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## Advaitic Language of Sublation

*U.A. Vinay Kumar\**

### Introduction

It is trendy these days to say that 'to be is to be the value of a variable.' So, a proposition 'This is a table' is symbolized as  $(\exists x) Tx$ , or 'Table exists' is symbolically written as  $(Tx)$ . In the former symbolism,  $x$ , the variable has to be given the 'value' — which in this case happens to be 'table.' In such a symbolism, the variable-value 'table' has to be 'instantiated,' which instantiation is again purely imaginary. Added to this, the meaning 'proximity' that could be attributed to the word 'this' seems to be completely lost in the din of symbolism. In the latter, semantically there seems to be some kind of a tautology —  $x$  is  $T$ .

However, without prejudice to the general utility of logical symbolisms or logical understanding, it can be said that the *ultimate* court of appeal for the *truth* of a proposition is not the logical truth-value or logical network, rather it is the experience. Logic, or its proposition(s), does not really bother about *what there is*. Rather logic is eager to see to it that the network it creates is (tautologically) true. Or, if a singular proposition is involved then it would speak of its possible

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\* Reader, Department of Philosophy, Goa University, Goa - 403 206. India.

truth-values. In this sense, logical truth can be said to be vacuous; whereas, a direct experiential set-up points to an object-situation. So long as this object-situation persists with its contents — desirable or otherwise — experience would wield the conclusive authority over the truth of the propositions that the experience generates. The propositions that emerge from experience may be called as cognitive propositions since they have — or are supposed to have — express cognitive content. *Experiential content* as the determinant of truth-value of a cognitive proposition may be in a way equated with the *numerical value* of a solution of material science problem. Numerical value fixes the final answer to the abstract calculations that are made through symbolisms.

In logic, the symbolism  $(\exists x)$  or  $(x)$  presupposes the existence — or at any rate — the implicit possibilities of existence of an external object *other than the experiencing subject*. But then one could ask: is there an 'external object'? If there is one, then, how does one come to know of/about it? How does one know the object to be real as opposed to merely imaginary? Over the years, realism and rationalism, and their innumerable persuasions, belonging to both Indian and Western traditions, have tried to answer this problem, and have done so in many different ways.

In this paper I am mainly concerned with the logic and language of a special Advaitic device called sublation. In this paper I confine myself to Śaṅkara and Dharmarāja. Sublation or *bādha* is an experiential episode that enables the experiencing subject to draw conclusions about the permanent falsity of an entity *via* the falsity of the corresponding cognitive content. Obviously an examination of this concept has also to look into the linguistic formulations of these episodes, since an

experiential episode always requires an articulating mode, such as language. I use the term Advaita/Advaitins in this paper mainly with reference to the above-stated thinkers.

The concept of *bādha* or sublation informs us that, that which is sublated/sublatable is unreal; thus, any entity, real or imaginary, if sublated, or is sublatable, then it is unreal; obviously its linguistic counterpart in a proposition makes the *whole* proposition susceptible to error, hence the falsity of the proposition (*in toto*/partially). [We shall see later in greater detail whether it is proper to say that the *whole* proposition becomes prone to falsity/error just because some part of it is falsified.] And, alternatively that which is unsublated and/or unsublatable is real, its linguistic counterpart in a proposition is also conceded as true. The term 'real' is purported to mean 'existence in triple time,' *trikāla-abādhita*, and 'unreal' to mean 'non-existence in triple time,' *trikāla-bādhita*. There is also an intermediary class, which is sometimes 'red' and some other times 'unreal.' Outwardly the whole thing looks simple; and gives an impression that there is one-to-one correspondence between sublation and unreality, and unsublation and reality. Yet it will soon become clear that the matter is extremely complex, and that deciding the reality-status through sublation is fraught with difficulties.

While it is common that from the experience of cognitive entity one can necessarily move to its propositional (linguistic) articulation one cannot necessarily move from formal propositional statement to the actual existence of its cognitive counterpart, for, the latter *could be* imaginary. Thus, mere propositional statements give only a contingent situation which may or may not have a corresponding cognitive experiential situation. The movement from cognition to propositional articulation includes the movement to reality-status and the

truth-value status, of the cognitive content and its linguistic form.

The cognitive propositions being in precedence over merely formal propositions with respect to cognitive content, and they being in a necessary relation to cognitive language, one could pertinently ask for an elaboration of the role of language in all our cognitive dealings. Our life is almost fully pervaded by cognitive content and cognitive propositions. Every cognitive proposition directly attempts to connect two things; the subject of experience — the agent who is experiencing (mind, soul, etc.) — on the one hand, and the object of experience on the other. The subject tries to 'comprehend' the object. At once language comes a-calling. For, without language, comprehension of an object is, or at least seems, impossible. Thus, cognitive content and the language are the twin things that occupy us. Though there is this necessary relation between the experience and language, they are not identical, and hence they are not one entity.

If so, what is the role of language in all these affairs? Does it play a postman?

- (i) A postman is presumed to faithfully deliver the goods and go. He does not tamper even a bit with the content. His *handling* of the goods is only incidental, and *does not affect* the content in any way.
- (ii) Or shall we say that language is sometimes *like*, and some other times *unlike*, a postman? And what it means to say language is *not like* a postman?

The ensuing analysis of the concept of *bādhā* is expected to help us decide on this question.

## I

**Cognitive Content and Propositions**

In Advaita, almost all (cognitive) propositions are treated as of substantive-adjective (predicate) relation type. Therefore, any formalism that one wants to arrive at in this case has to bear in mind the cognitive nature of the propositions. Advaitins consider most sentences (*vākyas*) as an adjective is predicated of substantive (*uddēśya-vidheya-sambandha* or *viśeṣya-viśeṣaṇa-sambandha*).<sup>1</sup> However, there is one notable exception to this characterization. Advaitins consider "some *vākyas* as not expressing this general subject-predicate or substantive-adjective relation."<sup>2</sup> The class of identity propositions is the exception. The identity propositions cannot be interpreted in a substantive-predicate way.

In contrast, Bertrand Russell refutes the claim that all or most propositions are of subject-predicate form. This he does by citing the vast class of asymmetrical propositions, as for example, "A is greater than B." But the Advaitins, according to D.M. Datta, will prefer to force the asymmetrical propositions of Russell into the very form of ordinary substantive-quality way.<sup>3</sup> The way they do this constitutes

1. D.M. Datta (1972), pp. 317-18 "(The Advaitins) . . . contend that though most sentences can be considered as propositions, in which an adjective is predicated of a substantive, there are a few *vākyas* which cannot be taken as expressing this general subject-predicate or substantive adjective relation . . . ."
2. *Ibid.*, p. 318.
3. D.M. Datta, (1972), p. 318 "The motive that inspires Russell to maintain that the subject-predicate form is not universal, is to refute absolutism, which he thinks is based on the fundamental misconception that all judgements predicate some quality or qualities of Reality . . . (he does this by) showing that all judgements do not contain a subject and a predicate. . . ."

another interesting matter.

In non-identity propositions, always, the meaning is said to be relational — thus we have *samsargāvagāhī vākyas*; whereas the identity propositions express a non-relational meaning, which is not constituted by the relations of two or more elements. Such a sentence is called *akhaṇḍārthaka-vākyam* — a sentence with an indivisible or unitary or non-relational meaning. These *akhaṇḍārthaka-vākyas*, in appearance, are very much similar to the subject-predicate type of propositions. However, they are, in reality, not belonging to the subject-predicate type. (Henceforth I use the term 'proposition(s)' or 'cognitive proposition(s)' for 'cognitive proposition(s),' unless I have stated otherwise.)

Now the question is: Is there any cognitive content in such identity propositions? In asking this question we should not forget that there is another equally tricky situation presented by the 'contradictory' content. One could claim that under the class of cognitive propositions, the *akhaṇḍārthaka-vākyas* may be construed as forming one extreme-end of the hierarchy while the other being constituted by a-cognitive entities without even an express-status to them in a proposition, such as, for example, 'son-of-a-barren-woman,' (*vandhyāputra*), which have no ontological existence, or being, *ab initio*. Does this then imply "infinite" cognitive content at one end and 'zero' cognitive content at the other?<sup>4</sup>

In both these proposition-cases the truth-claim has to be decided on the basis of cognitive content or its absence; equally so the middle-range cognitive propositions. This follows from our earlier assertion that cognitive content determines the status — reality and truth. Cognitive content is the meaning.

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4. Compare Fregean Hierarchy, A.K. Sen, (1998) p. 187.

If so, absence of cognitive content in any proposition makes it meaningless. In this way, if the cognitive content is assigned the status of an arbiter to decide the truth-value of a cognitive proposition, then the absence of cognitive content in a proposition that contains the term "son-of-a-barren-woman" as in —

"'Son-of-a-barren-woman' does not exist" (SoBW) [1]

will not make it false, but meaningless, even though the "proposition" is construed to be true. This is a fictitious problem created by the imaginative faculty and injected through language. And this is an uncalled-for imagination. For an Advaitin, this problem would not have arisen at all. After all no one would seriously assert a proposition with "son-of-a-barren-woman" as a subject or as a predicate.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, from a purely logical point of view no one can say [1] is or is not

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5. Svāmi Saccidanandendra Saraswati (1998), pp. 110-11; 2.2.5.28.58. In the context of refuting the Vijñānavādin, Śaṅkara argues that the awareness and the object of awareness have to be, of necessity, different. This is because, he says, the difference between them is also an object of awareness. One could argue against this by saying "what is the object of awareness now looks like/as if being outside, even though it is merely an internal object." One who argues this way is overtly and subjectively desirous of denying the external (*bahirvat*) reality. Such subjectivity has no place in arguments. If he were not desirous that way, how could he use such a word — "x looks as if it exists outside" at all? After all — "A [absolute] non-entity that 'x' is, cannot be visible at all in the first place." So there is no question of speaking about its existence either inside or outside. No one speaks thus: "Viṣṇumitra looks like a *vandhyāputra* (son-of-a-barren-woman)." SoBW, being totally non-existent, can neither be likened to something nor be accessible for likening. In Śaṅkara's example, something, Viṣṇumitra, a real entity, has been likened to that which is not accessible for likening, SoBW, when in fact we cannot



true, unless one actually begins to look into the semantics of the subject term 'SoBW.' But then that will involve getting *inside* the term, a conceptual dissection. As such getting into the term is all that is available for anyone to decide the truth of such subject-terms as for example 'SoBW,' 'Square-circle,' etc. Otherwise no one — not even the greatest of the logicians/scientists — can a priori rule out that they do not exist. And this is what even an Advaitin does. If the subject-term (or predicate-term as the case may be) has no corresponding cognitive content, the proposition ceases to be of meaning, since cognitive content is meaning, although it may be relational. That is why the term 'SoBW' is, cognitive content-wise *tuccha*, where *tuccha* denotes *lowest* in the cognitive hierarchy. As such there is no significant mention of it in any proposition, because the discussion on mere imaginary propositions is not encouraged. For our understanding, however, we can add that the proposition [1] may be termed as *tuccha vākya* — the lowest proposition of non or a-cognitive sort. The understanding that results from [1] is merely verbal just as Matilal has pointed out.<sup>6</sup> This could be a classic instance for an Advaitin where language fails — i.e. it makes us go away from cognitive content. Language that was summoned to reflect our cognitions faithfully, like the proverbial 'hedge started grazing,' began reflecting itself! The same can be said of what are imaginary entities like *gagana-kusuma*, *śaśaka-sṛṅga*,

→ seriously use SoBW either as a subject or as a predicate.

*sarvalokaprasiddhām bahiravabhāsamānām sañvoidam pratilābhamānāḥ  
pratyākhyātukāmāśca bāhyamartham 'bahirovat' iti vatkāram kuroanti/  
itarathā hi kasmāt 'bahirovat' iti brūyuh? na hi viṣṇumitrah  
vandhyāputravat avabhāsate iti kaścit acakṣīta . . .*

6. Matilal (1997), see "2.2 Empty Terms, and 2.2 Reference and Existence" in "Problems of Philosophical Logic in Navya-Nyāya" pp. 77 f.

'unicorns,' 'golden-mountain,' etc. The rule is semantics that enables the logical dissection of the concerned term. The falsity has to be semantically and logically justified. Cognitive nullity is the final determinant of reality-status and truth-value in this case. Not always language at outer level reflects reality.

While the propositional truth-value mainly hinges on the cognitive content, we can ask — upon what does the reality or unreality of the cognitive content hinge? Now, to say that propositions determine the reality/unreality of the cognitive content is to put the cart before the horse. Or to cite the experience itself as the deciding factor is to beg the question. Yet there is no other Court of appeal available to us apart from our experience. The only alterations in this Court of experience one could possibly make are to take either a partial or a holistic view of human experience. The Advaitins opt for the latter, i.e. they take a holistic view. Their holism takes into account not merely the waking state experiences but also the illusory experiences falling within the ambit of waking state, and dream-experiences during sleep, and also what lies outside the purview of wakefulness and dreams in sleep, i.e. deep sleep. It is by the keen analysis of these common human experiences that they have arrived at the criterion of reality called the *abādhittva*, the non-sublation theory of reality, which seems to subsume under it different logics.

Now we shall examine the origin of the concept of *bādhā* in Śaṅkara.

## II

### **Sublation of Predicate-content**

The origin of sublation as criterion of reality (and consequently truth) may be traced to the metaphors used by Śaṅkara in his preamble to the *Brahma-Sūtra-Bhāṣya*. Śaṅkara, while discussing

the *adhyāsa* (superimposition) between self and the non-Self, first defines *adhyāsa* in a particular manner and cites two metaphors —

- (i) *śuktika hi rajatavadavabhāṣate*<sup>7</sup>  
“Nacre itself appears like silver” (NS-type)
- (ii) *ekaścandraḥ sadvitiyavat*<sup>8</sup>  
“Same moon, i.e. the single, self-same moon, appears to be with another (moon)” (DM-type) (both tr. mine)

The most common meaning of *adhyāsa* being mistaking one thing as what it is not,<sup>9</sup> Śaṅkara speaks of three things implicitly or otherwise, that may be called as *conditions of adhyāsa*. That is, the conditions those are to be satisfied in order for one to know that there is *adhyāsa* committed by him. They are:

- (a) Necessity of *simultaneous apprehension* of both the entities involved in *adhyāsa*,
- (b) *Necessary unreality* of one of the two entities, including *necessary reality (relative reality or absolute)* of the other, and
- (c) The *simultaneous knowledge* of these two facts in order that there is the right knowledge.

[One may notice some amount of ambiguity regarding the terms ‘apprehension’ and ‘knowledge’ as used above in (a) and (c).]

We should note that the *adhyāsa* or superimposition has to be known as an error committed presently, and to be known presently by the person himself. Others’ knowledge of this error in no way helps the individual in question to realize the

7. Svāmi (1998), *Adhyāsa Bhāṣya* vol. I.

8. *Ibid.*

9. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

said error. The hypothesis of the possible falsity of an experience *as stated by others* can only help one under error form such a hypothesis. Yet it is he himself — that is the person under error — *who has to realize it*. Therefore, the conditions of *adhyāsa* are essentially:

- (i) The conditions of occurrence of *adhyāsa*, and
- (ii) The conditions of its simultaneous understanding.

Otherwise, if it was mere explanation of the occurrence of *adhyāsa*, then since the same could perhaps be well illustrated by NS-type illusion easily, without DM-type illusion, NS-type illusion alone could be sufficient.

In an illusion case of NS-type, later-falsity of 'silver' clearly satisfies (b). Thus, one knows that the 'entity' (or merely the 'predicate?'), which was perceived earlier as silver is unreal. Since no one can have the cognition of the form "*This nacre is/was silver,*" NS-type illusion apparently fails to fulfil the first condition of *adhyāsa* of simultaneous apprehension of the two entities involved in *adhyāsa*. To avoid this contingency the existence of an abstract substratum could be posited. Even then NS-type illusion does not and *cannot* ensure *sensory-perception* of such a substratum. Therefore, so long as such perception does not come forth, a skeptic (or a Berkeleyan perhaps) could always hold that there is no — and cannot be — such a substratum. To avoid this further contingency (in addition to the simultaneous knowledge of error) there ought to be at least one example of sensorily simultaneous — but at the same time erroneous — perception; so that people would at least grant the possibility that there could be simultaneous knowledge and error occurring in an individual. Moreover, meaning in any non-identity proposition being relational, there ought to be *something* to which the silverness at  $t_1$  and nacreity at  $t_2$  are attributed. Therefore, to satisfy this, Śaṅkara brings

in a DM-type illusion. This illusion presents two sensorial moons — one real, and the other illusory. However, let us term the earlier referred to abstract substratum as 'this,' where the term 'this' primarily denotes the existence of an *external object/locus*, proximate or otherwise.

In the NS-type illusion there is surely *no simultaneous* knowledge of the two entities in the sense that the silver that I *presently perceive* is *not-silver*. That is, there is neither the simultaneity of knowledge of 'silver' and '*nacre*,' or of the 'silver' and '*not-silver*.' The occurrence of 'knowledge' of false silver *later* or the *presumption* of the falsity of the silver-experience coming forth due to such frequent illusory experiences in our day-to-day life *cannot* act as an appropriate substitution to simultaneous knowledge of two entities, which is a necessary condition for *adhyāsa* to take place as stated above in (a) or (c). The abstract substratum "this" could always be skeptically dismissed after all. So, as mentioned earlier, to ensure at least a psychological possibility of such simultaneity (i.e. simultaneity of two sensory entities, one real and the other unreal, and also their simultaneous apprehension/knowledge) Śaṅkara brings in the DM-type illusion. This type of illusion clearly takes care of the third condition. There is knowledge/apprehension, whatever you wish to call it, of *both the entities simultaneously*. Since we already *know* beforehand that the second moon that is *presently seen* out there is after all *not* there — yet is *being perceived* by the sense-organs *here* (external locus) *and now* — it is unreal and is also sensorial and simultaneous to the sensory-perception of the real moon.

The analogous application of this idea of *adhyāsa* to the first order cognitive propositions having 'I' as the subject-term, as in 'I am this (body)' *ahamidam*, should result — (Śaṅkara wishes) — in the falsity of all relational

substantive–adjective propositions with the sole exception of identity proposition *aham brahmāsmi*. In other words, the cognitive content of the respective terms should all be sublated, retaining the *Brahman*-content alone. For this purpose one must start *perceiving* their (those I-proposition's) cognitive content counterpart of 'I' as *such*. This application leads one to many logical difficulties.<sup>10</sup>

The DM-type illusion, though primarily important to make the point of simultaneous apprehension of falsity, is limited in its sentential analysis because, as stated already, almost all propositions, with the sole exception of identity propositions, are analysed into subject-predicate type. [For an exhaustive treatment please see Kumar (2006) ICPR volume.]

Thus, NS-type of illusion constitutes the core as it explicitly involves both S-P analysis [Subject-Predicate analysis] (which is apparently complex in DM-type otherwise), and positing of an abstract (i.e. un-predicated) unchanging *external* substratum.

The silver-predicate gave room for nacre-predicate; thereby nacre-predicate falsified the proposition.

"This is silver (asserted at  $t_1$ )" [2]

It is false to the limited extent of predication. Let us note that the 'isness' in [2] is attached to the substratum and not to the predicate. Cognitively speaking, the previously perceived silver turned out to be unreal; hence it is now construed as illusory silver. We shall denote such illusory objects or predicates by indicating them in single quotes. So we have 'silver,' which is, now needless to say, unreal/false. Although I had seen silver (actual from my viewpoint) at  $t_1$ , I now realize that what I had seen is really not there (from the object-point of view). Along with this perception I also start thinking that

10. Kumar (1988).

the silver I had seen *was not there even at that very time*  $t_1$ , because I now refuse to attribute any cognitive content to it. Therefore, can we say the proposition [2] is false or should we confine to the falsity of predicate and predicate-content alone? Suppose [2] is construed as false, then will this construal make the 'externality' of the locus vanish? If 'externality' to the persistent locus is refused, how on earth am I now able to say I am perceiving nacre *exactly at the same place* where I had seen 'silver' earlier? On the other hand, if reality and truth to the external 'this' is granted then there would result Dvaita, dualism — of 'This' and 'I'.

In ordinary terms, nacre sublated the silver, where 'sublation' simply means replacement of certain cognitive contents by some others in the same locus where they existed earlier. The term replacement *does not* indicate any active displacement by nacre-predicate or nacre-object by thrusting itself upon the 'silver'-predicate or 'silver'-object, as for example in chemistry, as a gas-molecule does to a water-molecule.

However, from this fact of illusion one can validly infer that some predicate-contents are subject to this kind of sublation/change. Let us note here that 'this,' the alleged substratum, is not a cognitive-content in the normal sense. Rather it is only an inferred entity. This is so far as Śaṅkara goes.

### III

#### **Sublation and Removal**

Having seen the sublation of a predicate-content, which for all practical purposes meant a mere change from one predicate to another, propositionally, and one predicate-content to another, experience-wise, we shall now see the *Vedānta Paribhāṣā* view of sublation.

For *Vedānta Paribhāṣā*, sublation is not a mere change from one predicate-content to another; otherwise a situation of flux, in the same locus as in a movie for example, could be termed as sublation, which it is not. In a movie, the *screen* is the *locus*, in which *different* images are perceived every second. This 'change' of images cannot be termed as sublation. For that matter any real-time change *cannot* be termed as sublation. Rather, sublation involves the destruction of a predicate-content along with its material cause, which is materially responsible for the emergence of the said predicate-content in the first place.<sup>11</sup> As such, Advaita seems to claim that the material cause of *all* predicates is some or the other kind of *avidyā*, ignorance. The case where the destruction of predicate-content is not accompanied by the destruction of its material-cause is to be merely construed as removal.<sup>12</sup>

*Vedānta Paribhāṣā* further says that the cause of sublation is the intuition of the real nature of the substrate.<sup>13</sup> This intuition is to be understood as the ontological negative of *avidyā*. Thus, because of this mutual ontological opposition between the said intuition and *avidyā*, the intuition at once removes/negates the nescience or *avidyā* which is, as noted earlier, the material cause of (unreal) predicate-content. By extension, one could understand that when there is the intuition of the final real nature of the ultimate substratum, all predicate-contents are destroyed along with the *mūlavidyā* (primal nescience), which is the material cause of them. Any ad hoc intuition of the purported real nature of the entity, as, for example, nacre in

11. Sastri (1984), VP, I.109, p. 46. *kāryavināśo . . . kaścīdupādānena saha, / . . . bādhaḥ/*

12. Ibid., . . . *kaścittu vidyamāna eva . . . niṣṛtiḥ.*

13. Ibid., VP, I. 109, p. 47: *(bādhasya) kāraṇamadhīṣṭhānatattoasākṣātkārah, / tena vinā upādānabhūṭāya avidyāya aniṣṛtteḥ/*



'silver,' can be construed in two ways according to *Vedānta Paribhāṣā*.

When the primal material cause, *mūlavidyā*, is understood to persist in a change, one should understand that there is a change from ordinary illusory 'silver' to nacre. This purported change can be understood *with* or *without* reference to a lesser nescience called *tulāvidyā*, modal nescience. Then,

- (a) If the change is understood *without* reference to *any* material cause, including *tulāvidyā*, then the *change* of predicate-content is to be understood as removal.
- (b) If the change is understood *with* reference to *any* material cause such as, for example, *tulāvidyā*, then the *change* from 'silver' to nacre, i.e. from one predicate-content to another, is to be understood as sublation.

Then, we obtain the following logical possibilities with regard to sublation:

- (i) When we understand that *all* predicate-contents, including illusory and worldly, are destroyed along with their material cause — which is supposedly the *mūlavidyā* — there is sublation of all predicate-contents by the *Brahman*-intuition. [S-1] This is Primary Sublation (PS).<sup>14</sup>
- (ii) When mere *illusory* predicate-contents are destroyed, one could understand it to be (a) sublation, only if one takes into account the destruction of *their* material

14. Ibid., VP, I. 111, p. 47, *evam ca śūktirūpasya śūktyavacchinnacaitanyaniṣṭhātulāvidyākāryātoapakṣe śūktiriti jñānena tadajñānena saha rajatasya bādhaḥ/mūlavidyākāryātoapakṣe tu mūlavidyāyā brahmasākṣātkāramatranivartyatayā śūktitovajñānena anivartyatayā tatra śūktijñānāt nivṛttimātram mudgaraprahāreṇa ghaṭasyeva ॥*

cause, *tulāvidyā*. [S-2] This sublation of illusory 'silver,' etc. by the nacre, etc. is to be understood as Secondary Sublation (SS), as it does not refer to the destruction of primal nescience, and refers only to modal nescience, *tulāvidyā*;<sup>15</sup> [(b) removal, when no reference is made to *any* material cause].

One can reasonably assert that there cannot be sublation involving only *some* of worldly predicate-contents [as for example nacre-predicate (i.e. nacre), that we encounter in day-to-day life], because world-predicates are supposed to be the product of primal nescience in totality. Such a nescience can be destroyed only by *Brahman*-intuition. And *Brahman*-intuition cannot make distinction between one product of primal nescience and another for the purpose of destroying/not destroying them. For this purpose there cannot be distinction between ordinary illusion and world as illusion either. Therefore, either there is the entire world sublating, along with illusions intrinsic to it, by *Brahman*-intuition, or none at all, and no *Brahman*-intuition.

Hence

- (a) *Brahman*-intuition always results in PS.
- (b) Ad hoc reality-intuition always results in SS.
- (c) No reality-intuition results only in Removal.

In the view of the removal, the causes are not the intuition of the absolute or relative reality of the substrate.<sup>16</sup> Rather it is merely the origination of an opposed psychosis and the removal of defect. Further, while SS can be understood as Removal, PS cannot be understood as removal at all.

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15. Ibid.

16. Ibid.

For Eliot Deutsch,<sup>17</sup> the sublation *requiring* the destruction of *avidyā*, the material cause, and points to a 'disvalue,' according to him. Thus, 'silver' is a disvalue. However, this disvaluational process does not and cannot mean a conscious disvaluation as Deutsch seems to think in an implicit manner when he says — "the judging process itself is . . . an axio-noetic sort. 'X, because of a, b, c . . . is to be rejected and replaced by Y' . . ." This is because the ability to sublate is not commanded by the agent, at least in the ordinary illusory experiences. On the contrary one could concede conscious disvaluation of the world-predicates in favour of *Brahman*, since in the ordinary course *Brahman*-intuition is not forthcoming without conscious human effort. Further when disvaluation or valuation takes place it always implies the reality of its object *even after* such valuational process takes place. But *Brahman*-intuition is supposed to negate the world-predicates in triple-time, in such a way that there remains no trace of the things that are disvalued. Or else Deutsch's sublation can only be construed as SS.

\* Coming back to our analysis; what is of utmost importance is to examine the ontological negation [ON] (thus unreality), and the consequent logical negation [LN] (thus falsity), that are attributed to a predicate-content in the cases of sublation. Construal of a case as sublation necessarily means ON of the predicate-content in triple time and the corresponding LN in triple time too. Correspondingly, the 'silver' seen earlier has no ontological status in all the three times — hence unreal in all three times, and nor can the proposition at  $t_1$ , 'This is silver,' be attributed truth even at the time  $t_1$  — that is at the time of the experience — when at time  $t_2$  the 'silver'-predicate corresponding to a merely fictitious 'silver' is understood as

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17. Deutsch (1968), pp. 16-17.

being unreal. In other words there never *was* 'silver' existing in the purported locus, not to speak of its patent absence *now*.

Then, what is the truth-claim of the proposition 'This is silver [as made at  $t_1$ ]' as a whole, that is, including the term 'this'? The 'whole' therefore refers to 'this' and 'silver.' That is, whether the purported negation has to extend not merely to the predicate 'silver' in triple time but also to the subject term in triple time, now? If such a triple-time ON and/or LN is done then there would be no difference between the entities *vandhyāputra* on the one hand, and 'this' and 'silver' and 'This is silver' ('This is silver' a cognitive false identity gives an entity, which only on distinction becomes two. Distinction has to be made to show the *adhyāsa*. Distinction would then retain 'this' as a separate entity. On the other hand, if distinction is not made then *adhyāsa* cannot be demonstrated, and more importantly, there would be no difference between *vandhyāputra* and 'silver'), on the other. Obviously this cannot be so, for *vandhyāputra* can never yield any experience in triple times, as it — in a manner of speaking — stands sublated forever, and whereas 'this' and 'silver' *are not* so. If '*vandhyāputra*-status' is accorded to 'silver' then emergence/experience cannot be accounted for. If it is not accorded the said status, then 'silver' and such other predicates will have to be assigned some or the other ontological status, i.e. a neither/nor situation. [One can here ask pertinently, does the time involved in our experience get sublated? Normal illusion-cases do not lend support to the view of time-sublation. This is because some kind of memory of time seems to persist even of the illusory objects.]

Taking the alternative of assigning an ontological status, it is said: When a shell is perceived, albeit delusively, as silver, the silver-content can be neither unreal, nor what is elsewhere

real, e.g. in the shop or treasury; for, such content would be imperceptible, no contact therewith being possible. Nor can it be real, as, then so sublating cognition can arise in the form, 'this is not silver, but nacre.' Hence a content has to be admitted, which, being in contact, is not unreal, and yet, being sublatable, is not real; it is novel, indeterminable and produced in the shell substrate even in the absence of the (*real*) silver atoms; the production is brought about by nescience, defect (in the sense of sight or in the *manas* or in both) and residual impression (*samskāra*) of former veridical experience of silver. This standpoint can be understood as world-standpoint, that is, the logician is looking at the complete reality and propositional hierarchy from the present world-point of view and is trying to account for the entire phenomena. In its process a hierarchy of realities is created. The other alternative can be called the *Brahman*-standpoint. Even when the logician is in the world, he refuses to go away from two-valued logic. In the act he directly posits himself to be in the *Brahman* locus and tries to explain the matter. In such a schema the world has to be assigned the status of *vandhyāputra*. Taking either of these standpoints is logically fraught with insurmountable difficulties. These two standpoints, broadly speaking, are responsible for the divergence of the post-Śaṅkara thinkers.

From the world-standpoint, 'silver' is indeterminable either as real or as unreal. We shall call it *sadasad*, that is, neither *sat* nor *asat*, as indicating its ontological status in the reality hierarchy. Can the same be said of 'this'? That is, can the pure 'this' also be a *sadasad*? Obviously it cannot be so because it (this) is a pure *Brahman*. On the contrary, from the *Brahman*-standpoint, if proposition [2] is absolutely negated, including the 'this,' then such a *Brahman* is also negated. It is here that Mind and Language are highlighted to escape from the difficulties.

## IV

## Asat, Jagat, and Sat

If we carefully work out the above matter concerning world-standpoint we shall at once see that the world-predicates are conceived in analogous terms to the illusory 'silver'. If so, the whole actual world is nothing more than constitutive of world-predicates. Should we — or should we not — add the locus 'this' to this external world? Presuming that at the time of PS all external world predicate-contents are destroyed along with their material cause — the primal nescience — *mūlavidyā*, what would happen to the substrate term "this" and its corresponding content 'this'?

By no stretch of imagination could one conclude that the term 'this' itself denotes a predicate term, and its corresponding ontological content in a predicative manner. Such a presumption would make a mockery of the language as then one would have to say that 'a predicate is predicated.' (Note: Śāṅkara in fact makes the *adhyāsa*-proposition by using the term 'this' (*idam*) as a predicate term when he says *aham idam*. But then this *idam* or 'this' is only denotative of predicate that is attached to 'I,' and does not refer to an external independent locus. Similarly by extension, 'I am (this) body' would imply that the predicate 'I' is predicated by 'body-predicate'! Sublation of all predicates would automatically lead to total annihilation. Predicates everywhere! No wonder Śāṅkara has been branded a *pracchanna bauddha*!)

And we do not have the choice of calling the sublation of the world apart from PS either as SS or as Removal, because then it would mean that PS which occurs due to *Brahman*-intuition has not taken place yet — that is, only some other secondary *avidyā* has been removed along with the world-

predicates; and if it is removal it only means that some psychoses opposed to the world-predicate psychoses have emerged, in which case the same have to be specified. This would lead to infinite regress. This fallacy will ultimately take the toll on the so-called pure 'I,' the *Brahman*. That is, there will be a backward chain of psychoses opposed to the ones that are just then sublated. This means that there is no guarantee that the ones that have come afresh will also not be sublated in future.

Analysis of Perception (*pratyakṣa*) in *Vedānta Paribhāṣā* holds the key. According to *Vedānta Paribhāṣā*, all world-predicates are products of nescience associated with the residual impressions generated by experience with the form 'this.' But impressions where? Obviously impressions are those *as found in the mind* (*antaḥkāraṇa*, or *manas*). Therefore, world-predicates are attributed to the 'this.' And that 'this' in turn is to be traced to the mind for its (this's) origination. The attempt of *Vedānta Paribhāṣā* is to somehow avoid an independent external locus-hood to the 'this.' By avoiding the external locus-hood to the term 'this' the Advaitin hopes to avoid his biggest headache of duality of all sorts. The Advaitin does not want to assign any reality status to the world apart from the *vandhyāputra* status. At the same time he has to successfully explain the emergence of experience of the so-called illusion — 'silver' and later 'world.'

But can he succeed in avoiding external locus-hood to "this" altogether?<sup>18</sup> Let us understand *Vedānta Paribhāṣā* attempt.

18. A conjunctive ( $p.q$ ) is true if both  $p$  and  $q$  are true. Compare this with the proposition 'This is 'silver.'" Now this is obviously *not* a conjunctive proposition as ( $p.q$ ). If one takes the view of identity — or false identity for that matter — between 'this' and 'silver' then, if 'silver' is false (unreal), then 'this' is also false (unreal). This means that "This is 'silver' would be false (unreal) wholesale,

Generally there is no problem understanding the *asat*, or unreal entities, as remaining permanently sublated. Under this category two sub-categories are identified. First, the class of propositions containing entities like sky-flower (*gagana kusuma*) or hare's horn (*śaśaka śṛṅga*), which are called as *vikalpa*. In these fictitious entities at least some imaginary predicate-content is possible. They, however, remain sublated, since they are imaginary by definition ". . . the apprehension of the word 'hare's horn' is a *vikalpa*, which is different from knowledge. Apprehension of such cases of pure fiction is different from knowledge whether it be of the real or of the illusion. What constitutes this difference is the absence of any substratum to which the cognition may refer."<sup>19</sup>

The second class containing, for example, *vandhyāputra* or 'son-of-a-barren-women,' is defined as "incapable of being: hence not capable of being experienced in all times whether past, present or future. These are absolute *asat*, or *alka*, which form absolute non-existence, i.e. *atyantābhāva*. In this class, there cannot even be an imaginary predicate-content, let alone substratum."<sup>20</sup>

→ without any room for the truth (reality) of 'this.' Thus part-falsity or part-unreality has no room at all."

However this understanding leads to (i) the difficulty of logically identifying nacre in the same locus as that of the earlier "silver," and (ii) the elimination of cognitive-content in normal 'I-propositions,' i.e. if 'I am body,' etc. are finally sublated at the time of *Brahman*-intuition, then by using the above logic of identity between the subject and predicate, the subject 'I' will be negated, which will lead to nihilism, unless some other 'I' is brought in to protect the thought from nihilism. [Recall the second condition of *adhyāsa* (b), which says, necessary reality of one entity and necessary unreality of the other.]

19. Devaraja (1972), p. 131, fn 13.

20. Narain (1964), p. 151, op. cit.



If predicates are predetermined with respect to the cognitive content of two distinct sorts (a) that of subject 'I,' and (b) that of 'this,' such as, for example, in 'I am happy' and 'This is silver' respectively, then it follows logically that such a predetermination will continue to be so since there is an inseparable unity between them. (Chomskian creativity can be taken care of, easily.) In that case the 'I' that is usually made the subject of propositions cannot anymore remain unsublated, if and when the predicates are. This is because they are inseparable. Then do we have any subject term 'I' which withstands the sublation of associated predicates? Possibly none, none at all at least in the waking state. So what has been thus far construed as the subject ('I') and understood cognitively in a way because of its identity with cognitive predicates also gets sublated. Is there anything left? If the sublated 'I' is *antahkaraṇa*, which is playing the trick, first how did it do so? Under the spell of false identity of *Brahman* with *antahkaraṇa*, as in red-hot-iron ball, for example *antahkaraṇa* behaved as if it is the 'I'. However the guise is removed in *śuṣṭi*. *Sākṣin* awareness shows us that there is yet another 'I' which is *not predicated* at all. There is no 'this' representing any object. The 'this' is negated with the sublation of predicates. Language ceases. Mind ceases. Experience alone remains. There the witness is.

### Conclusion

The above discussion makes it clear that at least at one place language acts like a not-so-trustworthy postman. The case in reference is *tuccha vākyas* wherein *tuccha* concepts are involved. If mind and language are identified then the 'mind' — the postmaster — may be the real culprit! There is no cognitive content with regard to the *tuccha vākyas* or *tuccha* concepts, yet language delivered a false packet. A *tuccha vākya* cannot

be, in its undissected form, attributed with truth-value false in the normal sense of falsity, wherein possibility of falsity should imply the possibility of truth also. Therefore a *tuccha vākya* is meaningless inasmuch as the *tuccha* term is.

The postman, in the normal course brings all articles faithfully, as addressed to the addressee; delivers and returns. The addressee has to read and understand the content. In the normal course the postal articles may contain matters pertaining to 'others' and/or the 'addressee himself.'

The addressee may realize one fine day that, despite the fact that the postman was doing a good job, the *addressee himself was not*. That is the addressee himself was not able to understand the hidden message. All these would happen the day *susupti* is understood as *sākṣin*, the Witness. The hidden message is: 'all postal articles that are delivered are to be discarded.' As also, the real addressee is not *antaḥkāraṇa* or mind — complex (*jīva*), rather it is the *sākṣin*. But then *sākṣin* does not need any postal articles.

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