SOMETHINGS AND NOTHINGS: ŚRĪGUPTA AND LEIBNIZ ON BEING AND UNITY

Allison Aitken
Department of South Asian Studies and Department of Philosophy, Harvard University
aeaitken@fas.harvard.edu

Jeffrey K. McDonough
Department of Philosophy, Harvard University
jkmcdon@fas.harvard.edu

Introduction

Śrīgupta, a Buddhist philosopher in the Middle Way (Madhyamaka) tradition, was born in Bengal in present-day India in the seventh century. He is best known for his *Introduction to Reality (Tattvāvatāra)* with its accompanying auto-commentary *(Tattvāvatāravṛtti)*,[1] in which he presents the first Middle Way iteration of the influential "neither-one-nor-many argument."[2] This anti-foundationalist line of reasoning sets out to prove that nothing enjoys ontologically independent being *(svabhāva)*.

Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz was born some one thousand years later, in the city of Leipzig, situated on the outskirts of European learning and thought. He is best known today for having co-invented the infinitesimal calculus, for his book-length apology for the existence of evil, and as the butt of Voltaire's scathing satire *Candide*. In metaphysics, Leibniz famously defended a radical foundationalism in which he sought to ground the phenomena of everyday experience in unextended, mind-like monads unfolding of their own accord in a perfect pre-established harmony.

Śrīgupta and Leibniz have about as little in common as any two distinguished philosophers one can imagine. Politically, socially, and theologically they are simply worlds apart. And yet, as we shall argue, they develop a strikingly similar line of argument against the reality of the material world rooted in the thought that unity and being are convertible. In what follows, we will explore the similarities and differences in Śrīgupta's and Leibniz's thinking about being and unity. The first two sections show how Leibniz and Śrīgupta embrace a metaphysical principle linking being and unity and use that principle to argue against the full-blooded existence

of matter. The last two sections explore how and why Leibniz and Śrīgupta draw radically different conclusions from their thinking about being and unity, with Leibniz arguing for a kind of idealist foundationalism and Śrīgupta arguing for a rejection of full-blooded existence altogether.

What do we hope to gain with this particular comparison across times, cultures, and philosophical traditions? Three things. First, we will witness some intriguing, engaging, and powerful philosophy from two masters of the craft—always one of the chief rewards of engaging with great thinkers of earlier eras. Second, we will have the opportunity to see how Śrīgupta and Leibniz draw very different conclusions from shared starting points and why they could not be satisfied with each other's respective conclusions. Finally—and most interestingly to our minds—we will see how deeply Śrīgupta and Leibniz agree about the possibility space of metaphysics. Given how little they overlap with respect to their non-philosophical commitments, that agreement might be thought to have better claim to providing objective insight than could the views of any single figure, time, or tradition.

I

In his correspondence with the great Jansenist philosopher and theologian Antoine Arnauld, Leibniz offers a famously elegant argument in favor of the existence of true unities. The argument takes for granted a long-standing principle that we will call the *principle of unity*, and which Leibniz states succinctly with nothing more than a difference in emphasis: "what is not truly *one* entity is not truly one *entity* either" (G II 97/MP 121).[3] The principle of unity has a long and distinguished history reaching back at least to Plato's *Parmenides* and the *Sophist* (Thomas 2008). One might hope to defend it by seeing it as imposing "only an exceptionally weak logical requirement concerning number" (Levey 2003, p. 262). Such a defense would suggest that if something—some *x*—is to exist, then there must be some one thing—some one *x*—to which it is identical. For how could there be something that is not identical to some one thing? How could there be an *x* that is not identical to one *x* (namely itself)? Perhaps some such argument could lend support to the principle of unity from deep-seated convictions about mathematics and logic. Leibniz himself, however, may have seen the principle of unity as being more directly grounded in metaphysical intuition. His core idea seems to be simply that anything that enjoys real, true, fundamental being must also enjoy real, true, fundamental unity and vice versa. For him, the principle of unity seems to be a metaphysical principle that at the very least does not *require* further support from other domains such as mathematics or logic.

In his correspondence with Arnauld, and again later in his correspondence with the Dutch Cartesian Burchard de Volder, Leibniz uses his principle of unity to undermine Descartes' conception of matter. In

establishing new foundations for his geometrical physics, Descartes proposed to identify matter with extension itself, declaring, for example, in his *Principles of Philosophy* that "the nature of matter, or body considered in general, consists not in its being something which is hard or heavy or colored, or which affects the senses in any way, but simply in its being something which is extended in length, breadth and depth" (AT 9b:42/CSM 1:224). Descartes' conception of matter promised an especially intelligible, mathematically amenable foundation for natural philosophy and allowed him to draw a sharp distinction between matter and mind. Leibniz, although sympathetic with mechanical philosophy from a young age, came to believe that Descartes' conception of matter was too impoverished to be either useful or true. Armed with the principle of unity, Leibniz developed two distinguishable lines of thought aimed at undermining Descartes' understanding of matter.

The first line of thought seeks to establish that Cartesian matter must lack any principle of unity. Leibniz makes this point in a famous passage from a draft of a letter to Arnauld dated November 28/December 8, 1686:

> . . . bodily substance does not consist of extension or divisibility; for it will be conceded that two bodies set apart from one another, for instance two triangles, are not really one substance; let us now assume that they come together to make up a square, will the mere fact of their continuity turn them into one substance? I do not think so. Now, each extended mass can be considered as composed of two or a thousand others; there exists only an extension achieved through contiguity. Thus one will never find a body of which it may be said that it is truly one substance. It will always be an aggregate of many. Or rather, it will not be a real entity, since the parts making it up are subject to the same difficulty, and since one never arrives at any real entity, because entities made up by aggregation have only as much reality as exists in their constituent parts. (G 2:72/LA 88)

The closing sentence of this passage suggests that Cartesian matter cannot be fully real. We will return to that thought below. What is most important for our immediate concerns, however, is Leibniz's idea that Cartesian matter per se must lack any principle of unity. Leibniz takes it for granted that two bodies at a distance from one another cannot compose a true unity and therefore cannot compose a true being. But, Leibniz reasons, mere contiguity—the only kind of unity applicable to Cartesian matter per se—is, he thinks, no better a basis for real, true, fundamental unity. When I put my coffee cup down on my desk, I don't create a new unified object. When I pat my dog's head, we don't become one unified thing. Leibniz concludes that Cartesian matter per se cannot enjoy true unity and thus cannot enjoy true being.

The second line of thought seeks to establish a conditional claim, namely that if there are aggregates then there must be true unities. This point

is perhaps made most clearly in another letter from Leibniz to Arnauld, this time of April 30, 1687:

> I believe that . . . every entity through aggregation presupposes entities endowed with a true unity, because it obtains its reality from nowhere but that of its constituents, so that it will have no reality at all if each constituent entity is still an entity through aggregation. . . . [I]f there are aggregates of substance, there must also be genuine substances from which all the aggregates result. One must . . . recognize certain substances in them that possess a true unity. (G 2:96–97/LA 120–121)

There are again many things going on at once in this passage, including the thought that any aggregate "obtains its reality from nowhere but that of its constituents." We will return to Leibniz's views on ontological dependence later in section III. For now, what is most important in this passage is Leibniz's suggestion that "if there are aggregates of substance, there must also be genuine substances from which the aggregates result." Let us call the idea expressed here the *aggregate principle*. Put in terms of the principle of unity, we might express the basic idea of the aggregate principle by saying that if there are aggregates of true unities, there must be true unities that the aggregates aggregate.[4]

The aggregate principle tells us that if there are aggregates of unities there must be unities, but it doesn't tell us what those unities must be like. And, indeed, over the course of his long career, Leibniz seems to have entertained two very different conceptions of true unities. His first conception—his *corporeal substance* conception—takes living organisms in general, and human beings insofar as we are unions of souls and bodies in particular, as models of true unities. We find many passages in which Leibniz seems intent on insisting that genuine substances must be unions involving souls and bodies and not just souls or immaterial principles alone. So, for example, he writes that "the soul, properly and accurately speaking, is not a substance, but a substantial form, or primitive form existing in substances." Likewise, he tells us, "This will do: *Substance* is an entity that is one and full. 'One' like a man, and not an army. 'Full' like a man, not a soul *[anima]*, not a power *[virtus]*."[5] And, finally, he remarks, "What I call an . . . individual substance *[substantia singularis]* is not so much the soul, as it is the animal itself, or something analogous to it, endowed with a soul or form and an organic body" (GM 3:542/AG 168). As this last remark suggests, although embodied human beings represent Leibniz's favorite examples of corporeal substances, it is clear that he thinks that humans are only one example among many. Leibniz is insistent that other living creatures—birds and bees, cats and dogs—are candidate corporeal substances. He chides, "to wish to restrict genuine unity or substance to man almost without exceptions is to be as limited in metaphysics as were those in physics who enclosed the world in a ball" (G 2:98).

Leibniz's second—more famous—conception of substance takes minds or souls themselves as models of true unities. Just as unions of human souls and bodies serve as paradigms of corporeal substances, human minds or souls taken alone serve as paradigms of immaterial substances. Thus, in a piece written around 1684, Leibniz says plainly that "a soul is a substance acting and being acted upon" (A VI.iv.531; G 2:68). Similarly, in a passage from some notes taken on a conversation with Michelangelo Fardella, Leibniz suggests that it is only when we are identified with souls alone that we may be counted as genuine substances (A.IVB.1670/AG 105). Finally, in another letter written to de Volder, this time of June 30, 1704, Leibniz implies that genuine substances are properly analogous to souls, or minds, writing that "considering the matter carefully, we must say that there is nothing in things but simple substances, and in them, perception and appetite," a point he clarifies in a still later text in which he writes, "it is evident in the end there are simple [i.e. soul-like] substances alone" (G 2:270/AG 181; C 14/MP 175). It is worth emphasizing here that, as with his understanding of corporeal substances, Leibniz's understanding of immaterial substances is broad in the sense that it is not restricted to a narrow conception of human souls but rather ranges over immaterial unities both superior and inferior to human minds.

Leibniz's willingness to entertain both corporeal and incorporeal substances makes it harder to discern his considered views on the nature of true unities. Did Leibniz change his mind, holding first, for example, that corporeal substances are to be counted as true unities and then later counting only incorporeal substance as true unities (see Garber 1985, 2009)? Did he simply have inconsistent views on the subject (see Hartz 2007 and Hartz and Wilson 2005)? Was he aiming to appease different audiences? If so, sincerely or insincerely (McDonough 2013, Whipple 2015)? As intriguing as such questions may be, debates about Leibniz's considered views concerning the nature of substance turn out, we think, not to be central to our present concerns. What is central above all is Leibniz's commitment to what we have called the principle of unity. That is, to the principle that only true unities can exist in the fullest sense, or, to echo Leibniz, that to be one *entity* is to be *one* entity. As we have seen, the principle of unity provides him with an opening premise from which to argue against the existence of matter understood as mere extension. For the principle of unity implies that to be fully real, matter would have to be a true unity. But intuitive arguments offered by Leibniz suggest that neither matter nor any part of matter can be a true unity. Leibniz concludes that matter understood as mere extension cannot be fully real. In the next section, we will see that Śrīgupta—working in an entirely different tradition, almost a millennium before Leibniz—adopted essentially the same principle of unity and used it to arrive at essentially the same conclusion.

II

Śrīgupta opens his *Introduction to Reality* by laying out his so-called "neither-one-nor-many argument." The argument poses a dilemma fueled by Śrīgupta's own strict understanding of the principle of unity. For Śrīgupta, a true unity is something that lacks both physical and conceptual parts.[6] In other words, a true unity is mereologically simple and conceptually primitive. A diamond ring thus fails to count as a true unity for Śrīgupta because it has a physical diamond part and a physical gold-band part. But so, too, do numbers and abstract shapes. The number two can be conceptually divided into two single units. An abstract triangle can be conceptually divided into three sides and three angles. With his austere understanding of unity in mind, Śrīgupta poses his famous dilemma: *if anything has independent being, then it is either a true unity or a true multitude.* The point of the dilemma is to set up an argument ultimately showing that nothing can satisfy the consequent, and therefore (by modus tollens) that nothing can satisfy the antecedent. In short, since there is nothing that is either a true unity or a true multitude, there is nothing that has independent being. In coming to grips with Śrīgupta's compact, challenging argument, two thoughts in particular are worth bearing in mind.

First, Śrīgupta's notion of independent being corresponds quite closely to the notion of substance common in the Western philosophical tradition going back to at least Aristotle. Abstracting from many subtleties and variances, the core idea of a substance in the Western tradition is the idea of a fundamental, independent being. Thus, for example, in his *Categories*, Aristotle suggests that particular living beings may be counted as substances. In his account, Socrates and a horse are to be reckoned as fundamental, ontological elements of the world. Descartes would later suggest that there are essentially two kinds of substance—mental and material—and seems to have counted finite minds as fundamental, independent beings (while leaving things less clear on the material side). Notoriously, Spinoza dared to go a step further, insisting that only nature as a whole—what he provocatively called "God"—could be truly fundamental and independent. By Spinoza's lights, only "God or Nature" could be reckoned a substance. When Śrīgupta speaks of independent being he is, we suggest, getting at the same basic idea as Aristotle, Descartes, and Spinoza. Śrīgupta, as a metaphysician, is concerned with the question of whether anything exists per se, whether anything exists, as it were, without depending by its very nature on other things.

Second, with his dilemma, Śrīgupta means to draw a distinction dividing all possible independent beings. According to Śrīgupta, independent beings would have to be either true unities (they would have to be simple individuals or ones) or they would have be true multitudes (they would have

to be many true unities). Two further points may help to flesh out this aspect of his dilemma.

First, Śrīgupta uses terms for unity and multitude that most literally mean "one" *(eka)* and "not-one" *(aneka).*[7] He therefore takes the terms unity and multitude to represent two sides of a mutually exclusive and exhaustive predicate pair. The pair of predicates ". . . is a unity" and ". . . is a multitude" are thus, for Śrīgupta, akin to the predicates " . . . is a square" and ". . . is a not-square," or, more formally, ". . . is an F" and ". . . is a not-F." The implication, of course, is that if something has independent being, then on pain of violating the law of excluded middle, it must either be one *(eka)* or not-one *(aneka).*

Second, despite the fact that the categories "unity" and "multitude" are mutually exclusive and exhaustive disjuncts, they nonetheless, according to Śrīgupta, stand in an asymmetric, metaphysical dependence relation to one another. Śrīgupta observes, "Given that [a multitude] consists of many unities, if that [unity] does not exist, that [multitude] is also impossible."[8] Here Śrīgupta makes explicit an implication of Leibniz's aggregate principle that we left undeveloped above. Since the existence of a multitude of true unities presupposes (or would presuppose) the existence of true unities, but the existence of a true unity does not (or would not) presuppose the existence of a multitude of true unities, the existence of a multitude of true unities is asymmetrically dependent upon the existence of true unities. For Śrīgupta and Leibniz alike, we can no more have the existence of multitudes of true unities without the existence of true unities than we can have a forest without trees. The one does not presuppose the many, but the many do presuppose the ones.

Śrīgupta sees this implication of the aggregate principle as simplifying by half the consequent of his neither-one-nor-many dilemma. If the existence of aggregates of true unities depends on the existence of true unities, then Śrīgupta's original conditional *"if anything has independent being then it is either a true unity or a true multitude"* reduces to the new conditional *"if anything has independent being, then it is a true unity."* The reasoning here is almost too straightforward to spell out. Insofar as a multitude of true unities depends for its existence on true unities, it does not look to be ontologically self-sufficient. For how could something that depends for its existence on something else be reckoned ontologically self-sufficient? If our options are multitudes and unities, the conclusion follows immediately that only true unities are candidates for independent beings. For Śrīgupta, no less than for Leibniz, (true) unity and (independent) being are convertible.

Having arrived at essentially the same principle of unity as Leibniz, Śrīgupta also anticipates Leibniz's critical attitude toward matter. Given his strict definition of unity, Śrīgupta assumes that if matter were to have any hope of enjoying true unity—and thus independent being—it would have to be constituted by fundamental particles. But such particles would have to be

either extended or unextended. If, on the one hand, the fundamental particles were extended, they would have to have distinct sides, and if they had distinct sides, they would ipso facto have distinct parts, and thus not be true unities after all.

If, on the other hand, fundamental particles were unextended, then they could not comprise an extended body. Śrīgupta argues that the right side of an unextended particle could not be spatially distinct from its left side, nor from its top, bottom, et cetera. In this case, one particle would conjoin with all of its neighboring particles in one and the same location, and all of matter would collapse into a single, unextended point—a conclusion that Śrīgupta understandably finds absurd.[9] With both horns laid out, Śrīgupta concludes that matter cannot be founded in any true unities—neither extended particles, nor unextended particles—and therefore must itself lack true, independent being.

Śrīgupta and Leibniz are thus fundamentally in agreement about the status of ordinary bodies—things like ships, shoes, and sealing wax. They both maintain that the bodies of everyday experience are mere aggregates and as such are not fully real. Furthermore, they seem to have arrived at this quite radical conclusion—ships, shoes, and sealing wax certainly seem fully real!—by following out a very similar line of thought, namely that common bodies do not have the sort of unity that is a prerequisite for full, independent being. Having come this far together, however, Śrīgupta and Leibniz part ways dramatically. As we will see in greater detail below, Leibniz sees the unreality of ordinary bodies as the first step in an argument leading to an immaterialist foundationalism. Śrīgupta, by contrast, sees the unreality of ordinary bodies as the first step in an argument leading to a kind of anti-foundationalism. Having agreed on the principle of unity, the aggregate principle, and the unreality of ordinary bodies, Śrīgupta and Leibniz ultimately offer us very different conceptions of the deepest nature of reality.

III

As we have seen, Śrīgupta and Leibniz both take the principle of unity to undermine the reality of matter. Leibniz sees this negative result as setting the stage for a larger argument in favor of an immaterial foundationalism, that is, a view in which reality is ultimately grounded in immaterial being. An important line of argument leading in this direction is to be found in a letter from Leibniz to de Volder of January 21, 1704. In it, Leibniz writes:

> I have undertaken to prove that there are these things [viz., *unitates*] from this: because otherwise there would be nothing in bodies. First, what can be divided into many consists of many or are aggregates. Second, whatever are aggregates of many things are one only on account of the mind, and they have no reality

except what is borrowed *(mutuatam)*], that is, <the reality> or the things from which they are aggregated. Therefore, third, what can be divided into parts have no reality unless there are in them these things which cannot be divided into parts. Indeed, they have no other reality except that of the unities which are in [them]. (G 2:261/Levey 2012, p. 103)

This short passage provides another remarkably succinct and well-structured argument. The first premise of the argument just is the aggregate principle itself: "what can be divided into many consists of many or are aggregates." That is: if there are aggregates, there must be many which are aggregated. The first half of the second premise adds to that first premise an aspect of Leibniz's principle of unity. Aggregates do not have unity per se. They have only a derivative unity imposed by a mind thinking of them as a whole. The collection of books in my office is only one thing in the second-rate sense that I can think of them as being one thing. I can think of my books as *a* collection of books.

So far, so familiar. The second half of the second premise and the third premise, however, add something new. For together they suggest that whatever being is possessed by an aggregate, that being must be "borrowed" from "<the reality> of the things from which they are aggregated." Although put rather abstractly, there is, we think, an intuitive idea here. Leibniz's core thought is that multitudes—things that are, by the unity principle, not fully real—must ultimately depend on things that are fully real. If aggregates are not real per se they must be real—to the extent that they are real—through others. In currently popular parlance, we could say that the being of aggregates must be grounded in unities that have reality per se. What is made explicit here is the thought that multitudes do not merely (analytically even) presuppose unities, but that the being of multitudes presupposes the being of unities, that multitudes must somehow derive their very existence from the existence of their requisite unities.

Is this further thought—the grounding thought—consistent with Leibniz's corporeal substance account of substance? We think yes. It does, however, come at the cost of making immaterial principles play two rather different metaphysical roles. First, Leibniz presses immaterial principles into playing a foundational, grounding role. They provide the per se being that serves as the basis for the derived being of corporeal substances. They are, as it were, the creditors to the material substances' borrowers. Second, immaterial principles play a unifying role. Like Aristotle's substantial forms, they play an essential role in providing corporeal substances with a more-than-accidental unity. Given Leibniz's understanding of the principle of unity, this makes sense. If some extended things are going to count as being substantial, they will have to enjoy a kind of unity that is not enjoyed by extended things per se. Corporeal substances with incorporeal principles are thus a coherent solution to the problem, as Leibniz sees it, of the unreality

of bodies. Ordinary bodies—bricks, buildings, and sidewalks—may borrow their reality from corporeal substances, which enjoy true unity and being by virtue of their own unifying, grounding immaterial principles.

A second thread in Leibniz's correspondence with de Volder, however, does point toward a prima facie different solution to the problem of the unreality of bodies. It is perhaps most clearly expressed in a late essay (ca. 1712) titled *Metaphysical Consequences of the Principle of Reason*:

> A substance is either simple, such as a soul, which has no parts, or it is composite, such as an animal, which consists of a soul and an organic body. But an organic body, like every other body, is merely an aggregate of animals or other things which are living and therefore organic . . . from which it is evident that all bodies are finally resolved into living things, and that what, in the analysis of substances, exist ultimately are simple substances—namely, souls, or, if you prefer a more general term, monads, which are without parts. For even though every simple substance has an organic body which corre- sponds to it . . . yet by itself it is without parts. And because an organic body, or any other body whatsoever, can again be resolved into substances endowed with organic bodies, it is evident that in the end there are simple substances alone, and that in them are the sources of all things. . . . (C 13–14/PM 175; see also G 2:72/LA 88 and G 2:267)

Here Leibniz suggests that corporeal substances derive ("borrow") their being from both their unifying forms and their matter. The matter of a corporeal substance, however, is—Leibniz tells us—itself a collection of organic beings. Each member of that collection is therefore susceptible to a similar analysis. Each corporeal substance constituting the body of a greater corporeal substance must derive ("borrow") its reality from its unifying form and matter. Leibniz suggests that if we could analyze every corporeal substance, banking, as it were, the reality of its substantial form and further analyzing its remaining body, we would eventually arrive at nothing but immaterial forms alone. Dividing the world into primitive and derivative being would thus reveal a foundational level exhausted by immaterial principles alone.[10]

Is Leibniz's second thread consistent with his first thread? That is, is his suggestion that ordinary bodies derive their reality from corporeal substances consistent with his suggestion that corporeal substances derive their reality from immaterial principles? It seems so. For Leibniz could coherently imagine the world as having a two-stage ontological structure. The over- arching picture would hold that, at the first stage, ordinary bodies derive their existence from corporeal substances. In keeping with the principle of unity, corporeal substances would enjoy a true unity, and thus true being, wholly or partly by virtue of their having immaterial principles. At the second stage, corporeal substances would themselves be understood as deriving their existence from immaterial principles alone. Such principles

would play not only a unifying role but a grounding role as well. At the second stage, immaterial principles would be revealed as the deepest, ultimate foundations of reality, a stage of reality that solves the problem of the unreality of material bodies by providing a foundation of immaterial, per se unities.[11]

Leibniz's two-stage immaterial foundationalism takes it for granted that—on pain of violating the principle of unity—immaterial principles can provide the sort of unity required for full-blooded reality. If this were not so, both corporeal substances and monads would seem to be in the same boat as the ordinary, not-fully-real bodies they are supposed to ground. And, of course, appealing to immaterial principles to fill the metaphysical needs of material bodies seems an almost obvious move. The arguments marshaled by both Śrīgupta and Leibniz against the unity of matter don't seem to touch unextended, immaterial principles. Both corporeal substances and monads seem to enjoy kinds of unity that ordinary extended bodies do not. You can't have half a living bunny or half a monad in the same way as you can have half a bagel. Furthermore, it is clear that monads in particular are modeled on minds, and our minds seem to enjoy a very special kind of unity. I can ask if this or that book is mine, but—in ordinary circumstances at least—I can hardly ask if this or that thought is mine. Our memories, beliefs, and aspirations seem to form a whole in a very different way than do a gold band and precious stone.

IV

As we have seen, Śrīgupta and Leibniz agree on a surprising number of points: they both accept that the principle of unity can be relied on to show that matter understood as mere extension cannot be fully real. They also agree on the aggregate principle, which implies that the existence of an aggregate of true unities presupposes the existence of true unities.[12] Śrīgupta, we think, would even agree with Leibniz that a multitude of true unities could be said to "borrow" its reality from true unities, with only true unities claiming non-derivative, independent being.[13] Nonetheless it is clear that Śrīgupta would reject Leibniz's monadic metaphysics. For Śrīgupta explicitly argues that there can be no mind-like simple substances. He denies not only the possibility of extended, material unities but also mind-like unities. Minds—according to Śrīgupta—are in the same tight spot as matter itself.

In arguing against immaterial foundationalists similar to Leibniz, Śrīgupta suggests that anyone defending an account of a fully real and truly unitary mind must answer two fundamental questions concerning cognition *(jñāna)* and its content *(ākāra)*, which, for ease of the present dialogue, we will refer to in Leibniz's terminology as perceiver *(jñāna)* and perception *(ākāra)*.[14] First, what is the ontological status of perceptions? Are they real or unreal? In other words, are perceptions real in the same way as the perceiver is

supposed to be, or do perceptions have some lesser, derivative ontological status? Second, are the perceiver and its perceptions distinct or non-distinct?[15] In other words, is a perceiver and its perceptions one thing or more than one thing? Śrīgupta's two questions jointly suggest four possible views concerning the relationship between perceivers and their perceptions: (1) Perceptions are real and non-distinct from their perceiver. (2) Perceptions are real and distinct from their perceiver. (3) Perceptions are unreal and non-distinct from their perceiver. (4) Perceptions are unreal and distinct from their perceiver. Taking this division to be exhaustive, Śrīgupta, in effect, argues against Leibniz's immaterialist foundationalism by ruling out each option in turn.

In addressing the first view—that perceptions are real and non-distinct from their perceivers—Śrīgupta turns once again to his one-or-many dilemma. He argues that a real perception that is non-distinct from its perceiver must be either unitary or non-unitary. In arguing that a real perception cannot be unitary, Śrīgupta appeals to the fact that in our own experience perceptions appear to be variegated *(citra)*. His thought is that each perception typically presents a variety of aspects—a brown patch here, a white patch there, and so on. Śrīgupta reasons that whatever is phenomenally variegated is conceptually divisible into its constituent aspects. But if perceptions are divisible into constituent aspects, they cannot be true unities. Śrīgupta concludes that there can be no unitary, real perceptions that are non-distinct from their perceivers.[16] What about the other horn? Śrīgupta argues that if we suppose that real perceptions are non-unitary, and if—as this option presupposes—perceivers are not distinct from their real perceptions, then perceivers must be non-unitary as well.[17] That is to say, if a perceiver and its real perceptions are a single subject, then, by the law of non-contradiction, the non-unity of the real perceptions entails the non-unity of the perceiver.

Having dispatched option (1), Śrīgupta turns to option (2): perceptions are real and distinct from their perceivers. He rejects this option out of hand as utterly implausible. At this stage in his argument, Śrīgupta takes himself to have already rejected real matter, and so to have shown that a direct realist account of perception is off the table. As he sees it, the only available view with respect to option (2) is that perceptions are of the same nature as minds and akin to modifications or determinables of their perceiving minds. To Śrīgupta's way of thinking, a mental perception could no more be independent, self-sufficient, and distinct from the mind that perceives it, than could the sphericalness of a ball be independent from the ball itself, or the cubicalness of a block be independent from the block itself. It is worth noting that Śrīgupta's Buddhist idealist interlocutors would agree. Some of his idealist interlocutors accept that perceptions are real *(satyākāravāda)* while others do not *(alīkākāravāda)*. The view that perceptions are real and distinct from their perceivers, however, would be unacceptable to all of

Śrīgupta's idealist opponents since they share a common commitment to "nondual awareness" *(advayajñāna)*, that is, to the ultimate non-distinctness of subject and object. In rejecting option (2) as a non-starter, Śrīgupta is thus in agreement with even his most direct opponents (see TAV 103).

Having ruled out options (1) and (2), Śrīgupta turns next to options (3) and (4). That is, he directs his critical attention to views that take perceptions to lack substantial, independent reality. With respect to (3), he argues that if unreal perceptions were non-distinct from their perceivers, then, by the law of non-contradiction, the perceiver, too, would be unreal.[18] But this, of course, would be utterly inconsistent with immaterialist foundationalism. For if both perceivers and their perceptions were unreal, then they clearly could not provide the sort of ontological foundations imagined by Leibniz. With respect to (4), Śrīgupta argues that if unreal perceptions were distinct from their perceivers, then those perceptions and perceivers would still have to stand in *some* kind of relation—perhaps a causal relation—in order to account for ordinary experience. On Śrīgupta's view of relations, however, only real things can be genuine relata.[19] An unreal match can't start a fire. Unreal water can't quench a blaze. If perceptions were unreal and distinct from their perceivers, then, Śrīgupta maintains, they could not stand in the sorts of relations that are necessary for perception. And, Śrīgupta adds, even if unreal perceptions could stand in relations to perceivers, as figments they nonetheless could not provide the phenomenal determinacy and consistency that is the default of our ordinary experience.[20]

At this point, Śrīgupta takes himself to have eliminated the fourth of his four options for how a real, unitary perceiver could exist with respect to its perceptions. But he imagines that one of his immaterialist foundationalist opponents might object that this whole exercise of conceptually distinguishing between perceiver and perception and analyzing their relationship is entirely misguided, because, in actual fact, the mind is just one simple entity: a nondual awareness. The mind only *seems* dual by virtue of the reflexive nature of awareness.

In response, Śrīgupta argues that the whole idea of nondual awareness is in fact internally contradictory. He begins by pointing out that awareness necessarily involves a phenomenal distinction between the perceiving subject and perceived object. In fact, he takes intentionality to be a defining characteristic of awareness. To be aware is to be aware *of* something. He argues that this phenomenal subject-object distinction entails the conceptual divisibility of the mind, which, in turn, undermines its status as a true unity. In other words, if nondual awareness were truly *nondual*, then it could not qualify as *awareness* since it would fail to satisfy the intentionality demand required by the definition of awareness. Put conversely, if nondual awareness were truly *aware*, that is, if it were aware of some intentional object, then it could not qualify as *nondual* since it would fail to satisfy the simplicity demand required of a true unity. Śrīgupta summarizes his

argument as follows: "Due to lacking a cognitive object, [non-dual awareness] could not cognize anything else. Due to being nondual, [awareness] could not [cognize] itself. If examined, [nonduality] cannot be the nature [of awareness]. Tell me, what other option is there?" (TAV AŚ 3).[21]

With this, Śrīgupta takes himself to have shown that there is no defensible view according to which the mind might be counted as a true unity. In short, there can be no immaterially unified substances of the sort imagined by Leibniz's foundationalism.[22] Śrīgupta thus denies that there can be either material or immaterial unities. Accepting Leibniz's sentiment that "If there is nothing *truly one*, then every *true* thing will be eliminated" (G 2:251/AG 176), Śrīgupta takes himself to have shown that there are no candidates for independent being. All unity is conceptually constructed accidental unity,[23] and all being is dependent conventional being *(saṃvṛtisatya)*.[24] On Leibniz's account, matter turns out to be "nothing but a phenomenon founded in things, like the rainbow" (G 2:268). On Śrīgupta's view, *all* things—whether material or immaterial—turn out to be phenomena founded in other things that are in turn founded in other things like images reflected in mirrors.[25] In the final analysis, then, Śrīgupta upholds the unity principle but denies that it is ever satisfied. Nothing that exists is a true unity. And nothing has independent being. Whereas the principle of unity leads Leibniz to an immaterial foundationalist picture, essentially the same principle leads Śrīgupta to an anti-realist, anti-foundationalist picture.

Conclusion

In this essay, we have brought together two philosophers with minimal non-philosophical background in common. As we noted at the outset, Śrīgupta and Leibniz share very little socially, politically, or theologically. In spite of their being born in very different times and circumstances, however, they arrived at similar metaphysical principles and drew—up to a point—similar conclusions from those principles. They both reasoned their way to the principle of unity: to be a genuine being is to be a genuine unity, and, conversely, to lack true unity is to lack true being. Similarly, both reasoned their way to the aggregate principle: aggregates of true unities presuppose true unities that are aggregated, or, put negatively, one cannot have an aggregate of true unities without true unities. From these principles, Śrīgupta and Leibniz conclude that extended matter cannot be fully real. Appearances to the contrary, balls, books, and battering rams are not fully real entities. They are at best mere aggregates enjoying a second-rate existence and a mind-imposed unity.

Having come this far together, Śrīgupta and Leibniz nonetheless reason their way to radically different metaphysical pictures. Leibniz believes that mind-like, immaterial principles may be invoked to satisfy the principle of

unity. If living organisms are endowed with a unifying immaterial principle, then even they might exhibit a more than accidental unity. The right side and left side of a bunny rabbit may be unified in the way that the right side and left side of a chocolate bar cannot be unified. Furthermore, immaterial principles—principles lacking parts—might themselves be identified as true unities and thus as foundational beings. As such, they may provide immaterial foundations for lesser unities in accordance with the aggregate principle. If there are true unities, there may be aggregates of those unities, and those aggregates may borrow their reality from the reality of the unities that make them up. Śrīgupta accepts none of these results. On the contrary, he systematically argues that like matter itself, mind-like immaterial principles fail to satisfy the principle of unity. Mind-like principles must be thought of as involving both a perceiver and perceptions, and whether one thinks of those perceivers and perceptions as being distinct or non-distinct from one another, they cannot be thought of as true unities themselves. Śrīgupta thus denies what Leibniz affirms, namely that immaterial principles can provide the unity necessary for true being. He denies, in short, Leibniz's immaterialist foundationalism.

One benefit of seeing two great philosophers disagree in this way is that we can gain some insight into the weaknesses of both. Śrīgupta takes it for granted that a true unity must be conceptually indivisible. For example, even the ability to draw a conceptual distinction between the perceiving subject and its perceptions is enough, by Śrīgupta's lights, to show that the subject is not a true unity. Leibniz's views offer an implicit criticism of this starting assumption. The principle of unity tells us that true beings must be true unities, but it does not tell us what the standards of unity are. Leibniz's metaphysics suggests Śrīgupta's standard of conceptual indivisibility might set the bar too high for the kind of unity that is indicative of true being. On the other side, Leibniz seems to take it for granted that immaterial minds automatically satisfy the demands of the principle of unity. Śrīgupta's arguments against his idealist opponents, however, raise deep worries for that assumption. If our perceptions are variegated and complex, or if they are related to a perceiving subject, by what right are they to be counted as true unities? If Leibniz's metaphysics implicitly asks if Śrīgupta has raised the bar for unity too high, Śrīgupta's metaphysics implicitly asks if Leibniz has lowered it too far.

While the clash of great minds of the past is often both instructive and entertaining, we think the points of agreement between Śrīgupta and Leibniz may be even more revealing than the points on which they disagree. For one example: contemporary philosophers have become surprisingly complacent about the nature of being itself. Under the powerful influence of early analytic thinkers like Gottlob Frege, Bertrand Russell, and W. V. Quine, many philosophers now assume that existence is indicated by existential quantification. To exist—it is held—is to be the value of a variable bound

by a quantifier (cf. McDaniel 2017). Now, neither Śrīgupta nor Leibniz ever saw an existential quantifier or a modern logical variable. There is a sense in which they could not literally agree or disagree with the contemporary consensus. Nonetheless, their shared commitment to the principle of unity and the aggregate principle suggests that they saw existence as more complicated than modern commitments would indicate. For Śrīgupta and Leibniz, it seems, genuine, full-blooded being must have a metaphysical nature in its own right (it must have the nature of a unity), and, it seems, it must at least potentially come in degrees (for true unities have—or would have—a higher degree of being than mere aggregates of true unities). Here, then, from their points of agreement, we may see in the views of Śrīgupta and Leibniz the beginnings of a challenge to contemporary assumptions, a challenge made all the more potent, we think, by the fact that it has arisen across such distances of time, place, and tradition.

Notes

Abbreviations are used in the text and Notes as follows:

A   Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz. *Sämtliche Schriften und Briefe*. Edited by Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften. Darmstadt, Leipzig, Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1923–. Cited by series, volume, and page number.

AG   G. W. Leibniz. *Philosophical Essays*. Edited and translated by Roger Ariew and Daniel Garber. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1989.

AT   Rene Descartes. *Oeuvres de Descartes*. Edited by Charles Adam and Paul Tannery. Paris: J. Vrin, 1964–1974. Cited by volume and page number.

C   G. W. Leibniz. *Opuscules et Fragments Inedits de Leibniz*. Edited by Louis Couturat. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1903. Reprint, Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1961.

CŚ   Āryadeva. *Āryadeva's Catuḥśataka: On the Bodhisattva's Cultivation of Merit and Knowledge*. Edited by Karen Lang. Indiske Studier VII. Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1986. Cited by chapter and verse number.

CSM   René Descartes. *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*. Edited and translated by John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, Dugald Murdoch, and (vol. 3) Anthony Kenny. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984, 1985, 1991. Cited by volume and page number.

G   G. W. Leibniz. *Die Philosophische Schriften von Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz*. Edited by C. I. Gerhardt. Berlin: Weidmann. Reprint, Hildesheim: Olms, 1960. Reference is to volume and page number.

LA   G. W. Leibniz. *The Leibniz-Arnauld Correspondence*. Edited and translated by H. T. Mason. Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1967.

MA   Śāntarakṣita. *Madhyamakālaṃkāra = Madhyamakālaṃkāra of Śāntarakṣita with His Own Commentary or Vṛtti and with the Subcommentary or Pañjikā of Kamalaśīla*. Edited by Masamichi Ichigō. Kyoto: Buneido, 1985.

MAP   Kamalaśīla. *Madhyamakālaṃkārapañjikā*. See MA.

MAV   Śāntarakṣita. *Madhyamakālaṃkāravṛtti*. See MA.

MMK   Nāgārjuna. *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā = Zhong lun song: Fan Zang Han he jiao, dao du, yi zhu*. Edited by Ye Shaoyong. Shanghai: Zhongxi Shuju, 2011. Cited by chapter and verse number.

MP   G. W. Leibniz. *A Résumé of Metaphysics*. Edited and translated by Mary Morris and G.H.R. Parkinson, pp. 145–147. London: J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd, 1973. Cited by section number.

PM   G. W. Leibniz. *Leibniz: Philosophical Writings*. Translated by Mary Morris, edited by G.H.R. Parkinson. London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1973.

TA   Śrīgupta. *Tattvāvatāra*. See TAV.

TAV   Śrīgupta. *Tattvāvatāravṛtti*. Bstan 'gyur Dpe bsdur ma, vol. 63, pp. 101–112. Beijing: Krung go'i bod rig pa'i dpe skrun khang, 1994–2008.

  1 – The *Tattvāvatāra* (TA) and *Tattvāvatāravṛtti* (TAV) survive only in Tibetan translation. The root text is not extant as an independent treatise, surviving only as embedded in the auto-commentary. See Ejima 1980, pp. 217–221, for a Japanese translation of the root verses of the TA, and Kobayashi 1992, pp. 44–51 and 1994, pp. 99–88, for a Japanese translation of the TAV. See also the Tibetan critical edition, English translation, and introduction to the TAV in Aitken forthcoming. All citations of the text refer to the Bstan 'gyur Dpe bsdur ma edition, and the enumeration of verses follows Aitken forthcoming.

2 – There are, of course, earlier precursors to this argument in texts including Nāgārjuna's (ca. 150 C.E.) *Precious Garland (Ratnāvalī)*, Āryadeva's (third century) *Four-hundred Stanzas (Catuḥśataka)*, and Vasubandhu's (fourth century) idealist iteration in his *Twenty Verses (Viṃśikā)*. But Śrīgupta's *Tattvāvatāravṛtti* appears to be the earliest extant fully developed formulation of the Madhyamaka neither-one-nor-many argument, and indeed the earliest text devoted almost entirely to the argument, which became popularized by Śāntarakṣita in his *Ornament of the Middle Way (Madhyamakālaṃkāra)* (MA). Śāntarakṣita's MA appears to be an expansion of Śrīgupta's TA, with the two texts sharing a striking number of parallels, including their nearly identical opening stanzas presenting the central inference. Indeed, the Tibetan traditions maintain that Śāntarakṣita is the student of Śrīgupta's student, Jñānagarbha (early eighth century). Following the relative chronology according to the Tibetan tradition, we place Śrīgupta roughly in the seventh to eighth centuries.

3 – The works of Leibniz and Descartes are cited throughout by the abbreviations listed at the end of this article. References typically include citations to both an original language text and, where possible, an English-language translation.

4 – It is worth noting that this passage might also be taken to introduce a stronger version of the aggregate principle that Leibniz might also accept. The stronger version would hold that if there are aggregates (of any kind), then there must be true unities that the aggregates aggregate. This sense is suggested by Leibniz's statement "every entity through aggregation presupposes entities endowed with a true unity." In what follows we focus exclusively on the weaker version of the aggregate principle since (1) the weaker version is all Leibniz needs for the arguments that follow, (2) the stronger version may be seen as the result of combining the weaker version with Leibniz's unity principle, (3) Śrīgupta could accept the weaker version but not the stronger version for reasons that will become apparent in section IV, and (4) while the weaker version seems hard to deny, the stronger version— taken as an independent principle—seems highly contentious at best.

5 – Cited by Daniel Garber in a talk entitled "When Did Leibniz Discover Monads?" given to the North American Leibniz Society in 2008, and taken from notes Leibniz made in response to a dialogue concerning substance by Christian Thomasius, catalogued as LH IV.iii.1 in Bodemann 1966, p. 67, and reproduced in Utermöhlen 1979, p. 89. The translation is Garber's.

6 – In his sub-commentary on Śāntarakṣita's *Ornament of the Middle Way (Madhyamakālaṃkārapañjikā)*, Kamalaśīla (eighth century) defines

"unity" and "non-unity" in the context of this argument, stating, "'Unity' refers to something's being partless. The alternative member of the pair is non-unity *(anekatva)*, which is synonymous with 'consisting in discrete parts' *(bhedatva)*" *(cig pa zhes bya ba ni cha med pa nyid do // cig shos zhes bya ba ni du ma nyid de tha dad pa nyid ces bya ba'i tha tshig go //)* (MAP 23). For an English translation and commentary on Śāntarakṣita's *Ornament of the Middle Way*, see Ichigō 1989 and Blumenthal 2004. For exposition on and partial English translation of Kamalaśīla's neither-one-nor-many argument in his *Illumination of the Middle Way (Madhyamakāloka)*, see Keira 2004. For analysis of Śāntarakṣita's neither-one-nor-many argument with respect to Tibetan interpretations of it, see Tillemans 1982, 1983, and 1984; Tillemans and Lopez 1998; Doctor 2004; and Hugon 2015.

7 – Although the TAV is extant only in Tibetan, in the context of this argument, the Tibetan *gcig* and *du ma* are standard translations for the Sanskrit *eka* and *aneka*, respectively.

8 – *gcig mang po'i ngo bo yin pas de med na 'di yang mi srid pa . . .* (TAV 102). Here, Śrīgupta follows Āryadeva's line of thought in his *Four-hundred Stanzas*: "Whatever object one examines, none has unity. Given that there is no unity, neither is there a non-unity" *(tasya tasyaikatā nāsti yo yo bhāvaḥ parīkṣyate / na santi tenāneke 'pi yenaiko 'pi na vidyante //)* (CŚ XIV.19). Along the same lines, Śrīgupta's successor, Śāntarakṣita, elaborates on this point, stating, "'Non-unity' is defined as a composite of unities. If no unity exists, then that [non-unity] does not exist either, just like if no trees exist, a forest does not exist either" *('di ltar du ma ni gcig bsags pa'i mtshan nyid do / gcig med na de yang med de / shing la sogs pa med na nags tshal la sogs pa med pa bzhin no //)* (MAV 172).

9 – Śrīgupta sums up the argument, stating: "A fundamental particle could not be a [true] unity, because an [extended] composite [of true unities] is impossible. This is because if they were unitary in nature, then directly adjoining [particles] would [absurdly] occupy a single location." *(rdul phra rab ni gcig pa nyid ma yin te / rang bzhin gcig pu de la mngon par phyogs par yul gcig na gnas pas na bsags pa mi rung pa'i phyir ro //)* (TAV 102). Insofar as Leibniz takes extended things (corporeal substances or bodies) to be constituted by unextended monads, he must deny that unextended fundamental particles must conjoin in one and the same location. For discussion of Leibniz's thinking about the relationship between monads, location, and the constitution relation, see De Risi 2007 and 2018; McDonough 2013, 2016, and 2019; and Nguyen 2019.

10 – For related discussion, see Adams 1994, p. 324; Arthur 1998 and 2011; Rutherford 1995, pp. 156–159; and Levey 2007, pp. 75–85.

11 – This two-stage picture of Leibniz's metaphysics is developed at greater length in McDonough 2013.

12 – The conjunction of the aggregate principle and the claim that there are no true unities does imply substance nihilism (which Śrīgupta would endorse), but not thoroughgoing nihilism. Although Śrīgupta rejects the existence of true unities and multitudes of true unities, he accepts the existence of conventional unities and multitudes.

13 – Nāgārjuna explains the meaning of "independent being" *(svabhāva)* in his *Fundamental Verses on the Middle Way (Mūlamadhyamakakārikā)* as follows: "*Svabhāva* is [1] adventitious and [2] independent of other things" *(akṛtrimaḥ svabhāvo hi nirapekṣaḥ paratra ca /)* (MMK 15.2cd). In other words, (1) independent being is not something merely conceptually contrived or fabricated by the mind; it is not a mere being of reason or imagination. (2) Nor does independent being depend upon something else for its reality. Nāgārjuna goes on to describe the relationship between things with borrowed reality *(parabhāva,* literally "other-being"), like multitudes of true unities, and those with independent being *(svabhāva,* literally "own-being"), like true unities, stating, "what is referred to as 'extrinsic being' *(parabhāva)* is the intrinsic being *(svabhāva)* of some other thing" *(svabhāvaḥ parabhāvasya parabhāvo hi kathyate //)* (MMK 15.3cd). In other words, whatever reality some non-fundamental thing can be said to have is nothing more than the intrinsic being that it "borrows" from those fundamental things that ground it. Of course, Nāgārjuna, like Śrīgupta after him, will argue that this foundationalist framework does not in fact obtain: recognizing the metaphysical priority of the reality "lender" to the "borrower" in the foundationalist framework, Nāgārjuna argues that if there is nothing with independent/intrinsic being, then neither can there exist anything with borrowed/extrinsic reality: "Given the non-existence of intrinsic being, how could there be extrinsic being?" *(kutaḥ svabhāvasyābhāve parabhāvo bhaviṣyati)* (MMK 15.3ab). On MMK 15.2–3, see also Siderits and Katsura 2013, pp. 155–158.

14 – *Jñāna* (Tib. *shes pa*) and *ākāra* (Tib. *rnam pa*) correspond closely, though perhaps not perfectly, to Leibniz's "perceiver" and "perception." *Jñāna* is commonly translated as "cognition" or "awareness," and Śrīgupta takes *jñāna* to be interchangeable with terms commonly translated as "mind" (Skt. *citta*, Tib. *sems*) and "consciousness" (Skt. *vijñāna*, Tib. *rnam par shes pa*). *Ākāra* is a multivalent term in the history of Buddhist epistemology and philosophy of mind; see articles in Kellner and McClintock 2014 for recent scholarship on the variety

of meanings of *ākāra* in different Indian Buddhist historical and philosophical contexts. In the present context, *ākāra* might also be translated as "mental representation," referring more properly to the mental content of perception than to the act of perception.

15 – "Distinct" and "non-distinct" follow the grammatical and conceptual structure of the corresponding Sanskrit terms, *"bheda"* and *"abheda"* (Tib. *tha dad pa* and *tha mi dad pa*) in terms of the placement of the negation, but this disjunctive pair is also equivalent to "non-identical" and "identical," respectively.

16 – Śrīgupta claims that the same argument he recruits against the existence of material simples applies equally in the case of perceptions, suggesting the rejection of a kind of mental atomism. That is to say, there is no coherent story to be told about how mental or phenomenal simples could constitute the content of our perceptions (contra Hume): "Perceptions could not constitute a composite, just like [material] particles" *(rnam pa rnams rdul phran bzhin du bsags par mi 'gyur te /)* (TAV 103).

17 – "Since perceptions that are non-distinct [from their perceiver] are variegated, the mind cannot be unitary [TA 4ab]. A perceiver cannot be unitary because it is non-distinct from its non-unitary perceptions. Otherwise, on account of having contradictory properties, [the perceiver and its perceptions] would arise distinctly in two loci [and thus could not be non-distinct]" *(rnam pa tha dad ma yin rnams // sna tshogs phyir na sems gcig min // shes pa gcig pu ma yin te / rnam pa du ma dang tha mi dad pa'i phyir ro // gzhan du na chos 'gal bar gnas pa gnyis tha dad par 'gyur te /)* (TAV 102–103).

18 – "If perceptions were simply unreal, then absurd consequences would follow [TA 5ab1]. When one undergoes experiences, then not only would these [perceptions] be simply unreal, but it follows that [this] would be the nature of cognition [viz., the perceiver] too" *(rnam rnams mi bden nyid yin na / ha cang thal 'gyur / gal te nyams su myong na 'di dag kyang mi bden pa nyid yin te / rtogs pa'i ngo bo yang der thal bar 'gyur te /)* (TAV 103). TA 5 is not preserved in consistent meter in any edition of the Tengyur. The Peking, Nar thang, and Gser bris ma editions read TA 5b1: *ha cang thal bar 'gyur*; the Sde dge and Co ne editions read: *ha cang thal 'gyur ba*. We emend the text in accordance with 'Gos lo tsā ba's *Rgyud bla ma'i 'grel bshad de kho na nyid rab tu gsal ba'i me long*, which cites the stanza as unified and in consistent meter as follows: *rnam rnams mi bden nyid yin na // ha cang thal 'gyur ma 'brel phyir // ji lta bur na nges snang 'gyur // de lta min na bden pa nyid //* (Mathes 2003, p. 181). This option could also be ruled out in reliance on Leibniz's Law: if perceptions are unreal and perceivers are real, then, by Leibniz's Law, they are not identical.

19 – "Were one to accept [perceptions] as related [to perceivers] in virtue of their appearing determinately, then [perceptions] would in fact be real, since otherwise it would be impossible [for perceptions] to stand in either an identity relation *(tādātmya)* or a causal relation *(tadutpatti)* [with a perceiver]. Given that [you Vijñānavādins find it] inadmissible to say that [unreal] matter is related [to perceivers], since [unreal perceptions] would likewise [be unrelated to perceivers], [you must] accept perception[s] as real; thus, a perceiver that lacks a subject and object [relation] is untenable" *(nges par snang ba'i dbang gis 'brel par khas len na ni bden pa kho nar 'gyur te / gzhan du na de'i bdag nyid dang de las byung ba mi srid pa'i phyir ro // gzugs ni 'brel zhes mi 'thad na / de lta yin na rnam pa bden par khas blang ba'i phyir shes pa gzung ba dang / 'dzin pa dang bral mi 'thad do //)* (TAV 103).

20 – TA 5b2c: If perceivers were distinct from their unreal perceptions, then "due to being unrelated, how could [perceptions] determinately appear [to perceivers]?" *(ma 'brel phyir / ji lta bur na nges snang 'gyur /)* (TAV 103).

21 – *rig bya med phyir gzhan mi rig // gnyis su med phyir bdag nyid min // brtags na yang dag nyid mi 'gyur // rnam pa gzhan gang yin pa smros //* (TAV 104). AŚ abbreviates *antaraśloka*, transitional stanza.

22 – Although we cannot explore them here, it should be noted that Śrīgupta does provide arguments against the existence of other possible candidates for true unities that fall outside the material-mental dichotomy—for example, universals, time, and space.

23 – This parallels Leibniz's account of the unity of matter: "Matter is an aggregate, *not a substance but a substantiatum*, as would be an army or a flock; and, insofar as it is considered making up *one* thing, it is a phenomenon, very real, in fact, but a thing whose *unity* is constructed by our conception" (Letter to Samuel Masson, on Body, 1716 [AG 227]); and: "A body is not a true unity; it is only an aggregate, which the Scholastics call *ens per accidents*, a collection like a flock. Its unity comes from our perception. It is a being of reason, or rather of imagination" (*Conversation of Philarete and Ariste* [G VI 586/L 623]).

24 – This parallels Leibniz's account of the phenomenality of matter: "since only simple things are true things, what remain are only entities by aggregation; to that extent they are phenomena, and, as Democritus put it, exist by convention and not by nature" (AG 177). For Śrīgupta's views on conventional being, see TA 11 at TAV 105.

25 – TA 1: "In reality, all that exists externally and internally does not have independent being, due to lacking independent being that is either one or many, like a reflection" *(phyi rol nang na gnas 'di kun // yang dag*

tu ni rang bzhin med // gcig dang du ma'i rang bzhin nyid // bral ba'i phyir na gzugs brnyan bzhin //) (TAV 101).

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