

Summer 6-30-2018

Theories of Reflection in Indian Philosophy and Jacques Lacan

Dimitry Shevchenko

University of New Mexico - Main Campus

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/phil_etds



Part of the [Philosophy Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Shevchenko, Dimitry. "Theories of Reflection in Indian Philosophy and Jacques Lacan." (2018). https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/phil_etds/34

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Electronic Theses and Dissertations at UNM Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Philosophy ETDs by an authorized administrator of UNM Digital Repository. For more information, please contact disc@unm.edu.

Dimitry Shevchenko

Candidate

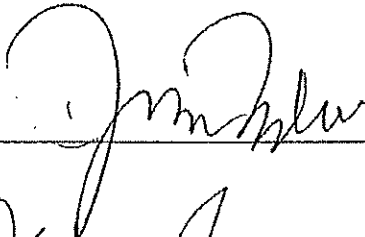
Philosophy

Department

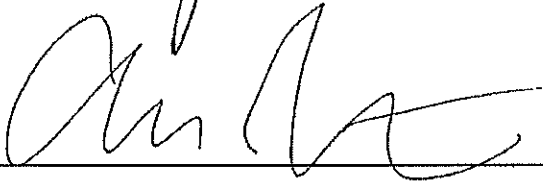
This dissertation is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication:

Approved by the Dissertation Committee:

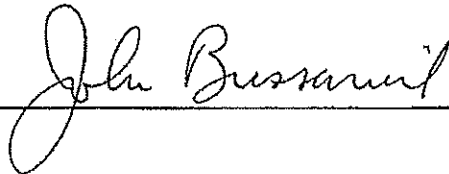
Professor John Taber, Chairperson



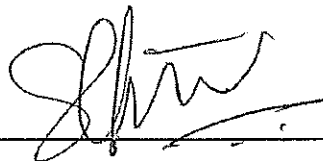
Professor Adrian Johnston



Professor John Bussanich



Professor Sthaneshwar Timalina



THEORIES OF REFLECTION IN INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

AND JAQUES LACAN

by

Dimitry Shevchenko

M.A., East Asian Studies, Tel-Aviv University, 2014

B.A., East Asian Studies and Film and Television, Tel-Aviv University, 2009

DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Philosophy
The University of New Mexico
Albuquerque

July 2018

Dissertation Supervisors: Professor John Taber and Professor Adrian Johnston

Theories of Reflection in Indian Philosophy and Jacques Lacan

Dimitry Shevchenko

M.A., East Asian Studies, Tel-Aviv University, 2014

B.A., East Asian Studies and Film and Television, Tel-Aviv University, 2009

Ph.D., Philosophy, University of New Mexico, 2018

ABSTRACT

In this dissertation I study the analogy of reflection in a mirror as a device used frequently in Indian philosophical traditions to solve the problem of the interaction between consciousness and matter. This problem, discussed both in Indian and Western philosophy, concerns the nature of the interaction between the seemingly incompatible dimensions of subjective experience and objective matter. In Indian philosophy, the essential idea is that, just as a face and its properties are reflected in a mirror and appear to belong to it, so are consciousness and its properties, such as the sense of self, subjectivity, and the experience of qualia, reflected in the mind-body complex and appear to belong to the latter.

Theories of reflection also explain the emergence of the “ego,” the function of one’s individual identity as a certain thing (I am this body; I belong to this family, etc). The self is reflected in the mind and leaves its trace in the form of a mental representation, the “I-notion.” The mind superimposes upon the “I-notion” other mental representations (of one’s body, one’s family, the things one possesses or desires), thus forming a complex, but ultimately false notion of oneself as intrinsically determined by a host of identities.

I analyze theories of reflection in key Sāṃkhya, Yoga, and Advaita-Vedānta texts, which show a clear historical and conceptual continuity. The historical textual study of various theories of reflection is the basis for my own philosophical interpretation of these theories. My main thesis is that reflection serves as a special relational category that accounts for the interaction between entities with different ontological statuses. I also argue that theories of reflection are explanatory of the process through which consciousness appears in our mind in the form of mental representation.

My study involves a cross-cultural perspective. I compare the Indian theories with a modern theory of reflection: Lacan's psychoanalytical theory of the mirror stage, which describes the formation of the ego as a result of the infant's self-recognition in the mirror.

Table of Contents

List of Figures	viii
Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1: Metaphysics of Image-Formation in Vedic Thought	8
Introduction.....	8
1.1 Vedic metaphysics of resemblance	8
1.2 The general condition of phenomenal representation (GCPR).....	14
1.3 The general condition of phenomenal formation (GCPF)	16
Conclusion	17
Chapter 2: Theories of Reflection and Non-Reflection in the <i>Upaniṣads</i>	18
Introduction.....	18
2.1 The dialogue between Gārgya Bālāki and king Ajātaśatru.....	19
2.1.1 Bālāki's theory of <i>puruṣa</i>	20
2.1.2. Ajātaśatru's theory of <i>ātman</i>	25
2.2 Theory of non-reflection in the <i>Chāndogya Upaniṣad</i>	29

2.2.1. Prajāpati's theory of the bodiless (highest) <i>puruṣa</i>	32
Conclusion	42
Chapter 3: Theories of Reflection in Sāṃkhya and Yoga	45
Introduction.....	45
3.1. Yoga-Sāṃkhya metaphysics	45
3.2.1 Reflection in the intellect: external objects.....	49
3.2.2 Reflection in the intellect: the self	55
3.3. Reflection in the self	58
3.4 Vijñānabhikṣu's double reflection theory.....	67
3.5. Mental representation of the self in Yoga (<i>asmitā</i>)	69
Conclusion	75
Chapter 4: Theories of Reflection in Advaita Vedānta.....	77
Introduction.....	77
4.1 Monistic theories of reflection before Śaṅkara.....	77
4.2.1 Śaṅkara's theory of <i>brahman</i> 's reflection in <i>jīva</i>	79
4.2.2. Śaṅkara's theory of reflection in the <i>Upadeśasāhasrī</i>	85
4.3 Pratibimbavāda	93
4.3.1 Padmapāda's theory of reflection	95

4.3.2 Pratibimbavāda: later developments	104
Conclusion	112
Chapter 5: Lacan's Theory of the Mirror-Stage	113
Introduction.....	113
5.1 The first reflection: the ego.....	114
5.2 The model of two mirrors	126
5.3. Second reflection: consciousness.....	134
5.4 The tain of the mirror: the unconscious	137
5.5. Mirror stage in perspective: Wallon and Lacan.....	140
Conclusion	145
Chapter 6: Phenomenology and Ontology of Self-Recognition in a Mirror: Towards Metatheory of Reflection.....	147
Introduction.....	147
6.1. Reflection as a model of self-ideation	148
6.2 Phenomenology of reflection.....	151
6.3. Ontology of reflection.....	157
6.4 Reflection and the problem of consciousness and matter.....	161
Conclusion	165

Abbreviations167

References169

List of Figures

Figure 1: Bouasse's experiment of the inverted bouquet.....128

Figure 2: Schema with two mirrors in *Seminar I*.....130

Figures 3 and 4: Double mirror device in "Remarks on Daniel Lagache's Presentation"130

Introduction

The first mirrors in India and other places in the world were probably pools of water and rock or clay containers of water.¹ Bronze-made flat or circular mirrors appeared around 2000 BCE during the pre-Vedic Indus Valley civilization at Quetta and Harappa in today's Pakistan and Dholavira in Gujarat, India.² The reflectivity of these mirrors varied and depended on the proportion of tin mixed with bronze.³ In order to achieve a highly reflective surface they needed to be polished for one or two days.⁴

Mirrors have been widely used in religious ceremonies and works of art; they are mentioned in poetry, prose, and drama.⁵ In Vedic society mirrors have been regarded apotropaic. During the wedding ceremony the bridegroom placed a mirror in the left hand of the bride, stating: "Indra's form is here to be looked at because the god corresponds in form to every form." Gonda suggests that this quote from the *Rgveda* may imply that the bride 'reflects' the divine or primeval bride.⁶

The symbolic use of mirrors, of course, is not unique to Indian culture. In Europe, from the Ancient period to this day, mirrors have assumed a variety of symbolic functions. They have symbolized truth and purity, but also the distortion of truth.⁷ Both in India and in Europe, in poetry as well as philosophy, the mirror serves as the main metaphor for the mind representing reality outside itself.⁸

¹ Enoch 2006:775

² Srinivasan 2008:1699

³ Ibid.

⁴ Pillai 1992:39

⁵ See Granoff 2000: 63-106.

⁶ Gonda 1980:150

⁷ Pines 1998: 20

⁸ Pines 1998: 20-21

While we find depictions of the mind as the “mirror of nature” in Indian philosophy, it is the image of the mind as the mirror of consciousness that gained prominence in what are known as *pratibimbavādas*, or “theories of reflection.”⁹ Theories of reflection appear in a great variety of Indian philosophical traditions – Sāṃkhya, Yoga, Advaita-Vedānta, Madhyamaka, and Yogācāra Buddhism, to mention only a few – and can be traced back to the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, *Chāndogya*, and *Kauṣītaki Upaniṣads*. In this dissertation I intend to study the analogy of reflection in a mirror as a device used frequently in Indian philosophical traditions to solve the problem of the interaction between consciousness and matter. This problem, discussed both in Indian and Western philosophy, concerns the nature of the interaction between the seemingly incompatible dimensions of subjective experience and objective matter. In contemporary philosophy of mind the most common solution to this problem is to reduce consciousness to matter, e.g., to brain-states, or brain-functions. In Indian philosophy, however, the analogy of reflection usually serves to defend the idea of an interaction of separate and independent principles of consciousness and matter (the latter also includes mental and emotional components). Just as the properties of my face appear in the mirror, the properties of consciousness, such as the sense of self, subjectivity, and the experience of qualia, are reflected in the physical-mental complex and appear to belong to the latter.

Theories of reflection also explain the emergence of the “ego,” the function of one’s individual identity as a certain thing (I am this body; I belong to this family, etc). The self is reflected in the mind and leaves its trace in the form of a mental representation, the “I-notion.” The

⁹ Plotinus is one example of a Western theory of reflection. Plotinus uses the metaphor of reflection in various ways, some of them are rather similar to those found in Indian philosophy. Thus he refers to the famous myth of Narcissus falling in love with his own image as a metaphor for a person identifying with his or her own material body, which is nothing but a reflection of the soul, the only worthy object of one’s attention (Davidson 1998:9-10).

mind superimposes upon the “I-notion” other mental representations (of one’s body, one’s family, the things one possesses or desires), thus forming a complex, but ultimately false notion of oneself as intrinsically bounded by a host of identities.

The metaphor of mirror-like reflection is used for different purposes in different contexts. Thus, it is invoked in the Advaita-Vedānta school of Pratibimbavāda (or the Vivaraṇa school) in order to address problems concerning individual liberation and the school’s fundamental doctrine of one self. Why would not liberation from the cycle of rebirth of one individual lead to liberation of all beings sharing the same self? The answer is that individual selves are countless reflections of the same self. Neither the original self nor other non-liberated reflections have to be affected by the emancipatory destruction of one of the mirrors. On the other hand, in Sāṃkhya and Yoga, reflection is utilized to explain the illusory interaction between separate ontological entities of consciousness and matter, as well as the process of knowledge which involves distinct entities.

While there are a number of excellent studies on particular theories of reflection (e.g., Rukmani 1988, on Vijñānabhikṣu's theory of reflection; Shima 2000, on theories of reflection in Advaita-Vedānta), my research is the first systematic study of theories of reflection in Indian thought that goes beyond the immediate context of a particular tradition. Not only does my study examine the role various theories of reflection play within particular metaphysical systems, but it also brings them into dialogue across traditions. The purpose of my comparative study of different theories of reflection is to draw out some general features of such theories, moving in the direction of a metatheory of reflection. In the present study, I focus on the textual study and analysis of only Brahmanical theories of reflection in Sāṃkhya, Yoga, and Advaita-Vedānta, which show a clear historical and conceptual continuity. This method allows me to describe a relatively long and rich development of the philosophical doctrine of reflection in the context of internal debates, responses

to opponents, standardized arguments and original contributions. Hopefully, the results of my research might be found fruitful also for the future study of those theories of reflection which I have not been able to include in this dissertation. Highly interesting theories of *pratibimba* in Madhyamaka and Yogācāra Buddhism, Kashmiri Śaivism, Madhva's Dvaita-Vedānta, etc. share the basic model of reflection as analyzed in the present study. If a metatheory of reflection can be formulated, it should be applicable to these theories as well.¹⁰

The historical textual study of various theories of reflection is the basis for my own philosophical interpretation of these theories. My main thesis is that reflection serves as a special relational category that accounts for the interaction between entities with different ontological statuses. I also argue that theories of reflection are explanatory of the process through which consciousness appears in our mind in the form of mental representation.

My philosophical interpretation of Indian theories of reflection and a formulation of a metatheory of reflection involves a cross-cultural perspective. Thus, I compare the Indian theories with a modern theory of reflection: Lacan's psychoanalytical theory of the mirror stage. Lacan's materialist and psychoanalytic commitments diverge sharply from those of the Indian philosophical tradition; yet, his theory of reflection is highly sophisticated and provides a modern perspective on ancient Indian ideas.¹¹ Lacan bases his theory of the mirror-stage on data from empirical research in child development from the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, as well as on his own clinical experience. These studies indicate that infants between the ages of six to eighteen months learn to recognize themselves in a mirror. During this period, according to

¹⁰ On Abhinavagupta's (10th-11th cen.) theory of reflection see Lawrence 2005. On Madhva's (13th cen.) theory see Sharma 1986:438-448. On Buddhist theories of reflection see Wayman 1984.

¹¹ A materialist reading of Lacan has been advanced by Žižek, Dolar, and other proponent of the so-called Ljubljana school of psychoanalysis. I follow this reading in general.

Lacan, a human child is still found in a biologically premature condition of helplessness and is hindered by motor incapacity, turbulent movements, and fragmentation of his bodily organs and functions. The reflection of the infant's body provides a unified image to the initially fragmented mental-physical complex. This reflected image becomes the basis for the imaginary object of identity for human consciousness, the ego, or the "I."

I propose a new reading of Lacan's theory of the mirror stage as involving a double reflection: the subject is reflected in external mirrors and their symbolic substitutes in the form of the ego, while the ego is also reflected back in the subject, in the "intra-organic mirror" located in the cerebral cortex. Until now, the Lacanian scholars have scrupulously scrutinized the first reflection and ignored the second reflection, although Lacan has explicitly mentioned it. I hope that my study will correct this oversight.

What follows is a brief summary of the six chapters of the present study.

Chapter 1 examines the early Vedic theory of resemblances between human and divine realms responsible for the emergence of forms in the human realm. I argue that later theories of reflection preserve the general structure of the Vedic model of formal causation, according to which the images of the phenomenal reality resemble the original forms of the divine reality.

Chapter 2 presents the two earliest theories of reflection, which appear in the *Upaniṣads*. The first theory from the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* and the *Kauṣītaki Upaniṣads* is an account of human beings as duplicates of their divine prototypes, as well as, more holistically, of a cosmos which derived from a human sacrifice and is, hence, anthropomorphic in nature. The second theory, appearing in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, describes the self in terms of a formless entity capable of reflecting forms other than itself.

Chapter 3 is a study of reflection in the philosophical traditions of Sāṃkhya and Yoga, which develop a notion of reflection in order to explain the illusory interaction between separate entities of consciousness and the mind. I will analyze metaphors of reflection appearing in the *Yogasūtra* by Patañjali, the *Yogasūtrabhāṣya*, the *Yūktidīpikā*, Vācaspati Miśra's *Tattvakaumudī* and *Tattvavaiśārādī*, Vijñānabhikṣu's *Yogavārttika*, and other texts. I will argue that the theory of the self reflected in the intellect must be understood in the context of Sāṃkhya and Yoga representationalism. While external objects are reflected in the mental faculty in the form of mental representations, an independent subjective entity is reflected in the intellect in the form of the I-notion.

Chapter 4 focuses on the monistic tradition of Advaita-Vedānta, which holds that the multiplicity of individual selves are nothing but reflections of one transcendental self. In this chapter, I will discuss the Advaita theory of reflection as presented by Śaṅkara and developed by Padmapāda and Prakāśātman. I will also discuss the later developments in post-Prakāśātman's Pratibimbavāda, a sub-school of Advaita, where *īśvara* takes *brahman*'s place as the reflection-prototype.

Chapter 5 presents a modern theory of reflection, namely Lacan's psychoanalytical theory of the mirror stage, which I have briefly presented above.

Finally, in chapter 6 of my dissertation, I derive the general features of a meta-theory of reflection from the theories presented in previous chapters. Based on a phenomenological and ontological analysis of the experience of self-recognition in the mirror, I argue that reflection is a special relational category explanatory of interactions between entities with different ontological

status (such as subject and object, mind and matter, reality and illusion, etc.) and provides a plausible solution to the problem of interaction between consciousness and matter.

I would like to express my gratitude to Prof. John Taber, for his patient reading and re-reading of the dissertation chapters and his illuminating comments. I am also indebted to Prof. Adrian Johnston for his long-term guidance on the chapter on Lacan. I would like to thank Prof. Sthaneshwar Timalina and Prof. John Bussanich for accepting the burden of serving as the dissertation committee members.

Chapter 1: Metaphysics of Image-Formation in Vedic Thought

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the early Vedic theory of resemblances between human and divine realities and its explanation of the appearance of forms in human reality. I will argue that the concepts of *pramā* (model, prototype) and *pratimā* (counterpart, image), as well as their correlatives *rūpa* (form) and *pratirūpa* (counter-form) must be seen as conceptual predecessors of the later *bimba* (prototype) and *pratibimba* (reflection). I will also attempt to demonstrate that the later theories of reflection preserve the general structure of the early Vedic model of formal causation, according to which the images of the phenomenal reality resemble the original forms of the noumenal reality. I will also show how the transition from metaphysics of resemblance in the early Vedas to metaphysics of identity in the *Upaniṣads* prepares the ground for the *Upaniṣadic* theories of reflection.

1.1 Vedic metaphysics of resemblance

Through the long history of the composition of the Vedic textual corpus, starting with the *Samhitā* and ending with the *Upaniṣads*, one of the underlying motives behind endless discussions has been the correct identification of cosmic connections (*bandhu/nidāna/upaniṣad*)¹² between different phenomena. The centrality of sacrifice in the early Vedic cosmology meant that sacrificial activities had their impact on cosmic events. Sacrifice was meant not only to bring about personal benefits and protection, but also to maintain the cosmic order, without which chaos would persist and the universe would collapse into the demonic non-being (*asat*)¹³.

¹² Smith 1989:72

¹³ Ram-Prasad 2001:9-11; Goman and Laura 1972:56-57

At least starting with the *Brāhmaṇas* literature, the Vedic ritualists considered the knowledge of the sacrificial-cosmic mechanism and the understanding of the precise relation between the elements of the sacrifice and the cosmic reality as a necessary condition for a successful oblation¹⁴. These connections were based on resemblances between the particular components of the sacrifice and the cosmic phenomena, identified with divine and mythical realities, as well as on a resemblance between the overall structure of the sacrifice and the cosmic order in its entirety.

Vedic ritualism was directed toward activating the connections that bind the ritual world to the world(s) at large; the ritual order lends its form to a cosmic order, a universal structure emanating from the structured sequence of rites.¹⁵

Smith points out that the Vedic connections are of two sorts – “vertical” and “horizontal.” Vertical connections refer to correspondences between the elements found in the higher planes – essentially transcendent realms – and their correlatives in the human, immanent world.¹⁶ Horizontal connections link resemblances on the same cosmological level¹⁷.

The relation between the correspondences is not symmetrical. The elements found in the divine realms, among the gods and cosmic phenomena are called *pramā* (model, prototype), while their counterparts in the human world are called *pratimā* (counterpart, image).¹⁸ The constant concern of the Vedic experts on the sacrificial-cosmic order has been “What was the prototype (*pramā*), what was the counterpart (*pratimā*), and what was the connection (*nidāna*) between

¹⁴ Gonda 1975:340

¹⁵ Smith 1989:53-54

¹⁶ Smith 1989:73; Coomaraswamy 1936:45

¹⁷ Smith 1989:73

¹⁸ Smith 1989:73, 76

them?”¹⁹ Thus, it is said that the creator-god Prajāpati, also identified with the material cause of the universe, has emitted the year as a counterpart (*pratimā*) of his own self (*ātman*).²⁰ Another counterpart of Prajāpati is the sacrifice, regarded as a unified whole. The sacrifice, thus, should be understood as an image of the universe in its entirety, and its parts as the counterparts of the cosmic components.²¹

On the level of the horizontal correspondences, the pair of prototype/counterpart is manifested in the relation between the sacrificer and the sacrificial oblation. While the sacrificer is expected to sacrifice himself as a counterpart of the sacrifice of the primordial cosmic man (*puruṣa*), his substitute in the form of an animal or a plant is permitted. Thus the human sacrifice becomes the sacrificial prototype and the animal sacrifice, its counterpart. It should be noticed that although the correspondences are horizontal, because both are found on the level of the immanent phenomenal plane, even among them vertical hierarchical relations are found. While the sacrificer is himself a counterpart of the sacrificed *puruṣa*, as a prototype he is valued higher than the animals or the plants²².

Another important Vedic terminology of resemblance is the pair of *rūpa* (form) and *pratirūpa* (counterform). Closely related to the concepts of *pramā/pratimā*, *rūpa* indicates the original form on the transcendent plane, *pratirūpa* – its image or reflection in the immanent realm. Thus in *ṚV* 6.47.18 it has been stated that the god Indra’s form (*rūpa*) corresponds to every form (*rūpa*), and everything is regarded as his image (*pratirūpa*).

¹⁹ *ṚV* 10.130.3

²⁰ *ŚB* 11.1.6.13

²¹ *ŚB* 11.1.8.3.; Smith 1989:73-74

²² Smith 1989:75-76

Coomaraswami regards the metaphysics of *rūpa/pratirūpa* as “Vedic exemplarism” and compares it to Bonaventure’s and other Neo-Platonic idealist theories.²³ Just as in Bonaventure’s exemplarism, the particular phenomenological realities are explained as emanations and reflections of the universal forms found in God’s mind, in Vedic exemplarism, the forms of the “angelic” level (*adhidaivata*) are projected and reflected on the “human” level (*adhyātma*).²⁴

Smith, however, points out that “*pratirūpas* or resembling images are made as well as discovered, a phenomenon that tends to distinguish this conception from the Platonic one.”²⁵ In the sacrificial context, the counterforms are not merely discovered as images of the divine, but actively constructed as “the works of art (*śilpa*)” and “made to *conform* to its model.”²⁶

Moreover, the sacrificial counterforms must conform to the prototype in a very particular way called *abhirūpa* (“appropriate form”).²⁷ Here, the important feature of the Vedic theory of correspondences must be remembered. Neither discovered nor ritually constructed connections between the prototypes and their images are those of identity. Two potential excesses must always be avoided: the one is called *jāmi* (excessive resemblance), another is *prthak* (total distinction or separation). In the ritual context, the elements of excessive resemblance are regarded as “fruitlessly reduplicative within a ritual sequence,” and are compared to a homosexual copulation, a fruitless act of “those too alike.” On the other hand, elements having no connection at all are not even capable of joining with others.²⁸

²³ Coomaraswami 1936:44-64

²⁴ Ibid. 45

²⁵ Smith 1989:76

²⁶ Ibid. 77

²⁷ Ibid 77

²⁸ Ibid. 51-52

Thus, the appropriate image for representation of the prototype must resemble it just enough, without being too identical or too different. The early Vedic emphasis on the resemblances (*sāmānya*) between the prototypes and their images leads Smith to postulate the discontinuity rather than continuity between the early Vedic metaphysics of resemblances and the later metaphysics of identity in the *Upaniṣads*. While a number of scholars regard the equation of the self and the cosmos as the logical conclusion of the Vedic searches for the cosmic correspondences, Smith points out that complete identity between correspondences is certainly faulty being a *jāmi*, or excessive resemblance, which should be avoided by all means in the early Vedic thought.²⁹

Smith's emphasis on the essential difference between the concept of resemblance and identity is important. The concept of resemblance allows the hierarchical metaphysics of the Vedas, as well as the sacrificial hierarchical structures. Smith demonstrates this hierarchical resemblance by the rules of ritual substitution, allowing the substitution of more complex, expensive, and difficult to obtain sacrificial components by simpler, cheaper, and easier to obtain ones. For instance, instead of the impossible (but ideal) sacrifice of a thousand years, it is permitted to perform its lesser but equivalent counterpart lasting one year only (the *tāpaścita* ritual).³⁰

The concept of hierarchical resemblance also makes the metaphysical world-formation possible. The creator's (in this case, Prajāpati's) oneness of form (*ekarūpatva*) cannot infinitely reproduce its own identical replicas. On the other hand, the creator may not create something completely other to itself, because this otherness must be contained in it at least in the potential form. Any change of form, any diversity of forms in the process of creation may, however, be explained by a hierarchical resemblance of the created phenomena to the creator. The variety of

²⁹ Smith 1989:194-195

³⁰ Smith 1989:186-187; SB 12.3.3.5-14

forms may thus be explained as being less perfect, less complete, but nevertheless somewhat similar to their original.

After Smith's distinction between resemblance and identity is duly noticed, we must register at the same time the moment common to resemblance and identity. Even if an image is not entirely identical to its prototype, it is somewhat identical to it in some respect. There must be an identical common aspect which makes the prototype and its image similar. At the same time, when two elements are said to be completely identical, there must be some difference between the two, making identity akin to resemblance; otherwise there would only be one element identical with itself. Despite the difference between the concept of "identity" and the concept of "resemblance," the relation between the two concepts is that of a conceptual continuity rather than of a conceptual break.

I would also like to point to the fact that the model of the transcendent prototype (*pramā/rūpa*) and its immanent image (*pratimā/pratirūpa*), as well as the corresponding connection between the two (*nidāna/bandhu*) survives in the *Upaniṣads*, as I hope to demonstrate in the next chapter. While the sacrificial context (*adhiyajña*) is still of some concern for the authors, especially in the earliest *Upaniṣads*³¹, the search for the correspondences between the divine realm (*adhidaivata*) and the "human" level (*adhyātma*) assume an increasingly physiological dimension. The knowledge of correspondences between the faculties and cosmic phenomena becomes more important than the correspondences between rituals and their divine prototypes.³² Although resemblances are replaced by identities, and ritual-centered metaphysics is replaced by an

³¹ For example, BU 1.1.

³² Olivelle 2008:xlix

anthropocentric metaphysics, the prototype-image paradigm is equally shared by Vedic theory of resemblances and the *Upaniṣadic* theory of identity.

1.2 The general condition of phenomenal representation (GCPR)

For the sake of a more rigorous formulation of the Vedic model of correspondences, I would like to propose a methodological distinction between the pairs of *pramā/pratimā* and *rūpa/pratirūpa*³³.

Pramā-pratimā-nidāna is the formal ontological framework for the relation between the noumenon and its phenomenal representation. Implicit in this relation is the efficient cause of phenomenal representation, or the process in the course of which the noumenal is manifested in the phenomenal. I suggest calling this efficient cause *māyā*. Although often translated as an “illusion,” the word *māyā* in the Vedic texts seems to have a more general and technical meaning of “making *pramā* into *pratimā*.” Thus, in ṚV 6.47.18, *māyā* is mentioned in conjunction with *rūpa* and *pratirūpa*: “... the counterform (*pratirūpa*) of every form (*rūpa*); his form is to be seen in all things. By means of his *māyā* Indra moves in various forms.”³⁴ The same verbal root $\sqrt{mā}$ common to *pramā*, *pratimā*, and *māyā* also points to a possible conceptual relation between the terms. Perhaps, the later meaning of *māyā* as an “illusion” was merely one of the possible candidates for the efficient cause of phenomenal reality, and the technical formal meaning of *māyā* as “making *pramā* into *pratimā*” has been replaced by this particular meaning.

A more general definition of *māyā*, compatible with my own, has been suggested by Gonda: “incomprehensible insight, wisdom, judgment and power enabling its possessor to create

³³ It should be noted, however, that the terms are often used interchangeably.

³⁴ Cited in Mahony 1998:42, 43.

something or to do something, ascribed to mighty beings.”³⁵ In a particular reference to the above quoted verse from the *ṚV* 6.47.18, Gonda argues that “*māyā* here refers to the special ability to create forms, or rather to the inexplicable power of a High being to assume forms, to project itself into externality, to assume an outward appearance, to appear in, or as, the phenomenal world.”³⁶

He immediately adds:

It is perfectly intelligible that this text could be quoted in order to demonstrate that the universe is identity gone into difference, God being the inner ground, the basis of identity, the world the outer manifestation of his being; in order to maintain the opinion that all and everything is a self-revelation, a manifestation, a particularization of the one and sole divine essence. As soon as this doctrine is firmly established *māyā* may become the mysterious and inexplicable power which screens the One under the mirage of individuality and under the display of the perishable universe; then it is the very energy of the One which enables it, or him, to project or ‘realize’ itself.³⁷

I suggest calling the fourfold scheme of *pramā-pratimā-nidāna-māyā* the *general condition of phenomenal representation* (GCPR). Each of the components of this scheme must be present in order to make any act of phenomenal representation possible. The actual content of each of the components varies and may be the subject of debate for the ancient Indian metaphysicians. For the early Vedic thinkers, the *pramā* usually refers to the divine realm (*adhidaivata*), the *pratimā* to its sacrificial counterpart (*adhiyajña*), and *nidāna* is the resemblance between the two (*sāmānya*). The *māyā* can be the proper sacrificial performance making this resemblance possible. The innovation found in the *upaniṣadic* texts is that the *pramā* becomes the cosmic totality (*brahman*), the *pratimā* is its counterpart within the human experience (*ātman*), and the *nidāna* is

³⁵ Gonda 1959:126

³⁶ Ibid. 128

³⁷ Ibid. 128-129

the absolute identity between the two (*ekatva*). *Māyā* is the power of illusion creating the appearance of separateness between the two.

The words *pramā* and *pratimā* are based on the verbal root $\sqrt{mā}$, literally meaning “to measure”. In later Indian philosophical traditions, the basic epistemological concepts are also based on this root, such as *pramā* (cognition), *pramāṇa* (the means of cognition), *prameya* (the object of cognition), *pramātr* (the cognizing subject). It is possible that the word *pramā*, which in the Vedic context meant “the noumenal prototype” becomes in a more epistemologically precise terminology “cognition of the noumenal prototype”, with the noumenal prototype becoming more closely associated with *prameya* (the object of cognition).

Pramā-pratimā-nidāna-māyā is an ontological scheme describing the relation between the phenomenal reality and its noumenal source. At the same time, it has an epistemological aspect in that true knowledge is defined by properly understanding all the constituents of the condition of phenomenal representation.

1.3 The general condition of phenomenal formation (GCPF)

Rūpa-pratirūpa-nidāna-rūpaṇa, on the other hand, can be seen as *the general condition of phenomenal formation* (GCPF), or appearance of distinct forms in the phenomenal realm. Any phenomenon of formation requires the formal cause (*rūpa*)³⁸, the formal effect (*pratirūpa*)³⁹, the persisting relation between the two (*nidāna*), and the efficient cause of formation (*rūpaṇa*). I am not familiar with any explicit usage of *rūpaṇa* in any similar context, but in analogy with *māyā*, I

³⁸ Or *imago imaginans* suggested by Coomaraswami (1936:51).

³⁹ Or *imago imaginata* (Ibid.)

suggest the term as describing a process by which the formal prototype appears as a particular phenomenal image.

The difference between GCPR and GCPF is a matter of accent. GCPR focuses on the correspondences between the noumenal and the phenomenal realities, and thus has an epistemological aspect. GCPF describes the process of formation, and is, essentially, a theory of formal-efficient causality. The referents of each of the schemas may coincide, but the conceptual emphases are slightly different.

Since the analogy of an image-making may take different forms, the image-making metaphysics of representation appears in different ways. The image of the prototype can be created through the act of art, through casting a shadow, through leaving traces, or through the reflection in a mirror. Thus, the grounds for the future models of reflection based on identity between the prototype and the image (e.g., *bimba-pratibimba-ekatva-avidyā*) have already been prepared by the early Vedic schemes of *pramā-pratimā-nidāna-māyā* and *rūpa-pratirūpa-nidāna-rūpaṇa*.

Conclusion:

The early Vedic theory of resemblances proposes an explanation for the formation of images in the phenomenal realm. The forms found in the divine realm are regarded as prototypes represented in the phenomenal realm as images resembling the original forms. There are correspondences between the divine forms and phenomenal images, but they are not identical. The transition to the metaphysics of identity in the *Upaniṣads* allows for the transformation of the prototype-image model into the prototype-reflection paradigm, according to which the two correspondences are identical, although the prototype is real but the reflection is not.

Chapter 2: Theories of Reflection and Non-Reflection in the *Upaniṣads*

Introduction

In this chapter I will discuss two ontological models from the early *Upaniṣads* each presenting a different perspective on the Vedic model of *pramā-pratimā*. Gārgya Bālāki applies the Vedic model to the correspondences between human and divine realms and to the correspondences between these two realities and the ultimate reality of *brahman*. Bālāki presents a theory of persons as duplications of their divine prototypes, as well as duplications of anthropomorphic cosmos. He invokes the notion of reflection as one way to describe the process of person-formation through duplication. I would like to call this theory of person-formation the “theory of *puruṣa* (the person).”

Bālāki’s theory of *puruṣa* has been rejected by the authors of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* and *Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad* in favor of a competing theory of emanation of the phenomenal world from the formless self. I call it the “theory of *ātman*.” This theory introduces the concept of self “made of consciousness” that dismisses the binary division between *pramā* and *pratimā*.

Some features of Bālāki’s theory of *puruṣa* have been accepted and further developed in the famous story from the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, in which the god Prajāpati teaches Indra and Virocana about the self. Nevertheless, Prajāpati accepts the claim of the competing theory that *ātman* is found beyond correspondences, thus rejecting the possibility that the self can be either the noumenal prototype or the phenomenal image. For the first time, the analogy of reflection has been applied to the concept of the self, and it has been demonstrated that the self is neither a reflection nor a reflected thing. Rather, by implication, it is that in which all the phenomena are reflected.

2.1 The dialogue between Gārgya Bālāki and king Ajātaśatru

The dialogue between the “proud” (*dr̥pta*) Gārgya Bālāki and king Ajātaśatru appears in two versions. The earlier version is from the *Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad* 2.1.1-2.1.20, and the later and more elaborate is from the *Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad* 4.1-4.20.⁴⁰ Both versions present the conversation between Bālāki, a learned Brahmin descendent of a certain Garga, and Ajātaśatru, the king of Kāśī. Bālāki arrives to teach the king about *brahman*. It turns out, however, that the king possesses a more complete understanding about *brahman*, and thus in turn becomes Bālāki’s teacher.

The story begins when Bālāki promises the king Ajātaśatru to tell him about *brahman*, and the king promises in return a thousand cows. Bālāki identifies *brahman* with the person (*puruṣa*) in the sun, but the king dismisses Bālāki’s words by saying that the person in the sun is merely “the most eminent of all beings, [...] their head and king. Anyone who venerates him this way will become the most eminent of all beings, he will become their head and king.”⁴¹ Further Bālāki identifies *brahman* with the persons in the moon, lightning, space, wind, fire, waters, mirror, echo, quarters, shadow, and in the body.⁴² KśU adds to these the persons in thunder, in sound, the dreaming person, and the persons in the right and left eyes⁴³. Ajātaśatru refuses to accept any of these persons as identical to *brahman*, although he admits their relative importance when their true correspondences are recognized.

⁴⁰ Keith 1908:xi

⁴¹ *atiṣṭhaḥ sarveṣāṃ bhūtānāṃ mūrdhā rājeti vā aham etam upāsa iti | sa ya etam evam upāste 'tiṣṭhaḥ sarveṣāṃ bhūtānāṃ mūrdhā rājā bhavati*, BU 2.1.2. From now on, unless specified otherwise, I will use Olivelle’s translations of the *Upaniṣads*.

⁴² BU 2.1.3-2.1.13

⁴³ *Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad* (KśU) 4.3-4.18

Finally, Bālāki remains silent and requests the king to accept him as his student. Ajātaśatru points out that it is not proper for a *kṣatriya* to teach a *brahmin*. Nevertheless, according to the KśU, but not in BU, the king proclaims that “it is the one who is the maker of the persons you have talked about, Bālāki, whose handiwork they are, that one should seek to know.”⁴⁴

According to both versions, the king takes Bālāki by the hand and they both approach a sleeping person (*puruṣa*). The king tries to wake the person up by calling him “O Soma, great king dressed in white!”⁴⁵, but the person does not wake up. Then Ajātaśatru wakes the person with his hand (or according to KśU, with a stick).

The king asks Bālāki “when this man was asleep here, where was the person made of consciousness (*viññānamayaḥ*)? And from where did he return?”⁴⁶ Bālāki does not know how to answer these questions, and the king explains that during sleep, the person “made of consciousness” withdraws all his vital functions (*prāṇa*) of seeing, hearing, etc. – each having its own consciousness (*viññāna*) - into the hidden place in the space within the heart. In the version appearing in the KśU, the sleeping person withdraws all his senses, including a distinct “consciousness self” (*prajñātman*) into one vital function (*prāṇa*). Ajātaśatru explains that the sleeping entity is no other than the self (*ātman*), which upon waking up sends forth from its own self “all the vital functions (*prāṇā*), all the worlds, all the gods, and all beings,” just as a spider sends forth its threads and “tiny sparks spring forth from fire.”⁴⁷

2.1.1 Bālāki’s theory of *puruṣa*

⁴⁴ *yo vai bālāka eteṣām puruṣānām kartā, yasya vai tat karma, sa vai veditavya iti*, KśU 4.19.

⁴⁵ *bṛhan pāndara-vāsaḥ soma rājann iti*, BU 2.1.15.

⁴⁶ *yatraiṣa etat supto 'bhūd ya eṣa viññānamayaḥ puruṣaḥ kvaiṣa tadābhūt kuta etad āgād iti* (BU 2.1.16)

⁴⁷ *sa yathorṇavābhis tantunoccareḍ yathā agneḥ kṣudrā viṣphuliṅgā vyuccaranty evam evāsmād ātmanaḥ sarve prāṇāḥ sarve lokāḥ sarve devāḥ sarvāṇi bhūtāni vyuccaranti/*, BU 2.1.20.

In his commentary on the BU, Śaṅkara explains that the word *puruṣa* in Bālāki's account (in the sun, the moon, etc.) means "deity" (*devatā*). Thus, it seems that Bālāki identifies *brahman* with different gods found in natural phenomena as well as associated in different ways with the human body.

I would like to suggest that Bālāki's different associations of *brahman* with different deities do not represent one unified teaching, but rather distinct theories familiar to this "learned and widely travelled man."⁴⁸ After being dismissed one by one by Ajātaśatru, Bālāki makes new guesses repeatedly. In fact, distinct claims of *brahman* associated with the sun⁴⁹, the moon⁵⁰, fire⁵¹, waters⁵², lightning⁵³, space⁵⁴, the eye⁵⁵ etc. appear in different parts of the *Upaniṣads*. In some cases, a particular association appears as exclusive ("*Brahman* is space"⁵⁶). In other cases, a particular association is proclaimed to be the chief one, or ultimately true, while other associations are not denied, yet explained as subordinated to the chief one.⁵⁷

Since Bālāki does not provide any clear connection or hierarchy between his various associations, it seems that he is widely familiar with different theories about *brahman* but does not have any guiding principle which could allow him to reject, accept, or subordinate these theories. In other words, he does not understand them.

Nevertheless, Bālāki invokes a particular view of *brahman* as a person or god (*puruṣa*) located either in one of the natural phenomena or associated with human body. The association of

⁴⁸ KṣU 4.1

⁴⁹ ChU 1.6-7; 3.1-11; 3.19.1

⁵⁰ BU 2.5.7; CU 4.12.1

⁵¹ SU 2.16-17

⁵² SU 2.16-17

⁵³ BU 2.5.8

⁵⁴ BU 5.1.1; ChU 1.9.1; 3.12.7-9; 3.18

⁵⁵ ChU 4.15.1

⁵⁶ BU 5.1.1

⁵⁷ ChU 1.6

brahman with *puruṣa* in Bālāki's account seems to refer to the older theory, which I would like to call the “theory of *puruṣa*,” competing with a newer theory introduced in our story by the king Ajātaśatru, which might be called the “theory of *ātman*.”⁵⁸ Both theories present alternative explanations of the source of the phenomenal reality. While the theory of *puruṣa* refers to the appearance of human and divine beings as a result of duplication of the anthropomorphic form of the universe, the theory of *ātman* traces the phenomenal reality in its various forms to the inner, non-anthropomorphic self capable of creating and projecting forms out of itself. I will now attempt to reconstruct the theory of *puruṣa*, and further present the theory of *ātman*.

The theory of *puruṣa* can be traced to the famous *Puruṣa-Sūkta* (RV 10.90), which recounts the story of creation of the world from a primordial enormous person (*puruṣa*) sacrificed by the gods. During the sacrifice, different parts of *puruṣa* turn into natural phenomena and gods associated with them – the moon is created from his mind, the sun is born from his eye, Indra and Agni come from his mouth and Vāyu from his breath. From the *puruṣa*'s bodily parts are also created the living creatures, the Vedas, and the social classes of the Vedic society.

The primordial *puruṣa* from the *Puruṣa-Sūkta* is the material cause of the phenomenal world, which is literally made from the parts of *puruṣa*'s body⁵⁹. Herman Tull calls it the “disjunctivist model” of creation, describing world creation as the process of division and splitting of the primary unity.⁶⁰ Nevertheless, it seems that the theory of *puruṣa* implies that the great *puruṣa* – the cosmic unity of being – is also a formal cause of its counter-forms – the small *puruṣas*, human

⁵⁸ Sahota's distinction between two theories of *puruṣa-vid* and *ātma-vid* refers, probably, to the same two theories which I have in view (Gardner 1998:52). In later periods, the competing teachings not identical with the ones discussed here are distinguished by the titles *ātmavāda* and *puruṣavāda* (Timalsina 2017:941). One may also mention here the fact that the preferred term for consciousness in Advaita-Vedānta is *ātman*, while in Sāṃkhya and Yoga it is *puruṣa*. These later developments can be seen as continuing the early Upaniṣadic bifurcation between the two fundamentally different positions on the nature of *brahman*.

⁵⁹ Tull 1989:51; Cohen 2008:41

⁶⁰ Tull 1989:70

or divine. Brown and Gardner suggest that the cosmic *puruṣa* from the *Puruṣa-Sūkta* is in fact a conglomeration of three distinct Vedic gods – Agni, Sūrya, and Viṣṇu.⁶¹ The cosmic *puruṣa* also corresponds to its human counterpart – the sacrificer.⁶² Thus, a certain correspondence between the cosmic person and particular divine and human “persons” already appears in the *Ṛg-Veda*.

The later Upaniṣadic doctrine of the thumb-sized person (*anguṣṭha-mātraḥ puruṣa*) residing in one’s heart and corresponding to the cosmic person (*mahān prabhuḥ/ puruṣa*)⁶³ might be based on the implications of the theory of *puruṣa*. The cosmic *puruṣa* is the original form (*rūpa*), which reproduces itself in various duplicates (*pratirūpa*) as gods and humans. Bālāki understands *brahman* as a human form found in different creatures, although it is not entirely clear whether he also associates *brahman* with the prototype – the cosmic *puruṣa*.

Śaṅkara suggests that Bālāki’s view of *brahman* refers to *viśiṣṭa*⁶⁴ or *amukhya brahman*⁶⁵ (*brahman* with attributes, or subordinate *brahman*), as opposed to *aviśiṣṭa* or *mukhya brahman* (attributeless, or the chief *brahman*), which the king has in view. The distinction between two kinds of *brahman* also appears in the BU closely after the conversation between Bālāki and Ajātaśatru. The Upaniṣadic text describes two different aspects of *brahman* – the one is *brahman* with form (*mūrta*), another – without form (*amūrta*)⁶⁶. *Brahman* with form is the source of all things in the world, which have a form, in particular a human body.⁶⁷

Among other associations mentioned by Bālāki, several “persons” relevant to Bālāki’s theory of reflection have a special interest for us: the persons in the waters, mirror, echo, shadow, and a dream. What is common to all these persons is that they are products of duplication or image-

⁶¹ Brown 1978:5; Gardner 1998:301

⁶² Desai and Collins 1986:271

⁶³ ŚU 3.12-13

⁶⁴ BUBh 219,18-19

⁶⁵ BUBh 228,2

⁶⁶ BU 2.3.1

⁶⁷ BU 2.3.3

making. While in the KśU, the person in the waters seems to refer to a deity associated with water (perhaps Varuṇa)⁶⁸, in BU, it refers to one’s reflection (*pratirūpa*) in the water⁶⁹. Similarly, one’s reflection in a mirror, the reproduction of a sound in its echo, and the contours of an object doubled in its shadow are all examples of prototypes repeated in their images.

While in the BU version, Bālāki does not mention the person in a dream, in the KśU , Bālāki speaks about “that person who, as one sleeps, roams about in dreams.”⁷⁰ At first glance, there is nothing which could suggest a relation of duplication. However, such a relation is quite plausible, if we take into account Śaṅkara’s description of dream as a reflection (*pratibimba*) of the world perceived in the waking state. This description, actually, occurs in Śaṅkara’s commentary on the dialogue between Bālāki and Ajātaśatru in BU.⁷¹ It is possible that Śaṅkara writes his commentary with the KśU version in mind, which suggests to him that the person “roaming about in dreams” is a waking person’s double, just as the worlds appearing in dreams are replications of the world perceived in the waking state.

Although there is no explicit reference to the common prototype of duplication-*puruṣas* in Bālāki’s account, the analogy of duplication (reflection, echoing, etc.) points to the existence of such prototype. The texts suggest that human *puruṣas* correspond to divine *puruṣas*,⁷² which makes it possible to ascribe duplication-*puruṣas* to human *puruṣas*, and the prototypes to divine *puruṣas*. Nevertheless, all *puruṣas* share the quality of “*brahman*-hood.” Bālāki points to a number of referents qualified as *brahman*, but never explains what *brahman* actually means. I argue that the creation story from the *Puruṣa-Sūkta*, as well as the later theories of the correspondence between

⁶⁸ KśU 4.2

⁶⁹ BU 2.1.8

⁷⁰ KśU 4.15

⁷¹ BUBh 241,11

⁷² See BU 2.1.15, where the mind of a sleeping person is associated with Soma.

the little *puruṣa* and the cosmic *puruṣa*, allow us to supply the missing meaning of *brahman* as the form of the cosmic person.

Bālāki presents a theory of duplication of one universal form into divine and human forms. According to this theory, the prototype (*pramā/rūpa*) of everything in the world is the cosmic *puruṣa*, and its counterparts (*pratimā/pratirūpa*) are homunculus *puruṣas* – gods and humans having the form identical to their prototype. The relation (*nidāna*) between the prototype and its images seems to be that of identity of form, and the efficient cause of the formation of the homunculus *puruṣas* must be duplication in various forms (reflection, casting a shadow, echoing, dreaming, etc.).

Bālāki’s theory of *brahman* with form is essentially a model of a totality of being having a particular form, namely the form of a human body, reproducing itself in endless human and divine creatures abiding in the realms created from the different parts of the cosmic body. While these realms (the moon, the sun, etc.) are the result of the disintegration of the cosmic body, the persons abiding in these realms preserve the form of the unified cosmic body, themselves embodying the form of unity. It is an externalist model, in that the creation of phenomena comes as a result of the objective process of division of matter and duplication of form.⁷³

2.1.2. Ajātaśatru’s theory of ātman

In the BU version, Ajātaśatru uses the word *ātman* only once, and thus does not seem to emphasize its contrast with *puruṣa*. In the KśU, however, the majority of king’s corrections of Bālāki’s associations include references to the self (*ātman*) of different things. Thus, the person (*puruṣa*) in the moon is said to be “the self (*ātman*) of food.”⁷⁴ The person in lightning is said to

⁷³ This externalist model of *brahman* with form, whose creation is based both on divisions and imitation of its unified form is quite in line with Śaṅkara’s general characterization of Bālāki’s doctrine in BUBh 217,15.

⁷⁴ KśU 4.4

be “the self (*ātman*) or radiance,”⁷⁵ etc. The KśU version seems to intensify the contrast between the persons in Bālāki’s theory and the concept of self in Ajātaśatru’s account. But what is *ātman*?

“It is the one who is the maker of the persons you have talked about, Bālāki, whose handiwork they are, that one you should seek to know,”⁷⁶ - proclaims the king. This maker is not the external cosmic person, nor the gods. It is the inner *ātman*, the self, who, like a spider, emits from itself the nets of vital functions (*prāṇa*), whose cognitive powers create the whole phenomenal world. Ajātaśatru’s theory of *ātman* is internalist, idealist model of emanation of the objective world from subjective powers of cognition found in the self, which is no other but consciousness (*vijñāna*).

While the theory of correspondences between different *puruṣas* is preserved in the account of the corresponding essences of things, the theory of the unformed *brahman*, the ultimate reality identified with the inner self, abandons the model of *rūpa/pratirūpa* for the sake of a different model of forms as cognitive projections having no external prototype.

Elsewhere, in both BU and other *Upaniṣads*, we find a doctrine of the large (*mahān*) *ātman* identical with the tiny *ātman* found in one’s heart.⁷⁷ The large *ātman*, the totality of the universe is the same *ātman* that fills one’s body and the *ātman* hidden in one’s heart. This doctrine seems to replace the older doctrine of the cosmic *puruṣa* corresponding to homunculus *puruṣas*. The difference is that the large *ātman* is bodiless (*aśarīram*)⁷⁸ and immeasurable (*aprameyam*).⁷⁹ Since the *ātman* has no form, and thus, has no boundaries, it can be infinitely large, as well as infinitely small. The word “immeasurable” (*aprameyam*) may also indicate the absence of *pramā* (prototype)

⁷⁵ KśU 4.5

⁷⁶ *yo vai bālāka eteṣām puruṣānām kartā, yasya vai tat karma, sa vai veditavya iti*, KśU 4.19.

⁷⁷ Van Buitenen 1964:109

⁷⁸ KśU 2.22

⁷⁹ BU 4.4.20

and *pratimā* (corresponding image), thus cancelling the distinction between the prototype-*ātman* and the image-*ātman*. It follows that any form of image-duplication is not applicable to the theory of *ātman*.

Ajātaśatru not only postulates his theory of *ātman*, but also attempts to refute Bālāki's theory of *puruṣa*. The episode during which the king makes an effort to wake the sleeping person up by calling him "O Soma, great king dressed in white!" is intended to demonstrate the falsity of Bālāki's theory. It is remarkable that Bālāki does not know the answer to the king's question: "When this man was asleep here, where was the person made of consciousness (*vijñānamayah*)? And from where did he return?"⁸⁰ It is the account of perception, or consciousness, which is absent from Bālāki's theory of correspondences.

Ajātaśatru's experiment, however, seems to imply a possible answer, which should have come from a proponent of the theory of *puruṣa*. By invoking Soma, previously identified by Ajātaśatru as the person in the moon, the king wants to say that Bālāki's theory connects the person consisting of perception and the god of the moon. This implicit connection is also made explicit by Śaṅkara: "That being in the moon and also in the mind (*manas*) as the experiencer and agent [...]."⁸¹

The early Vedic correspondence between the mind and the moon is well known⁸². There are also some indications that the Vedic thinkers believed that during sleep the mind was leaving the body.⁸³ It seems that the theory of *puruṣa* identifies the mind with a certain inner *puruṣa*, which is present in the body when a person is awake and leaves it when it is asleep, probably, to the moon. When he is in the body (in the heart), the person is conscious of the sense data entering

⁸⁰ BU 2.1.16

⁸¹ *ya evāsau candre manasi caikaḥ puruṣo bhoktā kartā ceti*, BUBh 220,13-14.

⁸² See Gonda 1986:147-160.

⁸³ *Vājaseneyi Saṃhitā (VS)* 4.15, cited in Gonda 1986:152; ChU 8.6.1-2

from the outside world. When the mind-person leaves the body during deep dreamless sleep, the body is unconscious of sense perceptions and does not keep any memory of the mind's out-of-body experiences⁸⁴.

Ajātaśatru attempts to demonstrate that if the theory of *puruṣa* were correct, then by addressing Soma, the conscious mind-person, who is no other but Soma's *pratirūpa*, would hear and return to the body from the moon. The person, however, does not react to this experiment, which proves that this account of consciousness is not true.⁸⁵

On the other hand, by awakening the sleeping person simply by pushing him, Ajātaśatru confirms that the person's consciousness has not gone anywhere, and remains in the person's body. Thus, the king contrasts Bālāki's externalist theory of *puruṣa* with his own internalist theory of *ātman*. Person's consciousness is hidden within the body, and thus its source must be looked for within and not without.

The philosophical implications of Ajātaśatru's emanation model and his rejection of the *pramā-pratimā* model are:

1. The self belongs to neither phenomenal nor noumenal realities, if the two are to be understood as having properties of form and extension. It is a new category of consciousness, which is the source of all realities.
2. The self has no form, thus no form corresponds to it. Nevertheless, despite being formless, the self is the source of all forms.
3. On the one hand, the self is said to be the creator of all realities (and persons). On the other, all the realities seem to collapse into the self during deep sleep. However, even when

⁸⁴ Avicenna held a somewhat similar view that self-awareness persists during dreamless sleep, and our sense of its absence is due to our lack of its memory (Kaukua and Kukkonen 2007:108-109).

⁸⁵ Śaṅkara has a lengthy debate with an opponent on the validity of such an experiment in BUBh 229,19-236,5.

one person is found in deep sleep, we observe that the world is not collapsing, otherwise the whole conversation between Bālāki and Ajātaśatru would not take place due to the servant's sleep. The difference between individual selves is not clearly stated, and the text is silent on the question whether the self is individual or universal.

At the same time, I would also like to draw attention to the argumentative style lurking behind the confusing symbolical and mystical language of the text. Ajātaśatru not merely casts aside Bālāki's "wrong" theory, but demands higher standards for a metaphysical theory. On the one hand, we must take into our account the existence of consciousness, which does not fit well into the externalist explanation of formal correspondences between persons. On the other hand, Ajātaśatru's experiment with a sleeping person suggests an empirical method of testing the soundness of a theory, based on its empirical implications.

2.2. Theory of Non-Reflection in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*

Almost all of the components of the dialogue between Bālāki and the king Ajātaśatru appear in a different arrangement in the story of Indra and Virocana in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (7th-6th cen. BCE).⁸⁶ The latter story, however, transforms the relatively disorganized Bālāki's theory of duplication of persons into a systematic account of a bodiless person – the true self - falsely associated with the body and its reflections. The text is in agreement with Ajātaśatru's that the self is neither *pramā* nor *pratimā*, but also rejects the emanation model. I will present my own interpretation of the text, according to which the human and divine realities are reflected in the self, thus making it not a prototype, not a counterform, and not a formless source of all form, but a reflecting substance.

⁸⁶ I am following the dating of the text in Olivelle 2008: xxxvi.

Chāndogya Upaniṣad 8.7-8.12 recounts that Indra, the king of gods, and Virocana, the king of demons, come to Prajāpati to learn about the self. In particular, they seek for that self, i.e., *ātman* “that is free from evils, free from old age and death, free from sorrow, free from hunger and thirst; the self whose desires and intentions are real.” Anyone who discovers and perceives the referent of this definition obtains all the worlds and all his desires are fulfilled (ChU 8.7.1).

Only after thirty-two years, living as celibate students under Prajāpati, Indra and Virocana get to hear Prajāpati’s answer. “This person that one sees here in the eye - that is the self” – says Prajāpati (ChU 8.7.4). In his commentary on the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, Śaṅkara explains that Prajāpati has in mind the seer, the subject of perceptual experience.⁸⁷ Prajāpati’s gesture might also be interpreted in the light of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 2.3.5, where the eye is explained to be the essence of the body, corresponding to the self which is the essence of the “formless” in the body.⁸⁸ Either way, Prajāpati’s two students fail to understand their teacher’s intention and mistakenly take the self to be each of their own reflections in the pupil of Prajāpati’s eye. They ask him, who the person reflected in the water and in the mirror is, and Prajāpati answers that it is the same person (ChU 8.7.4).

Now Prajāpati asks his two students to look into a pan of water and tell him what they do not see about themselves. Virocana understands that his physical body is the self; Indra thinks that the self is the reflection of his body (according to Śaṅkara).⁸⁹ Prajāpati’s experiment is further complicated when he asks his students to adorn themselves beautifully, dress well, spruce up, and then look into a pan of water. The two proclaim that “as the two of us here are beautifully adorned, well dressed, and all spruced-up, in exactly the same way are these, sir, beautifully adorned, well

⁸⁷ ChUBh on CU 8.7.4

⁸⁸ BU 2.3.5

⁸⁹ CUBh on ChU 8.9.1

dressed, and all spruced-up.” Prajāpati confirms that this is the self that his students are looking for (ChU 8.8.1-5).

Virocana leaves satisfied with his mistaken understanding of the self as a physical body. Indra, however, doubts that his understanding of the self as a reflection really corresponds to the definition of the self as free from old age and death. His doubts are addressed by Prajāpati by further identification of the self with “the one who goes happily about in a dream.” While Indra points out that the dreaming person still may experience suffering, and thus does not seem to conform to Prajāpati’s definition of the self, Prajāpati suggests to wait another thirty-two years (ChU 8.10.1-4).

After thirty-two years, Prajāpati tells Indra that the self is the one found in a deep dreamless sleep. Indra is satisfied with this answer, but on his way to the gods, he understands that there is a problem with the unconscious self, which is not capable of perceiving itself as “I am this.” Prajāpati affirms Indra’s doubts, and asks him to wait “only” five years for the final answer (ChU 8.11.1-3).

After five years, Prajāpati gives an elaborated answer and claims that the self is bodiless, and thus is free from all suffering associated with the embodied existence. In order to illustrate the nature of self, Prajāpati utilizes an analogy of the air, clouds, lightning, and thunder, whose forms are not seen during the winter dry season, and are blurred by the space (*akāśa*) in which they are hidden. When the hot rainy season arrives, however, these natural phenomena arise from the space, and due to the sun’s light and heat, each of them appears in its own true form (ChU 8.12.1; ChUBh on ChU 8.12.1). Similarly, when the self leaves the body, it reaches the highest light and appears in its true form as the “highest person,” who “roams about there, laughing, playing, and enjoying

himself with women, carriages, or relatives, without remembering the appendage that is this body (ChU 8.12.3).”

The self is also said to be the experiencer of his sense-faculties and of the faculty of thinking:

Now, when this sight here gazes into space, that is the seeing person, the faculty of sight enables one to see [...] The one who is aware: “Let me think about this” – that is the self; the mind (*manas*) is his divine faculty of sight. This very self rejoices as it perceives with his mind, with that divine sight, these objects of desire found in the world of *brahman*.⁹⁰

The story ends here, and Indra raises no further objections.

2.2.1. Prajāpati’s theory of the bodiless (highest) *puruṣa*

There are two possible ways to reconstruct Prajāpati’s argument about the self. One interpretation is suggested by the anonymous opponent in Śaṅkara's *Chāndogya Upaniṣad Bhāṣya*. During each of Prajāpati’s explanations, Indra and Virocana misidentify the self with something which it is not – with the body, the reflection, the self-image in a dream, etc. Taken separately, each of Prajāpati’s examples does not point to a self. However, taken together they progressively lead the student more closely to the realization of the self. The author of this interpretation compares Prajāpati to a person pointing at the moon for the sake of another person who cannot immediately see it. First, the person points to the nearby tree in the direction of the moon, next to the peak of the high mountain, and finally to the moon itself.⁹¹

⁹⁰ ChU 8.12.4-5

⁹¹ ChUBh on ChU 8.12.1. In contemporary scholarship, Ganeri and Black seem to follow this interpretation in general (Ganeri 2007:17-19, Black 2007:41-44). Notice, that although Śaṅkara denies that this didactic method should be ascribed to Prajāpati, he confirms the method itself as legitimate elsewhere (see BSBh on BS 1.1.8).

The second interpretation belongs to Śāṅkara, who holds that all of Prajāpati's examples and explanations refer to the same self. Śāṅkara denies any possibility that Prajāpati misleads his students at any stage – even for didactic purposes. Because Prajāpati claims that the self is found in all of these experiences and examples, the self is really present in all of them. Each of these experiences reveals a different aspect of the self, and taken together, the self is understood in its entirety.

Śāṅkara's interpretation seems more plausible to me. His Advaita perspective aside, there is no reason to assume that Prajāpati lies at any point. Prajāpati never misleads, because all instances of self-misidentification arise due to his student's misunderstanding. There is no evidence of intentional deception by Prajāpati, and each of his answers can be interpreted as rightly pointing towards the real self.

In order to make sense of Prajāpati's various definitions of the self, it is best to begin from his last definition, as presumably this is his final answer, against which no new objections are being raised. It is clear that the self is independent of the physical body, which is essentially mortal and the object of suffering. This bodiless self is the highest person (*uttama puruṣa*), and as such must be contrasted with other persons mistakenly taken by Indra and Virocana to be the self (the person in the eye, in the mirror, in water, etc.).

I would like to argue that Prajāpati's teaching of the highest and lower persons is a conscious attempt to revise Bālāki's theory of *puruṣa*, which has been criticized by Ajātaśatru as lacking unity, a clear hierarchy between different *puruṣas*, and a clear account of consciousness and cognition. At the same time, Prajāpati raises objections against Ajātaśatru's own theory of *ātman*.

The story of Indra and Virocana has several links to the dialogue between Bālāki and the king Ajātaśatru. The story in the ChU mentions the following *brahman* associations appearing in the BU dialogue: the person in the mirror, the person in the water, the person in the body, the dreaming person, as well as the self during deep sleep. Also mentioned are the air and lightning as analogies to the bodiless self in its true form, as well as space in which their true form is lost. The beginning of the same eighth chapter of the ChU, with which the story of Indra and Virocana is continuous in many ways, also includes discussions of the abode of the *brahman* in a small space within one's heart, the connection of the inner vital forces and the sun, etc.

On the other hand, the author or the editor of the KśU version of the dialogue himself makes an explicit reference to the story from the ChU, as he has chosen to end the story by attributing Ajātaśatru the following words:

For as long as Indra did not understand this self, the demons were prevailing over him. But when he came to know it, he smashed the demons, conquered them, and secured the supremacy, sovereignty, and lordship over all the gods. A man who knows this, likewise, wipes off all evils and secures the supremacy, sovereignty, and lordship over all beings – yes he does, when a man knows this.⁹²

As the KśU presents a more explicit and elaborate version of the theory of *ātman* than the one found in the BU, here it seems to make a statement that the *ātman* in this theory is the same as the *ātman* first misunderstood and finally properly understood by Indra. Since I am not familiar with a different story about Indra's study of *ātman* other than the one found in the ChU, it is plausible that the author of the KśU is itself a revision of Ajātaśatru's theory of *ātman* in response to Prajāpati's theory from the ChU. I argue that it is possible to reconstruct the story from the ChU as an argumentative response to Ajātaśatru's criticism of Bālākī's theory of *puruṣa* in the BU,

⁹² KśU 4.20

while the KśU in turn reshapes the dialogue from the BU to defend Ajātaśatru's position against the arguments made against it in the ChU. While a minute study of the KśU's revisions in the light of the ChU's argument would be beyond the scope of this research, it is important to study the ChU in relation to the BU, because both texts raise questions about the applicability of the metaphor of reflection to the self.

By adopting various features of Bālakī's theory of *puruṣa*, the author of the ChU reinterprets it in a new light, which allows him to avoid the weaknesses pointed out by Ajātaśatru. If, as I have suggested, we start Prajāpati's account of the self from the end, and consider his previous answers to Indra backwards, it should also become clear how he responds to Ajātaśatru's critique of the theory of *puruṣa*.

I. *The self may leave the body during the deep dreamless sleep.* Prajāpati defends the view implied by Bālakī's theory of *puruṣa* that during deep dreamless sleep the self may leave the body. The prevalent notion among the interpreters of the story has been that Prajāpati, in his last definition of the self as free from the body, refers to a fourth state of the self (*turīya*), distinct from the previous three states of wakefulness, dream-state, and deep dreamless sleep state. This interpretation has been suggested by Śāṅkara (ChUBh on ChU 8.12.1), and discussed by Raveh.⁹³ Both seem to identify this fourth state with liberation, or with spiritual transcendence of the ordinary states.

I think, however, that there are good reasons to read the passage describing the bodiless self as referring to the state of the deep dreamless sleep. First, the self is described as "this deeply serene one," which "after he rises up from this body and reaches the highest light, emerges in his

⁹³ Raveh 2008: 319-332

own true appearance (ChU 8.12.3).” The “deeply serene one” (*samprasāda*) is a very insignificant variation of the word *samprasanna* having the same meaning and describing the person found in a deep dreamless sleep in ChU 8.11.1.

I would also like to point out that the above quoted verse about the deeply serene one raising to the highest light also appears in ChU 8.3.4 in an account of the world of *brahman* directly preceding the story of Indra and Virocana. Here the world of *brahman* found in one’s heart is compared to a hidden treasure of gold, over which ignorant people pass every day (ChU 8.3.2). Śaṅkara interprets this passage – and I think he is right – in the sense that people go to the world of *brahman* every night during deep dreamless sleep.⁹⁴ The self, located in one’s heart, during deep sleep “slips” into the veins connecting the heart with the sun. Although not stated explicitly, the passages 8.1.1-8.6.6 (especially 8.3.2 and 8.6.1-5) suggest that while during deep dreamless sleep, ignorant people remain in the veins which potentially could lead them to all the pleasures of the world of *brahman* and out to the sun, the people who are aware of this treasure “go to the heavenly world every day (ChU 8.3.3).”

In our story there is no indication that the highest person leaves the body during some unusual *turīya* state, and it is most reasonable to assume that Prajāpati’s discussion of the free disembodied state of the self is continuous with his previous discussion of the deep dreamless sleep state.

Prajāpati seems to respond to the Ajātaśatru’s experiment with the sleeping person aimed at proving that the sleeping person does not leave to the moon as implied by Bālāki’s theory of *puruṣa* (BU 2.1.15-20). Prajāpati argues that while the self is usually indeed found in one’s heart,

⁹⁴ ChUBh on ChU 8.3.2.

those who know the nature of self may leave the body during the deep dreamless sleep and go to the sun, “the highest light” (not to the moon).

II. *The self is conscious and cannot lose consciousness during the deep dreamless sleep state.* Prajāpati rejects the view that the self has a human form (as in Bālakī’s theory). Instead, he argues that the self has the nature of consciousness; it is a cognizing subject, as described in the ChU 8.12.4-5 (“the seeing person,” etc.). In this he agrees with Ajātaśatru, who described the self as “the person consisting of consciousness” (*vijñānamayaḥ puruṣaḥ*) (BU 2.1.16).

The problem arises when we consider the state of deep dreamless sleep, during which the self appears to be unconscious. Ajātaśatru argues that during deep dreamless sleep, the self withdraws all of its cognitive functions and “rests oblivious to everything, just as a young man, a great king, or an eminent Brahmin remains oblivious to everything at the height of sexual bliss (BU 2.1.18).” Indra, however, realizes that the unconscious self having no knowledge “I am this” cannot be the self (ChU 8.11.1). Implicitly he criticizes Ajātaśatru’s theory and points out that the self “oblivious to everything” is not the self, as it is oblivious even to its own existence and thus may be said not to exist at all. How that which is conscious can have no consciousness?

On the other hand, Prajāpati explicitly states that “when one is fast asleep, totally collected and serene, and sees no dreams – that is the self; that is the immortal; that is the one free from fear; that is *brahman* (ChU 8.11.1).” Is he wrong? As it must be clear from the previously discussed point, the self goes to the *brahman* world every night. The body is unconscious, but the self is not identified with the body, and in fact may leave the body to the sun. Prajāpati points to this bodiless conscious *puruṣa*, while initially Indra has falsely taken the self to be the unconscious sleeping body.

III. *The self may be identified only with positive dream-experiences.* In general, Prajāpati seems to be in agreement with Ajātaśatru’s account of the dream state (ChU 8.10.1; BU 2.1.17-18). Both identify the self with the person experiencing itself in a dream. However, Indra raises an objection to the idea that the self free from fear and suffering may undergo various negative dream experiences such as fear, and even death (ChU 8.10.1-2).

It seems that Indra’s objection is raised against the unqualified attribution of dream states to the self, such as Ajātaśatru’s description of the self as “going about in a dream (*svapnāyācarati*).” It should be noticed that Prajāpati slightly but significantly modifies Ajātaśatru’s description of the dreaming self to “the one who goes happily about in a dream (*svapne mahīyamānaś carati*) (ChU 8.10.1).” In other words, Prajāpati associates the self with the positive dream experiences which are in line with his final definition of the self as the highest person who “roams about there, laughing, playing, and enjoying himself with women, carriages, or relatives, without remembering the appendage that is this body (ChU 8.12.3).” That self, whose knowledge allows one to fulfill all of one’s desires, is the self whose dream states consist of fulfillment of desires. Indra, however, confuses this self with another “dreaming person,” who might experience all kinds of frustrations and pain.

Curiously enough, in the BU version, Bālāki does not mention the dreaming person at all, which might be consistent with his externalist understanding of persons, with no regard for the “inner person.” The only theory of a dreaming person appears in Ajātaśatru’s theory. In the later KśU , however, Bālāki adds the dreaming person to his list of persons identified with *brahman*, whom he describes as “the person, who, while asleep, goes about in a dream (*puruṣaḥ suptaḥ svapnayā carati*) (KśU 4.15).” At the same time, Ajātaśatru’s account of dreaming self is absent from this text. The editor of the KśU prefers to attribute the account of a dreaming person to

Bālāki, instead of Ajātaśatru, perhaps to avoid the problem of ascribing unhappy experiences in dreams to the self free from all suffering, as pointed out by Indra in the ChU.

IV. *The self is a non-reflectable seer. It may imitate the bodily pursuit of desires on a mental level.* The conclusion falsely taken by Indra and Virocana following Prajāpati's first teaching about the self is that the self is one's body, and that it involves a certain relation with the reflection of the body (ChU 8.7.4-8.9.2). This episode of the teaching makes references to the following persons from Bālāki's theory: the person in the body, the person in the mirror, and the person in the waters (BU 2.1.8,9,13). There is also a mentioning of the person in the eye which does not appear in Bālāki's account in BU, but is later mentioned in KśU (the persons in the right and the left eyes, KśU 17-18) and in other places in the *Upaniṣads* (BU 2.5.5, 4.2.2; ChU 1.7.5, 4.15.1).

When Prajāpati argues that the self is the person seen in the eye, he points to the seer, the subject of experience which will be described in Prajāpati's final teaching as the "seeing person" (*cākṣuṣaḥ puruṣaḥ*) (ChU 8.12.4). His students, however, falsely take the person in the eye to be the reflection of their bodies in the pupil of their teacher's eye. When they ask "who is the one that is seen here in the water and here in a mirror?" they mean other reflections of their bodies – the person in the mirror and the person in the water. When Prajāpati answers that "it is the same one who is seen in all these surfaces (*sarveṣu anteṣu*)," – the students understand that the persons in the mirror, the eye, and the water are all reflections of the chief person – the person in the body, which must be the self. Since Prajāpati has in mind the seer, and not the seen body, *sarveṣu anteṣu* must refer not to the mirror, the eye, and the water, but to the "insides" of the bodies.⁹⁵ It is not clear whether Prajāpati postulates plurality of selves or one self "reflected" in many bodies. If the

⁹⁵ This is exactly how Jha translates *anteṣu* (1942: 450).

first, then all individual seers must be of the same kind of self. If the latter, all seers share one selfhood.

Further, after Prajāpati direct his students to look at their reflections in the water, he asks them what they do not perceive about themselves. The students say that they see themselves in a complete correspondence (*pratirūpa*) between their bodies and the persons in the waters. Thus, they seem to reaffirm Bālāki's theory of correspondences between persons and their duplicates, and assume that the self is the formal prototype – in this case their own bodies. Prajāpati, however, has asked them about what they did not perceive about themselves, hinting that the self is the person which is not reflected, i.e., bodiless consciousness. The relation of duplication or reflection is applicable only to the lower persons. Thus, the highest person is not the prototype of other persons, but that which has no form and does not produce counter-images.

Further Prajāpati asks his students to adorn themselves beautifully, dress well, and spruce themselves up, and then look into a pan of water and state what they do perceive about themselves. The students do as their teacher says and respond “as the two of us here are beautifully adorned, well dressed, and all spruced up, in exactly the same way are these, sir, beautifully adorned, well dressed, and all spruced up (ChU 8.8.2-3). Surprisingly, Prajāpati seems to mislead his students by affirming their mistakes: “that is the self; that is the immortal, etc. (ChU 8.8.3).” The only way I see his words can be accepted as true is if the self shares with the bodies the capacity for enjoying the objects which do not essentially belong to it. This suggestion is compatible with Prajāpati's final teaching in which the self in its disembodied form achieves the objects of its desires in the world of *brahman* (ChU 8.12.3-7). Indra understands that while the body and its reflection may be beautifully adorned, both become similarly injured or extinguished (ChU 8.9.1). The self, however, may enjoy all the desirable experiences without undergoing the painful ones.

For Prajāpati, the self is not devoid of objects. Its real objects, however, are mental prototypes of the external objects. Throughout the eighth chapter of the ChU, the distinction is made between the real desires of the self - which are always fulfilled, once a person knows this self - and the unreal desires, the desires of the sensual world which can never be ultimately satisfied.⁹⁶ Through its association with the mind (*manas*) described as the self's "divine sight" (*daivam cakṣuḥ*), the self is capable of roaming about in the realm of *brahman*, "laughing, playing, and enjoying himself with women, carriages, or relatives, without remembering the appendage that is this body."⁹⁷

There is nothing particularly spiritual about the real desires of the self; they do not look different from our ordinary sensual desires. The only difference is that being the direct objects of the mind, not obstructed by the gross physical reality, they become immediately attainable by the self.

Śaṅkara dismisses the promise of fulfilled desires as reserved for people of "dull intellect" intended to motivate them to search for *brahman* without qualities.⁹⁸ Nevertheless, Prajāpati's teaching intentionally attempts to preserve all the attractive features of a theory of selfhood, in which the relation of subject-object in the form of desire is not abandoned. Desires are not to be completely extinguished as preached by later traditions of Buddhism and Yoga. Desires should be merely withdrawn from the phenomenal reality into the mental realms of *brahman*.

On the other hand, Prajāpati's theory of non-reflection of the self becomes a fruitful ground for the future speculations regarding the ability of the self to reflect and be reflected in Sāṃkhya,

⁹⁶ ChU 8.1.4-8.2, 8.3.1, 8.7.1, 8.12.3-6

⁹⁷ ChU 8.14.3, 8.14.5; It should be noted that in some sources (e.g., SB 10.5.3.3, 3.8.3.8), the *ātman* is considered a substantiation of the *manas*, or even *manas* itself.

⁹⁸ ChUBh on ChU 8.1.1

Yoga, and Advaita Vedānta alike. The reflection of the seen body in the seer, as exemplified in Prajāpati's "person in the eye" bears resemblances to an explanation of the seer falsely taken to be an instrument of seeing due to the reflection of the later in the first. In Advaita, in particular, the example of the same person reflected in different surfaces becomes an analogy for the one self reflected in multiple individual bodies. When in the story of Indra and Virocana, the analogy of the self with reflectable bodies is false, later theories of reflection take the analogy to be proper.

The contrast between the self's non-reflectability and the self's nature as the experiencer of mental objects of desire untouched by external reality also anticipates later Sāṃkhya and Yoga theories of consciousness as a reflecting entity, illusorily assuming the forms of mental representations. Prajāpati's experiments with reflecting surfaces can be interpreted as pointing to the reflecting nature of the real self. While it is formless, it is constantly misrecognized for the forms it reflects.

Conclusion

Bālāki applies the metaphor of reflection in order to account for correspondences between human and divine beings, and possibly explain the formation of human forms as metaphysical imitation of the cosmic form. The relation of prototype and counter-form, which we have seen in the early Vedic theory of resemblances is preserved in Bālāki's theory of duplication of persons, in which reflections of human bodies have prototypes in the real bodies, the material human bodies have prototypes in divine persons, and the latter - the common prototype in a cosmic person. *Brahman* in this theory seems to refer to the form of human body, which is common to all of these persons.

Ajātaśatru criticizes Bālāki's theory as improperly taking *brahman* to be a principle with form, while it ignores the existence of consciousness, which must pre-exist the arising of any

forms. Ajātaśatru proposes to abandon the prototype-image model of formation in favor of emanation of forms (mental and physical) from the formless cognition-self.

Prajāpati revises Bālāki's theory, accepts some of Ajātaśatru's suggestions, and criticizes others. He establishes a clear hierarchy between the highest person – the conscious self – and the lower persons, which include human bodies. He makes it clear that reflectability may be ascribed only to the lower persons as the self has no form to be reflected. The source of human misery is the misidentification of the highest person with the lower persons, while the realization of the highest person as a distinct entity leads to the fulfillment of all desires.

The most important difference, however, between Ajātaśatru's and Prajāpati's theories of *ātman* is that for Prajāpati, the self is not the source of all phenomena. Ajātaśatru's self is the maker of all persons and forms, is the origin of all mental and material components of empirical experience. Therefore, his model of emanation has the disadvantage that not only the neutral or positive manifestations of the phenomenal reality, but also the negative ones associated with fear and suffering are potentially contained within the self made of consciousness. The author of the CU makes it clear, however, that the self is distinct from all the phenomenal "persons" as well as from all sources of fear and suffering. On the other hand, as the subject of experience, the self "reflects" rather than "sends forth" the phenomenal contents of all kinds. While the painful elements of experience often are mistakenly associated with the self, in fact they are merely seen by the seer, heard by the listener, etc.

Another problem in Ajātaśatru's account avoided in Prajāpati's theory is the difficulty of explaining the arising of objective material reality out of the self whose nature is consciousness. As in the latter theory the self is associated with positive mental states, identified with an essential

position of a perceiver, the undesirable arising of material objects out of pure cognition does not arise.

In sum, Prajāpati's self is not a prototype of any person having form and body, because it itself has no body and no form. Due to the same reason, nor is it a reflection of any formal prototype. However, as it seems to be misidentified with both prototypes and their counter-images, the self is the formless consciousness, that which reflects all the phenomena without being one of them.

Chapter 3: Theories of Reflection in Sāṃkhya and Yoga

Introduction

In this chapter I will study theories of reflection in the philosophical traditions of Sāṃkhya and Yoga. The two schools develop a notion of reflection in order to explain the illusory interaction between separate entities of consciousness and matter. Just like a face is reflected in a mirror, consciousness is reflected in the material intellect (*buddhi*), and thus the intellect appears to be conscious, while consciousness falsely appears to be engaged in the intellect's activity.

I will argue that the analogy of the self reflected in the intellect must be understood in the context of Sāṃkhya and Yoga representationalism. While external objects are reflected in the mental faculty in the form of mental representations, an independent subjective entity is reflected in the intellect in the form of the I-notion. In Sāṃkhya, the source of our idea of the I is the "I-making faculty" (*ahaṃkāra*); in Yoga it is the reflection of consciousness (*puruṣa*). I will also defend Vijñānabhikṣu's theory of double reflection (of the self in the intellect and vice versa) as the most plausible explanation of phenomenal experience, once one accepts that conscious awareness and perception belong to separate entities.

3.1. Yoga-Sāṃkhya metaphysics

The metaphysical dualism shared by Yoga and Sāṃkhya is presented thoroughly, but often aphoristically, in the fundamental texts of the two systems – the *Yogasūtra* of Patañjali and the *Sāṃkhyakārika* by Īśvarakṛṣṇa – roughly from the same period (4th c. C.E.). It was up to the commentators to explain, elaborate upon these texts, and defend their arguments against opponents.

The main idea that appears in the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* pertains to the duality between two fundamental principles underlying reality: *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*. *Puruṣa* is the self or pure subjectivity, which is said to illuminate and experience *prakṛti*, the objective world of creation. *Puruṣa* is essentially pure consciousness, unchanging and a-causal. The concept of *prakṛti*, which can be translated as “matter,”⁹⁹ refers both to tangible objects, including our own physical bodies, and to the faculties of cognition and perception, the ego and our psychological drives.

The relationship between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* is that of an observer and the observed, in which *prakṛti* becomes active merely due to *puruṣa*'s presence. The proximity between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* causes an erroneous identification between the two: *puruṣa* begins to identify itself with *prakṛti*, at the same time as *prakṛti* is identified with *puruṣa*. This mistake is the source of *duḥkha*, the everyday phenomenal existence inherently involving suffering. It is said that the end of suffering will be achieved through the isolation (*kaivalya*) of *puruṣa* from *prakṛti*. It should be mentioned that as opposed to the monistic system of Advaita-Vedānta, Sāṃkhya admits an infinite plurality of individual *puruṣas*.

Without going too deep into the differences between the two systems, Yoga is more of a prescriptive practice-oriented system than Sāṃkhya. As a means of liberation from suffering implied by the mistaken identification between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*, Yoga suggests a gradual meditative effort of active disassociation of the mind from the illusory connection with the self. On the other hand, for Sāṃkhya the process of disassociation between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* is a

⁹⁹ A more common but less precise translation is “nature.”

natural, spontaneous process, in which the subject's experience of the objective world brings about the ultimate satisfaction needed to end the primordial association between the two.¹⁰⁰

The mental faculty is the first appearance in the evolution of *prakṛti* in the presence of *puruṣa*. When out of sight of the self, *prakṛti* is nothing but unmanifested undifferentiated potentiality of matter (*pradhāna*). The classical Sāṃkhya theory of the evolution of the elements (*tanmātras*) describes a gradual unfolding of the contents of *prakṛti* triggered by its contact with the self. The mental faculty arises prior to the sense-faculties, and the latter prior to the material elements composing various physical objects. This curious evolution theory is the upside down version of materialist theories in which the mind arises from matter, and resembles the Neoplatonic emanation of the sensible realm from the intelligible realm emanating in turn from one undifferentiated unity of the One. Nevertheless, for Sāṃkhya all *prakṛti*'s evolutes are real, objective, causally-related elements governed by the same principles of change and action.

The mental faculty refers to three distinct functions commonly referred to as “the internal organ” (*antaḥkaraṇa*). These are the intellect (*buddhi*), the ego, or the “I-maker (*ahaṃkāra*),” and the mind (*manas*). In Sāṃkhya, the three are distinct elements evolving one from another. In Yoga, the three are considered as different aspects of the same mental faculty, referred to as the “mind” (*citta*).

The function of the *buddhi* is the ascertainment, or determination, of both the external objects and of the *puruṣa*. The intellect assumes any form, or image of things that are present in

¹⁰⁰ This view on liberation in Sāṃkhya is not very common among contemporary scholars. I defend it in my article (Shevchenko 2017) which is supported not only by the close reading of the *Sāṃkhyakārika*, but also by its traditional commentaries and highly illuminating interpretation by a modern Bengali philosopher K.C. Bhattacharyya.

its vicinity, but also projects its own subjective states (*bhāvas*) on the images perceived in the form of apprehension¹⁰¹.

The second function is called *ahaṃkāra*, or the “I-maker.” It is responsible for the sense of self-identity, the sense that I am this or that being, and that I am a conscious agent of my actions¹⁰². In general I will follow the accepted translation of the term as the “ego”.

The third function – *manas* – the thinking organ – develops along with other sense-faculties and bodily organs from the ego, according to Sāṃkhya.¹⁰³

The first two aspects of the mind – the intellect and the ego – are of a particular importance for the discussion of reflection theory, while the rest of the *prakṛti*'s evolutes, including the *manas* are less significant.

The theories of reflection are introduced in order to explain the process by which the illusory association between entirely distinct ontological entities of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* take place, as well as to explain the process of knowledge as involving both entities. Prior to Vijñānabhikṣu (16th c.) – the proponent of a double reflection theory - there were two major versions of the theory of single reflection: the self's reflection in the intellect and the intellect's reflection in the self. I will start, however, with the analogy of reflection as applied to the intellect's ability to reflect external objects. I will argue that the analogy is applied in coordination with Sāṃkhya and Yoga representationalist theories of perception and will also examine possible connections to the theory of reflection of the self in the intellect.

¹⁰¹ SK 23; Bhattacharyya 1983:191-192.

¹⁰² SK 24

¹⁰³ SK 27

3.2.1 Reflection in the intellect: external objects

The earliest reports about the image of reflection as applied to the intellect (*buddhi*), the primary evolutes of *prakṛti*, refer to the intellect's ability to assume the forms of the objects of cognition. Āryadeva (170-270 A.D.) in his *Śātaḥ* presents this view of the Sāṃkhya as follows:

The one can have various forms, like crystal. As one crystal becomes blue, yellow, red and white according to the colors (of things near by), just so one *buddhi* becomes various according to its objects. At one time it perceives misery, at another time pleasure and so on. Although *buddhi* has various forms, (actually) there exists only one *buddhi* (Honda 1974: 487).¹⁰⁴

The text describes the intellect's capacity to reflect the forms of external objects. Here, the form of the object means a distinguishing mark or characteristic (*viśeṣaṇa*) of the three *guṇas*¹⁰⁵ experienced as pleasure, suffering, or indifference. The anonymous Sāṃkhya seems to explain how the same entity (the intellect) is capable of undergoing different states without losing its own distinct nature (*svarūpa*).

The author of the *Yuktidīpikā* (YD) also utilizes the analogy of reflection in order to argue that the intellect does not change as a result of its interaction with external objects. His position is presented in response to the proponent of the Buddhist teaching of momentariness (*kṣaṇika*) who has argued that the intellect constantly undergoes change because it apprehends objects. The author of the *Yuktidīpikā* responds that what changes is the activity of the intellect (*vṛttis*), but not the intellect itself. As the word *vṛtti* is synonymous with *pratyaya*, here it may also stand for the ideas or representations of the external objects. Thus, the modification of the sense-organs grasping

¹⁰⁴ The original orthography preserved.

¹⁰⁵ The three *guṇas* or qualities are the driving forces of *prakṛti*, and they include the *sattva* (illuminating quality), the *rajas* (active quality), and the *tamas* (dark and limiting quality).

different objects is responsible for the changes in the mental representations of these objects. The author's example is that of the reflection of the face in the water. If there is any change in the water it is due to the movement of the water, not due to the reflected image. Just like the reflection does not cause any real change in the water, so the reflected images of apprehended objects do not cause any change in the intellect.¹⁰⁶

The opponent raises the possibility that the water having a reflection of a face is a new entity born from the contact between the face and the water, and thus the analogy does imply that the contact between the intellect and the objects cause a new intellect having the property of an apprehended object. The author of the *Yuktidīpikā* responds that neither the face nor the water may be the cause of the emergence of a new entity, i.e., the reflected face in the water. The face is not the cause of change in the water because it is located at a distance. The water cannot be the cause, because when the face is removed, the reflection also disappears. Were the reflection a new entity caused by the contact between the face and the water, we would expect the image of the face to remain in the water even after the removal of the face, just like the red color of the pot remains after the baking is done.¹⁰⁷

It seems that both analogies imply that the reflection of the external objects in the intellect is not causally efficacious, and thus is not real. There is no real interaction between the cognizing faculty and the external objects, only an apparent interaction. As it will be shown further, a similar interaction characterizes the contact between the intellect and consciousness.

The intellect's capacity to "reflect" the forms of external objects must be understood in the context of the theory of perception in Sāṃkhya. The definition of perception as a distinct means

¹⁰⁶ YD 190, 3-11.

¹⁰⁷ YD 190, 11-15.

of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) underwent significant changes throughout the history of this system. Vārṣaganya (first-second cen.) defined perception (*pratyakṣa*) as “the functioning of the ear and other sense-faculties” (*śrotrādivṛttiḥ*).¹⁰⁸ Vindhyavāsin (300-400 AD) offered an amended definition of his predecessor: “perception is the functioning of the ear and other sense-faculties, which is non-conceptual” (*śrotrādivṛttiḥ avikalpikā pratyakṣam*).¹⁰⁹ Contrary to western theories of perception, in which the sense organs are passive receivers of external stimuli, in some Indian theories (including Sāṃkhya, Yoga, and Advaita, among others) the sense functions are active forces which go out, touch the external objects and assume their form. Thus, the early definitions of perception in Sāṃkhya refer to pre-conceptual direct “grasping” (*grahaṇa*) of the objects by the senses, in which the mental faculty does not participate. As Harzer points out, Vārṣaganya and Vindhyavāsin understand perception as essentially non-propositional kind of knowledge.¹¹⁰

Īśvarakṛṣṇa proposes a revised definition of perception as “the ascertainment of each object” (*pratiṣayādhyavasāyo dṛṣṭam*).¹¹¹ Further Īśvarakṛṣṇa specifies that ascertainment (*adhyavasāya*) is synonymous with the intellect (*buddhi*).¹¹² Thus perception, according to Īśvarakṛṣṇa, takes place in the mental faculty and not in the sense-faculties as his predecessors have argued. The author of the YD explains that *adhyavasāya* means “that which follows the functioning of the sense faculties appropriating their sense-content (*upāttaviṣayendriyavṛtтыupanipātī yo 'dhyavasāyaḥ*)” (Harzer 2006:76).¹¹³ The intellect is identified by the author of the YD as *pratyaya*, which I would suggest to translate as “ideation” or

¹⁰⁸ YD 76,21

¹⁰⁹ Quoted in *Nyāyamañjarī* 93.10, *Sanmatitarkaprakaraṇa* 533.2, *Tattvabodhavidhāyinī*, *Pramāṇamīmāṃsā* 28.4. (The text is quoted in Harzer 2006:72. References are taken from Harzer 2006:124, note 3.

¹¹⁰ Harzer 2006:75

¹¹¹ Harzer suggests that Īśvarakṛṣṇa revises Vindhyavāsin's definition of perception in response to Dignāga's critique (2006: 82; 126-127, n. 37). Also see Hattori 1968:60-61.

¹¹² SK 23

¹¹³ YD 70,12

“mental representation.” The reason for this translation should become clear when *pratyaya* is contrasted with the functioning of the sense-faculties as will be shown immediately.

In SK 28, the function of the sense-faculties is described as “merely seeing the form (or color) and the rest” (*rūpādiṣu pañcānām ālocanamātram iṣyate vṛttiḥ*). This “seeing” (*ālocana*) is explained in the YD as “grasping” (*grahaṇa*). It can be further described as “the function of the sense-faculty assuming the form of the object due to its contact with the object.”¹¹⁴ *Pratyaya*, on the other hand, is “the ascertainment such as ‘this is a cow,’ ‘white,’ ‘it is running’ as a result of imitating the function of the sense-faculty towards the object.”¹¹⁵ As long as the contact between the sense faculties and the object persists, the sense-faculties come into a direct contact with an object and assume its form as a particular. The intellect reproduces the form of the object grasped by the sense-faculty and identifies its properties as universals as in a determination “this is a cow.” In other words, the cognitive activity of the mental faculty is essentially propositional and perception involves conceptualization.¹¹⁶

By removing the locus of perception from the sense-faculties to the mental faculty, Īśvarakṛṣṇa and the author of the YD broaden the definition of perception to include the inner states such as intuitive perception of the yogis, emotions, etc.¹¹⁷

The revised theory of perception in the SK and the YD is representationalist in that both the senses and the intellect conform themselves to the object.¹¹⁸ Together with the Buddhist

¹¹⁴ *viṣayasamparkāt tādrūpyāpattir indriyavṛtti[r] grahaṇam*, YD 203,4-5

¹¹⁵ *viṣayendriyavṛttyanukāreṇa niścayo gaurayaṃ śuklo dhāvatīty evamādiḥ pratyayaḥ*, YD 203,5-6. See also YD 188,18-19.

¹¹⁶ Harzer 2006:76-77

¹¹⁷ Harzer 2006:82

¹¹⁸ The representationalism of the Sāṃkhya theory of perception has been already acknowledged by other scholars. See Jacubczak 2008:241; Harzer 2006:122, note 150; J.B. Bhattacharya 1965:18 and King 1999:159-160.

Sautrāntika and the Advaita-Vedānta schools, it is known as the “image theory of perception” (*sākāra-jñāna-vāda*), i.e., the indirect realist position, according to which, what are perceived are images (*ākāra*), and not objects in themselves.¹¹⁹ I believe the terms “ideation” or “mental representation” applied in Western representationalism should be the proper rendering of *pratyaya*. The self perceives external objects by means of their representations, or ideas, which comprise the intellect. The very possibility of propositional content in the mental faculty has as its condition the transformation of particular objects grasped by the sense-faculty into ideas, mental objects analyzable in terms of particularity and universality.

The comparison of the intellect to a crystal reflecting nearby objects serves an important role in Sāṃkhya representationalism. While the represented image is a reflection of the external object, transformed by mental activity (*vṛtti*), the intellect itself is not affected by the reflection and does not change its essence.¹²⁰

Does the system of Yoga share Sāṃkhya’s representationalist theory of perception? Patañjali mentions perception as a valid means of cognition, without defining it (YS 1.7). The author of the *Vyāsa-Bhāṣya*¹²¹, however, defines perception very closely to the definition in the YD:

The modification of the mind (*citta*) which, by being connected with an outside object through the channel of the sense-organs and making that object its own, mainly comprehends the special nature of the object

¹¹⁹ King 1999:159

¹²⁰ YD 188,20-191,24.

¹²¹ The author of the *Yogasūtrabhāṣya* is traditionally known as Vyāsa. Some suggestions have been made to ascribe the text to the author of the YS Patañjali, and even to Vindhyavāsin. As no conclusive evidence for the authorship of this text exists, I will be following “the author of the *Vyāsa-Bhāṣya*.”

which has general and special characteristics, is the source of correct knowledge (called) perception (Rukmani 1981: I.59-60).¹²²

Here too, perception takes place in the mental faculty, although it does not necessarily involve propositional knowledge, as the object is grasped in its particularity. Another evidence of representationalism in Yoga can also be found in the YS 2.20: “The seer is consciousness alone; though pure, he witnesses the intellect (*pratyaya*)” (Rukmani 1981:II.135, amended)¹²³ While the word *pratyaya* has been used throughout the YS in different senses, including “a cause,” here the author of the *Vyasa-Bhāṣya* identifies *pratyaya* with the intellect (*buddhi*). It is not a coincidence that Patañjali chooses a word indicating intellect’s intentionality to contrast with the pure (*śuddha*) nature of the “seer (the self).” The self sees mental objects, representations of the objects assumed by the intellect.

The analogy of reflection as applied to the mental faculty is also mentioned in the *Yogasūtra*. Patañjali compares the mind (*citta*) absorbed in meditative contemplation called *samāpatti* to a transparent jewel reflecting the form of a nearby object. When the fluctuations of the mind stop, the mind is “taking the form of whatever object is placed before it, whether the object be the knower, the instrument of knowledge, or the object of knowledge.”¹²⁴ In other words, ordinarily, the mind’s ability to perceive clearly the objects and the light of consciousness reflected in it is distorted (“colored”) by its own activity. When the mind is steadily focused on the external objects, on the sense organs, or on the self, it can accurately reflect them.

¹²² *indriyaprañālikayā cittasya bāhyavastūparāgāt tadviṣayā sāmānyaviśeṣātmano'rthasya viśeṣāvadhāranapradhānā vṛttih pratyakṣam pramāṇam*, YSBh 25,15-16.

¹²³ *draṣṭā dṛśimātraḥ śuddho'pi pratyayānupaśya*, YS 2.20.

¹²⁴ YS 1.41

At this point we should ask whether the intellect reflects external objects in the same way as it reflects the pure consciousness (*puruṣa*). In other words, should the idea of a self be accounted for as a representation of the external self in the same way as the idea of an object is a representation of an external object? In the following section I will attempt to answer this question from the position of Sāṃkhya. I will return to the same question in order to learn the answer from Yoga in the final section of this chapter after my discussion of the notion of *asmitā*.

3.2.2 Reflection in the intellect: the self

Haribhadrāsūri (eighth cen.) reports two versions of the theory of the self in the intellect – the first ascribed to Vindhyavāsin (fourth cen.), the second - to Āsuri¹²⁵. Thus, Vindhyavāsin argues that:

By means of [sheer] proximity, the Self, the essence of which is unchanging [consciousness], makes the mind (*manas*), which is devoid of consciousness (*acetana*), a reflection of itself (*svanirbhāsa*), just as an adjunct (*upādhi*), [e.g., a flower, makes] a crystal [a reflection of itself] (Qvarnström 2012:401, 406).¹²⁶

Vindhyavāsin holds that apprehension takes place in the mind (*manas*), while other mental faculties (the *buddhi* and *ahaṃkāra*) are merely modalities of the mind. This is the reason that for him, the reflection of the self takes place in the mind, and not in the intellect¹²⁷.

According to the quote ascribed to Āsuri,

¹²⁵ There is little reliable historical information about Āsuri, and it is doubtful whether the quotation can be ascribed to him. See Larson 1987:112.

¹²⁶ *puruṣo 'vikṛtātmaiva svanirbhāsam acetanam/ manaḥ karoti sām̐nidhyād upādhiḥ sphaṭikam yathā//* (*Yogabindu* 449, in Qvarnström 2012:406)

¹²⁷ Larson 1987:144

[...] the highest pleasure (*bhoga*) of the [Self (*puruṣa*)] arises when the intellect (*buddhi*) has undergone such a change whereby it has become separated [from the Self, and whereby the Self is reflected in the *buddhi*], just like the appearance of the reflection of the moon in clear water (Qvarnström 2012:401, 406).¹²⁸

In this version, the intellect is said to reflect the self only after their actual separation has been completed. It seems to be compatible with the above mentioned verse from YS 1.41, in which during deep concentration, the intellect clearly reflects the object of its attention, including the self. It seems that the clear knowledge of the self as a separate entity may arise only when the intellect stops all of its mental activity and may clearly reflect the subject of experience.

The reflection theory of the self in the intellect is usually associated with Vācaspati Miśra (ninth century). According to Vācaspati Miśra, the self is reflected in the *buddhi*, the intellect, and thus the unconscious mental complex appears as conscious. At the same time, the self – subjective and immutable - appears as if characterized by mental activity and by objective contents, due to the superimposition of the activities of the intellect and the objects perceived by it upon the reflection of the self in the intellect.

Vācaspati's theory of single reflection aims at explaining how the process of knowledge takes place and what the locus of knowledge is. Knowledge takes place in the form of the pure consciousness reflected together with the objects in the intellect. In other words, the intellect assumes the form of the object and is illuminated by the light of *puruṣa*. It is generally assumed that the result of some activity is found in the same location in which the activity takes place. Therefore, the intellect, which is the locus of cognitive activity, must also be the locus of the result of this activity – cognition, or knowledge.¹²⁹ Vācaspati emphasizes that “the power of knowing

¹²⁸ *vibhakedṛkpariṇatau buddhau bhogo 'sya kathyate/ pratibimbodayaḥ svacche yathā candramaso 'mbhasi// (Yogabindu 450, in Qvarnström 2012:406)*

¹²⁹ Rukmani 1988:370, YV on YS 1.7

has not the *puruṣa* for its substratum, because knowledge does not inhere in it. [...] If it did, the *puruṣa* would become changeable” (Prasāda 1978:143, amended).¹³⁰ Vācaspati attempts to avoid any implications of change in consciousness by all means. It will be shown in the next section of this chapter, how theories of reflection in the self struggle to reconcile the immutable nature of consciousness with the appearance of intentional content in it.

In later theories, which will be discussed in detail further below, the reflection of the pure consciousness in the mental faculty is associated with the emergence of the empirical self or the ego - *ahaṃkāra* (literally – the “I-maker”). We do not find, however, any correlation between the empirical ego and the transcendental self in the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* and its commentaries, as well as in reports about earlier Sāṃkhya thinkers. *Ahaṃkāra* is described as a mental evolute of the intellect, from which the sense faculties and the organs of action evolve in turn. This faculty is “the cognition 'I', which arises for the agent with the character of reflection on his own self/nature.”¹³¹

The above definition found in the YD suggests that the idea “I am” arising in the intellect (*pratyaya*) represents the acting and sensing agent (*kartr*). Since the sense-faculties and organs of action evolve from the ego, the *ahaṃkāra* seems to be the entity to which the sensing and the bodily activities are ascribed by the intellect. While the ego is a real faculty, distinct from the intellect, in the intellect it appears in the form of the sensing and acting subject propositionally related to the objective contents in the form “I see the pot, etc.”

On the other hand, it seems that in Sāṃkhya, reflection of consciousness in the intellect does not give rise to a particular idea representing the self. The analogy serves other purposes.

¹³⁰ *na hi tadādharā jñānaśaktiḥ tatra jñānasyāsamavāyāt/ anyathā pariṇāmāpattir iti*, TV 224,5-6.

¹³¹ *kartuḥ svātmapratyavamarṣātmako yo 'yamahamiti pratyaya utpadyate sa khalv ahaṃkāra*, YD 194,3-4

Thus, in the YD, the intellect is compared to a crystal reflecting the self, which allows explaining the transference of qualities of consciousness to the unconscious intellect. The reflection is not real, and thus the appearance of consciousness in the intellect is also not real. The analogy also explains why the mere contact between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* does not create an appearance of consciousness in other non-conscious objects in *puruṣa*'s proximity, such as a pot. Only the intellect has a reflecting capacity to assume nearby forms, while other non-conscious objects lack this ability.¹³²

The notion of the I as representing the ego must be distinguished from the reflection of the self in the intellect. The latter is rather represented in coloring the process of ideation itself as being conscious. While the intellect is intentional, and consciousness essentially has no contents, the reflection of consciousness in the intellect gives rise to a false impression that the intellect is conscious, and consciousness is intentional.

3.3. Reflection in the self

Qvarnström identifies the earliest theory of reflection of the intellect in the self or consciousness with Vāṛṣagaṇya (first-second cen.).¹³³ Above I have discussed Vindhyaśin's theory of reflection, according to which consciousness is reflected in the intellect. It must be noted, however, that as opposed to the later disagreement between Vācaspatiśra and Vijñānabhikṣu, we do not find any indication that the two theories were rivals in the earlier period. The fact that both theories are mentioned in the *Yuktidīpikā* and the *Yogasūtrabhāṣya*¹³⁴ might suggest that at

¹³² YD 181,13-21

¹³³ Sometimes this theory of reflection has also been identified with Pañcaśikha (Qvarnström 2012: 403).

¹³⁴ YD 171,12-18; 181, 18-21; YSBh 441,19-26; YSBh on YS 444,1-12.

least some Sāṃkhya thinkers (perhaps including Vārṣaganya and Vindhyavāsin) upheld both theories of reflection.

According to the theory ascribed to Vārṣaganya, the intellect (*buddhi*) is reflected in *puruṣa*, the pure self. The self appears as if characterized by mental activity, but in fact it merely reflects the activity of the intellect. The self remains immutable, and nevertheless appears as undergoing transformation. The followers of Vārṣaganya, as reported in the YD, compared the conscious self to a transparent crystal (*maṇi*) assuming the forms of a nearby object.¹³⁵ Bhavya, on the other hand, reports two alternative views held by anonymous Sāṃkhyas. According to the first view, the reflection of the intellect in consciousness is compared to a moon reflected in still water, while neither the water nor consciousness undergo any real change of form. According to the second view, consciousness reflecting the intellect is compared to a mirror reflecting one's face. Here, it is said, consciousness does not undergo change (*vikṛti*), but does experience transformation (*pariṇāma*).¹³⁶

The second view reported by Bhavya is rather puzzling. On the level of analogy, the difference between reflection in a mirror and reflection in still water is not clear. On the other hand, the difference between change and transformation is not explained. In the *Sāṃkhyakārikā*, the word *pariṇāma* is used to describe the process of manifesting the effect potentially contained in its cause as ascribed to *prakṛti*, and not to *puruṣa*.¹³⁷ However, if a similar process of transformation is ascribed to *puruṣa*, a contradiction follows, because *puruṣa* is a-causal, and unchanging. The claim that *puruṣa* undergoes transformation rather than change, may imply an apparent (not real) change in that it reflects the transformations of *prakṛti*. In this sense, *pariṇāma*

¹³⁵ YD 171,12-18

¹³⁶ *Tarkajvāla* 6.2, cited in Saito 2011: 15.

¹³⁷ SK 16 and 27

might have a similar meaning to that of Śaṅkara's *vivarta* – a notion that one unchanging self undergoes an illusory transformation into the forms of the phenomenal world¹³⁸.

Three different versions of this theory of reflection in the self (the self as a crystal, as a mirror, and as water) are meant to reconcile the doctrine of complete separateness of consciousness from the physical world and faculties, as well as its essential a-causality and immutability¹³⁹ with the observable fact that the mind or intellect, in its apprehension of objects, appears to be conscious. The latter fact, to be sure, is admitted both in the *Sāṃkhyakārikā*¹⁴⁰ and in the *Yogasūtra*¹⁴¹. If consciousness is of immaterial and non-mental nature, what makes conscious intentionality possible? In other words, what may explain the phenomenon of being conscious of something, if consciousness is essentially “in itself” and “for itself?”

Another problem concerning the association between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* is: How is any interaction between such distinct entities possible? The problem can be seen as parallel to the problem of mind and matter in Western philosophy. However, while Cartesian dualism gives rise to the metaphysical difficulty of explaining the interaction between the mind and matter, Sāṃkhya dualism gives rise to the problem of explaining the interaction between consciousness and mind, since mind belongs to the material realm according to Sāṃkhya.

The analogy of reflection aims at resolving both of these metaphysical problems. First, the forms of the intellect and of the objects perceived by the intellect do not affect the immutable nature of the self, just like the still water is not actually transformed by the moon's reflection. The

¹³⁸ Potter 1981:66-67. The view that *puruṣa* undergoes transformation also appears in the *purusavada* discussed in Timalina 2017.

¹³⁹ SK 17

¹⁴⁰ *Tasmāt tat saṃyogātacetanaṃ cetanāvadiva liṅgam/
gunakartrtve ca tathā karte'va bhavaty udāsinaḥ//*, SK 20

¹⁴¹ *citer apratisaṅkramāyāstadākārāpattau svabuddhisamvedanam//*, YS 4.22.

activities of the intellect create the illusion that the same activities occur in consciousness, but in reality consciousness is not affected by these activities. Continuing with this line of thought, it follows that conscious intentionality is a false construct of two unrelated phenomena – intellect’s unconscious intentionality (its ability to assume the forms of objects and ideas) and non-intentional consciousness. Consciousness appears to be intentional due to the forms reflected in it, but in fact it remains aloof in its own self-nature. This disassociation between consciousness and intentionality might appear puzzling in the light of contemporary theories of consciousness.¹⁴² Nevertheless, for the Sāṃkhyas, consciousness is primarily understood as a seer (*draṣṭṛ*) whose gaze persists even in the absence of an object.

The problem of interaction between the immaterial consciousness and the material intellect is also addressed by the analogy of reflection. Indeed no real contact between the two is possible. The contact must be illusory, and the fact that the intellect appears to be conscious and consciousness appears to be active is a false appearance, similar to the appearance of the forms of nearby objects in a jewel.¹⁴³

More broadly, the theory of reflection in the self serves to explain the process of knowledge, when the knower is postulated to be separate from the known objects and the instrument of knowledge (primarily identified with the intellect). From the Sāṃkhya point of view, the unconscious perception of the objects by the intellect is merely a mechanical image-producing process¹⁴⁴. In modern terms, we might compare the ascertainment (*adhyavasāya*) of the objects by the intellect to biochemical brain-states, the material aspect of cognition, which does not include

¹⁴² Burley 2007:150

¹⁴³ YD 171,11-172,31

¹⁴⁴ J.B.Bhattacharya 1965:19.

any account of consciousness.¹⁴⁵ Consciousness is needed in order to explain the subjective awareness and experience of the images produced by the intellect. Hence, this must admit a difference between the unconscious ascertainment (*adhyavasāya/vyavasāya*) of the objects by the intellect and conscious cognition (*jñāna/caitanya*) taking place in the self¹⁴⁶. By maintaining that the intellect with its contents is reflected in the self, the Sāṃkhya attempt to explain the cognitive activity as taking place in the material intellect, while its product – i.e., knowledge – appears in the self.¹⁴⁷

Buddhist opponents criticize the theory of reflection in the self on several grounds. First, they point out to the problem of identity of form (*rūpābheda*). As has been suggested by the anonymous opponent in the YD, if consciousness assumes the form of the intellect with its contents by means of reflection, then any talk of difference between the two becomes absurd. If the form of the intellect is identical with the form of consciousness, it follows that consciousness and intellect are not different and thus postulation of a distinct consciousness is superfluous.¹⁴⁸

On first glance, the critique seems problematic, because it is easy to think about examples of things having the same form, but being different, such as Devadatta and the sculpture having a shape of Devadatta, or even two horses. It seems, however, that by “identity of form” the Buddhist opponent means, not the same thing, but the same kind of thing. Thus, if consciousness assumes the form of the intellect, and reflects the forms of external objects, it is of the same kind as the

¹⁴⁵ Schweizer argues that the unconscious mental activity in Sāṃkhya is compatible with contemporary computational paradigm accepted in cognitive science and AI (Schweizer 1993:854).

¹⁴⁶ YD 171,10-12.

¹⁴⁷ Vācaspati maintains that the knowledge does not really take place in consciousness, but merely in the reflection of consciousness in the intellect. See above.

¹⁴⁸ YD 171,19-24

intellect, and there is no reason to postulate another form-assuming entity, when there is already one.

The author of the YD responds that the same accusation can be directed against the Buddhists as they accept that the external object and the idea of this object in the mind (*vijñāna*) have the same form. Does it then imply that external objects and the mind are not different? A possible recourse for the Buddhists is an appeal to a distinct Buddhist school of the mind-only (*vijñānamātra*), according to which, indeed, the object and its cognition are the same thing, and there are no objects external to the mind. This position, however, rests on fundamentally different outlook than that of Sāṃkhya, and if the principle of non-difference of forms is based on the idealist assumptions of mind-only, the Sāṃkhya has the right to reject it.¹⁴⁹

Kamalaśīla (eighth cen.) raises a stronger objection regarding the relation between the self and the objects of the intellect reflected in it. If they are not distinct from the self, then it follows that as a result of the arising and disappearing of the images of these objects, the self actually undergoes similar modifications, which contradicts its eternal immutable self-nature. If on the other hand, the self is distinct from the reflected images, it does not actually experience them, which contradicts its essential nature as the experiencer (*bhoktr*).¹⁵⁰ In order to experience a particular image or idea, they must affect the experiencer in some way or another. If the reflection affects the reflecting substance, then the self is not essentially different from *prakṛti*, and it actually changes. If, on the other hand, the reflection does not affect the reflecting substance, the substance cannot be said to experience the reflection.

¹⁴⁹ YD 171,25-172,20.

¹⁵⁰ *Pañjikā* 114,14-18

It is possible to reconstruct a response to Kamalaśīla's objection based on two unrelated arguments. The first appears in the YD, in which the author points out that consciousness takes the form of the intellect only metaphorically (*bhaktito*).¹⁵¹ In other words, no contents of the intellect directly appear in the self, and the metaphor of reflection is meant to explain why it only appears that the forms of the objects belong to consciousness.

Another argument, surprisingly, is suggested by Vācaspati, who does not accept reflection in the self. Nevertheless, he responds to an opponent offering a very similar argument to that of Kamalaśīla in TV 1.4. The opponent argues that the self may not experience the service provided by the mind (representing forms of external objects) because experience would imply an actual contact between the mind and the self, which would result in self's changeability. Vācaspati responds that no actual contact takes place; there is merely proximity between the mind and the self. This proximity is neither closeness in space, nor time; it is the "fitness" (*yogyatā*) between the power of consciousness to experience and the power of the mind to be experienced. Due to the complementing, but distinct capacities between the two, the false impression arises that there is an actual contact. This imaginary contact is caused by the beginningless ignorance (*avidyā*).¹⁵²

The author of the YD and Vācaspati deconstruct conscious intentional experience into two completely separate components (the experiencer and the experienced) among which there is no real interaction. Our phenomenal sense of unified experience involving both is essentially mistaken. Thus, the Sāṃkhya may respond to Kamalaśīla that the property of experience (*bhoktrtā*) of consciousness should not involve any internalization of external form, but rather the ability to

¹⁵¹ YD 181,26-182,12

¹⁵² TV 19,14-24

observe these forms in another entity. There is no contradiction in the statement that the reflections in the self are distinct from the self and nevertheless, that the self experiences these reflections.

Another objection to a theory of reflection in the self comes from Bhavya. If the intellect with its contents is reflected in the self, the self must be seen as the assisting cause (*upakārihetu*) responsible for the arising of the reflection, just like the water is the assisting cause for the appearance of the reflection of the face. However, the self is said to be a-causal (*anupakārin*)¹⁵³; hence a contradiction.¹⁵⁴ If the self is capable of producing a reflection, it must be causally efficacious, and thus not really different from *prakṛti*.

The cause of reflection is often revoked in later discussions on *pratibimba* in Advaita-Vedānta. Does a reflection of one's face arise due to the face, the mirror, or due to the contact between the two? In fact, the author of the *Yuktidīpikā* has already responded to this question in his argument against the Buddhist advocate of the doctrine of momentariness on the relation between the intellect and its objects. The intellect cannot be the cause of the reflected image of an object just like the water cannot be the cause of the reflected image of the face, because once the face is removed, the image disappears. The same analogy can be applied to the reflection of the intellect in the self. While Bhavya argues that the self is only an assisting cause, while the efficient cause is the face, the author of the *Yuktidīpikā* holds that the face cannot be seen as the main cause of reflection due to its remoteness from the water.¹⁵⁵ Reflection has no efficient cause, and thus any talk of an assisting cause is meaningless.

¹⁵³ SK 60

¹⁵⁴ TJ on MMK 23, in Saito 2011:16.

¹⁵⁵ YD 190,10-15

However, since the arising of reflection in the mirror is an analogy for the arising of an illusory appearance, the question more broadly refers to illusory causation. If the causes of an illusory phenomenon are real, while their effect is unreal, which factors can be directly responsible for the transformation of a real cause into an illusory effect?

Bhavya suggests that without the presence of *puruṣa*, no reflections of the intellect with its states and contents would be possible; hence it follows that *puruṣa* is causally responsible for the arising of reflection, just like the soil is the assisting cause to the growth of a plant directly brought about by human agency. The Sāṃkhya, however, may respond that the reflection is not real, and thus in reality *puruṣa* does not give rise to anything. It seems that Śaṅkara has had a similar explanation in view, when he argued that since the entity undergoing transmigration in *saṃsāra* is merely a reflection; nobody in reality is being reborn¹⁵⁶.

In Yoga, the cause of illusion is ignorance (*avidyā*), which is taken to be a distinct cognitive state, and which, as Vācaspati claims has no beginning.¹⁵⁷ Ignorance, or taking something for something it is not (e.g., the self for what is not the self)¹⁵⁸, belongs to the mind, and *puruṣa* really has nothing to do with it. In Sāṃkhya, however, where ignorance is merely an absence of knowledge, its existence is explained in metaphysical rather than epistemological terms. As the author of the *Yuktidīpikā* explains, in non-liberated beings the current of knowledge is obstructed due to the predominance of the *guṇas* of *tamas* and *rajas* in the mental configuration of these beings.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁶ Upad. 1.18.37-46

¹⁵⁷ TV 19,27-29; YSBh 147,18-23.

¹⁵⁸ YS 2.5. See a detailed discussion on *anyathākhyāti*, or ignorance as mistaking something for something else, in Dasgupta 1974: 274-276.

¹⁵⁹ YD 232,23-233,1; YD 252,28-253,13

If the cause of the illusory transference of the intellect's properties onto the self in Sāṃkhya is to be accounted for, we must look for the proclaimed relation between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*. In SK 60, it has been said that *prakṛti* acts for the sake of *puruṣa*. *Prakṛti* is called *upakāriṇī* (a servant), while *puruṣa* is named *anupakārin* (non-servant). Although the meaning of *upakāriṇī* is different here from *upakārihetu*, it is clear that the only causally active entity is *prakṛti*, while *puruṣa* must be seen as the final cause (*artha*), a kind of an unmoved mover. From this perspective, Bhavya's accusation must be seen as an equivocation on the meaning of *upakārin*. As the final cause, the subject of experience, the self, is definitely responsible to some extent for the arising of reflection in it, but it is not brought about *by* him. Causal activity takes place in *prakṛti*, but is *meant* to be consciously experienced.

3.4 Vijñānabhikṣu's double reflection theory

Vijñānabhikṣu (16th century) is one of the most original commentators on Patañjali's *Yogasūtra*. Vijñānabhikṣu is particularly notorious for his attempts to synthesize and harmonize what has been considered as distinct philosophical schools of Vedānta (particularly Bhedābheda Vedānta), Sāṃkhya, and Yoga. This fact has a little bearing on this chapter, since his theory of reflection is developed within the limits of the metaphysical framework of the Yoga school.

The main text in which Vijñānabhikṣu develops his double-reflection theory (*anyonyapratibimba*) is the *Yogavārttika* - a commentary on Patañjali's *Yogasūtra* and *Yogasūtrabhāṣya*. Vijñānabhikṣu, however, discusses his double-reflection theory also in his *Sāṃkhyapravacanabhāṣya*, a commentary on one of the relatively late texts of the Sāṃkhya, and in his two compendiums on Yoga and Sāṃkhya, the *Yogasārasaṃgraha* and *Sāṃkhyasāra*.

Vijñānabhikṣu criticizes Vācaspati's theory of single reflection of the self in the intellect on several grounds. We know from the YSBh that cognition is the result of intellect's cognitive activity that 'belongs' to *puruṣa*. In Vācaspati's theory, however, cognition is ascribed to the reflection of the self located in the intellect, and not to the real self. Secondly, reflection is not real, and therefore, the arising of knowledge in it does not make sense. Thirdly, Vācaspati's theory contradicts the scriptures, according to which the self is the knower. Moreover, both reflections are necessary in order to avoid a contradiction of the subject being an object. If there is no self-reflection in the intellect by means of which the self becomes aware of itself, it follows that the self knows itself directly. This means the self is both the subject and the object of knowledge, which is a contradiction.¹⁶⁰ If, on the other hand, the intellect is not reflected in the self, it follows that the intellect is both the subject and the object of its cognitive activity¹⁶¹. Finally, the phenomenon of bondage and liberation becomes redundant and meaningless, because both seem to be attributed to the reflection of the self and not to the real self.¹⁶²

Instead, Vijñānabhikṣu postulates his double-reflection theory, a synthesis of the two theories of single reflection. The self is reflected in the intellect together with its objective contents, and both are reflected back into the self. Thus, *puruṣa* becomes the locus of knowledge, reflecting the apprehended content of the intellect, without undergoing any change in accordance with its own nature. It becomes the agent of experience, bondage, liberation, etc., without any modification in itself. Also the distinction between subject and object holds, because the real *puruṣa* remains

¹⁶⁰ YV 33,6-22; YV 445,21-27.

¹⁶¹ YV 21,23-22,14

¹⁶² Ram 1988:81-87

the subject, while the intellect together with all its contents, including the reflection of *puruṣa*, is reflected in it as an object¹⁶³.

I am in agreement with Vijñānabhikṣu that the second reflection is necessary, if the appearance of knowledge in self is to be accounted for. I have shown that Vācaspati attempts to avoid the complication of reconciling the immutable nature of the self with its being affected by the intellect's modification, and thus argues that cognitive activity and its result must be located in the same place – i.e., in the intellect.¹⁶⁴ However, as the author of the YD emphasizes, the result (cognition) produced by the instrument of cognition (the intellect) appears in a different substratum, i.e., consciousness through imitation (*anugraha*).¹⁶⁵ While for Vācaspati, the appearance of knowledge is ascribed to the reflection of the self, and not to the actual self, this means that the real self does not cognize. The reflection of the self, being unreal, cannot cognize, and cognition does not arise in the real self. Such a position is undesirable, because the Sāṃkhya are interested to preserve the self's immutability, without giving up on the self's property of being a cognizer. Reflection of the intellect in the self allows for the appearance of cognition in the self, without compromising the self's immutability.

3.5. Mental representation of the self in Yoga (*asmitā*)

Another issue to be considered here is the notion of *asmitā* in Yoga, which, as I would like to argue, is meant to explain the “I” notion as a reflection of the self. The term *ahaṃkāra* familiar from the Sāṃkhya metaphysics is not mentioned in the YS. However, a new term *asmitā* is introduced, which has not been used in Sāṃkhya. The author of the *Vyāsa-Bhāṣya* identifies the

¹⁶³ YV 21,23-22,14

¹⁶⁴ *na hi tadādhārā jñānaśaktiḥ tatra jñānasyāsamavāyāt/ anyathā pariṇāmāpattir iti*, TV 224,5-6.

¹⁶⁵ YD 77,20-78,2

ego ('I-am-ness', *asmitā*) in Yoga with the faculty of the 'I-maker' (*ahaṃkāra*) in Sāṃkhya,¹⁶⁶ which indicates a particular function of the mind (*citta*) responsible for associating the self with the intellect, the physical body, and with external objects falling under the scope of the 'mine' (*mama*).

The precise definition of *asmitā* in the *Yogasūtra* is "the identity between the power of seeing and the power by which one sees" (Rukmani 1989: IV.26, amended).¹⁶⁷ This definition of the ego describes not a particular ontological entity (as in Sāṃkhya), but a mistaken identity between the subject and the object of experience, namely between the self and the mind. *Asmitā* is explicitly understood to be a particular manifestation of ignorance (*avidyā*) regarding the difference of natures of *prakṛti* and the self (YS 2.5). It should be mentioned that ignorance in Yoga is not an absence of knowledge, but a real cognitive state said to be a "different kind of knowledge" (*jñānāntaram*) opposite in its qualities to true knowledge.¹⁶⁸

Vijñānabhikṣu distinguishes, however, between ignorance and *asmitā*. He identifies ignorance with the general idea of the I (*sāmānyato'haṃbuddhiḥ*) appearing in the intellect. At the same time, he defines *asmitā* as complete identity of the self with the qualities of the intellect that are superimposed on the self. Ignorance prepares the grounds for the arising in the intellect of an idea that represents the self as possessing the intellect's own qualities. Vijñānabhikṣu characterizes the stage of arising of ignorance prior to the arising of *asmitā* as that of "difference and non-difference" (*bhedābheda*),¹⁶⁹ in which complete identity is not apprehended (*atyantābhedāgrahaṇāt*), but which already includes the objective and subjective components to

¹⁶⁶ YSBh 374,7-16

¹⁶⁷ *dr̥gdarśanaśaktayor ekātmatevāsmitā*, YS 2.6

¹⁶⁸ YSBh 147,22-23

¹⁶⁹ I am following this translation of *bhedābheda* as suggested by Nicholson (2010: 39)

be confused in the next stage. When *asmitā* arises, it brings about complete identity between a representation of the self and the mental qualities, functions, and states of the intellect in the form “I am Īśvara,” “I am the experiencer,”¹⁷⁰ etc.

Vijñānabhikṣu introduces several analogies, including that of reflection, in order to illustrate the difference between *avidyā* and *asmitā*. The first is compared to two distant trees, the latter to seeing them as one tree. The first is compared to a person identifying himself with his wife and children; the latter to actually experiencing their joy and sorrow as one’s own. Finally, *avidyā* is compared to the reflection of the moon in the water; *asmitā* is seen as ascribing the movement of the water, the dirt in it, etc. to the moon reflected in it.¹⁷¹

The noun *asmitā* comes from first-person conjugation of the verb “to be” (*√as+mi*) followed by the abstract noun ending *tā*.¹⁷² In my opinion, the common translation ‘I-am-ness’, which I have used above, is not entirely satisfying. Strictly speaking, the word “I” (*aham*), found in the compound *ahaṃkāra* (the I-maker), is absent from the abstract noun *asmitā*. The most precise translation of *asmitā* must be “am-ness” – that which connects the I and a particular object identified with the I.

When the self is reflected in the mind, it appears in the pure identity “I am I”, the first I being the subject of the equation, the self, the second I its object, its reflection in the mind. The

¹⁷⁰ The choice of these examples is rather puzzling, as Īśvara is a unique sort of *puruṣa*, and the ability to experience (*bhokṛtva*) is a property of consciousness. Thus the above mentioned propositions ascribing these predicates to the “I” do not seem to illustrate the imposition of the intellect’s properties on consciousness. In his further discussion of the same *sūtra*, Vijñānabhikṣu illustrates the superimposition of the intellect’s properties on the self by more straightforward examples of such propositions as “I am suffering,” “I am peaceful,” “I am of a wakeful nature,” etc.

¹⁷¹ YV 152,16-29

¹⁷² Jakubczak 2011: 45

“am” is the identifying mediator between the two. *Asmitā* is this “am” – not a distinct entity, but something like a sign of equation (“=”) or a transparent surface of a mirror of the mind.

The idea that the mind (*citta*), which in Yoga includes the intellect (*buddhi*) as one of its functions, reflects the self and the objects, has been adopted by the author of the *Vyasa-Bhāṣya* in his commentary on YS IV.23. The author of the *Vyāsa-Bhāṣya* compares the mind to a crystal in that it also reflects all objects. “The mind is colored by both subjectivity and objectivity, the knower and the knowable; it assumes the nature of both the conscious and unconscious” (Prasāda 1978:300-301).¹⁷³ The commentator suggests that the way the intellect reflects external objects is identical to the way it reflects the self, although the first is the object of experience, and the latter is its subject. It seems that as opposed to Sāṃkhya, the idea of the I is not caused by the representation of *ahaṃkāra*, but by the reflection of the transcendent self in the intellect. Thus the idea of the I, according to Yoga, represents the pure consciousness.

The view that the reflection of the self in the intellect gives rise to a mental representation of it is stated even more explicitly by Vācaspati, in his commentary on the same verse from the YS:

As the mind, coloured by blue and other objects, establishes their existence by perception itself, so also due to assuming the reflection of the knower, the mind, coloured by that, establishes the knower, too, by means of perception itself. For there is a cognition with two aspects [namely, the object and the subject]: ‘I know the blue object.’ Therefore, like the object, the knower of that [object], although established by perception, is not shown thereby as existing separately [from the mind], like the reflection of the moon in water. However, to this extent it does not mean that (the perception of the self) is not valid means of knowledge. And from the fact that the moon in the water is a false cognition, it does not follow that the form of the moon is falsely

¹⁷³ *tadetac cittam eva draṣṭṛ dr̥ṣyoparaktaṃ viṣayaviṣayinirbhāsaṃ cetanācetasvarūpāpannam*, YSBh 444,2-3.

cognized. Therefore, due to the reflection of [the self] in the mind, the activity of the mind has consciousness, too, as its object; it is not the case that it does not have consciousness as its object. (Prasāda 1978:301, amended).¹⁷⁴

Vācaspati makes it clear that consciousness is the object of perception just like any other object. The perception, to be sure, is not direct cognition of the self in its externality, but a cognition of the self's reflection, its mental representation as a subject of experience such as 'I know the blue object.' Vijñānabhikṣu also explicitly identifies consciousness with the sense of 'I' (*ahaṃtva*) and since the intellect lacks the sense of 'I,' only the reflection of consciousness in the intellect makes such propositions as 'I know the pot' possible. On the other hand, Vijñānabhikṣu postulates that the knowledge of the self is possible only if it is reflected in the intellect just like any other object.¹⁷⁵

The reflection of the self in the intellect is related to the external self through the mediation of *asmitā* as "I am I." The form "I am I" is a correct identity insofar as the I is identified with itself. K.C. Bhattacharyya refers to it as "analytic judgment" or "self-identity."¹⁷⁶ At the same time, this identity is false, in a sense that the subject of the proposition "I am I" (the first I) is identified with its predicate (the second I). The mistaken identification of the subject (the real I) with an object (the I's reflection or mental representation) prepares the ground for the identity of the subjective I with objects or objective states and actions other than I, like in statements "I am this body," "I am happy," "I am thinking." This identity, in the form of "I am that" is referred to by Bhattacharyya

¹⁷⁴ *yathā hi nīlādyanuraktaṃ cittaṃ nīlādyarthaṃ pratyakṣeṇaivāvasthāpayaty evaṃ draṣṭṛchāyāpattiyā tad-anuraktaṃ cittaṃ draṣṭāram api pratyakṣeṇāvasthāpayati/ asti hi dvyākāraṃ jñānaṃ nīlam ahaṃ samvedamīti/ tasmā jñeyavat taj jñātāpi pratyakṣasiddho pi na vivicyāvasthāpito yathā jale candramaso bimbam/ na tv etāvata tad aprayyakṣam/ na cāsya jalagatatve tad apramāṇam iti candrarūpe'pyapramāṇaṃ bhavitum arhati/ tasmā cittapratibimbatayā caitanyagocarāpi cittavṛttir na caitanyagocareti/, TV 444,16-22.*

¹⁷⁵ YV 442,31-443,5

¹⁷⁶ Bhattacharyya 1983:183

as “synthetic judgment” or “identity of differents.”¹⁷⁷ *Asmitā* is responsible for the illusion that pure selfhood, an entity not open to any kind of relation, can be related to objective phenomena through its identity with its own reflection in the form of mental representation and with other mental representations of external objects.

The practice of Yoga constitutes an active and conscious disassociation of the self from its illusory reflections. First, the continuous fixation of the intellect on a single object ceases the stream of images reflected in the intellect, thus interrupting the process of self’s entanglement in its identity with differents.¹⁷⁸ Through the succession of meditative stages, the practitioner withdraws his mind from the sense-objects (*pratyāhāra*), thus disconnecting the intellect from its objects completely.¹⁷⁹ The intellect frees itself from the intrusion of its mental images (remembered or perceived). In other words it aims at stopping any “thinking” activity. What remains at some point is the mere presence of the reflection of the self and the ego (*asmitā*). Vijñānabhikṣu explains that at this stage, the direct perception of the self alone in the mind is in the form ‘I am’ (*asmi*).¹⁸⁰ In other words the yogi returns to his self-identity in the form ‘I am I,’ which is still a form of ignorance, as the identificatory function of *asmitā* has not been eliminated yet. The final liberation of the self from the intellect consists in complete cessation of all identity between the two. The intellect’s mental activity ceases; it does not reflect the self any longer, and thus the ego does not function at all. The self, on the other hand, is correctly seen as withdrawn into its own essential nature.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ YS 1.13

¹⁷⁹ YS 2.54

¹⁸⁰ YV 56,33-57,8. I believe there is no reason to assume that *asmitā* as one of the five *kleśas* or impurities in YS 2.6 is different from *asmitā* as a residue of ignorance experienced during *saṃprajñāta samādhi* in YS 1.17.

¹⁸¹ YS 4.34

I would like to speculate that the second reflection of the intellect in the self is required in order to create a repetition of the process of identification of the self with non-self over and over again. The intellect and the self produce, by reflecting each other, an infinite series of ‘I am I am I am I...’ like in an infinite hall created by two mirrors held in front of each other. In a single reflection of the self in the intellect in the form ‘I am I’ there is a mistaken identity between the subject and the object. This mistake, however, cannot imply ignorance (*avidyā*), since the distinction between the subject and the object is also present in this analytic judgment. When I am looking at the reflection of my face in a mirror, I can identify the reflection with the real face, but I cannot be mistaken into believing that my real face is really there in the mirror. However, in a double reflection, the infinite hall of self-reflections does not allow one to establish which I is the original subject and which its objective reflection. It is precisely this infinity of reflected self-images that creates the fundamental ignorance regarding the real reference of the self.

As far as I can tell, the connection between the theory of reflection and the theory of the ego in Yoga has not been explicitly acknowledged by traditional or contemporary scholars. It is implicit, however, that *asmitā*, the mediating relation between a subject and an object must refer to the reflective surface of the mind responsible for the illusory (mis)identification between the self and the mind in the form of “I am I.” Since the mind reflects not only the self, but also the objects, *asmitā* is also responsible for the self’s identification with what is not the self in the form “I am that.”¹⁸²

Conclusion:

¹⁸² Curiously enough, Bhattacharyya’s formulation of a mistaken identity between a subject and an object “I am that” seems to imply that the *Upaniṣadic* statement “Thou art that” entails a similar mistake. As I will show further, Śāṅkara and Padmapāda were aware of the problem and made efforts to explain what exactly makes the identity between “thou” and “that” real.

Both Sāṃkhya and Yoga propose representationalist theories of perception. The metaphor of reflection is utilized in both systems not only to account for the process by which the external objects leave imprints in the mental faculty; they also explain the idea of the “I” as a mental representation of an external subject. In Sāṃkhya, the “I” is the representation of the ego (*ahaṃkāra*) as a distinct mental faculty. In Yoga, it is the representation of the transcendent self superimposed on the representations of objects in the form of *asmitā*.

I have also argued that the second reflection of the mental faculty with its contents in consciousness, defended by Vārṣaṅya and Vijñānabhikṣu, is meant to reconcile our phenomenal experience of conscious intentionality with the doctrine of pure consciousness. I have further speculated that taken together, the reflection in the intellect and the reflection in the self may account for the deep entanglement of the pure subject with objective reality, leading to the mistaken identification of the subject with mental and material components of *prakṛti*.

Chapter 4: Theories of Reflection in Advaita Vedānta

Introduction:

In this chapter, I will discuss the Advaita theory of reflection as presented by Śaṅkara and developed by Padmapāda and Prakāśātman. Almost all Advaita philosophers have utilized the model of reflection to some extent, and it has been associated with the system in general.¹⁸³ However, these three thinkers provide an example of a continuous and systematic elaborating of various features of the theory of reflection, preparing the solid ground for later developments in what comes to be regarded as the Pratibimbavāda.

I will study the new directions the theories of reflection take in Advaita Vedānta. The new factor incorporated into the Advaita account of reflection of the self in the inner organ is the monistic orientation of the system. While to Sāṃkhya and Yoga, reflection is primarily a solution to the problem of interaction between consciousness and the intellect, the Advaitins utilize the reflection analogy to explain the apparent multiplicity of individual selves contradicted by the proclaimed reality of one self. Similarly, the question of identity between the transcendental self and its reflections comes to the fore in considering the liberating scriptural formula “thou art that.”

At the last section of this chapter, I will discuss the later developments in post-Prakāśātman’s Pratibimbavāda, where *īśvara* takes *brahman*’s place in its role of the reflection-prototype.

4.1 Monistic theories of reflection before Śaṅkara

¹⁸³ Among them Maṇḍana, Vācaspati, Sarvajñātman, Vidyāraṇya. Also see Timalsina 2009: 377.

Perhaps, the first monistic version of theory of reflection is found not in Advaita Vedānta, but in the writings of a grammarian Bhartṛhari (5th c. C.E.). In his *Vākyapadīya*, Bhartṛhari depicts the manifoldness observable in our world as merely distinctions in the cognition of a single entity. The perceived plurality in the real unity of being (*brahman*) parallels the unity of the “word principle” appearing as the plurality of sounds and words. The false appearance of plurality is compared to a mirror in which entities are perceived without actually being there.¹⁸⁴ The transformation of the one into many in the empirical world and in language must be understood as no more real than the illusory duplication of the same face reflected in a mirror. Timalsina points out that Bhartṛhari invokes the concept of reflection in order to demonstrate that *śabda-brahman* may seem to undergo change (*vivarta*), while in reality it remains eternal and immutable.¹⁸⁵ Bhartṛhari alters the original Sāṃkhya model of the real transformation of *prakṛti* reflected in the immutable self to fit his monistic model of only apparent change in *śabda-brahman*.

Elsewhere, Bhartṛhari explains the appearance of consciousness imposed on unconscious entities as *pratibimba*.¹⁸⁶ In this case, Bhartṛhari’s application of the reflection model does not necessarily imply monism, and in fact is not essentially different from theories of *puruṣa*’s reflection in the intellect in Sāṃkhya-Yoga. If Qvarnström is right in attributing the earliest reflection theory in Sāṃkhya to Vindhyavāsin from the 5th c. C.E., then it is possible that Bhartṛhari has adopted it from Sāṃkhya without significant changes.

Taken together, Bhartṛhari’s various applications of *pratibimba* prepare the ground for the monistic theories of reflection in Advaita-Vedānta. On the one hand, Bhartṛhari compares the

¹⁸⁴ VPVr I.152,6-153,1; Timalsina 2009: 373

¹⁸⁵ VP I.49; VPVr I.134, 1-2; Timalsina 2009: 377-378

¹⁸⁶ VP III.14.326; Timalsina 2009: 378

process of the illusory multiplication of one unified substance to the illusory duplication of a person or a thing in a mirror. On the other hand, he shares with Sāṃkhya-Yoga the assumption that the “animation” of unconscious entities by consciousness can be explained by the reflection of the latter in the former. I will show further how the combination of these two explanations of reflection will set the stage for the unique Advaita model of one self reflected in plurality of individual selves (*jīvas*).

Maṇḍana Mīśra and Śaṅkara (both from the 7-8th centuries) adopt Bhartṛhari’s model of reflection. Timalisina discusses at length Bhartṛhari’s influence on Maṇḍana Mīśra, an influential Advaita-Vedānta philosopher. Maṇḍana repeatedly applies the example of reflection in order to explain the distinction of *jīva*, or individual self, from *brahman*. *Brahman* is taken as a prototype (*bimba*), and the *jīva* as its reflection (*pratibimba*).¹⁸⁷

4.2.1 Śaṅkara’s theory of *brahman*’s reflection in *jīva*

Śaṅkara mentions the concept of reflection (*pratibimba*, *ābhāsa*¹⁸⁸, *praticchāyā* or *chāyā*) repeatedly in almost all of his writings.¹⁸⁹ He is, probably, the first Advaitin to explicitly utilize the model of reflection in order to explain the multiplicity of selves as a mistaken misperception of a single unitary self:

And that individual soul is to be considered a mere appearance of the highest Self, like the reflection of the sun in the water; it is neither directly that (i.e. the highest Self), nor a different thing. Hence just as, when one reflected image of the sun trembles, another reflected image does not on that account tremble also; so, when

¹⁸⁷ BS 7,9-10; 12,10-11, 21-22; 11,11-12; 72,5; 15,26-16,3; Timalisina 2009: 380

¹⁸⁸ Timalisina discusses the different ways in which Śaṅkara and other Advaitins use the term *ābhāsa* (2015:55-56). He notices the following difference between *ābhāsa* and *pratibimba*: “...*avidyā* is often identified as *ābhāsa* but never as *pratibimba*. This again confirms that *ābhāsa* refers only to the substrate (*upādhi*), which is not the case with *pratibimba*” (56).

¹⁸⁹ Among them Upad.1.5.4, 1.12.6, 1.18.32-33,40-46,87; BUBh 1.4.7, 4.3.7, 3.2.20-21; ChUBh 6.3.2; TUBh 2.6; BSBh 2.3.50, 3.2.18; PUBh 6.2.

one soul is connected with actions and results of actions, another soul is not on that account connected likewise. There is therefore no confusion of actions and results. And as that ‘appearance’ is the effect of Nescience, it follows that the *samsāra* which is based on it (the appearance) is also the effect of Nescience, so that from the removal of the latter there results the cognition of the soul being in reality nothing but Brahman (Thibaut 1980: II, 68-69).¹⁹⁰

The plurality of reflections of the same self is compared to the sun reflected in several reflecting substances, and might have been inspired by the *upaniṣadic* story in which Prajāpati demonstrates the fact that the same self can be reflected in several locations. It is also plausible that Śāṅkara’s theory of reflection is influenced by Bhartṛhari.

Śāṅkara’s application of the reflection model allows him to establish the relation of one self to the illusory plurality of individual selves. The first one is real, the latter are mere appearances. It should be noted that here Śāṅkara is rather ambiguous about whether *jīvas* are distinct or non-distinct from the self, which is quite in line with his ambiguity regarding the ontological status of ignorance, the material cause of individual selves, which is claimed to be neither real nor non-existing.

Another upshot of the logical possibility that the same object can be reflected in several locations is that it provides the solution to the problem of individual liberation. Maṇḍana and Vācaspati quote the objection as follows: if there were only one self, when one individual gets liberated, other individuals would become liberated as well.¹⁹¹ However, as Śāṅkara points out, “as when one reflected image of the sun trembles, another reflected image does not on that account

¹⁹⁰ *ābhāsa eva caiṣa jīvaḥ parasyātmano jalasūryakādivat pratipattavyaḥ/ na sa eva sākṣāt/ nāpi vastvantaram/ ataś ca yathā naikasmiñ jalasūryake kampamāne jalasūryakāntaraṃ kampate, evaṃ naikasmiñ jīve karmaphalasambandhini jīvāntarasya tatsambandhaḥ/ evam apy avyatikara eva karmaphalayoḥ/ ābhāsasya cāvīdyākṛtatvāt tadāśrayasya saṃsārasyāvīdyākṛtatvopapattir iti/ tadvyudāsena ca pāramārthikasya brahmātmabhāvasyopadeśopapattiḥ/, BSBh 2.3.50*

¹⁹¹ Potter 1965: 168

tremble also; so, when one soul is connected with actions and results of actions, another soul is not on that account connected likewise” (Thibaut 1980: 68).¹⁹² Actions and their results in the realm of *samsāra* are superimposed on the reflections of the self, while the real self is always liberated. The removal of ignorance from a particular individual does not affect other “reflections.”

In his commentary on the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (TUBh 2.6), Śaṅkara quotes an objection to the theory of reflection in the context of his discussion of the Upaniṣadic passage, in which *brahman* is said to multiply itself and enter into its own creation. The opponent argues that there is no conceivable way in which *brahman*, the undifferentiated cause of the phenomenal world, may enter its own creation. In particular, it is impossible for the universal self to enter the individual inner organ:

If it be said that one cause *brahman* became the receptacle, body, etc., and also that which is contained, the *jīvātman* within, we still say that cannot be; because it is only the thing outside that can be said to enter. [...]

If it be said that there may be entrance, as in the reflection of the sun in water, it cannot be, because of its unlimitedness and formlessness. There can be a reflection of one finite, corporeal thing into another clear surface like water. But there can be no reflection of *ātman*, because it is formless and not circumscribed, being the cause of *ākāśa* etc. Entrance in the form of reflection is impossible, since there is nothing else which can reflect, nor any space, other than that which it occupies (Sastri 1923: 143-144)¹⁹³.

Śaṅkara suggests that the entrance of *brahman* into the inner organ is similar to the “entrance” of the face into the mirror. There is no actual physical entrance of the universal self into the embodied

¹⁹² *ataś ca yathā naikasmiñ jalasūryake kampamāne jalasūryakāntaraṃ kampate, evaṃ naikasmiñ jīve karmaphalasambandhini jīvāntarasya tatsambandhaḥ*, BSBh 2.3.50.

¹⁹³ *bāhyāntarbhedenā pariṇatam iti cet tad eva kāraṇaṃ brahma śarīrādyādhāratvena tadantarjīvātmanā ādheyatvena ca pariṇatam iti cet, na, bahiṣṭhasya praveśopapatte/ [...] jalasūryakādīpratibimbavat praveśaḥ syādīti cet, na, aparicchinnatvād amūrtatvāc ca/ paricchinnasya mūrtasyānyasya anyatra prasādasvabhāvake jalādiṣu sūryakādīpratibimbodayaḥ syāt, na tv ātmana, amūrtatvāt, ākāśādikāṅgasya ātmana vyāpakatvāt/ tadviprakṣṭadeśapratibimbādhāraṇa tv antarābhāvāc ca pratibimbavat praveśo na yuktaḥ/*, TUBh 97,3-14, on TU 2.6.

existence, only the entrance of its reflection. The opponent, however, makes two objections against the appropriateness of the reflection metaphor as applied to *brahman*. First, the pure self cannot be the prototype of reflection as it has no form and is infinite. Second, there is no substance separate from *brahman*, in which it could be reflected.

The first point concerning the self's non-reflectability is quoted in various sources. We have seen a somewhat similar view in the ChU, where Prajāpati has attempted to demonstrate to Indra and Virocana that the conscious self having no form and no body cannot be reflected. A number of other philosophers have raised similar objections. Thus, Vācaspati, who has propounded a theory of reflection in his writings on Sāṃkhya and Yoga, criticizes it in his writings on Advaita and Nyāya. In his *Bhāmatī*, Vācaspati repeats the claim made by Śaṅkara's opponent that the formless *brahman* cannot be reflected.¹⁹⁴ This seems to remain the standard point of criticism of *pratibimbavāda* by *avacchedavāda*, as can be seen from Appaya Dīkṣita's (about 1550 AD) summary of the latter's objection:

The reflection of what is not conditioned by colour-form does not stand to reason; much more is this so in the case of what is altogether without color (i.e., Pure Consciousness) (Shima 2005: 35).¹⁹⁵

The argument of the self's non-reflectability can be equally turned against the dualist theories of reflection in Sāṃkhya-Yoga and against the monist theories of reflection in Advaita. The second objection quoted by Śaṅkara, regarding the absence of a reflecting entity separate from *brahman*,¹⁹⁶ specifically targets the Advaita theory.

¹⁹⁴ *Bhāmatī* 1938: 7-8

¹⁹⁵ *rūpānupahitapratibimbo na yuktaḥ sutarām nīrūpe*, SLS 18

¹⁹⁶ *vastv antareṇa viprakarṣānupapatteḥ*, BUBh 1.4.7

Śāṅkara prefers not to deal with the two points of criticism directly, but emphasizes, instead, that *brahman's* entrance into the inner organ is metaphorical. He points out that the only way to reach liberating union with *brahman* recognized in the *Upaniṣads* is through the self experienced within the cavity of one's heart. Thus, the analogies are utilized with the soteriological purpose in view to direct the seeker of liberation to realize the transcendent unity of the Absolute with the individual¹⁹⁷. Śāṅkara repeats the same argument in *BUBh* 1.4.7 and continues: "the perceptability [of the self] located in [its] effect is called metaphorically 'entering.'" (Mādhavānanda 1950: 122, amended).¹⁹⁸

In the *BSBh*, Śāṅkara defends the analogy of reflection on the following grounds:

The parallel instance (of the sun's reflection in the water) is unobjectionable, since a common feature – with reference to which alone the comparison is instituted – does exist. Whenever two things are compared, they are so only with reference to some intended aspect/feature [they have in common]. Entire equality of the two can never be demonstrated; indeed if it could be demonstrated there would be an end of that particular relation which gives rise to the comparison (Thibaut II.158-159, amended).¹⁹⁹

It is indeed impossible to find any analogy which would entirely correspond to the subject case. What is important is that there is a target feature of the subject case which is the same as a feature of the analogue case. Bādarāyaṇa, the *sūtrakāra*, argues that such a target feature common to *brahman* and the sun is "the participation in increase and decrease." Śāṅkara explains:

But what here is the intended similarity? The reflected image of the sun dilates when the surface of the water expands; it contracts when the water shrinks; it trembles when the water is agitated; it divides itself when the

¹⁹⁷ TUBh 98-99

¹⁹⁸ *tasmāt kāryasthasya upalabhyatvam eva praveśa ity upacaryate*, BUBh 1.4.7

¹⁹⁹ *yukta eva tv ayaṃ dṛṣṭānto vivakṣitāmśasambhavāt /na hi dṛṣṭāntadārṣṭrāntikayoḥ kvacit kañcid vivakṣitāmśaṃ muktivā sarvasārūpyaṃ kenacid darśayitum śakyate /sarvasārūpye hi dṛṣṭāntadārṣṭrāntikabhāvoccheda eva syāt /* BSBh 3.2.20

water is divided. It thus participates in all the attributes and conditions of the water; while the real sun remains all the time the same. Similarly *brahman*, although in reality uniform and never changing, participates as it were in the attributes and states of the body and the other limiting adjuncts within which it abides; it grows with them as it were, decreases with them as it were, and so on. As thus the two things compared possess certain common features no objection can be made to the comparison (Thibaut II.159).²⁰⁰

Śaṅkara considers the metaphor of reflection to be a technical philosophical tool known as “example” or “illustration” (*dr̥ṣṭānta*). The only purpose of *dr̥ṣṭānta* is ascertaining similarity between the subject case and the analogue case to make the target feature clear to the “ordinary man.” *Dr̥ṣṭānta* does not aim at proving or establishing anything and has to be used to make a single point.²⁰¹ The only reason (at least in this context) for using the metaphor of the sun’s reflection in the water is to illustrate *brahman*’s immutability in the face of the apparent modifications in the limiting adjuncts.

The commentators following the lineage of Śaṅkara, however, have suggested some particular responses as to how the formless self can be reflected after all. Usually, they point to the examples of other formless entities known from the ordinary experience, which can be reflected. Such examples include the ether or the sky which are reflected as a background for the clouds in the water, sound reflected as an echo, etc.²⁰²

I could not find any direct response to the objection that in order to be reflected, the pure self needs a separate reflecting entity, which is a metaphysical impossibility in the Advaita

²⁰⁰ *kiṃ punar atra vivakṣitam sārūpyam iti /tad ucyate - vṛddhihrāsabhāktvam iti /jalagatam hi sūryapratibimban jalavṛddhau vardhate jalahrāse hrasati jalacalane calati jalabhede bhidyata ity evaṃ jaladharmānuyāyi bhavati na tu paramārthataḥ sūryasya tathātvam asti /evaṃ paramārthato 'vikṛtam ekarūpam api sad brahma dehādyupādhy antarbhāvād bhajata ivopādidharmān vṛddhir hrāsādīn / evam ubhayor dr̥ṣṭāntadārṣṭrāntikayoḥ sāmāñjasyād avirodhaḥ/ BSBh 3.2.20*

²⁰¹ Jha 1999: 341-343, on NB 1.1.25

²⁰² SLS II.14,5-24; PPV 65,18-22

monistic system. We might notice, however, that in some cases, Śaṅkara applies his reflection analogy not to the transcendent *brahman*, but rather to the “witness” (*sākṣin*) or the “overseer” (*adhyakṣa*).²⁰³ In general, these terms denote not the pure consciousness in itself, but rather pure consciousness in relation to phenomenal cognition. *Sākṣin* may refer either to *īśvarasākṣin* (*brahman* in his role as the overseer of all phenomena) or to *jīvasākṣin* (the witness of phenomena as presented by an individual inner organ).²⁰⁴ In these cases, the prototype of reflection is not the formless *brahman*, but *brahman* in its role as a seer, and it is reflected in individual bodies which appear as separate from it. The model of reflection cannot be applied to a single undifferentiated reality, but it can be applied to the conditioned aspects of this reality (i.e., individual self and God) perceived from the phenomenal perspective (*vyavahāra*).

On the other hand, the reflecting entity is clearly postulated as ignorance (*avidyā*), or its phenomenal manifestation as name-and-form (*nāmarūpa*). This entity is not real, although it also cannot be said to be entirely non-existent; illusory as it is, *avidyā* is obviously experienced. Therefore, the ontological status of *avidyā* in Advaita is stated to be indeterminate (*anirvacanīya*). The attempts to reconcile the ultimate oneness of *brahman* with the illusory cause of the phenomenal reality, however, go far beyond the discussion of the reflection theory, and deal with the metaphysical foundations of the system.

4.2.2. Śaṅkara’s theory of reflection in the *Upadeśasāhasrī*

In the *Upadeśasāhasrī*, Śaṅkara returns to the analogy of reflection, this time in order to describe the relation between the conscious but inactive self and the active but unconscious

²⁰³ Upad. 1.18.116; BSBh 2.18.94; MUBh 2.2.4. Gupta understands the distinction between *sākṣin* and pure consciousness in terms of two different roles played by the same entity (2003: 113).

²⁰⁴ On Śaṅkara’s usage of the concept of *sākṣin* see Gupta 1998: 33-56.

intellect (*buddhi*). Just like the face is reflected in a mirror, the self is reflected in the intellect in the form of *ahampratyaya* (the “I-notion”), thus creating the false identity between the mind and the self, while in reality the two are distinct.²⁰⁵

Śaṅkara’s reflection theory in the *Upadeśasāhasrī* is almost identical to theories in Sāṃkhya, according to which the self is reflected in the intellect. Similarly, Śaṅkara applies his reflection analogy in order to explain the process of cognition. The self is the knower, but being inactive, it cannot be the subject of the verbal predicate “he knows” (*jānāti*). Neither can “he knows” refer to the intellect, because the locus of knowledge is the self. Thus, “he knows” is the result of the false superimposition of the intellect on the self, and vice versa. This mutual superimposition is similar to the false identity between the face and its reflection in a mirror. Śaṅkara explains:

The face is indeed thought by men to be the same as the face in a mirror, for the reflection of the face is seen to be of the form of the face. And because they do not discriminate between this [*ātman*] which becomes falsely manifest in that [intellect] and that [intellect] in which this [*ātman*] becomes falsely manifest, all people naturally use the verb "*jānāti*." Superimposing the agency of the intellect [upon *ātman*], [they] say that the knower "knows." In like manner superimposing the pure consciousness [of *ātman* upon the intellect], [they] say in this world that the intellect is the knower (Mayeda 1992:179).²⁰⁶

The identity perceived between one's face and its reflected image in the mirror is the result of mutual superimposition between the properties of the face and the properties of the mirror.

²⁰⁵ Upad 1.18.32

²⁰⁶ *ādarśamukhasāmānyam mukhasyeṣṭam hi mānavaiḥ /
mukhasya pratibimbo hi mukhākāreṇa dṛśyate //
yatra yasyāvabhāsas tu tayor evāvivekataḥ /
jānātīti kriyām sarvo loko vakti svabhavataḥ //
buddheḥ karṭṛtvam adhyasya jānātīti jña ucyate /
tathā caitanyam adhyasya jñatvaṃ buddher ihocyate // Upad 1.18.63-65*

Similarly, the identity between the knower (pure consciousness) and the locus of cognitive activity (the intellect) is the result of the false superimposition of the properties of each entity upon the other.

While it makes sense to assume that Vācaspati's theory of a single reflection has been influenced by that of Śaṅkara, it is also obvious that Śaṅkara had as his sources either Vindhyavāsin's single reflection theory, or Bhartṛhari's reflection theory, or both. The *Upadeśasāhasrī* version of the reflection theory is hardly monistic, insofar as it aims at explaining how the self and the intellect – ontologically distinct entities – interact and transfer their properties to each other. One important difference, however, between theories of reflection in Sāṃkhya-Yoga and Śaṅkara's theory of reflection is that for the former both the self and the intellect are real, and for the latter only the self is real. The intellect, being a manifestation of ignorance (*avidyā*), has an ontologically indeterminate status (*anirvacanīya*), and hence the reflection of the self must be unreal.²⁰⁷

In the *Upad.*, Śaṅkara presents a well-developed theory of self-ideation, which involves cognitive and semantic aspects. The real prototype of our idea of a self is the pure consciousness directly perceived as the subject of experience. In several of his writings, Śaṅkara attempts to prove the existence of a self in the ways reminiscent of Descartes' *cogito* argument: "the interior self is well known to exist on account of its immediate (intuitive) presentation (Thibaut 1980: I.5)."²⁰⁸ "The witnessing self is self-proved and cannot be denied (*ibid.* I.423-424)."²⁰⁹ "An adventitious thing, indeed, may be refuted, but not that which is the essential nature (of him who attempts the refutation); for it is the essential nature of him who refutes. The heat of a fire is not refuted (i.e.,

²⁰⁷ Upad 1.18.87

²⁰⁸ *aparokṣatvāc ca pratyag ātmaprasiddheḥ* (BSBh 1.1)

²⁰⁹ *svayaṃ siddhasya ca sākṣiṇo 'pratyākhyeyatvāt*, BSBh 2.2.28

sublated) by the fire itself (*ibid.* II.14).”²¹⁰ In the *PrUBh* 6.2., Śaṅkara argues against the "nihilist" (*vaiṇāśika*)²¹¹ position, according to which the rejection of objects of knowledge as existing in reality implies also the rejection of knowledge, which requires an object. Śaṅkara, who holds that consciousness is identical with knowledge and independent from the objects of cognition, raises a question: by what means can the non-existence of knowledge be known? The nihilist position is self-contradictory as one may not know the absence of knowledge. In other words, the cognizing self must be present in every act of cognition, even if this act is aimed at rejecting the possibility of cognition. It should be noted, however, that as opposed to Descartes, the self is not identified with the cognitive contents or cognitive activity (thinking), which are attributed to the material mental faculty. The self, just like in Sāṃkhya and Yoga, is pure consciousness devoid of intentionality. Nevertheless, there is no knowledge of objects without the reflection of the self in the mental faculty, and as such, it is the very condition of any cognition and cannot be doubted.²¹²

Śaṅkara establishes the existence of the self not only on the basis of direct perception, but also on the basis of a transcendental deduction, very similar to that of Kant. Kant has argued that all experience necessarily requires the presence of unchanging and unified consciousness:

Now no cognitions can occur in us, no connection and unity among them, without that unity of consciousness that precedes all data of the intuitions, and in relation to which all representation of objects is alone possible.

This pure, original, unchanging consciousness I will now name transcendental apperception (Kant 1999: 232, A107).²¹³

²¹⁰ *āgantukam hi vastu nirākriyate na svarūpam /ya eva hi nirākartā tad eva tasya svarūpam /na hy anger auṣṇyam agninā nirākriyate / BSBh 2.3.7*

²¹¹ By *vaiṇāśika*, Śaṅkara usually refers to Buddhism in general (Mayeda 2000: 21). The *vaiṇāśika* position expressed here actually represents Yogācāra, in particular Dharmakīrti.

²¹² Also see Gupta 1991:58.

²¹³ On Kant's unity of apperception also see 1999:246,B132-252,BB143

For Kant, no awareness of the manifold of intuition in the form of objects that exist in relation to each other is possible without its being unified in one consciousness. So for Śāṅkara, the existence of a distinct perceiver of multiplicity is the very condition of the phenomenal experience.²¹⁴ In his refutation of the Yogācāra doctrine of *ālayavijñāna*, the repository of mental impressions, Śāṅkara argues:

If you maintain that the so-called internal cognition (*ālayavijñāna*) assumed by you may constitute the abode of the mental impressions, we deny that, because that cognition also being admittedly momentary, and hence non-permanent, cannot be the abode of impressions any more than the quasi-external cognitions (*pravṛttivijñāna*). For unless there exists one continuous principle equally connected with the past, the present, and the future, or an absolutely unchangeable (self) which cognizes everything, we are unable to account for remembrance, recognition, and so on, which are subject to mental impressions dependent on place, time, and cause (Thibaut I.426-427).²¹⁵

Similarly, Śāṅkara presents a lengthy argument for the continuous existence of consciousness in all three states – wakefulness, dreaming state and deep sleep.²¹⁶ Briefly stated, consciousness is present in all these states, because we remember them, which proves that we were conscious of these states when they occurred. While it might seem to us that during deep sleep we are not conscious, it is the absence of objects of cognition – real, imagined, or remembered – that is responsible for the state of not being conscious of anything.²¹⁷ Nevertheless, pure consciousness is still there, because we remember its state of bliss testified by us saying “I have slept well.” Gupta summarizes the argument as follows:

²¹⁴ BSBh 2.2.28, 2.2.31; Upad. 1.18.121-123;

²¹⁵ *yad apy ālayavijñānaṃ nāma vāsanāśrayatvena parikalpitaṃ tad api kṣaṇikatvābhyupagamād anavasthitasvarūpaṃ satpravṛttivijñānavan na vāsanānām adhikaraṇaṃ bhavitum arhati /nahi kālatrayasaṃbandhiny ekasminn anvayiny asati kūṭasthe vā sarvārthadarśini deśakālanimittāpekṣavāsanādhānasmṛtipratīsamdhānādīvyavahāraḥ saṃbhavati / BSBh 2.2.31*

²¹⁶ BSBh 3.2.1-3.2.18

²¹⁷ Upad. 1.18.97; 2.2.90-93

The point that the Advaitins are trying to make, however, is this: one can only remember what has been experienced in the past. The presence of consciousness in sleep is as indubitable as its presence in the waking and dreaming states of consciousness. Accordingly, the Advaitins maintain that consciousness is an invariant in all three states. These states themselves are variant – that is, they come and go – but there is an invariant that spans these states. What is constantly present in these states, apperceiving even their sequence, is consciousness in its aspect as the witness.²¹⁸

After establishing the existence of a unitary unchanging self, Śaṅkara demonstrates through the metaphor of reflection the how the real self appears in the intellect in the form of an idea. The self is reflected in the intellect (*buddhi*), because “the intellect, being transparent and next to the self easily catches the reflection (shadow) of the light of self’s consciousness” (Mādhavānānda’s translation with my own revisions, in 1950, p. 612).²¹⁹ The self’s reflection in the intellect gives rise to two different ideas (*pratyayas*) – the notion “I” (*aham*) denoting the self (*ātman*) and the notion “mine” (*mama*) denoting everything which belongs or is attributed to the self (*ātmiya*).²²⁰ Śaṅkara emphasizes that the self is not directly indicated by any word (such as the “I”), because syntactic forms such as universals (*jāti*) or action (*karma*) are not applicable to it. Putting it differently, no word describing the self can have any sense (as opposed to reference), because the self is undifferentiated and not “open” to relations with syntactic units and thus cannot be represented in language. We can express the self only indirectly through the reference to the intellect in which the reflection of the self is found.

The I-notion, thus, is not a mental copy of the self, but from the start the intellect as the self, the self intellectualized and conceptualized. While the self appears as the object of the I-notion

²¹⁸ Gupta 1991:61

²¹⁹ *buddhis tāvat svacchatvād ānantaryāc cātmacaitanyajyotiḥpraticchāyā bhavati* / BUBh 4.3.7. See also Upad. 1.18.27.

²²⁰ Upad. 1.18.27

(*ahampratyayaviṣaya*),²²¹ some additional element, some false identity is necessarily added to it. The “I” cannot be imagined in its pure “I-ness,” but some “am-ness” must be added to it, such as “I am this body,” “I am the mind,” etc.²²² By the nature of the intellect’s activity defined as ascertainment (*adhyavasāya*), the idea of the self assumes propositional form; it becomes open to relations with other ideas, which is impossible for the real self having no relations with anything. These imaginary relations are dictated by the linguistic structure through which the intellect operates. The self is imagined to be the subject of some action (*karomi*),²²³ because the subject of a sentence needs to be predicated. Thus, the idea of a self is necessarily a complex and false idea combining subject-hood and activity. Śāṅkara calls this false idea *ahamkartṛ*,²²⁴ the “agent-self,” which indicates the intellect having the reflection of the self.

There is, however, a different notion of the self. This notion is “I am the existent” (*sadasmi*).²²⁵ This notion is born from the direct *cogito*-like awareness of oneself. The linguistic structure of the intellect forces us to think of the self in a propositional form, as if splitting the self into the subject (the “I”) and its predicate (the “existent”). In our experience of the self, however, the givenness of the self and its existence are inseparable.²²⁶ Thus, the idea of the existing self is a true and complex idea – complex not in the sense that it represents a synthesis of components, but as a thought that can be analyzed into distinct terms.

Although the idea “I am the existent” represents the direct experience of the self, the occurrence of this idea in the intellect causes the intellect to substitute the pure self with its

²²¹ Upad. 2.52-53; BSBh 1.1

²²² Upad 2.2.54

²²³ Upad 1.18.6

²²⁴ Upad 1.14.24, 1.18.20, 1.18.65

²²⁵ Upad 1.18.7

²²⁶ Also see BSBh 3.2.21

reflection in the intellect. The subject of the sentence is falsely taken to be the intellect itself, and hence we have the same old business of confusing the self with the intellect, the body, etc. From the Advaita perspective, precisely here lies Descartes' mistake – he has superimposed “the thinking thing,” the mental faculty on his direct awareness of the self's existence.

Thus, even the direct experience of the self may not liberate us from the false superimposition of the self and of what is not the self, because the self is always experienced as something else due to the impact of ignorance manifested through language. In Yoga, the clear observation of reflection of the self in the calm surface of the intellect leads to the subsequent collapse of the intellect and the liberating withdrawal of the self into its own form. For Śāṅkara, however, the seed of semantical misrepresentation of the self in the propositional form of “I-am x” persists as long as it is not removed by and through language itself. Therefore, the only way to *mokṣa* is through liberating statements (*māhāvākyas*) contained in the *Upaniṣads* and meant to be heard from a teacher. The scriptures proclaim not only *sadasmi* (“I am the existent”), but *sadbrahmāham* (“I am the existing *brahman*”), thus ruling out the self's misidentification with anything else.²²⁷

Śāṅkara explains that such sentences as *tat tvam asi* (“Thou art That!”) are intended to exclude from the notion of the “I” everything which is not the “I,” thus taking the directly experiencing self back to itself.²²⁸ A teacher proclaiming to a student “Thou art That!” might be repeating the same words coming from a parent of a young child pointing to a child's reflection in a mirror.²²⁹ The parent introduces the child to the false identity with his reflection, with the

²²⁷ Upad. 1.18.6

²²⁸ Upad 1.18.4

²²⁹ The parental exclamation “That's you there!” in Lacan's later revisions of the mirror-stage signifies not only the presence of the Imaginary in this early phase of the ego-development, but also the presence of the Symbolic register

inescapable addition of “am-ness” to one’s self. The teacher’s role, however, is to remove the reflection from one’s nature and let the potentially misleading sentence carry out its proper function: only what you experience as the self is the self. While in Yoga, liberation is attained through the cessation of the intellect’s activity, one might question the efficiency of one’s attempts to stop mental activity by meditative effort - itself a mental activity. However, from the Advaita perspective, the intellect operates through language, which organizes cognitions into meaningful relations, and therefore, the right knowledge of self-identity may be grasped through understanding the meaning of the *Upaniṣadic* sentences. Liberation is achieved not through the psycho-physical transformation of the mental apparatus, as implied in Yoga, but through grasping the meaning of such statements as “Thou art that!” While the sentence is a manifestation of the syntactic structure of the mental apparatus, it points to a referent external to this system. The separation between the intellect and the self is attained when one understands the meaning of a liberating statement, just like the divorce between two people is achieved through understanding the meaning of the words coming from an authorized person: “You are no longer married!” As long as I fail to grasp the meaning of the words “Thou art That!,” I still falsely believe that I am a part of the intellect, just like a desperate divorcee believes that “You are no longer married” are mere words. One’s realization that the *meaning* of the sentence “Thou art That!,” although expressed through language and by means of the mental apparatus, is not of a mental or linguistic nature, leads to the understanding of one’s true nature.

4.3 Pratibimbavāda

of language and sociality (Johnston 2013a). I will discuss this verbal expression of the ego-reflection in the next chapter.

In order to explain the nature of the individual self and its relation to the real self, Śaṅkara identifies the *jīva* not only as reflection (*pratibimba*), but also as appearance (*ābhāsa*) and “limitation” (*avaccheda*). While he usually uses the word *ābhāsa* interchangeably with *pratibimba*, by *avaccheda* he indicates that individual self is the result of the real self being limited by the inner sense, just as the same ether is enclosed by different pots.²³⁰ For Śaṅkara, the three are different ways to explain the emergence of individual selves.

The commentators following the lineage of Śaṅkara, however, have often considered the three models to be contradictory, and usually favored one over the others. Eventually, three distinct Advaitic schools were established – the Pratibimbavāda (Vivaraṇa), the Ābhāsavāda, and the Avacchedavāda (Bhāmatī). Traditionally, Śaṅkara’s direct student Padmapāda (820 C.E.) is considered the founder of the first of the three lines of interpretation of Śaṅkara (*prasthānatraya*), which later came to be known as the Vivaraṇa or Pratibimbavāda. While Padmapāda develops Śaṅkara’s theory of reflection substantially, he also uses a metaphor of ether limited in a jar, favored by Avacchedavādins. This probably means that he does not see any conflict between these two models.²³¹ His student Prakāśātman (1000 or 1100 C.E.), however, puts forward arguments in defense of the reflection model and against the limiting adjunct model.

Under this section I will discuss Padmapāda’s development of his master’s theory of reflection and Prakāśātman’s attempts to justify this theory as the most accurate representation of the relation between consciousness and the ego. I will also briefly review later versions of reflection theory in Advaita-Vedānta summarized in the *Siddhāntabindu* of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī (1500 C.E.) and the *Siddhāntaleśasamgraha* of Appaya Dīkṣita (1550 C.E.).

²³⁰ Gupta 2012: 87.

²³¹ Shima 2000: 39

4.3.1 Padmapāda's theory of reflection

In his *Pañcapādikā*, Padmapāda presents an extensive discussion of his version of theory of reflection and a well-developed theory of the ego (*ahaṅkāra*). In my analysis of Padmapāda's theory of reflection and its role in the formation of the ego, I will primarily rely on the first *varṇaka* of his book - a commentary on the introduction of Śaṅkara's commentary on the *Brahmasūtra*, where he discusses the mutual superimposition (*adhyāsa*) of the self and of what is not the self.

Padmapāda compares the transcendental self reflected in ignorance-substance (*avidyā*) in the form of an individual self to a face reflected in a mirror and to the moon reflected in the water. His discussion of self-reflection is based on Śaṅkara's reflection theory in the *Upadeśasāhasrī*, with one important difference. Śaṅkara emphasizes the difference between the self and its reflection – the first one is real, the second unreal - while the perceived identity between the two is a mistake of non-discrimination. For Padmapāda, however, the reflection is non-distinct from the self, and therefore is real. It is the perceived distinction between the two (the real face is here, its reflection is there; their mutual position facing each other) which is due to the illusion of ignorance.²³²

In order to understand the reasons behind Padmapāda's revision of his teacher's position in respect to the reality of reflection, we should explain his careful terminological analysis of the concepts used by Śaṅkara rather loosely. What does Padmapāda mean when he says that the self's reflection is real and identical to the prototype-self?

The self (*ātman*) is pure consciousness in itself, with no reference to limiting adjuncts. When it is limited by different objects of cognition, it is called "experience" (*anubhava*) (PP

²³² PP II.I.21,23-22.4; Venkataramiah 1948: 72

II.I.19,5-7; Venkataramiah 1948: 62). What happens, when the internal organ (*antaḥkaraṇa*) limits pure consciousness? Padmapāda continues to define what he means by the inner organ. It is a particular transformation of ignorance-substance (*avidyā*) having powers of cognition (*jñānaśakti*). Other synonyms for *antaḥkaraṇa* include the mind (*manas*), the intellect (*buddhi*) and the possessor of the I-notion (*aḥampratyayin*) (PP 20,22-26; Venkataramiah 1948: 69).

What is the nature of ignorance-substance, the material cause of the inner organ? In general, in post-Śaṅkara Advaita, *avidyā* is taken as a positive entity, the illusory substance-matter, which evolves into the world as we know it. Ignorance functions through two basic powers - *āvaraṇa* (covering, obscuring) and *vikṣepa* (projecting, dividing). These two powers are responsible for the appearance of *brahman* in two forms: *īśvara* and *jīva*. *Īśvara* uses the projecting power to make the world appear. *Jīva*'s perception of the world in its multiplicity is accounted by the obscuring power.²³³

Padmapāda makes a long list of synonyms for *avidyā*: *nāmarūpa* (name and form), *avyākṛta* (undeveloped, elementary substance), *māyā* (illusion), *prakṛti* (nature, matter), *agrahaṇa* (non-cognition), *avyakta* (not-manifested), *tamas* (darkness, the inert primary force), *kāraṇa* (cause), *laya* (dissolution), *śakti* (potency), *mahāsuṣṭi* (great sleep), *nidrā* (a dream), *akṣara* (imperishable) and *ākāśa* (ether) (PP 20,11-13; Venkataramiah 1948: 67). This list reveals quite a bit about the nature of ignorance. Being *prakṛti*, it is associated with the material substance from which the phenomenal world emanates. Associated with *agrahaṇa*, it has a cognitive aspect of the absence of cognition. As *tamas* it is of the nature of obstruction to knowledge. As *mahāsuṣṭi* and *nidrā*, it points to its manifestation during deep sleep, on the one hand containing the seeds of the

²³³ Gupta 2011:53-54

phenomenal experience, on the other, enveloping the self by complete oblivion. As *śakti* it has two important potencies – the power of concealment (*āvaraṇa*) and the power of projection (*vikṣepa*) (Venkataramiah 1948: 67). The first power is responsible for concealing the self; the second projects the non-self upon the self. Such a complex notion of ignorance having both ontological and cognitive dimensions is presumably required in order to account for the complexity of the phenomenal creation.

However, in order to set the non-differentiated potency of ignorance in motion, the efficient cause in the form of divinity (*īśvara*) is needed. *Īśvara* is *brahman* limited by ignorance and assuming a role of creator of all individual selves (*jīvas*). This Aristotelian-like mover is responsible for the transformation of ignorance, the material cause of the universe, into a particular configuration of the inner sense (PP 20,15-19; Venkataramiah 1948:67-68).

Padmapāda's unique contribution to the philosophy of the ego is his development of the notion of *ahaṃkāra*. We have seen that in Sāṃkhya, *ahaṃkāra* stood for a particular evolution of the intellect responsible for the sense of self-identity as this or that being or thing. In this theory, the ego, being entirely a product of material nature, has no connection whatsoever with the pure self.²³⁴ *Ahaṃkāra* is marginalized in Yoga, and practically replaced by *asmitā*, I-am-ness. Śaṅkara rarely makes references to *ahaṃkāra*. While he often refers to the intellect (*buddhi*) as *ahaṃkārtṛ* or *ahaṃkṛt*, it is not entirely clear whether he means by this that the intellect is the locus of *ahaṃkāra*, or that it is characterized by a false idea of the active agency ascribed to the essentially changeless self (*aham+kārtṛ*). While Mayeda interprets *ahaṃkārtṛ* in the first sense, I believe the

²³⁴ On the usages of *ahaṃkāra* in pre-Sāṃkhya sources see van Buitenen 1957, Biardeau 1965, and Thompson 1997.

context points to the latter, as *ahaṃkāra* is mentioned in relation to superimposition of the notion of agency on the notion of the “I.”

It is only possible to speculate about the place of *ahaṃkāra* in Śāṅkara’s philosophy. Yet, his vague references to the concept were sufficient for Padmapāda to move the concept of the ego center stage. In fact, he calls it “the main pillar of the dancing hall of *saṃsāra* (Venkataramiah 1948:121),”²³⁵ the ultimate support of the illusory cycle of suffering. The ego functions as a “knot” (*granthi*) illusorily connecting between conscious and unconscious elements:

[...] just as in the crystal there exists the [illusory] influence of the *upādhi* (i.e., the limiting adjunct of the nearby flower, the red color of which appears in the crystal), so in the conscious *ātman* there exists the [illusory] influence of *ahaṃkāra*. Hence, since it has the nature of both connected [things, the conscious and the inert], it becomes as if it were a knot so that *ahaṃkāra* is spoken of as *granthi* (a tangle of the conscious and unconscious elements) (Venkataramiah 1948:70, amended).²³⁶

Padmapāda’s characterization of the ego as a knot connecting what is real and conscious with what is illusory and unconscious implies that the ego combines two natures. Thus, Padmapāda criticizes the Sāṃkhya conception of the entirely material nature of *ahaṃkāra*, as it is not plausible that a purely material objective entity gives rise to the notion “I am” rather than “it is.”

This should not be thought thus (as the Sāṃkhyas do) i.e., since it is only one of the evolutes of its ground (*viz.*, *pradhāna*) and not implicit in the witness (*sākṣin*) which manifests the *ahaṃkāra*; it (*ahaṃkāra*) has that only (*viz.*, *pradhāna*) as its originator (i.e., material cause). For if it were so, then enjoyment (*bhokṛtva*)

²³⁵ *saṃsāraṇṛty aśālāmūlastambho*, PP 35, 18

²³⁶ *Tad evaṃ sphaṭikamaṇāv upadhānoparāga iva cidātmany apy ahaṅkāroparāgas tataḥ sambhinnobhayarūpatvād granthir iva bhavatīty ahaṅkāro granthirīti gīyate/* PP 21,11-13

which is its (*ahaṃkāra*'s) essential property, deprived of all relation to the witness would manifest itself as “the this” only. But it is not so (Venkataramiah 1948:68).²³⁷

Any notion of the “I” must be related to the subject of experience, and in Sāṃkhya the sense of I (*ahaṃkāra*) and the subject of experience (*bhoktr*, *puruṣa*) are entirely separated. I have already pointed above that for Padmapāda, the pure self does not experience anything. It is said to experience only when it is conditioned by limiting adjuncts of certain objects, which become the objects of experience. Experience (*anubhava*) is a relational category supervenient upon the limiting adjuncts of experiencing subject and experienced objects illuminated by pure consciousness. The notion of the ego, (*ahaṃkāra*) without its reference to consciousness, cannot include the idea of the I, because the source of such an idea is the pure self.

Padmapāda explains other attributes of the ego as follows:

And of this *avidyā*, the *ahaṃkāra* is a particular transformation resulting from its having *parameśvara* as a controller; it (*ahaṃkāra*) is the substratum of the power of cognition (*jñānaśakti*) and of the power of action (*kriyāśakti*); it is the sole basis of agency and enjoyment; it is a light generated by its association with the unchanging consciousness; it is self-luminous and it is immediate cognition (Venkataramiah 1948:67-68).²³⁸

Ahaṃkāra is the substratum of the power of cognition and the power of activity illuminated through the contact of the mental faculty with pure consciousness. It is the result of the mutual superimposition between two ontologically distinct entities – ignorance-substance (*qua* inner organ) and pure consciousness. *Ahaṃkāra* is composed of two parts: the “this part” (*idamaṃśa*),

²³⁷ *na caivaṃ mantavyam āśritapariṇatibhedatayaivāhaṃkārasya nirbhāse 'nantarbhūtaiva tan nimittam iti tathā saty apākṛtāhaṃkṛtisamsargo bhotrīvādis tadviśeṣaḥ kevalam idantayaivāvabhāseta na ca tathā samasti/* PP 20,20-22

²³⁸ *tasyāḥ parameśvarādhiṣṭhitatvalabdhapariṇāmaviśeṣo vijñānakriyāśaktidvayāśrayaḥ kartṛtvabhokṛtvaikādhāraḥ kuṭasthacaitanyasamṣalanasamjātajyotiḥ svayaṃ prakāśamāno 'parokśo 'haṅkāro,* PP 20,15-18

the mind proper, the evolute of ignorance-substance; and the “not-this part” (*anidamaṃśa*), the reflection of immediately known pure consciousness (PP 20,15-19; Venkataramiah 1948:68).

Thereby Padmapāda rectifies the Sāṃkhya theory of reflection, in which the intellect reflecting pure consciousness falsely appears conscious but whose evolution into the ego is quite unrelated to the reflected self. Instead, he posits the ego as the direct result of the entanglement between the intellect and consciousness. His notion of the ego as a knot between the I and what is not the I is much closer to the Yoga concept of *asmitā*. In Yoga, however, *asmitā* is a relational concept, opening the self to identity with itself, with the intellect, the body, etc. For Padmapāda, however, *ahaṃkāra* is a new entity supervenient upon the illusory identity between the intellect and consciousness. In this respect, Padmapāda’s *ahaṃkāra* also differs from Śaṅkara’s *ahaṃpratyaya* (the “I-notion”). *Ahaṃpratyaya* is the result of the confusion between two separate ideas – the idea of directly experienced self and the idea of agency. In this sense it is also composed of “this” and “not-this.” *Ahaṃpratyaya* is a false idea, a mental construct also caused by the interaction between the reflection of the self and the intellect’s activity, but it essentially belongs to the intellect. *Ahaṃkāra*, on the other hand, is not an idea, but a separate entity of a mixed ontological nature. While for Śaṅkara, *ahaṃpratyaya* is an aspect/modification of the intellect, for Padmapāda, the intellect is one component of *ahaṃkāra*. This is the reason that in Śaṅkara’s theory of reflection, the main story is that of the interaction between consciousness and the intellect, while in Padmapāda, the role of the intellect is relatively insignificant.

At this point, it becomes clear why Padmapāda goes against his teacher’s view and insists that the self’s reflection is real and identical to the prototype. “Real” (*sat*), according to Padmapāda, means “that which cannot be sublated.” The nature of mistake, like in a case of mistaking the mother of pearl with silver, is that we apprehend something (the silver) where it is not (mother of

pearl). The unreality of the mistaken apprehension is recognized, when the sublating cognition takes place ("this is a mother of pearl"). *Ahaṃkāra* is an illusory entity insofar as consciousness is attributed to the inner sense, because this superimposition may be sublated by the liberating knowledge "Thou art That (*ātman*, and not the inner sense)!" However, insofar as *ahaṃkāra* is held to be identical with consciousness because it is its reflection, no sublating knowledge can take place. My recognition "this is me" when pointing to my face in the mirror is not sublated by the removal of the mirror. The snake immediately disappears, once I recognize that it is a rope, but my face does not disappear when the mirror is removed. It does not appear in the mirror, but it continues to exist as the prototype – the real face. Similarly, the association between the reflection of the self and the inner sense ceases upon hearing liberating sentences, but the identity of the reflection of the self with the self does not cease. Padmapāda points out that the liberating statement "Thou art That!" is a statement of identity of the "thou" (the individual self) with the "that" (*brahman*); it is not a negation of identity:

There (in the sentence) "Thou art That!" what is intimated is that the individual self (*jīva*) which is in the position of the reflected image (*pratibimba*) is of the nature of *brahman* occupying the position of the prototype (*bimba*). Otherwise the sentence would not be "Thou art That!" but would be "Thou art not!" like "silver is not (Venkataramiah 1948:74, amended)."²³⁹

Only if the identity between the self and its reflection is admitted, the *Upaniṣadic* liberating statement "Thou art That" (*tat tvam asi*) can be true. Since the pronoun "thou" refers to the individual self – the subject of the sentence, and the "that" – the object of the sentence - refers to *brahman*, the identity between the two marked by the "art" can be true only if the subject is really

²³⁹ *tatra tattvam iti bimbasthānīyabrahma svarūpatā pratibimbasthānīyasya jīvasyopdiśyate 'nyathā na tattvam asīti syāt kintu na tvamasīti bhaven na rajatam asītivat!*, PP 22,21-23

non-distinct from the object. Otherwise, if the ultimate self is distinct from the individual self, it should have been stated “Thou art not,” like "silver is not."

It seems that Padmapāda’s theory of identity between the prototype and its reflection is a further step in the “monisation” of reflection. Śāṅkara inherits the original dualism in the theory of reflection from Sāṃkhya, with its emphasis on discrimination between the intellect and the self. Padmapāda is more consistent with the doctrine of oneness of being, and for him there is a real identity of a single self with its individual reflections. The importance of this difference could be seen in Padmapāda’s response to the opponent who points out that if the self were to refer both to the prototype and its reflection, the absurd conclusion would follow that the same thing can appear in two different locations. While Śāṅkara can ward off the objection by saying that the identity is illusory, Padmapāda’s response that the duplication is illusory is stronger from the standpoint of monism.²⁴⁰

Another objection brought against *pratibimbavāda* allows Padmapāda to make his theory of reflection into more than a metaphor. The opponent points out that even one’s realization that his reflection is identical to himself does not end the illusion of separation. If so, how does the realization of identity between the individual and the self bring about liberation? Padmapāda responds that there is a difference between the reflection of the insentient body in a mirror and the reflection of the conscious self. The identity between the body and its reflection cannot bring about liberation because the self is not present in either. The identity between consciousness and its reflection in the form of the individual self, on the other hand, can be realized by the reflection (*ahaṃkāra*) precisely because it is conscious.²⁴¹ Prakāśātman comments: the reflection of

²⁴⁰ PP 23,6-8; Venkataramiah 1948:75-76

²⁴¹ PP 23,11-20; Venkataramiah 1948:76-77

Devadatta in the pupil of one's eyes is not conscious not because it is a reflection, but because the reflection is of the insentient body, which is no different from the reflection of a pot.²⁴²

This distinction between a reflection of a body and a reflection of the self is an important contribution to the theory of reflection. Padmapāda makes it clear that reflection *per se* is not different in both cases. It is not a property of physical objects only, but rather a relation of identity-in-difference between any entity and its distinct appearance. Although the locus of a reflection is in the mirror, a reflection is the property of the prototype, not of the mirror, and therefore it is as real as the prototype.²⁴³

Another interesting objection is raised by a Prābhākara Mīmāṃsāka. The opponent claims that one's reflection in a mirror may be explained by a physical naturalistic account of the rays coming from the prototype and reflecting back from the mirror. Illusion does not exist; in reality, there is only a certain optical phenomenon taking place. Reflection does not exist anywhere, and thus cannot be identical to the prototype. Padmapāda's short answer is that the experience itself goes against such a statement. What he might mean is that reflection certainly appears and thus cannot be said to be non-existent.²⁴⁴ Again, one should remember the Advaita definition of the real as that which is not sublated. As long as the reflection is apprehended, and no conflicting cognitions arise, one may not say that reflection does not exist. This negative account of valid cognition is somewhat similar to that of Karl Popper, for whom the validity of scientific theories is in principle never conclusive. Some theory can be accepted as long as it has not been refuted; once refuted it is no longer valid.

²⁴² PPV 64,3-65,11

²⁴³ PP 22,2-20; Venkataramiah 1948:72-73

²⁴⁴ PP 23,2-4; Venkataramiah 1948:75

4.3.2 Pratibimbavāda: later developments

As we have seen, the main focus of Padmapāda's theory of reflection has been the development of a theory of the ego-formation, determined by conscious and other unconscious elements (i.e., the cognitive faculties). Padmapāda explains our phenomenal sense of being an individual by consciousness' reflection in the inner sense giving rise to the ego (*ahaṃkāra*). At least in one case, however, instead of *ahaṃkāra*, he uses a different term – *jīva* – to refer explicitly to reflection in the inner sense. He says that in the sentence “Thou art That!” the “Thou” denotes the individual self (*jīva*) who is in the position of the image (*pratibimba*) in respect to the “That,” i.e. *brahman*, who is in a position of prototype (*bimba*) (PP 22,21-23; Venkataramiah 1948: 4). He further defines *jīva* as having the nature of consciousness, without being affected by inertness of the inner sense. Nevertheless, due to the power of ignorance, the *jīva* experiences itself as distinct from *brahman* (PP 23,17-20; Venkataramiah 1948:77). Commonly understood, *jīva* stands for the individual self, i.e., for consciousness limited by the inner sense, the body, etc. However, this is a mistaken notion as in reality consciousness and the evolutes of the ignorance-substance are entirely separate, and as such, the individual may not be identical with *brahman*. Only insofar as it excludes the non-conscious elements does the word *jīva* indicate its "not-this" component, which is identical with *brahman* as pure consciousness.

A reflection relationship between *brahman* and *jīva* has already been introduced by Śaṅkara in BSBh 2.3.50, in which he has explained that we observe the plurality of *jīvas*, because they are reflections of one *brahman*, just like multiple reflections in different bodies of water belong to the same sun.²⁴⁵ Śaṅkara defines *jīva* as "the self, having the limiting adjuncts of the

²⁴⁵ The often-quoted verse from the *Bālābodhinī* ascribed to Śaṅkara nicely summarizes the relation between *brahman* and *jīva*: *brahman satyaṃ jagan mithyā jīvo brahmaiva nāparaḥ* (“*Brahman* is the truth, the world is false, *jīva* is *brahman* and nothing else”) (Gupta 2011: 9).

body and sense organs which are qualified by ignorance, desire and action (Commans 2000:238)."²⁴⁶ This definition is quite compatible with that given by Padmapāda, and it seems that in his account of reflection as taking place between *brahman* and *jīva*, Padmapāda does not add anything new to the teaching of his predecessor. In the *Upadeśasāhasrī*, however, Śaṅkara uses the metaphor of reflection to describe the relation between pure consciousness and the intellect, and here Padmapāda allows himself to develop it further into his theory of *ahaṃkāra*.

Padmapāda's commentator Prakāśātman is careful not to deviate from Padmapāda's terminology, and he uses *ahaṃkāra* and *jīva* in the same contexts in which his predecessor had used them, and he also describes *brahman* as a prototype (*bimba*) and *jīva* as a reflected image (*pratibimba*) (PPV 67,193-68,2). Prakāśātman, however, explicitly, although briefly, relates *jīva* and *ahaṃkāra* by saying that the latter is the limiting adjunct of the first (PPV 66,9-67,4). While such a definition is slightly different from Śaṅkara's definition, for whom the *jīva* is the self having as its limiting adjuncts the body and the sense organs, the definitions are not incompatible. Given that there are several levels of limiting adjuncts (ignorance, *ahaṃkāra*, the inner sense, the body, etc.), *jīva* may be seen as *brahman*'s reflection conditioned by all of them. Prakāśātman seems to distinguish between *jīva* and *ahaṃkāra*, in order to reinforce the identity of *brahman* with individual self, which must not be mistaken with *ahaṃkāra*, which has the aspect of the "not-this."

It is not entirely clear when the theory of reflection came to be regarded as the defining doctrine of the Vivaraṇa sub-school of Advaita-Vedānta, distinguishing it from the rivaling Bhamatī associated with the limiting adjunct model (*avacchedavāda*). While Vivaraṇa is based on Prakāśātman's writings and Bhamatī on those of Vācaspati Miśra, these philosophers use both

²⁴⁶ *avidyākāmakarmaviśiṣṭakāryakaraṇopādhir ātmā saṃsārī jiva ucyate* / (BUBh 3.8.12)

metaphors. It is true that the Prakāśātman clearly prefers the analogy of reflection and Vācaspati Miśra the analogy of the limiting adjunct, but both ascribe to each of the two metaphors different complementing purposes.

Thus, Prakāśātman argues that the metaphor of reflection establishes the identity between *brahman* and *jīva*, and the metaphor of the space within a pot establishes the undivided, non-relational nature of the *ātman* (PPV 67,19-68,11). Prakāśātman actually repeats Padmapāda's response to the opponent pointing to the absence of a real substance similar to a mirror in which *brahman* could have been reflected. Like Śaṅkara, Padmapāda admits that there are limitations to the metaphor of reflection, and emphasizes that reflection is only a metaphor. Nevertheless, Padmapāda, together with Prakāśātman, adopts a different approach in respect to the limitations of the reflection metaphor and claims that these limitations are actually addressed by other metaphors – those of the limiting adjuncts (the crystal and the pot) and the snake-rope metaphor. The metaphors, taken together, describe the relation between *brahman* and *jīva* with utmost precision. The metaphor of reflection catches the identity between *brahman* and the individual self, the rope mistaken for a snake is a metaphor which obviates the need for an additional substance other than *brahman*, and the metaphor of an undivided space illusorily limited by the pot establishes the undivided and non-relational nature of the self (PP 23,11-24,8; Venkataramiah 1948:77-79).

Despite this positive complementarity of the metaphors, Padmapāda is in agreement with Śaṅkara in that “all these examples are for the purpose of removing the doubt that may arise regarding what has been established by the Scriptures, confirmatory logic and experience, and also for mental comfort; it is not for the sake of directly establishing the thing itself (i.e., *ātman*) (Shima's 2000:39).” Padmapāda, like Śaṅkara, regards metaphors as “illustrations” (*udāharāṇa*)

intended for easier digestion of highly abstract ideas, not as kinds of proofs (PP 24,6-8; Venkataramiah 1948:79). Prakāśātman briefly adds that “a thing cannot be established by examples alone without a *pramāṇa*, because of the possibility of counter-examples; this is the idea (Gupta 2011:361).”²⁴⁷

Although Prakāśātman admits that counter-examples are possible, he suggests that some examples are more successful than others. He points out that the metaphor of a space surrounded by the pot is problematic when applied to *brahman* as it suggests that *brahman* actually turns into two distinct entities – one found within the limiting adjunct and the other is outside of it. It thus ceases to be all-pervasive and the controller of all. Instead, Prakāśātman presents his version of metaphor of reflection, according to which *brahman* is reflected in the limiting adjunct like ether is reflected in the water:

Because, just as ether, although it has no form, has its reflection in the water along with the clouds and stars, so can there be the reflection of the *brahman*. For in water which is but knee-deep there is seen (the reflection of) the distant and pervasive ether; for it is not possible to say that it is only the space which is in the water that is seen associated with the (reflected) images of clouds, etc. (Gupta 2011:353, amended).²⁴⁸

Prakāśātman argues that his analogy manages to avoid the problem of divisiveness of *brahman* associated with the model of the pot and the ether:

On the reflection theory, however, we see although the space is naturally present in the water, yet the reflected space is also seen. Thus the duplication of existence is intelligible; hence, among those which

²⁴⁷ *pramāṇam antareṇodāharaṇamātrād arthasiddhy ayogāt praty udāharaṇasambhavād iti bhāvaḥ*, PPV 68,10-11

²⁴⁸ *amūrtasya cākāśasya sāmhranaḥśatrasya jale pratibimbavad amūrtasya brahmaṇo 'pi pratibimbambhavāt/ jānumātrapramāṇe 'pi jale dūraviśālākāśadarśanāt/ jalāntarākāśa evābhrādipratibimbayukto dr̥ṣyata iti vaktum aśakyatvāt/* PPV 65,18-20

condition the empirical individual, the presence of the *brahman* as controller, etc., is intelligible. Thus, the reflection theory alone is superior (Gupta 2011:354).²⁴⁹

The water both occupies a certain inner space and reflects the external space. Thus, the contact between the unconditional *brahman* and the conditioned *brahman* is preserved (PPV 1892, pp.65,12-66,8). In other words, if the metaphor of limiting adjuncts is meant to illustrate the undivided nature of the self, the metaphor of reflection does this better. It is not very clear, however, why separation between the space outside the pot and inside the pot is more real than separation between space inside and outside the water, even if the water reflects the external space. Perhaps, Prakāśātman interprets Padmapāda's argument that reflection is real and is the property of the prototype in the sense that the external space actually enters the water in the form of reflection.

In order to appreciate further developments in post-Prakāśātman theories of reflection, it can be useful to look at the summaries of the main tenets of these positions in *Siddhāntabindu* (SB) of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī (1500) and *Siddhāntaleśasamgraha* of Appaya Dīkṣita (1550). Madhusūdana defines the position of the followers of Prakāśātman as follows: “*īśvara* (the Lord) is prototype-consciousness conditioned by ignorance, *jīva* is consciousness reflected in ignorance particularized in the inner organ through its mental impressions (my translation).”²⁵⁰ While we have seen that Prakāśātman, following Śaṅkara and Padmapāda has persistently regarded *brahman* as the prototype of reflection, Madhusūdana ascribes his followers the view that *īśvara* is the prototype of reflection. Appaya Dīkṣita describes the Vivaraṇa position in the same terms: “...the

²⁴⁹ *pratibimbapakṣe tu jalagatasvābhāvīkākāśe saty eva pratibimbākāśadarśanād ekatraiva dvignīkṛtya vṛtty upapatte jīvāvacchedeṣu brahmaṇo 'pi niyantrtvādirūpeṇāvasthānam upapadyate iti pratibimbapakṣa eva śreyān iti/* PPV 66,3-5

²⁵⁰ *ajñānopahitaṃ bimbacaitanyam īśvaraḥ, antaḥkaraṇatatsaṃskārāvachinnājñānapratibimbitaṃ caitanyaṃ jīvaḥ, iti vivaraṇakārāḥ/* SB 28,14-15

reflection is the *jīva*; what is in the position of the prototype is *īśvara* (Sastri 1935:I.169, amended).²⁵¹ It should be noted that Appaya Dīkṣita ascribes this position not directly to Prakāśātman, but to his followers (*vivaraṇānusāriṇaḥ*). Thus, we might assume that Prakāśātman’s theory of reflection has been modified by his followers in order to distinguish their position from the new competing theories of reflection, also described by Madhusūdana and Appaya Dīkṣita.

One of these positions is attributed by Madhusūdana and Appaya Dīkṣita to Sarvajñātman (900 CE) and his followers, according to whom, *īśvara* is the reflection of pure consciousness in one ignorance, and the *jīva* is its reflection in the intellect. Appaya Dīkṣita mentions two other works that present essentially identical positions, namely the *Prakaṣārthavivaraṇa* and the *Tattvaviveka*.²⁵² What is common to all these positions, in Appaya Dīkṣita’s words is that “in the above-mentioned views of the *jīva* and *īśvara* as varieties of reflection, *brahman* that is in the position of the prototype, is the pure consciousness, which is attained by the released” (Sastri 1935: I.162, amended).²⁵³ In fact, if we go directly to Sarvajñātman’s *Samkṣepasārīraka*, we find that Sarvajñātman renders *īśvara* as a reflected image (*pratibimba*) of the pure consciousness in the ignorance-substance and as the prototype (*bimba*) for *jīva* as its reflected image (*pratibimba*) in the intellect. Sarvajñātman makes a point that *īśvara*, although being consciousness limited by ignorance-substance, itself is free from ignorance in its concealing aspect. In other words, *īśvara* possesses the projecting power of ignorance (*māyā*), i.e., the power to delude the individual selves,

²⁵¹ *pratibimbo jīvaḥ, bimbasthānīya īśvaraḥ*, SLS II.17,7

²⁵² Appaya Dīkṣita also mentions the third version of theory of reflection presented in the *Citradīpa*, *Brahmānanda*, and *Dṛgdrśyaviveka*, according to which *īśvara* is the reflected image of pure consciousness. In this respect, it is not very clear in what respect this version is different from the second version (Shima 2000:34, 47, n.12).

²⁵³ *evam ukteṣv eteṣu jīveśvarayoḥ pratibimbaviśeṣatvapakṣeṣu yad bimbasthānīyam brahma tan muktaprāpyam śuddhacaitanyam* SLS II.14,3-4

while itself remaining omniscient. Perhaps, in this sense, the individual self is considered its reflection: *īśvara* creates a limiting adjunct in the form of the intellect and is reflected in it in the form of individually-experienced consciousness. The limiting adjunct conceals from the *jīva* the knowledge otherwise available to *īśvara* (ŚŚ 2.176-177; 2.190; 3. 277-278).

We have seen that *īśvara* is absent from Śaṅkara's, Padmapāda's, and Prakāśātman's accounts of reflection. All of them invariably render the prototype as *brahman* or the self (*atman*), and its reflected images as *jīvas*. How do they treat *īśvara*? *īśvara* is often utilized by Śaṅkara to refer to the formal and creative aspect of *saguṇa brahman*, and he defines it as "the self, having as its limiting adjuncts the power of eternal and unsurpassed knowledge" (Comans 2000:238).²⁵⁴ Padmapāda, at least in one instance describes the difference between *īśvara* and *jīva*, as well as between different *jīvas* as illusory, like in the case of a double moon appearing to someone with an eye-disease (PP 14,5; Venkataramiah 1948:46). Padmapāda also refers to *īśvara* as the efficient cause of the internal sense (PP 20,15-19; Venkataramiah 1948:67-68). In general, however, as Potter points out, "when the question arises as to who exactly God is, Padmapāda turns decidedly evasive" (Potter 1963:176). Prakāśātman rarely refers to *īśvara* explicitly.²⁵⁵ It is my general impression that for these thinkers, the theology of *īśvara* is relatively unimportant. The relation between *brahman* and *jīva* is their central concern, as well as the development of the plausible monistic theory accountable for the phenomenal world of plurality.

Appaya Dīkṣita describes the reasons the late Vivaraṇavādins postulate *īśvara* as the prototype and *jīva* as the reflected image and reject Sarvajñātman's doctrine. First, on the basis of the school's theory of a single ignorance-substance, the difference between *īśvara* and *jīva* must

²⁵⁴ *nityaniratiśayajñānaśaktyupādhīr ātmāntaryāmīśvara ucyate*, BUBh 3.8.12

²⁵⁵ I have managed to find only one case of mentioning *īśvara* in PPV 69, 21-22.

be due to a single cause, namely *īśvara*'s reflection in the form of *jīva*. One should not postulate the first reflection of *brahman* as *īśvara*, and the secondary reflection of *īśvara* as *jīva*, because essentially there is only one limiting adjunct.²⁵⁶ This argument is rather unconvincing, as the single ignorance-substance evolves into a multiplicity of *antaḥkaraṇas*, which produce individual reflections. Nothing should prevent *brahman* to be reflected both as *īśvara* bounded by the ignorance-matter and as *jīvas* bounded by multiplicity of *antaḥkaraṇas*, evolved from the same ignorance-matter.

Second, only if *īśvara* is the prototype and the *jīva* is its reflected image, *īśvara* preserves its self-dependence (*svātantryam*), and *jīva* its dependence on *īśvara* (*tatpāratantryam*). The third related reason is that since the proclaimed motivation of *īśvara* to create and manipulate *jīvas* is playfulness (*līla*), the metaphor of a single reflection is the most fit to describe *īśvara*'s game with the *jīvas*. The *siddhāntin* quotes from another commentary on the *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya*, the *Kalpataru*: “Just as a man plays with the changes, straight, crooked etc., occurring in the reflection, even so does *brahman* with the changes in the *jīva* (Sastri 1935:I.169, amended).”²⁵⁷

It seems that while Sarvajñātman is concerned with the relation of *īśvara* with *brahman* and *jīva*, the late *vivaraṇavādins* are worried that the analogy of reflection might lose its effectiveness and elegance, once the relation between two factors – prototype and image – is complicated by the addition of a third factor (a reflection of a reflection). Whatever the reasons behind the polemics between the proponents of one and two reflections are, the substitution of *brahman*-prototype with *īśvara*-prototype indicates the process of theization of theories of reflection in Advaita-Vedānta. In fact, during this period, we witness the growing spread of the

²⁵⁶ SLS II.17,2-9

²⁵⁷ *pratibimbatāh paśyan rjuvakraḍivikriyāh/ pumān krīḍed yathā brahman tathā jīvasthavikriyāh//* SLS II.2.17,10-11

analogy of reflection between divinity and the individual soul in other traditions as well, such as Kashmiri Śaivism and Madhva's Dvaita-Vedānta.²⁵⁸

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have followed the developments in Advaita theories of reflection. Śaṅkara utilizes the analogy of reflection for two different purposes. The first is meant to account for the illusory plurality of individual selves; the second is the same purpose for the sake of which Sāṃkhya and Yoga have postulated their theories of reflection: an explanation of the interaction between consciousness and the intellect. Śaṅkara's innovation in respect to the latter is the linguistic structure added to the mental activity of the intellect illuminated by the reflection of the self. This structure is responsible for the false ideas regarding the self.

Padmapāda takes Śaṅkara's theory of the self's reflection in the intellect and develops it into his theory of the ego-formation. Padmapāda is less interested in the linguistic aspect of reflection; his main interest is in the ontological analysis of *ahaṃkāra*, having as its basis the ignorance-material elements of the mental organ as well as the reflection of pure consciousness.

Prakāśātman prioritizes the analogy of reflection over other analogies describing the relation between *brahman* and the *jīva*. Later, the reflectionist school, claiming as its founding fathers Padmapāda and Prakāśātman, replaces this relation by the reflection taking place between *īśvara* and the *jīva*, testifying, among other reasons, to the theization of theories of reflection taking place in philosophical traditions of this period.

²⁵⁸ On Abhinavagupta's (10th-11th cen.) use of the analogy of reflection between Śiva and *ahaṃkāra* see Lawrence 2005. On Madhva's (13th cen.) theory of *bimbapratibimbabhava* between Viṣṇu and *jīva* and the practice of *bimbopāsana* see Sharma 1986:438-448.

Chapter 5: Lacan's Theory of the Mirror-Stage

Introduction:

Lacan bases his theory of the mirror-stage on the empirical evidence suggesting that infants between the ages of six to eighteen months learn to recognize themselves in a mirror. During this period, human infants are still found in a biologically premature condition of helplessness and experience their bodily organs and functions as having no unity. The reflection of the infant's body provides a unified image to the initially fragmented mental-physical complex. This reflected image becomes the basis for the imaginary object of identity for human consciousness, the ego, or the "I." Inspired by the findings of the natural and social sciences, Lacan bases his theory of the ego-formation also on Freud's writings, psychoanalytic metapsychology, clinical analytic practice, and philosophy both historical and contemporary.

I propose a new reading of Lacan's theory of the mirror stage as involving a double reflection: the subject is reflected in external mirrors and their symbolic substitutes, while the image of the ego is reflected back in the subject, in the "intra-organic mirror" located in the cerebral cortex. Until now, the Lacanian scholars have largely ignored the second reflection, although Lacan has explicitly referred to it on several occasions. The reason behind this neglect, perhaps, is the anti-naturalism of most Lacanians, leading them to turn a blind eye to Lacan's references to the actual central nervous system.

I will demonstrate that Lacan's theory of the mirror stage plays an important role in explaining the causally efficacious interaction between non-reductive categories of nature and society in his earlier writings and of the interaction between the imaginary, the symbolic and the real registers in his later writings.

5.1 The first reflection: the ego

Lacan presents his thesis of the mirror-stage fully in “The Mirror Stage as Formative of the *I* Function as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience” from 1949, although Lacan has already attempted to present his theory thirteen years earlier during the Fourteenth International Psycho-Analytical Congress at Marienbad²⁵⁹. The theme of the reflectory nature of the ego, however, is found throughout Lacan’s lectures in his *Ecrits* and *Seminars*, in his article on “The Family Complexes” (1938), and in “Some Reflections on the Ego” (1951/1953).²⁶⁰

Lacan bases his mirror-stage theory on empirical data from the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, as well as on his own clinical experience, according to which infants between the ages of six and eighteen months learn to recognize themselves in a mirror.²⁶¹ During this period, according to Lacan, a human child is still found in a biologically premature condition of helplessness²⁶² and is sunk in motor incapacity, turbulent movements, and fragmentation of his bodily organs and functions.²⁶³ The reflection of the infant’s body provides a unified image to the initially fragmented mental-physical complex. This reflected image becomes the basis for the imaginary object of identity for the consciousness – the ego, the *I*. In this reflected unity, the infant anticipates a completeness and mastery which he, or she, does not possess yet, thus forming a notion of the Ideal-*I*, the ideal form of oneself “that will only asymptotically approach the subject’s

²⁵⁹ Roudinesco 2003:25

²⁶⁰ Already at this point I would like to mention that the idea of the mirror stage was introduced for the first time not by Lacan, but by Henri Wallon, who has presented it in his article “Comment se développe chez l’enfant, la notion du corps propre,” published in 1931. Wallon has rendered it as the “mirror test” (*épreuve du miroir*) (Roudinesco 2003:29; Nobus 2017:105, 128, n. 24). I will discuss Lacan’s theory in the context of Wallon’s theory in the last section of this chapter.

²⁶¹ Johnston 2013:9

²⁶² The idea that humans are born prematurely and thus need the assistance of others for a relatively long period of their lives has been already formulated by Freud (Johnston 2013:9) and reiterated on the neuro-anatomical basis in Lodewijk Bolk’s “foetalization theory” during the 1920’s (Nobus 2017:107-108).

²⁶³ Lacan 2006:76

becoming.”²⁶⁴ Being the image of self-unity and self-identity, the ego also becomes the source of alienation for the subject from itself in that the object of one’s identity is always found outside oneself and is never achievable in its ideality.²⁶⁵ Lacan emphasizes that the ego is an object rather than a subject, a position he passionately defends against Anglo-American ego psychology aiming at strengthening the patient’s ego as presumably autonomous and conflict-free agency of subjectivity.²⁶⁶ Not only that the ego is an object, it is an illusory object of identity for the subject – something in which the subject misrecognizes²⁶⁷ him or herself.²⁶⁸

In his long paper from 1938 reprinted in 1985 under the title of “Family Complexes,”²⁶⁹ Lacan posits the mirror stage in the context of the ontogenetic history of child’s development and maturation. As mentioned earlier, an infant is born prematurely, and prolonged prematurational helplessness requires external social intervention for a successful physical and mental development.²⁷⁰ On the biological material level, birth is a violent tearing of the organic unity between the mother and the fetus, after which the newborn infant remains utterly powerless and dependent on the nutrition and care of others.²⁷¹ This biological insufficiency is precisely where

²⁶⁴ Lacan 2006:76. Freud presents his distinction between I-ideal (ego ideal) and the Ideal-I (or the ideal ego) in his “On Narcissism: and Introduction,” from 1914. On Lacan’s reading, the former is the vanishing points of the teloi of ego-level identifications and the latter is the ego if and when it succeeds at embodying its ideals.

²⁶⁵ Lacan 2006:148

²⁶⁶ Johnston 2013:9

²⁶⁷ The French word *méconnaissance* in the context of Lacan’s mirror-stage denotes the false recognition of subject’s identity with the reflection of his or her body. The actual physical disintegrated reality of the subject does not correspond to the unified external image with which the subject wishes to associate herself, and into which other people’s wishes and desires are projected.

²⁶⁸ Lacan 2006:80

²⁶⁹ The only unofficial English translation of this text by Cormac Gallagher is titled “Family Complexes in the Formation of the Individual (unpublished).” I rely on it here.

²⁷⁰ In his *Project for a Scientific Psychology* from 1895, Freud attempts to describe the human infant’s prematurational helplessness and its interaction with the caregiver in neurobiological terms. There he also argues that the initial helplessness of human beings is the primal source of all moral motives. See SE 1:318.

²⁷¹ Lacan, *Family Complexes in the Formation of the Individual*:19-20. Interestingly, Otto Rank, in *The Trauma of Birth* from 1924, argues that birth itself is the primordial *Ur*-trauma. Freud critiques Rank’s book in his own 1926 *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety*.

the factor of significant otherness in the form of the caregiver, usually the mother, is introduced into the life of the child. The initial dependence on others is the prerequisite for the later development of the child's ego, which is essentially open to the external social influences and manipulations. At this earliest stage of the infant's life, the nurturing mother compensates the biological separation at birth by satisfying the child's needs and primitive desires by "suckling, embracing and contemplating her child."²⁷²

The infant enters the mirror stage during and after yet another traumatic experience, namely that of the weaning. The mother by withdrawing her breast, causes a crisis in her child, because "weaning leaves in the human psyche the permanent trace of the biological relationship it interrupts."²⁷³ The vital tension leads to the arising of mental intention – either acceptance of the weaning or its rejection. One's oscillation between these two rudimentary intentions prepares the ground for the emergence of "me" (the one who accepts the weaning) and the awareness of the object (that which one rejects, the lost source of satisfaction). Weaning complex is also responsible for the arising of the desire for death, which for Freud was a biological drive,²⁷⁴ whereas for Lacan, it is a wish to escape from one's helpless condition and to return to the mother's womb.²⁷⁵

The mirror stage comes as a solution to the weaning complex in that the previous stage characterized by painful sense of disunity, separation, fragmentation and powerlessness is replaced by a promise of restoration of the lost unity.²⁷⁶ While the subject has never experienced unity prior to its anticipation during the mirror stage, it has already experienced *the loss* of unity at birth due

²⁷² Lacan, *Family Complexes in the Formation of the Individual*: 20

²⁷³ Lacan, *Family Complexes in the Formation of the Individual*:16

²⁷⁴ Exactly what the later Freud's *Todestrieb* amounts to and whether it is put forward by him as something strictly biological remain matters of still-unresolved controversy.

²⁷⁵ Lacan, *Family Complexes in the Formation of the Individual*:21-22

²⁷⁶ *Ibid*:31

to the violent separation from the mother's body. During the mirror stage the relatively undeveloped mental intentions of rejection and acceptance develop into the growing awareness of oneself and the other.

The mirror-stage is the basis for the whole psychological mechanism of the ego through all of its stages. It takes place during the period of formation of the complex of intrusion, characterized by the growing competition with the siblings and children of the same or close age.²⁷⁷ Between the ages of six months and two and a half years, in which the "specular I" is transformed into the "social I," the subject identifies itself not only with the image of one's own body, but with other human bodies as well. This second-order identification of the subject not only with its own image but with other similar images, is manifested, in the phenomenon of "transitivism". Transitivism indicates a common confusion of the young child with the other subjects among whom he finds himself. "A child who beats another child says that he himself was beaten; a child who sees another child fall, cries".²⁷⁸ At the same time, the subject's "own" body image can and does appear just as alienating as the images of others' bodies. This has a number of important implications in Lacan's theorizing about the ego and its pathologies as will be shown below. It should be noted that in Lacan's earlier writings, the process of socialization seems to proceed chronologically after the mirror-stage. In his later writings, however, Lacan revisits this point and stresses that subject's socialization begins, in fact, even prior to its birth, and the socio-symbolic "creation" of the subject takes place through the anticipated place of the subject in the social order.²⁷⁹

²⁷⁷ Lacan, *Family Complexes in the Formation of the Individual*:23-35

²⁷⁸ Lacan 2006:98, 113

²⁷⁹ Johnston 2013(a):9

This socialization, consisting in identification of the subject with other subjects, causes the emergence of the subject's desire for physical objects with which it associates the subjects of its identification. The subject desires objects desired by someone else – hence the phenomenon of jealousy, which “sets the stage on which the triangular relationship between the ego, the object and ‘someone else’ comes into being,” and expressions of aggressivity (i.e., destructive, disintegrating tendencies) come about as a result²⁸⁰.

Despite the fact that the objects of desire are exchangeable and can become equivalent to another, one is led to see objects as “having unity, permanence, and substantiality.” At the same time, the ego also appears as a kind of inert and stable entity, despite its factual instability.²⁸¹ On the other hand, the triangle of the ego-object-someone-else sets a limit to the subject's identification with the other in the form of the struggle between the ego and the other over the object. The ego as a distinct unit(y) is reflected back from the object of competition, and the subject's expression of aggression towards its opposing ‘someone else’ should be seen as a young child's anticipation of “the conquest of his own body's functional unity, which is still incomplete at the level of volitional motricity at that point in time.”²⁸² Paradoxically, subject's aggressivity aimed at the restoration of subject's independence from the other, i.e., at one's own unity, is manifested through the images of fragmentation of one's body. This paradox is consistent, to be sure, with subject's primordial helplessness and fragmentation experienced on this side of the

²⁸⁰ Lacan 1953:12; Lacan 2006:110-111. Lacan here is influenced, among other sources, by Alexandre Kojève's 1930s seminars on Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, where Kojève famously stated that “Man's desire is the desire of the Other.” Lacan, along with other French intellectuals (Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, etc.), attended Kojève's lectures and remained deeply marked by them.

²⁸¹ Ibid.

²⁸² Lacan 2006:112

mirror. On the other hand, unity represented by the image of one's body in a mirror is inseparable from the alienation of the subject from oneself caused by the externalization of one's own identity.

The structuralization and internalization of the ego-object-someone-else results in the formation of the imaginary alter-ego structurally accompanying any and every ego. And, the unified *Gestalt* of one's "own" body image, as both similar to that of others' body images as well as representing an impossible-to-achieve ideal, can itself become the object of aggression, destructiveness, hatred, etc. Alienation and misrecognition can and do arouse a spectrum of negative affects. Relatedly, all of this furnishes Lacan with means for explaining a range of psychopathological phenomena involving neurotic self-sabotaging, moral and/or sexual masochism, self-destructive behaviors, etc.

It seems that this dialectical divestment of the ego from its own otherness leads to its stagnation, to an attempt to build "military fortifications" around whatever images have been already internalized in one's self-identity, thus leaving other potential sources of identification, including the unconscious contents of one's own subjectivity outside of ego's aggressively defended boundaries²⁸³. Alternatively, certain hysterical symptoms may lead to aggressive disintegration in the individual.²⁸⁴ The defensive strategies of the ego, instead of strengthening the subject's capacity to cope with the reality (as claimed by the ego-psychologists), inevitably lead to neuroses, caused by the ego's denial (*Verneinung*) of subjective contents not included in ego's self-identity.²⁸⁵

The potential for madness is found in any one of us in the form of identifying myself with something, or someone, who is not myself – a misidentification characteristic of the mirror stage. At the same time, the mirror stage is the basis for the "normal" development of the ego. Not only

²⁸³ Lacan 2006:107

²⁸⁴ Ibid:78

²⁸⁵ Lacan 1953:11,16

pathological cases involve the ego's misidentification, denial, etc. but any of the "normal," i.e., mildly neurotic, stages of development of family complexes which themselves constitute the basis for the normal adult social and sexual life. Here, one of Lacan's critical targets is Anna Freud as the grandmother of ego psychology. Whereas her 1933 book's title speaks of *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense*, Lacan proposes instead that *the ego is the mechanisms of defense*. In other words, there is not a non-pathological ego separate from the ensemble of pathological defense mechanisms; rather, the ego is nothing other than, in its very essence, neurotic defensiveness.

Jealousy among siblings, "the archetype of all social feelings" corresponds to the triangle of "subject-object-someone-else". Only through the "alienating identity" with subject's rival image, and identification with the object of other's desire, the child will be able to recognize the other as the other and oneself as oneself.²⁸⁶

Finally, the Oedipus complex, which takes place between the ages of three and five, is based on the successful resolution of previous stages and contains all the components of the further period of maturation and the adult psychic life. The love for the parent of the opposite sex and the rivalry with the parent of the same sex both constitute dialectical movement from the previous stages, and involve the same mirror stage components of alienation-identity. I will not enter into the detailed discussion of this important stage, as it would be beyond the scope of the present study of the mirror stage. It should be noticed, however, that the subject resolves the Oedipus complex by its alienating identification with the image of the paternal figure (which is not necessarily a

²⁸⁶ Chiesa 2007:29

male biological father) from which the ego-ideal and the super-ego are derived, as well as sexual suppression and sublimation.²⁸⁷

Lacan's development of the ego follows rather closely Hegel's dialectic of lordship and bondage described in his *Phenomenology of Spirit*.²⁸⁸ Hegel similarly traces the development of Self-consciousness to its facing another Self-consciousness, triggering the process of self-recognition from and a struggle with the other.²⁸⁹ In general, the early Lacan's writings on the ego of the mirror stage follow Hegel's dialectical principle consistently. Each of the developmental stages involves a contradiction between unifying and alienating aspects of the ego, which are sublated through the higher stages, but never entirely disappear.²⁹⁰

The role, or rather the ability, of psychoanalysis, as Lacan enigmatically puts it, is to "accompany the patient to the ecstatic limit of the *"Thou art that,"* where the cipher of his mortal destiny is revealed to him."²⁹¹ "He rephrases his quotation from the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* fourteen years later in his *Seminar X*: *"Tat tvam asi, the that which thou dost recognize in the other is thyself"*.²⁹² In other words, it is in the power of the analyst to accompany his patient to the realization of the inescapable relation of the subject to the other. The illusory nature of the ego as an autonomous independent thinking and voluntarily acting entity is exposed as a mere mechanism of identifications always external to the subject. Although eliminating the function of the ego is not a possibility in psychoanalysis, understanding its nature seems to be "ecstatic." This ecstasy, we must say, has nothing to do with the achievement of the subject's lost or imagined harmonious

²⁸⁷ Lacan, *Family Complexes in the Formation of the Individual*:35-56

²⁸⁸ This is due in large part to Kojève's influence I have mentioned above.

²⁸⁹ Lacan 2006:98; Hegel 1977:111-119

²⁹⁰ Chiesa 2007:29-30

²⁹¹ Lacan 2006:81

²⁹² Lacan 2014:223

unity with oneself or even with the other, a kind of ultimate self-realization, as the conflicting nature of the ego would forever prevent the occurrence of both. As Lacan notes in his article from 1951, “the libidinal tension that shackles the subject to the constant pursuit of an illusory unity which is always luring him away from himself, is surely related to that agony of dereliction which is Man’s particular and tragic destiny.”²⁹³ The “Thou art that!” is a formula revealing to the analysand “the cipher of his mortal destiny,” in that he is confronted with one’s own mortality, the inevitability of death. While the infant in its initial helplessness has been saved by the Other, the end of analysis signifies the realization of our essential helplessness and loneliness in the face of death, where there is no Other who can save us.²⁹⁴ As Johnston points out, in pronouncing “Thou art that!” (“*Tu es cela*”) Lacan plays with a similarity between “*Tu es*” and “*tuer*,” between “Thou art that!” and “Kill that:”

The termination of the analytic process, according to Lacan, ought to fuse the “*Tu es*” and the “*Tuer*” through bringing about a momentary encounter with the analysand’s inescapable, “ownmost” (to resort to a Heideggerian term appropriate in a context in which Lacan is alluding to the concept of “being toward death” as found in *Being and Time*.²⁹⁵

Playing with this homophony, Lacan indicates, among other things, that getting the subject to step back from the ego in identifying the latter for what it is (“Thou art that!”) simultaneously involves a negating (“Kill that!”) of the ego’s power of enthralling/fascinating the subject formerly identifying with it.

The liberating and ecstatic effect of “Thou art that!” seems to be akin to catharsis, which spectators of a Greek drama may experience at the end of a show. The one who grieves over

²⁹³ Lacan 1953:16

²⁹⁴ Lacan 1992:303-304; Johnston 2009:153

²⁹⁵ Johnston 2009:153

Oedipus' horrible fulfillment of the prophecy he has been trying to avoid by all means also rejoices over solving the riddle of the Sphinx. In *Seminar VII*, Lacan compares between catharsis, which is the telos of the Greek tragedy, and the "purification of desire" experienced during psychoanalysis:

To limit ourselves to something that can be said right off, that everyone has known for a long time now, and that is one of the most modest features of our practice, let us say that analysis progresses by means of a return to the meaning of an action. That alone justifies the fact that we are interested in the moral dimension. Freud's hypothesis relative to the unconscious presupposes that, whether it be healthy or sick, normal or morbid, human action has a hidden meaning that one can have access to. In such a context the notion of a catharsis that is a purification, a decantation or isolation of levels, is immediately conceivable.²⁹⁶

The ecstatic limit of the "*Thou art that*" is reached when the "deep meaning has been liberated"²⁹⁷ from the frustrating cycle of pain-inflicting actions, the meaning of which one has not understood until now. In this process, one's desire is crystalized in the sense that it loses its attachment to particular objects of desire, with which the subject might have been obsessed all of his or her life. Many possibilities are open for the one who is ready to direct one's desire towards new horizons, and one stops desiring the impossible.²⁹⁸ This is why Lacan optimistically states that from this point the real journey begins.

While in his early writings, Lacan identifies the stage of socialization as a successor of the specular mirror stage, in his later writings, the subject is socialized even prior to his birth, when the future child is already integrated into the symbolic structure of the social order. In his revisions of the mirror-stage, Lacan adds a parental figure pointing to the infant's reflection and saying

²⁹⁶ Lacan 1992:312

²⁹⁷ Lacan 1992:312

²⁹⁸ Lacan 1992: 300, 323

“*That’s you there.*”²⁹⁹ By these gesture and utterance the grounds for infant’s integration into the symbolic structure of social relations have been prepared, and the misrecognition of the subject with the reflection of its “own” body is made possible. On the other hand, one’s cathartic realization in the form of the “*Thou art that*” is contrasted with the parental “*That’s you there*” in that it reveals rather than conceals the meaningless semantic relation in which the “I” is one of the signifiers, having no clearly distinct reference in the subject.

In 1949’s essay, Lacan uses the word “me” (*moi*) as identical with the ego. During this period, he uses the words “I” (*Je*) and “me” (*moi*) interchangeably as translations of Freud’s *Ich*.³⁰⁰ In his *Seminar II*, however, Lacan utilizes the word “*Je*” in order to explain that the I is distinct from the ego. In this context, the word “*moi*” as referring to the ego must mean “me” rather than “I.” In any case, in *Seminar II*, the corresponding formula to “*Thou art that*” appears to be Rimbaud’s “*I is an other*” (*Je est un autre*).³⁰¹ Here the “I” refers to the subject – specifically the unconscious subject – which is not the ego. In fact, the I is everything the ego is not – the unconscious content or unconscious mental activity denied by or unknown to the conscious ego. Lacan refers to this distinction of the I from the ego as Freud’s Copernican revolution in which the ego is decentred in relation to the individual.³⁰² Lacan explicitly identifies the subject with the unconscious, and distinguishes it from the ego. It is the unconscious that “knows without knowing” and “thinks without thinking,” and is the real knowing and thinking agency, i.e., the subject. Understood in this sense, “*Thou art that*” means that I am not the ego; I am that which is not the

²⁹⁹ Johnston 2013:9; See for instance, Lacan 2006:568.

³⁰⁰ Evans 2006:51

³⁰¹ Lacan 1991:7

³⁰² Lacan 1991b:9

ego; the real I is external to one's self-identity. As Lacan sometimes puts this paraphrasing Descartes: "I think where I am not, and I am not where I think."

Paradoxically, the I is impersonal and refers to "an organized system of symbols, aiming to cover the whole of an experience, to animate it, to give it its meaning".³⁰³ The unconscious subject is structured like a language and is manifested through speech.³⁰⁴

What Lacan keeps stressing is that the ego is not simply a negation of the I, not only a mistake of the I – although all of the above is true – but a particular object within the experience of the subject. It is an object which fills an "imaginary function" for the subject.³⁰⁵ We tend to substitute the ego with the subject referred to by the 'Thou' of 'Thou art that', and this substitution is the origin of the confusion between the two. The subject and the ego cannot, however, appear in the same equation at all. The *Je* and the *moi* cannot stand in any relation of identity to each other even formulated as 'Thou are not that', because the sentence still implies that the subject of the sentence stands in a relation to its object, even if this is a relation of a negation. As Lacan puts it,

There's no doubt that the real *I* is not the ego. But that isn't enough, for one can always fall into thinking that the ego is only a mistake of the *I*, a partial point of view, the mere becoming aware of which would be sufficient to broaden the perspective, sufficient for the reality which has to be reached in the analytic experience to reveal itself.³⁰⁶

Lacan attempts to avoid by all means any identification between the ego and the subject, even if it is a false identification. In particular, Lacan warns here against the attempts of ego-psychology to

³⁰³ Lacan 1991b:40-41. Likewise, in German idealism and some of its offshoots (with which Lacan is familiar already by the 1930s), the distinction between transcendental and empirical subjects involves the anonymous impersonality of the "I" *qua* transcendental subject.

³⁰⁴ Chiesa 2007:36

³⁰⁵ Lacan 1991b:44

³⁰⁶ Lacan 1991b:44

restore the ego its central place and its assumption that through the ego-analysis it is possible to reveal an “authentic self.” In fact the subject and the ego belong to distinct realms. The ego is an image having its identity with other images. The subject belongs to the symbolic order and acquires its identity within the “trans-subjective” symbolic realm of language. At the mirror stage, there is indeed an interplay between the fragmented, unconscious subject and its unified image, i.e. the ego. It is true that this interplay leaves its effect on the development of both the subject and the ego. Nevertheless, this is not the effect of the identity between the two, but of the essential confusion, misidentification of the two.

In other words, it is one thing to identify or even misidentify one subject with another subject, or one object with another object. It is an entirely different thing to misidentify the subject with the object – the two do not have any basis for comparison.

5.2 The model of two mirrors

In Lacan’s earlier writings, such as his articles from 1938, 1949, and 1951, the mirror stage is a concrete developmental stage in the early childhood, triggered by the infant’s encounter with the mirror. During this stage, the real mirror in which the subject identifies the reflection of his or her body is further substituted by human “mirrors,” the significant others whose accompanying gaze and presence constantly reflect their perceptions of the subject. The introduction of social relations into the subject’s perception of him or herself is due to the relational structures of the immediate social environment of the infant, namely the family, upon which one is condemned to depend for many years thanks to the biological fact of prolonged pre maturational helplessness. The imagos of the mother, the father, the siblings, etc. are internalized into the subject, together with the “complexes” around which these imagos are organized. The formation of the ego, thus,

is caused by an interplay between external reflections of the subject in the form of the familial imagos and the internal reflection, or internalization of these imagos by the subject. In this process, the real reflection in the mirror is transformed into a mental reflection whose role is to connect the outside with the inside, the outer world with the inner world, the social with the organic, the other with the subject. The ego is “the knot” at the “intersection of nature and culture,” “the knot of imaginary servitude,”³⁰⁷ whose very existence is grounded on the shaky grounds of a mixed biological and social origin. Lacan persistently stresses the irreducibility of the psychic life to biological-neurological processes, contrary to certain reductivist theories.³⁰⁸ The power of the society becomes predominant due to the biological insufficiency for the survival of the human child for a prolonged period. Natural dehiscence, complemented by social mediation, gives rise to the ego in order to bridge the gap between the natural and the social, evident in the early months of human life characterized by fragmentation of being.

The mirror stage remains a central concept in Lacan’s thought throughout his entire career. As Lacan testifies in 1968, “everyone knows that I entered psychoanalysis with the little brush that was called the ‘mirror stage’... I turned the ‘mirror stage’ into a coat rack.”³⁰⁹ It seems, however, that from the mid 1950-s the mirror stage becomes more and more symbolized and formalized. Moreover, Lacan abandons the real mirror as the cause of the child’s self-recognition, and gives predominance to the symbolical order, through which the child learns to recognize himself or herself. As Nobus points out, blind children may develop self-image, even if they have never seen

³⁰⁷ Lacan 2006:80

³⁰⁸ E.g., see Lacan’s “Presentation on Psychical Causality” from 1946 (Lacan 2006:123-160)

³⁰⁹ *Seminar XV*, cited in Roudinesco 2003:27

any reflections of their own body, as long as “the symbolic is there to replace and control” their eyes.³¹⁰

An example of Lacan’s recasting of the mirror stage in later years can be seen in his models of one and two mirrors and an inverted bouquet discussed in his *Seminar I* from 1954,³¹¹ in “Remarks on Daniel Lagache’s Presentation” from 1960, included in his *Écrits*,³¹² in *Seminar X* from 1962-1963 and elsewhere.

Lacan adopts an optical model of a spherical mirror and an inverted bouquet (figure 1) from the French physicist Henri Bouasse (1866-1953). In Bouasse’s experiment, conducted primarily for recreational purposes, an empty vase is posited in front of a concave mirror. The vase stands on the top of a box, which is open toward the mirror and in which posited an inverted bouquet. If the viewer’s eyes are placed in a certain position and in a certain distance from the mirror, he or she can see the reflections of the vase and the flowers in such a way that the inverted bouquet appears upright and within the vase.

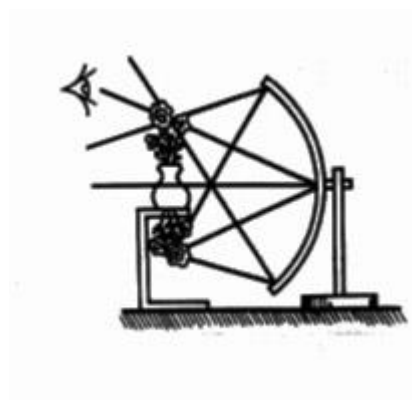


Figure 1: Bouasse’s experiment of the inverted bouquet.

³¹⁰ Nobus 2017:120

³¹¹ Lacan 1991a:76-80, 123-126, 139-142, 143-150, 164-175

³¹² Lacan 2006:563-572

Reprinted from Lacan 1991a:78.

In *Seminar I*, Lacan roughly identifies the box with one's physical body, the bouquet with drives and desires, the concave mirror with the cortex, and the eye with the subject.³¹³ In the context of the following discussion of a clinical case described by Melanie Klein, the model seems to describe the interplay between the imaginary and the real in the development of the ego and the subject's socialization. The illusory synthesis between the real flowers and the reflected image of the vase stands for the incessant introjection of the real images into one's "inside" (into the "intra-organic mirror" of the cortex) as well as into one's projection of one's drives and desires onto the external reality. The whole process is imagined to take place in respect to one's body (inside or outside of it), while the position of the subject for whom the interaction between the imaginary and the real becomes meaningful is established on the basis of the symbolic order. It should be emphasized that the interplay of projections and introjections, of the interaction between the imaginary and the real is only possible through the mediation of language, responsible for signification and representation of the real, for substitutions between the images, and other meaningful relations with objects and people.³¹⁴

Lacan adds to this schema of a concave mirror another plane mirror posited behind the box with the flowers and the vase (figure 2). This time, it is the bouquet that is standing upright on the box, and the vase that is inverted inside the box. The viewer's eyes are looking not directly into the concave mirror, but into the plane mirror. Thus, the viewer, from his position, sees the image of the flowers within the vase as a reflection of the reflected image in the concave mirror.

³¹³ Lacan 1991a:80

³¹⁴ Ibid:77-88

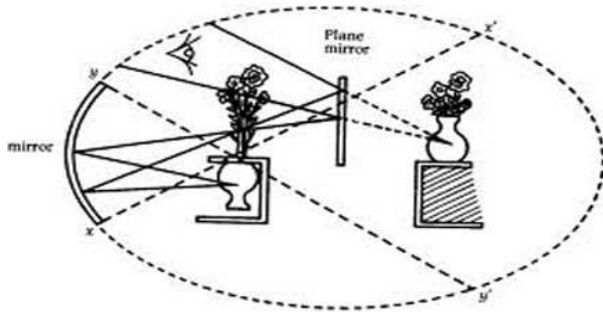
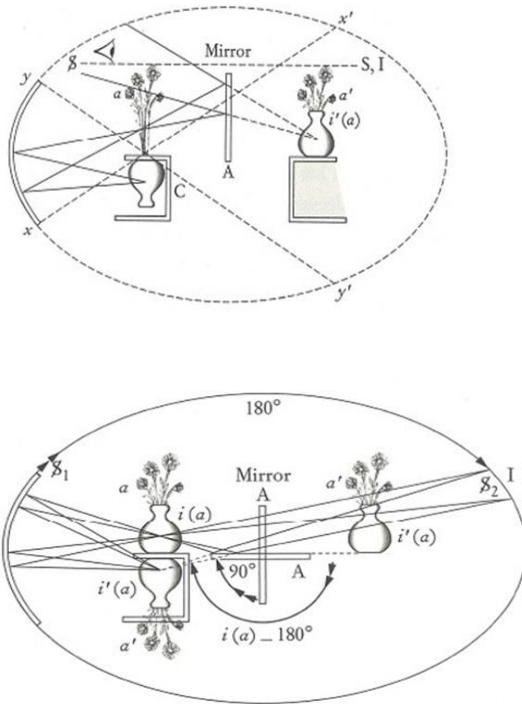


Figure 2: Schema with two mirrors in *Seminar I*.

Reprinted from Lacan 1991a:124.



Figures 3 and 4: Double mirror device in “Remarks on Daniel Lagache’s Presentation.”

Reprinted from Vanheule 2011:2, 5.

In this model of two mirrors, the eye, which represents the subject (but is not the subject, as Lacan repeatedly points out) can see in the plain mirror not only the reflection of the flowers in the vase, but also the reflection of one's own body. In this schema of two mirrors, in which both the subject and the object are reflected, Lacan traces the emergence of the initial and secondary narcissisms of the mirror stage, during which the child develops first an imaginary relation with the image of one's own body and later - with other people.³¹⁵ The model explains the process of creation of the ideal-ego, which becomes the source of imaginary projection, of the illusion of self-unity, independence and autonomy. This can be seen in further elaboration of the double mirror model as seen in figure 4: the ideal-ego as signified by *i'* (a) is an illusory reflection of the unity between the vase and the flowers.³¹⁶ On the other hand, the ego-ideal, the privileged signifier governing the internalization of social law and order, symbolized as *I*, the subject's own reflection in the plane mirror, represents the point of view from which the subject sees itself as it is seen by the other.³¹⁷ Thus, the model demonstrates that the ego-ideal is responsible for the perception of the ideal-ego by the subject.

The plain mirror rotates and allows the subject to change his or her perception of the vase and the flowers without actually changing the subject's physical position. This mirror symbolizes the discourse of the Other, through which the subject's relations to reality and others are constituted. Here Lacan makes use of the model in order to describe the psychoanalytical treatment, in the course of which, the subject alters its perspective on its relations with its own self-image, with the objects of desire and with the Other. As is demonstrated in figure 4, by changing the angle of the mirror reflection, *\$1*, signifying the position of the subject eventually

³¹⁵ Lacan 1991a:125

³¹⁶ Lacan 2006:566; 1991a:140; Evans 2006:52

³¹⁷ Vanheule 2011:4

reaches the point of view of \$2, symbolizing the position of the subject's reflecting other. In the context of the psychoanalytical treatment, the intersubjective interaction between the analyst and the analysand leads the latter to adopt the position from which the nature of the ego as constructed and constructing mechanism of illusion and misrecognition is revealed. It should be noted that this "turning around" of the analysand is not dissimilar to the role Socrates has assigned to a philosopher in his cave parable to turn the prisoners of illusions to the light of truth. At the same time, let us pay attention to the passive role of the analyst. The turning around takes place, not due to the analyst's active efforts to change the analysand's perspective, but through the dynamics of the discourse, an intersubjective process which involves depersonalization, or, as Lacanians later come to describe it, "subjective destitution," through which the analysand's rigid ego-defenses are loosened.³¹⁸

While the model invokes the formation of the ego by the reflected image of the body during the mirror stage, Lacan emphasizes that his model of two mirrors is merely a metaphor conveniently illustrating several aspects of the ego-ideal and the ideal-ego, the interaction between the real, the imaginary and the symbolic registers, as well as the dynamics of the psychoanalytical treatment.

Of the significance for the present study is the new aspect of the ego illuminated through the metaphor of the mirror-reflection. In Lacan's early treatment of the mirror stage, reflection has played the role of the illusory synthesis between biological and social planes manifested through the ego, a paradoxical entity created at the stitches between the two. The ego emerges in the attempt to heal the broken fragmentary reality, but the very efforts to bring unity and independence

³¹⁸ Lacan 2006:568

reproduce its essential brokenness. In the model of the two mirrors and the bouquet, reflection stands for the synthesis between the imaginary and the real by means of the symbolic. After hesitated association between the eye in the model and the subject, Lacan finally identifies the eye with the ego. The ego becomes associated with a certain position in the syntactic field of social signifiers, from which relations between the imaginary and the real are imagined, internalized and projected. Lacan names this kind of relations “mirror relations.” These are not real relations, describing relative positions of real objects, their real interaction – causal, correlative, or functional, but rather imaginary – they connect real objects with imagined; internalize the first and project the latter.³¹⁹ These relations, however, are not a free two-way flow of images – outside and inside; they are constantly mediated, interrupted, misrecognized and distorted through the symbolic order, i.e., through discourse. As Lacan points out, it is enough that the position of the eye in relation to the two mirrors slightly changes, and the subject will see the an unclear image. “Let’s say that this represents the uneasy accommodation of the imaginary in man,” – Lacan sums up.³²⁰ This statement somewhat weakens the Gestalt-like power of the imago over the subject in Lacan’s earlier versions of the mirror stage. The paradox of the mirror stage is that while the child anticipates his mastery over his body, it is the imago of his body that has a mastery over him, fascinates and captivates him. The power of the imago of the body is preserved in the imagos of the others, which forcefully penetrate the subject and establish their rule through the internalized structuration of the superego and the ego-ideal.

³¹⁹ Lacan’s discussion of “mirror relations” in the context of his optical model invokes Marx’s metaphor of camera obscura, an optical mechanism turning the real image into an inverted one. “In all ideology men and their circumstances appear upside down as in a *camera obscura*, this phenomenon arises just as much from their historical life-process as the inversion of objects on the retina does from their physical life process (Marx 2000:146).” In the process of production of ideas, real social relations between individuals and their real relations to productive forces are transformed into mystified illusory phantoms, which nevertheless gain primary access to human imagination at the expense of reality.

³²⁰ Lacan 1991a:140

By introducing the prevalent agency of the symbolic order in guiding the interaction between the real and virtual images, Lacan compromises the overwhelming power of the imago. Thus, in *Seminar I* he raises questions as to how our internalization of the imago of the father takes place at the end of the Oedipus complex. He refers to certain metaphorical mythical renderings of this process, involving “devouring of one’s father,” as in the communion, when the Christ is eaten, and internalized by the believer.³²¹ Lacan points to the inadequacy of such metaphors, but perhaps he also becomes aware of certain weaknesses of his own metaphor of reflection, in which the unrestrained images take over the empty soul of the subject. Instead of rejecting the metaphor altogether, he revises it by introducing a more or less complex optical construction of two mirrors, in which the images are necessarily mediated by the symbolic structure.³²²

The change in Lacan’s attitude to the power of the imago seems to be the direct result of his encounter with de Saussure and structuralism at the end of the 1940-s. In the aftermath of this encounter, Lacan sees fit to recast the imago not as purely imagistic/Imaginary, but now as a hybrid of the imagistic/Imaginary and the linguistic/Symbolic. The imagistic nucleus of the ego comes to be viewed by him as suffused with and marked by signifiers (specifically, by those signifiers emitted by parental Others participating in the moment of [mis]recognition in front of the mirror).

5.3. Second reflection: consciousness

In my discussion of the model of the double mirror, I have touched upon reflection as the model of introjection and projection of images. In this section I will focus on Lacan’s second reflection of the images in the “intra-organic” mirror, later associated by Lacan with the phenomenon of consciousness.

³²¹ Lacan 1991a:169

³²² During the 60-s, Lacan begins distancing himself from his model of the two mirrors. He argues that in *Seminar I*, the model was needed in order to clear away the imaginary which was overvalued in psychoanalysis, but is no longer adequate in representing his notion of the object *a*. Vanheule discusses the reasons behind Lacan’s rejection of his own model of two mirrors in 2011:1-9.

As I have demonstrated in my discussion of Vijñānabhikṣu's second reflection, there is no reason to assume that the subject should misidentify himself with his reflection, unless he also reflects back what he perceives in the mirror. Lacan describes this constant projection and introjection of the subject and the images assumed by the ego as "a play of mirrors."³²³

Already in his classical work on the mirror-stage from 1949, Lacan postulates this second mirror and locates it in the cerebral cortex, which he regards as what "psycho-surgical operations will lead us to regard as the intra-organic mirror."³²⁴ Curiously enough, the existence of Lacan's "intra-organic mirror" in this part of the brain has been supported almost fifty years later by the discovery of the "mirror neurons" responsible for the subject's imitation of other people's emotions and actions.³²⁵

In *Seminar II*, Lacan explicitly connects the subjective mirror to the (epi)phenomenon of consciousness. He provides his "materialist definition" for consciousness, which is said to occur each time "there's a surface such that it can produce what is called *an image*."³²⁶ Such a surface can be found in mirrors, lakes, and in a specific area of the human brain called the "area striata" of the occipital lobe. This area, responsible for the reception of visual images, functions exactly like a mirror, in the sense that an image is reflected at some point of the surface and strikes the corresponding same point in space.³²⁷ The ego is merely an object, an image reflected in consciousness. The ego and the consciousness are always correlated; they always appear together. Nevertheless, they are not the same thing – the ego is external to consciousness.

³²³ Lacan 1991a:179

³²⁴ Lacan 2006:78

³²⁵ Johnston 2012:32

³²⁶ Lacan 1991b:49

³²⁷ Lacan 1991b:49

Lacan takes a stand against what he calls the “religious conception of consciousness,” which coincides with the modern atheistic anthropocentrism. According to this idealist view, to which Lacan opposes his “material definition,” consciousness is a privileged vantage-point, a pinnacle of creation, teleological cause of all material processes.³²⁸ In fact, argues Lacan, “consciousness is linked to something entirely contingent, just as contingent as the surface of a lake in an uninhabited world – the existence of our eyes or of our ears”.³²⁹

In other words, the ability to reflect external reality by consciousness is no different from the ability to reflect in any other reflectory physical objects. Consciousness is a contingent material phenomenon, a by-product of the activity of blind nature. Conscious subject is a marginal part of subjectivity linked to the mechanical ability of the sense organs to reproduce images. Thus, Lacan often takes the eye, and not the cortex, to be the mirror of subjectivity, as the receptive surface posited in a particular location in relation to the rest of the world, thus organizing the world into space in accordance to its position.³³⁰ At the same time, in “The Freudian Thing,” Lacan points to the Freudian distinction between the “perception-consciousness system” and consciousness proper to argue that not all “reflected” (i.e. perceived) images are consciously perceived. Some contents of perception-consciousness bypass the awareness of consciousness proper and affect the network of unconscious mental contents. Thus, the unconscious interferes even with apparently conscious domain of perception.³³¹

The eye, for Lacan, seems to have two functions. First, as an organ of reflection, the eye reproduces the images, already reflected in the external mirror of the ego, thus initiating the infinite

³²⁸ Lacan 1991b:47-48

³²⁹ Ibid:48

³³⁰ Lacan 2014:223; 1991a:80

³³¹ Johnston, *Irrepressible Truth: On Lacan's the Freudian Thing*, unpublished: 117-118

interplay between the projected and introjected images. As Lacan puts it, “it has no need of two mirrors standing opposite one another for the infinite reflections of a mirror palace to be created. As soon as there is an eye and a mirror, the infinite recursion of inter-reflected images is produced.”³³²

On the other hand, as we have seen in his model of the two mirrors and the bouquet, at least on a metaphorical level, Lacan regards the eye as symbolic of the subject.³³³ The eye is not the subject, because it has nothing to do with the unconscious. At the same time it signifies the subject’s position in respect to the objective reality, including the ego. It is a specular position at the level of the imaginary, but nevertheless it relates to the real place of the unconscious subject in the symbolic world, i.e., in the world of speech.³³⁴ The eye is the visible signifier of the subject in the objective world as the “seer,” without reducing the subject to its objective imagery.

5.4 The tain of the mirror: the unconscious

The phenomenon of misidentification of the subject with the ego can be now explained by the interplay of reflections between the consciousness and the ego. What escapes, however, any grasp of reflection is the “tain of the mirror”³³⁵ – the dark rear of the reflectory surface. Žižek describes this impenetrable part of the mirror as follows:

Reflection – the mirroring of the subject in the object, the reappropriation of the object by means of the subject recognizing in it itself, its own product – encounters its limit in the “tain of the mirror;” in the points where, instead of returning to the viewer his own image, the mirror confronts him with a meaningless dark spot. These dark spots are, of course, simultaneously the condition of the possibility and

³³² Lacan 2014:224

³³³ Lacan 1991a:80

³³⁴ Lacan 1991a:80

³³⁵ This phrase comes from the title to a book by Rodolphe Gasché involving a Derridean critique of German idealist models of subjectivity (1988).

the impossibility of mirroring. Precisely by limiting reflection, they create the minimal distance between what is being mirrored and its mirror-image, the distance which makes the very process of mirroring possible.³³⁶

In other words, the “other” - the image of another person recognizable by the ego - has that side which cannot reflect the subject – i.e., the side of the “Other” or what is not recognizable by the ego in another person. On the other hand, the subject has a side which evades the awareness of the consciousness or its reflection in the ego. In the case of the subject, the unconscious seems to be this tain of the mirror – both making the phenomenon of conscious reflection possible and escaping the scope of this reflection. In this sense, the liberating formula “*Thou art that*,” or “I am the Other,” could refer to this negative non-reflection of the subject and the Other. Paradoxically, the subject is the Other, because both escape the mirror-interplay of consciousness and the ego, (as well as any ego/alter-ego relationships), and as such are really indistinguishable. As Žižek puts it,

[...] this image of uncontrollable Otherness with which no identification seems possible, is nothing but the “objective correlate” of the abstract negativity that defines the subject. The passage of “external” into “absolute” reflection consists precisely in this *redoubling* of reflection. Reflection as symmetrical mirroring of the subject in objectivity fails, there is always some residue which resists integration, and it is in this residue escaping the reflective grasp that the proper dimension of the subject is “reflected.” In other words, *the subject is the tain of the mirror* [...] “Absolute reflection” is simply the name for this experience of how the subject, by means of his very failure to grasp the secret of the Other, is already inscribed in the Other’s “accountancy,” *reflected* into the Other: the experience of how his “external” reflection of the Other is already a “reflective determination” of the Other itself.³³⁷

The unconscious subject is in fact intersubjective, as the language itself. Here Lacan’s another enigmatic formula might become a little more comprehensive – “*the unconscious is the discourse of the other*”.³³⁸ When it joins to other statements of identity between the I and the other, the

³³⁶ Žižek 2002:89

³³⁷ Žižek 2002:90

³³⁸ Lacan 1991a:85

structure and the ontological existence of the subject appear “outside” of the perceived individual. As Evance explains, “If the unconscious seems interior, this is an effect of the imaginary, which blocks the relationship between the subject and the Other and which inverts the message of the Other”³³⁹.

Lacan criticizes the widely believed relation between the conscious and the unconscious as between the outer layers and inner recesses. Lacan prefers the topological model of the Moebius Strip, in which “a single surface is twisted such that uninterrupted movement along it transports one between two opposed faces.”³⁴⁰ This model fits the relation between consciousness and the unconscious because here “the apparently separate conscious and unconscious dimensions intersect and pass into each other.”³⁴¹ As we have seen in the previous section, such cognitive experience as perception involves conscious reflection as well as unconscious incorporation.

The unconscious is the third factor, in addition to the conscious and the ego, which makes the mutual reflection meaningful. Without the unconscious, the subject is “no more anyone than the reflection of the mountain in the lake is”.³⁴² The mere exchange between reflections of the consciousness and the ego creates an illusion of identity, but it is an illusion for no one.³⁴³ The unconscious, through its symbolic structure, is the only source of recognition (*reconnaissance*) – whether of the distinctness of the images, of the Other, and of the subject, because only symbolic

³³⁹ Evans 2006:220

³⁴⁰ Johnston 2013b:253

³⁴¹ Johnston 2013b:253

³⁴² Lacan 1991b:52

³⁴³ This motif of “an illusion for no one” is nicely developed by the contemporary German philosopher of mind (who certainly is no Lacanian himself) Thomas Metzinger in his 2003 book *Being No One: The Self-Model Theory of Subjectivity*.

structure may provide a coherent system of reference for distinct units, among which the subject finds its place.³⁴⁴

5.5. Mirror stage in perspective: Wallon and Lacan

In this section, I would like to briefly compare Lacan's theory of the mirror stage with Henri Wallon's interpretation of this stage. On the one hand, I will put Lacan's theory in perspective by reframing the context and the function of the mirror stage as a developmental stage and a metaphor. On the other hand, by changing the perspective, I will posit Lacan's theory of reflection, as I have reconstructed it throughout this chapter, as *only one* version of psychological theory of reflection, instead of treating it as *the only one*.³⁴⁵

As I have mentioned earlier, Lacan owes the concept of the mirror stage to Henri Wallon (1879-1962), although throughout his career Lacan "forgets" to acknowledge this fact and always insists that it was he who introduced the term.³⁴⁶ In 1931, Wallon gives the name *épreuve du miroir* (mirror test) to an experiment through which the child learns to distinguish his own body from its reflected image between the age of three months and the end of the first year.³⁴⁷ Wallon relies upon the empirical observations made by Charles Darwin, William Preyer and Paul Guillaume, which suggest that children usually remain indifferent towards their own reflection before the age of three months, fixate and smile to it around the age of four months and understand that the reflected image does not lead a separate existence by the end of the first year of their lives.³⁴⁸ Wallon is

³⁴⁴ Lacan 1991b:52

³⁴⁵ Interestingly, it was Wallon who commissioned Lacan's 1938 essay on "The Family Complexes." Moreover, various empirical researchers from the 1970s onward have revisited mirror (and video) self-recognition phenomena in young children. For other usages of reflection analogy in psychology see, e.g., Vanheule and Verhaeghe 2009:399-402; Pines 1998:17-40.

³⁴⁶ Roudinesco 2003:27

³⁴⁷ Roudinesco 2003:27; Nobus 2017:106

³⁴⁸ Nobus 2017:105-106

interested in the development of self-awareness in respect to one's unified image of the body. He argues that the child does not recognize himself or herself at the first stage because during this period the child forms a unity with his or her own image. Recognition of oneself in a mirror must be preceded by recognition of the other, which implies a comparison of two images different in nature.³⁴⁹ He speculates that the child's engagement with his mirror-image and the progressive mastery of it result in the child's ability to distinguish himself or herself from the rest of the world.³⁵⁰

While early Lacan, as evidenced in his "Family Complexes," shares with Wallon his interest in the mirror test as an explanation for certain developmental processes, he gradually distances himself from Wallon's perception of the mirror test by recasting it in terms of the unconscious.³⁵¹ This is not surprising, as strictly speaking each of them works in a different conceptual framework: Wallon primarily in the field of cognitive development (dominated by such figures as Jean Piaget); Lacan in psychoanalysis (essentially Freudian tradition).

Nevertheless, Lacan and Wallon share an essential commitment to non-reducibility of psychical life to natural factors, and seek to explain how social factors collaborate with and dominate the natural. In particular, both are interested in describing the internalization of social structures by the psychological subject, the process through which the external social dynamics turns into an individual psychical and cognitive activity. Like Lacan, Wallon utilizes the concept of reflection, not only in the particular context of the mirror stage, but metaphorically extends it to the description of the subject-other interrelations:

³⁴⁹ Voyat 1984:43

³⁵⁰ Nobus 2017:106

³⁵¹ Roudinesco 2003:30

“Man begins by being reflected in another man as in a mirror. Only when Peter develops an attitude toward Paul which is similar to the attitude he has toward himself, does Peter begin to become conscious of himself as a man.” This statement of Marx’s (*Capital*, Vol. 3) expresses very clearly the back-and-forth motion between self and other, and between the image perceived in the other and oneself – an interplay which not only has a moral or social character but is also an essential psychological process.³⁵²

Wallon accepts Marx’s comparison of human social nature to a mirror; human individuals form their self-image through treating other human beings as mirrors, and perceive themselves as mirrors reflecting, internalizing, and imitating the others.

Wallon, a relatively orthodox Marxist, probably inherits the framing of the problem of social internalization and his method from “cultural-historical psychology,” developed in the Soviet Union by Lev Vygotsky, Alexei Leontiev, and others.³⁵³ The central factor in internalization and psychologization of the social, in this school, plays human activity and practice. The process of learning and development involves social interaction with others, personal imitation of the activity of others, and further repetition of this activity through one’s own efforts. Language plays an important part in the process of internalization, as it serves both as a medium of social communication and as giving shape to thought.

In his study of imitation in early childhood, Wallon traces the developmental transition from practical (sensorimotor) intelligence, which serves the children’s learning through interacting with objects, to intelligence that operates via representations and symbols. When the infant is still incapable of intentional acts, after the eleventh week, he or she is able to stick his or her tongue out when someone else is doing it in front of him or her. At this stage, imitation is merely an

³⁵² Wallon 1984a:127

³⁵³ On the impact of Soviet psychology on Wallon see Wallon 1984b:256-257. It should be noticed that the later Lacan comes explicitly to self-identify as a “dialectical materialist.” See Johnston 2014:84-99.

involuntary reflex. Around the seven months, however, the child knows how to stick his or her tongue out without an actual model present. This development demonstrates the transition to real imitation. The child first imitates the emotional expressions of others, such as the smile of the adult. In so doing, the child establishes a communication with an adult that has an integrating effect. At about three years of age, the child begins to achieve differentiation between the object and its representation and becomes capable of intentional imitation, in which the model, instead of being imposed on the child, is chosen by him. The desire to imitate is added to the ability to imitate.³⁵⁴

For Wallon, imitation is a necessary component of representation, which stands for the substitution of one word or object for another. Imitation takes place on the level of an action repeating the activity of the model, while the active substitution of the model by a different thing is responsible for the development of representational thinking. For instance, a child playing train with a wooden block, imitates the action of the train and substitutes the train with the block.³⁵⁵ More recent researchers into these identificatory phenomena likewise emphasize the important role of imitation.³⁵⁶

As I have mentioned earlier, Lacan locates certain “mirroring” qualities responsible for the internalization of social reality within the cerebral cortex. Wallon, following Pavlov, also considers the cerebral cortex a place in which the reaction of the reflexes to the external stimuli is taking place, and as a result develops “higher nervous activity.” Cerebral cortex, thus, is responsible for the interaction between organism and environment – not only physical but also social environment,

³⁵⁴ Voyat 1984:38-39

³⁵⁵ Ibid:39

³⁵⁶ See Galesse and Stamenov 2002.

on which we depend for our existence and which we create and shape through our own activity.³⁵⁷ Like Lacan in his fundamental article from 1949, Wallon cautiously relates the development of an awareness to one's body-image, to the cortical activity, responsible for the synchronization between the visual sphere of perception and the kinesthetic activity in the body.³⁵⁸ More recently, these claims have been substantiated in terms of neuroplasticity, following the discovery that the genetic functions may change as a result of external influences, and epigenetics, studying physical changes in the brain due to experience.

Wallon accepts Lacan's characterization of early childhood as an experience of fragmentation and search for unity, but criticizes some of its tragic implications. I will quote him in some length:

There are nightmares and delusions which effectively demonstrate that this systematic combination of the parts of the body into a dynamic and harmonious unit is by no means there from the outset, and that it is always liable to break down once more. On the other hand, to speak as the psychoanalysts do of a return to the "abysses" of childhood, to look upon the child as a tortured soul in search of body wholeness, or like Lacan to evoke "dislocation, dismemberment, emasculation, cannibalism, entombment," is to invent a tragic reality to which nothing in the child's behavior actually attests. The child's researches concerning himself and the objects about him are informed by the same lively and often joyful curiosity that he brings to his perceptual and motor learning. To feel dislocated, he would have to be endowed with some kind of foreknowledge of his future bodily unity, and there is no evidence to support this idea. Where could such an intuition come from at this stage, before the indispensable nervous maturation and the experiences to which this maturation will open the door?³⁵⁹

³⁵⁷ Wallon 1984c:243-244

³⁵⁸ Wallon 1984a:130

³⁵⁹ Wallon 1985a:123

Lacan's theory, in fact, is capable of addressing these objections. While it is true that the child has not experienced bodily unity prior to its anticipation during the mirror stage, he or she has already experienced *the loss* of unity at birth due to the violent separation from the mother's body. Although the child cannot consciously remember, this event is registered in the unconscious as the primary traumatic experience. Furthermore, the fact that existential anxieties regarding one's unity are not manifested in the child's conscious behavior does not mean that these do not exist on the unconscious level.

It is not the purpose of the present study to take sides either with Lacan or Wallon on their interpretations of the mirror stage and their stands on the question of social internalization. The comparison between the two rather aims at clarifying their positions and underlining the variety of theories of reflection existing in the field of contemporary psychological theories.³⁶⁰

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have examined Lacan's theory of the mirror stage, his model of two mirrors and a bouquet, as well as his concept of the intra-organic mirror related to the phenomenon of consciousness and located in the cerebral cortex. I have discussed the concept of reflection as explanatory of the interaction between nature and the society and constitutive of the ego, the "knot" between the two realms. In later writings, Lacan presents the ego as a different kind of "knot" connecting between the imaginary and the real by means of the symbolic.

Lacan's second reflection in the cerebral cortex explains the internalization of social structures and the symbolic order by the subject. For Lacan, internalization is passive and is driven by the captivating power of the imagos (in early Lacan), as well as through the symbolic order

³⁶⁰ On a survey of some of these theories see Pines 1998:20.

(Lacan of the 1950-s). Wallon challenges this notion of passive reflection and maintains that the subject internalizes social processes through active imitation of other human beings.

Lacan's implementation of the concept of reflection is an example of well-developed theory of reflection as applied to the interaction between social and natural realms, between the real and the imaginary and to the formation of the psychical agency of the ego. Lacan's theory of reflection shares with Indian theories the following features: 1. Reflection is an explanation of interaction between entities with distinct ontological statuses; 2. Reflection is responsible for the arising of the ego – an entity of a mixed ontological ancestry whose function is the illusory identity between subjective and objective contents; 3. Reflection is an account of internalization of external contents by mental faculty; 4. Reflection describes the essential openness of the ego towards identity with the contents and properties which do not originally belong to it (as in Advaita and Yoga), as well as the inseparability between the subject and the other (as in Advaita). These characteristics of the ego and the subject can be expressed by the formula "Thou art That!."

Chapter 6: Phenomenology and Ontology of Self-Recognition in a Mirror: Towards Metatheory of Reflection

Introduction

In this chapter, I will test the applicability of the mirror analogy as a model describing the process through which consciousness appears in the form of mental representation and as a plausible account of interaction between consciousness and matter. I will reconstruct the metaphysical position resonating at the very base of the analogy of one's reflection in a mirror. In order to do that, I will reflect on the empirical experience of self-recognition in a mirror and on the perception of the self that this experience phenomenologically implies.

I will further conduct an ontological analysis of the phenomenon of reflection. Reflection has an unusual capacity to make the properties of the prototype illusorily appear in entities that lack these properties. Theoreticians of reflection disagree over what kind of metaphysical category the reflected image actually is. Some argue that it is the property of the prototype, some that it is the property of the reflecting substance, some that it is a non-existent property. I argue that the properties of the reflected image are the illusory effect resulting from a complex interrelation between properties with different ontological statuses. I suggest adopting reflection into the metaphysical vocabulary as a relational category mediating between entities with different ontological statuses.

Finally, I will demonstrate that the concept of reflection suggests a plausible account of interaction between consciousness and matter. I argue that postulation of reflection, as a mediating principle between entities with different ontological statuses, establishes a relationship between a subjective nature of conscious experience and an objective nature of matter. Without committing

myself to any particular monist, dualist or pluralist positions, I maintain that the plausibility of non-reductionist theories of consciousness is enhanced once the interaction between consciousness and matter is adequately rendered.

6.1. Reflection as a model of self-ideation

One common feature shared by various theories of reflection in more or less explicit form is that they are theories about the *source* of our *idea* of a self. The idea of a self, or an “I” (*ahaṃ-kāra/ahaṃ-pratyaya/ahaṃ-vṛtti/Je/moi*), that appears in our mind, must have some source. The *āstika*, or orthodox Brahmanical philosophical schools (in our case, Sāṃkhya, Yoga, and Advaita-Vedānta), in general accept that there is a real self, namely pure consciousness, which leaves an imprint in our mind in the form of the “I-notion”, just like our sense impressions of external objects are imprinted in our mind in the form of ideas of these objects. In one important sense, however, the imprint left by the self is different from those made by the objects. While the objects perceived by the mind come and go, the self is always present in the vicinity of the mind. The imprint, or the reflection of the self, is constantly superimposed on mind’s activities, perceived as indistinguishable from these.

The very task of identifying the source of our ideas in order to validate them has been formulated by Descartes. Those ideas which appear in my mind against, or despite, my volition, must have as their source something external to myself. The difficult part is to prove that these ideas are not deceitful, or that they are the precise representations of really existing entities – whether of external objects or an infinite God. The self, for Descartes is not a representation, but is directly experienced in the course of thinking or of volitional activity.³⁶¹

³⁶¹ Descartes 2006:19-24

The *āstika* theories of reflection suggest a representationalist model of relation between our ideas and their source. Roughly, the *āstika* model resembles that of Locke, who argues that our ideas have a source in the experience of external objects. Either we have simple ideas, which are nothing but the exact imprints of sense impressions, or we have complex ideas, emerging as a result of our compounding, abstracting, and relating simple ideas.³⁶²

The idea of the self, thus, must be either a result of a simple sense impression of a really existing selfhood, or a result of mental construction of the self from simple ideas of sense-impressions each of which is not the self. Hume, for instance, traces the idea of the self to the cognitive habit of associating our constantly changing sense-perceptions with each other over time. The series of distinct moments of awareness connected by memory and apparent causal relationships are imagined to be one thing, for the imagination has a natural tendency to attribute identity to closely related objects. This imagined identity is the source of our idea of a self or of personal identity.³⁶³

For the *āstika* theories of reflection, the idea of a self, whether simple or complex, has its source in the experience of the real self. The metaphysical problem, however, is to demonstrate that the self is a real, independent entity, and that it can be reflected in the mind in the form of an idea like any other external object.

Śāṅkara addresses both problems by proving the independent existence of the prototype-self and of our mental representation of it in two different moves. First, the existence of the prototype-self is undeniable because it is immediately available to us in every experience. Second, the mind combines our correct mental representation of the experiencing or witnessing nature of

³⁶² Locke 1995: 59-74, 108-110, 289-295

³⁶³ Hume 1963:256-271

the self caused by the reflection of consciousness in the mind, with an idea of active agency, thereby forming a complex and false idea of selfhood.

The experience of reflection of oneself in a mirror is a good illustration of the process of self-ideation. When I am looking at my face in a mirror, I am simultaneously aware of myself in the form of the one who is looking, the “seer” and of my identity with the seen object in the form of the reflected face in the mirror. The verbal expression of the visual experience of self-reflection is “this is I” or “that is me”. The self’s awareness of itself by means of its own reflection poses the metaphysical possibility that the self itself can be the independent source of the idea of a self.

Buddhists, of course, deny that self-reflection in a mirror involves any real self. What is both experienced as the seer and seen as reflected is the *idea* of a self, a mental construction. Thus, Buddhist theories of reflection (in Madhyamaka and Yogācāra), left out in this study, focus on the ability of the mirror to create the appearance without postulating the real prototype.³⁶⁴ In this sense, they seem to be close to Hume’s view. Buddhist theories of reflection present a phenomenalist model of the source of our ideas, according to which our experience does not require postulation of independently existing objects (or subjects) of experience.

6.2 Phenomenology of reflection

The proponents of theories of reflection - both *āstika* and Buddhist – do not claim that the experience of seeing oneself in a mirror is the actual source of our idea of the self, and usually regard it as a mere analogy. This analogy, however, suggests a distinct “reflectionist” model, which

³⁶⁴ Buddhist *pratibimbavāda* theories appear in the Mahāyāna literature, such as the *Śālistambha Sūtra*, *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*, *Ratnakūṭa* and the *Samdhinirmocana Sūtra*. Analogies of reflection are also discussed by Mādhyamika and Yogācāra philosophers, such as Nāgārjuna, Maitreyaṅātha and Asaṅga. See Wayman 1984.

could be interpreted as either representationalist or phenomenalist. Before asking about the source of our idea of a self, we must first inquire about the source of our *idea of ideation* in general and of our *idea of ideation of a self* in particular. Seeing oneself in a mirror can be seen as an experience on the basis of which an empirical study of the mechanism of self-ideation can be conducted. As is evident from discussions of reflection theorists, the concept of reflection has been scrutinized both in respect to the idea of the self in the mind and in respect to the face in the mirror. In other words, the concept of reflection becomes a metaphysical category, equally applicable to physical bodies, as well as to a non-physical self.

The Buddhist interpretation of the mirror-reflection as a property of the mirror which obviates the existence of the prototype, however, is not really supported by our experience. In order to have an experience of seeing oneself in a mirror, there is a need for the prototype - the subject of experience – along with the reflecting substance and the reflected image. The subject necessarily must be conscious and capable of recognizing his or her own reflection; otherwise, an inanimate object can be mechanically reproduced in a mirror, but no recognition “that is me” will take place. Now I would like to present a possible way through which one’s experience of recognizing oneself in a mirror may be the source of the very process of ideation, or mental representation in general, and of the process of self-ideation in particular.

As Lacan has demonstrated seeing myself in a mirror leads to my identification with both subjects and objects, because the ability to see oneself as an external object in the mirror implies the possibility that other people can also see me as an object. However, if other people can see me as an object, they share with mirrors the reflecting capacity to represent me as an object. If, in turn, other people are kinds of mirrors reflecting me as an object, and I as a subject see these people as kinds of objects, then I am also a kind of a mirror, capable of reflecting other people as objects. If

I continue with this line of thought, I come to the conclusion that I, as a conscious subject, reflect external objects, which appear to me as objects of reflection.

The process of self-recognition seems to go through the stages of one's identification first with the image of the body reflected in a mirror, second with my physical body understood to be the prototype of the reflected image, the object for other human mirrors, and finally, with my own subjective capacity to mirror objects. This gradual process of self-recognition roughly corresponds to Indra's search for his "real" self. He first identifies himself with the reflected image in the mirror and in Prajāpati's eyes, second with his physical body, and finally – with some help from Prajāpati – with the formless bodiless entity made of consciousness capable of mirroring all forms.³⁶⁵

Through my interaction with different objects, I gradually learn to distinguish between subject-objects and mere objects. Subject-objects are the objects perceived by me, which express their perception of myself in different ways. These objects must be mirroring subjects, although I can perceive them only as objects. Such are human beings and animals. On the other hand, mere objects are the objects which do not show any signs of recognition of my presence, and thus seem to lack the reflecting quality of a subject. Such are tables, chairs, mountains and stones. Our experience of plants seems to be more ambiguous. On the one hand, they do not manifest any mirroring relation to ourselves, and thus must be mere objects. On the other hand, the fact that they share certain features, such as life and growth, with subject-objects, makes us think about the possibility that plants may be kinds of subjects too.

Through the mediation of the mirror I can think about myself in objective terms. As Wallon demonstrates in his article on kinesthesia, our identification with our body is not inborn; it is a

³⁶⁵ Indra's identification with the dreaming and dreamless sleeping states do not really fit into my schema of mirror-phenomenology presented here.

gradual process of appropriation of different bodily parts assuming a sense of unity through the reflected image of our body. Prior to my own objectification through identification with the image of my body, I do not perceive myself as an object. Neither do I perceive myself as a subject, as no clear distinction between myself and the objective world around me is established yet. It can be argued that at this early stage of development, only proto-subjective and proto-objective components of experience intermingle in the common stream of conscious states. On the other hand, what remains at the periphery of consciousness and beyond it – reality independent of the infant’s perception - is not yet differentiated *as* the external world in itself *from* the internal unconscious processes concerning only the individual in question.³⁶⁶ Since subjective and objective components of experience, as well as external and internal conditions of experience are not differentiated, no recognition of any differences is possible yet. That is why Wallon’s critique of Lacan’s account of infant’s experience of self-fragmentation before the mirror stage is justified. While the infant does not possess the unified image of oneself, neither can it experience oneself as a disordered collection of fragmentary processes, because the conditions for any kind of experience are not formed yet.

The moment of self-recognition in the reflected image of one’s body (whether or not mediated through the social agency of the parental figure) makes one aware of the subjective and the objective contents simultaneously, along with the tension inherent in the experience of oneself as the subject and object at the same time. This experience transforms the indistinguishable flow

³⁶⁶ Piaget ascribes the differentiation between the subject and the objective world, between inner and outer realities to the infant’s growing capacity to control certain processes and its incapacity to control others (Nelkin 1995:571). Piaget’s theory does not necessarily contradict the theory presented here, according to which subjectivity and objectivity arise as a result of one’s self-recognition in a mirror during the mirror stage. It is quite possible that Piaget’s notion of subjectivity based on will and activity develops independently from a notion of subjectivity based on a visually perceived split between oneself as a mirroring consciousness and as a reflected image. The two notions of subjectivity may become synthesized during one’s development into a complex notion of subjectivity which involves both the subject of perception and the subject of action.

of proto-subjective and proto-objective formations into the recognition of objects by the subject. From now on, the subject and its objects are experienced as separate. At the same time, the emergence of the conscious subject and the objects of cognition has an effect on the processes not manifested in one's subjective experience. The unconscious processes directly affecting the subject become the shadow of one's consciousness, one's unconscious. The not-yet-experienced or even non-experienceable processes determining the objects of experience as independent from the subject turn into the shadows of the phenomenal contents of experience – the things in themselves. The objects perceived by the subject *represent* things in themselves; the distinction between external sources of perception and their mental representations or ideas is introduced. On the other hand, the fact that the subject can be reflected as an object leads to the separation between the self as something beyond the appearance, the self in itself, as it were, and one's mental self-representation.

The identity between oneself as the subject and oneself as the object reflected from the mirror is the identity-in-difference responsible for the formation of the ego, supervenient upon the superimposition of the subject and the object of reflection. Two contradictions are responsible for the formation of the ego: 1. the contradiction between two natures: I as a subject and as an object; 2. the contradiction between the emerging experience of subject-object dichotomy and the previous state of interconnectedness of proto-subjective and proto-objective components of the proto-experience. The ego, on the one hand, attempts to bridge between the subjective and the objective fragments and thus reproduces the lost proto-subjective and proto-objective unity. On the other hand, the ego by encompassing the subjective and the objective, manifests the split between the two.

The sentence “It is you there!” uttered by a parent pointing to the infant’s image in the mirror may become intelligible only if the infant already differentiates between subjective and objective contents, and is also capable of relating the former to the latter. Here I tend to disagree with later Lacan, who maintains that self-recognition in the mirror is not possible without the symbolic mediation of language. On the contrary, the propositional structure of language “mirrors” the reflection-relation between the subject-prototype and its objective image. The infant can understand the statement “It is you there!” only on a condition that he or she knows that the word “you” indicates the subject looking in the mirror, the word “it” the object in the mirror, the word “there” the mirror, and the word “is” the identity between the looking subject and the reflected image. The possibility that the subject of a sentence can be predicated is made possible by the experience of self-recognition in a mirror, in which the subject of experience discovers that it can also be an object. However, what causes one’s self-recognition in the first place?

The fact that only humans are capable of recognizing themselves in the mirror³⁶⁷ testifies that some unique factor makes the phenomenon of self-recognition possible. Lacan’s hypothesis that this factor is language is not satisfactory, as it merely pushes the problem further back. He identifies correctly the capacity for self-recognition with the ability to symbolize and thus “see” the identity between oneself as a subject and one’s representation in the mirror. Language is indeed a mechanism of signification and thus of symbolization. However, it is not clear what enables infants to understand the language in the first place. If the capacity for symbolization comes as a result of acquisition of language, it is equally true to say that acquisition of language is only possible once the capacity for symbolization is already there.

³⁶⁷ The different ways other primates respond to their own mirror-reflection are briefly addressed in Nobus 2016:109.

One solution is that of Noam Chomsky, who suggests that in order to acquire language, we must be born with an innate knowledge of grammatical structures, making it possible to acquire this or that particular language. If we apply Chomsky's theory to the mirror stage, it can be argued that the capacity for symbolization, as well as the tendency to identify oneself with the reflected image are inborn and manifested due to the natural development of the individual, perhaps granted that the proper interaction with the significant other allows for one's healthy development.

Chomsky's theory of the innateness of language may imply in respect to the mirror stage that our ability for self-recognition is based on inborn knowledge, activated when the time is ripe. The Yoga and the Advaita theories of reflection suggest the opposite possibility: our ability for taking the subject of experience for its object is caused by inborn, or "beginningless" ignorance. In a way, our self-recognition is based on a capacity for misrecognition, for mistaking one thing for another. A great deal of Lacan's interpretation of the mirror stage also keeps coming back to this point: the subject's recognition of the reflection of one's body is essentially a misrecognition (*méconnaissance*).

The pure phenomenology of the mirror-stage does not allow us to determine with any certainty whether the infant understands the sentence "It's you there!" as a result of his or her self-recognition in the mirror or vice versa. It points, rather, towards a correlation between the capacity for self-recognition and for understanding a simple grammatical structure relating the subject of the sentence with its predicate. I would like to speculate that the two capacities should be seen as one and the same capacity to identify one thing with another, as manifested through different sense faculties. Since the infants can recognize the faces of other people before they come to recognize themselves in a mirror, and since animals also recognize other animals, it is plausible that the

ability to identify one thing with another can be traced to the ability to identify a perceived image with its remembered form.

The starting point for the phenomenology described above of the dialectical development of the subject, the object, the ego and the ability for language-acquisition is the infant's self-recognition in a mirror. It must be noted that alternative routes of development are possible indeed. It is very plausible that other experiences lead to different notions of subjectivity and objectivity, which synthesized with the notions born from self-recognition in a mirror give birth to quite complex and contradictory self-perceptions. Moreover, we may grant the possibility that variety of experiences may create very different subjects and objects of experience. It is even probable that to some extent those individuals whose notions of subjectivity and objectivity have developed as a result of a visual experience of mirror-reflection perceive these notions differently from individuals whose notions of subjectivity and objectivity have formed primarily as a result of other sensory experiences. If a child who is blind from birth forms some notion of color, it must be a very different notion than the one the seeing child has in mind. It is certain that blind child has a different kind of self-perception than the seeing child. Nevertheless, through language (again perceived differently by deaf children), the different kinds of subjectivity and objectivity may be somewhat bridged.

6.3. Ontology of reflection

As we have seen, Indian theorists of reflection raised several possibilities regarding the ontological status of a reflected image (*pratibimba*). The following possibilities have been suggested:

1. The reflected image is a property of the prototype (Padmapāda).

2. The reflected image is a property of the reflecting substance (Śaṅkara's anonymous opponent).
3. The reflected image is a property of a new entity born from the contact between the prototype and the reflecting substance (the Buddhist opponent mentioned in the YD).
4. The reflected image is not real, and thus is not a property of anything (Śaṅkara, Prabhākara, *yuktidīpikākāra*).

The paradoxical nature of reflected image is found in the fact that the properties that appear in the mirror (the features of my face) really belong to the prototype but illusorily appear to be found somewhere else. What is the ontological status of a real property illusorily appearing where it is not?

The full account of the ontology of reflection must necessarily involve real and illusory components. We must distinguish between the real properties of the prototype and the illusory properties of the reflected image. The latter are illusory not because they are non-existent. A non-existent entity such as the hare's horn is different ontologically from the perceived illusion of my face in the mirror. Illusory properties are negatively defined as properties which are neither real nor non-existent (according to Advaita, they are inexpressible or indeterminable, *anirvacanīya*), because they share with real properties the fact that they appear or are experienced, whereas simply non-existent entities do not appear at all.

The real properties of the prototype and the illusory properties of the reflected image are necessarily related, since the reflected image does not appear without the prototype present. On the other hand, the reflected image is necessarily related to the reflecting substance, as the latter is another necessary condition for reflection. The illusory properties appear to be identical with the

real properties of the prototype, but in reality they are not, because they have different ontological statuses (the one is real, the other is not). Furthermore, no reflected image will appear without the perceiving subject, for whom the illusion of reflection appears. The relations involved in the appearance of the reflected image thus also involve subjective and objective ontological statuses.

As the prototype, the subject, the reflecting substance and the reflected image are interrelated, this relation which involves entities and properties with distinct ontological statuses must be a relation of a special kind. It is neither fully real nor fully unreal, neither fully subjective, nor fully objective, but rather is found in between these categories and thus must be of a distinct ontological kind (following Advaita, let us call its ontological status “indeterminate”). This relation can be called a “reflection.”

Although reflection involves several relata, including the prototype, the mirror, the reflected image, and the perceiving subject (who can be the prototype or not), I will focus on a particular relation between the prototype (*bimba*) and the reflected image (*pratibimba*) as it is the main subject of discussion of theories of reflection. Reflection is an asymmetric relational property, in that the relation between the prototype x to its reflected image y (x is a prototype in respect to y) is not the same as the relation of the reflected image y to its prototype x (y is a reflected image in respect to x). There is much that points towards characterizing reflection as a causal relation, as no reflected image y appears without there being a prototype x , while it is not necessary that x is present only when y appears.

However, as we have seen, some theorists of reflection (especially Śāṅkara) deny that the illusory reflected image has any real cause. Real causes result in real effects; illusory phenomena are unreal and thus have no cause. There seems to be an ontological gap between the real factor

(such as my face) and the unreal effect (the properties of my face in the mirror). However, precisely the fact that the two are, nevertheless, causally related (as shown in the previous passage), leads us to postulate reflection as a relation of a distinct ontological nature – neither real nor unreal, but an intermediate state between the two, which allows for causal efficacy of a real cause in respect to an unreal effect.

On the other hand, the relation between the prototype and its reflected image involves not only efficient, but also formal causation, because the result of reflection is the appearance of the form of the prototype in the reflected image. Let us return here to the Vedic general condition of phenomenal formation (GCPF), which I have formulated in Chapter 1. This principle describes the four necessary factors responsible for the appearance of forms in the phenomenal realm: the formal cause (*rūpa*), the formal effect (*pratirūpa*), the persisting relation between the two (*nidāna*), and the efficient cause of formation (*rūpaṇa*). In the Vedic context this schema describes the relation between the forms of the noumenal reality and counter-forms in the phenomenal reality. The same schema can, however, be applied to reflection as relation between the prototype and the reflected image. Thus, the formal cause is the prototype, the formal effect is the reflected image, the persisting relation between the two is that of identity, and the efficient cause is the combination of factors responsible for the arising of the illusion (the presence of the prototype, the perceiving subject, the mirror, the rays, etc.).

It can be noticed that reflection, in addition to its being the efficient and formal causal relation, is at the same time the relation of identity of form between the prototype and its reflected image. This identity of form has lead Padmapāda to postulate that the reflected image is the property of the prototype and thus is as real as the prototype. I would like to point, however, to the ambivalent ontological status of reflection, which is in action here. Yes, in so far as the reflected

image is identical in form with its prototype it is real. But Śāṅkara is also right: in so far as the properties of the prototype appear where the prototype is not, it is unreal.

Reflection is thus an inter-ontological formal and efficient causal relation, which involves identity of form between ontologically distinct relata. So far I have considered a relation between prototype and reflected image which takes place in all cases of reflection, whether the prototype is an inanimate object witnessed by someone in the mirror or the witness's own face. Now I would like to consider the specific kind of reflection pertaining between the properties belonging to conscious subject (e.g., one's face) and their reflected image. The subject does not see itself in the mirror as a subject (one cannot see in the mirror one's subjective properties, such as one's consciousness, etc.). One sees only the reflection of one's objective properties, such as one's face. However, one condition of the appearance of the image in the mirror is the presence of the perceiving subject, without whom the illusion cannot arise. Moreover, the subject recognizes him or herself as the object in the mirror. In this sense, reflection is responsible for the imagined unity between the objective and the subjective perceptions of oneself. My previous postulation of reflection as an inter-ontological category is thus useful not only in respect to the interaction between ontologically distinct categories of reality and unreality, but also to the interaction between ontologically distinct categories of subject and object.

6.4 Reflection and the problem of consciousness and matter

Are we justified in applying the concept of reflection to the interaction between consciousness and the mental apparatus, as the *āstika* theories of reflection do? I maintain that if a theory of reflection accounts for the interaction between ontologically distinct relata, which are found in efficient and formal causal relations in so far as the properties of one relatum appear in

another relatum, we are justified in characterizing consciousness-mind interaction as that of reflection.

Consciousness and the mind, according to Yoga, Sāṃkhya, and Advaita-Vedānta, are distinct ontological categories. In Yoga and Sāṃkhya, consciousness belongs to the subjective substance, or *puruṣa*, whereas the mind is a material modification of *prakṛti*. In Advaita, consciousness is real, while the mind is an illusory entity. Nevertheless, the properties of consciousness, such as the “I-ness,” subjectivity, and the ability to experience are perceived as if characterizing the mind and as participating in mental activities. The properties of the mind, on the other hand, such as intentionality, the ability to represent sense-objects, and conceptualization are falsely attributed to pure consciousness. The transference of properties of one ontological entity to a different ontological entity is no different than in the case of transference of the properties of my face to the mirror.

Reflection as a category of relation between ontologically distinct relata is a solution to the problem of consciousness and matter, which is known in Western philosophy primarily as the mind-body problem. It is associated with dualist accounts of consciousness as distinct and independent of matter. If the immaterial consciousness and the physical body are entirely separate, how is any interaction between the two possible at all? There seems to be an unbridgeable gap, making it neither possible to perceive physical things nor act in the world.³⁶⁸

Contrary to Western thought, in Indian theories of reflection, the interaction between mental and physical processes and activities does not pose a critical problem, because both are considered as material. The main problem is an explanation of the relation between the objective

³⁶⁸ Phillips 2009: 51.

material processes and the phenomenal experience of these processes. How can the consciousness experience the ontologically separate reality of matter? The problem can be reformulated as follows. If the contact between consciousness and matter is real, then the two are not ontologically separate. If there is no contact at all, then it makes phenomenal experience impossible. If one is committed to substance dualism between consciousness and matter, one needs to find an alternative that would not make the contact real (in order to not violate the ontological separation between consciousness and matter), but will also not take it to be non-existent (in order to allow for the possibility of experience). Reflection is not real, and thus there is no real interaction between consciousness and matter. Neither can it be said that it does not exist, since reflection is perceived. In other words, reflection is not a real contact, but rather simulation of contact, its illusory appearance.

On the other hand, reflection has no nature of its own; it shares in the natures of the relata, what allows it to connect them. In this sense, it is inter-ontological category, whose function is to mediate between the entities with distinct ontological statuses (such as between subjectivity and objectivity, reality and unreality, etc.). As such it manifests itself as a kind of a new entity, supervenient upon distinct ontological entities, what Padmapāda and Lacan regard as the "knot." The knot connecting between consciousness and matter is the ego, perceived as sharing in the natures of consciousness and matter.³⁶⁹ Again, it must be stressed that the ego, like reflection, is not a real entity in that it is not a new being, but rather inter-ontological appearance of unity between distinct things.

³⁶⁹ The metaphysics of entities with two or more natures is not dissimilar to the attempts of Christian theology to explain the paradox of Jesus Christ's sharing in human and divine natures.

By preserving the ontological separation between consciousness and matter, while taking into account the appearance of interaction between the two, postulation of reflection increases the plausibility of dualist theories of consciousness and matter. At the same time we have also seen an example of a monistic, immaterialist, theory of consciousness in Advaita-Vedānta, which also utilizes the model of reflection. Consciousness is the only ultimate reality, but the phenomenal reality, which includes mental and objective (i.e., mind-independent) phenomena, is not merely reducible to consciousness and is regarded as real on a lower conventional level. In Advaita, reflection acts in the same way as in dualist theories in that it connects two distinct ontological entities, however here instead of two real substances, there is one real substance (consciousness) and one unreal substance (name-and-form, ignorance).

In Lacan's theory of the mirror stage, reflection functions in a similar way, although here the entities with different ontological status are not consciousness and matter. For Lacan, consciousness is primarily a material and relatively marginalized phenomenon. The main metaphysical problem in his early writings concerns the interaction between the irreducible realms of nature and culture in the formation of the ego. In Lacan's later writings, reflection accounts for the interaction between the real, the imaginary and the symbolic. The inter-ontological function of reflection, however, is the same: mediating between separate ontological spheres. For Lacan, the ego is the knot between natural and socialized components of the individual, as well as between the real, the imaginary, and the symbolic, just as for Padmapāda the ego is the knot between the mental-physical complex and the reflection of pure consciousness.

Conclusion

Here I would like to briefly summarize the main features common to the various theories of reflection discussed in my dissertation and which constitute a metatheory of reflection.

1. Reflection explains the interaction between distinct ontological realms, whether these are the realms of consciousness and matter, subjective and objective realms, the real and the imaginary, or the natural and the social.
2. Reflection is an inter-ontological formal and efficient causal relation, which involves identity of form between ontologically distinct relata.
3. Reflection is responsible for the arising of an entity of a mixed ontological ancestry, namely the ego.
4. Reflection is an account of internalization of images and social structures by consciousness.
5. Reflection is an account of the process through which consciousness comes to be mentally represented in the form of a complex idea.
6. Reflection allows for the possibility that the properties of one entity can appear in several locations, e.g., consciousness reflected in many individuals.
7. Reflection illustrates the essential openness of the ego towards identity with the contents and properties which do not originally belong to it, such as one's body, one's family, one's possessions, etc., as well as the inseparability between the subject and the other. These characteristics of the ego and the subject can be expressed by the formula "Thou art That!."

The value of the analogy of reflection lies in its explanatory power, as is evidenced by a variety of theological, soteriological, psychoanalytical, and metaphysical problems addressed by theories of reflection. Perhaps my comparative study of a number of theories of reflection may be

found useful in future studies of other theories, left beyond the scope of this dissertation. I would also like to suggest that postulation of reflection as a distinct ontological category may be of value for contemporary debates on the metaphysics of relations and the problem of consciousness.

Abbreviations:

ChU *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*

ChUBh *Chāndogya Upaniṣad Bhāṣya*

BS *Brahmasiddhi*

BSBh	<i>Brahma Sūtra Bhāṣya</i>
BU	<i>Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad</i>
BUBh	<i>Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad Bhāṣya</i>
KśU	<i>Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad</i>
MUBh	<i>Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad Bhāṣya</i>
PP	<i>Pañcapādikā</i>
PPV	<i>Pañcapādikāvivarāṇa</i>
PrUBh	<i>Praṣṇa Upaniṣad Bhāṣya</i>
RV	<i>Ṛgveda</i>
SB	<i>Siddhāntabindu</i>
ŚB	<i>Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa</i>
SE	<i>The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud</i>
ŚU	<i>Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad</i>
SLS	<i>Siddhāntaleśasaṅgraha</i>
TK	<i>Tattvakaumudī</i>
TUBh	<i>Taittirīya Upaniṣad Bhāṣya</i>
VP	<i>Vākyapadīya</i>
VPVr I	<i>Vākyapadīyavṛtti, Kāṇḍa I</i>
VS	<i>Vājaseneyi Saṃhitā</i>
Upad.	<i>Upadeśasāhasrī</i>
YS	<i>Yogasūtra</i>

YSBh *Yogasūtrabhāṣya*

YV *Yogavārttika*

References:

Primary Sources:

Bhāmatī - Śāstrī, Anantkr̥ṣṇa (ed.) *The Brahmasūtra Śāṅkara Bhāṣya with Bhāmatī of Vācaspati Miśra, Kalpataru of Amalānanda and Parimala of Appayya Dīkṣita*, Pandurang Jawaji, Proprietor of the "Nirnaya-Sagar" Press: Bombay, 1938.

BS - Shastri, Kuppaswami (ed.), *Brahmasiddhi* of Maṇḍana Miśra, Delhi: Satguru Publications, 1984

Bryant, Edwin F. (tr.), *The Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali*, North Point Press, New York, 2009

BSBh - Śāṅkara, *Badarayana: Brahmasutra, with Samkara's Sarirakamimamsabhasya*, GRETEL - Göttingen Register of Electronic Texts in Indian Languages and related Indological materials from Central and Southeast Asia, 11.15.2001 - 11.11.2016, http://gretl.sub.uni-goettingen.de/gretl/1_sansk/6_sastra/3_phil/vedanta/brssbh1u.htm

BUBh - (Editor unkown), *Complete Works of Śankarācarya, V. 8: Upaniṣad Bhāṣya: Bhṛdāranyaka 1-2*, Sri Vani Vilas Press, Srirangam, 1910

Burley, Mikel (tr.), "The Sāṃkhyakārikā", in *Classical Sāṃkhya and Yoga: An Indian Metaphysics of Experience*, Routledge: London, 2007, p. 164-179

ChUBh - *Chandogya-Upanisad (Chandogyopanisad) with the commentary ascribed to Samkara*, GRETEL - Göttingen Register of Electronic Texts in Indian Languages and related Indological materials from Central and Southeast Asia, 11.15.2001 - 11.11.2016, http://gretl.sub.uni-goettingen.de/gretl/1_sansk/1_veda/4_upa/chupsb_u.htm

Descartes, René, *Meditations, Objections, and Replies*, ed. and tr. by Roger Ariew and Donald Cress, Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., Indianapolis, 2006

Divānġi, P.C. (ed. and tr.), *Siddhāntabindu by Madhusūdanasarasvatī with the Commentary of Purushottama*, Gaekwad's Oriental Series 64, Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1933.

Griffith, Ralph, T.H. (tr.), *The Rig Veda*, 1896, <http://www.sacred-texts.com/hin/rigveda/>

Gupta, Bina (tr. and ed.), *Consciousness, knowledge, and ignorance: Prakāśātman's Pañcapādikāvivarāṇa "Elucidation of Five Parts", Section on Inquiry (Jijñāsādhikaraṇa), First Part (Prathama Varnaka)*, New York : Columbia University Press 2011.

Hattori, Masaaki (tr.), *Dignāga, On Perception: Being the Pratyakṣapariccheda of Dignāga's Pramāṇasamuccaya from the Sanskrit Fragments and the Tibetan Versions*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1968

Hegel, G.W.F. *Phenomenology of Spirit*, tr. by A.V.Miller, Oxford University Press, 1977

Hume, David, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding and Selections from a Treatise on Human Nature*, The Open Court Publishing Company, Illinois, 1963

Jha, Ganganatha (tr.), *The Chāndogyopaniṣad (A Treatise on Vedānta Philosophy Translated into English with the Commentary of S'ankara)*, Poona, Oriental Books Agency, 1942

---. (tr.), *The Nyāya-Sūtras of Gautama with the Bhāṣya of Vātsyāyana and the Vārtika of Uddyotakara*, Vol. I, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1999.

---. (tr.) *The Tattva-Kaumudī: Vācaspati Miśra's Commentary on the Sāṃkhya-Kārikā*, Oriental Book Agency, Poona, 1965

---. (tr.), *Yogasārasaṅgraha of Vijñānabhikṣu*, Parimal Publication, Delhi, 1995

Kant, Immanuel, *The Critique of Pure Reason* (1781/1787), tr. and ed. by P. Guyer and A. Wood, Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Keith, Arthur B. (tr.), *Śāṅkhāyana Āraṇyaka*, The Royal Asiatic Society, London, 1908

Mādhavānanda, Swami (tr.), *The Bhṛdāraṇyaka Upaniṣad with the Commentary of Śankarācārya*, Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, Almora, 1950

Kumar, S. and Bhargava, D.N. (tr. and ed.), *Yuktidīpikā*, Eastern Books Linkers, Delhi, India, 1990

Lacan, Jacques, “Some Reflections on the Ego”, *The International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, Jan 1, 1953; 34, 11-17

---. *Family Complexes in the Formation of the Individual*, tr. by Cormac Gallagher, unpublished.

---. *Seminar I: Freud's Papers on Technique 1953-1954*, tr. by John Forrester, W.W.Norton & Company INC.: New York, 1991(a)

---. *Seminar II: The Ego in Freud's Theory and in the Technique of Psychoanalysis 1954-1955*, tr. by Sylvana Tomaselli, W.W.Norton & Company INC.: New York, 1991(b)

---. *Seminar VII: The Ethics of Psychoanalysis 1959-1960*, tr. by Dennis Porter, New York: W.W.Norton and Company, 1992

---. *Écrits*, tr. by Bruce Fink, W.W.Norton & Company INC.: New York, 2006

---. *Seminar X: Anxiety*, tr. by A.R.Price, Polity Press: Cambridge, 2014

Larson, G. J. (tr.), "The Sāṃkhyakārikā of Íśvarakṛṣṇa", in *Classical Sāṃkhya: An Interpretation of its History and Meaning*, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, Delhi, 1979, p. 255-277

Locke, John, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Prometheus Books, New York, 1995

Mādhavānanda, Swami (tr.), *The Bhṛdāraṇyaka Upaniṣad with the Commentary of Śaṅkarācārya*, Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, Almora, 1950

Mayeda, Sengaku (ed. and tr.), *A Thousand Teachings: The Upadeśasāhasrī by Śaṅkara*, State University of New York Press (January 31, 1992)

Marx, Karl, "From *The German Ideology*," in Leslie Stevenson (ed.), *The Study of Human Nature*, Oxford University Press: New York, 2000

NVTṬ – Dravid, Rajeshwara Sastri, *Nyāyavārttika-tātparya-ṭikā by Sri Vachaspati Mishra*, Kashi Sanskrit Series 24, Benares : Vidya-Vilasa Press, 1925.

Olivelle, Patrick (tr.), *Upaniṣads*, Oxford University Press, 2008

PP – Bhāgavatāchārya, Rāmaśāstrī (ed.), *Pañchapādikā of Padmapāda*, Vol. II, Part I, Benares: E.J.Lazarus & Co., 1891.

PPV - Bhāgavatāchārya, Rāmaśāstrī (ed.), *The Pañcapādikavivarāṇa of Prakāśātman with Extracts from the Tattvadīpana and Bhāvaprakāśikā*, Vol. III, Part II, Benares: E.J.Lazarus & Co., 1892

PrUBh - *Prasna-Upaniṣad (Prasnopaniṣad) with the commentary ascribed to Saṅkara*, GRETIL - Göttingen Register of Electronic Texts in Indian Languages and related Indological materials

from Central and Southeast Asia, 11.15.2001 - 11.11.2016, http://gretil.sub.uni-goettingen.de/gretil/1_sanskr/1_veda/4_upa/prasupbu.htm

RV - *Rgveda, Mandalas 6 and 10*, GRETIL - Göttingen Register of Electronic Texts in Indian Languages and related Indological materials from Central and Southeast Asia, 11.15.2001 - 11.11.2016, http://gretil.sub.uni-goettingen.de/gret_utf.htm#RV_HvNE

Rukmani, T.S. (tr.), *Yogavārttika of Vijñānabhikṣu*, Vol. 1-4, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., Delhi, 1981

Sastri, S. Sitarama (tr.), *The Isa, Kena and Mundaka Upanishads and Sri Sankara's Commentary*, Madras, 1905

---. (tr.), *Aitareya and Taittiriya Upanishads and Sri Sankara's Commentary*, Madras: The India Printing Works, 1923

Śāstrī, Śrīrāma and Śāstrī, Krishnamurthi (ed.), *Pañcapādikā of Śrī Padmapādācārya with Prabodhapariśodhinī of Ātmasvarūpa and Tātparyārhadyothinī of Vijñānātmana and Pañcapādikavivarāṇa of Śrī Prakāśātman with Tātparyadīpikā of Citsukhācārya and Bhāvaprakāśikā of Nṛsiṃhāśrama*, Madras Government Oriental Manuscript Series CLV, Madras: Government Press, 1958

Sastri, S. Suryanarayana (ed. and tr.), *The Siddhāntaleśasaṅgraha of Appayya Dīkṣita*, Volume I, University of Madras, 1935

---. and Kunhan, Raja C. (ed. and tr.) *The Bhāmatī of Vācaspati: on Śaṅkara's Brahmasūtrabhāṣya (Catussūtrī)*, Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1933

SE - Freud, Sigmund, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Vol. I, ed. and tr. by James Strachey, with Anna Freud, Alix Strachey and Alan Tyson, London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1953-1974

SLS - Sastri, S. Suryanarayana (ed.), *The Siddhāntaleśasaṅgraha of Appayya Dīkṣita*, Volume II, University of Madras, 1937

Shochin V. K. (ed. and tr. into Russian), "Sankhya-Karika Ishvarakrishny s kommentariyami Gaudapady i Vachaspati Mishry ("Sankhya-karika-bhashya" i "Tattva kaumudi")"

["Sāṃkhyakārikā of Ísvarakṛṣṇa with Commentaries of Gaudapāda and Vācaspati Mīśra (Sāṃkhyakārikā-Bhāṣya" and "Tattva-kaumudī")"], *Lunniy Svet Sankhyi (The Moon Light of Sankhya)*, M.:Ladomir, 1995

Thibaut, George (tr.), *Vedānta-Sūtras with the Commentary by Śaṅkarācārya*, Parts I and II, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1980

TK - Jha, Ganganatha (tr.), *An English Translation with the Sanskrit Text of the Tattva-Kaumudī (Sāṅkhya)*, Bombay T. Tatyā, 1896

TTS - Krishnamacharya, E. (ed.), *Tattvasaṅgraha of Śāntarakṣita: With the Commentary of Kamalaśīla*, Vol. I, Oriental Institute, Baroda, 1984

TUBh - (Editor unknown), *Complete Works of Śaṅkarācārya, V.3: Upaniṣad Bhāṣya: Taittiriya, Chhandogya 1-3*, Sri Vani Vilas Press, Srirangam, 1910

TV - *Pātañjalayogadarśanam Vācaspatimīśraviracita-Tattvavaiśārādī-vijñānabhikṣukṛta-Yogavārttikavibhūṣita-Vyāsabhāṣyasametam*, Bharatiya Vidya Prakasan, Varanasi, 1971

Upad. - Subrahmanyastrī, S. (ed.), *Shri Shankarabhagavatpada's Upadeshasahasri with The Tika of Shri Anandagiri Acharya*, Mahesh Research Institute, Varanasi, 1978

Upaniṣads - Radhakrishnan, S. (ed. and tr.), *The Principal Upaniṣads*, London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1978

Veezhinathan, N. (tr.), *The Saṃkṣepasārīraka of Sarvajñātman*, Radhakrishnan Institute for Advanced Study in Philosophy, University of Madras, 1985

Venkataramiah, D. (tr.) *The Pañcapādikā of Padmapāda*, Oriental Institute, Baroda, 1948 (reprint 2013)

Virupakshananda, Swami (tr.), *Sāṃkhya Kārikā of Īśvara Kṛṣṇa with the Tattva Kaumudī of Śrī Vācaspati Miśra*, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras, 1995

VP - *Bharṭṛhari: Vākyapadīya*, GRETIL - Göttingen Register of Electronic Texts in Indian Languages and related Indological materials from Central and Southeast Asia, 11.15.2001 - 11.11.2016, http://gretil.sub.uni-goettingen.de/gretil/1_sanskrit/6_sastra/1_gram/vakyp1pu.htm

VP(Vr) I – Iyer, Sybhramaniya, *Vākyapadīya with the Vṛtti and the Paddhati of Vṛṣabhadeva: Kāṇḍa I*, Poona: Deccan College, 1966.

Wezler and Shujun Motegi (ed.) *Yuktidīpikā: The Most Significant Commentary on the Sāṃkhyakārikā*, Franz Steiner Verlag Stuttgart, 1998

Prasāda, Rāma (tr.), *Patanjali's Yoga Sutras with the Commentaries of Vyāsa and the Gloss of Vāchaspati Miśra*, Oriental Books Reprint Corporation, New Delhi, 1978

Wallon, Henri, “Kinesthesia and the Visual Body Image in the Child,” tr. by Donald Nicholson-Smith, in Gilbert Voyat (ed.), *The World of Henri Wallon*, 1984a, pp.115-132

---. “An Interview with Henri Wallon,” tr. by Donald Nicholson-Smith, in Gilbert Voyat (ed.), *The World of Henri Wallon*, 1984b, pp.247-260

---. “Psychology and Dialectical Materialism,” tr. by Michael Vale, in Gilbert Voyat (ed.), *The World of Henri Wallon*, 1984c, pp.241-246

YV - *Pātañjalayogadarśanam Vācaspatimiśraviracita-Tattvavaiśāradīvijñānabhikṣukṛta-Yogavārttikavibhūṣita-Vyāśabhāṣyasametam*, Bharatiya Vidya Prakasan, Varanasi, 1971

YSBh - *Pātañjalayogadarśanam Vācaspatimiśraviracita-Tattvavaiśāradīvijñānabhikṣukṛta-Yogavārttikavibhūṣita-Vyāśabhāṣyasametam*, Bharatiya Vidya Prakasan, Varanasi, 1971

Secondary Sources:

Bhattacharyya, Krishnachandra, “Studies in Sāṃkhya Philosophy”, *Studies in Philosophy*, ed. by Gopinath Bhattacharyya, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1983, p. 125-211

Bhattacharya, J.B., “Vācaspati Miśra's Misinterpretation of the Sāṃkhya Theory of Perception,” *Sri Venkateswara University Oriental Journal*, Vol. 8, 1965, p. 9-20

Black, Brian. *Character of the Self in Ancient India: Priests, Kings, and Women in the Ancient Upaniṣads* (New York: SUNY Press, 2007).

Biardeau, Madeleine, "Ahaṁkāra, the Ego Principle in the Upaniṣad," *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, Vol. VIII, 1965, pp. 62-84

Brown, Norman W., "The Sources and nature of *Puruṣa* in the *Puruṣasūkta* (Rg Veda 10.90)," *India and Indology*, 1978, pp. 5-10

Burley, Mikel, *Classical Sāṃkhya and Yoga: An Indian Metaphysics of Experience*, Routledge: London and New York, 2007

Chiesa, Lorenzo. *Subjectivity and Otherness: A Philosophical Reading of Lacan*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007

Cohen, Signe, *Text and Authority in the Older Upaniṣads*, Leiden, 2008

Comans, Michael, *The Method of Early Advaita Vedānta: A Study of Gauḍapāda, Śaṅkara, Sureśvara, and Padmapāda*, Motilal Banarsidass Publ., 2000

Coomaraswamy, A., "Vedic Exemplarism," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 1, Apr. 1936, pp. 44-64

Dasgupta, S.N., *Yoga Philosophy*, Delhi, 1974

Davidson, Arnold I., "Introduction: Reading Hadot Reading Plotinus," in Pierre Hadot, *Plotinus or the Simplicity of Vision*, The University of Chicago Press, 1998

Desai, Prakash and Collins, Alfred, "Selfhood in Context: Some Indian Solutions," *The Cultural Transition: Human Experience and Social Transformation in the Third World and Japan*, ed. by Merry I. White and Susan Pollak, Routledge & Kegan Paul, Boston, 1986

Deussen, Paul, *The Philosophy of the Upanishads*, tr. by A.S.Geden, Dover Publications. Inc., New York, 1966

Enoch, Jay M., "History of Mirrors Dating Back 8000 Years," *Optometry and Vision Science*, Vol. 83, No. 10, 2006, pp. 775-781

Evans, Dylan, *An Introductory Dictionary of Lacanian Psychoanalysis*, Routledge: London, 1996

Gallese, Vittorio and Stamenov, Maxim, *Mirror Neurons and the Evolution of Brain and Language*, Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2002

Ganeri, Jonardon, *The Concealed Art of the Soul: Theories of Self and Practices of Truth in Indian Ethics and Epistemology*, Oxford University Press, 2007

Gardner, *The Developing Terminology for the Self in Vedic India*, PhD Dissertation, the University of Iowa, May 1998

Gasché, Rodolphe, *The Tain of the Mirror: Derrida and the Philosophy of Reflection*, Harvard University Press, 1988

Goman, Thomas G. and Laura, Ronald S., "A Logical Treatment of Some Upanishadic Puzzles and Changing Conceptions of Sacrifice," *Numen*, 19:1, Apr. 1, 1972, pp. 52-67

Gonda, Jan, "The "Original" Sense and the Etymology of Skt. *Māyā*," *Four Studies in the Language of the Veda*, Mouton & Co., 1959, pp.119-193

---. *Vedic Ritual: The Non-Solemn Rites*, Leiden, 1980

---. "Mind and Moon," *Deyadharmā*, 1986, pp. 147-160

Granoff, Phylliss, "Portraits, Likeness and Looking Glasses: Some Literary and Philosophical Reflections on Representation and Art in Medieval India," *Representation in Religion: Studies in Honor of Moshe Barasch*, 2000, pp.63-106

Gupta, Bina, *Perceiving in Advaita Vedānta: Epistemological Analysis and Interpretation*, Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1991

---. *The Disinterested Witness: A Fragment of Advaita Vedānta Phenomenology*, Northwestern University Press, 1998

Harzer, Edeltraud, *The Yuktidīpikā: A Reconstruction of Sāṅkhya Methods of Knowing*, Shaker Verlag, Aachen, 2006

Honda, Megumu, "Ārya Deva's Critique Against Sāṅkhya," *Indogaku Bukkyogaku Kenkyu* 23, 2, 1974 (45), 7-12

Jakubczak, Marzenna, "The Collision of Language and Metaphysics in the Search of Self-Identity: On "Ahaṃkāra" and "Asmitā" in Sāṅkhya-Yoga", *Argument*, Vol. 1, 1.2011, 37-48

Johnston, Adrian, *Badiou, Žižek, and Political Transformations: the Cadence of Change*, Northwestern University Press, Evanston, 2009

---. "Reflections of a Rotten Nature: Hegel, Lacan, and Material Negativity." *Filozofski Vestnik* 33.2 (2012): 23-52.

---. "Jacques Lacan", *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Apr. 2, 2013 (a),

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/lacan/>

---. "The Object in the Mirror of Genetic Transcendentalism: Lacan's *Objet petit a* Between Visibility and Invisibility," *Continental Philosophy Review*, special issue: "Reading Seminar XIII: The Object of Psychoanalysis" [ed. Thomas Brockelman and Dominiek Hoens], vol. 46, no. 2, August 2013 (b), pp. 251-269.

---. *Irrepressible Truth: On Lacan's the Freudian Thing*, unpublished.

---. *Adventures in Transcendental Materialism: Dialogues with Contemporary Thinkers*, Edinburgh University Press, 2014

Kaukua, J. and Kukkonen, T., "Sense-Perception and Self-Awareness: Before and After Avicenna," *Consciousness: From Perception to Reflection in the History of Philosophy*, ed. by Sara Heinamaa, Vili Lahteenmaki, and Pauliina Remes, Springer, 2007, pp. 95-119

Keith, Arthur B., *The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upanishads*, Vol. 31-32, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1925

King, Richard, *Indian Philosophy: An Introduction to Hindu and Buddhist Thought*, Washington: Georgetown University Press, 1999

Lawrence, David P., "Remarks on Abhinavagupta's Use of the Analogy of Reflection," *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, Vol. 33, 2005, pp. 583-599

Larson, G. J., *Classical Sāṃkhya: An Interpretation of its History and Meaning*, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, Delhi, 1979

Larson, G.J. and Bhattacharya, R.S., *Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies, Vol. 4.: Sāṃkhya: A Dualist Tradition in Indian Philosophy*, Motilal Banarsidass, 1987

Mahony, William K., *The Artful Universe: an Introduction to the Vedic Religious Imagination*, State University of New York Press, 1998

Metzinger, Thomas, *Being No One: The Self-Model Theory of Subjectivity*, the MIT Press, 2003

Nelkin, Norton, "Subjectivity," *A Companion to the Philosophy of Mind*, ed. by Samuel D.

Guttenplan, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers LTD., 1995, pp. 568-575

Nicholson, Andrew, J., *Unifying Hinduism: Philosophy and Identity in Indian Intellectual History*, New York : Columbia University Press, 2010

Nobus, Dany, "Life and Death in the Glass: A New Look at the Mirror Stage," in Dany Nobus (ed.), *Key Concepts of Lacanian Psychoanalysis*, Karnac Books LTD, 2017, pp.101-138

Phillips, Stephen, *Yoga, Karma, and Rebirth: A Brief History and Philosophy*, Columbia University Press: New York, 2009

Pillai, S.G.K., Pillai, R.M, and Damodara, A.D., "Ancient Metal-Mirror Making in South India," *The Journal of the Minerals, Metals and Materials Society*, Vol. 44:3, 1992, pp.38-40

Pines, Malcolm, "Reflections on Mirroring," in *Circular Reflections: Selected Papers of Malcolm Pines (International Library of Group Analysis)*. London: Jessica Kingsley, pp. 17–40.

Potter, Karl H., *Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies: Advaita Vedānta up to Śaṅkara and His Pupils*, Motilal Banarsidass, 1981

---. *Presuppositions of Indian Philosophies*, New Delhi, India, Prentice-Hall of India, 1965

Qvarnström, Olle, "Sāṃkhya as Portrayed by Bhāviveka and Haribhadrasūri: Early Buddhist and Jain Criticisms of Sāṃkhya Epistemology and the Theory of Reflection", *Journal of Indian Philosophy* (2012) 40:395–409

Ram, K. (1988), “Vijñānabhikṣu’s Theory of Double Reflection”, *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*, Vol. 69, Poona, 1989, 77-92

Ram-Prasad, Chakravarthi, *Knowledge and Liberation in Classical Indian Thought*, Palgrave, 2001

Raveh, Daniel, “*Ayam aham asmīti*: Self-consciousness and Identity in the Eight Chapter of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* vs. Śankara's *Bhāṣya*”, *Journal of Indian Philosophy* (2008) 36:319-333

Renou, Louis, “On the Word Ātman,” *Vāk*, Vol. 2:1, 1952, pp. 151-157

Roudinesco, Élisabeth. “The mirror stage: an obliterated archive.” In *The Cambridge Companion to Lacan*. Edited by Jean-Michel Rabaté, 25-34. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Rukmani, T.S., “Vijñānabhikṣu’s Double Reflection Theory of Knowledge in The Yoga System”, *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, 16,4, Dec. 1, 1988, 367-375

Saito, Akira, “Bhavya's Critique of the Sāṃkhya Theory of *pratibimba*”, 東京大学大学院人文社会系研究科・文学部インド哲学仏教学研究室 Department of Indian Philosophy and Buddhist Studies, Graduate School of Humanities and Sociology, University of Tokyo University of Tokyo 2011-03-31, 13-22

Schweizer, Paul, “Mind/Consciousness Dualism in Sāṃkhya-Yoga Philosophy,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. LIII, No. 4, December 1993, pp. 845-859

Sharma, B.N.K, *Philosophy of Sri Madhvacharya*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1986

Shevchenko, D. (2017). "Natural Liberation in the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* and Its Commentaries," *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, Vol. 45, No. 5, pp. 863-892

Shima, I., "On Pratibimbavāda and Avacchedavāda in Advaitavedānta", 南アジア研究 (*Minami-Ajia Kenkyū – South Asian Studies*) / 日本南アジア学会 編 (Nihon Minami-Ajia Gakkai Hen – Edited by the Japanese Association of South Asian Studies). n12 (2000): 29-49

Smith, Brian K., *Reflections on Resemblance, Ritual, and Religion*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1989

Srinivasan, Sharada, "Mirrors: Metal Mirrors from India," *Encyclopaedia of the History of Science, Technology, and Medicine in Non-Western Cultures*, 2008, pp. 1699-1704

Thompson, George, "Ahaṃkāra and Ātmastuti: Self-Assertion and Impersonation in the Ṛgveda," *History of Religions*, Vol. 37, No. 2, 1997, pp. 141-171

Timalsina, Sthaneshwar, "Bhartṛhari and Maṇḍana on Avidyā", *Journal of Indian Philosophy* (2009) 37:367-382

---."Puruṣavāda: A Pre-Śāṅkara Monistic Philosophy as Critiqued by Mallavādin," *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, 2017, 45:939-959

Tull, Herman W., *The Vedic Origins of Karma: Cosmos as Man in Ancient Indian Myth and Ritual*, Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1989

Van Buitenen, J.A.B., "The Large Ātman," *History of Religions*, 4:1, Summer 1964, pp. 103-114

---. "Studies in Sāṃkhya (II): Ahaṃkāra," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 77, No. 1, 1957, pp. 15-25

Vanheule, Stijn, "Lacan's Construction and Deconstruction of the Double-Mirror Device," *Frontiers in Psychology*, Vol. 2, article 209, September 2011, pp.1-9

---. and Verhaeghe, Paul, "Identity through a Psychoanalytic Looking Glass," *Theory and Psychology*, Vol.19 (3), 2009, pp.391-411

Voyat, Gilbert, "The Work of Henri Wallon," in Gilbert Voyat (ed.), *The World of Henri Wallon*, 1984, pp.33-58

Wayman, Alex, "The Mirror as a Pan-Buddhist Metaphor-Simile", *Buddhist Insight: Essays by Alex Wayman*, ed. by George Elder, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1984, pp.129-151

Žižek, Slavoj. *For they know not what they do: Enjoyment as a Political Factor*. London: Verso, 2002.