

Does perception indicate that its  
objects are momentary or  
persisting?  
Jayanta versus Ravigupta.

Alex Watson

# Structure

- 1. The Buddhist Argument
- 2. Jayanta's Argument
- 3. My conclusion

# The Buddhist Argument

- [Premise 1:] Perception accesses only the present, neither the past nor the future
- [Premise 2:] The present lasts just one moment
- [Conclusion:]  
Perception accesses just one moment  
Perception grasps an object that lasts just one moment

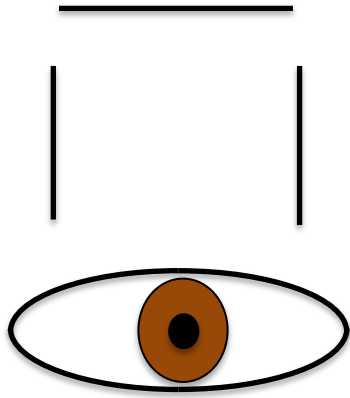


Fig. 1:  
The Buddhist View

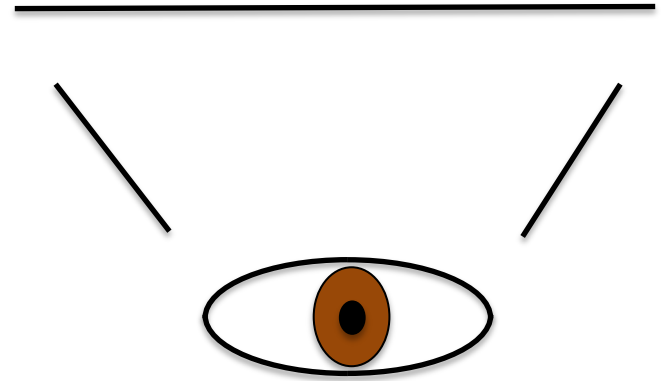


Fig. 2:  
The Nyāya View

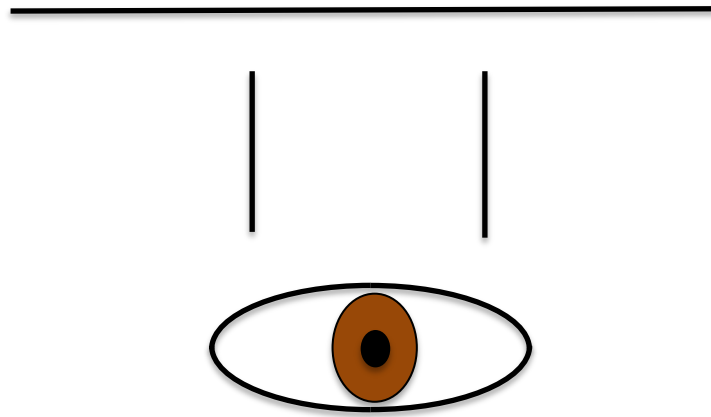
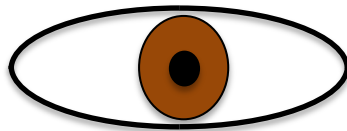
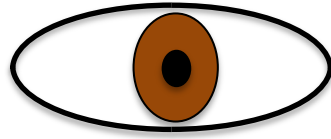


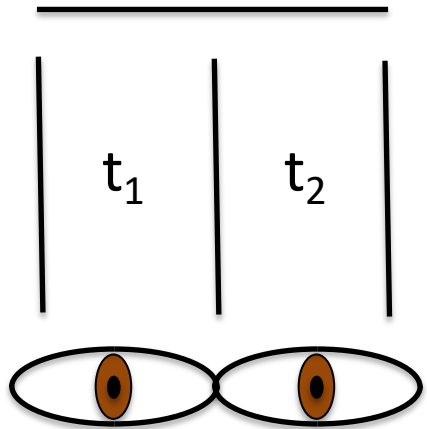
Fig. 3:  
A Third View

# Two Formulations of the Buddhist's Conclusion

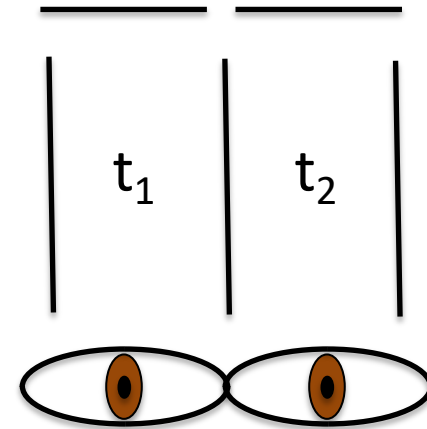
1. Perception accesses just one moment
2. Perception grasps an object that lasts just one moment



# Unwavering gaze and concentration



Nyāya View



Buddhist View

# The issue has now become:

- Can one moment of perception ever allow us to know that its object is the same as the object of the previous moment of perception?



# Now 2 paths have opened up for the Naiyāyika

- 1. Argue that we *can* know that 2 consecutive perceptions have the same object

- 2 Point out that:

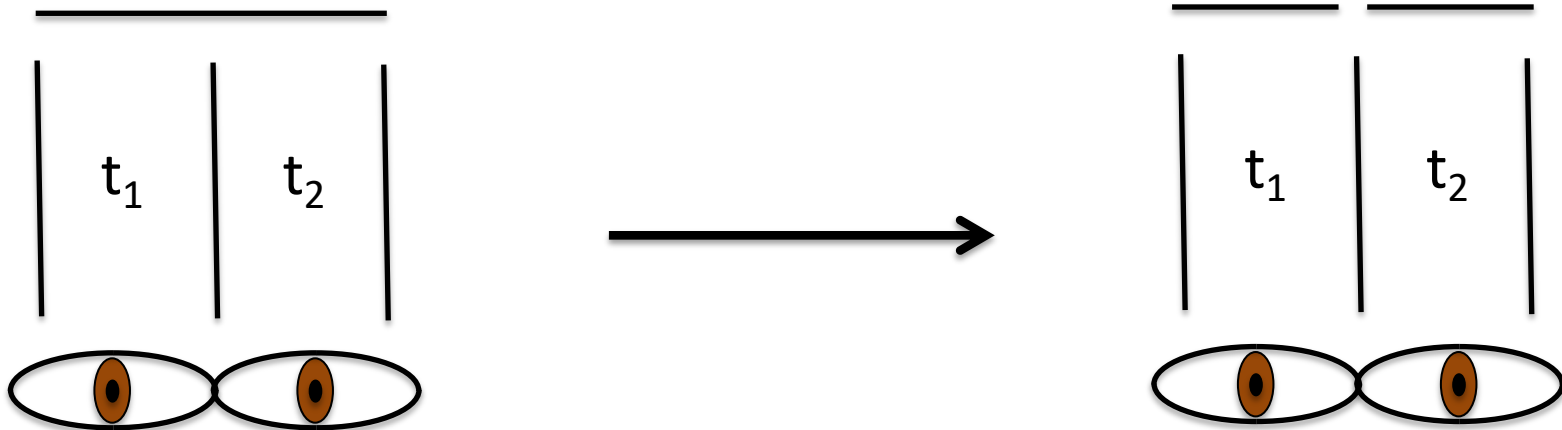
If we can't know that 2 consecutive perceptions have the same object, then we can't know that they have different objects.

# The Buddhist's Appeal to Quasi-Idealism

- To exist is to be perceived
- To not be perceived is to not exist

# How does that help?

- If non-perception means non-existence, then since the object of perception at  $t_1$  is not perceived at  $t_2$  we know that it does not exist at  $t_2$ .



## 2 paths for the Naiyāyika

- 1. Argue against q-idealism
- 2. Argue that q-idealism won't do the job:  
“Since the object of perception at  $t_1$  is not perceived at  $t_2$ , we know that it does not exist at  $t_2$ ”
- The Naiyāyika can say:  
*It is perceived at  $t_2$  !*

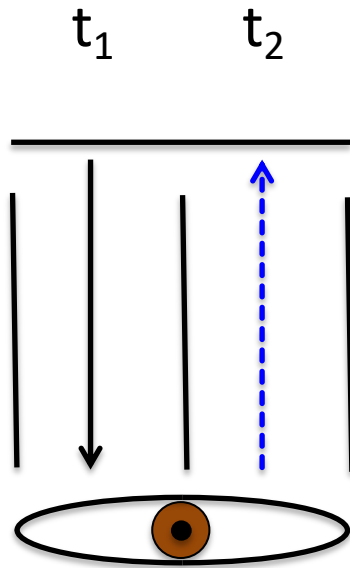
# Summary

- How does the Buddhist move from the weaker epistemological claim to the stronger ontological one?
- [B:] 2 different perceptions neither of which has access to the other's object
- [N:] Then not only would we not be able to know that their objects are the same, we would also not be able to know that their objects are different
- [B:] Quasi-Idealism
- [N:] That won't do the job

# Jayanta's Nyāya View

# Jayanta's Argument

- An object causes a perception to arise
- In the next moment the perception grasps the object
- Therefore the object lasts for at least 2 moments



$X \longrightarrow Y = X \text{ produces } Y$

$X \text{---} Y = X \text{ grasps } Y$



# Conclusion

Middle-ground agnosticism

**THE END**

Thank you for your time