

From Commentary to Philosophy, or *Lectio* and *Disputatio* in Indian Buddhist Commentarial Literature*

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As one of the editors of the present volume recently argued, “the problem of how to make sense of texts” is “the lowest common denominator of philological practice.”¹ And indeed, “[i]f we were to redefine philology [...] we would think of it most simply as the discipline of making sense of texts.”² This is of course to say that interpretation has played a prominent role in the “reading practices” (Pollock 2015a: 12, 20) we are inclined to regard as cultural declensions of philology understood as a cross-cultural phenomenon calling for historical and comparative analysis. In this perspective, philological practices of the kind Pollock terms “hermeneutical philologies” (2015a: 14) can be expected to have even greater importance in cultures finding themselves in a “hermeneutic situation” (Bazán).³ This was obviously the case of western medieval Christianity and Indian Buddhism, where legal, moral and soteriological practice was largely dependent on the proper interpretation of a set of scriptures with varying degrees of authoritativeness. In the past decades, the scholarly and intellectual dispositifs of these two cultures have been referred to as “scholasticisms” with increasing frequency, scholasticism being characterized as a set of institution-based, self-conscious and highly sophisticated textual practices developed in order to study, appropriate, harmonize and often defend various types of *auctoritates*, and in which commentary played a central role in allowing for literal understanding, doctrinal amplification, and apologetics.

Close scrutiny of the theory and practice of commentary in Latin medieval Europe and Buddhist India reveals interesting structural and functional similarities. Late medieval commentaries and their Buddhist counterparts (at least as far as normative commentarial technique and theory are concerned) (1) consciously make room for debate and dialectics by comprising, generally towards the end of a commentarial sequence, a section devoted to dispelling doubts and responding to objections. (2) Many of these contradictions are explicitly said to be motivated by at least apparent *contradictions*—whether internal inconsistencies, conflict between authorities, or contradiction with reason(ing). (3) Features (1) and (2) can certainly be regarded as points of mere technical interest. However, these concluding sections played an important role in the development of philosophy itself in the two contexts. For whereas the *disputatio* is generally considered to have emancipated itself from the commentary (*lectio*) via the *quaestio disputata*, Buddhist philosophy as we know it from the works of Dignāga (around 500) and especially Dharmakīrti (around 600) is structurally indebted to commentarial strategies formalized first in handbooks of exegetics composed slightly before and after 400 CE. Thus in addition to shedding comparative light on a particular aspect of commentarial technique, the present paper also attempts to follow one thread in the complex genealogy of philosophy in the Buddhist environment, viz. its indebtedness toward “reading practices.”

Comparing scholasticisms

1.1. A few steps in the direction of what can be called “comparative scholasticism” have already been taken in the past. Mention must be made in this connection of an important, though by now largely forgotten French scholar and philosopher, Paul Masson-Oursel (1882-1956), who has made a valuable attempt to approach scholasticism in a cross-cultural way as a *phase* in intellectual and philosophical development.⁴ According to him, scholasticism is not an “épisode, accidentel ou nécessaire, de notre civilisation issue du monde gréco-latin” (an episode that could be *described*), but an “aspect notable de la vie de l’esprit,” an “état de civilisation,” a “phase peut-être

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¹ Pollock 2015a: 1.

² Pollock 2015a: 22; see also Pollock 2015b: 114.

³ See below, §1.4 and n. 27.

⁴ See Masson-Oursel 1911 and especially Masson-Oursel 1920. On scholasticism and the debate on its nature, see Chenu 1993: 51-60 (“régime mental,” p. 52), De Rijk 1985: 82-105 (especially pp. 82-84), Schönberger 1991, and Solère 2002. Solère 2002 is perhaps the best overview of scholasticism to date. According to him, scholasticism refers to “l’ensemble des méthodes d’enseignement et de discussion en usage dans les écoles et les universités médiévales,” and the “formes sous lesquelles s’est manifestée une très large partie de la production philosophique, théologique, juridique et scientifique du Moyen Âge” (Solère 2002: 1299^a).

nécessaire de toute pensée” (a phase that could and actually must be *defined*).⁵ As a cross-cultural phenomenon, scholasticism is claimed to possess “une certaine généralité”⁶ and to exhibit a remarkable degree of synchronicity in the Latin West, in India and in China, three cultural contexts in which it follows a “sophistic” phase with which it shares a fascination for language. According to Masson-Oursel, scholasticism can be defined as “un enseignement qui fonde son autorité sur la lettre d’un texte sacré, interprétée par un corps professoral voué à l’établissement comme à la défense d’une vérité religieuse et porté, pour y réussir, à mettre son concours dans la raison discursive ou formelle.”⁷ As we can see, Masson-Oursel does not subscribe to any “material” or doctrinal characterization of scholasticism (e.g., in terms of *fides quaerens intellectum*), but searches instead for the structural/formal features of this “pédagogie d’une orthodoxie”:⁸ the subordination of science and philosophy to a clerically defined agenda, the primacy of the commentarial genre, an inclination for abstraction and formalism,⁹ a strong leaning towards encyclopedicity and systematic elaboration, an interest in unification and adaptation as well as apologetic concerns in a pluralistic environment.

1.2. Closer to us, and acknowledging a strong indebtedness to Masson-Oursel (“arguably the founder of the modern discipline of comparative philosophy”¹⁰), José Ignacio Cabezón has devoted two important contributions to the topic,¹¹ arguing for scholasticism “as a general and cross-cultural category in the history of philosophy,” or else as a “family of intellectual movements that are present in other cultures.”¹² Cabezón describes Masson-Oursel’s attempt as essentialistic (“scholasticism [could] be exactly defined by uncovering its essential qualities”), committed to historical evolutionism and Hegelian Eurocentricity (with its “goal of achieving objective, impersonal laws through the use of the comparative method”), thus as certainly “naive and outdated,” but as “insightful and interesting” in many ways.¹³ Cabezón envisions scholasticism as being basically concerned “with reconciling the rational and the experiential aspects of human religiousness”¹⁴ and views in “rationalism and systematicity”¹⁵ some of its key features. He distinguishes eight basic features of scholasticism: (1) “A strong sense of tradition,” i.e., “self-identification with a specific tradition [...] and commitment to its preservation,”¹⁶ and defence against the intellectual assaults of others. (2) “A concern with language,” i.e., “with sacred language (scripture) and its exegesis and with language generally as medium of expression.”¹⁷ (3) “Proliferativity,” i.e., a “tendency to textual and analytical inclusivity rather than exclusivity,” because scholastics opt “for broader [...] canons and for minute and detailed forms of analysis that leave no questions unanswered, no philosophical avenue unexplored.”¹⁸ (4) “Completeness and compactness,” for, “related to the proliferative tendency of the scholastic mindset is the generally held scholastic tenet that the tradition is complete: that nothing essential to the project of salvation has been neglected.”¹⁹ (5) “The epistemological accessibility of the world,” i.e., “the belief that the universe is basically intelligible.”²⁰ (6) “Systematicity,” i.e., “order in exposition.”²¹ (7) “Rationalism,” i.e., the commitment to reasoned argument and non-contradiction,” for “scholastics consider reasoning to be integral to the religious path[:] the systematic elucidation of doctrine, the ‘elimination’ of inconsistency, and the rational defense of tenets are perhaps the most central attributes of scholasticism.”²² (8) “Self-reflexivity,” for scholastics “are concerned not only with systematicity and rational argumentation, but with developing criteria for what

⁵ Masson-Oursel 1920: 124, 124, 128, and 141, respectively.

⁶ Masson-Oursel 1920: 124.

⁷ Masson-Oursel 1920: 128.

⁸ Masson-Oursel 1920: 129.

⁹ Masson-Oursel 1920: 127.

¹⁰ Cabezón 1994: 13-14.

¹¹ See Cabezón 1994 and Cabezón 1998.

¹² Cabezón 1994: 11 and 13, respectively.

¹³ Cabezón 1994: 14.

¹⁴ Cabezón 1994: 19.

¹⁵ Cabezón 1994: 20. Note also Cabezón 1994: 21: “Scholastics are rationalists. [...] It is always possible for an opponent, real or imagined, to demand a reason, that is, to require that a particular doctrinal assertion be justified; and for the scholastic there is never any theoretical ground for denying the validity of such a request.” According to him (*ibid.*), “[s]cholastic rationalism operates in large part to justify religious beliefs as expressed in doctrine.” This is in agreement with Chenu’s (1993: 55) characterization of scholasticism as a “forme rationnelle de pensée qui s’élabore consciemment et volontairement à partir d’un texte estimé comme faisant autorité.” Note the Dominican father’s striking formulas about the place of reason in scholasticism: “par un curieux paradoxe, cette méthode d’autorité voisine avec une extrême confiance en la raison” (1993: 57); “[t]oute la scolastique est mue par une confiance en la raison” (1993: 58). In the context of the “formule disputationnelle,” Solère (2002: 1309^b) speaks of a “rationalisme de la scolastique” (see also Schönberger 1991: 73-80).

¹⁶ Cabezón 1998: 4. See also Cabezón 1998: 20-21.

¹⁷ Cabezón 1998: 5.

¹⁸ Cabezón 1998: 5.

¹⁹ Cabezón 1998: 5.

²⁰ Cabezón 1998: 5. According to Cabezón 1994: 20, “at the very least everything that is of soteric importance is understandable through rational inquiry.”

²¹ Cabezón 1998: 5.

²² Cabezón 1998: 6. See also Cabezón 1994: 22.

constitutes a rational argument, that is, with logic as a second-order discourse.”²³ Additionally, Cabezón stresses the need for unity and synthesis, for “scholastics are usually dealing with large quantities of disparate textual material that is often contradictory. Part of their self-imposed task is to synthesize this material into an ordered whole.”²⁴

1.3. In the present writer’s opinion, comparative scholasticism should not, at least not primarily, aim at comparing doctrinal tenets and philosophical arguments, but rather at considering the *intellectual cultures* that were responsible for the formation, the development, and the overall physiognomy of law, the sciences, theology, and philosophy in the two contexts.²⁵ This includes the institutional environment, the teaching and scholarly practices, the many ways in which knowledge was produced, stored, enriched and made to fructify, etc. In other words, the ambition is to compare, say, structures²⁶ or, perhaps, “dispositifs de production,” rather than intellectual contents. In doing so, the Western medieval environment is to be approached and constructed as a heuristic tool, thus resorting to what is well or at least better known in order to draw research and interpretative hypotheses concerning the social and institutional conditions that presided over the formation and the development of specific ideas in the Buddhist context. In particular, the study of Latin medieval scholarly practices is very likely to help us better assess the extent to which Buddhist philosophical and more generally “śāstric” texts reflect teaching techniques and practices.

1.4. Among the many factors that make the Middle Ages so appealing in this connection, one could mention the fact that its philosophical traditions developed in a constant and multi-faceted dialogue with a revelation—if not revelations, if one considers its attitude toward the Aristotelian corpus from the 13th century onward, and the fact that Jews and Muslims were involved in the process—, i.e., the fact that dialectical argumentation and experience had to constantly invent new ways of coming to terms with the Bible, the Church Fathers, and, increasingly, Aristotle. In dependence on this, the Latin Middle Ages developed as an intellectual culture in which commentarial activity played a crucial role in the interpretation and the appropriation of earlier authorities—or, as Bernardo C. Bazán says, “une culture théologique et scientifique centrée sur des textes, [...] une culture en situation herméneutique.”²⁷ The Middle Ages inherited normative divisions of the sciences (the most famous one distributing them into the *trivium* and the *quadrivium*), each field of knowledge having its own *auctoritates* to be relied and commented upon, and intellectually recontextualized.²⁸ Mention should also be made of the primacy of disputation as a method for teaching, interpreting, inquiring and, in one sense at least, debating and polemicizing.²⁹

²³ Cabezón 1998: 6.

²⁴ Cabezón 1994: 21.

²⁵ For a somewhat programmatic essay on comparative scholasticism, see Eltschinger 2017.

²⁶ The word is used, by the way, by Marie-Dominique Chenu (1993: 66).

²⁷ Bazán 1985: 25, quoted in Solère 2002: 1301^b-1302^a.

²⁸ On the different classifications of knowledge, see Weijers 2015: 45-59. For discussions of authority in scholasticism, see, e.g., De Rijk 1985: 87-89, Schönberger 1991: 103-108, Chenu 1993: 106-131; on the authorities specific to the different disciplines, see, e.g., De Rijk 1985: 89-96, Riché/Verger 2013: 119-145, Weijers 2015: 61-75.

²⁹ See Bazán 1985, and especially Weijers 2013 and 2015: 107-137. The word *disputatio* can refer to at least three very different discursive/dialogical situations. First, two forms of *disputatio* should be distinguished, the “eristic/dialectical disputation” (see Weijers 2013: 76-78), which bears no connection with commentarial activity and “clearly seems to follow the ancient tradition of dialectical jousts as described by Aristotle and transmitted by Boethius” (Weijers 2013: 95), and the “scholastic disputation” which, consisting in “opposing contradictory arguments” (*ibid.*), is “aimed at finding the truth of a deep understanding of the problem” and searching for “the right answer to real problems or to teach dialectic and philosophy” (Weijers 2013: 108). The eristic disputation develops in the context of the *logica modernorum*, in the logical compendia called *artes disputandi*, where “the practice of the art of disputation is the central theme of the discussion” (Weijers 2013: 76) and “the *disputatio* is explicitly described as a discussion between an opponent (*opponens*) and a respondent (*respondens*)” (Weijers 2013: 77). One of its four types is the “dialectical disputation,” “a duel between an opponent and a respondent” (Weijers 2013: 77). In the thirteenth century, the eristic disputation gives rise to the *ars obligatoria, obligationes* constituting “the logic of a certain form of disputation in which each participant tried to induce the other to contradict himself [...]. Serving as a means to teach and check the correctness of dialectical rules, it can be considered both as an exercise and as a preliminary stage for real (i.e., doctrinal) disputation [...].” (Weijers 2013: 77). It is important to note that the scholastic disputation “is not a dialectical duel between two opponents, but the discussion of a question—using dialectical tools of course—between a master and his students or between several masters and bachelors (i.e., students having obtained the first degree)” (Weijers 2013: 121-122). According to Weijers (2013: 122), the scholastic disputation differs from the eristic in at least four ways: “First, it is generally the disputation of a question arising, at least in the beginning, from the reading of texts, especially in the faculties of theology and arts; often it concerns difficulties arising from the text, apparent contradictions or conflicting interpretations. In the faculty of law, it concerns concrete juridical cases, as it did in the twelfth-century law schools [...]. Second, it aims at determining (or teaching) the truth, at finding the right answer to the question; its use of dialectical argumentation, especially syllogisms, is geared wholly to this end. Third, the basic structure of the scholastic disputation is quite different from the eristic disputation: after the formulation of the question, arguments are given both for the affirmative and for the negative answer, after which the master gives his solution (usually one of the two positions discussed, but he may propose an alternative by means of distinction) and refutes the arguments counter to this opinion. Fourth, at least three participants figure from an early stage: the master, who proposes the questions, presides over the discussion and gives his solution, the respondent, who gives a preliminary answer, and the opponent, who attacks the respondent’s arguments. In more important disputations, several respondents and opponents appear [...]. These two forms of *disputatio* should be distinguished from “public debates, [...] a kind of dialogue on philosophical subjects conducted before a public” (Weijers 2013: 96; on public debates, see also Weijers 2013: 82-84). According to Weijers (2013: 82), “[t]hese public debates may have been inspired by the eristic disputation, which also sometimes took place before an audience. However, they were controversies about questions of philosophical interest and not dialectical jousts, and did not follow

Moreover, most of the pre-14th-century medieval intellectuals were clerics, be it simply because they were granted legal privileges *as university scholars*. And although, in contradistinction to most of what we know from the Buddhist context, all of them did not belong to the regular clergy,³⁰ many important philosophers and theologians from the 13th and 14th centuries actually belonged to the mendicant orders of the Dominicans or the Franciscans and thus were as much committed to promoting their own monastic order as they were to defending their own personal views.

From lectio to disputatio

2.1. The teaching methods resorted to by medieval masters have received a lot of critical attention thanks to the work of scholars such as Martin Grabmann, Palémon Glorieux, Lambertus Marie De Rijk, Bernardo C. Bazán and, closer to us, Olga Weijers, to whose decisive contributions the following presentation is heavily indebted. In particular, these and other specialists have shown how the origin of the disputation, admittedly one of the practices most characteristic of the medieval academic landscape, could be traced to the *lectio* (“which means not only the reading but also the explanation of and comments on a text”³¹), from which, in the form of the *quaestio disputata*, it was gradually detached and gained autonomy in the 12th or 13th century depending on the contexts.³² As remarked almost fifty years ago by P. Glorieux, “[l]a dispute est née de la leçon, par l’intermédiaire de la question,”³³ a hypothesis that since then has been widely confirmed: “Such questions raised by the master during the lectures and discussed immediately in the classroom are called *quaestiones*; the term *quaestio disputata* (disputed question) is generally reserved for the written form of questions that have been discussed, to be distinguished from the discussion itself, which is called *disputatio* (disputation). [...] When the questions are completely separated from the explanations of the texts, not only in time but also in subject, and thus become an independent exercise, we see the birth of the *disputatio* in the sense of the scholastic disputation.”³⁴ According to Anthony Kenny, “[p]erhaps the *disputatio* simply grew out of the other and older vehicle of professional instruction: the *lectio*, or lecture. In the course of expounding a text a commentator, from time to time, is bound to encounter difficult passages which set special problems and need extended discussion. When we are dealing with a sacred or authoritative text, the difficult passages will have given rise to conflicting interpretations by different commentators, and the expositor’s duty will be to set out and resolve the disagreements of previous authorities. Thus the *quaestio* arises naturally in the course of the *lectio*, and the disputation and the lecture are the institutionalized counterparts of these two facets of a method of study oriented to the interpretation of texts and the preservation of tradition.”³⁵ This interpretation of the historical development of the *disputatio* out of the *quaestio* via the *quaestio disputata* is further confirmed by O. Weijers, according to whom “there seems to be no doubt that *quaestiones* developed out of commenting on basic texts during the lectures. The divergence or obscurity of the authoritative texts suggested that comparison and critical analysis, along with dialectic, was used. This provided the occasion for a discussion on a theological issue, in which dialectic played a role—a discussion about a *quaestio*. The question here was thus initially a problem of interpretation. [...] With the help of dialectic, from Abelard onwards, the masters developed a complete method of teaching and research based on the systematic and well organised discussion of such *quaestiones*. [...] At the same time the collections of *Sentences* (the most famous was Peter the Lombard’s) established a form of systematic theology in which we also find questions arising from the discrepancies between authorities and being discussed with a certain amount of dialectical argumentation.”³⁶ Thus “the divergence between different

the systematic format of the *quaestio* [...]. They were discussions in which two opponents expressed different opinions, defending them with arguments based on authorities or on dialectical reasoning, but they did not obey certain rules and thus differ from both types of disputation we saw above. Let us call them ‘debates’ to mark the difference (although they too are often called *disputatio* in the written reports).” Importantly, “[w]e may deduce that in these debates one of the two participants was declared victorious, a detail that reminds us of the victories reported by Peter Abelard in his autobiography: he not only defeated his master William of Champeaux in a discussion about universals, but later sent his own students to debate with the same master and his pupils” (Weijers 2013: 83).

³⁰ Philosophers such as Arcaṭa (8th century) and Śāṅkaranandana (10th century?) could have been exceptions to this in that, though Buddhists from a religio-philosophical, doctrinal point of view, they were and remained brahmins.

³¹ Weijers 2013: 84. See also Weijers 2015: 79-80, Glorieux 1968: 108-122, and Chenu 1993: 67-71 (p. 67: “la *lectio* est acquisition de la science par l’étude des textes. [...] Enseigner, c’est lire, lire au sens technique: le professeur ‘lit’ son texte; son cours s’appelle une *lectio*, et il se nomme expressément *lector*.”).

³² See Weijers 2013, esp. pp. 84-88, and Bazán 1985: 31-34. Weijers points to the period between 1150 and 1200 and the circles of Simon of Tournai and his successors (Weijers 2013: 87), the School of Laon for the “resolution of theological problems during the exposition of the Bible” (Weijers 2013: 84), Abelard’s famous *Sic et non*, which “sets out to contrast authorities, principally the Church Fathers” (Weijers 2015: 95-96), and other theologians such as Gilbert of Poitiers, Stephen Langton and Robert of Melun.

³³ Glorieux 1968: 123. According to Chenu (1993: 67), “[l]e ‘style’ scolastique peut être ramené à ses éléments simples, [...] à trois procédés, dont la progression figure d’ailleurs à la fois leur genèse historique et leur progrès technique: on est passé de la *lectio* à la *quaestio*, puis de la *quaestio* à la *disputatio*.” See also De Rijk 1985: 99-101 and Solère 2002: 1302^a.

³⁴ Weijers 2013: 87.

³⁵ Kenny and Pinborg 1982: 25.

³⁶ Weijers 2013: 85, summarizing Bazán 1985.

authorities or between different parts of the same authoritative text”³⁷ likely was one of the driving forces in the development of the *quaestio* as an exegetical and doctrinal device destined to “to teach the meaning of the text but also to try to understand and clarify the problems implied by it.”³⁸

2.2. The presence of a contradiction and the discussion of antithetical propositions are definitory features of the question. These were foreshadowed in the writings of Aristotle³⁹ and especially Boethius who, in his *In Topica Ciceronis Commentaria*, defined the *quaestio* as a *dubitabilis propositio*, “a proposition which one can doubt.”⁴⁰ And in his *De differentiis topicis*, the same Boethius characterizes a question as *in dubitationem ambiguitatemque adducta propositio*, “a proposition leading to doubt and uncertainty.”⁴¹ Thus according to Boethius, a question always entails doubt and contradiction: “A question comprises at the same time an affirmation and a negation; for by the very fact that it is subject to doubt it seems to include a contradiction” (*ibid.*, 1049 B). This contradictoriness is reflected in the most frequent expression of the question, the *utrum... an...* (“whether... or...”) formula. In the first half of the twelfth century, Gilbert of Poitiers (1076-1154) elaborated on Boethius’s definitions. While agreeing that a contradiction is always involved in a question, he emphasized that “doubt is only present when valid arguments seem to support both parts of the question, the pro and the contra.”⁴² Hence the characteristic form of the question from the first part of the 13th century onward: “First the question—which could be answered by yes or no—was formulated, then arguments (based on authoritative texts or on dialectical reasoning) for the two possible answers were given. Next the master provided a ‘determination’ or ‘solution’ (i.e., the definitive answer to the question along with the justification), and finally there was a refutation, also given by the master, of the arguments given for the opposite position.”⁴³ This situation helps define both disputation as an art or a method and dialectic as the technique of argumentation proper, since “disputation is the art of discussing correctly—in other words to use serious argumentation to debate doubtful or contradictory propositions and prove which position is valid and which not. [...] [T]his art is the art of dialectic, since Ancient times considered the foundation of all rational inquiry.”⁴⁴ In his *De differentiis topicis*, Boethius defined an argument as “a reasoning (*ratio*) that makes a dubious matter trustworthy” (*argumentum autem ratio est quae rei dubiae faciat fidem*).⁴⁵ In the context of the discussion of a question, *ratio* as rational argument or dialectical reasoning (particularly syllogisms) is appealed to in addition to other sources for valid argumentation, such as *auctoritas*, (the quotation of an) authority or authoritative text, and *experientia*, experience, “that is to say perception of the real world by the sense,”⁴⁶ or “experimental verification, meaning essentially the observation of reality, the way in which we experience reality.”⁴⁷

2.3. What was to become the disputed question, i.e., what was called *dubia*, *quaestiones* or *dubitationes*, originally was allotted a specific (and rather limited) part toward the end of the commentary, at least in the commentaries in the form of *lectiones*⁴⁸ that were very common in the Paris Arts faculty between 1230 and 1260: “Commentaries in the form of *lectiones* [...] resembled the traditional literal explanations. They were divided into units of reading or lessons (*lectiones*), and each *lectio* had several fixed elements. The divisions of the commented passage (into

³⁷ Weijers 2013: 85-86.

³⁸ Weijers 2013: 86. Among the other factors, mention can be made of questions concerning “difficult points, obscure expressions or intriguing features” (*ibid.*). See also Chenu 1993: 71, and Panofsky’s interesting remarks in Panofsky 1957: 65ff.

³⁹ As remarked by Weijers (2013: 74), opposing pro and contra arguments in order to arrive at a solution comes very close to “the *aporia* method of Aristotle,” sometimes referred to as “diaporematic,” where “*diaporein* means to find a way amidst thoroughly explored difficulties,” whereas “the solution is called *euporia*, which means ‘solve the *aporia* in a satisfactory way’” (Weijers 2013: 35, referring, e.g., to *Metaphysics* III,1, *Topics* I,2, and *Ethics* VII,1, where “one presents a problem [*aporia*], introduces the conflicting opinions of philosophers, solves the difficulties and formulates the new opinion” [Weijers 2013: 36]). Note, by the way, that “[*a*]poria was translated by Boethius as *dubitationes*, or doubts, in his version of the Aristotelian treatise *On interpretation*” (literally, an *aporia* is “a difficulty obstructing the way” [*ibid.*], i.e., “problems arising from the fact that the savants of the past disagree about them or that valid arguments can be found for both sides” [*ibid.*]). Schönberger (1991: 52) describes the question as “eine durch einen Widerspruch erzeugte Aporie.” On the “method of the *aporiai*,” see Weijers 2013: 35-38. On the relationship with Aristotle’s *aporia*, see Chenu 1993: 79.

⁴⁰ *Patrologia Latina* 64, 1048 D, quoted and translated in Weijers 2013: 75.

⁴¹ *Patrologia Latina* 64, 1174 B, quoted in De Rijk 1985: 227, n. 25.

⁴² *Expositio in Boecii librum de trinitate* (ed. Häring, p. 63, quoted in Schönberger 1991: 53, n. 78), translation Weijers 2013: 79.

⁴³ Weijers 2013: 124. As Chenu points out, *obicere/objectio* do not always have the meaning we are familiar with: “*obicere*, c’est inducere rationes, donner des raisons pour l’une ou l’autre partie, et non pas opposer un fait ou un raisonnement à une thèse au préalable établie” (Chenu 1993: 79). In the same way, the *sed contra* arguments are not aimed at refuting the objections; rather, they consist in *rationes quae sunt ad oppositum*: “La seconde série d’arguments n’est pas contre la première série, elle est pour la seconde partie de l’alternative et ne s’oppose qu’indirectement aux arguments donnés pour la première. Ce qui s’oppose directement aux arguments combattus du point de vue de la thèse établie dans la détermination, ce sont les réponses qui suivent le corps de l’article, les *responsiones ad objecta*, c’est-à-dire réponses aux arguments [...], qu’ils soient de la première ou de la seconde série, dès lors qu’il s’écartent de la thèse” (Blanche 1925: 177-179, quoted in Chenu 1993: 80).

⁴⁴ Weijers 2013: 105.

⁴⁵ *Patrologia Latina* 64, 1174 B, quoted and translated in Weijers 2013: 75.

⁴⁶ Weijers 2013: 101.

⁴⁷ Weijers 2013: 142-143, referring to Imbach 2010.

⁴⁸ See Weijers 1996: 42-44.

several sections and subsections) are set out at the beginning of each *lectio*. The exposition or paraphrase (*expositio* or *sententia in speciali*) then follows; this is sometimes preceded by the *sententia (in generali)*; alternatively called the *intentio*, in other words the general meaning, so that the reader is given the broad sense of the passage before the commentary moves to literal analysis. The final section, sometimes following an *ordo* or *ordinatio* (describing the place of the passage within the text and the order of its parts) contained the *dubia* or *quaestiones*, questions or uncertainties arising from the text.”⁴⁹

The Theory of Indian Buddhist Commentary

3.1. As we have seen above, P. Masson-Oursel and J.I. Cabezón have insisted on commentarial activity as a defining feature of scholasticism regarded as a transcultural phenomenon, and cursory comparisons between Indian and medieval commentaries are not rare, as is testified by some pages of Madeleine Biardeau, likely the greatest among 20th-century French exponents of Indian philosophy.⁵⁰ The centrality, the abundance and the diversity of commentarial activity have long been recognized as an essential component of intellectual life in ancient India understood as a (set of) traditionalist culture(s) averse to anything perceived as “new.” As was pointed out by many specialists, however, commentaries often were, in India as elsewhere, a vehicle for (more or less discrete) innovation, and the adjective “new” was by no means universally perceived as deprecatory.⁵¹ Be that as it may, in spite of several seminal studies, the Indian commentary has not received the systematic attention it deserves.⁵² As even a superficial look at Indian commentaries suggests, raising objections and responding to them belong to the most congenial tasks and, as a point of fact, actual activities of Indian commentators. Here again, studies, and especially statistically based analyses of specific corpora are missing, and the extent to which this objection-and-answer structure has been normatively theorized as a mandatory feature of commentaries remains unclear. There is, however, at least one ancient Indian textual tradition that consciously theorized it as a necessary part of a commentary. Indeed, from at least the **Vivaraṇasaṅgrahaṇī* (VivSg, Tib. *rNam par bśad pa bsdu ba*) of the *Yogācārabhūmi* (YoBh, 4th century CE ?),⁵³ a tradition of Indian Buddhist scholastics has construed *codyaparihāra*, “responding to(/refuting) objections,”⁵⁴ as a necessary component of Buddhist canonical exegesis, a component that, as its Latin counterparts, was gradually allotted the final part of a commentarial sequence. Interestingly, this aspect of a commentary was also regarded by Indian Buddhist intellectuals as triggered by *contradictions (virodha)*—either in the form of internal inconsistencies or in the form of contradictions with reason(ing). And as we shall see, this doctrinal and apologetic complex can also be shown to be at the heart of later Buddhist philosophy. In other words, a defining feature of scriptural commentary can be regarded, if not as having given rise directly to philosophy in the Buddhist environment, at least to have become an essential element of the Buddhist philosophers’ way of accounting for their own philosophical and apologetic enterprise.

Strictly speaking, the VivSg is dedicated, not so much to commentary as (a) literary genre(s), as to the way in which a Buddhist preacher (*dharmabhāṇaka*) should explain the canonical scriptures in a catechetical, apologetic

⁴⁹ Weijers 2015: 81; Weijers 1996: 42.

⁵⁰ In her influential presentation of classical Indian philosophy in the *Encyclopédie de la Pléiade*, M. Biardeau quotes É. Gilson (1969: 83) and Thomas Aquinas (*Commentary on Ethics*, I, 2, as quoted in Chenu 1959: 135; Biardeau 1969: 87-88). She writes (1969: 87): “Le travail philosophique [en Inde ancienne, VE], de plus, semble s’être fait moins dans une méditation solitaire et désintéressée que dans la relation de maître à disciple, où le maître expose sa doctrine en y incluant les débats avec ses adversaires. C’est pourquoi les commentaires philosophiques prennent une forme essentiellement scolastique qui tient à la fois de la leçon et de la dispute médiévales, tandis que les textes indépendants rappelleraient plutôt les disputes ‘quodlibétiques.’” Biardeau alludes several times to scholasticism: “Disons donc simplement que la pensée brahmanique n’entre pas telle quelle dans nos catégories. En deçà de la distinction entre philosophie et théologie, elle se présente néanmoins comme une scolastique de plus en plus subtilement élaborée à partir de textes religieux intangibles” (1969: 92). “Les [les systèmes philosophiques ,VE] considérera-t-on alors comme de la ‘théologie’, en tenant compte de leur relation essentielle à une révélation? Ce serait encore rester dans une problématique occidentale où, même au Moyen âge, la distinction entre une pensée ‘naturelle’ et rationnelle pure et une pensée théologique s’appuyant sur le donné révélé est claire” (1969: 89). “Parce qu’elle avait rencontré la philosophie grecque (peut-être la seule philosophie spéculative ancienne qui se soit présentée comme uniquement rationnelle, sans présupposé religieux), la pensée médiévale chrétienne savait parfaitement qu’il y avait deux ordres de connaissance: la connaissance de foi, fondée sur un donné révélé partiellement perméable au travail de l’intelligence humaine, mais que celle-ci n’eût jamais pu découvrir, et la connaissance naturelle, où la raison s’exerce souverainement sur l’expérience qu’elle a du monde et construit sa vérité avec les critères de validité interne qu’elle se donne, n’ayant d’autre limite que son pouvoir actuel de connaissance” (1969: 90). Other direct allusions to scholasticism in indological scholarship include, e.g., Gerhard Oberhammer, Ernst Prets and Joachim Prandstetter’s three-volume *Terminologie der frühen philosophischen Scholastik in Indien* (1991-2006), and Gary Tubb and Emery R. Boose’s *Scholastic Sanskrit, A Manual for Students* (2007).

⁵¹ See, e.g., Biardeau 1969: 83-96, Ratić 2013: 425-438, and Seyfort Ruegg forthc.

⁵² See Chenet 1998, Hulin 2000, Preisendanz 2008, and Pollock 2015b.

⁵³ Although the work is commonly known as **Vivaraṇasaṅgrahaṇī*, its original Sanskrit title more likely was **Vyākhyā(na)saṅgrahaṇī* (see Delhey 2013: 539, and below, n. 56). On the YoBh, a bulky and essentially composite *summa* of early Buddhist idealism (Yogācāra, Vijñānavāda), see Schmithausen 1969 and Delhey 2013; on the VivSg, see Nance 2012: 167-212, on which significant parts of what follows are based.

⁵⁴ Or “objections and responses,” which amounts to the same, depending on the Tibetan translation of *codyaparihāra*: *rgol ba’i lan* (see below, nn. 56-57), reflecting an analysis as a genitive *taipuruṣa*, and *brgal ba dañ lan* (see below, n. 69), reflecting a *dvandva* interpretation.

and proselytic vein.⁵⁵ The VivSg starts with the following summary of its contents: “What is the summary of explanation (**vyākhyā[na]saṅgraha[nī]*_{VE})? A general account [encompasses]: 1. The corpus 1.1. Phrasing 1.2. Meaning 2. Explication 2.1. Teaching 2.2. Prompt 2.3. Meaning 2.4. Responding to objections 2.5. Connection 3. The dharma preacher 4. Exposition 5. Assembly 6. Listening 7. Brief and extensive praise of the Buddhas 8. Rewards of training.”⁵⁶ Explaining all these items would bring only very little in the present context. Let it be noted that “responding to objections” is one of the five aspects of “explication,” which the VivSg presents as follows: “Having first investigated the corpus of *buddhavacana* [“Word of the Buddha”_{VE}], one should seek out all ten forms of meaning—or whichever is suitable—in the scriptural texts (*gsuñ rab*, **pravacana*). Having done so oneself, one should teach these to others. Accordingly, a *dharma* preacher should engage in the practice [of teaching] by explicating in five ways those *sūtras* [...]. First, he should expound the teachings. After that, he should expound the prompt. After that, he should expound the meaning. After that, he should expound responses to objections. After that, he should expound connections.”⁵⁷ As we can see, the Buddhist preacher first “privately” analyses the twelfold canon⁵⁸ (*dvādaśāṅgapravacana*) according to, or by identifying, ten different kinds of meaning.⁵⁹ It is only once he has secured this understanding for himself that he turns to exegesis proper (1) by locating the explicated text in the twelve canonical “genres” or registers, (2) by identifying the “prompt,” i.e., discerning the motivation (turn one away from desire; instruct him; gladden him) behind the explicated text, (3) by ascertaining its summary and literal meanings (the latter by “indicating synonyms, [...] the corpus, [...] etymological derivation, and analyzing into aspects”), (4) by formulating and answering possible objections, and (5) by demonstrating its syntactic “connection” and semantic completeness.

Accounting for what triggers objections (whether expressed by oneself or by others⁶⁰), our text resorts, in addition to simple misunderstanding, doubtful synonymity(?) and reconditeness,⁶¹ to two types of contradiction. According to the VivSg, “[i]n brief, objections are of five kinds. [Not understanding the meaning:] There is nonunderstanding of the meaning, where a person who has failed to understand inquires, ‘What is the meaning of this phrase?’ [Verbal contradiction:] There is verbal contradiction, where [it is objected that] ‘what is said by the Blessed One here [contradicts] what he previously said on another occasion.’ [Contradiction with reason:] There is contradiction with reason, where a passage appears to contradict the four modes of reasoning. [Appearance (in) multiple parts:] There is the appearance [of one meaning] across multiple parts [of a text or texts], as [when one hears], ‘The Blessed One taught this very meaning in this or that [place], with many synonyms.’ [Extremely recondite:] [Finally, one may encounter objections] due to an extremely recondite [teaching]—e.g., ‘What is the inner self? Does it exist, abiding as permanent, stable, eternal, and truly real?’”⁶² The first type of contradiction relates to what is known among Indian scholastics as *pūrvāparavirodha*, i.e., “contradiction/incompatibility between successive

⁵⁵ For a description of the Buddhist preacher in the VivSg, see Nance 2012: 187-188.

⁵⁶ YoBh, VivSg D 'i 48a1-2: *rnam par bśad pa bsdu ba gañ ze na / spyi sdom ni /lus dan rnam par bśad pa dan/ /tshig 'bru dan ni don ñid dan/ /chos dan kun nas sloñ ba dan/ /don dan rgol ba'i lan dan ni/ /mtshams sbyar ba dan smra ba dan/ /bśad dan 'khor dan ñan pa dan/ /sañs rgyas bśags pa bsdu pa dan/ /rgyas dan bslab pa'i phan yon yin/*. Translation Nance 2012: 167-169. On **vyākhyā(na)saṅgraha(nī)* as a rendering of Tib. *rnam par bśad pa bsdu ba*, cf. ASBh 142,11: *vyākhyāsaṅgrahamukham*, and see above, n. 53. As noted by Nance himself (2012: 254, n. 1), he has “shifted the order in which these topics are listed in the opening verse to track the order in which they are treated in detail in the ensuing text.”

⁵⁷ YoBh, VivSg D 'i 54a1-3: *de ni re žig sañs rgyas kyi bka' i lus yin te / de'i phyir gsuñ rab la don bcu po de dag thams cad dam gañ yañ ruñ ba yoñs su btsal bar bya'o // de ltar bdag ñid kyi don du yoñs su btsal nas gžan dag la bstan par bya'o // de ltar [...] mdo sde la chos smra bas rnam pa lñas rnam par bśad pas 'jug par bya ste / dan por chos brjod par bya'o // de'i 'og tu kun nas sloñ ba brjod par bya'o // de'i 'og tu don brjod par bya'o // de'i 'og tu rgol ba'i lan brjod par bya'o // de'i 'og tu mtshams sbyar brjod par bya'o //*. Translation Nance 2012: 181. See also YoBh, VivSg D 'i 48a3 and Nance 2012: 169.

⁵⁸ The twelve “members” (*aṅga*) are: (1) *sūtras*, (2) melodic verses (*geya*), (3) prophecies/predictions (*vyākaraṇa*), (4) verses (*gāthā*), (5) inspired utterances (*udāna*), (6) circumstantial narratives (*nidāna*), (7) parables/stories (*avadāna*), (8) ancient narratives (*itivr̥ttaka*), (9) accounts of former lives (*jātaka*), (10) extensive scriptures (*vaipulya*), (11) fabulous accounts (*adbhutadharmā*), (12) instructions (*upadeśa*). The VinSg explains “instructions” as “matrices” (*mātrkā*) and *abhidharma*, i.e., Buddhist dogmatics. See Nance 2012: 181-183, and more generally Lamotte 1976: 159-161 and Nattier 2004.

⁵⁹ On the ten types of meaning, see Nance 2012: 174-180.

⁶⁰ According to YoBh, VivSg D 'i 55b5: *rañ gis gleñs pa'am gžan gyis brgal ba*.

⁶¹ The Tib. expression *šin tu llog tu gyur pa* generally renders Skt. *atyantaparokṣa*, “radically imperceptible,” which, in later Buddhist epistemology, refers to those states of affairs that are unempirical/transempirical, i.e., neither directly perceptible (*pratyakṣa*) nor inferable (*anumeya*). This interpretation may, however, be somewhat anachronical, for the example adduced by the VivSg, the (inner) self (**ādhyātma*, **ādhyātmika*?) does not, properly speaking, point to a radically imperceptible object, but rather to what is technically known as an *avyākṛtavastu* or “unanswered question/point” (as in questions such as “Is the soul different from the body or not?” “Does a Buddha survive after death or not?”). The VivSg’s explanation of the response to be given to this type of objection leaves no doubt about this (YoBh, VivSg D 'i 56a2-6, see Nance 2012: 186-187).

⁶² YoBh, VivSg D 'i 55b5-7: *de yañ mdr bsdu na rnam pa lñas rgol te / don ma rtogs pa ni ma rtogs pas tshig 'bru 'di'i don ci yin zes rgol lo // tshig 'gal bas ni 'di lta ste bcom ldan 'das kyis snar ni gžan du gsuñs la 'dir ni gžan du gsuñs so zes bya ba lta bus so // rigs pa dan 'gal bas ni gañ la rigs pa bži dan 'gal ba kun du snañ bas so // cha du ma kun du snañ bas ni 'di lta ste / bcom ldan 'das kyis de dan der rnam grañs du mas don de ñid yoñs su bstan pa lta bus so // šin tu llog tu gyur pas ni 'di lta ste / nañ gi bdag gañ yin pa de ni rtag pa dan brtan¹ pa dan ther zug dan yañ dag pa de kho na bžin du gnas par 'gyur ba de lta bu yod dam zes bya ba la sogs pas so //*. ¹em. : *bstan* D. Translation Nance 2012: 185.

statements,” a type of rhetorical defect generally regarded as a hallmark of untrustworthiness.⁶³ According to the VivSg, this type of objection is answered by exhibiting the intention underlying these apparently contradictory *loci*.⁶⁴ As for contradiction with reason (*yuktivirodha*), it points to a given statement’s failure to meet the requirements of reason(ing) (*yukti*), an important concept that, as we shall see, was given at least two different interpretations within Buddhist scholastic circles. The type of reason(ing) involved in our passage plays on two possible meanings of the Sanskrit word *yukti* = *yoga* (and the English word “reason”): reason as *causa fiendi* and reason as *causa cognoscendi*, the latter (the logical one) being understood as relying on, or reflecting, the former (the ontological one). This type of reason(ing) is regarded as fourfold: reason(ing) (based) on the realization of an effect (*kāryakaraṇayukti*), reason(ing) (based) on mutual dependence between entities (*apekṣāyukti*), reason(ing) that proves by means of arguments (*upapattisādhanayukti*), and reason(ing) (based) on the true nature of things or the way things are (*dharmatāyukti*).⁶⁵ Unfortunately, the VivSg has only very little to say about the kind of answer that should be given in such a case: “[Contradiction with reason:] One should offer a response by indicating a *kālāpadeśa*, by indicating the four modes of reasoning, and by indicating the connection between the cause and the result, saying ‘This is the result of such-and-such a cause.’”⁶⁶ This brief description entails three elements. While responding, the explicator first can point to the fact that the claim underlying the objection is simply unbuddhistic by showing that it is a *kālāpadeśa*, literally a “black/detrimental teaching.” Teachings of that sort are purported by some alleged (or self-appointed) authority to have been made by the Buddha himself and can be shown, on closer analysis, neither to conform to the sermons (*sūtra*) and the discipline (*vinaya*) preached by the Buddha nor to reflect the way things actually are (*dharmatā*).⁶⁷ Second, the explicator can answer by showing that the statement under scrutiny actually conforms with the standards of rationality as defined by the above-mentioned four types of reason(ing). Finally, he can prove the rationality of the commented text by resorting to causality, i.e., by demonstrating that things actually behave as they are said to do. As one can see, the three strategies overlap to a great extent: “the way things are” (*dharmatā*) is common to methods 1 and 2, and methods 2 and 3 both resort to causality. In other words, demonstrating that the scriptural statement commented upon does not contradict reason(ing) amounts to showing that it is consonant with the rest of Buddhist scriptures and that it conforms to reality itself interpreted, in a characteristically Buddhist way, as an entangled web of causal processes.

3.2.1. There is little doubt that Vasubandhu (active around 400 CE?), himself a Yogācāra author, knew the VivSg as he composed his influential *Vyākhyāyukti* (VY), a manual of scriptural exegesis with a strong leaning toward apologetic on behalf of the Mahāyāna (the “Great Vehicle” toward salvation and enlightenment).⁶⁸ Vasubandhu’s VY is not only far more exhaustive than the VivSg in its treatment of *codyaparihāra*; it is also working with a fairly different—one is tempted to say a new—concept of rationality. The treatise starts with the following words: “How should one discuss the *sūtras*? [One should do so] via five aspects (*ākāra*). One should state the purpose (*prayajana*) of the *sūtra*; the summary meaning (*piṇḍārtha*); the meaning of the phrases (*padārtha*); connections (*anusandhi*); and the two: objections and responses (*codyaparihāra*). The two—objections and responses—are collapsed into one [aspect], since the responses offered pertain to the [particular] objections [raised]. [...] From the objections and responses, [one may understand] that [the text] does not contradict reason and that there is no contradiction between those [texts] that are earlier [and] later.”⁶⁹ As we can see, (1) Vasubandhu re-organizes the VivSg list by replacing “teaching” and “prompt” by “purpose,” by dividing “meaning” into “summary meaning” and “meaning of the phrases,” and inverting the order of items 4 and 5, “objections and responses” and

⁶³ On *pūrvāparavirodha*, see, e.g., Eltschinger 2007: 108-109.

⁶⁴ YoBh, VivSg D’i D56a1-2: *tshig ’gal ba la ni dgoñs pa yañ dag par bstan pas rjes su mthun par bya ba’o // tshig ’gal ba la dgoñs pa yañ dag par bstan pas rjes su mthun par bya ba ji ltar cha du mar snañ ba dañ / śin tu lkog tu gyur pa la yañ de dañ ’dra’o //*. “[Verbal contradiction:] [Passages] should be made to concord via indicating the intention [underlying them]. One should proceed likewise in cases of appearance in multiple parts and extremely recondite teachings.” Translation Nance 2012: 186.

⁶⁵ On the four types of reason(ing), see, e.g., Sakuma 1990: II.99-102, nn. 596-605, Yoshimizu 1996: 114-119, n. 85, Deleanu 2006: II.494-495, n. 74, Eltschinger 2010a: 555-558.

⁶⁶ YoBh, VivSg D’i D56a2: *rigs pa dañ ’gal ba ni nag po bstan pa dañ rigs pa bži bstan pa dañ che ge žig gi ’bras bu ’brel pa bstan pas lan gdab par bya ba’o //*. Translation Nance 2012: 186. How does Nance’s translation fit with Tib. *che ge žig gi ’bras bu ’brel pa?*

⁶⁷ On *kālāpadeśa* and its contrary the *mahāpadeśa*, see Eltschinger 2014: 203-207.

⁶⁸ Previous work on Vasubandhu’s understudied VY includes Cabezón 1992, Skilling 2000, Horiuchi 2007 and 2009, and Eltschinger forthc.

⁶⁹ VY 6.5-7.4 (P si 33b4-34a1, “2.1. The five means of interpretation”): *ji ltar mdo sde rnam par bśad par bya že na / rnam pa lña dag gis te / mdo sde’i dgos pa dañ / bsdus pa’i don dañ / tshig gi don dañ / mtshams sbyar ba dañ / brgal ba dañ lan gñis brjod par bya’o // [...] brgal ba dañ lan gñis gciḡ tu bya ba ni brgal ba’i lan gdab pa’i don gyi phyir ro // [...] rigs pa dañ mi ’gal ba dañ / śna phyi mi ’gal ba ni brgal ba dañ lan las yin pas na [...] //*. Translation Nance 2012: 6-7 (brackets mine). The Sanskrit words in brackets are borrowed from Haribhadra’s AAA (15.24-26), which cites the VY’s initial verse (VY 6.9-12 [P si 33b5-6], quoted in Skilling 2000: 318): *prayojanam sapiṇḍārtham padārtham sānusandhikāḥ / sacodyaparihāras ca vācyāḥ sūtrārthavādinibhiḥ // iti pañcabhir ākāraih sūtram vyākhyātavyam iti vyākhyāyuktāu nirṇītam /*. “It is stated in the *Vyākhyāyukti* that a *sūtra* must be commented upon via five aspects: ‘Those who expound the meaning of a *sūtra* should state [its] purpose together with the summary meaning, the meaning of the phrases together with the connections and the objections and responses.’” To be compared with ASBh 142,11-12, with *abhiprāya* for *piṇḍārtha* (Nance 2012: 154).

“connections”; (2) Vasubandhu also regards suspicion of internal inconsistencies and contradictions with reason as what motivates responses to objections, the final element of a scriptural commentary.

3.2.2.1. Let us consider two examples of internal inconsistencies, both of which pertain to important aspects of Buddhist dogmatics: the nature of the mind and (the retribution of) action. Here is the first objection, concerning the nature of the mind: “Among these[, let us now turn to] objections [pointing] to internal contradictions. For example, somewhere [the Blessed One] speaks as follows: ‘What is called the mind, what is called the internal organ, and what is called cognition, inasmuch as it perishes every night and day and perishes at every moment, every second, every instant, appears [as] another in many ways and in many respects when it appears, and disappears [as] another [in many ways and in many respects when it disappears].’ But somewhere [else, the Blessed One] speaks as follows: ‘What is called the mind, what is called the internal organ, and what is called cognition, having been fortified over a long time (**dīrgharātram*, BHSD, SWTTF) by faith, having been fortified by morality, generosity and insight, goes upwards to [its] future state (**samparāya?*), goes to distinction [and] reaches heaven (**svargopaga?* SWTTF).’ How can a momentary (**kṣaṇika*) mind [be said to] go upwards in a future time?”⁷⁰ These two *logia* of the Blessed One give every appearance of contradicting each other: whereas the *Markaṭasūtra* emphasizes the mind’s momentariness, the second locus, by claiming the mind’s perfectibility and gradual improvement, involves its enduring nature. To this, Vasubandhu suggests the following response: “When [the Blessed One] says that the mind is momentary and that it goes upwards, he speaks intending (**abhipretya?*) its continuum(/series) (**tatsantāna?*); therefore, there is no [internal] contradiction, as [there is a contradiction between] the shadow and the rise of the (sun)light.”⁷¹

3.2.2.2. Our second example of an internal contradiction pertains to the utterly difficult question of the agent of actions and the experiencer of their (mainly post-mortem) retribution. Here is the objection: “In the same way, [the Blessed One] says somewhere ‘In this world, human beings perform both meritorious actions (**puṇya?*) and sinful actions (**pāpa?*). Having appropriated and carried them away, [these good and bad actions] cause [them] to transmigrate.’”⁷² But somewhere [else, the Blessed One] says: ‘Action exists, [its] maturation (*vipāka*) exists, too, but an agent (*kāraka*) does not exist (*nopalabhyate*).’”⁷² Does an agent of actions exist or not? Is (s)he who acts the same as (s)he who experiences the karmic results of actions? According to Vasubandhu and a majority of the Buddhists, there is neither an agent nor an experiencer, but just a beginningless series of purely momentary (physical and) psychological events whose properties and inclinations are a function of the actions it is responsible for. This is the point of Vasubandhu’s answer, which, again, resorts to the hermeneutic principle of the Buddha’s intention: “Somewhere, [the Blessed One] says: ‘In this world, human beings perform both meritorious actions and sinful actions[, etc.]’ and somewhere [else], he says: ‘An agent does not exist[, etc.]’ There is no [internal] contradiction in this case either, because [the Blessed One] had different things in mind [while delivering these teachings]. To explain, it is in the series of the [five] constituents (**skandhasantāna?*) [here metaphorically]

⁷⁰ VY 169,21-170,9 (P si 101a5-b2, “pūrvāparaviruddha(1)”: *de la śna phyi ’gal bar brgal ba ni dper na kha cig las ’di skad du sems śes bya ba’am yid ces bya ba’am rnam par śes pa źes bya ba ’byuñ ba gañ yin pa de ni mtshan mo dañ ñi mo de dañ de dag ’das śin skag cig dañ thañ cig yud tsañ de dañ de dag ’das pas rnam pa du ma dañ rnam pa sna tshogs mañ po gźan skye źin skye la gźan ’gag ciñ ’gag go źes bya ba gsuñs pa dañ / kha cig las yañ ’di skad du sems śes bya ba’am yid ces bya ba’am rnam par śes pa źes bya ba ’byuñ ba gañ yin pa de ni yun riñ po nas dad pas yoñs su bsgos / tshul khriñs dañ goñ ba dañ śes rab kyis yoñs su bsgos pas tshes rabs phyi ma la goñ du ’gro źin khyad par du ’gro ba dañ mtho ris su ñe bar ’gro ba yin no źes gsuñs pa la ji ltar na sems skad cig pa tshes phyi ma la goñ du ’gro bar ’gyur / . In the first passage, Vasubandhu is quoting from the *Markaṭasūtra*, of which we fortunately have the Sanskrit (see Tripathi 1962: 115-120, *Traité* III.1165-1167, and Chung N.D.: 102 for further references): *yat punar idam ucyate cittam iti vā mana iti vā vijñānam iti vā tat teśaṃ rātrīdivasānām atyayāt kṣaṇalavamuhūrtānām atyayāt pravartate bahunānāprakāram anyad evotpadyamānam utpadyate ’nyad eva nirudhyamānam nirudhyate / . “Au contraire ce qui est appelé ‘pensée’, ‘esprit’ ou ‘connaissance’, au fil des nuits et des jours, au cours des instants, des moments et des heures, se présente sous des aspects multiples et divers: quand elle naît c’est [déjà] une autre qui naît, quand elle est détruite, c’est une autre qui est détruite.” Translation *Traité* III.1166-1167. See also SN II.95 (Bodhi 2000: 595). In the second passage, Vasubandhu quotes from a passage very close to SN V.370, II. 5-7: *yañca khvassa cittaṃ dīrgharattaṃ saddhāparibhāvitam sīlasutacāga-paññāparibhāvitam tam uddhagāmi hoti viśesagāmi / . “But his mind, which has been fortified over a long time by faith, virtue, learning, generosity, and wisdom—that goes upwards, goes to distinction.” Translation Bodhi 2000: 1808. Closer parallels could not be identified.***

⁷¹ VY 191,20-22 (P si 109b7-8, “parihāra(6): pūrvāparaviruddha(1)”: *sems ni skad cig ma źes bya ba yin la / goñ du ’gro ba yañ yin no źes gañ gsuñs pa yañ de ’i rgyun la dgoñs nas gsuñs pa ’i phyir ’gal ba med do // grib ma dañ me ’bar ba ’gro ba bźin no // . The simile must be based on a text similar to MN II.235: *seyyathāpi bhikkhave yañ chāyā jahati tañ ātapo pharati / yañ ātapo jahati tañ chāyā pharati / evam eva kho bhikkhave pavivekāya pītiyā nirodhā uppajjati domanassaṃ domanassa nirodhā uppajjati pavivekā pīti / . “Just as the sunlight pervades the area that the shadow leaves, and the shadow pervades the area that the sunlight leaves, so too, with the cessation of the rapture of seclusion, grief arises, and with the cessation of grief, the rapture of seclusion arises.” Translation Nānamoli/Bodhi 2001: 844.**

⁷² VY 170,17-27 (P si 101b3-5, “pūrvāparaviruddha(3)”: *de bźin du kha cig las mi nams kyis ni ’di na bsod nams dañ // sdiğ pa gañ yin gñis ka byed pa ste // de ’i bdağ gir bya ba yin śin des // de yañ khyer te ’gro bar byed pa yin źes gsuñs pa dañ / kha cig las las kyañ yod rnam par smin pa yañ yod la byed pa po ni mi dmigs so źes gsuñs pa [...] // . The first locus (*pādas* 1-3 of the stanza) is somehow reminiscent of Uv 9.8ab: *yat karoti narah karma kalyānam atha pāpakam / (tasya tasyaiva dāyādo na hi karma prañāsyati //) . As for the second, which belongs to the *Paramārthasūnyatāsūtra*, it is frequently quoted in the framework of the controversy over the *puđgala* (“person”). See, e.g., AKBh 129,9-11 (quoted Lee 2001: 170, n. 1215): *asti karmāsti vipākaḥ kārakas tu nopalabhyate / . A slightly longer passage is quoted in MSABh 158,20-22 (for a discussion and further references, see Eltschinger 2010b: 322-323), BCAP 340,22-24 and AKBh 468,23-24 (see also *Kośa* V.59, n. 3, and below, n. 73).***

referred to as ‘human being’ that the cause of the two [types of actions] is to be found, and it is just in this [series] that the results of the two arise. Thus with this in mind, [the Blessed One] has said: ‘In this world, human beings perform both meritorious actions and sinful actions. Having appropriated and carried them away, [these good and bad actions] cause [them] to transmigrate.’ [But when] he said, ‘An agent does not exist,’ what he had in mind was the autonomous (**svatantra*) agent (**karty?*) that is imagined due to the false view of a self (**ātmaḍṣṭi*); [but he did] not [speak in this way] on account of the characteristics of the causal complex. For he has specified: ‘[agent] who would abandon those constituents [at the end of the present life] and take up new constituents [at the beginning of the next].’⁷³ Therefore, since he had different things in mind, there is no internal contradiction [between these various statements].”⁷⁴

3.2.3.1. As mentioned above, Vasubandhu’s view on contradiction with reason(ing) operates with a notion of reason(ing) that is not the same as the VivSg’s. The latter’s four types of reason(ing) designed what can be regarded as an intrabuddhistic and essentially exegetical/soteriological concept of reason. Recall, however, that the third type of reason(ing), i.e., “reason(ing) proving by means of arguments” (*upapattisāadhanayukti*), consisted in a monk or a *bodhisattva* providing justification for a certain teaching by resorting to three means of valid cognition, viz. perception, inference, and trustworthy scripture. Vasubandhu’s concept of reason(ing) can be seen as a generalization of the *upapattisāadhanayukti* and the role played in it by the means of valid cognition. Accordingly, contradictions with reason(ing) can be defined as inconsistencies with either perception, inference, or authoritative scripture: “In brief, here we call ‘reason(ing)’ (**nyāya*, **yukti*) the three means of valid cognition, i.e., perception, inference, and trustworthy scripture. [Any] objection [pointing out] contradictions with whatever [is derived] from these [means of valid cognition] must be known as an objection [pointing out] a contradiction with reason(ing).”⁷⁵ Here again, let us briefly review two examples of objections based on contradiction with individual *pramāṇas*.⁷⁶

3.2.3.2. According to Vasubandhu, the doctrine according to which everything—past, present, future—exists (the Sarvāstivāda monastic order is named after this controversial doctrine: “those who claim that everything exists”) provides a characteristic example of a contradiction with perception—and even more than that: “[Consider,] for example, [the following statement:] ‘O monks, past corporeality exists; future corporeality exists. What[ever] has passed away, is destroyed, has ceased to exist, has disappeared and has undergone transformation, [all] this exists.’ [This statement] contradicts perception, because it is [empirically] perceptible that past and future [things] simply do not exist, just as the hair of a tortoise (**kūrmaroman?*) [does not exist]. Moreover, saying [of something] that it is past and that it exists is an internal contradiction, for if it exists, how [can it be] past? And the same [applies to] the future. In this case, there is a contradiction with what is said [by the Blessed One] in another *sūtra* [i.e.,] ‘The eye, when it arises, does not come from anywhere, [and] when it ceases to exist, it does not go anywhere [to be] stored. O monks, the eye comes into existence after not existing and disappears after having come into existence.’”⁷⁷ Vasubandhu’s critique has a close parallel in the same author’s AKBh (299,1-18; see *Kośa* V.58-60), where the same texts are quoted. The Sarvāstivādin takes the statement that past and future actions exist at its face value. Vasubandhu (speaking here as a Sautrāntika) first provides a semantic analysis of these expressions,

⁷³ Cf. AKBh 468,23-24 (quoted Lee 2001: 193, n. 1396; quotation from the *Paramārthaśūnyatāsūtra*): (*asti karmāsti vipākaḥ kārakas tu nopalabhyate*) *ya imāṃś ca skandhān nikṣipaty anyāṃś ca skandhān pratisandadhāti (anyatra dharmasanketāt).*

⁷⁴ VY 193,4-24 (P si 110b1-6, “parihāra(8): pūrvāparaviruddha(3)”: *kha cig las mi rnamṣ kyiṣ ni ’di na bsod nams daṅ // sdīg pa gaṅ yin gñiṣ ka byed pa de // ’zes gsuṅṣ pa daṅ / kha cig las byed pa po mi dmigs so ’zes gaṅ gsuṅṣ pa gaṅ yin pa der yaṅ dgoṅṣ pa tha dad pa’i phyir ’gal ba med de / ’di ltar phuṅ po’i rgyud gaṅ la mi rnamṣ šes bya ba de la de gñiṣ kyi rgyu yod ciṅ de kho na la de gñiṣ kyaṅ ’bras bu ’byuṅ bas ’di la¹ dgoṅṣ nas / mi rnamṣ kyiṣ ni ’di na bsod nams daṅ // sdīg pa gaṅ yin gñiṣ ka byed pa de // de yi bdag gir bya ba yin šin des // de yaṅ khyer te ’gro bar byed pa yin ’zes gsuṅṣ pa yin no // bdag tu lta bas kun tu brtags pa’i byed pa po raṅ dbaṅ yod pa la dgoṅṣ nas ni byed pa po mi dmigs so ’zes gsuṅṣ pa yin gyi rgyu tshogs pa’i mtshan ṅid las ni ma yin te / ’di ltar gaṅ žig phuṅ po ’di dag ’dor šin phuṅ po gžan dag tu mtshams sbyor bar byed pa’i ’zes khyad par du mdzad pa yin no // de bas na dgoṅṣ pa tha dad pa’i phyir sṅa phyi ’gal ba med do // .’la em. : las Ed.*

⁷⁵ VY 173,16-17 and 19-20 (P si 102b6-7, “nyāyaviruddha(1),” *in fine*, and “nyāyaviruddha(2): pratyakṣavirodha,” *in limine*): *mdor na rigs pa ni ’dir tshad ma rnam pa gsum po mñon sum daṅ rjes su dpag pa daṅ yid ches pa’i gsuṅ no // de dag las gaṅ yaṅ ruṅ ba žig daṅ ’gal bar brgal ba yaṅ rigs pa daṅ ’gal bar brgal ba yin par rig par bya’o // .*

⁷⁶ Due to limitations of space made it impossible to quote Vasubandhu’s responses to these objections, which are significantly longer than his answers to the objections pointing to internal inconsistencies.

⁷⁷ VY 173,20-174,13 (P si 102b7-103a3, “nyāyaviruddha(2): pratyakṣavirodha”): *dper na – dge sloṅ dag gzugs ’das pa yod do // gzugs ma ’oṅṣ pa yod do // ’das pa daṅ zad pa daṅ ’gags pa daṅ bral ba daṅ yoṅṣ su gyur pa gaṅ yin pa de yod do* // ’zes bya ba ni mñon sum daṅ ’gal ba yin no // ’di ltar ’das pa daṅ ma ’oṅṣ pa ni med pa ṅid yin par mñon sum yin te / dper na rus sbal gyi spu bžin no // ’das pa’aṅ yin la yod pa’aṅ yin žes bya ba ’di sṅa phyi ’gal ba yaṅ yin te / gal te yod na ji ltar ’das pa yin / ma ’oṅṣ pa yaṅ de daṅ ’dra’o // mdo sde gžan las – miḡ skye ba na gaṅ nas kyaṅ mi ’oṅ la / ’gag pa na gaṅ du yaṅ sogs par mi ’gro’o // dge sloṅ dag de ltar na miḡ ni ma skyes pa las skye žin skyes nas kyaṅ ’jig go** // ’zes gsuṅṣ pas de daṅ ’dir ’gal ba yin no // .* *Cf. AKBh 299,6 (quoted Lee 2001: 173, n. 1238; quotation from the *Paramārthaśūnyatāsūtra*): *asty atītam asty anāgatam /*. Cf. AKBh 299,9-10 (quoted Lee 2001: 173, n. 1238): *yat karmābhyatītam kṣīṇaṃ niruddhaṃ vigataṃ vipariṇataṃ tad asti /*. According to Vasubandhu, the Buddha said this to the “Lagudāśikhīyaka parivrājakaṣ” (see *Kośa* V.59, n. 2, and AKVy 473,14-19). **Cf. AKBh 299,12-14 (quoted in Lee 2001: 174, n. 1241): *caḡsur utpadyamānaṃ na kutaścīd āgacchati nirudhyamānaṃ na kvacit sannicayaṃ gaḡchati / iti hi bhikṣavaṣ caḡsur abhūtvā bhavati bhūtvā ca prativigacchati /*. The same passage is quoted in BCAP 408,29-31 on BCA 9.142.

arguing that “we, too, say that the past and the future exist, but [in our opinion,] the past is what existed before, [and] the future, what will exist provided [its] cause exists; it is in this sense that we say that they exist, but [certainly] not [in the sense that they would exist] substantially[, as the present exists].”⁷⁸ He then suggests that the Sarvāstivāda interpretation of the *logion* entails an internal contradiction, “for otherwise [i.e., on the Sarvāstivāda interpretation], if [the past] existed of its own, it would not be established as past.”^{79,80} Finally, Vasubandhu quotes the same excerpt from the *Paramārthaśūnyatāsūtra* to show that his Sarvāstivādin opponent contradicts authoritative scripture.

3.2.3.3. Our second example presents us with a case of alleged contradiction with authoritative scripture (*āgama-virodha*), the “mainstream” Buddhists’ contention that the Great Vehicle is a forgery (i.e., not the word of the Buddha) because it contradicts the basic teachings of the Buddha. This case is of a particular importance inasmuch as it triggers one of the quantitatively and qualitatively most prominent aspects of the VY, i.e., its apology on behalf of the Great Vehicle,⁸¹ and inasmuch as it reflects what likely was an important concern of early 1st-millenium Indian Buddhist communities. As we can see, the objections (at least theoretically) raised in the framework of commentaries were not limited to sophisticated dogmatic or philosophical issues, but could pertain equally well to important challenges of a socio-historical nature. Here is this objection: “For example, claiming that the Vaipulya [section of the twelvefold word of the Buddha]⁸² is the Great Vehicle is in contradiction with scripture. Some say that the Vaipulya [section simply] consists of extensive *sūtra* works, but not of the Great Vehicle. – Why? – [Because] it is not the word of the Buddha! – [But] in which way is it not the word of the Buddha? – Because it contradicts [it]! It contradicts the word of the Buddha [as it is] acknowledged in all orders (**nikāya*). For in the [Great Vehicle] are found [claims to the effect] that all factors are selfless, non-arisen [and] non-destroyed, that all factors are originally peaceful [and] in complete cessation by nature; in the same way, one finds [statements such as] ‘Corporeality is unreal, O Subhūti, and [everything] up to awakening [itself] is unreal, O Subhūti!’ But in the word of the Buddha [as it is] acknowledged in all orders, the Blessed One [is seen to say] ‘What is ignorance? – Not to know the past and the [future?]’; he teaches the nature of all factors from birth to old age and death, [saying:] ‘Because that exists, this exists,’ ‘Because that arises, this arises,’ ‘Visual cognition arises in dependence on eye and corporeality,’ [And further:] ‘All conditioned things have passed away, are destroyed, have ceased to exist, have disappeared, have undergone transformation.’ [And further:] ‘Alas, [all] conditioned things are impermanent; they have the property of perishing upon being born; [and] since they are perishing after being born, they are tranquillity and bliss.’ [And further:] ‘O monks, [all] conditioned things are painful; cessation is peaceful.’ [And further:] ‘Due to the arising of [its] cause, suffering arises; due to the cessation of [its] cause, suffering ceases. By possessing the causes [responsible for this], one goes to good [rebirth] destinations (**sugati*); by possessing the causes [responsible for this, to] bad [rebirth] destinations; by possessing the causes [responsible for this, one obtains] cessation; all this arises due to possessing the [necessary] causes.’ [And further:] ‘Corporeality is impermanent, painful [and] changing.’ [And further:] ‘Those [things] that are accepted to exist by learned [people] in the world, I also say that they exist.’ With such statements, [the Blessed One] teaches birth, etc. Therefore, because it contradicts the word of the Buddha [as it is generally] acknowledged, the Great Vehicle is not the word of the Buddha, and thus, claiming that the Vaipulya [section of the twelvefold word of the Buddha] is the Great Vehicle, is contradictory with scripture.”⁸³

⁷⁸ AKBh 299,1-3: *vayam api brūmo 'sty atītānāgatam iti / atītam tu yad bhūtāpūrvam / anāgatam yat satī hetau bhaviṣyati / evaṃ ca kṛtvā 'stīty ucyate na tu punar dravyataḥ* / . See *Kośa* V.58.

⁷⁹ Yaśomitra (AKVy 473,29-30) glosses *svena bhāvena*, “of its own,” as *pratyutpannalakṣaṇena*, “with the character(istic) of the present,” and *atītam (iti) na sidhyet* as *pratyutpannam eva sidhyed ity abhiprāyaḥ*, “it would simply be established as present—such is [Vasubandhu’s] intention.”

⁸⁰ AKBh 299,13: *anyathā hi svena bhāvena vidyamānam atītam na sidhyet* / .

⁸¹ This apology is the subject matter of Chapter 4 of the work. On this aspect of the VY as well as for other sources, see, e.g., Cabezón 1992, Skilling 2000: 323-324, Horiuchi 2007 and 2009, and Eltschinger forthc.

⁸² On the Vaipulya section of the *dvādaśāṅgapravacana*, see above, n. 58.

⁸³ VY 175,22-177,18 (P si 103b2-104a4, “nyāyaviruddha(7): āgamavirodha[= Mahāyāna is not Buddhavacana]: *de bzin du – śin tu rgyas pa 'i sde ni theg pa chen po yin no zes gañ bśad pa yañ luñ dan 'gal ba yin te / kha cig na re mdo sde 'i le'u grañs rgyas pa rñams ni śin tu rgyas pa 'i sde yin gyi theg pa chen po ni ma yin no zes zer te / ci 'i phyir ze na / de ni sañs rgyas kyi gsuñ ma yin no // ji ltar sañs rgyas kyi gsuñ ma yin ze na / 'gal ba 'i phyir te / de ni sde pa thams cad la grags pa 'i sañs rgyas kyi gsuñ dan 'gal ba yin no // 'di ltar de las ni – chos thams cad ni rañ bzin med pa / ma skyes pa ma 'gags pa / chos thams cad ni gzod ma nas ži ba / rañ bzin gyis yoñs su mya ñan las 'das pa zes bya ba dan / de bzin du rab 'byor gzugs ni dños po med do // rab 'byor byañ chub kyi bar du yañ dños po med do zes 'byuñ la / sde pa thams la grags pa 'i sañs rgyas kyi gsuñ las ni bcom ldan 'das kyi ma rig pa gañ ze na / gañ de dan śhon gyi mtha' mi šes pa zes bya ba rgyas par 'byuñ ba nas / rga śi 'i bar du chos rñams kyi rañ bzin yañ bstan / 'di yod pas 'di 'byuñ / 'di skyes pa 'i phyir 'di skye / mig dan gzugs la brten nas mig gi mnam par šes pa skye / 'du byed 'di dag thams cad ni 'das zad pa 'gags pa bral ba yoñs su gyur pa 'o // kye ma 'du byed mams mi rtag // skye žin 'jig pa 'i chos can yin // skyes nas 'jig par 'gyur bas na // de dag ñe bar ži ba bde // dge sloñ dag 'di lta ste / 'du byed mams ni sdug bśal ba 'o // mya ñan las 'das pa ni ži ba 'o zes bya ba dan / rgyu kun 'byuñ ba las sdug bśal kun 'byuñ ba yin la / rgyu 'gags pa las sdug*

3.3. These four cases are far from exhausting the examples of internal and “external” contradictions adduced by Vasubandhu in the VY, but it should be clear by now that pointing to contradictions of either kind, basing objections upon them and answering these form an essential part of Indian Buddhist commentaries as theorized by Vasubandhu and others. Far from being limited to minor philological issues or superficial misunderstandings, these objections pertain to the most important aspects of Buddhist doctrine. It remains to be seen whether those who wrote scriptural commentaries with Vasubandhu’s recommendations in mind complied with this model—which seems to have been at least partly the case in Kamalāśīla’s exegetical practice.⁸⁴

Before concluding, let it be briefly mentioned that these two types of contradictions played a significant role in the development and the self-understanding of Buddhist epistemology, a tradition in which, as its name suggests, the means of valid cognition played a key role. Two important aspects of this tradition’s treatment of the *pramāṇas* are that it limits their number to perception and inference (thus excluding scripture from reliable sources of knowledge), and that it sharply distinguishes the empirical (*dr̥ṣṭa*) from the transempirical realm (*adr̥ṣṭa*, [*atyanta*]parokṣa, *atīndriya*, etc.), the first being accessible to ordinary human cognition (viz., the two *pramāṇas*) while the latter is the object of scriptural authority (*āgama*[*prāmāṇya*]). Buddhist epistemology is of an essentially apologetic character. In other words, its principal task is to critically assess (and, needless to say, to reject) the truth claims of other systems and to defend Buddhism against its opponents. There is at least one important passage in Dharmakīrti’s works demonstrating that *yuktivirodha* and *pūrvāparavirodha* played a decisive role in this apologetic endeavor, but severed from their originally exegetical context. Whereas, in the exegetical handbooks considered above, *yuktivirodha* and *pūrvāparavirodha* were two types of contradiction, each is assigned a definite epistemological function in Dharmakīrti’s system. Assessing the reliability of a given treatise or scripture—what these and earlier authors call a *parīkṣā* or “critical examination”—proceeds in two ways: first, its empirical statements should be checked against perception and inference; second, since those of its statements that pertain to the transempirical realm can be neither verified nor falsified, its internal consistency while dealing with supersensible things at least should be checked, and this is tantamount to searching for *pūrvāparavirodha*. Here is this all-important passage: “The [treatise]’s reliability consists in the fact that neither perception nor the two kinds of inferences [i.e., inference based on the force of real things and scripturally based inference,] invalidates the empirical or transempirical things [that are] their [respective] objects. [A treatise’s] not being invalidated by perception consists [first] in the fact that the things it holds to be perceptible are indeed such [i.e., perceptible], for example [the five *skandhas*, i.e., colours] such as blue, [affective sensations such as] pleasure and pain, [ideation consisting in one’s] grasping the characteristics [of things, conditioning factors] such as desire, and cognitions[, which are all perceived by sensory perception and self-awareness. Second, a treatise’s not being invalidated by perception consists] in the fact that the [things] it does not hold to be such [i.e., perceptible,] are [indeed] imperceptible, for example [pseudo-constituents] such as pleasure, which [the Sāṅkhya erroneously takes to] combine in the form of sounds, etc., and [categories] such as substances, motions, universals and connections[, which the Vaiśeṣika erroneously takes to be perceptible]. Similarly, [a treatise’s not being invalidated by inference] consists [first] in the fact that the [things] it holds to be the objects of an inference that does not depend on scripture are really such [i.e., inferable], as the four nobles’ truths, [and second] in the fact that the [things it holds to be] non-inferable are really such [i.e., noninferable], like the self, [God,] etc. [And this type of invalidation is] also [relevant] concerning an inference that depends on scripture[, which consists in identifying internal contradictions within a treatise]: for example, once it is admitted that demerit has the nature of [defilements] such as desire and the [corporeal and verbal acts] that originate from them, one does not prescribe [things] such as ablutions and fire oblation in order to remove it [i.e., demerit, because they cannot annihilate its cause].”⁸⁵

*bsñal 'gog pa yin no // rgyu dañ bcas pas bde 'gror 'gro // rgyur bcas ñid kyis ñan¹ 'gror te // rgyu dañ bcas pas mya ñan 'da' // 'di kun rgyu dañ bcas las 'byuñ // zes bya ba dañ / de bñin du gzugs ni mi rtag pa sdug bsñal ba 'gyur ba 'i chos can no zes bya ba dañ / 'jig rten na mkhas pa mams kyis yod par 'dod pa gañ yin pa de ni ña yañ yod par smra'o zes bya ba de lta bu la sogs pa 'byuñ bas skye ba la sogs pa yañ bstan to // de'i phyir rab tu grags pa'i sañs rgyas kyi gsuñ dañ 'gal bas theg pa chen po ni sañs rgyas kyi gsuñ ma yin no // de bas na ñin tu rgyas pa'i sde ni theg pa chen po yin no zes bya ba ni luñ dañ 'gal ba yin no //.*¹ñan em.: ñan Ed.

⁸⁴ See Schoening 1992: 224 and 1995: II.15-47.

⁸⁵ PV 1.215 and PVS 108,20-109,3: *pratyakṣeṇānumānena dvividhenāpy abādhanam / dr̥ṣṭādr̥ṣṭārthayor asyāvisamvādas tadarthayoh // pratyakṣeṇābādhanam pratyakṣābhimatānām arthānām tathābhāvaḥ / yathā nīlādisukhaduḥkhanimittopalakṣaṇarāgādibuddhīnām / atathābhimatānām cāpratyakṣatā / yathā śabdādirūpasanniveśinām sukhādīnām dravyakarmasāmānyasamyogādīnām ca / tathānāgamāpekṣānumānaviśayābhimatānām tathābhāvaḥ / yathā caturṇām āryasatyānām / ananumeyānām tathābhāvaḥ / yathātmādīnām / āgamāpekṣānumāne 'pi yathā rāgādirūpaṃ tatprabhavaṃ cādharmaṃ abhyupagāmya tatprahāñyā snānāgnihotrāder anupadeśaḥ /*. On this passage, see Eltschinger 2007: 105-109 and 221-223 (especially nn. 23-27).

Conclusion

Both in the Latin Middle Ages and in Indian Buddhist scholasticism, a significant part of doctrinal elaboration and philosophical thinking was embedded in or closely connected to scriptural commentary and emancipated itself from it in the form of the *quaestio disputata* and the *disputatio* on the one hand, of a type of *parīkṣā* on the other. In both contexts, contradictions between conflicting authorities, internal contradictions and other kinds of inconsistencies motivated objections that were critically addressed at the end of a commentarial sequence. In both contexts, the main expressions of “mature” philosophical activity bear strong formal and structural reminiscences of this origin. This is certainly not to say that philosophy arose from exegesis, of course, for even in the Buddhist context, at least a form of philosophy preexisted this type of commentary. But forms first developed in the framework of commentarial activity shaped and strengthened the type of philosophical expression that was to dominate the two intellectual cultures at their acme (12th-14th c. and 6th-12th, respectively).

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