

AS

WILEY

---

An Indian Doctrine of Perception and Error

Author(s): F. W. Thomas

Source: *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, New Series, Vol. 22 (1921 - 1922), pp. 23-42

Published by: [Wiley](#) on behalf of [The Aristotelian Society](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4544012>

Accessed: 07/08/2013 21:18

---

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at  
<http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



*The Aristotelian Society* and *Wiley* are collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

*Meeting of the Aristotelian Society at 21, Gower Street, W.C. 1,  
November 21st, 1921, at 8 P.M.*

## II.—AN INDIAN DOCTRINE OF PERCEPTION AND ERROR.

*By F. W. THOMAS.*

### § 1. *Prefatory.*

IT seems advisable to preface the discussion of the matter which I have in view with a short characterization of the system in which it arises. It is known as the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika system, a combination of two originally independent schools, of which the one, the Nyāya, contributed the logical doctrines, and the other mainly ontological and physical theories. It may be described as scholastic, pluralist, realist and atomistic. It affirms a plurality of souls, which are all omnipresent and everlasting, a material world constructed of atoms, differing in kind through what is called speciality or ultimate differentia (*viśeṣa*), real objects composed of these atoms, and a real time and space. It admits a deity, and as regards transmigration of souls, liberation by knowledge and so forth it is in agreement with the general Indian views.

The expositions usually commence with a list of categories, or classes of entities, of which seven are recognized, namely, substance, quality, action, universality, speciality, inherence and negation. The history of this classification is not known; the categories are not in any way deduced, and other possible categories, such as potency and similarity, are discussed: it is sometimes admitted that the list is indefinite and partly optional. The first six of the seven are qualified as positive. The first three are credited with "existence" (*sattā*), which is described as the *summum genus*. The recognition of a highest genus "existence" (denied by Aristotle) hardly calls for

D

explanation; but attention may be drawn to the manner in which it appears in the system. By some it was held that "existence" does not differ from "positivity" and therefore should include the universals: accordingly they deny it as a genus. That, however, was not the orthodox view. An argument was drawn to the effect that "existence" is required to account for loss of existence: that in virtue of which substances, qualities and actions can cease to be is "existence." An attempt is made to show that this is not incompatible with the recognition of eternal "existents," such as atoms, time, space and souls; in fact the Indian logician argues that, whereas existence is something occurring in both eternal and non-eternal, the possibility of the latter occurrence is something which qualifies it even in the former. This is consonant with his usual procedure in defining genera; but in the case of "existence" he plainly has the special object of distinguishing *physical* existence.

The epistemology deals first with "truth" (*pramā*), the subject of various definitions, which all describe it as an experience: we might therefore call it knowledge. The means to truth (*pramānas*) are most commonly considered to be four in number, namely perception, inference, analogy and communication, of which, however, the last two are admitted to be dependent upon the second. The property of being means to truth is their validity (*prāmānya*), which term is also applied to individual true cognitions. All four are distinguished, as being "experience" (*anubhava*), from memory.

### § 2. Perception.

According to the old definition perception was "cognition arising from contact of sense-organ and thing, inexpressible and unerring, consisting of affirmation." In order however to include "God's perception," and also for other reasons, preference was subsequently given to a definition in the form "cognition not instrumented by cognition"; and it was

explained that inference, analogy and communication are excluded as being instrumented by cognitions of subsumption, similarity and meaning respectively. If we inquire why a definition based upon an enumeration of the sense-organs is not preferred, the reason, apart from the case of "God's perception," will be that the definitions of the sense-organs are made to depend upon that of perception.

The sense-organs are the five usually recognized, namely eye, ear, skin, tongue, nose, and also a sixth, which is called the mind-organ (*manas*). What is the purport of this addition? In the first place, it was held necessary to posit an organ which should report occurrences in the soul, such as desires, feelings and so on, *i.e.*, should account for our awareness of these, since plainly they are cognized. It was quite in accordance with the system, which rejects "self-luminosity," to bring cognitions also under this rubric. As a result, we have three kinds of procedures in the soul, namely cognitions, desires and feelings, which are brought to consciousness by a single organ. Consciousness, however, is not the best word to be used in this connexion. For plainly the idea is in exact correspondence with that which Professor Ward expresses by the term "attention." Some philosophers explained the varying area of attention by a power of contraction and expansion in this mind-organ. But the orthodox view regards the organ as atomic. Its second function was to account for the fact that, while all the senses are in contact with the world, we attend to them severally.

As regards the objects apprehended by the exterior senses, we may cite a brief statement from a manual,\* as follows:—

"The field of smell is odour, also odourness and so forth.

"Similarly savour [is the field] of the tongue, and sound of the ear.

---

\* *Siddhānta-muktāvalī*, 53-7.

“The field of the eye is appreciable colour. Substances possessing the same, severalty and number, disjunction and conjunction, priority and posteriority, viscidty, fluidity and size, action and genus in appropriate occurrence, inherence under the same condition the eye apprehends through connexion with light and appreciable colour.

“Substance having appreciable touch and appreciable touch itself are the field of the skin ; also what is suitable for being seen, except colour. Here also colour is the cause of perception of substance.”

The gist of this is that smell and taste reveal only qualities and their genera, whereas sight and touch reveal also substance, action and so forth. Accordingly we should understand that, when we taste a thing, there is a combination of two senses, taste and touch : an apparently reasonable view.

What may be the correct doctrine as regards seeing substances, *i.e.*, things, through connexion with light and colour, I am not prepared to state. But at any rate it is a *prima facie* experience that we see not only colour, but also extension, and that may be enough ; moreover, a joint prerogative of sight and touch over the other senses is in this respect, I believe, conceded. The curious doctrine that colour is cause of the tactual perception of substance is one which we might be shy of mentioning. It was due to a desire for a single cause of such perception, and was connected with a view that air is known not by perception, but by inference. We need hardly mention that it is as cause and not as object of perception generally that “colour” was selected by these realists. The doctrine was criticized and rejected by the “moderns.”

We will not go into the physical explanations of vision, or what in the case of sight is understood by “conjunction with the eye and light,” or what is stated in this connexion as to action at a distance. Sufficient has been said to show that in their treatment of perception these Indian philosophers were at

least on a level with the Greeks and with the scholastics of our own middle ages. They even attained the notion that all perception and cognition were due to a connexion of intelligence with a skin, a notion, which seems to be endorsed by modern science. What is known as the "relativity" of perception in the case of such pairs "long" and "short" was also considered and by some denied,\* as we may also find in modern psychological works.

### § 3. *Process and Analysis of Perception.*

As a practical exemplification of the stages recognized by Indians in the process of perception we may quote a particular (Jain) statement† as follows :—

"Originating with a seeing, which occurs immediately upon conjunction of object and subject and which takes in existence only, we have a first apprehension of a thing qualified by intermediate generic forms—this is 'notice.'

"Next comes desire for the speciality of the thing noticed—this is 'curiosity.'

"Next, ascertainment of the speciality of the object of the curiosity—this is 'apperception.'

"The same, when it has attained a confirmed condition, is 'retention' or 'contemplation.'

"From curiosity 'doubt' is distinguished by being preceded thereby.

"Although all these are in a way the same, they have different designations in virtue of being special developments.

"Owing to being experienced without confusion, even when they occur in incomplete form, owing to their revealing severally unanticipated developments of the

---

\* *Tattva-cintāmani*, Vol. I, p. 560.

† *Pramāna-naya-tattv-ālok-ālankāra*, II, 7-18.

thing, and owing to their successive origination, these overpass each other.

“In some cases the succession is unobserved by reason of rapid origination.”

The Nyāya-Vaisesika philosophy is usually content for its purposes to distinguish in perception two stages, which I will represent by the terms “unquestioning” (*nirvikalpaka*) and “definitive” (*savikalpaka*). The literal meanings “without alternative” and “with alternative,” while indicating the nature of the distinction, are unsuitable for use, and for the second there is a synonymous term *vyavasāya* (apperception) which is rather literally rendered by “decision.” This important discrimination will justify a rather extensive quotation\* :—

“Immediately upon conjunction with the eye there does not arise a cognition in the form ‘pot,’ as a something qualified by ‘potness,’ by reason of the previous non-existence of the qualification ‘potness’; for the cause of awareness of a qualified cognition is cognition of a qualification. And so at first there comes to pass a cognition not penetrating to a being qualified as between pot and potness; and it is this that is the ‘unquestioning.’ And this not perceived. For a cognition not penetrating to a being qualified is not perception, since that presents itself as ‘I cognize a pot.’ Here in the self a cognition comes to light by way of being a determination [thereof], in the cognition again ‘pot,’ and in the pot ‘potness.’ That which is the determination, the same is called a ‘qualification’; in the qualification the further qualification is called the delimitant of the being that qualification. A cognition having for determination the delimitant of the being of a qualification is cause of the qualificand’s being qualified. Now in the unquestioning a determination such as

---

\* *Siddhānta-muktāvalī*, 58.

'potness' is wanting; hence in that cognition a glimpsing of the qualification of the pot, as qualified by potness, is not possible. Without the determination 'potness' there can be no cognition of what is qualified as 'pot,' because of the rule that cognition of a thing other than a genus is determined by some attribute."

The upshot of this is that there is in perception a stage at which the thing is indeed apprehended, but without discrimination of its "thisness" from its "essence," as the matter is elsewhere put. At that, the unquestioning, stage it is held that the cognition is really suprasensual and not subject to the alternative of truth and falsity. But what is the point of calling such a cognition suprasensual? What appears to be meant is not that the thing, but that the cognition is not perceived, *i.e.* by the mind-organ. In other words, we perceive, but do not perceive that we perceive. Furthermore, the cognition is infallible, so that error, if any, must come in, as the Epicureans held, with the *προσδοξαζόμενον*.

At the second, or definitive, stage we qualify the object by a generic term, recognizing that the pot is a pot. According to our system this implies a thinking of the genus itself, and we have to show how this comes about. In its realism the system demands that the genus must be there, in order to be thought; accordingly it is said to be apprehended by a non-mundane contact (*alaukika-sannikarsha*), which is designated *sāmānyalakshanā*, "having the generality for mark." Here again we may indulge in a quotation :—\*

"Here, if by the word 'mark' self-identity is intended, we get the meaning, 'a presence of which the self-identity is an universal.' And this is to be understood as by way of a determination in a cognition having for object the thing connected with the sense-organ. Thus, where

---

\* *Siddhānta-muktāvalī*, 63.



conjoined with the sense-organ is smoke, and with that for object the cognition 'smoke' has come to pass, in that cognition there arises the determination 'smokeness,' and with contact *qua* 'smokeness' a cognition 'smoke' having for object all smokes.

"Conjunction with the sense-organ is to be understood as mundane (normal), and this in the case of exterior sense-organs. In the case of the mind-organ merely the universal by way of being a determination in the cognition is 'presence.' Hence, when by verbal communication and so forth we are made aware of some ghost, a mental awareness of all ghosts is accounted for.

"Furthermore, generality means 'being common' and that is in some cases eternal, 'smokeness' and so forth, in other cases non-eternal, 'pot' and so forth. Where a particular pot is cognized as being, by conjunction, on the ground or, by inherence, in its parts, thereupon there arises a cognition of all the grounds, or of all the parts, having that pot.

\* \* \* \* \*

"In perception nothing is presented without a contact; and so without 'generality-mark' how would there be a presentation of all smokes *qua* smoke and of all fires *qua* fire: this is why 'generality-mark' is accepted. Nor should it be asked what harm there is in non-presentation of all fires and smokes: for, inasmuch as in regard to the perceived smoke a connexion with fire has been apprehended and other smoke is not given, there is then no accounting for the doubt whether 'smoke' is overlapped by 'fire'; whereas on my view, since by 'generality-mark' all smoke is given, a doubt is possible as to whether 'smoke' at other times in other places is overlapped by 'fire.'"

We are now, perhaps, in a position to seize the whole

doctrine which is meant to be conveyed. According to this doctrine, what is first presented is a particular object in its undivided entirety. But in point of fact the object consists of an universal inherent in its material; and this universal emerges to the view of the soul, which has contact with it in a suprasensual manner. But the universal, as such, inheres equally in all particulars; and, since it has no existence except as inherent, all the particulars come in some way into contemplation. Even a particular may act as an universal in view of the different other objects to which it stands in the same relation.

There is, however, yet another factor of which we must take account. When we see a lump of sugar, we know that it is sweet, a fact which we explain by "association of ideas." The Nyāya (but not all other systems) will have it that we *perceive* the sugar to be sweet, and it admits another non-mundane contact under the name "cognition-mark" (*jñāna-lakshanā*). Since, however, the object is clearly legitimate, namely, the distinction of the inherent universal from the associated, we need not quarrel with the way of putting the matter or discuss the arguments.

Probably the most interesting feature in the theory as so far expounded is its attitude to the universals, which it holds to be involved in the perception. It is not so long since in this Society we heard it maintained that the perception of a thing involves in a way a consciousness of all its congeners. Possibly, therefore, some further observations, partly from the Indian side, may be in point. The particular functioning as an universal has already come before us. But there is another Indian system, that of the Jains, which deals more formally with the subject. Here also we may make a quotation:—\*

"Generality is of two kinds, crosswise generality and vertical generality.

“Crosswise generality is a similar development in several particulars ; for example, ‘ox-ness,’ in bodies spotted and brindled.

“Vertical generality is substance common to prior and posterior developments ; for example, ‘gold,’ persisting in ‘armlet,’ ‘ring,’ and so forth.”

In thus discriminating two kinds of universal, of which one depends upon difference of individual and the other upon difference of time, the Jains would seem to have the support of a passage in Mr. Bradley’s *Logic* (I, c. VI, §§ 30 *sqq.*). But the Vaiseshika tenet seems to regard the individual even in its single occurrence as an universal, since it stands in various spatial relations. This, however, does not go for much, because their view was clearly that what is perceived is a particular, constituted by an universal inherent in certain matter.

Perhaps in this connexion I may venture to dwell upon a consideration which is certainly apposite. How far are we constituted capable of apprehending the strictly individual at all? May it not be said that the sense-organ always apprehends an universal, since it has no power of apprehending anything else? Just as a gun would impart precisely the same motion to every projectile having the same shape, size, and mass, and just as any other machine will function upon similar material to precisely similar effect, so the sense-organ is incapable of discriminating between precisely similar objects. We know, in fact, that beyond a certain degree of similarity it loses the power of distinguishing ; and, if it is argued that this is only a matter of a variable limit, and that the existence of two absolutely similar things is a disputable, or a false, hypothesis, we may reply that not the actuality, but the mere possibility of such similars suffices to enforce the lesson that what we perceive is not the inner self of the object, but a semblance which might recur elsewhere and is therefore in its nature an universal. On this view the particularizing factor

would be simply the junction of the two also general conditions "here" and "now."

What is ignored in this argumentation is the historical consideration? Can we not say that, failing other means, the history of the object gives a definite identification. Two cannon-balls may be as indistinguishable as we like; but they and their parts carry always theoretical, and probably physical, traces of the different situations in which they have taken a part. Even things which are actually classes may become, when we include the historical aspect, particulars: for example, man as a historical actuality is a single phenomenon. Upon this view the individual would be constituted by a crossing of two universals, one dependent upon similarity and the other upon temporal sequence, the cross and the vertical universals of the Jains. If it is rightly said that we are always dealing with a specious and not an absolute present, and that "iron" cannot in an atomic instant exist, it is clear that the time factor must always be included in the logical view. But plainly no combination of universals can ever yield more than a relative individuality; and, if we require the absolutely individual, we shall have to apply to the mystics. Or might it be said that after all there is some essential difference between the universal "Socrates" and the universal "man," namely, that we suppose "man" to be in some way definable, that is to be composed of a finite number of universals, whereas in regard to the individual we have a feeling that his essence is inexhaustible? But it is hardly to be expected that even this hypothesis would command assent; for, while it is clear that "man" need not imply any of the peculiarities which distinguish Socrates from Plato, we should have to deal with the view that "man" also is something of infinite potentialities, including those very idiosyncracies which distinguish Socrates and Plato.

I must not imply that the Indian logicians had discussed the matter in this light. In fact, they certainly did not do

so, but found in their atoms an absolute differentiation. But clearly the Jains, in admitting both a "crosswise" and a "vertical" generality, had taken a step which might ultimately render questionable the very idea of an individual. So far is it from being the fact, as has been alleged, that the Indians were unacquainted with the concept.

§ 4. *The Post-apperception (anu-vyavasāya.)*

The completed perception results according to the Nyāya in a cognition of a "this" as qualified by a universal, the object being really qualified and the cognition correspondingly determined. But these philosophers recognized a further stage, at which the mind becomes by mental perception cognizant of its cognition. No doubt, their opponents in general admitted such a stage in thought. But there were essential differences as to its character and indispensability. Some philosophers held that the original cognition was suprasensual and inferred from a resultant "known-ness" in the object. But the main contention was with the upholders of "self-luminosity." These maintained that the cognition in itself without "post-apperception" was sufficient to lead to appropriate action; and to the objection that desire also should be similarly autonomous they replied that this was nugatory, since for all action they posited cognition as a requisite. What they mean by "self-luminosity" is that all cognition implies consciousness, and some of them state their view formally as follows:—\*

"The proof of self-luminosity is perception itself. For all presentations have at their origination the form 'I cognize this,' tracing out a cognizer, a cognition, and a cognized, wherein the self is glimpsed as agent, the cognized as object of the act, and the cognition as action ;

---

\* *Tattva-cintāmani*, Vol. I, p. 788.

so that the cognition is experienced as including in its proper reference the cognizer and the cognized."

The point of the debate is, no doubt, a little obscure. What the opponent really maintains is that all cognitions are in the form of a revelation of their object to the subject and not susceptible of error: as the connexion between a cognition and its (true) object he names a "special kind of own nature," which he says is established by experience, although it cannot be conveyed by any single word. The Nyāya denies that all cognitions are in the form "I cognize this," and claims that experience proves that factual certitude in the form "this silver" is sufficient to elicit response. Both admit that the response may be mistaken; but, while the Nyāya holds that this is the fault of a wrong perception, the opponent considers that it is due to a failure to distinguish between the thing perceived and something desired.

#### § 5. *Truth and Error.*

Coming now to the matter of truth and error, we may recall how anxiously the later schools of Greek philosophy were occupied with the question of the non-illusory perception. The whole dispute between the Stoics and the later Academy centred about this point. The Stoics laboured to define an appearance which could not deceive, their *καταληπτικὴ φαντασία*, and even appealed to the goodness of Providence, which would not have created two exactly similar things; while the Academy based upon the view that any appearance might be false its doctrine of the probable. At a much earlier period some of the Sophists denied the possibility of error on the ground that a false statement was simply a different statement, wherein, of course, they were considering merely the content of a judgment and ignoring the real question, which concerns its reference.

In the Nyāya-Vaisheshika view perception does, as we have

seen, apprehend a real object, and the process consists of a distinguishing therein a "this" and an universal and then attributing the latter again to the former. Inasmuch, however, as it admits that perception may be true or false, it has to explain what truth and falsity are, how they arise, and by what means the latter can be cured.

To the question "what is truth?" most Indian schools would reply that it is identical with true experience. An absolute truth independent of experience does not seem to be contemplated; and if it were asked what is the truth of the statement "Cæsar is dead," apart from anyone's experience of it, they would probably reply that it was a factual coexistence of what is denoted by "Cæsar" with what is denoted by "dying," namely Cæsar's factual death.

Within the experience doctrine there were, apart from the extreme position of those who held that all experiences are true, many varieties of definition, some of which are set forth by an opponent and refuted as follows :—\*

"Truth is not experience corresponding to fact. For similarity, which is the meaning of the word "corresponding," does not hold between a cognition and a pot and so on; and moreover mere similarity has to be used in treating of error.

"Nor is it experience generated by a quality or experience generated by negation of defect, since these two are not invariants, and since they themselves require to be de-marked by 'truth' and 'untruth.'

"Nor is it unprecluded experience, since preclusion is truth of contradictory.

"Nor is it consonant experience, since being 'consonant,' which is being accordantly traced out by another cognition, is common to error.

---

\* *Tattva-cintāmani*, Vol. I, pp. 381, sqq.

“Nor is it experience generative of accordant response, since this does not comprehend truth which is indifferent and since the accordance requires to be demarked by ‘truth.’

“Nor is it experience of a ‘that,’ since of what is nothing there is no presentation, and, if there were, the same would apply to error.”

The disputant goes on to refute the view of those who hold that all objects are such in virtue of an ‘objectivity,’ and that particular objects have particular “objectivities,” which leads to the theory that truth is an experience having a determination coinciding with the particular “objectivity.”\*

Among these varieties of opinion we may find some adumbration of what we should recognize as a correspondence doctrine, a pragmatist doctrine, and a consistency doctrine. The Nyāya replies with its own definition, as follows :†—

“Truth is experience of a thing where it is, or experience with determination A applied to what possesses A.”

“Error is cognition of a thing where it is not, or cognition with determination A applied to what does not possess A.’

“Or else truth is experience, given a being other than error as so defined.

“And ‘having for determination A’ is ‘having for object a being qualified by A,’ or a ‘being generated by a cognition of qualification A.’”

\* This, perhaps, requires a little elucidation. If, it is said, we cognize another person's cognition and also its object, *e.g.*, a pot, we may still doubt whether he cognizes it *qua* “pot”: it may be presented to him under some other aspect, *e.g.*, missile. Accordingly, we suppose that a thing has some proper, or correct, aspect in presentation, and this is its “objectivity” or value as an object. Each thing has its objectivity, and in cases where this is realized we have truth of perception.

† *Tattva-cintāmani*, Vol. I, pp. 401-2.



The purport of this definition is to recognize in the thought and the thing an element not merely of correspondence, but of identity. This the Nyāya finds in its universal. It argues that the concept "earth" undeniably has a content, or determination, "earthness"; and, holding that "earthness" is really existent in all "earth," it is entitled to frame its definition in the stated form. We may say that its method consists in discovering a content which cannot be distinguished from its actuality; and it formally asserts that both perception and conception are contacts with a reality. I should like to ask whether from their point of view these systematists were not justified. Once admit that in the thought of a universal it is possible to distinguish content and act, then the content must have some sort of independent existence (which may indeed sometimes be nothing more than a having been thought by some one on some other occasion); and, if the universal is applicable to the perceived particular, then economy demands that the existence in conception should be the same as the existence in perception, and we have a fundamental identity either of things conceived and things perceived or of the corresponding operations. It is only if the contents are entirely under our control in thought that it seems possible to import them into perceptibles to which they are initially extrinsic. Other Indian systems, which admit a form of existence called "conventional," would elude this argument; and perhaps the philosophy of language would also regard the universal contents as having a conventional existence.

As regards error of perception also the Nyāya has to deal with various opponents. Its own doctrine is that error is mistake. When I perceive mother-of-pearl as silver, what happens is that an independently presented cognition of silver associates itself with the perception, which is thereby falsified. What is insisted upon is that the concept of silver qualifies the object perceived in precisely the same way as would in true

perception the concept "mother of pearl"; and a syllogism is drawn up as follows\* :—

"A cognition having for determination 'silverness' and begetting response due to wish for silver and applied to mother-of-pearl qualifies the mother-of-pearl, because it is cognition entailing response to the mother-of-pearl; like the cognition begetting response to mother-of-pearl by one requiring mother-of-pearl."

The opponent admits that the idea of silver is present by way of recollection or association, but denies the qualification. He holds that the perception of the thing and the remembrance of the silver are present in the mind together and that the wrong response is due to a negative something, namely a non-apprehension of difference between the two. We have here material for a pretty discussion, in which the case of silver and mother-of-pearl together mistaken for mother-of-pearl and silver together plays a prominent part. The strong point of the opponent is that his non-apprehension of difference accounts for the response in the case of true perception of silver as silver. In reality, however, he does not admit error of perception at all; and in fact he openly asserts that all cognitions are in accordance with fact, and that they can be made to appear false only in practice; whereas the Nyāya-Vaiseshika endeavours to get the error into the actual perception, and finds an analogy in recognition, which he explains as experience of "thatness" in the perception itself.

Another consideration urged by the Nyāya-Vaiseshika disputant is based upon the doctrine of the "second intention" (*anu-vyavasāya*), wherein the percipient becomes aware of his perception. If, he says, the original perception were not infected by, but only associated with, a false idea, then the second intention would be in the form "I cognize this and

---

\* *Tattva-cintāmani*, Vol. I, p. 443.

silver," whereas it is really in the form "I cognize this as silver," or rather, "I cognize a present thing as 'this' and as 'silver,'" since in the second intention the original object can appear only *viā* the original cognition.

Truth and error being as defined, their causes have next to be examined, and they are stated as "quality" and "vice" (or "defect") respectively. Neither of these, however, is regarded as a genus; each is a manifold established separately by induction.\*

"For truth universally there is not a single invariant 'quality': rather have we for such and such truths respective qualities, *e.g.* [in perception] contact of the sense-organ with more parts of the object, [in inference] cognition of a real mark, [in analogŷ] cognition of similarity, [in communication] cognition of meaning, all as established by concomitance and divergence. In the case of such and such untruth, where we have perception infected by the vices of [distance], bile [as when we see a white shell as yellow] and so forth, error as to mark, etc., seeing of a differentia is also quality, since the result confirms it."

Closely connected with the question of the causation of truth in perception is that of its mediacy or immediacy. Among the upholders of immediacy there are beside those who maintain that all cognitions are true some who consider that it is something produced by the cognition-producing apparatus, some who consider that it is produced by an additional factor and some who held that is a special "knownness" or qualification in the cognition. And they all urge against the mediacy doctrine the objection of *regressus ad infinitum*. The Nyāya-Vaiseshika replies as follows†:—

---

\* *Tattava-cintāmani*, Vol. I, p. 327.

† *Siddhānta-muktāvalī*, 135.

“If the truth of a cognition were self apprehended, then in regard to a cognition at the non-recurrence stage there would not be doubt. For then, if the cognition is cognized, its validity also is cognized, while if the cognition is not cognized, then, as the thing to be doubted is not cognized. how can there be doubt? Hence the validity of a cognition is matter of inference. Thus: ‘This cognition is truth, because it gives rise to accordant response; what is not so, does not do so.’ ‘This cognition having the determination ‘earth-ness’ is truth, because it is cognition with determination ‘earthness’ applied to what has odour. Nor should it be asked whence comes the cognition of the middle. For the having the determination ‘earthness’ is self-apprehended, and, as odour is apprehended of that, the application to the thing having odour is obvious. Nor should it be asked how the major ‘being truth,’ is known beforehand; for in the cognition ‘this’ a being truth is self-apprehended.”

As regards the *regressus ad infinitum* it is observed that we come sooner or later to a certitude of which invalidity is not apprehended; we do not entertain doubt of everything and that is enough. Accordingly the view is that validity is matter for inference, that we go back as far as there is doubt, and that ultimately there are cognitions, such as the cognition “this,” of which the truth is self-evident.

On the whole it would appear that in the view of all these disputants there is a stage (in the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika system the “unquestioning”) in perception which is not susceptible of error. They differ as to its character and discuss whether it is known to consciousness and in what manner error creeps in. In cases such as that of the distant “stump” or “man” some admitted a perceptual doubt, just as in the case of conflicting middles some posited an “inference of doubt.” But the Nyāya denies that the “apparatus of doubt” exists prior to the

perceptual judgment; and clearly perceptual doubt must be due to imperfection somewhere, unless we are prepared to admit the actual existence of "doubtful" objects which can develop upon inspection into either "posts" or "men."

The scholastic character of these discussions is apparent. What I should like to inquire of the Aristotelian Society is how far they bear upon the real problems. It seems that modern psychology admits in perception a large representational element. If I take for a horse something in the distance which turns out to be a cow, presumably the "horse" part is representational. But much more is ultimately representational and the ultimate presentational element may be merely a dark patch in a field. Apparently every element may be illusory, and more particularly the last, which may be a spot on the eye or some defect in the visual apparatus. If truth of perception were normality with reference either to the individual or the race or (by aid of a proportion) to all percipients, then normal illusions would be true (perhaps they are?); while, if it is verification, the "seeing of more parts" and so on, the process may require an indefinite stretch of time, in some cases ages, and truth becomes relative or an ideal, although through "seeing of a differentia" many errors may successively receive their quietus. However, verification, combined with the notion of a content, seems to imply something more than consistency of appearances; for, if the awareness is a simple factor, invariant in all the appearances, the consistency must be on the side of the content, and this consistency would signify a "being" in the thing.

---