CHAPTER 05
METHOD IN INTEGRAL PHILOSOPHY

In most general terms, integral philosophy means a comprehensive metaphysical synthesis. Pūrṇa Advaita or integral non-dualism of Sri Aurobindo is a philosophical synthesis of this kind. In the previous chapters a detailed exploration of Sri Aurobindo’s system of thought was made from an ontological and epistemological point of view. And, in those chapters one of the objectives of the present work had been realized; the cognitional theory and the epistemological principles inherent in integral non-dualism were brought out. However, along with the epistemological inquiry, a methodological analysis in view of discerning the distinct method employed in integral philosophy had also been undertaken. And, accordingly, although, in all the earlier searches in different directions the purpose has been methodological as well as cognitive, it is in this chapter that the methodological analysis is going to be taken up in an explicit and exclusive manner.

It is a well-illustrated fact that there is a meeting of Indian and Western thought in the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo. However, such illustrations represent three select aspects of Sri Aurobindo’s philosophy namely, the problem of evolution, the problem of Yoga and the problem of the nature of reality. The focus here is an aspect that is more basic than the previously explored ones – the problem of method in Sri Aurobindo’s philosophy. In the second part of the first chapter, the general background of Sri Aurobindo’s philosophy was brought out. Here, in the section that follows a modest attempt will be made to explain briefly the direct background of the methodological innovation brought by Sri Aurobindo’s integral philosophy.

5.1 Ancient Indian Traditions and Methodological Parallelism

There are two main currents in Indian Philosophy, one having its source in the ātma doctrine of the Upaniṣads and the other in the anātma doctrine of Buddha. They conceive reality on two distinct and exclusive patterns. The present study regards all these streams of thought as philosophical traditions, and, proceeds with its investigation along the lines of these two traditions.
In the structure of development of systematic philosophy in India, the discussion on the nature of the ultimate reality has the central and the pivotal position. The kind of rational treatment offered in view of solving this question of the nature of the ultimate reality would brand a thinker or school as belonging to one specific tradition in contradistinction with the other.

The highest conception of reality reached by the Vedic seers was that of the One Reality, which realizes itself in all existents. One can find in the Upanisads a number of philosophical discussions about this problem in their analyses of the nature of self, called Atman. Dr. Radhakrishnan says; “The analysis of the nature of self is the legacy of the Upanisads bequeathed to the subsequent systems of thought,” and he notes, for instance, the case of the Sāṃkhyā system which takes the self “to be a simple and pure, though passive, spirit, which in spite of its apparent simplicity has some character and uniqueness...” Nyāya–Vaiśeṣika is an associate school of this tradition. Advaita Vedānta, which considers everything other than Atman, which is identical with Brahman, as unreal, is the extreme form of atmavāda. Atman is the very pivot of the entire philosophy of the systems following the Upaniṣādic tradition.

There is another tradition in Indian Philosophy, which denies Atman. The Buddhists pioneered this tradition. It is important to note at this juncture that saying “Buddha’s revolt is not against the metaphysics of the Upanisads but against Brahmanical Hinduism” is a way of simplifying the radical philosophical differences between the Upaniṣads and Buddhism as mere religious and practical revolts. According to Buddha, existence is momentary, unique and unitary. Substance is an illusory thought-construction made under the influence of ignorance. Buddhist metaphysics and their doctrine of salvation are consistent with the categorical denial of Substance or Atman. This anātmavāda can be considered as a distinct and original philosophical tradition.

Both the major traditions of Indian philosophy aim to solve one and same problem, namely, the existential pain, and interestingly they have reached at one and same solution, namely, painless existence. They propose the ideal of a state beyond the possibility of pain and bondage of any kind. While the Upaniṣādic tradition gives
a very positive presentation of this ideal, the Buddhist tradition provides the negative aspect of it. Advaitic realization of the absolute is a blissful affirmation of the consciousness whereas Buddhists attain nirvana through the annihilation of sorrow with all its causes, which involves a negative process of a conscious correction of the unconscious falsifications of the real. The ultimate for both the traditions is devoid of empirical determinations. Accordingly, it is unattainable through empirical means. But, it is attainable here and now. “Man’s aim” in Indian philosophy, says M. Hiriyanna; “was no longer represented as the attainment of perfection in a hypothetical hereafter, but as a continual progress towards it within the limits of the present life.”14 And according to Kena Upaniṣad, “Blessed is he who attains illumination in this very life; for a man not to do so is his greatest calamity.”15 Insight into the nature of the real is the means of attaining the real. As Brāhadāranyaka Upaniṣad suggests, all desires are to be satisfied and thus transcended in order to realize the self.16 Buddhism reaches the same goal of desirelessness by denying the self, which is the center of all desires. Atman or self, which is the primary reality for the Upaniṣadic tradition, is a primordial wrong notion for the Buddhists. This is the fundamental metaphysical difference between the two major traditions of Indian philosophy.17 Although different in metaphysical specifications, they have a common goal.

5.1.1 Methodological Parallelism

Absolutism came to be established in each tradition. It was the end result of their sustained attempt to be self-consistent. Each tradition had to cross many a different phases of metaphysical theorizing peculiar to different schools that belonged to each of them. These phases include a range of metaphysical theories varying from monism to pluralism on the Upaniṣadic side and from critical realism to complete nihilism on the Buddhistic side. It was by employing a method of dialectic and a theory of illusion that both the traditions could overcome the metaphysical huddles on their way.18 Next, the development of ātma and anātma traditions may be briefly examined in view of identifying the methodological parallelism and mutual influence.

It is generally admitted that Sānkhya was the first philosophical system to arise in India. It tried to synthesize the chief tenets of the Upaniṣads on rational basis. It
bifurcated reality into two; the changing object—Parināmi nitya and, the unchanging subject—Kūtastha nitya. Śāṅkhyā dualism was succeeded by the Vaiśeṣika pluralism, which objectified all things including the subject, atman. Idealistic Vedānta reasserted the early monism through a rigorous criticism of the Śāṅkhyā dualism. The older Vedānta of the author of the Brahmasūtras established monism but it also accepted the possibility of modification of Brahma. Gaudapāda and Śaṅkara rejected the conception of the real transformation of the absolute into phenomena, Brahma-parināma-vāda, introduced the theory of appearance, Brahma-vivartha-vāda, and, asserted non-dualism, advaita.

On the other side, Buddhism is said to have three phases of development with distinct metaphysical leanings, namely, realism, criticism and idealism. Sarvāstivāda along with its associated schools constitutes the realistic phase of Buddhist tradition. For, the Sarvāstivādins, all the elements of existence, dharmas are objectively real - sarvam āsti. Although Thēreavāda is an allied school of Sarvāstivāda, it does not present a new system, meriting study for its own sake. It is the Sautrāntika school which gives the rational defense of the doctrines stated by the Sarvāstivādins. The Sautrāntika puts forward three metaphysical conjectures; everything is transient and perishing, anitya, every thing is devoid of substantiality, anātma, everything is discrete and unique, savalakṣana. The Sautrāntika prepared the way of the dialectic and subsequently the emergence of Yogācāra Idealism.

In brief, the earlier phase admitted on the one hand, the reality of separate elements and maintained them on the other hand as purely subjective forms (vikalpa). The subjective forms “are apriori forms which the uncritical mind (bala-prthahājana) superimposes on what really are momentary particular elements of existence.” The Mādhyamika, which represents the second phase of criticism in the development of the Buddhist tradition, treated the categories of substance, causality, change, existence, bhāva, and nonexistence, abhāva as subjective forms. At a later stage, it denied all the categories and doctrines, and Śūnyata was established. The Yogācāra idealism is based on the explicit acceptance of the doctrine of Śūnyata, but it contends that subjectivity, though the source of unreality, is real.
It was in the Buddhistic tradition that absolutism came to be established for the first time in the history Indian Philosophy. And, in the Buddhist tradition itself there are two different kinds of absolutisms, namely, Mādhyamika Nihilism and Yogācāra-Vijñānavāda Idealism. The Mādhyamika system is the systematized form of the Śūnyata doctrine of the Prajñāparamita treatises. Śūnyata is established by the dialectic. Initial stages of the dialectic are perceivable in the direct teachings of Buddha himself. The awareness of the antinomical character of reason, and the subsequent effort to transcend the duality of reason resulted in the method of dialectic. The principal alternative views that constitute the dialectic are supplied by the ātma and the anātma traditions. The Mādhyamika finds a transcendental illusion as exemplified in the mutually opposed views. This illusion consists in the fact that the empirical categories are wrongly ascribed to the Unconditioned, giving rise to various systems of metaphysics. There is nothing in the phenomena, which is not phenomenal, and, the Absolute is not a residual, precipitated when one aspect of phenomena is sublated, but it is the consciousness itself that all views about the real are unreal.

The other form of absolutism in the Buddhistic tradition was reached as the culmination of Yogācāra-Vijñānavāda idealism. The absolute for this school is the non-dual consciousness. The world of external objects is unreal. An ‘external object’ appears as external and objective because of an illusion. Illusion is the confusion between the two subjective functions of consciousness, namely knowing function and willing function. Knowing involves the discovery of the objectively given; willing is the subjective construction. Illusion takes place when the willed content is mistaken for the known content. The same illusion causes the subject-object duality. When the object is realized illusory, the subject automatically dissolves. What remains is consciousness, and, this consciousness freed of subject-object duality is the Absolute. According to Śaṅkara, Being that is pure, universal and self-evident, is alone real, and it is the Absolute, Brahman. This is contrary to the idealistic position of Vijñānavāda, which takes the knowing act or consciousness as the only real, out of which objects are created and projected.

As regards the nature and status of empirical phenomena all the three absolutisms agree to consider them as appearance. Accordingly, absolute for all the
three systems, is devoid of all empirical determinations. The appearances are negated by the true knowledge of the absolute. These systems do not establish the absolute through positive arguments rather they reject duality and appearances through dialectics. Thus, it is normative for every kind of absolutism to formulate a distinction of reality and appearance\textsuperscript{36} and then to negate the duality. The highest knowledge realized as non-empirical intuition is called as \textit{aparākṣaṇuḥbhuṭi} by Vedānta, as \textit{lokottarajñāna} by Yogācāra, and, as \textit{prajñaparimita} by Mādhyamika. The highest knowledge reached by the Vedānta and the Yogācāra systems could generally be described as Advaita, the knowledge of differenceless entity, either Brahman, the Pure Being or \textit{Vijñāna}, the Pure Consciousness. On the other hand, \textit{Advaya} would be the proper term to designate the Mādhyamika conception of the highest knowledge.\textsuperscript{37}

Vedānta employs dialectic to demolish difference, duality and particularity and thereby to establish indirectly the sole reality of Brahman as changeless, universal and self-evident. Vijñānavāda employs dialectic to disprove the reality of the object and plurality and thereby to establish indirectly the sole reality of \textit{Vijñāna}. The Mādhyamika employs dialectic to deny the views of the real and not the real in itself.\textsuperscript{38} Now, as regards the use of a theory of illusion, we find the Vedāntic absolutism first analyzing the empirical illusions and then applying it analogically to the world-illusion. The Vijñānavādins also make a similar treatment. The Mādhyamika addresses the same problem of world-illusion as presented in different systems of thought and hence his concern is with 'Transcendental Illusion,' as T.R.V. Murti describes it.\textsuperscript{39} Although there is a difference with regard to the illusions with which these absolutisms start to analyze and the standpoints from which they negate the illusory appearance, they could generally be understood as a mode of negative judgment.\textsuperscript{40}

In the three absolutisms, besides a similar spiritual orientation on the religious side, a theory of illusion and a method of dialectic on the philosophical side have also been identified as a few common constitutive elements. Advaitism which developed along the Upaniṣādic tradition is said to have borrowed the technique of dialectic from the Mādhyamika system of the Buddhist tradition. Similarly, although the Advaitism of Śaṅkara and the Yogācāra-Vijñānavāda idealism vary in details and focus, they exhibit a commonality in the essential structure of their conception and
analysis of illusion. However, these parallel pathways of philosophical methodology are not found extended in the modern Indian thought forms. On the contrary, later Indian thinkers seem to have brought in a new method for philosophizing in the Indian context.

5.2 Modern Trends and Methodological Newness

The modern Indian thinkers develop their systems in a state of inner conflict constituted by the anxiety to retain the elements of the original philosophical tradition on the one hand and the need to integrate the scientific attitudes of the contemporary culture and the spirit of their own respective religious traditions on the other. Except Muhammad Iqbal who bases his thoughts on the Islamic tradition, all other modern thinkers, namely, M.K. Gandhi, B.G. Tilak, R.N. Tagore, Dayanda Sarasvati, Sri Aurobindo, Swami Vivekananda, Dr. Radhakrishnan, Bhagavân Das, J. Krishnamurti, etc., generally belong to the Upaniṣādic tradition as far as the philosophical and religious sides are concerned. They overcome the initial methodical predicament by asserting the “the value of the elements of tradition with a renewed vigour emphasizing that these elements are not against the scientific temper of the present day world.” Many of them gather elements from different schools and reconstruct the ancient philosophies after incorporating some doctrines from the West. However, the exact nature of the East-West synthesis will vary from thinker to thinker, for, some have facilitated an interface of key tenets while some others have borrowed basic techniques alone. Underlying monism, reality of the world, integral nature of man, human dignity, human freedom, primacy of intuitive knowledge, etc., are a few issues on which all modern thinkers seem to agree with each other.

It is a widely held observation that the original mark of Indian philosophy in general, is its spiritual orientation. But as regards the nature of modern Indian philosophy, scholars have further clarified this common impression. Basant Kumar Lal argues that the method of Indian Philosophy is ‘Meditative speculation.’ The method of ‘meditative speculation’, which has already been a method employed by the Vedic seers and the Upaniṣādic thinkers, became explicit and systematic with the modern thinkers. And, each thinker has developed it in his own way in accordance with the predominant trait and interest of his philosophy. Sri Aurobindo, the special
focus of the present search, has developed a new method of philosophizing; in contrast to the Buddhist-Vedântic method of dialectic, the new method employed by him may be provisionally described as a ‘method of inclusion’ or *Samanvaya*. The negation made possible by the dialectical reasoning is replaced by affirmations prompted by synthetic vision, and, a theory of illusion fabricated for the systematic exclusion of some is replaced by a new theory of integration aimed at the inclusion of all. The further inquiry here is to find out the precise way how Sri Aurobindo updated the method of philosophizing in and through his integral advaitism.

Indian thought and Western (Greek) Philosophy are the two elements that constitute the background of Sri Aurobindo’s innovatory work in philosophy. However, he had his own reading of both. And, unlike his predecessors in the Indian tradition, “he propounds his doctrine not only from the extant of scriptural texts but also from the basis of enlightenment gained through his own intuitive mystic vision.” The exact nature of the mutual influence and relation between Sri Aurobindo’s philosophy and the Indian scriptures is unique. The primary source of his philosophy is undoubtedly his own spiritual experiences and mystical visions.

With this background knowledge regarding the evolution of method in Indian thought, the efforts to bring out clearly and distinctly the methodological principles employed by Sri Aurobindo in constructing his integral system of thought may be resumed. And, as the methodological analysis gets restarted, certain reaffirmations of the objectives of the search are in order. This can be done by re-launching the investigation as one of the numerous ways of solving the perennial problem of ‘method in philosophy.’

5.3 Method in Philosophy. Philological and Conceptual Analysis

*Darśana* is the term that is commonly used by the Indian writers to denote what Western thinkers mean by philosophy. Perhaps, the term *tattvajñāna* introduced by Vātsyāyana in his *Nyāyasūtraḥāṣṭha* would be a more apt Sanskrit word for philosophy. For, *tattvam* means reality and, hence, *tattvajñāna* means knowledge of reality as it is. *Darśana*, on the other hand, is a vision, which is normally the end
result of a knowing process. However, the word that Sri Aurobindo uses most is neither Darśana nor tattvajñāna, but the Western term, philosophy.

Philologically, the word philosophy comes from the Greek *philosophia*, which according to Martin Heidegger, was coined by Heraclitus. And it is by relying on Heraclitus’ aphorisms that Heidegger derives the meaning of philosophy. Sri Aurobindo also attaches a pivotal position to Heraclitus in the history of the thought evolution in the West. He says: “Nor is any Greek thinker more directly stimulating than the aphoristic philosopher Heraclitus.” And coincidently, like Heidegger, Sri Aurobindo also has subjected some Heraclitean terms and aphorisms for a philological inquiry to find the meaning and scope of intellectual pursuits.

The word *philosophia* comes from an adjectival term *philosophos*, which can be declined as *philein* and *sophon*. *Philein* means to love, thus, *philosophos* means loving *sophon*. According to Heidegger, in the Heraclitean sense, *philein* signifies *homo-legein*, which means to speak in the way in which the Logos speaks or speak in correspondence with the Logos. And, correspondence is in accordance – *harmonia* – with *sophon*. Therefore, Heidegger observes that *harmonia* which effects the correspondence is the distinguishing mark of the *philein* aspect of *philosophos*. He says: “That one being reciprocally unites itself with another, that both are originally united to each other because they are at each other’s disposal – this *harmonia* is the distinctive feature of *philein* of “loving” in the Heraclitean sense.”

Secondly, *sophon* according to Heraclitus means *Hen Panta*. *Panta* denotes the totality of being. *Hen* signifies the One that unites all. Thus, *sophon* means all beings are united in Being. Heidegger gives a pointed expression to this meaning of *sophon*: “being is Being.” The verb “is” in this expression is said to be transitive and thus brings in a notion of creative action that explains the essential unifying function of *Hen* in *sophon*. And, thus, it means approximately “gathered together.” Having thus identified the essential and determining element of *sophon*, Being is explained in terms of Logos: “Being is the gathering together – Logos.”

Although, not in a strictly philological analysis of the word philosophy, Sri Aurobindo has made an enquiry about the meaning of Logos: “Heraclitus tells us, all
indeed comes into being according to strife, but also all things come into being according to Reason, \textit{kat\,\,er\,\,in} but also \textit{k\,\,\,a\,\,t\,\,e\,\,\,t\,\,o\,\,n\,\,l\,o\,\,g\,\,on}. What is this Logos?\textsuperscript{54} And, he brings out the exact meaning of Logos by exploring the common meaning content of its varied synonyms used by Heraclitus in his aphorisms. In Sri Aurobindo’s estimation, Logos, according to Heraclitus, is the original and absolute rational force which must be conceived in contradistinction with the inconscient reason working in the material nature and the conscious reason that guides humans.\textsuperscript{55}

From this brief philological analysis along the exegetical lines followed by Martin Heidegger and Sri Aurobindo, the researcher concludes that philosophy is an approach to Logos, originally motivated by it, mostly moved by it, thoroughly based on it, and ultimately oriented to it.

But, however, according to Sri Aurobindo, Heraclitean \textit{Philosophia} itself and the subsequent Western European Philosophy in addition, have not realized all the brighter prospects of their pursuit. Sri Aurobindo has pointed out two significant potentialities which the Greek-Western European Philosophy failed to realize for want of an essential \textit{organon}. As an ‘\textit{aner\ philosophos}’ – man loving \textit{sophon}, everyone engaged in the philosophical pursuit has the possibility of realizing, firstly, the divine lordship of Logos and secondly, the divine supermanhood of his/her very self. The Indian equivalents for these highest philosophical realizations are \textit{Brahma Vidya} and \textit{Atma Vidya} respectively. Self-awareness through identity is the means of knowledge that leads to these realizations. But mind (with intellect), which is the ordinary instrument of cognition, cannot employ this means of knowledge. One needs to develop another superior instrument of knowledge to employ the method of knowing by identity. Sri Aurobindo calls this higher organon Supermind. These points, however, need certain elaboration.

It is, firstly, by justifying Philo who deduced from the Heraclitean idea of Logos the concept of an intelligent Force originating and governing the world, and, secondly, by comparing philosophy with Vedic-Vedântic thought that Sri Aurobindo brings out the way how Greek-Western philosophy failed to realize the divine lordship of the Absolute.\textsuperscript{56}
Sri Aurobindo argues that since the concept of Brahman is comparable with the idea of Logos,\textsuperscript{59} the seeker of Logos could have legitimately had the same experiential realization of Logos as the seekers of Brahman in the Indian philosophico-religious tradition gained. But, nowhere in Heraclitean philosophy one finds an explicit identification of the Absolute with the Divine and an attempt to recover and promote the essential unity of philosophy and spirituality. Instead, Western philosophy in the course of its development is found making a conscious and laborious attempt to redeem itself from its own religious sway.

Now, as regards Supermanhood, Sri Aurobindo observes that Stoics who were largely influenced by the Heraclitean philosophy have talked about the concept of ‘seed Logos,’ \textit{spermatikos}. This seed Logos, which is “the originative and determinant conscious force working as supreme Intelligence and Will”\textsuperscript{60} perceives things not as the ordinary human reason perceives them, “in parts and pieces, in separated and aggregated relations,” but in a comprehensive and essential manner, “in the original reason of their existence, their primal and total truth.”\textsuperscript{61} Another characteristic feature of seed Logos, is that it is reproduced in conscious beings as a number of ‘seed Logoi.’\textsuperscript{62} Basing himself on these observations, Sri Aurobindo contends that the concept of seed Logos is comparable with the Indian conception of \textit{prajña puruṣa}, which according to Vedāntic philosophy, says Sri Aurobindo, represents “the supreme Intelligence who is the Lord and dwells in the sleep state holding all this in a seed of dense consciousness which works out through the perceptions of a subtle puruṣa, the mental Being.”\textsuperscript{63} However, it is not a Vendāntic innovation, the Vedic seers themselves were aware of this aspect of the Absolute. They called it, in Sri Aurobindo’s translation, “Truth-Consciousness.” Also they believed that humans as knowers/experiencers could become truth-conscious.\textsuperscript{64} Now, when the humans enter into the divine Reason and Will and by the Truth become immortals, “\textit{anthropoi atmanoi}”\textsuperscript{65} they are not mere humans, but super humans. But once again as in, the case of the realization of divine Lordship of Logos, Supermanhood also remains as an unrealized possibility.\textsuperscript{66}

What is more penetrating and promising of all these is Sri Aurobindo’s investigation for the reasons why Greek-Western European philosophy fails to realize
its inherent potentialities. It is a promising investigation because it sheds light on Sri Aurobindo’s own conception of philosophy, its nature and destiny.

Force, Reason and Delight are the three basic integral aspects of Being: “Force is the first aspect of the world, war, the clash of energies, the second aspect, reason emerges out of the appearance of force in which it ... reveals itself as a certain justice, ... third aspect is a ... universal delight, ... which ... can establish something higher than justice, ... harmony, ... reason – ... the ecstasy of our fulfilled existence.” Heraclitean philosophia and subsequent Western-European philosophical tradition failed to realize all that they could have realized because their epistemological project was not integral. Their philosophical method and inquiry did not seize and possess all the three basic aspects of Existence. According to Sri Aurobindo, Heraclitus’s own knowledge of the truth of things stopped with the vision of the universal force and universal reason; “He (Heraclitus) seems to have summed up the principle of things in these two terms, the aspect of consciousness, the aspect of power, a supreme intelligence and a supreme energy.” While Western Science went on moving around one of the three aspects of Existence namely, force and strived to take possession of its measures and utilities through experiments in view of technological advancements, the philosophical tradition went a little farther and seized the two lower aspects of the third principle of delight too, namely pleasure and aesthetic beauty, but it unfortunately missed, Sri Aurobindo notes, “the spiritual beauty and spiritual delight.”

To bring out the differences in the epistemological approaches to reality and the resultant variance in the levels of apprehension of the same, Sri Aurobindo makes a distinction between Science, Rational Philosophy and Inspired Philosophy. He says, “Science takes possession of the measures and utilities of Force, rational philosophy pursues reason to its last subtleties; but inspired philosophy and religion can seize hold of the highest secret. utamam rahasyam.” Force, which is the sole object of enquiry of Science, when left to itself can only produce a balance of forces, the strife that is justice. But in that strife, there takes place a constant exchange of forces. When the need for the exchange of forces become obvious, there arises the possibility of modifying and replacing strife by reason which will function as the principle of exchange. According to Sri Aurobindo, Heraclitus and inevitably Western European
philosophy that followed him did not clearly see all the possibilities inherent in the rational intervention of man in nature. From the exchange of forces, determined by reason, it is possible for humans, according to Sri Aurobindo, "to rise to the highest possible idea of interchange, a mutual dependency of self-giving as the hidden secret of life, from that can grow the power of love replacing strife and exceeding the cold balance of reason. There is the gate of divine ecstasy."\(^7\) The Indian thought on the other hand, according to Sri Aurobindo, is a perfect sample of a philosophy inspired by religion. He observes; “Indian thought saw a third aspect of the Self and of Brahman, besides the universal consciousness active in divine knowledge, besides the universal force active in divine will, it saw the universal delight active in divine love and joy.”\(^8\)

Thus, philosophy, in its original philological sense, must be an approach to Being – that manifests itself as Force, Reason and Delight – through Science, Rational Philosophy and Inspired Philosophy. But, when considered against this synoptic vision of reality and the ways of approaching them, philosophy as it is practiced today, be it in the West or by the Vedántins, seems to be unworthy of that description. The actual practice of philosophizing in the course of history has seldom been holistic.

Thus, according to Sri Aurobindo, Being, if it has to be seized in its integrality, has to be sought in terms of its integral elements, namely, force, reason and delight, through the respective methods of Science, Rational Philosophy and Inspired Philosophy. Now, at this juncture, the present thesis contends that the human approach to reality may be conceived as constituted of the three distinct basic methods\(^9\) of knowledge identified by Sri Aurobindo. To avoid the equivocal use\(^10\) of the term philosophy, it is also contended that, the basic methodological alliance, - Science-Rational Philosophy-Inspired Philosophy -, brought by Sri Aurobindo may be renamed as ‘Physics – Metaphysics – Mysticism;’ Physics standing for all that Sri Aurobindo means by Science, and similarly, Metaphysics for the ‘Rational Philosophy’ and Mysticism, for ‘Inspired Philosophy.’\(^11\) In brief, Philosophy, according to Sri Aurobindo, develops by borrowing from physical, metaphysical and mystical ways of knowing.
5.4 Methodological Alliance in Integral Advaitism

Physical knowledge, gained ordinarily through Science or attained through some extraordinary perceptions, is obviously an indispensable common factor in any system of thought. Although there is no dispute regarding the essential role of physical knowledge in a system of thought, there is indeed a considerable difference discernible in the ways of gaining this kind of knowledge. When stretched little farther, such discussions regarding the ways of knowing the physical truths of Nature will eventually assume the form of so called ‘dialogues between Science and Religion.’ However, this area of the methodological alliance and the related questions are excluded from the present work. The analysis here is limited to the why and how of the methodical employment of metaphysics and mysticism in the Integral Advaitism. An analysis of this sort requires certain sharper tools and certain introductory understanding of the problem of method in Advaitism. And hence follows a heuristic interlude.

5.4.1 The How and What of Human Cognition

Ken Wilber in his elaborate introduction to an anthology of the mystical writings of the world’s great physicists has made an analysis of human cognitive life. He proposes an ontological scheme in view of elaborating the domains of human knowledge/experience with its corresponding scheme of disciplines.

Wilber makes three major findings; First, there are five different ways in which humans can know/experience reality. They are physics, biology, psychology, theology and mysticism. Secondly, each of these five fields of knowledge/experience approaches in its own way a definite realm of reality namely, matter, life, mind, soul and spirit. Finally, the structure of reality and so also the process of knowing/experiencing the reality is such that every superior realm transcends and includes all the inferior realms. Thus, spirit by its very nature becomes paradoxical because it is absolutely transcendent and absolutely immanent. Basing himself on this analysis of the human knowing process, Wilber has also made it very clear that the connection between physics and mysticism lies neither in the similarity of their world-
views nor in their aims and results. On the other hand, it consists in a self-awareness of the physicists that they may have always been dealing with shadow symbols or mathematical pictures or highly abstract differential equations or symbolic procedures. He quotes a modern scientist Eddington: “Physics most strongly insists that its methods do not penetrate behind the symbolism.” This awareness is what leads and enables the physicists to embrace mysticism.

But, there arise a few questions. Which representative field of knowledge would this analysis of knowledge belong to? Is not the conceivable structure of reality a distinct domain in itself? Is not the ‘enabling awareness’ of the physicists who embrace mysticism something more than a psychological experience? Is it not possible to make an exploration into the structural depth of the ‘shift’ from physics to mysticism?

Besides the physical knowing/experiencing there is another fundamental mode of knowing/experiencing. A. N. Whitehead has listed a few instances of this sort of knowing/experiencing: sense of withness with the body through which we are self-aware of knowing ourselves as an organic unity, sense of continuous and pervasive passage and yet of continuity with – in fact conformity to – the immediate past, sense of aims and intentions for the immediate future. Whitehead labels this level of experience as an experience in the mode of casual efficacy. These inner experiences of being real and in process can themselves become an object of reflection and articulation of imaginative and speculative inquiry. The result is the possibility of metaphysical discrimination of the structure of reality as it appears.

An analysis of the conditions of one’s knowing/experiencing would give certain clues to the fundamental structure of reality that one is trying to know/experience. A felt or ‘prehended’ internal relation of entities with one another is the primary and the sufficient condition for knowing/experiencing. This relatedness of entities represents the fundamental structure of all actuality. And, this structure can be delineated only if one passes through and beyond without denying the objectified world of physical knowledge/experience into a deeper level of actuality. In the process of metaphysical knowing one is participating from inside in the same structure of being that scientific inquiry examines from outside. And these inner
participatory elements are necessary ingredients of any true knowledge, because it includes the otherwise excluded inner aspects into the content of knowledge and guards the knower against skepticism. Thus, the world disclosed by empirical study and described by science is a world constructed by the sense organs, theoretical powers and the intellectual categories of human experience and thinking. However, this link between the mind and the universe or self and the world can neither be established scientifically nor could it be inferred from theories. It has to be sought in the conditions of science.

Metaphysics provides the theoretical framework for science, which science by itself lacks. It provides a clearer, less abstract, more concrete and more direct delineation of what is real. Metaphysics can assess the cognitive value of each special mode of knowing/experiencing: Physical sciences, Art, Religion, etc. It can give a credible account of those factors crucial to all experience that science, by abstracting from them tend to ignore. The following are a few of such factors: universality of change, pervasiveness of order, continuity within time, appearance of novelty, importance of aims and values, etc. Since there is no conceivable experience that does not illustrate these traits or factors, the metaphysical statements, i.e., the expressive statements about these traits cannot be falsified.

Therefore, a self-consistent science would point beyond itself to an ontological or metaphysical ground inclusive of knower/experiencer and the object of knowledge/experience. Metaphysical knowledge in turn presupposes that the object of inquiry has or can have a still deeper and more mysterious dimension. Hence, it is legitimate to expect an encounter with a realm of mysteries in the process of human knowledge/experience. Since whatever concerns mysteries would be called mystical, the encounter with the mysteries can be described as mystical knowledge/experience. Mysteries should not be understood as the exclusive referent of the incomprehensible reality. Mystery includes the sign or symbol through which the incomprehensible reality is made accessible to the knowers. In other words, mystery denotes not only the symbolized but the symbol also.

Now, the heuristic exploration has reached a point where it must, basing itself on the critical study and the new findings, think of enhancing the Wilber's analysis of
human cognition. The inclusion of metaphysics into the list of the fields of knowledge alone will not answer the questions that have been raised. And, it is not an easy task to expand Wilber’s scheme, for, metaphysics, which is yet to be included in the scheme is implicit in all the fields, just like Spirit (on the ontological side) is immanent and transcendent. Therefore, all that a search for the How and What of human knowledge/experience can derive, as it seems, is a set of broad methodological principles and a few resultant insights. And, the researcher proposes the alliance of Physics-Metaphysics-Mysticism as a reasonable heuristic model.

5.4.1.1 Physics – Metaphysics – Mysticism

Physics as the basic mode of knowing/experiencing has the entire ontic reality as its object of inquiry. The object of metaphysics is the structural complexities of all that is (the subject and the object are included). Mysticism, unlike in the previous modes of physics and metaphysics, where the knower/experiencer proceed through deduction or induction, is heeding to the ‘revealing reality.’ On the part of the knower/experiencer the object of inquiry is mystery. Hence, all that he/she can do is to wait eagerly to hear the unheard and to still the whole self to see the unseen. Because, it is not through grasping something, but by living the mystery that one knows/experiences in the mystical mode of inquiry.

All the same, if the methodological principles are prioritized by the knower/experiencer, the resulting knowledge/experience will assume the nature of the primary mode employed in the process. This is how there are different fields of knowledge/experience. For instance, a physicist knows/experiences reality primarily through the physical mode, whereas the philosopher approaches reality through a metaphysical mode and a theologian does it through the mystical mode. However, irrespective of the order of priority, each one is expected to employ other modes also in their inquiry so that the approach may be true and integral.

In short, Physics-Metaphysics-Mysticism represent the three basic modes of human knowing/experiencing and three representative fields of knowledge/experience. In this sense, physics means the science of physical knowledge/experience; metaphysics means the science of speculative or ontological
reasoning; and mysticism means the science of direct knowledge/experience. They are considered to be integral and basic modes of knowing/experiencing because none of them in its own capacity knows/experiences reality exhaustively.\textsuperscript{83}

The crux of the proposal would be the following; on the one side, matter, mind and mystery seem to be the essential media of both the unfolding of Reality and human knowledge/experience of it, and on the other side, physics – metaphysics – mysticism form the methodological alliance indispensable for any genuine search for Reality in its integrality.

5.4.2 Problem of Method in Advaitism

The question of method in advaitism has to be tackled at two levels, epistemological and hermeneutical. The technical Sanskrit equivalent for the epistemological aspect of method is \textit{Pramāṇa} and that for the hermeneutical side, \textit{Prakriya}. Epistemologically the question enquires the ways of advancing knowledge and in the hermeneutical level the search is for the most effective ways of communicating the knowledge gained.

5.4.2.1 Śruti as the Final Pramāṇa

All the advaitins are profoundly committed to śruti as the infallible revelation. Although śruti refers to Vedas as a whole, it is the Vedānta – Upaniṣads -, which forms the final portion of the śruti that constitutes the special object of advaitic tradition. Thus, precisely, for the advaitins, Vedānta is the valid and true means of knowledge that can reveal the ultimate reality to the human intellect. Ultimate Reality is not an object of perception because it is not an object of the senses. Note the Upaniṣadic descriptions of the Ultimate Reality: “That which one does not see with the eye,”\textsuperscript{84} “Nobody sees him with the eye,”\textsuperscript{85} “It is not comprehended through the eye,”\textsuperscript{86} “Which can not be thought by the mind, through which they say the mind thinks.”\textsuperscript{87} If, thus, sense perception has nothing to do in revealing Brahman, other sources of knowledge, such as inference, comparison and postulation that depend on the data supplied by the sense perception too will have little to do in Brahmadvīdya.
Sense-perception and the three means of knowledge that depend on it can impart only the knowledge of the sensible facts and objects.

And, because Brahman is self-evident by nature, it does not need any means to establish itself: “You can not see the seer of seeing, you cannot hear the hearer of hearing, you cannot think the thinker of thinking, you cannot know the knower of knowing.” However, perception and other means of knowledge do associate with the ultimate reality, but only through ignorance that establishes an appearance of duality.

5.4.2.2 Adhyāropa–Apavāda as the Basic Prakriya

The supreme reality, which is non-dual, which has no particular features, and which is beyond the range of speech and mind, is the truth realized by the classical Vedāntins. To communicate this experience they employ a special method called adhyāropa–apavāda, which means “false attribution followed by retraction.” The first articulation of this method is found in Śaṅkara’s Bhagavad Gita Bāshya; “For there is the saying of those who know the true tradition, “that which cannot be expressed (in its true form directly) is expressed (indirectly) through false attribution and subsequent retraction.” According to this method, first certain features are falsely attributed to the featureless Brahman, and then subsequently they are all negated.

A negative method which goes on falsifying and excluding all that comes in its way must naturally lead the system, as in the case of Buddhism, to nihilism. But, in spite of the negative hermeneutics it practiced, unlike the Buddhist anātamavāda tradition, the advaitic tradition in Vedāna has never been nihilistic. It so happened because Brahman, the superimpositions on whom are removed by the negative method, is said to remain unaffected and unnegated throughout the hermeneutical process. Thus, negative method brings by implication positive knowledge. This sense may lead scholars to think that the method of negation cannot be understood apart from the method of indication, laksāna. However, it must be noted here that scholars have failed to produce sufficient illustrations of Śaṅkara’s use of laksāna along with adyāropavāda. Among a few scholars who have worked in this direction,
Richard De Smet has tried to attach more importance to *lakṣaṇa* by projecting the positive method of indication as the major hermeneutical method employed by Śaṅkara and keeping the method of negation as an intermediary step to the former. However, by doing that, it seems, he has confused interpretation with truth, hermeneutics with epistemology.

In brief, for advaitins, *śabda* is the most reliable source of knowledge and false attribution followed by retraction is the basic method of interpretation. In other words, an epistemological principle, namely, commitment to *Veda-pramāṇa* and a hermeneutical technique called *adyāropa-upavāda* are the constituent elements of the vedāntic method. Now, keeping this finding as the immediate background knowledge the present study goes on exposing the methodological alliance in integral advaitism with a restatement of its contention in a more explicit and elaborate manner. By contenting that there is a unique inclusiveness of metaphysics and mysticism in the Advaitism of Sri Aurobindo what is intended here is to highlight three characteristic features of his system of thought: (a) Metaphysical expressions borrowed from rational philosophy are the interpretative keys employed in Sri Aurobindo’s advaitism while adherence to mystical knowing proper to inspired philosophy functions as the guiding epistemological principle, (b) The metaphysical language used by Sri Aurobindo is plastic enough to contain and convey the mystical knowledge coded in his integral philosophy, and, (c) The inclusiveness of metaphysics and mysticism is not the sign of an intellectual confusion between epistemology and hermeneutics, but an evidential support for a supramental fusion of reason and religion.

5.4.3 Inclusiveness of Metaphysics and Mysticism.

As a system of philosophy, integral advaitism is constructed in view of conversing with human reason, which Sri Aurobindo believes to be “proceeding by hypothesis, assumption and theory subject to verification of some kind.” And, what it wants to communicate is a “conscious experience of Truth, seen, felt, lived within and ... a spiritual perception (more direct and concrete than intellectual) of the true significance of things which may express itself in thought and speech, but it is independent of them in itself.” Thus, Sri Aurobindo’s advaitism is rational and
suprarational at the same time. The content is mystical while the continent is metaphysical.

In the methodological alliance employed in integral advaitism, mysticism comes first. It functions as the surest means for realizing the deepest truths of Existence. Metaphysics comes second and it formulates the mystical realizations in intelligible terms. Sri Aurobindo has very clearly brought out this distinction:

Wherever there has been a considerable spiritual development there arises from it a philosophy justifying it to the intellect. The method was at first an intuitive seeing and an intuitive expression, as in the fathomless thought and profound language of the Upanisads, but afterwards there was developed a critical method a firm system of dialectics, a logical organization. The later philosophies were an intellectual account (Eg. Gita, Sri Auribindo’s Foot Note) or a logical justification of what had been found by inner realization, or they provided themselves, a mental ground or a systematized method for realization and experience. (Eg. The Yoga philosophy of Patanjali, Sri Auribindo’s Foot Note)\(^\text{10}\)

Thus, the ‘intuitive seeing’ which happens in the course of spiritual development may perhaps provisionally be identified as the mystical way of knowing, the epistemological principle, and, ‘intellectual account’ which gives a ‘logical justification’ as the metaphysical expression, the hermeneutical technique. However, up to this point Sri Aurobindo seems to share the common path of vedântic tradition championed by Śaṅkara.

His uniqueness lies in the fact that he went one step further from the Vedântic way of employing the methods of mystical knowing and metaphysical knowing sequentially as the epistemological principle and the hermeneutical technique, to widen their scope so as to facilitate certain mutual inclusion or samanvaya. To highlight the innovative step taken by Sri Aurobindo, an effort basing on the findings of the previous sections on integral epistemology and human cognition to bring out the contrast between the sequential model of knowing and the samanvaya model of knowing would be helpful.
In the *samamvaya* model of knowing both mysticism and metaphysics have their operational fields expanded from within and thus their boundary lines removed. The knower is knowing the object of knowledge as in the way it is found identified with his/her consciousness. And, in every act of subsequent expression of the known content the facts represented are perceived in the way it is known by the perceiver. It is so, because knowledge/experience is a self-expression of the object of knowledge/experience, and any subsequent expression is an encapsulation of the knowledge/experience gained through the epistemic process of identification. Thus, here, knowing is an experience of ‘knowing as’ and the act of ‘making something known as’ is also giving an opportunity for an experience of ‘knowing as’. Therefore, in an integral approach, be it an epistemological query or some hermeneutical enterprise, the object is seized through a knowledge/experience by identity.102

However, to bring out the exact nature of inclusiveness, the specific role and significance that Sri Aurobindo attaches with Metaphysics and Mysticism need to be elucidated.

5.4.3.1 Mystical Knowing

Sri Aurobindo considers Śaṅkara as the greatest of all metaphysical thinkers. A number of times he has registered his admiration for Śaṅkara’s contributions to Vedāntic metaphysics.103 But, he does not think that Śaṅkara, while he interpreted Vedāntic metaphysics, relied on the best possible means of knowledge to understand the secrets of Vedas. Note a sharp observation of Sri Aurobindo in this regard; “I do not think that Śaṅkara’s *rational intellect*, subtle indeed to the extreme, but avid of logical clearness and consistency, could penetrate far into that *mystic symbolism*.”104 Sri Aurobindo seems to wonder whether Śaṅkara’s commitment to Śruti was complete enough, firstly, in understanding the meaning of Vedic revelation in its fullness, and secondly, in interpreting its implications in their integrality. The Vedic method of knowing and interpreting is summarized, according to Sri Aurobindo, in the following *śloka*:

"Girām upaśrutim, cara"
Stomān abhi sarva

abhi gṛṇihi ā ruva

This śloka is comprised of two verses from Rg Veda; 1.10.3, 4. Verse 3, “Girēm uyāśrutim carā” means ‘respond with śruti to our words’ and verse 4, “Stomān abhi sarva abhi gṛṇihi ā ruva” means ‘vibrate to our songs of praise, speak them out as they rise, cry out thy response.’

Now, basing on this śloka, he brings out the Vedic method of knowledge and the Vedāntic method of interpretation: “To enter passively into the thoughts of the old Rishis, allow their works to suit to their souls, mould them and create their own reverberation in a sympathetic and responsive material – submissiveness, in short to Sruti – was the theory the ancients themselves had of the method of Vedic knowledge” and, “To listen in soul to the old voices and allow the Sruti in the soul to respond, to vibrate, first obscurely in answer to the Vedantic hymn of knowledge, to give response, the echo and last to let that response gain in clarity, intensity, and fullness - this is the principle of interpretation…”

In short, as he writes in The Life Divine, “the true knowledge and description must be left to the language of the mystic and the figures, at once more vivid and recondite, of a direct and concrete experience.”

Quite in correspondence with the basic method of human cognition, one can find in Sri Aurobindo’s treatment of the problem, a fine fusion or a mutual inclusiveness of the method of knowledge and method of interpretation. And, here this relationship between the method of knowledge and the method of interpretation – ‘epistemology and hermeneutics’ or ‘mysticism and metaphysics’ as they are represented in the present scheme of thought – is asymmetrical. To the original interpreter, it is a one-way movement from the source of knowledge to the method of interpretation. His/her mystical knowledge/experience is transmitted to the readers through a sort of mystical philosophy. To the readers too, it is a one-way relationship, from the intuitive language to the source of intuition. Thus, in either case, though in contrary directions, there is a cross-sectional movement. In the case of Sri Aurobindo, who claims to have offered an original interpretation of Vedas and the Upaniṣads, the movement of consciousness is from mysticism to metaphysics.
5.4.3.2 Mystical Experience, the Ultimate Source of Knowledge

As it was discussed in the previous chapter, in Sri Aurobindo’s exposition of the doctrine of *pramāṇas*, the ways of knowing through identity – knowing by intimate direct contact and knowing by identity – are the two methods that put reason into its pure and sovereign use. The other two means, which know through separative contacts are of no use in the attempt to know the truth of Vedas, for the latter is not an object of perception, internal and external. Among the two methods of knowing through identity, the exact source of knowledge used by Sri Aurobindo is the means of knowledge *by* identity. The other source, namely knowing by intimate direct contact, is also a way of knowing through identity. But to put it precisely, it is a way of knowing *of* identity, not a knowing *by* identity. There is in fact a world of difference between the knowledge *of* identity and knowledge *by* identity. An attempt to bring out the difference between these two ways of knowing will also bring out the unique features of the ultimate source of knowledge used by Sri Aurobindo.

Human reason has a double action; dependent and sovereign.\(^{108}\) Reason through its dependent action perceives the phenomenon, while pure reason takes the sensible as a starting point and goes beyond to see what is behind the phenomenon. When reason is released from its dependent actions, and functions freely and purely, it is raised to the level of intuition or overmind consciousness where from it can see the essence of things. At this level, reason achieves two things; it becomes intimately aware of the essences, and it manifests a higher way of knowing through, what he calls, ‘soul-seeing.’ Ways of knowing through identity occur in this zone of the pure action of reason. Firstly, it employs an instrument of knowledge, which is described by Sri Aurobindo as ‘knowledge through intimate direct contact.’ This is knowledge *of* identity. K.C. Varadharan calls it *Upamāna* Consciousness.\(^{109}\) The other way of knowing through identity, *Sruti* or *Sākyakāra* as it is generally called, comes with a still purer use of reason. The reason that employs the instrument of *Śabda pramāṇa*, is neither the ordinary nor the extra ordinary dimension of mental reason, but the higher reason powered by supramental levels of being.

Knowledge by intimate direct contact should not be confused with what is ordinarily understood as *Upamāna*. In the realist schools of Indian thought, *Upamāna*
is employed as an analogical inference, a sensist instrument of knowledge. But, in the mystical traditions of the Indian thought, as Dr. K.C. Varadacari observes, Upamāna undergoes "a transformation from the poor analogical reasoning that it is considered to be and just an extension of the inferential reasoning" and becomes an instrument of knowing the supersensible. Thus, when Upamāna is redeemed from the usual association with sense-dependent reasoning, it begins to "intuit the inner nature of reality as correspondentia1, symbolic, supra-subjective, having its own unity of all grades and displaying mutual reflection which alone makes the splendid multiple figure of speech that adorn great language and literature." Thus, there is a clear contrast between the sensist employment of Upamāna and the mystics' use of it as an instrument of supersensible correspondence knowledge. Latter is the kind of Upamāna employed in the Upaniṣads and their commentaries while describing reality positively.

Although the graded process of cognition may seem to reach its summit with the knowledge of supersensible realities by means of intimate direct contact, in fact, it is not a complete cognition. For, the proper domains of Upamāna and the related lower instruments of knowledge are limited in scope and application. And, all of them together or any of them independently cannot seize integral reality. To seize reality in its inner depths and transcendent universality, in its essential oneness and manifested many-ness, yet another source of knowledge must be employed.

A careful analysis of the logic behind the knowledge of identity, Upamāna consciousness, itself would open the gates of the ultimate source of knowledge that Sri Aurobindo claims to have relied on: If sensible is the negation of the supersensible there would not be any similitude or correspondence. And, if there is no such similitude or correspondence - if not organic and functional, at least structural - there lies then no ground for analogical imagination or analogical reasoning. However, this is not the case. The identity theories of the West and the Indian systems that accept Upamāna as a valid source of knowledge are all basing themselves on the perceived fact of correspondence. The fact of correspondence, according to Sri Aurobindo, points to the non-opposition between the sensible and the supersensible, finite and the infinite. The perceived opposition is only a phenomenal description. Negation is a
merely methodological process, devoid of any ontological implication. Finite is veiled infinite and matter the concealed spirit.\textsuperscript{114}

Therefore, awakening fully into the inner truths of the sensible is a way of possessing the supersensible condensed in it. In the reverse movement of consciousness, which is the essential prerequisite of subliminal cognition, the knowledge thus gained through intimate direct contact is not the ultimate phase, but the penultimate phase derived through the \textit{analogue imagination} of reversed consciousness. The next one is the ultimate way of knowledge. Sri Aurobindo calls it knowledge by identity, \textit{Sruti, Sabda}, Vedic knowledge, etc. This method involves no act of knowing, but a passive awareness secreting from within the depths/heights of one's being. Since there was an elaborate discussion on this point in the previous chapter, it is needless to dwell more on it here.

5.4.3.3 Metaphysics as the Handmaid of Mysticism

As it was noted earlier, Sri Aurobindo's use of the words 'philosophy' and 'philosopher' is not in the original philological sense of the words \textit{philosophia} and \textit{aner philosophos}, respectively. He uses the word philosophy as a generic term that denotes the entire activities of the human mind.\textsuperscript{115} He conceives it as a handmaid of mystical knowledge/experience and is the rational foundation of physical knowledge/experience.\textsuperscript{116} In the order of different methodical approaches to reality, philosophical approach falls in between the physical approach and the mystical approach. In the present scheme of thought developed from the heuristic treatment, 'metaphysics' covers all that Sri Aurobindo means by philosophy, metaphysics, ratiocination, rational philosophy, intellectual philosophy, etc. The objective in this section is to bring out the significance of Sri Aurobindo's conception of philosophy, which has often gone unnoticed, may be because of the lack of exclusive treatment of the topic, use of multiple terminology, or a few apparently self-defeating statements like "I am not a philosopher...", etc. The nature of metaphysics may be delineated first and then its functions shall be brought out.

Through metaphysical inquiries, a seeker of truth can arrive at "only some initial representations of abstract and general character."\textsuperscript{117} Direct knowledge is
always an exclusive privilege of the mystical way of knowing. Philosophy as a search for knowledge will fail to fulfill itself, for the last word of knowledge will remain always unknowable to it. Although the unknowable is not absolutely unknowable, it will be practically unknowable to philosophy which is only a "creation of the mind." For, the mind needs to enter into the nature of Supermind in order to know the Truth: "...it is only when we have already had experience of a higher intermediate consciousness that any terms attempting to describe supramental being could convey a true meaning to our intelligence; for then having experienced something akin to what is described, we could translate in an inadequate language into a figure of what we know." Therefore, Sri Aurobindo does not consider metaphysical reasoning as a means to extend knowledge. He refuses to admit the autonomy of reason. He believes that rational intellect would be empty without some mystical intuition - generated by knowledge by identity - that gives the content to the former. In short, philosophy is not a means of knowledge, but a medium of expression.

Thus, by nature the whole edifice of metaphysics needs to be concerned with the relations between two things; "the fundamental truth of existence and the forms in which existence presents itself to our experience." Now, according to Sri Aurobindo, the all-pervading Absolute, the Divine, is the fundamental truth of existence. And, the forms in which Existence presents itself to our experience is the world, to refer to it collectively, or to put it concretely, each one's life with all the promoting and demoting factors in and around. So, nothing stands beyond the scope of metaphysics. If so, rational metaphysics stands in need of urgent enhancement. Sri Aurobindo says in this connection; "Not he the philosopher that achieves marvels in ratiocination and winneth the applause of an intellectual age, but he whose organon is a sharply whetted instrument which God pierces into the closed strongholds of prejudice, pedantry, error and obscurantism." Through his metaphysical poetry, Savitri, Sri Aurobindo is in fact trying to give an example of philosophizing through a poetic form. He says about his plan behind Savitri; "The philosophy (of Savitri) expresses or tries to express a total and many sided visions and experience of all the planes of being and their action upon each other. Whatever language, whatever terms are necessary to convey this truth of vision and experience it uses without scruple..."
Having ordained metaphysics as the mediator between mystical knowledge/experience and physical knowledge/experience, Sri Aurobindo has further described its specific job in the total movement of consciousness. In the capacity of a rational search engine, philosophy has to fulfill four functions. However, they are not four independent services that philosophy does, but four functional aspects of the single process of mediation. The first among them is to seek for truth by the intellect dispassionately. ‘Dispassionate’ search means a search, in the words of Sri Aurobindo, “without prepossession and prejudgement, with no other first proposition than the law of thought.” This would imply that philosophy is not bound to square its observations and conclusions with any current ideas of religion and dogma or ethical rule or aesthetic prejudice. Sri Aurobindo regards this function of philosophy as its svadharma. To fulfill this duty effectively and completely, a perfect freedom of the intellect is an essential condition. He says, “They (Philosophy, Science and Art) must be left free even to deny God and Good and Beauty if they will, if their sincere observation of things so points to them. For all these rejections must come round in the end of their circling and return to a larger truth of the things they refuse.”

Secondly, philosophy has to offer an intellectual formulation of the psychological and physical facts of Existence. In doing this, philosophy has to bring out, on the one hand, the inter-relational possibilities among the subliminal and surface aspects of Existence, and on the other hand, the basic relation of these aspects with the ultimate ontic fundament. Sri Aurobindo has put it very succinctly, “The philosopher’s business is to discriminate Truth and put its parts and aspects into intellectual relation with each other.” It is this functional aspect of metaphysics that makes it an effective guide to a dynamic solution of the problems of self-experience and world-experience.

The third function of philosophy is to make metaphysical distinctions. It is by making such distinctions that the intellect escapes “from the confusion of our first undistinguishing mental view of things.” According to Sri Aurobindo, there is only one sense, Manas, sense-mind, which has one inherent action and five specializations, namely, vision, hearing, touch, smell and taste. Cognitions and volitions are mind’s direct pure actions, whereas its awareness about the objects in the external world is the result of its mixed actions. The awareness of the external world is gained
indirectly through the sense organs. It is the mere regularity of the dominant habit of ego, which often separates the knower from the rest of the world by dividing him/her as subject and everything else as object. It is possible for a knower to develop processes and functions by which he/she may again enter into communion with all that have been excluded.

Human mind has accustomed itself to depend upon certain physiological functioning and their reactions as its normal means of entering into relation with the objects in the world. This is because the mind has consented to be dominated by matter. Once the mind is trained to liberate itself from the clutches of matter and original falsehood it will become capable of taking direct cognizance of the objects of knowledge. The mind must thus assert “its true character as the one and the all-sufficient sense and free to apply to the objects of the sense in its pure and sovereign instead of its mixed and dependent action.” Now, through a process of pure ratiocination, mind reaches at certain concepts which are not gained by physical way of knowing. Thus, although the complete use of pure reason takes the knower from physical knowledge to metaphysical knowledge, the demands of his/her integral being are not satisfied by metaphysical knowledge alone, for, as Sri Aurobindo says, “every concept is incomplete for us and to a part of our nature almost unreal, until it becomes an experience.”

Finally, metaphysics has to make an attempt to define to the mind what is really Infinite, Ultimate, and Absolute. In relation to this function, the other three are preparatory steps. However, the metaphysical statements made in view of defining the Infinite can never be quite final or ultimate, for the highest truth “can be lived, can be seen, but can only be partially stated.” Thus, basing on this final functional aspect of metaphysics, Sri Aurobindo seems to admit the real possibility and relevance of cognitive pluralism. And, as his choice, he follows the method of stating metaphysically the ultimate truth by making “a free resort to image and symbol, its intuitive form of speech in which the hard limiting definiteness of intellectual utterance of broken down and the implication of words are allowed to roll out into an illimitable way of suggestion.”
5.4.4 Inclusiveness Exemplified in Epistemic Justification

According to Sri Aurobindo, the process of epistemic justification proposed by the Indian tradition has a definite structure. An examination of his account of the Indian treatment of the problem and the related question of certainty will show how the different methods of knowledge, specially, metaphysics and mysticism are integrated in one movement of consciousness. *jñānam*, the certain knowledge, is arrived at after a few operations and self-instrumentation of consciousness. Sri Aurobindo writes:

First, the inquirer purifies his intellect by stilling of passions, emotions, and prejudgements and old Samskaras or associations. Secondly, he subjects received knowledge to a rigid scrutiny by skeptical vicāra, separating opinion from ascertained truth, mere conclusions from facts. Even the facts he takes as only provisionally true and is prepared to find his whole knowledge to be erroneous, misapplied or made up of half-truths. Thirdly, he experiments to get upalabdhi or personal experience. Fourthly, he again uses vicāra in order to ascertain how far his experiment really carries him and what he is or is not justified in concluding from it. Lastly he turns the light of the visuddha buddhi on the subject and by inspired discrimination arrives at *jñānam*.

Basing on this passage the structure of epistemic justification can be brought out as follows: *jñānam*, the true and certain knowledge is arrived at a stage preceded by four definite operations. Purifying, scrutinizing, experimenting, and discriminating are those four operations. The first operation is meant to purify the intellect and the other three are carried out in relation to the knowledge contents received through the intellect. And, because these operations are all contemplative operations of consciousness, each of them does employ certain specific instruments of knowledge such as Yogic sādhana, skeptical vicāra, and life-events. And then, each operation with the help of its specific cognitive tool yields distinct results such as *viśuddha buddhi*, provisional certainty, personal experience, and the power of discernment. Finally, a new instrument of knowledge, namely, *viveka*, emerges and guides the entire contemplative operation integrally to reach *jñānam*. Further details of the structure of epistemic justification as conceived by Sri Aurobindo shall be given along with explanation of diagram in Appendix. In which the researcher tries to present Sri Aurobindo’s concept of integral epistemological process.
The thick horizontal, vertical, and diagonal lines in the diagram signify the ultimate ontic fundament, consciousness that itself functions as the varied aspects and principles of the integral epistemic process. The numbers in the thick horizontal line represent the cognitional operations of human consciousness and that in the thick vertical line stand for the related cognitive instruments. The rectangles, with which the numbers signifying the cognitive operations involved and the cognitive instruments employed are diagonally attached, represent the end result of the epistemic process at its each definite stage. Now, an explanation of the epistemic process at each stage is in place.

5.4.4.1 The First Stage

In the first stage 'purification of the intellect' is the main operation, yogic sādhana is the instrument used, and purified intellect, viśuddhabuddhi is the result gained. The seeker is asked to purify his/her intellect by stilling all passions, emotions, prejudices, and associations. There are different yogic ways of purification. Sri Aurobindo himself tried many yogic paths, but attained the goal, as it was mentioned in the first chapter, by a simple method of 'stilling the mind' by which he realized that the gates to the overmental and supramental powers are automatically opened when the ordinary mental operations are stilled. Purification has to be pursued earnestly and ceaselessly until the intellect becomes unaffected by the interior movements of the ego, and thus become pure – viśuddhabuddhi.

5.4.4.2 The Second Stage

A thorough scrutiny of all the available knowledge claims is the cognitional operation undertaken by consciousness at this stage. vicāra, logical reason, in contrast to 'higher reason,' is the specific instrument of knowledge employed here. The purpose of the process of scrutinizing is to distinguish certain truths from uncertain opinions, biased statements, doubts and sheer stupidity. A stupid claim has no knowledge content. Doubts betray the fluctuation of mind between two or more possibilities. A biased statement is an obvious misapprehension of the total picture. Opinions may have some supporting reasons, but a certain claim alone will have
sufficient reasons and evidential supports. This operation is designed to discover the sufficient reason, if any. And the end result of such rigorous and detached intellectual enterprise is a sort of provisional certainty.

5.4.3.3 Third Stage

The claims that get through the rigorous test of vīcāra are not readily accepted as completely certain. The metaphysical discrimination is followed by a practical experimentation. An experimentation of the rationally abstracted truths against the actual life-situations is the cognitional process at this stage. The workability of the thought-solutions are examined by applying them in the real and problematic life-situations. Concrete life itself is the instrument of knowledge here. Each experiment leaves the inquirer with some new and specific personal experience. Such resultant personal experience is called collectively as upalabdhi, the end result of the process of experimentation. The upalabdhi thus gained and the knowledge claims which led the inquirer into these lessons of experience, together constitute the data for the fourth operation.

5.4.4.4 Fourth Stage

At this stage, consciousness involves in an epistemic process of discrimination. It uses the previously employed organon of vīcāra to make again some sharp metaphysical distinctions. Here its job is to distinguish between those claims that work in life and those that are merely logical. As a result of this cognitional operation the inquirer becomes capable of making clear distinctions, and thus certain power of discernment is regarded as the net-result here.

5.4.4.5 The Fifth Stage

At the final stage, consciousness integrates the methods and results of all the four previous stages into its multiple functions. Yet, it retains its distinctness and uniqueness, by bringing out a new instrument of knowledge namely, viveka, which is divine and human at the same time. vīcāra devoid of skepticism is its anthropological component, whereas the light of the viśuddhabuddhi, the result of the first operation,
perfects it by joining it as the divine component. Sri Aurobindo translates viveka as 'inspired discrimination.' ānānam is the end-result of this final epistemic process of integration.

As it is shown in the diagram, each higher stage includes the methods and results of the lower ones. All the subsequent cognitional methods and operations are powered and guided from inside by the light of viśuddhabuddhi which is the result of the first operation of purification. For instance, viveka, inspired discrimination, which is the instrument employed in the final cognitional process of integration, includes in its essence, vicāra, the metaphysical discrimination involved in the epistemic process, and the light of viśuddhabuddhi, which is nothing other than the supramental power of existence. In other words, viveka has a rational and suprarational or divine and human components in its essential makeup. Now, therefore, it may be contended, as it was done in the case of integral method of knowing and interpretation, that in the process of epistemic justification approved and practiced by Sri Aurobindo, there is an inclusiveness of the method of metaphysics and that of mysticism.

However, it is important at this juncture to note the significant role of Yoga or spirituality in the making of Sri Aurobindo’s method of inclusion. A set of Yogic sādhanā or a course of spiritual discipline is what is employed in the first cognitional operation of the integral epistemological process.

5.4.4.6 Place of Yoga in the Process of Knowing

The method of samanvaya is a synthetic approach, but it is not a synthesis of different approaches. In studying a subject matter, the scientific method, for instance, employs different means of knowledge such as perception, inference, postulation, etc. But, Sri Aurobindo’s integral approach is not such a combination of select sources of knowledge. The method of samanvaya is not the end result of an epistemological process of unification of different prameyās. Instead, Sri Aurobindo proceeds in the opposite direction. He turns to each pramāṇa and activates its inner dialectic. It has always been his foundational insight that every basic way of knowing contains within itself a latent power to exceed its limits. The one, all-pervading, ever evolving/involving consciousness is the source and essence of this power. It is by
getting hold of this Cit-Śakti through Yoga that Sri Aurobindo claims to have revitalized the inner power of self-transcendence in each source of knowledge.\textsuperscript{141}

In an ‘automatic writing’\textsuperscript{142} entitled Yogic Sadhan,\textsuperscript{143} Sri Aurobindo gives a few suggestions for a preliminary orientation of the consciousness of his disciples. In that book he has stated clearly the nature of knowledge, instruments of knowledge and the operations performed in the process of knowing. Knowledge, as explained in Yogic Sadhan, is awareness produced by an “act of consciousness operating on something in the consciousness itself.”\textsuperscript{144} And, everything that may be known exists in three states; sthīla, sūkṣma and kāraṇa. Kāraṇa denotes the existence of things in their ideal state of consciousness. In the sūkṣma state things have the possibility of development or modification, and there they exist in a mental state of consciousness. In the sthīla state things undergo actual change and evolution, and there they exist in a material state of consciousness. Now, therefore to know a thing integrally is to know that thing in all these three states.

The researcher finds it important at this juncture to note how Sri Aurobindo understands the specific ways of knowing at each of the above said states of consciousness, for it provides him with a valid comparison with the methodological alliance that he proposed little earlier: “The knowledge of Sthula is science. The knowledge of Sūkṣma is philosophy, religion and metaphysics. The knowledge of the Kāraṇa is Yoga.”\textsuperscript{145} Thus, the material, the mental and the ideal states of existence are seized by the scientific, metaphysical and Yogic means of knowledge respectively. And, as regards the cognitive operations involved, Sri Aurobindo states; “Complete knowledge consists of three operations, first objective Upalabdhi or experience, secondly intellectual statement of your understanding of the thing, thirdly subjective Upalabdhi or spiritual experience.”\textsuperscript{146} Thus, objective experience of Science and the subjective experience of Yoga are the two sources of philosophy. And, because the sādhaks are not scientists, Sri Aurobindo suggests his disciples to start from the Yogic source.

However, to employ the Yogic means of knowledge one has to by use of the Cit-Śakti keep the reason, imagination, memory, thought, and sensations sufficiently
quiet and pure. To activate the *Cit-Śakti* in all knowers/experiencers Sri Aurobindo suggests *Sapta Catusṭaya* Yoga.

The practice of *Sapta Catusṭaya* Yoga effects a systematic purification of all parts and planes of being. The separative factors posed by the workings of the ego, and, the seven-faced fact of ignorance, are all cleared by the Yoga. Once thus the entire parts and planes of one’s being are purified, the corresponding ways of knowing, each one independently and all of them in relation to each other, begin to evolve towards complete possession of their objects. In the course of this unidirectional evolution, different ways of knowledge naturally intersect. And at the outset, integral approach exhibits mutual inclusiveness of the basic methods of knowledge.

5.5 Retrospect and Prospect

Sri Aurobindo’s objective in doing philosophy was to bring out the original advaitic philosophy inherent in the *Upaniṣads* and in the *Gītā*. And, in so doing he employed the method of *Samanvaya*, which may be conceived, ontologically, as the method of inclusion as opposed to the method of systematic exclusion, or, epistemologically, as a method of integration as opposed to the method of negation.

Having thus finished the exposition of the method in Sri Aurobindo’s advaitism, a concluding note that offers a recapitulation of the findings of this thesis and a critical evaluation of its subject, namely integral advaitism is in order. And the general conclusion that follows will first offer a sympathetic summary statement of the thesis and a few critical observations.
Notes

1 P. T. RAJU, The Philosophical Traditions of India (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1992) 228 comments in this regard. “Aurobindo Ghose was a volcan in of his own kind, but he did not follow any of the traditions wholly. As a man practicing Yoga, he combined several ideas from several traditions that suited him, giving a new interpretation to even the early vedic hymns and including from western philosophy also. He criticized almost every ancient school, but expounded a philosophy that can be traced back to some of the schools, particularly the Saiva and Sakta Agamas. But he used a new terminology for traditional concepts.”


3 T.R.V. MURTI, The Central Philosophy of Buddhism, 10.

The present survey uses two heuristic tools, namely, tradition and school. Tradition means the fountain-source from which stems a continuous stream of thought and culture. When different forms of philosophical thought remain connected with their fountain-source and retain the consciousness of the origination forces that have been moving them on, they are described as different philosophical schools. For more on such distinctions, see, T.R.V. MURTI, The Central Philosophy of Buddhism, 10, P.T. RAJU, The Philosophical Traditions of India, 15.

5 There is yet another stream in Indian philosophy constituted by the Jaina attempt to reconcile ātmavāda and anātmavāda. The resulting Jaina philosophy may be described as anekāntātmavāda, for, according to them, reality is manifold. Being essentially un-Brahmanical and un-Buddhistic, Jainism stands as a distinct mid-way between the ātma and anātma traditions. Yet, it is not considered as another ‘tradition’ in the sense it is intended to mean the term in the present study, for, Jainism remained practically stationary down the ages. See, T.R.V. MURTI, The Central Philosophy of Buddhism, 11-12.

6 See, C. Up. V. iii. 3-12, V. iii. 7.1, B. Up. I.v. 4.3, viii.7.3, viii.9.1, viii.10.2.3.

7 RADHAKRISHNAN, Indian Philosophy, I, 162.

8 RADHAKRISHNAN, Indian Philosophy, II, 163.

9 T. Up. I.5

10 The teaching of Nairātmyavāda distinguishes Buddhism from all other systems.

11 RADHAKRISHNAN, Indian Philosophy, I, 694.


13 RADHAKRISHNAN, Indian Philosophy, I, 138: “The aim of the Upanisads is not so much to reach philosophical truth as to bring peace and freedom to the anxious human spirit. Tentative solutions of metaphysical questions are put forth in the form of dialogues and disputation, though the Upanisads are essentially the outpourings or poetic deliverances of philosophically tempered minds in the face of the facts of life. They express the restlessness and striving of the human mind to grasp the true nature of reality.” And, as regards Buddha, he was a man who was deeply disturbed by the transience and uncertainty of life. RADHAKRISHNAN, Indian Philosophy, I, 147 writes; “The story of the four signs which Gautama met on the road of Kapilavastu, the aged man ..., the sick man ..., the corpse ..., and the mendicant friar, points the moral that the misery of the world left a sting on his sensitive nature” The first noble truth taught by the enlightened Buddha was the tyranny of pain and the fourth noble truth was the gospel of painless existence.

14 M. HIRIYANNA, Outlines of Indian Philosophy (London: Allen & Unwin, 1932) 19.

15 Ke. Up. II.5.

16 B. Up. IV, iv, 6.

17 RADHAKRISHNAN, Indian Philosophy, I, 375 makes a very suggestive observation; “The fundamental difference between Buddhism and the Upanisads seems to be about the metaphysical reality of an immutable substance, which is the true self of man as well”, but, elsewhere RADHAKRISHNAN, Indian Philosophy, I, 676 says that, “Buddhism is only a restatement of the thought of the Upanisads with a new emphasis.” T.R.V.MURTI, The Central Philosophy of Buddhism, 20 says: “The Upanisads and Buddhism belong to the same spiritual genus; they differ as species; and the differentia are the acceptance or rejection of the atman (permanent Sub stance).”


19 The monistic theory of Rig-Veda is the referent here. Regarding this early monism Deussen says, as cited in M. HIRIYANNA, Outlines of Indian Philosophy, 13; “The Hindus arrive at monism by a method essentially different from that of other countries. … In India they reached monism, though not monothelism on amore philosophical path, seeing through the veils of the manifold the unity which underlies it.”

ASHOK KUMAR CHATTERJEE, The Yogacara Idealism, 3.

SIPHERBATSky, 'Buddhist Logic', 1, 1.

T.R.V. MURTI, The Central Philosophy of Buddhism, 57.

T.R.V. MURTI, The Central Philosophy of Buddhism, 58.

ASHOK KUMAR CHATTERJEE, The Yogacara Idealism, 11.


Nagarjuna is the systematizer of these sutras. See T.R.V. MURTI, The Central Philosophy of Buddhism, 83.


T.R.V. MURTI, The Central Philosophy of Buddhism, 9 defines dialectic as the "total and interminable conflict in reason and the consequent attempt to resolve the conflict by rising to a higher standpoint."

T.R.V. MURTI, The Central Philosophy of Buddhism, 60: "Nagarjuna and Aryadeva, the founders of the Madhyamika, were quite conversant with the classical Samkhya and Vaisesika and possibly Vedanta too. They invariably took them to represent the saswata or atma view ..."

ASHOK KUMAR CHATTERJEE, The Yogacara Idealism, 196.


ASHOK KUMAR CHATTERJEE, The Yogacara Idealism, 126-140.

ASHOK KUMAR CHATTERJEE, The Yogacara Idealism, 182.

Sankara's absolutism will be discussed in the following section.


There is a difference between the two terms avaitavada and advayavada. While the former means the theory of non-difference between or identity of jiva and Brahman; the latter means the theory of non-two, neither of the two extreme views.


T.R.V. MURTI, The Central Philosophy of Buddhism, 322.

T.R.V. MURTI, The Central Philosophy of Buddhism, 322-323 says; "The Vedanta analyzes illusion from the knowledge-standpoint: the illusion consists in wrong characterization, in mistaking the 'given' as something else;... Vijnanavada analyzes illusion from an opposite angle: for it, the 'given' is appearance, and the ideating consciousness alone is real. In both Vedanta and Vijnanavada, the analysis of empirical illusion is extended analogically to the world. But what will tell us that the phenomenal world itself is illusory?... An empirical illusion (of the form 'this is snake') does not itself necessitate being universalized of all phenomena... Both Vedanta and Vijnanavada have therefore to take the cue from some extra-logical mode of cognition: the Vedanta gets it from revelation (sruiti) which declares the atman (Brahman) alone to be real, the Yogacara depends on the deliverance of the trance-states where the objects drop out leaving consciousness as the sole reality. This is made the norm for judging phenomena.... The Madhyamika starts, not with an empirical illusion, but with the transcendental illusion, as exhibited in the inevitable conflict of opposed standpoints and philosophies."

BASANT KUMAR LAL, Contemporary Indian Philosophy (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1995) III.

P.T. RAJU, The Philosophical Traditions of India, 220.

BASANT KUMAR LAL, Contemporary Indian Philosophy, VII-VIII.

BASANT KUMAR LAL, Contemporary Indian Philosophy, IV: "Generally Indian philosophy is described as 'spiritual'; by this is meant that it lays emphasis on values that are supernatural and other-worldly. But this description is not adequate, because it gives the impression that Indian philosophy has no concern with this-worldly values. At least contemporary Indian philosophy should not be described that way. It emphasizes the utility of, what is called, spiritual values, but it does not do so in a compartmentalized manner; disregarding entirely considerations that are empirical and this-worldly. In fact the contemporary Indian thinker tries his best to reconcile the two. He explicitly says that spiritual awakening cannot take place in a void—that for spiritual growth the physical nature is not to be rejected but perfected. That shows that it is better to describe the general character of Indian philosophy as meditative. In this context the word meditative is more comprehensive than the word spiritual, because it incorporates in it even the word spiritual. What is being suggested here is that the Indian philosopher comes to discover certain holy powers of Nature and also a capacity of self-transcendence within man himself.... The process that he adopts is one of 'meditative speculation'..."

His impression about these factors is well expressed in one of his reviews of the philosophical treatise of Professor R. R. Ranke. He says in The Supramental Manifestation, SABCI, 16, 330; "The philosophy and thought of the Greeks is perhaps the most intellectually stimulating, the most fruitful of clarities the world has yet had. Indian philosophy was intuitive in its beginnings, stimulative rather
to the deeper vision of things, nothing more exalted and profound, more revelatory of the depths and the heights, more powerful to open unending vistas: has ever been conceived than the divine and the inspired Word, the mantras of Veda and Vedanta. When that philosophy became intellectual, precise, founded on the human reason, it became also rigidly logical, enamored of fixity and system, desirous of a sort of geometry of thought. The ancient mind had instead a fluid precision, a flexibly inquiring logic: acuteness and the wide-open eye of the intellect were its leading characteristics and by its power in it, it determined the whole character and the field of subsequent European thinking."


47 M. P. Pandit's scholarly observation cited in the preface of BINITA PANI, The Indian Scriptures and The Life Divine (New Delhi: Ashish Publishing House, 1993) is noteworthy here: "It is an accepted tradition in India that every Acharya who founds a system of philosophy cites support from the scriptures, notably the Upanisads, the Gita and the Brahma Sutras. Each interprets the text in a manner that his position stands - to gain support there from. The case with Sri Aurobindo, founder of integral philosophy of life, Purna Advaita is different. His system has grown out of his life long spiritual realization. It is only afterwards that he has turned to scriptures to examine how far his experience and perceptions are corroborated by the ancient authorities.... Sri Aurobindo is known to have had many experiences of yogic and mystic character which were later confirmed in the hymns of the Veda."

48 NB 4.2.35.


50 The Supramental Manifestation, SABCL, 16, 335. Elsewhere in The Supramental Manifestation, SABCL, 16, 370 he says: "We see in how many directions the deep divining eye of Heraclitus anticipated the largest and profoundest generalizations of Science and Philosophy and how even his more superficial thoughts indicate later powerful tendencies of the occidental mind, how too some of his ideas influenced such profound and fruitful thinkers as Plato, the Stoics, the Neo-Platonists."

51 MARTIN HEIDEGGER, What is Philosophy, 41.

52 MARTIN HEIDEGGER, What is Philosophy, 49.

53 MARTIN HEIDEGGER, What is Philosophy, 49.

54 Greek word meaning 'according to strife'.

55 Greek word meaning 'according to reason'.

56 The Supramental Manifestation, SABCL, 16, 367-8.

57 The Supramental Manifestation, SABCL, 16, 368: "It is not an inconscient reason in things, for his Fire is not merely an inconscient force, it is Zeus and eternity. Fire, Zeus is Force, but is also an Intelligence; let us say then that it is an intelligent Force which is the origin and master of things. Nor can this Logos be identical in its nature with the human reason; for that is an individual and therefore relative and partial judgment and intelligence which can only seize on relative truth, not on the true truth of things, but the Logos is one and universal, an absolute reason therefore combining and managing all the relativities of the many."

58 Commenting on Philo's achievement he says in The Supramental Manifestation, SABCL, 16, 368; "Was not then Philo justified in deducing from this idea of an intelligent Force originating and governing the world, Zeus and Fire, his interpretation of the Logos as "the divine dynamic, the energy and the self-revelation of God"? Heraclitus might not so have phrased it, might not have seen all that this thought contained, but it does contain this sense when his different sayings are fathomed and put together in their consequences."

59 The Supramental Manifestation, SABCL, 16, 368: "We get very near the Indian conception of Brahman, the cause, origin and substance of all things, an absolute Existence whose nature is consciousness (Chit) manifesting itself as Force (Lapsa, Shakti) and moving the world of his own being as the Seer and Thinker, Kavi, Vrinda, an immanent Knowledge-Will in all, vijnanamaya purusa, who is the Lord or Godhead, isavara, deva, and has ordained all things according to their nature from years semperternal. - Heraclitus' "measures" which the Sun is forced to observe, his 'things are utterly determined.' This Knowledge-Will is the Logos."

60 The Supramental Manifestation, SABCL, 16, 368-9.

61 The Supramental Manifestation, SABCL, 16, 368.

62 Plural of logos, meaning reason, world, will.

63 The Supramental Manifestation, SABCL, 16, 368.

64 In Sri Aurobindo's ontological scheme, the functions of Truth-Consciousness of the Vedas, prajnapuruṣa of the Upaniṣad, the seed Logos of Heraclitean-Stoic thought are found associated with Supermind.
A number of borderline disciplines and a few cross-sectional inquiries will stem from the basic methods of knowledge.

The equivocal use of the term philosophy has greatly blurred Sri Aurobindo's contribution to philosophical traditions in India and the West. The same has hindered his readers from accepting his system as philosophical.

One can find Sri Aurobindo employing such a methodological alliance in the process of justifying spiritual evolution in *The Life Divine II*, SABCL, 19, 833-5.

For instance, *alauika* perceptions identified by *Nyāya* theory of knowledge.


See Wilber's chain of being in Appendix II.


The proposal could be presented in a diagram. See Appendix I.

Ke. Up. 1.7.
K. Up. 2.3.9.
M. Up. 3.1.8.
Ke. Up. 1.6.
S. Up. vii.
B. Up. III.iv.

SRI SWAMI SATCIDANANDEDRA, *The Method of the Vedanta. A Critical Account of the Advaita Tradition*, 61 says: "Perception and the other empirical means of knowledge, along with the Vedic texts conveying injunctions and prohibitions — even along with the Upanisadic texts themselves — are valid only as long as the Absolute has not been known in its true nature through the Veda, for then the wrong notion of 'know' through means of knowledge' is eliminated. After true metaphysical knowledge has been attained, only the non-dual Absolute remains. There cannot then be the notion that the self is the object of a means of cognition, or that any means of cognition exists to know it. Hence the experts in the interpretation of the Upanisads have taught that the Upanisads are the 'final means of knowledge'."


BH. G. S. Bh. XIII.13.

SRI SWAMI SATCIDANANDEDRA, *The Method of the Vedanta*, 43: "The essence of the method of false attribution is that the imaginary characteristics are first attributed to the Absolute, and this serves as a negation of whatever is incompatible with those characteristics; then later even the falsely attributed characteristics are negated. Efforts to abolish falsely attributed characteristics have to be continued till all are removed. In this way the true nature of the Absolute can become known through the mere negation of all false attributions." And, in his commentary on the Brahādārānyaka Upaniṣad, as cited in SRI SWAMI SATCIDANANDEDRA, *The Method of the Vedanta*, 41, Śaṅkara explains, how this interpretative method is actually employed in Vedanta: "He who knows the Self, thus described, as the fearless Absolute (Brahman), himself become the Absolute, beyond fear. This is a brief statement of the meaning of the entire Upaniṣad. And in order to convey this meaning rightly, the fanciful alternatives of production maintenance and withdrawal and the false notion of action, its factors and results are deliberately attributed to the Self as a first step. And then the final metaphysical truth is inculcated by negating these characteristics through a comprehensive denial of all particular
superimpositions on the Absolute, expressed in the phrase ‘neither this nor that.’ Just as a man wishing to explain numbers from one to a hundred thousand billion (points to figures that he has drawn and) says, ‘This finger is one, this finger is ten, this finger is hundred, this finger is thousand,’ and all the time his only purpose is to explain numbers, and not to affirm that the fingers are numbers; or just as one wishing to explain the sounds of speech as represented by the written letters of the alphabet resorts to a device in the form of a palm-leaf on which he makes incisions which he later fills with ink to form letters, and all the while (even though he points to the letter and say ‘This is the sound ‘so and so”) his only purpose is to explain the nature of the sounds referred to by each letter, and not to affirm that the leaf, incisions and ink are sounds, in just the same way, the one real metaphysical principle, the Absolute, is taught by resort to many devices such as attributing to it production (of the world) and other powers. And then afterwards the nature of the Absolute is restated, through the concluding formula ‘neither this nor that,’ so as to purify if of all particular notions accruing to it from the various devices used to explain its nature in the first place.”

94 Śaṅkara has made this point in B.S.S.B. 3.2.22: “When there is the repetition [“not this, not this,” what happens is that] from the denial of all objects in their totality, That which is not an object, the inner = Self, is Brahman; and the desire to know Brahman ceases. Hence the definitive conclusion is that [the statement “not this not this”] negates the phenomenal world, which is superimposed in Brahman, and leaves Brahman remaining.”

95 lakṣaṇa is that which gives the secondary meaning of a word. A word, according to classical advaitism has vācyārtha (primary meaning) and lakṣārtha (secondary meaning or implied meaning). Vācyārtha is revealed through the śākti (explicit sense) of the word, while lakṣārtha is revealed through the lakṣaṇa (implication). Lakṣārtha is brought out by means of arthāpattī (postulation).

96 MICHAEL COMANS, The Method of Early Advaita Vedanta. A Study of Gaudapāda, Śaṅkara, Śrīsvāna and Padmapāda, 291-328 reviews the research works in this direction.

97 RICHARD DE SMET, The Theological Method of Śaṅkara (Rome: Pontifical Gregorian University, 1953).

98 Indeed there are other notable methods used in the Upaniṣads to communicate the Ultimate Reality. See, for instance, the method of teaching the Absolute through Doctrines of Cause and Effect (kāraṇa-kārya prakṛti) found in M. Up. II.i.12, T.Up. II.7, the method of communicating the true Nature of the Absolute indirectly through attributing to it the false notions of Universal and Particular found in B. Up. II.i.xi.7, the method of communicating the Nature of the Absolute indirectly through recourse to the notions of Seer and Seen found in B. Up. IV.v.15, the method of communicating the Absolute through discriminating it from the Five Sheaths (panca-kāśa-prakṛti) found in T.Up. II, and the method of communicating the true nature of the Self through a discrimination of the three apparent states of waking dream and dreamless sleep (avrasthātāraya – prakṛti) found in Māndukya Upaniṣad. But they are all variants that are subsidiary to the basic method of negation.

99 The Supramental Manifestation, SABCL, 16, 106.

100 Letters on Yoga III, SABCL, 24. 1262.

101 The Life Divine II, SABCL, 19, 879.

102 In this sense, thanks to the alleged employment of the basic method of knowing/experiencing by identity, the Vedic mysticism and the Upaniṣadic metaphysics may be said to regain their contemporaneity in Sri Aurobindo's integralism.

103 See, for instance, The Upaniṣads, SABCL, 12, 397-8; “The great Śankaracharya needs no modern praise and can be hurt by no modern disagreement easily. The first metaphysical thinker, the greatest genius in the history of philosophy, his commentary has done an incalculable service to our race by bridging the intellectual gulf between the Sages and of the Upanisads and ourselves. It has protected them from the practical oblivion in which our ignorance and inertia have allowed the Veda to rest for so many centuries, only to be dragged out by the hands of the daringly speculative Teuton. It has kept these ancient grandeur of thought, these high repositories of spirituality under the safeguard of the temple of metaphysics, the Advaita philosophy – a little in the background, a little too much veiled and shrouded but nevertheless safe from iconoclasm.”

104 The Upaniṣads, SABCL, 12, 398. Italics added.

105 Cited by Sri Aurobindo in The Upaniṣads, SABCL, 12, 398.

106 The Upaniṣads, SABCL, 12, 398.

107 The Life Divine II, 19, 921.

108 The Life Divine I, SABCL, 18, 60.


than Aurobindo's reasoning; own sake without any
subconsciously it cannot denial.

The writer's conscious

Philosophy is not an

Metaphysical philosophy is

For instance, Plato's

It is the

Thus he continues in The Human Cycle, SABCL, 15, 215: "... often we find atheism both in individual and society as a necessary passage to deeper religious and spiritual truth; one has some times to deny God in order to find him; the finding is inevitable in the end of all earnest skepticism and denial."

Essays on the Gita, SABCL, 13, 241-2. Here psychology means the science of psyche in the sense of inner soul. Thus psychological means subliminal.

The Future Poetry, SABCL, 9, 31.

The Life Divine II, SABCL, 19, 666-7: "Our metaphysical knowledge, our view of the fundamental truth of the universe and the meaning of existence, should naturally be determinant of our whole conception of life and attitude to it; the aim of life, as we conceive it, must be structured on that basis. Metaphysical philosophy is an attempt to fix the fundamental realities and principles of being as distinct from its processes and the phenomena which result from those processes. But it is on the fundamental realities that the processes depend; our own process of life, its aim and method, should be in accordance with the truth of being that we see; otherwise our metaphysical truth can be only a play of the intellect without any dynamic importance. It is true that the intellect must seek after truth for its own sake without any illegitimate interference of a preconceived idea of life-utility. But still the truth once discovered, must be realizable in our inner being and our outer activities; if it is not it may have an intellectual but not an integral importance; a truth of the intellect, for our life it would be no more than the solution of a thought-puzzle or an abstract unreality or a dead letter. Truth of being must govern truth of life; it cannot be that the two have no relation or inter-dependence."

The Life Divine I, SABCL, 18, 385.

The Life Divine I, SABCL, 18, 63.

The Life Divine I, SABCL, 18, 61.

Essays on the Gita, SABCL, 13, 252.

Essays on the Gita, SABCL, 13, 252.

The Life Divine II, SABCL, 19, 700.

Essays on the Gita, SABCL, 13, 253. In this sense, it may be contended that, Sri Aurobindo's metaphysics proper is presented in poetic forms and thus Savitri is his Mangunopus.

The Harmony of Virtue, SABCL, 3, 439.

vācāra is used twice in the second and the fourth operations.

This is how Yoga or Spirituality becomes the supreme science that unifies all methods. See The Human Cycle, SABCL, 15, 216.

Record of Yoga, II, CWSA, 11, 1510. Automatic writing is not a writing dictated or guided by the writer's conscious mind but through the intervention of beings of another plane, or an element in the subconscious mind or a brilliant vein in the subliminal.
Record of Yoga, II, CWSA, 11, 1368-1399. This book was received by Sri Aurobindo as an automatic writing in 1910.

Record of Yoga, II, CWSA, 11, 1380.

Record of Yoga, II, CWSA, 11, 1380. Italics added.

Record of Yoga, II, CWSA, 11, 1380.

The Synthesis of Yoga I, SABC, 20, 130.