SYAD-NARRATIVE AS A PHILOSOPHICAL PRACTICE METHOD TO MINIMIZE COGNITIVE BIASES

LA NARRATIVE SYAD COMO UN MÉTODO DE FILOSOFÍA APLICADA PARA MINIMIZAR LOS SESGOS COGNITIVOS

SAATHVIK DEVARAKONDA
Hindu College, University of Delhi
India
saathvikd123@gmail.com
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5277-8787

Abstract: The term 'health' doesn't merely apply to physical, social, and psychological spheres, but also extends to the philosophical sphere. Philosophical Counseling has recently emerged as a productive method to resolve issues concerning one's philosophical health, by employing Socratic dialogue and related techniques to cross-examine the relevant thoughts, values, intentions, and actions, to spur realizations that alleviate the issues. In this paper, I introduce two interdependent ancient Jain philosophical doctrines that may be applied fruitfully in Philosophical Counseling practice, namely, Anekāntavāda, which is ontological, and Syadvada, which is epistemological. Anekāntavāda is the doctrine of non-one-sidedness, that is, that reality is multi-faceted, and Syadvada is the corollary doctrine that knowledge is therefore necessarily relative and perspectival. I exapt some ways in which these twin doctrines may be fruitfully applied to resolve various issues connected with the sorts of cognitive biases and bounded rationality that often present themselves in Philosophical Counseling sessions. Research has proven bounded rationality and heuristics to be the principal causes of cognitive biases. This paper discusses the causes and impacts of cognitive biases on the processes of judgment forming and decision making and focuses primarily on two applications of the two Jain doctrines: (1) to understand the multiple dimensions of reality through Anekāntavāda in order to minimize reliance on heuristics and bounded

rationality, and (2) to identify and minimize specific cognitive biases. The objective is to propose Anekāntavāda and Syadvada as methodological tools of Philosophical Counseling that may be used to reduce bounded rationality, and to propose the blend of Syadvada and Narrative Therapy – the "*Syad*-Narrative" method – to attenuate cognitive biases and thus to yield productive outcomes in Philosophical Counseling.

Resumen: El término "salud" no solo se aplica a las esferas física, social y psicológica, sino que también a la esfera filosófica. La oorientación filosófica ha surgido recientemente como un método útil para afrontar problemas personales relacionados con la salud filosófica mediante el empleo del diálogo socrático y técnicas relacionadas para examinar los pensamientos, valores, intenciones y acciones relevantes y para estimular las acciones que alivian los problemas. En este artículo, presento dos doctrinas filosóficas jainistas antiguas interdependientes que aplicables a la práctica de la orientación filosófica, a saber, la *Anekāntavāda*, de naturaleza ontológica, y la *Syadvada*, de naturaleza epistemológica. *Anekāntavāda* es la doctrina de la no unilateralidad, es decir, plantea que la realidad es multifacética, y *Syadvada* es la doctrina que establece que el conocimiento es relativo y en perspectiva. El artículo explica algunas formas en las que estas doctrinas alinadas pueden aplicarse fructíferamente para resolver varios problemas relacionados con los tipos de sesgos cognitivos y la racionalidad limitada, que a menudo se presentan en las sesiones de orientación filosófica. La investigación ha demostrado que la limitada racionalidad y la heurística son las principales causas de los sesgos cognitivos. Este documento analiza las causas y los impactos de los sesgos cognitivos en los procesos de formación de juicios y toma de decisiones y se centra principalmente en dos aplicaciones de las dos doctrinas jainistas: (1) comprender las múltiples dimensiones de la realidad a través de *Anekāntavāda* para minimizar la dependencia de la heurística y de una racionalidad limitada, y (2) identificar y minimizar sesgos cognitivos específicos. El objetivo es proponer la *Anekāntavāda* y la *Syadvada* como herramientas metodológicas de orientación filosófica para ser utilizadas y proponer la combinación de *Syadvada* y Terapia Narrativa – el método "Syad-Narrative" – para atenuar los sesgos cognitivos y así producir resultados en la orientación filosófica.

Palabras clave: Filosofía Aplicada, salud filosófica, orientación filosófica, filosofía india, jainismo, *anekāntavāda*, *syadvada*.

Rationale

A bias is a natural proclivity to lean in favor of or against an individual, group, idea, or thing, usually in an unfair way. Biases are of two types: conscious or explicit biases and unconscious or cognitive biases. While conscious biases are intentional and subjects are aware of their attitudes and the results of their behaviors, they are not harmful unless they result in conscious stereotyping. Cognitive biases are subconscious errors in thinking that lead to misinterpretation of information from the world around us, and which affect our rationality and the accuracy of our decisions and judgments.

These errors in thinking arise from problems related to memory, attention, and other mental mistakes that sometimes result from our brain's efforts to simplify the immensely complex world around us. Unlike explicit biases, we are unaware of the cognitive biases we might have.[1] As research conducted on cognitive biases suggests, bounded rationality emerges as the primary cause for such biases.

Philosophical health, according to Luis de Miranda, a pioneer of philosophical practice, is a state of constructive coherence between a person's or group's methods of thinking, speaking, and acting, in which the opportunities for a good life and healing growth are expanded, and the needs for self-, intersubjective, and biodiverse flourishing are met. Dr. Miranda adds that philosophical health is about epistemic justice. A person who lacks the epistemic resources, such as conceptual frameworks, to make sense of events and perceptions, to name their experiences and their deep meaning aptly and well, and to account for them to others, also lacks a

---

[1] Lang, R., "What Is the Difference between Conscious And Unconscious Bias? FAQs", available at https://engageinlearning.com/faq/compliance/unconscious-bias/what-is-the-difference-between-conscious-and-unconscious-bias/. Last accessed on November, 20th, 2022.

framework into which they can fit their choices and purposes without distortion, or which they can use to make judgments and name something as 'just' or 'unjust', such as how they are treated.[2] But in cases where the very epistemic framework of individuals could be guised with bounded rationality, there come cognitive biases resulting in unjust judgments and distorted choices. Consequently, these cognitive biases result in the disruption of the coherence between the methods of thinking, speaking, and acting of individuals, further impacting their philosophical health. There is a dire need for the issues related to cognitive biases to be addressed in Philosophical Counseling with a substantial amount of care, as the subjects might not be aware of the existence of cognitive biases in them at all.

Studies have so far demonstrated that bounded rationality and cognitive biases share a cause-effect relationship causing issues in the philosophical well-being of individuals. In line with the Buddha's prescription (in his four noble truths) about the removal of the cause to mitigate the effect, this paper aims to provide a productive solution to cognitive biases that arise in Philosophical Counseling, using the Jain doctrines of Anekāntavāda and Syadvada alongside Narrative therapy, the '*Syad*-Narrative' method, to attenuate the bounded rationality and also minimize the cognitive biases of individuals. The methodology used in the development of the arguments in the paper is analytical in nature. It should be noted that this paper analytically explains and defines its purpose to attenuate the problem of cognitive biases from its very fundamental roots at an individual level to avoid *durniti* or bad judgment, which could further pave paths towards and orient dialogue and philosophizing and does not deal with solving any further stages of effects during dialogues directly (as all such issues

---

[2] de Miranda, Luis. "The Vision: Meaning is Healing", Available at https://philosophical.health/ Last accessed on January, 20th, 2022.

shall also be minimized when the correction happens on the individual level and the cause gets removed to mitigate the effect).

Bounded Rationality and Cognitive Biases

Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman, in the 1970s, gave the term 'cognitive biases' to describe purportedly flawed systematic patterns of responses to judgment and decision problems. Their research program – the heuristics and biases program – was based on the principle of bounded rationality as proposed by Herbert Simon in opposition to classical rationality. Classical rationality is mostly concerned with the formalization of normative solutions to judgment and decision-making problems via a statistics and probability approach, with the notion of bounded rationality, which addresses the specific constraints encountered by agents in their environments.

According to the bounded rationality view, humans have limited time, resources, and cognitive capacity to make decisions ranging from choosing friends to food and classes to shoes, and hence may have to rely on heuristics and simple strategies to make decisions. Because of cognitive and temporal constraints, humans are less likely to find all of the essential knowledge to make a reasonable decision, according to the bounded rationality decision-making process. As a result, humans tend to make satisfactory decisions rather than optimal ones.[3] This process of simplifying the immensely complex world and making decisions using heuristics makes cognitive biases a product of bounded rationality, which

---

[3] Wilke, A., and Mata, R., "Cognitive Bias", *Encyclopedia of Human Behavior,* 1, 2022, pp. 531-535.Available at https://s3.amazonaws.com/arena-attachments/557491/b16d97da35ed37a0a022e806cc931a0d.pdf . Last accessed on November, 20th, 2022.

further leads to what is called *durniti* in Jain logic: mistaking the partial truth to be the whole and absolute truth.

Philosophical Counseling and issues in Philosophical Health

In the field of philosophy, philosophical practice gained importance in the 1980s when Gerd Achenbach pioneered the movement and gave it a new course in the modern world. Many philosophers throughout history have applied philosophy to everyday problems, thus he was not the first to do so; nonetheless, he was the first to form an association committed to this work and to recognise philosophical practice as a separate field. Philosophical practise now encompasses a variety of formats, including philosophical retreats, long-term self-reflection groups, the philosophical café, and, of course, philosophical counselling, which is probably the most well-known type of philosophical practice according to Ran Lahav.

Any type of therapy session between a philosopher-practitioner acting as a philosophical counsellor and an individual counselee is generally referred to as "philosophical counselling." For several weeks or months, the two often meet once (or more times), during which time they discuss the counselee's problems and personal life in a philosophical manner.[4]

Luis de Miranda gives this novel concept of philosophical health in the field of philosophical counseling by not restricting the term health to mere physical, social, mental and biological spheres but also extending it to the philosophical level. From his empirical experience as a philosophical practitioner and counselor he bases the cultivation of philosophical health on five principles during a crisis. Crisis is derived from the Greek *krisis*, which means to

---

[4] Lahav, Ran, "Philosophical Counseling and Self-Transformation", Philosophy, Counseling, and Psychotherapy Cambridge Scholarly Press, 2013, pp. 2-3

choose, and to perform a discriminatory act between wanted and unwanted elements. The principles that Miranda suggests are mental heroism, deep orientation, critical creativity, deep listening, and what he calls the "Creal" or the creative Real as the ultimate possibility (the paper only deals with the first four as they are highly related to the problem of cognitive biases than the last principle). These principles of philosophical health are very intimately related to the process of judgment and get highly influenced by cognitive biases. Hence, we shall understand how cognitive biases impact our philosophical health in terms of these principles.

Mental heroism talks about gaining independence of thought and using one's wisdom. One cannot get even the tiniest amount of wisdom from others; one must instead produce it within.[5] Three key maxims make up the precept for getting independence of thought as propounded by Kant: (1) Think for oneself, (2) Think in the place of the other (in communication with human beings), and (3) Always think consistently with oneself.[6] Most importantly, mental heroism is about our system of values and our actions being in coherence which makes it no more of a world of ideals but a world of orientation. This brings us to the second principle, deep orientation. It talks about the orientation of one's own ideas and acts, where ideas are social forces that impact the society and are embedded in human forces by which one tries to mitigate uncontrollable beliefs, and automatic fears that, in turn, create impossible dogmas. When ideas are social forces embedded in human flourishment, philosophical progression demands an orient

---

[5] de Miranda, Luis: "Five Principles of Philosophical Health for Critical Times: From Hadot to Crealectic", *Eidos Journal for Philosophy of Culture*, 5, 2021, pp. 70-72

[6] Kant, Immanuel: *Anthropology, History, and Education*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2007.

dialogue. And having an orient dialogue requires a sense of firm judgment between wanted elements and unwanted elements. The third principle, i.e. critical creativity, deals with a durably resilient and regular capacity for recreative transformations of critical situations to create equilibriums. And the fourth principle, which is articulated with others, is called deep listening. This principle, being self-evident, plays a pivotal role in a dialogue to maintain consonance with the other, with nature and with truth.

To sum Miranda's principles up, in terms of judgment, one's philosophical health is sound when there is an independence of thought, orientation of thought and action, critical but consonant reciprocation of ideas, and listening to the other's perspective with intellectual empathy. When having cognitive biases, it is very obvious that one is influenced by external factors and biases that drive them away from independence of thought. Such a situation could be more troublesome when an individual's words and actions are in coherence with their biased thought. In such circumstances, placing oneself in the place of the other or thinking around the situation isn't possible due to bounded rationality. When there is no openness to listen to the other's thoughts due to pre-concieved notions and biased judgment, there cannot be room for an orient dialogue. This is where the problem of epistemic injustice starts with regard to philosophical health.

Luis de Miranda describes a philosophical dialogue as friendship in interrogating the world than affirming one dogma over the other. Such a thought according to him brings an openness in individuals to understand the other positions while looking around the situations from different vantages while engaging in dialogues and brings coherence of words and actions and consonance of ideas. The coherence and consonance further pave the path towards philosophical soundness. Whereas cognitive biases act as barriers to philosophical soundness. As we have discussed how cognitive biases could be barriers to the independence of thought, orientation

of thought and action, critical but consonant reciprocation of ideas, and listening to the other's perspective with intellectual empathy, we shall analytically explore in the coming sections about the doctrines of Anekantavada and Syadvada as philosophical tools to minimize such biases when used alongside narrative therapy for the betterment of philosophical health.

Anekāntavāda and Syadvada

Indian Philosophy majorly revolves around the Vedas, the earliest known philosophical works known to humankind. Jainism is one of the heterodox schools of Indian Philosophy, which plays a very important role in contesting the authority of the Vedic thought. The Jaina thought majorly revolves around the doctrine of autonomy or *aparigraha*. Usually, *aparigraha* is interpreted as non-posession or non-attachment by scholars, but such a definition would restrict the doctrine to just the ethical realm, and hence, the paper interprets it to be the autonomy of subject and object, and thought, word and action. And whenever this autonomy of any aspect is interfered with, it is considered to be *himsa* or violence. Respecting this autonomy and following non-interference is termed to be *ahimsa* or non-violence. Anekāntavāda is the doctrine of the many-sidedness of reality it is complimented by syadvada, the theory of relativity of knowledge.[7] The realities of matter (*pudgala*) and spirit (*jiva*) are considered different and distinct. There are an infinite number of material atoms and individual souls, each of which is real in its own right. And each atom and soul has a plethora of unique characteristics. An object has an endless number of unique properties. Everything has a plethora number of positive and

---

[7] J. Shah, Nagin: *Aptamimamsa Critique of Authority*, Sanskrit-Sanskriti Granthamala, 1999, pp.5

negative attributes. It is impossible for us, common people, to know all of a thing's characteristics. We can know only some qualities of some things. To know all the aspects of a thing is to become omniscient, which human beings are not.[8] We only see the surface of any object, from one side, and when we see that we only see something analogous to its skin (its outer membrane, so to speak) from a certain angle (like someone's face, not the back of their head), and that is aspectual in that we really only experience electromagnetic energy (light) waves not absorbed through its porous outer atoms but which bounce off of them and stimulate our eyes, which stimulates our optic nerves, which triggers our brain to project a visual image onto the source of those electromagnetic signals, but we do not see the other sides even of the object's surface from other angles, nor its density, temperature, energy state, electromagnetic field, internal molecular and other structures, the internal relationships between its parts, its indefinitely many atoms, their states, their quantum properties, the object's functionality, its gravitational relationship with all other objects in its vicinity and the galaxy, its historical being in and across other time slices, its indefinitely many perceptual aspects that it affords to other species with different perceptual organs and neural configurations, including those of species that no longer exist or that may yet to exist, or that exist in other parts of the cosmos, and so on – all of which is true of each object and exponentially true of all of them as they relate to each other and to other cognitive agents. The aspects of anything in relation to everything else may be said to be combinatorially explosive. Pragmatics and evolutionary constraints determine the heuristics that our brains deliver to our conscious attention as salient, and from among those, we can consciously select which ones we deem relevant, but much

---

[8] Sharma, C.D., *Indian Philosophy: A Critical Survey*, Motilal Banarsidass, 1997, pp. 50-51

of the salience and relevance realization our brains deliver is pre-conscious.

In conditions where the very nature of objects could be metaphysically multifaceted, the subject could be made to understand the relativity involved in knowing things. All of our judgments, or human knowledge, are unavoidably aspectual, relative, and restricted. And hence, other standpoints hold their own autonomous and partial validity of both truth and falsity. By holding one's own standpoint to be uncontestedly true would mean to invite unwarranted absolutism. And as per Jaina ethics, affirming one's dogma over the other perspectives and sides to look around a situation is *himsa* or violence of thought.

The Jain epistemological and logical system is known as 'Syadvada'. The word "*Syat*" refers to "perhaps" or "could be", and can be aptly translated as "relatively [speaking]". In Jainism, there are three ways of knowing things – '*durniti*', '*naya*', and '*pramana*'. Mistaking the partial truth to be the whole and absolute truth is *durniti* or bad judgment. For instance, it occurs with the claim that an object is absolutely real (*sadeva*). The doctrine of *naya* is a prominent part of Jain logic (aspects or standpoints: aspects of a thing, as perceived from standpoints). *Nayas* provide knowledge of a thing from specific perspectives, and these perspectives are aspectual abstractions through which reality is viewed. *Pramana* or valid judgment (*Syat sat*) is a statement of a partial truth, knowing that it is only partial, relative, and conditional, and has the possibility of being differently interpreted from different points of view. Every *naya*, in order to become a *pramana*, must be qualified by adding *syat*. To reject *syat* is to embrace absolutism, which is unwarranted and further gets contradicted by experience.[9] Syadvada emphasizes the acceptance of apparent opposite attributes without the attributes being literally

---

[9] Ibidem, pp. 51-53.

self-contradictory, as one reconciles the other from different standpoints. Different standpoints presenting seemingly contradictory attributes are synthesized in a coherent whole by Syadvada, making it a method of synthesis.[10] In short, Anekāntavāda and Syadvada are two sides of the same teaching, which is realistic and relativistic pluralism. Anekāntavāda is the metaphysical side of multifaceted reality that contains numerous characters, whereas Syadvada is the epistemological and logical side which suggests that we can only know some aspectual parts of reality and that all our judgments are, therefore, necessarily relative. And together, these magnificent doctrines safeguard the autonomy and non-interference of thought by upholding *ahimsa* and *aparigraha.*

Syad-Narrative

Method

Subjects often approach counselors with regard to concerns in their well-being that could be due to the disruption of coherence between divergent elements of their philosophical health (thoughts, words, values, intentions, and actions). And there is a good probability that the subjects might be unknowingly suffering from cognitive biases. In situations where the counselor is able to sense boundedness in the subject in terms of rationality, this could act as an indicator of the presence of cognitive biases in the subject. In such cases, the bounded rationality and cognitive biases may fruitfully be handled using the Jain doctrines of Anekāntavāda and Syadvada.
The suggested method for the application of Anekāntavāda and Syadvada is Narrative therapy, which seeks to distance the person

---

[10] Shah, J. Nagin, *Jaina Philosophy and Religion [English Translation of Jaina Darsana by Munisri Nyayavijayaji]*, Motilal Banarsidass, 1999, pp.328-329.

from the situation, allowing them to externalize rather than internalize their issues. Narrative therapy focuses on a person's abilities and a sense of purpose to help them get through challenging situations. Narrative therapy is based on an individual's experience of reality and is predicated on the idea that reality is not objective in nature.[11]

This enables clients to gain some perspective on the challenge they are facing and enables them to recognize how it might be more likely to be protecting or assisting them than harming them. People who adopt this viewpoint feel more empowered to alter their thought and behavior patterns and "rewrite" their life stories in order to live lives that reflect who they truly are, what they are capable of, and what their purpose is, independent of their circumstances. This method enables the subject to maintain a consistent thought of themselves irrespective of the circumstantial and external influences while respecting the other's perspective and its relative validity, as Kant's second and third maxims suggest.

This is where Anekāntavāda and Syadvada mesh with Narrative therapy. The subject is guided to understand that reality is multifaceted. The old story of the elephant and the visually impaired men can be utilized to this end. It tells the narrative of a group of blind men who have never seen an elephant before and try to describe what it's like by touching it. Each blind man can only feel one aspect of the elephant's body, such as the side or the tusk. They then characterize the elephant based on their limited experience, with their descriptions differing from one another: snake (tail), spear (tusk), tree trunk (leg), etc. In some versions, they develop suspicions that the others are lying and come to

---

[11] Ackerman, Courtney E.: *19 Narrative Therapy Techniques, Interventions + Worksheets. Positive Psychology,* available online at https://positivepsychology.com/narrative-therapy/, las access November 3rd, 2022.

blows. The moral of the parable is that humans have a tendency to claim absolute truth based on their limited, subjective experience, and they neglect other people's limited, subjective experiences, which may be equally true. It can be noted from the story that the objective reality of the elephant is not dependent on the perceptions that are relative to any perceptual vantage point and its perceived aspect, in which case of Anekāntavāda allows for both objective reality and relativism without contradicting itself.[12]

Philosophical Counselors may also use their creativity to mold or build a story on similar lines according to the subject's context, to personalize the situation and spur reflection. After explaining the doctrine of Anekāntavāda to the subject, for example, by using the parable, the subject may be given a prompt to build their own narrative. On the basis of the narrative the subject develops, the cognitive biases they might have can be identified, and a '*Syad*-Narrative', or a narrative with the inclusion of '*syat*', can be constructed to explain the epistemological relativity involved in their own knowledge and perceiving things.

The *Syad*-Narrative can be a useful tool to bring subjects out of their bounded rationality, minimize heuristics, to go for optimal judgments rather than satisfactory ones, and to reduce cognitive biases. Once the *Syad*-Narrative is built and disclosed to the subject, the counselor can add comments or ask questions for the sake of spurring further realizations for positive outcomes.

Building a Syad-Narrative

Syad-Narrative is the *Syat* (could be, possibly, or relatively) version of the narrative built by the subject during Narrative therapy. The main motive behind building a *Syad*-Narrative is to eliminate the space for unwarranted absolutism while making judgments and

---

[12] Goldstein, E. Bruce: *Encyclopedia of Perception*, Sage, 2021, pp. 492

decisions. The subject is asked to build a narrative, and the counselor makes a note of the narrative and marks the absolute statements or statements of *durniti* made by the subject. Once the subject builds a narrative, the *Syad*-Narrative method requires the subject to be made to understand that the very nature of reality is multifaceted – either through the story of the elephant and six blind men or an example among similar lines – as a prerequisite to breaking the shell of bounded rationality.

After the example is comprehended by the subject, it is recommended to guide the subject to review their previously built narrative to find the absolute statements made by them. As every *naya* (aspect, standpoint) in Jain logic, in order to become a *pramana* (valid judgment), must qualify it with *syat* (perhaps, relatively speaking), every judgment made by the subject needs to be qualified with *syat* to avoid biased outcomes. The Philosophical Counselor can help the subject in rephrasing the narrative with the addition of *syat* to the absolute statements to avoid *durniti* (absolutizing) by building a *Syad*-Narrative.

Example

Let's understand the construction of the *Syad*-Narrative with the example of a case of confirmation bias, a very common cognitive bias. The tendency to view new information as confirmation of preexisting thoughts and attitudes is known as confirmation bias. Confirmation bias is also very common on the internet, especially on social media. We are prone to reading online news stories that reinforce our opinions while ignoring those that contradict them. Various social media platforms promote our confirmation bias by feeding us stories that we are more likely to agree with, further polarising humans. Confirmation bias can be particularly damaging in certain situations, such as the legal system. A detective may, for

example, identify a suspect too early on in an inquiry and then look for corroborating evidence, while downplaying contrary evidence.[13] Although confirmation bias has obvious consequences, one can still work towards overcoming it by being open-minded and willing to look at situations from a different perspective than one might be used to, which can be cultivated by using Anekāntavāda and Syadvada. Let's consider an example from Arthur Conan Doyle's *A Study in Scarlet*, where Sherlock Holmes tries to coach Mr. Watson as he accompanies Holmes to a crime scene.[14] Let's assume Mr. Watson isn't happy with Holmes's approach. Taking Watson as our subject, let's also assume that he constructs the following imaginary narrative immediately after a conversation with Holmes:

> But when he got a case to deal with, I was astonished as well as impressed.
> I accompanied Holmes to the crime scene, an abandoned house on Brixton Road.
> "You don't seem to give much thought to the matter in hand," I said, at last, interrupting Holmes's musical disquisition when we were on our way.
> "No data yet," he answered. "It is a capital mistake to theorize before you have all the evidence. It biases the judgment."
> Inspectors Gregson and Lestrade were already on the scene. The victim was identified as Enoch Drebber, and documents found on his person revealed that he has a secretary, Joseph Stangerson.
> On one wall, written in red, is "RACHE" (German for "revenge"), which Holmes dismissed as a ploy to fool the police.
> As I gave it a thought, I felt that Enoch Drebber was murdered by his secretary. Holmes is acting plain even when things seem to be clear about the murder. Anyone who knows about the 'Barnes Mystery' of 1879 can clearly sense that it's the secretary. All we need to do is to delve deeper for proof to establish this factually.

---

[13] Ruhl , C.: *What Is Cognitive Bias?*, *Confirmation Bias* Simply Psychology. available at www.simplypsychology.org/cognitive-bias.html, last Access May, 4th, 2021.
[14] Doyle, Arthur Conan: *A Study in Scarlet*, Penguin Books. Harlow, 2021.

Based on the narrative Mr. Watson has drawn, it can be noted that Watson is using heuristics to draw conclusions about the murder, he is clearly bounded in terms of rationality, and he has a confirmation bias as he refers to a previous murder that happened in the Victorian era to draw conclusions about the present one, without exploring other possibilities. He made absolute statements in his narrative where he expresses unwarranted certainty that it is the secretary who killed the victim. These types of statements can be reconstructed with *syat* by the addition of a possibility modifier:

> *Syat* (it is possible) that the Secretary has killed the victim.

The addition of *syat* leaves some room for the exploration of other possibilities.

For those for whom Doyle's crime mysteries are not intuitive, here is another example of an imaginary narrative built by a subject who carries a self-serving bias. The self-serving bias is the propensity to ascribe favorable outcomes to internal, personal factors, while poor outcomes are attributed to external, situational reasons.[15] Let's imagine the case of a student who did not take their grade 12 examinations in 2021 due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, but who was passed on the basis of an assessment of their past three-year academic record (as happened in India's CBSE board exams). The student was awarded good grades in Physics and Chemistry but got a less satisfying yet good score in Mathematics due to a disturbed academic record in the past. Due to the lower marks in Math, the student couldn't secure a seat in the University of his/her choice for the Physics program they yearned to be a part of. Now let's go through the following imaginary narrative built in response

---

[15] Ruhl , C.: "What Is Cognitive Bias?, Self-Serving Bias Simply Psychology", op.cit.

to the prompt, "Were teachers generous to give good grades to students?" and try to construct a *Syad*-Narrative of the same.

> I worked hard. I put in extra effort to submit assignments timely.
> And I got good grades in Physics and Chemistry. I wouldn't call it teachers' generosity.
> Rather, it is an impression I sustained being a good student that fetched me good grades.
> As far as we are concerned with generosity in giving marks, the math teachers make it sound the opposite way.
> My academic record in the past was deficient not because I couldn't perform well, but surely because the teacher didn't teach us well. It is the teacher's mistake to cut my marks despite the fact that their own teaching and performance in the class were poor.

Based on the above-framed narrative, it can be noted that the subject carries a self-serving bias, as they are clearly blaming an external factor, i.e., the teachers for their failure to maintain a good teaching record in Math while they take credit for the good grades in Physics and Chemistry. An absolute statement from the narrative, "My academic record in the past was deficient not because I couldn't perform well, but surely because the teacher didn't teach us well", can be rephrased as,

> *Syat* my academic record in the past was deficient not because I couldn't perform well, but ~~surely~~ because the teacher didn't teach us well.

In conditions where the subjects use words of unwarranted certainty, like "surely", the counselor may examine the reason behind surety to let the subject reflect on their claims. If a rational answer is found in their response, the words of certainty can remain in the narrative, but otherwise ought to be struck through.

Conclusion

From the above discourse about cognitive biases, it can be concluded that cognitive biases that individuals involuntarily carry could impact an individual's judgments, decisions, and epistemic framework, and disturb one's philosophical health by disrupting the coherence between the philosophical organs, so to speak: thoughts, words, values, intentions, and actions. A disturbance in philosophical health has an adverse consequence on one's well-being and poses a philosophical problem that not only causes epistemic injustice but also disrupts the consonance of ideas and results in the lack of an orient dialogue. The root of these issues can be again traced to the issues of judgment or *crisis*. Such problems with regard to judgments can be understood to be *durniti* as per Jain logic. For such philosophical problems, an adequate solution is to be found in philosophical practice, such as the particular practice on the recommendation here, namely, the *Syad*-Narrative method. The effect of cognitive biases can't be stopped or minimized without the removal of the cause, as the Buddha prescribes in his four noble truths.

This paper identifies bounded rationality to be the cause of cognitive biases, by taking Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman's heuristics and biases program into account and proposes the *Syad*-Narrative method to minimize cognitive biases and Anekāntavāda and Syadvada as methodological tools to attenuate the bounded rationality. The reduction of boundedness in terms of rationality minimizes cognitive biases by leaving more room for exploration and further diminishes the extent to which the subject is prone to *durniti* and ultimately upholds the independence of thought, orientation of thought and action, critical but consonant reciprocation of ideas, orient dialogue and listening to the other's

perspective with intellectual empathy to ensure philosophical soundness.

Acknowledgements

References

Ackerman, Courtney E., 2021. 19 Narrative Therapy Techniques, Interventions + Worksheets. *Positive Psychology*. https://positivepsychology.com/narrative-therapy/.

de Miranda, Luis, n.d. The Vision: Meaning Is Healing. *Philosophical Health International*. https://philosophical.health/.

de Miranda, Luis. Five Principles of Philosophical Health for Critical Times: From Hadot to Crealectic. Eidos Journal for Philosophy of Culture. Volume 5 (2021).

Doyle, Arthur Conan, 2011. *A Study in Scarlet*. Harlow, England: Penguin Books.

Goldstein, E. Bruce, 2010. *Encyclopedia of Perception*. London: Sage.

Kant, Immanuel. Anthropology, History, and Education. Edited and translated by Günter Zöller and Robert B. Louden. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007

Lahav, Ran, "Philosophical Counseling and Self-Transformation", Philosophy, Counseling, and Psychotherapy, edited by Elliot Cohen Lang, R., 2019. What Is the Difference between Conscious And Unconscious   Bias?   FAQs. https://engageinlearning.com/faq/compliance/unconscious-bias/what-is-the-difference-between-conscious-and-unconscious-bias/.

Ruhl, C., 2021. Cognitive Bias Examples. *Simply Psychology*. www.simplypsychology.org/cognitive-bias.html.

Shah, Nagin J., 1999. *Samantabhadra's Aptamimamsa Critique of Authority*. Sanskrit Sanskriti Granthamala, Ahmadabad.

Sharma, C.D., 1960. *Indian Philosophy: A Critical Survey*. Motilal Banarsidass.

Shah, Nagin J., 1999. *Jaina Philosophy and Religion (English Translation of Jaina Darsana by Muni Sri Nyayavijayaji)*. Motilal Banarsidass.

Wilke, A., and Mata, R., 2012. Cognitive Bias. *Encyclopedia of Human Behavior*, 1, pp. 531-535. https://s3.amazonaws.com/arena-attachments/557491/b16d97da35ed37a0a022e806cc931a0d.pdf

RESEÑAS BIBLIOGRÁFICAS
REVIEWS