

THE  
IDEALIST STANDPOINT  
A STUDY IN THE VEDANTIC  
METAPHYSIC OF EXPERIENCE

DEBABRATA SINHA

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VISVA-BHARATI

Revised version of a Doctoral thesis, the present work develops a new approach to the basic tenets of the classical idealistic system of Advaita Vedānta. It has freely interpreted "the fundamental standpoint in the light of which the edifice of Advaita idealism may be sought to be understood and . . . intelligibly reorganized." Neither a mere historical interpretation nor a strictly textual study, the present work is a bold attempt to integrate the epistemological strands of the old system with modern philosophical thinking and, thus, to pose the Vedantic thesis afresh.

The central thesis of Advaita Vedānta is its doctrine of consciousness (*Cit*), which the author tries afresh to understand in the light of a critique of experience. According to him, this doctrine of consciousness hinges entirely on the notion of subjectivity, often found missing in the traditional expositions of Advaita Vedānta. From the unique standpoint of (transcendental) subjectivity he thus works out the classical Indian system as a subjectively-oriented metaphysic of experience dealing with the problems of conscious act, perception, illusory experience, nescience, grades of reflection etc.

For this analysis the author has largely sided with the recent European school of Phenomenology, particularly so far as its approach from the standpoint of subjectivity is concerned. And in the wake of reconstructing Advaita Vedānta as a 'metaphysic of experience', he has generally adopted *existentialistic* solutions. The work, thus, is a bold venture to combine two contemporary unorthodox systems with the old classical Vedānta.

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METAPHYSIC OF EXPERIENCE

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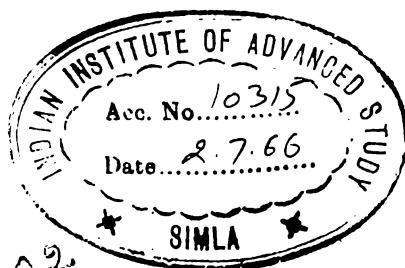
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## P R E F A C E

The search after 'a new name for some old ways of thinking'—as William James preferred to characterize 'Pragmatism'—may be said to represent, in one sense, the philosophic endeavour of the modern mind. New names need not be a question of mere nomenclature, but also be looked upon as a genuine way of thinking itself. Through such thinking alone can the older systems of thought undergo the process of being re-integrated to the living currents of present thinking. And this process should be taken as one organic to true philosophizing rather than as external to it. There may, after all, be no little truth in the Bradleyan epigram that "metaphysics is the finding of bad reasons for what is believed upon instinct". But the said 'instinct', i.e., the basic insight (or insights), constituting the foundation of a philosophical system, need not be taken as one unamenable to critical reasoning. Rather, philosophic reflection proper should be directed towards grasping such fundamentals, without resting upon the externals of metaphysical arguments as such.

This attitude being taken into consideration, the present enquiry would proceed towards re-understanding one of the classical systems of Indian thought, viz., Advaita Vedānta. The latter has not been sought to be understood in this study as a finished specimen of antiquarian thought ; there has rather been an attempt to arrive at the central standpoint which should offer a fuller understanding of Advaitic idealism. An exaggerated concern for the external argumentative superstructure of an old metaphysical system is apt to divert our attention from the standpoint that might have originally motivated the philosophic outlook of the system concerned. The scope for misunderstanding and misinterpretation in this regard would perhaps nowhere be greater than in the classical systems of India—developed as they have through

centuries, from the earlier *Sūtra-bhāṣya* stage to the later dialectical phase. But it can hardly be denied that the life-essence of a philosophical system does not lie in the sets of hypotheses put forward in abstraction.

I have been well aware that to attempt to re-interpret a classical system—particularly one so proved and developed as Śaṅkara's Vedānta—may well mean a rather embarrassing task. So I have attempted here a free interpretation of what may be considered to be the principal tenet of Advaita, rather than a bare textual interpretation or a historical study. [In this—as well as in certain basic respects in the line of interpretation followed—I have been emboldened by at least one outstanding example, viz., that of the late Professor K. C. Bhattacharyya, who, as stated in the Introduction to his “Studies in Vedantism”, offers “problematic constructions on Vedantic lines intended to bring out the relations of the system to modern philosophical systems”.] My central aim has indeed been directed to the fundamental standpoint in the light of which the edifice of Advaitic idealism may be sought to be understood and thus intelligibly reorganized. All that we may claim in the present study is not historic authenticity but a possible alternative way of understanding the central thesis of Advaita Vedānta in a new light.

What has engaged my interest throughout the work is the principle of Being as identified with Consciousness, to be found in the common Vedantic doctrine of *Sat-Cit*. The doctrine of Being (*Sat*) has usually been approached in terms of formal arguments ; but thereby the unique import of *Cit*, the principle of consciousness, has more often than not been missed. A mere abstract formulation of the principle of *Cit* in formal-metaphysical terms is apt to forgo its concrete bearing upon, and relation to, experience—what originally motivated Advaita as a *Cit*-centric philosophy, but is very often ignored in the common enunciation of *Cit* which joins it more or less in an abstract way to the principle of Being. On my reading, a far more illuminating way of approaching *Cit* in the light of interpretation of experience

seems to lie in the notion of subjectivity. The latter alone could assure for Advaita a unique standpoint which may give way to a subjectively-oriented 'metaphysic of experience', to be retraced within the framework of the Advaita system itself.

Our enquiry begins by proposing a fresh approach in the matter of adequately understanding what may be (philosophically, not historically) the standpoint motivating the philosophical character of the system at hand—its general idealistic standpoint and outlook (Introduction). The four chapters of Part I have been employed in the establishment—on independent grounds—and elucidation of *Cit* as the principle of subjectivity *par excellence* (Ch. I). (In view of the possible opposition from the realistic-positivistic camp at large, the establishment of the standpoint concerned has taken a major share in our study.) Thus is prepared the ground for the next—and the central—part of the enquiry (Chs. V and VI), which attempts to work out the fuller implications of the principle of *Cit*—a principle that would lead ultimately to a more or less full-fledged criticism of experience.

However, an examination of the bare standpoint of subjectivity as such may further raise doubts as to whether the former could yield an *ontological* standpoint proper (the latter being the approach that has commonly been accepted as central to Advaita philosophy). Accordingly, the last part (2 chapters in Part III) takes up this question, and brings out the *alogical* transition to the standpoint of Being from that of 'transcendental subjectivity' in the form of *Cit*.

In my line of interpretation, which obviously is not committed to any agreement with the orthodox or the standard one, I have rather made free use of the Phenomenology of Edmund Husserl, which itself represents rather a heterodoxy in European thought. With its typical subjectively-oriented outlook, Phenomenology seems, of all the Western systems, to promise the closest approach to Advaitic idealism (in its *Cit*-aspect)—necessary concessions being, of course, made for the otherwise widely different contexts.

And the methodology that Phenomenology offers may throw no little light towards a possible system of analysis of experience, attuned to the standpoint of subjectivity.

I might have as well stopped with Part II, where an outline of the Advaita metaphysic of experience has been attempted. But a demand for greater justice to the metaphysical standpoint as it actually occurs in Vedānta has eventually led to the concluding part—although it need not, strictly speaking, have come within the scope of our enquiry. The methodological approach adopted by us necessitates a so-called 'transition' to the metaphysical standpoint, although in Vedānta such a passage from one standpoint to the other would not evidently be entailed. I am keenly aware that our line of interpretation, deriving a possible metaphysic of experience, and therefrom an ontological scheme, might well be developed further—not merely in the Vedantic context, but possibly in respect of some other classical systems too.

In spite of the relative freedom in the treatment of the original texts concerned, I have proceeded, as far as possible, with reference to the relevant Sanskrit literature of Advaita Vedānta—and of other schools on occasions. In freely drawing from the original texts, I have, however, been chiefly concerned with the philosophical interpretation of the relevant points rather than the exact reproduction of the arguments as such. Our sources on Vedānta have chiefly been drawn from the commentaries of Śaṅkarācārya and the works of the *Vivarāṇa* school in particular, including such later works as *Citsukhī* etc.

As regards Phenomenology, I have had to depend for the sources largely on the English translation of the first volume of Husserl's "Ideas" (that being the only available English version of the great bulk of Husserl's works, except the "Encyclopædia Britannica" article, at the time of my preparing the work). The very nature of my work, being an interpretation from within rather than an external comparison of the two schools, may explain my free use of the phenomenological terminology in the Vedantic context (especially

in Chapters V and VI). However, considering the necessity for a closer account of the salient features of Husserl's Phenomenology in the context of my investigations, I have preferred to append a brief Note on Phenomenology at the end. Some reference to Existentialism—a more or less allied movement and one no less heterodox than Phenomenology—is also called for, at least in the last chapter, by the very nature of our approach. But the compass of the present enquiry would hardly permit further treatment of Existentialism as such.

The present work is a revised and slightly abridged version of my thesis, originally submitted and accepted for the D.Phil degree in Philosophy of the Calcutta University. On this occasion I must express my deep gratitude to Professor Dr. Kalidas Bhattacharyya, Professor of Philosophy, Visva-Bharati University, to whom I owe inspiration and guidance in undertaking this new line of investigation in an old field. I should further mention here, with due respect, the name of the late Mahamahopadhyaya Jogendranath Tarka-Vedantatirtha, D.Litt., once Research Professor of Indian Philosophy, Sanskrit College, Calcutta, who with loving care helped me for years to go through some of the difficult texts of Vedānta.

I am thankful indeed to the Centre of Advanced Studies in Philosophy, Visva-Bharati University, and once again to Professor Kalidas Bhattacharyya, the Director of the Centre, for the publication of the book. It may be mentioned here that substantial part of the present work was completed while I was a Research Assistant in the Department of Philosophy, Visva-Bharati University, some years back. I should also offer my grateful thanks to Sri Gouranga Press, especially to Sri Prabhat Chandra Ray, for their earnest co-operation in the printing of my book.

To my wife I owe a debt, though too personal, for her good judgment which has often helped me in finally preparing the manuscript.

In conclusion, I may just add, although some six years have passed since I wrote the thesis, I have now found little reason for any major and essential change in the work—although the late twenties and early thirties may well prove to be years of transformation for a growing mind. Subsequent first-hand studies in Phenomenology (during my two years of post-doctoral research in West Germany) have only confirmed my conviction that the phenomenological approach is suitable for interpreting afresh the basic Vedantic stand-point of Subjectivity.

*November, 1964.*

DEBABRATA SINHA

## INTRODUCTION

The question of approach would be almost imperative in philosophy, if the latter is to become a real critique—an unbiased one—of experience. A philosophy that may profess to be free, to all possible extent, from express dogmatism of any sort has to be particular in respect of approach or method. Or even for the possible understanding of a philosophy in a non-dogmatic way or context, the same question regarding method would arise. What may be that possible approach? Before treating this question, it should be considered what this dogmatism might be which a thoroughly critical philosophy is expected to avoid.

There may be involved a twofold dogmatism in philosophy in respect of the question of reality. On the one hand, there is the common-sense belief regarding the obvious reality of the world as communicated by actual and possible experience, wherein existents are taken to be real as such. This may roughly be regarded as the naïve or natural standpoint which takes for granted the positive reality of the world of experience. On the other hand, there is the metaphysical belief—presumably not on the level of natural experience—in the transcendent reality of the unconditioned absolute ground of things. The concept of Being or of Absolute may provide the key to such metaphysical belief. Thus, to start with, an avowedly non-dogmatic approach in philosophy should seek to exclude the following two fundamental, though often mutually independent, presuppositions: (i) the naturalistic belief, taking the worldly objects of experience as independently real and existent; (ii) the metaphysical dogma of the absolute Being or Existence. Of these, though the former has generally been rejected by idealists, the latter has more often than not been yielded to, in some way or other, by them.

Leaving aside the question of ontological existence (of

the metaphysical order), the empirical standpoint of taking the bare objects of experience as real by themselves may appear at the first instance hard to be denied. Yet such empirical approach need not be free from the naïve belief as to the independent reality of that which forms the object of experience. Consequently, an ideally non-dogmatic procedure should not commit itself to the level of sense-experience as communicating the real, just as the level of the so-called higher reality of the metaphysical order is also to be left out.\*

So, the alternative in broad that remains for a philosophy, attempting to be free from the said presuppositions, may rather be sought for in some other direction. While starting with no major presuppositions as to 'First Principles', presuppositions as implied by experience are rather themselves to be brought out on the basis of critical analysis of experience. Such analysis would imply a strictly reflective investigation in the light of what is indubitably presented to the cognising meaning consciousness. Such investigation should possibly proceed by way of distinguishing and grasping analytically, i.e., in their pure *essence*, the meaning-contents given to consciousness. Thus the conditions for the possibility of experience—such conditions as are themselves not empirically conditioned and in this sense are *a-priorities*—are sought to be brought out. This may be regarded as the strictly *epistemological* enquiry—one that can be characterized, in the Kantian way, as 'transcendental'. This methodological approach in philosophical investigations which has been hinted at here may provisionally be understood as one to be distinguished from, though not opposed to, the common formal-logical method employed in philosophy as well as in natural science.†

\* A metaphysically non-committal point of view may be said to have been adopted in Jaina philosophy in its theory of *Anekānta*, following the logic of *Syādvāda*, according to which absolute affirmation or negation of existence would be an absurdity, only conditional assertion being possible. However, even here the common-sense belief in the empirical as real could not be excluded.

† The further implications of this proposed (transcendental) approach cannot as such be developed in this introductory chapter, but they may be

In the line of such an approach it would follow that the assertion of existential reality should rather be suspended—at least in procedure. Principles are to be posited or realities affirmed according as consciousness means or refers to them. No external criterion, whether empirical or argumentative, other than what the cognising—and for that matter meaning—consciousness refers to should be introduced, if a systematically self-critical approach is to be carried out. In understanding the idealist position of Advaita Vedanta we may find a key to such approach in the epistemological dictum that the nature of the thing posited is to be determined according as it is presented to the consciousness which means or refers to it. ( . . . *yathāsamvid-avabhādhīnatvāt arthasattāniścaya.* . . )<sup>1</sup>.

As regards this approach, however, it may at once be doubted whether non-existential contents—or a system of such contents—may be possible. Would not a knowable necessarily mean an actual real? If not quite belonging to the sphere of objective facts, should not contents be at least regarded as psychological facts? The issue may *prima facie* be met with reference to the unique character of *knowing*, so far as it possesses the capacity of certifying all things that are knowable. For it is knowledge alone which ascertains facts; the latter cannot ascertain themselves, but are to be *known* in order to be ascertained. Knowledge as certifying—*pramāṇa*—thus presents a distinct level, wherein the question of knowability would not commonly arise as in the case of facts. To regard knowledge as a fact among facts—even as a unique fact—would only mean divesting it of its essential certifying character. Even if the apparent knowability of knowledge—the fact that knowledge can apparently be made an object of knowledge—is pointed out, the contention as to the unique character (and level) of knowledge in the capacity of certifying need not be surrendered\*.

This certifying aspect which knowledge possesses *qua*

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gradually evident in our discourse in the following chapters, through which the same approach has been sought to be developed.

\* *Infra*, Ch. III.

knowledge seem to point to the *prima facie* possibility of there being pure contents which may subsist *qua* essences even without being knowable as actual existents. This may at least promise an approach in philosophic reflection which might proceed in terms of non-factual contents, to be understood as *idealities* (or ideal preconditions) rather than as realities.

One point in this connexion may, however, be raised as to the plausibility of such an approach, namely, that the epistemic and the objective seem to be mutually confused herein. What pertains to the way of knowing as a mode of consciousness cannot legitimately be regarded as belonging to the order of reality. To such an objection it may at least be pointed out that a dichotomy of the epistemic and the objective cannot as such constitute a rigid principle in carrying out philosophic reflection. Such distinction of the mode of consciousness and the real object as such may arise through the common-sense presupposition of the independently existent object. Moreover, the distinction is all the more stressed in view of a possible confusion between modes of reference as in the meaning consciousness and the *psychological* modes as such. But our present approach would depart sharply from the psychological one, so far as the former seeks to proceed in terms of idealities and the latter in terms of ideas taken as mental counterparts of objects.

Further, a strict criterion for distinguishing the epistemic and the objective would indeed be hard to find. In this connexion, a review of the general position of a realistic system like Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika in positing the ontological scheme of categories (*padārtha*) may broadly prove our contention. The categories of existence—*padārtha*—as formulated by the Vaiśeṣikas are, in a sense, the enumeration of the meant. They are indeed brought under the broader category of 'knowable' (*prameya*). And, as the Nyāya dictum holds, the knowable is established on the basis of valid knowing—“*pramāṇebhyah prameyasiddhīḥ*”.<sup>2</sup> The ontological scheme of the Vaiśeṣika is sought to be resolved down to the epistemological

standpoint of the Naiyāika\*. After all, the Vaiśeṣika commentator, Praśastapāda, himself admits knowability (*jñeyatva*), besides namability (*abhidheyatva*) and existence (*astitva*), as one of the common characteristics of the categories†.

However, even if no definite criterion as to what is epistemic and what is objective could be found as such, the question may still remain: how are we to determine what is true and what is false? Can the proposed approach provide any criterion for truth and error without appealing to some *objective* standard? Firstly, it may be pointed out that any mode of cognising consciousness, be it valid or be it non-valid in the accepted sense, must have some content to refer to—“*Pratītiḥ saviṣayā*”. Even erroneous perception necessitates some positive content. But how to determine the validity of such content? The appeal here should rather be made to the verdict of consciousness itself—to what is present to it. The invalidity of cognition in an erroneous situation need not be derived from the non-existence of the (falsely perceived) object, but may rather be proved through rejection by the relevant succeeding content of consciousness. Nor can the falsity of cognition be accounted for merely by reference to the pragmatic use (*vyavahāra*), for even this use itself has to be determined with reference to the consciousness concerned—like the object, as noted earlier.

So, the relevant mode of meaning consciousness rather than any objective standard as such would prove to be the arbiter of validity in a truly reflective approach.<sup>3</sup> Of course, a *negative* criterion might be suggested in this respect—a criterion which may at least serve in eliminating the absolutely unreal—viz., reducibility in terms of mere language-forms. Ideas which can completely be linguistically resolved and as such prove to be mere linguistic constructions

\* Cf. “The Vaiśeṣika views the world from the ontological standpoint while the Nyāya does so from the epistemological”. M. Hiriyanna, *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*, p. 245.

† The point may further be developed by closely examining the categories separately—particularly, *sāmānya*, *Viśeṣa* and *abhiava*.

might be rejected as having no truth-claim as such. This would be the case with fictitious ideas, for instance, which are accordingly regarded as altogether false (*tuccha*), being bereft even of reference or meaning.

Now, in this proposed approach the whole stress seems evidently to be put on the subject's knowing rather than on the object known. The point of view of the cognising subject is proposed in preference to that of the object as such. Such reversal of the object-ward attitude, as entailed by this approach, may seem unwarranted at the first instance. However, the ground for a subject-centric attitude—if the said attitude can be so characterized, to contrast it with the object-oriented one—need not be far to seek. It may be evident if we recognise even barely the unique import of subject *qua* subject, plainly represented in the notion of 'I'. The objective attitude, commonly assented to, need not be the only approach in philosophy.

The 'independence' of the object known, as claimed by the realist, is after all intelligible in relation to knowing itself. For even to posit the aspect of independence as pertaining to the object necessitates the object *to be known*. If it still be urged that the object as independently existent does stand as such, this supposedly self-existent object would prove to be hardly anything more than an indefinite 'X'. But with such 'X' (cf. Kant's 'Thing-in-itself'), alleged to be beyond the ken of knowledge, we would hardly have any direct concern in the proposed approach.

This brings us, of course, to the question: what would be the possible attitude towards the real object, or the possible explanation of objectivity, for such a view? One point seems to be evident, viz., that the object as independent and real is left out of consideration. Objectivity is no longer to be looked upon as the character pertaining to the existent *per se*. Consequently, the common charge that the subject-centric position necessarily ignores objective experience and as such gives no explanation of the world of objects would not hold good.

In this connexion it may also be pointed out that even with such a fundamental subject-centrality, the minimum tenet of realism need not be given up. For all practical purposes, the independence of the empirical object or of the wordly facts can hardly be denied\*. Moreover, the approach which we here adopt in terms of fundamental subject-centrality should not in any case be misunderstood as 'psychologism' of any sort—the latter being roughly the view that whatever is asserted is psychologically determined. As already suggested, in the context of the reflective approach ideas are not to be taken as contents in the mind of an actual ego. Accordingly, the whole stress is laid upon the *meaning*-aspect rather than on the psychological facthood of ideas.

It is in the transcendental philosophy of Kant that a strictly epistemological approach was undertaken, proposing a radical explanation of knowledge. So, the question as to how knowledge is possible was taken up in earnest, leaving aside the psychological attitude of Locke and other empiricists. Accordingly, by transcending the self-defeating system of empirical ideas (as the psychological counterpart of the objects of knowledge), a presuppositional system of *idealities* (in the form of apriorities) was sought to be brought out. And Kant admittedly adopted 'the subjective point of view' in contrast to the object-positing attitude. Consequently, the object for Kant was reduced to *appearance* or to object-as-known, for the latter alone could be shown amenable to a thoroughgoing reflective analysis. However, the object as real in itself and unconditioned, though suspended in reflective analysis, still provided for the latter a necessary point of reference. The concept of 'transcendental object', though a postulatory concept for Kant, was yet regarded as necessary for conferring upon all our empirical concepts in

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\* The Advaitic contention in general as regards a provisional pragmatic (*vyāvahārika*) status or validity of the world of common experience is particularly under reference.

general the relation to an object, i.e., objective reality. Thus in Kantianism, the object as such serves more or less as the terminal point of reference. There is, so to say, a lapse of interest in the bare reality of the object as such, although not in objectivity.

Now, Kantianism introduced, at least as method, the subjective point of view in the transcendental (not mere logical) analysis of experience. But the concept of reality never did leave its trace in the Kantian critique. However, in the more recent philosophical discipline of Phenomenology, expounded by Husserl, the said *subjective* point of view has been more expressly pursued towards a systematic analysis of the pure structure of consciousness. The 'transcendental' point of view which was already involved in the Kantian metaphysic of experience is here sought to be worked out with thoroughgoing rigour. But in Phenomenology, unlike in Kantianism, the concern for existent reality is singularly left out; and 'objectivity' is not regarded in the Kantian sense as involving the element of necessity and universality and as referring to the postulated 'transcendental object'. On the contrary, consciousness in its essential functionality through modalities of reference provides the basic theme.\*

Thus, although Husserl's Phenomenology does not involve a strictly *a priori* approach of the Kantian type, it shares in common with the latter an enquiry after the conditions for the possibility of experience. Bidding for a presuppositionless philosophy, phenomenology proposes a discipline for the analysis of the presuppositional structure of consciousness in as rigorous a way as science itself. The approach therein is intended to be purely on the basis of 'evidence' presented in reflective insight (what Husserl calls 'essence-intuition'). *Subjective* in a sense though the method may be, it should steer clear of at least two extremes. On the one hand, there should be no commitment as to the

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\* For an account of the standpoint, outlook and method of Edmund Husserl's Phenomenology in outlines, vide *infra*, Index B: "A Note on Phenomenology".

*metaphysical* status of subjectivity or consciousness ; and, on the other hand, no psychologism should be involved. All that can be suggested herein is the possible *autonomous* region of subjectivity, the supposed home of idealities or essentialities.

Now, when we come to Advaita Vedanta, we do not, of course, meet with a-priorism of any sort, as one would find in European philosophy. It may be said of Indian philosophy in general (except perhaps, to some extent, the Vaiyākaraṇa system) that it does not as such involve the element of *a priori* in the strict logical sense of the term, with its epistemological-metaphysical bearing. So, Vedanta would not as such be concerned with the necessary logical structures of thought *mutatis mutandis* the structure of the world. Yet, this a-priorism apart, Vedanta may still be considered in the light of a so-called *transcendental* approach\* ; that means, it could be understood as a metaphysic of experience in terms of transcendental analysis of experience, even without necessary reference to any metaphysical or like presuppositions. Or, to put it in terms of Strawson's distinction (cf. "Individuals"), a 'descriptive metaphysics' rather than a 'revisionary' one may be traced within the framework of Advaita philosophy.

As the basis of such an approach to Vedanta, however, stands the standpoint of subjectivity. The notion of 'transcendental subjectivity' plays a distinct role in Kantianism, and more particularly in Husserl's Phenomenology. In Kantianism, the self as 'transcendental unity of apperception' represents the presuppositional subject-principle, sharply distinguished from the empirical self. And in Husserl's Phenomenology, as already referred to, there is a more explicit recognition of 'transcendental subjectivity' as sharply distin-

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\* The term "transcendental" has been used in this broadly Kantian-Phenomenological sense (which is otherwise metaphysically non-committal) throughout the book.

guished from psychological subjectivity.<sup>4</sup>

Without further going into the Kantian or the phenomenological position in the present context, it may here be noted that this standpoint of subjectivity brings both the systems, particularly Phenomenology, nearer to Advaita Vedanta. For the central idealist standpoint of the latter can be stated in terms of the cardinal principle of *Cit*, which stands for the very essence of subjectivity (as our discourse hereafter seeks to show). And the transcendental-subjective methodology of Phenomenology makes it particularly competent to throw light on a truly reflective investigation into the nature of subjectivity. So, an attempt at bringing out the truth and significance of subjectivity may be undertaken approximately on lines suggested by Phenomenology.

A broadly phenomenological approach—may not be in the strictly Husserlian sense—could thus be an approach towards the possible understanding of a philosophical doctrine, without necessary reference to the metaphysical or like presuppositions that may otherwise be involved in the system concerned. To consider the doctrine of *Cit* in Advaita system, playing the role of transcendental subjectivity as in a system of metaphysic of experience, it can possibly be attempted on phenomenological lines—with what success shall be seen in the sequel.

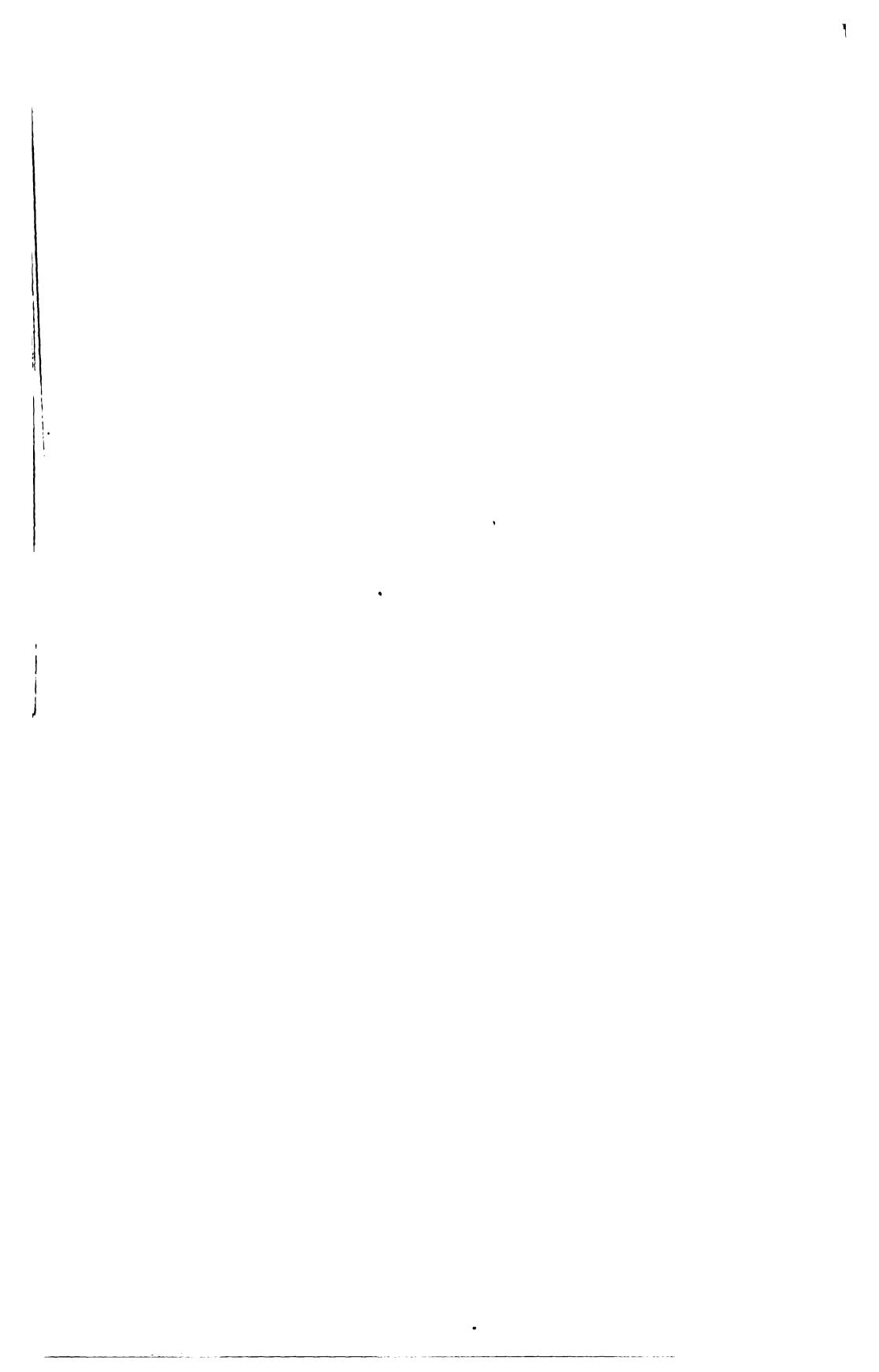
However, methodological considerations apart, the essentially *metaphysical* orientation of *Cit* *qua* pure subjectivity in the scheme of Advaita philosophy can hardly be overlooked. *Cit* is indeed indicated as the principle of consciousness which is at the same time ontological existence (*Sat*) or Being. But at least *methodologically*, we would rather keep in abeyance the ontological-existential aspect of *Cit*. Consequently, what may properly remain would be nothing but pure consciousness. And the latter, even if not *metaphysically* considered, would of course provide the pre-suppositional background in epistemological and psychological investigations. As such, we have in view the fundamental role of *Cit* in a possible system of critique of experience, one

that may broadly be regarded as its epistemological—or more properly, transcendental—role.

#### NOTES AND REFERENCES

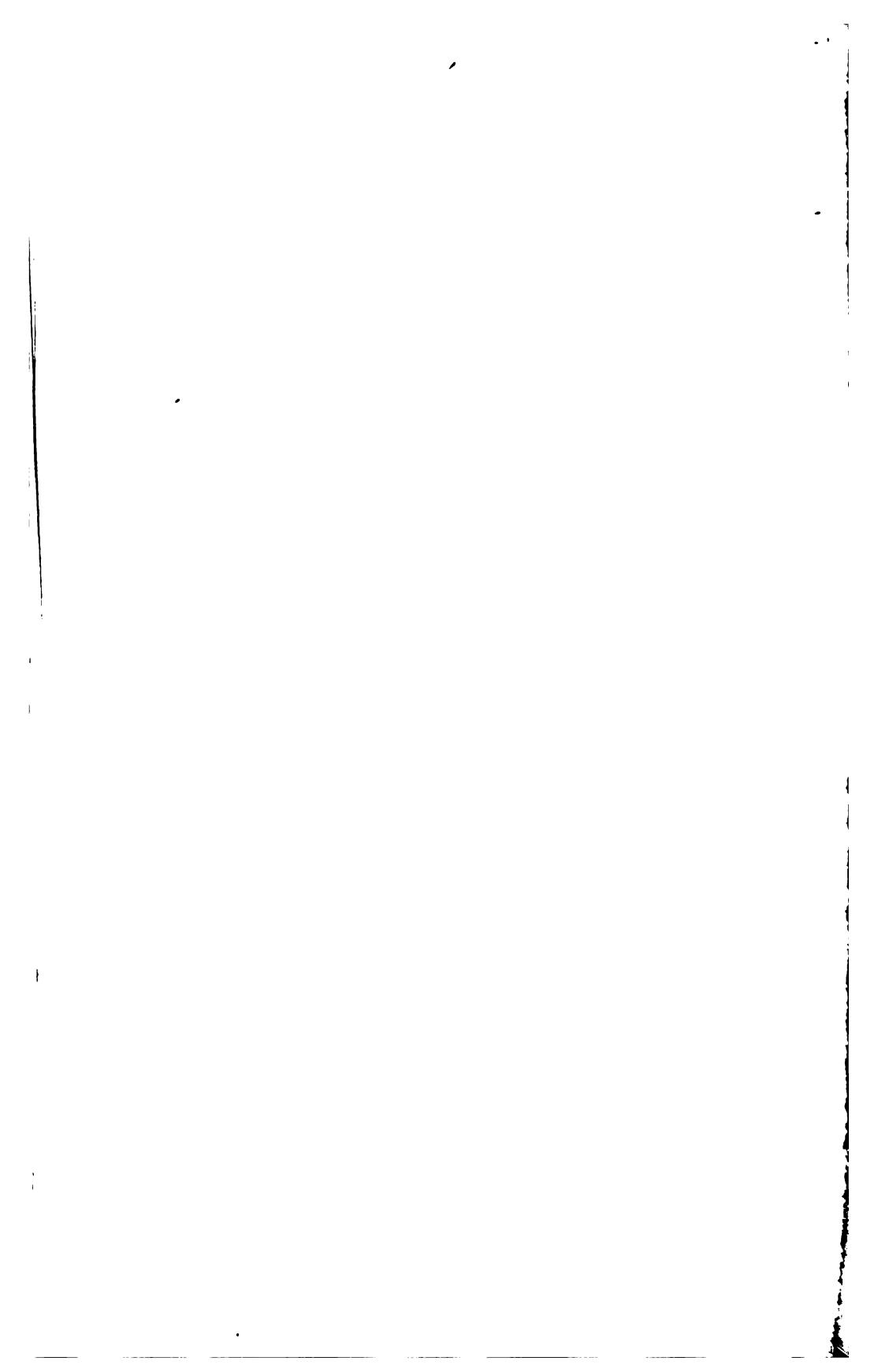
For the abbreviations of the Sanskrit texts under reference and the respective editions etc., see Select Bibliography (Appendix A).

1. *Pañcapādikā-Vivaraṇa* (subsequently referred to as *Vivaraṇa*), *Varṇaka* I, p. 21. (Only the number of the *Varṇaka* concerned mentioned subsequently).
2. *Nyāya-Śūtra*, II. 1. 10 ; also, cf. “*Prameyasiddhilī pramāṇāt hi*”, *Sāṅkhya-Kārikā*, 4.
3. Cf. “*Nahi arthasattāniścayādhīnah samvitsattāniścayāḥ, arthasattāniścayasyapi niścayāntarādhīnatvaprasaṅgāt*”, *Vivaraṇa*, loc. cit.
4. Vide Edmund Husserl, *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*, trans. by B. Gibson from the German original, Library of Philosophy (George Allen and Unwin). Subsequently referred to as *Ideas*.



PART I

NOTION AND STATUS OF *CIT* AS SUBJECTIVITY



## CHAPTER I

### APPROACH TO *CIT* AS SUBJECTIVITY

The possible way of approaching *Cit* in the Advaita doctrine, independent of its ontological thesis, would be to understand it in the light of transcendental analysis of experience. The ground for such approach may not be far to seek. For, consciousness *prima facie* stands for what can roughly be called the subjective, or simply be characterized—though negatively—as being other than the object in the epistemic situation. And *cit*, to have a definite import other than the metaphysical, should rather be defined in terms of the subjective. So our major problem here would be to show how far *cit* can, and does, claim to stand as the presuppositional ground in the subjectively oriented interpretation of experience. It is to the definition and elaboration of the notion of *cit* as having the unique import of subjectivity that the chapters in Part I are directed.

It is to be noted in this connexion that our enquiry would centre not around the subject that is *metaphysically* real, but rather towards the supposed foundational essence involved within the range of experience taken as *meant*. Accordingly, the procedure may be viewed not in terms of existence, natural or ontological, but in terms of what may be called pure ideational implicates of experience. With a view to bringing out the foundational status of consciousness, relevant logico-epistemological and psychological analyses, largely in keeping with Advaita philosophy, would be undertaken. Nevertheless, the attitude in broad of bringing in no metaphysical presupposition as such is sought to be maintained, so that a proper criticism of experience in the light of what Kant would call 'transcendental reflection'\* may follow.

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\* For the actual bearing of 'transcendental reflection' (as distinguished from 'logical reflection' by Kant), vide Ch. V.

To begin with an epistemological enquiry, what seems to be accepted is nothing more nor less than the undeniable rudimentary fact to which all individual cognition may be reduced, namely, 'I know'. Consciousness, although about something, stands nonetheless *for* the subject. For some, notably the Naiyāyikas, to speak of the *subjective* character of consciousness would mean that it necessarily pertains to a subject who knows or experiences as distinguished from the object experienced or known. But the genuine subjectivity of consciousness seems to lie deeper. For firstly, though Nyāya holds that consciousness belongs to a self, this self may remain without it; secondly, the so-called 'subjective' of the Naiyāyika, like that of S. Alexander, proves on further analysis to be as much objective as other things.

The true subjectivity intrinsic to consciousness would mean a different position and has to be shown differently. The principle of *cit* in Advaita doctrine indicates consciousness not as attributive and empirical but as substantive and transcendental. Consciousness *prima facie* would mean phenomena which are generally considered subjective, i.e., those which pertain to the subject (experiencer or knower). But to contend that consciousness in essence is subjectivity implies at once two steps. (1) Consciousness is not what just appears in the shape of conscious states in individual minds empirically determined but rather what presuppositionally stands behind such states. (2) The alleged core of consciousness should be such as to subsist by itself independent of extrinsic factors—objective or psychological. And this would signify its possible autonomy, i.e., its subsistence independent of empirical determination and objective reference.

Both these steps, however, imply the *prima facie* possibility of considering consciousness to be a distinct principle at all. There are thinkers who would hardly admit consciousness to be a distinct principle. Consciousness, they urge, can never be posited apart from the empirical context. As empiricists they would contend that consciousness as distinct is hardly to be found. Hume, for instance, would rather

reduce self to 'bundle of perceptions' and as such deny outright and substantive status to it as subject. Following the clue of Humean atomism further, modern realists like Bertrand Russell, for example, would be denying a special entitative character to consciousness as the essence of mental phenomena (cf. "The Analysis of Mind"). Further, Ryle brings the concept of mind as 'a second theatre' severely under criticism, offering a neo-behaviouristic explanation of mind as nothing more than 'minding' (cf. "The Concept of Mind").

Now, the first step in showing the possibility of self-subsisting consciousness would necessitate an analysis of knowledge-relation itself. To regard knowledge-relation simply as objectively (causally) determined, as a realist would have it, is to miss the *raison d'être* of knowledge itself. Even for a realist, who takes knowledge-relation like *any* relation between two facts, knowledge is regarded as a simple fact not further analysable. However, merely to admit knowledge-relation as simple fact like any objective event would little improve our genuine understanding of knowledge. This may prompt us to a reversal of the attitude in which the object is cognised. That would mean stressing the subjective side rather than that of the object. Accordingly, the peculiar feature of 'reference' as pertaining to knowledge has to be recognised. To consider the epistemological import of the knowledge-of-object situation, the simple proposition 'This is X' may give place to a more reflective proposition 'I have the knowledge of X'. And in the latter proposition, the 'of'-ness implies that there is a reference to X. To posit an object amounts invariably to a directedness on the part of the cognising subject. Thus each instance of cognition is the cognition of something. The directedness towards something other than the nowing consciousness itself is indicated by the reference-character of knowledge (or what the phenomenologists would call "intentionality")\*.

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\* The typical phenomenological treatment of consciousness rests on the unique feature of 'intentionality' (originally advocated by Brentano) : that every 'cogito' must be consciousness of something is to be interpreted not simply as a psychological fact.

As between knowledge and object, it is with the former as subjective act that we find the peculiar referencehood. For, in stating the knowledge-of-object situation, the 'of'-ness is meant to belong to the knowing act rather than to the object. If, however, the situation be put in terms of 'object-of-knowledge', then the latter would mean the object-as-known ; this in other words means that *knownness* (*jñālatā*) belongs to the object. But what is the status of this so-called 'knownness' in relation to the object?\*

Even if it be granted that knownness is a character belonging to object, its distinction from other objective qualities like colour, taste, smell etc. has still to be admitted. While the latter cannot be considered apart from the object as the locus, knownness cannot be so considered. Certain objective qualities like spatiality, nay even sound etc., may as well be treated apart from objective configurations and thereby ensuring, for instance, Geometry as the science of Space or Accoustics as the science of Sound. But such separate treatment is enabled only through mechanical abstraction of the qualities concerned from the composite structure of things. The unique character of knownness, on the other hand, presents itself as capable of being treated as such. This can explain why Psychology could at all proceed with the conscious phenomenon of knownness (and of felt-ness and willed-ness, to that extent) more or less independently of the objective (bodily) counterpart. Moreover, knownness presupposes the act of knowing as somehow outside the bounds of the object itself. As such, it can hardly be regarded as the original character of the object. On the contrary, while knowledge refers to the object, the latter does not intrinsically refer to consciousness.

Referencehood thus belongs inseparably to the subject-pole. When A refers to B, it follows that B is here to be understood necessarily in the context of A's reference (although it need not at once follow that B has *per se* no exis-

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\* For detailed analysis of 'knownness', vide infra, Sec. A.

tential status of its own). So far as B is sought to be explained in terms of A's act, that A may subsist independent of B suggests itself to us. It follows that A should presumably have a self-subsistent autonomous nature of its own apart from its actual reference to B, which means A subsisting independent of the B-context.

The train of analysis suggested above seems in broad to agree with the fundamental idealistic position of Advaita as noted earlier. To come to the thesis of the autonomous status of consciousness, Advaita seeks to trace pure consciousness at the background of cognitive states. Any state of consciousness (*vṛtti*) is on reflective analysis found to be involving the common element of consciousness. The varying cognitive states, having different objects from case to case, invariably shares the common character of knowingness (*jñānatva*). This character of knowingness as generic is felt to be not merely associated but identified with the states themselves ; but it is not nominally posited as on the strength of mere abstraction. It is due to fusion with the varying modifications that the generic character itself appears to be varying. For the character of pure knowingness is, on the last analysis, the manifestation of the object to the knowing subject ; and this character in its turn abides in the self\*. Now, such generic character as approached through conscious states points to the concrete possibility of consciousness as self-subsisting essence. Of course, such concrete essence may not be realised in actuality apart from the media of psychic states partaking of the generic character. To pass from the generic character (*sāmānya*) to the concrete embodiment of the generic essence —*vyakti*, not *jāti* or class—seems to be a typically significant procedure of Advaita. What comes to us as the generic essence bears the *possibility* that such essence may be concretely embodied.<sup>1</sup>

Now, knowingness is not to be looked upon as a property

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\* For the Advaitic equation of consciousness and knowledge (*cit* as *jñāna*), or the interpretation of the essence of consciousness in purely cognitive terms, vide infra, Ch. II.

of mental states like other properties such as causality, numericality, succession etc. The latter may pertain to the contents of mind but are not conceivable apart from the context of the contents themselves. Knowingness in general, however, can be conceived by itself independent of its belonging to any specific states. In this also the autonomy of knowingness is suggested.

Consciousness as it appears obviously varies in *form* from one state to another, so that the *essential* consciousness, alleged to be common to the various apparent forms of consciousness, may well be questioned. But the apparent differences in form may be resolved in the light of the referential aspect of consciousness and traced to the object-counterpart of the states of consciousness concerned. So far as the pure ground behind the states are concerned, it should not be conceived of as partaking of any form of objective reference varying according to the given object—although the ground itself is *ideally* posited rather than actually realised.<sup>2</sup>

From this preliminary survey pure consciousness (*Cit*) as self-subsistent subjectivity comes out at least as a possibility. With a view to strengthening this possibility by demonstrating the ontic validity of consciousness as the essential subjectivity, we now proceed to the detailed consideration of certain approaches as can be worked out in the context of the Advaita metaphysic of experience. Besides the so-called phenomenon of knownness, an analysis of the three-fold stages of experience in the forms of waking, dream and deep sleep and also the notion of 'I' would provide for Advaita several approaches to the notion of *Cit* as pure subjectivity.

#### SECTION A. ANALYSIS OF KNOWNNESS (*jñātata*)

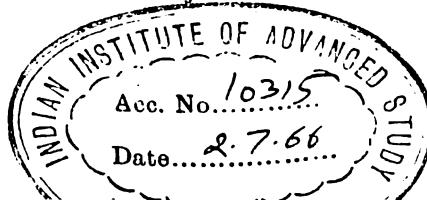
A closer examination of the epistemological character of knownness (besides what have been said in the preliminary remarks) would bring particularly into view in the present context the treatment of the concept in the Bhāṭṭa school of Mīmāṃsā. According to the Bhāṭṭas, knownness

(*jñātatata*) or manifestness (*prākātya*) is a character pertaining to the object, indicating the relation of self or subject to the object known. As knowledge is generated, the relation between the object and the knower is grasped. In an instance of knowledge stated in the judgment, "This is known by me", the object referred to rather than the subject seems to be primarily apprehended. This apparent primacy of the objective factor over the subjective is to be attributed to this relation between the object and the knower.

Now this character of knownness, resulting through knowledge-relation, is taken to be inhering in the object of knowledge in context as inseparable therefrom and is to be grasped through sense-perception along with the object. As this knownness is apprehended, it serves as the sign on the ground of which knowledge is inferred as the cause of such a quality as knownness—*jñātatālinānumāna*. So the object being known, the knowledge itself is known subsequently through inference.<sup>3</sup> As Pārthasārathi Miśra points out, knowledge is to be postulated as the adventitious cause which brings about the connection of the self with the object.<sup>4</sup>

It seems that the new quality of knownness should belong to the object known rather than the subject knowing, though the contrary view is not missing among the Bhāṭṭa thinkers. According to Vācaspati Miśra's interpretation ("Nyāyakanikā"), the quality of knownness should inhere in the self and as such be amenable to internal perception (*mānasā pratyakṣa*). Knownness, however, is kept apart from knowledge, so far as the former is obtained through mental perception, while the latter through inference. But this would entail an unnecessary dichotomy between knownness and knowledge, both abiding in the self. Knownness as located in the self could bear any meaning only in the sense of reference of knowledge to object ; and it is exactly this reference that is involved in knowledge as the *tertium quid* between self and object.

So the only alternative admissible seems to be to take knownness, pertaining to object, as the quality effected by



knowledge—a position mentioned by Pārthasārathi and accepted generally by later Bhāṭṭas. Knowledge itself has its own character (*jñānatvam*) and the knower its own (*jñātṛtvam*); so knownness should naturally belong to the object known. But the question may still be raised: how from knownness, a character admittedly objective or at least pseudo-objective, can the subjective principle like knowledge be inferred? For, the Bhāṭṭas do admit that knowledge, unlike knownness, is after all a quality in the self rather than in the object. Further it is maintained that knownness is an added quality to the object. But to recognize such addition (*atiśaya*) as due to the activity of knowing would entail that the latter has somehow been apprehended, whether prior to or simultaneous with the object. Without the knowledge being apprehended, it would be rather presumptuous to accept 'knownness' merely on the basis of such judgment as 'The pot is known' (put in a more explicit but sophisticated way as 'Knownness belongs to the pot').

Again, the very process of inferring knowledge in the Bhāṭṭa way would involve difficulties. In order to infer knowledge, knownness as the ground (*hetu*) is supposed to be cognised. How, then, to cognise knownness itself? The simple answer may be, as some Bhāṭṭa thinkers hold: through perception of knownness along with the object. But if knownness can be directly grasped, why not knowledge itself be similarly apprehended—which would, of course, mean surrendering the Bhāṭṭa position? Moreover, in such a view, knownness would be reduced to one of the objective qualities—a contention already examined. On the other hand, from a consistent Bhāṭṭa approach it would follow that knownness, if itself be known, should entail secondary knownness, and that in its turn a tertiary one, and so on. Thus an indefinite series of 'knownnesses' should follow, so that to infer knowledge on the basis of knownness (as known) would prove to be a baffling task.

A naïvely objective approach seems to escape the question of knowledge (as such) over and above the object.

But in that case, no reference to knownness could be made at all, nor to knowledge besides the object in view. As soon as the question of knowledge by way of knownness be raised, the absurd regress of 'knownnesses' would be inescapable. So, the apprehension of knownness as an objective quality would be unjustified. To treat knownness as a quality in the object, with which the supposed knowledge bears a contingent relation, implies only an improper abstraction. Even accepting for the sake of argument that knownness is *prima facie* an objective quality, a reflective analysis reveals its unique character as transcending the context of the object into the subjective act of knowing. The very absurdity of interpreting knownness in objective terms points to the originally unobjective level of knowledge—in other words, the level of subjectivity.

#### SECTION B. NOTION OF *I* OR EGO (*Ahamkāra*)

An investigation into the notion of *I*-hood or egoity (*ahamkāra*) can also provide a way of demonstrating *cit* as the foundational subjectivity. The individual is indicated by 'I' and as such *I*-hood is taken to stand for individuality (the latter broadly meant to include mind or internal organ). So far as the notion of 'I' at least *prima facie* involves the element of consciousness, a search for the essence of *I*-hood should lead to *cit* as the essence of subjectivity.

An ambiguity seems, however, to be involved in the very notion of *individuality* itself. For, the individuality as embodied in 'I' should be distinguished from the individuality of things, such as a tree, a rock etc. And the point of distinction apparently lies in the presence in the one and the absence in the other of the element of subjectivity. What seems to be common to both the types of individuals—*I* as well as the tree—is apparently the factor of self-contained identity. But the unique feature of individual subject is that it contains within itself the element of self-distinguishment which may be regarded as the mark of its subjectivity. The subject

alone is denoted by 'I', and never the things. In the case of objective entities I-ness is missing. The position of personal pronouns other than the first, viz., 'you', 'he' etc. may be *actually* denote 'I', they can neither be identified with the object-individual ; the possibility of being represented by 'I' from *their* respective points of view (though not that of the speaker) cannot, after all, be denied.

To put it schematically, at the one end of the hierarchy of individuality stands bare individuality (of things) *minus* subjectivity, while at the other end subsists—at least ideally—pure subjectivity devoid of individuality. At the intermediate stage (or stages) alone, one may find amalgamation, in varying proportions, of the elements of both individuality and subjectivity. It is in this region that the subject-individual may prevail. So, both the elements of individuality and of subjectivity are combined in the entity usually denoted by 'I'. In such combination, however, one of the elements need not imply the other (in a more or less Hegelian way) as dialectically involved within itself ; rather, even if co-existent, two elements are separable. That the two are at least primarily separate is suggested by the evidence of object-individual, where the element of bare individuality seems to prevail. This by itself at least suggests a possibility that subjectivity could subsist at the other end apart from individuality.

We next come upon a distinction of levels—reflective and unreflective—as may be traced in the I-consciousness. I-hood in its unreflective phase indicates the bodily level, where *I* as such and the feeling of *I* are not distinguished from each other. In this region of empirical use (*vyavahāra*), all that prevails is a bare feeling of *I*-ness, without the *I*-character being distinguished, enabling the common use in respect of self as body. Such functional appearance of *I*, however, may provide the point of departure for the search after pure *I*.

Saṅkara—and idealists may generally agree with him in this respect—takes body-self identity (*dehātmatā*) to be a case

of false identification (*adhyāsa*). They have thereby in view the reflective *I*, claiming to be distinct from the bodily complex. Such bodily level of individuality, where self is fused with the body, has been admitted by the *Naiyāyika* realist too to be false. Reflection on the body-self identity may bring home the notion of self as such. But, for the uncompromising naturalist like *Cārvāka*, the level of bodily self is the final stage which need not and cannot be transcended. At best there are shades of naturalism, taking self variously as the gross body (*sthūlaśarīra*) or as sense-organs or as vital principle (*Prāṇa*) or even as mind (*manas*), taken roughly as the 'subtle body' (*sūkṣma śarīra*). From such statements in use as (a) 'I am stout', (b) 'I am deaf', (c) 'I am thirsty', (d) 'I am with doubt', the characterizations in terms of body, sense-organ, vital principle and mind respectively are transferred to self.<sup>5</sup> But these are, after all, stages in approaching the pure self—beginning with the primary level of belief in the bodily self. That we can hardly confine ourselves finally to these stages may be shown as we come to the reflective analysis of *I*-consciousness.

*I* or ego at the reflective level is recognised as the inner principle distinct from the bodily complex. Such a principle, though having reference to body, still claims to be distinct. However, *Advaita* aptly recognises the intimate relation that exists between body and self. Here it comes remarkably close to the contention of some modern thinkers (like S. Alexander), who would hold—on the basis of adequate knowledge of the relation between the body and mental functions—that not only is mind vaguely connected with body but there is an intimate connection which does not enable us to rest in the conception of their mutual independence.<sup>6</sup> *Advaita* would not take the body-self identification as merely gratuitous or nominal ; it is basic, because the identity is actually felt.

Here comes into view the distinction between mediate knowledge and immediate perception in respect of the *I*-notion. So far as our perception is concerned, *I* is hardly to be apprehended except in its connection with the

bodily complex. On the perceptual level, the self presents itself ordinarily in the context of the causal chain of bodily activities (*kārya-kārana-saṅghāta*), and not as distinct from the latter. Through rational reflection alone is self known to be possibly distinct. Such evident fact that the same *I* is felt to persist from childhood, while the body undergoes organic changes from time to time, serves as the ground for inferring that the ego-substance (*ahampadārtha*) as denoted by *I* must possibly be distinct in essence from the bodily complex.<sup>7</sup> In another way Śaṅkara shows the distinctness of self from body. Starting from the common-sense position that self, even as the knower of all sense-manifold, is necessarily confined to the bodily complex, he further points out that body is itself knowable (*jñeyā*). So, if self is taken as nothing more than body, it would mean that one knowable is known by another knowable, which implies an evident absurdity. Through this *reductio ad absurdum* Śaṅkara maintains the trans-bodily character of self.<sup>8</sup>

Still, the primary sense of body-self identity can never be regarded as merely verbal, because such identity comes to us as a fact of perception. Even through critical reflection, *I* as dissociated from the bodily complex is not *actually* realized, though through such reflection alone the pure *I* can be envisaged. But the sense of body-self identity on the perceptual level can be superseded not through inference but through the higher level of 'intuition' of the true nature of self.

The bodily association—even if taken as necessary—does not preclude the trans-bodily character of the ego; the element of subjectivity does make itself felt within the *I*-notion. According to Alexander, the self as 'person' is to be considered as 'the synthesis of the self as subject and the self as body or as object'.<sup>9</sup> In spite of his attempt to reduce the subject to 'a development of the bodily self', he would still admit the unique character of the subjective element as not quite amenable to objective experience. (Of course, Alexander's final definition of subjectivity need not be accepted

here.) Again, the apparent uniqueness about the I-notion is admitted by Ryle—I unlike any other pronoun being never exhaustively grasped, though always felt to be proximate.<sup>10</sup> The point, however, remains whether apart from the said “systematic elusiveness”, there is any *positive* essence about *I*. The Advaita position in this regard would be quite unambiguous. Subjectivity is felt from the very beginning in I-notion. As Śaṅkara remarks (*Adhyāsabhbāṣya*), by virtue of immediacy (*aparokṣatva*), the innermost self (*pratyagātmā*) makes itself evident with indubitable certainty. In Vācaspati’s definition of *Pratyagātmā*, inner subjectivity is characterised by unique definiteness as distinct from the indefiniteness about our feeling of body, sense-organs etc.<sup>11</sup>

Now the question is: if self is in essence *unobjective* (*avīṣaya*), as Vedanta insists, how could it be the object of I-notion (*asmalpratyayavīṣaya*)? Such apparent logical absurdity is explained in Advaita by recourse to the principle of nescience (*avidyā*). The general principle apart, what is unobjective in essence assumes objectivity, even if apparent, through associational conditions (*upādhi*). As a result, the familiar phenomenon of ego is there—presenting a peculiar blend of the essential element of consciousness and the inessential non-conscious (*acit*) element. Ego appears determinable only in respect of the non-conscious element definable in terms of ‘this’ (*idam*). What eludes determination in terms of ‘this’—*anidam*—is the element of consciousness (*cit*). Thus ego is conceived as partaking of the dual character of ‘this’ and ‘not-this’ (*idamanidamrūpa*).<sup>12</sup> It thus marks for Advaita the significant stage where the actual and the ideal meet. Śaṅkara virtually accepts the principle of egoity (*ahamkāra*) as the first step of inexplicable fusion (*tādātmya*) between pure subjectivity and the objective, wherefrom the whole series of empirical-psychological categories—those of agency (*kartṛtva*), enjoyership (*bhoktṛtva*) and so on—follow. Here is the nodal point, as it were, binding together consciousness and non-conscious—*cidaśidgranthi*.<sup>13</sup>

Thus we understand how self, in spite of its unobjective

certitude, comes to be the object of I-notion through the principle of egoity. Pure subjectivity assumes the character of *ahamkāra*, when reflected on the internal organ (*antaḥkarāṇa*) and getting fused with it.<sup>14</sup> According to *Vivaraya*, the evidencing consciousness which remains in the background assumes the explicit character of I-hood through reflection on the 'transparent' medium of *antaḥkarāya*.<sup>15</sup> The I-principle is unique in marking the common meeting point for the knower and the known alike. From this fact of coincidence of the two (in such a statement as 'I know myself'), the Bhāṭṭa thinker goes to ascribe inertness to self in its 'known' aspect. Apart from the difficulties in admitting partial inertness of self, Advaita would put the burden of such amalgamation on the ego-principle. The knowable object-element in egoity is accounted for with reference to *antaḥkarāṇa*. Again, subjectivity—seated in egoity and yet tending to transcend it—cannot be regarded as involving within itself the dual elements of subject and object, for that would only mar its native homogeneity. So, while self is not equated with ego, the latter in its turn cannot be reduced to an inert principle.\*

Rational reflection would posit consciousness as distinct from, and beyond the stage of, egoity. Consequently, the appearance of pure subject as the object of I-notion has to be treated as false on deeper analysis. And this is meant when I-notion is taken to be a case of 'secondary reference' (*gaunī vṛtti*), by way of which the self that is as such unobjective comes to be objective in use.<sup>16</sup>

As shown so far, between the two ends of object and subject—both in their own ways devoid of I-hood—the intermediate stage of actual I-hood prevails. Commonly we move within the range of this stage, presenting shades of identity (*tādātmya*) between pure subjectivity and the physico-mental correlates and pervaded in general by the I-sense. Thus, on the bodily level, for instance, besides the perception of

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\* For a further phenomenological treatment of *Cit vis-a-vis ahamkāra*, and detailed analysis of the relevant stages, vide infra, Chap. VI.

'I-body' (or *I* as body), such perception as '*my body*' may also prevail. In the latter case, unlike in the former, the body is felt somehow as distinct from self, while the latter is likewise felt *qua* its capacity for possessing the body. In the one, *I* is wholly identified with body and in the other, it is felt as distinct and yet bound up with the latter. On the mental level, a distinction as between 'I-mind' (i.e., *I* am the mind) and '*my mind*' would similarly prevail. Broadly in this way, the pure *I* may gradually be approached in degrees of subjectivity, with corresponding dissociation from physico-mental complex. The possibility of pursuing *I* in such steps of dissociation—right from the bodily level—suggests the possibility of pure *I* as beyond the bodily complex, nay even beyond the mental manifold. And as the process is contrary to being object-ward, the essence that may *ideally* be posited at the end is naturally to be conceived as *unobjective*.

However, granting pure subjectivity to be shorn of physico-mental associations, it is yet hard to conceive of such supposed subjectivity to be devoid of individuality altogether. A completely de-individualised subject seems *prima facie* to be almost an anachronism.\* Without going into the mooted question as to how far, on ultimate analysis, individuality can be retained in pure subjectivity, one point may here be emphasized. The stage of pure subjectivity should mark the termination, ideally though it may be, of progressive subjectivisation—a process which need not be accompanied by a corresponding effacement of the *I*-sense. It may rather be called a case of 'rarefaction' than of complete 'evaporation' of the *I*-feeling, with which we start—a position which, nevertheless, may not be endorsed by the traditional Advaita view.

### SECTION C. EVIDENCE OF DEEP SLEEP (*susupti*).

Our ordinary experience is marked by two distinct stages of waking and dream. And an empirical-psychological

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\* The point here and the one in the previous paragraph will be more elaborately discussed later in course of our discourse.

account as such would hardly go beyond these states. The stage of sleep as devoid of dream, if admitted, would have little importance for it except as supporting in indirect way the continuity of the psychological self or 'stream of consciousness or of subjective life' (W. James).<sup>17</sup> In this respect we mark in Advaita a point of departure from ordinary psychology. In Advaita (as also in Yoga system), three distinct stages of waking, dream and sleep are recognised in marked distinctness. The recognition of a new dimension in the state of dreamless sleep (*susupti*) is a significant addition to ordinary psychology. In order to comprehend the proper import of this new dimension, we should proceed from waking to dream and from dream to deep sleep—marking the steps of withdrawal from objective experience.

In the waking state, sensations directly refer to things or objects. Even in mental constructions, finding place in the said state, the presentative element plays the dominant role. In dream, on the other hand, all that we have are mainly copies of waking experience rather than presentative percepts themselves. Moreover, imaginative construction, though obscure, has a freer play in dream ; while in waking life the possibility of combination and association in terms of ideas is conditioned and controlled by the demand of practical interest and empirical belief. Further, in dream unlike in waking, the limiting sense of body as the constant centre of reference is reduced to a minimum—with consequent freedom among dream-contents.<sup>18</sup> Dream has thus to be approached in the light of a gradual lapse of waking consciousness. The object of dream-awareness remains more or less in an ideal form, devoid of spatial and temporal determinations and free from the sense of objective continuity. As to the question of *reality* of dream-contents, Śaṅkara points out that dream-phenomena lack the attributes of reality, viz., spatiality, temporality, causality and non-contradiction (*deśakālānimittasampattirabādhaśca*).<sup>19</sup> The illusoriness of dream experience would consequently follow (*māyāmātram svapnadarśanam*).<sup>20</sup> The qualitative distinction of

dream in relation to waking lies not in respect of consciousness as such but of the character of dream-contents differing from objects of waking experience.

Now, the state of deep sleep may primarily be understood simply as the state of complete rest for the individual mind, exhausted through waking and dream experience. At this stage where even dreams do not prevail, psychic states seem to cease functioning altogether—sense-organs remaining inactive. The associational as well as the apperceptive aspects of mind seem to be conspicuous by their absence. One misses even the sense of *I* which recurs subsequently. In short, it is a seeming blankness in experience. But Advaita does not rest with a superficial account of such a typical case of experience. It rather seeks to find out the background of memory occurring in the waking state. Such memory, however vague, seems to refer to the experience of 'not knowing anything'. And this feeling of ignorance cannot certainly be ascribed to the dream state either, as the latter is not devoid of contents.

From the common-sense point of view, however, it may be urged that the alleged absence of knowledge is simply to be inferred from a comparison of the memory of pre-sleep state with the perception of post-sleep state. But a careful verdict of experience following upon deep sleep may be different. Thus the evidence of such judgments as 'I slept blissfully and I did not know anything' has to be closely analysed. To consider the latter part of the judgment, viz., 'I did not know anything', it is broadly speaking yielded through introspection so far as it records internal psychic state and no external event. Moreover, a reference, however indistinct, to a past stage gives it a semblance of memory—though we need not take it as an ordinary case of memory. For the memory of *negative* facts, external or internal, should be treated as different from that of positive mental states or of external objects.\*

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\* Of course, Advaita commonly holds it to be a plain case of memory (*smṛti*)—a contention which however need not as such be accepted. Accord-

The situation may be approached in the light of the cognition of absence-of-a-particular-object. The prior absence (*prāgabhāva*) of a thing is said to be felt or perceived in the locus concerned. The very recognition of the previous absence of the self-same thing in the given locus would imply that the actual absence of the same in the locus concerned must have been somehow noticed while the former had not been there. Thus it is the present perception of past absence which necessitates, as it were, that the actual absence were similarly perceived. In this sense of perception of objective fact, we might speak of 'knowledge of absence as a present fact' (after K. C. Bhattacharya in *The Subject as Freedom*, Ch. IV).

Now, the feeling of 'not having known anything' on waking—when modalised cognitions of this or that prevail—can be attributed to an awareness of this very absence of all knowledge, the subject being supposed to have evidenced the said absence.<sup>21</sup> But such absence need not be taken in a *negative* sense ; it should rather be conceived as the indefinite mass in which specific cognitions remain in a *potential* state. This exactly is denoted by *ajñāna* (nescience), in which—as Advaita states—the organ of psychic activity (*antahkarana*) finds, as it were, its primal potential state (*kāraṇāvasthā*). This vague awareness of undefined 'something', viewed in the light of modalised cognitions, assumes the more explicit form of 'knowing nothing' or 'not knowing anything'.<sup>22</sup>

That sleep cannot be regarded as a mere blank state has been shown from an analysis of the verdict of one awake from sleep. It can neither be urged that any judgment on sleep state can be passed on the basis of *stable* memory. The latter would hardly be possible, because the psychic organ, which alone can be the bearer of memory-giving traces, ceases to function in *susupti*.<sup>23</sup> Whether it can be regarded as *memory* in a loose sense or not, the supposed awareness of an indefinite mass is to be admitted as yielding some sort of

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ingly, later Advaita also formulates a formal proof on ground of such memory—*smaranalīṅgānumāna*.

cognition, wherein the mass should itself be regarded as content and apprehension in one. The later Advaitic explanation in terms of nescience-mode (*ajñāna-vṛtti*) also necessitates the positing of evidencing principle other than mind and ego. For, the element of *personal* consciousness or I-feeling is rather absent during deep sleep state—as may be testified immediately on waking, when a vague awareness of the surrounding objects prevail without any determinable I-feeling. Turning to the Yoga explanation, the mental mode of sleep, though having the notion of negation as content (*abhāvapratyayālambanā vṛttih nindrā*),<sup>24</sup> has still to be evidenced by *Puruṣa* (vide infra, *sākṣin*).

An analysis of the apparently negative experience of sleep significantly reveals the latter to be a stage of definite dissociation from the objective manifold. The content here is farthest removed from the object of waking perception, pointing to the possibility of consciousness being capable of remaining unmodified by the epistemic object. The compulsive and explicit character of the latter gradually subsides in steps of dream and sleep, without the corresponding evaporation of subjectivity.<sup>25</sup> Of course, a *conscious* withdrawal from objectivity, accompanying *definite* realisation of pure subjectivity, is not yet posited. Sleep state conveys the hint of untarnished subjectivity peeping faintly, as it were, behind the dark ground of *ajñāna*. But the background is yet to be *concretely* realised. All that is felt is the necessity towards a possible transcendental stage where subjectivity may be attained through conscious withdrawal from objectivity—the so-called fourth (*turiya*) stage.

In the characteristic classification of fourfold experience—originally given in Māṇḍukya Upaniṣad—the phases of consciousness in different attitudes have been shown. The waking (*jāgrat*) state is characterised by the consciousness of external objects other than cogniser himself (*svātmavyatirikte viṣaye prajñā*). In the dream stage, marked by internally directed consciousness (*antahprajñā*), we are aware of mental states, more inward than sense-organs (*indriyāpekṣayā*

*antaḥsīhatva*). The sleep state, where the subject is not inclined towards the object nor does it see any dream, is marked by consciousness as unified (*prajñānaghāna*). But with consciousness in a condensed state, self is as good as unmanifest at this stage (*suṣuptāvyākṛtayostu ekatvam siddham eva nirviśeṣatvāt*).<sup>26</sup> To sum up from our discourse above, consciousness as unified in sleep, however bare it may be, is to be regarded as 'not a mere thought, an unreal abstraction, but a concrete reality', as K. C. Bhattacharya puts it (*Studies in Vedāntism*, Ch. I).

Now, the element of bliss (*sukha*), said to be involved in sleep, should be considered in this context. Free from tension due to subject-object relationship, a state of mental rest may prevail in sleep. Still it should not be explained as a mere case of 'want of suffering' (*duḥkhābhāva*). Similarly as nescience, positive bliss is also postulated on the basis of a feeling of 'absence of pain' on waking.<sup>27</sup> *Suṣupti*, so far as it provides a point of inwardization of consciousness, makes for bliss—though in a feeble way—which is conceived in the Vedantic tradition as essentially centred in the nature of self. As *Vivarāṇa* remarks, seated in the innermost core of self, which as such is supremely 'desirable', bliss that otherwise remains hidden behind the turmoil of empirical experience makes itself felt during the unperturbed state of sleep.<sup>28</sup> However, the fringe of happiness, provisional (*anātyantika*) as it is in deep sleep, carries only the hint of perfect bliss as the ideal state.

#### A NOTE TO CHAPTER I

The threefold approach to pure consciousness developed so far—particularly the last two—may be viewed largely with reference to relevant psychological evidences. Nevertheless, the approach should sharply be distinguished as such from what may strictly be regarded a *psychological* approach to the question. For, the latter might as best show *cit* as a principle to be derived through relevant psychological

analysis of mental states—chiefly by way of *introspection*.\* Thus, for instance, a possible attempt to trace bare awareness ‘without an object’ by starting from a particular perception of object, could hardly be regarded as leading to the Vedantic *cit*. For, even the alleged ‘pure consciousness’ so discovered would prove to be, after all, a *psychic state*, which cannot possibly be dissociated from the empirical (psycho-physical) context of the individual. However, such approach may yield a suggestion regarding ‘consciousness without an object’ as a psychological possibility—a point often missed in modern psychology.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. “.. *jñātūr artha-prakāśasya jñānatvāt tasya ca ātmāśrayatvāt, antah-karaṇa-pariṇāme jñānatvopacārāt*”, *Vivarāṇa*, I, p. 41.
2. “.. *viśayagatatvāt ākārabhedasya samviśaśca anākāratvāt*”, *Jñāna-ghana*, *Tattvaśuddhi*, Ch. 33, p. 209.
3. Cr. “*Jñāte tu viśaye paścāt anumānāt jñānam avagacchati*”, *Sāvara-Bhāṣya*, *Pūrvā-Mīmāṃsā-Sūtra*.
4. Cf. *Sāstra-dīpikā*, I. i. 5 (*Tarkapāda*).
5. Sadānanda, *Vedāntasāra* (ed. M. Hiriyanna), p. 7f.

N.B. Statements attributed to different sub-schools of Cārvākas need not be taken historically, but rather as ‘logical stages in the progress of thought’ in its approach to the true self, beginning with the primary belief in the selfhood of the body. cf. Hiriyanna, Notes to *Vedāntasāra*.

\* Cf. Girindrasekhar Bose, “Is Perception an illusion?”, *Indian Journal of Psychology*, July 1926, where a psychological approach through introspective experiment to the thesis of “pure consciousness” has been given. But such attempt to trace bare consciousness ‘without an object’, by starting from a particular perception of object, can hardly be regarded as leading to the Vedantic *cit*. For, pure consciousness supposed to be discovered on this introspective-psychological approach would, after all, prove to be a *psychic state*, which again cannot possibly be absolutely dissociated from the empirical context of the individual. Moreover, the intermediate associative, ascertaining and apperceptive levels in the region of consciousness cannot also be overlooked.

However, from the said approach we can gain a valuable suggestion as to “consciousness without an object” to be a psychological possibility—a point that seems to be so widely missed in modern psychology. This, of course, does not justify the contention: “Since the Brahman is of the nature of pure consciousness, any psychological experience when deeply introspected is likely to lead to the realization of the Brahman.” (G. Bose, “The Psychological Outlook in Hindu Philosophy”, *Indian Journal of Psychology*, July & Oct., 1930; Presidential Address, Sectn. of Psychology, Indian Philosophical Congress, 1930).

6. S. Alexander, "Self as Subject and as Person", *Proceedings of Aristotelian Society*, 1910-11.
7. Cf. ". . . vālasthavira-śārīrabhede api soham iti ekasyātmanah pratīsandhānāt dehādibhyo bhedena asti ātmānubhava", *Bhāmatī*, *Adhyāsa-bhāṣya*, S.B.B.S., p. 14.
8. S. B., *Kaṭh. Up.*, II.i.3. (*Śaṅkara-Bhāṣya* referred to as S. B.).
9. S. Alexander, *ibid.*
10. G. Ryle, *The Concept of Mind*, ch. vi (6, 7).
11. "Āśkyanirvacanīyebhyo deheniyādibhyo ātmānam pratīpani nirvacanīyam añcati jānāti iti pratyak sa cātmā iti pratyagātmā". *Bhāmatī*, *Adhyāsa-bhāṣya*. (Here the stress is, of course, on the distinction of self from the empirical associations; but the definiteness as pertaining to the former is also in view).
12. *Bhāmatī*, *Adhyāsa-bhāṣya*, p. 30, p. 45. Also cf. *Pañcapādikā*, p. 17 (*idamānidamrūpa-vastugarbha*).  
Cf. "Tena anyonyādhyāsāt cidacīdgranthirūpaḥ adhyāsaḥ", Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, *Siddhāntavindu* (*Tīkā* on *Daśāloki*) I.
13. *Pañcapādikā* also refers to *ahaṅkāra-granthi*, p. 29.
14. "Asmatpratyayatvābhimato ahaṅkāraḥ", *Pañcapādika*, p. 17.
15. " . . . ahaṅkāragranthir asmatiśabdasaṁśabditaḥ pratyayaścasau ādarśa iva pratiimbasya anidamcītsambalitatvena tasyābhivyaktihetutvāt", *Pañcapādikā*, p. 29.
16. " . . . ātmacaitanyasya savikalpatyā sphuṭikaraṇavayavahāranimittam bhāsvaradravyam ātmānyādhyastam antaḥkaraṇam asmatpratyayam", *Vivaraṇa* I.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 68.
18. W. James, *Psychology*, p. 157 ff.  
N.B. From the strictly Behaviorist point of view, sleep and what Pavlov and his followers call 'internal inhibition' are one and the same process.
19. Śaṅkara remarks: In the dream state, the subject puts the body aside, as it were, and itself creates a dream-body of mental dispositions (*vāsanā-mayam svapnadeham māyāmayaṁiva*) in its place, presiding over it as self-manifest. S. B., *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, IV.iii.9.
20. S. B. B. S., III.ii.3.
21. Idem.
22. "Avasthāviśeṣa-viśiṣṭasya ajñānasya suṣupte anubhavāt tasya ca jāgaranē pi ghaṭādijñāna-virodhitādarśanat paṭāvagamasamaye", *Vivaraṇa* I, p. 57.
23. In some later Advaita works, two types of Nescience—primal (*mūlajñāna*) and explicit (*tulajñāna*)—have been distinguished. 'Anything' in the expression 'not knowing anything' refers to, by way of implication, many objects not known; while such expression as 'I have been ignorant' refers to primal nescience as the content. Vide Madhusūdana, *Siddhāntavindu* (46-51), ed. A. Sastri (Calcutta).
24. *Yoga-Sūtra*, I. 10. N. B. Negation here should not be taken literally but rather to mean the element of *tamas*, which stands in the Śāṅkhya philo-

sophy for the anoetic principle of obscuration. Cf. Vācaspati Miśra's *Tīkā* on *Yoga-Sūtra*, I. 10.

25. Cf. Śāṅkara's remarks that the self, though continuing through different stages, yet is itself beyond them as detached from all associations due to waking and dream experiences. ("Sthānatrayavyatirikttatvam chatvam śuddhatvam ca siddham", S. B., *Gauḍapāda-Kārikā*, I. 1.).
26. S. B., *Māṇḍ. Up.*, 3-4.
27. "Anubhūtameva sukhamutthitasya anusmaryamānam tatra virodhi duḥkhābhāvam arthāpattyā gamayati anubhūtam cet sukhām nāsti duḥkhamiti", *Vivaraṇa* I, p. 56.
28. "Bhāsata eva paramapremāspadatvalakṣaṇam sukhām tīvrauāyuvikṣipta-pradīpaprabhāvat mithyājñānavikṣiptayā na spaṣṭam avabhāsate suṣuptau tu tadabhāvāt adhikam vyajyata", idem.

## CHAPTER II

### THE STATUS OF CONSCIOUSNESS QUA KNOWLEDGE

In establishing the validity of consciousness (*cit*) as pure subjectivity in its autonomous essence,—as attempted in the last chapter—one primary question remains to be answered. From the general line of approach we have adopted above—more explicitly through the analysis of knownness (Sec. A, Ch. I)—the essence of consciousness seems to be envisaged purely in *cognitive* terms. In other words, the supposed essence of consciousness is at the same time taken as evidently equivalent to knowledge (*jñāna*) itself. (The essentially self-evidencing character of *cit* as implied by its possible autonomy of status is shown in the next chapter through analysis of self-consciousness or reflective cognition, which also suggests a purely cognitive approach to the question.) What leads then to the formulation of the essence of consciousness in the light of cognition, i.e., *cit* as equivalent to *jñāna*, the latter itself being one of the aspects of the totality of mental life? Consequently, the exact position of *cit* in the total context of mental (or conscious) life has to be assessed. If consciousness essentially denotes subjectivity as autonomous, this status of consciousness has to be shown in relation to the totality of conscious life in its cognitive as well as non-cognitive phases.

So the question arises: is not knowledge just one aspect of mental activity, like feeling and willing? Then, if *cit* is to be admitted as the generic background of mental states in general, why should it be equated to *knowledge* alone to the exclusion of the other aspects of the mental life? Now, this claim of knowledge to be identified with consciousness entails an investigation into the true status of knowledge in relation to the non-cognitive aspects of consciousness. Ac-

cordingly such questions would have to be considered: Has knowing as a mode of consciousness a natural priority over feeling and willing? If so, would such priority leave room also for a co-ordinate status among the three faculties of mind? Lastly, the central question: Has knowledge any special character that it should be equated to *cit*-essence?

So far as the general standpoint of western psychology is concerned, the three elements of cognition, emotion and volition are looked upon as mentally co-ordinate. There need not be any intrinsic or absolute priority of the one over the other. Consciousness in general, when admitted,—and admitted as an ultimate fact and as such logically indefinable,—is taken to be involved in or running uniformly through all the three kinds of mental states—cognitive, emotive and volitional. Each of the three aspects of mental life is equally an instance of consciousness—each an original co-ordinate form of consciousness.

Now, to concede priority to *knowing* over willing and feeling would amount to the admission that the two primary modes of mental activity other than knowing are reducible, on ultimate analysis, to *knowing* as the fundamental mode. And this is the position adopted in broad by different schools of Indian philosophy—perhaps with the notable exception of Buddhism.\*

Let us examine first whether the primacy of the mode of knowing can be held even at the empirical (psychological) level, without bringing in the standpoint of evidencing subjectivity. The issue may primarily be approached in the line of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, which is otherwise radically opposed to the Advaitic standpoint of *cit*. Though a transcendental status of consciousness as beyond the conscious states them-

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\* According to the general theory of *skandha* in the early phase of Buddhist philosophy, the four non-material factors (*skandha*) of existence, such as *vedanā* (feeling), *saṃjñā* (perception), *vijñāna* (consciousness) and *saṃskāra* (mental concomitants), stand on the same level in the constitution of personality (*pudgala*). Any subjective state, it is held, is as much a self-subsistent phase of mental life as the other, being in no way considered as a condition of that other—each such state subsists by itself.<sup>1</sup>

selves is denied outright by the Naiyāyika, the knowing aspect of consciousness is still recognised to be virtually *primary* in relation to feeling and willing aspects. Some grounds for such contention may, of course, be shown.

(a) According to the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika position, knowledge (*jñāna*) or cognition (*buddhi*) is a specific quality (*viśeṣaguṇa*) of self-substance and is consciousness itself. Self is not conscious (*cetana*) by itself ; it is only regarded so inasmuch as it has the capacity (*yogyatā*) of possessing the quality of consciousness located in it. Moreover, such other mental qualities of self as pleasure, pain, desire etc. are also regarded as conscious, so far as they too are the specific qualities of the self that is conscious in the sense mentioned. It follows that though non-cognitive mental states are not by themselves conscious, the conscious character is attributed to them because of their common inherence (*sāmānādhikaraṇya*) in the self-substance along with the quality of consciousness. Knowledge thus proves to be more primary than the other mental qualities of self.

(b) Mental states of the volitional type—such as wish, aversion etc.—all presuppose the cognitive moment. Both Nyāya and Advaita agree in the contention that wish is due to cognition, because it is only when an object is previously known that we can wish for it and act accordingly. (“*Jñāna-janyā bhavet icchā icchājanyā kṛtirbhavet*”). Even though in the case of feeling, a reference to object apparently belongs to such states as pleasure, pain etc., the reference actually pertains to the cognitive mode presupposed by such feeling.

(c) The distinction of level between knowledge of knowledge and consciousness of pleasure, pain etc. evidently comes out even from the analysis of the Naiyāyika himself. Thus, while the awareness of the inner states of mind is regarded as internal or mental perception (*mānasa pratyakṣa*) which is as much unreflective as any external perception, the knowledge of knowledge by way of retrospective evidence (*anuvyavasāya*) is unambiguously recog-

nised to be a case of reflection. *Anuvyavasāya* is not just another name for internal perception. Knowledge admittedly presents the unique occasion for reflective consciousness. The question of *validity* (*prāmānya*) proper arises in the case of knowledge alone—validity which is sought to be proved by recourse to retrospective evidence. Internal evidencing and retrospective evidencing—the two apparently differ, one not having and the other having a necessary bearing on the question of validity. *Anuvyavasāya* could be at most regarded as a type of *mānasa pratyakṣa*. Even then it is to be admitted that while the awareness of pleasure, pain etc. may not amount to reflection, the awareness of knowledge cannot but be reflective. The former may as well remain uncertified, but the latter must necessarily be certified.

However, the knowing mode is not merely taken as prior to other modes of mental activity but also as co-ordinate with the latter. The common psychological contention is also not left out. To consider the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika position first, knowledge is taken but as a specific quality of self along with other qualities. Besides the quality of cognition (*buddhi*), there are those of pleasure (*sukha*), pain (*duḥkha*), desire (*icchā*), aversion (*dveṣa*), will (*prayatna*) etc. Of these, *buddhi* stands for cognition, *sukha-duḥkha* for emotion and *icchā* and *yatna* for volition. (The position of *dveṣa* or aversion in this connection is rather ambiguous—it seems to stand midway between feeling and willing.) Cognition has the distinguishing character of manifesting or apprehending things, while the non-cognitive states show a different character.

Advaita would in broad agree with the Nyāya position, though through a different approach. A cognitive state is regarded to be as much a modification of the internal organ (*antaḥkaraṇa-vṛtti*) as a state of feeling or of willing. The only difference between the two sets of modes—cognitive and non-cognitive—is that while cognitive modes (*vṛtti*) take on the forms of the corresponding objects outside, mental

perception presents no object besides *vṛtti*.<sup>2</sup> But as *vṛtti*, both types of modes equally prove to be media for reflection of the evidencing consciousness. It is only as revealed by the latter that a *vṛtti* amounts to a state of consciousness in respect of modes of cognition and of non-cognitive modes as well.\*

Here a question would arise: if a state of feeling or willing be alikā a *conscious* state and as such involving in common the essential element of consciousness (whether *transcendentally* or as abstraction), then why are the former not regarded also as knowledge? Is not the perceptual character of immediacy present also in feeling and willing? Here comes into view the unique capacity of revealing the object—a capacity that characterizes knowledge alone as distinguished from feeling and willing. It is only through the act of cognition that object gets manifest to subject. The object that was previously unknown is presented to consciousness, or in the language of Advaita, the nescience (*ajñāna*) regarding object is removed through the relevant cognitive mode. But so far as emotive and volitional modes of consciousness are concerned, they hardly present this object-manifesting character through the removal of corresponding nescience.<sup>3</sup> (The modes in the form of internal mental states have even been regarded by the later Advaitins as *avidyā-vṛtti* rather than *antaḥkaraṇa-vṛtti*.)

So, through cognition alone is object manifested—and not through either feeling or willing. We *feel* necessarily an internal state of our own mind; even when in feeling there is a reference to object, it is but distant and indirect. In willing, however, an object is anticipated in imagination, but even that does not mean the actual presentation of the object. Empirically speaking, the manifestation of object

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\* It has rightly been admitted by Advaita that mental states of pleasure, pain etc. are revealed to the subject as soon as they are generated. Internal states being generated in the psychic organ mean their being at once evidenced by the subject—no intervening factor of *ajñāna* being there to be removed, as in the case of cognition.

through willing is hardly a possibility any more than through feeling.\*

So, the fundamental character of empirical knowledge is the presentation of object ; it is thus that the use concerning object is possible. And, in this respect, it has a marked semblance with the alleged evidencing by *cit*. It is in the essential character of manifestation (*prakāśa*) that consciousness stands equivalent to what we commonly regard as knowledge. However, the level of *cit* qua transcendental subjectivity, evidencing ultimately every mental state, and the epistemic level of the modalised psychic state, counter-acting the ignorance in respect of particular object, are to be kept apart. As one Advaita thinker remarks, the term *jñāna* is used in three different senses which are to be carefully distinguished.<sup>4</sup> The primary unreflective context of mere empirical use concerning the object present can hardly be treated as cognition proper—though *vr̥tti* is nevertheless there. But such mode may be regarded as knowledge only in its apparent capacity of effecting the use of the object concerned.<sup>5</sup> However, the apprehension proper of *vr̥tti* qua psychic state as we get it in introspection grasps *vr̥tti* necessarily as *conscious*, i.e., as fused with the evidencing consciousness. But the mere *vr̥tti* of the unreflective level, just effecting the directedness towards the object in use, seems to be *inferred* rather than directly apprehended as such.<sup>†</sup> Proceeding further, there is the transcendental level of pure evidencing by itself—*pratyak-bodha*—behind all particular modalisations in this or that form, external or internal. Here is *jñāna* in the higher sense of pure evidencing ground—*prakāśarūpatva*, and not in the epistemic sense

\* The primal act of reference—*Iksana*—as spoken of the Supreme Self (cf. *Brahma-sūtra*, I.i.5) should not be taken too easily in the light of empirical willing. In the former, unlike in the latter, the primal act of creation is to be conceived as a *free reference* on the part of the Supreme Being—which may be considered as much an act of knowing as one of willing.

† Sarvajñātma-muni makes an evident distinction between *vr̥tti* as such and *vr̥tti* as psychic state. But the former is possible only on abstraction (vide our remarks on *vr̥tti-cit* relation, *infra*). However, as a *formal* classification, the threefold division may stand.

of just removing the corresponding nescience—*ajñāna-virodhitva*.

Now, it is chiefly in terms of *vṛtti* that cognition is brought on the same level as the other two types of mental activities. While in external cognition the psychic mode is distinguishable (at least *ideally*) from the corresponding object that occasions the mode, in internal experience of feeling and willing the two are not so distinguishable. Both the types, however, belong to the same status so far as the evidencing subjectivity is alike traceable behind both of them as their evidencing ground.

But the very principle of *vṛtti* as mediating between subjectivity and object may be held in doubt. The case of cognition, no doubt, brings out the question of *vṛtti* into relief. Is it necessary to admit *vṛtti* as the *tertium quid* between the two poles of evidencing subjectivity and the evidenced object, as it is admitted in case of cognition? The larger issue of correlation of subjectivity and object here comes into view.

The realist like the Naiyāyika, and G. E. Moore of modern times would oppose such mediating principle. According to them, the mediation of *vṛtti* is unnecessary for the experience of object. For consciousness, as taken to be 'diaphanous' in nature by Moore, is directly determined by the object present; there is no 'via media' between the object and the knowing mind. According to Moore, sense-data' are 'directly present' to mind. But it follows from Moore's point of view that knowledge-situation is just a simple direct relation (of course, external) between two objects—one physical and the other mental. Consequently, 'direct presence' suggests rather a spatial relation. But, neither can knowledge be regarded as a spatial situation, nor can the uniqueness of the factor of consciousness be overlooked. Moore's explanation of the situation seems to be rather too simple.<sup>6</sup>

To turn to Naiyāyikas, instead of admitting a mediating factor between consciousness and object, they would rather

speak of the *form* (*ākāra*) of knowledge only as produced by the object concerned. According to the Nyāya theory, knowledge is just an originated entity (*janya-padārtha*) having for its occasioning factor some object outside, directly affecting the mind. But how far are we justified in regarding knowledge as an entity which is just caused? (The point of view has already been met in Ch. I). Whatever is there as effected through some cause must necessarily be varying according as the occasioning cause varies. From an objective point of view, knowledge may no doubt be explained in the light of varying objects. And the Naiyāyika account of knowledge in terms of the series of antecedent connections (*sāmīyoga*)—beginning with the outer terminus of object (*artha*) and ending with self (*ātman*) *via* sense-organs (*indriya*) and mind (*manas*)—seems rather *external*, not having direct bearing upon the essence of knowing situation. That knowledge can possibly be viewed in its pure domain of subjectivity has been shown in the previous chapters. So viewed, knowledge reveals an intrinsic nature ; and in the light of that nature the object-counterpart would prove to be just contingent.

However, the question remains: if knowledge is essentially homogeneous, how are we to account for the obvious distinctions in knowledge? The realist like the Naiyāyika would be answering it in terms of difference in relation between knowledge and object, from instance to instance. And that difference is in the long run attributed directly to the difference of objects. But such Naiyāyika contention hardly stands scrutiny. Firstly, the Naiyāyika himself has to recognise *qualitative* difference in knowledge—perception (*pratyakṣa*), inference (*anumāna*), testimony (*śabda*), memory (*smṛti*) etc. being each a different kind of knowledge. It may be the same object that is referred to in perception, in inference and so on—the kind of knowledge varying even when the object remains the same.

Further may arise the question: even if it be admitted that the distinction between one knowledge and another is

due to the difference of object, how is the relation itself (between knowledge and object) to be explained? The said relation may not be recognised *qua* relation at the level of bare perceptual knowledge. Still it need not be denied that the relation could be so grasped at a further reflective level. Thus, in one case there would be the simple judgment 'there is X', while in another case the corresponding judgement shall be 'X is *known* by me'. The difference is not merely a verbal one, because the emphasis is shifted from the bare assertion of object in one case to that of the *knowledge* of object in another. This shows that knowledge stands not merely in the context of object but also admits of being grasped *subjectively* *qua* knowledge—as in self-conscious reflection (a point to be treated in the next Chapter). The Naiyāyika, like any realist, is wedded to the *empirical* aspect of knowledge—an aspect that only refers to the object and its use. Once, however, the subjective moment of knowledge is also recognised—as has in fact been recognised even by realists themselves, like the Naiyāyika (in the form of *anuvyavasāya*) and Alexander (in the form of 'enjoyment')—the relation with object becomes a real problem. (See Ch. III).\*

The answer to this problem concerning knowledge-object relation may be sought for in a third factor, viz., *reference* of knowledge to object. (Even Moore recognises a third factor as subsisting between the consciousness and the corresponding object, mutually independent as the two are.) But *reference* itself as the third factor may again be understood either subjectively or objectively. Either *reference* may be taken to be a phase of the object itself, coming in relation to the knower. Or, it may be regarded as hinging on to knowledge and as such pertaining to the subjective side. From the former position it follows that reference

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\* Also cf. G. E. Moore, who recognizes 'knowing' as distinct from the 'known', though he takes the relation between the two as "a simple and unique relation". Moore, however, goes too far in positing the existential independence of object and consciousness—merely from the fact that the awareness is of the object. (vide Duccasse, loc. cit.).

belongs to object ; but the reference of object to knowledge would be hardly intelligible (a point examined earlier—Ch. I). Such reference may rather be viewed as pertaining to knowledge, while object as independently existing would practically turn to be *indefinite*. Thus, *vṛtti* as the mode of reference of subjectivity to object would prove to be the mediating factor as between subjectivity and object.\*

So the status of *vṛtti* is to be understood as accounting for the apparent relation of subjectivity to object. (The phenomenological status of *vṛtti* vis-a-vis subjectivity is to be further clarified later—Ch. V). *Vṛtti* enjoys the unique status of a mediator between the two poles of subjectivity and of object.<sup>7</sup> Viewed in its objective moment of reference, *vṛtti* appears for all practical purposes to be non-different from the object itself. [Perhaps to make out this point in too vivid terms, it is held in *Vedānta-paribhāṣā* that in the process of perception the psychic organ (*antahkaraṇa*) is *projected* through sense-organ and assumes the form of the outer object. Cf. Ch. on 'Pratyakṣa'.] But the subjective moment of reference is none the less there, with the result that *vṛtti* is sought to be grasped *qua* psychic state in dis-tinguishment from object. At this phase—a phase of reflection—*vṛtti* appears to be fused with subjectivity, or in other words, what is present is *vṛtti-pratibimbita-caitanya*. This proximity of *vṛtti* with evidencing subjectivity—a proximity which is to be traced to the psychic organ itself—is also responsible for the evidencing of the object whose form *vṛtti* assumes.<sup>8</sup> *Vṛtti* is thus finally to be understood in the light of evidencing subjectivity itself. The fuller bearing of this *cit-vṛtti* relation can be brought out only

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\* The Sāṅkhya system also introduces—somewhat in the manner of Advaita—the third factor of *vṛtti* for relating the variable aspect of objects to the invariable aspect of *puruṣa* or subject as pure consciousness. *Vṛtti*, formed in the image of the object, is incorporated by *puruṣa* by way of reflection (*pratibimba*). But in Sāṅkhya theory *vṛtti* is not directed to the object outside ; its *modus operandi*—from the level of *indriya* upto *buddhi*—seems rather to be confined within the domain of *subjective* experience. Thus, unlike in Advaita, the objective moment of reference seems to be overlooked—and therein lies the chief difference from the Advaita treatment of cognition by way of *vṛtti*.

when we consider the principle of nescience (*ajñāna*)—a problem which is left for a subsequent Chapter (Ch. V. 4).

Thus, in this chapter, further steps towards establishing *cit* as the principle of autonomous subjectivity are sought to be clarified. Firstly, an attempt to determine the exact position of *cit* in mental life has been made, and in doing so, to demonstrate the unique position of knowledge in relation to feeling and willing. Secondly, the role of *vṛtti* as the mediating principle correlating subjectivity and object is shown.

#### NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Cf. "... *dhammā honti*", *Atthasālinī*, 155.
2. "Sukhadulīkhādi-avacchinna-caitanyasya tadvṛtti-avacchinna-caitanyasya ca . . . aham sukhi ityādijñānasya pratyakṣatvam", *Vedānta-paribhāṣa*, Ch. I (*Pratyakṣa*), p. 49 (ed. A. Sastri).
3. Vide Annotations by A. Sastri, *idem*.
4. Vide *Sarvajñātma-muni*, *Śaṅkṣepa-Śārīraka*, I, 179:  
"Buddhervṛttau jñānatā tāvadekā  
Pratyagbodha jñānatā hacidanyā  
Tatsamparkāt jñānatā tatra cānyā  
Vyutpannoyam jñānaśabdastu tatra."
5. "... *vyavahāra-avisamvādād artha-prakāśātmatva . . .*", *Rāmatīrtha-Tikā*, *idem*.
6. Vide C. J. Ducasse, "Moore's The Refutation of Idealism", *The Philosophy of G. E. Moore*, ed. Schilpp, p. 242 ff.
7. "Pariṇāmasya ubhayasaiśargād . . .", *Vivaraṇa*, I, p. 70.
8. "Antalīkaraṇam hi svasminneva svasaṁsarginyāpi caitanyābhivyakti-yogyatām āpādayati", *idem*.

### CHAPTER III

## THE PROBLEM OF SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS AND SUBJECTIVITY

As the essence of subjectivity, *cit* has been shown to have the possible *autonomy* of status, which would mean the certifying of *cit* by itself without the mediation of further epistemic process. It has already been observed earlier that *cit*-essence is involved in each conscious state generically—the invariable factor of *cit* and the varying modifications (*vṛtti*) of mental states forming a complex unity. Of the two factors, again, it is only to consciousness as the constant factor that the manifest aspect in psychic state can be attributed ; and as such the former should not necessitate a further evidencing factor for its own manifestation, for that would be simply unwarranted. Consequently, consciousness which underlies (*anuvṛtti*) all psychic states as foundational subjectivity stands to be accepted as intrinsically self-evidencing (*svaprakāśa*).

The above thesis, put in broad argument, has to be substantiated by closely examining the larger issue in connection with the evidencing of consciousness. But the problem of *reflective* cognition may at once present an apparent challenge to such a position. That the primary unreflective experience is reflectively grasped by a secondary act of knowing seems to be a truism of the cognitive life. And such evidence of 'knowledge of knowledge' seems, on the face of it, to invalidate the thesis as to the autonomy and unobjectivity of consciousness. Firstly, to admit that a state of consciousness, to be evidenced, depends upon a secondary act of consciousness would mean surrendering the autonomy of consciousness in its supposed self-evidencingness. Secondly, the admitted amenability of consciousness to a secondary act of consciousness, i.e., its being a possible object of consciousness, might compromise its alleged unobjective character. Hence the

question: is consciousness dependent on reflective evidencing, or as self-evidencing is it not in need of an evidencing factor besides itself? A precise answer to this question may go a long way to clarify the intrinsic *subjectivity* of consciousness.

The reflective level of consciousness, or what may be termed 'self-consciousness', may signify two situations: (a) knowledge or awareness of self, the subject ; and (b) knowledge of knowledge, i.e., secondary knowledge concerning primary knowledge as the object. As we do not presume a metaphysical nature of self, the second part of the question alone, viz., the broad issue as to the knownness of subjectivity, assumes particular importance for our discourse. Self-consciousness is thus to be taken as the stage of reflective awareness, where the primary state of consciousness seems to be the object of a secondary instance of knowledge (whether by way of introspection or retrospection or some process of self-objectification). And such reflective level is, after all, an undeniable fact so far as the verdict of empirical consciousness is concerned. Some significant explanations of the issue from standpoints other than that of pure subjectivity may here be considered before coming to the Advaitic approach to the question.

Introspection, which is usually recognised to be the method of apprehending mental states, is evidently distinct from knowing *objectively*. But it is understood in different ways by Empiricists and Rationalists in Western Philosophy. To the former, introspection as equivalent to 'internal sense' is just parallel to external sensation—the results of introspection being epistemologically on the same level as those of external sense-perception. With this goes the empiricist denial of self-knowledge other than through introspection.

The rationalist view of self-consciousness, on the other hand, may in broad be interpreted in terms of 'introspective monism'<sup>1</sup>. According to it, introspection is taken as simple intuitive self-awareness—it being natural for the mind to know itself directly in every conscious act. Indeed in Cartesianism,

mind is conceived in the dual role of the subject knowing and of the object known at the same time. In this connexion, the view of Buddhist idealism (*Vijñānavāda*) regarding self-cognition comes into view. On the one hand, unlike the Naiyāyika realist, the Buddhist would recognise the intrinsic evidencing of ideas (*vijñāna*) ; on the other, unlike the Advaitin, the Buddhist with his phenomenalistic attitude would never bring in the postulate of the constant evidencing background. The view of self-cognition (*svasañvedana*) is suggested as an alternative way—the view that consciousness as essentially atomistic knows itself in knowing its object. Every mental state has a peculiar self-grasping reflective character. However, the Buddhist idealist seems to share the Advaita viewpoint when he contends that the objects in view would remain unaccomplished in a knowledge which itself remains unevidenced.<sup>2</sup>

The inherent contradiction of knowing knowledge itself seems to be involved in the said view. Śaṅkara points out the contradiction involved in an act directed upon itself, the act and the agent concerned being identical—*svātmani kriyā-virodha*.<sup>3</sup> In Buddhist mentalism, the necessity for the self-evidencing character of knowledge is indeed recognised but the *modus operandi* of such evidencing is conceived as within the context of mental states. Subjectivity is sought to be established on the level of psychic states—hence the apparent antinomy. The dilemma of introspective self-cognition would stand thus: either subject and object are identical, in which case cognition becomes an absurdity ; or the two are distinct, which would not enable self-cognition at all.

The rationalist, in upholding the peculiarity of self-awareness, over-emphasizes the 'subjective' (i.e. mental) character of the introspected objects\*. But to analyse such character, all that it may mean is the *privacy* belonging to the

\* 'Rationalism' has been used here in a broad sense which may include the Hegelian theory of self-consciousness (as mediated) and even in a sense, Gentile's theory of 'mind as pure act'—broadly those theories which in some way or other involve 'introspective monism'. All these views need not be discussed in the present context.

objects of introspection, being accessible only for the subject to whose experience-continuum they belong. However vague and undefinable it may seem to be, the characteristic intimacy of all intra-personal, as distinct from inter-personal, experience can hardly be denied. In every act of introspection there is present the characteristic flavour of selfhood. As on the one hand, the empiricist tries to explain the said factor away rather than explain it, the rationalist on the other would treat it on a *psychological* level, overlooking the epistemological *raison d'être* behind it. In this respect, as we presently see, Kant's theory and more particularly, Advaita—with its conception of *sākṣin* as self-evidencing—can give a key to the peculiar intimacy as pertaining to the intra-subjective contents.

Again, a pseudo-idealistic explanation on the matter may on the one hand recognise the subjective nature of consciousness and its capacity for effecting implicit reflection, and take such implicit activity of the subject on a level with the object cognised. Such a view-point is typically represented by S. Alexander and the Prābhākara school of Mīmāṃsā. The notion of "enjoyment" as introduced by Alexander may be regarded as a further attempt towards explaining the phenomenon of self-consciousness. But 'enjoyment' is, after all, hardly more than a feeling 'vitally' associated with the cognitive activity and as such cannot be taken as a mode of *cognition* on par with objective cognition or 'contemplation'. All genuine cognition is 'contemplative', according to Alexander. Moreover, starting from the position that the mind is not to be regarded as a contemplated object to itself and that the acts of the mind are not to be placed on the same level as external things cognized, Alexander practically surrenders his position by allowing introspection too.<sup>4</sup> Besides, the term 'enjoyment' no doubt suggests a duality of the enjoying as the act and the enjoyed as the referent of the act.

In the Prābhākara theory of triple knowing (*tripuṭi-samvit*), we find a view on self-manifestness in line with Alexander's. The Prabhākaras advocate simultaneous revela-

tion of the three factors in knowledge-situation—thing as object (*viṣaya*), knowing itself and self as the locus (*āśraya*) of knowledge. The manifestation of the knowing act is thus distinguished from that of either the object or the locus. Knowledge is self-manifest (*svaprakāśa*)<sup>5</sup>, so far as its evidencing differs from that either of the object or of the locus.\*

Now, the Prābhākara view, like Alexander's, involves confusion of subjectivity and object in more than one way. Firstly, the manifesting activity of knowing, if it is to be at the same time a content of knowing—though not as external object,—must surrender its essential nature as knowing. This is more evident from the fact that knowledge is practically regarded as on the same level with object. For, the manifestation of knowledge as a separate factor goes necessarily with the manifestation of object. In the context of the latter alone does the evidencing manifest itself. Here a peculiar ambiguity in the Prābhākara position is to be noted. A purely *objective* attitude, like the Naiyāyika's (q.v. *infra*), may be intelligible—with its unreserved emphasis on object, leaving knowledge primarily unevidenced. A thoroughly subjective attitude, as held in Advaita, would on the other hand lay complete emphasis on the *evidencing* aspect of the situation ; and it is indeed from a more or less subjective attitude alone that the question of evidencing of knowing would assume importance.

The general doctrine of one-term self-cognition, in its various phases, thus involves subjective attitude in some form or other—with an appeal to introspection as admittedly the only epistemological approach to determine the nature of implicit reflection. There may, however, be a radically *objective attitude* in the explanation of the introspective situation, by taking it in the larger context born of knowledge-object relation. Accordingly, the object apprehended is given emphasis and knowing as such turns to be a

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\* A distinction, however, is maintained between direct perceptibility (*saṃvedyatva*) and indirect knowability (*prameyatva*), whereby the primary act of cognition itself is made an object of inference.

secondary question. Two broad consequences may follow in the shape of two possible views: (a) Introspection would lose any special position of its own, being a cognitive act similar to any objective cognition ; (b) Knowledge *as such*, besides manifesting the object in use, would prove epistemologically irrelevant.

In the first view mentioned above, a realistic analysis would show the conscious states of sensation, perception etc. to be directed to the respective objects but never to be self-cognizant. They may however be *reflectively* known through a subsequent retrospective act directed upon them. This is the realistic position of Nyāya in its theory of retrospective evidence (*anuvyavasāya*),\* coming in direct conflict with the Advaitic position of self-evidencing subjectivity. According to Nyāya view, primary cognition is certified—if there is an occasion for so certifying—by a secondary cognition taking the former as its object. Thus, at the primary moment of awareness, we are just aware of the object presented, the cognition concerned remaining nevertheless uncertified. A secondary cognition is what is called for to evidence the primary one, and it is only at the secondary stage of retrospection that the primary cognition may be evident to us.

The Nyāya approach to the question bears evidently a realistic tone. Knowledge, for the Naiyāyika, can be as much objectified as an entity of objective experience. Knowledge is taken on the same level as *object* ; and accordingly, the evidencing of knowledge stands logically on the same footing as the knowledge of external object. The only peculiarity of the former is that it is *reflective* apprehension of the latter. [Nyāya draws a clear-cut distinction between the reflective and the unreflective types of internal experience. Of the latter type is the internal perception (*mānasa pratyakṣa*) of mental states other than knowledge].

The Nyāya view stated above is open to objection—parti-

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\* It is more precise to render *anuvyavasāya* as retrospection, rather than as introspection, though epistemologically the two mean in essence the same situation.

cularly from a standpoint which is ready to take into consideration the unique character of the subjective pole of experience. Some of the salient points of criticism that Advaita puts forth against the Nyāya view may here be considered.\*

A general criticism in the shape of a dilemma may at first be raised against the Nyāya view of retrospective evidence. Thus, to come to specific charges, if an instance of knowledge were admitted to be revealed by a knowledge other than itself, the latter again (i.e., the secondary cognition)—to be consistent—should be cognized by another instance of knowledge and that again by a fourth and so on. Thus would arise an infinite regress (*anavasthā*), leaving the primary knowledge which was sought to be certified, unestablished. On the other hand, if a subsequent certifying cognition be affirmed and yet the corresponding cognizance of the latter be denied, it would amount to an assertion of something, admittedly knowable (*premeya-sattā*), without relevant knowledge of the same—a self-defeating contention to posit.<sup>6</sup> Even the realistic Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika system itself proceeds on enumerating the categories (*padārtha*) or knowables on the admitted principle of valid evidence in consciousness (cf. “*pramāṇebhyah prameyasiddhīh*” etc.).

From the strict common-sense point of view, however, the claim of *anuvyavasāya* seems to be unassailable, because knowledge is looked upon barely as a mental event, there being apparently no *a priori* necessity that this knowledge is to be evidenced. Yet the Naiyāyika candidly admits that there are also reflective judgments like “This jar is known” and seeks to explain them as evidently the result of retrospection. But it may be questioned whether what is predicated in the said judgment is *knowledge* as such or *object* known. An unsophisticated reply would, of course, be in favour of the latter. The realist, however, would further argue his point: knowledge can be understood on the analogy of sense-organ

\* Cf. For a detailed account of the Advaita criticism against the Nyāya theory of *anuvyavasāya* and also for elucidation of the concept of *svaprakāśatva*, author's article: “A Study on the Advaita Theory of knowledge ; the concept of self-illumination”, The Calcutta Review (April, 1954).

such as eye, which though acts as instrument for revealing the object to the knower itself remains unevidenced by the latter. But such an explanation would evidently bring knowledge to the status of instrument (*karaṇa*) of knowing, proving it to be an agent of manifestation rather than manifestation itself. This would indeed reduce the world as manifest to experience to be an absurdity (*Jagadāndhyaprasamīga*). One Advaita author points out the possible infinite regress involved in taking knowledge to be merely the agent of manifestation (*prakāśaka*), not manifestation (*prakāśa*) as such. If knowledge be regarded as manifesting the object by way of producing another manifestation, the latter should similarly be taken to be producing another manifestation without being itself the manifestation. So it is to be admitted that knowledge being itself manifest can alone be regarded as evidencing the object.<sup>7</sup>

The other type of realistic view mentioned earlier is held by the Bhāṭṭa school of Mīmāṃsaka. It is more consistently objectivistic in outlook and close to the point of view just stated and criticized. The Bhāṭṭas take knowledge as necessarily beyond the grasp of direct awareness and only to be approached through the indirect way of inference. The Bhāṭṭas are well aware of the difficulties that follow the Naiyāyika view of retrospective evidence of knowledge ; at the same time, the paradoxical position involved in the contention of Vijñānāvāda is challenged. Thus the very possibility of evidencing knowledge is denied outright. The approach is rather from the side of *object*, to which the attribute of knownness (*jñātata*) or manifestness (*prākāṭya*) is supposed to be added as a result of the knowing act.<sup>8</sup> It follows that the *unobjective* pure aspect of knowledge is not felt at all in cognitive experience.

Apart from the difficulties in admitting knownness as *objective* quality (which have been previously discussed—Sec. A., Ch. I), the cancellation of direct knowability of knowledge also can hardly stand examination. How can knowledge, itself remaining unevidenced, enable the use of object

—and such use necessarily as known? To agree to the Bhāṭṭa position would practically mean that knowledge is ever unmanifest. The difficulty of regarding knowledge as by itself unmanifest and yet manifesting the object would reappear. Moreover, the Bhāṭṭa attempt to establish the existence of knowledge by ignoring its subjective character and by looking upon it as a thing among things betrays their false approach to knowledge. For on their admission, though knowledge is as unmanifest as any object, it is yet not evident to us as the object is ; and to that extent at least, knowledge would stand by implication on a different level. The difficulty with the Bhāṭṭas is that in their attempt to grasp knowledge *objectively*, they have naturally failed and have recourse to inference as the only approach left. Besides, as shown earlier (Sec. A, Ch. I), it would be logically impossible to establish knowledge if we proceed by way of knowing knownness.

Having examined some of the objectivistic theories, we may now turn to the *transcendental-subjective* point of view as one finds in Kant's philosophy. The recognition of the purely subjective character of the thinking ego in his first Critique is what distinguishes Kant's doctrine from the views so far considered. Since pure ego or knower is not introspectible, the only self which could possibly become an object of introspection is the empirical self. The problem of self-consciousness in Kant thus assumes two forms on two levels—empirical and transcendental. On the one hand, there is consciousness of self as object of perception ; on the other, reflective thinking on the transcendental level takes self as the *subject* of thinking. The *true* self of Kant stands only as the bare formal unity of consciousness, to be grasped through thought rather than through 'intuition'.

Thus for Kant, the only possible way to apprehend subjectivity is to *think* self as subject—not to *know* it. For, functional subjectivity as meant by 'transcendental unity of apperception' is hardly a concrete reality. What is missed in introspection is sought to be accomplished through thought. Though 'the analytic unity of apperception' is possible only

under the presupposition of a certain 'synthetic unity', the latter as the faculty of apperception is the understanding itself ; and as Kant points out, 'our understanding can only *think*'.<sup>9</sup> It seems that subjectivity is, to all intents and purposes, identified with thinking function in the Kantian doctrine—thinking that is itself thinkable rather than self-evident. The implicit unity of self-consciousness indeed remains more or less a logical problem—"a problem rather than a true datum, a problem which can be solved by recourse to inner sense", as a contemporary writer remarks.<sup>10</sup> The question, however, remains ; does not the primacy of knowing function as distinguished from the known content imply a certitude of its own? In admitting the impossibility of the self being caught in a process of so-called self-consciousness, Kant no doubt stresses the unobjectivity of self. But with his interest primarily in the forms of objectivity as effected through 'categories' of pure thinking, Kant stops short of *essential* subjectivity. Kant's *transcendental* interest hardly goes beyond the modes of functioning to the essence whose function is considered.

It is exactly this supposed essence of subjectivity on which Advaita lays its hold. Like Kant, Advaita would recognize the necessary epistemological shortcomings of *empirical* self-consciousness and also would agree with Kant on the point of implicit self-consciousness, necessarily involved in a conscious state. Kant and Advaita alike recognize the unity of self-consciousness at the *transcendental* (not empirical) level, presiding over the mental states—the former in the concept of 'transcendental apperception' and the latter in that of *sākṣicaitanya*.<sup>\*</sup> But in Advaita, unlike in Kant, the enquiry is centered not upon the activity in terms of which objectivity is translated and interpreted but rather upon the essence behind the activity. While with Kant the transcendental moment of such activity is *thinkable* rather than intuitable,

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\* The Advaita concept of self as witnessing subject (*sākṣin*) comes up in the next chapter (Section B) ; the self-evidencing aspect of subjectivity alone is here under consideration.

with Advaita thinkability would be only a secondary approach to transcendental self-consciousness. In the Advaitic account, as we shall presently see, the question of evidencing knowledge itself would be irrelevant at the level of transcendental self-consciousness, not because the latter is the 'logical precondition' but because it is essentially self-evidencing.

So, we come to the standpoint of *svaprakāśatva* as the typical Advaita answer to the question of evidencing of experience. Advaita would deny the possible approaches to the question other than its own, primarily by direct appeal to the element of *immediate certitude* involved in conscious act. The subject grasps the object through the act of cognition, but the act itself need not be grasped by another act of cognition.<sup>11</sup> Transcendental consciousness is to be conceived as the foundation behind the conscious life, beyond which there can be no further background—at least within the realm of personal experience. It cannot be taken as entailing another act of cognition; for that would mean either that a second cogniser is there to cognise the primary subject or that such cognitive act pertains to the self-same subject. But the former alternative would lead to an infinite regress of cognizer behind cognizer, and so on,<sup>12</sup> while the latter would imply evident self-contradiction (*svātmani kriyā-virodha*) of cognitive acts—one taking the other as its object in the self-same agent of cognition. The difficulties involved in the realistic view of retrospective evidence and in the Buddhistic theory of self-cognition are duly noticed by the Advaita thinker. Accordingly, nothing short of foundational subjectivity involved within each state of consciousness is stressed, and to the former pertains the self-evidencing (*svaprakāśa*) character. Only as *transcendentally* involving the essence of consciousness, can a cognitive state—nay, any psychic state—claim to be self-evident.

Some initial doubts may, however, be raised against the concept of *svaprakāśatva*. Thus, with reference to the analogy of lamp in connexion with the concept, it may be urged that

the apparent self-assurance and self-intimation of mental states would hardly justify the postulation of the 'phosphorescence character' of consciousness. But it may be replied that the analogy of lamp has in fact been excluded from the scope of *svaprakāśatva* as defined by Advaita. For, the characteristic of 'invariable manifestation'—the alleged contention of what Ryle would call the 'efflorescence theory'—would indeed prove to be too wide for defining consciousness as such, because mental states would also be covered thereby.<sup>13</sup> For, as noted in the last Chapter, mental states of feeling and willing generated in psychic organ (*antalikarana*) are admitted to be necessarily evidenced by consciousness and as such remaining manifest.<sup>14</sup>

Some further charges may possibly be brought against the notion of *svaprakāśatva* from the realist point of view.\* (a) A thing being illuminated and a mental process being conscious are not similar, because while illumination has degrees, there is nothing such for consciousness. The mental process being conscious presents itself immediately, while an object which is externally illuminated does not do so. On external analogy alone can the illuminated thing and the conscious state be considered as similar. As Ryle observes. "... Knowing is not the same sort of thing as looking at and what is known is not the same sort of thing as what is illuminated". (*The Concept of Mind*, p. 161 f.). (b) Failure and mistake in the recognition of a mental state—a common fact of experience—seems to counter the contention of self-luminosity.

Now, as to the first charge, it seems to support rather than to rival the position that the evidencing of knowledge is itself a peculiar self-assurance that brooks no mediation. Advaita indeed stresses that the self-evidencing character of knowledge stands unique in its immediacy and as such is not comparable to the illumination of things by light. The second difficulty, however, brings us to a larger problem as to

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\* The first objection stated here follows Ryle's criticism of the 'efflorescence theory' (*The Concept of Mind*).

the presence of *unreflective* mental states. It is a truism that there may be instances where we make use concerning a particular object without a 'recognizable' awareness of that object, while at some subsequent moment the original experience, not primarily noticed, becomes distinct. How is the presence of such *unreflective* level of experience, where awareness is seemingly absent, to be reconciled with the position that any instance of knowing is necessarily self-evidencing? For, the use of object would entail the presence of the corresponding psychic state (*vṛtti*) ; and the latter once there could hardly remain unevidenced.

Here the peculiar *negative* bearing of the principle of nescience (*ajñāna*) on the evidencing consciousness is in view. Without going into an analysis and justification of the concept of *ajñāna* in Advaita philosophy, it may here be mentioned that it is meant to explain the apparent limitation of the pure evidencing character of consciousness as subjectivity\*. As consciousness is the *raison d'être* of the knowledge-of-object situation (shown earlier in Chapter I), the criterion for explaining the alleged irregularity in the evidencing of the object cognised should be sought for in consciousness rather than in the object. Thus from the Advaita point of view, the explanation would be in terms of some lapse, as it were, of the evidencing consciousness through an *alogical* factor, i.e., *ajñāna*. Consequently, the object would appear obscure, though from the side of object there could be nothing to prevent it from being revealed to cognizer.<sup>15</sup> So experience, when it does not appear to be quite explicit, would be inexplicable except through the recognition of 'functional negativity' involved within experience. And the subsequent awareness of the previous unreflective moment should rather be understood as a case of *retrospection* of the earlier mental event. It is not reflective in the sense that the primary awareness is made an object of secondary awareness.

Now, after meeting these relevant doubts, we come to

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\* For the status of *ajñāna* in relation to *cit*, vide Ch. V.

the notion of *svaprakāśatva*. It has been defined (*in* “*Citsukhī*”) as ‘the capacity of immediate use without being cognizable’ (*avedyavat̄ sati aparokṣavayavahārayogyatvam*).\* Formal as the definition is, it seems to characterize consciousness rather in a negative manner by way of differentiation (*vyāvṛtti*). Chiefly concerned with avoiding the defects in other views on the evidencing of consciousness, the definition seems to miss the *positive* essence of consciousness. ‘Uncognizability’ and ‘the capacity for immediate use’ should be taken as the *external* characterization of knowledge that may prove helpful in excluding it from the *empirical* notions. As already remarked, the character of *svaprakāśatva* should be confined to foundational subjectivity behind psychic states appearing to be conscious. To the level of mental states (*vṛtti*), which serve as the media for reflecting consciousness, may however pertain manifold grades of cognition varying from the unreflective to the explicitly reflective. It is thus evident that pure consciousness as self-evidencing marks a level distinct from that of modalized mental states.

Where is then the point of departure for the transcendental self-evidencing level? Here the negative epithet of ‘uncognizability’ can certainly provide a clue towards understanding the positive import of *svaprakāśatva*. It signifies a departure from the common objective attitude of grasping things ; for, naturalistic attitude is apt to miss the essence of knowledge. The possibility of *indirect* cognition through intellectual comprehension need not, however, be denied ; what is denied here is *direct* cognition. In indirect cognition the object in context is apprehended through *vṛtti*-mediation and not directly revealed to consciousness—it is *vṛtti-vyāpya* and not *phala-vyāpya*, to use the later Vedantic terminology. But the common notion of objectivity includes not only thinkability but also the possibility of being perceived as object. (Cf. Kant’s distinction between thinking and know-

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\* This standard definition, accepted in latter Advaita, is so formulated by Citsukhācārya in “*Tattvapradīpikā*” after considering other possible, but inadequate, attempts at defining the notion of *svaprakāśatva*. (Vide *Citsukhī*, pp. 3-21).

ing : "To think an object and to cognise an object are by no means the same thing". However, with Kant, knowledge is only with regard to the object of possible experience, i.e., sensible intuition). Here on the other hand, perceptuality is completely denied and thinkability alone retained. Pure consciousness cannot be revealed by pure consciousness itself. One may still refer to pure consciousness as capable of immediate use, only so far as *immediate certitude* pertains to consciousness and thereby renders it amenable to cognitive judgment.

From the Advaitic account of self-consciousness given so far would follow the approach through *pure psychology* as distinct from empirical psychology. On considering the subjective functions of knowing in referential relation to various modes of knownness (or types of *objectivity*), we may pass on to the level of subjective activity as such—in dissociation from the objective givenness. Here comes into view what may be characterized as 'transcendental psychology' or 'spiritual psychology', as termed by K. C. Bhattacharyya (Cf. *The Subject as Freedom*, p. 27ff). Its distinction from ordinary empirical psychology is sharply brought out in its being founded on the thoroughly subjective attitude. The subjective functions of knowing, feeling or willing are commonly understood in psychological and epistemological considerations as associated with *objects* known, felt or willed. But here we find an attitude which sharply turns from object and aims at the pure essence of subjectivity. Consequently would come into play the approach through gradual unobjectification along with inwardization.

Some of the *Upaniṣads*, and Śaṅkara in his commentaries, emphatically urge the deepening insight with a view to obtaining higher and higher levels of spiritual truth. In pointing out the significance of the scriptural texts, differentiating the true self from other physical and psychical adjuncts, Śaṅkara remarks that they (scriptural texts) intend to direct the mind towards the innermost self (*pratyagātmā-bhimukhīkaraṇārtha*).<sup>16</sup> Knowable categories—from the level

of senses up to the level of intellect (*buddhi*)—are regarded as so many approximations to the core of subjectivity. Accordingly pure self (*ātman*) should stand at the upper terminating point in the series. And each higher level in the hierarchy is ascribed excellence in relation to the lower, till the innermost self is attained as the highest of all excellences in the individual.<sup>17</sup> The enumeration of the steps in the hierarchy is meant to prompt the mind which is naturally in the outgoing attitude, to turn towards self.\*

The essential self has indeed been declared as the innermost self (*pratyagātman*). Self is denoted as innermost (*pratyak*), making itself immediately felt to be certain as distinct from the complex of psycho-physical associations which is not so immediately felt—("Aśakyānirvacanīyebhyah etc."—see Ch. I. B). The character of self as differentiated from the outer is explained as being due to the association of consciousness with ego, the latter necessarily positing itself in differentiation from the objective world outside.<sup>18</sup> Senses are naturally directed outwards and as such hinder the approach to self within. It is not possible for one, intent on external objects, to be at the same time approaching the inner self. And hence the instruction to the aspirant after self-realization for suspension of the naturalistic attitude (*svabhāva-pravṛtti-nirodha*).<sup>19</sup> In strengthening further the motive for such attitude, Śaṅkara of course refers to the alleged target of immortality (*amṛtatvam*), cited in the Upaniṣad, meaning the constant character pertaining to the core of individual existence (*amarāṇadharmatvam nityasvabhāvatvam*).<sup>20</sup> Thus the approach to the true self marks a positive departure from the objective attitude. And that is what is implied by the Advaitic doctrine of *Cit* as *self-evidencing*.

#### NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Ledger Wood, *The Analysis of Knowledge*, ch. V.
2. Cf. "Apratyakṣopalambhasya nārthatrṣṭih prasidhyati", Dharmakīrti, *Pramāṇavārttika*.

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\* Further (phenomenological) significance of the steps in the scheme of Advaitic metaphysic of experience shown later (Chs. V and VI).

3. S.B.B.S., II.ii. 28.
4. S. Alexander, *Space, Time and Deity*, vol. I, Introduction.
5. "Mitau ca kacidanupapattir nāsti iti svayaṁprakāśaiva mitih", Śālikā-nātha, *Prakaraṇaprañcikā*, ch. IV (1).
6. "Anubhuteranubhāvyatve anavasthāpātāt na ca vācyam, avaśyavedyat-vābhāvāt na anavasthāvyavahārasya tatsvarūpasattāmātreṇāpi upapattiriti. Tadviśayapramāṇānudaye tatsattayā api aniścayāt tata eva vyavahāra ityapi asidhch", *Citsukhī*, I, p. 15.
7. "Tataḥ pratibhāsamānasyaive jñānasya tatsādhakatvam vahavyam", *Jñānaghāna*, *Tattvaśuddhi*, ch. 35, p. 19.
8. Citsukhācārya, the Advaita thinker, has represented *jñātata* as self-manifest (*svaprakāśa*), vide *Citsukhī*, p. 18. (But that would not be in strict conformity with the Bhāṭṭa view).
9. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, "Transcendental Deduction", trans. N. K. Smith, p. 153 f. (Macmillan, 1953).
10. W. H. Walsh, *Reason and Experience*, Ch. IX.
11. Vide S.B.B.S., II. ii. 28, and *Bhāmatī* thereon.
12. *Bhāmatī*, loc. cit. : ". . . na ca pramātari kuṭasthacaitanye pramāpekṣa-sambhavāḥ, yataḥ pramātuḥ pramāyāḥ pramātrantarāpekṣāyām anavasthā bhavet".
13. Vide *Citsukhī*, I, p. 4: ". . . Suhādau ativyāptiḥ sukhādcrapi svasat-tāyām prakāśavyabhicārāt".
14. *Ibid.*, p. 4 f. ; also, cf. author's article, "A Study on the Advaita theory of knowledge: the concept of self-illumination", *The Calcutta Review*, April, 1954.
15. Cf. "Anātmapramāṇasya caitanyasya vaikalyādavaraṇādeva viśayānavagatisiddhiḥ na viśaye pṛthagvāraṇam kalpanīyam", *Vivaraṇa*, I, p. 14.
16. S.B.B.S., I. 1. 31.
17. *Kaṭhopaniṣad*, I. iii. 10 ; also, S.B. on the same.
18. "Ātmanastu sarvātmakatvāt na parāgvyāvṛttatā, ahamuparāgādeva vyāvṛttyavabhāsaḥ", *Vivaraṇa*, I, p. 55.
19. Cf. "Parāñci khāni vyatṛṇat svayambhūḥ tasmāt parān paśyati nāntarātman. Kaścidhīraḥ pratyagātmānam aikṣat āvṛttacakṣuḥ amṛtatvamicchan", *Kaṭhopaniṣad*, II. 1. 1. & S. B. thereon.
20. *Idem*.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE CONCEPT OF SELF AS SUBJECTIVITY

Our enquiry so far shows consciousness, in its ultimate essence, to be nothing but self-subsistent and self-evidencing subjectivity. But consciousness, after all, is primarily to be understood in the context of *self* as the locus—a point previously noted (Ch. I). No doubt, only as pertaining to self, the subject of experience, could consciousness at all embody subjectivity. Now as consciousness itself proves on ultimate analysis to be unobjective *par excellence*, the conception of self too would necessitate modification in that light.

In positing metaphysically the epistemic principle of *subject*, we come upon *self* as embodying substantive identity. The question remains as to how to relate such self with consciousness in the light of subjectivity. In this regard a kind of dilemma seems *prima facie* to follow: Self is commonly supposed to be the locus of consciousness; if the essence of pure consciousness be approached in completely *subjective* terms, how could its locus be defined in *objective* terms—which would mean subjectivity abiding objectively? On the other hand, to be merely the locus of consciousness would mean distinction, rather than identity, of the two—self and consciousness; and if consciousness proves to be ultimately nothing but subjectivity *itself*, self should not similarly be looked upon as subjectivity—two ‘subjectivities’ as such being an apparent absurdity.

So it seems, the way to resolve this problem lies in a revision of the common notion of self in relation to consciousness. Moreover, a possible metaphysic of experience, seeking in consciousness the essence of subjectivity, may ill afford the notion of self as a ‘metaphysical abstraction’, not innerly connected to an analysis of experience. So, the definition of

self in the light of a critique of experience is necessitated. Accordingly, the *phenomenological* correlation of the two principles of self and of consciousness has to be shown (Sec. A) and then the resulting orientation of the import of self would follow from such correlation (Sec. B).

#### SECTION A. SELF AS EQUIVALENT TO CONSCIOUSNESS

Self in its common import means the substrate of consciousness rather than consciousness itself—the latter being regarded as quality, either essential or inessential. To deny consciousness in self altogether would, on the other hand, go contrary to the apparent fact that the *experience* of things, as distinguished from things themselves, do occur in the 'person', commonly accepted as self. Thus, short of unqualified identity of self and consciousness—which is exactly the position of Advaita Vedanta,—we are left with the alternative of viewing consciousness either as essential or as adventitious attribute of self. Above the phenomenalist extreme would appear the intermediate group of views—realistic and semi-idealistic—represented by Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, Prābhākara Mīmāṃsā, Rāmānuja etc. All of them would agree more or less that self is a substantive entity, but refuse to identify it with consciousness\*. Self is *metaphysically* posited to be the locus of consciousness taken as attributive—either accidentally or essentially. How far this difference of self and consciousness may be allowed is to be considered here—particularly in the light of the Advaita criticism on the point.

According to Nyāya, consciousness belong to self as accidental attribute—self in its essential nature being non-conscious (*jada*). Consciousness is regarded as extrinsic quality (*āgantukadharma*) originating in the soul-substance. It is looked upon more as a phenomenon occurring to soul-

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\* For Rāmānuja, unlike Nyāya etc., though self is taken to be necessarily conscious and even 'self-manifest' in that sense (Cf. "Cidrūpātā hi svayam-prakāśatā"), consciousness is conceived essentially as *attributive* (*vīśeṣaṇa-bhīta*) and self, its locus, as the knower implied by 'I' (Cf. "...na jñāptimātramātmā apitu jñātaivāhamarthah").

substance rather than a self-accomplished (*pariniṣṭhita*) principle. Knowledge is but the resultant of a series of relations (*saṃyoga*), of which self is the last term just preceding mind-organ (*manas*). As for the persistent identity of self, implied by the phenomenon of *memory*, it may be accounted for by self being a permanent substance (*nityadravya*) which remains constant behind mental states. Moreover, the intrinsically unconscious (*svataḥ acetana*) nature of self is sought to be proved by an appeal to the instances of sleep, swoon etc., during which self, it is contended, evidently lacks in consciousness.\* Thus self being sometimes found conscious and sometimes not, the Nyāya realist prefers to take the conscious character pertaining to it as extrinsic and adventitious (*kādācītka-caitanyatvāt āgantuka-caitanya ātmā*).<sup>1</sup>

Now as to the Nyāya position stated above, the question would arise as to how self, being devoid of the conscious character, is in a position to recognize the past experience as its own and connect it with the present state of consciousness. The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika realist seems to prefer the path of common-sense in accepting the apparent phases of conscious and non-conscious states and in postulating—rather in abstraction—self as the *neutral* repository of such (passing) phases. But the point remains that we can hardly posit self/ except as intrinsically conscious. For the 'dark' inert substratum—even if metaphysically posited—would be (epistemologically) unintelligible from the point of view of evidencing. Moreover, the explanation of consciousness through the mechanism of *saṃyoga* seems to be rather mechanical and to underestimate the *sui generis* nature of consciousness. To pass from the antecedent process which can be explained in purely *objective* terms to the sphere of consciousness which can properly be understood only as subjective would hardly be an intelligible transition. Moreover, as regards the status of

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\* Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsakas also prove the non-self-evidencing nature of self from the fact of non-experience of self during sleep—“... *suṣuptau abrahāśūt na ātmanah svaprakāśatvam*”, *Sāstra-dīpikā*, (Nirṇayasāgar), p. 100.

consciousness itself, its reduction to mere 'epi-phenomenon' could hardly be admitted even by the Naiyāyika himself. For, it would be hard to reconcile such position with the Naiyāyika contention that consciousness is the condition for positing the objects of experience (*q.v.* Introduction). To derive consciousness completely in terms of objective factors, which themselves presuppose (at least epistemically) consciousness, seems to be an obvious contradiction.

As regards the state of deep sleep or of swoon, the apparently felt absence of consciousness therein may be interpreted as the lack of *object* rather than of consciousness. When the object to be evidenced is not there, the evidencing principle as such does not seem to be quite evident.<sup>2</sup> The Naiyāyika seems to confuse the lack of the referent of consciousness with the absence of consciousness itself. Again, so far as the reference-character pertains to knowledge, it belongs *mutatis mutandis* to self, the admitted locus. Thus self comes to refer to object by way of knowledge-relation.\* A knowledge-situation may simply be viewed in the light of a lamp illuminating a thing, say a jar. Further, in a given knowledge-situation, the object as known may be taken to be manifest by the subject concerned—as implied by such judgment in use as "The jar is known by *me*". In this case a dichotomy between self and consciousness—self being divested of consciousness—would mean the manifestation of object by a non-manifesting factor. Then, why not admit a log of wood as manifesting the jar in context? An unsophisticated analysis of the situation thus shows self to be the manifesting factor in a simple knowledge-situation, proving a schism between self and consciousness as unwarranted.<sup>3</sup>

Advaita further argues that if self were not intrinsically conscious, it would be liable to doubt and to contrary judgment. But there is no such dubitability with regard to the subject of consciousness, *i.e.*, self.<sup>4</sup> On the contrary, the

\* The point has been formally presented by way of *anumāna* against the Naiyāyika: "Ghata-tajjñānayoḥ sambandhalātmaniṣṭhaḥ jñānaniṣṭhat-vāt padaviṣayatvavat" (*Citsukhi-Tattvapradīpikā*, I, p. 22).

positive character of immediacy and certitude as pertaining to self would come into view. Whether in inferring or in remembering or in doubting or contradicting with regard to this or that object, the knower himself remains all the same immediate, indubitable and uncontradicted.<sup>5</sup> And that is because self is of the very nature of consciousness itself, which is characterized by immediate certitude. Were self intrinsically inert and only accidentally conscious through acquiring an adventitious quality, doubt, mediacy, contradiction etc. should have necessarily followed.<sup>6</sup> Instead of doubt as regards 'I', the unmediated assurance regarding self presents itself to the individual in and through conscious acts. The experiencing agent need not be evidenced *separately* by an act of cognition, because it is the very evidencing itself.<sup>7</sup> [Free from doubt or contradiction, self is indeed denoted by the epithet 'self-evidencing' (*svaprakāśa*).]

To posit a locus for consciousness, however, seems to be quite a common tendency in philosophical as well as in common-sense thinking. Thus, for the Prābhākaras, consciousness though regarded epistemologically unobjective, is yet taken to be abiding in self. While knowledge is admitted to be revealed unobjectively in immediacy, self though recognised to be immediate without being object of knowledge is still taken to be revealed as the *locus* and not as object. But the Prābhākara distinction between locus and object appears to be only half-drawn. That the supposed locus of consciousness could come under the broader category of objectivity is not duly considered by the Prābhākara thinker. To be an *object* in the widest possible extent would hardly exclude the locus from its scope.

Moreover, so far as self proves to be immediate only in the context of the knowledge of *object*, the intrinsic immediacy of self as *subject* is evidently overlooked. Again, on the Prābhākara admission itself, immediacy without being object of consciousness—a character admittedly pertaining to the latter—would belong to self as well. This as such precludes the necessity of drawing any distinction between

consciousness and self, if the Prābhākara is to be consistent.<sup>8</sup>

The manifesting character (*prakāśagunatva*) of consciousness is admitted in common by Nyāya and Prābhākara as by Advaita ; but the uniqueness of this character is overlooked by the former. Even in the empirical context, such character should be distinguished from any other empirical quality ; and its distinguishing mark would lie in perfect coincidence with its supposed locus in respect of origination or appearance. Thus, as in the case of a lamp (whose very nature is luminosity), in self there could be origination of the manifesting quality only with the origination of self.<sup>9</sup> But so far as self is admitted to be eternal, *i.e.*, without an origin\*, it follows that the manifesting quality cannot be regarded as having a separate origin of its own ; hence, consciousness, the said manifesting character, should be regarded as identical with self.

As to the *apparent* origin and destruction of knowledge, such temporal determinations are to be understood only in the light of modalized consciousness represented by the modifications of psychic organ and not to be referred to consciousness as such (the point held in Ch. II). The two levels of consciousness—empirical and transcendental—here come into play. Consciousness as empirically determined would correspond to objects and may be spoken of as appearing and disappearing—its intrinsic essence being left apart. But so far as consciousness in its self-evidencing essence in concerned, it would admit of no empirical, temporal determinations.<sup>10</sup> The varying, contingent, temporally determined character of consciousness comes rather from the *objective attitude*, while in its unobjective essence consciousness is to be posited as immutable—(“ . . . *viṣayagatatvāt ākārabhedasya, samvidāśca anākāratvāt*”).<sup>11</sup> In the latter aspect alone is consciousness equated to self, whereas in the former it *apparently* is located in self in its varying phases.

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\* The *eternity* of self, if it is to be non-metaphysically understood apart from any reference to scriptural authority, should be understood in the light of the essential undeniability of unobjective consciousness (*vide* Ch. I).

In posing that self is manifest in the cognitive act as the locus along with the object, the Prābhākara really means the cognizer (*pramātā*) or ego (*ahamkāra*). That ego is manifest along with the object in cognition would be admitted by Advaita too.<sup>12</sup> But so far as the epistemological character of unobjective immediacy (*anidantā*) is concerned, Advaita would hold it as only *seemingly* pertaining to ego and not being the essential nature thereof. The Prābhākara, on the other hand, would practically go beyond the ego—the latter being felt as the locus of knowledge. That this ego cannot be identified with self, though naturally confused therewith, has already been shown in course of our discourse (Ch. I.B.).

Thus, an appreciation of the unique import of subjectivity should lead to the identification of consciousness and self. A difference between the two may be entertained only on a more or less objectivistic approach. But viewed from the standpoint of pure subjectivity, the seeming difference between knowledge and knower would pertain only to the superficial level where the subjective essence is missed. On an approach admittedly subjective, the epistemic dualism of knowledge and knower—though such dualism may not be so pronounced as that of knowledge and object—is sought to be reduced to the essential background of subjectivity; whereas in approaches that are not so, such dualism tends to stand (in most cases to be metaphysically justified in the long run).

#### SECTION B. THE CONCEPT OF SĀKṢIN

The bridge between consciousness and self, the supposed locus, has been shown above—not externally, but in terms of the essential identity between the two on the level of pure subjectivity. Now *cit* as the ultimate essence of subjectivity tends to go beyond all reference to individuality, and so would self as non-different from such transcendental essence. As previously observed, all the empirical features that we

associate with the individual—even up to the stage of mind—tend to be superseded in the pure essence of *cit*. The question, then, would arise: Should even the last vestige of individuality be possibly left out, as one crosses the threshold of empiricity to enter, so to say, the transcendental region of *cit*? At this point comes in the cardinal concept of *sākṣin* or 'witnessing self'.

As Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad (IV. iii) poses the question as to what the 'central light' may be, through which the individual comes to be evident (*kim yotirayam puruṣah*), the enquiry is set on foot after a principle, which though involved in the empirical individual, would yet stand beyond the confines of the latter.\* Such 'light' is thus sought after, which may be more foundational than the light from external agencies—apparently enabling our perception of the external world. The said 'light' should be treated as different from the physical (*abhautika*), being unfailing in character (*alupta-sakti-svarūpatvam*), unlike physical agencies of manifestation. Self is pointed out as the evidencing agent in question (*ātmaivāsyā yotir bhavati*), departing at the same time from the *empirical* individual comprising the congeries of bodily and mental factors. Here self stands as the very essence of the individual which marks the link between the empirical and the metaphysical regions. Thus, on the one hand, *sākṣin* which participates in the process of empirical activity (*vyavahārāṅgatva*), cognitive or otherwise, is not taken as completely transcendent in character. On the other hand, *sākṣin* need not exhaust itself within the confines of the empirical individual (*jīva*). In approaching the concept of *sākṣin*, its *jīva*-transcending character comes first into consideration.<sup>13</sup> The primary point of departure in the question of *sākṣin* is the empirical individual, who not only cognizes but also feels and enjoys.<sup>14</sup>

The common import of the term 'witness' (literal mean-

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\* Śaṅkara, in his commentary, explains the light in question as that by means of which the individual carries all his actions (*vyavaharati*). S. B., Bṛ. Up., IV, iii. 2.

ing of 'sākṣī') conveys the central characteristic implied by the notion of *sākṣī*, viz., seeing or experiencing without being agent of the act concerned (*akartṛtvesati draṣṭṛtvam*).<sup>15\*</sup> Even as evidencing, it is a unique activity—an activity that implies no agency (*kartṛtvā*). From the common-sense point of view, however, the cognizer would necessarily be involved in the act of cognition so far as the former is an agent of the act. The cognizer, for all practical purpose, shares the same level as the other epistemic categories, viz., cognition itself (*pramā*), the way of cognition (*pramāṇa*) and the object of cognition (*prameya*)—all veering round the cognitive act.† Now the transcendence of knowership in particular invites opposition from the realist camp. Thus, for the *Naiyāyika*, cogniser (*pramātā*) itself is experiencer (*draṣṭā*) ; even the subject of false cognition is no other than the cognizer itself, because the object altogether outside the scope of cognition can neither be the object of false cognition. Consequently, *sākṣī* as a distinct principle other than cognizer would be unwarranted.

The *Advaita* approach in reply would chiefly be with reference to the question of the evidencing of mental states, cognitive and otherwise. The plain acceptance of mind as the organ of internal experience (*antarindriya*) may explain—as in *Nyāya*—the internal perception of mental states through the medium of mind (*manojanya-pratyakṣa*). But such mental perception of non-cognitive states is sharply distinguished in *Nyāya* from *reflective* knowing or *anuvyavasāya*. Behind both these cases, however, what must stand in common is internal evidencing in some form or other. As for mental states like pleasure etc., they can hardly remain in the mind unnoticed. Even with their *seemingly* unreflective character, the emotive-volitional states of mind have

\* *Sāṅkhya* also points to the *sākṣī*-character of self (*puruṣa*) in a similar way “ . . . draṣṭṛtvam akartṛbhāvaśca”, *Sāṅkhya-kārikā*, 19.

† *Vātsyāyana* in the *Nyāya-Bhāṣya* expounds the four-fold categories enumerated here ; and the scheme is *prima facie* accepted by the *Advaitin* too. *Jñānaghāna* evidently has in view the four-fold categories when he refers to *sākṣī* as differentiated from cogniser etc. (*pramātrādi*).

sharply to be distinguished from unreflective sense-perception.

So, if both these types of apprehension—unreflective mental perception and reflective knowing—are characterized in common by *internal evidencing*, the law of parsimony (*lāghava*) demands that there should be postulated an evidencing principle more foundational than mental states (cognitive or otherwise) themselves. Such a principle in the background may be characterized in terms of 'knowing by way of immediate evidencing' (*sākṣātkāri-jñānatva*). Of course, the possibility of evidencing, independent of mind, may well be questioned. It may then be replied that at least the state of deep sleep (*suṣupti*) (as discussed previously) presents an outstanding case, when nescience (*ajñāna*) itself seems to be evidenced as object—and when organs of valid knowledge (*pramāṇa*), nay the psychic organ itself, do not function.

The said evidencing principle may prove to be the transcendental precondition in all particular instances of perceiving. Three interpretations have been presented in later Advaita regarding the relation of self to object in perception, mediated through *antahkarana*.\* The peculiar association of *antahkarana* with pure consciousness being granted, views may differ as to the exact process how *antahkarana* serves to bring about the manifestation of object to subject. Nevertheless, the *transcendental* status and importance of *sākṣin* in perception is recognized in common ; it is admitted to be the evidencing subject involved in each state and revealing the object by imparting immediacy to it. Common-sense philosophy tends (as noted in the last section) either to posit self in complete exclusion from the psychic process or to equate it altogether with the latter. But we need not proceed with any prior metaphysical bias

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\* Cf. Three sub-theories in Advaita as to the function of *antahkarana* in perception and the consequent place of the individual (*Jīva*) in relation to the object in perception: (i) *abhedābhivyakti*. (ii) *ciduparāga* and (iii) *āvaraṇābhībhava*. Vide D. M. Datta, *Six Ways of Knowing*, Ch. IV ("The Place and Function of the Self in Perception").

towards soul-substance as *completely* detached from all psychic activities. For, the transcendental character of self as the ultimate precondition of subjective life should possibly emerge out of a reflective analysis of the conscious process involved in mental states.

To illustrate the point in concrete terms—anger or intense desire may be occupying my mind for a while, when I completely identify myself, without being aware of so identifying, with the passing mental phase. But as anger or desire cools down, I find myself in a position to reflect on the very outgoing state of mind as such. In so reflecting, I may by and by recognise the outgoing state as *my own*; and therewith in a glimpse, as it were, may be recognized the evidencing of the same state. Thus a notion of my 'inner consciousness' would come upon me—one involved in my mental states and yet found to be referring *freely* to such states.\*

To trace the evidencing background of the experiences of self in and through psychic states, which stand necessarily evidenced, would be a continuous process of gaining essence within the region of subjectivity. It is not a discontinuous leap in the dark for a self that lies in primeval inertness. The transition from mind to self has indeed been rather mechanically conceived in Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika. As directly stated in Yoga philosophy, the fact that psychic states appear necessarily evidenced points to the truth that the subject which 'owns' these states should be of a constantly evidencing nature ("Sadājñātāḥ *cittavṛttayah* *tatprabhoh* *puruṣasya* *apariṇāmitvāt*", *Pātañjala-sūtra*, IV, 18).†

Against the Naiyāyika contention as to the possibility

\* Perhaps the modern English poet drives at the same point as he declares:

"To advance from friend to the composite Self  
Central 'I' is surrounded by 'I eating',  
'I loving', 'I angry', 'I excreting',  
And the 'great I' planted in him  
Has nothing to do with all these." (Stephen Spender)

† The contrary argument goes: had *puruṣa*, or the self as consciousness, been non-constant and contingent like other things, mental states would have remained at least sometimes unknown. (Cf. *Vyāsa-Bhāṣya* and *Vācaspati, Tattvavaiśrādī*, *loc. cit.*).

of mental perception (*mānasa pratyakṣa*) of self as qualified by mental states, Advaita argues negatively. The position that self as endowed with the attributes of pleasure, pain, knowledge etc. is knowable by the same self through mental perception, would involve the fallacy of contradiction of subject and object (*karma-kartr̄-virodha*). The same self is the *subject* of knowledge in question and, as endowed with mental attributes, is also the *object* of that knowledge. Again, to treat self under two aspects—pure and qualified—in order to avoid such contradiction, would be too sophisticated an approach.<sup>16</sup> Further, the *reductio ad absurdum* entailed by the Nyāya position may be put in another way. Knowledge, as the factor constituting the principle of cogniser (*pramātā*), admittedly shares the same level with other mental states like pleasure, pain, wish etc. Now, to regard such cognizer as cognizing the mental states themselves—may be through an organ other than sense-organ—seems apparently to involve absurdity.

Still, a reply may be found on the Naiyāyika side by referring to (after Ryle) 'higher order acts'. According to Ryle, who is certainly more radically positivistic than the Naiyāyika in explaining mental phenomena, "for any operation of any order, there can be operation of a higher order". But such explanation would leave us with a series of cognitive acts without a unitary reference to an experiencing subject which may connect the series of cognitions (*anusandhāna*).\* (Even Ryle, while explaining the phenomenon of self-consciousness wholly in empirical-psychological terms, refers to a 'witness').

Again, a reflective analysis of body-consciousness also (as already mentioned in Ch. I. B.) would bring home the unique unmediated evidencingness of the transcendental evidencer or witness. Individual cognitions in respect of the

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\* Cf. Apperceptive unity in Kant's "Transcendental Deduction"—the transcendental-functional substitute for substantive self. (Kant's 'Unity of transcendental apperception' is, in a sense, largely equivalent to *sāksin* of Advaita—the question of metaphysical status being left apart.

body may vary from one mode to another—each taking separately the body or certain of its aspects as specific object. Nevertheless, behind all specific modalities of bodily cognizance there remains implicit a generic awareness of the body. This background of generic awareness of the body, against which explicit cognition through specific modes occur, is enabled through the unfailing unmediated evidencing by the constant (*kūṭastha*) evidencer.<sup>17</sup> During the lapse period between one specific mode of bodily cognizance and the next, the body remains all the same evidenced, although implicitly. Thus, while consciousness appears in modes as varying and temporarily determined, it is found constant and invariable in its aspect of transcendental evidencing.<sup>18</sup>

Thus, behind the psycho-mental complex commonly called the individual (*jīva*), there is to be traced the invariable background of consciousness subsisting essentially in unmediated evidencing.<sup>19</sup> This alone may be regarded as the inner essence of the individual which, as Śaṅkara points out (*Adhyāsa-bhāṣya*), evidences the series of mental states (*aśeṣa-saṃpracāra-sākṣi*). The inner self *owns* the states, but, itself being outside the stream, remains completely unmodified by the process. Consequently, the epithets ‘detached’, ‘unaffected’ etc., conveying the unique position of self.<sup>20</sup> At the same time, the constantly evidencing character of the inner self makes itself felt with immediate certitude, ever indubitable and uncancelled.<sup>21</sup>

At this stage, a further crucial question as to the possibly metaphysical status of *sākṣin* cannot possibly be evaded. Indeed for Advaitā, *sākṣin* as the substratum of *individual* experience or being, need not be the last word. It may move even further to the *ideal* level of pure consciousness in its absolute autonomy, in which the evidencing act would not play a *constitutive* role. Following in this line, some Advaita thinkers draw a distinction between the dual aspects of *sākṣin*—transcendent and immutable (*kūṭastha*) on the one hand, and immanent and functional (*tatāstha*) on the other.<sup>22</sup> According to this distinction, in the latter aspect alone does

the notion imply evidencing function—and correspondingly, the evidenced continuum (*dṛṣya*). In its ultimate nature as pure consciousness, however, self would involve no reference, even detached.

To sum up, so far as the essence of individual or 'person' is concerned, we could hardly stop short of pure consciousness. The latter constitutes the innermost being in the individual, though uniquely associated through free evidencing reference with the empirical manifold of bodily-mental factors—the latter being the apparent index of personality. The freedom of the evidencing act no doubt conveys the suggestion that self *per se* could possibly remain in transcendent autonomy—a state in which even the reference-act would prove to be irrelevant. Such *possibility* has already been envisaged in respect of consciousness. However, to pass on at once from *sākṣin*, the freely subsisting pure self, to the *metaphysical* principle of all-transcending Being, i.e., *Brahman*, would be too wide a transition to be justified in the present context.\* Here, however, the essential nature of consciousness as subjectivity—a concept which may as such prove to be abstract—is sought to be defined with reference to the relatively concrete concept of *self*.

From our discourse in Part I, it finally comes out that the ultimate *essence* (the term 'essence' being used roughly, not strictly, in a *phenomenological* sense) of individuality would prove to be but pure unobjective consciousness (*cit*) itself. Viewed in the attitude of *object*, 'person' may be understood in terms of combined unity (not identity) of

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\* However, Jñānaghana—and Advaita thinkers would generally agree in this respect—has defined the status of *sākṣin* in a two-fold way—epistemological and metaphysical, the former pertaining to *jīva* and the latter to *Brahman*. In anticipation of the metaphysical, the two aspects are thus sought to be reconciled. ("Paramārthato brahmatyepi pratibhāsataḥ sākṣīnaḥ samsāri-antarbhāva eva", Jñānaghana, *Tattvaśuddhi*, Ch. 35).

several factors, physical and mental. But viewed *subject-wise*—i.e., in the attitude which tends sharply to turn from object (as independently existent)—an analysis in search of the true essence of person should ultimately lead to pure subjectivity. *Cit* is thus sought to be posited as the *non-empirical* ground of the individual, who is otherwise necessarily connected with the world of empirical experience.

That there is possibility for pure consciousness, which is equivalent to the essence of subjectivity, to subsist in complete autonomy, has been sought to be derived through several independent approaches by way of analysing salient epistemological and psychological features and situations (see 3 sections, Ch. I). What is shown thereby is that consciousness, besides barely implying what is subjective, bears within itself the possibility of autonomously subsisting in its pure essence—completely unalloyed by any objective association whatsoever. Still the doubt may remain whether, and how far, the supposed autonomy of pure consciousness could satisfy the larger claim of being the essence of *all* possible phases of consciousness, unless it be clearly demonstrated not only with reference to cognitive phenomena but to mental states *in general*.

So, to avoid a possible confusion in understanding *cit* as the background of the total texture of mental life, its foundational position is shown in respect of all the three types of mental states (Ch. II). The autonomous status of *cit* as foundational subjectivity is further sought to be strengthened by an analysis of the phenomenon of reflective knowledge or self-consciousness (Ch. III)—the unique self-evidencingness of *cit* is brought out thereby.

Further, the alleged essence of subjectivity has to be set in the *concrete* context of the individual, who not only knows but also acts and enjoys. Hence the step towards further defining the principle of subjectivity in the light of self, the supposed principle of unity within the complex of physico-mental elements that roughly constitute *person* as individual. (Ch. IV).

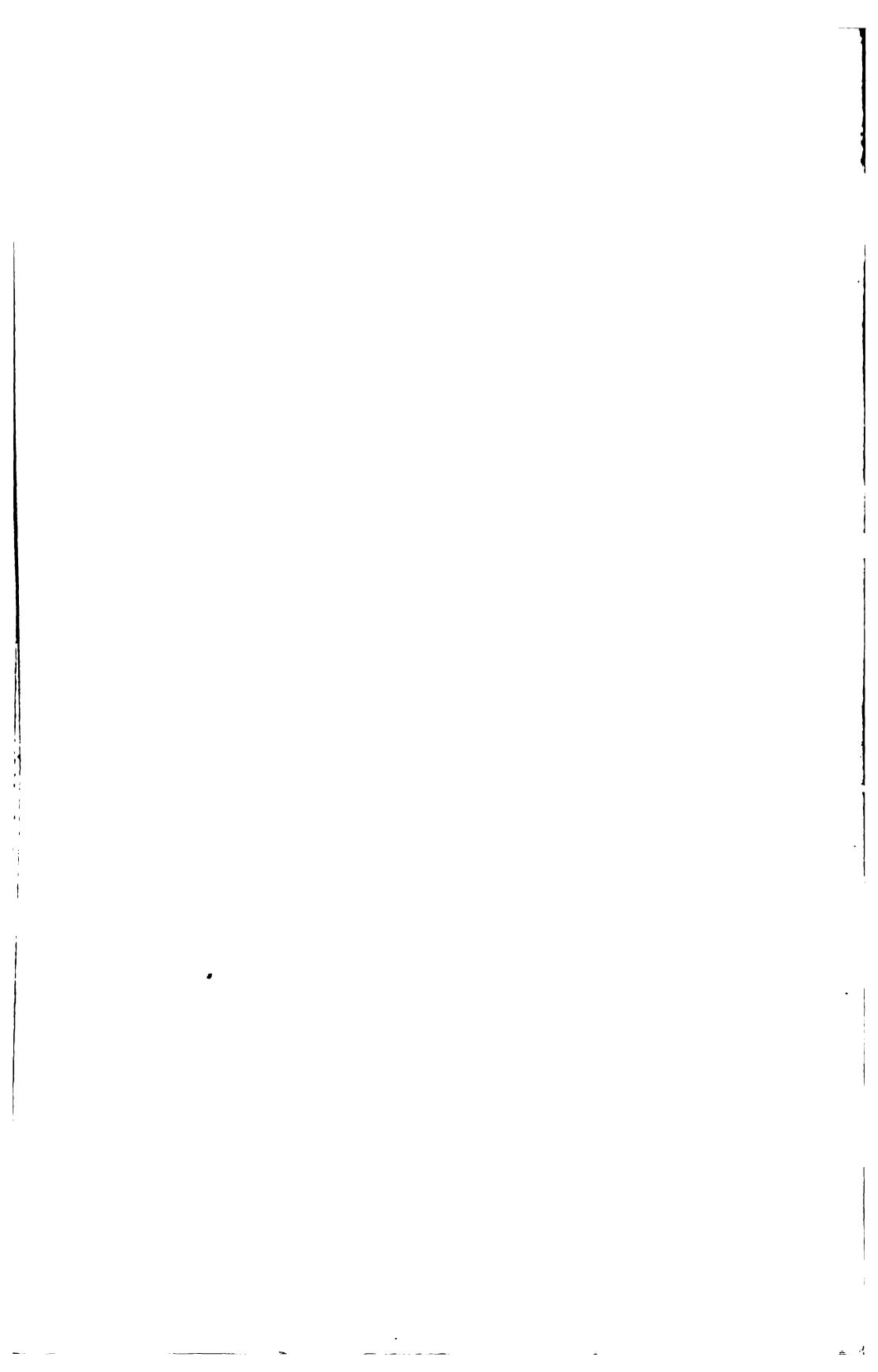
## NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Vide Śaṅkara's statement of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika position, S. B. B. S., II. iii. 18.
2. Cf. "Viṣayabhāvāt iyam acetayamānatā na caitanyābhāvāditi. Yathā bijadāśrayasya prakāśasya prakāśyābhāvāt anabhivyakter na svarūpābhāvāt tadvat. . .", S.B.B.S., II. iii. 18.
3. Cf. "Pradīpna prakāśitam itivat mayā avagatamiti vyavahāradarśanāt. Ātmacaitanyayorbhede vyavahāro. . . . upacāritaḥ syāt", Vivaraṇa-prameya-saṅgraha, p. 57f.
4. Citsukhī, I, p. 32.
5. Cf. "Pramātā sandihānopi asandigdho viparyasyannapi aviparitah, parokṣam artham utprekṣamānopi aparokṣah, smaran api anubhavikah prāṇabhṛtmātrasya", Bhāmatī, II. ii. 28.
6. Cf. "Yadāgantuka jñānam jaṭasvabhāvam tat kadācit parokṣam kadācit sandigdham kadācit viparyastam, na caivam ātmā", ibid., II. iii. 18.
7. Cf. ". . . na tu upalabdhāram prati tatpratyakṣatvāya upalambhāntaram prārthanīyam", ibid, I. ii. 28.
8. Cf. Vidyāraṇya's refutation of the Prābhākara view; "Ātmā na samvidāśrayatvena aparokṣah samvitkarmatāmantareṇa aparokṣatvāt samvedanavat", Vivaraṇa-prameya-saṅgraha, p. 85. Also, cf. Citsukha's formal argument against the Prābhākara on the point: "Ātmā samvidrūpaḥ samvitkarmatām antareṇa aparokṣatvat samvedanavat iti prābhākaram samvitkarmatām antareṇa aparokṣatvāt samvedanavat iti prābhākaram prati anumānat", Citsukhī, p. 28.
9. ". . . dravya janmavyatireke svadravyopādhau janmābhāvasya pradīpādau dṛṣṭatvāt atrāpi yotihśabdāt ātmāni prakāśaguṇasya janmābhavaniścayāt", Vivaraṇa, I, p. 41. Also, cf. Vivaraṇa-prameya-saṅgraha: "Pradīpapataḥbhāsvaraṇūpavad. . . . ātmā eva anubhavaḥ syāt".
10. Cf. "Svayaṁprakāśasya janmavīśānūpapattel", Jñānaghāna, Tattvaśuddhi, Ch. 33, p. 208f.
11. Ibid, p. 209.
12. Cf. "Jīvākārāhamvṛtti-pariṇāla-antahkaraṇena ca jīvobhivyajyate", Vivaraṇa, I, p. 73.
13. Cf. ". . . sākṣi jīvavyatirekeṇa vyavahṛyate", Appayadīkṣita, Siddhānta-leśasaṅgraha, I.
14. Jñānaghāna poses the enquiry on Sākṣin with the question: "Kim pramātrādīvyatiriktaḥ sākṣi nāma kaścit asti na vā", Tattvaśuddhi, ch. 35, p. 217.
15. Nṛsiṁhāśrama, Advaitadīpikā, I, p. 439.
16. Vide Citsukhī, IV, p. 381f. : ". . . mānasapratyakṣavedyavat icchādeḥ karmahartṛbhāvasya bādhakatvāt".
17. Cf. Pañcadaśī, VIII. 1: "Kūṭastha-bhāsito deho dhīṣṭha jīvena bhāṣyate".
18. Ibid, IV. 24.
19. Cf. "Tam pracāram aśeṣam asaṅgitayā avikāritvena ca hānopādānaśūnyaḥ sākṣat avyavahānam avabhāsayati citidhātuḥ", Pañcapādikā, p. 35.

20. Cf. "Asangitayā avikāratvena itiyādinā sākṣiśabdārtham āha", *Vivaraṇa* ; also, "sākṣat̄ iksaṇat̄ nirvikāratvāt̄ ca", *Siddhāntaleṣa*, I.
21. *Bhāmatī*, II. ii. 28: "Asya sakṣiṇah sadā asandigdha-aviparitasya nityasākṣātkāratā anāgantukaprakāśatvē ghaṭate".
22. Vide *Advaitadīpikā*: "...draṣṭṛtvaghaṭitam sākṣitvam na svarūpam apītu udāśinavodhātmakameva sākṣitvam svarūpam, tasya niṣpratiyogikasvarūpatvāt̄", p. 441.

PART II

VEDANTIC PHENOMENOLOGY



## CHAPTER V

### ADVAITA METAPHYSIC OF EXPERIENCE

(PHENOMENOLOGICAL PROLEGOMENA)\*

#### I

#### TOWARDS ADVAITA PHENOMENOLOGY

What follows from our investigations in the preceding Part is not *cit* that should stand as a *logical abstraction*; nor does *cit* prove to be a metaphysical principle proper. For, the interest has been focussed on *cit* as *the essence of subjectivity* rather than as the metaphysical *prius*. And so far as the possible status of subjectivity can *prima facie* assure a philosophical standpoint, the latter should enable a complete interpretation of the basic structure of experience. Advaita might therefore be regarded as adopting the standpoint of subjectivity proper when the chief features and knots pertaining to knowledge and experience could be shown to be resolved in the light of that standpoint. Thus, a more or less self-complete system of *criticism of experience* in the light of a possible methodology (which proves to be distinctly *subjective* in character) would come into view. There is no need of introducing any metaphysical postulations in the pathway of such a procedure.

Now, in order that the Advaitic metaphysic of experience as a whole could be reorganized, the methodology that might be implicit therein has to be developed. And in the orientation of the principle of subjectivity in Advaita, a *subjective* methodology is certainly anticipated (as the epistemological-psychological analyses set forth in the previous chapters

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\* For the major features and standpoint of Husserl's Phenomenology, and also with reference to the occasional terminological use of certain technical expressions, borrowed directly from the same, both in this chapter and the following one, *vide infra*, "A Note on Phenomenology" (Index B).

already indicate). Its difference from common empirical psychology and epistemology, where the prior reality-status of actual object is fundamentally presupposed, is thereby explained. A systematic methodology, which is at the same time subjectively oriented, might alone be in a position to retrace the subjective standpoint of Advaita as represented by the principle of *Cit*, and thereby to bring out the implications behind the epistemological-metaphysical tenets in Advaita philosophy.

Such a possible subjective methodology should, however, be distinguished from a mere *psychological* analysis of mental states. A *transcendental* analysis of experience—be it Husserlian or Advaitic—should not be read in the light of psychological analysis but is rather to be taken as a system of truths whose validity, logical or ontic, should not be grounded in mental states and functions.

Now, the philosophical discipline of Phenomenology could lend us such a broad methodological line of interpretation as needed for the purpose (See Introduction). A metaphysic of experience, if closely followed, should show in its development an *implicit* phenomenology (at least in a broad sense) and be understood in that light. Thus, once assured of the standpoint of subjectivity as involved in the Advaita doctrine of pure consciousness (*cit*), we should be in a position to attempt towards reorganizing the whole of Advaitic criticism of experience on the basis of phenomenological approach in the sense mentioned. However, no external comparison between Phenomenology and Advaita is in view here. The former might only throw light on the *implicit* methodology along which a thoroughgoing metaphysic of experience within the framework of Advaita philosophy could be developed.

Indeed the phenomenological aim is to bring in no metaphysical postulates and to attain a possible system of absolute truths on a rigorous analysis of experience. And the aim of Śaṅkara also has been likewise to discover, as Prof. S. Radhakrishnan points out, '*the immanent principle within*

experience' rather than to construct a world beyond it.<sup>1</sup> No postulate regarding the reality of *transcendent* object came in the way of Śaṅkara's analysis of the pure realm of inner experience.

However, such an approach need not be understood as being motivated by an artificial attitude of suspense towards object—an attitude admittedly not natural. Any exclusive preoccupation with *theoretic* consciousness—as in Kant or in Husserl—would possibly entail some attitude of indifference, or suspension of belief, towards the naïvely accepted objective reality. Further, in Husserl the 'bracketing' of external reality is taken rather as a *theoretical* attitude to facilitate the mind in turning back within itself and inspecting it from within, as it were. In Vedanta, however, the attitude of turning from the flux of objective appearance is recognised to be a serious phase in the spiritual life of man and not merely a *theoretical* attitude. Śaṅkara lays down the avowed aim of his enquiry thus: to avoid the snare of the objective world, into which the self is dragged from its native home of pure subjectivity, and to restore subjectivity to its original integrity.<sup>2</sup> With Advaita, unlike with Husserl's Phenomenology, subjectivity is not a mere theoretical presupposition, nor is the movement towards grasping its essence a purely theoretical attitude. One has to remember that, after all, Vedanta is motivated by the deeper interest in liberation (*mokṣa*), recognized to be the supreme value (*Parama-puruṣārtha*).

The Vedantic scheme of a metaphysic of experience may indeed be summed up in the light of a twofold approach as follows: Firstly, the supreme Reality, i.e., *Brahman* has to be reduced to *immediacy* from its transcendent ontological status, through equation with individual self in the form of *I*. The enquiry would thereby be brought within the range of *immanent* experience from the transcendent heights of ontological Being—reflection being directed to the subjective field of consciousness rather than to the metaphysical First Principle as such. Next there would come the stage of

distinguishing the *pure* from the spurious subjectivity ; this would imply the restoring of the ultimate essence of subjectivity in *cit* behind the complex of empirical consciousness as marked by the ego.<sup>3</sup> A phenomenological analysis of consciousness would pertain obviously to the second part of the approach.

## 2

## THE METHOD: "TRANSCENDENTAL REFLEXION"

As noted above, the realization of self, whose very essence is subjectivity, is the avowed aim of Advaita thought. And the pathway to such realization lies along subjectivization. As shown in a previous chapter (Ch. III), Advaita insists on the mind's turning inwards towards grasping the true self. But such inwardization could proceed only at the cost of the natural objective attitude. But what may be the point from which the natural attitude turns to the transcendental? For Advaita, the situation of error in our knowledge and experience would present such a turning point.

The phenomenon of error (*adhyāsa*) presents in the fact of contradiction a concrete occasion for *reflection*\*. As soon as the content of one experience is contradicted by another —the common locus of reference being presupposed—the subject is faced with a situation which demands reflection with a view to understanding. It is on reflection that the content of false perception is recognized *qua* its false character, in contrast to the reality of the substratum. But the content of false perception *prima facie* comes to us as objective presentation and thus causes the 'shock' for common-sense in violently contradicting the stable objective character of things, with which we are familiar. Consequently,

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\* This would indeed justify Śaṅkara in introducing his metaphysical discourse with the problem of error. But the *Adhyāsa-bhāṣya* is more often than not taken rather too easily as just providing the key to the metaphysical solution of Advaita as to the appearance of world-phenomenon (*jagat-prapañca*).

the need for reflection by way of turning back upon experience-content as such.

As with illusory appearance such as rope-snake, so with the confusion of bodily characters with the subject-self, the fact of contradiction would demand a suspense of the existential character of the presented content and a closer inspection of the content *qua* content. In case of body-self identity (*dehātmādhyāsa*), the native sense of subjectivity, although it does not prove by itself to be an objective presentation as such, would still clash directly with the objective character of body, senses etc. In this way, the situation would point to *reflection* with a view to distinction of the essential from the objective complex.

This line of approach through reflection may be more expressly formulated in terms of what may be characterized as 'transcendental reflection' (after Kant). A steady insight into the presuppositional ground or structure of possible experience as may be brought through close scrutiny of the contents within the region of consciousness—and not any mystical intuition or revelation—is what is generally meant by *transcendental reflection*. It is to be sharply distinguished, as Kant suggests, from *logical reflection*; for, the latter seeks to proceed by way of comparison of the given representations without taking into account the corresponding faculty of knowledge to which the representations belong.\*

The threefold Vedantic discipline in the steps of hearing (*śravāṇa*), intellection (*manana*) and contemplation (*nididhyāsana*) can be understood in the light of the said *transcendental reflection*. The chief stress on the Vedantic discipline is on the cultivation of that attitude of mind—at

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\* By "transcendental reflection" in a subjectively oriented analysis of experience, Kant meant the principle of *distinguishment*, through which the given representations may be traced back to their respective faculties. Husserl uses the term 'reflection' or 'self-reflection' somewhat in the Kantian sense, meaning that type of conscious acts in which the stream of experience, with all its inherent phases, can be grasped and analysed in the light of its own evidence. Husserl describes it as "consciousness' own method for the knowledge of consciousness generally" (*Ideas*, p. 219).

varying levels—in which the pure and essential structures of experience should become evident. Of these, *śravāṇa* signifies in the long run the terminating point of enlightenment (as the Vivarāṇa school in particular maintains); the stages of *manana* and *nididhyāsana* serve as but instrumental means (*sahakāri*) thereof.<sup>4</sup> *Śravāṇa*, on ultimate analysis, would mean the reduction of intellectual truths to direct apprehension; but primarily it stands for the strictly *intellectual* level of acquaintance with relevant scriptural texts in their logical connexions. Intellection (*manana*) is supposed to reveal further the essential features behind the apparent truths of the scriptures; and through intense concentration (*nididhyāsana*), the whole mind is to be fixed on the essence or essences so discovered and get in tune therewith (*ekatānatvam*).<sup>5</sup>

Advaita keeps to the point that real enlightenment can come only through concrete intuition (*anubhūti*) and not through abstraction. As Śaṅkara urges, all empirical and logical reasoning must be reduced to intuition; because through that alone we are presented with reality.<sup>6</sup> Knowledge is to culminate in *complete* comprehension of the essence in view—“*Avagatiparyantam jñānam*” (S.B.B.S., I.i.l.). And this is the case not merely with the knowledge of *Brahman* but at every step of transcendental reflection along which Advaita approaches the highest essence. The true function of mental reflection passes from purely logical reasoning to the apprehension of essences in distinction from the associational correlates. *Pañcadaśī* (I.37) clearly refers of this approach when pointing to the distinction of the essence of self in progressive dissociation from the associated strata (*kōṣā*).\*

Intuition for Advaita does not mean *a priori* intuition—either of the Cartesian or of the post-Kantian type, i.e., a higher type of intellectual activity or thinking elevated to

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\* In commenting upon the verse under reference, Rāmakṛṣṇa refers to *buddhi* as the means of distinction (*buddhyā niṣkṛṣya*), approximating to the sense of 'transcendental reflection'.

the level of immediacy. Nor is any form of mysticism presumptuously entailed—and to admit that in philosophic reflection proper would indeed mean surrendering the philosophic endeavour itself. But the approach of Advaita may be understood as the gradual revelation of the essence embedded in the region of pure experience, in the pursuit of the highest essence behind all. The Advaitic intuition should rather be understood in the light of *phenomenological* intuition (*Anschauung*). The cardinal principle of Husserl's phenomenology is that, every primordial object-giving ('dator') intuition is correspondingly 'source of authority for knowledge'. The essential insight corresponds to pure essence or 'eidos' prevailing in its respective generic stage. Now leaving aside the connected ethico-spiritual context, the Advaitic approach through *śravana* etc. may well be treated on phenomenological lines.\*

Coming now to the acclaimed role of intellect *vis-a-vis* intuition in Advaita thought, mere intellectual method of logical reasoning (*tarka*) independent of intuitional basis has been ruled out in the search for essential truths. For mere intellectual reasoning cannot give any new content but can only arrange materials already at hand. In examining the role of logical reasoning, Śaṅkara points to its necessary instability and inherent shortcomings in the matter of realizing the supreme essence. For such truths as are to be obtained through scriptures (*āgamagamya artha*) alone cannot as such form the subject-matter of independent rationation (*svatantratarkāviśaya*).<sup>7</sup> The subjective (individual) feats of rationation move spirally, as it were, round the centre of the empirical content—forming concentric circles but seldom gaining any new ground of experience. It is no doubt true that the logical process of inferring things not evident to our present experience may serve our practical purpose; but in matters of non-empirical import, as in

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\* With the 'practical' interest of Advaita as the "Science of Liberation" (*Mokṣa-sāstra*) and its definite cultural background, intuition takes on no doubt the colour of a rigid ethico-spiritual discipline in the shape of *śravana* etc.

respect of *essences* in the region of pure experience, it would prove to be inadequate.

Of course, Śaṅkara does accept the value of reasoning, when it proceeds in the light of authentic experience as embodied in *Śruti*—*āgamānusāri-tarka*.<sup>8</sup> This shows a deeper kind of reflection than the logical, not strictly confined within the limits of formal and external interconnexions of data yielded by sense-experience. Such reflection should rather be concerned with an insight into the inner essence behind the common logico-empirical categories of experience. Even when logical reasoning is necessitated for ascertaining (*niścaya*) the content of intuition, it is to proceed in the light of that very intuition and not as independent of, or contrary to, it.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, reasoning independent of intuitional background (conveyed by *Śruti* in the Vedantic context) is barren—*śuṣka tarka*—and as such is to be avoided. As in phenomenology proper, mediate inference is admitted only as having ‘the methodological meaning’ of leading us towards that which is to be revealed by direct essential insights relevantly following upon the inferences concerned. The *sūtra*, “*Janmādyasya yataḥ*” is accordingly interpreted not as an instance of inferring *Brahman* from the world of ordered forms and relations but as leading to the truths behind the scriptural texts—*vedāntavākyapradarśanārtham*.

One question may still be raised as to this implicit method of reflective intuition. It is repeatedly stressed, on the one hand, that knowledge concerning realities must conform to relevant objects—*vastutantra*—and as such not be subjectively conditioned by the knowing individual—*puruṣatantra*. And at the same time the course of discipline in the form of hearing etc. is prescribed for the aspirant of truth. How are we then to reconcile these apparently conflicting positions of subjective activity and of objective passivity? The answer may be found in the peculiar status that transcendental essences seem to enjoy. While *revealed* in the essential insight and as such not *created* by knowing activity, they would own validity only as revealed in intuition.

So long as the focal point of the mind reflecting were not reached, relevant essences could hardly be posited. This may analogically be somewhat understood in the light of the manner in which a streak of sun's ray pouring into a room through a hole illuminates the mass of dust particles on its way—those that were so long as good as non-existent to the plain eyes. Thus the Vedantic practices and injunctions (*vidhi*) would be relevant only in the matter of bringing about the mental focus in stages of higher and higher essentiality ; the ideal efficacy of injunction lies in turning the mind to the attitude of transcendental reflection.\*

## 3

ROLE OF *Cit*: TRANSCENDENTAL SUBJECTIVITY

Śaṅkara starts with positing the *evident* opposition between subject and object—one is the experiencing cognising principle, the other is the experienced and cognised. However, their duality should not exclude the *empirical* fact of their mutual identification ; bare psychological evidence speaks for it. It is a fact of experience that 'I', however subjectively understood, is sometimes spoken of in objective terms. We need not necessarily express *I qua* subjectivity, i.e., as distinguished from object ; we also make such statements as 'This is I'. In 'this-*I*' equation 'this' evidently refer to the bodily-objective locus. And the admittedly subjective factor so far as it is implied by 'I' is not merely referred to an objective locus but is also sought to be *identified* therewith.

Yet, behind such seeming identification of subjectivity and the objective as exemplified in the given statements, the

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\* To accept *vidhi* in the *Mīmāṃsā* sense of injunction for action would go against the fundamental stand of Advaita that knowledge (*jñāna*) is independent of activity on the part of the knower. The injunction that is accepted in Advaita is rather to be interpreted as one of *law* (*niyamavidhi*), as the Vivarana school holds. (cf. *Vivarana* I, p. 3ff.; *Vivarana-prameya-saṅgraha*, p. 3ff.).

possible subsistence of the two factors in dissociation from each other should be recognized—the substratum (*adhiṣṭhāna*) and the falsely imposed (*adhyasta*) can stand mutually distinguishable, though not *actually* distinguished. The subject in such a situation seems to have no status by itself other than a *functional* one in terms of objective behaviour. However, the said subject-object identification is *seeming*; for the true relation between self and non-self is, after all, one of radical opposition. This opposition is enabled through a transition from the psychological subjectivity of the empirical individual to the *transcendental subjectivity* of pure consciousness (*cit*).<sup>10</sup> And the latter, as Husserl contends, cannot be obtained through the *natural* attitude of empirical psychology; for it is no part of the objective world but is rather the subjective conscious life itself.\*

Now the phenomenon of error (*adhyāsa*) indeed provides for Advaita the point of departure from psychological to transcendental subjectivity. As noted in the last section, the phenomenon of error (*adhyāsa*) involving contradiction provides the concrete occasion with which reflection might start. The said erroneous identification of self and non-self is regarded as the commonest confusion in human life and as such forms the chief item of *adhyāsa*. The psychological features (epistemologically relevant at the same time) of agency (*kartṛtvā*), cognisership (*pramātṛtvā*) etc. constitute different aspects of basically the same confusion. In these cases the supposed subjectivity of consciousness necessarily appears in the objective context. Consequently, the inner being is regarded as objective or non-self quite as much as the body or bodily characteristics.

This appearance of one thing in the aspect of another (*anyasya anyadharmanavabhāsa*) is the essential character of the situation of error. Now, in the underlying subjectivity behind the said psychological phenomena is recognized the principle

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\* Husserl, indeed, defines 'transcendental' as 'the quality of that which is consciousness'. (*Vide Encyclopaedia Britannica* Art. on "Phenomenology").

which is *ideally* free from the tinge of objectivity. On the other hand, to this inner subject the objective physico-mental manifold is supposed to make its appearance. Even the empirical ego or 'I' (*aham*), with all its physico-mental associations and world-involving references, is conceived as presented to a deeper 'I' which has a presuppositional evidencing character.\*

The fundamental presuppositional status of consciousness is signified when it is stated that things whether *known* or even *unknown* are in the long run evidenced by the witnessing consciousness.† Here a distinction is evidently drawn between knownness in the ordinary sense and being (transcendentally) evidenced. The ways of knowing (*pramāṇa*) are indeed relevant in the context of knowing a thing. But Advaita would not deny the possible existence of things independent of being cognised by us. Things may be there *for* the subject, even though the latter is not actually cognizant of them by way of valid means of knowing such as perception, inference etc. [Of course, the object as *unknown* is explained in terms of the mediating third factor of nescience (*ajñāna*) obtaining between pure evidencing subject and object—its exact character *vis-a-vis* *cit* being taken up in subsequent section].

Such recognition of even the *unknown* being evidenced by the witnessing consciousness would exempt it from the standing charge of 'ego-centric predicament' brought against empirical (or psychological) idealism. In the latter, no distinction seems to be drawn between 'to know' and 'to be aware of'. Advaita, however, draws a sharp distinction between the two *levels* of (i) being cognized through the way of knowing and (ii) being evidenced by the witnessing consciousness (*sākṣi-caitanya*). It would accordingly not be incoherent to admit the uncognized (*ajñāta*) as *transcendentally* evidenced (*sākṣi-bhāṣya*). Such a contention could

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\* One may compare here the phenomenologist position: "The 'I' and 'we' which we apprehend presuppose a hidden 'I' and 'we' to whom they are present" (Husserl, En. Brit. Art.).

† "Sarvam vastu jñātatayā vā ajñātatayā vā sākṣicaitanyasya viṣaya eva", *Vivarana*, I.

be possible only from the standpoint of transcendental subjectivity. In this sense Advaita, like the realist, may as well recognise the independent being of *uncognized* object—its relative independence at least. [The distinction of the Advaitic standpoint from the Buddhistic mentalism (*Vijñāna-vāda*) is here relevant—no transcendental background of subjectivity other than psychic states themselves being admitted in the latter].

To come to a fundamental epistemological tenet of Vedanta, the knowledge-of-object situation is constituted by identification with consciousness (*cit-tādātmya*). On ultimate analysis, some sort of identification or fusion with evidencing consciousness is posited to be at the root of the manifestation of object. Such fusion may be effected either through some mediation (*vyavadhāna*) of the process of valid knowing (*pramāṇavyāpāra*) or without any mediation whatsoever. All objective entities come to be apprehended through the mediation of modes of knowing. The internal organ (*antaḥkaraṇa*) alone—which is at the same time the principle of individuality (*ahamkāra*)—is to be revealed independent of any knowing process as such.<sup>10</sup>

Turning again to the Vedantic notion of self, the Upaniṣads in general and Śaṅkara posit it as the terminus in the ever-deepening series of senses, objects of sense-experience, mind and so on as may be traced in the gradual steps of transcendental reflection.<sup>11</sup> Of course, the analogy of a series should not be taken here to signify that self is just a final term in the series beginning with senses. Self is certainly the innermost as behind all the stages of experience, and behind it nothing further *inner* (*āntara*) is conceivable. Nevertheless it is not a mere *part* of the series but belongs at the same time to a new plane as it were—a transition to a new dimension of being.\*

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\* An analogy from mathematics may help us in understanding the position better. Thus, for instance, a geometrical line can conceivably be divided into smaller and smaller sections, till a *point* is reached. Though such points constitute the line as its parts, the point as such also presents a new dimension of its own—a new level of being. For, in the strictly geometri-

In the case of self as the final 'inner', we need not bring in the parallel of ordinary 'inner' where antecedence and consequence of order in respect of two terms are necessarily presupposed.<sup>12</sup> The enumeration of such a series may have at least the efficacy of bringing home to the unreflective mind the unique character of self—helping the mind which is naturally directed outwards to turn gradually towards the self within.<sup>13</sup> In the Vedantic emphasis on the *non-empirical* (*asamsāri*) character of self not involved within the worldly process, the transcendentality of self-subject is all the more clearly brought forward.

## 4

*Cit in the Light of Conscious Act*

An analysis of experience, to be truly phenomenological, should no doubt proceed on the implicit assumption that consciousness is of the nature of *act* in the sense of reference-function being constitutive of consciousness. But, then the immediate question would be: can pure consciousness (*cit*), which is *ideally* characterized by substantive autonomy, be itself conceived of in terms of *act*? It cannot after all be denied that consciousness is actually grasped in its *immanence* (in the phenomenological sense) so far as it is involved within mental states themselves (the point to be developed in the context of perception in the next section). [Under acts 'immanently directed' or 'intentional' experiences immanently related Husserl includes those acts of consciousness which are essentially so constituted "that their intentional objects, when these exist at all, belong to the same stream of experience as themselves."]<sup>14</sup> Now in the aspect of *immanence* alone would it be relevant to speak of consciousness as act, pure or modified.

Phenomenologically speaking, all that may be evident

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cal sense, while a line has only one *dimension* (taking the term not in its wider sense as in the former use), a point has none.

to us is that consciousness is immanently involved in every conscious state as the necessary factor of *evidencing*. Coming to Advaita theory, object is reduced to *vṛtti* which in its turn cannot stand but as evidenced by consciousness. So, object is not taken in its 'transcendence' (in the sense of being real beyond the stream of experience) but is sought to be reduced to consciousness by way of *vṛtti*-mediation. On the level of modalized knowledge (*vṛtti-jñāna*), object-reference by way of *vṛtti* implies the way of being consciously constituted. Such *vṛtti*-mediation is admitted to be present at every level of knowledge, external or internal. Even when *vṛtti* is not produced through the senses—as in the case of internal experience of mental states, for instance—some sort of *vṛtti* besides the evidencing consciousness as such would be necessary to make a state of consciousness possible.<sup>15</sup>

But the question may be raised at this stage: should then consciousness be regarded necessarily as 'functional' in the sense described, or only adventitiously so? Now, 'function' as it should be understood in the context of evidencing consciousness should first of all be sharply distinguished from certain current uses of the expression. *Function* may mean, for instance, external activity (on the part of some being or thing), not grounded in the nature of the agent concerned but mechanically or accidentally related to it. There is again the case of "mathematical function": a mathematical system expressing the function of certain symbol, say X, is grounded in the symbol concerned.\*

Now, *phenomenologically* considered—in which sense alone could functionality be admitted of consciousness—'function' is to be understood as grounded in the essence of 'noeses' or those in accordance with which consciousness points to something of which it is the consciousness. What is meant here is not, strictly speaking, the function of consciousness but rather—to follow the Husserlian explanation

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\* A function is a mathematical system consisting of a set *A* (the range of the independent variable) and a set *B* (the range of dependent variable) and a correspondence which pairs with every element of *A* some element of *B*.

—the very manner in which objective unities of every region of being and of every grade of generality or category are 'consciously constituted'.\*

However, Advaita would rather depart from the strictly phenomenological point of view which proceeds with 'eidetic essence' in the form of 'consciousness of'. For in Advaita, the emphasis is shifted from the question of *form*, pertaining to 'consciousness of', to the concrete ground of consciousness itself. So there should be no 'functional problem' as such for Advaita—the problem which no doubt occupies the central position in Husserl's phenomenology,† in which consciousness by itself remains more or less a formal presupposition from the function point of view. [Of course, even Husserl—somewhat in the Vedantic fashion—admits that consciousness is not a title-name for 'psychical complexes' but "it is consciousness through and through, the source of all reason and unreason, all right and wrong, all reality and illusion, all value and disvalue, all deed and misdeed".]¹⁶

Before mentioning the classification of the functional modes of consciousness (so far as consciousness may be said to *have* 'noetic' or meaning function), the *vritti-cit* relation should be closely examined. Now, the principle of *sākṣin* in Advaita combines in itself the elements of pure consciousness and of nescience (*ajñāna*)—the latter being there in its unmodified stage. *Cit*—even though involved at the highest stage of immanence within *sākṣin*—nevertheless tends to be distinguished in its autonomous being, although such distinction may not reach beyond 'possibility'. But nescience on its part could not similarly be distinguished from the complex of *sākṣin*. And if *sākṣin* is sought to be abstracted in its pure aspect from the said complex, no *definite* content would remain—such content as may be

\* According to Husserl, the 'functional problem' is concerned with how 'all fundamental types of possible consciousness and the modifications, fusion, syntheses which essentially belong to them' may be systematically studied 'in their eidetic generality and phenomenological purity'. (*Ideas*, p. 253).

† Cf. "The viewpoint of Function is the Central viewpoint of Phenomenology", *ibid*, p. 252.

identified to be nescience *in itself*. The relation between *cit* and *vṛtti* has similarly to be understood—*vṛtti* being, on ultimate analysis, nothing but modalized nescience as following from *antahkarana*. *Vṛtti* should not be regarded as a definite content in abstraction from the complex of *vṛtti*-evidenced-by-*cit*—which may confirm our approach to *vṛtti* not as pre-existent content which happens to be evidenced by *cit* through mechanical relation but as the functional correlate of *cit*.

There may be, broadly speaking, two possible modes of function in respect of consciousness—as valid cognition and as pseudo-cognition in the illusory situation. The former is effected through the modalization of internal organ—*antahkarana-vṛtti*—in the form of the object concerned and the latter through the modalization of nescience—*avidyā-vṛtti*—with illusory object as content. But why at all should a mode other than that of psychic organ be recognised? This entails a detailed treatment of the problem of error and of the determining principle of nescience (*avidyā* or *ajñāna*) in that context (see later).

## CHAPTER VI

### ADVAITA METAPHYSIC OF EXPERIENCE (PHENOMENOLOGICAL RECONSTRUCTION)

#### 5

#### ANALYSIS OF PERCEPTION

A critique of experience proper should proceed right from the fact of perception-of-object. The element of evidencing cognition (*sākṣātkāri-jñānatva*) is generally recognised to characterize the form of knowing called *pratyakṣa*.\* So far as perception is primarily *sense-perception*, the Nyāya definition of *pratyakṣa* as 'knowledge originating from sense-object relation' (*Indriyārthasannikarṣotpannam jñānam*) is commoly accepted. But a mere objectivistic explanation of the situation is not enough for Advaita; an explanation of the same from a *transcendental* standpoint is sought to be introduced.

To start with, the question of the object of perception as independently existent is shifted in Advaita—as in any avowedly transcendental philosophy—to the question of the object as *meant* or 'intended', or in other words, of consciousness being 'intentionally related' to the object.† The latter is necessarily to be understood in terms of *reference* of the knowing subject; and this may correspond in Advaita to the factor of *vṛtti*. The modes of presentation of object, external

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\* Such broad characterization of perception is basically accepted by some other systems of Indian philosophy too. According to the Prābhākara, it is "*sākṣātkāri-vijñānatva*"; the Bhāṭṭa defines it thus: "*Sākṣātpratītiḥ pratyaksam*".

† While Kant was concerned with the transcendental analysis of objectivity rather than with the object *per se* ('Ding-an-sich'), Husserl went further—the existentially posited object being 'bracketed' with a view to phenomenological reduction. Advaita resembles Husserl rather than Kant in its concern not so much for a logical-transcendental analysis of objectivity in its strictly *formal* character as such but rather for 'essence' in the realm of pure experience.

of *cognisership*, i.e., being the agent of knowing act—a quality that evidently cannot belong to the object of cognitive act. Thus as internal organ is itself characterised by the quality of agenthood, the consciousness defined by it should naturally assume the character of cognisership.<sup>20</sup> However, the apparent forms of object and of cogniser pertaining to consciousness need not be taken in abstraction from each other ; they are rather to be regarded as two *moments* of the self-same act of consciousness—*intending* an object and *intended* by the subject.

It may be noted in conclusion that the character of 'immanence' (in the phenomenological sense) would follow from the account of perceptual experience so far given. In the Advaita theory of perception, object is reduced to *vṛtti*, which in its turn cannot stand but as evidenced by consciousness. So the object is not taken in its 'transcendence' (in the sense of being *real* beyond the stream of experience) but is sought to be reduced to consciousness by way of *vṛtti*-mediation. That would not, of course, mean that the perception of object is to be regarded as in any way *internal* ; rather the realistic position of the independent reality of things and the externality of sense-perception is shared. But from the *transcendental* point of view, the object as relevant to experience is taken to be in some *alogical* relation of identity with consciousness. Identity with consciousness no doubt proves ultimately to be the essential import of objectivity ; but such identity again is recognised to be something alogical and as such, false (*ādhyāsika*).<sup>\*</sup> Further implications of the Vedantic analysis of perceptual experience would be clarified when illusory experience be analysed and the unique role of *ajñāna* in the Vedāntic metaphysic of experience explained (q.v. sections 6 & 7).

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\* Husserl too, while stating that in 'immanent perception' perception and the thing perceived essentially constitute "an unmediated unity, that of a single concrete *cogitatio*", admits at the same time that the two are "in principle and of necessity not really and essentially one and united", *vide Ideas*, p. 124, p. 130.

## 6

## ANALYSIS OF ILLUSORY EXPERIENCE

By an appeal to common-sense Advaita contends that illusory perception is a *positive* fact and as such cannot be explained away as something merely negative. It maintains at the same time that though the object of illusory perception is a presented content, it lacks the character of the object of normal perception. For unlike the latter it does not possess the relatively stable character. So a type of knowing, different from valid knowing (*pramāṇa*), is to be admitted. Such knowing need not be incompatible with the absence of relevant knowledge, though it would possess at the same time some of the common characteristics of valid cognition. They are: (i) the capacity for occasioning retrospective cognition in the form of 'I know' ; (ii) subsequently generating wish etc. ; (iii) causing subsequent mental traces and dispositions (*samśkāra*). Even in illusory experience referentiality would be there ; only here the 'noetic' or meant content would not cohere with the content of *standard* experience (in the self-same situation).

Now the genesis of illusory experience cannot be explained with reference to senses as in valid cognition. The illusory object is a complex, of which the substratum (indicated by *this*) is in direct contact with sense-organ ; but the latter could hardly account for the peculiar unstable character of the illusory content. For such content, though seemingly given, is nothing short of a 'construction' in the locus concerned ; and senses cannot go beyond the limit of the given. Neither could such illusion be due to mental traces, because the latter may give rise to memory and not to perception ; nor could it be caused directly by any defect (*dosa*) in the medium of experience, because such defect by itself would not have any capacity for producing a content as such. So the additional factor of *nescience* (*avidyā*) has to be postulated as that which effects the phenomenon of illusory perception.

The supposed nescience, again, may assume two forms, viz., of object (*vastu*) and of knowledge (*vṛtti*)—respectively under two conditions. The object of illusory cognition may be taken as the objectified modification of nescience ; the objective unity of the content of illusion represents a fusion of the locus (*this*) and the misplaced content—the latter ascribing (falsely) a specific character to the former. On the other hand, the unity of consciousness in the aspect of illusory cognition would represent meaning-consciousness in this context. Objectivity may assume unity through fusion of the false content with the real locus, while similar unity would characterize the consciousness involved in the said objective situation. In the latter case, the double modes of *antahkarana* and of *avidyā* get fused into one apprehension.<sup>21</sup>

Now this description of illusory experience in terms of *ajñāna* and its twofold modes may well be understood phenomenologically. (The problem of illusion has indeed been included by Husserl under the 'Functional Problem'—*Ideas*, p. 251f). The phenomenon of illusory perception does not represent a form of experience to be treated as absolutely different from common experience. The phenomenological explanation in terms of 'intentionality' should also apply here, as in normal experience. Accordingly, illusory experience as much as normal experience may be considered in its *noetic* phase, i.e., as harbouring in itself a *meaning*. In this sense, illusion should be viewed in the light of the 'noetic-noematic structure' of 'intentional' experience—of the ways of being conscious so far as they pertain to illusory experience.

Thus, on the one hand, an illusory experience—its illusoriness granted—would mean a definite *content* in the object of illusion—its 'noetic' content. On the other hand, the *meaning* precisely as it lies 'immanent' in experience—in the pure form of experience itself—constitutes the 'noematic'

\* *Vivarana* gives a detailed analysis of illusory perception in terms of nescience-mode (*avidyā-vṛtti*), which acts as the condition (*upādhi*) in effecting apparent knowledge (*jñānābhāsa*)—taking as object the false content (such as silver in the nacre-silver illusion). cf. *Vivarana*, I, p. 29.

correlate ; the latter may be represented in the Vedantic terminology by *avidyā-vṛtti*. It should, however, be noted in connexion with the Vedantic analysis that unlike in Husserl's phenomenology, the noetic phase with the corresponding noematic content are not considered in dissociation from the real object (as in Phenomenology), but rather in the context of the latter. [Of course, the implicit admission of the *transcendental* background of *sākṣi-caitanya* is there.]

However, a sharp line of distinction is drawn between the illusory (*prātibhāsika*) and the empirical (*vyāvahārika*) levels of knowledge, there being some sort of 'asymmetrical' relation between the two (in respect of validity). The typical Advaita concept of 'inexplicability' (*anirvācyatva*) here comes into view—it refers to the *seeming* objectivity that pertains to the content of false perception. The marked difference of such content from that of valid cognition is that here the subjective (psychical) element of image is mixed up with the objective element of percept. Psychologically viewed, the situation of error (*adhyāsa*) means the confusion of perceived content with remembered image, as Śaṅkara defines it—"Smṛtirūpah paratra pūrvadṛṣṭāvabhāsah". Even accepting the image aspect of the content, Advaita never takes illusory perception as a simple case of remembering. [Indeed *Anirvacanīyakhyāti* rejects *Akhyāti*, so far as the latter wrongly introduces the element of remembering (*smṛti*) in perceptual experience.] The experience of falsity is not merely a case of negative non-discrimination (*vivekāgraha*), as *Akhyātivāda* urges, but it is characterized by the presence of *positive* content (*bhāvavastu*).

Indeed the content *qua* content is never denied in the Advaita view ; what is denied is the character of *reality* as referring to a real spatio-temporal context. In false perception, the object on primary reflection is found to be lacking the character of *reality* that pertains to the object of *valid* perception. Accordingly, the *Anyathākhyāti* view that the content of false cognition is characterized by reality, though 'transferred' from the *actual* object, is not entertained. So,

to explain the appearance of false object as a sort of 'extended' perception of the *real* object at some other point of space and time seems plainly to contradict the experience of false object in the locus at hand. The alleged existence of false object as 'distant' in space (*desāntariya*) and in time (*kālāntariya*) goes contrary to the evident feeling of presentedness of the false object before us. Further, the element of (distinguishable) association, felt reflectively, between the real and the unreal is also ignored in the Naiyāyika explanation.

It should be noted here that even the said reality-character need not be treated as pertaining to an order different from the immanent region of pure experience. For the false content itself can indeed be viewed *qua intended* (in the act of consciousness as represented by *avidyā-vṛtti*). Accordingly, existentiality or reality should rather be viewed as immanently involved in the essentiality of the content without necessarily transcending to a reality *external* to the region of pure intuition. In this case the *intended* object essentially turns upon the very act rather than subsisting by itself, as the content of valid knowledge does. Consequently, such *false* content seems to possess a 'noetic' character of an *intermediate* type—embodiment reference, but not to reality. As such it may properly be regarded as belonging to the *tertiary* order of the 'inexplicable' (*anirvācya*).

Further, the typical but significant mode in the form of *I* or ego (*ahaṅkāra-vṛtti*) should be considered in this context. The modalization of consciousness in the form of *I* appears to be characterized by a peculiar *indefiniteness*; it cannot be treated as ordinary mode of consciousness that implies some definite content by itself. In this respect the *I*-mode seems rather to share the character of false perception, although such mode is regarded as *empirical* (*vyāvahārika*) like any case of normal experience.

Of course, the ground for ascribing *I*-mode to the region of nescience rather than to that of valid modes is not far to seek. It is evident that the mode in the form of *I* does not

stand alone but necessarily accompanies some modification in object-form. As such, the I-mode is dependent upon the object of cognition although *I* posits itself as *other* than the latter.<sup>22\*</sup> Once it is recognised that *I* and object are revealed in cognition simultaneously—*I* not being evident in isolation,—the question would arise if two co-existing modes could be of the same order of valid cognition. For, the simultaneous presence of two definite contents of consciousness seems to be an evident absurdity in experience. So the seeming form of *I* in consciousness, having no definite content of its own, should be ascribed to the region of *nescience*.

Now, if I-mode belong to the order of nescience, the conditioning defect (*doṣa*) would have to be indicated—the latter being an 'efficient' condition in the situation of error. Here nescience itself has been pointed out as the said condition; unlike in ordinary error, the defect is not adventitious (*āgantuka*) but necessary. The (relatively) constant factor of individual nescience (in the shape of *antaḥkaraṇa*) rather than the contingent factor of variable *doṣa* is here in view. And as nescience itself serves, on ultimate analysis, as the ground of all empirical use and practice (q.v. section 7), the mode issuing directly from nescience should be regarded as empirical (*vyāvahārika*); in other cases nescience-modes would be purely illusory (*prātibhāsika*). (Indeed psychic organ itself could become *object* for the evidencing consciousness only by way of I-mode<sup>23</sup>).

## 7

PRINCIPLE OF NESCIENCE (*Ajñāna*)

In a philosophy wedded to subjectivity, the concept of Nescience stands for the principle of objectification—the prime *alogical* factor that hinges on to unobjective conscious-

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\* In Nyāya philosophy too, self as equivalent to *I* is admitted to be knowable only in conjunction with the specific qualities abiding in self—“*Dharmādharmāśrayah adhyakṣa viśeṣaṇayogataḥ*”.

ness. The motive behind the Advaitic treatment of erroneous perception is no doubt to introduce the indeterminable principle of nescience (*ajñāna*). Proofs—perceptual and inferential (also postulational)—are advanced by Advaita for showing nescience as a *positive* principle. *Ajñāna* does imply something more than mere absence of knowledge, although it may *prima facie* seem that *ajñāna* could bear a meaning only as implying the negation or absence (*abhāva*) of knowledge. But negation in relation to conscious evidencing (rather than to things) presents a unique character.

On the evidence of such judgment as "I am ignorant", the negativity of the alleged 'non-knowledge' would involve a plain contradiction. It is argued that the perception of negation necessitates the perception of the negatum (*pratyayī*) concerned in the self-same locus.\* But to follow the same analysis in the case of the felt absence of *knowledge* (as explicitly stated in such judgment as 'I do not know') would lead to a contradiction. For that would mean the subsistence of knowledge and of its absence in the very same locus, the self, at the same time—and that means an evident contradiction. So the alleged absence of knowledge has to be understood differently than ordinary negation (*abhāva*). (The case of *susupti* may be referred to in this context).

The common process of negation is directed object-ward. The ignorance as to a particular object is one thing, while the perception of the ignorance itself is another. In the former, consciousness is directed to an objective situation, while in the latter it is directed to a moment within itself that tends to counter its own 'referentiality'. Such moment, it seems, would neutralize the very evidencingness of consciousness, being itself the agent of obscuration (in respect of consciousness). Thus, nescience as the positive (*bhāvarūpa*) obscuring

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\* Of course Advaita, unlike Nyāya, substitutes for perception (*pratyakṣa*) another *pramāṇa*, viz., *anupalabdhī*, for the knowledge of the so-called negative facts. (The apprehension of *ajñāna* is a case of perception, according to Advaita, though of a higher order than that of sense-perception.) However, the knowledge of the positive counter-correlate (*pratyayī*) is admitted in Advaita too as necessary in *anupalabdhī*.

principle has for its locus and its object the self-same principle of consciousness—*samānāśrayaviśayam bhāvarūpam ajñānam*.\*

However, in the zeal for establishing nescience as *positive*—so that it may not be confused with mere absence (*prāgabhāva*) of knowledge—the *raison d'être* of the principle is not to be overlooked. To raise the issue of positivity to a *metaphysical* status would ultimately amount to the position of 'Consciousness *plus* Nescience' (the latter in that case proving to be as much an independent principle as *Prakṛti* of Sāṅkhya philosophy). But such a position may lead to serious difficulties. How to explain the primary alogical connexion between *Cit* and *Ajñāna*? Another nescience-principle would be necessitated. [In Sāṅkhya philosophy, an original alogism (*anādi aviveka*) between *Puruṣa* and *Prakṛti* has indeed been posited to explain the primary association of the two.] That would only involve a confusion of categories.

Leaving aside the realistic-metaphysical orientation, the essential status of nescience should be considered. Nescience *as such* is hardly to be felt; *ajñāna* would stand as *indefinite*, were it taken in abstraction from the complex formed through association with *cit*. To look more closely into the relation of *ajñāna* to *cit.*, it can be expressed as one of *function* to *essence* (of substance). It is an *inseparable* relation—one that may subsist between, say, the burning capacity of fire and fire itself. [The metaphysical phase of this position is shown thus : *Māyā* should exist potentially in Brahman, having no reality of its own independent of the latter and to be inferred from the effects following from itself; thus *Māyā* is neither to be identified with Brahman nor is it in essence independent of it.<sup>24</sup>]

This brings us to the concept of 'indefinability' (*anirvācyatva*) as a third category other than reality and unreality.

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\* The positivity (*bhāvarūpatva*) of *ajñāna* is proved also inferentially. The proof through inference proceeds indirectly, by showing the characteristics of valid knowledge (*pramāṇajñānam*), which cancels erroneous knowledge. Cf. *Vivaraṇa*, I, p. 13; *Vivaraṇa-pramyea-Saṅgraha*, p. 17 f.

In erroneous situation the generic substratum ('this') stands behind the false perception and also the opposing right cognition as well. It is the apprehension of the specific content in the generic essence (of the given locus) that removes the false percept. This shows that error necessarily appears on the substratum—"sādhiṣṭhāno bhramah", and the content pertaining to it is rejected subsequently as unreal. The correction of false cognition does involve not merely the rejection of the false content but also the right apprehension of the substratum in its true (specific) character. So the complex situation of error involves the substratum (*adhiṣṭhāna*), in which alone the specific character of the given object is to be perceived—and only such perception can finally counter the false one. As such, the erroneous situation could hardly be regarded as simply unreal (*asat*) or 'zero' (*śūnya*). The unreality may be spoken of it only as differentiating it from the real (*sadvyāvṛttimātram*) ; in order to emphasize its non-real character alone the 'indefinable' may be spoken of as 'unreal'.<sup>25</sup> (One may here refer to the Husserlian use of the term 'irreal' in the sense of non-real rather than unreal, to characterize 'Pure Consciousness' and consequently its subjectively and objectively oriented essences.) In respect of ideal autonomy independent of the substratum, the false content may practically be looked upon as unreal or 'nothing' (*śūnya*).<sup>26</sup>

The reality of the substratum thus stands on a level different from that of the appearing content. Consequently, the question of contradiction between the two would not arise from the alogical relation holding between them. The substratum serves as the background on which the false content appears rather than as the factor countering the latter. It is the *specific* character of the substratum which alone is capable of countering the false content. As to the cognizance of nescience as such, *ajñāna* stands revealed to transcendental consciousness ; the latter alone enables *ajñāna* to be evidenced at all and in no way does cancel it. And hardly is nescience *per se* conceivable apart from being

evidenced—a point already referred to. So, nescience is taken as *necessarily* evidenced by transcendental consciousness. Even if it be contended in doubt (though such doubt would be untenable, as already noted) that the false appears *in vacuo* without a positive support behind it, the *transcendental* support in pure consciousness for a phenomenon of erroneous perception could hardly be denied.

Viewing in the light of the “essentialistic” search of Advaita, transcendental consciousness would stand on ultimate analysis—even when all floating essences in the region of pure experience were dismissed. Pure consciousness is the final essence which cannot be superseded by any further essence in pure intuition. It not only stands all cancellation but is also the ultimate presupposition of all cancelling acts of consciousness.<sup>27</sup>

The modalized aspect consciousness alone, and not pure consciousness, stands to the corresponding modalized nescience in a relation of necessary contradiction. Due to the distinction in level between pure consciousness and its modalized form in cognition, a relation of compatibility—rather than one of contradiction—should subsist between consciousness and nescience. Consequently, it would not be a contradiction to maintain that nescience *abides* in consciousness.<sup>28</sup>

Now, nescience may be regarded in broad to stand for *objectivity* as hanging on to unobjective consciousness. In this respect, the concept of *ajñāna* seems to come close to the Kantian conception of ‘object in general’—the latter alone confers upon empirical concepts in general the relation to object or objective reality. In the Kantian theory, however, ‘object in general’ is posited just as a logical postulate implied in *a priori* reflection. *Ajñāna* in Advaita, on the other hand, is not to be understood merely as a formal concept but rather as the concrete implicate of pure experience.\* The cognizance of the very presence of

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\* In later dialectical Advaita, however, the *formal* aspect of *ajñāna* rather than the phenomenological is emphasised.

nescience is grounded in the evidencing consciousness. What the formal approach either by way of inference or by way of postulation (*arthāpatti*) may assure us is the *formal* character of nescience as other than negative (*abhāvavyāvṛtti*) or as positive, but cannot by itself evidence the pure content that is nescience.<sup>29</sup>

That *ajñāna* is not a mere logical category may be more evident if we consider how it could be traced from the level of objective experience in degrees of generic essentiality. *Ajñāna* in its pure essence is to be intuited on the transcendental purified level of experience alone. This is suggested by the state of dreamless sleep (*susupti*), wherein the unmodified mass of *ajñāna* stands evidenced by the evidencing consciousness. So far as the prior stages of normal and illusory waking experience and of dream are concerned, *ajñāna* is certainly present, but not *qua ajñāna*. In case of *empirical* ignorance some reference, explicit or implicit, to this or that object would be there ; whereas in the state of *susupti* alone could nescience be apprehended in its generic essence. However vague, the efficacy of such nescience-in-general for effecting memory should be recognised, so far as it can yield the impression of *total* ignorance. In error the nescience-content is only retrospectively posited, so far as it is recognised that the actual object were *not known*. In the intermediate region of normal experience, however, the meaning of nescience changes and nescience is recognizable there, if at all, only as signifying 'function' of consciousness.

Now, on ultimate analysis, *ajñāna* would rather represent the *functional* aspect of Consciousness. The various modalities of Function (in general), in varying degrees of generality, constitute the world of experience. *Ajñāna* (or *Avidyā*), viewed as function in relation to pure consciousness, should represent *Reference in general* ; and as such it should stand on the same level as evidencing consciousness itself. As modalized nescience in the form of modifications (*vr̥tti*) of internal organ correspond to modalized consciousness, so unmodalized

nescience would correspond to unmodalized consciousness, i.e., *sākṣi-cit*.

The relation that nescience-in-general may be said to bear to evidencing consciousness is to be closely considered. In a possible relation (if at all it could properly be spoken of as *relation*) of *free* association alone can evidencing consciousness and Reference or Function in general share the same transcendental level. Advaita defines such a possible relation with the help of the category of “*upādhi*” or free association. The latter signifies a relation which is not necessary but *free*—a relation which however is rather concomitant with the essence though not contingent to it. On the path of transcendental reflection, nescience is revealed as necessary, rather than accidental, correlate of consciousness—a status roughly implied by the notion of *quality* (*viśeṣaṇa*). But at the height of such reflection, when the level of the evidencing consciousness (*sākṣi-cit*) itself might be reached, the possible relation should rather be represented by *upādhi* in place of quality (*viśeṣaṇa*). Thus, on ultimate analysis, the status of nescience should mean the generic (functional) correlate to which pure consciousness remain freely associated.\*

At this stage, the ultimate position of *ajñāna* as *function* in respect of consciousness may be reviewed. It has been noted that there need not be any dualism of essence and function—the latter having no independent status apart from the former. Function *qua* function would rather abide in essence and as such effect the *seeming* activity in the latter.<sup>30</sup> The question of dualism may arise only at the lower level of modifications from *Māyā-śakti*—a level where the succeeding stages derived from the primal Function come to be posited as *independent*. The empirical world of things and beings would come within this region of *modifications* of the primal function of *Cit* and as such take on a seeming independence. But even though tending to subsist by them-

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\* Vide *supra*, our discourse on “*Sākṣin*” (Ch. IV).

selves independent of the primal Essence (*i.e.*, *Cit*), the functional modifications by themselves could not claim substantive autonomy. Here again the category of inexplicability (*anirvācyatva*) already explained would come into play.

### GRADES OF REFLECTION

The comprehension of essences in gradual steps within the region of pure experience may be carried out through the corresponding stages of dissociation of the essential correlates of consciousness from the relevant empirical complexes. Thus, to begin with, at the stage of illusory perception nescience appears to subsist in a contingently modalized form as occasioned by extrinsic factors of 'defect' etc. At the other end, however, nescience may possibly be intuited in its generic nature—as in the stage of deep sleep—or better, in enlightened meditation (*samādhi*). Indeed the whole process of approaching the ultimate essence of consciousness might become intelligible in the light of 'grades of reflection'. The higher the grade of reflection, more *analytically* the ideal essence could be grasped—through more and more distinction of the corresponding nescience-correlates, in which the essence possibly remains involved in the various stages of association. In this manner, *ideally* a stage may be reached where the innermost essence should be grasped in its purity correspondingly with nescience in its generic character. For such apprehension of nescience in the pure generic form would at the same time reveal it as essentially dependent on Consciousness.\*

Indeed, the rationale of the Vedantic reflection may be indicated in the progressive apprehension of *pure* essence within the region of consciousness in steps of non-objectifica-

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\* Cf. K. C. Bhattacharyya, *Studies in Vedantism*, p. 16 f. Bhattacharyya, however, proceeds with the conception of "grades of existence", holding between subject and object, while I prefer to proceed rather in the line of "grades of reflection".

tion. Correspondingly should proceed *distinguishment*—progressively clearer and more generic—of what may be regarded as the *intentional* correlates of consciousness. At the primary unreflective stage of waking and of dream, the subject-pole of experience would remain hardly distinguished from the objective correlate—the region of nescience, in larger or smaller degree, within the region of individual consciousness. At the stage of *samādhi*—and imperfectly in *suṣupti* too—the essence of self or consciousness may be restored in its native subjectivity with the denial of the ‘other’ that has been hitherto prevailing prior to that stage; even the act of denial itself stands to be denied therein. As the subjective essences are grasped in progressive dissociation from the manifold of objective presentations, the preceding phases of seeming obscuration and objectification of the subjective essence, i.e., the corresponding *ajñāna*-counterparts of consciousness, are also recognised as false. In this process of grasping truth and rejecting untruth, the possible ultimate essence of subjectivity would be reached—and therein alone could be realized the truth of all the stages.

Thus the said ‘grades of reflection’ should imply levels of identification of pure consciousness (*cit*) and nescience in different degrees. And what is empirically as well as *transcendentally* the most significant stage of such identification is, broadly speaking, that of *mind* (*antaḥkaraṇa*). It marks the first step of *descent*, as it were, from evidencing consciousness, where there can be reference to the ‘other’ but not the slightest amalgamation with it. Mind, which stands for various activities of thinking, feeling, perceiving etc., embodies such a stage of amalgamation. Here the principles of subjectivity and non-subjectivity together constitute, as it were, a close fusion (*cidacidgranthi*). The mind-principle indeed plays a cardinal role in the explanation of the features, which though linked to subject fall short of subjectivity pure. It stands mediating between the two distinct poles of subjectivity and object; and without this mediation the fluctuations in our knowledge of objects could

hardly be explained. The mere presentation of object within the field of one's perception may not necessarily amount to cognition ; for, the third factor of *attention* (or 'interest') would be moreover entailed—a factor evidently exercised through *mind*.<sup>32</sup>

Now, mental processes should mean hardly anything if they are not subjective. The mental and the subjective seem to be for all practical purposes equivalent. Still even in our mental introspection a fringe of pure consciousness may be felt as involved within, and yet transcending, mental states themselves. Whether the fringe is taken into account or not, subjectivity is commonly accepted to be valid in the form of 'individuality' alone. To put it otherwise, only through an *alogical* identity with such features of mind as agency, enjoyment etc. pure consciousness may assume the worldly (*samsāri*) or empirical character.<sup>32</sup> After all, subjectivity and mind need not be taken as two absolutely different entities related together ; for then the relation between the two might as well lapse at any stage.

A mere contingent relation of two mutually independent distincts do not seem to hold between consciousness and mind. For apart from consciousness, mind would be an absurdity in experience. Consciousness in the empirical context stands necessarily linked to the mind-principle, taking on thereby the form of *individuality*. The fusion of pure consciousness with mind, responsible for the *use* of self as mind, marks too deep a stratum for the individual to be normally ignored. Even in the state of deep sleep, there would be no absolute cessation of connection with mind-principle ; the latter only remains in a 'potent' state as it were. In fact mind and consciousness should be as much inseparable in experience as the light falling on an object would be indistinguishable from the latter. After all, through the medium of mind alone subjectivity gets more and more involved within the region of objects and thus takes its active share in the empirical world of things and beings.<sup>33</sup>

So, mind need not be taken as a solid platform for subjectivity to set its foot on ; rather, it is *transitive* in character. Grades of essentiality may be implied by the fourfold 'functions' (*vritti*) of mind corresponding to the fourfold phases of psychic organ (*antahkaraṇa*), viz.. *manas*, *citta*, *ahaṅkāra* and *buddhi*. Of these, the faculty of critical intelligence (*buddhi*) marks the highest moment of mentality and approximates most to the essence of subjectivity.\* As Śaṅkara remarks, the principle of *buddhi* by virtue of its 'natural transparency and proximity' reflects the light of consciousness—the "light" said to pervade the different levels of the psycho-physical complex of the individual. Next to critical intelligence it is the associational level of mind (*manas*), that reflects pure consciousness through its association with *buddhi*. Further, through association with *manas* again can sense-organs reflect consciousness, till finally even the body as invariably associated with sense-organs would get fused with transcendental consciousness.

At the bottom Advaita seems to start with the *dim* subjectivity on the sub-psychic perceptual level of *body*, which is *felt* as subject ('I-body') in relation to the physical environment, or of "bodily subjectivity". [Here 'body' is not taken merely in the *naturaistic* sense of a bare physical entity, a thing among things but also as singularly felt from within to be one's own.]† This may be followed by the series of media—more and more subtle—for the manifestation of consciousness, till the higher stage of 'critical intelligence' (*buddhi*) would be reached. The nodal point of *buddhi*, inalienably involving consciousness, seems to be rather hard to resolve. As Śaṅkara remarks, even the wise one who can distinguish self from non-self has to yield to the primal illusion of taking

\* *Buddhi* has often been used by Śaṅkara in the broad sense of 'mind'. But he also makes express distinction between *buddhi* and *manas* as two distinct levels—more in line with the Sāṅkhya metaphysic of experience. (The later Advaita prefers to take them simply as different functions of the self-same principle, overlooking their respective grades of essentiality).

† Cf. "The body as externally and internally perceived, as observed and felt may be regarded as the subject in relation to the environment and psychology has to start with this bodily subjectivity", K. C. Bhattacharyya, *The Subject as Freedom*, Ch. III.

critical intelligence as the very essential self itself.<sup>34</sup> It is an illusion which is prior to all transcendental confusions and is at the very root of empirical consciousness. Thus by way of gradual associational link with *buddhi* downwards, the whole physico-mental system of the individual comes to partake of the very character of consciousness and as such gets fused with the latter.

This gradual fusion of transcendental consciousness with the common features of *personality* may be understood in the light of an analysis of experience. Thus, to start with the higher stage, critical intelligence marks the self-conscious level where the nature and content of experience could be ascertained. Through critical intelligence, the subject may own the odd mass of objective data that should enter into the realm of experience, by way of organizing the former. At the *associational* level of mind, however, the contents of experience would merely be received and assembled ; and upon those contents does intellect work. Though the sense of egoity and individuation (*asmitā*) may already be present at the associational level, it is the higher *critical* stage of intellect proper (*buddhi*) which should strictly be regarded as *apperceptive*. Again, mind itself would depend upon sense-organs to gather objective data from outside ; the former can function when the materials brought in by the senses are present. But sense-organs, again, cannot function independent of the body, wherein they abide.

From body to critical intelligence *upwards*, there is a chain of association in steps of which subjectivity could be approximated in increasing degrees of purity. The alogical process of fusion with consciousness that starts with the first step of *buddhi*, left to itself, extends down to the level of the body. In the uphill task of retracing the essential nature of consciousness in its native subjectivity, the path lies through the reverse process of *dissociation*. Now the individual may be freeing himself through respective grades of reflection from the confusion at the level of body or of senses, nay even of mind. Yet the final vestige of human confusion that takes

critical experiencing intelligence as the true subject seems hard to transcend.

Precisely at this point, Advaita (and Sāṅkhya alike) would go on further to posit transcendental consciousness (*sākṣi-caitanya*) as the *post-intellect* index of transcendental reflection. Indeed the whole vital-mental framework of the individual may ultimately be reviewed in the light of transcendental consciousness. Consequently, the status of mind in relation to bodily activity—particularly in the state of deep sleep—should be considered. Normally at the waking stage the phase of bodily activity of the individual is subordinated to the mental act (cf. “felt body” in K. C. Bhattacharyya). Our vital activities have to undergo the necessary mediation, at least implicit, of mind even when the former appear to be spontaneous—*manodhīnatādarśanāt prāṇavṛtteh*.<sup>35</sup>

Of course, the question that in deep sleep the vital function of the body seems to operate, even though the mind is admittedly inactive, has to be met in this connexion. To view phenomenologically such seeming independence of the individual’s vital phase from his mind, the apparent cessation of the former should be understood from the point of view of evidencing consciousness rather than of external obsever. From the standpoint of the evidencing subject the cognizance of the body may be effected only through the mediation of mind. And mind is admittedly inactive during sleep, which would practically mean that the body would be as good as functionless in relation to individual consciousness.

Here comes into view the theory that whatever exists does so only by virtue of its being evidenced by the subject—viz., *drṣṭi-sṛṣṭi-vāda*. Advaita proposes to work out into a full-fledged standpoint what is admittedly shown by dream-experience.<sup>36</sup> Hence it might be urged, if the being of things is admittedly derived by way of evidencing (or being evidenced), then to be consistent, only two terminal levels of being (*sattā*)—the apparent (*prātibhāsika*) and the transcendental (*pāramārthika*)—should strictly be retained (contrary

to the traditional Advaita classification into three types of being).\* Unless the existence of things *unperceived* (*ajñāta-sattā*) be recognised, there may hardly be a justification for bringing in the intermediate category of the *empirical* (*vyāvahārika*), which is commonly accepted by Advaita. Now, even without forgoing the transcendental standpoint of *drṣṭi-sṛṣṭi*, empirical objectivity need not be denied—in view of the evident difference between the two experiences of waking and of dream in the verdict of empirical consciousness.<sup>35</sup> The object of ordinary cognition cannot certainly be denied empirical validity so far as it can effect empirical use (*vyavahāra*) in the form of consequent activity or reaction, whether positive or negative—*jñānajanyapravṛttinivṛtti*.

The progress in Advaita phenomenology from the level of psycho-physical complex to that of consciousness pure marks the gradual steps of reflection. At the one end the ego is completely embedded and involved in the world of things ; and at the other end the ego—if there be any vestige of egoity at all at that stage—is left shorn of attachment to the world. In the former, the belief in the world as self-subsistent stands supreme and even man is reflected upon only within the bounds of the *natural* attitude. In the latter, there is a lapse of interest and belief in the world. *Jīva*—commonly meant by *I* and conditioned by the nescience-correlates of psychic organ, sense-organs and dual bodies, subtle and gross—would correspond to the “world-immersed ego” of the phenomenologist.† So far as the Husserlian steps of the

\* The *pāramārthika* and the *Prātibhāsika* should, in this sense, imply the two plainly contrary categories of the evidencing and the evidenced respectively ; although *prātibhāsika*, strictly speaking, should mean the illusory alone.

† E. Fink points out ‘the three egos’ as involved in Husserl’s Phenomenology: (i) the worldly ego or *I*, i.e., the natural man ; (ii) the epoché-performing ego, the ‘observer’ ; and (iii) the transcendental ego. M. Farber seeks to solve the riddle of correlating the three egos by recourse to “degrees of reflection”. Farber, *The Foundation of Phenomenology*, p. 553 f.

observing withdrawing ("epoché-performing") ego and of the *transcendental* ego are concerned, they both seem to be covered by the principle of *sākṣin* in Advaita. The concept of *sākṣin* primarily indicates 'the theoretical transcendental observer', involving no epistemological *use* in positing the world—theoretical or atheoretical. Yet this may be regarded only as the 'immanent' (*taṭastha*) moment of *sākṣin* where the reference to experience-continuum, though free, would necessarily be present. But besides this 'immanent' phase, a 'transcendent' (*kūṭastha*) moment could also be conceived where consciousness should stand completely self-accomplished.

So we note in conclusion the supposed *transcendent* status (beyond the "transcendental") of *cit*, taking its departure from the culminating point of transcendental reflection. Viewed thus in its possible ultimate status, *cit* should involve no reference to the region of pure experience and the essences thereof but would rather transcend such reference altogether. Here comes into play the major distinction from *pure* Phenomenology, meant as a rigorous science of essentialities, wherein essences should enjoy more or less the (rather 'theoretical') status of transcendental idealities. But Vedanta would hardly direct its interest to a possible system of *essences*, theoretically understood in the context of *meaning* rather than accepted as realities. On the contrary, essences presented in different modes in different grades of reflection would mark progressive approximations to the one and unique essence, viz., *Cit*. And this is because of *existentiality* pertaining to *Cit*, posited not merely as the central essence but also as the ultimate *existence-stratum* behind all possible essences—an issue to be attempted in the next part.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

(Chs. V and VI)

1. S. Radhakrishnan, *The Vedanta according to Samkara and Ramanuja*, p. 87 (George Allen & Unwin).
2. "Asya anarthahetoḥ prahāṇāya ātmakatavavidyāpratipattaye sarve vedāntāḥ ārabhyante", S. B. B. S., *Adhyāsabhbhāṣya*.
3. Cf. "Brahmaṇaḥ parohṛṣasya pratyakṣatvasiddhyaye ahamātmam upadīṣya puṇaḥ tadvyudāṣena mukhyātmatvam upadiṣati", *Vivaraṇa*, I, p. 57 f.
4. Vide *Vivaraṇa-prameya-saṅgraha*, p. 1 ff., according to which the other two are regarded as *phalopakārakāṅga*.
5. *Pañcadaśī*, I. 54.
6. "Anubhavāvasānativāt bhūtavastuviṣayatvāt ca . . .", S. B. B. S., I. i. 2.
7. S. B. B. S., II. i. 11, and *Bhāmaṭī* thereon.
8. Cf. ". . . śrutyā eva ca sahāyatvena tarkasya abhyupetatvāt", S. B. B. S., I. i. 2.
9. Cf. *Pañcadaśī*, VI. 30.
10. "Avyavādhānena citsaṁsarga eva pratibhāṣahetur na jñānavyāpāraḥ", *Vivaraṇa*, I, p. 61.
11. Cr. "Sārveśām eva eśām paratvena pratipādanam", S. B. B. S., III. iii. 14.
12. *Pañcadaśī*, VI. 167.
13. S. B. B. S., III. iii. 15.
14. *Ideas*, p. 124.
15. Cf. "Na hi vṛttim vinā sākṣiviṣayatvam kevalasākṣivedyatvam, kintu indriyānumānādīpramāṇavyāpāram antareṇa sākṣiviṣayatvam", *Vedānta-paribhāṣā*, Ch. I.
16. *Ideas*, p. 251.
17. Cf. "Kārakatvavyājanjakatvadharadvaya . . .", *Vivaraṇa*, I, p. 84.
18. "Antaḥkaraṇam hi svasmīnnīva svasaṁsarginyapi caitanyābhiviyaktiyogyatām āpādayati", *ibid.*, p. 70.
19. "Parināmasya ubhayasaṁsargād vyanjakābhedena vyāṅgāvicchedaḥ", *idem*.
20. Cf. ". . . antaḥkaraṇasya kartrtvāt tadavacchinnāḥ pramātā", *idem*.
21. Cf. "Yadyapi antaḥkaraṇavṛttiḥ avidyāvṛttiśca iti dve īme jñāne, tathāpi viṣayādhinam phalam", *Vidyāraṇya*, *Sarvadarśanasaṅgraha*, XVI.
22. Cf. ". . . viṣayoparaktasapratiyogikasvabhāvasya ahamikārasya . . .", *Vivaraṇa*, I, p. 55.
23. "Ahamvṛtti-avacchinnameva antaḥkaraṇam caitanyasya viṣayabhāvam āpadyate . . .", *idem*.
24. Cf. "Nistattva kāryagamyāsyā śaktirmāyāgnīśaktivat. Nahi śaktiḥ kvacit kaiścit budhyate kāryataḥ purā . . .", *Pañcadaśī*, II. 47.
25. Cf. "Sadvyāvṛttimātram bhramasya asattvam nāma na śūnyatvam niṣedhapratiyogitvāt . . .", *Vivaraṇa*, p. 38.
26. "Sarvavādinām sarvam vastu svakāle vartamānamapi vināśād ūrdham śūnyameva . . .", *idem*.

27. Cf. “*Sarvabhramāvabhāseṣu ca sākṣicaitanyasya ālambanasya vidya-manatvāt . . sākṣi eva adhīṣṭhānam avadhiśca vidyata . .*”, *Vivarāṇa*, loc. cit. ; also “. . kūṭasthāparokṣaikarasacaitanyāvadhiḥ sarvasya vādhahāḥ”, *Pañcapādikā*, p. 12.
28. “*Sākṣicaitanyasya ca ajñānāvabhasakatvāt na cidāśrayatvavirodhah*”, *Vivarāṇa*, I, p. 43.
29. *Ibid.*
30. “*Śaktih iti ātmāparatantratayā ātmanah sarvakāryopādānatvasya nir-vodhrtvam . .*”, *Pañcapādikā*.
31. “. . yasya avadhāna-anavadhānābhyām upalabdhi-anupalabdhi bhava-tah tanmanah”, *S. B. B. S.*, II. iii. 32.
32. *Ibid.*
33. *S. B., Brh. Up.*, IV. iii.
34. *Idem.*
35. *Vivarāṇa*, p. 58.
36. *Idem.*

PART III

BEYOND PHENOMENOLOGY: THE METAPHYSICAL  
STANDPOINT

## CHAPTER VII

### CRITIQUE ON ADVAITA PHENOMENOLOGY

From our investigations in the preceding section (Part II) which propose to be broadly phenomenological in character, the inadequacy of the strictly phenomenological standpoint in attempting a complete representation of the Advaitic metaphysic of experience may prove to be evident. The present discourse would not permit a closer review of the standpoint and method of Phenomenology as such ; only some of the more relevant and salient points will be referred to in this context. The said inadequacy of Phenomenology can, of course, be traced to certain limitations of the former in its claim to be a full-fledged *transcendental* philosophy. (Here "transcendental phenomenology" rather than "descriptive phenomenology" is more strictly in view.)

(a) Firstly, as a *transcendental* enquiry, Phenomenology, it seems, does not succeed in fully bringing out the *essentialistic* implication of the region of pure consciousness, into the nature of which it aims to investigate. The shortcoming in the essentialistic search seems to be conspicuous in the final characterization—honest though it may be—of consciousness as "phenomenological residuum"\*. But that is, after all, a *negative* definition of the nature and status of consciousness. (b) The major philosophical inadequacy of Phenomenology, in its strictest import, seems to lie in its necessary confinement to the status of 'possibility' on the pathway of its analysis and even at the apex of its investigation. But it is dubitable if such 'possibility' devoid of reality-ground could stand further analysis. Consequently, the failure of pure phenomenology to yield the genuine *onto-*

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\* Of course, the phenomenologist would agree, no phenomenological disconnecting or reduction could finally cancel the pure subject or Ego, which should serve as the centre of all acts of reference. As Husserl urges, no reduction 'can get any grip on' the pure Ego. (*Ideas*, p. 233).

*logical* standpoint of Being—a question which is nevertheless involved in any serious philosophizing.

The absence in Husserl's Phenomenology of such a standpoint—ontological or metaphysical—may have strengthened it as a rigorous presuppositionless science of philosophy (the aim of Husserl being to develop “philosophy as rigorous science”—but possibly at the cost of its further philosophical merit at large. In Advaita, on the other hand, the ontological standpoint is conspicuously present. So far as a pure metaphysic of experience is concerned, the Advaitic doctrine of *Cit* is no doubt intelligible on phenomenological lines in broad. But, a full-fledged metaphysics being taken into consideration,—and Advaita is hardly to be understood apart from its metaphysics,—the phenomenological standpoint in itself may evidently prove inadequate.

How, then, is the alleged ontological standpoint to be obtained in the context of the Advaita doctrine of *Cit*—proceeding more or less in the path of transcendental analysis of experience? The present chapter and the next shall chiefly be concerned with this problem of finding a pathway to the metaphysics of Being, in line with the doctrine of *Cit* expounded so far. And here comes the question of outstepping the bounds of *pure* phenomenology in favour of a supposedly more *concrete* approach.

It may at least here be remarked that Advaita, after all, would be the last philosophy to stop with *idealities*, which represent *ideal possibility* alone, and to refrain from positing Being as absolute *existence* (ontologically speaking). In this respect the notion of ‘possibility’ should prove particularly relevant, as defining the relation of the *ideal* and the *actual*. The position of Advaita in this context has accordingly to be considered.

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As to the general position of Phenomenology as a ‘presuppositionless’ philosophy, a doubt may at once arise regarding the attempt to get at *essences* disconnected from reality. What phenomenology seeks to investigate is the

realm of essences taken neither as real nor as unreal. But how far can the proposed study of a completely *neutral* region of experience be possible? Essences seem to enjoy a peculiar status distinct from facts and are characterized as 'non-real'. All transcendentally reduced contents are taken as *non-realities* and are excluded from every connexion with the real world. Now, could it at all be possible to obtain such essences, excluded from every connexion with the real world and to proceed systematically in the neutral region, making for an autonomous system of truths?

A self-contained system of idealities may be otherwise intelligible in the light of abstract analysis ; but the phenomenologist's claim to proceed to a systematic theory of the Essential Being through *intuition* (or 'essential insight') may seem to be rather misleading. Indeed in Phenomenology, essences are conceived more (though not completely) in the line of hypostatized universals, born of logical generalization, than as concrete individuals of immediate experience. In this connexion it may be noted that *intuition* as it applies to the Advaita metaphysic of experience holds necessarily in the *reality*-context (as noted earlier).

Phenomenology, of course, turns to the region of *subjectivity*—leaving the pre-existent objective world as the bias of the naturalistic standpoint. However, in thus turning to the region of pure experience, it somehow assumes that the realm of subjectivity is valid by itself—enjoying exclusive self-existence so plainly denied to the world of objects.\* The region of *pure consciousness* is taken to have absolute being of its own independent of the natural world. However, what is missing is a positive indication as to the reality-status of the alleged transcendental subjectivity. Any locus of subjectivity in the natural world is denied ; nor is the reality of a supra-natural region admitted. For the latter would go against the basic postulate of *immanent* consciousness as vitally bearing upon the phenomenological procedure.

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\* Cf. Marvin Farber's criticism on "the assumptive nature of the general field of subjectivity", *The Foundation*, p. 541 f.

Moreover, to speak of subjectivity without starting with any basis in actuality or *natural* locus seems to be rather presumptuous. As it has been shown on previous occasions in our discourse, subjectivity should be posited primarily at the *bodily* level itself. Though the phenomenologist starts with the existent ego or the natural-empirical consciousness, the realm of subjectivity is yet taken from the very beginning as an exclusive region able to stand by itself apart from any connexion with the existent. Besides, the phenomenological method of "reduction" from factual experience to the transcendental dimension may as well expose it to the charge of being 'anti-scientific' (anti-naturalistic), as critiques like M. Färber would put forward.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, a strict logic of science, proceeding in the line of laws of nature, is likely to demand that the essences should constitute the *real* world of facts.\*

Further, starting with a non-committal attitude with regard to metaphysics, Husserl seems in the long run to surrender his phenomenological position to an *idealistic* metaphysics of the Cartesian type. Thus, in "Cartesian Meditations" Husserl contends that it is necessary to lose the objective world in order to regain it in the field of universal self-consciousness. Beyond the Cartesian methodic doubt in the framework of his phenomenological reduction, Husserl proceeds to the *ego cogito* of Descartes—the domain of absolute and certain being—through the principle of 'transcendental subjectivity'. Phenomenology thus tends to revert to Cartesianism in attempting to grasp consciousness as the region independent of the corporeal.

In the phenomenological exposition of subjectivity, again, the problem of 'the three egos' (as E. Fink critically points out) is likely to emerge. In Husserlian philosophy, the *observer-ego* is dissociated from the world of the *empirical ego*. The dubitability of the world presupposes

\* Cf. Moritz Geiger in *Proceedings of the Sixth International Congress of Philosophy* (1926): ". . . the arguments taken from the reality of laws of nature not only maintain that essences are given but also that they are real", p. 276 f.

the indubitability of the doubting self ; and such self cannot itself be in the world. This ego, like Kant's 'transcendental unity of apperception', might have a functional rather than substantive validity. But Husserl, with his Cartesian motive, passes on from the intermediate ego to the *pure* or *transcendental* self which ultimately tends to stand as the *prius* of all objectivity. This seems to indicate a rather unwarranted transition from *I having experience* to *I that have them*, as Ryle has pointed out ; it would mean a confusion of I-ness with a 'new I.'<sup>2</sup>

If there be any significant distinction between the said I's—the observing and the transcendental,—the phenomenologist, to be consistent, should confine himself to the first type. Indeed, Husserl himself posits the pure ego as the 'phenomenological residuum'. Yet in continuing the phenomenological self-reflection, the reflecting (i.e., epoché-making) ego,—referred to as constituting objectivity—is again posited in an *absolute* sense. My Ego comes to be *absolutely* posited in the sense that at the final stage of transcendental reflection it is "given purely as that which has being in itself, in itself experiences a world, confirms the same and so forth". Such tendency of existentially-metaphysically affirming the transcendental ego betrays in phenomenology a shift "from the conditions of knowledge to conditions of being", as M. Farber points out.<sup>3</sup>

The phenomenological investigation starts with the admitted aim of finding out 'conditions of knowledge' rather than 'conditions of being'. There can be no continuity between the two searches—more so because the question of existence is sought to be kept apart from the phenomenological procedure. It is only through some approach other than that of essentialistic reflection pure that essences (or 'phenomena') may assume *existential* validity. For existence, to be grasped in its unique concreteness, has to be approached in a way other than the purely intellectual. And that would be the *existentialistic* approach, offering to meet the central drawback of Phenomenology. [The *existential-*

*istic*, as distinct from the merely *existential*, approach refers to a philosophic insight into the ontological structure of the fundamental human existence (*Dasein*). Cf. the distinction between 'existential' (*existenziell*) and 'existentialist' (*existenzial*) in Heidegger's thought]\*

The shortcoming of the purely phenomenological approach towards the Vedantic metaphysic of experience may be evident, as the necessary *ontological* status of *Cit*—the supreme and ultimately the only essence—is taken into consideration. Thus, pure consciousness is not the mere transcendental presupposition, nor even the limiting point in phenomenological reduction. It is further posited as the prime existence-stratum, in terms of which reality is to be conceived on ultimate analysis. Thus for Vedanta, 'phenomenological residuum' would not be the final characterization of pure consciousness; but it proposes to go beyond a metaphysically non-committal status. How that passage to the expressly positive standpoint of Being—a metaphysical standpoint *par excellence*—can be effected in the typically Vedantic way, shall be shown in the next chapter.

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#### THE STATUS OF 'POSSIBILITY' REVIEWED

A strictly phenomenological investigation would, as we have seen, hardly move beyond the region of pure *possibility* which is represented by the system of essences and wherefrom the ontic question of *existence* is sought to be shelved.† And

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\* The philosophical movement commonly known as *Existentialism* lays its hand upon the simple truth, generally overlooked in traditional philosophy, that *existence* is primordial and irreducible. It contends that existence, unlike a category of thought, is unamenable to rational analysis and proof. From this recognition of the predicament of existence follows the denial of the purely intellectual method of reflective analysis in the matter of getting at existence; the approach, on the other hand, should rather be one of *identification* with or 'participation' in reality by way of *concrete* experience, the import of which is subjective. Existence thus takes on a unique meaning in the context of the non-cognitive approach of the Existentialist.

† Cf. Husserl's general attitude that 'the knowledge of possibilities precedes the knowledge of actualities'.

the Advaitic principle of *Cit* has been worked out, in keeping with the phenomenological outlook, as the essence within the region of pure experience—its status being defined accordingly. Consequently, to be consistent with such phenomenological standpoint, the ontic status pertaining to *Cit* is ultimately to be defined purely in terms of *possibility*. [Our earlier investigations in Part I have also left *cit* with the tentative status of possibility—as *possible* autonomous subjectivity].

However, it should be noted, genuine Advaita would not subscribe to an a-prioristic approach as such—a-priorities, either as pure concepts of thought or as pure essences, being not the concern of Advaita. It is rather with the question of *reality* that Advaita concerns itself. Nor would it be ready to bring down *cit*—in conformity with the phenomenological standpoint—to the metaphysically undefined level of ‘phenomenological residuum’. Yet, in reflectively approaching the ultimate principle of *Cit*, Advaita may primarily refer to the final and only essence as *possible* Reality, distinguished from the actual—such possibility being conveyed by reflective analysis itself.<sup>4</sup> But such an idea of possibility (*sambhāvanā-buddhi*) as born of reflection need not be taken as dismissing the ontological ground posited by Advaita.

All that a purely phenomenological line of investigation may assure us is *cit* as the central essence behind all our experience, actual and possible—the essence, theoretically at least, being divorced from existence. But the fundamental metaphysical interest of Advaita, on the other hand, lies in *existentiality* or in reality that exists *per se*. So the problem arises: how are we to reconcile these two apparently rival points of view in the understanding of Advaita, i.e., the phenomenological and the ontological? The task is thus to find out whether and how an account in the light of possibility could yield at the same time existential reality.

Here, the *existentialistic* point of view may come in, proposing a *non-cognitive* approach to reality. But that would mean the abandonment of the cognitive approach so

persistently followed by Advaita. So, the existentialistic approach can hardly be entertained, just because reflective analysis has to proceed in the pathway of *knowing*, whereby alone the question of possibility can arise. Thus, leaving aside the non-cognitive approach of the existentialist, the ontological possibility of the Advaitin should rather be considered in the light of knowing—and that may be characterized as *cognitive possibility*.

Apart from the different orientations of the concept of 'possibility' in different philosophies, metaphysical or non-metaphysical, let us consider what may broadly be regarded as the 'common-sense view', and its further implications. As the common-sense view would state, every possible is real, unless it is contradicted. A content of experience brings with it a claim to reality or actual existence, but the negative condition of possible contradiction would be there. Consequently, whatever is presented as a *possible* content—and any content is a *possible* content—is to be taken as *prima facie* real so far as it is capable of standing possible contradiction. This position would be quite opposite to that of the positivist; for the latter, possibility itself is conceived in terms of reality or actual existence and not *vice versa* (as in Positivist thought). Such a notion of possibility should not be limited to the pragmatic standpoint of 'working abstraction' that owes its entire validity to actual experience alone. Also it need not be doubted that the distinction between actuality and possibility is altogether overlooked in such a view. For, to take the possible as equivalent to the real is not the same as to actualize or realize such reality; the latter would mean something more.

Again, to approach the question in a different way, the verdict of our common aesthetic experience also—as in the region of art and music—would hardly justify the status of such *bare* possibility as noted above. Thus, in the world of art, a masterpiece of painting such as an Ajanta fresco or the Mona Lisa of Da Vinci, for instance, would convey an ideal proportion or harmony of visible form. Or a song attuned

to an Indian *rāga* would convey the ideal form of the *rāga* concerned. In neither case is the *ideal* form conceived through mere *abstraction* from the colours or the notes concerned ; rather, in and through the latter the mind aesthetically feels the ideal (that is the *possible*) as concrete (and as realized), though in progressive steps. Thus the positivistic attempt to reduce ideality to a mere sensationalistic 'entropy', as it were, seems to be plainly going against the verdict of common aesthetic experience.

With the said common-sense interpretation, however, the Advaitic approach to the question of possibility would substantially agree. Thus for Advaita, every presentative content of experience—*viṣaya*—*prima facie* partakes of the status of the real but subject to the negative condition of cancellation (*bādha*). Any content may be taken as actually existent so far as it is not replaced by a new content at the self-same locus. The possible is thus envisaged *qua* real and not as ideal abstraction or bare possibility.

The Advaitic theory of intrinsic validity of cognition—*Svataḥprāmāṇya*—conforms to this approach to the notion of possibility. According to *Svataḥprāmāṇya* theory, the reality of the presented content makes itself felt at the very primary moment of cognition. With the Mīmāṃsakas, Advaita would hold that the object of cognition is real so far as cognition reveals it, and that a cognition is valid so far as it reveals some object. Consequently, cognition in revealing an object is necessarily valid. The intrinsic capacity of cognition for determining the object is recognised to be defining the very nature of epistemic validity (*prāmāṇya*) itself.<sup>5</sup> Thus, the truth pertaining to the knowledge of object concerned is not to be regarded as an *added* property of the knowledge, gained through external corroborative or confirmatory processes of cognition and of practical test, as Nyāya would maintain.

A likely objection to the position of intrinsic validity of cognition would be: the question of validity could be of any meaning only in a reflective context where the 'truth-value'

(as Hobbhouse and others would term it) is involved. As left to itself at the primary moment, cognition should be free from any question of validity. But it may be replied, the actual existence of the object is communicated to us at the very primary moment of cognition. What a secondary cognition contributes is no *new* reality ; there may only be a more *explicit* recognition of the self-same reality. There is no addition either with regard to the validity itself or to its apprehension.\* As to the validity itself, the self-same truth present at the primary level reappears in a clearer form at the secondary ; for, the reality of the object is present all the same at both the levels. As for the apprehension of the truth, whereas at the primary level the existence of the object in question is felt entirely in the object-context, the secondary confirmatory cognition pertains more specifically to the *existence* aspect of the object, more or less independent of the context of the content in view. The truth of the unreflective cognition is thus stated only in a new context in the reflective cognition, thereby gaining a new significance.

Also in examining the Nyāya position of extrinsic validity of knowledge—*paratah-pramāṇya*—Advaita points out that testifying knowledge at the reflective level has no ontological bearing upon the existential truth already gained at the primary moment of cognition. For, subsequent associative and cohering cognition with regard to the object—the latter being involved only by way of reference not immediate—may have ‘psychological’ or ‘aesthetic’ value (to echo the logical positivist denunciation of metaphysics), which may be relevant to the knowing mind but not to the truth pertaining to the knowledge of object already gained. Viewed in this light, the standpoint of intrinsic validity need not basically come in conflict with the Naiyāyika contention as to extrinsic validity.

The question of *error* is worth mentioning in this connection, because the phenomenon of error may be pointed

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\* *Vivarana-prameya* refers to the question either of the origination (*utpatti*) or of the apprehension (*jñapti*) of the validity concerned, p. 100 f.

out as seemingly incompatible with the intrinsic validity of cognition. In its emphasis on the *presentative* basis of an erroneous cognition, Advaita would indeed agree with Nyāya as against the Prābhākara and the Baudhā. But in Nyāya theory of *Anyathākhyāti*, the belief in the *reality* of each possible seems to be overdrawn—(the appearing silver in the nacre is thus explained as *really* located in a different spatio-temporal situation). While Nyāya goes so far as to invest the content (*viśaya*) at once with a reality-status, Advaita would not go further than ascribing on it a tentative and pragmatic (*vyāvahārika*) validity—a peculiar *neutral* status neither of reality nor of unreality—*sadasadvilakṣaṇatva* [see Ch. VI (5)]. As to the alleged cognition at the error stage, Advaita treats it not as knowledge proper but only as *seeming* knowledge (*jñānābhāsa*).\*

Now, without going further into the details of the orientations of the concept of possibility in the relevant philosophical systems, some of the major positions in this regard may only summarily be mentioned in the present context. Thus, in the Critical philosophy of Kant, the problem of *transcendental possibility* was introduced as distinguished from the merely *logical* on the one hand and the *metaphysical* on the other. But Kantianism, after all, ended in exposing the yawning gulf between cognitive possibility and the alleged metaphysical possibility. For the realization of the latter, the alternative path of 'practical reason' was suggested. In pursuit of this aspect of Kantian philosophy—the primacy of 'practical' over 'pure' reason—the philosophy of values developed. But in the latter, again, the question of cognitive possibility was altogether missed, so far as it sought to look upon 'ought' as the ontologically original concept.

Then we come to the cross-roads of the alternatives presented by Nicolai Hartmann and by A. H. Whitehead

\* Cf. The distinction of nescience (*ajñāna*) in the aspect of object and of cognizance—the latter in terms of *ajñāna-vṛtti*. q.v. Ch. VI (6).

respectively. Hartmann develops the concept of ideal possibility in the form of value-essence on *phenomenological* lines. The ideal (*a priori*) modality characterizing value can, however, be represented by the concept 'ought', though not as implying moral obligation. (The category "ought-to-be" gives a new conception of possibility). However, Hartmann seems to end with a schism between the regions of the real and the ideal. Ultimate idealities, though sought to be brought out in steps of reflection, prove to be devoid of ontological status proper. With Whitehead, on the other hand, the transcendent entities ("eternal objects") though metaphysical are admittedly obtained through abstraction. The two realms of actuality and ideality—of "actual occasions" and of "eternal objects"—are regarded as 'intrinsically inherent in the total metaphysical situation'. However, in Whitehead's philosophy of Organism, possibility comes through abstraction rather than through a transcendental analysis of experience. Consequently, no necessary compatibility between possibility and knowability—which would mean *metaphysical-cum-cognitive possibility*—could be shown.

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In the Advaita metaphysic of experience may be traced a fruitful combination of the two trends mentioned above, the phenomenological (of the type of Hartmann), resulting in a schism between the real and the ideal and the metaphysical (as in Whitehead), positing *transcendent* entities through abstraction. Thus, on the one hand, a broadly phenomenological procedure would be in view in discovering *Cit* as the ultimate essence. On the other hand, *Cit* presents not merely the highest knowable essence in transcendental reflection but also claims absolute reality. *Cit* should thus come out as *possibility qua reality*.

*Cit*-essence, unlike Hartmannian 'Value', is not to be regarded as Platonic in its transcendentality. For it is, after all, obtained from within the region of 'purified' subjective experience in the wake of transcendental reflection; though it is not to be confined on ultimate consideration within

such a sphere. *Cit* is sought to be traced in and through the phenomenal states of experience. At no stage of reflection—not even at the bodily level—is *cit* absent. At every stage *cit* is to be traced in varying association with the corresponding referential or functional correlate; the non-empirical fringe prevails behind the empirical mass. As Śaṅkara contends, consciousness is found to persist in and through all the three normal states of man—from waking to deep sleep.<sup>6</sup> With each stage of reflection, *cit* as the ‘possible’ comes out in greater purity of essence, progressively detached from the corresponding empirical implications. The import of ‘thou’ (*tvam*) in ‘*Tat tvam asi*’ indicates the innermost self that comes out in stages of reflection right from the bodily level and ultimately proves to be the *possible* pure consciousness itself.<sup>7</sup>

Now, what precisely is meant by *cit* as conveying *possibility*? Is it just an *ideal* demand of thought for the ‘Ought-to-Be’? That would indeed leave the possible without the reality-basis. But to refer back to the common-sense position, confirmed by Advaita, as already shown, every situation of ‘possibility’ involves also reality—subject to the absence of possible contradiction.

So viewed, the intermediate essences presented in the path of reflection should rather be interpreted as provisional possibles—such as may claim to be real prior to being contradicted by subsequent content of reflection. Such intermediate status is to be read as neither real nor unreal, *mutatis mutandis* neither completely possible nor completely non-possible—a status represented aptly by the Advaitic category of the inexplicable (*anirvācya*). Thus, whatever stands as possible is guaranteed reality—at least within the context of the relevant experience-continuum.

Following this line of approach, we would come to the *final* essence, the highest possibility. It is thus that *cit* is derived. *Cit* may be viewed exactly in the light of any other essence as revealed in the intermediate range of reflection. Thus, on the one hand, it would present itself as *possible*,

marked at the same time by *knowability*, at the terminal stage of transcendental reflection. On the other hand, it should be regarded as *real* so far as it is possible. However, the real crux of the problem on possibility would arise at the stage of ultimate essence. The highest of possibility should claim at the same time to be the highest of reality. *Cit* is the essence which not merely *demands*\* to be real as 'Ought-to-Be', but which must *exist*—and exist ontologically.

The possible grounds for holding the existentiality of the supreme essence may be more closely considered.

(a) A unique peculiarity of the *cit*-essence proper—a peculiarity missing in preceding essences—has to be admitted. Intermediate essences come home to us only as themselves revealed by the central essence of *Cit* in the background. The varying modes of subjectivity present shades of essentiality only as reflecting the presuppositional consciousness, the ultimate revealing factor. However, so far as the ultimate essence of *cit* is concerned, it stands on a unique ground. It is, as we have formerly seen, essentially self-revealing (*svayamprakāśa*). From the point of view of evidencing at least, *cit* constitutes the ground of all other essence-forms within the region of consciousness. And so far as evidencingness constitutes the very essence of *cit*, what is foundational *ratio cognoscendi* proves to be so also *ratio essendi*.

(b) To refer to the theory of possibility as implied by Advaita, each *possible* at the respective stage of transcendental analysis stands as real, subject to the absence of possible contradiction by subsequent content. Now, the *possible* as revealed at the terminal phase of transcendental analysis *ex hypothesi* would claim at least provisional reality. Here, however, the essence presents itself with the unique claim of absolute *uncontradictability* (*abādhitatva*). Avaita holds in broad the indestructibility of consciousness, the impossibility

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\* We have freely used the expression 'demand'—borrowing the concept from Hartmann—for its suitability for the purpose of our discourse (particularly in this chapter).

of its absolute negation (*atyantābhāva*). The possible absence of consciousness is inconceivable—in the sense that the chair, the table, this or that particular individual might possibly be conceived of as not being there in some point of time, past or future. There is indeed no theoretical limit to the possibility of absence in respect of any phenomenon that may come within the range of consciousness directly or indirectly. But the evidencing principle that stands behind every experience and every thought—even the suicidal thought of its own annihilation—can hardly be regarded as itself destructible. To recognise consciousness in its identical essence apart from varying modes of reference amounts to denying that it is temporally determinate in terms of origination and destruction.<sup>8</sup>

So, what follows from the Advaitic position as stated is that *Cit* as the ultimate essence of the subjective is not merely necessarily *knowable* but also *real*. It is the essence which differs uniquely in status from any other essence. Its unfailing reality-claim may be viewed in the light of one phenomenon alone, viz., the 'I' that presents itself *indubitably*. The indubitability and peculiar immediacy of the subjective comes home to us primary through the *I*-feeling. In *cit*, the same indubitability at the surface reappears in unconditioned freedom. The individual-bound *I* is transcended in the pure essence of subjectivity—the latter being *deindividualized* as much as it is real. [Though *sākṣi-caitanya* marks the foundational essence within the range of individual consciousness, *cit* as existence *par excellence* is hardly to be confined within the bounds of the individual. Advaita metaphysics is ever directed to the trans-individual Existence].

Thus, the Advaitic *Cit* stands for cognitive possibility *par excellence*—the highest Essence being shown to be as much *real* as *knowable*. Here, however, our next problem would arise. *Cit*, so far as it is *phenomenologically* interpreted in terms of essence, stands as real only *qua essence* but not *qua reality*. However, the supreme essence is also recognised to be unique in status, as necessarily implying *exist-*

ence. And once such existentiality or reality of the Essence is recognized, cognitive possibility also takes on a new significance. It no longer remains an ideal envisaging in transcendental reflection but demands concrete realization. Thus, the problem of *actualizing* the possible as real comes in—a problem which has no less seriously been treated in Advaita philosophy.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Marvin Farber, "Experience and Transcendence", *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Sept. 1951; also, *The Foundation of Phenomenology: Edmund Husserl and the Quest for a Rigorous Science of Philosophy* (Harvard University Press), p. 535.
2. G. Ryle, "Phenomenology", *Proceedings of Aristotelian Society*, Suppl. Vol. XI.
3. M. Farber, *The Foundation of Phenomenology*, p. 541.
4. Cf. "Jñānānanda-sarvajñapratyagātmabhūtam brahma-niścayayitum asamartha api yuktayah śaudāvagate brahmaṇi sāmānyadvāreṇa sambhāvanābuddhīhetabō bhavanti", *Vivarāṇa*, V, p. 221.
5. "Prāmāṇyam nāma jñānasya arthaśaricchedasāmarthyam", *Vivarāṇa-prameya-saṅgraha*, p. 101.
6. "... caitanyasya tu suṣupte api anuvṛttim. . .", S.B.B.S., IV. i. 2.
7. Cf. "... tvampadārthopi pratyagātmā. . . dehād ārabhya pratyagātmata�ā sambhāvyamānāḥ caitanyaśāryantatvena avadhāritāḥ", *idem*.
8. "Nodeti nāstametyekā samvidēśā suayamprabhā", *Pañcadaśi*, I. 7.

## CHAPTER VIII

### PASSAGE TO BEING : FAITH-APPROACH

It now appears that the purely transcendental-phenomenological standpoint could assure nothing further than the *possibility* that pure consciousness should be real and not a mere ideal presupposition. The ontological standpoint, on the other hand, offers to pass on to the concrete reality-ground of the ideal possibility. In envisaging a transition from the one standpoint to the other—from the phenomenological to the ontological—a new approach, which may overcome the necessary limitation of the purely reflective approach given so far, would be necessitated. In this context would appear the role of faith—faith in scriptural authority or the verbal testimony of scriptures (*Sabda*).

Such scriptural faith has a twofold role to play in respect of gaining the final ontological standpoint in Advaita. At the first instance, it should bring home the positive assurance of the *knowability* of the supreme Essence *in concrete*, i.e., as real or existent and not merely *qua* essence. Further, such assurance gained through verbal testimony should be carried to fulfilment in actual realization of Reality.

*Faith*—as we propose to characterize the Advaitic attitude in this context—though departing from the strictly rational and reflective approach, should not be taken as a mere non-cognitive attitude or a bare surrender of the cognitive. It does not stand for a premature emotive-volitional commitment by choosing to forgo progress of knowing—as Existentialists would generally do. It rather signifies a fulfilment of the *cognitive* demand itself, developed in the pathway of Advaita metaphysic of experience. It suggests a level which, though other than the intellectual, leads to the actualization of the demand for knowing Reality in concrete. Viewed in this light, scriptural faith should rather stand for

an *enlightened irrationalism*. The possibility that the highest essence discovered in transcendental reflection, i.e., *cit* is at the same time real *per se*, is primarily given to us through a peculiar assurance resting upon the general Vedantic tradition. Further, such assurance is ultimately carried to the stage of fullest comprehension of Reality or Being. For want of any other suitable expression, the whole province of this trans-rational approach may broadly be characterized as *Faith*—an approach grounded in *Śruti*.\*

There are two implications of this faith-approach: (a) It refers to the tradition of scriptures (*Śruti*) as the repository of the highest spiritual truths and insights; (b) In a more ultimate sense, faith implies the *revelation* of Reality to the mind already enlightened through reflection. (In both cases, however, the reference is to *knowing*.) Accordingly follows the twofold treatment of the *alogism* involved in the final phase of the Advaitic metaphysic of experience.

A. The tradition of scriptural authority (*Śruti-prāmāṇya*) with regard to ultimate (metaphysical) truths has a significant bearing upon the Vedantic discipline in its search for Reality. A statement contained in the scriptures (*āptavākyā*) carries a special claim with the searching mind on the very strength of traditional sanctity. As such it proves to be uniquely different in its truth-claim from any other ordinary statement. For the modern mind, however, to anchor a philosophical belief on mere traditional authority may seem to be the very antithesis of a genuinely philosophical endeavour. (The point is touched upon subsequently).

So, the Vedantic appeal to verbal testimony of *Śruti* has to be viewed in the proper perspective. It is a truism that

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\* Even in the context of *religious* faith as generally interpreted in Western theology, the cognitive aspect as 'belief' may be distinguished from the volitional aspect as 'trust'—the former alone being relevant in theological discourse. *cf.* "Faith", *Hasting's Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. V. (1912), p. 689. (Of course, our discourse here proposes to be wholly *philosophical* and not theological.)

a philosopher has, after all, to participate in the concrete life-blood of his cultural tradition. Such tradition may have unique validity for the philosopher concerned—a validity which may normally be missed in a tradition other than his own. So follows an *alogical* acceptance of the *reality* of such tradition even prior to a reflective and rational appreciation of its nature through distinguishment. Thus, when the philosopher accepts a tradition—granting it to be a living one—the attitude that is involved may be characterized as *existentialistic*, in a broad sense of the term. It is a primary existentialistic faith in the authority of *Sṛuti* that gives special importance to scriptural statements.

Such metaphysical assurance, derived from verbal testimony, may well be explained with reference to ordinary 'verbal cognition' in the empirical sphere. Thus, while any spoken word conveys nothing more than *bare* possibility as regards the actual existence of the meant or referent of the word, such *prima facie* belief would vary according to the hearer's faith in the speaker concerned—the presence of what Stebbing calls "the hearer-speaker attitude" being taken for granted. When a fact is stated by one in whom I have faith (in the ordinary sense of reliability), I tend to believe the fact to be an actuality even though it be beyond the range of my experience at the moment. The case would, however, be different when I have scarcely any faith in the person stating or the speaker.

However, verbal faith derived from *ordinary* speech would evidently fall short of the faith derived from the verbal testimony of scriptures at least in two important respects—even when the element of primary faith in the speaker be granted in common in both the cases. Firstly, unlike ordinary speech, scriptural testimony does not offer any possibility of empirical verification, the truth-content here being *ex-hypothesi non-empirical*. Secondly, what is conveyed by ordinary speech is, after all, *bare* possibility which in all case falls short of completely valid possibility. The verbal testimony of *Sṛuti*, on the other hand,—usually

represented by the preceptor (*guru*) in whom the student hearing is supposed to have full faith (*śraddhā*)—necessarily yields *valid* possibility. What such verbal testimony guarantees are the *reality* of the supreme essence of reflection independent of the context of the latter, and also the ultimate comprehension of Reality *in concrete*.

It is, however, to be noted that even the verbal testimony of scriptures can *prima facie* yield only mediate (*parokṣa*) and not immediate knowledge. Nevertheless, the mediate knowledge as to the nature and existence of Being, so produced through the verbal source, enjoys validity on its own account—thanks to the scriptural source itself. And this is what distinguishes such knowledge from the mediate knowledge derived from common inference (*anumāna*). Inference as an independent way of knowing fails as such to lead to *ontological* possibility, which however can be communicated by the scriptural statements. In the field of empirical knowledge, inference may provide some sort of possibility (in the form of verifiability), though on the basis of available data. In verbal cognition from *Śruti* where the transcendent non-empirical reality is meant, there is hardly any scope for empirical verification. What is missing in (empirical) verification is, however, more than gained on ground of verbal testimony, which itself claims to embody experience at the highest level.

This approach through faith in the form of verbal testimony may be clearer if we cite by contrast the major approaches to *cognitive faith* which may be cited in European thought. Thus comes into view the approach of *pure thought* ('Transcendental reflection') as may be found (a) *positively*, in the Rationalist system of the continent and (b) *nagatively*, in Kantianism.

(a) The Rationalist belief, shared by a host of thinkers from Descartes to Wulf and Leibniz, assumes that pure *a priori* thinking gives us valid cognitive possibility regarding transcendental metaphysical truths. And the world-views they respectively present are but the elaborations of pure

categories of transcendental thought in its *a priori* movement. Now such categories are posed as pure *universals*, distinguished reflectively. But the very possibility of *absolutely* dissociating universals of pure reason from particulars of experience may be put to question. For the honest verdict of thought seems to be that pure universals, as completely dissociated from particulars, should rather stand as *ideal* 'demands' than as *real* categories.

(b) It is from this negative criticism of the rationalist position that Kantianism takes its origin. Kant, proceeding through transcendental reflection to *a priori* modes of thinking, comes to a negative position so far as the ontological possibility of the *a-priorities* of thought is concerned. The movement of transcendental thought by way of distinction seems with Kant to reach its apex in 'Transcendental Ideas'; the latter, though the highest target of thought, misses philosophical validity in neither bearing upon actual experience nor possessing existence by themselves. Kant, not ready to sacrifice cognitive possibility, prescribes a veritable stage-back to the level of actuality of sense-experience. Reality is to be sought nowhere else than on the sense-level. Highest universals or pure concepts may arise as mere *demands* of pure reason with no possibility of their actualization as real. The path of transcendental reflection remains, after all, to be linked to the actuality of sense experience. (However, Kant's concern for metaphysical reality made its way through the path of "practical reason").

This Kantian critique of pure thought in the face of the rationalist doctrine may find its echo in the Advaitic treatment of *universal* (*sāmānya*) in opposition to the Naiyāyika view. Advaita, though tentatively admitting universals in its reflective enquiry, would stop short of positing *metaphysical* universals, existing *per sé* and completely dissociated from the particulars. The ideality of universals is to be recognized, but in and through the system of particulars and not exclusively beyond that. This is where Advaita would sharply differ from the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika standpoint which

would too boldly posit *metaphysical* universals—standing on that account on the same platform as the Greek masters, Plato and Aristotle. Of course, Advaita seems *prima facie* to admit of at least two universals, viz., *Cit* and *Sat* (Existence). Yet, even such universals would hold good rather as transcendental categories in the path of reflection, and could further be posited as metaphysically real on the strength of scriptural faith alone. At the final stage of concrete realization, the two evident universals would prove to be but Reality itself or Being that is the concrete embodiment of *Cit* and *Sat* at the same time.

B. The Advaitic search after Reality would not stop with the assurance of *realizability* born of verbal testimony. It passes on to the final phase of realization itself—to the complete actualization of the *possibility* as pertaining to the supreme essence. The reflective grasp of supreme essence through transcendental analysis, supported by scriptural authority, is ultimately to mature into the concrete immediacy of Reality. Here the typical issue of knowledge from verbal testimony—*śabdajanyajñāna*—would come into play.

Such cardinal scriptural text as 'Thou art that' (*Tattvam asi*) has a direct bearing upon the Vedantic discipline, not as merely theoretical statements but as the point of departure for enlightenment through integral comprehension of Reality. The latter alone marks the final aim of Vedanta. The primary knowledge of Reality, with all the certainty as may be derived from scriptural texts, does not by itself imply the fullest comprehension. Scriptural texts are not, for the matter of that, without any efficacy for bringing about final enlightenment. In common experience we do find words serving as useful agents for bringing home direct to the wandering mind the truth it has been searching without success. The analogy of 'the tenth man' (*Daśamastvamasi*)—a homely example in Advaita literature—strikes on this very

point.\* In this case, a *demonstration* occurs within a context that gives significance to the object (or person) demonstrated. In the ideal stage of perfect realization of identity between "that" and "thou", however, the common distinction between the "descriptive" and the "demonstrative" uses of language (*cf.* Stebbing)<sup>1</sup> would not hold good—both "thou" and "that" being referred to as much *demonstratively* as *descriptively*.

Cognition through word (*śabda*) is to be analysed further in steps of Vedantic realization. Firstly, there arises from scriptural texts an *indirect* knowledge concerning the *existence* of Supreme Being. There are texts declaring the latter as *real* (*sat*), as *existing* (*asti*). All that such existential statements yield is the assured but still *indirect* knowledge of Reality. In its lack of directness, it is no less mediate (*parokṣa*) than inferential cognition, as already pointed out. It is only the generic aspect of existentiality (*sattvāṁśa*) that is *primarily* conveyed through scriptural texts, as also from ordinary words or inference ; but the *specific* content (*vyakti*) is not revealed thereby. To state the situation in a different way, *viz.*, in terms of *ajñāna*—the ignorance in respect of existence would be removed while one may still be in the dark as to the actual manifestation of the meant content—(*abhānāpādaka-ajñāna*)<sup>2</sup>.

In order that the instruction in scriptural texts may yield its intended result, *viz.*, the fullest comprehension of Self, the import of the texts concerned implying Reality must be understood.<sup>3</sup> The intermediate stages of gradual apprehension of the ultimate essence, finally meant by the texts, are thus necessitated. Steps of knowledge, in the understanding of the true essence of Self as distinguished from its inessential aspects, are presupposed<sup>4</sup>. Through repeated guidance from relevant scriptural texts, the gradual grasp of *the* Essence is

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\* In *Bhāmatī*, I.i.1, another example is given on a similar point. For a musical trainee, who is trying to grasp the exact note occurring in a certain *rāga*, a statement of the relevant note (or notes) may help his discriminating the note in actual perception. (It is thus that the science of music actually comes to facilitate the practical learner of music).

effected in progressive approximation. Thus, as on the one hand inessential implicates are dissociated, so on the other the underlying essence-content would present itself as more and more purified. For the ultimate essence, i.e., the essence that stands behind all intermediate essences, remains involved within the manifold associations of body, sense-organs, mental factors and so on.

So far as the steps of reflection are prompted by scriptural instructions, the immediacy of knowledge resulting from scriptural statements, even if admitted, should hardly be taken without qualification. Indeed the *Bhāmatī* school of Advaita stresses the *mediacy* of knowledge as effected through verbal testimony—śābdaparokṣavāda—rather than its *immediacy*—śābdāparokṣa—as the *Vivarāṇa* school would prefer to hold. Along with the advocated immediacy of knowledge necessarily goes the *Vivarāṇa* insistence on the *injunctive* approach—an injunction of law (*niyama-vidhi*) in respect of the knowledge of Reality. Such injunction should not, however, conflict with the thoroughly *cognitive* attitude of Advaita, if we consider the distinction between the initial phase of enquiry (*ijñāsā*) and the final phase of knowledge amounting to the perfect comprehension of Self that is Reality on the last analysis.

The position of Vācaspati Miśra, advocating the mediacy of knowledge born of verbal testimony, is apparently opposed to the *Vivarāṇa* view. But in exaggerating the external difference, the essential agreement bearing upon the fundamentally *cognitive* approach is apt to be overlooked\*. The *Vivarāṇa* school, while advocating the immediate character of scriptural knowledge, maintains at the same time that subsequent reflection and meditation are necessary to yield immediate revelation of Reality. The purification of the mind is insisted upon. As Saṅkara remarks, the realization

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\* Cf. Pointing to the fundamental agreement between the two views, Dr. Mahadevan thus remarks: ". . . both Vācaspati and the *Vivarāṇakāra* agree in this that the path to perfection lies in and through knowledge", T.M.P. Mahadevan, *The Philosophy of Advaita*, p. 254.

of Self may be attained by the mind, purified through proper discipline and aided by scriptural instructions from the teacher (who should enjoy the fullest reliance of the student).<sup>5</sup>

The real point behind the controversy is: what comes to us primarily as a *bare* possibility is to mature, through steps of mental discipline and reflection, into *valid* possibility, and ultimately into the very concrete immediacy of the Real itself. According to Śaṅkara himself, for the ordinary individual not yet endowed with an intellectual understanding of the Real, there is certainly the necessity of repeated scriptural instruction (*Śravana*) and reflection, intellectual and transcendental—*manana* and *nididhyāsana*.<sup>6</sup> For those also, who have already attained clear and distinct insight into the two principles of Being (*Tat*) and of the individual self (*tvam*), the efficacy of scriptural statements in producing the immediate revelation of the Real in absolute Identity is no less there.<sup>6</sup>

In this context, the notion of 'demand' (already introduced in our discourse in the last chapter) may be found particularly relevant. As the ultimate essence is recognised—though not immediately but distantly—to be *real*, the demand for actualizing it in existence arises. The elaboration of the nature of reality clarifies the demand, while the progressive approximation of the essence of consciousness in steps of transcendental reflection strengthens it. So far as the fulfilment of the final demand is concerned, it is to be gained, if at all, at a level beyond the region of transcendental reflection—a level where Reality is to prevail absolutely by itself.

The said *demand* as brought out in the wake of transcendental reflection may well be confirmed by the fundamental *value*-attitude, basically characterizing the outlook of Advaita philosophy. The *interest* in reality is essentially

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\* *Manana* and *nididhyāsana* need not be taken as two exclusive stages, signifying intellection and meditation respectively, but may better be taken as respectively less and more intense stages of the continuous movement of 'transcendental reflection'. Vide *supra*, Ch. V (2).

an attitude of value, seeking satisfaction in nothing short of concrete existence. The Advaitin would share the common interest of Indian philosophy—and quite pronouncedly too—in Freedom (*mokṣa*) as the supreme end (*parama-puruṣārtha*). [Indeed *Freedom*, for Advaita, is the very Reality itself, eternally accomplished (*pariniṣṭhita*) in nature.] The value-attitude being present at the root, the interest in reality necessarily preponderates over a merely *theoretical* enquiry into a system of *possible* categories. As the ultimate essence of transcendental reflection represents supreme value too, the former is promoted by virtue of value-demand to the highest existence-stratum. Nothing short of concrete reality could satisfy the Advaitin; he would not merely stop with the realization of Reality as 'Ought-to-Be'. This Advaitic attitude may in one sense appear to be somewhat Kierkegaardian, in its interest in the existential question, in concrete existence—an attitude that marks itself as different from the disinterestedness in respect of the possible.\*

Further significance of this resulting phase of the Advaitic metaphysic of experience may be brought out in the light of a *metaphysical* interpretation. What demands finally to be realized should evidently be *trans-individual*, for the real that is supposed to exist absolutely *per se* must be so beyond the context of individual consciousness. As such, it may be spoken of indefinitely as the Supreme Being. Now, the unqualified ontological status of the said Supreme Being may also be viewed from a different angle in the light of the so-called 'revelation' on the part of Being to the mind in reflection. What the mind grasps in clear understanding as the ultimate Being that *demands* to be real but falls short of being *realized* in perfect immediacy, would find its *transcendent* counterpart in *revelation* on the part of Being

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\* There may be an interesting study on the equation of existence and value in Indian thought. In the concept of existentiality (*sattā*) there is the implication of *value*, the highest of existence or reality thus implying value *par excellence*. That which is the highest good (*śreya*) must be existent. Value without the existential basis would be futile.

itself.\* Further, such metaphysical revelation or the immediacy of absolute trans-individual reality might even be read at cardinal stages in the path of transcendental reflection. Such stages of revelation, however, need not be regarded as strictly conforming to the Vedantic system as it stands. By way of freely interpreting the Advaitic metaphysic of experience alone, we prefer to introduce the concept of *revelation* here. Thus right from the level of gross body (*sthūla-śarīra*) upwards, the outstanding phases of essence-structure, obtained through upward steps of intuition, are to be correlated to the progressive revelation of (trans-individual) reality as *cosmic*. [The *cosmic* principles of *Hiranyagarbha* and *Virāṭ*, mentioned in the earlier Vedantic literature, may be looked upon as such categories which constitute the possible ontological-cosmological scheme of Advaita, developed in the line of its metaphysic of experience].

In this connection, it may not be out of place to hint at a further possible 'religious' significance following from such metaphysical notion of revelation. What has been explained as *demand* could also possibly be connected to the idea of 'grace', variously occurring in different theistic philosophies of India and the West. With the recognition of *personality* in the reality-principle, the line of communication between the human mind and the Divine seems itself to take on a *human* colour. Thus, what stands as the revelation of Being to the enquiring mind may also prove, viewed in another light, to be the 'grace of God' upon the devotee concerned. Leaving aside theology as such and keeping more to phenomenology, the demand of the aspiring and reflecting individual (*jīva*) seems to correspond to the notion of 'grace' of the Divine Being.

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\* 'Revelation' in this context may be understood independent of any theological or like association of 'divine personality'. The term seems appropriately to signify the immediacy realized in the nature of Being which is envisaged by the mind in reflection. The idea of divine personality need not necessarily be brought in to imply such revelation.

N.B.—The Advaitic position so interpreted may otherwise be compared to the Thomistic contention that revelation confirms the truth about God which human reason can attain in metaphysics without revelation.

From such an interpretation of the Advaitic enlightenment in terms of the so-called *revelation*, one seeming difficulty may however arise. The revelation of the self-accomplished reality to the subject seems to imply a surrender of the subjectivistic position so far maintained. For, is it not true that the concept of revelation carries with it the usual implication of *objective* reality as standing in opposition to the subject? This objection can be met in the present context if we bear in view the point that here revelation is to be understood as the very realization of subjectivity itself. And subjectivity realized is objectivity denied.

In cases other than pure *cit*, the revealed content would stand relatively independent even while the context of subjective evidencing were there. From the objects of sense-perception to the essences of transcendental reflection, there would hardly be any exception to this *presentative* character. But with regard to *cit*, the central essence of subjectivity, it would be otherwise. For, to speak of *cit* as finally *revealed* should not mean its being *presented* to the reflecting subject—as *other* than the latter. As on the one hand, revelation (*prakāśa*) constitutes the essential nature of *cit* as self-evidencing, the latter in its turn constitutes the very essence of the subject itself—a point made out in our earlier chapters.

Yet, a revelatory presentative character may not altogether be ignored in the final comprehension of *cit* as real. But such revelatory character too would prove to be but *self-transcending* on ultimate analysis; for even the context of *approach* on the part of the reflecting mind would be missing, as revelation were finally to culminate in Reality itself. Of course, Reality may not be regarded as *subjective*; because subjectivity, after all, would refer to the context of the intuiting consciousness. Nor can it be regarded as *object*.\* But knowing and being—subjectivity and object-

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\* Some later Advaitins—such as the authors of *Vedānta-paribhāṣā*, *Advaitasiddhi* etc.—have represented the Vedantic Absolute more in the light of the grand metaphysical 'Object'. But the characterization of Being simply *objectwise* seems to ignore completely the subjective approach which is so vital in grasping *Cit* as supreme Essence. The final acceptance of

hood—appear ultimately to be transcended in the common ground of Reality, which could be characterized to be as much subjective as objective.\*

Now, to come back to the analysis of knowledge through verbal testimony, it is admitted by the Advaitin that the final immediacy of the Real is gained through knowledge born of scriptural statement. The final stroke of illumination is wrought through the *integral* mode of consciousness—*akhandādhī*—having for its content the self-accomplished Being itself. In such knowledge alone could Reality in its concreteness—so far reflectively envisaged as Essence—stand comprehended. Such final and fullest comprehension is meant by the Advaitic stress on *knowledge* as the pathway to Reality.

Nevertheless, it may be argued that even the ultimate mode (*vṛtti*) should not be free from at least the last vestige of Nescience (*avidyā*). The final mode, however, would bear a peculiarly *transitional* character—and a transition towards the Real. Consciousness as reflected in the final mode seems to be 'overwhelmed', as it were, by the Real itself, its alleged content. The highest point in the *distinguishment* of essence would be found at the same time to mark unreserved *identification*—as the essence can no longer be grasped as a content presented to *detached* evidencing. The purest essence so far progressively intuited emerges as Reality, engulfing in unconditioned identity both the evidenced and the evidencing—the two proving to be *seemingly* distinguished. The immediacy of the integral mode of consciousness (which can hardly be regarded as a 'mode of consciousness' proper) still pertaining to *jīva*, would directly pass on to the Real, as it were.† Such final transition into the

reality or ontological existence need not overlook the pathway leading to the pen-ultimate stage.

\* Cf. It is thus that the Upaniṣadic dictum “*Brahmavid brahmaiva bhavati*”, closely bearing upon Advaita philosophy, may be understood.

† Cf. *Pañcadaśī*, VII. 49-50. The author, in keeping with the general trend of Advaita Vedānta, refers to the two types of immediacy (*aparokṣatva*)—one pertaining to the final mode of consciousness (*akhandākāra-vṛtti*) and the other to the *object* corresponding to such mode, i.e., the self-manifest reality—the immediacy of the former being actually derived from that

Real hardly admits of any further analysis and seems more liable to be explained *existentialistically*. Thus, at the apex of reflective distinguishment, Existence reigns supreme in non-distinguishment.

To proceed further with the significance of existentiality thus attained through the integral mode of knowing, it brings with it a new *context* beyond that of the intuiting consciousness—the latter persisting, however thinly, in the final knowledge. The ultimate essence of the subjective reveals itself not in the context of the subject but as transcending into the Real. Thus, what is metaphysically referred to as 'That' (*tat*) meets on common ground of transcendental reflection the essential subjectivity pertaining to individual consciousness (*tvam*). It is like re-discovering one's being in a new context—as the 'tenth man' realises himself as the tenth, this tenth-character really belonging to him though hidden from his notice. The character of the new metaphysical context of Being alone (*sadeva*) was known in the form of 'that'. [The very pronoun 'that' (*tat*), standing for the Real in question, implies some sort of *distance*—a distance for the enquiring consciousness.] But the realization of the said context—not *qua context* but *qua existence in concrete*—is sought to be effected through verbal testimony concerning the supreme identity.\*

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of the latter. From the ontological standpoint, the immediacy originally belongs to the real indeed ; but from the point of view of transcendental reflection, i.e., *ratio cognoscendi*, the immediacy would primarily pertain to the knowledge concerned. However, the final emphasis of Advaita is on the *ontological* standpoint of Existence.

\* Ultimate Reality—*Brahman* of Advaita Vedānta—as *absolutely transcendent*, beyond any possible reference of consciousness, seems to be the ultimate *demand* of philosophic consciousness. Advaita Vedānta, in its over-zealous metaphysical attitude, goes to the extreme of not resting even with such demand but of positing it as eternally realized in *Brahman*. Proceeding as we do in the path of a metaphysic of experience, Advaita may be represented as culminating in the Supreme Self (*parameśvara*) which, as non-different in essence from the 'transcendental subject', would stand rather in a unique relation of *non-difference* (*sāyujya*) with the latter. It may be possible, however, that such a situation put forth a still higher demand of *absolute* freedom from even the final *rarefied* phase of transcendental experience. But the realization of such ultimate demand may better be kept an open question.

N.B.—A free interpretation of the position of Advaita Vedānta on the issue of final knowledge has here been given ; accordingly the remarks on

From the foregoing treatment of the Advaitic transition from the strict bounds of a metaphysic of experience to an ontological standpoint of Existence, we are now in a position to assess the *existentialistic* step involved therein. The grounds for regarding the resulting position of Advaita as *existentialistic*—of course, in a wider sense—may be considered as follows.

(a) *Cit* as the highest essence, transcendently derived, is recognised to be existentially real. It is not a question of positing existence as a *concept* at the height of possibility and of relating it externally to the highest essence of subjectivity. Rather, *cit* itself is *concretely* realized as existence. The Advaitin, like the true existentialist, would not be concerned with existence as a conceptual essence distinguished in abstraction but should rather be interested in concrete existence.\* The ontological interest in the real throughout marks the transcendental enquiry of Advaita. And it is nowhere so evident as in the question of final comprehension, which again is marked by the priority of existence over essence.

(b) The existentialistic import comes out further in the *non-intellectual* approach of faith as implied by the significant role attached to verbal testimony (*śabda*). Faith in *śabda* involves in two-fold steps a *non-cognitive* assurance of the existent real. The assurance first comes in the form of valid possibility yielded by *śabda*; and it is realized in perfect comprehension. Faith thus marks the point of departure in the quest for Reality.

(c) Moreover, the attitude of *value* is markedly present

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the consequences of such a position may not also conform to the strict Advaita doctrine as such.

\* There is also a trend, as mentioned earlier, in later Advaita towards an independent metaphysics of *Sat* or *Existence*, proposing rather a conceptualistic approach to the question of Being. But even there the crux should remain as to how to effect the change-over from the *essence* of Existence to *real* existence. For, even with the discovery of 'Existence' as the *central* essence, the real as existent may still remain unaccomplished. Thus the question of existentiality may be raised and to meet it, some kind of *existentialistic* step seems to be entailed. cf. Kant's criticism on the 'Ontological Argument'. Vide. *supra*, Introduction.

in Advaita in its supreme interest in ultimate freedom (*mokṣa*). And it is this basic value-attitude that makes for the ontological interest in concrete reality. To echo S. Kierkegaard, the value-interest (Kierkegaard speaks of 'the ethical') refuses to stop with the disinterestedness of the possible in its interest for existence and for nothing short of existence.

However, even viewed in the light of an existentialistic attitude, the Advaitic position should be sharply distinguished from the strictly existentialist position as presented in recent European movement—from Kierkegaard to Sartre and Marcel etc. In the first place, the emotive-volitional approach as characterizing the irrationalism of the existentialist would sharply differ from what may be considered the *enlightened irrationalism* of Advaita. Whatever irrationalism may be involved in Avaita by way of faith seems to be directed to the interest of a higher level of knowing. Though *śabda* implies faith that is existentialistic, it provides but the inevitable step to that final enlightenment into which transcendental reflection is to culminate.\* Yet it may be contended in broad that the Advaitic metaphysics of the Real is in the long run effected on the fulcrum of existentialistic faith.

The principal distinction in character between Advaitic metaphysics and the Existentialist ontology may hardly be missed. For the existentialist, with his commitment of existentiality at the primary level of human reality, there could hardly be any transcendence beyond the bounds of the latter to a supra-personal ontological ground so far as the question of existence is concerned. The question of Being (*Seins*)

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\* Such a stage of the highest possible experience may perhaps legitimately be characterized as 'mystical'—a completely supra-intellectual stage of 'higher immediacy' (Bradley). However, our concern is with the (cognitive) approach in the light of which even such ultimate mysticism, if at all, may be assessed.

N.B.—The Christian existentialist, Marcel, speaks of 'revelation' in the sense of 'certain higher modes of human experience' through which 'the ontological mystery' may be comprehended. (*Vide* Gabriel Marcel, *The Philosophy of Existence*).

*frage*) even when raised, as markedly in Heidegger, seems to remain rather indefinite. In Advaita, on the other hand, existentiality sought for should remain attuned to the ontological standpoint of Being. Scriptural statements convey the primary assurance finally leading to the actualization of the ontological possibility.

Similarly also, the value attitude so markedly present in Advaita should find its root deeper than what may just be called the 'ethical'. It may, after all, be doubted as to how far the ethical represents the total "metaphysical demand" of our nature, as urged by Kierkegaard himself. The Advaitic value-demand is not to be satisfied at the level of 'action' but rather at the highest level of truth where the pathway of knowledge should culminate.

Thus, the ontological motive of Advaita is fixed on Being and its metaphysics is derived accordingly. The point of emphasis falls not on the individual being but on the trans-individual Being. To sum up the metaphysical outlook of Advaita, after Śaṅkara himself: what is to be shown is not the *human* (pertaining to the world-involved individual) character of Self, but the essence of the individual as grounded in Supreme Being rather than as resting in its *natural worldliness*.<sup>7</sup>

#### NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Stebbing, *A Modern Introduction to Logic*, Ch. II. 2.
2. Cf. *Pañcadaśī*, VII. 56.
3. Cf. "Padārtha-jñānapūrvakatvāt vākyārtha-jñānasya.", S. B. B. S., IV. i, 2; also, "Vākyārtha-pratītiḥ sākṣātkārasya pūrvarūpam", *Bhāmatī*, IV. i. 3.
4. "... kramavalī pratipattiḥ tāt tu pūrvarūpameva ātmapratiptatteḥ . . .", S.B.B.S., loc. cit.
5. "Śāstrācāryopadeśa-śamadāmādisaṁskṛtam mana ātmadarśane kāraṇam", S.B., *Bhagabagdītā*, II. 21.
6. S.B.B.S., IV. i. 3.
7. "... saṁsāriṇaḥ saṁsāritvāpohena iśvarātmatvam pratipādayiṣitam", S.B.B.S., IV. i. 3.

## A NOTE IN RETROSPECT

The search for a standpoint in respect of Advaitism—one that may legitimately yield a possible system of analysis of experience—brought us originally to the notion of subjectivity. Epistemologically speaking, it appears to be a philosophy wedded to the standpoint of subjectivity. But subjectivism as such is never the last word in Advaita; for metaphysically, Advaita is attuned to Being. So far as a system of criticism of experience could be made out, Advaita seems to hold alliance rather with Phenomenology in suggesting the region of pure consciousness as the ground for all meaning of objectivity. As a full-fledged metaphysics of Being, on the other hand, there seems to be in a sense some kinship with Existentialism, so far as the prime existential-reality of *Cit* as the highest precondition of experience is unconditionally stressed.

Now, a transcendental analysis of experience, it is true, would save Advaitism from turning into a dogmatic and barren metaphysics. However, such an analysis need not on the other hand turn into a bare *theoretic* system of *idealities*, as in Husserl's Phenomenology, which is proposed as a rigorous science of essences. For, the typical hold on Being in concrete would not allow Vedantism to develop into a purely theoretic system, concerned solely with the elucidation of the meaning of being (*Seinssinn*, according to Husserl). What Phenomenology chooses to forgo in the interest of a theoretic attitude, viz., a commitment to reality in the form of *naïve* world-belief, seems never to be regained—on a metaphysical plane. So, although transcendental subjectivity is posited as *constituting* the world-meaning, it is never properly granted a metaphysical status in Phenomenology.\* Nor would consciousness, in a strictly pheno-

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\* Husserl, in his later phase however, seems to be tending towards some sort of a metaphysical position—in the trail of his notion of the 'world-

menological system, be existentially affirmed.

In the Advaita system, the existential affirmation of the reality of pure subjectivity has been enabled in two ways. Negatively, the non-acceptance of a purely *theoretic* aim—the latter being marked by an interest in idealities or essence-forms, which have a bearing on *meaning* rather than on reality. This finds its echo, on the positive side, in the pronounced affirmation of metaphysical faith in the scriptural testimony, assuring the ultimate ontological ground of transcendental subjectivity.

But, what can effect a transition into the said ontological ground—all theological associations apart—is fundamentally the value-attitude. For, in positing self as existence of a unique sort and seeking to realize it in its unobjective and primordial existentiality, Advaitism no doubt exhibits in the long run an attitude of value at bottom which alone brings the issue of existence into forefront. In deed, on their own admission, the value-aspect of self is more than emphasized. This emphasis may well be traced in the cryptic Vedantic formulation regarding *Ātman* that is Brahman: *asti bhāti priyam*—that which exists, manifests and is at the same time most cherished. (The last aspect of “*priyam*” should correspond to the element of *Ānanda* in the composite definition of Reality as “*Sat-Cit-Ānanda*”).\*

A fundamental doubt may, of course, be raised as to how far philosophy should at all be identified with the quest for values. Perhaps it may legitimately be treated as an original, and for that, an open question. However, we may just point out whether the attitude of pure analysis and dis-

\*constituting subjectivity'. This may particularly be traced in the last major work of Husserl, "The Crisis of European Science and Transcendental Phenomenology" (the title originally in German).

\* This trend of characterizing *Ātman* as that which is desirable or worth cherishing *par excellence*, can be traced as far back as the Upaniṣads (*vide Brhadāraṇyaka Up.*, IV. ii. 5: “*Ātmanastu kāmāya sarvam priyam bhavati*” etc.). But somehow or other this trend seems to have been as such relatively far less developed in Advaita philosophy than its doctrine of *Cit-cum-Sat*. Within the range of our present discourse too, the concept of *Ānanda* has not been taken into consideration, although I am fully aware it is worth a separate investigation as such.

tinguishment of meaning or essence should prove to be enough for philosophic consciousness itself. Perhaps, with H. H. Price, we might exclaim: clarity is not enough. If it were not enough, would not the attitude of value have an essential bearing on philosophic reflection?

Now, as regards the subjective attitude itself, it may be questioned at the outset: why at all to start with the subjective attitude instead of the commonly accepted objective attitude? And, if starting with that attitude, why to commit to it in philosophizing? The question has been touched upon in the beginning of our enquiry. Here it may be urged that such an attitude remains, after all, an original attitude in philosophy. It is worth recalling in this connexion how Kant proposed in his so-called 'Copernican Revolution' a turn in the way of thinking (*Denkart*) in his first "Critique". And Husserl was all the more pronounced in his prescription of a 'bracketing' of what he considers to be the naïve belief in the objective reality of existent facts (through 'transcendental epoché'). However, both in Kantian transcendentalism as well as in phenomenology, the proposed reversion of the natural (objective) attitude in philosophic reflection, though deliberate, has admittedly been *theoretic* in motive and character.

In Vedanta, on the other hand, the reversion of the common objective attitude has been more value-oriented than one purely theoretic in motive. Consequently, though the subjectively oriented metaphysic of experience could not be worked out in the direction of a thoroughgoing theory of knowledge—as in Kant or even in Phenomenology—Vedanta has nevertheless been in a position to yield a philosophy of subjectivity in concrete, grounded in a theory of Being. This concreteness in standpoint thus seems to have been gained at the cost of a purely theoretic interest in the analysis of experience.

Thus, the question of an ultimate subjective attitude—the primacy of the subjective—is perhaps inextricably linked up with the issue of value itself. But the issue is not sought

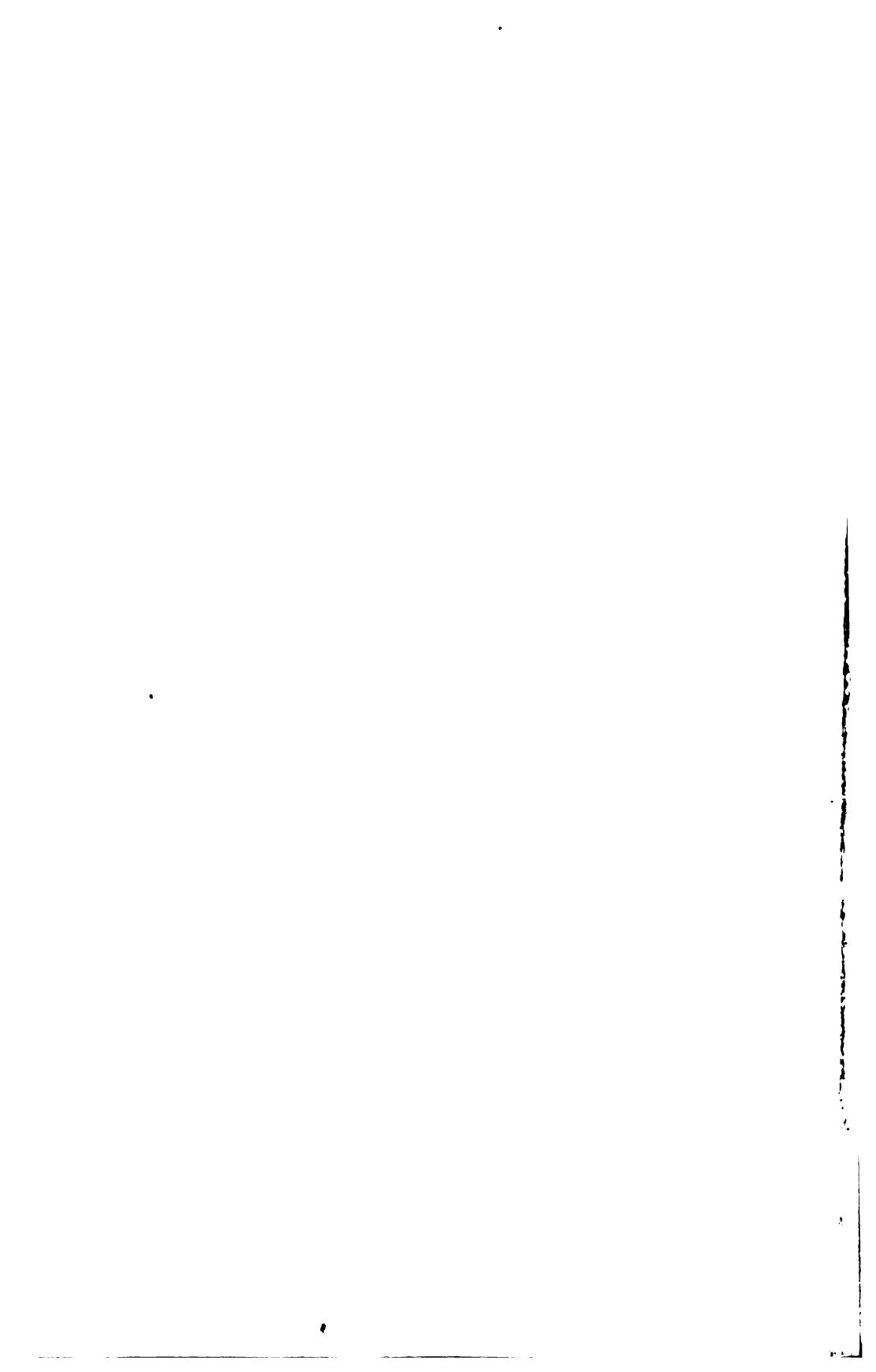
to be resolved through an irrationalistic commitment—a mere non-cognitive ‘attitude to life’ (as Prof. Paton prefers to characterize Existentialism)\* rather than a metaphysics. It is essentially a cognitive vindication of the fundamental value-attitude. Whether to accept—not simply to recognize—this *subjective-cum-value* attitude in philosophic reflection might as well be left an open question.

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\* Cf. H. J. Paton, *In Defence of Reason* (“Existentialism as an Attitude to Life”).



## **APPENDIX**



## APPENDIX A

### SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY (OF SANSKRIT WORKS)\*

[The list includes only the texts of Advaita Vedānta which have been referred to in this book. The texts belonging to other Indian systems such as Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, Sāṅkhyā-Yoga, Mimāṃsā, Buddhism etc. are not separately mentioned here.]

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- Advaitadīpikā* of Nṛsiṁhāśramā, pub. Lazarus, Benares.

\* References to the relevant Indian and Western literature—along with necessary citations—are given in *Notes and References* attached to the respective chapters, as well as in the running foot-notes.

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## APPENDIX B

### A NOTE ON PHENOMENOLOGY\*

#### 1

Phenomenology, originally proposed by Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) as a new philosophical discipline, offers in a non-speculative attitude an independent methodology and a mode of analysis. It has as its aim 'a completely understanding philosophy'—one that is ready to take an account of experience at first hand. What Husserl attempts is a philosophy which should be thoroughgoing in its analysis of experience and at the same time free from metaphysical presuppositions. In one of his earlier papers, Husserl set down his aim of "philosophy as a rigorous science"—a system of ascertained knowledge to be based on strict evidence.

#### 2

Phenomenology is primarily a study of physical phenomena—the science of the manifestations of consciousness. It is an enquiry into the nature of types of mental functioning. Now, such a primary definition of phenomenology no doubt brings it close to psychology. So, the distinction of one from the other is to be considered at the outset. This may best be done by showing the difference between the psychological and the phenomenological descriptions of inner experience—both being apparently concerned with the same subject-matter.

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\* This short account of Husserl's Phenomenology is given here chiefly with reference to the 1st volume of his "Ideas", and does not enter into the subsequent phases in the development of Husserlian thought. It is largely reproduced from my article, "The Phenomenology of Edmund Husserl", published in the Calcutta Review (March, 1960).

For a more extensive introduction, see (1) Dorion Cairns, "Phenomenology", *A History of Philosophical Systems*, ed. V. Ferm; (2) Marvin Farber, *The Foundation of Phenomenology: Edmund Husserl and the Quest for a Rigorous Science of Philosophy*.

<sup>1</sup> Marvin Farber, "Phenomenology", *Twentieth Century Philosophy*, ed. D. D. Runes.

There is two-fold difference between the two studies which would be more evident by reference to the characteristics of psychological investigations. (a) Psychology is a science of *facts*, of events which are presented to us ; (b) it is a science of *realities*. The phenomena dealt with in psychology are *real* events—empirical, wordly and spatio-temporal. The psychological events as belonging to (empirical) subjects are co-eval with the facts of the spatio-temporal world.

In contrast to these characteristics, firstly, phenomenology seeks to be a science of 'essential being' and not of facts. Here 'essences', and not facts, form the subject-matter. Secondly, the contents of phenomenological investigations can be characterized not properly as 'real' but rather as 'non-real'.<sup>2</sup> Reality, in the usual sense of existentiality, is not here in question. The distinction between the psychological point of view and the phenomenological has been repeatedly stressed by Husserl. In psychology, the mind is directed upon experience as the natural attitude dictates, that is, upon some inner state of mind as a *natural event*. The phenomenological point of view, on the other hand, concerns itself with the autonomous region of pure consciousness as disconnected from the natural order.<sup>3</sup>

In passing from empirical psychology to pure phenomenology, we come to an intermediate discipline which has been called 'phenomenological psychology'. The latter should not, however, be confused with pure or 'transcendental phenomenology' with which we are here directly concerned, though both presuppose the same descriptive methodology broadly denoted by the name of 'phenomenology'. As Husserl himself puts it, phenomenological psychology is "an *a priori* psychological discipline, able to provide the only secure basis on which a strong empirical psychology can be built".<sup>4</sup> Of course, this itself was a departure from empirical psychology, inasmuch as it was reflective in method. That means a reversion of the ordinary attitude with a view to concentrating upon the psychical 'act of experience' in which the features of mental life are

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<sup>2</sup> Edmund Husserl, *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*, trans. B. Gibson, Library of Philosophy, p. 44.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 166.

<sup>4</sup> Husserl, "Phenomenology", *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. 17, (14th edition), pp. 69-91.

apprehended. Thus, its task is to systematically examine the types and forms of experience which imply directedness on the part of consciousness towards something, or in other words, which are 'intentional'. This is the comprehensive task that Husserl set for himself in "Logical Investigations", where phenomenology is conceived as a subdomain of Psychology—as dealing with the 'immanent descriptions of psychical events'.

Phenomenology of this earlier stage had a two-fold function. It provides, on the one hand, a basis for empirical psychology ; and, on the other, the 'sources' out of which the fundamental concepts and the ideal laws of pure logic arise. In thus seeking to retrace logical concepts and laws to their epistemological genesis, it is regarded as equivalent to epistemology. But 'transcendental' or 'pure' phenomenology supersedes phenomenological psychology. The former aims at constructing such philosophy as can provide the basis for a systematic revision of all the sciences. After all, psychology, even if it be 'intentional' or 'eidetic' can hardly be purged of empirical associations. It is certainly not clear, as Husserl himself admits,<sup>5</sup> whether the investigations of a phenomenological psychology are 'free from all psycho-physical admixture'. Self-consciousness in psychology is hardly conceivable without connexion with external events and non-psychical realities.

The phenomenological procedure in psychology, in finding out the essential forms implied by psychical phenomena, of course, paves the way towards transcendental phenomenology in the latter's analysis of the fundamental structure of pure consciousness. Husserl's "Logical Investigations" prepared the ground for transition to his phenomenology proper in two respects. On the one hand, the *psychological* theories which sought for the empirical-psychological foundation for logical methodology was refuted ; and consequently, the empirically subjectivistic epistemology was rejected. On the other hand, the descriptive-psychological explanation of the structure of experience was introduced. The latter led to a new epistemological outlook which gave rise to the phenomenological procedure in terms of 'essence' as ideally presupposed by pure experience.

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<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 700.

Now, let us examine the phenomenological standpoint more closely. What primarily characterizes the approach of phenomenology is the radical alteration of the *natural* standpoint. From the natural standpoint of the man-in-the-street, the world of facts in an independent spatio-temporal system is presented to the subject ; and the subject himself also belongs to that world. Our natural experience, uninterfered by reflection, involves the character of existentiality. What the phenomenologist proposes is an attitude of suspense with regard to the existential reality admittedly pertaining to the objects of experience.

The method of doubt, as Descartes tried it, is applied—but with a different end in view. In phenomenology, unlike in Cartesianism, doubt does not necessarily lead to a system of indubitable metaphysical truths. It would rather provide a methodological device through which certain things are brought to clear light. Systematic doubt of the thesis yielded by the natural standpoint conditions a 'suspension' of the thesis. And the latter would consequently undergo a transformation which can be far-reaching. Such transformation, however, differs from the negation or denial of the thesis. The latter is rather disconnected or 'bracketed', no use in knowledge being made of it. The outer object would remain, but as disconnected, so far as any judgment concerning its actual existence is subjected to a suspension. This suspense of the natural cognitive attitude, leading to necessary dissociation, is what is meant by phenomenological 'epoché'. Through this a realm of disconnected consciousness is sought to be obtained.

Now, such phenomenological method is markedly *subjectivistic*, proceeding as it does with the findings of a self-reflecting ego. The subjective attitude is admittedly adopted through a suspense of the objective attitude which seeks to posit natural objects and even metaphysical realities. For, the ideal of a transparent methodological enquiry which would be altogether free from any assumptions and theorizing can be answered only by a method directed to the experiencing subject and its first-hand evidence within the range of experience.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Cf. "Turning inwards in pure reflexion, following exclusively 'inner experience' and setting aside all the psycho-physical questions which relate to man as a corporeal being. I obtain an original and pure descriptive

Husserl would, however, sharply distinguish the *pure* subjective method of phenomenology from the spuriously subjective approach of 'psychologism'. As already pointed out, Husserl rejected psychologism in favour of the *logical* status of idealities. The 'ideal' modes of reason enjoy validity of their own, independent of acts, mental or non-mental, and thus comprises the realm of pure logic.

The principle of 'transcendental subjectivity' as distinguished from 'psychological subjectivity' is to be closely noted in this connection. Psychological subjectivity is the subjective counterpart in the complex situation involving the non-mental objective factor as well. It comes to us as on the same level with the data of external experience. As such, it is relative, variable and necessarily empirical in nature. Transcendental subjectivity, on the other hand, is not to be grasped under the attitude of empirical psychology. For, it is no part of the world to which 'I' or 'we' of common import and use, as well as the objects said to be related to such 'I' and 'we', belong. It is rather the 'subjective conscious life itself', as referred to which the contents of experience do subsist. Thus even the empirical ego has as its presuppositional background the fundamental inner subjectivity, to which it is present. Hence, the peculiar relation between the two can be understood neither in terms of difference nor of identity.<sup>7</sup>

## 4

Thus, phenomenology as "transcendental idealism" is to be understood as the theory from the standpoint of transcendental subjectivity. Its distinction from subjective or psychological idealism can hardly be overlooked. Any 'psychological' or 'anthropological' idealism implies that the world is somehow dependent for its existence on some consciousness-in-the-world. As such, it would plainly come in conflict with the phenomenolo-

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knowledge of the psychical life as it is in itself, the most original being obtained from myself, because here alone is perception the medium."—Husserl, *Ideas*, Preface.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. ". . . though the transcendental 'I' is not my psychological 'I', it must not be considered as if it were a second 'I', for it is no more separated from my psychological 'I' in the conventional sense of separation, than it is joined to it in the conventional sense of being joined," *idem*.

gical contention as regards the 'intentional objectivity' of the contents of experience.

The sphere of consciousness as an autonomous region, disconnected from the world of existent facts, is the target of phenomenological investigation. Husserl, in fact, proposes 'a certain general insight into the essence of consciousness in general' as prior to the phenomenological analysis proper<sup>8</sup>—(though what exactly Husserl means here is not quite clear). Consciousness, as providing the theme of phenomenological enquiry, stands *prima facie* for conscious experience, taken as the stream of experience. But the ideal of pure consciousness as substantive and autonomous (as for instance, in Advaita Vedanta), is defined by Husserl in terms of "phenomenological residuum". No further commitment is made with regard to its ontological nature and status. It is only admitted that such supposed pure consciousness has the possibility of remaining unaffected in its ideal being by phenomenological disconnection.<sup>9</sup>

The typical phenomenological treatment of consciousness rests on the unique feature of what is termed "intentionality", that is, intrinsic reference-character. The phenomenologist takes it as a basic truth that every actual state of experience ('cogito') must be a consciousness of something. This said character of intentionality may not explicitly belong to all states of experience in being evident in the same degree. Nevertheless, it may be said to be potentially characterizing any and every state of experience.

Let us consider this character of intentionality more closely. It may superficially be explained as a relation between the state of consciousness concerned and its essential correlate. The latter is the *meant* in relation to consciousness. Such is the case with the perceiving of something, the judging of a matter, the valuing of a value, the wishing of the wished content, and so on. Now, in such situations, viewed purely in terms of *intentionality*, there is no question of relating a psychological event with some other real fact, or of finding a psychological connexion obtaining between the one and the other. We would rather be concerned with experiences in their purity involving 'essences'. Essences

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<sup>8</sup> Husserl, *Ideas*, p. 113.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 113 f., pp. 150 ff.

themselves are neither real nor unreal, but subsist in the light of phenomenological intuition.<sup>10</sup>

That consciousness is *of* something is, for the phenomenologist, more than a mere psychological fact. The intended correlate to which our experience—and, to that extent, the subject—is directed, is not to be taken as the object of individual experience in the ordinary sense. The intentional object is rather to be taken *qua* intentionality of a conscious act. However, there may be correlation between every possible object and a series of intentional acts. For, the intentional object of a conscious act is 'not an inherent abstract part or moment of that process'.<sup>11</sup> Thus, the object intended by one conscious act can coincide with the object intended by another.

## 5

Coming to the phenomenological method itself, it is marked by what is called 'phenomenological reduction'. With the suspending of belief in the natural world, all the sciences—natural and mental—undergo disconnection. Phenomenology stands as a pure *descriptive* discipline which proceeds through absolutely transparent presentation on purely immanent lines. The standard that Husserl proposes to follow is 'to claim nothing that we cannot make essentially transparent to ourselves by reference to consciousness and on purely immanent lines'.<sup>12</sup> Accordingly, all transcendences whatsoever are suspended, and transcendent eidetic regions and the ontologies which belong to them are subjected to the process of reduction to 'immanent essences'. The latter have their validity in the sphere of experiencing consciousness, that is, as contents which can be grasped within the stream of experience as conditioned by phenomenological suspension. Consequently, no transcendent-eidetic regions and disciplines should be taken as contributing any premise towards the study in view.

<sup>10</sup> In reviewing Husserl's doctrine, Prof. Ryle states the position thus: ". . . every intentional act is related, though related by an internal relation, to a genuine subject of attributes", G. Ryle, "Phenomenology", *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Soc.*, Suppl. Vol. XI, p. 79.

<sup>11</sup> Dorion Cairns, "Phenomenology", *A History of Philosophical Systems*, ed. V. Ferm.

<sup>12</sup> Husserl, *Ideas*, pp. 176 f.

The distinction between immanent and transcendent perception in this context is clearly drawn. They are the two fundamentally different ways of appearing in experience. *Immanent* perception refers to the direct evidencing of experience, belonging to the same sphere as the experiencer. Perception and the perceived here essentially constitute a homogeneous unity. But *transcendently* directed intentional experiences are otherwise, referring to the experiences of other persons and of outer things and events. Consequently follow the fallibility of transcendent perception and the self-evidence of immanent perception. Every immanent perception necessarily guarantees the existence of its object.

The absolute indubitability of one's own existence (*Dasein*) indeed provides for the phenomenologist the best illustration of the self-evidence of the immanent. While the existence of the outer objects in the world of things and beings always remains dubitable, the Ego and the inner stream of experience ever claim absolute validity and certitude. Moreover, as Husserl indeed admits, the ego and its own stream of experience are grasped 'not only essentially but existentially'.

In phenomenological investigation, 'Intuition', i.e., essential-ideational insight into the datum of pure essence, is recognised to be the 'source of authority for knowledge'. Accordingly, there would be the need for faithfully expressing the clearly given essence as intuitively apprehended. The aim is to bring the variable and vague matter of intuition into focus of complete clearness. Intuition is a particular concern with, or a peculiar turning towards, a content that is reflectively observed in its pure being as such.

Apprehension of essence, however, has its own grades of clearness—varying from the limit of obscurity to the point of absolute proximity of the essence. The graded differences of clearness correspond to the modes of being given. On the one hand, the process of rendering intuitible, and on the other, that of enhancing the clearness of what is already intuitible—these are the two interconnected processes of making clear to oneself the essence. The position of mediate or inferential reasoning in this connexion is worth nothing. Inference is recognised as but methodologically significant for leading us to the point of direct essential insight into the given.

Now, that type of conscious acts in which the stream of experience with all its manifold inherent phases can be grasped and analysed in the light of its own evidence is conveyed by 'reflection'. In a way, it is "consciousness' own method for the knowledge of consciousness generally".<sup>13</sup> It implies a turning back to the experience itself. Our attitude as knowing agents is sought to be altered radically, turning from the objectively given to the object-giving consciousness and subject. It is an essential insight which is always attainable because immediate. It brings home to us the sphere of pure and clear data—the original acts of consciousness.

Reflection, again, brings out one essential peculiarity which is distinctive of the transcendently purified field of experience—the relation of the stream of experience to the *pure* ego. Every conscious act pertains to the act-performing Ego, as being directed from the latter. In every act of consciousness, immediate or mediate—cognitive, volitional or emotional—"I am present, actually present". But such 'I', found on phenomenological suspension, can never be taken as the *individual* that I actually am. What remains as the phenomenological residuum is rather pure experience that is act. However, the phenomenologist would agree that no disconnecting can finally remove the *pure* subject that experiences and serves as the centre of all reference. As Husserl remarks, no reduction 'can get any grip on' the pure Ego.<sup>14</sup>

Two phases of experience are to be distinguished. On the one hand, there is 'the pure subjective phase of the way of experiencing', implying at the same time the 'pure' subject of the act of being directed. On the other hand, there is the content of experience to which the Ego is directed. Consequently, there are two poles in the sphere of experience, giving rise to two possible aspects for investigation—pure subjectivity and 'the constitution of objectivity as referred to its subjective source'. But the phenomenologist further maintains that the experiencing Ego as such cannot provide a separate subject-matter for enquiry. For him, the pure Ego, apart from its modes of being related through acts of reference, hardly presents any *entitative* character. It serves only as the centre of reference, potential or actual, for

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 219.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 233.

all acts of consciousness. Such reference pertains to the character of intentionality that marks in general all acts of consciousness. The explicit form of 'cogitatio' through which the Ego is said to experience should be taken only as a special mode of the general character of intentionality.

The salient features of Phenomenology as an independent philosophical discipline have so far been stated. We find that Phenomenology aims at a presuppositionless philosophy and claims to examine the possible presuppositions (or essentialities) behind the strata of experience. A non-committal, if not antagonistic, attitude towards metaphysics as such is sought to be maintained here—although with dubitable consistency, particularly in view of Husserl's later developments. It may not be out of place to remark here that the trend towards objectivity and realism, so marked in the earlier programme of Husserl, tends subsequently to develop almost into a Cartesian type of Ego-centred metaphysics. (Cf. *Cartesian Meditations*).

However, in conclusion it has to be admitted that phenomenological reduction is meant to be a methodological device without any pretence to metaphysics as such. In this context we may befittingly quote in conclusion M. Farber's remarks: "The phenomenological investigations of intentional experience, taken as such, may indeed illuminate metaphysical questions and even result in dissolving pseudo-questions, but it may not be construed metaphysically as idealism or realism within the frame of the method".<sup>15</sup>

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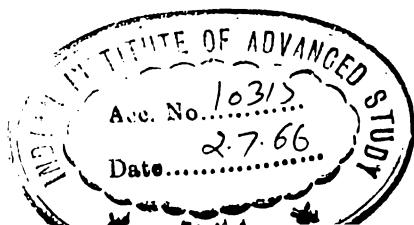
<sup>15</sup> *The Foundation of Phenomenology*, p. 536.

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## **ERRATA**

Page 17, line 2 : for "and" read "any"

Page 17, line 32 : for "nowing" read "knowing"

Page 24, at the end of line 3 : after "may be" add "characterized as quasi-subjective. For, though they do not"

Page 171, line 12 : for "Physical" read "Psychical"



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