

Padmapāda's Illusion Argument

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Introduction

Advaita Vedānta's tradition of reflection on perceptual illusion arises out of a concern with *mukti*, a "liberation" or "salvation" that is conceived as a radical change of awareness, thus as a "mystical experience." Developing the teachings of the Upanishads and the *Bhagavadgītā*, Śaṅkara (c. 700 A.D.) and his followers try to articulate a world view that would explain the possibility of this mystical state and show it to be the *summum bonum* (*paramapuruṣārtha*). It is problematic whether any Advaita philosopher, even the great Śaṅkara himself, is a "mystic philosopher," that is, one who attempts to describe his own mystical experience and to theorize therefrom. But convinced that a kind of *experience*, albeit a mystical experience, is the most important matter in life, the Advaitins try to formulate a comprehensive theory of experience (*anubhava*) that would conform to their soteriological views. Above all, it is the topic of perceptual illusion that forms the bridge between the Advaitins' soteriology on the one hand and their theory of experience on the other. The relation of the salvific experience to our everyday experience is viewed as analogous to the relation between veridical and delusive sense perception.^[1]

Śaṅkara in the very first sentence of his *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya*^[2] uses the term '*adhyāsa*,' literally "superimposition" but also "false appearance," to capture the relation between the natural and mystical state of the self's true experience on the one hand and worldly experience on the other.^[3] The Advaitin then asks, "What is *adhyāsa*?" and proceeds to give two characterizations (or definitions) of it. The second of these he defends with references to everyday instances of illusion. Thus in this opening passage, and in pronounced fashion in his Upanishadic commentaries and his *Upadeśasāhasrī* as well, Śaṅkara articulates an understanding of "*adhyāsa*" that is supposed to include both everyday and mystical phenomena.^[4] Further, in this "*adhyāsa*" section of his *BSB*, he mentions some alternative views of illusion, apparently for descriptive as opposed to polemical purposes: without disputing these views, he puts forth his second characterization and claims that it would be acceptable to all disputants.^[5] Therefore with these characterizations, Śaṅkara must be seen as launching Advaita "phenomenology of perceptual illusion."

However, it is only after Śaṅkara that Advaita phenomenology and indeed critical reflection overall become advanced. Śaṅkara himself is so much less concerned with argument and justificational issues than with elaborating the soteriological teachings of diverse Upanishadic texts that many of his more properly philosophic views are too inchoate and embedded in other discussions to repay at all easily a scrutiny,^[6] although many modern reconstructions of his positions have appeared. His followers inherit the soteriological and textual concerns, but they also try to be systematic and to refute opponents on a whole range of issues. It is with Śaṅkara's disciples, Padmapāda, Sureśvara, Vācaspati, and *their* followers that the Advaita polemics and phenomenological analyses become truly astute.

Advaita theory of knowledge, and related phenomenology, become increasingly broad in scope, as through the years there is a shift in the focus of Advaita reflection. In general, more and more attention is paid to cosmological and worldly (*vyavahārika*) issues, while Śaṅkara's embedded epistemological positions are enormously filled out. By the time of the *Vedāntaparibhāṣā*, the famous seventeenth-century textbook of

Advaita epistemology, the topic of perceptual illusion is taken up not so much within a soteriological discussion as within a wide-ranging explanation of "means of knowledge" (*pramāṇa*) in general.^[7] The *Vedāntaparibhāṣā* incorporates centuries of reflection—much of which originates in rival schools—on topics ranging from particulars and universals to the foundations of claims about the non-presence of something x. (Do I directly perceive that there is not an elephant here?) Thus one should not think that Advaita epistemology is limited to a concern with perceptual illusion, particularly in the later period. Yet in the *Vedāntaparibhāṣā* and in many intermediate works, the early phenomenology of perceptual illusion, and in particular that contributed by Padmapāda, informs crucially the theory of knowledge, somewhat like the influence of Descartes and Hume in the West.^[8] It clearly forms the mainstay of the central Advaita positions.

Padmapāda is generally admitted to have been Śaṅkara's younger contemporary and his student. Along with Sureśvara (who most likely was also a student of Śaṅkara's) and Vācaspati Mīśra (who was probably at least a generation later), he is the originator of a distinct line of Advaita commentary. These three are the founders of the *prasthānatraya*, "three lines of interpretation [of Śaṅkara]," known to students of Advaita. Padmapāda launched a tradition of commentary and understanding of Śaṅkara to which several prominent philosophers belong, including Prakāśātman (c. 975), the title of whose lucid (but often unfaithful—see note 12 below) commentary "*Vivaraṇa*" has become the name whereby this branch of Advaita is commonly known, Citsukha (c. 1275), the logician and polemicist who purports to refute all the late schools, Mādhava (c. 1350), who is best known for a wide-ranging survey of Indian schools,^[9] and Dharmarājadhvarīndra, the author of the *Vedāntaparibhāṣā* previously mentioned. There are also several less major figures who belong to Padmapāda's "line," and the number of Sanskrit commentaries written on his work is large.^[10]

In this paper, I wish to examine Padmapāda's thought on illusion—with an eye to evaluating his metaphysics. Despite the sophistication of Padmapāda's analysis, the marriage between the metaphysics and the understanding of illusion is an unhappy one. Yet this point could be turned around: although, as I shall show, Padmapāda is unsuccessful in his attempt to show through an illusion-analogy the possibility (*sambhava*) of his views about the Absolute (*brahman*), his meticulous phenomenology of the mental life has merits of its own. I shall not slight it by jumping too quickly into an examination of the metaphysics. Only after presenting with some detail Padmapāda's analysis of everyday illusions, do I take up the metaphysics of Advaita and demonstrate the failure of his illusion-analogy.

Another aim of the paper, overlapping the evaluative concern, is historical. I contend that Padmapāda's view of illusion illumines his metaphysics of *brahman*, the "Absolute," and of *brahman*'s relation to *māyā*, the "cosmic illusion." This metaphysics has been misunderstood by some scholars of Indian philosophy.^[11] By elaborating Padmapāda's use of the illusion-analogy, I intend to show precisely what his views are on the nature and ontic status of "*māyā*." While it is a matter of debate to what degree he departs on this score from Śaṅkara, his views on *māyā* are not the same as those of Prakāśātman, his famous "follower" who lived about two centuries later.^[12] Also, Padmapāda's insistence on defending the possibility (*sambhava*) of the truths revealed by *śruti*, "scripture," along with the phenomenology, achieves a quantum-leap in Advaitic philosophic procedure. This type of reasoning, in addition to the phenomenological arguments, represents a major development over Śaṅkara.^[13] This paper is not directed principally to questions of Padmapāda exegesis or of his place in the evolution of Advaita, but it is intended to contribute to what is hardly an overmined field.^[14]

The distinction between illusion and memory

Padmapāda's principal work, the *Pañcapādikā*, is a commentary on that portion of

Śaṅkara's *BSB* which explains the first four sūtras of the *Brahmasūtra*.^[15] Presumably, the work was to take up the first five sections of Śaṅkara's *BSB* (i.e. the entire first chapter and the first section of the second), but all we have is a commentary on Śaṅkara's treatment of sūtras 1.1.1–4.

As noted, at the beginning of Śaṅkara's *BSB* the key topic is illusion as the appropriate analogue for the Self's true experience in relation to one's experience of the everyday world. Padmapāda focuses first and at length on this part of his teacher's treatise. We remarked that Śaṅkara characterizes illusion in two ways. These are, first, "an appearance (*avabhāsa*) of something previously experienced—[in this way] like memory—in something else."^[16] Then after relating three alternative views, he gives a second "minimalist" characterization that is presumed to be acceptable to all disputants (as well as to conform to common usage): to wit, "the appearance of one thing with the properties of another."^[17] As I indicated, it seems to me that Śaṅkara, because he gives the second characterization without a word of dispute for the alternative positions, is not so much concerned with the precise nature of illusion as with making a soteriological point. He wants merely to refer to illusions as the phenomena that are—within our everyday experience—the appropriate analogues for the relation of the world to the single transcendent Self. But Padmapāda takes it upon himself to show that each of Śaṅkara's characterizations is superior to alternative views, and does not elaborate the minimalist point. His concern is with disagreements on illusion among rival schools.

Padmapāda begins his discussion by distinguishing an illusory cognition (*mithyājñāna*) from an instance of memory. He has two goals in this regard. First, he wants to show in what sense the term '*smṛtirūpa*,' "like memory," is used by Śaṅkara in his first characterization. Second, he wants to establish—against an alternative view of illusion ("*smṛtipramoṣakhyātivāda*" interpreted as "*akhyātivāda*" by some of the commentators^[18])—the positions that illusion has a distinct phenomenological character and, most importantly, that cognition is unitary. According to the alternative view, illusion is predominantly memory but also involves two cognitions, a sense cognition as well as a memory cognition, somehow blended together (because the "awareness of remembering" is obscured or "stolen away").

The reason that Śaṅkara uses the term '*smṛtirūpa*,' "like memory," is, he says, to suggest that there can be no illusory appearance of something that has not been previously experienced, just as there can be no memory of something whereof one has had no immediate acquaintance. This is a view that Padmapāda wholeheartedly endorses. Sensation creates mental (or subliminal) impressions (called "*saṃskāra*" and "*vāsanā*"), while both memory and illusion involve, psychologically considered, the activity of these sense-created impressions.

The way in which mental impressions inform a present cognition is complex on Padmapāda's view. He elaborates this portion of his theory while disputing the *smṛtipramoṣakhyāti* view mentioned just above.^[19] To translate the text, the position to be refuted (the "*pūrvapakṣa*") is:

The cognition of something x that occurs when the eye is in contact with a different thing y is just memory, but there is an obscuration (*pramoṣa*—"stealing away") of the awareness that it is a remembering. Because of some defect of the instruments [or causes] of cognition, i.e. the senses, etc., there arises a memory-awareness of a particular object, while the capacity of the organ to present the distinct thing with which it is in contact is vitiated by the defect. In this way, solely because of the defect of the sense-organ, there is a failure to note the distinction between the memory and the sensation which arise together, and thus the error is produced that there is a single [cognition] that in fact has not occurred, as in the case of two trees in the distance [perceived as one].^[20]

While according to this the opponent's position an illusory cognition is predominantly

memory, Padmapāda believes that an illusion has little in common with an instance of memory except in one respect. This is that in both the object cognized has been experienced previously. (This is what Padmapāda sees as the point of Śaṅkara's use of 'smṛtirūpa,' as we noted.) He insists that as a presentation (*avabhāsa*) an illusory cognition differs crucially from an instance of memory in its clarity ("*spaṣṭam*") and immediacy ("*aparokṣārthāvabhāsa*").^[21]

Then in addition to this phenomenological argument, Padmapāda presents a linguistic one. He points out that if the object of an illusory cognition were the same as the object of an instance of memory then a person deluded by, for example, a piece of mother-of-pearl appearing as silver would make the judgment 'That silver,' not 'This silver,' as actually occurs. In Sanskrit, the term '*idam*,' "this," is used to refer to an object presented in immediate experience, while the term '*tat*,' "that," is reserved for objects previously experienced and remembered. Thus the common usage tells against the opponent's position. This, to my mind, is Padmapāda's best point against the *pūrvapakṣa*, although surely the phenomenological argument is also a good one.

But this is not all he says. He also attacks by asking, "What is an awareness of remembering (*smaraṇābhimāna*)?" According to the opponent, it is this awareness of remembering which, invariably present in an instance of correct memory, is obscured or suppressed by a sense-defect in an instance of illusion. Padmapāda avers that there is no particular form in which an awareness of remembering presents itself and by which it can be discerned.^[22] He is firmly convinced that cognition is unitary. And I believe it is above all this supposition that rules out for him the possibility of any such distinct awareness of remembering. But he does seem to have some good phenomenological points. First, we are not *always* self-conscious about our remembering when we recall something or other. This is particularly evident in recalling the meaning of words: in comprehending the meaning of a sentence one must recall the meaning of individual words, but one does not recall their meaning *as* remembered meaning. So there is clearly no "awareness of remembering" in this instance.^[23] Second, memory is invariably "intentional": one cannot engage in an act of remembering without remembering some object or other. No awareness of remembering occurs entirely apart from the objective content of the memory.^[24] But Padmapāda's eschewal of the idea of *smaraṇābhimāna* involves more than the denials that there is any remembering that is "non-intentional" and that in all instances there is plainly a self-consciousness about the remembering. He says in a sweeping fashion that whereas admittedly one sometimes designates an object as remembered by a certain usage, e.g. "I remember (such and such)," still even then, as always, no distinguishable "awareness of remembering" is involved.^[25] Thus here he appears to be guided not by phenomenological considerations but by a peculiar idea of the unity of cognition. Surely we can be aware of engaging in the act of remembering—in some cases with little attention to the objects remembered. (Imagine an amnesiac questioned by a physician: "Can you remember what you ate for breakfast? Can you picture the entrance to the hospital?" The point in these cases would be to focus on remembering itself, not its objects.) Some of Padmapāda's arguments in this passage (*Ppk* 45-47) appear to be mere hand-waving. In fact, his eschewal of the notion of self-conscious remembering is one indication that his is a "one-dimensional phenomenism"—a position the full implications of which I shall explain in the last section.

Now an everyday cognition is no simple unity according to Padmapāda. Judgments (reflecting cognitions) do indeed, he says, involve mental impressions, because judgments are expressed in words whose meanings are remembered. Further, in the inference 'The mountain is fiery' (made by one who sees only that the mountain is smokey) mental impressions of past experiences of fire conjoined with smoke clearly have a role. Also, in an instance of recognition (e.g. 'This is that Devadatta whom I met previously') mental impressions are responsible for the "that" portion of the judgment. But in all these cases there is only a single cognition in part influenced by memory (*smṛtigarbha*), not

two cognitions.

The references to cases of inference and of recognition are presumed to show the possibility (*utpādanam* = *sambhava*) of a unitary cognition. Thus there also *could* be a unitary cognition in the case of an illusion:

. . . it is evident that an inferential cognition [e.g. as expressed in the judgment 'The mountain is fiery'] arises from a [direct] cognition [i.e. sensation] of the inferential mark [e.g. particular smoke] together with mental impressions, while an instance of recognition [e.g. as expressed in the judgment 'This is that Devadatta'] arises from eye-contact together with mental impressions. In both these cases as well [as in illusion], there is just one single valid cognition that is "impregnated" with memory (*smṛtigarbha*). Without an arising of mental impressions, both [of these two types of valid cognition] would not occur. . . . Nor is there, moreover, any [other] reason to believe that in these cases we have two cognitions.^[26]

The unity of inferential cognitions and of those of recognition reveals, Padmapāda argues, the possibility of single yet "memory-impregnated" cognitions. That this possibility is actual in the case of illusion he presumably takes to be demonstrated by the unitary judgment it provokes, e.g. '*idam rajatam*,' "This silver," just as with inference and recognition, although he is not explicit here.^[27] In any case, a key idea in this section is the unity of consciousness in the present moment. Later, we shall review the role of the idea in Padmapāda's metaphysics.

Also important here—though for a different line of the metaphysics—is that Padmapāda sees the force of his opponent's position as deriving from the need to explain *causally* the contrast of illusion and veridical perception. He wants to appropriate that force into his own position. Note that according to the *smṛtipramoṣakhyātivādin* illusion comes about through a break in the causal chain characteristic of veridical perception. Padmapāda agrees.^[28] He too embraces a causal theory of perception (*pratyakṣa*) in general, and as we shall see, much of his explanation of individual instances of illusion relies on the identification of causal factors. His disagreement with the *smṛtipramoṣakhyātivādin* is limited to the characterization of the mental life.

The "object" of an illusion

Padmapāda, we have seen, in part uses a linguistic argument to refute the *smṛtipramoṣakhyātivādin*: we say '*idam rajatam*,' "this silver," not '*tad rajatam*,' "that silver," when presented with what we take to be silver, whether the presentation be illusory or veridical. What then is the reference of the term '*idam*,' the "this" used as an ostension? Padmapāda sees the thing (*viṣaya* = *artha* = *ālambana*)^[29] pointed to as the presented "silver" supported by the real mother-of-pearl (*śukṭigatamithyārajata*). Here he is opposed first of all by "realists" who espouse *anyathākhyātivāda*, "the view that illusion is the perception of something as otherwise (than the way it is in fact)," e.g. certain Naiyāyikas or "Logicians." His attack against this view reveals the extent to which Padmapāda is a "phenomenalist." My reading is that he is a phenomenalist on the issue of the criterion of the *ultimately* real. But although his is a radical phenomenism on that issue, it is hardly thorough-going or comprehensive: his ontological position is peculiarly Advaitic, having little in common with the Western subjectivist systems (such as Berkeley's) that espouse a phenomenalist position on the issue of the criterion of the real.

The opponent's *anyathākhyātivāda* is presented as a naïve realism, though one with a peculiar wrinkle. Padmapāda's opponent claims that the illusory cognition not only presents something real, the something *can satisfy desire*. In the stock example, the deluded person on the beach would be seeing a real piece of silver in the marketplace through some bizarre extension of his normal power of sight. (And he would not realize that he has such capability—unless he were an astute philosopher.)

Padmapāda pokes fun at the view so-rendered, except for its understanding of the nature of an "object" of a (perceptual) cognition (whether illusory or veridical). This is the idea that such an "object" is presented as something toward which purposeful activity *might* be directed. The Buddhist Dharmakīrti and the Naiyāyikas argue that "*arthakriyā*," "causal efficiency" and "capacity to fulfill an aim," is the mark of a true "object" (or real thing, *vastu*) in that a real thing is capable of satisfying desire and thus is *appropriately* sought in action.^[30] In other words, according to Dharmakīrti and the others, whom I see as "pragmatists," something is real just in case it can satisfy a desire. A mirage is not real just because it will not quench thirst. Nor is there a danger that one could be bitten by the snake of the "snake-rope" illusion. Thus the Indian pragmatists have a "holistic" notion of experience such that experience would involve activity in the world, and more precisely, interaction with worldly objects.^[31] Padmapāda, on the other hand, does not use the term '*arthakriyā*,' and incorporates only as much of the theory as suits his purposes: instead of '*arthakriyā*' he uses the term '*vyavahārayogya*,' "suitable (as the object of) [illusory] worldly activity."^[32] The term '*vyavahāra*,' "worldly activity," is used by Advaitins to designate the illusory world of our everyday experience in contrast to the transcendent reality of the Absolute, Brahman. Thus this usage shows that Padmapāda does not believe activity has anything to do with the means whereby the real is to be discerned. Although the expression echoes the pragmatists' position, for Padmapāda it means only that a perceptual presentation is a presentation of something that appears as though it could be an object of purposeful activity. But "purposeful activity" is itself illusory from the sublating perspective of the single Self. All worldly activity is *māyā*, "illusion," according to Padmapāda, and is revealed to be so by the sublating cognition that simultaneously reveals *brahman*.^[33] Consonantly within the "*vyavahārika*" perspective, the means whereby an illusory object (of the "silver" and "snake" sort) is discerned as such is, he says, not interaction but a sublational cognition, e.g. as expressed in the judgment "This is mother-of-pearl." Thus the point is that according to Padmapāda the illusory silver is *presented* as an appropriate object of desire. One does not find out that it is incapable of fulfilling desire until one has a sublating experience that shows it to be unreal. Not the capacity of the object to fulfill desire is the criterion whereby veridical and illusory experiences are to be discriminated. Rather, only a further experience can be the basis for that determination—at least with illusions of the silver-mother-of-pearl sort (we shall see that Padmapāda distinguishes between two broad types of illusion and that it is only with regard to one of these that the character of the immediate presentation is all-decisive). Padmapāda goes no further in his embrace of the notion *arthakriyā* than to hold that the object (*ālambana*) *appears* as an appropriate object of desire. This, in his view, is only a matter of phenomenal fact, with no special ontic relevance. The contrast of Padmapāda's phenomenalism with the pragmatism of this group of opponents is extremely important, and we shall return to it in evaluating his theory in the last section.

Yet despite his stance on "*arthakriyā*," Padmapāda's phenomenalism is limited. The "silver-mother-of-pearl" (also "snake-rope") type of illusion is, he says, the appropriate analogy for the metaphysics of Brahman, but it differs crucially from a second type that he identifies. Four examples of this second type of illusion are given: (1) the bitter taste of something sweet to a person with hepatitis ("diseased with bile"), (2) the sight of a double moon (*dvicandra*) by an astigmatic, (3) the red appearance of a crystal because of the proximity of a red flower, and (4) the reflection of an object in a mirror. These are presentations that remain false, Padmapāda points out, even after one understands that they do not present a true reality, unlike the case of the snake and the rope.^[34] One can know that these presentations are false (*mithyā*) while they remain immediate presentations.

Padmapāda does not give full details about how this is possible, beyond distinguishing between the two kinds of illusion. To be sure, he finds other *pramāṇa*-s, "means of knowledge," and it is in particular the *pramāṇa* inference (*anumāna*) that appears to be

operative in this "counter-intuitional" discernment. Further, the inferences here are drawn based on causal relations.^[35] But "Why are there means of knowledge in addition to the character of experience?" and "How are these *pramāṇa*-s related one to another?" are questions that Padmapāda does not directly address, although, as I shall argue, on the latter question he appears to have a pretty definite view.^[36] There is a tension in Padmapāda's position: sense perception (*pratyakṣa*) provides a reason to believe that, for example, the crystal is red, while inferential reasoning based on causal relations urges that such an appearance is false. Why should the character of an immediate presentation be the criterion of the real in some instances but not in all? Padmapāda's commentators give more thought to the question than does Padmapāda himself, but the groundwork for a response is indeed present in his distinction of the two types of illusion—along with his complex use of the distinction in explicating the metaphysics of Brahman.^[37]

The presentations of the second type of illusion (the red crystal, etc.) are relational (*sopādhika*); their very nature invites reflection on the relations of one thing to another. Indeed, experience itself teaches that sense presentations in general are mediated by complex causal factors. But all this causal interaction is conditioned by the polemics of the first type of illusion, which is relationless (*nirupādhika*).^[38] Recall that Padmapāda accepts that the object of a perception *appears* as an object of purposeful activity, while viewing the entire realm of activity as illusory. In parallel fashion, he sees objects as standing in a causal chain that involves the sense organs while he also maintains that the entire nexus of causal relations is negated in the Self's true perception.

The causal nexus is complex on Padmapāda's account. The presence of the object is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for the perception of it.^[39] Many contributing factors are identified: a causal theory of perception (embraced by many of the Indian schools with variations) is by the time of Padmapāda already quite developed. The object perceived, along with many variables pertaining to distinct kinds of objects, light (or another medium), the sense-organ, subliminal impressions, the internal organ (*manas*), and the self are all necessary factors. (We might call this Advaita *psychology* of perception, except for the factors relating to external objects such as the transparency of a crystal.)^[40] Through identifying the conditions (*upādhi*) that influence perception, Padmapāda can agree with many of the rival thinkers that the reason that, for example, a person diseased with an excess of bile sees white things as yellow is a defect in the sense organ; likewise with other illusions of the *sopādhika*, "relational," type. But the entire causal nexus is subject to a sublation of the "snake-rope" (*nirupādhika*) sort.

The "support" and "locus" of an illusion

One factor that is common to all illusions, whether relational or not, and indeed common to all cognitions, is the presence of a *real* "locus" and "support," *ālambana* (or less ambiguously "*adhiṣṭhāna*" and "*āśraya*").^[41] This stands as an empirical generalization, and Padmapāda refutes a counter-example that purports to show that there are presentations that have no locus.^[42] He also puts forth a linguistic argument in support of the claim: a judgment that expresses a sublational cognition invariably makes reference, at least implicitly, to a locus where the change occurs.^[43]

Now in ordinary experience, the locus of the object of a cognition is either (a) external—a physical (*jadaka*) object—as exemplified in sensory cognitions, or (b) internal, as exemplified in dreams. Padmapāda in discussing dreams (as examples of illusion) says that he does not want to quibble over the terms '*antar*' and '*bahir*,' "internal" and "external." Though he does view the self as internal, like dream-objects and unlike physical things, his chief concern is to defend the position that—from the metaphysical perspective—both the presentations of dreams and of waking experiences have consciousness (*caitanya*) as their support (*āśraya*):

Even in the waking state [as well as in dreaming] the immediacy [of

consciousness—"aparokṣatā"] that involves [external] objects is not to be distinguished from inner immediate experience (*anubhava*)—[at least not] according to [any] cognition that is valid—for they are presented in the same way. Thus an object even in the waking state is experienced invariably (*eva*) as intimately associated with inner immediate experience. Otherwise the presentation of the material world would be impossible. As a pot that is covered (*avagunṭhita*) by darkness is not presented [to cognition] without the [counter-]covering (*avagunṭhana*) of the light of a lamp, so it is here.^[44]

From the metaphysical perspective, the Self, i.e. Brahman, is the locus and support of *māyā* the cosmic illusion, and that reality (*pāramārthikatva*) is thought to underlie every worldly appearance. Although the externality of the "locus" in waking experience is a dimension to be sublated, a real locus is said to remain even after the ultimate sublation. Padmapāda's stress on an invariable presence of an *adhiṣṭhāna* in all instances of cognition, to include the worst illusions, is married to his view of Brahman as the "ground" of all phenomena and their "material cause."^[45]

In this way, Padmapāda presents his understanding of the central doctrine of Advaita, namely the identity of the self with Brahman. And indeed the famous *ātman-brahman* equation of the Upanishads appears to be understood similarly throughout Advaita, i.e. with the *brahman*-factor understood as the "ground" or "locus" of all phenomena.^[46] The connotations of the terms used in the passage translated just above reinforce the stress on the idea that all cognitions involve a locus: both darkness and light are thought of as "coverings" (*avagunṭhana*). Everything "objective" except the locus and support in all cognitions is similarly a matter of "covering" and can be removed in a sublational experience of the snake-rope sort—so that only the bare "locus," and "inner immediate experience," would remain.^[47]

Padmapāda does not present an empirical argument for the ultimate identity of all objects with a single locus-support—namely Brahman—and relies instead on *śruti*, "scripture." But he does argue defensively, pointing out that because dream and external objects are presented in the same way^[48] there is no reason (*pramāṇa*) to believe that external appearances have anything other than the self for their locus-support.^[49] Thus his point is that this ultimate identity is *possible*.^[50]

A summary and an appraisal

We have seen that Padmapāda distinguishes two kinds of illusion and that it is only the relationless ("snake-rope") sort that is the proper analogue for the "relation" between Brahman and one's experience of the everyday world. In this final section, I want to focus on the metaphysics and in particular on Padmapāda's use of an illusion analogy to explain the relation (or non-relation) of Brahman, the Absolute, to *māyā*, the cosmic illusion. I shall also say a word about what appears to be wrong with his theory.

The central conception, what makes this "illusionist" world view click in Padmapāda's mind and provides the key to its structure, is, I believe, the notion that everything except the self (or cognition itself) is a candidate for sublation (*bādha*) within the invariable presentation of a "locus"—in other words, that only the self is not a candidate for the sort of change in the phenomenal character of experience that occurs when one ceases to see the snake and sees instead the rope as it is.^[51] The notion that only (a) the self and (b) the locus-support of a cognition (the two are thought to be identical) are unsublatable is the linchpin of the system. To change metaphors, it is this idea that undergirds the remarkable statement of Śaṅkara's that perception and all the other *pramāṇa*-s, "means of knowledge," including scripture (*śāstra*), are dependent on the presence of *avidyā*, "non-awareness [of oneself as Brahman],"^[52] that is to say, their operation presupposes the condition of *māyā*. This statement is remarkable, and a

fortiori Padmapāda's embrace of it, because of Śāṅkara's concern with giving reasons (i.e. "*pramāṇa*") for his views, a concern that Padmapāda expands a thousandfold. How can a view be rational that purports to transcend the canons of rationality—or criteria for warranted belief—including, to be sure, scripture?

Now the topic of the foundations of the Advaita world view, whether scriptural revelation, reason, mystical experience, or some combination of these, has been amply discussed in recent, and not so recent, scholarly literature, both in the West and in India.^[53] My intention is not so much to contribute further reflection on this topic, though as I have said I shall not hold back my opinion about the merits of Padmapāda's theory, but to question whether the ideas about sublatibility really show the possibility of a single Self excluding the world, as Padmapāda claims.

First let us summarize his most abstract positions. The Advaita doctrine championed by Padmapāda is that everything except the self-luminous character of the self, its intrinsic awareness of itself as aware (*svayamprakāśamāna*), is sublated—within the invariable "locus"—in the ultimate "knowledge" (*vidyā*), even the phenomena of thought-processes, emotions, and desires, even the profound mystical appearance of an *īśvara*, "God."^[54] Unlike Vācaspati who holds that Brahman always carries within its supreme self at least the "potencies" of world-forms,^[55] Padmapāda holds—in consonance with his idea of *mukti*—that the ontic status of the world is simply that it does not exist; it is only *māyā*, like the illusory snake.^[56] All appearances of "otherness," including that of an *īśvara*, similarly are not veridical; there absolutely are no other things than Brahman, the Self. This radical "illusionism" is the distinguishing mark of Padmapāda's interpretation of Śāṅkara.

I admit that he also gives, as Karl Potter points out,^[57] an interesting cosmology and theory of how Brahman comes to appear as *māyā*, and this involves both a notion of an *īśvara* and the concession that it is Brahman itself that suffers *avidyā*, "nescience."^[58] Prakāśātman takes this theory as the point of departure for his own much more realistic view of world-appearance. But the passage in the *Ppk* presenting these ideas is exceedingly brief and in effect a digression.^[59] Moreover, as Prakāśātman *rightly* explains, the key idea in this regard is that Brahman can undergo the sort of change that is typical of *illusory* presentations without relinquishing its native state.^[60] The way that the passage (*Ppk* 98-99) connects with the main line of thought reinforces this emphasis: near the end it is proclaimed that "ego-sense" (*ahaṁkāra*, which is said to be foundational for much appearance) is illusion only, and an analogy to the illusion of a red crystal is made. Now the red-crystal illusion is "relational," and correspondingly Padmapāda holds that ego-sense is related to a more primal "nescience," *avidyā*. The point is that what then follows is further discussion of relationless illusion as the way to understand *avidyā*. Finally, the ontic status of *avidyā* is declared to be, as already noted, illusion alone. This means that it exists as long as one is caught up in it. But with liberation, it disappears.^[61]

The metaphysics is thus a radical "illusionism," and the quasi-theistic cosmology bound up with the notions of "*jñānaśakti*" and "*kriyāśakti*," Brahman's powers of knowledge and (creative) action, would be better attributed to Prakāśātman, the pre-eminent "Vivartavādin."^[62]

Let us return now to the question of whether Padmapāda demonstrates the possibility of this "Brahman." The idea that the self and the locus-support are unsublatable while everything else is—conceived on analogy to the relationless sort of everyday illusion—is supposed to secure the possibility (*sambhava*) of the single and absolute reality of Brahman excluding the world. Scripture (*śruti*) indicates that the possibility is actual; or at least, this is the official position of both Śāṅkara and Padmapāda. Both of the Advaitins also appear to hold that a mystical experience (*brahmasākṣātkāra*)—revealing *brahman* as sense experience reveals everyday objects—is the theory's consummation, and even "confirmation"; thus unofficially and in a peculiar way both appear to believe that there is mystic "evidence" for the theory.^[63] In any case, the possibility of the truth of the

metaphysics is to be secured by the ideas about sublatability; the truth itself by scripture or extraordinary experience. The prior question is then whether these ideas do their job.

Now insofar as Padmapāda is correct in understanding the snake-rope type of illusion to be "relationless," he would be able, first of all, to maintain a pure phenomenalism on the criterion-issue—at least at its highest level (*pāramārthika-sat*)—and exclude causal factors. Without relations (other than the identity relation exemplified in the proposition that *ātman* is *brahman*), there can be no basis for the discernment of causal factors conditioning the veridicality of an immediate (mystical) presentation, in the imagined experience of "*mukti*."

Similarly, there would be no basis for a supposition of "otherness," since this would require a presentation of things in a relation other than that of identity. Indeed, the claim about possibility is very strong. It is, again, that on analogy to the type of sublation that occurs when the snake is seen to be not the rope it was formerly taken to be, it becomes imaginable—however remotely—that I am deluded right now and that *nothing* that I take to be real on the basis of my present experience, the chair here, the piece of paper, etc., is indeed real, except my own subjectivity. With all candidates that involve relations excluded, the only thing not possibly sublated would be the subject's immediate and unreflective awareness of itself (*svayamprakāśamāna*). The snake-rope type of sublation is taken to show that it is possible that some future experience of my own could reveal the illusoriness of *everything* in my present experience, except that dimension which is the awareness's awareness of itself including, to be sure, the presentation of a real thing as its "support."^[64]

But, let us ask, is there not in the sublational cognition revealing the rope a presentation of relations among things, between the rope and our bodies, for example? The rope is useful and would not bite were we to pick it up. Padmapāda himself responds to a similar question.^[65] He tells us not to take the specific analogy too seriously. Of course, he has to have an analogy, otherwise he would have no argument and no demonstration that the identity of the self with Brahman excluding the world is possible. So he offers us another analogy: space and the space inside a pot. There are in reality no relations (other than identity) obtaining between universal space and the space that we arbitrarily delimit as that inside a pot.^[66] This analogy is taken to illustrate the idea that any presumption, and perception, of things *in relation* could be false (*mithyā*). And I must say that I see no reason why we should not agree. The chief difficulty I find is not that all presentation of relation *could* appear to be negated experientially, but that the austere self-experience that he imagines could not. Let me explain.

The polemics of sublatability are very profound. In modern Western thought, this has been brought out by Descartes and his thought-experiment of possible deception by a devil. He imagines, i.e. deems it possible, that a devil could be deceiving him with illusory sense presentations. (Nowadays philosophers bring out the same idea with talk of "experience-tanks" or the like: "Superduper neuropsychologists could stimulate your brain so that you would think and feel you were writing a great novel, or making a friend, or reading an interesting book. All the time you would be floating in a tank, with electrodes attached to your brain."^[67]) Padmapāda's illustrations do not appear to me to be as vivid as Descartes', but this hardly matters. He has a similar argument. What presentation of experience could not possibly be sublated, as an illusory appearance of silver by a veridical appearance of mother-of-pearl, by some further experience? In respect to what dimension of experience is it *impossible* to imagine that one is deceived? Surely not any particular presentation of things in relation. Is it not imaginable that there be a cognition that involves a self-awareness but not anything external to oneself? (Yogic trance, or "deep-sleep," might be an example of this.)

As I see it, the problem is not with imagining an apparent disappearance of the external world in a cognition of "self-absorption," but with the notion that the self-absorption is unsublatable.

One of Padmapāda's great themes is, as we have seen, the unity of cognition. It is evident in his notion of "memory-impregnated" cognitions, which we reviewed, and in many other details of his theory of experience. His claim is that there is a possibility of a cognition that is unitary to the ultimate degree. What would it be like? It would be the barest bones of a cognition. It would be an awareness of itself and a sense of its own reality as its own "locus" and "support." I find all these ideas intelligible and this state of "*mukti*" imaginable—so long as the conception is restricted to the psychological and no notion of *brahman* is implied. More about this in a moment. But if one could "pop" into this supreme self-absorption, why couldn't one also pop out? There is no end to the regress of possibilities of experiential sublation.

Padmapāda takes the unsublatability of the self to show the possibility of a true ultimacy of experience. But the idea shows only the trap of the "solipsistic" ultimacy^[68] of an extreme and "one-dimensional" phenomenalism. The metaphysics would hoist itself by its own petard: the very logic of sublatability requires that in the negation of world-appearance in a unitary cognition of self all means of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) would be inoperative. The picture is thus a potent trap.

Does the objection that hinges on the sublatability of "self-absorption" presuppose a view of temporal relations among cognitive moments, in that it is thought that a further sublational cognition could *follow* the salvific experience? Yes, it does. Well, the salvific experience is presumed to transcend temporal relations, and thus the objection is not cogent. No, it is cogent. Every dimension of everyday experience that is imaginable as sublatability in the supreme self-absorption is also imaginable as again present in some ensuing experience—imaginable not, to be sure, on the part of the "liberated" person, but on all our parts. Neither Padmapāda nor any of his commentators, so far as I am aware, considers this point—absorbed as they are in the *picture* of self-absorption.

But hasn't Padmapāda identified factors that are *essential* to all cognition, namely self-awareness and the presentation of a locus, and thus a cognition limited to these essentials would be indeed a stop in the regress of sublatability? No. Often we are absorbed in objective presentations, and have no awareness of ourselves. Also, our everyday self-understanding is far richer than that which is reflected in Padmapāda's notion of intrinsic self-illumination. All that Padmapāda has shown is that we are potentially self-aware at any moment, or perhaps that there is no possibility of any other type of awareness without this potentiality of self-awareness (the central doctrine of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* according to some interpreters). The self may be self-illuminating, *svayamprakāśamāna*.^[69] And the potentiality of this profound intuition of self may be as constant as the Advaitins think it is. But there is nothing in the idea that suggests that such an intuition could not be followed by a fuller experience of self—such as we have of our own bodies and our "being-in-the-world." Thus there is no reason to suppose that a cognition that has only itself as its object as well as its "locus" and "support" is not also a candidate for sublation. This is the fundamental failure of the theory.^[70]

There is also an equally grievous instance of incoherence, related to this phenomenological misconception. Padmapāda's notion of the unity of the self and Brahman believed to be evident in a mystical experience is unintelligible, i.e. *not* imaginable, because Brahman is considered the *adhiṣṭhāna* and *āśraya*, "locus" and "support," of *all* things. In other words, Padmapāda cannot show that a cognition of the self and Brahman negating the world is possible because Brahman is conceived as the locus-support of all worldly things. For *Brahman* to be presented as identical with a state of self-absorption would require some kind of reference to worldly things, and in the state of *mukti* as Padmapāda conceives it there is none such. Thus we can construct a "pragmatist" objection (invoking the tradition of Dharmakīrti et al.) that would run as follows. With everyday illusions, even of the radical "relationless" sort—best exemplified, I would say, not in a snake-rope sublation but in waking from a vivid dream—a judgment of illusoriness can

be secured only by an experience involving interaction or interrelation. Since there is imagined no interaction or interrelation in the state of self-absorption, it is unimaginable that Brahman, by definition the locus-support of all things, could be revealed therein. Thus Padmapāda must needs fail in his attempt to show that a cognition revealing all things to be *māyāyika* could occur.^[71]

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NOTES

1. In developing an illusionist metaphysics and soteriology, the Advaitins draw deep from a common well of Indian religious conceptions. See the *Majjhima-Nikāya*, Sutta 26, for an example in the Buddhist tradition—outside Vedāntic "scriptures." Then for an early and particularly striking example within Vedānta, see *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 4.3.9-22.
2. *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* (henceforth "BSB") ed. J. L. Shastri, *Brahmasūtra-Śāṅkarabhāṣyam* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1980; originally published [2nd ed.] Bombay: Nirnaya Sagar, 1909), 1.1.1, pp. 4-9.
3. The choice of the term 'adhyāsa,' "superimposition," to designate illusions reflects Śāṅkara's metaphysical views. Illusions are more neutrally referred to as "viparyaya" and "bhrānti." (Later in fact [BSB 1.1.4: p. 69], Śāṅkara uses the term 'bhrānti': "sarpabhrānti," "the illusion of the snake.")
4. e.g. *Upadeśasāhasrī* 2.2.51-55 (in the translation by Sengaku Mayeda, *A Thousand Teachings* [Tokyo: University of Tokyo, 1979], pp. 235-36.)
5. BSB 1.1.1: *sarvathā api tu . . . na vyabharati*.
6. N. K. Devaraja, *An Introduction to Śāṅkara's Theory of Knowledge* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1962), is able to present Śāṅkara's views as an intricate epistemological system because he expounds the opinions of a whole host of Śāṅkara's followers—while not always crediting their originality and overvaunting the achievements of Advaita's "founder." Some others do this as well, apparently following the tradition among the classical thinkers of all schools of achronistically attributing sophisticated positions to the earliest documents, and in particular to the "sūtras," of each school. Of course, there has appeared a considerable amount of excellent scholarship on Śāṅkara, including in part, to be sure, this book of Devaraja's.
7. Because of the enormous popularity of the *Vedāntaparibhāṣā*, its author Dharmarājadhvarīndra must be viewed as the pre-eminent systematizer of Advaita epistemology, although it may be, as Surendranath Dasgupta claims in the "Forward" to Swami Madhavananda's edition (Howrah: Ramakrishna Mission, 1972), that he is heavily dependent upon Rāmādvaya's *Vedānta Kaumudī*. Cf. Dasgupta's discussion in his *A History of Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1975), pp. 204-14.
Note that in the introductory verses Dharmarājadhvarīndra does say that philosophy should be concerned with the *paramapuruṣārtha*. He also elaborates the idea in his book's last chapter. Nevertheless, the book is dominated by epistemological concerns, not soteriological ones.
8. See for example *Vedāntaparibhāṣā* 1.55. Note further what Karl Potter says in the "Introduction" to the volume of *The Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1981) devoted to Advaita Vedānta (Vol. III): "It is Padmapāda who pioneers the epistemology we . . . associate with Advaita. He provides the bridge between Śāṅkara and later Advaita, which is obsessed with epistemology as Śāṅkara was with the contrast between knowledge and action" (p. 73). Also interesting is Paul Hacker's general statement on Padmapāda's originality: "Im ganzen können wir sagen, dass Padmapāda ein schlechter Kommentator, dafür aber ein um so selbständigerer Denker ist." *Untersuchungen über Texte des frühen Advaitavāda: 1. Die Schüler Śāṅkaras* (Wiesbaden: Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur in Mainz, Abhandlungen der geistes- und sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse 1950,

- no. 26), p. 27.
9. viz. *Sarvadarśanasamgraha*. Note that Mādhava's *Vivaraṇaprameyasamgraha* has been translated by S. S. Suryanarayana Sastri and Saileswar Sen, Andra University Series No. 24 (1941), who attribute it to "Bhāratīrtha."
 10. See E. P. Radhakrishnan, "The Pañcapādikā Literature," *Poona Orientalist* 6 (1941-42), pp. 57-73.
 11. e.g. E. P. Radhakrishnan, pp. 58-59.
 12. Prakāśātman has a "tiered" ontology, and views the sublation of world-appearance in Brahman-experience as showing that the world has no absolute reality but not—as Padmapāda holds—as involving its disappearance: see below, the final section. Note that Prakāśātman's *Vivaraṇa* stands in a complex relation to Padmapāda's work, and is far from a sentence-by-sentence gloss.
 13. Doubtless, it is Śāṅkara himself who suggests to Padmapāda the importance of this line of reasoning. He gives (*BSB* 1.1.1: p. 19) a counter-example to the apparent general rule (*niyama*) that superimposition occurs only on perceptible objects: *apratyakṣe 'pi hy ākāṣe bālās talamalinatādy adhyasyanti*. Śāṅkara also twice uses the expression 'vyavahāraḥ sambhavati,' "the worldly practice [of . . .] is possible [only given . . .]" (pp. 20-21). But not only is this line of reasoning not at all prominent with Śāṅkara—especially as compared with Padmapāda's use of it—he appears to be confused about its nature. When he says 'tasmāt,' "therefore," after his statements about possibility (p. 21), he conflates arguments about the possible and the actual.
 14. There have been however some notable efforts in Padmapāda scholarship. Many of the general historians of Indian philosophy have given serious attention to the Advaitin. For example, Surendranath Dasgupta claims to base his exposition of Śāṅkara's views in Volume I of *A History of Indian Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969) on Padmapāda's and Prakāśātman's commentaries. Also, Karl Potter often refers to Padmapāda's views in his long introduction to the Advaita volume of *The Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies*. He also provides there a thirty-odd page summary of Padmapāda's major work, the *Pañcapādikā*. The most significant contribution in English to scholarship on Padmapāda is D. Venkataramiah's translation of the *Pañcapādikā*, Gaekwad's Oriental Series, Vol. 107 (Baroda: Baroda Oriental Institute, 1948), along with the accompanying notes. Venkataramiah's notes often elucidate obscure passages, but sometimes they reflect the views of later Advaitins who are unacknowledged. They also suffer, as does the translation, from Venkataramiah's lack of command of the technical philosophical vocabulary in English. (Potter's summary on this score represents a great advance.)
But despite these works, Padmapāda has not received the attention he deserves. As Karl Potter's bibliography shows, Advaita scholarship has focused principally on Śāṅkara, with Padmapāda enjoying about one percent of the amount of attention that his teacher has received: *The Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies*, Vol. 1, rev. ed. (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1980), lists more than four hundred secondary works on Śāṅkara, while only seven pieces are listed for Padmapāda. Let me add that there is good German scholarship on Padmapāda, and on Prakāśātman: most notably, Paul Hacker's *Untersuchungen über Texte des frühen Advaitavāda*, pp. 1927-1933 and 2014-2061, and *Vivarta* (Wiesbaden: Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur in Mainz, Abhandlungen der geistes- und sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse 1953, no. 5), pp. 36-41; and Klaus Cammann, *Das System des Advaita nach der Lehre Prakāśātman's* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1965).

15. The *Pañcapādikā*, edited by S. Srirama Sastri and S. R. Krishnamurti Sastri, Madras Government Oriental Series 155 (1958), Part 1, is henceforth referred to as "*Ppk.*"
16. *BSB* 1.1.1: *ko 'yam adhyāso . . . smṛtirūpaḥ paratra pūrvadr̥ṣṭāvabhāsaḥ*
17. *BSB* 1.1.1: *anyasya anyadharmāvabhāsatām.*
18. viz. by Prakāśātman in his *Vivaraṇa*, which comprises Part 2 of Madras Government Oriental Series 155, p. 129, and by Ātmasvarūpa and Vijñānātman, MGOS 155, Pt. 1, pp. 41ff.
19. Padmapāda does not identify his opponents by name. Venkataramiah attributes the view to the Mīmāṃsaka Prabhākara (p. 19). It seems likely that Padmapāda had a direct familiarity with Prabhākara, although at least here he does not assume any special understanding of the views that he refutes. In fact, the three opposing views that he takes up are just those that Śāṅkara mentions in giving his "minimalist" characterization.
Prabhākara's view, by the way, is, as noted, also referred to as *a(viveka)khyātivāda*; and rightly so since, as we shall see, a "failure to distinguish" memory from sensory cognitions is one element crucial to the theory.
20. *anyasamprayukte cakṣuṣy anyaviśayajñānaṃ smṛtir eva, pramoṣas tu smaraṇābhimānasya. indriyādīnāṃ jñānakāraṇānāṃ kenacid eva doṣaviśeṣeṇa kasyacid eva arthaviśeṣasya smṛtisamudbodhaḥ kriyate. samprayuktasya ca doṣeṇa viśeṣapratibhāsa hetuṣaṃ karaṇasya vihanyate. tena darśanasmarāyoh niranantarōtpannayoh karaṇadoṣād eva vivekānavadhāraṇād dūrasthāyor iva vanaspatyoh anutpanne eva ekatvāvabhāse utpannabhramaḥ. Ppk 42-43.*
21. *Ppk* 51 and 55; cf. *Ppk* 40.
22. *Ppk* 46.
23. *Ppk* 45.
24. *Ppk* 45.
25. *Ppk* 47.
26. *dr̥ṣyate . . . liṅgajñānasamskārayoh liṅgijñānōtpādanam, pratyabhijñānōtpādanam ca akṣasamskārayoh. ubhayatra api smṛtigarbham ekam eva pramāṇajñānam. samskāranudbodhe tadabhāvāt. . . na punaḥ jñānavadaye pramāṇam asti. Ppk 53.*
27. But see *Ppk* 52.
28. *Ppk* 51ff and many other places.
29. See note 41 below on the ambiguity in these terms.
30. Venkataramiah attributes this view to the Naiyāyikas (p. 25), but it appears to originate with Dharmakīrti. See Masatoshi Nagatomi, "Arthakriyā," *Adyar Library Bulletin* 31-32 (1967-68), pp. 52-72, who identifies both senses of the term in Dharmakīrti's writing.
31. A favorable comparison to such twentieth-century philosophers as John Dewey and William Alston might be made in regard to their criticism of the phenomenalism of Berkeley and Hume.
32. *Ppk* 48.
33. Although there is a difference in connotation, the terms 'māyā' and 'vyavahāra' are used synonymously by Padmapāda, as by most Advaitins.

34. *Ppk* 98-113.
35. Padmapāda many times says explicitly that causes may be inferred from effects, e.g. *Ppk* 51. Note that it was again Dharmakīrti who brought out to the Indian philosophic community the causal underpinnings of many inferences. It is because fire is the cause of smoke, necessary to its presence, that one may reason validly from the premise that there is smoke on the mountain to the conclusion that there is fire there too.
36. Śāṅkara says at *BSB* 1.3.20 that perception (*pratyakṣa*) is independent in its operation, while the other *pramāṇa*-s, in particular inference (*anumāna*), are dependent on perception. Padmapāda's commentary does not extend as far as this passage, but there is no reason to believe that he does not also see perception as having this privileged "foundational" status. Indeed, his phenomenalism with respect to the ultimately real dovetails with this position. But I have found no explicit statement in a passage that is clearly not a "*pūrvapakṣa*."
37. *Ppk* 70-71 and 98ff.
38. Padmapāda does not use the word '*upādhi*' here, but he does use '*upadhāna*' (*Ppk* 102), a word that derives from the same verbal root, '*dhā*.' (The commentators prefer the former term, possibly through the influence of the Naiyāyikas, and interpret the two terms as virtual synonyms.) Also, and this is the important exegetical point, Padmapāda clearly expresses the idea of conditioning relations. Often he does so through forms of the verb '*apekṣ*,' e.g. *Ppk* 54-55. In this passage (*Ppk* 54-55) and later in expositing the metaphysics of the self (*Ppk* 112-13), he pellucidly expresses the idea of "relationless" sublation. (Note that Śāṅkara himself uses the term '*nirupādhi*' in this sense, e.g. *Muṇḍakōpaniṣadbhāṣya* 2.2.4.)
39. *Ppk* 54 (reading '*āloka*' for the misprint '*aloka*': when "light" is absent one cannot see an object that is present).
40. Padmapāda's clearest statement of the mechanics of perception occurs at *Ppk* 114-17. Here we may note that Sengaku Mayeda's paper, "The Advaita Theory of Perception," *Wiener Zeitschrift für des Kunde Südasien und Archiv für Indische Philosophie* 12-13 (1968-69), pp. 221-40, is an excellent reconstruction of the Advaita psychology (as opposed to epistemology and phenomenology) of perception, although he too concentrates on Śāṅkara's views somewhat at the expense of the more developed theory in later Advaita.
41. *Ppk* 52: *mithyālamanaṃ jñānaṃ mithyājñānam*. "An illusory cognition is a cognition that has an illusory object." Thus one might think that the term '*ālambana*' invariably means "presented object," and would refer to that which the presentation (*avabhāsa* or *prakāśa*) would be of. But Padmapāda sometimes uses the term to mean "locus" and "support" instead. Two other terms used regularly, '*viśaya*' and '*artha*,' have potentially the same ambiguity.
42. *Ppk* 63.
43. *Ppk* 64-65.
44. *jāgaraṇe 'pi pramāṇajñānād antaparokṣānubhavāt na viśayasthā aparokṣatā bhidyate, ekarūpaprakāśanāt. ato 'ntaparokṣānubhavāvaguṇṭhita eva jāgaraṇe 'py artho 'nubhūyate. anyathā jaḍasya prakāśānupapatteḥ. yathā tamasā 'vaguṇṭhito ghaṭaḥ pradīpaprabhāvaguṇṭhanam antareṇa na prakāśibhavati, evam.* *Ppk* 57-58.

45. Doubtless, some of this emphasis is due to Padmapāda's desire to refute the Mādhyamika Buddhists. These so-called "nihilists" hold that there is no ultimate support for appearances: the self is really *śūnya*, "nothing." To contradict this view Śaṅkara uses the term '*paratra*,' "in something else," in characterizing illusion, Padmapāda says. The first time he stresses the necessity of an *adhiṣṭhāna* is in this context (*Ppk* 61-68), but he stresses it in the later talk about Brahman as well. See *Ppk* 139ff.
46. The identity-statement would not be analytic or epistemically necessary, but synthetic and metaphysically necessary—to use the terms elucidated by Saul Kripke, *Naming and Necessity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 1980), Lecture 1. Cf. Karl Potter's discussion of the identity-statement, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 73, and Wilhelm Halbfass, *Studies in Kumārila and Śaṅkara* (Rienbek: Wezler, 1983), pp. 54-60.
47. Sometimes it seems to me that this is a metaphysics of the locative case. Note that Śaṅkara's use of '*paratra*' in his first characterization of *adhyāsa* is brilliantly suggestive: the "something else" which the illusory object appears *in* is—from the metaphysical perspective—Brahman, and '*paratra*,' like all forms of '*para*,' has the connotation of "supreme, highest, pre-eminent" as well as "remote" and "beyond."
48. But are they? Dreams do not exhibit the same degree of continuity as waking experiences. Moreover, the only way we know (or could know) that dream-objects have the self as their locus-support is *with reference to* waking experiences. The fact that Padmapāda misses these points is another indication of his radical (and misguided, as I shall show) phenomenalism on the issue of the criterion of the ultimately real.
49. *Ppk* 57.
50. We can understand now why Padmapāda feels no need to use different terms for (a) the presentational object of a cognition (e.g. silver) and (b) the locus and support of a cognition (e.g. mother-of-pearl): these are ultimately identical. We remarked that the terms '*ālambana*,' '*artha*,' and '*viṣaya*' are all used in both senses—see note 41 above.
51. Śaṅkara expresses the idea of the unsublatability of the self, although not so clearly as Padmapāda: *BSB* 1.1.1, *aparokṣatvāc ca pratyagātmaprasiddheḥ*, and (much more explicitly) *Aitareyōpaniṣadbhāṣya*, introduction (*Ten Principal Upanishads with Śaṅkarabhāṣya*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1978, p. 325), *utpannasya ca brahmātmavijñānasya abādhyamānatvāt*. It is also implicit in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*: 4.3.23-31. Padmapāda presents the idea many times, e.g. *Ppk* 52: *na svataḥ jñānasya mithyātvam asti, bādḥābhāvāt*. See also in particular *Ppk* 65-66.
52. *BSB* 1.1.1: *avidyāvadvīṣayāṅy eva pratyakṣādīni pramāṇi śāstrāṇi ca*. See also *BSB* 4.1.3: *pratyakṣādyabhāve śruter apy 'bhāvaprasaṅga iti cet; na, iṣṭatvāt*.
53. Ram Mohan Roy's championing of the rationality of Śaṅkara's Vedānta in the early nineteenth century launched a series of similar defenses in India. See Wilhelm Halbfass, *Indien und Europa* (Basel: Schwabe, 1981), chapter 12, and his later extensive discussion of the entire issue of reason and revelation in the philosophy of Śaṅkara, *Studies in Kumārila and Śaṅkara*, op. cit., pp. 27-84.
54. *Ppk* 286-88.
55. *Bhāmāṭī* 1.3.30: edited by J. L. Shastri in *Brahmasūtra-Śaṅkarabhāṣyam*, op. cit., pp. 261-64. Note that Srirama Sastri in his Preface to Vol. 155 of the Madras Government Oriental Series (in which the *Ppk* appears along with seven commentaries), pp. xvii-xix, lists ten principal differences between Padmapāda's and Vācaspati's philosophies, but he neglects this one. And it should count, I would say, at least in the top

three.

56. There are ample indications of both views in Śaṅkara's works. The reason that Padmapāda's teacher makes cosmological statements that spark Vācaspati's interpretation is that he is committed to an idea of invariable perfection for *śruti* from a world-bound perspective. Of course, he nonetheless believes that *śruti*, like everything that is inessential to the self, belongs to the province of *māyā*. See *BSB* 1.3.30.

57. *Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies*, Vol. III, p. 86.

58. *Ppk* 98-99; and 74: *anādisiddhāvidyāvachchinnānantajīvanirbhāsāspadam ekarasam brahma*.

59. *Ppk* 98-99.

60. *Vivaraṇa*, op. cit., pp. 653-57. This passage is Prakāśātman's commentary on Padmapāda's understanding of sūtra 1.1.2 ("[Brahman is that] from which the beginning, etc. of this [world proceed]") expressed at *Ppk* 300: "*viśva vivartate*." José Pereira has translated this section: *Hindu Theology: A Reader* (New York: Doubleday, 1976), pp. 201-06.

Let me repeat that the idea of "transmogrification" (Pereira's coinage for '*vivarta*')—contrasting with "transfiguration" (*pariṇāma*)—is not pronounced in the *Ppk*. However, that Padmapāda is thinking of Brahman as not losing its native state when he says here (*Ppk* 300) that it is the "root-cause" is likely: "*yadavaṣṭambho viśvo vivartate prapañcaḥ tad eva mūlakāraṇam brahma*"—"having this as its support all world-appearance unrolls, this alone, the root-cause, is Brahman." Nevertheless, the key ideas are "*avaṣṭambha*" and "*mūlakāraṇa*," not that expressed by the verb '*vivartate*'—whose grammatical subject, moreover, is not '*brahma*' but '*prapañca*,' "world-appearance." (Cf. *Ppk* 56: . . . *aparokṣacaitanyasthāvidyāśaktir ālambanatayā vivartate*: 'the power of "nescience" stationed in immediate awareness "transmogrifies" as objects.')

Let me add that I find Prakāśātman's ideas here of particular interest, since it is on the issue of whether Brahman "transfigures" and/or "transmogrifies" that Aurobindo, that premier mystic Brahmvādin of our century, takes himself to depart from Śaṅkara. (I do not believe however that Aurobindo had a direct familiarity with Prakāśātman's work.) For Aurobindo's theory of Brahman's *real* "evolution" (and "involution") in world-forms, see *The Life Divine* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust, 1973), pp. 295-321, 439-81, and 834-35. Cf. my "Aurobindo's Concept of Supermind," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 25, no. 4 (December 1985), pp. 410-16, and *Aurobindo's Philosophy of Brahman* (Leiden: Brill, 1986), pp. 124-31.

61. *Ppk* 66-67. An indication that Padmapāda does not take his own "cosmology" seriously is that in this passage (*Ppk* 66) he says that the occurrence of the cosmic illusion is "inexplicable," *anirvacanīya*.

62. Cf. Klaus Cammann's discussion, op. cit., pp. 124-28.

63. I discuss the implicit "mystic empiricism" of Śaṅkara and various "folk Vedāntins" in "Is Sri Aurobindo's Philosophy Vedānta?" *Adyar Library Bulletin* 48 (1984), pp. 1-27, and in my book, op. cit., pp. 67-73.

Anantanand Rambachan has attempted to depreciate "experience" (*anubhava*) in Śaṅkara's soteriology and correspondingly to appreciate "scripture" or "revelation" (*śruti*): "Śaṅkara's Rationale for Śruti as the Definitive Source of Brahmajñāna; A Refutation of some Contemporary Views," *Philosophy East and West* 36, no. 1 (January 1986), pp. 25-40. Now *śruti* is indeed according to Śaṅkara an indispensable means both (1) to have a right intellectual understanding of the self and (2) to achieve

an existential knowledge (*vidyā*) of *brahman*. But it is important to distinguish these and to see that the value of the intellectual knowledge is thought of as only instrumental, as deriving from its role in the attainment of *brahmasākṣātkāra*, "immediate *brahman*-experience." The intellectual understanding brought by "scripture" does not, furthermore, appear to be the sole possessor of this instrumental value. Contrary to what Rambachan says, there often appear to be yogic "prerequisites" (*adhikāra*) as well, although Śāṅkara is not always consistent about these (see e.g. *Upadeśasāhasrī* 2.1.2, *Muṇḍakōpaniṣadbhāṣya* 3.1.1, 3.1.2, 3.2.4, *Kenōpaniṣadbhāṣya* 4.7, and *Taittirīyōpaniṣadbhāṣya* 3.1.1). Whatever be the precise list of *adhikāra*-s, understanding the words of the Upanishads is clearly held to be, though necessary, *not* sufficient. From Śāṅkara's *Muṇḍakōpaniṣadbhāṣya* 1.1.5: *vedaśabdena tu sarvatra śadbarāśir vivakṣitaḥ. śadbarāśyadhigame 'pi yatnāntaram antareṇa gurvabhigamanādilakṣaṇam vairāgyam ca na akṣarādhiḡamaḥ sambhavati*. But beyond this confusion of necessary and sufficient conditions, Rambachan's worst error is, I repeat, that he conflates the ideas of intellectual and existential understanding and fails to see that according to *śruti* as interpreted by Śāṅkara the liberating "knowledge" of Brahman is a "psychological event" (*anubhava*), not an "intellectual comprehension," (*śabdādhiḡama*). See in particular *BSB* 1.1.2: *śrutyādayo 'nubhavādayaś ca yathāsambhavam iha pramāṇam, anubhavāvasānatvād bhūtavastuviśayatvāc ca brahmajñānasya*. (The most significant use of 'anubhava' here is not the first, which Rambachan focuses on, pp. 35-56, but the second.) Rambachan says that experience is not a *pramāṇa* for knowing *brahman*. In the intellectualist sense of "knowing," he is right. All *pramāṇa* give intellectual knowledge, *pramā*, and there is, according to Śāṅkara, no intellectual knowledge in the liberating experience. There can be no report of the experience of *brahman* since the liberated person is lost to the world (or more properly, the world is lost to him). Thus not any "mystic report" but, as Rambachan partly sees, only self-authenticating *śruti* teaches the essential nature of the self and *mukti*. But it is an austere "self-experience" that is most highly valued, not *śruti*. Moreover, this "experience" is conceptualized in such a way that the world, including *śruti*, *has to be māyā*. (The inference is drawn according to the understanding of everyday illusion.) See the *BSB* citations in note 52 above, and Śāṅkara's *Bṛhadāraṇyakōpaniṣadbhāṣya* 2.1.20: *ekasmin brahmaṇi nirupādhiḡe na upadeśo na upadeṣṭā na ca upadeśagrahaṇaphalam. tasmād upaṇiṣadām ca anarthakyam iti etad upagatam eva*. The official epistemology is surely anti-empiricist, even anti-mystic-empiricist; but not only does Śāṅkara believe that a living *mukti* is a real possibility for a person and from that perspective "virtual evidence," the *logic of his metaphysics* is governed by a complex analogy to everyday experience, veridical and illusory. See the *BSB* citation in the following note (note 64) as another expression of this governing analogy.

64. Brahman thus includes both intrinsic self-awareness and all reality—in that it is that which underlies all worldly things. This is an extremely important point. The reason that there can be salvific Brahman-experience is that Brahman is real, the Advaitins hold, just as the knowledge mediated by the senses is dependent on real things. Śāṅkara says this explicitly at *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* 1.1.4:

brahmavidyā . . . pratyakṣādipramāṇaviśayavastujñānavad vastutantrā:

"Knowledge (*vidyā*) of *brahman* is dependent on a real thing, like the knowledge of the real things that are the objects of such means of knowledge as sense experience."

65. *Ppk* 111-13.

66. This appears to be the same type of phenomenon as that brought out by the "duck-rabbit" pattern popularized by Wittgenstein: *Philosophical Investigations* (New York: Macmillan, 1953), p. 194.
67. Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (New York: Basic Books, 1974), p. 42.
68. Cf. Paul Hacker, "Die Idee der Person im Denken von Vedānta-Philosophen," *Kleine Schriften* (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1978), pp. 280-81.
69. The idea is that we can be aware of ourselves directly, without mentally reflecting on the fact of our existence; the self is "irreflexively self-illuminating." Compare M. Merleau-Ponty's understanding of the Cartesian "*cogito*," *Phenomenology of Perception*, tr. Colin Smith (London: Routledge & Keagan Paul: 1962), pp. 369ff. Paul Hacker illumines the Vedāntic idea in numerous articles: see for example "Śaṅkara der Yogin und Śaṅkara der Advaitin" and "Śaṅkara's Conception of Man" republished in his *Kleine Schriften*. Cf. Aurobindo's notion "knowledge by identity," *The Life Divine*, pp. 524-552, and my book, op. cit., pp. 103, 117, and 124.
70. The failure is particularly evident in the obscurity of the notion of "*jīvanmukti*," "liberation while alive." Cf. Potter's discussion of the notion, op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 34-35. ("The *jīvanmukti* state seems paradoxical"—p. 34. Indeed, it is, if "living" is taken to involve conscious and willful activity and not just a comatose state.)
71. I wish to thank Wilhelm Halbfass and Richard Lariviere for commenting on an earlier draft.