Preamble

It would appear that jñāna as a concept has received ambiguous treatment in the Indian epistemological tradition; no less has pramā, a related concept of considerable significance. Although this may give evidence to a concern with 'understanding' in some form or another, the rampant confusion does not give the impression of a healthy theory of knowing. Nevertheless . . . jñāna has been seen to refer, on the one extreme, to any bit of awareness or apprehension, to statements of incontrovertible judgements and beliefs, on the other. 'Ideation', 'cognition', 'judgement', 'knowledge', 'belief', 'inference', 'proposition', and even 'wonder', not to mention 'remembering', 'dreaming', 'guessing', 'doubting', and so forth, have contested in the broad spectrum chalked out by jñāna. More fundamentally, however, jñāna has carried the nuance of 'cognition' or 'psyche-dependent awareness'; although the unguarded rendering of 'knowledge' — which is more appropriately to be preserved for pramā — has made prolific appearance in recent literature (being really a left-over from the earlier indulgence of philologists).¹ In this paper I attempt to disentangle the notions of jñāna and pramā in the epistemological context by reference mostly to some trends and analyses in the Nyāya and Advaita schools of thought. But first, some remarks on the reasons for the alleged ambiguity. For one, not all schools and writers in the classical Indian tradition are agreed upon the exact epistemological status of jñāna. There are differences of views, (a) on the causal nexus in the emergence of jñāna, (b) as to whether it involves identifiable mental processes, and if so, their relative stages and significance; there is dispute also on the precise nature of the content of a jñāna, and on its truth-value. As to the latter, one wishes to ask whether jñāna is 'true' by its own nature, or whether 'truth' and 'falsity' are predicatable of jñāna — i.e. whether it could be in error, and false. And how are we to know, or be aware at least,
of (a) jñāna, (b) its truth, or falsity, (c) whatever other epistemic status or specific features that may be claimed by it? Moreover, what does it mean to say any of these things? For instance, if jñāna is ‘true’ by nature, then what sense would there be in asking whether a jñāna is ‘true’ or ‘false’: does it make sense to ask this question? Is not falsity ruled out analytically in such a definition of jñāna: for true jñāna (like ‘true knowledge’ — if ‘knowledge’ is to be true by definition) would be tautologous and false jñāna (or ‘false knowledge’) a contradiction in terms? But such lacunae do arise, as they clearly have, when a theory fails to give more precise understanding of the basic terms of its, in particular, epistemological discourse, with which we are to be concerned here.

Secondly, the ‘psychic’ undertone that belies the Indian approach to understanding, has contributed to this ambiguity. Indian epistemology has generally concerned itself with cognition as ‘a mind-content said to possess the property of knowing in contrast to the concern in western [analytical] epistemology predominantly with properties of propositions expressing or stating beliefs’. We might as well say in a rather general sense, now stretching jñāna to its forbidden extreme, that ‘knowing’, an episodic present, rather than ‘knowledge’, a static all-time, is what is stressed in the Indian via-à-vis western epistemology. ‘Knowing’ qua cognizing here is understood as a phenomenologically continuous process, which is an immediate property or disposition of the ‘mind’ (or ‘mental’, literally, internal sense: manas, antahkaraṇa, buddhi)² of the person (the subject) who has the awareness. Being a property (or quality: guṇa) of the ‘mind’ it is transitory, remaining and disappearing in the duration of the particular mental mode, much as any experience and ‘mood’ of the person come and go, so to say. While, in contrast, ‘knowing’ in western epistemology, has had to do more with properties of propositions expressing beliefs and judgements, and less with the psychological and phenomenological character of the actual believing and ‘judging performed by the knower at some time’,³ which is perhaps what the traditional notion of judgement in western (e.g. Kantian) thought conveyed. ‘Knowledge’, then, in the western sense is characterized as an impersonal ‘quantity’ of propositions measurable independently of human intention and mental content;⁴ and their truth-values, even if probabilistic, are regarded to be akin to truths of mathematical (or logical) propositions. The distinction is analogous, although not isomorphic, to that between experience and a statement of the experience, as the latter
may take on properties (e.g. assertion of truth-value) that may not obtain in the experience — just as (to indulge in yet another analogy) for Strawson, the significance of a sentence is independent of questions about its truth or falsity, which are more appropriately directed to propositions or statements. It is not to be implied however, that 'knowing' qua cognition, in the Indian context, is exempt from questions of truth and falsity, though it is believed to be easier to demonstrate the truth or falsity of statements or propositions, than it is of cognitions and mental modes, which are comparatively private and individual, but which may evidence propositional structure (as distinguished from a proposition). Statements or propositions, however, at some point turn out to be about people's beliefs, about what is within their awareness — the state of believing — and therefore cannot be completely devoid of the element of 'judgement' implicated in 'subjective knowing', i.e. in cognitive understanding. But this is another issue, which is beyond the scope of the present inquiry.

In light of the differences outlined, we may note how jñāna is used in the Indian context, sometimes to indicate 'knowing' in the sense of 'propositional attitude' towards beliefs, or towards what one is actually believing and judging at some time, as would occur, say, in reflective and introspective states, where there is affirmation of particular cognitive contents, as for example, when one becomes aware of 'table contentness' in his consciousness as his eyes fall on the large 'object' (this something) in the kitchen. The judgement is not about the 'object' as such, but is an affirmation of his mental mode in relation to the object. However, often, too swift a move is made by writers who take 'propositional attitude' to be an assertion of a proposition, in the way a proposition embodying a belief is given (linguistic) expression through the use of meaningful terms. And thus, jñāna comes to be used equivocally for characterizing the former disposition as though it were the latter, assertive, expression. Moreover, when a reflective judgement is taken to be an assertion of the truth-value of a cognition, jñāna is rendered as knowledge, implying that it is a judgement with a truth-value, which may be so in certain, albeit restrictive, conditions but is not a general case. In other words, here jñāna, with an attached truth-value truth is taken to correspond to 'knowledge', in the sense of 'true judgement', in the western context. The term, however, that would seem to be closer to this sense of 'knowledge' is pramā. But pramā, as such, is not predicative of each and every jñāna since pramā is a distinct class of awareness that requires for its
establishment much more than a simple, or even a complex, jñāna does: since the ‘simple’ could answer to nirvikalpa (indeterminate) and the complex to samāsāya (doubt), yet neither of them qualify to be pramā qua ‘true judgement’. (We shall elaborate on this shortly). It may, for instance, require the successful deployment of a pramā-karana, purposeful instrument for generating true judgement, together with certain conditions that guarantee validity of the process. For a jñāna to be a pramā, it may require the features of certitude (nīcaya), decisive absence of doubt and counterinstance, and so forth. And while the causal instruments efficacious in generating pramā may be quite restrictive, in number, though not in scope, those related to the generation of jñāna of a more general class may not be too restrictive in number; and while the problem of ‘truth’, and ‘falsity’, may be of serious consequence to one, viz to pramā, it need hardly cause alarm with regard to the other. ‘Doubt’ or ‘uncertainty’ may be more detrimental to one than to the other. Likewise, the implications for morality, and such normative issues, may bear directly on the success of one, but these may hardly be meaningful for the other. In short, it is argued, pramā proves to be epistemologically more fundamental and primary, than jñāna. Yet they are inextricably related. We need to examine each in some detail now.

PART B

Jñāna: Cognition

We shall begin by supposing that jñāna is a mentalistic term (i.e. functional, without presupposing a mentalistic ontology) that denotes any bit of awareness, and by extension, ‘ideation’, ‘cognition’, ‘judgement’, ‘belief’, ‘propositional apprehension’, and maybe ‘intuition’. Of course there are other sorts of cognitive awareness, such as doubting, supposing, dreaming, referring, remembering and so forth, that are also regarded, as we shall see, to be cognitive events as distinguished from affective and conative processes, precisely since jñāna is that class of mental phenomena (acts or events, temporally though not spatially coordinated) that have objective content, i.e. they refer to actual ‘objects’ such as are not borrowed from ‘contents’ of other mental states. Only such mental modes whose contents are unborrowed, or are ‘novel’, are epistemically significant, and therefore are potential candidates for ‘knowing’. But the significance of a jñāna (e.g.
in the case of remembering) is in respect more of its content — i.e. having contentness: visayatā: than of being even potentially knowledge. Though, we may mention here, Advaita would not insist, maybe even resist, that there has to be an actual object in the case of each jñāna, yet the ‘content’ of jñāna is described as being ‘objective’ (visayi-bhūta; V. P. IV 1) for there must be some reference to which the content points even if it is a concept or is self-referential. In other words, jñāna has to be significant in an epistemic sense. The content itself may be far from being well-defined and determined, it could be simple or ‘primitive’, and uninformed. But just as meaning is dependent upon the structure of a linguistic utterance, the content of cognition is meaningful, so to speak, to the extent a structure is discernible within it. Nevertheless, Nyāya does admit one class in the genus jñāna which is devoid of any structure — viz. nirvikalpa: ‘undetermined’. Such an awareness has no ‘form’, it is uncharacterized as yet, it is a simple presentation as distinguished from awareness that involves judgement in respect of the contents presented in consciousness. Though not devoid of ‘content’ as such, it is regarded as ‘multiple and discontinuous’ since the specific relations between the elements in the content are wanting in this type of simple ‘prejudgement’ or ‘Prehension’. Although not ‘judgement’ itself, nirvikalpa jñāna is the starting point of all ‘knowing’; just as for Kant ‘experience’ is not knowledge itself, but the origin of knowledge. However, this much can be said: nirvikalpa is jñāna in so far as it has visayatā (contentness) which is not borrowed from some other property of the self — i.e. it is the property of being directed, even if obliquely, to some objective reference or ‘other’ (saviṣayatā). Where it differs, however, from its antithesis, savikalpa jñāna — which covers a larger genus of determined awareness — is in not having a similarly defined relational structure of elements within its visayatā. By definition, therefore, savikalpa jñāna is a qualitative awareness, i.e. its objective content — earlier characterized as being directed or related to some ‘object’ — has a relational structure in its ‘intentional presentation’ (to borrow a term from Brentano). This makes the awareness qualitative or viśiṣṭa: thus savikalpa jñāna is by definition qualitative cognition. In other words, those cognitive or epistemic modes of the ‘mind’ that have objective content with a qualificative structure, much as could be said of ‘propositional’ attitudes or apprehensions, are savikalpa jñānas. Unless this qualification is introduced, which Nyāya insists upon, but largely ignored by Advaita, there would be little to distinguish
clear and distinct cognitions from 'primitive' ones, perhaps only causally, and one cognition from other members of the class, since it is one consequence of this condition that 'determined' cognition involves awareness of a distinguishing feature in the objective content of each epistemic mode. That is to say, in savikalpa there has to be an awareness of, apart from the 'object', the specific features that are the distinguishing properties of the individual object. If the object, presented in consciousness, aligned to the 'subject' (in 'subject-predicate' model) is viśeṣya, the distinguishing features which qualify the 'subject' is the viśeṣaṇa. The viśeṣya then is the qualificand of which the viśeṣaṇa is the qualifier. This relation assumes the propositional form of structure prevalent in, say, a statement. Hence, a qualificative ānā is said to name propositional structure in respect of its viśeṣya-viśeṣaṇa sambandha (qualificand-qualifier relation). So, if something, x, appears in my awareness, it is presented as qualified by a distinguishing property y. This relation can be represented in the following propositional form, considered to be inherent in such cognitions, as follows, where x — qualificand, y — qualifier, j — (savikalpa) ānā.

\[ j = Q(xy). \]

Thus, when I sit on the kitchen table and an object floats into my awareness, I become aware of some contentness (this something) in my awareness, if the awareness becomes defined as an object distinguished by a specific feature (e.g. 'cupness') then, it is said, a qualificative cognition (viśiṣṭajānā) has emerged, with the following propositional structure:

\[ j = Q(x, \text{cupness}). \]

This awareness in turn may be qualified by yet another feature, making the ānā more complex, as when I become aware of some liquid in the cup, viz. some tea (= z); thus, the structure:

\[ Q((Qxy)(z)) : Q((Qx\text{cupness})(\text{tea})). \]

The qualifier, z, does not always have to be a general, it could well be an individual or individuals, e.g. 'lollies'. Of course, there is possibility of error, as when the viśeṣaṇa from another viṣayatā is juxtaposed on this viśeṣya (e.g. \( Q(xw) \)). We shall return to this problem shortly.
For now, we should note especially how jñāna in this analysis emerges as a particular instance of an episodic apprehension and not as a propositional constant of logic: jñāna is not even like the eternal sentences of Quine ('true no matter what'), nor the 'true for all purpose' propositions and proto-type sentences Tarski was looking for. This does not however make jñāna any less epistemically significant. For in so far as jñāna is a qualificative awareness (or better, judgement) it is amenable to analysis, and its content (which this type of awareness must have) may be correlatable to some linguistic form of expression — i.e. the cognitive content qua qualificative structure could lend itself to linguistic expressibility, to some actual or possible utterance, analyzing which in terms of logical principles, would be tantamount to analyzing the cognition. It is not being claimed that linguistic meaning and structure are in any way inherent to the cognitive content, as may be said of belief states, but that they may be applicable to jñāna not derived from linguistic understanding. Two problems remain in the Nyāya analysis to be discussed — viz. (a) the mechanics, as it were, of the cognitive process, (b) the question of 'truth' and 'falsity' of the jñāna. We shall proceed by summarizing some points scored above.

Nyāya describes cognition in a more general sense as a quasi-psychological process that ensues when the self of the subject encounters the object. Cognition, as distinct to propositions, is a property (guṇa) of the self of the person having the cognition, and this property arises under certain special conditions that intimately involve some of the internal processes of the subjects, such as mind’s relation with the self, and so forth. And the character of the cognition is such that its reference is beyond itself. Cognition, however, is not an eternal property of the self — but it is perishable. It comes about only in relation to something else: it qualifies the self (ātman), and it is a consciousness or awareness always of something (saviṣayakatā), never of itself — unless it presents itself as an 'object' of yet another cognition. In Nyāya, as Professor Bimal K. Matilal points out, 'to be conscious means to be conscious of something, there being no such thing as “pure consciousness”; and this, again, means to cognize, that is, to have a jñāna of something.’ ‘It can be called a “mental” state only in the sense that what the Naiyāyikas call mind (manas) is a necessary factor (actually the instrument) in the production of a jñāna. Again, we can call a jñāna an act if we would thereby imply that there is always something toward which this act is directed.’ All cognitions, with the exception of the simple or nirvikalpa thus are
qualificative (vīśēṣṭa) bearing a relational structure between the qualificand and qualifier in the content of awareness (vīśēṣya-vīśēṣaṇa sambandha). But the cognition is not the relation itself: it is a property, or a disposition of the self — not a property of the object either (jñātatā: knownness as in Mīmāṃsā); nor is it the ‘event’ of the relation between the subject apprehending and its object (as in Advaita). The only condition at which this relation is transcended, in Nyāya view, is the state wherein no cognition, indeed no experience, arises in the self which then is said to stand in freedom as a pure substance (śuddhā-dravya). We shall note the differences in Advaita analysis shortly, which contrasts with the Nyāya. To Nyāya no ‘cognition’ or awareness can ‘reveal’ itself in referring to an object or whatever else the ‘mind’ comes into contact with. In other words, cognition is not a ‘self-aware’ or self-conscious bit of awareness in its origin: it is always paratah-prakāśa: ‘illuminable by other’. For cognition to reveal itself to itself there would have to be a second-order illumination, and even then it reveals itself as an object (vīśaya) of another cognition and not as a ‘subjective knowing’. An objection is raised that if yet another cognition is required to reveal the previous cognition and so on, then logically we could end up in an infinite regress situation: awareness of awareness of awareness of awareness, as is implied in the notions of vyavāsāya and anuvyavāsāya. Nyāya contends that the latter affirmation clinches the issue since, all things being equal, we hardly seem to concern ourselves at length with subjective awareness and the mode of their revelation, once the object presented has been cognized. Thus we do not find ourselves recoiling to reflect on the ‘awareness of the table percept’ once the table has been perceived with its distinguishing feature.

Now the basic condition for a cognition to emerge is that there must be a mental function — ‘movement of the mind’ — which is akin, though not identical to the Advaita condition of antahkaranavrtti, and the Sāṅkhya-Yoga, cittavrtti. We may note that the mental modes that fall under this category are: perceiving, inferring, knowing, doubting, wondering, guessing, remembering, dreaming, desiring, willing, hoping, rejoicing, worrying, contemplating, etc. But not all mental modes, we pointed out earlier, are acceptable as jñāna in Nyāya, much less in Advaita.

The mental modes which Nyāya does not regard to be jñāna are: desiring, willing, hoping, rejoicing, suffering, etc, that is, the psychic states of conation and affection or volition and feeling. Only those other mental modes that are some form of ‘cognition’ or apprehension are accepted as jñāna. Advaita
would agree with Nyāya on this point. 'Mental modification' -vrtti- is an operation of the mind roused by an initial stimulation, which can occur in a number of ways. For example, when the mind, through some sense-organ, contacts an object, it receives impressions from the object which stimulate the mind, which 'transforms' in response to the impressions. The mind can, of course, receive impressions through and from other sources, such as internal states, memory, and its association with the power of reasoning or intellect (buddhi). But whilst the 'mind' in Nyāya, for which the term is 'manas', is regarded as an indriya, in Advaita it is called 'antahkarana', literally 'inner vehicle', a complex unified psychic apparatus with a much wider scope than 'manas' (of Nyāya), itself a subordinate function of antahkarana. We shall see a little later what else 'antahkarana' involves. But though it is called 'mind' for convenience it is not what we understand by mind (e.g. in terms of the 'mind-brain identity' thesis) in Western philosophical psychology. Now, mental modification in Nyāya is restricted to modifications of manas, more specifically the mind as an internal sense or instrument of the self. It is atomic in structure, to which is subordinated several functions of the senses (indriya) through which the mind makes contact with objects, both external and internal (such as pain-states). The manas has no sentiency or intelligence as an intrinsic property, nor is there a notion of the witness-consciousness (sākṣi-caitanya) of Advaita associated with the self (ātman) that 'illuminates' the 'mode' of the mind. Nor do the sense-organs possess any intelligence, which depend directly on the self. Intelligence or consciousness is not intrinsic to the self either, it is a contingent property (guna) that comes into operation in any cognitive process, when the manovṛtti (mental mode) becomes related to it, thereby qualifying it as well. But in this process, it must be made clear, it is not the case, in Nyāya, that the consciousness reveals or illuminates that manovṛtti as a cognition. Manovṛtti is a cognition once it attaches itself to the self. There is not the sense of 'imparting light' or 'illumining from within' as is in Advaita.

In Nyāya understanding it is less adequate to call jñāna a 'mental state' than it is to call it a mental mode, a 'cognitive act' or 'episodic event'. If one were to be aware of the 'cognition' as an awareness this would involve another mental process in which the 'cognizing' would feature as a mental content of another operation (jñāna). We earlier referred to this as a second-order apprehension which occurs in retrospection, or reflective awareness, such as in the form "I know this (is a) table"; whilst the first order cognition
would take the form “this (is a) table”, or simply “table”. Cognition, \textit{jñāna}, arising in this way, are also called \textit{buddhi}, and \textit{upalabdhi}; which translate roughly as ‘apprehension’.\textsuperscript{11} Thus, in Nyāya there is no talk of illuminating the cognition from within itself: what is illumined is the object itself. Cognition, itself, is not cognized, except in a numerically distinct cognitive act enduring in a separate species present.\textsuperscript{12} The agent in the process is the self; consciousness is a function of the agency. As soon as a relation (\textit{sāmyoga} between the \textit{manas} and \textit{ātman}) occurs there is deliverance of the object in the consciousness of the subject. What consciousness delivers therefore is the object, not the cognition, in strict analysis. There is no consciousness before that. The cognition, we might say, is the “consciousness-link” of the subject with the object — though, in common parlance, it is said that there is a ‘cognition’ (\textit{jñāna}) of or ‘about’ the object, meaning thereby that the object is in the immediate awareness of the self. When the ‘object’ is further defined in respect of its distinguishing feature (\textit{Qxy}) that particular judgement is said to have staked a claim to be ‘a knowledge’ — i.e. it is a viable candidate for \textit{pramā}. Whether it is or it is not, and how this is to be determined, are issues we shall return to after considering the Advaita analysis of \textit{jñāna}.

\textbf{PART C}

\textit{The Bounds of Cognition in Advaita}

Now the Advaita understanding of \textit{jñāna} also invokes mental, or better, ‘psychic’ mode-effecting, but here this is an operation (\textit{vṛtti}) of the internal sense or \textit{antahkaraṇa} which is to be distinguished from the ‘\textit{manas}’ (mind) of Nyāya. Firstly, the \textit{antahkaraṇa} to Advaita is an ‘inner instrument’ with much wider function than what is called the \textit{manas} in this system — it is akin to the common sense, in Aristotle’s psychology. The other aspects of \textit{antahkaraṇa} are memory (\textit{citta:} the recollecting sense); intellect (\textit{buddhi:} the intelligence principle), the ego-sense (\textit{aharīkāra:} ‘I-maker’). The sense-organs (\textit{indriyas}) (senses of touching, feeling, smelling, tasting, hearing, etc.) are not ‘aspects’ or ‘functions’ of \textit{antahkaraṇa}. The sense-organs are associated with \textit{antahkaraṇa} through \textit{manas},\textsuperscript{13} in that they are responsible to the ‘mind’. The ‘aspects’ themselves, including \textit{manas}, are modifications or ‘transformations’ of the internal sense, albeit of varying types and with different functions to each. For example, when the internal faculty receives
impressions from an object through a sense-organ, the operation that is triggered off is regarded as a function of the *manas* (‘mind’); when there arises the subject’s awareness of itself as an ‘I’, this state is called *‘ahāmkarā’* (ego-sense); when there is recollection, this function is designated as memory or remembrance. It does not seem that *‘antarāhkarana’* is a term for a substantive (real) base as such, but rather is an operational nominalist concept that covers an aggregate of varying psychic functions and processes that arise in time. Indeed, Madhusūdana Sarasvati, an eminent voice for Advaita, characterized *antarāhkarana* as having something of the nature of light (*tejas*) which illumines the objects in its vicinity. What then, one might ask, of the relation of *antarāhkarana* to subliminal processes, such as reflexes, ‘tacit’ (e.g. Polanyian) intentions and dispositions to respond in certain specific ways? The likely response in Advaita would be that these are potential psychic ‘functions’, whose transformations somehow remain impressed, even as vague forms of awareness, in the sense-organs which nonetheless are substantive. There are many forms of psychic modifications, which can be classed under the three psychological categories of *cognitive*, *conative* or volitional and *affective* or emotional, as we saw in Nyāya analysis. It is the cognitive ones that we are interested in, as these satisfy one of the essential criteria for a psychic mode to qualify as a *jñāna*. Firstly, cognitive forms of psychic-states arise when the *antarāhkarana* modifies in a certain way, determined by a particular set of conditions, which are more restrictive in Advaita than in Nyāya. For one, sense-organ contact is purely a contingent condition, even for perceptual cognition in Advaita, in contrast to (the early) Nyāya view. The extent to which a ‘psychic’ mode is a cognition is the extent to which it has been brought about by a direct contact between the *antarāhkarana* (not just the *manas*) and the object cognized. Memory clearly is not a case of such direct contact; but since there is some remote object presented through ‘latent psychic-traces’ such ‘reminiscence’ or recollection of latent impressions pass as *jñāna*, although not a very purposeful one: its object is representative not presentative. The epistemic status of memory is considerably weaker, therefore, in Advaita than it is in Nyāya, although neither accepts memory to be *pramā* (knowledge), except perhaps in some trivial sense, such as expressed in the re-cognition “Ah! Yes, I know: I remember you from school days!” Likewise, for awareness of *manas*, *ahāmkarā* and *buddhi*, since these are already *vr̥tti*, ‘aspects’, within the ambience of, and not features without, the *antarāhkarana*. But we must understand the object the
*antahkarana* is said to come in contact with in a cognitive process in a wider sense than it is in Nyāya. While in Nyāya, (*savikalpa*) jñāna answers to *real* relational characters of objects, and not to superimposed (*adyāyā*) or projected ideal-constructs (*vikalpa*) *ab extra* on the prejudgemental phase of awareness, in Advaita the *relatas* in a cognition need not be *real*, although in some sense they must be empirical, i.e. experiential. Conceptual abstracts, generals juxtaposed with particular (e.g. in "You are That"), and seemingly metaphysical contents (e.g. in "All is Brahman") may suffice. But such jñāna would be necessarily more complex and susceptible to difficulties.

Secondly, unlike the function of *manas* in Nyāya, where it informs the ‘self’ (*ātman*) directly of the object it comes into contact with, the *antahkarana* does not inform the ‘self’ (*ātman*), rather it is itself illumined by *sākṣin* or consciousness – the pure element of ‘witnessing’ in all awareness. The *sākṣin*, however, does ‘borrow’, as it were, its (reflected or ‘delimited’, *avacchinna*) consciousness (*tejas*, ‘light’) from the self (*ātman*), the pure consciousness of subjectivity.\(^\text{17}\) Whilst in Nyāya, any mental modification – other than conative and affective ones though – once it is related with the self (*ātman* or *sanyoga*), qualifies for a jñāna; in Advaita there is an additional requirement for its illumination. The mental or psychic *vr̥tti* is not an *absolutely* necessary condition, much less is it sufficient for a jñāna. However, if jñāna is to proceed from such psychic acts there has to be an illumination internally of the ‘mode’ or *antahkarana-vr̥tti*. Only then is there a conscious awareness of the psychic mode which is then a phenomenologically given awareness of something. It is to emphasize this that Kalidas Bhattacharyya remarks: ‘As mental states are not subjective in the proper sense of the term they are not conscious and *a fortiori* not consciousness’.\(^\text{18}\) Since therefore, mental mode are not revealed as self-consciousness (the ‘subjective’) is, their ‘consciousness-qualificand’ lies without them – though not so remote in time and space as in Nyāya analysis. Consciousness as though appears to become an internal characteristic (though not the self-nature, *sva-rūpa*) of the *antahkarana* in its immediate or proximate association with the *sākṣin* (witness-consciousness), and the illumination of an *antahkarana-vr̥tti* is therefore (fairly) direct in the same moment of its arising. An analogy is made to the crystal that takes on light from nearby and scintillatingly reflects its every contour (*bimba-pratibimba*). But for this illumination there would be no jñāna. Thus a distinction is made between cognition *qua jñāna* and other psychic modes that are like cognition. Consider the
following incident: I pull out the drawer and look into my jewellery box for the prized golden ring my mother had given me for my birthday. I went looking for it knowing that it was there as I had seen it there yesterday morning and I know the other ornaments it is placed amidst. But when I open the box, suddenly a strong suspicion overtakes me; it may have been stolen overnight; and as I open the box, sure enough I do not see it there. I could see all other pieces which I expected to be there, but the golden ring was not there, or so it appeared to me. However, after a little while, I notice that it is there, exactly where it should have been and at the very spot I had my eyes fixed. But why did I not see it earlier? Could it be that my sudden expectation of it not being there blocked it out of my attention? But surely, if my eyes were fixed on that spot, and I could see all other items around it, it must have been the case that the impressions from the ring were not registering themselves on my mind. Advaita would not deny that the impressions were registering on the mind, they surely were. Since the eyes, in a sense, were in contact with the ring, the impressions would have flowed in and caused a mental modification to that effect. But what happened in this instance was that instantaneously as this antahkaranavrtti arose, another, counterpositive to this, also emerged, informed by the intellect (buddhi), and before the witness-self (sākṣin) could illumine the former, the latter, due to its high expectation, got illumined, thus blocking the consciousness from flooding into, as it were, the former mode (antahkaranavrtti). It was only after a while, when possibly doubt arose about the buddhi-inspired antahkaranavrtti that the light of consciousness (sākṣin) reflected on the sense-organ-informed mode, antahkaranavrtti. Thus, it is stressed by Advaita that the only relation sufficient in this process is that between the antahkaraṇa and its object, as well as between its vṛtti and the sākṣin, for jñāna to arise, all other relations being contingent. The connection the unillumined vṛtti has with the self (ātman) in such cases is an indirect and mediated one, and cannot as such become a cognition or ‘mode of consciousness’. The contact, though, of the psychic mode with consciousness is as important, just more, as the contact of the antahkaraṇa with the object. Finally, whilst the Nyāya position does not deny consciousness or awareness to be an aspect of jñāna, it does however only accept consciousness to be an additional contingent character and not an intrinsic character of the mental states. As Kalidas Bhattacharyya points out, ‘(He) has openly admitted that all conscious states (with him
(Naiyāyika) there is no single consciousness as such except as an abstract universal, adjectival to every conscious state) are contingent, each of them occasioned at a particular point of time and enduring for a limited period.\textsuperscript{19} Here Advaita, and Mīmāṃsā, differ from Nyāya as they argue that a cognition, as distinct from any mental state, first and foremost has the character of subjective knowing, wherein the knowing self, or rather the ‘intelligence’, ‘consciousness’ (sākṣin, literally, witness-consciousness associated with the self), illuminates the mental state brought about by an antahkaraṇavṛtti or pramāṇa-operation, directly as a cognitive state. And further that in Advaita, at least, the relation arising in the form of a conscious mental state is transcended in going beyond all mental modifications (antahkaraṇavṛtti) in which self-subjectivity (sākṣin-caitanya) stands forth as pure consciousness, which it penultimately is. This ‘state’ is called Brahma-jñāna or ātmavidyā: the self knowing itself as Pure Subject par excellence, which is said to be the unconditional ‘state’ of Mokṣa or freedom from all ignorance. In Nyāya, however, there is no such thing as ‘pure consciousness’; freedom being of different order altogether – curiously, that of a self (ātman) in all unmodifying state of no-feeling.

Unlike Nyāya then, Advaita does not accept many forms of jñāna. It excludes cognitive states other than perceiving, inferring, apprehending, knowing, directly experiencing (aparokṣānubhūti) and perhaps memory-recollection, ego-sensing or self-consciousness. While Nyāya is happy to proliferate the list of cognitive states under ‘jñāna’, such as those above with the addition of remembering, doubting, wondering, guessing, dreaming, and so on. One would wonder however, on what grounds does Nyāya include these under jñāna when each has only the remotest contact with their respective objects (viṣaya) – which Nyāya claims to be the distinctive feature of jñāna. Perhaps Nyāya ought to have divided its jñānas, or candidates for jñāna, into primary and secondary cognitions, and insisted that the primary cognitions have definite viṣayatās, such as those which Advaita also accepts as jñāna, whilst the secondary ‘cognitions’, do not have definite viṣayatā, but ‘borrowed’ ones.\textsuperscript{20} Some Naiyāyikas seem to make such a distinction. For, they divide cognitions into two types: recollection and ‘experience’ (anubhava); as it is stated: “All cognitions other than recollections come under experience”.\textsuperscript{21} They then go on to divide the cognitions that come under ‘experience’ into two sorts – thus, “There are two kinds of experiences, real (yathārtha) and erroneous (ayathārtha)”\textsuperscript{22} But that is
raising a separate issue before resolving sufficiently the first issue, and informing us of the nature of 'experience'. It is not until the ferment in Navya-nyāya ('new logic' school) that we get a picture more clear than we have evinced in the previous section.

**PART D**

**Pramā: Knowledge**

If we take knowledge (pramā) to be 'true ('valid') cognition' — whatever else knowledge might be, according to the different theories of knowledge (e.g. 'justified true belief') — we are to ask: are all jñāna 'true'? Does each and every jñāna qualify to be knowledge? Here, by jñāna we are to understand 'cognition' as analyzed earlier — viz. a simple apprehension of an object, effected through the inner sense (antahkarana/manas). But does the fact of being a cognition mean that it is ipso facto true? — just as we may ask, if a belief or proposition about something (some state of affairs) is true simply by virtue of being a belief or proposition? A jñāna cannot be said to be true simply by being a jñāna — as the Prabhākara Mīmāṃsā school seems to want to say. 23 There is more to being 'true' (i.e. to truth) than being presented with a cognitive content which may claim to be knowledge. The point is that, not all cognitions turn out to be true: some could be erroneous, some doubtful (or uncertain), some indefinite, some hypothetical, some patently false, and others neither true nor false. But there are a number of salient issues in such discussions which are not always too obvious nor clear. For instance, what are we to understand by 'true' (or truth — although we may refrain from thinking the penultimate question of 'the Truth')? What is 'false', what error? What is doubt; what certainty? What sort of a definition or theory of truth is available to us? What are the criteria (or 'marks') for measuring truth, or falsity? It will not be possible to do justice to these larger issues in a short discussion as this. We deal only with the bear rudiments to throw some light on the notion of pramā, in contrast to jñāna. We may begin by noting that, in Nyāya, at least, every qualificative cognition is either true or false (in their origin), although nirvikalpa-jñāna and doubt are said to be neither true nor false. The latter is a special case that receives attention later. Now, for a jñāna (henceforth to be assumed to be 'qualificative' unless indicated otherwise) to be a pramā, it must have truth-value which
makes it a 'true cognition'. The truth-value is given in terms of \textit{pramāṇya}, conditions under which a cognition is 'true'. For Nyāya this consists in the \textit{jñāna} having a special feature (in addition to its cognitive content) which is called '\textit{guna}: excellence'. But the conditions that constitute and account for \textit{guna} are different from the conditions that generate and constitute a \textit{jñāna}. Although the conditions that generate a \textit{jñāna} and those that give it 'truth-value' are different they nevertheless arise together; thus \textit{jñāna} arises as a \textit{pramā} or it does not. We may not know or be aware of its truth-value, but this is a separate issue. We are for the present to be concerned with the issue concerning the conditions that give \textit{pramāṇya} and those that do not, in the process of the emergence of the cognition, and with the awareness of the cognition.

Now one way to approach the question of \textit{pramāṇya} is to give the conditions under which a cognition is true. Nyāya does this by suggesting that a cognition has to be an authentic presentation of the object it cognizes, (\textit{yathārthānubhava}) i.e. it must conform to reality, in terms of the qualificand qualifier relation we developed earlier. For instance, if \(Qxy\) is apprehended, \(y\) should be the feature of \(x\). This 'criterion' is represented in the cryptic formula: \textit{tadvati tatprakārakatva}:\textsuperscript{24} accurate apprehension of the object with its property as in reality. Stated more explicitly, an authentic presentation is constituted by the equiformity with the features of the object causally efficacious in giving rise to that awareness\textsuperscript{25} — i.e. the object cognized must have those features as cognized.

The definition of 'truth' thus far enunciated appears to resemble what is generally known as the 'correspondence theory of truth'. But these are not isomorphic; there is an important difference. The 'conformity' sought here is not a measure as such between the cognition, on the one hand, and the objective correlate of which it is a cognition, on the other. To ascertain (apprehend) this would involve a process like introspection or some external means of comparing the cognition side by side with the reality in judging the authenticity and the representation, but which in turn would require another cognition to ascertain the correctness of the immediately previous judgement, and so on and so forth. This would lead us to \textit{infinite regress}, if this is the only way 'correspondence' is to be determined and ascertained. The Nyāya principle though is much simpler; either there is conformity or there is not; no question of the awareness \textit{ab extra}, in theory at least, of this conformity is implicated here. That is to say, although we may not be
aware of the ‘conformity’ as soon as we become aware of the object, it is presented with the cognition. Still, however, there is a glaring problem: how can we ever be certain that the ‘conformity’ (yathārthatva) is there? This is a practical problem, to which a different sort of an answer is given, and which in turn raises some empirical difficulties. We shall consider this issue shortly.

A more reasonable approach, would be to give the conditions, not under which a cognition would be true, — as the difficulties raised above would warn us against — but to give conditions under which a cognition would be false. Thus a cognition would be false if it involved attributing such features to an object as are not really in the object (tadabhāvavatī tatrakāraka). The test-case would be if and when a qualifier is not actually related to the qualificand of the content presented in awareness. That is to say, referring to our notational representation, in the cognition $Q_{xy}$, if $z$ does not really belong to $x$, then an error is detected, and the cognition falsified. More concretely, consider, for instance, the awareness: ‘This gold-necklace is red’. If the qualifier red does not occur in the qualificand (gold-object) in reality, as it presumably is perceived to be, then the jñāna is a case of an error; it is false, thus does not qualify to be pramā. Suppose that while looking at the gold-necklace John suddenly recollects seeing a red-beaded necklace around his wife’s neck on the previous day, and juxtaposes the ‘red’ (viśesāṇa) on the gold (object: viśaya) now in his presence; the obvious outcome is just what he reports: he sees ‘redness’ in the gold-object where it is not. Consider another example, the alleged awareness: ‘here’s horn’. This cognition has a complex of two viśayatā; ‘here’ and ‘horn’, they are both real things in the world: but in this cognition they have got mixed up, i.e. their relation or juxtapositioning is unwarranted and therefore at fault. Since ‘hare’s horn’ is not an authentic presentation in reality, the jñāna is said to be apramā, false or ‘invalid’ cognition.

The next criterion for prāmāṇya is the absence of doubt and uncertainty. Niścaya or ‘certainty’ is certainly a significant mark as it gives conviction of the truth of the cognition. However, it could be argued that the same degree of conviction may be present in the content of an erroneous cognition. Thus mere certainty, niścaya or assuredness (asaṁditṛda), is not sufficient; there must be a decisive absence of any grounds for doubting the truth. Unlike error, where the viśesāṇa (or prakāra: qualifier) of another object is related to the object of the cognition in question, in doubt there is
presented a confusing set of contents, which gives rise to uncertainty and oscillation between the two poles in awareness — e.g. in the contraries of ‘tree’, ‘not-tree’, only one of which is true. As such, then, doubt clearly lacks certainty, but it is neither true nor false; at best we can say that, as an indecisive cognition, it is ‘not true’, since no definite feature is being attributed to the objective content, nor does it portend towards a purposive outcome. In short, a doubt makes no claim to truth, rather it manifests a state of cognitive anxiety. There is no decisive judgement forthcoming in a doubt, of the form say: ‘This is a tree: is this a tree?’ so as to distinguish the two mental contents and assert one over and above the other.\textsuperscript{27} It is, however, not a state of ignorance, nor something that stands opposed to any known, or knowable object, or truth. If knowledge were justified true belief, to invoke an analogy, doubt would not be ‘disbelief’, but more correctly, a disposition of conflicting beliefs. Herein, then, lies also the significance of doubt: it may prove to be the beginnings of a more detailed and critical ‘inspection’, a role which has been acknowledged in Indian thought, as the source of dialectics, as much as its use has been a contributing factor in the growth of western thought (cf. Descartes, Hume, Kant and the sceptical tradition). Doubt warns against \textit{a priori} judgements (which may not be \textit{analytic}), and puts the onus of ‘proof’ on the knower. In this respect, doubt could be said to be the first stirring towards unravelling erroneous and hidden bits of judgement (‘premiss’) which owe their source to some extrinsic defect (\textit{doṣa}) or deficiency in the cognitive process (or in the apparatus: ‘Is this shell yellow, or am I jaundiced?’). Thus by casting suspicion on this extra cognitive feature, doubt calls for its removal, if there is to be authentic knowledge. Thus, the absence of doubt and the genuine conditions that would warrant doubt, and therefore sceptical judgement, would need to be assured, over and above self-conviction (\textit{nīscaya}).

\textit{Pravṛtti-sāmarthya}

Finally, the other major criterion much discussed in Nyāya and Mīmāṁsā is \textit{pravṛtti-sāmarthya}: the outcome resulting in, or portending to, productive or fruitful activity (\textit{saphala}). That is to say, there must be potentiality in the judgement (\textit{jñāna}) to lead to the fulfillment of some desired goal or end. For Nyāya this is as much an epistemological criterion as it is a practical one. In other words, it is a rational consideration of ‘workability’, reminiscent
of the Pragmatist theory of truth made familiar by William James, John Dewey and Charles Peirce, with the difference that this consideration is one, doubtless a major, criterion derived from a more 'realist theory of truth', but does not become as such the 'theory of truth' itself to which Nyāya would be seen to subscribe. For that matter, Advaita and, particularly, Mīmāṃsā, would appear to be equally committed to this consideration as a corroborative test of what already appears to be true. To be sure, in Nyāya, pravṛtti-sāmarthya does not merely have a corroborative feature, but more significantly reveals the truth of the cognition; it is not that a cognition derives its truth-value, or seeks its corroboration, in the practical outcome, but that herein lies the power of making manifest the truth, or falsity as the case may be, of the jñāna — although the process of manifestation involves inference or a subsequent judgement. According to Jayanta, this criterion constitutes the confirmation of the jñāna in practical terms by yielding the result or consequence that bears out, as it were, the distinguishing property of the object cognized — (e.g. quenching of thirst by water: this one hot, this cold).

The guṇa of the jñāna is exposed thereby. Kesava Miśra gives a forceful argument to vindicate this move, through an example: when a man looking for water has the cognition of water, he makes the following consideration: either it is sāmartha, 'fit' or capable of satisfying, i.e. has pragmatic worth, or it is not sāmartha. And an inference is drawn: if there is sāmarthya then the cognition is true; if not, the cognition is false; he may even rely on previous experience to ascertain the distinguishing marks. Udayana also argues along the same lines, adding that the successful outcome proves the efficacy inherent in the jñāna by virtue of the guṇa attendant upon it, and it is this we may be aware of but not of the truth of the jñāna when cognition first emerges in consciousness. However, through the sort of inferential consideration indicated above, the truth or falsity of a jñāna could be said to have been ascertained, or known pending the practical confirmation.

For special sorts of cognition, such as those derived through inference, and, particularly, from 'words' (i.e. śabdaprāmāṇya) another criterion is suggested — viz. āptopadeśa, or āptavacana: the reliability or trustworthiness of the 'testimony' and of the source itself. This entails inquiring, especially if there is doubt about the judgement, whether the source of information could plausibly be relied upon, and whether within this lies the roots of error and misjudgements. In the context of linguistic utterance, the reliability
of its ‘author’ would be the consideration; with scripture, the wisdom of sages; with wise pronouncements, sanction of ‘special persons’ (puruṣaviśeṣa), and maybe even that of Īśvara (God). This criterion is common to Advaita and Mīmāṃsā as well, but its relevance is no less for ‘sources’ of knowing (pramāṇa) other than linguistic utterances (śabda:śrutī). Nyāya has clearly given a set of criterion by which to settle on the question of pramāṇya of jñāna. Let us see how this works with a simple experience. I seem to have become aware of something, some object, in front of me; but the presentation is too indefinite and vague for me to be able to say what it really is. As my awareness becomes a little clearer, there seems to be an object like a typewriter. This is the viśayatā in my awareness. Although it shows the features of a typewriter, I am wondering whether it might not be an office calculator. Thus there is doubt: ‘Is it a typewriter; or an office calculator?’ If the former, it should have all the features (viśēṣa, t1) of a typewriter (viśayatā t0), and not (t2 of a calculator (t3). I am not able to distinguish between the two, since the features (t1) oscillate between being the qualifier of t0 and t3. Tadvatī tatprakārakatva requires that the cognition be either of the form: typewriter (qualificand) -R- typewriteriness (qualifier); or calculator-calculatoriness. But the striking resemblance between t1 and t2 confuses me. I am sure though it is t1 and not t2. Perhaps I ought to make the following consideration: if my awareness is of a typewriter I should be able to type words and sentences, and not mere numerals, with the use of the object; if it does not type verbal constructions, then it is not a typewriter. I am fairly convinced of the outcome; the doubt I had barely plagues me. I am now only too anxious to see the outcome as I believe to be fitting to the object cognized. I strike at the keys in the familiar way that I do with typewriters, and sure enough some words: ‘the blue fox,’ appear printed on the sheet. The outcome has resolved all my doubts, and confirmed the judgement I had put my bet on, having ruled out the counterfactual. Of course, I could have as well asked the secretary in the office what this equipment was; and I could still consult her if I have any lingering doubts about my judgement.

We may notice that in the Nyāya view nowhere is it being said that an awareness of the truth of the judgement is intrinsic to the judgement itself, or even of its awareness. Thus the conditions proposed for ascertaining the truth of a jñāna are necessarily extrinsic to the cognition itself. The pramāṇya, although it may arise with the cognition, is not apprehended simultaneously.
as the objective content is. If it had been, the problem of doubt would not arise, argues Udayana, for if one is aware, with some conviction, that a judgement in his consciousness is either true, or false, as the case may be, then there would be no cause for uncertainty, nor a need to establish certainty in some other way to one's satisfaction. This is a pertinent argument, as it is meant to hit those who maintain the theory of self-certification of truth (svatahprāmāṇyaavāda) which is a sore point in the Advaita epistemology, to which we shall come shortly. The Nyāya position is clear on this, which, to repeat somewhat, holds that by seeking to ascertain truth, or falsity, extrinsically, we are not giving the jñāna anything more than what it has come with; it is just that whatever truth-value it came with was not transparent in the judgement itself. Thus, this is paratahprāmāṇya with respect to the ascertainment (niścaya) not determination of the truth, or falsity, of the judgement. Furthermore, the conditions that give rise to the judgement (jñāna) are not necessarily those that will secure prāmāṇya, truth-value, for the judgement. These conditions may be different, and are extrinsic to the aggregate of causal conditions efficacious in generating the jñāna. One or some amongst this may be a unique or 'extraordinary' causal link, called karaṇa or instrument, and of this instrument one may be sufficiently efficacious in producing judgements which are true — such as perceptual (pratyakṣa), inferential, (anumāna) and linguistic understanding (śabda). This extraordinary (asādharanakaraṇa karaṇa) causal condition accounts for the guṇa (excellence) attributed to the judgement which therefore emerges, all things being equal and vitiating factors or deficiency not intervening, as pramā. If in place of guṇa there is doṣa or defective factors, then the result is an apramā, false judgement, or maybe doubt, perhaps error, or even unmitigated pseudo-judgement. Thus, in respect of the determination (distinguished from ascertainment, 'knowing') of the truth, and of the falsity, of a jñāna, the theory is pratahprāmāṇya again, i.e. they are caused from without the conditions generating the judgement. Thus, it follows that one important way of arriving at true judgements (pramā) is to ensure that an adequate karaṇa, one appropriate to the subject matter (or 'object') sought to be understood or investigated, is deployed, with due care and caution against defective factors, irrelevant contingencies, and pretentious judgements. Thus also, the importance of the pramāṇas ('valid mean of knowing') that have attracted considerable attention on the part of Nyāya, indeed most all Indian schools of thought. But we are
straying here slightly, although this would be another approach to the question of pramāṇa we could have taken here, as I have elsewhere. The Advaita view of pramāṇa can be discussed vis-a-vis the Nyāya theory. In principle however, Advaita does not find any difficulty in agreeing with Nyāya on the viability of any, may be all, of the ‘criterion’ proposed; indeed, Dharmarāja Adhvarīndra, following Madhusūdan Sarasvatī here, repeats virtually the very considerations as we have examined — viz., tadvati tatprakārakajñānatvam prāmāṇyam; pravṛttyanukūla — although with a somewhat different interpretation and emphasis and with the addition of a few of their own criteria. But first, on the practical side, the ‘conformity’ criterion is seen to present some difficulties, namely that of infinite regress, in the manner we remarked on earlier. Of course, the Nyāya rebuttal is that, in the example, say, of quenching the thirst with water, one does not normally resort to another judgement to ascertain whether the thirst has been quenched: either it is or it is not, and the evidence for this is provided by other consequences. Thus, Nyāya does not consider this to be an issue as much as Advaita and especially Mīmāṃsā are pressed to make it into, presumably for a different sort of a motive: this criterion, if it is taken to be a definition of prāmāṇya itself, would smack of too strong a commitment to realism. Advaita is less worried about this since there is interest in this school to know as much as possible about empirical reality; it may not be a sufficient indicator of Reality, in toto, but that need not be a concern here. Thus, the later Advaita writers are happy to incorporate this as a ‘mark’ of pramāṇa and suggest it as a viable ‘test’, rather than a theory per se of truth. Likewise, with niścaya or asamīdigdhā — i.e. the mark of certainty or conviction, and absence of doubt; and so with pravṛtti sāmarthya or fruitful activities. What Advaita contends, however, is that their presence is not, as Nyāya would have them, dependent upon some conditions other than or outside of the aggregate of causal conditions that generate the judgement since this is ensured by the use of a viable karanā, or instrument of knowing as part of the aggregate conditions. Furthermore, the overall conditions should be such that Advaita would expect two further characteristics in the judgement — viz., (a) abādhitatva, unfalsified by any other valid evidence, (b) anadhigatatva, what is known must be something that was unknown prior to this, thus making it a ‘novel revelation’, or disclosing a ‘new object’.

Abādhitatva is of considerable importance in the Advaita and Mīmāṃsā theories of truth. This criterion requires that the cognition ought not to be
contradicted or falsified by some other information pertaining to the same object or subject matter, as sought to be illumined. The criterion requires the consideration of counterfactuals, whose confirmation or strength in turn would render untrue the cognition in question. This criterion is negative precisely because Advaita does not seem to believe in the efficacy of the empirical modes of establishing truth in contradistinction to falsity. Not that it does not believe in truth, perhaps in some ultimate sense of Truth, to which all relative truths are subordinated; and what is ultimately True is also ultimately Real, Sat: satyasya satyam — if there is no ‘True’ there is no God either, for Advaita.

But there are a few problems with this criterion as well. Between Śrīharṣa and Citsukha, the criticism was made that,37 (i) even false cognitions may not receive falsification (would we then take them to be ‘true’?); (ii) a true cognition may obtain its falsification from a false cognition (or even from dubious assertion) (iii) a false cognition may be falsified by another false cognition (does therefore the criterion stand up to a real test?); (iv) we are never in a position to say whether a cognition, believed to be true now, will not be falsified in the future. Of course, the last criticism is a favourable submission to the falsifiability thesis, for there is acknowledgement here of the possibility of falsification, though the conditions under which this would be obtained are not stated. However, the assault from these criticisms can be softened by appealing to corroboration from the other ‘marks’ of truth. In other words, no test is seen to be decisive under one particular criterion, rather they have to, as it were, work together in concert or collectively (sāmānya-sāmagrī), each being a check upon the other.

One may add yet another criterion to the list, but which is more strictly a mark to be found in the texts of scriptures, or in the words of a ‘higher person’ (mahāpuruṣa) — namely āptopadeśa: ‘testimony of a reliable source’. Thus there are some six criterial marks of truth to be seen in the Advaita theory. While some overlap with those in the Nyāya theory, the difference, and a very striking one, is that in Advaita view the conditions that determine the truth of an awareness are the very conditions that also generate those cognitions which are true. That is to say, truth is constituted intrinsically by the conditions that generate the cognition. One may seek corroboration from tests undertaken extrinsically, but these do not constitute their truth, any more than they can be said to generate the cognition itself. And these corroborations are to be seen in the outcomes
of nonfalsification, fruitful activity, novelty of the matter illumined, and so forth. One gets the suspicion, however, that Advaita has incorporated into its theory of self-certification (self-truth-making: svatah-prāmāṇya-vāda) what are essentially marks of a judgement to be determined extrinsically. But one also notices that no direct test of 'correspondence' or conformity in the verificationist sense, is actually proposed. At best, the test is a negative one, because the theory of truth underpinning it is negative also — viz. non-falsificationist.

One may object further, that in avoiding a direct test situation the Advaita theory smacks of psychologism. For, it could be argued, if the test of the direct relation of the cognition to the object cognized is not regarded to be necessary — since this is supposedly guaranteed intrinsically by the theory — how is then one to know, that (a) jñāna is not an idea conjured in the mind of the knower? (b) there is an objective correlate of or about which (true) judgement is said to have been generated? Advaita response to these would appear to be yet simplistic: these are known or apprehended intrinsically as well, since the conditions that ensure prāmāṇya also reveal the prāmāṇya. That is to say, the ascertainment of prāmāṇya, truth, is also intrinsic, such that no doubt should arise of the sort raised here. The only aspect of the theory with which Advaita agrees with Nyāya is on the question of falsity, what constitutes falsity and how this may be known. Falsity is a mark of “failed” conditions that are extrinsic, or ab extra to the aggregate of conditions that generate the cogniton and its truth. The awareness of falsity in a cognition occurs ab extra, in another judgement which apprehends the defects (doṣa) or pretentious conditions not germane to the process. If we take Advaita seriously on the latter admissions we may allow that Advaita has not glossed over the possibility that error, misjudgement, illusions, etc, could arise in place of true jñāna, and also that the same would be acknowledged. If its theory of truth, because it is svatah (intrinsically determined and ascertained) appears to be rather incorrigibly strict, its theory of falsity, because it is paratah (extrinsically determined and ascertained) is rather more tangible and reasonable. Is it fortuitous that Advaita does provide, albeit through a negative means, criteria for the detection of falsity or error in a judgement, attributed to adventitious defects? For, if it could be shown that falsity via non-falsification is absent, then, given the svatah-prāmāṇya theory, truth could be taken to have been established. Further confirmation of the absence of
falsity could be had by utilizing the other 'criterial marks' which instead of seeking to ascertain truth — as is the case in Nyāya — seek to ascertain the absence of falsity. Of course, by failing to show that a jñāna has novelty need not necessarily mean that it is false — since memory, or recognition, barely discloses anything new, but it is hardly a 'false' judgement (apramā). All of which is to say that Advaita is aware of the difficulties presented in its definition, as also in its criteria in establishing truth. But it would insist, in theory at least, that prāmaṇya is given and guaranteed by the totality of the conditions causally efficacious in producing the cognition. Advaita does not believe that a true cognition requires a guṇa ab extra as such (na tu adhikagunām apeksate). And yet certain marks of truth are suggested, by which presumably the absence of falsity could be discerned, if not truth itself. What emerges, it would appear, is a theory of truth, which is not sure of its own grounds. Thus, it borrows some 'marks' from another theory, and proposes 'tests' which better support yet another theory. But in so far as it attempts to balance considerations for 'truth', by a more practical approach to falsity, it gives the appearance of being quite comprehensive in its scope. For after all, Advaita would prefer an approach that would show up, as it were, the unreality of the empirical world, so that one may desire to transcend the empirical fold in search of the (more) real, the ultimately True.

Finally, I would like to present two considerations that I believe would help toward bringing the two approaches to truth (Nyāya and Advaita) a little closer, than they seem to be, although it would be hopeless to attempt a reconciliation, though Dharmarāja and others have tried. One is that, Navya-nyāya thinkers were generally aware of the infinite regress involved in the criterion of external confirmation, i.e. they were aware of the difficulty in coming up with appropriate tests for the true, and so they proffered a definition of false cognition: ayathārthas tu arthavyabhicāri apramānajah; one which is not in consonance with the real character of that of which it is a cognition; which amounts to saying that a true cognition is a cognition that is not falsified or shown to be false (avisainvādy' nubhavah prama). Secondly, and perhaps more significantly, Nyāya looked upon the test of pravṛttisāmarthya or successful activity as encompassing the first criterion of truth, as we saw earlier, Nyāya demands, namely, conformity of the property with the object cognized. According to Jayanta at least,
pravṛttaśāmartiya succeeds in doing two things: (i) it constitutes a confirmation of the jñāna pragmatically by yielding the result or consequence that bears out as it were the character of the object cognised: and (ii) it leads to the discovery, in this way, of the unique character or property, viz. guṇa of that object. And if doubt still pervades, then the other criterial marks could be invoked or ascertained. However, for all intents and practical purposes, it could be argued that if the tests proposed ensemble in Nyāya stand the cognition firm and confirmed in respect of the absence of its falsity, then by implication, the presence of its truth-character has been vindicated; no further considerations would be necessary, unless perhaps for corroborative dispelling of doubt. This is quite a reasonable program in itself, with an element of criticism built into it. Now taking (a) and (b) together we get the following, somewhat less tendentious view: truth is what is not known to be false, and can be shown to be true. We begin to arrive at a position which resembles somewhat the falsificationist versions of truth that have come to prominence of late in western epistemology. One implication of this approach is that it does not require the assumption that a cognition, irrespective of the use of a pramā karāṇa, is intrinsically true: and it prevents premature rejection of awareness whose direct confirmation has not been forthcoming, with respect to the 'conformity' criterion. It looks for the potential falsification of the jñāna in question. If the cognition remains noncontradicted or unfalsified then we could proceed further, with considerations under (b) (above). An appeal to corroborative from other 'marks' would add strength to its claim. In other words, no one test is seen to be decisive under one particular criterion, and no one criterion is taken to express the definition of 'true cognition' (pramā); rather they are taken together to work in unison, and collectively give meaning to whatever it is to be true.

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ABBREVIATIONS


Banaras Hindu University Publications, Varanasi, India.


Pañcapādikā of Padmapāda, with comm. of Prakāśatman; tr. D. Venkataramiah, Gaekwad Oriental Series, (Baroda) CLV, 1958.

Śābdaśaktiprakāśikā of Jagadiśa (J. A. Bhattacharya (ed.),) Kashi Sanskrit Series No. 109, Varanasi, 1934 (1979).


Tarka-śaṅgraha, with Dipikā (commentary = T.S.D.) of Annambhaṭṭa, tr. and notes by Gopinath Bhattacharya: Progressive Publishers, Calcutta 1958; and text in Athalye (ed.) Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute (BORI), Poona,
NOTES

A version of this paper was presented in the annual conference of the Australasian Association of Philosophy, 1981, Newcastle, Australia. I am grateful to Professor B. K. Matilal, as also to Professors J. N. Mohanty and Karl H. Potter, with whom some issues herein have been discussed, although another paper would be needed to do justice to some recent problems raised on pramāṇya — see note 29 below.

1 Such as Max Müller, who translates even ‘anubhava’ as knowledge: Six Systems of Indian Philosophy Longmans, London, 1928 (under Smṛti); for more recent example see, K. K. Dixit, Indian Logic: its problems as treated by its schools, Vaishali, Bihar, 1975.


5 B. K. Matital, N.N.D.N. pp. 8ff.


7 N.N.D.N. p. 6–7; 8–13. Cf. Kant: ‘for there is then at least a presumption that the ground of the agreement of all judgements with each other . . . rests upon the common ground, namely, upon the object, and that it is for this reason they are all in agreement with the object — the truth of the judgement being thereby proved’. op. cit. p. 645, (Opining, Knowing, Believing).


9 Akin to “faculty of judgement” of medieval western philosophers. Though it is not clear whether antahkarana is a ‘unit’ like atomic mind in Nyāya (and ‘brain’ in Western
psychology and Identity Thesis), or whether it is a set of potential mental states in so far as it is said to be a delimitation of reflective consciousness. The difference between a realist and an idealist epistemology becomes apparent in this analysis. In realist epistemology something inside must make direct contact (or vice versa) with the object, with no intervening possibility of ideation, whilst in idealist epistemology the contact is not direct: first there is an illumination, then its relation with something other than itself is sought, which may not be there in all cases.

*Manas* is more like Aristotle’s common sense, and the epistemology resembles his too; whilst Advaita is more Platonic or Socratic, shall we say, accrediting greater reality (relative) to the empirical world, than Plato did, at least for the purposes of a ‘Theory of Knowledge’ that covers all levels of experience before each is transcended.


10 Siddhanitamuktavali on B. P. 48–49.
11 Nyāya-sūtra of Gautama: I.1.15 and Vātsyāyana’s bhāṣya on I.1.23.
12 S. K. Maitra op. cit. p. 68.
13 V. S. 65–69 Citta is not used for ‘mind’ here, but for memory.
14 See note 9 above. Though it would be true to say that to impute these as ‘activities’ or ‘acts’ would be misleading; these are modes in which judgement is present whose relation is with the content than with the “psychic” modification, vṛtti itself.
15 See reference in note 2 above.
16 T. S. 34: Sarvavvakārahahetutah jñānam buddhi; sā dvividhā smṛtih anubhavaśca (BORI); Kuppuswami 28 p. 13. On its status as pramā we return later.
17 antahkaranavisisto jīvah; antahkaranopahitahsāksī V. P. I. 98.
19 Loc. cit.
20 N.N.D.N. p. 8; 62 ff.
21 T. S. 34 Dīpikā on 34 (BORI). Also see Dīpikā on 63 B.P. 135–6; tatprakāraṁ jñānam V. P. I. 83.
22 T. S. Dīpikā of author on 35 (BORI).
23 G. Jha: *Pūrva Mīmāṁsā In its Sources* BHU 1964 p. 68.
24 TS 35 (BORI) Thus in the cognition ‘This is a pot’, (ayam ghatāḥ) (ghaṭa) ‘pot’ is the viśeṣya (qualificand), while potness (ghaṭatva) is the prakāra or distinguishing feature in the correlate cognition corresponding to the qualifier of pot. The experience of cloth (pataḥ) cannot have ghaṭatva as its prakāra. In ‘blue pot’ experience, blueness is the prakāra in the cognition, while the same blueness is the viśeṣaṇa of the pot itself.
27 The most expository accounts on doubt are given by J. N. Mohanty, see his *Garīgaśa’s Theory of Truth*, [See under T. C. (Abbreviations)], esp. Introduction (perhaps also one of the better summaries of issues in Indian problem of truth); ‘Nyāya Theory of

28 Professor Karl Potter has recently contested the conventional view of Indian 'theory of truth' (if there be one only) in opting for a more Value-pragmatist oriented theory on which, apparently, much talk on *prāmāṇya* is ultimately based: *Prāmāṇya* as Meaning Divorced from Truth-Conditions', Jadavpur, International Conference in Philosophy, Jan. 1983 (unpublished).


31 The point remains that 'awareness of the truth' is not simultaneous with the judgement in question, although this may arise in a reflective awareness, or anuvyavasāya: awareness of awareness, a sort of a second-order knowing. Udayana in *Nyāyakusumānjali*, pp. 220–30.


33 *loc. cit.* (note 31 above).

34 V. P. VII I (*Svatahprāmāṇyavāda*).

35 Jayanta argues that people couldn't be fooled too easily in trusting their judgements on day-to-day experiences. *op. cit.* p. 159.

36 *tacca jñānasāmāṇyaśāmagrīprayojayam. loc. cit.* (V. P.) Compare Jayanta on similar tendency towards denying the interpolation of a 'special, extraordinary, causal condition: *Nyāyamaṇḍīra*, *op. cit.* pp. 150–158.

37 Phyllis Granoff (note 41 below) and P. K. Sundaram (note 39 below).

38 V. P. *loc. cit.*


40 *Tarka-bhāṣā* see note 29 and 30 above.


42 *Nyāyamaṇḍīra* op. cit. pp. 55–60.


Although, it should be noted, the Indian criterion of falsification did not seek reduction of conflicting evidence into formal logical contradictions (as derived from, say, *modus tollens*) as the Popperian methodological proposal requires; thus the problem of finding basic observation statements that can be substituted as falsifiers of derivations in a theoretical system does not arise for the Indian parallel, as theirs was a more pragmatic problem of detecting inconsistencies in certain sorts of experience (*anubhava, jñāna, pramāṇa* etc.)

44 Some further analysis that involved high technicality have been omitted here.

For an outline see my *Śabda-pramāṇa* – an argument for the thesis that Śabda ('word') is a means of knowing*, *Vedānta Kesari* (Madras), February, 1973, pp. 55–58.