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Utpaladeva and Abhinavagupta on the Freedom of Consciousness

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Abstract and Keywords

The Pratyabhijñā (“Recognition”) system, designed by the Śaiva nondualist Utpaladeva (c. 925–975 CE) and expounded by Abhinavagupta (c.975–1025 CE) stands out as one of the greatest accomplishments of Indian philosophy. Engaging in a dialogue with all the rival currents of thought of his time, and claiming that the realization of our identity with God (understood as a single, all-encompassing, and all-powerful consciousness) can be achieved through the mere recourse to experience and reason, Utpaladeva transforms the Śaiva scriptural dogmas into philosophical concepts. His “new path” is aimed at demonstrating that the essence of any individual’s consciousness is none other than the absolute freedom characterizing God’s creativity. While examining Utpaladeva’s use of the concept of freedom in several major Indian controversies (such as the debates over the existence of the self or the ontological status of perceived objects), this article explores his phenomenological attempts to uncover the freedom of consciousness in our most ordinary experiences.

Keywords: Utpaladeva, Abhinavagupta, Śaivism, Pratyabhijñā, freedom, consciousness, self, phenomenology, idealism, intentionality

Utpaladeva’s Philosophical Revolution within the Śaiva Nondualistic Tradition

The Pratyabhijñā (“Recognition”) system is arguably the most brilliant outcome of Śaiva nondualism, a Hindu heterodox tradition that once thrived in medieval Kashmir. For this reason it has often been called “Kashmir Śaivism” in secondary literature. This, however, is a misleading appellation, not only because when this system was elaborated, a rival

Śaiva current (the dualistic Śaiva Siddhānta) was dominant in the valley,¹ but also because the texts belonging to the Pratyabhijñā corpus, while being undoubtedly and profoundly Śaiva, are not so in the same sense as Śaiva scriptural, exegetical, and devotional literature, in particular due to their distinctive philosophical method.

Somānanda (c.900–950) is often presented as the first author of the Pratyabhijñā tradition, but is probably more accurately described as the most important precursor² of the real founder and main innovator of the system, namely his disciple Utpaladeva (c. 925–975) whose treatise was commented upon by the great polymath Abhinavagupta (c.975–1025)³ Utpaladeva's magnum opus, the *Īśvarapratyabhijñā* treatise or [*Treatise on*] *the Recognition of the Lord*, is composed of verses (the *Kārikās*)⁴ on which the author himself has written two commentaries: a brief one (the *Vṛtti*)⁵ and a more detailed explanation (the *Vivṛti*), which was certainly Utpaladeva's most important text,⁶ but which is not preserved in its entirety. So far only one lengthy fragment of this text has come to light,⁷ although shorter ones have recently been discovered.⁸ Abhinavagupta has written two long commentaries on Utpaladeva's work: a synthetic explanation of the verses, the *Vimarśinī*,⁹ and a very detailed explanation of the *Vivṛti* called the *Vivṛtivismarśinī* (an extraordinary work but also a notoriously difficult one, in part because of the loss of most of the text on which it comments).¹⁰

Even though Utpaladeva claims that his treatise explains truths already contained *in nuce* in the Śaiva nondualistic scriptures,¹¹ he is fully aware of the originality of his endeavor. In a manner quite extraordinary among Indian authors (who usually tend to downplay any innovative aspect of their work and prefer to highlight their faithfulness to a timeless tradition), he even explicitly points out this novelty by describing his own system as a “new path”¹² toward liberation.

Utpaladeva's undertaking indeed constitutes a small revolution within the Śaiva tradition insofar as he chooses to avoid all dogmatic and scripturally based assertions and to engage in a philosophical dialogue with all the other Indian currents of thought (whether Hindu or Buddhist) of any importance at the time.¹³ This does not mean that Utpaladeva would cease to be a Śaiva or that he would question the authority of the Śaiva sacred texts: his main goal when entering the philosophical arena is to demonstrate the superiority of Śaiva nondualism on all its religious rivals. But his interlocutors reject the Śaiva scriptures while admitting the validity of other scriptural sources (the orthodox Hindus' Veda, the Buddhists' *sūtras*, etc.). Discussing with them therefore requires having recourse to sources of knowledge that, contrary to scripture, are universally acknowledged—that is, perception (or immediate experience)¹⁴ and inference. Utpaladeva thus describes his “new path” as a phenomenological and dialectical method capable *by itself* (i.e., without any recourse to scripture)¹⁵ of making the reader realize

his or her identity with the highest God, namely Śiva, understood as a single, all-powerful and all-encompassing consciousness that creates the world by merely imagining it. According to Utpaladeva, liberation from the beginningless cycle of rebirths (*saṃsāra*)—which is also the beginningless cycle of pain—is nothing but this blissful “recognition” (*pratyabhijñā*) of oneself as “the Lord” (*īśvara*), that is, Śiva. This realization can be achieved by simply drawing attention to our most immediate experiences, that is, through a close examination of our various cognitive events, and through the critical investigation of all the theories claiming to interpret these experiences.¹⁶

Although Utpaladeva’s ultimate goal is to defend the Śaiva nondualistic faith, his systematically polemical approach has a deep impact on the meaning of the metaphysical principles that he inherits from his religious tradition: in this constant dialogue with other schools of thought he transforms the Śaiva nondualistic dogmas into concepts rationally justified and embedded in the complex structure of a philosophical system.

The Controversy over the Existence of the Self: Utpaladeva’s Appropriation of Buddhist Epistemology and the Tantric Metamorphosis of Brahmanical Orthodoxy

In his treatise Utpaladeva first and foremost takes position in a pan-Indian debate that opposed Hindu and Buddhist thinkers for centuries, namely the controversy over the existence of a self (*ātman*) defined as an enduring substance existing within every human being and guaranteeing his or her permanence. This notion is of great importance to Brahmanical schools, in particular because, as pointed out by the Mīmāṃsā (which claims to represent the core of Brahmanical orthodoxy), the injunctions to sacrifice found in the Veda are nonsensical if the agent of the sacrifice is not a lasting entity and as a consequence cannot enjoy later (i.e., mostly in some other life) the positive results that must ensue from the sacrifice.¹⁷ Other Hindu schools, while not necessarily opposing this mainly¹⁸ ritualistic point of view, rather seek liberation through gnosis: they consider that the cause of all pain lies in our mistaking the self for an entity such as the body, which, being subjected to change, is bound to perish, so that escaping from *saṃsāra* can only be the result of a knowledge discriminating between the self and what does not endure in us. The Buddhists, on the other hand, uphold the thesis of universal momentariness and contend that we are mistaken in believing that we, as individual subjects, have some kind of continuous existence despite the inevitable changes affecting us. According to them this erroneous conviction is the very root of existential pain, while understanding and cultivating the thought that there is no self (*nairātmya*) is the only “antidote” capable of counteracting the catastrophic effects of the belief in the self.

Utpaladeva and Abhinavagupta side with the Brahmanical schools in this controversy, defending the existence of the *ātman* against various Buddhist assaults. While claiming to do so, however, they also appropriate many an idea formulated in the first place by their Buddhist opponents. They display a vast and precise knowledge of the Buddhist epistemological traditions, and not only do they express much admiration for some of their Buddhist adversaries: they often use (and avowedly so) Buddhist conceptual weapons to defend their own positions.¹⁹

Besides, it is not only their relationship with the Buddhists that turns out to be more complex than it looks at first sight. The religious current to which they belong systematically reverses the socio-religious values of purity and impurity that pervade the Brahmanical world, notably by presenting activities usually considered as utterly impure (the consumption of meat or alcohol, certain sexual practices, etc.) as a potential path toward liberation.²⁰ Utpaladeva adopts a similar strategy on the philosophical battlefield. On the one hand, he places at the very center of his system the notion of self-recognition—an explicit borrowing from the Mīmāṃsakas²¹: according to Śabara²² and most of all Kumārila,²³ what proves the existence of the self is precisely the fact that we are able to *recognize* ourselves as the same person throughout time. On the other hand, in the very title of his work Utpaladeva places the term *īśvara*, “Lord,” next to the word “recognition”: according to him recognizing oneself means *realizing that we are in fact God himself*—and this is in glaring contradiction with Kumārila’s fierce atheism.²⁴ Utpaladeva thus appropriates the conceptual core of Brahmanism (i.e., the doctrine of the self as what we recognize every time we say and think “I”) but subverts it by completely transforming its metaphysical background²⁵: the Mīmāṃsakas’ belief in an objective world of multiple substances existing independently of consciousness, as well as their denial of the existence of a God creating or organizing the universe, are replaced with the thesis that all subjects and objects are ultimately nothing but God, that is, the universal consciousness.

The Core of Utpaladeva’s System: Freedom (*svātantrya*)

What enables Utpaladeva to achieve this spectacular reversal of the Mīmāṃsakas’ values is the metamorphosis to which he subjects the Brahmanical notion of self. Refusing to define it as a static substance capable of bearing transitory qualities, he rather presents it as a pure dynamism: according to the Śaiva, the self is nothing but the absolute freedom (*svātantrya*) that constitutes the essence of consciousness. The term *svātantrya* primarily designates the property of that which is autonomous, or exists and acts by itself, without requiring any external prompting or determination (contrary to what is

heteronomous, *paratantra*). But translations such as “autonomy” or “independence” fail to grasp the entire range of meaning of the Sanskrit word, because *svātantrya* designates, more than a mere absence of external influence, a positive power that nothing can hinder (the Śaivas often use it as an equivalent of terms such as *aiśvarya*, “sovereignty”), and also because—at least in Śaiva nondualistic literature—it has strong aesthetic connotations: *svātantrya* is the playfulness and aesthetic delight experienced in any artistic process, but also in any act of imagination. According to the context, this notion of *svātantrya* examined in the following pages might thus remind the Western reader of very different concepts: the Greek philosophers’ cosmic game, the Scholastics’ *causa sui*, Descartes’ “libre arbitre” or even the phenomenological descriptions by Heidegger and Sartre of the vertiginous freedom of consciousness.

Freedom as the Basis for Demonstrating the Existence of the Self

In what way is this notion of *svātantrya* a satisfactory answer to the Buddhist denial of the self’s existence? The Hindu upholders of the self belong to different traditions (Mīmāṃsā, Nyāya, and Vaiśeṣika, but also currents that depart in a number of ways from Vedic orthodoxy: Sāṃkhya, Yoga, and Vedānta). These traditions defend different theses as regards the nature of the *ātman*—for example they disagree as to whether the self is conscious by nature (i.e., including in the liberated state) or not. They do agree, however, that the self is the substrate of the various ordinary conscious states and must therefore be some kind of unchanging substance. And according to Utpaladeva, this is precisely why their defense of the self is doomed to succumb to the Buddhist attacks. For if the self cannot bear any change without becoming other, it cannot be a knower: as already pointed out by Dignāga (5th century?), just as any agent, a knower must be somehow affected by the act of knowing that he or she performs—which is impossible in the case of a strictly unchanging entity; so the self can never be conscious.²⁶ The Śaiva nondualists, while emphasizing that the various Brahmanical traditions cannot resist this Buddhist critique, set out to show that the Buddhist argument only holds if the self’s existence is understood in accordance with the way insentient things are. For objects only exist while conforming to a certain limited form that they have not chosen or produced and that characterizes them: a square ceases to be a square as soon as it no longer has four sides. But the very essence of consciousness lies in the fact that its existence is not determined by such a limited essence—or, according to a paradox highlighted by Abhinavagupta, the self (*ātman*) is characterized by the freedom not to remain merely oneself (*ātman*).²⁷ Thus we all know through immediate experience that in imagination, consciousness can take on countless forms at will. When we imagine, for example, an elephant, our consciousness presents itself as a specific object distinct from consciousness, since we

apprehend the imaginary object as an object, in other words an entity grasped as “this,” whereas we apprehend consciousness itself as “I.” But despite this distinction, we remain aware that the imagined elephant is *only imagined*—we know that in fact the elephant is only an aspect taken on by our consciousness. Yet the imagining consciousness does not merely *become* the imagined elephant, nor does it *cease to exist* as a consciousness when taking on the elephant’s form; it simply manifests itself as something distinct from itself. This infinite plasticity of consciousness, or this capacity to manifest itself in innumerable forms while remaining itself (even though it shows itself in the form of objects, i.e., *as what it is not*) is precisely what the Śaivas call “freedom,” and according to them, this freedom transcends the pure momentariness upheld by the Buddhists: contrary to insentient objects, consciousness is capable of changing without perishing.

Admittedly, as pointed out by the Buddhists, our experience as conscious beings is not that of a single continuum of consciousness: if we pay attention to our cognitive activity, we must acknowledge that it occurs in the form of a series of heterogeneous, purely momentary cognitive events. But the Śaiva nondualists argue that even this constant experience of momentariness involves an awareness of the profound unity of consciousness. Utpaladeva shows this by appropriating and transforming the classic Naiyāyika and Mīmāṃsaka proofs of the self based on memory²⁸ and self-recognition.²⁹

These proofs rest on the assumption that memory could not occur without a permanent substrate of cognitions, and the Buddhist philosophers have developed a solid answer to such a line of argument: we can remember because every perception leaves a residual trace (*saṃskāra*) or an imprint (*vāsanā*) that remains latent in the cognitive series until a similar perception “awakens” the trace and triggers memory; yet the persistence of the latent trace does not require any enduring substrate because every cognition, while being momentary, causally determines the arising of the next cognition in such a way that the next cognition too bears a momentary latent trace.³⁰

According to Utpaladeva, however, this explanation fails to account for the most characteristic feature of memory, namely the fact that remembrance is not just about a past object, but rather consists in the awareness of our *experiencing* an object in the past: remembrance is the *subjective* awareness of having perceived, and the Buddhists cannot explain it.³¹

To understand Utpaladeva’s reasoning here we must keep in mind that according to the Buddhist epistemologists, every cognition is aware of itself, or possesses *svasaṃvedana*, “self-awareness”³²: it is not known by becoming the object of a second cognition, but rather, through the most immediate kind of experience—every conscious activity involves the intuitive, pre-reflexive awareness of being conscious. Utpaladeva, who adopts this Buddhist notion of self-awareness,³³ points out that as a consequence we must accept

that consciousness *cannot be objectified*. A cognition can never be grasped as an object by another cognition, first of all because we are not aware of our own experiences (whether past or present) in the same way in which we are aware of objects: we do not know that we are (or were) conscious as we know that there is a pot in front of us, because when aware of ourselves, we do not grasp ourselves as an entity distinct from consciousness (that is, as an apprehended “this” distinct from the apprehending “I”).³⁴ But the impossibility of objectifying any cognition also results from the fact that the very nature of an object is to be *passively* manifested (most Sanskrit words denoting the object of knowledge can also be translated as “that on which the action [of knowing] can be exerted”), while a cognition is what manifests the object in the very act of manifesting itself.³⁵ If we nonetheless try to apprehend the cognition as an object, we ipso facto fail to grasp its specificity, namely its self-manifestation (*svaparakāśatva*)³⁶ or its capacity to *actively* manifest itself and the object—a capacity that, according to the Śaivas, is none other than the freedom of consciousness.

So when remembering, we are aware of ourselves as having cognized in the past, and the Buddhists cannot account for this phenomenon, since according to them nothing exists over and above momentary cognitions, yet their own theory of self-awareness entails that the present cognition cannot take as its object the past cognition. In the Buddhist perspective, every cognition must therefore be “confined to itself” (*ātmaniṣṭha*)³⁷ because while one cognition cannot take another as its object, there is no conscious entity beyond the momentary cognitions. As a consequence the cognitive synthesis (*anusandhāna*) on which all our ordinary activities rest remains inexplicable.³⁸ Abhinavagupta sums up the problem and its solution in the following way:

And because the [past] experience [that we remember now] does not consist in an object of knowledge, since it consists in a cognition, [we] cannot be aware of it through another cognition [taking it as its object]; rather, it is self-manifest. But if [this past experience] no longer exists when [its] memory occurs, then how could it be manifest [within that memory]? Even if [we] had rather admit that [somehow the past experience still] exists [when we remember it], these two [cognitions] must remain separated from each other, as the manifestation of the memory [on the one hand] and the manifestation of the experience [on the other hand, since one cognition cannot take the other as its object;] so that memory[, which must be somehow connected with the experience that it recalls,] can never occur. So this [memory process] is [only] possible in the [following] way: the self-awareness belonging to the [present] memory is none other than the self-awareness belonging to the [past] experience. And nothing else that would be distinct from this self-awareness—[i.e., a means of knowledge] such as a perception or an

inference—can be applied to this [past experience so as to make it known]. And therefore this single self-awareness that stretches uninterrupted[ly] in the period of time [between the past experience and the present memory] is precisely the true nature of the knowing subject—this is [now] established.³⁹

Memory can only be accounted for if the self-awareness of the present remembering cognition is none other than the self-awareness that belonged to the past experience—and this lasting self-awareness is precisely the self.

Freedom as the Heart of Utpaladeva's Absolute Idealism

The Śaivas thus argue that the only way to account for our most ordinary experiences and the synthesis that they involve is to admit that all momentary cognitions are various aspects of one single lasting consciousness. But they do not content themselves with establishing that this consciousness is unitary: their goal is to prove that it manifests itself in the form of the universe, that is, as insentient objects and as conscious beings that are limited in space and time. In other words, they want to establish a kind of absolute idealism, and they share with the Buddhist Vijñānavādins (the upholders of the Vijñānavāda, “the thesis that [everything is] consciousness”) the conviction that perceived objects, which we ordinarily believe to be external to consciousness, are in fact mere aspects or appearances (*ākāra*) taken on by consciousness, just as the world of our dreams.⁴⁰ Utpaladeva therefore sides with the Buddhist idealists in their dispute with the so-called Sautrāntikas,⁴¹ another influential group of Buddhist thinkers according to whom although we can never have any direct access to the external world, we must infer the existence of a reality outside of consciousness so as to account for the variety of our perceptions.⁴² The Śaivas even explicitly borrow a number of arguments from the Vijñānavādins in order to establish their own idealism.⁴³

Yet Utpaladeva disagrees with them on one crucial point.⁴⁴ In the Vijñānavāda, since the cause of phenomenal variety cannot be the existence of various objects outside of consciousness, it must be sought in the mechanism of residual traces also invoked to explain memory or the visions of our dreams. Our perceptions are thus said to occur as a result of latent traces left inside the cognitive series by previous experiences, and this causal chain of imprints producing perceptions that in turn cause imprints, and so on, is beginningless, so that there is no point in looking for a first principle causing the manifested universe. As for the Śaivas, they consider that the reason for the countless manifestations constituting the world is, rather than some impersonal mechanism of latent traces, the freedom of the universal consciousness relishing its own creativity. In order to prove that the Vijñānavādins' explanation of phenomenal variety is unsound,

Utpaladeva exploits a criticism of the imprint theory already leveled against the Vijñānavādins by the Sautrāntikas.⁴⁵ But he also endeavors to show that, although usually we do not pay attention to it, we are always somehow *experiencing* the creative will of consciousness: gathering and reworking a number of ideas and techniques found in the Śaiva tradition,⁴⁶ Utpaladeva builds a veritable phenomenology aimed at uncovering freedom at the heart of all experience.

The Śaiva Phenomenology of Freedom: Imagination, Perception, Desire, Intentionality

The author of the *Pratyabhijñā* treatise thus invites his readers to focus on the banal yet wondrous ability that every conscious being has of imagining at will entities that nobody has ever perceived—such as (to give Abhinavagupta’s striking example) “a five-trunked, four-tusked elephant running in the sky.”⁴⁷ In this regard the Śaivas strongly oppose the view of Brahmanical philosophers. The latter keep downplaying the power of imagination in order to show that the Buddhist idealists wrongly ascribe to consciousness the power to manifest the universe without relying on any external support (*ālambana*). Naiyāyikas and Mīmāṃsakas therefore explain that even the most extraordinary entities appearing in our dreams or imaginary constructions, far from being creations *ex nihilo*, are in fact made of various bits perceived in the past that imagination merely assembles.⁴⁸ And indeed, we might suspect that we are capable of picturing up the fantastic elephant described by Abhinavagupta simply because we then put together elements previously perceived (tusks, trunks, the sky, a running elephant ...). Utpaladeva nonetheless shows that imagination is a free creativity, first of all because even if it merely combines preexisting elements, as an activity of combination, it is perfectly free of any external determination. Moreover, the combined elements do not remain unaffected as they are integrated to the imaginary object: our imaginary creations are endowed with an organic unity which would be impossible if the imagining consciousness did not profoundly transform the combined parts themselves into something new. When imagining, we are therefore experiencing the very power that constitutes the essence of God, that is, the ability of consciousness to create by freely manifesting itself as this or that object, and Utpaladeva insists that imagination is a path toward liberation, since in it we can recognize ourselves as the almighty universal consciousness.⁴⁹

There is, however, an obvious objection to this reasoning: although we are capable of imagining, we are also aware of the vast difference between imagining and perceiving. And unlike imagination, perception involves the consciousness of a given that we do not choose: the perceived object imposes itself on us and we apprehend its presence and specific form whether we want it or not. Perception is first and foremost the experience

of the passivity of consciousness confronted to its Other and forced to take it into account. This is the major difficulty that the Śaiva nondualists need to overcome in order to demonstrate their idealism—and their way of solving this problem is perhaps the most extraordinary feature of their system.

Utpaladeva thus points out that the experience of perception is not a purely passive one: perceptual cognitions, far from merely reflecting their objects, involve at their very core an *act* of realization (*vimarśa*) that distinguishes consciousness from other entities such as mirrors.⁵⁰ Although the latter are endowed with the power to reflect, they remain inert, while consciousness, when perceiving objects, actively grasps itself as manifesting them. Thus when perceiving a patch of blue, consciousness grasps itself as perceiving the blue, and it does so by *expressing* itself in various forms: “I,” “this,” “I see this,” “this is a patch of blue,” “I see this patch of blue,” and so on. For according to the Śaiva nondualists (who are much indebted in this respect to the grammarian-philosopher Bhartṛhari),⁵¹ the Buddhist epistemologists wrongly draw a radical distinction between perception (considered as devoid of any linguistic aspect) and concept (understood as an essentially discursive thought).⁵² The Śaivas insist that even what we usually consider as the very first moment of a bare perception is in fact pervaded by language—or rather a kind of silent, proto-language that, as Abhinavagupta says, can be compared to expressive gestures such as nodding or pointing with a finger.⁵³ Utpaladeva thus argues that if perception were not already pervaded by some kind of verbal expression, we could not account for the many complex activities (running, reading, etc.) in which we engage without constantly telling ourselves “I am doing this”: a runner pondering over each of his or her movements would not go very far, just as a reader focusing on the fact that (s)he is deciphering every single letter would keep losing track of the content of what (s)he is trying to read. Such activities are not *conceptualized*, either because we are too concentrated on what we are accomplishing to reflect on it while it is happening, or because we do it automatically, as it were, while our mind is distracted. Yet these actions involve a kind of synthetic awareness: a runner would not run if (s)he did not grasp together, besides the environment in which (s)he is running, the movements that his or her body has just performed and those that (s)he is about to carry out. The running subject does not reflect on what (s)he is busy doing, yet (s)he links together various perceptual awarenesses, and this is possible because his or her consciousness does not passively record sensory data but appropriates them through some kind of silent expression that can later be elaborated on when (s)he thinks back on what (s)he has done and explains it. And this means that discursive thought is nothing but the development of a subtle, condensed expression already present in any act of perception.⁵⁴

Admittedly, the fact that we are able to grasp synthetically the content of our perceptions does not entail that we actually *create* this content: showing that consciousness is not

purely passive when confronted to the object does not amount to demonstrating that consciousness freely manifests itself in the form of the various things that we perceive—the Śaiva nondualists must therefore adduce further arguments to demonstrate that consciousness creates the perceived objects.

One of them regards the particular desire (*icchā*) that drives us when we decide to create something. When a potter for instance sets out to create a pot, his initial desire is restricted to a specific object, namely the pot—otherwise he would just as well create a cloth (and he would be a weaver!). But the object to which his desire must be restricted does not exist yet, so what is it that gives a specific aim to his creative urge? One could argue that in such a case the potter simply imagines a pot before actually creating it, so that his desire is restricted by the imagined pot. But the imagined pot is also the product of a *creation*, albeit an imaginary one; so in order to picture the pot, the potter must have first wished to create an imaginary pot—and how is this desire determined as the specific desire of an imaginary pot, if not thanks to the fact that the potter first imagines the imaginary pot before actually picturing it? The only way to avoid an infinite regress is to admit that the objects of our creative desires are first apprehended as one with the subject: creation is an apparent externalization (or, quite literally, what the Greek philosophers would have called an *ec-stasy*) through which the subject playfully projects him- or herself out of him- or herself, as it were; and in the very first phase of this process, the object is still apprehended in its full unity with the subject, or as a manifestation by the subject of the subject.⁵⁵

Of course Utpaladeva seems to be begging the question here, since showing that the objects of our creations are aspects of ourselves that we have playfully presented as distinct from us does not amount to demonstrating that such are the objects of our perceptions. His point, however, is that perceptions too involve *a desire to perceive*: as any act, perception presupposes a will to act in which the object of perception is experienced as one with consciousness, that is, as an appearance that consciousness freely takes on. We all constantly go through this experience in which the object is grasped as still immersed in the subject, since it occurs at the very beginning of any perception; but we do not pay attention to it because we are almost instantly engrossed in the appearance of the object as a “this” separated from the “I” and seemingly independent from it (just as we are sometimes caught in our own game when day-dreaming and forget for a while that our imaginary world is nothing but our consciousness playing with itself). In ordinary circumstances we keep being distracted from this ever renewed experience of the objects’ identity with consciousness, but it is sometimes brutally revealed to us when we are confronted with an unexpected or intensely emotional event: as Utpaladeva’s master, Somānanda, had already explained, when experiencing intense joy, terror, orgasm, or simply when we are suddenly struck by

the realization that we have forgotten to perform some urgent task, the opposition between “I” and “this” dissolves and what is left is an “effervescence of all powers”⁵⁶—the pure dynamism of consciousness in its quivering desire to manifest the universe’s infinite variety.

This does not mean, however, that our experience of the fundamental freedom of consciousness would be merely occasional. Thus one of Utpaladeva’s proofs for idealism rests on an examination of what Western phenomenology has termed intentionality, i.e. the fact that even in the most ordinary situations, consciousness is the consciousness *of* an object, or is object-oriented.⁵⁷ There is something paradoxical about his appeal to intentionality in order to establish the freedom of consciousness, because intentionality seems to be primarily the experience of the fact that consciousness is always confronting the otherness of an object obtruding on it. The Śaivas name *aunmukhya* this way that consciousness has of being *turned toward* or *directed upon* the object, and the Sanskrit word (an abstract substantive formed on the adjective *unmukha* that literally means “whose face is turned upward”) perfectly expresses this transcending presence of the object in intentionality: consciousness is intentional insofar as it is turned toward an object that stands above it or transcends it. Intentionality thus seems to betray the essential heteronomy of consciousness, as emphasized by Sartre, who considers that it immediately reveals the object as an entity existing independently of the subject.⁵⁸ However, with Husserl’s concept of a foundational intentionality,⁵⁹ Western phenomenology has witnessed at least one spectacular attempt to show that intentionality rather constitutes the basis for idealism (albeit a transcendental one). And notwithstanding the immense cultural, religious, and philosophical gap that separates Utpaladeva from the author of the *Ideen*, there is undeniably some kind of convergence here: the Śaiva nondualists also endeavor to show that intentionality, far from betraying the passivity of consciousness, reveals its creativity. Thus Abhinavagupta explains Utpaladeva’s argument in the following way:

If the object of knowledge were distinct [from consciousness], then the intentionality of the self ... could not belong to this [self. For] this intentionality aiming at something distinct [from the self] would entail for the [self] what is called “dependence on the Other”, [i.e.] heteronomy. But heteronomy is contradictory with freedom; and it is freedom ... which is the nature of the self; therefore a self that would be turned toward (*unmukha*) an [entity] distinct from it would not be a self at all. And that which is not a self, [i.e.] which is insentient, does not turn toward an object of knowledge So this is what follows if one reverses this [unwanted] consequence: [the self] makes itself an object while being free, [i.e.] while not being turned toward an [entity] distinct [from it].⁶⁰

If the object were independent of consciousness, the very fact of intentionality would remain inexplicable because a consciousness turned toward a genuinely alien object would be dependent on it and therefore heteronomous, which is impossible. One could suspect a sophism here: aren't the Śaivas presupposing the freedom of consciousness that they seek to demonstrate? Abhinavagupta's main point, however, is that consciousness cannot be heteronomous precisely *because only an entity endowed with freedom is capable of intentionality*: being turned toward an object, or object-oriented, requires freedom. A consciousness that would not be free would not be conscious at all because it would be incapable of any extroversion (real or apparent) toward any Other: it would remain riveted to a self-contained identity, incapable of being anything besides itself, and therefore incapable of any relationship with anything—including the object. Intentionality entails the freedom not to remain confined to one's own nature, the freedom that consists in not "being merely oneself" (*ātmamātratā*),⁶¹ contrary to insentient objects. And this freedom is conceivable only if consciousness is not really transcended by an object existing independently of it. In other words, intentionality occurs insofar as consciousness *chooses to manifest itself as intentional*, or to appear as if it were dependent on the object; and the intentional aim is possible only if consciousness takes the form of the object aimed at while aiming at it.

Exploring the Limits of Consciousness's Freedom: The Failure to Objectify Consciousness, and the Unthinkable External Object

Paradoxically, however, this phenomenology of freedom also emphasizes the *limits* of consciousness's freedom. Thus as we have seen, the Śaivas point out that because the very nature of consciousness is to manifest itself (whereas objects are passively manifested), *it can never be apprehended in the form of an object*: Utpaladeva insists that the Buddhist principle according to which a cognition is self-manifest entails not only that a cognition *does not need* another cognition to be known, but also that it *cannot* be known through another cognition that would take it as an object.⁶² This interpretation of self-awareness—which Utpaladeva might have borrowed in part from Śāntarakṣita (c.725–788 □)⁶³—leads the Śaivas to point out what, as conscious entities, we do not have the power to do. Yet this limit to our freedom as conscious entities has no other cause than the fundamental freedom of consciousness: as soon as we try to grasp a cognition as we would grasp a patch of blue in front of us, we fail to apprehend the singularity of consciousness because we end up reifying its absolute spontaneity, and in this very failure we experience the pure dynamism of consciousness as that which resists any objectification.⁶⁴

This very idea that consciousness cannot be objectified is what enables the Śaivas to solve a problem that has haunted Western phenomenology from Hegel to Levinas, namely: how do we become aware of the existence of other conscious subjects? Most Indian traditions answer this question by saying that this knowledge is inferential. Thus according to the Mīmāṃsakas, we infer the self of others from the fact that we see others act and that we know (from our own experience as acting subjects) that action presupposes a conscious will to act.⁶⁵ This explanation was appropriated by the Buddhist Dharmakīrti (6th or 7th century □) in the *Santānāntarasiddhi* (i.e., the *Establishment [of the Existence] of Other [Cognitive] Series*)⁶⁶. In this treatise—well known in Śaiva circles⁶⁷—Dharmakīrti endeavored to show that it is possible to account for our awareness of others in the Buddhist idealist perspective just as well as in a system ascribing an external existence to objects of consciousness, such as that of the Mīmāṃsakas⁶⁸: even though we can never have access to any reality beyond phenomena, we can infer the existence of others from the phenomenon of their action. According to Utpaladeva, however, this explanation is inadequate. Indeed, our awareness of the existence of other conscious beings is not of a perceptual nature (we can see someone else’s body, but we cannot see his or her consciousness). Yet it is more immediate than a knowledge resulting from a causal inference: we do not know that the person in front of us is conscious as we infer that there must be some fire on a mountain from the fact that we see smoke above it. We rather know it through a kind of guess that partakes of both perception and concept while being neither,⁶⁹ and that is not strictly speaking a means of knowledge, since instead of bringing about a new information it simply draws our attention to something that we already know—in other words, it is a recognition.⁷⁰ And this recognition of others as conscious entities *results from our failure to apprehend them as mere objects*. Thus as Abhinavagupta explains while commenting on Utpaladeva’s lost *Vivṛti*, our awareness of the others is based not on the knowledge of an invariable concomitance causally linking consciousness and action, but rather on the subjective intuition that action and consciousness are ultimately the *same* reality. We are aware of this identity because we recognize in the others’ actions the freedom that we keep experiencing as conscious entities, a freedom that “cannot bear to be [apprehended] through a realization [grasping it] objectively”⁷¹: upon seeing others act we recognize them as conscious subjects because all our attempts to grasp these acting entities as passive objects fail. And this very failure brings us back to the most immediate experience of all, that is, self-awareness, or the awareness of being a spontaneous, self-manifesting entity.

This paradoxical approach, which highlights the limits to the powers of consciousness so as to make all the more evident that consciousness is free, is also adopted by the Śaiva nondualists when they seek to refute theories according to which something exists outside of consciousness. Thus they keep emphasizing that however powerful,

consciousness can never grasp any entity that would remain absolutely extraneous to it, whether in perception or in imagination. In this connection they explicitly borrow Dharmakīrti's famous principle of the "necessity [for the object and its cognition] to be perceived together" (*sahopalambhaniyama*)⁷² so as to show that perception is not an encounter with an entity absolutely alien to consciousness, but a self-awareness through which consciousness grasps *itself* as bearing the appearance of the object.⁷³ They also highlight the radical impossibility of *picturing* an entity that would not consist in the conscious manifestation: imagining such an object would amount for consciousness to try and manifest an object by nature non-manifest, and this is an inexorably vain attempt. This impossibility is at the core of Utpaladeva's critique of the Sautrāntikas' claim that we must infer the existence of external objects. According to the Śaivas, such an inference is doomed to failure because even an inferred object (as well as any object of a concept) must somehow be manifest to consciousness⁷⁴—and an object that would be absolutely alien to consciousness simply remains *unthinkable*.⁷⁵ But once again, showing that consciousness is incapable of imagining such an object is a way for Utpaladeva to emphasize the all-encompassing might of consciousness: this incapacity to which he draws our attention is nothing but the experience of the fact that *everything partakes of consciousness*. Thus when explaining why, according to Utpaladeva, imagination constitutes a path toward liberation and reveals the divine creativity within us, Abhinavagupta remarks that we cannot even *imagine* that imagination might not be free⁷⁶: the only limit to the freedom of consciousness is the impossibility to deny this freedom, because we constantly experience it in the most immediate way.⁷⁷

The Play of Consciousness: Hiding the Impossible To Hide

There is, however, something problematic about this systematic endeavor to show that consciousness cannot be objectified or conceptualized. The Śaiva nondualists themselves acknowledge that objects are in fact consciousness taking on their form, and that all objects of consciousness (including objects of concepts) are ultimately nothing but consciousness. But if consciousness is a pure dynamism, how can it present itself in the form of inert objects? If its absolute spontaneity is undeniable, how can we mistake it for a reality external to us? And if its freedom knows no limits, how can it take the form of individuals subjected to pain and death?

The Śaiva philosophers are aware of this paradox, and in fact they keep highlighting it as the perfect expression of consciousness's freedom. It is precisely because consciousness can do anything that it is capable of performing the most difficult of all deeds, namely concealing one's own nature, which, as Abhinavagupta points out, seems impossible since the very nature of consciousness is to be manifest:

In this [system of ours] this is the ultimate freedom of the Highest Lord, namely: accomplishing things that are extremely difficult to achieve [and] cannot [even] be imagined in the state that is peculiar to the bound individuals and precedes [recognition—that is,] for [people] like us. And what could be more difficult to accomplish than this: manifesting the apparent negation of the manifestation of the self which [is nothing but] manifestation, whereas the very fact that it consists in [manifestation] remains entirely manifest?⁷⁸

In Śaiva nondualistic literature this extraordinary power of self-concealment through which consciousness makes the universe appear in its infinite variety by partially hiding its absolute power and unity is called *māyā*—an untranslatable word that has to do with deluding appearances (it designates among other things the wondrous visions conjured up by a magician), although the Śaiva nondualists insist that contrary to what the Vedāntins claim, *māyā* cannot be reduced to a pure illusion or understood as somehow distinct from the only reality of the Brahman.⁷⁹ This *māyā* is rather defined by the Śaiva nondualists as a crucial aspect of the ultimate reality—that is, the freedom of consciousness, since it is nothing but the ability of consciousness to play (*krīḍā*)⁸⁰: cosmic creation, while being perfectly real insofar as it is a manifestation of the only reality (namely the dynamism of consciousness),⁸¹ is ultimately a game in which consciousness acts *as if* it were split into a variety of objects and subjects, just as children, while playing, remain aware that they are not really what they pretend to be. As Abhinavagupta puts it:

Because this Highest Lord [that is consciousness] accomplishes the most difficult deeds, due to its pure freedom, it is skilful in the game (*krīḍā*) of self-concealment. Concealing oneself whereas one's nature remains unveiled—this is precisely the Omnipresent Lord's *māyā* from which comes all this variety found in the universe.⁸²

Śiva is the Actor⁸³ embodying the universe while remaining himself—and he remains himself precisely because his very nature is the freedom to exuberantly manifest himself in infinitely variegated forms, and to play at hiding his own powerful and unitary nature from himself while remaining aware of it.

One could suspect that this is a facile way to get rid of an obvious weakness in Śaiva nondualistic philosophy. Accounting for finiteness, pain, and our inborn belief in a world of independent objects and subjects becomes a particularly delicate matter if reality is nothing but the perfect autonomy of an all-powerful consciousness; isn't it a dubious trick on the Śaivas' part to invoke some unfathomable transcending power in this context? The prodigious ability of consciousness to accomplish the seemingly impossible might appear

as some kind of conceptual *deus ex machina* conveniently brought up so as to account for whatever remains inexplicable in their system.

We should keep in mind, however, that Utpaladeva and Abhinavagupta harshly criticize the theory, found in Advaita Vedānta, that the metaphysical ignorance (*avidyā*) at the root of our belief in the reality of differentiated objects and subjects is “inexplicable” (*anirvacanīya*) and resists any rational attempt to account for it.⁸⁴ If the Pratyabhijñā authors often insist that the freedom of consciousness to hide itself is “prodigious,”⁸⁵ they do not mean that it would remain impossible to understand for us because it would belong to some distant divinity whose power would be forever incommensurable with ours. What they mean is that *we* are endowed with this extraordinary power and actually exert it in the most ordinary situations: if we do not fully comprehend it (at least as long as we are not liberated), it belongs to us and we keep experiencing it in our most trivial activities. When playing, day-dreaming, attending a theatrical show, or simply when being distracted, we all experience the marvelous yet banal power of consciousness to *ignore what it knows*. In such situations, we obviously know more than that on which we focus our attention (*ādara* in Sanskrit), and it is deliberately that we choose not to pay attention (*anādara*)⁸⁶ to this or that aspect of reality. Yet somehow we must remain aware of it; if we did not, playing would not be acting *as if* &, nor would we enjoy fiction while knowing that it is only fiction, nor would we be capable of acting while being absent-minded. This capacity not to pay heed to what we know, or to be distracted from our own knowledge, is what enables the universal consciousness to objectify its own subjectivity and identify with this or that limited individual.⁸⁷ The same power is at work in every perception: in it we grasp consciousness as if it were an object, and just as in our dreams, we are so engrossed in this objective manifestation that *we forget what we always know*—that it is a mere form taken on by consciousness. And this is precisely the prodigy that, according to the Śaivas, constitutes the ultimate form of freedom: the capacity of consciousness to somehow conceal its ever self-manifest nature.

Freedom, Reason, and Grace

So even in the midst of the most abstract and technical discussions with various rival schools, Utpaladeva’s explicit goal is simply to draw our attention to our own experience, to make us notice what we always already know.⁸⁸ As Utpaladeva himself emphasized in his lost *Vivṛti*, even the polemical dimension of his work is merely aimed at uncovering an experience of reality with which everybody is familiar but which is usually “stained” by

various wrong theories claiming to interpret it.⁸⁹ And this experience is none other than that of the freedom of consciousness.

In this respect it should be noted that Utpaladeva did not invent the notion of *svātantrya*. Not only is the idea that the self is a conscious entity and a free agent already found in the Śaiva tradition (both dualistic and nondualistic)⁹⁰; it is also of importance in the Brahmanical sphere, notably in the Mīmāṃsā tradition.⁹¹ In the Pratyabhijñā system, however, it acquires an unprecedented scope and systematicity: Utpaladeva's treatise endeavors to demonstrate that the self cannot be a static substance but rather is the very dynamism that characterizes consciousness, and that the only possible cause for phenomenal variety is not an external world (whether immediately accessed in perception, as most Brahmanical schools believe, or indirectly apprehended as a reflection within consciousness, as the Buddhist Sautrāntikas argue); nor is it a beginningless, impersonal series of latent traces (as the Buddhist Vijñānavādins contend), nor again an inexplicable illusion (as advocated by the Vedāntins)—it is, rather, the freedom of consciousness. And in order to substantiate this metaphysics of freedom Utpaladeva does not only criticize the rival theories about the self or the cause of phenomenal variety: he also develops a phenomenology aimed at tracking down in all our cognitive events an awareness of power and autonomy that we never really lose, but from which we keep being distracted.

Yet Utpaladeva himself concedes that his philosophical path does not necessarily lead to liberation: however penetrating the phenomenological analyses and inferential reasonings used to bring about the “recognition of the Lord,” there is no guarantee of their soteriological efficacy. This is the case because philosophical discourses necessarily reify to some extent the subjective spontaneity of consciousness that they try to express,⁹² but also because some people are simply bound to remain blind to their own freedom.⁹³ This latter idea is in keeping with the Śaiva nondualistic notion of divine grace (*anugraha*)⁹⁴: liberation only occurs provided that Śiva decides to liberate this or that individual.⁹⁵ And this is why—paradoxically in a system that grants so much importance to freedom—the individual is sometimes described by the Śaiva nondualists as utterly powerless: we wrongly see ourselves as ethically responsible for our acts and we claim authorship for our creations whereas in fact Śiva is the sole agent of all actions,⁹⁶ including our endeavors to free ourselves. However, individuals only lack agency inasmuch as they mistake their self for some inert object such as their body, and liberation is not bestowed upon them by some distant God on whose will they would entirely depend, since they *are* God: far from being the gift of a transcendent Other, grace is yet another manifestation of the freedom belonging to any conscious subject. This is why reason is both so powerful and so frail in the Pratyabhijñā's perspective: although Utpaladeva goes as far as presenting it as a “path” toward liberation, we can

always choose to remain impervious to any rational attempt at uncovering a truth that we always already know—even philosophy is ultimately nothing but consciousness freely playing at enslaving and liberating itself.

The Influence of the Pratyabhijñā Treatise on Later Indian Philosophical Literature

The Pratyabhijñā texts did not remain confined to the valley of Kashmir: they spread to the far south of India, and their conceptual influence is obvious in later Śaiva but also Vaiṣṇava literature.⁹⁷ Nonetheless, the assessment of their impact on the thought of Utpaladeva's main opponents, namely the Buddhist philosophical movements, remains a particularly difficult task. Whereas Abhinavagupta's works constitute a crucial source of information for the historians of late Buddhist philosophy in India,⁹⁸ to date there is still no undebatable evidence that the Pratyabhijñā treatise had any noticeable impact on Buddhist epistemological thought.⁹⁹ This might be partly due to the gradual decline of Buddhism in Kashmir after Abhinavagupta's time. It is also possible that however brilliant, Utpaladeva's works did not manage to convince the Buddhists that nondual Śaivism (regarded at best with suspicion in most Hindu circles due to its heterodox practices) was worth responding to: from the point of view of those concerned with defending the Buddhist faith it might have seemed strategically unsound to attack the representatives of a minor and relatively isolated current. However, we should be wary of concluding too hastily that the relation of influence between Buddhist and Śaiva philosophies was never mutual: much of Indian Buddhist literature is lost, and much remains to be edited. Thus the great Kashmiri Buddhist philosopher Śāṅkaranandana,¹⁰⁰ often mentioned and quoted by Abhinavagupta,¹⁰¹ might have been aware of at least some of Utpaladeva's works¹⁰²; and once completed, the ongoing edition and translation of his *Dharmālaṅkāra* will certainly help us determine if the Pratyabhijñā philosophy did have an impact on Buddhist thought.

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Utpaladeva. *Ajaḍapramāṭṛsiddhi*. Translated in D. P. Lawrence, "Proof of a Sentient Knower: Utpaladeva's *Ajaḍapramāṭṛsiddhi* with the *Vṛtti* of Harabhatta Shastri." *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 37 (2009): 627–653.

Utpaladeva. *Īśvarapratyabhijñākārikā with the Author's Vṛtti*. Edited and translated by R. Torella. [Roma: 1994.] Corrected Edition, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2002.

Utpaladeva. *Siddhitrayī* [including the *Īśvarasiddhi*, *Sambandhasiddhi* and *Ajaḍapramāṭṛsiddhi*], ed. M. K. Shastri. Srinagar: Kashmir Series of Texts and Studies 34, 1921.

Notes:

(¹) Alexis Sanderson, "Purity and Power among the Brahmans of Kashmir," in *The Category of the Person: Anthropology, Philosophy, History*, ed. M. Carithers, S. Collins and S. Lukes, pp. 190–216 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 203; and "The Śaiva Exegesis of Kashmir," in *Mélanges tantriques à la mémoire d'Hélène Brunner*, ed. D. Goodall and A. Padoux, 231–442 (Pondicherry: Institut Français de Pondichéry/École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 2007), 432n672.

(²) Somānanda's treatise, the *Śivadṛṣṭi*—on which Utpaladeva has written a commentary—had an immense impact on Utpaladeva's thought. See Somānanda, *Śivadṛṣṭi ... with the Vṛtti by Utpaladeva*, ed. M. K. Shastri (Srinagar: Kashmir Series of Texts and Studies 54, 1934). For partial translations see Raniero Gnoli, "*Śivadṛṣṭi* by Somānanda: Translation and Commentary, Chapter I," *East and West* 8 (1957): 16–22; "Vāc. Il secondo capitolo della *Śivadṛṣṭi* di Somānanda," *Rivista degli Studi Orientali* 34 (1959): 55–75; and John Nemeč, *The Ubiquitous Śiva: Somānanda's Śivadṛṣṭi and His Tantric Interlocutors* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); cf. Raffaele Torella, "Notes on the *Śivadṛṣṭi* by Somānanda and Its commentary," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 42, no. 5 (2014): 551–601. However, not to mention that Somānanda's method is far less systematic than Utpaladeva's, a number of crucial concepts—among which the central notion of recognition that has given its name to the system—are not found in the *Śivadṛṣṭi*. See Raffaele Torella, "Introduction," in Utpaladeva, *Īśvarapratyabhijñākārikā with the Author's Vṛtti*, ed. and trans. R. Torella, rev. ed. (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2002), xx; and Isabelle Ratié, *Le Soi et l'Autre. Identité, différence et altérité dans la philosophie de la Pratyabhijñā* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2011), 3–4n3.

(³) Although some contemporary scholars still seem to assume the contrary, it is now beyond doubt that while Abhinavagupta was a brilliant exegete of Utpaladeva's works, he was by no means the creative force behind the Pratyabhijñā system. See, e.g., Raffaele Torella, "A Fragment of Utpaladeva's *Īśvarapratyabhijñā-vivṛti*," *East and West* 38 (1988): 137–174, esp. 140; and Torella, "Introduction," in Utpaladeva, *Īśvarapratyabhijñākārikā*, □ □ □ □ □

(⁴) Utpaladeva, *Īśvarapratyabhijñākārikā*. Although the English rendering of the verses quoted below is mine, it closely follows Raffaele Torella's excellent translation.

(⁵) The *Vṛtti* is edited and translated in Utpaladeva, *Īśvarapratyabhijñākārikā*.

(⁶) See Raffaele Torella, "Utpaladeva's Lost *Vivṛti* on the *Īśvarapratyabhijñā-kārikā*," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 42 (2014): 115–126.

(⁷) It is preserved (in the form of a very incomplete manuscript) in the National Archives of India. Raffaele Torella has edited it along with introductions and translations in the following series of articles: "A Fragment"; "Studies on Utpaladeva's *Īśvarapratyabhijñā-vivṛti*. Part I: *anupalabdhi* and *apoha* in a Śaiva Garb," in *Expanding and Merging Horizons. Contributions to South Asian and Cross-Cultural Studies in Commemoration of Wilhelm Halbfass*, ed. K. Preisendanz, pp. 473–490 (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2007); "Studies on Utpaladeva's *Īśvarapratyabhijñā-vivṛti*. Part II: What Is Memory?," in *Indica et Tibetica. Festschrift für Michael Hahn zum 65. Geburtstag von Freunden und Schülern überreicht*, ed. K. Klaus and J. U. Hartmann, pp. 539–563 (Vienna: Arbeitskreis für tibetische und buddhistische Studien Universität Wien, 2007); "Studies on Utpaladeva's *Īśvarapratyabhijñā-vivṛti*. Part III. Can a Cognition Become the Object of Another Cognition?," in *Mélanges tantriques à la mémoire d'Hélène Brunner*, ed. D. Goodall & A. Padoux, pp. 475–484 (Pondicherry: Institut Français de Pondichéry/École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 2007); "Studies on Utpaladeva's *Īśvarapratyabhijñā-vivṛti*. Part IV. Light of the Subject, Light of the Object," in *Pramāṇakīrtiḥ. Papers Dedicated to Ernst Steinkellner on the Occasion of His 70th Birthday*, ed. B. Kellner et al., pp. 925–940 (Vienna: Arbeitskreis für tibetische und buddhistische Studien Universität Wien, 2007); and "Studies in Utpaladeva's *Īśvarapratyabhijñā-vivṛti*. Part V: Self-Awareness and Yogic Perception," in *Devadattīyam. Johannes Bronkhorst Felicitation Volume*, ed. F. Voegeli et al., pp. 275–300 (Bern: Peter Lang, 2012).

(⁸) They were found in the margins of manuscripts containing Abhinavagupta's *Vimarsinī* (on the latter text see below, note 10). For a diplomatic edition of some very brief passages of Utpaladeva's lost *Vivṛti* see Yohei Kawajiri, "New Fragments of the

Īśvarapratyabhijñā-Ṭīkā,” in *Utpaladeva: Philosopher of Recognition*, ed. B. Bäumer and R. Torella (Delhi: DK Printworld, forthcoming). For an introduction, edition and translation of lengthier fragments see Isabelle Ratié, “Some Hitherto Unknown Fragments of Utpaladeva’s *Vivṛti* (I): On the Buddhist Controversy over the Existence of Other Conscious Streams,” in the same forthcoming volume; and “Some Hitherto Unknown Fragments of Utpaladeva’s *Vivṛti* (II): Against the Existence of External Objects,” in *Mélanges tantriques à la mémoire de N. Ramacandra Bhatt*, ed. D. Goodall & P. S. Filliozat (forthcoming).

⁽⁹⁾ Abhinavagupta, *Īśvarapratyabhijñāvimarśinī*, ed. M. R. Shāstrī and M. K. Shāstrī, 2 vols. (Srinagar: Kashmir Series of Texts and Studies 22 & 33, 1918–1921), hereafter *Vimarśinī*. For a full translation see Kanti Chandra Pandey, *Īśvarapratyabhijñāvimarśinī of Abhinavagupta, Doctrine of Divine Recognition, Vol. 3: English translation*, rev. ed. (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1986). Although pioneering, this work should be used with much caution: the translation is often imprecise and even wrong (in part because the author bases most of his interpretations on a 17th-century commentary by Bhāskaraṅṭha, whose understanding of 10th-century philosophical debates is often questionable). K. C. Pandey also tends to skip difficult passages without warning the reader that he does so: see, e.g., Isabelle Ratié, “*Pāramārthika or apāramārthika? On the Ontological Status of Separation According to Abhinavagupta*,” in *Puṣpikā: Tracing Ancient India through Texts and Traditions, Contributions to Current Research in Indology 1*, ed. N. Mirnig, P. D. Szanto, and M. Williams, pp. 381–406 (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2013): 386.

⁽¹⁰⁾ Abhinavagupta, *Īśvarapratyabhijñāvivṛtivimarśinī*, ed. M. K. Shāstrī, 3 vols. (Bombay: Kashmir Series of Texts and Studies 60, 62, & 65, 1938–1943), hereafter *Vivṛtivimarśinī*. No full translation of it has been published to date. Abhinavagupta’s disciple, Kṣemarāja, also authored a short treatise, the *Pratyabhijñāhṛdaya* or *Heart of Recognition*, which sums up the tenets of Utpaladeva’s system. See Kṣemarāja, *The Doctrine of Recognition: a Translation of Pratyabhijñāhṛdayam*, trans. J. Singh, rev. ed. (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1980). However, Kṣemarāja’s goal is to translate Utpaladeva’s thought into the terminology of the religious movement which he favors, namely the Krama, while avoiding any mention of the philosophical controversies that constitute the very core of Utpaladeva’s treatise (see, e.g., Sanderson, “The Śaiva Exegesis,” 401).

⁽¹¹⁾ See Ratié, *Le Soi et l’Autre*, 9n15 and “*Pāramārthika*,” 382n2.

⁽¹²⁾ Utpaladeva, *Īśvarapratyabhijñā-kārikā*, verse 4.16. See also Isabelle Ratié, “*Pratyabhijñā*,” in *Tāntrikābhīdhānakośa: A Dictionary of Technical Terms from Hindu*

Tantric Literature, vol. 3, ed. D. Goodall and M. Rastelli, pp. 523–525 (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2013): 524.

(¹³) In this regard Utpaladeva, while indebted to Somānanda (see above, note 4), also owes much to Sadyojyotis (c.675–725 □) a Śaiva author who belongs to the dualistic tradition of the Śaiva Siddhānta. On this influence see Isabelle Ratié, “Utpaladeva’s Proof of God: On the Purpose of the *Īśvarasiddhi*,” in *Utpaladeva: Philosopher of Recognition*, ed. B. Bäumer and R. Torella (Delhi: DK Printworld, forthcoming). In both cases, however, Utpaladeva’s endeavor appears far more systematic and encompassing than that of his predecessors.

(¹⁴) In other words, experience that has not been mediated yet by any kind of conceptual thought.

(¹⁵) Admittedly, one of the four parts of Utpaladeva’s treatise, the “Part on Scriptures” (*Āgamādhikāra*), deals with notions found in Śaiva scriptural sources. However, this part only comes *after* the (much lengthier) sections of the treatise where Utpaladeva claims to establish the truth by relying solely on reason and experience: the *Āgamādhikāra* merely shows a posteriori that the results of Utpaladeva’s demonstrations are compatible with the Śaiva scriptural teachings. See Torella, “Introduction,” in *Utpaladeva, Īśvarapratyabhijñārikā*, □ □, and Ratié, *Le Soi et l’Autre*, 12. It has nonetheless been noted that even within the first two sections of the treatise the “hermeneutical focus” is not “altogether invisible,” particularly in *Īśvarapratyabhijñārikā*, verses 1.5.12–14: see Alexis Sanderson, “A Commentary on the Opening Verses of the *Tantrasāra* of Abhinavagupta,” in *Sāmarasya. Studies in Indian Arts, Philosophy and Interreligious Dialogue in Honour of Bettina Bäumer*, ed. S. Das and E. Furlinger, pp. 79–138 (New Delhi: D.K. Printworld, 2005), 128–130. However, as pointed out in Ratié, *Le Soi et l’Autre*, 526, in this case too Utpaladeva only mentions scriptural sources so as to show that what he has *already* established through other means also happens to be supported by the Śaiva scriptures.

(¹⁶) On these two aspects (phenomenological and dialectical) of Utpaladeva’s method see Ratié, *Le Soi et l’Autre*, 7–10 and 727–728.

(¹⁷) See Kumārila Bhaṭṭa, *Ślokavārttika ... with the Commentary Nyāyaratnākara of Śrī Pārthasārathimīśra*, ed. G. S. Rai (Varanasi: Ratna Publications, 1993), *Ātmavāda* chap., verse 3–4ab: “And [the Buddhist] denial of the self challenges all [Vedic] injunctions without exception For these [injunctions] proclaim that the agent [of the sacrifice] possesses the result [of the sacrifice] in some [future] life, and if there are only

[momentary] cognitions [and no lasting subject, these cognitions] cannot be [both] the agent [of the sacrifice] and the enjoyer [of its result].”

(¹⁸) Recent studies have shown that contrary to what is usually assumed, for Kumārila Bhaṭṭa (6th or 7th century) the most influential representative of Mīmāṃsā, knowing the self is not only useful in that it encourages to perform rites and can constitute an independent path towards liberation. On these little known “Vedāntic” aspects of Kumārila’s work (and the difficulty of interpreting them), see, e.g., Roque Mesquita, “Die Idee der Erlösung bei Kumārila Bhaṭṭa,” *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens* 38 (1994): 451–484; John Taber, “Kumārila the Vedāntin?,” in *Mīmāṃsā and Vedānta: Interaction and Continuity*, ed. J. Bronkhorst, pp. 159–184 (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2007); and Kiyotaka Yoshimizu, “Kumārila’s Reevaluation of the Sacrifice and the Veda from a Vedānta Perspective,” in the same volume, pp. 201–253.

(¹⁹) See the seminal article by Raffaele Torella, “The Pratyabhijñā and the Logical-Epistemological School of Buddhism,” in *Ritual and Speculation in Early Tantrism, Studies in Honor of André Padoux*, ed. T. Goudriaan, pp. 327–345 (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992); and Isabelle Ratié, “The Dreamer and the Yogin: On the Relationship between Buddhist and Śaiva Idealisms,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 73, no. 3 (2010): 437–478.

(²⁰) See, e.g., Sanderson, “Purity and Power”; and Alexis Sanderson, “Meaning in Tantric Ritual,” in *Essais sur le rituel III. Colloque du centenaire de la section des Sciences religieuses de l’École Pratique des Hautes Études*, ed. A. M. Blondeau and K. Schipper, pp. 15–96 (Louvain/Paris: Peeters, 1995), 78–87.

(²¹) See Ratié, *Le Soi et l’Autre*, 60–62 and 254–257; and Isabelle Ratié, *Une critique bouddhique du Soi selon la Mīmāṃsā. Présentation, édition critique et traduction de la Mīmāṃsakaparikalpitātmapariṅśā de Śāntarakṣita (Tattvasaṅgraha 222–284 et Pañjikā)* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2014), 210–218.

(²²) See Madeleine Biarreau, “L’Ātman dans le commentaire de Śabaravāmin,” in *Mélanges d’indianisme à la mémoire de Louis Renou* (Paris: De Boccard, 1968), 109–125.

(²³) See Govardhan P. Bhatt, *The Basic Ways of Knowing: An In-Depth Study of Kumārila’s Contribution to Indian Epistemology*, rev. ed. (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1989), chap. 12; John Taber, “The Mīmāṃsā Theory of Self-Recognition,” *Philosophy East and West* 40, no. 1 (1990): 35–57; and Ratié, *Une critique bouddhique*.

(²⁴) On Kumārila’s arguments against the existence of God, see, e.g., Helmut Krasser, “Dharmakīrti’s and Kumārila’s Refutations of the Existence of God: A Consideration of

Their Chronological Order,” in *Dharmakīrti’s Thought and Its Impact on Indian and Tibetan Philosophy*, ed. S. Katsura, pp. 215–224 (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1999). Naiyāyika authors have elaborated various strategies to defend God’s cosmic agency against Kumārila’s critique. On these strategies, see, e.g., George Chemparathy, *An Indian Rational Theology: Introduction to Udayana’s Nyāyakusumāñjali* (Vienna: de Nobili Research Library 1, 1972); and Helmut Krasser, *Śāṅkaranandanānās Īśvarāpākaraṇasaṅkṣepa, Teil 2: Annotierte Übersetzungen und Studie zur Auseinandersetzung über die Existenz Gottes* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2002). On Utpaladeva’s response to Kumārila’s arguments see John Taber, “Utpaladeva’s Īśvarasiddhi,” *Adyar Library Bulletin* 52 (1986): 106–137; and Ratié, “Utpaladeva’s Proof of God.”

(²⁵) This transformation also affects the very definition of self-recognition; on the divergences between Kumārila and Utpaladeva in this regard see Ratié, *Le Soi et l’Autre*, 257–261.

(²⁶) Dignāga, *Pramāṇasamuccaya, Chapter 1. A Hypothetical Reconstruction of the Sanskrit Text*, ed. E. Steinkellner. Available online at www.oeaw.ac.at/ias/Mat/dignaga_PS_1.pdf, verse 44: “And if the person undergoes a modification when a cognition arises, [(s)he] is impermanent; but if [(s)he] does not undergo any modification, [stating] that the self is a knower is incorrect.” On this argument, see, e.g., Masaaki Hattori, *Dignāga, On Perception, Being the Pratyakṣapariccheda of Dignāga’s Pramāṇasamuccaya* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968), 69 and 171–172.

(²⁷) See Abhinavagupta, *Vimarśinī*, vol. 1, 202, where the freedom (*svātantrya*) of consciousness is defined as “the fact of not just resting in [a state of] being merely oneself, contrary to insentient [objects]” (*ātmamātratāyām eva jaḍavad aviśrāntatvam*). See also, e.g., Abhinavagupta, *Vimarśinī*, vol. 1, 212, where freedom is said to be “the existence as the Great Lord” (*māheśvarya*) “because it differs from [the way in which] insentient [entities] exist while having a single, delimited nature (*pariniṣṭhitaikarūpajaḍabhāvavailakṣaṇyāt*).”

(²⁸) On the Naiyāyika proof of the self based on memory, see, e.g., Claus Oetke, *‘Ich’ und das Ich. Analytische Untersuchungen zur buddhistisch-brahmanischen Ātmankontroverse* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1988), 254–260 and 345–360; and Jonardon Ganeri, “Self-Intimation, Memory and Personal Identity,” *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 27 (1999): 469–483. On Utpaladeva’s use of the argument of memory see Isabelle Ratié, “La Mémoire et le Soi dans l’Īśvarapratyabhijñāvimarśinī d’Abhinavagupta,” *Indo-Iranian Journal* 49 (2006): 39–103; and Torella, “Studies ... Part II.” For other proofs of the self

adduced by Naiyāyikas (many of which appear in the Pratyabhijñā treatise), see, e.g., Arindam Chakrabarti, “The Nyāya Proofs for the Existence of the Soul,” *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 10 (1982): 211–238; Arindam Chakrabarti, “I Touch What I Saw,” *Phenomenological Research* 52, no. 1 (1992): 103–116; Karin Preisendanz, *Studien zu Nyāyasūtra III.1 mit dem Nyāyatattvāloka Vācaspati Miśras II*, 2 vols. (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1994); and Jonardon Ganeri, “Cross-Modality and the Self,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 61, no. 3 (2000): 639–657.

(²⁹) See above, notes 23 and 24.

(³⁰) On the Buddhist refutation of the memory argument, see, e.g., James Duerlinger, *Indian Buddhist Theories of Persons: Vasubandhu’s ‘Refutation of the Theory of a Self’* (London/New York: Routledge, 2003), 96–98 and 238–251; and Vincent Eltschinger and Isabelle Ratié, *Self, No-Self, and Salvation: Dharmakīrti’s Critique of the Notions of Self and Person* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2013), 173–186.

(³¹) See Utpaladeva, *Īśvarapratyabhijñārikā*, verse 1.3.1: “[This might be] true; but even if[, as you Buddhists claim,] the memory cognition is produced by the residual trace [left by] the past experience, [since this memory cognition] is confined to itself, it cannot make [us] know the past experience.” On Abhinavagupta’s explanations see Ratié, *Le Soi et l’Autre*, 63–65 and 110–112.

(³²) On this famous Buddhist notion (interpreted in sometimes strikingly different ways by modern scholars), see, e.g., Paul Williams, *The Reflexive Nature of Awareness. A Tibetan Madhyamaka Defense* (Richmond: Curzon Press, 1998); Dan Arnold, “Is *Svasaṃvitti* Transcendental? A Tentative Reconstruction Following Śāntarakṣita,” *Asian Philosophy* 15, no. 1 (2005): 77–111; Zhihua Yao, *The Buddhist Theory of Self-Cognition* (London/New York: Routledge, 2005); Dan Arnold, “Self-Awareness (*svasaṃvitti*) and Related Doctrines of Buddhists Following Dignāga: Philosophical Characterizations of Some of the Main Issues,” *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 38 (2010): 323–378; Birgit Kellner, “Self-Awareness (*svasaṃvedana*) in Dignāga’s *Pramāṇasamuccaya* and *-vṛtti*: A Close Reading,” *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 38 (2010): 203–231; and Birgit Kellner, “Self-Awareness (*svasaṃvedana*) and Infinite Regresses: A Comparison of Arguments by Dignāga and Dharmakīrti,” *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 39 (2011): 411–426.

(³³) See Torella, “Studies ... Part III” and Ratié, *Le Soi et l’Autre*, 112–124.

(³⁴) See Utpaladeva, *Īśvarapratyabhijñārikā*, verse 1.4.4: “For the past experience is not manifest in a memory in the same way as an object [is manifest, i.e.,] separately [from

the subject], since [when we remember, this experience] is manifest as resting on the self in the form ‘I once experienced’.” See also *Īśvarapratyabhijñākārikā*, verse 1.4.6, which explains that even when we talk about, e.g., “our past experience,” this does not qualify as a successful objectification of our past awareness, since it is nothing but another way (and according to Abhinavagupta, a rather convoluted one) of expressing the subjective awareness that originally takes the form “I experienced”: “Even that which is remembered [in the form] ‘I had *this perception* in this way’[, i.e.] as [seemingly] distinct [from the subject], is a mere semantic analysis of [the original expression] of memory [which takes the subjective form] ‘I perceived’.” For Abhinavagupta’s explanations of these two verses see Ratié, *Le Soi et l’Autre*, 222–229.

(³⁵) See Utpaladeva, *Īśvarapratyabhijñākārikā*, verse 1.3.2a: “A cognition cannot be known by another [cognition since it is] only self-manifest [and cannot be manifested by anything else].” For Abhinavagupta’s explanation see Ratié, *Le Soi et l’Autre*, 115–118.

(³⁶) Utpaladeva, *Vivṛti* in Torella, “A Fragment,” 146.

(³⁷) Utpaladeva, *Īśvarapratyabhijñākārikā*, verse 1.3.1 (see above, note 32). See also *Īśvarapratyabhijñākārikā*, verse 1.7.6.

(³⁸) See Utpaladeva, *Īśvarapratyabhijñākārikā*, verse 1.3.6: “If [things were] as [the Buddhists claim, then] everybody’s [everyday] life, which results from [a constant activity of] synthesis of [our various] cognitions, should perish[, because these cognitions would be] separated from each other [and] unable to know each other.”

(³⁹) Abhinavagupta, *Vimarśinī*, vol. 1, 288–289. On the more complex inferential reasoning presented in chap. 1.3 of the *Pratyabhijñā* treatise see Ratié, *Le Soi et l’Autre*, 109–168; on the relationship between the two arguments see Ratié, *Le Soi et l’Autre*, 245–251.

(⁴⁰) Recent studies have been debating whether Indian Buddhist idealism is ontologically committed (i.e., actually denies the existence of any external world) or simply emphasizes the impossibility of ever gaining any epistemic access to such an external world. On this debate see, e.g., Dan Arnold, “Buddhist Idealism, Epistemic and Otherwise: Thoughts on the Alternating Perspectives of Dharmakīrti,” *Sophia* 47 (2008): 3–28; Birgit Kellner and John Taber, “Studies in Yogācāra-Vijñānavāda Idealism I: The Interpretation of Vasubandhu’s *Viṃśikā*,” *Études Asiatiques/Asiatische Studien* 68, no. 3 (2014): 709–756; and Isabelle Ratié, “On the Distinction between Epistemic and Metaphysical Buddhist Idealisms: A Śaiva Perspective,” *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 42 (2014): 353–375.

(⁴¹) On the difficulty of determining the identity of these Sautrāntikas in medieval Indian philosophical literature, see Isabelle Ratié, “Can One Prove that Something Exists Beyond Consciousness? A Śaiva Criticism of the Sautrāntika Inference of External Objects,” *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 39, no. 4-5 (2011): 479-501, 481n4. In any case the theory commonly ascribed to these Sautrāntikas in and after Dharmakīrti’s works seems to have been vigorously defended by the Kashmiri Buddhist philosopher Dharmottara (c.740-800 CE) as shown by Abhinavagupta’s testimony: see Lawrence McCrea and Parimal Patil, *Buddhist Philosophy of Language in India: Jñānaśrīmitra on Exclusion* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 141-142n71; and Lawrence McCrea, “Abhinavagupta as Intellectual Historian of Buddhism,” in *Around Abhinavagupta. Towards an Intellectual History of Kashmir from the 9th to the 11th Centuries (Proceedings of the International Conference held in Leipzig, 8-10/6/2013)*, ed. E. Fanco and I. Ratié (forthcoming).

(⁴²) On Utpaladeva’s critique of the Sautrāntikas’ position see Ratié, “Can One Prove.”

(⁴³) See Ratié, “Dreamer,” and “On the Distinction.”

(⁴⁴) See Ratié, “Dreamer,” 460-464.

(⁴⁵) See Ratié, “Dreamer,” 453-460.

(⁴⁶) See Ratié, “Dreamer,” 467-468 and 472.

(⁴⁷) Abhinavagupta, *Vimarśinī*, vol. 2, 264-265; see Isabelle Ratié, “‘A Five-Trunked, Four-Tusked Elephant Is Running in the Sky’: How Free Is Imagination According to Utpaladeva and Abhinavagupta?,” *Études Asiatiques/Asiatische Studien* 64, no. 2 (2010): 341-385, esp. 344 and 358.

(⁴⁸) See John Taber, “Kumārila’s Refutation of the Dreaming Argument: The *Nirālambanavāda-adhikaraṇa*,” in *Studies in Mīmāṃsā: Dr. Mandan Mishra Felicitation Volume*, ed. R. C. Dwivedi, pp. 27-52 (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1994); and Ratié, “Five-Trunked, Four-Tusked Elephant.”

(⁴⁹) On Utpaladeva’s examination of the freedom of imagination (which was mainly conducted in the lost *Vivṛti*, but the gist of which can be retrieved from Abhinavagupta’s commentaries) see Ratié, “Five-Trunked, Four-Tusked Elephant,” 353-361.

(⁵⁰) See Utpaladeva, *Īśvarapratyabhijñākārikā*, verse 1.5.11: “[The wise] know that the nature of manifestation is a [dynamic] realization (*vimarśa*); otherwise the manifesting [consciousness] (*prakāśa*), while being colored by the objects, would be similar to an insentient [entity] such as a piece of crystal.” On this famous verse and its commentaries,

see, e.g., Harvey Alper, “*Svabhāvam avabhāsasya vimarśam*: Judgment as a Transcendental Category in Utpaladeva’s Śaiva Theology,” *Adyar Library Bulletin* 51 (1987): 176–241; and Ratié, *Le Soi et l’Autre*, 495–508. Note that Harvey Alper’s translation of *vimarśa* as “judgement” and his understanding of the notion as denoting first and foremost the consciousness of objects rather than self-awareness are problematic: *vimarśa* is the pre-conceptual and pre-reflexive act through which consciousness is always already grasping *itself* as having a specific form (whether objective or subjective), and it can only grasp itself in an objective form because all cognitive events ultimately rest on the subjective realization in which consciousness apprehends itself as a pure “I” (see Ratié, *Le Soi et l’Autre*, 160n115).

(⁵¹) On this crucial influence (and the divergence in this respect between Somānanda and Utpaladeva) see Torella, “Introduction,” in Utpaladeva, *Īśvarapratyabhijñākārikā*: □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □; and Raffaele Torella, “From an Adversary to the Main Ally: the Place of Bhartṛhari in the Kashmirian Shaiva Advaita,” in *The Grammatical Traditions of Kashmir: Essays in Memory of Pandit Dinanath Yaksh*, ed. M. Kaul and A. Akujkar, pp. 508–524 (Delhi: DK Printworld, 2008).

(⁵²) For a useful introduction to this famous dichotomy in the works of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti and its evolution among later Buddhist epistemologists, see McCrea and Patil, *Buddhist Philosophy of Language*, 9–34.

(⁵³) See Abhinavagupta, *Vimarśinī*, vol. 1, 205–206, where the subjective realization of consciousness as “I” is described as “an internal discourse” (*antarabhilāpa*) “independent of semantic convention” (*saṅketanirapekṣa*) and “similar to a nod turned inward” (*antarmukhaśironirdeśaprakhyā*). See also Abhinavagupta, *Vimarśinī*, vol. 2, pp. 260–261, where Abhinavagupta, while explaining that the expression inherent in realization is devoid of semantic convention, notes that this realization is “comparable to such [silent gestures] as pointing with a finger” (*aṅgulinirdeśādiprakhyā*).

(⁵⁴) See Utpaladeva, *Īśvarapratyabhijñākārikā*, verse 1.5.19: “Even at the [very] moment of immediate perception, there is a realization (*vimarśa*); otherwise how could such [activities] as running occur, [whereas without such a realization they would be] devoid of any synthesis?” For Abhinavagupta’s explanations of this argument (that Utpaladeva had also put forward in a slightly different form in his lost *Vivṛti* on *Īśvarapratyabhijñākārikā*, verse 1.5.10, as can be gathered from Abhinavagupta, *Vivṛtivismarśinī*, vol. 2, 169–170), see Ratié, *Le Soi et l’Autre*, 163–167 and 491–493. Note that the example of running is reminiscent of Somānanda’s *Śivadṛṣṭi*, 1.9–11ab (quoted by Abhinavagupta, *Vivṛtivismarśinī*, vol. 2, 170).

(⁵⁵) See Utpaladeva, *Īśvarapratyabhijñākārikā*, verse 1.5.10: “Moreover, there is necessarily a manifestation of all objects [as] existing within the Lord’s self; [for] without this [manifestation], the realization [consisting in] desire cannot occur.” For Abhinavagupta’s explanations see Ratié, *Le Soi et l’Autre*, 481–493. This argument based on the necessity of avoiding an infinite regress in creative desire appeared in a lost Śaiva work quoted by Abhinavagupta in this connection, the *Nareśvaraviveka* (see *Vivṛtivimarsinī*, vol. 2, 167; Ratié, *Le Soi et l’Autre*, 487–488). On the difficulty of determining its authorship and the hypothesis (which remains to be substantiated) that Utpaladeva might have composed it, see Lyne Bansat-Boudon and Kamaleshadatta Tripathi, *An Introduction to Tantric Philosophy: The Paramārthasāra of Abhinavagupta with the Commentary of Yogarāja* (London: Routledge, 2011), 186n823.

(⁵⁶) *Sarvaśaktivilatā* (Somānanda, *Śivadṛṣṭi*, verse 1.11b). As noted in Torella, “Introduction” to Utpaladeva, *Īśvarapratyabhijñākārikā*, ¶ 34 and in Nemeč, *Ubiquitous Śiva*, 115n115, Somānanda in turn derives this idea from Śaiva scriptural sources, in particular the *Vijñānabhairava*. Similarly, Utpaladeva inherits from earlier Śaiva sources (Somānanda’s *Śivadṛṣṭi* and the Krama tradition) the idea that every perception involves at its very beginning an awareness of the identity between the object and the subject: see Ratié, “Dreamer,” 467nn88–89.

(⁵⁷) See Utpaladeva, *Īśvarapratyabhijñākārikā*, verse 1.5.15: “For this very reason, [consciousness] must make itself an object of knowledge; nonetheless, the object of knowledge has no separate existence—[otherwise] the freedom [of consciousness] would be ruined, because of the intentionality [of consciousness] regarding this [object].” For a translation and analysis of Abhinavagupta’s commentaries on it see Ratié, “Dreamer,” 469–472.

(⁵⁸) Jean-Paul Sartre, *L’Être et le néant. Essai d’ontologie phénoménologique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1943), 28.

(⁵⁹) Edmund Husserl, *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie, Erstes Buch: Allgemeine Einführung in die reine Phänomenologie*, ed. W. Biemel, Hua III (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1950), §41.

(⁶⁰) Abhinavagupta, *Vimarsinī*, vol. 1, 215. The translation given here is a slightly modified (and shortened) version of Ratié, “Dreamer,” 470–471.

(⁶¹) See above, note 28.

(⁶²) See Raffaele Torella, “A Fragment,” 144–145. In this fragment Utpaladeva confronts a Buddhist opponent who deems that the ability of cognitions to manifest themselves does

not entail the impossibility for them to be manifested at times by other cognitions—a position that is somewhat reminiscent of Dignāga’s attitude, since the latter, while defending the thesis that every cognition is endowed with self-awareness, admits that a cognition can be known through another in memory for instance. See Ratié, *Le Soi et l’Autre*, 120–124.

(⁶³) See Ratié, *Une critique bouddhique*, 216–217. Śāntarakṣita defines the self-awareness characterizing every cognition as the sentience or spontaneity (*ajāḍatva*) that separates conscious entities from inert, passive objects, and he might be the first Buddhist philosopher to do so in such an explicit manner; see Williams, *Reflexive Nature*, 25, and James Blumenthal, *The Ornament of the Middle Way: A Study of the Madhyamaka Thought of Śāntarakṣita* (Ithaca/Boulder: Snow Lion Publications, 2004), 220–221. Note, however, that Śāntarakṣita mentions this point very briefly and that Kamalaśīla does not elaborate much on it, which seems to indicate that the idea was already familiar to their readers.

(⁶⁴) See above, notes 35–37.

(⁶⁵) Thus Śabara claims that although the self is “the object of self-awareness” (*svasaṃvedya*), “it cannot be perceived by someone else,” and that “the person apprehends him-/herself but cannot show [him-/herself] to someone else”: see Śabara, *Mīmāṃsābhāṣya 1.1.1–5*, in *Materialen zur ältesten Erkenntnislehre der Karmamīmāṃsā*, ed. E. Frauwallner, pp. 7–61 (Vienna: Hermann Böhlau Nachf., 1968), 56–57. Kumārila explains the passage by saying that whereas “it is by itself that the self is the object of a manifestation” (*Ślokavārttika, Ātmavāda* chap., verse 142c), the self of others, since it is not directly manifest, must be inferred. See Kumārila, *Ślokavārttika, Ātmavāda* chap., verse 145: “[We] declare that the knowledge of [the existence] of the others’ Selves [results] from an inference based on the examination of [their] actions, [since we] see [from our own experience as knowing and acting subjects that actions] cannot occur without [being preceded by] cognitions [that belong to] a self.”

(⁶⁶) On this fascinating yet little studied work (only preserved in its entirety in Tibetan translation), see, e.g., Hidenori Kitagawa, “A Refutation of Solipsism (Annotated Translation of the *Santānāntarasiddhi*),” *Journal of the Greater India Society* 14, no. 1/2 (1955): 1–32; Shoryu Katsura, “Dharmakīrti’s Proof of the Existence of Other Minds,” in *Pramāṇakīrtiḥ: Papers Dedicated to Ernst Steinkellner on the Occasion of His 70th Birthday*, ed. B. Kellner et al. (Vienna: Arbeitskreis für tibetische und buddhistische Studien Universität Wien, 2007), 407–422; and Junjie Chu, “Sanskrit Fragments of Dharmakīrti’s *Santānāntarasiddhi**,” in *Religion and Logic in Buddhist Philosophical Analysis. Proceedings of the Fourth International Dharmakīrti Conference, Vienna*,

August 23–27, 2005, ed. H. Krasser et al., pp. 33–42 (Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2011).

(⁶⁷) The dualist Rāmakaṇṭha as well as Abhinavagupta quote fragments of it; and Abhinavagupta discusses it at length. See Isabelle Ratié, “Otherness in the Pratyabhijñā Philosophy,” *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 35 (2007): 313–370; *Le Soi et l’Autre*, chap. 8; and “Some Hitherto Unknown Fragments.”

(⁶⁸) See Ratié, *Une critique bouddhique*, 62n160.

(⁶⁹) See Abhinavagupta, *Vivṛtivimarsinī*, vol. 1, 101: “By [saying that it] ‘is guessed’ (*ūhyate*), [Utpaladeva suggests] that the consciousness of others is not merely the object of an inference In this [awareness of the existence of other consciousnesses] there is also, in part, an activity of the senses, and therefore a guess involves an immediate perception.”

(⁷⁰) The Śaivas thus identify recognition (whether of the others as conscious entities or of oneself as Śiva) with what the Buddhist epistemologists call an inference resting on “a reason that is a nature” (*svabhāvahetu*) as opposed to an inference resting on “a reason that is an effect” (*kāryahetu*), and they explain that the whole Pratyabhijñā treatise is a *svabhāvahetu*-based reasoning. But they also insist that the so-called *svabhāvahetu* inference is not strictly speaking an inference (since it does not meet what the Buddhists themselves present as a basic criterion for any means of knowledge, namely bringing about a *new* knowledge). In this connection Abhinavagupta often reminds his readers that even the Buddhist epistemologist Dharmottara acknowledges this somewhat ambiguous status of the *svabhāvahetu* inference when he states that it does not establish the existence of a “real thing” (*vastu*) but merely brings about a “usage” (*vyavahāra*). See Isabelle Ratié, “On Reason and Scripture in the Pratyabhijñā,” in *Scriptural Authority, Reason and Action: Proceedings of a Panel at the 14th World Sanskrit Conference, Kyoto, September 1st–5th 2009*, ed. Vincent Eltschinger and Helmut Krasser, pp. 375–454 (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2013), 428–430.

(⁷¹) *Idantāvimarsāsahiṣṇuḥ*–Abhinavagupta, *Vivṛtivimarsinī*, vol. 1, 106. For a translation of this passage (and others related to it) see Ratié, “Otherness,” 363–364n101.

(⁷²) On this argument and its various interpretations in the Buddhist epistemological tradition, see, e.g., Takashi Iwata, *Sahopalambhaniyama: Struktur und Entwicklung des Schlusses von der Tatsache, daß Erkenntnis und Gegenstand ausschließlich zusammen wahrgenommen werden, auf deren Nichtverschiedenheit*, 2 vols. (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1991); Helmut Krasser, “rNgog lotsāba on the *sahopalambhaniyama* Proof in Dharmakīrti’s *Pramāṇaviniścaya*,” in *Aspects of Buddhism. Proceedings of the*

International Seminar on Buddhist Studies, Liw, 25 June 1994, ed. A. Bareja-Starzynska and M. Mejer, pp. 59–82 (Warsaw: Warsaw University, 1997); and Arnold, “Buddhist Idealism.”

(⁷³) On this Śaiva appropriation of the *sahopalambhaniyama* argument see Ratié, “Dreamer,” 439–445; and “On the Distinction.”

(⁷⁴) In this regard Utpaladeva claims that his argument supersedes the Buddhist idealists’ because the Dharmakīrtian tradition refuses to acknowledge any immediate manifestation (besides pure self-awareness) within concepts, so that it does not have the means to claim that the external object cannot even be conceptualized: see Ratié, “Can One Prove,” 497.

(⁷⁵) On this idea (and Utpaladeva’s explanation of the fact that we are nonetheless capable of *talking* about the external object) see Ratié, “Can One Prove.”

(⁷⁶) See Abhinavagupta, *Vimarśinī*, vol. 1, 272–273: “Therefore in that realm [of imagination], one cannot even imagine (*sambhāvanāpi nāsti*) a dependence [of the imaginary creation] on the already existing creation [that is the perceived universe ...].”

(⁷⁷) See, e.g., Abhinavagupta, *Vimarśinī*, vol. 1, 185: “This freedom of what consists in nothing but consciousness with respect to the phenomenal variety constituting the universe, how is it that [our opponents] do not acknowledge it, [whereas it is] established through [mere] self-awareness (*svasaṃvedanasiddha*)?”

(⁷⁸) Abhinavagupta, *Vimarśinī*, vol. 2, 128 (as edited in Ratié, *Le Soi et l’Autre*, 563).

(⁷⁹) On the Śaiva nondualistic critique of the monistic ontology of Advaita Vedānta see Raffaele Torella’s notes in Utpaladeva, *Īśvarapratyabhijñākārikā*, 186–187; Ratié, *Le Soi et l’Autre*, 668–712; “Five-Trunked, Four-Tusked Elephant,” 363–378; and “*Pāramārthika*”.

(⁸⁰) On the distinction between the Śaiva and Vedāntic notions of play see Ratié, *Le Soi et l’Autre*, 557–562.

(⁸¹) This way of “saving the phenomena” is an important aspect of the Śaiva nondualists’ ontology, and what distinguishes it most clearly from the Advaita Vedāntins’ monism. See, e.g., Ratié, “*Pāramārthika*”; “Five-Trunked, Four-Tusked Elephant,” 363–378, and “An Indian Debate on Optical Reflections and Its Metaphysical Implications: Śaiva Nondualism and the Mirror of Consciousness,” in *Indian Epistemology and Metaphysics*, ed. J. Tuske (London: Bloomsbury, forthcoming).

(⁸²) Abhinavagupta, *Tantrāloka with Commentary by Rājānaka Jayaratha*, vol. 3, ed. M. K. Shāstrī (Bombay: Kashmir Series of Texts and Studies 30, 1921), 9–11 (verse 4.10bd–11, with the correction in Ratié, *Le Soi et l'Autre*, 558).

(⁸³) On this image, pervasive in Śaiva nondualistic sources, see, e.g., Sanderson, “Purity and Power,” 205; Bansat-Boudon and Tripathi, *An Introduction*, 68n258 and 87; Ratié, *Le Soi et l'Autre*, 560n200 and 559; and Nemec, *Ubiquitous Śiva*, 53.

(⁸⁴) On the arguments put forward by the Śaiva nondualists against the Vedāntins in this regard see Ratié, *Le Soi et l'Autre*, 566n211 and 669–680; and “Five-Trunked, Four-Tusked Elephant,” 367. This criticism probably targets the thesis formulated in Maṇḍanamīśra, *Brahmasiddhi & with commentary by Śaṅkhapāṇi*, ed. S. K. Sastri (Madras: Madras Government Oriental Manuscripts Series 4, 1937), 9. On the difficult question of the Śaiva nondualists’ sources for Advaita Vedānta see Ratié, “Five-Trunked, Four-Tusked Elephant,” 365; Bansat-Boudon and Tripathi, *An Introduction*, 8n41; and Ratié, “An Indian Debate,” fn. 90.

(⁸⁵) On the Śaiva authors’ use of words such as *kathaṃcit/kathaṃcana* (literally, “somehow”) meaning “in a prodigious manner”/“in a marvelous (*adbhuta*) way,” see Ratié, *Le Soi et l'Autre*, 565–566n210.

(⁸⁶) From the very beginning of his treatise Utpaladeva explains that although the self is perceived (*dṛṣṭa*) it is not paid attention to (*anupalakṣita*; see Utpaladeva, *Īśvarapratyabhijñārikā*, 1.1.3). On this capacity not to pay attention in aesthetic pleasure or pain, see Ratié, *Le Soi et l'Autre*, 567–568. Note also that according to Abhinavagupta imagination “has as its essence a mental distraction,” *vyākṣepasāra* (*Vimarśinī*, vol. 1, 270).

(⁸⁷) See, e.g., Abhinavagupta, *Vivṛtivismarśinī*, vol. 2, 294, which explains that consciousness identifies with, e.g., a particular body not by really abandoning its nature but merely by “not paying attention” (*anādṛtya*) to it.

(⁸⁸) See Utpaladeva, *Īśvarapratyabhijñārikā*, verses 1.1.2 and 2.3.15–17. See also, e.g., Abhinavagupta, *Vivṛtivismarśinī*, vol. I, 87, explaining that the inferential discourse which constitutes Utpaladeva’s treatise “amounts to nothing but pointing out [something already seen]” (*pradarśanamātrāvaśeṣa*), and that it is similar to the act “which consists in drawing attention [on something] in this way: ‘See! See!’”

(⁸⁹) As shown in Ratié, *Le Soi et l'Autre*, 250, the verse quoted in full in Abhinavagupta, *Vimarśinī*, vol. 1, 130 must have been the first concluding verse of the *Vivṛti* partially

glossed in Abhinavagupta, *Vivṛtivimarsinī*, vol. 3, 404. The verse runs thus: “After having thus reduced to silence through clear arguments those who, denying their [own] self-consciousness, hold this or that thesis, [I] have made obvious the true nature of the subject [so far] stained (*kaluṣīkṛta*) by them.”

⁽⁹⁰⁾ See Alex Watson, *The Self's Awareness of Itself: Bhaṭṭa Rāmakaṇṭha's Arguments against the Buddhist Doctrine of No-Self* (Vienna: de Nobili Research Library 32, 2006), 90-91.

⁽⁹¹⁾ See, e.g., Ratié, *Une critique bouddhique*, 15-16; on the idea that the self is the agent because only he has a (free) will to act, see, e.g., Elisa Freschi, “Desidero ergo Sum: the Subject as the Desirous One in Mīmāṃsā,” *Rivista di Studi Orientali* 80 (2007): 51-61.

⁽⁹²⁾ See, e.g., Abhinavagupta, *Vimarsinī*, vol. 1, 32-33: “But we will say [later in the treatise] that consciousness, when talked about as the object of a concept, is not consciousness in the ultimate sense, because that which has to do with the status of an object of knowledge is a created [entity and not the creating consciousness itself].... So one must make effort to avoid as much as possible the stain which degrades [consciousness] inasmuch as it lets it fall down to the status of an object of knowledge ... ; for obviously, when teaching it is impossible to avoid entirely the objectification of [consciousness].”

⁽⁹³⁾ See, e.g., Abhinavagupta, *Vivṛtivimarsinī*, vol. 3, 167: “But [we] see that even [if we have recourse] to countless demonstrations [showing] that the usage [of the word ‘Lord’ with respect to ourselves is valid, some] people remain forever faithless as to the identity of [their] self with the Great Lord! [To this Utpaladeva replies in his *Vivṛti*:] True”

⁽⁹⁴⁾ On grace in Śaivism and the different understandings of this term in dualistic and nondualistic circles see Sanderson, “Meaning in Tantric Ritual,” 25-26, 33-34, 39-40, 45-46, and 76-77; and the definition of *anugraha* in *Tāntrikābhidhānakośa: A Dictionary of Technical Terms from Hindu Tantric Literature*, vol. 1, ed. H. Brunner, G. Oberhammer, and A. Padoux (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2000), 120-121. See also Bettina Bäumer, “Grace,” in *The Variegated Plumage: Encounters with Indian Philosophy*, ed. N. B. Patil and M. Kaul (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2007), 154-159; Christopher Wallis, “The Descent of Power: Possession, Mysticism and Initiation in the Śaiva Theology of Abhinavagupta,” *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 36, no. 2 (2008): 247-295; and Ernst Furlinger, *The Touch of Śakti: A Study in Non-dualistic Trika Śaivism of Kashmir* (New Delhi: DK Printworld, 2009), 79-120.

⁽⁹⁵⁾ See, e.g., Abhinavagupta, *Vivṛtivimarsinī*, vol. 3, 183: “But it is only due to the Lord that despite countless efforts, recognition does not occur in someone.”

that it is difficult to determine on this sole basis whether Śāṅkaranandana was responding to Utpaladeva.

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