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The Structure of A Theory of Error: A Three-Cornered Debate*

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Barring a few exceptions, philosophers have generally accepted the reality of Error. In fact, it is not even contrary to commonsense that there should be misperception or an erroneous belief. Of course, the denial of error does not involve a contradiction; but it must be false on factual grounds. We have seen other people falling into error or we have found ourselves being in error at one time or another, and that clinches the issue so far as the question of the existence of error is concerned. In what follows we discuss the views of three philosophers – Nyāya, K.C. Bhattacharyya and McTaggart – on what they conceive to be some of the important issues pertaining to the problem of Error. Our discussion will, however, be chiefly confined to what goes by the name of perceptual illusion, for it is this type of error which necessarily involves sense-object contact and it is this, further, to which the three philosophers in question direct most of their attention. I will attempt to bring out and discuss, critically perhaps occasionally, the salient features of each view, their relative significance in the over-all context and some of the metaphysical implications of their conception of the nature of error. In the end, by way of Concluding Remarks, I have sought to call attention to what I think to be the important points on which the respective views agree and diverge, and then to raise a couple of basic issues which in my view any worthwhile theory of error must eventually address. I should hope that the treatment that follows will serve to carry forward the line of comparative analytical work so elegantly done by Professor Bimal Matilal on the subject.

Error as Promiscuity: The Nyāya Analysis

All error presupposes, even if only provisionally, the appearance-reality distinction, irrespective of whether the error in question is

* This paper is dedicated (albeit with a sense of guilt) to my ailing father.

confined to one individual or is shared by the entire race of knowing beings – though in the latter case it is sometimes called phenomenal truth. (In Advaita Vedānta, on the Indian side, the term used is *vyāvahārika satya* or *sattā.)* Whenever something appears or is cognized as something *else*, there is error. (Of course, the proof of the existence of error lies in the correcting awareness like, for example, the proof of the pudding lies in the eating.) As a minimal truth about error, this proposition is perhaps acceptable to all except the dogmatic sceptic who denies the possibility of knowledge and, therefore, of error altogether.

Now, if error is a false cognition in which something appears *as* something else, it follows that it is essential to the nature of a valid cognition that it be of something *as* something, that it be, in other words, of something *as* having characteristics. For it is only when perceiving (or cognizing) is seen as perceiving-*as* that perceiving something as something *else* becomes a possibility in the first instance. There can be no misperception of character where there is no room for perception of character. It is no wonder then that all awareness that matters for Nyāya is given the name of *savikalpaka jñāna* or *viśiṣṭa jñāna* in that system. The whole point of calling a cognition qualificative (*savikalpaka)* or relational (*viśiṣṭa*) is that it cognizes an object as so-and-so and as such-and-such. To put it technically, a qualificative cognition in its simplest form, in Nyāya, has three constituents: the qualificand (*dharmin* or *viśeṣya*, which is a term standing for the object characterized), the qualifier (*viśeṣaṇa*, which stands for the characteristics or features which characterize a qualificand or *viśeṣya*) and the qualification or relation (*vaiśiṣṭya*, also called *saṃsarga*) which relates the two relata, the qualificand (*viśeṣya*) and the qualifier (*viśeṣaṇa*) in a certain way, the qualificand being the first term of the relation, and the qualifier (or characterizer) being the second term of the relation. In other words, a qualificative cognition is something which has relational content: *sāṃsargika-viṣayatā-vattvam viśiṣṭa-jñānatvam*. It is to be noted that all the three terms are regarded by Nyāya as objects (*viṣaya)*, and included under the comprehensive concept of *viṣayatā*. Another notable point is that the linguistic expression of a qualificative cognition does not, and *cannot*, explicitly mention the relation or qualification, though it can be clearly and unambiguously understood and brought out from the order of the words expressing the relata (i.e. objects) cognized. In fact, normally, specially in a very simple cognition of the form "This (is) tree" even the qualifier 'tree-ness' (which is a universal according to Nyāya) is not mentioned explicitly, though according to Nyāya it

can be clearly understood as a property which characterizes (or qualifies) the qualificand 'This [tree]' which therefore is regarded as possessing the property 'tree-ness'. It is here worthy of note that what acts as a qualifier in one cognition can very well be a qualificand with respect to something else in a different or more complex cognition, even though it may include the content of the earlier simpler cognition. For example, in the qualificative cognition "This tree (is) green", the green-colour, although it occurs in the same content, is a qualifier(*viśeṣaṇa*) with respect to tree and a qualificand (*viśeṣya*) with respect to green-ness (which Nyāya regards as a universal), which is said to inhere in it. In such cognitions, that is, where we have more than one qualificand we have what Nyāya calls a chief qualificand (or *mukhya viśeṣya*). Thus in the example "This tree (is) green" the tree will become the chief qualificand out of the two qualificanda 'tree' and 'green', simply because while 'green' is qualified only by green-ness, the tree is qualified not only by the green-colour but also by (the universal) tree-ness which is said to inhere in the tree. In other words, the entity, which is a certain tree, is cognized as having two characteristics: (1) tree-ness, which remains unmentioned and (2) green colour which, although mentioned by the adjective 'green', has in turn the property green-ness, which (universal) remains unexpressed. In sum, a qualificative cognition in Nyāya is an awareness of something *as* having a certain characteris-tic(s), whether this characteristic is a certain quality, or a certain universal, or a certain relation, or a certain action, and so on.

Both veridical perception and non-veridical perception are instances of (*savikalpaka* or) qualificative cognition. (In fact in Nyāya, even doubt is an instance of qualificative cognition, for in doubt too, even though it is not a definitive cognition (*niścaya*), our uncertainty is, for example, with regard to whether *A* is *X* or *A* is *Y*.) The speciality of non-veridical perception lies however in its deviation (*vyabhicāritva*) or what Matilal[1] translates as 'promiscuity'. This deviative character is reflected in the fact that a non-veridical (or illusory) perception fails to grasp its object in its true character or features. To the extent, however, it is *savikalpaka*, it must cognize the object *as* having some character. Its failure to see the object in its true character does not make it cease to be perceiving-*as*: in other words, it does not compromise its title as 'qualificative cognition'. In fact it is arguable whether there is ever such a thing as simple perceiving in which something is cognized but not as having characteristics. A mere 'that' without a 'what' is a single abstraction. It is not only a metaphysical requirement that an existent have, besides existence, at least one

more characteristic but also a demand of epistemology that an existent, if it is known, be known as having some features. Dread of error or misperception may drive some philosophers to seek safer pastures and so postulate such simple perceiving instead of perceiving-*as* and thus remove by definition the possibility of error, but that only begs the issue.The problem of error remains where it is and awaits some more fruitful and bold explanation for, as said above, the fact of error has to be admitted.

Before we proceed further, I wish to call attention to one basic tenet of Nyāya as regards cognition. Both valid (*pramā*) and non-valid cognitions (*apramā*) are regarded in Nyāya as species of *jñāna* (cognition or awareness), and as such share some common features. Uddyotakara calls one such common feature as the capacity to ascertain (or manifest) the general (*sāmānya-paricchedakatva*).[2] This is explained by Vācaspati thus: even the erroneous cognition "This is silver" (when in fact there is a conch-shell) correctly mainfests the yonder object as having general features like whiteness, shiningness, etc.[3] All knowledge (valid or non-valid) according to Nyāya is error-free so far as the *dharmin* or the substantive is concerned (*sarvam jñānam dharmiṇy abhrāntam*). In other words, it is always with regard to the character or features of the object that the question of error arises. When I mistake a conch-shell for a piece of silver, doubt cannot pertain to the (unfalsifiable) knowledge that *some* object exists, though my cognition that there is silver in front of me is later on corrected by the subsequent true perception that the object concerned in fact has a shell-character. In fact, as we shall later on see when we come to deal with McTaggart, if error were to obtain even with regard to the existence aspect we shall be landed in complete scepticism.

These were important preliminaries. We have said above that in Nyāya perceptual error is said to be promiscuous and that this promiscuity consists in its deviation from the object with which the sense is in contact. But this is only one part of the story. The other part is that perceptual illusion, in virtue of the fact that it is cognitive, sees some *other* object than the actually presented one. In other words (as Matilal explains), the illusory and hence promiscuous awareness, relates to two different objects at the same time.[4] It relates to two objects in the sense that it connects or represents them as connected, while in actual fact they are not so connected. The forging of such a connection is illicit. To see a shell as shell is to deal with one object. ('Object' here is used in its ordinary sense of a thing-like particular and not in the typical Nyāya sense, for in that system, in *one* clear

sense no seeing, if it is *savikalpaka*, deals with just *one* object but also with a characteristic, which too, as mentioned above, is called *viṣaya* or object.) But to see a shell as silver is to deal with, and connect, two different objects which bear no such unity in the real world. When in a situation where there is direct contact with shell, we, instead of saying 'This is shell' say, mistakenly, 'This is silver' we connect the 'This' which refers to the shell actually presented to us, with silver and thus set up a relation where it does not exist: the silver-character is attributed to 'This' where it does not in fact belong. To put it technically in the language of Gaṅgeśa: a cognition is false if the qualifier does not occur in, or is not contained in, the qualificand (*yatra yan nāsti tatra tasya jñānam, tad-abhāva-vati tat-prakārakajñānam vā 'pramā*).[5]

Now the Nyāya theory of error is called *anyathā-khyāti* or 'apprehension otherwise' theory. Matilal translates the term as 'misplacement'. (In fact, quite a few other schools subscribe to this theory even though they present it in different forms and advance different arguments in its favour. Perhaps that is why Vācaspati says: *anyathākhyātim tu vṛddhāḥ.*)[6] The theory has several aspects which we shall discuss in some detail below. This will obviously include an explanation – psychological or otherwise – of the mechanism which is supposed to lead to the error in question.

To take up this last point first, what exactly happens when, for example, I mistake a shell for a piece of silver or a rope for a snake? According to Nyāya this misperception cannot be adequately understood and explained unless we recognize the role of similarity (*sārūpya*) which exists between the two objects, shell and silver or rope and snake. This argument based on similarity is important, because similarity is defined as: *tadbhinnatve sati tadgata-bhūyo-dharma-vattvam*[7] (possession, by a thing which is different from some other thing, of many of the attributes of the latter), and hence is able to explain, so it is thought, why we take something for something else (*atasminstaditi pratyayaḥ*) – which is the chief meaning of *anyathā-khyāti*. (In this light it looks understandable why some Advaitins – e.g. *Prakāśātmayati* – have taken great pains to refute the hypothesis of similarity and replaced it by *ajñāna*.) I cannot perceive silver while a shell lies in my front unless there is some alikeness of features – whiteness, shiningness, etc. – between shell and silver. After all I never mistake an ant for an elephant. Even though *asambandhāgraha* (non-apprehension of unrelatedness, i.e. lack of knowledge of absence of relation between what is perceived and what is remembered or the two modes of awareness, perceiving and remembering) is implicitly

present in an erroneous cognition, there is also present alongside an element of *sambandhagraha* (apprehension of relation or connection between what is perceived and what is remembered or the two modes of awareness, perceiving and remembering), and then both of these together make way for 'similarity' such that the latter is able to contribute its bit in bringing about (perceptual) superimposition which gives rise to an invalid cognition.[8] (In fact writers like Vācaspati go further and see in similarity the source of all kinds of erroneous cognition including those like 'the yellow conch-shell, 'the bitter sugar', 'double moon', etc.)[9]

Jayanta and the Three Senses of 'Ālambana' : Some Criticisms

Now the question is: how can I see an object (silver or snake) which is not present before me and so not in touch with my sense-organ? Here before we come to the standard Nyāya reply, we need to pause a little and take note of the *ālambana*-talk to which some of the older Nyāya writers – Jayanta, for instance – have drawn our attention. They normally point to three diverse options[10] as regards the question of the *ālambana* or 'objective support' or 'foundation' of an erroneous cognition which therefore is called *sālambana bhrama*. One view is that in e.g. the false cognition 'This is water' the solar rays with their own specific features concealed or suppressed (*nigūhita*) and assuming the form of water, constitute the *ālambana*. The other view is that the *ālambana* here is water presented through recollection which is triggered by, say, the awareness of its similarity with the object present in front. So this view holds that an *ālambana* is one which *appears* in a cognition, *not* the one which lies in front. Since apprehension of the unreal entities such as sky-flower is ruled out from the first, the water existent elsewhere (*deśāntarādau*) becomes the *ālambana* by its presentation through recollection. The third view is that in case of illusion the objective support (*ālambana*) of the awareness in question is one and what appears in it is something different. Thus the rays of the sun constitute the objective support but what appears in consciousness (*pratibhāsate*) is water. In this view an *ālambana* is what gives rise to knowledge though not as its agent (or knowing subject: *kartā*) or instrument (i.e. the senses: *karaṇa*). In what is called '*nirālambana* error' (e.g. hallucination which is without any external 'objective support' and so is purely mental) it is the *form* presented by recollection which constitutes the so-called *ālambana*. The point is that whatever the case, the totally non-existent or unreal can never be an '*ālambana*' of, or produce, an illusory cognition.[11]

It would seem then that to Jayanta and to those he refers to, an erroneous cognition is a single unitary awareness much like recognition irrespective of the fact that there is present in it an element of *akhyāti* in the sense that recollection or memory is not apprehended as such during the time it lasts. In fact Jayanta has no doubt in his mind that the *anyathākhyāti* theory, with the three different *ālambanas* referred to above as its basis, is the only logically coherent theory which offers an adequate explanation of the phenomenon called error. [12]

Before we proceed further, I must pause and confess that I do not quite understand what Jayanta exactly means by what he calls *ālambana* when he refers to three different views on what serves as an *ālambana* in a situation of perpetual error. Normally *ālambana* is taken to mean an 'objective foundation' or 'support' as distinguished from the appearance (*pratibhāsa*) of which it is a foundation or support. By appearance(s) of course is meant the things as they appear to us in a cognition (attended with belief) and so are always distinguished from reality, i.e., from the things as they are. Professor Matilal too[13] seems to accept this very meaning of the term *ālambana* and explicitly distinguishes it from the word *pratibhāsa*, and further attributes this very distinction between the meanings of the two words to the Indian *pramāṇa* theorists. On the view, then, which we are taking and which finds support from such quarters as Matilal, the *ālambana* in a situation where we *mistake* a shell (or rope) for a piece of silver (or snake) would be shell (or rope), as distinct from the silver (or snake), which latter would for that reason be called an appearance or *pratibhāsa*. Indeed, we feel tempted to add that this notion of *ālambana* is accepted on all such hands as care to draw a distinction between appearance and reality, irrespective of whether they take this distinction to be ultimate and non-negotiable or purely contextual (as e.g. is the case with the Nyāya view of such illusion(s) which remains confined to one individual or a few individuals in a particular spatio-temporal setting). However, on the second of the three views attributed to the Nyāya thinkers (*ācāryaḥ*) by Jayanta and referred to above – in fact Jayanta himself accepts as possible all the three hypotheses – it is *water*, which *appears* through recollection caused by the perception of its similarity with the yonder (existing) object, which has been called the *ālambana* of the cognition concerned and *not* the object with which the sense-faculty is actually in (ordinary) contact. If so, the question arises as to what name we should give to the entity which is present in front and *which* is misrepresented *as* water. Again, while the third hypothesis cited by

Jayanta seems, superficially at least, to be in consonance with the commonly accepted view (of *ālambana*) we have referred to above, the first view according to which, in an illusion of the kind 'This is water' it is the sunrays which (with their own special features remaining hidden from view) assume the form of water, which are taken to be the *ālambana*, seems to be indistinguishable from that view (i.e. the third view) which, in maintaining that the *ālambana* of an erroneous cognition is one while what appears in that cognition is something different, makes the sun-rays the *ālambana* and water the *appearance* of the illusion concerned. That our perplexity over the meaning of *ālambana* as used by Jayanta is not entirely unfounded seems to get confirmed by two factors, namely (1) that Jayanta defines an *ālambana* as such a condition or support of a cognition, which is different from the agent (knowing subject: *kartā*) and the instrument (the sense organs: *karaṇa*) and thus precludes a supersensible object like an atom from being that condition (*kartṛ-karma-vyatiriktam jñāna-janakam ālambanam ucyate iti na paramāṇvādau prasaktiriti*); and (2) that in his talk (at the same place) of *nirālambana* error (e.g. hallucinations) as one which has no (actual) objective support whatsoever (to support it) and which consequently is just an (object–) form (*ākāra*) which is recalled in memory and (then) presented to consciousness, Jayanta himself seems to take the view that an *ālambana* is something which is an actual existent and with which a sense-organ remains in contact at the time an illusory perception takes place. Indeed, it is to be noted that while enumerating some of the factors – such as e.g. love, grief, eye-disease, sleep, or an unbalanced condition of the three humours, etc. – which excite memory of an object which thereby makes an appearance to consciousness in subjective hallucinations, Jayanta nowhere refers to any *actually existing object* as its foundation or support and thus rules out sense-object contact as the factor responsible for hallucinations or other such (*nirālambana*) errors. In other words, Jayanta calls only such errors *nirālambana* which are without any existing object (existing, that is, at the time and place when that error takes place) as their support or foundation unlike *sālambana* illusions where the sense-faculty is really in contact with some really existing object, even though the latter's own's special characters remain uncognized. However it may be, we must for the present leave unsettled the question as to what meaning other Nyāya writers would have accepted out of the three senses (of *ālambana*) cited and advocated by Jayanta.

The Psychology of Perceptual Illusion

With this we must now turn to the important question of the psychology and ontology of an illusory cognition – a favourite theme in Indian philosophy – and the Nyāya (and that includes Navya-Nyāya) answer on it. The Nyāya's *anyathākhyāti* theory holds that in an illusory perception both past experience and memory are at work. The illusion takes place because by reason of misperception, *the peculiar* traits or characteristics of the shell (or rope) as distinguish-ed from the silver (or snake) are suppressed and so hidden from view, though at the same time the similarity of characteristics, features, aspects, etc., sets in motion a process – an unconscious process – in which the revived memory brings before us the (non-existent) object (silver or snake) which was cognized in the past somewhere else. In illusion the object with which our sense-organ comes into (ordinary) contact is surely the shell (or rope) lying in front, which therefore acts as a support-stimulant (*ālambana*) for the said (mis-)perception to take place; it is however not perceived *as* shell (or *as* rope). In other words, though it (shell (or rope)) appears as having certain characteristics such that the cognition in question can be called perceiving-*as* proper, some of its special features, apprehension of which alone can enable us to see it in its true shell-(or rope-) character go unnoticed. The silver that (mis-) appears in the cognition is not an object out of the blue. It exists in this world though at a different time and place (e.g. in the shop) and it is the memory of it as experienced as an object sometime in the past which intrudes and produces confusion and thus makes it (shell) appear as silver.

In fact, taken by itself there is nothing wrong with the verbalized erroneous cognition of the form "This (is) silver"; the form looks perfectly conceivable. The force and impact of the perceptual act is felt no less when it leads to an erroneous cognition than when it produces a valid cognition; and structurally too there seems to be no difference between the two cognitions. But as soon as this cognitive content comes to be falsified by a subsequent correcting awareness, "This (is) silver" turns out to be a *fake* (or non-existent) unity. The 'This' here represents the real shell but is perceived *merely as* 'This'. Its shell-character (or *svarūpa*) remained unapprehended due to certain defects in the observing subject or outside. What was perceived, in other words, was just a given substratum, no *svarūpa* or character of it. The 'silver' which gets united with the 'This' surely represents a real object in a certain clear sense – for else its recollection is impossible – but not as *this* silver or *that* silver. Not *this* silver, because there was no silver presented; not *that* silver, because

that silver – i.e. a silver of the past remembered as something having existed at a certain time and place – could not be combined with the 'This' substratum. What could be so combined is *only silver* (*rajatamātra*). There is no gainsaying that *some* past silver *is* remembered – for else there could never be a question of cognizing something *as* silver – but it is not remembered as *that* silver. It is only the silver-*character* which is remembered. The silver-character is surely as real as *any* past silver, for it is a part of the latter. This silver-*character* came to be combined with a 'This' into the unity "This (is) silver" through the unique psychological mechanism referred to above – the unity which, even though it was taken to be real earlier, now stands rejected on discovery of its falsity. Not only this. It can *not now be taken to have been real even before.*

The Nyāya theory takes *this*-aspect as truly belonging to *this shell,* not to the apparent (or illusory) content 'This silver'. The silver which was real was not a *this silver;* it was just *silver.* Only the shell was *this shell,* or, to put in a more apt phraseology, the shell was perceived merely as *this.* Quite a few Indian philosophers would reject the above account and maintain that there was a *this*-aspect *as much* in the illusory content as in the shell. But if at all they could uphold this it is only because they took the view that there was a completely false object of the form "This (is) silver". Nyāya, however, cannot admit this. Indeed, it may add that correction cannot do away with the *this*-aspect; it only annuls – and this 'only' is not insignificant – the *samānādhi-karaṇya* (substantive-adjective identity) of *this* and *silver* and presents the false content as 'silver (is) in this'. In other words, it is the content as an objective unity (or as a *unitary*-object) which comes to be rejected in correction.

It would be wrong, (to repeat), to read Nyāya as meaning that the object of past experience enters the visual field as such so that the eyes can see it; but it can have in Nyāya' s view what it chooses to call a supra-normal cognitive contact (*alaukika sannikarṣa*) with the eyes so as to enable us to perceive, i.e. misperceive. The meaning of the term 'supra- normal' needs to be properly understood here. The object perceived in illusion is not a phantom or an image. An image teaches us nothing. Revived memory presents the object supra-normally or 'non-physically' (Matilal) such that the sense-organ can entertain it. This 'entertaining' (in illusion) is as much cognitive in character as it is in a valid cognition. That is why – and this is often ignored – the object appears in (mis-)perception as a qualifier or a characteristic (*prakāra*).

It may be thought, as indeed some Western philosophers like D.M.

Armstrong too[14] do, that since the object cognized in an illusory perception is non-existent, the cognition (in which it appears) itself is really of a *non-perceptual* or non-sensuous character. Nothing, however, says Nyāya, would be further from the truth: in fact the whole proposition sounds counter-intuitive. Notwithstanding the fact that the object of an erroneous cognition is presented to us by memory, it cannot be denied, says Nyāya, that it (the object: silver or snake) is *felt* to be perceived[15] at the time it is cognized. Without opening your eyes you cannot even perceive a mirage. Just as if I am *perceiving* I cannot legitimately doubt, whether immediately or introspectively, that it is I who am perceiving, similarly if I am perceiving I cannot legitimately doubt that I am *perceiving*. Hence Nyāya concludes that just as both the subject and object of an invalid cognition 'This is silver (or snake') are both equally real – a theme to which we shall return later – so they are equally well *perceived* by the cognizer. However, the cognition is called *anyathākhyāti* because the shell appears invested with a different character.

This point concerning the 'evidently' perceptual character of an erroneous cognition is made by Nyāya in its rebuttal of the Prābhākara Mīmāṃsaka view which denies precisely this perceptual (or cognitive) character of the illusion. Even if I misperceive a rope for a snake, I act (for example, I may try to run away from the scene) as if I *saw* a snake. My action (*pravṛtti*) of running away or whatever is prompted by the unmistakable awareness that I *saw* a snake. (Nyāya would, however, agree with the Prābhākara and others so far as the indubitable role of memory and past experience in an erroneous cognition is concerned.) Indeed, as we pointed out above by quoting Jayanta, even the subsequent correcting awareness (*bādhaka pratyaya*) does not undermine the 'perceived' character of the object. It only points to the non-existence of the cognized object at a certain time and place.

The Ontology of the Erroneously Cognized 'Object'

The role of revived memory in presenting an illusory object brings into prominence an important aspect of the Nyāya theory of *anyathākhyāti*. It is that the object of a misperception, silver or snake in our examples, cannot in the nature of the case be an entirely unfamiliar object. I cannot see a rope as a snake or a shell as silver, unless I already possess some knowledge of snake or silver through past experience of these objects. It is possible for me to see a piece of silver (or snake) as something for the first time (– as indeed we all do in respect of one or the other object which we come across in our day-to-

day life and of which too our world is considerably made –) but it is not possible for me to see something *as* silver (or *as* snake) unless I am already in possession of these concepts through some experience of, or familiarity with, the objects the concepts in question stand for. Our world does not consist merely of present knowledge, perceptual or conceptual. It constantly, though often perhaps unconsciously, builds on our past experience and knowledge or even habitual association and the like. More often than not our *perceivings-as* bear the mark, consciously or unconsciously, of previous experience or acquaintance (in some form) with the things and objects of the world. In a like way our present illusions too can be traced back to our misapprehensions of the same. Thus a common causal factor of both my (present) valid and invalid judgements may well be some familiar object of past experience. On the other hand, a thing like a sky-flower cannot be an object of either valid or invalid cognition. It is not perceived, nor was it ever perceived in the past. It is not even conceivable as a *possible* object, though we may tentatively entertain it by way of illustrating a certain philosophical or theoretical point. In other words, it is only something *real* which can be an object of veridical or illusory perception. The so-called non-existence of a thing called 'silver' or 'snake' in an illusion is something which has its place within the realm of the real. Which means (to put it this way) that the so-called appearances are themselves part of reality and that therefore the appearance-reality distinction is in Nyāya not basically a radical one in the sense in which it is, for example, in Advaita Vedānta (or even in McTaggart with certain qualifications). Thus in Nyāya it is the real alone which can become an appearance in a certain spatio-temporal setting.

This leads us to an important point about the in-built ontology of the Nyāya theory in question. A question is often asked as to what is the status of the illusory object? Is the silver perceived in a misperception real or unreal? The answer varies from school to school in Indian philosophy. We shall not consider all those answers, and focus only on the one given by Nyāya. Nyāya affirms, without equivocation, the reality of the illusory silver (or snake). Though at the time of misperception the silver is non-existent or absent in the locus of the shell it exists elsewhere, for example in the silversmith's shop, and is thus real. We have seen it there in the past and acquired a concept of it. The property of being a piece of silver (*rajatatva*) is thus as much a part of the furniture of the world as the property of being a shell (*śuktitva*). As said above, an unreal thing like a sky-flower can never present itself to our senses. So what happens in an erroneous

cognition is that the perception of (say) the conch-shell revives, through similarity, the memory of the pre-cognized silver and this memory presents the silver to our senses through a supra-sensuous or supra-normal contact. Such a supra-sensuous relation suffices to make perception possible. The Nyāya argument thus is that both the subject (or qualificand) and the predicate (qualifier) of the invalid judgement 'This is silver' are equally real metaphysically, though one of them may be wrongly cognized at a certain time and place. In other words, to put the matter a little technically, according to Nyāya, every component (– the qualificand, the qualifier, and the relation –) of the erroneously cognized object-complex (or unity) is, taken separately, a real entity, though the object-complex or the unity (a-(R-b)) itself in its existing (perceived) form is not an actual existent.

It would be palpably wrong to understand this doctrine as implying that this unity is the handiwork of the manipulating cognitive act which produces a false cognition. Nothing according to Nyāya would be more erroneous. In fact Nyāya emphatically asserts that a cognitive act is not an act of relating or combining. The object(s) is merely referred to by a cognition (whether true or false) and not constructed or created. A cognition does not even unify the components a, R and b, which all are the real elements in what is cognized. The unity is a contribution of the relation R which binds its two relata (or terms) a and b together. In an erroneous cognition, which also is necessarily a qualificative (or relational) cognition (see above), the complex or unity cognized has to be broken up into its constituent elements, viz. a relation and its two terms, all of which survive (– in so far as their own reality is concerned –), though *no longer* as elements comprising *that* unity. All these three elements do *not* necessarily have to form an *actually existent complex* (or unity) in order to be cognized. That they are cognized as an objective complex is one thing and that they must actually exist *as that very objective complex* is quite another. In true cognitions of course the objective complex actually exists as a matter of fact, but this feature is not integral to a qualificative cognition *per se*, for that would make a qualificative cognition necessarily true – a proposition just not acceptable to Nyāya. It is because we are in the habit of assuming that reference is a real relation existing between two real things that we presume or postulate the reality of the objective complex *so that* a cognitive act can refer to it. This however according to Nyāya need not be the case. An act of cognition as such an act refers to (or cognizes) an objective complex but this in no wise means that the objective complex must be a real existent in one form or another.

The Concept of Jñāna-lakṣaṇā Pratyāsatti

The concept of supra-normal contact (*alaukika sannikarṣa*) needs some further elucidation, if only because it comes to our aid not only in understanding cases of error but also cases of veridical cognition. The kind of *sannikarṣa* (which in fact is of three kinds) which explains the latter type of cases is called in Nyāya *jñāna-lakṣaṇā pratyāsatti*. The form which the question often takes is this: can one see a fragrant sandal or flower? The ordinary answer would be a firm negative. It would be argued that while one can see the sandal or flower, one cannot visually see the fragrance and can only *infer* it from our past olfactory perception of it. Nyāya would reject any such explanation – and Matilal here agrees with Nyāya – which introduces the element of inference in such cases of perception, as unsatisfactory. "To say that a quick process of inference intervenes here is to accept only a poor theory."[16] Nyāya would explain all such cases of veridical perception (and not only illusion) in terms of, and on the familiar model (already referred to above) of memory presentation and 'supra-normal' contact with the visual organ. The perception of the present sandal revives vividly, through similarity, the memory of the fragrant sandal experienced in the past such that we are able to *perceive* even the present sandal, though actually away from our sense of smell, as fragrant. We find thus that the revived knowledge – *jñāna* – does duty here for the sense-object contact in presenting the object (fragrance) immediately.[17] In sum, the Nyāya theory of *jñāna-lakṣaṇā-pratyāsatti* seeks to offer not just a pragmatic way of getting out of a difficult situation, but a thoughtfully worked out explanatory principle.

Now many things can be said for or against the above Nyāya theory, and indeed have been said by the rival philosophical schools, especially the Advaitins. However, for reasons of space, we shall limit ourselves just to noting briefly a few points which strike us presently. In defence of its view that the fragrance of the present unsmelt sandal is also perceived (through supra-normal contact), what Nyāya does is to appeal to our direct (and immediate) experience on seeing the yonder sandal and queries whether we do not invariably judge the matter thus: "This piece of sandal is fragrant", even before we are able to smell it as such. If such a judgement, Nyāya asks, embodies an immediately *felt* experience, and if immediacy is the hall-mark of perception, how can we in fairness repudiate the proposal that along with that of the sandal, there is a simultaneous (sense-) perception of its unsmelt fragrance too. Now there is no doubt that we often pass

such judgements in certain cognitive situations and that they also seem to represent immediate feelings of fragrance, etc. However, as we closely examine the matter, we find that if on subsequent reflection we honestly ask ourselves whether we really immediately and directly smelt the fragrance, etc. of the yonder (unsmelt) sandal in the same way as we did in the past when we saw it and smelt it (memory of which is supposed to trigger off the present supra-normal contact), we discover that we lack memory of any such so-called immediate knowledge. In fact the feeling of the so-called immediate knowledge which we claim to experience when we pass judgements of the above kind, suddenly seems to evaporate. If so, we cannot help remarking that the sandal's fragrance was not really felt to be known from any immediate contact with the concerned sense-faculty. It seems then that the source of a judgement like "This sandal is fragrant" must be a mediate one; in other words, such a knowledge has a definite inferential element even if that is not immediately evident to us at the time we make such judgements. In fact, psychologically, even when we judge "This sandal is fragrant" we may yet feel tempted to *actually* smell the fragrance, considering the good feeling (which we now recall) it generated when we smelt it in the past. Jayanta perhaps senses the difficulty of the problem when he observes that the (unsmelt) fragrant sandal is not seen by the visual organ, but by the mind.[18]

The difficulties which beset the doctrine of *jñāna-lakṣaṇā-pratyā-satti* or supra-normal contact (*alaukika sannikarṣa*) as an explanation of perceptual *error* are no less, though we cannot here attempt an elaborate critique of these. Briefly, there is no question that the Nyāya dictum that the 'perceived' character of the 'silver' or 'snake' in the situation of a perceptual error cannot be denied, makes very sound sense. Ignore this dictum and you are at a loss to explain the possibility of perceptual error. Or alternatively you have to hold (à la Prābhākara Mīmāṃsakas, for instance) that all perception is by definition valid – a position which most philosophers would like to contest. And there is also no doubt that the illusory 'silver' or 'snake' has to be a familiar object, very much a part of the existent world: it has to be a real entity even if it remains actually unpresented and so non-existent in an illusion. The crux of the matter, however, is this: how can revived memory (of silver or snake) pass as a *perceptual* judgement. Obviously, Nyāya implies – and here its standpoint is similar to that of the Prābhākara Mīmāṃsakas – that this memory has to be unconscious. But can memory be unconscious? Isn't it the case generally that when we remember something we know that we are

remembering something? And if we postulate unconscious memory why can't we by the same token postulate unconscious perception so that our (i.e. Nyāya's) contention above that in e.g. the false cognition "This is silver" the cognition, even though it refers here to an object (silver) with which the sense-faculty is not in contact and which therefore appears to it through revived memory, is *perceptual* in character, seems to lose much of its force. After all, an act of memory and an act of perceptual cognition are at par in so far as their character as mental states is concerned. Both are states of awareness and as such conscious states even if their objects are differently given. Thus there seems to arise a whole host of problems if we postulate a thing like unconscious memory. But whatever be the final solution of these and related issues, one thing remains certain – though this is perhaps nothing more than a commonplace – and this is that in a false cognition the role of the representative element represented by revived memory has clearly to be admitted. Or else we find ourselves faced with a none-too-palatable situation of having to concede, in agreement with some opponents, that the silver of the erroneous cognition "This is silver" is a totally unreal or non-existent object. How to reconcile the representative and the presentative elements in cases of perceptual error so that the cognition *looks*, and is not simply presumed, to be a unitary whole, is a question which is central but which cannot be addressed within the limits of this paper. It is a question, however, which demands resolution by any worthwhile theory of error. A causal relation between what is called 'supra-normal contact' and 'perception' (which latter represents 'This' in the erroneous cognition "This is silver") demands to be properly conceived and established in the first instance, for denial of such a causal relation adds to difficulties and puts into question the very justifiability of the assumption of supra-normal contact.[19] But in whatever way we look at this part of the issue, one thing seems undeniable and it is that even after the cognition (and the object-complex) has been broken into elements which are identifiable with the elements of the real world, the relation or connection which links one element to the other, resists elimination in this way. Incidentally, Gaṅgeśa explains the matter by saying, in line with the general Nyāya position, that the 'characteristic' or the 'predicate' part (*viśeṣaṇa*) of the erroneous cognition is without doubt existent, but its relation with the 'subject' or the 'substantive' (*viśeṣya*), though non-existent, is not apprehended as such.[20] Some other Navya-Naiyāyikas on the other hand hold that even this (so-called causal) relation is an existent which belongs elsewhere but is dislodged and transplanted along with

the silver (which too belongs elsewhere) upon the 'This'.[21]

The context demands that we call attention to what Nyāya considers to be an important difference between the normal connection with the sense-organ and the (memory-induced) supra-normal connection. In a perceptual illusion we have a substantive (subject: *dharmin*) along with an adjective or characteristic (predicate: *dharma*) or what is also called 'chief' (*mukhya*) along with a 'subordinate' (*gauṇa*); that is, there is a thing that is being characterized and a thing that characterizes it. When the characteristic ('predicate' or 'subordinate') wrongly characterizes the 'chief' or the 'subject' we have the case of a perceptual illusion. The characteristic (or the qualifier) in such cases is yielded by the memory-induced supra-normal relation (*alaukika sannikarṣa*). It is to be remembered that whatever is presented to the sense-organ in this (supra-normal) way can only act as a characteristic (or an attribute) and not as a subject (or substantive). This means, as we said above, that nothing can go wrong with the 'chief' or the 'subject' (The 'This' in "This is...") in *any* perceptual situation. It must be remembered, however, that what is normally connected can be both be the chief or the 'subordinate'. It is a different matter though – and this too is equally important – that while verbalizing such an epistemic situation (that is, where the connection is normal) it is the 'chief' (*mukhya*) that plays the role of the substantive (or 'subject'). If the object, which is the chief, is presented to the visual organ and if I perceive it, nothing wrong can happen. The implication of this, in other words, is that (to repeat) it is only in respect of the characteristic (or qualifier) that I can go wrong and everything remains all right so far as the 'chief' or the 'subject' is concerned: *sarvasya jñānasya dharmiṇy avisaṃvādāt*.[22]

K.C. Bhattacharyya and the Meaning of Falsity

We now pass on to K.C. Bhattacharyya's reflections on error. Unlike Nyāya (and quite a few other schools of Indian philosophy) Bhattacharyya does not seem much interested in the question concerning the genesis – i.e. the causes and conditions – of error. He is more concerned with the task of exploring the meaning of falsity and its metaphysical implications as regards the question of the status of the object of an erroneous belief or cognition.

Again, Bhattacharyya is alive to the significance that attaches to the question of a certain psychological aspect of a belief or perceptual cognition, whether true or false. Like most classical Indian philosophical schools Bhattacharyya not only admits the possibility of

error but also sees the proof of its existence in the cancelling or correcting awareness, in "disbelief", in other words. Illusion, quite unlike what is called a thinking error, involves an original belief. It is a perceptual fact, to all intents and purposes. The belief has such completeness about it that so long as it lasts we are not prepared (psychologically speaking) to believe that it could be otherwise. Indeed even when he gives his initial definition of a different (though related) notion, viz., "Fact", Bhattacharyya has this psychology of belief in mind when he says: 'Fact means what is believed: what a person *believes* is a fact *to him*.'[23] (Bhattacharyya though clarifies elsewhere[24] that his above definition indicates the *use*, not the linguistic definition of 'fact'). Any way, what he means to say is that although our beliefs may turn out to be untrue in the end, it is undeniable that we *take* them to be true as a matter of course and even act upon them if the need so arises. There is thus an implicit truth-claim built into the very structure of a belief. A believed content stands so long as it is not actually falsified. The false, according to Bhattacharyya, is 'unreal', much like the contradictory; it is however, theoretically speaking, a much more complicated affair. The contradictory – say a square circle – is rejected from the start. There never arises any question of entertaining it in belief and so never any question of assuming it to be real or fact. A square circle is never assumed to be an actual or even a possible existent. When trying to juxtapose side by side the two concepts 'square' and 'circle' we find they cannot be combined in a single 'thought' or concept. In trying to think them together we find they are unthinkable as a unitary whole. (Bhattacharyya hastens to add, however, that the contradictory is not meaningless like the word 'abracadabra'.) The false, on the other hand, is what once appeared or presented itself as real. When we take a rope for a snake, the snake is assumed to be real in a full-blooded sense. The cause of the error may be disputed, but, that misperception is an error on the part of the perceiving subject, is considered as beyond question.

Now, there is one great difficulty that besets error. There seems to be no third thing between non-existence and reality. A false content *as* false, on the other hand (as our philosopher would tell us), stubbornly refuses to be categorized as either. In misperception, for example, something (snake, e.g.) *appears* and is taken to be real. This apparent content cannot be a contradictory content. A contradictory content, as said above, is never believed and is from the first excluded from the domain of the real. A false content, on the other hand, though finally unqualifiedly discarded on discovery of its falsity, is

superficially not at odds with reality in character and conception. Taken by itself it is perfectly conceivable and seems possible, and thus in a sense claims to belong to the world of fact. But when discovered as false, it seems to lapse into God knows what. It then is *felt* to have come from nowhere and cannot also be placed anywhere. It appeared – that is all we feel convinced about and that is all we tell ourselves we have a right to assert. But how can an appearance – and that is the most gnawing question of them all – which is once believed (and accepted as fact that far) be declared, as it later on is on awareness of its falsity, as a homeless something? How can the discovery of a content as false deprive it even of its (seemingly obvious) character as *objective* content? These are some of the questions which we shall address as we discuss Bhattacharyya's view of falsity in its main outline.

Falsity and Unthinkability

In a way, the idea of falsity presents a quite different, even puzzling, picture. Here, according to Bhattacharyya, no actual question of existence is ever implied or entertained: it is through and through unthinkable. Thinkability (or thought), for Bhattacharyya, has to do with the question of existence – with the real in other words. A false content (snake), like a contradictory content (square circle), cannot be said to be thought, not only because it does not actually exist but also because its existence or non-existence does not admit of conception. Which means, in other words, it is neither a possible existent nor a possible non-existent. One can, according to Bhattacharyya, entertain in thought the non-existence only of that whose existence also is conceivable or possible. But since the false, in his view, bears no connection with the factual, it bears no concern even with the non-existent. The false is what is 'unreal', declares Bhattacharyya.[25] And though it is regarded by him as what he calls a 'speakable' content, it, he states, cannot be taken as a proposition which is affirmed or denied in a judgement. Falsity is no thought-content and is therefore beyond affirmative or negative judgement, the object of a judgement always being a proposition with a meaning or a thought-content. True, it (the false) is rejected but this rejection in itself is no conscious thought-content. If it is a negation ('negation' in a certain sense), it is a negation unaware of itself as a thought-content, unaware of itself as a negative judgement. And if it is some-times (loosely) spoken of as a proposition, we, urges Bhattacharyya, have to treat it as a merely speakable proposition. And that is entirely different from being a thinkable proposition.

Some of Bhattacharyya's terminology here needs a bit of elucidation. When he calls a content a merely speakable proposition, what Bhattacharyya seems to mean is that the nature of that content is exhausted in the *mere* speaking of it. Specifiable only as the *what* of a state of awareness, it frustrates all attempt at independent – independent, that is, of the epistemic attitudes – objective determination of itself. It thus resists contemplation in any objective mode of speech with the consequence that one does not feel interested (theoretically, not psychologically) in pursuing any enquiry into its actual ontological standing. In fact we come to believe that it does not even make sense to ask whether it falls outside or within the domain of reality.

A nagging question may however still persist: Why is express rejection of falsity not a negative judgement, as Bhattacharyya seems to maintain. Don't we here mean consciously to deny the reality of something (snake) which we think or discover to be false? Bhattacharyya would here invite attention to the following consideration. Although (he would say) a negative judgement also implies rejection or disbelief, the rejection (or disbelief) here is never *total* or absolute. It is conditional and qualified. It is qualified in the sense that while something is denied or rejected something is asserted, while something is disbelieved something is believed. Denial of the existence or character of something is here at the same time affirmation of the existence or character of something. That is one major difference, Bhattacharyya would point out, between falsity and negation (of a negative judgement). The judgement 'S is not P', while it denies the proposition 'S being P', also at the same time affirms the proposition 'S being not P'. In fact even in the negative existential judgement like 'A is not' the disbelief in the existence of A is a positive belief in the non-existence of A, "non-existence being understood as a factual determination of the possible existent A."[26] Similarly, in a statement like 'There are no dragons', the disbelief in the existence of dragons would be, to Bhattacharyya, a positive belief in the non-existence of dragons.

The case with falsity is, on the other hand, different. The assertion of falsity implies 'pure' disbelief "that is not equivalent to any belief."[27] The content disbelieved, being not even considered as a possible existent and so as (naturally) implying no question of existence, does not qualify as a thinkable or thought-content. Consequently it is neither affirmed nor denied in a judgement. It is, to repeat, the thought-content having a reference to the existence question which becomes the object of affirmation or negation in a

judgement. This typical Bhattacharyyan view of thought's essential involvement with reality proclaims his idealistic bias, though we soon find him parting company with the idealists on the question of the nature of error.

The idealists do not deny, in fact they positively acknowledge, that there is error, even a good deal of it, in the universe. They also agree or would agree – unlike, for instance, philosophers like Prābhākaras or Descartes[28] – that error is no mere privation. They will contend, however, that there is no error so complete or so absolute as to deserve total banishment from the all-inclusive reality. The distinction between truth and error is with Hegelian idealism one of degree rather than of kind. All error contains some truth, for it has a content which in some sense belongs to the universe. (Similarly every truth is in some sense infected with error and is therefore never absolute.) Error committed and expelled from one world – and there are according to the idealists diverse worlds within the universe – as discrepant with that world finds a place in some other world by some sort of transmutation, just as, for example, evil committed in the world gets (on the idealists' view) transmuted so as to render the ultimate reality to be on the whole good in the end. All error thus acquires the status of partial truth (or partial error)[29] and is accommodated alongside other truths within the one vast complex whole. An error with a pretense to absoluteness is intrinsically incapable of accommodation within reality and so must look for a place outside that reality. This, however, the idealistic premisses do not permit. There is no absolute error and no 'space' outside reality.[30]

The above account would not be acceptable to Bhattacharyya. Falsity on his conception is neither here nor there. It is, as we remarked above, homeless. As such the false content raises no demand for its ontological determination. And Bhattacharyya finds here nothing baffling. However, before we examine this aspect we need to have an idea of Bhattacharyya's overall conception of falsity in some further detail.

Bhattacharyya addresses himself exclusively to that aspect of falsity which is connected with disbelief, which often takes the form of denial ('negation' in a certain sense) or rejection. This rejection cannot take place unless there is awareness of falsity, i.e. awareness of a content *as* false. We however find that this awareness of a content as false can, in the nature of things, only take place against the backdrop of a prior belief in that content. This (Bhattacharyya would aver) is the single most important determination of falsity. Falsity as a fact about our cognitive effort or about the world has its *prius* in a

previous belief. This is so – importantly – in so far as disbelief is a giving up of, or ceasing to believe, a certain content.[31] Disbelief is not so much a new belief, as it is withdrawal of belief in a content which was previously taken to be fact: it is withdrawal of belief in the "is" from the appearance (snake).

Rejection of a content does in no way here mean that the said content is as such unintelligible. It is very much intelligible, but only in the way of a *possible* content. It is a possible content, however, not as belonging to the present but to the *past*. Were it a present possibility, it could not have been treated as categorically false and so deserving of unqualified rejection. If it is rejected in the present it is rejected only as a content which was previously believed and exists now as a *past* possibility. To quote Bhattacharyya' s own succinct words:

> When we disbelieve the content of a belief, we understand the content ... not by itself but *as* what we believed. We are thus conscious of the belief as past but as the belief is now understood *only* as rejected, we may say that to reject it is to have it now in the mind as *past*. 'As past' means 'as rejected' : the consciousness of the pastness of the belief is but the consciousness of the belief being rejected.[32]

The foregoing reflections enable us to understand the well- known Bhattacharyyan thesis that since falsity attaches, if and when it does, only to the belief previously held, no present belief can, properly speaking, be *known* to be or *said* to be false. It is not that a presently held belief cannot *be false*, but it stands, i.e. does not lose its belief-character so long as it is not annulled by a subsequent belief (or perception) – which latter then acquires, in terms of Bhattacharyya' s direction of thinking, the character of a disbelief. Correction arising from disbelief is therefore not of a false belief presently held: it is of a belief previously held[33] (but now discovered to be false). Correction of falsity or error does not therefore admit of being expressed in any single 'unitary logical form'[34] – 'form' here meaning only the content of a believing or thinking and not the believing or thinking itself. It always needs two sentences (in the event, for example, of mistaking a rope for a snake): '*This* was taken as *this snake*' and 'What *this* was taken to be was no fact'. And it is evident that it is impossible logically to combine the two into one.[35]

We are now in a position to appreciate why correction of falsity, though arising in the wake of disbelief, cannot be *appositely* logically expressed apart from the past believing of it. Reference to the

subjective fact of a past believing (or perceiving) is ineluctable – nay is a positive must – in any expression of correction in respect of the content of a believing (or perceiving). What is now known to be false is what was believed-as-this-snake. When we discover that what we thought to be a snake was *in fact* a rope, the present experience which is belief in *this* being a rope cannot be, without incurring grave impropriety, described as disbelief in *this snake*. The reason, thinks Bhattacharyya, is that for the present consciousness now there is no such thing as even to disbelieve. The content *this snake* was, or appeared to be, true when there was belief in it (recall Bhattacharyya's initial idea of fact: 'Fact means what is believed') and is now false in reference to the present belief (expressed as *this rope*). At the time of believing it there is no consciousness of the content *this snake* as being false; else belief loses its *raison d'etre*. In other words, *this snake* was a unity in the past, in which was incarnated the previous belief as *a single* (unified) experience.

Ontology of the False Object

The real dilemma regarding error is this: what was then believed as *this snake* cannot be 'said' to have been false and what is now known as false cannot be referred to as *this snake*.[36] Now that I disbelieve I find it impossible to describe in explicitly objective terms what it was that I then believed. But neither can I aver that there was then only the subjective fact of a contentless believing. The content is neither fact nor absolute nought.[37] It is not characterizable either way.

Now, if I understand Bhattacharyya's meaning, it seems that he is confusing between 'objectivity' and 'factuality' when he says that the content of the past belief which has now been rejected, is characterizable neither as fact nor as absolute nought. Surely the content '*this* snake' which now in the light of the present correcting consciousness stands cancelled, is, and even *was*, no fact. But does it mean that the content then believed (or asserted) cannot therefore be expressed in *objective* terms? I think it is possible to say in the same breath and in the wake of the present (corrective) consciousness, that though 'this' that was believed or perceived to be a snake turned out to be no fact, yet the belief or perception *claimed, as* belief or *as* perception, to cognize a *certain object* and so was not without any objective content whatever. In all belief or perception (attended with belief) there is an implicit claim that the content believed is independent of the *subjective* state of believing or perceiving. And though in the case of correction the false content

comes to be annulled, the objectivity-aspect of the cognitive situation somehow survives and needs to be accounted for, unless one denies that there was even the act of perceiving at that time. The so-called reference failure in the case of a false cognition or belief does not take away from the latter its character as cognition or belief which consists precisely in this claim to know, or refer to, an object. Indeed, as we shall specially see in our discussion of McTaggart, were there not this basic intentionality to a perceptual belief, we shall be landed in pure scepticism. (It is here necessary to caution the reader against ascribing this sort of intentionality or claim to any or every form of consciousness which, if Western scholastics are to be believed, would make even of (the contradictory like) a square circle as something possessed of an 'objective' being by reason of the fact that it becomes, if and when it does, an object of thought or consciousness.) However, as a corrective codicil to my above critical comment I would like to add that Bhattacharyya does seem – by his use of the phrase 'nor absolute nought' above – to appreciate that the objectivity aspect has somehow to be retained and cannot just be wished away by rejecting the false content.

It may be protested, specially by a certain type of idealists (see above), that the false *this snake* is not so much as rejected (even if it is thought to be rejected) as it is included and absorbed in the true belief *this rope*. And ideal inclusion, to be sure, need not be complete non-sense. There is, however, one fact which militates against such a suggestion and that is that the incompatibility of the contents, especially in a perceptual situation, is directly felt. Besides, it is difficult to *show*, in such situations, that the true content is indeed wider and more inclusive.

Correction of Error as a Higher-order Act

We know that wherever its cause be, for error there is nowhere else to be except in the erring subject. And since all error is a retrospective discovery, correction of error can be aptly called reflective consciousness. This reflective consciousness already represents a higher plane of consciousness in comparison to that of the corresponding prior belief. It is reflective consciousness, for unlike the illusory cognition it is at once aware of itself as cancelling or correcting consciousness. And even if it were to be held that both illusion and cancellation are equally subjective states, one critical distinction between the two must needs be drawn. It is that we are necessarily conscious of the illusory nature of our previous perception only in a subsequent moment – the

moment, that is, at which the cancelling awareness takes place. In the second place, cancellation is not a subjective state which merely supervenes on the earlier illusory experience: the cancellation can hardly be said to be temporal in the ordinary sense of the term. It is not just another state which succeeds the previous one, for in that case any two states in the order of earlier and later would be illusion and cancellation respectively. The reflecting subject now (i.e. during correction) discovers itself as having been in error.[38] And since this discovery of error takes place against the evidence of the present (i.e. subsequent) belief or experience, the latter can fairly be regarded as an experience which stands at one degree higher than the former. Beliefs may or may not be the result of reflection, but disbelief, in Bhattacharyya's view, is always the achievement of reflection.

The above account of disbelief brings into sharper relief the truth (if any) and the significance of Bhattacharyya's teaching that as always implying correction of a false content, disbelief is a positive mode of consciousness and is no mere privation of belief. Consciousness of something as imaginary or contradictory means to have no belief in it. For example, if I am aware of a 'square circle' *as* a contradictory something, this awareness does not amount to any disbelief in it simply because the question of my believing it never arose. Falsity therefore cannot be a content detachable from the believing of it, and the belief cannot in the present be contemplated without reference to the present disbelief. "Disbelief, indeed, is a conscious reference to the prior belief but the prior belief can be spoken of at the time of disbelief *only in reference to the disbelief*".[39] Little surprise, then, that Bhattacharyya feels impelled to conclude that the consciousness of the false and the consciousness of the subjective imply each other. The first part of this thesis Bhattacharyya expresses thus: "The consciousness of the false is consciousness of a content that is not speakable except as the content of a belief which, again, is not speakable except as that the content of which is false".[40] And further: "To be conscious of the false is ... to be conscious of the subjective".[41] This 'consciousness of the subjective', which consciousness of the false is said to imply, is not the ordinary introspective awareness of oneself as the subject of a certain psychic state. It is rather an acknowledgement, a confession if you will, of oneself as having gone wrong in one's perception or judgement. It is not so much an indictment of the false content as it is of one' s having believed falsely. And this has the consequence that the disbelieved content comes to be seen as really unassertable and so indistinguishable from the (subjective) believing of it.

Falsity as a Species of 'Unreality'

We must now turn to the other critical question, namely what account, in strictly ontological terms, can be given of the false? But is it possible even to talk of the ontology of falsity? In other words, does it make sense to try to determine the place of a false content in relation to reality?

There are a couple of statements of Bhattacharyya's which give us an inkling of his position. Bhattacharyya sometimes uses 'false' and 'unreal' as interchangeable and suggests: "The snake can be ... spoken of indifferently as false or unreal."[42] His meaning becomes further clear from his view which explicitly denies that the false is but the objective fact of non-existence.[43] To be an objective fact of non-existence, the false has to be a possible existent regarding which an actual question of existence can be asked. The false, however, as we discover, is not a *present* possibility.

It would be wrong to read this to mean that Bhattacharyya is oblivious to the distinction which exists between falsity and unreality – the term 'false' often being taken as a predicate assertible of a proposition and the term 'unreal' being often presumed as assertible of something in respect to which there is a possible question of existence. While not exactly meaning to deny the usefulness of such a distinction, Bhattacharyya doubts whether the distinction can with reason be sustained in the case of the perceptually false or the illusory. The perceptually false is a content once taken (or believed) as existent, this perception being expressed as 'This is a snake'. When, however, the error is detected and the correction effected, the said correction is of the false content. The correct form in which the correction is then expressed is 'This snake is no snake', rather than 'This is not a snake'. It is the distinctive experience of perceptual annulment or cancellation which is symbolically expressed in the form of a judgement, this apparent judgement being in fact no judgement proper. The correction 'This snake is no snake', says Bhattacharyya, is not a thinking denial of some proposition for the simple reason that the proposition 'This snake being snake' cannot be denied. To put it in more precise and specific terms, *it is with respect to the correction proper that the falsity (or false thing) (corrected) can be spoken of as 'unreal'.* In other words, the 'false' is properly characterized as 'unreal' only when this 'false' comes to be exposed as to its real character in a falsifying (or correcting) consciousness.

'Unreality', however, may well appear in other forms, so that 'unreal' and 'false' need not be taken as synonyms. 'Unreality' is

surely a wider term than falsity, and to this Bhattacharyya is duly alive. It is not necessary for a content to be regarded as unreal that it must have been previously believed or that the question of its existence must have been asked. The only requirement for qualification to the title 'unreal' is that the content in question should be believed and that, further, no actual question of its existence should arise *during* the disbelief.[44]

Now this contingency of falsity being at bottom nothing but a species of the unreal may tempt one into believing that the false must have a being of some sort. And some philosophers indeed maintain that the unreal must in some sense exist.[45] Soon, however, we find, much to our chagrin, that the false frustrates all attempt at any definite ontological determination of itself. The earlier hopes of an either/or answer to the question of its existence or character are now felt upset by the rather unforeseen circumstance of the experience of failure. As believed, the false content was existent but as now disbelieved it is rejected as non-existent. What kind of being, then, it may be said to be possessing such that its (previous) claim to serve as a subject of possible predicates could be regarded as justified. But, as it turns out, we discover that the false as now discovered in its falsity is describable neither as existent nor as non-existent, that it can now be only characterized, paradoxically to all appearance, as the objectively uncharacterizable 'what' of 'what was thought', which now cannot be taken apart from thought and projected as something – whether a something which exists or a something which does not exist. Earlier, the false content *as believed* proclaimed independent existence as one among the objects of the world (see above). Now, however, with the discovery of its false character, the content not only comes to forfeit its previous claim but finds that it cannot break free from the believing of it and so cannot find independent residence in the world of fact. No more entertainable as 'is' or 'is not' the false content now puts to shame all further (ontological) enquiry and renders its winding up the only honourable philosophical course left. The question: what was it that one believed when one believed falsely, now falls outside the bounds of legitimate metaphysical enquiry.

Some Critical Observations

The above treatment of error or falsity must provoke a full-length critical appraisal of Bhattacharyya' s theory. However, for lack of space we shall confine outselves to making only a few brief remarks.

Firstly, to recall some of the things Bhattacharyya has said. He calls

falsity a species of the 'unreal' and this on the ground – which he appears to regard both as a necessary and sufficient condition – that falsity properly concerns a content which was previously believed (as real) but which is *now* disbelieved and corrected. (Distinguishing the other unreals from falsity he says: "An unreal content is properly said to be false if it was believed and hence could be the subject of an actual question".[46])

Now we may ask, does not this notion of falsity sound too subjectivistic? Are not the qualifications laid down for the title 'false' somewhere arbitrary and one-sided? What we mean is that Bhattacharyya's conception of falsity appears to fail to take care of certain cases which are by common consent acknowledged to be of false belief. To illustrate. Imagine a situation in which a person *X* believes that there is a snake in front. Imagine also that he conveys this (perceptual) belief of his to a hearer *Y*, who, however, does not agree with him and asserts instead, on the basis of his own perception, that it is (not a snake but) a rope. Suppose further that both *X* and *Y* categorically reject each other's beliefs in the light of their own respective (perceptual) beliefs, of the truth of which they are (somehow) convinced.

Now the immediate paradox is *not* that contrary beliefs are being held by two persons which, on Bhattacharyya's view, will both be facts so far as these respective believers are concerned. (Cf. "Fact means what is believed: what a person believes is a fact to him.") It is rather that both *X* and *Y* are dismissing *as false*, contents which in the first instance they have never themselves believed. To put it differently, here is a situation where a content is being disbelieved and corrected without having ever been believed. But for something to earn the title of 'false' it is essential, on Bhattacharyya's view (to speak quite generally), that it be both the object of a past belief and a present disbelief. Shall we then say that *X*'s and *Y*'s rejection of each other's beliefs is utterly without consequence so that the contents rejected are not false to *X* and to *Y*?

It is difficult to surmise what would be Bhattacharyya's response to this. But if they are fit examples of awareness, on both *X*'s and *Y*'s part (of a content as false), then it is clear that the concerned contents (viz. 'There is a snake in front' and 'There is a rope in front'), since they (on Bhattacharyya' s meaning of falsity) are not characterizable as either-existent-or-non-existent, cannot also be regarded as unreal. Here, then, is a case of awareness (and rejection) of falsity which on the face of it remains unexplained on Bhattacharyya's theory.

Next, K.C. Bhattacharyya says that the false object ('object' in a

certain sense) of an illusory situation, the snake in our example, belongs nowhere. It eludes every attempt at ontological placing. No actual question of existence is asked about the false, and hence even its non-existence cannot be a fact. But we ask, doesn't the snake in some way (– however indefinable this 'some' may further seem –) exist? Can we really account for its *appearance* anywhere without postula-ting its *existence* somewhere? To this it may be replied that the reference here was to the snake which was *believed* to exist but which, retrospectively, turns out to be non-existent. To this we agree but we yet want to say that the snake, even if it is to be called unreal because of its false character (the quarrel is here not over terminology), differs from the two other unreals – the imaginary-unreal and the contradic-tory-unreal – in a very fundamental way. The imaginary and the contradictory, the golden mountain and the square circle respectively, are (if known as such) never believed. A question of existence is never entertained about them and hence they can be called unthinkable on Bhattacharyya's notion of thinkability. But, and this is the critical issue, they are unthinkable perennially; their unthinkability is not relative to any particular knowing subject. The case with the snake is, on the other hand, different. If it can become the object of an erroneous (perceptual) belief or judgement, it can also figure as the object of a true (perceptual) belief or judgement. Its falsity in a certain context is through and through relative – relative to a misperceiver. It is not absolute or unqualified, as is the case with the golden mountain or the square circle. The object called snake has its place in the world, and is therefore, so far (in a certain way) real. Its actual absence or 'non-existence' in a certain context is a qualified one. *The content snake is not by itself an impossible aggregate of incompatible contents.* It remains a content presented (and asserted) and is an *apparent* content which an imaginary or a contradictory content never is. What is annulled or falsified is its appearance, or if you are very particular about a certain terminology, *presumed* existence (– not its basic reality –) when it was actually absent. Otherwise, the snake is a real object, as real as the rest of reality, or in case one rejects the reality of the world, as unreal as the rest of the world. In fact, to permit ourselves this manner of speaking, it appears because it is real *somewhere* and presupposes our knowledge of itself; presumably a creature of fantacy it is yet not fantastic. After all, as Bhattacharyya himself acknowledges, the snake of a misperception is neither an imaginery content (like golden mountain) nor a contradictory something (as the square circle is). Though the content 'snake' seems to vanish into nothingness on discovery of its falsity in a

subsequent correct perception of the rope *as* rope, the believing (or asserting) part remains as before. The objectivity embodied in the 'This' of 'This snake' survives the rejection of the content 'snake' and is retained in the present (valid) cognition of rope *as* rope. The mistake arises from confusing objectivity with actuality such that with the rejection of actuality the objectivity too is supposed to disappear. Though I am far from suggesting that K.C. Bhattacharyya does not seem aware of this distinction, it appears to me that he does not adequately provide for it in his conceptual scheme either. Just as the 'perceived' character of the entity called snake in misperception can never be wished out of existence or underplayed, similarly the objectivity-part of the subjective act of *perception* also is not capable of being undermined.

Bhattacharyya says that the disbelief or the falsifying awareness is a reflective consciousness and so one degree higher than the original (mis-)perceiving consciousness, but he does not seem to take *full* cognizance of the fact that the disbelief or falsifying consciousness is able to perform its job only in the light of the presently perceived (and so believed) content 'rope'. Even while correcting the previous erroneous belief, the present (dis-)belief does not forgo its *own* believing character and the attendant truth-claim. And Bhattacharyya does nowhere deny the perceptual character of the falsifying (and therefore reflecting) consciousness. The aim of this act (of consciousness) is also to perceive and know, and its (another) character as reflective conscious-ness it derives from its character of being at bottom a perceptual consciousness. The contents as they present themselves to these respective consciousnesses (– the previous one and the subsequent one –) may be different but their (intended) object is the *same* – the object namely that comes to be represented as 'This'. That this is so is easily seen when we contrast the so-called corrective (and hence reflective) consciousness with such *introspective* consciousness as by choice makes the previous cognition its object of contemplation. In sum, it is only when the same object is discovered by the present perception to be actually a rope that the previously 'perceived' content 'snake' comes to be rejected.

McTaggart's Account of Error

We now take up for consideration our third philosopher, McTaggart. McTaggart admits the reality of error and believes, though not without producing reasons, that men are capable both of knowledge and error and that they are also in principle capable of effecting an

entasis, unless the error is of such 'phenomenal' nature as infects the view of all thinking beings (as, for example, is the case with time whose metaphysical reality McTaggart rejects). It is surely pathological to dismiss all our beliefs as false; and it is equally dogmatic to hold, à la Protagoras, that all human beliefs are true and so beyond question. Human beings, McTaggart held, generally live in a mixed state of knowledge and error.[47]

This, however, may not be the end of the matter, however strong one's conviction be that knowledge and error are both there in the world. For both the beliefs: (i) that there is no knowledge and (ii) that there is no error, may be held by different persons with the same conviction as the preceding one (viz. that there is both knowledge and error). It is interesting that McTaggart himself raises this issue and proceeds to discuss it in what he considers to be its essentials. We shall here take up both these questions in turn for a brief discussion.

Refutation of Scepticism with regard to Knowledge and Error

Let us first consider the question concerning knowledge. (By 'knowledge' McTaggart here means both veridical perception or judgement and true belief.) Now, either there are no people who deny that knowledge exists or there is at least one person *P* who denies that any knowledge or veridical cognition exists. In the first case the question does not even begin to arise and so there is no one to refute. In the second case the denial may mean two things which McTaggart considers, albeit in his own way. First, it may mean that *P* denies that any of the perceptual cognitions which have existed up to the time he makes the above assertion (– "there is no true cognition" –) is true. On this McTaggart seems to say that this view (i.e. the denial) is either wrong or the person is not telling the truth. The denial is wrong because *P* is forgetting (quite mistakenly) that the entire list of cognitions which have existed up to the time he asserts the above proposition, does not include this present belief of his which it should *if* it is to be true in respect of *all* cognitions (or beliefs), and that therefore the list is not exhaustive enough. But, on the other hand, this belief which is *about* each member of a class (of cognitions) existing up to the present moment cannot itself be a member of that class and thus a part of its own subject (or the state of affairs it asserts to exist); which means that there can be no such proposition which *P* claims to be making if we were to take this view of his assertion. So we still have nothing to refute.

The second possibility is that *P* believes that the property of being a

cognition (or belief) necessarily excludes the property of being true. On this interpretation of *P*'s assertion "no true cognition exists" it is not impossible that *P* should hold the belief which he says he holds. But if he holds the belief, it is certain to be false; for the truth of the belief entails its falsehood. And a belief whose truth entails its falsehood would necessarily be false. To express it in McTaggart's own words: "If I assert that no knowledge exists then I am maintaining that my belief in the proposition 'no knowledge exists' is false. For if it were true, it would be knowledge. At the same time, since I am asserting the proposition, I am maintaining it to be true. There is therefore a contradiction involved in the assertion of the proposition, although not in the proposition itself."[48]

To put the whole matter briefly, though the proposition "No knowledge exists" is not self-contradictory, as it is often supposed to be, its assertion necessarily makes it false. So we can say: either no one asserts it or it is false.

We now pass on to error. McTaggart regards with suspicion any theory of reality or knowledge which does not provide for the existence of error. As we said in the beginning, and as McTaggart explicitly affirms, the proposition that there is no error is not in itself self-contradictory, nor does for that matter its assertion involve a contradiction, because no contradiction afflicts either the proposition itself or its assertion. It must, however, be false, says McTaggart, on grounds of fact. If a single person, or I myself, have committed an error, and I have no reasons to doubt that some similar erroneous beliefs have been entertained by other people at some times, it is undeniable that error exists. Were any of these beliefs true, the error which they assert to exist, would exist. If any of them were false, then the belief itself would be error.[49] Thus the belief that there is error is, on McTaggart's view, a self-justifying belief.

Indeed, McTaggart goes on to assert that any attempt to deny error in one place compels us to postulate its existence elsewhere and that this way we get enmeshed in a vicious infinite regress. I shall here state his argument partly in my own way, for his statement of it seems to me a bit obscure. McTaggart says that to his view that the reality of error is undeniable, it might be replied by someone who believes that it is possible that the universe is in quite some respects *not* what it appears to be, that what we call error (or falsity) may *itself* be an *appearance* and that therefore in the ultimate and true sense, there is no such thing as error.[50] On this view a *prima facie* erroneous belief – let us call it B_1 – would be got rid of by asserting that it is not *really erroneous* even though it *appears* to be so. But this, says McTaggart,

would imply that B_1 has been contemplated and that its contemplation – let us call it B_2 (which regards it as an error) – is erroneous. Now behind B_2 which in regarding B_1 as erroneous, is thought, on the view that error is nothing but an appearance, to be itself an appearance, there must be a mental state – call it B_3 – which is the appearance that B_2 is such a belief. And in that case B_3 would become an error. Now if it is said (in reply) that it may only appear to be an appearance (and not a fact) that B_2 is a belief that B_1 is an error, then there would inevitably be another mental state — call it B_4 – which is the appearance of B_3 as what it (i.e. B_3) is not. And then B_4 would be an error. Thus (says McTaggart) any attempt to deny error at one place leads to another error (at a different place) through an infinite series.[51] The reason for this is that whenever we believe or assert that anything (– e.g. B_1 which appears to be an error but which on the protester's view is not really so –) appears to be what it is not, we necessarily assert the existence of a mental state which is the appearance and is therefore erroneous. In other words, in denying the reality of one error we assert the reality of another error, whose reality in turn can only be denied by asserting the reality of a third error. Which means, if we stop anywhere we end up with a real error on our hands and thus our attempt to "get rid" of error has failed. And if we endlessly continue like this the infinite series becomes vicious, for the view, in whose defence we started on this series – the view, namely that there is no real error but rather only an appearance of error –, will not be proved correct or justified unless we have reached the end of that endless series. And this is impossible. Therefore, McTaggart concludes, the fact of error cannot be denied and any attempt to do so is doomed to failure from the beginning: to say that it is an error to think that there is any error is simply self-contradictory.

Phenomenal Truth or Universal Error?

Much like philosophers such as Hegel or the Advaita Vedāntins, McTaggart too draws a distinction between two kinds of error which he thinks men are liable to. The first kind of error is the one which we have discussed above in connection with Nyāya and K.C. Bhattacharyya. It is common to think that this error – also called (as we saw above) illusion or misperception (which leads to a false belief [or judgement]) – is usually confined to one individual or a few individuals and has its source in some particular cause or causes. Mistaking a rope for a snake or a shell for a piece of silver is an error which

comes under this category. But there is another category of error which though not accepted by every philosophy or philosopher, is fairly well-known in the history of philosophy, both Indian and Western, and which according to its protagonists is generally shared by all thinking beings or at any rate by (almost) the whole human race. (Some philosophers such as the Vedāntins even believe that there is (or are) a definite cause(s) behind this error, removal of which cause or causes through philosophical reflection or wisdom, can lead to the extirpation of the error concerned and thus make possible the direct 'seeing' or intuition of reality as it is.) Postulation of such an error usually enables the philosophers concerned to draw a distinction between appearance and reality at the universal level too. Now McTaggart invites our attention to one important characteristic which, according to him, both types of Error share and which, though quite obvious, is, he says, usually forgotten or is apt to be forgotten by philosophers whether in the heat of philosophizing or for some other reason. It is this. Every mistake must belong only to the mistaking subject, just as every knowledge can exist only in the knowing subject. Wherever or whatever may be the cause of Error, the error itself can exist only in the minds of beings who misperceive things or make false judgements about them.[52]

At the same time, however, there is, according to McTaggart, one major difference between the two types of error mentioned above. In the case of such errors as remain confined to one or a few persons, the error in question often tends, until and unless removed or corrected, to produce disorder and confusion in the experience (or life) of those persons who hold it; and this fact persuades people to recognize it as such and also (rightly) attribute it to the minds of those persons. On the other hand, the error which is of a universal nature, i.e. which is common to all thinking beings in the universe or at least to the human race as such, and which is such that in its effects it does not prevent the formation of an orderly and consistent system of experience, often leads people, including philosophers, to call it "phenomenal truth". Now, McTaggart says that this characteristic of the (universal) error, which *thus* distinguishes it from the first type of error, often makes us, and no less the philosophers who are supposed to know better, oblivious to the fact that this error too exists in the minds of the beings who hold it and that it does not one bit cease to be error just because it is shared by the whole humanity. The aweful consequence of this is that ordinary men and philosophers alike tend to forget that what we take to be phenomenally true is not really true, but really false,[53] and thus suppose that what is phenomenally true is

also really true in one sense or another. (Some idealists, for example, apparently seem to say that time or (say) evil is an appearance, or 'phenomenally' real, but not 'ultimately' real. Incidentally, A.J. Ayer[54] implies that McTaggart thought and talked this way, but this is (in my view) to misrepresent McTaggart altogether. It is true that McTaggart drew a basic distinction between appearance and reality in a quite uncommon way, but it does not mean that he bestowed upon appearances any real status by just a twist of words or otherwise. In fact, and this goes unnoticed by Ayer, McTaggart, as we just saw, *expressly* disparages such language.) Finally, just because a belief which is true has generally an object outside itself, philosophers too tend to hypostatize the (really erroneous) contents of the "phenomenally true" beliefs and set them up as objects which have "some sort of bastard reality, though not real reality."[55] As an example of this, McTaggart points to Kant' s "phenomenal objects" in space and time. "But a phenomenal object of phenomenally true cognitions is", as McTaggart well remarks, "*nothing but an objectified error detached from the self who has the erroneous cognition.*" "And this", he adds, "is impossible."[56] (I think Advaita Vedānta and K.C. Bhattacharyya would, on the whole, agree with McTaggart on this point.) I should think that philosophers resort to this kind of talk under the influence of perhaps Hegel's (unhappy!) practice of calling an "appearance" anything which is not wholly self-subsistent. Be that as it may, McTaggart was very clear in his mind that he was not the one to become a participant in this kind of discourse.

Now the type of error which is commonly shared by all knowing beings is, according to McTaggart, to be found in very intimate connection with the appearance of time or matter (or even what we call judgements). It may be noted that McTaggart rejects the reality of all these three. (In Advaita Vedānta, this universal error is found in connection with the appearance of the world of plurality.) However, it is the first type of error which we shall focus on, in the main.

Error need not always be Judgemental

The first important thing that strikes one about McTaggart's view of error is that he belongs to that rare breed of Western philosophers who visualize the possibility of error in perceptions and not necessarily or always in judgements.[57] (In fact, as indicated above, McTaggart came to reject the reality of judgements on metaphysical grounds. But into that we need not enter; and besides, as McTaggart would say, the unreality of judgements does not entail their falsity.) It

has been an article of faith with quite a few philosophers, specially in the West, that it is in our judgements that we go astray, not in our perceptions. One well-articulated version of this latter doctrine is to be found in Kant. The following passage from Kant nearly sums up his view on the matter.

> Truth or illusion is not in the object, in so far it is intuited, but in the *judgement about it*, in so far as it is thought. It is therefore correct to say that *the senses do not err* – not because they always judge rightly but *because they do not judge at all.* Truth and error, therefore, and consequently also illusion as leading to error, are only to be found in the judgement, i.e. only in the relation of the object to our understanding. In any knowledge which completely accords with the laws of understanding there is no error. In a representation of the senses – as containing no judgement whatsoever – there is also no error.[58]

McTaggart here would be one with Kant in holding that error is to be looked for in the (erring) subject regardless of whether the error is one of judgement or of perception. He would, however, differ with the Kantian view that error characterizes judgements alone. McTaggart by no means denies that error can belong to judgements too, for as we just said, the reality or unreality of judgements does not entail their truth or falsity; only he sees nothing extraordinary or exceptionable in the view that our perceptions too can err. One can see that Kant gives no good reason why senses can never go wrong. He only avoids the question by stipulating (so to say) that senses do not err because they cannot judge, and that error properly is to be found "in the relation of the object to our understanding". The view therefore that it is only our judgements that go awry, is, to McTaggart, nothing more than a dogma born of prejudice.

McTaggart admits that the distinction perhaps resists neat verbal formulation, but points out that it becomes evident to anyone who introspectively contemplates the difference between, say, his judgement "I am in pain" and the perception (i.e. introspection) of himself on which that judgement is based.[59] To illustrate through another example, McTaggart would draw a distinction between saying "I perceive the black crow" and saying "I see *that* the crow is black". This is not the place to discuss the great metaphysical use which McTaggart makes of this distinction, but its philosophical significance can hardly be exaggerated. The point simply is: if we can correctly perceive (i.e. without necessarily judging) things *as* having certain characteristics, why can't we misperceive them, without bringing in

the element of judgement, as having characteristics which they do not actually have. (In fact, given his premisses, even Kant' s view seems consistent. He sees the possibility of error in judgements because he regards truth also as a characteristic of judgements.)

Error as Misperception of Character

One central doctrine of McTaggart's view of error is that he sees misperception as consisting in mistaking the *character* of something and not the existence aspect of the situation. One will notice that this view is a natural, nay necessary, corollary of McTaggart's view of perception as knowledge of something *as having* characteristics.[60] (The reader will not fail to notice here the striking similarity that seems to exist between McTaggart's view of perception and the Nyāya view which we have already referred to above. As we noted then that for Nyāya too the paradigm of all cognition is qualificative cognition (*savikalpaka* or *viśiṣṭa jñāna*), the cognition, in other words, of something as being characterized by something – an atttibute or a characteristic. In fact, McTaggart would unreservedly endorse the Nyāya dictum: "*sarvam jñānam dharmiṇy abhrāntam prakāre tu viparyayaḥ*"[61] but he does that also for a different but important reason, namely to ward off the sceptical threat.) The admission of erroneous perception, he says, should not lead one to the (illicit) conclusion that it is possible that "nothing" in fact exists, and that something is only misperceived *as* existing. This, he says, would land us in complete scepticism. When we misperceive, there is, McTaggart holds, no doubt that *something does exist*;[62] it is with regard to *what* that something is that we err in misperception.[63] This is how McTaggart tries to save reality and his own realism. Misperception always consists in investing this real, contrary to our own intentions, with features which do not in fact belong to it. When, for example, I mistake a rope for a snake (or a tree-stump for a man), I definitely see something as existing; only I wrongly ascribe the snake-character (or the man-character) to the perceived existent, i.e. rope (or tree-stump). It is in this false ascription of a character to the perceived object that misperception is supposed to consist. In other words, what is misperceived always has a really existent object as its locus or ground. It is, however, noteworthy in McTaggart's view that an erroneous perception need not be entirely erroneous.[64] Thus I may perceive S as having two qualities p and q while in fact it may really have p but not q. (This doctrine is sometimes called 'selectivity of perception'.)

Ontology of Error

The further question whether, what is misperceived is real in some way (as Nyāya holds) is to McTaggart "ambiguous".[65] The characteristics ascribed to the perceived existent may be real and unreal both. In a rope-snake case the snake-character ascribed to the existent (rope), though compresent with the erring cognition, is real in so far as it is part of the thing called 'snake' which exists somewhere else and is therefore very much part of this world; and here McTaggart would perhaps agree with Nyāya. When, however, we perceive something as temporal, it is a case of misperception in which the misperceived character, viz. the temporal duration is unreal, for time according to McTaggart is unreal. In fact, in his view there is one error which remains present in all 'ostensible perceptions' – by which term McTaggart would like us to mean all such experiences as on introspection appear as perceptions – and it is that the objects are perceived as temporal in nature or character. And if McTaggart is to be believed, nothing can have temporal characteristics.[66] But, whether or not one agrees with his view of the unreality of time, McTaggart in principle admits, in case of universal illusions, the (possible) unreality of what is misperceived. McTaggart has however no doubt in his mind that behind the appearance called 'time', there is a reality – what he calls the *C*-series – which we erroneously assume to be a temporal series. Unlike K.C. Bhattacharyya, he would refuse to regard the (false) temporal series as ontologically uncharacterizable. He would say, using Leibniz's notion of *phenomenon bene fundatum*[67] that time or the time-series is (to use one of the English equivalents), a *real* appearance, an appearance which as a *well-founded* phenomenon, forms an orderly, reliable and uniform system of experience. (The same, says McTaggart, is true of matter. Matter, according to him is unreal,[68] and so an appearance much like time, which is (falsely) inferentially judged to be real, though in fact what exists as its ground or locus is really something with the nature of spirit.) The reality of time (and of course matter) has been denied by many philosophers both Indian and Western. But McTaggart is the first philosopher to tell us why what appears as the time-series appears as a time-*series*, that is, in other words, what is the reality – and this reality too should be of the nature of a series – that serves as its locus or foundation. His *C*-series is his answer to the above question,[69] for it is this series which in his view corresponds in reality to the *appearance* of a *series of events in time*. To elaborate a little, what McTaggart tries to drive at is that when we perceive an object as having diverse stages

in its history and thus undergoing an actual change, this means that the object has a complex inner structure: its parts are *in fact* ordered in a *real non-temporal order* which is the *C*-series, and it is this non-temporal arrangement of parts which under certain conditions is *misperceived* by us as a *temporal* series (or order) of events in that object's history. This point is of basic importance but is likely to be forgotten or overlooked, given the over-all idealistic bias of McTaggart's philosophy. In McTaggart's view some similarity between the (illusory) apparent and the real must always exist so as to make specific instances of perceptual error look to be a real possibility in the first instance; in other words (as Nyāya too has been seen to hold), there is always some reason behind the kind of appearance which a real takes on in situations of illusion. Imagination here without doubt plays its part, but it does not run amuck so as to create all the elements making up the illusory content. As McTaggart observes, explaining his postulation of the *C*-series: "For when we consider how an *illusion* of time can come about, it is very difficult to suppose, either that all the elements in the experience are illusory, or that the element of the serial nature is so. And it is by no means so difficult to account for the facts if we suppose that there is an existent *C*-series."[70] "And if there is a *C*-series", McTaggart adds, "it will follow that our experience of the time-series will not be entirely erroneous. Through the *deceptive* form of time, we shall grasp some of the *true* relations of what really exists."[71] These relations, however (says McTaggart), would not be the relation of earlier and later. "The *C*-series will", to quote him again, "include as terms everything which appears to us as in time, and the *C*-series will contain the realities in the same order as the events are ranged in by the relations of earlier and later."[72] Hence the term *phenomenon bene fundatum*.

McTaggart thus seems, I take it, to characterize in two separate ways the status of the objects of universal illusions and those of what are called individual errors or misperceptions. The objects of universal errors (e.g. time, as mentioned above) are unreal through and through, even if they enjoy (by way of 'real' appearance) a kind of dependably stable and systematic relationship with the fundamental reality. In the true sense they too, McTaggart would say, are discrepant with the basically real, but their working relationship with the latter is such that the everyday affair of living is not affected or upset by the so-called error.

The case with individual errors is, however, different. Here the misperception, whether occurring in one person or in a group of persons, tends, until extirpated or corrected, to produce (as said

above) disarrangement and confusion in the life and experience of those who fall victims to it. McTaggart holds, however, that the ground or locus on which a misperceived or illusory character appears is always an actual existent; in other words, appearance always implies reality, and the existence aspect is (in his view) never questionable. (We must not, however, confuse an illusory appearance with such other appearances which too though also *implying* reality imply it in a different way, viz. by belonging to the real object as so many perspectives or manifestations, of which that object is therefore the synthesis. In a true perception, what appears coincides with the real, while in an illusory experience what appears happens to be disparate with that real.) McTaggart would, however, perhaps say that the illusorily perceived object, say a snake or silver, though non-existent in a particular perceptual situation, is not an out of the world object and so not ontologically indeterminable. The illusory object belongs to this very world which is seen but erringly; this world only gets displaced and thus (so to speak) rearranged. Illusions do not, therefore, belong to some larger world of which reality is a 'selection plus an addition'. In a situation of individual perceptual error a *totally* unreal and unfamiliar object can never as such enter the visual field. As we saw in our discussion of the Nyāya theory, one cannot misperceive something *as X* unless one has some acquaintance with *X* in the first instance. And this acquaintance cannot but have been acquired in the past. Analogy with the dream-objects would not hold here. For though it is true that whatever we perceive or misperceive in dreams or waking life is built out of the objects and material of this world, the illusory objects of a waking misperception are from the first 'consistent' objects. The constituent elements (of those objects) and even their form of unity are features of the real world when that world is taken (as it should be) as wide or rich enough: that is, they are not random conglomerates of incompatible material/concepts taken from diverse objects (– as e.g. is the case with a hare's horns or a sky flower –) masquerading as objects in their own right or as denizens of the actual world. In sum, according to McTaggart, the misperceived object (snake) must also be, albeit at a different time and place, a part and parcel of the world. It may be non-existent or absent in an illusory situation and so may be cancelled in a subsequent corrective perception (– which later asserts the content as really to be a rope –), but this non-existence cannot mean its being *unreal* but rather only being *untrue* in a particular space-time. In other words, the illusory nature of an object, discovered as such in a subsequent cognition, cannot lead to its being totally excluded from the system of reality. In

a different situation the (same illusory) snake or silver can become the consistent (and true) object of a valid cognition – something which its absolute unreality would seem utterly to rule out.

Concluding Remarks

In the above we have outlined and discussed at some length three diverse views on the notion of perceptual illusion. While they differ in their respective analyses of the subject as also in their emphases on one or the other problem the phenomenon of illusion raises they appear to agree on a few fundamental points. All of them take the view that the fact of there being error in the world has to be reckoned with and cannot be wished away either by denying its possibility (along with that of knowledge) altogether or by tinkering with the notion of perception itself. They all recognize the possibility of both veridical perception and illusory perception, and thus avow that the perceptual character of an illusion or the perceived character of the object of such an illusion cannot be dismissed or undermined. Veridical perception and erroneous perception certainly differ, but not in respect of their 'cognitive' character (as those like Prabhāraka Mimasakas would like to maintain): they are both equally genuine states of perceptual awareness and both have, as states of certitude, an implicit truth-claim, which claim, even though it is in principle always defeasible, *never* really fails to characterize these states proper. Again, all the three philosophers allow for the appearance-reality distinction so far as individual illusions are concerned, and, furthermore, regard the presence of a real objective support or foundation (*ālambana*) as necessary for an appearance or error to take place. In other words, they agree that when there is an illusory cognition something must exist, even though it may appear as being different from what it is. There also seems to be an agreement that all experience is error-free so far as the reality of the substantive or subject is concerned. This proposition, while it allows the cognitive character of an illusory experience to remain intact, also guards, as McTaggart tries to show (and as Nyāya and K.C. Bhattacharyya would I think readily agree, even if they do not raise the matter explicitly or in the fashion McTaggart does), against absolute scepticism. They further agree as regards the logical corollary of the above proposition, viz. that it is in respect of the character of the object and not that of its existence that our perceptions go awry and that their errant nature is certified by the subsequent cancelling or correcting awareness. There is further unanimity that an error which remains limited to one individual or a

few individuals and which therefore brings disorder or confusion into the experience (and life) of the individual(s) concerned is always in principle capable of being removed or corrected – a consequence which is entailed by the preceding proposition. All the three views, again, share the common conviction, whether explicitly or otherwise, that though it is not totally devoid of truth, a perceptual error, specially in those respects in which it is an error, cannot be accounted for as partial truth and so does not admit of being ideally included or accommodated within a greater or wider truth. Consequently, all the three thinkers reject (– and McTaggart does it explicitly –) or would reject the idea of degrees of reality and truth.[73] A thing, they would say (to paraphrase McTaggart a little), cannot *nearly* be without *quite* being.

This, however, is not all there is to the three views in question. There are matters of importance which a certain view either does not simply deal with or offers thereof an account which collides with or at least differs from that given by the others. While McTaggart draws, in respect of some important features, a radical distinction between what is usually called (by some philosophers) phenomenal truth (or reality) and ultimate or real truth (or reality) and thus unequivocally entertains the idea of universal illusions (as somewhat different in nature and consequence from individual errors), Nyāya only chooses to deal with the issue of individual illusions. In fact, it can even be affirmed, without fear of refutation, that Nyāya rejects in principle the very idea of any radical dichotomy between phenomena and reality at the universal level and so rejects any such thing as universal illusions. The position of K.C. Bhattacharyya on this point is (as I take it) quite clear, even though he does not deal with the question directly in his treatment of error. Bhattacharyya would heartily endorse, as some of his writings contained in the two volumes of his *Studies in Philosophy* tend clearly to show, the McTaggartan rejection of the idea of phenomenal 'reality' as real in some sense, even though the two may disagree in their precise conception of reality or unreality. The latter half of the preceding statement needs this additional remark that (as we mentioned above) when McTaggart talks of appearances at the universal level, he even while regarding them as really unreal, prefers to call them *well-founded appearances* (– in the sense in which Leibniz uses his term *phenomenon bene fundatum* –) and thus postulates between them and the fundamental reality underlying them a certain definite and working relationship – which relationship is incidentally missing in the case of the illusory in individual errors. Whether K.C. Bhattacharyya would go the whole hog with McTaggart

on this issue is a matter of opinion, though my own feeling is that there is no reason why he should not if he too entertains the idea of universal illusions, and if he too regards the world of appearance as a common or inter-personally observable something.

On the question of the exact status of the apparent object in individual illusions, however, McTaggart would side with Nyāya in the sense that even while rejecting the illusory object as non-existent at the time of its appearance he would not banish it from the world of fact altogether, let alone characterize it, in the manner Bhattacharyya does, as neither-existent-nor-non-existent. Thus there seems to be an important agreement between McTaggart's and Nyāya's position on the issue. Indeed, it seems that Bhattacharyya offers no good ground for classing the illusory with the contradictory and the imaginary and calling them *all* 'unreal' in the same breath.

Lastly, it seems that the Nyāya treatment of perceptual error offers a relatively more exhaustive account of the problem in the sense that it quite explicitly calls attention to some of the factors which in its view together constitute the psychological mechanism responsible for the genesis of individual illusions. These factors include, mainly, memory, projection (or superimposition) of the recollected entity (silver or snake) upon the object (shell or rope) with which the sense faculty is actually in contact, and non-awareness of the fact that there is such a projection on the basis of recollection triggered by perception of features common to both the objects, the existent one and the superimposed one. The account may not seem satisfactory in certain respects, and that is not our contention either; but it is significant that Nyāya does realize the importance of this kind of psychological account as an explanation of illusory experiences. To ignore this aspect of the problem is really to understand the story only partially. The psychology of an illusory perception is as important as the logic or metaphysics of it. Indeed the pertinence of this point seems to be well realized by McTaggart in his postulation and elaborate treatment of the '*C*-series' which in his view is the *reality* which is universally misperceived as the time-series. (His subsequent distinction, in certain basic respects, between individual illusions and universal errors is therefore of great relevance.) Again, the Nyāya contention that the apparent content cannot be a wholly unreal and unfamiliar entity is not without significance, even though its overall metaphysical account may seem to leave much to be desired. The imaginary and the contradictory are by definition impossible contents – which an apparent content (specially in the context of individual illusions) never is – and so cannot appear to any cognition (or belief) as

existent: the (misperceived) silver or snake may well be a creature of phantasy but it is not for that reason purely fantastic. Its appearance – and here we quite agree with the Nyāya and the McTaggartan view – implies and has its basis in reality even if the final question as to how it should be metaphysically characterized remains, within the limits set for this essay, an open one. Its absolute non-existence – as some philosophers presume – is a possibility only if one rejects altogether the reality of the world of which it otherwise is in some (though not perhaps further easily determinable) sense a part.

Before I close, I wish to call attention to one particular issue which, in my view, needs careful consideration in any theorizing about error and which I have but only obliquely referred to so far. The very notion of perceptual error in the sense it has been discussed in the present essay raises one very fundamental issue: How can the cognitive object (– silver or snake in our examples above –) to which the illusory perception as revelatory and as a perceiving-*as* refers, retain its objectivity or object-character even in the midst of the rejection of its reality by a falsifying awareness? That, before being corrected, the content of an illusion is taken (and consequently even *asserted*) as a *real* object, is a truism which is accepted almost on all hands. Following correction however the same content seems to *survive as an object* even though it is otherwise found false and so unreal. This objectivity of its is surely a very unusual one. In contrast to a veridical perception where the objectivity and the reality of the content or thing known are found to be *coinciding,* the objectivity of the content cognized in an illusory perception is found to be severed or disjointed from reality. This severance (from reality) is not what normally characterizes 'objects' as we know them. The illusory content is however anything but normal; and since an illusion *is* quite often falsified, this severance cannot but be admitted.

Of course it may be denied and indeed has been denied. The Buddhist idealists (the *Vijñānavādins*) afford one example; the Nyāya school, quite another. The Buddhists hold, as indeed many a Western philosopher too do, that with its rejection in correction the illusory content loses, besides its reality, its objectivity too so that in final terms it gets reduced to nothing but something evidently subjective. In other words, to reconstruct a little, the Buddhists would say that since reality and objectivity are coincident in a veridical cognition, the rejection, in correction, of the one – i.e. the reality-aspect – necessarily involves rejection of the objectivity-aspect too. The falsifying awareness asks them both to pack up and go home, so that what survives the devastation is nothing but the subject (or consciousness:

hence the name *ātmakhyāti*). In this connection sometimes a caveat is entered in the way of implying that while the objectivity-aspect must needs go in the wake of rejection, the reality-side can (after all) be retained and *saved*. But this has terrible consequences. That a content can be real and known too but without being an object (to that knowledge) would make that content only a modality or form of knowledge (or subject). This may not seem to be much harmful in itself: after all it is possible, for all we know, that reality be, even in its knownness, just a mode or form of knowledge or consciousness. However, the paramount question is, whether this is what the evidence of correcting awareness demonstrates, demonstrates, that is, that the illusory silver (or snake) was not an object of the previous (erroneous) cognition but rather a real subjective image or idea. It should not be forgotten that presently we are not so much concerned with the question of describing the character of reality but with the issue of error (which sometimes occurs in our effort to know that reality) whose existence the Buddhists in question do not deny. When in a correcting judgement, which simply cannot be detached from the content presently known or discovered to be false, we say "*This* is not snake but a rope" the *this*-part of the judgement cannot both be asserted as a real existent and rejected as something unreal. And it is indisputable that in the content expressed as "*This* is rope" it (i.e. *this*) *is* asserted as real: in fact, further, it is asserted as being something *different* from the apprehending subject, and this *not only* in the correcting perception but also in an illusory experience. There is thus no way of doing away with the *objectivity-aspect* of the illusory content which in the above example the *this* without doubt expresses.

Let us now briefly note how the Nyāya tries to dispense with the objectivity-aspect of the *rejected* (illusory) content. Nyāya, of course accepts the general verdict that in a true perception the objectivity-aspect and the reality-aspect coincide. In fact, Nyāya's basic insight – which of course it shares with some other Indian philosophers – that no cognition (true or false) can be without an object or content (–"*na cā 'viṣayā kācidupalabdhiḥ*" –) and is therefore basically 'intentional' (to use a Western scholastic term) has much to commend it. And we have also seen how Nyāya, in keeping with its radically realist orientation, *tries* to save reality by that part of its ontology and doctrine of cognition according to which all the elements *a*, *R* and *b* making up the (false) objective complex (*a*-(*R*-*b*)) cognized in a false perception (or cognition) are, taken in themselves, real and therefore part of the actual world. Since, however, it is the unified content *a*-(*R*-*b*) which is cognized (and believed) in an illusory perception and

which (even though for that reason taken to be *real*) comes to be rejected in correction, Nyāya declares this *unity* to be *unreal*. And if it (the unity) is declared unreal, it follows that it cannot be regarded as having been real earlier either (i.e. during the illusion). And once it loses its reality, it forgoes, at least on a certain assumption, its objectivity-aspect too. (This assumption is, with many thinkers, the *basic* postulate of perception – if not of knowledge in general, as some thinkers would further like to suppose.) Add to this the fundamental realistic postulate on which Nyāya takes its stand (see above) and you find the whole thing going topsy-turvy. For on the realistic postulate of Nyāya, normally a cognition cannot have for its object something which is not real at the same time. (In fact, as indicated above, this follows from a certain view of the basic postulate of perception itself mentioned above.) That objectivity should coincide with reality in a veridical perception, is, to Nyāya, not just a matter of accident: it is in-built in the scheme of things. Given that (metaphysical) scheme, the reality of 'something' follows from the fact that that something becomes an object of a perceptual cognition. Nyāya then finds itself on the horns of a dilemma: either it says that the illusory content *a*-(*R*-*b*) (or 'this is silver') is, though unreal, a cognitive object, and thus in the process compromises its realism; or it gives up its basic faith that objectivity and reality must coincide, and thereby says good-bye even to the objectivity-aspect of the rejected (illusory) content. Nyāya does not (– in fact it cannot –) deny that the (rejected) content *was* felt as an object; and so, to that extent, it does not, unlike the Buddhist idealists, declare in to be completely subjective. After all, it seems to ask itself, how can a unity formed of elements which are each of them real, be a totally subjective affair? Yet another alternative would be to deny, like the Prābhākara realists, the very cognitive character of the false perception. The choice for Nyāya is indeed difficult: hence the dilemma and the despair in which it finds itself, however brave a posture it may otherwise try to put up by seeking (uneasy) rapproachments here and there.

A brief reference to the Prābhākara position becomes inevitable in the present context. It is a basic article of faith with the Prābhākaras that objectivity necessarily coincides with reality in a cognition, specially in a perceptual one. Their perception of their own variant of 'robust' realism tells them that an object in any cognitive situation is nothing but a real revealed by that cognition and that therefore (as they conclude), objectivity is nothing more than the property of being revealed (or known) in a certain way. (As we know, it is a basic doctrine with many Indian philosophers that knowledge is revelatory

(*prakāśaka*) in character.) And since this property, according to them, must belong to a real that is so revealed (or known) in an ordinary perception an objectivity as taken apart from reality is (in their view) a pure chimera. Now in correction (as we noted above), while the reality of the (mis-)perceived object comes to be rejected, its objectivity *seems* to persist. This anomalous situation seems to the Prābhākara to constitute a real threat to his brand of realism. So what he does is to deny the cognitive character itself to the illusory perception and (consequently) to the illusory content. Since a cognized object must be real, the object rejected as unreal cannot be regarded as having been cognized at all, all appearances to the contrary notwithstanding. Consequently, the Prābhākara ends up by denying the possibility of perceptual error and with that any appearance-reality distinction altogether. And if there is no perceptual error, there cannot be any such thing as an illusorily perceived content or object. Consequently, to repeat, there can be no such thing as an objectivity existing in dissociation from reality. The Prābhākara surely tries to find a way out of the impasse but that does not concern us here, for that (so-called) solution is not essentially of an epistemic or perceptual nature.

K.C. Bhattacharyya's exact position on the issue is not easy to determine, even though I have myself suggested above in my discussion of his view that his conclusion that the content rejected in correction was *neither fact nor absolute nought*, even while recognizing, though obscurely, the said distinction, does not seem exactly to provide for it in his metaphysics of error. I would, however, prefer to wait for a more authoritative interpretation from the better-informed Bhattacharyya scholars than say or attribute things in a haste which may seem unwarranted.

I think some further light can be thrown on the problem we have raised if we consider and put together – and this may involve a bit of reconstruction too – some of McTaggart's views on the nature of perception and belief (perceptual or otherwise) and their relation to reality. I am, however, far from suggesting that what is going to be said in the following can *all* be directly or explicitly attributed to McTaggart. I am here only trying to pick up the relevant clues where I have found them offered and then to see whether something plausible can be made out of them. McTaggart starts (though surely he is not the first one to do so) by preserving what he thinks to be the basic intentional character of a perception, by defining it as an *awareness* of a substance (a thing or object, or in Nyāya's terminology, a *dharmin*) as having characteristics.[74] In McTaggart's view, if

perception did not give us knowledge about the characteristics of substances we will have no means of knowing what characteristics a particular substance possesses other than those which we know a *priori* to belong to all substances. Perception alone therefore can give us empirical knowledge. In other words, perception on McTaggart's view is essentially involved with reality which latter primarily consists of substances – what are called 'things' or 'objects' by certain other philosophers (and this reality according to McTaggart includes oneself or one's experiences)[75] – and thus implies a *direct* cognitive relation (speaking loosely) to the object. Now this clearly means – as indeed it means in Nyāya too – that a perception's intentionality is primarily *cognitive;* or that a perception *aims* at knowing reality in its character or features. (It is to be marked that unlike e.g. Husserl McTaggart does not seek to suspend, through some such device as phenomenological epoche or even otherwise, any judgement on the reality or otherwise of the world. Such search for 'indubitable' knowledge McTaggart would regard as vain and inconsequential.) The question, why the intentionality of perceptual consciousness is of this kind, McTaggart would regard as unanswerable. He would say, in common with Husserl, that we can only take notice of this characteristic of intentionality and then proceed to investigate the matter in further detail. (In a similar vein McTaggart would declare the Heideggerian type of question: why is there something rather than nothing, as illegitimate so far as philosophical enquiry is concerned.) Now, if the (intention or) objective of a perception vis-a-vis the world is always cognitive, is it not the case, McTaggart goes on to ask, that every perception is (to use his own words) 'self-evidently' correct?[76] But, if all perception be self-evidently correct, where, one may wonder, is left the room for erroneous perception? And there is certainly error, as McTaggart himself admits, and that too (as he says) not only in judgements based on perception but in perception itself.

Now, without going into a detailed exegesis I must at once state that what McTaggart really means by the above doctrine is *not* that it is a *self-evident truth* that all perception is true; that would involve him in a blatant self-contradiction, for, as we noted above, he not only admits the reality of error, but actually holds that *all* our (present) perception of objects as being in time is fundamentally erroneous. A slight rephrasing of his language, however, reveals beyond a shred of doubt that what McTaggart really means is that perception has of its nature a "presumptive" correctness.[77] In other words, every perception (or perceptual belief) *presumes* itself to be true and thus has an inbuilt truth-*claim*. This presumption is surely always capable of being

shown to be false in some subsequent experience and (so) rejected, but it stands so long it is not *actually* falsified. Question this self-evident presumption of perception and you are at once confronted with some very major consequences. (1) Were every perceptual error to discover itself as such (i.e. as error) at the very moment of its occurrence there would never be any error at all. (And as we have seen above, there certainly is error.) (2) In the second place, if all perception were to disbelieve itself right from the beginning, it would just not get started and so all optimism about the knowability of the world (which optimism is, I think, not misplaced, given the kind of beings we are) would founder on the rocks. And this, in turn, would land us in a scepticism which would be total and from which there would be no exist. It is this truth-claim which, as we noted in our discussion above, is inbuilt also into the structure of every belief *qua* belief (perceptual or otherwise) which asserts something about the existent – which claim, if true, makes that belief a piece of knowledge, and if untrue, gives the lie to its claim, though without affecting at all its *belief-character*. (Cf. K.C. Bhattacharyya's notion of belief and 'fact' referred to above. Cf. also the great Nyāya thinker Udayana's insight that we have an innate tendency to desire and seek knowledge so that even a false cognition is originally *taken* by us to be a case of true cognition: "*pramāyaḥ prāyikataya tadvāsanāyāḥ samuṭkaṭatvād apramā 'pi prametyeva gṛhyate.*"[78])

McTaggart now takes the crucial step. If all beliefs (– and this includes perceptual beliefs –) claim to be true with regard to what they assert then all beliefs necessarily refer to what is asserted. And this reference, of course, implies a transcendence, a going beyond such that it is often construed as a *real* relation existing between a belief and the object (or fact) to which that belief refers. Now, since a real relation necessarily involves the *reality* of the two terms – the belief or perception and the object (or the perceptum) to which it refers – and since in the case of false beliefs or perceptions the objects (or facts) to which they refer are non-existent or unreal, it is concluded (and this specially is supposed to hold in respect of perceptions) that either there are no false perceptions or beliefs (cf. Prābhākaras or philosophers like Protagoras) – and this implies that every perception or belief is by definition true – or that there are non-existent objects or facts to which those false perceptions refer, if their existence *as* false perceptions is not denied. And both these alternatives appear problematic if not downright absurd, so that one is willy-nilly led into affirming some kind of solipsism or scepticism.

McTaggart looks the problem firmly in the eye and draws, while

formulating his notion of belief, a very important distinction, the distinction namely between *actually referring* and *professing to refer*. Thus, while every belief (according to him) *professes* to refer to some fact or object (and more specifically to correspond to it in a certain way), it is only true beliefs which *really* refer to some fact or object.[79] In case of false beliefs, then, this 'profession' of reference comes to grief.

Now, I have no doubt in my mind that this characteristic of 'professing to refer' which, according to McTaggart, every belief has, belongs equally, in fact with greater force and fullness, to perception (whether veridical or non-veridical), for it is, above all, to perceptual consciousness that the real appears to present itself directly and immediately (– and 'immediately' need not here mean 'infallibly'–)so that one can justifiably talk of the presented content as 'given', given, i.e. in its characteristics and structures. Below perception there is no *felt* level against which the contents of perception can be checked. *The contents of perception are answerable to perception alone.* And perception, as we have seen, has a presumptive correctness about it. (As McTaggart elsewhere well says: "Where there is no claim to give knowledge, there is no error."[80] It is to be marked that at a different place McTaggart calls the belief based on one's perception an 'ultimate' empirical belief.[81]) In case of veridical perception this 'profession to refer' to some object (or fact) is crowned with success, while the converse happens in the case of false perceptions. In no case, however, does a perception (or belief) cease to possess this basic character. Indeed, McTaggart goes on to explain that in saying that every belief *qua* belief professes to refer to some object or fact, what he means is that "every-belief professes to be true, or, in other words, that to believe *anything* means to believe it to be true."[82] But can something profess to do something unless it intends or aims to do something? Can something presume itself to be true unless it aims to be true?

Now, I have also no doubt in my mind that it is this basic intention and the (consequent) 'profession' of reference which as a *subject* (or *subjectivity*) enables a perceptual act to posit as an *object*, and so to bestow objectivity upon, what it happens or seeks to know; for it is only by being an *object* that something sought to be known can claim to be different from the *subjective* act of knowing. And there is no doubt that whatever is perceived, whether truly or falsely, seeks to break free and so to *proclaim* its independence from us, the knowing subjects. The subject-object distinction obtains right from the moment the cognitive consciousness begins to take shape, so to say;

and the perceptual act or perceptual life is not therefore, at bottom, 'anonymous' as Merleau-Ponty (or Husserl) would like to have us believe. It is necessary to remember here that what we posit as object in perceptual experience, is only that character or aspect of the real upon which our gaze happens to fall. In other words, it is only the *apparent* content which is constituted in its objectivity by the percipient subject. (If, for example, I perceive a pot but do not notice its blue-character, this blue-ness can *not* be considered as having been posited as an object even though it is otherwise a part of the thing called pot, which *is* posited (since perceived) as an object.) In one word, it is the real cognitive encounter of mind and reality which creates the conditions in which the objectivity (-aspect) comes to be constituted as something distinct from the (concerned) subjective act of knowing. In a veridical perception, the objectivity-aspect and the reality-aspect coincide. In a situation of error on the other hand, the objectivity-aspect of the thing perceived, once it is constituted as such in the perceptual act, survives, along with the perceptual character of the conscious act, rejection of its reality-aspect. Even if exposed as to its falsity, the apparent content does not lose its objectivity-aspect so long as we continue to regard the act of consciousness concerned as a perceptual act. It needs to be remembered, however, that the truth-claim or presumption which (in McTaggart's view) characterizes every perception *qua* perception is not *as naturally available* to imagination and thought, for they are felt from the beginning, in whatever measure, as free and manipulative (since creative). Perception, on the other hand, *feels* itself bound and unfree (in the sense of finding itself *unable*) to 'create' or 'manipulate' the character of the given, even if it actually does so on occasions, as e.g. in situations of error or illusion.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Bimal Krishna Matilal, *Perception: An Essay on Classical Indian Theories of Knowledge* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), p. 180.

2. Uddyotakara, *Nyāya-vārttika* (under *Nyāya-sūtra* 1.1.1), in Gotama's *Nyāya-darśana*, ed. with Vātsyāyana's *Nyāya-bhāṣya*, Uddyotakara's *Nyāya-vārttika*, Vācaspati's *Tātparya-ṭīkā*, and Udayana's *Pariśuddhi* by Anantalal Thakur, vol. I (Mithila, 1967), Ch. I (p. 7). Cf. Udayana in *Pariśuddhi* (Thakur's edn.), p. 93: "*Aprāmāṇyasyā 'pi sāmānya-paricchedakatvam*".

3. "*Rajatavijñānam api purovarti śuklabhāsvaram sad dravyam paricchinatti, śuktikājñānam api.*" *Tātparya-ṭīka* (under *Nyāya-sūtra* 1.1.1), in Thakur's edn., p. 28.

4. Matilal, *Perception*, p. 180.

5. Gaṅgeśa, *Tattva-cintāmaṇi*, with the commentary of Mathurā Nātha Tarkavāgīśa,

Pratyakṣa Khaṇḍa, vol. I (Ist Calcutta edn., 1897; reprint, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1974), p. 401.

6. Vācaspati, *Tātparya-ṭīka* (under *Nyāya-sūtra* 1.1.1), in Thakur's edn., p. 160. In fact I strongly suspect that even Saṃkara's definition of *adhyāsa* in the Introduction (*Adhyāsa-bhāṣya*) to his commentary on Bādarāyana's *Brahmasūtras* as "*smṛtirūpaḥ paratra pūrvadṛṣṭāvabhāsaḥ*" preserves some of the essentials of the idea of *anyathā-khyāti*. All the important ingredients of the theory as advocated by Nyāya – ground or locus, appearance of something already experienced, and memory – are contained in Saṃkara's definition, whatever view his commentators might take. The same holds for e.g. Rāmānuja's definition of illusion given in his *Śrī-bhāṣya* (comm. on *Brahmasūtra* 1.1.1): "*anyasya anyathāvabhāsaḥ*" . The Jains too accept the theory and call it (like Nyāya) *viparīta-khyāti*. So does Yoga. Indeed, Veṅkaṭanātha, a follower of Rāmānuja, avers that *anyathā-khyāti* as a minimum proposition must be accepted by all the parties in the dispute so that a semblance of a reasoned explanation can be found for the facts of perceptual illusion, its conative corollary and the ultimate correction. "*Ātmakhyātyadi-vādeṣu anyathātvam avāritam / bhrama-pravṛtti-bādhāderanyathā na hi sambhavaḥ//*" Venkatanātha, *Nyāya-pariśuddhi*, tr. into Hindi by Shivaprasad Dvivedin (Varanasi: Chowkhamba Vidyabhavana, 1992), Adhyāya 1, Āhnika 1, p. 22.

7. Viśvanātha, *Nyāya-muktāvalī* in *Kārikāvall*, with the commentaries *Muktāvalī*, *Dinakarī* and *Rāmarudrī*, ed. A. N. Jere (Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, reprint, 1982), pp. 59-60 (under *kārikā* 2).

8. "*Sarvatra hi rajatodakādivibhrameṣu śukti-rajatayorvā maru-marīci-salilayorvā sārūpyameva nimittam pratīmaḥ. na hi jātu rūpam rasādiṣu hastinam vā maṣakādiṣu āropyanti.*" Vācaspati, *Tātparya-ṭīka* (under Nyāya sūtra 1.1.2), in Thakur's edn., p. 158.

9. "*Yatra bhramas tatra avaśyam kathaṃcit sārūpyamiti.*" *Ibid.* (under *Nyāya-sūtra* 1.1.2), p. 159. In this connection an interesting question is raised (from the opponent's side) by Vācaspati: since it can be said that every thing in the world is like everything else in one respect or another (for, can't any two things be said to be alike at least in the sense that they are both existent?), what kind or degree of similarity does the Naiyyāyika think to be neccessary for perceptual ascription to take place. Vācaspati replies that there cannot be any stipulation or law (*niyama*) in this regard; it may vary from observer to observer, object to object or situation to situation. See *ibid.*, pp. 158 ff.

For Udayana's discussion of these and other examples such as 'bent stick' in water, see his *Pariśuddhi* (under *Nyāya-sūtra* 1.1.2), in Thakur's edn., pp. 174-76.

10. Jayanta Bhaṭṭa, *Nyāya-mañjarī*, Part I, ed. Gauri Nath Sastri (Varanasi, 1982), Āhnika 2, pp. 135-36; Āhnika 3, pp. 261-62. (Hereafter cited as *NM*)

11. "*Tasyendriyārthajanyatvam siddham tadbhāva-bhāvataḥ/ na hyanunmīlitākṣasya marau salila-vedanam//*" *Ibid.*, Āhnika 2, p. 135. Also: "*Na ca ekānta asato dṛṣṭā, jñānotpādana-yogyatā.*" *Ibid.*, p. 137.

12. *NM*, Āhnika 3, p. 262. Also see pp. 261-62 for further details. Incidentally, Jayanta offers his own interpretation of the term *bādha* (correction or cancellation) as in keeping with his understanding of *anyathā-khyāti*. *Bādha*, according to him, can mean only *viṣāyāpahāra* (taking away of the object) and not *sahānavasthāna* (non-co-existence), *saṃskāroccheda* (removal of the impressions) and the like: "*Viṣayāpahāras tavad astu bādhaḥ, viṣayasya ca na pratibhātatvam apahniyate kintu pratibhātasya asattvam khyāpyate ity apahārārthaḥ.*" *Ibid.*, p. 262.

13. Matilal, *Perception*, p. 38.

14. For D.M. Armstrong's rejection of the perceptual character of 'sensory illusion', see his *Perception and the Physical World* (London : Routledge, 1961), Chapter 7. The analysis that Armstrong offers of 'sensory illusion' is in terms of false belief or inclination to believe falsely that we are (veridically) perceiving some physical objects or states of affairs. And so he concludes: "When (or in so for as) we suffer from sensory illusion there is *no* object at all, physical or non-physical, which we are perceiving in any possible sense of the word 'perceiving'. There is simply the (completely) false belief that ordinary perceiving is taking place". *Ibid.*, p. 83. The reader will notice that in the above Armstrong even rejects the idea that in illusion some object exists with which our sense-faculty is in contact, even if we may be representing it incorrectly.

15. Jayanta: "*anubhūtatayā hi na rajatam atra prakāśate, kintv anubhūyamānatayā*". *NM*, Āhnika 3, p. 257.

16. B.K. Matilal, *Perception*, p. 206.

17. Viśvanātha, *Kārikāvalī*, kārikā 65 and the commentary *Muktāvalī* thereon.

18. *NM*, Āhnika 2, p. 161: "*purvotpannacākṣuṣavijñānaviśeṣaṇasya bāhyasya vastuno mano grāhakam ... śabdādyupāyāntaraviratau ca jāyamānamanavadyam jñānam mānasam pratyakṣam bhavati, surabhi ketakīkusumam, madhurā śarkareti jñānavat.*"

19. Some Navya-Naiyāyikas call shell-silver an *upanītabhāna* object which is recognized through the simultaneous operation of the normal and the supra-normal connections. They add the rider, however, that the supra-normal connection has to function in cooperation with the sense-faculty in question. "*Etat tritaya-sannikarṣaḥ ṣaḍindriya-sahakāri iti sampradāya-vidaḥ, manasa eva sahakāri iti śula-pāṇimiśrāḥ.*" Laugākṣi Bhāskara, *Tarka-kaumudī*, trans. as *The Moon-Light of Logic*, by P.I. Gradinarov (Delhi: Ajanta Books International, 1991), para 28 (p. 10). Thus Śūlapāṇi and his followers differ and attribute it to the mind.

20. "*Api ca tvanmate bharame' pi yasminnaṃśe bhramatvam tad rajatatvādikam viśeṣaṇam sadeva. vaiśiṣṭyam tu asadapi asat-khyātibhītasya tava mate na bhāti.*" *Tarka-Tāṇḍava* of Vyāsatīrtha, with the commentary, vol. I, *Nyāya-dīpa* of Rāghavendratīrtha, ed. by Śrinivāsachar and Vidwan V. Madhwachar (Mysore: University of Mysore, 1932), p. 170. In the passage '*tvat*' refers to Gaṅgeśa. See further pp. 171f.

21. See *Gādādhāri* (of Gadādhara Bhattācharyya) on Pratyakṣa Khaṇḍa of Gaṅgeśa's *Tattva-cintāmaṇi*, as referred to in Nani Lal Sen, A *Critique of the Theories of Viparyaya* (Rabindra Bharati: 1962), p. 192.

22. Udayana, *Pariśuddhi* (under *Nyāya-sūtra* 1.1.1), in Thakur' s edn., p. 81. When translated the line reads: All cognition remains unerring in respect of the substantive.

23. Krishna Chandra Bhattacharyya, *Studies in Philosophy*, 2 vols., ed. by Gopinath Bhattacharyya (Calcutta: Progressive Publishers, 1958), II, p. 169. My italics (Hereafter cited as *SP*).

24. This clarification K.C. Bhattacharyya gives in reply to Rasvihari Das' criticism of his definition. Das' criticism appeared in *Philosophical Quarterly* 7, 1932, pp. 387-96. Bhattacharyya's rejoinder appeared in the same number of that journal, pp. 397- 404. I owe this information to George Bosworth Burch (ed.) (with an Introduction), *Search for the Absolute in Neo-Vedānta: K.C. Bhattacharyya* (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1976), pp. 16-17.

25. *SP*, II, p. 174.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 171.

27. *Ibid.* My italics.

28. Thus, according to Descartes, 'E]rror is not a pure negation, but rather a privation or lack of some knowledge which somehow should be in [us]'. Rene Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy,* with Selections from the Objections and Replies, trans, by John Cottingham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), Fourth Meditation, p. 38. Descartes goes on to affirm that it is privation 'which is all that the essential definition of falsity and wrong consists of' . *Ibid.*, p. 42.

29. Cf. F. H. Bradley's talk on degrees of truth (and degrees of error) and degrees of reality.

30. For a reasoned account of truth and error along the idealist lines see, for example, F.H. Bradley, *Essays on Truth and Reality,* first edition 1914 (reprint: Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950), Chapter IX ('On Appearance, Error, and Contradiction'). Also see Bradley's *Appearance and Reality,* second edition with an appendix (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1897), Chapter XVI.

31. The existence of disbelief as a fact is proved by introspection.

32. *SP,* II, p. 198.

33. The false is what is corrected or disbelieved. Properly, "disbelief" should mean correction or rejection of what was believed (*SP,* II, p. 195) and not of what is merely suggested or imagined. This latter is only belief in non-existence.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 183.

35. *Ibid.*

36. *Ibid.*, p. 187.

37. *Ibid.*, p. 190.

38. It may be noted that 'reflective consciousness' as used here does not mean the same as the usual 'reflection' or 'self-consciousness' of the kind 'I am aware of such and such state', nor does it mean awareness of oneself as the subject of experiences.

39. *SP,* II, p. 197.

40. *Ibid.*, p. 195.

41. *Ibid.*, p. 197.

42. *Ibid.*, p. 172.

43. *Ibid.*, p. 195.

44. This requirement, the reader will notice, is duly met by the imaginary and the contradictory too. When we refer to the entity golden mountain as an example of the imaginary or to square circle as an example of the contradictory, we already disbelieve them and regard them as unreal; the question regarding their existence seems settled for us from the first, and any suggestion to the contrary seems a mere pretention.

45. Thus, F.H. Bradley says the following on the unreality of the contradictory: 'The self-contradictory, I suppose most of us would agree, is unreal. And yet since we discuss it, it is clear that the self-contradictory in some sense exists, *Essays in Truth and Reality,* op. cit., p. 269. This doctrine, variants apart, goes as far back as Parmenides: 'What can be said and thought of must necessarily exist.' Quoted by Jaakko Hintikka in his *Knowledge and the Known* (Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel, 1974), p. 23. We may briefly respond to such a doctrine by saying that thinking need not just be an encounter between mind and reality – though surely it is minimally that too – but is also a process of evaluating the metaphysical status of the objects or contents of thought.

46. *SP,* II, p. 172.

47. J. McT.E. McTaggart, *The Nature of Existence,* vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1921); vol. 2, ed. by C.D. Broad (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 1927). The reference here is to vol. 2, Secs. 508, 511. (Hereafter cited as *NE*)

While referring to *NE*, I have mentioned, for the reader's convenience, section numbers along with the volume numbers. I may mention that the section numbers of both the volumes of *NE* are continuous, even though page numbers are not. The *first* volume ends at Section 293.

48. *NE*, II, Sec. 509. My italics. See also Sec. 858. Wittgenstein here would be one with McTaggart: "No proposition can make a statement about itself." Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. by D.F. Pears & B.F. McGuinness (London & Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961), 3.332 (p. 16). Elsewhere McTaggart has tried to show why propositions cannot be about themselves though they can *apply* to themselves. See his "Propositions as applicable to Themselves", in his *Philosophical Studies*, ed. with an Introduction by S.V. Keeling (London : Edward Arnold & Co., 1934).

49. *NE, II,* Sec. 510. On the question of the existence of error, one can here also with advantage refer to the Advaitin Citsukha's response to the philosophic view which discounts the possibility of erroneous cognition altogether. Apart from drawing attention to a number of causes and conditions which in his view can adequately account (for the genesis of) error, Citsukha poses the following question to the opponent: What will you (the opponent) say about the cognition (or proposition) of the form, 'There is erroneous cognition'. If this awareness (or proposition) is accepted as true, then you are conceding the existence of error, for this cognition to be true there has to be an erroneous cognition somewhere. But if you declare it as invalid, then your proposition itself becomes erroneous. "*Kiṃ cāyathārthapratyayo 'stītyasya pratyayasya yathārthatve tasya sālamba natvayā kaścid api ayathārthapratyayo 'bhyupeya*". Citsukhācārya, *Tattva-pradīpikā*, trans. into Hindi by Swami Hanumān Dass Ṣatsastri (Varanasi: Chaukhambha Sanskrit Sansthan, 1987), Chapter 1, p. 164. Just note the remarkable similarity of this argument with that of McTaggart's presented above.

50. *NE*, II, Sec. 510. See also Sec. 857 where McTaggart attempts to show that if error is an evil, this evil cannot be got rid of by denying the reality of error. The very appearance of the error, adds McTaggart, itself constitutes real error.

51. *Ibid.*, Sec. 510. See also Sec. 511.

52. *Ibid.*, Sec. 520.

53. *Ibid.*

54. A.J. Ayer, *Metaphysics and Common Sense* (Macmillan, 1967), pp. 65-67.

55. *NE*, II, Sec. 520.

56. *Ibid.* My italics.

57. *Ibid.*, Sec. 302. In my opinion, even the qualificative cognition of Nyāya (and a false cognition too is a qualificative one) cannot be regarded as necessarily judgemental, so that *cognizing that* cannot in Nyāya be a paradigm of knowledge.

58. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (1929; reprint, London: Macmillan, 1973), p. 297. All italics mine. A similar doctrine Russell expresses as follows: "There are in fact no illusions of the senses, but only mistakes in interpreting sensational data as signs of things other than themselves. Or, to speak more exactly, there is no evidence that there are illusions of the senses." Bertrand Russell, *Human Knowledge: Its Scope and Limits* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1948), p. 182. In fact, the doctrine goes back very far. It would be of profit to reproduce here a few lines from the conversation between Socrates and Theaetatus.

Socr. "We have advanced so far as to see that we must not look for it in sense-perception at all, but in what goes on when the mind is occupied with thing by itself,

whatever name you give to that."

Theaet. "Well, Socrates, the name for that, I imagine, is making judgements."

Socr. "You are right my friend ... Tell us once more what knowledge is."

Theaet. "I cannot say it is judgements as a whole, because there is false judgement: but perhaps true judgement is knowledge."

See Plato, *Theaetetus* as included in *Plato' s Theory of Knowledge,* trans. with a running commentary by F.M. Cornford (1935; reprint, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973), 187A. 187B.

59. *NE,* II, Sec. 301.

60. *Ibid.*

61. Madhva's commentary *Mitabhāṣinī* (as included with other commentaries) in Śivāditya's *Sapta-padārthī,* ed. Amarendra Mohan Tarkatirtha and Narendra Chandra Vedāntatirtha (Calcutta: Metropolitan Printing and Publishing House, 1934), sūtra 29 (p. 33).

62. *NE,* II, Secs. 513, 517.

63. *Ibid.* See 517.

64. *Ibid.*, Sec. 516. This doctrine of McTaggart's must not be confused with F.H. Bradley's doctrine of degrees of truth and degrees of error to which we have already alluded in note 30.

65. *Ibid.*, Sec. 517.

66. For McTaggart's rejection of the reality of Time see *Ibid.*, Chapter XXXIII which contains perhaps the greatest argument against time in the history of philosophy.

67. See G.W. Leibniz, *New Essays on Human Understanding,* trans. & ed. by Peter Remnant and Jonathan Bennett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981) pp. 146, 219, where Leibniz tries to explain the idea through the rainbow example. Leibniz therefore distinguishes 'well-founded appearances' from such phenomena as are presented to us in dreams, hallucinations, etc.

68. For McTaggart's rejection of the reality of matter, see *NE,* II, Chapter XXXIV, esp. Secs. 352-363, which too is well-known for its argument.

69. For MaTaggart's account of the *C*-series and various issues relating to it, see *Ibid.*, Chapters XLV to L.

70. *Ibid.*, Sec. 347. My italics.

71. *Ibid.*, Sec. 349. My italics.

72. *Ibid.*, Sec. 351.

73. See *NE,* I, Sec. 4.

74. *Ibid.*, Sec. 44; *ibid*; II, Secs. 300-301. For a detailed exposition of McTaggart's theory of Perception, see my "McTaggart on Perception", *Indian Philosophical Quarterly,* vol. XIX, No. 3, July 1992, pp. 207-253.

75. How erroneous one can be in one's reading of a philosopher is instanced by Vinit Haksar, who in his *Indivisible Selves and Moral Practice* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 242, attributes to McTaggart the view that the self is a property of the substance. I may mention that not only McTaggart nowhere takes this view but rather regards both the self and its experiences as substances. See e.g. *NE,* II, Chapter XXXVI and *passim.*

76. *NE,* II, Sec. 513; cf. also Sec. 514.

77. This phrase I borrow from P.T. Geach, *Truth, Love and Immortality : An Introduction to McTaggart's Philosophy* (Berkeley & Los Angeles : University of California Press, 1979), p. 140.

78. Udayana, *Pariśuddhi* (under *Nyāya-sūtra* 1.1.1), in Thakur's edn., p. 79.
79. *NE*, I, Sec. 20.
80. *Ibid.*, II, Sec. 422.
81. *Ibid.*, I, Sec. 46. McTaggart calls such a belief as 'ultimate', for though it is based on something, i.e. one' s perception, it is not based on any other belief.
82. *Ibid.* Sec. 20. Compare M. Merleau-Ponty, *The Primacy of Perception*, ed. James Edie (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964), p. 25: "[A]lthough we are always immersed in the world and perceptually present to it, yet the idea of truth itself is an *ideal* implied in the least perception." My italics.