Discussing Nyāya in Brajbhāṣā: On Six Categories of Reasoning in Brajvāsīdās's *Prabodhacandrodaya Nāṭaka*

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Abstract: This paper interrogates the representation of the instruments of reasoning (*tarka upāya*) in Brajvāsīdās's *Prabodhacandrodaya Nāṭaka*, "The Drama of the Rise of the Wisdom Moon", composed in Brajbhāṣā in 1760 CE. How are Nyāya categories expressed in a dramatic mould? What is the context of their exposition and its aim in Brajvāsīdās's text which displays Vedāntic and *bhakti* leanings? First, I will introduce the context and the conceptual background of the discussion and then analyse the treatment of Nyāya in the drama through a close reading of the relevant text passages. My conclusions are provisional but make space for the possibility of Nyāya philosophy being treated in languages different from Sanskrit and in literary genres other than technical literature (*śāstra*).

Keywords: logic, Vedānta, philosophy, drama, vernacular, Braj, early modern

1. Introduction

Why do you not set about propogating Vedānta in your part of the country? There Tantrikism prevails to a fearful extent.

> Rouse and agitate the country with the lion-roar of Advaita-
> vada. Then I shall know you to be a Vedāntist. First open a
> Sanskrit school there and teach the Upanishads and the
> Brahma-Sutras. Teach the boys the system of Brahmacharya. I
> have heard that in your country there is much logic-chopping
> of the Nyaya school. What is there in it? Only Vyapti [perva-
> sion] and Anumana [inference] – on these subjects the Pandits
> of the Nyaya school discuss for months! What does it help to-
> wards the Knowledge of the Atman?

With these words, addressed by Swami Vivekananda (1863–1902) to a
Bengali pupil, the self-fashioned Vedānta monk rejects any connection
of Nyāya with the knowledge of the self.[1] It is striking that he seems to
willingly dismiss the fact that for centuries Vedāntins of all extractions
composed works dealing with questions of Logic. At the same time, he
channels one of the main Vedāntic preoccupations, that is, that knowl-
edge of the self (*ātman*) comes chiefly from the correct understanding
of the teaching of Upaniṣads and the *Brahmasūtra*s.[2] The intellectual
perspective of modern Vedāntins like Swami Vivekananda and that of
ancient and medieval Vedānta thinkers has received more scholarly at-
tention since we know, for example, that Advaita (non-dualist) Vedāntins
had to adopt the techniques and concepts developed in Navya Nyāya in
order to counter the opposition of the Dvaita (dualist) Vedāntins. How-
ever, we are less aware of what took place in early modern times, espe-
cially from the 17th century onwards.[3] The present article contributes
to the study of the interactions of Vedānta and Nyāya in early modern
times and especially attempts to look at Nyāya through unconventional
sources, like Brajvāsīdās's *Prabodhacandrodaya Nāṭaka* (hereafter PcN). It
is appropriate, therefore, to first introduce this work and the conceptual
background of this study.

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1   Cf. Vivekananda (1964), vol. 7, p. 256.

2   These are works that, along with the *Bhagavadgītā*, are recognized as the tex-
    tual foundation of the philosophies falling under the denomination of Vedānta.

3   Except for Madhusūdana Sarasvatī (16th c.), not much attention has been dedi-
    cated to later Vedāntins. On this, cf. Minkowski 2011.

2. Brajvāsīdās's *Prabodhacandrodaya Nāṭaka*

Brajvāsīdās (born 1730?), an author initiated in the Vallabha religious tradition and living in the Braj region of northern India, composed the *Prabodhacandrodaya Nāṭaka*, "The Drama of the Rise of the Wisdom Moon," in 1760 CE. The PcN is part of a literary tradition which is famous for the Sanskrit play *Prabodhacandrodaya* (PC), written by Kṛṣṇamiśra in the 11th century.[4] The story (*kathā*) of the Prabodhacandrodaya was re-told several times in Sanskrit, in North Indian regional languages (Braj-bhāṣā, Avadhī), in Khaṛī Bolī Hindī, and in South Indian languages.[5] Kṛṣṇamiśra's drama was well known, but it was by no means the sole source of inspiration for the retellers of the Prabodhacandrodaya *kathā*. In the inception of his PcN, Brajvāsīdās declares that he drew not only from Kṛṣṇamiśra's *Prabodhacandrodaya* (of which he had heard about) but also from a 17th century Persian Sufi retelling of the story, the *Gulzār-i ḥāl* by Banvālīdās, of which he possessed a manuscript copy (*kitāba*).[6]

From the philosophical and religious points of view, the PcN combines Vedānta and *bhakti*. Although Brajvāsīdās belonged to Vallabha's school of Vaiṣṇava Vedānta (Śuddhādvaita Vedānta), a careful examination of his PcN shows that the drama does not display specific elements pointing to it. This downplayed affiliation can be seen as caused by several factors. First by the fact that the Prabodhacandrodaya as a story tries to accommodate as many philosophical viewpoints as possible. Secondly, from the literary viewpoint several early modern authors composed works which can be seen as "sectarian", displaying clearly a specific philosophical and religious perspective, as well as "non-sectarian" works, where doctrines associated with a discrete philosophical tradition are absent.[7] Thirdly, scholars have demonstrated that from the 16th

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4   Kṛṣṇamiśra's work was translated several times to English and other European languages like French, German, Italian and Spanish. For this paper I refer to the text edition and translation by M. Kapstein (2009).

5   The tradition of Prabodhacandrodaya retellings has been largely neglected in modern scholarship. Brajbhāṣā, Avadhī and Khaṛī Bolī Hindī retellings are the object of a general study by Agrawal (1962).

6   Cf. PcN 1.13–18. On the *Gulzār-i ḥāl*, see Cappello (2019) and Gandhi (2020).

7   One example is that of Nanddās (d. c. 1585), who was also initiated in Valla-bha's tradition, and who composed not only religiously oriented texts but wrote

century onwards some ideological differences between Vedāntins start-
ed to become less important, leaving space to other preoccupations.[8] In
this sense, the PcN aligns itself not so much with Vallabha's Vedānta but
with Vedānta as conceived and expressed in other vernacular sources.

While Vallabha's doctrine centres on a personal god identified with
Kṛṣṇa, the PcN presents the Absolute both impersonal and personal. The
personal facet is necessary for the cultivation of *bhakti*, that is, creating
a bond of loving connection with a god one can "see" and remember.[9]
Moreover, for Brajvāsīdās the personal aspect of the divinity could be
identified with the gods Kṛṣṇa as well as Rāma.[10]

On this point, and several others, the PcN is in line with ideas ex-
pressed in Tulsīdās's *Rāmcaritmānas*. This long poem, composed in 1574
in the North Indian regional language Avadhī, reads Rāma of Ayodhyā's
story in a Vedāntic and *bhakti* light, by regarding the prince as the Su-
preme God.[11] When dealing with personified metaphysical concepts like
Brahman, *māyā* (Illusion), *jīva* (the Individual Self), as well as the phe-
nomenal world, the PcN reuses the text of the *Rāmcaritmānas* in sev-

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and also adapted compositions on literary theory. For his religiously-oriented
works, see McGregor (1984), pp. 98f.; for those on rhetoric see ibid., pp. 125f.

8   For example, according to Gianni Pellegrini, from the 16th c. there were attempts
     at bringing closer the Vivaraṇa and the Bhāmatī schools of Advaita Vedānta
     on some issues, like the ontological substratum of *avidyā*. See Pellegrini (2018),
     p. 605.

9   On Vallabha's (1478–1530) philosophical and religious ideas and writings, see
     Barz (1976) and Narain (2004). The term *bhakti* (from the Skt. verbal root *bhaj*)
     is not of easy translation and definition, yet it is of crucial significance for the
     Indian philosophical and religious landscape. For an overview of the mean-
     ings and practices associated with it, see Narayanan (2018). I deal extensively
     with the philosophical and religious conception of the PcN in chapter 4 of my
     doctoral thesis on *Vedānta, Bhakti and their early modern sources: A complete
     translation of Brajvāsīdās's Prabodhacandrodaya Nāṭaka with a critical study of its
     philosophical and religious dimensions*, Université de Lausanne (2022).

10   Cf., for example, PcN 5.119.

11   The *Rāmcaritmānas* is held to be one of the fundamental works of the *bhakti*
     movement in North India up to this day. Cf. Lutgendorf (1991). The philosophi-
     cal interpretations of Rāma's story were developed mainly in works such as the
     Rāma-related Upaniṣads and the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa*, upon which Tulsī relied
     for his own retelling. See Vaudeville (1959).

eral instances. Therefore, philosophical inspiration for the PcN comes not only from the classical Sanskrit texts by Vedānta and the exegetical works by the Vedāntic philosophers but also from local language sources. The literary refinement of the *Rāmcaritmānas* and the popularity it enjoyed already in the 17th and 18th centuries make it a literary and intellectual paradigm for the PcN.[12]

The indebtedness of the PcN to the *Rāmcaritmānas* in terms not only of *bhakti* but also of Vedānta contributes to current discussions about the "Greater Advaita Vedānta." This approach seeks to enlarge the literary canon of Vedānta philosophies to texts composed in languages other than Sanskrit. It attempts to investigate the popularisation of Vedāntic philosophies, "to enrich and maybe complicate their intellectual history" through the additional investigation of genres different from commentaries or treatises.[13]

Allegorical dramas like the PcN dedicate significant space to philosophical reflections by blending poetry and learned discourse. Therefore, it is not possible to examine the PcN with exactly the same expectations as when reading a treatise (*śāstra*) on a particular topic. Still, it is possible to read the text in its own terms and determine what discourses were relevant to Brajvāsīdās, how he expressed them and, of course, its declared and implicit sources.[14]

The PcN, like many other 18th-century works in North Indian regional languages, shows an encyclopaedic tendency.[15] However, it contains what

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12 A comprehensive study of the influence of the *Rāmcaritmānas* on other early modern works is a desideratum. For an overview of some texts directly connected to it, see Bulcke (1999), section "Anya hindī Rām-sāhitya".

13 This is exemplified by publications such as Allen et al. (2017) and Peterson (2020). While these scholars refer specifically to Advaita Vedānta, I believe that the study of all the schools of Vedānta philosophy – not only Advaita – could benefit from the insights derived from a broader range of sources and languages.

14 My contention here is nourished by Angelika Malinar's research on philosophy in the *Mahābhārata*. The scholar argues for an inclusion of literary texts, like the epics, as an integral part of the histories of Indian philosophy. In addition, she observes that non-conventional philosophical works should not be approached with expectations of systematicity, but should be carefully regarded also in respect of the conventions of their distinct genres. Cf. Malinar (2017).

15 Cf. McGregor (1984), chapter IV.

may look like digressions which deserves closer scrutiny. For example, in the first act of the play Brajvāsī introduces king Viveka's eight ministers as personifications of the eight limbs (*aṣṭāṅga*) of Pātañjala Yoga. To be sure, Brajvāsī's reworking operates a bhaktification of the *aṣṭāṅga* list, while showing influences also from Haṭha Yoga and Purāṇic yoga. This extended exposition, absent in Kṛṣṇamiśra's PC and in Banvālīdās's Persian *Gulzār-i ḥāl*, gives a distinctly yogic flavour to the *bhakti* in PcN, which will be consolidated through other means in the following acts of the drama.[16]

3. Nyāya in Brajbhāṣā

How does this affect Nyāya? This exploration is preliminary, insofar as my work does not treat Nyāya specifically and because of a gap in the research dealing with Nyāya in vernacular languages (*bhāṣā*) as well. The very existence of complete works dedicated to this field and composed in the regional literary languages of North India is in doubt. On the topic of vernacularisation, Sheldon Pollock has observed that "[b]oth *nyāya*, the *pramāṇaśāstra* (along with the larger questions of epistemology), and *mīmāṃsā*, the *vākyaśāstra*, were entirely untouched by vernacularization. I have been unable to locate a single premodern work in either field in any regional language, except for the occasional and very late, almost certainly colonial-era, translation."[17]

The case under discussion in this article – albeit preceding colonial times – could, indeed, be seen as a tiny exception to the rule. However, I would like to take another approach to the question: that of opening space for a possibility. Apparently Nyāya was never entirely "vernacularised", but does that imply that such topics were not discussed at all in regional languages? Were they never commented upon, maybe orally?

After all, Nyāya scholars themselves debated about whether *bhāṣā* words possess expressive power, that is, if they communicate knowledge like Sanskrit. Pollock reports the debates among them: for some, like Kauṇḍa Bhaṭṭa (fl. 1625), *bhāṣā* held an equivalent signifying power to Sanskrit. On the contrary, Kamalākara Bhaṭṭa (fl. 1620–1630) opposed the

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16 Cf. Pastore (forthcoming).

17 Pollock (2011), pp. 23f. See also pp. 28f.

use of *bhāṣā*, for in his view *bhāṣā* terms were "corrupted" and did not have the capability of conveying a meaning as effectively as Sanskrit.[18] But when the dominion of Sanskrit in the field of Knowledge systems was indeed "bent", how was Nyāya affected?

4. Nyāya in the *Prabodhacandrodaya Nāṭaka*

The PcN presents abstract concepts personified, like the two princes Viveka (discrimination) and Moha (bewilderment), half-brothers and enemies. Sacred texts are embodied as well, like Upaniṣad, the lost queen of king Viveka, and her daughter Bhagavadgītā. Therefore, there is also a character called Nyāyaśāstra or Taraka/Tarkaśāstra, which I translated as Science-of-Reasoning or, one could say, Debate, personified as a woman. The denomination points out that it is rightly the śāstric Nyāya, that is, related to its articulation in the technical literature, that is addressed in the PcN. In order to better understand the passages I will analyse, it is useful to be familiar with the PcN's plot.

The PcN presents the soteriological process of freeing the ātman from its bondage by body and mind in order to recognise the relationship of unity/identity it entertains with the Brahman. A power struggle occurs between two parts of the same family: the first is the faction of Mahāmoha, Bewilderment, the second is the faction of Viveka, Discrimination. These two are the sons of king Mana (Skt. *manas*), Mind, and the grandchildren of Jīvātama Puruṣa (Skt. *jīvātman*), the Individual Self. Jīvātama Puruṣa suffers since his son Mana has forgotten him because of Mahāmoha. Moha and his party made up of Kāma (Desire), Lobha (Greed), Krodha (Anger) etc. can be destroyed if Viveka reunites with Upaniṣad and their twin children Vidyā (Knowledge) and Prabodha (Wisdom) are born. When king Mana remembers his father, the Individual Self Jīvātama Puruṣa, the latter will be able to meet Supreme Self (Paramātama Puruṣa, who never enters the scene) again. This will all take place thanks to the support of Viṣṇubhakti, Bond-with-Viṣṇu.

Among Viveka's allies there is Nyāyaśāstra, who is described in the final 6th act of the drama. The first mention of it is found in the prologue to the act: Faith (*śraddhā*), allied with Discrimination, narrates to her

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18 Pollock (2011), pp. 29–36, cites these and other thinkers' positions about this issue.

daughter Peace (*śānti*) what has happened in the war, and how their faction defeated Bewilderment's. However, she adds that Mana was seduced by the Siddhis (Supernatural Powers) deriving from yoga practice, and became Moha's victim again. Afterwards, she says that Nyāyaśāstra intervened and reminded the king of the troubles he went through because of Moha and how much difficulty it meant to get rid of him.[19] In this instance the role of Nyāya's character is positive, and her task is to provide an argument for Mana to reconsider his actions.

The PcN, however, is a Vaiṣṇava Vedānta text with the purpose of portraying Vaiṣṇava Vedānta as the best option for a spiritual seeker. For this reason, even schools of thought which were Viveka's allies throughout most of the drama, are criticised in the last part of the 6th act. When Viveka is reunited with Upaniṣad in the presence of Jīvātama, the latter asks Upaniṣad where and how she spent the time separated from her husband. The queen reports of her consecutive encounters with three women: Yajñavidyā (Sacrificial Science), Mīmāṃsā (Hermeneutics) and, finally, Nyāyaśāstra. The narrative proceeds in this way: Yajñavidyā and Mīmāṃsā interrogate Upaniṣad about her belief, and each time Upaniṣad states that she believes in the single eternal ocean of bliss that is Brahman.[20] After Upaniṣad's declaration, Yajñavidyā and Mīmāṃsā reject Upaniṣad's views. At this point, Viveka intervenes and refutes the doctrines of Yajñavidyā and Mīmāṃsā.

This pattern changes in the case of Nyāyaśāstra because Upaniṣad herself has something to say about her. She introduces Nyāyaśāstra without restating her own belief as in the two previous cases, while Viveka's intervention comes only later. This looks like a strategic move from the part of Brajvāsīdās since he creates a division of labour between Upaniṣad and Viveka. In the case of Yajñavidyā and Mīmāṃsā, the matter was the correct interpretation of Upaniṣad's words, while in the case of Nyāyaśāstra the value of *śabda* (authoritative testimony) in general – and *śruti* (revealed texts) in particular – is the first issue to be at stake, of clearly epistemological nature. Therefore, Upaniṣad will uphold the status of *śabda* among the means of valid knowledge (*pramāṇa*), and hence defend herself, before her husband takes up metaphysi-

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19 PcN 6.44f.

20 For example, PcN 6.97f.

cal problems, rejecting Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika in a more general fashion. While Viveka's arguments against the metaphysical views of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika in the PcN largely resemble those of Kṛṣṇamiśra's *Prabodhacandrodaya*,[21] the extended presentation of the instruments of reasoning (*tarka upāya*) by the queen is entirely Brajvāsīdās's own creation.

Now let's take a close look at the description made by Upaniṣad. She says she arrived in Nyāyaśāstra's dwelling place and saw there many "people" sitting and "having a discussion".[22] Then she adds:

> *vividhi bhāṁti dṛṣṭānta saji tarka aneka upāya /*
> *karata bāda vidyā vipula so meṁ dekhyau jāya //* 6.110

> The numerous instruments of argumentation, embellished with various examples –
> I saw they were practising the multifarious science of debate (*bāda vidyā*).

> *koī tahāṁ bāda ko karai /*
> *koī nigraha ko anusarai //*
> *jalpa vitaṇḍa soṁ koi arai /*
> *chala aru jāti koī vistarai //*
> *e ṣaṭa bheda nyāya ke kahe /*
> *tina kari ve saba jhagarata rahe //*
> *chaho bheda ke kahoṁ ju lakṣana /*
> *jānata hai saba loga bicakṣana //* 6.111

> There someone has a discussion (*bāda*), someone practices [the points of] defeat (*nigraha*), someone sticks to dispute (*jalpa*) and trivial objection (*vitaṇḍā*); someone spreads intentional misinterpretation (*chala*) and false rejoinder (*jāti*). These are said to be six categories of reasoning (*nyāya*); they all keep fighting through them. I am going to describe the characteristics of the six categories, [for] all skilled people know them.

Why is the treatment limited to merely six categories (*ṣaṭa bheda*)? According to Sitansusekhar Bagchi, a sixfold classification of *tarka* – *ṣaṭtarka* or *ṣaṭtarkī* – was widespread in philosophical discourses, to the extent

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21 Cf. Kṛṣṇamiśra (2009), pp. 260–265, for the Sanskrit text and translation of the whole passage.

22 PcN 6.109: *caracā karata jana*. Unless noted otherwise, all translations are mine.

that the term *tarka* became a symbol of the number six in chronograms. He remarks, however, that lists of five, ten or eleven categories are more frequent. The only major thinker supporting a sixfold configuration is Śrīharṣa, the well known Advaita Vedāntin from the 12th century. At the same time, the lists Bagchi discusses, also the shorter and longer ones, are by no means univocal in terms of their members. Although related to debate, what the philosophers explained as "sixfold *tarka*" is not the categories Brajvāsīdās speaks of. In their case, the six types of *tarka* point to a division of the modalities of debate: infinite regress, vicious circle, mutual dependence, etc.[23] For this reason, it seems that Brajvāsī was aware of the number six being associated with *tarka* as an idiomatic expression and that he wished to employ it, but referring to a selection of the core subject matter of Nyāya and not to a technical aspect of it.[24]

Most of the definitions of these categories which are given in a passage following the above quoted introductory stanzas strongly evoke classical Nyāya sources, among these the *Nyāyasūtra*s (henceforth NS). After a relative decline in its popularity during the 11th century, when several independent works were composed in the field of Nyāya instead, Akṣapāda's influential text kept being commented upon by thinkers well into the 18th century.[25] The style of śāstric exposition is reproduced in the PcN by concluding the elucidation of each category with the formulaic phrase "this is called 'x' in Nyāya". One instance of this is the description of *chala* (intentional misinterpretation):

> *jori gāṃṭhakai artha anartha /*
> *lehiṁ banāya kaha na samarattha //*
> *āna ke pāchahi dūṣaṇa lāvai /*
> *nyāya madhya so chala kahavāvai //* 6.116

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23 Apart from Śrīharṣa's, Bagchi explores the classifications and related discussions by several other influential scholars, such as Udayana (10/11th c.). Cf. Bagchi (1953), pp. 151–183, for an overview. On how the nomenclature *ṣaṭtarkī* also denoted the six schools of philosophy, and its popularity, see Gerschhmeier (2007).

24 Cf. NS 1.1.1; *hetvābhāsa* (lit. "semblance of a reason", that is, a logically untenable reason) is absent from the list. The rationale of the omission is not explicit, but we know that the *bhāṣya* on NS 1.1.1 states that *hetvābhāsa* really is a kind of *nigrahasthāna* (point of defeat, defeat situation).

25 Cf. Preisendanz (2005).

> Joining a meaning [with] a different meaning, they make up [something which does] not [possess] the same meaning [of what] was said. After that, they accuse [the one who spoke]; for [the Science-of-]Reasoning this is called intentional misinterpretation.

The term *anartha* could mean "lack of meaning", but it seems more apt to translate it as "different meaning", since, in line with NS 1.2.10 and 1.2.12, *chala* consists in a deliberate misunderstanding of the sense of a word in order to oppose the adversary. With respect to wording, the PcN seems to tend more towards that of verse 145 in Keśavamiśra's *Tarkabhāṣā* (TBh), the well-known primer of Nyāya from the 13th century:

> *abhiprāyāntareṇa prayuktasya śabdasyārthāntaraṃ parikalpya dūṣaṇābhidhānaṃ chalam* (…).[26]

In particular one element allows to confirm the proximity of the two explanations: the intent of finding fault in the speaker's words, indicated by both texts with the term *dūṣaṇa*. The phrase *lehiṃ banāya* of the PcN has the same sense of "making up", or "inventing", as the verb *parikalpya* in the TBh, but a similar expression (*kalpanā*) is found also in NS 1.2.12.[27] While Akṣapāda takes several other *sūtra*s to exhaust the topic of *chala*, the PcN and the TBh do not delve into the distinct typologies of misinterpretation.

While we do not observe any unusual reinterpretation of *chala* by the author of the PcN, the case is different for the other members of the sixfold group. As a general difference with the pithy statements in the NS, the descriptions in PcN highlight the ideal social setting of debate by portraying the people engaged in discussion: two scholars (*paṇḍita doya*), self-conceited people (*jana abhimānī*), two people (*doya jana*), and people with little knowledge (*alpavidyā jana*). Unlike *chala*, the other categories do not simply restate the traditional view, but in some cases the purpose, as anticipated, appears to be re-establishing the primacy of *śabda*:

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26 Cf. TBh, p. 243, translated by Iyer: "When someone uses a certain word (or words) in one sense and if the hearer were to find fault with it by construing it in a different sense, this practice is called *chala* or quibbling."

27 For the meaning of *banā-* see the dictionary entry in Das (1965–1975), p. 3382. At the same time, the TBh and NS are still closer in diction than the PcN.

paṇḍita doya baiṭhe ika ṭhāhīṁ /
tatva vicārahiṁ āpusa māhīṁ //
dehīṁ deha karai niravārā /
nita anitta ko karai vicārā //
pakṣa rahita śabdahi niravāhī /
kahata nyāya meṁ bāda su tāhī // 6.112

Two scholars sit together, they reflect together upon reality/
truth. They deliberate [about] the body and the possessor of
the body; they ponder upon [what is] permanent and imper-
manent. [When] they decide [according to] verbal testimony,
[which is] impartial, this is called Discussion in [the Science-
of-]Reasoning.

Vāda is a conversation where the two parties involved aim at the truth.
This is in agreement with the definition of the first, the "honest" kind of
debate in the NS.[28] However, if *sūtra* 1.2.1 specifies that it is a situation
which involves the adoption of opposite sides (*pakṣa* and *pratipakṣa*) and
that the truth can be established through any of the *pramāṇa*s, this is
not the advice given in the PcN. Using the language proper of the topic
at hand, the PcN overturns the definition of *vāda* by singling out only
one *pramāṇa*: testimony (*śabda*). It suggests that any debate should be
solved by resorting to testimony, since it is assertive (*pakṣa rahita*, liter-
ally "without a side"), and doubt is apparently what should be avoided.

With *jalpa*, we find that the definition includes a different kind of
critique and disapproval:

paṇḍita doya ju caracā karahīṁ /
nija nija jaya icchā mana dharahīṁ //
nīrasa rasa kī svāda na jānaiṁ /
nyāya madhya tehi jalpa bakhānaiṁ // 6.114

Two scholars have a discussion, they fix the mind [on] the de-
sire [for] one's own victory. [Being] devoid of *rasa*, they do not
know the taste of *rasa*. This is called Dispute in [the Science-
of-]Reasoning.

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28 Cf. also, for example, TBh 135: *tattvabubhutsvoḥ kathā vādaḥ* "Discussion is a
debate between seekers of the truth".

This description also follows what has been put forward in NS 1.2.1 and 1.2.2 with reference to the purpose of *jalpa*, which is victory (*jaya* in the PcN).[29] The second line of PcN 6.114 contains a familiar Vedāntic criticism made to *tarka*: it is "sapless" or "dry, dull" (*nīrasa*).[30] This reproach may seem conventional, but the term *nīrasa* is not simply a synonym for the Sanskrit term *śuṣka*, "dry". It alludes to a broader theme in the PcN. In the text, *bhakti* is said to be the *eka rasa* or single essence in Brahman.[31] This *rasa* is said to be both *ānanda* (bliss) and *samatā* (sameness in the sense of equanimity).[32] Not tasting the *rasa* means not knowing Brahman on the one hand; on the other hand, the mention of *rasa* and its taste (*svāda*) implies an aesthetic and emotional dimension, typical of the *bhakti* presented in the PcN.

Upaniṣad, in fact, defends the status of scripture as the only means of knowledge, and what is more, subtly provides a *bhakti* perspective in her critique. This is also the case of *nigraha*:

> *jahāṁ doya jana ati abhimānī /*
> *samajhaiṁ nahīṁ śabda kī bānī //*
> *apanohī haṭha saṭha ve ṭhānaiṁ /*
> *aura na dukhai āpa dukha māne //*
> *kevala jhagarohī priya jāhī /*
> *kahata nyāya meṁ nigraha tāhī //* 6.113

> Where two people, very self-conceited, do not understand the words of testimony, are intent only on themselves, the stubborn fools, and are not sad [for] others, [but] sorrowful [for] themselves – who like only fighting, is called [Point-of-]Defeat in [the Science-of-]Reasoning.

The first line evokes NS 1.2.19, where *nigrahasthāna* is defined as an occasion for defeat (*nigraha*) due to a mistake (*vipratipatti*) or a lack of understanding (*apratipatti*). Here, Brajvāsī refers to those who "do not understand" (*samajhaiṁ nahīṁ*) to convey these two shades of meaning. He

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29 Matilal (1998, pp. 2 and 56) calls *jalpa* a way to win "by wit or intelligence" or a "verbal fight". See also ibid., pp. 47ff.

30 Cf. *Brahmasūtra* 2.1.11 with Śaṅkara's commentary in BSBh, pp. 321–323.

31 PcN 6.147.

32 PcN 5.118f., 6.22, 6.81, 6.97, and 6.101.

is more preoccupied to specify that the object partially or wholly mis-
understood is the "words of testimony" (*śabda*). It is interesting to note
that Upaniṣad primarily defends *śabda* as *śruti*, but at the same time *bānī*
can also be translated in the sense of someone's "saying, utterance". In
the vernacular cultural and literary universe the term *bānī* indicated the
utterances of someone spiritually perfected and able to guide others.[33]
Therefore, *śabda kī bānī* may be alluding also to the teaching or instruc-
tion of such an authoritative figure. The passage is, in fact, not devoid of
moralising undertones and points beyond scriptural ignorance.

Brajvāsī adds a negative psychological dimension by saying that people
who don't grasp the significance of the *bānī* are egoistical and do not think
about other people's suffering. This second accusation can be seen as an
elaboration of the attribute "very self-conceited" (*ati abhimānī*). This kind
of recrimination was not new to the philosophical field: Madhusūdana
Sarasvatī blamed those recurring to *jalpa* (sophistry) as *ahaṃkārin* or ar-
rogant debaters.[34] Vātsyāyana in his commentary to NS 2.1.69 delineates
the profile of the *āpta*, the reliable source of knowledge for testimony, by
mentioning that he has to possess a desire to communicate his experi-
ence to others. In this regard, other commentators or sub-commentators
emphasised even more such a moral or ethical aspect of the *āpta*'s profile
by adding compassion and unselfishness among other qualities.[35]

The disapproving tone of Brajvāsīdās's statements, accusing people of
being selfish and ignorant, is frequent, as it returns in the case of *vitaṇḍā*
(trivial objection):

> *jahāṁ alpavidyā jana koū /*
> *kari abhimā āpa maiṁ doū //*
> *caracā baḍī āpa maiṁ ṭhānai /*
> *bāta na kachū yathāratha jānai //*
> *āpahi vara paṇḍita kari mānaiṁ /*
> *tāhi vitaṇḍā nyāya bakhānaiṁ // 6.115*

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33 An example is the unrivalled status of *bānī* in the Sikh traditions. See Singh
    (2003), ch. 1. In the Hindī vernacular context, people are familiar with the *Kabīr
    vānī*, the utterances of the *sant* Kabīr (1398–1518). See Vaudeville (1982).

34 Cf. Pellegrini (2014), p. 8, n. 23.

35 Cf. Vācaspati Miśra's (10th/11th c.) *Nyāyavārtikatātparyaṭīkā* (NVTṬ), pp. 166f. Cf.
    also Ganeri (2001), pp. 35f.

When there are people with little knowledge, two behaving arrogantly with one another, when they are intent in big discussions with one another, [but] do not know anything as it is, and consider themselves to be the best scholars, then [Science-of-]Reasoning describes this as Trivial Objection.

The presence of such moral evaluations in the PcN is not only a matter of recreating traditional ways of confrontation but it appears to be especially developed and emphasized because of the *bhakti* facet of Brajvāsīdās's drama. The play opens with a verse of blessing (*maṅgalācaraṇa*) which is the first frame qualifying the PcN as a *bhakti* story. Of course, already Kṛṣṇamiśra's PC included *bhakti*, but the opening of the PcN and the subsequent verses make the PC story relevant for an 18th-century audience. In the PcN we find, in fact, an obeisance paid primarily to the *satsaṅga*, the company of fellow devotees. The qualities of the *sant*s, the truth-knowers, are at the centre here: they are compassionate, merciful, and pure.[36] Crucial among their qualities is their unselfishness, their considering the good of others like their own.[37] Characterisations such as those of *nigraha* and *vitaṇḍā*, therefore, exclude in this way the participation of any *sant* in their company. In this respect, that Nyāyaśāstra herself does not appear on the scene, but that people practising her science are portrayed in the PcN, may create a parallel between the social setting of debate and that of *satsaṅga*.

The characterisation of *jāti* (false rejoinder) displays a similar pattern of definition-cum-critique:

> *praśna karai uttama jana joī /*
> *tāko uttara deya ju koī //*
> *tākari samādhāna nahiṁ āvai /*
> *suni tehi aura bahuta dukha pāvai //*
> *tāhi nyāya maiṁ jāti su jānai /*
> *yoṁ kari ṣaṭa bhedahi pahicānai // 6.117*

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36 PcN 1.6.

37 PcN 1.7.

> A person that asks an excellent question,[38] [but] is not satis-
> fied when someone answers him; [and] listening to [the reply]
> becomes even sadder – he who knows this as False Rejoinder
> in [the Science-of-]Reasoning, recognizes in this way the six
> categories.

The emphasis is put on the fact that upon hearing a false rejoinder,
one becomes even sadder (*dukha*) than before. When she concludes her
speech, Upaniṣad declares that she has ascertained that these six catego-
ries are baseless (*niradhāra*), because by constantly reflecting, she did not
obtain any joy (*sukha*).[39] The elimination of *dukha* and the attainment of
ultimate bliss is what the knowledge of the sixteen categories of Nyāya
brings about according to NS 1.1.1 and 1.1.2. In this sense, Upaniṣad seems
to point to the fact that Nyāya cannot truly accomplish what it promises.
It seems clear, then, that Upaniṣad is not only making a case for *śabda*
as the source for the knowledge of the Brahman, but also for joy and for
the *rasa* of Brahman, which corresponds to *bhakti* and *ānanda*, devotion
and bliss.

5. Conclusion

In Brajvāsī's PcN we find a treatment of Nyāya which is closely related to
śāstric sources but where the language of discussion is Brajbhāṣā. At the
same time, Nyāya is not only contrasted to a Vedāntic point of view but
also to one of *bhakti*. Brajvāsī's interpretation could be termed a *bhakta*'s
response to Nyāya, where the topic is adapted to the *bhakta*'s worldview
in general and to that of the PcN story in particular.[40] The passage could

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38 The adjective *uttama* could also be understood as referring to *jana*: "an excellent
person".

39 PcN 6.118: *bhalī bhāṁti kari ye chaho maiṁ dekhe niradhāra / nahiṁ sukha kahū
te lahyo rahī bicāri bicāra //*. At the same time, *niradhāra* can also be understood
in the sense of "defining, settling, ascertaining" (as a *tadbhava* corresponding
to Sanskrit *nirdhāraṇa* instead of *nirādhāra*). Hence, the first line of the verse
could be translated as: "I have ascertained these six [categories] properly", by
conflating the meaning of *dekhe* (I have seen / I saw) with *niradhāra*. Cf. Das
(1965–1975), p. 2638.

40 This intellectual operation is not unknown in the realm of *bhakti*. For example,
the Dādūpanthī Sundardās adapted motives of *rīti* and *kāvya* to suit his *sant*

be interpreted as a fruit of the encyclopaedic tendency of the text on the one hand; on the other hand, it may also be a witness of the author's awareness of a longstanding, critical engagement between Nyāya and Vedānta.[41]

The confidence with which Brajvāsīdās tackles Nyāyaśāstra in *bhāṣā* could mean that its realm was not left entirely untouched by vernacular language(s). In the case of PcN, the treatment of Nyāyaśāstra can also be considered a written trace of what took place orally, in the context of reading and explaining texts with the assistance of a teacher. Nothing prevents us to think that Nyāya texts were read in Sanskrit and their exegesis (and critique) took place in *bhāṣā*.[42] In this sense, maybe the relationship between forms of knowledge and the choice of language was not always as rigid as one would presume.

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NS   *Nyāyayasūtra of Gautama: a System of Indian Logic*, ed. and comm. Ganganath Jha, Poona: Oriental Book Agency, 1939.

NVTṬ   *Nyāyavārtikatātparyaṭīkā of Vācaspati Miśra*, ed. Anantalal Thakur, New Delhi: Indian Council of Philosophical Research, 1996.

PC   *Prabodhacandrodaya*, *The Rise of the Wisdom Moon by Kṛṣṇamiśra*, ed. and tr. M. Kapstein, New York: Clay Sanskrit Library, 2009.

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bhakti audience in the 17th century. Cf. Rajpurohit (2021). The term *bhakta* is generally translated as "devotee", but it is crucial to understand that in the PcN's worldview it means someone who establishes a loving relationship with a god, a bond which is not unilateral but shared with the god who loves him/her in turn. Such a relationship makes the *bhakta* participate in a larger community of people bound not to the world but to a god.

41 For an overview of mainly Advaita and Dvaita Vedānta involvement with Nyāya over the centuries, see Diaconescu (2012), pp. 265–277.

42 An intellectual operation which would not be unheard of, akin to the translation practices into Persian at the Mughal court. In that context, the translators worked with the help of *paṇḍit*s in order to understand the meaning of the texts they sought to render in the imperial court's adopted official language. These conversations between the scholars often happened in *bhāṣā*, the language common to the two parties. See Truschke (2016), chapter 1.

PcN   Brajvāsīdās, *Prabodhacandrodaya Nāṭaka*, (editors not mentioned), Lucknow: Naval Kishor Press, 1875.

TBh   *Tarkabhāṣā of Keśavamiśra*, ed. and tr. S. R. Iyer, Varanasi: Chaukhamba Orientalia, 1979.

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