

PERCEPTION

*An Essay on Classical Indian
Theories of Knowledge*



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Analysis of Perceptual Illusion

We find things about seeing puzzling because we do not find the whole business of seeing puzzling enough.

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6.1 *Seeing and Seeing-as*

Sensory (perceptual) illusion is said to be 'promiscuous' in Nyāya. Veridical perception is therefore characterized by *Nyāyasūtra*, 1.1.4, as 'non-promiscuous' (*a-vyabhicārin*). Promiscuity involves one's indeterminate relation with at least two persons at the same time. Promiscuity of awareness here means that it deals with two 'objects' at the same time. Let us call an awareness simple if it deals with only one object (unanalysed, but not necessarily unanalysable). An awareness then would be non-simple if it deals with more than one object. Our perceptual awareness is very seldom simple in the above sense, although in exceptional cases, and then only under some theoretical consideration, it can become simple. We can, however, analyse a non-simple awareness and abstract a simple one from it for our convenience. In a non-simple awareness, then, there will be at least two objects. We can call it a molecular non-simple awareness if these two objects are connected in a particular way. Usually the two play two different roles to form a unity: one is the 'chief' (*mukhya*) and the other is subordinate (*gauna*), one is being characterized while the other is the characteristic (*dharma-dharmin*), and one is the qualificand (*viśeṣya*) while the other is the qualifier (*prakāra*). (An awareness of two seemingly unconnected objects, awareness of the conjunct, *a* and *b*, or the alternant, *a* or *b*, or the negation, not-*a*, would be non-simple under this description. In the case of the first two, however, we have a free choice of regarding any one of the constituents as the 'chief'. In 'not-*a*' usually an absence is the qualificand or 'chief' and it is qualified or distinguished by *a*.)

The two objects, while playing different roles, can form a unity when they are connected. They would form a *fake* unity when they are not connected. Promiscuity of awareness does not mean simply that it

deals with two objects, for then most awareness would be promiscuous. Rather the promiscuity consists in dealing with and uniting two objects in the above way when they are not so connected or united in the actual world. Seeing a tree as a tree is not promiscuous. Awareness of the table as a table (or as brown, if it *is* brown) is not promiscuous. For the two objects here are the thing (tree) and the tree-character (or tree-universal or tree-ness, if we accept such entities). And they *are* connected. We do not here unite the character with something to which it does not belong. But seeing a rope as a snake is promiscuous. For the two objects are the thing (rope) and the snake-character. The snake character does not belong to the thing (rope) and therefore our seeing it as a snake is promiscuous in so far as it unites them into one complex.

I have remarked that perceptual awareness is seldom simple in the above sense. This point is sometimes made by such claims as 'All seeing is seeing *as* . . .'.¹ If a person sees something at all, it must look to him *like* something, even if it only looks like 'somebody doing something'. I do not think there is any need to belabour the point although, as I have indicated, the universality or non-exceptionality of this position is dubious. There are some cases of seeing which are not cases of seeing-*as*. There may be a logical necessity to accept such exceptions and this will be discussed in Chapter 10. Here I wish to argue briefly that seeing is mostly seeing-*as* . . ., i.e. is seeing something as something and it is only with regard to such seeing-*as* that the possibility of promiscuity, i.e. possibility of illusion, can arise. The normal adult perceptual process is involved with various accretions due to past experience, collateral information, habitual associations, interpretations, and inference. All this makes a simple perceptual awareness a rare event that stands by itself. It is also well known that our perception could be promiscuous. It occasionally becomes promiscuous because of its involvement with all those things just mentioned. Epistemologists, therefore, would like to search for an occasion of simple perceptual awareness where chances of promiscuity are nil or logically impossible. If seeing is an occasion of 'simple' seeing in our sense of the term, and not of seeing-*as* . . ., then it is impossible for it to be promiscuous, or to be an illusion. In the epistemologist's language, it is 'incorrigible'. Some philosophers think that if we can concentrate upon the 'pure sensory core', we have reached such an awareness in our perceptual process.

¹ G. N. A. Vesey, p. 114.

A distinction is usually made between seeing-things and seeing-that in modern philosophical writings on perception. But that distinction is not relevant for our purpose here. What is relevant for our purpose is to decide whether we are seeing a simple or a non-simple thing. Very few things we see are simple in the strictest sense. Similarly, we very rarely direct our seeing only at a simple object in a conglomeration. Therefore, our seeing-things is 'non-simple' in the above sense. Some cases of seeing-things can be simple, as we have already conceded, but all so-called cases of seeing-that are non-simple for obvious reasons. It may be argued that I am blurring an important distinction between seeing-things and seeing-that. For example, F. Jackson has argued recently that while A in ' S sees A ' is subject to substitutivity (of co-referential terms), it is not so in ' S sees that A is F '. In particular, Jackson's point is that:²

- (1) ' $(A = B)$ and S sees A . $\supset S$ sees B ' is valid, but
- (2) ' $(A = B)$ and S sees that A is F . $\supset S$ sees that B is F ' is not valid.

I do not find this to be quite convincing; for there is an unexplained ambiguity in the use of 'sees' in the second case. Assuming that we are not talking in the first person I think we have to make the following point clear. In Jackson's example, the financier absconding to Brazil sees a pleasant-looking man, and if the pleasant-looking man is also a detective, then I can very well report that the financier sees the detective, even though he may be unaware of the fact that the man he sees is a detective. But if he sees *that* the pleasant-looking man is approaching him, it does not, according to Jackson, follow that he sees *that* the detective is approaching him. I think this is wrong unless we have switched from the non-epistemic seeing (in F. I. Dretske's sense)³ in the first case to the epistemic seeing in the second. Notice that the first implication (1) holds only because it is a case of non-epistemic seeing. Otherwise he cannot be said to be seeing the detective if he sees only a pleasant-looking man. In epistemic seeing, 'He sees a pleasant-looking man' would unpack as 'He sees that this is a pleasant-looking man', and it would not imply 'He sees that this man is a detective'. There may be other philosophic reasons for introducing the notion of seeing-that but for our purpose such cases can be treated together with cases of non-simple seeing-things. In fact, I propose to

² F. Jackson, pp. 155 f.

³ F. I. Dretske, pp. 78 ff.

take non-simple seeing-things as equivalent to a sort of epistemic seeing.

Sensory illusion is a non-simple seeing, and a very odd one, because it is promiscuous. The question whether there can be sensory illusion which is also a *simple* awareness in our senses, is a question that can be reserved for later discussion. I have followed, I think, a fairly standard practice of understanding 'illusion'. We use 'illusion' for cases where something is seen but looks to be other than it is or is 'taken' to be. Thus the rope is *taken* (i.e. mistaken) to be a snake and a white wall or a conch-shell looks yellow to the jaundiced eye. Hallucinations and dreams are special cases. We may rule that they are also non-simple perceptions. I shall return to this question later.

6.2 Two Buddhist Analyses of Illusion

When I see a shining piece of silver which is actually a piece of shell, how do I know that I am mistaken? At the next moment or at a later time, I may perceive the same piece to be a shell, which is non-silver. Therefore there are two cases of seeing involved here. The first can be described as:

X looks *F* to *S* at *t*₁.

The second as:

X looks *G* to *S* at *t*₂.

It is assumed that *F* and *G* are mutually exclusive characteristics. The Sanskrit philosopher calls the second case the 'contradicting or correcting awareness' (*bādhaka pratyaya*) in relation to the first case which is the case of illusion. The 'correcting' awareness falsifies the 'looks *F*'. But the question arises: what is (or was) this 'looks *F*'? From the Buddhist circle, there are apparently two alternative answers. (To be sure, these two views are ascribed to the Buddhists by their non-Buddhist counterparts.) From the non-Buddhist circle, there are, at a conservative estimate,⁴ at least three different answers. I shall examine all of them here. The two Buddhist analyses of illusion may be attributed to two different views about the nature of awareness. According to one, our awareness has a 'form' (*ākāra*) intrinsic to itself, while the other maintains that our awareness is essentially 'formless'.

⁴ I follow Vācaspati Miśra in giving this list of two Buddhist and three non-Buddhist views. See Vācaspati under NS, 1.1.2 (pp. 160–4, A. Thakur's edn.). Bhāsarvajña notes eight different views, pp. 26–32. There are also other ramifications.

The latter claims that our awareness in illusion *falsely* appears to be 'burdened' with an object—an object which is non-existent (*asat*). The former believes that our illusory awareness projects its own 'form' as an external object.

My awareness of silver is *falsified* by my veridical awareness of the piece of shell. Obviously this does not mean that there was a piece of silver there which has now been destroyed or transformed into a shell. For our 'robust sense' of reality as well as of the nature of the material object would not allow such a conclusion. Therefore the piece of silver that I saw or misperceived was nothing but part of my awareness. In other words, this was a *mental* entity, an object-form that my awareness grasped or made a part of itself. If this is conceded, then it is easy to explain how it has been 'destroyed' or 'falsified' by our next awareness. This amounts to saying that what *appeared* in such awareness was a 'form', a qualifying part of that very awareness and as long as the 'form' cannot exist when the awareness passes away, the silver-appearance, the mental entity, would not exist without that awareness. This is the position of the Buddhist generally belonging to the Yogācāra-school or rather the school that upholds *sākāra-vāda*.

The main part of this theory, which is technically called the 'revelation of the awareness itself' (*ātmakhyāti*), is that the silver-form or the silverlike appearance that we are sensorily aware of is not external to the awareness but internal (*āntara*) to it. In this respect, the silver-form (comparable to the sensory datum) shares the character of such 'internal' episodes as pain or pleasure. We have awareness of pain or pleasure, but this pain or pleasure that we 'feel' cannot be anything 'external' to the awareness itself which reveals it. We have pain-form or pleasure-form which, according to the Buddhist, is an integral part of the awareness itself. Similarly the silver-form in a sensory illusion is an integral part of the awareness. An argument is formulated as follows: in our sensory illusion, there are three elements: (i) the silver-form that is picked out by the part 'silver' in the expression 'this (is) silver', (ii) what lies in front, and is picked out by the part 'this', and (iii) the awareness itself. Now the silver-form has a problematic character. It can presumably be connected with the two other elements of the complex: (ii) what lies in front and (iii) the awareness itself. However, while the illusory awareness ascribes it to what lies in front (the external object), the 'correcting' awareness refutes such an ascription. By elimination, therefore, the silver-form can *rightly* be connected with the third remaining element, the awareness itself. Since

there is no other element involved in the structure of the awareness, the silver-form cannot be attached to anything else. To put the matter simply: the silver-form in the awareness is not matched by anything in the objective situation with which we are concerned here. Hence it must belong to the subjective side, i.e. be only a part of the awareness itself. As there is no 'knower' or self on the subjective side for the Buddhist, there remains only awareness.⁵ If the silver-form is in this way attached to the awareness itself, the Buddhist will say that the silver-form is therefore a characteristic of the awareness, not of anything lying outside. Therefore I have called it a 'mental' entity or a non-external existent. I presume that any sense-data philosopher who argues that a sense-datum is a mental entity (and there cannot be any unsensed sense-datum) would have to take a similar position. It might be said that the drunkard's perception of pink rats, Macbeth's vision of the dagger, and all other hallucinations could be explained in this way, the object of awareness being non-physical in all such cases. The *sākāra-vāda* of the Yogācāra Buddhist is however a more radical theory than this, as we shall see.

Regarding the existence of mental objects as well as of mental events, there has been much discussion in what is considered a special branch of philosophy, namely the philosophy of mind. The arguments in favour of materialism, behaviourism, and physicalism, which eliminate (or 'parse away') mental objects or inner events such as pain or after-image in favour of the physical, are too well known to be repeated here. It may be tentatively assumed that the above Indian philosophers accept mental entities as real and intelligible and hence would regard the modern programme for eliminating all mentalist vocabulary as unnecessary. Hence from this point of view there will be little sympathy for the claim that all our talk of mental entities must be banished from any philosophical discourse. It is undeniable that mental objects like pain cannot *exist* without there being a person having them. But must all things that exist or are presumed to exist *exist* independently of the mind? It seems that the Sautrāntika-Yogācāra Buddhist goes to the other extreme and envisions a programme that could eliminate all physicalist vocabulary in favour of phenomenistic entities alone. Some would, however, prefer to interpret the

⁵ This type of argument is technically called *arthāpatti* (Mīmāṃsā) or *pariśeṣa* (Nyāya): of several possibilities, *a*, *b*, *c* . . . if all but one, say *c*, are rejected by evidence to the contrary, *c* is automatically established. See my *Logic, Language and Reality: An Introduction to Indian Philosophical Studies*, I. 4.

Yogācāra entities as purely 'mental'. If this seems to offend common sense, the physicalist should remember that his position too occasionally offends our presumably robust common sense. Mental events are undeniably facts as much as a car accident is a fact in the external world. There may or may not always be a recognizable and identifiable (under presumably some laboratory condition) physical change in the brain-cells concomitant with each mental event. We must admit that beyond a certain limit, the physicalist's programme becomes as much mysterious and conjectural as that of a mentalist or even a phenomenalist. In any case, some philosophers now accept the mentalist vocabulary for the sake of convenience, and because it would *practically* be impossible to do otherwise, if not for any other compelling reason.⁶ I will come back to this problem later. My own position is, however, that while there are some obvious internal episodes and mental entities, such as pain, pleasure, remembering, and confusing, it is not absolutely clear that the immediate objects of our sensory illusion should necessarily be 'non-existent' or purely mental in the way some Buddhists claim. The main problem in the West has been the mysterious sway that Cartesian dualism held over centuries. In the classical Indian philosophy of mind, it may be noted, such a radical sort of dualism was never seriously maintained.

Whether or not we can grasp external objects in our awareness, there is undeniably a common feeling shared by all of us that there is an external world. Some (Mādhyamika) Buddhists disagree with their Sautrāntika-Yogācāra counterparts in holding that our awareness does not really have any *form* (*ākāra*) that is intrinsic to it. The Naiyāyikas and the Prābhākaras join hands with this section of the Buddhists in this regard. They can all be classified as those who regard awareness *formless* (*nirākāra-jñāna-vādin*). It is, however, maintained in this theory also that one awareness is distinguished from another by virtue of its 'object-form', i.e. that which appears in it as its object. Thus the awareness of blue will be distinct from the awareness of green because one is characterized by 'blue-grasping' while the other by 'green-grasping'. These 'blue-grasping' and 'green-grasping', which we have just called particular 'object-forms' are, however, not an intrinsic part of the awareness in this theory for awareness is essentially *formless*. The object-form is also called the 'apprehensible form' (*grāhya*) because it

⁶ This is the general position of many modern Western philosophers who are neither behaviourist nor idealist, and who reject Cartesian dualism. See also ch. 8.6.

is apprehended by the awareness and the awareness is called the 'apprehender' (*grāhaka*).

That our sensory awareness is characterized by an apprehensible object-form is revealed by its linguistic description. To describe the awareness we say, 'it is an awareness of blue', or to express what is apprehended we say, 'it is blue'. This apprehensible object-form gives the *formless* awareness a recognizable shape as it were, so that we can distinguish one from the other. The major point here is that although the awareness is basically *formless*, it has the peculiar capacity of revealing or manifesting an entirely non-existent or unreal object (*asat-prakāśana-śīla*; recall Vasubandhu in *Vijñapti-kārikā* 1: *asad-arthāva-bhāsanāt*), and hence it is no wonder that our perceptual illusion reveals or manifests an object (that particular snake that I saw just a moment ago for example) that has no counterpart in reality. In fact this particular is not even identified with the illusion itself (in this theory), for the object's distinctness from the awareness that grasps it is almost experientially proven (recall also Udayana: *na grāhya-bhedam avadhūya dhiyo'sti vṛttih*).

It should be emphasized, even at the risk of repetition, that each awareness arises only when it is characterized by some apprehensible form, but since awareness is, in this theory, essentially *formless* like the sky or space (*colourless* like the transparent crystal), it is only *nominally* characterized by its particular apprehensible *form*. The apprehensible form is not an essential part of our awareness. But what could be its objective status? If it is posited only as a 'mediator' between the external world and the internal episode of awareness then its objective status is dubious. Nyāya and Prābhākara would like to identify this apprehensible-form with the external reality or parts of such reality. The Sautrāntikas who do not align themselves with the Yogācārinś would probably have to say that the so-called apprehensible-form is a 'representation' (in some acceptable sense) of the external object. Those Buddhists who believe that awareness must have a *form* (an object-form), the Yogācārinś, argue that the apprehensible-form is an 'internal' entity. It is *mental* for it is that part of awareness which is externalized or projected outside. But the Mādhyamika Buddhists who would regard awareness as being essentially *formless* would argue that the apprehensible-form in erroneous perception, since it is neither mental nor material, neither external nor internal, is in fact an unreal or non-existent (*a-sat*) entity. The apprehensible object-form, the argument continues, can be held to be real provided it fulfils either of

two conditions: (i) it is mirrored by the part of an external reality, or (ii) it is an integral part of the 'internal' reality, the awareness-episode itself. But since the apprehensible snake-form in the perceptual illusion of a snake fulfils neither of these conditions, it must be regarded as non-existent or unreal. It is also to be concluded therefore that our awareness possesses the power to make a non-existent object appear in it.

The claim here is something like this. The nature of our awareness is such that when it arises as an episode from all its causal factors, it arises invariably apprehending some object-form that is different from it. The proponent of the above argument shows that the nature of an awareness cannot be such that its object-form is always, or is always caused by, an existent entity. The object-form may very well be a non-existent entity. We do have awareness of past and future things, where we cannot say that the object-forms are directly caused by those past or future things. Similarly we have to deal with the episodes of awareness of non-existent, unactual things. Because they are non-existent at the time when the awareness episode arises, they cannot be causally responsible for the relevant object-forms, the apprehensible-forms, in the awareness. In other words, in order to be the apprehensible object-form of awareness, it is not always necessary, though it may be sufficient, for an external object to 'create' such an object-form. For the object-form may be an unreal, a non-existent object, which the awareness apprehends or grasps as the apprehensible, as necessarily happens in dreams or hallucinations (*keśādi-darśana*). Therefore the *asat* 'non-existent' object-form of the illusion, 'this is a piece of silver' is *unreal* for it meets neither test of reality: it is not a contribution from (a representation of) the external object and it is not *created* by the awareness itself. It is only apprehended or grasped by the awareness.

This, I think, is the position of those who hold the 'revelation of the non-existent' (*asat-khyāti*) theory of sensory illusion. This is stated in non-Buddhist texts rather poorly and in an unconvincing manner. The object, i.e. the silver-form that is grasped in our sensory awareness is *asat*, unreal or non-existent. The 'correcting' awareness in which the piece appears as non-silver to the perceiver and he says 'this is *not* silver' exposes this fact, viz. non-existence of that silver-form that we grasped before. Commentators of the non-Buddhist tradition ascribe this view to the Mādhyamika or *śūnyavāda* school. However, this ascription need not be taken to be strictly correct.

The obvious difficulties of this view led to the other Buddhist view, which we have mentioned already. This is held by those who held the Yogācāra doctrine: The object-form is an integral part of the awareness itself, each awareness being different from another by virtue of this unique object-form which appears in it. The object-form does not come from outside. In fact when the object-form is projected outside or externalized, we are said to have an awareness of the external object. An awareness of blue is determined by the blue-form which is unique to that awareness. Therefore the object-form intrinsically belonging to the awareness determines it as an awareness of that very object. In a true awareness the object-form becomes the 'evidence' (*pramāṇa*) for the apprehension of the object. The same episode, awareness, in one role supplies the evidence, i.e. the object-form (as *pramāṇa*), for the apprehension and in another role becomes the result (*phala*), i.e. what is established by that evidence, namely the apprehension of the object. This is not to be regarded as impossible. For example, the same oak tree in the aspect of being an oak acts as evidence (*liṅga*) for being regarded as a tree. Here the oak-aspect is the evidence for the tree-aspect, although the two in principle are inseparable. Just as we can say that 'this is a tree' because it is an oak, similarly it is possible to assert that there is apprehension of the object because the object-form belongs to it as an integral part. In this way these Buddhists would move towards some kind of phenomenalism and idealism, for they would claim that we do not need to refer to the external world in order to explain, understand, and distinguish our awareness-episodes. They would maintain that the familiar external world is nothing but these object-forms of true awareness (*pramāṇa*) individually externalized. In sensory illusion etc., the object-form, i.e. the snake-form, belongs essentially to the awareness itself, for its externalization is repudiated by our 'correcting' awareness (awareness that corrects the previous error) which says 'this is *not* silver'. This counter-thrust against externalization would establish the internal or mental nature of the object-form that is grasped in sensory illusion.

It may be noted that the theory of 'the revelation of the non-existent' in illusion is not to be totally neglected. For even in the Nyāya realistic analysis of illusion, where the objects apprehended are broken into bits and pieces so that they can be identified with the bits and pieces of the actual world, there is one recalcitrant element that is not totally eliminable in this way! It is the *connection* (*samsarga*) that one bit has

with the other. This has to be finally a non-existent entity, an *asat* particular. Illusion thus uses its own cement to connect real bits and pieces into some fanciful whole. (See below.)

In this brief reconstruction of the views of the two Buddhist schools I have tried to simplify the rather complex arguments of the Buddhist, but the vocabulary that is common to the Buddhist discussion is not familiar today in philosophic parlance. Hence difficulties exist especially in following the thread of the argument as we jump from one step to another. In spite of these problems of exposition, I believe the rather specific nature of Buddhist phenomenalism is clear, though the arguments and philosophic motivation which led the Buddhist to these positions may still remain obscure. I shall now expound the three non-Buddhist theories of sensory illusion.

6.3 *The Advaita View of the Inexplicability of the Appearance*

The first well-known non-Buddhist view, which is in a way derivable also from the Buddhist position, is called the *anirvacanīyakhyaṭi*, which says that the object-form, the silver-form or the snake-form, in sensory illusion (expressible as 'this is silver' or 'this is a snake') must belong to a third realm of objects which is neither existent nor non-existent. This view resolves the problematic character of the object-form grasped in illusion by positing a third realm, which is sometimes called (wrongly, I think) in modern interpretations as the 'transcendental' realm. This view belongs to Advaita Vedānta. It is obvious that this position exploits the weak points of the two Buddhist views. First, the silver-form cannot *really* be non-existent or unreal for (i) it appeared in an apparently perceptual awareness and (ii) according to one meaning of 'see' '*a* sees *X*' implies '*X* exists'. Something, it may be argued, which was so vivid and certain in my 'direct' awareness cannot easily be ruled out as unreal. The 'revelation of the non-existent' (*asat-khyaṭi*) view is rather weak on this point. For it does not explain why an unreal object is grasped at all by illusion. Second, the silver-form cannot really be internal or mental, for after all a vivid perceptual experience grasps it as an external object. Nor can the silver-form be regarded as existent or real, for the 'correcting' awareness falsifies that possibility. Nor can we rule that the silver-form is therefore both real and unreal, existent and non-existent, for that would be a contradiction. With such arguments, it is concluded that the nature of the silver-form appearing in illusion therefore cannot be made explicit (cf. *vacanīya*) as existent or as non-existent, for it is neither. It is uncategorizable by the ordinary

notion of the existent and the non-existent. This view is generalized in Advaita to support another philosophical doctrine. Śaṅkara explains the status of this whole external, material world on this model of sensory illusion. Our ordinary veridical perception reveals diversities of the external but the scriptures say that there is the non-dual Brahman and Brahman-awareness will ultimately 'falsify' the diversity-awareness. Because of the presence of such falsifying awareness, therefore, the diversity of the external world would have the same *uncategorizable* status. It is, in the above sense, neither existent nor non-existent, neither real nor unreal. To put it another way, the world has an 'inexplicable' (or ineffable) existence (*a-nirvacanīya* or *prātibhāsika sattā*), for under examination (*vicāra*) it yields to neither the characteristic or mark of the existent nor that of the non-existent. We need not concern ourselves too much with this metaphysical thesis which is an integral part or a necessary consequence of the scriptural (and perhaps experiential in the mystical sense) assertion about the Brahman-awareness. But this thesis need not be called (as it often is by some modern exponents) 'illusionism' in the ordinary sense of illusion. Rather, the model of sensory illusion is used as an argument to show that the world of experience is neither categorizable as real or existent nor as unreal or non-existent. The world does not strictly conform to the way we intuitively understand these terms, 'real-unreal' or 'existent-non-existent'.

One may recall here the Brentano thesis about the 'intentional inexistence' of the objects of all psychological verbs. One of the marks of intentional inexistence is this: from '*a F*'s *X*' (where *F* stands for any psychological verb) we cannot infer whether *X* exists or does not exist.⁷ Here the Advaitin is dealing with a specific type of psychological verb, cases of illusion, i.e. illusorily seeing *X* (the SNAKE). Now the argument is that this SNAKE can be said to be neither existent nor non-existent. Having established the status of the SNAKE in illusion in this way, the Advaitin proceeds to show that the status of the whole world appearing in our awareness is similar: indescribable either-as-existent-or-as-non-existent. In other words, the situation here is not comparable to what we ordinarily understand by the existents, e.g. the chair I am sitting upon, or the pen I am writing with, nor is it comparable with what we ordinarily understand by the non-existent or unreal, the rabbit's horn, the son of a barren woman, etc.⁸

⁷ F. Brentano, pp. 39-61.

⁸ For Śaṅkara's interpretation of *adhyāsa*, see *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya*, pp. 1-4.

We may put this another way: our *a priori* notion of existence and non-existence falls short of the world we actually experience. Or the world we experience behaves strangely enough to enable us to say that it contradicts our *a priori* notions of real and unreal. The snake that I experienced in my sensory illusion had, with all its peculiarities and generalities, the unmistakable mark of being real and existent but now it has vanished, and a thing as real as a snake cannot do this. Therefore, how else could we classify that snake-form in our illusion except as neither real nor unreal? This theory in fact tends more towards realism than phenomenalism or idealism. For it accepts the external world more seriously as real and existent. It is only in the context of the ultimate Brahman awareness that the reality-status of this world becomes questionable.

6.4 *The Prābhākara View of No-illusion*

Now I shall discuss the views of the two avowedly realistic schools, the Prābhākara Mīmāṃsaka and the Nyāya. The best way to introduce the Prābhākara is to say something about what is called the 'existential import' of the verb 'to see'. I believe the matter is concerned not simply with the English usage of the verb 'see', for the problem exists also in Sanskrit philosophy of perception. I may refer to how Śabara has formulated the principle of existential import in perception.⁹ To restate the Śabara principle: from 'S sees A' we can infer 'A exists', i.e. there must be something satisfying the description, or having the name, A, which S sees. Philosophers such as G. E. Moore and A. J. Ayer have tried to distinguish the different uses of this verb, in one case 'to see' is like 'to eat', which carries with it the existential implication of what is seen (or eaten), while in another case seeing does not have the said existential import, i.e. seeing something is consistent with the non-existence of what is seen.¹⁰

There are, among other things, two distinct problems here which I wish to discuss. First, people can *say* that they see things which they also believe (at the moment of seeing) to exist. A little boy can see Santa Claus or a ghost and he also believes that such a being exists and is there. Hence this is not really a counter-example to the use of 'see' governed by the 'existence' condition. A proper counter-example would be found in the percipient saying that he sees X with the full

⁹ Śabara, *Mīmāṃsā-bhāṣya*; see also ch. 7.5.

¹⁰ G. E. Moore (1953), pp. 64 ff; A. J. Ayer, *Foundations of Empirical Knowledge*, (1962 edn.), p. 21.

awareness that *X* is not present or does not exist. I concede that there are such examples. But I suggest that we could take it as a metaphorical extension of the use of the verb based upon similarity of situation (in both sorts of cases there are eyes open, broad daylight, I was not dreaming, I had an experience etc.). Second, with regard to after-image and other private data, dark patches, blurs, blotches, etc., it is perhaps still possible to claim that the 'existence' condition holds, unless our 'existence' condition further implies that the object be publicly observable. In fact it is reasonable to claim that if I see a blur, it exists for me, for the failure of other people to see it does not mean that *I* do not see it.

Some modern representationalists (e.g. F. Jackson)¹¹ argue that if Macbeth *saw* a dagger (which other people failed to see) then there must have been a dagger-like shape for only Macbeth to see. Or, in other words, 'there may have been a *mental image* seen by Macbeth which he mistakenly took to be a dagger'. This means that although it is true, as if by definition, that nothing *physical* or material or public is seen when we are hallucinating, it does not follow from the same definition that something private or non-physical or mental cannot be seen when hallucination occurs. Even a Yogācāra Buddhist would say that when someone is sensorily aware of the silver-form in sensory illusion, that silver-form he sees exists *for him*, though not as a publicly observable object. It exists as an integral part of that very awareness. The Prābhākara would raise a question at this point: if he sees the silver-form which exists, why should we call that awareness an illusion at all? The Prābhākara is however not a representationalist as we shall see presently. He is a direct realist, though he disagrees with Nyāya in his analysis of illusion. He takes the extreme position that if illusion means awareness of *X* when *X* is unreal or not there, then there cannot be any illusion in this given sense of the term, for all obvious cases of illusion can be explained away in a different manner. This position is called *akhyāti* or *satkhyāti* or *vivekākhyāti*. *Akhyāti* means 'no illusion'; *sat-khyāti* means 'only the existent (real) appears in our awareness', and *vivekākhyāti* means 'the distinction between past experience and present experience is "missed" (in illusion)'. All these three expressions (used as names here) in fact describe different aspects of a theory. I shall reconstruct the theory along with the usual arguments that are given in its favour.

¹¹ F. Jackson, pp. 50 ff.

We have said earlier that a perceptual (sensory) illusion is a non-simple awareness, for it involves at least two elements. This, however, does not mean that the awareness is always judgemental in the sense that it is expressed as 'this is silver', nor does it mean that the percipient necessarily says 'I see that this is silver' to express his inner judgement. For all we know, the illusion may happen too quickly for the verbalization to arise. (On verbalization and related problems, see Chapters 8 and 10.) But still it would be a non-simple awareness in our sense. For it would probably be admitted by all parties that even in my sensory illusion of a blue blur when there is only a white expanse (a wall), I am ready to allow a duality of what appears in the awareness and what stimulated the sensory faculty (I say 'probably' because only some form of extreme phenomenalism, which will then move close to idealism and then to solipsism, may dispute this account). Sanskrit philosophers call the first *pratibhāsa*, 'that which *appears* in awareness', and the second *ālambana*, 'what *supports* the awareness by (causally?) stimulating etc.'

It might be argued that given the above duality and the non-simple nature of the sensory perception, it is possible to think that such seeing could potentially deliver a judgement of the form 'this is *F*'. I think this argument is valid but the crucial word is 'potentially', for the point is that it may or may not actually deliver the judgement required. Even so the sensory perception would be non-simple according to our definition, for it involves the duality mentioned above. It is possible for such a perception to be an illusion provided the 'appearance' (*pratibhāsa*) deviates (that is how the Sanskrit philosophers would like to put it, *vyabhicarati*) from 'the support-stimulant' (*ālambana*). In other words, if *X* looks some way to *S* and *X* is not that way at all, then *S*'s perception is an illusion. If I am seeing, for whatever reason, a blue blur in the corner of the white expanse (wall) at the moment while the white wall, even in that corner, is not that way at all, then my seeing is illusory. The Prābhākara takes his cue here, and goes on to say that there is another alternative to our declaring this awareness to be illusory. The notion of *ālambana*, 'the support-stimulant', from which the *pratibhāsa*, 'appearance', is said to deviate, has been explicitly contrived in the above account of illusion as performing a causal function. But this may not be an essential constituent of the notion of *ālambana*, 'the support', though in most cases that which is the *support* is also the *stimulant* and hence a causal factor. For example a past object (or a future one) may be the *support*, i.e. the objective support (or

ālambana) of some present awareness. Therefore it is possible to say that the 'objective support' and the 'appearance' of a particular awareness not only can coincide (as opposed to 'deviate') and be the same, but they also always or necessarily 'coincide'. If they do so necessarily, then, the argument continues, there cannot arise any illusion in the given sense where the 'support' (*ālambana*) must deviate from the 'appearance' (*pratibhāsa*). In other words, both Nyāya and Prābhākara would hold that in veridical perception what lends objective (causal) support (*ālambana*) to the awareness is also the object that appears in it, the 'object-form' and the (external) object being not separable at all. If a red patch causes the awareness of red, then the 'red-appearance' is nothing that could be distinguishable from the red patch itself. If the same can be maintained in the case of perceptual illusion, then we have to say that there cannot be any proper illusion.

The above, rather strenuous, argument suggests a useful analysis of what we ordinarily take to be illusion. The Prābhākara says that each sensory illusion is non-simple not only because it is involved with at least two objects but also because it combines two distinct modes of awareness into one. One is the direct sensing while the other is a 'concealed' remembering. The judgement into which this 'illusion' can be developed has two distinct expressions, 'this' and 'silver' as in 'this (is) silver'. Here the 'this' part singles out the direct sensing, while the 'silver' part points to the 'concealed' remembering. 'Illusion' means that these two distinct modes of awareness are *confused* as one. This confusion is due to our lack of knowledge of their distinctness. To be sure, we are confused not in our awareness but only in our behaviours, actions etc. (*vyavahāra*). Because we cannot grasp the distinction between the two truly distinct cases of awareness, we tend to treat them as a unity (out of confusion) in our verbal report, actions, speech-behaviour etc. (*vyavahāra*); we further act on the basis of this confusion or 'fusion'.

The 'this' part shows that what we grasp lies in front, but owing to some defect in the causal situation we cannot fully grasp it as a piece of shell. The similarity between a piece of silver and a shell being grasped in this way reminds the percipient of the *previously experienced* silver-character. Here again, owing to some defect in the causal situation, the remembering mode of awareness 'conceals' its own nature (*pramuṣṭa-tattā*) in the sense that it does not fully grasp that the silver-character we experience here is only a memory of such a character and is not actually present. In other words, in remembering *F* we are usually

aware that we had directly experienced *F* once before. The present case is, however, not the usual kind of remembering, for we are only aware of *F* and the fact of its being previously experienced is concealed from the awareness. In this way in our speech-behaviour (*vyavahāra*), a fusion of memory (remembering) and perception has taken place and as a result we have what we call an illusion. In this analysis of illusion, it is maintained that what we *see*, i.e. the piece of shell, exists even though we do not see it *as* a piece of shell and what we actually remember, i.e. the silver-character, is not what we see, though in our confusion, we *think* or *say* that we see it. *Saying* and *thinking* are only different modes of *vyavahāra* here. In fact there is a double fusion, according to this analysis. We are unaware of the distinction between objects—what is actually seen and what is actually remembered—and we are unaware, in addition, of the distinction between the two modes of awareness, seeing and remembering. Illusion is thus explained in terms of this double lack of awareness of distinction (cf. *vivekāgraha*).

Each individual piece of awareness, under this theory, is correct or non-illusory in the sense that it is 'object-corresponding' (*yathārtha*). In other words, here the 'appearance' (*pratibhāsa*) does not deviate from the 'support' (*ālambana*) in either case. In the perceptual component, the 'appearance' is expressed as 'this' and the 'objective support' is also what lies before the perceiver, while in the 'remembrance' component, the 'objective support' is the *remembered* silver. But what appears in the awareness is the *unqualified* silver. That is the silver of our past experience which is now only being *remembered*. But the *remembered* aspect of the past silver does not appear along with the appearance of silver in our present awareness. In other words, the awareness is the awareness of an indefinite piece of silver, not of *that* piece of silver (i.e. the silver I had seen before).

Sometimes, the Prābhākara argues, two distinct cases of perception are fused together to generate a so-called illusion, instead of a fusion between a seeing and a remembering. A jaundiced person, for example, perceives the conch-shell as yellow. Here the awareness of yellow is a sensory perception although this yellow is not of the object we distinguish in our visual field, i.e. the conch-shell. The yellow belongs to the disease that affects the eye. It is like seeing the white conch-shell through yellow glass where the yellow we see belongs to the glass. The yellow of the disease is sensed but that it belongs to the disease is not apprehended, just as the yellow of a very transparent glass plate may be grasped without our realizing that it is a quality of

the glass plate. The awareness of the conch-shell is also perceptual. Because of the obvious defect in the perceptual factors, we grasp only the material body, the conch-shell as such without its particular colour. In this way, there is a perception of the qualifier only, the yellow, as well as another perception of the thing only, the conch-shell. The two cases of perception are distinct but we are unaware of their distinction. Similarly the two objects, the qualifier and the thing, are distinct, but there too we lack the knowledge of their unrelatedness. The result is a fusion in *vyavahāra*, in which the conch-shell appears yellow to us. What is the function of the 'correcting' awareness in such cases? It simply supplies the missing knowledge of their distinction, of their unrelatedness. The so-called 'correcting' (*bādhaka*) awareness supplies only the *gaps* in the previous awareness and thereby sets the matter right! In this way, all cases of awareness, including illusion, would appear as 'object-corresponding' under this theory. Therefore, strictly speaking, no awareness can be incorrect or wrong.

We may ask why, in the case of a so-called perceptual illusion, we have a revival of memory which is really not a *normal* remembering? For in normal remembering we do grasp the object *as being experienced before*. Here this crucial component of a normal remembering is missing. How can we explain this abnormality? The Prābhākara suggests a way out. The Prābhākara, if we recall, believes that a cognitive event, when it is produced by a set of causal factors in normal circumstances, would be naturally a piece of knowledge (Chapter 5). If there is some fault or defect (*doṣa*) present among the causal factors, the result would be a 'defective' cognition, which we call illusion. This, according to the Prābhākara, is how we must explain the abnormality of the said remembering. Although we are actually remembering (i.e. have a memory-revival of) a snake previously experienced, we are not aware that it is a remembering. The defect among causal factors has produced a corresponding defect in the memory-revival itself with the result that we are confused in our speech-behaviour (*vyavahāra*) or the resulting activity and so on. The previously experienced snake lends objective (causal) support to my remembering of it and it is also what is grasped by the same 'remembering'. Hence this remembering is not incorrect. In the same way we can show that the perceptual part is also not incorrect.

I have said that the Prābhākara is a realist. He tries to resolve the puzzlement of an idealist sceptic by meeting him headlong. An idealist or a sceptic may point to a well-known puzzlement. If objects exist

independently of our being aware of them, and if it is in the nature of our awareness to reveal objects, then there should not arise any illusion. And if awareness by nature reveals objects that are not there to begin with, there cannot possibly arise any correct awareness, and there is no possibility of knowledge. The Prābhākara tries to opt for the first alternative and maintains that there are, in fact, no cases of illusion, but only of confusion. Remember the Vasubandhu argument: if in *some* cases of awareness (dreams, hallucinations) we are aware of objects that are not there, at least in the way they appear to us, then *all* cases could be so, for there is no neutral ground for us to distinguish between them. The Prābhākara turns the tables on this position and says that if some cases of awareness make us aware of objects that are there, and are there as they appear to us, then all cases of awareness must be so, for awareness and the factors giving rise to awareness, e.g. sense-faculty etc., cannot change their intrinsic nature of causing true awareness. These cases of so-called illusion are only apparent and can be explained away. In an awareness, be it a remembering, or seeing, or a sensing, sometimes due to some defective causal collocation we may not be aware of as much as we should be or could be, but we are never wrongly aware of something that is not there. There may be omission but no commission.¹²

The Prābhākara does not accept sense-data in the same way as some modern representationalists. The immediate object of perception may be the thing with properties, or simply the particular property without the thing (as in some cases of illusion explained above) or the thing itself without the property. In the last case we may be visually aware of the thing because it *has* a colour and shape but we need not always be aware of this colour or this shape, for we can simply be aware of the thing as such (although such awareness is caused by its having a colour). If the (white) wall is *seen* to be blue through a trick of light, then we see the blue, the particular property which, according to the Prābhākara, belongs to some external object, in this case to the light perhaps: the particular colour belongs not to the wall in front but to the lighting arrangement. Similarly we see the wall without seeing its colour while we are not aware that we are not seeing its colour. We are unaware that we are seeing two objects unrelated to each other, the wall and the particular blue. We are also unaware that there are two cases of seeing each distinct from the other. In this way, illusion is

¹² Vācaspati under NS, 1.1.2 pp. 161–3 (Thakur's edn.).

explained without resorting, in the usual sense, to the sense-datum blue (I assume that a sense-datum in the usual sense is a mental entity). If this blue is called a sense-datum here, it is unquestionably physical, according to the Prābhākara. Besides, by saying that direct grasp of the thing, the material body, is possible without the mediation of the grasping of its colour etc., the Prābhākara is opting for direct realism. Hallucinations and dreams are explained in terms of memory. When Macbeth sees the dagger, if he does, the Prābhākara would say that he is only remembering the previously experienced dagger without being aware that he is only so remembering. Further, he is also confusing the perceptual capacity or capability of his present situation (broad daylight, open eyes etc.) with his 'concealed' remembering. He is unaware of the distinction between the two distinct cases. The dagger that appears in hallucination is therefore an internal object or a mental object in the sense that it is a remembered dagger and the initial experience was caused by a real dagger.

The Prābhākara's analysis of illusion seems unnecessarily complicated, although he is apparently motivated by his faith in realism and hence wishes to avoid positing a set of unwelcome entities called 'appearance' (*pratibhāsa*), distinct from objects in the material world. He rightly emphasizes the role of memory in any non-simple perceptual awareness. As long as we allow that we cannot remember what we never experienced before in some form or other, the role of the objects in the material world (and this includes even properties, features, etc. of things) in generating even *disguised* memories is rightly underlined. But as Vācaspati has remarked the proposed analysis of illusion by the Prābhākara is unnecessarily driven to some ludicrous extremity (cf. *atīvyākhyāna*). In other words, the Prābhākara is guilty of 'overkill'. The strenuous effort to split what seems to be a unitary perceptual mode of awareness into two distinct occurrences of awareness, viz. remembering and seeing (where again we are unaware that we are remembering as well as unaware that we are not seeing), is, according to its Nyāya critique, neither necessary nor defensible. It is not necessary, the Nyāya says, since there is a simpler way of explaining illusion. Nor is it defensible because such an explanation cannot account for the origin of human effort and action towards the object grasped in such illusory awareness. For example, even if I misperceive a snake, I immediately act in some way or other such as running away from it. My action is unquestionably prompted by my (false) awareness. Under the Prābhākara analysis, however, we would have to

say that my action is prompted by my *lack* of awareness of the distinctness of the two different cases. Now suppose I pick out the object presented (to me) by my revived memory to make a false attribution to what lies before me but is entirely unrelated to it. I may, of course, make the attribution in either of two ways. I may do it unknowingly, or knowingly (as in a make-belief or fantasy). It is also true that I need not act the same way in each situation. People do not usually act on lack of knowledge but rather under some *positive* certitude or awareness. As Vācaspati emphasizes, 'A conscious being does not act out of lack of awareness, but out of awareness'.¹³ Therefore I may lack the required knowledge of the unrelatedness of the two objects, but my positive action comes when I, unknowingly of course, 'mix them together', i.e. superimpose one upon the other.

The Prābhākara could reply that our failure to distinguish these two distinct cases of awareness would make them appear as one; this similarity with one unitary (perceptual) awareness would be enough to prompt us to act. In normal discourse we do say that the person ran away from that false snake because he *did not know*. The Prābhākara says that while the two different types of awareness remain distinct, confusion emerges (shows itself) when we express them in speech, for we express them as one: 'This is a snake.' The Nyāya answer to this is not very convincing. Vācaspati says that if we can claim that it is possible to treat the two distinct cases of awareness as similar to one unitary awareness when their distinction is not grasped (and as a result our activity or speech-behaviour is made to conform to such a single unitary awareness), then we may as well claim that one unitary awareness could be treated as *similar* to two distinct instances of awareness when identity or the relatedness of its two components is not grasped. And then the speech-behaviour or even our action appropriate to those cases of distinct awareness should also follow. The Prābhākara point is this. The tentative causal rule for action is that *A* and the like of *A* prompt similar action. Although illusion is not a unitary perceptual awareness the situation resembles the case of a unitary perceptual awareness as long as we fail to distinguish between the two distinct cases of awareness. Hence both episodes of awareness prompt us to act in a similar way. The point of Vācaspati's counter-argument is not very clear here. We may, facetiously, interpret the comment in a way that would go in favour of the Prābhākara. Suppose

¹³ Ibid., p. 162.

I see something lying on the ground, something that looks like a snake, and thus my memory of a snake is revived but for some unspecified reason I cannot identify or relate the two (for what lies before me is, unknown to me, a snake) and thereby cannot be aware that it is a snake. This situation would then be similar to my having two distinct cases of awareness, seeing and remembering. And hence the behaviour appropriate to such a situation (with two distinct cases of awareness) would follow. In other words, I would not run away from the place, since I know that my memory-snake cannot bite me. If this is the point of the Nyāya reply, the Prābhākara could very well say: in such a situation the person involved does not usually run away, although other observers may, for they know that there is a snake lying there!

6.5 The Nyāya Analysis of Illusion: Anyathākhyāti

I shall now try to expound the Nyāya analysis of illusion, which is called the 'misplacement' (*anyathākhyāti*) theory. In fact, some form of *anyathākhyāti* is implied in the attempt of many realists, even in the West. Thus, they avoid unnecessary multiplication of objects which are either abstract, or mental, or intentional. The theory, as I shall show later, is generalized in Nyāya to explain other philosophical problems connected with vacuous names and descriptions which are apparently meaningful, although there is nothing that they name or that answers such descriptions. This is also a relevant analysis in connection with what may be called the old Russell–Meinong controversy over the problem of fictional entities. Part of the philosophic insight that might have prompted Russell to propound his theory of definite description can be seen to be at work as the Nyāya tackles the problem of empty terms in logic by generalizing the 'misplacement' (*anyathākhyāti*) theory.¹⁴ For certain problems of perception can be transposed back into the problems of reference. For example, if I cannot *see* a non-existent object, how can I name it, or try to refer to it or describe it? Moreover, the initial name-giving occasion, as the modern (Kripke's) theory of reference would emphasize, requires a 'perceptual' sort of situation (comparable to baptism).

It is well known that a sensory illusion of a snake and a veridical perception of it are very much alike, so that the percipient cannot distinguish between them at the time of experiencing, and yet there is a

¹⁴ B. K. Matilal (1971), pp. 123–45. See, for further elaboration of different facets of the issue, A. Chakrabarti, 'Our Talk about Non-existents', Oxford D. Phil. thesis, 1982, Appendix.

basic difference between them which the percipient may quickly learn. A theory of illusion is supposed to account satisfactorily for this likeness as well as difference. Representationalists believe that the acceptance of entities like sense-data makes this explanation simple. It is argued that the likeness is due to the fact that both cases of awareness, one veridical and the other illusory, share a common sensory core, i.e. they both consist of the immediate perception of the same object, viz. a sense-datum, while the difference is due to another fact. In veridical perception the sense-datum being a correct representation or picture of what lies before the perceiver leads to the correct mediate awareness of the object, the snake, while in illusion the datum misleads. Phenomenalism accepts the first explanation of the likeness, but claims that the difference is to be explained in terms of the coherence (or lack of it) of the particular datum with the others in the web of data; if the datum is a 'misfit' (*viśaṃvādin*), the awareness is an illusion. For example, Dharmakīrti defined correct awareness as that which does not run counter to any other relevant awareness or action (cf. *aviśaṃvādakatva*). If I see a piece of silver and later on lift it and place it in my palm, and conduct several tests, all these behaviour-episodes would have to cohere with the first awareness of the piece of silver. If they do, the veracity of the perception is established, if they do not, the awareness is illusory. This also shows why the Buddhist may agree with Nyāya in maintaining that knowledge-hood is known 'otherwise' (*parataḥ*) i.e. not when the awareness is known (see Chapter 4) but when successful activity follows.

Dharmakīrti uses the example of a jewel and a lamp, both being hidden from the eye and emitting rays. This simile can be exploited in favour of both the representationalist and the phenomenalist. We see the rays, the same (or similar) rays in both cases, and we may in both cases approach the object. If I approach with the awareness that it is a jewel and obtain a lamp at the end of the line, then the object does not 'fit' or does not perform its expected role (*arthakriyā*) as a jewel. Or I may rush with the awareness that it is a lamp and obtain a jewel. In that case, it does not do its job either. Both cases exemplify illusion. But if I rush with the awareness that it is a jewel and a jewel is what I obtain, then it is known to be veridical.¹⁵

Nyāya says that the theory that is called 'misplacement' (*anyathā-khyāti*) can give a much simpler explanation than the above. It explains

¹⁵ Dharmakīrti (PV), *Pratyakṣa* chapter verse 57.

the likeness between two cases of snake perception, illusory and veridical, by referring to the similarity of properties, features, aspects, etc. between the two objects, one of which (a rope) I see, and the other of which (the snake) I misperceive. Obviously there will be little chance of misperceiving *A* while *B* lies before me unless there is some similarity of features etc. between *A* and *B*. I cannot mistake a mustard seed for an elephant, for example. These features etc., we must note, are not odd sorts of entities such as sense-data. They are attributable to the material object we see, or to the physical environment etc. They are not sense-impressions private to the percipient but rather in most cases observable features of the external world. Some sense-data philosophers believe that sense-data are physical, or part of the material world, and hence it may be claimed that what they are saying does not differ from the position I am defending here. G. E. Moore, for example, would consider that sense-data are 'properties' of the material object, sometimes of the visible (front) part of the opaque physical object.¹⁶ It is important to realize the difference here. The features, properties, parts, and so on which I am invoking as the basis of similarity are attributable (in fact, they may be said to belong) to the material object in the same way as some philosophers would attribute sense-data to the material object, or to the physical occupant. But what the sense-data philosophers say, and Nyāya does not say, is that they are also the objects of our immediate perception, on the basis of which perception we *see* the material object. The Nyāya position is that we see the opaque physical object, the piece of silver for example, *because of the presence of these properties*, but not necessarily because we first *see* these properties, features, parts, etc. as a preliminary to the second, mediate perception. The shining white feature *causes* me to *see* the piece of silver, and sometimes a similar feature shared by another object, a piece of shell, may *cause* my perception, i.e. misperception, of silver. This likeness between a veridical perception and an illusion leads us to mistake one for the other.

The point made in the last paragraph may be elaborated. It is usually believed by sense-data philosophers, as it was by the Buddhists, that we first see the colour of the object (say the red of my car) and then through the mediation of this seeing, we 'see' (or at least we think we 'see') the car. When under neon-light the red is changed into purple and I see the purple, I may *doubt* whether it is really my car. Somewhat

¹⁶ G. E. Moore (1953), pp. 31-96.

in this way, sense-data philosophers like H. H. Price would argue in favour of a direct or immediate perception of a red or purple patch with a certain bulgy shape: 'When I see a tomato there is much that I can *doubt*. I can doubt whether it is a tomato that I am seeing, and not a cleverly painted piece of wax. I can *doubt* whether there is any material thing there at all.'¹⁷ In my example of an illusory case, I can doubt whether it is not another car but I cannot doubt my seeing immediately a purple patch with a certain bulgy shape. But must I *see* the colour always and invariably before I see my car? Could it not be the case that I walk to my car *seeing* that it is there without thinking (i.e. seeing) even what colour it has now? Frequently I *see* my car without even stopping to look at the colour. This does not mean that the car has become colourless all of a sudden. Nor does it mean that I can or could see it even if it did not have a colour. For, as Nyāya has emphasized (and I repeat for emphasis), I see it *because* it has a colour, but not necessarily because I *see* that colour. Of course I see the colour also, because it is there to be seen. But unless my perception is propositional (in the Chisholmian sense)¹⁸ so that I see that the car is red (or that it is a red car), I do not need the immediate and independent perception of the red to 'mediate' in my perception of the car itself. Suppose I am sitting by my desk near the window, and I notice (i.e. look up, *see*) whenever a car passes by. Now you come in and ask me: 'Did you see that car that passed by a moment ago?' I can truthfully answer 'Yes, I did'. You may then ask, 'What colour was it?' And I can still truthfully reply, 'I did not see (notice) its colour'. I would not have been able to see it, however, if it had been an uncoloured (invisible) car (like the invisible man in science fiction). Therefore it stands to reason to say that I saw the car (because it had a colour) but did not see its colour. It can of course be argued that I saw the colour because it was there even though I now think I did not. I am reminded here of an old Bengali joke: A physician asks his prospective patient, 'Do you have a headache in the morning?' The patient replies, 'No sir'. And the physician says, 'Of course you have it every morning, but you are not able to know it'.¹⁹

According to the 'misplacement' (*anyathākhyāti*) theory, the snake I see in my illusion is a real snake (an existent entity), and does not

¹⁷ H. H. Price, p. 3; my emphasis. I shall ignore in the context the much-debated question of primary-secondary qualities as well as what modern science says about colour etc.

¹⁸ R. Chisholm, *Perceiving*, pp. 3 and 164 ff.

¹⁹ Paraśurām, *Cikitsāvivhrāt*: 'hai hai zānti pāro nā.'

belong to the separate class of (mental) existents like the class of sense-data; it is part of the already existent snake community, part of the 'furniture' of this material world. To understand this argument, we have to consider several other points; in so doing, we can also explain the difference that is there between the two cases of awareness, veridical and illusory.

First, the 'perceived' character of the snake in our sensory illusion cannot be easily dismissed or underplayed. Nyāya therefore rightly rebukes the Prābhākara for trying to undermine this fact and to turn what is a genuine case of perception (though not a case of *genuine* perception) into something different (a case of remembering only) by a tortuous explanation (cf. *ativyākhyā*, Vācaspati). The Buddhist, the phenomenalist, and also the representationalist are therefore right in insisting upon this 'perceived' character of the experience in illusion. The Prābhākara is also right in talking about past experience and memory-revival in the context of illusion. If we follow this lead, we can avoid the insecure and rather debatable realm of sense-data, percepts, appearances (*pratibhāsa*), and 'forms' (*ākāra*).

Second, the role of past experience, acquired concepts, anticipations, habitual association etc. in generating a present perceptual knowledge and by the same token a perceptual illusion, can hardly be overestimated. Possibly excluding a few days in early childhood, we constantly build upon our past experience—a process that probably never ends. In each non-simple perception, in each *seeing-as*, I constantly draw upon my previous experience knowingly or (more often) unknowingly. I can probably *see* (as a child does) a snake as something without any past experience or previous association with a snake either by perception or by a picture or by some description. But I cannot see something *as* a snake unless I am aided by past experience, concept, etc. By the same token, I cannot very well misperceive, i.e. see what is not a snake *as* a snake without such aid. Therefore, a shared causal factor of both my veridical and illusory perception of a snake would be my acquired snake-concept or past experience of a snake or snakes.

Third, I have already mentioned that according to Nyāya the piece of silver we *see* in a 'shell-silver' illusion situation does not lie outside the silver bullion of this material world, but in fact it is a part of it. By the same token, the snake in the 'rope-snake' illusion, the purple that covers my red car in neon light, my bitter taste of sugar when I am suffering from jaundice, and the dagger in Macbeth's hallucination—

all are part of this world we know best. The problem here is to explain how I can see (or perceive) these objects which are not present or connected (physically) with my sense-faculty. Nyāya, in partial agreement with the Prābhākara, invokes the service of past experience and memory. The revived memory triggered off by the similarity of shared character brings in its wake the object of the past experience. The object of the past experience cannot enter the visual field *physically* for the eyes to see, but it can have a 'non-physical' connection (*alaukika sannikarṣa*) with the eyes to make it possible for us to perceive (i.e. misperceive). It is not an image or a shadow that we perceive in illusion. For that is not the meaning or implication of the expression 'non-physical' here. Revived memory presents the object *non-physically* to allow the sense-faculty to communicate or consider it. And in this way it appears in perception (or rather misperception) as a characteristic or a qualifier.

Fourth, illusion, as I have emphasized, is a non-simple perception. Therefore it can potentially deliver a judgement. Such a judgement can be interpreted as either identifying or predicative (or attributive). If it is the former, 'this is silver' has to be interpreted as 'this = a piece of silver'. If the latter, it should be interpreted as 'this has silverness or silver-essence' or 'this belongs to the silver-kind'. Now we have of course been familiar with silver or some piece of it for a long time from seeing it in old coins and spoons or in a silversmith's shop (cf. *vaṇig-vithyādaḥ*, Vācaspati).²⁰ Memory presents some (indefinite) familiar silver, which, though it is not physically present, can enter into a non-physical relation with the sense-faculty. Such a 'non-physical' relation (*sannikarṣa*) with the sense-faculty would be enough to make a perception possible.

Fifth, can I *see* cold ice or a fragrant flower? One way to answer this is to say no. For it will be explained that we *see* the ice and the flower and *infer* the coldness and fragrance from past associations, though such inferences are very rapidly made. I think, along with Nyāya, that this way of answering the question is not satisfactory. For sometimes I unmistakably seem to *see* the fragrant jasmine and the cold ice! I *see* a sweet fruit and my mouth immediately waters. To say that a quick process of inference intervenes here is to accept only a poor theory. Nyāya takes all these as cases of perception (seeing), and veridical cases at that. The explanation here follows the previous model of

²⁰ Vācaspati, p. 160 (Thakur's edn.).

memory presentation and the resulting 'non-physical' connection with the visual sense organ. Thus it is that the model of memory presentation and 'non-physical' connection is invoked not simply to explain the problem of sensory illusion. In other words, the model is not devised in desperation, to save realism against the argument from illusion. The model has more explanatory power, for it explains standard cases of illusion as well as some veridical perception. Properties like fragrance, coldness, and sweetness, by definition cannot have any 'physical' connection with the eye (cf. *vyavasthā* theory).²¹ Hence it is said that memory acts as a 'go-between' in generating correct perceptual knowledge. Memory provides the *non-physical* connection here.

Sixth, there is one important difference, according to Nyāya, between the 'physical' connection with the visual organ and the memory-intervened 'non-physical' connection. In a non-simple perception (obviously the question of memory-intervened perceptual connection does not arise in the case of simple perception), whatever is 'physically' connected with the visual organ can either play the role of a *dharmin* (a qualificand) or that of a *dharma* (a qualifier). If, however, something has the memory-induced 'non-physical' connection with the visual organ, it must always play the role of a qualifier or a characteristic. In other words, what is 'physically' connected can be either the 'chief' or the 'subordinate' (to use our previous terminology), but what is 'non-physically' presented (cf. *upanīta*) must always take the subordinate role. If I look outside the window and am asked 'what do you see?', I could answer, 'I see the car', 'I see the red car', 'I see that the car is red', 'I see the red (colour) of the car', 'I see that red colour characterizes the car', and so on. Similarly I can answer 'I see the jasmine', 'I see the fragrant jasmine', 'I see cold snow' and so on, but according to Nyāya, I would never say 'I see the fragrance of the jasmine' or 'I see coldness qualifying the snow'. In perceptions of this kind, the object (jasmine, snow, sugar) that is physically connected with the eye must be given the prime role of the qualificand or 'chief' in the object-complex. In its verbal report, therefore, the 'chief' occupies the position of the substantive (the 'subject') while the 'non-

²¹ The *vyavasthā* theory states that there is always a unique object for each 'means' of awareness such that what is grasped by one cannot be grasped by another. We cannot 'hear' sound through our faculty of taste! The Buddhist believes that this is true of all sense-faculties and the faculty of 'mind' as well, while Nyāya argues that there is no *vyavasthā* 'restriction' with regard to the sense of touch and vision. We can see and touch the same table! See also 6.6. For more on this point see Vātsyāyana under NS, 1.1.1.

physically' presented element turns into an adjective or a 'predicate'.

Seventh, this brings us to another important characteristic of a non-simple awareness. It has been said that perceptual illusion is possible only in the case of a non-simple awareness where there is a 'chief' along with a 'subordinate' in the object-complex, a thing that is being characterized and what characterizes it (a 'subject' and a 'predicate'). If the characteristic ('subordinate') mis-characterizes the 'chief', we have an illusion. The characteristic (that which plays the role of the characteristic) is supplied in such cases by the above-mentioned memory-induced 'non-physical' connection. We have pointed out above that whatever is presented to the sense-faculty in this way can only play the role of a characteristic. Therefore in illusion a previously experienced silver-piece is being identified (subordinately, predicatively) with the subject of my visual experience. This, by implication, shows that nothing can go wrong with the 'chief' in any perceptual situation. For what plays the role of the 'chief' must necessarily be physically connected with the visual organ. If the object (which plays the role of the 'chief') is connected physically with the sense-faculty and if I *see* it, what else can go wrong? This means that I can never misperceive the object that plays the role of the 'chief' (the 'subject'); I can misperceive in so far as its characterization is concerned. This point is stated in Nyāya by the commonly accepted dictum: all cases of awareness (non-simple) would be correct, in fact, unerring, as far as the 'chief' is concerned but they might be wrong with regard to the characteristic that characterizes the 'chief'.²²

6.6 *Explanation of Fiction and Fantasies*

In its simplest form, the 'misplacement' theory (*anyathākhyāti*) asserts that error or perceptual illusion is the misplacement of a real *F* in a real *X*. The basic assumption in this theory is that nothing appears in our visual perceptual awareness, which is not also existent or real (that is objectively real in some way or other). If something seems to be an entirely *unfamiliar* object appearing in our dreams, hallucinations, wildest imaginations or, in any other apparently perceptual mode of awareness, this unfamiliarity, outlandishness, or the out-of-the-world characteristic is only apparent, according to Nyāya, for proper and careful analysis will show that it is constructed out of only the *familiar*

²² Udayana, *Parīśuddhi*, p. 81 (Thakur's edn.). The principle might be in line with the intention behind a familiar principle in the Western logical tradition: $Fa \supset (\exists x)(x = a)$. See Hintikka (1962); also A. Kenny, p. 61 and B. Williams, p. 92.

bits and pieces. In other words, the unfamiliar objects in a dream can be broken down to elements that have been already objects of our past acquaintance in some way or other. The so-called non-existent is therefore constructed by us out of the existents—existents that have been experienced by us already. In imagination, fantasies, and dreams it is our unconscious memory or unconscious reminiscence that is at work. If we do not ascribe separate existential status to the objects of memory, derivative of the objects of past experience, we need not worry about ontological economy in this theory. This seems to be an advantage over the sense-data theory, where a separate class of entities with dubious ontological status has somehow to be conceded. In imagination etc., in this theory, we draw unconsciously from our 'memory-bank'. However the notion of the object of memory and past experience raises the problem of intentionality, or 'intentional inexistence' as Brentano called it. (See Chapter 4.6.)

So far in our analysis we have taken the standard cases of perceptual illusion. Such cases as the 'rope-snake' or the 'shell-silver' situation are paradigm cases. In fact the Nyāya analysis in terms of similarity and memory-revival works well for such cases. But there are many other types of illusion which are difficult to explain in terms of similarity and unconscious reminiscing.²³ For example, the shiny property (*cākacikyādi*, Udayana) is the point of similarity between the shell and a piece of silver, and that which may rightly revive my memory of silver. But it is not at all clear how we can speak in this manner of a similarity between the ascript (*āropya*) and the object to which it is ascribed (*āropa-viṣaya*) when I misperceive, for example, that the (white) conch-shell is yellow, under the influence of disease. We do not ascribe or superimpose a yellow thing upon the white conch-shell. Nor do we ascribe yellow colour to white colour, for white colour has not been the object of visual awareness here at all. On the whole, we have to say that we ascribe yellow to the conch-shell. But then where is the supposed similarity between them? Anticipating such an objection, Vācaspati has given an answer. The percipient is aware of only the colour yellow belonging to the disease (we may compare it with coloured glass), but he does not recognize the object to which it belongs. He is also aware of the conch-shell whose white colour is hidden from his eye, as it were, owing to the disease (or the presence of the yellow glass). At the same time he is unaware that the yellow colour he sees is unconnected

²³ Vācaspati and Udayana under NS 1.1.2 (Thakur's edn., p. 175).

with the conch-shell he sees. However, he remembers a situation similar to this, in which he perceived a ripe *bilva* (or *vilva*) fruit as yellow, which presents him with the ingredient to misperceive and say 'this is yellow'. The ascript here is a relation, as Udayana emphasizes. It is a connectedness which picks out *two* unconnected objects, the conch-shell and yellow colour to which the ascription is being made (cf. *āropa-viśaya*). A similar analysis is proposed when I taste sugar as bitter. According to Nyāya direct realism, however, I cannot taste sugar directly as a thing. In fact only two faculties, that of vision and touch, are said to have the power to apprehend the material thing (body) directly. Hearing, smelling, and tasting can grasp only the relevant properties, not the things. Therefore, 'I hear a coach' (Berkeley's example, much discussed by Armstrong and Jackson²⁴ from different points of view), 'I smell a jasmine', and 'I taste food' are all to be differently reformulated in Nyāya. When sugar tastes bitter, this is how it is supposed to happen, according to Vācaspati: I perceive sugar by tongue, but some ailment prevents me from tasting its sweetness (note also that tasteless sugar would be like 'colourless conch-shell'). On the other hand, I taste a bitter taste that belongs to *pitta* (i.e. the disease). This situation evokes the past experience of a bitter-tasting *nimba* fruit. Thereafter in the way described above we ascribe connectedness to the situation which in turn picks out the unconnected sugar and bitter taste. The ascript here is the connectedness, and the object to which it is ascribed is a pair, the lump of sugar and the unconnected bitter taste present in the disease.²⁵

A simple illusion is a misplacement or misconnection of the two unconnected entities—one is the ascript and the other is the object to which the ascription is made in the resulting judgement. There are two sides to the *ascription*: the ascript (*āropya*) and the 'object of ascription' (*āropa-viśaya*), i.e. the object to which the former is ascribed. Nyāya emphasized that any entity belonging to either side of this type of ascription is real and existent and part of this world. The ascription itself is part of the imaginative construction (aided by past experience) or *vikalpa*, which is the general feature of any non-simple perception. (For *vikalpa*, see Chapters 8 and 10.) This ascription or misconnection can be accounted for, Nyāya believes, by probing into material, i.e.

²⁴ D. W. Armstrong, p. 20. Also F. Jackson, pp. 7–8.

²⁵ Udayana, *Parīśuddhi*, p. 137 (Thakur's edn.). Vācaspati uses the example '*kācasyeva*' where *kāca* means a kind of eye-disease. I have taken the liberty of using a modern example, that of a coloured glass.

physical and physiological, as well as some psychological factors such as memory, unique to each type of illusion. I say 'psychological' with tongue in cheek, for a psychological factor here should not be confused as being a reference to sense-impression or sense-data which are, some representationalists argue,²⁶ mental entities. Psychological factors mean here any vestiges of past experience that may creatively contribute to any non-simple perception. Incidentally, Nyāya direct realism does not necessarily lead to modern materialistic behaviourism in which all mental episodes or states must be identified with some physical behaviour or some neuro-physiological states. Hence ordinary mental occurrences are accepted as separate facts in Nyāya.

Similarity can be a material (or objective) feature. It is not always the perceived similarity, but the mere presence of similarity in the objects themselves that triggers off the perception sometimes rightly and sometimes wrongly. A question is raised by Vācaspati: since it is possible to say that any object is similar to any other in some respect or other (for example, two very dissimilar things can also be said to be similar simply in that both are at least existent, *sat*), what kind or degree of similarity would trigger off a perceptual attribution? The answer is that there cannot be any restrictive rule (*niyama*) in this case, for it varies from person to person, object to object, situation to situation. Suppose an object has a cluster of properties, features, determined by my past experience: *a, b, c, . . .* The presence of any one of these or any combination chosen from this set could trigger off my perceptual ascription aided or unaided by other factors. Sometimes my eager expectation to see my friend would be enough to trigger off a perceptual attribution to, or misidentification of, another person wearing, for example, the same sort of coat in a crowd. This 'anomaly' (i.e. lack of any restrictive rule) is in fact a characteristic of a mental occurrence.

Perceptual illusion can be of various types. It seems that the Nyāya explanatory model fits in very well with what we may call *imaginative* error. The standard examples are a 'shell-silver' situation and a 'rope-snake' situation. The role of similarity and imaginative attribution is almost paradigmatic in such cases. The second type can be called objective or situational or conditional error. Here the whole situation seems to be manipulative. The examples are tasting bitterness in sugar, seeing yellow in a conch-shell, etc. These must be explained through a

²⁶ e.g. F. Jackson, pp. 50-87.

careful analysis of the individual situation. I have given above Vācaspati's analysis of the two examples. There are other examples where 'imaginative' attribution may be properly analysed following the lead of Vācaspati: the bent stick in water (mentioned by Udayana), mirror illusion (mentioned by Vardhamāna), double moon, false motion of trees when one moves by a vehicle etc. (Dharmakīrti).²⁷ There are obvious difficulties if we use just one model of analysis for different types of error. We need not delve into the problem here. However, it may be presumed that with modern knowledge of physics, physiology, optics, etc. some sort of analysis of each situation would be possible (and this analysis may or may not coincide with the scientist's analysis) from the Nyāya point of view, for, we can set aside some item or items forming the set of ascripts and another set of items to which ascription is being made. Now, while the two are unconnected, perceptual attribution on the basis of some vestiges of past experience could connect (i.e. misconnect) them. This analysis of the actually unconnected *ascrip*t and *subject* in each misperception is the basis of the Nyāya 'misplacement' theory. Causal factors of each (wrong) attribution may be different. In hallucinations, and other psychotic conditions we can count an ardent desire or intensity of fear among their causal factors. The real object of the past experience (e.g. the real dagger for Macbeth) is the *ascrip*t ascribed to the actually *unconnected* (1) empty space (in front of the percipient) and (2) the present time. The combination of the latter two would be the *subject* (*viṣaya*) of ascription, i.e. the object to which ascription is being made. Sanskrit philosophers, it should be noted, instead of the Macbeth example (of which, alas, they were unaware), frequently refer to the hallucination of the beloved by the lovelorn lover during long separation (*viraha*).

It should be noted here that in spite of Vācaspati's bold attempt to apply a single model of analysis (that of *ascription* of a remembered object upon a perceived object, induced by similarity) to both types of illusion, other Naiyāyikas would beg to differ. They divide illusions into those which run counter to another (succeeding) perception, e.g. the 'rope-snake' illusion, and those which run counter to other (non-perceptual) evidence, e.g. double moon (*prātyakṣika tiraskāra* and *yauktika tiraskāra*). Some Naiyāyikas would suggest a different model of analysis for the second type. For example, they would say that we

²⁷ For Vardhamāna see *Nibandha-prakāśa* on Udayana's *Parīśuddhi* Bibliotheca Indica edn., p. 396). For Dharmakīrti, see *Nyāyabindu*, p. 12.

need not take recourse to remembrance or similarity in these cases. This will be clear in the next section.

6.7 *Sense-datum versus Direct Realism*

Udayana has emphasized that we mis-ascribe connectedness (= relation), that is, we 'misconnect' the unconnected, and the lack of awareness of their unconnectedness has been cited as an auxiliary factor. Here, however, Nyāya seems to concede the insight of the Prābhākara analysis where such lack of awareness is rightly emphasized. (For more on the Prābhākara, see below.) There are further problems with the Nyāya view of ascription. First, if we were to ascribe a relation to the two unconnected entities in the above manner then the structure of the illusory awareness would be 'the conch-shell and this yellow are connected', and not 'the conch-shell is yellow'. Vardhamāna explains in reply: it is the nature of any relation to try to pick out two available items *as* related, provided a relation between them is, if not actual, at least possible. Here similarity plays the role of a relation, for this yellow colour is a particular feature and this conch-shell is a thing, and therefore it presents a situation where a relation is possible (between the thing and the feature).²⁸

However it raises the question: what is this relation that we are ascribing? Is it general relatedness? If so, then the awareness would no longer be an error, for two unconnected items can have some very general relation between them, for we can ingeniously formulate a chain of relation to show some connection in some way. (In fact, according to the Nyāya concept of 'relation', in general, anything can be related to anything else.) Do we ascribe the specific relation that is possible, in this case, between the thing and the feature, viz. inherence? We do not, for our illusion here persists even when we know that the conch-shell cannot be yellow. Vardhamāna resolves this by saying that we ascribe here a unique relation between the two items, a relation that may not pick out any other ordered pair (in other words, a relation-particular).

Are we not then creating a new thing, a (non-existent) relation-particular? The answer, I believe, would have to be 'yes', and Nyāya would probably say that this is a minimal creation that we must attribute to the creative faculty of 'imagination' (*vikalpa*), which is certainly at play in perceptual illusion. I have already made this point while

²⁸ Vardhamāna, p. 394.

discussing the Buddhist theory of 'the revelation of the non-existent'. The main constituents of the object in illusion may be considered parts of this actual world and presented either by memory or by the occasion under which illusion occurs. But the particular connection that ties them up in illusion is only a possible, but not actual (and hence a 'non-existent' *asat*) entity.

It has already been noted that it is not always the *perceived* similarity that gives rise to illusion. It may be asked: When is similarity to be perceived in order for it to be a factor in generating illusion? Vardhamāna gives an answer. We may ascribe either an identity or a characteristic. In other words, our illusory judgement may be either identificatory or predicative. If our judgement admits the form 'this = a piece of silver', that is, if we identify what lies before us with a piece of silver, then similarity between the two has to be perceived. But if we ascribe a characteristic, that is, if our judgement admits the form 'this has silverness', then the mere presence of similarity would be enough to trigger off *misperception*. The former, it may be noted, is a more complex judgement than the latter, and hence Vardhamāna, in pointing this out, shows his own logical insight. To perceptually affirm of something that it is identical with a piece of silver we must be *aware* that the piece resembles a piece of silver in essential respects, but mere presence of some similarity may induce a perception of something as a piece of silver.

Some argue that it is possible to dismiss similarity as a relevant factor for each case of illusion. For what is needed is the presentation of the ascript in some way or other. It is not always that similarity reminds us of the ascript, for sometimes the ascripts may be *perceptually* present. For example, the physiological condition (disease, drunkenness, etc.) will make the percipient *see* pink rats without any intervention of the revival of memory due to similarity. Vardhamāna reports that there are two views on this matter. One holds that when we identify through mistake the object before us with a piece of silver, then it is the *perceived* similarity that presents the piece of silver in the form of a disguised reminiscence. The other holds that when similarity is the only defect (*doṣa*) of the situation, i.e. the only relevant factor for the resulting misperception, then similarity may present the ascript from the 'memory bank'. But the second view further claims that in the case of other physiological conditions, such as disease, the presentation of the ascript, yellow for example, is *perceptual* (*pratyakṣād eva*) and

there is no need in our explanation to invoke the service of similarity.²⁹

In later Nyāya there is a tension between these two types of interpretation of illusion. In some cases of illusion (disease, tricky lighting, drunkenness) the misperception is felt so instantaneously and directly that recourse to the chain-device of similarity, remembrance, and ascription seems unnecessary. In such cases, the ascript is said to be perceptually presented, rather than through reminiscence. It is also wrong to say that when my jaundiced eye sees yellow I remember a past experience of yellow. The yellow is perceived first before we get to the stage of ascription, that is, the stage of associating yellow with the conch-shell resulting in a non-simple perception. This analysis apparently goes against the elaborate analysis of Vācaspati as explained earlier. According to Vācaspati, yellow is doubtless seen in such cases but we do not ascribe it to the conch-shell. We ascribe or concoct a connection which picks out two unconnected objects, conch-shell and yellow.

Sense-data philosophers, especially those who take sense-data to be part of the physical world, would not find much to dispute with the Nyāya analysis here. For example, G. E. Moore and C. D. Broad have argued that our visual datum is the front part of the opaque physical object.³⁰ As long as what is seen is identified with some part of the physical and neuro-physiological world, I think Nyāya would not find it problematic. For clearly the existence of these items is not *essentially* dependent upon their being perceived. That my car looks purple under neon can be seen by a number of people. Neuro-physiological conditions may not be public in this way, but this need not present any problem. If I have jaundice my eye will see yellow where yours will not. But if you have jaundice you will see the same or similar yellow, i.e. the *yellow* of your disease. In other words, the yellow is as much shared by us as the disease. It is reported that not one but several drunkards, not always at the same time, see pink rats on their white beds! Likewise the round plate looks elliptical to me while I am sitting in this chair in the same way as it does to another observer when he sits here, provided nothing else changes. Nyāya would find all these physical and

²⁹ Ibid., p. 397. Note in this connection the strong realistic claim of H. P. Grice: 'any justification of a particular perceptual claim will rely on the truth of one or more further propositions about the material world (for example, about the percipient's body)' (p. 471 in Swartz's anthology).

³⁰ G. E. Moore (1953), pp. 31-98; C. D. Broad, pp. 29-48 (in Swartz's anthology).

physiological data acceptable, provided two other assumptions do not go along with it: (i) these are the objects we must necessarily see in our *immediate* perception, and the physical world appears in its full glory when we see 'through' them, that is in our so-called *mediate* perception; (ii) there is little point in taking these objects to be *actually* there when nobody is perceiving them. Nyāya unequivocally rejects these two assumptions.

Some sense-data philosophers may argue in favour of the possibility of *unsensed* sense-data. At the extreme was Mill's view who defined substance as the 'permanent possibility of sensation'. If this means that Mill rejected the second assumption, this would be welcomed by Nyāya. But the point of Nyāya is that these data are *actual*, not possible, so that we do not need a perception to take place to show that they are possible. The sense-data philosophers, however, were more inclined to save phenomenalism from the alleged criticism that it does violence to common sense. But they would then have to concede that without any perceiver the sensible world would vanish into nothingness! Probably their point was that these possibilities exist independently of any perceiver to make them *actual*. Nere Nyāya would beg to differ. Naiyāyikas argue that we do not *necessarily* see the physical world through such data, although we may do so on occasion. For we can see the physical world even directly. In the 'bent-stick' example (which Udayana mentions) a new *physical* bent stick is not created, but the property of 'bentness' belonging to the interaction of light and water (for Udayana, water waves) is transferred to the straight stick whose straightness is there hidden, much in the same way as yellow belonging to the yellow glass through which I am seeing is transferred to the white wall whose white then becomes hidden.

The Nyāya position has some similarity here with the 'multiple location' defence of naïve or direct realism—a theory that H. H. Price has ascribed to Whitehead.³¹ According to this theory, a simple material object, such as a penny, 'is really a sort of infinitely various porcupine, which is not merely here in this room (as we commonly take it to be) but sticks out as it were in all directions and to all sorts of distances, "from" all of which it has its being and is qualified in various ways, whether present to any one's sense or not.' However, this similarity with Nyāya need not be overemphasized. For Nyāya would not go so far as to take a penny to be a 'porcupine' unless there are also

³¹ H. H. Price, pp. 55 ff.

infinitely various percipients, at the same time, looking at the same penny from all directions and all sorts of distances. Since this is not what *actually* happens, Nyāya would not accept the suggestion of a penny being actually a 'porcupine'. Nyāya would, however, allow that some objective *external* particulars (features, things, properties or whatever) may be produced temporarily in the cases under consideration (i.e. in the second type of perceptual illusion). Further, in the production of such temporary (in fact momentary) particulars, the percipient certainly plays some part (he is included in the set of 'causal' factors). When two persons looking at a penny *see* two different shapes due to their positions, etc., they help to create two different (objective and external) shapes which are then ascribed to the penny they actually see. These two created shapes do not belong to the penny, but are only attributed to it by different viewers. Hence there is no contradiction in saying that when the two percipients cease to perceive the penny in this way those 'objective' and 'external' particulars, those two shapes, also cease to exist. For if the sets of *supporting* causal factors are disturbed, the effects (those two shapes) are destroyed thereby. When nobody is looking at the penny, it shines in its own glory with its one and only shape! Hence, a penny cannot be a 'porcupine' in Nyāya.

What is the nature of these objective, external particulars which are also momentary and dependent upon the percipient's perceiving? Are they similar to the sense-data? If acceptance of sense-data means only acceptance of such temporary, external objects, there may not be any quarrel between Nyāya and the sense-data theorist in this matter. In fact the ontological status of these 'objective' particulars in Nyāya is very intriguing. It is claimed (in Nyāya) that an external objective reality can be created by a set of causal factors, of which a mental event can be a crucial member. The life (duration) of such external entity is short because the crucial mental event is also shortlived. In the Nyāya system, numbers such as two, three, or a thousand are *created* in this way as objective external facts by the co-operation of some mental event. The crucial mental event that generates such numbers is called *apekṣā-buddhi* (a 'count-orientated' cognitive episode). Such numbers die as fast as the corresponding cognitive episodes disappear. Similarly, another episode called 'sensing' may be regarded as a causal factor for generating the said objective, external particulars, the blue-blur, etc. But these do not exist when no observer is present.

How do these particulars differ from the sense-data? First, they are not *mental*, but external objects, although they have been *anomalously*

created by a mental episode as one of its causal factors.³² Most sense-data philosophers take sense-data to be mental, but the Naiyāyika's particulars are not in the 'head' of any person. Second, they are according to Nyāya not direct and immediate objects of perception, but only ascribed to the 'main' object of perception. He who sees an elliptical penny does not see the elliptical shape first, by virtue of which he sees the penny. He sees *simply* the penny *as* elliptical. Third, these particulars are not in any case part of the surface of the object of perception. They do not belong to the object but are only attributed to it. This shows that even those who would like to make sense-data part of the surface of the object perceived would not agree with the Nyāya view about these anomalous particulars. (See also Chapter 12.4.)

D. W. Armstrong, with a view to supporting direct realism, has given an analysis of sensory illusion in terms of *false* belief or inclination to believe falsely that we are perceiving, that is, veridically perceiving, some physical object or state of affairs.³³ To have a sense-impression, according to him, is to believe, or be inclined to believe, that we are *immediately* perceiving something, some physical object or state of affairs. Most of what he says in the relevant chapter would seem to be acceptable to Nyāya. It is, however, difficult to see how by calling or identifying all perceptual illusion as mere false beliefs or even inclination to such beliefs, we can resolve the whole issue. According to this view, we do not actually *perceive*, although we may *think* we perceive, when we suffer from an illusion. It seems to me that Armstrong in this respect makes the same mistake as the Prābhākara who explains that in a perceptual illusion of silver we really do not *perceive* the silver (although we *think* we do). Although the Prābhākara analysis is entirely different, as we have seen above, there seems to be an agreement in this respect. In their eagerness to save realism, both the Prābhākara and Armstrong seem to undermine the *perceived* character of our experience of silver in illusion. It becomes highly counter-intuitive if in order to account for or explain the phenomenon of perceptual illusion we simply say that there is no perceptual illusion for which explanation may be needed. Besides, Nyāya will say that in the case of perceptual illusion we have also an 'inward perception' (an

³² I borrow this term from D. Davidson. See his essay, 'Mental Events', for his formulation of anomalous monism. Nyāya seems to be anomalously monistic, not dualistic in the Cartesian sense. In using this phrase, however, I do not wish to ascribe D. Davidson's view to Nyāya. The agreement is more generic than specific.

³³ D. W. Armstrong, pp. 80-98.

anuvyavasāya) that we have had an (external) perception. In other words, we not only reach a judgement of the form 'this is silver' but also in the next moment another inward judgement of the form 'I perceive that this is silver'. This, for Nyāya, seems to supply stronger experiential evidence in favour of the perceptual character of the experience. Such evidence cannot be lightly brushed aside. In other words, Nyāya would claim that when I visually see the double moon, I also *inwardly* perceive in the next moment that I see visually, and this needs an explanation. Our disposition, that is, belief or inclination to believe, may be the result of an experience, but certainly not simply a substitute for such experience. Vācaspati's charge of 'overkill' (cf. *ativyākhyāna*) against the Prābhākara would apply equally well against Armstrong.

There is an agreement between Armstrong and the Prābhākara in another significant respect. The Prābhākara rightly emphasizes the factor he calls 'our lack of awareness of the distinctness of the two experiences, seeing and reminiscing'. If we are unaware of this distinction we will naturally be more inclined to confuse the two as one experience, perceiving, and in this way it would be possible to say that we believe (falsely) that we perceive when we do not actually perceive. The Prābhākara, however, would not say that it is our experience which mixes the two. Rather the claim is that our description of the experience, our speech-behaviour, *mixes* them inadvertently. The Prābhākara, however, is quite clear about the *perceived* part of the experience, for as sensory illusion is a non-simple awareness it contains the minimal perceptual part when we are confronted with the object and we see it; we see the piece of shell, though not as a piece of shell. Armstrong argues that he maintains, in his explanation, the ordinary usage of 'perceive', according to which, 'what is perceived must have physical existence'. This is also the problem before the Prābhākara as well as Nyāya. The Prābhākara insists that there is no real illusion, for the perceived object, the 'thing' (*dharmin*), i.e. the shell, exists, much as the remembered piece of silver did when it was perceived. Nyāya also agrees with the Prābhākara in this respect. But Nyāya adds that the resulting event is not a confusion or conflation in our speech-behaviour of two different cases of awareness; rather it is one single case, which, though not veridical, is perceptual in character. In illusory perception, disconnected entities get connected falsely, but those disconnected entities are real entities. Thus there is more than one way to maintain the common-sense intuition about the ordinary

usage or sense of the verb 'perceive' (or 'see'). Armstrong, however, is not simply a direct realist, since he also believes in the materialist theory of the mind. Neither the Nyāya nor the Prābhākara can be called materialist or monist in the same sense. At least the situation is not very clear here. Moreover, Armstrong's direct realism maintains that all our five sense-faculties *perceive* the external material thing directly, and not through any sense-datum. Nyāya, however, says that only two sense-faculties, the sense of vision and the sense of touch, grasp the external material object directly, not through its properties! This will be explained further in the remaining chapters.