At the time of Śaṅkara, Śāṅkya and Yoga occupied an eminent position. Buddhism, being idealistic in form, commanded faith over a good number of intelligentsia. Under these circumstances, Śaṅkara was facing two-fold problem. Firstly, he had to expose the logical inconsistencies of his rival systems, because he thought that those systems were not in accord with the letter and spirit of the Vedas and hence did not propound metaphysics vouched for and backed by the authority of the Vedas. Secondly, he had to synthesize and wield together into a powerful and logically consistent system all the haphazard declarations of the Upaniṣadic teachers. I have chosen to deal with the first part of Śaṅkara's job, which, in my humble opinion, has been left unexplored or touched in passing by the scholars of Indian Philosophy.

According to Śaṅkara, Brahmān is the Ultimate Reality as taught unanimously by all the Upaniṣads. While establishing this contention Śaṅkara had to explain all the doubtful and seemingly conflicting Upaniṣadic passages. In order to show that any interpretation other than this was not a true and a right one, he had to achieve three targets: (i) to show that the Upaniṣads do not mention the doctrines of Prakṛti, Mahāt etc. of the Śāṅkhyaśas, (ii) to meet and reconcile satisfactorily the objections raised by his opponents, (iii) and finally, to point out the
inconsistencies of the non-monistic schools of Indian Philosophy. These three objectives were achieved by him, not only by commenting upon the Brahma-sūtras, but also by writing commentaries on the principal Upaniṣads. As far as practicable, I have tried to incorporate in the present work all the scattered information regarding the refutations of the non-monistic schools of Indian Philosophy as revealed in the works of Śaṅkara himself. That is why the maximum number of quotations employed in this thesis are from Śaṅkara's own works.

Keeping in view the limitations of space here, it has not been possible for me to incorporate in this work all criticisms against the non-monistic schools made by the Advaitins who flourished after Śaṅkara. Therefore, I have reserved my attempt to Śaṅkara alone. But there is no denying the fact that the aphoristic nature of some of the fragmentary references made by Śaṅkara, such as his bare mention of the theories of error in his Adhyāsa Bhasya, has forced me now and then to consult his most faithful commentators who are very near to him in time and spirit. Under such circumstances, I have not been able to reserve my temptation to quote from the works of his blind followers such as Śrīśvarācārya and others. But this has been done only to clear some of the knotty points or to incorporate such unavoidable points which did not strike Śaṅkara.

The time at Śaṅkara's disposal was very short and the project before him was one that could consume the time of a number of dedicated lives. Consequently, we find that
Shamkara left untouched or touched in passing certain philosophical problems. He left this work to be completed by his blind and direct followers such as Śrīśvarācārya, Padmapāda etc., who proved in a very commendable and convincing way that the doctrine of Brahman was never contradicted either by experience or by rational thinking. In fact, all philosophical reasonings and criticisms only help to convince the intellect and strengthen one's faith in the Reality taught by the Upaniṣads. According to Shamkara, the true purpose of logic is to adapt the individual's mind to accept the Upaniṣadic Truths. Logic will be going astray from its very purpose if it disturbs the findings of the Upaniṣads in any way.

The followers of Shamkara reconciled the apparent inconsistencies of Advaita Vedānta and supplemented erroneous findings pointed out by Shamkara. They enriched the Advaita Philosophy by introducing epistemology, minute and detailed observations with regard to the nature of the relation of Māyā, Brahman and world-appearance etc. For all these reasons, I have very occasionally consulted and borrowed from them to bring out clearly Shamkara's point of view.

It was a normal practice in India that men well-versed in their subjects pertaining to different schools of Indian Philosophy used to gather to discuss their views. The discussion used to be of a debate type. The results of these discussions determined the superimacy of a particular school over the other. The debates were often
attended by a good number of learned men even from distant parts of the country. Thus the winning party would immediately become famous and some of the enthusiastic listeners would readily and voluntarily offer themselves to follow the winning man and dedicate their lives to spread his principles. So the masters, and more particularly, the founders, of a particular school of thought had to undertake extensive tours of disputation. Śaṅkaraśārīrya, being a leader and probably the foremost spokesman of Vedic orthodoxy, had also to do so. Consequently, he had to criticise the different schools of Indian Philosophy by exposing their inconsistencies and self-contradictions. While doing so, he imagines a disputant, anticipates answers if objections are raised against the opponent's contentions and sometimes, he asks him to clear a knotty point. At last, he proves that the opponent's hypothesis was inconsistent, it involved contradictions in itself and over and above all this, it went contrary to experience and the authority of Shruti. It is with this aspect of Śaṅkara's job with which the present treatise deals. In this connection, one is reminded of a bold declaration made by Śaṅkara himself, "It is to refute all those who were opposed to the right doctrine of perceiving everything as the unity of the Self that this Śārīraka commentary of mine is being attempted."

It will be observed that this attempt of mine brings out an important aspect of Śaṅkara's personality in a new

1 Vide Śārīraka Ṣhāsya on 1/3/19.
light which may appeal to most of the modern minds. It brings out Śaṅkara’s personality as a critic who, not believing in the reality of the world at all, is seen here arguing from purely a relative world of criticism, using such arguments as the most faithful realist would use. In spite of all this, he has strongly and convincingly maintained that this world of diversity is as illusory as the snake in the rope.

Criticism is of two types. One is objective and the other is subjective. The objective type of criticism attacks the opponent arguing from the opponent’s hypothesis itself. Hence the approach of a critic of this type is so sound, positive and solid that it wins appreciation from all impartial and neutral intellects. The other i.e. the subjective type of critic attacks the opponent projecting and employing, and even asserting, his own assumptions. This is obviously an inferior type of criticism and strikes unpleasant.

Śaṅkara has to be appreciated for criticising his rival schools objectively. This may be clarified thus: All branches of Indian Philosophy may mainly be divided into two classes: (i) Vedic Philosophy, those which ascribe ultimate and sole authority to the Vedas.(ii) non-Vedic Philosophies, which recognise the use of reason in the ascertainmnet of ultimate truth, giving secondary importance to the validity of Shruti. Śaṅkara, while dealing with the schools of the first category,(for example, when he refutes the Mīmāṃsika’s contention that all Vedic passages are
necessarily injunctive in character) brings in those scriptural passages which apparently contradict the Mimamsist's contention. On the other hand, when he criticises the second type of schools of Indian Philosophy, he uses all tricks of debate such as 'manipulation', 'destructive argument' 'dragging the opponent to the corner', etc. to silence the opponent. The objections raised by the opponent on the monist's assertions, are met from grounds of reason alone. Hence Shamskara's criticisms are objective.

It may be objected that Shamskara has introduced the authority of Scriptures even while criticising the Bauddhas' contention that space is a non-entity. That he establishes the existence of space citing a declaration of an Upanisadic passage there, proves that he has not been objective always. But, it may be replied that this does not bring any discredit to the personality of Shamskara as a critic. Decisive conclusions cannot be reached unless some final authority is recognised. Shamskara could have been considered to be subjective if he did not criticise his opponent taking his stand on the authority which the opponent recognises. Because the Bauddha, does not believe in any type of ultimate validity, therefore, there is nothing objectionable on the part of Shamskara in introducing an Upanisadic passage in support of his own hypothesis even while criticising a non-Vedic school of Indian Philosophy.

1. Cf. Chapter Five,(i) (d)
In the end, with all my humility and gratefulness, I may express my indebtedness towards my Supervisor, Dr. Hem Raj Vatsya, Shastri, M.A., Ph.D., Reader in Sanskrit Department of the Panjab University. He is a well-versed master of a number of oriental works in Indian Philosophy. He had the rare privilege of studying works like Bhāmatī traditionally at Benaras. It was he who suggested me this topic. It is not exaggeration when I say that his guidance, supervision and suggestions from time to time, have enabled a feeble intellect like that of mine, to attempt this aspect of the Shankara's personality.

Nanak Ram