

Analysis of the Second and Fourth Definitions of Mithyātva in the Advaitasiddhi of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī

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Abstract This paper is a preliminary analysis of two among the five definitions of falsity (*mithyātva*) presented by Madhusūdana Sarasvatī (MS) in his *magnum opus*, the *Advaitasiddhi*. It is mainly focused on the second and fourth definitions, which at first sight appear to be mere repetitions of one another. The first definition of falsity examined is Prakāśātman’s: “falsity is the property of being the counter-positive of the absolute absence of an entity in the [same] locus in which it is perceived.” The other definition investigated was first given by Citsukha: “falsity is the property of being the counter-positive of the absolute absence residing in its own locus.” The mutual differences among these two definitions will be underlined following MS himself, as well as some other authors of the later Advaita Vedānta textual tradition.

Keywords Advaita Vedānta · *Advaitasiddhi* · *Mithyātva* · Falsity · Madhusūdana Sarasvatī

In this paper I shall go through a preliminary analysis of two of the definitions of falsity (*mithyātva*), as discussed by Madhusūdana Sarasvatī (MS, 1585–1640) in his magnum opus, the *Advaitasiddhi* (AS).¹ My contribution will thus focus only on the validity of the definitions (*lakṣaṇa*), primarily the second, nevertheless attempting a critical comparison with the fourth, but avoiding the more intricate discussion of the means of knowledge (*pramāṇa*). In fact, it is often believed that the fourth definition

¹ MS writes the AS, summing up all arguments of *Advaita Vedānta*, in order to provide answers to the keen objections and refutations proposed by the follower of Madhva’s Dvaita Vedānta Vyāsa Tīrtha (1478–1539) in his *Nyāyāmṛta* (NA).

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is nothing more than a repetition of the second one. I will attempt to answer this question after analysing both definitions.²

Introduction

It is customary in philosophical debate to undertake discussion on the basis of a *laukikanyāya*: *lakṣaṇapramāṇabhyāṃ hi vastusiddhiḥ* “Through the definition and the means of knowledge, indeed there is the establishment of an entity.”³

Keeping this in mind, MS at the beginning of his AS underlines that an unavoidable means for the establishment of non-duality is to first prove the falsity of the world: *tatrādvaitasiddher dvaitamithyātvaḥpūrvakatvād dvaitamithyātvam eva prathamam upapādanīyam* (AS3, p. 8).⁴ Thereafter, the next logical step to establish the falsity of the phenomenal world is to furnish the means of valid knowledge to determine the real nature of falsity (*mithyātva*). The *ācārya* first quotes an inference already utilized by previous Advaita followers, specifically by Ānandabodha Bhaṭṭāraka (twelfth century), also the author of the fifth form of *mithyātva* in the AS.⁵ Ānandabodha in his *Nyāyadīpāvalī* (NM/PM/ND, p. 1) writes: *vivādapadaṃ mithyā dr̥ṣyatvād/ yad ittham tat tathā/ yathobhayavādyavivādapadaṃ rajataṃ/ tathaitat tat tathā/...* MS slightly improves this inference, adding two other probans (*hetu*): *vimataṃ mithyā dr̥ṣyatvād, jaḍatvāt, paricchinnavāt sūktirūpyavat* (AS3, pp. 30–31), “The universe under consideration is false because it is an object of cognition, because it is insentient, because it is limited, just as the silver [superimposed] in the nacre” (Potter 1998, p. 540).

² For a better understanding of the article, I would like to remind the reader of a few of the Advaita tenets: *in primis* the doctrine of the triple ontological differentiation of reality (*sattātraya*) according to which *brahman* is the incontrovertible supreme reality (*pāramārthikasattā*); the phenomenal universe has an empirical level of reality (*vyāvahārikasattā*), while perceptual errors like the silver in the nacre, have an illusory rank of reality (*prātibhāsikasattā*). The second point is the conception of superimposition (*adhyaśa*), which motivates the debate on theories of error (known as *khyātivāda*). Specifically the Advaita view of *anirvacanīyakhyaṭi* maintains that the object cognised during a perceptual error is different from the real and the unreal, so it cannot be predicated as *sat* or *asat*, and is thus an undefinable entity: *sadasadvilakṣaṇānirvacanīya*. Lastly, we have absolute unreality, which is totally void of any kind of ontological rank: *asat, tuccha* or *alīka*, whose classical examples are the hare’s horn (*śaśaśṛṅga*), the barren woman’s son (*vandhyāputra*) or the sky-flower (*khapuspa*).

³ Although this statement seems to be quite common, it is only attested to, as far as I actually know, by Sāyaṇa’s *R̥gvedabhāṣyabhūmikā*, where the opponent (*pūrvapakṣin*) states the inability of the *siddhāntin* to find a flawless definition of Veda, adding to this very phrase a rather vague indication: *iti nyāyavidāṃ matam*, “this is the opinion of the knowers of logical reasoning.” The idea derives, however, from *Nyāyabhāṣya*, Introduction to I, 1, 3.

⁴ According to Advaita Vedānta, the pure consciousness (*śuddhacaitanya*) is self-revealing and self-illuminating, so no proof is necessary to establish it. As consciousness requires no proof, so the falsity of the world alone is to be established. With the establishment of the falsity of the world, the non-dual nature of the supreme reality is automatically established.

⁵ The fifth definition is attested to in the Ānandabodha Bhaṭṭāraka’s *Nyāyadīpāvalī* (NM/PM/ND, p. 1): *saty avivekasya mithyābhāvasya sādhyatvān nāprasiddhaviśeṣaṇatā, nāpasiddhānto 'pi, satyam abādhyam, bādhyam mithyeti tadvivekaḥ*, which results in the fifth definition proposed by MS: *sadviviktatvaṃ ca mithyātvam...*

Now, the probandum (*sādhya*) of an inference must be something whose existence has to be established in the subject (*pakṣa*) of that inference. Before this is done, in order to avoid the fault of non-establishment of the probandum, the *viśeṣaṇāsiddhi* or *sādhyaśiddhidoṣa*, the same *sādhya* must be established somewhere else.⁶ That previous establishment (*siddhi*) is seen in what is called a similar instance (*sapakṣa*), where the presence of the probandum is ascertained. So, in order to avoid the *sādhyaśiddhi* in the quoted inference, it is necessary to establish the nature of that falsity (*mithyātva*). To satisfy this requirement the *advaitācāryas* in different texts gave different definitions. MS has the merit not only of gathering the five foremost definitions, but of discussing them and ridding them of the doubts and flaws arisen over the centuries.

The everyday view is that the world of waking experience is the reality against which illusion and dream stand out as false. The Advaitins extend the concept of falsity to the world of practical experience as well. This leads to a disagreement between the Advaitins and the realists, such as the Naiyāyikas or the Mādhvas, who believe that falsity is attached only to some kinds of experience, such as hallucinations and dreams and their objects, but not to the physical world. For the Advaitins a false object is not merely the content of an illusion, but also the contents of our ordinary experience.

As mentioned above, there are five different definitions of falsity in Advaita literature.⁷ These are, of course, distinguishable one from another, but there is no hierarchy among them. Actually, they are alternative descriptions of falsity, independent of each other and equally valid. Obviously, when in many definitions the definiendum (*lakṣya*) is one and the same entity, the definitions (*lakṣaṇa*) are necessarily similar. What must be taken into account in giving different kinds of *lakṣaṇa-s*⁸ is the avoidance of the flaw of unnecessary repetition (*punaruktadoṣa*).⁹

⁶ The subject (*pakṣa*) of an inference is the qualified (*viśeṣya*) or the ground (*āśraya*) for two entities, the probandum (*sādhya*) and the probans (*hetu*), which must be both present in the *pakṣa*, so they are also called qualifiers (*viśeṣaṇa*) of the *pakṣa*.

⁷ In the history of Advaita Vedānta eleven definitions of falsity have been proposed (NA, pp. 21–22), but, after many centuries of continuous debate, only five of them were considered free of flaws (*nirdoṣa*). These five definitions are presented in the beginning of AS.

⁸ The first of these five definitions of falsity analysed by MS in the third chapter of the *prathamaparicheda* of the AS is: *sadasadanadhikaraṇatvarūpam anirvācyatvaṃ mithyātvam*, “to be false is the impossibility of being defined in the form of being the locus neither of a real entity nor of an unreal one.” This definition has been previously given by Padmapādācārya (ninth century) in his *Pañcapādikā*, as quoted in AS *mithyāśabdo ’nirvacanīyatāvacaṇaḥ* (PP/PPV, pp. 42–43; AS3, p. 48). On the other hand, Padmapādācārya, paraphrasing the purport of the word *anirvacanīya*, defines falsity as “not being the locus of either reality or unreality” (*sadasadanadhikaraṇatva*). Moreover, discussing this definition of falsity, MS clarifies what, according to him, is *sat*: *trikālābādhyatvaṃ sattvam*, “Reality is what is uncontrovertible in the three times,” while *asat* is: *kvacid apy upādḥau sattvena pratīyamānatvānadhikaraṇatvaṃ asattvam*, “To be unreal [means] not to be the [object] which is perceived as existing in any substratum whatsoever.” (AS3, pp. 50–51).

⁹ *Nyāyasūtra* (V.2.1) lists *punarukta* as the eleventh among the twenty-two points of defeat (*nigrahassthāna*). Later on, two *sūtras* are entirely dedicated to its explanation: *śabdārthayoḥ punarvacanam punaruktam anyatrānūvādāt* (V.2.14) and *arthād āpannasya svaśabdena punarvacanam* (V.2.15). With these two aphorisms it is clear that not only is the repetition of sound considered a fault, but also the repetition of the same concept through different words. See also Prets (2004, pp. 440–441).

Dvīṭyamithyātva

The second definition of falsity (*dvīṭyamithyātva*) is *pratipannopādhau traikālikaniṣedhapratiyogitvaṃ mithyātvam* (AS3, p. 94), “To be false is to be the counter-positive of the constant absence of an entity in the [same] locus in which it is perceived.”¹⁰ This definition was first proposed by Prakāśātman Yati (twelfth century) in the *Pāñcapādikāvivarāṇa* (PPV).

The intended meaning of Prakāśātman is that a thing is considered false (*mithyā*) if it is cognised in the locus where there is also its absence. In the nacre-silver illusion (*śūktirūpya*), the silver (*rajata*) is the counter-positive (*pratiyogin*) of its absence (*abhāva*) in the same nacre in which it is seen (*pratipanna*).¹¹

So, the falsity of an entity corresponds to its being cognised in some locus or other, and in that same locus the presence of the counter-positiveness (*pratiyogitva*) of the constant absence of that very entity should be recognized as well. The silver that appears in the locus—nacre—is false because it is negated in all three times in that very locus. The nonexistent is also eternally negated, but it is never present in any locus whatsoever. With the word *pratipanna* the author intends the object of knowledge “*svaprakāarakadhīśeṣya*,” an object of knowledge the characteristic of which is imparted by the object itself, as a jar is an object of the knowledge of a jar. That is, the locus has to be cognised as the qualified (*viśeṣya*) in which the counter-positive is cognised as a qualifier (*prakāra*). The hare’s horn (*śaśaśṛṅga*) obviously cannot be an object of knowledge, therefore the unreal cannot be *pratipanna*.

The constant negation (*traikālikaniṣedha*) is nothing but the constant absence (*atyantābhāva*): *traikālikasaṃsargāvachchinnapratiyogitāko ’bhāvaḥ*, “An absence whose counter-positiveness is delimited by a relation covering the three divisions of time” (TS, p. 62). In fact, the significance of constant absence is implied by its lack of any restriction of time, where prior (*prāgabhāva*) and subsequent absences (*dhvaṃsābhāva*) are to be excluded from the sphere of definition, the former being possessed of an end (*sānta*), and the latter of a beginning (*sādi*) (TS, p. 62). So the definition will be written thus: *svaprakāarakadhīśeṣyo ya upādhis tanniṣṭhāty-antābhāvapratiyogitvaṃ mithyātvam*. After that, the definition must be examined for concordance (*samanvaya*) with the classical instance of perceptual error (*bhrama*): the illusory silver cognised in the nacre, which is expressed through this statement: *idaṃ rajatam*, “This is silver.” Normally the word *sva* is intended to mean the entity to which *lakṣaṇa* must apply. So here the silver is intended, while

¹⁰ I’d like to draw the attention of the reader to the specific use of the term *upādhi* as locus. As far as I know, this usage is restricted to this definition of *mithyātvam* and was previously used only by Prakāśātman. Neither the author of the *Pāñcapādikāvivarāṇa*, nor his commentators, gave an explanation of this peculiar implication of the term *upādhi*, even if they seem to utilize it in the sense of *adhikaraṇa* or *adhiṣṭhāna*. In the *Viṭṭhaleṣī*, a commentary on *Laghucandrikā*, we find the derivation (*nirukti*) of the term: *upa samīpe ādhīyate ’sminn ity upādhir iti* (AS3, p. 94), so the prefix *upa*, seems to mean “near”, or, I would guess, “upon”, the other prefix *ā*, can be glossed as *samantāt* implying an idea of totality and completeness, while the root *dhā* means “to put, to pose.” I wish to thank Professor Eli Franco for drawing my attention to this. See also footnote 17.

¹¹ PP/PPV, pp. 106–107.

the word “this,” *idam*, signifies the *svaprakāarakadhīviśeṣyaḥ*, the subject or the locus qualified by the knowledge¹² whose modality is that of the object under investigation—here of the silver—and in which resides the counter-positiveness of its constant negation: that is the falsity of the silver (Bhattacharya 1992, p. 53; Śukla 2004, pp. 9–10). Similarly, the constant absence of the universe is predicated of that same *brahman* where the universe is said to be cognized, as in the scriptural passage “There is no multiplicity here” (*neha nānāsti kiñcana, Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad, IV.4.19*). Therefore, the counter-positiveness of the constant absence of the universe in *brahman* is ascertained to be the falsity of the universe.

In his *Laghucandrikā* commentary on the AS, Brahmānanda Sarasvatī defines the term *pratipannopādhi* as follows (AS3, p. 94): *pratipannaḥ svaprakāarakadhīviśeṣyaḥ ya upādhir adhikaraṇaṃ tanniṣṭho yas traikālikaniṣedho atyantābhāvas tatpratiyogitvam ity arthaḥ*, where *pratipanna* means what is qualified (*viśeṣya*) by the cognition (*dhī*) whose qualifier (*prakāra=viśeṣaṇa*) is the false (*mithyā*) thing. Such a qualifier is the substratum, the “*pratipanna-upādhi*.” The counter-positive of the constant negation in the substratum is called *mithyā*.

This definition is objected to by the opponent, who, having some perplexity in relation to the nature of the constant negation (*traikālikaniṣedha*), first identifies in it four different flaws. He argues that if such negation is real then one has to admit a second reality other than *brahman*, so there is a fault of abandoning the Advaita position (*advaitahāni*). On the other hand, if this *traikālikaniṣedha* were to be taken as illusory (*prātibhāsika*), then there would be a flaw in having proved what is already proven (*siddhasādhana*), namely, in the Mādhva *siddhānta*, which accepts the same idea.¹³ The third objection deals with the fact that if the negation were to be interpreted as possessed of phenomenal reality (*vyāvahārika*), then the character of the universe, of being liable to contradiction (*bādhitvatva*), would present the universe itself as the counter-positive (*pratiyogin*) of that very absence, rendering it real. That is just the opposite of what the *Advaitins* intend to prove (*arthāntara*), since a negation of a negation (*abhāvābhāva*) establishes only the reality of the counter-positive.¹⁴ Besides, the *śruti*, “*neha nānāsti kiñcana*” would be regarded as yielding a false proposition (*atattvāvedaka*), hence, there would be its lack of authority (*aprāmāṇyāpatti*) (Bhattacharya 1992, pp. 53–55; Gupta 2006, pp. 29–31).

The MS refutes these four objections one by one. *In primis*, if the negation were viewed as *pāramārthika*, it would be regarded as identical with *brahman*, the

¹² It should be noted here that *dhī*, or *vṛtti*, the particular modality of the internal organ (*antaḥkaraṇa*), does not mean any kind of knowledge, but valid knowledge which is phenomenal (*vyāvahārika*). Knowledge cannot be taken here in the ultimate sense (*pāramārthika*), for *pāramārthika* knowledge is undifferentiated, being that which does not possess any subject-predicate relation at all (VP, pp. 46–49).

¹³ The Mādhvas accept the reality of the world. If the negation were only an apparent one, then the object which is negated is not really sublated, hence it would still be present. Therefore a *siddhasādhana* flaw is involved (Mookerjee 1969, pp. 206–207). This means that in cases of an erroneous cognition or an illusion such as denying the pot in its parts, the constant absence of the erroneously cognized negation is already established for the realists. In other words, if you say the negation is illusory, as the negation of a pot in its two halves (*kapāladvaya*), such a position is already admitted by other systems.

¹⁴ In this context the opponent takes the term *tātvika* as meaning “absolutely real”. Thus, we have a twofold division in *tātvika* and *atātvika*, where the *atātvika* part is itself again twofold: *vyāvahārika* and *prātibhāsika*.

substratum (*adhiṣṭhāna*) of that negation. In fact, it is a recognised tenet in both schools of *Mīmāṃsā*¹⁵ that the absence has the nature of its own substratum. So, even if the negation was considered as absolutely real, the *advaitahāni* flaw wouldn't be involved. The argument is thus contradicted. If the negation were viewed as unreal, it would certainly be not apparent (*prātibhāsika*), but empirical (*vyāvahārika*),¹⁶ because even if through this negation an empirical entity were liable to be contradicted (*bādhya*), its counter-positive would not be real. For example during dreams the illusory negation of an equally illusory object does not result in the confirmation of its counter-positive, i.e., the illusory object: *svāpnārthasya svāpnanīṣedhena bādhadarśanāt* (AS3, p. 101). Therefore, the negation of a negation does not result in the confirmation of the reality of the counter-positive. In fact, if we see a dream-object and during that dream that very object is negated, then when the dreamer awakes, both the dream-object and its negation will be contradicted (*bādhitā*). So, if the negation is contradicted, it does not mean that such negation will confirm the reality of its counter-positive. Only when the negation possesses a lower ontological level than its counter-positive does it fail to oppose the reality of the counter-positive: *...niṣedhyāpekṣayā nyūna-sattākatvam, prakṛte ca tulyasattākatvāt katham na virodhitvam?* (AS3, p. 101), “...but here, in this precise case, two entities of the same level of reality are involved, so how can there be any contradiction?” Such negation does not imply the absolute reality of the universe, for the negation (*niṣedha*) and its counter-positive are equally liable to contradiction, having both the same feature: the character of being an object of knowledge (*drśyatva*). Thus, also the *arthāntara* flaw is ultimately denied.

Concerning the charge of predicating a false proposition attributed to the *advaitaśruti*, MS finds that is untenable, because if *śruti* asserts the unreality of an unreal object, it is only stating a matter of fact. Consequently, the unauthoritativeness (*aprāmāṇikatva*) flaw charged by the opponent does not arise.¹⁷

Another point to be taken into account is the following argument raised by the opponent (Sharma 1994, pp. 25–27): If the universe were negated by its own nature, then there wouldn't be any differentiation between the world and the absolutely unreal, for if the universe is the counter-positive of the constant negation in the same

¹⁵ The Bhāṭṭa *Mīmāṃsaka*-s, *Naiyāyika*-s, and *Mādhva*-s accept that the absence of the pot on the ground is cognised as separate from the ground. But the *Prābhākara Mīmāṃsaka*-s, hold that the absence of the pot is really identical to the ground itself. The *abhāva* is the cognition of the substratum alone. When we say “there is no pot on the ground,” we are really only saying that we perceive the ground alone where a pot was supposed to have been present. We do not perceive such a thing as “absence of pot” on the ground. Therefore, “absence of pot” is the same as the ground alone, the substratum. Here the pot, which is supposed to have been present but not seen, is the counter-positive (*pratiyogin*).

¹⁶ However the *Advaitin* doesn't accept an apparent nature (*prātibhāsika*) of negation of the reality of the world, otherwise the negation itself would be contradicted, affirming the reality of the world as counter-positive. For instance, in the illusion of silver in nacre, the silver is illusory but the negation of the silver, at the end of the illusion, cannot be such. Therefore, to ultimately negate the silver the negation must be accepted as *vyāvahārika*. Although an empirical (*vyāvahārika*) entity is liable to contradiction (*bādhya*), at any rate such negation does not result in the confirmation of its counter-positive. That is why the MS says: *atātvikatve 'pi na prātibhāsikah, kintu vyāvahārikah!* (AS3, p. 99–100), and does not treat the *prātibhāsika* option.

¹⁷ AS3, pp. 110–112.

locus in which it is cognised, it will also be the object of the constant negation in all the other loci. Hence, if we also negate it in the locus in which it appears, then the conclusion will be that it is absent everywhere, or its constant absence resides in each and every locus (*sarvatra traikālikaniśedhapratīyogitva*). How, then, can the Advaitin's requirements regarding the false entity's difference from the unreal (*asadvailakṣaṇya*) be maintained?¹⁸

The *siddhāntin*'s reply conforms to the definition of absolutely unreal (*asat*), as *kvacid apy upādihau sattvena apratīyamānānarhatvam asattvam*.¹⁹ In fact, even though the character of the counter-positiveness of the constant absence being everywhere is common to the unreal (*alīka*) and to what is false (*mithyā*), *asat* is called that which is never cognised as existent in any locus whatsoever, as in the case of the son of a barren woman (*vandhyāputra*). But this is not the case when we consider the nacre-silver or the world, because before their definitive sublation, they are cognised as existing in their own loci. This is precisely what is indicated by the word “*upādhi*,” which means existing referent (*sadarthaka*).²⁰ In any event, before the realisation of *brahman* (*brahmasākṣātkāra*) neither *śuktirūpya*, nor the world (*prapañca*) are possessed of this kind of unreality. Therefore, there is not the flaw of being equated with the absolutely unreal. On the contrary, the *Śūnyavādins*,²¹ in accordance with their *asatkhyāti*, do not agree that the ground of a perceptual error is *sat*, but *asat* itself (*asadadhiṣṭhānabhrama*),²² for this reason their conception of

¹⁸ AS3, pp. 134–136. I am here obliged to skip the discussion of *asat* as *nirupākhyā*. The discussion of *vikalpavṛtti* is, however, worth mentioning. Brahmānanda quotes the *Yogasūtra* of Patañjali (I.9): *śabdajñānānupātī vastuśūnyo vikalpaḥ*, “*vikalpa* is [that kind of *cittavṛtti*] devoid of any real object, which arises merely from a word (*śabda*) and a cognition (*jñāna*).” In any verbal cognition three factors are to be considered: *śabda*, the word; *artha*, the meaning of the word; and *jñāna*, or *vṛtti*, the cognition resulting from the word. In *vikalpa*, such as that associated with a word like *śaśāśṛṅga* or hare's horn, we hear the word and, as a consequence, some cognition occurs in the mind, but without corresponding meaning.

¹⁹ See footnote 7.

²⁰ Brahmānanda writes (AS3, pp. 140–141): *sadarthakena abādhyārthakena/ pratīpannapadayukteneti śeṣaḥ/ upādhipadasya svasamīpavartini svadharmasamkrāmakārthakatvāt, svasamīpavṛttidrīṣyatvāvachchedena svagatasattvādidharmabhramajanakatvasya prakṛte tātparyaviśayatvāt, sarvādhiṣṭhānam eva prakṛte upādhipadārtha iti bhāvahaḥ*, “*Sadarthakena* [means] that which has an unsublatable meaning, and that which is united with the word ‘*pratīpanna*’ [must be added as] the rest of the sentence. Seeing as how the word *upādhi* means that which permits the recognition of the property of the entity [perceived] in what is before it; in the case in question, owing to the limitation by the liability to be known (*drīṣyatva*) which resides within the entity in front, therefore [the word *upādhi*] is the object of the meaning of that which generates the illusion of a property such as existence and the like in the entity known. Hence, here, the implicit meaning of the word *upādhi* is indeed the substratum of everything.” (In my translation I follow *Viṭṭhaleśī*).

²¹ Brahmānanda clarifies the Advaita assertion *vis-a-vis* the Bauddha (AS3, p. 139): *nanu śūnyavādinō mādhyaṃikasya mate sarvaṃ mithyeti svikāre 'pi ghaṭaḥ sann ityādīdhīḥ svikriyate sarvānubhavasiddhāyās tasyā apalāpāsambhāvāt*.

²² Although the Advaitin says the world is an illusion superimposed on *brahman*, he carefully points out that the illusion involves the erroneous identification of the world with the unsublatable (*trikālabadhya*) *brahman*. Without a cognition sublating the world (*bādhakajñāna*), its illusion will persist. In contrast, there is no such requirement for some Buddhist schools. According to them whatever exists does so only momentarily. Anyway it is not so for the Mādhyamikas. For them, the sublation of whatever appears to exist is not in any way dependent on *bādhakajñāna*. At any rate, the *parijñāna* of Madhyamaka can be thought as a kind of *bādhakajñāna*. (I owe this point to the suggestion of Prof. Franco.)

sattva or existence of the world is only the capacity to produce effects (*arthakriyākāritva*). Accordingly, in nacre-silver as well as in the world, which are capable of being cognised as existing in some real substratum, the definition of the *asat* given by MS is not applicable. So the objection is groundless (Bhattacharya 1992, pp. 88–89).²³

At this point in the text, the realist opponent resumes the assertions of his challenger. If the final meaning of the word *upādhi* were considered to be a real locus (*sadadhikaraṇa*), then the entire *mithyātva* definition will be “the counter-positiveness of the constant absence whose locus is any real entity.”²⁴ This demarcates the border between *mithyā* and *alīka*: the false entity is superimposed onto a real locus, but the unreal has no locus at all. Due to this assertion, the Naiyāyikas raise another charge of *siddhasādhana*, the flaw of proving what has already been proven, against the Advaitin’s definition of falsity, regarding the so-called *avṛttipadārthas*, like *ākāśa*, *kāla*, *dik* and *ātman*, which are not false but have no locus. These entities can also be predicated as negated for all time in every real locus, even if they are not false (Chaudhuri 1955, pp. 165–171).²⁵ To rid himself of this charge, the *siddhāntin* is obliged to specify something in the definition: “Whatever be the locus of a real entity, the counter-positiveness of the constant negation residing in it is its falsity.”²⁶

If this reformulation was the intended meaning, due to the disestablishment of a locus for *ākāśa* and the like, it is not possible for the word *yat* to intend them. So, even if this *siddhasādhana* is avoided, another *siddhasādhana* cannot be avoided. In fact, when the ground is the locus of the pot by a contact relation (*saṃyoga-saṃbandha*), in that same locus, there is the absence of the pot by an inherence relation (*samavāyasambandha*), and so the counter-positive of that absence is that very pot. Therefore, the *pratiyogitva* property resides in the pot, and this has already been proven. For this reason MS must show this definition in a new light. *Ergo* the definition must also mention the relation (*saṃbandha*): “What is the locus of an entity due to a certain relation, through that very relation the counter-positiveness of the absolute relation residing in it, is its falsity.”²⁷ If this was the intended purport of the definition, the *siddhasādhana* about the pot, etc., is avoided, due to the fact that in the locus in which the pot resides by contact relation, there isn’t the absence of the pot because of that same contact. At any rate, although the previous flaws are contested, the *siddhasādhana* in the non-pervading entities (*avyāpyavṛtti*) like contact, etc. (*saṃyogādī*) (Ingalls 1988, pp. 73–74; Bhattacharya 1980, pp. 308–309, n. 87), would be unavoidable. In fact, in the common example of the tree in which a monkey sits by a contact relation *saṃyogasambandha*, in the tree-monkey contact (*vṛkṣakapisamyoga*) the particular word “contact,” *saṃyoga*,

²³ AS3, pp. 138–150.

²⁴ *yāvat sadadhikaraṇāntyantābhāvapratyogitvam*, (AS3, p. 150).

²⁵ MS directly gives a definition of the *avṛtti* entities, as counter-positive whose constant absence is *kevalānvaṃyin*, always and everywhere present; or, in other words, whose absence resides everywhere: *avṛttiṣu gaganādiṣu kevalānvayyatyantābhāvapratyogīṣu...*

²⁶ *yadadhikaraṇam yat sat tanniṣṭhātāntābhāvapratyogitvam tasya mithyātvam* (AS3, p. 150).

²⁷ *yena saṃbandhena yad yasya adhikaraṇam, tena saṃbandhena tanniṣṭhātāntābhāvapratyogitvam ity asya mithyātvam* (AS3, p. 150).

represents a quality (*guṇa*), which, in the Nyāya view, has for a locus a substance (*dravya*), where it is found to be present by an inherence relation (*samavāya-saṃbandha*). Thus in the locus, in the substance that is the part of the tree limited by the branches (*śākhāvachedena*), the contact with the monkey resides by inherence relation. In the part of the tree limited by the roots (*mūlāvachedena*) there is the absence of that contact with the monkey, by that same inherence relation. So in this case, falsity as intended by the Advaitins is already established.²⁸

This forces MS to add another qualification to the definition: the delimitor or delimiting factor (*avacchedaka*):

The falsity of something is to be the counter-positive of the constant absence present in that very locus where there can be the cognition of the locusness of something by whichever particular relation and by whichever particular delimitor, and by that same particular relation, by that same particular limiting factor [its subsequent negation as well].²⁹

This is explained as: the locusness of the contact of the monkey is cognised by inherence relation in the upper portion of the tree, and in the lower part of same tree. If in the lower portion there is the absence of the contact of the monkey, in the top part of the tree the contact of the monkey isn't absent. For this reason, this kind of falsity was not previously established in the contact, etc., so there is no occasion for the *siddhasādhana* flaw. This means that an entity is false when it is cognised while standing on a real locus (*sat*) through a particular relation, in a specific time and place, and that same entity is simultaneously absent in that very locus, in that very time, by that same relation.

Much later in the text, MS reminds us of another issue: the negative content of the knowledge *śūktir iyaṃ na rajatam*, “This is nacre, not silver,” being empirical, is only able to sublimate the *vyāvahārikatva* of the silver, but not its *prātibhāsikatva*. Consequently, the sublation eliminates the mere *vyāvahārikatva* of the silver, so that it may appear as possessed of an apparent reality (*prāṭīkasattā*). But this is not true, because with the immediate correct knowledge (*aparokṣapramā*) *iyaṃ śūktiḥ*, “This is nacre,” the *ajñāna*, material cause of the erroneous silver, is sublated and the *prātibhāsikatva* is also negated. In this way, through the mediate knowledge of the substratum (*adhiṣṭhāna*) the sublation of ignorance as the material cause of the illusion is impossible, even when removing the *vyāvahārikatva*, its appearance does remain (*anapahārāt*). Just as a man suffering from bile, upon tasting molasses will exclaim “This molasses is bitter,” even though, having previously eaten it, he is

²⁸ See, for instance, the *Anumānakaṇḍa* the *Nyāyasiddhāntamuktāvalī* commentary on *kārikā* 69 regarding the *pratyogiviyadhikaraṇābhāva*: *ayaṃ vṛkṣaḥ kapisaṃyogī (kapisaṃyogavān) etadvṛkṣatvāt* (NSM, pp. 488–492). See also the useful dictionary of Prof. Jha (2001, p. 68) where *avyāpyavṛttitva* is explained as the state of being of non-pervaded occurrence or the state of being collocated with its own absence: *svātyantābhāvasamānādhikaraṇatvam*, *Nyāyapradīpa* 87.17; *Nyāyakośaḥ* (Jhalakīkar 1978, pp. 99–100) *svapratyogitvasvasamānādhikaraṇa etadubhayasaṃbandhena abhāvavtam*; see also *Nyāyasūtra* II.2.17 with *bhāṣya*.

²⁹ *yena saṃbandhaviśeṣeṇa yena ca avacchedakaviśeṣeṇa yadadhikaraṇatāpratītir yatra bhavitum arhati, tenaiva saṃbandhaviśeṣeṇa tenaiva avacchedakaviśeṣeṇa tadadhikaraṇakātyantābhāva-pratyogitvaṃ tasya mithyātvam/* (AS3, p. 151).

aware that it is sweet. This kind of perception keeps on till the sickness is finally removed (Bhattacharya 1992, pp. 100–103).³⁰

Likewise, according to the Advaita Vedānta tenets, only a direct knowledge of the substratum can destroy ignorance (*ajñāna*), but the indirect knowledge only takes away its *vyāvahārikatva*. Before the attainment of the direct knowledge of *brahman*, the *vyāvahārikatva* of the world is sublated by the mediate knowledge arising out of the study of the scriptures and other means, but its appearance still continues. When, at the end, by direct realization of the supreme knowledge, *ajñāna*—pertaining to the substratum—is sublated, only in that very moment does the *prātīkatva* also cease.³¹

Furthermore, it cannot be said that this definition is over-pervasive (*ativyāpta*), since *brahman* is absent in the cognised locus (*upādhi*) of space and time. So *brahman* becomes, in this sense, the counter-positive of its absence in all space and all time, as testified by *śruti*: *sa eva adhistāt sa upariṣṭāt* (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, VII.25.1), where it results in being localised either below or above, rendering the two kinds of spaces, the lower and the upper, as the cognised locus (*prati-pannopādhi*) of the omnipervasive (*sarvavyāpi*) *brahman*. What's more, the same scripture repeatedly proclaims that no relation whatsoever is possible between *brahman* and the universe: *asaṃgo hy ayaṃ puruṣaḥ* (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, IV.3.15–16), *asaṃgo nahi sajjate* (*ibidem*, III.9.26, IV.5.15). *Brahman*, consequently, is eternally negated in the loci where, according to the *śruti*, it is supposed to stand. Thus, *brahman* also can be judged as false (Bhattacharya 1992, pp. 104–107).

To this last attack from the opponent, MS replies with his usual certitude, remarking that *brahman*, being attributeless (*nirdharmaka*), cannot possess even counter-positiveness of an absence as a property. Accordingly, the text *satyaṃ jñānam anantaṃ brahma* (*Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, II.1.1) cannot be considered as predicating the attributes of truth (*satyam*), knowledge (*jñānam*) and infinitude (*anantam*) of the supreme *brahman*, in contradiction (*vyākopa*) with its absence of any relation whatsoever (*asaṃgatva*). Rather, these constitute its intrinsic nature (*svarūpa*) and are to be considered in an apophatic way (*niṣedhamukhena*), as absences of limitation because absence (*abhāva*) is identical with its locus.³² Thus, *satya* is the negation of untruth, unreality and falsity in *Brahman*, and *jñāna* is the negation of unconsciousness (*acaitanya*) in it. In this way, self-luminosity (*svaprakāśatva*) means absence of illumination by others (*paraprakāśyatvābhāva*); while the infinitude (*ananta*) indicates three types of infinitude: eternity (*nityatva*) as absence of limitation by time (*kālaparicchedābhāva*); all-pervasiveness (*vibhutva*) meaning absence of limitation by place (*deśaparicchedābhāva*); and plenitude (*pūrṇatva*) meaning absence of limitation by things (*vastuparicchedābhāva*).³³

³⁰ AS3, p. 155.

³¹ AS3, p. 155.

³² The older Vedāntins also held the same views; in the introduction of his commentary on *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* Śaṅkara says in effect that the differentiation of absence is only apparent or illusory (*vikalpa*).

³³ The acceptance of three kinds of limitation (*pariccheda*) is a common notion among the Advaita scholars; they are: limitation due to time (*kālakṛtapariccheda*), that due to place (*deśakṛtapariccheda*) and that due to things and forms (*vastukṛtapariccheda*).

Since absence is not different from the substratum, this means that there is no implication of dualism. Thus, *brahman* is free from all positive and negative attributes.³⁴ Concluding, the author emphasizes that this definition of falsity is ultimately flawless.

Caturthamithyātvā

The fourth definition (*caturthamithyātvā*) is ascribed to Citsukhācārya (thirteenth century), author of the *Tattvaprādīpikā* (TP): *svāśrayaniṣṭhāyantābhāvapratiyogitvaṃ mithyātvam*, “to be false is to be the counter-positive of the constant absence residing in its own locus.” With this definition Citsukha intends that *mithyā* is what appears in a place where it doesn’t exist:

To begin with, the definition is not impossible: “The falsity of all entities is the counter-positiveness in relation to the constant absence, in what is considered to be their locus (stanza 7).” To wit threads, etc., are considered as the locus of objects like cloth and such, so the counter-positiveness of the constant absence residing in them [= threads] is their [= clothes’] falsity. The cloth’s existence is not possible anywhere else [than in the threads], and if it is not possible even there [in those threads] then, according to the maxim of the shoes on the neck (*galepādūkānyāya*),³⁵ the result would indeed be their falsity.³⁶ Nor can it be said there is a lack of pervasion of the definition because that [existence in a locus] is not present in the eternal entities which don’t reside in a substratum,³⁷ since it is accepted that whatever is different from *brahman* is an effect and therefore resides in a cause, just as in the empirical domain [it is accepted that] the silver and the like has as its locus the nacre, etc. Nor is there over-pervasion because the [absolutely] real *brahman* is without a *substratum*, and therefore it is not possible even to doubt the counter-positiveness of a constant absence pertaining to its own locus. Nor is there an *arthāntara* flaw in real entities such as conjunction, sound and the like, which are accepted by others as existing partly [in their own locus] because if we accept the co-existence of the presence and absence in the same locus, such a condition would arise everywhere,³⁸ as a consequence in the world water will be given in

³⁴ AS3, pp. 156–157.

³⁵ The *galepādūkānyāya* refers to a situation where an ill-intentioned person refuses to go away from a house after repeated requests, and subsequently the police can’t help but intervene with force, beating him on the neck with a shoe, making him run away (Sharma 1989, p. 133). Here it is the same, if the cloth doesn’t exist even in the only place in which it could, then we are forced to consider it false.

³⁶ The existence of the cloth is not possible elsewhere than in the threads, since it is an effect, so it has to inhere in the inherent cause (*samavāyikāraṇa*). Therefore since effect cannot exist elsewhere except in its locus, if it does not exist even in its own locus it is *mithyā*.

³⁷ Here the reference is to the aforementioned *avṛtipadārtha-s*: *ākāśa*, *kāla*, *dik* and *ātman*.

³⁸ The condition mentioned by the text is the problematic co-existence of the presence and the absence of the same entity in the same locus at the same time.

folded hands to [each] opponent....³⁹ Therefore, in this way [in those cases] there is no application of the definition of falsity.”⁴⁰

At this point in the discussion, the opponent tries again to object to the convictions of Citsukha, asking about the nature of the constant absence (*atyantābhāva*) whose counter-positive (*pratiyogin*) is found in its own locus. Should it be considered real (*prāmāṇika*) or illusory (*prātibhāsika*)? If it were to be taken as real, then the basic tenet of non-duality will be damaged, as the counter-positive (*pratiyogin*) of a real constant absence must also be considered real. As proof of this, when the contradicting knowledge arises, the illusion of the nacre-silver ceases to be perceived and in that nacre the qualifier (*prakāra*) of the silver (*rajata*), which is the “silverness” (*rajatatva*), is negated. Thus, the *rajatatva* must be seen as the counter-positive of its illusory absence in the silver, but it is not false (*mithyā*), since *rajatatva* is real elsewhere (Śāstrī 1964, pp. 126–128).

In the objection raised about the absolute reality of the constant absence, the reply of Citsukha is different from what we have seen in the second definition. According to him if the constant absence is real, the Advaita doctrine would be not affected, as writes Potter (2006, p. 643):

...the truth of *advaita* is established by the instruments of knowledge of truth (*tattāvedakapramāṇa*). So it is not vitiated by entities or nonentities that are established by empirical instruments of knowledge (*vyāvahārika-pramāṇa*). For example, in the illusory perception of (shell) silver the contact between the “this” part of the shell and the silver-form which is presented in the perception “this is silver,” is a counterpositive of the contact’s absence; and it is veridical....

On the other hand, the other hypothetical objection concerning the illusory status of the constant absence also doesn’t stand to reason, since Advaita does not accept any veridical absence (Sharma 1974, pp. 59–62; Potter 2006, pp. 641–645).

The Naiyāyikas might continue to argue that the locus of an entity cannot also be the locus of its eternal negation. Therefore in the later development of Advaita, the author of the manual entitled *Vedāntaparibhāṣā*, Dharmarājādharīndra (seventeenth century), in his interpretation of the Citsukha’s definition of falsity (*mithyātva*), was

³⁹ “The folded hands” refers to the Hindu practice of offering water (*tarpaṇa*) to the ancestors in the *añjalī mudrā*. Here this metaphorical expression means that all the opponents will perish, will die, compelling someone to give them water.

⁴⁰ Citsukha gives ten definitions, which are objected to by the *pūrvapakṣin*. He replies to every attack of the opponent, refusing all the flaws, even if his own idea of falsity is expressed only in the tenth definition. Citsukhī’s text runs thus: *na tāval lakṣaṇasaṃbhavaḥ/ sarveṣāṃ api bhāvānāṃ svāśrayatvena saṃmate/ pratiyogitvam atyantābhāvaṃ prati mṛṣātmatā// 7 // tathā hi – paṭādināṃ bhāvānāṃ svāśrayatvenābhimatās tantvādayo ye tanniṣṭhātyantābhāvapratiyogitvaivaṃ teṣāṃ mithyātvam/ na hi teṣāṃ anyatra sattā saṃbhavinī/ tatrāpi cet sā na syāt tadā galepādukānyāyena mṛṣātvam eva paryavasyeta/ na ca nirāśrayeṣu nityeṣu bhāveṣu sā nāstīti lakṣaṇasyāvṛptiḥ; brahmavyatirikṭasya kṛtsnasya kāryatayā kāraṇāśritatvasya vyavahāradaśāyāṃ rajatāder iva śuktyādyāśritatāyāḥ svīkāraṭ/ nāpy ativyāptiḥ; satyasya brahmaṇo nirāśrayatvāt tasya tanniṣṭhātyantābhāvapratiyogitvāyāḥ śāṅkitum apy aśakyatvāt/ na ca paraiḥ pradeśavṛttitayābhyupagatesu saṃyogaśabdādiṣu satyeṣv api lakṣaṇasya sadbhāvād arhāntarata; bhāvābhāvayor ekādhikaraṇatvābhyupagame sarvatraiva tathābhāvāpater virodhasya jagati dattajalāñjalitāprasamgāt/... tad evaṃ na mithyātvanirukṭiḥ/ (TP/NP, pp. 67–68).*

bound to add the word *abhimata* (“assumed, considered, supposed”) and the adverb *yāvat*, bearing a connotation of totality (Chakraborty 1967, p. 71). Furthermore, in this case the presence is of a supposed (*abhimata*) entity which is therefore itself supposed; but the absence is a fact, at least from the empirical (*vyāvahārika*) point of view.⁴¹

Stimulated by the criticism of Vyāsātīrtha, MS intends this definition in a peculiar way. The *Nyāyāmṛta*’s passages are straightforward objections against the fourth definition.⁴² Here, the argument regards the refined definition given by MS, leaving aside what I think was the most important objection: the charge that the fourth definition is a mere replica of the second one.

As a matter of fact, the definition seems essentially the same as the second. However, to differentiate them MS alters the qualifier (*viśeṣaṇa*) and the qualified (*viśeṣya*), so the meaning is (AS3, pp. 182–183): *svātyantābhāvādhikaraṇa eva pratīyamānatvam*, “[the characteristic of actually] being cognised in the locus of its absolute absence.” The second definition, by contrast, means the property of being the counter-positive of the absence which resides in that which is cognised as the locus of the counter-positive.

Basically, the arguments that the opponent should raise are exactly the same as those used against the second definition, namely the fault of abandoning the Advaita position (*advaitahāni*), the flaw of proving what is already proven (*siddhasādhana*), the flaw of proving something different from what is intended to be proved (*arthāntara*), etc., which are to be answered as in the second definition: *dūṣaṇaparihāraḥ pūrvavat* (Sharma 1994, pp. 36–38; Pandurangi 2004, pp. 105–106).

The opponent states that it is impossible to find the *atyantābhāva* of something in a place where it is present either through contact relation (*saṃyogasambandha*) or inference relation (*samavāyasambandha*). Otherwise difficulties like the impossibility of being the material cause (*upādānatva*) will arise: if there is the constant absence of a pot in two halves (*kapāladvaya*) through inference relation, then the *kapāla* cannot be the material cause of the pot. What’s more, if something having the absence of a pot can be the material cause of a pot, then threads (*tantu*) can also be the material cause of a pot.⁴³

MS challenges this objection, arguing that in time (*kāla*), both the counter-positive as well as its absence can co-exist: when the pot exists in its parts, at the same time its total negation exists in the threads. Thus, if the pot and its absence could co-exist in time, there is no difficulty in maintaining that the pot and its negation could co-exist in the same space (*dik*) too. So there is no contradiction with being the material cause, as the prior absence is also there. In other words, MS is impelled to accept that something can be considered the material cause of an effect when it has the prior absence (*prāgabhāva*) of an effect. Here, the two halves

⁴¹ In the *Anumānapariccheda* of the *Vedāntaparibhāṣā* the definition is widened, adding two *viśeṣaṇa*-s, to this: (VP, pp. 239–240): *mithyātvaṃ ca svāśrayatvenābhimatayāvanniṣṭhātyantābhāvapratiyogivam/*

⁴² NA, p. 42.

⁴³ AS3, pp. 184–185.

(*kapāladvaya*) possess the prior absence of the pot. Therefore, the parts constitute the material cause of the pot. Furthermore, the threads, possessing the prior absence of cloth, are material cause only of the cloth and not of the pot (Revathy 2004, pp. 64–65).⁴⁴

At this point, another objection can be raised: if the universe becomes absolutely absent, it can be confused with the hare's horn, or some other unreal entities (*asatpadārtha*). The fact that it does not exist in any substratum means that there is its absolute negation in every substratum. But this leads the definition towards an excessive pervasion (*ativyāpti*) in the *asat* (Revathy 2004, p. 69).⁴⁵

The answer remains the same: what appears in the substratum of its absolute negation is nothing but what merely appears as existent (*sattādātmyena pratīyamānatvam*), hence the development of the definition as “whatever is being cognized as having the same nature as existent with its absolute negation, is false.” The unreal (*tuccha*) and false entities (*mithyā*) are different because *tuccha* never appears to exist in any locus, but *mithyā* appears to exist, at least in *brahman*. So, the definition would be better expressed as: *svātyantābhāvādhikaraṇa eva sattādātmyena pratīyamānatvaṃ mithyātvam*, “[For something] to be false is to be perceived as having the same nature as an existing [thing] in a locus of its absolute absence.”

Lastly, the *pūrvapakṣin* may argue that even *asat* is positive and may appear as an object of cognition. In fact, the text *asad evedam agra āsīt* (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, VI.2.1) certifies that the unreal is known as existent. Hence, even changing the sentence to *sattādātmyena pratīyamānatvam* there would be over-pervasion (*ativyāpti*) in *asat* (Chakraborty 1967, p. 73).

But the Advaitins wouldn't interpret the text in such a way. The sentence *asad evedam*, does not give rise to a cognition having reality as its qualifier (*sattva-prakāarakajñāna*) in an unreal entity (*asatpadārtha*). The text simply means “In the beginning Reality was not” (*sat na agra āsīt*): it negates the entire sentence *sad eva somya agra āsīt* (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, VI.2.1). To be more precise, the sentence *asad āsīt* should be re-formulated as “*na sad āsīt*”, which is merely the denial of the statement *sad eva somya agra āsīt*, a refutation that could be attempted by someone like the Bauddhas, intending that, prior to manifestation, *sat* did not exist. Here the particle *a-* in the word *asad* does not mean any adjective implying negation, it is only a negative conjunction. So *asad* is not *na sat* but it is *sat na* (Revathy 2004, p. 70).⁴⁶

In conclusion, the definition is not too wide to include the unreal, because “appearing in the locus of its absence,” is intended to indicate something as “appearing as real” (*sattvena pratīyamāna*). Therefore this definition of Citsukha reformulated by MS, “falsity of an object consists of its being absolutely negated

⁴⁴ See footnote 43.

⁴⁵ As stated in the *Bālabodhinī* (AS2, p. 148).

⁴⁶ This *asad āsīt* is similar to *aghaṭo ghaṭaḥ*, “The non-pot is a pot.” Here there is no cognition that has non-pot as the *viśeṣya* and potness as the *viśeṣaṇa*. Similarly in *asad āsīt*, there the cognition which has *asad* as the *viśeṣya* and *sattva* as its *prakāra* does not arise, so the definition is not (*ativyāpta*) (AS2, p. 149).

within the very substratum where it is manifested,” according to the author is also flawless.⁴⁷

Sāmīkṣā

As summarily stated above, the opponents of the Advaitins reveal that the second definition and the fourth are mere replicas of each other. Therefore, besides the *punaruktadoṣa*, the flaws highlighted in the fourth definition are the same as those stated in the second one. In order to escape the *punaruktadoṣa*, the author finds a way to maintain a reciprocal difference between the two.

The second definition of falsity is: *pratipannopādhau traikālikaniṣedhapratiyogitvaṃ mithyātvam*, while the fourth definition is *svāśrayaniṣṭhātāntābhāvapratiyogitvaṃ mithyātvam*. In trying to trace a correspondence between them, I find that these definitions strictly follow each other: by the term *sva* of the fourth the word “cognized” (*pratipanna*) is intended; the term substratum (*āśraya*) of the fourth, stands for locus (*upādhi*) in the second; the word *niṣṭha* used by Citsukha corresponds to the locative case-ending (*saptamī*) in the word *upādhi*; the constant absence (*atyantābhāva*) of the latter is clearly the constant negation (*traikālikaniṣedha*) of the former; while the counter-positiveness (*pratiyogitva*) is common to both the definitions.

At any rate, MS himself responds to this very objection, affirming that the intended purport of the compound *svāśrayaniṣṭhātāntābhāvapratiyogitvaṃ* is that the false thing has the property of being cognised in the very locus (*adhikaraṇa*) of its constant absence. Therefore, if the intended meaning was “*mithyātva* consists in the appearance of an object in the very substratum wherein the object is not present”⁴⁸ then this would be the differentiating factor from the second definition of falsity.

In the fourth definition it is said that a thing is false when there is its constant absence in each and every locus where it appears. On the other hand, in the second definition the resulting purport is that an entity is false because its apparent cognition is wherever there is its constant negation. To be more explicit, an object is illusory because it is absolutely negated in each and every substratum of its appearance. In other words, there is an invariable relation between appearance and absolute negation. This means that the cognition of this very entity is the pervaded term (*vyāpya*) and its constant negation (*atyantābhāva*) is the pervading term (*vyāpaka*). But the second definition states that an object is illusory because wherever there is the constant absence of that object there is its appearance. Therefore this case is the reverse of the previous one: the absolute negation of the object is *vyāpya* and its appearance or cognition is *vyāpaka*. From another perspective, according to the fourth definition the object that appears in a substratum is the *viśeṣya* (substantive) and the property of being constantly negated in that substratum is the *viśeṣaṇa* (adjective). But according to the second definition, what is

⁴⁷ AS3, pp. 189–192.

⁴⁸ *svātyantābhāvādhikaraṇa eva pratīyamānatvaṃ mithyātvam* (AS3, pp. 182–183).

absolutely negated is the *viśeṣya* and the characteristic of the constant absence appearing in its substratum is the *viśeṣaṇa*. Accordingly, the form of the fourth definition will be: *svātyantābhāvavavyāpyaṃ svaprakāraakapratīviśeṣyatvam*, “a qualifying property whose cognition has as its qualifier the cognized entity, [and that qualifying property] is pervaded by the constant absenceness of that [same] cognized entity,” while the form of the second one is: *svaprakāraakapratīviśeṣyatvavyāpakābhūtātyantābhāvapratīyogitvam*, “to be the counter-positive of a constant absence which is pervaded by the qualifying property whose cognition has as its qualifier the entity cognized.” For this reason, there is no repetition of the second definition in the fourth, because basically there is a reversal (*vyatyaya*) in the qualified-qualifier relation (*viśeṣaṇaviśeṣyabhāva*) (AS1, p. 44; Śukla 2004, pp. 64–70).⁴⁹

So, the MS’s reformulation states: what appears only (*eva*) in the locus of its own constant negation is false. In the present context the word “only” (*eva*) means that the appearance of what is false in a certain locus is the *vyāpya* property and the constant negation of it in the same locus is the property which is *vyāpaka*: an entity is false only if the character of that very entity is being constantly negated in its own locus (Bhattacharya 1992, pp. 144–147).

To sum up more simply, I find that while in the fourth definition the falsity of a thing is its being absolutely absent in the very locus in which it presents itself, in the second one falsity is actually what stands eternally negated in the very locus in which it appears. In this definition, the substantive (*viśeṣya*) is what stands as eternally negated and the rest of the definition is the qualifying clause (*viśeṣaṇa*). In the fourth definition, what appears or presents itself as real is the substantive, and the rest of the definition, i.e., “in the very locus in which it is absolutely absent” is the qualifying cause (Mookherjee 1969, pp. 286–289).

The Balabhadra’s *Siddhivivākyā* deals with the problem by giving a clearer explanation of *svātyantābhāvādihikaraṇa eva pratīyamānatvam*. Here, the distinction of the adverb *eva* is not the lack of establishment of the locus of the constant absence of the object examined, as the opponent wants to prove. On the contrary, the intended meaning of the expression is that the counter-positiveness of the constant absence is limited by the relation of the object of cognition standing in the whole [locus] cognized as the substratum of that same object.⁵⁰ Thus the underlined difference concerns the distinction of the loci in which an entity appears. In fact, in the fourth definition the accent is on the relation delimiting the counter-positiveness (*pratiyogitāvachhedakasambandha*) through which the object conceived resides in

⁴⁹ In the body of the text there is no explicit mention of the reversal of the qualified-qualifier relation (*viśeṣyaviśeṣaṇabhāva*), or the pervaded-pervader relation (*vyāpyavyāpaka*) in the two definitions. This reading is arrived at by the intended meaning of the fourth definition, which is then glossed by the commentators. Actually, even Brahmānanda is silent about this reversal, which is briefly mentioned in the *Viṭṭhaleśī* commentary of the *Laghucandrikā*, as the only possible rebuttal of the repetition flaw. The passage of the *Viṭṭhaleśī* runs like this: *svāśrayatvena pratīyamānāvavanniṣṭhety arthaḥ/ ata eva idaṃ pratīpannetyādyuktāv apaunarukyāya viśeṣyaviśeṣaṇabhāvavatyasena vyācāṣṭe – tacceṭi.../*, “The meaning is: what abides in whatever is cognized as its substratum. Therefore he himself comments on this [issue] through a reversal of the relation qualified-qualifier, in order to avoid the repetition of the second definition starting with *pratīpanna*, etc., thus [he moves further saying] *tacca...*” (AS3, p. 182).

⁵⁰ AS3, p. 183.

its supposed locus, and it is that which is to be negated. For instance, the Naiyāyikas and the Mādhvas assert that a certain object, like a pot, may either remain or be eternally absent in a certain locus, be it the two halves (*kapāladvaya*) or the ground, and yet this very pot may not be regarded as false. For them the pot is present in its parts in the relation of inherence (*samavāya*) and eternally absent in those same parts through the relation of contact (*saṃyoga*), and yet, in spite of this dual nature, it is not false.

However the Advaitins regard the pot as false and try to reconcile the definition of falsity having considered this case, proposing a more refined expression of the definition. According to them a false entity is eternally absent in the locus in the same relation through which it is also present therein. If the pot is present in its parts by a relation of inherence, it is also eternally absent there through the same relation. The opponent may reply, saying that if a pot is absent in the *kapāladvaya* by inherence relation *samavāyasambandha*, the two halves cannot be considered its parts (*avayava*) any longer, for an *avayava* is that in which the whole (*avayavin*) remains present through the relation of inherence. The Advaitins answer that the part-whole (*avayavāvayavin*) situation is not determined by the whole which is inherent in its parts, rather, whatever is a part of a whole, is so because in that *avayava* stands the prior absence of the whole. As, for instance, a half (*kapāla*) is a part of a pitcher (*ghaṭa*), because in that *kapāla* the *ghaṭa* is not yet present (Chakraborty 1967, pp. 71–72; Karunakaran 1980, pp. 95–96).

Against this, following Brahmānanda's formulation of the cognized locus (*pratīpannopādhi*), in the second definition “the substratum whose shape is qualified by a cognition whose qualifier is the entity cognized” (*svaprakāradhīviśeṣyarūpādhikaraṇa*) seems to be intended, which focuses attention on the distinguishing character present in the locus as well as on the property of the entity cognised in it.

Conclusion

In this paper I attempted to clarify two of the most discussed definitions of falsity in the entire panorama of Advaita Vedānta literature. After a brief survey of the main objections raised by the opponents, I tried to analyze and comment upon the replies given by MS, with the aim of clarifying some of the difficult passages. Having summarily treated the validity of the second and fourth *lakṣaṇa*-s, according to MS they turned out to be free from the three main flaws affecting a definition: lack of pervasion (*avyāpti*), over-pervasion (*ativyāpti*) and impossibility (*asambhava*). The main concern I had to face was the extreme similarity between the two definitions, which the opponent interprets as a flaw of mere repetition (*punaruktadoṣa*).

The avoidance of this flaw forces MS to reformulate the definition: *svāty-antābhāvādhikaraṇa eva pratīyamānatvaṃ mithyātvam*, compelling him to set aside the previous definition. So, the real differentiation appears in the intended meaning (*tātparyā*) of the fourth definition, rather than in the one expressed by the definition itself.

In the last section of the paper, the *samīkṣā*, I have pointed out that, in order to rebut the charge of the *punaruktadoṣa*, rather than MS, it is the comment of the *Laghucandrikā*, the *Viṭṭhaleśī*, that explains how to read the difference between the definitions. According to the *Viṭṭhaleśī*, MS simply exchanges the positions of the qualifier (*viśeṣaṇa*) and the qualified (*viśeṣya*) in the second and the fourth definitions of *mithyātva*. Accordingly, this pair of *viśeṣaṇa* and *viśeṣya* makes no ontological difference, but it does make a pragmatic difference to how we describe the matter.

Frankly speaking, the two definitions state the same thing only with a difference of emphasis. This is attested to also by the fact that the flaws that MS is compelled to refute are the same in both cases. My personal view is that since all five definitions look at the meaning of *mithyātva* from different points of view, they are all virtually the same in their literal meaning (*vācyārtha*), even if their intended meanings (*tātparya/vivakṣā*) are modelled according to the opponents' arguments. Nevertheless they ultimately indicate the same ontological entity in terms that are essentially similar without being congruent: falsity is that which is presented to consciousness but later on contradicted.

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