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CONTENTS

ARTICLES

- GIACOMO BENEDETTI
The figure of the Ṛṣi in the Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa p. 9
- KAPIL KUMAR BHATTACHARYYA
*Science communication in the Indian perspective:
insights from the Indian experience* p. 67
- HORST BRINKHAUS
Sūryavaṃśa - Somavaṃśa - Harivaṃśa p. 83
- KLAUS KARTTUNEN
*India as a mirror of otherness in the classical and
medieval West (The establishment and development of
an idea of India, of a myth called India)* p. 95
- TAKAHIRO KATO
Bhāskara's concept of jñānakarmasamuccaya p. 137
- FRANK KÖHLER
RV 3.26: poetry and the multifarious nature of Agni p. 155
- NATALIA R. LIDOVA
Rasa in the Nāṭyaśāstra – Aesthetic and Ritual p. 187
- GIANNI PELLEGRINI
*Dream and Khyativāda: a Survey on analogies and
differences*..... p. 213
- ALEXANDRA R. ZINOVYEVA
*Heteroglossia and Code-switching in Śūdraka's
Mṛcchakaṭika”: Why does the theatre director speak
different languages?* p. 237
- List of contributors*..... p. 257

REVIEWS

- HARI DUTT SHARMA, *Glimpses of Sanskrit Poetics and Poetry*. Raka Prakashan, Allahabad, 2008 (Pierre-Sylvain Filliozat) p. 263
- VASUGUPTA, *Gli aforismi di Śiva con il commento di Kṣemarāja (Śivasūtravimarśinī)*, a cura di Raffaele Torella, Milano, Adelphi (Piccola Biblioteca 641), 2013 (Bettina Baumer) p. 267

GIANNI PELLEGRINI

DREAM AND *KHYATIVĀDA*: A SURVEY
ON ANALOGIES AND DIFFERENCES¹

In India oneirology assumes multifarious undertones which pass through the most disparate fields. This investigation skims just a few features peculiar to epistemology (*pramāṇasāstra*) *tout court*. So, this general survey shall *in primis* be confined to that section of the “theory of knowledge” concerning direct perception (*pratyakṣa*) and its relations with the “theory of error”. It will be mainly focused on Advaita Vedānta, which also looks at the dream (*svapna*) with an unmistakable attitude strictly coherent with its own constitutive tenets.

I.1. Introductory Considerations

The analysis begins with the observation of the classical model of the inference (*anumāna*) used by Advaita Vedānta to demonstrate the falsity and illusory character (*mithyātva*) of the phenomenal universe (*prapañca*).

The *locus classicus* for this very inference is Ānandabodha Bhaṭṭāraka’s (XII century) *Nyāyaratnadīpāvalī*:

*vivādapadaṃ mithyā dṛśyatvād. yad itthaṃ tat tathā.
yathobhayavādyavivādapadaṃ rajataṃ. tathaitat tat tathā.*

¹ This contribution is a slightly more technical re-elaboration of a small part of an earlier article: Gianni Pellegrini (a), “Svapna: alcune considerazioni sull’epistemologia del sogno nell’Advaita Vedānta”, *Quaderni di studi Indo-Mediterranei*, n. 2, Edizioni dell’Orso, Alessandria, 2009, pp. 71-89. I thank Prof. Alberto Pelissero for his precious advices and improvements.

“The object under discussion is false, because it is perceptible, in fact what is such [= perceptible] (*ittham*) is also false, like the silver, which is the object unanimously accepted by the debaters (*vādin*); so, if this [= silver] is such [also] that [= the object under discussion, i.e. phenomenal universe] is so [= false].”²

The *probandum* (*sādhya*) of this inference is “falsity” (*mithyātva*), a concept whose existence should be proved within the inferential subject (*pakṣa*) – herein the phenomenal universe – by means of a *probans* (*hetu*).

A few centuries later, in his *Advaitasiddhi*, Madhusūdana Sarasvatī (XVI cent.) adds two *prodandums* (*hetu*) to that suggested by Ānandabodha. So the inference results modified in this way:

*vimataṃ mithyā drśyatvād, jaḍatvāt, paricchinnatvāt
śuktirūpyavat*

“The disputed object is false, because it is perceptible, because it is insentient, because it is limited, like the silver [superimposed] on the mother of pearl”.³

In this case, to validate his thesis Madhusūdana Sarasvatī puts forward three logical reasons: direct perceptibility (*drśyatva*), insentience (*jaḍatva*) and limitedness (*paricchinnatva*).

² Here I refer to the unique edition of the text, printed within Kāśī Saṃskṛta Series: Ānandabodha Bhaṭṭāraka, *Nyāyamakarandaḥ ācāryacitsukhamuniviracitavyākhyopetaḥ. Pramāṇamālā nyāyadīpāvalī ca*, Bālarām Udaseen Swāmī N. S. N. Ed., Chawkhamba Sanskrit Series, Varanasi, 1901, p. 1. Actually there are three versions of the same inference: the first in *Nyāyamakaranda* (p. 128), the second in *Pramāṇamālā* (p. 11) and the third is quoted above (*Nyāyadīpāvalī*, p. 1). In *Nyāyamakaranda* Ānandabodha includes also “dream objects” (*svapnadṛśya*) as a positive instance (*sapakṣa*).

³ In this inference the word “*vimataṃ*” (“disputed object”), i.e. the inferential subject (*pakṣa*), is glossed as “*vipratipattiviśiṣṭam*”, “characterized by the disagreement sentence” or “*vipratipannam*”, “the object of disagreement”. See Sarasvatī Madhusūdana, *Advaitasiddhiḥ viṭṭalesīyavyākhyopabṛmhitagaḍabrahmānandīv vyākhyāsanāthikṛtā balabhadrapraṇītasiddhivyākhyā anantakṛṣṇaśāstrisaṃgrhītanyāyāmṛtādvaitasiddhitarangiṇī laghucandrikā-saṃgrahātmakacaturgranthopaskṛtā ca*, Ed. by Anantakṛṣṇaśāstrī, Delhi, Parimal Publications, 1997 [1 Ed. Bombay 1937], p. 30f.

The inferential subject is commonly defined as “the locus where the occurrence of the *probandum* is suspected” (*saṃdigdhasādhyavān*).⁴ Beside the inferential subject there is a “similar instance” (*sapakṣa*), where the occurrence of the *probandum* has already been proved (*siddha*) with certainty (*niścitasādhyavān*), in many situations and by other means of knowledge.⁵ In the body of the inference the example (*dr̥ṣṭānta*) represents that previously proved element, which in our case is the silver perceived in place of the mother of the pearl. Thanks to the example, the proposition (*pratijñā*), constituted by the first two members (*avayava*) – namely inferential subject (*pakṣa*) and *probandum* (*sādhyā*) – avoids the flaw (*doṣa*) of the unestablishment of the qualificand (*viśeṣaṇāsiddhi*) or of the *probandum* (*sādhyāsiddhi*). In fact, according to Indian Logicians, without expressing the example (*dr̥ṣṭānta*) there is no chance to support a proposition (*pratijñā*).⁶

In order to prove the consistency of the invariable concomitance (*vyāpti*) with the three *probans* and the *probandum* “falsity” (*mithyātva*) of the above mentioned inference, Advaita theoreticians usually utilize as example (*dr̥ṣṭānta*) – or as “similar instance” (*sapakṣa*) – a specific type of entities (*padārtha*) perceivable without the aid of the senses. In the technical language of the later phases of the school, these entities are addressed as “illuminable [= knowable] by the witness alone” (*kevalasākṣibhāṣya*).

⁴ See Annambhaṭṭa, *Tarkasaṃgraha, with the Author's Own Dīpikā, and Govardhana's Nyāyabodhinī*, Edited with Critical and Explanatory Notes by the Late Yashwant Vasudev Athalye, Poona, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1988, p. 43.

⁵ In order to clarify the concept of the “example” in the classical inferential theory in early Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika see: Ernst Prets, “Example and Exemplification in Early Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika”, *The Role of the Example (dr̥ṣṭānta) in Classical Indian Logic*, Edited by Shoryu Katsura and Ernst Steinkellner, Wien, Arbeitskreis für Tibetische und Buddhistische Studien Universität Wien, 2004, pp. 197-224.

⁶ The inferential subject (*pakṣa*) of any inference whatsoever indicates also the qualificand (*viśeṣya*) or the locus (*āśraya*) of other two members, namely the *probandum* (*sādhyā*) and the *probans* (*hetu*). Both these members are understood also as “qualifications” or “determinations” (*viśeṣaṇa*) of the inferential subject, because they must occur therein. See Gianni Pellegrini (b), “Analysis of the Second and Fourth Definitions of Mithyātva in the Advaitasiddhi of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī”, *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, vol. 39, part. 4-5, pp. 441-459, especially p. 442f.

The cognition presented by the witness is immediate and intuitive because it does not involve any relation whatsoever as, on the other hand, happens with all the other functions of the knowing subject (*pramātr*).⁷ Within the category of entities illuminable by the witness alone are listed also mirage (*marumarīcikā*), blue of the sky (*gaganamālinya*), happiness and sorrow (*sukhaduḥkha*), merit and demerit (*dharmādharmā*), internal organ (*antaḥkaraṇa*), as well as modalities and modifications of the internal organ (*antaḥkaraṇavṛtti*). Fundamental pieces of this mosaic and, certainly useful for this reconstruction, are the so-called apparent and illusory entities (*prātibhāsika*), whose degree of reality coexists with the duration of their appearance (*pratītimātraśārīratva*): the silver superimposed on the mother of pearl (*śuktirūpya*), the snake perceived in the place of a rope (*rajjusarpa*), as well as dreams (*svapna*), whose cognition is decidedly an interior phenomenon deprived of the mediating intervention of the senses. Chief responsible for these epistemological entities is none but ignorance (*avidyā*).

I.2. Notes on Advaita Epistemology

Dharmarāja or Dharmarājadhvarīndra (XVII cent.), author of the *Vedāntaparibhāṣā* (“The meta-rule of Vedānta”, hereafter VP) a schoolbook of Advaita epistemology, relying on the above mentioned considerations provides a definition (*lakṣaṇa*) of dream condition: *indriyājanyaviśayagocarāparokṣāntaḥkaraṇavṛttyavasthā svapnāvasthā*.⁸ “Dream condition is that condition

⁷ It is likely that the first definition (*lakṣaṇa*) applicable to these concepts should be attributed to the commentary on Padmapādācārya’s (VIII-IX cent.) *Pañcapādikā*, the *Pañcapādikāvivaraṇa* of Prakāśātman Yati (XI cent.): *sākṣivedyatayā, manomātragamayatayā vā ’parokṣa ity arthaḥ* “It is directly perceivable because it is knowable through the witness or because it is cognizable only through mind. This is the meaning.” See Padmapādācārya, *Pañcapādikā śrīprakāśātmanunīkṛtena vivaraṇākyavyākhyānena śrīmadakhaṇḍānandamuniśrī-viṣṇubhaṭṭopādhyāyakṛtābhām tattvadīpanarjuvivaraṇasamjñitābhyām vivaraṇavyākhyābhyām ca samalaṅkṛtā*, Ed. by S. Subrahmanyaśāstrī, Mount Ābū-Vārāṇasī, Maheśa Anusandhāna Saṁsthāna, 1992, p. 243.

⁸ See the seventh chapter of *Vedāntaparibhāṣā* (hereafter VP), namely the *viśayapariccheda*: Dharmarājadhvarīndra, *Vedāntaparibhāṣāsamāṇiprabhāṣīkḥāmanisahitā*,

where a modification of the internal organ immediately cognizes an object without the aid of sense faculties”.⁹

Exactly at this point, dream converges with the entities “knowable by the witness alone” (*kevalasākṣibhāṣya*). This, furthermore, is the reason why we can easily find dream – deceptive by nature – exemplifying the illusory character of the universe.¹⁰

It would be impossible to proceed without outlining two additional points: the “knowledge theory”, and the pivotal doctrinal tenet of Advaita Vedānta, the notion of superimposition (*adhyāsa*).

According to the common trend of orthodox *darśanas* and, as sketched by VP,¹¹ also in pre-modern phases of Advaita epistemology, every cognition (*pramāṇi*) presents a triple structure (*tripuṭī*) where three invariably and mutually connected elements can be singled out: the knower or knowing subject (*pramātṛ*) who, by means of a valid instrument of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) cognizes an object (*prameya*). Any valid cognition (*pramā*)¹² sprouts out of a rigorous process, during

Edited by Pārasanātha Dvivedī and Dadana Upādhyāya, Vārāṇasī, Sampūrnānanda Saṃskṛta Viśvavidyālaya, 2000, p. 423.

⁹ In *Mañiprabhā* (p. 423), a sub-gloss to VP, entitled *Amaradāsa* (XVIII cent.) specifies that “*indriyājanya*” means *āgantukadoṣajanya* “produced by an adventitious vice”. In the case of dream the vice is sleep (*nidrādoṣa*).

¹⁰ For instance, Gauḍapāda’s examination of illusion entirely rests on the analogy of the empirical reality with dream. See the discussion at the opening of *Māṇḍūkya-kārikā*’s *Vaitathyaprakaraṇa* (II.1-7), deepened in *Āgamaśāstravivarāṇa*, the commentary ascribed to Śaṃkara. A similar statement is found in *Pañcapādikāvivarāṇa*, *op. cit.*, p. 69. Besides, Śaṃkara treats systematically the problem of oneiric experience and its illusory character while commenting *ad Brahmasūtra* III.2.1-6.

¹¹ There are four main works to which the reader could be directed to deepen the Advaita Vedānta theory of direct perception: the articles of Mayeda Sengaku, “The Advaita Theory of Perception”, *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Süd und Östasiens*, 1968-1969, XII-XIII, pp. 221-240 and Purusottama Bilimoria, “Perception (*pratyakṣa*) in Advaita Vedānta”, *Philosophy East and West*, 1980, XXX, n° 1, pp. 35-44. The monographic study of Bina Gupta (a), *Perceiving in Advaita Vedānta*, Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 1995, together with an annotated translation of the first section (*pratyakṣapariccheda*) of VP, as well as the essential, although dated, book of D.M. Datta, *The Six Ways of Knowing*, Calcutta, University of Calcutta, 1997 [I Ed. 1932], pp. 17-118.

¹² VP gives a definition of both, the instrument (*pramāṇa*) to get a valid knowledge (*yathārtha*): *pramākaraṇam pramāṇam* “the means of knowledge is the instrument to obtain a valid knowledge”, as well as of the valid knowledge (*pramā*) itself: *pramātvam*

which a knowing subject knows something through a specific modality (*vṛtti*).

I shall limit my analysis to part of Advaita theory of direct perception (*pratyakṣa*), as treated in the first section of VP, beginning with valid types of perception but focusing on the erroneous ones.

Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad (III.4.1: “*yatsākṣādaparokṣāt brahma*”) affirms that only *brahman* is always immediately present and directly perceivable. The luminous nature of *brahman*, that is pure consciousness (*śuddhacaitanya*), illuminates the universe. Due to this self-luminous nature (*svaprakāśa*) its light flows into every cognitive act, which becomes an expression of that pure consciousness mediated by a mental mode (*vṛtti*). This consideration hints at the fact that knowledge shows itself on two levels: the perfect and eternal knowledge, whose essential nature coincides with the Absolute itself, i.e. “the knowledge as intrinsic nature” (*svarūpajñāna*);¹³ and empirical knowledge, which manifests itself through mental modifications (*vṛttijñāna*). Being shaped in dependence of perceived objects, this latter kind of knowledge results unstable.¹⁴

During the cognitive process indivisible knowledge, one and eternal, although always limitless and self-same, irradiates itself on innumerable modalities which, as if they were many mirrors, on their turn again reflect this very knowledge so to confine it, or better to render it particularized (*viśiṣṭa*) as to appear limited (*avacchinna*). Thus, that same threefold set of members of this epistemic process acquires a re-definition according to the Vedāntic

anadhigatābādhitārthaviśayakajñānatvam “valid knowledge is that knowledge which cognizes an object previously unknown and [later on] unsublated”. See VP, *op. cit.*, p. 22f.

¹³ I translate the term *svarūpajñāna* as “the knowledge as intrinsic nature”, because when knowledge is intended in the sense described above, the compound should be read as a *karmadhāraya*: “*svarūpam eva jñānam iti svarūpajñānam*”.

¹⁴ *caitanyaśāstrādīve 'pi tadabhivyañjakāntaḥkaraṇavṛttir indriyasamnikarṣādinā jāyata iti vṛttiviśiṣṭaṃ caitanyam ādimad ity ucyate jñānavacchedakatvāc ca vṛttau jñānatvopacārah. tad uktaṃ vivaraṇe – antaḥkaraṇavṛttau jñānatvopacārād iti. VP, op. cit., p. 46ff. Compare with the source of this passage: Pañcapādīkāvivarāṇa, op. cit., p. 132, where it is found with a minor difference: antaḥkaraṇaparīṇāme jñānatvopacārāt.*

technical terminology: *pramātr* becomes *antaḥkaraṇāvachchinnacaitanya*, “consciousness limited by the internal organ”; *pramāṇa* takes the name *antaḥkaraṇavṛttyavachchinnacaitanya*, “consciousness limited by the modification of the internal organ” and, *prameya* is renamed *viṣayāvacchinnacaitanya*, “consciousness limited by the object”.¹⁵

Once these three elements are given, the way to get a direct perception should be remembered. According to VP the causal factor is the non-difference, or the union (*abheda*) of the three above mentioned functions of consciousness (*caitanya*). The mental modification (*vṛtti*) of the internal organ goes out through the sensorial channels and reaches the place of the object, pervades it and merges into its exterior form (*viṣayādyākārapariṇāma*). Then, having removed the covering (*āvaraṇabhāṅga*) represented by the darkness of ignorance which till that moment was preventing knowledge, it dispels the ignorance related to that very object. In this process the internal organ – “consciousness limited by the internal organ” (*antaḥkaraṇāvachchinnacaitanya*) – and its modality – “consciousness limited by the modification of the internal organ” (*vṛttyavachchinnacaitanya*) – while moving towards the object are already unified. When these two merge into the third kind of consciousness, that is “consciousness limited by the object to be known” (*prameyāvacchinnacaitanya*), then the direct perception (*pratyakṣa*) of that object takes place.¹⁶

Even though the absolute form of knowledge (*jñāna*) is pure when, in its *vṛtti* form, it is connected with phenomenal world and becomes mixed with it. This very mixture renders it impure and, consequently, sometimes erroneous (*apramā/ayathārthajñāna*).

¹⁵ VP, *op. cit.*, p. 61f.

¹⁶ VP, *op. cit.*, p. 63ff. I wish to recall for the reader that in VP, among various categories of direct perceptions, there is a twofold classification distinguishing the perceptual character proper of the object (*viṣayagatapratyakṣatva*) and the perceptual character proper of cognition (*jñānatapratyakṣatva*). Both these kinds of perception have different causal factors (*prayojaka*). Here in the text I introduce just the causal factors of the perceptible character proper of cognition (*jñānatapratyakṣatva*). See Purusottama Bilimoria, “Perception (*pratyakṣa*) in Advaita Vedānta”, *Philosophy East and West*, 1980, XXX, n° 1, p. 35f.

Among the several examples of erroneous, apparent and illusory knowledge there are two classical instances profusely debated in Indian philosophical texts: the snake perceived in place of the rope and the silver cognized in place of the mother of pearl. It is also possible to attempt an analogy with the dream phenomenon. In fact, in both the cases the common denominator determining the lack of ground for the specific cognition is that the modification of the internal organ (*vṛtti*) is substituted by another kind of *vṛtti*, which Advaita Vedānta calls “modification of ignorance” (*avidyāvṛtti*). This kind of modification arises when ignorance veils the Self, and then transforms and projects itself into a plurality of modifications (*vṛtti*).¹⁷

The second presupposition to be kept in mind is the doctrine of superimposition (*adhyāsa/adhyāropa*) around which is built the entire Advaita Vedānta’s speculative structure. This *adhyāsa* is the improper mutual superimposition of the illusory on the real and vice-versa. Superimposition being the very cause of any bondage is believed to be also the origin of erroneous knowledge. The *locus classicus* of this conception is found in the introductory section (*scilicet adhyāsabhāṣya*) of Śaṅkarācārya’s commentary on *Brahmasūtra*. Therein Śaṅkara defines superimposition in two different passages: *smṛtirūpaḥ paratrapūrvadrṣṭāvabhāso ’dhyāsaḥ* “superimposition is an appearance in form of memory of an object previously seen elsewhere”. The second definition is more generally relevant: *atasmīn tadbuddhiḥ* “the cognition of something on what is not that”. Both the examples can easily be applied to the classical confusion between rope and snake or mother of pearl and silver.¹⁸

¹⁷ See Bina Gupta (b), *The Disinterested Witness. A Fragment of Advaita Vedānta Phenomenology*, Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1998, pp. 57-60. We should not forget how Gauḍapāda (VII cent.) classifies dreams. In his *Āgamaśāstra* (I.12-16) he highlights that *viśva* and *taijasa* are respectively: the former effect of dream, and the latter cause of waking condition and effect of the individual consciousness in deep sleep state (*prājñā*). Both are characterized by miscomprehension (*anyathāgrahaṇa*) and lack of comprehension (*agrahaṇa*).

¹⁸ See: *Brahmasūtraśaṅkarabhāṣyam, śrīgovindānandakṛtāyā bhāṣyaratnaprabhayā śrīvācaspatimīśraviracitayā bhāmatyā śrīmadānandagīrīpraṇītena nyāyanirṇayena samuṣṭam*, Edited by Jagadīśa Śāstrī, Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 2000 [I Ed. Delhi 1980], pp. 10-13 and p. 24.

II. Generalities on the Theory of Error

Śaṅkara's interpretation of *adhyāsa* furnishes new fuel to the debate on perceptual error (*bhrama*) and the nature of its negation (*bādha*). These conceptions are included in the context called by philosophical literature "theory of error" or *khyativāda*.¹⁹ In classical Indian philosophy there are five principal theories of perceptual error: *asatkhyāti*, *ātmakhyāti*, *akhyāti*, *anyathākhyāti* and *anirvacanīyakhyāti*.²⁰

As discussed elsewhere,²¹ all the same illustrious scholars thought it correct to divide these five *khyāti*s into two groups.²² Nevertheless, Vedāntic tradition maintains that the sub-division should basically be threefold. In fact, on one hand we find the theory according to which the product of erroneous perception is a mere *nihil*: this is the *asatkhyāti* of Mādhyamika Buddhists. On the other hand there are three *khyāti*s according to which the result of the perceptual error (*bhrānti*) is real. These three theories of error can collectively be addressed as *satkhyāti* and precisely are Yogācāras' *ātmakhyāti*, Prābhākara Mīmāṃsā's *akhyāti* and Nyāya's *anyathākhyāti* (otherwise developed by Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsakas' *viparītakhyāti*).

The third group consists in a unique theory supported by

¹⁹ The word *khyāti* generally indicates "celebrity, fame", "good reputation" etc. However, it is usually utilized with the meaning of "knowledge", as witnessed by Magha's *Śīsupālavadha* (IV.55) where the term *khyāti* is glossed by Mallinātha: *khyātiṃ jñānam*. Despite this, in the field examined by this article, the term *khyāti* assumes the specific meaning of "perceptual error" or "erroneous knowledge/cognition/judgement". See Johnatan Duquette– K. Ramasubramanian, "Anyathākhyāti: A Critique by Appaya Dīkṣita in the *Parimala*", *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, vol. 37, n. 4, 2009, p. 333.

²⁰ These are five classical *khyāti* theories. Beside these five, many others are added: the Jainas' *sadkhyāti*, the Viśiṣṭādvaitins' *yathārthakhyāti*, the Sāṃkhyas' *sadasadkhyāti* as well as the Mādhyas' *Abhinavānyathākhyāti*.

²¹ See Gianni Pellegrini (a), "art. cit.", p. 74f.

²² T.M.P. Mahadevan, *The Philosophy of Advaita*, Delhi, Bharatiya Kala Prakashan, 2006 [1 Ed. Madras 1938], p. 69. The original list, seemingly codified by Maṇḍana Mīśra's (VII-VIII cent.) *Vibhramaviveka* (1), presented four theories of error (*ātmakhyātir asatkhyātir akhyātiḥ khyātir anyathā / parīkṣakānāṃ vibhrāntau vivādāt sā vivicyate //*): "*Vibhramaviveka*. Edited by S. Kuppaswami Sastri and T. V. Ramachandra Dikshitar. Madras: Published in *The Journal of Oriental Research*, 1932, p. 1. In early times (already with Śaṅkara, but more systematically with Padmapāda [VIII-IX sec.]) was added Advaitins' theory of error, the *anirvacanīyakhyāti*.

Advaitins: the *anirvācanīyakhyāti*. Following this point of view, the entity grasped during illusion is not absolutely real (*sat*) as the Absolute alone is, otherwise it would never be denied (*bādhita*).²³ That illusory object can neither be completely unreal (*asat/tuccha*), or we would have to face the impossibility of perceiving it.²⁴ The so grasped entity has an ontological level of reality lasting as long as its cognition lasts; thus, it is different from real and unreal, because impossible to be predicated within the brackets of real and unreal (*sad-asad-vilakṣaṇa*): it is an indefinable *quid* (*ānirvācanīya*).

Before proposing a brief survey on the *khyātis* and their relation with dream, it seems proper glancing through the process leading to erroneous perception. I shall exemplify it by means of the well-known example of the silver superimposed on the mother of pearl (*śuktirūpya*).²⁵

Someone, finding himself in certain conditions, can mistake an object placed in front of him (*purovarttin*) for another object, which is not actually there. This kind of illusion will last until the intervention of an opposite kind of knowledge, able to nullify the first judgement. These conditions are: a sensorial vice (*indriyadoṣa*), the resemblance (*sādrśyādi*) of the perceived object with something else which constitutes the locus of the illusion (*adhiṣṭhāna = prameyagatadoṣa*), the latent impressions and similar imprinting stored in the interior of the knowing subject (*samskāradīpramātr̥gatadoṣa*), such as desire, fear, etc. Last, but not least, are the temporal and spatial ambiguities where the perceived object is placed.²⁶

The second step along this path is the actual perception of the object as something different from what really is. Such

²³ According to Vedānta, especially in its earlier phases, *brahman* is what is unsubstlatable in the three times (*trikālābādhyā*). See *Advaitasiddhi*, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

²⁴ In the Advaitic panorama the distinction between an illusory or false entity (*mithyā*) and an absolutely unreal entity is also important, such as the son of a barren woman (*vandhyāputra*) and other similar instances which are defined: *kvacid apy upādhanu sattvena pratītyarhatvānadhikaranatvam*, “[Unreality] is the property of non-being the substrate of the capability of being cognized as existent in any locus whatsoever”. This definition is given in *Advaitasiddhi*, *op. cit.*, p. 50f.

²⁵ VP inserts this elaborated discussion at pp. 150-156.

²⁶ Compare with *Pañcapādikāvivarāṇa*, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

cognition produces a consequent reaction coherent and co-substantial with the nature of its content.

Let's now apply (*samanvaya*) these general considerations to the more discussed example: the silver-nacre instance.

Someone enters a dimly lit room (*mandāndhakāra*) and, on the opposite side, grasps something glittering (*cākacikya*) even though he doesn't get its effective nature. The shimmering object lying before revives (*udbhāva*) in him some latent impressions (*vāsanā*) of an object with analogous characteristics previously seen (*pūrvadr̥ṣṭa*). Besides, due to his radical attachment (*rāgataḥ prāpta*) like desire for wealth, yearning or whatever else (*kāmādi*), the spontaneous tendencies hidden in the mind of the perceiver go along with those already awakened impressions. These factors determine in the individual the emergence of the idea that the object is a piece of silver already seen previously in a certain goldsmith's shop (*āpaṇastha*), and which he intensely longs for. At this point that fellow affirms: "this is silver" (*idaṃ rajatam*). Within the utterance "this is silver" (*idaṃ rajatam*) are presented two parts which, although connected with separate entities, describe a unique object: a part characterized and expressed by the pronoun "this" (*idamaṃśa*), concerned with the directly perceived object lying before (*purovartittva*), and a second part related to the content of the false cognition, namely the silver (*rajatāṃśa*).

Despite the erroneous nature of this cognition, it is nonetheless capable of generating in the individual an action (*pravṛtti*) consistent with its own nature. Hence, obeying a motion discordant with the real nature of the object lying before (*viśamvādī-pravṛtti*), the individual goes towards the silver to lay hold of it. Once the silver is picked up, he becomes aware that the object is not silver (*rajata*) but something similar with an inferior value, the mother of pearl (*śukti*). At last he formulates a judgment denying and contradicting (*bādhakajñāna*) the earlier one: "this is not silver, this is mother of pearl" (*naidaṃ rajatam iyaṃ śuktiḥ*).

This is the background investigated by philosophical schools. Nevertheless their conclusion concerning the above described situation are various and conflicting (*vipratipanna*).

II.1: *Asatkhyāti*

Mādhyamika-Śūnyavādins' *asatkhyāti* is the most extreme theory of error. According to the Mādhyamika Buddhists, illusion is nothing but apprehending an unreal entity as if it were real. For them, in the silver illusion, not only silver is unreal (*asat*) but also the nacre. All the cognitions in general are unreal and are consequently labelled with the word *asat*.

The two parts involved in the cognition, the “this” (*idamaṃśa*) pertaining to the mother of pearl and the silver (*rajatāṃśa*), together with their connecting relationship (*sambandha*), are unreal (*asat*) just like a mere void conceptualization (*kalpanā*). Mādhyamikas push themselves further pointing out that also the silver placed in the goldsmith's shop, as any other entity, is deprived of any reality whatsoever, therefore void.²⁷ Illusion, as any other seemingly valid cognition, is possible even without a foundation ground (*adhiṣṭhāna*). It merely exists in the erroneous perception of the unreal (*asat*) as real (*sat*).²⁸

As a consequence, it would be easily deducible that, if also the object standing as the solid substrate of the erroneous perception (*bhrama*) is considered *asat*, then the oneiric entities and the knowledge arisen out of them cannot be treated as exceptions. In *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* (VII.34) Nāgārjuna himself equates dream with the illusory manifestation (*māyā*), a mental construct without any support, just like the classical example of the city of the celestial musicians (*gandharvanagara*).²⁹ At any rate, in the

²⁷ Govardhan P. Bhatt, *Epistemology of the Bhāṭṭa School of Pūrva Mīmāṃsā*, Varanasi, Chaukhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1962, p. 101f.

²⁸ Bijayanand Kar, *Indian Theories of Error*, Sophia Indological Series, Delhi, Ajanta Books International, 1990, p. 87f.

²⁹ *yathā māyā yathā svapno gandharvanagaraṃ yathā / tathotpādas tathā sthānaṃ tathā bhāṅga udāhṛtam //*, “Just like an illusion, like a dream, like ‘the city of the Gandharvas’, the production is exemplified in the same way; so the persistence and the destruction as well.” The edition utilized is: Āryanāgārjuna, *Ācāryacandrakīrtteḥ prasannapadākhyaṅgīyā saṃvalitā āryanāgārjunīyaṃ madhyamakāśāstram* [hindi-

economy the analysis here presented, more useful seems Śāntarakṣita's point of view (725-788 AD). In his *Tattvasamgraha* he actually writes that the knowledge originated during dream condition is a mental one which, in order to be produced, does not need the mediation of sense faculties but, on the contrary, is brought about by a previous cognition (*pūrvabuddhi*). That previous cognition is the knowledge of the waking state, which constitutes the material cause (*upādānakāraṇa*) of the oneiric cognition (*svāpnajñāna*).

Hence, even if untruthful this kind of cognition cannot be evaluated as absolutely erroneous, since its material cause is a knowledge originated by an existing object.³⁰

II.2: *Ātmakhyāti*

The second *khyāti* is *ātmakhyāti* of the Buddhists idealistic school of Yogācāra-Vijñānavādins.³¹ According to them the knowing subject (*pramātr*) is a continuous flux of mutually independent sub-conscious momentary and instantaneous (*kṣaṇika*) thoughts. Consciousness (*vijñāna*) is the sole metaphysical reality. For this reason Yogācāras explain perceptual error in a solipsistic way, as a mere externalization of a subjective notion. Specifically, in the traditional example of the experienced silver in place of the mother of pearl (*śuktirūpya*), the particular cognition of the silver presents itself as an external object. This is not absolutely unreal, as maintained by Śūnyavādins, but is actually real only as an interior mode. The mistake occurs in believing it an external entity endowed with an independent ontological status.

Therefore, during the illusion an instantaneous idea

bhāṣānuvādasahitam], Sampādakaḥ Svāmī Dvārikadāsaśāstrī, Vārāṇasī, Bauddha Bhāratī, 1989, p. 75.

³⁰ Compare with the inescapable, although often imprecise, monographic study of Satyajit Layek, *Analysis of Dream in Indian Philosophy*, Delhi, Sri Satguru Publications, 1990, pp. 80-83.

³¹ According to Bijayanand Kar also the Vaibhāṣikas and Sautrāntikas support the same *khyāti* with slight variations. See Bijayanand Kar, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

recognizes itself as external.³² When someone picks the mother of pearl up and says “this is not silver” (“*nedam rajatam*”). At that moment the negated thing is “this-ness” (*idaṃtā*) alone, that is the externality of the silver and not the silver itself, which remains interiorly plausible.³³

At any rate, the analysis of dream and oneiric knowledge done by Yogācāras seems to differ from their form of *khyāti*. For example, Śaṅkarācārya, commenting on *Brahmasūtra* (ad II.2.29 “*vaidharmyāc ca na svapnādivat*”), noticed that Vijñānavādins’ point of view reflects an absolute congruence between internal and external cognitions, as witnessed by Dīnāga’s (480-540 d. C.) *Ālambanaparīkṣā* (VIa-b).³⁴ More precisely, he points out that internal objects appear as external. Regarding this, it might be likely to sketch an extension of the meanings of “internal” and “external” respectively in the spheres of waking and dream.

According to Vijñānavādins dream knowledge (*svāpnajñāna*) could be added as evidence for the fact that even consciousness does not need a real substrate in the external world. In fact, in dream knowledge, to a particular cognition does not correspond any externally existent object.³⁵ This is witnessed in *Pramāṇavārtika* (II.15) where Dharmakīrti (VII cent.) observes that the knowledge occurred during dream condition is not associated with an actually real object, consequently the deriving cognition cannot be intended as truthful or valid.³⁶

³² Govardhan P. Bhatt, *op. cit.*, p. 101f and T.M.P. Mahadevan, *op. cit.*, p. 75f and 77-80.

³³ R. Balasubramanian, *Advaita Vedānta*, Madras, University of Madras, 1976, pp. 82-88.

³⁴ See: *Ālambanaparīkṣāvṛtti and Vṛtti by Dīnāga with the Commentary of Dharmapāla*, Restored into Sanskrit the Tibetan and Chinese Versions and edited with English translations and noted and with copious extracts from Vinītadeva’s Commentary, by N. Ayaswami Sastri, Adyar, Theosophical Society, 1942 pp. xiif, 2, 5f, 10; and also Fernando Tola - Carmen Dragonetti, “Dīnāga’s *Ālambanaparīkṣāvṛtti*”, *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, n. 2, 1982, pp. 105-134, especially p. 107.

³⁵ These information are borrowed from Satyajit Layek, *op. cit.*, p. 81f.

³⁶ *Pramāṇavārtika* (II.15), here interpreted in the light of Prajñākaragupta’s commentary, states: *sarvajñānārthavattvāc cet svapnādāv anyathekṣaṇāt / ayuktaṃ ... //*, “If [it would be said] since every cognition presents a content, [this invariable concomitance] is untenable, because in dream and other similar instances there is an opposite vision ...” Here Dharmakīrti presupposes such an invariable concomitance (*vyāpti*): *yad yaj jñānaṃ tat tad arthavat*, “whatever is knowledge, that has an object”, otherwise expressed as *sarvaṃ*

II.3: *Akhyāti*

The theory of *akhyāti* is supported by Pūrva Mīmāṃsā ritualistic school founded by Prabhākara (VII-VIII cent.).

Śālikanātha (VIII-IX cent.), Prabhākara's chief follower, in *Prakaraṇapañcikā* (III.1) affirms: *yathārthaṃ sarvaṃ eveha vijñānam iti*, "Here truly all the cognitions are valid".³⁷ According to him the term *akhyāti* represents simply an "absence of knowledge" (*jñānābhāva*), because it is impossible for a cognition to grasp an object and simultaneously being invalid.

The opinion of Prābhākara Mīmāṃsakas is that an illusion cannot be considered a unitary cognition, but a composite judgement constituted at least by two distinct notions. The error stands in the lack of comprehension of the independence of both cognitions. Perceptual error, i.e. illusion (*bhrama*), is not a negative concept or an absence (*abhāvātma*), as to consider it a mistake. On the contrary, it is a simple omission.

In order to apply *akhyāti* to *śuktirūpya* example, it could be said that the mother of pearl lies before the perceiver but, since

jñānaṃ sālambanam, "every cognition has a support/content/referent (*ālambana*)". At any rate, according to him this invariable concomitance (*vyāpti*), being a deviating one (*vyabhicārita*), does not work in the case under examination. If we consider it valid, then all the differentiations (*vibhāga*) between what is erroneously perceived and what is not so (*bhrāntābhrānta*) would collapse. If someone would argue that a cognition cannot have an *ālambana*, then, being without a supporting content (*nirālamba*), dream knowledge (*svāpnajñāna*) could not be conceived as valid. Anyhow dream knowledge, even though supportless, is considered a knowledge just like any knowledge arisen during the waking state. In fact, even during dream it is possible to grasp an object lying before. Conversely it should be borne in mind that dream knowledge cannot be confused with perceptual error (*viparyaya*), since the latter is a cognition and as such has an *ālambana*, although this support and the deriving cognition show different qualifications (*prakāra*), while *svāpnajñāna* is without actual supporting content (*nirālamba*). In conclusion, according to Prajñākaragupta's interpretation, Dharmakīrti reads the initial invariable concomitance as inconclusive (*anaikāntika*): "*tasmāt svāpnādāv anaikāntikatvam anyathādarśanāt*". I have consulted the edition: Dharmakīrti, *Pramāṇavārtikam svāmīyogīndrānandakṛtāvartikālaṃkārabhāṣyavyākhyāsahitaprajñākaraguptaviracitavārtikālaṃkārabhāṣya-samalaṃkāram*, Edited by Svāmī Yogīndrānanda, Vārāṇasī, Śaḍdarśanaprakāśana-pratiṣṭhānam, 1991, p. 468f.

³⁷ *Prakaraṇa Pañcikā of Śālikanātha Mīśra with the Nyāya-siddhi of Jayapuri Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa*, Edited with introduction and Notes by Mīmāṃsā Ratnam Pt. A. Subrahmanya Sastri, Varanasi, Banaras Hindu University, 1961, p. 43.

only the silver is grasped, the real content (*viṣaya*) of that cognition is just the silver. In the judgement “this is silver” (*idaṃ rajatam*) two constitutive components can clearly be distinguished. The first comprehends the “this” part (*idamaṃśa*) and has the nature of a direct perception (*pratyakṣajñāna*). Once grasped the information “this” (*idaṃ*) the faculty of sight (*caḥsurindriya*) withdraws. The second part, presenting silver (*rajata*), cannot be defined as direct perception (*pratyakṣa*), since silver is not present there. In fact, at that point takes place a recollection (*smaraṇamātra*) of the silver seen somewhere else. These two cognitions are intrinsically valid (*yathārtha*) but two causes conceal the “property of being this” (*idaṃtā*), and this results in the lack of discrimination between the two cognitions (*vivekāgraha*). These two causes are the basic confusion occurred between perceptual (*anubhāvātmake*) and mnemonic (*smaraṇātmake*) cognitions, and the lapse of memory (*smṛtipramoṣa*) intervened between the perceived object (“*idaṃ*” = “this”) and remembered one (“*rajata*” = “silver”).³⁸

Prabhākara’s understanding of dream is in many ways congruent with his *akhyāti*. According to Prabhākara’s Mīmāṃsā, while asleep a dreamer internally grasps an external object perceived elsewhere in the past. Even though in that moment the object is not recognized as a content of a previous experience, nevertheless because of the obscuring lapse of memory (*smṛtipramoṣa*) it seems freshly experienced. On what concerns the object itself, the cognition turns out to be valid because the object has been truly perceived in the past. The invalidity of the cognition is given by misinterpreting that recollection as if it were a perception just occurred. Such confusion seems originated only by sleep so that the dream knowledge is not intrinsically mendacious, but its lack of validity derives from ancillary conditions.³⁹

³⁸ R. Balasubramanian, *op. cit.*, pp. 39-57. Consult also Karl H. Potter, *Presupposition of Indian Philosophy*, Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 1991 [1 Ed. Minneapolis 1962], pp. 197-200.

³⁹ Although not always critical, a fundamental work and a source of much information is: Jadunath Singh, *Indian Psychology*, 3 vols., Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 2008 [1 Ed. Calcutta, 1967], especially the third volume: “*Epistemology of Perception*”, p. 123f.

II.4: *Anyathākhyāti*

The Pūrva Mīmāṃsā philosophers led by Kumārila Bhaṭṭa (VIII cent.), together with Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika realists, accept the so-called *anyathākhyāti* or *viparītakhyāti*. Usually *anyathākhyāti* is attributed to Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika while *viparītakhyāti* is ascribed to Bhāṭṭas. Both theories are regarded as almost identical, because the fundamental idea lying behind them is that an existing object is grasped otherwise (*anyathā*) or contrarily (*viparīta*) respect to as it really is.⁴⁰

Anyhow, beside the mere denomination, there are substantial differences between these views. Kumārila does not accept the perceptual character of judgements concerning the inherence (*samavāya*) of the universal (*jāti*) “silverness” (*rajatatva*) in the individual (*vyakti*) silver. This specificity leads to inherence, the core of the debate between these schools: Naiyāyikas accept it as an independent (*svatantra*) category (*padārtha*) and as fundamental type of relationship (*saṃbandha*). Bhāṭṭas, on the contrary, do reject not only inherence as independent category but also its very definition, postulating at its place “unity in diversity” (*tādātmya*).⁴¹

In Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika every cognition depends and conforms itself to the nature of the cognized object (*jñeyādhīnajñāna*). When Logicians investigate on the nature of the silver mistaken for the nacre, state that the object lying before – the “this” [= mother of pearl] – is grasped through a normal type of perceptual contact (*laukikasamnikarṣa*). On the other hand, the perception of silver results out of an extraordinary perceptual contact (*alaukikasamnikarṣa*) operated by particular exclusively noetic connection (*jñānalakṣaṇapratyāsatti*)⁴² established

⁴⁰ Srinivasa Rao, *Perceptual Error*, Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, 1998, pp. 59-85.

⁴¹ Karl H. Potter, *op. cit.*, p. 204f, 210f.

⁴² According to Nyāya there are three kinds of extraordinary perceptual contact (*alaukikasamnikarṣa*): *sāmānyalakṣaṇapratyāsatti*, *jñānalakṣaṇapratyāsatti* and *yogajapratyāsatti*. Among them, in the context of the “theory of error” Naiyāyikas accept *jñānalakṣaṇapratyāsatti*, vehemently refused by Advaitins. This type of extraordinary perception happens when a cognition originates another cognition of different kind. For example, if we perceive at distance a piece of sandalwood we immediately say “Sandal is fragrant” (*surabhi candanam*). The fragrance of the sandalwood lying at a certain distance

between the senses and their object.⁴³ The proper characteristic of the silver [= “silverness”] (*rajatatva*) lying somewhere else is improperly associated with the “this” (*idam*), which stands ahead. Then, the resulting judgement is “this is silver” (*idam rajatam*). Naiyāyikas think that both, mother of pearl and silver, are real (*sat*). The mistake comes by relating “this” which lies before (*purovarttin*) with the silver lying in the goldsmith’s shop (*āpaṇastha*). The sentence “this is not silver” (“*nedam rajatam*”) predicates just the falsity of the relationship occurring between the two objects.⁴⁴

An example among others is Śrīdhara’s (end of X cent.) *Nyāyakandalī*, where the problem is touched in a synthetic as well as clear manner. Śrīdhara observes that oneiric cognitions are brought about by a few factors, such as: internal disorders and latent impressions arisen out of the meddling of alien agents, as merit and demerit. These are purely illusory, because they impose an exterior form on an absolutely interior entity. The reason which allows to differentiate dream (*svapna*) from perceptual error (*bhrama*) is that they appear in different states of consciousness (*avasthāviśeṣa*): dream happens during sleep, while perceptual error occurs during waking condition.⁴⁵

cannot be grasped by the sense of sight, but only by sense of smell because sandal is out of its range. How, then, is smelling perception possible? Logicians explain this process by means of *jñānalakṣaṇapratyāsatti*. See also Jadunath Singh, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 88.

⁴³ P.S. Roodurmun, *Bhāmātī and Vivaraṇa Schools of Advaita Vedānta*, Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 2002, p. 52f. A cognition whose content is the mother of pearl (*śukti*) has as qualifying modality “the property of being a mother of pearl” (*śuktivaprakāra*). On the other hand, when a cognition has silver as its content is said to be “*rajatatvaprakāra*”. Both are example of valid knowledge (*pramā*). Moreover, the property of being silver (*rajatatva*) and the property of being mother of pearl (*śuktiva*) are two general characteristics (*dharma*) respectively present in the silver (*rajata*) and in the mother of pearl (*śukti*) by an eternal inherence relationship (*samavāyasambandha*). But, when someone staring at the mother of pearl cognizes silver, the consequent judgement will have “silverness” as modality (*rajatatvaprakāra*): the modality (*prakāra*) proper of an object (= *śukti*) is grasped as a modality of another object (= *rajata*). This is an example of erroneous or invalid knowledge (*apramā*). According to Kumāriḷa any cognition is determined by a characteristic (*dharma*) indicating (*bodhaka*) a specificity (*viśiṣṭatā*) called by Naiyāyikas *prakāratā*. See also Srinivasa Rao, *op. cit.*, 59-66.

⁴⁴ R. Balasubramanian, *op. cit.*, p. 59 and T.M.P. Mahadevan, *op. cit.*, p. 84f.

⁴⁵ *yady api saṃskārapāṭavād dhātudoṣād adṛṣṭād vā samāropitabāhyasvarūpaḥ svapnapratyayo bhavann atasmimś tad iti bhāvād viparyayah, tathāpy avasthāviśeṣa-*

Nyāya remains clear in distinguishing perceptual error from dream, because the latter has the nature of memory. For this reason *anyathākhyāti* is not completely adequate to explain the illusory character and the invalidity which constitutes dream experiences.

II.5. *Anirvacanīyakhyāti*

Finally Advaitins, faithful to *anirvacanīyakhyāti*, consider perceptual error and illusion as mere appearance (*pratibhāsa*): a *quid* neither real, as *brahman*, nor unreal (*alīka*), as the son of a barren woman (*vandhyāputra*); therefore *bhrama* is undeterminable (*anirvacanīya*). In fact, if it were absolutely real it could not be contradicted; and, if it were totally unreal, it could not be ever perceived. Thus “the silver superimposed on the mother of pearl” (*śuktirūpya*) should be considered undeterminable (*anirvacanīya*). Therein, the material cause (*upādānakāraṇa*) of the silver is ignorance (*avidyā*) which, by virtue of the correspondence – or better non-otherness – between effect and cause (*kāryakāraṇa*) dear to Advaita Vedānta, is also undeterminable.⁴⁶ Hence where the superimposition (*adhyāropa*) of the silver on the nacre is experienced, an undeterminable material cause manifests an undeterminable object on a substrate (*adhiṣṭhāna*), connecting the former to the latter by means of an undeterminable relationship.⁴⁷

For example, for its existence silver depends on the solidity of mother of pearl where it is projected. If the mother of pearl would not be present there, then silver could not be cognized. So, following Advaitins, the mother of pearl is endowed with a more stable level of reality than the illusory silver.

Advaita Vedānta, roughly at the time of Prakāśātman (XI cent.), began to formulate the doctrine of threefold ontological

bhāvitatvāt prthag uktah. Nyāyakandālī, Being a Commentary on Prasastapādabhāṣya with Three Sub-commentaries, General Editor R. T. Vyas, Vadodara, Oriental Institute, 1991, p. 432. See also Jadunath Singh, *op. cit.*, vol. III, p. 122f.

⁴⁶ In order to deepen the correspondence between cause and effect see Śamkara’s discussion in the *ārambhañādhikāraṇa* of the *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* (II.1.14-20). See also P.S. Roodrumun, *op. cit.*, p. 114f.

⁴⁷ Srinivasa Rao, *op. cit.*, pp. 103-118.

level of the real, according to which the reality (*sattā*) of the universe is empirical (*vyāvahārika*), that of the silver and other entities born out of a specific modality of ignorance (*avidyāvṛtti*) is the apparent (*prātibhāsika*) one, lasting as long as those kinds of entities are cognised (*pratītikālika*). Also the plurality of objects seen during dream pertains to this level of reality: they are illusory because contradicted and annihilated once the dreamer awakes.⁴⁸ Like the other apparent manifestations (*prātibhāsika*), also oneiric experience participates to reality as long as an empirically grounded cognition (*vyāvahārika*) is capable of denying them: in the case of dream it is the awakening (*prabodha*) and, in the case of illusory silver it is the recognition of its real substrate, that is the mother of pearl.⁴⁹

III. Dream as Erroneous Cognition: *Vedāntaparibhāṣā*'s View

Following this logical thread, in VP⁵⁰ we find an analysis as brief as cogent of later Vedāntic epistemology related to oneiric experience.⁵¹

Dharmarāja, at the opening of the discussion, affirms:

*ghaṭādyadhyāse 'vidyaiva doṣatvena hetuḥ
śuktirūpyādhyāse tu kācādayo 'pi doṣāḥ. tathā
cāgantukadoṣajanyatvaṃ prātibhāsikatve prayojakam.*

“On what concerns the superimposition of the pot and other [empirical] objects, since it is a defect, the cause is surely ignorance; while, on what concerns the

⁴⁸ Karl H. Potter, *op. cit.*, p. 166f and 223.

⁴⁹ Advaita followers accept that even empirical objects (*vyāvahārika*), although endowed with a tangible and seemingly stable reality (*sattā*), are destined to vanish once the knowledge of *brahman* (*brahmajñāna*) arises. Just like apparent reality (*prātibhāsikasattā*) is replaced by empirical one, at its turn also empirical reality gives its place up to the unquestionable immensity of the absolute reality (*pāramārthika*). For this reasons Advaitins often metaphorically express the supreme realization as the wakening from a dream.

⁵⁰ The following quoted passages are found in VP, *op. cit.*, pp. 172-183.

⁵¹ A.O. Fort, “Dream and Sleep in Later Advaita Vedānta”, *Adyar Library Bulletin*, 1987, Festschrift for Ludo Rocher 51, p. 173f.

superimposition of the [apparent] silver on the mother of pearl, also distortions of sight such as cataract (*kāca*) and other similar are [to be considered] defects. Therefore, the causal factor in [determining] the illusory character [of dream objects] is the property of being produced by an adventitious defect.”⁵²

Then, the focus is immediately directed towards dream:

*ata eva svapnopalabdharathādīnām
āgantukanidradoṣajanyatvāt prātibhāsikatvam.*

“Ergo, chariots and other objects [mentioned by *Brhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad*] are illusory because are perceived during dream and originated by an adventitious defect.”⁵³

Then Dharmarāja prompts an apparently Naiyāyika opponent (*pūrvapakṣin*) to defend his position, according to which dream perception is nothing but a type of memory:⁵⁴

*nanu svapnasthale pūrvānubhūtarathādeḥ
smaraṇamātraiva vyavahāropapattau na
rathādisṛṣṭikalpanam gauravād iti cet.*

“If someone would object: given that chariots and other objects previously experienced in dream condition are just a recollection, then this common verbal usage becomes logically tenable. For this reason the

⁵² More in general see Gianni Pellegrini (a), *op. cit.*, pp. 71-87.

⁵³ Here the text mentions a passage from *Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad* (IV.3.9-10) where the nature of the “person” (*puruṣa*) during dream is depicted: *atrāyaṃ puruṣaḥ svayaṃ jyotir bhavati* “here that ‘person’ is light by himself” and *na tatra rathā na rathayogā na panthāno bhavanty atha rathān rathayogān pathaḥ sṛjate* “There, there are no chariots, nor animals yoked to chariots, nor routes, therefore he creates chariots, animals yoked to chariots and routes ...” According to Advaitins’ interpretation of these two passages, it is the individual self (*jīvātman*) who creates *ex novo* those entities, which otherwise would not be present therein. See again Johnatan Duquette – K. Ramasubramanian, “art. cit.”, p. 342ff.

⁵⁴ See: Umesha Mishra, *Dream Theory in Indian Thought*, Allahabad University Studies n. 5. Allahabad, Allahabad University, 1929, pp. 273-278.

assumption of the creation of chariots etc. is cumbrous.”

Dharmarāja’s reply is direct:

*na, rathādeḥ smṛtimātrābhypagame ‘ratham paśyāmi’
‘svapne ratham adrākṣam’ ityādy anubhavavirodhāpatteḥ.
‘atha rathān rathayogān pathaḥ sṛjate’ iti
rathādisṛṣṭipratipādakaśrutivirodhāpatteś ca. tasmāc
chuktirūpyavat svapnopalabdharathādayo ‘pi
prātibhāsikāḥ yāvat prātibhāsam avatiṣṭhante.*

“It is not like that! In fact, by accepting that chariots and other [oneiric] objects are merely recollections, would arise an opposition with direct experiences such as ‘I see a chariot’ or ‘During dream I saw a chariot’. Moreover, there would be a contradiction with the textual passage stating the [oneiric] creation of chariots etc.: ‘Then he manifests chariots, animals yoked to chariots and routes’ (*Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* IV.3.10). So, just as silver [superimposed] on the mother of pearl, also chariots and all the other objects grasped during dream are illusory, [which means that] they last as long as illusion persists.”

In the sub-commentary to *Śikhāmaṇi*, which is a gloss of VP entitled *Maṇiprabhā*, Amaraḍāsa (XVIII cent.) clarifies:

*nidrādoṣanivṛttikāle ‘pi ‘svapne ratham adrākṣam’ ity
eva pratītir na tu ‘rathādikaṃ smṛtavān’ ity ata
uktapratyayavyavahārasya smṛtimātratvena nopapattir
iti bhāvaḥ.*

“The purport is that when also the defect [constituted] by sleep withdraws, then occurs a [residual] experience [like] ‘During dream I saw a chariot’ and certainly not [like] ‘I remembered a chariot and other objects’. Therefore, the common verbal usage concerning the said cognition exclusively [considered] as mere recollection is not logically tenable”.

According to the followers of *Vivarāṇa* non-dual school of

Vedānta, to whom Dharmarāja usually refers, the real substrate (*adhiṣṭhāna*) of perceptual error and oneiric experience is the witness-consciousness (*sākṣicaitanya*).⁵⁵ As said above, during dream sense faculties and their solid objects (*viśaya*) are not present. Notwithstanding, *svapna* is not a recollection, since therein also oneiric objects are immediately grasped. At any rate, the knowing subject identified with the waking consciousness (*viśva*) who perceives the empirical objects is somehow different from the subject identified with dream consciousness (*taijasa*) who perceives oneiric objects. In their cognitions, either knowing subject (*pramātr*) is conditioned by adventitious (*āgantuka*) defects and by latent impressions stored during his specific state of consciousness.⁵⁶

IV. Conclusion

It is a matter of fact that even when dream appears real, oneiric world will anyway be contradicted once the individual awakens. Dream is in many ways similar to a recollection (*smṛti*) because both are generated when latent impressions (*saṃskāra*) are awakened. Anyhow, it should be noted that dream seems more dynamic and “representative”, while recollection collects a past episode reproducing an internal and limited experience borne to mind in a “presentative” way.

In this analysis I tried to demonstrate that in Advaita dream nearly resembles a perceptual error. Notwithstanding, it must be stated that between the two occurs an important difference: in the illusion or perceptual error (*bhrama*) the senses guided by an awakened by mind join the external object. This does not happen during dream, when sense faculties are withdrawn. Moreover, it should not be ignored that at the time of awakening every object of the oneiric experience vanishes, despite their relative solidity during dream, leaving (sometimes) behind itself just a recollection. This is the reason why there is a strong

⁵⁵ Bina Gupta (a), *op. cit.*, p. 298.

⁵⁶ A.O. Fort, “art. cit.”, p. 173f.

analogy between dream and illusory cognition or perceptual error, even though I could exclude a completely shared identity.

In conclusion, the set objective was to show how in some ways *khyāti* theories run in parallel with oneiric cognitions. So, starting from Advaita Vedānta's *anirvacanīyakhyāti* and its interpretation of dream, it has been observed an almost absolute congruence, due to the fact that both – *svapna* and *bhrama* – are members of the category of those entities called “knowable by witness alone” (*sākṣibhāṣya*). Moreover, in the school of Prabhākara and in that of the Śūnyavādins a close analogy has been found between the particular *khyāti* theory and dream. At last, on the other hand, it has also been noticed that this equation is not at all invariable, because schools like Yogācāra and especially Nyāya present different understanding concerning the theory of error and dream cognition.

Abbreviation

VP = *Vedāntaparibhāṣā*