

## ***Anyathākhyāti: A Critique by Appaya Dīkṣita in the Parimala***

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**Abstract** In this paper, the problem of illusory perception, as approached by the Nyāya and Advaita Vedānta schools of philosophy, is discussed from the standpoint of the *Parimala*. This seminal work belonging to the *Bhāmātī* tradition of Advaita Vedānta was composed in the sixteenth century by the polymath Appaya Dīkṣita. In the context of discussing various theories of illusion, Dīkṣita dwells upon the Nyāya theory of *anyathākhyāti*, and its connection with *jñānalakṣaṇapratyāsatti* as a causal factor for perception, and closely examines if such an extraordinary (*alaukika*) perception is tenable to explain illusory perception. He then proceeds to point out the deficiencies of this model and thereby brings to the fore the *anirvacanīyakhyāti* of Advaitins as the only theory which stands scrutiny.

**Keywords** *Advaita Vedānta · Nyāya · Parimala · Anyathākhyāti · Jñānalakṣaṇapratyāsatti · Anirvacanīyakhyāti*

### **Introduction**

At the very beginning of his commentary on the *Brahmasūtras*, Śaṅkara raises the question whether superimposition between the “we” and the “you”, i.e. between the conscious subject (Self) and the object (non-Self), is

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possible or not. In his view, though superimposition is rather difficult to account for logically, still it is a fact experienced by each and every individual in daily life. In this context, he introduces the notion of “superimposition” (*adhyāsa*), which he defines as the “appearance elsewhere, with a nature like to that of recollection, of what was seen before.” (*Bhāmatī* 1992, p. 16) According to Śāṅkara, this process of false attribution has for its material cause an unreal and beginningless nescience (*avidyā*). This short introduction on *adhyāsa* by Śāṅkara is discussed at great length in the *Bhāmatī* (by Vācaspati Miśra, ninth century AD) and its commentaries, the *Kalpataru* (by Amalānanda, thirteenth century AD) and the *Parimala* (by Appaya Dīkṣita, sixteenth century AD).

In *Bhāmatī*'s section popularly known as *marumarīcikā* (“desert-mirage”), it is stated that “the superimposed water is like absolutely real water, and for that reason is like what was formerly seen; but really that is not water, nor what was formerly seen; but it is untrue, indeterminable.”<sup>1</sup> The author of *Kalpataru*, while presenting this view of *Bhāmatī*, with which he naturally agrees, comments: “Thus if one can explain the theory of illusion by considering the water, though truly indeterminate in nature, to be perceived, it is indeed futile to establish the existence of water elsewhere.”<sup>2</sup> Through that sentence, Amalānanda subtly shows his disagreement with the Nyāya theory of *anyathākhyāti*, which maintains that in illusory perception it is the object existing elsewhere that is being perceived. In his *Parimala*, Appaya Dīkṣita takes cue from this sentence and discusses at great length the view of Naiyāyikas. After raising some doubts on the statement made in *Kalpataru*, he points out how the *anyathākhyāti* theory seems much simpler at first sight: “Would it not be appropriate to take the opposite view [being much simpler], namely—if the silver, which is already present elsewhere, can explain the illusion, then it is indeed futile to think of the creation of a new silver [to account for illusory perception].”<sup>3</sup> He then questions and refutes this theory to finally establish the Advaita theory of *anīrvacanīyākhyāti* as the best candidate for explaining illusory perception.

Having not been translated in English, and being a terse text in itself, the *Parimala* has not been discussed thoroughly by Western scholars. It is, however, recognized as a most profound and valuable work in the tradition of Advaita Vedānta. Here is an attempt to bring in to the attention of scholars the above section of the *Parimala*, in which a critique of the Nyāya theory of illusory perception is presented, and wherein the theory of Advaitins is established as the one that stands intellectual scrutiny against other theories.

<sup>1</sup> *tadanena krameṇādhyastaṃ toyam paramārthatoyam iva, ata eva pūrvadrṣṭam iva; tattvatatu na toyam, na ca pūrvadrṣṭam, kiṃ tu anṛtam anīrvācyam* (*Bhāmatī* 1992, p. 22).

<sup>2</sup> *tathāca svarūpeṇa anīrvācyam api toyam bhrame avabhāsītumarhatī iti mudhā amuṣya deśāntarādau sattvakalpanetyāha* (*Kalpataru* in : *Brahmasūtraśāṅkarabhāṣya* 2007, p. 23). Translation by the authors.

<sup>3</sup> *nanu deśāntarastharajatasya bhramaviṣayatvopapattau mudhā abhinavarajatakalanam iti viparītam eva vaktum yuktam* (*Parimala* in : *Brahmasūtraśāṅkarabhāṣya* 2007, p. 23). Translation by the authors.

## Brief Summary of Five Theories of Illusion

That an illusion actually occurs in some instances of perception is a fact which cannot be denied by anyone. However, having a different metaphysical outlook at the world and being committed to different epistemologies and belief systems, Indian philosophers of the classical age proposed different theories for explaining illusory perception. In particular, it is noted that the proposed theories differ both with respect to the processes that generate illusory perception as well as to the ontological status given to the falsely perceived entity. The five main theories of illusion that are generally discussed and debated upon are (Dasgupta 1957, p. 384):

1. *asatkhyāti*—apprehension of the non-existent (Mādhyamika Buddhism)
2. *ātmakhyāti*—apprehension of the subjective (Yogācāra Buddhism)
3. *akhyāti*—non-apprehension (Prabhākara Mīmāṃsā)
4. *anyathākhyāti* or *viparītakhyāti*—mistaken apprehension (Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika)
5. *anirvacanīyakhyāti*—apprehension of the indeterminate (Advaita Vedānta)

In Sanskrit, the word *khyāti* has two different meanings, namely “fame” (*prasiddhiḥ*) and “knowledge” (*jñānam*).<sup>4</sup> In all evidence, in the context of theories of illusion, the word is employed only in the sense of “knowledge”, or “apprehension”. The five theories under consideration are thus concerned with the mechanism for the generation of knowledge in illusory perception.

The theory of *asatkhyāti*, held by Buddhist Mādhyamikas, contends that in an erroneous cognition, neither the object cognized nor the substrate is real. In the well-known shell-silver illusion, for instance, both the cognized silver and the shell are conceived to be non-existent. In contrast, the three next theories are denoted as *satkhyāti* because they admit the existence of a falsely perceived entity.

According to the theory of *ātmakhyāti*, held by the Yogācāra school of Buddhism, the object of illusion is none other than an existent mental image, which is seemingly projected outside. The content of illusion is real, but its cognition as something existing externally is erroneous. In Prabhākara’s theory of *akhyāti*, there is no such thing as erroneous cognition. Here, the illusory perception results from the failure to distinguish between two valid cognitions, i.e., perception and recollection, and the objects presented by them. For instance, in the case of the shell-silver illusion, when the eyes come into contact with the object in front, it merely cognizes it as “this”. However, due to some similarity between the object perceived and the silver, a second cognition arises immediately, namely the memory of silver seen elsewhere. The non-apprehension of the difference between both cognitions as well as

<sup>4</sup> As an example of *khyāti* meaning “fame”, we have: “By which action people wish to get great fame (*khyāti*) in this world...” (*Manusmṛti*, 12.36). An example of *khyāti* meaning “knowledge” is found in *Māgha* 4.55: “Those who know friendship, etc. as mind purifying agents, having overcome afflictions [and] obtaining ‘*sabījayoga*’ and the knowledge (*khyāti*) of the difference between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*, desire to halt that also in the stage of *samādhi*.”

the objects presented, leads to the illusory perception of shell as silver. According to Naiyāyikas, the Prabhākara theory of non-apprehension does not explain the “positive” aspect involved in every illusory perception, that is, the false identification of silver with the shell. In their theory of *anyathākhyāti*, they assert that we first cognize “this” through the normal process of perception and then associate the “silverness”, existing elsewhere, with “this” [object in front] through an extraordinary perception in the form of knowledge (*jñānalakṣaṇapratyāsatti*). The “silverness” perceived is real but its association elsewhere is misconceived.

These views are successively refuted by Advaitins, for whom the perceived entity has a special kind of reality, known as *prātibhāsika*. The object of illusory perception is conceived to be neither existent (i.e., *sat*, for it is ultimately sublated by a truer knowledge) nor non-existent (i.e., *asat*, for it is actually perceived) but something which is different from both *sat* and *asat* (*sadasadvilakṣaṇam*), that is, indeterminate (*anirvācyam*, *anirvacanīyam*) in nature and thus unreal (*mithyā*).

### Śaṅkara’s Definition of *Adhyāsa*: An Appraisal in *Bhāmātī*

In the introduction to the *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya*, Śaṅkara defines *adhyāsa* as *smṛtirūpaḥ paratra pūrvadr̥ṣṭāvabhāsaḥ*. Put simply: superimposition consists in perceiving something [in a locus] which was previously perceived in a different locus. Here, Vācaspati Miśra, the author of *Bhāmātī*, derives the word *avabhāsa* in two different ways. Initially, taken as a derived word (*yaugika*), it denotes that knowledge which is “terminated” or “depreciated”, i.e., sublated by another cognition. In that sense, the very word *avabhāsa* conveys the meaning of mere appearance, illusory cognition, etc.<sup>5</sup> With this meaning, the definition of *adhyāsa*, in its abridged form, suggests that superimposition is simply what gets sublated later. On the other hand, when the word *avabhāsa* is taken as *rūḍhi*, i.e., in its non-derived form, it simply means “knowledge”. In this second sense, the definition of *adhyāsa* given above can be taken as an extended one, in which the various aspects involved in illusory cognition are elucidated.

According to Vācaspati Miśra, the word *smṛtirūpa*, literally meaning “being of the nature of recollection”, denotes in Śaṅkara’s definition that aspect of recollection referring to the object *not being present* at the locus where it is perceived (*asannihitaviṣayatvam*). By introducing this word to qualify *avabhāsa*, Śaṅkara, as noticed by Vācaspati, seeks to make clear the distinction between *adhyāsa* and “recollection” (*pratyabhijñā*), in which the object recognized *is present* in the locus where it is perceived. An example of recognition is when I see someone in front of me whom I saw previously, and recognize him to be the same person. Here, what is recollected is present in

<sup>5</sup> *avasannaḥ avamato vā bhāsaḥ avabhāsaḥ. pratyayāntarabādhaścāsya avasādaḥ avamāno vā (Bhāmātī 1992, p. 16).*

front while in simple recollection, it is not. Thus, it is noted that without the adjective *smṛtirūpa* in the definition of *adhyāsa*, one would be facing a case of over-applicability (*ativyāpti*).<sup>6</sup>

Yet, by defining *smṛtirūpa* in such a way, Advaitins seem to have landed into deeper trouble by rendering the very definition of *adhyāsa* inapplicable (*asambhava*). Indeed, the fact that *smṛtirūpa* entails that the object recollected should not be present in the locus is in total contradiction with their axiom that every instance of perception necessitates that the object be present in the locus where it is perceived. Thus, in the case of illusory perception also, the superimposed object must be present for illusion to take place, as long as the illusion remains. To circumvent this difficulty, Amalānanda, the author of *Kalpataru*, replies that what is meant here by the object *not being present* is that the object is not “really” present.<sup>7</sup> The superimposed object has in fact a relative existence as it depends for its own existence on the substratum in which superimposition takes place.

Having given his definition of *adhyāsa*, Śaṅkara then proceeds to succinctly present the conception of illusory perception maintained by other schools. Though all schools basically concur on this definition, they do differ in the details. Some speak of it as superimposition elsewhere of the attributes of another; some others say that, when there is the superimposition of one on another, it is a delusion conditioned by the absence of discrimination between two cognitions; others, finally, say that when there is superimposition of one on another, there is an assumption in the latter of an opposite attribute (*Bhāmatī* 1992, p. 16). What attracts our attention in this paper is the position taken by Advaitins with respect to the Nyāya theory of illusory perception. Before proceeding with the polemical discussion between the two schools as presented in *Parimala*, we first introduce the Nyāya theory of *anyathākhyāti* and the theoretical device of *jñānalakṣaṇapratyāsatti*, on which it heavily relies upon.

### **The Theory of *Anyathākhyāti*: Justifications for *Jñānalakṣaṇa-Pratyāsatti***

Like Advaitins, Naiyāyikas accept that in [ordinary] perception, the connection between the object perceived and the sense-organs (*indriyārthasannikarṣa*) is necessary for direct perception to take place.<sup>8</sup> However, in the case of illusory perception, they take a stand that the falsely perceived entity is not present in the locus in which illusion occurs. Now the question arises as to how, in the Nyāya theory, illusory perception is possible if the object is not in direct contact with sense-organs. As an answer to this, the Nyāya philosophers

<sup>6</sup> *asannihitaviśayatvaṃ ca smṛtirūpatvam, sannihitaviśayam ca pratyabhijñānaṃ samīcīnam iti nātivyāptiḥ* (*Bhāmatī* 1992, pp. 17–18).

<sup>7</sup> *asannidhānaṃ ca āropyaśya adhiṣṭhāne paramārthataḥ asattvaṃ* (*Kalpataru* in: *Brahmasūtraśāṅkarabhāṣya* 2007, p. 19).

<sup>8</sup> *indriyārthasannikarṣa janyam jñānaṃ pratyakṣam* (*Tarkasaṃgraha* 1998, p. 14).

have come up with the theory of “presentation through revived memory” (*jñānalakṣaṇapratyāsatti*).<sup>9</sup> It is mainly against the use of such conceptual device to explain illusory perception that Advaitins, and especially the author of the *Parimala*, take position. Before presenting their arguments, we first briefly summarize the position of Naiyāyikas as regards the nature of illusory perception.

In the case of the shell-silver illusion, the Naiyāyikas contend that the cognition “this is silver” (*idam rajatam*) basically consists in a perceptual knowledge in which a qualifier (*prakāra*), i.e., “silverness”, qualifies a qualificand (*viśeṣya*), i.e., “shell”. Since, as mentioned above, perception *per se* arises due to the contact of a sense-organ with an object, perception of “silverness” also demands a contact with sense-organs (i.e., eyes). The point here is: how do we come to perceive silverness as qualifying the shell? What is the nature and locus of silverness? It is maintained by Naiyāyikas that silverness is neither a mental construction, for it is verily perceived in the locus of illusion, nor non-existent because we actually (though falsely) perceive it. Also, they do not accept that silverness suddenly appears in the locus and then disappears with sublation, the reason being that no process of causation can reasonably explain the generation and annihilation of silverness in a shell. Their conclusion is that silver must exist somewhere else, and to the question—how can the silver existing somewhere else be perceived without sense-organs?—it is replied that it is through *jñānalakṣaṇapratyāsatti*.

The notion of *jñānalakṣaṇapratyāsatti* is invoked in Nyāya philosophy to justify certain instances in which the direct perception of objects, described as extraordinary (*alaukika*), occurs without being actually related to sense-organs. Three instances of *jñānalakṣaṇapratyāsatti* are provided:

1. On *seeing* a piece of sandalwood at a distance, the direct perception that this is a “fragrant sandalwood” arises, though we do not actually *smell* the fragrance;<sup>10</sup>
2. In the subsequent cognition (*anuvyavasāya*)<sup>11</sup> that immediately follows the perception (*vyavasāya*) of a jar, the connection between the mind and the object of this cognition, which itself is a cognition, is in the form of the primary cognition;<sup>12</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Literally, the word *jñānalakṣaṇapratyāsatti* denotes a certain relation (*pratyāsatti*) in the form (*lakṣaṇa*) of knowledge (*jñāna*). More often than not, such knowledge arises from the recollection of an object perceived in a previous experience.

<sup>10</sup> *evam jñānalakṣaṇāyāḥ asvikāre ‘surabhicandanam’ iti jñāne saurabhāsyā jñānam katham syāt yadyapi sāmānyalakṣaṇāyāpi saurabhāsyā bhānam sambhavati tathāpi saurabhatvasya bhānam jñānalakṣaṇāyā (Muktāvālī in: Kārikāvālī with 2002, p. 280).*

<sup>11</sup> According to Naiyāyikas, a cognition is ontologically a quality of the self, and to recognize that the self possesses such cognition, it must be related to the self through *anuvyavasāya*. Indeed, the primary act of cognition (*vyavasāya*) does not cognize itself but only reveals the external object (*viśaya*) as it is; a secondary act of retrospection (*anuvyavasāya*) on the first cognition, involving the “I”, is necessary to recognize that the self possesses this cognition.

<sup>12</sup> *nanu anuvyavasāye katham sambandhasya bhānamityāsaṅkya yathā ghaṭaḡhaṭatvayoḡ vyavasāyarūpapratyāsattiyā bhānam tathā tatsambandhasyāpi, vyavasāyarūpapratyāsatteḡ aviśeṣāt (Tarkasaṅgrahadīpikāprakāśikā, 1980, p. 280).*

3. In an illusory perception, such as “this is silver”, there is the direct perception of silverness, which inheres in the silver present elsewhere.<sup>13</sup>

In all cases cited above, since there is no ordinary relation (*laukikasannikarṣa*) linking the object with a sense-organ, knowledge arises from an extraordinary perception mediated by the “revived memory” of the object seen earlier, that is, through *jñānalakṣaṇapratyāsatti*. In the first case, the remembrance of the sandal fragrance perceived in the past officiates for the sense contact; in the second case, it is the primary cognition (*vyavasāya*) that mediates; in the third case, it is again the remembrance of the silver seen elsewhere. Of course, once *jñānalakṣaṇapratyāsatti* is accepted to mediate the perception of silverness, there is no need to resort to the Advaita theory, which proposes a more complex mechanism (i.e., creation, existence and annihilation of apparent silver in the locus of the shell) for explaining the illusion.

### Arguments of Advaitins Against *Jñānalakṣaṇapratyāsatti*

According to Advaitins, the theoretical device conceived by Naiyāyikas in the form of *jñānalakṣaṇapratyāsatti* is not tenable. Their arguments can be summarized as follows:

#### 1. The three examples given by Naiyāyikas to assert the existence of *jñānalakṣaṇapratyāsatti* can be explained in a different way

In his *Advaitasiddhi*, towards the end of the section on *sattvanirvacanam* (“an expository discourse on existence”), Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, while refuting the theory of *sāmānyapratyāsatti* put forth by Naiyāyikas, asserts that the whole theory of inference will become futile by accepting the theory of *jñānalakṣaṇapratyāsatti*.<sup>14</sup> In this context, he brings forth a counter-argument against the case of the “fragrant sandalwood”, cited by Naiyāyikas to defend their theory of *jñānalakṣaṇapratyāsatti*. According to him, what is visually perceived is not “fragrant sandalwood” but only sandalwood. In judging the fragrance of the distant sandalwood, we simply *infer* the existence of fragrance by recognizing the invariable concomitance (*vyāpti*) that exists between the sandalwood and the fragrance.<sup>15</sup> As far as the second example is

<sup>13</sup> *iṭham ca raṅge rajatatvaviśiṣṭabuddhyanurodhena jñānalakṣaṇapratyāsattikalpane’pi na kṣatiḥ phalamukhagauravasyādoṣatvāt* (*Muktāvalī* in: *Kārikāvalī* 2002, p. 487).

<sup>14</sup> *etena—surabhi candanam’ ityādiviśiṣṭajñānāya kalpitā jñānalakṣaṇā pratyāsattirapi nirastā, candana tvena surabhivānumānopapatteh, anyathā sādhyaviśiṣṭapakṣapratyakṣopapatteh anumāna mātrocchedaprasaṅgāt* (*Advaitasiddhi* 1997, pp. 342–343).

<sup>15</sup> However, it must be noted that in the case of perceiving the *same* sandalwood which is known to have fragrance from a previous experience, no inference is necessary: recollection alone is sufficient for knowledge of fragrance to take place.



concerned, since Advaitins neither consider knowledge as a quality of the self<sup>16</sup> nor *anuvyavasāya* as a means for cognizing knowledge, the need for *jñānalakṣaṇapratyāsatti* is far removed.<sup>17</sup> As regards the third example given by Naiyāyikas, which is primarily the subject-matter of this paper, we find a detailed discussion by Appaya Dīkṣita in his *Parimala*. His arguments against the use of *jñānalakṣaṇapratyāsatti* to explain illusory perception are discussed below (point 3).

## 2. If *jñānalakṣaṇapratyāsatti* is accepted as a valid means of knowledge, then the process of inference (*anumāna*) becomes futile

As mentioned above, this argument is brought forth by Madhusūdana Sarasvatī in his *Advaitasiddhi*. Here, it is advanced that if *jñānalakṣaṇapratyāsatti* is accepted then the whole theory of inference, as an independent means of knowledge, becomes redundant. For instance, in the inference “there is fire on the mountain because there is smoke”, we first perceive smoke on the mountain and then recollect the knowledge of the invariable concomitance (*vyāpti*) between fire and smoke, following which knowledge of fire takes place. Even in this instance, we could say that it is through *jñānalakṣaṇapratyāsatti*, i.e., through the knowledge of the fire which figures in the *vyāpti*, that fire is perceived.

Moreover, when the complex of causal factors for perception (*pratyakṣasāmagrī*) and for inference (*parāmarśa*)<sup>18</sup> are fully available at the same instant, those that give rise to perceptual knowledge are always more powerful than those giving rise to inferential cognition,<sup>19</sup> the reason being that only perception takes place and not inference (ex: when seeing fire and smoke on the mountain, I do not infer fire from smoke but simply perceive fire). As a consequence, *jñānalakṣaṇapratyāsatti* being the means for extraordinary perception, it is concluded that it always prevails upon the causal factors for inference and therefore, that the whole theory of inference has to be abandoned.

To defend their thesis against this objection, if Naiyāyikas were to say that it is only the causal factors for ordinary perception (*laukikapratyakṣa*) that can prevail upon those for inference and not those for extraordinary perception (*alaukikapratyakṣa*), Advaitins present an example in which the causal factors

<sup>16</sup> It is only Naiyāyikas who consider knowledge to be a quality of the self. Besides knowledge, the self possesses several other qualities, such as pain, pleasure, infinitude, etc., some of which (like infinitude) are not necessarily perceived when the mind gets related to the self. It is however not clear why that knowledge, as a quality of the self, is itself always perceived. If we insist that knowledge is always perceived because it is its nature to be perceived, then it amounts to say that knowledge reveals itself, i.e., is self-evident, which is the Advaita view (Datta 1997, p. 114).

<sup>17</sup> Indeed, according to Advaitins, the nature of the self is consciousness (*cit*). Since the self is self-evident, and that knowledge is evident to the self, knowledge does not require another knowledge to become evident. Therefore, there is no need for *anuvyavasāya* for the self to recognize that it possesses knowledge.

<sup>18</sup> By the “complex of causal factors”, we refer to the different auxiliaries necessary for perception to take place, such as a sense-organ, its contact with the object, the presence of light, etc.; with respect to inference, we refer to the invariable concomitance (*vyāpti*) between the middle and major terms of the inference, the subsumptive reflection (*parāmarśa*), etc.

<sup>19</sup> See, for instance, *Muktāvalī* in: *Kārikāvalī* 2002, p. 316.



for extraordinary perception and inference are both present, and where the final cognition that takes place is one of [extraordinary] perception and not of inference. The example is that of a pillar falsely perceived as a human being.<sup>20</sup> First, we doubt whether it is a pillar or a human being. Then, because we seemingly perceive the movement of a hand (which is always associated with a human being), we *infer* the presence of a human being. The causal factor that gives rise to inference in that case is the apparent motion of the hand. But after examination, we find that there is no hand at all. Hence, the perception that it is a human being must be through *jñānalakṣaṇapratyāsatti* since it is an instance of false perception, and therefore Naiyāyikas have to accept that the causal factors for perception (ordinary or extraordinary) do prevail upon those for inference.

In response to that, Naiyāyikas maintain that in cases of inference where the major term (*sādhya*) cannot be known prior to inferential cognition, extraordinary perception cannot take place and therefore, inference cannot be declared to be redundant. The example that is cited in this regard is the following one: “Earth is different from the rest (non-earth) because it possesses smell.” Because smell exclusively belongs to earth, it is impossible to conclude that whatever has smell is different from the rest without referring to earth itself; it is only possible to observe that what is *not* different from the rest has *no* smell.<sup>21</sup> Therefore, the major term (“different from the rest”) cannot be cognized through *jñānalakṣaṇapratyāsatti*, and hence there is no question of abandoning inference as a means of knowledge. But this is not an argument which is acceptable to Advaitins because in their view, an inference is a process of reasoning based on an invariable concomitance between the middle and the major terms, not between the *absence* of the major term and the *absence* of the middle term. Hence, they do not consider the above example as an instance of inference but as one of *arthāpatti*, or postulation, considered by them as another means of valid knowledge.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>20</sup> This example is not construed by Advaitins but has been accepted by the Naiyāyikas themselves to demonstrate that the causal factors for perception are more powerful than those for inference, in the absence of a desire to infer. See, for instance, *Muktāvalī* in: *Kārikāvalī* 2002, p. 316.

<sup>21</sup> According to Naiyāyikas, the middle term (*hetu*) of an inference can be of three types: *anvaya-vyatirekī* (concomitant in affirmation and negation), *kevalānvayi* (concomitant in affirmation alone) and *kevala-vyatirekī* (concomitant in negation alone). In the inference “I see smoke on the mountain, therefore there is fire”, the middle term is *anvaya-vyatirekī* because both affirmative concomitance (*anvayavyāpti*) and negative concomitance (*vyatirekavyāpti*) are possible. For instance, “wherever there is smoke, there is fire, as in a hearth” and “wherever there is no fire, there is no smoke, as in a tank” are valid instances of *anvayavyāpti* and *vyatirekavyāpti*, respectively. An example of *kevalānvayi* is: “Jar is nameable because it is knowable, like a cloth”; here, it is impossible to find the absence of a concomitance between “knowability” and “nameability” because all things are knowable and nameable. The example cited in the text is *kevala-vyatirekī* because the affirmative concomitance cannot be observed (*Tarkasamgraha* 1998, pp. 231–233).

<sup>22</sup> The justification advanced by Naiyāyikas and the refutation of Advaitins discussed above, are succinctly presented in the *Advāitāsiddhi* as follows: *abhāvasādhyakevalavyatirekiṇi sādhyaprasiddheḥ anaṅgatvāt tatra k!ptāyā anumitisāmagryāḥ pratyakṣasāmagrīto balavattvam iti —vācyam; arthāpattivādibhiḥ asmābhiḥ tadanabhyupagamāt* (*Advāitāsiddhi* 1997, pp. 343–344).

### 3. It is impossible to explain the appearance of silverness through *jñānalakṣaṇapratyāsatti*

Even if we maintain that *jñānalakṣaṇapratyāsatti* explains the cognition of smell in the perception of fragrant sandalwood or in the perception of jar in *anuvyavasāya*, it is impossible to defend the view that silverness can be perceived in the same manner. In his *Parimala*, Appaya Dīkṣita cites two conditions fulfilling which *jñānalakṣaṇapratyāsatti* is usually accepted:

- *yatra yatpūrvamavagataṃ, tasminneva punardrśyamāne tajjñānasya [tadupanāyakatvam]*—If something were known [to be present] previously in a locus, and if the same locus is seen again, then with reference to that knowledge [a revived memory takes place];<sup>23</sup>
- *yadavacchedena yatpūrvamavagataṃ, tadvattvena drśyamāne tajjñānasya [tadupanāyakatvam]*. If something were known [to be present] previously in a locus which is delimited by “that”, and if something delimited by the same “thatness” is seen, then with reference to that knowledge [a revived memory takes place].<sup>24</sup>

Appaya Dīkṣita maintains that though these two conditions are fulfilled in the case of the fragrant sandalwood, they cannot be extended to the case of the shell-silver illusion since the shell was never known before with silver or as a delimiter of silverness. Without the perception of such connection between shell and silver, it is impossible for *jñānalakṣaṇapratyāsatti* to give rise to the cognition “this is silver”.<sup>25</sup> Thus, according to Advaitins, there is no question of accepting this theoretical device to explain illusory perception.

Against this argument, Naiyāyikas may object that there is also no mechanism of causation justifying the creation of silver at the locus of the shell, as conceived by Advaitins. It thus seems that there is no common ground on which both parties can agree upon and proceed with meaningful discussions. But then Appaya Dīkṣita goes on to say that the mechanism of causation proposed by Advaitins should also be accepted by Naiyāyikas. It is indeed

<sup>23</sup> This rule can be understood in the case of the fragrant sandalwood if: *yatra* = in the sandalwood (locus); *yat* = fragrance; *pūrvamavagataṃ* = known [to be present] previously; *tasminneva punardrśyamāne* = when the same locus (i.e., the sandalwood) is seen again; *tajjñānasya* = the knowledge of the fragrance [takes place].

<sup>24</sup> This rule can again be understood in the case of the fragrant sandalwood if: *yadavacchedena* = that which is delimited by the “sandalwood-ness”; *yat* = fragrance; *pūrvamavagataṃ* = known [to be present] previously; *tadvattvena* = by the nature of possessing “sandalwood-ness”; *drśyamāne* = when it [another sandalwood] is seen; *tajjñānasya* = the knowledge of the fragrance [takes place].

<sup>25</sup> *pūrvam rajatatvavattvena rajatatvavacchedakavattvena vā anavagate śuktiśakale rajatajñānasya saṃnikarṣatvāyogāt* (*Parimala* in: *Brahmasūtraśāṅkarabhāṣya* 2007, p. 23).

well-known that in certain instances, such as in dreams, misunderstandings, etc., for which there are no established mechanisms of causation, both the schools have to resort to *doṣa*<sup>26</sup> as the only agent responsible for creating the illusion. This being the case, Advaitins argue that from a theoretical viewpoint, it is much simpler to take *doṣa* for explaining all kinds of illusions rather than resorting to different mechanisms for explaining different illusions (a certain *doṣa* for dreams, *jñānalakṣaṇapratyāsatti* for illusory perception, etc.). They defend this thesis by also bringing in the “principle of parsimony” (*lāghava*),<sup>27</sup> and thereby justify their application of this mechanism to all kinds of illusions. The author of *Parimala* is clear: Advaitins are not creating a new theory here but only generalizing a principle that is already accepted by both schools in certain cases. In contrast, by construing different models to explain the various kinds of illusions, Naiyāyikas go against the principle of parsimony.

### Need and Evidence for Accepting Creation of an Apparent Entity in *Anīrvacanīyakhyāti*

A story is narrated by Appaya Dīkṣita to show how, in certain instances, it is only *doṣa* and not *jñānalakṣaṇapratyāsatti* that has to be resorted to for explaining illusory perception. In a place where several people are assembled, an impostor makes the following statement: “A hare possesses a horn. This horn, which has these specific characteristics, can be found by launching a search in the forest. Then, a great advantage awaits the one who is successful in this venture.”<sup>28</sup> An innocent person among the audience, tempted by the advantage and fully believing in the narration, goes to the forest and looks for the hare’s horn. In the course of his search, having seen something with the described characteristics, he jumps to the conclusion: “This is the hare’s horn.” Given the fact that hare’s horn does not exist, one has to necessarily admit that a claim of the nature “this is hare’s horn” is an instance of illusion. If such an illusory perception has to be explained within the framework of the Nyāya

<sup>26</sup> The word *doṣa* is a generic term employed to denote the various factors, specifiable or not specifiable, that are responsible for the generation of illusion. In the rope-snake illusion, for instance, the *doṣa* could be the similarity between the rope and the snake; in the ghost-post illusion, it could be the dim light, the distance between the object and the observer, the blurred vision, etc.; in the case of objects looking yellow, it could be the jaundice disease. However, in certain instances, the *doṣa* can hardly be pinpointed, such as in the case of dreams, hallucinations, misunderstandings, etc.

<sup>27</sup> On various occasions, Indian philosophers (*śāstrakāras*) invoke the “principle of parsimony” (*lāghava*) to justify a certain view. This principle (*lāghavanyāya*) is formulated as such: *k!ptakalpyayormadhye k!ptam balīyaḥ*, i.e., “between that which has already been established and that which has to be established (i.e., any other explanation), what has been established is more powerful.”

<sup>28</sup> *śāśasya śrīngamastī. tadevamlakṣaṇamarnye patitamanviṣya labdhum śakyam | tena cedam prayojanam bhavati* (*Parimala* in: *Brahmasūtraśāṅkarabhāṣya* 2007, p. 23).

theory of illusion, then one is obliged to bring in *jñānalakṣaṇapratyāsatti* for the innocent person to perceive the hare's horn in that "something" he picked up. Since, however, hare's horn is a non-existent (*asat*) entity, there is no question of a revived memory arising from a previous perception of that. Thus, in order to explain the direct perception of hare's horn, one has to accept—even if one does not wish so—the generation of an apparent hare's horn (*prātibhāsikaśaśāsrṅga*) due to some *doṣa*.

Here Naiyāyikas could still defend their position by saying that *jñānalakṣaṇapratyāsatti* can arise because the innocent person has the memory of having heard the impostor's description of hare's horn. In other words, the memory created through verbal knowledge, known as *vikalpa*,<sup>29</sup> can itself serve for the generation of *jñānalakṣaṇapratyāsatti*, through which the above illusion can be explained. According to Naiyāyikas, there is no need for accepting the generation of an apparent hare's horn as one can explain the illusion with the help of *jñānalakṣaṇapratyāsatti* itself. Perhaps keeping this in mind, Appaya Dīkṣita takes recourse to dreams as an example of illusion where even *vikalpa* cannot be conceived of for the generation of *jñānalakṣaṇapratyāsatti*. In fact, it is not uncommon to perceive in dreams things that have neither been seen, nor heard of or inferred at any time before. In such instances, even Naiyāyikas have to resort to some kind of a defect, a *doṣa*, to explain the illusion. Hence, it is clear that it is not possible to give a unified explanation of illusory perception with the help of *jñānalakṣaṇapratyāsatti* alone.<sup>30</sup>

Having thus explained the need for accepting the generation of an apparent entity in dreams, Advaitins take also resort to *śruti* to strengthen their position. In the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (IV.3.10), it is said: "There are no chariots there, no spans, no roads. But he projects from himself blisses, pleasures, delights."<sup>31</sup> The *śruti* here describes the dream state as one in which the individual apparently creates (*srjate*) what he perceives.<sup>32</sup> Without accepting such creation, it would not be possible to explain the presence of chariots, spans, etc. in the dreamer's place. In the view of Advaitins, this verse also suggests that the created entities are "unreal" (*mithyā*), i.e., not "really" present, for these entities cease to exist when the dreamer wakes up. In the same way, the illusory object is said to be unreal (*mithyā*) as well as indeterminate (*anirvācyam*) because it is neither existent—being sublated in the wake of knowledge—nor non-existent—because it is actually perceived.

Another justification advanced by Dīkṣita in favour of *anirvacanīyakhyāti* is that it does not require the introduction of new tools for apprehending the illusory object, other than whatever has been accepted as the necessary tools

<sup>29</sup> In *Yogasūtra* I.9, *vikalpa* is defined to be the verbal knowledge of a non-existent entity (*śabdajñāna anupātī vastuśūnyo vikalpah*).

<sup>30</sup> *asti ca svapne manuṣyapaśupakṣivṛkṣādyanekarūpasyaikasyāvayavino'nubhavaḥ, na ca tatrāsamñihitaviṣayatvaṃ kalpayitum śakyamityagatyā doṣavaśād prātibhāsikasyaiva tasyotpattiraṅgīkaraṇīyā* (*Parimala in: Brahmasūtraśāṅkarabhāṣya* 2007, p. 24).

<sup>31</sup> *na tatra rathā, na rathayogā, na panthāno bhavanti, atha rathān rathayogān pathaḥ srjate* (*Radhakrishnan* 1973).

<sup>32</sup> Such a discussion is also found, for instance, in *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* III.2.1-5.

in the case of normal perception. In general, two conditions are required for normal perception to take place: 1. the contact of the object with the sense-organ(s); and 2. the contact of light with the object.<sup>33</sup> In the case of illusion, these conditions are respected only if one accepts that the entity is present in the locus where it is perceived, which in turn demands the creation of an apparent entity at the moment of illusion. On the other hand, if we maintain that illusory perception occurs through the mediation of knowledge only, i.e., through *jñānalakṣaṇapratyāsatti*, these conditions cannot be fulfilled. As a result, new tools have to be introduced for explaining the apprehension of the illusory object, which again boils down to abandoning the principle of parsimony.

### A Central Objection to *Anīrvacanīyākhyāti* and Dīkṣita's Response

The salient features of *anīrvacanīyākhyāti* can be summarized as follows:

1. The apparent silver is neither absolutely real (*sat*) nor non-existent (*asat*), for which reason it is called *sadasadvilakṣaṇa* or *anīrvacanīya*;
2. The recollection of the apparent [unreal] silver after sublation, in the form “it was only the unreal silver that was seen” (*mithyaiva rajatamabhāt*), provides the evidence for taking the silver to be *anīrvacanīya* in nature;
3. The apparent silver is assumed to be generated at the locus of the shell just before the rise of illusory knowledge (*tatkālotpannam*), and is taken to be present till the knowledge is sublated (*bādhita*).

As regards the third point mentioned above, an important objection has often been raised: if the silver were to be generated and annihilated, like the bubbles in water, how is it that such a thing is not perceived? This objection is addressed by Appaya Dīkṣita in the *Parimala* using two different approaches. The first one, which may be described as psychological, tries to analyze the process of illusion as perceived from two different states: 1. the state in which the individual is under the spell of illusion; and 2. the state in which the individual has come out of illusion in the wake of knowledge. In the first case, when the individual is under illusion, since the silver is observed to be having the same locus as its substratum (*adhiṣṭhānam*), which *already* exists, there is no possibility of perceiving any creation. In fact, it is the relation of “non-difference” (*tādātmya*) between the silver and its substratum, i.e., the shell, which actually prevents the apprehension of the creation of silver. Further, since the process of sublation, which consists in the removal of ignorance (*avidyā*) through knowledge (*vidyā*), has not yet taken place, the annihilation of silver—which is solely dependent on the removal of *avidyā*—cannot be perceived. Thus, there is no question of creation and destruction of silver when the individual is under the spell of illusion, for the object is directly

<sup>33</sup> *jñānapratyāsattiyādyajanyarajatacakṣuṣapratyākṣamātre kṛptasya rajatacakṣu saṃyogasya rajatālokasamyogasya ca kāraṇatvaṃ parityajya, tasyāsannihitarajataviśayatvaṃ na kalpanīyam* (*Parimala* in: *Brahmasūtraśāṅkarabhāṣya* 2007, p. 24).

perceived to be in front of him, which is confirmed through the cognition “this is silver” (*idam rajatam*). Even in the second case, when illusion has ceased to exist, there is no possibility of cognizing generation and annihilation. This is so because the knowledge that the individual entertains is of the form: “silver is not present, was not present and will never be present” (*rūpyam nāsti, nāsī, na bhaviṣyati*). This is clearly a case of *traikālikaniṣedha* where the presence of an illusory object in the locus is negated in all the three times—past, present and future.<sup>34</sup>

Now, a related question that arises: how can an entity that is perceived to be present at a particular location at one point of time be negated in all the three times? As an answer to this, Dīkṣita adopts a second approach, which may be termed ontological, in which he resorts to *sattātrividhya*.<sup>35</sup> This theory, invoked by Advaitins to resolve certain metaphysical issues including the problem of illusory perception, posits the existence of three orders of reality: 1. *pāramārthikasattā*: absolute reality, *Brahman*; 2. *vyāvahārikasattā*: empirical reality, associated with the worldly entities; and 3. *prātibhāsikasattā*: apparent reality, associated with illusory objects.<sup>36</sup> Here, Dīkṣita points out that there is possibility of contradiction, if only the negation and the object negated in all the three times have the same order of reality. However, in the present case, there is no question of a conflict as the silver that is perceived is only apparent in nature (*prātibhāsika*) whereas the negation is empirical in nature (*vyāvahārika*), for the latter is not going to be sublated in the wake of some other knowledge.<sup>37</sup>

## Conclusion

In this paper, a concise critique of the Nyāya theory of *anyathākhyāti*, as discussed by Appaya Dīkṣita in his *Parimala*, as well as the different instances in which the Naiyāyikas invoke the concept of *jñānalakṣaṇapratyāsatti*, have been presented. Dīkṣita’s main arguments against the application of this theoretical device for explaining illusory perception have been carefully

<sup>34</sup> *nacābhinavarajatotpattyāṅgikāre jalabudbudāderiva tasyotpattināśānubhavaprasaṅgaḥ, bhramakāle tasya prakṣiddhapurovartitādātmyenānubhūyamānatayā utpattyapratītyupapatteḥ, bādḥvatāre traikālikaniṣedhasyānubhūyamānatayā nāśāpratītyupapatteṣca* (*Parimala* in: *Brahmasūtraśāṅkarabhāṣya* 2007, p. 24).

<sup>35</sup> A detailed discussion on this issue can also be found in the chapter “*āvidyakarajatotpattyupapatti*” of the *Advaitasiddhi* I.58 (pp. 648–651).

<sup>36</sup> According to Advaitins, the *śruti* itself provides the platform for such a classification. In the *Advaitasiddhi* I.8 (p. 216), the following *śruti* from *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* II.6.3—*satyam cāṅṛtaṃ ca satyamabhavat*—is cited and commented upon. The interpretation provided there is that the word *satyam* appearing in the second place refers to *pāramārthika*, the first one refers to *vyāvahārika* and the word *aṅṛtaṃ* refers to *prātibhāsika*. For a more detailed (and polemical) discussion on this issue per se, the reader may refer to *Advaitasiddhi* I.60 (pp. 656–661).

<sup>37</sup> *naca kvacidutpadya kañcūkālaṃ sthītasya tatra traikālikaniṣedhānupapattiḥ, phalabalāt samānasattākayoreva pratiyogitadatyantābhāvayorvirodhah, na tu prātibhāsikavyāvahārikayoriti kalpanopapatteḥ* (*Parimala* in: *Brahmasūtraśāṅkarabhāṣya* 2007, p. 24).

analyzed. It was shown that though this device may be useful in explaining certain cognitive events, such as the cognition of “fragrant silver”, it cannot be successfully employed in the case of illusory perception. It seems to us that the crux of Dīkṣita’s argumentation is to uphold the “principle of parsimony” (*lāghava*), which he brilliantly applies to arrive at a unified formulation for the explanation of illusion taking place in dreams as well as in other kinds of illusions. Also, he successfully employs it while extending the already established theory of perception to the apprehension of illusory objects, thereby avoiding intrusion of any further complexity into the theory.

Further, it is interesting to note that the arguments presented here by Appaya Dīkṣita while refuting the theory of *anyathākhyāti*, and establishing the Advaita theory of *anirvacanīyakhyāti*, are purely based upon logical reasoning and not on scriptural authority. It is not uncommon to find Advaitins resorting to *śruti* during polemical discussions to uphold their position against other philosophical systems. It is indeed remarkable that Dīkṣita here refutes a theory upheld by logicians by remaining on their own territory. Some of the possible objections against *anirvacanīyakhyāti* have been raised as well as answered by Dīkṣita himself in the course of his discussion. In this paper, only one among these objections has been discussed. Other objections are planned to be taken in a further paper.

## Appendix

The discussion undertaken by Appaya Dīkṣita in the *Parimala*, the subject matter of this paper, follows Amalānanda’s commentary on a particular section of the *Bhāmatī*. In order to facilitate the readers who would be interested in the original Sanskrit texts, we reproduce here this section of the *Bhāmatī* from (*Bhāmatī* 1992, p. 22ff.), and the corresponding commentaries in *Kalpataru* and *Parimala* from (*Brahmasūtraśāṅkarabhāṣya* 2007, p. 23ff.).

### *Bhāmatī*

*tasmānna sat, nāsat, nāpi sadasat parasparavirodhāt, ityanirvācyameva āropanīyam marīciṣu toyamāstheyam; tadanena krameṇa adhyastam toyam paramārthatoyam iva, ata eva pūrvadrṣtam iva; tattvatatu na toyam, na ca pūrvadrṣtam; kintu anṛtam anirvācyam*

### *Kalpataru*

*tasmād iti | evam marīcitoyatādātmyamanirvācyam prasādhyā sad eva bhātīti nīyamamabhāṅkṣīt | tathā ca svarūpenānirvācyam api toyam bhrame ’vabhāsīt-umarhatīti mudhā amuṣya deśāntarādau sattvakalpanetyāha—tadaneneti | nanu abhinavatoyāvabhāsābhīyupagame pūrvadrṣtatvam bhāṣyoktam virudhyeta, tatrāha—ataeveti | abhinavatve ’pyāropyasya pūrvadrṣtagrahaṇamupayujyate, āropanīyasamānamithyāvastvantaropadarśakasya pūrvadarśanasamskārdvā-*



*reṇopayogād iti | 'svarūpeṇa marīcyambho mṛṣā vācaspatematam | anyathākhyātirīṣṭā 'syetyanyathā jagrḥurjanāḥ' | evaṃ tāvaddehādih, san, bhāsamānatvād ātmavat ityanumānasya marīcikodakādāu anaikāntatopapādanena dehāderanirvācyatvamuktam*

### Parimala

*mudhā'muṣyeti | nanu—deśāntarastharajatasya bhramaviṣayatvopapattau mudhā'bhinarajatakālpanam iti viparītameva vaktum yuktam, na ca—asannihitāparokṣye sannikarśakāraṇābhāvo doṣaḥ, jñānasya sannikarśatve vahnyanumitisthale pratyakṣodayaprasaṅgāt, samāne viṣaye pratyakṣasāmagryā balavattvāt, alaukikapratyakṣasāmagryapekṣayā anumitisāmagryā balavattve saṃśayottarabhramarūpapuruṣapratyakṣasthale anumitiprasaṅgāt; tasya sannikarśatvābhūyupagame 'pi yatra yatpūrvamavagataṃ tasmīnneva punardṛśyamāne tajjñānasya, yadavacchedena yatpūrvamavagataṃ tadvattvena dṛśyamāne tajjñānasya vā, tadupanāyakatvena pūrvam rajatatvavattvena rajatatvāvacchedakavattvena vā anavagate śuktiśakale rajatajñānasya sannikarśatvāyogāceti—vācyam; rajatāntarotpattāvapi saṃpratipannarajatakāraṇābhāvasya tulyatvāt | tadabhāve 'pi doṣavaśāt prasiddhavyāvahārikarajatavilakṣaṇaṃ prātibhāsikaṃ rajatamutpadyata iti kalpyate cet, sannikarśābhāve 'pi doṣavaśāt asannihitarajataviṣayaṃ prasiddhāramārūpajñānavilakṣaṇaṃ bhramarūpajñānamutpadyata ityeva kalpyatām; lāghavāt iti cet, ucyate—astī tāvatpratārakavākyāt 'śāsasya śṛṅgamasti' 'tadevaṃlakṣaṇaṃ arāṇye patitamavṣiṣya labdhum śakyam' 'tena cedam prajoyanam bhavati' ityevamrūpādāvāptamohasya tathāivārāṇyaṃ gatvā tadanveṣamāṇasyoktalakṣaṇakāṣṭhāśṛṅgāntarādīdarśane śāśāśṛṅgamidamityanubhavaḥ; asti ca svapne manuṣyapaśūpakṣivṛkṣādyanekarūpasya ekasyāvayavino'nubhavaḥ; na ca tatrāsannihitaviṣayatvaṃ kalpayitum śakyamityagatyā doṣavaśāt prātibhāsikasyaiva tasyotpattirāṅgikaraṇīyā; evamanyatra bhramasthale doṣasya viṣayotpattikāraṇatvak!ptau tathāiva rajatabhrame'pi saṃbhavati | jñānapratyāsattvyādyajanyarajatacākṣuṣapratyakṣamātre k!ptasya rajatacakṣuṣaṃyogasya rajatālokaṃyogasya ca kāraṇatvaṃ parityajya tasyāsannihitarajataviṣayatvaṃ na kalpanīyam [ ] nacābhinarajatotpattyaṅgikāre jalabudbudāderiva tasyotpattināśānubhavaprasaṅgaḥ, bhramakāle tasya prāksiddhapurovartitādātmyenānubhūyamānatayā utpattiyapratītyupapatteḥ; bādḥavatāre traikālikaniṣedhāyānubhūyamāntayā nāśāpratītyupapatteśca | naca kvacidutpadya kañcītkālam sṭhitasya tatra traikālikaniṣedhānupapattih, phalabalāt samānasattākayoreva pratiyogitadatyantābhāvayorvirodhāḥ, natu prātibhāsikavyāvahārikayoriti kalpanopapatteḥ |*

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