

ŚAṆKARA'S CONCEPT OF ADHYĀSA : A TEXTUAL INTERPRETATION

The concept of 'adhyāsa' furnishes the one single clue to the understanding of the Advaita Vedānta of Śaṅkar. This is evidently the reason why Śaṅkara in his commentary on the Brahmasūtras begins with an analysis of the concept, [why the portion of the text known as 'Adhyāsabhāṣya' forms the prelude to Śaṅkara's Brahmasūtra-bhāṣya, otherwise called Śārīraka mīmāṃsā]. Tradition has attached the greatest importance to it, and the two schools of Advaita Vedānta, commonly known as the Vivaraṇa and the Bhāmati schools, have bestowed upon it most cautious attention, and generations of adherents of both the schools have elaborately commented and reviewed upon it. In fact, most of the later writers, instead of presenting glossaries impartially on the entire text of Śaṅkara's Brahmasūtra-bhāṣya, have, in their selective approach, been rather over-thorough in their analysis of Śaṅkara's concept of 'adhyāsa' since they considered it as most vital for the philosophy of the Advaita. [Even in our own times, a galaxy of renowned scholars and great masters in the subject, like Profs. S. Radhakirshnan, K. C. Bhattacharyya, M. Hiriyanna and Drs. S. N. Dasgupta, Belvalkar and a host of others have very carefully reviewed the significance of the concept in the context of Śaṅkara's philosophy.] It becomes, therefore, a matter of shock and surprise when we are told that 'this chapter which is most important in his entire Brahmasūtrabhāṣya has been utterly misunderstood' and is given 'a cursory treatment by his commentators'.¹ It is possible that the person responsible for this over-bold pronouncement regards all treatments, however, elaborate and lengthy, as cursory, if in them the fundamental issue, raised and discussed, is, as he claims, 'utterly misunderstood'. And, it may also be that the proposition 'all classical treatment on the issue is cursory since in it the issue is utterly misunderstood' is intended to be taken as covertly analytical—no treatment of the concept of 'adhyāsa' can be regarded as enlightened and thorough if it does not fall in line with or veer round the one indisputable interpretation furnished at long last by this new commentator of Śaṅkara.

The charges against the traditional interpretation of Śaṅkara's concept of 'adhyāsa' have been made in the following way. 'Tradition has understood *adhyāsa* as a psychological concept. In this interpretation, *adhyāsa* stands for an eternal process of psychological illusion in which all men get necessarily involved. But here I feel it my duty to point out that Śaṅkara is not giving any account of illusion at all.... This chapter deals with a philosophy of language and not with an account of psychological illusion. In this chapter, Śaṅkara tries to give a critique of language which leads him to the conclusion that language necessarily falsifies the reality it purports to represent.'² Also, 'Tradition in rendering Adhyāsa as superimposition is carried away by the example used in the Vedānta literature of shell-silver or rope-snake illusion. But Śaṅkara and his contemporaries have used these examples as illustrative of a logical point and nothing else. They are not discussing it at the factual level but by way of illustrating what they mean by logical error'.³ In this, then, some unnamed contemporaries of Śaṅkara are credited with seeing, the 'logical point' in the concept of 'adhyāsa' and grasping it as logical error, and to that extent, they are absolved from the charge of misunderstanding Śaṅkara and his *adhyāsa-bhāṣya*. The 'logical point' which (according to the new Theorist) tradition has missed in its cursory treatment of Śaṅkara's *adhyāsa-bhāṣya* and the mistake it committed thereby was first brought out in the *Analytical Studies*⁴, among a host of other mistakes supposed to have been committed by it, such as, regarding *śabdapramāṇa* (which is really a critique of language⁵) as an extraordinary *pramāṇa* of scriptural revelation and thereby wrongly limiting the scope of logical reason. In a recently published paper⁶, this logical point has been more clearly brought out, elaborated and critically reviewed. It is this that the doctrine of Adhyāsa is a logical doctrine and not a psychological one. The error that is discussed here is logical and not psychological. In this logical doctrine, Śaṅkara wishes to point out that the logical subject and the logical predicate belong to two different categories with distinct and opposite characteristics and their coupling in propositional symbolism is logically unsound. Ignorance of the category difference between the two leads to this kind of coupling in propositional form.⁷ Furthermore, "all pro-

positions including those which are counted as true and those which are counted as false at the factual level are based on a logical error which Śaṅkara names as Adhyāsa. Adhyāsa in the context of Śaṅkara Vedānta stands for the logical error of coupling two different elements of thought with categorial differences of fundamental type in case of all predication involving an ascription of either a sortal or a characterising universal to a particular which is its locus."⁸ Why a factually true predicative or descriptive statement should be taken as logically erroneous according to Śaṅkara is explained in the Analytical Studies as follows : . . . "any attempt of classifying or describing necessarily carries with it the logical possibility of misclassifying and misdescribing. When I describe a thing as a snake, my statement is open to the logical possibility of falsification and even on the basis of a correcting cognition when I describe the thing as a rope the possibility of my description being falsified is not ruled out. On account of this logical possibility of error, all the descriptive statements are initially vitiated. So any language which employs class-concepts (and no language can do without) carries with it the logical possibility of falsification".⁹ This logical point in Śaṅkara's notion of 'Adhyāsa', unpardonably missed by Śaṅkara's traditional commentators, has been clarified further for our benefit. "Every judgement, therefore, while judging a thing to be of a sort carries the possibility of having misjudged it. This statement only signifies that universals are of a free floating character and that since they are capable of being applied to different instances on different occasions they are capable of being applied both rightly and wrongly. In other words, this statement signifies that predicates in our language are not straight jackets. . . . This statement (supposedly Śaṅkara's own ?) by no stretch of imagination can be construed to assert that there is only one thing, i.e. a Brahman whereas we, the human mortals of the earth are in a perpetual state of illusion falsely believing that there are many things when actually there is only one thing on earth".¹⁰ The severity of the language used here in the last sentence leaves one gaping in the process of guessing if the fling is intended to be at Śaṅkara by Śaṅkara himself or at his ' traditional ' commentators by the new commentator !

In spite of the vehemence with which the ' logical point ' (or feature) of Śaṅkara's concept of ' adhyāsa ' has been explained

so far by our new commentator on Śaṅkara's Adhyāśabhāṣya, several points in that logical theory of 'adhyāśa', still remain unclear. It is, of course, clear that 'adhyāśa' in this new version is not to mean illicit or wrong superimposition as traditionally held. It is not also to mean a 'fact' of experience since as a genuine philosopher Śaṅkara can only deal with a logical and linguistic question and not with any factual question at all.¹¹ Again, not being a psychological concept, 'adhyāśa' is not to mean an 'error of experience', or as it is wrongly held and defended by Tradition, 'a *positive* ignorance' presenting a distorted view of things occasioned by some adventitious defect (*āgantuka doṣa*). It is not also to be taken as mistaking one thing for another which latter is characterised by an absolute negation of the other. It is also very much clear that according to this new version of Śaṅkara's adhyāśa, 'adhyāśa' does not have anything to do with the psychological processes and events connected with such phenomena as, misperception, illusion or misconception. On the positive side, it is clear also that, according to the new view, 'adhyāśa' of Śaṅkara's meaning stands for the faulty logical process, involved in all descriptive statements, of 'coupling' or combining two ideas which as the 'logical subject' and the 'logical predicate' belong to two radically distinct 'types' and are, therefore, 'categorially' different.¹² It is also clear that, according to this new thesis on Śaṅkara vedānta generally and on Śaṅkara's Adhyāśabhāṣya in particular, the confusion, ignorance or *avidyā* that Śaṅkara complains of, is the logical error involved in propositional symbolism when we 'couple' two distinct ideas together as subject and predicate in descriptive statements which cannot be *ex hypothesi* so herded together.¹³ The points which are not sufficiently clear are : in the first place, if it is being used as the *logical subject* and the *logical predicate* that makes these ideas, categorially distinct and even opposed, or one of them being a unique individual and the other in so far as it is a *jāti*, a class-idea or a class-characteristic, or both. If the first alternative is taken, it remains to be explained : how in being used as the logical subject and the logical predicate ideas can come to acquire such distinctive and uncompromising character and status which makes their 'coupling' in judgement logically unwarranted since it is through this coupling or combi-

nation alone that they can come to derive their nature as the 'logical subject' and 'predicate'¹⁴. On the second alternative since the so called unique individual or particular having unique reference, and the *jāti*, the class-idea or class-characteristic, described as a loose jacket, a free floating idea with non-specific or indifferent reference can be regarded in such ways only when they are considered in themselves and outside a relational context, it is not clear why inside a judgemental relation they should be understood as distinctive and radically distinct as heretofore, rendering the judgement in which they are now found logically false¹⁵. If the third alternative is to be accepted, and according to the new thesis Śaṅkara's concept of 'adhyāsa' as a logical concept is to be taken to mean the 'coupling' or combining a particular or an individual as a 'logical subject with a sortal or characterising universal taken as logical predicate, quite a number of fresh questions arise. Firstly, is it correct to say, as has been said by this new interpreter of Śaṅkara's adhyāsa', that 'in every proposition, a particular is collected under a universal either of of the sortal type or of a characterising type as 'this is a rope' or 'this is strong'¹⁶. Again, does not the statement made in another place that 'the logical error to which he draws our attention and which is involved in every case of predication is due to our ignorance of fundamental difference between two logical categories of the logical subject and the logical predicate: the particular and the universal'¹⁷ go to suggest that every predicative and descriptive judgment is irrevocably singular and monadic? Is this description of 'all' descriptive statements correct? If not, is this error of omission also to be attributed to Śaṅkara?

The difficulty in the acceptance of the third alternative explanation of Śaṅkara's linguistic theory of 'Adyāsa' given above has been that while adumbrating this theory in his Analytical Studies this new interpreter gave us to understand that Śaṅkara's concept of 'adhyāsa' is a whole-sale condemnation of all linguistic expressions. Thus he says, 'since no linguistic expressions are possible without joining ideas which are distinct and different, language by its very nature necessarily falsifies, and is not a fit instrument for delivering the truth'¹⁸. The title of this paper published in the quarterly---'Śaṅkara's doctrine of Adhyāsa: Difficulties of propositional symbolism' also goes to suggest

that Śaṅkara's theory of 'adhyāsa' is illustrated in propositional construction *generally* and so whatever ideas are 'coupled' in propositions are logically incompatible and cannot be connected without violence to the principles of logic of his understanding and acceptance. So, the limitation of 'adhyāsa' to propositions involving an individual or a particular as the logical subject and a sortal or characterising universal as the logical predicate seems to fall short of whole-sale condemnation of 'all linguistic expressions' which was the previous target.

Secondly, what are we to understand by the expression 'coupling' when it is said that the coupling of the logical subject, a unique individual, and the logical predicate, a free-floating universal, in propositional symbolism, is logically unsound, and that this is 'adhyāsa' of Śaṅkara's meaning? To be sure, the word 'coupling' is intended to be the English equivalent of Śaṅkara's 'mithunīkṛtya' and our interpreter is so fascinated by it that he almost invariably uses it to singify propositional relation between the subject and the predicate. What Śaṅkara himself means by 'mithunīkṛtya' will be explained in the context of Śaṅkara's text later on. We shall, at this stage, try to see what difficulties this innovator of Śaṅkara's linguistic theory of 'adhyāsa' has created for himself by using the word as meaning judgmental combination. To meet the exigency of showing how any proposition, any descriptive or classificatory statement is illustrative of Śaṅkar's 'adhyāsa' in the sense of illicit combination he labours hard to establish why the terms—the subject and the predicate—must be accepted as radically distinct and logically incompatible. Next, since there cannot be any real combination or relation (positive) between incompatibles or categorially distincts, he takes the 'coupling' or 'joining together' of the subject and the predicate to mean a 'non-relational tie'¹⁹. Next, since the 'S-P' fixture in a determinate judgment is described in Indian philosophy as '*saṃsargāvagāhi*' he is compelled to invent a new meaning for the word 'saṃsarga' which is not to mean any relation. He is oblivious of the fact that the expression alternatively used in Indian epistemology is '*saṃbandhāvagāhi*' where the word 'saṃbandha' means 'saṃbandha' and so a relation. In this context, he castigates his own teacher Dr. D. M. Datta for a mistake which that illustrious professor

did not commit in the book under reference. Dr. Datta *did not say*, as he could not, that "according to the Advaitins all propositions are relational (samsargāvagāhi)". He says, some are, and some others, such as identity—propositions, are non-relational (samsargānavagāhi). Dr. Datta also does not say that even though the vedantins accept that all propositions are relational yet they establish an absolutism far more radical than that of the west.²⁰ This would really have been an impossible feat. Russell's complaint was against the universal 'S-P' type. Dr. Datta in the book under reference remarked that although the Advaita does not accept that all propositions are of the subject-predicate type, the identity propositions such as 'that thou art' being exceptions, yet it succeeds in establishing absolutism of a more radical kind.²¹ It is the student of that illustrious professor who has landed himself in a series of blunders and contradictions in attempting the impossible. His statement that 'for Vedāntins, not all propositions are relational, but none is,²² is a mistake. His second statement and a connected one inside the same paragraph that 'every proposition is for the Vedāntins of the subject-predicate type²³ is another mistake, and he knows that the proposition, 'He is that Devadatta' is not of that type.²⁴ There are innumerable others—all flowing from his intransigent insistence on developing a 'linguistic theory of adhyāsa' in Śaṅkara where it does not hold. But he will milk the he-goat all the same. To this end he employs the Śaṅkarite expression 'coupling' even though he is not clear in what way and under what meaning this word which he uses to stand for the propositional combination or joining of the subject and the predicate will serve his purpose.

If the logical 'adhyāsa' of his meaning is to be a misuse of language, if it is to be anything illegitimate, the 'coupling' of the categorially different in the texture of any descriptive statement should mean an illegitimate 'relation'. Its function would be expressing a relation between unrelatables. In factual reference, again, this 'coupling' will be an apparent relation or a pseudo-relation. The judgment or proposition as a linguistic set-up will have then to be accepted as a relational set-up although illegitimate. It cannot then symbolise a 'non-relation' and the

so-called 'coupling-function' in it cannot symbolise any 'non-relational tie'. By attempting to say that all propositions, according to the Advaita Vedānta, are non-relational, which is a mistake or misstatement of fact, and by insisting that they exhibit 'non-relational ties', he allows them to remain sacrosanct and legitimate and defeats his own purpose which could be served by showing them as relational and by showing the judgmental 'coupling' as an illegitimate relation or pseudo-relation and not as a 'non-relational tie'. Yet he insists on showing that every assertive tie is a non-relational tie, which quite apart from its unserviceability for this thesis, is his third grave mistake in the series.²⁵ To begin with the unserviceability of the notion that 'the assertive tie is a non-relational tie' for the thesis of 'adhyāsa' as a logical error: By way of explanation of this he says 'To say that it is a non-relational tie is to say that universals are not like caps or straight-jackets made to fit into one particular as opposed to another. Their very essence consists in their capacity to be applied to some rightly and to some wrongly.'²⁶ What he means to say is perhaps that since a universal does not belong exclusively to one particular, since it is not applied to one particular to the exclusion of other particulars, therefore, it can be applied to some particulars rightly and to others wrongly. Even supposing that this analysis of the nature of a universal is correct, and a universal such as, 'cow' or 'cowness' in so far as it does not relate itself to my cow exclusively, may as a 'free floating thing' now settle upon another particular which is your cow and in this case rightly, thereafter on another particular, a man, a horse or a dog and in these cases wrongly, it would baffle one to understand how the right or wrong application in its regard can be an 'application' without application, that is, without getting it involved in a relation to its several locus. Does the possibility of both right and wrong application, besides showing it as an indifferent content, show also that it is not brought into relation with its locus although asserted of it? How a universal can become a 'predicate' without being predicated of the subject, how one of the items in a judgment can be asserted 'of' the other without entering into a relation—by being simply situated or juxtaposed in a 'non-relational tie'—is difficult to follow. If in a judgmental 'coupling'

or 'joining', we really keep apart the categorially different 'subject' and 'predicate' the individual and the universal, by wedging in between the two a 'non-relational tie', there can be no error, logical or psychological. It thus appears that for his logical theory of adhyāsa it is necessary to regard the judgmental 'coupling' as a relation, however, illegitimate. The suggestion that the 'coupling' or the assertive tie is to be a non-relational tie seems to involve self-contradiction. That the judgmental 'coupling' of his conception is to be regarded as a relation, though illegitimate, becomes evident from his statement in the very next paragraph. Thus he says 'A judgment which states a fact is called false. But every judgment whether true or false in combining two elements which could not and should not be combined becomes on that account logically erroneous'.²⁷ Is this 'coupling' together a coupling an existent (real) and non-existent (unreal) in a non-relational manner as has been said in the preceding paragraph ?

Now, about the alleged logical misbehaviour of a universal which according to our theorist explains the possibility of the logical error (adhyāsa) : It is stated that 'since they are capable of being applied to different instances on different occasions they are capable of being applied both rightly and wrongly'.²⁸ But, this does not seem to furnish any ground for their misapplication. The universals, since they are universals, are not, of course, limited to any one particular. But that they are 'free floating' is not the view of any school of the Vedānta. That they are *ante re* may be the platonic view but not the view of any school of Indian Philosophy. And that they are *applied to different instances on different occasions* is possibly a view peculiarly of our theorist's own. Neither the Naiyāyika 'inherence' nor the Vedānta 'tādātmya' furnishes any ground for the belief that the universals are applied from without, and upon different instances on different occasions. Moreover, its capacity to figure in a number of particulars all at once—*anekasamavetatvam*—does not disprove its capacity to hold in any given particular, to fit into it. Its incapacity to hold any one particular of a certain kind would on the contrary disprove its capacity to inhere in many 'like' particulars. It would disprove its claim to be a universal, since an unattached universal may float as a simple

'singularity' in any haven of its choice, but it does not become a universal without a natural habitat in a group of particulars of which it is the common essence, or from which it is reared up by a conceptual process of abstraction. Such being the case, a universal, neither by itself, nor through the agency of a human sorter operating with it as something furnished ready-made in advance, is consciously misapplied. Errors become errors only when they are detected. And they are detected only through experience of contradiction. That all factual propositions are theoretically corrigible has not been upheld by any school of Indian philosophy, least of all by the *svataḥprāmāṇyavādis* like the Mīmāṃsā and the Vedānta. With the *parataḥprāmāṇyavādi* Nyāya a factual proposition is neutral (neither true nor false) prior to proof or validation. With the *svataḥ-aprāmāṇyavādi* Buddhist it is false inherently and factually, its truth only relative to its use and practical utility.

The greatest difficulty of the linguistic thesis on 'adhyāsa' as an illegitimate judgmental or propositional relation, or as it has been otherwise expressed, illegitimate 'coupling' of a logical subject—a particular, and a logical predicate, a universal, is its utter irrelevance for Śāṅkara vedānta in particular, as for Indian philosophy generally. Since this has been claimed to be the only correct presentation of Śāṅkara's concept of 'adhyāsa', utterly misunderstood by Śāṅkara's classical commentators, we shall now show that it has absolutely no basis in Śāṅkara's text in the Adhyāsabhāṣya. In course of our examination, we shall also show how this new adhyāsa theory is itself an instance of 'adhyāsa' in the real Śāṅkarite sense and how it has been engendered by the Saṃskāras of certain alien trends of thought aided by certain adventitious defects, such as, misreading of passages and misconstruction of meaning. To this we shall now turn.

The concept of 'adhyāsa' has been postulated and explained by Śāṅkara in the prelude to his Brahmasūtrabhāṣya called the Adhyāsabhāṣya. There it has not been posed as a general theory but only as a special problem. Śāṅkara is not interested in a general theory of illusion, error or misconception. The adhyāsa of the self on the not-self as of the not-self on the self and the illegitimate transference of the properties (*dharma*) of the one

to the other constitute the one single subject-matter of his discourse. This has been described by him as the most basic and fundamental, vitiating all our normal day to day experience and behaviour. The kind of view of things and attitude towards life fostered by this adhyāsa, more meaningfully, by this ignorance of the true nature of the self as one self-shining all comprehensive pure spirit underlying the veil of multiple appearances has been called as a state of bondage. Liberation from this bondage, freedom from the normal limitations of the ignorant life, a life of enlightenment and spiritual freedom, has been described as the philosophic goal. This is realisation of Brahmatva by the self, empirical and phenomenal, by transcendence of its finitude and limitation and by the discovery of its absolute self identity with the one, non-dual immutable eternal presence (brahmātmaitatva). That this is all that has been said and expressed in the Adhyāsabhāṣya and that nothing has been said about any illogical propositional symbolism attempting to signify the 'linking' or 'coupling' relational or 'non-relational tying', between the logical subjects and the logical predicates of any description will be shown next through a textual rendering of the words and sentences of the adhyāsabhāṣya of Śaṅkara.

Including the interrogatives, which by posing questions or possible objections on behalf of an opponent (pūrvapakṣin) facilitate further clarification and elucidation of the point at issue. There are thirty-eight sentences all together in Śaṅkara's Adhyāsabhāṣya. Keeping in view the order and sequence of the different aspects of the problem raised and discussed, these sentences can be grouped and arranged as follows :

1. The first *two* sentences (in some editions one big complex sentence) while envisaging the *necessity* of postulation of 'adhyāsa' in the sense of misapprehension as an explanatory concept to resolve the conflict between the upaniṣadic idea of the true self and our habitual taking of it in course of our 'given' experiences and day to day behaviours as empirical individuals, bring forth the peculiar illogicality and consequently, logical indeterminability of the *fact of adhyāsa* in the given case. The illogicality of the phenomenon of adhyāsa of self and not-self is due to the fact that, not to speak of the revealed authority of the śrutis which declare the self and the not-self as remote from,

and as opposed to each other as is light from darkness, even our ordinary felt experience of 'I' on the one hand, and of 'thou' or 'This' on the other, of the subject and of the object-knower and the known-show them off as poles apart, and so incapable of being confused or *misidentified* one with the other. Notwithstanding this, Śaṅkara continues, in our habitual experience (anubhava)²⁹ of the self as 'This-I' (*ahamidam*) and our reaction as 'I am this' and of the not-self as 'mine this' (*mamedam*) or 'this is mine', the self and the not-self get fused *together* and misrepresented. When, in course of our given experience, something appears differently from what it is in itself, from what it is in reality, the admission of that experience, although a 'given' experience, as *misapprehension*, and of the content experienced, although a 'given' content, as a *distorted appearance* (*vivarta*) becomes irresistible. Therefore, the *misidentification* or *fusion* of the self and not self in our habitual experience and normal reaction of life and the mistaken transference of the properties of one to the other will have to be admitted as 'adhyāsa' in the sense of *wrong superimposition*, although from the fact of the case, on account of their radical opposition (according to the śrutis) and polar distinction (in given knowledge) this 'adhyāsa' seems *logically inexplicable*. This is roughly what Śaṅkara says in the first two sentences.

This being the meaning of the opening sentence (or sentences) of Śaṅkara rendered textually, it is difficult to discover in them any *general* dissertation on the logic of language or its alleged misuse in all descriptive statements in so far as the logical subject, an individual or particular, is 'coupled' or combined with the logical predicate, a free floating universal.³⁰ The discourse is singularly about *anyonyātādātmyādhyāsa* or *itaretaratādātmyādhyāsa* of *ātmā* and *anātmā* in the habitual experience and normal reaction of all mankind (*naisargika lokavyavahāra*). Yet our new interpreter of Śaṅkara's concept of 'adhyāsa' has discovered in these passages and in the *Adhyāsabhāṣya* generally, a critique of language, a discussion devoted exclusively to general misuse of words and expressions in propositional symbolism in so far as logical subject-words with referential meaning and predicate-words with predicative or descriptive uses are unlawfully joined together doing violence to what he believes to be the 'logic of

language'. This he supposes to be Śaṅkara's doctrine of 'adhyāsa' which, according to him, relates to logical and linguistic issues and has nothing to do with any psychological or experiential issue connected with illusion or misapprehension, although the classical commentators, one and all, utterly misunderstood it as that. We want to point out initially that in Śaṅkara there is no 'doctrine' of *adhyāsa* but only a 'concept' of *adhyāsa*. He evinces no interest in a *general theory* of *adhyāsa*. His interest is limited to offering an explanation of misapprehension or ignorance (positive) of the self and the Advaita theory of error developed by his adherents is a general elucidation of his meaning encased in his notion of 'adhyāsa' and that elucidation did not move in linguistic lines.

2. The concept of 'adhyāsa' postulated in the opening two sentences to explain the anomaly between the nature of the self as communicated by the extra-ordinary (*alaukika*) *pramāṇa* and the self as is apprehended in ordinary experience calls for an explanation. So Śaṅkara in the immediately next two sentences poses the question as to what the concept means, and gives his own definition that *adhyāsa* is the *apparent presentation* (*avabhāsa*) of a content *similar to one previously perceived* (*pūrvadr̥ṣṭasya avabhāsa*) in a locus characterised by its absolute negation (*paratra*), generated by a process *resembling memory* (*smṛtirūpa*).

3. This is followed by *five* sentences, three of which for the purpose of elucidation bring into comparison, three other alternative views already current on the self-same subject-matter, the fourth points out general agreement of those views with Śaṅkara's own on essential point, and this is followed by two commonplace examples of the phenomenon in question in the last sentences of this group.

4. Next follows, the group of *six* sentences including two interrogatives which by posing two very intricate problems confronting Śaṅkara's postulation of 'adhyāsa' of the not-self on the self, lead to further elucidation. The problems raised are : in the illustrations cited in the previous para, the locus of 'adhyāsa' is felt as an objective content (*viśaya*) and it is also apprehended as 'out there in front' (*purovasthita*). But these two circumstances seem to be absent in respect of the suggested superimposition of the not-self on the self. In the last sentence

of the group, Śaṅkara reiterates that the alleged discrepancies between the commonly accepted instance of 'adhyāsa' and his postulated case of 'adhyāsa' of self and not-self can be explained away—*evam aviruddhaḥa pratyagātmani api anātmādhyaśaḥ*. Explanation of this is given in three sentences in the middle. The gist of this is that the self, though not content of knowledge as itself, can be proxy, become an appasent content in term of the ego which is the vehicle of 'I-consciousness'. And in order to be just *felt* as a content 'out-there', a perceptible locus; it is not necessary that something must be *really so*, and always: the imperceptible either even though no perceptible locus out there in space, is nevertheless taken as that by the unenlightened who seem to perceive duskinness and cauldron shape in it. Here, the ether is not a 'purovasthita viśaya', yet we seem to perceive it as that, and also as characterised by certain 'rūpas', although it is nirūpa'.

5. Next there are *two* sentences which state that *this*, 'adhyāsa' of the self and the not-self in so far as it fulfils requirements of the definition given earlier is *avidyā* in the sense of *misapprehension only*, and that this, therefore, cannot make any difference as to the real nature of thing, cannot affect it materially. This suggests vivartavāda of Śaṅkara. The content of a misapprehension is both peculiar to it and limited to it; it is no feature of the thing itself, no real part of it, no real modification of it; it is a floating appearance.

6. Then, comes a remarkable sentence which states that this *avidyā* or ignorance of the form of mistaken mutual identification of self and not-self forms the ground of all our distinctions as between ways of knowing and objects of knowledge, both vedic and laukika, and that even our revealed doctrines, as enjoining, as prohibitive, even as instructive of ways of release presuppose this *avidyā* as their basis and are vitiated by it. In other words, without mistaken identification of the self and not self there can be no distinction of knower, knowing and known in our normal experience and behaviour and there can be no relevance for injunctions in respect of 'Do's' or 'Don't' as also for instructions for release from bondage.

7. The whole-sale condemnation of all *forms* of knowledge, *means* of knowledge as also of all our behaviours based upon

them is not easy to grasp. So, in the next group of *eight* sentences, Śaṅkara explains how evidently such is the case. The first sentence is an interrogative posing the problem, and the subsequent sentences form the explanation—the solution of the problem. Śaṅkara's argument is briefly this: without mistaken feeling (abhimāna) of 'I' in the body and 'mine' in the sense organs, that is, without mistaken identification of the self with the body and the sense-organs, there can be no 'knower' and 'known' as there can be no knowing as a process or activity, no behavioural drives based upon or initiated by them.

8. Then comes the group of three sentences showing by means of illustration that so far as this ignorance in the form of mistaken sense of identity of the self with the body is concerned, there is nothing to distinguish the so-called enlightened behaviour of human beings from the blind instinctive behaviour of lower animals, and in the end, arguing that if the animal behaviour is irrational so also is the behaviour of even the most intelligent among human beings (vyutpattimatām).

9. In the group of *three* sentences that follow next the claim for special treatment on behalf of behaviours and acts guided by the śāstras is dismissed on the ground that these do not involve the knowledge of the true self as revealed in the Vedānta and would not endure and survive in the event of that highest enlightenment being there (na ativartate).

10. Next, in course of *four* sentences, Śaṅkara demonstrates in what way there has taken place an 'adhyāsa' (explained already as wrong apprehension of a content where it is not nor ever can be) in the case of the true self. He starts with the most evident cases of illicit superimposition, in which properties commonly known as foreign and as belonging to quite 'others'—*bāhyadharmān* are misattributed to the self, and then, progressively, shows misattribution of those which though alien are more subtle and so less evident, such as properties of the body (*dehadharmān*), the properties of the senses (*indriyadharmān*) and the properties of the mind or *antaḥkaraṇa*. Then, finally, he shows the most subtle form of this 'adhyāsa' in which the ego which has its expression in self-consciousness as 'I' (ahampratyayin) is superimposed on pure consciousness, the witness—universal of all presentations in term of psychical modifications

but uninvolved in them and contrary wise, in which this witness—universal in its turn is superimposed on antaḥkāraṇa etc. In the last sentence of the group, this 'adhyāsa' of self and not-self is declared to be of the form of misapprehension (mithyā-pratyayarūpa) and beginningless and also as interminable in the absence of right knowledge.

11. In the *two* concluding sentences, Śaṅkara states that this 'adhyāsa' has been the root cause of bondage and of all the evils of life, and that the declared aim and purpose of the vedānta texts has been the eradication of this root evil by fostering the knowledge of absolute oneness of the self as pure spirit (ātmaika tvavidyāpratipattaye).

The sentences presented in several groups above according to their import are *all* the sentences of Śaṅkara's Adhyāsa-bhāṣya. They have, from beginning to end, one single theme for discussion, and it is the basic *avidyā* or ignorance involved in the wrong identification (*itaretarādhyāsa*) of self and not-self. This is the 'adhyāsa' that Śaṅkara speaks of. On account of it we do not have knowledge of the self as it is, we have a distorted view of it as the phenomenal subject (jñātā), the agent (kartā) and the enjoyer (bhoktā). Adhyāsa, then, is a mechanics of distortion. Due to it a thing appears other than what it is, it is mistaken for what it is not. Whenever there is contradiction between two experiences of the same thing, wherever something is apprehended otherwise than what it is or what it is known to be, we resolve the contradiction between the two experiences by regarding one of them as false or apparant that is, by regarding one of them as an 'adhyāsa'. Śaṅkara, in his Adhyāsa-bhāṣya, seeks to explain our habitual experience of the self which differs radically from the self as it is described in the upaniṣads, otherwise called the vedānta texts, as a case of 'adhyāsa'. He explains what he means by it by comparing his own account with other current accounts of the phenomenon of illusion and gives two commonly accepted examples of it. Had he not been concerned with the wrong psychoses involved in misperception or misapprehension, he would not have compared his own account with other accounts of perceptual error and would not have cited two illustrations from the same field. Again, had not the suggested 'adhyāsa' of self and not-self been the specific subject-matter of his dis-

course he would not have taken so much trouble in explaining away the anomaly between the suggested 'adhyāsa' of the not-self on the self in which the locus is not a *purovasthitaviṣaya* and the two illustrations of 'adhyāsa' cited by him from the field of common experience in which the locus of 'adhyāsa' is so. As this point is very significant for the metaphysics of the Advaita Vedānta and very much liable for misunderstanding and misrepresentation, it is necessary to explain it in some details. It will be seen that the illustration of the invisible Sky given by Śaṅkara is an illustration of an *actual case of illusion* or misperception which the ignorant experiences, and *not* of error as a logical possibility as the new interpreter has misunderstood it to be.

The phenomenon of 'adhyāsa' has an element of irrationality, *anirvacanīyatā*, characterising it. The nacre does not *become* silver, nor does the single moon *become* double. The nacre only *appears* as silver and the single moon *appears* as double in certain given experiences. So an 'adhyāsa' is an error of *experience* and its illogicality consists in this that in it a thing turns out in experience what it cannot be materially and in fact. In this respect the experience concerned is understood to misidentify a thing with its absolute 'other', with that which is *is not*. This may also be interpreted as illicitly superimposing a content on a foreign locus. Now, in the opening lines, Śaṅkara has suggested 'adhyāsa' of not-self on the self as also of the self on the not-self as a fact of our given experience and habitual reaction based on such experience. It is to show that Śaṅkara's interest does not lie in expounding a general theory of error of any description but in explaining the *peculiar nature* of the suggested 'adhyāsa' of the not-self on the self and what metaphysical implications it entails that certain anomalies between the *suggested* 'adhyāsa' of the not-self on the self and the *known* 'adhyāsa' in the two common place illustrations are brought forth through the *pārvapakṣa*. The anomalies are : The locus of commonly known 'adhyāsa' cited is found to be an objective something (*viṣaya*) given as 'out there in front of us' (*purovasthita*). The self in the given case, which is to be the locus of illicit superimposition has already been described as a non-object (*aviṣaya*) and being so cannot be supposed

to be 'out there in front'. In this, Śaṅkara is *not* dealing with any logical or linguistic error or with the general or formal possibility of linguistic error as a necessary feature of descriptive language as our new interpreter, oblivious of the context of discussion, and heedless of the meaning of the words used in the two sentences embodying Śaṅkara's replies, has misconstrued. The 'adhyāsa' of not self on the self, is, according to Śaṅkara a fact or an event that has *actually taken place*. It is illustrated in our everyday experience and behaviour. His problem is : how to explain this ? How can it be taken as an 'adhyāsa' even though it does not seem to fulfil the commonly regarded necessary conditions of 'adhyāsa', such as, the *purovasthitatva* and *viśayatva* of the locus of superimposition. Classical commentators have explained the psychological possibility of this 'adhyāsa' in great details. For the purpose of this essay, however, we shall bring out Śaṅkara's solution very briefly. Śaṅkara's reply is contained in two sentences which should be taken interconnectedly and not as presenting alternative solutions. It is this : the self the vedānta speaks of, is, of course, *aviśaya* and not an object in *any* sense. Not being limited or localised, it cannot also be *purovasthita* in relation to a percipient distinguished from it. But all the same, though, in itself, it is neither an object nor a direct 'content' (*viśaya*) which in relation to the senses may be supposed to be 'out there in front of us', yet as 'informed' by or apparently determined (*upahita*) by the ego, antaḥkaraṇa etc., and *as that* being the *inner* self-conscious principle apperceiving itself in distinction from the 'Thou', 'This', or objectivity in general, it realises itself as a self-shining (*svaprakāśa*) *presence* and so, as a *sākṣāt viśaya* in a *derivative* and some what quixotic sense. What oddity can there be in this supposition, pray ? Does not *ākāśa* (ether), although not a given object, nor given outside (since it is all-encompassing) as something out there and as in front of us, *appear* to have colours and shapes even though it is devoid of colour, shape and tactual determination (which could foster contact sensation ? To be the locus of an 'adhyāsa', therefore, it is *not necessary* (*na ca ayam asti niyamah*) that something should be *really* an object in direct contact and actually given in front of us. All that is necessary is that it should *appear as that* and be *felt to be* so. And this

condition is fulfilled by the suggested 'adhyāsa' of not-self on the self. Though *as* itself, the self is not an object, as the locus of 'adhyāsa' it is felt as one, though not localised as a content in direct contact as a distinctive 'this there', it is, nevertheless taken *as if* it is like that in the same way as the all-pervading Ether (ākāśa) which is invisible and never localisable in itself and which is devoid of *rūpa*, *ākāra* and *sparsa* *guṇa* is apprehended illusorily as out there looking like a cauldron and having colour etc.. And Ākāśa is the symbol of Brahman or Ātman-*Ākāśastallīngāt*. The suggested meaning of the two sentences taken together is: To be apprehended as a direct content (Sakṣāt viṣaya) as also as 'out there in front' (purovasthita), it is not necessary that something must be so in reality or as itself. It may become so *derivatively*, and in a secondary sense, by *appearing as that* without being so in the same way as the all-encompassing Ether which is no visible object, not also a direct content, not also in contact with us, not also anything having colour or shape, is nevertheless wrongly apprehended by the unenlightened as a really determined and determinate something by being taken under certain adventitious conditions (upādhis). The *Vivaraṇaprameya Saṁgraha* hints at the very same meaning when it insists that in 'adhyāsa', the self figures in its improved (saṁsṣṭarūpeṇa) form and not as itself (svarūpeṇa). Having explained the *modus operandi* of the 'adhyāsa' of self and not-self in this way, Śaṅkara shows in the remaining portion of the Adhyāsa-bhāṣya how this primal ignorance has crept into and vitiated all our day to day experiences and conventional behaviours and why its elimination, root and branch, is an indispensable condition of release from the bondage of the ignorant life that we habitually lead.

There is thus not a single word anywhere in the entire text of the Adhyāsa-bhāṣya which besides being a narration or explanation *in* language, speaks *of* language or its misuse. In the theoretic mode of an argument by *arthāpatti*, the concept of 'adhyāsa' is postulated to resolve the contradiction between our habitual taking of the self as the empirical person and the right view of the self as one self-shining unnegatable reality, the non-dual spirit as propagated by the vedānta (*vedāntavedya*). This 'adhyāsa' being of the nature of taking something as that

which it is *not*, nor ever *can be*, has a dual character as concealing (*āvaraṇa*) the thing as it is, and as projecting (*vikṣepa*) on it the appearance, that which it is not. It is in relation to this double or dual contexts that it is described as an *illicit* superimposition on a true locus, a mixing up of the real and the unreal, a *covering up* of the real by the false (*mithunīkṛtya*), a misbecoming of one for another, a misidentification. From the first line to the last line in the *Adhyāsa-bhāṣya*, Śaṅkara's theme of discourse is not a general theory of 'adhyāsa' or error but the special case of 'adhyāsa' of the self and the not-self. Yet our new interpreter finds in it nothing but discourse on illicit or illogical combination of categorially distinct ideas in propositional set-up as an inalienable feature of all descriptive language. How could this happen ?

The explanation is not far to seek. When something is mistaken for something else, when there is a fundamental misunderstanding of one thing for another which latter is absolutely different, there we have 'adhyāsa' of Śaṅkara's meaning. In misreading and misunderstanding Śaṅkara's 'adhyāsa' of self and not-self as an allegedly illogical connection (a non-relational tie ?) between a particular as the logical subject and a free-floating universal as predicate, our interpreter is under a spell of 'adhyāsa' of Śaṅkara's concept of *adhyāsa*. And the incidence of this 'adhyāsa' of *adhyāsa* can be explained in the way the Śaṅkarites explain occurrence of any 'adhyāsa'. *Adhyāsa* is misrepresentation of a content similar to one seen in the past-generated by *Samskāras*, compounded by certain adventitious defects, such as, dim light, defect of sense-organs etc. How these factors have worked in our new interpreter's *adhyāsa* of Śaṅkara's conception of 'adhyāsa' are now being shown.

The opening lines of *Adhyāsa-bhāṣya* are taken to mean by the new interpreter as follows. "Ideas like you and I and subject and object are opposed to one another like light and darkness. Any coupling of them, therefore, does violence against accepted principles of logic. But since no linguistic expressions are possible without joining ideas which are distinct and different, language by its very nature necessarily falsifies, and it is not a fit instrument for delivering the truth."³¹ In his essay published in the Quarterly the first part of Śaṅkara's statement is represented

as meaning, "The sphere of the application of ideas of subject and object are mutually exclusive as those of light and darkness and any coupling of them is ruled out by the settled points of logic".³² Persons who have not seen Śaṅkara's text in original and have not also gone through even the not-too-good translation of the lines given by Thibaut are likely to take the mistaken view that the English rendering of the lines presented above are roughly correct. But the fact is otherwise. *It is not only wholly incorrect, it is a distortion.* Śaṅkara has not used a single word to express that "since no linguistic expressions are possible without joining ideas which are distinct and different, language by its very nature necessarily falsifies, and is not a fit instrument for delivering the truth." Nothing corresponding to this nonsense is there in Śaṅkara's passage, and this is, therefore, no translation, literal or figurative, although the view is attributed to Śaṅkara. Can this be taken an idea logically deducible from what Śaṅkara has said in the first part of the sentence? The answer is an emphatic 'no'. In Śaṅkara's statement 'you and I', 'subject and object' are not used as distinct pairs, connected by the conjunctive 'and'. Here there are no four separate items; 'I' and 'subject' and 'thou and object' are syntactically related as equivalents. Moreover, 'I' and 'thou' are not the expressions Śaṅkara's uses. His expressions are 'that which is accessible to the notion of 'Thou' and 'that which is accessible to the notion of 'I', that is, that to which the word 'Thou' and the word 'I' point or refer—'Yusmadpratyayagocara' and 'Asmatpratyayagocara'. These are used as adjuncts or adjectives to the expressions 'viśaya' and 'viśayi' respectively. The expressions 'viśayi' and (viśaya' in the context mean 'knower' and 'known' or subject of knowledge (*Jñātā*) and the object of knowledge (*jñeya*). So, nothing is said about the 'ideas of you and I and subject and object. What is said is about the knower and the known apprehended referentially as the 'I' and the 'this' or 'Thou', and it is said that in so far as they are poles apart in their reference, they are incapable of being identified, that is, of being taken one as the other (*itaretarabhāvānupapattau itaretarabhāvānupatpattiḥ*). Nothing is, therefore, said about any and every distinct word being brought into relation or being joined together as part of descriptive language. About

the knower which is referred to as 'I' and is radically opposed to the reference of 'this' or 'Thou', it is said that it should not be misidentified with the object known and vice versa in so far as the *essence of the knower is constituted by pure consciousness* which is self-revealed whereas the object is *jada* and dependently revealed. In brief, it is about the illicit identification of the self with the not-self and of the not-self with the self in our ordinary experience and behaviour that Śaṅkara is speaking, and *not* about linguistic misuse of all sorts of distinct words in descriptive statements.

To facilitate comparison with Śaṅkara's text in order to find out if there is any basis for a logico-linguistic theory of 'Adhyāsa' in Śaṅkara's opening lines a close literal translation possibly much better than Thibaut's rendering, is being given. Thus Śaṅkara says : " In as much as the mutual identification (*itaretarabhāva*) of the *viśaya* (the object, the known content) and the *viśayi* (the knower, the subject of knowledge) accessible to the cognitive reference as 'Thou' (this) and as 'I' respectively (*yusmadasmatpratyayagocarayoḥ*), by nature as radically opposed as is darkness to light (*tamaḥprakāśavat viruddhasvabhāvayorḥ*) being admitted as absurd (*anupapattau siddhāyam*), the mutual identification of their respective properties and characteristics is more so (*taddharmāṇāmapi sūtaram itaretarabhāvānupapattiḥ*), therefore, the supposition of a super imposition of the *viśaya* cognised as a 'Thou' (this) and its characteristics on the *viśayi*, the essential nature of which is pure consciousness and which is cognitively apprehended as the 'I' and contrariwise, the superimposition of the *viśayui* and its characteristics on the *viśaya* will have to be admitted as logically untenable (*ityataḥ asmatpratyayagocare viśayini cidātmake yusmatpratyayagocarasya viśayasya taddharmāṇāṇi ca, tadviparyayeṇa viśayinaḥ taddharmāṇāṇi ca viśaye adhyāsaḥ mithyeti bhavituṃ yuktam*). Notwithstanding this, failing to discriminate, one from the other, the substantives and characteristics which are radically separate (*tathāpi atyantaviviktaḥ dharma-dharminoḥ itaretarāvivekena*), and also superimposing the being (self identity) of the one upon another as also the characteristics of the one upon another (*anyonyasmin anyonyātmakatām anyonyadharmān ca adhyasya*) and thus effecting a union of the Real and the false (*satyāṇṛte*

mithunīkṛtya), there has resulted from ignorance (*mithyājñānanimittatā*) this natural (beginningless) procedure and behaviour (conduct or reaction) of mankind as 'I-this', 'mine-this' (*ahamidaṁ mamedam iti naisarjiko yaṁ lokavyavahārah*).³³

It will be clear from above that Śaṅkara complains of 'adhyāsa' of *viśayi* and *viśaya* and that this 'adhyāsa' is of two forms—*anyonyasmin anyonyātmakatām*, misidentity of one with another, otherwise called '*ekatvādhyāsa*' and *anyonyasmin anyonyadharmam*, misattribution of the properties of one to the other, otherwise called '*tādātmyādhyāsa*'. He also points out in the first part of his statement that the second presupposes the first and where the first is illegitimate the second is more so. Vivaraṇa-prameya brings out the distinction more clearly by showing that the first is *ānubhāvika*, that is, relative to one's immediate feeling or experience, while the second involving relation between a substantive and attributive is *vyāvahārika*, that is, relative to behavioural reaction. The illustrations '*ahamidaṁ*' and '*mamedam*' are to be interpreted in both the ways. But where elementary issues are misunderstood and misinterpreted there is little scope for deeper analysis. Our new interpreter initially commits the mistake in taking Śaṅkara's *viśayi* and *viśaya* to mean the 'logical subject' and the 'logical predicate' of a proposition. It did not strike him that there is no human language in which *viśaya* and '*vidheya*' are used as equivalent terms. He did not also pause to consider that what can be regarded as the 'logical subject' and the 'logical predicate'—both fall inside Śaṅkara's concepts of *viśaya*, meaning the object known (*jñeya*). At the basis of his mistake in confounding *viśayi* and *viśaya* with logical subject and predicate can be found his incapacity to follow the syntactical link between *viśayi* and *asmatpratyayagocara* in the one case, and between *viśaya* and *yusmatpratyayagocara* in the other case—a syntactical connection exhibited at least twice by Śaṅkara in the opening paragraph. This his error, which can be called an error of omission (non-observation) is, however, prelude to another error of commission (mal-observation), and this consists in his regarding *yusmat*, *Asmat*, *Viśayi*, and *Viśaya* as logically distinct words allied to Russell's 'ego-centric particulars'. And this accounts for his

conjunctive use of these expressions in his rendering (misrendering) as 'ideas like you and I *and* subject and object etc'. Next, since he understands descriptive language as coupling and combining two distinct ideas, and since any such combination is to take the form, not of two conjoined words, such as, tables *and* chairs, or red and not-red, which do not make a sentence, but of a proposition or sentence to fulfil the requirement of descriptive language. So Śaṅkara's *subject* and *object* get metamorphosed into the logical *subject* and the logical *predicate*. This then prepares the ground for further metamorphosis. It is this. Since Śaṅkara speaks of 'adhyāsa' about subject and object, and since the subject and object of Śaṅkara has to be taken as subject and predicate to meet the exigency of his faulty 'Saṃskāra', of descriptive language or descriptive statements as illogically combining or coupling two incompatible contents, subject and predicate, therefore, the 'adhyāsa' of Śaṅkara, naturally, has to stand for a "propositional relation" being understood as illogical. This, in short, gives the early phase in the development of the linguistic theory of 'adhyāsa'. The most intriguing thing about it is : what was introduced by Śaṅkara as a 'particular instance' of 'adhyāsa' in respect of self and the not-self, the subject and the object is, through misunderstanding of the conventional meanings of words used, made into the 'general pattern' of all adhyāsas as a *propositional relation between logical subjects and logical predicates* !

For the second stage in the development of this marvellous thesis, he had to come under a further impact of illusion, a new and an additional 'adhyāsa'. Coming across, Śaṅkara's definition of 'adhyāsa' he becomes the victim of this new 'adhyāsa'. But here the entire blame is not to be laid at his door. Mr. George Thibaut who was acting as his guide proved a false guide, since in spite of the reference he made to the Bhāmati in his foot notes, he did not have a clear grasp of Śaṅkara's definition.³⁴ Śaṅkara's '*Smṛtirūpaṃ paratra pūrvadṛṣṭāvabhāsaṃ*' was by Thibaut rendered into 'The apparant presentation, in the form of remembrance, to consciousness of something previously observed, in some other thing.' This innocent looking translation becomes a grievous mistake when 'smṛtirūpa' of the definition is misinterpreted as a form of 'remembering' as has been done by Thibaut,

or as meaning 'memory' as has been understood by the new interpreter.³⁵ The expression 'smṛttirūpa' does not mean *smṛti*. *Smṛti* is knowledge of something past as *past*, recognition (*pratyabhijñā*) is the knowledge of something *present* as identical with its past-self, 'adhyāsa' involving wrong presentation is neither. But all the three have a common factor which is : 'being occasioned by past 'saṃskāra' -pūrvasamskārajanyatā. But while memory is *exclusively* due to this *saṃskāra* and recognition is partly conditioned by the present *perception*, an 'adhyāsa' or misperception is determined partly by *non-perception* of the given as itself due to certain adventitious defect. Any way, in order not to confuse with the Prābhākara view of error, the illusion content is not to be taken as a 'remembered' content but only as a misrepresentation. Thibaut is not clear on this point. The interpretation given by the new theorist is based on a mistaken deduction made from Thibaut's analysis of the Bhāmata where Bhāmata presents the case of the right application of a class-concept to a new case of perception of an individual. This he takes up as showing the analysis of 'adhyāsa' and, therefore, of wrong application of a concept, and as a result, he comes out with the thesis that 'in his definition of 'adhyāsa' Śaṅkara seems to proclaim that any descriptive statement involves the use of a class-idea and this class-idea which is generated and presented by *Smṛti* falsifies the unique character of the unique individual'.³⁶ That 'adhyāsa' in Śaṅkara's taking is a memory generating a class-idea is simply ludicrous since memory does not generate such ideas, and in the perception of silver in a nacre, there is misperception of *one content for another*, and there is no *mis-predication* of a character to a substantive *given* already in advance. In the given case, we say 'This is silver', not 'the nacre in silver', not also 'this is *a* silver, as we say, 'this is *a* cow'. It can be seen that neither the rendering of Śaṅkara's definition of 'adhyāsa' attempted by our new interpreter as shown above nor the rendering given by him in his paper in the Quarterly where 'adhyāsa' is openly taken by him as a 'new doctrine of predication', he shows any respect to the words used by Śaṅkara in the definition stated by him.³⁷ This creates the impression that, according to this new interpreter, to present the view of a classical philosopher it is unnecessary or superfluous to see what he has *actually said*

and the proper philosophic approach would be to ignore all 'factual details' (since they are factual) and to theorise about what the philosopher 'should have said'. Such a discussion may be philosophic, according to the new norm, but it is simply un-academic.

The 'avabhāsa' called 'adhyāsa' is a given presentative experience which is never known in all its definable characteristics unless and until it is sublated,—being initially indistinguishable from normal presentative experience. When it is *known* as an 'adhyāsa', it is found to be a presentative experience (or experience of a presented content) which as sublated is not a 'bhāsa' but an 'avabhāsa'; it is also known as mistaking one thing for another; lastly, it is felt as some process which *like* *smṛti* is generated by past associations (*saṃskāra*), although not by that alone as *smṛti* is, but by *saṃskāras* compounded by some adventitious defects. According to Vācaspati 'avabhāsa' is the most significant part of the definition of Śaṅkara, while Ratnaprabhā takes 'paratra avabhāsa' as the most significant part. The other expressions, such as, 'smṛtirūpa' and 'pūrvadr̥ṣṭa' are to be taken as adjuncts. Pañcapādikā or Vivaraṇa shows no disagreement on this rendering. Taking note of all these, Śaṅkara's definition of 'adhyāsa' can be textually rendered as follows : *Adhyāsa*, as a false cognition, is an apparent presentative experience in an alien locus of a content *like* one seen in the past, resembling *smṛti* or memory—knowledge. Again, *adhyāsa*, in the sense of a false content, is "an apparently presented content in an alien locus, resembling one seen in the past, *as* in memory." In no sense, it can be the application of a class-concept or a universal misrepresenting a unique individual which the theorist regards as the general feature of all descriptive statements or propositions, firstly, because it is *not* what Śaṅkara says, secondly, because in 'adhyāsa', we do not have a general theory of predication, what we have is mistaking one thing for another or misidentifying things, thirdly because every judgmental knowledge in terms of a concept is *not* a case of a sublated knowledge as 'avabhāsa' always is, and fourthly, because the concept of unique individual with unique character is unknown to the Advaita literature,—

neither Brahman, the qualityless, nor the phenomenal pluralities with both generic and specific and characters integrated by the relation of *tādātmya* being one such.

If the first stage of the linguistic theory of 'adhyāsa' has been reached by an *ādhyāsika* taking of the *viśaya* and the *viśayi* of Śaṅkara (which meant subject of knowledge and object of knowledge, *jñātā* and *jñeya*) as the logical subject and the logical predicate of any proposition and so of any descriptive statement, the second stage is reached when this logical subject and the logical predicate are shown respectively. As the unique individual and the free-floating class-idea or universal behaving erratically in relation to its locus. An *ādhyāsika* view of Śaṅkara's definition of 'adhyāsa' as a predication relation between an individual and a class-idea helps the new theorist to achieve this transition. What is remarkable here is that, while the first *adhyāsa* in respect of the meaning of Śaṅkara's opening sentence enables the theorist to leave off Śaṅkara's context and his discussion on the 'adhyāsa' of self and not-self—the subject-matter of his entire discourse in the *Adhyāsa-bhāṣya* and to reinterpret 'adhyāsa' as dealing with the illegitimate relationship between the logical subject and logical predicate in all descriptive statement, this new *adhyāsa* in respect of Śaṅkara's definition of 'adhyāsa' enables him to misconstrue all propositional relations in descriptive sentences as a relation between a unique individual or a particular as the subject and a universal or class-idea as a predicate. But there is also a third and final stage in the *ādhyāsika* rendering not only of Śaṅkara but also of the principles of logic prevalent among ordinary mortals. To this we now turn.

Undertaking to discharge the self-imposed responsibility of demonstrating how a propositional relation can fare as an 'adhyāsa',—an illogical construction, and how this ingenious offspring of self-deception can pass as the Śaṅkarite conception of 'adhyāsa', he, on the one hand, reduces the logical subject and the logical predicate to logical absurdities, and on the other hand, misquotes or misrepresents classical commentators and classical texts as lending support to his nonsense. This, then, is the third and the consummate phase of his *ādhyāsika* rendering of Śaṅkara's 'adhyāsa'. To be in-

compatible, the logical subject and the logical predicate of descriptive statements must be shown as categorially distinct. This is done by taking the one as a unique individual, a self-complete entity with existential import but without any descriptive meaning, and by taking the other as a free-floating apparition which although a universal does not necessarily contain the implication of having been instantiated. In this way, he shelves the one beyond the pale of language and rears the other up to the unearthly region of abstract singularity (since nothing inhering in number of individuals can be a universal). In this, he falls a victim to a series of new *adhyāśas*. He does not pause to consider first, if such an abstracted individual and a disembodied universal can work as any logical subject and logical predicate of any propositions, contrariwise if the logical subject and the logical predicate of propositions can be *as themselves* extended to such absurd limits. Yet this absurdity is bolstered up in order to provide support for the so-called doctrine of 'adhyāsa' as a logical doctrine as distinguished from the psychological. Lest any one should suspect that the absurd logical doctrine of 'adhyāsa' manipulated by him as absolutely no relevance for the Śāṅkarite conception, he, on the next, takes the help of certain *ādhyāsika* interpretation of a few classical passages here and there. The most important as also the most interesting item in his *ādhyāsika* venture with 'adhyāsa' can be found in this that losing sight of the syntactical connection between subject and '*asmatpratyagocara*' on the one hand, and object and '*yuṣmatpratyayagocara*' on the other, Śāṅkara's statement in respect of a *particular instance* of *adhyāsa*, such as *between self and not-self* or between *jñātā* and '*jñeya*' is *misunderstood and misinterpreted by him as a relation between logical subject and logical predicate, furnishing the general basis of all kinds of a 'adhyāśas' on linguistic lines*. The relation between a logical subject and logical predicate, of course, gives a proposition or linguistic statement. So through misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the meaning of 'subject' and 'object', he comes to fashion his linguistic theory of *adhyāsa* as involving an illegitimate tying between any subject-word and predicate word. What a fertile imagination! Then, again, Śāṅkara's own statement in the *adhyāsa-bhāṣya* to the effect that in order that there may take place an 'adhyāsa' in the sense of an illusion

or misperception, it is *not* an absolutely necessary condition that the locus of 'adhyāsa' or the object to be misperceived, must be one 'given' as 'a direct content out there in front of the perceiver, since ākāśa, although no perceivable and no direct content present in front, is as a matter of fact, wrongly taken to be so, and properties which can never be attributed to it are *actually* and wrongly attributed to it by the ignorant—is misconstrued by our theorist as a statement not in support of an *actual* and so *psychological illusion* to which all of us are ordinarily subject, but as a statement in support of the absurd logical and linguistic theory of 'adhyāsa' of his manipulation. Not only Śaṅkara, even Vācaspati in certain imaginary passages³⁸ is quoted as replying that 'the vedānta doctrine of logical error condemns equally those judgment which are correct and those which are called incorrect ones.' Similarly, the explanation given by vivaraṇa-prameya and M.M. P. N. Tarkabhūṣaṇ of the relation of 'Tādātmya' is misread and misinterpreted as an explanation of 'Tādātmyādhyāsa'³⁹, simply because the two concepts 'tādātmya' and 'tādātmyādhyāsa' appear as synonymous to him. His crowning achievement in this direction, however, can be found when he quotes the passage from vivaraṇa-prameya—"yadyapi ātmānā-tmanoḥ anyonyasmin anyonyatādātmyādhyāsaḥ samānaḥ tathāpi ātmanaḥ saṁsṛṣṭarāpena eva adhyāsaḥ na svarāpena iti satyatvaṁ" as 'forcefully' and 'clearly' explaining the universal as a mere idea (kalpanā) and the particular as the Real.⁴⁰ Had it not been true that our friend, in his revolt against the classical and so traditional interpreters of Śaṅkara, had been all the while labouring under the spell of a series of 'adhyāsas' of the classical psychological type, the charge of intellectual dishonesty and deliberate fabrication would have been irresistible.

In consideration of the peculiar predicament he has been labouring under, his charges that Śaṅkara's philosophy and the Śaṅkarite concept of 'adhyāsa' have been "utterly misunderstood" by all his classical commentators and interpreters down up to our own times, need not be considered seriously. His criticisms of Śaṅkara's concept of 'adhyāsa' in his article published in the Quarterly, proceeding as they do from an *ādhyāsika* rendering of that concept, should be similarly ignored as not affecting Śaṅkara or his doctrine in any way, and did not Śaṅkara himself

say—"yatra yadadhyāsaḥ tatkr̥tena doṣeṇa guṇeṇa vā aṇumātre-nāpi sa na sambadhyate"? Śāṅkara by his *viśaya* and *viśayi* did *not* understand the subject and predicate of any linguistic expression. He did *not* also take 'adhyāsa' to stand for a propositional relation of any description. In his *Adhyāsa-bhāṣya*, he was concerned *neither* with any theory of predication *nor* with any critique of language. He also did *not* evince any interest in a general theory of error or illusion. He was singularly interested in the mistaken sense of identity and the illicit superimposition of the self and not-self which our conventional experience and behaviour entail and involve. And this he named as 'adhyāsa', and he took it to mean mistaking a thing for what it is not and what it can never be. By rejecting *samavāya* as a relation and expousing *tādātmya*, he discountenances independent reality of relation. He did not identify *tādātmya* with *tādātmyāadhyāsa*. It is *not* his view that in every proposition, a particular is collected under a universal either of the sortal type or a characterising type. It is *not* Śāṅkara's view that every proposition is of the subject-predicate type. It is *not* Śāṅkara's view that the logical subject and the logical predicate—one being a unique individual, a bare particular, and the other being a free-floating universal—are categorially distinct and opposed and that any relation between them is, therefore, logically false, and that this is 'adhyāsa' of his meaning. In Śāṅkara's philosophy, there is *no* room for bare particulars and free-floating universals, and *no* place for a mistaken judgment or error except on the ground of actual sublation or rejection. This being the case, all the absurd criticisms against doctrines fancifully worked out and paraded as Śāṅkara's own are quixotic passes and thrust against shadows.

—S. K. Chattopadhyaya

NOTES

1. G. Misra-Srimanta Pratap Seth Vedanta Lecture 1969, published in his *Analytical Studies in Indian Philosophical Problems*, Utkal University, p. 4.
2. Ibid.
3. His paper-Śaṅkara's doctrine of Adhyāsa, *Ind. Phil. Quarterly* Vol. II No. 3 pp. 228-229.
4. *Analytical Studies* pp. 4-7.
5. *Op. cit.* p. 9 also pp. 12-14.
6. *Ind. Phil. Quarterly* Vol. II No. 3.
7. *Op. cit.* P. 225.
8. *Op. cit.* 228.
9. *Analytical Studies* pp. 5-6.
10. *Ind. Phil. Quarterly* Vol II No. 3 pp. 229-30.
11. Ibid, p. 229.
12. *Op. cit.* 225 opening paragraph.
13. *Analytical Studies* pp. 4-5, also *Ind. Phil. Quarterly* Vol. II No. 3 p. 229 and p. 233.
14. Strangely enough after having worked out this noxious theory as Śaṅkaras own the interpreter has made it into a point of criticism against Śaṅkara. *Ind. Phil. Quarterly* P. 234.
15. *Op. cit* pp. 229-230.
16. *Op. Cit* p. 225.
17. *Op. Cit* p. 230.
18. *Analytical studies* p. 5.
19. *Ind. Phil. Quarterly* Vol. II No. 3 p. 227.
20. Ibid.
21. *Six ways of knowing* pp. 310-11.
22. *Ind. Phil. Quarterly* Vol. II No. 3 p. 227.
23. Ibid.
24. *Analytical studies* pp. 10-11.
25. *Ind. Phil. Quarterly* Vol. II No. 3 p. 227.
26. Ibid.
27. *Op. cit.* p. 228.
28. *Op. cit* 229.
30. G. Misra's paper in the *Quarterly* referred to already.
31. *Analytical Studies* p. 5.
32. *Ind. Phil. Quarterly* Vol. II No. 3 p. 229.
33. S. B. opening sentences.

34. Sacred Books of the East. Vol. XXXIV p. 4.
35. Ibid also G. Misra-Analytical Studies p. 5.
36. Ibid.
37. Ind. Phil. Quarterly Vol. II No. 3. p. 229.
38. His paper in Quarterly p. 228.
39. Op. cit. p. 226.
40. Op. cit. pp. 231-32 compare Tarkabhūṣaṇ's edition of Vivaraṇa-prameya Saṃgraha, Vasumati Sāhitya Mandir, new edition, pp. 125-132 both for explanation of the passage and also for explanation of the relation of Tādātmya (not tādātmyādhyaśa).