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No Outside, No Inside: Duality, Reality and Vasubandhu's Illusory Elephant

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Some of the basic terminology of Yogācāra philosophy needs reevaluation. Whereas commentaries almost universally gloss the term dvaya *('duality') with some version of the phrase* grāhyaṃ grāhakaṃ ca *(lit. 'grasped and grasper', but usually translated as 'subject and object'), in fact this gloss is absent from the earliest strata. The term and its gloss are derived from separate streams of Yogācāra reasoning—one from discussions of linguistic conceptualization and the other from discussions of perception. Once we see that these two are distinct, it becomes clear that the commentarial literature asserts their identity in order to philosophically unify Yogācāra thought. One upshot of this is that even in this later assertion 'duality' refers not to the distinction between internal and external reality (as in 'textbook' Yogācāra), but to the falsely projected distinction between mental subjects and mental objects.*

Introduction

Current scholarship often conflates two quite different philosophical positions in Yogācāra: the denial of *duality* (*dvaya*) and the denial of real external objects (*bāhyārtha* or *bhūtārtha*).[1] It is easy to understand why these are often confused. The 'two' of the duality denied is almost universally glossed in the Sanskrit commentaries with some version of the phrase *grāhyaṃ grāhakaṃ ca*[2]—which literally means 'grasper and grasped', but is usually understood as object and subject, and consequently exterior and interior. It seems logical to say that if there are no external objects, then there is no 'object' side of the subject/object divide.[3] Under such an interpretation, denying duality is simply another way of asserting that there is only subjectivity. This interpretation also makes sense of the well-known

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terms 'representation only' (*vijñaptimātra*) and 'mind only' (*cittamātra*), both of which seem to indicate a view of the universe according to which external objects do not exist but their subjective mental correlates do.[4] This general picture of Yogācāra is the dominant one, though it has come under fire in recent years for its advocates' tendency to classify Yogācāra as a form of idealism. I believe that this view indeed needs correction, but I do not think that the problem lies in the notion that Yogācāra is idealism.

Instead, as I will argue here, this picture is mistaken because at a basic level it fails to note the proper philosophical context in which the phrase *grāhyaṃ grāhakaṃ ca* came to be a standard gloss of the term *dvaya*. In truth, the phrase *grāhyaṃ grāhakaṃ ca* as a gloss of *dvaya*—ubiquitous among the commentaries—is absent from the earliest strata of Yogācāra texts. The term and its gloss are derived from separate streams of reasoning—the former from discussions of linguistic conceptualization and the latter from discussions of perception. My goal in this paper is to trace out the separate meanings of each of these two distinct concepts, and thereby to attempt to recapture the philosophical import of the commentarial decision to assert their identity. As I will argue, the standard picture of Yogācāra's denial of duality misreads the positions of early thinkers such as Vasubandhu and Asaṅga because it accepts a philosophical unification without properly understanding the two distinct concepts combined in the standard model. First, it fails to understand that the grasper/grasped denial—a denial of the functionality of perception—denies subjectivity along with objectivity, *internal as well as external* reality. Second, it fails to recognize that the denial of duality fundamentally consists in a denial of *the entire concept of reality* as ordinarily conceived—or, to say the same thing, it is a denial of any and all products of conceptual-linguistic construction.

A second reason for the slippage between the denial of duality and the denial of external reality mentioned above is that the two-ness of 'duality' being denied by the Yogācāra resembles the well-known Cartesian two-ness called 'dualism'. Cartesian dualism divides reality into mind and matter. When Yogācāra philosophers say that what we ordinarily take to be external objects are only mental representations, it is only natural to take this as a denial of the material in favor of the mental. Although I do not take the similarity as far as other interpreters, I consider this likeness to Western idealism a useful parallel. Indeed, I will argue below that there is no reason not to accept that 'representation only' (*vijñaptimātra*) signifies a wholesale denial of physical 'form' (*rūpa*) as a possible designation for reality.[5] For Vasubandhu, as we will see, a proper understanding of duality is premised upon a rejection of physicality. This will leave no room for anything that might be considered 'external'. Yet what I mainly hope to show is that the 'grasper/grasped' doctrine of non-duality, far from being principally about the denial of external reality, is in fact a version of the traditional Buddhist denial of the 'internal' self. From this perspective, to deny duality is to deny (1) the erroneous belief in the self that we naturally derive from our ordinary reliance upon sensation and (2) the erroneous belief in existence and non-existence that we naturally

derive from our belief in misleading concepts and language. Duality so understood represents a common thread running through our ordinary conceptions of sensation, physicality, existence, and the personal self.

This means that even if Yogācāra can be reasonably termed anti-dual*ism*, this denial of the dualism of mental *vs.* physical is *not* what is being denied in the non-duality of grasper and grasped. Such is evident even in the simple fact that traditionally, *both grasper and grasped consist primarily in elements of physical form*. These terms most centrally refer, respectively, to the six sensory organs and the six sensory 'fields' (*viṣaya*) or objects—all but two of which are counted as *dharmas* of physical form.[6] To deny grasper and grasped is thus to deny the full apparatus of sensory contact. Yes, this includes and begins with a denial of what we take to be external reality (*bāhyārtha*); but more importantly, this first denial leads to and culminates in a denial of what we take to be internal reality: The sense organs that are the basis for our false imagination of the self (*ādhyātmikāyatana*). What makes this good Buddhism, then, instead of nihilistic solipsism, is that subjectivity must be denied along with objectivity, and an indescribable but still somehow 'real' reality awaits recuperation on the far side of enlightenment.

* * *

The position I have just summarized requires elucidation and proof. The nature of 'duality' touches upon many themes in Yogācāra thought, and I will not attempt a comprehensive study of the term. Instead, I will draw upon a number of Yogācāra texts in order to describe what I take to be Vasubandhu's distinctive articulation of the nature of duality and his application of duality to the figure of the illusory elephant in his mature Vijñaptimātra work, the *Trisvabhāvanirdeśa* (TSN).[7] I will argue that Vasubandhu was aware of the danger of conflating the denial of external reality with the denial of duality (a danger that comes with the ubiquitous gloss of duality as grasper/grasped), and so employed the TSN's magical elephant figure so as to prevent exactly the confusion that besets contemporary scholarship.

Unfortunately, despite Vasubandhu's care and precision, we have not properly understood the significance of the TSN's magically created elephant. It is easy to have missed it. He used a figure of speech whose full meaning seems to have been lost in time. Modern interpreters have no means of knowing how Vasubandhu believed a mantra, a yantra, and a piece of wood could create the illusion of an elephant. Nonetheless, although the trick is lost, Vasubandhu and other Yogācāra authors have left evidence of their understanding. I will begin, therefore, with a look at a passage from the *Mahāyānasaṃgraha* (MS) of Asaṅga that analyzes the meaning and purpose of a variety of comparisons (*upamā*). Vasubandhu's MS commentary, the *Mahāyānasaṃgraha-bhāṣya* (MSBh) then provides further instruction, not only for its direct reinterpretation of the relevant figures, but also because it points us in the direction of the interpretation of figures contained in the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra-bhāsya* (MSABh).[8] A close look at select passages of the MSABh will enable us to understand just what Vasubandhu intends in his TSN figure. The surprising conclusion of this section (Part 1) is that Vasubandhu's elephant is intended not

as a figure for the illusory nature of external reality, but as a figure for the illusory nature of the physical body.

In Part 2, then, I discuss the concept of 'duality' more directly and attempt to understand Vasubandhu's application of this concept to the elephant figure. Here is where I argue that the definition of 'duality' as 'grasper and grasped' is a later synthesis imposed upon previous notions of duality—a concept that had once been more commonly associated with discursive oppositions in the dharma such as 'conditioned and unconditioned' and 'illusion and reality'. I do not believe that those who redefined duality as exclusively grasper and grasped had any intention of effacing or demoting this more fundamental conception. Instead, Vasubandhu's TSN, drawing upon the MSA, self-consciously develops the magical elephant figure into an articulate combination of previously separate doctrines in the term 'non-duality'. As I have expressed above, this view ultimately draws a straight connecting line through ordinary notions of perception, physicality, existence and selfhood.

In brief, I will argue as follows: To suggest that the physical body is false—the main point of the illusory elephant figure—is to highlight the illusory nature of sensation. The original comparison of this illusory characteristic of sensation to 'duality', understood as conceptual/linguistic bifurcation, is quite obviously figurative. The point is to say that conceptual/linguistic constructions are just as illusory as we know perception can be. Once duality is defined as 'grasper and grasped', however, there is a new emphasis on reading the figure for its exemplification of the falsity of sensation itself. Indeed, the terminological pair 'grasper and grasped' basically refers to the twosome of sensory organ and sensory object. *Yet even in this sensory transmutation the figure is still used to describe the illusory nature of the same basic conceptual/linguistic* '*duality*'. That is, although the illusory elephant is an instance of the erroneous operation of the physical senses, the 'duality' that it figuratively illuminates is still to be understood as exclusively mental: 'Duality' always and only refers to the mental sense organ and its ostensible mental object.

Part 1: The Figurative Significance of the Magical Elephant

A number of scholars have noted the central importance of analogies in Yogācāra thought. Modern scholars have used Yogācāra treatments of dreams, illusions, and other figures as a way of illuminating a number of perplexing concepts and terminologies.[9] Traditional Yogācāra authors also took their analogies as a topic of analysis. Asaṅga's *Mahāyānasaṃgraha* (MS) provides an elegant and fairly precise account of just why the Buddha described 'the dependent nature' (*paratantrasvabhāva*) through a variety of analogies. As Asaṅga writes, explaining a list of eight figures for the dependent nature:

> (MS II.27)[10]
> For what reason is the dependent nature (*paratantrasvabhāva, gźan gyi dbaṅ gi ṅo bo ñid*) said to be like a magical illusion, etc.? In order to turn others away from erroneous doubts about the dependent nature.

For Asaṅga, the purpose of the analogies in question is to meet natural doubts that arise in the face of Yogācāra descriptions of reality. The 'dependent nature' of experience is its nature as described from the perspective of its causes—as Vasubandhu says in the TSN, it is 'dependent' because it is dependent on causal conditions.[11] And, of course, when Yogācāra thought appeals to causes, it is traditionally appealing to mental causes. Experience is explained as the causal result not of the contact of material sensory organs with material sensory objects, but of the ripening of subconscious mental karmic seeds of previous actions into experienced mental events.[12] The natural 'doubts' that arise in the face of such a view are all doubts that experience as we know it *could* arise without the proper apparatus of sensory contact in place. Asaṅga acknowledges the appeal of such doubts, and he explains that the Buddha provided each of several figures of speech in order to counter their distinctive forms.

A few examples will show the specificity of these doubts and the Buddha's skillful methods of countering them through exemplary figures:

> (MS II.27)[13]
>
> 1. Thus, where these others think this, in order to counter the doubt, 'How does a non-existent become a sensory field?' [the Buddha said that the dependent nature was] like a magical illusion.
>
> 2. In order to counter the doubt, 'How do minds and mentalities come about without an object?' [the Buddha said that the dependent nature was] like a mirage.
>
> 3. In order to counter the doubt, 'If there is no object, how are there agreeable and disagreeable experiences?' [the Buddha said that the dependent nature was] like a dream.

Asaṅga understood each figure to provide a counter to a potential doubt. If you are worried that the Yogācāra account of reality is impossible because it claims that sensory fields (*viṣaya*, *spyod yul*) do not exist, the Buddha points to the example of a magical illusion, where the object manifested in the illusion does not exist and yet seems to be perceived.[14] If you are worried that the Yogācāra account fails because with no objects (*artha*, *don*) there can be no mental events that are ordinarily directed toward objects, the Buddha points to the example of a mirage, which occasions numerous mental events directed toward a nonexistent object. If you are worried that the Yogācāra account fails because with no objects there can be no opportunity for pleasant or unpleasant experiences, the Buddha points to the example of a dream, in which one has the opportunity for a full range of experiences without the need of any real objects.

Each example thus provides modern readers with two interesting pieces of information. First, it shows us (a) a problem that Asaṅga considered to be solved by the figure of speech at hand. Second, it shows by extrapolation (b) what Asaṅga considered to be the nature of the comparative example. The figure of the dream counters the doubt that (a) real emotional experience can exist without an object. But it only works to counter that doubt because, as Asaṅga must believe, (b) the emotional experiences in a dream are real, though their emotional objects are not. Similarly, the figure of the magical illusion counters the doubt that (a) there can be

sensory experience of 'fields' that do not exist. And it only works to counter that doubt because, as Asaṅga must believe, (b) magical illusions occasion an experience without a corresponding sensory field.

My principal goal here is to understand the illusory elephant, so let us focus further on this second aspect of the magical illusion figure: What does it mean that Asaṅga considered its special figurative significance to be not only that it appears without a real object (*artha*) like a dream or a mirage, but that it appears without a corresponding sensory 'field' (*viṣaya*)? One crucial point that we are of course expected to know is that while *artha* is a general term that refers to a wide range of objects, *viṣaya* is a more restricted technical Ābhidharmika term that refers specifically to the six objects of the sense organs: visible forms, sounds, smells, tastes, tangibles, and mental objects. In the *Abhidharmasamuccaya* (AS) Asaṅga writes that the first ability of the sense organs (*indriya*) is the 'grasping of sensory objects' (*viṣayagrahaṇa*).[15] The *viṣaya*-s together therefore make up the world as it is available to the senses. For this reason they are called the 'external spheres' (*bāhyāyatana*) or 'external components' (*bāhya dhātu*), as opposed to the sensory organs, which make up the 'internal spheres' (*ādhyātmikāyatana*) or, together with the six consciousnesses, the 'internal components' (*ādhyātmika dhātu*).[16]

Asaṅga uses this traditional categorization of the 'internal' and 'external' dharmas in, among other places, MS II.5, where he groups together the 'representations of the body, the body-possessor, and the experiencer' (*dehadehibhoktṛvijñapti*) as 'the six internal components (*ādhyātmika dhātu*, *nang gi khams*), the eye, etc.'[17] Here the 'body' (*deha*, *lus*) refers not to the organ of tangible sense alone, but to a combination of all five physical sense organs (for otherwise the eye would not appear in the list).[18] The representations of the body-possessor (*dehi*, *lus can*) and the experiencer (*bhoktṛ*, *za ba po*) are both classified within the sixth sense organ, the *manas*.[19] These three 'internal' representations (body, body-possessor and experiencer) appear in the MS as the first three of five mistaken representations that appear in the dependent nature—that is, the very representations that are counteracted by the figures listed shortly thereafter.[20] The fourth item in this list of mistaken representations is the six 'external' components, (*bāhya dhātu*, *phyi'i khams*), the *viṣaya*s, called 'the representations of what are to be experienced by them'—i.e. experienced by the internal components.[21] Fifth is 'the representations of the enjoyer of those' (*tadupabhoktṛvijñapti*), which refers to the six consciousnesses.[22]

These five representations are all, of course, 'representation only' in this *vijñapti-mātra* presentation, and the discussion that follows this listing of representations consists in a well known philosophical treatment of this core Yogācāra doctrine (MS II.6–9).[23] I will only summarize the opening section here, though I will have opportunity to return and treat the remainder below. The argument opens with an objector criticizing Asaṅga's claim that all of the things listed (sense organs and external objects, for instance) are only representations and asking for an example (*dṛṣṭānta*, *dper*)—that is, a comparable known instance of things appearing when what appears does not actually exist. The example supplied as a response is a dream, in which various unreal objects appear—including not just the objects

of the five sensory organs (visible forms, sounds, smells, tastes, tangibles) but also medium-sized dry goods such as houses and mountains. Asaṅga points out that any number of similar examples could be adduced, including, among others, the magical illusion. It is clear that Asaṅga thinks the main erroneous doubt countered by all of these figures is the general doubt about the truth of the doctrine of representation-only. The *viṣayas* are only one aspect of the traditional account of reality, and are, in particular, countered by the magical illusion figure.

* * *

Vasubandhu's commentary on Asaṅga's MS, the MSBh, glosses each figure from a somewhat different perspective. Since Vasubandhu also uses the distinction between *ādhyātmika* and *bāhya* in this context, it is worth looking at Vasubandhu's Ābhidharmika discussion of 'internal' and 'external' in his *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* (AKBh). After a brief statement that defines the external and internal *dharmas* as I have just described them above, Vasubandhu entertains and responds to an objection (in Hall's translation):[24]

> (AKBh on I.39)
> When there is no self, how is there anything internal or external? Thought (*citta*) is figuratively called the 'self', because it is the support for the ego. It is said: 'By a self well tamed, the wise man obtains heaven'. And Lord Buddha has spoken elsewhere of the taming of thought: 'The taming of thought is well, thought tamed brings happiness'. It is for this reason, because of their proximity [to the 'self'] in being the basis for thought [which is taken to be the self], that the eye and so on are internal, while form and so on are external because of being fields.

The objector suggests that the idea of something being 'internal', *ādhyātmika*—literally, 'related to the self'—is inappropriate since Buddhists reject the belief in a self. Vasubandhu's response is to acknowledge that there is, indeed, no real difference between internal and external. The term is not to be taken literally, but figuratively. The Buddha himself used the term 'self' to refer, figuratively, to thoughts—in one place saying that 'thought' must be tamed, and in another that 'the self' must be tamed.[25] The internal dharmas, then, are those that form the basis for thoughts of the existence of a self. External dharmas are those that are the basis for other imaginings.

To return to the MS discussion on figures, then, Vasubandhu's MSBh writes:[26]

> (MSBh on MS II.27)
> Suppose one should ask: Intending what purpose did the Bhagavan teach the eight examples? This should be explained [thus]: Regarding the first, the example of an illusion is an antidote to the six internal fields (*ādhyātmikāyatana*, *naṅ gi bdag ñid can gyi skye mched*), the eye, etc. Why? It is taught, 'Like an illusory elephant, although these are not existent, they appear as though through perception'. Why, then, the example of a mirage? Because of its similarity to the things of the inanimate world (*bhājanaloka, snod kyi 'jig rten*), which are like a mirage, where there is the appearance of water by the power of one's desire even though it is not existent. An antidote to the [objects of] experience (*upabhoga*, *ñe bar spyod pa*) such as form, etc., is the example of a dream. Thus, it is taught that as [in] a dream,

> these forms, etc., are experienced as pleasant or unpleasant even though they do not exist.

This analysis of Vasubandhu's agrees with Asaṅga's general point that each figure is intended to counter a particular mistaken belief that might undermine our confidence in Yogācāra. Just what those beliefs are, though, differ significantly (see Table I).[27] While Asaṅga had seen the magical illusion as serving to prove the possibility of sensory experience without real *external* sensory fields, Vasubandhu says that the magical illusion figure counters the *internal* sensory organs (*ādhyātmikāyatana*). While Asaṅga had seen the dream analogy as serving to prove the possibility of pleasant and unpleasant experiences in the absence of objects of experience, Vasubandhu glosses this so as to give the dream analogy the role of countering not the experiences but 'form, etc'.—that is, the external spheres (*bāhyāyatana*) themselves.

What does Vasubandhu's alternative interpretation mean, and where does it come from? One way to draw out the implications of these analyses of figures might be to search through whatever sūtras we have that would likely have been available to Asaṅga and Vasubandhu and attempt to locate the figurative expressions that reflect the ostensible Buddha-intentions they describe. Although a few well-known sūtra passages will occupy our attention below, I have done no systematic study. Yet I believe that Vasubandhu's MSBh and TSN do not draw directly upon scriptures, and instead adopt the approach to the dream and elephant figures articulated in the MSABh.[28] One passage, indeed, seems to be in precise agreement with Vasubandhu's interpretation of magical illusions and dreams:[29]

> (MSABh on MSA 11.30)
> There the dharmas compared to a magical illusion are the six internal spheres (*adhyātmikānyāyatanāni*), because there is a perception with respect to a nonexistent living self. Those compared to a dream are the six external spheres (*bāhyānyāyatanāni*), because there is no substance to their experience.

Just like Vasubandhu's passage, this passage correlates the magical illusion and the dream with the internal and external sense spheres, respectively. Indeed, it is sensible to think that Vasubandhu had this passage (or one like it) in mind when he provided his gloss. Especially interesting, therefore, is the *reasoning* that the MSABh provides for each correlation: Illusions are like internal spheres 'because there is a perception with respect to a nonexistent living self'. That is, just as the internal spheres are mistakenly

Table I Asaṅga's MS and Vasubandhu's MSBh on the reason for the figures of the magical illusion and the dream.

	Asaṅga	Vasubandhu
[countered by] magical illusion	[external] sense fields (*viṣaya*) = *bāhyāyatana*	internal sense organs = *ādhyātmikāyatana*
[countered by] dream	pleasant & unpleasant experience (*upabhoga*)	[external objects of] experience (*upabhoga*) = *viṣaya* = *bāhyāyatana*

taken to be the self, the illusory elephant is taken to be a real living being (with a self). This passage therefore fits neatly with not only Vasubandhu's MSBh but also his AKBh passage cited above. The author of the MSABh seems to have understood the figurative meaning of 'internal' (i.e. self-related) spheres explained in the AKBh: These are the dharmas that are erroneously taken to be the self. The external spheres, on the other hand, are those dharmas that are taken to have 'substance' (*vastu*)—i.e. the things that make up the world in which one finds oneself.

* * *

In the TSN, Vasubandhu consistently likens the magically produced elephant to the mistaken perception of 'duality' (*dvaya*). This figurative application is the central topic of this paper, and we will need to delve deeper into both sides of the equation before it can be fully understood. Nonetheless, we already know enough to see that one common interpretation of this figure cannot be right: namely, the belief that the TSN's illusory elephant figure represents our mistaken conception of external reality. Before we complicate things by looking at the next MSABh passage, then, let us mark down this crucial point of which we can be sure: *For Vasubandhu and the MSABh, the magical illusion is not a figure for our mistaken apprehension of external reality. It is principally a figure for our mistaken apprehension of the self*. The magical elephant is used to elucidate the errors of the subjective, not the objective, side of experience, by evincing the possibility of an experienced 'self' where there is no self.

This conclusion is counter-intuitive, perhaps even confounding, but it is supported by even a casual glance at these authors' uses of these figures. For elucidating problems specific to *external* reality, Vasubandhu and the MSABh claim that not the magical illusion, but the dream, is most appropriate. Indeed, this was exactly how we saw Asaṅga using the dream example in the MS, and it is exactly how Vasubandhu uses the dream example in the Viṃś. When he is countering the doubt that without external objects we could have no experience of 'restriction in space and time' (*deśakālaniyama*), Vasubandhu employs the dream in order to display the falsity of the assumption that without real objects our experience would lack spatial and temporal location:

> (Viṃś 3.20–22)[30]
> In a dream, even without [real] objects (*artha*), some places have some things: Bees, gardens, women and people, for example, are not seen everywhere. And where they are seen, [they are only seen] sometimes, not all the time. Such [an argument] establishes restriction in space and time without [the need of real] objects (*artha*).

The false perception of space and time in dreams provides a perfect proof instance of how we could (because we do) have experiences of space and time without real objects. In dreams we experience objects that have all the apparent substance of physical reality, but that we later find out in fact do not exist.[31]

The magical illusion is used entirely differently, playing an entirely different philosophical role. It does not exemplify, for instance, any of the characteristics of ordinary external objects, such as appearing to exist in space and time. As we will

see in Part 2, the *Saṃdhinirmocanasūtra* (SNS) uses it to articulate a characteristic not of external objects but of discourse, which it calls 'dual'. In the TSN, the figure is used to correlate a variety of distinctive Yogācāra philosophical terms, within which the elephant itself is likened, again, to the characteristic of 'duality'. Even under its traditional gloss as 'grasper and grasped', duality refers to 'internal' as well as 'external' aspects of experience. Ultimately, therefore, it is equally counterintuitive to say that the TSN employs the magical elephant figure to exemplify the internal 'self' as it is to say that it exemplifies the external 'substance'. Yet Vasubandhu and the MSABh do both seem to be saying that they have used a figure that most naturally (in their minds) exemplifies the mistaken appearance of the self, to exemplify 'duality'.

Inspired by this revelation, it seems relevant to notice that in fact, the TSN contains only four instances of the word 'self' (*ātman*), and two of them occur in the context of the magical elephant figure.[32] Given Vasubandhu's agreement with the MSABh that the magical illusion figure exemplifies, specifically, the mistaken imposition of a self upon the organs of sense, it does not seem outlandish to translate this term literally, as below:[33]

> (TSN)
> 27. It is just as something made by magic with the power of a spell appears as the self of an elephant (*hastyātmanā*) where there is only an appearance, but the elephant does not exist at all.
> . . .
> 29. In the same way, the construction of what does not exist appears as the self of duality (*dvayātmanā*) from the root mind where there is only an appearance, but the duality does not exist at all.

As I have said, we will need more background in order to elucidate just what is meant by this 'self of duality' and its comparison to the 'self of an elephant', but for now we can at least reiterate with some certainty that the magical elephant is *not* a figure for external reality.

To summarize: If we combine (1) the fact that Vasubandhu makes a distinction between the internal and external *āyatanas* and aligns the former, as opposed to the latter, with the magical elephant figure, and (2) the fact that the TSN consistently compares the magical elephant to 'the self of duality' or simply 'duality', *never an external object*, we have powerful evidence that Vasubandhu sees 'duality' as something quite different from external reality.[34] In fact, I believe that the choice to explain duality via the magical elephant figure (instead of dreams) is intended to prevent us from slipping into the simple equation of duality with external reality.

* * *

The above is the main point I wish to make in this section, but because Vasubandhu seems to be making use of the MSABh in his formation of the TSN's illusory elephant, we can still benefit from a look at a second MSABh passage. This passage employs a variety of figures in order to explain the super-ordinary

powers of a Bodhisattva that constitute the four *smṛtyupasthāna*s, or 'foundations of mindfulness'.[35] The passage specifically focuses on the perfect attainment of these four by means of 'thorough knowledge' (*parijñā*):[36]

> (MSABh on MSA XVIII.43–44)
> In what way [are the foundations of mindfulness achieved by the bodhisattva] with thorough knowledge? With the thorough knowledge that the body (*kāya*) as such is like a magical illusion because of its being apprehended (*prakhyānāt*) as non-existent form (*rūpa*). With the thorough knowledge that feelings (*vedanā*) as such are like a dream, because of their coming about erroneously. With the thorough knowledge that the mind is naturally clear, like the sky. With the thorough knowledge that dharmas are adventitious, like defilements such as clouds and smoke in the unblemished sky.

As above, I will focus on the magical illusion and the dream. Table II summarizes the four views on these figures discussed thus far. On the topic of the dream, the second MSABh passage echoes Asaṅga's mention of positive and negative feelings, but does not focus specifically on the external spheres, as Vasubandhu did. On the topic of the magical illusion, the passage focuses on something seemingly new: the body. As we have already noted, however, the body here may be considered to consist in all but one of the six internal spheres—that is, the five non-mental sense organs.[37] Thus the passage echoes Asaṅga with regard to the dream, and incompletely echoes Vasubandhu with respect to the magical illusion. The first of these points is explained when we notice that unlike the first MSABh passage, the second MSABh passage is not structured according to an *āyatana* classification; instead, it is structured according to the four objects of cultivated self-awareness that constitute the 'foundations of mindfulness': body, feelings, minds, and mental objects. This means that in this second passage all of the figures under discussion are taken to exemplify a correct apprehension of some part of the self. There is no question of any 'external' dharmas coming under consideration, because they are not part of this standard list. This explains why the passage's dream figure parallels Asaṅga's 'experience' rather than Vasubandhu's 'objects of experience'.

As to the merely partial agreement with Vasubandhu (and the earlier MSABh passage) on the figure of the magical illusion, we must look at the decision to apply different figures to different *aspects* of mistaken self-apprehension. For, as has already been discussed, self-apprehension *in toto* relies upon all six internal spheres. Since these are here divided up into separate figures, though, there is no possibility to make a complete parallel with Vasubandhu and the first MSABh passage. In such a situation, covering five out of six of the other passage's figurative objects is as close a parallel as would appear possible. Yet this passage is more than simply a close parallel. The choice to focus separately upon separate parts of the self allows for a somewhat subtler, more precise, use of these figures, which thereby teaches us something new about the figurative import of the magical illusion. When a choice has to be made, the aspect of the self that the magical illusion counters most directly is the characteristic erroneous belief in the human body (*kāya*). Why? The text tells us: because it has physical form (*rūpa*). The mistaken self-apprehension that is most

Table II The magical illusion and dream figures according to Asaṅga's MS, Vasubandhu's MSBh, and two MSABh passages.

	MS commentaries		MSABh	
	Asaṅga	Vasubandhu	First passage	Second passage
[countered by] magical illusion	[external] sense fields (*viṣaya*) = *bāhyāyatana*	internal sense organs = *ādhyātmikāyatana*	internal spheres = *ādhyātmikāyatana*	body (*kāya*) = non-existent form (*rūpa*)
[countered by] dream	pleasant & unpleasant experience (*upabhoga*)	[external objects of] experience (*upabhoga*) = *viṣaya* = *bāhyāyatana*	external spheres = *bāhyāyatana*	feelings (*vedanā*)

like a magical illusion is the self-apprehension of the body, 'because of its being apprehended (*prakhyānāt*) as non-existent form (*rūpa*)'. Here the magical illusion is said to exemplify the false imputation of a non-existent physicality. But, as cannot be overemphasized, this is not the physicality of external objects—rather, it is the physical self.

This last point is the key to combining the two passages from the MSABh into a coherent understanding of the figurative force of the magical illusion. In one passage the magical illusion exemplifies the mistaken aggregation of sensory organs into a self. In the other, the magical illusion exemplifies the mistaken aggregation of the *material components* of the self. What does this mean? It means that the purpose of the magical elephant figure is to undermine our natural trust in our own embodiment—or, to say the same thing (at least in this system), our trust in our *having sense organs*. Asaṅga tells us in the AS that each of the five aggregates (*skandha*) appears as a self in a different manner, and that for the *rūpa-skandha* that manner is 'the substantial self as having the apprehending body'.[38] In the MS, as we have already seen, he tells us that the first of the ten mistaken representations that make up the dependent nature is the 'representation of the body' (*kāya-vijñapti*, *lus rnam par rig pa*). Vasubandhu's MAVBh commentary to the MAV also says that the false idea of 'sentient beings'—whether those beings be oneself or others—is founded upon the five physical senses.[39] This notion of self is the target of the elephant figure in the MSABh and the MSBh, and is what I believe is meant by the 'self of an elephant' in the TSN—namely, the false belief in a sentient being based on a misleading belief in sensation.[40] The 'self of duality', to which it is compared, will require further elucidation in Part 2 below.

* * *

Can the interpretation just described be brought into line with Asaṅga's point, with which we opened this discussion, that the magical illusion counters our belief in the necessity of the sense fields—that is, the 'external' dharmas? We should not expect the views to entirely cohere, since of course there are explicit differences between Asaṅga's MS and Vasubandhu's MSBh. Yet it seems to me worth noticing that although the sense fields are 'external', they are still explicitly *sensory*. In all cases the magical illusion is used to counter our belief in the reality of sensation. This may seem uselessly general, given that (1) all of external reality is included within these categories of 'sensation' and (2) we are, after all, talking about a list of figures (illusions, dreams, reflections, mirages, echoes, etc.) which *all* represent mistaken perceptions of one kind or another. Still, Asaṅga used the term *viṣaya* for magical illusion alone, using *artha* and other terms for the others.

What this leads me to believe is that, contrary to our typical 21st century understanding of a magic show, the magical illusion for the authors of these texts does not indicate a malfunction of the senses or an extraordinary external circumstance, but instead is an experience that is *falsely attributed to the senses*. These authors take it that unlike mirages and echoes, which generate misleading sensory input, magical illusions are believed to be phantasms that circumvent

sensation entirely and somehow (magically, via *mantras*, etc.) affect awareness directly, so that we falsely ascribe our experience to our sensory organs when in reality no sensory perception has taken place—that is, no sensory perception of the illusion.[41]

For the Yogācāra, such is a particularly useful figure because *the same can be said of all physical form*. Everything that we imagine we experience as a result of physical sensory organs 'grasping' physical sensory fields is actually the result of mental causes alone. In actuality, there is no physical form (*rūpa*) that acts as the object of perception, and there is no physical sensory organ that acts as perceiver. Thus, the magical elephant in all of its uses can display the erroneous character of our ordinary reliance upon the physical senses. If in fact no sensation is taking place, it makes sense to have Asaṅga's term for sense objects, *viṣaya*, evoking the same erroneous imagination of an elephant as Vasubandhu's term for sense organs, *ādhyātmikāyatana*. Ultimately, of course, both are equally false. In order to make this point clear, the TSN and the MSABh—along with a host of later commentators—encapsulate the entirety of the error associated with the physical sensory apparatus in the term 'duality', to which we now turn our attention.

Part 2: Duality, Existence and Physical Form

Throughout the modern scholarly literature on Yogācāra philosophy, one sees the term 'duality' glossed as 'grasper and grasped' or more commonly, 'subject and object'. Vasubandhu advocates this *grāhya-grāhaka* description of duality repeatedly and prominently, as in the following passages from his MAVBh commentary on the MAV (MAV verses are shown with Vasubandhu's commentary):

(MAV 1.1 with MAVBh)[42]

There is construction of what does not exist. Duality there is not real.

Emptiness there is real. [The construction of what does not exist] is real there [in emptiness] too.

The construction of what does not exist there is the discriminative construction of grasped and grasper. Duality is grasped and grasper. The emptiness of that construction of what does not exist is its lack of existent grasped and grasper. The '[it] is real there too' refers to the construction of what does not exist.

(MAV I.5 with MAVBh)[43]

The constructed, the dependent, and the perfected

Are indicated by the thing, the construction of what does not exist, and the nonexistence of duality.

The thing is the constructed nature. The construction of what does not exist is the dependent nature. The nonexistence of grasped and grasper is the perfected nature.

A glance through the MAVBh, the MSBh, and the *Dharmadharmatāvibhāgavṛtti* (DhDhVV) would make one think that Vasubandhu hardly ever missed a chance to gloss 'duality' as 'grasped and grasper'. What is the meaning of these terms, 'grasper and grasped'? In both the AS and the AKBh, 'grasping' is what is done by a sensory organ to a sensory object. I have already mentioned that Asaṅga writes in the AS that the first ability of the sense organs (*indriya*) is the 'grasping of sensory

objects' (*viṣayagrahaṇa*).[44] For the AKBh, 'grasping' includes the mental sense as well as the physical, and so is used when describing the general division of the earth into sensory objects and sensory subjects (V.41b) and when comparing mental with physical sensation:

> (AKBh II.24)[45]
> Samādhi is mental single-pointedness. For the distinction between minds and mentalities is subtle. It is difficult to delimit even in the mental stream which among the moments comes after which. Even with respect to physical forms it is difficult to ascertain just which among the tastes grasped by the sense organ (*indriyagrāhya*) are attributable to which among the many tastes of plants, [let alone] which are which among the formless dharmas grasped by the intellect (*buddhigrāhya*).

The meditator who is trying to isolate individual mental events needs single-pointed concentration in order to distinguish among various objects, all of which appear because they have been 'grasped' by either physical or mental sense organs. Implicit here is that grasper and grasped describe sensory organs and their objects. This is spelled out clearly in MAV 3.17, which describes 'grasper, grasped, and grasping' in such an explicit threesome that even Vasubandhu in his MAVBh must dutifully withhold from commenting upon it with the term 'duality':

> (MAV III.17 with MAVBh)[46]
> Still others are the things that are the seeds of the grasper, grasped, and their grasping.
> What are the others? The components. There the things that are the seeds of the grasper are the eye component, etc. The things that are the seeds of the grasped are the form component, etc. The things that are the seeds of their grasping are the eye-consciousness component, etc.

According to this passage, the three forms of the verb 'to grasp' correlate directly to the three categories of *dhātu*-s, with 'grasper' and 'grasped' explicitly indicating organs and fields, respectively.

More often, though, the 'grasper' and 'grasped' are presented as an exclusive pair with the six consciousnesses included on the 'grasper' side. This is the way the terms are presented in Asaṅga's AS,[47] as well as in the *Saṃdhinirmocanasūtra* (SNS):

> (SNS VIII.20)[48]
> The grasper is the five physical sense spheres (*rūpyāyatana*), thought (*citta*), mind (*manas*), consciousness (*vijñāna*), and the mental (*caitasika*) dharmas.
> The grasped is the six external sense spheres (*bāhyāyatana*). Also, Maitreya, whatever is grasper is also grasped.

It is not difficult to correlate the definitions of 'grasper' and 'grasped' in MAV III.17 with those in SNS VIII.20 if we recognize that while the first reflects the *dhātu*s, the second reflects an *āyatana* classification. Skillful Buddhist metaphysicians can classify the entirety of the universe in either mode (as well as in a *skandha* classificatory scheme). In classifying everything, however, while the *dhātu* classification has the luxury of six extra categories for the six consciousnesses, the *āyatana* system must somehow crowd these six into the organs and fields alone. Inevitably, the six

consciousnesses come to be classified as part of the mental organ, a category that always does work as an *āyatana* that it does not have to do as a *dhātu*. I mention this because it indicates that the diversity of mental categories listed as varieties of 'grasper' in SNS VIII.20 should not distract us from recognizing that 'grasper' and 'grasped' as a duality is still, basically, a division between sensory organs and sensory fields. The SNS does not use the term 'duality' here, but the only obvious pairs in the grasper/grasped dichotomy are the six sensory organs and their objects.

A similar clarification may be in order with reference to the SNS statement that 'whatever is grasper is also grasped'. The point of this statement is to indicate that at subsequent moments all mental events are available to the mental organ as objects of thought (memories, etc.) and therefore every component of the 'grasper' side effectively becomes part of the *dharma-dhātu* after its grasping responsibilities are finished. It is emphatically not the case that the 'grasper' is an internal object, 'one's self as it appears to oneself'.[49] On the contrary, once something becomes an internal object, it is no longer 'grasper' but has become 'grasped'. The SNS must add this statement to the list of 'grasped' components because 'grasper' and 'grasped' in themselves are simultaneous. The reader will have noted that the components on each side of this distinction are quite similar to those on each side of the *ādhyātmika/bāhya* distinction. Transposing this into *grāhya* and *grāhaka*, two forms of the same transitive verb, emphasizes the point that the two are *always present together in a single act of grasping*. Each requires the reality of the other, and gains its identity through the other. This makes grasper and grasped a natural pair, an exclusive conceptual twosome that ties together the sensory fields and the sensory organs.

* * *

In spite of this obvious 'duality' of grasper and grasped, however, none of the passages cited employs the term 'duality' in a context that suggests that duality is what the authors have in mind. In fact, the direct equation of 'duality' with 'grasper and grasped' appears nowhere in the SNS, MAV,[50] MS,[51] AS, or MSA, in spite of the fact that many of the commentaries on these texts assume a grasper/grasped interpretation of duality. It seems reasonable to deduce that this interpretation became dominant after these texts were composed. Nonetheless, this interpretation does not seem to have faced any detractors, whether within Yogācāra texts or modern scholarly writings. The question thus becomes how to understand the possibility of a smooth transition from the use of the term 'duality' without the necessary implication of a grasper/grasped interpretation to the relatively hegemonic interpretation we find across the commentaries, especially those attributed to Vasubandhu.[52]

One passage that I take to represent an intermediate, transitional stage is MSA XI.40:[53]

> (MSA XI.40 with MSABh)
>
> What has a threefold and a threefold appearance is the characteristic of grasper and grasped.

> For the construction of what does not exist is the characteristic of the dependent. The expression 'a threefold and a threefold appearance' is a possessive compound (*bahuvrīhi*).[54] Here the [first] appearance of three is the appearance of words, the appearance of meanings, and the appearance of bodies. The other appearance of three is the appearance of mind, apprehension, and construction. Mind is always defiled. Apprehension is the five bodily consciousnesses. Construction is the mental consciousness. Here the first threefold appearance is the characteristic of grasped. The second is the characteristic of grasper. This indicates the construction of what does not exist, the character of the dependent.

This analysis appears to use the 'grasper and grasped' terminology in new, conceptual/linguistic mode. D'Amato even goes so far as to translate *lakṣaṇa* here as 'signifier'. The three aspects of the 'grasper' are now the seven consciousnesses that make up experience, consisting in the defiled mind (*kliṣṭamanas*), the five consciousnesses associated with the physical organs, and the mental consciousness. The three objects 'grasped' by these three conscious 'graspers' are all mental objects, that is, different kinds of appearances: words, meanings, and bodies.

This classification eschews the 'grasper/grasped' relationship of the sense organs with their objects, and replaces it with a mind-only account. To say that 'words' are what is constructed by the defiled mind is to say that language is unrelated to reality. This is confirmed by the declaration that the five physical consciousnesses—which we ordinarily take to be associated with the sensory organs and fields—instead have 'meanings' (*artha*) as their 'grasped' object.[55] The mental consciousness itself consists in 'construction' of 'bodies'. This is a bit confusing, but it might simply mean that the body—i.e. the physical sense organs—appears to exist because we deduce its presence from our sensory experience. In any event, whether the intention is to say that the mind 'constructs' the physical body or other existing forms, it too is engaged in the process of linguistic construction.

To say that these conceptual/linguistic forms of consciousness 'grasp' their mental objects is a natural use of the term, as where the AKBh says that formless dharmas are 'grasped' by the intellect. The significant shift here is the transformation of the objects grasped into mere mental objects and the consequent elimination of the 'grasping' action of physical sensory organs. Given that 'grasping' simply is the action of the senses (and is something quite different from 'construction'), the 'grasping' here is perhaps to be considered figurative, like the 'self' of *ādhyātmika*.

An alternative interpretation presents itself if we read *artha* here not as 'meaning' (and thus in its natural pair with *pada*) but as 'object' or 'thing'. In such a reading we lose much of the linguistic implication of the verse, and the passage instead seems to pair the sensory consciousnesses as subjects with the sensory objects as mental objects. Yet even under such an interpretation we can only account for the sensory organs by including them among the 'objects' of mental consciousness. This combines both sides in the 'duality' of sensory organ and sensory object within the singular 'object' of consciousness. Whether we accept this second interpretation or the conceptual/linguistic one, the 'grasper and grasped' terminology in this verse

applies no longer to all sensory organs and their objects, and instead is reduced only to the operation of the mental sense organ and its objects.

* * *

Although the above passage does not describe the 'grasper and grasped' as 'duality', it prepares them for this later role by describing them in mind-only conceptual/linguistic terminology. This terminology allows them to fit with another meaning of duality, one dominant in a large number of earlier Yogācāra texts. Here duality is not 'grasper and grasped', but is instead the more fundamental twosome 'reality and illusion'—a duality which is described repeatedly as the mistaken result of attachment to linguistic forms. Language, in these texts, is compared to an illusion, and so, as I now illustrate through a brief excursus into a few scriptural uses of the illusion, the 'duality' that precedes the exclusive subject/object-ification of the term is closely tied to analyses of the illusory elephant figure.

We should not expect to see the full flowering of 'duality' in the early *prajñāpāramitā*, but the roots of the Yogācāra magical illusion and its signification were already present in a variety of well known passages from the *Āṣṭasāhāsrikā-prajñāpāramitā* (in Conze's (1958) translation):

> Yes, it is. Because a Bodhisattva who trains himself in perfect wisdom should train himself like an illusory man for full enlightenment. For one should bear in mind that the five grasping aggregates are like an illusory man. Because the lord Buddha has said that form is like an illusion. And what is true of form, is also true of the six sense-organs, and of the five (grasping) aggregates. (6)

> Here the Bodhisattva, the great being, thinks thus: countless beings I should lead to Nirvana and yet there are none who lead to Nirvana, or who should be led to it. How ever many beings he may lead to Nirvana, yet there is not any being that has been led to nirvana, nor that has led others to it. For such is the true nature of dharmas, seeing that their nature is illusory. Just as if, Subhuti, a clever magician, or magician's apprentice, were to conjure up at the cross roads a great crowd of people, and then make them vanish again. What do you think, Subhuti, has there anyone been killed by anyone, or murdered, or destroyed, or made to vanish? (8)

> The form of an illusory man is neither bound nor freed. The Suchness of the form of an illusory man is neither bound nor freed. Because in reality it is not there at all, because it is isolated, because it is unproduced. (9)

All of these passages support what I have argued above in Part 1, and show that Vasubandhu and the MSABh are drawing upon a well-established Mahāyāna tradition when they claim that the magical elephant represents the mistaken apprehension of a self.

The first of these passages in fact makes exactly the same parallel as Vasubandhu and the MSABh do, saying that the 'six sense-organs' are 'like an illusion'. The other passages use the figure of an illusion to undermine various beliefs that derive from a false notion of the self. In one, the notion that there are beings that are led to Nirvana and others that lead them to Nirvana is likened to the belief that the disappearance of illusory beings is equivalent to killing them. In truth, there are

no real beings that might benefit from liberation. The last passage makes the same point by likening the self to the 'form of an illusory man'.

One point in these passages becomes quite important as the illusion figure is used as the foundation for the Yogācāra view of duality: All of these images are intended to emphasize the contrast between two different causal accounts: the causal story of what appears to be there and the causal story of the formation of the illusion itself. If you're worried about an illusory person dying, you are (of course) mistaking the illusion for reality. More precisely, this is a mistake of thinking that something is 'produced' that is in fact 'unproduced'. You are attributing a false causal story to what is going on. An illusory man that is 'unproduced' is never really there and therefore is 'neither bound nor freed'. What *is* produced is an illusion, but since it comes into existence and disappears based on causes and conditions that are nothing to get upset about (some magician's crossroads trick), this causal story is entirely distinct from the causes of a real person (birth, etc.).

This point that the illusion (*māyā*) appears to be caused one way but is really caused another way is a significant theme of the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* (LAS), a centerpiece of Yogācāra thought. Here, however (in Suzuki's translation), the theme is deepened into a statement not just about causality, but about the false nature of the concept of reality which the false view of causality supports:

> [B]irth is no-birth, when it is recognised that the world that presents itself before us is no more than Mind itself; and as to all external objects of which we state that they are or are not, they are seen as non-existent and unborn . . . . [I]n order to cast aside the philosophers' thesis on birth by causation, it is asserted that all things are like Māyā and unborn. (96)

> Māyā cannot be the cause of error, because of its incapability of producing evils and faults; and thus, Mahāmati, Māyā does not give rise to evil thoughts and faults. Again, Mahāmati, Māyā has no discrimination of itself; it rises when invoked by the magical charm of a certain person. It has in itself no habit-energy of evil thoughts and faults that, issuing from self-discrimination, affect it. (94)

> Mahāmati, when the world is understood to be nothing but mind itself, the existence and non-existence of external objects ceases to be discriminated, and there is the rise of the Buddhayana family. (93)

Here the 'unproduced' or 'unborn' quality of illusory realities—that is, the fact that they are not caused as they appear to be—has been expanded into a statement that our notion of what it means to exist is false, because it relies upon false conceptions of causality. Yogācāra speculation recognizes that since the illusion 'has no discrimination of itself', it is not *in itself* erroneous. That is, there's nothing wrong with an illusion, as long as you recognize it as one. It simply has different causal properties than it appears to have. It is only a problem if you are misled by the appearance.

The LAS points out the inherently unproblematic nature of the appearance itself as part of a wider effort to convince us to suspend our instinctive attribution of reality and unreality. Its alternative approach is to claim that the illusory (i.e. *vijñapti-mātra*) nature of existence means not that things are non-existent, but that there is *neither the existence nor the non-existence* of external objects.

When we understand that there really is no 'existence' outside of appearances, the concept no longer has any purchase. Existence itself turns out to be something we attribute to things outside of, or in addition to, their appearance. The attribution of existence is only our way of discriminating certain things that appear from other things that appear, preferring some as real over others deemed merely illusory. Such discrimination is always a mistake, according to this view, because it falsely attributes a mutually exclusive character to reality that reality does not have. This mutual-exclusivity of existence is what the LAS terms 'duality':

> Again, Mahāmati, what is meant by non-duality? It means that light and shade, long and short, black and white, are relative terms, Mahāmati, and not independent of each other; as Nirvana and Samsara are, all things are not-two. There is no Nirvana except where there is Samsara; there is no Samsara except where there is Nirvana; for the condition of existence is not of mutually-exclusive character. (67)

* * *

In the SNS this unreality of the notion of existence—the recognition that existence and non-existence are both to be rejected—is once again given the name 'non-duality'. In the SNS, as in the LAS, 'duality' refers not to 'grasper and grasped', but to a wide range of conceptual or discursive oppositions. Here, however, it focuses in particular upon those oppositions that appear in the teachings of the Buddha, especially those that privilege one ontological state over another, such as enlightenment and non-enlightenment, reality and illusion, and ultimate and conventional truth:

> (SNS X.10)[56]
>
> Bhagavan, how is one to understand the characteristic of the Tathāgata's complete perfect enlightenment which is right, the turning of the wheel of the dharma which is right, and the great complete and perfect nirvana which is right?
>
> Manjuśrī, it is the characteristic of non-duality. There is neither complete perfect enlightenment nor non-enlightenment, neither turning the wheel of the dharma nor not turning the wheel of the dharma, neither the great complete and perfect nirvana nor the absence of the great complete and perfect nirvana—because of the absolute purity of the dharma body (*dharmakāya*) and because of the manifestation of the emanation body (*nirmāṇakāya*).

> (SNS I.1)[57]
>
> Son of the victorious one, in the expression 'All things are non-dual, all things are non-dual', what is [meant by] all things, and in what way are they non-dual?
>
> Son of a noble family, 'All things, all things' [refers to] just two things: the conditioned and the unconditioned. There the conditioned is neither conditioned nor unconditioned. The unconditioned is neither unconditioned nor conditioned.

The second quotation here is the start of the opening dialogue in the first chapter of the SNS, often considered the foundational Yogācāra sūtra. It defines non-duality quite explicitly as the unreality of the difference between the conditioned and the unconditioned, which we may translate into the difference between samsara and nirvana. The unreality of discursive opposition itself is taken up more explicitly in the sections that follow. The questioner asks for an explanation of why these oppositions are false, and is told that the terms 'conditioned' and 'unconditioned'

are 'figurative expressions' (*btags pa'i tshig*), that is, 'conventional sayings that arise from construction' (*kun tu rtog pa las byung ba tha sñad du brjod pa*).[58] When the questioner sensibly asks why the Buddha would have invented and used such conventional terms, the respondent brings forth the figure of the magical illusion in great detail, which I will only summarize.[59]

As in the *Āṣṭasāhāsrikā-prajñāpāramitā* example cited above, SNS I.4 asks us to imagine the case where 'some magician or his student' (*sgyu ma mkhan nam sgyu ma mkhan gyi slob ma mkhas pa źig*) produces an illusion at a crossroads. The magician piles up grass, leaves, branches, stones, and other available scraps and creates a variety of magical appearances, in a list that begins with 'herds of elephants' (*glang po che'i tshogs*). The text describes the reaction of two different kinds of people who observe the illusion.[60] The first is the person of a 'childish nature, a foolish nature, a deluded nature'. Such people at first see the illusion and take it to be what it appears to be, saying of the elephants, the jewels, etc., 'That's what's there', in accordance with what they see and hear. Then later, they come to see the illusory quality of the appearance and have to change their tune and say, 'That's not real, it's a lie'. The second type of person with 'not a childish nature, not a foolish nature, an undeluded nature', knows about the grass, leaves, branches and so on, knows that there is no troop of elephants, and recognizes that what is there is an illusory appearance (*sgyu ma byas pa*). When such people see the illusion, then, they also say 'That's what's there', but they never need to change their tune, because they understand the illusory nature of the illusion all along.[61]

After this extended allegory, SNS I.5 explains why it is relevant to the topic of the Buddha's speech. People 'with a childish nature' who have not yet attained nirvana and do not understand 'the inexpressible nature (*dharmatā*) of all dharmas'[62] hear the description of things as conditioned and unconditioned and think, 'That's what's there'. Then later they come to change their view to the subsequent designation that 'That's not real, it's a lie'. The fully enlightened Buddha, on the other hand, aware of the inexpressible nature of all dharmas, understands that the idea ('*du śes*) of things being conditioned and unconditioned is only conceptual construction, only illusory appearance, does not become attached to it, and never has the subsequent cognition that 'That's not real, it's a lie'.

The chapter ends with a verse that reminds us that all along we have been talking about duality, and thus places the previous discussion in its proper context:

> SNS I.6 (38)[63]
> The profound, non-existence of childish sensory objects (*viṣaya*, *spyod yul*),
> Ineffable non-duality—although the victorious one has taught it,
> Childish, stupid fools
> Remain pleased with the proliferation of talk.
> Not understanding, or misunderstanding,
> They are born as sheep and cows.
> Flinging out these expressions of their awareness,
> They will cycle on endlessly here in samsara.

Here 'duality' is clearly intended to indicate something fundamental about talk, about discourse. True 'profound' reality is beyond speech, and is described by the terms 'ineffable' and 'non-dual'. Those who continue to cling to words—including the Buddha's words—will continue to 'cycle on endlessly here in samsara'.

What, exactly, is the 'duality' denied? In the opening to the dialogue, it seemed fairly straight forward that the duality must be the distinction between conditioned and unconditioned—that is, the distinction that appears in the Buddha's speech between samsara and nirvana, conventional and ultimate reality, *dharma* and *dharmatā*. Indeed, the Buddha denies the reality of each side of this duality, and later the Buddha is said not to reify the distinction by stating with respect to either, 'That's what's there'. Yet there is some ambiguity when, in the closing verse, the very same passage seems to reify the same duality when declaring that there is a distinction between the true interpreters and the ones who end up cycling in samsara. If there is no truth to the distinction, why is the distinction reiterated in the last lines?

The answer is, of course, that we who are asking the question are still engaged in the proliferation of talk. The reason we (fools) take the last lines to be evidence of a reiterated duality is that we have not properly understood that duality remains in the linguistic description, even when it is negated at the level of reality. This is simply the problematic nature of language itself. The result, then, is a self-consciously self-undermining series of statements.

Why, we might ask, is the Buddha's language not simply false, or wrong, if no matter how we explain it we are liable to be misled into the dualities that it apparently advocates even as it denies them? Since language can't provide a direct answer, the answer is provided only figuratively, through the explanation of the magical illusion. The purpose of the example is to show just how a legitimate explanation of things can appear necessarily 'dual' even when the reality is not. Foolish people move from believing in real elephants to believing the elephants are unreal, when in fact there was ever only one reality, namely a magic show. The 'duality' in their speech is exemplified through the erroneous alternation between the two discursive claims, 'That's what's there' and 'That's not real, it's a lie'. This is likened to believing in the reality of the conditioned and the unconditioned. The clever person at the magic show, on the other hand, sees the illusory elephants, but knows the trick. The result is not that she thinks the elephants are simply unreal. That would simply be saying, 'That's not real, it's a lie'. Instead, she understands that there is a reality here, best described as an illusory appearance of an elephant caused by sticks and leaves. When the magic show is going on, however, she must still be able to refer to the elephants and say, 'That's what's there'. Surely she knows, and can speak about, the appearance of elephants as elephants, as opposed to snakes or giraffes. Yet whichever she refers to, she understands them to be an illusory spectacle. This is how the Buddha speaks, when he declares various conceptual oppositions—the duality of samsara and nirvana—but ultimately knows that these discursive oppositions are unreal.[64]

* * *

It is time, now, to apply the fruit of our scriptural excursus to the interpretive texts under discussion. The view I have presented, which I am calling the reality/unreality or existence/non-existence interpretation of duality, is a subtle yet coherent position—an eminently Mahāyāna one, at that—which makes no use of the terms 'grasper and grasped', and really has nothing to do with subject–object duality. I believe that this view is sufficient to explain 'duality' in a wide range of Yogācāra texts, and it is the basis for any coherent understanding of what is meant by 'duality' in the TSN. Before returning to the TSN itself, however, let us look again at the intermediary text between the SNS and the TSN: the MSA. MSA XI (without its commentary) makes use of the illusory elephant figure in terms that would be familiar to the composer of SNS I:

> (MSA XI.25,27)[65]
> Duality is illustrated through the error of grasping the illusory appearance of an elephant.
> Just as the duality there does not exist, and the duality appears,
> . . .
> So on account of existence and nonexistence there is no distinction between existence and non-existence.
> Where the illusory appearance is real and unreal, dharmas are characterized by error.

Here the 'error of grasping the illusory appearance of an elephant' is likened to 'duality' because both appear, even though they do not exist. Consequently, both appearances guide one toward the belief in either existence (*bhāva*) or non-existence (*abhāva*). This is the erroneous belief in the 'real and unreal' quality of appearances.

The MSABh comments upon the first line by saying that 'Although the *grasper and grasped* there do not exist, duality is perceived'.[66] What is added here with the interpretation of duality as grasper and grasped? Given that the SNS stands alone perfectly well without such an interpretation, is there any reason to assume that the MSA requires it? Perhaps the MSA does not require it, but it stands to reason that the MSABh is intending to highlight the connection between this appearance of duality and the 'grasper and grasped' that appears in MSA XI.40, 13 verses later. That passage, discussed above, emphasizes the mental activity of linguistic and conceptual construction—calling it 'grasper'—and the ostensible object of linguistic and conceptual construction—calling it 'grasped'. To call these 'non-dual' here is to say that conceptual/linguistic objects (and here all objects are conceptual/linguistic objects) are coterminous with conceptual/linguistic construction. Does this addition make sense of the MSA passage?

At first glance, it seems doubtful. A nearby verse in the MSA concurs with the SNS application of the term 'duality' to the Buddha's basic dual categories of existence, such as desire and aversion, faith and faithlessness, defilement and purity:

> (MSA XI.34–35)[67]
> Mind has the appearance of duality, the appearance of desire, etc., and likewise
> The appearance of faith, etc. No dharma is distinguished according to defilement or purity.

> When it says, 'The distinguishing characteristic of duality is nothing but the appearance of duality',
> This means that mind (*citta*) has the appearance of a picture (*citrābhāsa*), the manifestation of a picture (*citrākāra*).

There is no sensible interpretation of these verses according to which duality means 'grasper and grasped', and even the MSABh does not attempt to impose one. The conceptual duality here is not, as in the 'grasper and grasped' formulation, the duality of mind and its mental–linguistic object, but the duality of opposing concepts. The point is plainly equivalent to the SNS point, that the dualities of the dharma are mere appearances, and do not exist as they appear.

There is, however, another passage that may help us to bridge these two different dualities. In the following, an exploration of the dharma's conceptual bifurcation into opposites seems to run aground on something rather close to the 'grasper and grasped' duality. In the following, we should read 'form, etc'. as representing the pair of opposites, 'form and non-form', just as 'desire, etc'. in MSA XI.34 clearly means 'desire and aversion':

> (MSA XI.21–22, 24)[68]
> Since there is an appearance of duality there but its existence is not real,
> Reality and unreality are attributed to form, etc.
>
> It's not that the existent is non-existent, or that the non-existent exists.
> Rather, the non-difference between existence and non-existence [itself] is attributed to form, etc.
> . . .
> The cause of error and the error are the representation of form
> And the formless representation. From the one's non-existence, the other is impossible.

The first two verses seem to express exactly what is at issue in the SNS, namely the conceptual bifurcation involved in the attribution of form or formlessness. Form and non-form as concepts consist in a duality that itself is only a linguistic construction, the belief in each requiring the belief in the other. Without the notion of form, the notion of formless representation also makes no sense. The last verse, however, draws upon our conventional understanding that the two are related not only conceptually, but *causally*. If we believe in visible forms, we believe that they are the cause of visual consciousness, which is itself formless. Thus the MSABh comments correctly on the passage, 'from the one's non-existence, the other is impossible', with the gloss, 'because of the non-existence of the cause'.[69] The significance of this is to say that if form is only a representation (i.e. if it is only a formless illusion of form), then there is no way that it can be a cause of anything, including a formless representation. Form and non-form, both representations, can in no way be causally related. They are both 'unproduced' like illusory men, and so have no causal relation to one another. One false construction cannot be the cause of another. They are both caused only via whatever causes bring about delusion.

In this way, the non-duality of form and formlessness, of physicality and its opposite, becomes the pivot between two rather different-seeming rejections: the

rejection of the duality of conceptual opposites and the rejection of the duality of mind and mental objects. By rejecting the reality of physical form (not just the reality of external forms, the reality of the concept of physicality itself), the Yogācārin finds a synthesis of the 'non-duality' of samsara and nirvana and the 'non-duality' of sensation. These are the two denials that are united when duality is defined as 'grasper and grasped'.[70]

* * *

The importance of the argument of MSA XI.24 should not be underestimated. Asaṅga cites it in MS II.9 as proof that the *vijñapti-mātra* doctrine is not nihilistic solipsism. A genuine non-duality, he seems to be saying, requires that the impossibility of formlessness must follow from the impossibility of form. This means that while the *vijñapti-mātra* view seems to negate the possibility of form by calling all forms only mental representation, it follows from this negation that mentalities too are unreal. *The negation of form is only the first step in a two-step process* that moves from the denial of form to the denial of the possibility of formless representations. Representation-only yields, of itself, to an absence of all representations.

This crucial point is encapsulated in Vasubandhu's concluding verses of the TSN:

> (TSN 36–37)[71]
> As a result of perception of only mind, there is no perception of knowable things.
> As a result of no perception of knowable things, there can be no perception of mind.
>
> As a result of no perception of both, there is perception of the dharma realm.
> As a result of perception of the dharma realm, there can be the perception of liberation.

The TSN concludes, then, pointing out that while the doctrine of mind-only shows us the unreality of mental objects, its true goal comes subsequent to this realization, and as a result of it: *We must realize the unreality of mind together with the unreality of knowable things*. The ultimate realization comes with the freedom from belief in both—i.e. the duality of minds and mental objects.

What this means, then, is that Vasubandhu employs the term 'duality' with the assumption that we will understand that the full range of the meanings of 'grasper and grasped'—including conceptual as well as sensory bifurcation—is appropriately subsumed under the duality of mind and mental objects. This assumption fits precisely with the comprehensive systematization of all minds and mental events under the rubric of 'grasper and grasped' in MSA XI.40, that is, under the rubric of conceptual/linguistic construction. There, as we saw, the words, meanings, and bodies that are 'grasped' are described as appearances only. The 'grasping' that is under discussion in the TSN, as in the MSA, is not the grasping of physical sensory organs and objects, but only the apparent grasping of appearances by the mind. Since each of these objects has already been classified as a mental/linguistic 'construction', there was never any real 'grasping' going on in the first place. To name all such appearances 'non-dual', then, is an opportunistic but consistent extension of this earlier classification.

If we take Vasubandhu at his word, then, the denial of duality itself *assumes* the truth of *cittamātra*. The declaration that mind and mental objects are 'non-dual' only makes sense once it is understood that mental objects are only mind. It is, again, the second stage of a philosophical and spiritual development. The illusory elephant figure, which is primarily a counter to sensation—in particular, physical sensation—becomes a most appropriate figure to use as a counter to this second level of the appearance of duality. Once the elephant figure is understood as a natural example of the unreliability of the physical senses, it can indicate, figuratively, the unreliability of the *mental* sense: Just as the elephant appears to be a sensory object in spite of its extra-sensory (magical) cause, so the mind appears bifurcated into mental event and mental object in spite of *its* non-sensory causal story, which is the unending transformation of consciousness itself.

* * *

If Vasubandhu's repeated 'grasper and grasped' interpretation of 'duality' represents a terminological shift at the epicenter of Yogācāra, it might appear surprising that it seems to have slipped beneath the radar of scholastic dispute. A possible explanation for this is that it was, as I have said, only a natural extension of ideas already present in the foundations of Yogācāra speculation. To investigate this possibility before concluding, we return finally to Asaṅga's famous MS argument proving that all things are *vijñapti-mātra*—the argument that I began to summarize above in Part 1.

Recall that Asaṅga had given the example of a dream, along with other figures, to show that there do exist appearances of unreal objects. In response to this point, the opponent accepts that dreams are an instance of unreal appearance, but points out that reality is different from dreams, since we know that dream objects are unreal when we wake up, whereas once we are awake there are other things that remain real. Asaṅga's response is to suggest that this description only makes the analogy more fully appropriate, since enlightened beings have 'awakened' from the deluded state in which ordinary beings remain. Although ostensibly awake, ordinary beings continue to believe in unreal things. He then proceeds to prove this through appeal to scripture and reasoning, in turn.

The scriptural proof consists in a citation of two of the most famous Yogācāra passages, namely the *Daśabhūmika* passage, 'The triple world is only mind' (*cittamātram idaṃ yad idaṃ traidhātukam*),[72] and the *Saṃdhinirmocana-sūtra* (SNS) passage at VIII.7–8 that contemporary scholars believe to contain the earliest extant statement of the *vijñapti-mātra* doctrine.[73] This early statement appears as the Buddha's answer to Maitreya's request that he explain whether objects perceived in meditation are the same or different from the perceiving consciousness. The Buddha answers that they are the same, since all mental objects are *vijñapti-mātra*. In rejoinder, then, Maitreya pushes the point and asks how it can be that a mind 'grasps' (*'dzin pa*) itself. In answer, the Buddha declares a much broader doctrine: 'Maitreya, no dharma can grasp any dharma. Rather, in whatever way a mind comes about, so it appears'.[74] The mind and its object, he says, are like an object and

its reflection in a clean mirror, which make the observer think that there are two different things, when in truth there are not.

This repudiation of 'grasping' and its subsequent explanation of two things as really only one comes admittedly quite close to a declaration of the non-duality of grasper and grasped. If this is present in the SNS, my claim as to the late imposition of this terminology may seem to be overstated. Therefore, two points need to be noted. First, Asaṅga does not use any term resembling 'non-duality' here, saying instead that the mind in concentration and the mental object 'appear as different things' (*don tha dad par snaṅ go*).[75] Thus it is still left for Vasubandhu and other commentators to stake the name 'duality' to this particular false distinction in mental perception.

Second, the citation from the SNS just summarized represents what appears in Asaṅga's MS, but it does not exactly accord with extant Tibetan versions of the SNS. At SNS VIII.7, we find Maitreya asking not how a mind can 'grasp' (*'dzin*) itself, but how it 'can conceive of' (*rtog par bgyid*) itself. And again, later, we find the Buddha answering not that no dharma 'grasps' (*'dzin*) itself, but that no dharma 'can conceive of' (*rtog par mi byed mod*) itself. It is possible that these are different translations of the same term, but there are compelling reasons to prefer the latter terms as the older. The terms for thought and conceptual construction make more sense in the context of the discussion of meditative states. To replace them with 'grasping' suggests that the Buddha is rejecting duality in all perception, not all thinking. This is, of course, the point that I am suggesting comes later. It need not come later, except that if the original author was intending to deny all grasping in VIII.7, it is unclear why Maitreya would then proceed (as he does), in VIII.8, to ask whether this mirror figure applied to *rūpa* as well. 'Grasping', as we have seen, generally implies the activity of physical, as well as mental, *indriyas*.

Given the predominance of the commentarial practice of imposing the *grāhya-grāhaka* terminology on older texts that do not require it, it is reasonable to hypothesize that the terms we find in MS I.4 represent evidence of a parallel alteration of the paraphrased root text, also performed in order to make the passage more of a support for the grasper/grasped interpretation of duality.[76]

An intentional alteration is considered an outrage, but in the context of our discussion thus far, the change may be subtle enough to dodge dissent. Even the terminology of conceptual construction (*rtog pa*) fits at least partially with the meaning of grasper and grasped from MSA XI.40. There, as we saw, one of the threefold 'graspers' was the 'construction [that] is the mental consciousness', and one of the threefold 'grasped' was the bodies that it constructed. SNS VIII.7 says that these appear to be two, but are in fact one thing. What the terminological shift in MS I.4 embodies, then, is the application of the other two components of MSA XI.40's three-fold grasping to the claim of conceptual construction—that is, to declare, along with the construction of mind and its objects, the simultaneous, non-dual construction of linguistic appearances and material perceptual appearances. This is indeed a change, because SNS VIII.7 is only denying the difference between mind and mental objects, between an appearance and what

appears, and is not discussing the linguistic constructions to which it ordinarily applies the term 'non-duality'. Yet since the MSA XI.40 view presumes that everything 'grasped' by all of its 'graspers' is only an appearance, it is fair to say that the new terminology encapsulates these other aspects of construction within the non-difference of mind and mental objects.

From there, it is only a short step to apply the term 'duality' to 'grasper and grasped' under this wider definition, as Vasubandhu and the MSABh and the later commentarial tradition do. On the one hand, to apply the term this way is to use the term 'duality' as the pivot between two issues that are treated separately in earlier Yogācāra texts such as the SNS and the MAV: (1) the illusory self that is based on the mistaken belief in ordinary perception (including mental perception) and (2) conceptual/linguistic oppositions such as reality *vs*. illusion or nirvana *vs*. samsara. On the other hand, under the 'grasper and grasped' interpretation of duality these are not distinct, but *nested issues*: The belief in the 'reality' of a conceptual distinction between illusion and reality is only one form of the more general, 'dual' error of distinguishing one's concepts from one's mind. The criticism of 'duality' in this larger sense is thus a critique of the very notion of reality, a way of saying that 'reality' is a construction akin to—indeed, dependent upon—sensory delusion.

Conclusion

Above all, this paper has sought to show that the denial of duality in Yogācāra thought is not, merely, a denial of external reality. As my title suggests, the denial of duality is as much a denial of internal reality as it is a denial of external reality. In addition, as I have just explained, the denial of duality in its broadest interpretation entails *the denial of the notion of reality itself*. Duality signifies the mistaken character of all ordinary conceptual construction, all ordinary language, and all ordinary perception.

Recognizing this allows us to understand what Vasubandhu means when he compares the 'self of duality' to the illusory elephant. The application of the magical illusion figure as perceiver/self to 'duality', places physicality (*rūpa*) in the center of Yogācāra critique as the basic error: The error is now redefined as the belief that perception gives rise to a preferred degree of 'reality' or 'existence'. In fact, in this view reality itself is an illusion, and the basic problem of human life is the belief that some underlying 'existence' justifies or accounts for experience.

The *grāhya-grāhaka* interpretation of duality that is being used in the TSN and across a wide range of Yogācāra texts therefore *begins with the assumption that all appearances are reducible to mind and mental objects*. The appropriate interpretation of *grāhya-grāhaka* understands the terminology itself to encompass the *conclusion*, not the proof, of the doctrine of *citta-mātra* or *vijñapti-mātra*. Mind-only, therefore, is only the first stage in a two-stage process. The second stage is the recognition of non-duality. At the second stage, however, non-duality is *always and only* the non-duality of mind and mental object, in its various forms. External objects *per se* never enter into this level of the discussion.

This interpretation differs in several ways from previous interpretations of the magical elephant figure. First, it differs from views that claim that the ultimate view of Yogācāra is an assertion of the reality of the internal as against the external. While Vasubandhu does argue to disprove the coherence of external objects as we ordinarily conceive them, for instance in the Viṃś, this argument only gets one past the first stage of Yogācāra argumentation. This point explains, finally, why the illusory elephant, which is likened to duality, is a figure for the illusion of self, not for external reality. At the point where external reality is understood to be representation-only, what is still necessary is to come to recognize the false self-nature that remains if one is still deluded by the duality of *internal* reality, the duality of mind and mental objects:

> 27. It is just as something made by magic with the power of a spell appears as the self of an elephant (*hastyātmanā*) where there is only an appearance, but the elephant does not exist at all.
>
> 29. In the same way, the construction of what does not exist appears as the self of duality (*dvayātmanā*) from the root mind where there is only an appearance, but the duality does not exist at all.

Second, this interpretation differs from views that claim that Yogācārins assert the reality of the mental as against the falsity of the physical. Although physicality is a central target of Yogācāra critique, and although the physical ties together the basic 'dualities' of conceptual and perceptual bifurcation, the physical remains only one side of a 'dualistic' pair. As a consequence, the rejection of the physical, like the rejection of the external, must be followed by a rejection of the mental or the non-physical as well. Otherwise conceptual dualities persist.

Third, then, is the basic point that underlies all of what has been said: The basic 'duality' in Yogācāra philosophy—be it in the SNS or the TSN—is the duality inherent in any and all conceptual bifurcation. The critique of the 'duality' of conceptual bifurcation begins (historically) with a critique of the Buddha's own language of 'compounded' and 'uncompounded', but it extends, via a critique of form and non-form, to include the 'duality' of mental perception itself as an example of 'grasper' and 'grasped'. In Vasubandhu's Yogācāra, then, and forever forward, there is no longer any distinction between the non-duality that undermines the belief in reality and unreality and the non-duality that undermines the belief in mind and mental objects. When he turns to comment upon earlier texts, the essential falsity of all dualities is encompassed in his simple gloss, 'grasper and grasped'.

Abbreviations

AKBh	*Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*: Pradhan (1975)
AS	*Abhidharmasamuccaya*: Rahula (1971)
DhDhV	*Dharmadharmatāvibhāga*: Mathes (1996)
DhDhVV	*Dharmadharmatāvibhāgavṛtti*: Mathes (1996)
LAS	*Laṅkāvatārasūtra*: Suzuki (1999)
MAV	*Madhyāntavibhāga*: Anacker (1998)

MAVBh	*Madhyāntavibhāgabhāṣya*: Anacker (1998)
MS	*Mahāyānasaṃgraha*: Lamotte (1973)
MSBh	*Mahāyānasaṃgrahabhāsya*: Derge Tanjur, Sems tsam ri (199–?)
MSA	*Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra*: Lévi (1907–1911)
MSABh	*Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkārabhāṣya*: Lévi (1907–1911)
SNS	*Saṃdhinirmocanasūtra*: Lamotte (1935)
TSN	*Trisvabhāvanirdeṣa*: de la Vallée Poussin (1933)
Viṃś	*Viṃśatikakārikā*: Lévi (1925)

Notes

[1] The reduction is not always explicit. Wood (1991, p. 43) directly equates the two, writing, for instance, 'duality (*dvaya*)—the supposed external object—is the imagined nature'. Somewhat more subtly, Garfield (2002, p. 139) equates 'actual phenomena' with 'objects of experience' in spite of the fact that the verse upon which he is commenting describes these 'actual phenomena' as (in Garfield's translation) 'emergent consciousness, / Having emerged from the conceptualization of seer and seen'—i.e. duality. Other authors recognize that duality and external objects are different but nonetheless slip occasionally into mistakes that I will argue represent a conflation of the two. Such mistakes include, for instance, Hattori's apparently uncontroversial description of the ultimate Yogācāra awakening (1988, p. 27) as a realization 'that the object does not really exist'. In fact, the subject also must fail the test of existence, and in fact the notion of existence and non-existence is itself considered a dualistic error. My analysis is intended to counter such simplifications.

[2] MAVBh on 1.1, MSABh on XI.24. I will discuss an alternative interpretation of the term below.

[3] This is Garfield's interpretation (2002, p. 142), for instance, when he says of what is 'dual in nature' that 'it is an independent object of mind and so is distinct from the subject that apprehends it'.

[4] Such is a sensible interpretation of the opening section of Vasubandhu's Viṃś, which explains that the triple world is only mind (*cittamātra*), and then explains the *mātra* of *cittamātra* by saying, 'the point of 'only' (*mātra*) is to exclude external objects (*artha*)'. Viṃś 3: *mātramityarthapratiṣedhārthaṃ*. I am not arguing against this being a denial of the external world, but I do hope to show that the preoccupation with the external world is only part of the denial of duality, which includes a denial of the internal world as well.

[5] This places me at odds with Dan Lusthaus (2004), though only partially. I am convinced by Lusthaus' analysis of Yogācāra as similar to epistemological idealism. Yes, the whole point of Yogācāra is to show that our ordinary conception of reality is false, and must be transformed. And yes, the Yogācāra must, as good Buddhists, maintain belief in some kind of reality that is unavailable to ordinary beings. Where he is discussing perception, however, Lusthaus fails to note the centrality of the Yogācāra *critique* of our ordinary understanding of perception in general, and *rūpa* in particular: 'The case of material elements is important for understanding one reason why Yogaacaara is not metaphysical idealism. No Yogaacaara text denies materiality (*ruupa*) as a valid Buddhist category. On the contrary, Yogaacaarins include materiality in their analysis'. I consider this a mistake. While Yogācārins may retain the term *rūpa* for analytical purposes, to suggest that Yogācāra unequivocally inherits the Abhidharma categorization of *rūpa* is to misconstrue the crucial Yogācāra emphasis on the falsity of duality. As this article seeks to show, materiality in Yogācāra analysis is associated with exactly what is false in our ordinary conceptions. Lusthaus (2002) is somewhat more subtle on this point, and I prefer to treat it in detail elsewhere.

[6] AKBh I.9a–b. The two that are not *rūpa* are, of course, the mind and mental objects.

[7] More text-critical research will be necessary to determine whether Vasubandhu was the first, or even the most important, advocate of the positions he articulates. My central goal here is to articulate the distinctive character of the positions themselves.

[8] By this term I intend the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra* together with its commentary.

[9] Recent examples include Hattori (1982), Kaplan (1990), Nagao and Kawamura (1991, pp. 51–60), Prasad (1993) and Tripathi (1969).

[10] MS II.27/ *gźan gyi dbaṅ gi ṅo bo ñid ci'i phyir ji skad smos pa'i sgyu ma la sogs pa lta bur bstan ce na/ gźan gyi dbaṅ gi ṅo bo ñid la gźan dag nor ba ñid du som ñi za ba bzlog pa'i phyir ro/* I take Asaṅga to be the author of the MS and the AS, but do not consider other texts attributed to Asaṅga to have any well established authorship. I thus refer to them by their titles only.

[11] TSN 2a,c: *yat khyāti paratantro 'sau . . . pratyayādhīnavṛttitvāt . . . .*

[12] TSN 6 explains that the mental 'cause' (*hetu*) is the 'consciousness called the storehouse' (*ālayākhyavijñānaṃ*) and the 'result' (*phala*) is the 'sevenfold [consciousnesses] called active' (*pravṛttyākhyaṃ ca saptadhā*). See Waldron (2003) for a detailed, current treatment of the *ālayavijñāna*.

[13] MS II.27 1. *'di ltar gźan dag 'di sñam du ji ltar na med pa spyod yul du 'gyur sñam du sems pa de dag gi som ñi za ba de bzlog pa'i phyir sgyu ma lta bu ñid do/*
2. */sems daṅ sems las byuṅ ba don med pa rnams ji ltar 'byuṅ sñam du som ñi za ba bzlog pa'i phyir smig rgyu lta bu ñid do/*
3. */don med na 'dod pa daṅ mi 'dod pa'i ñe bar spyod par ji tar 'gyur sñam du som ñi za ba bzlog pa'i phyir rmi lam lta bu ñid do/.*
The MS provides another five figures, but I am focusing here on the magical illusion and using the dream as a comparative example.

[14] This is doubtless a reference to SNS I.6, which I discuss below.

[15] AS I.2, p. 30.1–4. Rahula (1971, p. 48).

[16] AKBh I.39.

[17] MS II.5, p. 26: *de la lus daṅ lus can daṅ za ba po'i rnam par rig pa ni mig la sogs pa'i naṅ gi khams drug tu rig par bya'o/.*

[18] In AS I.IV he calls this the 'internal body' (*ādhyātmaṃ kāya*). Rahula (1971, p. 118).

[19] There is a slight discrepancy between the MSBh and the MS on this passage. The former glosses the 'body-possessor' as the *kliṣṭa-manas* and the 'experiencer' as the *mano-dhātu*. The latter glosses the 'body-possessor' as the five outer-directed sensory consciousnesses and the 'experiencer' as the mental consciousness. The latter seems to be more consistent with the the *Abhidharmasamuccaya*, which says, Rahula (1971, p. 19), that all seven of the mental dharmas constitute the *mana āyatana*. But the former's indictment of belief in the body, as the basis of the defiled mind, is consistent with my argument below that Vasubandhu is centrally interested in undermining such belief.

[20] In truth, ten are listed, but since the last five are forms of the first five, I opt for simplicity and skip them here.

[21] MS II.5, p. 26: *de ñe bar spyad par bya ba'i rnam par rig pa ni gzugs la sogs pa'i phyi'i khams drug tu rig par bya'o/.*

[22] MS II.5, p. 26: *de la ñe bar spyod pa rnam par rig pa ni mig gi rnam par śes pa la sogs pa'i khams drug tu rig par bya'o/.*

[23] MS II.6–9 draws upon SNS VIII.7–8 and prefigures both Vasubandhu's Viṃś and Dignāga's *Ālambanaparīkṣā*.

[24] Hall (1983, pp. 145–146). Hall's edition, p. 234, has: *ātmany asati katham ādhyātmikaṃ bāhyaṃ vā/ ahaṃkārasanniśrayatvāc cittam ātme 'ty upacaryate/ 'ātmanā hi sudāntena svargaṃ prāpnoti paṇḍitaḥ 'ity uktaṃ/ cittasya cā 'nyatra damanam uktaṃ bhagavatā/ 'cittasya damanaṃ sādhu cittaṃ dāntaṃ sukhāvaham' iti/ ata ātmabhūtasya cittasyā 'śrayabhāvena pratyāsannatvāt cakṣurādīnām ādkhyātmikatvaṃ rūpādīnāṃ viṣayabhāvād bāhyatvam/.*

[25] Although the term for figurative comparison (*upacāra*) does not appear in this passage, I agree with Hall's translation because Vasubandhu's analysis fits with his figurative principle articulated in several places in the AKBh, 'This is because of the figurative use (*upacāra*) of the [name of the] effect for the cause'. Hall (1983, pp. 69, 192–193): *kāraṇe kāryopacārāt*.

[26] MSBh (Sems tsam ri) 152b(304).1–3: *bcom ldan 'das kyis don ci las dgoṅs nas yod pa ma yin pa'i sgyu ma la sogs pa'i dpe brgyad bstan ce na/ de bstan par bya'o// de la re źig sgyu ma'i dpe ni naṅ gi bdag ñid can gyi skye mched drug po mig la sogs pa rnams kyi gñen po ste gaṅ gi phyir sgyu ma'i glaṅ po bźin du de dag yod pa ma yin na yaṅ ñe bar dmigs pa ñid du blta bar bya'o źes ston to//smig rgyu'i dpes kyaṅ gaṅ gi phyir snod kyi 'jig rten de rnams kyaṅ de daṅ mtshuṅs pa'i phyir smig rgyu bźin te/ yod pa ma yin na yaṅ gduṅs pa'i dbaṅ gis chur dmigs pa bźin no// gzugs la sogs pa'i ñe bar spyod pa'i gñen po ni rmi lam gyi dpes te/ des na rmi lam bźin du gzugs la sogs pa 'di dag yod pa ma yin na yaṅ de las byuṅ ba'i 'dod pa daṅ mi 'dod pa'i ñe bar spyod pa yaṅ de bźin du bstan to/* Cf. Anacker's summary on pp. 635–636 of Potter (1999) and Lamotte's (1973) French summary, Vol. II, p. 124. Note that in n. 578, p. 758, Anacker writes that Lamotte (1934) translates ch. 2 of MSBh, whereas Lamotte (1934), although named 'chapitre II' in fact provides a translation of what Lamotte (1973) and Anacker's summary call chapter I, verses 1–28.

[27] In fact, MSBh dutifully cites and explains all eight figures exactly as they are explained in the MS before turning to treat them separately in this passage.

[28] See D'Amato (2000, pp. 33–39), for discussion of the authorship of the MSABh. As D'Amato points out, Asaṅga (i.e. the author of the MS) cites the MSA as an authoritative text. Authorship of the MSABh is disputed, and preferring the Sanskrit and Chinese manuscripts over the Tibetan attribution to Vasubandhu, D'Amato concludes that it is most likely the composition of one otherwise unknown Vyavadātasamaya. I adopt D'Amato's practice of referring to the MSA and MSABh without authorial attribution. Vasubandhu's understanding of the MSABh as an authoritative source will be made clear in what follows.

[29] MSABh on MSA 11.30 (62): *tatra māyopamā dharmāḥ ṣaḍādhyātmikānyāyatanāni/ asatyātmajīvāditve tathā prakhyānāt/ svapnopamāḥ ṣaṭ bāhyānyāyatanāni tadupabhogasyāvastukatvāt/* I believe that Vasubandhu's MSBh and TSN draw upon the MSA's explanation of the dream and the magical illusion, but it is interesting that with respect to several other figures Asaṅga's MS in fact accords better with the MSA. This passage and the next cited from the MSABh below are mentioned by Masaaki Hattori (1982) in his discussion of the dream analogy in Yogācāra.

[30] Viṃś 3.20–22: *svapne vināpyarthena kvacideva deśe kiṃcid bhramarārāmastrīpuruṣādikaṃ dṛśyate na sarvatra/ tatraiva ca deśe kadāciddṛśyate na sarvakālamiti siddho vināpyarthena deśakālaniyamaḥ/*.

[31] Vyāsa's commentary on Patañjali's *Yogasūtras* provides an argument against Vasubandhu's position here, in a treatment that clearly considers the dream as evidence that needs to be refuted in order to maintain confidence in the reality of external objects. This is summarized by Sharma (1992). No such counter-arguments are provided against magical illusions. Prasad (1993) summarizes a 'Śaṅkarite critique' of the dream argument that fits Vasubandhu's position above. Prasad seems to indicate, however, that Vasubandhu uses the argument to prove that reality is necessarily only a dream, whereas surely Vasubandhu intends the dream only to prove that reality *could be* like a dream. Both Sharma and Prasad paint Vasubandhu as requiring that perception and/or knowledge be indubitable, but I do not find this position in the Viṃś.

[32] The other instances are both exceptions that prove the rule for which I am arguing. The first, at TSN 4b (though see Tola and Dragonetti (1983, p. 263, n. 50) for manuscript divergences), is the initial appearance of the same compound that I discuss here, *dvayātmanā*: *tatra kiṃ khyāty asatkalpaḥ kathaṃ khyāti dvayātmanā/ tasya kā nāstitā tena yā tatrādvayadharmatā//*. While every commentator understands the significance of the verse's

distinction between *dvaya* and *advaya*, no one to my knowledge has yet pointed out the parallel opposition of *-ātmanā* and *-dharmatā* set up in the second half of each compound. It is, of course, legitimate to translate *dvayātmanā*, as most do, without explicit reference to a personal *ātman*, but I believe that to do so loses Vasubandhu's contrasting the 'self' with 'reality' when he finishes one line with 'with *the self of* duality' (*dvayātmanā*) and the next line with 'the reality of non-duality' (*advayadharmatā*). The second instance, at 23a, also refers to the mistaken reality of the constructed nature, describing it as 'the self of convention' (*vyavahārātmā*). In many compounds throughout the TSN Vasubandhu indicates something 'having the nature of' using not *ātman* but the derivative *ātmaka*/*ātmika*. Only the falsely constructed dual nature—the unreal self—is referred to by the term *ātman*.

[33] TSN 27 & 29: *māyākṛtaṃ mantravaśāt khyāti hastyātmanā yathā/ ākāramātraṃ tatrāsti hastī nāsti tu sarvathā// . . . . // asatkalpas tathā khyāti mūlacittād dvayātmanā/ dvayam atyantato nāsti tartāsty ākṛtimātrakam//* I mention that I am translating ātman literally because the term often means 'the nature of' or some such and not, as I have it here, 'the self'. The words that I translate here as 'as the self of an elephant . . . as the self of duality' appear: 'like an elephant . . . by nature of duality' in Anacker (1998, p. 294); 'Like an elephant . . . duality' in Garfield (2002, pp. 133–134); 'an elephant . . . with the nature of duality' in Kaplan (1990, p. 56); 'in the nature of an elephant . . . in the nature of duality' in Kochumuttom (1989, pp. 112–113); 'comme un éléphant . . . en dualité' in De la Vallée Poussin (1933, p. 160); 'as an elephant . . . with duality' in Tola and Dragonetti (1983). Only Kochumuttom's translation preserves the obvious parallel between the verses, and is how I would translate the expressions if I were not drawn by the passages just cited to take the *ātman* to refer literally to the personal self. Garfield's translation is based on the Tibetan translations, none of which preserve the parallel. Each Tibetan translator seems to have chosen to translate *ātman* literally as *bdag* or *bdag ñid* either in the case of the elephant or in the case of duality, but never both.

[34] This summary holds even if the reader remains skeptical about my translation of *dvayātmanā* as 'as the self of duality'.

[35] On *smṛtyupasthāna*, see Rahula (1971, p. 169) and Dudjom (1991, Vol. II, p. 129), which contains further references.

[36] MSABh on MSA XVIII.43–44 (141): *katham parijñātaḥ kāyasya māyopamatvaparijñayāt tathaivābhūtarūpasaṃprakhyānāt/ vedanāyāḥ svapnopamatvaparijñayā tathaiva mithyānubhavāt/ cittasya prakṛtiprabhāsvaratvaparijñayā ākāśavat/ dharmāṇām āgantukatvaparijñayā ākāśaganturajodhūmābhranīhāropakleśavat/*.

[37] See above discussion of MS I.5 and note on Vasubandhu's commentary. Also cf. Rahula (1971, pp. 118 ff.), where Asaṅga treats the internal and external 'body' (*kāya*) as categories investigated also under the *smṛtyupasthāna*.

[38] AS I.1 (1): *saparigrahadehātmavastu*.

[39] MAV 1.3 (425): *sattvapratibhāsaṃ yat pañcendriyatvena svaparasantānayoḥ*. Vasubandhu goes on to attribute the appearance of 'self' (*ātman*) to the defiled mind (*kliṣṭa manas*), which fits with the other side of the equation, the 'self of duality'.

[40] In a fascinating recent article, Noritoshi Aramaki (2000) argues that early Yogācāra texts reflect what he calls an *avavāda* structure, in which (if I understand it properly) the paths and practices of the bodhisattva are described from two complementary perspectives: (1) from the perspective of the Tathāgatas' teaching which must be understood and put into action, and (2) from the perspective of the Tathāgatas' realization which must be taught. Aramaki focuses on the *avavāda* structure of the Maitreya chapter of the SNS, and discovers therein that the primary specific realization that must correlate with the teaching contained within the famous first extant passage to declare the *vijñapti-mātra* doctrine—and thus, the 'realization' that generates the defining doctrine of the Yogācāra school—is nothing other than the 'infinite supernatural power (*mahāprabhāva*)' to know how all beings' *citta* arises (p. 52). Primarily, this means that the bodhisattva knows how beings are aware of: having

a body (*ādānavijñāna*), perceiving sensory objects such as form, etc. (*sakṛdrūpādiviṣayodgraha*), and mental constructions (*vikalpamanovijñāna*) (p. 53). Aramaki points out that by correlating these three layers of Early Buddhist *vijñāna* theory with the declaration of *vijñapti-mātra*—that is, by declaring that the bodhisattva understands these to be awarenesses without mental objects ('*ālambanavijñaptimātra*')—the SNS succeeds in providing 'a synthesis of Early and Mahāyāna Buddhisms' (p. 57). In concurrence with Aramaki, then, we can add the following to our discussion thus far: (1) The two MSABh magical elephant passages discussed thus far also support Aramaki's '*avadāna* structure' thesis because they describe the very same figurative use first as the ideal aspirant's doctrine and second as the bodhisattva's 'thorough knowledge'; (2) The declaration of the illusory nature of the body, which we have established as the magical elephant's figurative *forté*, just may be the primary element in the central doctrine of the Vijñānavāda. It is no coincidence that this figure plays so important a role in the texts under discussion here.

[41] Cox (1988, p. 55) notes that the Sautrāntikas believed that a magical illusion required a *rūpa* such as a piece of wood as a substratum. This is a relevant point, but not essential, because there is no *rūpa* corresponding to the 'self' that one perceives. The piece of wood does not actually look like an elephant. We think there is an elephant because we fail to rely upon our senses.

[42] MAVBh 1.1 (424): *abhūtaparikalpo 'sti dvayaṃ tatra na vidyate/ śūnyatā vidyate tvatra tasyām api sa vidyate // tatrābhūtaparikalpo grāhyagrāhakavikalpaḥ/ dvayaṃ grāhyaṃ grāhakaṃ ca/ śūnyatā tasyābhūtaparikalpasya grāhyagrāhakabhāvena virahitatā/ tasyām api sa vidyata ityabhūtaparikalpaḥ/*.

[43] MAVBh I.5 (425): *kalpitaḥ paratantraś ca pariniṣpanna eva ca/ arthād abhūtakalpāc ca dvayābhāvāc ca deśitaḥ // arthaḥ parikalpitaḥ svabhāvaḥ/ abhūtaparikalpaḥ paratantraḥ svabhāvaḥ/ grāhyagrāhakābhāvaḥ pariniṣpannaḥ svabhāvaḥ/*.

[44] AS I.2, pp. 30.1–4. Rahula (1971, p. 48).

[45] AKBh II.24 (54–55): *samādhiścittasyaikāgratā/ sūkṣmā hi cittacaittānāṃ viśeṣaḥ/ sa eva duḥparicchedaḥ pravāheṣvapi tāvat kim punaḥ kṣaneṣu/ rūpinīnām api* [55] *tāvadoṣadhīnām bahurasānāṃ kāsāṃcid indriyagrāhyā rasaviśeṣā duravadhārā bhavanti kim punarye dharmā arupino buddhigrāhyāḥ/*.

[46] MAV III.17 with MAVBh (443): *grāhakagrāhyatadgrāhabījārthaścāparo mataḥ// katamo 'paraḥ/ dhātuḥ/ tatra grāhakabījārthaścakṣurdhātvādayaḥ/ grāhyabījārtho rūpadhātvādayaḥ/ tadgrāhabījārthaścakṣurvijñānadhātvādayaḥ //*. I am grateful to Mario D'Amato for pointing me in the direction of this passage.

[47] AS I.2 (20.10–18). This section contains reference to a rather more intricate theory of *grāhaka* than I can analyze here.

[48] SNS VIII.20 (100): *'dzin pa'i don ni skye mched gzugs can lṅa daṅ/ sems daṅ yid daṅ/ rnam par śes pa daṅ/ sems las byuṅ ba'i chos rnams so/ gzuṅ ba'i don ni phyi rol gyi skye mched drub po dag yin no/ byams pa yaṅ 'dzin pa'i don gang yin pa de ni gzuṅ ba'i don kyaṅ yin no/*.

[49] Garfield (2002, p. 150).

[50] Readers familiar with these texts may object that the expression *grāhyagrāhaka* does appear in them several times in evident relation to duality. For instance, it appears at MAV III.4 (438) in a position clearly intended to associate the term with the dependent nature, and then in III.9 (440) places the term *dvayam* in similar position. My argument here is not that the terms 'duality' and 'grasper and grasped' cannot or should not be related. I am only suggesting that earlier texts allow for a wider definition than merely 'grasper and grasped'. At MAV V.23–26 (459), *grāhyagrāhaka* appears seventh in a laundry list of 'extremes of duality' (*dvayāntatā*) that the work is dedicated to eradicating. Even in MAV III.4 *grāhyagrāhaka* is paired with *bhāvābhāva*. Indeed, both pairs of terms, and the term duality, find their most extensive discussions within the context of discussions of the dependent nature.

[51] In their commentaries to MS II.3, summarized by Lamotte (1973, p. 90), both Vasubandhu and Asvabhāva bring in *grāhya-grāhaka* language to explain *parikalpitalakṣaṇa* and

vijñaptimātra. Williams (1989, p. 83) cites this MS passage as a paradigmatic instance of the Cittamātra description of the 'object' as both 'grasper and grasped'—which it is, of course, but only in the commentaries. Asaṅga does not use this terminology here.

[52] See especially MAVBh, MSABh, MSBh, and DhDhVV. I include the MSABh here because the Tibetan canon attributes it to Vasubandhu. I have not previously been a supporter of the 'two Vasubandhus' thesis (Jaini, 1958) or a 'Vasubandhu complex' of texts, but I am hard pressed to account for the difference between these commentaries and Vasubandhu's so-called independent Yogācāra works—*Pañcaskandhakaprakaraṇa*, Viṃś, *Trimśikākārikā*, and TSN—which entirely lack the definition of duality as grasper and grasped. This section contains only a first pass at sketching the different ideas at play in this development.

[53] Mario D'Amato (2003) has made a fascinating study of this and surrounding passages. See especially p. 197. MSA XI.40 with MSABh: *trividhatrividhābhāso grāhyagrāhakalakṣaṇaḥ/ abhūtaparikalpo hi paratantrasya lakṣaṇaṃ// trividhatrividhaś cābhāso 'syeti trividhatrividhābhāsaḥ/ tatra trividhābhāsaḥ padābhāso 'rthābhāso dehābhāsaś ca/ punar trividhābhāso manaudgrahavikalpābhāsaḥ/ mano yat kliṣtaṃ sarvadā/ udgrahaḥ pañca vijñānakāyāḥ/ vikalpo manovijñānam/ tatra prathamatrividhābhāso grahyalakṣaṇaḥ/ dvitīyo grāhakalakṣaṇaḥ/ ityayam abhūtaparikalpaḥ paratantrasya lakṣaṇam/*

[54] This is not a literal translation, but explains the meaning of the gloss.

[55] See below for an alternative reading of *arthạ* here as indicating not 'meaning' but 'object' or 'thing'.

[56] SNS X.10 (162-163): *bcom ldan 'das de bźin gśegs pa'i mṅon par rdzogs par byaṅ chub pa gaṅ lags pa daṅ/ chos kyi 'khor lo bskor ba gaṅ lags pa daṅ/ yoṅs su mya ṅan las 'das pa chen po gaṅ lags pa de dag gi mtshan ñid ni ji lta bur rig par bgyi lags/ 'jam dpal gñis su med pa'i mtshan ñid yin te/ mṅon par rdzogs par byaṅ chub pa 'aṅ ma yin/ mṅon par rdzogs par byaṅ ma chub pa 'aṅ ma yin/ chos kyi 'khor lo bskor ba 'aṅ ma yin/ chos kyi 'khor lo mi bskor ba 'aṅ ma yin/ yoṅs su mya ṅan las 'das pa chen po 'aṅ ma yin/ yoṅs su mya ṅan las 'das pa chen po med pa 'aṅ ma yin te/ chos kyi sku śin tu rnam par dag pa ñid kyi phyir daṅ/ sprul pa'i sku kun tu ston pa ñid kyi phyir ro/*

[57] SNS I. 1 (34): *kye rgyal ba'i sras chos thams cad gñis su med pa chos thams cad gñis su med pa źes bya na/ chos thams cad ni gaṅ/ ji ltar na gñis su med pa yin/ rigs kyi bu chos thams cad chos thams cad ces bya ba ni gñis ji tsam pa ste/ 'dus byas daṅ/ 'dus ma byas so// de la 'dus byas ni 'dus byas kyaṅ ma yin/ 'dus ma byas kyaṅ ma yin no// 'dus ma byas ni 'dus ma byas kyaṅ ma yin/ 'dus byas kyaṅ ma yin no/*

[58] SNS I.2 (35).

[59] SNS I.4–5 (36–37).

[60] Here I use the terms 'observe the illusion' and 'see the illusion' to describe the figure in the SNS although, as I have argued earlier, illusory images are not brought about through perception alone. What the SNS says (36), more precisely, is that when the foolish people 'see or hear' the trees and leaves and so on, they form a thought with respect to it (*de mthoṅ ṅam thos na 'di sñam du sems te*). In this case, however, since the SNS is not concerned to elucidate the relationship between perceiver and the perceived, focusing as it does on the 'duality' of the belief in the existence *vs*. the non-existence of the elephant, I opt for simplicity.

[61] My summary is rather different than the one given in Potter (1999).

[62] SNS I.5 (37): *chos thams cad kyi brjod du med pa'i chos ñid*. This expression is the motivation for the *Dharmadharmatā-vibhāga*.

[63] SNS I.6 (38): *zab mo byis pa'i spyod yul ma yin pa // brjod med gñis min rgyal bas bstan mdsad kyaṅ// byis pa gti mug rmoṅs pa 'di dag ni // smra ba'i spros la dga' źiṅ gñis la gnas // ma rtogs pa 'am log par rtogs pa dag // lug daṅ ba laṅ dag tu yaṅ skye źiṅ// de dag śes pa'i smra ba de bor nas// śin tu yun riṅ 'khor ba 'dir 'khor 'gyur/*

[64] A particularly interesting point to note here is that the best explanation is the figure, and that the figure must be *only* a figure, because an example or a direct, discursive explanation

would necessarily be tainted by the inherent 'duality' of all language and conceptualization. Only figures can stand because since they are, by their nature, self-undermining in the sense that they require the hearer to understand something different from what is asserted.

[65] MSA XI.25,27: *māyāhastyākṛtigrāhabhrānter dvayam udāhṛtam/ dvayaṃ tatra yathā nāsti dvayaṃ caivopalabhyate// . . . // tathā bhāvāt tathā 'bhāvād 'bhāvābhāvaviśeṣataḥ/ sadasanto 'tha māyābhā ye dharmā bhrāntilakṣaṇāḥ//.*

[66] Emphasis added. MSABh on 25–26: *grāhyaṃ grāhakaṃ ca tatra yathā nāsti dvayaṃ caivopalabhyate/.*

[67] MSA XI.34–35: *cittaṃ dvayaprabhāsaṃ rāgādyābhāsam iṣyate tadvat/ śraddhādyābhāsaṃ na tadanyo dharmaḥ kliṣṭakuśalo 'sti// yathā dvayapratibhāsād anyo na dvayalakṣaṇaḥ/ iti cittaṃ citrābhāsaṃ citrākāraṃ pravartate//*

[68] MSA XI.21–22, 24: *tathā dvayābh[ās]atātrāsti tadbhāvaśca na vidyate/ tasmād astitvanāstitvaṃ rūpādiṣu vidhīyate// na bhāvas tatra cābhāvo nābhāvo bhāva eva ca/ bhāvābhāvāviśeṣaś ca rūpādiṣu vidhīyate// . . . // bhrānter nimittaṃ bhrāntiś ca rūpavijñaptir iṣyate/ arūpiṇī ca vijñaptir abhāvāt syān na cetarā//*

[69] MSABh on MSA XI.24: *kāraṇābhāvāt.*

[70] It is somewhat controversial to declare that the Yogācāra do not believe in the possibility of *rūpa*. Nonetheless, I believe this not just from what I have written but from a variety of contexts in which it appears that Yogācārins reject not just mental sensation, but also the physical sensory organs and fields. Yogācārins reject, for instance, all eleven of the dharmas that the AKBh includes in the aggregate of physical form (*rūpa-skandha*): the five physical sense organs, the five objects of those sense organs, and the 'invisible form' (*avijñapti-rūpa*). The fact that this last category is rejected is uncontroversial. It serves a special purpose in Sarvāstivādin Abhidharma philosophy, accounting as it does for the unperceived streams of karmic cause and effect. Its designation as *avijñapti* distinguishes it from all other kinds of matter, since while every other category of *rūpa* is defined according to its role in perception, the *avijñapti-rūpa* is 'invisible' or 'unperceived' or 'uncognized' and so plays no role in perception. Yogācāra philosophers not only do away with this extra kind of form, replacing it with a thoroughly mental karmic causal account centering on the 'storehouse consciousness' (*ālayavijñāna*), they also deny the very existence of anything that is *avijñapti*. Their rejection of the only non-perceptual variety of form fits with their declaration of the non-duality of the standard ten perceptual kinds of *rūpa*, as we see in MSA XI.21–22, and XI.40.

Yogācāra thinkers also describe additional categories of *rūpa* that are nonetheless denied reality. Asaṅga's AS adds five kinds of *rūpa* to the 10 standard organs and fields, all of which he classifies within the *dharma-dhātu* and therefore consist in 'physical form' that exists only as a mental object: *ābhisaṃkṣepika*, *abhyavakāśika*, *sāmādānika*, *parikalpita*, and *vaibhutvika* (Rahula, 1971, p. 24). The very notion that mental objects might be considered within the category of *rūpa* suggests the merely conventional nature of the category itself. This is confirmed when we notice that (1) the first (*ābhisaṃkṣepika*) is a term for the atom, which is a primary target of Vasubandhu's analytical critique in the Viṃś, and (2) the fourth (*parikalpita*) is the constructed nature, which the AS equates with 'the emptiness of the non-existent' (*abhāvaśūnyatā*) and Vasubandhu equates with 'duality' and the elephant that one imagines to exist where there is none (Rahula, 1971, p. 65.). Both are merely mental imaginations or projections of physicality, and yet to the AS they are as *rūpika* as the ten organs and fields. What this means, of course, is that *rūpa* is ultimately unreal.

This elimination of materiality is accomplished partially through the addition of two new varieties of consciousness (*ālayavijñāna* and *kliṣṭamanas*), but also (as I am arguing) through a denial of the ordinary functionality of perception, as encapsulated in the non-duality of grasper and grasped. This certainly does not mean that *rūpa* is eliminated as a valid conventional category of analysis. Of course, *rūpa* is an essential characteristic of our false perceptions of reality. My point is that much of the Yogācāra description of emptiness or

ultimate reality begins with a denial of the various kinds of physical form, and that physical form is a primary target when, not only conceptual duality, but grasper and grasped is denied.

[71] TSN 36–37 (156): *cittamātropalambhena jñeyārthānupalambhatā/ jñeyārthānupalambhena syāc cittānupalambhatā// dvayor anupalambhena dharmadhātūpalambhatā/ dharmadhātūpalambhena syād vibhutvopalambhatā//.*

[72] Rahder (1926, p. 49).

[73] Schmithausen (1984) and Aramaki (2000). Here I summarize not the SNS passage itself but the MS paraphrase.

[74] MS II.7 (27): *byams pa chos gaṅ yaṅ chos gaṅ la yaṅ mi 'dzin mod kyi/ 'on kyaṅ de ltar skyes pa'i sems gaṅ yin pa de ni de ltar snaṅ ṅo.*

[75] MS II.7 (27).

[76] I do not know whether the change was made before, during, or after the composition of the MS.

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