David B. Zilberman *Author*
Giridhari Lal Pandit *Editor*

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A Few Words About David Zilberman

David Zilberman (1938–1977) was a Russian-American philosopher. He lived in the USA only less than 4 years, and during this period, he managed to settle as an immigrant, teach at different universities, write 18 smaller and 2 big articles, worked on the material of 2 books (to the state of completion), and had left another book unfinished.

However, I would like to emphasize some more than just biographical facts. This brings home the idea that Zilberman's thoughts and plans got birth to a susceptive extent still back in Russia. Having mentioned that, we try to draw attention to one very significant point. All described above accomplishments were logical and possible because prior to emigration he was well prepared and came to the USA as a highly qualified specialist. The ground for such great achievements is rooted in Zilberman's personal exceptional faculties and talent. But, beyond doubt that was also owing to the high state of the art in sciences, philosophy of science and ideas, sociology, literature, poetry, art, esthetics, religious quests, and education system, in other words, due to cultural development in Russia at that time; all that benefited to harmonious personal development. That was the period when Russian culture of the post-1960's wave in all its aspects started perceiving itself as if it was boundless and obtained the wings. Of course, it was too far from reality because communist ideology and KGB dominance did not disappear; it was a sort of euphoria and sensation of imaginary liberty originated by a great hope to see reality just in such perspective; and this fervent wish lived in the hearts of the best minds of the country, who represented true and finest intelligentsia. David Zilberman joined this aura in 1968 when he became a fellow at the Institute of Concrete Social Studies (IKSI) in Moscow. It was a time when Russian philosophers, sociologists, methodologists, scientists, and so many other specialists started sharing their ideas on a high professional level with their counterparts on a worldwide scale. Zilberman completed his doctoral fellowship in 1972 under the leadership of Yuri Levada.[1]

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[1]Yuri Levada was a prominent Russian sociologis, political scientist, and the founder of the Levada Center.

According to numerous testimonies and memories, David Zilberman was considered one of the brightest and uniquely talented scholars. It is interesting to recollect what Yuri Levada wrote about Zilberman: "It seems to me, in the works of Zilberman one should first look not so much for ready-made solutions and complete schemes, but for examples of high scientific inspiration and promising searches for new ways of movement of thought."[2]

With the downfall of this wave, the next period of Soviet suppression started. The IKSI was closed and it essentially disappeared. Its members were forced to operate behind the Iron Curtain in a context of severely limited public visibility and without proper scientific recognition.

David Zilberman immigrated to the USA in 1973 with inherited cultural gems in his heart and mind. As soon as Zilberman sensed the breath of freedom, all the knowledge that he grasped and possessed by that time burst out into his productivity, a longing desire to express himself fully, swiftly, and ardently learn more, and move forward mightily with his ideas and plans. In the USA, Zilberman got more deeply engaged in his Indological studies.

It seems most appropriate to introduce Zilberman to the reader, in both a professional and personal way, by using his own words. A short autobiographical statement was requested by the editor of the Russian language publication (GNOSIS, N.Y., 1978) for inclusion with Zilberman's article "Understanding Cultural Tradition through Types of Thinking." Zilberman wrote as follows one month prior to his untimely death on July 25, 1977:

> "In a strict sense, I do not work within a tradition because my goal is to create a new tradition by working "inter-traditionally" or, between traditions. But I would like to mention (in chronological order) the philosophical influences to which I am especially open: Indian Vedanta, Vijñānavāda Buddhism, Hegel's phenomenology, Heidegger's hermeneutics, Bakhtin's semiotics, and certainly, the modern Anglo-American philosophy of language (L. Wittgenstein).
>
> My work is systematic Indian philosophy, consisting of investigations in logic, Indian yoga (Russian="exegeza"),[3] and the metaphysics of ritual, all that exerted the most significant influence on my method. However, I do not remain within the bounds and subject-matter of Indian philosophical problems proper, but merely try to use the methods that I can pick up there to a better understanding of the prospects for the development of Western philosophical ideas and the obstacles to such development. This work is the only attempt (known to me) where the West is explained from an Indian point of view. The way I comprehend it can be explained by the fact that I had a thorough understanding of Indian philosophies before even reading Plato. Sometimes things happen this way. So, my method, in its embryonic stage, was a procedure of "reverse translation," or "reverse understanding."
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> My Indological studies (i.e., in Sanskrit and Indian philosophies and culture) had begun in 1962. I worked under the leadership and guidance of Russian Academician Boris Smirnov in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan. From 1968 to 1972 I was doing my best to apply my knowledge of Asian societies and mystical and religious traditions toward the development of a general sociological and anthropological theory of tradition.

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[2] From Preface by Y. Levada to D. Zilberman "*On semeiotics of Understanding Types of cultural Traditions*" In: *Peoples of Asia and Africa*, Moskva, "Nauka," pp. 129–130, No. 3, 1989, 1.3.14, Zilberman's Archive at the Mugar Library, Boston University.

[3] exegesis (Old Greek ἐξηγητικά, from ἐξήγησις, "interpretation, presentation").

> My main task is to create a new type of philosophizing, which is distinct from the known types. I call it "modal metaphysics" or "modal methodology." The article "Understanding Cultural Tradition through Types of Thinking" is one of my first exercises. Since the occasion when this paper was written I have gone far beyond it. But considering the fact that this is a completely new idea, and because life is transient, I doubt that I shall be able to finish this undertaking."

The reality revealed that Zilberman did go far and beyond. That period in the USA resulted in a prolific outcome that brought to life two major Zilberman's books: *The Birth of Meaning in Hindu Thought*[4] and *Analogy in Indian and Western Philosophical Thought*.[5] Having significantly advanced the profound work in "modal methodology," Zilberman wrote in his letter to Yuri Levada about the indescribable exhilaration which he felt when giving extant ideas new life: "Working with 'modal methodology' can be likened to passing one's hand over a cistern full of cold, black cinders, turning them once again into brilliant glowing embers."[6]

A remarkable recollection by David W. Allen of David Zilberman, as a teacher, caught my attention. It reverberated the time when David W. Allen was Professor Zilberman's student at Brandeis. In his letter of Dec 20, 2013, David Allen wrote: "I recall lying on the green lawn on my side chewing on a blade of grass with my fellow students outdoors behind the Brandeis buildings under a small sapling later hit by lightning. Our teacher, Professor Zilberman, was sitting with us. It was a spring day. We were upon a hill, the highest point in the University. There was a slight breeze. A copy of Heidegger's *Being and Time* was in his hand, and I felt as though I was a student in the ancient Greek Academy, being lectured to by Heraclitus, Plato, or Aristotle. It was a blissful spring. We had already started the ascent. It was the end of alienation. It was the happiest time of my life."

I would like to draw the reader's attention to an attempt to determine the innate meaning/purpose of this collection.

Zilberman thought that the highest praise is due to the author for the way in which he does justice to every side of the subject, even investigating questions which have only a slight bearing upon the matter in hand, and thus erecting a marvelously complete structure. This aspect is overall even more striking than the foundation of the individual Zilberman's works, which had been already in a measure laid and presented before in his books.

The works included in this volume reflect the multi-propensity of the author's research interests; they reveal different aspects of his thought. These articles limelight the multilateral bright facets of the author's unified integral intellect; and these facets can be illuminated and apperceived when reading each independent subject of the development of philosophic thought. They have to offer today another chance

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[4] D. Zilberman *The Birth of Meaning in Hindu Thought.* Ed: R.S. Cohen, Dordrecht; Boston: D. Reidel; Norwell: Kluwer Academic, 1988.

[5] D. Zilberman *Analogy in Indian and Western philosophical thought*. Eds: H.Gourko, R.S. Cohen, Boston Studies in the Philosophy of Science, Vol.243, Springer, 2006.

[6] Letter to Yuri Levada, January, 5th, 1976, Zilberman Archive at the Mugar Library, Boston University.

to perceive Zilberman's ideas and elaborations as they were conceived in his mind and imagination and written in his own personal style employing frequent neologisms, metaphors, and imagery.

During the summer break of 1977, Zilberman was working concurrently on three large books: "Analogy in Indian and Western Philosophical Thought," "Moscow Logical Circle" and started elaboration on the "Sum of Metaphysics." In his letter on May 26, 1977, to a dear friend O. Volkova,[7] he revealed his vision and immediate plans: "Now I am about to outline for the first time my major attempt to start creating not 'systems' but 'sums' of philosophies so that the philosophical activity would be able to reemerge on the slopes of such 'sums'" (from family archive).

The Zilberman Archive at the Special Collections Division of the Mugar Memorial Library at Boston University lists in its Catalogue hundreds of manuscripts, both in English and Russian (several dozen of which are of substantial size), consisting of more than 12,000 pages. Out of all this richness, only 20 articles and 2 above mentioned books written in the USA have been published. Another book, *Understanding Cultural Tradition*, which originated back in Russia, was finally published in English.[8]

On July 25, 1977, while returning home on a bicycle from the seminar with his students at Brandeis University, David Zilberman was killed by a teenage motorist. David Zilberman's untimely death shocked his near family, friends, colleagues, and students. American poet Allen R. Grossman, who was Zilberman's colleague at Brandeis, wrote: "I knew David Zilberman not for long but I loved him dearly as did many. My poem '*The Lecture*' and an elegy '*The Prothanation of a Charioteer*'[9] are dedicated to David Zilberman. The poem records Zilberman's understanding of his own nature, as I gathered it; and the charioteer is incarnate Krishna, glorious companion."

Tragic untimely death of David Zilberman did not allow him to finish many of his undertakings. Zilberman's legacy still awaits its true discovery.

For the David Zilberman Foundation Board
Rachel Zilberman
Chicago

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[7] O. Volkova (1926–1988) – an exceptional Russian Sanskritist and Indologist.

[8] D. Zilberman *Understanding Cultural Tradition,* Ed. by B. Oguibenine, MBPH, Delhi, 2021.

[9] A. Grossman *Of the Great House, A Book of Poems*, New Directions Press, NY, 1982.

Preface

"Philosophology" of David Zilberman[1, I]

> "This is a magic feeling: when touching the cinder it flashes once again as a diamond."
> D. Zilberman

Modern Western philosophy, as you know, is thoroughly permeated with eschatological motives; the bread of the apocalypse has long become a philosophical daily bread of prime significance. One can argue who introduced what Jacques Derrida calls the "apocalyptic tone in philosophy"—whether Derrida himself, or Heidegger, or, even earlier, Nietzsche, Marx, or Kant. It is quite obvious, however, that the idea of the end of philosophy and philosophizing has taken root here seriously and for a long time. But the end is also the death, as Derrida notes in his *Phantoms of Marx*.[II] What has become so fashionable in modern philosophy is the funeral of philosophy, with all the accessories that comply with this occasion: commemoration, funeral tolling of the bell, the ghosts, and the feeling of irrecoverable loss.

And yet—does the end always also imply the inevitability of a burial? Why cannot one suppose the possibility of philosophizing in the vein of "the science about the ending?" No matter how simple this idea may seem, its consistent implementation requires an extremely radical revision of both the very essence of philosophy and the methods of its functioning (if, of course, one can imagine philosophy as a full-of-life being and not as a specter). This is demonstrated with full persuasiveness by the philosophical system, grandiose both by the concept and in execution, developed by the Russian-American philosopher David Zilberman (1938–1977).

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[1] First edition of this article was published in: "*Philosophy Is Not at Its Completion...From the History of Russian Philosophy. XX Century: In 2 Books*" / Ed. Lektorsky V.A.., Book II. 60s – 80s - M.: "Russian political encyclopedia", pp. 670-691, ©1998 (in Russian), Trans. Robert Zwinger. – DZF.

David Zilberman is undoubtedly a unique phenomenon of modern world philosophy, and, perhaps, not only modern. According to Roman Jacobson,[2] he was a true expert in a comparative analysis of ancient Greek, classical German, French and English philosophy, and also in Eastern philosophical traditions especially in Indian philosophical thought, from the Vedic period to the present. As Roman Jacobson yet noted, Zilberman had a deep erudition and original, well-founded concepts on most of the various historical problems of semiotics, from antiquity to the present, perfectly knew the texts of Indian and Greek philosophy, had a fine comprehension of their terminology, phraseology, and content; likewise, Zilberman was well versed in historical and methodological problems of logic, linguistics, sociology, anthropology, and religious thought; he was a real connoisseur in Russian philosophy, semiotics, and anthropology in the historic perspective and modernity.

The uniqueness of Zilberman is grounded not only in an amazing variety of research interests and incredible erudition but also in their evolution, which allowed him to look at world philosophy through the perspective of the classical Indian philosopher (extremely knowledgeable in all other philosophical traditions, which, of course, sets him apart from some of the recognized representatives of classical Hinduism). As Zilberman notes in his brief autobiography, he acquired fundamental knowledge in Indian philosophy even before he read Plato.[III]

He studied Indian philosophy under the guidance of a prominent Russian Indologist-theologian, academician Boris Smirnov, though Zilberman recognized that his main research interest was ingrained in classical Indian philosophy, in particular, he revered Śaṅkara's Advaita-Vedānta.

Zilberman's great knowledge, the originality of his research amplitude, an extraordinary bright mind, and what he called a "mystical giftedness of high rank," allowed him to leave a thorough trace in almost everything he did. Nevertheless, Zilberman considered a new method of philosophical elaboration ("modal construction") and a philosophical system that unfolds through the application of this method as the main achievement of his activity. He called his system in different ways: "philosophology (the science of philosophical systems)," "the science about the ending," "philosophical eschatology," "modal methodology," "new philosophical synthesis," "comprehensive metaphysics," "sum of metaphysics (or sum of philosophy)," and, apparently, he was not completely satisfied with any of these terms, which somehow turned out to be more narrow for what he was doing. Perhaps the most, Zilberman favored the notion of "sum of philosophy," which stood in the line with the type of theological sums, and he compared his philosophical undertaking with the great scholastic synthesis, that was carried out, however, on completely different principles and foundations.

All commentators who evaluate Zilberman's "sum of philosophy" agree upon its category which is unusual for modern philosophy; it bears the nature of universal philosophical synthesis, comparable in the scale of systematization with that of the constructs created by Aristotle, Kant, or Hegel. As noted in the preface to one of a

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[2] Roman Jakobson was an American linguist and literary theorist.

few works by Zilberman published in Russia, his system of philosophizing has no analogs in Western philosophy since the time of Kant, and it approximates only universal philosophical systems of the past.[IV] According to another assessment of Zilberman's work, his system does not fit into modern philosophic ideas (that are mainly preoccupied with the problems of form and expression, while Zilberman's interest is referred to the spheres of content and essence). So, these reflections allowed us to draw a conclusion that "his philosophy is the last in our time frame experience of synchronous synthetic comprehension of the Western foregoing (historical), contemporary, and his own philosophy."[V]

No matter how high these assessments are, they are only partially true: namely, in that part, that presents the "Western" component of Zilberman's philosophical concept, more precisely, that establishes the concurrency of his ideas with the largest systems of modern philosophy. The idea of "philosophology" (the science of philosophical systems) is much broader and affects the universal characteristics of any philosophic construction. Since the potential of philosophy in a Western culture turned out weakened (for many reasons, which were mindfully analyzed by Zilberman), Zilberman did not view Western philosophy as a representation of what he called "Philosophia Universalis" which he regarded as the realization of philosophical "karma." If we assume, as Zilberman does, that the acknowledgment of philosophizing as "the implementation of karma" was realized in classical Indian philosophies, the following becomes clear:

1. The initial intention of "philosophology" is to create an "expected synthetic conceptual construction of philosophy (as an object of the science of philosophies)"[VI] that can fill the gap between the Western and Indian worlds of philosophical activity.

2. The goal of "philosophology" is to initiate "a new philosophical synthesis with objective set of categories which has ever been preset by philosophy heretofore" (at least in Western culture), in other words, "the history of philosophy is not at an end," not completed, on the contrary, "its genuine history has simply not yet begun."[VII]

In regards to classical Indian philosophy, this goal setting becomes somewhat modified, taking into account the fact that the life of philosophy there has, in fact, developed and seems to be even completed (both in the doctrinal and cultural aspects); this, however, does not cancel the progression of philosophy into its post-systemic existence, what Zilberman calls Philosophia Universalis. Although these progressions of philosophy have been carried out by Indian philosophies autonomously and were initiated long before the very idea of "philosophology" appeared, Zilberman's merit lies in the very conceptualization of this movement; namely, in articulating specific mechanisms of its implementation and in a discovery of a special sphere of philosophical being ("texture," which will be discussed onwards) as the result of this movement.

It is important to note that these two routes of analysis of Indian and Western philosophy, conducted by Zilberman are in no way isolated from each other, although he did not reduce them to the usual practice of seeking similarities and

differences. Zilberman's intention was to work within the framework of "comparative philosophy," which is designed, according to the version that he put forward, to reveal the fundamental features of any philosophic study that are universal in any culture and historical epoch. Perhaps, this is the most impressive feature of the whole philosophical conception of Zilberman. No less accentuated is the fact that, in Zilberman's view, the "chosenness" of philosophic elaborations (the destiny of a few, according to Plato) with the completion which Zilberman proposed, is restricted by him solely alone. This is, by no means, a hint of extreme esotericism (although Zilberman's concepts are exceptionally difficult to grasp), nor this is a claim for philosophical Olympus (although Zilberman ironically compared his philosophical enterprise with the ascent of Everest and subsequent descent from there barefoot).

Zilberman asserted (as a fact obvious to him) that philosophy has in no case exhausted its potentials (and in the Western variant it has not yet even begun embodying them); therefore, it is possible to reveal new dimensions of philosophic thought, and the time for such discoveries had finally come. Moreover, this is true not only for Western philosophy, where the realization of karma did not occur at all but also for Indian philosophy, which is quite prosperous from the standpoint of karma. This is altogether true for any philosophy, to the extent when all its fundamental reflections were worked out, and thus the corpus of its basic texts has been developed (that is, when "the corpus of the texts has already overflowed to the extreme," thereby philosophy created its own objectivity, liberating itself for its own self). Only then does the true being of philosophy become possible, as well as its existence in the new dimensions of thought, when the Logos "got emptied" in it, and "the end came." True philosophy (just philosophy, because the predicate of truth is inappropriate here) can exist, therefore, only in the form of "science about the ending," in other words, as philosophical eschatology. This, however, does not abolish the entire preceding philosophy—on the contrary, it constitutes precisely the objectivity of philosophical eschatology. How is this possible?

When Zilberman talked about the didactic or "communicative" side of his philosophical discourse, he noted that "success requires a one-time, but radical turn in the minds of listeners: they have to understand the meaning of the described actions, and then the thread of communication may begin." The condition for such overturn seems to be a willingness to abandon established ideas and the ability to reflect on rather simple but seemingly general things, such as: what is philosophy per se? What is its objectivity? What are its methods, and the results?

The unbiased reasoning on this matter reveals a very interesting situation, at least in Western culture.

"To my recollection, I told you several times on various occasions," Zilberman notes in his letter, "about what has been the subject of my enduring amazement for two years now. Philosophy has survived, as they say, to gray hair (if you start counting its time from Plato), but still has not bothered to take care of itself. No matter how deeply I explored its history, I did not find a single hint that philosophers were engaged in philosophy as such or yet had mentioned the setting of a similar problem. We know a deceptive expression: "engaged in philosophy." Of course, every philosopher is engaged in philosophy in one's own way; but not a single one took

up philosophy. That is, I transfer the stress from the verb to objectivity. There is no subject of "occupation in philosophy." Philosophers were engaged in morality, society, state, a human soul and behavior, physics, biology, god and theology, cognition, and finally, they were preoccupied with themselves, but never occupied in philosophy of itself. What a tremendous power of this urge to be not "yourself." Humanly, this is so understandable."[VIII]

One can view that as fetched from intersubjectivity, it is an appeal to others in the hope of communicability. The philosopher broadly broadcasts on a topic that seems to be of interest to all or many (say, Plato talks about morality, Husserl speculates about the crisis of sciences, etc.). But, first, this preoccupation with other people's problems is not reflexive, but natural, and second, the philosopher is not sincere in one's conviction that these topics are interesting to oneself in the same sense as to others; thus, the philosopher obstructs one's own self-awareness.

And yet, philosophy, at least Western, failed to turn away from extraneous topics. What philosophy itself could not do turned out to be accomplished by external forces: those very spheres of intellectual activity that claimed to get their objectivity back again. Zilberman asserts that precisely due to the righteous expulsion of philosophy from all subject areas, we can seriously talk about "pure philosophy" without taking a risk of wandering back into empiricism, naturalism, sociologism, and ideology. Furthermore, Zilberman also remarks, that the possibility of constructing such a philosophy is a real option, independent of favorable or unfavorable circumstances; such a prospect was already realized once in history, though not in so dramatic situation (like that of the "King Lear"); that was achieved in classical Indian culture. This possibility is realized when philosophy discovers its own, inherent subject of research and develops analytical methods corresponding to this objectivity. Philosophy as "the science about the ending," therefore, does not quite necessarily represent an omen of catastrophe, as in the case of modern Western culture; in classical India, it becomes a sign of heyday of the whole civilization, a condition for its existence and a guarantor of survival. What occurred in India Zilberman calls the "Indian Miracle." Universal philosophy has been created there; it claims to solve all possible philosophical problems and is really capable of solving them in a "closed sphere of its knowledge."[IX]

As known, Classical Indian philosophy includes six complementing philosophical systems or Darśanas: Sāṃkhya, Nyāya, Vedānta, Mīmāṃsā, Vaiśeṣika, and Yoga; Buddhism is regarded to be in a complementary relationship to them. The exclusiveness of Indian philosophers as representatives of all these systems, according to Zilberman, "lies in the fact that they were the only ones who discovered in the philosophical substance the principle of a spiritual organization, when philosophical systems, like faces, are inclined to each other as the mirrors, reflecting one another in eternal and autonomous observation." "The effect of this discovery shocked me so," Zilberman writes, "that I cannot further on explaining these systems separately, and I am not capable to merge them into a single dominant spiritual volume... The most difficult thing here: is the presence of a *mirror-image* in the absence of a *personality*. Also, it is not easy to express that we are talking about the tilting of systems, and not about the moments of one system, as, say, in Hegel. This

immediately widens the habitual framework of philosophical elaboration, and, in addition to the autonomy of the subject, one discovers the source of an infinite variety of spiritual states."

The inclining of the systems, with the effect of mirror-image, means that only "comprehended" content of neighboring systems (including its own content, reverberated by other darśanas) gets into the field of view of each of them, so that "everything is reflected in everything, and the number of projections is infinite." Such multi-positioning ability is possible only under one condition when these systems are not inclined toward the reflection of the world, or nature, or Being, or society, or anything external to themselves, in general. In the darśanas, there are no natural objects of experience (including consciousness in the implemented interpretation in Western philosophy). That is why the darśanas are considered in the capacity of the object for the very self. Apparently, understanding this internal, non-natural nature of philosophy, as well as its "self-objectivity," is the key to the radical turn of interpretation that Zilberman spoke about.

"The embryo of what I develop," notes Zilberman, "lies in Śaṅkarā's simple thought about the supernatural as the real, not only in its content but also in the form. The super-realism of thought about the Absolute is that the latter is cognized by Reason, it transcends the reason, not in any 'ontological' sense, but namely in the substance of this very statement just made. That is, what has just been said in content should be turned towards the very form of what was said, and the content should be caught in the 'expressed'." In the situation analyzed by Śaṅkarā, a deliberately unrealistic task is proposed for thinking: to describe the Absolute, i.e., Brahman, using unsuitable (not absolute, but created) means or the means of the language. In solving this problem, thinking brings to the fore all echelons of its pictorial modes in order to ultimately surpass language as a communication method and come to the negation of the "physics of the language" through realizing self as Brahman and thus attaining absolute knowledge.[x]

A similar case is regarded by Śaṅkarā in the Kaṭha Upaniṣads: this is about knowledge of the posthumous existence which is acquired by an individual before the actual death, the knowledge that is not under the force even for gods because there is self-consciousness. What Yama, the god of death, teaches Nachiketas (not able to escape death) who came to him with a question about the posthumous existence, is called the "Sphoṭa," denoted as the meaning of the world, and shaded by this very world in the body of the word. The designated notion or "Sphoṭa" is not a word or a sound of speech, but an essential, beginning-less material of all thoughts and names, as well as the world-creating activity arising from this material. An example of such activity is presented in the sacred sound AUM (OM). Relying on the AUM (which represents the minimal semantic matrix, the "primal word," A/ Alpha and Ω/Omega of essence-differentiation), thinking exfoliates off the self the ideas about birth and death, about causing and changes, etc. So Nachiketas receives the only true answer to his question about existence after death: since this state is not one of the mental states, it is not conjugated with any of the verbal descriptions. This does not mean, however, that it is not real: a description of "self" is obtained by removing all descriptions of "not-self." "The one who knows self is not born and

does not die, does not arise from nothing, nothing arises from it. The unborn, eternal, enduring, and ancient, does not perish with the death of the body."[XI]

Such reasoning is very difficult to percept in Western philosophy; moreover, according to Zilberman, it is "completely unbearable" for philosophers in this culture, although, it seems, that the intention of such analysis should have taken root here, at least since the time of Schelling and Hegel. "Philosophy in the nominative case" or "pure reflection" as a distracted (from everything natural) philosophical self-awareness claiming for absoluteness, supposes, as its prerequisite, the willingness to be engaged in philosophical consciousness that is in no way dependent on sensibilia and is not reducible to the objects of perception. However, a radical purification of reflection in Western philosophy not only did not happen but was not yet possible so far, because of the reason that Zilberman defines as the indistinguishability of the means and the object of philosophical elaboration, in other words, due to existing phenomenon of "gluing together" the language and "knowledge schemes." This "gluing together," which he called a "natural setting" (immanent, in his words, to the biblical version of creation, as well as to philosophy of antiquity, and to all subsequent philosophy of Western culture), is manifested in the internal naturalism of the philosophical approach.

When Descartes and later Hegel, Husserl, and other Western philosophers made a decisive overturn toward consciousness and thereby to the philosophical elaboration beyond the experience, they could not keep within the framework of this intentional unnatural environment. Descartes failed to succeed due to postulating a modus of extent (which became naturalized by the fact that Descartes did not consider to make it an object of a "Radical doubt" and, therefore, to question its natural self-sufficiency). Hegel couldn't achieve that because he outputted the Absolute Idea into the world. Introduction of the Absolute Idea to the world due to the features of Hegelian metaphysics precisely contributed to the promotion of the Idea into the world and not the reconstruction of this world, and therefore Hegel left the Idea within the sphere of the natural. Husserl also didn't succeed in this direction. He conducted the analysis of philosophical subject matter as the activity of the philosophers of Western culture (while the problem here is precisely such: "constructing something philosophical has hitherto consisted solely in the evasions of making philosophy a very object of philosophic study," so that naturalness penetrates phenomenology as a reduction of the impossible to the existing, this is why phenomenology is no less natural than all above-mentioned). These concepts were rooted in the naturalness that refers mainly to the physics of the language (this is also true in the Hegelian system, as Zilberman shows), which is elusive in the "gluing together" situation that is characteristic of this culture.

Although the philosophy of Western culture constituted itself as "metaphysics" (as an overcoming or exceeding the physics of existence), it remained naturalistic to such extent that it did not try to overcome "physics of the language"; moreover, it even did not attempt setting such a task. If Western philosophers thought about what is life (of philosophy) after the death of the body, then the death of the language was not supposed to be related to the birth and existence of genuine philosophy.

It is hardly possible to "peel off" the language from the knowledge schemes developed in a culture where philosophy is forced to de-naturalize all aspects of its activity by itself, without any substantial assistance from the outside, like that of, for example, in the case of the impact produced by the Vedas on classical Indian philosophy. In the "linguistic Universe" of the Vedas, shared by all who lived in classical India, all phenomena are denaturalized, and their meanings are de-reified so that philosophy is freed up to fulfill its direct functions, that is, to analyze its own existence as an active self-development, and also to establish what should be achieved in the world of philosophical knowledge. The implementation of these functions involves working in three areas of the existence of philosophy; they are text, culture, and texture; their accomplishment represents what Śaṅkarā called "world-creating activity."

"Here is a good illustration," Zilberman notes on this occasion, "God created man in His own image and likeness. When falling into nature, man lost likeness, retaining only the image. Artificial (philosophical) activity is the restoration of similarity, however, only in thinking. Thus, wonderful worlds of thoughts are created, which are far from being perfect from certain points of view, and these worlds are partly incomprehensible to the very producer of thoughts, who calls for cooperation";[XII] these are the worlds of philosophical elaborations.

The existence of these worlds is guaranteed by what Zilberman defines as "Maya" or "transcendental illusion" or artificial creative activity, naturalized in the subject. Maya is the nature of the activity of consciousness, which is always false relative to true nature. This is true because the possibilities of their correlation are at least doubtful, even in the case of Western philosophy. In other words, consciousness is active either because it is false relative to true nature or because it is outside of a position. The activity of consciousness is not ideal, because it does not idealize; also there is no categorization here. Zilberman explains this by the example of his own activity: "I do not idealize, if only because I am in a pre-real state: I have nothing to idealize. I do not categorize because of the same reason: nothing became condensed into something definite; the fog cannot be clarified but only scattered... These questions arise when I do modalization: what exactly I am doing? How and why do I do it? This is not at all a categorization of the 'living,' and idealization here denotes the opposition to the real. Think about the contrary, completely unthinkable direction. The life peremptorily heaps upon me, with its separations and irreducibility, and I shift its claim into a different, unimaginable assignment, and pave completely different paths for it. What I am doing is not idealization, but a super-realization of thinking. The modal methodology is surrealistic with respect to life which is too ideal for philosophical work."

"Surrealism" of "transcendental illusion" is the reality not only of philosophy, but of the whole world of human existence, to the extent that this reality is unnatural, simulated, sometimes inexpressible, but always communicable. Communicativeness is a condition of this reality as being that is not rooted in the spontaneity of natural existence and therefore needs a different basis of its significance for many (ideally, for all, but usually very few, namely, philosophers). The one who can localize oneself in this world (more precisely, the worlds) must have

the ability to "comprehend the world," "translate existence into being," "transcend the life content," so that life itself becomes one's "intellectual work in the method-ological reflection, in other words, the cognitive thinking." The insight that arises, in this case, is by no means psychological, it is "ontological understanding," the readiness of "universal grasp," "the entirety of comprehending everything as in a state of trance, when the Universe suddenly highlights all its parts with their bonds, and there is no a single dark corner in it, not a single shadow to isolate a non-genuine sign."

The communicativeness that retains there (which is, however, not equivalent to the general significance) is determined by the fact that the very ability of "ontologi-cal understanding" is rooted in the structures of consciousness that are interpreted by Zilberman as "structures of creation" which are shared by (or, more precisely, established, because they can also be shared by many others) all those who have a "tendency to adaptation," i.e., professional philosophers. Professionalism here is not interpreted in a Kantian way, namely, not by defining the boundaries of philo-sophical reason, but by finding the sum of all the possibilities of philosophy, that is, taking into account all "conceivable worlds" (when their "conceivability" is equated to one and the only one) and also the "unimaginable" worlds, i.e., the worlds "cre-ated by the subject of consciousness."

Although Zilberman's texts did not reveal the exact nomenclature of the "struc-tures of creation," it seems that this term is quite close to what he called "philo-sophical roles"; he was reducing them to "six" ways of creation (understanding), and recognition of surrealistic structures of consciousness ("Theorist," "Logician," "Methodologist," "Methodist," "Empiricist," "Phenomenologist"). It is quite diffi-cult to reconstruct in detail how this structure-of-six or just "six" was created because it fits six types of Hindu philosophical systems, darśanas, which Zilberman was aware of long before the development of his "philosophology." Therefore, we will accept the method of explanation given in his book *The Birth of Meaning in Hindu Thought*, according to which "six" embraces all possible combinations of three modalities in two positions, and the "six" does not need empirical substantia-tion (including the historical one). The coincidence of "six" is determined by the fact that it was in Hinduism where the ideal of engagement in philosophy was realized.

The appearance of modality is quite logical in Zilberman's conceptualizations; after all, this is about absolute philosophical creativity, about creative activity that is not confined by any natural limits, and therefore, about ultimate freedom, which is always modal, because it involves actions at one's own discretion, a choice from many prospects, the actualization of necessity and potentiation of possibility. Zilberman considered three modalities to be sufficient for a free play of philosophi-cal creativity: deontic (necessity, N), apodictic (actuality, I), hypothetical (possibil-ity, V). As Zilberman proposed, the scheme of modalities is constructed by modeling a "triple," "ternary" opposition of the Advaita (= "non-dualistic") Vedānta, in con-trast to Western philosophy with its model of "dual opposition."

The conceptualization of truth (in no way referential, which is important) in Vedānta considers three levels – absolute truth (A), conventional truth (B), and

absolute non-truth (C); the latter can be reduced to the second if it turns to be reflexing, but usually, it disappears from the horizon of a specific analysis, going into the denominator of the modal formula:

$$\frac{(A)B}{C}$$

(It is essential, that this formula is only a matrix, or rather, a model of modalization, while the concrete cases can include each one of the modalities that were indicated by Zilberman, which are located in positions A, B, or C.)

Understanding of this scheme, as well as modality as such, is extremely difficult in Western philosophy because of already mentioned phenomenon of "gluing together" the language and "knowledge schemes"; this phenomenon appears here in the form of a subject-object separation which does not accept a modal relation to itself. Modalization destroys the illusory subject-object scheme and does it by a double reference: of the possible, existing, or necessary position of what the truth is conceptualized about, and the subject, who realizes oneself as intending to communicate something about this to another subject (or subjects) in the form that corresponds to one or another modality. Such multiplication of the subjects of communication in itself may lead to a break in the connection of language and thought schemes (this connection is possible only within the ground of one subject), and when such multiplication is reinforced by the recognition of the replete existence of all modal worlds (as well as unnatural worlds), then it results in the discovery of new dimensions of the thought, more precisely, of the methods of their conceptualization, i.e., specific "philosophical work." However, the technique here, as Zilberman preferred calling it, has nothing in common with the modal exceptions of classical and modern Western logic. This technique is multifaceted, for it encompasses three subject levels of philosophical elaboration (the text, the culture, and the texture). It is distributed in historical temporality (of the initial creation and the subsequent observing of the dramaturgy of philosophical creativity on all three levels of objectivity); it is distributed on among "six" "philosophical roles" (on each separately and all possible their combinations with each other, and once again on different levels of objectivity). This technique varies depending on the application in different types of philosophic approaches (namely, modally recognized, i.e., truly modal, and those where genuine modalization did not happen, like in Western philosophy, for instance). Such a technique is presented especially in modal methodology (where it got its first conscious conceptualization) and supposes different methods of conceptualization (among which an important place belongs to "planned misfit understanding," or falling into the absurdity of something other). It is quite possible, that this technique contains much more that either was not noticed by the commentator, or not emphasized by Zilberman, or fundamentally defies any articulation.

A condition for understanding the modalization technique (in other words, "philosophical work") seems to be the "double knowledge principle" shared by all Hinduism followers, according to which there is "transcendental" (Pāramārthika)

and "transactive" or "practical" (Vyavahārika) knowledge. The subject-matter of this doctrine is revealed in the texts developed by six Hindu schools: the fundamental, so-called "root" text of each of the schools is recognized as "transcendental" knowledge; "transactive" knowledge is derived from it, and in this sense belongs to it, but is never included into "transcendental" knowledge as such.

The continuation of one text into another and their outputted consolidation into a chain of texts means the advancement of each philosophical school into a "nobody's zone of thinking." Mastering the latter implies the "cognizing" of that fragment of meaningful substance, which is revealed in the texts of that school. The corpora of texts of all schools are bound with each other through their "root" foundations; however, the knowledge grasped from them is "transcendental" (i.e., "absolutely true") only for the texts of a "concrete" school, but for all other schools this knowledge is "transactive" ("conventionally true" or "absolutely untrue") and constitutes the subject of their reflection. The "root fundamentals" of the darśanas (as well as their "transactive" components) differ by the "view angle" of the Vedas (after all, "darśana," literally, is a "mirror," in this case, of the Vedas), in which the Vedas are mirrored from three different positions, and are perceived, respectively, as "meaning" (N), "knowledge" (I), and "sign" (V). The combination of the specificity of the "viewing" of the Vedas and the shifts from the "absolute" to the "transactive" within the frame of each darśana gives those modal formulas, which Zilberman used as the basis for identification of the "six" "philosophical roles":

$$\frac{(1)\ (I)\ N}{V} \quad \frac{(2)\ (N)\ I}{V} \quad \frac{(3)\ (N)\ V}{I} \quad \frac{(4)\ (V)\ N}{I} \quad \frac{(5)\ (V)\ I}{N} \quad \frac{(6)\ (I)\ V}{N}$$

Sāṃkhya	Nyāya	Vedanta	Mīmāṃsā	Vaiśeṣika	Yoga
"Theorist"	"Logician"	"Methodologist"	"Methodist"	"Empiricist"	"Phenomenologist"

The identification and analysis of "philosophical roles" in Indian material became the grounds for the introduction of modal approach to Western philosophy, where Zilberman was able to determine the conformity of the leading philosophic systems of this culture to one or another method of "philosophic elaboration," and also to give these philosophic systems completely different, previously unforeseen interpretations. For example, these are:

(a) Interpretation of the development of dialectics in its modern exposition that is provided not by Hegel, but by Kant; (b) Considerations about the externality of phenomenology to science, (though phenomenology was created by Husserl in order to interpret science); (c) Considerations about "falling out" of phenomenology from the modus of not only deonticity, but even apodicticity of many trends in the latest philosophy of the West, and so on. The modal perspective of the analysis also allowed raising a question that had never been set before in Western philosophy: "Is this or that philosophy understood here as intended by its creator?" And if a negative answer follows this question, then it is the task of the modal

methodologist to restore justice and give the commented texts their perfection (even if this happened by the fault of their creator).

All this becomes possible by virtue of a special adjustment of "modal commentator" of texts: the commentator does not integrate oneself into an object, does not model an object, does not retell, and does not take an austere position, but takes position of the object that perceives itself as text.[XIII] No other position is supposed to be possible in this case, as long as philosophic work is truly text-production, in other words, the realization of "comprehended" "knowledge schemes." Here is a question of whether it is possible to promote this analysis in other areas? For Zilberman, by his own admission, such an opportunity opened up by chance.

While doing research on cultural tradition, he noticed that modal schemes of philosophical text-production can serve as an excellent illustration of the types of involvement in cultural tradition. The transition to cultural realms, however, is by no means accidental (although it is not well-known in Western philosophy). "The occupation of philosophy," Zilberman wrote, "implies such a power of conviction in one's work, that one lacks a doubt about one's own likewise involvement in the midst of it." This is because philosophy "comprehends" whole worlds of its special existence, so one can imagine the suitability of its "fabrications" for life as the criterion of the significance of a philosophical system. However, anticipating the subsequent analysis, it can be noted that a separate philosophical system, even the most ingenious, cannot be "full of life" due to the fact that its modal scheme always has a denominator (something that disappears from the horizons of analysis of this philosophical system). The combination of the local modal incompleteness of a concrete system with the global completeness of all well-known methods of philosophical elaboration, however, suggests the possibility of such "full of life" system, and of course; this was realized in classical Indian civilization. Indeed, the Vedas or the cultural universe of this civilization were created, maintained, and protected by the tireless activities of the caste of professional philosophers, the Brahmans (here Zilberman joins the opinion of many researchers, including M. Weber). Omitting the profound analysis of the place and the role of the Vedas in classical Indian culture, their philosophical nature and relations with darśanas, which were creations of the Vedas, and their co-originators at the same time (we refer the reader to Zilberman's monograph *The Birth of Meaning in Hindu Thought*), we note that what is happening here can be called "cultural sur-realization of philosophical schemes" (though we are taking a risk to combine Zilberman's terms into construction that he personally did not use).

Zilberman had retraced the cultural sur-realization of philosophical schemes on the example of many systems and cultures (he left, generally speaking, a universal scheme of this approach as applied to the main types of culture in his "mammoth-size," according to his own words, 900-page dissertation about cultural traditions). The analysis of one of such sur-realizations gave rise to a comparison between David Zilberman and Max Weber (this is about the brilliant parallel of Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* and Zilberman's *The Orthodox Ethics and the Matter of Communism* published in the USA in 1977). The replacement of the notion "spirit" with the "matter" in the title of Zilberman's paper is very

remarkable. Philosophical complex of the Orthodox ethics, continued by Marxism and "revived" by the Soviet society, is considered as a "universal semantic code" of that culture, a semantic code equated in this capacity with the material basis of life there ("the matter of communism"). From the modal position, this "sur-realization" could not avoid a failure (due to the "incomplete vitality" of the combination of only two "philosophical roles," more precisely, even one, given their fundamental proximity). It is surprising, however, that it happened, generally speaking, in the Western culture, where, for reasons of the modal order, "the connection of philosophy with intelligent way-of-life was broken right away at soon as its philosophy emerged" (so one can only presume how, for instance, society should look if the functions of its "cultural system" are represented by Hegelian logic).

In India, this connection was manifested not only in the cultural sur-realization of classical philosophy (when its concepts were turned into the system of meanings of this culture) but also in the subsequent return of philosophical engagement to its realm. The social engaging of philosophy produces what Zilberman called "structures of quasi-consciousness." Genuine philosophy gets rid of this cultural veil and is engaged in the reflection of itself by a complete reflection of absolute knowledge ("structures of creation"). The need for such a reflection is revealed by the fundamental incompleteness of the modal formula of each "philosophical role," and this incompleteness is represented by what goes into the denominator and essentially disappears from the field of view. In the comments[XIV] regarding *Approaching Discourses between Three Persons about Modal Methodology and Summa Metaphysicorum*, Zilberman noted: "This insufficiency is resolved by forming a process where consciousness passes through all states, trying to combine local incompleteness with global fullness and thereby realize its potential sufficiency, but for consciousness as a whole. Hence, I think, comes the compelling force of modal definiteness, which makes you rush forward without rest"; rush in the circle of pure textuality, using the liberty of commenting, never once touching the ground of the sample.

This work with knowledge-texts is, in a certain sense, an "eternal repetition of already mastered." But, in contrast to the Nietzschean "repetition," in the case with modal methodology, it is quite accurately clear why and how this is done; this is needed to restore the fullness of (philosophical) consciousness, by going through the types of (philosophical) reflections by historical content. "It is difficult to convey," Zilberman comments further, "how strong the effect of denaturalization and liberation is. But you have to pay for freedom in kind. The pay here is the strongest internal reflection. One has to wait until the reality is formed for the words already used; the reality that is understood in accordance with knowledge. It is as if God was once again advancing things in front of Adam and Adam was calling their names."[XV]

The effect of complete liberation from the "aspect of naturalness" is also determined by Zilberman as "ascension," that is, shifting of philosophical elaboration into special areas, into the "texture" of human existence. "For the blood (meaning) to circulate in the body of the world, a circulatory system (texture) is needed,"[XVI] which is the ultimate semantic integrity where meaning is realized and becomes available for subjectification (in other words, appropriation of the sense by subjects

of the world). Also, the transmission of meaning in time is needed (to ensure the continuity of being of this world). The world-creating essence of philosophizing, postulated by Zilberman at the very beginning of the deployment of his system, is revealed most clearly when "texturing"[3] philosophy or turning it into a self-sufficient sum of all possible "philosophical roles" designated to "conceptualize" and "comprehend" the world. When philosophy becomes a "texture" of human existence, it turns into what Zilberman calls Philosophia Universalis. The attaining of Philosophia Universalis Zilberman associates with the realization of the modal completeness of philosophizing, and that is the goal of his "philosophology."

In case, if the goal of "texturing" of philosophy has already been reached (as in classical Indian philosophy or "philosophy of absolute, internally perfect world-creating"), then the task of "philosophology" is to reveal and distribute all the elements, relationships, and properties of aggregated complementarity of its systems. Also, its objective is to track presented in this process "dramaturgy of knowledge, with all its insets, clippings, glue-ins, shifts, telescoping and complementarity."[XVII] The formal result of such a movement is the transformation of the sixfold module presented above into a special construction, which Zilberman called a "polynomial" or "folding module." This construction reflects the transformation of classical Indian philosophies into the "sum of philosophies" that has already happened in this culture. A substantial result of this movement is a radical change in the notions about Indian philosophy that become established in Western (and not only) culture (the entire text of Zilberman's monograph *The Birth of Meaning in Hindu Thought* is a confirmation of this concept).

According to Zilberman, the idea of "texture"[4, XVIII] as the summarized mutual involvement of all sprouts of philosophical thought is completely alien to Western philosophers. This is how he expressed this idea: "It seems to them that one can start to philosophize 'taking an utterly new approach'; they are puzzled and perplexed by the presence of iterative themes and paradoxes. But if one starts talking to them about the totality of all possible philosophical viewpoints of the West, they rush to teleologism, determinism, and other obsessive concepts, that is, they will try explaining the sum from the perspective of one specific approach. They are not even aware that Indian views are fundamentally non-anthropological, that these views represent a truly professional division of the philosophical subject, while all attempts of philosophical elaboration in the West still remain at the level of amateurism that more or less successfully expresses 'natural curiosity,' non-cultivated and non-directed exploratory interest."[XIX, XX]

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[3] Texturing: immersion in the text with the identification of its texture as living substance. – Trans.

[4] Texture—From letter to A. Piatigorsky: "texture is a qualitative definiteness of objectivity, namely what you can feel as roughness, bulging, the sharpness of an object, when comparing attention with touch. By texture, I imply any steadily dissected object, some elements of which are meaningful at least for some consciousness. The method of dismembering the object is arbitrary. In a particular and substantial case, an object can turn out to be a structure, and then its elements, connections, and integrity will be significant." – D.Z.

The task of "philosophology" is to help the emergence of (professional) philosophy, which can be done primarily by reflecting Western philosophy in the modal mirror of Indian darśanas as perfect philosophical knowledge. The later texts of Zilberman contain many examples of detailed comparative modalization: Hegel and Mīmāṃsā, Kant and Nyāya, Husserl and Nyāya Vaiśeṣika, Wittgenstein and Advaita, Chomsky and Advaita, Democritus and Vaiśeṣika, Descartes and Yoga, Plato and Advaita, and psychoanalysis and Sāṃkhya.

Zilberman planned for the transition to a modal interpretation of Western philosophical tradition as such. He wanted to implement the modal line of Marxist-Hegelian philosophical interpretation, to discover the roots of Kantian transcendentalism in Hegelian logic, and the foundations of Hegelian logic in Husserlian phenomenology. Zilberman was about to interpret Descartes through the concepts of Husserl, to analyze the modal development of the basic ideas of Plato's philosophy, as if they were passed through the prism of Hegel's texts, to explicate some problems and failures of phenomenology, as if they were "foreseen" by Hegel and Marx, and much more. Ideally, all philosophical systems of the West should be rethought through the modalization technique in order to become the "sum of philosophy."

David Zilberman did not have time to do this: he died untimely at 39, leaving for us his grandiose vision of philosophy, philosophy reviving from the cinder of nothingness.

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Notes

I. The article "*Philosophology of David Zilberman*" by Helena Gourko is presented here on purpose. Professor Helena Gourko dedicated many years of her work (at Boston University) to the research of Zilberman's legacy. She created the Catalog of Zilberman's archive, translated *The Birth of Meaning* into Russian, compiled and edited *Analogy in Indian and Western Philosophical Thought*, translated/edited *Orthodox Ethics and Matter of Communism* from English into Russian, wrote in Russian a monograph *Modal Methodology of David Zilberman*. She had read every paper/letter written by Zilberman and she was the very one who could know the most about his creative plans. – David Zilberman Foundation (DZF onwards).

II. Derrida, J., *Les Specters de Marx,* Paris, p. 15, 1993.

III. Zilberman, D., Autobiographical Statement in Zilberman Archive at the Mugar Library, Boston University, 1.3.15.

IV. Levada Y., Preface to D. Zilberman "On semeiotics of Understanding Types of cultural Traditions" In: *Peoples of Asia and Africa*, Moskva, "Nauka", pp. 129–130, No. 3, 1989, No. 1.3.14. Zilberman Archive at the Mugar Library, Boston University.

   V. Piatigorsky, A., *On the philosophical work of Zilberman* (*First brief introduction*), in the present volume.

  VI. Zilberman, D., *The Birth of Meaning in the Hindu Thought,* ed. by R. S. Cohen, Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Co. (Boston Studies in the Philosophy of Science, vol. 102) pp.7–8, 1988.

 VII. *Ibid*., P.2.

VIII. Zilberman Archive at the Mugar Library, Boston University, 5.1.1/3.

  IX. Zilberman, D., *The Birth of Meaning in the Hindu Thought,* ed. by R. S. Cohen, Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Co. (Boston Studies in the Philosophy of Science, vol. 102) Chapter I p.1–69, 1988.

   X. Zilberman, D., "*Teaching of Śaṅkarā on Intuition and the Organization of Philosophical Text to Perceive Transcendental*," Zilberman Archive at the Mugar Library, Boston University, 2.1.6.

  XI. Zilberman, D., "*On "Kaṭha Upaniṣada*" P. 8, Zilberman Archive at the Mugar Library, Boston University, 1.7.51.

 XII. Zilberman, D., "*Approaching Discourses between Three Persons about Modal Methodology and Summa Metaphysicorum*." in the present volume.

XIII. *Ibid*., in the present volume.

XIV. Zilberman Archive at the Mugar Library, Boston University, 1.5.2.

 XV. Zilberman, D., "Approaching Discourses between Three Persons about Modal Methodology and Summa Metaphysicorum." in the present volume.

XVI. *Ibid*. in the present volume.

XVII. Zilberman Archive at the Mugar Library, Boston University, 1.5.2.

XVIII. Zilberman, D., "Approaching Discourses between Three Persons about Modal Methodology and Summa Metaphysicorum." in the present volume.

XIX. Zilberman, D., *The Birth of Meaning in the Hindu Thought,* ed. by R. S. Cohen, Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Co. (Boston Studies in the Philosophy of Science, vol. 102) pp. 340–341, 1988.

 XX. *Ibid*., 343.

Introduction

Methodological and Epistemological Priority of the Text with Structural Design: David B. Zilberman (1938–1977) as Philosopher-Methodologist

> When a discipline reaches perfection,
> it does not cease to exist for the world;
> it is the world that ceases to exist for it.
> David B. Zilberman

The Birth of Meaning in Hindu Thought: How Is History of Indian Philosophy Possible?

How is it possible for philosophy to engage in a constant methodological/meta-philosophical dialogue with itself without those usual irrelevancies of the space and time of its occurrence which have proved too distracting to the critical mind in other contexts in the past? We can no longer afford to postpone the transcendental task set in this question where it is either Indian semantics or Indian philosophy which may matter most. Addressing itself to such a task, as it does, the posthumously published volume[I] was written by the late David B. Zilberman (1938–1977), who did most of his scientific work in philosophy in Russia before becoming an immigrant in America in the Fall of 1973.

In this vein, I will introduce David B. Zilberman as a philosopher-methodologist. Thus the book (1988) was written for the methodologists and philosophers of science, epistemologists, metaphysicians, linguists, logicians, and philosophers of language, among others. A many-faceted methodologically oriented work, it focuses on Indian semantics, Buddhism, and the principal systems of Indian philosophy – *Sāṃkhya*, *Yoga*, *Vaiśeṣika*, Nyāya, *Mīmāṃsā*, and *Vedānta* – among others, in those very aspects which have had to wait such a long time to become a subject of

rediscovery. In particular, one should here think of the method(s) they must have employed for self-construction – and therefore of the possible cross-cultural methodological affinities – but which remained, for one reason or other, hidden in their very organization. Both in its aim and method of bringing those *methods* – with far-reaching methodological affinities – to the surface, as the very principles of their generation and operation, this is a work of its first kind that has appeared in a field it itself shapes. For the systems chosen become the very material of Zilberman's newly proposed "modal methodology" as he calls it. It is of course intended to be of a universal application in the direction of "reforming the whole idea of philosophy" as an object for a new "science," viz., 'the science of philosophy.'[II] Thus, it is "one which allows the investigator to identify the proper modus of his involvement in a cultural tradition, precisely in the "metaphysical point" of change of the frame of reference."[III] In the present case, then, *its* sensitivity to the changing frames of reference dictates the choice of the material for treatment, viz., the kind of framework(s) – in-the-making in the six systems (=*Darśanas*) of Indian philosophy, as also those of Pāṇini and Bhartṛhari in Indian semantics. The choice is also explained by considering how much Zilberman had been fascinated (see the references and the bibliography of his selected works),[IV] by their whole family, by the Sanskrit language, and, above all, by India as a whole. One should here think of India, with him, as the land where Buddha was enlightened and Śaṅkara lived and taught, as also the land where he himself "mentally left his heart, his soul, and to which he dedicated most of his works" (see Ellena Michnik-Zilberman's excellent Introduction).[V] True to his commitments, he continued working on the *Upāmanā-khaṇḍa*, Gaṅgeśa's treatise on analogy, along with the book (1988), until he breathed his last. As Ellena Michnik-Zilberman tells us (Introduction),[VI] shortly before his death in an accident (July 25, 1977), he had planned for a research stay in India for the period 1978–1979. With his work (1988) at last being made available to us through the *Boston Studies*, thanks to the unsparing efforts of the Editor, Robert S. Cohen, and his colleagues, the more serious student can *now* subject his/her own methodologically oriented metaphilosophical understanding of Indian philosophical systems to the searching appraisals of an appropriate kind. But this is a task which is not so easy as it is generally thought to be. For here much will depend on what kind of *hermeneutic distance* from the target (a particular text or cultural tradition) one is able to choose according to one's mastery of the original texts.

Let us, then, ask, with Zilberman: How (or in what sense) is such an understanding possible? The difficulties and the challenges of philosophizing as thinking on the type of thinking called Indian philosophy have been hinted at in an analogous question which celebrated historian-philosopher Surendranath Dasgupta had posed as early as 1922: *In what sense is a History of Indian Philosophy possible?*[VII] If at all this was intended to remind us that, in order to be possible, history of *philosophy* demands *its* constant presence as a totality of events (=texts)-in-the-making, we seem to have hardly made any progress since that time. For more recently, some scholars[VIII] have complained about a lack of an attempt to formulate a "real" history/ theory of *development* of *its* divergent systems, of their genesis, growth, and mutual interaction. Is history of philosophy just a matter of formulation/conceptualization?

Why is it no longer clear to us, as it was before, what we are asking for? There have been, of course, attempts by the contemporary scholars, interested in this development, to trace their *origin* to the socio-political conditions of their time and place, depending every time heavily on the kind of *externalist stance* (whether the sociological or the Marxist-materialist) of the individual scholar oneself. But their principal failure can be found, I think, in their incapacity to recognize the inherent poverty of the externalist stance generally. No approach based on *it* can achieve even its limited aim of understanding the genesis of a philosophical system/text-in-the-making *without* a clear meta-philosophical commitment to surpass its actual historical movement. For, is not all philosophical history philosophy speaking about itself?

What is, then, puzzling and in need of explanation is this: our methodological and meta-philosophical approaches, if any, when employed to critically interpreting and developing the traditional *modes* of philosophizing in India have failed us repeatedly for reasons yet to be diagnosed by us. Where we may have been simply lacking such approaches altogether – i.e., a case of failure in *hermeneutic distance* – we have been simply thinking of their history as an *object* of investigation, among other objects, completed and finished once and for all, *as if* we have not been aware at all of the academic challenge of rediscovering them not once but again and again.

We were reminded of this challenge long ago by Surendranath Dasgupta when he said that the *discovery* of their important features, as also "a due appreciation of their full significance, may turn out to be as important to modern philosophy as the discovery of Sanskrit has been to the investigation of modern philological researches. It is unfortunate that the task of reinterpretation and re-valuation of Indian thought has not yet been undertaken on a comprehensive scale."[IX] Only a philosophy deeply aware of its every presence and every movement could engage itself in such a meaningful, though difficult, task. It is in this sense, then, that Zilberman's work will demand that attention from the specialist which it truly deserves as the first systematic attempt to meet a very old challenge with a sophistication and spontaneity which characterize philosophy when it responds to its own presence as *thoughts/texts-in-the-making*. In what follows, I shall elaborate this point, while leaving the more difficult task of rethinking the principal themes, with Zilberman, to the more serious reader himself/herself.

In Search of Vedic Philosophies: What Made Indian Philosophy Possible?

Zilberman's study in the traditional systems of Indian semantics and epistemology has a clear and original methodological-transcendental orientation. This is expressed by means of a number of general principles of fundamental strategic importance to it, such as the following:

1. The elementary plurality of cultural universes and forms of thinking must be admitted if appropriate methodological reflection on them is to be possible at all.[X]
2. No culture should be approached as an *object* for investigation, among other objects. On the contrary, every culture should be made a subject of study by application of modal methodology.
3. As a corollary of (2), every type of philosophical thinking should sooner or later come under the purview of such a study as a meta-philosophical inquiry.
4. The time and space of occurrence of a type of thinking, as a culture-in-the-making, will never tell us how unique it (in its character) is when taken in relation to others.
5. It is, on the contrary, a correct understanding of its results which will give a clue to understanding its origin, but not vice versa.[XI]

All of them (there may be many more) are applicable, according to Zilberman, in the case of Indian philosophy. And this is of particular importance to us as philosophers, the historical, archaeological, and comparative researchers in this field in this century notwithstanding. For we have here, among other difficulties the historians have recognized from time to time, yet to form a clear idea of its place in a sound typology of thinking based on the recognition of pluralism of cultures full of intra-cultural and cross-cultural interactive possibilities. If there is, then, a central doctrine at work here, it is this: "We must abandon in principle the way of approaching cultures as *objects* for investigation. We should try modal methodology..." with a "three-dimensional understanding of what culture is, how it is possible, and why it is inevitable from a particular point of thinking."[XII] This transcendentally oriented methodology can be seen at work in a wide range of problems and themes which Zilberman has raised and organized (Chapters 1–9) into the very material for the level and sophistication of his own philosophical thinking. For example, in Chapter 2, we find him grappling with a set of interpretative tasks such as the following:

 (i) What is the *Ṛgveda Saṃhitā* as a whole, by using which methods was it made as a whole?
(ii) What are the accomplishments of the grammarian Pāṇini as the founder of the structural-normative method in ancient Indian linguistics?

In this style, each of the nine chapters unfolds itself into the other. Zilberman develops well-argued answers to questions of fundamental, methodological, and interpretative significance. He then traces them to the original sources (texts) themselves, in fulfilment of his aim of working out an original interpretation of subjects as rich in range and depth as the following:

> The Hindu Systems of Thought as Epistemic Disciplines; The Birth of "Meaning": A Systematic Genealogy of Indian Semantics; Dialectics in Kant and in the Nyāya Sūtra; Nyāya Gnoseology; Advaita Vedānta; Is the Bodhisattva a Sceptic?; Hindu Values and Buddhism; Understanding Cultural Traditions Through Types of Thinking; and The Family of Hindu 'Visions' as Cultural Entities.

The novelty of his method of interpretation is gradually revealed to us first in the types of question being raised and then in the kind of detailed treatment they receive. The aim which remains central to his design is to find an answer to the larger question: What made Indian philosophy *then* Indian? Here it should be understood as a question concerning the very *nature* and *possibility*, and not the beginnings, of Indian philosophy. The methodological priority of the transcendental task set in this question can no longer be ignored, even by those who have been preoccupied with the following historical-genetic question: What was specific for the beginnings of "philosophy in India"? How and when did it begin? Where it has become necessary for him to raise questions of philosophical identity of Buddhism or of *Advaita Vedānta* or of other systems of classical Indian philosophy on the one hand and to rediscover achievements such as Pāṇini's grammar on the other hand, Zilberman's modal methodology shows the serious limitations of comparative philosophy, by the very power of its application to specific cases. This is, then, one reason why one must keep asking, with him: What made Indian philosophy then Indian? What made it possible? Why is it irreducible, notwithstanding all sorts of its reductive comparisons with traditions of philosophical thinking in the West? What gives it, then, its *unique structural identity* across the different historical periods in which it seems to have unfolded, spreading itself in so many systemic variations on recurrent philosophical themes? Who among us, whether in India or in the West, may not have been, at one time or other, deeply disturbed by these foundational, though oft-misunderstood and at times ill-formulated, questions? Yet many scholars have taken *its* Indianness, in a trivial sense, for granted. Accordingly, they have looked for their task more and more in the question of the legitimacy of the term 'philosophy' in an Asian context, i.e., in the *genetic* context of the beginnings of 'Indian philosophy.' On the other hand, there are those who would be too willing to reconcile themselves with one or the other of the following positions:

(a) That unlike philosophy in the West, Indian philosophical systems have developed answers to all philosophical questions including those which interest the Western critical philosophical mind.[XIII]
(b) That their content can always be restated in a language which is more familiar to the Western traditions.[XIV]
(c) That they are essentially philosophies of life interwoven with the *mokṣa/nirvāṇa* oriented *other-worldly*, religious world-views.[XV]

There may be hosts of other types of questions lying deeply and unsuspectedly hidden in the *structural identity question* above. Some of these may have been superficially touched in our own time just because they are themselves premised on the alleged power of these systems to flood you at any time with ready answers to all conceivable philosophical questions, whether they concern consciousness, cognition, life before and after death, immortality of the soul, or mokṣa/nirvāṇa, whichever way preconceived. But we are surely in for a shock if we have been in a long slumber because we have never asked ourselves where exactly the familiar approaches to Indian philosophy must fail. Fail they must, because, first of all, they

are unable to touch the real issues of interpretation for lack of an appropriate methodological orientation. Secondly, there have been complexities of a peculiar sort largely bedeviling the recognition of Indian philosophy by the West, which have to do with what Zilberman admirably identifies as a problem of proper hermeneutic distancing.[XVI]

For the first time, then, we find Zilberman grappling with either the *structural identity questions*, taken in their proper methodological dimensions, or those setting transcendental tasks of reinterpretation. Never before has this methodological challenge, which Indian philosophy has *always* posed to the serious modern scholar, been met as boldly, or in such *hermeneutic depth*, as in Zilberman (1988). There may have been no real turn, significant or revolutionary, in the tradition of Hindu thought in recent times. But we find ourselves today in a different situation altogether. There is a reason to pause and to recognize, in the work of Zilberman, a novel approach already set on its way to rediscovering and reshaping its material in Indian philosophy. As a consequence, what we should expect is a transformation of the very *task* of understanding *it* into a methodologically and transcendentally oriented *hermeneutic scenario* of new possibilities and new challenges including those that await the historian of philosophy.

With his eyes set on the so-called "root" texts (*sūtras*) of different philosophical traditions in India, Zilberman focuses on root-questions such as the following: What is the *Veda*? What role did the Vedic texts play in the very "design printed upon the matter of Indian philosophical culture?"[XVII] The creativity and originality of this methodology, in the Indian philosophical setting, shows itself, then, in the very task he has set himself. In his own words: "I have employed my thought in a *certain way* to investigate how various different philosophies (not philosophers!) employed theirs to establish the principles of organization of their own thinking activity with respect not only to thinking, but behavior and culture in general."[XVIII] What is remarkable is that this has been possible in our troubled times of which one could say, with Zilberman, the following: "... the history of philosophy is not at an end … its *genuine* history has simply not yet begun."[XIX] But is this not also true of its methodology? Where it is the rich heritage of Indian philosophy which we would like to see properly anchored to its methodological self-awareness, the answer is in the affirmative. How reassuring it is in this context, then, to be told at last that *it* "was not what it was because it was Indian.... On the contrary, it is that exceptionally and uniquely *primarily textual character* of it that constitutes its 'Indianism'."[XX]

Wherein lies, then, we may oversimplifyingly ask, Zilberman's major achievement? This question calls for a detailed and critical appraisal of his work. I shall here refrain from undertaking such a difficult task. It should suffice here to say two things. *First*, Zilberman's work is remarkable for its choice of a proper *hermeneutic distance* from the object(s) it has made its *philosophical subject* in the original tradition of Hindu thought. And this is in itself a considerable methodological achievement where scholars have either failed or at best been less fair to the nature of their undertaking. *Secondly*, and as a consequence, it is able to focus on the methodological problems of understanding the method of philosophizing to be found in different variations in this tradition. It is here that it employs its strategy of *working*