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ARTICLE

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On the presentational unity of knowing in Nyāya

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ABSTRACT

Many Sanskrit epistemologists think there are several basic ways of knowing (*pramāṇas*). Yet there is also a long tradition of seeking a general definition of *pramā*, the mental episode of knowing that is the result of a *pramāṇa*. One popular definition of *pramā* invokes the concept of *anubhava*. In ordinary usage, ‘*anubhava*’ means ‘experience’. But in the context of defining *pramā* it usually receives a more technical-sounding translation, like ‘presentational awareness’ or ‘non-mnemic awareness episode’. This paper considers how to interpret the *anubhava* condition in Nyāya epistemology. On a *presentationalist* interpretation, the condition requires *pramā* to present the cognizer with its object in a perception-like way. On a *deflationary* interpretation, the condition only functions to exclude memory from counting as a *pramāṇa*. This paper defends a modest presentationalist interpretation. Sections 3 and 4 present two kinds of arguments for this interpretation. Section 5 embeds the interpretation within a wider presentationalist framework, but stresses important disanalogies with the presentational conception of knowing that Maria Rosa Antognazza claimed was “genuinely traditional” in the history of epistemology (“The Benefit to Philosophy of the Study of its History”. *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 23, no. 1 (2015): 161–84).

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1. Introduction

It is plausible that there are several basic ways of knowing – perception, inference, and testimony, for example – and several associated distinctive forms of knowledge. Still, one might reasonably wonder:

(Q) Is there something all forms of knowing have in common, in virtue of which they all qualify as forms of knowing?

In recent epistemology and history of epistemology, there is renewed interest in a bold answer to (Q): what all forms of knowing have in common is that

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they are *presentations* of the known to the knower, so that knowing involves a perception-like contact between knower and known. Call this the *presentational conception of knowing* (PC).¹ As Maria Rosa Antognazza has documented (see Antognazza, “Benefit”; “Distinction”; *Thinking*), PC has a rich history that was neglected in post-Gettier epistemology. Antognazza hence suggested that PC is the real ‘traditional’ account of knowing, *contra* Gettier’s suggestion that a belief-based account is traditional.

Discussion of the place of PC in historical epistemology has drawn mostly on European and Anglophone sources.² One might wonder how PC fits into a global history of epistemology. An important part of answering this question is to assess whether an analogue of PC is dominant in Sanskrit epistemology, a uniquely rich, diverse, and independent tradition. This paper opens a cautious investigation into this question by attending to an important tradition of inquiry in Sanskrit epistemology – viz., Nyāya – that complicates the narrative.

I will defend two claims. On the one hand, there is a reasonable case for ascribing a presentational conception of knowing to Nyāya. On the other hand, this conception is very different from the one Antognazza described. Most importantly, it is consistent with an externalist analysis that reduces knowing to (i) a common factor between veridical and non-veridical awareness together with (ii) veridicality explained by suitable causal conditions. Hence more caution is needed in dismissing a Gettierological narrative on the grounds of the pervasiveness of PC.

With these ideas in mind, here is the plan. Section 2 reviews some basics of Sanskrit epistemology and Nyāya to frame the questions of the paper, and discusses what it would take to locate an analogue of PC in Nyāya. Section 3 offers an initial case for ascribing an analogue of PC to Nyāya on the basis of (i) Nyāya definitions of knowing in terms of an ostensibly presentational mental episode – viz., *anubhava* – and (ii) Nyāya views about *anubhava* and perception that suggest that *anubhava* is presentational by Nyāya standards. Section 4 gives a further argument from early Nyāya commitments that complements the one in Section 3 and helps address some doubts from Section 3. Section 5 takes stock by describing a more explicit analogue of PC inspired by Gaṅgeśa that fits with the arguments in Sections 2 and 3, showing that it is importantly different from the version of PC Antognazza highlighted.

Before proceeding, it is worth commenting on the kind of ascription I am investigating – namely, to a tradition of inquiry like Nyāya and not just to one figure. Traditions of inquiry in Sanskrit philosophy have long histories, beginning with root texts (e.g. Akṣapāda Gautama’s *Nyāya-Sūtras* and early commentaries by Vātsyāyana and Uddyotakara), being transformed by

¹I extend this label from other work where I discuss PC in a contemporary light that complements the historical suggestions here (see Sylvan, “Inference”; “Presentation”).

²An exception is Adamson, “Thinking”.

interactions with competing traditions (e.g. Buddhism), changing in light of innovations by later figures (e.g. Udayana, Gaṅgeśa), and sharing commitments with traditions that are allies on some issues (e.g. Mīmāṃsā shares Nyāya's realist commitments) or that join forces (e.g. Vaiśeṣika joins Nyāya to form Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika). Philosophers who are pivotal in the development of one tradition may also contribute to others – Vācaspati Miśra, for example, is equally important in Vedānta.

With these facts in mind, one might wonder what it would mean to locate an analogue of PC in Nyāya. The answer is that it could mean different interesting things. The strongest reasonable thing it could mean is that an analogue of PC originates in early Nyāya figures (Gautama, Vātsyāyana, Uddyotakara), is preserved in pivotal later figures (e.g. Gaṅgeśa), and is presented in compendia like Annambhaṭṭa's *Tarkasaṃgraha*. A less strong thing it could mean is that an analogue of PC is a clear commitment in a range of later Nyāya figures, and this commitment coheres with core ideas in early Nyāya. I will primarily be considering whether there is an analogue of PC in Nyāya in the second sense. This is because, as I stress in Section 3, there is no direct basis for ascribing a presentational definition of knowing to early Nyāya.

2. On locating a presentational conception of knowing in Sanskrit epistemology

2.1. Sanskrit epistemology and Nyāya: some conceptual preliminaries

The core of Sanskrit epistemology is *pramāṇa-śāstra*. *Pramāṇa-śāstra* examines the *pramāṇas*, which are epistemic sources like perception (*pratyakṣa*) and inference (*anumāna*). While *pramāṇas* can be called 'epistemic sources', they are not sources of the *state* of knowledge, but rather of the *mental episode* of *pramā*.

Settling on a translation of 'pramā' is important for making useful comparisons between Sanskrit epistemology and twentieth- and twenty-first-century epistemology in English. A common translation of 'pramā' is 'knowledge-episode'. A related approach I will adopt is to use 'knowing' in a regimented way, to pick out an episode that is the culmination of a process either of *coming to know* or of *maintaining epistemic contact*.³ This rendering of 'pramā' reflects the complementarity of 'pramā' and 'pramāṇa'. It also

³Nilanjan Das renders 'pramā' as 'learning episode' (see "Gaṅgeśa on Epistemic Luck"; "On Translating"). One reason to prefer 'knowing' is that it seems wrong to describe cases of maintaining epistemic contact through a sequence of *pramā* episodes as *learning*. For most of the discussion to follow, this difference will not be crucial. Das ("On Translating") makes a further proposal, which is that the role of 'anubhava' in specifying the kind of mental episode required for *pramā* is to pick out learning episodes. I offer reasons in Section 3 for thinking that 'anubhava' does more work – and also less in one respect when *pramā* only maintains epistemic contact.

calls attention to interesting comparisons, like the comparison between Alvin Goldman's early causal theory of knowing (see Goldman, "Causal Theory") and Nyāya epistemology.

Although the focus of Sanskrit epistemology is not on defining *pramā*, there are – as we'll see – many examples of definitions of *pramā* in Sanskrit epistemology, as well as doubts about its analyzability.⁴ Furthermore, there is a common way of relating *pramā* to other epistemic concepts that has inspired comparisons with twentieth- and twenty-first-century analyses of knowledge.⁵ It will be useful to make that conceptual cartography explicit.

Note that '*pramā*' is not the only central term in Sanskrit epistemology that has been rendered as 'knowledge'. Another central term is '*jñāna*'. Although '*jñāna*' can refer to an episode of knowing, it is often used in a more general way in philosophy, which Das ("Gaṅgeśa on Epistemic Luck") renders as 'awareness episode'. Two aspects of the philosophical use are worth noting. Firstly, *jñāna* is not factive: there can be non-veridical *jñāna*. Secondly, *jñāna* does not necessarily have *qualificative structure* – i.e. not all *jñāna* grasps its target object *as qualified* by some feature. Note, however, that non-qualificative *jñāna* is not an epistemic 'given' akin to Russellian direct acquaintance. In Gaṅgeśa, for example, non-qualificative *jñāna* is only postulated on the basis of a regress argument – it is not something to which we have privileged access.⁶

This second observation brings up the important distinction between *savikalpaka jñāna* and *nirvikalpaka jñāna*. This is often glossed as a distinction between *non-conceptual* and *conceptual awareness*, though Matilal (*Perception*, 313) emphasized a connection with 'imagination' (his rendering of '*vikalpa*') rather than *concepts*. Following Matilal, I will assume that it is helpful to see cases of qualificative awareness as cases of *awareness-as*, where one is enabled to be aware of X as F partly in virtue of being aware of X and F-ness, and partly via *vikalpa*.

The place of *nirvikalpaka jñāna* in Nyāya epistemology and philosophy of mind is disputed. One important question to ask is whether it can constitute *pramā*. Arindam Chakrabarti ("Against Immaculate Perception") argued that Nyāya epistemologists should answer no. Although his arguments are controversial, they raise an issue worth bearing in mind. Chakrabarti ("Against Immaculate Perception", 6) suggests that since only veridical *jñāna* can be *pramā* and *jñāna* that lacks qualificative structure cannot be veridical, non-qualificative *jñāna* cannot be *pramā*. On this basis, Chakrabarti also argues that since *perception* is a kind of *pramā*, *nirvikalpaka jñāna* cannot constitute perception (though it is part of its genesis). Whether Chakrabarti is right makes a difference to what kind of analogue of PC might be ascribable to early Nyāya.

⁴Arguments against the analyzability of *pramā* can be found in Śrīhara (a twelfth-century Vedānta philosopher); see Das, "Śrīhara" for discussion and comparison to knowledge-first epistemology.

⁵Two sources of this tradition are Matilal, *Perception* and Phillips, *Epistemology in Classical India*.

⁶For illuminating discussion, see Bhattacharyya, *Gaṅgeśa's Theory*.

Two final key aspects of the relationship between *jñāna* and *pramā* in Nyāya are worth noting. The first is the idea of *parataḥ-prāmāṇya*, which is often translated as ‘extrinsic validity’. According to *parataḥ-prāmāṇya*, the status of a *jñāna* episode as *pramā* is explained by factors external to the *jñāna* episode. A rationale for *parataḥ-prāmāṇya* is that *realism* – an indispensable Nyāya commitment – requires veridicality to be cognition-independent.

It is important not to overstate *parataḥ-prāmāṇya*. Another central theme in Nyāya – what Dasti (“Parasitism”) calls the *parasitism* of the non-veridical on the veridical – puts limits on non-veridicality. According to parasitism, the intentionality of any *jñāna* rests on prior contact with something real (e.g. a real object or qualifier). Non-veridical *jñāna* is non-veridical in virtue of *misplacement*. In Gaṅgeśa, this involves a *jñāna* episode’s presenting a real qualifier in a real object that is not actually qualified by it.

As we’ll see, *parataḥ-prāmāṇya* and parasitism also bear importantly on what kind of analogue of PC one might ascribe to Nyāya epistemologists.

2.2. Two forms of PC and the possibility of PC in Sanskrit epistemology

Sanskrit epistemology provides a helpful occasion for distinguishing two forms of PC. On the one hand, PC could be understood as a conception of knowing where ‘knowing’ picks out a mental state or episode that results from a way of knowing:

Resultant PC: What makes a mental state or episode a case of *knowing* is that it involves perception-like contact between subject and object.

On the other hand, PC could be framed as a conception of the unity of knowing understood as a *process* of coming to know or maintaining epistemic contact:

Processual PC: What makes some process a process of knowing is that it involves perception-like contact between subject and object.

If there is an analogue of PC in Sanskrit epistemology, it could accordingly have two foundations:

Pramā-PC: What makes a *jñāna* a case of *pramā* is that it involves perception-like contact between subject and object.

Pramāṇa-PC: What makes a *jñāna*-producing process a *pramāṇa* is that it involves perception-like contact between subject and object.

So understood, one can find ascriptions of PC-analogues to Sanskrit epistemologists. In discussing epistemology in Advaita Vedānta, Gupta wrote that

Perception is also central in the scheme of *pramāṇas* in a much deeper sense. It is the presupposition of all other *pramāṇas*, not merely genetically in the sense

that the latter are based on knowledge derived from perception, but morphologically. Perception represents a structure that overlaps into all other means of knowledge. It is the paradigm of nonmediate knowledge, while also being intrinsic to mediate knowledge.

(*Perceiving in Advaita Vedānta*, 40)

If Gupta were right, epistemologists in Advaita Vedānta would be committed to *Pramāṇa*-PC. Note also that many Sanskrit epistemologists have accepted definitions of *pramā* that invoke the concept of *anubhava* (or *anubhūti*). In ordinary usage, ‘anubhava’ means ‘experience’.⁷ It sometimes has this meaning in philosophy,⁸ but is usually given a more technical rendering, like ‘presentational awareness’.⁹ If we take these definitions at face value, there is also – so it would seem – a case for attributing *Pramā*-PC to many Sanskrit epistemologists.

To justify ascribing such an analogue of PC to a figure or tradition of inquiry like Nyāya, then, we should ask:

Q1: Are Gupta’s claims about the unity of the *pramāṇas* ascribable to the figure or tradition?

Q2: Does the figure or tradition endorse *Pramā*-PC, or a definition of *pramā* that entails *Pramā*-PC?

I will explore these questions together for two reasons. One is that *pramā* and *pramāṇa* are interdefinable: *pramā* is the result of a *pramāṇa*, and a *pramāṇa* is a source of *pramā*. The other is that a yes answer to one of the questions is relevant to assessing evidence in favour of a yes answer to the other. If, for example, it could be shown that the *pramāṇas* have a common presentational structure, it will be more plausible to take definitions of *pramā* in apparently presentational terms at face value.

2.3. Naïve and non-naïve presentationality

According to PC, knowing involves a ‘perception-like’ contact between knower and known. Antognazza understood this in a demanding way I do not think is ascribable to Nyāya. For Antognazza, knowledge is perception-like in the sense that it:

derives directly from its object which is present in a primitive and irreducible way to the mind of the knower in which there is no ‘gap’ between knower and known.

(“Benefit”, 169)

⁷Müller, “Indian Logic” translated ‘anubhava’ as ‘perception’.

⁸See Gupta, *Reason and Experience*, Appendix II on the range of ‘anubhava’.

⁹See Chatterjee, *Nyāya Theory of Knowledge* and Phillips, *Epistemology in Classical India* for this kind of rendering.

There are several ideas here not all required by views on which knowledge is perception-like. For Antognazza, knowing is:

- (i) irreducible
- (ii) directly derived from its object
- (iii) characterized by a ‘presence’ of the object to the mind in which there is ‘no gap’ between knower and known

Antognazza adds two further ideas – that knowing is *different in kind* from and *incompatible* with believing:

According to these traditional views, knowing and believing are distinct in kind, in the strong sense that they are mutually exclusive mental states... . Knowing is not ‘the best kind of believing’; nor is believing to be understood derivatively from knowing.

(“Distinction”, 279)

Call a version of PC that features all these commitments *naïve incompatibilist* PC.

Nyāya epistemologists do not accept an analogue of naïve incompatibilist PC. Firstly, as we will see in Section 3, there is a long tradition of analyzing *pramā* in terms of a common factor between veridical and non-veridical *jñāna* – namely, *anubhava*. Moreover, *parataḥ-prāmānya* entails that the status of a *jñāna* episode as *pramā* is extrinsic. Hence it is implausible that Nyāya epistemologists accept irreducibility and incompatibility claims: *pramā* in general and perceptual *pramā* in particular are special cases of *anubhava*, which is present in cases of *illusion* and *doubt*.

Secondly, Nyāya epistemologists do not accept naïve realism about perception. While many Naiyāyikas after Jayanta Bhaṭṭa and Vācaspati Miśra accept non-conceptual perception (*nirvikalpaka pratyakṣa*), it is also a standard view in Nyāya that *savikalpaka pratyakṣa* is genuinely perceptual. Moreover, *nirvikalpaka pratyakṣa* is a causal precondition of perceptual *pramā*, and is only known indirectly.

Despite these differences with Antognazza’s version of PC, *pramā* may still be essentially perception-like by satisfying *non-naïve* analogues of (ii) and (iii), and by being definable in terms of a presentational mental episode. Furthermore, Nyāya may be committed to treating *pramā* as perception-like according to standards of perception-likeness suggested by Nyāya theories of perception. These are the hypotheses I will now explore.

3. The presentationality of knowing in Nyāya epistemology: an initial case

I will argue that later Nyāya (≈tenth century onwards) is committed to *Pramā*-PC. To defend this claim, I first note (Section 3.1) that *anubhava*-based definitions of *pramā* appear in a variety of later Nyāya figures. Taken at face

value, these definitions entail that *pramā* is presentational. As I acknowledge, however, it is not obvious that ‘anubhava’ should be understood presentationally: there is some reason to think ‘anubhava’ is a technical term used to exclude memory as a *pramāṇa*, and indicates nothing presentational. To address this worry, I first argue (Section 3.2) that even if the purpose of the *anubhava* condition is to exclude memory, this is consistent with *anubhava*’s being presentational. Secondly, I note (Section 3.3) that several Naiyāyikas are committed to positive conceptions of *anubhava* that explain why memory is excluded. Finally, I argue (Section 3.4) that apt *anubhava* – the kind that constitutes *pramā* – is perception-like by Nyāya-inspired standards of perception-likeness.

None of this supports ascribing *Pramā*-PC to early Nyāya. Hence Section 4 further argues that early Nyāya is committed to a version of *Pramāṇa*-PC that meshes with the versions of *Pramā*-PC discussed so far.

3.1. ‘Anubhava’-based definitions of *pramā* in later Nyāya

In the *Nyāya-Sūtras* and early commentaries of Vātsyāyana and Uddyotakara, there is no definition of *pramā* in terms of *anubhava* or similar concepts (e.g. *anubhūti*). But in later Nyāya, there is a stable commitment to such definitions. Udayana (tenth – eleventh centuries) offers two important examples:

Pramā is experience [*anubhūti*] of the state of that thing [*tattva* – i.e. the state of the object of the awareness episode].

(*Lakṣaṇamālā*, 1)

Pramā is correct apprehension [*yāthārtha anubhava*].

(*Nyāyakusumāñjali*, 362)

As Granoff (1978: 4) notes, the first is structurally similar to older Buddhist definitions, though these definitions used ‘*jñāna*’ rather than ‘*anubhūti*’. The second was preserved in a thirteenth-century Introduction to Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, Keśava Miśra’s *Tarkabhāṣā*:

Right cognition [*pramā*] is the apprehension [*anubhava*] of a thing as it is [*yathārtha*].

(*Tarkabhāṣā*, 7)

These definitions were attacked by Śrīharṣa. The attack inspired Gaṅgeśa (fourteenth century) to explore other definitions invoking *anubhava*, including:

Pramā is awareness [*anubhava*] of something there where it is.

(*Tattvacintāmaṇi*, 236)

This kind of definition also became the ‘textbook’ definition, included in later compendia like Anṇambhaṭṭa’s *Tarkasaṃgraha* (seventeenth century):

The experience [*anubhava*] which cognizes an attribute as belonging to a thing which really has it ... is known as *pramā*.

(*Tarkasaṃgraha*, 104)

If we take these definitions at face value, it is tempting to conclude that later Nyāya is committed to *Pramā*-PC. These definitions have been received and communicated in ways that encourage this conclusion. For example, in an important early twentieth-century presentation of Nyāya, Chatterjee wrote:

Pramā has been defined by the Nyāya as true presentational knowledge (*yāthārtha anubhava*). It is a definite and assured cognition of an object, which is also true and presentational in character.

(*Nyāya Theory of Knowledge*, 40–41)

Chatterjee's use of 'presentational' to render 'anubhava' continues to be endorsed in recent work (see, e.g. Phillips, *Epistemology in Classical India*).

3.2. *Anubhava and the exclusion of memory*

There is, however, reason to doubt that these definitions commit later Nyāya to *Pramā*-PC.¹⁰ To see why, let's consider how the idea of defining *pramā* in terms of *anubhava* originated outside Nyāya. Sanghvi (*Advanced Studies*, 44–45) suggests that the use of 'anubhava' in defining *pramā* came into Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika via the Vaiśeṣika philosopher Śrīdhara (tenth century) in the context of excluding memory as *pramāṇa*. This idea was then incorporated into Nyāya via Vācaspati Miśra, who used 'anubhava' to exclude memory from qualifying as *pramā*.

This origin story suggests that 'anubhava' is a technical term. One might further suggest that because the function of 'anubhava' is to exclude memory, it is best to translate it as 'non-mnemic awareness' (as e.g. Das ("Gaṅgeśa on Epistemic Luck") does). There are figures who explicitly understand the term in this way. To take a nice later example, in a discussion that has some echoes of Śrīharṣa's objections to some definitions invoking 'anubhava', Raghunātha Śiromaṇi (fifteenth – sixteenth century) wrote:

'[E]xperience' [= *anubhava*], used [to speak of] knowledge gained by verbal testimony, etc., [is] used [to say that this] knowledge [is] other than memory [= *smṛti*].

(*Padārthatattvanirūpaṇam*, 66; bracketed words inserted in translation)

Echoing Udayana (*Nyāyakusumāñjali*, 339), Raghunātha frames this as a point about usage:

For [we] do not say 'I am experiencing pleasure, etc.' in cases [where we] ascertain pleasure, etc., by inference, etc.

(*Padārthatattvanirūpaṇam*, 67)

On this basis, one might argue that 'anubhava' just means 'non-mnemic awareness', *not* anything presentational. Call this the *deflationary view*.

¹⁰Thanks to Nilanjan Das (p.c.) for raising this issue.

Several points are worth making in reply. Firstly, even if ‘anubhava’ is a technical term used to exclude memory, there could be reasons for excluding memory that support a presentational reading. Secondly, ‘other than memory’ could be used not merely to indicate *anything other than memory*, but rather *contrastively*. Presentational mental states are a natural contrast class for mere reproductions of earlier experience by *smṛti*. So, if ‘other than *smṛti*’ indicates a contrast with *smṛti*, it could support a presentational reading.

To appreciate the second point, consider another pair of contrasting terms – ‘original’ and ‘reproduction’.¹¹ ‘Original’ can be reserved for a special subclass of artistic creations – ones that display originality. But it can also be used simply to refer to genuine creations rather than reproductions. To indicate this, you could say that, by ‘original’, you mean ‘not a copy’. But in saying this, you do not mean *anything* that is not a copy – rocks, after all, are not copies.

An alternative to the deflationary view is that the relationship between *anubhava* and *smṛti* is like the contrastive relationship between originals and copies. Just as ‘not a reproduction’ can mean *original work*, hence not just *anything* that is not a reproduction, so ‘not a recollection’ could mean *online source of information rather than a reproduction of earlier awareness*.¹²

A third point reinforces these points. ‘*Smṛti*’ can be rendered as ‘recollection’ rather than ‘memory’. It is harder to appreciate ‘*smṛti*’ as a contrast when translated as ‘memory’. Memory is a specialized mental faculty. Mental phenomena ‘other than memory’ are a random assortment. Recollection, however, is a mental function that makes for interesting contrasts. Recollected information contrasts with online information that flows to the cognizer via a present channel (e.g. perception or testimony).

The contrastive interpretation provides a better explanation of the role of the opposition of *anubhava* and *smṛti* in Navya-Nyāya (post-Gaṅgeśa). In textbook presentations of Navya-Nyāya epistemology, the *anubhava/smṛti* distinction is a *taxonomic* division of awareness episodes (*jñāna*). Consider Annambhaṭṭa:

Buddhi and *jñāna* are the same thing, and stand for cognition which is the cause of all verbal expressions. It is of two kinds – recollection [= *smṛti*] and experience [= *anubhava*].

Recollection is the cognition which is caused only by reminiscent impression.

All cognitions other than recollection come under experience [= *anubhava*]. There are two kinds of experiences, real and erroneous.

¹¹ Some use related words for the *anubhava/smṛti* contrast – see e.g. Kisor Chakrabarti, *Classical Indian Philosophy*, 35, who translates ‘*anubhava*’ as ‘productive cognition’ and ‘*smṛti*’ as ‘reproductive cognition’. Matilal, *Logic, Language, and Reality*, 208 also suggests the problem with memory is that it is not an original cognition.

¹² The contrast is sometimes rendered this way. Consider Phaṇibhūṣaṇa Tarkavāgīśa on NS 1.1.3: “Valid knowledge is of two kinds – presentative (*anubhūti*) and representative (*smṛti* or remembrance). [...] Thus the root *mā* with the prefix *pra* (i.e., *pramā*) in the word *pramāṇa* is to be taken only in the sense of valid presentative knowledge. Remembrance ... has only a borrowed validity” (*Nyāya-Sūtras* (trans. Chattopadhyaya and Gangopadhyaya), 32). See also Kar, *Theories of Error*, 61.

The experience [= *anubhava*] which cognizes an attribute as belonging to a thing which really has it, is real; and this is known as *pramā*.

(*Tarkasaṅgraha*, 104)

To translate '*anubhava*' as 'non-mnemic awareness' without qualification does not capture its taxonomic role.

3.3. The nature of *anubhava*: ideas from Jayanta, Udayana, and Gaṅgeśa

So far, we've only seen indirect reasons for rejecting the deflationary view. Is there direct evidence for a non-deflationary reading? As we'll see, Jayanta Bhaṭṭa and Udayana give substantive reasons for denying that memory can be *pramā* that suggest positive conceptions of *anubhava*. These conceptions do not make *pramā* presentational in anything like Antognazza's sense. They may, however, make *pramā* presentational in modest senses inspired by Nyāya accounts of perception.

Before considering Jayanta and Udayana's reasons, some context is in order. A different reason for denying that mnemic awareness episodes can be *pramā* is ascribed to Mīmāṃsā epistemologists by Jayanta and Udayana: namely, that mnemic awareness episodes are not *novel*, but merely grasp objects that have already been grasped by earlier awareness episodes. This suggests one candidate necessary condition on *anubhava* – viz., novelty.

Jayanta (*Nyāyamañjari* (trans. Bhattacharyya), 45-6) and Udayana (*Nyāya-kusumāñjali*, 336-8) reject this condition owing to cases where one maintains awareness of something through a series of distinct awareness episodes. Consider, for example, sustaining perceptual awareness of *o* over an interval [t_1 , t_4] by enjoying four awareness episodes directed in the same way at *o*. The episodes at t_{2-4} do not, Jayanta and Udayana suggest, grasp something not already grasped. But each is a fine candidate for *pramā*. If memory is disqualified from *pramā*hood on grounds of insufficient novelty, these perceptual episodes will be wrongly disqualified.

Jayanta and Udayana offer importantly different reasons for denying memory *pramā*hood. Jayanta (*Nyāyamañjari*, 23) denies that memory awareness can be *pramā* on the grounds that it is '*anarthaja*' – i.e. not generated by a presently existing object (*artha*). Jayanta suggests that memory is *anarthaja* for two reasons. The first is that he thinks that, in many cases, the object of memory *does not exist* at the time of memory awareness. The second, deeper reason is that there is not the right kind of causal contact between memory and its object *even if its object still exists*:

Even when the object of memory exists in a distant country the existence of the object is not considered as an invariable condition of memory.

(*Nyāyamañjari* (trans. Bhattacharyya), 46)

Jayanta's discussion suggests an interesting necessary condition on *anubhava*:

Artha-Linkedness: *Jñāna* can qualify as *anubhava* only if it is *arthaja*, where this consists in the *jñāna*'s being appropriately causally linked to an existing object.

This condition only makes *anubhava* perception-like in a causal sense, by demanding an appropriate causal link between *anubhava* and its object. Nevertheless, it is highly nontrivial to treat this link as necessary for all *pramā*. Jayanta brings this out in discussing inferential *pramā*:

[H]ow is the inference of the past rainfall generated by an existent object? [...] The subject of [the] inference is a river. The river at a particular place has swollen because it contains a large quantity of extra water which has been supplied by a contiguous up-country over which it flows. The past rainfall is, now, non-existent but the river which is also inferred as the subject of [the] inference exists at the time of inference. Therefore, an inferential knowledge is conditioned by its real and existent object.

(*Nyāyamañjari* (trans. Bhattacharyya), 45-6)

Jayanta defends a related idea about future-directed inferences, like the inference that “one's brother will turn up tomorrow” (*Nyāyamañjari* (trans. Bhattacharyya), 46). Here one is aware of a presently existing object due to prior causal contact, which is the target of the future-directed inference. Hence the object-dependence is not *present stimulus-dependence*, as one might infer from the first example. The involvement of sense perception is more indirect. But this condition makes *pramā* interestingly *object-dependent*, unlike on typical *belief-based* accounts of knowing.

Now, Jayanta's focus is not on explaining *anubhava*, but rather on explaining why memory is not a *pramāṇa*. Since *anubhava* is non-mnemic, we can infer that it is subject to the *arthaja* condition, but this evidence is indirect. There is more evidence that Udayana has a positive conception of *anubhava*. In *Nyāyakusumāñjali*, Udayana gives several reasons for denying *pramā*-aptness to memory awareness. One is that it is *not anubhava* (or is ‘*ananubhava*’):

[H]ow is memory to be excluded as a valid mode of cognition? The answer is that memory stands excluded *simply because it is not a cognitive experience* [= *ananubhavatven eva*].

(*Nyāyakusumāñjali*, 338 (English), 334 (Sanskrit); my italics)

A second reason is that “there is no usage regarding recollection that it is a kind of valid cognition” (*Nyāyakusumāñjali*, 339). These reasons do not tell us much about why memory awareness cannot be *anubhava*. Udayana joins Jayanta in rejecting the view that novelty is required on the basis of sustained perceptual awareness (*Nyāyakusumāñjali*, 336). But he offers a different alternative, according to which valid (*yathārtha*) *anubhava* has *independent* (*anapekṣatvāt*) validity:

Since recollection is co-objective with the cognition that produces it and is dependent for its truth [*yathārthatayā*] or falsehood [*ayathārthatayā*] upon

the truth or falsehood of the latter, it cannot be treated as true or false unless the cognition producing it is established as true or false. The usage regarding truth and falsehood of recollection is based mainly on the cognition producing it. The earlier *anubhava* has its truth or falsehood independently, while the truth or falsehood of recollection is dependent always upon the truth or falsehood of the earlier *anubhava*.

(*Nyāyakusumāñjali*, 339 (English, modified for clarity), 334–5 (Sanskrit))

Udayana's discussion suggests a necessary condition on *anubhava*:

Independent (A)*yāthārthya*: *Jñāna* is *anubhava* only if its status as *yāthārtha* or *ayāthārtha* is independent – i.e. not fixed simply by the status of another awareness episode.

This condition is closer to Jayanta's than it might first appear, and the two could be connected in a more unified theory, given that the concept of 'truth' in play is *yāthārthya*. A closer translation of 'yāthārtha' is 'in conformity to the object (*artha*)'. Since the aspect of an awareness episode that has this status should not be assumed to have propositional content, but just *object-directedness* (*viśayatā*), being appropriately causally linked to an object may be sufficient for *yāthārthya*. Hence one might combine Jayanta's and Udayana's proposals as follows:

Independent Conformity to the Object: An awareness episode is *anubhava* only if its status as *yāthārthya* or *ayāthārthya* is not simply determined by earlier awareness episode, but rather by an appropriate causal link to the object of awareness.

This proposal suggests a non-naïve alternative to one component of Antognazza's PC – namely, the condition that knowledge be directly derived from the object:

Non-Naïve Derivation from the Object: An awareness episode directed at *o* qualifies as *pramā* partly in virtue of the fact that its *pramā*-status is directly derived from *o*, where this consists in independent conformity to *o*.

If we follow Udayana in taking *anubhava* to be a positive episode with which *smṛti* is contrasted (rather than *vice versa*), we might hold that it is *in virtue of being anubhava* that an awareness episode meets the Independent Conformity condition. If so, an awareness episode's presentationality is plausibly what explains its candidacy for being *pramā*. This results in a more robust analogy with PC.

There is a reason to doubt this suggestion, however: it is not obvious Udayana holds that *it is in virtue of being anubhava* that an awareness episode can satisfy Independent Conformity. An alternative is to *directly* explain the candidacy of an awareness episode for *pramā*hood *just* by appealing to Non-Naïve Derivation from the Object. This falls short of *Pramā*-PC.

My arguments in Section 3.4 and Section 4 will provide one kind of response. It is worth noting, though, that later developments in Nyāya give

resources for explaining Independent Conformity via an externalist account of presentationality in terms of demonstrative intentionality. This would result in an analogy with an important externalist version of PC in contemporary epistemology – namely, John Campbell’s view in *Reference and Consciousness* that perceptual knowledge is grounded in demonstrative awareness of objects. To see this, recall Gaṅgeśa’s definition:

Pramā is awareness [*anubhava*] of something there where it is.
(*Tattvacintāmaṇi*, 236)

Gaṅgeśa’s phrasing suggests that demonstrative awareness is essential to *pramā*. This proposal provides a deeper explanation than the ones in Jayanta and Udayana, because it allows us to be more specific about the kind of link with the object required for *pramā*: it is the kind required for demonstrative awareness.

3.4. Nyāya criteria for perception-likeness

Suppose it is granted that *anubhava* should be understood positively. Does it then follow from *anubhava*-based definitions of *pramā* that *pramā* is *perception-like*? Not obviously, for two reasons. Firstly, *pramā* is not perception-like in Antognazza’s sense. Secondly, given that the evidence considered is from later Nyāya, it is not clear PC has deep roots in Nyāya.

To begin addressing these concerns, let’s consider what it would take for *pramā* to be perception-like on Nyāya’s own terms. There are several options that can be brought out by starting with the definition of perception in early Nyāya:

Perception Sutra: ‘Perception is the knowledge (*jñāna*) resulting from sense-object contact [and which is] not due to words (*avyapadeśya*), invariably related [to the object] (*avyabhicāri*), and is ‘of a definite character’ (*vyavasāyātmaka*).’
(*Nyāya-Sūtras* (trans. Chattopadhyaya and Gangopadhyaya), 1.1.4, 43; bracketed additions in translation)

The Perception Sutra is understood in different ways in early and later Nyāya, and its model was influentially replaced by a simpler account in Gaṅgeśa. Before considering the significance of these variations, let’s consider what perception-likeness would be, granting the Perception Sutra.

Granting the Perception Sutra, perception-likeness will be a multi-factor affair that could come in different kinds and degrees. *Full* perception-likeness would require analogues of all four conditions. *Minimal* perception-likeness would require an analogue of at least one of the *distinctively perceptual* conditions. The *avyabhicāri* condition alone is not distinctively perceptual: all *pramā* must satisfy this condition.¹³ So minimal perception-likeness plausibly requires an

¹³Note, however, that one might argue that the object-conformity condition on *pramā* is a generalization of the *avyabhicāri* condition on perception.

analogue of the sense-object contact, non-verbality, or definiteness conditions. The non-verbality of all *pramā* can be ruled out on the grounds that some *pramā* is verbal – namely, testimony (*śabda*)-based *pramā*. So, minimal perception-likeness would plausibly require an analogue of the definiteness or sense-object contact conditions. Finally, let's say that *strong* perception-likeness in early Nyāya would require analogues of both the definiteness and sense-object contact conditions.

Non-Naïve Derivation from the Object in Section 3.2 is a candidate for a generalization of the sense-object contact condition. Of course, it does not require present sensory contact, but it does require a kind of contact ultimately provided by prior sensory contact by the subject or – in the case of testimonial *pramā* – another subject. If so, *pramā* plausibly has minimal perception-likeness. I will also argue in Section 4 that veridical *anubhava* in testimonial and inferential cases satisfies an analogue of the definiteness condition. If so, there is a case for thinking that *pramā* also has strong perception-likeness by early Nyāya standards.

Later Naiyāyikas depart in increasingly significant ways from the Perception Sutra. This fact, however, reveals other reasons for taking *pramā* to be perception-like. To see this, let's consider first some developments in Nyāya philosophy of perception due to Vācaspati Miśra.

Vācaspati Miśra (see *Nyāya-Sūtra: Selections*, 24–26) famously reinterpreted the Perception Sutra. Rather than taking the non-verbality and definiteness conditions to be necessary conditions for perception, he took these conditions to correspond to two different kinds of perceptual awareness, *nirvikalpaka* and *savikalpaka* (henceforth rendered as 'indeterminate' and 'determinate'). So, for Vācaspati Miśra, the only *general* conditions on perception are the sense-object contact and *avyabhicāri* conditions. This improves the prospects for *Pramā*-PC.

If we follow Vācaspati Miśra, we can distinguish two *kinds* of perception-likeness: *indeterminate* and *determinate* perception-likeness. An awareness episode is strongly like indeterminate perception if it satisfies analogues of the sense-object contact and non-verbality conditions, and strongly like determinate perception if it satisfies analogues of the sense-object contact and definiteness conditions. This distinction points in the direction of a new strategy I pursue in Section 4: namely, to argue that the forms of *pramā* in Nyāya other than sense perception are like determinate perception.

Before getting there, let's consider how Gaṅgeśa transformed Nyāya philosophy of perception. Gaṅgeśa defines perception as follows:

Immediate Awareness: Perception is '[*jñāna*]' that does not have a cognition as its chief instrumental cause [*karaṇa*]'

(*Tattvacintāmaṇi*, 335).

The *definiens* borrows from a definition by Udayana on which perception is "a sense-organ-produced veridical cognition whose chief instrumental

cause is not a cognition” (*Lakṣaṇamālā*, 13, as translated by Phillips (in a comment at *Tattvacintāmaṇi*, 336)). But Immediate Awareness is a larger departure from the Perception Sutra, because it drops the sense-object contact condition. One rationale is that this condition is not satisfied by God’s perception (*Tattvacintāmaṇi*, 328). Gaṅgeśa also suggests (*Tattvacintāmaṇi*, 327) that this condition overgenerates perception on the grounds that *manas* (mind, or inner sense) is a sense organ and inference and memory are generated by contact with *manas*. Gaṅgeśa does, however, follow Vācaspati Miśra in distinguishing determinate and indeterminate perception, which have their own distinctive necessary conditions.

Gaṅgeśa’s definition complicates the case for *Pramā*-PC. Full perception-likeness would now require (i) being analogous to immediate awareness and (ii) satisfying additional conditions for determinate or indeterminate perception. Since inferential *pramā* is not immediate, its status as perception-like is in doubt. However, if other forms of *pramā* are in a further way analogous to *determinate* perception, one might still conclude that they are interestingly perception-like. Hence the next section turns to further arguments.

4. The presentational unity of the *pramāṇas*

The argument so far fails to establish that an analogue of PC has early roots in Nyāya. I will now suggest some further reasons for this claim. Firstly, I will suggest (Section 4.1) that *pramā* is perception-like in early Nyāya in a further way not yet discussed. Secondly and more importantly, I will argue (Section 4.2-4.3) that the *pramāṇas* have an interesting kind of presentational unity in early Nyāya. This makes it reasonable to locate *Pramāṇa*-PC in early Nyāya, and to see *Pramā*-PC as rooted in earlier ideas.

4.1. The perception-likeness of veridical *anubhava*

Pramā is not mere *anubhava*. It is *apt anubhava*, where ‘apt’ here is a coverall for the condition that is meant to be captured by additional qualifiers in *anubhava*-based definitions, like ‘*yāthārtha*’.¹⁴ As I will now suggest, there are additional reasons for regarding apt *anubhava* as interestingly like *determinate* (*savikalpaka*) perception.

To qualify as *pramā*, *anubhava* must not only be non-illusory, but also exclude *doubt* and *hypothesis* (*tarka*). For both doubt and hypothesis are *apramā* in Nyāya. If so, it follows that *anubhava* is a kind of episode that

¹⁴Gaṅgeśa, *Tattvacintāmaṇi*, 218 rejects a definition of *pramā* as *yāthārtha anubhava* on the grounds that the *yāthārtha* condition implausibly requires *similarity* between *anubhava* and its object. As I use ‘apt’, it does not require such similarity.

can only be (fully¹⁵) apt if is not dubious or hypothetical. This fact helps explain the consistency of the definitions surveyed in Section 3.1 with definitions like the following from Jayanta and Keśava Miśra:

Pramāṇa is what produces such an apprehension as is other than an illusion or doubt.

(*Nyāyamañjari* (trans. Bhattacharyya), 22)

Right cognition [*pramā*] is the apprehension [*anubhava*] of a thing as it is [*yathārtha*]. By [the expression] ‘of a thing as it is’ [is meant] the exclusion of Doubt [*samśaya*], Error [*viparyaya*], and Hypothetical Reasoning [*tarka*].

(*Tarkabhāṣā*, 7)

Why can’t doubt and *tarka* be *yathārtha anubhava*? Doubt is understood from the earliest Nyāya texts onward as *wavering* awareness (*Nyāya-Sūtras*, 1.1.23). With this fact in mind, Annambhaṭṭa subsumed it under ‘non-valid experience’ (*ayatharthanubhava*) and defined it as follows:

A doubt is a cognition which relates to several incompatible alternatives in the same thing – as in the dubitative cognition – ‘It may be a post or a man’.

(*Tarkasamgraha*, 41)

Doubt is also understood in early Nyāya as a precursor to the special case of ascertainment that is “definitive cognition” (*nirṇaya*) (*Nyāya-Sūtras*, 1.1.41).

Ascertainment is not philosophical certainty in a Cartesian sense. It is *first-order* certainty. In the context of inquiry, ascertainment is the attainment of a definitive cognition that one of various alternatives obtains, which hence excludes the alternating content of doubt (‘It may be that p or that q’). Outside deliberative contexts, definitive cognition is attainable by perception alone, Vātsyāyana explains:

When the sutra declares that definitive cognition is that ascertainment which is got at after duly deliberating the two sides of a question, this is not meant to apply to all kinds of definitive cognition; for in the case of perception ... the definitive cognition consists simply in the ‘ascertainment of the object’ – it is only in regard to a thing in doubt ... that definitive cognition consists in the ascertainment got at by duly deliberating the two sides of a question.

(*Nyāya-Sūtras* (trans. Jha), 460)

Reflection only “serves the purpose of restoring or resuscitating the *pramāṇas* (which have become shaken by doubts ...)” (*Nyāya-Sūtras* (trans. Jha), 448). It does not add a new, distinctively philosophical source of knowledge possible only by first using a method of doubt. On the contrary, ordinary perceptual ascertainment is the prototypical case of doubt-resolution, which is plausibly part of why “[a]mong the four kinds

¹⁵Given parasitism, other forms of *anubhava* are apt *in a respect*. Even illusions, for example, are directed at real objects and qualifiers – these are just mislocated.

of cognition, perception is the most predominant” (*Nyāya-Sūtras* (trans. Jha), 102). Perceptual *pramā* in early Nyāya excludes doubt because it is definitive:

An ‘indecisive [awareness]’ resulting from sense-object contact may be taken for perceptual knowledge. Hence [Gautama] says ‘of a definite character’. [...] Just as the object perceived by the senses is eventually perceived by the mind, so also an object is indecisively apprehended by the mind after being indecisively apprehended by the senses. Doubt is only the ‘vacillating [awareness]’ with a drive for the perception of some unique character which is apprehended by the mind after being apprehended by the senses ...

(*Nyāya-Sūtras* (trans. Chattopadhyaya and Gangopadhyaya), 52)

These passages clarify why doubt is *apramā* and why apt *anubhava* is perception-like by early Nyāya standards. The kind of ascertainment prototypically illustrated by determinate perception is needed for *pramā* generally.

We can understand why *tarka* is not *pramā* in a similar way. Vātsyāyana again:

Why should [*tarka*] be said to be ‘for the purpose of bringing about the true knowledge of the real character’, and not to be that knowledge itself?

Our answer to this is that it would not be right for us to speak of the reasoning as embodying the knowledge itself, because, as a matter of fact, it is indecisive, being purely permissive in character – the reasoner ... does not (by his reasoning alone) accurately determine, or decide, or ascertain, that the thing must be so and so.

(*Nyāya-Sūtras* (trans. Jha), 447)

Hence doubt and *tarka* cannot be apt *anubhava* because they lack a feature that is partly definitive of perception according to the Perception Sutra. Of course, as noted in Section 3, this feature is only preserved for *savikalpaka* perception in later Nyāya. But that is compatible with the idea that apt *anubhava* is perception-like: it is like *savikalpaka* perception.

4.2. The presentational unity of the *pramāṇas*

As we’ve seen, apt *anubhava* contrasts with memory, doubt, *tarka* and illusion for the following reasons, which suggest that it is interestingly like determinate perception:

- i. Episodes of *anubhava* purport to provide independent awareness of their objects.
- ii. Apt *anubhava* is definite, where the prototype of definite awareness is determinate perception.
- iii. Apt *anubhava* is non-illusory.

Since *pramā* is apt *anubhava*, *pramāṇas* must ensure that an awareness episode has features (i-iii). Notably, TB + theories do not make this prediction,

since correct beliefs needn't satisfy (i) and (ii). Theories that conform to PC, however, make this prediction. This suggests a further argument:

Argument from the Unity of the Pramāṇas

1. If *pramā* = a mental episode with features (i-iii), *pramāṇas* must be causes of such episodes.
2. *Pramāṇas* are defined in early Nyāya in a way that ensures that they are causes of mental episodes with features (i-iii).
3. So, there is abductive support for attributing an analogue of PC to early Nyāya.
4. Since one would *not* expect *pramāṇas* to need these features in a non-presentationalist epistemology, attributing an analogue of PC to early Nyāya is better supported than attributing a non-presentational conception of knowing.
5. So, there is sufficient support for attributing an analogue of PC to early Nyāya.

To defend this argument, I will focus on two *pramāṇas* that may seem unlike perception – inference (Section 4.2.1) and testimony (Section 4.2.2) – and argue that early Nyāya accounts of them mesh with *Pramā*-PC. The point is to defend (2) where it is unobvious.¹⁶

4.2.1. Inference (*anumāna*)

'Inference' is the standard translation of '*anumāna*', which literally means *after-knowledge*. The literal meaning guides the claim in early Nyāya that inferential *pramā* is *pramā* that is preceded by perception (*Nyāya-Sūtras*, 1.1.5):

After perception comes inferential cognition, which is led up to by perception.
(*Nyāya-Sūtras* (trans. Jha), 153).

That claim is understood in a specific way by Vātsyāyana:

The expression 'led up to by perception' refers to the perception [= *darśana* – literally, *seeing*] of the relation between the *probans* and the *probandum* and also the perception of *probans* itself.

(*Nyāya-Sūtras* (trans. Jha), 153)

Vātsyāyana's presentational characterization is the basis of the later idea that the distinctive instrument (*karaṇa*) of inferential *pramā* is *grasp of the invariable concomitance* or *pervasion* (*vyāpti*) between *probans* and *probandum*.

Early Nyāya imposes a high presentational bar on inferential apprehension. Firstly (*Nyāya-Sūtras*, 1.1.34), the reason (*hetu*) offered in a successful

¹⁶ I do not have space to discuss the fourth *pramāṇa* – *upamāna* ('analogy'). But *upamāna* is an easier case than inference and testimony, because the ground of *upamāna* in Nyāya is *perception of similarity*.

inference must *demonstrate* the truth of the conclusion with the help of an illustration (*dr̥ṣṭānta* – derived from the root for ‘seeing’). The illustration is necessary for seeing the relation between *probans* and *probandum* which is to be grasped in the target [*pakṣa*] of the inference:

Perceiving this *probans-probandum* relation in an instance, one infers it also in the case of [the *pakṣa*].

(*Nyāya-Sūtras* (trans. Chattopadhyaya and Gangopadhyaya), 111)

This is essential for understanding how the inference obtains for the target case.

Notably, the demands of inferential knowledge are only made *more consistently* presentational in later Nyāya. Beginning with Jayanta (*Nyāyamañjari* (trans. Bhattacharyya), 252), Nyāya adds the idea that grasp of invariable concomitance rests on awareness of a relation between universals; this gives an answer to inductive skepticism that is notably different from what other anti-skeptics in Sanskrit epistemology offer.¹⁷ Later Naiyāyikas take this awareness to be literally perceptual, involving ‘extraordinary’ (*alaukika*) *sense-object contact*.¹⁸

4.2.2. Learning from words (*śabda*)

Testimony may appear even less like perception than inference, on the grounds that one gains knowledge by *deferring* to someone. But this gloss distorts the experience of learning from factual sources. If a student reads in a chemistry textbook that some process occurs, they can learn this *by reading*. They do not first understand what the textbook says, consider whether it is true, and then trust the author. In such cases, words present facts.

It is common to portray the Nyāya account of *śabda*-derived *pramā* as fitting a similar description. Consider Matilal and Ganeri:

It is ... claimed in Nyāya that testimony usually, in fact always, generates certainties in the first place. [...] We do not have a non-committal understanding of what is said prior to this type of certainty.

(Matilal, *Word and the World*, 65-66)

It is a key claim in Nyāya philosophy of language that, for a basic category of utterances, the output of the language faculty is a pure belief in the proposition expressed. [...] Thus, understanding an utterance of ‘Rāma is cooking rice’, made sincerely by a competent speaker, consists in the hearer’s direct assent to the proposition that Rāma is cooking rice. Understanding issues sometimes in a belief not *about* what the speaker said but *in* what is said.

(Ganeri, *Artha*, 74)

These descriptions are based on later Nyāya presentations, especially Gaṅgeśa’s. Gaṅgeśa’s view is usefully understood as ironing out tensions in

¹⁷For discussion of the differences, see Sastri’s exposition of Annambhaṭṭa, *Tarkasaṅgraha*, 207ff.

¹⁸Another seventeenth-century Nyāya compendium, *Bhāṣā-Pariccheda* and its autocommentary (*Siddhānta-Muktāvalī*) by Viśvanātha, endorses perception of universals. See *Bhāṣā-Pariccheda*, 99-100.

early Nyāya descriptions of *śabda* in a way that clarifies how *śabda*-based *pramā* can fit the model of *pramā* as apt *anubhava*.

Some describe a shift in the history of Nyāya from a speaker-oriented to a hearer-oriented view.¹⁹ But interestingly, there are two characterizations of *śabda* in early Nyāya. The first fits the later emphasis on *understanding* on the hearer's behalf. In his commentary on Gautama's introduction of the *pramāṇas* at *Nyāya-Sūtras* 1.1.3, Vātsyāyana writes that *śabda* is "that by which the objects are signified, or denoted, or made known" (*Nyāya-Sūtras* (trans. Jha), 101). In his subcommentary, Uddyotakara adds the crucially different gloss that the *śabda pramāṇa* "consists in the cognition of [the denotation] of words" (*Nyāya-Sūtras* (trans. Jha), 108; bracketed addition in translation). Vācaspati Miśra gives a more nuanced formulation:

When a sentence is uttered, there arises a cognition of things by the words composing that sentence; and it is this cognition of things denoted by the component words which constitutes *śabda* as the fourth *pramāṇa*; when this aforesaid cognition is the *pramāṇa*, the result consists of the knowledge of the whole sentence; but when the cognition of the meaning of the entire sentence is regarded as the *pramāṇa*, then the result is in the form of the idea of the thing being spoken of being rejected or chosen . . .

(*Nyāya-Sūtras* (trans. Jha), 108)

These characterizations say nothing about speakers or their reliability. Only later sutras and commentaries dedicated to *śabda* do. According to the lead sutra, "[t]he assertion of a reliable person is 'word' [*śabda*]" (*Nyāya-Sūtras* (trans. Jha), 199). Here Vātsyāyana adds demanding conditions on being a reliable speaker: the speaker must possess "the direct and right knowledge of things, [be] moved by a desire to make known the thing as he knows it [and be] fully capable of speaking it" (*Nyāya-Sūtras* (trans. Jha), 199-200).

Can these characterizations be reconciled? One strategy is to say that there is merely a difference in focus on different parts of a causal chain. A *śabda*-derived *pramā* is an awareness episode produced by *both* hearing and processing a statement *and* certain qualities of the statement. As with inferential *pramā*, distinctions in causal role allow for subtlety here – e.g. the distinction between *karaṇa* (chief instrumental cause) and *vyāpara* (a cause's mode of operation), as well as enabling/disabling conditions.

One option is to take *understanding* on the hearer's behalf to be analogous to grasping *vyāpti* in the case of inference (the *karaṇa*), and to take whatever qualities are required from the speaker to be enabling conditions. This analogy between inference and testimony is accepted by Gaṅgeśa.²⁰ He does not deny that there are further conditions on an awareness-episode's

¹⁹See Dasti, "Testimony" and Phillips, *Epistemology in Classical India*, Chapter 6.

²⁰See e.g. the summary of the *karaṇas* for the four *pramāṇas* in *Tattvacintāmaṇi*, 172.

being *pramā* than *just* that it be caused by the *karaṇa*; the point is to recommend a generative rather than transmissive view.

The resulting view is presentational. Understanding *śabda* in the relevant conditions excludes doubt, just as grasp of *vyāpti* does in structurally analogous conditions for inference. If understanding of *śabda* is built from an understanding of words, which individually present referents and jointly present a fact, the composed understanding presents a fact.²¹

Because the hearer's correct understanding is the basis of the awareness episode, the latter is not a mere reproduction of another awareness episode. The status of *śabda* as a *pramāṇa* would otherwise be in doubt for the same reasons as memory. The non-mnemicness of *pramā* requires genuine *pramāṇas* to be generative, not transmissive.

4.3. The presentational unity of *pramāṇas* and *pramā*

The upshot of the last two sections is that the *pramāṇas* have an interesting presentational unity that is explained by understanding them as sources of apt *anubhava*. Although *śabda* and *anumāna* are not reducible to *pratyakṣa*, they share certain structural features with *savikalkapa pratyakṣa*. So, while there are mutually irreducible forms of *pramā*, it is plausible to see these forms as having a common structure imposed by the requirements for apt *anubhava*.

Hence, though perceptual *pramā* is not the sole fundamental form of *pramā*, it is a *prototype* in the sense that its presentational features are shared by other forms of *pramā*. This upshot is put well by Jayanta:

The net result is that a cause of true knowledge is a means of proof. [...] [T]he three terms *arthotpannam* [caused by the real object of knowledge], *avyabhicāri* [non-illusory] and *vyavasāyātmakam* [determinate] should be borrowed from the sūtra on perception and combined into the other sūtras defining the other means of proof so that the causes of memory, illusion, and doubt are excluded from all classes of means of proof. Thus, the above three terms become the common factors of all the four sūtras which define the four different means of proof.

(*Nyāyamañjari* (trans. Bhattacharyya), 54)

If this is right, it is plausible to ascribe to Nyāya both (a) Gupta's thesis that all *pramāṇas* are 'morphologically' perception-like and (b) the thesis that the outcomes of *pramāṇas* – i.e. the forms of *pramā* – are perception-like.

5. A modest, non-naïve presentationalism

The previous two sections argued that *pramā* and the *pramāṇas* are perception-like in modest Nyāya-inspired senses. I will now take stock by describing

²¹ Ganeri, *Artha*, 116 translates nineteenth-century Naiyāyika Sudarśanācārya in terms that fit this portrayal: "The meaning of a word is an object of a presentation caused by the word as governed by the meaning relation. A 'presentation' is an item of testimonial knowledge".

a wider presentationalist framework inspired by Gaṅgeśa and explain why this framework does not justify the extension of Antognazza's history of epistemology to Nyāya.

The wider framework consists in the following theses:

1. *Pramās* derived from (*savikalpaka*) perception, testimony, inference, and analogy are factive presentations – i.e. presentations of qualifiers 'there where they are', to adapt Gaṅgeśa's phrasing.
2. *Savikalpaka anubhava* consists in a potentially non-factive presentation of a qualifier in a qualificand.
3. Nevertheless, non-factive *savikalpaka anubhava* is parasitic on factive presentation.

All *anubhava* is also partially reality-presenting, in virtue of presenting the cognizer with a genuine qualifier or a genuine qualificand.

(1-3) explain why apt *anubhava* has the presentational characteristics from Section 4. *Anubhava* cannot be apt unless it *determines* that a qualifier is where it is. Hence *pramā* is *definite* and doubt and *tarka* are not *pramā*. Secondly, *anubhava* cannot be fully apt unless it provides referential access to reality. Hence illusions are *apramā*. Moreover, since *smṛti* functions to reproduce earlier awareness episodes, *smṛti* cannot present one with an object of awareness. Hence *smṛti* cannot be *pramā*. Thus there is a unified explanation of why memory, doubt, *tarka* and illusion are never *pramā*.

I turn to some contrasts. Note that it does not follow from (1-3) that Nyāya accepts a *factive awareness-first view*, as Vaidya ("Elements") suggests.²² Factive awareness episodes for Gaṅgeśa are not absolutely epistemologically fundamental. To enjoy qualificative awareness of some qualifier in some qualificand, one needs prior awareness of the qualifier (*Tattvacintāmaṇi*, 609-641) and to use memory in an enabling role (*Tattvacintāmaṇi*, 658; 334ff) except in first cases of awareness.

Nyāya's embrace of qualificative structure in conscious experience suggests a disanalogy with central forms of disjunctivism. The most central form is a naïve realist view that denies that experience has accuracy conditions and takes perception to consist in the simple seeing of particulars. Nyāya rejects this view. It does not, however, follow that Nyāya accepts the 'content view'. For while experience does not necessarily have the *particularity* it has in naïve realism, it is *objectual*: rather than having a content, it has *objectivity* (*viṣayatā*).²³ Hence Nyāya offers an alternative between standard

²²Factive presentation is *prime* – i.e. not the mere conjunction of internal and external components. But as Brueckner, "Williamson" noted, knowing on a causal theory is prime but definable.

²³See Bhattacharyya, *Gadādhara's Theory of Objectivity* for discussion of this notion of objectivity.

no content and *content* views: conscious experience has qualificative structure, but is not a propositional attitude.

A second respect in which Nyāya epistemology differs from typical disjunctivism is that it is compatible with a causal explanation of all factive presentation. The doctrine of *parataḥ-prāmāṇya*, which is “set in stone as hard as diamond” (*Tattvacintāmaṇi*, 208), requires this.

But although it is non-negotiable that *pramā*hood is the product of external conditions, it does not follow that Nyāya has a causal analysis of *pramā* like the early Goldman’s (see “Causal Theory”). While there is always a causal explanation of *pramā*, it does not follow that Nyāya accepts a meta-physical explanation in causal terms. What is more fundamental in Gaṅgeśa is the definition of *pramā* as presentation of a qualifier there where it is. This requires a suitable causal link. But this necessary condition is not part of the definition of *pramā*, but rather something that follows from it together with *parataḥ-prāmāṇya*.²⁴

6. Conclusion

We can now see why Nyāya has only a modest presentationalism that does not support the extension of Antognazza’s history of epistemology to Sanskrit epistemology. Consider again Antognazza:

[A] persistent and genuinely traditional strand of thought can be documented according to which knowledge derives directly from its object which is present in a primitive and irreducible way to the mind of the knower ... That is, knowledge is a primitive perception or an irreducible mental ‘seeing’ what is the case; knowledge is the primitive presence of a fact to the mind (or to the senses) in which there is no ‘gap’ between knower and known.

(“Benefit”, 169)

Nyāya has a weaker form of presentationalism for several reasons. Firstly, *pramā* is not irreducible. Naiyāyikas define *pramā*. Secondly, there is a *common presentational factor* between *pramā* and *apramā*. Doubt, *tarka*, and illusion are all forms of *anubhava*. They are not apt *anubhava*. But there is an important commonality between these episodes and *pramā*. This is a neglected flipside of parasitism. Part of why illusion is an *imitation* of *pramā* is that it is *more like pramā* than skeptics claim:

Vātsyāyana: “[W]henever there is a wrong apprehension of the pillar as ‘man’, both of these – the real object and the counterpart – are manifested in it quite distinctly, and the misapprehension is due to the perception of their common properties ...”

(*Nyāya-Sūtras* (trans. Jha), 1646)

²⁴Relatedly, anti-luck conditions on different forms of *pramā* will vary with the different conditions required for demonstrative access by different *pramāṇas*. This variance undermines any general virtue-theoretic analysis, Gaṅgeśa notes at *Tattvacintāmaṇi*, 218.

It is not, as on disjunctivist views, that illusion merely appears to be like *pramā* but is intrinsically different. Illusion is intrinsically like *pramā* in key respects. Hence non-factive *anubhava* and *pramā* are more similar than belief and knowledge. *Pramā* does not exclude *anubhava*: it is a special case of *anubhava*.

So Nyāya does not accept analogues of either the irreducibility of knowing or the exclusiveness of knowing and believing, but instead accepts the following disanalogous claims:

Special Case: *Pramā* is a special case of *anubhava*.

Extrinsic Difference: The difference between *pramā* and illusory *anubhava* is explained by external factors.

What about the idea that knowing involves the ‘direct presence’ of an object to a subject? If direct presence requires that the object of *pramā* is *in* the cognizer’s mind, then Extrinsic Difference excludes an analogue of direct presence. Direct presence also requires that one’s access to the object of knowledge is *immediate*. By affirming the distinctiveness of inferential *pramā* and the fact that inquiring minds want *more* than inferential *pramā*, Nyāya appears to reject this claim. There may, however, be a weaker kind of ‘immediacy’, as discussed in Section 3 the cognizer must have *live access* to reality.

There are, however, further ways in which knowing is perception-like in Nyāya. The previous sections suggest:

Definitiveness: The kind of definite ascertainment that is prototypical of determinate perceptual *pramā* is also a feature of inferential and testimonial *pramā*.

Perceptual Preeminence: The most satisfying form of *pramā* is perceptual *pramā*.

The first claim ensures that all *pramā* has something importantly in common with perceptual *pramā*. But caveats are needed. Firstly, ascertainment is not luminous. The experience of perceiving has only first-order definitiveness (see *Tattvacintāmaṇi*, 588). This is compatible with higher-order doubt about the veridicality of one’s awareness episode, though this is absent by default.²⁵ Secondly, Perceptual Preeminence suggests that non-perceptual *pramā* is not epistemically perfect. The view is more like Ayers’ view in *Knowing and Seeing*, on which primary knowledge is perception-like and secondary knowledge is an analogue.

For these reasons, Nyāya presentationalism is modest. It does not follow that a Getteriological construal is justified, though there are some similarities.

²⁵Consider: “[E]xperience shows that, without a cognition being doubted as erroneous, doubt does not arise with respect to an object that has been with certainty ascertained” *Tattvacintāmaṇi*, 94; cf. “If there is no taint of suspicion of non-veridicality, a cognition of an inferential mark, etc., is itself a cause of a bit of certainty about an object” *Tattvacintāmaṇi*, 134.

One resemblance is that the question of what *pramā* is gives way to the question of what conditions an *anubhava* episode must meet to be *pramā*, and examples involving epistemic luck are relevant to this question. Another resemblance is that, given *parataḥ-prāmānya*, this question is approached in a way that treats *pramā* as the gift of external conditions.

But these similarities belie several disanalogies. *Pramā* is not a propositional state but rather an object-directed episode. Further differences between *anubhava* and belief are also significant: while *anubhava* is a non-factive common factor, it is closer to *pramā* than belief is to knowledge. A closer analogy recommended by Vaidya (“Nyāya Perceptual Theory”) is with sophisticated representational theories of perception like Burge’s (in e.g. *Perception*), which take perception to have non-conceptual attributive structure and are constructed against the backdrop of content externalism. So understood, it is plausible to attribute a non-naïve presentationalism to Nyāya.

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