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# Mythisierung der Transzendenz als Entwurf ihrer Erfahrung

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# Advaita Vedānta Hermeneutics of Revelation Key-Statements as “Mythicising” of Transcendence

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*A methodological auto-reflection  
of philology leads to a systematic  
philosophical investigation.*

HANS-GEORG GADAMER

Before engaging in the proper theme of this paper, let me start with a few introductory remarks. The paper is concerned with the early Advaita Vedānta hermeneutics of chosen key-statements (*mahāvākyas*) of the Upaniṣads. In Vedānta, *mahāvākyas* were considered the most important part of Vedic revelation.<sup>1</sup> The task of the key-statements of revelation (die entscheidenden Offenbarungsaussagen) consisted in conveying the truth about the nature of transcendence.

In the paper I will try to relate the Advaitic hermeneutics to G. OBERHAMMERS idea of “mythicising” the transcendence. References to the notions and formulations of G. OBERHAMMER hermeneutical reflections will appear throughout the text, but particularly when introducing the conclusive parts of the Advaitic interpretations of revelatory statements.

Early Advaita Vedānta hermeneutics of chosen key-statements  
(*mahāvākyas*)

This part of the article will include a survey of principles that underlie the particular, Advaitic way of interpreting the sense of chosen sayings of the revelation. I will refer here to relevant frag-

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<sup>1</sup> In this sentence by revelation are meant texts considered to contain and convey the revealed truth. In the following pages, however, the revelation will be mostly taken to have the sense of the very revealed truth, and particularly so in the context of the exegesis.

ments of works of two early Advaitins, that is of Śaṅkara (traditionally dated 788-820 A.D.) and of Sureśvara, Śaṅkara's direct pupil and follower. I will introduce their interpretation of two *mahāvākyas* namely: "Brahman [is] real, knowledge, infinite"<sup>2</sup> and "You are that".<sup>3</sup>

These particular sayings, when understood without proper consideration, may seem to speak about the nature of Brahman in apparently different manners. The first one seems to indicate an entity characterised by qualities mentioned in the statement. A characterisation leads to a particularisation of the given thing; thus one might conclude from this sentence that Brahman, being unique due to his attributes, is differentiated from other existing things. This conclusion is unacceptable for the Advaitin. The second *mahāvākya* predicates identity of two disparate, as it seems, entities denoted as *tat* = this (i.e. Brahman) and *tvam* = you. This identity, one might think, suggests a paradoxical lack of differentiation between the subject and object, which in turn might lead one to conclude that the two particular entities are one and the same. According to the Advaitins the revelatory truth contained in each of these key-statements require considering them from different perspectives, which, in turn, would facilitate arriving at their real, soteriological sense.

It became necessary, then, to focus on such an explanation of the sense of the above two *mahāvākyas*, which would show that they both mediate the experience of the true nature of Brahman as one, single reality without any attributes. This interpretative effort will be illustrated here with the exegesis of the sentences by Śaṅkara and Sureśvara. Yet before undertaking the question of Advaita Vedānta hermeneutics of particular sayings of revelation, I would like to put this hermeneutics in a wider context of its soteriology and epistemology. I hope it is not altogether groundless to indicate a general view of early Advaita on the conditioning under

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<sup>2</sup> TU 2,1: *satyaṃ jñānam anantaṃ brahma*.

<sup>3</sup> ChU 6,8,7: *tat tvam asi*.

which humans – being here and now – can gain true knowledge of Brahman. One could even say that when considering the Advaitic exegesis it is crucial to always bear in mind the frames within which Advaitins construed their “truth” about the epistemological validity and soteriological meaningfulness of the key-statements (*mahāvākyas*) of revelation. By epistemological validity of the key-statements, I mean here their functioning within Advaita Vedānta as a proper means to experience the transcendence (~Brahman, „das Jenseits des Seienden“).<sup>4</sup> For the Advaitin, revelation (*śruti*) is the only available means, that allows one to experience the nature of Brahman as being true. This realization is, in itself, a liberating truth – the way and means to attain release. The question arises now, how the *mahāvākyas* can possibly lead the one, who is searching liberation (*mumukṣu*) to experience the nature of Brahman? How does language, be it the language of revelation but having, nevertheless, the status of a phenomenon actualised in a form of a set of objective statements, become the only means to experience Brahman? And can the *mumukṣu* entrust the *śruti* statements, which, after all, are the products of nescience (*avidyā*)? Śāṅkara clearly formulates this problem in the following way: “The mutual superimposition of the Self upon the Non-Self, that is, nescience (*avidyā*) is the necessary condition on which are based all worldly practices (*vyavahāra*) regarding means of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) and the objects of knowledge (*prameya*), whether they (i.e. prac-

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<sup>4</sup> The notions of “Brahman” and “das Jenseits des Seienden” correspond to one another with regard to, at least, two aspects. Firstly, they both refer to that which is “beyond being”, if by this one understands something that transcends the world of here and now. Secondly, as G. OBERHAMMER indicated, both “Brahman” and “das Jenseits des Seienden” are the condition for the consciousness of the subject. As to the functions of both the notions, see also: OBERHAMMER 2000: 4 [see p. 13 in this volume]: „Wenn ich das ‚Jenseits des Seienden‘ als ‚Gott‘ und ‚Vater‘ oder in der Vedānta-Tradition Indiens als ‚Brahman‘ mythisiere, so vermittelt diese ‚Mythisierung‘ zwar auch den rationalen Inhalt des sprachlichen Ausdrucks, als ‚Mythisierung‘ des ‚Jenseits des Seienden‘ aber enthält sie keine Wahrheit, sondern ist Möglichkeitsgrund seiner mythischen Gegenwart, so daß ich mich zu ihm verhalten, ihm begegnen kann.“

tices) are of ordinary life or of the Scripture, and [also] scriptural text regarding injunctions, prohibitions, and liberation.”<sup>5</sup>

With this important, even fundamental presupposition in mind Śaṅkara goes on to explain the *a priori* situation which conditions the knowledge of Brahman. At the beginning of any kind of knowledge there is the superimposition (*adhyāsa*), the *a priori* of the thought and language process (*vyavahāra*). Subjectivity, in the sense of being the knowing subject, is a necessary and indispensable basis for any kind of cognitive act. It seems to be a matter-of-fact statement, but often neglected and forgotten when entering into the more and more sophisticated analysis of gaining the knowledge of Brahman in Śaṅkara’s teaching. All these are factors indispensable of the cognitive act, “because the means of right knowledge cannot operate unless there is a knower, [and] without the employment of the senses, perception and the other [means of right knowledge] cannot operate.”<sup>6</sup> And then Śaṅkara concludes the discussion of the factors necessary for the cognitive act to take place by saying: “hence perception and the other means of right knowledge, and the Vedic texts have for their object that which is dependent on nescience.”<sup>7</sup> The superimposition (*adhyāsa*) of the meanings acquired as a result of the thought and language process (*vyavahāra*) is a matter of fact and is indistinguishable to the subject who himself exists in this world, as well. Śaṅkara as early as in the commentary to the BSū 1,1 writes about the *a priori* conditioning of the language of revelation, as well: “Having proved that the object and the subject – whose respective fields are the notions of the ‘You’ and the ‘I’, the natures of which are opposed to each other as darkness and light are – cannot be identified [and that] their

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<sup>5</sup> BSūBh 1,1: *tam etam avidyākhyam ātmānātmanor itaretarādhyāsam puraskṛtya sarve pramāṇaprameyavyavahārā laukikā vaidikāś ca pravṛttāḥ sarvaṇi ca śāstrāṇi vidhipratishedhamokṣaparāṇi.*

<sup>6</sup> BSūBh 1,1: [...] *pramāṇtvānupapattau pramāṇapravṛtṭy anupapatteḥ. na hīndriyāṇy anupādāya pratyakṣādi vyavahāraḥ sambhavati.*

<sup>7</sup> BSūBh 1,1: *tasmād avidyāvad viṣayāṇy eva pratyakṣādīni pramāṇāni śāstrāṇi ca.*

properties, as well, cannot be identical, it is proper [to say] that the superimposition (*adhyāsa*) of the object whose field is the notion of the ‘You’ and of the properties of it upon the subject – whose self is intelligence, and which has for its sphere the notion of the ‘I’ – and the opposite of that [i.e.]: the superimposition of the properties of the subject to the object is wrong. Still, having superimposed on the one the essence and properties of another [and] having coupled the real and the unreal, because of the false knowledge of the substratum of properties and the properties, which are infinitely different [from one another], due to not having [them] distinguished mutually, the natural practise of people (*lokavyavahāra*) is such [as to say]: ‘I am this, mine is this’.<sup>8</sup>

A fact to which I would like to draw attention once again is how Śāṅkara explains the original situation in which a man can make use of his cognitive power. This situation appears to be the inborn, if one can use such an adjective, commixture of the subject (non-Self), object (Self) and of the essential natures and properties of both, which is acquired in the very act of cognition. One can see from the passage, that the process by which one gets to know the Self (“I”) and the Other (“You”) as the mixture made up of subjective and objective elements is the natural, inborn epistemological error of not discerning the (ultimately) real and the unreal. It is so, because man is availed to exercise his cognitive power within the only mode of existence of the material world (*vyāvahārika*).

The process of language and thought as described by Śāṅkara inevitably superimposes the objective meanings upon the soteriological sense of *śruti*. The superimposition (*adhyāsa*) of the mean-

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<sup>8</sup> BSūBh 1,1: *yusmadasmatpratyayagocarayor viṣayaviṣayiṅos tamaḥ-prakāśavadviruddhasvabhāvayor itaretarabhāvānupapattau siddhāyām taddharmāṅām api sutarām itaretarabhāvānupapattir ity ato ’smatpratyayagocare viṣayiṅi cidātmake yusmatpratyayagocarasya viṣayasya taddharmāṅām cādhyāsaḥ, tadviparyayeṇa viṣayiṅas taddharmāṅām ca viṣaye ’dhyāso mithyeti bhavitum yuktam. tathāpy anyonyasminn anyonyātmakatām anyonyadharmāṅś cādhyasyetaretarāvivekena, atyantaviviktayor dharmadharmiṅor mithyāṅānānimittaḥ satvāṅrte mithunīkrtya, aham idaṃ mamedam iti naisargiko ’yaṃ lokavyavahāraḥ.*

ings acquired as a result of the thought and language process (*vyavahāra*) is a matter of fact and is indistinguishable to the subject who himself exists in this world, as well. Man's basic existential situation both shapes and curbs his cognition, but man, as the "Dasein" cannot realise this fact without the help of *śruti*. Yet *śruti* itself communicates, so to say, mixed-up meanings, because it acquires "worldly" senses due to existing in this world. Discovering the real (i.e. true in the absolute sense) message of revelation has to be interwoven with uncovering the epistemological value of *śruti* with regard to Brahman by the subject. This can be done only in an act of interiorizing the message of *śruti* by the subject at the moment when he realises that *śruti* refers to his own existence and indicates at his basic existential situation. This OBERHAMMER expresses in the following passage:

„Damit diese Schlüsselaussagen (*māhāvākyāni*) der Offenbarung jedoch die Transzendenz (= Brahman) in solcher advaitischer Hermeneutik tatsächlich für das Emanzipation suchende Subjekt evozieren können, dürfte es entscheidend sein, dass ihnen, zufolge der Identität des transzendenten Seins des Subjektes mit dem transzendenten Brahman, ein echter Realitätsbezug in der Erfahrung des Emanzipation suchenden Subjektes zugrunde liegt, der verhindert, dass diese Aussagen bedeutungslos werden. Dies wird besonders an Aussagen deutlich wie ‚*tat tvam asi*‘<sup>9</sup> oder ‚*ahaṃ brahma asmi*‘<sup>10</sup>, die ohne diesen Realitätsbezug und der in ihnen zum Ausdruck kommenden Identität des Subjektes mit dem Brahman lediglich leere Formeln ohne sinntragenden Inhalt wären (etwa im Sinne von  $A = A$ , ohne zu wissen, was  $A$  ist) und so nichts evozieren und mythisch in die Gegenwart vermitteln können. Erst wenn in diesem sprachlichen Ausdruck die advaitische Relation des hörenden Subjektes zur transzendenten Wirklichkeit des Brahman implizit vorausgesetzt und mitgeteilt ist, kann er durch die Einbeziehung der transzendenten Realität des Subjektes, deren wahres Sein eben

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<sup>9</sup> ChU 6,8,7.

<sup>10</sup> BĀU 1,4,10.

das Brahman ist, als ‚Mythisierung‘ der Transzendenz dieses in dem einen zweitlosen Brahman zu sich kommen lassen.“<sup>11</sup>

This is an ultimate act of appropriating the soteriological meaningfulness of *śruti*, making it one’s own, that is: experiencing this sense as the ultimate sense of one’s own existence. To this experience, undoubtedly, leads a conscious effort on the part of the *mumukṣu*. Śaṅkara’s understanding of the man’s existence inevitably influences his hermeneutics, which fact is perceivable in the important hermeneutical principle underlying his whole exegesis of *śruti*. It is the principle of epistemological mistake, given the name of the superimposition, which, as an *a priori* factor, forms the basis of human cognition. This mistake is then mirrored in the wrong understanding of the ultimate sense of the upaniṣadic statements. If one considers the revelation as simultaneously containing the *vyavahāra* and *paramārtha* senses *a priori* “mixed up” and confused, because of the confused situation of the subject, then one can also understand how the revelation, in spite of it having been conditioned by *avidyā* and in spite of having had superimposed objective meanings, bears within the potency to reveal the nature of Brahman as true. The *vyavahāra* sense of the *śruti* has to be as if dissolved, so that the real, soteriological sense can shine through. The realization of this fact marks the starting point for the exegesis, which is to become the way towards experiencing the transcendent reality as true.

This status of *śruti* creates the basis for its epistemological validity and decides about its potency to unfold its soteriological meaningfulness as well. Man searching liberation can then be guided by the key-statements of revelation, because his understanding of his own existence allows him to presume that all aspects of Advaitic truth are already present in it. The highest, ultimate truth, however, is not immediate to the man, but it is there in a potential, latent form. One has to be aware of the fact that linguistic formulations of an idea of the Absolute, be they considered a valid reve-

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<sup>11</sup> OBERHAMMER 2000: 22 [see p. 33 in this volume].

lation, are subjected to objectivisation and reification. The knowledge thus gained, as a set of objective statements of facts, necessarily has to undergo a process of interpretation in order to become a "living word" again, and not to lead to the distortion of the actual message of *śruti*. Therefore the need arises for a constant effort to overcome the aforementioned limitations which prevent men from the realization of the salvific sense of *śruti* in its fullness.

This is how the key-statements (*mahāvākyas*) of the revelation can be considered to be both valid with regard to the experience of transcendence (Brahman, „Jenseits des Seienden“), and meaningful, in the sense of being the instrument of attaining the liberating experience.

GUY MAXIMILIEN has aptly explained these aspects of *śruti* in the light of Advaita Vedānta: «Elle<sup>12</sup> est le seul mode de traduction dans l'ordre de la connaissance objective de ce qui n'est pas un objet. [...] Un moyen de manifestation qui se nie soi-même, de ce qui est par nature Auto-Manifestation directe.»<sup>13</sup>

In Advaita Vedānta man has no other means than word to enter the path of experiencing transcendental reality, which reality is beyond the senses and inaccessible through other means of cognition. Close reading and minute analysis of the message of *śruti* may lead to the proper grasping of the overall order of reality. It gives that understanding, that is both founded on and legitimised by revelation itself. It is solely revelation, as well, that is capable to express something which is the content inaccessible through other means of cognition due to the simple reason that revelation is conveyed through language and, in fact, is language itself. Precisely for the very same reason can language be detached from our ordinary cognition. Due to this power, language, and here it is the language of the revelation, can speak about what is not its objectivised content. It can, therefore, speak about transcendence, though speaking about Brahman is not, obviously, referring to some objec-

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<sup>12</sup> That is *śruti*.

<sup>13</sup> MAXIMILIEN 1975: 18.

tively existing designate. In Advaita Vedānta the language of revelation is then this only means, that allows us into the “mythic presence” of transcendence and makes it possible to experience for us.

To conclude – for the Advaitin the actual soteriological meaningfulness of the revelation, which finally results in attaining the liberating experience by the self, seems to be contained in its latent potency to reveal the true reality. One has to bear in mind though, that the liberating experience has to be attained by the very self who searches the liberation. It is no objective fact communicated straightforwardly in the language of revelation. The liberating experience is the effect of the single-aimed effort of one who is intent upon experiencing the truth about Brahman. It is always undertaken by the self and within the self, and it is prompted by the revelation.

This effort, a *sine qua non* for approaching Brahman, requires, as its basis, a very thorough exegesis of the *mahāvākyas*, which are the means to this purpose as explained above. Therefore one has to strive constantly and consciously – as it seems – to overcome the tendency to objectivise the message of the *śruti* and try to interiorise it.

One has to be aware of the *a priori* conditioning of the revelation, which provides the structural basis for its epistemological validity. The soteriological meaningfulness of *śruti*, foreshadowed by the objective meanings of words, is not to be read as a simple statement of the truth about Brahman. Still it is this potential revealing power of key-statements, that has to be actualised by the exegesis that leads one to experience as true the nature of Brahman. It is the true soteriological value of the *mahāvākyas*.

The true face of what they communicate is for those, who are apt to analyse and properly interpret the objectivised content of these sayings into an immediate realization of the true nature of Brahman, the non-objectifiable one, attributeless and identical with the transcendent self (*ātman*).

It is then the Advaita Vedānta exeget's task to interpret the *mahāvākyas* of the Vedāntic revelation in such a way that they become fit for revealing the Advaitic mythisation of transcendence („das Jenseits des Seienden“).

### ŚAṄKARA

In many of his acknowledged works Śaṅkara scrutinises the true sense of the two *mahāvākyas* chosen for discussion here. I will introduce the interpretation of TU 2,1 as found in Śaṅkara's commentary to TU 2,1. As to the second *mahāvākya* contained in ChU 6,8,7 I have chosen its interpretation as found in the verse part, chapter 18, of the *Upadeśasahasrī*, which is entitled: *tattvamasi-prakaraṇam*. These passages deal with the interpretation of the mentioned *mahāvākyas* in the most detailed manner.

In BSūBh 3,3,1 Śaṅkara has explicitly explained what should be the general approach towards the interpretation of the soteriological sense of *śruti* (I quote the translation of W. HALBFASS):

“There cannot be different cognitions relating to the one identical Brahman, since it cannot be true, that knowledge and its objects are at variance. If, however, many different cognitions concerning the one Brahman were being proposed in different Upaniṣads, then only one of these could be true, and the others would be erroneous. As a result, there would be a loss of confidence in the Upaniṣads.”<sup>14</sup>

The possibility, or rather, the danger of understanding those statements of the Upaniṣads that speak about the nature of Brahman in different manners, is ever present. The above quotation is a clear indication that Śaṅkara is going to contend for showing, by means of his hermeneutics, that all key-statements of the Upaniṣads do and can teach about the one and only reality of Brahman.

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<sup>14</sup> BSūBh 3,3,1: *na ca ekarūpe brahmaṇy anekarūpāṇi vijñānāni saṃbhavanti. na hy anyathārtho 'nyathā jñānam ity abhrāntaṃ bhavati. yadi punar ekasmin brahmaṇi bahūni vijñānāni vedāntāntareṣu pratipipādayiṣitāni teṣāṃ ekam abhrāntaṃ bhrāntāni itarāṇīty anāśvāsaprasaṅgo vedānteṣu.*

The possibility of different cognitions of Brahman is excluded and shown as groundless, because there cannot be any disparity between the true knowledge and its object – the presence of disparity would show, that the *a priori* misunderstanding of the basic existential situation of the self still persist. In the perspective of one, uniform cognition of Brahman all *mahāvākyas* should be taken as describing one, unique reality. The division into the so-called *nirguṇa* and *saguṇa śruti*, i.e. statements respectively describing Brahman as without qualities (*nirguṇa*) or as possessed of certain attributes, is a result of an unavoidable epistemological mistake contained in deciphering the sense of the revelation within the frames of reality experienced here and now. They are all to be taken to mean one and only, devoid of qualities, identical with the Self (*ātman*), reality of Brahman.

*Tat tvam asi* (ChU 6,8,7)

Śāṅkarian hermeneutics of this particular *saguṇa śruti* strikes one as following this interpretative process, which can make all seemingly disparate key-statements of the Vedāntic revelation lead to a single one, unified, Advaitic type of mythisation.

ChU 6,8,7 (i.e.: “You are that”), as noted above, seems to be the statement of identity of the Self with transcendence.<sup>15</sup> ChU 6,8,7 is treated most extensively by Śāṅkara in his *Upadeśasahasrī* (“A Thousand Teachings”, US). The discussion on the interpretation of this *śruti* is contained in chapter 18. It starts with introducing the opponent’s view on the need for *prasaṃkhyāna*-meditation and reasoning (*yukti*) in order to arrive at the salvific sense of the sentence: “Even if it is said: ‘You are the only [really] existent’, no permanent release (*muktatā*) of the Self arises. Therefore the *prasaṃcaṣṭā*-meditation as well as the reasoning (*yukti*) should be considered.”<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Vide supra, p. 250.

<sup>16</sup> US 18,9: *sad eva tvam asīty ukte nātmano muktatā sthirā. pravartate prasaṃcaṣṭām ato yuktyānucintayet*. It is difficult to decide though, what kind

The *prasaṃcākṣā*-meditation and the need for its usage in order to experience the real sense of the ChU 6,8,7 is then discussed in the verses which follow. It is not clear, however, whether Śaṅkara completely disapproves of this method of meditation, or admits the possibility of its application.<sup>17</sup> Yet even without any definite answer to the question of whether *prasaṃkhyāna*, the synonym of which is *prasaṃcākṣā*, plays any role in the process of coming to understanding the salvific sense of this key-statement, it is necessary to see how one should proceed with its interpretation. The method is described in US 18,90 to 93: “When there is no thought: ‘I am the [really] existent’, [the sentence] ‘You are that’ would also be meaningless. This expression will be meaningful to one who has a clear idea about ‘You’ and ‘I’.”<sup>18</sup>

One should not underestimate the importance of this strophe. In the process of coming to understanding the soteriological mean-

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of meditation *prasaṃcākṣā* was. From the way it is introduced in the verses that follow, it seems that *prasaṃcākṣā* is somehow equated with *prasaṃkhyāna* meditation. MAYEDA, in a footnote to this particular verse, stated the following: “As it is clear in the Upad, Śaṅkara rejects *prasaṃkhyāna*, but he recommends *parisaṃkhyāna*, though how they differ from the former (i.e. *prasaṃcākṣā* mentioned in verse 9, H. M.) is not known [...]”

<sup>17</sup> MAYEDA 1992, pp. 197-198, footnote 13 says that “the word *prasaṃcākṣā* is used as a synonym of *prasaṃkhyāna* [...]. In his work Sureśvara makes an opponent define *prasaṃkhyāna* as: ‘Mentally going over the meaning of such *śruti* as ‘Thou art That’ and the reasoning based on the method of agreement and contrariety Naiṣ(karmyasiddhi) 3,90 [...]’ Like Śaṅkara Sureśvara rejects *prasaṃkhyāna*.” This statement of MAYEDA is true only to a certain extent. It is Sureśvara himself who says that *prasaṃkhyāna* can be accepted as a proper method of realizing the sense of chosen *śrutis* at an initial stage of the discipline leading to the experience of the Absolute. This is what Sureśvara says in NS 3,124-125: “But if you say that still without *prasaṃkhyāna* you cannot sustain [your] life, we will accept it in [the discipline, that is]: hearing (*śravaṇa*) etc. How? *Prasaṃkhyāna* [occurs] when [something is] heard, its [methodic] principle consists in repetition. A man comes to understand after having heard properly what he heard partially or a bit.” (*athaivam api prasaṃkhyānam antareṇa prāṇān dhārayituṃ na śaknoṣīti cec chravaṇādāv eva saṃpādāyīṣvāmah. (124) prasaṃkhyānam śrutāv asya nyāyo ’stv āmreḍanātmakah iśacchrutaṃ sāmīśrutaṃ samyak śrutvāvagacchati. (125)*)

<sup>18</sup> US 18,90: *sad asmīti dhīyo ’bhāve vyarthaṃ syāt tat tvam asy api. yuṣmadasmadvivekajñe syād arthavad idaṃ vacaḥ.*

ingfulness of ChU 6,8,7 an indispensable precondition is the realization of the *a priori* epistemological fault, mentioned by Śaṅkara in BSūBh 1,1.<sup>19</sup>

It seems to be quite obvious, as well, that “You” and “I” mentioned above refer to the very same existential situation discussed in BhSūBh 1,1. Besides, Śaṅkara indicates quite clearly here that one might approach experiencing the true, soteriological sense of ChU 6,7,8 provided one understands his own existential situation: “When there is no thought: ‘I am the [really] existent’, [the sentence] ‘You are that’ would also be meaningless.” The realization of how man’s cognition is conditioned and what his primordial existential situation is, leads one to realise another fact, namely: “There is no doubt that what is known as the notions: ‘my’ and ‘this’ [refers to] ‘You’. [The notion] ‘I’ would [refer to] both: the very ‘I’ (*asmadiṣṭa*) [and] ‘I am this (*ayam asmi*)’.”<sup>20</sup>

This strophe reminds one again of the examples used in BhSūBh 1,1 “I am this” and “mine is this” that serve as examples to show how the superimposition of the non-Self and Self and their properties upon one another takes place. It seems that in the context of discussion ChU 6,7,8, as well, Śaṅkara points to the necessity of making a clear-cut distinction between the actual sense of the word, which refers to the object, i.e. everything that is non-Self and the self, which is the object of cognition. But the sense of the word “I” presupposes the awareness of the *a priori* existential situation of the subject and his awareness of his very self. Then another step of this hermeneutical process is stated: “With regard to one another, for them [namely the notions from verse 91,] a relation of principal and subordinate (*pradhānaguṇatā*) is wished for, and also a relation of determinans-determinandum (*viśeṣaṇa-viśeṣyatva*) should be understood rationally.”<sup>21</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Vide supra, p. 252-253.

<sup>20</sup> US 18,91: *mamedampratyaṅvau jñeyau yuṣmady eva na saṁśayaḥ, aham ity asmadiṣṭaḥ syād ayam asmīti cobhayaḥ.*

<sup>21</sup> US 18,92: *anyonyāpekṣayā teṣāṃ pradhānaguṇateṣyate. viśeṣaṇaviśeṣyatvaṃ tathā grāhyaṃ hi yuktiṭaḥ.*

The assumption here seems to be, that the notions “mine, this” (the non-Self) and “I” (the Self = *ātman*) refer to one and the same object, and that they are co-ordinated as determinans-determinandum when one considers them logically and rationally. This logical consideration is then explained in US 18,96: “For here, in ‘I’, it is the reasoning (*yukti*) by co-presence and co-absence (*anvaya-vyatireka*)<sup>22</sup> for the words and the word-objects, that there would be an accurate determination.”<sup>23</sup>

It is only in stanzas 18,175-176 that we get a more definite explanation of *anvaya-vyatireka* method of reasoning. “In case of Veda there is no such a rule [as]: ‘in the sentence this word should be the first one and this word should be the following one.’ The syntactical order of words [follows] from the sense [of the sentence]. For, in case of the sentence, there is the remembrance of the meanings of words which are heard by [means of the reasoning] *anvaya-vyatireka* and then [there arises] understanding of the sense of the sentence.”<sup>24</sup>

One understands now that the *anvaya-vyatireka* method is connected to the preliminary stage of understanding the structure of ordinarily used language, and this is underlined by Śaṅkara himself in US 18,178. This stage is necessary insofar as it lets one understand the functions of words and word-meanings in the sentence in order to make a meaningful unit out of a string of words. “In the sentences such as ‘you are that’, the sense of the sentence ‘I am the ever-liberated’ will not be clarified, unless from the clear discrimination of the meaning of the word ‘you’ the sense ‘I am ever liberated’ [is acquired].”<sup>25</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Vide infra, p. 268.

<sup>23</sup> US 18,96: *anvayavyatirekau hi padārthasya padasya ca. syād etad aham ity atra yuktir evāvadhāraṇe.*

<sup>24</sup> US 18,175-176: *idaṃ pūrvam idaṃ paścāt padaṃ vākye bhaved iti. niyamo naiva vede 'sti padasāṃgatyaṃ arthataḥ (175). vākye hi śrūyamāṇāṃ padānāṃ arthasamṣṛtiḥ. anvayavyatirekābhyāṃ tato vākyārthabodhanam (176)*

<sup>25</sup> US 18,179: *tattvamaśyādivākyeṣu tvaṃpadārthāvivekataḥ, vyajyate naiva vākyārtho nityamukto 'ham ity ataḥ.*

In the next stanza Śāṅkara lays emphasis on the fact that the *ratio* is to be utilised in order to distinguish the sense of the word “you” (non-Self) from the Self clearly.<sup>26</sup> With this function of the rational analysis of the sentence-sense fulfilled, one shifts from rational to soteriological meaningfulness of ChU 6,8,7. This is the most important, as well as the most interesting moment in the interpretation of this *śruti*. This is the moment of the breakthrough from the ordinary sense to the salvific meaningfulness of the key-statement. This moment is shown as the culmination of the whole exegesis of ChU 6,8,7. “The meaning of this sentence becomes clear in the following way: The unique (*kevala*) ‘I’ is the meaning of the word, because by removing (*apoha*) the meaning ‘the sufferer’, the innermost self (*pratyagātma*) is ascertained.”<sup>27</sup> I think the whole discussion on experiencing the true, salvific sense of this key-statement is best summarised by G. OBERHAMMER. Though the following quotation occurs in the work in which OBERHAMMER analyses Śāṅkara’s understanding of *anubhava*, the conclusions drawn there are suitable for our discussion as well: «[...] il devient clair que l’identité de l’Ātman et du Brahman, [...] ne signifie pas quelque identification de deux entités différentes en une connaissance conceptuelle et par suite qu’elle n’est aucunement un contenu d’une «connaissance de quelque chose». Elle signifie simplement que le sujet de l’expérience se transcende soi-même dans cette expérience vers un «au-delà de l’étant», qui vient ainsi s’inscrire dans l’expérience, en dehors de (tout élément) second.»<sup>28</sup> And, finally: «[...] le sujet prend conscience de lui-même comme ātman (Brahman), sans concepts ni images objectivants, par la seule compréhension des énoncés de la Śruti. La validité de ce «prendre conscience» résulte du fait que la réalité même, attribuée au sujet par la Śruti, se fait consciente en lui comme telle.»<sup>29</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Vide supra, p. 252: BhSūBh 1,1.

<sup>27</sup> US 18,181: *vākyārtho vyajyate caivam kevalo ’hampadārthaḥ. duḥ-khīty etad apohena pratyagātmaviniścayāt.*

<sup>28</sup> OBERHAMMER 1994: 23.

<sup>29</sup> OBERHAMMER 1994: 21.

*Satyam jñānam anantaṃ brahma* (TU 2,1)

In this part the exegesis of TU 2,1 *śruti*: “Brahman [is] real, knowledge, infinite” will be introduced. This is apparently a *śruti* that describes transcendence as possessing of the above-enumerated attributes. Śāṅkara’s interpretation of this sentence is to be found in his commentary to this Upaniṣad entitled *Taittirīyopaniṣadbhāṣya* (TUBh).

While interpreting this passage, Śāṅkara seems to concentrate on two issues: the notion of *sāmānādhikarāṇya* (approximately co-reference) and the question of the *viśeṣaṇa-viśeṣya* relation (i.e. the relation of determinans-determinandum) between terms in a sentence. *Sāmānādhikarāṇya* is the notion of linguistic provenance. It was used as early as by Pāṇini. It has been defined only in the seventh century AD in the *Kāśikāvṛtti* by Vāmana and Jayāditya in the commentary upon sūtra 2,1,49. There it is stated: “*Sāmānādhikarāṇya* is the functioning of the word having different causes for its application with regard to one sense (or: object).”<sup>30</sup>

In this definition *sāmānādhikarāṇya* is taken to mean the co-reference of two members of a Tatpuruṣa-Karmadhāraya compound to one object, and is not related to the sense of the sentence, but only to the sense of a compound word. But in the discussed passage from TU 2,1 *sāmānādhikarāṇya* is the intra-linguistic relation among words that decides that words having one and the same case ending and put next to one another refer to a single designate.

The *viśeṣaṇa-viśeṣya* relation is, most generally, the relation between something to be determined (*viśeṣa*) and some determining factors. In linguistics it is taken to express the relation between a substantive and adjective(s).<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> *Kāśikāvṛtti* (= KV) ad 2,1,49: *bhinnapravṛttinimittasya śabdasyaikasminn arthe vṛttiḥ sāmānādhikarāṇyam*.

<sup>31</sup> Kātyāyana, commenting upon Pāṇini 2,1,57, states *bhedakaṃ viśeṣanam bhedyam viśeṣyam*: “The attributive adjunct (*viśeṣaṇam*) is the determining factor and the subject (*viśeṣyam*) is the thing to be determined.”

These two notions, i.e. the relation of *viśeṣya-viśeṣaṇa* and *sāmānādhikaraṇya* seem to be the most important factors in the analysis of the sense of TU 2,1 by Śaṅkara. He states: “The sentence: ‘Brahman [is] real, knowledge, infinite’ expresses the sense of a definition [or: indication] of Brahman. Therefore the three words: ‘real, (*satya*) etc.’ referring to attributes (*viśeṣaṇas*), have Brahman as the thing to be determined (*viśeṣya*). [...] Only due to the relation of determinans-determinandum (*viśeṣaṇa-viśeṣyatva*), the words: ‘real (*satya*) etc.’ [which have] one case ending, are in the state of co-reference (*sāmānādhikaraṇya*). Brahman, which is determined by the three determining terms i.e. ‘real etc.’, is differentiated from other things to be determined.”<sup>32</sup>

An interesting element in the interpretation of TU 2,1 is the fact that Śaṅkara mentions the relation of determination (*viśeṣaṇa-viśeṣyatva*). It becomes clear very soon, that this relation is conceived of in a peculiar way.

Immediately after the short exposition of his preliminary thesis, Śaṅkara goes on to discuss the relation of determinans-determinandum (*viśeṣaṇa-viśeṣyatva*). He concentrates exclusively on explaining this relation.

Further in the same passage the opponent in the discussion indicates a fault in Śaṅkara’s reasoning. The opponent states that no other Brahman exist from which one could differentiate (this) Brahman. Thus one cannot delimit its realm in such a way as one does when distinguishing, for example, individuals of one species by means of indicating that one individual of the species possesses certain attributes which are absent in another individual of the same species. The opponent indicates that this cannot be the right procedure in the case of Brahman, which is one and only. Śaṅkara refutes this reasoning by trying to prove that in this particular sen-

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<sup>32</sup> TUBh, p. 443: *satvaṃ jñānam anantaṃ brahmeti brahmaṇo lakṣaṇārthaḥ vākyāṃ. satyādīni hi trīṇi viśeṣaṇārthāni padāni viśeṣasya brahmaṇaḥ. [...] viśeṣaṇaviśeṣyatvād eva satyādīny ekavibhaktiyantāni padāni samānādhikaraṇāni. satyādibhis tribhir viśeṣaṇair viśeṣyamāṇaṃ brahma viśeṣyāntarebhyo nirdhāryate.*

tence: “Determining terms (*viśeṣaṇa*) have the sense of the definiens (or: indicators – *lakṣaṇa*). [...] Determining terms (*viśeṣaṇa*) primarily express the sense of the definition of Brahman and they do not primarily [convey the sense of] attributes.”<sup>33</sup>

The adjectives “real, etc.” used in the *śruti* discussed do not refer to attributes. They are used here to serve one, particular purpose: to define the one and only thing (Brahman) and to indicate it. How it is done by means of these words, is explained by Śāṅkara later in the passage.

At this point Śāṅkara explains the difference between the relation of the definiens-definiendum and determinans-determinandum: “Determining terms (*viśeṣaṇa*) [related to the given] to be determined substratum (*viśeṣya*) exclude [this to be determined substratum] only from [other things] of the same genus, but the definition (or: indication – *lakṣaṇa*) excludes [the to be defined thing] from everything else [...] Words *satyam* etc., are not mutually connected with one another, due to the rule of ‘referring to another’, thus they refer to the to be determined substratum.”<sup>34</sup>

The rule hinted at by Śāṅkara in the above quotation is the Mīmāṃsā rule contained in Jaimini-Sūtra: “And the qualities, due to [their] being subservient to other [things], are not related to one another because of [their] equality.”<sup>35</sup>

Eventually Śāṅkara clearly describes the function of TU 2,1 in which the three words *satya*, etc. relate to the substratum to be determined in such a way that they define it by excluding it from everything which is non-Brahman: “In [the sentence] ‘Brahman is real...’ [Brahman is only] indicated with the word ‘real’, the subject of which [word] is some general notion (*sāmānya* – resem-

<sup>33</sup> TUBh, p. 444: *lakṣaṇārthatvād viśeṣaṇānām. [...] lakṣaṇārthapradhānāni viśeṣaṇāni na viśeṣaṇapradhānāny eva.*

<sup>34</sup> TUBh, p. 444: *samānajātīyebhya eva nivartakāni viśeṣaṇāni viśeṣyasya lakṣaṇaṃ tu sarvata eva. [...] satyādiśabdā na parasparaṃ sambadhyante parārthatvād viśeṣyārthā hi te. ata ekaiko viśeṣaṇaśabdaḥ parasparaṃ nirapekṣo brahmaśabdena sambadhyate.*

<sup>35</sup> JSū 3,1,22: *guṇānām ca parārthatvād asaṃbandhaḥ sāmātvaṭ syāt.*

blance?) of external reality (*bāhyasattā*). But Brahman is not denoted only with the word ‘real’. In this way, the words: ‘real etc.’ put together with one another (*itaretara-samnidhā*) [and at one time] being for one another the limiting factors and [at the other] the thing limited, exclude it [i.e. Brahman] from being directly expressed by the words ‘real etc.’ [These words] become [then] fit for expressing the sense of the definition of Brahman.”<sup>36</sup>

As it now can be seen, the whole discussion on the process of the acquisition of the true sense of TU 2,1 is dominated by a specific approach to its function. Step by step Śāṅkara strives to prove that this *śruti* should not be taken to describe Brahman as a being determined by qualities, because Brahman is a single, undetermined reality. At first, the linguistic interpretation of the mutual syntactical and semantic relations (which are *sāmānādhikaraṇya* and *viśeṣaṇa-viśeṣya*) among words in the sentence imposes the structure of an apparent relation of dependence on us. That is: one notices that there is the governing element to be determined and at the same time the determining governed elements (*viśeṣya-viśeṣaṇa*). Recognising this relation is unavoidable inasmuch as it lets us differentiate among the governed and governing elements in a unit of speech in which there is no copula and in which all words have the same case-ending (*sāmānādhikaraṇapada*). It is a basic, though only an initial procedure in approaching a proper, soteriological sense of TU 2,1. Due to this step one is able to see the structure of a sentence and the syntactic-semantic function of words constituting it. The *viśeṣya*-word governs the case ending of the *viśeṣaṇa*-words, and thanks to it these words can be taken to create a meaningful unit and refer to a single subject matter (*sāmānādhikaraṇapada*).

Yet it would be an exegetical – so to say – mistake to restrict the function of the *viśeṣaṇa-viśeṣya* relation in the case of the *śruti*

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<sup>36</sup> TUBh, p. 452: *bāhyasattāsāmānyaviśeṣeṇa satyaśabdena lakṣyate satyaṃ brahmeti na tu satyaśabdavācyaṃ eva brahma. evaṃ satyādiśabdā itaretarasamnidhāv anyonyaniyamanyāniyāmakāḥ santaḥ satyādiśabdavācyaṃ tan nivartakā brahmaṇo lakṣaṇārthāś ca bhavanṭīty.*

from TU 2,1 only to the relation of the determinans-determinandum. By doing so one would also show that one does not realise the fact that *śruti*, existing in the empirical world of our “Da-sein” is, in fact, embedded in the *vyāvahārika* order of things. In order to make it yield a true sense, one has to as if see through the symbolisation of Brahman by means of the language, to let the light of Brahman reality shine through the words. This seems to be suggested by the statement that “Brahman cannot be directly expressed and cannot be the object of the sentence similar to [things] like ‘blue lotus’.”<sup>37</sup>

Yet one cannot simply overlook the fact that these particular words with their particular meanings are the sentence-constituents. Therefore the next step should be to state precisely the revelatory function of the *viśeṣaṇa*-words. Obviously one can not take them to convey the sense of attributes for reasons already mentioned above. By excluding everything from Brahman’s nature which is non-Brahman they indicate the “that-ness” of Brahman, its *haecceitas*. Yet this is not the only function they have to fulfil here, as one could say that the *haecceitas* of a thing can be expressed by simply naming it.

One could, in this case, state as much as “Brahman is Brahman”, which would be approximate to GERTRUDE STEIN’s famous: “a rose is a rose is a rose”.

The *viśeṣaṇas* also serve as those indispensable elements in that sentence that indicate the “such-ness” *quidditas*, the true essence (*svarūpa*) of Brahman. Their relation with the word Brahman seems to be such that they precisely delimit the realm of Brahman, without the apparent imposition of the usual, attributive function of the *viśeṣaṇa*-words. The word “real” excludes the fact, that Brahman is “unreal”. Similarly the word “Brahman” excludes the fact that “non-Brahman” is real. Such an interpretation of the *viśeṣya-viśeṣaṇa* relation reminds us of a specific method of infer-

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<sup>37</sup> TUBh, p. 452: *avācyaṭvaṃ nīlotpalavad avākyaṛthatvaṃ ca brahmaṇaḥ*.

ential reasoning of Śāṅkara known as *anvaya-vyatireka* as mentioned above. *Anvaya-vyatireka* can be explained as an inferential reasoning, which, by indicating at a combination of concomitant presences and concomitant absences may be used to support claims of identity and mutual reducibility of some *relata*.<sup>38</sup>

Let me now apply this method to the interpretation of the *mahāvākya* from TU 2,1. The word “Brahman” used in this statement requires the invariable presence of the word “*satya*”, because if there is a reality of Brahman, it is the only true one (*satyaṃ brahma*). This step of *anvaya*, that is of concomitant presence of Brahman and the real, both in the intra-linguistic sentence-situation and extra-linguistic reality, is proven by concomitant absences. That is, if there is a non-Brahman, it is at the same time unreal (*anṛta*). This seems to be the way by which Śāṅkara proceeds to explain the function of attributive adjuncts of this *śruti* and the ultimate function of those words that lead to the realization of Brahman as such, and not to the reality of it as possessed of attributes. Words with an apparently attributive sense both delimit the realm of one undifferentiated thing as such (*brahmasvarūpa*) and do not superimpose any attributes upon it. This is an important moment in Śāṅkara’s hermeneutics of TU 2,1. It is thus shown that this *mahāvākya* is not meant to show what Brahman is like but what it is not. In this way Śāṅkara shows that the apparent relation of *viśeṣya-viśeṣaṇa*, which at first is a superimposed mythicising (“Mythisierung”) of transcendence, is also as a reality possessed of attributes to be excluded. The above-shown method of the analysis of the function of particular words of TU 2,1 *mahāvākya* allows one to reach, in the final step, the final, soteriological meaningfulness of this key-statement of the Vedāntic revelation. If one interprets the

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<sup>38</sup> In the description of the function of *anvaya-vyatireka* I follow HALBFASS 1991, p. 170. When writing about the state of research on *anvaya-vyatireka* HALBFASS does not mention MAXIMILIEN 1975. MAXIMILIEN in his introduction to the translation of *Naiṣkarmyasiddhi* by Sureśvara writes on pp. 7-8: «L’outil intellectuel de l’opération est une forme de raisonnement inférentiel appelée *anvayavyatireka*. (raisonnement par) co-présence et co-absence.»

relation of *viśeṣya-viśeṣaṇa* in the above way, it becomes clear that one must exclude the linguistic relation of noun-attributive adjuncts or semantic-logical relation of subject and predicates, as they could then lead one to assume that this sentence intends to communicate the extra-linguistic relation of determinans-determinandum. *Sāmānādhikaraṇa* and the *viśeṣya-viśeṣaṇa* relation do not function here strictly as a linguistic notion, though applied, on the surface of it, to solve some semantic and syntactical questions. Linguistic and logical questions evoked by the particular structure of the sentence in which words are in apposition and co-related as “determinans-determinandum” subserve a different purpose here. Linguistic and logical notions (*sāmānādhikaraṇya*, *viśeṣya-viśeṣaṇa*) are aptly used here to de-construct the syntactic structure and the meaning of the sentence in order to eventually show that the ordinary grammar of the ordinarily used language relates only to the ordinarily experienced reality. It is a necessary step, but is to be discarded in the very moment in which the realization of the true and only purport of the sentence arises, which is the essence (*svārūpa*) of Brahman. The words function exclusively in the relation of *lakṣya-lakṣaṇa* and the analysis of the way they define Brahman’s nature leads to another conclusion: these words cannot directly denote Brahman, they can only indicate (or perhaps evoke?) it.

Śaṅkara strives to prove that by this de-constructing of the apparent sense of *śruti* statements one can come to the realization of the truth about the transcendence. This process of de-constructing makes one slowly come to know the true nature of the reality described by the sentence. The moment in which this particular key-statement unfolds its salvific meaningfulness is precisely the moment that allows one, in G. OBERHAMMERS words, into the “mythic presence” of transcendence. It is also this moment that makes transcendence experiential to the Self. Maybe it also allows the Self to experience its own transcendental dimension. Yet this also seems to be the moment in which words – with their many-faceted meanings – are no longer necessary, being foreshadowed by the

immediateness of the “mythic presence” of transcendence. It seems to be quite easily discernible that both in Śāṅkara and G. OBERHAMMER’s thought, the role of the language in the process of bringing in the “mythic presence” of transcendence is not to be underestimated. Language, be it an ordinarily used system of meaningful signs or the language of revelation, is the instrument which makes that which is not an object of cognition experiencable to the Self. The overall process of the acquisition of soteriological meaningfulness of the revelatory key-statement present in the hermeneutics of Śāṅkara, based on his idea of the “One Reality” of Brahman reminds us about the conditioning of the “mythicalisation of transcendence” which G. OBERHAMMER writes about. The one and undifferentiated Brahman of Śāṅkara seems to be this “mythic presence” of transcendence realized by means of the language: „Mythisch wäre demnach die Wirklichkeit nicht insofern über sie geredet wird, sondern sofern sie das für den Menschen in Sprache und durch Sprache Wirklichkeit gewordene Sein selbst in Einzelnen und im Ganzen ist.“<sup>39</sup>

It seems to be quite obvious when interpreting the sense of TU 2,1, Śāṅkara strives to de-mythicise this particular mythicalisation of transcendence as a reality with particular attributes. Yet his hermeneutical effort to de-mythicise the reality described by TU 2,1 leads to another mythicalisation. It is unavoidable inasmuch as the mythicalisation can be meaningful only under the condition that it is contained within the framework of the experience of transcendence as it is present in a particular religious tradition. This OBERHAMMER expresses in the following words: „Will man aber eine solche Annahme nicht machen, so könnte es nur einen einzigen Grund für die nachträgliche unterschiedliche Verbalisierung geben: die jeweils andere Erfahrung, derzufolge auch die Verbalisierung eine andere sein muß, wann immer es einen Zusammenhang zwischen Erfahrung und nachträglicher Verbalisierung geben soll; selbst wenn dieser Zusammenhang nur darin bestünde, daß die Transzen-

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<sup>39</sup> OBERHAMMER 1987: 30.

denzerfahrung in einem religiösen Glauben ermöglichende ‚Mythisierung‘ des ‚Jenseits des Seienden‘ tatsächlich zu einer Erfahrung führt und die ‚Mythisierung‘ durch diese Erfahrung nicht aufgehoben, sondern von ihr zur geistigen Realität gebracht wird.“<sup>40</sup>

#### SUREŚVARA

Sureśvara (ca 850 - 900 AD), the pupil of Śaṅkara and his follower, deals with the interpretation of TU 2,1 in his *Taittirīyavārttika*, a commentary on *Taittirīyopaniṣad*. His method of interpreting *śruti* has already been described by HACKER<sup>41</sup>, MAXIMILIEN<sup>42</sup>, and MAYEDA<sup>43</sup>. To my knowledge HACKER was the first to introduce the interpretation of ChU 6,8,7: *tat tvam asi* and to notice and enumerate what constituted the peculiar character of this interpretation. HACKER introduces succeeding steps in the interpretation of Sureśvara, indicating at first, just as Sureśvara himself, the intellectual level of understanding the meaning of the “Great Saying”. At this stage HACKER specifies characteristic components of such an understanding. They are: *anvaya-vyatireka* method<sup>44</sup>, *samsarga*<sup>45</sup>, *anyonya-niyāmya-niyāmakatā*<sup>46</sup>. These components, co-oper-

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<sup>40</sup> OBERHAMMER 1987: 29.

<sup>41</sup> HACKER 1951, particularly p. 73-79.

<sup>42</sup> MAXIMILIEN 1975, particularly introduction, pp. 7-13.

<sup>43</sup> MAYEDA 1980-81.

<sup>44</sup> HACKER 1951. *Anvaya-vyatireka* is defined by HACKER on p. 74 in the following manner: „Das Verständnis des heiligen Satzes geht aus vom Verständnis der Wörter, die ihn konstituieren. Man erreicht es durch die logische Methode des Anvaya und Vyatireka, d.h. durch Reflexion darüber, daß der Inhalt der Wörter und des Satzes wohlbegründet und das Gegenteil logisch unmöglich ist.“

<sup>45</sup> HACKER 1951, p. 75, on which one can find a translation of NS III.9.: „Jeder Satz, sei er weltlich oder vedisch, macht nur insofern einen Satzinhalt verständlich, als dieser in einer Vereinigung (*samsarga*) besteht,“ and p. 76: „Dagegen ist hinreichend klar, daß Sureśvara unter der ‚Vereinigung‘ eine Art Sinnverschmelzung von Subject und Prädikat verstand.“

<sup>46</sup> HACKER 1951: 76, a translation of NS 3,2: „Wie im Falle der Begriffe ‚blau‘ und ‚Lotus‘ wird durch die beiden (Worte *tat* und *tvam*) zweierlei aus-

ating in order to lead to a logically accurate understanding of the sense of ChU 6,8,7, concur in the initial stage of the sense-acquisition. This stage, though an indispensable one, prepares the reader / hearer for the next, much more important stage, that is, the understanding which comprises the actual, revealed sense of the *śruti* (*śravaṇa*) with regard to the true nature of Brahman. At this stage Sureśvara laid out the following, indispensable constituents of his method: *sāmānādhikaraṇya*, *viśeṣaṇa-viśeṣya-bhāva* and *lakṣya-lakṣaṇa-saṃbandha*.<sup>47</sup>

MAXIMILIEN, in the introduction to his translation of the *Naiṣkarmyasiddhi*, has made a few interesting remarks concerning the exegetical method of Sureśvara. MAXIMILIEN indicates its connection to the exegesis of Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā and shows its connection to the method of the analysis and interpretation of TU 2,1 by Sureśvara.<sup>48</sup> When MAYEDA treats the same subject that HACKER did before, he does not differ much in his conclusions<sup>49</sup> when tracing out the successive steps of interpreting ChU 6,8,7 by Sureśvara. MAYEDA points out that Sureśvara's merit lies in the point that "he gave specific technical terms to, and clearly formulated the three-fold relation among words, word meanings, and the Inner-*ātman*"<sup>50</sup>

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geschlossen, nämlich das Leidvollsein und das Nichtātmansein [...] Nach Jñānottamas Erklärung ist in dem Beispiel die Ausschließung oder gegenseitige Einschränkung (*anyonya-niyamya-niyamakatā*) von Subject und Prädikat so zu verstehen, daß in dem Satze ‚Der Lotus ist blau‘ durch die Bestimmung ‚blau‘ alles Nichtblaue von dem Lotus, und durch die Bestimmung ‚Lotus‘ alles, was Nicht-Lotus ist, von dem Blauen ausgeschlossen wird.“

<sup>47</sup> HACKER 1951: 77: „Im heiligen Satze besteht zwischen den beiden Wörtern *tat* und *tvam* die Beziehung der grammatischen Koordination (*sāmānādhikaraṇya*), zwischen beiden Wort-Inhalten (*padārtha*) die des Spezifizierenden zum Spezifizierten (*viśeṣaṇa-viśeṣya-bhāva*) und zwischen den Wortinhalten einerseits und dem Satzinhalt andererseits die des annähernd Indizierenden zum annähernd Indizierten (*lakṣya-lakṣaṇa-saṃbandha* III.3).“

<sup>48</sup> MAXIMILIEN 1975: 12, footnote 2, in which he points out that TV 2.1, verses 44-100, comprise a method of interpreting TU 2,1, which is very much similar to the method of interpreting ChU 6,8,7.

<sup>49</sup> See: HACKER 1951: 75–77 and MAYEDA 1982: 150-159.

<sup>50</sup> MAYEDA 1980-1981: 160.

to the Śāṅkarian exegesis of this particular “Great Saying”. As MAXIMILIEN has rightly pointed out, the exegesis of TU 6,8,7 does not seem to be different from the interpretation of TU 2,1.

After these remarks showing a history of the research on Sureśvara’s exegesis of *śruti* TU 2,1, let me now shift to the description of this method as seen in the TV of Sureśvara.

Sureśvara, Śāṅkara’s pupil included in his exegesis of TU 2,1 the same interpretative model of his teacher and in addition provided a precise methodology.<sup>51</sup> It seems unnecessary to repeat here all the successive steps in the intellectual cognition of the meaning of TU 2,1, as the authors of the studies mentioned above have already explained it. Although Sureśvara does not straightforwardly mention, that in order to properly analyse the sense of TU 2,1 one has to apply the same method as in the interpretation of ChU 6,8,7, a close reading of the relevant fragment of TV makes the parallels easily recognisable. For our purposes it is then enough to remember the steps in approaching a proper understanding of the meaning of ChU 6,8,7 as described by HACKER.<sup>52</sup>

Let us see then whether our supposition with regard to the similarities in the approach to the understanding of both TU 2,1 and ChU 6,8,7 are eligible. In the successive verses Sureśvara indicates that the four words used in the TU 2,1 *mahāvākya* are related as determinans-determinandum (*viśeṣaṇa-viśeṣyatva*), and that they all have one and the same declension ending.<sup>53</sup> It is interesting to notice that he stresses the fact that Brahman is the main (*prādhānya*) word in the sentence and is to be understood as the determinandum (*viśeṣya*). The remaining words are the determinants (*viśeṣaṇa*).<sup>54</sup> Further he mentions the condition of congruence, which he

<sup>51</sup> Cf: NS 3,3.

<sup>52</sup> Vide supra, footnote 46.

<sup>53</sup> TV 1,47: *viśeṣaṇaviśeṣyatvāt satyādīny ata eva ca catvāry ekavibhaktīni [...]*.

<sup>54</sup> TV 1,48: *vedyatvena yato brahma prādhānyena vivakṣitam, tasmād viśeṣyam vijñeyaṃ tato ’nyat syād viśeṣaṇam*.

explains as *ekādhikarāṇya*, a synonym of *sāmānādhikarāṇya*. Next he explains the functioning of a congruent sentence, bringing the example already known from Śaṅkara, the “blue, big, sweet-smelling lotus”.<sup>55</sup> The same exemplificatory sentence, which in everyday usage illustrates the mundane way of coming to understand the actual content of the sentence by differentiating the lotus with the given determining terms from other individual representatives of the same kind of flower, is used in the next verse. Here Sureśvara defines the function of the determinans (*viśeṣaṇa*) in the “Great Saying” of the TU 2,1 as being those constituents of the sentence that allow the differentiation Brahman from all this, which is non-Brahman.<sup>56</sup> The function of the attributive adjuncts is then to differentiate things of the same species that are furnished with different attributes from one another. In the case of Brahman this manner of understanding the function of words that are taken to be attributive adjuncts fails, as there are no other Brahman from which this one can be differentiated.<sup>57</sup> Therefore one has to understand the relation between the terms in the sentence in a different way: as the relation of *lakṣya-lakṣaṇa*, definiendum-definiens.<sup>58</sup> In this relation words that function as attributive adjuncts are, independently from one another, co-ordinated syntactically and semantically with the object to be determined (*viśeṣya*).<sup>59</sup> A conclusive step in Sureśvara’s procedure of interpreting TU 2,1 is to state clearly that the *viśeṣaṇa*-words function in this sentence only as “indications” (or perhaps: evocators) of Brahman – they do not name it directly. Even though they do not give up their meanings as attri-

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<sup>55</sup> TV 1,46: *nīlaṃ mahat sugandhīti viśiṣyanty utpalaṃ yathā, ekādhikarāṇy evaṃ satyādīni paraṃ mahat.*

<sup>56</sup> TV 1,51: [...] *taj jñātaṃ yad anyebhyo ’vadhāryate. nīlotpalādivad brahma nānyathā [...].*

<sup>57</sup> TV 1,52: *vyabhicaradvastu syād viśeṣyaṃ viśeṣaṇaiḥ, brahmāntarād ṛte tv atra kuto brūhi viśeṣyatā.*

<sup>58</sup> TV 1,53: *lakṣyalakṣaṇatām yātu na doṣo ’tra manāg api.*

<sup>59</sup> TV 1,58: *satyādayaḥ parārthatvād itaretaranisprhāḥ, ekaikas tv ata evaiṣāṃ viśeṣyārthena badhyate.*

butive adjuncts, they still do not determine Brahman, but only indicate it by excluding everything that is non-Brahman from it.<sup>60</sup>

It is quite discernible now that Sureśvara closely follows his teacher when it comes to the method of interpreting TU 2,1. His contribution basically seems to be contained in providing a structure to Śaṅkara's method by systematising it. It is worthwhile noticing that, strangely enough, Sureśvara does not insist that *viśeṣaṇa* words reject their attributive sense. An interesting trait of both Śaṅkara's and Sureśvara's interpretation of TU 2,1 is the fact, that neither of them speak about the necessity to introduce the function of *lakṣaṇā*-secondary, contextual and indirect sense of words, which later became a must in the Advaitic exegesis of *sāmānādhikarāṇya* sentences, beginning with Sarvajñātman. Yet it is only Sureśvara's hermeneutic which clearly indicates that the exegesis of ChU 6,7,8 should become a sort of paradigm for the Advaitic interpretation of all key-statements that are congruent (*sāmānādhikarāṇya*) and seem to describe Brahman as a determined being.

Both the tension and the intensity between the linguistic description and that which it refers to is produced in the process of analysis of the real meaning of the saying of the revelation. The process, involving etymology and logic, reasoning and intuition, all applied within the limits of one's own religious tradition, eventually leads one to the conclusion that language indicates the reality of Brahman without naming it. It is exclusively the content, which is beyond ordinary word meanings, as if absent at first sight, that gives the ultimate salvific meaningfulness to the statements of the revelation. This transcendent reality flows through the word – and in this way only due to and by means of the language – this unnamed yet indicated reality becomes approachable to those searching for liberation. The capacity of the key-statements to let the “Jenseits des Seienden” become approachable is equal to its so-

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<sup>60</sup> See: TV 1,100: *pratyākhyātākḥilānātmabhedasatyārthavācīnā tathai-va satyaśabdena lakṣyate, tan na tūcyate*. TV 1,101: *evam satyādayaḥ śabdāḥ svārthāsaṃtyaginaḥ paraṃ lakṣayati viruddhārthanivṛtṭya 'jñānahānataḥ*.

teriological meaningfulness. In this way they become a proper instrument to attain liberation.

The hermeneutics of both the TU 2,1, “Brahman is real, knowledge, infinity”, which, when considered on the ordinary level of its meaning, seems to communicate transcendence as possessed of attributes and the hermeneutics of ChU 6,8,7, which proclaims identity of the Inner Ātman with Brahman, *are* – strange as it might seem at first sight – proclaiming the same kind of being. The process of interpretation makes all seemingly disparate key-statements of the Indian Revelation lead to a single type of mythisation.

Whether a *mahāvākya* seems to speak about a qualified Brahman, or one, attributeless Brahman, whether it seems to indicate the identity of the Self (Ātman) with transcendence (Brahman), it is always aiming at indicating one and the same “mythisation” of transcendence, which is the idea of the one, attributeless, undivided and identical with all reality.

In a later stage of its development, the Advaitic hermeneutics of all congruent statements evolved in the direction of the so-called *akhaṇḍavākyaārtha* theory of one, undivided sense of the sentence of Revelation. This theory is, as it seems now, first named and properly described in the work of Sarvajñātman entitled *Samkṣepaśārīraka*. In the first chapter he describes the process of the interpretation of TU 2,1 in over twenty verses, and at the very outset of his exegesis he indicates that the attributive words of this particular key-statement should be interpreted in the same manner, as the words “this” (*tat*) and “you” (*tvam*) in the ChU 6,7,8 statement “You are this”. The statement from the Chāndogya-Upaniṣad is to express the sense of identity of the transcendent Self (*tvam*) with transcendence (*tad*). The procedure of interpreting TU 2,1 then is to show that the sentence should evoke the sense of one, undivided reality (*akhaṇḍa*) in us.

It seems then, that this could be an indication that the appositional, attributive sentence was taken by the later Advaitin to bring about the knowledge of the identity of the transcendent Self and

transcendence. The moment of the realization of this undivided (*akhaṇḍa*), due to the proper realization of the true, soteriological meaningfulness of the key-statement from TU 2,1, might also be considered by Sarvajñātman to be the moment of the realization of the lack of differentiation, primordial identity (*akhaṇḍa*) of the transcendental Self with transcendence.

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