Ṣaṃkara's Advaita Vedānta

A way of teaching

J. G. Suthren Hirst

ŚAṂKARA'S
ADVAITA VEDĀNTA

Śaṃkara (*c.* 700 CE) has been regarded by many as the most authoritative Hindu thinker of all time. A great Indian Vedāntin brahmin, Śaṃkara was primarily a commentator on the sacred texts of the Vedas and a teacher in the Advaitin teaching line. This book provides an introduction to Śaṃkara's thought which takes this as a central theme. The author develops an innovative approach based on Śaṃkara's ways of interpreting sacred texts and creatively examines the profound interrelationship between sacred text, content and method in Śaṃkara's thought. The main focus of the book is on Śaṃkara's teaching method. This method is, for Śaṃkara, based on the Upaniṣads' own; it is to be employed by Advaitin teachers to draw pupils skilfully towards that realization which is beyond all words. Consequently, this book will be of interest not only to students and scholars of Indian philosophy, but to all those interested in the relation between language and that which is held to transcend it.

J. G. Suthren Hirst is Lecturer in South Asian Studies at the University of Manchester. Her interest in teaching and learning at all levels informs her research on the Vedānta school of Indian philosophy, on Hindu texts and on gender and religion in South Asia and the diaspora.

ROUTLEDGECURZON HINDU STUDIES SERIES
Series editor: Francis X. Clooney, SJ

The *RoutledgeCurzon Hindu Studies Series*, in association with the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies, intends primarily the publication of constructive Hindu theological, philosophical and ethical projects aimed at bringing Hindu traditions into dialogue with contemporary trends in scholarship and contemporary society, and with the particular concerns of Hindus living in India and abroad today. The series also invites proposals for annotated translations of important primary sources and studies in the history of the Hindu religious traditions.

EPISTEMOLOGIES AND THE LIMITATIONS OF PHILOSOPHICAL INQUIRY
Doctrine in Mādhva Vedānta
Deepak Sarma

A HINDU CRITIQUE OF BUDDHIST EPISTEMOLOGY
Kumārila on perception
The 'Determination of Perception' chapter of
Kumārila Bhaṭṭa's *Ślokavārttika*
Translation and commentary
John Taber

ŚAṂKARA'S ADVAITA VEDĀNTA
A way of teaching
J. G. Suthren Hirst

ŚAṂKARA'S
ADVAITA VEDĀNTA

A way of teaching

J. G. Suthren Hirst

TO ALL THOSE FROM WHOM
I HAVE LEARNED

CONTENTS

CONTENTS

SERIES EDITOR'S PREFACE

The RoutledgeCurzon Hindu Studies Series, published in collaboration with the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies, intends primarily the publication of constructive Hindu theological, philosophical and ethical projects. The focus is on issues and concerns of relevance to readers interested in Hindu traditions in particular, yet also in the context of a wider range of related religious concerns that matter in today's world. The Series seeks to promote excellent scholarship and, in relation to it, an open and critical conversation among scholars and the wider audience of interested readers. Though contemporary in its purpose, the Series recognizes the importance of retrieving the classic texts and ideas, beliefs and practices of Hindu traditions, so that the great intellectuals of these traditions may as it were become partners in the conversations of today. Deepak Sarma's *Epistemologies and the Limitations of Philosophical Inquiry*, and John Taber's *A Hindu Critique of Buddhist Epistemology: Kumarila on Perception* were fitting first volumes in this new Series.

It is equally appropriate that Jacqueline Suthren Hirst's *Śaṃkara's Advaita Vedānta: A Way of Teaching* is now published as a third volume. This book is about a key figure in a Hindu – Brahmanical, Advaita – tradition, the great seventh–eighth-century thinker named Śaṃkara. Although he is often described as a philosopher or theologian, Hirst is right in describing Śaṃkara's unique contribution in appropriate apophatic language near the end of her study: 'not untextual', 'not unphilosophical', 'not socially and politically ungrounded', and 'not ungrounded in experience'. Or to put it positively and in other words: Śaṃkara is a teacher for whom texts, ideas, social context, and experience matter, all in relation to the dynamics of the teacher–student relationship.

There is an enormous bibliography related to the work of Śaṃkara, and anyone venturing to add to it today must manage both to appropriate the mass of prior interpretation and yet also to speak freshly. Hirst's exceptionally integral appreciation of Śaṃkara leads us on a tour of his major writings, his key insights, and also what has been said about him in India and in the West. All of this is fruitfully focused on the notion of Śaṃkara as a teacher, an

identification that rings true in terms of the project evidenced in his writings and of the traditional appellation of him as Śaṃkarācārya, 'Śaṃkara the revered teacher'. To use pedagogical issues as the lens through which to see Śaṃkara offers us a vivid sense of his whole project in terms of what it all is for.

By a plan that will be accessible to the student not deeply familiar with Śaṃkara's works, yet sure also to hold the attention of scholars deeply familiar with Śaṃkara and the key writings attributed to him, Hirst explores the key dimensions of the teaching dynamic: the need for teaching (Chapter 2), its source (Chapter 3), methods (Chapter 4), contexts (Chapter 5, name and form; Chapter 6, the Lord), its language (Chapter 7), and its culmination or end (Chapter 8).

Hirst is consciously aware that her own book – along with her related articles and lectures – is itself a work of teaching, a reading of texts and a clarification of ideas that is also aimed at drawing the reader into the work of thinking through the Vedānta project of Śaṃkara. *Śaṃkara's Advaita Vedānta* is an appropriately rich, reflective and fresh addition to the Śaṃkara bibliography, and at the same time a modern scholar's contribution of her own words to the long and varied tradition of those who have explicated the ideas and methods of the Advaita master. It is a solid contribution to Hindu Studies, itself a teaching moment within that long and venerable tradition.

<div align="right">

Francis X. Clooney, SJ
Series Editor
Academic Director
Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies

</div>

PREFACE

This book has been a long time in the writing. There are many who have helped shape what it has become, though for its final form I must take responsibility. Many then who have influenced this book will, like Śaṃkara, pass by anonymously, but by no means insignificantly. To them I am grateful, as I am to the others. Of those whom I thank explicitly, at the head are my mother and father, my first teachers, to whom I owe so much. Another, who may be surprised to be mentioned here, is Chris Barnes Nicol, teaching supervisor and friend, whose own exceptional practice showed me the importance of good teaching and learning for every pupil, whatever their background and ability. Professor Julius Lipner, my doctoral supervisor, who first inspired me by his own study of Vedānta, has been my teacher and assiduous critic for many a long year. It is largely due to his much appreciated encouragement that this book finally sees the light of day. Professor T. M. P. Mahadevan profoundly changed my attitude to studying Advaita Vedānta when I met him shortly before his death. For his generosity and that of the various pandits and librarians who helped me at Adyar, Madras and Thanjavur, including Rajalakshmi, I am deeply grateful. Many other people have read sections or the whole of this book. For their acute comments, I am particularly grateful to Dr Chakravarti Ram-Prasad, Dr Mary Searle-Chatterjee and Dr Valerie Roebuck, as well as to the anonymous readers. There are also the many students who have enthusiastically grappled with Śaṃkara and other Indian thinkers and allowed their own thinking – and mine – to be challenged thereby. They are the others who have ensured this book was completed. Professor Francis Clooney at the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies has, in the final stages, been a most encouraging editor. The book has benefited greatly from his pedagogically sensitive suggestions. I also thank Andrew Quilley, Dr Roger Ballard, Dr Alan Williams, Dr Dermot Killingley, and Dr Siew-Yue Killingley, whom I have bothered for technical help and support. Dorothea Schaefter at RoutledgeCurzon and Peter Willis at Steven Gardiner Ltd have both given patient assistance. As for the others, they have preserved me from the void.

<div align="right">

Jacqueline Suthren Hirst
University of Manchester

</div>

April 2004

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

ABBREVIATIONS

Ait Up Bh	*Aitareya Upaniṣad Bhāṣya* (Śaṃkara's commentary on *Aitareya Upaniṣad*)
A.S.S.	Ānandāśrama Sanskrit Series
BhG	*Bhagavad Gītā*
Bṛ Up Bh	*Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad Bhāṣya* (Śaṃkara's commentary on *Bṛ Up*)
BS	*Brahma Sūtra* of Bādarāyaṇa
BSBh	*Brahma Sūtra Bhāṣya* (Śaṃkara's commentary on *BS*)
Ch Up Bh	*Chāndogya Upaniṣad Bhāṣya* (Śaṃkara's commentary on *Ch Up*)
ET	English translation
GBh	*Gītā Bhāṣya* (Śaṃkara's commentary on *BhG*)
GKBh	*Gauḍapādīya Kārikā Bhāṣya* (Śaṃkara's commentary on *GK* – Gauḍapāda's verses)
Ka Up Bh	*Kaṭha Upaniṣad Bhāṣya* (Śaṃkara's commentary on *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*)
Ke Up Bh	*Ke Up Bh* (Śaṃkara's prose commentary on *Kena Upaniṣad*)
Mā Up	*Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*
Mu Up Bh	*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad Bhāṣya* (Śaṃkara's commentary on *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*)
Pr Up Bh	*Praśna Upaniṣad Bhāṣya* (Śaṃkara's commentary on *Praśna Upaniṣad*)
Tait Up Bh	*Taittirīya Upaniṣad Bhāṣya* (Śaṃkara's commentary on *Tait Up*)
Upad G	*Upadeśasāhasrī Gadyabandha* (Śaṃkara's *Thousand Teachings*, Prose Section)
Upad P	*Upadeśasāhasrī Padyabandha* (Śaṃkara's *Thousand Teachings*, Metric Section)

INTRODUCTION
Studying the teacher

Śaṃkara was a teacher. To assert this of a man who is commonly known as Śaṃkarācārya,[1] that is, 'Śaṃkara the revered teacher', may be thought to be stating the obvious. Yet while many secondary sources mention that Śaṃkara was a teacher, or acknowledge the importance of the teacher in what he writes, very few pay further attention to the point.[2] It is the intention of this book to remedy the deficit.

My argument in brief is this. If we study the renowned Indian thinker Śaṃkara (c. AD 700) as a teacher or, indeed, as a teacher–commentator, we make one of his major preoccupations the focus of our study. Such a focus allows us to take seriously his own exegetical comments on the method of the sacred texts, specifically their teaching methods. This in turn enables us to pay close attention to Śaṃkara's view of how these texts work as a means of knowledge. For Śaṃkara this is vitally important, because their knotty problem is to make known to human beings the ultimate reality that transcends words. I conclude that these texts may be seen to work as much by laying down fruitful methods for gaining such an understanding as by trying to describe that which, by definition, is indescribable.

In this initial chapter, I shall introduce Śaṃkara to those unfamiliar with his work and set my own approach in the context of other studies of his life and teaching. Through this I shall elaborate on the three levels of method this book seeks to address and the way in which it teases out the argument. While the book aims to make Śaṃkara's work and approach accessible to those who are studying him for the first time, whether from a Hindu perspective or not, it also addresses key questions of interpretation and method that have been and remain disputed by scholars both within and outside the Indian tradition of Advaita Vedānta to which Śaṃkara belongs.

Identifying the teacher

Who, then, was this teacher and what did he teach? In Chapters 1 and 3, we shall consider the sources for Śaṃkara's own life and works in greater detail. For the moment we note that he was a commentator on the ancient Indian

1

Vedic texts called Upaniṣads or Vedānta, who lived perhaps around AD 700 and saw himself as a member of the correct Advaitin teaching tradition. This teaching tradition, which he notably shaped, interpreted the Upaniṣads' search for ultimate reality (*brahman*) in a non-dual (*advaita*) way. According to this tradition, there is no second to *brahman*, the reality that grounds the cosmos. *Brahman*, which is non-dual, the sole reality, simply is self-reflexive consciousness, the self.[3] Individual selves are, in reality, not different from *brahman* or from one another. Like the space contained in each of a row of clay pots, they appear different because each person has an individual body and mind. But really, just as each space apparently confined in its jar simply is space in general, so too each individual self is none other than the consciousness that is *brahman*. The idea that selves, like the multiplicity of the world, are different from *brahman* is due to a fundamental misconception which affects all caught in the world of rebirth. In reality, *brahman*, self-reflexive consciousness, is beyond multiplicity, has no attributes (is *nirguṇa*) and transcends all worldly experience.

Because things in Advaita are, then, other than they appear to be, Ram-Prasad (2001) describes Advaita's position as non-realist. This is helpful so long as we do not fall into the oversimplifying trap of a late Advaita verse, which holds the world to be just unreal. From a conventional perspective, Śaṃkara argues rather strongly for a realist position, which holds that the world must be of such a kind for experience to be possible in the way it is. He rejects the Vijñānavāda Buddhist position, which holds that objects do not exist external to the processes of consciousness. Now, in the end, Śaṃkara's motivation for doing this is to argue for the existence of a permanent self, *brahman*, which is other than objects and the processes by which they are cognized. This goes with his ultimate Advaitin viewpoint, that there is nothing other than *brahman*, the self-reflexive consciousness which is the self. Śaṃkara explains it in this way. Individual selves and the multiplicity of the world, which at a conventional level must exist as they do to account for conventional experience, are in the end just misconceptions superimposed on *brahman* by those who have not understood its true identity. They are, to quote another of Śaṃkara's favourite examples, like a rope lying in a corner, which is wrongly imagined to be a snake! There really is a rope, but it is misconceived to be a snake. The idea of a snake is wrongly superimposed on the rope. Actually there is no snake other than the rope, just the rope. There is no multiplicity other than *brahman*, just *brahman*. The world and individual selves do not exist in and of themselves, only insofar as they are nothing other than *brahman*.

Sometimes, then, Śaṃkara seems to make rather conflicting statements about the status of the world, partly because at some times he speaks from a conventional perspective, at others from an ultimate one. This can be a frustrating position to grasp. From Śaṃkara's point of view, this is not surprising, since the problem is symptomatic of experience in the world of

rebirth (*saṃsāra*). But, as he sees it, the Upaniṣads are there to teach the knowledge that will liberate the seeker from that. The whole point of his commentaries, consequently, is to teach the means of removing the cause of *saṃsāra* to those who want to turn away from the world of rebirth. This means (*sādhana*) simply is the knowledge of the identity of *brahman* and self.[4] Śaṃkara's primary purpose, then, is not to establish metaphysical positions but to move pupils on, as the Upaniṣads do, from misconception to the realization of *brahman* as self.

Given this, our argument about Śaṃkara's way of teaching bears not only on his major preoccupation with teaching and the teacher, but also on the central function of his role as textual commentator, which is to show how this conveying of *brahman*'s identity as self can be the case. It will, therefore, be a key part of my argument that Śaṃkara's roles as teacher and as commentator converge, and I shall seek to demonstrate this, particularly in Chapter 4.

There is, though, a problem at the outset. Śaṃkara the teacher, as we shall see in Chapter 1, is known almost entirely from hagiographical stories post-dating his life by several centuries. The problem is evident: what can be said of him in the twenty-first century? Madugula's presentation of The Teacher in story form offers one solution (Madugula, 1985). Madugula puts the narration into the mouth of Padmapāda, one of Śaṃkara's direct disciples, while acknowledging that he never wrote a biography. He weaves together purported events from Śaṃkara's life with 'the principal elements of the master's teaching', so that story and 'message' will work together, prompting readers to inner enquiry (p. x). Not much, perhaps he implies, has changed since the days of Śaṃkara, when people had forgotten that the self was *brahman*: 'They needed a teacher who could tell them who they were, a teacher *extraordinaire*, a teacher of god and man, a *jagad-guru* [world teacher]. Such a one was Ācārya Śaṅkara' (p. ix).

Madugula writes in the hagiographical tradition, accepting that, nowadays, people come from different religious and other backgrounds, but that inquiry, into the world, life, 'yourself', is 'a gift' (p. x). Both the 'events' and the teachings he portrays appear to be drawn from his reading of an English translation of 'Vidyāraṇya's work' (p. x), presumably that by Swami Tapasyananda (1980), who gives a rather more sophisticated justification for such an approach in his own introduction. For Madugula, however, it is Śaṃkara as an imagined person and inspirational teacher who is his primary interest.

Our approach will be rather different. It certainly notes the continuing appeal of Śaṃkara as 'world teacher', not least amongst those influenced in India and the diaspora by one or more of the present-day Śaṃkarācāryas, leaders of religious centres purportedly founded by Ādi Śaṃkara, our subject.[5] It also recognizes the trajectory of European and North American study of Śaṃkara,[6] which enormously exaggerated the importance of his Advaita Vedānta (non-dual) school by comparison with a range of theistic

schools that were (and are) far more influential in terms of popular practice. Yet our primary interest is neither in Śaṃkara the teacher as a person (inaccessible to historians as he is), nor simply in the content of his Advaitin teachings (important though his writings will be as our primary source). Rather, as befits our central argument, we shall focus on the method of his teaching and on what we can learn of him as a teacher from this. It will not then be adversely affected by the distance of the hagiographical sources from Śaṃkara's own time, for its primary material will be drawn from the writings of Śaṃkara himself.

Method in studying Śaṃkara

My interest in Śaṃkara's method is not entirely new. Concern with 'the method of the Vedānta' and with Śaṃkara's method in distinction from that of other Advaitins is at the heart of Swami Satchidanandendra's massive study in Sanskrit, whose first volume is translated by A. J. Alston into English under that title (ET 1989). As an Advaitin himself, Satchidanandendra was committed to unearthing 'the true method of the Vedanta' (1989, p. 11 and frequently). He writes his work in traditional format, putting forward and refuting rival views, establishing his own, properly Advaitin, point of view, supporting his work from the Upaniṣads and other relevant Sanskrit scriptural texts, annotating his text with comments on his own method and that of his primary sources. Also within the Advaitin tradition, though taking issue with Satchidanandendra's approach, Michael Comans has recently published a comparative study of method in Śaṃkara and other early Advaitin thinkers (Comans, 2000). Important though this work is in developing a position similar to our own, neither author goes on to stress its connection with Śaṃkara's emphasis on the teacher and as a teacher himself, which will be our focus in the coming pages.

Satchidanandendra is, however, an important contributor to modern studies of Advaita, not just in his concern with Advaita's method(s), but in the scholarly method he himself employs. In seeking to distinguish Śaṃkara's method from those of the diverse interpretations of Śaṃkara's various Advaitin successors, Satchidanandendra laid the foundation of work that in North Atlantic scholarship[7] is more frequently associated with the names of Paul Hacker and Daniel Ingalls. Indeed, Hacker's ground-breaking article of 1950, in which he distinguished Śaṃkara's use of key concepts from later Advaita's, acknowledges the work already done by Satchidanandendra.[8]

Whether Ingalls was aware of Satchidanandendra's work when he gave his famous lecture on 'The Study of Śaṃkarācārya' in 1952 is not clear.[9] It was in this lecture that he advocated the historical study of Śaṃkara's work, separating this out from the traditional and philosophical methods more prevalent at the time. Indian historian G. C. Pande's *Life and Thought of Śaṅkarācārya* is one of the more detailed recent examples of a historical

approach that draws on careful Indian and European scholarship alike. Major contributions to trying to establish which works of Śaṃkara's are authentic on historical and literary critical principles have also been made by Sengaku Mayeda (1965a, 1965b, 1967, 1967–8), Tilmann Vetter (1979) and Albrecht Wezler (1983) among others (e.g. Halbfass, 1991, Ch. 6; Rukmani, 1998; Sundaresan, 2002). What all these authors share is a determination to read Śaṃkara in his own terms and not through the lenses of later Advaita,[10] an approach therefore very different from that of Madugula or even Tapasyananda, whose hagiographies we mentioned above.

This book presumes a historical approach and tries, in a necessarily limited way, to go a little further than the authenticity and distinctiveness debates by looking at the possible social background against which Śaṃkara was writing.[11] While difficulties over precise dating obtrude, I do suggest that a rising tide of devotionalism may be detected as part of the context for Śaṃkara's teaching, a context on which he skilfully draws to lead his pupils beyond worship to an understanding of the self within (see Chapter 6).

The book's other key assumption, which should by now be quite clear, is that it is impossible to study Śaṃkara without paying close attention to the way in which he comments on scriptural texts: his glosses (word by word explanations), his longer exegetical comments (explaining the form, context and content of the verses under consideration) and his apparently free-standing arguments (taking off from the text and leaving it far behind). In this nitty-gritty engagement with text and commentary, we may start to understand the way in which Vedāntin teachers and pupils did the same in their pursuit of that which would liberate them from the endless round of rebirth. Satchidanandendra's work, which we have mentioned above, exemplifies such an approach in a modern context. Another scholar who has been very influential in stressing the importance of reading the text in understanding Vedānta is the Jesuit, Francis Clooney (1993, 1991). Indeed he prefers to speak of this school by its alternative title, Uttaramīmāṃsā, the school of the 'later exegesis',[12] to emphasize this point. He rejects the view that philosophical arguments or summaries of key points removed from context can help us to understand what Śaṃkara and his successors were really about.

In this book, I strongly agree with Clooney. In Chapter 2, I shall lead the beginner reader through the introduction to that work which defines Śaṃkara as a commentator, his *Brahmasūtra* commentary.[13] Well-known as this material is to the specialist, it can be off-putting to a reader coming to it new. I shall indicate how, like a detective, the reader can find the clues beneath the surface so that gradually a picture of Śaṃkara's main concerns can start to form. Equipped with this initial competence, the reader can progress through Chapter 4 and the subsequent chapters to discover how Śaṃkara construes contexts and the Vedānta as a whole, not least through the repeated discovery of teaching methods which Śaṃkara makes in the texts. Understanding how

such methods complement one another and strip away unwanted assumptions will form another step in studying Śaṃkara's method. This will then put the reader in a position to appreciate my argument about the way Śaṃkara holds scriptural texts to teach: not just in providing content, a knowledge-base if you like, but by modelling methods, methods of fruitful understanding, fit to fulfil the promises the texts themselves make. Indeed, this book itself seeks to model the processes of understanding involved, as the outline of its stages above is intended to convey. And because this is integral to the way my argument works, it is not for the beginner reader alone.

This, however, raises another problem. Is this modelling an appropriate goal for an academic study that distances itself from a hagiographical approach and is not written from within the Advaitin tradition? I hold that it is, with some important caveats. Insofar as Śaṃkara's teaching is what Taber has labelled 'transformative philosophy' (1983; Shantha Kumari, 1994), there is a question over whether it, like other Indian teachings in which meditation under a teacher's guidance is central, can possibly be understood by a person who does not put herself under such a teacher to gain realization. Put in a different way, because that which is to be understood, in Śaṃkara's case (and variously for other schools), is the self, which is neither subject nor object of cognition, it is not open to academic scrutiny or investigation.

There is a clear sense in which this is true, as it is for all religious traditions studied by those who are not participants themselves. The modelling I propose is not to be misunderstood as a substitute for sitting at the feet of an Advaitin teacher, nor is its goal the realization that is the proper end of such study alone. But I do hold that, in a strong sense, an engagement with the texts of Advaita is a prerequisite for even an intellectual understanding of Śaṃkara's aims and, in that sense, familiarity with process as well as with content is not only an appropriate but also a necessary aspect of academic study.

This is not to deny that there are many other ways of approaching Śaṃkara's Advaita. Above we have mentioned the hagiographical, historical and textual–critical. Another key approach with many varieties of its own has been the philosophical.[14] Examples have ranged from comparative studies that have sought to compare Śaṃkara with great European philosophers, Hegel, Kant, Fichte, Heidegger, to name but a few,[15] to rigorously argued positions on matters of contemporary philosophical interest that have taken Śaṃkara as their starting point.[16] They have been written by both Indians and non-Indians, mutually influenced by and influencing scholarship in colonial, extra-colonial and postcolonial contexts. One of the most widely known modern writers was Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, one time President of India, Spalding Professor of Eastern Religions and Ethics in the University of Oxford and defender of Advaita as both *philosophia perennis*, the perennial philosophy, whose truth, it claims, is found in many different traditions,[17] and as the acme of 'the Hindu view of life' (Radhakrishnan, 1927). His life's work,

on his own admission, was dedicated to showing the robustness of Indian philosophy in the face of European criticism (Gopal, 1989, pp. 16–19).

In this study, I have not attempted a philosophical evaluation of Śaṃkara's arguments, though I have tried to show the way in which they contribute to his Vedāntin interpretation according to his own comments and practice. In the final chapter, I have also indicated points in his Advaitin position that are particularly vulnerable to criticism. My conclusion suggests that a reading of Śaṃkara's work as 'not untextual' and 'not unphilosophical' may be helpful in checking polarizations of approaches here, but this is a matter for later.

So far, I have related my approach in this book to other prevalent academic approaches to the study of Śaṃkara, whether written from within the Advaitin tradition or not. Among those who choose to locate themselves in relation to an Advaitin tradition, we have already seen the differences between the approaches adopted by Satchidanandendra, Mudugula and Radhakrishnan. But these are not the only possibilities. Ramana Maharshi (1879–1950) was widely claimed as an exponent of Advaita both by his Indian and American followers, yet he was untutored in Vedānta or its texts (Mahadevan, 1977; Suthren Hirst, 1985). His emphasis was on the experience of the 'I' beyond body, mind and speech. The contemporary Śaṃkarācāryas of Kāñcī and of Śṛṅgeri, among others, have, by complete contrast, been (rather differing) products of a system of brahmanical scholarship in whose authority they ground their not inconsiderable political power (Cenkner, 1992; Yocum, 1992).[18] Different again has been the work of brahmanical scholars like Kasinath Bala Sastri Agase[19] and S. S. Suryanarayana Sastri[20] in producing editions, translations and scholarly studies of Sanskrit texts, or of polymaths like T. M. P. Mahadevan,[21] who made Śaṃkara's writings more widely known in a series of translations into English and South Indian languages to celebrate the annual Śaṅkara Jayantīs, part of the work of the *vihāra* that he ran in Madras, a centre for Advaitin teaching and practice benefiting from and complementing his academic work.[22]

The connections between these different approaches, individuals and organizations, and their relation to a history of colonial intervention, European study and postcolonial politics are extremely complex. And it is not within the scope of the present work to tease them out. Simply to mention them may, however, remind the reader of the plethora of work going on in the study of Śaṃkara's Advaita and of the impossibility of writing an 'unlocated' interpretation.

Yet there are dangers too of oversimplistic location. So, for instance, Natalia Isayeva criticizes Hacker's work on the grounds that he reads into his interpretation of Śaṃkara his own Christian concerns (1993, p. 90). On closer inspection, however, the particular (mis)interpretation of which she accuses him is well able to be justified in its own terms.[23] This is not to deny that non-Indian and indeed Indian scholars' own presuppositions have moulded their interpretations of Śaṃkara and of Advaita and, in not a few cases, led to

outright distortions. It is to caution against jumping to conclusions on the basis of labels, without considering wider interpretative contexts. Clooney, for example, is completely open about his intention to write a Christian 'Theology after Vedānta', yet his reading of the Vedānta texts, while shaped by his larger interest, is not noticeably distorted by Christian 'reading in'.[24] In my own case, my interest in writing this particular book on Śaṃkara has been shaped by a number of factors: an intellectual and personal fascination with religious language and how it can possibly give knowledge of God;[25] a serendipitous choice of university courses, with an Indian specialism in which Śaṃkara (and Rāmānuja correctively) was taught for reasons to do with the history of European study to which we have already alluded; an encounter with T. M. P. Mahadevan that seriously challenged my academic presuppositions; and my own career in teaching, which has developed synchronously with my study of teaching method in Śaṃkara's works. None of these is incidental to the shape of this book. Whether any has distorted it as a study, others must judge. In the conclusion to it, I suggest a corrective way of reading Śaṃkara as 'the other' to which this too must submit. Now though I outline the chapter structure to come.

The shape of the study

Above I have indicated the cumulative manner in which I hope this book will work. In exploring 'a way of teaching,' it will be concerned with method at three different levels at least. The first level is that of the teaching methods of the Upaniṣads themselves, or, to be more precise, Śaṃkara's interpretations of their methods. Where necessary, I shall distinguish between these. The second level is that of Śaṃkara's implementation, adaptation and extension of these teaching methods as methods of his own, or, again to be more precise, of his Advaitin teaching tradition. The third level relates to the study of Śaṃkara's methods, at both levels one and two, and is embodied in this book as process.

Accordingly, I start in Chapter 1 by discussing, in more detail, Śaṃkara as teacher himself. In this chapter, I argue for the importance of his own works as sources of his teaching methods, a claim which I aim to substantiate in the rest of the book. Chapter 2 identifies the need for Advaitin teaching: the context of superimposition, that misidentification which comprises the world of *saṃsāra*, birth and death and rebirth. It inducts the reader into the study of Śaṃkara's commentaries and identifies who the fit pupil can be.

At this point, a note on the use (or otherwise) of gender-inclusive vocabulary is necessary. Because, for Śaṃkara, the pupil (and indeed the teacher) is almost without exception assumed to be male, I shall use 'he', 'him' and 'his' when speaking of Śaṃkara's own ideas. To remind the reader that it is in this gendered sense that I use these words, and lest we forget the context of knowledge and power which Śaṃkara (and modern academia!) assumes, I use

'she', 'her' and 'hers' in other circumstances. Further, when I am delineating Śaṃkara's position to help the reader 'get inside it', insofar as this may be possible, I do not mark every sentence with a bracketing phrase, such as 'in Śaṃkara's view', because this can become tiresomely repetitive. I have, however, made it clear above that I do not regard it as my brief to defend or even assert the truth of Śaṃkara's teaching, but rather to make comprehensible in what sense it is 'true teaching' for him.

Chapter 3 explores the source of this teaching in the Upaniṣads and starts to argue for the important though scripturally dependent way in which reason may be used in the search for knowledge of *brahman*. It rejects the view that experience is an independent means of knowledge for this, a view confirmed by various other recent studies (e.g. Bader, 1990; Fort, 1992), but which, in our case, throws the emphasis back on the Upaniṣads as the source of needed teaching methods. It is in Chapter 4 that the heart of our argument can be found. Here I look very specifically at the different levels of teaching methods that are involved in studying Śaṃkara's Advaita, arguing for the cumulative effect of questioning, interiorizing methods, stories, and illustrations, Śaṃkara finds in and adapts from scripture.[26]

Chapters 5 and 6 then look at the context in which the teaching is given, context first in the sense of the conventional world, which is that of ordinary human (and other) experience and, second, in terms of devotional traditions and understanding of *brahman* as Supreme Lord. Drawing on the methods we discovered in Chapter 4, and showing how Śaṃkara applies scripturally based argument using examples along with cumulative techniques to draw the pupil onwards, I argue that Śaṃkara uses scripture and its teaching methods to enable the pupil not simply to reject the context of conventional experience, but through it to come to understand that which is ultimate reality.

Chapters 7 and 8 study the *dénouement* of the teaching. This is given in the context of the preparation that the teacher works in the pupil through the teaching methods already discussed. In Chapter 7, we look at the way in which Śaṃkara construes the language of the key statements of scriptural teaching, not least to show how it is that *śruti*, the scriptural texts of the Upaniṣads in particular, can be the only and effective *pramāṇa* or valid means of knowledge for knowing *brahman*, and so, in terms of our argument, how they can teach. Here and in the final chapter comes the completion of our claim that scripture provides fruitful methods for disclosing *brahman*, not just description of *brahman*. I argue that, for Śaṃkara, the processes of grammatical investigation, which ascertain the way individual words and the chosen sentences function, are paralleled by a reorientation within the hearer–pupil, such that he is put in readiness to hear the liberating truth. Chapter 8 then explores 'the end of the teaching', with its intended double meaning. That which is the culmination of the teaching is simultaneously its supersession. It is that 'from which words turn back' (*Tait Up* 2.9.1). Taking Śaṃkara's commentary on the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, from which this phrase comes, I show how, in a single

text, Śaṃkara brings together a range of methods as a way of teaching which leads the pupil to precisely that point of realization 'from which words turn back'. Applying a process of mutual complementarity which strips away that which is unwanted and is central to Śaṃkara's own method, I then seek to show how the key passages on language may fruitfully be read in relation to one another, demonstrating how, in Śaṃkara's works, they yield the realization of that which is beyond words. Finally, I hint that a not dissimilar process of defining by negation and of stripping away the unwanted be applied to different approaches to the study of Śaṃkara themselves, the present one not excepted. For it is perhaps thus that we may be prevented from othering, or indeed appropriating, the other, while allowing the other to be heard.

1

THE TEACHER HIMSELF

In trying to discover Śaṃkara the teacher, we have three kinds of sources: Śaṃkara's own writings; the traditional 'lives' or hagiographies of Śaṃkara; and the records of his own pupils. Only the last are (relatively) unproblematical and they were not concerned to give the kind of biographical data modern researchers might seek. They do, though, help us to understand the kind of impact Śaṃkara had on his closest pupils. From this, we can begin to build up a picture of Śaṃkara the teacher from those who presumably knew him best and, more importantly, could testify to the power of his teaching. We shall accordingly, and somewhat unusually, start with what they have to say. We shall then turn to the hagiographies and ask what weight can be placed on them in our search for Śaṃkara the teacher. Finally, we shall look at Śaṃkara's own writings, discussing their authenticity, outlining their content and setting them in the context of a period of lively intellectual debate and rising devotionalism.

The views of Śaṃkara's pupils

'Toṭaka' (*c.* AD 740) was the composer of a hymn in eight verses in praise of his teacher. Advaitin tradition makes him one of Śaṃkara's four main pupils and author of the *Śrutisārasamuddharaṇa* (*Drawing out the Essence of Śruti*).[1] The striking similarities between his thought and Śaṃkara's suggest that he may well have been a direct pupil.[2] His hymn is eloquent in the teacher's praise. Śaṃkara is said to be an ocean of compassion, the one who can save from the sea of rebirth, the best of teachers, a treasure-trove of truth. He is unequalled, even among the wise. By comparison with him, Toṭaka disclaims his own ability. The hymn's constant refrain echoes: 'Be Thou my refuge, O mentor, Śaṃkara!' (tr. Mahadevan, 1980, p. 176).

From *Śrutisārasamuddharaṇa* v.175, we catch a glimpse of Toṭaka as pupil. The Sanskrit words of this verse have a double sense. At one level, the author is describing the format of the *Śrutisārasamuddharaṇa*. He composed it, he says, in the form of a conversation between a teacher and a pupil, like scripture (*śrutivat*).[3] The Sanskrit also suggests that Toṭaka was

able to draw out the essence of scripture in conformity with scripture (*śrutivat*) through hearing conversations between the teacher and (his) pupil(s).[4] In other words, Toṭaka hints that it was his own experience of audiences with Śaṃkara that enabled him to understand the heart of the scriptural teaching and represent it in his current work. This can truly be described as *śrutivat*, like scripture and like (his own) hearing. The teaching context mediates true understanding, reflects both the content and form of Upaniṣadic teaching and provides the model for the next generation of teachers and learners.

We now look at clues in the writings of two other authors usually identified as direct pupils of Śaṃkara: Padmapāda (*c.* AD 740) and Sureśvara (*c.* AD 760).[5] Padmapāda's major work was the *Pañcapādikā*, a sub-commentary on the first chapter of Śaṃkara's *Brahmasūtra* commentary.[6] It opens with four homage verses, the last to those who teach Śaṃkara's works:

> I bow my head before the teachers, renowned for their knowledge . . . of the *Bhāṣya*, those who drink the nectar flowing from the *Bhāṣya*-lotus, which owes its birth to the *Mānasa*-lake of his mouth – the loving disciples who, like bees, are eagerly lifting up their faces from all quarters.[7]
>
> (Invocation verse 4, p. 6, tr. Venkataramiah, 1948)

Here Padmapāda pays respect to the next generation of teachers, Śaṃkara's pupils, who are fed by the honey from the lotus flower of his commentary (*Bhāṣya*). In *Thousand Teachings* 18.230, Śaṃkara had reverenced his own teacher as the one who 'collected the best honey of the nectar of knowledge for us from the flowers of the Upaniṣadic sentences'. Now it is his own words that are compared with the nectar, his mouth with the lake on which the honey-bearing lotus grows. The tone has shifted.

Two of Sureśvara's works also bear invocatory verses that reflect his teacher's power. In his sub-commentary on Śaṃkara's *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* commentary, Sureśvara honours *brahman*, then hails the teacher, clearly Śaṃkara, 'by the axe of whose speech the opinions of the logicians are destroyed'.[8] Next he borrows a verse Śaṃkara gives at the beginning of his own commentary: 'I composed this explanation of the *Taittirīya*'s essence for those who long for a clear sense, through the favour of my teacher.'[9] Perhaps Sureśvara uses this verse to indicate that his devotion to Śaṃkara is patterned on Śaṃkara's attitude to his teacher in turn. It also, of course, places his commentary in the correct line of interpretation.

This is also the function of the verses to the teacher near the beginning of Sureśvara's independent work, the *Naiṣkarmyasiddhi* (ET: *Realization of the Absolute*). It was written, says Sureśvara, at his teacher's instigation and is like a flickering firefly compared with the thousand rays of his teacher's work.[10] Nothing is lacking in the latter, but Sureśvara writes for his own benefit, to

purify his own knowledge on 'the touchstone of those who know *brahman*'.[11] Of these, Śaṃkara is surely deemed to be one.

To do him justice, Śaṃkara's pupils searched for an apt comparison for their charismatic teacher. They found inspiration in his name[12] and likened him to Lord Śiva. Sureśvara does this by ending the *Naiṣkarmyasiddhi* with a verse ingeniously capable of two interpretations. As Śiva bears the weight of the river Ganges on his head, bringing it safely down to earth, so Śaṃkara conveys the Upaniṣadic knowledge to human beings.[13] Padmapāda also uses double meanings, but he does so in order to distinguish Śaṃkara, the true ascetic, from the serpent-clad, ash-anointed figure of Śiva.[14] It is the renouncer teacher whose importance is stressed.

The problem with assessing these tributes is that they follow a standard pattern of eulogy. Contemporary inscriptions bear similar elaborate descriptions, comparing various kings with Śiva.[15] This might suggest that such eulogies tell us more about a leader's need for legitimation than about his individual characteristics. Mahalingam (1969, p. 112 f), however, while acknowledging the type of writing concerned, suggests that the comparisons had to be appropriate both to the king's actions and character and to Śiva's. We may perhaps trust the eulogies as reflecting the disciples' estimation of their teacher.[16] Whereas Śaṃkara is keen to stress the importance of interpreting the scriptures in accordance with the correct teaching tradition, if necessary correcting earlier misleading commentaries,[17] his pupils personalize this and see it embodied in the figure of Śaṃkara himself. He mediates the Upaniṣads to them, destroys the opinions of opponents, compassionately leads them to liberation and guides their future careers. He is for them the touchstone of truth.

Nonetheless, many others were looked on as great teachers in their traditions. We want to know what made Śaṃkara different as a teacher. In the rest of the book we shall examine his specific way of teaching. First, though, we turn to our second group of sources for Śaṃkara the teacher, the so-called traditional 'lives' or hagiographies (literally, 'writings about holy ones').[18]

The traditional lives

In an article entitled 'The Life of Śaṅkarācārya', David Lorenzen indicates that he located references to at least 34 different Sanskrit hagiographies of Śaṃkara, of which only six or seven are available in printed form.[19] At least one of them is attributed to a pupil of Śaṃkara's, Ānandagiri, but scholars question some of the traditional attributions and assign to the hagiographies varying dates, all of them post-dating Śaṃkara by several centuries.[20] This makes them difficult to use as a source for Śaṃkara himself, since they reflect concerns of their own times and differ between themselves even on such details as where Śaṃkara was born and died, what his parents were

called, where he travelled and where or whether he established any *maṭha*s ('monasteries' or, rather, centres for renouncers, which were establishments of learning).[21] However, they remain the only basis for the 'facts' about Śaṃkara's life, since his own commentaries contain nothing explicitly auto-biographical, for reasons we shall indicate.

This has led scholars to take one of four approaches to the hagiographical material. The first is to ignore it altogether. This is often found in books that stress Śaṃkara as a philosopher. So, for example, the only information Radhakrishnan and Moore give on Śaṃkara's life is to say: 'Śaṃkara is generally assigned to the eighth century (788–820?) AD, . . . A creative thinker of the first rank, Śaṃkara says that he is merely expounding what is contained in the Vedas' (1957, p. 506). The second approach is to give a truncated version of Śaṃkara's life, with or without acknowledgement of the hagio-graphical sources and their variations. Paul Deussen, for example, wrote:

> Of Çañkara it seems to be certain that he lived about 700 or 800 AD, founded a famous school in *Çriñgagiri*, where perhaps also he was born, as an ascetic pilgrim . . . undertook journeys as far as Kashmir to work for his doctrine, and died in *Kāñcî*.
>
> (1912, p. 35, n. 23)

We shall consider below why people have felt a need for accounts of Śaṃkara's life. One obvious answer is that it gives a sense of security or orientation. As a concession to that need, I shall give a slightly fuller version here, but stress that it remains simply a potted version for that purpose! It quotes Lorenzen's summary, with comments of my own in square brackets. Lorenzen says:

> The facts that we can accept with confidence are
> [i] that he was born in a Brāhman family from the Kerala region [South West India] but left home at an early age to become a wandering ascetic (*saṃnyāsin*);
> [ii] that he became a student of a teacher named Govinda, a pupil of Gauḍapāda [the directness of the connection with Gauḍapāda is questionable];[22]
> [iii] that he wrote various philosophical and devotional works including commentaries on the Upaniṣads, *Bhagavad Gītā*, and *Brahmasūtra*;
> [iv] and that he travelled throughout India with his own disciples defeating rival theologians.
> It is probable though not at all certain
> [v] that his father was named Śivaguru and was a Yajurvedin Brāhman of the Taittirīya branch;
> [vi] that his father died while he was still a young child;

[vii] that he later performed the funeral rites of his widowed mother over the objections of his kinsmen;

[viii] that one of his most important conquests was a man named Maṇḍana Miśra, a mīmāṃsā follower of Kumārila;

[ix] that his most important disciples were named Ānandagiri, Padmapāda (Sanandana), Sureśvara (doubtfully identified with Maṇḍana Miśra and Viśvarūpa [identifications disproved]), Hastāmalaka and Toṭakācārya [some stress only four, omitting Ānandagiri or identifying him with Toṭaka, and relating one pupil to each of the *maṭha*s mentioned in [x]];

[x] that he established various religious centers especially at Śṛṅgerī in the South, at Puri in the East, Dvārakā in the West, and Badarikāśrama in the North [a strong claim also made by Kāñcī in the South, but some versions mention none at all];

[ix] and that he died at a young age, thirty-two according to most accounts, at either Badarikāśrama [in Himalayas], Kāñcī [in modern Tamilnadu] or somewhere in Kerala.

(Lorenzen, 1983, p. 156)

This provides a quasi-historical outline which writers tend to vary according to their own concerns. Thus Lorenzen puts in [vi] and [vii] because it is important to the way he goes on to analyse the hagiographical myth. Cenkner simply accepts that Śaṃkara did found *maṭha*s (cf. [x] which Lorenzen gives as 'not at all certain'), because his interest lies with these current-day institutions.[23] Anyway, as Tapasyananda puts it, such an outline is rather like the bare bones of an extinct animal, subject to the interminable debate of experts, whereas the hagiographies themselves are like an artist's model of that animal, making it live for ordinary people (1980, p. vii).

Accordingly, some writers take a third approach, letting the story speak for itself. But which story? And for what ends? Tapasyananda translates the *Sankara-Dig-Vijaya* attributed to Mādhava (-Vidyāraṇya) as a dynamic model, yet regresses to saying that it is 'the only way to give some idea of Sankara, his doings, his personality and the times in which he lived' (1980, p. xiii). This ignores the problems of the source material. Isayeva tells the story to highlight how Śaṃkara's significance is portrayed as an incarnation of Śiva who is greeted with heavenly music at his birth, shows great learning at a tender age and so forth. Yet in the end she tries to single out 'some reasonably reliable facts from the whole conglomerate of colorful legends' (1993, p. 82) and so discards the rest.

The fourth set of approaches tries to recognize and value the hagiographies for the kind of writing they really are, though authors differ in their judgment as to what this is. A hagiography may be analysed for its mythological themes (e.g. Bader, 1990, p. 16) or its historical or political sub-text (Lorenzen, 1983; Narayana Sastri, 1916). While these interpretations are very illuminating in

their different ways, they do not contribute much to our picture of Śaṃkara the teacher, except to show indirectly the extent of his continuing influence.

However, this need not force us to abandon the hagiographies altogether, for Śaṃkara's role as teacher is one of their primary themes (cf. Clooney, 1996). I shall illustrate this using the *Śaṃkara-digvijaya* as my example and accepting that it is a late composite text. In this Life, Śiva takes birth as Śaṃkara in response to a plea from the gods that the Vedic path is being neglected, for it is being criticized by Buddhists who are converting people away from it and rejected by Vaiṣṇava and especially Śaiva sectarians who are spreading their own degraded practices (Canto 1.27–29). Like Viṣṇu who takes birth to restore *dharma* and (for Śaṃkara) to teach the Advaitin path, Śiva descends as a great teacher 'to save the world floundering in the ocean of transmigratory existence' (1.84). As a child this Śaṃkara shows great mastery of Vedic and all other branches of learning and is flooded with the joy of the non-dualistic teaching of the Upaniṣads (4.1–20). Yet he submits to Govinda as a teacher, performs devoted service to him and is initiated into *saṃnyāsa* by him, learning the *śāstra*s at his feet (5.89–96). He in turn writes commentaries, initiates disciples and engages in disputes with opponents, presented as the teacher *par excellence*. Nothing is done for his own aggrandizement, but purely out of compassion for his pupils. His arguments are lucid and unanswerable, following the (*Brahma*)*sūtra*s and grounded in reason (*yukti*) (7.40). They are set out in debates – with Maṇḍana in his Pūrvamīmāṃsaka phase (8.74–130), with Nīlakaṇṭha, a Śaiva dualist (15.49–60) and with Bhāskara who advocated identity-in-difference (15.139–155) – all in simplified form to popularize the teaching.

Similarly, Śaṃkara's famous hymns are given concrete settings, showing the teacher responding to different individuals, according to their need. When his dying mother is unable to grasp his exposition of Advaita, he sings a hymn to Lord Śiva, but she is frightened by seeing Śiva's attendants. So he sings a hymn to Lord Viṣṇu, whose Vaikuṇṭha heaven she reaches in bliss (14.29–50). Śaṃkara also takes proper responsibility for his pupils. The reason why Sureśvara wrote the works he did (13) and why Padmapāda's commentary only covers the first chapter of the *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* (14.138 f) are all explained in terms of Śaṃkara's direction, intervention and understanding – an Advaitin tradition seeking to justify the shape of its legacy by reference to its greatest teacher. Finally, Śaṃkara ascends the so-called throne of omniscience at the temple to Mother Śāradā in Kashmir, the only learned man from the South to be given such admission, earning his right to enter by answering opponents from all the major schools (16.54 f).

The aetiological and polemical functions of this portrait are clear. However, they reflect a Southern Advaitin claim to derive inspiration from a teacher who stood within the correct tradition of interpretation yet towered above it, whose confidence was in scripture and reason, whose own model of the teacher was scripturally based and compassionate and who worked within

yet transcended the (purported) religious norms of his day. This is not just a stereotype of any Indian *guru*, but reflects emphases in the Advaitin tradition, which for all their later modes of expression, are in accordance with Śaṃkara's own concerns.[24] They will be among the themes explored in the rest of this book. For the moment, though, we turn to our third source for Śaṃkara the teacher, namely, his own works.

The quest for Śaṃkara the teacher

Immediately, we face two problems: authenticity and dating. We shall examine these below. For the moment, I shall anticipate my conclusions and simply state that in his authentic works Śaṃkara gives us virtually no biographical clues. Where he does pay homage to his teacher(s), they cannot be clearly identified and his contemporary opponents are never named. Personal identity is not significant. What is important is to belong to the correct teaching tradition and to pass its understanding down to your own pupils in turn.

In a delightful passage in his *Brahmasūtra* commentary, Śaṃkara discusses what it means for one who has realized the truth to become childlike. He holds that such a person should not make a display of his understanding, learning and virtue, but be free from deceit and pride. He then quotes from two unidentified *smṛti* passages:

> 'A (true) brahmin is one whom nobody knows as either their equal or beneath them, unlearned or well-educated, of good conduct or bad. A wise person should act without his actions being known, pursuing his *dharma* privately. . .' and 'With no outward signs or ostentatious behaviour'.
>
> (*BSBh* 3.4.50)

Piantelli makes the attractive suggestion that this is in a sense autobiographical. Śaṃkara is the orthodox Indian commentator *par excellence*. He places himself within the correct teaching tradition, ascribes his insights to scripture and his teachers and, like the wise person in the quotation, passes through life – or history – unknown (1974a, p. 190).[25]

However, this does not mean that we have no further access to Śaṃkara the teacher. We have numerous comments and his own practice that show how he envisaged the true teacher: by birth a brahmin, but now a *paramahaṃsa* wandering ascetic who has renounced all rituals and conventional signs; more importantly, one who has himself realized the truth of non-duality, a knower of *brahman*, who has compassion for those still sinking in the ocean of rebirth; a faithful interpreter of scripture, seeking to base his own practice on the example of scripture's wisdom and compassion; one who is beyond the words and images of the world, but who can use them to draw others to the

same ineffable truth (cf. also *Upad G* 1.6). In a strong sense, then, as we go on to examine his way of teaching, we shall start to understand more about Śaṃkara the teacher.

Beyond this, though, it could be argued that a 'quest for the historical Śaṃkara' reflects a Western interest in personality and the individual that is irrelevant and inappropriate to the Advaitin tradition and carries with it all the difficulties of method encountered by those who sought the historical Jesus. Like that quest, it risks creating a figure in the researcher's desired image, the perfect philosopher, for example. Since Śaṃkara himself seems to favour anonymity and the sources result in a paucity of hard information anyway, surely it would be better to abandon the search?

It was in an attempt to approach Śaṃkara as his own tradition has done that we began by looking at the views of his pupils and the hagiographies. Barbara Doherty (1979, pp. 5–24) has ample grounds for showing how a Western myth of Śaṃkara's importance has been created by such scholars as Max Müller and Paul Deussen, but as Bader (1990, p. 19, n. 25) points out, the myth-making did not start with them. Śaṃkara has been claimed as the founder of Advaitin *maṭha*s, the single-handed defeater of the Buddhists in India, a great devotee of Śiva, an advocate of Śākta (Goddess) worship, the founder of the non-sectarian worship of five deities or six, as well as the leading exponent of Vedānta.[26] In a sense, Śaṃkara has become all things to all men – at least to those people who have an interest in him. The following quotation from Radhakrishnan shows this very clearly:

> The life of Sankara makes a strong impression of contraries. He is a philosopher and a poet, a savant and a saint, a mystic and a religious reformer. Such diverse gifts did he possess that different images present themselves, if we try to recall his personality [can we?]. One sees him in youth, on fire with intellectual ambition, a stiff and intrepid debater; another regards him as a shrewd political genius (rather a patriot) attempting to impress on the people a sense of unity; for a third, he is a calm philosopher engaged in the single effort to expose the contradictions of life and thought with an unmatched incisiveness; for a fourth, he is the mystic who declares that we are all greater than we know. There have been few minds more universal than his.
>
> (Radhakrishnan, 1929, Vol. 2, p. 450)[27]

If this assessment were merely talking of the total picture of 'Śaṃkara' that has emerged over the centuries, it would be unproblematical. Clearly this picture does function as the basis for the four idealizations Radhakrishnan depicts. Yet he refers simultaneously to a historical individual, by mentioning Śaṃkara's roles, personality and great mind. This raises questions about the relation of that individual to the total picture. Śaṃkara can presumably only

be described as a poet if he did write poetry or at least poetically. We are only justified in seeing him as a religious reformer if he did engage in such activities as founding *maṭha*s. And there will be major problems in understanding the texts he did write if we are unable to place them in a reasonably accurate historical context. So unless we are prepared to take the total picture of 'Śaṃkara' and project this back onto a purported historical individual, some discussion of the animal's bones is inevitable. In the last part of this chapter, therefore, as well as indicating the nature and content of Śaṃkara's main works, I shall deal with questions of authenticity and dating and seek to locate Śaṃkara in his historical context.

Śaṃkara's major works

Śaṃkara is attributed with writing literally hundreds of works (Piantelli, 1974a, lists 433). While there is unanimous agreement that some of these are spurious, and a growing scholarly consensus on which are undoubtedly authentic, there is also a considerable grey penumbra where Western and Indian scholars differ among themselves or reject texts held central to Śaṃkara's thought by modern Advaitin teachers.

In determining which works attributed to Śaṃkara are authentic, the starting point is his commentary (*Bhāṣya*) on the *Brahmasūtra*s of Bādarāyaṇa. Śaṃkara is, if you like, by definition, the author of this work. Each of the so-called six schools or viewpoints (*darśana*s) of orthodox Indian philosophy developed a set of *sūtra*s as a foundation text. These were aphoristic verses strung together as a basis for the system, '*sūtra*' meaning 'thread'. Bādarāyaṇa's *Brahmasūtra*s, which form a summary of Upaniṣadic teaching, belong to the Vedānta school. However, each *sūtra* is so brief that it is unintelligible without a commentary. It is susceptible, therefore, to a wide variety of interpretations. Śaṃkara's commentary was by no means the first (cf. Nakamura, 1983). He sometimes follows the views of an earlier commentator (see below), while the *sūtra*s themselves mention at least seven other people who discussed Upaniṣadic meaning. Śaṃkara's is, however, the earliest extant commentary and is regarded as the most authoritative in the Advaitin branch of Vedānta. It has been commented on in turn many times over. We noted Padmapāda's *Pañcapādikā* above.

The *Brahmasūtra*s themselves are divided up into four *adhyāya*s. The first deals with reconciling the different underlying Upaniṣadic texts to which the *sūtra*s refer, so that a coherent interpretation can be given. For Śaṃkara, this obviously has to be in accordance with Advaitin understanding. Here, as elsewhere, Śaṃkara takes care to differentiate his position from that of his chief opponents, the Pūrvamīmāṃsaka 'earlier exegetes' whose primary concern was with the Vedic ritual prescriptions. The second *adhyāya* is entitled 'non-contradiction'. Here the *sūtra*s, followed by Śaṃkara, examine the views of various opposing schools, most importantly the views of

Sāṃkhya on the nature of the cause, and of the Buddhists on the nature of consciousness. The third *adhyāya* on 'the means' (*sādhana*) is largely concerned with meditations of various kinds, while the fourth on 'the result' (*phala*) opens with two important *sūtra*s concerned, for Śaṃkara, with ways of coming to understand the self's identity as *brahman*, Śaṃkara's persistent theme throughout. It also includes discussion of various post-death destinations reached through particular meditations. While the titles of the *adhyāya*s give an indication of the main focus of each, throughout his commentary Śaṃkara develops his Advaitin understanding by identifying underlying Upaniṣadic texts, showing how they can all be interpreted in an Advaitin way and refuting the position of opponents of various kinds.

The *Brahmasūtra*s (or *Vedāntasūtra*s as they are also sometimes called) form one part of the so-called triple foundation of Vedānta. The other two parts are the (classical) Upaniṣads and the *Bhagavadgītā*. A Vedāntin commentator who wished to demonstrate the authenticity of his interpretation had to show that it could embrace and explain each part of the foundation in relation to the whole. It is not clear at what point the triple foundation was recognized as such. However, Śaṃkara is credited with writing commentaries on many of the principal Upaniṣads and on the *Gītā*. We shall see below that these are solidly established as authentic, so Śaṃkara either consolidated or inaugurated the convention.

Anticipating the discussion on authenticity, I will at this stage name and characterize Śaṃkara's Upaniṣadic commentaries and *Gītā* commentary to give a sense of the scope of these works. Ten Upaniṣadic commentaries can safely be attributed to Śaṃkara, namely those on the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, *Chāndogya*, *Aitareya*, *Taittirīya*, *Kena* (prose and verse), *Kaṭha*, *Muṇḍaka*, *Praśna* and *Īśa Upaniṣads*. Of these, the first two are perhaps the most important. They are certainly the lengthiest, not only because of the length of the respective Upaniṣads themselves, but also because of the extended commentaries and refutation of opponents that Śaṃkara gives to explain and implement their way of teaching. They are also the two Upaniṣads Śaṃkara quotes most frequently in his other works.

The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* is divided into three sections of two books each. Starting with a meditation on the sacrificial horse and ending with various prescriptions for specific ritual outcomes, the Upaniṣad has the heart of its teaching, in Śaṃkara's view, in Books 2, 3 and 4. Here dialogues between teachers and pupils on the nature of the self, the 'unseen seer', where no difference is found, give Śaṃkara ample material for developing his textually based Advaitin way of teaching. The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* also contains many such dialogues, with verses supporting Śaṃkara's strong emphasis on the teacher (e.g. 6.14.2). One of its most important passages is found in Book 6, where Śvetaketu's father teaches him about the nature of the self, in the famous repeated teaching, 'You are that'. Its origination story, 'In the beginning was being, one only without a second' (*Ch Up* 6.2.1), provides

another anchor for Śaṃkara's Advaitin interpretation. The questions of the *Kena Upaniṣad*, the origination stories in the *Aitareya* and *Taittirīya*, the story of Naciketas in the *Kaṭha* where the god of death teaches him how to seek the highest within: to all these and many other passages we shall return later as we see how they provide Śaṃkara with multifarious material for a way of teaching.

The third member of the Vedāntin 'triple foundation' is the *Bhagavadgītā*. While many, though by no means all, Upaniṣadic passages admit quite easily of an Advaitin interpretation, the *Gītā* is, on the face of it, quite different. On the eve of battle, Lord Kṛṣṇa, acting as charioteer to Arjuna, a Pāṇḍava prince, famously teaches Arjuna that it is his duty as a *kṣatriya* (warrior) to go into battle and fight. Acting in a detached manner, understanding who Kṛṣṇa really is (ultimate reality) and being devoted to Kṛṣṇa will lead the devotee to Kṛṣṇa's highest state. In Śaṃkara's interpretation, two principles are very important. The first is that this is, yet again, a teaching context that provides Śaṃkara with numerous examples of how a teacher should proceed. The second is the distinction he makes, which runs through all his major works, of the difference between (ritual) action and knowledge. This having been made, Śaṃkara is then able to focus on what it is to know Kṛṣṇa in an Advaitin way, in which there is ultimately no difference between Kṛṣṇa's true nature as supreme self and the self of the devotee.

The two other works attributed to Śaṃkara that we shall accept as authentic are his commentary on the *Gauḍapādakārikā*s and his independent work, *Thousand Teachings*. The verses of Gauḍapāda are themselves subject to much dispute about authenticity. They comprise four chapters, the first being woven around the twelve verses of the short *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*, a meditation on the four quarters of the syllable Om. They are attributed to Gauḍapāda, who is held to be the teacher of Śaṃkara's teacher, Govindapāda, though recent work suggests there may be more generations between Gauḍapāda and Śaṃkara than this implies.[28] While representing a non-dualistic interpretation of the Upaniṣads, the *Kārikā*s are usually thought to be heavily influenced by Buddhist ideas, in particular, in the fourth chapter.[29] Thomas Wood (1990) has argued that the four chapters were not all written by the same hand and that the commentary is not by Śaṃkara.[30] Wood's arguments against the authenticity of the latter are, however, in places faulty.[31] Not only does Śaṃkara's commentary on the four *Kārikā*s satisfy Hacker's authenticity criteria, which we shall consider below, but it uses examples and interprets origination stories within a framework of super-imposition in a way very similar to Śaṃkara's other main commentaries (see Chapter 4). It is consistent with his approach to the Upaniṣads as a way of teaching. I accept it therefore as a genuine work.[32]

The *Upadeśasāhasrī* (*Thousand Teachings*) is a different kind of work from the commentaries we have just described. It is an independent treatise, written in eighteen metrical and three prose chapters. Hacker's criteria establish it as

genuine, but there are certain internal signs that it may not have been written originally as a single work.[33] Even if it was compiled by a later hand, I accept the authenticity of the parts and shall draw on it to illustrate Śaṃkara's attitude to teaching and teaching method. The prose chapters are all constructed as dialogues between a teacher and a pupil, so are a rich source of material. Bader tends to see them as examples of Śaṃkara the practical teacher, by contrast with his other major works that display him as commentator (1990, p. 43 f). I agree that the exegetical nature of much of Śaṃkara's work is crucial and has often been overlooked. However, for reasons that will become clear in Chapter 4, I do not think it is helpful to drive a wedge between Śaṃkara as teacher and Śaṃkara as commentator. His approach in *Thousand Teachings* is consistent with that in his major commentaries. For it is very much through his exegesis that Śaṃkara lays bare the teaching methods of scripture, which he then employs as a teacher himself.

Many other works are also attributed to Śaṃkara. In order to clarify the position I shall take towards these, it will be necessary to focus more specifically on the question of how authenticity may be established.

Questions of authenticity

It was the German scholar, Paul Hacker, who provided the foundation for legitimating the commentaries on the triple foundation as authentic works. To test whether a work was original to Śaṃkara or belonged to a later Advaitin writer, Hacker (1950) developed certain criteria, taking the *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* as the standard. In particular, he looked at Śaṃkara's use of key terms, like *avidyā* (ignorance, misperception), *māyā* (often rendered 'illusion'), *nāmarūpa* ('name-and-form', all this cosmos) and *Īśvara* (the Lord) (1950, ET in Halbfass, 1995, pp. 57–100). He convincingly described Śaṃkara's characteristic usages and the ways in which they were developed and 'tidied up' by later writers. We shall come back to these terms in Chapters 2 and 5. Along with subsidiary criteria, they have been applied by Hacker and Mayeda to validate the works we have outlined above.

Hacker, however, recognized that there were some differences between the commentary on Gauḍapāda's verses and Śaṃkara's major works. He accounted for this by positing a development in Śaṃkara's thought as follows. As a young writer, Śaṃkara was influenced by the Yoga school. He wrote a sub-commentary on Vyāsa's *Yogasūtra* commentary in that tradition, the *Yogasūtrabhāṣyavivaraṇa*, attributed to him. He was attracted to Gauḍapāda's work by its yogic features and wrote his commentary affected by its Buddhist overtones. Later, he came to repudiate Buddhist views even more strongly and wrote his mature works like the *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* and the *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣadbhāṣya*, in which he also left behind his early Yogic phase.

This 'biography' of Śaṃkara has become well-established in Western writing, supported by the work of Tilmann Vetter (1979). Halbfass has criticized it, though, for using an inappropriate developmental model to explain apparent 'discrepancies' in Śaṃkara's thought, differences that might equally be accounted for by the particular commentatorial task at hand or the level at which Śaṃkara is writing. It also looks on the Vedānta and Yoga traditions as mutually exclusive, regarding change from one to the other as 'conversion'. This imports an inappropriate Christian model of religious traditions. Nevertheless, after discussing Wezler's work on the *Yogasūtrabhāṣyavivaraṇa*, Halbfass concludes that its authorship 'remains a puzzle'. He does, however, hint that it seems more likely that it is by a later author indebted to Śaṃkara's great commentaries than to an early Śaṃkara who subsequently wrote the *Gauḍapādakārikābhāṣya* (Halbfass, 1991, pp. 218–19).

There is not room here to go into the various arguments in detail. I shall make the following assumptions on authenticity at this point. Hacker's main criteria work extremely well to differentiate Śaṃkara's Advaitin commentaries from those of his Advaitin successors. On this basis, we can safely assume Śaṃkara's authorship of the commentaries on the triple foundation as indicated above. Hacker's criteria are not, however, suited for other purposes, for example, adjudicating on the *Yogasūtrabhāṣyavivaraṇa*. Given the uncertainty about this text, I shall not draw on it here. By contrast, the *Gauḍapādakārikābhāṣya* satisfies the criteria, which are properly applicable to it. I accept it as a genuine work. Rather than press a developmental theory, though, I prefer Halbfass's approach, which is to take the corpus of Śaṃkara's authentic works as a whole.

Numerous treatises are also ascribed to Śaṃkara, some of which are used regularly as manuals in modern Advaitin study since they contain key teachings in summary form.[34] Often they betray signs of their later origins. One of the most important, the *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi*, has been shown by Robert Gussner (1977) to be later on stylometric grounds. More recently, Pande has challenged both Hacker's semantic criteria and Gussner's stylometric application, emphasizing the need to take seriously the existence of subcommentaries and other factors.[35] He does not though really establish new criteria, but concludes by urging a cautious reappraisal (1994, Ch. 3).[36] Further, in a fine piece of critical analysis, Vidyasankar Sundaresan has taken the short *Pañcīkaraṇa* treatise as a case study for re-examining the derivation, scope and application of authenticity criteria. In particular, he stresses the need to compare treatises not just with Śaṃkara's *Brahmasūtra* commentary, but with a careful reading of his *Gītā* and *Upaniṣad* commentaries as well. He also indicates the need for further detailed work (2002, p. 25).[37]

Because I find Sundaresan's criticisms in principle telling, but the conclusions to the particular cases he and Pande examine not entirely convincing, I shall continue to take it that the only treatise that is unquestionably

authentic is the *Thousand Teachings*. This does have the disadvantage that much valuable material is neglected if studies focus only on Śaṃkara and not on the later tradition, an even greater pity with the hymns we shall examine in a moment. However, it does not seem to me that it is justified to take cognizance of Hacker's criteria but then to quote extensively from secondary spurious treatises, as Isayeva (1993) does with the *Sarvadarśanasiddhāntasaṃgraha*.[38] Until further work is done, it is difficult to decide which treatises, if any, should be re-included.

Numerous hymns form the third and most prolific group of works ascribed to Śaṃkara. Here Hacker's criteria are largely ineffectual and stylometric considerations become difficult, as Pande rightly points out (1994, pp. 123–4). This is because the hymns are (usually) rather short and are of a different *genre* from the philosophical writing which the criteria were designed to test. They are addressed to a phenomenal range of deities, forms of Śiva, Viṣṇu, the Goddess and many others. It is usually agreed that some of the hymns come from later authors, attributed to Śaṃkara to gain the blessing of his authority or, more likely, simply ascribed to one of the many heads of the Advaitin *maṭha*s who each bear the title of Śaṃkarācārya. The problem is in deciding which to accept and which to reject.[39] Two possible approaches to this are fraught with (often Western) assumptions. The first is to say that Śaṃkara was not really interested in devotion. His was a path of knowledge in which devotion was left far behind. Even if he did compose the hymns, this was merely for the sake of worshippers a long way back on the path, so the hymns can safely be ignored as sources for his 'real' views. I shall argue in Chapter 6 that this gives an inadequate view of devotion in Śaṃkara's thought. An Advaitin counterpart of the same view is to agree with the motive given for the composition of the hymns and therefore to say that they can all, in principle, be accepted as authentic. The *Śaṃkara-digvijaya* implicitly takes this view by describing the occasions for hymns to a multiplicity of deities, including the teacher Govinda, Śiva and Viṣṇu, various rivers and the Divine Mother.

The second strategy is to try to decide which hymns are authentic on the basis of Śaṃkara's own religious allegiance. Thus if, as is usually believed, he was a Śaiva (worshipper of Śiva), it would be reasonable to assume that the hymns addressed to Śiva were authentic, the others possibly not. However, this again introduces a form of exclusivism that needs to be examined carefully. It may reflect assumptions of Western monotheism that are quite inappropriate in an Indian context. It assumes that a worshipper of Śiva would not address hymns to other deities. Yet Hindus whose chosen form of God is Śiva frequently pray to other deities, on their festivals, for a particular boon, at the beginning of worship and so on. Accordingly, Hacker, who proposes that Śaṃkara was in fact a Vaiṣṇava, has been accused of seeing the problem in Western monotheistic terms, wanting to find a single God and that a God of grace in the author he studied for so long (e.g. Isayeva, 1993, p. 90).

However, there is not so straightforward a divide between Christian and Hindu assumptions on this issue as may so far appear.

Later in this chapter I shall argue that Śaṃkara was contemporary with the Tamil poets, both Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava, who wandered South India from shrine to shrine, singing exquisite songs entirely dedicated to the Lord of their choice. Such focused dedication was not, therefore, a cultural impossibility for Śaṃkara. But this need not imply that he followed it. Modern Smārta brahmins, bearing the name Ayyar in Tamil, trace their allegiance to Śaṃkara. Sometimes described as Śaivas, they are usually adherents of the *ṣaṇmata*, which advocates non-sectarian worship of the six deities: Śiva, Viṣṇu, Śakti, Sūrya, Gaṇapati, and Kumāra. Śaṃkara is frequently asserted to have founded or revived this way of worship.[40] This would then return us to the possibility that he composed hymns to a wide variety of deities. However, Śaṃkara is also claimed by Śākta sectarians as an advocate, hymns such as the *Saundaryalāharī* being cited in support.[41] It is clearly a complex issue.

The position I take is this. There is sufficient evidence from Śaṃkara's major works to indicate that he was familiar with a Vaiṣṇava background. I shall argue in Chapters 3 and 6 that Śaṃkara consciously used this as part of his way of teaching. It is however unreliable to construct major aspects of Śaṃkara's thought from the hymns, as for example Miśra (1967) does in his book on *The Place and Development of Bhakti*. For this, the key sources must be those accepted above as authentic.

Dating Śaṃkara's life

We turn now to the problem of dating the life of Śaṃkara the teacher. AD 788–820 has become the commonplace of modern scholarship. Yet this relies on the colophon (heading) of a single manuscript, the hagiographical assertion that Śaṃkara died aged 32 and a probable confusion of our Śaṃkara with a certain Abhinava Śaṃkara, said to have been the head of the Kāñcī *maṭha* from AD 801–839.[42] The whole issue of the reliability of the succession lists of the *maṭha*s is itself problematic, the earliest list probably dating from no earlier than the sixteenth century and placing Śaṃkara in the fifth century BC.[43] In view of this, AD 788–820 cannot be maintained. A more reliable though less specific result is obtained by relative dating of texts: whom Śaṃkara quotes and who quotes him. If they are Buddhist authors, their dates can sometimes be fixed from the reports of Chinese pilgrims, though caution is necessary. Thrasher (1979) argues that Śaṃkara lived at the end of the seventh century AD, on evidence from Maṇḍana Miśra, a longer-lived contemporary of Śaṃkara's. He also refers to Kumārila and Prabhākara, exponents of two branches of the Pūrvamīmāṃsaka school, who slightly predated Śaṃkara and who, like him, show knowledge of the Vijñānavādin Buddhist, Dharmakīrti. Vetter (1979) holds that it is impossible to be more precise than the period AD 650–800, but Thrasher's argument is not

necessarily affected by his views. Perhaps it is judicious to follow Alston (1980a, p. 43) and date Śaṃkara *c.* AD 700.

Śaṃkara's historical background

Having arrived at this point, writers on Śaṃkara usually leave the dating issue on one side.[44] However, if we want to have any sense of Śaṃkara the teacher in his own milieu, we may want to rearrange the 'bones' against a historical backcloth even if this can only be painted with rather broad brushstrokes here. Accepting that Śaṃkara came from South India in the late seventh or eighth century AD, we can draw on the work of historians to try and understand a little of that milieu. The picture we have of South India at the time is based largely on surviving temples, inscriptions and grants inscribed on copper-plates, with additional evidence from coins and literature. The Chinese Buddhist Xuan Zang (*c.* AD 596–664) also travelled in South India in the early half of the seventh century, though some of his reports seem to be based on hearsay.[45]

Nilakanta Sastri has characterized this time as the 'conflict of three empires' (1976, pp. 146–72; cf. 1990). The Western Chālūkyās had their capital in Bādāmi in modern Karnataka, the Pallavas reigned from Kāñcīpuram near modern Chennai (Madras), and the Pāṇḍyas held sway in the far south from Madurai. Kerala, where Śaṃkara was probably born, was under the Cheras, a lesser power whose history is still obscure (Nair, 1990, p. 120). However, the intermittent political conflict between these dynasties proved 'no obstacle to cultural growth' (Nilakanta Sastri, 1976, p. 147). It was a time of great cultural interchange, with travel – throughout the region, to northern India and to Southeast Asia and even China – possible for some (Anandasivam, 1990). It was also a time of debate and learning, and of the gradual establishment of *maṭha*s, or centres of learning, in the region and beyond (Xuan Zang in Watters, 1905; King Mahendravarman's early seventh-century play, *Mattavilāsaprahasana*; Minakshi, 1977, p. 239; Cenkner, 1983, p. 39, n. 4; Nandi, 1973, p. 77). There is, though, no definite evidence concerning the Śaṃkara *maṭha* in Kāñcīpuram at this time (Minakshi, 1977, p. 241), nor of the others whose foundation is attributed to him. Nonetheless, such a vibrant context, not least as affected by the rise of devotion, may well have been a factor in Śaṃkara's debates with his opponents and we shall return to this below.

The rise of devotion

Very importantly for our understanding of Śaṃkara's background, the period was one in which devotion to Śiva and Viṣṇu was rising, with the massive growth of Tamil *bhakti* traditions. Mahalingam notes of the Pallava king Narasimhavarman II Rajasimha (*c.* 690–*c.* 728):

> The intense religious revival that started during the reigns of his immediate predecessors continued in an accelerated tempo during his reign, as is reflected by some of his own inscriptions which are soul-stirring pieces of devotional literature couched in excellent Sanskrit poetry.
>
> (1969, p. 109)

Evidence for the welter of religious activity of the period is found in the way kings are described in inscriptions, the temples they endowed and the works of the Tamil poet-saints. These poets, many of whom were not brahmins, are often portrayed as protesting against Vedic brahmanism. We might therefore expect their devotion to be of little concern to Śaṃkara, a brahmin. Champakalakshmi, however, has argued that the *bhakti* movements were firmly in brahmin hands. Protest often expressed disagreement between those brahmins who retained their allegiance to Vedic ritual and those who favoured the new *bhakti* (1996b, p. 144). This was important in a context where competition for royal patronage for temple-building and economic security was fierce. Elites used royal conversion to channel agricultural surpluses towards temples, to which *maṭha*s were sometimes attached, and to consolidate their power by the use of land grants (Champakalakshmi, 1996a, p. 60; 1978). The other main contenders for this patronage were Jains and Buddhists,[46] the maritime trade through which the latter had established their influence being in decline (Champakalakshmi, 1989, pp. 162–73; cf. Stein, 1994, p. 73). As we shall see, this context of devotion and competition was not one to which the philosophical schools of the day remained immune.

The trend of rising devotion can be well-illustrated in the Nyāya (logicians) school (Chemparathy, 1979). In the *Nyāyasūtra*s (?second century AD),[47] the Lord (Īśvara) was held to belong to the class of souls. The early fifth-century *Bhāṣya* (Commentary) still describes him as a soul, but of superior standing, free from *adharma* and error, possessing *dharma* and knowledge in abundance. However, by the sixth century, Uddyotakara is declaring that Īśvara does not belong to any class, but surpasses all classes. For Uddyotakara, the Lord is Śiva; he himself was a Pāśupata worshipper of Śiva. A slightly earlier writer, Praśastapāda, who belonged to the Vaiśeṣika sister school, was a member of another Śaiva sect, the Māheśvaras (Matilal, 1977, p. 85). It may be that some of Śaṃkara's opposition to these schools related to current religious competition, if, as we shall argue in Chapter 6, his teaching is couched against a Vaiṣṇava background.

The writings of the Yoga school show similar influence[48] and even Kumārila, Śaṃkara's older Pūrvamīmāṃsaka contemporary, opens his *Ślokavārttika* with a salutation 'to him whose body is pure consciousness, whose divine eyes are the three Vedas, to him who causes the attainment of highest bliss and wears the crescent moon', that is, to Śiva.[49] In Jha's translation of his opening verses, Kumārila also makes the surprising statement

that he intends to make the (atheistic) Mīmāṃsā theistic, though this is not developed further than the homage verse.[50] The Sanskrit, however, only implies that Kumārila is going to ensure that Mīmāṃsā is properly in line with the teachings of the Veda (that is, *āstika*), because for the most part it has been reduced to a materialist position rejecting the authority of the Veda (that is, *lokāyatīkṛtā*).[51] Biardeau, in line with Champakalakshmi's view we presented above, suggests that there was considerable antagonism between the brahmins, like Kumārila, who were proponents of the orthodox Pūrvamīmāṃsaka Ritualist school and the growing influence of *bhakti* devotionalism at the time. Vedic ritual was simultaneously being pressed by the attraction of Buddhist types of renunciation, by developments in *yoga* linked with renunciation and by the rise of devotionalism.[52] If this analysis is correct, then Kumārila's praise verse to Śiva is all the more notable as a legitimizing strategy. Given this, even if Jha's translation overpresses the Sanskrit, Kumārila's praise verse at least tends to suggest an environment in which it was expected that tribute should be paid to the Lord, an environment which may well be vital in understanding the importance of Īśvara in Śaṃkara's writings, as we shall see in Chapter 6.

Śaṃkara then taught at a time when there were burgeoning Vaiṣṇava sects as well as Śaiva sects, Jain groups which, unlike Buddhist ones, became part of the new devotional temple-based milieu,[53] brahmins who remained primarily concerned with Vedic-based rituals and probably by far the greater part of the population who did not belong to any particular sect, but worshipped a range of deities, perhaps with one 'chosen form' whom they viewed as Supreme. He taught at a time when many of the other schools around him were developing their teaching in the light of the growing influence of 'the Lord'. As we saw above when considering the hymns, Śaṃkara has been attributed with a vast range of different religious positions himself. In conformity with the principle we established there, we shall turn here to his authentic works to see what clues they offer on this point.

In this respect, it is telling that Śaṃkara uses Viṣṇu's relation to his image in a range of contexts, for example, to illustrate the use of Om in meditating on *brahman*,[54] yet never mentions the *liṅgam*, the equivalent aniconic form of Śiva. He refers specifically to the *śālagrāma*, the small round polished stone from the river Gaṇḍakī in which Viṣṇu is worshipped.[55] He also appears to sanction the temple-going and other activities of worship practised by Bhāgavata Vaiṣṇavas, though he disagrees with the Pāñcarātra theology he discusses alongside this (*BSBh* 2.2.42–45). No such approbation is given of Śaiva practices, the discussion of their theology being much briefer and linked with the refutation of Vaiśeṣika and similar views (*BSBh* 2.2.37). In addition, his references to release by stages (*kramamukti*) have a Vaiṣṇava background traceable to the earlier commentator on the *Brahmasūtra*s.[56] These factors suggest at least familiarity with a Vaiṣṇava milieu, which we will need to take into account in understanding his thought.[57]

The intellectual climate

Finally, in this sketch of Śaṃkara the teacher, we need to look at the intellectual climate of his day. Śaṃkara's *Brahmasūtra* commentary is written in the standard form of a discussion between opponents and himself. Very often a section will state the meaning of a *sūtra* from a *prima facie* point of view (the *pūrvapakṣa* or opponent's view). Objections to this initial interpretation will then be given. Next, Śaṃkara's own view will be stated and objections to this refuted. Finally, a summary will be given of the correct view (the *siddhānta*). It is therefore important to understand who Śaṃkara's opponents were and whom he is criticizing in particular passages. Natalia Isayeva (1993) systematically examines this issue. Here I shall simply summarize the field as it affects Śaṃkara and indicate where in this book these opponents are further discussed.[58]

It is usual to talk of the six 'orthodox' schools of Indian philosophy, though this sets rather artificial limits. We have already mentioned the Nyāya school of logicians and its sister school, the Vaiśeṣika. With the Pūrvamīmāṃsakas, they contributed to discussion about the *pramāṇa*s, the so-called means of knowledge – how we know what we know and how that knowledge is validated (Chapter 3). Śaṃkara strongly disagrees with the Nyāya view that reason alone can establish the existence of *brahman*. He also rejects their understanding of the nature of *brahman* (Chapter 5).

Sāṃkhya and Yoga form a second 'pair' of schools. So far as Śaṃkara is concerned, Sāṃkhya is primarily important because he inherits its cosmology and psychology, that is, its account of the way our world is structured. However, he differs radically from Sāṃkhya in the way he relates the two basic principles of the world, *puruṣa* (monadic consciousness, 'self') and *prakṛti* (psycho-physical 'matter') (Chapter 5). The Yoga school is sometimes portrayed as the school of practice that goes with the Sāṃkhyan school's theory, but this reflects a Western distinction between theory and practice (Whicher, 1998). Nonetheless, the Yoga school did develop certain techniques of meditation which bear undoubted similarities to Buddhist techniques and which, in turn, influenced other orthodox schools. Because he viewed meditation as a mental action and because of his attitude to ritual action in relation to knowledge, Śaṃkara is very reticent about such techniques (see Suthren Hirst, 1996). He also criticized the Yoga school for its view of the Lord as the author of scripture, though in many ways his view is similar (Chapter 3).

Śaṃkara's own school of Vedānta is also known as the Uttaramīmāṃsā (later Exegetical school) and is usually paired with the Pūrvamīmāṃsā (earlier Exegetical school). Whereas the schools we have already considered were *āstika* ('orthodox') in that they affirmed the existence and importance of the Veda, these last two schools were actively concerned to comment on and interpret these scriptures. Recognized as the most authoritative of scriptures,

the Veda comprises four collections of texts known as the *Ṛg*, *Yajur*, *Sāma* and *Atharva Veda*s. Each consists of four 'layers' of texts. The Saṃhitās are collections of hymns for the sacrifice. Next come the Āraṇyakas and the Brāhmaṇas in which meditation on the ritual progressively replaces the ritual itself. This process culminates in the Upaniṣads, which deepen earlier searches for the source of all that there is, beneath the cosmos and within the individual, and stress the importance of knowing and realizing that reality for oneself.[59] The concerns of these different 'layers' thus overlap. However, in principle, the Pūrvamīmāṃsā focused on the ritual texts or *karmakāṇḍa* (section on ritual action), while the Vedāntins concentrated on the texts to do with inner realization or *jñānakāṇḍa* (section on knowledge). Śaṃkara, like other Vedāntins, was heavily dependent on the exegetical techniques and rules developed by the Pūrvamīmāṃsakas for determining the sense of scriptural passages, though he applied them in rather different ways (Chapter 3). He completely rejected their emphasis on the importance of ritual action.

We have already noted that there were contemporary differences among Vedāntin interpretations of scripture. The authors we can name include Gauḍapāda (an Advaitin predecessor), Bhartṛprapañca (an earlier Vedāntin advocate of identity in difference) and Bhāskara (a Bhedābhedavāda Vedāntin of perhaps two generations later) (see Isayeva, 1993). Scholars such as Ingalls (1952) and Piantelli (1994b) also identify the work of an earlier commentator on the *Brahmasūtra*s, whom Ingalls names the Proto-commentator, believing him to be the *vṛttikāra* ('the commentator') mentioned by Śaṃkara's followers like Sureśvara. Ingalls sees this earlier commentator's work as a source used by both Śaṃkara and Bhāskara, because their *Brahmasūtra* commentaries have many passages in common, despite Bhāskara's violent disagreement with Śaṃkara over the nature of *brahman* and liberation. It may also be possible to deduce from such passages on *kramamukti*, liberation by stages (e.g. *BSBh* 4.3.10), that Śaṃkara shared this commentator's Vaiṣṇava background.

Beyond these six schools, Śaṃkara criticizes other views that he also held to be *āstika*: the Māheśvara Śaivas (in association with the Vaiśeṣika school) and the Pāñcarātra Vaiṣṇavas (Chapter 6). Besides these were the *nāstika*s, literally, those who say there is not, that is, those who deny the Veda and the existence of *brahman*/the self, as far as Śaṃkara is concerned. Materialist (Lokāyata) views obviously had considerable popular appeal. Their opinions are disputed at various junctures. The Jains are criticized in the *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya*, because the *Sūtra*s themselves do so. Considering their importance in Śaṃkara's day, they do not receive a great deal of attention in his other commentaries, however. The Buddhists are a different case. Some of Śaṃkara's key ideas, such as the two levels of truth – ultimate and conventional – and the consequent division of texts into those of primary and secondary meaning, are so close to Madhyamaka teachings that authors from other Vedānta schools down to modern scholars have debated the

significance of this. Some see him as a secret Buddhist; others attempt to deny all similarity or see it as a vehicle for winning over or subverting Buddhist influence. Isayeva (1993, p. 16) argues convincingly that the similarities have to be understood in the context of a very different approach, one that takes Upaniṣadic scripture seriously. Śaṃkara criticizes Sarvāstivāda, Vijñānavāda (Yogācāra) and Madhyamaka views, though the former school was almost certainly defunct by his day and his detailed knowledge of the others has been questioned.[60] They are, however, key players in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* commentary, *Thousand Teachings* and other commentaries, not just in the *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya*. It certainly seems to be the case that Śaṃkara saw them as his chief opponents, along with the Pūrvamīmāṃsakas.

Nonetheless, Śaṃkara was not as well versed in Buddhist teaching as his Mīmāṃsaka contemporary Kumārila and it is highly implausible that he was responsible single-handedly for the decline of Buddhism in India with which some hagiographies credit him. Many other factors were operating, not least the maritime decline and competition for patronage we noted above. Śaṃkara's arguments, with others, may have contributed in the long run to its demise. However it seems to have been only in the tenth century that Buddhist and Jain authors started to criticize Vedānta seriously, so caution is certainly necessary.[61]

In this world functioned Śaṃkara, a skilled commentator and revered teacher. Let the man pass quietly by. It is to his teaching that we turn.

2

THE NEED FOR
THE TEACHING

The human condition

At the very beginning of his commentary on the *Brahmasūtra*s, Śaṃkara describes the human condition that keeps us bound to rebirth.[1] Although his language can be difficult to understand in the different English translations, his idea is simple. The human condition rests on a series of misidentifications, confusions about who we really are. Everyone, he explains, confuses the 'we' with the 'you', the subject of experience with the object of experience, the 'I' with what is not 'I'. For example, if I say, 'I am fat' or 'I am thin', I am confusing the self (the eventual referent of 'I') with the body. The self is not fat or thin; it is the body which is. If I think, 'I am deaf' or 'I am blind', I am mixing up my senses with the self. If I feel, 'I'm determined to do that' or '*I* want something' or 'I'm not sure about that', I am attributing determination or desire or doubt to the self, whereas these are really attributes of the mind (belonging to the 'inner organ' or *antaḥkaraṇa* in the more or less Sāṃkhyan view of body and mind that Śaṃkara accepts).[2] Lastly, if I feel like a whole person only when my family is safe and sound, then I am 'superimposing' aspects of their life onto my own.

Does this confusion matter? At a common-sense level, we can immediately understand that it affects the way we see ourselves. We can feel miserable because of our shape, undermined if we experience sense impairment as a disability, pulled apart by different feelings, worried by the condition and attitudes of others. From Śaṃkara's point of view, though, this confusion is even more serious. While it remains, liberation from the world of rebirth is impossible; *brahman* is not truly known. But to know *brahman* is a person's highest end, so the entrammelling misconceptions must be removed. Hence the need for teaching.

In the first prose chapter of the *Thousand Teachings*, Śaṃkara provides the Advaitin teacher with guidelines for bringing a pupil to the liberating knowledge of *brahman*. At one point, the teacher is to instruct the pupil about the true self (*ātman*) using passages from the scriptures. If the pupil then expresses a desire to break free from the world of rebirth, the teacher is to ask

the pupil: 'Who are you?' Śaṃkara imagines the pupil replying something like this:

> 'I am a brahmin's son belonging to such and such a family. I was a student (or a householder); now I am a wandering ascetic. I want to get out of the ocean of transmigratory existence, which is infested with the great sharks of birth and death.'
>
> (*Upad G* 1.10)

As the hypothetical discussion unfolds, it shows that such a pupil is still deeply affected by the confusions of the human condition. Although technically he understands that the self is different from the body and is eternal, he continues to misidentify himself with a male body from a particular social group and family at a specific stage of life. So that these misconceptions can be properly uprooted, the subsequent teaching is designed to help the pupil relate the scriptural passages about the self to his own experience and to come to understand that this true self is non-different from *brahman*. In Chapter 4, we shall look in more detail at the different methods that can be used for this purpose.

Śaṃkara was by no means unusual in pinpointing misidentification as the root of the ensnaring human condition. The fundamental problem in Sāṃkhya is the failure to distinguish between *puruṣa* (consciousness) and *prakṛti* (mind and matter). For Buddhists, the wrong view takes one or more of the *skandha*s[3] that make up a person to be permanent, in other words, a self.[4] Other schools are therefore also interested in what Śaṃkara calls 'superimposition' (broadly, confusing two things) and its root in *avidyā* (see below). These two concepts are fundamental to Śaṃkara's thought. We shall make an initial investigation of them at this point, but shall have frequent cause to return to them to deepen our understanding of their implications. In this, we shall be following Śaṃkara's own method, for, while he opens the commentary on the *Brahmasūtra*s by setting the scene with these particular terms, he constantly returns to clarify what he means by them.

Let us take *avidyā* first. '*Avidyā*' is grammatically the opposite of '*vidyā*', which means 'knowledge'. So *avidyā* is ignorance, in Śaṃkara's context, ignorance of our true nature. But it is more than that. It is, as we have already seen, positive misidentification, not just the absence of knowledge (cf. Matilal, 1980). It is sometimes translated as 'nescience' (a word which comes from the Latin, *nescire*, meaning 'not to know') to distinguish it from plain 'ignorance'. For Śaṃkara, *avidyā* is 'the seed of the whole world of rebirth' (*BSBh* 1.1.1, p. 6).[5] In other words, while *avidyā* lasts, rebirth will continue. However, because of phrases like this, later Advaitins came to interpret *avidyā* as a sort of subtle material from which the universe is made. We shall look in more detail at Śaṃkara's understanding of the world in Chapter 5. For the moment, we shall just note that, for Śaṃkara, *avidyā* is primarily

a fundamental error rather than a quasi-material substance. It is then an epistemological rather than an ontological category.

Superimposition (*adhyāsa*) is the outcome of *avidyā*. In explaining what happens when we confuse the 'we' with the 'you', Śaṃkara draws on our experience of error in everyday life. Suppose you see a piece of mother-of-pearl and think that it is silver. What has happened? Essentially, you have misidentified mother-of-pearl as silver. To use Śaṃkara's terminology, you have superimposed silver (or some quality of silver) on what is not silver, but mother-of-pearl. Śaṃkara acknowledges that the various schools differ in their explanations of the superimposition that occurs in perceptual error but, according to him, they all share one feature in common: 'There is never any doubt that [superimposition] is the presentation of the attributes of one thing in another' (*BSBh* 1.1.1, p. 2).[6] So, by analogy, the human condition is one of mutual superimposition, where the self and its attributes are superimposed on what is not self (especially the individual's mind and body) and the not-self and its attributes are superimposed on the self. Hence I think, 'I am fat, blind and determined!' (superimposing not-self on self) or I presume that the true subject of all my thoughts and actions is some mental faculty (superimposing self on not-self).

When Śaṃkara describes the human condition as *adhyāsa*, he is not saying that all our perceptions are erroneous. Rather, within the conventional world, we can distinguish correct perception from misperception, largely because misperceptions can be sublated, that is, they can be corrected by further information so that the misperception disappears. If I see a rope and think it is a snake, I am superimposing the (qualities of a) snake on the rope. When I get closer and see that it is a rope after all, my mistaken view of the snake is sublated. It disappears. I no longer see a snake, but the rope as it is. This process then becomes an analogy for the human condition and liberation from it. Once I see the self as the self, not as confused with body, mind and so forth, then my mistaken view is sublated. Only the self is seen.

In discussing the Advaitin view of *avidyā* functioning as superimposition, Deutsch acknowledges that 'the general characterization of the process of false attribution is persuasive: it is readily testable in experience' (1980, p. 43). He asserts that this view of *avidyā* as superimposition 'does make sense of this our worldly misperception'. Deutsch is perhaps a little confusing here as he slips too easily between the particular perceptual errors that are known (and hence testable) in our experience and the *model* they can generate for understanding the nature of the world. Rather, then, reversing Deutsch's formulation, 'worldly misperception' helps make sense of the human condition and the model it generates is plausible because we have all had experience of such misperception.

There were opponents of Śaṃkara, however, who did not find his model plausible, for it entailed that the nature of the whole world is *avidyā*. But the *pramāṇa*s, like perception and inference, the means by which we come to know

things, function precisely within the context of this world. So too do both the scriptural injunctions prescribing ritual activity and those parts of the Veda that are to do with liberation from this world. So what you are saying, challenges the opponent, is that the methods of acquiring knowledge operate on the basis of *avidyā*, which at the very least is the opposite of knowledge. This, it is implied, is just daft! Several centuries later, Rāmānuja was to agree with this challenge, produce numerous arguments and examples to back it up and to develop a different theory of misperception that underpinned his own understanding of how knowledge of *brahman* develops gradually.[7]

Śaṃkara accepts the charge, but not its implications. He argues that all activity, including the functioning of the *pramāṇa*s, requires an agent, but agency only arises from the misidentification of the self with the body, senses and mental faculties (*BSBh* Introduction). Perception palpably works via eye and sight, ear and hearing, nose and smell and so forth, yet these are all aspects of not-self that are superimposed on the self, when we think 'I see, I hear, I smell'. Śaṃkara's view here is apparently close to that of the Sāṃkhyans who use the metaphor of the blind man carrying the lame man to illustrate how activity is only possible when *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* are combined (that is, are not distinguished from one another). However, while Sāṃkhya recognizes *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* as separate ontological principles, Śaṃkara, as an Advaitin, recognizes only the self as such. So, in his Advaitin view, all activity is based on superimposition or failure to distinguish the self from that which is superimposed upon it, including agency, which is what 'learned men' call *avidyā*. They contrast it with *vidyā*, which here is the knowledge that can distinguish self from what is not self. In other words, in the context of analysing the human condition and the nature of liberation, *avidyā* and *vidyā* have these senses. Indeed, they act as orientators towards the final goal. This does not mean, though, that the *pramāṇa*s cannot be trusted when functioning in the sphere of *avidyā*. It is precisely from their trustworthy operation that we can distinguish correct perception from incorrect, which provides the analogy of superimposition in the first place.

Śaṃkara's emphasis on error is, however, only a starting point. While Śaṃkara shares with Buddhists, Sāṃkhyans and others a sense that *avidyā* provides the 'problem situation', he differs sharply from them in the way he characterizes it, even as superimposition, and in the solution that is appropriate. For Śaṃkara, the analysis and solution is not deducible by human reason alone, but is compassionately given by scripture.[8] It is scripture that teaches the oneness of the eternal self, that on which the multiple world is superimposed. It is then scripture that helps him read the illustration of the rope–snake and construct the framework of superimposition. Just as the snake is superimposed on a real basis, the rope, so the world of multiplicity, agency, not-self, is superimposed on a real basis, the self that is none other than *brahman*. The Buddhists drew no such conclusions from the rope–snake example, which had its origins in their own repertoire.[9]

So it is that, having established the human condition as one of beginning-less superimposition due to false understanding (*mithyājñāna*), Śaṃkara turns to a study of the Vedānta texts as carried out in the *Brahmasūtra*s. Scriptural teaching is needed to remove our wrong conceptions and to provide the crucial understanding of the absolute oneness of the self.

The commentator's task

The *Brahmasūtra*s begin tersely. 'Then therefore the desire to know *brahman*', says Bādarāyaṇa (*BS* 1.1.1).[10] This suggests that the enquiry into *brahman* (based on the 'desire to know *brahman*') follows on from something else ('then') and has a purpose in so doing ('therefore'). It is Śaṃkara's job, as commentator, to clarify what is meant by this or, more precisely, to demon-strate at the outset four things about the text on which he is commenting: who is fit to study it; what its subject matter is; what the relation between the text and the subject matter is; and what its purpose is.[11] Śaṃkara accordingly explains the first *sūtra* to show how it deals with each of these issues (though not necessarily in that order). His strategy in explaining this first *sūtra* is also important to us because it illustrates his commentator's method, identifies a key opponent and helps us understand what is involved in Vedāntin study from an insider's perspective. We shall look at his comments in some detail and see how they relate to material elsewhere in his authentic works.

The method of the Vedāntin commentator is to take each word of the text in turn to explain its meaning. This then contributes to the way in which the whole *sūtra* or verse is to be understood. It is important to realize that this is what is being done for three reasons. The first is that it helps the reader to appreciate and have patience with the structure of the commentary and to realize how seriously Śaṃkara takes the texts he interprets. This has two further consequences, one that should prevent us from leaving too much out from our understanding of Śaṃkara, the other from reading too much in. Second, then, paying attention to the structure of the commentary should make the reader wary of approaches to Śaṃkara's thought that bypass these explanations as obscure and of not much interest to those who want to get to the heart of his philosophy. Such approaches are in danger of omitting the whole scriptural foundation of his thought and attribute too little to Śaṃkara.[12] However, third, studying the explanations of individual words should make us judicious about not attributing too much to Śaṃkara. Sometimes his glosses are minimal. In such cases he is probably just fulfilling what is required of him and what he says is not necessarily fundamental to his own thought. It is his interpretative strategy that needs examining in such contexts.

As we saw earlier, the commentator's method often involves giving a *prima facie* or opponent's interpretation first, before showing why this is

incorrect and going on to state what the correct interpretation should be. So in explaining this first *sūtra*, Śaṃkara indicates what each word does not mean, in his opinion, before giving his own explanation. It is obviously important to realize that this is going on, particularly in the later longer discussions, so that the opponent's view is not misread as Śaṃkara's own. (Gambhirananda's translation is more helpful than Thibaut's in this respect, since it often gives indications in italics of who the speaker is.) We shall notice the strategies of word-by-word explanation and refutation of alternative interpretations as we turn to Śaṃkara's commentary on *BS* 1.1.1.

The first word he has to explain is '*atha*' ('then' or 'now'). After a couple of quibbles about what it does not mean, Śaṃkara establishes that something must 'go before' the enquiry into *brahman*. The question is: what is this prerequisite? We noted above that the school of Vedānta or Uttaramīmāṃsā, Later Exegesis, is often paired with that of Pūrvamīmāṃsā, the Earlier Exegesis or Ritualist school. Both necessarily require prior knowledge of the Veda on which they comment, so the 'then' must indicate something more specific. Here the pairing suggests an obvious possibility. Perhaps, study of the concerns of the Earlier Exegetical school should be the basis for study of the Later Exegetical school. Specifically, perhaps, the study of Jaimini's *Mīmāṃsāsūtra*s should precede the study of Bādarāyaṇa's *Vedāntasūtra*s (*Brahmasūtra*s). More fundamentally, the question is whether, as Śaṃkara puts it, the understanding of *dharma*, the goal of Pūrvamīmāṃsā, should precede understanding of *brahman*, the goal of Vedānta, or not. In replying to this question, Śaṃkara makes clear one of the most basic distinctions in his thinking and shows that his closest fellow exegetes are in many ways his greatest opponents.

Knowledge and ritual action

Śaṃkara is able to state the distinction between himself and the Pūrvamīmāṃsakas, and between the Vedāntin goal and theirs, extremely simply.[13] Whereas their enquiry into *dharma* revolves around the performance of ritual acts and leads to temporary happiness of one sort or another, the Vedāntin enquiry into *brahman* is dependent only on knowledge of *brahman* and yields permanent liberation from the world of ritual and rebirth. Since it is possible for a person who has studied the Vedānta section of the Veda (broadly the Upaniṣads) to enter directly into the search for *brahman*, there is no need to assume that *dharma*, ritual action or a study of Pūrvamīmāṃsaka texts is in any way incumbent on the student seeking to know *brahman*. This is not, then, the prerequisite of which the *sūtra* speaks. However, before we return to Śaṃkara's view of what this might be, we need to look more carefully at the reason for the sharp distinction he makes between knowledge and ritual action, for, through it, Śaṃkara highlights the need for the particular teaching of Advaita Vedānta. The arguments I shall summarize

here are found in *BSBh* 1.1.1–4 at the outset of his commentary, but are repeated throughout his major writings.[14]

The Pūrvamīmāṃsakas were chiefly concerned to reflect on the language of the Veda as it pertained to sacrificial or ritual actions of various kinds. They consequently developed an understanding of Vedic language as injunctive, that is, as containing commands that the person who wants result *x* should perform sacrifice (or meditation) *y*. Not every statement in the Veda is in the form of a command, of course. Some are positive injunctions, others are prohibitions, but yet others are *mantra*s (formulae for use in the ritual) or figurative or descriptive statements of various kinds. These last were classified as *arthavāda*, secondary statements whose real function was to encourage a person to undertake ritual action. So, for example, all statements about the self were seen, not primarily as descriptions of the self, but as motivators to action, the self being the one who would accrue the result of the sacrifice performed. In this way, all Vedic language was understood to be *codanā* (explicit or implicit injunction).

Śaṃkara does not deny that the *karmakāṇḍa* (the section of the Veda dealing with ritual action) contains injunctions to perform particular rituals. Nor does he disagree that the Veda contains many different kinds of language use, including different types of *arthavāda*, though he applies the category somewhat differently. What he does reject is the view that action of any kind can yield liberation either in and of itself or in conjunction with knowledge. Indeed in *Bṛ Up Bh* 1.3.1, he compares performance of ritual with (the impure and binding act of) eating meat from an animal killed with a poisoned arrow. The example shows that this is no mere philosophical wrangle with contemporaries who subscribed to one or other of the views he rejected. It is a matter of salvific moment.

For Śaṃkara, it is knowledge alone that yields, indeed is, liberation. It is therefore the *jñānakāṇḍa*, the section of the Veda dealing with knowledge, especially the Upaniṣads, which is of prime importance to him. Śaṃkara's understanding of the way in which the language of the Upaniṣads gives knowledge of *brahman* is subtle and sophisticated and we shall look at it in detail in Chapters 7 and 8. For the moment, we must just note that it is not by injunction of any kind and realize the reason why.

If a person is commanded to do something, the choice over whether to act according to that command lies with the person. In other words, whether or not the sacrifice is performed depends on the will of the person. It might be performed. It might not be. So too the result (*phala*) is dependent on the sacrifice being performed. If it is not performed, the result will not be produced. The result is therefore also in the end dependent on the will of the sacrificer. In Śaṃkara's view this means that the goal of the Pūrvamīmāṃsaka, *abhyudaya*, happiness or prosperity of various kinds, is dependent on actions that may or may not be performed. It is caused by these actions. It is therefore necessarily part of the web of time, space and causality

that makes up this world of rebirth. As part of this web, it is necessarily transitory. Therefore, although it may be long-lasting bliss in a heaven of the pleasantest kind that is gained by the ritual, in the end it is as impermanent as the rest of this world of means and ends. It cannot then be true liberation from it.

Śaṃkara contrasts *abhyudaya*, with its twin faults of being dependent and being transitory, with *niḥśreyasa*, the highest good of liberation, which is independent and eternal. This distinction depends on a further contrast between action and knowledge. Action, as we have just seen, involves option because it is dependent on whether or not the person decides to act and how. Knowledge, however, is dependent only on the nature of the object that is known and the correct functioning of the means of knowledge (*BSBh* 1.1.1, 1.1.4). Say there is a post down the road (cf. *BSBh* 1.1.2). I may think, 'That is a post or a man or something else', but only one of those ideas is correct, that is, is a form of knowledge or true cognition. I cannot choose which it is. It *is* a post. I only have knowledge of it (as opposed to misconception) when I know that it is a post. So when Śaṃkara denies that knowledge is a mental activity what he is denying is that knowledge is dependent on some mental choice of the knower. Its form is determined by that which is known, not by some imaginative mental construction. Knowledge thus differs crucially from a common form of meditation found in the Vedic texts that involves the imaginative identification of two things to achieve a particular result. Śaṃkara gives the example of fire (*BSBh* 1.1.4). The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* states, 'The fire is man, O Gautama; the fire is woman, O Gautama' (5.7.1, 5.8.1). This is the basis for a meditation that eventually leads the meditator to the world of the gods. Such a meditation on fire is very different from knowledge of fire: it is hot, not cold and so forth. This depends only on the nature of fire, not on the thinker's imagination or desire for specific results.

Knowledge of *brahman*, similarly, is dependent not on the mental choice of the one who knows *brahman*, but on the eternal nature of *brahman*. So it is not flawed by involvement in the world of results, ends and means, as the goal of the Pūrvamīmāṃsā necessarily is. But, it may be asked, is not liberation itself a result of such knowledge? And if it is a result, is it not equally bound up with such a system? Here we may take Śaṃkara's argument one step further. Knowledge of *brahman* is not knowledge of *brahman* as an object, for *brahman* is 'different from the known and above the unknown' (*Kena Up* 1.3, quoted in *BSBh* 1.1.4). Rather, it is being *brahman*, knowing *brahman*, not as an object, but as being identical with one's true self, that is, self-reflexive consciousness beyond subject–object duality. This is liberation, our true state from which all superimpositions have finally been removed. If knowledge has a function, it is to remove these superimpositions, not to produce some new result. *Brahman* simply is. It is, however, very hard to express this in linguistic structures, since these force us to distinguish between subjects and objects. Śaṃkara tries not to speak of the knower attaining *brahman*, because this

could make us think that *brahman* is the result of some action of attaining. The same problem arises if we talk of realizing *brahman*, for *brahman* is again made the object of (an apparently mental action of) realizing. We can only emphasize the two points we have just made: (i) action, for Śaṃkara, involves option, knowledge does not; (ii) knowledge of *brahman* is not knowledge of an object but the state in which all objectivizing superimpositions have been removed. Later Vedāntin critics were to take up the difficulties we have just noted and to charge Advaita with incoherence in its notion of liberation. As Śaṃkara states it, however, it is a guarantee of true liberation, by contrast with the Pūrvamīmāṃsaka's entrapment in the world of rebirth. To show that there is a major section of the Veda that is concerned with this teaching, whose purpose is quite different from that of the ritual texts, is thus a crucial part of his argument in *BSBh* 1.1.1–4, for it underlines the need for the separate teaching of Vedānta, a teaching that is necessary for liberation as it is for truth.

This is why he contrasts the highest good (*niḥśreyasa*) of Advaita Vedānta with the prosperity (*abhyudaya*) of the Pūrvamīmāṃsā. In so doing, Śaṃkara conveys a value judgement about the latter in his very choice of words. Indeed, one of the early Pūrvamīmāṃsaka commentators, Śabara, equated *dharma*, the goal of their system, with *niḥśreyasa*, the highest good, something that goes beyond the particular rituals and their specific results. D'Sa interprets it as Significance (1980, pp. 49–54) . By ignoring this and claiming *niḥśreyasa* for Advaita, Śaṃkara rejects the Pūrvamīmāṃsakas' worldview and theory of language as inadequate, as ultimately insignificant and as failing to yield the true highest good. He also rejects a move by his older Mīmāṃsaka contemporary, Kumārila, who explicitly incorporated the goal of final liberation into his scheme. Kumārila held that, by performing only those rituals that were obligatory, a person would generate no further results of actions, meritorious or otherwise.[15] The results of previous actions having worked themselves out, there would be nothing to tie the person to the world of rebirth and liberation would ensue.[16] Later in the *Brahmasūtra* commentary, Śaṃkara rejects this view as implausible (*BSBh* 4.3.14; cf. *Tait Up Bh* 1.1 Introduction; 1.11.4; *GBh* 18.67). Better to stick to your own worldview, which is at least justified in the ritual sphere, his vocabulary of *abhyudaya* and *niḥśreyasa* signals at the outset.

This major discussion was generated by the *prima facie* interpretation of the word 'then', an interpretation stated quite succinctly in *BSBh* 1.1.1 but developed and refuted in more detail especially in 1.1.3–4. It can be linked very simply with the interpretation of the word 'therefore'. The Veda itself teaches that the results of ritual are impermanent, claims Śaṃkara, quoting *Ch Up* 8.1.6: 'Just as here (in this life) the world which is acquired through ritual action perishes, so there (in the next world) the world which is acquired through merit perishes.' However, it also teaches: 'The one who knows *brahman* attains the highest' (*Tait Up* 2.1). Thus, by contrast with the

perishable results of ritual, it indicates 'the highest goal of human beings to be through knowledge of *brahman*' (*BSBh* 1.1.1, p. 5).[17] Note Śaṃkara's construction. Through it, he avoids having to say that the goal is gained or acquired through this knowledge, subtly emphasizing that this is not a transient result, unlike the acquisitions of ritual action and merit. The 'enquiry into *brahman*', embodied in the *Brahmasūtras*, is 'therefore' undertaken for the purpose of this highest goal, namely, liberation.

The fit pupil

We need now to return to the correct interpretation of the word 'then', according to Śaṃkara's explanation. Quite simply, it intimates the conditions that make a person eligible or ready to undertake the enquiry into *brahman*. There are four such conditions:

(i)   Discrimination between eternal and non-eternal matters
(ii) Dispassion towards the enjoyment of the results (of actions) here and hereafter
(iii) Accomplishment of practices such as mental tranquillity and control of the senses
(iv) Desiring liberation.

(*BSBh* 1.1.1, p. 5)[18]

These being satisfied, a person can embark upon the enquiry into *brahman* whether or not they have already engaged in the enquiry into *dharma*, the Pūrvamīmāṃsā's domain.

A person who has enquired into *dharma* will, however, have to recognize its limitations before becoming eligible. In fact, this is what conditions (i), (ii) and (iv) amount to when considered carefully in the light of our previous discussion. Condition (ii) is perhaps the most obvious case. The Pūrvamīmāṃsā is results-orientated, in Śaṃkara's view, whether these are the specific results of particular rituals or the merit that accrues from following the prescriptions of *dharma*. Until dispassion towards such a framework for living arises, there is no point in undertaking the Advaitin search. This dispassion can spring from a recognition that there is a difference between the eternal and the transient, condition (i), the transient comprising the world of means and ends that is ultimately unsatisfactory. It can be cultivated by the sorts of practice mentioned in condition (iii), which later Advaitins expanded to include cessation (from continued attachment to sense objects or from all *dharmic* activity), forbearance (being unswayed by opposites such as heat and cold, pleasure and pain, love and hate), concentration (on *brahman*) and faith. Swami Nikhilananda, a modern Advaitin, explains this as an affirmative attitude towards Vedānta teaching (1975, p. 45). Finally, dispassion towards the world of ends and means leads to a longing for liberation from it,

condition (iv). This is perhaps the most important of all the conditions, for it is a recognition of one's need for the teaching, a readiness to be open to what the Upaniṣads and teacher have to offer. It reflects the ancient practice of the Upaniṣadic teachers, who would only teach when approached by a pupil arriving fuel in hand – that is, showing willingness to be a pupil (and to tend the teacher's fire).

From this, it would appear that anyone who satisfies the four conditions above can undertake the enquiry into *brahman*. In other words, ethical and attitudinal criteria are sufficient. This view is to some extent supported by the description of the Vedāntin pupil given in *Upad G* 1. The teaching is primarily offered to those who desire liberation and have faith. Further, the teacher may only teach the liberating knowledge to one who has renounced everything transient that is obtained by (ritual) means, who has left behind desires for sons, wealth and worlds, who is fit through mental tranquillity, self-control, compassion and so forth, and who possesses the qualities of a pupil well-known from the scriptures. While Śaṃkara does not specify these, his commentator, Ānandajñāna, refers to *BhG* 13.7, which mentions absence of pride and deceit, non-harming, patience, uprightness, and various other ethical qualities. This seems to accord well with the four conditions of *BSBh* 1.1.1.

However, these are not the only stipulations given. According to *Thousand Teachings*, Prose Chapter 1, the pupil should also be a *paramahaṃsa* wandering ascetic, a pure brahmin, should approach his teacher in the proper way, and should have been scrutinized with respect to his caste, occupation (or ritual action), conduct, knowledge (of the Veda), and family. These conditions raise a different set of requirements altogether, for they are all, directly or indirectly, to do with birth. Most obviously, it is required here that the pupil be a brahmin. This is probably because the more fundamental requirement is that the pupil should be a *paramahaṃsa* ascetic. In medieval times, this was the highest of four grades of renouncers. Śaṃkara is not yet aware of this later categorization, but the term already connotes a renouncer of the purest kind. In *Bṛ Up Bh*, he expresses the view that it is possible to renounce at any stage of life (4.5.15),[19] but indicates that it is only a brahmin who is qualified to become a renouncer (3.5.1). The pupil, then, in this text, for Śaṃkara, is one who has renounced life in society from being a brahmin.[20]

Prose Chapter 2, however, only requires the pupil to be a *brahmacārin*, not a fully fledged renouncer. Normally, a *brahmacārin* is a person at the first stage of life (*āśrama*) about to embark upon Vedic study. However, Śaṃkara distinguishes between formal *āśramic* study and the enquiry into *brahman*. The latter presupposes that the former, in which knowledge of the Veda is acquired, will already have been undertaken. Here, Śaṃkara seems to apply the term '*brahmacārin*' somewhat unusually to the person engaged in the deeper search. Now, though, a second reason has emerged why he prefers the pupil to have been a brahmin. It is only males from the first three *varṇa*s,

the so-called twice-born, who are eligible to study the Veda in the first place.[21] And knowledge of the Veda was already presumed in *BSBh* 1.1.1 to be a common prerequisite of both Pūrvamīmāṃsā and Vedānta. In *BSBh* 1.3.34–39, following Bādarāyaṇa, Śaṃkara is quite categorical that *śūdra*s, members of the fourth (servant) *varṇa*, are not eligible for Vedic study. This requires some ingenious exegesis of those Upaniṣadic passages which, critically speaking, predate this restriction and include *śūdra*s among the people taught about *brahman*. For example, one Jānaśruti is taught by the brahmin Raikva, who explicitly addresses him as 'Śūdra' (*Ch Up* 4.2). Both in his *Chāndogya* commentary and in the *BSBh* discussion on *śūdra*s, Śaṃkara etymologizes this to indicate 'one on whom grief rushes'.[22] This refers to Jānaśruti's reaction on overhearing that he is less than Raikva, an unattractive character whom he finds scratching himself by a cart! Other clues in the story and surrounding passages indicate that Jānaśruti is really a (twice-born) *kṣatriya*, Śaṃkara maintains.

This whole discussion takes place against a background of such discussions among the Pūrvamīmāṃsakas about the person qualified to perform (a particular) ritual, the *adhikārin* (see Halbfass, 1991, pp. 66–74). Śaṃkara is showing that, just as there are formal conditions for participating in the ritual system, so are there for pursuing the truth of *brahman*. However, his clear preference for the pupil to be a brahmin is not always felt to be palatable. It seems to go against the Advaitin's own teaching that birth, gender, ability, and so forth are part of the world of non-self that we falsely superimpose on the self. It seems to contradict the claim that modern Advaitins often make about the universality of Vedānta, which can transcend cultural specificity precisely because of its recognition that the goal is *nirguṇa*, without qualities. We cannot explore these claims any further here. We shall, though, note the way two recent writers on Śaṃkara allow their reservations to colour their explanation of *adhikāra*.

Cenkner explicitly states: 'Whereas Bādarāyaṇa excludes the *śūdra*-s, Śaṅkara opts for the liberality of the earliest Upaniṣads which include them' (1983, p. 49). In this, he makes appeal to *BSBh* 3.4.37 against *BSBh* 1.3.34–38 where he has to admit that Śaṃkara excludes *śūdra*s. However, 3.4.37 is concerned only with those who do not fit into one of the four traditional stages of life (*āśrama*s), not with *varṇa* at all.[23] Cenkner's concern is really with the modern Śaṃkarācāryas and *maṭha*s that trace their foundation to Śaṃkara. He accepts, without criticism or reference, the view that 'the student ascetics were recruited, in the beginning, from all castes' (p. 50). He seems determined to found this apologetic claim in Śaṃkara's declared ideas, despite the numerous caveats he has to make and his misreading of the *BSBh*.

Alston is more judicious. Śaṃkara certainly requires the pupil to be a pure brahmin, but this 'should not be interpreted in a purely caste sense' (1990, p. 6). He implies that a true brahmin is a brahmin by behaviour not by birth and refers to *BSBh* 3.4.38, where Śaṃkara quotes *Manusmṛti* 2.87. Alston

translates: 'Whoever practises universal benevolence and friendliness is a Brahmin' (1990, p. 6). However, this overemphasizes the single term *maitra,* omits the first part of the quotation Śaṃkara gives and ignores the *āśramic* issue that Śaṃkara is actually dealing with (as Cenkner does). It makes no allusion to the more sober judgment Alston makes elsewhere that belonging to the three higher *varṇa*s and knowing the relevant Vedic texts is taken as read (1989a, p. 65). It is quite true that Śaṃkara emphasizes the importance of, for example, truthfulness as part of a true brahmin's character. He has no difficulty with the story of Satyakāma Jābāla, an illegitimate boy whose mother is vague about his ancestry, but who approaches Gautama for teaching and makes a clean breast of the problem. Gautama accepts him as a pupil on the grounds that only a brahmin would have told the truth so honestly (*Ch Up* 4.4). Nonetheless, the crucial point about the story is that his characteristic (honesty) identifies his birth (brahmin). Behaviour alone is not sufficient. In reflecting on British and other criticisms of caste, some neo-Hindu movements have tended to stress behaviour rather than birth as a criterion of *varṇa* (ISKCON does so most explicitly). However, it is not legitimate to read this modern concern back into Śaṃkara's writings, even if his conservatism is irksome in this respect. Alston does not quite do this, but his selective comment could be misleading. For it may blind us to Śaṃkara's position and, along with Cenkner's exposition, to the political implications of the power of the brahmin Śaṃkarācāryas.

At the end of his discussion on *śūdra*s, though, Śaṃkara does seem to soften his attitude a little. He concedes that they may possess knowledge, which they could not have acquired in this life because not eligible, from some previous life. He also reminds us that *smṛti* texts are open to all (*BSBh* 1.3.38). Since *smṛti* texts do teach the Advaitin truth insofar as they are in agreement with *śruti*, Śaṃkara may turn out to be less hardline than at first appears.[24]

This is one of the many points Marcaurelle picks up in developing his argument that physical renunciation is not a precondition for knowledge in Śaṃkara's view and that performance of *dharma* with the correct detachment indicates all to be qualified for knowledge.[25] However, even Marcaurelle concedes that

> although Śaṅkara understood his teaching to be accessible to all castes, for sociohistorical and/or strategic reasons, in practice, he may have taught mainly to Brahmins, who were probably the most qualified to understand the subtle argumentation of his revival, the most concerned about it, and the most competent to spread it throughout society once converted to the doctrine.
>
> (2000, p. 39)

This underlines my point about sociopolitical power. Furthermore, since, as I argue, the pupil for Advaitin truth is primarily going to be engaged with the

Upaniṣadic texts, it would seem that Śaṃkara's restriction to brahmins, at least in practice, holds.[26] The élite construction of knowledge is, of course, not particular to the Vedic tradition. It is present in different form in, for example, the academic tradition within which a book like this must be located.

Where women are concerned, Śaṃkara's texts give him less scope for rewriting. There are many women teachers and questioners in the Upaniṣads. Śaṃkara does not attempt to downplay their role. He even notes the tenderness with which Yājñavalkya encourages his wife Maitreyī to join him in renouncing ritual and social life (*Bṛ Up* 2.4.2). The later hagiographies portray Śaṃkara teaching his mother the truth of Advaita on her deathbed, though in the end he has to concede that it is beyond her (e.g. *Sankara-digvijaya* 14.29–50). Nonetheless, Śaṃkara generally envisages the pupil as male, for example in *Upad G* 1, 2 and 3.[27]

There is, though, one notable exception given almost in passing in *GKBh* 4.95, quite unprompted by Gauḍapāda's text. Śaṃkara contrasts those who, having little understanding, cannot comprehend ultimate reality with 'any, even women and others, who if they will be firm of conviction, are indeed in the world of great knowledge, whose knowledge is of the most excellent reality',[28] the non-dual self. There are then tensions in Śaṃkara's own writings that make space for different contemporary interpretations, though to foist feminist and egalitarian concerns upon him would be to misconstrue his social context.[29]

The one to be known

So far we have seen how Śaṃkara specifies the person who is fit to study Vedānta (as above) and the purpose of undertaking that enquiry (liberation). We turn now to his discussion of its subject-matter, in paying attention to the word '*brahma-*'. As usual, Śaṃkara starts by saying what the text does not mean. His argument relies on grammatical points to do with Sanskrit compounds, which need not detain us. His key point is that the word '*brahma-*' here refers to the supreme reality (not to the brahmin *varṇa*) and that this *brahman* is the whole focus of Vedānta, not just a subsidiary part of it. *Brahman*, as supreme reality, is unequivocally identified as the subject-matter of the *Brahmasūtra*s, the Upaniṣads, which they summarize and the system of (Advaita) Vedānta that pursues the enquiry in hand.

This being the case, it is obvious that the whole of the *Brahmasūtra* commentary will be concerned to explore in more detail what the nature of *brahman* might be. However, Śaṃkara once again provides at the outset a foundation on which to build later learning. *Brahman*, then, is that to which *BS* 1.1.2 refers in saying: 'From which the origination and so forth of this'. Less elliptically, *brahman* is that from which the cosmos originates, by which it is sustained, into which it is dissolved at the end of a world cycle. *Brahman* is thus indicated to be first and final cause, an idea with which pupils will be

familiar, so they will have a sense of orientation in their quest. Śaṃkara already indicates, however, that the correct source of this idea is not human reasoning about the world in which we live, but the testimony of scripture. The passage to which *BS* 1.1.2 is held to refer is *Tait Up* 3.1: 'That from which these beings are born and so forth, desire to know that. That is *brahman*.'

Śaṃkara foreshadows his explanation of this passage in *BSBh* 1.1.2 by quoting it in *BSBh* 1.1.1, in explaining 'the desire to know *brahman*'. This he justifies, as we have already seen, by the fact that 'the awareness of *brahman* is the purpose (*artha*) of human beings because it destroys the worthless (*anartha*-) misconception, etc. which is the seed of the whole world of rebirth' (p. 6).[30] In choosing the term *artha* and its negative *anartha*, Śaṃkara indicates that questions of being, knowing and valuing are all interlinked in this enquiry into *brahman*. Through knowledge of *brahman*, a human being's highest purpose is achieved. That which is worthless is destroyed. Misconception vanishes. The world of rebirth no longer exists as such, for the liberated person is no longer bound by it, sees it as it is, attaches no ultimate value to it. When Thibaut and Gambhirananda translate *anartha* as 'evil', they inevitably introduce inappropriate connotations from different religious contexts and obscure the subtlety of Śaṃkara's language.

At this point, an opponent raises a query. Since, it is implied, we know what you are talking about already, what is the point of further enquiry into *brahman*? Or if we do not already know *brahman*, it will not be possible to make such an enquiry (because *brahman* is beyond our reach).[31] The charge is that the Advaitin enterprise is itself worthless, purposeless, pointless. Śaṃkara's reply is clearcut. We do already have an idea of *brahman*, which is what gives us the starting point. However, for many people this idea is confused and misguided, so it needs to be sorted out. Their confusion rests on both fallacious reasoning and on misinterpretations of scripture.[32] Here is Advaita's task: to interpret the texts correctly, with the help of reasoning that does not contradict this, for the supremely important purpose of the highest good.[33] Here Śaṃkara makes an important statement on method. Both scripture and reasoning will be crucial in his commentary, but they function properly only when the latter is interlinked with and based on the former.

This is a vital theme to which we shall return in the next two chapters. In *BSBh* 1.1.1, it is highlighted by the starting points from which we work. The first is an etymology. *Brahman*, says Śaṃkara, is by nature eternally pure, realized and free, omniscient, possessing omnipotence. Now the word '*brahman*' comes from a root √*bṛh*, meaning 'to be great'. The sense of 'eternally pure, etc.' follows from that derivation. It is important to be clear what he is asserting here. This is not an Indian version of the ontological argument, which might say that, by definition, *brahman* is that than which no greater can be conceived, taken as a proof of the existence of *brahman* of that nature. Rather, the way Śaṃkara refers to *brahman*, in a phrase that is highly characteristic throughout his works (i.e. *nityaśuddhabuddhamukta*) is, in his

view, a summary of the Upaniṣadic teaching about *brahman*. It is derived from scripture, not from reasoning based on the meaning of words. However, the word '*brahman*', which we know from scripture, is itself part of the way in which scripture helps us to understand *brahman*. Scripture legitimizes the use of reasoning by providing cases to which it may be applied.[34]

Our second starting point for knowledge of *brahman* comes from our sense of our own identity. No-one thinks, 'I am not.'[35] In thinking, 'I am, I exist', I affirm the existence of self. 'And this self', says Śaṃkara, 'is *brahman*'. The problem is that most of us do not understand the nature of this self properly. Here Śaṃkara lists a whole series of the mistaken opinions of his opponents. These range from the Materialists, whom he accuses of identifying the self wholly with the body, to the Madhyamaka Buddhists, who see self as *śūnya*, literally, 'empty' of inherent existence, but correctly translated as 'void' in Śaṃkara's writing because he sees their view as ultimate nihilism. *Āstika* ('orthodox') thinkers can also be mistaken, attributing agency and/or the enjoyment of *karmic* results to the self (Naiyāyikas and Sāṃkhyans) or misinterpreting the relationship between the Lord and individual selves (followers of Yoga, according to Thibaut, but also Naiyāyikas). The point here is that we do have a starting point for understanding the self in our own experience, but we extrapolate from it incorrectly, unless guided by the correct teaching of scripture. Scripture, though, is not antithetical to our experience. It helps us to make sense of it, because it addresses itself to people still entangled in the world of name and form, the world of conventional experience. We shall look further at this relationship in Chapter 5.

We shall conclude this chapter by summarizing Śaṃkara's word-by-word interpretation of *BS* 1.1.1 and relating it to the four features whose presence the commentator has to demonstrate to justify the significance of the text under discussion and the teaching based on it. 'Then' implies the conditions a fit pupil must fulfil before starting on the Vedāntin enquiry, primary among them being a desire for liberation. It does not indicate the need for prior study of the ritual system and *dharma*. 'Therefore' indicates that there is a reason for undertaking this enquiry, namely, liberation. '*Brahman*' is the source of everything, known from scripture, from the meaning of the word itself and, initially, from our own, though often mistaken, sense of identity. The 'desire to know' leads to the 'enquiry' that is needed to sort out the correct interpretation of self from misdeductions and wrong views of scriptural teaching.

The 'person fit for study', the *adhikārin*, has been described above. We saw that certain conditions are assumed rather than stated in *BSBh* 1.1.1, where the focus is on those attitudinal requirements that serve, among other things, to distinguish the Vedāntin seeker from the Ritualist. The 'subject-matter' is *brahman*. The 'relation between the text [of the *Brahmasūtra*s and, by implication, the Upaniṣads] and the subject-matter' is clarified in the controversy with the Pūrvamīmāṃsaka about the nature of language. The

ritual section (*karmakāṇḍa*) relates to its subject-matter, *dharma*, by providing the injunctions which, when followed, result in *dharma*. The knowledge section (*jñānakāṇḍa*) relates to *brahman*, by providing (non-injunctive) sentences which, when correctly interpreted, give liberating knowledge of *brahman*. Finally, the 'purpose' is clear. It is to give this liberating knowledge which we need if we are to escape from the world of perpetual rebirth, the matrix of our human condition.

3

THE SOURCE OF
THE TEACHING

In *BSBh* 1.1.1, having established the need for the teaching, Śaṃkara indicates that the source for our enquiry into *brahman* will be the scriptural texts, correctly interpreted. Accordingly, in this chapter, we examine his concepts of authoritative text and interpretation, then determine the weight he attributes to reason and personal experience respectively. Throughout his writings, Śaṃkara stresses that *śabda* (word, authoritative text) is the only *pramāṇa* for *brahman*. To understand this claim, however, we need first to look more closely at how we know what we know, the issue that lies at the base of Indian philosophical discussions about the *pramāṇa*s or methods of acquiring knowledge.[1]

Methods of acquiring knowledge

Among Śaṃkara's contemporaries, there was considerable debate about the nature and number of these methods. Most radically, the Mādhyamika Buddhists argued that to know how many *pramāṇa*s there were, you would have to know what kinds of things to be known there were (to decide how many spheres of operation you needed). But to know what kinds of things to be known there are, you would have to be able to apply the *pramāṇa*s. There is thus an inherent circularity in the process, a prime example of the emptiness or interdependence of all phenomena central to Madhyamaka thinking. Accordingly, it is impossible to establish as independent any *pramāṇa* at all. The Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamikas therefore held that there were no means of knowledge by which to establish any position as true. All that could be done was to demonstrate the inherent difficulties in any thesis. Because the Mādhyamikas did not accept any *pramāṇa*s, Śaṃkara would not even engage in dispute with them. It is impossible to discuss knowledge with those who deny its very foundations.

At the other extreme, the Bhāṭṭa Pūrvamīmāṃsakas[2] held that there was a set of six *pramāṇa*s that were not reducible to one another (which is not to say that there are not some relations of dependence between them). These were: direct sense perception (*pratyakṣa*); inductive inference (*anumāna*); verbal

testimony (*śabda*); comparison (*upamāna*); presumption (*arthāpatti*); and non-cognition (*anupalabdhi*). Śaṃkara tends to focus on the first three and it is on these that we shall concentrate in investigating his claim that *śabda* is the only *pramāṇa* for *brahman*.

All schools, apart from the Madhyamaka, but including the Materialists, accepted direct sense perception as a *pramāṇa*. There was some variation in what they counted as direct sense perception, some accepting Yogic insight in this category, for example. For Śaṃkara, class, quality and action are characteristics of objects that are amenable to sense perception (*Ke Up Bh* 1.3). It is for this reason that he holds that *brahman* is beyond sense perception. *Brahman*, possessing no qualities, has none of the marks that identify one object out from among other objects. This is because *brahman* is not an object to be cognized, but the very cognizer of all cognitions. Śaṃkara acknowledges that this makes *brahman* very difficult to teach about. The evidence of sense perception cannot be used. He recognizes that some will therefore assume that *brahman* does not exist, but himself appeals to the teaching of traditional authority (*āgama*) as an alternative and more appropriate *pramāṇa*.

The second *pramāṇa* to consider is a form of inductive inference (*anumāna*). The standard Nyāya example, for the public demonstration of a proof procedure, goes like this:

(i)   This mountain is fire-possessing   (thesis)
(ii) because this mountain is smoke-possessing   (reason)
(iii) and what possesses smoke possesses fire
      like kitchen, unlike lake.   (principle and example)
(iv) Since this mountain is smoke-possessing   (application)
(v) therefore this mountain is fire-possessing.   (conclusion).

Anumāna requires what is called 'universal concomitance' (*vyāpti*) to work. In other words, because smoke and fire are always seen to occur together (that is, they are universally concomitant), we can infer the existence of fire from the existence of smoke. Note that *anumāna* is based on empirical observation.[3] It is not a logical necessity that fire and smoke occur together. We just happen always to observe it. If we observed a counter-example, the inference would be falsified. Śaṃkara accepts *anumāna* as a source of knowledge about the world, but he points out how susceptible it is to problems. He actually quotes the shepherd's smoke-box as a counter-example to the inference above. (The box contained smoke – no fire – for using against predators. The opponent could reply that fire must have caused the smoke in the first place.)

Where *brahman* is concerned, *anumāna* is automatically ruled out. This is because it is dependent on (though not reducible to) sense perception and sense perception cannot be a *pramāṇa* for *brahman*, as we saw above. Śaṃkara therefore criticizes the Naiyāyikas and others who sought to establish the

existence of (a) God by processes of inference. Apart from the problem of dependence on sense perception (which Nyāya could deal with because it held universals could be perceived and the Lord is the universal of all universals), Śaṃkara rejects the view that you can argue from particular cases within the world to the general case of the whole universe. To argue from composite objects needing an efficient cause to the universe being composite and therefore needing an efficient cause (*brahman*) is illegitimate in Śaṃkara's view. However, he does give a special place to *anumāna* within the context of scripture, as we shall see in Chapter 4.

The third *pramāṇa* identified by the Mīmāṃsakas was verbal testimony (*śabda*). The reliability of the witness is important here. If someone calls out, 'Fire, fire!' you do not believe their testimony to be true if they are a known joker or always crying wolf. A crucial subset of verbal testimony for the *āstika* schools is scripture – or, more precisely, the *śruti* texts of the Veda, reliably transmitted. There were three main ways of justifying their inclusion as a *pramāṇa*. Clearly scripture conveys verbal testimony of a sort. It is a verbal message. It will be a *pramāṇa* if it is reliable, has its own appropriate sphere and is fruitful. (Efficacy is generally a sign of a valid *pramāṇa*.)

First, then, the Pūrvamīmāṃsakas and Vedāntins argued that scripture is needed as a *pramāṇa* for those matters that are beyond the scope of sense perception, which are transcendental issues. For the Ritualists, this meant *dharma*, for the Vedāntins, *brahman*. We have no other means of knowing what the connection is between ritual and results, argued the former, apart from the injunctions of *śruti*. Such future unseen results are the appropriate sphere of the *pramāṇa* of scripture. The Vedāntins argued that, like *dharma*, *brahman* is beyond the senses and inference.[4] However, the Upaniṣadic *śruti* texts are wholly concerned with *brahman*. They have an appropriate sphere of operation.

Second, the reliability of the *śruti* texts is underpinned in Pūrvamīmāṃsā and Vedānta with the doctrine of *apauruṣeyatva*. This holds that scripture is eternal, without author whether human or divine, and therefore infallible. We shall consider this further in the next section.

Third, the *śruti* texts are seen to be fruitful in Vedānta because they actually do liberate people. Śaṃkara can argue this because he believes that it is possible to be liberated in this life.[5] Such a person knows the self to be *brahman*. This *anubhava* (realization) is never sublated, that is, shown to be false by subsequent cognitions. Moreover, we can observe that for such people grief and delusion have ceased.[6] Scripture is therefore an effective *pramāṇa* – its knowledge works – with a sphere of its own. As Śaṃkara puts it pointedly, 'A *pramāṇa* is a means of knowledge or is not a means of knowledge according to whether it is the cause of a true cognition arising or not' (*Bṛ Up Bh* 2.1.20, p. 740).[7] To suppose the scripture to be false because it speaks of that which cannot be known by sense perception and inference is to make unwarranted assumptions that limit the nature of what there is to be

known. It is to reject an available *pramāṇa* and wilfully to ignore the results that *pramāṇa* yields.

Śaṃkara does, however, take seriously the view that each *pramāṇa*, including scriptural testimony, has its own sphere. Thus he says that if scripture were to assert that fire is cold, it would have no authority to do so. An understanding of the nature of fire falls within the scope of sense perception, which shows it to be hot. Scripture cannot overrule the proper use of sense perception and inference in their own areas.[8] Nonetheless, because scripture's proper subject is *brahman* and *brahman* is the source of all there is, scripture does provide a framework within which the operation of sense perception and inference, and indeed scripture itself, are seen to operate. We shall return to this in Chapters 4 and 5.

The nature of scripture

Since scripture is the sole *pramāṇa* for knowledge of *brahman*, we need to consider its nature carefully to see how it works. It is sometimes said that Śaṃkara modifies the Pūrvamīmāṃsaka teaching of *apauruṣeyatva* (being without personal origin) because he holds that *brahman* emits the Vedic texts at the beginning of each world cycle (e.g. Flood, 1998, p. 145). In this section, we shall examine the relation between *brahman* and scripture, according to Śaṃkara, and try to assess what sort of claim Śaṃkara makes when he continues to assert that the Veda is *apauruṣeya*.

In *BSBh* 1.1.3, Śaṃkara gives two possible interpretations to the *sūtra*. The second, which is longer, explains how scripture can be the source of our knowledge of *brahman*. The first, on the other hand, indicates that *brahman* is the source of scripture. The Sanskrit is '*śāstrayonitvāt*' – 'because it is the source of scripture' or 'because scripture is its source'. It can be read either way. Śaṃkara nowhere indicates that a choice has to be made between the two readings. We may therefore take it that both explanations reflect his own views.

However, to say *brahman* is the source of scripture seems to go against the idea that it is *apauruṣeya*, without personal origin of any kind. We can be certain that Śaṃkara did subscribe to the latter view from three kinds of clues. The first are his frequent references to scripture as eternal (*nitya*). The second is his discussion of the eternal relationship that he holds to exist between a word and its referent (that to which it refers). The third is a rare though explicit use of the term *apauruṣeya*. We shall look at each of these in turn.

To say that scripture is eternal implies that it has no beginning, no moment of composition. This accords with the Pūrvamīmāṃsā view of *apauruṣeyatva*. It is not that the Veda exists as a kind of pre-existent book. Such an image comes from a tradition in which emphasis is on scripture as written, whereas the Vedic texts are essentially oral. Rather, the language of the Veda is eternal. This is worked out through the second idea mentioned, the eternal

relationship between a word and its referent. Here Śaṃkara follows Pūrvamīmāṃsaka arguments that derived from reflection on the order embedded and enacted in the sacrificial ritual. The idea can be difficult to conceive from a modern Western point of view. For Śaṃkara and the Ritualists, a word first of all refers to its *ākṛti*, a kind of concrete universal or generic configuration, of which particular objects are instances. Take the word 'cow'. It first refers to its *ākṛti*, the collection of characteristics that make something a cow rather than a horse. Via this *ākṛti*, it then refers to particular animals that can be identified as correct examples of cows. When Śaṃkara says that the relation between a word and its referent is eternal, he is talking about the relation between the word and its *ākṛti*, not the word and any particular instances of the *ākṛti*. So, changing our example, we could say that the word '*deva*' always denotes the *ākṛti* or collection of characteristics that make an individual a god and not a human, sage, ghost, or animal. This example was important to Śaṃkara because through it he tried to defend his acceptance of the existence of world cycles against the Pūrvamīmāṃsā rejection of this cosmology. His opponents argued that such a view would commit him to denying the eternality of the Veda, because he could no longer hold that the gods (equated by the Ritualists to the Vedic words) were eternal. (They disappeared at the end of each cycle when the universe is dissolved back into a latent state.) Śaṃkara argues back that, though in any new cycle the individual fulfilling the office of some particular *deva* might vary, the *ākṛti* of *deva*, denoted by the eternal Vedic word, remains permanent. The eternality of the Veda is therefore consistent with the cosmology of world cycles.

This may all seem rather obscure. We may also have difficulty with the further implication of this view: that language is not conventional but eternally given. In other words, a *go* (ox) is not called a '*go*' ('ox') because at some stage of the development of Sanskrit that was what people decided the sound '*go*' should mean. Rather a *go* is called a '*go*' because the word '*go*' eternally refers to the *ākṛti* of ox and through it to particular oxen. The thinkers who held this theory agreed that children come to learn language by learning its conventional uses, but hold that this only explains how language is learned, not how it originates in the first place. They, of course, hold that it is eternally given in the Veda.

It would be easy to dismiss this as untenable by anyone who does not share the same presuppositions about Vedic authority. We can resist this temptation by noting the underlying claim that the structures of language are prior to the intelligibility of the world in which we live. It is also important to understand the function this theory plays in Śaṃkara's thought. It is not just a way of claiming infallibility for the Veda over against the humanly derived systems of the Buddha and such teachers as Kapila (founder of the Sāṃkhya school). It is also the ground for believing that the language of scripture is trustworthy since it relates isomorphically to the world that is based on it. Put another way, the world is of such a kind because it is manifested in accordance with

the words of scripture that eternally denote the kind of worlds there can be (*BSBh* 1.3.28; *Bṛ Up Bh* 2.4.10). They thus regulate name, form and action, providing the context in which the results of past actions can reach fruition, when the time is ripe. Since they are reliable in this respect (that is, in relation to *dharma*), there is no reason to doubt their validity in relation to knowledge of *brahman* – and this we know to be their concern from the many, many statements to that effect found in the Upaniṣads. Śaṃkara then benefits from holding to this view of the eternal relationship between words and *ākṛti*s, which entails the eternality of the Veda, the source of these words. It does, however, relate language very tightly to the world of name and form, as he is ready to concede. This means that he will have to develop a particular view of language to show how it can yield knowledge of that which is precisely beyond the world of name and form. We shall look at these issues further in Chapters 7 and 8.

Our final clue is Śaṃkara's actual use of the term '*apauruṣeya*' in a revealing passage in the *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya*. *BS* 1.2.2 indicates that qualities (like having true purposes) are 'desired to be expressed', that is, by scripture of *brahman*. The problem here is that it is people who have wishes, want to say things, but the scripture is '*apauruṣeya*', says Śaṃkara. Thibaut translates: 'the Veda . . . is not the work of man.' Gambhirananda is less literal but more accurate in giving: 'the Vedas have no author.' Even so, Śaṃkara holds, we can talk about scripture wanting to express something in a metaphorical sense. If I understand what you want to say, then I correctly interpret the words you speak. Similarly, we need to interpret correctly what the Vedic words denote. Śaṃkara, though, takes this use of the desiderative (the Sanskrit form of a word that expresses desire to do something), which he finds already in the *Brahmasūtra* text (1.2.2)[9] and makes it a characteristic part of his own style.[10] He also speaks of the Veda as like a compassionate mother, using a highly personal image for his sense of the 'fittingness' of what the Veda teaches (e.g. *Ka Up Bh* 1.3.14; *Upad P* 18.3). Certainly this fittingness has to be understood in the way we outlined it above, given the intimate relation between Vedic language and this world of name and form. Yet the personal image and use of the desiderative seem to me quite intentional. Let us explore this a little further.

First of all, it is quite difficult to explain the metaphor of what is 'desired to be expressed' in any way that does not itself suggest precisely that personal intention which cannot be ascribed to the *apauruṣeya* texts. This is partly because the one who hears and interprets these texts is involved in a kind of conversation, as Śaṃkara's application of the metaphor makes clear. It is a conversation in which the text gives frequent explanations of itself to the hearer, and in which the hearer's understanding needs constant checking by reference back to the specific and wider contexts of the passage being interpreted. Śaṃkara's imagery surely springs from a lifetime's engagement with the texts as well as from scriptural and *Sūtra* use.

It is corrected and complemented by another Upaniṣadic image, *brahman* 'breathing out' the Vedic texts (*Bṛ Up* 2.4.10). In his Upaniṣad commentary, Śaṃkara offers two explanations of this metaphor. The first indicates the intimate connection between *brahman* and the world of name and form, which we mentioned above and to which we shall return. Just as it is difficult to tell whether breath is the same or different from the one breathing, so it is difficult to say whether name and form are the same or different from the supreme self. But breathing is not just intimate, it is done (usually) without thought or effort. Saying that the Veda issues without effort, Śaṃkara comments, indicates that it is a *pramāṇa*, not like other books. He seems to mean that other books require the effort of composition, which the Veda does not.

It is to the same Upaniṣadic passage that Śaṃkara alludes when discussing *brahman* as the source of scripture (*BSBh* 1.1.3). Here the metaphor of breathing is applied to *brahman*'s omniscience and omnipotence. Normally we assume that an author knows more than is contained in his or her work, however extensive that may be; the great grammarian Pāṇini is given as an example. We may assume the same of *brahman* in relation to scripture – how much more given the ease with which it is produced, just like breathing: 'For an authoritative teaching of such a kind, characterized by the Ṛg Veda and so forth, possessing the characteristic of omniscience, cannot have its origin in anything other than the omniscient' (*BSBh* 1.1.3).[11]

This comparison with human authors seems rather less helpful to a view of *apauruṣeyatva* than the version given in the Upaniṣad commentary. Yet it comes in the commentary where Śaṃkara clearly affirms that scripture is *apauruṣeya* and has the discussion about the eternal relation between words and referents that is central to Mīmāṃsā discussions on this subject. Perhaps in the first part of *BSBh* 1.1.3, Śaṃkara is just following an earlier commentator and we were wrong to take this as an important view of his own?

An alternative approach notes the consistent features between this passage and others. Śaṃkara is keen to stress that the manifold collection of scriptural texts is the basis for the differentiation of this world, the differences between gods, animals and people in different *varṇa*s and stages of life. These differences are, of course, both in accordance with the eternal designations of Vedic words and with the previous deeds of those now in these different conditions: an appropriate world of name, form and action. Yet there is a view of Vedic language as source that Śaṃkara wishes to reject. It is the view of the grammarians that Vedic language is the material cause of the world, that is, that everything else arises as a manifestation of *śabda* (Vedic language). Śaṃkara's most important principle is that of non-duality. To preserve it, *brahman* must be understood as sole cause of the world. To have an eternally existing Veda that is the material cause of the world, separate from *brahman*, clearly compromises this. So Śaṃkara makes it quite clear that origination

from Vedic words means only that things are brought about in accordance with the eternal capacity of the words to denote those things (*BSBh* 1.3.28). Making the scripture that is constructed as omniscient dependent on an omniscient *brahman* is another way of ensuring that the principle of non-duality is not breached. In this light, Śaṃkara's reference to the learned grammarian, Pāṇini, may be a little naughty!

There is another hint that the eternal scripture is related to the consciousness of *brahman* in Śaṃkara's thought in *Tait Up Bh* 2.3.1. The exegetical context is one in which Śaṃkara has to connect the *mantra*s of the *Ṛg*, *Yajur* and *Sāma Veda* with the *manas*, the second of five 'sheaths' around the *ātman* that the text is describing. He holds that the eternality of the Veda is guaranteed if it is understood that

> the *mantra*s are the beginningless and endless understanding of the self expressed through the words of the *Yajur*, the consciousness of the self which is based in the modification of the internal organ (*manas*) and further distinguished by the adjuncts of the modifications of the *manas*. Otherwise the non-eternality (of the Veda) would result, like colour (or form) and so forth which are objects (of consciousness, not eternal and identical with it).[12]
>
> (*Tait Up Bh* 2.3.1)

While the passage only applies to the *mantra*s, it appears that Śaṃkara generalizes to the whole of the Veda and holds here that its eternality is guaranteed by the eternality of the self, whose non-duality is guaranteed, in turn, by the Veda being identical with it. The necessary connection with the *manas* is made by recollection of the way in which the self is reflected in and known through the internal organ (*manas*) (see Chapter 7). The Veda here is not the product of an omniscient consciousness but identical with it, it seems. While this may safeguard the notion of *apauruṣeyatva* better, it seems to introduce the principle of differentiation back into the non-dual source – or perhaps there is the implication that this differentiation is only manifested through the modifications of the *manas*, back again to the intimate connection between language and the world of name and form.

It may be helpful to see these passages as containing mutually correcting images: some personal, others impersonal; some identifying scripture with *brahman* or consciousness of the self, others subtly distinguishing it as breath; some where breath signifies authority and eternality, others great knowledge and 'authorship'. We shall see later, in Chapters 5 and 7, that this principle of mutual limitation is fundamental to Śaṃkara's understanding of the way scriptural language (and hence the commentator's) works. We also note that the personalistic overtones in *BSBh* 1.1.3 will be overcome when we realize that the omniscient omnipotent *brahman*, the one with the capacity to manifest Vedic language and the world of name and form, is in reality the

eternally pure, realized and free *brahman* on whom the whole notion of creatorship is just a superimposition.

This, however, raises a severe difficulty about the nature of scripture in Śaṃkara's thought, as his Vedāntin opponent is quick to point out. Scripture, as a *pramāṇa*, works precisely because of the intimate connections we have been investigating. Yet, in the end, it is one with the world of name and form, which is merely a superimposition, produced by *avidyā* (misconception, non-knowledge). How can it possibly then be a source of truth, being based, as the Advaitin blatantly admits, on its opposite? Śaṃkara's arguments, which four hundred years later Rāmānuja was still to find unsatisfactory, include the following. Dreams, which are of a different order of reality from waking, can give real results in the waking world. (Similarly, scripture, which is of a different order of reality from realization, can give the real result of realization.) Scripture states that non-duality is realizable and gives the methods for realizing it. Realization cannot be doubted – people experience it, it ends misconception and there is no further knowledge that could cause it to be changed or sublated (*BSBh* 2.1.14). In other words, Śaṃkara appeals to a pragmatic criterion of success, states that the opponent's own view requires the rejection of explicit scriptural statements and holds that a *pramāṇa* does not need to belong to the same order of reality as the knowledge that it yields.

Whether this gives a coherent account of the way scriptural language can yield realization of transcendent reality is a question we shall have to postpone until Chapter 7. Here we simply note that, for Śaṃkara, in terms of the world of superimposition within which scripture functions, scripture is trustworthy, a trustworthiness expressed in both personal and impersonal images. On the one hand, it is the manifestation of an omniscient *brahman*, compassionate as a mother, expressing desires and intentions to lead the hearer to the truth. On the other, it is the eternal language that transcends the errors of composed works and is the guarantor of the reliability of the world in which we operate. However, it is also diverse and open to many varying and often incorrect interpretations, hence the need for a teacher and for principles of interpreting scripture that will form the subject for the rest of this chapter. However, before turning to these, I would like to look at a figure who appears to integrate several of these themes in Śaṃkara's writings: the personal and impersonal, the given scripture and the need for interpretation, the teaching tradition and its relation to truth. That figure is Nārāyaṇa.

Nārāyaṇa, founder of the teaching tradition

There are various places, in both *śruti* and *smṛti*, where the text might seem to compromise the teaching of *śruti*'s *apauruṣeyatva*. These include the genealogies of teachers found in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, a statement by Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhagavadgītā* and a purāṇic text quoted by Śaṃkara himself on the origination of the world from the self-existent one's voice. To stave off

the problem, Śaṃkara differentiates the eternal scripture from the line of teachers who transmit it (*guruparamparā*) or from the origination of the correct interpretation (*sampradāya*) of the texts. When Svayambhu, the 'self-existent one', eternally utters the Vedic words, Śaṃkara does not wish this to imply that he composes the Veda (*BSBh* 1.3.28). Rather, the text indicates that Svayambhu initiates the *sampradāya*, the correct interpretation and transmission of the texts. Similarly, Kṛṣṇa, described in the *Gītā* as 'the maker of the Upaniṣads (*vedāntakṛt*)', is said by Śaṃkara to be 'the maker/ originator of the correct teaching of the meaning of the Upaniṣads/Vedānta, (the *vedāntārtha-sampradāyakartṛ*)' (*GBh* 15.15). Here Śaṃkara certainly differentiates the origination of interpretation from the non-originating scripture. However, Kṛṣṇa, properly understood, is none other than the non-dual *brahman*. Hence Śaṃkara simultaneously shows that the correct interpretation of scripture, that is, the Advaita teaching, derives ultimately from *brahman*. This is not just a case of making *brahman*, personalized as Kṛṣṇa or whoever, the external guarantor of the interpretation. Rather, the correct interpretation of scripture is that of non-duality, none other than the very nature of *brahman*. Put slightly differently, the correct interpretation of scripture is not just a matter of an intellectual understanding of its meaning, though understanding to what the words refer is absolutely central. It is simply the non-dual realization of the identity of inner self with *brahman*.

This is shown nicely in a slightly obscure passage in Śaṃkara's commentary on Gauḍapāda's *Kārikā*s. At the beginning of Chapter 4, the author praises the one who knows (*sambuddha*), the best among men, almost certainly a reference to the Buddha. Śaṃkara, by contrast, is keen to point out that this chapter follows on from one in which the faults of the Buddhists and dualists have been demonstrated by contrast with the true teaching of Advaita. The one praised here for the success of the teaching is the eternally knowing Lord, called Nārāyaṇa, the Puruṣottama (Supreme Person). And Śaṃkara has already told us: 'This first verse is to praise the originator of the correct interpretation of the Advaita viewpoint (*advaitadarśana-sampradāyakartṛ*) through its/his non-dual nature alone' (*GKBh* 4.1).[13] The *sampradāyakartṛ* is envisaged as the Lord Nārāyaṇa, none other than the non-dual reality. Knowing this identity, Nārāyaṇa teaches it as the correct interpretation of scripture, the true teaching or perfect understanding (*samyagdarśana*) of Advaita. This teacher, Nārāyaṇa, is praised only inasmuch as his true identity is realized, for it is this realization that will make the current teaching fruitful.

Investigating the identity of Nārāyaṇa, we find a sage in the *Mahābhārata*; the cosmic deity transcending the forms of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva in the Purāṇas; that 'Nārāyaṇa' was the preferred term among Vaiṣṇavas for the Supreme; that he was the deity of ascetics who had renounced the world. In Śaṃkara's own terms, as we shall see in Chapter 6, Nārāyaṇa is the name he gives to the most subtle personalized form of *brahman*, the Inner Controller

and witness. There are all sorts of resonances here which make it appropriate that Nārāyaṇa is thought of as the originator of the correct Advaita teaching. Yet Śaṃkara stresses that it is in his non-dual nature that Nārāyaṇa is praised. It is as the non-dual reality that Nārāyaṇa is held to unite personal and impersonal, eternal scripture and its interpretation, the teaching tradition and truth.

Interpreting scripture

Since we have seen that the eternal scripture and its correct interpretation are given together, it should not come as a surprise that Śaṃkara continually stresses the need for a teacher to help present-day seekers come to know *brahman*. *Brahman* can only be known through scripture, but scripture can only be understood through a teacher. This is why Śaṃkara repeatedly tells us that *brahman* is known 'through scripture and a teacher', often coupling the two in a single Sanskrit compound.[14] Once more, scripture and interpretation stand together, each inefficacious without the other. A teacher's interpretation, ungrounded in scripture or gained through a non-Advaitin school, is misleading if not downright dangerous. It suffers from the faults of unguided reason, which we shall consider later in this chapter. On the other hand, scripture not mediated by an Advaitin teacher may yield book-learning at best. But this is not the same as realization of *brahman*, which will occur as the teacher skilfully teaches the pupil to come to know *brahman*, using the methods as well as the content provided by scripture. It is these very methods, employed by a previous Advaitin teacher, which have brought the present teacher to realization. This realization is the pragmatic criterion of the truth of Advaita. (It works; it does set you free.) It qualifies the teacher to draw others to the truth, precisely because it is the result of the correct interpretation of scripture.

This is why Śaṃkara stresses the need for the correct interpretation of scripture at the very beginning of his *Brahmasūtra* commentary. In this, he echoes the *Sūtra*s' own priority. There are, he says, many different views about the nature of the self. They are based on reasoning and scriptural passages and their distortions – all mixed up. Anyone who followed one of these views would be deprived of the highest good (that is, liberation): 'Therefore, the exegesis of the Vedānta text(s), supported by reasoning which is not contradictory to it, whose purpose is the highest good, is stated at the beginning (*prastūyate*), by mentioning (*upanyāsa*) the enquiry into *brahman*' (*BSBh* 1.1.1, p. 6).[15]

It is very difficult to convey in English all the resonances of the Sanskrit here. The word '*prastūyate*' implies that what is stated at the outset is thereby praised or recommended. The 'enquiry into *brahman*,' which is conducted by examining the meaning of the Vedānta text(s), is precisely 'the desire to know *brahman*', oriented to the highest good away from worldly ends and means. It

is therefore of a different kind from the Pūrvamīmāṃsaka enquiry, the old exegesis of the Ritualists, to which it is juxtaposed. This new exegesis will show how the various Upaniṣadic scriptural passages (texts, in the plural) form a harmonious whole (text, in the singular), the Advaitin interpretation of non-duality. By juxtaposition (*upanyāsa*), this new exegesis will strip away the world of ends and means from the Advaitin goal, the superimposition of language from the non-dual self. Here, at the beginning of Śaṃkara's commentary, is a subtle clue to the heart of Advaitin method, and through this is implied the need for an Advaitin teacher who has received the correct interpretation that was given with the scripture itself.

In historical terms, Śaṃkara inherits a sense of the teacher's importance from a variety of directions. The ritual texts, with their need for correct pronunciation, were in the hands of brahmin specialists. The Upaniṣadic teachings, conceived as 'secret', were handed on only to suitable pupils. The *Sūtra*s of the so-called 'orthodox' schools were so elliptical that they could be understood only by participating in a line of interpretation through a teacher. The Buddhists had academies in which viewpoints were debated and pupils were trained to establish the correct position. Meditation practice was to be undertaken only under the guidance of an accredited teacher. Perhaps Śaṃkara himself realized the truth in such a way.[16]

Śaṃkara himself, however, does not ground the teacher's importance in his own experience, but in Upaniṣadic teaching. This is hardly surprising and not difficult, given the nature of the Upaniṣads, which frequently consist of dialogues between teacher and pupil, teacher and questioner. What is interesting is the way he presses the text to give the strongest emphasis possible. Here are four examples. The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* tells the story of a man lost in a forest, who finds his way home when a helpful person gives him directions. It illustrates the point that 'the person who has a teacher knows' (6.14.2).[17] Śaṃkara's comment, which develops the passage into a long allegory, stresses the role of the teacher. Elsewhere, he often quotes 6.14.2 when discussing knowledge and the teacher's function. He connects it with a bit of a verse from the same Upaniṣad.[18] The verse in full says: 'I have heard from those like you, sir, that knowledge which is learned from a teacher is best (*ācāryāddhaiva vidyā viditā sādhiṣṭham*)' (4.9.3). Śaṃkara abbreviates the quotation. This is normal practice in making allusions to other passages, but the effect is to strengthen the sense considerably. Whereas the Upaniṣad just says that knowledge from a teacher is best, Śaṃkara's quotation can now be read to stress 'knowledge from a teacher alone' (*ācāryāddhaiva vidyā*).

This view comes across very clearly in the way Śaṃkara glosses *Kena Upaniṣad* 1.4: 'We have heard from the ancients.' Whereas the text makes no reference to alternative sources, Śaṃkara's comment dismisses all ways of knowing other than through a true teacher. In understanding *brahman*, reasoning, popular wisdom, much learning, austerities, and sacrifices are all

useless. It is only to be understood through the transmission of the instruction of the teachers (*ācāryopadeśaparamparayaiva*), that is, in an Advaitin teaching line.

My final example comes from the story of Naciketas and Yama in the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*. Yama has granted Naciketas three boons, including knowledge of the self. When he has fulfilled the boy's requests, Yama exhorts him: 'Having obtained the boons, understand them' (1.3.14). By a little sleight of hand, Śaṃkara's explanation of this verse reads: 'Understand this, once you have gone to the most excellent teachers.'[19] In other words, once again he stresses that knowledge of the self is only to be obtained through, that is, once you have gone to, a proper teacher.

This brings us back to the function of the true teacher, which is to draw the pupil to realization on the basis of a proper interpretation of scripture. For Śaṃkara, as for his contemporaries, a proper interpretation meant a harmonious interpretation. Looking at the Upaniṣads from a historical and/or literary critical perspective, we may see texts expressing many divergent views, as the Upaniṣadic sages struggled to discover the underlying reality of macrocosm and microcosm, by meditating on the ritual texts or seeking a more radical approach. There is no single account of ultimate reality, of the means by which it may be realized, of its relation to the self of the individual. Yet even such a perspective tends to accept a common purpose in these texts: the search for the ultimate, which gives them their character as (classical) Upaniṣads. The Vedāntin commentators were perfectly aware of the variety of the texts on which they were commenting. However, since they held that scripture was eternal, they could not explain its variety as due to the visions of different sages. Rather, each commentator tried to show how the interpretative framework of his teaching tradition made best sense of scriptural diversity.

In harmonizing the texts, the Vedāntin writers were able to draw on exegetical strategies already developed by the Pūrvamīmāṃsakas to give a coherent interpretation of scripture from a Ritualist point of view. We have seen earlier how Śaṃkara rejects their view that meaningful scriptural language is primarily injunctive, in favour of a view that the Upaniṣads give instruction about *brahman* who is to be known. However, he adopts wholesale their six criteria, which enable a commentator to construe the purport (meaning) of Vedic passages. Unsurprisingly, Śaṃkara applies them in a characteristically Advaitin way. The six criteria are: (i) the opening and closing sentences of a passage (that is, delineating the context); (ii) repetition (that is, the repeated statement within a passage of what it is about); (iii) novelty (that is, knowledge given here that could not be obtained through another *pramāṇa*); (iv) result (that is, the purpose of the passage); (v) secondary passages (that is, passages which – for Śaṃkara – praise the knowledge that is given elsewhere in the section under consideration); (vi) consistency (that is, reasoning that shows how the passage hangs together and supports what is

being taught).[20] These are all held to be characteristics of the text itself, so the text contains the clues for its own interpretation. The characteristics are listed in descending order of importance. They will not all be found in every passage, but some will be found in each.

De Smet shows very clearly how they all operate in *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6 (1953, pp. 207–8). I will use his example since it is so economical, though I expand considerably on the summary given by Lipner (1986, p. 150, n. 38).

(i) The opening sentence is taken to be *Ch Up* 6.1.3 'By knowing which the unknown becomes known' (see *Ch Up Bh* 6.2.4), the closing one to be 6.16.3: 'All this is identical with that; that is truth; that is *ātman*; you are that, O Śvetaketu.' This shows that the sense of 'the unknown to be known' (which is 'one only without a second', 6.2.1) is given in terms of the identity statement 'You are that' and as the basis of 'all this' manifested world. This is therefore the topic under consideration (see Śaṃkara's summary on 6.16.3).[21] This is the clearest indication of scripture's meaning and, as we shall see below, is actually the topic of the whole of the Vedānta, properly construed, in Śaṃkara's view.

(ii) Throughout *Ch Up* 6, the phrase 'You are that' is repeated nine times: you can't really miss what it is trying to say. ('This sentence has been explained more than once', Śaṃkara notes with light irony in *Ch Up Bh* 6.16.3. The significance of the repetition is dealt with in *BSBh* 4.1.2.)

(iii) Since the topic is *brahman*, one without a second, it clearly cannot be known by perception or inference, the other possible *pramāṇa*s, for reasons we considered at the beginning of this chapter (see Śaṃkara's rejection of logic [*tarka*] alone in *Ch Up Bh* 6.2.4).

(iv) *Ch Up* 6.14.2 makes it clear that the purpose of the knowledge of the non-dual *brahman* is release from the world of birth, death and rebirth. (This is the passage about the man lost in the forest we referred to above. Śaṃkara also quotes the relevant bit of the verse on purpose in *Ch Up Bh* 6.2.4.)

(v) The whole of *Ch Up* 6 is actually the story of a boy called Śvetaketu who returned from his Vedic teacher after many years, rather self-satisfied. Then his father asked him: 'Did you ask for that instruction by which the unheard becomes heard, the unthought thought, the unknown known?' The hearer's curiosity is stirred by the story to seek that knowledge out. So the topic is praised by the story (see Śaṃkara's comment on 6.1.3).

(vi) *Ch Up* 6.1.4–6 gives the examples of the clay (and pot), gold (and bracelet), iron (and nail-scissors) to show how, in reality, there is one only without a second, despite the multiplicity of the world. (The products of clay, gold and iron are really nothing but clay, gold and iron. The multiplicity of the world is nothing but *brahman*.) In Chapter 4, we shall see how such examples form part of a formal pattern of arguing that Śaṃkara finds embedded in scripture. They thus help to show the consistency of the passage under consideration (see how Śaṃkara cites them in *Ch Up Bh* 6.2.1 and 6.2.2, the latter against the Buddhists).

Śaṃkara does not always give the technical terms for the criteria in the examples cited above, but it is clear that he is using them in the course of his exegesis, showing how the whole of *Ch Up* 6 is harmonized by an Advaitin reading. This harmonization works at both a textual level and a logical level. So, in the course of his explanation, he shows how the text gives the basis for refuting Buddhist, Nyāya and Sāṃkhya views on the nature of causation. Here, as in the *Brahmasūtra* commentary, he follows the *Sūtras*' double method of achieving harmonization (*samanvaya*). Further, textually, the harmonization works at a local level (in this particular chapter) and universally (for the whole of the Upaniṣads). By the latter process, the commentator shows how the Upaniṣads are to be construed as a single statement. This is their *ekavākyatā*. We shall briefly consider how Śaṃkara seeks to demonstrate this by applying the six criteria at an 'all-Upaniṣad' level.

Śaṃkara already hints at how this will be achieved in his statement about the exegesis of the Vedānta text(s) that we looked at above (*BSBh* 1.1.1). First, a single topic is required. This topic is the nature of the self. It is established to be so by statements found 'throughout the Vedānta' (2.3.6; cf. 1.1.1 Introduction). Direct statement is always the most powerful exegetical indicator of context (i); repetition of the topic is here indicated as well (ii). If the topic is the self, the criteria of unknowability by other *pramāṇa*s (iii) and result in release from rebirth (iv) will apply to the whole of the Vedānta (and Śaṃkara establishes this in his exegesis of *BSBh* 1.1.1–4 as we saw in Chapter 2).

The application of the category of *arthavāda* (secondary passages) (v) is slightly more complicated. The Ritualists developed this notion to account for apparently descriptive passages, particularly those found in the Upaniṣads. These, they held, were given to encourage a person to perform a relevant sacrifice (or meditation) and were thus subordinate to the primary injunctions of the Veda. Śaṃkara does not simply reverse the process. The injunctions of the Vedic section on action (*karmakāṇḍa*), he allows, have their place within the world of ends and means. They are, however, relegated in comparison with the section on knowledge (*jñānakāṇḍa*). But within this section, there are different types of text. Some indicate *brahman* without qualities. Some attribute qualities to *brahman*. Śaṃkara harmonizes these texts in various convergent ways. In the former, *brahman* without qualities is to be known; in the latter, *brahman* with qualities is to be meditated on.[22] The former provide the ultimate way of indicating *brahman*, the latter the conventional, the result of superimposition. More subtly, Śaṃkara indicates how the latter yield knowledge of the subject of the former, under scriptural guidance. All these will be the subject of further investigation in subsequent chapters. By the device of conventional and ultimate ways of speaking, however, he allows all such texts to be interpreted in a primary literal way. This still leaves him with groups of texts he regards as secondary passages (*arthavāda*). These include, for example, passages that seem to contain an injunction in relation

to knowledge of the self, the genealogies of lines of teachers or the various Upaniṣadic stories, in particular, the origination myths. Their primary purpose, Śaṃkara explains, is to direct attention to that sole reality that is to be known. Their facticity is not necessarily questioned, but it is not of real consequence. What does matter is the way they bear on the single topic of the Vedānta.

Here, then, we are beginning to see how Śaṃkara understands the complex Upaniṣadic texts to operate in ways that focus all attention on the self that is to be known. This is endorsed when we consider the sixth criterion of consistency (vi). Just as the *Chāndogya*'s teaching on the one only without a second was upheld by the examples of clay and gold, so those statements on the one self found 'throughout the Vedānta' are supported by similar examples built into widespread patterns of reasoning. A more detailed explanation of this process is given in Chapter 4. In Chapter 5, we shall see how even these patterns of reasoning are incorporated into the framework of superimposition, which Śaṃkara holds to be given in scripture itself, as the best way of making sense of the multiplicity of the world. Finally, in Chapters 7 and 8, we shall see how the exegesis of certain key Upaniṣadic passages draws all these threads together: web disclosing spider, warp and weft the imperishable beyond. Anticipating slightly, we note that, for Śaṃkara, the unitary purport of scripture (its *ekavākyatā*) can only properly be established by the Advaitin teaching on the oneness of the self (*ekatva*).

In this section, we have primarily been concerned with questions about the interpretation of scripture. We have seen how the correct interpretation is given with the eternal scripture and is to be learned only from a teacher in the Advaitin line. The purpose of such interpretation is not, however, intellectual learning, but coming to understand *brahman*. The next chapter will look in more detail at the methods provided by scripture for this purpose. It must, however, be stressed that, because Śaṃkara holds that realization occurs through the very process of understanding the purport of the Upaniṣadic texts, exegetical methods and teaching methods are very closely interrelated and are, at times, identical.

On reason and personal experience

The main concern of this chapter has been to explore the sources of non-dual realization in Śaṃkara's view. We have seen that he is quite categorical that *śabda* (the verbal testimony of the Vedic texts) is the only *pramāṇa* for knowledge of *brahman*. Yet we have also seen how, in the processes of interpretation, there is an important place for reason that is not contradictory to scripture. We have further seen that the proper context for such interpretation, indeed the only way scripture is to be understood correctly, is through the instruction of an Advaitin teacher in the correct teaching line. This is not just viewed as one school among many schools, comparable with Sāṃkhya or

Nyāya, with a well-developed lineage of pupils and teachers. Śaṃkara nicely distinguishes between the viewpoints of these other *darśana*s (literally 'seeing', hence 'schools', 'viewpoints') and the *samyagdarśana* of Advaita. The *samyagdarśana* is the perfect realization of non-duality, the true teaching of Advaita, the correct school that passes this on. It conveys the *sampradāya*, the correct interpretation given by Nārāyaṇa, the one who unites personal and impersonal, scripture and interpretation, in the perfect realization itself. Because it is so-based, it is not prone to the inconsistencies and contradictions of schools that are based in the mere reasoning of human teachers.

But this requires us to clarify the position of reason in Śaṃkara's thought, and raises the question of the nature of realization and the role of personal experience so far as Śaṃkara is concerned. For Nārāyaṇa's realization is the model for ours; it is praised so that the teaching may be successful in engendering understanding in us.

The position of reason may be stated simply. Unfounded reason is dry reason. It is ever prey to contradiction. It is of no help in knowing *brahman*. However, this does not mean that Śaṃkara discards reason as a means in favour of some kind of mystical intuition. His Advaita is deeply rational. It requires the use of reasoning in establishing correct interpretations of scripture and in refuting opponents, as one of them points out (*BSBh* 1.2.11). His Advaita is rational precisely because scripture sanctions reasoning that is in conformity with itself. Scripture does this by indicating that reflection is an integral part of coming to know the self. It contains embedded within itself criteria for its own interpretation, which include consistency achieved by rational argument. To promote this, it contains patterns of argument using examples. It thus provides the basis for refuting opponents, as well as for achieving textual harmonization. However, reason is not a *pramāṇa*, either in a narrow or a broad sense. In a narrow sense, reasoning is conducted through formal inference, ruled out as an independent *pramāṇa* because it relies on sense perception to function. A form of inference is, however, given in scripture, as we shall see in Chapter 4. This, though, functions as part of the *pramāṇa* of scripture. In a broader sense, reasoning (*yukti*, *tarka*) seeks to argue a coherent case, which may establish the probability of a hypothesis, though not certain knowledge (hence it is not a candidate to be a *pramāṇa*).[23] Where it is grounded in scriptural practice, it is not only unexceptionable, it is vital in the Advaitin teaching of truth.

Finally, then, we must consider the role of personal experience in Śaṃkara's Advaita. In modern presentations of Advaita, (mystical) personal or intuitive experience is often accorded priority over scripture in a variety of ways, as Rambachan clearly demonstrates (1991, pp. 1–14; cf. Forsthoefel, 2002). The increasing stress on experience (*anubhava*) is not just a modern phenomenon, though. Gussner shows that it was already operating in hymns from the centuries after Śaṃkara and uses it as one criterion for testing authenticity (1973, 1977).

It is quite true that Śaṃkara is adamant that rote-learning of the Veda is not sufficient. The seeker after liberation must come to realization of the inner self's being *brahman*. This is the *jñāna* or knowledge that is the seeker's goal. It is not, however, knowledge in the ordinary sense, in that ordinary knowledge is always knowledge of something. It has an object, that which is known. But such knowledge implies multiplicity. It is part of the conventional world of superimposition. It must be transcended in coming to realize *brahman* as 'unseen seer'.

It is also the case that Śaṃkara accepts a pragmatic criterion for confirming the truth of scriptural teaching. So, though he accepts the Pūrvamīmāṃsā theory that knowledge is self-validating, he points to the existence of people in both past and present who were liberated while still living and whose non-dual consciousness is never sublated. This shows that the Veda, while belonging to the world of multiplicity, can and does release people from it.

Further, near the beginning of his *Brahmasūtra* commentary, in a discussion on *pramāṇa*s, he contrasts the position of the Ritualists pursuing *dharma* with that of the Vedāntins seeking *jñāna* (*BSBh* 1.1.2). For the former, scripture (etc.) is the only source of knowledge. For the latter, *anubhava* (often translated 'experience') is included along with scripture.

Taken together, these three points might seem to suggest that Śaṃkara actually makes (mystical or intuitive) experience the real *pramāṇa*, to which scripture is only contributory. However, this almost certainly misrepresents the place of *anubhava* in Śaṃkara's thought. As Rambachan points out, the context of *BSBh* 1.1.2 is crucial to understanding the place Śaṃkara gives *anubhava* here (1991, pp. 113–16). For one thing, Śaṃkara actually says that the Vedāntins have as *pramāṇa* 'scripture and so on' and ' "experience" and so on'. Rambachan argues that this indicates experience is just one among several other contributory factors and is not given pride of place. He also notes that Śaṃkara has just sanctioned the use of inference when used in conformity with scripture, though not as an independent *pramāṇa*. So he suggests that experience (*anubhava*), understood broadly as 'any experience which can be analyzed to support and reinforce the revelations of *śruti*', can be used in a similarly contributory way (1991, p. 114). Rambachan links this with his final point that the true contrast Śaṃkara makes here is between *dharma* that is yet to be achieved and *jñāna* that is of an already existing *brahman*. For this reason, he suggests, Śaṃkara can allow (everyday) experience to be contributory in a way the Ritualists cannot (for *dharma* as a goal does not yet exist to be experienced).

Rambachan, however, ignores the rest of Śaṃkara's sentence, in which he apparently legitimates a view of *anubhava* as final arbiter. The relevant *pramāṇa* (note the singular) here is scripture, etc. and '*anubhava*', etc. respectively, because 'knowledge of *brahman* has as its object an already existing thing and because it *culminates* in *anubhava*' (my emphasis).[24] Correct as Rambachan is on the place of inference and the contrast between Ritualist

and Vedānta goals, it does not seem possible to read Śaṃkara's comments here as a sanction for ordinary everyday experience contributing to knowledge of *brahman* (though this may well be Śaṃkara's view elsewhere, as we shall see later).

The key would seem to be in Śaṃkara's use of *anubhava* elsewhere. *Thousand Teachings* is particularly germane. In it, Śaṃkara distinguishes clearly between *anubhava* as the ordinary dualistic experience of objects, arising from *pramāṇa*s such as perception, which experience is marked by *duḥkha*,[25] and *anubhava* of the self, which is none other than *dṛśi*, the witness, that context-free state of consciousness which simply is the self, non-sublatable, ultimately self-validating (*svapramāṇaka*).[26]

Metric Chapter 12 then has to be looked at in this light. The variations between the translations of Jagadananda, Mayeda and Alston show how compact and difficult the Sanskrit is, but also how different assessments of the place of experience in Advaita affect their interpretations. The context is a discussion of the sense of 'you' in the well-known phrase 'You are that', which we shall look at in detail in Chapter 7. Verse 8 identifies 'you' with the 'knower of knowing' in *Bṛ Up* 3.4.2. Mayeda continues: 'Therefore this is the [right] apprehension (*anubhava*) of this word; any other apprehension is false' (1979, p. 129). Alston, taking the modern Advaitin view Rambachan rejects, translates the same phrase: 'One should acquire direct experience [*anubhava*] of That – all other experience [*anubhava*] is illusory' (1990, p. 145).

Mayeda, with Jagadananda,[27] makes this an issue of interpreting the text of the scriptural *pramāṇa*. Alston emphasizes its result as 'direct experience' (a single word '*anubhava*' in the Sanskrit). In one sense, there is no disagreement between them but only a problem of describing *anubhava*, the final realization of non-dual consciousness, in language that inevitably suggests differentiation between knower and known. As Śaṃkara puts it elsewhere, 'Insofar as it is a reflection of that [seeing], the arising of the (liberating) thought is called "the realization of that" (*asyānubhavaḥ*)' (*Upad P* 18.202).[28] In other words, although the liberating cognition provides the necessary epistemic shift so that the hearer understands 'You are that,' the arising of the liberating cognition is only *called* 'the realization of that', since 'that' is beyond all duality.[29]

This non-dual *brahmānubhava*, the 'context-free state of consciousness' to use Ram-Prasad's phrase (2001, p. 171), is indeed self-validating (*svapramāṇaka*, *Upad P* 18.200). As that which accompanies all cognitions yet is other than their specific content, it can require no independent confirmation (for any form of apparently independent or other-validation would not be such, as it would in turn be accompanied by this self-reflexive consciousness). In the liberating cognition, it is immediately given as such; thus knowledge of *brahman* is, to go back to *BSBh* 1.1.2, of an existing 'thing' of a very particular kind, this self-reflexive consciousness, immediately known. Yet *brahmānubhava*, while given in every specific cognition, is not normally

recognized as such. It must be sought for in the desire to know Brahman, knowledge which, once gained, culminates in *anubhava* (*BSBh* 1.1.2 again). And this *brahmānubhava* is not gained from a source different from the *pramāṇa* of scripture. It is precisely the knowledge this *pramāṇa* yields (supported by inference as *Upad P* 12.16 and 12.18 make clear). It will, however, endure when the scripture itself is discarded (see Chapter 8). Scripture, then, is the sole *pramāṇa* as the method for acquiring the valid knowledge of the self. But the self's own nature is that which, finally, guarantees itself, the context-free consciousness, transcending even the means of scripture.

We can conclude this chapter simply. Scripture is the only source or channel for our knowledge of *brahman*, though it must be mediated by a self-realized Advaitin teacher who has received the correct interpretation given along with the eternal scripture from the beginning. There can be no realization independently of the texts, though they do not simply bring about realization by themselves. Self-standing reason is decried, but scripture itself provides the sanction and paradigm for proper reasoning, which is crucial to harmonious interpretation of scripture and refutation of opponents. *Anubhava* is the non-dual realization gained from the scripture so interpreted. It, as knowledge of *brahman*, is identical with that self which is to be known as witness, not as object. *Anubhava* cannot be realized independently of scripture, nor does it act as an independent confirmation of others' experiences recorded in scripture, for this is not how Śaṃkara and his contemporaries viewed the *apauruṣeya* source. Śaṃkara is equally clear that notions of enjoyership (agency, experiencing) and of knowing which still includes difference are superimpositions of which the self must be rid. Any term we retain bears the scent of difference: experience, intuition, realization, just as much as knowing. The advantage of the last is that it always keeps in focus the nature of the Advaitin enterprise, as a textually based quest for that which transcends even itself.

4

THE METHODS OF
THE TEACHING

In the last chapter, we saw that, for Śaṃkara, scripture is the only means of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) for realizing the oneness of *ātman* and *brahman*. We also intimated that scripture does not simply indicate the content of this realization (non-duality) but provides the methods which the teacher needs to help the pupil realize that non-duality. In this chapter, which is at the heart of our argument, we shall explore these methods in more detail. We shall first look at the particular methods which Śaṃkara derives from the Upaniṣads and then consider the framework within which he understands these methods to work.[1]

The Upaniṣadic basis of Śaṃkara's teaching methods

As is well known, the Upaniṣads, particularly the older ones, are frequently presented as dialogues between teachers and pupils, experts and challengers. The etymology of the word '*upaniṣad*' is often given as 'to sit down near' a teacher, though perhaps a better meaning is 'secret doctrine' (Olivelle, 1996, p. lii). In either case, it is not surprising that the Upaniṣadic texts are themselves replete with teaching methods. Śaṃkara is not just concerned with the approaches of the many Upaniṣadic teachers, however. Rather, he wants to clarify the intention of scripture itself. As we saw in Chapter 3, he expresses this intention of scripture by using the Sanskrit form of a verb called the desiderative, which indicates a desire to do something. So in his introduction to *Bṛ Up* 2.4, Śaṃkara explains that *śruti* 'wishes to enjoin renunciation insofar as it contributes to knowledge of *brahman*'. When in *Bṛ Up Bh* 2.4.5, Śaṃkara then comments that Yājñavalkya 'wishes to teach renunciation as a means to immortality', he is showing that the Upaniṣadic sage is teaching in accordance with the intention of scripture.[2]

However, as we noted earlier, Śaṃkara is aware that there may be a danger in using this kind of language, for it tends to personify scripture and so to suggest that scripture is personal. Śaṃkara argues rather that the intention of scripture is to do with the meaning of the Vedic sentences (*vedavākya*) whose interpretation is the commentator's task.

This leads us, crucially, to distinguish at least three levels of method when we are trying to assess the Upaniṣadic basis for Śaṃkara's own:

(i)   The teaching methods of the Upaniṣadic teachers themselves (embedded for Śaṃkara in the overarching intention of scripture)
(ii) Śaṃkara's interpretations of those methods, which sometimes appear to be at variance with the logic of the Upaniṣadic episodes he interprets, but which are fundamentally concerned to lay bare the intention of scripture[3]
(iii) Śaṃkara's own teaching methods, which are based on (i) via (ii), and which in some places overlap with (ii) because of the hermeneutical orientation of his work. In other words, in making clear the intention of scripture as he reads it, he is teaching precisely in the way scripture intends. Śaṃkara the commentator is primarily Śaṃkara the Advaitin teacher, passing on the (purportedly) traditional interpretation and methods to the teachers of tomorrow.

To some of those methods we now turn, seeking to show how, in Śaṃkara's view, scripture prepares pupils to be receptive, provides fruitful teaching techniques and sets these in a fundamental framework that enables them to be successful.

Questioning

In Chapter 2 we saw how the Advaitin pupil should possess at the outset certain excellent characteristics that conduce to mental purity, making the pupil open to and worthy of the teaching. We shall now see how the teacher develops this openness to enable the pupil to engage with the Advaitin teaching and embrace it personally. With hindsight, the pupil will see how these preliminary tactics begin a path that leads right up to the final understanding. These techniques are cumulative and given by the scripture, which, compassionate like a mother, understands how children learn.[4]

Modern studies of teachers' use of questioning in the classroom tend to confirm that there is a peculiar and not very fruitful pattern prevalent in much of the questioning that goes on. In ordinary life, a person usually asks a question because she genuinely wants an answer or would like to know what the other person thinks. In the classroom, by contrast, except in the case of a very experienced and skilful teacher, questions can degenerate into a closed kind of verbal checking, in the worst examples requiring pupils to 'guess what's in the teacher's mind'. The skilful teacher, on the other hand, is able to use questions in an open way to lead pupils out (the literal meaning of 'educate') from their present learning to new perceptions, so that they make the changed understanding their own. She is also interested in the pupils' own questions and views.

It is not surprising that questioning techniques play a key role in Śaṃkara's understanding of teaching method, since the Upaniṣads themselves are so full of the play of cross-questioning in public debate. Famous examples include Gārgī Vācaknavī's insistent questioning of Yājñavalkya about the ground of the cosmos on which everything is woven 'like warp and woof' (*Bṛ Up* 3.6 and 3.8). Her final question leads him to teach about the imperishable unseen seer and unknown knower, in Śaṃkara's vocabulary, the witness of all cognitions. A more private affair is the young Naciketas' questioning of Yama (*Ka Up* 1.1–1.3). Told by his irritated father to 'go to hell' (Yama is the god of death), Naciketas seeks the key to true immortality in the questions he puts to Yama. Away from public debate, the *Kena Upaniṣad* opens with a series of questions, the *Praśna* is structured around them.

Now in these and many other instances, it is the teacher who is questioned, sometimes by a challenger, sometimes by a genuine pupil. The questions function to test the teacher's true grasp of the subject (that is, *brahman*), his ability to answer and explain and to show the consistency of his understanding. For the genuine enquirer, the questions indicate readiness to receive the next stage of the teaching and elicit that teaching from the teacher. It is the pupil who questions.

Because of this, Śaṃkara always feels the need to explain the situation when scripture shows the teacher in the role of questioner. 'Isn't it against the rules,' he has someone query, 'that the one who is the teacher should question the pupil?' (*Ch Up Bh* 5.12.1)[5] as Aśvapati asks the five great householders who approach him for teaching to tell him on whom they meditate as the self. Aśvapati's response to their answers is instructive. He takes what they say, commends it, but shows that each has only a partial grasp of truth, which his own teaching can integrate into a whole. In justifying Aśvapati's questioning, Śaṃkara quotes *Ch Up* 7.1.1, where Sanatkumāra explicitly tells Nārada, 'Come to me with what you know. Then I will teach you what is beyond that.'

Here then is one scripturally sanctioned use of questioning by the teacher: to ascertain the pupil's current understanding so that the teacher can 'take it from there'. This may be behind the last preliminary condition to be satisfied by the pupil in *Upad G* 1.1. Before the teacher imparts the 'knowledge which is the means to liberation', the pupil is to be examined about his caste, ritual activities, behaviour, knowledge, and family. This is probably not just about ensuring the pupil's social acceptability (unlike in the case of Satyakāma Jābāla, *Ch Up Bh* 4.4), but is to enable the teacher to assess the pupil properly at the outset. If, later, hindrances arise that prevent the pupil from understanding the scriptural teaching which has been given, the teacher will understand their origins and be able to help the pupil deal with them (cf. *Upad G* 1.4).

A second legitimate use of questioning is shown by Ajātaśatru in *Bṛ Up* 2.1.16, according to Śaṃkara's explanation. Ajātaśatru asks his pupil

Gārgya the two questions Gārgya ought to have put himself but is unable to formulate:

> So although Gārgya was the one being prompted, he did not bring up the questions on these two subjects: where this self was before awakening or whence it came on its journey.[6]

<div align="right">(<i>Bṛ Up Bh</i> 2.1.16)</div>

The teacher, by questioning, forwards the discussion, thus helping the pupil to articulate ideas that would otherwise have remained buried. In *Upad G* 2, the discussion follows what Śaṃkara seems to view as the standard pattern, pupil persistently asking teacher questions to voice his doubts and sort out difficulties. However, from Verse 63 on, the teacher keeps reversing the pattern, throwing questions back at the pupil to make him realize the implications of what he has been saying. Paraphrasing a little, one section of the discussion goes like this:

Pupil: Revered teacher, is the mutual superimposition of body and *ātman* made by the aggregate of the body or by the *ātman*?
Teacher: Does it make any difference?
Pupil: If I am just the aggregate of the body and so forth, I am non-conscious, so I don't make the superimposition. If I am the highest *ātman*, I am conscious, so the superimposition which is the seed of every calamity is made upon *ātman* by myself [which seems to the pupil rather strange].
Teacher: If you know that superimposition is the seed of every calamity, don't make it!

This leads on to a third use of questioning: to help the pupil confront his own doubts honestly. A famous story in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* tells how Indra, king of the *deva*s, and Virocana, king of the *asura*s, approach Prajāpati, 'lord of creatures,' for teaching about the self. Virocana goes away satisfied by Prajāpati's initial teaching that it is the body (reflected in water) that is one's true self. Indra, after pondering, realizes how unsatisfactory this view is and returns for further teaching. Prajāpati asks him why. Śaṃkara explains that this is not out of ignorance. 'Although knowing, he questioned him again so that Indra would make his intention (in returning) clear' (*Ch Up Bh* 8.9.2).[7] Indra had gone over the problems in his own head, but until he expressed them to the teacher, the teaching could not proceed.

   In *Upad G* 2.74, the pupil acknowledges to the teacher that he is in doubt about consciousness being eternal and unchanging. He appears to have a sneaking feeling that the Vijñānavāda Buddhist analysis of consciousness is right. The teacher simply questions, 'How?' This forces the pupil to articulate his difficulty more fully. The teacher then skilfully takes what he says and

shows that the answer is contained in the very way the pupil describes the problem.

A final function of questioning sums up the previous three and is crucial to Śaṃkara's understanding of method as we shall see later. It is to increase the pupil's self-awareness. There is a delightfully cryptic story in *Bṛ Up* 5.2, where the *deva*s, humans and *asura*s approach Prajāpati for teaching. It is simple: '*da, da, da*.' (T. S. Eliot was hardly more cryptic when he quoted it in *The Wasteland*!) However, Prajāpati did not leave it at that. Of each group, having given the teaching, he enquired: 'Have you understood?' 'Yes,' they replied. But the *deva*s heard, 'Be self-controlled,' the humans heard, 'Give,' and the *asura*s heard, 'Have compassion.' (Each is a single word beginning with 'd' in Sanskrit: *dāmyata*, *datta*, *dayadhvam*.) Had they got it wrong? No, because Prajāpati's question, checking their understanding, was not a closed 'guess the mind of the teacher' question, despite its appearance. Rather, it was directing them to look within themselves, to recognize their own natures and to hear the teaching as providing a corrective to their distinctive faults.

Think back to Chapter 2, to the way the teacher turned the pupil's *curriculum vitae* back to him:

> You are right [that the eternal *ātman* is different from the body]. Why then did you say incorrectly: 'I am a brahmin's son of such and such a family. I was a student . . . and now I am a wandering ascetic?'
>
> (*Upad G* 1.13)

The pupil's own words become the basis, after further discussion, of increased self-awareness. The pupil realizes that his understanding of the truth of non-duality has remained at an intellectual level and that he still actually misidentifies himself with the body and its social circumstances. It is only gradually that this habitual misidentification can be broken down, and self-awareness is vital in this process. It is easier to turn people away from their faults with only a little teaching if they recognize their own faults, says Śaṃkara, in relation to Prajāpati's teaching (*Bṛ Up Bh* 5.2.3). And we should not be misled into thinking that most of Prajāpati's instruction is irrelevant because it was given to *deva*s and *asura*s. Prajāpati (and scripture) would teach only what was good, so humans should learn from all three. Or, more radically, suggests Śaṃkara, there are only humans anyway, of various personality types, some more prone to lack of self-control, others to greed, yet others to cruelty and harm. If the cap fits, wear it! Only by progressive self-awareness, provoked initially by the teacher's skilful questioning, can the obstacles to perfect understanding be finally removed.

In this section, I have tried to show how the three levels of method distinguished above contribute to Śaṃkara's understanding of questioning as a teaching technique. First, the Upaniṣads themselves provide examples of teachers questioning pupils as well as the other way round. Second, Śaṃkara

gives comments on these, which are explicitly designed to bring out the significance of questioning as a teaching method. These comments are often extended or make cross-references to other similar stories, such as the incidents of Sanatkumāra and Prajāpati recounted above. This suggests that Śaṃkara is genuinely concerned about teaching method, not just with glossing the text. Finally, examples from the free-standing chapters of the *Upadeśasāhasrī* show Śaṃkara's own application of the questioning techniques through the figure of the teacher and the way he structures the discussions and leads each pupil towards understanding the self.

Renunciation

Another preliminary to this understanding is renunciation. We have already seen how the preferred pupil is a *paramahaṃsa* wandering ascetic and how renunciation or, rather, lack of desire (*virāga*) for the fruits of one's actions is one of the preconditions for the one starting the enquiry into *brahman* (*BSBh* 1.1.1). We shall now explore in a little more detail how this lack of desire (*virāga*) that leads to renunciation (*vairāgya*) is to be encouraged, and show that another cumulative method is here involved.

Śaṃkara's commentary on the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* contains some striking passages where the reader is forced to reflect on the impurities that compose the human body. In 6.14.2, the Upaniṣad tells the story of a man from Gandhāra who wanders about lost in a forest until a kind stranger points the way home. Śaṃkara develops this into a full-blown allegory in which the man wanders about in the forest of the body 'consisting of fire, water and food, filled with wind, bile, phlegm, blood, fat, flesh, bone marrow, semen, worms, urine, and faeces'. He is also afflicted with numerous desires and makes the misidentifications endemic to the human condition (see Chapter 2). It is only under the guidance of a compassionate teacher that he becomes dispassionate (*virakta*) towards transmigratory existence and is thus ready to be taught about the oneness of the self. The unstated implication is that the teacher helps him to reflect on the nature of the human condition, in part by realizing just what it is that makes up the body.

In the same Upaniṣad commentary, Śaṃkara graphically describes the condition of the foetus, smeared by the urine, faeces, wind, bile, phlegm and so forth, which he thinks are also in the womb. He stresses the painfulness of birth, alluded to by the Upaniṣad (5.9.1). The point of all this is to induce renunciation (*vairāgyaṃ grāhayati*).

These lists of bodily components are reminiscent of similar lists used in Buddhist cultivations of mindfulness. A famous example is found in the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, which recommends contemplation of the 'nails, teeth, skin, flesh. . . kidneys, heart . . . diaphragm, spleen . . . contents of the stomach, feces, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears . . . snot, etc.'[8] This can be supplemented by visiting a cremation ground and contemplating a

decomposing body in various ways. These practices are not meant to induce disgust, but are simply two of many ways of contemplating the composite and transitory nature of the person.[9] They thus help to build up an understanding of the conditioned nature of things, a key aspect of the First Noble Truth of *duḥkha* (suffering, impermanence, 'conditionedness').

It is almost certainly to this Buddhist teaching that Gauḍapāda was referring in *GK* 3.43. In glossing this verse, Śaṃkara gives a clearly Advaitin interpretation to *duḥkha*, but shares with the Buddhists an understanding that the spiritual path, here renunciation, is to be 'brought into being' (*bhāvanā*):

> 'Having remembered that all is *duḥkha*', i.e. that it is duality projected by ignorance, therefore let the mind which is dispersed cease 'from enjoyment of desires', whose object is yearning, through the mental cultivation of renunciation (*vairāgyabhāvanayā*).[10]
>
> (*GKBh* 3.43)

In this case, then, renunciation, that is, mental detachment from duality, follows the basic Advaitin understanding of the nature of the transmigratory world.

While the lists of bodily composites may be reminiscent of Buddhist sources on mindfulness, Śaṃkara is keen to stress that the basis for his comments is Upaniṣadic. This he does by showing that the Upaniṣads give examples of mortality to create renunciation, that they connect *virāga* (lack of desire) with *vairāgya* (renunciation) and that a concern for renunciation is vital for understanding the self and so is built into the structure of key Upaniṣads. We shall illustrate each in turn. *Bṛ Up* 4.3.35, for example, compares the dying body with a creaking cart. Śaṃkara remarks that the sight of a dying person gasping for breath is common, but that scripture mentions it to create renunciation (*vairāgyahetoḥ*). 'How miserable indeed is this transmigratory existence!' he adds. *Śruti*, in helping us to renounce it while we still have time, shows its compassion.[11]

When Yājñavalkya starts to teach his wife Maitreyī in accordance with *śruti*'s desire to enjoin renunciation, Śaṃkara explains: 'Since he wants to teach renunciation (*vairāgya*) as a means to immortality, he causes a lack of desire (*virāga*) for such things as wife, husband or sons to arise, so that they are given up' (*Bṛ Up Bh* 2.4.5).[12] The play on words is clear, but goes right to the heart of the matter. For detachment is a necessary precondition for knowledge. There is only any point in offering a drink to a person who is thirsty. A person who is not detached from the affairs of transmigratory existence, which is characterized by the differences of ends and means, is not ready for knowledge of the oneness of the self (*Bṛ Up Bh* 1.4.1).[13] True scholarship, the knowledge of the self, is the culmination of putting away desires, the abandonment of ritual and its requisites with its visible and invisible aims (*Bṛ Up Bh* 3.5.11, p. 816).[14] It thus comes from the renunciation

of this transient life and of the entire Pūrvamīmāṃsaka worldview. Every kind of thing that can be broken down into means and ends is characterized by the desire that is now shunned. 'For unless desire is suppressed, that wisdom concerning the self does not arise' (*Br Up Bh* 3.5.1, p. 816).[15]

This issue of renouncing desires is so important that Śaṃkara sees it as the schema for the whole *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*. He even appeals to it as such in the introduction to his commentary on the *Kena Upaniṣad*. He assumes that the enquirer in this Upaniṣad must be detached (*virakta*) from the composite body, the transient results of action, since he asks about 'that which is different, the eternally changeless'. Śaṃkara may use a method that has similarities with the Buddhist tradition, but through it he rejects not only the Pūrvamīmāṃsaka worldview but any Buddhist solution as well. That which is to be sought as a consequence of turning away from desires is the Upaniṣadic self, the witness of vision, the thinker of thought.

Summarizing, we can see how a cumulative method is at work. The pupil's initial turning away from the fruits of actions is strengthened through reflecting on the nature of the human body and all aspects of the world of ends and means. The recognition that this is merely the product of *avidyā* (misconception) encourages orientation away from it. Full relinquishing of attachment accompanies a true understanding of that self which is not vitiated by its opposite, all that is transitory, unsatisfactory and impure. We shall now consider three crucial ways of awakening that true understanding which Śaṃkara believes the Upaniṣads to provide, namely, the use of examples, story and interiorizing techniques.

Examples

One of the most characteristic features of Śaṃkara's writing is the plethora of illustrations he uses. In this section, I shall try to show how scripture underpins Śaṃkara's use in three ways. First, the Upaniṣads identify the *focus* of theologically significant examples. Second, they give specific *instances* for the commentator to employ. Third, they lay down the *method* of using examples fruitfully. This last is perhaps the most crucial.

For Śaṃkara, Upaniṣadic examples are focused on the teaching of non-duality. Uddālaka Āruṇi's teaching to his son, Śvetaketu, provides a famous series. To help Śvetaketu understand the significance of the teaching, 'You are that,' his father gets him to consider bees collecting honey, the seed of the *nyāgrodha* tree, salt dissolved in water, and many other examples as well (*Ch Up* 6, especially 6.9–6.16). For Śaṃkara, these examples reinforce the point that, fundamentally, there is no difference between *brahman* ('that') and the self ('you'), when the latter is stripped of its psychosomatic individuality (see further Chapter 7). All the other major Upaniṣadic examples have the same function, in his view, and the vast majority of Śaṃkara's own examples relate to *brahman* or *brahman*'s relation to the world. This is to be expected,

given his teaching about the unitary aim of scripture: realization of the one *brahman*.

Some of the instances scripture provides are less immediately amenable to an Advaitin interpretation than others, but this does not deter Śaṃkara from using them, once an Advaitin implication has been established. The example of the fire and the sparks in *Bṛ Up* 2.1.20 is held to illustrate the relation between the individual self and *brahman*. It seems to fit a *bhedābheda* view neatly, that is, the self is in some ways different from *brahman* but in other ways the same. Śaṃkara, however, argues that the correct interpretation of the example is to say that as the spark is identical with the fire, so the self of understanding (*vijñānātman*) is identical with the supreme self (*paramātman*). He then uses the fire–sparks illustration elsewhere with other examples, like the homogeneous salt block, which suit his purposes better.[16] The salt block features in *Bṛ Up* 4.5.13, where the self is compared with a block of salt which tastes the same throughout. Śaṃkara frequently refers to this when discussing *brahman* as pure consciousness, sometimes quoting, sometimes paraphrasing or alluding to the verse.[17] He also links it with the topic of *BS* 3.2.16, so establishing a link between commentator and Upaniṣads via the *Sūtra*s.

The role of scripture as an authorizing source of examples becomes clear in *Upad P* 18. Śaṃkara is explaining the connection between the supreme self and the psychosomatic complex. It is as though the supreme self is reflected in the ego (*ahaṃkṛt*) like a face in a mirror. Śaṃkara claims that this illustration is in accordance with scripture and reasoning (*śāstrayuktibhyām*) (18.43); it is favoured by *śruti* and so forth (18.113). However, a precise scriptural source remains untraced. Scripture then does not limit Śaṃkara's illustrations. His favourite is the rope–snake, which he shares with the Buddhists. He can, however, use it with confidence, for the Upaniṣads provide the necessary guidelines, the context in which examples are to be employed.

For Śaṃkara, these guidelines are as much concerned with method as with stipulating the focus for and providing instances of examples. Here lies the heart of my contention that, for Śaṃkara, scripture provides the methods for, not just the content of, Advaita's true teaching. To support it, we shall look carefully at the way he holds examples to function.

It is frequently held that examples are given in Advaita to 'make the penny drop'. So Eliot Deutsch says: 'Examples function not so much as a means of *convincing* one in any shallow rationalistic sense, but as a means of *awakening* one to new possibilities of experience' (1980, p. 94, his emphases). Śaṃkara certainly recognizes this function. Śvetaketu is awakened (*pratibodhita*) to the truth about the self by his father's 'reasons and examples'. Indeed, until such awakening occurs, scripture may have to give many examples, in part 'to make for ease of understanding' (*Mu Up Bh* 1.1.7).[18] Śaṃkara himself often gives his favoured illustrations in groups, following the Upaniṣads' own multiple usage (e.g. in *Bṛ Up* 2.1.20, *Mu Up* 1.1.7). In *Bṛ Up Bh* 1.5.2, he compares the whole transient universe of means and ends with a flowing river or

lamp-flame; it is insubstantial as a banana-stalk, like foam, a magical illusion, a mirage, a dream. His style is reminiscent of Buddhist writers (compare the Mādhyamika, Candrakīrti, quoting a Buddhist text)[19] and probably purposely so. For his intention is to indicate the need to turn away from such a world to the knowledge of *brahman*. The illustrations pile up, inducing a sense of the evanescent yet perpetual flow of transmigratory existence. They thus undermine our normal tendency to hold on to this existence as if it were permanent and unchanging. They cause us to see things differently, to wake up to the truth.

However, examples (*dṛṣṭānta*) go much further than this. With reasons (*hetu*) and theses (*pratijñā*), they form part of a formal argument (*anumāna*). They provide support for, and hence justification of, the universal concomitance claimed between what is stated in the thesis and the reason given (see Chapter 3). So, in the standard Nyāya example, you can deduce the presence of fire from the presence of smoke because the two always go together, the example of 'in the kitchen' somewhat graphically supporting the case. (Think of a wood fire for cooking in a house with no outlet.) Throughout Śaṃkara's works, there are cases of formal arguments taking just such a form.

It is vital, though, to understand the status and significance of such arguments, as far as Śaṃkara is concerned. Inference (*anumāna*) is not in itself a means of knowledge for *brahman*, as we saw in Chapter 3. But formal argument, including *dṛṣṭānta* (examples), has its place in Advaitin method *because* scripture sanctions it by employing such argument itself. Śaṃkara believes that this method has been handed down through such *Brahmasūtra*s as 1.4.23: '*Brahman* is also the material cause, because this does not contradict the thesis (*pratijñā*) or the example (*dṛṣṭānta*).' Once again, the Sūtra connection between Upaniṣads and Advaitin commentator is demonstrated to be important.[20]

By looking at Śaṃkara's interpretation of *BS* 1.4.23, we can see how he thought such formal arguments worked. A (Naiyāyika) opponent is arguing that *brahman* is just the efficient cause of the universe. In other words, *brahman*'s relation to the universe is like that of a potter, the agent who makes a pot, but not like the clay, that from which the pot is made, its material cause. Śaṃkara disagrees. He thinks *brahman* is both material and efficient cause, or reality-giving and reality-shaping cause, in line with the Upaniṣadic thesis and examples to which the *sūtra* refers. These he first identifies in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (but later in the *Muṇḍaka* and *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*s as well). The argument can be set out as follows:

Thesis: *Brahman* is the material cause (the *pratijñā* implied in the scriptural question: 'Did you ask for that instruction by which the unheard becomes heard, the unthought becomes thought and the unknown becomes known?' – Uddālaka Āruṇi's enquiry of his big-headed son in *Ch Up* 6.14.1)

Reason: because only by knowing the material cause can the effect, which is of the same nature as the material cause but not as the efficient cause, be known (and the passage above implies that by knowing one thing all others, even the unknown, can become known)

Examples: just as you know what something made of clay is basically like from knowing what clay is like, or what something made of gold is like from knowing what gold is like (given in *Ch Up* 6.1.2 and 6.1.4 which Śaṃkara quotes in full).

In other words, you can deduce the basic make-up of a clay pot if you know what clay (its material cause) is like, but you will not get very far trying to deduce its nature from simply knowing what the potter (its efficient cause) is like [application]. So, if the Upaniṣad implies that everything else can be known by knowing *brahman*, it must mean that *brahman* is the material cause, not just the efficient cause [restated conclusion]. We shall look further at Śaṃkara's understanding of causality in Chapter 5. The point here is that he holds formal argument to be embedded in scripture itself, to be assumed by the *Brahmasūtra*s and to take the general form of a three- or five-point argument, which first states a thesis, then gives a reason for that thesis and provides a substantiating example. It may then also explain the application of the example and restate the conclusion, equivalent to the initial thesis, as we have done above.

   This method is not just confined to one or two places in the Upaniṣads. Rather, it is systematic and widespread, in Śaṃkara's view. He gives a very clear statement of its general form in his *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* commentary:

> For, in all the Upaniṣads, first having stated (*pratijñāya*) the oneness (of the self), then having explained by examples and reasons (*dṛṣṭāntair hetubhiś ca*) that the world is a modification or part or such like of the supreme self, (scripture) concludes with oneness again.
>
> (*Bṛ Up Bh* 2.1.20)

He then shows how this general method finds particular application in the next part of the *Bṛ Up*: 2.4.6 *states*, 'All this is the self'. Then various *reasons and examples* are given on the origin, preservation and dissolution of the world to show that it is merely a modification of the supreme self. These include the drumbeat, conchblast, smoke from damp fuel, waters running into the ocean, salt dissolved in water (2.4.7–12) and the so-called Honey Teaching (2.5). Finally, scripture will *conclude* by saying, 'Without inside, without outside, this self is *brahman*' (2.5.19).

   Such arguments need not be localized to a single section of one Upaniṣad. Their full scope is pan-scriptural. Theses (*pratijñā*) that are to be upheld

by the teaching of non-difference are found throughout the Upaniṣads (*prativedāntam*) (see *BSBh* 2.3.6). So too are the accompanying reasons and examples (for further detail, see Suthren Hirst, 1990). The point is *not* that the supreme self as single cause of all can be proved to exist by independent inference, but that scripture provides every aspect of the argument that establishes the reasonableness of non-difference.[21]

This is very important. What it means is that Śaṃkara himself can use formal argument, both to clarify the meaning of scripture and to refute opponents' positions, safe in the knowledge that his method, instances and context are truly scriptural. Śaṃkara can thus address an adversary who rejects Vedic scripture via a straightforward formal argument in his own terms and with everyday examples. In the *Upadeśasāhasrī*, for example, when arguing against the Buddhist, Śaṃkara never quotes Vedic scripture. However, for him his method remains scripturally based.

The method is not limited to exegesis and refuting opponents. Śaṃkara seems to have helped his pupils to formulate arguments according to the scriptural pattern. It is possible to reconstruct the argument by which the pupil sums up the discussion in *Upad G* 2.109 as follows:

Thesis: The only independent existent, the self, is eternal perception (*avagati*) [*pratijñā* summing up the meaning of the Upaniṣads]

Reason: because the world of multiplicity depends for its existence on being perceived (lit. on awareness – *avagati*)

Example: like the rope–snake that does not exist unless it is perceived (lit. apart from *avagati*)

Application: so the multiple world of waking, dreaming, etc. does not exist unless perceived (lit. apart from *avagati*)

Conclusion: and therefore the light of the self, which is perception (*avagati*), exists.[22]

Once more we see how, in clarifying the intention of scripture, Śaṃkara lays bare a method central to the commentator's task and fruitful for the searching pupil. The understanding of non-duality is open to the enquiring mind whose reflections, scripturally recommended, are guided by scripture in every facet of their explorations.

Story

In many ways, the comments that apply to Śaṃkara's use of examples also apply to his use of story. Both focus on realization of the one *brahman* within; instances are given in scripture that provide the base of, but do not limit, the commentator's repertoire; scripture itself legitimizes the method by its own example and, importantly, by explaining its own use. Thus, at the end of one of Yājñavalkya's cosmological explorations, Śaṃkara points out that

scripture distances itself from the narrative and explains its meaning to us (*asmabhyam*) (*Bṛ Up Bh* 3.3.2).[23] This is very significant. It shows that the process of correct interpretation has already been started by scripture. The sacred texts show the teacher how to understand and pass on that insight in turn. This takes us back to their role in providing guidelines on method as well as on content.

When stories appear in scripture, Śaṃkara is scrupulous in explaining their function. Frequently, he says that they aid comprehension, create the right disposition in the speaker, show the means of transmitting knowledge or praise that knowledge so that pupils will be encouraged to seek it.[24] In other words, they are central to the teaching process. In the following, we shall focus on three stories, one scriptural, two from the folk tradition, to see how they kindle Advaitin understanding and to note the light they throw incidentally on the person of the Advaitin teacher. In Chapter 5, we shall look in more detail at Śaṃkara's handling of a set of very important Upaniṣadic stories, the origination myths.

We have already referred to the story about the man from Gandhāra lost in the forest, blindfolded and abandoned. When someone removed his blindfold and pointed him in the right direction, by asking his way from village to village, he could make his way back home (*Ch Up* 6.14). We saw how Śaṃkara described the forest of the body in graphic detail to help the hearer cultivate lack of attachment. This description forms just one part of the extended allegory Śaṃkara develops to extract full Advaitin meaning from the story. Thus the kidnapped person is one who has been snatched from his own country, the true self (or self that is reality, *sadātman*), by the bandits of merit and demerit.[25] Taken by these bandits into the forest of the body (as described above), he is in danger from the wild animals of opposites, such as heat and cold. The sympathetic stranger is one who knows. This person directs the victim by true teaching till he arrives back, happy and peaceful, at his true home, the self.

Of what, then, does this way of teaching consist? It consists of nothing other than creating lack of desire for this world; of denying that the person is really a transmigrator, son of so and so – that is, of rejecting the misidentifications endemic to the unenlightened human condition; of teaching, 'You are that which is reality (*sat yat tat tvam asi*)', of applying the central Upaniṣadic teaching to the person's self-understanding. The pattern is not new to us. It informs the teacher's approach to the pupil in *Upad G* 1. And, nicely, Śaṃkara brings back into the story the truth that the story itself was designed to illustrate to Śvetaketu: 'You are that (*tat tvam asi*).' Scripture's content and method and so the Advaitin teacher's are of a piece.

One of Śaṃkara's favourite stories, to which he often alludes only briefly, is the folk tale about the tenth man.[26] It is frequently used to illustrate how 'You are that' can bring sudden illumination. Here is the story.

> A party of ten men crosses a river. When they reach the other side, one of them tries to count them up to make sure no-one is missing. He is dismayed to find that only nine of them are present. All of them are bewailing their loss, when a passer-by points out to the person who was counting, 'You are the tenth'. Then the truth dawns. In counting the others, he had forgotten to count himself.[27]

<div align="right">(cf. Tait Up Bh 2.1.1 Introduction)</div>

Like the stranger in the Gandhāra story, the passer-by directs attention back from misidentifications (here with others in the party and the supposed fate of the missing man) to the person's own identity. Hence the appropriateness of the story for illustrating the truth of 'You are that'.

The other folk tale we shall consider is attributed by Śaṃkara to 'those who know the tradition' (*sampradāyavit*, *Bṛ Up Bh* 2.1.20). I suspect that he is not just referring to well-versed storytellers but specifically to those who know its true Advaitin interpretation. Rāmānuja later uses the same story for a different end. No doubt such variant applications were already around in Śaṃkara's day. The story itself is simple.

> A prince, abandoned by his parents, was brought up by a fowler and behaved as a fowler's son would. However, when he was later told of his royal birth, he went back to performing the duties of his true royal ancestors.

<div align="right">(cf. Bṛ Up Bh 2.1.20)</div>

Śaṃkara explains its significance like this. The individual self associates itself with the body in which it dwells until a teacher enlightens it that it is really *brahman*. Then it gives up the desires of its former life and becomes convinced of its true identity. Once again, the pattern of renouncing ordinary desires, throwing off misidentifications and understanding the true nature of the self, is central to Śaṃkara's interpretation of the story.

There is also a common pattern in the way Śaṃkara handles these stories. Rather than letting them stand and make their own impact, he insists on allegorizing (though in Chapter 5 we shall note an interesting example where he appears to recognize the story's own power). There seem to be two basic reasons for this tendency. The first is that he believes he is following a scriptural pattern where scripture explains its own stories. 'Just so,' says the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* of the Gandhāran story, 'one here who has a teacher knows' (6.14.2). The second follows. The correct (Advaitin) interpretation of scripture is vital. The allegory safeguards the true teaching, making its application clear in every detail.

It is all the more intriguing then that the teacher figure in each of these stories is left rather vague. A passer-by solves the problem for the ten

who crossed the river. In Śaṃkara's version of the Gandhāra story, it is a 'sympathetic person' who happens to hear the cry of the lost man. The fowler prince is told his true identity by a mysterious stranger who is characterized only by knowledge and compassion. I have suggested elsewhere (Suthren Hirst, 1990, pp. 130–1) that this may not just be due to oral story-telling style. Rather, it may be comparing the Advaitin teacher with the *bodhisattva* of Mahāyāna Buddhism. Solely out of wisdom and compassion, each chooses freely to teach and is not entrammelled by this choice. Yet the *bodhisattva*'s principle is one of mere expediency in Śaṃkara's view (Suthren Hirst, 1990, pp. 137–9). By implicit contrast, the stories show the Advaitin teacher to be the true teacher, for the content and methods of his merciful teaching are sure, based on the compassionate truth of scripture.

Interiorization

We have seen how skilful questioning and a progressive turning away from the world of ends and means draw the pupil towards a personal understanding of the truth of Advaita. This is further kindled by illustrations and stories that help the pupil to say, 'O, I *see*!' The whole enterprise is grounded in a confidence in scripture and the rationality of the search undertaken. Now we shall explore one further method to show how it deepens the initial questioning and turning away from the world to focus on the self within.

The early Upaniṣads are full of explorations for the source of all that there is. Some of them search for this ultimate reality at the base of the cosmos. We recall Gārgī's question here: 'On what is *that* woven, like warp and woof?' (*Bṛ Up* 3.6.1). Others look deep within the structures of the individual person to find that which transcends both body and mind. There is a good example in *Ka Up* 1.3.12. Meditations on waking, dreaming and deep sleep, and what is beyond all three, are of a similar kind (*Bṛ Up* 4.3; *Mā Up*). Some of these explorations are systematic and structured, others less so. They are linked with a quest inherited from the Brāhmaṇas, in which mystical connections are sought between the sacrifice, the individual and the cosmos, as a basis for meditation. For Śaṃkara, all these culminate in what he hears as the great sentence of non-duality, 'This self is *brahman*', given in variant forms in *Bṛ Up* 2.5.1, *Ch Up* 8.14.1 and *Mā Up* 2.

Because of his view of the single meaning of scripture, Śaṃkara has no scruples in applying insights given in one scriptural passage to another on a similar theme, under the general guidance of the statements of non-duality. What this means in the present case is that Śaṃkara takes both cosmological and psychological explorations, unstructured as well as structured, and turns them into interiorizing techniques that progressively focus attention on the self and enable the pupil successively to discard misidentifications with what is not the self. Here is an example.

Śaṃkara is commenting on Gārgī's cosmological search, well-known but not particularly systematic in the answers she gets from Yājñavalkya. Śaṃkara, by contrast, explains:

> For the elements, starting with earth and finishing with ether, are arranged one within the other. By appropriating them each in turn, from the most external, and then rejecting them, the seer's own immediate self, which is within all, is to be shown forth in what follows, having no constituents (*agauṇa*), free from all characteristics of the transmigratory world.[28]
>
> (*Bṛ Up Bh* 3.6.1)

So the search for the basis of the whole cosmos leads in the end to 'the seer's own immediate self' and this search is ordered by an appeal to a current five-element cosmology of earth, water, fire, air and ether. By rejecting each of these progressively more subtle elements in turn, and the three *guṇa*s (constituents) of which they are made, the seer intuits the self, which transcends the whole process of *saṃsāra*.

This process of 'successively seeing what is more subtle'[29] is found by Śaṃkara in the *Kaṭha*'s exploration of the individual via senses, 'sense-objects', internal sense organ (*manas*), cognition (*buddhi*), thence to the great self, then the unmanifest, till the person (*puruṣa*, or consciousness within all) is realized. By an inward search of the processes of cognition, guided by scripture, the pupil may transcend the purely individual and realize unity with the *puruṣa* who is the source of all.[30]

This idea of progressing through stages so that the self beyond all can be realized is shown clearly in Śaṃkara's explanation of what the Upaniṣad means by *saṃkrāmati* ('coming together' or 'going through') in *Tait Up* 2.8.5. In this section, the Upaniṣad is drawing together the famous 'sheaths' passage. Rejecting the views that *saṃkramaṇa* means 'attainment' of the self or identification with any one of the five sheaths (of food, breath, mind, understanding, and bliss), Śaṃkara concludes that it means 'realization alone'. This is the realization that the self is within yet other than the five sheaths which are simply misidentified with, or superimposed on the self. It is to the realization of '*brahman* (as) reality, consciousness, infinite' (*Tait Up* 2.1.1), beyond all conceptual construction, that the stages of understanding, through stories of manifestation and interiorization, lead (see further Chapter 8).

That such a process of interiorization is important to Śaṃkara's own method can be seen from his commentary on *Bṛ Up* 2.4.7–14, where numerous unordered examples are given to show how 'all this' is the self. Śaṃkara sees some of these examples as referring to the manifestation of this world of name and form, and others to its dissolution. In the latter context, he builds on the Upaniṣad's example of touch, whose basis is said to be skin

(2.4.11). Skin, the sensor of touch, merges into the internal sense-organ (*manas*), the internal sense-organ merges into cognition (*buddhi*) and cognition into pure consciousness, the supreme *brahman*. The key terms of the *Kaṭha* exploration (and Sāṃkhyan psychology) reappear. There is no dichotomy between the cosmological and the psychological. The crucial point is to use the structures of this world, ordered by scripture, to realize the self within all. Then the endemic misidentifications with body and mind will be removed, as the processes of interiorization and rejection deepen the preliminary teaching tactics. They both further the pupil's introspection and formalize the dissatisfaction that renounces the things of the world.

But the nature of the world must first be understood, for it is the very context of the teaching. As such, it forms part of the teacher's instruction in *Upad G* 1 and will be the subject of our attention in Chapter 5. As a bridge to that discussion, we conclude this chapter by examining the framework within which all the various teaching methods function, and note that this framework also specifies the nature of the world.

The framework of superimposition and elimination

So far, I have tried to show how scripture provides Śaṃkara with trustworthy teaching methods that work cumulatively to deepen the pupil's self-awareness, foster rejection of the misidentifications endemic to the human condition and lead to realization of the true nature of the self. This will primarily be engendered through the great sayings like 'You are that' (see Chapters 7 and 8). Importantly, though, these are not just a lot of disparate methods acting independently. Rather, I argue, there is an important framework within which they all function. It is none other than the framework of superimposition and elimination. To this we now turn.

'There is a saying of those who know the tradition', says Śaṃkara in *GBh* 13.13, ' "By superimposition and elimination (*adhyāropāpavāda*-), the undescribed is described/the unmanifested is manifested." ' [31] We have already seen how another reference to 'those who know the tradition' (*sampradāyavit*) seems to suggest that they are teachers of Advaita. So we could read this sentence as saying that the true Advaitin method is superimposition and elimination. We might then argue that 'superimposition and elimination' should be seen as Śaṃkara's method *par excellence*.

This would be going too fast. The saying is quoted to explain the *Gītā*'s attribution of omnipresent hands, feet, eyes, heads, and mouths to the Supreme and its significance is not particularly stressed, though it does occur in the thirteenth chapter of the *Gītābhāṣya* where Śaṃkara elaborates his understanding of non-duality most unambiguously. It is not repeated elsewhere in Śaṃkara's major commentaries, nor does he use the neat phrase 'superimposition and elimination' (*adhyāropāpavāda*-) as a recurring technical

term. A welter of different words throughout the commentaries does, however, indicate how important the pair of ideas is.[32] To expect a consistent technical vocabulary of Śaṃkara is probably to look for the wrong thing, though we shall return to an underlying pattern of method in Chapters 7 and 8. He is not primarily a systematic philosopher but a reflective religious teacher guiding pupils to the Advaitin insight on the basis of the multiple insights of scripture, unified, as he believes, by the principle of non-duality. And it is because the concept of superimposition is the key concept for relating the multiple world to the one non-multiple, non-dual self that Mahadevan and Satchidanandendra rightly regard it as central to Śaṃkara's thought (1985, p. 1; ET 1989, Introduction) and we propose it as a framework for his many methods.[33]

Now Śaṃkara's understanding of superimposition is fundamental to his works, so it has been discussed in detail by many commentators. I do not propose to rehearse those discussions here. Rather, I wish to argue the novel case, central to this book, that superimposition provides the framework for Śaṃkara's way of teaching. First, then, I suggest that, at one level, this framework is conceptual. It explains the nature of the world, including the human condition, as we saw in Chapter 2, and relates this to the supreme self or *brahman*. Since understanding the latter is the Advaitin's quest, the concept of superimposition is the necessary backdrop to the pursuit of this quest and its various methods. It thus provides the material which the stories and illustrations illuminate, and is the very stuff of the formal arguments exemplified and sanctioned by scripture.

But it goes further than this. Importantly, at a second level, it structures the methods themselves. The processes of questioning and introspection lead on to the techniques of interiorization, where layer after layer of superimposition is successively stripped away, as we have just seen. The cultivation of lack of desire and renunciation culminates in the formal rejection of all that is not self superimposed on self. As the examples and stories illumine, they strip away misperceptions from the self.

At a third level, however, the very way methods function models the way in which the multiplicity of the world of superimposition converges to disclose the self within. The best example of this is the rope–snake illustration, which can illustrate any or all of the following:

(i)   Consciousness/*brahman* is involved in manifestation
(ii)   The natural mode of this manifested world is superimposition
(iii) Superimposition must be made upon a real foundation
(iv)   The individual entrammelled in *saṃsāra* suffers from fear
(v)   *Brahman* is unaffected by this superimposition
(vi)   The world is nothing but *brahman* (because it is superimposition on *brahman*)
(vii) The person who realizes this is released from fear.[34]

The great illustration of superimposition thus shows the plight of worldly existence, the truth of ultimate reality and the possibility of release. Its multi-faceted applications embody the possibility that different superimposed means can converge towards that final purified unity.

In Chapter 5 we shall see in more detail how the structures of this super-imposed world of name and form in which we live contain within themselves the possibilities of their own elimination and transcendence; in Chapters 7 and 8 we shall see how language itself functions within the framework of superimposition and elimination in laying bare the meaning of the Upaniṣadic great sayings. The framework is thus of comprehensive import-ance in Śaṃkara's teaching. We conclude this chapter by showing how the framework, like the many methods that operate within it, is for Śaṃkara grounded in scripture.

'There are hundreds of scriptural sentences which say that all this multiplicity is simply constructed on *brahman*', he says and cites four to make his point: ' "It is to be realized as one only" (*Br̥ Up* 4.4.20), "There is no diversity here at all" (*Br̥ Up* 4.4.19; *Ka Up* 2.1.11), "For where there is duality *as it were*" (*Br̥ Up* 2.4.14, 4.5.15, my emphasis), "One only without a second" (*Ch Up* 6.2.1) (*Br̥ Up Bh* 1.4.10, p. 672)'.[35] It is important to realize how these quotations work together to understand how Śaṃkara perceives the frame-work to be embedded in the whole of scripture, not just suggested by a key quotation like the third above. First, scripture indicates that there is a dire predicament from which knowledge can save us by adjuring us to know *brahman* – the theme of the whole *jñānakāṇḍa* (*śruti* relating to knowledge). 'It is to be realized as one only.' Our attention is directed towards *brahman*. Second, scriptural statements on non-duality conflict with our ordinary acceptance of plurality and cause us to question its status. 'There is no diversity here at all.' Third, key phrases confirm that plurality is falsely constructed on *brahman* through misapprehension (*avidyā*): 'There is only duality as it were.' 'In reality, there is one only without a second.'[36]

Moreover, while the concept of superimposition appears necessary to understand the way Śaṃkara constructs some of the arguments he finds in the Upaniṣads, for him this merely confirms that it can be inferred from a scrip-tural basis. Here is an argument he finds in *Br̥ Up* 4.3:

Thesis: 'For this infinite being is unattached' (4.3.16)
Reason: because it moves in the three states of waking, dreaming and deep
              sleep (throughout 4.3)
Example: 'like a great fish' (which moves between the river banks unaffected
              by them, 4.3.18)

The implication, as Śaṃkara spells it out in his commentary on 4.3.18, is that the three states do not affect the self, this infinite being, because they are merely superimposed by *avidyā* upon it. 'This', translates Madhavananda

nicely, 'has been stated to be the gist of the whole passage (*samudāyārthaḥ*)' (1975, p. 455).

So we can now summarize the gist of this chapter. Scripture provides the Advaitin teacher and commentator not only with the content but with the methods of an Advaitin way of teaching, thereby guaranteeing their effectiveness in contrast to the expedient and contradictory methods of the Buddhists and others who ignore a proper scriptural foundation for their soteriology (Suthren Hirst, 1990, pp. 137–9). The methods, like the content, have been faithfully transmitted by the author of the *Brahmasūtra*s and others in the correct teaching tradition, and Śaṃkara explains them and implements them as such. Finally, his fundamental framework of super-imposition and elimination, which functions in complex conceptual and methodological ways, is safely grounded and erected, for it is seen to be scripture's own.

5

THE CONTEXT OF
THE TEACHING

The world of name and form

As we have already seen in the three preceding chapters, the context for Advaitin teaching is the world of superimposition. Such a world typifies the human condition that engenders the need for the teaching (Chapter 2). It is intimately linked with and based on scripture that is the source of the teaching (Chapter 3). It provides the illustrations, stories, structures and framework for the teaching itself (Chapter 4).

In this chapter, we shall examine the nature of this world of super-imposition in more detail to try to assess its role and importance in Śaṃkara's way of teaching. In doing so, we shall challenge a common presentation of his thought. With some notable exceptions, such as Ramachandran (1969) and Alston (1980b), the impression is often given that the world of super-imposition is of little importance to Śaṃkara. There is one central reason for this and at least three contributory factors. The central reason is clear and seems uncontentious: precisely because this world is superimposition springing from misconception, it is of little value compared with knowing *brahman*. It is just what has to be renounced for realization to occur. The other contributory factors include Śaṃkara's teaching on the 'two truths' – ultimate and conventional; his purported use of the term *māyā*, usually translated as 'illusion'; and the numerous inconsistencies in the ways he pictures the world and its relation to *brahman*. The first of these views the world of super-imposition as the conventional realm, the world of ordinary experience, the world of multiplicity. This conventional truth is to be superseded once the ultimate truth dawns, the truth of the non-duality of *brahman*. It can hence appear to be of little consequence. The second, simply by describing the world as *māyā* or illusion, tends similarly to down-value it. When *māyā* is characterized as 'indeterminable as either real or not real' (*sadasadvilakṣaṇa*), this contributes to a negative assessment. *Māyā* acquires a curious ontological status, one that is arguably incoherent and dismissable.[1] A much-quoted later Advaitin verse is more blunt: *Brahman* is real, the world is false, it says.[2] Finally, the numerous inconsistencies in Śaṃkara's picture lead easily to the view that he was not really that interested in the nature of the world. If he had been, it is implied, he would surely have sorted himself out.

In the following, I shall suggest a different approach, one which stresses the pedagogical value of the world. Given that the world of superimposition is the context for the liberating teaching of Advaita, we shall ask: how can this world give knowledge of *brahman*? This is not to go back on what we have already said, that there cannot be knowledge of *brahman* independently of scripture. It is rather to extend what we discovered in Chapter 4, that scripture orders the world and our perception of it so that it can disclose *brahman* within. Śaṃkara inherited from the Vedic texts a wide variety of different origination stories exploring the nature of the manifested world. From the Purāṇas, he accepted a cosmology of recurring world phases of origination, preservation and dissolution, a view rejected by contemporary Ritualists, the Pūrvamīmāṃsakas. He belonged to an intellectual scene where the nature of causality was hotly disputed, the Buddhists, Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas and Sāṃkhyans holding apparently radically different positions. Śaṃkara's engagement with such debates at the outset of the *Brahmasūtra* commentary (1.1.2, 1.1.5 f) shows their importance in the Vedānta tradition before him. A correct understanding of causality played a vital role in interpreting the Upaniṣadic texts so that *brahman* could be properly known. Śaṃkara's own Advaita makes the relation of multiplicity to oneness a crucial issue. It will thus be apparent that, in reflecting on the nature of the world in the light of the texts vital to him, Śaṃkara is involved in a highly complex task. Its primary purpose, however, is quite clear: it is to yield knowledge of *brahman*.

In this chapter, we shall investigate three aspects of Śaṃkara's approach. These are: the teaching of the 'two truths' already mentioned; Śaṃkara's concept of the world of name and form; and his skilful use of complementary and mutually restricting analogies. As before, we shall see how Śaṃkara finds these key concepts and methods to be given in the Vedic texts themselves and to be supported by scripturally consonant procedures of reason.

Ultimate and conventional truth

The historical source of Śaṃkara's teaching on the 'two truths' is almost certainly the Mādhyamika Buddhists via Gauḍapāda. Structurally, his view is very close to theirs. Both hold that there are both ultimate and conventional viewpoints. The former view liberates, the latter binds. Both believe that the ultimate view and liberation are available within this world. For both, the distinction between ultimate and conventional relates to a twofold categorization of texts, one provisional group leading on to those teaching ultimate truth.[3] Finally, the ultimate viewpoint for both is beyond all linguistic description, a delicate issue for Śaṃkara.[4] However, despite these clear similarities, in Śaṃkara's view the content and source of his teaching on the two truths, and that of the teaching tradition to which he belongs, is entirely Upaniṣadic. It can be seen as rooted in its teaching of the two *vidyā*s

(or *vidyā* and *avidyā*)[5] and establishes the indescribable *brahman*, by contrast with the nihilistic void that is his misconstruction of the Madhyamaka teaching on emptiness.[6]

Pāramārthika-satya or ultimate truth, then, is for Śaṃkara *brahman*, one without a second, without qualities of any kind, identical with the self. The qualityless (*nirguṇa*) *brahman* is ultimate reality (*paramārtha-sat*).[7] There is no scope for compromise over this teaching. It can never be sublated, downgraded by some other insight. It is the single truth to which all the Upaniṣads bear witness but is most clearly taught in the great sayings of identity, such as 'You are that', which we shall look at in Chapter 7. Such texts teach ultimate truth.

However, this is not the way we normally see things, caught up, as we are, in the world of superimposition. We experience a world of multiplicity. We use language that implies differentiation. This is *vyāvahārika-satya*, conventional truth, the way we experience the everyday world. It has validity in that it is public (experienced to be of such a kind by all those bound by it); it is consistent (fire is always hot and so forth); and it is reliable (as a framework for interrelating with others and for obtaining desired ends). This conventional truth is reflected in scripture in texts on ritual and meditation, indeed, it seems, in any that appear to ascribe difference – whether in *brahman* or between ourselves and *brahman*. In texts where *brahman* is ascribed qualities, *brahman* is to be meditated on; in texts where qualities are denied, *brahman* is to be known, implies Thibaut's translation of *BSBh* 1.1.11 (Vol. 1, p. 64). In this, the distinction between the goals of action (including meditation) and knowledge seems straightforwardly equatable with the distinction between texts teaching conventional and ultimate truth. However, as we shall see, and as Śaṃkara's more subtle Sanskrit allows for, the issue is rather more complex. He writes:

> Thus the rest of the book is begun to show that the sole *brahman* is taught in the Upaniṣads to be linked with the adjuncts connected to it or free from the adjuncts connected to it insofar as it is to be meditated on and insofar as it is to be known.[8]
>
> (*BSBh* 1.1.11, p. 35)

This rather literal translation is crucial for it shows that *brahman* is always connected with superimposed adjuncts; the key is whether they are retained or removed. Some texts can be read at two levels: for meditation or for knowledge. So even where knowledge is clearly concerned, *brahman* is apparently ascribed qualities, origination stories are told and so forth. Grappling with such kinds of texts as part of the knowledge section, Śaṃkara develops his most important ideas on language and the world. For it is precisely the conventional world, as ordered by scripture, that provides the models for superimposition and sublation, and hence the methods for

apprehending its source. It is important that Śaṃkara's vital programmatic statements distinguishing ultimate and conventional ways of regarding reality are not forced apart prematurely. For while it is impossible for the enlightened person to continue to cling to any aspect of the world of name and form, it is crucial for the unenlightened that scripture makes the latter the very springboard of understanding.

There remain, nonetheless, two crucial differences between conventional and ultimate truth. Conventional truth is concerned with multiplicity, ultimate truth with non-duality, non-multiplicity. Whereas ultimate truth can never be sublated, conventional truth not only can be, but must be, if liberation is to occur. Thus in texts for meditation, plurality ascribed to *brahman* is to be accepted for such purposes. In texts concerned with the highest knowledge, plurality is (eventually) to be discarded, once it has served as a means for understanding that non-dual reality on which it is superimposed (*BSBh* 3.2.21).

If we are to understand the relation between conventional and ultimate truth in Śaṃkara's works, then, we need to examine the implications of this process of discarding or sublating with some care. Śaṃkara's concept of the sublation (*bādha*) of the conventional way of looking at things is partly modelled on the experience of waking from a dream. During the dream, the experience may seem consistent, is apparently shared by others in the dream and so forth. However, on waking, the dream experience is sublated. It ends and you realize its private status, its provisional or illusory nature, compared with the public world of waking. It lacks the shared features of that world, in terms of time, space, cause,[9] and hence is no longer deemed real on awakening. It is thus similar to illusions of other kinds, such as a mirage, or a magician's creations. When their true nature is realized, these all act as analogies for the process of sublation, just as the experience of misperceiving a rope as a snake acted as an analogy for the process of superimposition. So, as one realizes the provisional nature of the dream on waking, in a similar way, one realizes the provisional nature of the conventional world on 'waking' to the ultimate truth.

This comparison, however, raises sharply the question of the nature of the conventional world and the sense in which it, like the dream world, vanishes on awakening. Here, Deutsch's translation of *bādha* as 'subration' or down-rating is helpful. He uses it to underline the point that the crucial aspect of *bādha* is disvaluing – that is, realizing the lack of importance of the experience sub-rated/sublated, by comparison with one's new understanding (1980, p. 15). It is not so much that the public conventional world disappears once realization has dawned, rather that it is seen in a different way. This is made beautifully clear in a short passage in the *Brahmasūtra* commentary (3.2.21). Here, the links between being, knowing and valuing are shown in the course of a discussion rejecting (yet again) a Ritualist view of language as primarily injunctive.

The Pūrvamīmāṃsaka has suggested that the annihilation of the world of superimposition is something which can be commanded. Śaṃkara then considers in what sense the world of multiplicity can be said to disappear once *brahman* is known. He explicitly rejects the possibility that it goes out of existence:

> If it were saying that this currently existing manifestation, consisting of bodies and so forth at the individual level and of earth and so forth at the external, is to be annihilated, this teaching on annihilation would have an impossible goal; it is not possible for a single person to cause annihilation.[10]
>
> (*BSBh* 3.2.21, p. 362)

If this were possible, it would have been done by the first liberated person, so the public world of shared experience would no longer exist, which it patently does. Rather, on knowing *brahman* as the self, misconception is replaced by knowledge and the world of name and form disappears like the imagery of a dream. Note the illustration Śaṃkara chooses. Given that he has rejected the possibility of physical annihilation, it seems that, with the dream illustration, he is stressing that it is the way of seeing things that vanishes (and this occurs as the result of the knowledge that has dawned, not through some injunction to abolish the world). The consequence of this is that an enlightened person cannot continue to value some aspect of the world of name and form that has been dissolved by knowledge (and so, once again, there is no place for injunctions, whether about *brahman* or about abolishing the world).[11]

The nub of the matter is that which is sublated is no longer inordinately valued or attended to (in particular, as the world of ritual). To use the super-imposition analogy: we have no fear of the snake once we see the rope. The conventional and the ultimate are two ways of being and knowing, but they are also two ways of valuing. They are perhaps like the different ways a physicist and a lay-person might see and describe a table: in terms of elementary particles, or as a wooden structure for putting things on, respectively. Each way of looking is appropriate to a particular context. So with Śaṃkara. But if you are wise, he implies, you will realize the priority of the context of liberation. And since this is the real (the unchanging, the independent, the unsublated), the world by comparison cannot be absolutely real (*na . . . ātyantikaṃ satyatvam*, *BSBh* 3.2.4), because it changes, is dependent on *brahman* and is sublated in the sense we have seen above. However, Śaṃkara is quite clear that this does not make it an illusion in the same sense that dreams are. It is fixed, distinct, public, sharing the features of time, space and cause. 'Therefore when the dream is declared to be merely an illusion (*māyā*), this is to be distinguished [from the sense in which it is applied to the conventional world in *BS* 3.2.3]' (*BSBh* 3.2.4, p. 347).[12]

Nonetheless, as we shall see in the next section, Śaṃkara is quite clear that this conventional world is *avidyākṛta*, produced by misconception. In the light of the above, this then raises the question, Whose is *avidyā*? quite starkly. The problem is this. If *avidyā* belongs to *brahman*, *brahman* can be seen as the cause of the public world without difficulty, but then misconception is located in *brahman*, which is supposed to be simply knowledge/consciousness. If *avidyā* belongs to the individual, this is unproblematic in itself, but it becomes difficult to see how this can give rise to a shared public world as opposed to my misunderstanding of that world. To solve the difficulty, later Advaita made a straightforward distinction between *māyā*, the power of the Lord to project this public world (and its nature as illusion), and *avidyā*, the individual's misunderstanding of its true nature. Śaṃkara is more radical and less helpful. *Māyā*, anyway, despite impressions frequently given by Radhakrishnan and others, is not a term Śaṃkara uses much, unless directed to it by his sources.[13] *Avidyā* is another matter. If you ask the question, he says, you are still afflicted by it.[14]

Here is one of several strong clues that Śaṃkara is really interested in the current bondage of the human condition, the psychological, not in how the world came to be, the cosmogonical. We shall find another such clue in looking at his treatment of Upaniṣadic origination stories below. This would tend to support the view that the world, as such, is of little importance to Śaṃkara. The crucial words are 'as such'. Before considering this further, however, we shall examine an apparent metaphysical inconsistency in Śaṃkara's writings that might also seem to support this kind of assessment.

In some places, notably his commentary on Gauḍapāda's *Kārikā*s, Śaṃkara appears to take an idealist view of the world. Such a view sees waking experience as similar to dreaming (using the comparison slightly differently from Śaṃkara's analogy for sublation considered above). It denies the existence of external objects separate from consciousness. What we perceive as external is simply one facet of the process of cognition. Apparently external objects are really projections or conceptual constructions. A similar view was accepted by Vijñānavāda Buddhists (who, incidentally, developed the notion of the 'substratum consciousness', *ālaya-vijñāna*, to help explain shared public experience).[15] However, in the *Brahmasūtra* and *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* commentaries, Śaṃkara turns such arguments against his Buddhist opponents. Putting into their mouths an argument similar to one found in Vasubandhu (*c.* fourth century AD co-founder of the Vijñānavāda or Cittamātra school), Śaṃkara argues for a realist account of the world.[16] On this view, external objects really exist as such, independently of (our) consciousness. It is only such a view, argues Śaṃkara, that can make sense of our experience of objects as external. For if the Buddhists claim to start with experience, then they must admit that, when, for example, we see something, we are not conscious of the cognition of the thing but rather of the thing itself. We do not see the cognition, but the object itself.

There are three possible ways of explaining such inconsistencies. One is to accept a thesis of Śaṃkara's development away from the Buddhist position in his early commentary on Gauḍapāda's work. This certainly has attractions, even if the rest of Hacker's 'biography' is questioned. It would accept that Śaṃkara's mature position is realist. It does, however, seem to ignore the fact that Śaṃkara is already deeply critical of Buddhists in the *Kārikā* commentary. A second way is to presume that Śaṃkara is not really interested in establishing the truth through argument, but simply uses whatever argument is to hand to further his case. (The corollary of this is that the nature of the world is actually insignificant.) This method was typical of the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamikas, whom Śaṃkara dismisses scathingly as rejecting all the *pramāṇa*s. This second explanation would interpret the vehemence of this dismissal as poor cover for a strong resemblance in method (cf. Biderman, 1978). I accept that there is some justice in this psychological argument, but recall, from Chapter 4, the key role of scripturally demonstrated *anumāna* in Śaṃkara's thought. A third approach asks what the purpose of Śaṃkara's different arguments was. In each case, it was to establish the eternal unchanging independent reality of *brahman*, pure consciousness, over against the world that changes, exists dependently as superimposition, is the object that is perceived and can be sublated (cf. Ingalls, 1954). I suggest that, in his major commentaries, Śaṃkara found that a realist account of the nature of the world, *at a conventional level*, secured this view of pure consciousness the best, over against Buddhist interpretations of consciousness.[17] Once again, it appears that the world 'as such' is less important than what it leads us to understand about *brahman*. Nevertheless, the way it does this is precisely through the scripturally ordered picture of the world 'as such'. To see, then, how Śaṃkara's realist account is part of a wider picture that incorporates his understanding of the constitutive function of language and his preferred explanations of causality, we turn, first, to his treatment of origination stories and from there to his own favoured cosmological concept, that of 'name and form'.

Origination stories

The numerous origination stories found throughout the Upaniṣads comprise Śaṃkara's main sources for a scripturally ordered picture of the world 'as such'. We must, though, be careful to understand the nature of this picture. It is not a sort of early scientific description of cosmogony that Śaṃkara finds in the texts, themselves varying in their explanations of the origination process. It does, though, have significance for ways of seeking the self. First, then, we shall examine why there is a problem, consider one solution, then offer a variation on that solution which supports the positive valuation of the world for pedagogic purposes, as argued in the rest of this chapter.

In particular, then, some Upaniṣadic accounts envisage three basic elements emerging from reality (*sat*, *brahman*) and combining to manifest the cosmos (e.g. *Ch Up* 6.3–4: fire, water and food/earth), others five (e.g. *Tait Up* 2.1, giving ether, air, fire, water, earth). Because Śaṃkara speaks in some cases of three elements,[18] but in *Thousand Teachings* of five (*Upad G* 1.19–20),[19] Mayeda has argued that the latter may have been his preference. However, Mayeda concludes: 'What he really wants to say is simply that from a cosmological point of view *Brahman* is identical with *Ātman*' (1979, p. 27). A similar conclusion is reached on this issue by Sundaresan. He first considers *Ch Up Bh* 6.4.4, which Mayeda does not cover. While Śaṃkara mentions both *trivṛtkaraṇa* (mixing of three elements) and *pañcīkaraṇa* (mixing of five elements) in this passage, Sundaresan points out that Śaṃkara favours neither over the other. Accordingly he concludes, 'Rather, both accounts are treated equally, and the emphasis is shifted back to non-dual Being' (2002, p. 4).

That Śaṃkara understands the primary purpose of the origination stories to be the disclosure of the non-dual self is clear. However, I shall argue that the way these stories structure the world to enable this disclosure is not insignificant in his view. Further investigation indicates that Śaṃkara does take some care to reconcile three- and five-element texts. In the *Brahmasūtra* commentary 2.3.1–12, following the *Sūtra*s themselves, Śaṃkara comments at length to defend his Advaitin view against charges of incoherence (*BSBh* 2.3.1). His solution, however, is simple. The five-element version of *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* 2.1 can be deemed to incorporate the three-element version of *Chāndogya* 6.3 f, ether and air preceding the manifestation of fire, water and earth (food). Importantly, he does this in the very context in which he is establishing the fundamental scriptural thesis of non-duality (*BSBh* 2.3.6). It is this Advaitin understanding that can underpin correct use of Mīmāṃsā procedures for reconciling different passages in this (and, indeed, every) case.

Not insignificantly, then, Śaṃkara follows a similar procedure in an incidental comment in his *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* commentary. The Upaniṣad text says, 'As (Death) was worshipping, water sprang up'. Śaṃkara comments:

> Here we must add, 'following the origination of the three beginning with ether', because there is another comparable scriptural statement (*Tait Up* 2.1.1) and because there is no option (*vikalpa*) over the stages of manifestation.[20]
>
> (*Bṛ Up Bh* 1.2.1, p. 617)

Śaṃkara here uses the term '*vikalpa*' in its Mīmāṃsā sense. In Pūrvamīmāṃsā, discussion of *vikalpa* usually revolved around the question of whether certain ritual practices enjoined in different passages were alternatives or whether they were to be combined. Here Śaṃkara clearly indicates, despite Mayeda and Sundaresan, that the Upaniṣadic origination

accounts are to be read as a whole. Indeed, I would argue that he is implicitly using a similar process of reconciliation when he mentions the five-element cosmology along with the three-element cosmology required by the text in his comment on *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6.4.4. In this case, his focus is once more on the Advaitin thesis of non-duality as that which underpins his interpretation of the texts on origination (as in *BSBh* 2.3.6 and elsewhere).

Having established this, Śaṃkara is then left free to use patterns of cosmological manifestation as the basis for those processes of interiorization we considered in Chapter 4. In particular we saw how, in his commentary on *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* 3.6.1, Śaṃkara interpolates a pattern based on five-element manifestation to direct the one who seeks liberation back to the true self. Textual interpretation and understanding of the world can be seen to go hand in hand, their structures not incidental in drawing the one who seeks to realize the self within.

There are, of course, many other origination stories on which Śaṃkara comments, some of which we have considered elsewhere in our exploration of Śaṃkara's method. In Śaṃkara's view, they are all *arthavāda*, secondary passages that support the primary teaching on non-duality. This supporting role is, however, extremely important, linked as it is with Śaṃkara's understanding of the arguments for non-duality that are embedded in scripture and with the complementary role of examples in leading the seeker towards realization (see below). What I have suggested at this juncture is that, just as the value of these secondary passages should be recognized, so too should the pedagogic value of the world that they help the Advaitin seeker to construe. To a further constitutive use of language, linked with Śaṃkara's favoured cosmological concept of name and form, we can now turn.

Name and form (*nāmarūpa*)

The concept of name and form derives quite clearly from the Upaniṣadic tradition in Śaṃkara's use[21] and is commonplace in later Advaita too. However, scholars such as Satchidanandendra (ET, 1989, p. 19) and Hacker (1950) have shown that Śaṃkara's use differs subtly, both from his sources' and from his successors'. I shall indicate some key differences before examining Śaṃkara's concept in more detail.

In origination stories like *Ch Up* 6.3.2–3, the deity has already emitted fire, water and food, giving rise to three types of creatures, before it manifests name and form, apparently associated with individuality.[22] Śaṃkara, by contrast, envisages 'unmanifest name and form', dependent on the self, as the primordial material cause from which all manifested name and form is produced.

> That name and form, being unmanifested, manifesting from that self, appeared in the name and configuration of ether. . . . From this,

becoming more gross, name and form, manifesting, took the form of air. Then fire, from fire water, then earth . . . .[23]

(*Upad G* 1.19–20)

This unmanifest name and form is different from the self, is grounded in it and known by it (*Upad G* 1.18).[24] It is so subtle that it is impossible to say whether it is the self or something different (*tattvānyatvābhyām anirvacanīya*).[25] It is consistently described by Śaṃkara as *avidyākṛta*, brought about by misconception. Here, *avidyā* is not another type of material cause, as it tends to become in later Advaita, but the provoking misconception that Śaṃkara infuriatingly refuses to locate, as we saw above.

Śaṃkara's distinction between the unmanifest and manifest name and form is one little noticed in later Advaita, that between name and form and *avidyā* another. Thus Satchidanandendra notes that, whereas in Śaṃkara's *Brahmasūtra* commentary 'name and form are said to be *imagined through* Ignorance and to be *spoken of as* Māyā', in the *Pañcapādikā* sub-commentary attributed to Padmapāda, 'they are said to *be* Ignorance and Māyā' (Satchidanandendra, ET, 1989, p. 19, translator's emphases).[26] That is, the *Pañcapādikā* simply identifies name and form with both *avidyā* and *māyā*, while Śaṃkara views name and form as resulting from *avidyā* and to be characterized as *māyā*, as we shall see further below.

A good source for a full survey of Śaṃkara's idiosyncratic use of name and form with an anthology of key texts is Alston (1980b, pp. 119–45 and notes). In the following, I wish to focus on two aspects: the valuation of the world it suggests and the way it serves to integrate several otherwise rather diverse aspects of Śaṃkara's view of the world. Although this could be taken as implicit in Alston's survey, I articulate it rather differently.

The introduction to the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* commentary gives the most unambiguous description and valuation of name, form and action (using this trio because of 1.6.1, 'This indeed consists of three things: name, form and action'):

> Thus the round of rebirth from Brahmā down to stationary objects, which possesses faults such as innate misconception (*avidyā*), is based on name, form and action. This very manifested [state], consisting of ends and means, is that which was unmanifested before the origination of the world. This *saṃsāra*, like the seed and the sprout, brought about by misconception, characterized by the super-imposition of actions, factors and results on the self, without beginning, without end, is futile (*anartha*). So this Upaniṣad is begun, to remove misconception from the person who is not attracted (*viraktasya*) [by it], its purpose being the attainment of the knowledge of *brahman*, which is the opposite of that.[27]

(*Bṛ Up Bh* Introduction, p. 609)

It is important to realize that the world thus characterized is essentially the world of ritual and rebirth, which is to be renounced by the one seeking knowledge. Śaṃkara's introduction goes on to distinguish the ever-free *brahman* from such a ritual world based on the trio of name, form and action, a view similarly expressed in *Thousand Teachings*: 'Different from name, form and action, by nature ever-free, I am the self, the supreme *brahman*, pure consciousness, I am always without a second' (*Upad P* 11.7).[28]

Such a view is confirmed in the *Brahmasūtra* commentary, in the course of a long discussion on the pair of name and form, citing scriptural sources and concluding the same. For the one in the ultimate state, the world of manifest name and form, evolved from the unmanifest, and comprising the world of conventional experience, is said by all the Upaniṣads not to exist (*BSBh* 2.1.14, quoting *Ch Up* 8.14.1, 6.3.2 etc., then later 8.24.1).

Futile, destined to vanish, to be eliminated. The standard view of Śaṃkara's assessment of this world seems straightforwardly to be upheld in his preferred combination of terms. However, I shall argue that thinking about this world, using *nāmarūpa* and other related concepts, is crucial in breaking beyond it and is, on Śaṃkara's own admission, the only way of coming to know *brahman* at all. So he says: 'It is not possible for the scripture to make known an unknown other thing (or that which is unknown, other than a thing) without resorting to everyday words and their meanings' (*Bṛ Up Bh* 2.1.20, p. 737).[29] And even more specifically: 'For if name and form were not manifested, then the form of this self, which is without limiting conditions, referred to as a mass of understanding, could not be known/ proclaimed' (*Bṛ Up Bh* 2.5.19).[30]

Śaṃkara's task is, as we have repeatedly seen, two-fold: to produce a consistent reading of the *śruti* texts, and to defeat opponents of an Advaitin view, using scripturally based reason. *Nāmarūpa* helps him in this task. First, it enables him to show how the Upaniṣads teach the theory of causality he defends and to make sense of texts that might seem to count against such a theory. Second, it helps to support a Mīmāṃsaka view of language, which is vital for understanding the relation between scripture and world. Third, it moves the understanding on beyond the initial theory of causality in a way fully justified, for Śaṃkara, by the texts themselves, enabling him to integrate into an Advaitin vision other scriptural concepts, like the Lord's creative power (*māyāśakti*) and *prakṛti* (the mental-material world). In doing this, it helps the pupil to work through the origination stories in a variety of ways till their true purpose is understood, the disclosure of the ever-free *brahman*. This is certainly more to do with reading texts about the world than the world in itself, so could be seen as yet another clue that Śaṃkara is not interested in the nature of the world as such. Yet the texts make us order our world and our persons so as to disclose self within; name and form are an intimately related pair; at a conventional level, eternal connections exist between words and generic configurations. At the least, this should warn us that our

understandings of text and world are mutually conditioning, and in our final section, we shall see how, in one brilliant image, Śaṃkara shows their unfolding to be in parallel. So to causality.

Śaṃkara, like many other Vedāntins, espoused a theory of causality known as the *satkāryavāda*, the teaching that the effect exists (latently) in the cause. The standard example given for this is the pot, which exists latently in the clay from which it is formed. The pot once made is nothing other than the lump of clay moulded into a different shape and so was potentially (latently) there in that unshaped lump. A more modern example might be that of a potential sculpture, seen by the artist's eye, in the piece of wood she contemplates. The *satkāryavāda* theory was often interpreted as a theory of the real transformation of the cause into the effect, *pariṇāmavāda*. On this view, the lump of clay really changes its form into that of the pot. This view was held, for example, by the Sāṃkhyans, who believed that the root-*prakṛti* really transformed itself into this manifest world. Sāṃkhyans had no problem with the primal cause undergoing real change. Such a view is, however, problematic for Śaṃkara. For him, *brahman*, the one without a second, must be the material cause of the universe for there is no other: 'In the beginning was being, one only, without a second' (*Ch Up* 6.2.1). Yet clearly he cannot attribute real transformation to *brahman*, for this would compromise its infinite partlessness and unchanging nature and therefore its reality. At this point, his distinction between unmanifest and manifest name and form (not found as such in the Upaniṣads) comes into play. That which transforms itself, first into ether, then air and so on, is name and form, clearly differentiated from the ever-free *brahman*. *Brahman*'s changelessness is protected. So too are Upaniṣadic statements like, 'In the beginning this was the non-existent'. They refer not to the *asatkāryavāda* of the Vaiśeṣikas, who hold that the effect does not exist latently in the cause, argues Śaṃkara, but to the unmanifest name and form. This is described as non-existent because of its subtlety, in comparison with its clear experienceable existence when in the manifest state (*BSBh* 2.1.17 on *Ch Up* 3.19.1 and *Tait Up* 2.7).

But then, challenges the Sāṃkhyan opponent, if you accept a changing name and form, you are really agreeing with our theory that it is *prakṛti* which is transformed by contrast with the unchanging *puruṣa*, that is, *brahman* (*Pr Up Bh* 6.3).[31] Certainly, we seem to be back yet again with a dualistic problem. The existence even of the unmanifest name and form seems to be a second to *brahman*, precisely that which Śaṃkara wishes to refute. One tactic he takes is to stress the dependence of the unmanifest name and form on *brahman*. It cannot exist without *brahman*, unlike the Sāṃkhyan *prakṛti*, which is an independently eternal principle (*Pr Up Bh* 6.3). A second is to stress how in its subtle form 'it is impossible to say whether it is *brahman* or something else'.[32] A third is to shift the notion of causality, which we shall look at below. On the second, I am inclined to agree with Alston against Hacker that the translation given above is the correct interpretation of

Śaṃkara's Sanskrit (Alston, 1980b, pp. 129–32). It is not so much that Śaṃkara is noting the instability of unmanifest name and form as something always tending towards manifestation (which is what Hacker argues). Rather, it is the non-separability of name and form, the desire that *brahman*'s oneness is not compromised, which is at issue.

This interpretation can be sustained even in the light of *Bṛ Up Bh* 2.4.10, which Hacker does not consider. Here it seems that Śaṃkara is concerned not with the unmanifest but with the manifest name and form. Madhavananda's translation reads:

> Name and form are the limiting adjuncts of the Supreme Self, of which, *when they are differentiated*, it is impossible to tell whether they are identical with or different from It, as is the case with the foam of water. [Note Śaṃkara's example of foam and water, which he also employs in *Upad G* 1.19.]
>
> (1985, p. 252, my emphasis)

Yet in their gross differentiated state, at one level, it is quite plain that name and form are not identical with the transcendent *brahman*. Alston rightly points out that this passage is about 'transition from the unmanifest to the manifest state' (1980b, p. 129).[33] However, he ignores another subtle difference in the Sanskrit at this point. Śaṃkara does not say here that it is impossible to say whether the manifesting name and form is the same as that (*brahman*) or different. Rather, he says that name and form *ought* not to be described as being either that (*brahman*) or something other, talking of the constitution of all states of *saṃsāra*.[34] I suggest that this has to be understood in the light of statements elsewhere that, from the ultimate standpoint, name and form is not separate from *brahman* (*Bṛ Up Bh* 3.5.1), that name and form is real only insofar as it is the true self (*Ch Up Bh* 6.3.4), that it has no independent existence (*Pr Up Bh* 6.3), just as the snake does not exist apart from the rope. Name and form is, however, taken as real in itself in the sphere of conventional experience (*BSBh* 2.1.14). So name and form is not to be described as the same as *brahman* nor as different from it for the same reason that the question, Whose is *avidyā*? is to be disallowed. We are back with a split between ultimate and conventional truth, and an urgent situation of bondage. At this point, we need a radical shift in our notion of causality, a shift for which the concept of name and form is eminently suitable. First though, we note another function of the concept at the conventional level that is vital for Śaṃkara's understanding of language.

This is its ability to embrace the Mīmāṃsaka view of the eternal relationship between words and *ākṛti*s (generic configurations), which we mentioned in Chapter 3, a use to which the *Brahmasūtra*s already put the phrase in 1.3.30.[35] Now Vedic words can be equated with names, constant *ākṛti*s (rather than individuals) with forms.[36] Purāṇic passages on the manifestation of the

world at the beginning of each cycle in accordance with Vedic words are readily harmonized with earlier passages from the Brāhmaṇas (*BSBh* 1.3.28). Far from objects being the result of 'the arbitrary activity of naming' (Alston, 1980b, p. 124), they are manifested in accordance with the set pattern of Vedic language. The beings so originated instantiate a particular name and form because of their past actions, the whole trio from the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* commentary underlying the discussion at this key point (*BSBh* 1.3.30).[37] We can therefore see that, *at the conventional level*, a mythology (of cosmic cycles), a metaphysic (of realism), a language theory (of eternal relationships), and a causality theory (*satkāryavāda*) are cleverly drawn together by the concept of *nāmarūpa* used with subtle differences, though not inconsistently, by the interpreter of scriptural givens.

We turn now to the role of *nāmarūpa* in subverting this conventional picture, a shift given by scripture precisely where it seems to be supporting *satkāryavāda*. 'The modification is merely a name arising from speech, the clay/gold/iron alone is reality', says *Ch Up* 6.1.4–6. This passage is crucial to Śaṃkara. It indicates for him that no real change takes place from cause to effect. Rather, the effect is cause seen and named differently. In a long comment in *BSBh* 2.1.27, Śaṃkara draws on the idea of this passage in conjunction with his view of name and form to defend *brahman*'s partless changelessness. I shall quote it at length since it also shows clearly how name and form, brought about by *avidyā* (misconception), is linked with his vital teaching on superimposition:

> An object does not actually acquire parts when a difference of form is attributed to it because of a misconception. It is like when a person with defective vision sees more than one moon; the moon does not actually become multiple. So *brahman* is considered to be the basis of all conventional experience, including real transformation, because of a difference of form which is designated name and form and is constructed by misconception. It consists of the manifest and the unmanifest and is impossible to describe as either 'that' [*brahman*] or as something different. But in its ultimate form [*brahman*] remains unchanged, transcending all conventional experience. Because this difference in name and form, constructed by misconception, merely has its origin in speech [alluding to *Ch Up* 6.1.4], *brahman*'s partless-ness is not violated. The purpose of the *śruti* on real transformation is not to teach real transformation as such, because no fruitful result can come of such teaching. Rather it has the purpose of teaching about the existence of the self, which is *brahman*, and is free from all conventional experience, because a result can come of that. Having begun by saying, 'This is the self which is not thus, not thus', it states (the result), 'O Janaka, you have attained fearlessness' (*Bṛ Up* 4.2.4).[38]
>
> (*BSBh* 2.1.27)

The change from unmanifest to manifest name and form absorbs the mythology and philosophy of the transformation theory of causality, yet as a whole is seen as nothing other than a superimposition upon *brahman*, the sole reality, *sat*. If we characterize this as a shift in the understanding of *satkāryavāda* causality, this should not be understood as a developmental statement about Śaṃkara. The notion that name and form is *avidyākṛta* is always central for him. Rather, my intention has been to show that, working from a number of different starting points, Śaṃkara's understanding of name and form, if not strictly systematic, is nonetheless an important integrating concept, both in his own attempt to make sense of different texts and to refute opponents and to draw pupils on from their initial understanding to the final realization.

The last section of this chapter will illustrate this teaching process in another way. In it, we, in a sense, go back to the beginning to look at three of the analogies Śaṃkara uses to illuminate the relation between *brahman* and the world. Familiar themes and shifts will emerge as we examine how the analogies our world provides are contextualized and juxtaposed by Śaṃkara. We shall see how each has specific functions, including a place in scripturally provided inference, but that it is in their mutual combination and restriction that they push the pupil beyond the limitations of name and form to the one within.[39]

The clay–pot example

The clay–pot example is drawn from *Ch Up* 6.1.4. Śvetaketu, a big-headed young brahmin, has just returned from twelve years' Vedic study with a teacher. 'Did you ask', queries his father gently, 'for that instruction by which the unheard of becomes heard, the unthought of becomes thought of, the unknown becomes known?' In Śaṃkara's commentary, we hear Śvetaketu's mental retort: 'How can that be possible?' In the Upaniṣad, the father starts his instruction by replying: 'By knowing a lump of clay, all things made of clay are known.' Things like water-pots, pitchers and so on, explains Śaṃkara, are simply modifications of the clay. A product or effect is nothing other than its material cause (that from which it was made, its *upādāna-kāraṇa*). So, we shall find out, this world is nothing other than *brahman*, its material, or better, reality-giving cause (De Smet, 1970, p. 115).

From this, it will be clear why the clay–pot example is one Śaṃkara frequently uses or alludes to when discussing *satkāryavāda*.[40] Playing a crucial role in his two linked enterprises (the interpretation of scripture and the defeat of opponents), it operates in terms of both content and method. The exposition that follows on both the clay–pot and the rope–snake will follow closely the line taken in the *Chāndogya* commentary itself to indicate the subtle interplay between text, argument and example in Śaṃkara's thought.

In the *Chāndogya* commentary, then, Śaṃkara shows how the clay–pot example (6.1.4) helps to make sense of the verse which follows in the next section: 'In the beginning, this was being (*sat*) alone, one only without a second' (*Ch Up* 6.2.1). One afternoon, the explanation goes, as you are walking through an Indian village, you see some pots, where, in the morning, you had seen only the clay. You realize that the pots you see now are simply the clay you saw earlier, fashioned into a different form. Just so, clarifies Śaṃkara, the multiple world we now perceive is nothing but *brahman*, the really existent, in manifested form. The example helps make sense of this particular passage, an example provided by scripture for its own elucidation: both content and method are given. Causality is shown to be explained by scripture according to the *satkāryavāda* view.

The example also helps to refute the opposing theory of causality, that of the *asatkāryavāda*, the view that the effect does not pre-exist in the cause. It was a view held by the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika school and, in a different form, by Buddhists. Śaṃkara explicitly distinguishes the Upaniṣadic teaching on being/existence from the Vaiśeṣika view (*Ch Up Bh* 6.2.1). He admits that they see existence as a universal property: you can say, the thing exists, the quality exists, the action exists. However, they hold that, once an effect is produced, the cause no longer exists as such. This will not do as an interpretation of this passage, for here an identity between the source, 'being alone,' and this (manifested world) is affirmed.

Śaṃkara argues against the *asatkāryavāda* (both Vaiśeṣika and Buddhist) in various ways. First, he takes the common-sense view that something cannot come out of nothing. Second, he argues that the opponents cannot produce an example to support their case. He rejects their seed–sprout example on the grounds that the sprout is simply a different arrangement of the constituents of the seed, not something entirely different, the seed no longer existing. (He ignores the point that the Vaiśeṣikas can reconstruct the clay–pot example to support their case. The lump of clay no longer exists as lump of clay once the pot exists as pot.)[41] Third, he argues that to subscribe to non-existence as a metaphysical doctrine is illogical since it involves the denial of the existence of the very person making the denial.[42] This holds for Śaṃkara because *sat* simply is *brahman*, which is *ātman*, which is consciousness.

The first two points and others like them tend to assume that *asatkāryavāda* asserts that something (an effect) can arise from nothing (*asat* as cause). This is partly because Śaṃkara is engaged in explaining the continuation of the text of *Ch Up* 6.2.1, which says, 'Some say, "In the beginning this was non-existence alone . . . ,"' but it persists in all his rejections of *asatkāryavāda*. However, this is not really what either of his opponents was arguing. The Vaiśeṣikas thought there were really existing causes that ended their existence *as causes* as the real effect came into existence. The Buddhists held that each event could be accounted for in terms of multiple interdependent causes and

conditions. Śaṃkara, perhaps naughtily, tends to ignore this and presses his common-sense and textually based view. The point, though, is that, whatever the merit of his arguments here, he holds them to be based on a scripturally given example employing a scripturally sanctioned method in accordance with the correct teaching tradition.[43]

This is not just a question of interpreting a single passage. We saw in Chapter 4 that 'throughout the Vedānta' there are statements (*pratijñā*) that can only be upheld as the first line of Upaniṣadically given inferences if the *satkāryavāda* (and its related clay example) are accepted.[44] A key instance is *Mu Up* 1.1.3, 'Sir, what is that through which, if it is known, everything else becomes known?' It is important to note that the inference generated is not an argument proving the validity of *satkāryavāda*. Rather, it is a scripturally given argument about the nature of the self, which requires the validity of *satkāryavāda* to work. This suggests the importance Śaṃkara ascribes to this theory of causality but also the need to interpret it correctly. This is why he goes to some lengths to show why the Sāṃkhyan interpretation is faulty and also why he changes his example, as we shall see below.

We have already mentioned the Sāṃkhyan view that this manifested world, *prakṛti*, consisting of the three *guṇa*s or strands of intelligibility, activity and inertia, is none other than the root-*prakṛti* or *pradhāna*.[45] As effect, it existed latently in and was manifested from this cause. Manifestation occurs, however, when the equilibrium of the three *guṇa*s is disturbed because of the seeming entanglement of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*. In other words, there is something different from and beyond the material cause in the Sāṃkhyan system, namely, *puruṣa*. This Śaṃkara is clearly not prepared to admit, since it would compromise the teaching of non-duality. He therefore acknowledges that, though in the case of the clay–pot you need a potter as well, an efficient or structure-giving cause (*nimitta-kāraṇa*), this is not the case with *brahman* and the production of the world. *Brahman* is both material and efficient cause, shown since the scriptures attribute origination to the reflection or thought of *brahman*, not to any other. The clay–pot example has its limitations.

These are further shown when the Sāṃkhyans apply it to their interpretation of *satkāryavāda* as *pariṇāmavāda* (teaching on real transformation), the view that the cause is really transformed into the effect: clay into pot, milk into curds and so on. As we saw above, Śaṃkara cannot hold this view since it entails real change in the cause. As he says repeatedly, *brahman* is without change, eternal, not affected by the processes of *saṃsāra*. It is at this point that we, with him, change our example to that of the rope–snake.

The rope–snake

We have already met the rope–snake as a key example for Śaṃkara's understanding of superimposition: its nature, its consequences and the freedom that correct understanding brings. In the current context, its most important

function is to provide an example for *satkāryavāda* that does not entail a theory of real transformation.[46] Seeing a rope and imagining it to be a snake clearly involves no actual change in the rope. Neither does the reverse process of recognizing the rope for what it really is. The rope–snake example thus provides a complement to the clay–pot example, by implication excluding from it that aspect of it as an analogy which might wrongly suggest real change.[47]

As was indicated in the extract on name and form from *BSBh* 2.1.27, for something to be capable of change, in Śaṃkara's thought it must have parts or different aspects that reflect different phases of a process of change. But *brahman* is partless (and changeless), as we know from texts like *Śvet Up* 6.19: 'Partless (*niṣkalam*), actionless, tranquil, blameless, taintless', and *Mu Up* 2.1.2: 'For this divine person is formless (*amūrtaḥ*), for he is without and within, birthless (*ajaḥ*)' (quotations Śaṃkara gives in *Ch Up Bh* 6.2.2). For this reason, Gambhirananda's translation of Śaṃkara's application of the rope–snake example in the paragraph immediately following these quotations is rather misleading. He says:

> How can it be logical that Existence which is partless can have a changeful configuration?
> *Reply*: There is no such fault because, as from the constituents of rope, etc., there can appear shapes like snake, etc. Similarly it is logical that from the constituents of *sat*, Existence, imagined by the intellect, there can appear a changeful configuration.
>
> (1983, p. 422)

However, this sounds at first as if *sat* has constituents or parts, precisely the view Śaṃkara is arguing against. His reply should rather be translated as follows:

> *Reply*: This is not a problem. Because the configuration (or pattern) of the modification is possible through parts falsely constructed (*parikalpita*) by the intellect on *sat*, just as the configuration of the snake, etc. occurs through parts falsely constructed on the rope, etc.[48]
>
> (*Ch Up Bh* 6.2.2, p. 509)

In other words, just as the intellect sees in the rope features which make it appear like a snake, so the intellect sees in *sat* features that make it appear as this manifested world (the modification). But those features as constructed are not really present either in the rope or in *sat*.

The rope–snake example clearly helps to establish Śaṃkara's own view of *satkāryavāda* as superimposition (as did the final interpretation of *nāmarūpa* considered above). Later Advaita was to call this view *vivartavāda* (teaching on illusory appearance) to distinguish it from *pariṇāmavāda* (teaching on real

transformation). Śaṃkara however does not yet employ this term, a key example of the later tradition fixing in description what he illumines by illustration.

As might be expected, that illustration is also used extensively in the counterpart to establishing Śaṃkara's own view, that is, rejecting his opponents'. It goes alongside scripture, where the opponent recognizes the Veda, or stands alone where this is not the case. *Ch Up* 6.2.3 begins: 'It [*sat*] thought, "May I be many, may I come forth". It originated fire.' Since *sat* thinks, exhibits conscious processes, it cannot be the insentient *pradhāna* or *prakṛti* of Sāṃkhya. The word translated 'thought' (*īkṣita*) literally means to 'see', hence to see in one's mind. So, according to Śaṃkara, *sat* is 'one who makes a seeing' and here Gambhirananda may well be right to interpret this as an act of visualization. We will take this up in the next section with the example of the magician. Śaṃkara then continues his exegesis of *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6.2.3 by applying the examples of clay–pot and rope–snake to the process of origination.

First, *sat* declares, 'May I become many; may I be born (*prajāyeya*).' In passing we may note that Śaṃkara draws out the intention with an economic gloss: 'May I be born, originate fully/excellently (*prajāyeya prakarṣenot-padyeya*).' This seems crucial for our assessment of the status of the world in Śaṃkara's thought. Whether '*prakarṣeṇa*' here means 'fully' or 'excellently', it suggests a positive evaluation of manifestation. Elaborating then on this process, Śaṃkara suggests it is like earth taking the shape of pots, or ropes snakes. It is easy to see how the rope–snake example fits with a process that is now seen as a type of mental construction, being *buddhiparikalpita*. It is less immediately apparent why the clay–pot is retained. While Śaṃkara does not make it explicit, it seems to act as a kind of illustrative guarantor of the reality of the cause. It prepares for Śaṃkara's rejection of the (possibly Buddhist, though probably Sāṃkhyan) objector who suggests that the rope–snake example implies the unreality of what is perceived. Śaṃkara insists that what is perceived (in terms of the manifested world) is real insofar as it is *sat*. He could have argued that the world is real insofar as its basis is real, just as the snake is real insofar as it is (really) a rope. In other words, there is a real substrate on which superimpositions are made. Elsewhere, he does apply the rope–snake in this way. However, because Buddhists used the rope–snake example without commitment to the independent existence of a real substrate, Śaṃkara probably felt that the clay–pot example was less ambiguous in this respect. At any rate, his juxtaposition of the two examples in this particular context seems to bear out the view that these examples function in relation to one another and in mutual restriction. I shall develop this below.

Śaṃkara thus uses the rope–snake example here against Sāṃkhya and, probably, by allusion, against the Buddhists. Finally, he uses it, again with the clay–pot, against a Nyāya view. The Naiyāyikas held existence to be a

property of things that they do not, of course, possess before their beginning (before they exist) and after their end (when they no longer exist). Śaṃkara rejects this view. There only are objects and the words that designate them because of the primacy of *sat*. Objects cannot exist without *sat*, that is, reality, which is *brahman*, nor can the words which denote them. Objects do not exist independently, but are contingent upon *sat.* They just are *sat*, seen and described as if different from *sat*. They are like the snake, which is really a rope, called 'snake' because it is seen as such, like lumps and pots called such as if they were different from the clay with which they are really identical. Here we catch a hint of the Upaniṣadic passage that allows Śaṃkara to integrate these two illustrations (and to interpret name and form as super-imposition) and which he quoted in his commentary on the previous verse: 'Modification is merely a name arising from speech, the clay is the only reality' (*Ch Up* 6.1.4).

Having defended his interpretation of the Upaniṣad's origination passage against Sāṃkhya and Nyāya theories, Śaṃkara continues, without a break, to show the implication of such a world view. Once the rope is recognized as the reality and the pots seen as nothing but clay, the words 'snake', 'pot' and so forth lose their currency. Similarly, the person who has recognized *sat* no longer needs to use words to describe the world as if it were different from *sat*. This is the sense given in the following quotations from *śruti*: 'Where speech turns back, along with the mind, unable to reach' (*Tait Up* 2.4.1), 'in the inexpressible, unsupported' (*Tait Up* 2.7.1). The latter comes from another passage on origination, which itself makes clear the goal of it all, namely, the fearless state supported by the invisible, unsupported source of all.

We can make three comments on these quotations that underline how the rope–snake and clay–pot examples are functioning. First, in his commentary on *Tait Up* 2.7.1, Śaṃkara takes this passage to be establishing the reality of the self, equated with *brahman*. This is one of the main purposes of the clay–pot example, to affirm the reality of the substrate on which super-imposition is made, and to exclude from the rope–snake example any suspicion of the contrary. Second, we are reminded of the close link between language and objects, name and form. *Brahman* is beyond the world of name and form, hence inexpressible by any words, yet is the goal of the search. Snake and pot and the words designating them must be left behind when the reality of rope and clay is grasped. In the analogies, the base language and different objects (rope and clay) remain. In the reality to which the analogies point, all name and form must be transcended, leaving only the substrate beyond them. Yet without superimposition and analogy, the substrate would not have been realized. Here then is an important indication of the positive evaluation Śaṃkara places on the world, for it is the very means of its own transcendence. Third, the *Taittirīya* passage shows clearly the purpose of its own (and indeed every) origination story: to direct attention to that which liberates from the originated world, *brahman*, the self, the source of all (cf.

BSBh 4.3.14). This is the purpose which, like all Śaṃkara's major examples, the rope–snake and clay–pot share.

Śaṃkara makes this particularly clear in *BSBh* 1.4.14.[49] Here, he explicitly quotes *GK* 3.15, attributing it to 'those who know the tradition' (*sampradāyavidaḥ*) to argue that the only point of examples such as the clay is to show that the effect is non-different from the cause. *GK* 3.15, of course, itself uses the Upaniṣadic examples of clay, iron and sparks to show that the texts teach non-difference. Here, then, Śaṃkara makes a very clear claim that he is basing his method on that of the teaching tradition which in turn properly interprets the Upaniṣads.

Magician and magical illusion

The final example for the relation between *brahman* and world we shall consider is that of the magician (*māyāvin*) who creates a magical illusion by his own magical powers. The same word, *māyā*, can be used for both the power and its product. This enables Śaṃkara to integrate rather different uses in *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*, *Gītā* and Gauḍapāda.[50] However, when Śaṃkara employs the magician example, it is notable that *māyā* always applies to the magician's power, the means through which the magic show is created.[51] It does not describe the effect. Or, to put it another way, there is no real effect apart from the magician's power. This will be important for the way Śaṃkara uses this analogy to complement the clay–pot and rope–snake examples.

The elusive magician does not appear as frequently or with such detailed explanations as these other examples. However there are sufficient fleeting occurrences throughout Śaṃkara's works and two rather more extended applications (in *GKBh* 3 and *Ait Up Bh* 1) to justify our focus in this section and to make better known Hacker's contention (1950, pp. 269–71) that *māyā* is more important as an illustration than as a theory for Śaṃkara.

The analogy has at least four important applications: to guarantee the unity of self as efficient and material cause; to preserve the self unchanged despite the multiplicity of the world; to stress the reality of the self as cause; and to indicate the possibility of release once realization occurs. These are familiar themes. We shall treat them in reverse order, paying most attention to the one listed first. Imagine you are watching a skilled magician. He creates a magical world of forests and people in which you become engrossed. Alternatively, he performs the Indian rope trick and you see him as another person climbing in the air. But once the show is over, you return to reality. The magical world is gone. Only the magician remains.[52] Just so, when you realize the nature of this world (as superimposition or, in *GKBh*, as originated through *māyā*, here paralleled with misconception), you are no longer engrossed by the world. The world disappears in the sense we considered above. Release from its thralls is possible (theme four above).[53] Only *brahman* remains. The reality of the self is affirmed (theme three).[54]

To demonstrate that there is no coming into being (*ajātivāda*) is a central concern of Gauḍapāda. Śaṃkara almost certainly understands this in a subtly different sense, but, in the third chapter of his commentary, eagerly interprets Gauḍapāda's teaching on *māyā* to mean that the changeless self is unaffected by the multiplicity of the world, which does not exist from the standpoint of ultimate reality (*paramārthataḥ*) (theme two). While Gauḍapāda uses the illustration of a dream here, Śaṃkara adds to it the magician (*māyāvin*).[55] This is not just by attraction to Gauḍapāda's frequent vocabulary of *māyā*, nor just because it is implied by Gauḍapāda's quotation from *Bṛ Up* 2.5.19 on Indra's magical powers (*GK* 3.24).[56] Rather, it nudges all the teaching about *māyā* in the direction of analogy rather than description,[57] probably for two main reasons. The first may have been to differentiate his own teaching from that of the Buddhists for whom *māyā* was a key concept. It allowed him, even in this context, to introduce his preferred terms of *avidyā* and name and form into the discussion.[58] The second relates to a key argument of this chapter, and indeed, of the book, about complementarity and mutual restriction. If the teaching on *māyā* is understood descriptively, there is a danger that it will be taken as a single explanation of the nature of the world. But this reintroduces those problematic questions about who is responsible for *māyā* (or *avidyā*, misconception). Śaṃkara, it seems to me, is quite determined not to allow the pupil to think there is any easy solution to this, other than realization itself. In the *GKBh*, Śaṃkara blatantly uses the magician example to highlight the tension involved when the problem is looked at from a conventional point of view. Here is the magician. Here is the magical illusion. Here is the audience, taken in by the show. Whose is *māyā* or *avidyā*? The magician's? Or the perceiver's? It is merely superimposed, not existing from an ultimate standpoint.[59] It is an easy step from this to the attribution of *māyā* to the Lord and *avidyā* to the individual self, as we saw was done in later Advaita. But Śaṃkara refrains from simplifying. By insisting on the analogy, which does not operate alone but is to be complemented by other analogies, he forces the pupil to live with the problem until the ultimate solution is seen.

In the *Aitareya Upaniṣad* commentary, the magician appears in an apparently different guise. One of the problems for the clay–pot example was the apparent need for a potter in addition. We saw above how Śaṃkara maintained that the *Chāndogya* text preserves *brahman* as sole cause because it shows that origination is due to conscious reflection. *Brahman* is both efficient and material cause. Here, Śaṃkara poses the problem the other way round. 'In the beginning', says the *Aitareya*, 'this (world) was indeed just the one self. Nothing else whatsoever winked. He thought (*īkṣata*), "Let me originate the worlds".' (*Ait Up* 1.1). Commenting on the next verse, Śaṃkara compares the self with an architect who has a plan for a palace. But then an objection is raised. An architect uses separate materials. What does the self have to use? Śaṃkara's first answer involves name and form, whose identity with the self

he stresses strongly. Then he gives a preferable position, perhaps sensing that the analogy becomes too strained, when architect and materials are equated:

> Just as a magician, who possesses intelligence, and has no material, transforms just himself into another person climbing through space as it were, so the omniscient God (*deva*) who is omnipotent and has great power (*mahāmāyaḥ*) transforms just himself into another, in the form of the world.[60]

> (*Ait Up Bh* 1.1.2)

As the magician produces the illusion through his own intelligence, so God produces the world through his own power (cf. *Ait Up Bh* 1.2.3). The unity of the cause is maintained (theme one).

There does seem to be a difference in style between the magician's appearances in *GKBh* 3 and *Ait Up Bh* 1. This is partly due to the different interests of the source texts. The latter is an unabashed origination story. The former is a more philosophical text concerned to show that there is no origination, real or otherwise. Another difference is linked with this. In the Upaniṣad commentary there is no association at this point with *avidyā*, misconception. In terms of the later Advaitin distinction, this would be a key passage for associating *māyā* with the Lord. By contrast, as we have seen, in the commentary on Gauḍapāda's verses, the ambiguity of the question of *avidyā* is purposely tied to the magician analogy and recurs in the apparently more explanatory passages on origination 'through *māyā*'. Third, the Upaniṣad commentary seems to take a more positive view of manifestation by the magician. It is through this that the one self can become known. The other commentary stresses that *māyā* can be sense-knowledge consisting of *avidyā*, that is, that by which we misidentify multiplicity as different from *brahman* (*GKBh* 3.24).

However, the differences should not be overpressed. In striking agreement, both commentaries discuss the purpose of origination stories and conclude unambiguously that they are of no importance in themselves, but only insofar as they yield understanding of the one, non-dual, changeless self (*GKBh* 3.23–24; *Ait Up Bh* 2.1 Introduction). Nicely, for our purposes, the two start from diametrically opposed queries. In the *GKBh* (3.23), the opponent charges Śaṃkara's *ajātivāda* with undermining the authority of scripture that speaks of origination (*sṛṣṭi*). Śaṃkara acknowledges that there are such texts but says they have other purposes (*sā tv anyaparā*). Expanding on Gauḍapāda, he says that whether things are really originated or whether they are just originated by the magician through his magical power, the scriptures on origination are the same. They are about the self, which the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* describes as 'existing both within and without, changeless' (2.1.2). This also copes with the fact that there are many different origination accounts in the Upaniṣads. Like the different versions of another story about

breath which was trying to show its own importance (e.g. *BSBh* 1.4.14), these variants should be understood as the stories they are. They do not need some literalistic harmonization, attributing each to a different cosmic cycle.[61] Rather, they are intended to make the oneness of the self accessible to the intellect, so it is proper to construe their purpose as such.[62]

The challenge to the *Aitareya* origination story is different. Then 'Is this not nonsense?', suggests the opponent, after Śaṃkara itemizes numerous aspects of the story where queries might arise. Śaṃkara, not surprisingly, rejects this aspersion cast on scripture: 'There is no problem here. All this is an *arthavāda* because what is desired to be expressed is only the understanding of the self' (*Ait Up Bh* 2.1 Introduction, p. 339).[63] An *arthavāda* for Śaṃkara, we saw, is a secondary passage, which may or may not describe things as they are, but whose primary purpose is not in its description but in that to which it points. So what we find is that the scriptural accounts of origination have no privileged position in Śaṃkara's exposition. They serve the same purpose as other stories we have considered: to direct attention to the self. This returns us sharply to the question raised at the beginning of the chapter. If this is the case, does this not down-value the importance of the world, an account of which the origination stories purport to give?

At this point, re-enter the magician:

> There is a preferable explanation. Like a magician, the omniscient, omnipotent God, the great magician, created all this to make the achievement of awakening (to knowledge) easy (or, pleasant, *sukha*), like the development (*prapañca*) of stories, etc. in the everyday world.[64]
>
> (*Ait Up Bh* 2.1 Introduction, p. 339)

Gambhirananda's translation (1957–8, Vol. 2, p. 46), which separates the creation by magic from the story elaborated for easy instruction, misses the point. This revolves around a lovely play on the word '*prapañca*'. It can mean the plot of a story. But it is also one of Śaṃkara's normal terms for the manifested world. So, Śaṃkara intimates, just as a story carries you with it, unfolding its meaning through the plot, in a similar way the world, originated by the great magician, unfolds its meaning to you and makes coming to realization not just possible but pleasant and (relatively!) easy.[65] The development of the manifestation, through ether, air, fire, water, and earth, for example, gives the clue to its dissolution, back into the source beyond. Story and structure go together. But it is no use getting stuck on the surface – of either stories or structures:

> For there is no worthwhile result at all from knowing the stories of origination, etc. But the result from knowing the proper nature of the one self is immortality, well-known from all the Upaniṣads.[66]
>
> (*Ait Up Bh* 2.1 Introduction, p. 339)

Complementarity and mutual restriction

I have implied throughout this discussion of examples that no one example is sufficient on its own. Rather, they all complement each other, at times reinforcing similar points, but, more importantly, helping to eliminate from one another the wrong inferences that might be made, were each example allowed to stand alone. Each one functions properly, not merely by offering its own insights, but by excluding irrelevant features from the others.

If, for instance, the clay–pot example were used alone, people might think of *brahman* in physical terms, because clay is a gross material. By including the magic and rope–snake examples, which are both the result of subjective states, such a view is discouraged. The clay–pot example, however, is needed to preserve the notion of absolute identity. There is a clear difference between the magician and his illusion and between the perceiver and the rope, which might endanger the crucial affirmation of identity, were it not for the correction offered by the clay–pot example. For the world is not a separate entity, independent of *brahman*. However, the clay–pot example itself suggests the need for a potter. The magician, who needs no separate materials, re-emphasizes the unity of *brahman*, the source, in a different way.

Again, the magical illusion acts as a counterbalance to the clay–pot and rope–snake examples. Alone, the latter might suggest that there is a similarity between substrate and superimposition. In the former case, the magical illusion need bear little resemblance to its creator, so it firmly precludes a search for any structural correspondence between the language of super-imposition and ultimate reality.

Finally, the misperception of the rope–snake affects only the individual. By contrast, the entire magical manifestation is the magician's responsibility. Yet any tendency to attribute *avidyā* (misconception) to the Lord alone, on the basis of the magician example, is ruled out by the example of the rope–snake, which is misperceived by an individual. So, as we have suggested above, these illustrations together help to prevent the distortion inevitably implied in the question, Whose is *avidyā*?

It remains for me to justify my claim that Śaṃkara deliberately used examples in this way. In Chapter 7 we shall see that he makes explicit statements about the way terms in key Upaniṣadic sentences mutually limit one another's meanings. Given that, it will be sufficient to show that Śaṃkara does use examples in juxtaposition for similar purposes, even if he does not articulate this method fully.

We have already started to do this in our investigation of Śaṃkara's commentary on *Ch Up* 6.2. Here we saw how Śaṃkara started with the clay–pot example, given by the Upaniṣad itself in the previous chapter, as part of an argument against *asatkāryavāda*. We noticed that he changed his example to the rope–snake to counter the Sāṃkhyans' dualistic interpretation of his preferred *satkāryavāda*. Clay–pot affirms identity, rope–snake denies gross

materiality, in terms of our account above. De Smet, developing a different though related understanding of complementarity in Śaṃkara, puts it slightly differently (1989, pp. 53–70). Neither an account of reality-giving causality nor an account of operative causality is sufficient alone. Each contributes to providing a view of *brahman* as cause that is stripped of ordinary understandings of causality in the process.

There are frequent other passages in which Śaṃkara uses two of the examples together and the occasional context where all three play a part. (This is not to suggest that they do so exclusively. Many other examples may also feature, for instance, space in jars, the crystal coloured by the red cloth next to it, the water of a mirage.) Sometimes, the different examples are given to support the same point. But they may also be complementary or actually mutually controlling. In *BSBh* 2.1.1, the clay–pot is used as an example for origination, the magician and illusion for preservation of the world order, a complementary use. In 2.1.9, both are used to make the same point, namely, that *brahman* need not be affected by the dissolution of the world at the end of a world cycle (*pralaya*). Clay and gold are not affected when their products are broken down into them again, the magician is not affected by his magic, either in producing it or when it ends, for it is not real. Finally, in 2.1.14, the clay–pot example, given with a quotation from *Ch Up* 6.1.4, asserts identity between cause and effect, which is a mere modification by name. It is swiftly followed up by the rope–snake example, used to reject any suspicion that the effect is separate from the cause (as the pot might appear to be but the snake patently is not). Here is a mutually controlling use which explicitly rejects a wrong interpretation of the clay–pot example made by an opponent.[67]

It seems significant that all three examples also feature together in *GKBh* 3. If this is an early work, it shows that Śaṃkara was sensitive to images working in this way from the beginning. It is certainly one among several significant instances of consistency in complex and important insights between this and other major works. It is not just the magician example that is used to underline the reality of the self. The rope–snake is used alongside it in 3.27 to make this point and the clay–pot surfaces in 3.32 on the same theme. A mutually controlling use of examples is, however, implied in 3.19. The argument once more involves the assumption that what changes has parts, what is changeless does not. The self does not have parts. It does not really change. Multiplicity appears in it through *māyā* as the snake does in the rope. Multiplicity is not a real change, as might be the case with clay made into pots. Here is a warning not to misapply the scriptural clay example, which has been cited in 3.15 and will be used again positively in 3.32.

It is perhaps not difficult to see how Śaṃkara might have developed the view for which I am arguing. In defending his own views and, especially, in refuting opponents, the argument often hinges on the application of the example. Appropriate parallels must be drawn out; inappropriate nuances rejected. The weak point of one example can be corrected by the strong point

of another, opponent (a) turned aside with the clay–pot, opponent (b) with the rope–snake.[68] A sense is developed of how all examples, like all stories, truly function in pointing towards the one self within. Certainly the world is to be transcended, but Śaṃkara's Advaitin teaching compassionately draws the pupil from its ritual opaqueness as a world of ends and means, through examples and stories that only make sense in its context, via the structuring and framework of scripture, to the one worthwhile realization, eternally pure, realized and free. In Chapter 6, we turn then to see how such an understanding of *brahman* as eternally pure, realized and free is to be reconciled in Śaṃkara's way of teaching with his frequent statements about the Supreme Lord.

6

THE CONTEXT OF
THE TEACHING
The Lord

Perhaps no other aspect of Śaṃkara's teaching has given rise to so much disagreement as his understanding of Īśvara, personal God or Lord. In this chapter, I engage with the debate for three main reasons, each of which bears on my central argument about Śaṃkara's way of teaching. The first reason develops from Chapter 5. Just as there we found it necessary to re-evaluate the place of the world in Śaṃkara's understanding, so here we shall re-evaluate the place of the Lord. This will allow us to see how, for Śaṃkara, the Lord is an important aspect of the context of Advaitin teaching, along with the world of name and form. The second reason follows. As I argued in Chapter 5 of the world of name and form, so here I shall argue that, for Śaṃkara, a correct understanding of the Lord is pedagogically vital. This is not simply an issue of understanding the Lord's connection with the world of superimposition in order to reject a dualist theistic point of view. Rather, in coming to understand the ways the Lord manifests himself in the world, as well as in understanding the ways the Lord transcends the world, the pupil is drawn towards a proper Advaitin understanding. The third reason is also linked. It enables us to see explicitly how Śaṃkara draws on a Vaiṣṇava background with which his pupils could have been familiar to draw them to this realization. Śaṃkara's understanding of the Lord, I shall therefore argue, is intimately connected with his way of teaching. First, though, we need to locate these issues in the context of recent debates.

The debate about the Lord

Whether it is the Lord's nature as cause that is being discussed or the Lord as a focus of devotion, a similar polarity of opinion exists. So, for example, on cause, Shlomo Biderman suggests that 'the Śaṅkaran God is totally bound by the constitutive rules of creation', rules that formulate God's status: 'Hence God must be thought of as having no status outside of his status as creator' (1982, p. 432). God is defined as cause or creator in relation to the created world. When that is transcended, since it belongs to conventional experience,

God, like the world, disappears. Contrast this with De Smet's explanation of *brahman* as cause:

> And this Cause is not an intermediary Īśvara (God/Lord) but the one *brahman*-Ātman, the supreme Existent, that remains *nirguṇa* and *nirapekṣa* (without qualities and independent), even though its creating makes it appear to our ignorant minds as *saguṇa* and *sāpekṣa* (with qualities and dependent).
>
> (1970, p. 118)

If the former position is taken, it is easy to see how devotion is given an inferior place in Śaṃkara's thought. Such a view emerges in Lott's comparison of Śaṃkara with Rāmānuja and Madhva. On Śaṃkara, he explains:

> For at most such a devotional relationship, and the ascription of personal qualities to the supreme Being that accompanies it, can only provide a provisional state for the seeker, prior to the realisation of absolute oneness.
>
> (1980, p. 125)

Misra's view stands in sharp distinction. He finds Śaṃkara to stand in 'an unbroken tradition of *bhakti* inherited from the Upaniṣads', a tradition characterized by *bhakti* understood as 'the sentiment of love' (1967, p. 256), which is far from provisional. Recently, Malkovsky has also argued strongly for the importance of the role of divine grace in Śaṃkara's soteriology, linking this with a realist interpretation of his thought (2001; 2000, p. 71).

A further related disagreement concerns the locus of value in Śaṃkara's thought. Pande argues persuasively that *ānanda* in its highest sense 'is the innate value or axiological self-sufficiency of *Brahman*' (1994, p. 203), applied just as 'Being' and 'Consciousness' are. Deutsch, rather, associates the notion of value with *saguṇa brahman* (*brahman* with qualities), saying:

> It is the experience that, although negated by *nirguṇa* Brahman, yet complements *nirguṇa* Brahman-experience and, because it takes up and harmonizes everything within itself, makes possible the affirmation of the spirituality or intrinsic value of all modes of being.
>
> (1980, p. 13)

Deutsch's formulation suggests a link between these issues and what Lott calls 'the question of the two-Brahmans', the lower and the higher, the *brahman* with qualities and without. Are they 'two distinct Brahmans' or 'merely two aspects of the one Brahman', Lott asks? (1980, p. 122). Extending his

question, we might continue: is the Lord as cause, the one to be worshipped, the source of value, simply to be equated with the lower *brahman*, the *brahman* with qualities, or not? And if he is, does this mean that, in the end, such a Lord, paradoxically, has no value, being merely provisional?

In the following, as I have indicated, I shall try to unravel some of these issues, looking at the Lord as a crucial aspect of the context of the teaching, the counterpart of world. This is based on Śamkara's discussion of name and form in *BSBh* 2.1.14, which we shall look at in detail below. In doing this I am not, however, prejudging the question by insinuating that I favour the solutions of Biderman and Lott over De Smet and Misra. Rather, I shall argue, in parallel with the previous chapter, that Śamkara shows that it is precisely through an understanding of the Lord, gained through right interpretation of scripture and linked with the world of conventional experience, that seekers are brought to the realization that transcends all duality and linguistic terms. So, certainly, in one sense, whenever any language is used, the conventional is being invoked. But to dismiss this too soon as provisional may be to fail to understand how it is that the pupil is drawn to know the omniscient but ever pure, free and realized *brahman* as self.

To explore this, we shall examine three different aspects of the Lord as context for the teaching. First, we shall consider in more detail the sources, use and limitations of the notions of higher and lower *brahman*. Second, we shall see how Śamkara relates cosmology to different facets of the Lord, integrated through his understanding of name and form and indicating how scripture draws us beyond name and form to the qualityless one within. Third, we shall return to the actual devotional context of Śamkara's day and try to see what light, if any, our previous investigations may shed on the various clues of Vaiṣṇava influence in his writings that we noted in Chapter 1.

The higher and lower *brahman*

Writings on Advaita frequently refer to the lower and higher *brahman* or *brahman* with qualities (*saguṇa*) and *brahman* without qualities (*nirguṇa*). The link between the former and conventional truth and the latter and ultimate truth seems straightforward and clear. However, Śamkara's usage is considerably more complex than at first sight appears and is, unsurprisingly, linked with his central problem of providing a harmonious interpretation of scripture, some of whose passages speak of a *brahman* with qualities, some of *brahman* without.[1] We shall first consider how Lott and Mahadevan portray this issue in Śamkara's thought, then turn to Śamkara's own works.

Philosophically speaking, Lott is absolutely right in pointing out that 'the question of the two-Brahmans is just another way of asking how empirical reality relates to ultimate reality' (1980, p. 122). This is the nub of the whole matter, but I shall suggest that his solution to the problem is not fully articulated and glosses over some key points of Śamkara's exegesis. Because

Lott believes that the relationship between empirical and ultimate reality is ambiguous and inexplicable, he criticizes those like Mahadevan (and De Smet) who explain it quite easily by proposing that it is the same reality that is without qualities as ultimate and called God in relation to the empirical world and empirical soul.[2] Lott rather proposes that there is only one *brahman* from the ultimate perspective, but two from the conventional, this 'lower-Brahman' or 'Lord' ('and in Sankara's thought there is little difference between these two terms,'[3] says Lott) being 'an unavoidable necessity' (1980, p. 122). In a footnote, Lott gives several references to support this view (p. 201, n.1).[4] However, on careful examination, these largely concern the difference between passages on the Lord where qualities are to be retained for meditation and specific results, and passages on the Lord where qualities are to be removed in understanding ultimate reality. The point is not that there are two different Lords, nor that the Lord is simply identified with the lower *brahman*, but that the qualities ascribed to the Lord are to be used for different purposes, dealt with in different ways. Both use qualities, speak from within the conventional world, but are distinct in terms of outcome. So, when Śaṃkara speaks of *saguṇa brahman*, or more frequently of *saguṇa upāsanā* or *saguṇa vidyā* (meditation with qualities),[5] he is speaking of that domain of misconception (*avidyā*) where we are still bound up with actions, factors and their results, the realm of ritual action and meditation, not the realm of liberating knowledge (*vidyā*). Lott's continuing explanation ignores this and speaks as if all 'Lord' and 'Cause' language was what Śaṃkara primarily meant by lower or *saguṇa brahman*.

Yet even where the context is the difference between action and knowledge, the line between lower and higher *brahman* is not clear. Or, to be more precise, it is the highest or supreme *brahman* who is deemed to be both subject of knowledge and of some meditations. Consider *BSBh* 1.1.20, commenting on *Ch Up* 1.6.6f, 'Now that person bright as gold who is seen within the sun, with beard bright as gold, etc.' Śaṃkara goes to some lengths to establish that the subject here is the highest Lord (rather than a distinguished individual self), allowing that, for the purposes of meditation (usually associated with the lower *brahman*), the highest Lord, who is 'without sound, without touch, without form, without decay' (*Ka Up* 1.3.15), (that is, *nirguṇa*), and is the cause (note), may be spoken of as possessing some of the qualities of his effects, such as having a golden beard, an abode and so forth. From this, as from many other passages, it seems quite clear that it is the same highest Lord, without qualities, who is spoken of as possessing qualities for particular purposes, not that there are two *brahman*s, as such.[6] Again, in *BSBh* 1.3.13, which Lott cites, it is the highest *brahman* that Śaṃkara establishes even as the subject of meditation on Om, whose result is the world of Brahmā and release by stages.[7]

Such examples fit Mahadevan's model better than Lott's, although even Mahadevan's vocabulary seems too tidy, for it is quite clear that Śaṃkara's

preferred term for God ('Īśvara', 'Lord') is applied as much to the highest *brahman* as to God in relation to the empirical world and selves. Certainly there are 'tidy' texts, like Śaṃkara's comment on *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* 6, embedded in the first chapter of Gauḍapāda's *Kārikā*s. The Upaniṣad speaks of the four quarters of the syllable Om, linked with three cosmic states and the fourth beyond, three states of consciousness (waking, dreaming, deep sleep) and the fourth beyond. It is this fourth that is the higher *brahman* (Śaṃkara quotes *Pr Up* 5.2), the third that is the Lord.

However, at this point, we surely need to recognize what Col. G. A. Jacob noticed over one hundred years ago (1894, pp. vii–ix): that Śaṃkara uses the terms 'Supreme Brahman', 'Supreme Lord', 'Brahman', 'Supreme Self' and so on more or less interchangeably. The corollary of this is that the neat boundary between *nirguṇa brahman* and the Lord as *saguṇa brahman* and part of the manifested order cannot really be maintained. This is not to deny that all descriptions (including '*nirguṇa brahman*') belong to the conventional world. Nor is it to deny that there are passages where Śaṃkara clearly relates the Lord to the world of name and form, rulership or Lordship implying something ruled, hence the duality of conventional experience. However, the real issue for the Advaitin teacher is to draw the pupil from such conventional experience to ultimate realization, through the proper interpretation of *śruti*, and this can only be done through the very concepts and language that must eventually be left behind.[8] This is a different matter from sorting out which passages are for meditation and which for knowledge (some it seems being available for both). The point is to discover how, where knowledge is sought, the qualities ascribed may be removed in a way that leads to ultimate reality, not simply to the void. This is fundamentally the issue when Śaṃkara discusses *brahman* as Lord and cause, as we shall see below. Now, though, we try to tease out how the Lord as Lord may be envisaged as forming part of the context of the teaching. To do this, we shall look at part of Śaṃkara's important comment on *Brahmasūtra* 2.1.14.

Even here, when he is demarcating the Lord's lordship in relation to the world, we find that Śaṃkara's vocabulary is not tidy. Quoting *śruti* and then using the analogy of universal ether enclosed in various jars and pots, Śaṃkara explains how the Lord is such

> only with regard to the adjuncts of name and form which are brought about by misconception. In the field of conventional experience, he rules over the conscious selves who are really identical with his own self, but who are called embodied creatures with regard to the aggregates of bodies and organs which are composed of name and form and superimposed by misconception. . . . So the Lord's lordship, omniscience and omnipotence are such only with respect to the limitations of the adjuncts consisting of misconception. In reality the convention of rulership, needing to be ruled, omniscience and so on

does not apply to the self, whose own nature free from all limiting adjuncts [is known] by knowledge.[9]

(*BSBh* 2.1.14, p. 201)

This seems quite clear. The Lord is only a Lord when he has others to rule over, others whose existence is based on the conventional world of name and form superimposed by misconception that is removed by knowledge. For in reality, those other selves are none other than the single self, the Lord's own self. The God concept, omniscience, omnipotence and all, is part of the world of name and form to be eliminated. The matter seems settled on the side of those who limit God's status to the conventional world and devotion to the provisional at best. The Lord is part of the context of the teaching because he is defined in terms of the dualistic world of conventional experience.

However, it is not quite that straightforward. Introducing the scriptural passages on name and form, Śaṃkara says:

> Name and form, constructed by misconception as if they were themselves the omniscient Lord's, of which it is impossible to say whether they are the same as that or something different, which are the seed of the manifestation of the transmigratory world, are called in both *śruti* and *smṛti* the omniscient Lord's power of *māyā* and *prakṛti* [primordial mental–material nature].[10]

(*BSBh* 2.1.14, p. 201)

Here is a hint that the omniscient Lord is transcendent to name and form in one sense – they seem to belong to him – even though, in another, he is only Lord by virtue of that (falsely constructed) relationship with name and form. However, Śaṃkara continues, 'Different from them [name and form] is the omniscient Lord' (*tābhyām anyaḥ sarvajña īśvaraḥ*), quoting *śruti* copiously.

Furthermore, the whole passage comes in answer to a Sāṃkhyan opponent who charges the Advaitin that, if he insists on absolute unity, the ruler–ruled relationship is precluded and hence the Lord cannot be the cause of all. Śaṃkara gives the name and form explanation to show how he can maintain his previously upheld position that it is the sentient *brahman*, not the insentient *pradhāna* of Sāṃkhya, that is the cause of the origination, preservation and dissolution of all this. *Brahman* as cause logically precedes the superimposition of name and form (just as rope precedes snake). Admittedly, the concept of cause implies the concept of effect. Note, though, that Śaṃkara characterizes the Lord from whom origination, etc. come as eternally pure, realized, free by nature, omniscient, omnipotent.[11] Yet on a straightforward reading, omniscience and omnipotence are strictly an aspect of 'all this', not of the eternally pure *nirguṇa brahman*. It could be argued that this is just Śaṃkara equivocating in order to associate attributes of consciousness with the Lord, against the insentient *pradhāna*. No doubt there

is something in this. However, bearing in mind what Jacob noted and what we said above, it seems incontravertible that Śaṃkara is thereby strongly asserting that the cause of all this, the base of superimposition, is none other than the eternally pure *brahman* without qualities, the one without a second, and that qualities such as omniscience and omnipotence are a better way of helping us to come to the understanding of the non-dual subject, self, than the Sāṃkhyan alternative.[12] As qualities, they are indeed to be finally removed,[13] but then so are the terms 'self' and '*brahman*' themselves.[14] The Lord is part of the context of the teaching not just as a single aspect of name and form, but as its very basis. Through engaging with the texts to come to understand the true nature of this Lord, the Advaitin pupil is guided to discard less satisfactory positions (the efficient cause of the Nyāyas, the atomist analysis of the Vaiśeṣikas, the insentient *pradhāna* of the Sāṃkhyans). Yet even the Lord's omniscience and omnipotence point beyond themselves, as we shall see later, to the true self, the seer of seeing.

We can summarize Śaṃkara's position on the lower and higher *brahman* as follows, the summary indicating why positions like Lott's and Mahadevan's are perhaps not very far apart after all, though both oversimplify in equating Lord or God with lower *brahman*. Śaṃkara uses terminology like 'lower' and 'higher', 'with' and 'without qualities', often where his source text does and in contexts where he wishes to distinguish action, meditation and misconception from knowledge. Many texts to do with knowledge contain 'descriptions' of *brahman*. These enable the commentator to identify the proper subject of the text (*brahman* rather than the individual self or an element such as ether) and to establish that the scriptural teaching is of a conscious *brahman*, not an insentient cause. They also allow the Advaitin commentator to state quite freely that this highest Lord, free from all qualities, takes on different qualities out of kindness for those who are intent on him (*sādhakānugrahārtham*) (*BSBh* 1.1.20). It seems to be such ideas that allow Deutsch to talk of the *saguṇa* experience that 'makes possible the affirmation of the spirituality or intrinsic value of all modes of being', as quoted above.

However, from the point of ultimate truth, scripture wants to make known the one that, alone, is without any adjuncts at all, even omniscience and being the cause of all actions.[15] Then the two forms of *brahman*, which the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* negates, are associated with the omniscient, omnipotent conditioned *brahman*, the basis of the whole conventional world, that basis consisting of actions, factors and results. By contrast, 'Not thus, not thus' (*Bṛ Up* 2.3.6) teaches that *brahman*, which, free from the distinctions of all adjuncts, the subject of perfect understanding, unborn, unaging, undying, fearless, is because of its non-duality not the object of speech and mind at all (*vāṅmanasayor apy aviṣayam advaitatvāt*) (*BSBh* 2.3 Introduction).

From the above, I would like to emphasize, first, as Mahadevan does, the oneness of *brahman*, whether with or without adjuncts; and second, the untidiness, that which Lott describes as the ambiguity, of Śaṃkara's

treatment here. This we could diagnose with Rāmānuja as being due to the fundamental incoherence of the Advaitin worldview, in that a differentiated world with differentiated *pramāṇa*s can never give knowledge of an undifferentiated reality, nor a basically dualistic model of superimposition (of *A* on *B*) yield an understanding of the non-dual. Alternatively, we could concede with Śaṃkara that the world and the scriptural language with which we have to work is fundamentally differenced, yet by pushing at every scripturally given model, and through their mutual exclusion and correction, we are forced beyond this duality to an understanding of the one self within. In the next section, I shall try to argue the latter case with respect to the Lord's relation to the cosmos and Śaṃkara's understanding of name and form.

The Lord and the cosmos

We have already come across a number of different ways of conceptualizing the Lord's relation to the cosmos and, in the previous chapter, have suggested that the analogies associated with them indicate that these function by mutual purification. Here we shall try to look at these more closely, noting that, for readers from Jewish, Christian and Islamic backgrounds, there will be aspects of these models that are largely foreign to ways in which God is understood in their own traditions.

We start with the Lord as efficient or structure-giving cause, over and above the world he shapes from name and form. Yet we remember that this was corrected by the magician example, where name and form are not separate materials, different from the magician's own projection. Then we have Lord as material or reality-giving cause; but this is no inert matter, so cause is to be understood in the sense of basis of superimposition. Standard ideas of both efficient and material cause are modified in relation to one another and through an understanding of superimposed name and form. In all such discussions in the *Brahmasūtra* commentary and the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* commentary, Śaṃkara simply speaks of '*brahman*' or uses the term 'Supreme Lord' in contrast to 'individual self' (*jīvātman*). It is of the ultimate that we are speaking, trying to grapple with the nature of the *brahman* which is desired to be known.

Next, there is the model in which supreme *brahman* stands over against Lord and world, the latter two inevitably going together as ruler and ruled, part of the world of name and form, the realm of all dualities. Supreme *brahman* is the basis of superimposition, while the Lord, seen as different from *brahman* as self, is an aspect of that which is to be sublated. Hence, when the pupil in *Thousand Teachings* breaks through to an understanding of the originator of names and forms, the Supreme Being different from all else, the shining one beyond the world of rebirth and hence different from himself, the teacher is advised to admonish him:

> You should not understand it in this way, my dear, because an understanding of difference is prohibited . . . in such texts as 'The one who thinks, "He is one, I am another", does not know' (*Bṛ Up* 1.4.10), . . . 'The one who sees multiplicity here goes from death to death' (*Bṛ Up* 4.4.19).[16]
>
> (*Upad G* 1.26)

A slightly different course of re-education is given to the opponent in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* commentary, who feels it improper for the individual self to identify itself with the Supreme Self, God (*deva*), ruler of the cosmos, since the Supreme is eternally pure, realized and free by nature and the individual self is the opposite of that. His preference is to offer flowers, water and other forms of worship to this one who is eternally transcendent (*Bṛ Up Bh* 2.1.20, Madhavananda's translation, p. 206 f). Here Śaṃkara takes texts that refer to the 'maker of the originated world' (*sṛṣṭikartṛ*), agreed to be the supreme self, to show that it is that self alone that enters the world of name and form, and that there is no other self than this. We seem to be back with the previous model of the supreme *brahman* as cause and self, rather than of the supreme that transcends an understanding of cause or ruler in relation to world.[17] However, in both cases, the pupil or opponent is pushed to reconsider a view that defines the individual self over against the Lord to gain an understanding of the one self within. An understanding of Lord that is developed only in apposition to world, and not as an understanding of true self, remains inadequate. It is necessary to progress from an understanding of Lord as cause and thus as context for whole world and teaching, through an understanding that such a Lord, if viewed over and against oneself, is only part of the context of name and form, to a final understanding of Lord as true self, once more transcendent to name and form. The one within, true seer, true self, is none other than the supreme. Put the other way round, the supreme is none other than the one within, witness of all cognitions.

There is, however, one further model I would like to consider, perhaps the most alien to a Western reader, through which Śaṃkara seeks to reconcile not only different cosmogonical texts but also different understandings of Lord. We may refer to it as 'going beyond the aggregates'. Through this model we will try to show how, as with name and form, the manifestations of the Lord in the cosmos provide a reversible structure pointing beyond themselves to the ever pure free non-dual *brahman*. First, though, we need to take several steps backward into the world of origination stories.

Here we meet with numerous deities: Hiraṇyagarbha (the Golden Womb), Virāṭ (the sovereign), Prajāpati (the Lord of creatures), to name but a few. Others mentioned are Svayambhū (the self-born), Maheśvara (the Great Lord), the *antaryāmin* (the Inner Controller), Prāṇa (breath). They feature variously in origination stories from the Vedas (including the Upaniṣads), *The*

Laws of Manu, the Purāṇas and so on. They seem to be part of Śaṃkara's 'mental furniture' for he introduces them in various places where the text does not constrain him. Explaining the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* story that opens, 'In the beginning this was only the self, in the shape of a person', Śaṃkara identifies Prajāpati with the first embodied being born from the cosmic egg, while the one in the shape of a person is his first-born, Virāṭ. Trying to make sense of the *Kaṭha*'s 'great self' beyond the intellect (1.3.10), Śaṃkara equates it with Hiraṇyagarbha, 'born before all', consisting of intelligence and activity.

This may seem out of place to one who, as we have previously seen, holds all origination stories to be of little point in themselves, functioning only to direct attention to the one self within. However, we must be careful not to move too fast here and to imagine Śaṃkara existing in a version of a demythologized modern secular world. Hacker (1972, p. 131) observes that Śaṃkara makes little attempt to systematize a cosmogonical mythology, to relate each of the various deities to each of the others. He implies that this is because they are really of little relevance to Śaṃkara. At the ultimate level, this is clearly the case. However, I have been arguing that, in gaining such an understanding, the structures of world and text do play an important role. We need to investigate a little more carefully what part these deities play. In Chapter 5, we saw that Śaṃkara takes some care to reconcile texts that appear to speak variously of three- and five-element manifestation. The five-element structure turned out to play a part in the interiorization process by which the seeker successfully comes to understand the one within. The same may prove to be the case with these various cosmic deities.

Let us first try to understand what kind of deities these are. From one point of view they can be conceived as individuals who are gods. Here, a 'god' (*deva*) is a being who may enjoy an exceptionally long life in a blissful heaven as a result of past meritorious actions, particularly error-free performance of ritual. Nonetheless, in the end such a god remains part of the cycle of rebirth and will eventually be reborn. Hiraṇyagarbha, the one born before all, provides a good illustration. Śaṃkara mentions him as one of the lords who will be allowed to retain his office in the next world cycle (*kalpa*), through the Supreme Lord's favour (*BSBh* 1.3.30). Nonetheless, the implication is that Hiraṇyagarbha is given a 'temporary', if *kalpa*-long, reprieve. He continues in that role only because the Supreme Lord allows it to be so.

However, these deities have a further composite aspect that also needs to be considered before we can understand Śaṃkara's cryptic comments on them. This can be illustrated by looking further at the nature of Prajāpati in the Brāhmaṇa texts. Here, he is not only the 'overarching deity', the thirty-fourth god who is more important that the other thirty-three. He is also said to be 'all the gods' (e.g. in *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* 3.3.7.3). He is also described as 'all this' (*idam sarvam*), 'the universal whole and totality' (Smith, 1989, p. 55). In particular, he is all space, all time, indicated by his identification with the twelve months of the year and so on, and is the one who emits all creatures,

hence his name. He is then the sum or aggregate of the whole manifested cosmos (as well as being beyond it, like *brahman*, 'all this', in the Upaniṣadic texts).

In his *Brahmasūtra* commentary, Śaṃkara makes a connection between Hiraṇyagarbha and Prāṇa (Breath). Hiraṇyagarbha is said to have two aspects: its aggregate (*samaṣṭi*, comprising the totality of the different aspects of the cosmos); and its particular (*vyaṣṭi*, comprising each of those aspects that together make up the aggregate). To return to the example of Prajāpati mentioned above, it may help to think of the aggregate as like the year, the particulars as the twelve months or three hundred and sixty-five days that make it up. It is through these twin aspects of its Hiraṇyagarbha form that Prāṇa can be said to pervade the whole macrocosm (*adhidaivatā*), that is, every individual element and every aggregate within it (*BSBh* 2.4.13). Some of these aggregates are imagined as 'worlds', desirable places that can be reached as a result of sacrifice or meditation (e.g. *Ch Up* 1.7.6–9). They are inhabited by those individuals who have successfully attained these worlds and enjoy them along with their presiding deity.[18]

Madhavananda stresses a slightly different collective aspect of Hiraṇyagarbha when he explains it as 'the being identified with the sum total of all minds' (1975, p. 3, n.1). This accords with its characterization as intelligence and activity which we saw above. When Śaṃkara therefore speaks of the whole spectrum of rebirth from Hiraṇyagarbha (or Brahmā) down to a blade of grass, this spectrum can be thought of as a vast spectrum of individuals, but more properly it is a spectrum of locations for individual rebirth, many, including the highest, the world of Hiraṇyagarbha or Brahmā, comprising numerous particulars within it. However, attainment of even these highest worlds of Brahmā, Hiraṇyagarbha or Prajāpati is dependent on rituals and meditations, involves 'going' to a particular location and is part of the realm of ignorance. It is, therefore, inextricably bound up with means and ends, with actions, factors and their results, these features characterizing the collective composite named Hiraṇyagarbha or whatever. Given this, we might feel that this digression among deities has little point for Śaṃkara.

There are, however, at least two ways an understanding of such structures of the cosmos can yield the liberating knowledge of *brahman*. One is to pursue those meditations that lead to 'release by stages' (*kramamukti*), which leads to the world of Brahmā, the lower *brahman*. Śaṃkara accepts the Purāṇic view that, at the end of the *kalpa* (world cycle), all those individuals currently reborn in and enjoying this world of Brahmā will attain release from rebirth. They will not be reborn at the beginning of the next world cycle.[19]

A more direct way is to understand how the teaching on name and form applies to the current case. In the early Upaniṣads, *brahman* often becomes known when the meditator or teacher focuses in turn on various different parts of the cosmos, then aggregates them, then finally goes beyond them, as in *Bṛ Up* 2. Alternatively, the Upaniṣad may consider the different elements

and organs of an individual as aspects of *brahman*, the whole. Importantly, connections between the macrocosm and microcosm are continually made. So *Ch Up* 3.18 identifies the 'four feet' of *brahman* with both aspects of the individual (speech, breath, eye, ear) and elements of the macrocosm (fire, air, sun, and the directions). The famous 'Inner Controller' passage in *Br Up* 3.7 also considers both macrocosm and microcosm, finding the Inner Controller within earth, waters, fire and so on, but also within breath, speech, the eye, etc. Here is the search for the self, which is within yet other than the cosmos, within yet other than the individual, the unseen seer, as we saw in Chapter 4. This ultimate reality surpasses those realms that are actualized by the sacrifice or by meditation. 'There is no other witness but he', concludes Śaṃkara with *Br Up* 3.7.23.

Śaṃkara goes further by suggesting that, whatever section through conventional experience is taken, it can be understood as a set of adjuncts, a superimposition of name and form, and often a destiny of rebirth, superimposed on the non-dual self. As in our earlier explorations of the successively more subtle layers within individual and manifestation which point one beyond to the self, so now we shall see how Śaṃkara shows that our (textually derived and sometimes aggregate) understandings of Lord and world can be placed along a spectrum of subtlety mirroring a cosmic scale of manifestation.

There are two passages that show this particularly clearly. The first is a comment on a passage from the *Aitareya Upaniṣad*, which speaks of the relation of consciousness (*prajñā*) to Brahmā, Indra, Prajāpati, the gods, the five great elements and so forth. It concludes, 'Consciousness is *brahman*'. Śaṃkara sums up:

> That is this reality freed from the distinctions of all adjuncts, without decoration, without taint, without action, tranquil, one, non-dual, which is to be known by the removal of all distinctions as 'Not thus, not thus', beyond the scope of all words and concepts. That one, the omniscient Lord through connection with the exceedingly pure adjunct of wisdom, instigating the seed of the whole common unmanifested universe, is called the Inner Controller, because he is the one who sets limits. That further is called Hiraṇyagarbha when it is characterized by falsely identifying itself with the intelligence which is the seed of the whole manifested universe. That again is called Prajāpati, Virāṭ, when possessing the adjunct of being the first embodied one coming forth inside the cosmic egg. When it has adjuncts like fire and so on coming forth [from the egg], it is called [by the names of] the deities. In the same way also with respect to distinct bodies ranging from Brahmā down to a blade of grass, *brahman* gets (or, is perceived by) name and form in all these ways. That which is one only, divided by the differences of all these adjuncts, by all creatures and by logicians, is known in every manner

(*sarvaprakāreṇa*) and is constructed as multiple. The *smṛti* says, for example, 'This some call Fire, others Manu, Prajāpati, some Indra, others Breath, others the eternal *brahman*' (*Manusmṛti* 12.123).[20]

(*Ait Up Bh* 3.1.3)

The whole passage is nicely ambiguous. The identification with cosmic intelligence is an *abhimāna*, a false construction. All the multiplicity is falsely constructed. The differences are imposed by logicians, but also by all creatures – in the way they think, but perhaps also in the way they are. Moreover, *brahman* is known in every manner. Certainly this is misknowing at one level, yet through all these constructions, *brahman* is capable of being known as the one only on which all other adjuncts are merely the superimpositions of name and form. The quotation from Manu very subtly indicates this, since the last people it mentions call it (correctly) the eternal *brahman*. Notice too the highly elevated place given to the Lord as Inner Controller, possessing only that exceedingly subtle adjunct of wisdom (or consciousness?) that qualifies the Lord for omniscience. Through such an understanding, Śaṃkara perhaps intimates, one comes close to the one non-dual, provided that the misconstructions of difference we noted above are rejected.

We find a similar picture in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* commentary:

> Therefore the teaching, 'Not thus, not thus', is given, because the self without adjuncts is not observable, is without distinctions and one. The self with the adjuncts of bodies and organs distinguished by misconception, desire and action is called the transmigrating individual (*saṃsārī jīva*). The self with the adjunct of eternal and exceedingly great knowledge and power is called the Inner Controller, the Lord.
>
> Just this one, without adjuncts, alone, pure, is called the imperishable supreme, in its own nature (*svena svabhāvena*). Then, distinguished by the adjuncts of the bodies and organs of Hiraṇyagarbha, the Unmanifest, gods, classes, individual aggregates (*piṇḍa*), humans, animals, ghosts and so on, it takes the labels of these, the forms of these. . . . Therefore differences between these are simply due to difference of adjuncts, not to anything else. Because it is laid down in all the Upaniṣads, 'One only without a second'.[21]

(*Bṛ Up Bh* 3.8.12)

In this passage, which, importantly, is not directly provoked by the text being glossed, the ordering in terms of progressive subtlety is not so clear as in the *Aitareya* commentary. I think, though, it would be a mistake to deduce from this that Śaṃkara gives an order in the *Aitareya* commentary only because his text does, but is not really bothered about it here. Apart from anything else, he constructs the order rather differently from the *Aitareya Upaniṣad* itself and

more in conformity with the terms used here. Also, the context of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* passage needs to be taken into consideration. The discussion is over the relation of the Inner Controller (3.7) to the imperishable witness (3.8.11). Śaṃkara is rejecting a difference–non-difference (*bhedābheda*) view and similar alternatives to stress that there is fundamentally no difference in the witnessing self, one only without a second. In particular, there is no ultimate difference between individual self and Lord in that they are, in reality, just the one self. Having dealt with this issue, Śaṃkara then gives the descending cosmological list, interestingly recalling our observation about different 'sections', by including both classes and individual aggregates.

The point, then, is not that Śaṃkara is interested in arranging cosmic deities on a scale for the sake of the scale. Rather, it is a way of helping the pupil to understand how any view of cosmic arrangement can be reframed to help disclose the self within. In particular, by 'retracing' the cosmogonical manifestation through these cosmic deities, the pupil is led to the Lord who is the Inner Controller, so very subtly distinguished from the supreme by the adjunct of wisdom alone. This Inner Controller, who has no body or organs of its own, because it has no past actions, being ever free, is identified by Śaṃkara as Nārāyaṇa (*Bṛ Up Bh* 3.7.3),[22] to the significance of which we shall return below. As such, it transcends the world of rebirth, the world in which forms (of bodies, organs, locations) are the result of past actions. To these forms, names correspond or, conversely, in accordance with the eternal names, forms appropriate to one's past actions are materialized. Conceptualization and actualization go hand in hand: 'As one meditates, so shall one become.' Only the conceptualization of the Inner Controller, called Lord, called Nārāyaṇa, transcends this constructed world, pointing beyond itself to the unnamed witness, free from all conceptualization whatever.

The place of Viṣṇu

It is quite clear that Śaṃkara's primary focus is scripture, that it is in grappling with the texts of the knowledge section that the teacher can draw the Advaitin pupil to realization. Nonetheless, neither teacher nor pupil is a *tabula rasa*, a blank screen, before being taught. In Chapter 1, we discovered that interest in the Lord, both philosophical and devotional, was a strong feature of Śaṃkara's environment. The philosophical aspect of this has been partly indicated above, in showing the way Śaṃkara criticizes opponents to clarify the nature of Lord as cause, as distinct, empirically, from the individual self, as none other than supreme self, highest *brahman*, from an ultimate point of view. In Chapter 1, we also noted that members of philosophical schools, like the Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika, often had a devotional allegiance of their own, frequently to Lord Śiva. It would be anachronistic to regard this as an uneasy marriage. Rather, their philosophy can be seen as articulating the ramifi-

cations of their devotion and vice versa. In the final section of this chapter, we shall try to make sense of the various clues we noted in Chapter 1 that Śaṃkara was at least aware of, if not strongly influenced by, a Vaiṣṇava environment, that is, one where devotion is primarily offered to the Lord as Viṣṇu.

I have considered the issue of Śaṃkara's attitude to *bhakti* (devotion) in some detail elsewhere (Suthren Hirst, 1993). Here, I want to highlight the way in which Śaṃkara, as teacher, draws on that Vaiṣṇava background to help the pupil come to the Advaitin truth. Incidentally, it is sometimes implied that Śaiva traditions naturally incline to asceticism and monism, while Vaiṣṇava ones favour devotionalism and difference between Lord and worshipper. Some have even read this off from the supposed connection between Śaṃkara and Śaivism. However, this is a gross simplification of patterns actually found. In Śaṃkara's time, the possibility of Vaiṣṇava Advaita is shown at a popular level in texts like the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* and, more philosophically, in writings like Ādiśeṣa's *Paramārthasāra* ('Essence of the Ultimate').

In the following, I shall make two minimal assumptions. The first is that, in his major commentaries, Śaṃkara is not interested in showing how a Śaiva tradition can yield Advaitin realization. This may well be due to the strong Śaiva connections of the Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika schools in his day. Śaṃkara dismisses the Māheśvara Śaivas along with these schools, with little ceremony. Certainly, the influence of a Vaiṣṇava earlier commentator and the shape of the *Brahmasūtra*s themselves may be at work here. However, it should be noted that Śaṃkara regards the Vaiśeṣikas as *ardhavaināśika*s, semi-nihilists, much too close to Buddhist teaching for Vedic comfort (*BSBh* 2.2.18). It is possible that he cherished little love for the devotional tradition to which their philosophy was related.[23] My second assumption is that the very frequency of Śaṃkara's references to Viṣṇu and his images cannot be ignored, though their context has to be carefully considered. Other Vaiṣṇava clues are linked with quotations from the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* on the highest place of Viṣṇu, moderate criticism of the Vaiṣṇava Bhāgavatas (unclearly distinguished from Pāñcarātras) and expansion of passages in the *Gītā*, itself a Vaiṣṇava text. In the following, then, I am not arguing that Śaṃkara is explicating Advaita for a specific Vaiṣṇava community. Rather, I am suggesting that he draws on familiarity with a Vaiṣṇava environment to help his pupils realize the truth of non-duality, a truth to which he himself may well have been drawn from a similar starting point. In this sense, the Lord, now Viṣṇu, once again becomes the context for the teaching.

Mention of Viṣṇu and his images, whether as a divine person or the aniconic *śālagrāma*, is frequent throughout the *Brahmasūtra* commentary and elsewhere.[24] The context is almost always one of meditation, where the difference between *brahman* and that on which *brahman* is superimposed for the purposes of meditation is compared with the difference between Viṣṇu and his image. This might lead us to assume that Viṣṇu as Lord is considered

unimportant, the association with the realm of results and misconception being so clear. I am not convinced that this is the case.

First, in one such passage, the comparison is used to draw attention to the reality of Viṣṇu (and other gods) (*Bṛ Up Bh* 1.3.1). This may in part have been to reject the Pūrvamīmāṃsaka Ritualists' view that the gods were reducible to the Vedic sounds for their names and, as such, were intrinsic to the sacrifice, without individuality of their own. Śaṃkara argues strenuously against such a position in his *Brahmasūtra* commentary.[25] It seems likely that a similar concern lies beneath the surface here, given that he is arguing against a Pūrvamīmāṃsaka opponent. The opponent claims that a meditation on name as *brahman* does not entail that *brahman* actually exists, and that regarding an image as Viṣṇu or some other god is a similar case. It does not entail the reality of Viṣṇu. Rejecting this, Śaṃkara restores to the gods, including Viṣṇu, the possibility of being worshipped as realities in their own right, at least within the conventional world.[26]

We shall return to the place of worship below. However, Śaṃkara's comment here is also designed to indicate the reality of *brahman*, different from that on which it can be superimposed for meditation. It would be wrong to press the comparison between *brahman* and Viṣṇu. Śaṃkara frequently indicates that analogies do not work in all respects. There is, nonetheless, a sense in which the reality of *brahman* parallels that of Viṣṇu. Both are to be distinguished from what is other than them by the one engaged in meditation or worship. *Brahman* is other than the world of name and form, Viṣṇu other than his stone image.

Second, there are indications that the concentration, religious intensity and sense of proximity involved in the worship of Viṣṇu are good comparisons for some meditations on the highest *brahman*, meditations which are on forms provided for the sake of those intent on the highest Lord and which can lead by stages to complete understanding, the highest world of Viṣṇu.[27] Commenting on 'Om is the ether-*brahman* . . . the eternal ether to be known' (*Bṛ Up* 5.1.1), in relation to meditation on the higher *brahman*, Śaṃkara says:

> That ether which is the supreme self is the primeval ether. That which is not the object of sight and so forth, which is without a basis (for being perceived), not possible to perceive, one causes to enter into the syllable Om, with faith and devotion and with particular emotion. Just as in the world [one causes] Viṣṇu thus [to enter] into the image of stone and so forth, whose features correlate with Viṣṇu.[28]
>
> (*Bṛ Up Bh* 5.1.1, p. 954)

Om is 'the best basis' (*Ka Up* 1.2.9) provided by scripture for meditation on *brahman*. Śaṃkara's comment here hints at intense religious concentration, both in meditation and in worship of Viṣṇu. It is perhaps not too fanciful to read this as Śaṃkara asking the pupil to recall past experience, to learn from

it if meditation is to be used as a purification, to appreciate the provision that is made for grasping the ungraspable.

There seems to be a similar sub-text in the following example. Viewing the Lord with such qualities as minuteness, scripture teaches that he is to be contemplated in the lotus of the heart, as Hari (Viṣṇu) is in the *śālagrāma* stone, explains Śaṃkara. There the intellect is enabled to grasp the Lord, who, although omnipresent, is gracious (*prasīdati*) in being meditated on there (*BSBh* 1.2.7). However, *brahman* does not really possess limitations of size and place. They are only for meditation.

We saw in Chapter 3 that a sense of scripture's compassion and grace seems to be important to Śaṃkara. Here such compassion and grace are attributed to the Lord, who, in scripture, provides those forms for meditation. While the comparison with Hari refers to the localization of Viṣṇu in the *śālagrāma* stone for the sake of worship, perhaps too there is a sense in which the grace experienced in such a setting is drawn on here.[29] There is nothing in Śaṃkara's *Chāndogya* text or the *Brahmasūtra* (1.2.7) to necessitate the use of such a verb as 'to be gracious' or 'be pleased' as Malkovsky stresses (2001, pp. 188–9). Yet, as ever, Śaṃkara makes his Advaitin message clear. *Brahman* is essentially without difference.

The question then arises as to whether devotion can really have any place for Śaṃkara. It seems to me that it can, at a variety of levels. In *BSBh* 2.2.42, Śaṃkara gives a list of Bhāgavata practices of worship: visiting the temple (*abhigamana*); getting offerings (*upādāna*); making offerings (*ījya*); recitation (*svādhyāya*); and mental control (*yoga*). Oberhammer argues that these all refer to specific Pāñcarātra practices (1977–8, p. 222, n. 2). What is significant is the fact that Śaṃkara equates these with the contemplation of the Lord (*īśvarapraṇidhāna*), which is established in *śruti* and *smṛti*. This commended worship is said to be perpetual and performed 'with consciousness of nothing else' (*ananyacittatayā*). This is reminiscent of the *Gītā*'s 'devotion to nothing else' (*ananyabhakti*, e.g. *BhG* 11.54), which Śaṃkara is able to present as leading to and constituting the Advaitin realization: there is nothing else, only the supreme self, one without a second. With this, we have moved beyond preparatory or purificatory exercises, reminiscences of past religious experience, through Vaiṣṇava worship to Advaitin understanding. It parallels the movement of the pupil, hearing and engaging with Upaniṣadic teaching, who must move beyond an understanding of difference and worship of other to the one self within. Study of Upaniṣadic texts, then, under an Advaitin teacher, should not lead to a desire to worship based on difference, but those for whom temple worship was a starting point may see its true culmination in non-difference.

It is at this point that some feel Advaita sells out to devotion or makes it 'only provisional'. Lott's comparison between Śaṃkara, Rāmānuja and Madhva, where Lott's Christian sympathies lie with the latter two, is a case in point. I have suggested elsewhere that we do not have to read *bhakti* as simply

a meaningless 'container term' in Śaṃkara's *Gītā* commentary, that is, one which he fills with a somewhat arbitrary sense dependent on his more primary division between action (and meditation, preparation, purification) and knowledge (Suthren Hirst, 1993). If this is the case, then we can take his statements on *ananyabhakti* seriously, though, properly, from an Advaitin point of view, they disturb the opinion that devotion necessarily entails difference. In this sense, Deutsch's hunch about spirituality, where *saguṇa brahman* 'takes up and harmonises everything within itself' (1980, p. 13), is perhaps helpful, though Deutsch's language is at once too imprecise and too closely linked with the difficult *saguṇa*/*nirguṇa* divide and the ambiguity of the notion of *nirguṇa* experience, as such.

If we are prepared to accept the case just put, at least for the sake of understanding Śaṃkara's position, we can then see further how the Lord acts as a context for Advaitin teaching. In Vaiṣṇava theology, six qualities are regularly attributed to the Lord. These are knowledge (*jñāna*), sovereignty (*aiśvarya*), potentiality (*śakti*), strength (*vīrya*), might (*bala*), and splendour (*tejas*). In *BSBh* 2.2.44, Śaṃkara rejects these qualities, along with the *vyūha* theory with which they were often associated. This speaks of four real manifestations of the Lord, each springing from the former,[30] which is unacceptable to Śaṃkara since, in his view, it compromises the teaching on non-duality and superimposition. However, in his *Gītā* commentary, these qualities, or allusions to the complete list, occur remarkably frequently, apparently describing *brahman*.[31] Particularly significant is their occurrence in the Introduction, which we shall look at now.

> And this Blessed One, who possesses knowledge, sovereignty, potentiality, strength, might, and splendour, and has subdued the root insentient mind–matter, his *māyā*, composed of the three qualities, who is the unborn, imperishable Lord of all beings, although the one whose nature is eternally pure, realized and free, is indicated as possessing a body as it were through his *māyā*, being born as it were, acting for the sake of the world.[32]
>
> (*GBh*, Introduction)

We are back in the world, talking of the Lord as personal cause, as one coming to teach the world as Kṛṣṇa. Yet the one so viewed is precisely the 'eternally pure, realized and free' one, the characterization of *brahman* without qualities given by Śaṃkara throughout his works.[33] At the beginning of the *Brahmasūtra* commentary, that phrase is linked, as we saw before, with the qualities of omniscience and omnipotence. There too the context is of *brahman* as cause of the origination, preservation and dissolution of the universe. We suggested that omniscience and omnipotence led the pupil beyond other unsatisfactory views of cause to a better understanding of *brahman* which is consciousness. We may see now how a similar process may

be applied to the six Vaiṣṇava qualities. Each may be seen as an aspect of either omniscience (knowledge) or omnipotence (sovereignty, potentiality, strength, might, and splendour). They lead beyond the world, beyond the idea of Lord as omnipotent unmoved mover, to the Inner Controller, the Lord named Nārāyaṇa, whose only adjunct is wisdom and whose name gathers up resonances of a Vaiṣṇava-preferred name for the Supreme Lord, the great teacher, the deity of renouncers, the initiator of the correct Advaitin teaching tradition:

> 'Those men', renouncers, 'worship Me' 'who are not other', beings who are not separate, 'thinking', understanding, the Supreme God Nārāyaṇa to be the self; 'for those' who see the ultimate. . . 'I secure gain' [showing how Śaṃkara glosses the text].[34]
>
> (*GBh* 9.22)

Unprompted and drawing on several of those resonances, Śaṃkara introduces the name Nārāyaṇa here unbidden, as elsewhere in the commentary. It is only in understanding the Supreme Lord as self that perfect insight, realization of the ultimate, can emerge. Yet we have tried to show how this insight can be drawn out of the experience of those coming from a Vaiṣṇava devotional tradition, people for whom texts like the *Gītā* and the *Nārāyaṇīya* section of the *Mahābhārata* were well known, though their interpretation must now be in accord with the insight of Advaita.

Śaṃkara shows this clearly enough in his commentary on the *Gītā*. He also subtly indicates it in a double use of a key quotation from the *Nārāyaṇīya*: 'O Nārada, because of this *māyā* produced by me, you see me connected with the characteristics (*guṇa*s) of all beings. You are not to know me as such' (*MBh* 12.339.45–6). In *BSBh* 1.1.20, this quotation supports the view that the highest Lord takes forms for the sake of those intent on him, while stressing that where such qualities are ascribed, they are for meditation, since the highest Lord is by nature free from all qualities. In Śaṃkara's second use in *BSBh* 3.2.17, the *Nārāyaṇīya* verse forms one of several quotations, significantly including, 'Not thus, not thus', which expressly teach, in Śaṃkara's view, that *brahman* is without difference. It is introduced by the words, 'Thus in *smṛti* Nārāyaṇa, bearing his universal form (*viśvarūpadhara*), said to Nārada. . . .' Nārāyaṇa is specifically identified as the teacher here, with a phrase that recalls Chapter 11 of the *Gītā*, where Kṛṣṇa, frequently called Nārāyaṇa in Śaṃkara's commentary, manifests himself to Arjuna. Śaṃkara explicitly refers to him as *viśvarūpadhara* in *GBh* 11.8 (and cf. 11.12, 11.14, etc.). Yet here, as in the other passages, this universal form is to be understood in terms of adjuncts, superimposed on the one who transcends even reality and non-reality (*GBh* 11.37). Here Śaṃkara has to add a layer of interpretation not present in the text. However, he finds 11.54 conducive to Advaitin interpretation. By devotion to no other, Kṛṣṇa is to be known and seen in

reality, says the text; strong words, necessarily indicating liberation for Śaṃkara. By existing as non-separate, *ananyā bhaktiḥ*, he explains, is where there is nothing separate from the Blessed One at any time. It is devotion by which nothing is perceived as other than Vāsudeva (Kṛṣṇa's patronymic) by any of the sense organs. By such devotion, it is possible to know Kṛṣṇa in the mode of his universal form, according to the scriptures, but also to see him directly, as he really is, and to 'go to' liberation. Without doubt, the *Gītā* shapes his comment here. Yet the fact that he quotes a resonating passage from the *Nārāyaṇīya* in the contexts and for the purposes that he does hints that it is important for him that such Vaiṣṇava experience be correctly interpreted, following the very Advaitin teaching given by Nārāyaṇa, the Supreme Teacher, initiator of the correct teaching tradition, whose proper form, as his teaching, is non-dual.

The context of the Lord

We started this chapter by citing three opposing pairs of views on Śaṃkara's understanding of the Lord: as cause, focus of devotion and source of value. It should be clear from the foregoing discussion why ample material can be found in Śaṃkara's commentaries to support both sorts of view. I suspect that authors' final assessments often depend as much on their religious positions as on Śaṃkara's own. However, this is by no means straightforward. To a Jesuit, like De Smet, deeply influenced by Aquinas, yet sympathetic to Śaṃkara, it is none other than the Supreme *brahman* who is cause, albeit purged of all our usual understandings of cause. To a Methodist like Lott, in tune with the teachings of Rāmānuja, Śaṃkara's view inevitably seems provisional, perhaps short of the mark. I hesitate therefore in stating my own view, in case it too should be judged simply as the result of various types of Christian conditioning. It is, however, at least in tune with the ideas of some modern Advaitins, such as Ramachandran and Radhakrishnan, though this, in itself, is no guarantee that it is accurate to Śaṃkara's own thought.

As I read Śaṃkara, then, the crucial issue is to show how *śruti* and *smṛti* give true teaching, valid and accurate teaching methods yielding knowledge of the truth or, better, knowledge that *is* truth. In the previous chapter, I indicated how the world functions as a context for such teaching. In this chapter, I have suggested that we can also see the Lord as the context for such teaching in a number of ways. First, the Lord as part of a contemporary Vaiṣṇava milieu acts as context, giving an experience of worship, a source of examples, a possibility of transcendence, which can be drawn on and drawn out towards Advaitin realization. This Lord is understood to be the teacher and giver of interpretation, Nārāyaṇa, hence context-giver of the whole Advaitin teaching tradition, in a certain precise sense, that of non-dual reality. This Nārāyaṇa, Lord and Inner Controller, with the sole adjunct of wisdom, represents that conceptualization which transcends the conventional

world as loci of rebirth, though still participates in conventional language, of necessity. It is one of the closest approaches we have to that which is beyond the purchase of senses and mind.

Alongside such clues, and playing a far more major part in Śaṃkara's commentaries, run discussions on the Lord as cause, discussions which push the pupil beyond other unsatisfactory philosophical teachings on this subject to the conscious Lord who is cause of all. However, this is insufficient, even when such discussions are accompanied by mutually controlling analogies. Such a Lord, though, clearly forms the context for the teaching, not least when he is imagined as the one who originates this whole manifested world, through elimination of which alone one can come to know *brahman*. As part of this, the pupil must understand that Lordship implies something ruled over, a duality proper only to the world of name and form, transcendent to which is the highest *brahman*. Here Lordship is part of the context of the empirical world, of our experience of duality and difference, a critical example for testing whether we can reject such a view as final. Ultimately, however, it is the highest *brahman* alone which is to be seen as cause in the sense that it is the basis of all superimposition of name and form. In this sense, we may perhaps speak of *brahman* as purified context for the whole teaching, as that which sublates all else in comprehensive simplicity, yet, even as the eternally pure, realized and free one, designated highest Lord.

We may perhaps recall the story of Prajāpati teaching Indra and Virocana (*Ch Up* 8.7 f). Prajāpati teaches first that the self is that seen in a reflection, next that it is the self seen in dream, then in deep sleep, then beyond. Śaṃkara rejects the view that this is moon–branch teaching, moving through less and less unsatisfactory teachings till the truth is seen. Rather, he holds that Prajāpati teaches the truth at each stage, though it is only at the end that Indra can appreciate this, placing it all in context. It seems to me that Śaṃkara's teaching on the Lord, particularly as cause, functions like that. As with Indra, the final context is non-duality, beyond all language and differentiation at all. However, while language and teaching remain, that context of non-duality, which we may see represented in Nārāyaṇa the non-dual highest Lord, illuminates the senses in which Śaṃkara's diverse statements about the Lord may all be seen as true teaching.

In Chapters 5 and 6, then, we started with the context in which the Advaitin teaching must be given: the context of this world and its structures, the context of popular understandings of the Supreme Lord. I argued that while these are to be finally discarded as superimpositions upon non-dual reality they are not unimportant to Śaṃkara in pedagogical terms, since they help to draw the pupil towards the non-dual truth. With our final example of the story of Indra and Virocana, we turned the issue of context on its head. So far as the pupil is concerned, the movement is from current context and misunderstanding towards ever more proximate apprehensions of the self. So far as the Advaitin teacher is concerned, all teaching is given in the ultimate

context of non-duality. It is when the pupil's understanding is finally transformed to see all else in the light of this ultimate context that the teacher's task is done. Accordingly, we turn in our final two chapters to examine the language which is at the heart of the teaching, the sentences from the Upaniṣads which, when correctly understood, 'make the penny drop'.

7

THE LANGUAGE OF
THE TEACHING

We have already discovered a considerable amount about the language of scriptural teaching in Śaṃkara's works. In Chapter 4, we saw how, within a 'scripturally given' framework of superimposition, a galaxy of methods focused attention on the one self. These ranged from questions raised by and to the pupil, through illustrations supporting inferences found embedded in scripture, to stories ordering understanding till realization dawned. In Chapters 5 and 6, we explored how Śaṃkara extends these insights to indicate the ways scriptural language orders experience of the world, of devotion, of the Lord, enabling the pupil who hears and reflects on the texts with an Advaitin teacher to go beyond the conventional to a realization of the one beyond difference and change.

However, this is not yet a complete explanation of how scriptural language works, according to Śaṃkara. Just because he holds that *śabda* (the verbal testimony of the *śruti* texts) is the only *pramāṇa* (valid means of knowledge) for *brahman*, he must show precisely the way words yield the knowledge that he claims is beyond all words. He must argue this in relation to various theories of language and sentence function, not least those developed by Pūrvamīmāṃsaka writers interested primarily in the Veda's injunctive force.

Scholarly interest on this subject has focused on Śaṃkara's exegesis of three key statements: 'You are that' (*tat tvam asi*) from *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6, '*Brahman* is reality, consciousness, infinite' (*satyaṃ jñānam anantaṃ brahma*) from *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* 2.1 and 'Not thus, not thus' (*neti neti*) from *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 2.3.6.[1] This is largely because, either in his *Upaniṣad* commentaries or in his *Brahmasūtra* commentary and in *Thousand Teachings* Metric Chapter 18, Śaṃkara has given extended comments on their language use, sometimes of a highly complex, technical nature.

In this chapter, we shall follow the established procedure of examining these detailed statements, but I shall argue that Śaṃkara's comments must be set in a much wider context. It is important to look at references to such passages in his work as a whole, and also to the contexts of the individual commentaries, which have often been ignored. This has strong justification in terms of what we have already argued about the importance of exegetical context for

teaching method in Śaṃkara's writings, as well as in his own clear signals in the passages concerned. Strangely, even authors who would criticize an approach that extracts the 'philosophical' nub of Śaṃkara's teachings from its commentarial setting tend to follow a rather similar procedure in isolating the specific comments about language from their surrounding contexts.

I shall also, somewhat more controversially, seek to show how reading these passages alongside each other, as mutual corrections to one another, may help to overcome the contradictions and inconsistencies that other writers have found so problematical. Most importantly, I shall argue that individually and together they push the pupil beyond language in a way consistent with methods we have investigated in previous chapters. Along with this, I reject the assumption on which many widely varying explanations of these passages have been based, namely, that the key interpretative problem is to decide how language describes *brahman*. Rather, similarly to Maximilien (1975, 1976), I shall suggest that Śaṃkara is searching for different ways of encapsulating methods for leading the pupil towards realization. These methods must, however, in his view, stand up to rigorous discussions of *pramāṇa* and language use developed by Buddhists and Pūrvamīmāṃsakas.

This approach has the advantage that we shall not need to order these passages, either chronologically or logically, making some 'earlier' or 'less' important. Strategies that have done this have produced widely varying pictures of what Śaṃkara is up to. Thus Biardeau, noting the more 'positive' evaluation of language in the *Taittirīya* commentary and the *Brahmasūtra* commentary by comparison with the 'negative' *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* and *Gītā*, presumes a sequence: *Gītā* commentary and *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* commentary, *Brahmasūtra* commentary, *Taittirīya* commentary (1959, pp. 99–100). Her arguments can seem persuasive, but so too do Hacker's, on different grounds. And on his chronology, the *Taittirīya* is an early text, the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* commentary a mature work (1968–9, see p. 147, for summary in English).

'Logical' orderings have not produced any consensus either. Alston is adamant that Śaṃkara's emphasis on 'Not thus, not thus' is primary, so any 'positive' statements must be relegated (e.g. 1980a, 3.3, 4.1). Lipner, by contrast, tends to suggest the opposite (e.g. 2000). While the *neti neti* statements are important in warning us of the subtlety with which words strain, Lipner regards the positive retention of the ultimate meaning of key terms like 'reality' and 'consciousness' as Śaṃkara's final position – 'or at least a pole in an ongoing dialectic between the negative and the positive connotations'.[2]

I shall agree with Alston that 'Not thus, not thus' is the pinnacle of Śaṃkara's teaching, not least because Śaṃkara repeatedly equates its meaning with that of 'You are that' and even with that of '*Brahman* is reality, consciousness, infinite'. However, I shall also try to show how the positive meaning of terms like 'reality' and 'consciousness' is used against opponents and to lead the pupil on beyond, just as I argued in Chapter 6 in relation

to 'Lord' and 'devotion'. In order to support this whole approach, I first examine the place of the three key passages in Śaṃkara's work as a whole and then consider each of the specific commentaries in turn.

The wider context

'You are that' and 'Not thus, not thus' are phrases quoted very frequently throughout Śaṃkara's works. They often feature in blocks of quotations given to support an argument. 'You are that' usually stresses the identity of self as *brahman* or the consequences of its teaching method.[3] 'Not thus, not thus', unsurprisingly, is a key text to bolster Śaṃkara's understanding of superimposition, emphasizing that *brahman* is without any qualities at all and is to be taught by denying qualities.[4] In the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* commentary on the text from which the phrase comes, it is particularly linked with the removal of the world of name, form and action, the world of means and ends, the world of ritual rejected by comparison with the search for knowledge of *brahman*.[5]

In this search for knowledge it coincides with a key use of the *Taittirīya* passage from which '*Brahman* is reality, consciousness, infinite' is drawn. This passage affirms, 'The one who knows *brahman* attains the highest,' and links this with the verse: 'The one who knows *brahman* as reality, consciousness, infinite, hidden in the deepest cave, in the highest heaven, obtains all desires, along with the wise *brahman*' (*Tait Up* 2.1.1). In the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, this is followed by an origination story and the famous 'five sheaths' passage in which, according to Śaṃkara, *brahman*, the highest, is beyond the sheaths of food, breath, mind (*manas*), understanding, and bliss (see further Chapter 8).

This passage is the source of some of Śaṃkara's most frequent quotations outside the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* and *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*s, and all ultimately bear on the self beyond attributes. Most obviously, Śaṃkara quotes 'the one who knows *brahman* attains the highest' to indicate the Advaitin goal.[6] Yet even the multiple citations in origination contexts have the same point, for the sole end of these is to disclose the self beyond, as we saw in Chapter 5. That the phrase, *satyaṃ jñānam anantam brahma*, is embedded in such a perspective, is clearly indicated in *BSBh* 1.4.14. Śaṃkara first quotes it, then shows how the *Taittirīya* discloses *brahman* as the conscious cause within the sheaths, and hence as the inner self. Śaṃkara makes plain here the function of origination stories as *arthavāda* and quotes *GK* 3.15 to the effect that there is no real origination at all (cf. *BSBh* 2.1.14).

In relation to this, it is not insignificant that the first two major Upaniṣadic texts to be discussed in the *Brahmasūtra* commentary are *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6, the origination of the elements from being (*sat*) alone, the one without a second, and *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* 2 on the sheaths.[7] The former gives the context in which 'You are that' will be taught and also assures the pupil that modifications are name only, not real transformations. The latter directs

attention to the one who transcends or comprehends all elements, which anyway are not ultimately real, so do not limit it.[8]

Both work with the common-sense notion that the highest *brahman* is the truly real and is other than non-conscious causes, in discussions that are intended to identify clearly what the subject of the Upaniṣads is.[9] They will contribute later in the commentary to the refutation of alternative views of causality, especially the Sāṃkhyan, considered in Chapter 5. They accord with quotations of '*Brahman* is reality, consciousness, infinite', which are given to identify *brahman*, the subject, as the real and as the conscious.[10] Yet, in this, I suggest, they work in a similar way to the language about the Lord discussed in Chapter 6. Once the pupil has understood to what the texts refer and has reflected on the arguments about opponents, he is ready to be led beyond this identification of the Lord as the real and the conscious, to the understanding of the one beyond all superimposition.

There are many clues that this is the case in instances where two or three of the passages in which we are interested are quoted together or are mutually implied. We shall look briefly at two here, but note other important occurrences in the individual commentaries considered below. In *Bṛ Up Bh* 1.4.7, Śaṃkara is arguing against opponents who favour the importance of injunctions and meditation for gaining knowledge. He emphasizes that 'Not thus, not thus' puts a stop to all action, just as 'You are that' removes consciousness of everything except the self. These teachings, along with various others, are simply there 'to speak of that'. Grief, delusion, fear and so on are removed (*Tait Up* 2.9.1 is quoted). The highest end is attained (*Tait Up* 2.1.1, from which '*Brahman* is reality, etc.' comes, is quoted among other proof texts). Our three focal texts concur.

In *BSBh* 1.1.19, concluding his view on the sheaths passage, Śaṃkara quotes *Tait Up* 2.9.1 once more. *Brahman* is 'object of neither mind nor speech'. The passage as a whole is not meant to convey knowledge of *brahman* with distinctions (*saviśeṣa brahma*). The clear implication is that the sheaths passage, which gives further details on the highest *brahman*, referred to in our key verse, teaches *brahman* without distinctions, just as *neti neti* does.

This emphasis on the removal of superimposition for the disclosure of the one beyond is shown very clearly in the first commentary on *tat tvam asi*, which we now consider. It too is a passage in which *neti neti* and the sheaths passage feature, as integral to the meaning of 'You are that' itself.

Tat tvam asi ('You are that') in *BSBh* 4.1.2

The context for the extended treatment of 'You are that' in the *Brahmasūtra* commentary is a discussion about whether repetition is allowed in the case of such sentences.[11] Śaṃkara must defend his position from a charge that it sounds very like the advocacy of repeated meditation, which he elsewhere strenuously rejects. Here he argues that, whereas some pupils may realize what

'You are that' teaches immediately they hear it, others will need to hear it repeatedly until realization dawns. Such pupils will make incremental progress, through reflecting on what they hear with a teacher. Such effort is required but does not constitute human action bringing the result about. Rather, once this hard preparation is done, realization will occur through the words of the sentence alone.

Attention is focused on each of the words in turn. '*Tat*' ('that') is to be understood from the context of *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6 as referring to the cause of all, *brahman*, the real, the one without a second. Throughout the *Brahmasūtra* commentary, this has been presented as the subject of the Upaniṣads and contrasted with other notions of cause, including the Sāṃkhyan. By this time though, the pupil has also considered the role of name and form, and the view that there is no actual transformation of the cause into the effect, that the effect is, in the final analysis, unreal (*BSBh* 2.1.14, etc.). He has also progressed through many meditations where *brahman* is identified as the topic. So Śaṃkara clarifies the meaning of 'that' by quoting from *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* 2.1 and from four *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* passages to show that it is effects and attributes which must be stripped away until all that remains is consciousness, the base of all superimposition. Notably he explains that the phases of existence such as 'origination' must be removed. It is 'not produced, not subject to old age or death' (*Bṛ Up* 4.4.25); there is no real transformation. Attributes like 'grossness' must also be removed. 'Not gross, not subtle, not short, not long' (*Bṛ Up* 3.8.8), it has no elements, however subtle, no qualities, however conceived. Yet words such as *jñāna* or *vijñāna*, in passages like '*Brahman* is reality, consciousness (*jñāna*), infinite' (*Tait Up* 2.1.1) and '*Brahman* is consciousness (*vijñāna*), bliss' (*Bṛ Up* 3.9.28), speak of it as consisting of the illumination of consciousness. It is this, free from all characteristics of *saṃsāra*, which is the referent (*padārtha*) of 'that'.

'*Tvam*' ('you') in the context of *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6 refers to Śvetaketu, the boy who returned from time with his teacher, arrogant in his knowledge, yet unable to say by what the unheard becomes heard, the unknown known. Alluding to the five sheaths passage, and later specifying precisely, Śaṃkara explains that from this 'you' must be stripped away all superimpositions of body, senses, *manas* (sense co-ordinator), *buddhi* (cognitive faculty), objects, sensations, and so on.[12] Once this is done, all that is left is the underlying consciousness. It is then that 'you' can be seen to be no other than 'that'. Consciousness, stripped of causality, simply is consciousness, stripped of the facets of individuality. Reading intertextually then, as Śaṃkara's hints lead us to do, the highest *brahman*, referred to in the verse, '*Brahman* is reality, consciousness, infinite' which he quotes here, is 'attained' as the sheaths are stripped away, attributes denied, the method of *neti neti* put into practice. Through the progressive discarding of what is not the self, the pupil works towards true understanding, 'You are that' working by negation. That a

method of understanding the referent of the words is a method of discarding the superimposition the pupil wrongly makes could not be made more clear.

> Because the meaning of the sentence is dependent upon understanding the meaning of the words (*padārtha*), this sentence, 'You are that', cannot give rise to valid cognition of its meaning for those whose two notions (of 'that' and 'you') are confused with doubts about understanding the meanings of the words. Therefore, people like this are to engage in repeated hearing of scripture and reasoning so that they can discern the meaning of the words. Although the self is to be understood as having no aspects – because the many aspects of body, senses, mind, intellect, sense objects, sensations, and so on are (just) superimposed on it, still it is appropriate that understanding comes in stages, first removing one (superimposed) aspect by one act of attention, then another by another. But this is only preliminary to understanding the self.[13]
>
> (*BSBh* 4.1.2, p. 462)

Because '*padārtha*' means both 'word-meaning' and 'word-referent', Śaṃkara suggests that discerning the meaning and discriminating that to which the words refer by discarding unwanted superimposition go hand in hand. This is no mere verbal knowledge, yet it is simply through the proper understanding of the words that knowledge dawns. The means of knowledge is *śabda* (word).

An opponent challenges Śaṃkara that *duḥkha*, the suffering and unsatisfactoriness of existence, cannot really be overcome in this way. Śaṃkara affirms that it can. In his exegesis of *neti neti* in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* commentary, he seeks to show why.

Neti neti ('Not thus, not thus') in *Br Up Bh* 2.3.6

The phrase *neti neti* occurs several times in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*. While it is at *Br Up Bh* 2.3.6 that Śaṃkara chooses to explain it in some detail, his exegesis takes careful stock of its use elsewhere. As in the *Brahmasūtra* commentary, he is concerned to show the proper identity of the subject of the Upaniṣad, namely the self identical with *brahman*. Only on such a reading can sentences like, 'That is this self spoken of as "Not thus, not thus,"' make sense. And only so can the promise, 'I will explain to you (the knowledge of the self that gives immortality)' be fulfilled.[14] If the self is understood in any other way, as just mental impressions (Śaṃkara's characterization of a Vijñānavāda Buddhist view), as a substance with attributes (Naiyāyikas and Vaiśeṣikas), as that on which *prakṛtic* mind is dependent (Sāṃkhyans), or as a separate individual self with its own karmic experiences ('those who think they are followers of the Upaniṣads'), then key statements in the Upaniṣad will have to be ignored and the Upaniṣad's authority (*prāmāṇya*) be vitiated.

Distinguishing *brahman*, the supreme self, from the gross and subtle forms that for Śaṃkara are merely the 'truth' of superimposition, Śaṃkara turns to the teaching on *brahman*, given in 'Not thus, not thus'.[15] His explanation is unambiguous. Words denote by referring to what distinguishes something (*viśeṣa*), whether this is name, form, action, difference, class, or quality. But *brahman* has none of these.[16] So words cannot denote *brahman*.[17] Rather, *neti neti* teaches by removing all differences of limiting adjuncts (*sarvopādhiviśeṣāpohena*), that is, anything that is superimposed upon *brahman* and normally denoted by words. Note that this includes even such scripturally given teachings as '*Brahman* is consciousness, bliss' (*Bṛ Up* 2.9.28), 'only a mass of consciousness' (*Bṛ Up* 2.4.12), '*brahman*', '*ātman*'. Even such cherished phrases and terms must be removed for 'when again that which is desired to be taught is the proper nature alone, which is without the distinction of any limiting adjuncts, then descriptive teaching is not possible by any means whatsoever' (*Bṛ Up Bh* 2.3.6, p. 756).[18] At this point, what is required is the superior means (*abhyupāya*), the teaching (*nirdeśa*) of *neti neti*, which works by removing all previously achieved 'descriptions' or teachings. Whatever has been ascribed must be removed. Because there is then nothing left that a person might desire (or, indeed, fear) apart from *brahman*, then the desire to know *brahman* is fulfilled, one's identity is realized.[19]

The same point has been reached as in the 'You are that' passage considered above. Neither fear nor desire can remain with the removal of every aspect of superimposition. Realization has dawned, 'understanding is centred in the self alone' (*Bṛ Up Bh* 2.3.6).[20] Here Śaṃkara is obliged to reinstate at least some of the language of the Upaniṣad to speak at all: one's identity is realized with *brahman*; it is simply a mass of consciousness without interior or exterior (cf. *Bṛ Up* 4.5.13). Yet speak he must, for this strong claim has an important purpose. Śaṃkara tacitly asserts that, far from *neti neti* resulting in a void (a charge to which he is vulnerable himself, as we shall see with *Tait Up Bh* 2.1.1 below, and as Madhyamaka denial would entail on his reading, as in *BSBh* 3.2.22), it culminates in the supreme self. The pupil's initial 'desire to know *brahman*' is satisfied. *Duḥkha*, by implication, is expelled.

Is 'Not thus, not thus' then a *description* of *brahman*, as Madhavananda's translation throughout would suggest?[21] Śaṃkara certainly plays with the term '*nirdeśa*' and its related verbal forms throughout this passage, applying them both to the way gross and subtle forms are talked of, and to the way *brahman* is too. Yet if these are 'descriptions', it seems that they are only so provisionally at the conventional level and that *neti neti* is certainly not a description insofar as *brahman* precisely lacks any of those features that a description might include. I therefore propose that Śaṃkara, glossing the Upaniṣad's own term, '*ādeśa*', by '*nirdeśa*', purposely exploits the literal sense of √*diś*, 'to point out', strengthened by the prefix, *nis*. Ordinary descriptions point out by means of distinguishing features. *Neti neti* points out *brahman* as that which is other than all this, not by objectifying it but by leaving it as what

remains: 'By what should one know the knower?' It is for this reason that Śaṃkara deems *neti neti* an *abhyupāya*, a superior means. And in this strategy of making *brahman* known by removing all superimposition there are continuities not only with 'You are that' as above, but also with Śaṃkara's explanation of *satyaṃ jñānam anantaṃ brahma* in *Tait Up Bh* 2.1.1.[22]

Satyaṃ jñānam anantaṃ brahma ('*Brahman* is reality, consciousness, infinite') in *Tait Up Bh* 2.1.1

'Not thus, not thus' is really a gift to an Advaitin wanting to speak of the removal of superimposition. *Satyaṃ jñānam anantaṃ brahma* poses many more difficulties on the surface, looking very much like the sentence, 'The lotus is big, blue and fragrant', a sentence that describes the lotus by ascribing to it precisely those kinds of qualities from which *brahman* is free.

To tackle this issue, Śaṃkara develops a sophisticated technical argument about the type of sentence that this is, arguing that it is '*lakṣaṇārtham*'. This Sanskrit compound may initially be translated as 'for the sake of pointing out', that is, for referring, in this case, to *brahman*. However, the Sanskrit is ambiguous and so we shall need to examine its meaning(s) and the problems of interpretation occasioned by Śaṃkara's use of this term in some detail below. First, though, we note that, whatever its meaning, it must be such that it satisfies (i) the Mīmāṃsā criterion that the sentence is there for a purpose (or else be subsidiary or meaningless); (ii) Śaṃkara's Advaitin view that such a primary purpose be not injunctive[23] and (iii) the text's own statement that knowing *brahman* as reality, consciousness, infinite yields the fulfilment of all desires, since it is none other than attaining the highest.

According to Śaṃkara, the purport of the whole of the second main section of the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, which includes our sentence and the five sheaths' teaching, is summed up in the sentence, 'The knower of *brahman* attains the highest'.[24] This purport is also said to be signified by the verse quoted in *Tait Up* 2.9.1 to conclude the section: 'The one who knows the bliss of *brahman*, from which words along with the mind turn back without reaching it, does not fear anything at all.'[25] Just as a full realization of 'You are that' ends in the removal of life's suffering, and the proper end of 'Not thus, not thus' in the removal of all desires, so understanding this section of the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* removes all fear. And this can only be the case, emphasizes Śaṃkara, when the 'from which', in the verse which *Tait Up* 2.9.1 quotes as above, is interpreted as referring to the 'self, free from conceptual construction (*nirvikalpa*), pointed out (*lakṣaṇa-*) by what was said earlier, whose bliss is non-dual'.[26] This is the one that is 'not the object of mentalizing, cannot be denoted, is specified (*viśeṣaṇa-*) as invisible and so on'.[27] Here, no distinction due to *avidyā* remains. So there is no place for fear (referring to *Tait Up* 2.7.1) (all from *Tait Up Bh* 2.9.1).

This position is entirely congruent with that of *Br̥ Up Bh* 2.3.6 on 'Not thus, not thus'. If we are to speak of the non-dual self, language must linger. This is the force of Śaṃkara's continued use of terms such as *-lakṣaṇa* and *-viśeṣaṇa* here. It is through the 'pointing out' of the text, through its 'specification' of the self as 'invisible' (from *Tait Up* 2.7.1), through the reinstatement of terms like 'mass of consciousness only' (*Br̥ Up Bh* 4.5.13, in *Br̥ Up Bh* 2.3.6), that the self comes to be known and that this realization can in turn be communicated. But that which is the *artha*, the purport, the point, the goal of the teaching, is the one beyond.

It is within this reading of *Tait Up* 2 as a whole that Śaṃkara's identification of '*Brahman* is reality, consciousness, infinite', as '*lakṣaṇārtham*' must be interpreted. The problem is that this Sanskrit compound is capable of being broken up in two different ways. Śaṃkara rarely resolves its ambiguity explicitly. It may be read as '*lakṣaṇa* + *artham*', 'for the sake of/in the sense of a definition'. Or it may be read as '*lakṣaṇā* (long ā) + *artham*', 'for the sake of/in the sense of secondary or analogous predication'.

In a key article in 1957, Biardeau argued that a definition (*lakṣaṇa*) in Indian terms works by separating off that which is defined from other things, rather than by ascribing positive characteristics to it. Because Śaṃkara clearly starts his commentary with such a view, as we shall see below, and because this suits an interpretation of *brahman* that denies characteristics of it, many secondary writers have followed such an interpretation of *lakṣaṇārtham* (that is, understanding it to mean 'in the sense of/for the purpose of a definition'). They include, although for somewhat different reasons, Bartley (1986) and Alston (1980a, 4.1).

Noting, however, that Śaṃkara emphasizes that the terms '*satyam*' and '*jñānam*' retain their own meanings, and developing a sophisticated view of 'proximate secondary predication', Lipner argues that Śaṃkara subtly exploits the double meaning of the compound (Lipner, 1997). To appreciate Lipner's argument we must first examine in a little more detail what he means by 'proximate secondary predication'. According to Mīmāṃsā, words can be applied in both primary and secondary senses. A word's primary sense is its literal or proper sense. As we saw in Chapter 3, naming words (in Sanskrit) have a fixed relationship with the *ākṛti* or generic configuration they designate. So the word '*siṃha*' ('lion') designates the *ākṛti*, 'lion-ness', and, in a sentence, the particular lion to which it refers. Wherever possible, the Vedic commentator should adopt such primary meanings in giving an interpretation. But words can also have a range of secondary senses, as Lipner demonstrates carefully in relation to Śaṃkara's own usage (Lipner, 1989). In particular, Lipner shows how Śaṃkara distinguishes between two types of *lakṣaṇā* or secondary predication: remote and proximate, in *BSBh* 3.3.9.

There are various types of secondary predication that could come under the category 'remote'. For example, to say that 'Devadatta is a lion' is not to say literally that Devadatta is a lion, but that he has some characteristics of a lion,

bravery, for example. The term 'lion' is here used metaphorically and its relationship to its primary sense, the animal with a mane, is remote. Similarly, when the Upaniṣads superimpose one idea on another for the sake of meditation, this is remote *lakṣaṇā*. 'Fire is the chant,' says *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 1.6.1. Here, the meaning of the word 'chant' superimposed on the 'fire' for the meditation has no direct semantic connection. It is another form of remote secondary predication that is to be eschewed when interpreting the primary sentences of scripture (though not in passages on meditation that are subordinate, so far as Śaṃkara is concerned).

With such usages, Śaṃkara contrasts 'proximate secondary predication'. When we say, 'The village is on fire!' we do not literally mean that the whole of the village is on fire, but more probably only a part. So part of the literal meaning of the term 'village' is retained in this sentence (it is not the forest which is burning), though part does not apply (the part which has escaped the fire). This is an instance of proximate *lakṣaṇā*. It is in such a sense that Lipner suggests Śaṃkara uses the term '*lakṣaṇārtham*' in his interpretation of '*Brahman* is reality, consciousness, infinite', to which we now return.

Certainly, Lipner agrees, Śaṃkara starts his explanation by using *lakṣaṇārtham* with the meaning 'for the purpose of a definition (*lakṣaṇa + artha*)'. However, in the course of the commentary, Śaṃkara shifts the meaning, so that the 'definition' is finally seen to work 'in the sense of proximate secondary predication (*lakṣaṇā + artha*)'. As we have just seen, in such a form of *lakṣaṇā*, part of the sense of the word is retained in its primary sense, though not the whole of it. This enables Lipner to argue that it fits the way Śaṃkara jettisons those aspects of the terms 'reality' and 'consciousness' that are inappropriate to the highest *brahman* (such as being a material substance, being subject to change; see below), but retains their proper, though rarefied, senses. This helps to guarantee the meaningfulness of scriptural language against the criticism that otherwise the terms have no purchase.[28]

This analysis helps Lipner to argue that the nice distinction Śaṃkara makes between words from the roots √*vac* and √*lakṣ* in his commentary is that between description (which is inappropriate for *brahman* because it is without name, form, action, class, etc.) and proximate secondary predication (which, consistent with Lipner's interpretation of *lakṣaṇā + artham*, can still ascribe a proper sense of 'the real' and 'the conscious' to *brahman*). Alston, by contrast, though not arguing directly against Lipner, agrees that *brahman* cannot be designated directly (√*vac*), but must therefore be indicated (literal meaning of √*lakṣ*) by definition, which uses 'characterizations' (*viśeṣaṇa*) only to mark *brahman* off from something else. He rejects Biardeau's suggestion that Śaṃkara goes beyond this function of definition to the ascription of positive characteristics, since this contradicts Śaṃkara's clear statements elsewhere about why this is simply impossible (1980a, p. 173).[29] Other writers like Bartley also point out that the Vedāntin commentator should avoid *lakṣaṇā*,

secondary meaning, at all costs, especially in a passage of such importance. Lipner is well aware of this but argues that, because proximate secondary predication retains part of the primary sense of the term, this is a different case from a purely metaphorical interpretation. The question then is whether he breaches Śaṃkara's constant stress that *brahman* cannot be denoted by the primary (even if here partial) sense of terms.

As we examine the key moves in Śaṃkara's explanation, I shall argue that a shift does indeed take place, but that this shift is best understood in parallel with *BSBh* 4.1.2. There we saw that ascertaining the referents (*padārtha*s) of 'you' and 'that' went hand in hand with a process of stripping away super-imposition, until the moment of full realization beyond this could occur. Here I suggest that ascertaining the way in which '*Brahman* is reality, consciousness, infinite' is *lakṣaṇārtham*, at a grammatical level, is intended to produce a similar shift in the reflective pupil.

Śaṃkara himself very clearly states that the *mantra* containing this phrase is quoted for a threefold purpose: first, to specify an appropriate definition/method (*lakṣaṇa*) capable of making known the nature of the *brahman* that was referred to briefly in 'The knower of *brahman* attains the highest' but which has not so far been fully ascertained; second, by such a definition/method (*lakṣaṇa*) to make that *brahman* knowable as the inner self; and, third, to make clear that the fruit of that knowledge of *brahman*, attaining the highest, simply is being the self beyond the characteristics of transmigratory existence, which just is the nature of *brahman* (*Tait Up Bh* 2.1.1, p. 282).[30]

We have here then a definition (*lakṣaṇa*) that is to specify that which is so far underdetermined. Yet, paradoxically, it must specify a nature (*svarūpa*) that is *free from* specifications. We have here too a definition or method whose primary purposes are 'to make plain' or 'to make knowable' the highest goal, the identity of inner self as *brahman*. Śaṃkara implies that there is to be a passage through definition to realization, through specification to the one beyond. It is as if a focusing in on *brahman* through the words of scripture leads to the self beyond. This self is never the object of mentalization or denotation, yet specifications such as 'invisible', stories such as the sheaths, and definitions such as '*Brahman* is reality, consciousness, infinite' guide the pupil towards it.

Let us follow Śaṃkara the teacher's method. First, he compares '*Brahman* is reality, consciousness, infinite' with 'The lotus is big, fragrant and blue'. Here 'big', 'fragrant' and 'blue' are *viśeṣaṇa*s or qualifiers, specifying the lotus, distinguishing it from other lotuses that are red, small and so on. In the case of *brahman*, however, Śaṃkara points out that 'reality', 'consciousness' and 'infinite' act not primarily as *viśeṣaṇa*s but 'for the sake of a definition' (*lakṣaṇārtha-*) insofar as a definition (*lakṣaṇa*), here, distinguishes *brahman* not from others in its class (of which there are none), but from everything else. Here we may note an exact correspondence with 'Not thus, not thus', which

was precisely to teach *brahman* as other than everything else. Starting with the ordinary function of a sentence of this type, where the words in Sanskrit are in grammatical co-ordination with one another, Śaṃkara suggests how this sentence may function differently but not aberrantly to yield the knowledge desired.[31]

The next step is to take the ordinary meanings of the separate words, each of which applies to *brahman*, the grammatical subject, but then to show how they operate *by mutually controlling one another's meanings*. Here is the explicit paradigm of generating understanding by removing unwanted meanings, which we earlier applied to the key analogies and which we shall also suggest can be applied to these passages on language, read together. Śaṃkara's argument much condensed runs as follows.

'*Satyam*' ('real') means 'unchanging'.[32] '*Satyaṃ brahma*' therefore distinguishes *brahman* from what changes, from what is an effect (*vikāra*), that is, from the phases of origination and so forth which were rejected of 'that' in *BSBh* 4.1.2. *Brahman* is what is not unreal. Yet precisely because '*satyam*' can mean 'material cause', it raises the difficulty that *brahman* may be considered merely as one factor among many (as the material cause is in producing a product) and as non-conscious. To correct this, '*jñānaṃ brahma*' removes the unwanted meanings, particularly ruling out the possibility that *brahman* is not conscious. Yet this in turn brings new difficulties. For '*jñānam*' ('consciousness') might lead one to think of *brahman* as the agent of knowing. This would imply both change and limitation by the knowable object and the process of knowing. This, however, would be inappropriate to *brahman*, which is both *satyam* (real, unchanging, as shown above) and *anantam* (infinite, without limits). These words therefore act as a check on the inappropriate connotations of '*jñānam*'. *Brahman* is what is not unconscious, not changing, not unreal.

Each word does, then, in fact function in its own primary sense in contributing to the meaning of the sentence as whole, for it is through this primary sense that it removes the unwanted connotations of the other words. Each then has a purpose in the sentence. None is redundant. Indeed, it is precisely through their juxtaposition that they point asymptotically to *brahman*, ever beyond their denotation. So Śaṃkara concludes:

> Thus the words like 'reality', because they occur in mutual proximity, controlling and being controlled by one another in turn, act to distinguish/turn back *brahman* from the denotation of words like 'reality', and so are *lakṣaṇārthāḥ*.[33]
>
> (*Tait Up Bh* 2.1.1, p. 285)

Earlier, however, an opponent launches an objection that, if the words merely act negatively, the sentence is void of meaning or referent, like one speaking of the son of a barren woman who bathes in the water of a mirage crowned

with skyflowers and armed with a hare's horn bow! The spectre of the void shadowing *neti neti* is raised again, but here in relation to a Mīmāṃsā opponent, rather than a Buddhist, who would find Śaṃkara's subsequent assertion more than unconvincing. In this passage, Śaṃkara speaks to opponents who accept that scriptural language is the appropriate method of acquiring knowledge (*pramāṇa*) for the matter in hand. It must therefore have a point, provided this is correctly identified. What point would there be in a (scriptural) definition/method, the main function of *satyaṃ jñānam anantaṃ brahma*, terminating in a void, he asks?[34]

However, he accepts the need to backtrack. Let us take it, he argues, that 'real', etc. are functioning as *viśeṣaṇa*s, distinguishing characteristics of *brahman*, the grammatical subject of the sentence. Then *brahman* is properly distinguished by those words, retaining their usual senses, from other things with opposite characteristics. The word '*brahman*' has its own meaning; 'infinite' distinguishes it by denying limitations of it; 'real' and 'conscious' by making plain their own (normal) meanings. At this level of understanding *brahman* is the real, from which origination springs, the cognizer which enters each body as the individual self (*jīva*). To support this, Śaṃkara quotes the origination story from *Tait Up* 2.1.1, which immediately follows the *mantra*. Yet later he will quote *Ch Up* 6.1.4 as a reminder that modifications are merely names, not real effects, and will argue that the sheaths are there as a gradual way of detaching misidentifications and 'entering' the inmost *brahman*. A common-sense Vedāntin reading, later to be deconstructed as *arthavāda*, leads the pupil in the right direction.

There is one further crucial step Śaṃkara must make in returning to the assertion that our key sentence works *lakṣaṇārtham*. The opponent argues that understanding *brahman* as the cognizer makes it the knowing agent, subject to the previous charges of change and limitation. This is appropriately denoted by the noun *jñāna*, which is dependent on the verbal action expressed by the root √*jñā*, according to standard grammatical analysis. In response, Śaṃkara sketches a model of cognition that is developed in far greater detail in *Thousand Teachings* Metric Chapter 18. Its key importance here is the way it seeks to distinguish the eternal unchanging consciousness, the self, from its appearances (*buddhi*, sense objects, etc.), the proper referents of 'knowledge' language. This is not unlike the way the referent of 'you' was separated out from the different aspects of the cognizing individual in *BSBh* 4.1.2.

Śaṃkara is now in a position to conclude that neither 'consciousness' nor 'reality' denotes (√*vac*) *brahman*, for *brahman* is without those characteristics that are the grounds for the application of words in a primary denotative sense. But it is indicated (√*lakṣ*) by them. Scripture takes these terms and refines them, identifying them in origination accounts, juxtaposing them in the *mantra* quoted, giving the basis for distinguishing them from their ordinary use. Yet working through that use, it points to *brahman*. '*Brahman* is reality, consciousness, infinite' becomes a fit *lakṣaṇa*. It focuses in on *brahman*

even when the terms are used as *viśeṣaṇa*s, speaking of distinguishing charac-
teristics. It picks *brahman* out from everything else, encouraging the pupil
to discard misidentifications. It thus enables the pupil to understand that
brahman, approached through the origination stories but free from change, is
the inner self, beyond the processes of cognition, unlimited by any aspect of
the manifested world. It can thus place the pupil in the position for realization
to dawn, as for the tenth man in the story, and hence for the sentence to fulfil
its threefold purpose as *lakṣaṇa*. For Śaṃkara has shown how it can specify
a method, make *brahman* knowable through that method and yield the
realization that is none other than being the self. While *brahman* is 'unspeak-
able', never the purport of a denotative sentence (*avākyārtha*), the language of
scripture, operating through its primary senses, has once more been shown to
be adequate, at least in Śaṃkara's terms, as a *pramāṇa*.

This interpretation, then, avoids the need to understand '*lakṣaṇārtham*' as
'*lakṣaṇā + artham*'. Yet it incorporates the importance of the directionality of
understanding *brahman* as the real and the conscious, gained here through
the origination and other scriptural sources, which Lipner's explanation
secures. However, it trades the cognitive purchase of the proximate secondary
predication on the grounds that this does still involve an element of primary
denotation (the retained meaning), which Śaṃkara is so against. But it
concedes that Lipner's interpretation shows how easily a similar view and
technical label for this came to be applied in later Advaita.[35] The remaining
question is whether, on this modified *lakṣaṇa* interpretation, the opponent's
charge of vacuity is properly answered. Alternatively phrased, it is the
question of whether duality can be overcome using a medium rooted in
duality. Śaṃkara's answer is pedagogical and in terms of results. He claims
here that, in attaining the highest, all fears are removed, along with the *avidyā*-
caused difference that is the root of fear. Elsewhere, he points to those who do
live free from the ties of transmigration. On such a criterion, though, others
will challenge the Advaitin, as remaining deluded (a Buddhist response), as
having only the partial truth (a Viśiṣṭādvaitin response).[36] The epistemo-
logical questions that lurk here, including the issue of the possible vacuity of
words, are addressed in Śaṃkara's more complex exposition of *tat tvam asi* in
Upad P 18.

Tat tvam asi ('You are that') in *Upadeśasāhasrī*
Metric Chapter 18

Metric Chapter 18, known as the '*tattvamasi prakaraṇa*', is the longest
chapter in the collection of Śaṃkara's self-standing treatises, *Thousand
Teachings*. It is written in a highly elliptical style. This can make deciphering
the complex arguments difficult, as the sometimes widely varying views of the
three principal translators into English show (Jagadananda, 1941; Mayeda,
1979; Alston, 1990). There is also some dispute on the numbering of the

verses. I shall follow Mayeda's critical edition, indicating variations where significant.

At the outset, Śaṃkara makes clear that the teaching, 'You are that', along with reason, is what removes the qualities of the non-self from the self, like removing the idea of a snake from a rope. The self is indeed already established as the 'I' known to each one of us, as Śaṃkara argued in his introduction to the *Brahmasūtra*s, but mistaken views of it need to be removed:

> The characteristic of the non-self (*yuṣmad*) is removed from the self (*asmad*) which is already known as 'I', by teachings such as 'You are [that]' coupled with reason, like the idea of a snake from (what is really) a rope.[37]
>
> (*Upad P* 18.4)

His key ideas of superimposition, the importance of hearing and reflection, the view that the self always is, and is not something to be achieved or brought about, unlike the result of ritual action or meditation on a Pūrvamīmāṃsā view, are all in place. So too is the key point for which we have been arguing, that the words of scripture, correctly understood, act to remove that super-imposition and so yield liberation. Their ability to do so is grounded here in Śaṃkara's confidence that scripture teaches compassionately like a mother (18.3).

It is, however, not until 18.170 following, that Śaṃkara gives his detailed explanation of 'You are that', stressing once more that it is linked with the rejection of *duḥkha*, all that is unsatisfactory and belonging to the world of means and ends. Before this, though, he tells us that the teaching needs a doorway (*dvāra*), a way in without which it will be useless (*anarthakaḥ*), without point, the authority of scripture, by implication, vitiated (18.110). We are reminded that for '*Brahman* is reality, consciousness, infinite' to be a *lakṣaṇa*, for its words to be *lakṣaṇārthāḥ*, it had to be effective, capable of yielding the realization that *brahman* is none other than the true inner self.

The 'way in' (*dvāra*) for 'You are that' is provided by the reflection analogy which we shall examine in a moment. Śaṃkara develops this analogy for the processes of cognition in more detail than in *Tait Up Bh* 2.1.1 to underpin his explanation of the way 'knowledge' language works. Through this he seeks to explain how teachings like 'I am the witness' can make sense. Treating the sentence 'I am the real' as parallel to the sentence 'You are that', he then deter-mines the referents (*padārtha*s) of each of the terms to help the pupil towards an understanding of the sentence meaning itself. The whole discussion is embedded in a complex weaving of strands on scripture's authority as a *pramāṇa*, the nature of cognition and the witness of cognitions (*pratyagdṛśī*), the function of language and the mediating role of the reflection analogy (Suthren Hirst, 2003).

Within this, Śaṃkara also addresses the four issues basic to the (Uttara) Mīmāṃsaka commentator's role: the topic; the fit person; the result; and the method or link between teaching and result. The whole chapter, then, makes a very tight claim about the authority of the teaching, 'You are that'. It is given by compassionate scripture. It conforms to Mīmāṃsā requirements. Its language use can be coherently explained. It is grounded in a model for the processes of cognition, whose superiority over those of the Prābhākara and Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsakas and of the Diṅnāga Yogācārin Buddhists is argued. Moreover, it satisfies the pragmatic criterion: it bears fruit. While we cannot pursue the detail of this here, I shall argue that, not only the model of cognition and language which Śaṃkara develops, but also the way in which he does so, once more simultaneously allows the explanation of the technical way in which scriptural language works as a *pramāṇa* and enables the pupil who follows this to discard from the self the superimposed 'I' that impedes realization.

Śaṃkara starts with the familiar view that words cannot directly denote the inner witness (*pratyagdṛśī*) in any way at all. However, he suggests that, where there is a reflection, then words can indicate it (indirectly) (*lakṣayeyuḥ*) (*Upad P* 18.29).[38] His analogy (and it remains an analogy, though, as with so many of his analogies, later Advaita pressed this into a technical explanation) is of a face reflected in a mirror.[39] The reflection of the face is different from the face because it is dependent on the mirror, whereas the actual face is not. Nevertheless, we may extrapolate, it is what can be directly seen and spoken about as the face, though the one whose reflection it is can never see her face directly. The language applies to what can be seen, through which that which is not directly available can be made known. There is, of course, no exact parallel, as Śaṃkara warns us of analogies elsewhere. Nevertheless, as in *Tait Up Bh* 2.1.1, he has now prepared the way for 'knowledge' language to apply directly to the reflection/superimposition/mental apparatus and only indirectly to the self as permanent witness. So, after a section in which he challenges views of the self alternative to the Advaitin's, he concludes: 'If it be the case that the intellect (*buddhi*) is the reflection of the consciousness which is the self's proper nature, it is fitting that the Veda teaches (*śāsti*) that, by words for "knowledge"' (18.50).[40] Here, though, he has to argue against a Mīmāṃsaka opponent, familiar with grammatical theory, who contends that a verb, which in Sanskrit has a root part denoting the verbal action and an ending showing the person who is the agent, must apply to a single subject. In English, if we say, 'She goes', we understand that the agent of going is the one who performs the action of going. The question is how Śaṃkara can sustain a grammatical analysis of the word '*jānāti*' ('he knows'), since he wants the changeless cognizing subject to be the self, but the process of knowing and experiencing to belong to transmigratory existence.

Here the reflection analogy comes into its own.

> The personal ending [-*ti*, 'he'] denotes the reflection of the self; the meaning of the root [√*jñā*, 'know'] is the action of the mind. 'He knows' is said falsely, due to failure to discriminate the two.[41]
>
> (*Upad P* 18.53)

Śaṃkara has a single subject for the verb 'He knows', in the undiscriminated activity of the mental faculties, which nonetheless bear the reflection of the self. It is then the task of the teacher to help the pupil discriminate the true meaning of 'I' from the mental complex with which it is confused.

Supporting his argument, as he did at the beginning of the *Bṛ Up* 2.3.6 commentary on *neti neti*, with presentations and rebuttals of alternative views of consciousness and the self, Śaṃkara then moves on to help the pupil understand the proper meaning of 'I' in scriptural statements like, 'I am the witness', as a preparation for understanding the meaning of 'You are that'. As Lipner (2000, pp. 57–64) and Maximilien (1976, p. 125) point out, the meaning of 'that' is not really at issue in *Upad P* 18. It is taken as given in 18.26 and indeed in *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6.2.1.[42] But the meaning of 'you', equivalent to 'I' in 'I am the witness', 'I am the real', remains to be determined. Here, as in *BSBh* 4.1.2 and *Tait Up Bh* 2.1.1, Śaṃkara holds to the view that the sentence meaning comes from, and only from, a proper understanding of the meanings of its constituent words (18.178).[43] Once these are understood, however, it is sufficient to hear the sentence alone for understanding to dawn, just as Rāma, told 'You are Viṣṇu', suddenly understood his true identity at the end of the *Rāmāyaṇa* (18.100).[44]

Śaṃkara then proposes *anvayavyatireka*-reasoning as the appropriate method for ascertaining the meaning of this crucial word 'I' (18.96).[45] Exactly what he means has generated extended discussion in the secondary literature. The term literally means 'conjunction and disjunction' (or the 'presence and absence' of specified features). Halbfass understands Mayeda to view it as a pedagogical method specific to Śaṃkara for understanding *tat tvam asi* (1991, p. 163). He rejects this, finally interpreting it as the all-pervasive habit of reasoning in deciding what applies and what does not apply (p. 170). Between these very specific and very general interpretations lies the detailed work of George Cardona, who discusses *anvayavyatireka* in a variety of philosophical but especially grammatical contexts (1967–8, 1981). Drawing on his work and on Śaṃkara's explicit statement that 'the method of *anvayavyatireka*- applies as between a word (and its idea) and a referent' (*Upad P* 18.96) (2000, p. 66, n.35), Lipner argues, in parallel with his understanding of *lakṣaṇā* in *Tait Up Bh* 2.1.1, that Śaṃkara wants to find those elements of the word 'I' that properly apply to the self, and to discard those that do not. In this very technical sense, the term 'you' will turn out to indicate (√*lakṣ*), though not express (√*vac*), the self.

As before, I shall argue that a grammatical issue, the determining of what is the proper referent of the word 'I' or 'you', is paralleled with a process in

which the pupil discards the inappropriate superimpositions from his under-
standing of these terms till the point at which understanding dawns. I shall
further argue that the proper and primary sense of the term is retained
insofar as it denotes the reflected self (which can be denoted), but that the
reflection analogy gives yet another way of focusing and pointing beyond
itself to the one no words can denote, whether with an everyday or a rarefied
meaning.

Śaṃkara does, however, say quite clearly that 'the "semantic terminus"[46] of
the word "I" in the light that is the inner self is that which is spoken of in "You
are the real", its fruit being liberation' (18.101).[47] Through this, he makes
yet again the strong claim that liberation comes only through the words of
scripture, without need of meditation to make verbal knowledge 'real'.[48]

The subsequent discussion develops the basis for the 'semantic terminus',
appealing to the reflection analogy (18.109) supported by an argument from
dream (18.117). An opponent charges Śaṃkara with the logical flaw of
circularity. The face and the reflection in the mirror can be known indepen-
dently of one another; they can both be seen separately. But Śaṃkara's way of
establishing the reflection of the self is not independent of the cognition
of the self (18.115).[49] To put it another way: Śaṃkara is trying to establish the
existence of a self through a reflection model that already presumes the self.

Śaṃkara's reply is to appeal to the dreaming state where *pratyaya*s, mental
events, are established separately from the self. His justification is that, since
there are no actual objects like chariots present, then what we have is a case of
the self seeing mental events (which are thus proved separate from the self).
The one called 'the knower' is the one whose reflection pervades the mental
events (18.120a, cf. 18.118a). Śaṃkara thus proposes a formal inductive
inference (*anumāna*):

> There is a permanent self-aware cognizer
> Because it is needed to account for the occurrence and awareness of
> changing mental events
> Like a lamp (which shines to illuminate diverse changing objects).[50]
>
> (18.123)

That the reason (*hetu*) is vulnerable to criticism Śaṃkara acknowledges later
when he engages in turn a Prābhākara, then a Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsaka, then a
Diṅnāga Yogācārin Buddhist, to argue that whatever account of cognition is
accepted, there is a need for a permanent cognizer separate from mental
events, contrary to the views they expound (Suthren Hirst, 2003; cf. Ingalls,
1954; Ram-Prasad, 1993). This emerges out of a discussion as to whether the
witness is to be known through a *pramāṇa* or without one:

> If it is said here that negation [of the *pratyaya*s, the superimpositions,
> the non-self, central to Śaṃkara's method] is by the *pramāṇa* of

verbal testimony alone, voidness will be the [undesired] result, because the witness is not established.[51]

(18.125)

Just as in *Br̥ Up Bh* 2.3.6 and *Tait Up Bh* 2.1.1, the spectre of the void has reared its head. For, if the charge sticks, Śaṃkara cannot give a Mīmāṃsaka-acceptable account of Upaniṣadic language bearing fruit in realization. His claim that 'I'/'You (are that)' language has its semantic terminus in an unchanging inner self will be shown to be hollow. This is why, before explaining how 'You are that' bears on the inner self free from all unsatisfactoriness and suffering (*duḥkha*), Śaṃkara elaborates on his account of cognition with arguments such as the one we have just outlined above. On the basis of this account, *duḥkha*, which is misattributed to the self, but is really mental (18.166), *can* be removed, through the idea of the self discriminated from mental events. In *BSBh* 4.1.2, superimpositions had gradually to be removed from the understanding of 'that' and 'you' so that their proper referents could be understood. Here too Śaṃkara has built up a complex series of arguments designed to lead the pupil not only to the point of acceptance, but, through these, to be able to thrust away those inappropriate aspects of the unsatisfactory process of cognition and experience, which, superimposed on the *asmad* when it is called 'I' (18.4), prevent the proper understanding of the scriptural sentence.

Śaṃkara is now in a position to return to grammatical issues. There are two key moves he must make. One is to show how the sentence, 'You are that', itself functions (especially 18.169–71, 18.194–5). The other is to show that what was needed for the sentence to make plain its meaning was the clarification of the referent of the word 'you'.

In sentences like, 'You are that', when the referent of the word 'you' is not discerned, then the referent of the sentence, 'I am the eternally free,' is not plain either. [The method of] *anvayavyatireka* is mentioned for discerning that, not for anything else. For when the referent of the word 'you' is discerned, the referent of the sentence is as plain as a *bilva* fruit placed on the hand. And so the referent of the sentence is discerned as (the self) alone,[52] because the inner self is settled upon, by removing[53] this notion of being the one who suffers from the referent of the word 'I'.[54]

(18.179–81)

Since Śaṃkara makes no distinction between meaning and referent, he cleverly suggests that the grammatical process of rejecting inappropriate notions (of suffering/experiencing, etc.) from the word 'you' is parallel to the mental process of pushing them away. It is because of this that the final realization, 'I', the 'O yes!' of the tenth man in the story, can arise, because the

inner self is fully known. It is not just ascertained to be the referent of the sentence, but known as it is. There is no further room for doubt. We can compare this with the *neti neti* exegesis and with Śaṃkara's affirmation there that understanding is centred in the self.

That which remains, grammatically, by the process of *anvayavyatireka*, is the 'I', its denotation that of the reflected self, though now discriminated from the mirror with which it has been confused. It yields understanding of that which constantly is, the eternally free self. This can be referred to as 'the knower', a use of language made justifiable by the arguments for the need for a permanent cognizing self. Yet ultimately that self is beyond all words and mental events/cognitions, as Śaṃkara consistently affirms. Once more a grammatical process parallels a pedagogic journey, a journey fulfilled not just in understanding a word, but in the sentence yielding its meaning.

The sentence is 'You are that'. 'Are' (*asi*) shows that 'you' and 'that' are *tūlyanīḍa*, literally, 'having the same nest'. They share a referent, in grammatical co-ordination, like '(This is) a black horse' (cf. 18.169) or '*Brahman* is reality, consciousness, infinite'. Thus 'the word "that" has the meaning of the inner self, "you" the meaning of the word "that" ' (18.194b).[55] The meanings of the words coincide, though this is no simple tautology, which would yield no new knowledge and so be without authority as a means of knowledge (Gupta and Wilcox, 1984). Rather, hard work must be done to ascertain the meaning of the word 'you', and it is once this has been done that the sentence can give rise to a valid cognition (*pramā*) (18.193).

So Śaṃkara explains a little earlier:

> Because of its connection with that which speaks of non-suffering, the word 'you' has the meaning of the word 'that'. So because of the connection of the word 'that' (with 'you'), the sentence may bear on the inner self, like 'You are the tenth', by denoting the inner self.[56]
>
> (18.169b–170)

Note Śaṃkara's vocabulary. 'That' speaks in a primary sense (*vācin*, √*vac*) of that which is not *duḥkha*. 'You' is a denotation (*abhidhāna*) for the inner self. This is rather shocking, in view of Śaṃkara's constant argument that no words can denote the self. But it is the ground on which he can go on to say 'For, without giving up their own meaning, the two together yield a particular meaning, culminating in the realization which is the inner self. Therefore there is no other meaning contradictory to that meaning' (18.171).[57]

The primary sense of 'that' has been taken as read, given in scripture. The ordinary language use of 'you' or 'I' refers to the individual, the one to whom we refer when we say 'He knows', confusing the reflected inner self with changing mental events. We know there is an 'I', an inner self, but the sense of the word and the understanding of the reality have to be made firm. It is once the process of discriminating the sense of 'I' has been completed and the two

words put together that realization can dawn. And note Śaṃkara's language here carefully. As throughout, he uses the potential mood to propose a possible interpretation, the Advaitin interpretation that he holds to be true. But he does not say that the sentence meaning denotes the inner self. Rather, elliptically using a locative case, he suggests, 'Let (us agree that) it bear upon the inner self' (18.170b).

The sentence then has a proper meaning. In Mīmāṃsā terms, it is *viśiṣṭārtha*.[58] Its referent (*artha*), the inner self beyond suffering, has been specified (*viśiṣṭa*) by the way the words 'that', 'you' and 'are' each function in relation to one another to exclude unwanted meanings and so to bear upon the self. A correct meaning has been obtained by a legitimate process. Yet the inner self is precisely not 'a qualified object' (*viśiṣṭārtha*), for it has no qualities or distinctions. Once again, Śaṃkara uses an opponent's vocabulary to show how his Advaitin interpretation can make sense, purportedly within the parameters the opponent sets.

Indeed it seems likely that Śaṃkara goes even further in this demonstration. For he has shown how the sentence has not just a proper but also a fruitful result. It culminates in that *avagati*, that realization which is not of the inner self as an object, but which simply is the inner self. There is nothing that could negate this (cf. 18.192), nothing further that needs to be done. The Pūrvamīmāṃsā understanding of authoritative sentences is once again subverted. It is not just injunctive sentences that can yield results and thus be authoritative, Śaṃkara implies.

Such a claim needs to be set against the complex understanding that, by his day, Pūrvamīmāṃsakas like Kumārila had developed, of how verbal *bhāvanā* ('realization' or 'bringing about') worked.[59] As Jha explains, its full significance involves (i) the agent's full knowledge of the meaning of the command form the Vedic sentence uses; and (ii) the support of *arthavāda*, secondary passages that, for example, praise the action enjoined and so encourage the agent to act; so that (iii) the agent 'should thereby come to know of the necessity of the performance of the sacrifice, etc. with particular results; and (iv) should then become engaged in their performance' (Jha, 1907, p. xxx, numbering added). Since the performance itself is based on *codanā*, the authoritative injunctive force of the Veda, it yields the results desired.[60] In such a Pūrvamīmāṃsā view, there is then a fittingness between the latent desire in human beings for the good, the injunctive force of scripture, the way it enables human beings to see how to achieve this goal and motivates them to embark on the appropriate course of action and the desired result. This may be in a future heaven (*svarga*, another realm of experience) or, as Kumārila maintains, liberation that cuts ties with embodiment and experience, after the performance of the obligatory rituals for their own sake.

It is against such a background that Śaṃkara is demonstrating how his Advaitin interpretation properly upholds the authority of the Upaniṣadic scriptural statement under consideration ('You are that'). It too is fitting

and result-generative, though not, of course, in his view, injunctive. Nor is its result 'brought into being', for this cannot apply to the self.[61] But what the sentence properly understood *does* do is to answer the need for the teaching (Chapter 2) in the context of the layered understanding of scriptural texts and world for which we have been arguing (Chapters 4–6), where secondary passages focus attention onto the self (Chapter 4, Chapter 5), and where attention to the referents of words and the way they lead to a *viśiṣṭārtha*, which is the sentence meaning (Chapter 7), have the effect of removing all obstructions to understanding, so ending superimposition.

The sentence, 'You are that', then, has been shown to be capable of generating its result, but not through an injunctive verb that, in conformity with the agent's deepest desire and action, leads to the desired result deferred to a future point. Nor does it stand in need of further meditation to secure its liberating potential (18.203 f, cf. 18.9–18). This is why Śaṃkara will argue strongly in a moment that such a reading involves abandoning what the text actually says and so is senseless, because it renders it meaningless, pointless and invalid (*anarthaka*) (18.196–7). Against this, a proper fruitful interpretation is available. For, as the Advaitin pupil comes correctly to understand 'You are that', it removes all impediments to understanding, all superimpositions from the inner self. Just as all suffering ceases in deep sleep, so does the self's 'being a sufferer', once and for all (*sarvadā*), through the understanding of the inner self (18.191).

So Śaṃkara summarizes the implications of grammatical co-ordination against the opponent who wants meditation to consolidate verbal understanding of the sentence:

> Thus the word 'that' has the meaning of 'inner self', the meaning of 'you' is that of 'that'. As a pair [*ubhāv api*] they cause to be rejected that which is not inner self, that which is the sufferer/experiencer.[62] And thus they mutually cause to be understood the meaning of 'Not thus, not thus'. How, when the fruit resulting from 'You are that' [is] of such a kind, can its dependence on action be asserted, its validity as a means of knowledge denied?[63]
>
> (18.194b–196)

The teaching of 'You are that' is none other than that of 'Not thus, not thus'. That which is removed is the world of name, form and action, the world of experience, unsatisfactoriness, the superimposed non-self. It has a clearly demonstrated result, by implication open to observation in the one free from suffering. What grounds are left to besmirch its validity, to suggest its insufficiency?

The chapter ends with Śaṃkara arguing this point out at length, and reminding the opponent that there *are* sentences that yield direct knowledge, as in 'attaining the number' (18.199), another reference to the tenth man's

sudden comprehension in which he realizes that he is the tenth he already was. Gathering together the strands on cognition, authority and then on reflection, to underpin the strand on language, Śaṃkara adjures his audience:

> It is to be accepted that the self is self-validated, which is synonymous with being directly knowable to itself. On our view, it is when the ego ceases that there is realization of one's own self. . . . The witness alone is to be realized by its own self, [whose nature] simply is realization. The arising of the mental cognition, which is a reflection of that, is referred to as 'the realization of that'.[64]

(18.200, 202)

Śaṃkara alludes to Pūrvamīmāṃsaka and Buddhist discussions on cognition and whether *pramāṇa*s are self- or other-validated. He arrogates to the Advaitin view a self-established, self-knowable reality, that which is realization, context-free consciousness (*anubhava*) itself.[65] As with 'Not thus, not thus' and '*Brahman* is reality, consciousness, infinite', differentiated language must remain. In this case the instrumental case is retained when Śaṃkara speaks of the witness being known by itself. Yet he mitigates this with the acknowledgement that it is only the *reflection* of this realization, this context-free consciousness, which can actually be recollected or referred to in an objectified way.

There is, in Śaṃkara's terms, nothing more to be done, nothing more to be desired, no further question to ask. The argument holds. The analysis convinces. The method works. *Tat tvam asi* is *neti neti*. As was *satyaṃ jñānam anantaṃ brahma.* The penny drops.

> To the one who, like a bee, gathered for us the sweetest nectar of knowledge from the flowers of the Vedānta sentences, to my true teacher (*sadgurave*), reverence (18.230).

From an Advaitin point of view, there is no more to be said. We, though, have two more tasks to conclude our analysis of the methods which Śaṃkara finds provided in scripture. In our final chapter, we shall first take a single commentary by Śaṃkara and see how the methods work together in it to yield realization. We shall then revisit the different passages that discuss the language of the teaching in relation to one another, and ask in what sense this is the end of the teaching.

8

THE END OF THE TEACHING

Throughout this book, I have argued that Śaṃkara quite explicitly bases his own exegetical strategies and teaching methods on those he finds given in *śruti*. In this final chapter, I shall first demonstrate how these various teaching methods come together in a single text to yield the end of the teaching. I shall then return to the passages on language and show how together they bear on this end. In conclusion, I shall consider how the mutually corrective use of language we have noted throughout this study may be applied to the study of the teacher himself.

The methods at work: Śaṃkara's commentary on the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*

While there is no one commentary or section of the *Thousand Teachings* in which every single one of the methods we have considered can be found, there are significant clusters in each of Śaṃkara's major works. My argument has therefore been that they are not random but form part of a coherent approach to scripture and to teaching formed through a lifetime's deep engagement with the texts.

The work I have selected as an example is Śaṃkara's commentary on the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*.[1] This commentary is long enough to display a good range of methods at work: questions, examples, stories, and interiorization techniques; Śaṃkara is very clear about the way the text shapes itself; and it contains one of our key passages on language. I shall show both how the concerns of the text shape Śaṃkara's particular exegetical concerns and how his broader themes on the nature of the human condition and the framework of superimposition are in place. Within this, I will indicate the way Śaṃkara points out the text's overt teaching methods so that they lead towards realization. Finally I will review how Śaṃkara's interpretation of '*Brahman* is reality, consciousness, infinite' harmonizes with his understanding of 'You are that' and 'Not thus, not thus' in this text, where he explicits appeals to the way language works by the mutual control of terms to yield the end of the teaching. Where applicable, I will also show how Śaṃkara chooses to adopt

similar techniques in his independent collection, *Thousand Teachings*, with its specifically pedagogical intent.

The *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* begins with an invocation to various deities, a section on pronunciation, a series of meditations making connections between elements of macrocosm and microcosm, various chants, and an elliptical discussion on whether truth, asceticism or study and teaching is what is most important, plus some prescriptions to the student on proper behaviour (first section). It ends with what Śaṃkara considers to be some eulogies to food, and meditations on the conditioned *brahman* (end of third section). It is in the second 'section on *brahman*' that Śaṃkara finds the heart of the text. Accordingly, a considerable number of his extended comments, including his introduction to the whole Upaniṣad, are concerned to distinguish between desire, ritual action and meditation for results, on the one hand, and knowledge of *brahman*, the removal of *avidyā* and liberation on the other (Introduction, 1.11.4, 2.5.1). This is a familiar theme, which links not only with the structure of the *Taittirīya*, but with Śaṃkara's understanding of the human condition as a state of superimposition throughout his writings. Thus here he says that, while certain meditations on the conditioned self may be beneficial in a preparatory way, 'the purpose of this teaching on *brahman* is to remove *avidyā* and thereby to eradicate *saṃsāra* completely' (2.1.1 Introduction). As in his other works, this world of *saṃsāra*, the world of duality, is constructed by ignorance (*avidyākalpita*) (2.5.1, cf. 2.8.5). Its plurality is solely due to the manifestation of name and form acting as limiting adjuncts (*upādhi*) upon *brahman* (2.6.1). To address this problematic, 'the text begins, "The knower of *brahman* attains the highest", in order to remove the ignorance which is the seed of the whole misery, with the purpose of realizing the self, free from all distinctions of limiting adjuncts' (2.1.1, p. 281).[2] As usual, such a view is supported by the rope–snake example: just as the correct cognition of the rope removes the false cognition of the snake, so knowledge of the oneness of the self removes distinctions of agency, etc. (a view to which here the Ritualist opponent objects) (1.11.4).

The *Taittirīya* commentary thus starts with the same problem as Śaṃkara's other major commentaries and independent teachings (cf. for instance *Upad P* 18.4, *Upad G* 1.18 f, 2.48 f) and understands it in a similar light, drawing on *śruti*'s own teachings about (non)-duality (cf. *Tait Up Bh* 1.11.4 for multiple supporting texts). Most importantly, for our argument, it also indicates that, in Śaṃkara's view, the text is there to teach. This is why he says that the 'section on *brahman*' is *ātmadarśanārtha*, its purpose being to teach the self so the self may be realized (cf. *Upad P* 18.3). Moreover, we saw in Chapter 7 how, when Śaṃkara comes to explain why the Upaniṣad quotes the *mantra*, '*Brahman* is reality, consciousness, infinite', he gives a complex three-fold explanation of its purpose and hence of the way the teaching is to yield realization (2.1.1). Later he underlines this by explaining that the passage on the five sheaths, consisting of food, etc., is introduced

precisely in order for that *brahman* to be understood (2.5.1, p. 295).[3] We are justified then in supposing that Śaṃkara approaches this Upaniṣad, as he does others, as a source of ways of helping the pupil to realization, and that he derives these from the Upaniṣad's explicit statements as well as from the way it is structured. So we turn now to examples from this commentary of particular techniques we noted elsewhere in Śaṃkara's writings.

In order to receive the teaching on non-duality, the fit pupil must be properly prepared. The subject matter of *Tait Up* 1 lends itself to the issue. The question of duty is introduced in 1.9 (*Tait Up Bh* 1.10), while 1.11 gives instructions on the specific duties a pupil is to perform after he has studied the Veda. This is because knowledge of the self occurs more easily in one who is made ready (*saṃskṛta*) and has a purified disposition (*viśuddhasattva*) (1.11 Introduction). Furthermore, Śaṃkara acknowledges that non-injury, celibacy and so on can be supplementary aids to knowledge (1.11.4, cf. *Upad G* 1.4). Even the grace of the Lord (*īśvaraprasāda*), austerities and meditations (*dhyāna*) are not ruled out (1.11.4) in a preparatory role (cf. 2.1.1 Introduction). Moreover, the story of Bhṛgu (3.1 f), who meditates on the five sheaths described in *Tait Up* 2, shows, in Śaṃkara's view, that anyone who desires to know *brahman* should practise austerity by following the method of controlling their external and internal organs. There is no doubt about this because 'now the *śruti*, putting the story on one side, states the purpose developed in the story in its own words' (3.6.1).[4] Here is another clue to *śruti*'s overt clarification of its own meaning and teaching purpose in Śaṃkara's understanding.

Once the pupil is prepared by the methods found in the first and third sections of this Upaniṣad, he is ready for the hearing, reflecting and contemplating that comprise the direct cause of knowledge of *brahman* (1.11.4). As usual, Śaṃkara's stress is on following the methods laid down by the Upaniṣad and reflecting on the meanings of the passages heard, so that eventually it is the words of *śruti* that alone disclose final realization (cf. *Upad G* 1, *Upad G* 2, *Upad P* 18.188).[5] Here we shall see how interiorization via the five sheaths passage, questioning legitimated by the Upaniṣad itself, an understanding of an origination story and various supporting examples all work to the same end, the disclosure of *brahman* spoken of as reality, consciousness, infinite in 2.1.1.

The interiorization technique is begun in the second part of that verse. First, *Tait Up* 2.1.1 gives a brief origination sequence of ether, air, fire, water, earth, and then herbs, food and a person, emerging from the self. That person is described as the self made of food, the first of five 'sheaths' given in the text, each becoming more subtle, more interior. So within the self made of food is the self made of breath (2.2.1b), within that the self made of mind (2.3.1b), the self made of knowledge (2.4.1b), then the self made of bliss (2.5.1b). For each person-shaped self the Upaniṣad specifies its head, right and left wings,

body and tail or support, the reference to wings and tail being a reminder of the bird according to whose form the Vedic fire-altar was constructed to create correspondences between macrocosm and microcosm.

By specifying a person as the end product of origination and then describing the first sheath, the Upaniṣad has a clear purpose, in Śaṃkara's view:

> It is desired to make that person approach the innermost *brahman* through knowledge. But his intellect, which takes the non-self to be his own self in relation to particulars with external forms, cannot, unsupported by some particular, be suddenly made free from support, intent on the innermost inner self. So (the *śruti*) says, 'Of him this is the head', causing him to enter (the innermost self) by the commonplace fiction that the self is the body which is seen, like showing the moon by (first indicating) the branch.[6]
>
> (*Tait Up Bh* 2.1.1, p. 288)

Using the example of the person who draws a friend's attention to the moon by pointing first to one branch, then to another, until the friend sees the moon beyond the end of the branch, Śaṃkara shows that it is the *śruti*'s intention not just to explain the innermost self, but to guide the hearer towards it.

Śaṃkara makes the transition to the second sheath, the person made of breath, with another explicit comment on method:

> The scripture begins [the next section on the self made of breath] as it wants to make known the absolutely innermost *brahman* through knowledge, by beginning with the self made of food ending with the self made of bliss, by removing the five sheaths which are constructed by misconception.[7]
>
> (*Tait Up Bh* 2.2.1, p. 289)

So, as we saw in Chapter 4, the method of interiorization is one by which one mentally 'enters' into progressively more subtle understandings in order to strip them away from the self, from *brahman*, which is absolutely innermost (*abhyantaratama*), without any distinctions whatever. As in *BSBh* 1.1.11 f, where he comments on this passage, Śaṃkara goes beyond the Upaniṣad in which the fifth sheath, the self made of bliss, seems to be the culmination of the teaching. Taking his cue from the Upaniṣad's own wording, which makes *brahman* the tail or support of the self made of bliss, Śaṃkara stresses that *brahman*, far from being the last though most subtle of the sheaths, is that which transcends them totally (2.2.1 and 2.5.1). This is confirmed by other Vedic texts that negate distinctions, notably, 'The self is said to be "Not thus, not thus"' (*Bṛ Up* 3.9.26, quoted in *Tait Up Bh* 2.5.1). Having established this

reading, Śaṃkara again emphasizes that the five sheaths were introduced in order for the *brahman* that was the subject of the definition, 'reality, consciousness, infinite', to be understood (*pratipattyartham*). He concludes, 'As the tail or support, that one non-dual *brahman* is the culmination of the duality constructed by misconception' (2.5.1, p. 295).[8] It is that towards which all superimposition leads, first structured by scripture, then progressively stripped away, so that the self may be known.

To such a culmination the origination story in *Tait Up* 2.6.1 is also held to lead. In the Upaniṣad, the self desires to be many, to be born. Then, says the Upaniṣad, having originated all this, it entered it. This latter phrase occasions a long discussion in Śaṃkara's commentary, as does the similar notion in other Upaniṣadic contexts. Śaṃkara's explanation is in terms of name and form, followed by various challenges to his notion of *brahman* that the idea of 'entry' into the originated world occasions. In the end, these are rebutted with a firm reminder to consider the context, namely, that introduced in 2.1.1, 'The knower of *brahman* attains the highest . . . *brahman* is reality, consciousness, infinite. The one who knows that as existing in the intellect. . . .' Śaṃkara then connects this origination story with the sheaths teaching where *brahman* is to be realized in the cavity of the heart. Here *brahman* is to be found within the intellect, where it 'entered' and is to be known as seer, hearer and so on (2.6.1). In his insistence that this validates the existence of *brahman*, it might seem as if Śaṃkara is taking this origination and entry rather more literally than in some of his other commentaries. But this is just a stage in his argument and the pupil's reflection. Later, *Tait Up* 2.8.5 speaks of the person attaining the self of bliss. At this point Śaṃkara rejects the idea that '*saṃkramaṇa*' here means acquiring or attaining something as an object. Its meaning is, rather, the realization of the self from which the error of misidentification with the five sheaths is finally removed. It is to this end that all the teaching of *Tait Up* 2 is directed:

> Therefore becoming many, entering the creation, acquiring bliss, attaining fearlessness and so on are constructed on *brahman*, as the object of all conventional experience, solely for the purpose of realizing the self which was indicated in what was said earlier: '*Brahman* is reality, consciousness, infinite.' But in the ultimate sense, no conceptual construction whatsoever is possible upon *brahman* which is beyond conceptual construction. Having then known this self which is beyond construction, realizing it by stages, '[The one who knows] does not fear anything' (2.9.1).[9]
>
> (*Tait Up Bh* 2.8.5, p. 311)

The origination story has the purpose of directing the pupil to search for the seer within as well as of confirming the existence of that which is sought. But like the teaching of the five sheaths that preceded it, its end is in recognizing

the one beyond all construction whatsoever (cf. *Upad G* 1.37, which quotes *Tait Up* 2.6.1, 'Having originated all this it entered it' and 'You are that' among many passages evidencing non-duality).

Nonetheless, it is important as a stage along the way of teaching, as are the questions the Upaniṣad itself sanctions: 'Now therefore the questions (*anupraśnāḥ*) (*Tait Up* 2.6.1).' Śaṃkara explains that these are the questions the pupil as hearer asks after the teacher has spoken (cf. *Upad G* 1.16 f). The Upaniṣad itself gives two questions, but the word for 'questions', '*anupraśnāḥ*', is in the plural. So this allows Śaṃkara to explain how the text raises other questions too, since 'two questions' would be indicated by the use of the dual ending in Sanskrit. Thus the plural is used 'in relation to other questions which properly arise'[10] as a result of statements in the text itself (2.6.1): 'Does *brahman* exist or not?' 'Does the ignorant person reach *brahman* or not?' 'Does the one who knows reach *brahman* or not?' Questioning the instruction for clarification is not only legitimized so that the pupil progresses (cf. *Upad G* 1), but is shown to be part of the process of reflection vital to defending the coherence of the Advaitin interpretation of the way language works and hence of safeguarding it against the claim, which we considered earlier, that it leads to a hare's horn of a void ('Does *brahman* exist or not?') (cf. *Upad P* 18.44, 18.76, 18.111).

Śaṃkara makes this clear by referring back yet again to the statement, '*Brahman* is reality, consciousness, infinite', from 2.1.1. The reference to existence (*astitva*) in *Tait Up* 2.6.1 allows confirmation that reality (*sattva*) in that phrase *is* the real (*sat*), now argued to be the cause of the world. Since the world, which is the effect, can be perceived, and since no effect comes from nothing (according to the doctrine of causality that Śaṃkara as a Vedāntin holds), the cause must exist (2.6.1). Doubts about this raised earlier in relation to the negating use of language are, we may take it, allayed by the text allowing this appropriate question to be raised. This is not, of course, to assert the validity of such an argument, merely to note how Śaṃkara as teacher, holding it to be the case, supposes *śruti* to make space for text and teacher to deal with doubts.

The Upaniṣad, then, by its very structure, has set the scene for Śaṃkara to outline the human condition and hence the need for the teaching in *Tait Up* 2. It has indicated various preparations that make the fit pupil ready to receive the teaching. It has incorporated a set of methods, including interiorization techniques accompanied by origination stories, which direct the pupil, under the teacher's guidance, to seek the self within and to strip away the layers of superimposition, constructed to aid in just such a process. It has allowed space for questioning and discussion about the nature of the self and the nature of the Upaniṣadic quest, seeking to build in the pupil confidence that that which is sought is the sole reality, on which all else is superimposed. And, in Śaṃkara's view, it has done this in such a way as to make realizable, in the strongest sense, the Upaniṣad's affirmation, 'The knower of *brahman* attains

the highest', centred on the continually recurring *lakṣaṇa*, '*Brahman* is reality, consciousness, infinite'.

In Chapter 7, I proposed a way of interpreting this *lakṣaṇa* that would understand it both as a definition by negation of what *brahman* is not and as a method of stripping away superimposition such that *brahman* can be realized. We can now see how the other teaching in the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* as explained by Śaṃkara helps to confirm such an interpretation. Like the man who crossed the river and counted the others but failed to count himself, so the person affected by misconception fails to understand his true nature as *brahman*. But just as the man reminded by some passer-by realizes that he himself is one of the ten, so the one taught by the scripture (*śrutyupadiṣṭa*) realizes that (his) self is *brahman*, the self of all (cf. *Upad P* 12.3, 18.170 f, 18.187, 190). It is this realization which the Upaniṣad speaks of as 'attaining (*āpti*) the highest' (2.1.1).

At the heart of this, the words of the *mantra* '*Brahman* is reality, consciousness, infinite' do not just distinguish *brahman* from all objects of any kind by the mutual stripping of inappropriate meanings from each other's normal denotations, using their own primary meanings. (We saw that 'consciousness' strips 'reality' of any notion of materiality; 'reality' strips 'consciousness' of any notion of change; 'infinite' strips both of any limitations whatever, cf. *Upad P* 18.194–5.) Rather, in doing so, they also become fit to act as *lakṣaṇa*, that is, as Śaṃkara set out his manifesto in the first place: (i) to be a definition/method capable of making *brahman* known; and (ii) by this to *make brahman knowable* as the inner self; which (iii) simply is being the highest, the self beyond the characteristics of transmigratory existence (2.1.1).

The words of the Upaniṣad are thus shown to have a purpose other than the injunctive force of the ritual prescriptions and prohibitions. They are shown to be capable of generating new knowledge, knowledge that is not only important but fundamental to liberation. They are thus vindicated as being a necessary *pramāṇa*, the valid means for acquiring knowledge of *brahman*, in their very function as words within a sentence within a context within an Upaniṣad and within the entire corpus of *śruti*. They are also shown to be a sufficient *pramāṇa*, since their stories and techniques and grammatical structures contain the methods that help to strip away all misconceptions, allowing *brahman* to be realized as self.

In this, Śaṃkara's explanation of '*Brahman* is reality, consciousness, infinite' can be seen to be entirely congruent with 'Not thus, not thus' (quoted in 2.5.1, cf. 2.11.1 'Where words turn back') and also with 'You are that' (cf. 3.10.3–4 where Śaṃkara stresses that 'You are that' and 'That is reality, that is the self' confirm that the self that 'enters' creation as the individual self is nothing other than the supreme self.) But this congruence is not limited to confirmatory quotations within this particular commentary (cf. *Upad P* 18.195). Our extended consideration of Śaṃkara's *Taittirīya* commentary

also shows how such interpretation of the complex functioning of scripture as a *pramāṇa* is congruent with his other explanations of 'Not thus, not thus' and 'You are that', which we considered in detail in Chapter 7. As climactic statements themselves embedded in texts that encourage interiorization, tell stories, use examples to support argument, and so forth, they too help the teacher to guide the pupil towards realization and offer a way of teaching.

In the end, *brahman* is that 'from which words turn back' (*Tait Up* 1.11.1). It is truly the end of the teaching – but not before these words have yielded the realization in which no difference, no misconception, no fear whatever can remain (1.11.1). In this, as in the rest of its teaching, the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* is of a piece with the others, in Śaṃkara's Advaitin reading. This we shall see as we turn back to examine the end of the teaching in a wider context once more.

Remaining problems?

That *brahman* is the end of the teaching was made clear from the outset. The Vedāntin's quest or enquiry is 'the desire to know *brahman*'. It ends when that desire is satisfied. It is, according to Śaṃkara, when *neti neti* removes the causes of all other desires, when *satyaṃ jñānam anantaṃ brahma* fulfils all desires, when *tat tvam asi* pushes away all unsatisfactoriness and suffering.

And I have phrased it like this, giving scriptural sentences quasi-agency, for a very precise reason. In Chapter 7, we followed Śaṃkara's key attempts to show how the end of the teaching, beyond language, is attained precisely through language, thus justifying the claim that scripture, properly interpreted, is the only *pramāṇa* for knowing *brahman*. I argued that, for Śaṃkara, the proper grammatical analysis of these sentences carries with it a method for stripping superimposition away from the pupil's (mis)understanding. Only as the meanings of the words are properly understood, individually and then in juxtaposition, is there potential for the sentence to yield final realization. Proper understanding entails not just an intellectual process but a reorientation, an instantiation of the method in the pupil's own self-understanding. Such an instantiation we have just seen in the *Taittirīya* commentary.

Difficulties, though, remain. Chief among them are these. Do Śaṃkara's explanations satisfactorily resolve the charge of the void, of meaninglessness? Does Śaṃkara overcome the charge that language, riddled as it is with duality, can be the *pramāṇa* for a non-dual *brahman*, given that Śaṃkara has to return to using precisely the language he rejects, 'self', 'consciousness', 'attain', etc., immediately after rejecting it? Has he then overcome the duality that is apparently at the heart of his own system, just as he claims it is at the heart of the human condition – or not?

If these are charges to Śaṃkara's Advaitin position, then further charges must be put to the present interpretation as well. Is Śaṃkara as consistent in his view of how language operates as I have portrayed him here? Or do differences of emphasis not remain which are better accounted for, on a chronological developmental model, for example?

Corrective readings

To address such final problems, I shall develop a model that reads Śaṃkara's key passages on language in a mutually corrective way. My justification for doing this is modelled on Śaṃkara's own explicit and implicit practice. When Śaṃkara explained the sentence '*Brahman* is reality, consciousness, infinite' in *Tait Up Bh* 2.1.1, we saw how he spoke of the words controlling and being controlled by one another, a process both grammatically and pedagogically achieving the mutual removal of undesirable implications. This is not the only instance where he moots such a process of mutual control. In *BSBh* 2.1.22 Śaṃkara affirms that when passages teaching non-difference like 'You are that' make non-difference known, 'the transmigratoriness of the embodied self and the creatorship of *brahman* are removed'.[11] Taking this with his comment in *Upad P* 18.194–5 on 'that' and 'you' both working together mutually, we have further support that a process of mutual exclusion may be basic to Śaṃkara's understanding of language function. In Chapter 5, we also suggested that Śaṃkara's use of the key analogies of rope–snake, clay–pot and magician–magic appeared to function in a similar way. Working correctively, they helped remove criticisms about the effectiveness of such analogies based on erroneous assumptions about the possibility of a straight correspondence between a single example and that which it illuminates (*brahman*). This then is the basis for reading the key passages on language in a similar way.

However, I must make it clear that Śaṃkara does not often explicitly direct his reader to such a reading, though his handling of 'Not thus, not thus' in the *Brahmasūtra* commentary gives it strong support. We shall look at this passage below. Usually, the apparent contradictions, inconsistencies, different emphases, silences, are simply left as such in his own writings, tidied up by later commentators. Śaṃkara does, though, give strong indications that *tat tvam asi*, *neti neti* and *satyaṃ jñānam anantaṃ brahma* in their full context all teach the same, all cause the same realization to come about, as various passages we examined in Chapter 7 state overtly or imply. If this is the case, and according to Śaṃkara's position on the *ekavākyatā* of scripture[12] it would necessarily have to be so, then there is justification for showing how certain inconsistencies may be overcome, other than by assuming that Śaṃkara altered his views or that his Advaita is finally incoherent.

In developing this corrective model, we shall start once more with Śaṃkara's explanation of 'You are that' in *BSBh* 4.1.2. In this passage, once undesired superimposition has been stripped away, that which is left is

caitanya, consciousness which is illumination. Śaṃkara uses the word '*caitanya*' as unproblematic, supporting it by quoting from various *śruti* texts, including '*Brahman* is reality, consciousness, infinite' (*Tait* 2.1.1) and '*Brahman* is consciousness, bliss' (*Br̥ Up* 3.9.28). Similar readiness to use the term 'consciousness' for *brahman* elsewhere is one of the clues Biardeau takes for a more positive use of language in this commentary (1959, pp. 90–1, p. 97). We may note though that Śaṃkara is quite careful in his phrasing, merely saying that *brahman* is '*spoken of* as being that which is the illumination of consciousness'.[13]

I further suggest that at an ultimate level such a position is corrected in *Br̥ Up Bh* 2.3.6. Here Śaṃkara advocates the radical removal of all language by 'Not thus, not thus', including the removal of teachings such as '*Brahman* is consciousness, bliss' and even terms like '*brahman*', 'self'. Even here though he concludes by affirming that the understanding is centred in the self, the word for which he has just rejected. This suggests that when the teacher speaks of realization, as he must in order to teach, scriptural language, whose justification has already been demonstrated, can be used for it is the best we have. But the removal of superimposition is the primary function of the texts. Apparently 'descriptive' language continues to be used, in the absence of any alternative.

A reading that involves the radical removal of all language, though, raises the spectre of the void, of a *brahman* not previously or independently established, as we have already seen. *Brahman* is thereby open to question as a chimera or, at least, as completely unknowable. While 'Not thus, not thus' is the prime example, interpretations of '*Brahman* is reality, consciousness, infinite' and 'You are that' are also subject to such a reading. Looking at his works as a whole, we can see that Śaṃkara has various strategies that address this. At the outset of the *Brahmasūtra* commentary, Śaṃkara argued that *brahman* is already well-known as the 'I', though because that 'I' is misidentified, it is the task of the Vedāntin commentator to show how the texts teach its proper meaning. He also argued from the meaning of the term '*brahman*' (√*br̥h*, to be great) that *brahman* is that on whose existence there are no limits. Supporting his case differently for those for whom appeal to Vedic authority would cut no ice, he develops complex arguments about the need for a permanent cognizing self. Indeed, it may be because he knows that these will be dealt with fully in *Br̥ Up Bh* 4.3.7 that he is so cavalier on the void question in *Br̥ Up Bh* 2.3.6.

However, another strategy may be to read the key passages alongside one another correctively. Here are two examples, the first explicit, the second implicit. In *BSBh* 3.2.22, the implications of the double 'Not thus, not thus' in *Br̥ Up* 2.3.6 are being debated. An opponent proposes that it could be *brahman* with its two cosmic forms, gross and subtle, that is negated, or just the two cosmic forms. Finally, he proposes that it is *brahman* alone, the form-possessor (*rūpavat*), which is negated:

For it is possible to negate that since the reality of its existence is open to doubt because it is beyond speech and mind. But the manifestation of forms cannot be negated because it is in the sphere of perception, etc.[14]

(*BSBh* 3.2.22, p. 364)

Śaṃkara rejects such a view, which would lead to the absurd position of the Madhyamaka (*śūnyavādaprasaṅga*) – the phrase being a clear sign that he has this Buddhist school in mind when he talks of 'the void' (*śūnya-tā*). His defence is that negation is always made with respect to something of which it is negated. The text 'Shall I tell you of *brahman*?' from *Bṛ Up* 2.1.1 could therefore only be interpreted in the opponent's terms if the warning of *Tait Up* 2.6.1, 'He who knows *brahman* as non-existent becomes non-existent', were ignored. Śaṃkara then refers several times more to *Tait Up* 2. He accepts with the opponent that *brahman* is 'beyond speech and mind'. However, 'From where words turn back along with the mind unable to reach' (2.4.1) does not mean that *brahman* is non-existent. This is because, in the same passage, *brahman* is spoken of as 'the highest', as '*Brahman* is reality, consciousness, infinite'. It is defined as existent, not the opposite. Here is clear evidence that *Tait Up* 2.1.1 can be read as a corrective to the wrong interpretation of *Bṛ Up* 2.3.6. 'Not thus, not thus' strips away all language, but the language that has given direction to the teaching to the very end removes the threat of the void.

Our second example is implicit in Śaṃkara's comments on the proper meanings of words. In *Tait Up Bh* 2.1.1 and *Upad P* 18 he emphasizes that the key words, such as 'reality', 'consciousness', 'you', 'that', retain their proper meanings. We can see this as a further corrective to the worries raised by radical negation. Through the proper sense of reality language, we suggested earlier, the origination accounts guide in the right direction; through the proper sense of knowledge language, related to the reflection model, so too does it. Yet it is also through their proper meanings that the terms remove unwanted implications from each other as well. The language is, of course, derived from scripture, supported by arguments for a permanent cognizing self. Yet, on this interpretation, it will find its final *niṣṭhā* or semantic reach in the inner self, not by elusive denotation but by the leap of insight occasioned by radical negation and the realization of identity, safeguarded thus.[15]

The kind of correctives I have just suggested also function within as well as between the key explanations and occasion subtle shifts of emphasis and understanding. I have just tried to indicate how this might work with the notion of retaining the proper meaning (*svārtha*) of 'reality', etc. But other '*artha*' language is prevalent as well, unsurprisingly since it is the referent/ meaning of words with which Śaṃkara is concerned. We shall review his treatment of '*padārtha*' ('referent') and '*viśiṣṭārtha*' ('particularized meaning') in turn. While the discussion has to become rather technical, it does show

how Śaṃkara uses such corrective shifts to support his view on how scriptural language can be the adequate *pramāṇa* for knowledge of *brahman*. This of course underpins our own argument about scripture as a way of teaching.

We return first to Śaṃkara's explanations of the '*padārtha*' of 'you'. In *BSBh* 4.1.2, the *padārtha* of 'you' seemed simply to be consciousness. By contrast in *Upad P* 18 I argued that the *padārtha* of 'you' is the *reflected* self discriminated from that with which it is confused. The reflection model gave the 'way in' for knowledge language, showing how words like 'consciousness' could indicate, though not denote, the self. The *padārtha* of 'you', its referent, that which is denoted by it, is the reflected self (like the face reflected in a mirror), yet its *niṣṭhā*, its semantic terminus is, by indication, the inner self itself (the face itself). Here the correction acts between two different explanations of the same sentence, 'You are that'.

The shift on *viśiṣṭārtha* is a daring one within a single explanation, found, as we saw, in the *Thousand Teachings* Metric Chapter 18. Here Śaṃkara is even more than usually aware of his Pūrvamīmāṃsaka opponents and those *prasaṃkhyāna* Vedāntins who, drawing on their position, insist that realization is to be brought about by meditation. As we showed in Chapter 7, Śaṃkara subverts the normal view of the particularized meaning (*viśiṣṭārtha*) of a sentence. For sentences like 'The lotus is big and blue' or 'This is a black horse', the *viśiṣṭārtha* comes from showing how the attributive words ('big' and 'blue') qualify the substantive ('lotus'). 'You are that' has a similar form in Sanskrit. However, Śaṃkara argues that whereas bigness and blueness are qualities of the particular lotus mentioned, this type of analysis does not apply in the case of *brahman*, the true self. Śaṃkara further rejects Kumārila's view that, in authoritative sentences, it is the words designating the specific requirements of some sacrifice that particularize the *bhāvanā*, the urge to action expressed by the all-important injunctive verb, which in turn moves the person to act appropriately in pursuit of the desired goal, the injunction's fruitful outcome (its *viśiṣṭārtha*). Rather, in Śaṃkara's view, it is by applying the method of conjunction and disjunction to 'you' and then by reading 'that' and 'you' together that the removal of that which belongs to the sufferer occurs. It is the consequent realization of the self, identical with the removal of superimposition occasioned by 'Not thus, not thus', which is the *viśiṣṭārtha*, the fruitful outcome of the sentence.[16]

Thus, both between passages and internally, shifts are made in the application of terms like '*svārtha*', '*padārtha*' and '*viśiṣṭārtha*'. As if to confirm these shifts, or to remove from the terms any remaining suspicion that they actually denote or specify the self beyond language, Śaṃkara concludes his exegesis of 'Brahman is reality, consciousness, infinite' by quoting *Tait Up* 2.9.1, 'From where words turn back along with the mind', and emphasizes that *brahman* is *avākyārtha*, not the referent of a sentence. Lest then the authority of scripture be deemed completely undermined, Śaṃkara embeds his discussion of 'You are that' in *Upad P* 18 in a complex weaving of

arguments to support the authority of his Advaitin interpretation, as we saw in Chapter 7. That, in his view, it is both based on plausible exegesis, at a grammatical level, and bears fruit, at an existential level, is central to his argument. *Viśiṣṭārtha*, the specific (and fruitful) meaning of the sentence, and *avākyārtha*, not being the referent of the sentence, paradoxically, in the case of *brahman*, go together.

Different passages have different emphases, some due to the different orientation of the texts under explanation. Yet read together, they support one another in their common concerns, remove from one another unwanted implications, bring about shifts in grammatical understanding paralleled in the pupil's self-understanding. Whether they use 'consciousness' and 'own nature' language or negation language with ease, or develop analogies as a medium for such language or arguments against the void in defence, all are concerned to strip away from language, by language, that superimposition which must be removed. And it is this, I contend, which is scriptural language's proper function and end.

The culmination of the teaching

Such a position receives strong support from Śaṃkara's explicit statement to that effect in an important passage in *BSBh* 1.1.4, where he is discussing different possible ways of constructing scriptural language identifying *brahman* and self. It is also a passage that contains a tell-tale 'trace' word, '*samarpaṇa*' ('making known'), which, I suggest, can be read as a marker for the culmination of the teaching. We shall follow Śaṃkara's argument in *BSBh* 1.1.4, then look more closely at the trace word, '*samarpaṇa*', before returning to the culmination of our own argument with the tenth man and the final realization.

Śaṃkara's main argument in *BSBh* 1.1.4 is against the Pūrvamīmāṃsaka, on his familiar theme denying that realization of *brahman* can be dependent on any ritual action or meditation whatsoever. In the course of this, he proposes and rejects several models for understanding the scripturally stated identity of *brahman* and self. It is neither a type of *sampat* nor of *adhyāsa*, technical terms for meditations in which, respectively, an inferior feature is thought of as a superior, or a superior superimposed meditatively on an inferior. Nor is it a meditative purification. For, according to any of these explanations of the identity,

> the connection between the words in sentences like 'You are that' (*Ch Up* 6.8.7, etc.), 'I am *brahman*' (*Bṛ Up* 1.4.10), 'This self is *brahman*' (*Bṛ Up* 2.5.19) and so on would be broken/harmed, since its point is to cause the actuality of the oneness of *brahman* and self to be understood.[17]

> (*BSBh* 1.1.4, p. 16)

Rather, Śaṃkara stresses that *brahman* is not an object (*viṣaya*) of knowing as an action, nor of meditation, nor of speech, mind, etc. The opponent objects that scripture cannot then be its source (of knowledge).[18]

> No, replies Śaṃkara. Because scripture's point is the removal of difference constructed by *avidyā*. For the scripture/teaching (*śāstra*) does not wish to make *brahman* understood as an object insofar as it is a 'this'. How then? Causing it to be understood as not an object since it is the inner self, it removes the difference of object to be known, knower, knowing and so on which is constructed by *avidyā*.[19]
>
> (1.1.4, p. 16)

Śaṃkara quotes two supportive excerpts from the *śāstra* (*Ke Up* 2.3 and *Bṛ Up* 3.4.2) and concludes:

> Therefore [on this view] there is no problem that liberation is impermanent [as it would be on an action or meditation reading], because the nature of the eternally free self is made known (*samarpaṇa*) by removing the transmigrator, which is constructed by misconception (*avidyā*).[20]
>
> (1.1.4, p. 16)

Samarpaṇa, here, is simply, the making known of the self, the delivering up of that which is to be realized, through the scriptural sentence(s) on identity. And this is done through the removal of difference constructed by *avidyā* as Śaṃkara's incessant repetition of that phrase makes clear.

Yet it is perhaps because of its literal meaning that Śaṃkara constantly uses this term when he speaks of the culmination of the teaching in realization. For *sam√ṛi* literally means 'to place together', and it is the connection (*samanvaya*) of the words 'you' and 'that', or '*brahman*' and 'self', that is violated on any other reading than one which yields knowledge of identity. When taken together in their proper sense for the removal of difference, they can 'yield up' (causative) the realization.

In *Bṛ Up Bh* 1.4.7, Śaṃkara uses the term with much the same face meaning as in *BSBh* 1.1.4. He rejects the need for further action because realization comes simply 'at the time of hearing, through sentences like "You are that", which are for making known (*samarpaka*) the nature of the self as actuality' (*Bṛ Up Bh* 1.4.7, p. 662).[21] However, in *Tait Up Bh* 2.1.1, Śaṃkara seems to play with the underlying sense a little further. Not only is the *lakṣaṇa* to be 'capable of making known a specific nature which is ever free' (from specifications),[22] a conundrum, when the meaning is 'making plain'. But later Śaṃkara argues that the two words, '*satyam*' ('reality') and '*jñānam*' ('consciousness'), are specifiers (*viśeṣaṇa*s) of '*brahman*' '*svārthasamarpaṇenaiva*.'

This last phrase can be translated both as 'by making [it] known simply through their own meanings' (the interpretation of which we have argued above) and as 'by certainly delivering up their own meanings', suggesting that these properly directional terms from scripture actually yield realization in transcending themselves.

A similar use in *Upad P* 18.171 may confirm a similarly subverting double meaning. Speaking of 'you' and 'that', which mutually indicate the inner self beyond suffering (18.169–70), Śaṃkara states: 'For, without giving up their own meanings, the two together yielding up/making known the particular meaning (*viśiṣṭārtha-samarpakau*) culminate in the realization which is the inner self' (18.171).[23] Do they also deliver up, transcend, the normal specified meaning, of sentences applying to substantives with attributes, and so yield the final understanding?

We have already noted the subtle locative use through which Śaṃkara says that the sentence *bears on* the inner self (18.170). It is also in this verse that he includes the sentence, 'You are the tenth', which changes the person's self-understanding in a flash (18.170). *Samarpaṇa* then suggests that clarity of understanding, plain as a *bilva* fruit placed (*arpita*) on your hand, which is yielded when the scriptural sentence is properly heard. But it simultaneously hints, perhaps, at the way that clarity is achieved, in the delivering up of language and its objectifications. It signals scriptural language working as a *pramāṇa*, making plain that which is beyond words.

The tenth man's understanding, like Rāma's, like the pupil's who hears aright, comes directly through the sentence. Time and time again in *Upad P* 18 (but also in *Tait Up Bh* 2.1.1 and elsewhere), Śaṃkara alludes to that illustration.[24] Along with the reflection analogy, the stripping away of unwanted meanings by the method of conjunction and disjunction (*anvaya-vyatireka*) and the arguments about the cognizing self, it nudges at the pupil's self-understanding, against the opponent who wants further meditation, until the hearer is at the point of readiness and 'You are that' culminates in realization.

The supersession of the teaching

Although Śaṃkara may bring him out with amazing frequency, the tenth man only needed to be told, 'You are the tenth', a single time for the point to dawn on him. Similarly, once the meanings of the words have been properly ascertained, and superimposition stripped from self-understanding, it is sufficient to hear 'You are that' just once for the scriptural sentence to act as a valid means of knowledge (*pramāṇa*). The world of transmigration, the proper sphere of operation of the *pramāṇa*s like perception, is forever sublated. 'But where he has become simply the self of all, by what should he see anything?' (*Bṛ Up* 4.3.22, quoted in *BSBh* 4.1.3).

So it is that Śaṃkara can swiftly concede:

> If you say that, if perception, etc. become non-existent then this will
> lead to the undesirable conclusion (*prasaṅga*) of the non-existence of
> *śruti* even, [we say] no problem. Because this is what is acknowledged.
> From the text beginning with 'There a father is no father' to 'The
> Vedas are no Vedas' (*Bṛ Up* 4.3.22), the non-existence of *śruti* in
> enlightenment (*prabodhe*) is acknowledged by us.[25]

> (*BSBh* 4.1.3, p. 465)

The scripture itself gives permission for its supersession, in conformity with
the logic of the removal of superimposition, which according to Śaṃkara, it
consistently teaches.[26]

Śaṃkara's acknowledgement in *BSBh* 4.1.3 is not, however, an isolated
instance. In his *Gītā* commentary he puts forward a similar view. *BhG* 2.69
refers to the night of all beings in which, by contrast, the self-restrained
person is awake. Śaṃkara's comment explains that *avidyā*, in the form of the
differences of actions, means and ends, disappears, once knowledge arises.
There is no need for further action or injunction. Even the conventional realm
of means and objects of knowledge does not arise.[27]

> For the last *pramāṇa*[28] brings to an end the knowing agency
> (*pramātṛtva*) of the self. And, in bringing it to an end, it ceases to be
> an authority, just as [something which appears to be] a means of
> knowledge in the sleeping state [ceases to be one when one awakes].[29]

> (*GBh* 2.69)

Thus the author who was so keen to defend the authority (*prāmāṇyatā*) of the
Veda at all costs in his explanation of 'You are that' in *Upad P* 18, and indeed
throughout his works, can now simply say that it becomes '*apramāṇī*', no
longer one that is an authority.

The reason is clear and two-fold. In realization, the self is no longer
(misidentified as) a knowing subject over against knowable objects to be
known through means of knowledge. No *pramāṇa* at all has its place. And
specifically the *pramāṇa* of scriptural testimony has done its job. It has
stripped away that superimposition which implicated the self in the world of
difference and thereby becomes redundant. The end of the teaching, the
culmination in self, is indeed the end of the teaching, for the Veda is no longer
needed.

What remains?

At the end of this exposition of the teaching, what remains? In Śaṃkara's
terms, nothing but the self. But there lingers the question that proved
obdurate on the *lakṣaṇā* interpretation: has duality been successfully over-
come? The problem there was that the retained senses of words like 'reality',

'consciousness', 'you', seemed to perpetuate a duality of *brahman* as the object described.[30] Throughout this book, and in the last two chapters in particular, I have, however, argued that in Śaṃkara's view, it is not scripture's primary purpose to provide descriptions of *brahman* in order to satisfy the desire to know *brahman*. Rather, scripture is there to provide methods of teaching that push the pupil towards the point at which non-dual realization dawns. And the teacher is there, within a teaching tradition, to unearth and implement these methods, to ascertain the proper sense of scriptural words, to defend the 'true teaching' against charges of vacuity and impropriety, and to show in the practice of engagement with the texts how *śabda* (the verbal testimony of the Veda) is indeed the *pramāṇa* for knowing *brahman*.

Whether or not, then, duality is adjudged to have been successfully over-come, according to the present interpretation, is bound up with a series of questions about the nature of Śaṃkara's work with which we shall conclude this study. The first relates to the way my interpretation construes scripture to operate in Śaṃkara's writings and whether its claims about method are thought to be plausible. To help the reader decide, I shall summarize its main points below. The second indicates the type of assessments that would have to be made of Śaṃkara's work, as so presented, to decide whether or not he does overcome the problem at the heart of his own system. These will follow my summary argument. Finally, the third returns to the questions raised in the introduction about 'the study of Śaṃkarācārya' and reviews what we may have learned about Śaṃkara and the process of studying him in the course of this book. With these, the study ends.

Summarizing the argument

First, then, the argument. In Chapter 1, we saw that evidence for the life of Śaṃkarācārya or Śaṃkarabhagavatpāda is extremely scanty, the hagiogra-phies available post-dating his lifetime, *c.* AD 700, by several hundred years. Nevertheless, we argued that, from them, from the testimonies of his direct disciples and from his honorifics, all of which indicate the reverence in which he was held as a teacher, we gain a picture of one remembered primarily as a great teacher. His own constant emphasis on the importance of scripture and the teacher in coming to know *brahman* confirms this view. So, we argued, rather than paying lipservice to this as many studies do, we should take his role as teacher seriously. After all, Śaṃkara constantly emphasizes that the desire to know *brahman*, the enquiry into *brahman*, what Vedāntin study is all about, is achieved only by hearing and reflecting on scripture with a teacher in the correct teaching tradition. A guided practice of hearing and discussing scripture, of engaging with the texts, is thus at the heart of Śaṃkara's method (Chapter 3). Its purpose is to remove the superimposition that constitutes the human condition, occluding our understanding of the self (Chapter 2). This being beyond perception and the other available *pramāṇa*s, *śabda* (the verbal

testimony of the Vedic and especially the Upaniṣadic texts) is the only appropriate *pramāṇa* to use (Chapter 3). But to justify the validity of scripture and his Advaitin tradition's interpretation of it, Śaṃkara must show how it works. It is here that I argue that the roles of Śaṃkara the teacher and Śaṃkara the commentator coincide.

We have seen that, for Śaṃkara, what is required of scripture is that it should remove the obstructions to the pupil's realization of what is already the case, the self's identity with *brahman*, which is taught throughout the Upaniṣads. But in teaching this identity, the Upaniṣads in particular, as interpreted by Śaṃkara the commentator, provide Śaṃkara the teacher and commentator for teachers with teaching methods to emulate. Signalling the problem and solution of the human condition ('Where there is duality, as it were', *Bṛ Up* 2.4.14, 4.5.15), exemplifying teacher–pupil dialogues, commenting on their own stories, embodying the members of formal inductive argument, the Upaniṣads show ways of leading home the one lost in the forest (*Ch Up* 6.14). These form the basis, I have shown, for Śaṃkara's own strategies of interpretation, argument and teaching of the Advaitin truth (Chapter 4). Redirecting Pūrvamīmāṃsā's exegetical principles and categories, Śaṃkara makes the statements on the identity of *brahman* and the self the key teachings of the *jñānakāṇḍa* (section on knowledge), supported by the subsidiary (*arthavāda*) passages, particularly the origination accounts whose sole function is to focus attention on the one self.

Several times in the course of the book we have seen the important place these origination stories have in Śaṃkara's teaching repertoire. *Ch Up* 6 and *Tait Up* 2, which contain two of the most important passages on language, were already established as key texts by their position in Bādarāyaṇa's *Brahmasūtra*s. Śaṃkara, however, uses such stories not only to direct attention to the self through the story-line, but also to argue against alternative constructions of causality, to build up an understanding of an eternally existing self through their vocabulary and logic, to draw from them complementary analogies that help the pupil to understand and remove superimposition (Chapter 5), and to form the basis for comprehending the referents of the terms 'you' and 'that' (Chapter 7). And these strategies, we demonstrated, are drawn directly, in Śaṃkara's view, from the texts themselves. To take such a view of the origination stories is not, however, I argued, to demean the place of the manifested world, the conventional realm, in Śaṃkara's teaching. As well as being the proper locus of life in society, with its obligations and ritual necessities, when the manifested world is ordered by Upaniṣadic scripture interpreted by an Advaitin teacher, it provides the pedagogical context for coming to know *brahman* (Chapter 5). Like the unfolding plot of a story, it discloses *brahman* within, a *brahman* which is 'all this', which can be identified with various ways of aggregating its component parts; known devotionally for its knowledge, sovereignty, potentiality, strength, might, and splendour; understood then as the omniscient, omnipotent one

who manifests all; so gradually be understood as Nārāyaṇa, the non-dual founder of the teaching tradition; and through this be realized as the *nityaśuddhabuddhamukta* self, eternally pure, realized and free (Chapter 6). The skilled teacher draws the pupil on through common devotional experience to an understanding that Lord and individual self are non-different, the self of the Lord being none other than the self of the individual. On this self, other Upaniṣadic passages help the pupil to focus, through stories inviting interiorization within the cognizing individual and beyond (Chapter 4).

Our argument so far is thus that scripture provides Śaṃkara, as teacher and commentator, with a repertoire of teaching strategies that his writings highlight and apply in turn. But if the verbal testimony of scripture then provides the teaching methods, stories, basis for arguments, illustrations, and vocabulary, which help the pupil build up a context of understanding and, with the teacher, to tackle alternative views of what constitutes a person, it must also, as a *pramāṇa*, make known what Śaṃkara presents as its main teaching, the identity of one's true self with *brahman*. Our argument is therefore that, constantly prepared by the Advaitin teacher and commentator to hear the single message that duality is only 'as it were', that there is 'one only without a second', that superimposition is to be removed like the idea of a snake from a rope, the pupil is ready to tackle the meanings of the words of the key sentences and for them to work to remove difference (Chapters 7 and 8). It will not be the first time the pupil has come across them. It may not be the last. But as he learns on what basis the scripture can teach through words for knowledge, sees how words control one another's meanings, rejects change or attribution from their meanings, discriminates the impermanent mental events and so on from the reflected self, he is being edged by the language of compassionate scripture and skilled teacher asymptotically onwards:[31] '*Brahman* is reality, consciousness, infinite', 'Not thus, not thus', 'You are that', to

> 'I am that reality,' the moment when words turn back. . . .

It is not that, in Śaṃkara's view, subsidiary passages (*arthavāda*) cannot teach what is the case, though that is the reality of the self which is consciousness, not the real transformation of the world. Scripture must be truthful at every level. It is not that *tat tvam asi* and *satyaṃ jñānam anantaṃ brahma* do not teach the reality that is none other than consciousness, consciousness that is self-validating yet the subject of long argumentation. Rather, in the end, having built up this picture of 'duality as it were', having developed this understanding of *prapañca* (manifestion, plot) as like magic – or a snake – or a pot that is really only clay, having established this model of the cognizing individual that reflects the true self, the scriptural sentences work by teaching, 'Not thus, not thus', 'You are that', and so fulfil their end, not in describing *brahman*, but in making it known.

Finally, then, if this is a plausible presentation of how scriptural language teaches in Śaṃkara's work, it will not have left outstanding the problem of the duality of language. For it will have shown how, for Śaṃkara, teacher and commentator, scriptural language works towards the moment of its own transcendence.

Is duality overcome?

At one level, this must be an issue for those who have engaged with the texts within an Advaitin tradition to decide.[32] 'The basic truth of Advaita, which is the Self, of the nature of consciousness, cannot be denied', claims T. M. P. Mahadevan, famous Advaitin scholar, in his introduction to the 'Hymn to Dakṣiṇāmūrti' (1980, p. 1). It is not, however, the purpose of this book, which has been concerned with method in studying Śaṃkara, to come to a judgement of such a kind. It has rather sought to show on what grounds Śaṃkara holds the Upaniṣads, as interpreted by his Advaitin teaching tradition, to give true teaching: 'true' both in the colloquial sense of real, good, proper, effective teaching ('She's a true teacher'), and 'true' in making known that which is held to be true, the identity of self with *brahman*. This has been the book's first level of concern with method. It has also, having identified the Upaniṣads' teaching methods through Śaṃkara's comments, shown the way Śaṃkara himself puts them, or advocates putting them, into practice. Śaṃkara's method has been its second level of concern. Third, though, based on these first and second levels, it has, I hope, operated on a third level, itself modelling a method of studying Śaṃkara's works.

We may, however, as part of that third level, raise questions about those points in Śaṃkara's presentation where difficulties arise. For while it has been our primary purpose to suggest a way of reading and engaging with texts in, of and by Śaṃkara, arguments about the philosophical coherence of his position can certainly be raised, as they were, constantly, by his opponents. Briefly, then, we shall suggest the points at which his claims about non-duality are vulnerable, not least because this bears on how we judge him as a teacher.

For Śaṃkara, the basis for a judgement about the final truth of Advaita comes primarily from the argument that non-dual understanding is unsublatable. If it is none other than the self beyond the objectifying processes of cognition and action that constitute the world of transmigration, then there is nothing that could counteract such a realization, because this would, by definition, be a reversion, a 'lapse', to the world of difference, of means and ends. We have tried to show how, in Śaṃkara's interpretation, scripture is able to bring about that radical reorientation, re-evaluation, shift to self-realization.

Yet we also saw the key role played in supporting such a possibility by the reflection model and the arguments for a permanent cognizer. In different

ways, these interrelated issues are vulnerable points for a challenge against non-duality. The reflection model can be seen to have two sources. One is a Sāṃkhyan model of *puruṣa* (consciousness) and *prakṛti* (mind–matter), where the self acts as *puruṣa* reflected in the mental structures of *prakṛti*. It is clearly a dualistic model and, even in Śaṃkara's adaptation, may be seen to be open to the same persistent duality: non-self superimposed upon self and *vice versa*. Whether the inherent duality can be overcome by the mutually purifying application of multiple analogies niggling at the pupil's understanding till a reorientation can occur is the issue here.[33]

The other source for the reflection model is the experience of dreaming, in which Śaṃkara claims the need for a permanent witness over against the *pratyaya*s, the mental events misidentified as objects in the course of the dream. It thus converges with other arguments about the need for a permanent cognizer. The chief contemporary critics of such arguments were those Buddhists of Diṅnāga's school whom Śaṃkara challenges elliptically in *Upad P* 18.141 f. Whether Śaṃkara does successfully argue for a self that is necessary for cognition of any sort to take place is debatable, though we cannot pursue this now (rather, see Ram-Prasad, 2002). We note, though, that the argument cannot, in his own terms, be designed to prove the existence of such a self, knowledge of which is given only through the scriptural *pramāṇa*. It must however be persuasive enough as an explication of the seer spoken of, particularly in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, to support the Advaitin seeker in his quest. Its validity as an argument, then, is not of no consequence.

Two other weak points remain, of both of which Śaṃkara is aware. The first is the difficulty of describing the experience of realization in terms of what actually 'happens' and of accounting for mental experience subsequent to realization by the one liberated while still living. Thus we have his statement in *Upad P* 18.202 that it is simply the arising of the thought (*dhī*), the reflection, that can be spoken of as realization (*anubhava*). The context-free consciousness or realization itself is beyond expression or identification with mental events. Yet we also have the pragmatic acknowledgement in *Bṛ Up Bh* 1.4.7 that there may persist mental impressions that need to be removed by meditation even after realization. Whether this is read as the realism of a compassionate teacher or a tacit admission of possible flaws in the notion of nonsublatable duality remains a question.

The second is the problem of how to talk of realization, since all words participate in duality. But here Śaṃkara is on stronger ground, though Rāmānuja will challenge his coherence on this point. Śaṃkara's tactic, as we have shown, is judiciously to reinstate the vocabulary of scripture which gets one closest to the non-dual realization, but in the full awareness that it belongs to the world of name and form. Whether any of these weaknesses is sufficient to tell against the way Śaṃkara the teacher–commentator encourages the pupil–hearer to engage with the texts till they yield non-dual realization is the

matter for another and different kind of study. To conclude this one, we return to our third level of concern in our study of method.

The study of Śaṃkara the teacher

In an article entitled, 'Images of Śaṃkara: Understanding the other' (Suthren Hirst, forthcoming), I take as my starting point four photographic portraits of modern Indian scholars and/or teachers of Advaita, each of whom I present as typifying a very different approach to studying Śaṃkara. They have already been mentioned among others in the introduction to this book. In the article, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan was my type for a philosophical approach, Swami Satchidanandendra for a textual approach. I referred to the 'old' Śaṃkarācārya of Kāñcī, Chandrasekharendra Sarasvati (and the current Śaṃkarācārya of Śṛṅgeri, Bharati Tirtha) to raise questions about the need for a socially and politically grounded approach, and took Ramana Maharshi to exemplify an experiential approach. In my conclusion, I argued that, rather than seeing these as simply radically incompatible or eulogistically aggregatable approaches, we might take them to be mutually refining, indicating that Śaṃkara's work was not unphilosophical, not untextual, not socially and politically ungrounded, and not heedless of experience. Let us now see to what extent our study of Śaṃkara as teacher supports such a view.

That the *śruti* texts and Śaṃkara's interpretation of them need to be central to any study of Śaṃkara has been a key theme of this book, so I start by reviewing a textual approach. It might seem odd, then, to characterize this by the negative formulation: Śaṃkara's work is 'not untextual'. I have, after all, argued that it is thoroughgoingly textual, that the texts are taken to be the very source of Śaṃkara's teaching methods. Yet the negative formulation acts as a warning: that to ignore the texts and the minutiae of Śaṃkara's exegesis in favour of philosophical argument alone will be to omit the basis of Śaṃkara's work. As Clooney argues convincingly, Śaṃkara's Advaita and the tradition that follows him, comprising in Clooney's terms the 'Text' of Advaita, is fundamentally a Mīmāṃsā tradition, in which insight comes not just from the content of the texts but from reading them, from following the arguments and counterarguments, from seeing how they work and from finding them to work in the reader (Clooney, 1993). Our study has advocated a similar view: that, for Śaṃkara, realization comes through engagement with the texts, hearing and reflecting on them under the guidance of an experienced teacher. It has also stressed that the precedent for this is set by the texts themselves, which give statements on and clues to their interpretation.

Yet, second, 'not untextual' may also signal that this is not a simple return to a 'traditional' approach as characterized and criticized by Ingalls (1952). While this book accepts the corrective that Clooney's stress on the Advaita Text makes to an approach that has simply assumed sub-commentaries to be a degenerative form, it does operate with the historical assumptions of those

such as Ingalls and Hacker and those building on their work, like Mayeda, that it is appropriate to distinguish Śaṃkara's work from his Advaitin successors, and indeed from his predecessors, to see what is characteristic of his work. In this, it does not find the way Isayeva (1993) draws on spurious works to be helpful. It does, though, acknowledge that there is much further work to be done to see how Śaṃkara's insights on the method(s) offered by scripture are taken up, modified or ignored in the writings of later Advaita. Here the work of the Kannada scholar, Swami Satchidanandendra, must again be mentioned. For his 1929 work distinguishing Śaṃkara's method from that of other Advaitins considerably predated that of Hacker (who quotes him) and Ingalls. Where the current work differs from his, however, is in rejecting the assumption that he as an Advaitin makes that Śaṃkara and Gauḍapāda are, without variation or development, true to the method of the Upaniṣads, which themselves advocate the method of attribution and removal of superimposition, as credited to 'knowers of the tradition' in Śaṃkara's *Gītā* commentary, 13.13 (ET 1989, pp. 39–40). Śaṃkara's assumption that there is a concordance among all the Upaniṣadic texts is not one we are required to adopt ourselves in order to appreciate how he construes them. We did, however, find it expedient to read his own texts as mutually corrective, once appropriate criteria for authenticity had been applied.

Third, to say that Śaṃkara's work is 'not untextual' is to distance our position from the view of those who assume that citing texts or dependence on texts is an archaic approach from which little can be learned in the modern age. As Rambachan (1991) has shown, this suspicion of 'scripture' (and, we might add, concomitantly, of 'theologians') has been widespread, such that even scholars like Radhakrishnan, who valued the religious insights of the Upaniṣads, held them to be validated as the insights of the seers, that is, as based on religious experience, rather than as a *pramāṇa* in their own right, capable of yielding knowledge of *brahman*. In this book, we have argued strenuously for an interpretation of texts as *pramāṇa*, showing the many ways Śaṃkara justifies their authority, but particularly the way that the language itself is interpreted to yield understanding, by stripping away superimposition. This is very far from a superficial citing of proof texts to support an argument (though Śaṃkara does engage in such citing at times too). Rather, it is an engagement with hermeneutics that accepts its premises as given, not just because 'scripture says so', but because they have been fruitfully shown to be the case by those who study within this teaching tradition and because there can be no other *pramāṇa* than the language of scripture. This is not, of course, a claim by the present author to the truth of the premises, such as we saw Mahadevan (1980) making above. It is a claim that the argument of this book has shown hermeneutical method to be central *in* and *to* the study of Śaṃkara's works.

Here we may recall that though Śaṃkara would necessarily reject a notion of authorial intention, for the *śruti* texts are *apauruṣeya* (without personal authorship, human, divine or other), he imputes such to the text itself, personifying the Veda and speaking, using the desiderative form of verbs, of what it wants to say. Since we saw in Chapter 3 how he also corrects this, we might see here an understanding of directionality within the text itself, directionality to which the reader/hearer responds appropriately when, pursuing the desire to know *brahman* therein, non-dual realization dawns. That there are many different (erroneous) ways of responding to the Veda Śaṃkara is clear. That there is one true understanding (*samyagdarśana*) is the premise of his life's work. It is 'not untextual'.

We may consider the other three negative formulations more swiftly. To what extent does the subject matter of this book support the view that Śaṃkara's work is 'not unphilosophical'? While we have not unpacked his arguments in detail, we have seen that his engagement with epistemological issues, and particularly his need to establish a self as the condition for the possibility of cognition at all, played a key role in supporting his arguments about the authority of the Veda and, along with that, making plausible a model of cognition that would both conform with key Upaniṣadic statements about the knower and provide a 'way in' for scriptural language to work. In this clear sense, Śaṃkara's work is 'not unphilosophical'. We have further demonstrated the importance of reason in Śaṃkara's works. Indeed it is basic to the whole interpretative enterprise, provided that it is in consonance with and grounded in scripture. Śaṃkara demonstrates that this is, in his view, the case by showing how scripture itself recommends reflection on its content. This is exemplified not only in scripture's specific statements, 'It is to be heard, reflected on, etc.', and the *Brahmasūtra*'s constructions of these (e.g. in *BS* 1.1.2 as interpreted by Śaṃkara), but by the prevalence throughout the Vedānta of the statements acting as *pratijñā*s, major premises for scripturally based inductive inferences on *brahman*, as Halbfass has also discussed. Yet, in the end, Halbfass decides that Śaṃkara puts his own arguments beyond the public arena of philosophical scrutiny, since they are not assumed nor indeed desired to operate independently of scripture (1991, p. 36). They are there derivatively and in its service. In this sense, perhaps, then, while Śaṃkara's work is 'not unphilosophical', since it uses (sometimes) stringent methods of articulating and criticizing arguments according to rational and formally agreed criteria, it is not unreservedly philosophical in intent.

Here, a European Enlightenment distinction between theology and philosophy comes into play, a distinction whose anachronism leads writers like Wilke to continue to claim Śaṃkara as both a theologian and a philosopher because of the use he makes of rational argument (1995, pp. 339–41). Questions of value raise their heads here, questions that led thinkers like Radhakrishnan to stress Śaṃkara's role as a philosopher (as well as a man of

many parts), not least so that the quality of his thinking would be recognized by 'the West'. To suggest that Śaṃkara's work is 'not unphilosophical' is also then to question the assumptions of those who use 'philosophy' as a criterion of the West's rationality over against 'Eastern' spirituality.

There is also a much stronger sense in which Śaṃkara's work may be said to be 'not unphilosophical'. Writers such as Chakravarti Ram-Prasad have shown how arguments like Śaṃkara's against Vasubandhu on the reality or otherwise of the world have the potential for development to address continuing current arguments on 'idealism', 'realism', 'non-realism' (1993, 2002). While Ingalls (1954) showed that, for Śaṃkara, the force of such arguments was to establish the need for a self as cognizer over against a world of knowers, knowables and knowing (a position which sits happily with those we outlined above), the arguments can be shown to have the potential for development aside from that primary use. 'Not unphilosophical' reminds us of Śaṃkara's primary purpose, on which we have concentrated in this book, while refusing a view of Śaṃkara which would closet him as non-rational. (This is not, of course, to imply that challenges cannot be raised to his arguments, as his opponents did.)

Next we may consider whether this book gives any support to the view that Śaṃkara's work is 'not socially and politically ungrounded'. At one level, this sounds banally obvious; any work is necessarily socially and politically grounded. Yet, if we take this third negative formulation as a warning too, it will have the very important role of reminding us that this is the case, even when the specific context is difficult to establish, as we saw in Chapter 1. Because the argument is conducted between opponents in texts, and because it bears upon the self of all, there is a tendency for concrete social and political issues to slip away, leaving Śaṃkara open to universalist, egalitarian or *hindutva* interpretations.

The restrictions Śaṃkara actually places upon the Advaitin pupil, so that he is, normally, a male brahmin and sometimes renouncer, remind us speedily that Śaṃkara's interpretation of Upaniṣadic teaching was intended only for the élite few, among whom his followers were but one group among many. While his claim was to the absolute truth, it was made within a Vedically-influenced ambience, whether affected by acceptance, formal acknowledgement or explicit rejection of Vedic authority. It simply ignored *mleccha* ('barbarian') traditions. Yet within that ambience, Śaṃkara made no claim to represent 'true Indianness' or '*hindutva*' ('Hinduness'), nor even to speak for all who accepted Vedic authority. Quite apart from the clear anachronism of any notion of 'Indianness' or 'Hinduness', Śaṃkara was not interested in social identity except insofar as it guaranteed him brahmanical pupils. He was vitriolic in his criticisms of other *āstika* schools, for these were the ones who were of most threat to his own position. Moreover, the hagiographical accounts in which he is presented as composing songs after recognizing reality in an untouchable, along with Cenkner's and Alston's

tendency to soften Śaṃkara's narrow social prescriptiveness, may show the embarrassment Śaṃkara's stance can occasion. They cannot write it away. Śaṃkara the teacher, and the content of his teaching, was 'not socially and politically ungrounded', any less than modern reinterpretations of his work, the current one included.

Finally, then, we may ask whether this book has shown any evidence that Śaṃkara's work was 'not ungrounded in experience'. In Chapter 1, we noted that Śaṃkara is extremely reticent about his own life, though his frequent statements about the need for a teacher and for that teacher to be one who knows the self, might lead us to assume that he was, in his own terms, one liberated while still living. Once more, though, the negative formulation will prove useful as a warning. We have already noted the tendency among modern Advaitin interpretations to prioritize spiritual experience over scripture as a *pramāṇa*. This was the case even for writers like Radhakrishnan who translated and commented on the Upaniṣads, *Gītā* and so on, and even more so for spiritual leaders like Ramana Maharshi, whose search and silent teaching was impelled by a near-death experience of separation from the body and mind in his teenage years. Yet this was not just a modern phenomenon. Within a century or so of Śaṃkara's death, in the *Vivekacūḍāmaṇī* ('Crest Jewel of Discrimination'), for example, the priority of *anubhava* was already being stressed, as Gussner has shown. Against such a position among modern writers, Rambachan stresses the priority of *śruti* as a *pramāṇa* for Śaṃkara, a view this study strongly supports. *Anubhava* in this context, for Śaṃkara, is that context-free consciousness, that realization, that *avagati*, which always is yet is only made plain as such once superimposition is removed by hearing 'You are that'. It is *svapramāṇaka*, self-validating, not in the sense that direct spiritual experience is that on which Advaitin truth claims are made independently of scripture, but as needing no other confirmation, as being unsublatable, once the teaching is understood. That this is the culmination of the teaching we have made plain in this chapter and the last. Because this is the intent and goal of Śaṃkara's writing, Taber has described it as 'transformative philosophy'. At the very least, we may say that, for Śaṃkara, the teaching and its culmination, which is his life's work, are 'not ungrounded in experience'.

In previous articles, I have described Śaṃkara as a theologian, rather than as a philosopher, if by the former term is meant one for whom soteriological concerns grounded in sacred texts are a priority. This study certainly supports the importance of the sacred texts, their teaching techniques and their linguistically mediated ability to deliver liberation in Śaṃkara's work. However, the discussion above suggests that, rather than using such a label for him, a label open anyway to considerable misunderstanding or negative evaluation, it may be more helpful to present him as he presents himself, as a teacher and commentator on the sacred texts whose work is most definitely 'not untextual' but also 'not unphilosophical', 'not socially and politically

ungrounded', 'not ungrounded in experience'. These indicators, with the caveats they flag, may induce caution in us as interpreters. But then definition by negation and mutual correction of unwanted meanings are, for Śaṃkara, a fundamental way of teaching.

GLOSSARY

abhyudaya   happiness, prosperity

ācārya   teacher; also head of *maṭha*

adharma   lack of cosmic and social order

adhikārin   appropriately qualified person (for ritual, or Vedic study)

adhyāsa   superimposition (mistaking something for what it is not, especially thinking *brahman* has qualities)

adhyāya   lesson; chapter (especially of four main sections of *BS*)

advaita   non-duality (of *brahman* and *ātman*)

āgama   traditional teaching, sacred text

ahaṃkāra, ***ahaṃkṛt***   'I-maker', ego, mental faculty that identifies things as 'mine'

ajātivāda   teaching on causality that there is no real origination, which Śaṃkara adapts from Gauḍapāda

ākṛti   generic configuration, collection of characteristics that make something what it is

ānanda   bliss, highest value

antaḥkaraṇa   'inner organ', aspect of mind that organizes thoughts and feelings; for Śaṃkara, part of *prakṛti*

anubhava   experience; for Śaṃkara, the final realization beyond words and objects of experience

anumāna   inductive inference; for Śaṃkara, to be built on as given in *śruti*

anvayavyatireka   'conjunction and disjunction'; a method of grammatical analysis Śaṃkara applies to understanding Vedic sentences, especially 'You are that'

apauruṣeya   without personal origin; the status of the Veda in Pūrva- and Uttaramīmāṃsā

artha   purpose, aim; meaning, referent

arthavāda   secondary passage; for Śaṃkara, passages, like origination stories, which direct attention to the one self

asat   non-being

asatkāryavāda   teaching on causality that the effect does not exist latently in the cause (which Śaṃkara rejects)

āśrama   stage of life: student, householder, forest-dweller, renouncer

āstika   for Śaṃkara, affirming the authority of the Veda; 'orthodox'

asura   anti-god, demon

ātman   true self; for Śaṃkara, self-reflexive, content-free consciousness, identical with *brahman*

avagati   awareness

avidyā   ignorance; for Śaṃkara, misconception

avidyākṛta   due to misconception

bhakti   devotion

bhāṣya   commentary

bhedābheda   'difference–non-difference' view that *brahman* is both different from and identical with self

bodhisattva   in Mahāyāna Buddhism, a being who has vowed to become a perfect Buddha for the sake of all sentient beings, characterized by wisdom and compassion; Śaṃkara contrasts the *bodhisattva*'s expediency with the true teaching of the compassionate, wise Advaitin teacher

brahmacārin   celibate student in first stage of life

brahman   ultimate reality; for Śaṃkara, identical with *ātman*, self-reflexive consciousness

brahmānubhava   realization that is *brahman*

buddhi   cognition; mental faculty shaping cognition and action

caitanya   consciousness

codanā   authoritative injunctive force of Veda, urging to action; for Śaṃkara, produces results so limited to the world of rebirth

darśana   'seeing'; realization; viewpoint; school

daśanāmī-saṃnyāsin   member of one of the ten orders of ascetics associated with (one branch of) Śaṃkara tradition

deva   god, usually of beings within the cycle of rebirth; occasionally, God

dharma   cosmic and social order; the duties of each ideal social group and stage of life; for Śaṃkara, part of the world of rebirth

dṛṣṭānta   example, especially as third member of a formal inference

duḥkha   suffering, unsatisfactoriness of world of rebirth

ekavākyatā   single meaning; unitary purport of all Upaniṣadic texts; for Śaṃkara, non-duality

guṇa   quality; one of the three strands of *prakṛti*: intelligibility/goodness, activity, inertia

guruparamparā   line of teachers

hetu   reason, second member of a formal inference

īśvara   Lord

jīvātman   individual (and, for Śaṃkara, embodied) self

jñāna   knowledge; consciousness

jñānakāṇḍa   section on knowledge (Vedic texts most important to Vedānta, mainly the Upaniṣads)

karma   (ritual) action

karmakāṇḍa section on action (Vedic texts most important to Pūrvamīmāṃsā, mainly the ritual prescriptions, etc.)

kramamukti release by stages

lakṣaṇa definition (by negation); for Śaṃkara method of making *brahman* known

lakṣaṇā secondary predication (see Chapter 7 for a full explanation)

lakṣaṇārtha *either* 'in the sense of a definition' *and/or* 'in the sense of a secondary predication'

manas mind, internal sense organ

mantra chanted ritual formula

maṭha centre for renouncers, establishment of learning

māyā magic; magical illusion

māyaśakti creative power of the Lord

nāmarūpa name and form, one of Śaṃkara's preferred terms for the world of rebirth

Nārāyaṇa preferred Vaiṣṇava name for the Supreme Lord; for Śaṃkara, name of the most subtle understanding of the Lord leading to an understanding of non-duality

nāstika not recognizing authority of Veda

neti neti 'Not thus, not thus' (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 2.3.6)

niḥśreyasa the highest good; for Śaṃkara, liberation

nimittakāraṇa efficient or structure-giving cause

nirguṇa without attributes

nityaśuddhabuddhamukta 'eternally pure, knowing and free', Śaṃkara's signature phrase for *brahman*

padārtha meaning/referent of word(s)

paramahaṃsa-parivrājaka wandering ascetic

pāramārthika-satya ultimate reality/truth

paramātman supreme self, *brahman*

parameśvara Supreme Lord, often *brahman*

pariṇāmavāda view of causality that there is a real transformation of the cause into the effect (which Śaṃkara rejects)

pradhāna in Sāṃkhya, material cause or root-*prakṛti*, which Śaṃkara rejects

prakṛti mind–matter; in Sāṃkhya, a second category of being, alongside *puruṣa*; for Śaṃkara, understood as other than consciousness, a superimposition on *brahman*

pramāṇa method for acquiring valid knowledge; for Śaṃkara, *śabda* (verbal testimony, here of the Veda) is the only *pramāṇa* for knowing *brahman*; perception and inference give conventional knowledge

prāmāṇya validity, authority

prapañca manifested world; plot of a story

pratijñā thesis, first member of a formal inference

pratyaya mental event, cognition; for Śaṃkara, part of *prakṛti*, mind–matter other than consciousness

puruṣa man; in Sāṃkhya, multiple monadic consciousnesses; for Śaṃkara, single consciousness, *brahman*

Pūrvamīmāṃsā school of 'earlier exegesis', Ritualists

pūrvapakṣa (fictive) opponent's view

śabda verbal testimony, especially that of the Veda

saguṇa with qualities

śālagrāma stone (from the Gaṇḍakī river bed) in which Viṣṇu is worshipped

samarpaṇa making known; delivering up

saṃnyāsa renunciation (as an ascetic, or of attachment to action)

sampradāya for Śaṃkara, correction interpretation of the sacred texts; hence, teaching tradition

sampradāyakartṛ one who transmits the correct interpretation; for Śaṃkara, sometimes identified with Nārāyaṇa

saṃsāra world of rebirth; for Śaṃkara, world of name and form

samyagdarśana correct viewpoint; perfect realization

śāstra teaching; sacred text

sat reality, being, *brahman*

satkāryavāda view of causality that effect is latent in the cause (which Śaṃkara accepts in modified form)

satya real, reality

satyaṃ jñānam anantaṃ brahma '*Brahman* is reality, consciousness, infinite' (*Taittirīya Upaniṣad* 2.1.1)

siddhānta final, established view

smṛti 'remembering'; sacred texts whose authority derives from the Veda, including *Bhagavad Gītā*, *Purāṇa*s, *Manusmṛti*

śruti 'hearing'; the most authoritative sacred texts, the Veda

śūdra servant; member of fourth *varṇa*

śūnya 'empty'; for Mādhyamika Buddhists, empty of inherent existence, dependent on causes and conditions; for Śaṃkara, void, nihilistic

sūtra 'thread'; aphoristic verses of each major school

svapramāṇaka self-validating

svārtha own (primary) meaning

tarka logic, reasoning; Śaṃkara rejects 'dry logic' but rational argument is fundamental to his exegetical approach

tat 'that', *brahman*

tvam 'you'

tat tvam asi 'You are that' (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6.8.7, etc.); Śaṃkara interprets this as stating the identity of *brahman* and *ātman*

upādānakāraṇa material or reality-giving cause

upādhi limiting adjunct; anything superimposed on *brahman*

Uttaramīmāṃsā school of 'later exegesis', the Vedānta

vairāgya renunciation

Vaiṣṇava worshipper of Viṣṇu, to do with such devotion

varṇa   ideal social category; only members of the first three *varṇa*s (priests, kings and merchants) were eligible to hear the Veda, *śūdra*s being precluded

vākyārtha   meaning/referent of a sentence (or whole passage)

Vedānta   end/culmination of the Veda, the Upaniṣads; alternative name for the set of schools also known as Uttaramīmāṃsā (school of 'later exegesis') based on Upaniṣads

vidyā   knowledge; in other contexts, meditation

virāga   lack of desire

viśeṣaṇa   specification, distinguishing characteristic; adjective, a word that specifies or qualifies another

viśiṣṭādvaita   'non-dualism of the one with qualities'; Rāmānuja's school of Vedānta

viśiṣṭārtha   specified/particularized meaning

vyāvahārika-satya   conventional reality/truth

vyūha   manifestation; one of four separate manifestations in Pāñcarātra Vaiṣṇava theology that Śaṃkara rejects as non-dual

NOTES

1 Though note Hacker's claim that Śaṃkara's authentic works were written in the name of Śaṃkarabhagavatpāda (1978b).

2 Cenkner, 1983, does discuss 'Śaṅkara's pedagogy in religious life' but straight-forwardly accepts that Śaṃkara adopted the 'triple method' of Advaita: hearing, reflection and meditation. For a critique, see Suthren Hirst, 1996.

3 cf. *Bṛ Up* 2.5.19 'This self is *brahman*', one of Śaṃkara's favourite quotations. 'Self' here does not mean ego or individualized self, but the context- and content-free consciousness necessary for any (content-ful) experience to be possible. Śaṃkara identifies this with *brahman*. I have avoided capital letters for 'Self' and the anglicization of 'Brahman' since it is too easy to read into these markers, not present in Sanskrit, inappropriate ideas of God or soul. For a clear explanation of how Advaita makes the equation between self and *brahman* as consciousness, see Ram-Prasad, 2001, pp. 163–73.

4 cf. *Bṛ Up Bh*, Introduction

5 Ādi Śaṃkara was 'the first, or head, Śaṃkara'. The contemporary Śaṃkarācāryas are leaders who, from the last two decades of the twentieth century, have increasingly been called on to legitimize the position of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, the 'World Council of Hindus', one of whose aims is the widespread cultural legitimation of Hinduism in the diaspora. The VHP is the religious arm of the Sangh Parivar. The Sangh's pursuit of the synonymity of *hindutva* ('Hinduness') and Indianness has been linked with the call to destroy the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya in December 1992 because of its location on the supposed birthplace of Lord Rāma, as well as to the ensuing violence and continued anti-Muslim and anti-Christian activities in India.

  In the past, the Śaṃkarācāryas have functioned largely independently of one another with very different styles (see e.g. Cenkner, 1992; Yocum, 1992). The senior Śaṃkarācārya of Kāñci, His Holiness Chandrasekharendra Sarasvati (d. 1984), who 'made a great tour of our sacred land' from 1919–39 (Mahadevan, 1968, p. 480), was held in high regard by people such as T. M. P. Mahadevan, who also respected Ramana Maharshi.

6 Isayeva, 1993, outlines this history in her Introduction. For numerous references, see Halbfass, 1988.

7 I use this term as Dr Dermot Killingley, University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne does, to indicate work from the intellectual traditions of Western Europe and North America and to avoid the problem of speaking of 'the West', which, as Killingley points out, has no clear location on a globe and depends on where you view it from.

8 Hacker refers to *Mūlāvidyā-nirāsaḥ, atha vā Śrī-Śaṅkara-hṛdayam,* published in 1929 in Bangalore, under the name Subrahmaṇya (or Subba Rao) (1950, pp. 79–80). (Satchidanandendra did not take his ascetic's name till 1948, see the back jacket, ET 1989.) Hacker acknowledges that Satchidanandendra was indebted to Swami Siddheswarananda of the Ramakrishna Mission for this book, which generated a 'lively controversy' between the author and other Indian scholars including Kuppuswami Sastri and Hiriyanna. For a recent outline of the approaches of Swami Satchidanandendra and Hacker, see Alston, 2000.

9 Address to the Bhandarkar Oriental Institute, Poona (now Pune), on 25 August 1952, published as Ingalls, 1952. In his opening words, footnoted to the article, Ingalls did, however, say, 'It [i.e. the study of Śaṃkarācārya as his current research subject] is one where a Westerner's thanks to India cannot fail to be sincere, for most of the work done on the subject has been done by Indians' (Ingalls, 1952, p. 1). He also refers to Hacker's work, probably Hacker, 1950, the article in which Hacker acknowledges Satchidanandendra.

10 Satchidanandendra is not, however, so thorough-going in then applying the historical method between Śaṃkara and his earlier sources. For Satchidanandendra, Śaṃkara and his predecessor, Gauḍapāda, simply reproduce faithfully the Upaniṣads' own methods. Pande, 1994, refers to a variety of scholarly treatments on Gauḍapāda, though in the end it is not clear whether he recognizes any difference between Gauḍapāda and Śaṃkara.

11 See also Pande, 1994, Chapter 3.

12 By contrast with the Pūrvamīmāṃsā, the school of the 'earlier exegesis', the 'Ritualists' who focused their attention on *codanā*, the prescriptive language of those Vedic texts which enjoined or proscribed (ritual) actions for gaining particular ends.

13 I am aware, thanks to Clooney, of the suggestion of P. M. Modi (1956, Volume 2, Chapter 9) that the *Brahmasūtra*s should be read 'backwards' from *BS* 3.3, not least to avoid the danger of reading *BSBh* 1.1.1–1.1.4 as a sufficient summary of Śaṃkara's work (1993, pp. 69–74). However, the opening statements of Śaṃkara's commentary are very important, not least as they bear on our major themes: the context of superimposition; the purpose of the Veda; the appropriate pupil for the teaching.

14 Ingalls mentions Prof. Belvalkar's comparison of Indian systems, Prof. Radhakrishnan's comparisons between Indian and European philosophers, Profs Raju's and Datta's deductive work to generate from Śaṃkara's 'a system to fit the present generation of thought' (1952, p. 4). See e.g. S. K. Belvalkar (1929) *Vedānta Philosophy*, 2 parts, Poona; S. Radhakrishnan, 1932, 1933, and numerous references in notes to his translations of *The Principal Upaniṣads* and *The Bhagavadgītā*. P. T. Raju (1955) *East and West in Philosophy*, Jaipur: University of Rajasthan (and see S. S. Rama Rao Pappu, 1988, pp. 198–202); D. M. Datta (1963) 'On philosophical synthesis', *Philosophy East and West* 13: 195–200, and for earlier works, see Potter, 1995, Volume 1, Section 2.

15 For example, Paul Deussen (1922) *Vedanta und Platonismus im Lichte der Kantischen Philosophie*, second edition, Berlin: A. Unger; (1917) *Vedānta, Platon und Kant*, Wien: Urania; P. T. Raju (1932) 'The problem of the infinite: Hegel, Bradley and Śankara', *The Philosophical Quarterly* (1937) *Thought and Reality: Hegelianism and Advaita* with a foreword by J. N. Muirhead (London: George Allen & Unwin); Taber, 1983, on Fichte and Heidegger (though compare J. L. Mehta (1978) 'Heidegger and Vedanta: Reflections on a questionable theme', *International Philosophical Quarterly* 18.2: 121–49). Neo-Platonism and Meister Eckhardt have also been subject to comparison: e.g. J. F. Staal (1961) *Advaita and*

Neoplatonism: A Critical Study in Comparative Philosophy, Madras: University of Madras; Rudolph Otto (1932) *Mysticism East and West: A Comparative Analysis of the Nature of Mysticism*, London: Macmillan (revisited in Wilke, 1995).

16 For example, Ram-Prasad, 1993, 2002, and cf. Mohanty, 1992, pp. 42–6. Halbfass notes in particular the contribution of K. C. Bhattacharya, e.g. in his *Studies in Philosophy*, 2 vols, Calcutta, 1956–8 (1988, Chapter 16).

17 A view which was certainly not Śaṃkara's own, even allowing for the modern context in which Aldous Huxley popularized the notion of *philosophia perennis*. Radhakrishnan presents his introduction and translation of the *Bhagavadgītā* in this light (1948, p. 12, n. 1, Gopal, 1989, p. 204).

18 The senior Śaṃkarācārya of Kāñci, Chandrasekharendra Sarasvati (1894–1994) was widely respected for the authority of his teaching (as well as his person). A recent large translation from Tamil into English collects many of his short discourses into one volume, ranging from the Veda and its auxiliaries, to Pūrvamīmāṃsā, Nyāya and so on. Śaṃkara (Bhagavatpāda) is cited as much for his authority legitimating the maintenance of *dharmaśāstra* as for his Advaitin teachings (e.g. 1995, p. 673). The translator's introduction makes plain the importance he and the publisher, the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, place on 'reHindu-ising', even 'reIndianising' people whose grasp of their own tradition, Hindu Dharma/Vedic Dharma/Sanātana Dharma, is held to be poor compared with that of Christians and Muslims (p. xv).

19 One of the main pandits at Poona, from the 1890s on, producing the Ānandāśrama Sanskrit Series of critical editions, including Śaṃkara's key commentaries on *Kena Upaniṣad*, *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* and *Bhagavadgītā*.

20 Editor and translator of key Advaitin texts, including, with Kunjan Raja: Vācaspati Miśra, *Bhāmatī* (*Catuḥsūtrī* portion), Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1933; with Saileswar Sen: Bhāratītīrtha, *Vivaraṇa Prameya Saṅgraha*, Kumbakonam, 1941. He also wrote on Śaṃkara, (n.d.) *Life and Teachings of Sankaracharya*, Madras: G. A. Natesan & Co. See also S. S. Suryanarayana Sastri (1961) *The Collected Papers of S. S. Suryanarayana Sastri*, edited by T. M. P. Mahadevan, Madras: University of Madras.

21 Research student of S. S. Suryanarayana Sastri and his successor as Head of the Centre for the Advanced Study of Philosophy, University of Madras.

22 For a bibliography up to August 1961, see *Essays in Philosophy: Presented to Dr T. M. P. Mahadevan on his Fiftieth Birthday*, Madras: Ganesh & Co, 1962, pp. 515–27.

23 See my arguments about Śaṃkara's handling of Vaiṣṇava material in Chapter 6, and Suthren Hirst, 1993. A sophisticated criticism of Hacker can be found in J. J. Lipner's review of Halbfass, 1995: *Religion* 30 (April 2000): 195–7.

24 He does however seem to prioritize individual reading over studying the text with a teacher.

25 Here I make no quick equation between Christian or Jewish understandings of God and *nirguṇa brahman*, or Supreme Lord, in Śaṃkara's work. If critics are tempted to use this to write off my comments on devotionalism, I trust they will look too at the texts.

26 The word 'scripture', literally meaning 'what is written', can be very misleading in a Vedāntin context where the authoritative *śruti* texts are envisaged as a form of sound, of verbal testimony, and are orally transmitted. Nonetheless, I retain the term for ease, since the term 'text' alone is too broad and the repetition of 'sacred text', which encodes equally misleading notions of what is sacred, is cumbersome. Also it is notable that in *Bṛ Up Bh* 2.4.10, Śaṃkara comments that the authority of the Veda is indicated by its being breathed out by *brahman* without effort, 'not like

another book' (*na yathā anyo grantha iti*). While other palm leaf manuscripts, tied together with a knot (*grantha*, hence the word for book), are indeed written with effort, compared with the Veda's being breathed out, what it is differentiated from is 'another book'.

1 THE TEACHER HIMSELF

1 His name comes from the *toṭaka* metre in which the hymn and most of the other work are written. For the text of the hymn, see Mahadevan, 1980. For the text of the other work, see Comans, 1996.

2 See Potter, 1981, p. 598, and Hacker, 1951, pp. 1936–8. Hacker notes similar views on *avidyā*; on the interchangeability of '*paramātman*' with '*parameśvara*'; parallels between Toṭaka's *Śrutisārasamuddharaṇa* and Śaṃkara's *Thousand Teachings*; and Toṭaka's imitation of the praise verse from the end of Śaṃkara's commentary on Gauḍapāda's *Kārikā*s.

3 This would be a reference to the many Upaniṣadic dialogues between teacher and pupils. See further, Chapter 4.

4 *guruśiṣyakathāśravaṇena mayā śrutivac chrutisārasamuddharaṇam kṛtam*. Hacker (1951, p. 1937) mentioned this, but did not note the multiple senses of '*śrutivat*' with which Toṭaka plays.

5 Satchidanandendra questions whether 'Padmapāda' was a direct disciple (1989, p. 18).

6 See further below for a discussion of Śaṃkara's works.

7 *yadvaktramānasasarahpratilabdhajanmabhāṣyāravindamakarandarasaṃ pibanti |*
pratyāśamun mukhavinītavineyabhṛṅgāḥ tān bhāṣyavittakagurūn praṇamāmi mūrghnā ||

8 Homage verse 2. *yadvāṇīkuliśāvarugṇamatayaḥ . . . tārkikāḥ.*

9 *Tait Up Bh* Homage verse 3
taittirīyakasārasya mayācāryaprasādataḥ |
vispātārtharucīnāṃ hi vyākhyeyaṃ sampraṇīyate ||
Pande (1994, p. 105) assumes that this verse originated with Sureśvara and was added later to Śaṃkara's commentary, perhaps by Ānandagiri. He claims that Śaṃkara did not usually include such verses, the quality of the benedictory verses in *GKBh* being poor and so inauthentic (pp. 106–7).

10 *Naiṣkarmyasiddhi* 1.5 *sahasra kiraṇavyāpte khadyotaḥ kiṃ prakāśayet |* 'Can a fire-fly illuminate that which is filled with a thousand rays?'

11 *Naiṣkarmyasiddhi* 1.6 . . . *brahmavinnikaṣāśmasu ||*

12 Śaṃkara (literally, 'auspicious') is a common name for Śiva, stressing his beneficent nature.

13 *Naiṣkarmyasiddhi* 4.76
viṣṇoḥ pādānugaṃ yāṃ nikhilabhavanudam śaṃkaro 'vāpa yogāt
Alston's explanation of the myth (tr. 1971) is directly dependent on Hacker, 1951, p. 1919 f. Balasubramanian's translation incorporates both senses.

14 *Pañcapādikā* Invocatory verse 3.
namāmy abhogaparivārasampadaṃ nirastabhūtinanumārdhavigraham |
anugram unmṛditakālalāñchanam vināvināyakam apūrvaśaṃkaram ||
D. Venkataramiah's annotated translation brings out the double meanings (my additions in square brackets [ ]): 'I bow to the unique Śaṃkara, rich in the possession of an entourage of ascetics ('*bhogi*' in the sense of serpents as applied to Lord Śaṃkara [i.e. Śiva]) bereft of wealth ('*bhūti*' – sacred ashes covering the body of Śiva) who attaches equal value to reasoning ('*anumā*' = reasoning, which equally with *śruti*, supports the body of Śaṃkara's doctrine; Umā, Śiva's consort

forms half his body), of mild aspect (unlike Ugra, i.e. Śiva who as the name implies is of fierce aspect), who has eradicated all traces of Kāla (Kāla-Māyā, also poison; Śiva is Viṣakaṇṭha, having the mark of poison on his throat), rid of Vināyaka (a Buddhist teacher whom Śaṃkara [is said to have] silenced; Śiva has Vināyaka [i.e. Gaṇeśa], his son, by his side)' (1948, facing p. 1).

15 See, for example, the Kāśakkudi plate comparing Parameśvaravarman I (669–90/1) with Śiva: 'This wonderful (king) possessed of high prosperity (*bhūti*) was the lord of men (*bhūta*) had a bull for (his) crest (and) a club on (his) banner (and) possessed immovable firmness (thus) resembling Śiva who wears sacred ashes (*bhūta*), is the lord of goblins (*bhūti*), has a bull for his emblem and a club on his banner and resides on the mountain,' quoting from *South Indian Inscriptions*, Archaeological Survey of India, New Imperial Series, Vol. 2, p. 357 (Mahalingam, 1969, p. 106).

16 The eulogies may, however, have made space for difference between their views and those of their teacher (J. J. Lipner, personal communication, July 2002).

17 See the introduction to his *Gītā* commentary.

18 The main work on these has been done in a series of articles in the *Journal of the University of Bombay* (1960–72) by W. R. Antarkar. Detailed secondary works include Baldev Upadhyay's *Śrī Śaṅkarācārya* in Hindi (see Lorenzen, 1983, p. 158), Piantelli, 1974a, Bader, 2000.

19 See also Bader's bibliography (2000, pp. 357–9).

20 On Śaṃkara's date, see further below. Vetter only narrows it to between AD 650 and 800 (1979, p. 11).

21 For an extremely useful comparative chart of the major incidents recorded in eight key Sanskrit hagiographies, see Bader, 2000, pp. 74–5.

22 Potter, 1981, p. 103. King acknowledges the problem caused for the traditional view, as Bhāvaviveka (early fifth century) includes a verse identical with *GK* 3.5 (1995, p. 36). He suggests that the *Gauḍapādīya-kārikā* is a composite text, with the fourth 'chapter' composed by a pre-Śaṃkara early Advaitin who may have acted as editor for the text as a whole. King does not rule out the tradition altogether: 'Perhaps the figure of "Gauḍapāda", traditionally Śaṅkara's *paramaguru*, was indeed a seventh-century Advaitin' (p. 47).

23 'The teacher-*sannyāsī* became part of the Vedānta lineage from this moment forward because Śaṅkara established *maṭha*-s throughout India and laid the foundation for the custom of having religious teachers come from orders of ascetics' (Cenkner, 1983, p. 39).

   Bader by contrast notes that only three of the eight hagiographies he studied mention Śaṃkara as a founder of *maṭha*s. He concludes that 'the only logical explanation for this is that the establishment of monastic centres was not very widely attributed to Śaṅkara until some time after the composition of our Sanskrit sources' (Bader, 2000, p. 313) and suggests that there were two streams in the tradition, one of which used links with *daśanāmi-saṃnyāsin*s to further its own power.

24 This is not to deny that there are major differences between the *Śaṃkara-digvijaya* and Śaṃkara: Śaṃkara does not see himself as an incarnation of Śiva, nor do his direct disciples despite their literary comparisons; the response to the outcaste (Śiva in disguise) (Canto 6.25 f) may be the logical outcome of Śaṃkara's teaching but is rather more open than his conservative attitude to *varṇa*; the explanations of Advaita, especially on 'You are that' (e.g. Canto 8.74 f) reflect much later, simplified views; the importance of scripture is asserted rather than demonstrated by any deep exegesis. Nonetheless, this hagiography sees Śaṃkara as the same open compassionate mediator of liberation that his direct pupils did and emphasizes the twin pair of scripture and reason as the way to saving truth.

25 Piantelli may be influenced by Thibaut's translation of the second sentence, which reads: 'Quietly devoted to his duty, let the wise man pass through life unknown.' (*BSBh* 3.4.50, Vol. 2, p. 327). Ram-Prasad notes that Śaṃkara does not make any personal claim to have achieved liberation (2001, p. 243, n. 48).

26 Ignoring the many other versions of Vedānta that exist and the fact that Vedānta's own influence is and always has been quite limited in India and abroad, it being only one of many branches of learning, schools of philosophy and ways of articulating devotional traditions.

27 Referred to by Gopal, 1989, p. 382; also quoted in Tapasyananda, 1980, p. xxxvi.

28 Gauḍapāda's date is fixed to the late fifth or early sixth century, since Bhāvaviveka, a Buddhist philosopher, quotes *Gauḍapādakārikā* 3.5. Bhāvaviveka was a younger contemporary of Dharmapala known to have lived in the fifth century from Chinese pilgrims' reports, and with a work translated into Chinese in AD 630. See Potter, 1981, p. 103.

29 cf. Alston, 1980a, pp. 24–30, and Isayeva, 1993, pp. 10–14 and pp. 48–62, on the relation between Buddhist ideas, Gauḍapāda and Śaṃkara. For an extensive study, see King, 1995.

30 He also rejects the theory of Buddhist influence in favour of a Kashmiri Śaiva milieu.

31 In particular, Wood misunderstands the nature of Īśvara in Śaṃkara's thought (1990, p. xiv).

32 Pande also accepts the *Adhyātma-paṭala-bhāṣya* as a genuine commentary on grounds of style and ideas, including its rejection of ritual but explication of 'spiritual ethics' (1994, p. 110).

33 *Upad P* 17, 18 and 19 all have invocatory verses suggesting they were originally self-standing units. The pupil in *Upad G* 1 is said to be a *paramahaṃsa* renouncer, but the pupil in *Upad G* 2 is merely described as a *brahmacārin* (i.e. an ordinary student), suggesting they were not originally part of a series. Potter further suggests that Śaṃkara only wrote 'portions' of *Thousand Teachings* (Malkovsky, 2001, p. 395).

34 Dazey notes that the current Śaṃkarācārya at Śṛṅgeri studies the *Pañcīkaraṇam* on a daily basis (1993, p. 159). Swami Nikhilananda, of the Ramakrishna Order, recommends the *Dṛgdṛśyaviveka* for students on advanced courses in Advaita philosophy (see Raphael, ET 1990, *Self and Non-self: The* Dṛgdriśyaviveka *Attributed to Śaṃkara*, translated from the Sanskrit with a commentary, London: Kegan Paul International, p. 14).

35 Though he comes down in favour of the *Vivekacūḍāmaṇī* being post-Śaṃkara, because of its polished style and systematic approach (Pande, 1994, p. 119).

36 I do not find all of Pande's arguments convincing, particularly with regard to Śaṃkara's sense of *anirvacanīya*. Myers (1998), drawing on Pande, has recently argued that Śaṃkara, despite Hacker, does use the term *ānanda* (bliss) of *brahman*, in a non-dual sense (so the prevalence of *ānanda* in a source cannot exclude it from being authentic). However, Myers' emphasis that Śaṃkara applies '*ānanda*' in a metaphorical (therefore secondary) sense is problematic. (See further Chapter 7 on Śaṃkara's views on *lakṣaṇā*, secondary predication.)

37 I remain unconvinced by the conclusion that the *Pañcīkaraṇa* is a genuine work (or that the main body of the short text is, once its introductory 'quotations' have been removed), not least because of the connections between this and other *prakaraṇa* texts and late (post-Śaṃkara) Upaniṣads to which Sundaresan himself draws attention (2002).

38 Even Pande, who is willing to expand the list of authentic treatises, accepts Kaviraj's exclusion of the *Sarvadarśanasiddhāntasaṃgraha* from the twenty-

volume Vani Vilas edition of Śaṃkara's supposed Sanskrit works initiated by the Śṛṅgerī *maṭh* (1994, p. 104 and p. 122).

39 Taking a moderate and critical view, Pande concludes: 'Of the *stotra*s the *Dakṣiṇāmūrtyaṣṭaka* has received the widest acceptance, although several others were also probably composed by him' (1994, p. 128). Pande is also inclined to accept the likelihood of Śaṃkara's Tantric connections later in life and hence of the *Saundaryalaharī*'s being authentic.

40 cf. N. Ramaratnam (ed.) (n.d.) *Sankara and Shanmata*, Souvenir of Conference on Sankara and Shanmata held in Madras, 1–9 June 1969, Madras: MLJ Press. See also Mahalingam, 1969, p. 125. Alternatively, Śaṃkara is credited with founding the *pañcāyatana* worship of Śiva, Viṣṇu, Sūrya, Gaṇeśa and Devī, also linked with South Indian Smārta practice, e.g. C. Sivaramamurti, 1955, p. 36.

41 Brooks, 1992, p. 44.

42 Pathak, 1882, pp. 174–5, gave death date. Editor, p. 140, filled in birth date. For further discussion, see Tapasyananda, 1980, pp. xv–xxiv and Isayeva, 1993, pp. 83–7.

43 Kuppuswamy dates the Kāñcī list to 1523–9 and Śṛṅgeri to 1705–41 (1972, pp. 17–18). It would have been in his interest to say if any others had been earlier. Piantelli dates the Śṛṅgeri list as late as the time of Saccidananda Bharati, d. 1814 (1974a, p. 203).

44 Pande, a historian, does devote a chapter to 'The Age of Śaṅkara' (1994, chapter 3). While helpful and wide-ranging, it makes statements which do not always apply to South India, assumes that the *varṇāśrama* ideal system really did exist though in decline, and has a somewhat idealistic picture of *bhakti* as socially levelling, against those studies which argue that *bhakti* enabled allegiance of élites to be kept in place, mirroring devotion to the deity (e.g. Stein, 1994; Champakalakshmi, 1996b; Chattopadhyaya, 1997).

45 There is some dispute as to whether Xuan Zang (Hsuan Tsang/Yuan Chwang) actually travelled any further south than ?Kāñcīpuram. In the *Hsi-yü-chi* ('Records of Western lands') compiled or composed by Xuan Zang, there is an account of how he went south from ?Kāñcī to the Malakuṭa country, noting the existence of various religious 'sects', including the numerous Digambara Jains. However, Chapter 4 of the account of Xuan Zang's life ('The record of the Tripiṭaka master of the Great Compassion Monastery') seems to indicate that he did not actually go there: 'Distant from the confines of this country (i.e. Draviḍa) about 3000 *li* he heard that there was the Malakuṭa country' (translated by Watters from Julien's 1857 French translation). Xuan Zang continues his journey in the next section as if from Draviḍa (not Malakuṭa). Watters concludes: 'He may not have gone to Malakuṭa, but the descriptions of the country, the people, and the Buddhist remains are evidently those of an eye-witness' (Watters, 1905, p. 229).

46 The story that the Pallava king Mahendravarman I (*c.* 610–30) was a Jain who converted to Śaiva worship receives support from the Trichy inscription, which portrays him as a 'worshipper of the *liṅga*' who wanted to spread that 'knowledge which has turned back from hostile conduct' (quoted in Mahalingam, 1969, p. 76). Females were likely to support Jains, with obvious advantages if different groups could be kept loyal, e.g. Mahendravarman's father seems to have been a Vaiṣṇava while his grandfather's wife made grants to Jains.

47 On dating problems, Potter, 1977, p. 220.

48 cf. *Yogabhāṣya* 1.25 *yatra kāṣṭhāprāptir jñānasya sa sarvajñaḥ sa ca puruṣaviśeṣa iti.*

49 *viśuddhajñānadehāya trivedīdivyacakṣuṣe |*
   śreyaḥprāptinimittāya namaḥ somārdhadhāriṇe ||

50 'For the most part Mīmāṃsā has, in this world, been made Atheistic; and this effort of mine is made to turn it to the theistic path' (Jha tr., 1907, p. 2).

51 *Ślokavārttika* 1.10
   prāyeṇaiva hi mīmāṃsā loke lokāyatīkṛtā |
   tām āstikapathe kartum ayaṃ yatnaḥ kṛto mayā ||
52 'Ce n'est donc par hasard que la Mīmāṃsā, ripostant au bouddhisme, prend aussi ses distances par rapport à la *bhakti*' (Biardeau, 1969, p. 65).
53 See Champakalakshmi, 1996a, p. 61.
54 *BSBh* 4.1.5. cf. also *Bṛ Up Bh* 1.3.1, 5.1.1; *BSBh* 3.3.9, 4.1.3; *Ch Up Bh* 6.16.3, 7.1.4; *Pr Up Bh* 5.2; *Tait Up Bh* 1.8.1.
55 For example *BSBh* 1.2.14. cf. *Ch Up Bh* 8.1.1; *Tait Up Bh* 6.1.1; *GKBh* 1.28. For details on *śālagrāma*, see Malkovsky, 2001, p. 185f.
56 cf. *BSBh* 4.3.10 and Piantelli, 1974b, who nonetheless sees Śaṃkara as a Śaiva.
57 There are numerous other hints, some of which will be taken up later in the book. Hacker, 1965, first proposed Śaṃkara's Vaiṣṇava connections. Though there are some difficulties with his formulation, his observations need to be taken seriously (Suthren Hirst, 1993).
58 For more background, see King, 1999. For detail on Śaṃkara's refutations of these viewpoints, see Alston, 1989c.
59 For more detail on these texts, see Lipner, 1994, pp. 29–39.
60 Ingalls, 1954, argued that Śaṃkara is chiefly concerned with late Yogācāra, as incorporated by Diṅnāga and Dharmakīrti.
61 Nakamura, 1983, Part 2. It was not until Vācaspati Miśra synthesized the teachings of Śaṃkara and Maṇḍana Miśra in the tenth century and the *Vivaraṇa* developed the Śāṃkara school that Śaṃkara gained wider attention (Hacker, 1964, p. 238). This may only have extended beyond their own circles around the fourteenth century when Vidyāraṇya became 'abbot' of the oldest Śāṃkara *maṭha* at Śṛṅgeri (Wilke, 1995, p. 336).

2 THE NEED FOR THE TEACHING

1 This chapter provides a basic exposition of *BSBh* 1.1.1 to help students who are new to reading Śaṃkara's commentaries. Those familiar with Śaṃkara may wish to proceed directly to Chapter 4.
2 The *antaḥkaraṇa* or inner organ organizes thoughts and feelings. For a survey of Śaṃkara's uses, see Mayeda, 1979, pp. 29–33. In *BSBh* 2.2.10, Śaṃkara criticizes Sāṃkhya for various incoherences in its position, including holding sometimes that the *antaḥkaraṇa* is threefold (as *manas, buddhi* and *ahaṃkāra*), sometimes single (reducing them all to *manas* or to *citta*, 'mind'). Each has various applications in Sāṃkhya (see Larson, 1979, pp. 182–7). Broadly, *manas* is the constructive, analytic faculty or sense-co-ordinator; *buddhi*, initially linked with effort, becomes the source of our 'fundamental strivings' that shape what we perceive as well as what we do; and *ahaṃkāra* is what gives us our sense of 'I' and 'mine'. In some places, Śaṃkara seems to reduce these all to *manas*, e.g. in *Ke Up Bh* 1.2–6. In others, he distinguishes *manas* and *buddhi* (e.g. *Upad P* 16), linking the former, for instance, with doubt and conceptual construction, the latter with certainty or effort (Mayeda, 1979, pp. 30–1). The continuity with Sāṃkhyan ideas seems clear, though Mayeda does not stress this.
3 Form, feelings, cognitions, constructing activities (such as will, joy, attention), consciousness (see Harvey, 1990, pp. 49 ff). Mahāyāna schools varied in their attitude to *skandha* analysis. Yogācāra held that all the others reduced to the *skandha* of consciousness. Madhyamaka stressed the interdependence of all causes and conditions, none of which should be seen as permanent and independent.

4 However, Ram-Prasad, 2001, p. 187, contrasts Śaṅkara's view, in which epistemic failure is the primary fault to be remedied (though it does lead to suffering), with Buddhist, particularly Yogācāra–Mādhyamika views, where suffering (*duḥkha*) is the primary fault to be remedied (though correct knowledge is the instrument).

5 *niḥśeṣasaṃsārabījāvidyā-*. Page references where necessary are given to the Motilal Banarsidass edition of the *BSBh* unless otherwise stated.

6 *sarvathāpi tv anyasyānyadharmāvabhāsatāṃ na vyabhicarati*. For Vācaspati Miśra's gloss on this passage, see Ram-Prasad, 2002, Chapter 2.

7 See, in particular, his arguments in the *Mahāsiddhānta* (long statement of the correct position) in *Śrībhāṣya* 1.1.1.

8 For example, *Bṛ Up Bh* 4.3.35 *ity āha kāruṇyāt śrutiḥ. Ka Up Bh* 1.3.14 *śrutir anukampayāha mātṛvat . . .*
Upad P 18.3 *. . . kim arthaṃ śrāvayaty evaṃ mātrivac chrutir ādṛtā ||*

9 For example Candrakīrti *Prasannapadā* on *Madhyamakakārikā* 25.3. He uses the illustration to indicate that the apparent elements (*dharma*s) that make up our lives and are characterized by defilements, intentional actions, rebirths and so on, do not exist in reality even in the *saṃsāric* condition (and cf. Diṅnāga's use, Chapter 5, n. 46).

10 *athāto brahmajijñāsā*. Clooney urges that this and the other opening *sūtra*s should not be taken alone, but read as setting the parameters of the practical structure which follows, namely that of fruitful meditation upon properly organized and underpinning upaniṣadic texts, carried out by properly qualified meditators who understand 'the ontological and cosmological context within which the meditation can be fruitful' (1993, p. 72). On the importance of the ontological and cosmo-logical context within which *brahman* is to be realized, see below, especially Chapters 5 and 6.

11 He identifies these four features explicitly in *Īśa Up Bh* Introduction and *Ka Up Bh* Introduction. He treats them implicitly in *BSBh* 1.1.1.

12 For example Eliot Deutsch: 'The exegetical dimension of Vedānta is of great interest to students of linguistics and Indian cultural history (and naturally to Indian scholars themselves), but it is of very little interest to Western students of philosophy. . . . In reconstructing Advaita Vedānta, we intend to focus on philosophical analysis at the expense of scriptural exegesis . . .' (1980, p. 5). Deutsch does recognize that the product of his reconstruction is not therefore a Vedāntic system in itself, but not that the philosophical vision is thereby diminished. This is questionable given Śaṃkara's view of the relation between scripture and reason.

13 Nonetheless for the extent to which his approach remains indebted to Pūrvamīmāṃsā, see Clooney, 1993, p. 129 f, on this passage in particular, and on knowledge and action, Ram-Prasad, 2000b.

14 For example *Bṛ Up Bh* Introduction and 1.4.7 distinguish results-orientated ritual and meditation from knowledge and clearly reject the former, the results of Vedic means being coterminous with the cycle of rebirth which is to be uprooted.

15 For example Kumārila Bhaṭṭa *Ślokavārttika* 5.16.110–111: 'A person whose aim is liberation should in that case not engage in optional or prohibited rites, but should perform the obligatory and occasional rites, wanting to avoid sin. It is known that the desired result will not accrue to the one who does not desire it and that knowledge, "This is (so)," is of use for the one who knows the self.'
mokṣārthī na pravarteta tatra kāmyaniṣiddhyoḥ nityanaimittike kuryāt pratyavāya-jihāsayā. prārthyamānaṃ phalaṃ jñānaṃ na cānicchor bhaviṣyati ātmajñe caitad astīti tajjñānam upayujyate.

16 See further Ram-Prasad, 2001, pp. 38–44.

17 *tathā brahmavijñānād api paraṃ puruṣārthaṃ darśayati "brahmavid āpnoti param" ityādiḥ.*

18 *nityānityavastuvivekaḥ, ihāmutrārthabhogavirāgaḥ, śamadamādisādhanasaṃpat, mumukṣutvaṃ ca.*

19 cf. *Ait Up Bh* Introduction, where he quotes *Jābāla Upaniṣad* 4 to this effect.

20 See also for instance the end of *Ch Up Bh* 8.12.1 for another emphasis on the *paramahaṃsaparivrājaka*, this time as the teacher. Marcaurelle argues that while physical renunciation may be appropriate for some brahmins seeking knowledge (and only brahmins may so renounce) this does not mean that Śaṃkara holds physical renunciation to be a precondition for seeking knowledge (2000, p. 74 f).

21 Biardeau notes that 'twice-born' frequently becomes collapsed to mean 'brahmin' in the *dharmaśāstra*s (Biardeau and Malamoud, 1976, p. 32, cited in Marcaurelle, 2000, p. 39 and p. 222, n. 39).

22 He glosses: 'he rushed into grief' or 'grief rushed upon him' or 'he in his grief rushed to Raikva', all of which combine the meanings of *śucaṃ* (grief) and *abhi√dru* (to rush upon) as components of *śū-dra*.

23 Marcaurelle also moves too swiftly from *āśrama* to *varṇa* in connection with this verse (Marcaurelle, 2000, p. 106 and p. 31).

24 Because within the framework of rebirth, *karma* (action) from previous lives bears fruits and generates the type of birth appropriate to the nature of actions performed, theoretically anyone may be reborn as a brahmin in some future life as a result of past *karma*.

25 Marcaurelle, 2000, throughout, and for this point, see p. 130 for instance. With his wider argument that renunciation for Śaṃkara often refers to the renunciation of agency, that physical renunciation is not a precondition for knowledge (despite the claims of those modern Advaitins who wish to reserve this for the inner circle of renunciants at Śāṃkara *maṭha*s), that actions and meditations in the correct practice of *karmayoga* (in the *Gītā* commentary in particular) can be performed both in a preparatory manner and subsequent to liberation, I am in sympathy.

26 Mayeda suggests that one reason why Śaṃkara was more rigid than the Upaniṣads is because he was a reformer 'who turned the extremely buddhisticized tradition of Vedānta towards the . . . Upaniṣadic Vedānta' and so enforced this by using brahmanical social boundaries against the Buddhists (2000, p. 23). Śaṃkara's commentaries, e.g his introduction to the *Aitareya Upaniṣad*, show a very strong preference towards brahmin renouncers, which the text does not in itself require.

27 Though it could be argued that the masculine pronoun and endings are used inclusively.

28 *"ye" kecit stryādayo 'pi "suniścitā bhaviṣyanti" cet te eva hi loke mahājñānā niratiśayatattvaviṣayajñānā ity arthaḥ.*

29 As Clooney points out, 'The Advaitins remain very much Mīmāṃsakas, constricting their audience by the demands and expectations of reading as a skilled, cultured practice . . .' (1993, p. 136).

30 *brahmāvagatir hi puruṣārthaḥ, niḥśeṣasaṃsārabījāvidyādyanarthanirvahaṇāt.*

31 *tat punar brahma prasiddham aprasiddhaṃ vā syāt. yadi prasiddhaṃ na jijñāsitavyam. athāprasiddhaṃ naiva śakyaṃ jijñāsitum iti.*

32 *evaṃ bahavo vipratipannā yuktivākyatadābhāsasamāśrayāḥ santaḥ.*

33 See Chapter 3, n. 15.

34 Ram-Prasad has suggested that 'it may equally be said that it is because *brahman* is thus-and-so (and available to reason) that the texts so describe it as such. This is not to deny the authority of text but to say how/why it is so' (personal communication, August 2002).

35 *sarvo hy ātmāstitvaṃ pratyeti, na nāham asmīti.*

3 THE SOURCE OF THE TEACHING

1 For a sophisticated discussion of the *pramāṇa*s as the methods of acquiring knowledge in the context of rational enquiry, see Ganeri, 2001, Chapter 1.

2 Those Pūrvamīmāṃsakas who followed Kumārila Bhaṭṭa.

3 'Vātsyāyana [a Nyāya commentator, *c.* AD 450] explains that the various means of knowledge have a subsidiary role here': the thesis comprises testimony, the reason inference, the example perception, the application analogical comparison (Ganeri, 2001, p. 14).

4 Śaṃkara accepted that the Veda was the source for knowledge of *dharma* as well as for knowledge of *brahman*, but that desire for the latter effaced desire for the former (cf. *Bṛ Up Bh* 2.1.20, *GBh* Introduction).

5 Fort points out that this idea is important in Śaṃkara's writings, though his use of the later term, *jīvanmukta* (liberation while living), is limited to *GBh* 6.27 (1998, Chapter 2 and p. 196, n. 2).

6 *Bṛ Up Bh* 2.1.20, p. 741 *śokamohādinivṛttiś ca pratyakṣaṃ phalaṃ brahmakatva-pratipattipāraṃparyajanitam ity avocāma.*

7 *pramāṇasya hi pramāṇatvam apramāṇatvaṃ vā pramotpādanānutpādana-nimittam.*

8 See for instance *Bṛ Up Bh* 2.1.20 (Madhavananda's translation, p. 209). Later in this section, the Ritualist argues that sense perception does contradict the Advaitin's viewpoint:

   na kevalam upaniṣado brahmaikatvaṃ pratipādayantyaḥ svārthavighātaṃ karmakāṇḍaprāmāṇyavighātaṃ ca kurvanti. pratyakṣādiniścitabhedapratipatty-arthapramāṇaiś ca virudhyante (p. 740).

   'Not only do the Upaniṣads which teach the oneness of *brahman* contradict their own meaning and the authority of the ritual section, they are also contradicted by the means of knowledge such as sense perception whose point is to establish certain difference.'

   Śaṃkara merely replies: *na, uktottaratvāt.* 'No, because of all the above.' For continuation of text, see n. 7.

9 *BS* 1.2.2 *vivakṣitaguṇopapatteś ca.* 'And because the qualities desired to be expressed are possible', i.e. Bādarāyaṇa is taken to mean that, in the passage of *śruti* under consideration (*Ch Up* 3.14), the qualities that *śruti* wants to speak of are proper to the highest *brahman* which Śaṃkara argues is the topic of the passage.

10 For instance *BSBh* 1.4.6 (discussing *Ka Up* 1.2.12): 'From this we understand that here it does indeed want to speak about the non-difference of the individual self (*jīva*) and the conscious one (*prājña*).' *tenāpi jīvaprājñayor abheda eveha vivakṣita iti gamyate* (p. 154).

   Bṛ Up Bh 2.4 Introduction (leading into the story of Yājñavalkya telling Maitreyī of his intention to renounce): '[*Śruti*] wants to enjoin renunciation as subsidiary to this knowledge of *brahman*.'
   asya brahmavidyāyā aṅgatvena saṃnyāso vidhitsitaḥ (p. 757).

   Tait Up Bh 2.8.5: 'For here what "The knower of *brahman* reaches the supreme" wants to teach is that, through understanding that, one is the supreme self.' *tadvijñānena paramātmabhāvo hy atra vivakṣito "brahmavid āpnoti param" iti* (p. 309).

   GKBh 3.3 *Śruti* speaks of manifestation from the self 'out of a desire to help the slow-minded to understand' (*mandabuddhipratipipādayiṣayā*).

11 *na hīdṛśasya śāstrasyargvedādilakṣaṇasya sarvajñaguṇānvitasya sarvajñād anyataḥ saṃbhavo 'sti.*

12 *tasmān manovṛttyupādhiparichinnaṃ manovṛttiniṣṭham ātmacaitanyam anādinidhanaṃ yajuḥśabdavācyam ātmavijñānaṃ mantrā iti. evaṃ ca nityatvopapattir vedānām. anyathā viṣayatve rūpādivad anityatvaṃ ca syāt.*

13 *tatrādvaitadarśanasampradāyakartuḥ advaitasvarūpeṇaiva namaskārārtho 'yam ādyaślokaḥ.*

14 For instance *Bṛ Up Bh* 2.5 Introduction, 2.5.15; *Ch Up Bh* 6.1.2, 6.15.2, 8.1.6, 8.7.1; *Ka Up Bh* 2.2.12; *GKBh* 3.32; *GBh* 2.21, 2.63, 8.8, 13.30, 18.17; cf. *Bṛ Up Bh* 2.4.5, 4.4.21; *Ka Up Bh* 2.3.8; *GBh* 3.41.

15 *tasmād brahmajijñāsopanyāsamukhena vedāntavākyamīmāṃsā tadavirodhi-tarkopakaraṇā niḥśreyasaprayojanā prastūyate.*

16 The hagiographies are difficult to use here. *Śaṃkara-digvijaya* presents Śaṃkara as an embodiment of Śiva, mastering Vedic learning at an early age, gaining Advaita realization and only approaching Govinda for teaching as a formality. Dazey though suggests that there is another strand to the account, which sees this as a true learning process. Dazey links Śaṃkara's own insight gained from a teacher with his insistence 'on the transmission from teacher to disciple of a great Upaniṣadic dictum as the only means to spiritual realization' (1987, p. 368).

17 *ācāryavān puruṣo veda.*

18 Both are quoted in *Upad G* 1.3; *Ke Up Bh* Introduction; *Bṛ Up Bh* 2.1.1; *Ch Up Bh* 6.14.2. See also *Upad P* 17.51; *Ch Up Bh* 7.1.3; *BSBh* 3.4.1.

19 *Ka Up Bh* 1.3.14 *"prāpya" upagamya "varān" prakṛṣṭhān ācāryāṃs tadvidas tadupadiṣṭaṃ sarvāntaram ātmānam aham asmīti "nibodhata" avagacchata.*

20 *upakramopasaṃhārāv abhyāso 'pūrvatā phalam |*
arthavādopapattī ca liṅgaṃ tātparyaniścaye ||
Quoted, without source, by van Buitenen, 1956, p. 200, n. 134.

21 Note there may be sub-topics. In *Ch Up Bh* 6.7.6, for instance, Śaṃkara indicates a closing sentence for the topic of three-fold manifestation.

22 Though in Chapter 5 we shall see Śaṃkara's more sophisticated formulation.

23 For a detailed study, see Satchidananda Murty, 1959.

24 *BSBh* 1.1.2, p. 8 *kiṃtu śrutyādayo 'nubhavādayaś ca yathāsaṃbhavam iha pramāṇam anubhavāvasānatvād bhūtavastuviṣayatvāc ca brahmajñānasya.*

25 For instance *Upad G* 2.45, 2.48, 2.51, 2.110; *Upad P* 11.10, 12.8, 16.4, 18.12–19 on proper attainment.

26 For instance *Upad P* 5.5, 12.8, 12.9, 18.104, 18.141 f, disagreeing with Vijñānavādin over the need for experiencer other than *anubhūti*, 18.200.

27 Jagadananda gives: 'The understanding of the term "Thou" in this sense is correct. The other sense different from it is due to superimposition' (1941, p. 124).

28 *tadābhāsatayā janma dhiyo 'syānubhavaḥ smṛtaḥ ||*
Though the Sanskrit here does use the genitive: '*anubhava* of that', this cannot be read to imply that 'that self' is the object of the experience (*Bṛ Up Bh* 3.4.2 makes this very clear).

29 While Śaṃkara's meaning is clear, '*anubhava*' in such contexts is hard to translate as Śaṃkara uses both noun and verb forms for that context-free consciousness that enables experience, yet is beyond it, which is to be attained yet is not an object of attainment. Ram-Prasad retains 'experience' as a translation, with the advantage of continuity with the word's use in an empirical context, while stressing its minimal use when translating *brahmānubhava* (2001, p. 171). Thinking of *anubhava* as 'being alongside', i.e. as that consciousness without which no empirical experience would be possible, yet is other than it, and is that in which the desire to know *brahman* culminates, I have opted for 'real-ization' in this context. While this is not without its own problems, it does avoid the danger of inappropriate associations with notions of personal experience.

4 THE METHODS OF THE TEACHING

1 An earlier version of this chapter was published in Suthren Hirst, 1990.

2 *Br̥ Up Bh* 2.4 Introduction, p. 757 *asyā brahmavidyāyā aṅgatvena saṃnyāso vidhitsataḥ . . .* (referring back to the fourth *brāhmaṇa* being discussed).
2.4.5 *sa [Yājñavalkya] hovācāmr̥tatvasādhanaṃ vairāgyam upadidikṣur . . .*

3 I distinguish between (i) and (ii) here to show where Śaṃkara appears to change or develop the text.

4 Śaṃkara frequently personifies scripture in such a way, notwithstanding his caution in *BSBh* 1.2.2 (cf. *Ka Up Bh* 1.3.14; *Upad P* 18.3). One's mother is said to be one's first teacher, hence the appropriateness of this personification.

5 *nanv ayam anyāya ācāryaḥ sañ śiṣyaṃ pr̥cchatīti.*

6 *evam asau vyutpādyamāno 'pi gārgyo yatraiṣa ātmābhūt prāk pratibodhād yataś caitad āgamanam "āgāt" tadubhayaṃ na vyutpede vaktuṃ vā praṣṭuṃ vā "gārgyo ha na mene" na jñātavān.*

7 *vijānann api punaḥ papracchendrābhiprāyābhivyaktaye.*

8 *Majjhimanikāya* 1.57 tr. Ñāṇamoli, 1995, p. 147. I. B. Horner's translation, Vol. 1, p. 73 f, gives parallels in *Aṅguttaranikāya* 3.323, 5.109; *Dīghanikāya* 2.293.

9 cf. the subsequent emotionally neutral example of noting different types of rice, peas and beans in a sack. Disgust, as a form of revulsion, is as much a tie as desire. The point of the meditation is detachment: 'In this way he abides contemplating the body as a body internally, externally, and both internally and externally . . . And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world. That too is how a *bhikkhu* abides contemplating the body as a body . . .'. See *Visuddhimagga* 8.42–144 for details.

10 *"sarvam" dvaitam avidyāvijr̥mbhitaṃ "duḥkham" evety "anusmr̥tya kāmabhogāt" kāmanimitto bhoga icchāviṣayas tasmād viprasr̥taṃ mano nivartayed vairāgyabhāvanayety arthaḥ.*

11 *ity āha kāruṇyāt śrutiḥ.*

12 *amr̥tatvasādhanaṃ vairāgyam upadidikṣur jāyāpatiputrādibhyo virāgam utpādayati tatsaṃnyāsāya.*

13 *na hi saṃsāraviṣayāt sādhyasādhanādibhedalakṣaṇād aviraktasyātmaikatva- jñānaviṣaye 'dhikāro 'tr̥ṣitasyeva pāne.*

14 *etad ātmavijñānaṃ pāṇḍityam . . . eṣaṇāvyutthānāvasānam eva hi tatpāṇḍityam.*

15 *eṣaṇām atiraskr̥tya na hy ātmaviṣayasya pāṇḍityasyodbhava ity. . . .*

16 See *Pr Up Bh* 4.1; *GKBh* 1.6, 3.15; *BSBh* 2.3.43; *Br̥ Up Bh* 2.1.20, 4.5.13; cf. *Upad P* 18.83.

17 For instance *BSBh* 1.3.1; *Br̥ Up Bh* 3.8.12; 4.3.21; *Upad G* 1.39.

18 *anekadr̥ṣṭāntopādānaṃ tu sukhāvabodhanārtham.*

19 *Prasannapadā* 1.1 quoting *Saṃyuttanikāya* 3.141:
phenapiṇḍopamaṃ rūpaṃ vedanā budbudopamā |
marīcisadaśī saṃjñā saṃskārāḥ kadalīnibhāḥ |
māyopamaṃ ca vijñānam uktam ādityabandhunā ||

20 Śaṃkara also explicitly considers a formal inference presuming an idealist viewpoint to be implied by *GK* 2.4 and labels the stages of the argument accordingly.

21 So, for example, Śaṃkara can, by criticizing the weaknesses in the Sāṃkhyan position, reject the Sāṃkhyan thesis that 'the *pradhāna* (mental–material principle in Sāṃkhya) acts to bring about the purpose of the *puruṣa* (principle of consciousness in Sāṃkhya)' (*BSBh* 2.2.6).
. . . ity ataḥ pradhānaṃ puruṣasyārthaṃ sādhayituṃ pravartata itīyaṃ pratijñā hīyeta.
Thibaut's translation masks both the formal claim to dismantle the thesis and the Sāṃkhyan cosmology being rejected (vol. 1, p. 372).

22 *Upad G* 2.109 Thesis simplified from: *yady evaṃ bhagavan kūṭasthanityāvagatir ātmajyotiḥsvarūpaiva svayaṃsiddhā ātmani pramāṇanirapekṣatvāt.*

Reason simplified from: *tato 'nyad acetanaṃ saṃhatyakāritvāt parārtham. yena ca sukhaduḥkhamohapratyayāvagatirūpeṇa pārārthyaṃ tenaiva svarūpeṇānātmano 'stitvaṃ nānyena rūpāntareṇa, ato nāstitvam eva paramārthataḥ.*

Example with application spelled out: *yathā hi loke rajjusarpamarīcyudakādīnāṃ tadavagativyatirekeṇābhāvo dṛṣṭaḥ, evaṃ jāgratsvapnadvaitabhāvasyāpi tadavagativyatirekeṇābhāvo yuktaḥ.*

Conclusion simplified from: *evam eva bhagavan avagater ātmajyotiṣo nairantaryabhāvāt kūṭasthanityatā advaitabhāvaś ca sarvapratyayabhedeṣv avyabhicārāt.*

23 *samāptākhyāyikā. ākhyāyikānirvṛttaṃ tv artham ākhyāyikāto 'pasṛtya svena śrutirūpeṇaivācaṣṭe 'smabhyam.*

24 Of numerous examples, see *Bṛ Up Bh* 2.1; *Ch Up Bh* 5.3.1; *Ch Up Bh* 4.1.1; *Tait Up Bh* 3.1.1; *Pr Up Bh* 1.1.

25 Merit, while the positive outcome of appropriate action, is just as much a bandit as demerit, since it is part of the world of means and ends, an ensnaring result of that attached action the seeker after liberation must eschew.

26 See Thompson and Roberts, 1960, Type No. 1287, 'Numskulls Unable to Count their own Number'.

27 See also *Upad P* 12.3, 18.170, 172–4, 187, 190, 199; *Bṛ Up Bh* 1.4.7, 1.4.15.

28 *pṛthivyādīni hy ākāśāntāni bhūtāny antarbahirbhāvena vyavasthitāni teṣāṃ yad bāhyaṃ bāhyam adhigamya adhigamya nirākurvan draṣṭuḥ sākṣātsarvāntaro 'gauṇa ātmā sarvasaṃsāradharmavinirmukto darśayitavya ity ārambhaḥ.*

29 *Ka Up Bh* 1.3.12 *sūkṣmatāpāramparyadarśanena.*

30 See also *GKBh* 1.2, where, following *GK*, Śaṃkara speaks of moving through the three states (*pāda*, literally, 'feet') of the self, waking, dreaming and deep sleep, to the fourth *pāda* beyond.

31 *tathā hi sampradāyavidāṃ vacanam* "adhyāropāpavādābhyāṃ niṣprapañcaṃ prapañcyate" *iti.*

32 For instance, for superimposition: $\sqrt{klp}$, vi$\sqrt{klp}$, adhy$\sqrt{ās}$, adhyā$\sqrt{ruh}$, pratyupa$\sqrt{sthā}$. For instance, for elimination: ni$\sqrt{vṛt}$, (prati)ni$\sqrt{sidh}$, apa$\sqrt{uh}$, pra$\sqrt{hā}$. *GBh* seems to prefer *adhyāropa* and *apavāda* e.g. 2.18, 4.18, 13.2, 13.13.

33 Comans rejects the notion that *śruti* negates fictitious superimpositions. Rather it negates superimpositions which really exist (2000, p. 469). This is partly because he does not wish to downvalue Īśvara (the Lord) as a mere fiction. With this I am in sympathy (see Chapter 6).

34 Respective examples from: *GBh* 13.16; *GBh* 13.26; *GKBh* 1.6; *Ch Up Bh* 8.12.1; *Ka Up Bh* 2.2.11; *GKBh* 2.18; *BSBh* 1.4.6.

35 *sarvaṃ hi nānātvaṃ brahmaṇi kalpitam eva* "ekadhaivānudraṣṭavyam" "neha nānāsti kiṃcana" "yatra hi dvaitam iva bhavati" "ekam evādvitīyam" *ityādivākyaśatebhyaḥ.*

36 cf. *GKBh* Introduction; *Upad G* 1.40.

5 THE CONTEXT OF THE TEACHING: THE WORLD OF NAME AND FORM

1 In another context, Śaṃkara himself implies that something is either existent or non-existent. *Ch Up Bh* 6.2.2 *keyaṃ saṃvṛtir nāma kim asāv abhāva uta bhāva iti.* (Critically to opponent): 'What is this so-called popular usage? Is it non-existence? Or existence?' (Don't pretend it can be anything else.)

2 *brahma satyaṃ jagad mithyam* |

3 The Madhyamaka distinction between *nītārtha* texts (giving direct teaching) and *neyārtha* texts (whose meaning had to be drawn out) was closely linked with the

idea of the Buddha's skilful means (*upayakauśalya*) in teaching. Śaṃkara is quite opposed to such a view (see Suthren Hirst, 1990).

4 I have argued elsewhere that Śaṃkara's subtle use of vocabulary in the *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣadbhāṣya* indicates how he carefully differentiates his view from the Madhyamaka's (Suthren Hirst, 1996).

5 cf. *Mu Up Bh* 1.2 Introduction, commenting on text's distinction between higher and lower knowledge. Though the terms *pāramārthika* and *vyāvahārika* are not used here, the descriptions of the lower knowledge involving actions and results and the higher knowledge of freedom, one without a second, are comparable with Śaṃkara's use of those terms, e.g. in *BSBh* 2.1.14 (Thibaut, Vol. 1, p. 324).

6 From a Madhyamaka point of view, *śūnyatā* teaches only that all things are empty of inherent or independent existence, being dependent on causes and conditions (see further King, 1999, pp. 119–27).

7 Śaṃkara does not sharply distinguish the concept of truth from that of reality. He uses the terms *satya* and *sat* interchangeably (see for instance his gloss of *sat* by *satyam* at the end of *Ch Up Bh* 6.2.2). This is partly because ultimate truth is not in the end a matter of propositions about reality. It simply is realization of that reality.

8 *evam ekam api brahmāpekṣitopādhisaṃbandhaṃ nirastopādhisaṃbandhaṃ copāsya-tvena jñeyatvena ca vedānteṣūpadiśyata iti pradarśayituṃ paro grantha ārabhyate.* In *BSBh* 2.1.20, Śaṃkara does tend to link passages mentioning the qualities of the supreme Lord (*parameśvara*) with meditation, emphasizing that there are also passages, such as *Ka Up* 1.3.15, in which qualities are specifically denied.

9 *BSBh* 2.3.4. cf. *BSBh* 1.1.2 and 4.1.13, where time, space and causality are specifically linked with the nature of the world as sphere of ritual.

10 *tatra yadi tāvad vidyamāno 'yaṃ prapañco dehādilakṣaṇa ādhyātmiko bāhyaś ca pṛthivyādilakṣaṇaḥ pravilāpayitavya ity ucyeta sa puruṣamātreṇāśakyaḥ pravilāpayitum iti tatpravilayopadeśo 'śakyaviṣaya eva syāt. BSBh* 3.2.9 makes it clear that the conventional experience of each individual (*ekajīvavyavahāra*) lasts so long as it is bound by limiting conditions; cf. also *GBh* 18.50: what ceases is the idea of the differentiated forms of the external world (*bāhyākārabheda-buddhinivṛtti*).

11 Discussing how the enlightened person, who is free from conceptual construction, can act in the world and teach, apparently requiring conceptual construction, the eighth-century Yogācāra-Mādhyamika Buddhist, Śāntarakṣita, says:

> In fact, he does not favour his conceptions as being [more] useful [than others']. He knows them to be without basis; he is like a magician. The magician knows that the image of some horse he has produced is not objective, and he is neither deluded by nor attached to it. (*Tattvasaṃgraha* paras 3598–9, cited in Ram-Prasad, 2000a, p. 287).

Ram-Prasad stresses: 'The magician, like his audience, does have the same perceptual experience of a horse, for the conjuring up of an image consists in just that; but he recognizes it for what it is, and hence does not commit an error about its metaphysical status' (p. 287). While Śaṃkara argues against a 'consciousness-only' based view (e.g. in *BSBh* 2.2.28), the parallels with his position are clear.

12 *ato vaiśeṣikam idaṃ saṃdhyasya māyāmātratvam uditam.*

13 For instance Gauḍapāda's *Kārikā*s; in a very different sense, in the *Gītā*; importantly, in *Brahmasūtra* 3.2.3. Śaṃkara cannot, therefore, ignore it, but downplays it as a theoretical term in comparison with 'name and form' and *avidyā* (see Hacker, 1950).

In the *Upadeśasāhasrī*, Śaṃkara mainly uses it as an illustration of the magician's magic (e.g. *Upad P* 17.26, 28, 29, 30) or for the power of the Lord in originating (even quoting *BhG* 7.14 in *Upad P* 16.35). This is extended where *māyā* is that from which a perception of difference arises (e.g. *Upad P* 19.5, 19.17), consistent with his use elsewhere and perhaps influenced by metric considerations.

14 See for instance *GBh* 13.2 (tr. Mahadeva Sastry, p. 332 f) and Ingalls, 1953.

15 Williams, 1989, p. 90 f, gives an introduction to Cittamātra (Vijñānavāda) understanding of consciousness.

16 For further details, see Ram-Prasad, 1993.

17 He may also have wished to distinguish himself more strongly from a Buddhist idealist view than in *GKBh* 4.99, where he simply relies on asserting that 'this ultimate non-dual reality can be attained through Vedānta alone':
idaṃ tu paramārthatattvam advaitaṃ vedānteṣv eva vijñeyam ity arthaḥ.

18 For instance *BSBh* 2.4.20–2. This is not surprising, however, as it is *Ch Up* 6.3 which is held to be under discussion, given the *BS*'s reference to 'the teaching on the one who makes things tripartite' (. . . *trivṛt kurvata upadeśāt, BS* 2.4.20).

19 In *Upad G*, however, Śaṃkara merely notes the order of manifestation of the five elements and does not speak of the theory of their mixing, found in *MBh* 12.244.2 (Mayeda, 1979, p. 60, n. 6).

20 *atrākāśaprabhṛtīnāṃ trayāṇām utpattyanantaram iti vaktavyaṃ śrutyantara-sāmarthyād vikalpāsambhavāc ca sṛṣṭikramasya.*

21 For instance *Bṛ Up* 1.4.7, 1.6.1, *Ch Up* 6.3.2, 8.14.1, *Mu Up* 1.1.9, 3.2.8, *Pr Up* 6.5 (on dissolution). It also occurs in *BS* 1.3.30. In *Upad G* 1.23, Śaṃkara himself links it back to a passage in *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* 3.12.7. In *BSBh* 2.1.14, he cites *Ch Up* 8.14.1, *Ch Up* 6.3.2, *Tait Ār* 3.12.7, *Śvet Up* 6.12. Importantly, in *Bṛ Up Bh* 2.5.19, which quotes *Ṛg Veda* 6.47.18, Śaṃkara implicitly shows how his own understanding that name and form is essential for making the 'form' of the unconditioned self known is grounded right back in this pronouncement of the Vedic seer. Śaṃkara does not use the phrase in its Buddhist sense of 'whole person', where *nāma* comprises the four mental *skandha*s and *rūpa* the material or bodily *skandha*.

22 Hume's 1931 footnote seems right: 'Name and form is the Sanskrit idiom for individuality.'

23 *te nāmarūpe 'vyākṛte satī vyākriyamāṇe tasmād etasmād ātmana ākāśanāmākṛtī saṃvṛtte . . . tato 'pi sthūlabhāvam āpadyamāne nāmarūpe vyākriyamāṇe vāyubhāvam āpadyete, tato py agnibhāvam, agner abhāvam, tataḥ pṛthivībhāvam. . . .*
In his explanation of the *Chāndogya* text in *BSBh* 2.4.20, Śaṃkara acknowledges that tripartition precedes particular names and forms, but here he follows *BS* 2.4.20 and indeed *Ch Up* 6.2.3f themselves.

24 cf. *BSBh* 1.1.5, p. 27 *kiṃ punas tat karma yat prāg utpatter īśvarajñānasya viṣayo bhavatīti. tattvānyatvābhyām anirvacanīye nāmarūpe avyākṛte vyācikīrṣite iti brūmaḥ.* 'What again is that object which before manifestation appears as the object of the Lord's knowledge? We say that it is the unmanifest name and form, indescribable as that (self) or as something else, which is desired to be made manifest.'

25 This is quite different from the idea of *māyā* being indeterminable as being or not being (*sadasadanirvacanīya*) characteristic of later Advaita, which should not be read back into Śaṃkara's use, as Isayeva does, for instance in translating a key passage from *BSBh* 2.1.14 (1993, p. 165).

26 The Sanskrit reads: *atra yad eva nāmarūpam "avidyā kalpitam" iti, "māyāśabdavācyam" iti ca spaṣṭam uktaṃ bhāṣye, tasyaivāvidyātvaṃ māyātvaṃ ca pañcapādikāyām uktam iti sphuṭo virodhaḥ* (Satchidanandendra, 1964, p. 10).

27 *evaṃ brahmādyā sthāvarāntā svābhāvikāvidyādidoṣavatī dharmādharmasādhanakṛtā saṃsāragatiḥ nāmarūpakarmāśrayā tad evedaṃ vyākṛtam sādhyasādhanarūpaṃ jagat prāg utpatter avyākṛtam āsīt. sa eṣa bījāṅkurādivad avidyākṛtaḥ saṃsāra ātmani kriyākārakaphalādhyāropalakṣaṇaḥ anādir ananto 'nartha ity etasmād viraktasyāvidyānivṛttaye tadviparītabrahmavidyāpratipattyarthopaniṣad ārabhyate.*

28 *nāmarūpakriyābhyo 'nyo nityamuktasvarūpavān |*
   aham ātmā paraṃ brahma cinmātro 'haṃ sadādvayaḥ ||

29 *na ca laukikapadapadārthāśrayaṇavyatirekeṇa āgamena śakyam ajñātaṃ vastvantaram avagamayitum.* cf. *BSBh* 1.1.12 Introduction, p. 35: 'Thus knowledge of the self which results in immediate release is taught by means of the specification of limiting adjuncts (*upādhi*) . . .'
   evaṃ sadyomuktikāraṇam apy ātmajñānam upādhiviśeṣadvāreṇopadiśyamānam apy . . .

30 *yadi hi nāmarūpe na vyākriyete tadā asyātmano nirupādhikaṃ rūpaṃ prajñānaghanākhyaṃ na pratikhyāyeta.*

31 cf. *BSBh* 1.4.3.

32 For instance *BSBh* 1.1.5 (Thibaut, Vol. 1, p. 50) *tattvānyatvābhyām anirvacanīya* (interpreting 'that which is that' (*tattva*) as a reference to *brahman*).

33 The verb form is a present partiple, *vikriyamāṇa*.

34 *Bṛ Up Bh* 2.4.10 *nāmarūpayor eva hi paramātmopādhibhūtayor vyākriyamāṇayoḥ salilaphenavat tattvānyatvenānirvaktavyayoḥ sarvāvasthayoḥ saṃsāratvam. . . .* 'The world of rebirth comprises all states of name and form, which are limiting adjuncts of the supreme self, and which, when manifesting, like foam from water, are not to be described as the same or as different from that . . .'

35 *samānanāmarūpatvāc cāvṛttāv apy avirodho darśanāt smṛteś ca.* 'And because of the sameness of name and form in the cycle there is no contradiction with what is seen (*śruti*) and *smṛti*.'

36 The plural *nāmarūpeṣu* is used unusually in this passage, alongside the more usual dual form.

37 cf. also *BSBh* 2.3.43, where bodies and organs (*kāryakaraṇa*), the results of past actions, are said to be dependent on name and form.

38 *na hy avidyākalpitena rūpabhedena sāvayavaṃ vastu saṃpadyate. na hi timiropahatanayanenāneka iva candramā dṛśyamāno 'neka eva bhavati. avidyākalpitena ca nāmarūpalakṣaṇena rūpabhedena vyākṛtāvyākṛtātmakena tattvānyatvābhyām anirvacanīyena brahma pariṇāmādisarvavyavahārāspadatvaṃ pratipadyate. pāramārthikena ca rūpeṇa sarvavyavahārātītam apariṇatam avatiṣṭhate. vācārambhaṇamātratvāc cāvidyākalpitasya nāmarūpabhedasyeti na niravayavatvaṃ brahmaṇaḥ kupyati. na ceyaṃ pariṇāmaśrutiḥ pariṇāmapratipādanārthā, tatpratipattau phalānavagamāt. sarvavyavahārahīnabrahmātmabhāvapratipādanārthā tv eṣā, tatpratiphalāvagamāt. "sa eṣa neti netyātmā" ityupakramyāha "abhayaṃ vai janaka prāpto 'si" iti.*

39 King, 1991, notes the necessarily complementary functions of three different types of examples in a slightly different way. He groups them as those which illustrate the world as delusory appearance; as illusory appearance; and as non-different.

40 For instance *Ch Up Bh* 6.2.1f; *BSBh* 2.3.6; *GKBh* 3.15; *BSBh* 1.4.14 *et passim*; *Bṛ Up Bh* 1.6.1 (cf. 2.1.20 on gold and iron); *Ka Up Bh* 2.3.1; *Tait Up Bh* Introduction; *Ait Up Bh* 1.1.3.

41 cf. the opponent in *Bṛ Up Bh* 1.2.1 (Madhavananda, p. 12).

42 cf. *BSBh* 1.1.1 Introduction (and *Upad G* 2.93).

43 cf. *BSBh* 2.1.18 and Śaṃkara's initial comment: 'The existence of the effect before origination and its non-difference from the cause are understood "by reasoning" "and from another scripture" (quoting *BS* 2.1.18).'

44 See especially *BSBh* 1.4.23.

45 See further Larson and Bhattacharya, 1987, pp. 65–73.

46 Śaṃkara's immediate source for this example would appear to be *GK* 2.17. He uses it, as we shall see, to establish the reality of that on which superimposition is made. Earlier Diṅnāga, a Buddhist logician of the Yogācāra school (fifth to sixth century AD), had used it to deprive both rope (substrate) and snake (superimposition or conceptual construction) of substantial reality:
rajjvāṃ sarpa iti jñānaṃ rajjudṛṣṭāv anarthakam |
tadaṃśadṛṣṭau tatrāpi sarpavad rajjuvibhramaḥ ||
(Quoted in Brückner, 1979, p. 149.)
'The cognition, "It is a snake," referring to a rope, has no object once the rope is perceived. Similarly, when its aspects are perceived, the illusion of the rope is like the snake.'

47 As Śaṃkara says elsewhere (*Upad P* 18.86), an analogy only works in some particular respects, not in a similarity of all features:
dṛṣṭadārṣṭāntatulyatvaṃ na tu sarvātmanā kvacit ||
cf. *BSBh* 3.2.20.

48 *naiṣa doṣaḥ. rajjvādyavayavebhya sarpādisaṃsthānavat buddhiparikalpitebhyaḥ sadavayavebhyo vikārasaṃsthānopapatteḥ.*

49 *BSBh* 1.4.14, p. 163; *mṛdādidṛṣṭāntaiś ca kāryasya kāraṇenābhedaṃ vadituṃ sṛṣṭyādiprapañcaḥ śrāvyata iti gamyate. tathā ca sampradāyavido vadanti*
"mṛllohavisphuliṅgādyaiḥ sṛṣṭir yā coditā 'nyathā |
upāyaḥ so 'vatārāya nāsti bhedaḥ kathaṃcana || (*GK* 3.15) *" iti.*
'It is understood that *śruti* teaches about the manifestation, which comprises origination, etc., using examples such as the clay, to speak of the non-difference of the cause and effect. Moreover this is what those who know the tradition say: "Origination taught otherwise [i.e. other than the rejection of difference referred to in *GK* 3.13–14] using clay, iron, sparks and so on is a means for making [non-difference] accessible; there is no difference whatsoever."'

50 Gauḍapāda seems to use *māyā* both as a term for the perceived manifestation (*prapañca*, e.g.1.17) and as the illusion through which the unborn appears manifest, by which the dream world too is produced (especially *GK* 3). Neither *Śvet Up* nor *BhG* use it in an illusionist way but as the marvellous power of the Lord which deludes those who cannot recognize his true nature.

51 This is obscured by Nikhilananda's translation of *GKBh* 3.23, where the Sanskrit speaks of the magician acting 'through *māyā*'.

52 For instance *GKBh* 1.6(7)

53 For instance *GBh* 13.26 Superimposition ends when a person can discriminate between the *kṣetrajña* (the 'knower of the field', *brahman*, the self) and the *kṣetra* (the 'field', all that which is superimposed on *brahman*). For then a person realizes that *kṣetra* is 'like an elephant projected by magic or something seen in a dream, like a city of celestial musicians (*māyānirmitahastisvapnadṛṣṭavastugandharva-nagarādivat*)'. See also *GBh* 2.18, 15.4, and cf. *BSBh* 2.1.1 and 2.1.9 where Śaṃkara quotes *GK* 1.16 on awakening from *māyā* in the context of the magician example.

54 For instance *GKBh* 3.27; cf. *BSBh* 2.1.28.

55 *GKBh* 3.10, 3.11, cf. 3.19. On *ajātivāda* in Gauḍapāda, including its Advaitin use of Buddhist sources and early Vedāntin critiques, see King, 1995.

56 *Bṛ Up* 2.5.19 includes this quotation from *Ṛg Veda* 6.47.18. Indra was the most popular deity for *Ṛg Veda* poets (see Brockington, 1996, p. 10 f).

57 It is significant that Śaṃkara introduces the magician example at the first use of *māyā* in the text of *GK* 3, i.e. 3.10.

58 cf. *GKBh* 3.25, 3.29.

59 See *GKBh* 3.10; cf. *Bṛ Up Bh* 2.5.19.

60 *athavā yathā vijñānavān māyāvī nirupādāna ātmānam eva ātmāntaratvenākāśena gacchantam iva nirmimīte, tathā sarvajño devaḥ sarvaśaktir mahāmāya ātmānam evātmāntaratvena jagadrūpeṇa nirmimīte iti yuktataram.*

61 This is what the opponent suggests in *GKBh* 3.15.

62 *GKBh* 3.15 *tasmād utpattyādiśrutayaḥ ātmaikatvabuddhyavatārāyaiva nānyārthāḥ kalpayituṃ yuktāḥ.*

63 *atrātmāvabodhamātrasya vivakṣitatvāt sarvo 'yam arthavāda ity adoṣaḥ.*

64 *māyāvivad vā, mahāmāyāvī devaḥ sarvajñaḥ sarvaśaktiḥ sarvam etac cakāra sukhāvabodhanapratipattyarthaṃ lokavad ākhyāyikādiprapañca iti yuktataraḥ pakṣaḥ.*

65 Given, as we argue, that Nārāyaṇa is, for Śaṃkara, the subtlest way of talking of *brahman*, as initiator of the correct teaching tradition and inner controller (see Chapters 3 and 6), it is interesting to note, in the context of our explanation of the magician example, the (*c.* third/fourth century AD) playwright Bhāsa's invocation of 'Nārāyaṇa as the stage-manager of the main plot, prologue and epilogue of the triple world' in his *Dūtaghaṭotkaca* 1.1 (cited in Jan Gonda, 1970, p. 133).

66 *na hi sṛṣṭyākhyāyikādiparijñānāt kiṃcit phalam iṣyate. ekātmyasvarūpaparijñānāt tu amṛtatvaṃ phalaṃ sarvopaniṣatprasiddham.*

67 cf. *BSBh* 2.1.18 (Thibaut, Vol. 1, p. 341). Here Śaṃkara is again trying to establish a *satkāryavāda* view against the *asatkāryavādin*. He uses the milk and curds example along with the actor and costume example (comparable to the clay–pot and magician–magic examples) to argue in turn for the non-difference of cause and effect and for the cause as the basis for all conventional experience (*vyavahāra*).

68 A good example of this can be found in *Upad P* 18.46, where Śaṃkara adduces the rope–snake example to parry an opponent's criticism of his use of the reflection analogy.

6 THE CONTEXT OF THE TEACHING: THE LORD

1 *BSBh* 1.1.11, cf. *BSBh* 3.1.1, and frequently.

2 Lott (1980, p. 122), quoting T. M. P. Mahadevan (May 1966), 'The Idea of God in Advaita', *Vedanta Kesari*.

3 We shall see below that this is incorrect.

4 *BSBh* 1.1.11, 1.3.13, 3.2.21–2, 4.3.14.

5 For instance *BSBh* 3.3.31 *saguṇāsu vidyāsu gatir arthavatī na nirguṇāyāṃ paramātmavidyāyām ity uktam.* 'It has been said that going (to the gods) only has a point in relation to meditations (*vidyā*) with qualities, not in relation to the knowledge of (or meditation on, *vidyā*) the supreme self, without qualities.' cf. *BSBh* 2.1.14, *BSBh* 3.3.1.

6 This also seems clear in *BSBh* 3.3.13, where Śaṃkara indicates that attributes such as bliss (*ānanda*) are to be taken as applying to *brahman* in all passages, for 'their purpose is simply for realization (*pratipatti*)', i.e. not for meditation, as in the cases discussed in 3.3.12.

7 In *kramamukti* (ultimate release by stages), selves who have performed successful meditations get the result of being reborn in the world of Brahmā. At the end of the world cycle, when all worlds are dissolved, these selves are collectively released. They will not be reborn when the next origination takes place.

8 And here I differ in my interpretation of the material from Malkovsky, 2001.

9 *evam avidyākṛtanāmarūpopādhyanurodhīśvaro bhavati, vyomeva ghaṭakarakādyupādhyanurodhi. sa ca svātmabhūtān eva ghaṭākāśasthānīyān avidyāpratyupasthāpitanāmarūpakṛtakāryakaraṇasaṃghātānurodhino jīvākhyān vijñānātmanaḥ*

pratiṣṭe vyavahāraviṣaye. tad evam avidyātmakopādhiparicchedāpekṣam eveśvarasy-eśvaratvaṃ sarvajñatvaṃ sarvaśaktitvaṃ ca na paramārthato vidyayāpāstasarvo-pādhisvarūpa ātmanīśitrīśitavyasarvajñatvādivyavahāra upapadyate. cf. Thibaut, Vol. 1, pp. 328–30, Gambhirananda, pp. 333–5.

10 *sarvajñasyeśvarasyātmabhūta ivāvidyākalpite nāmarūpe tattvānyatvābhyām anirvac-anīye saṃsāraprapañcabījabhūte sarvajñasyeśvarasya māyāśaktiḥ prakṛtir iti ca śrutismṛtyor abhilapyete.*

11 . . . *nityaśuddhamuktasvarūpāt sarvajñāt sarvaśakter īśvarāj janisthitipralayā nācetanāt pradhānād anyasmād vā . . .*
cf. *BSBh* 1.1.2 (Thibaut, Vol. 1, p. 19); 2.3.30.

12 cf. also *BSBh* 2.1.22 where *brahman*'s omniscience and omnipotence is discussed alongside *brahman*'s eternal freedom, immediately before a passage where the sublation of the individual's transmigratory nature and *brahman*'s creatorship (*sraṣṭṛtva*) is affirmed.

13 cf. *BSBh* 2.1.31, where the powers of the supreme *brahman*, described in *śruti*, are clearly ascribed to plurality due to *avidyā*.

14 *Bṛ Up Bh* 2.3.6. See further, Chapter 7.

15 *Bṛ Up Bh* 2.1.15, and *Upad P* 15.28–30.

16 *ācāryo brūyāt – naivaṃ somya pratipattum arhasi, pratiṣiddhatvād bhedapratipatteḥ. kathaṃ pratiṣiddhā bhedapratipattir ity ata āha – "anyo 'sāv anyo 'ham asmīti na sa veda" . . . "mṛtyoḥ sa mṛtyum āpnoti ya iha nāneva paśyati" ity evam ādyāḥ.*

17 This is partly because the disagreement with the opponent here is over the nature of the individual self.

18 In the Vedic worldview, there were three 'planes' of existence: the macrocosm (*adhidevatā* plane, 'relating to the gods'); the microcosm, the human self or sacrificer (*adhyātman* plane, 'relating to the self'); and the sacrifice (*adhiyajña* plane, 'relating to the ritual'), which bridged and constructed and provided the clue to knowledge of the other two. Thus by making the correct ritual or meditative connections between the elements of the body–mind complex and the elements of the cosmos, the individual sacrificer was enabled to attain the world appropriate to the ritual pursued.

19 See for instance *BSBh* 1.1.11, 1.3.13, 4.3.10.

20 *tad etat pratyastamitasarvopādhiviśeṣaṃ san nirañjanaṃ nirmalaṃ niṣkriyaṃ śāntam ekam advayaṃ neti netīti sarvaviśeṣāpohasaṃvedyaṃ sarvaśabdapratyayāgocaram tadatyantaviśuddhaprajñopādhisambandhena sarva-jñam īśvaram sarvasādhāraṇavyākṛtajagadbījapravartakam niyantṛtvād antaryāmi-saṃjñam bhavati. tad eva vyākṛtajagadbījabhūtabuddhyātmābhimānalakṣaṇaṃ hiraṇyagarbhasaṃjñaṃ bhavati. tad evāntaraṇḍodbhūtaprathamaśarīropādhimad virāṭprajāpatisaṃjñam bhavati. tadudbhūtāgnyādyupādhimad devatāsaṃjñaṃ bhavati. tathā viśeṣaśarīropādhiṣv api brahmādistambaparyanteṣu tat tan nāmarūpalābho brahmaṇaḥ. tad evaikaṃ sarvopādhibhedabhinnaṃ sarvaiḥ prāṇibhis tārkikaiś ca sarvaprakāreṇa jñāyate vikalpyate cānekadhā. "etam eke vadanty agniṃ manum anye prajāpatim. indram eke 'pare prāṇam apare brahma śāśvatam" ityādi smṛtiḥ.*

21 *tasmān nirupādhikasya ātmano nirupākhyatvān nirviśeṣatvād ekatvāc ca "neti neti" iti vyapadeśo bhavati. avidyākāmakarmaviśiṣṭakāryakaraṇopādhiḥ ātmā saṃsārī jīvo ucyate. nityaniratiśayajñānaśaktyupādhir ātmā 'ntaryāmīśvara ucyate. sa eva nirupādhiḥ kevalaḥ śuddhaḥ svena svabhāvenākṣaram param ucyate. tathā hiraṇya-garbhāvyākṛtadevatājātipiṇḍamanuṣyatiryakpretādikāryakaraṇopādhibhiḥ viśiṣṭaḥ tadākhyas tadrūpo bhavati . . . tasmāt upādhibhedenaiva eṣāṃ bhedo nānyathā. "ekam evādvitīyaṃ" ity avadhāraṇāt sarvopaniṣatsu.*

22 *ya īdṛgīśvaro nārāyaṇākhyaḥ. . . .*

212

23 It is beyond the scope of the present work to suggest how the Advaita tradition and Śaṃkara himself came to be so strongly associated with Śaivism later. Some key factors may be: his name (Śiva is frequently called Shankar, i.e. Śaṃkara), a desire for devotional distinction from the Vaiṣṇava schools of Rāmānuja and Madhva to complement different philosophies, a desire by a growing form of moderate Śaivism to legitimate itself through association with Śaṃkara in the hagiographies, demonizing other (non-extant?) forms of Śaiva practice.

24 For instance *BSBh* 1.2.7 (Hari), 1.2.14, 1.3.14, 3.3.9, 4.1.3; *Br̥ Up Bh* 1.3.1, 5.1.1; *Pr Up Bh* 5.2; *Ch Up Bh* 7.1.4; *Tait Up Bh* 1.8.1; *GBh* 4.24.

25 On Pūrva- and Uttaramīmāṃsaka understanding of *devatā*s ('gods') as verbal realities, see Clooney, 1988, 2000. Śaṃkara argues for the existence of deities separate from their names (verbal realities) on various grounds including: (i) that this is required so that a person making a sacrifice can imagine them appropriately and make the correct offering (see *BSBh* 1.3.32–3); (ii) because the *arthavāda* passages that describe the deities are to be taken as referring to something already existing, that is as *anuvāda*; (iii) because a word and its referent are different (*BSBh* 1.3.33).

26 *Br̥ Up Bh* 1.3.1, p. 626. (Opponent) *brahmadr̥ṣṭir eva kevalā nāsti brahmeti cet. etena pratimābrāhmaṇādiṣu viṣṇvādidevapitrādidr̥ṣṭīnāṃ tulyatā.* (Śaṃkara) *na. r̥gādiṣu pr̥thivyādidr̥ṣṭidarśanāt. vidyamānapr̥thivyādivastudr̥ṣṭīnām eva r̥gādiviṣaye kṣepadarśanāt. tasmāt tatsāmānyān nāmādiṣu brahmādidr̥ṣṭīnāṃ vidyamānabrahmādiviṣayatvasiddhiḥ. etena pratimābrāhmaṇādiṣu viṣṇvādidevapitrādibuddhīnāṃ ca satyavastuviṣayatvasiddhiḥ.*

'If it is suggested that it is the meditation on *brahman* which alone [exists] and that *brahman* does not exist, and similarly for the contemplation of Viṣṇu and so on in an image, and of the gods and forefathers in the brahmins, we reply, no. Because meditation on the *r̥c* [chant] as the earth is taught. In relation to a topic like the *r̥c*, it is seen to apply only to meditation on a thing which actually exists, like earth and so on. Therefore because of its similarity to that case, it is established that the subject of the meditation on name, etc. as *brahman*, etc. is the really existing *brahman*. By this it is also established that the subject of the contemplation of Viṣṇu in the image and of the gods and forefathers in the brahmins is a really existing object.'

27 cf. *BSBh* 1.1.20; 1.3.13 on Om; 4.3.10 on the highest place of Viṣṇu, with allusion to *Ka Up* 1.3.9.

28 *yat tat paramātmākāśaṃ purāṇaṃ khaṃ tac cakṣurādyaviṣayatvān nirālambanam aśakyaṃ grahītum iti śraddhābhaktibhyāṃ bhāvaviśeṣeṇa coṃkāre āveśayati. yathā viṣṇvaṅgāṅgitāyāṃ śilādipratimāyāṃ viṣṇum loka evam.*

29 See further Malkovsky, 2001. In particular, he notes the links between Vaiṣṇava contexts and Śaṃkara's validation of grace (e.g. pp. 386–7).

30 See Oberhammer on the two different versions of this teaching which are addressed in *BSBh* 2.2.42–3 and 2.2.45 respectively (1977–8, p. 224).

31 *GBh* Introduction, 7.1, 10.9, 10.15, 11.3.

32 *sa ca bhagavān jñānaiśvaryaśaktibalavīryatejobhiḥ sadā saṃpannaḥ triguṇātmikāṃ svāṃ māyāṃ mūlaprakr̥tiṃ vaśīkr̥tya, ajo 'vyayo bhūtānām īśvaro nityaśuddhabuddhamuktasvabhāvo 'pi san, svamāyayā dehavān iva jāta iva ca lokānugrahaṃ kurvan lakṣyate.*

33 For instance *BSBh* 1.1.1, 2.1.22, 3.2.22; *Br̥ Up Bh* 1.1.1, 1.4.7, 4.3.18, 4.4.12; *Ait Up Bh* 1.1.1; cf. *Upad P* 12.11, 13.3, 13.16, 17.80; *GBh* 7.13, 9.11.

34 *ye punar niṣkāmāḥ samyagdarśinaḥ "ananyā" apr̥thagbhūtāḥ paraṃ devam nārāyaṇam ātmatvena gatāḥ santaś "cintayanto māṃ ye janāḥ" saṃnyāsinaḥ "paryupāsate" "teṣāṃ" paramārthadarśinām . . . "yogakṣemaṃ vahāmy" prāpayāmy "aham".*

7 THE LANGUAGE OF THE TEACHING

1 Note that these are rather different from the four or so statements later identified as *mahāvākya*s ('great statements'): e.g. *tat tvam asi* (*Ch Up* 6.8.7, etc., *Sāma Veda*), *brahmāham asmi* (*aham brahmāsmi*, *Br Up* 1.4.10, *Yajur Veda*), *prajñānam ānandam brahma* (from *Āmnāyopaniṣad* in this form, cf. also *Ait Up* 3.1.3, *Ṛg Veda*, and *Br Up*), *ayam ātmā brahma* (*Māṇḍ Up* 2, *Atharva Veda*), as given together in the *Pañcīkaraṇa*. This formulaic status seems to be linked with the Daśanāmī tradition, which associates each of the four main *maṭha*s purportedly founded by Śaṃkara with one of the four Vedas and its corresponding *mahāvākya* (see Sundaresan, 2002, p. 26 for *Pañcīkaraṇa* text, plus p. 33, n. 50, and Dazey, 1993, p. 149).

2 J. J. Lipner, personal communication, July 2002.

3 For instance *BSBh* 1.2.13 (primary sense of self is Lord, i.e. not individual soul); 1.3.19 (highest *brahman* is real nature of individual); 1.4.16 (when you understand *tat tvam asi*, transmigratory nature vanishes); *Ch Up Bh* 7.24.1 (teaches identity); 8.12.1 (addressed to one in body whom self has entered to show individual self not different from highest); *Upad P* 12.5 (removes pain from witness).

4 For instance *GBh* 13.12; *BSBh* 2.1.14, 3.2.17; *Mu Up Bh* 2.1.1; *Upad P* 2, 11.12, 18.21; *BSBh* 3.2.22; *Br Up Bh* 2.3.1.

5 For instance *Br Up Bh* 1.3.2, 1.4.7, 1.4.10, 3.9.26, 4.2.4, 4.4.22, 4.5.15 and throughout.

6 For instance *BSBh* 1.2.11 (as opposed to individual self); 1.4.14 (linked with fruit of realization), cf. *Br Up Bh* 1.3.1; *Br Up Bh* 1.4.7 (realization as highest end); 1.4.10 ('*brahman*' and 'self' synonymous).

7 The teaching of *neti neti* is also implied right at the beginning of the *Brahmasūtra* commentary with Śaṃkara's classic statement about superimposition, precisely that which needs to be discriminated and removed.

8 cf. *Tait Up Bh* 2.1.1 (tr. Gambhirananda, pp. 301–2), quoting *Ch Up* 6.1.4, 'All modifications exist in name only, being supported by mere words; the clay alone is real'.

9 cf. *BSBh* 1.1.11 end and Śaṃkara's quotation of *satyam jñānam anantam brahma* at the beginning of *BSBh* 1.1.12.

10 For instance *BSBh* 1.3.8 (the real); *BSBh* 1.4.14 (the conscious). cf. *BSBh* 2.3.18 where the phrase is quoted to show that *brahman*'s consciousness is not contingent on the nature of the self, over against a Vaiśeṣika view. See also *Praśna Up Bh* 6.2, where the phrase is quoted with others to show consciousness is not changed yet appears affected by limiting adjuncts, following a rebuttal of Nyāya and Lokāyata views among others.

11 It is preceded by discussions of repetitions in meditations, along the lines of Pūrvamīmāṃsaka discussions about duplication or separation of particular rituals and results (see e.g. Kumārila's *Tantravārttika* 2.2).

12 *BSBh* 4.1.2, p. 462 *tathā tvaṃpadārtho 'pi pratyagātmā śrotā dehād ārabhya pratyagātmatayā sambhāvyamānaś caitanyaparyantatvenāvadhāritaḥ.*
'Thus the referent of the word "you" is ascertained as the inner self, the hearer, understood as being the inner self by beginning with the body (*dehād ārabhya*) [and going through the other sheaths], whose culmination is consciousness.'

By '*dehād ārabhya*', Śaṃkara may just be referring forward to the list of body, senses, *manas*, etc. he gives later in the paragraph. However, he has just quoted *Tait Up* 2.1.1, '*Brahman* is reality, consciousness, infinite', which we shall see has to be read in its wider context. In *BSBh* 1.1.17, concluding his explanation of the five

214

sheaths passage there, Śaṃkara talks quite explicitly of the 'misidentification of the self with the non-self, in the body and so on' (*dehādiṣv anātmasvātmaniścayaḥ*); the self is to be pointed out as different from these, from all the sheaths.

13 *tatra yeṣām etau padārthāvajñānasaṃśayaviparyayapratibuddhau teṣām tat tvam asīty etad vākyaṃ svārthe pramāṃ notpādayituṃ śaknoti padārthajñānapūrvakatvād vākyārthasyety atas tān pratyeṣṭavyaḥ padārthavivekaprayojanaḥ śāstrayukty-abhyāsāḥ. yadyapi ca pratipattavya ātmā niraṃśas tathāpy adhyāropitaṃ tasmin bahvaṃśatvaṃ dehendriyamanobuddhiviṣayavedanādilakṣaṇaṃ tatraikenāvadhāne-naikam aṃśam apohatyāpareṇāparam iti yujyate tatra kramavatī pratipattiḥ. tat tu pūrvarūpam evātmapratipatteḥ.*

14 Śaṃkara here refers forward to *Bṛ Up* 4, in which the story of Yājñavalkya teaching Maitreyī is found for the second time, 4.5 repeating 2.4. He quotes, 'By what should one know the knower', which in 4.5.15 is followed by Yājñavalkya's terse affirmation, 'You are taught (*anuśāsanāsi*), Maitreyī. Immortality is just this', i.e. the promise of explanation is fulfilled. cf. *BSBh* 3.2.22: It is *brahman* which is to be taught.

15 The Sanskrit gives him justification: *athāta ādeśaḥ*, 'Now therefore the teaching'. The echo in the opening of the *Brahmasūtra* (*athāto brahmajijñāsā*) which starts a new teaching distinguished from the world of ends and means, of gross and subtle superimposition, could hardly have been lost on Śaṃkara, especially as it is Maitreyī's desire to know which frames this passage.

16 *Bṛ Up Bh* 2.3.6 *yasmin na kaścid viśeṣo 'sti nāma vā rūpaṃ vā karma vā bhedo vā jātir vā guṇo vā*. cf. also *Ke Up Bh* 1.3.

17 Throughout Chapters 7 and 8, I shall use the term 'to denote' as a translation of √*vac* in the relatively strong sense of 'to designate a referent through the primary meaning of a term'. I take this to exclude the connotations of a term, those additional elements of meaning that become attached to it in particular contexts. By contrast with 'denote', I shall use the term 'to indicate' as a translation of √*lakṣ*, which I shall argue is central to Śaṃkara's understanding of how language can bear upon (indicate) *brahman* without objectifying it by denotation.

18 *yadā punaḥ svarūpam eva nirdidikṣitam bhavati nirastasarvopādhiviśeṣaṃ, tadā na śakyate kenacid api prakāreṇa nirdeṣṭum.*

19 cf. *Ait Up Bh* Introduction, p. 325.
. . . *iṣṭayogam aniṣṭaviyogam vātmanaḥ prayojanaṃ paśyaṃs tadupāyārthī yo bhavati sa niyogasya viṣayo dṛṣṭo loke, na tu tadviparītaniyogāviṣayabrahmātmatvadarśī.*
'Restrictive injunctions apply to the one who regards the purpose of the self as acquiring what is desired and abstaining from what is not desired and so seeks the means for doing that, as is seen in everyday experience [*loke*], not to the one who sees that *brahman* is the self which is quite other than that, to whom restrictive injunctions do not apply.'
    Where there is no desire there is no scope for injunction or further action. Where there is knowledge of *brahman* as self, there is no desire/dislike (cf. also *Upad P* 18.221 f).

20 *ātmany evāvasthitā prajñā bhavati*. I have argued elsewhere (Suthren Hirst, 1996) that Śaṃkara selects the term, *prajñā*, so loaded with significance for Mahāyāna Buddhists, to emphasize that it is in Advaita that true understanding (and compassion) are found.

21 And as Alston, somewhat surprisingly following Madhavananda's translation without comment, appears to accept (Alston, 1990, p. 376, n. 1 to *Upad P* 18.198, his numbering).

22 That the *neti neti* text is principally a teaching method is confirmed in *BSBh* 3.2.22, the commentary's discussion of the *Bṛ Up* 2.3.6 text. Rejecting a *śūnyavāda*

position, Śaṃkara draws on *Tait Up* 2.9.1 to argue that this does not indicate a void either but a method of teaching:

pratipādanaprakrīyā tv eṣā "yato vāco nivartante aprāpya manasā saha" iti.

' "From which words along with the mind turn back without reaching it": this is a method of teaching/making known.'

23 Śaṃkara has a long discussion on this that includes the rejection of *jñānakarma-samuccaya* (the combination of knowledge and meditative action) in *Tait Up Bh* 1.11.4.

24 *Tait Up Bh* 2.1.1, p. 282 *"brahmavid āpnoti param" iti vākyaṃ sūtrabhūtaṃ sarvasya vallyarthasya.* 'The sentence, "The knower of *brahman* attains the highest", is the thread of the whole meaning of the section.'

25 *Tait Up Bh* 2.8.5, p. 311 *sarvasyaivāsya prakaraṇasyānandavallyarthasya saṃ-kṣepataḥ prakāśanāyaiṣa mantro bhavati.*

'In conclusion, to make clear the meaning of the *Ānandavallī* (second section), indeed of the whole topic, there is this *mantra*: ["From which words . . . turn back" (2.9.1)].' Determining the topic or context (*prakaraṇa*) is an important part of Mīmāṃsā exegesis:

MS 3.3.14 *śrutiliṅgavākyaprakaraṇasthānasamākhyānāṃ samavāye pāradaur-balyam arthaviprakarṣāt.*

'Among "direct assertion", "indicative power", "syntactical connection", "context", "place" and "name" – that which follows is weaker than that which precedes – because it is more remote from the final objective' (Jha tr., 1933, *Shabara-Bhāṣya*, with text of *Mīmāṃsā-sūtra*s, p. 449).

26 *yato yasmān nirvikalpāt yathoktalakṣaṇāt advayānandād ātmano. . . .*

Since no words or thoughts apply to the self, *nirvikalpa* is to be read as 'without conceptual construction', as in its Buddhist use. Biardeau, however, points out that Śaṃkara's use of *vikalpa* is often more akin to the Pūrvamīmāṃsā sense, in relation to possible 'options' for enjoined rituals (1959, p. 88). Perhaps simultaneously, then, Śaṃkara indicates the transcendence of all Pūrvamīmāṃsā goals (over which fear may linger because by definition heaven and so on are only to be enjoyed after this life) in the non-dual understanding.

27 *yasmād apratyayaviṣayāt anabhidheyād adṛśyādiviśeṣaṇāt. . . .*

28 'The negative control *anantam* does not permit a straightforward empirical understanding of the terms *satyam* and *jñānam* – *brahman* transcends that; nevertheless their empirical content does provide some positive purchase, projected by *anantam* into a purified, trans-empirical if systematically elusive insight' (Lipner, 1997, pp. 311–12).

29 Biardeau is, of course, aware of such statements in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*. This is one reason why she thinks it to be an earlier text, with a negative position from which Śaṃkara moved on.

30 *"brahmavid āpnoti param" ity anena vākyena vedyatayā sūtritasya brahmaṇo 'nirdhāritasvarūpaviśeṣasya sarvato vyāvṛttasvarūpaviśeṣasamarpaṇasamarthasya lakṣaṇasyābhidhānena svarūpanirdhāraṇāyāviśeṣeṇa coktavedasya brahmaṇo vakṣyamāṇalakṣaṇasya viśeṣeṇa pratyagātmatayā ananyarūpeṇa vijñeyatvāya, brahmavidyāphalaṃ ca brahmavido yatparabrahmaprāptilakṣaṇam uktaṃ, sa sarvātmabhāvaḥ sarvasaṃsāradharmātītabrahmasvarūpatvam eva nānyat ity etatpradarśanāya caiṣā ṛg udāhiyate – "tad eṣā 'bhyuktā" iti.* 'And this *Ṛg*, "Here is a verse uttering that," is quoted:

(i) To ascertain the nature (of *brahman*) by laying down a definition capable of making known (*brahman*'s) specific nature which is ever free (from specifications), a definition which will (now) specify the nature of *brahman* which

was not yet ascertained when it was briefly mentioned as that which was to be known, in the sentence, "The knower of *brahman* attains the highest";

(ii) To make known the *brahman* spoken of as to be known in its non-different form as the inner self without specification, by specifying the definition we have just mentioned;

(iii) To make clear that the result of the knowledge of *brahman* for the one who knows *brahman*, a result which is characterized as attaining the highest *brahman*, is none other than being the self of all, which is indeed the nature of *brahman*, beyond all the characteristics of transmigratory existence.'

31 Rāmānuja, of course, does think this explanation aberrant and argues that language as a *pramāṇa* is permanently differentiated and can yield knowledge only of differentiated knowables, not least in a sentence of this kind in which the grammatical co-ordination works to apply several different attributes to a single substantive (*Śrī Bhāṣya* 1.1.1, *Mahāsiddhānta*). For extracts of his main arguments, see Radhakrishnan and Moore (eds), 1957, pp. 543 ff.

32 The standard definition of 'reality' in Indian philosophy, and precisely what led Madhyamaka thinkers to reject the notion of inherently existing reality as incoherent, on the grounds that everything comprises necessarily changing causes and conditions.

33 *evaṃ satyādiśabdā itaretarasannidhānād anyonyaniyamyaniyāmakāḥ santaḥ satyādiśabdavācyāt tannivartakā brahmaṇo, lakṣaṇārthāś ca bhavantīti.*

34 In the context of discussing scriptural language, that is *śabda*, as the source for knowledge of *brahman*, Biardeau quotes *BSBh* 2.2.28:
yaddhi pratyakṣādīnām anyatamenāpi pramāṇenopalabhyate tat sambhavati. yat tu na kenacid api pramāṇenopalabhyate tan na sambhavati.
'For that which is cognized by any valid means of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) whatever, perception and so on, exists. That which is not cognized by any valid means of knowledge at all does not exist.'

She comments: 'L'existence des choses pour le philosophe hindoue est directement liée aux moyens de connaissance valide' (1959, p. 85, n. 8). While Śaṃkara makes this statement in an argument about the existence of the external world against the Vijñānavādin (Consciousness Only) Buddhist, it could be taken as also referring obliquely to *brahman*, supporting the general view that a *pramāṇa* does not bear on the non-existent.

The Pūrvamīmāṃsā charge may run deeper than this, however. In *Tantravārttika* II.1.1c, the *Bhāvārthādhikaraṇa*, Kumārila uses the skyflower as the example of something which can never be brought about as the result of a Vedic injunction (see tr. Jha, 1924, p. 477; cf. Sureśvara *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣadbhāṣyavārttika*, *Sambandhavārttika* 630:
saṃbhāvyamānasiddher hi kāryatā matā |
vyomatatpuṣpayor na syāt siddhātyantāprasiddhayoḥ ||
'For something [such as sacrifice] can be thought of as *kārya*, [i.e. enjoined to be brought about], if it is capable of being established [brought into being], not the ether which is already established nor the skyflower which is absolutely non-existent.'

Śaṃkara's fictive opponent may then use it as a symptom of vacuity in this strong sense, scripture as invalid in an Advaitin construction, because incapable of bringing about its desired end.

35 Later Advaitins explained *satyaṃ jñānam anantaṃ brahma* and *tat tvam asi* in terms of *jahadajahallakṣaṇā*, that is, *lakṣaṇā* where part of the meaning is dropped, part retained. Sara Grant bases her explanation of Śaṃkara on *tat tvam asi* on the similar notion of *bhāgalakṣaṇā* (partial *lakṣaṇā*), drawing support from the (later) *Vākyavṛtti* (1999, pp. 143 ff).

36 For instance Rāmānuja's explanation of the *kaivalyārthin* ('one who aims at knowledge of the *kevalātman*, pure self') in his commentary on *BhG* 7.28.

37 *siddhād evāham ity asmād yuṣmaddharmo niṣidhyate |*
rajjvām ivāhidhīr yuktyā tat tvam itāyādiśāsanaiḥ ||

38 *ābhāso yatra tatraiva śabdāḥ pratyagdṛśim sthitāḥ |*
lakṣayeyur na sākṣāt tam abhidadhyuḥ kathamcana ||

39 Note that he holds it to be scripturally given and sustained by reason (18.43), though no clear scriptural source can be found. cf. *Ch Up Bh* 6.3.2 Śaṃkara comments on the Upaniṣad's statement that 'that deity', the self, 'entered' into the three *deva*s (fire, earth and food, glosses Śaṃkara) 'by the living self' (*anena jīvena ātmanā*): 'For what is called the living self is merely a reflection of the deity. Born from contact with the elements such as the intellect (*buddhi*) alone, the 'entering' is like in a mirror, a reflection of the person (*puruṣa*, true self), like (a reflection) of the sun, etc. in water and so on.'
p. 513 *jīvo hi nāma devatāyā ābhāsamātram. buddhyādibhūtamātrāsaṃsargajanitaḥ, ādarśe iva praviṣṭaḥ puruṣapratibimbo jalādiṣv iva ca sūryādīnām.*

The status of reflection as an analogy, rather than as a technical explanation, could not be made more clear. For this reason, Aleaz's section, 'Jīvātman is the reflection of the Consciousness', is confusing for it does not draw any distinction between description and analogy, even while quoting multiple passages in which the analogical function is clear (Aleaz, 1996, pp. 151–4).

For a clear exposition of the way in which the *Vivaraṇa* (commentary on the *Pañcapādikā*) took what was an analogy in Śaṃkara and defended it as a theory (*pratibimbavāda*) against the *avacchedavāda* (teaching that the self was a 'limitation' rather than a 'reflection' of *brahman*), see Alston's summary of Satchidanandendra (Alston, 2000, pp. 99–100, based on Satchidanandendra, ET 1989, paras 244–5).

40 *caitanyābhāsatā buddher ātmanas tatsvarūpatā |*
syāc cet tam jñānaśabdaiś ca vedaḥ śāstīti yujyate ||
Śaṃkara's choice of verb (*śāsti*) is important. The Veda acts as *śāstra*, as authoritative teaching for the self, in using words for 'knowledge'. It is not just that it 'implies' the self (Jagadananda); it is more than 'referring' to it (cf. Alston). Mayeda's translation preserves this key methodological and pedagogical point.

41 *ātmābhāsas tu liṅvācyo dhātvarthaś ca dhiyaḥ kriyā |*
ubhayam cāvivekena jānātīty ucyate mṛṣā ||

42 *upalabdhiḥ svayamjyotir dṛśiḥ pratyaksad akriyaḥ |*
sākṣāt sarvāntaraḥ sākṣī cetā nityo 'guṇo 'dvayaḥ ||
'Awareness, the self-luminous, the seer, the inner reality, actionless, the one immediate within all, the witness, the one giving consciousness, eternal, without qualities, non-dual', referring to the *ātman* which remains after negation by *neti neti*. cf. *Ch Up* 6.2.1 'This was being/the real (*sad*) alone, my dear, in the beginning, one only without a second. . . .'

43 *anvayavyatirekoktiḥ padārthasmaraṇāya tu |*
smṛtyabhāve na vākyārtho jñātum śakyo hi kenacit ||
'What is known as the method of conjunction and disjunction is (used) for recollecting the meanings of the words. For if these are not recollected, the sentence-meaning cannot be understood by anyone.'

Śaṃkara subscribes to the Bhāṭṭa understanding of sentence-meaning (i.e. *abhidhānavāda*, that sentence-meaning arises from the recollected word-meanings of the individual words) rather than to the Prābhākara understanding (i.e. *anvitābhidhānavāda*, that the sentence itself generates the meaning, since the words

only have meaning insofar as they are connected with one another in a sentence and specifically with the action enjoined). See Kunjunni Raja, 1963, Chapter 5.

This process is, of course, grounded in the preliminary attitudinal and epistemological preparation which we noted earlier (Chapters 2 and 4).

44 Śaṃkara's allusion is to *Rāmāyaṇa, Uttara Kāṇḍa* 110.8–12 (reference from Alston, 1990, p. 320).

45 *anvayavyatirekau hi padārthasya padasya ca |*
syād etad aham ity atra yuktir evāvadhāraṇe ||
'For "conjunction and disjunction" between a word and its referent is indeed the method-of-reasoning (*yukti*) in this case for ascertaining (the meaning of) this I.'

Śaṃkara refers to 'this I' as that whose meaning needs ascertaining by *anvaya-vyatireka*. In the context of the previous verses, where it is the discrimination of the self and non-self which is in question, it is clear that the need is to disentangle the enduring 'I' from the rest, so that the word 'I' can be correctly understood.

46 Lipner's nice translation of '*niṣṭhā*'.

47 *ahaṃśabdasya yā niṣṭhā jyotiṣi pratyagātmani |*
saivoktā sad asīty evaṃ phalaṃ tatra vimuktatā ||

48 Śaṃkara's target here appears to be those Vedāntins, such as Maṇḍana Miśra, who took such a view, not simply the Pūrvamīmāṃsakas whose work influenced such Vedāntins. He refers to *prasaṃkhyāna*s in 18.12 and 18.17. Alston's reference (1990, p. 324) is unfortunately confusing, since he attributes the *Naiṣkarmyasiddhi* of Sureśvara to Maṇḍana Miśra. Though the two are equated in some of the hagiographical literature, modern scholarship rejects the view that they are the same person (see Thrasher, 1993, Appendix A).

49 *nātmābhāsatvasiddhiś ced ātmano grahaṇāt pṛthak |*
mukhādes tu pṛthaksiddhir iha tv anyonyasaṃśrayaḥ ||
'If establishing that there is a reflection of the self is not separate from the cognition/notion (literally, 'grasping') of the self, whereas establishing of the face, etc. (i.e. reflection) is separate, then here there is (vicious) mutual dependence.'

50 *prathanaṃ grahanaṃ siddhiḥ pratyayānām ihānyataḥ |*
āparokṣyāt tad evoktam anumānaṃ pradīpavat ||
'Mental modifications are presented, grasped and guaranteed by that which is other than them and is directly known (i.e. the self). This alone is the inference made, whose substantiating example is the lamp.' Here Śaṃkara advocates an independent inference, which he needs to counter the opponent's challenge of vicious dependence. Ultimately, though, for Śaṃkara, it is rooted in *śruti* (cf. Chapter 4).

51 *śabdenaiva pramāṇena nivṛttiś ced ihocyate |*
adhyakṣasyāprasiddhatvāc chūnyataiva prasajyate ||
The Madhyamaka vocabulary of *śūnyatā* (absence of inherent existence, but for Śaṃkara, voidness) and *pra√sañj* (to result in, particularly from an argument leading to absurdity, the only goal of Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka reasoning) is surely not incidental.

52 With Alston, 'the bare "I"', i.e. that 'I' which is the *asmad*, free from superimposition of *yuṣmad* (18.4). Or 'I alone', equivalent to 'I the ever free' (cf. 18.179).

53 *apohena*. Śaṃkara surely uses the term of Buddhists in Diṅnāga's school on purpose. While rejecting their theory of definition by negation (*apoha*), he cheekily affirms that the true self is known through the negation of inappropriate notions from the word 'you'/'I'. For a critique of their theory of *apoha*, see Matilal, 1986, pp. 398–403.

54 *tattvamasyādivākyeṣu tvaṃpadārthāvivekataḥ |*
vyajyate naiva vākyārtho nityamukto 'ham ity ataḥ ||

anvayavyatirekoktis tadvivekāya nānyathā |
tvaṃpadārthaviveke hi pāṇāv arpitavilvavat ||
vākyārtho vyajyate caivaṃ kevalo 'haṃpadārthataḥ |
duḥkhīty etadapohena pratyagātmaviniścayāt ||

55 *tacchabdaḥ pratyagātmārthas tacchabdārthas tvamas tathā ||*

56 *nirduḥkhavācinā yogāt tvaṃśabdasya tadarthatā ||*
pratyagātmābhidhānena tacchabdasya yutes tathā |
daśamas tvam asīty evaṃ vākyaṃ syāt pratyagātmani ||

57 *svārthasya hy aprahāṇena viśiṣṭārthasamarpakau |*
pratyagātmāvagatyantau nānyo 'rtho 'rthād virodhy ataḥ ||

58 As Śabara (perhaps first century AD) states the principle: *viśiṣṭārthasaṃpratyayaś ca vākyārthaḥ*, 'sentence meaning is the cognition of a qualified object' (*Śabara-bhāṣya* 96, l.8 f on *Mīmāṃsāsūtra* 1.1.7.25). Since words have a general referent in their respective *ākṛti*s, it is their combination in the sentence, the way they particularize each other, which enables them to refer to a particular entity. Kumārila later explains this as a process of exclusion (cf. D'Sa, 1980, p. 101, and further p. 173).

59 See *Tantra Vārttika* II.1.1c *Bhāvārthādhikaraṇa*. A complex analysis leads Kumārila to the view that experts in *bhāvanā* explain *bhāvanā* as 'the action of the person instigating, or bringing into existence that object which is the nominative of the Action "to be" ' (tr. Jha, 1924, p. 478).
Tantravārttika 2.1, p. 344:
tena bhūteṣu kartṛtvaṃ pratipannasya vastunaḥ |
prayojakakriyām āhur bhāvanām bhāvanāvidaḥ ||
This follows from his view that to bring something into existence is what underlies all verbs of action and that the Vedic language itself engenders the necessary action. cf. *Tantravārttika* 2.1, pp. 351–2:
tatra yad audāsīnyapracyutimātreṇa parispandarūpaṃ nirūpyate sā bhāvanā. ye tu tadanurañjanasamarthāḥ kartṛkarmagatā viśeṣas te tasyā eva karaṇetikartavyatāṃ-śayor niviśante . . . dhātvarthasāmānyaṃ nāma yat karmaśabdenābhidhīyate viśeṣaṇabhāvāc ca yāgādayo bhāvanāviśeṣa ity ucyante. . . .
'That which takes the form of getting going (*parispanda*), in the mere moving away from inactivity, is what is called the *bhāvanā*. The particularisers, relating to the agent and the object (of the action), which are capable of giving colour to that (*bhāvanā*), enter into (a relation with) it as the instrument (of the action) or as what is to be done (the process of the action) . . . .The generic denotation of the verbal root is expressed by the verb and, due to the existence of particularisers, the sacrifice etc are said to particularise the *bhāvanā* ("urge to action", "bringing to be").'

60 *Codanā* is 'the verbal force expressive of purpose and leading to action', which underlies all particular *vidhi*s or injunctions (Clooney, 1990, p. 139). In a verse which explains that the injunctive ending of the verb is not sufficient in itself to enjoin action, but that other words must supply its requirements for the 'what', 'by what' and 'how' of the action enjoined, Kumārila concludes:
Ślokavārttika 2.3 *tena pravartakaṃ vākyaṃ śāstre 'smiṃś codano ucyate ||*
'Hence in this system the *sentence* which *urges* [to action] is called "Codanā" [Injunction]' (*Śloka Vārttika* II.3 on *MS* 1.1.2, tr. Jha, 1907, p. 21, his emphases).
As D'Sa puts it, primarily in relation to the earlier Śabara's view: 'What is worthy of our attention is that the "cry", the "urge", the "demand", the "exigency" (*bhāvanā*) expressed in verbs like *yajeta* ["let him sacrifice"] corresponds to the "urge", the "desire" (*kāmaḥ*), etc. for Svargaḥ ["heaven"] in any man. . . . Thus the merit of the *bhāvanā* doctrine lies in the fact that it locates the imperatives, that is,

it finds their locus not in a source extrinsic to man but in his very being . . .' (1980, pp. 103–4).

61 In that Kumārila accepts that liberation is the end of embodiment, not a state that can be brought about, for that too would have to end, there are clear parallels with Śaṃkara's understanding of liberation. However, they disagree over the role of knowledge (see Ram-Prasad, 2001, Chapter 1, on the Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsā view and Chapter 4 on Advaita). Śaṃkara criticizes Kumārila's view of liberation through performance of obligatory rituals and avoidance of proscribed ones as incoherent (*BSBh* 4.3.14, *Br Up Bh* 1.4.7; see Chapter 2).

62 The standard translation suggests that '*tat*' removes from '*tvam*' 'being a sufferer' and '*tvam*' removes from '*tat*' 'not being the inner Self' (Mayeda, 18.195; Alston, 18.197; Jagadananda, 18.197). Lipner has a persuasive interpretation of the Sanskrit, followed here (2000, pp. 62–3). However, Śaṃkara emphasizes that the words act *mutually* to yield their meaning and it should be noted that Sureśvara takes a position which has influenced the other translations:

Naiṣkarmyasiddhi 3.10

nirduḥkhitvaṃ tvamarthasya tadarthena viśeṣaṇāt |
pratyaktā ca tadarthasya tvampadenāsya saṃnidheḥ ||

'The meaning of "you" is "being a non-sufferer" because it is qualified by the meaning of "that", and the meaning of "that" is "being immediate" because of its proximity to the word "you".'

63 *tacchabdaḥ pratyagātmārthas tacchabdārthas tvamas tathā ||*
duḥkhitvāpratyagātmatvaṃ vārayetām ubhāv api |
evaṃ ca netinetyartham gamayetām parasparam ||
evaṃ tat tvam asīty asya gamyamāne phale katham |
apramāṇatvam asyoktvā kriyāpekṣatvam ucyate ||

64 *svasaṃvedyatvaparyāyaḥ svapramāṇaka iṣyatām |*
nivrttāv ahamaḥ siddhaḥ svātmano 'nubhavaś ca naḥ ||
drśir evānubhūyeta svenaivānubhavātmanā |
tadābhāsatayā janma dhiyo 'syānubhavaḥ smrtaḥ ||

65 Hence, Mayeda's reading '*svasaṃvedyatva*' (for Śaṃkara here, 'directly knowable to itself') seems preferable to '*svayaṃvedyatva*' (the usual Vedāntin term for 'directly knowable to itself') which Mayeda notes and Alston adopts. '*Svasaṃved-yatva*' is the term preferred by Buddhists such as Diṅnāga to convey their view that when there is an awareness of blue there is also an awareness of that awareness (cf. Matilal, 1986, p. 44). Śaṃkara seems to be claiming here that the Advaitin under-standing of what it is to be 'self-validating' gives the best interpretation of what it is to be the awareness given in awareness, i.e. directly knowable to itself.

8 THE END OF THE TEACHING

1 For an extended discussion of the pedagogical structure of *Upad P* 18, see Suthren Hirst, 2003.

2 *ato aśeṣopadravabījasyājñānasya nivṛttyarthaṃ vidhūtasarvopādhiviśeṣātmadarśan-ārtham idam ārabhyate "brahmavid āpnoti param" ityādi.*

3 *yasya* [i.e. *brahma paraṃ . . . yatprakṛtaṃ satyajñānānantalakṣaṇaṃ*] *ca pratipatty-arthaṃ pañcānnādimayāḥ kośā upanyastāḥ. . . .*

4 *adhunākhyāyikāṃ copasaṃhṛtya śrutiḥ svena vacanenākhyāyikānirvṛttam artham ācaṣṭe. . . .*

5 Śaṃkara does not subscribe to the view of the later Bhāmatī school, which held that contemplation was needed to convert verbal knowledge into realization because this would imply accomplishment of the goal by human effort. The views

of the Vivaraṇa school that liberating cognition comes directly from the texts is closer to his own. On these schools, see Ram-Prasad, 2001, pp. 196–209.

6 *sa hi puruṣa iha vidyayā āntaratamaṃ brahma saṃkrāmayitum iṣṭas tasya ca bāhyākāraviśeṣeṣv anātmasvātmabhāvitā buddhir anālambya viśeṣaṃ kaṃcit sahasā ānantaratamapratyagātmaviṣayā nirālambanā ca kartum aśakyeti dṛṣṭaśarīrātmasāmānyakalpanayā śākhācandranidarśanavadantaḥ praveśayann āha "tasyedam eva śiraḥ".*

7 *annamayādibhya ānandamayāntebhya ātmabhyo 'bhyantaratamaṃ brahma vidyayā pratyagātmatvena didarśayiṣu śāstram avidyākṛtapañcakośāpanayanena . . . prastauti. . . .*

8 *asti tad ekam avidyākalpitasya dvaitasyāvasānabhūtam advaitaṃ brahma pratiṣṭhā puccham.*

9 *tasmāt "satyaṃ jñānam anantaṃ brahma" iti yathoktalakṣaṇātmapratipattyartham eva bahubhavanasargapraveśarasalābhābhayasaṃkramaṇādi parikalpyate brahmaṇi sarvavyavahāraviṣaye, na tu paramārthato nirvikalpe brahmaṇi kaścid api vikalpa upapadyate. tam etaṃ nirvikalpam ātmānam evaṃ krameṇopasaṃkramya viditvā "na vibheti kutaścana".*

10 *bahuvacanaṃ tu sāmarthyaprāptapraśnāntaropekṣayā ghaṭate.*

11 *api ca yadā "tattvam asi" ity evaṃjātīyakenābhedanirdeśenābhedaḥ pratibodhito bhavaty apagataṃ bhavati tadā jīvasya saṃsāritvaṃ brahmanaś ca sraṣṭṛtvam. . . .*

12 The view that scripture comprises 'a single passage' with a single meaning: the non-dual *brahman*.

13 *caitanyaprakāśātmakatvam uktam.* Note that my translation is different from Thibaut's. Thibaut assumes a description of its nature. I assume a way of speaking which acts as a teaching method.

14 *athavā brahmaiva rūpavat pratiṣidhyate taddhi vāṅmanasātītatvād asambhāvyamāna-sadbhāvaṃ pratiṣedhārham. na tu rūpaprapañcaḥ pratyakṣādigocaratvāt pratiṣedhārhaḥ.*

15 In the end, the difference between my position and Lipner's is very small, his pushing the grammatical exegesis to its limits (and so endangering non-duality, though Lipner now stresses that the dialectic between the positive and negative explanations of language safeguards this and can engender the leap of insight), mine pushing the pedagogical understanding of non-duality (and so endangering linguistic purchase, though I argue strongly that the directionality of scriptural teaching safeguards this in the end). Herein is the Advaitin's dilemma.

16 In his *Tantravārttika*, *Bhāvārthādhikaraṇa*, Kumārila uses the method of conjunction and disjunction (*anvayavyatireka*) to argue the case that it is the verb ending (which indicates the imperative, e.g. *-eta* in *yajeta*, 'Let him sacrifice') that expresses the *bhāvanā* (the urge to action), since the two (the ending and the urge to act) always occur together (p. 348, l. 18 f). It is perhaps not incidental that here too a grammatical form (the verb ending) goes hand in hand with a process in the one who hears (an urge to action). For Śaṃkara, it is the words in grammatical co-ordination with one another that go hand in hand with the process of discarding superimposition.

17 . . ."*tat tvam asi*" "*ahaṃ brahmāsmi*" "*ayam ātmā brahma*" *ityevamādīnāṃ vākyānāṃ brahmātmaikatvavastupratipādanaparaḥ padasamanvayaḥ pīḍyeta. . . .*

18 *aviṣayatve brahmaṇaḥ śāstrayonitvānupapattir iti cet.* (The opponent quotes *BS* 1.1.3 here, implying that Śaṃkara's interpretation of the *Sūtra*s is failing at the outset.)

19 *na. avidyākalpitabhedanivṛttiparatvāc chāstrasya. na hi śāstram idaṃtayā viṣayabhūtaṃ brahma pratipipādayiṣati. kiṃ tarhi, pratyagātmatvenāviṣayatayā pratipādayad avidyākalpitaṃ vedyaveditṛvedanādibhedam apanayati.*

20 *ato 'vidyākalpitasaṃsāritvanivartanena nityamuktātmasvarūpasamarpaṇān na mokṣasyānityatvadoṣaḥ.*

21 *ātmavastusvarūpasamarpakair eva vākyaiḥ "tat tvam asi" ityādibhiḥ śravaṇakāla eva.* . . .

22 *sarvato vyāvṛttasvarūpaviśeṣasamarpaṇasamarthasya lakṣaṇasya* . . . , as we saw in Chapter 7.

23 *svārthasya hy aprahāṇena viśiṣṭārthasamarpakau |*
   pratyagātmāvagatyantau . . .

24 For instance *Bṛ Up Bh* 1.4.7, 1.4.15.

25 *pratyakṣādyabhāve śruter apy abhāvaprasaṅga iti cet. na. iṣṭatvāt. "atra pitā 'pitā bhavati" ity upakramya "vedā avedāḥ"* (*Bṛ Up* 4.3.22) *iti vacanād iṣyata evāsmābhiḥ śruter apy abhāvaḥ prabodhe.*

26 Though in his actual commentary on *Bṛ Up* 4.3.22 and e.g. *BSBh* 2.1.14, Śaṃkara interprets the phrase as meaning that the injunctions and prohibitions relating to ritual action are irrelevant for the one who knows.

27 *na* . . . *pramāṇaprameyavyavahāraḥ saṃbhavati.*

28 That is, the Veda. See Mahadeva Sastry, tr. p. 79, and by implication, Satchidanandendra, ET 1989, pp. 62–3, since he quotes this passage in a section on 'How the Veda is the final means of knowledge'.

29 *pramātṛtvaṃ hy ātmano nivartayaty antyaṃ pramāṇaṃ nivartayad eva cāpramāṇī bhavati svapnakālapramāṇam iva.*

30 That this problem had to be faced in later Advaita is clear from Sarvajñātman's defence of *jahadajahallakṣaṇā* in his *Pañcaprakriyā* Chapter 1. Having stipulated the three types of *lakṣaṇā*, of which *jahadajahallakṣaṇā* (where part of the meaning is dropped, part retained) is relevant to *tat tvam asi*, etc., he continues:

   na caivaṃ mantavyam – lakṣaṇayāpy ātmano bodhyatve karmatvaprasaṅga iti, a[vidyā]dhyāropitātaddharmavinivartakatvāt śāstrasya. śāstraṃ hi pratyagātmani avidyādhyāropitam ataddharmaṃ nivartayaty eva kevalam, na tu taṃ karmīkaroti; ataḥ "yato vāco nivartante" ityādivirodho 'pi nāsty eva. aupaniṣadatvaviśeṣaṇam api pratyagātmanaḥ śāstrasya tadviṣayāvidyānivartakatvena karmatvābhāve 'py upapadyata eva (Kocmarek (ed.), 1985, p. 128, ll. 18–21).

   'And it should not be thought that because the self is made known through *lakṣaṇā* that this leads to the undesirable conclusion that it is an object, because scripture removes the superimposed qualities which do not belong to it. For scripture only removes the qualities which do not belong to it and are superimposed on the inner self by misconception (*avidyā*), but it does not make it into an object. Therefore there is no contradiction with what is said in "From where words turn back" (*Tait Up* 2.9.1). Indeed it is proper to specify the inner self as that which is taught in the Upaniṣads, because scripture removes the misconception concerning the self (*tadviṣaya*), although it is not an object (*karmatva*).'

   Sarvajñātman plays with the terms, '*karma*', both the grammatical object of a sentence and the objectivization of the self that is denied, and '*viṣaya*', the self as the subject or concern of *avidyā*. He affirms as Śaṃkara does (in *BSBh* 1.1.4) that the self is not an object of knowledge nor is made such by scripture. Sarvajñātman goes on to state that the person who seeks liberation should therefore discard the primary meaning (*mukhyavṛtti*) and resort to either *lakṣaṇā* or *guṇavṛtti* (secondary meaning), using *anvayavyatireka* (the method of conjunction and disjunction). 'I' is associated with the notion of duality (of breath, body, etc.), '*brahman*' with non-immediacy. Because of this contradiction between their primary senses, 'the adjuncts (*upādhi*) are to be removed in both cases, and two pure referents indicated (*lakṣyete*)'.

Pañcaprakriyā Chapter 2 . . . *ubhayatra upādhiparityāgaḥ kriyate, śuddhau padārthau ca lakṣyete* (Kocmarek (ed.), 1985, p. 129, ll. 8–9).

　　As in *BSBh* 4.1.2, both turn out to indicate non-dual consciousness, but the terms are now used within the framework of *jahadajahallakṣaṇā*, with part (*bhāga*) of the meaning removed, part indicated. In the end, this seems to skirt the actual problem of objectivizing by emphasizing the result of using language in this way, namely, the removal of superimposition, which is liberation.

31　Imagine a graph with a curve gradually moving towards an axis. This is an asymptote. It gets infinitely nearer and nearer and nearer to the axis but never ever quite touches it. So I suggest, scriptural language can move the pupil nearer and nearer to an understanding of *brahman* until the point at which it discloses the 'axis' ever beyond.

32　Though simply belonging to a modern Advaitin tradition does not solve the issue, for assumptions and methods have changed widely and diversely in Advaita between Śaṃkara's time and the present day.

33　Note that in *Ch Up Bh* 6.3.2, where Śaṃkara uses the reflection analogy to illuminate the self's 'entering' origination, he makes an opponent suggest that the unreality of the reflection casts doubts on the reality of the self. Śaṃkara's reply shows the satisfactoriness of this from an Advaitin point of view in that the reflection is unreal, but not that which is reflected.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Aleaz, K. P. (1996) *The Relevance of Relation in Śaṅkara's Advaita Vedānta*, Delhi: Kant Publications.

Alston, A. J. (tr.) (1971) *The Realisation of the Absolute: The* 'Naiṣkarmya Siddhi' *of Śrī Sureśvara* (with Sanskrit in roman), London: Shanti Sadan, second edition.

——(1980a) *Śaṃkara on the Absolute: a Śaṃkara Source-book*, Vol. 1, London: Shanti Sadan.

——(1980b) *Śaṃkara on the Creation: a Śaṃkara Source-book*, Vol. 2, London: Shanti Sadan.

——(1989a) *Śaṃkara on Discipleship: a Śaṃkara Source-book*, Vol. 5, London: Shanti Sadan.

——(1989b) *Śaṃkara on Enlightenment: a Śaṃkara Source-book*, Vol. 6, London: Shanti Sadan.

——(1989c) *Śaṃkara on Rival Views: a Śaṃkara Source-book*, Vol. 4, London: Shanti Sadan.

——(tr.) (1990) *The Thousand Teachings* (Upadeśasāhasrī) *of Śrī Śaṃkarācārya*, London: Shanti Sadan.

——(2000) 'Śaṃkara in East and West today', in B. J. Malkovsky (ed.), *New Perspectives on Advaita Vedānta: essays in commemoration of Professor Richard De Smet, SJ*, Leiden: Brill, pp. 84–108.

Anandasivam, R. (1990) 'South India and China: early contacts', in H. M. Nayak and B. R. Gopal (eds), *South Indian Studies*, Dr T. V. Mahalingam Commemoration Volume, Mysore: Geetha Book House, pp. 369–88.

Antarkar, W. R. (1972) 'Saṅkṣepa Śaṅkara Jaya of Mādhavācārya or Śaṅkara Digvijaya of Śrī Vidyāraṇyamuni', *Journal of the University of Bombay* 41: 1–23.

Bader, J. (1990) *Meditation in Śaṅkara's Vedānta*, New Delhi: Aditya Prakashan.

——(2000) *Conquest of the Four Quarters: Traditional Accounts of the Life of Śaṅkara*, New Delhi: Aditya Prakashan.

Balasubramanian, R. (ed. and tr.) (1988) *Naiṣkarmyasiddhi of Sureśvara*, edited with introduction, English translation, annotation and indices, Madras: Radhakrishnan Institute for Advanced Study in Philosophy, University of Madras.

Bartley, C. J. (1986) 'Interpreting "*satyaṃ jñānam anantaṃ brahma*"', in N. J. Allen, R. F. Gombrich, T. Raychaudhuri and G. Rizvi (eds), *Oxford University Papers on India*, Vol. 1, part 1, Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 103–15.

Biardeau, M. (1957) 'La définition dans la penseé indienne', *Journal Asiatique* 245: 377–84.

—— (1959) 'Quelques réflections sur l'apophatisme de Śaṅkara', *Indo–Iranian Journal* 3: 81–101.

—— (tr.) (1969) *La Philosophie de Maṇḍana Miśra vue à partir de la* Brahmasiddhi, Paris: École Française d'Extrême-Orient.

Biardeau, M. and C. Malamoud (1976) *Le Sacrifice dans l'Inde Ancienne*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.

Biderman, S. (1978) 'Śaṅkara and the Buddhists', *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 6: 405–13.

—— (1982) 'A "constitutive" God – an Indian suggestion', *Philosophy East and West* 32: 425–37.

Brockington, J. (1996) *The Sacred Thread: Hinduism in its Continuity and Discontinuity*, second edition, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Brooks, D. R. (1992) *Auspicious Wisdom: The Texts and Traditions of Śrīvidyā Śākta Tantrism in South India*, Albany: State University of New York Press.

Brückner, H. (1979) *Zum Beweisverfahren Śaṃkaras: eine Untersuchung der Form und Funktion von* dṛṣṭānta*s im Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣadbhāṣya und im Chāndogo-paniṣadbhāṣya des Śaṃkara Bhagavatpāda*, Berlin: Reimer.

Candrakīrti, *Mūlamadhyamakakārikās (Mādhyamikasūtras) de Nāgārjuna avec la* Prasannapadā (*Commentaire de Candrakīrti*), Louis de la Vallée Poussin (ed.), St Petersburg: L'Académie imp. des sciences, 1913.

Cardona, G. (1967–8) '*Anvaya* and *vyatireka* in Indian grammar', *Adyar Library Bulletin* 31–2: 313–52.

—— (1981) 'On Reasoning from *anvaya* and *vyatireka* in Early Advaita', in D. Malvania and N. J. Shah (eds), *Studies in Indian Philosophy*, Memorial Volume for Sukhalji Sanghvi, Ahmedabad: 1981, pp. 79–104.

Cenkner, W. (1983) *A Tradition of Teachers: Śaṅkara and the Jagadgurus Today*, Columbia: South Asia Books.

—— (1992) 'The Sankaracarya of Kanci and the Kamaksi Temple as Ritual Center', in R. B. Williams (ed.), *A Sacred Thread: Modern Transmission of Hindu Traditions in India and Abroad*, Chambersburg, Pennsylvania: Anima Publications, pp. 52–67.

Champakalakshmi, R. (1978) 'Religious conflict in the Tamil country: a reappraisal of epigraphic evidence', *Journal of the Epigraphic Society of India* 5: 69–81.

—— (1989) 'Religion and social change in Tamil Nadu (*c.* AD 600–1300)', in N. N. Bhattacharyya (ed), *Medieval Bhakti Movements in India*, Śrī Caitanya Quincentenary Commemoration Volume, New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, pp. 162–73.

—— (1996a) *Trade, Ideology and Urbanization: South India 300 BC to AD 1300*, Delhi: Oxford University Press.

—— (1996b) 'From devotion and dissent to dominance: the *bhakti* of the Tamil Āḷvārs and Nāyanārs', in R. Champakalakshmi and S. Gopal (eds), *Tradition, Dissent and Ideology: Essays in Honour of Romila Thapar*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 135–63.

Chandrasekharendra Sarasvati (ET 1995) *Hindu Dharma: The Universal Way of Life*, Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan.

Chattopadhyaya, B. (1997) *The Making of Early Medieval India*, Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Chemparathy, G. (1979) 'A Discussion of the Early Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas on the Nature of Īśvara', *Bhāratīya Vidyā* 39: 31–8.

Clooney, Francis X. (1988) '*Devatādhikaraṇa*: A Theological Debate in the Mīmāṃsā and Vedānta Traditions', *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 16: 277–98.

——(1990) *Thinking Ritually: Rediscovering the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā of Jaimini*, Vienna: Brill.

——(1991) 'Binding the Text: Vedānta as Philosophy and Commentary', in J. R. Timm (ed.), *Texts in Context: Traditional Hermeneutics in South Asia*, Albany: State University of New York Press, pp. 47–68.

——(1993) *Theology after Vedānta: An Experiment in Comparative Theology*, Albany: State University of New York Press.

——(1996) *Seeing Through Texts: Doing Theology Among the Srivaisnavas of South India*, Albany: State University of New York Press.

——(2000) 'Śaṃkara's Theological Realism: The Meaning and Usefulness of Gods (*devatā*) in the *Uttara Mīmāṃsā Sūtra Bhāṣya*', in B. J. Malkovsky (ed.), *New Perspectives on Advaita Vedānta: Essays in Commemoration of Professor Richard De Smet, SJ*, Leiden: Brill, pp. 30–50.

Comans, M. (ed. and tr.) (1996) *Extracting the Essence of the Śruti: The* Śrutisārasamuddharaṇam *of Toṭakācārya*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.

——(2000) *The Method of Early Advaita Vedānta: A Study of Gauḍapāda, Śaṅkara, Sureśvara and Padmapāda*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.

Dazey, W. (1987) 'The Daśanāmī Order and the Monastic Life', unpublished PhD thesis, University of California, Santa Barbara.

——(1993) 'The Role of *bhakti* in the Daśanāmī Order', in K. Werner (ed.), *Love Divine: Studies in* bhakti *and Devotional Mysticism*, London: Curzon Press, pp. 147–72.

De Smet, R. V. (1953) 'The Theological Method of Śaṃkara', unpublished PhD thesis, Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome.

——(1970) 'Śaṅkara and Aquinas on Creation', *Indian Philosophical Annual* 6: 112–18.

——(1989) 'Radhakrishnan's interpretation of Sankara', in G. Parthasarathi and D. P. Chattopadhyaya (eds), *Radhakrishnan: Centenary Volume*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 53–70.

Deussen, P. (ET 1912) *The System of the Vedānta According to Bādarāyaṇa's* Brahma-sūtra*s and Çaṅkara's Commentary Thereon, Set Forth as a Compendium of the Dogmatics of Brahmanism from the Standpoint of Çaṅkara*, tr. C. Johnston, Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Co.

Deutsch, E. (1980) *Advaita Vedānta: A Philosophical Reconstruction*, Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, first published 1969.

Doherty, B. (1979) 'The Path to Liberation: Śaṅkara, Metaphysician, Mystic and Teacher', unpublished PhD thesis, Fordham University, New York.

D'Sa, F. X. (1980) *Śabdaprāmāṇyam in Śabara and Kumārila*, Vienna: Gerold & Co.

Flood, G. (1998) 'Sacred Writings', in P. Bowen (ed.), *Themes and Issues in Hinduism*, London: Cassell, pp. 132–60.

Forsthoefel, T. A. (2002) *Knowing Beyond Knowledge: Epistemologies of Religious Experience in Classical and Modern Advaita*, Aldershot: Ashgate.

Fort, Andrew O. (1992): Review of L. K. L. Srivastava (1990) *Advaitic Concept of Jīvanmukti*, Delhi: Bharatiya Vidya Prakashan, *Religious Studies Review* 18.2 (April 1992): 95–9.

——(1998) *Jīvanmukti in Transformation: Embodied Liberation in Advaita and Neo-Vedanta*, Albany: State University of New York Press.

Gambhirananda (tr.) (1957–8) *Eight Upaniṣads*, 2 vols, Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, reprint 1972–3.

——(tr.) (1977) *Brahmasūtra-Bhāṣya of Śrī Śaṅkarācārya*, third edition, Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama.

——(tr.) (1983) *Chāndogya Upaniṣad with the Commentary of Śrī Śaṅkarācārya*, Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama

Ganeri, J. (2001) *Philosophy in Classical India*, London: Routledge.

Gonda, J. (1970) *Viṣṇuism and Śivaism: A Comparison*, London: Athlone Press.

Gopal, S. (1989) *Radhakrishnan: A Biography*, Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Grant, S. (1999) *Śaṅkarācārya's Concept of Relation*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.

Gupta, B. and W. C. Wilcox (1984) ' "*Tat tvam asi*": An Important Identity Statement or a Mere Tautology?', *Philosophy East and West* 34.1: 85–94.

Gussner, R. (1973) 'Hymns of Praise: A Textual Critical Analysis of Selected Vedāntic Stotras Attributed to Śaṅkara with Reference to the Question of Authenticity', unpublished PhD thesis, Harvard University.

——(1977) 'Śaṅkara 's *Crest Jewel of Discrimination*: A Stylometric Approach to the Question of Authorship', *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 4: 265–78.

Hacker, P. (1950) 'Eigentümlichkeiten der Lehre und Terminologie Śaṅkaras: Avidyā, Nāmarūpa, Māyā, Īśvara', *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 100: 246–86. [ET available in Halbfass, 1995, below.]

——(1951) *Untersüchungen über Texte des frühen Advaitavāda 1. Die Schüler Śaṅkaras*, Wiesbaden: Steiner in Komm.

——(1964) 'Zur Geschichte und Beurteilung des Hinduismus', *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung* 59.5/6: 231–45 (*Kleine Schriften*, pp. 476–83).

——(1965) 'Relations of Early Advaitins to Vaiṣṇavism', *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Süd- und Ostasiens* 9: 147–54 (*Kleine Schriften*, pp. 205–12).

——(1968–9) 'Śaṅkara der Yogin und Śaṅkara der Advaitin. Einige Beobachtungen', *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Süd- und Ostasiens* 12–13: 119–48 (*Kleine Schriften*, pp. 213–42).

——(1972) 'Notes on the Māṇḍūkyopaniṣad and Śaṅkara 's *Āgamaśāstravivaraṇa*', in J. Ensink and P. Gaeffke (eds), *India Maior*. Congratulation Volume Presented to J. Gonda, Leiden: Brill (*Kleine Schriften*, pp. 252–69).

——(1978) *Kleine Schriften*, L. Schmithausen (ed), Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag Gmbh.

——(1978b, first ed. 1947) 'Śaṅkarācārya and Śaṅkarabhagavatpāda: Preliminary Remarks Concerning the Authorship Problem', originally published in *New Indian Antiquary* 9: 1–12, rev. ed. in *Kleine Schriften*, pp. 41–58.

Halbfass, W. (ET 1988) *India and Europe*, Albany: State University of New York Press; German language edition (1981), Basel: Schwabe & Co.

——(1991) *Tradition and Reflection: Explorations in Indian Thought*, Albany: State University of New York Press.

——(1995) *Philology and Confrontation: Paul Hacker on Traditional and Modern Vedānta*, Albany: State University of New York Press.

Harvey, Peter (1990) *An Introduction to Buddhism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hume, R. E. (tr.) (1931) *The Thirteen Principal Upanishads*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ingalls, D. H. H. (1952) 'The Study of Śaṃkarācārya', *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute* 33: 1–14.

——(1953) 'Śaṃkara on the Question: Whose is *avidyā*?', *Philosophy East and West* 3: 69–72.

——(1954) 'Śaṃkara's Arguments Against the Buddhists', *Philosophy East and West* 3.4: 291–306.

Isayeva, N. (1993) *Shankara and Indian Philosophy*, Albany: State University of New York Press.

Jacob, G. A. (ed.) (1894) *The Vedāntasāra of Sadānanda, Together with the Commentaries of Nṛisiñhasarasvatī and Rāmatīrtha*, edited with notes and indices, Bombay: T. Jivaji.

Jagadananda (tr.) (1941) *Upadeśasāhasrī Gadyapadyabhāgadvayam: A Thousand Teachings in Two Parts – Prose and Poetry – of Srī Sankarāchārya*, translated into English with explanatory notes, Mylapore, Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math.

Jha, Ganganatha (tr.) (1907) *Ślokavārttika Translated from the Original Sanskrit with Extracts from the Commentaries of Sucarita Misra (The* Kāśika) *and Partha Sarathi Misra (The* Nyāyaratnākāra), Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal.

——(tr.) (1924) *Tantravārttika: A Commentary on Śabara's Bhāṣya on the Pūrvamīmāṃsā Sūtras of Jaimini*, 2 vols, Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, reprint 1998, Delhi: Pilgrims Book Pvt Ltd.

——(tr.) (1933–45) *Shabara-Bhāṣya*, 3 vols plus Index, Gaekwad's Oriental Series Vols 66, 70, 73, plus 103, Baroda: Oriental Institute.

King, R. (1991) 'Brahman and the World: Immanence and Transcendence in Advaita Vedānta: A Comparative Perspective', *Scottish Journal of Religious Studies* 12: 107–26.

——(1995) *Early Advaita Vedānta and Buddhism: The Mahāyāna Context of the Gauḍapādīya-kārikā*, Albany: State University of New York Press.

——(1999) *Indian Philosophy: An Introduction to Hindu and Buddhist Thought*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Kocmarek, Ivan (ed. and tr.) (1985) *Language and Release: Sarvajñātman's* Pañcakriyā, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.

Kumārila Bhaṭṭa, *The Mīmāṃsāślokavārtika with the Commentary Kāśika of Sucaritamiśra*, K. Sambasiva Sastri (ed.) (V. A. Ramaswami Sastri for Vol. 150), Trivandrum Sanskrit Series, Vols 90, 99, 150, Trivandrum: Government Press, 1926, 1929, 1943.

——*The Tantravārtika: A Gloss on Śabara Svāmī's Commentary on the Mīmāṃsā Sūtras by Bhaṭṭa Kumārila*, Gangadhara Sastri (ed.), Benares Sanskrit Series, Benares: Braj B. Das & Co., 1903.

Kunjunni Raja, K. (1963) *Indian Theories of Meaning*, Madras: The Adyar Library and Research Centre.

Kuppuswamy, A. (1972) *Srī Bhagavatpāda Śaṅkarācārya*, Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series, Vol. 89, Varanasi: Chowkhamba.

Larson, G. J. (1979) *Classical Sāṃkhya: An Interpretation of its History and Meaning*, second revised edition, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.

Larson, G. J. and R. S. Bhattacharya (1987) *Sāṃkhya: a Dualist Tradition in Indian Philosophy*, *Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies*, Vol. 4, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.

Lipner, J. J. (1986) *The Face of Truth: A Study of Meaning and Metaphysics in the Vedāntic Theology of Rāmānuja*, Basingstoke, Macmillan.

——(1989) 'Śaṃkara on Metaphor with Reference to *Gītā* 13.12–18', in R. W. Perrett (ed.), *Indian Philosophy of Religion*, Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, pp. 167–81.

——(1994) *Hindus: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*, London: Routledge.

——(1997) 'Śaṅkara on *satyaṃ jñānam anantaṃ brahma*', in P. Bilimoria and J. N. Mohanty (eds), *Relativism, Suffering and Beyond: Essays in Memory of Bimal K Matilal*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 301–18.

——(2000) 'The Self of Being and the Being of Self: Śaṃkara on "That you are" (*tat tvam asi*)' in B. J. Malkovsky (ed.), *New Perspectives on Advaita Vedānta: Essays in Commemoration of Professor Richard De Smet, SJ*, Leiden: Brill, pp. 51–69.

Lorenzen, D. (1983) 'The Life of Śaṅkarācārya', in F. W. Clothey and J. B. Long (eds), *Experiencing Śiva: Encounters with a Hindu Deity*, New Delhi: Manohar, pp. 155–75.

Lott, E. (1980) *Vedāntic Approaches to God*, Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Madhava, *Śrīmacchaṃkaradigvijayaḥ*, Vinayaka Ganesha Apate (ed.), A.S.S. 22, third edition, Poona, 1932.

Madhavananda (tr.) (1975) *The Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad, with the Commentary of Śaṅkarācārya*, fifth edition, Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama.

Madugula, I. S. (1985) *The Ācārya: Śaṅkara of Kāladī: A Story*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, reprint 1991.

Mahadevan, T. M. P. (1968) *Preceptors of Advaita*, Secunderabad: Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Sankara Mandir.

——(1977) *Ramaṇa Maharshi: the Sage of Aruṇācala*, London: George Allen & Unwin.

——(tr.) (1980) *The Hymns of Śaṅkara*, revised edition, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.

——(*c.* 1985) *Superimposition in Advaita Vedānta*, New Delhi: Sterling.

Mahadeva Sastry, A. (tr.) (1897) *The Bhagavad Gita, with the Commentary of Sri Sankaracharya*, Madras: private publication, corrected Samata edition, 1979.

Mahalingam, T. V. (1969) *Kañcīpuram in Early South Indian History*, London: Asia Publishing House.

Mahendravarman, *Mattavilāsa Prahasana* (*'The Farce of Drunken Sport'*) *of King Mahendravikramavarma Pallava*, ed. and tr. from the Sanskrit and Prakrit by Michael Lockwood and A. Vishnu Bhat, Madras, 1981.

Malkovsky, B. J. (2000) 'Śaṃkara on Divine Grace', in B. J. Malkovsky (ed.), *New Perspectives on Advaita Vedānta: Essays in Commemoration of Professor Richard De Smet, SJ*, Leiden: Brill, pp. 70–83.

——(2001) *The Role of Divine Grace in the Soteriology of Śaṃkarācārya*, Leiden: Brill.

Marcaurelle, R. (2000) *Freedom through Inner Renunciation: Śaṅkara's Philosophy in a New Light*, Albany: State University of New York Press.

Matilal, B. K. (1977) *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika*, History of Indian Literature, J. Gonda (ed.), Vol. 4, Fascicule 2, Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz.

——(1980) 'Ignorance or Misperception: A Note on *avidyā* in Buddhism', in A. Bareau *et al.* (eds), *Buddhist Studies in Honour of Walpola Rahula*, London: Gordon Fraser, pp. 154–64.

——(1986) *Perception: An Essay on Classical Indian Theories of Knowledge*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Maximilien, G. (1975) 'Le langage et l'*ātman* d'après *USP* 18. 1. *Lakṣaṇa*', *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Süd-Asiens* 19: 117–33.

——(1976) 'Le langage et l'*ātman* d'après *USP* 18. 2. L'interprétation de "*tattvamasi*"', *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Süd-Asiens* 20: 125–39.

Mayeda, S. (1965a) 'The Authenticity of the *Bhagavadgītābhāṣya* Ascribed to Śaṅkara', *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Süd- und Ost-Asiens* 9: 155–97.

——(1965b) 'The Authenticity of the *Upadeśasāhasrī* Ascribed to Śaṅkara', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 85: 178–96.

——(1967) 'On Śaṅkara's Authorship of the *Kenopaniṣadbhāṣya*', *Indo–Iranian Journal* 10: 33–55.

——(1967–8) 'On the Author of the *Māṇḍūkyopaniṣad* and the *Gauḍapādīya-Bhāṣya*', *Adyar Library Bulletin* 31–2: 73–94.

——(tr.) (1979) *A Thousand Teachings: The* Upadeśasāhasrī *of Śaṅkara*, translated with an introduction and notes, Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press.

——(2000) 'Śaṅkara and Buddhism', in B. J. Malkovsky (ed.), *New Perspectives on Advaita Vedānta: Essays in Commemoration of Professor Richard De Smet, SJ*, Leiden: Brill, pp. 18–29.

Minakshi, C. (1977) *Administration and Social Life under the Pallavas*, Madras: University of Madras.

Misra, A. P. (1967) *The Development and Place of* Bhakti *in Śāṅkara-Vedānta*, Allahabad: Leader Press.

Modi, P. M. (1956) *A Critique of the Brahmasūtra (III.2.11–IV) with Reference to Śaṅkarācārya's Commentary*, 2 vols, Baroda: private publication.

Mohanty, J. N. (1992) *Reason and Tradition in Indian Thought: An Essay on the Nature of Indian Philosophical Thinking*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Myers, M. W. (1998) 'Śaṅkarācārya and *ānanda*', *Philosophy East and West* 48.4: 553–67.

Nair, K. M. (1990) 'Political history of Kerala', in H. M. Nayak and B. R. Gopal (eds), *South Indian Studies*, Dr T. V. Mahalingam Commemoration Volume, Mysore: Geetha Book House, pp. 115–29.

Nakamura, H. (ET 1983) *A History of Early Vedānta Philosophy*, 2 parts, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.

Ñāṇamoli (tr.) (1995) *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya*, translation edited and revised by Bhikkhu Bodhi, Boston: Wisdom Publications.

Nandi, R. N. (1973) *Religious Institutions and Cults in the Deccan c. AD 600–AD 1000*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.

Narayana Sastri, T. S. (1916) *The Age of Sankara*, Madras: B. G. Paul & Co.

Nikhilananda (tr.) (1975) *Self-Knowledge: An English Translation of Śaṅkarācārya's* Ātmabodha *with Notes, Comments and Introduction*, Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math.

——(tr.) (1974) *The Māṇḍūkyopaniṣad, with Gauḍapāda's* Kārikā *and Śaṅkara's Commentary*, sixth edition, Mysore: Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama.

Nilakanta Sastri, K. A. (1976) *A History of South India from Prehistoric Times to the Fall of Vijayanagar*, fourth edition, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

—— (1990) 'Political history of Tamilnadu', in H. M. Nayak and B. R. Gopal (eds), *South Indian Studies*, Dr. T. V. Mahalingam Commemoration Volume, Mysore: Geetha Book House, pp. 130–46.

Oberhammer, G. (1977–8) 'An Unknown Source in Śaṅkara's Refutation of the Pāñcarātra', *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute* 58–9: 221–33.

Olivelle, P. (tr.) (1996) *Upaniṣads*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Otto, R. (1932) *Mysticism East and West: A Comparative Analysis of the Nature of Mysticism*, London: Macmillan.

Padmapāda, *Pañcapādikā of Śrī Padmapādācārya* (with five commentaries), S. Srirama Sastri and S. R. Krishnamurthi Sastri (eds), Madras: Madras Government Oriental Series Vol. 155, 1958.

Pande, G. C. (1994) *Life and Thought of Śaṅkarācārya*, Motilal Banarsidass: Delhi.

Pathak, K. B. (1882) 'The Date of Śaṃkarāchārya', *Indian Antiquary* 11: 174–5.

Piantelli, M. (1974a) *Śaṅkara e la rinascita del Brāhmanesimo*, Editrice Esperienze: Fossano.

—— (1974b) '*Krama-mukti*: A Few Notes', *Indologica Taurinensia* 2: 259–78.

Potter, K. H. (ed.) (1977) *Indian Metaphysics and Epistemology: The Tradition of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika up to Gaṅgeśa*, Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies, Vol. 2, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

—— (ed.) (1981) *Advaita Vedānta up to Śaṃkara and his Pupils, Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies*, Vol. 3, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

—— (ed.) (1995) *Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies: Bibliography*, third revised edition, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.

Radhakrishnan, S. (1927) *The Hindu View of Life*, London: George Allen & Unwin.

—— (1929) *Indian Philosophy*, revised edition, 2 vols, London: George Allen & Unwin.

—— (1932) *An Idealist View of Life*, London: George Allen & Unwin.

—— (1933) *East and West in Religion*, London: George Allen & Unwin.

—— (tr.) (1948) *The Bhagavadgītā: With an Introductory Essay, Sanskrit Text, English Translation and Notes*, London: George Allen & Unwin.

Radhakrishnan, S. and C. A. Moore (eds) (1957) *A Sourcebook in Indian Philosophy*, Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, reprint 1973.

Rajasekhara, S. (1985) *Early Chalukya Art at Aihole*, New Delhi: Vikas.

Ramachandran, T. P. (1969) *The Concept of the* Vyāvahārika *in Advaita Vedānta*, Madras: University of Madras.

Rama Rao Pappu, S. S. (ed.) (1988) *Perspectives on Vedānta: Essays in Honor of Professor P. T. Raju*, Leiden: Brill.

Rambachan, A. (1991) *Accomplishing the Accomplished: The* Vedas *as a Source of Valid Knowledge in Śaṅkara*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

Ram-Prasad, C. (1993) 'Dreams and Reality: The Śaṅkarite Critique of Vijñānavāda', *Philosophy East and West* 43: 405–55.

—— (2000a) 'Conceptuality in Question: Teaching and Pure Cognition in Yogācāra-Madhyamaka', *Religious Studies* 36: 277–91.

—— (2000b) 'Knowledge and Action I: Means to the Human End in Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsā and Advaita Vedānta', *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 28: 1–24.

—— (2001) *Knowledge and Liberation in Classical Indian Thought*, Basingstoke: Palgrave.

—— (2002) *Advaita Epistemology and Metaphysics: An Outline of Indian Non-realism*, London: RoutledgeCurzon.

Roebuck, Valerie J. (tr.) (2004) *The Upaniṣads*, Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Rukmani, T. S. (1998) 'The *Yogasūtrabhāṣyavivaraṇa* is not a Work of Śaṅkarācārya the Author of the *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya*', *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 26: 263–74.

Śaṃkara, *Aitareyopaniṣat: Ānandagirikṛtaṭīkāsaṃvalitaśāṃkarabhāṣyasametā*, A.S.S. pandits (ed.), A.S.S. 11, second edition, Poona, 1898.

—— *Bhagavadgītābhāṣya*, in *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā with commentaries*, Wasudev Laxman Shastri Pansikar (ed.), Delhi: Chaukhamba Sanskrit Pratishthan, 1992.

—— *The Brahmasūtra-Shānkarbhāshyam with the Commentaries* Ratnaprabhā, Bhāmatī *and* Nyāyanirṇaya *of Shrīgovindānanda, Vāchaspati and Ānandagiri*, Mahadeva Shastri Bakre (ed.), second edition, Bombay, 1909.

—— *Brahmasūtram śaṅkarabhāṣyopetam*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1990.

—— *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣat: Ānandagirikṛtaṭīkāsaṃvalitaśāṃkarabhāṣyasametā*, Kasinath Bala Sastri Agase (ed.), A.S.S. 15, third edition, Poona, 1914.

—— *Chāndogyopaniṣat: Ānandagirikṛtaṭīkāsaṃvalitaśāṃkarabhāṣyasametā*, Kasinath Bala Sastri Agase (ed.), A.S.S. 14, fifth edition, Poona, 1934.

—— *Gauḍapādīyakārikābhāṣya*, in *Shri Shankarabhagavatpāda's* Upanisadbhasyam, Vol. 1, S. Subrahmanyashastri (ed.), Varanasi, 1979.

—— *Īśāvāsyopaniṣat: saṭīkaśāṃkarabhāṣyopetā*, Rajaram Ganesa Bodas (ed.), A.S.S. 5, second edition, Poona, 1905.

—— *Kāṭhakopaniṣat: saṭīkādvayaśāṃkarabhāṣyopetā*, Vaijnath Kasinath Rajvade (ed.), A.S.S. 7, second edition, Poona, 1897.

—— *Kenopaniṣat: saṭīkaśāṃkarapadabhāṣyavākyabhāṣyopetā*, Kasinath Bala Sastri Agase (ed.), A.S.S. 6, second edition, Poona, 1895.

—— *Muṇḍakopaniṣat: saṭīkaśāṃkarabhāṣyopetā*, A.S.S. pandits (ed.), A.S.S. 9, Poona, 1889.

—— *Praśnopaniṣat: saṭīkaśāṃkarabhāṣyopetā*, A.S.S. pandits (ed.), A.S.S. 8, Poona, 1889.

—— *Śaṅkara's* Upadeśasāhasrī, critically edited with introduction and indices by Sengaku Mayeda, Tokyo, 1975.

—— *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā: śāṃkarabhāṣyasametā*, Kasinath Bala Sastri Agase (ed.), A.S.S. 34, Poona, 1908.

—— *Taittirīyopaniṣat: ānandagirikṛtaṭīkāsaṃvalitaśāṃkarabhāṣyopetā*, Vamana Sastri Islampurkar (ed.), A.S.S. 12, fifth edition, Poona, 1929.

—— *Ten Principal Upanishads with Śāṅkarabhāṣya*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1964, reprint 1987.

Satchidananda Murty, K. (1959) *Revelation and Reason in Advaita Vedānta*, New York: Columbia University, reprint Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1974.

Satchidanandendra (1964) *Vedānta Prakrīya Pratyabhijñā*, Holenarsipur, South India: Adhyatma Prakasha Karyalaya.

—— (ET 1989) *The Method of the Vedānta: A Critical Account of the Advaita Tradition*, translated by A. J. Alston, London and New York: Kegan Paul International.

Shantha Kumari, B. R. (1994) 'Transformative Metaphysics: Advaita as a Model', in R. Balasubramanian (ed.), *The Traditions of Advaita: Essays in Honour of Bhāṣyabhāvajña VR Kalyāṇasundara Śāstrī*, New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, pp. 178–200.

Sivaramamurti, C. (1955) *Royal Conquests and Cultural Migrations in South India and the Deccan*, Calcutta: Trustees of the Indian Museum.

Smith, B. K. (1989) *Reflections on Resemblance, Ritual and Religion*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Stein, Burton (1994) *Peasant State and Society in Medieval South India*, Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Sundaresan, V. (2002) 'What Determines Śaṅkara's Authorship? The Case of the *Pañcīkaraṇa*', *Philosophy East and West* 52.1: 1–35.

Sureśvara, *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣadbhāṣyavārttika*, edited with Ānandagiri's *Śāstraprakāśikā* by K. S. Agase, A.S.S. 16, 1892–4.

—— *Naiṣkarmyasiddhi of Sureśvara*, edited with introduction, English translation, annotation and indices by R. Balasubramanian, Madras: Radhakrishnan Institute for Advanced Study in Philosophy, University of Madras, 1988.

—— *Sambandha-vārtika of Sureśvarācārya* (from *Bṛ Up Bh Vārttika*), edited and translated by T. M. P. Mahadevan, Madras: University of Madras, 1972.

—— *Taittirīyopaniṣadbhāṣyavārtika of Sureśvara*, edited with introduction, English translation, annotation and indices by R. Balasubramanian, Madras: University of Madras, 1974.

Suthren Hirst, J. G. (1985) 'Modern Interpretations of Śaṅkara: T. M. P. Mahadevan and Ramaṇa Mahārṣi', unpublished paper, Sanskrit Tradition in the Modern World Symposium, University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

—— (1990) 'The Place of Teaching Techniques in Śaṃkara's Theology', *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 18: 113–50.

—— (1993) 'The Place of *bhakti* in Śaṅkara's Vedānta', in K. Werner (ed.), *Love Divine: Studies in* bhakti *and Devotional Mysticism*, Durham Indological Series No. 3, Richmond: Curzon Press, pp. 117–45.

—— (1996) 'Strategies of Interpretation: Śaṃkara's Interpretation of the *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad*', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 116.1: 58–75.

—— (2003) 'Weaving the Strands: Cognition, Authority and Language in Śaṃkara's *Upadeśasāhasrī* 18', in Srinivasa Rao and Godabarisha Misra (eds), *Paramparā: Essays in Honour of R. Balasubramanian*, New Delhi: Indian Council of Philosophical Research, pp. 141–66.

—— (forthcoming) 'Images of Śaṃkara', in A. King (ed.), *Renaissance and Renewal in Indian Religions: The Spalding Symposium Papers 2002*, London: Luzac.

Taber, J. (1983) *Transformative Philosophy: A Study of Śaṅkara, Fichte and Heidegger*, Honolulu, Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press.

Tapasyananda (tr.) (1980) *Sankara-Dig-Vijaya: The Traditional Life of Sri Sankaracharya by Madhava-Vidyaranya*, second edition, Madras: Ramakrishna Math.

Thibaut, G. (1890–6) *The Vedānta Sūtras of Bādarāyaṇa with the Commentary by Śaṅkara*, 2 vols, *Sacred Books of the East*, Vols 34 and 38, Oxford: Clarendon Press, reprinted Dover, New York, 1962.

Thrasher, A. W. (1979) 'The Dates of Maṇḍana Miśra and Śaṃkara', *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Süd-Asiens* 23:117–39.

—— (1993) *The Advaita Vedānta of* Brahma-siddhi, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.

Thompson, S. and W. E. Roberts (1960) *Types of Indic Oral Tales*, Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, Academia Scientarum Fennica.

van Buitenen, J. A. B. (ed. and tr.) (1956) *Rāmānuja's Vedārthasaṃgraha*, translated with an introduction, Poona: Deccan College.

Venkataramiah, D. (tr.) (1948) *The Pañcapādikā of Padmapāda, Translated into English*, Gaekwad Oriental Series, Vol. 107, Baroda: Oriental Institute.

Vetter, T. (1979) *Studien zur Lehre und Entwicklung Śaṅkaras*, Publications of the de Nobili Research Library, Vol. 6, Wien: Gerold & Co.

Watters, T. (1905) *On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India*, Vol. 2, London: Royal Asiatic Society.

Wezler, A. (1983) 'Philological Observations on the So-called *Pātañjala-yogasūtrabhāṣyavivaraṇa* (Studies in Pātañjalayogaśāstravivaraṇa I)', *Indo–Iranian Journal* 25: 17–40.

Whicher, I. (1998) *The Integrity of the Yoga* Darśana*: A Reconsideration of Classical Yoga*, Albany: State University of New York Press.

Wilke, A. (1995) *Ein Sein – Ein Erkennen: Meister Eckharts Christologie und Śaṃkaras Lehre vom Ātman: zur (un-)Vergleichbarkeit zweier Einheitslehren*, Bern: Peter Lang.

Williams, P. (1989) *Mahāyāna Buddhism: The Doctrinal Foundations*, London: Routledge.

Wood, T. E. (1990) *The Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad and the Āgama Śāstra: An Investigation in the Meaning of Vedānta*, Monographs of the Society for Asian and Comparative Philosophy, No. 8, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

Yocum, G. (1992) 'The Coronation of a Guru: Charisma, Politics and Philosophy in Contemporary India', in R. B. Williams (ed.), *A Sacred Thread: Modern Transmission of Hindu Traditions in India and Abroad*, Chambersburg, Pennsylvania: Anima Publications, pp. 68–91.

Yogabhāṣya, in *The Yogasūtras of Patañjali with the Scholium of Vyāsa and the Commentary of Vāchaspatimiśra*, Vasudev Shastri Abhyankar (ed.), Bombay Sanskrit and Prakrit Series, Vol. 46, revised and enlarged edition, Bombay, 1917.

INDEX