



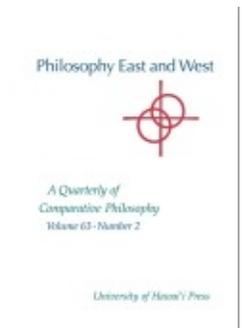
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Reply to Stephen Phillips

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Much as I am honored by Stephen Phillips' detailed defense, in the face of my methodological "refutation," of the Nyāya thesis that a raw perception of the qualifier is a necessary causal factor for some (not all) determinate perception of an entity as qualified, I am not fully convinced that my deeper qualms about the very idea of immaculate perception unimpregnated by predicative structure have all been adequately addressed. Instead of a detailed response, which I intend to undertake elsewhere, I wish to underscore the central worry behind my fifth (which Phillips calls "good") and seventh (which Phillips calls "weak") objections.

When I claimed that perception is introduced, taxonomically, as a variety of veridical awareness, I had in mind the opening line of Gaṅgeśa's section on the definition of perception:

sā ca pramā caturvidhā, pratyakṣānumityupamitiśābdī-bhedāt

And such veridical awareness is of four kinds: perception, inferential knowledge, knowledge from similarity, and knowledge from words.¹

This seems to be flatly incompatible with the admission of a subclass of perceptions that are not veridical awarenesses!

Why does Phillips say that I am simply mistaken? True, taxonomic difficulties cannot overturn empirical evidence. But recall that there is no direct apperceptive evidence for "raw perception." The sole evidence is a generalization from a whole series of mediate (*parokṣa*) awarenesses that can happily afford to be instrumentally and crucially caused by other *awarenesses*. On the other hand, immediacy, which is the hallmark of a perception, consists of not having another *awareness* in its causal nexus. My seeing of a wall as white is *direct*, rather than inferential, analogical, or testimonial, to the extent that I did not have to go through any other *awareness* first in order to arrive at this visual perception. An inductive generalization from other mediate (cognition-generated) cognitions should not have such inexorable probative power over our account of immediate sensory cognition as to force us into admitting a neither-true-nor-false third kind of raw awareness!

Phillips seems to have overlooked the metaphor of "spelling" that I used in this context while giving my second objection. If the step-by-step picture of building up the content of perception that Gaṅgeśa assumes is correct, then each element of the perceptual content of the predicative perception that this is a flower—the universal flowerhood, the actual physical object identified as "this," and *qualification* as a cementing relation, in this case inherence—would first have to be cognized in the unconnected "raw" manner! Now, even if we somehow swallow the idea of seeing a universal barely and not in relation to any one of its instances, it simply makes no

sense to talk about a bare, raw, unstructured perceptual acquaintance with qualification or inference! Logically and structurally one could argue that unless you have “got” *a*, *b*, and *R* first, you cannot have the complex *aRb*. But this is admittedly a process of logical postmortem dissection of a whole piece of direct qualificative perception. And the point of my metaphorical warning—“You need to have ‘L’ and ‘O’ and ‘D’ and ‘N’ to spell ‘London,’ but you *do not need to spell* ‘L’ or ‘O’ or ‘D’ or ‘N’ first. Single letters simply cannot be spelled!”—was this: there are all sorts of different ways of “getting.” You need to “get” the qualifying feature somehow in order to see or hear or taste something as qualified by that feature, but you do not therefore need to see or hear or taste that feature alone first in a bare, raw, unqualified manner! I do believe, like a good Naiyāyika, that high-pitchedness (or fifthness, in the octave) can be heard although it is a sound-universal. But I refuse to admit that *before* I can hear a sung note as high-pitched or (the fifth) I must somehow hear that universal directly without hearing it in any note!

The central point, once again, is this: all awareness is intentional, according to Nyāya. There are only three kinds of intentional roles that our awarenesses assign to their objects: the role of a qualifier (roughly, the predicate), the role of that which is qualified (the subject), and the role of the connecting relation or tie. The allegedly non-predicative raw perception, while claiming to be an awareness, cannot assign any one of these roles to its objects. Phillips misleads us when he writes:

The very point of the posit is to explain how some determinate cognitions get their predication content. And so it has to be understood as having an object, the qualifier. . . .

The object of the postulated pre-predicative raw perception (bare flowerhood) may *become* the qualifier in a resultant determinate perception (“this is a flower”). But it is not a qualifier *in that raw perception*. That raw perception does not have any qualifier, qualificand, or relation as its object. That is what makes it “raw.”

But these are the only kinds of object of which we know. Hence it does not have an object. Hence it is not an awareness, because there cannot be objectless awareness.

To insist now that there is a fourth kind of objecthood called the objecthood appropriate to indeterminate awareness is to beg the question in the most pathetic fashion.

Note

1 – Gaṅgeśa, *Tattvacintāmaṇi*, vol. 1, *Pratyakṣa-khaṇḍa*, with the *Prakāśa* commentary by Rucidatta Miśra and a subcommentary by Rāakṣṇādhvarin, ed. N. S. Rāmānuja Tatacharya (Kendriya Sanskrit Vidyapeetha) (Tirupati: 1972), p. 567.