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SPECIAL ISSUE

Self-Awareness (*svasaṃvitti*) and Related Doctrines of Buddhists Following Dignāga: Philosophical Characterizations of Some of the Main Issues

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Abstract Framed as a consideration of the other contributions to the present volume of the *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, this essay attempts to scout and characterize several of the interrelated doctrines and issues that come into play in thinking philosophically about the doctrine of *svasaṃvitti*, particularly as that was elaborated by Dignāga and Dharmakīrti. Among the issues thus considered are the question of how *mānasapratyakṣa* (which is akin to *manovijñāna*) might relate to *svasaṃvitti*; how those related doctrines might be brought to bear with respect to some problems addressed with reference to the further doctrine (also closely related to *svasaṃvitti*) concerning *pramāṇaphala*; and the distinctiveness of Dharmakīrti's *sahopalambhaniyama* argument for *svasaṃvitti*. A question recurrently considered throughout the essay has to do with whether (following Akeel Bilgrami) *svasaṃvitti* reflects a *perceptual* or a *constitutive* understanding of self-awareness.

Keywords *Svasaṃvitti* · Self-awareness · Dignāga · Dharmakīrti

Introduction: *Perceptual* and *Constitutive* Understandings of Self-Awareness: A "Governing Disjunction"

It seems to me that among the deepest divisions of intuitions among philosophers of mind is a philosophically basic one: whether the questions defining the field are essentially *empirical* or *metaphysical* questions. Philosophers like Jerry Fodor and Daniel Dennett, impressed by the recently enormous advances in scientific understanding of the brain (and particularly by those advances informed by research in

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computer science and AI), generally take the field to concern finally empirical questions. They take it, then, that the findings of empirical research in the cognitive sciences count as answering the basic questions of philosophy of mind (which, I submit, can be understood to center for these philosophers on the question of mental causation); what cognitive-scientific research provides, on their view, just is an account of the mental. Against such views, philosophers like John McDowell can be understood to take the basic issues in philosophy of mind instead to be metaphysical or "constitutive." For McDowell, someone like Dennett offers "what may be an enabling explanation of consciousness, but not a constitutive one … We lack an account of what [consciousness] is, even if we have an account of what enables it to be present."[1] An account of some of the enabling conditions of the mental, then, is not to be confused with an account of what the mental *is*—though it is a fair question whether there is anything that *could* count as the latter.

A conceptually parallel divergence is perhaps exemplified by the two principal lines of traditionally attested interpretation of the Indian Buddhist doctrine of *svasaṃvitti*, or "self-awareness," as we can straightforwardly translate this while still retaining the ambiguity of the concept (does the compound, e.g., involve a subjective or objective genitive? in English as in Sanskrit, both are possible, and yield different senses). It has in this regard been widely noted, at least since Paul Williams's 1998 *The Reflexive Nature of Awareness*,[2] that there are basically two main ways to understand this doctrine first promulgated by Dignāga. The first reflects what I will characterize as a basically *perceptual* understanding of *svasaṃvitti*; on this view, self-awareness is to be understood as a distinctive *kind* of perceptual awareness—one distinguished by its particular object or content (viz., one's "self," or one's "own" mental states), but otherwise evincing the same structure and character as ordinary perception. While first-order perceptions, then, are *of* the ordinary objects of experience, *svasaṃvitti* consists in the essentially second-order awareness *of* those first-order cognitions. Epistemologically, such an understanding can be enlisted in support of characteristically empiricist foundationalism; on this kind of view, the salient point is that self-awareness is uniquely immediate and indubitable, and hence, the basis of any other certainty we could be entitled to.

While this represents, we will see, a plausible account of what some Buddhist proponents of *svasaṃvitti* were up to, this kind of epistemological deployment of *svasaṃvitti* is not obviously warranted by the doctrine on the other main interpretation thereof. Thus, on the alternative reading that Williams associates particularly

[1] McDowell (1998, p. 357). George Steiner makes the same point with respect to language and linguistics: "… it is by no means clear that a neurophysiological scheme and the deepening analysis and treatment of pathological states will lead to an understanding of the production of human speech … To say, as do the textbooks, that the third frontal gyrus 'transforms' an auditory input into a visual-verbal output or feedback, is to substitute one vocabulary of images for another. Unlike the 'animal spirits' of Cartesian physiology, the new electro-chemical vocabulary allows and rationalizes medical treatment. This is an immense step forward. But it is an empirical and not, necessarily, analytic step. We do not know *what* it is we are talking about, though our discourse may induce profitable, experimentally verifiable techniques of treatment." (Steiner 1998, p. 298)

[2] For illuminating philosophical accounts of some of the interpretive options with regard to *svasaṃvitti*, see, in addition to Williams (1998), MacKenzie (2007), Ganeri (1999), and Matilal (1986, pp. 148–160).

with Śāntarakṣita, *svasaṃvitti* is not to be understood as picking out any particular *kind* of awareness; rather, it picks out whatever it is in virtue of which any cognition counts as such, whatever *constitutes* anything as a token of this type. I will characterize such views as reflecting a *constitutive* understanding of self-awareness, and I concur in taking Śāntarakṣita pithily to have stated one such: "Cognition is distinct from insentient forms; it is just this self-awareness (*ātmasaṃvitti*) which is its [i.e., cognition's] not being an insentient form."[3] If the concept of *svasaṃvitti* is thus taken to tell us something simply about what cognition (or consciousness, experience, awareness)[4] *is*, then perhaps we could say, in terms of the contemporary divide with which I opened, that certain things typically said about *svasaṃvitti* properly concern, rather, the "enabling conditions" of the mental—that *svasaṃvitti* properly has to do with what it *is* to experience or cognize something, and that it may therefore be misleading to imagine it as (say) an epistemologically privileged *kind* of cognition.

Which of the two broad views of *svasaṃvitti* is in play for any thinker turns out to be of greatly ramified significance; indeed, it seems to me that among the most interesting things to have emerged from the discussions that gave rise to the articles in the present volume is something of the extent to which the doctrine of *svasaṃvitti* is implicated in a whole range of characteristically Buddhist claims. Thus, rightly understanding any particular Buddhist thinker's elaboration of this doctrine may involve getting clear, as well, on such things as what that thinker takes to be the significance of the *pramāṇaphala* doctrine (the characteristically Buddhist claim that by the word '*pramāṇa*,' we really refer only to the cognition usually imagined to result from the exercise thereof); on how or whether he takes *svasaṃvitti* to relate to *mānasapratyakṣa*, or "mental perception," and on just what that is; on what he takes to be the implications of the stark characterization (commonly ventured by Dignāga and Dharmakīrti) of perception as constitutively non-conceptual (*kalpanāpoḍha*), and what he takes to be the problems raised by that—what we understand any Buddhist thinker to mean by any of these other cardinal claims turns out to relate closely to how we understand him to elaborate the idea of *svasaṃvitti*, and vice versa.

The occasion to characterize and constructively engage with the other contributions to the present volume represents, then, an opportunity to try to characterize, philosophically, some ways of understanding the main doctrines and arguments that thus dovetail with the category of *svasaṃvitti*—an opportunity to lay out what I take to be the issues centrally raised by these doctrines, and some of the arguments offered both for them and based on them. Among the things these various (and variously understood) doctrines commonly concern, I think, is the general

[3] TS p. 478: *vijñānaṃ jaḍarūpebhyo vyāvṛttaṃ upajāyate | iyam evâtmasaṃvittir asya yâjaḍarūpatā ||*. I have elsewhere sketched an interpretation of Śāntarakṣita's as a basically transcendental understanding of *svasaṃvitti*; see Arnold (2005a).

[4] It might be noted that I am, throughout this essay, rather nonchalant in my varying use of terms for mental events. The salient point for me is that these terms commonly refer to *intentional* mental events, which is what I most significantly understand by all of them—it makes sense to say of cognition, consciousness, experience, awareness, etc., that they are commonly *of* or *about* something, that they have some content.

question of how we are to make sense of the contentfulness (the *intentionality*) of cognition—the question, that is, of what the indubitable occurrence of awareness is reasonably taken to tell us about (what awareness would seem to be *of*) *what there is*. Variations on this question, we will see, recurrently arise in considering all of the interesting issues raised in the other contributions to the present volume.

After laying some philosophical groundwork in this and the next section, I will begin to develop this point by attending (in conversation with Hisayasu Kobayashi's article) to Dignāga's puzzling introduction of *svasaṃvitti* as somehow related to *mānasapratyakṣa*, or "mental perception." Like Kobayashi, though, I will chiefly consider not what Dignāga himself says, but what can be gleaned from some subsequent Buddhist thinkers. Noting that the Sanskrit of Dignāga's text in this regard was long available only as preserved in Prajñākaragupta's commentary on Dharmakīrti's *Pramāṇavārttika*, Kobayashi thus considers how this later commentator understood the category of *mānasapratyakṣa*; I will consider, instead, what the Mādhyamika thinker Candrakīrti says about the closely related category of *manovijñāna* ("mental cognition")—and, following Dharmakīrti's brief presentation in the *Nyāyabindu*, why the issues raised by Candrakīrti turn out to relate to *mānasapratyakṣa*.

This arc of thought will serve to introduce the characteristically Buddhist claim that '*pramāṇa*' really refers to '*pramāṇaphala*;' for we will see that Prajñākaragupta deploys his understanding of the *mānasapratyakṣa* doctrine—an understanding just such as we will have been led by Candrakīrti and Dharmakīrti to expect—to address precisely the same problem that Dharmakīrti's commentator Dharmottara instead addresses with reference to the *pramāṇaphala* doctrine. Both Prajñākaragupta and Dharmottara, then, are concerned with the question—centrally problematic given some of Dharmakīrti's characteristic commitments—of how particularly the *pramāṇa* that is perception (*pratyakṣa*) can be thought to yield epistemic content. (Birgit Kellner comments in this regard that the whole debate concerning *pramāṇaphala* "arose with respect to one particular means of valid cognition, namely perception (*pratyakṣa*). And perception—more narrowly: perception through the five external senses—also remains at its core.")[5] On Kobayashi's reading, Prajñākaragupta addresses the problem by arguing that it is particularly *mānasapratyakṣa* that issues in what might be called "perceptual judgments"; Dharmottara argues to similar effect that the point of the *pramāṇaphala* doctrine is that perception can really be thought a *pramāṇa* only insofar as it comes to "fruition" (*phala*) in what is effectively a judgment.

Dharmottara's understanding of the *pramāṇaphala* doctrine, we will then see, is very different from that of Dignāga, who elaborates his seminal statement of the doctrine chiefly by arguing for the nature and significance of *svasaṃvitti*; indeed, it is on one reading just the point of the *pramāṇaphala* doctrine, on Dignāga's deployment thereof, to advance the case for thinking that *svasaṃvitti* is finally the only genuinely "perceptual" *pramāṇa*. Here, it will be helpful to engage the contributions to the present volume by Shinya Moriyama and Birgit Kellner. Moriyama follows traditional doxographical characterizations of Dignāga's arguments—represented by

[5] This volume, p. 216.

most commentators as alternately advancing "Sautrāntika" and "Yogācāra" interpretations of *svasaṃvitti*—in identifying some problems that the Mādhyamika Bhāviveka shows to arise for Dignāga. While readings that thus emphasize the apparent contrasts between certain of Dignāga's claims are not without basis, it seems to me that they obscure the point perhaps chiefly advanced by Dignāga's arguments concerning *svasaṃvitti*: that it is with this doctrine that the epistemological common ground of these doxographically characterized perspectives most clearly emerges. While her argument follows a different arc, and is in ways critical of certain of my own past interpretive predilections, it seems to me that Birgit Kellner effectively develops much the same point I thus mean to emphasize; for Kellner, too, it is clear how certain of Dignāga's statements may variously relate to the perspectives in play for Moriyama, but nevertheless important to clarify that this is "perhaps not in the way that scholars have interpreted it so far."[6]

On my reading, then, of verses 1.8cd-9 of his *Pramāṇasamuccaya*, Dignāga should thus be understood to argue in effect for what I have elsewhere referred to as *epistemic idealism*—for the view that whatever one says about how finally to *explain* the contentfulness of cognition (whether in terms of a really existent world of external objects or not), the fact of its *being contentful* should be reckoned as both explanatorily basic and intrinsic to cognition. Moreover, the occurrence of a contentful cognition just is the occurrence of a subjectively experienced cognition; Dignāga's argument that *svasaṃvitti* is finally all that could be referred to as '*pramāṇa*' thus advances the claim, on my reading, that anything *known* can finally only be, we might say, *first-personally* known. This represents a view that proponents of both "Sautrāntika" and "Yogācāra" can hold, since, whether or not one is inclined finally to advert to external objects, it is incontrovertible that it is only *as known* that it makes any sense to say that even these are accessible.

If it seems truistic, the latter point nevertheless has the property (typically exhibited by truisms) of being true—indeed, it seems, even incontrovertibly so. Whether or not anything significant follows from the claim, then, I want to turn next to the argument that John Taber illuminatingly discusses in his contribution to the present volume—Dharmakīrti's *sahopalambhaniyama* argument, or the argument that the most salient fact about objects of awareness is the constraint (*niyama*) that they be known only together with the apprehension thereof (*sahopalambha*). What I want to characterize in Dharmakīrti's culminating development of Dignāga's lines of argument is the peculiar sense in which the mode of *necessity* seems to be in play. Taber, I think, picks out the same feature of Dharmakīrti's argument with his reference to the "Identity of Indiscernibles"; I want to suggest that the idea might also be illuminated by thinking about it in terms of Mark Sacks's notion of "situated thoughts," which Sacks invokes to characterize the distinctive kind of necessity typically involved in transcendental arguments. Dharmakīrti's point, in these terms, will be that anything we might know by way of explaining awareness will always already be (in Sacks's language) "phenomenologically embedded" in the very thing we are supposedly trying to explain.

[6] This volume, p. 218. I earlier elaborated the idea of epistemic idealism in relation to Dignāga and Dharmakīrti in Arnold (2008).

The consideration of Dharmakīrti's *sahopalambhaniyama* argument as thus involving the mode of necessity can give us a way to sharpen the point (which I will already have developed in my reading of Dignāga) that, for all the clearly epistemological work the doctrine of *svasaṃvitti* may be doing, these thinkers might nevertheless also have something more like a *constitutive* understanding of *svasaṃvitti*; for it is arguably characteristic of such an understanding for it to be most naturally advanced by arguments—paradigmatically, on my understanding, Kantian *transcendental* arguments—that involve the mode of necessity. To the extent, then, that the arguments typified by Dharmakīrti's *sahopalambhaniyama* argument can thus be characterized as involving necessity, it would seem there is a decidedly non-perceptual sort of argument to be made for *svasaṃvitti*, which further sharpens the question of what kind of contrast there is between perceptual and constitutive understandings of *svasaṃvitti*.

It is especially with such questions in mind that I have followed Akeel Bilgrami in thus characterizing the two main views of self-awareness. On a *perceptual* understanding of self-awareness, according to Bilgrami, self-knowledge of intentional states is characterized chiefly as *direct* or immediate; *constitutive* views, in contrast, make self-knowledge "*constitutive* of intentional states, i.e. … [make] intentional states conceptually dependent in a crucial sense on our self-knowledge of them" (2006, p. 23). Among the reasons why it is interesting to invoke Bilgrami in this regard is that he takes there to be a "governing disjunction" between the two kinds of views: "Only one of the two models, perceptual or constitutive, can be right" (2006, p. 28). If this is correct, then it would seem that Dignāga and his philosophical descendants must hold *either* a perceptual *or* a constitutive view—which would seem to mean that if we can (by, for example, considering the *sahopalambhaniyama* argument) attribute a constitutive view of *svasaṃvitti* to any of these thinkers, we would have to say they err in commonly having characterized it all along as "perceptual" (*pratyakṣa*).

We will see, however, that from the perspective of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti, Bilgrami might be thought to beg one of the questions centrally at issue; insofar as these Buddhists are finally arguing for an idealist position, their whole point is that it makes sense even for an avowed realist to say that perceptual awareness in general may not be finally distinguishable from self-awareness—whereas for Bilgrami, a constitutive view of self-awareness is to be characterized chiefly in terms of the contrast between these. Perhaps, then, it is to the extent that they are idealists that Dignāga and Dharmakīrti can think there is no disjunction between the perceptual and constitutive understandings of self-awareness—though we might also reasonably conclude in this regard that there are fundamental tensions in the Buddhist accounts.

Just such questions can be brought into focus when we conclude, finally, by considering Alex Watson's exposition of the Śaiva Siddhāntin thinker Bhaṭṭa Rāmakaṇṭha's critical appropriation particularly of Dharmakīrti's *svasaṃvitti* doctrine. Rāmakaṇṭha would seem to share Bilgrami's sense that the right account of *svasaṃvitti* can only be constitutive *or* perceptual. For Rāmakaṇṭha, this means that Buddhist proponents of the doctrine, though having picked out something significant by it, compromised their own insights by attempting to explain self-awareness

in terms of momentary, causally efficacious particulars.[7] Here as in the earlier discussion of the "Sautrāntika" and "Yogācāra" agendas of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti, we will see the importance of distinguishing between *phenomenological* claims, and proposed *explanations* thereof. Just, that is, as these Buddhists can allow with the realist that awareness seems, phenomenologically, to be of an external world, they can also allow Rāmakaṇṭha's claim that temporal continuity represents a phenomenologically significant fact about awareness; in both cases, the question is whether cognition can so much as *seem* as it thus does given the Buddhists' proposed explanations of such phenomenological facts. Rāmakaṇṭha, I will suggest, paradigmatically exemplifies transcendental arguments in arguing that these Buddhists cannot, at the end of the day, explain the phenomenological facts—which must, he takes it to follow, have among the conditions of their possibility that consciousness essentially be something enduring.

Rāmakaṇṭha himself, however, may compromise his own best insights in concluding as much; for it is not clear that a transcendental argument in support of a constitutive view of *svasaṃvitti* warrants the kind of conclusion he is after. In order to set up that point, as well as to elaborate a bit on Bilgrami's thoughts regarding the disjunction between "constitutive" and "perceptual" understandings of self-awareness, I want to start with a brief excursus on some modern Western arguments variously involving what might be called "self-awareness." We can, then, usefully equip ourselves with some conceptual tools for the reading of Dignāga and his Indian followers and critics by briefly considering Franz Brentano and David Hume to exemplify certain aspects of a "perceptual" understanding of self-awareness; and by then considering the sense it makes to say that one of Kant's main transcendental arguments against Hume is in the service of an essentially "constitutive" understanding thereof. Let us see, then, how some famous moderns have influentially discussed self-awareness.

The *Perceptual* Views of Brentano and Hume, the *Constitutive* View of Kant: A Contrastive Case Study

Surveying attempts to capture the distinctiveness of self-knowledge, Akeel Bilgrami adduces the characteristically Cartesian view that there are three distinctive characteristics thereof: its playing a "*constitutive* role in the very idea of what it is knowledge of, i.e., in the very idea of a mental state"; its being somehow *infallible*; and its essentially consisting in "a form of infallible (inner) *perception* of one's mental states" (Bilgrami 2006, p. 12). In other words (to take these in reverse order), our awareness of our own mental lives is, (1), to be understood on the model of perceptual awareness; this means it makes sense to say that self-awareness is *of* one's own mental content in the same way that perceptions are *of* trees and the like. If anything distinguishes *this* kind of "perceptual" awareness from the, um, perceptual kind, it is especially that the *svasaṃvitti* kind is, (2), uniquely incorrigible or

[7] On some of the connections between *perceptual* and *causal* accounts of self-awareness, see Bilgrami (2006, pp. 24–28).

irrefragable; while it is possible to be wrong about what is given to us in any perception, one cannot be mistaken in knowing simply *that* one has the perception. And, (3), it is somehow *constitutive* of "knowing," as such, that it involves this perceptual relation to itself.

Franz Brentano, it seems to me, has elaborated an instructively *empiricist* version of a recognizably Cartesian account. Here is a passage in which Brentano well exemplifies at least two of the criteria that make for a picture of the sort Bilgrami has thus characterized as Cartesian:

> … besides the fact that it has a special object, inner perception possesses another distinguishing characteristic: its immediate, infallible self-evidence. Of all the types of knowledge of the objects of experience, inner perception alone possesses this characteristic. Consequently, when we say that mental phenomena are those which are apprehended by means of inner perception, we say that their perception is immediately evident. Moreover, inner perception is not merely the only kind of perception which is immediately evident; it is really the only perception in the strict sense of the word … [this is because] the phenomena of the so-called external perception cannot be proved true and real even by means of indirect demonstration. For this reason, anyone who in good faith has taken them for what they seem to be is being misled by the manner in which the phenomena are connected. Therefore, strictly speaking, so-called external perception is not perception. Mental phenomena, therefore, may be described as the only phenomena of which perception in the strict sense of the word is possible.[8]

Chief among the points I take Brentano to make here is that it is uniquely the case for "inner perception"—for our awareness of the occurrence and contents of our own mental events—that the object of this cognitive act is just as it seems to us to be. Among the reasons for thinking so is that the "object" of the awareness, in this case—what it is an awareness *of*—just is *how the cognition seems to us*. There can thus be said to obtain, in the case of Brentano's "inner perception" alone, an identity between the intentional content and the phenomenological character of such cognitions—between *what they are about* and *how they seem*. This is in contrast to all other cognitions, regarding which it is always possible to doubt whether what they are *of* is really as it seems. We might, then, be wrong in thinking that affairs in the world are just as represented in any particular cognition; but we cannot be wrong about the fact that *that is it how it seems to us*, insofar as its *seeming* to us that something is thus and so is all that we can really be immediately aware *of*. This, for Brentano, is why it makes sense to say that "mental phenomena" are finally "the only phenomena of which perception in the strict sense of the word is possible."

The foregoing epitomizes, I think, a characteristically foundationalist deployment of an idea essentially comparable at least to some understandings of the Buddhist doctrine of *svasaṃvitti*; insofar as "inner perception," on this view, is uniquely indubitable, the kind of certainty this awareness uniquely yields must be reckoned as somehow basic to all other knowledge. This is, as I will note below with regard to

[8] Brentano (1874, p. 91).

Dharmakīrti, the quintessentially empiricist view according to which (on Wilfrid Sellars's influential critique thereof) "*x is red* is analyzable in terms of *x looks red to y*."[9] Among other things, such an account relates closely to characteristically empiricist views of personal identity; for insofar as self-awareness is here imagined as essentially *perceptual*, we are encouraged to think of what we are aware *of*, in "self-awareness," as constitutively episodic in just the way that perceptible impingements upon us by the environment are. It is, I am thus suggesting, typical of this understanding of self-awareness (and of what it discloses) to take the constitutively episodic character of perceptual *content* as the best guide to what self-awareness is really *of*. Hume exemplifies this intuition when he famously argues that there is finally nothing more to a person than a "bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement" (1739, p. 252). What is real, on Hume's view, is only the episodic cognitions themselves, and not anything like an enduring subject whose states we might take these to be; "For as such a succession answers evidently to our notion of diversity, it can only be by mistake we ascribe to it an identity …" (1739, p. 255). Among the difficulties with such an understanding of what self-awareness is really *of* is that if persons thus consist in dynamic series of evanescent events, it is hard to explain the compelling *phenomenological* sense of identity and continuity that surely characterizes awareness. Hume's conviction, in this regard, is that this phenomenological sense of the unity and continuity of what are really constitutively episodic mental events is finally misleading, and can be explained simply as a function of recognition and memory: "… as the relation of parts, which leads us into this mistake, is really nothing but a quality, which produces an association of ideas, and an easy transition of the imagination from one to another, *it can only be from the resemblance, which this act of the mind bears to that*, by which we contemplate one continu'd object, that the error arises" (1739, p. 255; emphasis added). It is, in other words, only insofar as successive mental states "resemble" one another in important respects—chiefly, in respect of seeming to be commonly the states *of* one subject—that they seem, phenomenologically, to be the states of an enduring subject. In reality, what there is (as Hume says in terms that Dignāga and Dharmakīrti would surely endorse) is only "such as consist of a succession of related objects." (*Ibid.*)

It is against this characteristically empiricist account of personal identity—which itself relates, I suggested, to a characteristically perceptual understanding of self-awareness—that we can best elaborate an example of what Bilgrami calls a *constitutive* understanding thereof; for so I understand Kant's *transcendental unity of apperception*, which Kant first argued for by way of a rejoinder to Hume's arguments here. The questions Kant here presses against Hume are compelling: how could we even recognize two such moments or representations *as similar* without already presupposing the very continuity putatively explained by this recognition? How are we to understand the single *perspective from which* it could even make sense to say any two such moments are thus "taken" as similar? Hume's account, Kant thus argued, begs the question, insofar as the very idea of recognition that he

[9] See note 90, below.

adduces in favor of his own case is itself only intelligible relative to some unifying perspective *on* whatever is recognized; Hume has effectively adduced, then, what is in fact good evidence for Kant's point. Thus,

> Without consciousness that that which we think is the very same as what we thought a moment before, all reproduction in the series of representations would be in vain. For it would be a new representation in our current state, which would not belong at all to the act through which it had been gradually generated, and its manifold would never constitute a whole, since it would lack the unity that only consciousness can obtain for it.[10]

That is, contentful "experience" essentially consists in the kind of synthesis in virtue of which the subject of any experience is aware of herself *as* having earlier experienced anything she now takes herself to recognize. The very idea of recognition only makes sense, then, relative to *some unifying point of view*—which, therefore, cannot itself be explained (as attempted by Hume) in terms of recognition.[11]

In characterizing as *transcendental* the "unity of apperception" that necessarily characterizes experience, Kant advances the point that this perspectival unity cannot itself be a product of experience, since it is, rather, a condition of the possibility of having any experience in the first place. To that extent, Kant's rejoinder displays the constitutively transcendental logic that is his preoccupation throughout, and his point is effectively that Hume's own account (his own *denial* of a point such as Kant's) is itself intelligible only *given* Kant's point. Hume's own appeal to the experienced "relation of parts" that tend to produce "an association of ideas" is only available, that is, insofar as *being a subject* already consists at least in somehow bringing these "parts" under some perspective; what it is thus to have a perspective cannot, then, be explained by these parts, which themselves are always already intelligible to any subject only as the "parts" *of her experience*.

Kant's account here naturally raises the question of what thus *performs* the synthesis that thus characterizes experience, what the *agent* of "apperception" is like. To press such questions, however, is in effect to ask for an empirical locus of these actions, something for which criteria of identity could be adduced—which would seem to be in tension with Kant's characterization of the idea as transcendental. There may be, then, an acute problem regarding how this putatively "transcendental" condition relates to (or whether indeed it must in some sense *be*) the empirically given person. In this regard, P. F. Strawson characterizes many likely objections to Kant's point as thus turning on the thought that "the ascription of states to a *subject* require[s] the subject itself to be an intuitable object for which there exist empirically applicable criteria of identity" (1966, p. 107). But in that

[10] A103.

[11] "There must therefore be something," Kant thus concludes, "that itself makes possible this reproduction of the appearances by being the *a priori* ground of a necessary synthetic unity of them. …one must assume a pure transcendental synthesis of this power, which grounds even the possibility of all experience (as that which the reproducibility of the appearances necessarily presupposes)" (A101-102).

case, Kant's point would look very much like the Cartesian sort of argument he so unambiguously aims to eschew.[12]

It is, I think, something like this problem that Kant has in mind in alternatively elaborating the argument for the transcendental unity of apperception in the second edition of the *Critique*. Here, the emphasis is rather more on a strictly *logical* condition of the possibility of experience. Thus, in a passage that represents the *locus classicus* of his arguments in this regard, Kant explains:

> The **I think** must **be able** to accompany all my representations; for otherwise something would be represented in me that could not be thought at all, which is as much as to say that the representation would either be impossible or else at least would be nothing for me. That representation that can be given prior to all thinking is called **intuition**. Thus all manifold of intuition has a necessary relation to the **I think** in the same subject in which this manifold is to be encountered. But this representation is an act of **spontaneity**, i.e., it cannot be regarded as belonging to sensibility. I call it the **pure apperception**, in order to distinguish it from the **empirical** one, or also the **original apperception**, since it is that self-consciousness which, because it produces the representation **I think**, which must be able to accompany all others and which in all consciousness is one and the same, cannot be accompanied by any further representation. I also call its unity the **transcendental** unity of self-consciousness in order to designate the possibility of *a priori* cognition from it.[13]

On this elaboration of the idea, Kant's is more clearly a strictly *formal* point: it is a condition of the possibility of our having any experience at all that the content of that experience be in principle expressible in terms of *the content of some subject's judgment*. Note that this is very different from saying that all experiences are *expressed* as judgments (whether to others or to oneself), which is clearly false; the point is only that experience is contentful just insofar as it is possible for the subject thereof to attend to it under any of the propositional attitudes—possible for the subject to entertain a thought like "I think (doubt, hope, worry, claim …) *that* such and such is the case." Among the insights expressed here is that the subject of any such experience cannot be in any doubt about "whose" experience it is, since experience just is the kind of thing that can be taken by the subject thereof *as hers*; it is, in other words, constitutive of experience to be had (and experienced as had) from some perspective—that is just what experience *is*.

Now of course there is a great deal to be said about all of this, and about what, exactly, follows from it. It must at least be allowed, however, that this line of argument leaves a great deal in question, and it ought therefore not to be surprising that the Kantian doctrine sketched here went on to invite a range of readings, a range that arguably centers on just the sort of divide we have sketched with regard to *svasaṃvitti*.[14] Chief among the open questions, it seems to me, is whether it is really

[12] See notes 15 and 16 below.

[13] B131–132. The emphasis reflected in bold type is original.

[14] For further elaboration of this point (particularly with reference to Robert Pippin's work), see Arnold (2005a, 81ff).

right that Kant's transcendental unity of apperception, specifically *as* "transcendental," cannot admit of any explanation. It seems, after all, that we understand what we are asking when we persist in pressing the very same questions that I suggested could be raised with regard to Kant's first elaboration of the idea; thus, it still seems that it makes sense to ask just what kind of *thing* this "self-consciousness" *is*, such that it could be the agent of what seems for all the world like a cognitive *act* (one in which this self-consciousness "produces the representation **I think**").

Nevertheless, it is clear that Kant meant to have foreclosed just such questions. In this regard, the distinctiveness of Kant's constitutively transcendental approach is perhaps best appreciated with reference to his critique of Descartes. Kant adduced Descartes's *cogito* argument as a paradigm case of a "Paralogism"—that is, an argument that trades on an equivocation concerning the key term, here between "I" as grammatical or logical subject (*I think*), and "I" as naming an ontologically distinct substance (therefore *I am*).[15] It is, then, precisely against Descartes that Kant urged that "[i]n the synthetic original unity of apperception I am conscious of myself not as I appear to myself, nor as I am in myself, but only that I am. This *representation* is a *thought,* not an *intuition*."[16] That is, the representation "I think" is emphatically not to be understood as anything like a perceptual encounter with one's "self" or one's "states" (it is "a *thought*, not an *intuition*"), but as something more like the logical or conceptual limit of any conceivable act even of inquiring about such things.

Emphasizing a point that Kant himself made,[17] Edmund Husserl argued in this regard that there is an extent to which the Cartesian *cogito* argument is itself an essentially transcendental argument, quite rightly advancing the point that we cannot coherently doubt that there is experience—and that Descartes compromises its essentially transcendental character just insofar as he introduces "the apparently insignificant but actually fateful change whereby the ego becomes a *substantia cogitans* … and [the] point of departure for inferences according to the principle of causality …" (*Cartesian Meditations* p. 24). What is problematic about Descartes's move in this regard is that it makes of something that is logically or conceptually constitutive of awareness—something that is, as such, essentially abstract, viz., the fact that awareness is necessarily indexed to some perspective—"an intuitable object for which there exist empirically applicable criteria of identity" (to recur to Strawson's words).

This is the sense it makes, then, to take the Kantian account to exemplify what I have followed Bilgrami in taking to be a *constitutive* account of self-awareness—and, as well, the kind of sense it could make for Bilgrami to think such an account is disjunctive with the kind of perceptual understanding we saw in Brentano's recognizably Cartesian picture. Thus, it is clear that on what seems the more defensible reading of Kant, the "transcendental unity of apperception" is nothing at all like a "kind" of perception, not a second-order awareness *of* our

[15] A344ff.

[16] B157. Cf. A117n.

[17] A348: "Since the proposition 'I think' (taken problematically) contains the form of each and every judgment of the understanding and accompanies all categories as their vehicle, it is evident that the inferences from it admit only of a transcendental employment of the understanding."

first-order cognitions; rather, Kant's point is that it is simply *constitutive* of experience to be had from some perspective, such that it will no longer be "experience" we are reflecting on if it does not make sense to ask, of whatever instance of this is in view, *whose* it is. The strictly logical or conceptual necessity that experience thus be individuated in terms of the first-person perspective from which it is "had" does not, however, warrant any inferences about what kind of "thing" this subject must therefore be.

Precisely to that extent, it is not obvious just what constraints are imposed on our account by the recognition of Kantian apperception as transcendentally constitutive of awareness. One might venture, though, that the Kantian line of argument shows at least that no such explanation could be exhaustively "third-personal" or impersonal in character, since if there is no longer any reference to the first-person perspective of the subject whose experience we want to understand, we are no longer giving an account *of* what we claim to be; anything rightly referred to as "experience" will in that case have disappeared from view.[18] This is effectively to deny what I allowed earlier, and to argue that in fact we do *not* understand what we mean when we ask for an "explanation" of the transcendental unity of apperception. This is because there is nothing it could mean, no sense it could make, to "explain" (what we have essentially been trying all along to characterize) the subjective character of subjectivity; nothing could count, e.g., as an answer to the question of what kind of "thing" subjectivity is, since it cannot be subjectivity that is in view when it is thus imagined as *objective*. The real constraint imposed by a "constitutive" reading of Kant's transcendental arguments may involve, then, the strictly conceptual point that it is not clear what could count (or whether anything could) as explaining subjectivity.

If something like the foregoing represents a useful lesson to distill from "constitutively" understanding Kant's transcendental unity of apperception, then it should be useful, as well, to ask whether or not the constraints imposed by Kant's argument cut against Buddhist proponents of *svasaṃvitti*. If, that is, a constitutive understanding of self-awareness is incompatible with some explanations (if not with the very idea of any explanation) thereof, it is reasonable to ask whether the explanations offered by Buddhists in their capacity as proponents of *anātmavāda* are compatible with their own doctrine of *svasaṃvitti*. Whatever Buddhists can be said to have recognized, then, in elaborating the idea of *svasaṃvitti*, they are surely in the business of offering a phenomenologically counter-intuitive *explanation* of the character of awareness, and it is reasonable to ask whether this all coheres.

We will see, in this regard, that Bhaṭṭa Rāmakaṇṭha argues cogently that a constitutive understanding of *svasaṃvitti* is the only defensible one, *and* that such an understanding is incoherent with central features of *anātmavāda*. On his view, then, a constitutive understanding of self-awareness cuts against central Buddhist commitments. Nevertheless, there are moments where it seems to be just the point of the Buddhist arguments to advance a constitutive understanding; Rāmakaṇṭha's question, then, of whether the Buddhists' own doctrine of *svasaṃvitti* is consistent with *anātmavāda* is indeed pressing (though not, perhaps, as easily settled as he

[18] Ganeri (2007) includes much reflection in this vein.

takes it). How we read this dispute will vary depending not only on which understanding of *svasaṃvitti* we take any particular Buddhists to have proposed, but also depending on (what can be just as difficult to ascertain) just what is taken to follow from holding either of the broadly defined views on offer.

Let us turn, then, to Dignāga's elaboration of the doctrine of *svasaṃvitti*, and see how some of the foregoing might be useful in getting a sense of what he is up to. We will begin obliquely, by considering some discussions raised by the puzzling passage in which Dignāga first introduces *svasaṃvitti*—a passage in which the latter is represented as relating to the apparently more general category of *mānasapratyakṣa*, or "mental perception."

Candrakīrti on *manovijñāna*, Dharmakīrti on *mānasapratyakṣa*: Some Issues Opened up by Dignāga

The main arguments we will develop regarding *svasaṃvitti* are at verses 8–10 of the first chapter of his *Pramāṇasamuccaya*. Dignāga first introduces the category, though, at verse 6, where *svasaṃvitti* seems to be somehow subsumed under the category of *mānasapratyakṣa*, "mental perception." Thus, having first emphasized the constitutively nonconceptual character of *pratyakṣa* ("perception"), Dignāga here and in verse 7 specifies that in addition to sensory perception, there are two other instances of the kind of nonconceptual awareness that counts as perceptual: *mānasa-* and *yogi-pratyakṣa*. *Svasaṃvitti* is then introduced as somehow qualifying the former. In the translation of Masaaki Hattori, Dignāga says:

> … there is also mental [perception, which is of two kinds:] awareness of an [external] object and self-awareness of [such subordinate mental activities as] desire and the like, [both of which are] free from conceptual construction. (1968, p. 27)

Masatoshi Nagatomi—whose own approach to the verse was, like those of most everybody writing before the recent availability of a Sanskrit text of Dignāga, by way of Hattori's translation from the Tibetan—observed that this verse is "in fact so elliptical that no two post-Dharmakīrti commentators reached an exact consensus on the reading of it…."[19] A straightforward reading (from the Sanskrit) of Dignāga's

[19] "… particularly," Nagatomi continues, "with respect to the compound *artha-rāgâdi-sva-saṃvitti*." (1980, pp. 255–56) He adds that the commentators "did assume, however, if not quite approvingly, that the verse proposed two kinds of *mānasa-pratyakṣa*. They were led to that assumption partly under the influence of Dignāga's *Pramāṇasamuccayavṛtti* that dwelt on *mānasa-pratyakṣa*'s 'awareness of an object' and 'self-awareness (in the form of) passion, etc.' respectively as though each were syntactically independent of the other." Nagatomi reflects the consensus in holding that Dignāga seems to have proposed *three* kinds of *pratyakṣa*, while Dharmakīrti takes the discussion to have concerned four; see, on this, Franco (1993), Yao (2004), and Franco (2005). On the huge advance for the field represented by the recent availability of a reliable Sanskrit text, see Franco (2006), who is reviewing the 2005 edition by Steinkellner, et al, of the Sanskrit text of Jinendrabuddhi's commentary on the first chapter of Dignāga's *Pramāṇasamuccaya*. Together with such earlier extant materials as were used and noted by Hattori 1968, Jinendrabuddhi's Sanskrit provides the chief basis for Steinkellner's "hypothetical reconstruction" of Dignāga's Sanskrit text (PS), which is what I follow in citing Dignāga; according to Steinkellner, then, the Sanskrit of Dignāga's *Pramāṇasamuccaya* 1.6ab is: *mānasaṃ cârtharāgādisvasaṃvittir akalpikā*.

commentary remains, I think, indeterminate with respect to the most puzzling issues: "Mental [perception], too, is non-conceptual, having as its object things like form and so forth, engaging aspects (*ākāra*) of experience; and self-awareness, with regard to such things as pleasure, because of [its] being independent of the senses, is mental perception."[20] If it is clear that Dignāga here means to introduce *svasaṃvitti* as an instance or aspect of "mental perception," it is not immediately clear just what it means to say so. Does self-awareness occur *only* with regard to "such things as pleasure"? Even if so, might that nevertheless be compatible with self-awareness's being present somehow in every awareness? Above all, is *svasaṃvitti* to be understood as one particular *kind* of "mental perception," distinguished by its special sort of object or content (viz., "desire and the like")? Or as something more like a way of talking about what *mānasapratyakṣa* essentially *is*, and therefore not ultimately separate therefrom?

While I will not further probe Dignāga's intent in this regard, our discussion of some of Dignāga's other arguments regarding *svasaṃvitti* can be served by our briefly attending to some subsequent discussions, among Indian Buddhists, of issues stemming from Dignāga's ambiguous passage. I follow Hisayasu Kobayashi, then, in here considering some later developments of Dignāga's claims regarding *mānasapratyakṣa* and *svasaṃvitti*. We will turn shortly to the views of Prajñākaragupta that are made available to us by Kobayashi; I begin, though, with some brief passages from the Mādhyamika Candrakīrti, the first chapter of whose *Prasannapadā* comprises a lengthy engagement with an imagined Buddhist opponent whose thought looks much like Dignāga's.[21] Candrakīrti effectively introduces (albeit without naming) *mānasapratyakṣa* in the course of heading off some of Dignāga's characteristic appeals to etymology in support of his account. Thus, Dignāga had taken *pratyakṣa* (*praty-akṣa*, "with respect to the senses") to be so called insofar as it is dependent on the senses—in just the same way, he suggested, that instances of "perceptual awareness" (*vijñāna*) are distinguished particularly as *cakṣur-vijñāna* ("*visual* perceptual awareness"), etc. Against this, Candrakīrti invokes the Ābhidharmika category of *manovijñāna* ("mental awareness") in showing why he takes Dignāga's argument to fail.

The salient point for us does not involve the etymological debate that frames the exchange, but rather, Candrakīrti's account of why it is important that we be able to distinguish this "mental awareness" (*manovijñāna*) from the other kinds. On the Ābhidharmika picture that Candrakīrti here invokes, the five familiar sense faculties—those based in material sense organs, and thus typically distinguished by Buddhists as the *rūpīndriya*, "form-possessing" or *material* senses—have as their respective objects the things we would expect (the ocular sense faculty apprehends

[20] According to Steinkellner, PS p. 3: *mānasam api rūpādiviṣayālambanam avikalpakam anubhavākārapravṛttaṃ rāgādiṣu ca svasaṃvedanam indriyānapekṣatvān mānasaṃ pratyakṣam*. Hattori (1968, p. 31): "The mental [perception] which, taking a thing of color, etc., for its object, occurs in the form of immediate experience (*anubhava*) is also free from conceptual construction. The self-awareness (*sva-saṁvedana*) of desire, anger, ignorance, pleasure, pain, etc., is [also recognized as] mental perception because it is not dependent on any sense-organ."

[21] See Arnold (2005b) for all the particulars; references here will be to that translation, with Candrakīrti's Sanskrit also available there.

color and shape, the auditory faculty apprehends sound, etc.). The object of the "mental" sense faculty then is *the outputs of each of these five*. That is, the five material sense faculties are understood, on this model, as something like simple transducers, such that contact between any of these and its proper objects generates a "signal" of the sort that can be the direct object of a mental awareness. It is, however, just the occurrence of the latter that represents the cognitively contentful part of the process; the other factors are, we might say, enabling conditions of cognition, but they are not themselves really "cognitive" except as the content of a mental cognition. The outputs of the material sense faculties are, then, aptly characterized as "cognitive" (as instances of *vijñāna*) only to the extent that these outputs are ontologically of the kind that can be internally related to (as the *content of*) the *manovijñāna*; only the latter, though, is genuinely *contentful*.

The problem Candrakīrti raises in this regard is that *manovijñāna* therefore cannot be clearly distinguished from any of the other five *vijñāna*s by its content, since its content comprises that of any of the other five sensory cognitions; insofar as *manovijñāna* has as *its* content the outputs of the other *vijñāna*s, its content also includes *their* content. Without some specification, Candrakīrti says, "the difference among the six kinds of perceptual cognition cannot be made clear, since *mental* cognition (*manovijñāna*) proceeds with respect to the very same object as *visual* cognition." The qualification of the various *vijñāna*s in terms of their respective bases is called for, then, just insofar as it is necessary to distinguish *mano-vijñāna* from the others; otherwise, Candrakīrti says, one could invariably wonder, of any reference to cognition, "is this a perceptual cognition produced by the senses that possess form, or is it a *mental* (*mānasa*) [cognition]?"[22]

Whether or not this is a convincing argument of the etymological sort Candrakīrti has in mind, the point for us is that the content of an instance of *manovijñāna*, on Candrakīrti's account, comprises the objects of our sensory "cognitions," which are taken by the *manovijñāna* as representing states of affairs—such as *that I'm seeing a tree*. This picture emerges more clearly from another instance of Candrakīrti's pressing his case against Dignāga by invoking the category of *manovijñāna*. Here, Candrakīrti rightly represents Dignāga as adducing, in support of his characterization of *pratyakṣa* as "free of conceptual thought" (*kalpanāpoḍha*), an Ābhidharmika text that he (Dignāga) takes to warrant that characterization: "Someone endowed only with visual cognition senses blue, but not *that* it is blue."[23] Hattori aptly summarizes the obvious point of Dignāga's citation of this: "The expression '*nīlaṃ vijānāti*' implies that one has an immediate awareness of the object itself. On the other hand, '*nīlam iti vijānāti*' implies that one forms a perceptual judgment by associating a name with the object perceived. Thus, the above Abhidharma passage expresses the thought that perception is free from conceptual construction…" (Hattori 1968, p. 88, n.1.36).

Candrakīrti rejoins, however, that in fact this text does not support Dignāga's characterization of perception; this is because "the point of this authoritative text is not to state a definition of *pratyakṣa*, but is simply that of demonstrating the

[22] Arnold (2005b, p. 455).

[23] Per Steinkellner, PS p. 2: *abhidharme 'py uktam–cakṣurvijñānasamaṅgī nīlaṃ jānāti no tu nīlam iti.*

insentience of the five [material] senses."[24] A quotation of the same passage by Yaśomitra supports Candrakīrti's point; Yaśomitra adduces the text in commenting on Vasubandhu's treatment (in the *Abhidharmakośa*) of the cognitive outputs of the five material senses, and Yaśomitra, too, takes the passage to express only the point that the outputs of the material senses are not themselves contentful—they are, rather, the content *of* the *manovijñāna*.[25] Candrakīrti would thus seem to be correct in claiming that the passage cited by Dignāga does not state a definition of perception; indeed, the passage suggests, rather, that *manovijñāna* is precisely that *conceptual* sort of faculty which alone knows *that* things are as represented by the material senses.

Now, it may seem that Candrakīrti's engagement with Dignāga here is irrelevant to the issues we are stalking; while the foregoing arguments do stem from Candrakīrti's engagement with Dignāga's case for the non-conceptual character of *pratyakṣa*, the issue of whether Dignāga is entitled to his preferred etymology may seem of little importance for us, as might the issue of whether Dignāga is right to think his case supported by the Ābhidharmika passage he adduces. That Candrakīrti has given us a useful vocabulary for characterizing some questions about *mānasapratyakṣa* is clear, however, if, following Kobayashi's lead, we now turn to Dharmakīrti's *Nyāyabindu*. In that text's brief discussion of "*mānasapratyakṣa*" (which, Kobayashi rightly notes, Dharmakīrti quite clearly adduces as one of four kinds of *pratyakṣa*),[26] Dharmakīrti in fact never uses this word; the verse in which he is commonly taken to define *mānasapratyakṣa* actually refers, rather, to *manovijñāna*, which Dharmakīrti defines in quite standardly Ābhidharmika fashion:

> That is mental cognition (*manovijñāna*) [which is] produced by the immediately preceding condition (*samanantarapratyaya*), which is a sensory cognition whose cooperating condition (*sahakāri*) is an object immediately following its proper object.[27]

Dharmakīrti thus represents "*mānasapratyakṣa*" just as Candrakīrti suggests we should understand *manovijñāna*: he says that a "mental cognition" has as *its* object a "sensory cognition" (*indriyajñāna*), and that the latter in turn represents some instance of whatever kind of object is proper to the sense capacity in play.

On Dharmakīrti's account as on Candrakīrti's, it would thus seem there can only be any cognitive content to the extent that there occurs a moment of *manovijñāna*, which is all that can be said really to *know* anything even perceptually. As Dharmottara says in commenting on Dharmakīrti's passage, it is owing to *manovijñāna* that "the moment that is subsequent to the moment of the object of the sensory cognition is grasped as included within a single continuum (*santāna*)."[28] In other

[24] Arnold (2005b, pp. 459–460).

[25] See AKVy p. 72; Yaśomitra's text reads *vijānāti* (as contra Candrakīrti's *jānāti*).

[26] This volume, p. 234ff.

[27] NB 1.9, 57: *svaviṣayānantaraviṣayasahakāriṇendriyajñānena samanantarapratyayena janitaṃ tan manovijñānam*. Kobayashi (this volume, p. 237) reads this much as I do.

[28] NB p. 58: *tathā ca sati indriyajñānaviṣayakṣaṇād uttarakṣaṇa ekasantānāntarbhūto gṛhītaḥ*.

words, it is only to the extent that the various sensory output signals are, as it were, *received* by the mental "sense" that there can seem to be a single stream of consciousness. Further, Dharmottara here suggests that the point involves a peculiarly temporal dimension; for while the *manovijñāna* clearly figures as the conclusion (the "*phala*," we might say in anticipation of a related point) of an eminently temporal process, it is here suggested by Dharmottara that it is distinctive of the *manovijñāna* nevertheless somehow to "bring along" the (necessarily previous) moment of sensing that is its content. If, then, the dawning of *manovijñāna* represents the moment at which a subject can first be said to have contentful experience, *manovijñāna*'s therefore being temporally successive is nevertheless denied; indeed, it is just *manovijñāna* that is here meant to explain how it can be that constitutively momentary cognitions—which are chiefly imagined in this as in many other Buddhist accounts as *effects*—are nevertheless somehow contemporaneous with the cognized objects that are their causes.[29]

It seems from the brief discussion in the *Nyāyabindu*, in any case, that for Dharmakīrti "*mānasapratyakṣa*" just is *manovijñāna*. As we saw from Candrakīrti's engagement with Dignāga, *manovijñāna* represents precisely that conceptual faculty which knows *that* things are as represented by the senses. Given this, Dignāga is tendentious in taking a passage saying as much to warrant his characterization of *pratyakṣa* as *kalpanāpoḍha*; the quotation really entitles him only to the claim that the "perceptual" outputs *of the bodily senses* are nonconceptual—which, on the Ābhidharmika account originally advanced by the passage, just is to say that the outputs of the senses are not epistemically contentful at all, but are, rather, themselves the content *of* the "mental perception" that alone really "knows" anything. This would seem to be just the sort of view that Paul Williams stated in characterizing one understanding of *svasaṃvitti*—that in order "for a proper perceptual act to take place," a sensory awareness of something's appearing blue "has to become the object of an awareness *that* it is an eye-consciousness with an aspect of blue" (Williams 1998, p. 7).

To the extent, then, that Dignāga clearly introduced *svasaṃvitti* as somehow subsumed under *mānasapratyakṣa*, and to the extent, as well, that something like Candrakīrti's and Dharmakīrti's understanding thereof is in play for him, this could all be taken to recommend a perceptual understanding of *svasaṃvitti*—a view of that as consisting in awareness that is "of" one's mental states in the way that perception is *of* trees, etc. *Svasaṃvitti* would seem on such a view to consist in the second-order awareness *that* something is as represented by the senses. Among the problems in so understanding Dignāga, however, is that this would seem to be to characterize *svasaṃvitti* as an eminently conceptual faculty—which is just what Dignāga means to deny in characterizing it as perceptual (*pratyakṣa*).

[29] We will see below that similar questions of temporality are very much to the fore in Rāmakaṇṭha's case against the Buddhists; see section "Concluding with More on the Significance of Phenomenological Considerations: Rāmakaṇṭha's Critical Appropriation of *svasaṃvitti*" below (p. 369 in this volume).

Prajñākaragupta on *mānasapratyakṣa*, Dharmottara on *pramāṇaphala*: Two Solutions to the Same Problem

If we cannot here get clear on what Dignāga himself held in this regard, or what (if any) philosophical work the category is doing for Dharmakīrti—among the puzzling aspects of the presentation in the *Nyāyabindu* is that Dharmakīrti seems to disavow the category as being of little significance[30]—it is nevertheless interesting that a view of *mānasapratyakṣa* precisely like the one here sketched seems, based on Hisayasu Kobayashi's account, to have been held by Dharmakīrti's commentator Prajñākaragupta. Thus, just as Candrakīrti emphasized that Dignāga's Ābhidharmika passage really says that only with the *manovijñāna* can one be said to know *that* something is blue (*nīlam iti vijānāti*), so, too, for Prajñākaragupta, "a mental perception is a cognition which grasps its object as 'this' (*idam iti jñānam*)."[31] Indeed, Prajñākaragupta's seems to be the point that specifically *sensory* perception (*indriya-pratyakṣa*) finally counts as a *pramāṇa* only as realized by the *mānasa-pratyakṣa*; as he says (in Kobayashi's translation), "One takes action [towards a given object] only after thinking 'this'. Therefore, mental perception is a valid cognition (*pramāṇa*) because it incites one to take action [towards a given object] (*pravartaka*)."[32] To the extent, that is, that only perceptual *judgments* really further our aims, perceptual awareness becomes contentful, on Prajñākaragupta's reading of Dharmakīrti—and hence, becomes a *pramāṇa*—only, we might say, with the "fruition" that is *mānasapratyakṣa*.

Not inappropriately, this thought occasions the objection that *mānasapratyakṣa* would in that case turn out to be conceptual (which would seem to disqualify it from counting as an instance of *pratyakṣa* at all); for if *mānasapratyakṣa* denotes the constitutively second-order faculty responsible for knowing *that* anything is the case, this would seem precisely to be the faculty of forming judgments (*niścaya*, as Dignāga and Dharmakīrti would say) regarding the outputs of the senses. But in that case, Prajñākaragupta imagines an interlocutor asking of *mānasapratyakṣa*, "why would it not be conceptual?"[33] Prajñākaragupta's answer, as I understand it from Kobayashi, is in effect simply to assert that despite its consisting in cognitions of the form "this is such and such," *mānasapratyakṣa* nevertheless exhibits the property of "grasping directly the essence of its object" (as Kobayashi renders *svarūpagrahasākṣāttva*).[34]

Prajñākaragupta thus invokes *mānasapratyakṣa* with respect to the question of how *pratyakṣa* can be epistemically contentful and nonconceptual at the same time—and in the end, seems simply to assert that there is a faculty (viz., *mānasa-pratyakṣa*) that is at once capable of yielding judgments, and nonetheless a kind of

[30] As Dharmottara explains, "this mental perception is well known as an established conclusion; but there is no *pramāṇa* probative of it." (NB p. 63: *etac ca siddhāntaprasiddhaṃ mānasaṃ pratyakṣam, na tv asya prasādhakam asti pramāṇam*.) Stcherbatsky's remarks on this (1958, pp. 28–29, n. 3) are worth a look.

[31] This volume, p. 240.

[32] This volume, p. 241.

[33] *tadā kasmān na savikalpakatā*. See this volume, p. 241.

[34] This volume, p. 241.

perception. Insofar, however, as it is precisely whether a propositionally contentful cognition like "this is such and such" *can be* the kind of cognition that does that, this answer might be thought to beg the question. In fact, whether any cognition can be described both ways is, as Dharmakīrti's commentator Dharmottara can be taken to have recognized, a very difficult problem given certain of Dharmakīrti's central commitments.[35] We can, indeed, wind up our survey of *mānasapratyakṣa* by considering something of Dharmottara's attempt to address the same problem we have now seen Prajñākaragupta address with reference to *mānasapratyakṣa*. Not only can this help us to render more precise our understanding of what Prajñākaragupta may here be trying to do, but this will give us an occasion to introduce the subject of characteristically Buddhist claims regarding *pramāṇaphala*.

The standardly "Buddhist" claim, in the latter regard, is that when we use the word '*pramāṇa*' (typically taken by Indian philosophers to denote whatever brings about an episode of veridical awareness, the epistemic "instrument" thereof), it should be understood that we are really referring to the *resulting cognition*—to the *pramāṇaphala*, or "fruition of the *pramāṇa*." It is in discussing the sense it makes to say this that Dignāga offers his most significant arguments concerning *svasaṃvitti*; that is not, however, at all how Dharmottara represents the characteristically Buddhist claim in commenting on the *Nyāyabindu*. Dharmottara thinks, rather, that *pramāṇa* really denotes the "result of the *pramāṇa*" (*pramāṇaphala*) in the sense that only when cognition issues in a resulting *judgment* is there any epistemic content—any content, that is, such as can facilitate purposeful activity.

The problem here is the same one Prajñākaragupta addressed with reference to *mānasapratyakṣa*: it would seem to be our cognitive encounters with medium-sized dry goods that can be understood to "facilitate purposeful activity" (to invoke Dharmakīrti's familiar account of what it is in virtue of which anything counts as *pramāṇa*)—but if perception is really as radically nonconceptual as Dharmakīrti seems to say, then it could never be thought to yield awareness of such temporally enduring macro-objects, since (as Buddhists would have us understand particularly with respect to ourselves) the attribution of continuity to what are really just series of fleeting instants is nothing if not conceptual. Perceptions, in other words, would seem not to be *epistemically contentful* except to the extent they involve some conceptual structure; insofar, then, as that is just what Dignāga and Dharmakīrti commonly urge that perception essentially lacks, it is hard to see how *pratyakṣa* can count as a *pramāṇa* at all. As Georges Dreyfus has said in this regard, "it is simply not possible to explain intentionality in the full-blown sense of the word without having recourse to conceptuality."[36]

[35] See Arnold (2009) for an elaboration of this reading of Dharmottara, and for further comments on the passage here to be adduced.

[36] Dreyfus (2007, p. 107). In attributing this recognition to Dharmakīrti, Dreyfus allows that he is "using Dharmottara's ideas rather than Dharmakīrti's," taking it as "not unreasonable to argue that Dharmottara said what Dharmakīrti ought to have said, or perhaps said implicitly, and proceed on this basis." (*Ibid.*, n. 18). While it may represent the most hermeneutically charitable regarding of Dharmakīrti thus to accept Dharmottara's conventionally commentarial claim simply to have rightly discerned Dharmakīrti's purport, I take it, rather—and also, I think, not unreasonably—that Dharmottara is significantly revising Dharmakīrti in order to address a real problem in the latter's project.

Addressing this problem, Dharmottara thus distinguishes what is "apprehended" (*grāhya*) by perception from what is "to be ascertained" (*adhyavaseya*) thereby:

> What is *apprehended* by perception is a single instant; but what is to be ascertained by the judgment (*niścaya*) produced on the strength of perception is a *continuum* of such instants. And it is precisely a continuum that is to be intended by perception, since a moment cannot cause one to gain anything.[37]

Since, Dharmottara says, it is only "intentional (*prāpaka*) cognition that is a *pramāṇa*,"[38] this means that it is only in virtue of perceptual *judgment* regarding temporally enduring macro-objects that perception can finally be thought a *pramāṇa*.[39] This, for Dharmottara, is finally the point of the *pramāṇaphala* doctrine:

> Even given its arising [causally] from some object to be apprehended, a cognition still has some intentional function necessarily to be performed, by doing which a goal is obtained. And that [function] just is the *pramāṇaphala*, because of the exercise of which a cognition becomes intentional.[40]

Notwithstanding Dharmottara's claim (as an avowedly faithful interpreter of Dharmakīrti) to be allowing nothing of the sort, this clearly amounts to the claim that perception does, after all, involve something like a conceptual aspect. Whether or not he can reconcile this with Dharmakīrti's characterization of perception as radically nonconceptual, the significance of the *pramāṇaphala* doctrine for Dharmottara is thus that it is only insofar as any instance of *pratyakṣa* comes to "fruition" (*phala*) in an epistemically contentful *judgment* that it can be thought a *pramāṇa*. The kind of judgment in which perception must thus issue in order to count as a *pramāṇa* is, for Dharmottara, what we should understand by the "fruition of a *pramāṇa*" (*pramāṇaphala*)—which is, he agrees with Dignāga, all that we can really refer to by the word '*pramāṇa*.' We will now see, though, that Dignāga understands the point of the *pramāṇaphala* doctrine very differently.

Dignāga on *pramāṇaphala* as *svasaṃvitti*

Dignāga most significantly argues for the doctrine of *svasaṃvitti* by way of elaborating on the claim—characteristic of the school of thought that begins with him, and understood by Dharmottara in the way we have just seen—that by the word

[37] NB p. 71: *pratyakṣasya hi kṣaṇa eko grāhyaḥ. adhyavaseyas tu pratyakṣabalotpannena niścayena santāna eva. santāna eva ca pratyakṣasya prāpaṇīyaḥ, kṣaṇasya prāpayitum aśakyatvāt*.

[38] NB p. 80: *prāpakaṃ jñānaṃ pramāṇam*. On my translation of *prāpaka* as "intentional," see Arnold (2009).

[39] For more on this, see McCrea and Patil (2006), especially pp. 307–331.

[40] NB p. 80: *grāhyād* arthād utpattāv apy asya jñānasyâsti kaścid avaśyakarttavyaḥ prāpakavyāpāro[,] yena kṛtenârthaḥ prāpito bhavati. sa eva ca pramāṇaphalam, yadanuṣṭhānāt prāpakaṃ bhavati jñānam. uktaṃ ca purastāt pravṛttiviṣayapradarśanam eva prāpakasya prāpakavyāpāro nāma. tad eva ca pratyakṣam arthapratītirūpam arthapradarśanarūpam. atas tad eva pramāṇaphalam*. (*I follow Stcherbatsky (1958, p. 434)—in reading thus instead of Malvania's *prāpyād* in NB)

pramāṇa we cannot really refer to the epistemic "instruments" of our awareness, but only to the cognition generally imagined as *resulting* from the exercise thereof—the *pramāṇaphala*, or "fruition" of the *pramāṇa*. Dignāga's treatment of this doctrine is very different from what can be taken from Dharmottara's engagement with the *Nyāyabindu*; while Dharmottara's elaboration made no reference to *svasaṃvitti*, it is arguably just the point of Dignāga's development of the doctrine to advance a case for *epistemic idealism*—for the view, that is, that we can relate with genuine cognitive immediacy only to things (such as representations or "aspects," *ākāra*) that are in some way intrinsically "mental."

To that end, Dignāga argues that it is finally *svasaṃvitti* that is the "*pramāṇaphala*." The claim, then, that this—*pramāṇaphala*, which just is to say *svasaṃvitti*—is what we really refer to by the word "*pramāṇa*," would seem to be tantamount to the claim that in the final analysis, self-awareness is the only thing that counts as a *pramāṇa*, at least of the perceptual sort.[41] Dignāga might thus be read, then, as concerned to show that *svasaṃvitti* is (as we saw Brentano say of what he called *inner perception*) "not merely the only kind of perception which is immediately evident," but "really the only perception in the strict sense of the word."[42] Despite, however, the obvious affinities here to Brentano's picture, Dignāga's arguments may turn out also to involve something more like the logical or conceptual necessity of a constitutive view of self-awareness.

Dignāga introduces these arguments with the second half of *Pramāṇasamuccaya* 1.8, after having discussed perception (*pratyakṣa*) in some of the ways we saw in considering, above, the passage in which the term *svasaṃvitti* first appears.[43] Here, Dignāga asserts that cognition is "actually a *pramāṇa* only as result" (*pramāṇaṃ phalam eva sat*).[44] He explains:

> For in this regard, the result is not, as for realists,[45] something other than the *pramāṇa*; rather, in virtue of just this cognition's occurrence (existing as a result) as being contentful (*viṣayākāratayā*), there is the conception of it as

[41] Jinendrabuddhi glosses Dignāga's *atra* as "with regard to *pratyakṣa*, as that was previously described" (*atrêti pūrvokte pratyakṣe*).

[42] Cf. note 8, above.

[43] See note 19.

[44] In thus reading the verse, I defer to Kellner (her note 46), who reasonably takes it that "*jñāna* is to be supplied as the subject term"; that is, it is because of *jñāna*'s being "comprehended along with its result" that *jñāna* should be characterized as "*pramāṇaṃ phalam eva sat*." While I am persuaded by Kellner that there is thus a correction to be made to my translation of this elsewhere—I have previously read Dignāga's *pāda* "d" as having '*pramāṇa*' as subject, and '*phalam eva sat*' as predicate—I do not see that the change makes a difference at least for the interpretive aims I am presently pursuing (which are to some extent continuous with my earlier aims). Hattori (1968, p. 28) renders the *kārikā* thus: "…[we call the cognition itself] '*pramāṇa*' [literally, a means of cognizing], because it is [usually] conceived to include the act [of cognizing], although primarily it is a result."

[45] I hereby stipulate that all uses of the word 'realist' in this essay refer to realists about external objects—realists, that is, of the sort typically opposed by idealists.

> having a function. Based on that conception, being a *pramāṇa* is figuratively predicated (*upacaryate*), even though really without function.[46]

Reference to *pramāṇa*s, then, encourages us to imagine that we might distinguish something essentially *pre-cognitive* as a constraint on the determinacy of cognitions, something not itself yet fully cognitive that is nevertheless "instrumental" in the realization of cognitions. But anything we could refer to as such, Dignāga here suggests, is always already accessible to us only given a complete and contentful act of cognition; there is no access to anything somehow given to us before cognition, since it can only be through already constituted cognitions that we can "get at" anything at all. It is therefore only figuratively that we can refer to *pramāṇas*, since what we can only really have in view is the kinds of already contentful cognitions that *pramāṇa*s themselves are supposedly invoked to explain; thus, it is, as Dignāga says, just "in virtue of cognition's occurrence as being contentful" (*jñānasya viṣayākāratayotpattyā*) that we can take there to be something we might thus invoke as instrumental to the determinacy of mental content.

Dignāga's commentator Jinendrabuddhi explains, with regard to this verse, what is really picked out by the characterization of anything as *instrumental* (*sādhanam*):

> [The expression] 'the instrument of an action' (*kriyāsādhanam*) [should] not [be understood to refer to] every instrument of every action, or [to mean that] every action is to be accomplished by all [of these]; rather, the instrument of an action, *x*, is that instrument immediately (*avyavadhānena*) owing to which *x* reaches completion.[47]

We should not, that is, suppose that all of the factors conducing to something are rightly thought "instrumental" in its realization, or that every action will have the same range of factors; rather, only that factor "immediately" (*avyavadhānena*) because of which the act is realized is appropriately characterized as instrumental in bringing it about (*sādhanam*). On this account, Dignāga is entitled to think it is particularly in virtue of "cognition's occurrence as being contentful" that we figuratively characterize cognitions as being *pramāṇa*s because it is "immediately"

[46] PS pp. 3–4: ***savyāpārapratītatvāt pramāṇam phalam eva sat***. *na hy atra bāhyakānām iva pramāṇād arthāntaraṃ phalam. tasyâiva tu phalabhūtasya jñānasya viṣayākāratayotpattyā* ***savyāpārapratīti****ḥ. tām upādāya pramāṇatvam upacaryate nirvyāpāram api sat*. Hattori (1968, p. 28): "Here we do not admit, as the realists do, that the resulting cognition (*pramāṇaphala*) differs from the means of cognition (*pramāṇa*). The resulting cognition arises bearing in itself the form of the cognized object and [thus] is understood to include the act [of cognizing] (*savyāpāra*). For this reason, it is metaphorically called *pramāṇa*, the means of cognition, although it is [ultimately speaking] devoid of activity (*vyāpāra*)."

[47] PSṬ p. 66: *tathā hi na kriyāsādhanam ity eva sarvasyāḥ kriyāyāḥ sarvaṃ sādhanaṃ sarvā vā kriyā sarvasya sādhyā, anavasthāprasaṅgāt; kiṃ tarhi tasyāḥ kriyāyās tat sādhanam, yā yataḥ sādhanād avyavadhānena prasiddhim upayāti. sâiva ca tasya kriyā sādhyā*. Reading the difficult relative clause here without recourse to variables, one could also translate, "that action which is completed (*prasiddhim upayāti*) has as instrument that instrument because of which it is immediately (*avyavadhānena*) [completed]." Thanks to Horst Lasic and Whitney Cox for comments helpful to my understanding of this passage.

owing to this that cognition is determinate; this is *immediately* so since, at least on the view that cognition is constitutively intentional, the occurrence of a phenomenologically determinate cognition *just is* the occurrence of cognition's "being contentful."

I take it, then, that chief among Dignāga's points in explaining the claim that cognition is "actually a *pramāṇa* only as result" is thus to characterize cognition "as being contentful" (*viṣayākāratayā*). My rendering here of *viṣayākāratā*—and verse nine's basically equivalent *viṣayābhāsatā*[48]—as "being contentful" seems to me non-tendentiously to render Dignāga's text, which literally qualifies cognition's arising (*jñānasya utpatti*) "as being that whose aspect (*ākāra*) is an object" (*viṣayākāratayā*). Dignāga's reference to cognition's thus having the "aspect" of its object is reasonably (and commonly) taken to reflect his here embracing *sākāravāda*—embracing, that is, the kind of view on which the direct objects of cognition are themselves mental representations of some sort. While Dignāga was surely committed particularly to such a representationalist or phenomenalist understanding of intentionality, I take his characterization here most significantly to advance the claim simply that cognition *is* contentful or intentional—its being so, indeed, is what I take Dignāga's sentence finally to predicate of cognition.[49] The main point then will be that whatever the particulars of one's explanation of that, the fact remains that cognition's being contentful is finally something *intrinsic to cognition*; Richard Aquila could be expressing the same point when he says (of a view held by Descartes) that "[s]ince being certain in any case of what my awareness is an awareness *of* is compatible with being uncertain of what might exist apart from awareness itself, what awareness is properly awareness of would seem to be something which exists *within* that very awareness itself" (Aquila 1977, p. 12).

Jinendrabuddhi thus explains the "nature" (*svabhāva*) in virtue of which cognition itself is all that could be thought "instrumental" in its own realization:

> In this regard, with respect to a patient such as form, a cognition (which consists in resemblance) must have a nature (*svabhāva*), existing as an instrument, as being experience—[an experiential nature] owing to which there is effected an ascertainment [of various cognitions] as distinct, [such that we can be aware:] "this is a cognition of blue, this of yellow."[50]

[48] See note 67, below.

[49] Against an aspect of the reading I proposed in Arnold (2008), Kellner (this volume, her note 47) adduces this passage to warrant the following characterization of the problem Dignāga is addressing: "This situation is comparable to that of cause and effect in general. The effect arises from its cause and resembles it. It is therefore believed to perform the activity of taking on the cause's form, but in reality, it is without any activity." This seems to me to emphasize Dignāga's *phalabhūtasya* (which I have here rendered parenthetically), which does not have any obvious bearing at least on the reading I am presently developing, since it does not tell us anything about cognition's characterization as "being contentful"—which is, on my reading, the point that is predicated here. Thus, I take the instrumental *viṣayākāratayā* as a predicative instrumental (an *itthambhāve tṛtīya*), and render "*as being* contentful." That, on my reading, is the point that is made thematic in the sentence.

[50] PSṬ p. 66: *tatra rūpādau karmaṇy anubhavātmanā sādṛśyātmano jñānasya tena svabhāvena karaṇabhūtena bhāvyam, yenêdaṃ nīlasya jñānam, idaṃ pītasyêti vibhāgena vyavasthā kriyate*.

Among the things Jinendrabuddhi thus makes clear is that what is wanted here is a criterion for individuating cognitions—something in virtue of which we can take cognitions to be phenomenologically distinct, such that we can know of our own experience when it is of one thing, when of another. Explaining why only something intrinsically "cognitive" could fit the bill in this regard, he anticipates the objection that it could be with reference to such factors as the acuity of the senses that the determinacy of mental content is constrained—that we might think, in other words, that what is "instrumental" in producing contentful cognitions is our sensory interactions with things in the world. The reason it will not do to think such things could be "instrumental" in the realization of determinate cognitions: "because of their not being of the nature of cognition (*ajñānasvabhāvatvāt*), and because, [rather], of their being the *causes* of all cognitions."[51] Jinendrabuddhi thus invokes a distinction (such as we noted at the outset from McDowell)[52] between an *enabling* explanation and a *constitutive* one, and suggests that only the latter sort will do in this case.

His point, I take it, is that the one thing in virtue of which we can take cognitions to *be* phenomenologically distinct, and which we are therefore entitled to refer to as "instrumental" in the realization of any contentful act of cognizing, is the first-personally known fact of the cognition's seeming as it does—which, on the view that it is constitutive of cognition for it to be so known, just is to say the very fact of cognition's occurrence. Nothing, that is, except the bare fact of cognition's *seeming* some way is *immediately* (*avyavadhānena*) related to the occurrence of an act of cognizing; for while it can be doubted whether anything else that is proposed as a constraint on the content of cognition is really as it seems, there is in this case alone an identity between the intentional content and the phenomenological character of cognition. Indeed, a cognition's seeming to be of something just is its character *as* a cognition; the "immediacy" that obtains, then, is of the peculiarly strong sort that goes with *identity*. This, on one view of the matter, is why it makes sense to say that anything we might refer to as "instrumental" to the realization of cognition (as *pramāṇa*) is finally identical with the "resulting" cognition.

Whatever we finally take Dignāga to have meant, however, as a reason for thus holding that cognition is "actually a *pramāṇa* only as result," he then proceeds to claim that this "result" is *svasaṃvitti*; as he says in the first two quarters of verse nine, "Now in this regard,[53] self-awareness is the result, since judgment regarding an object has the form of that [self-awareness]."[54] Together with the first view, this would seem to suggest that at least the *pramāṇa* that is perception is to be understood as finally consisting in *svasaṃvitti*; if, in other words, a perceptual cognition is "actually a *pramāṇa* only as result," and if "result" here refers to self-awareness, it

[51] PSṬ pp. 66–67: *indriyāder āvilatādibhedo niyāmaka iti cet, na, tasyâjñānasvabhāvatvāt sarvajñānahetutvāc ca*.

[52] See note 1, above.

[53] See note 41, above.

[54] PSṬ p. 4: *svasaṃvittiḥ phalaṃ vâtra tadrūpo hy arthaniścayaḥ*. Hattori (1968, p. 28): "… or [it can be maintained that] the self-cognition or the cognition cognizing itself … is here the result [of the act of cognizing]."

would seem straightforwardly to follow that such a cognition counts as a *pramāṇa only as self-awareness*.[55]

There is some question, however, concerning the force of Dignāga's *vā*; I perhaps fudged this as "Now," but it far more typically signals an alternative ("or"), which is how Dignāga's commentator Jinendrabuddhi takes it.[56] Thus, Dignāga could well be saying, "*Or* self-awareness is the result"—in which case, it seems, it would only be within certain parameters that self-awareness is thus to be understood as what is referred to by the word *pramāṇa*. This reading represents one of the bases for taking Dignāga here to be alternately giving accounts of what might be said on either of the perspectives traditionally characterized as "Sautrāntika" and "Yogācāra." On one such interpretation, Dignāga's *kārikā* 1.8cd (*savyāpārapratītatvāt pramāṇaṃ phalam eva sat*) can be thought specifically to concern the case in which it is an external object that a "resultant" cognition is of, whereas he here turns to consider what might be said if instead it is cognition itself that the "result" is of.[57]

Such a reading seems to me, however, to obscure the point I take Dignāga chiefly to be aiming at, which is finally that just the same things can be said about *svasaṃvitti* regardless of whether or not one explains the content of awareness with reference to a world. This is, Dignāga is arguing, because whatever any cognition is finally thought to be *of*, the cognition itself must be reckoned as explanatorily basic. Dignāga here expresses that thought in giving a reason for his claim that "self-awareness is the result"—viz., "since judgment regarding an object has the form of that [self-awareness]."[58] As Jinendrabuddhi explains in introducing his consideration of this verse, "there can be no awareness (*saṃvitti*) of anything apart from cognition."[59] Anything known, that is, can be known only *as* given in some

[55] With regard to this sort of reading, Kellner (this volume, p. 217) suggests that what she has chiefly found problematic is its interpretation of "the exposition of means and result as being essentially about normative aspects of epistemology, about a hierarchy among means of valid cognition, which strikes me as unwarranted." Whether or not it is right to deny that such concerns are immediately in play for Dignāga, it seems to me not unreasonable to develop a philosophically engaged reading in part by considering what else Dignāga may be committed to in virtue of what we understand him to say; it is, in this regard, clear from the subsequent course of the Indian philosophical tradition's engagement with Dignāga that there are a good many things he could reasonably be thought committed to.

[56] See note 57, below.

[57] This view is recommended by Jinendrabuddhi: "Earlier, awareness of an object was said [to be] the result; hence, the word '*vā*' has the sense of [expressing] an option" (PSṬ p. 69: *pūrvaṃ viṣayasaṃvittiḥ phalam uktā; ato vikalpārtho vāśabdaḥ*). Hattori (1968, p. 101, n. 1.60) similarly comments, "In *k. 8cd* and the *Vṛtti* thereon, the cognition possessing the form of an object, i.e., the apprehension of an object (*viṣayâdhigati*), has been regarded as *phala*…. an alternative view recognizing *sva-saṁvitti* as *phala* is put forward here…." Kellner (this volume, p. 223) agrees that Dignāga puts forward two alternatives, but is nevertheless concerned to argue—much as I am arguing here—that, in particular, Dignāga's disjunctive syntax should not be understood as is typically supposed; rather, "the shift to self-awareness as the result, indicated with 'or' (*vā*) in PS 1.9a, accordingly does not indicate a shift from externalism to internalism, but rather a change in perspective from external objects in PS(V) 1.8cd to validly cognised objects in general, regardless of whether they are conceived as internal or external to the mind, and including mental associates."

[58] See note 54, above.

[59] PSṬ p. 68: *tasmān na vijñānavyatiriktasya kasyacit saṃvittiḥ sambhavati*.

cognition—"only," Jinendrabuddhi says, "according to awareness" (*yathāsaṃvedanam eva*); there is no "experience of an object as it is in itself (*yathāsvabhāvam*)."[60] In his own comment on this verse, Dignāga expresses the same point in terms of the basically phenomenalist metaphor of *ābhāsa*, "appearance" (which has much the same sense as *ākāra*); he thus introduces, then, the reason stated in 1.9b (verse itself here repeated in italics):

> For cognition arises having two appearances: the appearance of itself, and the appearance of an object. It is its [i.e., cognition's] self-awareness as having either appearance which is the result. Why? *Since (hi) judgment regarding an object has the form of that [self-awareness].*[61]

I thus take Dignāga's expression here to involve a subjective genitive ("*its* self-awareness as having either appearance"[62]); the point, that is, is not that *svasaṃvitti* is *of* both these aspects (in the way, e.g., that perceptions can be *of* trees), but rather that cognition *has* the quality of self-awareness—which is so, Dignāga is thus to be understood as emphasizing, regardless of what we say about its content. Cognition has the property of self-awareness, in other words, *however* the content of that be characterized—whether, as Dignāga says, cognition be finally understood as *svābhāsam* or *viṣayābhāsam*. Dignāga's reason, then, for the claim that *svasaṃvitti* counts as *pramāṇaphala*—that "judgment regarding an object has the form of that [self-awareness]"—amounts, on my reading, to the point that it is only *as* first-personally cognized that anything is epistemically accessible to us at all. I take it that Dignāga advances, in this way, a case for thinking that *epistemic* idealism (the view that we are only immediately acquainted with mental items) represents the only reasonable epistemological position, even for those reluctant to give up reference to external objects. As Jinendrabuddhi says in concluding his commentary on this part, the point is that "whether or not external objects are present, cognition, having either appearance, is sensed; that which is its [viz., cognition's] self-cognition, i.e., its experience of itself, that will be the result"[63]—will be, that is, the

[60] PSṬ p. 68: *yathāsaṃvedanam eva viṣayo niścīyata… na hi yathāsvabhāvam anubhavo 'rthasya.*

[61] PSṬ p. 4: *dvyābhāsaṃ hi jñānam utpadyate svābhāsaṃ viṣayābhāsaṃ ca. tasyôbhayābhāsasya yat svasaṃvedanaṃ tat phalam. kiṃ kāraṇam? tadrūpo hy arthaniścayaḥ*. Hattori (1968, p. 28): "Every cognition is produced with a twofold appearance, namely, that of itself [as subject] (*svābhāsa*) and that of the object (*viṣayābhāsa*). The cognizing of itself as [possessing] these two appearances or the self-cognition (*svasaṁvitti*) is the result [of the cognitive act]."

[62] I thus read the subjective-genitival *tasya* as *jñānasya*, and Dignāga's *ubhayābhāsasya* as a *bahuvrīhi* modifying that. This is warranted, I think, by Jinendrabuddhi (note 63, below), who clearly reads *ubhayābhāsa* thus as a *bahuvrīhi*. On this reading, Dignāga refers to "its [i.e., cognition's] self-awareness," where "it" is then characterized as "having either appearance." See Kellner (this volume, her note 54) for more on this, where it is noted that I have previously read this passage differently (and, I now think, incorrectly). Compare Chu (2006), who renders the passage with an objective genitive: "Cognition arises with two appearances: the appearance of the cognition itself and the appearance of the object-field. *A self-awareness of these two appearances* is the result" (Chu 2006, p. 239; emphasis added). Hattori (note 61, above) similarly renders "the cognizing of itself."

[63] PSṬ p. 69: *saty asati vā bāhye 'rtha ubhayābhāsaṃ jñānaṃ saṃvedyate. tasya yat svasaṃvedanaṃ svānubhavaḥ, tat phalaṃ bhaviṣyati*. As noted above (note 62), I take the *bahuvrīhi* compound in Jinendrabuddhi's first sentence to support my reading of Dignāga.

pramāṇaphala that is all we can really refer to by the word '*pramāṇa*,' regardless of how we explain what awareness is finally of.

Dignāga on Cognition's "Being Contentful" (*viṣayābhāsatā*) as What is Meant by *pramāṇa*

This reading seems to me consistent with what Dignāga says in the course of introducing and elaborating the remainder of his verse 9 (here again italicized), where he again makes reference to the fact of cognition's "being contentful:"[64]

> For when cognition, along with all its content,[65] is the object, then one knows the object as desired or not desired [only] in conformity to self-awareness; but when it is an external object being known, then *just its* [*i.e., cognition's*][66] *being contentful is the pramāṇa*. For in that case, disregarding that [its] nature is self-cognized by awareness, just its [i.e., cognition's] being contentful (*arthābhāsatā*) is the *pramāṇa*, since that content (*artha*) is *known through that*.[67]

I would argue that the contrast apparently drawn here is not nearly so sharp as Dignāga's disjunctive syntax might lead one to expect; indeed, I think that the alternatives are to be understood as finally amounting to the same thing. Kellner, it seems to me, is stalking the same point with her suggestion (following Jinendrabuddhi) that "the conditional clause that begins the introduction to PS 1.9c, *yadā tu bāhya evārthaḥ prameyaḥ* …, fulfills a different purpose than is often supposed."[68]

Thus, Dignāga first maintains that when it is a *cognition* that is known—"along with all its content," he says—it is of course accessible only to the subject thereof. The first alternative explicitly involves, then, a commitment to the view that cognition's being contentful is *intrinsic* to cognition; as Jinendrabuddhi says of Dignāga's text here, "on the view that the object of cognition is internal, 'along with all its content' [means] along with content which is characterized as part of what is to be apprehended."[69] The seemingly contrastive view is that of a realist about external objects, who will instead maintain that the same mention of a cognition's comprising its object must refer, rather, to the cognition's being individuable in terms of the external object it seems to be about—not that cognition *seems* to be of a

[64] See note 46, above.

[65] On Dignāga's *saviṣayam* here as an indeclinable, adverbial compound, see Kellner in this volume, her note 58.

[66] The insertion is supported by Jinendrabuddhi, who thus specifies the antecedent of the pronoun: ***viṣayābhāsatâiva*** *jñānasya* ***pramāṇam*** *iṣyate*; PSṬ p. 72.

[67] PS p. 4: *yadā hi saviṣayaṃ jñānam arthaḥ, tadā svasaṃvedanānurūpam arthaṃ pratipadyata iṣṭam aniṣṭaṃ vā. yadā tu bāhya evârthaḥ prameyaḥ, tadā* ***viṣayābhāsatâivâsya pramāṇam****. tadā hi jñānasvasaṃvedyam api svarūpam anapekṣyârthābhāsatâivâsya pramāṇaṃ. yasmāt so 'rthaḥ* ***tena mīyate****.* Hattori (1968, pp. 28–29): "For, in this case, we overlook the true nature of the cognition as that which is to be cognized by itself, and [claim that] its having the form of a thing is our means of knowing that [thing]."

[68] This volume, p. 223; cf. note 57 above.

[69] PSṬ p. 70: *tatrântarjñeyapakṣe grāhyāṃśalakṣaṇena viṣayeṇa saviṣayam.*

world of external objects, but that it *is* so. Such an account is, accordingly, introduced as what Dignāga's verse here entertains.[70]

This makes it easy to suppose that Dignāga's reference to what counts as a '*pramāṇa*' in this case represents an alternative to what he said in the first half of the verse (where it was claimed that "self-awareness is the result")—that, in other words, he is no longer advancing the same point in the second half of the verse. Such a reading of the verse's two main claims as distinct from one another seems to me to be reflected in Shinya Moriyama's comment—which is apparently informed by traditional doxographical descriptions of the supposedly alternating perspectives in play for Dignāga—to the effect that "[i]f one reads only this verse, it is not particularly problematic to identify the means of valid cognition and its result as 'the cognition's having the mental form of object' (*viṣayākāratā*) and 'self-awareness' (*svasaṃvitti*), respectively."[71] On such a reading, the salient point is that the text's references to what counts as '*pramāṇaphala*' and what as '*pramāṇa*' are really to *two different things*.

Reading the text with this sort of emphasis, one might then see problems arising from Dignāga's subsequent verse (*Pramāṇasamuccaya* 1.10)—which some traditional interpreters have read as representing the alternative, "Yogācāra" reading of what is taken to have been said from a "Sautrāntika" perspective in verse 9 (which we have just been considering).[72] Here, Dignāga says:

> That [cognition] whose appearance is *x* is the *prameya*; but being the *pramāṇa* and the result thereof belong, [respectively,] to the subjective aspect (*grāhakākāra*) and to [*sva*-]*saṃvitti*—hence, these three are not separate.[73]

As in his reading of verse 9, Moriyama here, too, evidently takes Dignāga's emphasis to be on the distinctions thus invoked. Following the traditionally doxographical framing of Dignāga's arguments, Moriyama is led thereby to identify the following problem:

> … from the Yogācāra standpoint in v. 10, the two mental forms [*viz.*, *viṣayābhāsa* and *svābhāsa*] are considered to be the object and the means of valid cognition for their result, self-awareness … On the other hand, the last

[70] Jinendrabuddhi: *bāhyārthapakṣe tu bāhyena*; PSṬ p. 70.

[71] This volume, p. 262.

[72] So, for example, Moriyama notes (his note 4) that Sucaritamiśra takes the latter verse "as a presentation from the Sautrāntika position," and verse 10 as Yogācāra; cf. Hattori (1968, pp. 101–103, n. 1.61).

[73] PS p. 4: *yadābhāsaṃ prameyaṃ tat pramāṇaphalate punaḥ, grāhakākārasaṃvittyos trayaṃ nâtaḥ pṛthak kṛtam*. Note that *yadābhāsaṃ*'s being a *bahuvrīhi* for *jñāna* is recommended by much of what precedes this, corresponding to (what we saw earlier) *svābhāsam* and *viṣayābhāsam*, etc. (in addition to which, grammatically, it can only be a *bahuvrīhi*!). Thus, I read *yadābhāsam* as "*yadābhāsaṃ jñānam*," "that cognition of which the phenomenal content is *yat*" (here taken just as a variable). Hattori: "whatever the form in which it [viz., a cognition] appears, that [form] is [recognized as] the object of cognition (*prameya*). The means of cognition (*pramāṇa*) and [the cognition which is] its result (*phala*) are respectively the form of subject [in the cognition] and the cognition cognizing itself. Therefore, these three [factors of cognition] are not separate from one another" (1968, p. 29). Hattori comments, "In this verse the Yogācāra view is clearly expounded" (1968, p. 105, n. 1.67).

half of v. 9 starting with the presupposition of the external object requires *viṣayākāratā*, not *svābhāsa*, as the means of valid cognition.[74]

That is, on what Moriyama follows some traditional observers in taking to be the "Yogācāra" perspective expressed in verse 10, it is particularly cognition's *having some content* (its being *yadābhāsam*, "that whose appearance is *x*")[75] that is to be reckoned as what is known ('*prameya*'); its "subjective aspect" (*grāhakākāra*) that is to reckoned as the '*pramāṇa*;' and *svasaṃvitti* that represents what we are to imagine as brought about by the operations of these (*pramāṇaphala*). But on the "Sautrāntika" perspective that is taken to be expressed in the preceding verse, it is instead (we saw) cognition's *being contentful* (*viṣayābhāsatā*) that we are to imagine as '*pramāṇa*.' Thus, it seems that the Sautrāntikas (in verse 9) call *pramāṇa* what Yogācāras (in verse 10) call *prameya*, and that what Yogācāras (again in verse 10) call *pramāṇa* (the *grāhakākāra*) is altogether missing from the Sautrāntika picture. Owing to this, Moriyama suggests, on the Sautrāntika view "a crucial part of self-awareness, the *svābhāsa*-factor, cannot be explained."

This would seem, among other things, to recommend the impression of these doxographically described perspectives as therefore significantly different, and precisely in regard to *svasaṃvitti*. Moriyama reasonably finds support for such a reading in Dignāga's disjunctive syntax; surely it matters, it can thus be urged in defense of this reading, that Dignāga introduces verse nine's claim (that *viṣayābhāsatā* is the *pramāṇa*) as pertaining particularly to those cases where it's an external object that is to be known. While there is thus something to recommend this reading, however, it seems to me to obscure (what I take to be the main point of Dignāga's whole thread of argument here) the extent to which it is precisely the *svasaṃvitti* doctrine that Dignāga takes to *join* the "Sautrāntika" and "Yogācāra" perspectives. Against the kind of reading that Moriyama bases on some traditional interpretations, then, I am suggesting that Dignāga's verses 9 and 10 read rather differently if we keep in mind that Dignāga's claims here are still made in the context of his overarching claim that by '*pramāṇa*' we really refer only to the '*pramāṇaphala*.'

Dignāga should, that is, be understood as distinguishing (in verse 9) cognition's "being contentful" (*viṣayābhāsatā*) as '*pramāṇa*' only relative to his claim that by '*pramāṇa*' we really refer only to the '*pramāṇaphala*'—in which case, to say *being contentful* is what is referred to by '*pramāṇa*' is effectively to say that being contentful is somehow identical with *svasaṃvitti*. Dignāga's reference to the seemingly contrastive case "in which it is an external object that is to be known" is not to be read, then, as supporting a different understanding of *svasaṃvitti*, nor is he to be understood as compromising his own claim that there is really nothing that can ultimately be distinguished as '*pramāṇa*'; indeed, he just is explaining *why that claim*

[74] Note that Moriyama (this volume, p. 263, perhaps following Hattori 1968, p. 104, n. 1.64) gives *viṣayākāratā* for the verse; as we saw above (notes 46, 67, above), that word figures in the preceding portion of Dignāga's *vṛtti*, but according to Steinkellner's edition the verse reads *viṣayābhāsatā*.

[75] Note that as modifying *jñānam* (note 73, above), the *bahuvrīhi* compound *yadābhāsam* is effectively equivalent to *jñānasya viṣayābhāsatā*; that is, to characterize cognition as "having some content" (*yadābhāsam*) just is to adduce the state of affairs of "cognition's being contentful."

makes sense—explaining that however we account for the phenomenologically contentful character of cognition, it will make sense to say *svasaṃvitti* is the "result."

Dignāga thus argues that even if we want to account for cognition's being contentful with reference to external objects, it remains the case that it is only *through cognition*—and to that extent, through *svasaṃvitti* (*tadrūpo hy arthaniścayaḥ*)—that there can be any access to them. Explaining as much, Jinendrabuddhi emphasizes that "even on the externalist position, the object is ascertained only according to awareness (*yathāsaṃvedanam eva*); for there is no experience according to objects [in themselves], as was already explained."[76] We can, in other words, only be thought to know even external objects *as first-personally experienced*, as themselves the content of some awareness. To the extent, then, that cognition's being contentful is thus constitutively known by the subject thereof, *svasaṃvitti* turns out to be ineliminably basic even to the epistemology of an avowed realist. It seems to me that Birgit Kellner, in the reading of this section that she advances in the present volume, makes essentially the same point when she concludes that Dignāga means to argue that "self-awareness is the result because, owing to its providing access to how objects of valid cognition appear subjectively, it allows for a comprehensive conception of the result, applicable to intentional objects as well as mental associates, and also applicable regardless of whether externalism or internalism are advocated."[77]

The claim that cognition's "being contentful" is the only thing worth the name '*pramāṇa*' does not, then, amount to the claim that *viṣayābhāsatā* is something over and above the "*phala*" which is *svasaṃvitti*. Rather, I take Dignāga to advance the point that insofar as cognition's thus being contentful is finally an *intrinsic* property of cognition, it is intelligible quite independently of questions regarding what cognition is really *of*. In traditional doxographical terms, the point is that a "Sautrāntika" already says everything that can be said, epistemologically speaking, in support of "Yogācāra" idealism. On the view I thus take him to be pressing, the right account to give of cognition's often seeming to represent external objects is just that cognition sometimes has this sort of *phenomenal content* (*ābhāsa*). But this is to allow nothing more than that cognition is characteristically contentful, which is just to make a phenomenological point (not an ontological or metaphysical one): that cognition seems to be *of* things. However one aims to explain this phenomenological fact (whether, e.g., in "realist" or "idealist" terms), the fact itself, *as* phenomenological, concerns something intrinsically known to the subject thereof. To the extent, then, that contentful cognition is defined (is *constituted* as such) by its being known to the subject thereof, Dignāga can find epistemological common ground for Sautrāntika and Yogācāra in the claim that regardless of what we think cognition is finally *of*, it is only as first-personally known, only as internally related to an act of cognition, that that is accessible. This is finally why I said above, of the apparent contrast in terms of which Dignāga introduces 1.9cd, that what might seem to be proposed as alternatives may in fact amount to pretty much the same thing.

[76] PSṬ p. 70: *bāhyapakṣe 'pi yathāsaṃvednam evârtho 'vasīyate. na hi yathārtham anubhava iti prāg evoktam*. See note 60, above, for Jinendrabuddhi's earlier statement of the same point.

[77] This volume, p. 226.

I concur with Junjie Chu, in this regard, that the point for Dignāga is thus that "the Sautrāntika's theory agrees with that of the Yogācāra in any case."[78] With respect, then, to Dignāga's verse 10 (which on Moriyama's reading is in tension with verse 9), the salient point on the present interpretation is Dignāga's conclusion: "hence, these three are not distinct" (*trayaṃ nâtaḥ pṛthak kṛtam*).[79] Here again, I take Dignāga still to have in view the overarching claim that by '*pramāṇa*' we can only refer to what is really the *pramāṇaphala*—the claim that any of the various terms thought to be in play in acts of knowing are only "figuratively referred to" (*upacaryate*), with its really only being through an already constituted (and subjectively known) cognition that any of them can be individuated. That *viṣayābhāsatā* is, I would thus emphasize, figuratively referred to in verse 9 as '*pramāṇa*,' while the equivalent fact that cognition "has as its appearance *x*" (*yadābhāsam*) is figuratively referred to in verse 10 as the '*prameya*,' does not count against the overarching claim that regardless of what all we might say in this regard, it is finally only *as* internally related to an act of cognition that anything can be known to us. Whether we would account for cognitive content with reference to an external world or not, then, it can only be "through" *svasaṃvitti* that we have access; to the extent that it is thus only *as first personally known* that anything at all is epistemically accessible, the occurrence of cognition as being contentful (*jñānasya viṣayākāratayā utpattiḥ*) just is the occurrence of subjectively known awareness—this is why it makes sense to say *svasaṃvitti* is the *pramāṇaphala* whatever our ontological commitments finally are.[80]

[78] (Chu 2006, p. 241); among the virtues of Chu's interesting article is that he gives us a great deal of relevant text from Jinendrabuddhi.

[79] Jinendrabuddhi invokes an eminently Yogācāra turn of phrase in glossing this: *trayasyâpi tattvato 'pariniṣpannatvāt, na jñānāt pṛthak karaṇam* ("because of this whole trio's being, in reality, non-perfected, it is not separate from cognition"; PSṬ p. 76).

[80] Note that on my reading of Dignāga, in contrast to that of Moriyama, it is not clear that Dignāga has the problem that Bhāviveka evidently takes himself to be addressing. Moriyama follows Akira Saitō, in this regard, in holding that "Bhāviveka here claims that the means of valid cognition and its result can be explained without introducing the theory of self-awareness. His main claim is … that there is no other nature of mind other than cognition's having the mental form of an object (*viṣayābhāsatā*). Unlike the opponent, who accepts the duality of mental forms, Bhāviveka proclaims that a cognition that has only the mental form of an object is sufficient for explaining the means of valid cognition as well as its result." Following Bhāviveka's interpretation, then, Moriyama characterizes that view as alternative to Dignāga's precisely insofar as "a difference is found only in their claims about the result (*pramāṇaphala*): whereas Dignāga seems to regard self-awareness as the result, Bhāviveka takes the accomplishment of the cognition, which bears only the object-appearance, as its result…. For Dignāga, however, the two are related to different objects: whereas the means of valid cognition is concerned with an external object, the result is connected to an internal object." But this does not really count as an alternative to Dignāga's view if Dignāga's whole point is, as on my reading, just to argue that awareness finally knows only something *mental*; to say "*svasaṃvitti* is the result," that is, *just is* to say that "there is no other nature of mind other than having the mental form of an object (*viṣayābhāsatā*)." Again, then, *viṣayābhāsatā* is introduced by Dignāga not as something additional to *svasaṃvitti*, but precisely as a reason for even the realist about external objects to allow that *svasaṃvitti* is nevertheless the *pramāṇaphala*.

Is Dignāga's a Constitutive View of *svasaṃvitti*? Bilgrami on the Supposed "Independence" of Perceptual Objects

The view that something thus intrinsic to awareness is (perhaps among other things) epistemologically basic could surely be elaborated along lines familiar from our earlier excursus on Brentano, which Dignāga's recurrent reference to "phenomenal content" could be taken to recommend. Dignāga's claim, then, that it is finally only self-awareness that is properly "immediate" can be enlisted as part of a project in empiricist foundationalism, with self-awareness at the base insofar as it is (with Brentano) "the only perception in the strict sense of the word"; insofar, that is, as self-awareness is uniquely indubitable and incorrigible, this might be reckoned the basis of any certainty we could be entitled to. On this sort of reading, Dignāga's reference to cognition's "being contentful" would be read mainly as expressing the kind of phenomenalist skepticism that is characteristic of empiricism; the emphasis, in other words, would be on Dignāga's word "appearance" (*ābhāsa*)[81]—cognition may *appear* to be of objects, but insofar as the appearing itself is all we can be sure of, we'd better start with that. This is just the sort of view that finds expression in the thought that we are immediately acquainted only with representational 'sense data' or the like, which Dignāga's reference to *ābhāsa* and *ākāra* (and the so-called doctrine of *sākāravāda* more generally) can reasonably be taken to suggest.

Let us consider, though, the possibility that Dignāga might just as aptly be characterized as elaborating a *constitutive* view of self-awareness. Bilgrami affirms, in this regard, that chief among the upshots of such a view is that "our very notion of a mental state requires that mental states lack an independence from our capacity for knowing that we have them" (2006, p. 17); in particular, they "lack the independence from our knowledge of them that facts or objects in the external world have from our capacity to have knowledge of *them*" (*Ibid*.). Deploying his idea that there is a disjunction between such a view and the empiricist sort of view we saw exemplified in Brentano, Bilgrami further says of the "independence" our mental states lack:

> Given the governing disjunction, we can confidently say this much. What they lack is precisely the independence possessed by the things *of* which we have perceptual knowledge, *from* that perceptual knowledge, i.e., the independence from perceptual knowledge that objects and facts in the external world possess. (Bilgrami 2006: p. 29)

Properly *perceptual* cognition is thus defined by its being independent of the things it is *about*, in the sense (perhaps among others) that anyone's perceptually apprehending anything in the vicinity is not constitutive of that's *being* there. A tree's being situated (its "occurring") in such and such a place is not, that is, equivalent to its being the object of a proximal agent's awareness—its *being* is not

[81] It might be noted, in this regard, that *ābhāsa* often has not just the sense of "appearance," but particularly of "specious" appearances—as, for example, in the term *hetvābhāsa* (the "mere appearance of a reason"), denoting a fallacy in argument.

the same as its *being known*; for a cognition to occur, in contrast, just is for the subject thereof to be aware of it.

It is, however, precisely insofar as this is so that self-awareness—our cognitive acquaintance with our own mental lives—cannot, for Bilgrami, finally be perceptual; for the subjectively known character of our own experience is *not* thus independent of our "knowledge" thereof, but is, indeed, always already on display in our being aware of anything at all. Hence, Bilgrami's view that there is a basic disjunction between the "constitutive" and "perceptual" views. If this is right, then it would seem that Dignāga and his followers must hold *either* a perceptual *or* a constitutive view—which would seem to mean that if we can attribute a constitutive view of *svasaṃvitti* to Dignāga, we would have to judge him wrong to have characterized it all along as "perceptual" (*pratyakṣa*). Something, it seems, has to give.

Note, however, that in characterizing the "lack of independence" that distinguishes self-awareness on a constitutive view thereof, Bilgrami could reasonably be thought by Dignāga and Dharmakīrti to beg precisely the question at issue; thus, Bilgrami (for whom it is perhaps axiomatic that idealism is a non-starter) says particularly that cognitions are not independent of our knowing them in the way that "facts or objects in the external world" are. While this characterization surely captures something significant about the phenomenologically distinctive character of perception—specifically, the fact that perceptual objects seem, phenomenologically, to "impinge" upon us—it is just the point of Dignāga (and, following him, Dharmakīrti) to argue that we can account for this strictly *phenomenological* fact about perceptual awareness without any reference to external objects. It cannot, then, be particularly with reference to awareness of *external* objects that self-awareness is distinguished; for these Buddhists have allowed only that cognitions that seem, phenomenologically, to represent external objects are indeed characterized by their "being contentful" (*viṣayābhāsatā*), and have claimed they can alternatively explain their seeming so. They would surely argue, then, that Bilgrami is not entitled at this point to exploit intuitions particularly regarding the independence of *external* objects from our awareness thereof; for it just is whether we need to say there are such things that is in question for these Buddhists.

Clearly, then, it matters, for Bilgrami's claim regarding his "governing disjunction," whether we take some form of idealism to be tenable; for as I have been urging, the point of Dignāga's whole trend of argument with regard to the foregoing phenomenological considerations is that in fact, cognition's being contentful *is* (unlike Bilgrami's perceptual objects) constitutively known by the subject thereof. The point these Buddhists thus mean to press is that just insofar as we can only know even perceptual objects *as the content of awareness*, it turns out that we never *can* say even of perceptual objects that they exist independently of their being known.[82] On the Buddhist view that it is thus particularly its *being contentful* that is constitutive of cognition, the point is that one's first-personal acquaintance with the

[82] Or at least, that they can be *known* to exist independently of being known; how strong (and perhaps how interesting) a claim is made here surely depends on whether it is the epistemic or the metaphysical point the Buddhists finally take the argument to recommend.

occurrence of one's own cognitions just is acquaintance with their being contentful; conversely, insofar as cognitions are constitutively known by the subjects thereof, any occurrence of cognition's being contentful just is the occurrence of a first-personally known state. To the extent that only this much is indubitably known, it thus seems that on the trend of argument begun by Dignāga, the salient point about "facts or objects in the external world" is that they are available to us only as internally related to acts of cognition—only, contra Bilgrami's formulation, as "lacking independence" from any awareness of them.

It may, then, be just insofar as Dignāga and his philosophical fellow travelers would argue finally for idealism that they can reject Bilgrami's governing disjunction; insofar, that is, as their point just is to argue that it is only as first-personally known that we have any epistemic access to the world, they are arguing precisely that nothing finally has "the independence from perceptual knowledge" that "objects and facts in the external world" are generally supposed to have.

Dharmakīrti's *sahopalambhaniyama* Argument: Towards the Mode of Necessity

The foregoing considerations might give us some way to understand the sense it could make for these Buddhists to hold a constitutive view of *svasaṃvitti* even while representing it as essentially *perceptual*. We can further develop the case for a constitutive view of *svasaṃvitti* by turning our attention now to Dharmakīrti's so-called *sahopalambhaniyama* argument, which as Taber notes was widely regarded by subsequent thinkers as the definitive argument regarding *svasaṃvitti*. What is decidedly non-'perceptual' about this line of argument is the extent to which it involves something like the mode of necessity. I will suggest that the logically distinctive move here—the one Taber would characterize in terms of the Identity of Indiscernibles—might also be illuminated by Mark Sacks's conception of "situated thoughts." The logically distinctive character of Dharmakīrti's argument may particularly shed light on the possibilities for a constitutive view of *svasaṃvitti* among Buddhists.

Dharmakīrti introduces the most widely cited formulation of the *sahopalambhaniyama* argument (the one at *Pramāṇaviniścaya* 1.54) as specifically meant to show how everything that's been said about *pramāṇa* and *pramāṇaphala* can be established particularly given the view of "there being nothing but representations" (*vijñaptimātratāyām*)—given, that is, the idealism of Yogācāra.[83] It is in the context of the same concern that Dharmakīrti also elaborates, in *Pramāṇavārttika* 3.335, what John Taber follows the commentator Manorathanandin in taking to be an alternative formulation of the same basic argument.[84] In the run-up to *Pramāṇavārttika* 3.335, Dharmakīrti (as read by Manorathanandin) has a Yogācāra proponent acknowledge that of course, phenomenologically speaking, it *seems* to us

[83] PVin p. 39: *bhavatu nāma yathādarśanaṃ pramāṇādivyavasthā, vijñaptimātratāyāṃ sâiva kathaṃ sidhyati?*

[84] See Taber, in this volume, p. 292.

that much of what we experience is external to awareness; it is, however, how we are to *explain* this phenomenological character of awareness that is in question. It is true, Dharmakīrti's imagined Yogācāra thus concedes at *Pramāṇavārttika* 3.334,[85] that "thought possesses a specific aspect (*buddhir ākāraviseṣiṇī*), i.e., it is connected with a particular aspect of blue or non-blue, etc." Just as with Dignāga's claim that "cognition's being contentful" is the only *pramāṇa* that even a realist could refer to, Dharmakīrti's point here represents something that an idealist, too, can say; what is at issue between Sautrāntikas and Yogācāras, then, is just how we are to explain this phenomenological fact. Thus, as Dharmakīrti's Yogācāra continues to say of this "thought possessing a specific aspect," it is precisely "whether that thought could arise from an external object, or from something else, i.e., from the constraint of a latent disposition" that is "worth considering."[86]

Elaborating on this, the commentator Manorathanandin nicely captures the difficulty he takes Dharmakīrti here to have identified: On one hand, the constitutively episodic character of awareness—its "being occasionally occurrent" (*kādācitkatā*)—seems precisely to demand that there be specifiable *causes* of any moments of awareness[87]; on the other hand, Manorathanandin explains, the problem with the demand that we specify the causes of awareness is that "there is no object at all, possessing a distinction from thought (*buddhivyatirekin*), which is apprehended as being the cause (*hetutayā-upalabhyate*)." The familiar reason for this claim: "because of the awareness of nothing but the form of cognition."[88] The point is that anything cognitively "apprehended" is, *ipso facto*, internally related to an act of awareness; just to that extent, though, anything taken to be *known* as being a causal constraint on awareness could never have the property of "possessing a distinction from thought." Anything we can know about the causes of cognition, then, can only finally be *known* by us "from the inside," as it were.

With such issues in play, *Pramāṇavārttika* 3.335 then expresses an argument that Manorathanandin elaborates thus: "In regard to this, because of the non-apprehension of things like blue apart from the qualification which is awareness—and because of the apprehension of blue only when there is apprehension of that [i.e., of the qualification which is awareness]—perceiving (*darśana*), whose content is things like blue (i.e., whose aspect is blue), is based on awareness of the blue and of

[85] Here with Manorathanandin's comments.

[86] PV pp. 199–200: ***yadi buddhis tadākārā*** *vā bāhyasarūpêty ucyate, satyam[;]* ***asti sā*** *buddhir* ***ākāraviśeṣiṇī*** *nīlānīlādyākāraviśeṣayuktā; kiṃtu sā buddhir* ***bāhyād*** *arthāj jāyeta,* ***anyato*** *vāsanāpratiniyamād* ***vā iti vicāram idam arhati***. Cf. Dunne's translation of Dharmakīrti's verse (2004, p. 277n): "If awareness has the image of the object, then it must have something that distinguishes [each] image [for each awareness]. It would be wise to look into whether that differentiation must come from something external, or whether it might just as easily come from something else."

[87] "And that could," he continues, "be external, or it could be [something internal, like] a *vāsanā*, since both make sense" (*kādācitkatayā tu kāraṇaṃ tasyāḥ kiñcid vyavasthāpanīyaṃ[.] tac ca bāhyaṃ, vāsanā vā syāt, ubhayathâpy upapatteḥ*). PV p. 200.

[88] *Ibid.*: *na tāvad buddhivyatirekiṇârthaḥ kaścid dhetutayôpalabhyate, buddhisvarūpamātravedanāt.* Note that I have, for my own rhetorical purposes, given the last couple of sentences from Manorathanandin in reverse order; thus, the present phrase actually occurs in the text immediately before the sentence given in note 87, above.

the thought *only together* (*sahâiva*).''[89] The one thing we cannot doubt with respect to any occurrent awareness, Dharmakīrti thus argues, is the fact (itself constitutive of awareness) of its *seeming* to be of something; there is no awareness that lacks this property or ''qualification'' (*upādhi*). This means, however, that the property of thus *seeming*, phenomenologically, to have some content must itself be *intrinsic* to cognition; that is, indeed, just what it means to say that one cannot have an awareness lacking that property.

Precisely to that extent, however, *the awareness itself* must be reckoned as both epistemically and logically basic. If, in other words, we have (based on our experience) the idea that things out there in the world exhibit such properties as *being blue*, that can finally be so only insofar as we have the logically prior experience of its *seeming to us* that such things are the case. This might be taken to reflect (or indeed to state) an eminently *empiricist* view of self-awareness; Dharmakīrti can clearly be understood in this regard to advance (what many would take as a criterion of being an empiricist) a key version of what Wilfrid Sellars influentially critiqued as the ''myth of the given''—one (not unlike Brentano's) according to which knowledge is built on the foundations of what incorrigibly *seems* to a subject to be the case. Sellars was concerned to argue, against such views, that ''*being red* is logically prior [to], is a logically simpler notion, than *looking red*''—and concludes, from his arguments for this claim, that ''it just won't do to say that *x is red* is analyzable in terms of *x looks red to y*.''[90] To the extent that it carries conviction, this characteristically Sellarsian point—the point, in John McDowell's formulation, that ''reality is prior, in the order of understanding, to appearance'' (1998, 410)—would also seem to cut against the argument Dharmakīrti appears to have in mind.

While that may certainly be among the upshots of Dharmakīrti's argument here, this characterization with reference to Sellars seems nevertheless to leave something of the force of Dharmakīrti's argument out of account—in particular, the mode of *necessity* that apparently attaches to Dharmakīrti's main claim. I thus have it in mind, I think, to pick out the same feature of Dharmakīrti's argument that John Taber reasonably proposes thinking about in terms of the principle of the ''Identity of Indiscernibles.'' As we have seen, reference to *identity* is certainly not out of place here, since the argument surely turns (as I think we can still say with reference to Dignāga's terms) on the identity of *cognition's occurring*—which just is to say, its being contentful (*viṣayābhāsatā*)—with *its being known*. Taber suggests in this regard that Dharmakīrti's argument aims to show that ''instead of the sharing of all properties, the sharing of just *one crucial* property is considered sufficient to establish identity or, more precisely, 'non-difference' (*abheda*), namely, the property of being perceived at a particular time!''[91]

[89] PV p. 200: *tatra* ***darśanena*** *jñānen***ôpādhinā** *viśeṣaṇena* ***rahitasya*** *nīlāder* ***agrahāt ta****sya* ***grahe*** *ca nīlasya* ***grahāt*** *sahâiva nīladhiyor vedanād* ***darśanaṃ nīlādinirbhāsaṃ*** *nīlākāraṃ vyavasthitaṃ*. Cf. Taber in this volume, p. 291.

[90] Sellars (1997, p. 36). Sellars's entire discussion at pp. 32–46 is relevant here; see also Robert Brandom's comments at pp. 136ff. of this edition.

[91] Taber in this volume, p. 292.

It is from the most widely cited formulation of the *sahopalambhaniyama* argument, centering on Dharmakīrti's *Pramāṇaviniścaya* 1.54, that Taber here takes the word *abheda*, and so we here turn to that unfolding of the argument. Answering, then, the question (noted above) of how the *pramāṇaphala* doctrine is to be established given Yogācāra commitments, Dharmakīrti says at *Pramāṇaviniścaya* 1.54 that "because of the constraint [according to which anything is known only] together with the apprehension [thereof], there is no difference between *blue* and the *cognition* [thereof]."[92] Among the points Dharmakīrti makes in elaborating on this is that "when there is non-apprehension of the aspect of one of these two, there is not apprehension of the other, [either]. And this doesn't make sense if there is a difference in nature (*svabhāvaviveke*), since there is no cause of the connection [between them]."[93] That is, without some *awareness* of blue, there can be no epistemic access to the "blue itself," either—and if, conversely, there is thought to be some access to the "blue itself," that can only be insofar as there is some *awareness* thereof. Seemingly emphasizing that it follows that these are *identical*, Dharmakīrti explains that this invariable concomitance is tantamount to the two terms' having the same "nature" (*svabhāva*).[94] This is, Dharmakīrti suggests, because there is nothing that could be thought of as *causing* such a connection—for again, anything that could be *known* as bringing this about would, *ipso facto*, already be internally related to an act of cognition just such as we had here aimed to explain.

With regard to this claim, Dharmakīrti entertains an objection such as might reflect the perspective of an Ābhidharmika, for whom contentful cognition is to be understood as constrained, in the first instance, by sensory outputs that, while themselves of the nature of '*vijñāna*,' are produced by contact with objects in the world—that, in other words, what causes this connection is just the operation of such factors as sensory contact with objects in the world. On such a view, "first there is apprehension of an object, owing to [its] proximity as being the cause of cognition; subsequently, of awareness (*saṃvedanasya*)."[95] The objection is thus that there can be contentful cognition only insofar as there are *inputs* to cognition—and if it is characteristic of the cognition thus produced for it to be first-personally known by the subject thereof, it must nevertheless be the case that only a cognition so occasioned could present itself to a subject in the first place. The direction of explanation, on this view, should thus be from world to awareness.

This objection elicits Dharmakīrti's argument for the claim that perceptual objects are most significantly characterized by "the constraint" (*niyama*) according to which they can be known only "together with the apprehension [thereof]"

[92] PVin 1.54a-b (p. 39), as introduced following the foregoing (note 83, above): *api ca,* ***sahopalambhaniyamād abhedo nīlataddhiyoḥ***.

[93] PVin p. 40: *na hy anayor ekākārānupalambhe 'nyopalambho 'sti. na câitat svabhāvaviveke yuktam, pratibandhakāraṇābhāvāt*.

[94] This kind of claim surely recommends Taber's characterization of the argument in terms of the Identity of Indiscernibles.

[95] PVin p. 40: *viṣayasya vijñānahetutayôpanidheḥ prāg upalambhaḥ paścāt saṃvedanasyêti cet*.

(*sahopalambha*). Thus, while the latter point has already been adduced as a reason for thinking there is finally no difference between "blue itself" and the cognition thereof, he now gives a reason for thinking this constraint to obtain in the first place. Why should it be thought, that is, that self-awareness is in this sense explanatorily prior to awareness of objects? Dharmakīrti answers the interlocutor's appeal to the constraint exercised by the senses, then, by thus concluding his verse 1.54: "Seeing of an object is not established for one whose apprehension is [itself] imperceptible."[96]

Translating the same verse from the Tibetan translation that was at the time all that was available, Georges Dreyfus and Christian Lindtner render: "[If you do] not [accept that only] perception is perceived, the perception of an [external] object can never be proved" (1989, p. 47). Particularly their second insertion suggests that the point of this verse is that cognition can only finally be "of" itself. While this is likely as Dharmakīrti means, at the end of the day, to argue, I take it that he is here making a more limited and conceptually basic point: that whatever one says with regard to what cognition is finally "of," nothing at all can be known that isn't "first-personally" known; there cannot, that is, be a state of 'knowing' that is not experienced as such by the subject thereof. "For," as Dharmakīrti immediately elaborates, "there is not awareness of an object simply in virtue of there *being* an object; rather, [there is awareness of an object] by virtue of there being an *awareness* thereof."[97] And while awareness's really being *of an object* can coherently be doubted, there being such an *awareness* cannot itself be thought to require demonstration (*sā câprāmāṇikā*);[98] rather, there being some occurrent awareness is simply the self-evident basis of all our transactions, none of which can get off the ground except through such epistemic access as cognition alone affords.[99] There is, in other words, nothing more certain than the existence of cognition itself, and any cognition's being known by the subject thereof must therefore be reckoned, epistemically and conceptually, as the most basic fact of all—as uniquely indubitable or immediate. While a realist will, then, take himself to claim not (with Dignāga and Dharmakīrti) that cognition *seems* to of a world, but

[96] PVin 1.54c–d, 40: *apratyakṣopalambhasya nârthadṛṣṭiḥ prasidhyati*. Both Watson (his note 26) and Taber (his note 19) cite many relevant sources regarding this widely cited verse.

[97] PVin p. 41: *na hi viṣayasattayā viṣayopalambhaḥ, kiṃ tarhi tadupalambhasattayā*. Compare Dreyfus and Lindtner (1989, 47): "The fact that an object (*viṣaya*) exists does not mean that it is perceived. On the contrary, it is [perceived] by its perception!"

[98] I thus read the feminine pronoun *sā* as having *tadupalambhasattā* as its antecedent; Dreyfus and Lindtner read "So [the existence of an object] does not [provide us] with valid cognition…." (1989, p. 47)

[99] So, Dharmakīrti: "And this [i.e., awareness itself], which is without warrant, does not block transactions based on the [supposed] existence [of external objects]; [indeed,] given the non-establishment of that [i.e., of awareness itself], there is non-establishment of the object, too; hence, everything would be destroyed, because of the impossibility of transactions regarding existence when there is non-establishment even of the existent. Therefore, insofar as one is non-apprehending"—that is, insofar as the conceptually basic fact of *being aware* does not obtain—"no awareness of anything is known at all." (PVin p. 41: *sā câprāmāṇikā na sattānibandhanān vyavahārān anuruṇaddhi. tadaprasiddhau viṣayasyâpy aprasiddhir ity astaṅgataṃ viśvaṃ syāt. sato 'py asiddhau sattāvyavahārāyogyatvāt. tasmān nânupalabhamānaḥ kasyacit saṃvedanaṃ vedayate nāma kiñcit*.)

that it *is* so, Dharmakīrti has here argued that before a realist can say or make sense of that, he must first say at least that it *seems*, phenomenologically, to be so.

Dharmakīrti further emphasizes that this conceptually basic fact must itself be intrinsic to awareness, since otherwise an infinite regress will ensue. Again,[100] then, if it were the case that we must first understand what cognition is really *of*, and only subsequently know *that* we have awareness thereof, then (as Dharmakīrti says),

> awaiting the end [of a series of] apprehensions, a person does not comprehend any object, because of the non-establishment of all [cognitions] when there is non-establishment of one [i.e., of the first-personally known one]. And since there is no end of the arising of apprehensions, the whole world would be blind and deaf. If there is [to be] any termination [to the series], that [cognition must] intrinsically apprehend itself and the aspect of an object simultaneously (*svayam ātmānaṃ viṣayākāraṃ ca yugapad upalabhate*).[101]

That is, we cannot be said to have any epistemic acquaintance with something we are not *aware* of; and since to be aware just is to be *first-personally* aware, that means there can be no epistemic acquaintance with anything until there is a cognition essentially characterized by *svasaṃvitti*. This means, however, that cognitions must be known by the subjects thereof from the very start—they must be, as it were, reflexive *all the way down*—since otherwise there would be no way to bridge the gap between first being somehow *non*-cognitively acquainted with the world, and then cognitively so; indeed, Dharmakīrti is arguing that there is nothing it could look like to *be* "non-cognitively" aware of anything. It cannot be the case, then, that our first-personal acquaintance with our own mental lives is itself parasitic on a world of objects that are themselves intelligible apart from our awareness thereof; for this very fact could only be *known* by us through a cognition whose very character as a cognition already constitutively involves its necessarily being known by the subject thereof.

Dharmakīrti thus argues not only that the doctrine of *svasaṃvitti* does not (contra many of the doctrine's Indian critics) open up an infinite regress, but that it represents the only way to *foreclose* a regress; only cognitions that are *intrinsically* reflexive could be thought to disclose anything at all, quite regardless of what we say about what is thus disclosed. It does not, to that extent, make sense to say we could *know* epistemic content to be essentially constrained by something not itself cognitive (by, e.g., contact between things in the world and the material sense faculties); for any cognition to that effect is always already individuable to the subject thereof only in virtue of her own first-personal acquaintance with her mental states (her *svasaṃvitti*).

[100] See note 95, above.

[101] PVin pp. 41–42: *tan na tāvad ayaṃ puruṣaḥ kañcid arthaṃ pratyety upalambhaniṣṭhāṃ pratīkṣamāṇaḥ, ekāsiddhau sarvāsiddheḥ. na côpalambhānām utpattiniṣṭhety andhamūkaṃ jagat syāt. kvacin niṣṭhāyāṃ sa svayam ātmānaṃ viṣayākāraṃ ca yugapad upalabhata iti… tat siddhaḥ sahopalambhaniyamaḥ, ekavyāpāre kramāyogāt, tasyâviśeṣāt.*

Among other things, Dharmakīrti in this way advances the claim that *svasaṃvitti* represents not one among several *kinds* of awareness (viz., that kind which is *of* our own mental states), but rather, the intrinsically reflexive character in virtue of which the subject of any cognition can know her own cognition to be contentful.[102] This, finally, is why Dharmakīrti thinks it right to say that the most salient characteristic even of perceptual objects is the constraint (*niyama*) given which they can only be experienced "together with the apprehension [thereof]" (*sahopalambha*). Contra Bilgrami, then, Dharmakīrti is clearly concerned to argue precisely that perceptual awareness is *not* to be distinguished from self-awareness in terms of the latter's lack of the "independence possessed by the things *of* which we have perceptual knowledge, *from* that perceptual knowledge"; for on Dharmakīrti's view, it turns out that perceptual objects, too, finally lack this independence.

Dharmakīrti concludes from this that we should therefore embrace precisely the conclusion that Sellars took to be problematic:

> 'Awareness' manifests that way because of its identity (*tādātmyāt*); [it is] not *of* anything other than it[self], just like self-awareness. Because of this, it doesn't make sense [that it be] with regard to another object than it[self]. But given that colors and so forth are not objects apart from experience, what exists with that as its nature [just] shines forth that way; hence (*iti*), there can be the experience of things like color.[103]

It is, in other words, only because of properties intrinsic to awareness that "there can be the experience of things like color"—which is almost precisely to say, against Sellars, that "*x is red* is analyzable in terms of *x looks red to y*."[104] Dharmakīrti's point is that it cannot be held that cognition is constitutively *of* a world, since it is just cognition itself (and not what cognition seems, phenomenologically, to represent) that must finally be reckoned as basic. Cognition is, to that extent, autonomously intelligible—we can make sense, that is, of its being the kind of thing it is quite independently of whether it is thought to be of a world.

[102] This formulation of Dharmakīrti's point brings to mind the interesting materials that Moriyama (this volume, p. 267) gathers from Dharmakīrti's discussion of *yogipratyakṣa*; Moriyama aptly characterizes the references to *svasaṃvitti* in this regard as concerning "self-awareness as the basis of self-identification"—which is surely congenial to a constitutive view of *svasaṃvitti* such as I am here sketching.

[103] PVin p. 42: *saṃvedanam ity api tasya tādātmyāt tathāprathanam, na tadanyasya kasyacid ātmasaṃvedanavat. tato 'pi na tadarthāntare yuktam. anarthāntaratve tu nīlāder anubhavāt tadātmabhūtaḥ prakāśate tathêti nīlādyanubhavaḥ syāt*. Cf. Dreyfus and Lindtner (1989, p. 47): "Cognition manifests itself as such, simply because it is its nature to do so. There is not the slightest [thing] apart from it, as in the case of self-cognition. This also means that such a [cognition] is not a cognition apart from (*anyathā*) an 'object.' There is no ['blue object'] apart from the experience of blue, etc. So, [we] experience blue, etc., because [blue, etc.] appears that way; this being the blue nature of such [self-cognition]."

[104] See note 90, above.

"Situated Thoughts:" One Possible Take on the Nature of Dharmakīrti's Argument

While we can, then, again enlist Sellars to make the point that Dharmakīrti effectively upholds a quintessentially empiricist view, it is also important to appreciate (what would seem to cut against that characterization) how the mode of necessity figures in the argument we have just sketched. In this regard, it seems to me helpful to invoke Mark Sacks's idea of "situated thoughts," which, despite the different ends towards which Sacks develops it, represents an idea not altogether unlike what Dharmakīrti seems to be after with the *sahopalambhaniyama* argument. Sacks develops this idea as a way particularly to make sense of the logically distinctive character of transcendental arguments just such as we considered earlier with reference to Kant. The unique purchase of such arguments (if they have any) is surely a function of the mode of necessity they involve—of the fact, for example, that the conclusions to such arguments cannot coherently be denied, insofar as any denial is itself intelligible only given the truth of the conclusion. It has, however, historically proven difficult to specify just what kind of necessity such arguments involve; for while strictly *logical* necessity may be impressive, that would seem incapable of yielding the kinds of substantive or "synthetic" conclusions that proponents of transcendental arguments typically have in mind.[105] Sacks accordingly proposes that the mode of necessity that is distinctive of transcendental arguments is a function of their constitutively involving an appeal to "situated thoughts."

The significance of this idea can be brought out by contrasting it with the view that the mode of necessity can only attach to relations between concepts or propositional contents—with the view, that is, that strictly *logical* necessity is the only kind worth the name. The problem is that if transcendental arguments articulate nothing more than relations between concepts, then they would seem to warrant conclusions only about the proper use of concepts, and not the kinds of metaphysically significant claims they are typically offered to support. In that case, such arguments would be particularly vulnerable to one of the standard objections to them, which is that while it may be a condition of the possibility of *X* (of, for example, our using language) that we *believe Y* (that, for example, there are other minds), it does not follow from this that it must be *true* that *Y*. Thus, Sacks argues, "mere talk of conditions of possibility is too vague. It could be taken to mean no more than semantic conditions for the possibility of a given concept['s] making sense, which would simply take us back towards the notion of conceptual presupposition" (2005, p. 443). It matters, then, that what is in view is, more precisely, typically "an *epistemic condition*—a condition for the possibility of knowledge, or of experience" (*Ibid*.).

Appreciating the distinctive necessity of transcendental claims thus depends on appreciating the difference it makes that they typically involve *the point of view from which they are offered*; thus, such claims "are (or stand to be) valid a priori, but the necessary conditions that their crucial moves advert to are not between propositions or concepts, but between situated thought contents" (2005, p. 451).

[105] On this and related issues, see Arnold (2005c, pp. 121–131).

Descartes's *cogito* argument is paradigmatic in this regard; while we noted in "The *Perceptual* Views of …" section (pp. 328–335) that Descartes compromised the transcendental character of his argument by taking it to warrant an inference to an immaterial substance as the empirical locus of 'thinking,' the basic argument nevertheless "brings out the sense in which situated thought forces a shift from the purely propositional or semantic level to the level of pure phenomenological description" (2005, p. 446). Of the "situated thought" that forces this shift, Sacks explains:

> In saying of a thought that it is *situated*, I mean that it is construed as being the thought that one would have *from a particular point* within a framework, the content of which is informed by it[s] being grasped as if from that perspective. It is not bare propositional content considered as if from nowhere, but is rather informed by being phenomenologically embedded and directed. (2005, p. 444)

The point, I take it, is that transcendental claims constitutively trade on thoughts whose propositional content is somehow amplified by the fact of possibly being had *from some perspective*. Reconstructing, for example, the famous Cartesian argument, we can note that the claim "there is no experience" is self-contradictory (and therefore necessarily false) not particularly in virtue of the conceptual content of the claim, but in virtue of the fact that, *as* "phenomenologically embedded," the claim itself is intelligible only *as made* by a subject who must, to that extent, have some experience. Not only, then, the propositional content of the claim, but also *the making of the claim* thus figures as a premise. The fact that the thought here expressed is thus "situated" means, as Sacks elaborates in terms that seem also to apply to *svasaṃvitti* as we have elaborated it, that "[a]ny experience must be internally structured, or articulated, on pain of it[s] not qualifying as an experience at all: without that articulation, sufficient to distinguish one type of experience from another, there would not be anything it is like for the experiencing subject to undergo it" (2005, p. 444). There could not, that is, be "anything it is like" for someone to claim that "there is no experience" unless that claim itself is false, and it is therefore because of the peculiarly "situated" character of this thought—because, in fact, there *is* something it is like to entertain that thought—that the thought is *necessarily* false.

Dharmakīrti's *sahopalambhaniyama* argument can, I think, reasonably be understood as exploiting a similar sort of necessity. For Dharmakīrti, too, the most basically incontrovertible point is that whatever we say about what experience is really *of*, there is "something it is like" to be the subject thereof. The ineliminably first-personal character of awareness, he argues on the basis of this, cannot be finally explained by anything that is not itself "of the nature of awareness" (*jñānasvabhāva*),[106] since it is only *as* "like something for a subject" that any putatively explanatory factors could be encountered or entertained in the first place. As with Sacks's "situated thoughts," then, the necessity that is the distinctive mode of Dharmakīrti's argument is of the peculiar sort that goes not simply with the concepts in play, but with the "phenomenologically embedded" character of any knowledge one could claim in this (or any other) regard.

[106] I here invoke a passage from Jinendrabuddhi referred to above; see note 96.

Dharmakīrti's claim, on such a reading, is effectively that any thought we could have about, e.g., how to explain the character of awareness, will always already be a "situated thought" in Sacks's sense—will always already be "phenomenologically embedded" in the very kind of thing on which it would supposedly give us purchase. While some would judge this to be an insignificant truism (*of course* we can only know things *as known* by us; how else?), the mode of necessity that thus figures in Dharmakīrti's argument makes the argument itself difficult to refute. As Arindam Chakrabarti notes in a brief study of this line of argument, "Realists in the West have tried to undermine the argument by labelling it 'the egocentric predicament,' but for all its egocentricity, it nevertheless remains a predicament for even the rank realist that a person cannot sincerely say 'p' without at the same time showing that he or she believes 'p.' Or as Bradley put it, '…you cannot find fact unless in unity with sentience'" (1990, p. 17). (The really difficult question is determining just what, if anything, follows from this.)

While we can thus appreciate that Dharmakīrti's *sahopalambhaniyama* argument for *svasaṃvitti*—an argument that subsequent Indian philosophers took to be the most powerful argument for the characteristically Buddhist doctrine—is logically distinctive and perhaps even incontrovertible, it is reasonable to ask just how much this argument can really be thought to get him. Recall, in this regard, that Dharmakīrti himself introduces the *Pramāṇaviniścaya*'s canonical statement of the argument by suggesting that it adds a particularly "Yogācāra" dimension to what is otherwise a position that "Sautrāntikas," too, can hold.[107] Dharmakīrti is well aware, in this regard, that a case for *epistemic* idealism (for the view that it is only mental items that we can be thought immediately to *know*) does not suffice to show *metaphysical* idealism (the view that only mental items *exist*). In this regard, the version of the *sahopalambhaniyama* argument that we found in *Pramāṇavārttika* 3.335 (note 89, above) is immediately followed, in Manorathanandin's commentary, by the concession of precisely that point. Thus, after Dharmakīrti argues that there can be no access to anything at all without the "qualification which is awareness," the "Sautrāntika" opponent (as represented in Manorathanandin's commentary on verse 336) rejoins: "Even so—i.e., even given the absence of a probative external object, which [you have shown to be] cognitively inaccessible (*parokṣa*)—there is no proof of absence."[108] On Manorathanandin's reading, Dharmakīrti's Yogācāra proponent concedes the point:

> A cognition is appearing; but it does not *appear* as external (*bāhyaṃ tu na pratibhāsata eva*)—our effort (which is dedicated to negating a fiendish external object which is without a *pramāṇa* that is probative of the desired conclusion) is only to that extent. But if the desire to refute this [i.e., external

[107] See note 83, above.

[108] PV p. 200: *na[;] tathâpi parokṣasya bāhyasya sādhakasyâbhāve 'pi nâbhāvasthitir iti cet*. I take the initial "*na*" as syntactically independent of the sentence that follows—as expressing, that is, the Sautrāntika's initial denial of the account just proposed by the Yogācāra, with the ensuing sentence giving the reason for so denying.

> objects] is weightier, [the effort] of the master (*ācāryīyaḥ*) with respect to the refutation of atoms (by considering whether or not they have parts) should be considered.[109]

Manorathanandin's expression of this concession – of the point that Dharmakīrti can thus claim only to have shown that whatever the content of a cognition seems to be, the conceptually and epistemically basic fact of its *seeming* so is not itself external ("it does not *appear* as external")—again involves the basic point advanced by the *sahopalambhaniyama* argument; for the fact that the "seeming" is not external is true by definition, since cognition's *seeming* some way is just what any putative object thereof would be external *to*.

But what, in that case, can Dharmakīrti think has been added to the Sautrāntika position, other than the recognition that that position already amounts to epistemic idealism? Despite the mode of necessity that we have seen to attach to it, the *sahopalambhaniyama* argument, it seems, still advances the case only for epistemic (and not for metaphysical) idealism—which is, I submit, part of why this same argument remains available in the service of a generally empiricist understanding of *svasaṃvitti*. It is, in other words, chiefly insofar as *svasaṃvitti* thus figures in an eminently *epistemological* case for broadly idealist conclusions that a perceptual understanding of the doctrine remains in play.

It is important, in this regard, to consider a part of Sacks's characterization of "situated thoughts" that I have so far suppressed. Thus, we attended, above, to Sacks's emphasis on the kind of *situatedness* he has in mind; Sacks also emphasizes, though, that it is crucial to appreciate the difference it makes that he particularly has in view situated *thoughts*. Thus, Sacks explains that "[i]n saying that what is so situated is a *thought*, I mean to distinguish it from mere phenomenological or perceptual experience" (2005, p. 444). If I rightly understand him, Sacks's point is that the kinds of arguments he aims to characterize (viz., transcendental arguments) cannot work if they depend only upon the (contingent) *making of the claim*; rather, the conceptual content of the claim must also remain in play. Thus,

> a situated *thought* differs from the corresponding experience in that the situated thought does not require that the subject actually be situated—only that he approximates in thought to what would be delivered up to him if he were so situated. We might put this by saying that the situated thought is phenomenologically informed without itself being a phenomenological experience. (2005, p. 444)

If, in other words, it is characteristic of these arguments for the strictly conceptual or propositional content to be somehow "amplified" by the intelligibility of that's being entertained from some particular perspective, it nevertheless remains the case that there must *be* some particularly propositional content.

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[109] PV p. 200: *pratibhāsamānaṃ jñānaṃ bāhyaṃ tu na pratibhāsata evêti tāvatâvābhimatasiddheḥ sādhakapramāṇarahitapiśācāyamānabahirarthaniśedhenâsmākam ādaraḥ. yadi tu tanniśedhanirbandho garīyān sāṃśatvānaṃśatvakalpanayā paramāṇupratiṣedhe ācāryīyaḥ paryeṣitavyaḥ*. See Arnold 2008: pp. 16–17, for more on this passage, and on the arguments from Vasubandhu to which Manorathanandin here alludes.

While I confess to being not altogether sure what sense it makes thus appeal to something "phenomenologically informed" that is not itself "a phenomenological experience" (whatever *that* is), it is clear, at least, that what Sacks is after here may differ significantly from one of Dharmakīrti's guiding impulses; in particular, this elaboration of the difference it makes that Sacks refers to "situated *thoughts*" stands in tension with Taber's idea that for Dharmakīrti, "just *one crucial* property is considered sufficient to establish identity or, more precisely, 'non-difference' (*abheda*), namely, the property of being perceived at a particular time!" On my reading, the salient point of Taber's emphasis is that Dharmakīrti advances his line of argument in the context of his overriding commitment to finally *causal* explanations of, well, pretty much everything; Dharmakīrti will not, then, have much truck with "thoughts"—at least not if those be characterized, as for Sacks, in terms of the propositional content they are about[110]—just insofar as only unique, causally efficacious particulars are, for Dharmakīrti, finally real. It is, then, what Taber captures about Dharmakīrti with his emphasis on perception "at a particular time" that may particularly be in tension with Sacks's aims.

Thus, while Dharmakīrti is very strongly committed to the irreducible reality of "thoughts" in the general sense of *mental events*, he is, I think, just as strongly committed to the view that the episodic character of cognition (its *kādācitkatā*, as Manorathanandin said)[111] is central; precisely insofar as they are real, mental events can only consist, for Dharmakīrti, in causally explicable, momentary particulars, and Dharmakīrti's conviction is that there is ultimately nothing *more* to thoughts than the particular events in which they thus consist. There is a case to be made, then, for thinking there is a strong sense in which Dharmakīrti's *sahopalambhaniyama* argument really requires reference only to "the property of being perceived at a particular time," and that any propositional content the argument seems to involve can finally drop out.

While it is beyond the scope of this already excessively long essay to elaborate on that claim, it should suffice for my present purposes to say that what is significant about this is that Dharmakīrti's *sahopalambhaniyama* argument is ventured along with a prior commitment to the view that whatever this argument gets us must be compatible with a certain explanation; in particular, such "situated thoughts" as Dharmakīrti appeals to can only be, he thinks, the kinds of momentary, causally efficacious particulars that alone are really existent on his view. It is reasonable to think, however, that precisely this commitment compromises the mode of necessity that his argument otherwise seems to have, and that if there remains, in Dharmakīrti's elaboration of the doctrine, any tension between the "empiricist" and "constitutive" views of *svasaṃvitti*, this overriding commitment is its source. It is, in other words, because he is already (and on other grounds) committed to the view that "thoughts" can only consist in momentary particulars that Dharmakīrti may be limited to making only an epistemological case for the kind of idealism he

[110] In qualifying the "thought" part of his "situated thoughts," then, Sacks seems to have in mind something more like the Fregean understanding of "thought" than the "mental-event" sense; see Frege (1967).

[111] See note 87, above.

upholds—and indeed, that the epistemological case he makes may itself be threatened by a more genuinely transcendental argument that is not constrained by a prior commitment to causal explanation. I mean, of course, the line of argument that Alex Watson has explicated following Bhaṭṭa Rāmakaṇṭha.

Concluding with More on the Significance of Phenomenological Considerations: Rāmakaṇṭha's Critical Appropriation of *svasaṃvitti*

It is important to recognize, in regard to the foregoing issues, that a properly transcendental argument does not need to show that the transcendental claim at issue is itself (as Sacks says) "part of what is given as the content of our perceptual experience"; such an argument is, rather, concerned to show that certain "facts are required for experience to have the structure it does—even if those facts cannot be read off directly from the content of our perceptual experience of [the] world" (2005, 450). On Sacks's reconstruction particularly of Kantian transcendental arguments, then, "it is not that our point of view is tainted by a particular cognitive structure that we bring with us, but that it is the notion of a situated thought, the mere notion of experience as being from a point of view, that itself imposes the relevant structure" (2005, p. 455). If, that is, such arguments constitutively involve what might be characterized as a *phenomenological* step—the initial step, in particular, in which one is encouraged to attend to what Sacks characterizes as the "phenomenologically embedded and directed" nature of claims regarding experience, or in which, with Dharmakīrti, one is encouraged first to recognize that we can only know anything *as first-personally known by us*—that step is not itself the transcendental argument; rather, the argument proper consists in showing what must be the case in order for that to *be* the phenomenological character of experience, in showing what "imposes the relevant structure" of the phenomenology. Thus, Kant's argument with respect to the transcendental unity of apperception consists not in showing *that* experience has a phenomenologically unitary character (which he not unreasonably took as uncontroversial), but in showing, rather, that experience could only *have* this character given its always already being conceptually structured. This, I take it, is what Sacks expresses by saying it is experience's "being from a point of view" that "imposes the relevant structure."

This is worth stressing since it is precisely the dialectic that Alex Watson so clearly brings out in Rāmakaṇṭha's arguments. This Śaiva Siddhāntin thinker's critical appropriation of the Buddhist doctrine of *svasaṃvitti* seems to me to bring more sharply into relief not only some of the various issues in play in Buddhist elaborations of the doctrine, but also some of the strengths and limits of the transcendental arguments that, I think, most naturally advance a constitutive understanding of the doctrine. Rāmakaṇṭha's development of the doctrine, as elaborated by Watson, is in many respects almost precisely like Kant's argument, contra Hume, for the transcendental unity of apperception.[112] To that extent, Rāmakaṇṭha's arguments seem to me quite cogently to undermine particularly Dharmakīrti's

[112] See "The *Perceptual* Views of …" section above (pp. 328–335).

strongly held commitment to the momentary, causally explicable character of first-personally known mental events—though whether the arguments also cut against Dignāga (who arguably did not share Dharmakīrti's strong commitment to momentariness), and whether they can really be thought to yield (what Rāmakaṇṭha chiefly wants) anything like a doctrine of *ātmavāda*, seem to me to remain reasonable questions.

As Watson emphasizes, Rāmakaṇṭha's doctrine of *ātmavāda* was distinct among Brahmanical versions thereof in eschewing "the existence of a self over and above consciousness"; on his view, rather, "The self just *is* consciousness."[113] Rāmakaṇṭha is thus able to begin his work by making common cause with the Buddhists, enlisting characteristically Buddhist arguments against any view according to which an enduring and autonomous *ātman* is supposed to be related to (but in no sense identical with) our manifestly episodic experience. Buddhists are typically apt, in this regard, to take the episodic character of experience to be clear from the manifestly evanescent *content* thereof—from the fact, that is, that what we are aware of is constantly in flux, giving our experience the character of a constitutively temporal flow of momentary events. Rāmakaṇṭha's view, however, is that even the episodic character of experiential *content* is only intelligible against the background of a unitary, synthesizing perspective—against the background, that is, of *svasaṃvitti*, which he effectively understands as an enduring condition of the possibility of cognition's occurring at all. Insofar, then, as Rāmakaṇṭha shares the Buddhist view that there is no *ātman* over and above what can be found in attention to experience, he is chiefly interested in showing that *svasaṃvitti* cannot, after all, be understood as momentary; as Watson puts it,

> the way to discover who is correct about whether consciousness is momentary or enduring is to focus on our self-awareness, and see if consciousness appears in it as momentary or enduring. We do not need logical arguments here, but rather a kind of phenomenological observation of our ongoing *svasaṃvedana* …[114]

Rāmakaṇṭha thus argues, in a strictly phenomenological key, that while the contentful character of experience is indeed episodic, "the perceiver of those objects appears to us, through self-awareness, as always the same. We never lose a sense, after all, that it is me who is experiencing the objects."[115] Among the points Rāmakaṇṭha offers in support of this intuition is that any moment of experience is characterized by its "having no sense of its non-existence before it [comes into being] or non-existence after it is destroyed even in all three times …"[116] Elaborating on this, Watson says Rāmakaṇṭha's point is that "we never have been nor will we ever be aware of a moment in which our consciousness is yet to exist or has

[113] Watson in this volume, p. 298

[114] This volume, p. 299

[115] This volume, p. 299

[116] This is Watson's translation in 2006, p. 223; the Sanskrit, in Watson's edition (2006, p. 396), reads "*kālatraye 'pi tiraskṛtasvagataprāgabhāvapradhvaṃsābhāvaḥ*."

ceased to exist. Yet if, as the Buddhist claims, consciousness not only is, but also appears to us as, momentary, we would expect some awareness of these two kinds of non-existence. We would feel constantly new, as though what we were in the last moment had just ceased to exist."[117] Later alluding to the same point, Rāmakaṇṭha further argues that

> the ceasing of the perceiver is not sensed in any of the three times. For something which had prior non-existence is said to have arisen; something which undergoes cessation is [said to] be destroyed; but when there is no consciousness of something at some previous or subsequent extremity of it, it cannot be said to arise and cease in every moment.[118]

Its just having arisen is not, that is, part of the *content* of any putatively momentary instance of awareness, nor is its being about to give rise to a subsequent, discrete such instance; rather, awareness is phenomenologically characterized by temporal continuity.

It is important to emphasize, with Watson, that Rāmakaṇṭha is here speaking phenomenologically; he is, in other words, only making a claim about what will seem to us to be the case if we appropriately direct our attention to the subjective character of our own mental lives. The phenomenological point he thus makes is, however, a compelling one, and is particularly in need of explanation given the extent to which characteristically Buddhist intuitions regarding momentariness can be taken to be supported by the episodic character of experience—and particularly, by the character of what might be called the "subjective now," which would seem to represent the paradigm case of something momentary. While it is true, then, that (as Watson allows) "Rāmakaṇṭha will have to provide an independent refutation of the Buddhist arguments for momentariness,"[119] Rāmakaṇṭha can reasonably suppose that his phenomenological observation here significantly undermines the intuitive plausibility of momentariness.

Consider, in this regard, the extent to which Rāmakaṇṭha's phenomenological point could be taken as formally stated by Charles Peirce, here characterizing some problems in the mathematical representation of continuity as they arise with regard to the "subjective now":

> We are conscious only of the present time, which is an instant if there be any such thing as an instant. But in the present we are conscious of the flow of time. There is no flow in an instant. Hence the present is not an instant.[120]

[117] Watson (2006, p. 223, n. 35).

[118] Watson's translation (2006, p. 250); Rāmakaṇṭha's Sanskrit (given in *ibid.* p. 249) reads "*na hi kālatraye 'pi grāhakātmano dhvaṃsaḥ saṃvedyata ity uktam. yasya hi prāgabhāvaḥ sa utpanna ucyate, yasya tu pradhvaṃsaḥ sa naṣṭaḥ. yasya punaḥ pūrvottarayoḥ koṭyor nâsty abhāvasaṃvit sa pratikṣaṇam utpanno niruddho vêti na śakyate vaktum.*"

[119] This volume, p. 300.

[120] Peirce (1976, p. 127). Peirce further said, in the same vein, that "[i]t is difficult to explain the fact of memory and our apparently perceiving the flow of time, unless we suppose immediate consciousness to extend beyond a single instant. Yet if we make such a supposition we fall into grave difficulties, unless we suppose the time of which we are immediately conscious to be strictly infinitesimal" (1976, p. 124).

Subjectivity is, in other words, a constitutively *present* phenomenon, in the sense that consciousness can be said to be experienced with subjective immediacy only in the present—a fact that emerges when one reflects on the phenomenological difference between any present moment, and one's own past experiences as presently available to memory; the past experiences are now available as *objects* of reflection, but the only genuine subjective immediacy to such reflection is *in the present remembering*.[121] Despite the fact that the subjectively immediate "now" of experience would thus seem to represent (as Peirce aptly puts it) "an instant if there be any such thing as an instant," the phenomenologically salient feature of such experience strikingly seems, rather, to be its *non*-momentary character, its continuousness.[122]

While it surely complicates things thus to attend to the phenomenologically "continuous" character of what could seem (particularly for someone who takes her bearings from the episodic character of experiential content) like the paradigm case of a "moment," Watson is quite right that Rāmakaṇṭha's Buddhist opponents can (as Rāmakaṇṭha himself recognized) nevertheless concede the phenomenological point; indeed, a Buddhist would surely urge that the entire Buddhist project is called for in the first place just insofar as we are seduced by the *phenomenologically* continuous character of awareness into supposing that awareness must really *be* something finally enduring. As Watson appropriately asks in this regard, "If we experienced ourselves as momentary, why would there be any need of a Buddhist path?"[123] Rāmakaṇṭha and his Buddhist opponents disagree, then, not chiefly in regard to the foregoing phenomenological description, but in regard to how we are to *explain* that's being the phenomenological character of subjective immediacy.

The situation is, then, very much like that concerning Dignāga's and Dharmakīrti's cases for idealism. In that regard, too, these Buddhists can concede that it *seems*, phenomenologically, like experience is often of a world of external objects; their challenge, rather, is to *explain* (in terms that the phenomenological facts render counter-intuitive) how the phenomenological facts can be as they are. Similarly, Rāmakaṇṭha's real challenge concerns not so much the phenomenology, as the question (to recur to a phrase from Sacks) of what "facts are required for experience to have the structure it does—even if those facts cannot be read off directly from the content of our perceptual experience of [the] world." The question, in other words, is just what "structure" is imposed upon experience by the fact of its always being from a seemingly continuous point of view, just what constraints are imposed on our explanations by the phenomenological considerations here adduced by Rāmakaṇṭha.

In this regard, Rāmakaṇṭha not unreasonably attributes to his Buddhist interlocutors an explanation strikingly like the one we saw Hume offer of the same phenomenological facts; thus, Buddhists like Dharmakīrti will explain the

[121] The phenomenological distinction between first- and second-order cognitions figures in one of Dignāga's arguments (not considered here) for the necessity of supposing all awareness to involve *svasaṃvitti*; see Kellner's contribution to this volume, pp. 211ff, for more on this.

[122] For phenomenological reflections in the same vein as Peirce's, see also Husserl's *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time*. The issues here relate to Dharmottara's observation (see note 28, above) about *manovijñāna*'s resolving the time-lag problem that is so intractable particularly for Buddhist proponents of momentariness.

[123] This volume, p. 300.

phenomenologically unitary and continuous character of awareness as a function of "conceptualization" (*vikalpa*, *kalpanā*), which distortedly represents what should really be understood as a causally continuous series of constitutively momentary events. Sketching, then, Rāmakaṇṭha's take on the Buddhist alternative he refuses, Watson says that on the Buddhist position, "What actually presents itself is a sequence of momentary perceivers, but because of the rapidity with which they succeed each other, and the likeness of each to the previous one, we superimpose permanence on to them, we mistake them for being one lasting thing rather than many momentary things."[124]

Here, it becomes significant that *svasaṃvitti* is quite aptly invoked to characterize the fact of experience's being from a seemingly continuous point of view; insofar, that is, as experience's being constitutively perspectival is tantamount to its necessarily being known by the subject thereof, the particular respect in which we here want to understand "the likeness of each [moment] to the previous one" involves these moments' being taken as alike experiences had *from the same perspective*—and it would seem to be just this perspectival character that is thematized in the *svasaṃvitti* doctrine. Dharmakīrti will not want to allow, however, that *svasaṃvitti* is implicated in the conceptually distorted synthesis of episodic experiences, insofar as *svasaṃvitti* represents the paradigm case of a constitutively *non*-conceptual acquaintance. Thus, on Watson's account,

> The debate between Rāmakaṇṭha and Buddhism thus ceases to be about whether we experience our consciousness as momentary or enduring. The crucial issue now is whether our sense of our consciousness as enduring is a case of *svasaṃvedana* or is a *vikalpa* … The reason that so much hangs on this question of whether or not something is *svasaṃvedana* is that both sides hold *svasaṃvedana* to be necessarily valid.[125]

While Dharmakīrti can, then, concede Rāmakaṇṭha's strictly phenomenological point about the phenomenally continuous character of awareness, he cannot concede that this is the phenomenal content particularly of *svasaṃvitti*; to allow that it is *svasaṃvitti* itself that has this unitary content would be effectively to concede Rāmakaṇṭha's case. (Whether, however, it is right to say on Dharmakīrti's account that *svasaṃvitti has* any content is a difficult question.)

It is at this point that Rāmakaṇṭha's clearly becomes a transcendental argument; for his move at this juncture is to argue, in effect, that it is a condition of the possibility of the phenomenology's being as it is that the Buddhist explanation thereof cannot be right. Against, then, Dharmakīrti's view that it is conceptual superimposition that accounts for the phenomenological sense of cognitive continuity, Rāmakaṇṭha argues, among other things, that the very idea of superimposition here already presupposes something *non*-momentary, since nothing momentary could be thought to "do" the superimposing that's imagined here: "since [for you] everything is momentary, nothing could do the joining. That is precisely why even

[124] For Rāmakaṇṭha's elaboration of what he thus takes to be the Buddhist account, see Watson (2006, pp. 230—231). For Hume's account of personal identity, see "The *Perceptual* Views of …" section, above.

[125] This volume, p. 301.

several momentary conceptual cognitions in sequence could not superimpose."[126] The point is that no two *successive* states of awareness could ever be judged *the same*—in the respect, that is, of being alike the states of the same subject—unless they can somehow be held together in one state comprising both.

More basically, Watson credits Rāmakaṇṭha with effectively raising the question:

> In a Dharmakīrtian universe, in which all things, both perceivers and perceived objects, are momentary, where could anyone ever have experienced something enduring, in order to acquire the concept of duration such that they are then able to superimpose it?[127]

The trend of Rāmakaṇṭha's argument here can, I think, quite effectively be glossed by recurring to Kant: "There must therefore be something that itself makes possible this reproduction of the appearances by being the *a priori* ground of a necessary synthetic unity of them … one must assume a pure transcendental synthesis of this power, which grounds even the possibility of all experience (as that which the reproducibility of the appearances necessarily presupposes)."[128] The very ideas of reproduction and recognition only make sense, that is, relative to a unifying point of view—relative, that is, to *svasaṃvitti*, which must therefore genuinely (i.e., not just phenomenologically) reflect the essentially unitary character of awareness.

This, then, is the arc of argument I take Watson to have discerned in Rāmakaṇṭha's works: Undermining the intuitive plausibility of characterizing cognition as momentary, Rāmakaṇṭha first argues that phenomenological attention to awareness shows that even though the "subjective now" would seem (as Peirce put it) to be "an instant if there be any such thing as an instant," it is the temporally extended or continuous character even of subjective immediacy that is the most salient phenomenological fact. Rāmakaṇṭha then clarifies that of course the Buddhists can concede the phenomenological point; indeed, this is not something Buddhists would deny, but rather, Rāmakaṇṭha can now be taken to urge, just what they must explain. His argument is then a transcendental argument to the effect that in light of certain other core commitments, Buddhists cannot, it turns out, explain this phenomenological fact—which is to argue, in effect, that it is a condition of the possibility of cognition's seeming as does that the Buddhist explanation of phenomenological continuity cannot be right. On Rāmakaṇṭha's view, rather, cognition can seem as it does only given the unitariness—which is among other things to say the *irreducibility*—of the perspective *from which* it must be had if it is even to count as an instance of "experience."

Just as with Kant's comparable argument against Hume, this argument clearly cuts particularly against the kind of finally causal account that Dharmakīrti, for one, would give of the experiential perspective that Rāmakaṇṭha thus takes to be ineliminable. On what Rāmakaṇṭha not unreasonably takes to be Dharmakīrti's

[126] Watson's translation (2006, p. 244); Rāmakaṇṭha's Sanskrit (given on the same page) reads "*sarveṣāṃ kṣaṇikatvena yojanānupapatter na kiṃ cid etat; ata evânekasyâpi kramabhāvino vikalpakṣaṇasyânāropakatvam*."

[127] This volume, p. 301.

[128] Cf. note 11, above.

account, that is, first-personally experienced mental events will finally admit of a complete explanation in terms of the causally describable particulars that alone exist for Dharmakīrti.[129] Insofar as ordinary cognitions are typically not ("first-personally") *about* the evanescent causes thereof, this amounts to an account from which a first-person perspective would seem finally to be eliminable. Among the things Rāmakaṇṭha might be taken cogently to show with his basically transcendental argument is, then, something simply of the ineliminable character of a first-person perspective—the irreducibility, more precisely, of a first-person perspective to causally describable transactions among discrete, momentary particulars. Precisely to the extent that it is constitutive of experience for it to be had from some unifying perspective, Rāmakaṇṭha argues that experience cannot be exhaustively explicable in terms of momentary particulars, insofar as these cannot themselves represent or constitute "perspectives" on anything just insofar as they are without temporal extension.

If, however, we can thus credit Rāmakaṇṭha with having made a cogent case against certain aspects particularly of Dharmakīrti's development of the *svasaṃvitti* doctrine, we can nevertheless conclude by posing for Rāmakaṇṭha the same kinds of questions earlier noted regarding Kant. More particularly, even if we allow that Rāmakaṇṭha has cogently argued for the ineliminability of a first-person perspective, and also for the inexplicability of such a perspective in exhaustively causal terms, we can ask whether he is entitled to think he has thereby shown the reality of something worth the name *ātman*. It is clear, we noted in this regard, that Rāmakaṇṭha does not mean by that the same sort of thing most Brahmanical philosophers understood by *ātman*, since for Rāmakaṇṭha this is not something essentially different from consciousness itself; that is, indeed, precisely why Rāmakaṇṭha had to show that something integral to consciousness itself—specifically, *svasaṃvitti*, or the fact of its being first-personally known from an apparently continuous perspective—is enduring.

That, however, is the problem; for while Rāmakaṇṭha may have given cogent reasons for thinking that a first-person perspective is ineliminably constitutive of experience, it is not clear that it follows from this that such a perspective must therefore consist in the kind of thing that could exhibit *temporal* continuity. This perhaps becomes especially clear when we consider Rāmakaṇṭha's claim that (as Watson says, distinguishing *svasaṃvitti* from *ahampratyaya*) "[*s*]*vasaṃvedana* occurs all the time; it 'accompanies' the self permanently, even in deep sleep, *even after death and before the next incarnation*."[130] Even if one can show, however, that there is an irreducibly unitary perspectival character to awareness, that is not to have shown that awareness must therefore involve some temporally enduring *thing*;

[129] Note, however, that Dignāga arguably did not share this commitment (I have noted this, following Hayes and Katsura, at Arnold 2005c, 24), and it is therefore reasonable to ask whether Rāmakaṇṭha's argument here would cut against Dignāga.

[130] This vol., p. 310; emphasis added. See Watson's note 44 for Rāmakaṇṭha's Sanskrit.

something's being *temporally* enduring is as surely an empirically applicable criterion of identity as its being involved in causal transactions, and Rāmakaṇṭha's argument therefore seems to invite the worry that Strawson said was most likely to be expressed regarding Kant's approach: "the ascription of states to a *subject* require[s] the subject itself to be an intuitable object for which there exist empirically applicable criteria of identity."[131] To the extent, then, that the purchase of his argument against Dharmakīrti derives particularly from Rāmakaṇṭha's *constitutive* view of *svasaṃvitti*—and to the extent, as well, that Rāmakaṇṭha is averse to the idealism of his Buddhist opponents, and therefore apt to share Bilgrami's governing disjunction—it would seem he cannot say that recognizing the constitutively perspectival character of awareness represents anything like a perceptual encounter with one's "self" or one's "states." That would seem, however, to be just the sort of thing he claims when he nevertheless concludes that *svasaṃvitti* continues "even after death."

Rāmakaṇṭha, I am thus suggesting, compromises the properly transcendental character of his argument when he thus takes it to warrant the conclusion that the unitary perspective from which experience is constitutively had must consist in something of the temporally enduring sort that could survive death. Perhaps the real problem here, however, is that it is not at all clear just what (if anything) does follow from a constitutive understanding of self-awareness, or from the kind of transcendental argument that perhaps most naturally advances such an understanding. While there is, then, something compelling about philosophical attention to what is *constitutive* of experience, such reflection may finally tell us something only about what it is that we need to explain; a constitutive understanding, I have thus urged, is not itself an *explanation* of self-awareness, and to that extent, the question whether some explanation of this constitutive character of awareness is still called for (and if so, what kind of explanation that should be) is not obviously foreclosed by a philosophical case for such a view. Perhaps the most difficult issue here, to recur to the statement from John McDowell with which I first introduced the idea of a "constitutive" explanation,[132] is that while it may be important to recognize that accounts of the "enabling" conditions of the mental should not be confused with accounts of what the mental *is*, it is not finally clear that anything *could* count as an instance of the latter.

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[131] See "The *Perceptual* Views of …"section, above (pp. 328–335).

[132] See note 1, above.

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