

Some Notes on the Second and Fourth Definitions of *mithyātva* in the *Advaitasiddhi* of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī

In the multifarious panorama of the medieval *Advaita Vedānta*, one of the most significant text is, without doubts, the *Advaitasiddhi* of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī (XVII century).

This treatise is full of technicalities and complex passages, which are not only oriented in debating, as usual, with opponent schools through the *jalpakathā* method, but to the final doctrinal establishment of the non-duality too.

The text opens with a radical statement according to which in order to establish the non-duality is previously necessary to prove the “falsity” (*mithyātva*) of the entire phenomenal universe (*prapañca*). The denial of this *prapañca* is presented through an inference (*anumāna*) mutated from the *Pāñcapādikāvivarāṇa* of Prakāśātma Yati (XII century): “the object under discussion (the world) is false, because it is seen, because it is insentient, because it is limited, just as the silver on the nacre”. Before denying the absolute reality of the world, it is however important to furnish a definition (*lakṣaṇa*) of the probandum (*sādhya*) used in the mentioned inference, in order to obey to the classical rule of the philosophical disputations: “*lakṣaṇapramāṇābhāṃ vastusiddhirbhavati*”, “Through the definitions and the means of knowledge there is the establishment of an entity”.

Faithful to this line, Madhusūdana Sarasvatī presents and discusses over five possible definitions of *mithyātva*, which were previously suggested by other *advaitācārya*-s.

Our paper will be mainly focused on the second and fourth of these, which, at the first sight, appear as mere repetitions one of the other. The author himself will underline the difference between them, as also their individual validity.

The first of the two (the *dvitīyamithyātva*) was proposed by Prakāśātma Yati in his *Pāñcapādikāvivarāṇa*: “falsity is the counterpositiveness of the absolute absence of an entity in the [same] locus in which it is perceived”.

The fourth definition (*caturthamithyātva*) is ascribed to Citsukhācārya (first half of the XIII century) in the *Tattvapradīpikā*: “falsity is the counterpositiveness of the absolute absence residing in its own locus”.

In order to escape from the *punaruktidoṣa* or the *piṣṭapeṣaṇa* one, the author finds out a way to maintain the reciprocal difference of the two.

Our aim is to analyse both the definitions in all their components through the author’s explanations, the commentaries and other sources of the *Advaita Vedānta milieu*.