
THE TRUTH OF NESCIENCE: CONSIDERING THE EXPRESSION OF PRIMORDIAL TRUTH IN HEIDEGGER'S *BEITRÄGE* AND ŚAṄKARA'S *BRAHMASŪTRABHAṢYA*

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ABSTRACT

What if a theory of 'primordial truth' is brought forward that claims to precede conventional theories of truth, and additionally asserts that the conventional understanding of truth is inherently compromised due to the distortions related to the very questioning of truth? This type of truth can be attributed to Heidegger's presentation in his work *Beiträge der Philosophie (vom Ereignis)* where he considers what he calls the 'event of truth'. To approach such a primordial truth implies a fundamental problem of articulation which has to circumvent conventional methods of expression. In order to better evaluate Heidegger's approach, this paper will juxtapose it against the approach of the Indian philosopher Śaṅkara. Each approach is concerned with the 'saying' of truth, and each approach is concerned with how to articulate something which emerges prior to articulation, and explicate something which evades conventional understanding. We will here explore the nature of Heidegger's primordial event of truth and the effects that such a concept can induce, against an understanding of Śaṅkara's concept of 'superimposition' which is practiced in order to remove obstacles to the illumination of true

Being. Although these two approaches cannot be reduced to one another, their juxtaposition provides us with an opportunity to reflect on method, language, the nature of understanding, and ultimately, the possible inability of academic efforts to engage in such a project. The question in this study may be posed as follows: should Heidegger's *Beiträge* be understood as a (very long) pointless mantra?

Keywords: Heidegger; Śāṅkara; *Beiträge*; saying; nescience; Advaita Vedānta

Introduction

In this study we will take a look at the expression of a concept of truth, which considers itself prior to conventional approaches to truth. We will see that such an idea of an exclusive, absolute and primal truth that precedes and makes possible natural language, also implies a fundamental inaccessibility to this primal truth, or its ability to be expressed in the manner in which we usually approach truth philosophically. Not only does it maintain its inaccessibility to a definite understanding on one hand, it also allows for the emergence of a kind of ignorance or distortion when we apply our everyday understanding to this primordial truth; a concept of what is here characterised as nescience. In order to try to understand a text like the *Beiträge* which claims to deal with a realm of primal truth, a work which even claims to be authorless, we perhaps need to juxtapose one philosophical tradition or one philosophical language against another. We will therefore present two different texts from two distinct philosophical traditions, Heidegger and Śāṅkara, in order to identify characteristics of primal truths, and further suggest approaches with which we are able to apprehend the implication of such an invasive concept, reflected in the change of meanings in a range of dependent or supportive concepts.

Truth and Machination

Heidegger formulated a peculiar interpretation of truth in a text written between 1936 and 1938, entitled *Beiträge der Philosophie*

(vom Ereignis), the English translation is *Contributions to Philosophy (of the Event)*.² The text was formulated nine years after publication of Heidegger's first major work, *Sein und Zeit*³, but remained unknown until it was posthumously published in 1986. We selected this text in order to study the way the text deals with the problem of a primordial idea of truth and its relation to other significant concepts, and which seems to alter their conventional meanings in the presence of this primordial transformative 'event' of truth [*Ereignis*]. Thus, in the *Beiträge*, along with the development of a unique concept of truth, a distinction is made between beings [*seiende*], Being [*Sein*], and 'primordial Being' or Beyng [*Seyn*]; A 'being' is basically everything that can be an object of study, a 'something' which can be represented, like an object, a quality, or a relation. 'Being' is inscribed in the traditional metaphysics and therefore means the most abstract or substantial form that constitute a 'being' to be cognized as a such. 'Beyng' (spelled with an 'y') or what we occasionally refer to as 'primordial Being', is Heidegger's concept of Being beyond traditional metaphysics, connected to the transformative 'event' of truth [*Ereignis*]. This concept of an original truth connects to the above-mentioned differentiation of being/Being/Beyng in the pre-metaphysical domain. In this way Heidegger departs from his earlier approach to Being in *Sein und Zeit* where truth was understood as *altheia* or 'unconcealment'. Truth now is expressed as a fundamental emergence prior to *aletheia*. With his 'anti-metaphysical' agenda *Beiträge* intends to overcome philosophy in the conventional sense, because, such a philosophy is based on the false premise that what is 'real' is derived from objects or 'beings' [*seiendes*], and consequently, so is the understanding of the Being [*Sein*] of these 'things'.

Thus, according to *Beiträge*, an investigation of a fundamental truth can only be carried out as inherently connected to a question of Being, and is therefore to be articulated as a break with our current state of non-cognition that we are subjected to. To approach this radical 'other' truth we need new ways of expressing what is concealed, and this way is what Heidegger in the *Beiträge* states as a 'thoughtful meditation'

[*Besinnung*] on truth.⁴ This is to be understood in a pre-epistemological and pre-metaphysical sense. It is on one hand a self-illuminating and self-concealing truth on which we wholly depend upon as human beings, and on the other hand, it is a fundamental obstacle to our reaching truth, preventing any clarity regarding ourselves and our world. But of course, there are openings revealed in *Beiträge*, in the form of privileged phenomena (e.g. an analysis of death and ‘being away’) and especially relevant to this study, indications of truth in the form of *sayings* [*Sagen*], which do not expressly determine or definite anything: “Here the speaking is not something over and against what is to be said but is this latter itself as the essential occurrence of *Beyng*.”⁵ It is an important assumption of this study that *Beiträge*’s core statements *must* be included in this category, that is, to be considered as sayings.⁶ We tentatively call this category ‘text/speech of necessity’ due to an intrinsic characteristic of their articulation and operation.

One concept of truth is highlighted as concerning everything that can *be* as such, including any relative truth model articulated within a representational domain. Therefore, Heidegger accentuates a radical difference between this domain and an original truth by connecting ‘truth’ to ‘*Beyng*’ [*Wahrheit des Seyns*], This essential truth implies a fundamental withdrawal of the primordial Being ‘in’ the dominance of beings [*seiendes*], which in turn superimpose their characteristics on this Being, to the extent that ‘*Beyng*’ shows itself as something it is *not*.⁷ In this perspective truth is understood both as the original light that is the foundation of every possible way anything can *be*, and a distortion of this primordial Being which in the current situation is manifested as what in *Beiträge* is asserted as the expansion of pervasive ‘machination’ [*Machenschaft*]. We are subject to a distortion of our sense of reality, that directs our cognitions and activities into conflict with our essential ‘nature’. This concept of distortion is crucial, since the primordial Being as the most intimately known, is also that which is unrealized, even to the extent that its absence in cognition is not felt or known at all. The only way to know this absence of truth is to engage in a project of recovering

of what constitutes the current situation, and this is the *Beiträge*'s mission.

In the *Beiträge*, Heidegger engages in an analysis of the constitution of 'objects' in terms of their makeability [*Machbarkeit*] – that is, something that can be acted upon and subsumed a field of calculative planning – as an abandonment of the primordial Being [*Seinsverlassenheit*] that further leads to the forgetfulness of Being [*Seinsvergessenheit*]. But, according to *Beiträge*, even in this state of a progressive distortion of truth, or precisely because of it, the seed of its opposite may give birth to an 'event' [*Ereignis*] of truth: "But the abandonment by beyng excludes and precludes the event. The resonating must sound out of this abandonment and must start with the unfolding of the forgottenness of beyng."⁸ The use of the term *event* is crucial; it ties the original truth to the primordial Being by drawing on a common sense understanding of an event, e.g., timely and accidental, while suppressing others e.g., the objectively definable phenomenon.

This 'event' disguises itself as 'nothing', and consequently the radical other truth can only *be* as this intervening appropriation, and certainly this concept of an *event* moves the truth of such a Being back into the unknown, connected to a multitude of modified concepts employed in *Beiträge* – and no doubt the underlying tone of monstrosity and darkness of Heidegger's thinking, characterized as such by Sloterdijk, *does* really resonate with the project of *Beiträge*.⁹ This impression is supported by the claim in the text itself that the message does *not* belong to the author's personal expression, rather it belongs to the hints of truth itself according to its 'own logic' [*aus ihrem Gesetz*]. This de-humanization and de-personification of an original truth is to be sought after through the aforementioned openings and sayings which demand a conceptual framework that subverts a conventional rational approach: "All 'proving' presupposes that those who understand, as they come to stand before the represented content of the proposition, remain the same, unaltered in following the representational nexus that bears the proof."¹⁰ This critique of the scope and validity of logic targets in particular the belief that logic can be utilized to clarify fundamental philosophical problems. Heidegger, on the contrary, sees logic as adding to the complexity of the problems of

philosophy, due to its establishment of an authoritative field of concepts contributing, in Heidegger's view, to the 'preference of things'.

Therefore, the *Beiträge* is not something to be read and intellectually understood in the conventional sense, rather the reader of the text has "to be appropriated over to the appropriating event".¹¹ And in that appropriating *event*, the human being is equal to [*gleichkommt*] *Da-sein* involved in an essential *transformation* [*Wesenswandel*], which is somehow caused, but indeed not understood as in the form of rational discourse. The readers instinctively collect and analyse the text, but is circumvented due to an unknown causality incorporated in the speech of the text. The *Beiträge's* speech is meant to indicate something entirely different that conveys the impression of immense distance of the radical other event of truth to the common understanding of referential truth, though a kind of progress is suggested as instrumental: "That conditions a stratagem which within certain limits must always accommodate itself at first to the ordinary meaning and must proceed in company with that meaning for a while, in order then to call up at the right moment an inversion of thinking, though one still under the power of the same word."¹² The concept of 'inverse' [*umgekehrt*] marks an essential feature of the transformative truth: This inauthentic understanding can 'suddenly' be subverted in a reverse movement in which the familiar and known is revealed as that which conceals and distorts.

Now, we briefly mentioned the *Beiträge's* claim to be authorless, that is, comprising connected hints arises from the truth itself, and we are led to tentatively characterize this as 'speech of necessity', that is, an expression manifested solely by the 'proximity' to the original truth.¹³ There is strictly speaking no author of the text to refer to, except as a name or a sound in the same speech; anticipation of truth expresses itself, and indications of individuality are to be considered as belonging to the distorting totality. In principle, every word has to be regarded as absolute, at least in principle, *if* not affected by individuality.¹⁴ The phenomenal aspect of an event of truth is reflected in the concept '*Verrückung*' (literally: dislocation) which is a special Heideggerian use of a term indicating a

comprehensive and abrupt movement, a displacement/dislodging that includes a detachment from what was before, in the sense of a fundamental response to an otherness. Heidegger suggests a reversal of the determining power of the logical thinking, however, something more is added when Heidegger introduces the concept of intimacy: “Detachment [*Loslösung*] from every ‘personal’ domain will succeed only out of the intimacy [*Innigkeit*] of the earliest belonging”¹⁵ This emotive aspect points to a structural event and a progression of the reception referred to as trembling and intimacy. Again, the peculiar combination of preservation and suppression is demonstrated, i.e., utilizing express meanings of common-sense words only to partly withdraw from the induced reference to set in motion a ‘purification’ that serve a different and new purpose.

Before leaving the *Beiträge* we should summarize its significant points: First we found a direct link between a pre-metaphysical truth and the question of a primordial Being/Beyng through a likewise changed meaning of an event (of truth), Secondly, there emerged a comprehensive concept of a distorted reality, machination, which threatens to undermine the very message of the *Beiträge*, although potentially capable to activate an essential intimacy. Thirdly, *Beiträge* emerged as text or speech of necessity, circumventing an individual author or receiver in favour of an essential *Dasein*.

Brahman and the *māyā/avidyā*

We will try to throw some light on the *Beiträge* by engaging the late 8th-century advaitic philosopher Ādi Śaṅkarācārya’s celebrated *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya*, which is a commentary on Bādarāyaṇa’s *Brahmasūtras* (or *Vedāntasūtras*) dated somewhere between the 3rd – 2nd century BCE. Śaṅkara founded the *Advaita Vedānta*, a philosophy and a path to practice, in order to obtain a liberating knowledge of the non-dual truth - and to penetrate the pervasive nescience of the phenomenal world. Key-statements will here be collected in order to acquire a basic idea of how the concept of nescience (*māyā/avidyā*) is employed and related to a non-dual truth, Brahman, a particular concept of reality taken from

particular *Upaniṣadic* sources, which denies the apparent phenomenal world any reality. It is to be noted that for the purpose of harmonization of different traditional sources (e.g. *Ṛgveda*, the *Brāhmaṇas*, or the *Upaniṣads*) the Sanskrit word *māyā* is seemingly used synonymously with *avidyā* by Śaṅkara as representing a veiling and illusory power, and that both of these concepts are covered by the translators' use of the English word 'nescience' or occasionally 'ignorance' or 'principle of illusion.'¹⁶

In the *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya*, the concept of Brahman is discussed in the context of refutation of opponents' views on this subject. Brahman is initially stated as pure existence [*sat*] and pure consciousness [*cit*], and is said to be known by everyone, though unrealized. But a problem of cognition is stated due to the character of the claimed non-dualism: Brahman is beyond any categories of causalities, qualities or actions, and thus being a non-object, it is "impossible to say that it is not or is not apprehended"¹⁷ Though undecided and undetermined, a fundamental realization *is* possible of everything as 'really' Brahman, and this is the true knowledge that causes the releasing *event* of truth. Thus, Being and truth are one: The event of *knowing* Brahman is *being* Brahman; therefore, the event of truth transforms [*pariṇāma*] or rather transfigures [*vivarta*] everything, yet nothing is different from what was before, since Brahman is changeless and all-pervasive.¹⁸ Śaṅkara summarizes the nature of liberation [*mokṣa*] that is Brahman:

This (*mokṣa*) is eternal in the true sense, i.e., eternal without undergoing any changes [*kūṭasthanitya*], omnipresent as ether [*akāśavat, sarvagata*], free from all modifications [*nirvikāra*], absolutely self-sufficient [*nirapekṣa*], not composed of parts [*akhaṇḍa, niṣkala*], of self-luminous nature [*svayaṃ prakāśa*].¹⁹

Here a duplication of truths must be assumed; absolute truth and relative qualifying truths are to be separated from each other as essentially different, though, simultaneously present, as each other's 'other' divided by an abyssal transforming event. The implication of this 'otherness' is that

the human beings are in the state of nescience [*māyā*] as our inherently self-referencing condition (no external ‘corrections’) – but there has to be some kind of reflection of its opposite, since truth can be at least posited and pursued. This implies of course an ontological and epistemological complexity in the concepts of *māyā* and *avidyā*, which has to contain not only the absence of truth but also a truth of nescience to be captured in and through itself. The absolute truth cannot *be* without the recognition of everything as ‘really’ a manifestation of nescience.

In Śaṅkara’s introduction in *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* an aspect of *māyā/avidyā* is characterized as a superimposition [*adhyāsa*] in which the qualities of one thing are wrongly projected on another thing, and applied to the question of the relation between Self [*cit, ātman*] and non-self [*acit, anātman*]. Śaṅkara states this as the central problem because the purpose of the *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* is to “free one’s Self from that wrong notion which is the cause of all evil and attaining thereby the knowledge of the absolute unity of the Self.”²⁰ Thus, the notion of the *mind* [*antaḥkaraṇa*] which is considered as a unconscious, that is, a ‘material’ non-Self submitted to change, is superimposed on a (changeless) Self [*ātman*], which is the internal principle of Brahman - and the reverse: The *ātman* is superimposed on the mind, and the collective effect is the diverse world of experience. Thus, *māyā* represents the cause of illusion which is neither existent nor non-existent and imposes its limiting adjuncts [*upādhis*] as delineating qualities replacing a more general or different thing, that is, on Brahman, making the phenomenal world seem real. When under the spell of *māyā*, the soul is caught in the world of names and forms in circles of transmigration. But this is only by the workings of *māyā*, “not defined as being [*Brahman*] nor different from it.”²¹ In this ontological limbo, ‘not belonging to Brahman and not different’ and ‘neither real nor unreal’, *māyā* cannot be affected by something at all; *māyā* can only be removed by the true discriminative knowledge of Brahman.

The world and the individual counterpart in the form of an illusory “I”, also have to represent the necessary condition of liberation. This peculiar ontological and epistemological ambiguity attached to the

concepts of nescience [*māyā/avidyā*] causes a verbal articulation of these to engage in *negative* and/or *circular* logical figures; that there is really no acting subject, though the right action within nescience is urgent needed:

All acting and enjoying is at the bottom based on the non-discrimination (by the soul) of the respective nature of internal organ [*antahkaraṇa*] and soul [*jīva*]; while in reality neither the internal organ nor the soul either act or enjoy; not the former, because it is non-intelligent; not the latter, because it is not capable of any modification.²²

The aspect regarding projection within *māyā* is active, i.e., *adhyāsa* takes place as an inner dual mechanism, which holds its imaginary ‘prisoners’ in a confusing reciprocal deadlock; the Self is superimposed on the non-Self, and the non-Self on the Self.

A method to analyse the great sayings [*mahāvākyas*]

The problem for Śaṅkara here is that superimposition, which is used to explain nescience, is itself conditioned by nescience, because of the division of Self and non-Self, is ultimately not real. In this context, it seems that *adhyāsa*, as both a cause and effect of nescience, in Advaita Vedānta necessarily express a circular structure. The reason why this contradiction is not considered destructive can be found in the concept of a beginningless [*anādi*] relation, which prevents a logical infinite regress in the nature of the superimposition. It is to be noted that there seems to be found a similar structure in Heidegger’s account of *Dasein* as the ‘thrown projector’ [*geworfene Werfer*] and in the characteristics of machination.²³ We might at this stage assume that such a circular structure is unavoidable in the context of a pervasive state of nescience, which non the less allows a realization of this in the light of truth:

Those quick-witted persons, on the other hand, in whose mind the sense of the words is not obstructed by ignorance, doubt, and misconception, are able to intuit the sense of

the sentence ‘Thou art that’ on its first enunciation even, and for them therefore repetition is not required. For the knowledge of the Self having once sprung up discards all ignorance; so that in this case no progressive process of cognition can be acknowledged.²⁴

This is one of the great sayings of the *upaṇiṣadic mahāvākyas*, and can be understood as a glimpse of spontaneous induced intuition, sufficient to escape the unreal bondage of the world. But this exceptional instance is not in accordance with the ‘normal’ mechanism of *saṃsāra*, which propagates the weight of reality on the empirical level.

The principles of such interpretations are explained by one of Śaṅkara’s disciples, *Sarvajñātman* (10th century) who authored a text, *Pañcaprakriyā*, about the language of Advaita Vedānta up to and including his time. In the first part of *Pañcaprakriyā*, he discusses three ways a word is able to convey meaning: Through a *primary* meaning [*mukhyavṛtti*], a *secondary* meaning [*lakṣaṇāvṛtti*], and a meaning based on *similar qualities* [*guṇāvṛtti*]:²⁵

It is obvious that the primary expressed meanings cannot be applied in a positive statement in regard to Brahman, since the Absolute is without the limitations or qualities applicable to objects, and that secondary or metaphoric meanings must be preferred. Sarvajñātman covers in his treatise sentence analysis in which he employs the above mentioned three types of word meanings, now in relation to the non-dual reality, which can be divided into two types of sentences:

- A. Sentences which express absolute truth as an identity between the internal principle of Self [*jīvātman*] and the Absolute [*Brahman*] conveyed through an undivided sentence meaning [*akhaṇḍārtha*], and
- B. Sentences which are subsidiary [*avāntaravākya*] conveyed through qualification of the Absolute either positively [*vidhivākya*] or negatively [*niṣedhavākya*].

Now, regarding the former kind of sentences, the identity type (A), Sarvajñātman connects this type to ‘Great Sayings’ [*mahāvākyas*], because these sentences express a direct identity, like: “That thou art” [*tatvamasi*] and “I am Brahman” [*aham brahmāsmi*] (we refer to a schematic overview of the procedure in **Table 1** below). If the meaning of these sentences are truly realized, the event of liberation [*mokṣa*] has been reached, though, of course, not by a semantical analysis alone, rather through a genuine *appropriation*.

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Sarvajñātman's Hermeneutical Method
Non-dual sentences of identity or qualification →
Analysis of the express meanings of words and resulting sentence meaning →
Causing a contradiction of meaning to occur, which has to be resolved →
Analysis of the alternative implied meanings of words →
The part of the meanings associated with nescience is removed →
The pure part of meanings are retained →
The true meaning of the sentence is revealed

Table 1 – The procedure of a non-dual interpretation

The words ‘I’ and ‘Brahman’ have to be understood in order to understand the sentence “I am Brahman”. The primary or expressed [*vācya*] meaning of ‘I’ is the inward consciousness associated [*sabala*] with mind, breath and body, and the expressed meaning of ‘Brahman’ has for its meaning the pure consciousness associated with ignorance. Now a contradiction occurs in the *expressed* meaning of the sentence: The entity associated with the effect (mind, body, etc.) and the cause (nescience as a cause, here the creator god *Īśvara*) “share the same grammatical case, and are

related to each other as a qualifier and things qualified.”²⁶ According to the rule of interpretation, the secondary meanings are to be applied since the part of the expressed meanings denoting the associated entities has to be abandoned: The ‘I’ has to be understood as the inward pure consciousness, and the ‘Brahman’ has to be understood as the absolute pure consciousness. Of course, in order to realize this identity requires that a devotee is guided by a competent teacher who has obtained final release, and only when the candidate has reached a certain *karmic* maturity which makes him fit to attempt to grasp the truth. Regarding the other category, the subsidiary sentences (B), Sarvajñātman now considers the much larger portion of *upaṇiṣadic* statements, which are not *mahāvākyas*, e.g., “Brahman is truth, knowledge, the infinite” [*satyam jñānamantam brahma*]. Here the entity, which cannot be subject to differentiation, is *qualified* by truth, knowledge, infinity and bliss. But this is a contradiction: ‘Truth’ can here only mean not false; ‘knowledge’ can only mean not insentient, etc. Really, Brahman is not limited by qualifications at all. The qualities attached to Brahman must be either negative (what Brahman is *not*), or if positive, connected to some level of nescience: Brahman with qualities [*saguṇabrahman*] is what is meant in the subsidiary statements, as opposed to the absolute Brahman without qualities [*nirguṇabrahman*] as stated in the *mahāvākyas*. Any attempt to determine the word ‘Brahman’ necessarily fails, and so is the case of determining the Self, ‘ātman’, which can only be approached through a process of negation.

These methods of articulation and understanding are not accidental but necessary guidelines in relation to a radical other truth, and the nature of a pervasive nescience. We will return to this point when considering the *Beiträge*.

The ‘who’ of nescience

Now a debate is raised that had to emerge from the key concepts employed by Śaṅkara. For our purpose, it is interesting to track the modifications that took place shortly after Śaṅkara’s work was written. We will focus on the *Bhāmatī* school represented by the third direct disciple of

Śaṅkara, Maṇḍana Mīśra (8th century) who wrote the work *Brahmasiddhi*, followed by Vācaspati Mīśra's (9th century) *Bhāmatī*, which became at that time the dominant interpretation of Śaṅkara's *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya*. In *Brahmasiddhi* Maṇḍana embarks on a discussion of *avidyā* from a slightly different point of view than previously: The issue of its subject or locus [*āśraya*] and its object or substratum [*viśaya*].²⁷ This type of question usually belongs to a theory of knowledge, but here it is applied to the ambiguous *avidyā*, as the question of the location of its operation, and the corresponding question concerning the nature of the object which is misapprehended. Maṇḍana Mīśra's position is that it is the individual soul [*jīva*] which is the seat of *avidyā*, and that it is Brahman who is the object of this misapprehension.

This is elaborated on a century later in Vācaspati Mīśra's gloss on *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya*, the *Bhāmatī*; regarding the individual soul, the *jīva*, it is previously told that it is only different from Brahman as seen under the aspect of nescience, and this, of course, means that the support of the operation of nescience is also a product of the same:

The inner self defined by the internal organ etc., the intelligent being compounded of the “this” and the “not-this,” is the *jīva*, the agent, the enjoyer, the support of the two kinds of Nescience – the result and the cause - the substrate of “I-ness”, the transmigrator, the vessel of the entire host of woes, the material cause of reciprocal superimposition; the material cause of that again is superimposition; hence, this being beginningless, like the seed and the sprout, there is not (the defect of) reciprocal dependence.²⁸

The condition of *jīva* is superimposed on the Self, through non-distinction of the difference between self and non-self, resulting in a superimposition of these. The concept of “I” is possible because of the limited *jīva*, which is considered as “the substrate of ‘I-ness’”, targeted by the “I” (which is object-like), nonetheless the self-manifestation of the real Self is present. Interpreting Śaṅkara's words about the real Self

which can never be an agent or enjoyer, Vācaspati Mīśra now states in *Bhāmatī* that *avidyā* is to be located in the *jīva*, because nescience can never be associated with the pure Brahman, thus preserving the truth as absolute and undifferentiated. The arguments in favour of this puzzling role of the *jīva* are twofold: Firstly, a strict requirement of formal logic and reason is only applicable to the realm of objects, *not* the *avidyā*, which is inexpressible [*anirvacanīya*]. Secondly, *jīva* as both a condition of the operation of *avidyā* and an effect of the same condition is a beginningless [*anādi*] relation which simply makes any question about dependencies meaningless; whether *avidyā* is dependent on *jīva* as its support, or *jīva* dependent on *avidyā* as its effect, does not make sense in the presence of *anādi*.

Now, we have touched upon some interesting characteristics in the philosophy of Advaita Vedānta which we consider to be fruitful for an evaluation of a concept of truth in *Beiträge*: Clear formulated guidelines for articulating and interpreting truth in our current state of nescience, and a conceptual framework of how to understand the changes in the concept of a self, connected to the differentiation of truth and Being.

Beiträge revisited: Self and Non-self

We notice that in *Beiträge* the principle of nescience, the machination, cannot be separated from the experiential component which means a cumulative strengthening of the part of machination: Abandonment by Beyng [*Seinsverlassenheit*] → Forgetfulness of Being [*Seinsvergessenheit*] → Machination [*Machenschaft*] → Lived experience [*Erlebnis*]. The seemingly infinite horizon of experiences makes possible an endless expansion of the propagation of nescience. Guided by the discussion of a method of articulation of truth and the location/support of *avidyā* in Advaita Vedānta, we turn to a question regarding the ‘who’ of the event of truth, as well as that of the machination. Who is the subject of nescience/machination? A part of the answer is the previously observed differentiation within the concept of a self and their mutual relations. We have to take a closer look at *Beiträge*’s conceptualization of a human

being, a self and its essential relations:

The human being has an intimation [Ahnung] of being, is the surmiser [Ahnende] of being, because being ap-proprieates [Er-eignung] the human being and does so specifically such that the ap-proprieation first needs something that is self-proper [Sich-eigenes], i.e., a self [Selbst]. This selfhood has to be withstood in that standing fast [Instandigkeit] which allows the human being, by taking a stand [innestehend] in Da-sein, to become the being that can be encountered only in the who-question [Wer-frage].²⁹

The reply to the advaitic problem of the ‘who’ of nescience in the articulation of truth, which might be reframed to: The subject of nescience (as well as the event of truth) is the Self [Selbst], and this Self is not the ‘I’ [Ich] of a human being, since the Self needs an instrument of transformation to be able to go beyond the constructed ‘I’. The individual human being is not the real ‘who’, for which the *Beiträge* is written (or by which it is written); it is the Self [Selbst] which can be only because of the essential *Dasein* with which the Self connects. It is notable that the event [Ereignis] is here meant as appropriation [Er-eignung] only through a reference to the Self. The human being may be present, but its dispositions have to be dislodged [Verrückt] or turned away from. This ‘reversal’ of dispositions reveals the true subject of nescience as the Self, on which the propagation of nescience is based, and eventually is the place of its withdrawal. But this intimation to which the Self [Selbst] is receptive has a conceptual counterpart, which is the ‘I’ [Ich] simply because this is a product of machination:

The self is never the ‘I’. The with-itself [Bei-sich] of the self [Selbst] essentially occurs as steadfast acceptance [Über-nahme] of the ap-proprieation [Er-eignung]. Selfhood is belongingness in the intimacy of that: strife as the conflict over appropriation. If instituted on their own initiative, no ‘we’ [Wir] and ‘ye’ [Ihr] and no ‘I’ [Ich] and ‘thou’ [Du]

and likewise no community can ever reach the self. Unless these are first grounded on Da-sein, they merely miss the self and remain excluded from it.³⁰

The ‘I’ is to be seen as an ‘unconscious’ attachment to the machination, if not reflecting the selfhood. We can conclude that the domain of intimacy (though continually at work) needs to be activated to be realized in the world, and this is a transformation from the “I” (the constructed self) to the Self (which points to its essence)³¹. In **Table 2** below the left-most part belongs to the ‘material’ or constructed domain, the middle represents the semi-subject that needs to be connected to the rightmost part in order to truly be, and the rightmost part is essentially which is beyond any concept of subject/object. This structure shows why there must be a rupture between the inauthentic and the other realms in the form of an event: “Everything

is transformed [*verwandelt*] and that the bridges which just now led to beyng must be pulled down, because another [*anderer*] time-space [*Zeit-Raum*] is opened up by beyng itself.”³² The ‘I’ seemed to have lost its meaning altogether or rather has been completely reorganized. The form of articulation has to internally reduplicate the concept of a self to express what has not taken place, and which cannot be covered by words and meanings belonging to nescience.

Constructed subject	Semi-subject	Beyond subjects
"I"	Self	Essential Self
<i>Ich</i>	<i>Selbst</i>	<i>Dasein</i>
<i>antaḥkāraṇa</i>	<i>jīva</i>	<i>Ātman</i>

Table 2- Differentiation of self in the presence of a liberating event

The painful explication

Heidegger addresses the problem of sentence-analysis in two parts dedicated to two slightly different statements: “Being ‘is’ infinite” [*Das Sein ‘ist’ un-endlich*] and “beings are” [*Das seiende ist*].³³ Heidegger’s own analysis of both sentences shows that the immediate expressed meanings are regarded as misleading: The former sentence as qualifying determination, and the later sentence in the form of an existential proposition: The former sentence’s expressed meaning is resolved as implying a sort of ‘a closed circle’ [*geschlossene Kreis*], which points to a secondary meaning of the ‘infinite’ [*un-endlich*]. The second sentence (“Beings are”), Heidegger continues: “The proposition says nothing, as long as it is understood immediately”; ‘Immediately’ here means the words’ primary meaning. But if the primary meaning of the sentence is abandoned, then there must be a truer significance of the words through which the sentence attains a different meaning, which is given by Heidegger as the following: “being essentially occurs [*das Sein west*].” Thus, Heidegger’s analysis in fact conforms to the same patterns as outlined previous by the beforementioned Advaitin Sarvajñātman who constructed the method to exclude those parts of the sentence-meanings which prevented a true understanding. Both types of sentences demonstrated by Sarvajñātman, concerning identity and qualification, employed traditional concepts involving ‘dualities’ (i.e., objects, relations and connected metaphysics), which we labelled ‘expressed’ meanings, or what Heidegger termed the ‘immediate’ or ‘thoughtless’ ways of understanding, which had to be abandoned.

We can apply our algorithm to sentences which states what the Beyng is, or can be similar to. One example of an undivided identity-sentence from *Beiträge* would be the following: “The truth of beyng is the beyng of truth” [*Die Wahrheit des Seyns ist das Seyn der Wahrheit*].³⁴ The sentence is indeed not meaningless, but the express meaning misleadingly implies ‘truth’ and ‘Beyng’ to be known like objects or object-relations. This version of knowing the truth, that is, the reduction of Beyng to an epistemological proposal, leads to an infinite regress since Beyng in itself

is defined as a relation between two beings (subject and an object); then what is the Beyng of the subject and the object? The problem here is that truth does not 'exist' the way Beyng 'exist', and that Beyng is posited the Being of a substantial thing to be known as an object. Now, when articulating something which is beyond the limitation of our referential language, it means that both 'truth' and 'Beyng' has to be stripped of their object-meanings (metaphysical understanding) through adoption of their implied [*lakṣya*] meanings. Only if 'truth' and 'Beyng' is thought as 'pure', i.e., as connected to a fundamental decision [*Entscheidung*] and appropriation [*Ereignis*], the sentence makes sense as expressing a real inner union.

The other type of sentence is, according to Sarvajñātman, the subsidiary, i.e., the 'supporting' sentences, which *qualifies* the non-dual truth. In the following is selected a sentence from the *Beiträge* which connects two key-concepts, Beyng [*Seyn*] and event [*Ereignis*]: "Beyng essentially occurs as the event [*Das Seyn west als das Ereignis*]." ³⁵ In an expressed interpretation this would generate the meaning that 'Beyng is (really) to be qualified as something which occurs (like an event is said to occur)'. Beyng in its uniqueness, we were told in the *Beiträge*, is lonely, it does not need differences, not even the ontological difference, though still qualified as an event that changes everything. The resolution of the contradiction lies in abandoning the associated nescience possessing duality: the meaning of 'event' has to *exclude* meanings like 'an appearance within time and space which is subject to calculations and observations', and rather pointing to its negative aspect, while retaining the timely and appropriative aspect. Thus, the 'purified' reconstructed sentence-meaning would combine timely appropriation and essential transformation to mean a reverse causal change of everything, i.e., that the comprehensive change is caused by an anticipation of a non-self of an event which might never happen. The speaking of *Beiträge* is directed towards our essential Self, *Dasein*, through a non-discursive structural disposition of intimacy, in order to activate a removal of mental obstacles. Just as truth and primordial Being cannot be qualified, so too the true

form of nescience cannot be subject to qualifications, since a realization of the truth of machination requires a recognition of the truth of Beyng. The meaning of this sentence is that machination may seem to be eternal and within the domain of deliberate human actions, it really is *not*.

The mantric connection (without goods or humans)

If we are to take the claim of a speech of necessity seriously, will it not imply that the totality of words and sentences are flawless and therefore, at least in principle, to be recited in one prolonged exhalation of a sequence of modulated sound? In a text by Heidegger devoted to the question of language, it is said:

But the mantras [Spruche] have has their only master [Meisterin] the necessity to say the self-same evermore inceptually each time, until at last, without even remotely trying to calculate this through comparisons, one word finally hits the mark [glückt], a word in which the voice of Beyng becomes attunement.³⁶

The privileged sayings, including the key statements in *Beiträge* itself, convey something original (inceptual) which they strictly speaking are not able to accomplish, but not the less have to attempt, if the claimed necessity is to be believed and followed.

We have here described an attempt to articulate a frame and a particular method to support *Beiträge*'s event of truth, but we still we need to comment on an alternative application of language which might contribute to a slightly different view on what language can do. We refer to a significant aspect of language which is frequently discussed in traditional Indian philosophy of language. Language here is considered to be primarily *speech*, and investigated through three means of valid cognitions [*pramāṇas*] perception, inference and testimony. We will focus on a subcategory which are generally known as mantras; and we notice that this particular type of speech have no straightforward cognitive or communicative purpose.³⁷ These utterances are not speech in the ordinary

sense, since they do not intent to be received or understood, and due to their original (non-human) source are considered to be necessary and perfect, and therefore it is mandatory to preserve the sequence (in case of more than one word) and an exact pronunciation (silent or audible) which allows no improvised alteration or addition, like explanation or clarifications, which cancels the real efficacy of a mantra. We might even add that a mantra makes use of words in their full potential of what a word can *do* apart from function as a carrier of meanings on the semantical level whether expressly, metaphorically, or otherwise.³⁸ The ritualists in the classical Mīmāṃsā-tradition regards mantras as eternally vibrating syllables [*varṇas*], arranged in specific patterns of sound which emanates efficacy when performed correctly in a ritual setting.³⁹ The Veda from which they are extracted is in itself considered as eternal and infallible, and in no need of any divine or human authorship whatsoever, and therefore they are without defects, and with absolute authority to be practiced exactly as prescribed.⁴⁰

Here it is to be noted that repetition, *japa*, is an essential part of the ritual setting of mantras, and in the recitation of e.g., a Vedic hymn is embedded in a sacrificial ritual in which the hymns or mantras can be regarded as an offering of words itself.⁴¹ This alternative understanding invoked by a ritual repetition suppresses the semantical quality and let the sonic aspect come to the foreground, to exert its full effect on a fundamental level of consciousness. In the *japa* we understand differently, not the referential ‘same’ (‘to say the self-same evermore inceptually’). New connections are established and others are suppressed, and when systematically utilized, mantras are able to cause a change of perspective outside any particular progressive plan of understanding.

Conclusion

The use of sentences to approach the concept of truth in the *Beiträge* reflects the problem of articulation in *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya*. This is structurally similar to the character of the mutual superimposition [*adhyāsa*] in which the true reality [*ātman*, *Brahman*] assumes the

character of a thing ('not-self') [*acit, anātman*] and vice versa, in a beginningless [*anādi*] origin of a perpetual overlaying of projections.⁴² The condition of truth is requires a maturing that must be accomplished before a meaningful reading of *Beiträge* can take place. The purpose of the mental component is a gradual removal of obstacles, preparing a break with the fixed representational scheme of the logical thinking.⁴³ Śaṅkara's concept of truth as self-luminous [*svayamprāśa*] is correlating with *Beiträge*'s clearing [*Lichtung*], *not* because they are the 'same', but because the 'determining power' is everything but *this* (*svayamprāśa / Lichtung*).

Regarding the self, a tripartite of differences within this concept became clear: An "I" [*Ich*], a Self [*Selbst*] and *Dasein*. These differentiations had a function of tying machination and truth together: An inert construction of nescience [*Ich, antaḥkarana*], a complete 'Other' from the point of view of a Self [*Dasein, ātman*], and a true reverberation of truth [*Selbst, jīva*] mediating between the two opposites.

This exposed the problem of agency: The essential transpersonal *Dasein* does not possess individuality and therefore unable to act - while the 'I' appears to act but represents an 'inert' and determined agency, only reflecting the *Erlebnis*-aspect of machination, enacting the directions of the same. The last possibility of a true agency of authentic decisions is the Self [*Selbst*] precisely because it potentially can show itself as a reflection of the event of truth through *Dasein*, and thus may be said to identified as an agent, capable of re-organizing the 'I' and thus giving voice and space to the 'nothingness' of Beyng.

Regarding the sayings of *Beiträge* itself we have pointed to the articulation of the testimony of necessity, due to its claimed resistance to any assimilating dialectics or destructive institutionalisation,⁴⁴ causing a break with the comfortabilities of everydayness. Thus, the necessity pervades the speech, which are formed in order to make use of the full potential of language. This means not only is it possible to utilise a purifying procedure to enhance our understanding based on established meanings, but also to employ other dimensions of speech, as demonstrated

in both *Beiträge* and *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya*. Furthermore, when the causal factors have been brought about by earnest and recurrent practice, it is obvious that a conventional progressive understanding cannot be applied to a relation between, on one side, a receptiveness to a radical other, and on the other side the ecstatic rupture of reality itself. Rather, we prefer to designate such a strange occurrence as synchronicity or association, in order *not* to exclude a causal connection altogether. This slightly differs from connotations arising from Heidegger's positioning as an 'attunement', to point out that such a union strictly speaking cannot be obtained, though we are aware of that such connections can be interpreted from domains in which is attempted to articulate impossible the same type of occurrences .⁴⁵

We will complete this study with a citation from the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* which articulate the impossible moment of a union between the silent spectator [*puruṣa*] (the true Self) and the (female) matter (intellect, mind, world) [*prakṛti*], which have provided him with his supporting nescience [*māyā*] to make possible his release from the self-same nescience:

As a dancer ceases from the dance after having been seen
by the audience;
So also, prakṛti ceases after having manifested herself to
the puruṣa |
It is my thought that there is nothing more delicate than
prakṛti who says
'I have been seen' and never again comes into the sight
of puruṣa |
Nothing therefore is bound; nothing released, not anything
transmigrates.⁴⁶

ENDNOTES

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² Martin Heidegger 1989. *Beiträge der Philosophie (vom Ereignis)*. Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann. English translation: --. 2012. *Contributions to Philosophy (of the Event)*. Translated by Richard Rojcewicz & Daniela Vallega-Neu. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

³ Martin Heidegger. 1967. *Sein und Zeit*, Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag.

⁴ Heidegger, *Beiträge*, 5. / Heidegger, *Contribution*, 7.

⁵ Heidegger, *Beiträge*, 4. / Heidegger, *Contribution*, 6.

⁶ Due to this inclusion, we are able to address speech both as source of language in a pre-metaphysical sense, and the actual articulations in the *Beiträge*.

⁷ Heidegger, *Beiträge*, 111. / Heidegger, *Contribution*, 88.

⁸ Heidegger, *Contribution*, 91. / Heidegger, *Beiträge*, 114.

⁹ Peter Sloterdijk. 2001. "Domestikation des Seins." In *Nicht Gerettet*. 142-234. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp. 142-154.

¹⁰ Heidegger, *Contribution*, 13. / Heidegger, *Beiträge*, 13.

¹¹ Heidegger, *Beiträge*, 5. / Heidegger, *Contribution*, 3.

¹² Heidegger, *Contribution*, 67. / Heidegger, *Beiträge*, 83-84.

¹³ Heidegger, *Beiträge*, 4. / Heidegger, *Contribution*, 6.

¹⁴ We will here refer to the Indian *Mīmāṃsā*-tradition, which regards the most important category of text/speech as being of no human or superhuman origin, that is, authorless [*apauruṣeya*], contained in itself and eternal.

¹⁵ Heidegger, *Contribution*, 6. / Heidegger, *Beiträge*, 4.

¹⁶ George Thibaut. *The Vedānta Sūtras of Bādarāyana with the commentary of Śaṅkara*. Vol.1-2. New York: Dower Publication, p.6.

¹⁷ Thibaut, *The Vedānta Sūtras of Bādarāyana*, vol.1, 37.

¹⁸ The dualistic *Sāṃkhya* defended two irreducible constituents of reality, expressed in the theory of real transformation [*pariṇāmavāda*], while Advaita Vedānta defends a theory of apparent change or transfiguration [*vivartavāda*].

¹⁹ Thibaut, *The Vedānta Sūtras of Bādarāyana*, vol.1, 28.

²⁰ Thibaut, *The Vedānta Sūtras of Bādarāyana*, vol.1, 9.

²¹ Thibaut, *The Vedānta Sūtras of Bādarāyana*, vol.1, 328-329.

²² Thibaut, *The Vedānta Sūtras of Bādarāyana*, vol.1, 123.

²³ Heidegger, *Contribution*, 37. / Heidegger, *Beiträge*, 45.

²⁴ Thibaut, *The Vedānta Sūtras of Bādarāyana*, vol.2, 336.

²⁵ Ivan Kocmarek. 1985. *Language and Release. Sarvajñātman's Pañcaprakriyā*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 47 ff.

²⁶ Kocmarek, *Language and Release*, 51.

²⁷ R. Balasubramanian, 1983. *A Study of the Brahmasiddhi of Mandana Misra*. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Amarabharati Prakashan. 83-88.

²⁸ S.S. Suryanarayana Sastri & C. Kunhan Raja. 1992. *Bhāmatī of Vācaspati on Śaṅkara's Brahmasūtrabhāṣya (Catussūtrī)*. Madras: The Adyar Library and Research Centre, 59.

²⁹ Heidegger, *Contribution*, 193. / Heidegger, *Beiträge*, 245.

³⁰ Heidegger, *Contribution*, 254-255. / Heidegger, *Beiträge*, 322.

³¹ Gosetti-Ferencei views Heidegger's interpretation of a self as violent, and therefore inconsistent with poetic subjectivity. This means that Heidegger's concept of a "I" is elevated to the core of the self disregarding the different meanings of a 'self' in the light of the event of the 'Other'. This shows how a specific interpretation of Heidegger's concept of truth leads to a modification of the entire range of concepts: Self, unusualness, event, concealment, nothingness, strife, etc. Jennifer Anna Gosetti-Ferencei. 2004. *Heidegger, Hölderlin, and the Subject of Poetic Language*. New York: Fordham University Press.

³² Heidegger, *Contribution*, 374 / Heidegger, *Beiträge*, 475.

³³ Heidegger, *Contribution*, 211-212 / Heidegger *Beiträge*, 268-269.

³⁴ Heidegger, *Contribution*, 75 / Heidegger, *Beiträge*, 95.

³⁵ Heidegger, *Contribution*, 204 / Heidegger, *Beiträge*, 260.

³⁶ Martin Heidegger. 2022. *On the Essence of Language and the Question of Art*. Polity. Cambridge. German original: --. 2010. *Zum Wesen der Sprache und Zur Frage nach der Kunst*. Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann.

³⁷ Regarding mantras, we refer to André Padoux. 2015. *Tantric Mantras*. New York: Routledge. Furthermore, an extensive review of literature about mantras is provided by Harvey P. Alper: "A Working Bibliography for the Study of Mantras, in Harvey P. Alper (ed.). 2012. *Understanding Mantras*. Motilal Banarsidass Publishers. Delhi. 327-445.

³⁸ Heidegger, *Essence of language*, 58.

³⁹ An exposition of the *Mīmāṃsākas* theory of language as well as other classical positions is to be found in Mikael Stamm. 2021. *Sacred Sound and Language in Classical Saiva Siddhānta*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.

⁴⁰ Frits Staal has defended a theory of mantras which claims that (Vedic) mantras are meaningless, and can be compared to bird songs, stating that mantras are not to be considered as language at all. He supported his theory with extensive empiristic data collected in India, and convincingly argues for this view, see Frits Staal. *Ritual and Mantras: Rules without Meaning*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass (1996).

⁴¹ Padoux, *Tantric Mantras*, 24 ff.

⁴² This is one of the interesting points made by Vincent Blok in his study of Heidegger's critique of Ernst Jünger. Here Blok emphasizes in particular the circular character of machination, causing any manifestation of the will (Nietzschean or not) to repeat itself infinitely. Only an abandonment of this determinative 'will' altogether, have the capability to escape the machination, and reach the 'other beginning.' Vincent Blok. 2011. "An Indication of Being. Reflections on Heidegger's engagement with Ernst Jünger". 204-205. In *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*. Vol. 42, No. 2, p.194-208.

⁴³ Gonzales argues that the transitional state is inherent in any true understanding, and Heidegger's insistence on absolute direct saying is not possible. This interpretation is quite reasonable and convincing, but problematic from the point of view of this study, due to our insistence on the radicality of the message of the *Beiträge*. Francisco J. Gonzales. 2008. "And the Rest is Silence. Sigetik. Logic and Dialectic in Heidegger's *Beiträge zur Philosophie*". *Research in Phenomenology*. Vol. 38, Leiden: Koninklijke, 358-391.

⁴⁴ An example of such a institutionalization which is the opposite of an essential approach is Charles E. Scott. 2001. *Introduction: Approaching Heidegger's Contributions to Philosophy and its Companion*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. Scott's view implies a restrictive control of how to understand *Beiträge*, criticizing any 'non-orthodox' understanding which is to be considered as an intrusion into a 'genuine' European philosophical tradition.

⁴⁵ The strict concept of synchronicity is formulated by Leibniz as a perfect harmony between body and soul which is pre-established "between the system of efficient causes and that of final causes. [...] without the one being able to change the laws of the other." G.W. Leibniz. 1989. *Philosophical Essays*. Indianapolis & Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 207. A more assertive version is given by Jung in a definition of synchronicity is attempted from the concept 'uncaused events': "a 'coincidence' of subjective and objective happenings, which just cannot be explained causally. C.G. Jung 1991. *The structure and dynamics of the Psyche*. London: Rutledge, 205 ff.

⁴⁶ *Sāṃkhyakārikā* verse no 59, 61, 62, Gerald Larson. James. 1969. *Classical Sāṃkhya. An interpretation of its history and meaning*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass. 280-280.

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