CHAPTER III

THEORIES OF ERROR
(a) *Truth and Error*

Error is the reverse of valid knowledge. It is an experience where an object is cognized as something else or as having certain characteristics that really fall outside of its being. The cognition of a shell as silver, of a rope as a snake, and so on are instances in point. The explanation of errors of perception has been a live issue in philosophy. Is error due entirely to the object or solely to the subject or equally to both? Quite a number of interesting theories have been propounded by Indian philosophers as to how error arises and what should be the status assignable to the object represented therein. Five main theories of error are generally referred to in Indian philosophical literature:

आत्मक्यतिरस्वक्यतिः क्यतिः ध्यातिरप्यताः

tva-निर्वाचनक्यतिः tva-प्रतिपद्यताः

These theories can be grouped under two classes, (i) asat-khyāti and (ii) sat-khyāti. According to the theory of asat-khyāti, which is advocated by the Mādhyamikas, in error there is cognition of the unreal. The doctrines that go under the class of sat-khyāti hold that in error there is cognition of the real and they are three:

(a) ātma-khyāti, the view of the Viṣṇāna-vādins, who are

1. Iṣṭa - siddhi, p.39.
subjectivists, (b) akhyāti, the doctrine of the Prabhākaras, who regard all knowledge as true, and (c) anyathā-khyāti, the theory of the Naiyāyikas, who hold that what is given in erroneous knowledge is otherwise than in the mode in which it is presented. The Advaitin’s view of error is that it is indeterminable (anirvacanīya) and this, Vidyāranya demonstrates by a criticism of rival theories.

(b) Akhyāti-vāda.

The very first viewpoint discussed by Vidyāranya is of Prabhākara, who does not recognise any false knowledge. The Prabhākara recognises only a two-fold classification of cognition into valid cognition and memory. He seems to suggest that knowledge can never be false, there is no such knowledge as mithyājñānam but is always true either recollective or contactual. In the case of 'this is silver', the this is perceptually cognised and the silver is remembered. The cognition of the 'this' is perceptual because there is sense-contact with what is in front. The cognition of the silver, however is a memory, being generated by a sense-impression called up by similarity etc. Neither of these

1. VPS, p.98.
cognitions is false. But because of a defect such as desire present in the agent, the conceit of memory-ness is lost and the two cognitions and their respective contents are not discriminated. There is the non-apprehension of their non-relation (asamsarga-graha) and consequently, what is usually called error results. Similarly, through those same defects the nacre-ness of what is in front is not perceived. The peculiarities of the 'this' such as its having a dark exterior etc., are obscured. And thus there results non-discrimination as between apprehension and memory. As a consequence of such non-apprehension of non-relation as between the 'this' and 'silver', he who seeks silver comes to be active in respect of what is in front! The sublation 'this is not silver' which results from the discrimination of nacre from silver, destroys non-apprehension of non-relation and removes wrong empirical usage.

Vidyārāṇya, criticizing the above-mentioned view, says that in the view of akhyāti, delusion and sublation cannot intelligibly be explained. The akhyāti-vādin regards the silver which is presented in delusion as the remembered. But just as in the case of the cognition of

1. ibid, p.99.
real silver, the illusory silver is presented as existing in front. The delusive cognition is in no way inferior to the cases of right cognition. Nor may it be said that the non-existence of silver in front made known by the sublating cognition makes the delusive cognition inferior; for the sublating cognition negates only the silver known to the world as real and not the illusory silver which appeared in the delusion. The Prabhakara considers delusion to be a composite of two cognitions. But just as in the case of right cognition, in delusion also, the general and the particular are immediately presented as in reciprocal relation. Even of the delusive cognition the content is a 'this-what'; and hence the characterization of delusion as a succession of two cognitions mistaken for one is not sound. There will be no responsive activity on the part of the percipient, if there is no positive determinate cognition of the given thing. Further, since, in the view of the Prabhakara, Saṃvit is self-revealing, the cognitions, if they be two, must be recognised as two, in which case there would be no delusion at all.

Moreover, ākhyāti (absence of illusion) is never a logical concept for this term cannot logically establish anything which can explain cognitions like
'this is silver', (where there is a shell). Absence of khyāti is a too wide term to include experiences in dreamless sleep (suṣupti) into the category of such cognitions. Knowledge of conative actions upon a different object is also a too narrow term, for such actions are not universal. Knowledge of many things whose difference is lost cannot also be said to be the cause of such true knowledge for the fact that there is a difference between the shell and silver which are denoted by two terms. There is a cognition of duality in such knowledge as is evident from the two terms of different connotations. Thus the evidence of perception itself cannot establish an absence of difference to explain such a knowledge of one appearing as the other.

Vidyāraṇya shows that on no account can there be a logical possibility of the knowledge of many objects whose difference is lost by eliminating the possible alternatives to such a view. He shows that the knowledge of different objects whose difference is lost cannot account for error, for it is unable to prove the origination of error universally and even consistently. The knowledge of two different objects as one unified

1. ibid, p.102.
cognition as in those cases of genus-species relation where there is both difference as well as non-difference (bheda-bhedavādin's knowledge as khaṇḍa gauḥ - a khaṇḍa-cow) is not error, nor even the knowledge of perception and memory giving a unified judgement is alone an explanation of error, for a unified judgement of two perceptions as in the judgement aham manuṣyaḥ can very well account for the falsity of the knowledge. Nor also the judgement regarding a generic and a specific object (sāmānya viśeṣajñānam) can be said to have a relational knowledge and hence excluded from the category of error; for here also there is a knowledge of different objects whose difference is lost, the relational knowledge being a non-etre to the Prabhākaras who advocate a clear-cut difference of various knowledge - processes in the case of their explanation of error and no other factor such as the quality - object relation (guṇa-guṇī - sambandha) can account for such knowledge. Moreover, there is a clear recognition of difference between the generic and specific objects which is capable of negating the unified judgement and therefore, there is no possibility as the Prabhākara holds that such unified judgements are outside the category of error. The Prabhākara contention of
error is further vitiated by the fact that there should at the time of perception of this (idam) be always a clear-cut distinction with the recollection (silver), or else to explain the distinction a third knowledge has to be admitted, whence it should follow that all knowledge as having lost the distinction (aviviktapadartha-jñānam) is false. Hence Prabhākara's absence of distinction is always with regard to a unified judgement and hence that judgement has a unifiedly related object (as 'this-silver') without any distinction and thus their whole psychology falls to the ground for the fact that their recognition of a unified object without distinction will tantamount to the recognition of a relational judgement which in fact has been shown to be not possible in their theory.

Padmapāda has moreover pointed out the possibility of smaraṇābhimāna from the view-point of the Prabhākaras who seek to justify error by its obliteration. Vidyāraṇya has worked upon the charges against any such possibility as hinted at by Padmapāda and Prakāśātmayati. He has very clearly shown that the Prabhākara contention of smaraṇābhimāna remains inexplicable. He has suggested

1. ibid, pp. 104-106.
eight alternatives to mean smarāṇābhirūṇa and has shown that none is tenable. The conceit of remembrance (smarāṇābhirūṇa) cannot be memory itself; for in that case, since in delusion memory itself; would be lost, there is the contingence of the non-existence of the cognition of silver. Nor can the conceit of remembrance be something other than memory for it would have to be said that when something other than memory is lost, there is non-discriminatedness for memory; and thus there is the contingence of the absence of a common locus. Nor is the conceit of remembrance an attribute present in memory; for no such attribute is cognized. Nor is it the apprehension of a thing as qualified by prior experience; for in the case of a delusive recognition, "This is that Devadatta," while there is the apprehension of relation to prior experience there is seen non-discrimination even without the loss of that apprehension. Nor is the conceit of remembrance some particular memory present in itself; for without such external adjuncts as the cause and content nowhere is a distinction among cognitions observed. The conceit of memory is neither a particularity which is the cause of the object of knowledge as distinguished from the sphere of prior experience nor

1. ibid, pp. 108-109.
being the generator of a different fruit; for in memory
there is no object of knowledge and fruit over and
above those that are present in experience. Nor is
the concept of remembrance the experience 'I remember',
for, if elsewhere discriminatedness is established for
the experience 'I remember', it is possible in the case
of delusion to say that there is no discrimination
because of the loss somehow of that experience. But
that itself is not established. Thus the concept of
remembrance, which is to be lost, is difficult to
explain.¹

Vidyāranya's analysis is more analytic than
Prakāśātmayati's and his analysis has brought out more
ably the nature of smṛti as opposed to the view of the
Prabhākara, — that is to say, that smṛti is never with
regard to the auxiliary aspects of the object but
always with regard to the pure object. Vidyāranya has
shown that there should be a difference between the
Vyāvasāyañja smṛti and anuvyāvasāyañja smṛti by way
of bringing out this conclusion from the Advaitist
standpoint. He says that in vyāvasāyañja smṛti there
is recollection of the pure object (ghaṭamātram) but

¹. नैष विश्लेषणगात्रे विभाजितेऽवस्तु:।

ibid, p. 108.
in anuvyavasāyajanya smṛti there is recollection of the object as previously known (by which the auxiliary aspects are implied). Hence Vidyāranya has concluded that Smṛti, to be pure can never rake up along with the auxiliary aspects of an object, their anuvyavasāya or a recollective knowledge that as vouchsafing for their knowledge should be presupposed and hence is always with regard to the object as such or an object bereft of any relation with anuvyavasāya or recollective knowledge, but having relation with vyavasāya or pure cognition that is a priori to anuvyavasāya.¹

Vidyāranya's analysis of smṛti and its object from the Advaita point of view has been more elaborated by himself with reference to the verbal recollection of an object (padāt padārthasmṛti).² Padmapāda had hinted at this aspect of recollection and tried to show that here also there is a pure object without any other auxiliary aspect perceived along with it. Prakāśātmayati has shown by way of elaboration that both in abhihitānvayavāda and anūtābhidhānavāda, there is the verbal recollection of successive words till the last and a clear link among such bits of recollection is responsible for the verbal

1. ibid, p.110.
2. ibid, pp.111 - 116.
knowledge. This link is established by the words in the successive recollection of their meanings by the impressions of a relation among such words and their meanings which are roused by the words themselves. Thus in verbal recollection too, there is a clear recognition by the Vedāntins, as in all other views, that the objects of recollection (viz. the successive meanings) are pure objects raked up by the impressions obtaining between them and the words and there is no scope for any other knowledge such as that of words related with their meanings, for the fact that such knowledge will end in a regressus ad infinitum by depending on another knowledge and also in obliterating the functions of words altogether. Thus the verbal recollection is due to the impressions of a relation obtaining between successive meanings of words.

Vidyārāṇya has very ably pointed out that the view of the Prabhākaras that error can be explained by the supposition of a recollected knowledge (smṛti) that is valid, is untenable for the fact that there is some kind of knowledge that is neither purely perceptual nor purely recollective but purely illusory and hence false in itself. Vidyārāṇya has worked out in detail this

1. PPV, p. 184.
2. VPS, p. 119.
conclusion by showing that the obliteration of what the Prābhākaras accept viz. of previously cognized aspects of the objects, is wholly untenable on the ground that this smaranaḥbhimāna - pramoṣa is not responsible for error as is evident from the fact that inference (anumāna) presupposes previously cognised (parokṣa) space, time etc. or at least the previous cognition of these and they remain in the shape of impressions only but which are not found to be so present in smṛti where these sāṃskāras do not present themselves as really calling up such previous knowledge of the different aspects of the recollected object. Thus there is a clear-cut distinction between inference of cognition (jñānānumāna) and recollection in which the latter is unadulterated with the previous knowledge of the different aspects of the object for which the Prābhākara supposes and advocates an obliteration. Thus smṛti being with regard to the pure object should be a different category of valid knowledge altogether and cannot in any way generate false (mithyā) knowledge (such as of actions) by the obliteration of some parts. This is the greatest rejoinder to the Prābhākara theory and Vidyāraṇya has brought out this quite ably.
Vidyārāṇya further shows that the Prabhākara contention is untenable for the fact that here is no logical ground to suppose that delusion is the result of non-apprehension of non-relation. Because non-discrimination cannot be between two things apprehended; for in the dream-state, which is a delusion, nothing other than the Self is apprehended. Since there do not exist two apprehended things, there is the contingency of the dream-experience being not a delusion. Nor can the non-discrimination be between the apprehended and the remembered; for in dream, when there is non-discrimination of the remembered blue etc. from the apprehended Self, there is the contingency of the presentation of the dream cognition in the form 'I am blue,' etc. Nor can the non-discrimination be between the remembered; for then everything would be presented only as mediate and not as immediate in delusion. Since the conceit of remembrance which is to be lost in order that there may be non-discrimination is not determined and since non-discrimination itself is not proved either as between apprehension and memory or as between the apprehended and the remembered, the theory of akhyāti stands condemned.  

1. VPS, pp. 118-119.
Vidyārānya has thereafter brought in the Naiyāyika view that the silver (object of superimposition) is present elsewhere as a real entity but is brought forth upon the shell with which the sense is incontact, being associated with any doṣa (defect) and is thus taken into knowledge upon the shell which is present before. The recalling of silver upon shell is according to them, due to the similitude between them and hence the Naiyāyikas conclude that the knowledge of silver is purely perceptual (grahanātmaṁ). The Naiyāyikas hold that in mistaking a piece of nacre as a piece of silver, there are not two pieces of knowledge as the Prabhākaras hold, but there is a third variety of knowledge where the piece of nacre is cognised as being qualified by the knowledge of the piece of silver. This erroneous knowledge arises, according to the Naiyāyikas, due to an abnormal contact of the sense-organ (viz. the eye) with the object (viz. silver which is absent in the present case but present elsewhere). This abnormal psychosis is what is known as jñānalakṣaṇa – sannikarṣa or connection of the sense-organ with the object due to the pre-occupied knowledge of that object in the mind, though the object be not really present.

1. देवाकालनाचरणं दि रज्ञा शृविसर्गप्रमोदो दौषिपिं्चितो विद्यायिनो शुभायारम्भना गृहय电动ुष्टिसाधनी - सम्भाव्यत: । न वेक्षनस्मृतिभविषिं ज्ञानतथिं - ताहुयादेनियामकत्वाः ।

This view which is known as Anyatha-khāti-vāda cannot stand the scrutiny of logic as Vidyārāṇya exposes to it. Vidyārāṇya asks whether otherwise-ness belongs to the cognition or to the result, or to the object. If it belongs to the cognition, the cognition of silver has for its basis or object a nacre. Then, is the nacre the object of the cognition of silver, because it imparts its form to the cognition or because it is the object of activity prompted by the cognition? The first alternative is untenable. A nacre cannot impart its form to the cognition of silver. The second alternative also cannot be maintained. The perception of a tiger prompts the use of a sword. But the sword is not the object of the cognition of a tiger. Otherwise, otherwise-ness cannot belong to the result or manifestation, which is common to valid knowledge and illusion. There is no difference in the manifestation brought about by valid knowledge and illusion. Otherwise-ness cannot belong to the object. Is otherwise-ness in the object, identity of a nacre with silver? Or is it the transformation of a nacre into silver? If it is identity of a nacre with silver, is there absolute difference between them or difference-cum-non-difference? They cannot be absolutely different, since absolutely different things cannot be identical. They cannot be different and non-different, since in that case

1. ibid, p. 120.
'this is silver' would not be an illusion like the cognition 'the cow is short-horned'. The second alternative viz. that nacre transforms itself in the form of silver, is also unsound. If silver be a transformation of nacre, it can never be sublated. The cognition of silver which is in dispute is unsublatable, since it is the cognition of a transformation, like the cognition of curd, which is a modification of milk. Hence also, even like the milk, nacre would never again be cognized. There is another reason why the view of transformation is defective. If silver were a transformation of nacre, even those who are not affected by defects ought to cognize silver. Indeed it is not observed that the same milk is transformed in the form of curd in respect of some persons, but not in respect of others. Therefore, the doctrine of anyathā-khyāti, which does not stand the test of investigation is not the correct view of error.

1. शेषाशेषवेष एवं बन्धु गौरितिविद्युत्सिनि: स्पाध | ibid, p. 121.
2. क्षौद्वितादस्रासीसैंपिनः परिषामयाः युक्तः | निदासवस्यांशपि रञ्जन्तितित्वेषरंगां | ibid, p. 122.
3. तत्समानान् न्यायायाति: हृनिस्त्या | ibid, p. 122.
The Vijnana-vadin Buddhist is a supporter of Atmakhyati and he is a subjectivist with regard to the example of shell-silver. The silver of subjectivist vijnana vadin is real but it is mental and so the falsity consists in the appearance of an inner state as external. As such according to this school it is the consciousness (vijnana) that is the sole cause of the appearance of all the empirical phenomenon and it is therefore, the ground of all the appearances. Thus the advocates of atmakhyativada are all subjectivists in so far as they recognise nothing outside of knowledge. The object of knowledge is only a form of knowledge which alone is true. Knowledge and its objects are inseparably connected and invariably present, hence there is, so to say, identity in them. Because of the invariability of the simultaneous presentation of blue and its cognition, say the vijnana-vadins, there is non-difference between the two. If blue were different from the cognition of blue, then it would not be manifest in the cognition. Or if it be said that it is manifest in the cognition, then what restriction is there that all things should not be manifest in a single cognition? It may be said that in the experience 'I know this' the cognizer, the object and the cognition are experienced as of

3. VPS, p. 256.
Also see - सर येन सह निर्यातलोपल्लघरत तत्त्व सहऽवाक्यस न वैष्णवे, Bhāmatī, p. 544.
distinct natures and as reciprocally related. But that is not intelligible for, how can there be relation among the momentary? Therefore it should be assumed that first three separate cognitions 'I', 'this' and 'know' associated with the respective forms arise. Thence from the third cognition coloured by the vāsanās called the first and the second cognitions, there is generated another cognition which is of a nature similar to the third cognition and is associated with the three forms. And thus, it must be admitted that the momentary cognitions alone are objects. That cognition is momentary is established by perception. Just as the cognition of blue makes known also the exclusion of other colours, similarly the cognition which appears as present intimates also its non-relation to the times past and future.

Vijñānavādin seems to think that if one maintains the outer existence of silver upon the substratum, one is to accept the possibility of a denial of both the elements. It is rather convenient to think of the silver as a state in consciousness which is projected outwards when the false cognition is contradicted we do not deny the silver which is real as a state in consciousness but deny the sense of externality which was grafted upon it - the virtue of its
being indicated as existing yonder. The Saugata divides the world of reality into two categories, the intellect (citta) and its products (caitya) and regards them as originating in dependence on four kinds of causes: the auxiliary causes (sahākāri - pratyaya) like light etc., the adhipati - pratyaya such as the sense of sight etc., the immediately antecedent cause (samanantara - pratyaya) which is the prior cognition and the substrate cause (ālambana - pratyaya) viz. the external thing.

Criticizing the Ātmakhyātivāda of the Buddhists, Vidyārāṇya says that of these four kinds of causes none will explain the origination of cognition in the form of silver which is fundamental to the position of the Vijñāna-vādin. Since an auxiliary cause like light is responsible for clearness alone, it cannot originate the form of silver. Nor is the rise of the form of silver possible from the sense of sight etc., called the adhipati - pratyaya, since that is the cause only of the restriction of the content to a particular cause as visible, audible etc. If a thing is apprehended through the sense of sight, we do not regard that thing as the product of the sense of sight. The sense of sight characterizes that object as a visible thing, and does not generate it.

1. ज्ञानसुरैव बोधरजसायो विज्ञाय:।
Nyāya-makranda, p.100.

2. VPS, p.123.
what is called the immediately antecedent cause, which is
the prior cognition cannot originate the form of silver; for immediately antecedent to the rise of the delusion of silver there might have been the cognition of some object, say, a pot which belongs to quite a different class and which cannot possibly be the cause of the origination of silver. Nor is the rise of the form of silver possible from the external thing called the substrate cause, since the Vijnanavadin does not acknowledge any extra-mental object.

But in a reply to this criticism, the Vijnanaavadin says that cognition comes to have the form of silver because of the capacity of Samskara. But the acceptance of this statement falsifies his own position. The samskara which is held to be the cause of the form of silver must either be permanent or momentary. If it be permanent, there is the abandonment of the doctrine that everything is momentary. If it be momentary, there is relinquishment of the view that there exist cognitions alone. The Vijnanavadin tries to escape by saying that the external manifestation of silver is raked up by an impression which had been imprinted, so to say upon the series of momentary bits of knowledge (jhana santati or vijnana santati) and this impression though

1. VPS, p.124.
separated by a gulf of such momentary bits of knowledge, can call up the silver by way of similitude as in the case of paddy yielding paddy after a long time. They go even to the extreme of admitting an eternal chain of impressions regarding an external object carried down through the momentary bits of knowledge and the calling up of the object by the maturity (pariṣṭāka) of this impression – series (vāsanā).¹

Vidyāraṇya brings out the fallacies to such a view of the Buddhists from the viewpoint of the Prābhākaras who attack the ātmakhyāti doctrine. The Prābhākaras according to Vidyāraṇya, point out that the silver which is held by the Buddhists as the objective projection of the subjective existence is never capable of being accounted for in error. If it is not born there, it can have no appearance and if it is held to be born, it fails to be subjective, for an objective basis of such appearance (say, an external object perceived before) has to be admitted. But the Buddhist argument being that the subjective silver is only projected as external under the influence of imperfections (doṣas) adhering to the knowledge (or say, silver) which is subjective in itself. Prābhākaras charge them with non-origination of any externally projected silver; for they point out that the

¹ ibid, p.124.
causal knowledge of the externally projected silver being prior to the object has not the capacity to reveal it and any other knowledge devoid of imperfections attached to it can never be said to be the cause of the calling up of the external silver for the simple fact that there ceases to be any causal nexus between a particular piece of knowledge and a particular appearance (which is possible only under the influence of the došas calling up the external projections through vāsanās or impressions according to the Buddhists). Finally if the knowledge being under the influence of these došas can call up the external projection, then the latter being born of the knowledge of silver which is subjective should be admitted as a real (sat) category like the subjective silver or else, the external projection of silver should cease to have for its cause the subjective knowledge of silver which makes the former appear. Thus in the view of Ātmakhyāti, even silver would not appear.¹

¹ VPS, pp. 125-126.
Diametrically opposed to the Anyathākhyātivāda of the Naiyāyikas is the Buddhist doctrine of asatkhyāti, which maintains that the object of false perception is entirely non-existent. Error consists in the cognition of the unreal as real. In the shell-silver illusion, the silver does not exist, yet we seem to perceive it. Both the object and the knowledge of the object are fanciful and imaginary. They are non-existent.

If the objective of Asatkhyātivāda is only to expose the unreality of silver as against its apparent reality then this theory is hardly disputable even by its rivals. Because all are to agree that in error that which appears to be real is actually not real. But the theory of Asatkhyāti, besides maintaining the unreality of the silver, also advocate that whatever is perceived 'as' the 'silver' is also mere non-being. That means the 'shell' which is ordinarily accepted as real is also rejected by this theory. Asatkhyāti stands for complete void or śūnya. Along with the rejection of error, its locus is also rejected. And it is this rejection of locus which is argued to be the distinguishing feature of the theory of Asatkhyāti.

1. B.J.Kār: The Theories of Error in Indian Philosophy, p.95.
But here the Vedāntins and many others argue that how can a totally non-existent something be at all apprehended. An absolute naught cannot even be conceived (e.g. son of a barren woman) what to speak of its being perceived. It is a matter of experience that shell is misperceived as silver. This shows that something is being apprehended as something else. So the silver characterisation of the present objective shell may be found to be wrong after later verification but that something as the locus of silver characterisation is positively present even at the time of error, there can be least doubt about it.

It is pointed out by way of defending the theory of Asat-khyāti that substrateless delusion is possible as in the case of kesondraka and the fata morgana and limitless sublation is also possible as in the case of the statement of the trustworthy person, “not snake” which sublates the delusive cognition of rope as snake.

But such defence of this theory of error is without any foundation. Because the rays of light are the substrate of the Kesondraka and ether is the substrate of the fata morgana. It is this reality of locus which is always maintained by the Advaitins in a very forceful manner. The Post-Saṅkarites, while elaborate the theory

1. NM, pp. 177-178.
2. VPS, p.148.
3. VPS, p.149.
of Anirvacaniyakhyāti emphasize a positive character of error only to contrast their account of error from that of the Śūnyavādins.¹

Accordingly, Vidyāraṇya, too exposes the inconsistencies in niradhiṣṭānabhrāma and shows that the word 'paratra' as given in the definition of adhyāsa 'Smṛtirūpaḥ paratra pūrva-dṛśtāvabhāsaḥ' indicates that adhyāsa is possible only upon a locus (Sādiṣṭānādhyāsa). He says that the Śūnyavādi or Mādhyāmika Buddhist argues that illusion may appear even without any saṃyoga or sense-contact for which only the defects due to Avidyā and impressions of previous false cognitions are sufficient; hence according to the Mādhyāmika, the third factor which is held necessary by the Vedāntins, viz., a sense-contact with the locus is unnecessary in illusion. But this view of the Mādhyāmika is criticized vehemently by Vidyāraṇya who says that without the admission of knowledge of some object upon some locus, even cases of true knowledge can come within the purview of illusion.² Hence the basic principle of illusion is violated by the Śūnyavādi who does not recognise the locus of illusion. He next brings out the argument from the example of the seed and sprout

1. B.J.Kār : The Theories of Error in Indian Philosophy, p.97.
2. VPS, p.149.
(bijāṅkurā-dṛṣṭāntā) given by the Mādhyamika to show that there are mutually existing loci of the consciousness and the object (rajatam) and hence no third locus of illusion need be admitted, but the process of illusion should be explained by the origin of illusion which is nothing but the projection of the internal as the external. But the Mādhyamika contention is totally untenable for the fact that the analogy of the seed and sprout cannot establish the mutuality of loci in the consciousness and the object. There is a very great difference between these two sets of origination viz. the set of seed and sprout and the set of consciousness and object psychologically and epistemologically. This is the basis of Vidyāraṇya's forceful arguments against the Mādhyamika contention. He shows that in the case of the seed and sprout, there is no mutual dependence (itaretarāśrayata) but a regressus ad infinitum, for the fact that the chain of seeds and sprouts pre-supposes different causal series and hence no mutual dependence can arise, but only an infinite regress in the causal chain arises. In the other case viz. consciousness and object, however, there is at the foundation of origination the fallacy of mutual dependence and hence the question of regressus ad infinitum does not arise,
so the Madhyamika cannot say that there is no mutual
dependence in the present case also as in the other case.
Vidyārāṇya shows that consciousness (Saivism) and the
object (raja) being simultaneously born, there is the
inevitable fallacy of mutual dependence and not the
absence of it.

Vidyārāṇya has further shown that all cases of
illusion are with regard to a substratum that is present
and hence the negation of the false object makes a
revelation of the substratum upon which the superimposed
object was falsely cognised. Hence any discussion of the
nature of negation brings out the fact that all errors are
upon a substratum (sādhīsthāna bhramaḥ) and this an added
proof to what the nature of perception reveals as a unified
experience of the substratum (idam) and the object (raja).
This nature of negation is shown, by Vidyārāṇya following
his predecessor as a universal law in all kinds of error,
for even if the knowledge of negation of the objects is
born mediately as through inferential or verbal proofs, yet
the knowledge of negation always accompanies the knowledge
of the substratum and hence any consistent theory of error
should admit this basic principle of adhyāsa. Thus

1. VFS, p. 150.
Vidyārāṇya, following his predecessors shows that even in the Śāṅkhyā theory there is the primal Matter (prakṛti) as the fundamental principle of the negation of all the primary elements (trigūnas) in it, for the Śāṅkhyā view that prakṛti is the state of equilibrium (sāmyāvasthā) of all primary elements advocates the negation of all these elements in prakṛti, but the negation of prakṛti itself is never practicable for, there is no other ground more fundamental than prakṛti where it can be negated. Vidyārāṇya has further shown that from the Advaitist standpoint there is a very cogent argument to show that all adhyāsas that are due to ajñāna, that is directly experienced by Sākāścājñāna along with the object falsely cognised, have this fundamental ground which makes all adhyāsas revealed till they are not negated by true knowledge¹. Vidyārāṇya, while bringing out this Advaita ontology in the sphere of error, has strongly repudiated that this ground is also the object of negation inasmuch as along with the object of the external world, the consciousness that is the only witness of the false object should also be regarded as being negated. But such a view, he says, is untenable for the fact that consciousness

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¹ प्राप्ति मा जिवनंत्वनवत्संसारायथाबन्तमः वा 
परिशिष्टानां.. . .. . .. साक्षि:स्यापेक्षाप्रवृत्तिः प्रक्रीति:।
VPS, p. 150.
is never an object of negation, rather it itself is the
external ground where all false appearances are negated.

Vidyāranya then elaborates the point that the object
of superimposition, according to the Advaitists, is not
void (sūnya) but is negated in sat or the existent substratum
and hence is false. The object is not void for the fact that
it is the object of negation and hence it is different from
sat as also from asat and is therefore anirvacaniya or
mithyā. If it were a complete void, it could not have
appeared as such and hence would not have the necessity of
being negated. The negated object being anirvacaniya at the
time of appearance, is therefore neither existent like the
substratum nor non-existent like a void-object, but is an
appearance of the sat and is therefore negated by the
knowledge of it. Thus Vidyāranya shows that the object
falsely perceived is never an asat object while appearing
but an anirvacaniya object and may be accepted as asat when it
is destroyed by true knowledge of the substratum and never
before its negation.

The nerve of the Madhyamika's argument is based on the
fact of sublation. He regards the sublation as having no limit.

1. Ibid, p.152.
2. Ibid, p.152.
But he fails to see that there can be no bare negation. All negation is significant negation. The sublation in the form 'not snake', culminates in the cognition 'but a rope'. Subsequent to sublation, there is of course, unreality for the superimposed snake; but prior to that there must be admitted, even by the Śūnya-vādin, the presentation of an illusory object on a real substrate.

1. Ibid, p.150.

2. तले याणालोषः तारंभवच्च शून्यतवशः पूर्वी स्थिर्याति ने निधानः अस्वभावः शून्य निधानः।

Vidyārāṇya has summed up very logically the Advaitist position of illusory knowledge which is known as anirvacanīya-khyāti-vāda by showing the logical and psychological anomalies in other views. For example, he has shown that in the Prabhakara theory of akhyāti, there is a bundle of uncalled for assumptions viz. the recollection of the presented, the obliteration of some aspects of recollection, recognition of two pieces of knowledge where a unitary knowledge arises, etc. Similarly, in the Naiyāyika view there is the psychological inconsistency in making the silver directly perceived as present elsewhere and the logical inconsistency of the absence of any relation between the silver and the shell inasmuch as without a relation obtaining there between the superimposed and the locus of superimposition revealed in a unitary piece of knowledge, the Naiyāyikas theory of super-sensuous relation (alaukikasannikāraṇa) cannot be logically established; and in the Buddhist theory there is the uncalled for assumption of the externally perceived as the internally present. In the Advaitist theory, however, there is an illusory object viz. the silver, which is perceived on the shell falsely but the silver is never real in the phenomenal world. Hence,

1. WPS, p. 132.
2. अष्टाध्यायी रचयितृकावाक्यसंग्रहः - - - - - - - - - - - -
   - - - - - - - - - - सदैव माननार्थ्येऽयं व्यायामगृहस्तन्तु॥
   ibid, pp. 132-133.
Vidyāraṇya shows that the Advaitist conception of three grades of reality — illusory, phenomenal and transcendental, is consistent with the logic and psychology of illusion inasmuch as the illusory silver has a reality (illusory) which is negated in the phenomenal plane. Thus, the existence of silver is there so long as we perceive it and hence the silver is, so to say, born then and there. The position of the Advaita Vedāntins as brought out by Vidyāraṇya regarding the nature of illusion comes to this that the object of illusion should be regarded as such that its false character becomes apparent while it is put to logical test. This falsity is according to them anirvacanīyatva and logically establishes the object of illusion as the creation of ignorance covering up the consciousness of the locus as supported by method of agreement and difference (anvayavyatirekasiddha). The object of illusion, therefore, is different from the phenomenal object and is negated by the knowledge of this object. Hence the object of illusion and its knowledge are both created by Māyā or Avidyā covering up consciousness of the locus that are directly revealed by Sākṣicaitanya or the witness-consciousness. This creation of Māyā and the consequential illusory knowledge are what is preached by Advaita Vedānta whose logic rests upon the fact that whenever
there is a false object, there is the mixing-up of the objects of two grades of reality - be it phenomenal and illusory or transcendent and phenomenal. The whole logic of illusion hinges upon this contention which speaks volumes in support of the Advaitist position that illusion is the false creation of Māyā or Nescience that is itself an unreal entity. All our false knowledge is born out of the creation of a false object on a locus that is falsely got mixed up with it. This is known as the anirvacaniya-khyāti of the Advaita Vedāntins who bring out clearly the object of knowledge of illusion from the standpoint of a logical analysis of the possibility of such an abnormal psychosis. They hold that as consciousness is the only real source of revelation of a thing, the consciousness of the knower (pramātr Caitanya) revealed through the vṛtti, gets identified with the consciousness on which the thing is superimposed (Viṣaya caitanya), and then the ignorance covering up the nacre creates the silver. Everything of the universe, according to the Advaita Vedāntins, is the creation of ignorance in the sense that it is superimposed on consciousness and has no independent existence. This piece of silver is also the creation of ignorance as it has no separate existence apart from the consciousness (of nacre) on which it is falsely cognised.

1. अतो रज्ज मायामयीत्वस्यमन्याभावाद्विद्याय

ibid, p.133.