

CONSCIOUSNESS:

an Optimality Theory Approach.

Cosme R. Martins

ABSTRACT

Based on the “Dvaita Vada Philosophy of Vaisnavism” (Prabhupada, 1972) the purpose of this article is to describe the characteristics of “consciousness”.

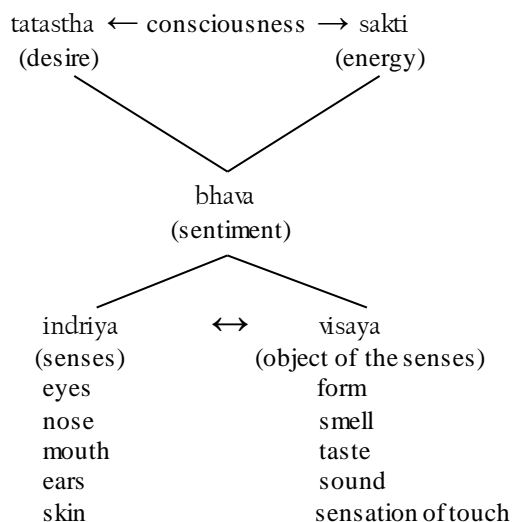
DEFINITION

Just like the symptom of fire is “light and heat” the symptom of the soul is “consciousness” (Prabhupada, 1972).

Consciousness means “to be aware of something”. And the “essence of this awareness” can be divided as “tastha” (desire) and “sakti” (energy).

THE “CAITA (CONSCIOUSNESS) MODEL”

For the purpose of describing the characteristics of “consciousness” we have developed the “CAITA [ˈtʃei.tə] MODEL” as below:



Notice that the union of “tatastha” and “sakti” generates “bhava”.

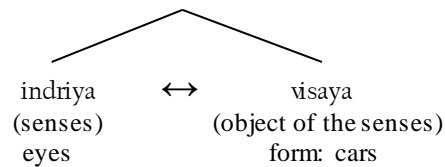
The “senses” (indriya) represents the different gates of our body by which our “consciousness” (tatastha -sakti) experiences the material world manifested as the “object of the senses” (visaya).

Based on the “CAITA MODEL” above the interaction of “consciousness and language” can be demonstrated on the following dialogue:

THE CAR SHOPPING

Someone wants to buy a car. He looks up at an advertisement and finds the address of a “car shopping” together with some car photos.

This part corresponds to the interaction of the “senses” (the eyes) with the “object of the senses” (the form: cars).



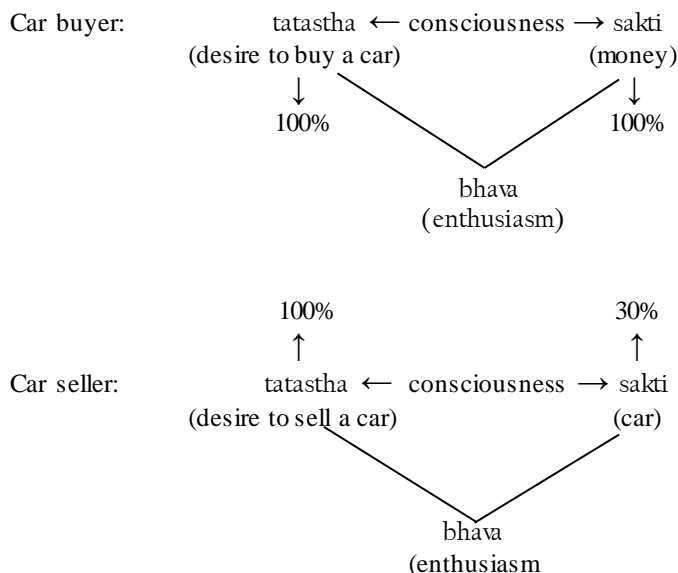
As he gets there he greets the “car seller” with great enthusiasm and says:

Car buyer: Hi! I’m looking for a “brand new sport car!”.

Car seller (replying with great enthusiasm): Fantastic! We’ve just received some last week!

The “car buyer” then notices that the “sport car” is actually not brand new! It has been repainted. He thanks the car seller and leaves for another car shopping.

If we apply the “CAITA MODEL” on this conversation we can see that it lacks a symmetrical relationship:



On this dialogue the “car buyer” presents one hundred percent (100%) of sakti: translated here as “money” whereas the “car seller’s” presents much less than that: his car has actually been estimated only thirty percent (30%) of the actual price.

The “psycholinguistics of this dialogue” can also be represented in an Optimality Theory Approach (Prince&Smolensky, 1973) as follows:

Constraints:

TATASTHA (100%): desire

SAKTI (100%): energy (money – car)

BHAVA: enthusiasm

| INPUT: THE CAR SHOPPING | CAI TA (COUNSCIOUSNESS) | | BHAVA (ENTHUSIASM) |
|---|----------------------------|---|-----------------------|
| | TATASTHA (100%) | SAK TI (100%) | |
| Car buyer: tatastha ← consciousness → sakti (desire to buy a car) (money) ↓ 100% ↓ 100% → bhava (enthusiasm) | | | |
| Car seller: tatastha ← consciousness → sakti (desire to sell a car) (car) ↑ 100% ↑ 30% bhava (enthusiasm) | | <div style="background-color: #cccccc; text-align: center; padding: 20px;">*!</div> | |

(→): winner candidate.

For the grammar of “COUNSCIOUSNESS” the “TATASTHA CONSTRAINT” occupies the highest ranking followed by the “SAKTI CONSTRAINT”: TATASTHA>> SAKTI.

This “CONSTRAINT RANKING” is natural because it resembles our real “COUNSCIOUSNESS”. In other words I first desire “something” (“TATASTHA”), in this case: a car. Secondly I may ask myself: do I have enough money (“SAKTI”) for it? The answer is: yes!

The analysis of the “TABLEAUX” above reveals that although there exists a one hundred percent (100%) of symmetry of the “TATASTHA CONSTRAINTS” in relation to each other this same symmetry fails in terms of “SAKTI CONSTRAINTS ”.

The second candidate (car seller) violates the “SAKTI CONSTRAINT” and so the “car business” can not be successful.

REFERENCES

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Prabhupada, Bhaktivedanta Swami (1972). The Bhagavad-Gita as it is. Los Angeles – BBT. The United States of America.

The author is graduated (Master Degree) in “Philology and Portuguese Language” (University of São Paulo – Brazil).

