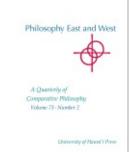


Considering Certification

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Jewel of Reflection on the Truth about Epistemology: A Complete and Annotated Translation of the Tattva-cintā-maṇi. Volume 1, Perception. Volume 2, Inference. Translated by Stephen Phillips. London: Bloomsbury.

Considering Certification



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I. Introduction

Stephen Phillips' Jewel of Reflection on the Truth about Epistemology is a masterful translation and commentary on the books originally written by Gaṅgeśa, the fourteenth-century father of the Navya-Nyāya tradition of Indian philosophy. Jewel is one of the most highly regarded works in Indian epistemology, one that rivals the work of Immanuel Kant in terms of its depth and significance. While J. N. Mohanty (1966) and B. K. Matilal (1968) translated portions of Gaṅgeśa's Jewel, only Phillips (2020) offers a complete translation—one that will serve as the foundation for any future study of Gaṅgeśa. In what follows, I will not be focusing on issues of translation or interpretation pertaining to the text. Rather, I will be engaging Phillips' account of Gaṅgeśa (hereafter Phillips) with the aim of bringing Gaṅgeśa's Jewel into contact with a debate in contemporary epistemology. I believe Gaṅgeśa's distinction between perceptual knowledge and certification has a lot to offer contemporary epistemology.

The point of departure for my engagement with Phillips is the debate over internalism and externalism about knowledge. One account of the debate is that there is a disagreement over whether the KK principle is true. The KK principle states that when x knows that p, x knows that x kn

that x can know that p, without having any reflective access to the knowledge basis for p.² However, some analytic philosophers object to the internalism-externalism debate. In a now classic set of essays, Tyler Burge (1993, 2003) moves around the internalism-externalism debate by drawing a distinction between two types of warrant: *entitlement* and *justification*—where entitlement plays an externalist role, and justification plays an internalist role.

The internalism-externalism distinction does not exist in Indian epistemology. In Indian epistemology, there is a distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic validity. This distinction only superficially resembles the internalism-externalism contrast found in the analytic tradition.³ Just as Indian epistemologists did not draw the distinction between *a priori* and *a posteriori* knowledge, they also did not draw the distinction between justification being a wholly internal affair versus justification being a wholly external affair.

Can the absence of the internalism-externalism debate in classical Indian epistemology be used to draw an alternative map of epistemic relations, one that competes with Burge's distinction between entitlement and justification? Stephen Phillips' (2012) work on Nyāya epistemology in combination with his translation and commentary on *Jewel* allows for an opportunity to explore this question. In section II, I present Burge's account of the dual warrants of entitlement and justification. In section III, I present Phillips' account of perceptual knowledge and certified knowledge. In section IV, I use both theories to analyze a case of perceptual knowledge. In section V, I turn to a comparative analysis of Burge's and Phillips' views, to open up the issue for further debate and discussion.

II. Tyler Burge on Entitlement and Justification

In his 1993 and 2003 articles Burge offers an alternative way of seeing the internalism-externalism debate about justification. In his 1993 work he distinguishes between justification and entitlement as follows:

Although both have positive force in rationally supporting a propositional attitude or cognitive practice, and in constituting an epistemic right to it, entitlements are epistemic rights or warrants that need not be understood by or even accessible to the subject. We are entitled to rely, other things [being] equal, on perception, memory, deductive and inductive reasoning, and on—I will claim—the word of others. The unsophisticated are entitled to rely on their perceptual beliefs. Philosophers may articulate these entitlements. But being entitled does not require being able to justify reliance on these resources, or even to conceive such a justification. Justifications, in the narrow sense, involve reasons that people have and have access to. These may include self-sufficient premises or more discursive justifications. But they must be available in the cognitive repertoire of the subject. The border between the notions of entitlement and justification may be fuzzy. (1993, pp. 458–459)

In the passage above, Burge maintains that entitlement is an epistemic right, and that entitlements are not to be understood on an internalist account. Rather, they are subspecies of an externalist kind of warrant. Entitlements are consistent with the denial of at least some versions of the KK principle, such as *access* and *awareness*. In his 2003 article he further develops the notion of entitlement by drawing out the sense in which it is a subspecies of epistemic externalism. There are several main theses he argues for:

- (i) "Entitlement is *epistemically externalist* inasmuch as it is warrant that need not be fully conceptually accessible, even on reflection, to the warranted individual." (p. 504)
- (ii) Entitlement is a property of a subject in relation to a representation, since entitlement is a species of warrant and warrants aim to provide a "route to truth," and truth is a property of representational contents. (pp. 506–507)
- (iii) Entitlement is integrated with anti-individualism in the philosophy of mind. Anti-individualism is the thesis that "representational states are dependent for their natures, and for the individuation of what representational contents they have, on certain relations between the individual—or relevant representational systems of the individual—and certain aspects of the environment that is represented." (p. 505)
- (iv) "The epistemic goods" of entitlement "are fulfillments of norms associated with achieving the representational good, truth." (p. 506)
- (v) Entitlement is "teleological." "[T]here are certain functions, ends, goals, and commitments, which bring with them goods for animals and their subsystems. Goods are relative to these ends, goals, commitments, or functions." (p. 507)

Concerning the relation between entitlement and perception, Burge says the following:

[T]o be warranted in a visual perceptual belief, one need not have beliefs about one's visual capacities. Such beliefs come later than visual belief about ordinary environmental matters. There is no reason to think that one cannot be warranted in beliefs about the physical environment unless one has meta-beliefs about what capacities one has to perceive it. (2003, p. 529)

Burge claims that perceptual states entitle us to perceptual beliefs:

An epistemic entitlement to rely on a perceptual state or system just *is* an entitlement to hold appropriately associated perceptual beliefs. (2003, p. 531)

Burge provides two conditions that govern the way in which perceptual states contribute to the entitlement to hold a perceptual belief.

The anti-individualist condition. A perceptual representational state has the content it has because there have been causal-formative interactions between the individual through the type of representation and aspects of the environment (2003, p. 531).

The reliable-veridicality condition. For a perceptual representational state to contribute to an epistemic entitlement the perceptual state type must be reliably veridical in the perceptual system's normal environment (2003, p. 532).

Burge's basic view is that we need not debate whether justification is either internalist or externalist. Rather, we can note that there are two types of warrant. One kind of warrant is justification, and it plays the role typically held by the internalist. Another kind is entitlement, and it plays the role typically held by the externalist. An individual can have a perceptual state that entitles them to a perceptual belief even if they have no justification for their perceptual belief based on their perceptual state. Burge's view is that anti-individualism about perception is tied to entitlement as an externalist type of warrant. It is because perceptual representation is asymmetrically dependent on veridical representation that we are able to have an account of entitlement where we have a right to believe a perceptual belief even when we don't have the ability to justify our belief through a correct understanding of our perceptual capacities.

III. Stephen Phillips on Certification and Perception

Phillips' account of Gangeśa is one on which there is a two-tier theory of knowledge. *Perceptual knowledge* is an animal way through which minds are related to the world. *Certified knowledge* is a reflective way in which minds relate to each other in collective reasoning and debate. These are two distinct kinds of *epistemic success* that have superficial similarities in common. Phillips holds the following with respect to *certification*: *S possesses certified knowledge*⁵ that *p* if and only if

- (a) p is true.
- (b) S believes p.
- (c) S's belief that p has been produced by a genuine knowledge source.

Phillips holds (a) because both perceptual knowledge and certified knowledge are factive. One cannot know something that is false. He holds (b) because while perceptual knowledge is *not* a species of belief, *certified knowledge* has belief either as a component or as a consequence of knowing. He holds (c) because, according to the Nyāya, perceptual knowledge (episodes of occurrent knowledge) generate true beliefs. Those true beliefs can be certified or uncertified.

With respect to the distinction between internalism and externalism, Phillips says the following about Gangesa:

[D]espite the externalism [of Gangesa's view], conscious justification is not just important but thematic for Gangesa and Nyāya. When a doubt, dispute, or desire to know arises, then turning to knowledge sources as best we can is our method of resolving it. Thus, the knowledge sources are for Gangesa not only generators of so-to-say unreflective knowledge (some of which we share with animals) but in the context of debate and dispute ... certifiers and methods of inquiry. Certification with respect to a recognized knowledge source elevates, moreover, a subject's level of confidence, and presents a higher barrier to doubt and dispute than there would be otherwise. Bits of inferential knowledge—just as perceptual awareness and knowledge from testimony become more secure through checking to make sure they are true. But though knowledge can be coupled with degrees of certainty, a bottom level of, so-tosay, sense certainty (without being actually certified) naturally accompanies our cognitions purporting to present the world (called by Gangesa "awareness," anubhava). Otherwise, there would not be what Western philosophers call belief, or, as Gangeśa would say, trust in cognition as shown in action. (Phillips 2020, p. 10)

According to Phillips, Gangesa is neither an internalist, an externalist, nor a combination of them.⁶,⁷ Nevertheless, Gangesa has commitments that fall in line with various parts of internalism and externalism. Consider Gangesa on occurrent knowledge:

Occurrent knowledge is not only known but produced, too, from something extrinsic, not "of itself," i.e., not from a collection of causes sufficient to produce just any cognition. (Phillips 2020, p. 145)

For Gangesa the source of an episode of knowledge—for example both the seeing that A and the resulting fact that it is known—is produced from something extrinsic to the subject. The episode as an instance of perceptual knowledge relationally ties the subject to the world. Thus, justification, on an internalist model, where it is taken to be an ability tied to the subject where rationality is at play, could not be a component of perceptual knowledge for Gangesa. This is one of the externalist commitments of Gangesa.

However, Phillips points out that Gangesa also holds that perceptual knowledge can either be certified or uncertified, and that conscious justification is important. For Gangesa some instances of perceptual knowledge that are not certified, or don't need to be certified, are still instances of epistemic success. Central to Gangesa, and to Vātsyāyana before him, is the view that knowledge is for action's sake, and it is through action in the world that our knowledge is revealed. As a consequence, when we are in the right position with respect to objects and qualities in our environment, we are subject to episodes of knowing. It is by virtue of those episodes

arising in us through the satisfaction of a complex causal network that we are able to effectively act and cope in the world. We act in ways that are beneficial to us, and these actions are made possible by episodes of knowing.

It doesn't follow from the fact that perceptual knowledge does not always require certification that it never needs to be certified. For Gangeśa, philosophical debate is one place where certification is required. His philosophical methodology requires that we use knowledge sources, such as inference and perception as well as counterfactual reasoning (tarka), to resolve philosophical disputes.

According to Phillips, a key feature of certification is that it is disjunctive in nature. Not only did Gangeśa hold a disjunctivist account of perception, the also thought of certification as being disjunctive. Just as one can distinguish between perception and pseudoperception via the causal profile of each, one can also distinguish between certification and pseudopercertification. Certification is objective and requires that certain objective constraints are satisfied. Pseudopertification is subjective. Pseudopertification looks right from the first-person point of view, but is objectively misleading. Pseudopertification is subject to correction.

If S is pseudo-certified in holding p, then there is some information that S could learn such that they would no longer be certified in holding that p. By contrast, *genuine certification* is such that if S is certified, then there is nothing that S could non-mistakenly learn that would undermine or override the holding of p. The relation between certification and perceptual knowledge is such that two conditions hold:

- (i) S can know that p and not be certified with respect to p at a time t.
- (ii) If *S* knows that *p*, then for *S*, *p* is *certifiable* in principle, but perhaps not at *t*.

For analytic epistemologists, Gaṅgeśa's view of certification invites the question: is there a conception of justification in Gaṅgeśa that matches the view that *x* can be justified via reasons that turn out to be false? If certification is the place where conscious justification is to be found in Gaṅgeśa, one might look there for a fallibilist conception of justification. Phillips holds that appearance of certification is a good translation of prāmāṇyābhāsa and a suitable rendering of a fallibilist conception of justification. Given that certification is disjunctive, taking appearance of certification for a fallibilist conception of justification appears to be appropriate.¹²

IV. An Example and Two Analyses

One way to compare Burge's dual-warrant theory with Phillips' certification versus perceptual knowledge is to examine a case and see where the two views agree and disagree. Consider the following case:

Suppose early in the day Maya sees water in a pond in the center of the desert in *proper* viewing conditions where there is a causal connection between her seeing and the actual pool of water. Suppose later that day Simone asks Maya: "Is there any water nearby?" Simone notes to Maya that heat in the air is causing mirages in their area. Because Maya cannot discriminate between a mirage and water from a distance, doubt arises in her mind as to what she saw. Maya says to Simone, "I don't know, but I might have seen water over there (pointing to the pond). It sure seemed to me that I saw water."¹³

In Burge's view, Maya is entitled to her belief that there is water nearby because her representation of water was caused by water under the appropriate causal conditions for one to have a veridical representation of water. After her veridical perception of water, Maya is in a position to knowledgably assert that there is water nearby based on her entitlement to her perceptual belief. However, Maya doesn't know that water is nearby after Simone introduces the defeater that there are lots of mirages in the area because Maya cannot discriminate between what she saw and a mirage. She also lacks any overriding defeater to the one introduced by Simone—for example, she cannot claim that the prevailing environmental conditions in the vicinity of the pond do not support the appearance of mirages. Thus, while Maya is entitled to her belief even after Simone introduces the defeater, she lacks justification for the perceptual belief. One remaining question is: what is the status of her perceptual belief with respect to knowledge? Does Maya know on the basis of the entitlement to her belief or does she lose her knowledge because she lacks justification for the perceptual belief?

According to Phillips, Gangesa holds that one's knowledge can be *shaken off* through the introduction of defeaters. This means that although Maya has perceptual knowledge because her knowledge is a direct consequence of the formation of a perceptually caused awareness that is true, the introduction of the defeater by Simone causes her to lose her knowledge. That is, there is a relation between perceptual knowledge and certification. Although one can know something that is not certified, if someone else introduces defeaters to their knowledge, the knowledge can be shaken off.

So, we might draw the conclusion that the following holds between Burge and Phillips: for Burge, Maya is entitled to her belief even after Simone introduces a defeater to her perceptual belief. For Phillips, it seems as if Maya loses her knowledge after Simone introduces her defeater.

My own view is that further inquiry is required so as to determine exactly in what sense Maya's knowledge is shaken off. "Shaken off" can be interpreted in different ways, and it isn't clear that Gangeśa must take the view Phillips offers. Given that Maya no longer has an occurrent episode of knowledge, for that was lost as soon as she looked away from the pond, what does it mean to say Maya's knowledge is "shaken off"? Is Maya's

knowledge simply shaken off when she looks away? Is it shaken off merely by virtue of Simone's defeater? How should we understand Maya's standing knowledge in relation to the introduction of defeaters given the distinction between perceptual knowledge and certified knowledge?

Consider the *priority thesis*, (PT), that Phillips claims Naiyāyikas hold: *all standing knowledge requires a first moment of episodic knowledge*. Given (PT) and the fact that Maya's seeing event has passed, what is the status of the standing knowledge that was generated from the episodic knowledge event? Is it still a piece of knowledge for Maya?

The core distinction between the context of assertion in which a knowledge claim could be made and the metaphysical realizer of an instance of standing knowledge is that one can possess the metaphysical complex that realizes a piece of knowledge, yet fail to be able to assert the knowledge in a context because they lose justification for doing so. That is, one could argue that Maya has standing knowledge that there is water in the pond because she saw it. Once she learns about the prevailing conditions from Simone, and recognizes that what she saw might have been a mirage, she simply loses the warrant to assert her knowledge, since assertion is governed by knowledge, and she is aware of a defeater to her knowledge. Were it a mirage she would not even be warranted in asserting that there is water in the pond.

Arguably, shaken off only means that a person has lost their warrant to assert what they know, without necessitating that they no longer possess the knowledge in standing form. I hypothesize that Gangeśa holds:

(FRIA) Failure to Rebut, then Impermissible to Assert: If S cannot appropriately respond to defeaters concerning p in context C, then S loses their warrant to assert p in C.

(FRIA) falls short of the view that S loses their standing knowledge when a defeater has been introduced. As a consequence, (FRIA) leaves it open whether p can be asserted in other contexts. And it leads the way as to how that should be answered by appealing to norms of certification.

We can now ask if Gangesa holds the KK principle: If x knows that p, then x knows that x knows that p? According to the accessibility view, when x knows that p, then it is in principle possible for x to know that they know that p. In the awareness view, when x knows that p, merely by virtue of knowing that p, x knows that they know that p. Because these versions of the KK principle are different from what Gangesa is concerned with in picking out certification as a kind of epistemic success and (FRIA), we need not attribute the KK principle to Gangesa. The distinction between the context of assertion and the metaphysical realizer of knowledge is sufficient to account for Maya's epistemic situation. The upshot is that Maya can still have knowledge but fail to be able to assert it because of the norms governing certification. One need not argue that

because Maya cannot prove that she knows that she knows, that Maya loses her knowledge. The possession of perceptual knowledge that leads to standing knowledge is independent from the ability to assert it. Not surprising given their ext commonality, this analysis of Maya is in harmony with the view that one can take from Burge's distinction. Maya's failure to justify doesn't show that she doesn't have an entitlement to her perceptual belief. Regarding Phillips' view, we can say that Maya has perceptual knowledge, but she cannot certify it.

V. Clearing a Path for a Cross-Cultural Epistemological Engagement

Both Burge and Phillips push back on the classic internalism-externalism debate by offering a different account of how epistemic concepts can relate to one another. Rather than saying that knowledge is composite and justification is a component either on an internalist or an externalist model, they deny that justification is the only component for which we can account for the internalist and externalist intuitions. There are differences between the two views.

Burge's dual warrant theory goes past the internalism-externalism debate by positing two types of warrant. Justification plays an internalist role, while entitlement plays an externalist role.

- (i) Entitlement is a property of perceptual beliefs.
- (ii) Entitlement is attached to representational contents, specifically propositional contents.
- (iii) Entitlement is a right to believe, and it is distinct from another kind of warrant: justification.

Phillips posits two distinct types of mental relations between a subject and the world. Certification, which is a mind-to-mind relation, plays an internalist role where justification and practices of justification occur. Perceptual knowledge plays an externalist role between mind and world.

- (i) Certification is a property of knowledge, of which one kind is perceptual knowledge.
- (ii) Certification is a property of both occurrent knowledge and standing knowledge.
- (iii) Certification occurs between subjects who are able to give reasons to one another.

Another difference between Burge and Phillips is that Burge's theory is focused on a compositional account of knowledge where belief plays an important role. Burge views entitlement and justification to be properties of belief. Phillips holds that perceptual knowledge is not a species of perceptual belief. It is not the case that belief is a component of knowledge for Gaṅgeśa. Rather, perceptual knowledge is a direct true awareness. In addition, justification is not a component of knowledge. Phillips' account is

similar to that of Williamson's (2000) knowledge-first account, where knowledge is a mental state distinct from belief.

In conclusion, I strongly believe, we are faced with two options in global epistemology. We can either adopt a belief-first epistemology and hold that there are two types of warrants that a belief can have—entitlement or justification—or we can adopt a knowledge-first epistemology and hold that there are states of perceptual knowledge—which can be certified or not. The hope is that we can have a richer discussion of the possibilities that an epistemic architecture can have, through the engagement of cross-cultural epistemology and works like Gaṅgeśa's Jewel of Reflection on the Truth about Epistemology.

Notes

- 1 See Pappas 2020 for a discussion of the relevant positions. William Alston (1989) defends a form of internalism, and Alvin Goldman (1986) defends externalism.
- 2 See Pappas 2020 for these distinctions and for other versions of internalism and externalism.
- 3 See Taber 1992 for discussion of this point.
- 4 See Sosa 2007 and 2009 for comparison. Phillips uses the language of animal versus reflective levels, which bears a striking resemblance to the work of Sosa.
- 5 See Phillips 2020, p. 13. It is important to note that here Phillips should be talking about certified knowledge, and thus I have added the italics to make it clear.
- 6 I read Phillips this way mostly from his 2012 book. The reason why is that the traditional way of understanding the debate between internalism and externalism in epistemology is with respect to a single-tier theory of knowledge, where justification is a component of it either on an internalist or an externalist theory of justification. But Gaṅgeśa is offering a two-tier theory. As a consequence, it would seem that one cannot strictly apply the distinction to Gaṅgeśa because the architecture is different. Thus, it seems more appropriate to read Phillips as trying to sort out where Gaṅgeśa's commitments are with respect to the distinction found in Anglo-analytic epistemology.
- 7 Phillips (2012, pp. 14–15; emphasis added) says: "Nyāya agrees [with internalism] but with the important *addendum* that by attending to the nature of perception, inference, and testimony, which at the first level operate with us unselfconsciously, we at the second level selfconsciously certify what we know and believe. *The internalism flows*

- out of the externalism." It is useful to consider Phillips' remarks in light of the work of Das and Salow (2018).
- 8 See Dasti and Phillips 2017 for discussion of Vātsyāyana on knowledge for action.
- 9 See Phillips 2012 for discussion of certification.
- 10 See Vaidya (2020) 2021 for an extensive discussion of the issue of disjunctivism in Nyāya. See Vaidya forthcoming for a discussion of disjunctivism in Gangesa.
- 11 See Phillips 2012, p. 21.
- 12 In addition, if what it takes for something to be a "Gettier Counter-example" to the JTB analysis of knowledge is that epistemic luck is a consequence of a fallibilist conception of knowledge, then while there might be a suitable term in Sanskrit for a fallibilist conception of justification that is amenable to Gangesa's epistemology, it might, nevertheless, not be central to his epistemology. While he has an example that can be used to undermine the JTB analysis in the way that Gettier does, it is arguably not an example that is put forward under a fallibilist conception of justification. See Das 2021 on Gangesa and Epistemic Luck.
- 13 This example has been constructed out of a conversation between Phillips and me. It captures one question about Gangesa's two-tier epistemology that needs to be addressed: what exactly is the epistemic status of the knowledge that remains after both the knowledge episode and defeaters, which can shake it off, have been introduced?
- 14 See Phillips 2020, pp. 10–11, for discussion of the two-tier view and the KK principle. I am offering an analysis of it that deviates from his own view.
- 15 See Vaidya forthcoming for discussion of this issue.

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Some Ideas Concerning Stephen Phillips' Jewel of Reflection on the Truth about Epistemology: A Complete and Annotated Translation of the Tattva-cintā-maṇi



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Stephen Phillips' Jewel of Reflection on the Truth about Epistemology (see Phillips 2020) is surely a landmark achievement in the realm of research on Navya-Nyāya. It is a work of reference not only for specialists but also for a broader audience of philosophically interested readers. Phillips has demonstrated his expertise on Nyāya in general in many previous publications. At present, there is probably hardly anybody else who would have been better qualified to accomplish the mammoth task of translating and elucidating such a complex and voluminous Sanskrit work as the Tattvacintāmani. It should however be noted that there is another edition and annotated translation of the *Tattvacintāmani* (excluding the *Upamānakhanda*) by V.P. Bhatta (see Bhatta 2005, 2012, 2021), which is rather addressed to specialists, who are proficient in Sanskrit. The two volumes on the Anumānakhanda were published in 2021 (one year after the publication of Phillips' three volumes). Considering the enormous size of such a book project, the result cannot be expected to be completely flawless. The present review focuses on the introduction in volume 1 and on volume 2. I will address some minor issues, primarily methodological ones, but I will also address a few more serious (albeit surely accidental) translation errors (especially in the Siddhāntalakṣaṇa-section of the Vyāptivāda), which can lead to a misunderstanding of Gangesa's stance on a pivotal topic of the Navya-Naiyāyikas, namely the correct definition of the concept of pervasion (vyāpti).

I

The introduction is very insightful. However, logicians will probably stumble over Phillips' methods of formalization. Some examples are given below.