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.  

**Introduction**

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

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: *tatrādvaitasiddhār dvaitamithyavāpūrvaśvabhāvatād dvaitamithyātvam eva prathamam upapādaṃyan (AS3, p. 8).* 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 (*mithyātvā*). The *ācārya* first quotes an inference already utilized by previous Advaita followers, specifically by Ānandabodha Bhattāraka (twelfth century), also the author of the fifth form of *mithyātvā* in the AS. Ānandabodha in his *Nyāyadīpāvalī* (NM/PM/ND, p. 1) writes: *vivādapadāṃ mithyā drṣṭvatvād/ yad ittham tat tathā/ yathohayāvādyavivādapadāṃ rajatam/ tathaitat tat tathā/...* MS slightly improves this inference, adding two other probans (hetu): *vimatāṃ mithyā drṣṭvatvād, jaḍatvāt, paricchinnatvāt śūktirūpyavat* (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).

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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 (*adhyāsa*), which motivates the debate on theories of error (known as *khyātiavāda*). Specifically the Advaita view of *anirvacanīyatvā* 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: *sadasadvilaksanānyānaḥ*... Lastly, we have absolute unreality, which is totally void of any kind of ontological rank: *asat, tucchac or alīka*, whose classical examples are the hare’s horn (*sāśāṛhnga*), the barren woman’s son (*vandhyaputra*) or the sky-flower (*khapus*).

3 Although this statement seems to be quite common, it is only attested to, as far as I actually know, by Śāyaṇa’s *Ṛgvedabhāṣyabhumikā*, where the opponent (*pūrvapāksin*) states the inability of the *siddhāntin* to find a flawless definition of Veda, adding to this very phrase a rather vague indication: *iti nyāyavidam 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 (*suddhacaitanya*) 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 Bhattāraka’s *Nyāyadīpāvalī* (NM/PM/ND, p. 1): *saty avivekasya mithyābhāvasya sādhyaśvān nāprasiddhavīśeṣanāt, nāprasiddhānto ’pi, satyam abādpīyam, bāḍhyam mithyeti tadvivekahiḥ*, which results in the fifth definition proposed by MS: *sad-viviktatvām ca mithyātvam...*
Now, the probandum (sādhyā) 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 sādhyāsiddhidoṣa, the same sādhyā must be established somewhere else. 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 sādhyāsiddhi in the quoted inference, it is necessary to establish the nature of that falsity (mithyātvā). To satisfy this requirement the advaitācāryas in different definitions 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. 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 is the avoidance of the flaw of unnecessary repetition (punaruktadosa).

6 The subject (pakṣa) of an inference is the qualified (viśeṣya) or the ground (āśraya) for two entities, the probandum (sādhyā) 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 (nirdosha). 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 prathamapariccheda of the AS is: sadasadanadhikaraṇatvarūpam anivrācyatvam 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 mithyāsābdo’nivrācyatvātavacanah (PP/PPV, pp. 42–43; AS3, p. 48). On the other hand, Padmapādācārya, paraphrasing the purport of the word anivrācyat vyāsā, 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: trikalabādhyatvaṃ sattvaṃ, “Reality is what is uncontrovertible in the three times,” while asat is: kvacid api upādhaḥ sattvena pratyāmāvatvāvānadhikaraṇatvaṃ asatvam, “To be unreal [means] not to be the [object] which is perceived as existing in any substratum whatsoever.” (AS3, pp. 50–51).

9 Nyāyāstra (V.2.1) lists punarukta as the eleventh among the twenty-two points of defeat (nigrahashthāna). Later on, two sūtras are entirely dedicated to its explanation: sābdarāhayoh punarvacanam punaruktaṃ anyatraśrvātādī (V.2.14) and arthād āpānasya svāśabdena 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).
Dvitiyamithya¯tvā

The second definition of falsity (dvitiyamithya¯tvā) is pratipannopādau traikāli-
kanisedhapratiyogitvaṃ mithya¯tvam (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 Prakāśatman Yati (twelfth
century) in the Pañcapitalavivarana (PPV).

The intended meaning of Prakāśatman is that a thing is considered false (mithya¯
if it is cognised in the locus where there is also its absence. In the nacre-silver
illusion (śukti¯rupya), 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 cognized in some locus or
other, and in that same locus the presence of the counter-positiveness (pratiyogita)
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 “svaprapkārakadhiśeṣya,” 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 (viṣeṣa) in which the counter-
positive is cognised as a qualifier (prakāra). The hare’s horn (śāsaśrīga) obviously
cannot be an object of knowledge, therefore the unreal cannot be pratipanna.

The constant negation (traikālikanisedha) is nothing but the constant absence
(ayantabhāva): traikālikasamsargāvachinapratiyogitako ’bhāvah, “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
(dhvamsābhāva) 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: svaprapkārakadhiśeṣyo ya upādhis tanniṣṭhātya-
antābhāvaapratiyogitvaṃ mithya¯tvam. 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: idam rajatam, “This is silver.” Normally the word sva is intended to
mean the entity to which laks̐an 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 mithya¯tvā and was previously used only by Prakāśatman.
Neither the author of the Pañcapitalavivarana, 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 adhikarana or
adhishāna. In the Vīṭhaleśi, a commentary on Laghucandrikā, we find the derivation (nirukti) of the
term: upa samipe adhiyate ’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 samanvā 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.

the word “this,” idam, signifies the svaprakārakadhiśeṣyāḥ, the subject or the locus qualified by the knowledge 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, Bhṛdāranyaka 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 Laghucandrīkā commentary on the AS, Brahmananda Sarasvatī defines the term pratipannopādhi as follows (AS3, p. 94): pratipannah svaprakārakadhiśeṣyāḥ ya upaḍhīr adhikaraṇām tanniṣṭho yas traikaḷikanisēdho avantabhāvas tatpratīyogitvam ity arthah, where pratipanna means what is qualified (vīśeṣya) by the cognition (dhi) 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 (traikaḷikanisēdha), 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 traikaḷikanisēdha were to be taken as illusory (pratibhāsīka), then there would be a flaw in having proved what is already proven (siddhāṇa), namely, in the Mādhva siddhānta, which accepts the same idea. 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 (bādhītatva), 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 (abhaṅgabhāva) establishes only the reality of the counter-positive. Besides, the śruti, “neha nānāsti kiñcana” would be regarded as yielding a false proposition (atattvavedaka), hence, there would be its lack of authority (apurāmānyaśpati) (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

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12 It should be noted here that dhi, or vṛtti, the particular modality of the internal organ (antahkarana), does not mean any kind of knowledge, but valid knowledge which is phenomenal (vyāvahārika). Knowledge cannot be taken here in the ultimate sense (paramārthika), for paramārthika 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 siddhāṇa 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 cognised 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 tattvika as meaning “absolutely real”. Thus, we have a twofold division in tattvika and atattvika, where the atattvika part is itself again twofold: vyāvahārika and pratibhāsīka.
substratum (adhisthāna) of that negation. In fact, it is a recognised tenet in both schools of Mīmāṁsā\textsuperscript{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 (pratibhāsika), but empirical (vyāvahārika),\textsuperscript{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 svāpnaniśedhena bādhadarsanāt (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 (badhita). 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: ...niśedhyāpeksayā nyūnasattākatvam, prakṛte ca tulyasattākatvāt katham na virodhitvā (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 (niśedha) 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.\textsuperscript{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

\textsuperscript{15} The Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṁsaka-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 Prabhakara Mīmāṁsaka-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 (pratīyogin).

\textsuperscript{16} However the Advaitin doesn’t accept an apparent nature (pratibhāsika) 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: atītvikate ‘pi na pratibhāsikah, kintu vyāvahārikah (AS3, p. 99–100), and does not treat the pratibhāsika option.

\textsuperscript{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 traikālikaniṣedhapratīyogītva). How, then, can the Advaitin’s requirements regarding the false entity’s difference from the unreal (asadvaitakāṣya) be maintained?\(^{18}\)

The siddhāntin’s reply conforms to the definition of absolutely unreal (asat), as kvacid apy upādhau 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 (brahmāsāksātkāra) neither śuktiyūpya, nor the world (prapañcā) 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 asatkhya, do not agree that the ground of a perceptual error is sat, but asat itself (asadadhiśṭhānabhrama),\(^{22}\) for this reason their conception of

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\(^{18}\) AS3, pp. 134–136. I am here obliged to skip the discussion of asat as nirupākhyā. The discussion of vikalpavṛtti is, however, worth mentioning. Brahmananda quotes the Yogasūtra of Patanjali (I.9): śabdajñānānupatt vastusūnyo vikalpa, “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 sāsārī 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.

\(^{20}\) Brahmananda writes (AS3, pp. 140–141): sadarthakena abādhyārthakena/ pratipannapadayaukteneti śeṣaḥ/ upādhipadasya svasamīpavartini svadharmasamāṅkrānakārthakatvāt, svasamipavartitṛdyayāvāvacechedena svagataasattvādharbharmayajanaakatyavyasya prakṛte tātparyāvishayatvāt, sarvādhiśṭhānam eva prakṛte upādhipadārtā iti bhāvāḥ, “Sadarthaka [means] that which has an unsublatable meaning, and that which is united with the word ‘pratipanna’ [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 (drśyatva) 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 Vīthaleśīnt.

\(^{21}\) Brahmananda clarifies the Advaita assertion vis-a-vis the Baudhā (AS3, p. 139): nanu śūnyavādino mādhyaṃmikasya mate sarvāṃ mātīyeyi svrkāre ‘pi ghaṭāh sann ityādīdīḥ svrkriyate sarvānubhavasid-dhāyās tavā apalāpāsamābhbavāt./

\(^{22}\) 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 (trikālābhāvyā) 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 Mādhyaṃkās. For them, the sublation of whatever appears to exist is not in any way dependent on bādhakajñāna. At any rate, the purijñāna 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 (artha-kriyākāritva). 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 (Bhattacharyya 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 mithyātvā 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 siddhāśādhanā, the flaw of proving what has already been proven, against the Advaitin’s definition of falsity, regarding the so-called avṛtti-padarthas, like akāśa, 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 akāśa and the like, it is not possible for the word yat to intend them. So, even if this siddhāśādhanā is avoided, another siddhāśādhanā cannot be avoided. In fact, when the ground is the locus of the pot by a contact relation (samyogasambandha), 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 pratiyogitvā 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 (sambandha): “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 siddhāśādhanā 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 siddhāśādhanā in the non-pervading entities (avyāpyavruttī) like contact, etc. (samyogādi) (Ingalls 1988, pp. 73–74; Bhattacharyya 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 sambandha, in the tree-monkey contact (vrksakapisamyoga) the particular word “contact,” samyoga,

23 AS3, pp. 138–150.
24 yaḥvat sadadhikaraṇātyantābhāva-pratīyogītvam, (AS3, p. 150).
25 MS directly gives a definition of the avṛtti entities, as counter-positive whose constant absence is kevalānvayin, always and everywhere present; or, in other words, whose absence resides everywhere: avṛttī guṇāṅgisu kevalānvayvatantarābhāva-pratīyogīṣu...
26 yaḍadhikaraṇaṁ yat sat tannīḥṣṭayantābhāva-pratīyogītvam tasya mithyātvam (AS3, p. 150).
27 yena sambandhena yad yasya adhikaraṇaṁ, tena sambandhena tannīḥṣṭayantābhāva-pratīyogītvam ity asya mithyātvam (AS3, p. 150).
represents a quality (guna), which, in the Nyāya view, has for a locus a substance (dravya), where it is found to be present by an inherence relation (samavāya-sambandha). Thus in the locus, in the substance that is the part of the tree limited by the branches (śākha vacchedena), the contact with the monkey resides by inherence relation. In the part of the tree limited by the roots (mūla vacchedena) 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.\textsuperscript{28}

This forces MS to add another qualification to the definition: the delimiter 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 delimiter, and by that same particular relation, by that same particular limiting factor [its subsequent negation as well].\textsuperscript{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 śuktir iyam na rajatam, “This is nacre, not silver,” being empirical, is only able to sublate 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 (prātītikasattā). But this is not true, because with the immediate correct knowledge (aparokṣapramā) iyam śuktiḥ, “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

\textsuperscript{28} See, for instance, the Anumānakhaṇḍa the Nyāyasiddhāntamuktaivali commentary on kārikā 69 regarding the pratiyogivyayadhikaranabhava: ayaṁ vrksah kapisanyogt (kapisanyogavān) etadvrksatvat (NSM, pp. 488–492). See also the useful dictionary of Prof. Jha (2001, p. 68) where avyāpyavrttīva is explained as the state of being of non-pervaded occurrence or the state of being collocated with its own absence: svayantabhavasamānadhikaranatvam, Nyāyapradīpa 87.17; Nyāyakośaḥ (Jhalakikar 1978, pp. 99–100) svapratibhāgivatvasasāmānādhiśāranya etadbhayasāmbandhena abhāvatvatam; see also Nyāyasūtra II.2.17 with bhāṣya.

\textsuperscript{29} yena sambandhaviśeṣena yena ca avacchedakaviśeṣena yadadhikaranatpratītīt vatra bhāvītum arhati, tenaiva sambandhaviśeṣena tenaiva avacchedakaviśeṣena tadadhikaranakātyantabhāva-pratītivitvam 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 prātītikatva 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 adhastat sa upariṣṭat (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 cognized locus (pratipannopādhi) of the omnipervasive (sarvavyāpī) brahman. What’s more, the same scripture repeatedly proclaims that no relation whatsoever is possible between brahman and the universe: asamgo hy ayaṁ puruṣaḥ (Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad, IV.3.15–16), asamgo 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 satyaṁ jīnānam anantaṁ brahma (Taittirīya Upaniṣad, II.1.1) cannot be considered as predicating the attributes of truth (satyaṁ), knowledge (jīnānam) and infinitude (anantaṁ) of the supreme brahman, in contradiction (vyākopa) with its absence of any relation whatsoever (asamgangatva). Rather, these constitute its intrinsic nature (svarūpa) and are to be considered in an apophatic way (nisedhamukhena), 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 jīnāna is the negation of unconsciousness (acaitanya) in it. In this way, self-luminosity (svaprakāśatva) means absence of illumination by others (paraprakāśyatvabhāva); while the infinitude (ananta) indicates three types of infinitude: eternity (nityatva) as absence of limitation by time (kālakāraṇaḥ; all-pervasiveness (vibhutiva) meaning absence of limitation by place (deśaparicchedabhāva); and plenitude (pūrṇatva) meaning absence of limitation by things (vastuparicchedabhāva). 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 (kālakāraṇapariccheda), that due to place (deśakāraṇapariccheda) and that due to things and forms (vastukāraṇapariccheda).
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. Concluding, the author emphasizes that this definition of falsity is ultimately flawless.

Caturthamithyātva

The fourth definition (caturthamithyātva) is ascribed to Citsukhācārya (thirteenth century), author of the Tattvapradīpikā (TP): svāsravyānīṣṭhātyantābhāvapratiyogitvam 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), the result would indeed be their falsity. 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, 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, as a consequence in the world water will be given in

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 (samavāyikāraya). 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 avṛtti-pādārtha-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... Therefore, in this way [in those cases] there is no application of the definition of falsity." 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 (pratīyogin) is found in its own locus. Should it be considered real (prāmānika) or illusory (pratībhāsika)? If it were to be taken as real, then the basic tenet of non-duality will be damaged, as the counter-positive (pratīyogin) 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 (rajeta), which is the “silverness” (rajaṭatva), is negated. Thus, the rajaṭatva must be seen as the counter-positive of its illusory absence in the silver, but it is not false (mithyā), since rajaṭatva is real elsewhere (Sāstrī 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 (tattvavedakapramaṇa). So it is not vitiated by entities or nonentities that are established by empirical instruments of knowledge (vyāvahārika-pramaṇa). 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, Dharmarāja dhvarindedra (seventeenth century), in his interpretation of the Citsukha’s definition of falsity (mithyātva), was

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39 “The folded hands” refers to the Hindu practice of offering water (tarpana) to the ancestors in the añjali 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 tāvā lākṣaṇaṁ aṁbhaṁ/ sārveṣām api bhāvānāṁ svārṣrayatvena saṁmāte/ pratīyogitvam atyantābhāvaṁ prati mṛṣāmatā/ 7 // tatha hi — paṭāḍānāṁ bhāvānāṁ svārṣrayavenāṁhitāṁ tantvadayo ye tanniṣṭhāyantābhāva-paramāyogitavāṁ teṣāṁ mithyātvam/ na hi teṣāṁ anyatra sattāṁ saṁbhavinīt/ tatrāpi cet sā na syāt tadā galepādakānyāyenā mṛṣātva eva paryavasyet/ na ca nirāśrayetvāḥ nityoṣu bhāveṣu sā nāstīti lākṣaṇasyāvāpyātīḥ; brahmaṇavatīrkitasya kṛṣṇasya kāryataya kāraṇāśīrtavasya vyavahāradsāvayām rajatārde īva šuktyāśiriśatayāh svakarta/ nāpy ativāpyātīḥ; satyasva brahmaṇo nirāśrayatvāt tasya tanniṣṭhāyantābhāva-paramāyogitāvāṁ śāṅkum apy aśākyavāt/ na ca paraṁ pradesāsvṛttitayābhupalagatasya śāṃyogasabdādāśi satyasya api lākṣaṇasya sad-bhāvād ardhantarata; bhāvābhāvavāy ekādhikaranaṁ bhupalagame sarvatvaṁ tathābhāva-patter virodhasya jagāti dattajalāṇjalitāprasaṁgatī/ tad evaṁ na mithyātvaniruktīḥ/ (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 sup-
p\uppose; but the absence is a fact, at least from the empirical (vyāvahārika) point of view.41

Stimulated by the criticism of Vyāsatīrtha, 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 prattyamānatvam, “[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: dāṣaṇaparīhāraḥ 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 (samyojasambandha) or inherence relation (samavāyasambandha). Otherwise difficulties like the impossi-

bility of being the material cause (upādānatva) will arise: if there is the constant absence of a pot in two halves (kapāladvaya) through inherence 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 (dīk) 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): mithyātvam ca svāśrayatvenābhimatayāvanniṣṭhātyantābhavaprātiyogitvam/.

42 NA, p. 42.

(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 pratīyāmānatvam), 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: svātyantābhāvādhiṣṭhānaṇa eva sattādātmyena pratīyāmānatvam 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 pratīyāmānatvam 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-prakārakajñāna) 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 asat does not mean any adjective implying negation, it is only a negative conjunction. So asat 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 pratīyāmāna). 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 asat āsīt is similar to aghato ghatah, “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 asat āsīt, there the cognition which has asat 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 punaruktadosa, the flaws highlighted in the fourth definition are the same as those stated in the second one. In order to escape the punaruktadosa, the author finds a way to maintain a reciprocal difference between the two.

The second definition of falsity is: \(pratipannopādhau traikālikaniśedha-\)pratiyogitvaṁ mithyāvam, while the fourth definition is \(svāśrayaniśṭhātyantāḥbhāvapratiyogitvaṁ mithyāvam\). 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 (aśraya) of the fourth, stands for locus (upādhi) in the second; the word niṣṭha used by Citsukha corresponds to the locative case-ending (saptami) in the word upādhi; the constant absence (aṭyantābhāva) of the latter is clearly the constant negation (traikālikaniśedha) of the former; while the counter-positiveness (pratiyogītva) is common to both the definitions.

At any rate, MS himself responds to this very objection, affirming that the intended purport of the compound \(svāśrayaniśṭhātyantāḥbhāvapratiyogītvaṁ\) is that the false thing has the property of being cognised in the very locus (adhiśāraṇa) of its constant absence. Therefore, if the intended meaning was “mithyāvā 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 (aṭyantābhāva) 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


\(^{48}\) svātyantābhāvādhikaraṇa eva pratīyamāṇatvaṁ mithyāvām (AS3, pp. 182–183).
absolutely negated is the višeṣya and the characteristic of the constant absence appearing in its substratum is the višeṣaṇa. Accordingly, the form of the fourth definition will be: svāyantābhāvavoṣyāpyaṃ svaprakārapratītivīṣeṣyatvam, “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: svaprakārapratītivīṣeṣyatvavāpākībhūtāntābhāvapratiyogitvam, “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 (višeṣaṇavišeṣyabhāva) (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 (višeṣya) is what stands as eternally negated and the rest of the definition is the qualifying clause (višeṣaṇa). 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 Siddhivyākhyā deals with the problem by giving a clearer explanation of svāyantābhāvābhārāṇa 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] cognised 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 (pratīyogitāvacchedakasambandha) 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 (višeṣyavišeṣaṇabhāva), or the pervaded-pervader relation (vyāpyavāpāka) in the two definitions. This reading is commented 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 Laghucandrika, as the only possible rebuttal of the repetition flaw. The passage of the Viṭṭhaleśī runs like this: svāsyaṣayaṃ prātyamānāyāvannīṣhyet arthah/ ata eva idam pratipannetadhyukṭaṃ aparāmaraṇāya višeṣyavišeṣaṇabhāvavāpyatvasena vyācaṣte – tacce.../. “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 pratipanna, etc., thus [he moves further saying] tace...” (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 Mādhyavas 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 (avayavavayavin) 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 (pratipannopādhi), in the second definition “the substratum whose shape is qualified by a cognition whose qualifier is the entity cognized” (svaprakāra-kadhīviśeṣyarūpādhikaraṇa) 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 (atīvyāpti) and impossibility (asāṃbhava). 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 (punaruktadosa).

The avoidance of this flaw forces MS to reformulate the definition: svāty-antābhāvādhikaraṇa eva pratīyamānatvam mithyātvam, compelling him to set aside the previous definition. So, the real differentiation appears in the intended meaning (tātparya) of the fourth definition, rather than in the one expressed by the definition itself.
In the last section of the paper, the samīksā, I have pointed out that, in order to rebut the charge of the punaruktadosa, rather than MS, it is the comment of the Laghucaṇḍrikā, 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 mithyāṭvā. 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 mithyāṭvā from different points of view, they are all virtually the same in their literal meaning (vaćyārtha), even if their intended meanings (ārttaryavyakṣa) 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.

References

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