Perceiving Reality

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Consciousness, Intentionality, and Cognition in Buddhist Philosophy

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ABBREVIATIONS

AK	Abhidharmakośa of Vasubandhu (in Pradhan 1975)
AKBh	Abhidharmakośabhāṣya of Vasubandhu (in Pradhan 1975)
AKVy	Abhidharmakośavyākhyā (Sputhārthā) of Yaśomitra (in Shastri 1970–1973)
AN	Aṅguttara Nikāya attributed to Śākyamuni Buddha (in Morris 1989–1995; Hardy 1979)
AS	Abhidharmasamuccaya of Asaṅga (in Tatia 1976)
ASBh	Abhidharmasamuccayabhāṣya of Asaṅga (in Tatia 1976)
CS	Caraka Saṃhita of Agniveśa (in Sharma and Dash 1976)
D	sDe dge Tibetan Tripiṭaka
DĀ	Dhvanyāloka of Ānandavardhana (in Shastri 1940)
DN	Dīgha Nikāya attributed to Śākyamuni Buddha (in Rhys Davids and Carpenter 1995–2007)
HB	Hetubindu of Dharmakīrti (in Steinkellner 1967)
HBṬ	Hetubinduṭīka of Arcaṭa (in Sanghavi 1949)
KSP	Karmasiddhiprakaraṇa of Vasubandhu (in Lamotte 1936)
L	Locana of Abhinavagupta (in Shastri 1940)
MĀ	Madhyamakāloka of Kamalaśīla (D3887)
MAK	Madhyamakālaṃkārakārikā of Śāntarakṣita (D3884)
MAP	Madhyamakālaṃkārapañjikā of Kamalaśīla (D3886)
MAV	Madhyamakāvatāra of Candrakīrti (in La Vallée Poussin 1970)
MBh	Mahābhāṣya of Patañjali (in Kielhorn 1962–1972)
MMK	Mūlamadhyamakakārikā of Nāgārjuna (in De Jong 1977)
MN	Majjhima Nikāya attributed to Śākyamuni Buddha (in Trenchner 1993; Chalmers 1993–1994)
MS	Mīmāṃsāsūtra of Jaimini (in Frauwallner 1968)
NB	Nyāyabindu of Dharmakīrti (Malvania 1955)
NBṬ	Nyāyabinduṭīkā of Dharmottara (in Malvania 1955)

NBṬ	Nyāyabinduṭīkā of Vinītadeva (in Gangopadhyaya 1971)
NM	Nyāyamukha of Dignāga (in Tucci 1930)
NP	Nyāyapraveśa of Śaṅkarasvāmin (in Tachikawa 1971)
NS	Nyāyasūtra of Akṣapāda Gautama (in Tarānātha, Amarendramohan, and Hemantakumar 1985)
NSBh	Nyāyasūtrabhāṣya of Vātsyāyana (in Tarānātha, Amarendramohan, and Hemantakumar 1985)
NV	Nyāyabhāṣyavārttika of Uddyotakara (in Tarānātha, Amarendramohan, and Hemantakumar 1985)
NVTṬ	Nyāyavārttikatātparyaṭīkā of Uddyotakara (in Tarānātha, Amarendramohan, and Hemantakumar 1985)
PDS	Padārthadharmasaṃgraha of Praśastapāda (in Jetly 1971)
PrasP	Prasannapadā of Candrakīrti (in La Vallée Poussin 1903–1913/1970; May 1959)
PS	Pramāṇasamuccaya of Dignāga (in Steinkellner, Krasser, and Lasic 2005)
PSV	Pramāṇasamuccayavṛtti of Dignāga (in Steinkellner, Krasser, and Lasic 2005)
PSṬ	Pramāṇasamuccayaṭīkā Viśālāmalavatī of Jinendrabuddhi (in Steinkellner, Krasser, and Lasic 2005)
PV	Pramāṇavārttika of Dharmakīrti (Chapter 1 in Gnoli 1960; Chapters 2, 3, 4 in Miyasaka 1971–1972; Tillemans 2000)
PVĀ	Pramāṇavārttikālaṃkāra of Prajñākaragupta (in Sāṅkṛtyāyana 1953)
PVin	Pramāṇaviniścaya of Dharmakīrti (in Vetter 1966; Steinkellner 1973)
PVinṬ	Pramāṇaviniścayaṭīkā of Dharmottara (in Krasser and Steinkellner 1989)
PVSV	Pramāṇavārttikasvavṛtti of Dharmakīrti (in Gnoli 1960)
PVV	Pramāṇavārttikavṛtti of Manorathanandin (in Sāṅkṛtyāyana 1938–1940)
SN	Saṃyutta Nikāya attributed to Śākyamuni Buddha (in Feer 1975–2006)
Sn	Sutta Nipātta attributed to Śākyamuni Buddha (in Andersen and Smith 1990)
SP	Sambandhaparīkṣā of Dharmakīrti (in Frauwallner 1934)
SSV	Sāṃkhyasūtravṛtti of Aniruddha (in Garbe 1888)
ŚV	Ślokavārttika of Kumārila (in Shastri 1978)

(xvii)   *Abbreviations*

TBh	Tarkabhāṣā of Mokṣākaragupta (in Iyengar 1952)
TS	Tattvasaṃgraha of Śāntarakṣita (in Shastri 1968)
TSP	Tattvasaṃgrahapañjikā of Kamalaśīla (in Shastri 1968)
TS/P	TS and TSP referenced together
VB	Vibhaṅga (in Rhys Davids 1904)
VimŚ	Viṃśatikā of Vasubandhu (in Lévi 1925)
VimŚV	Viṃśatikāvṛtti of Vasubandhu (in Lévi 1925)
VN	Vādanyāya of Dharmakīrti (in Much 1991)
VM	Visuddhimagga of Buddhaghosa (in Shukla 1984)
VP	Vākyapadīya of Bhartṛhari (in Rau 1977)

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction: Taking the Structure of Awareness Seriously

If one is impressed by the irreducible uniqueness of mental life, and yet happens to be a naturalist, or even a physicalist, one would want to carve out a niche within the heart of one's naturalism in order to find a place secure enough for the intentional.

(Mohanty 1986: 505)

"The mind," Hume once argued, "can never exert itself in any action, which we may not comprehend under the term of perception."[1] Hume was right, and in that sense he comes very close to a position that Buddhist philosophers have advocated for two and a half millennia: perceptual awareness in its multifaceted forms is the beginning and end of our conscious lives. This book is about the structure of that perceptual awareness, its contents and character, and about what we stand to learn when we realize that the world we inhabit is inseparable from our perception of it.

A distinctive and influential philosophy of perception emerges in the Buddhist tradition from the analyses of consciousness and cognition associated with that system of thought and method of descriptive analysis known as the Abhidharma.[2] With Dignāga and Dharmakīrti, the initiators of a Buddhist school of epistemology, this systematic inquiry into the

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1. Hume (2000: 291).
2. Lit. "concerning" (*abhi*) "the teachings" (*dharma*), usually translated as "higher doctrine"—the systematic scholastic analysis of the Buddha's teachings as contained in the eponymous genre of philosophical literature. See Frauwallner (1995) and Willemen, Dessein, and Cox (1998) for detailed discussions of the origins and scope of this literature, which develops over a period of several centuries beginning around 300 B.C.E.

philosophical foundations of empirical knowledge plays a formative role in shaping what would eventually become the dominant approach to Buddhist philosophy of mind at such well-established universities as Nālandā and Vikramaśīla. According to this approach, a philosopher's views on perception are central to his or her epistemological and metaphysical commitments. Thus, questions about what there is and how we come to know it, become questions about the nature of awareness itself, its modes of disclosure, and its contents. And here the Buddhist comes surprisingly close to a position that is widespread among Western phenomenologists: to say about something that it exists is not primarily to make an ontological assertion but to provide a descriptive account of experience. On this view of perception, empirical awareness is intrinsically perspectival: it does not simply manifest a given object, a particular, but it is also in some sense self-manifesting, self-given. To perceive is to occupy a specific vantage point. This dual aspect view of awareness, whose origins may be traced to early Abhidharma accounts of cognition in terms of luminosity (viz., the lamp that makes itself manifest while illuminating others),[3] becomes an axiomatic principle of Buddhist epistemology and a subject of debate between the Buddhists[4] and their principal opponents, the Naiyāyikas ("philosophical logicians") and the Mīmāṃsakas ("hermeneuticians").

The central concern of this book is a range of arguments advanced by two prominent philosophers at the university of Nālandā, Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla,[5] in support of the role that a particular understanding of the structure of awareness must play in settling epistemological disputes. What is significant about these arguments is that they provide a model for integrating the phenomenological and cognitive psychological concerns of Abhidharma traditions within the dialogical-disputational context of Buddhist epistemology. In unpacking the central arguments of Buddhist epistemology I am not simply pursuing a project in the history of philosophy, much less in the history of Buddhist thought alone. Rather, I am committed to the view that both the specific style of these broadly Sanskritic

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3. The Mahāsāṃghika ("Great[er] Community") view of self-cognition found in *Mahāvibhāṣā* ("Great Commentary") articulates precisely such an account. See Yao (2005: 15).

4. The "Buddhists" stand here for those who adopt the epistemological concerns of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti. These authors' views on mind and cognition differ significantly from those advanced by Mādhyamika philosophers who follow Candrakīrti's (fl. 640) critique of reflexive awareness (for which, see chapter 3.3). Unless otherwise noted, all unspecified uses of "Buddhist" (or its plural form) refer to the former group.

5. The dates for Śāntarakṣita (c. 725–788) and Kamalaśīla (740–795) are those given by Frauwallner (1961: 141–143), based on textual references and historical records, including their visits to Tibet at the invitation of king Khri srong lde btsan (c. 740–798).

argumentative strategies and the universality of the metaphysical and epis-
temological theses under dispute are better showcased (and understood) if
made continuous with contemporary philosophical concerns. The principal
methodological reason for emphasizing *continuity* over *comparison* reflects a
specific intuition about the scope of philosophical inquiry: one which says
that its problems, though often couched in historically and culturally contin-
gent terms, are nonetheless grounded in all aspects of conscious experience
for a person at any given time.[6] To the extent that contemporary philosophi-
cal debates—and the theoretical advances and empirical findings that inform
them—provide clear accounts of a wider range of conscious experience, they
can be profitably used in probing the Buddhist epistemological project such
that the implications of its theses (as well as their strengths and limitations)
are fully borne out.

A central argument of this book is that epistemological inquiries in India,
particularly with regard to examining the sources of reliable cognition, have
never displayed the sort of non-naturalism characteristic of the Cartesian
and Kantian traditions in Western philosophy. Thus, with the return to
naturalism in epistemology and phenomenology, hence to understanding
cognition in embodied and causal terms,[7] we are now in a better position to
appreciate the contributions of Buddhist philosophers to epistemology.

Let me clarify from the outset that I take naturalism to be a commit-
ment to considering the empirical evidence from the sciences of cognition
in settling questions about the acquisition of beliefs. More broadly, natural-
ism refers to the notion that reality is exhausted by nature, though there is
no agreement among contemporary philosophers on exactly what counts as
"nature." Indeed, philosophers with weak commitments to naturalism oper-
ate with a rather unrestricted notion of nature, whereas stronger adherents
to naturalism define it more stringently.[8] Eliminativist positions, which
seek to reduce mental content to, say, neurophysiological processes do not,
I think, do justice to the phenomenal or qualitative aspects of experience,
and provide little or no support for the framework of a phenomenological
epistemology. My position on naturalism, which I shall henceforth refer to as
phenomenological naturalism, closely aligns with the enactive and embodied

6. A similar approach is at work in Ganeri (2012). Note that Ganeri does not label
his analysis of the philosophical literature of classical India, which he considers nei-
ther comparative nor historical in scope.

7. For one of the earliest accounts of causal theories of knowledge, see Goldman
(1967). A causal account of knowledge simply states that a person's belief that *p*, say
that it is raining, is true *iff* it is the case that *p* (that is, if it is *actually* raining). For a
review of various causal theories of mental content, principally those advanced by
Fred Dretske, Jerry Fodor, Ruth Garrett Millikan, David Papineau, Dennis Stampe,
and Dan Ryder, see Rupert (2008).

8. See Papineau (2007) for an extensive survey of various positions on
naturalism.

approach to cognition: cognitive awareness is to be thought not as an internal state of mind or brain locked into linear causal chains of sensory input and behavioral output. Rather, it is to be understood as a structure of comportment, an intentional orientation and attunement to a world of actions, objects, and meaning.[9] The enactive approach to cognition, as championed by its proponents, is non-reductionist because it relies primarily on dynamic systems theory, whose working premise is that in order to understand complex systems such as sentient beings, we must pay close attention not only to their constitutive elements but also to their organization.[10] As such, it allows for cognition to be understood in causal terms without reducing the contents of awareness to noncognitive elements.

A focus on causal accounts of cognition is shared by all Indian epistemological theories, Buddhist or otherwise. It is with Dharmakīrti, however, that an examination of the underlying processes of cognition becomes instrumental in determining which epistemic practices are conducive to effective action, captured by the well-known theory of the pragmatic efficacy of cognitions. By contrast, modern Western philosophers, beginning with Descartes, argue that justification, specifically the justification of reasons for why certain beliefs ought to be classified as knowledge, is the main focus of epistemic inquiry. What sets the two traditions apart seems to be the fact that, as Jitendranath Mohanty pointed out some time ago, "the distinction, common in Western thought, between the causal question and the question of justification was not made by the Indian theories."[11]

While Mohanty is right about the absence of this distinction in Indian and indeed Buddhist epistemology, this should not necessarily be seen as an unfortunate oversight. Rather, the absence of a distinction between the causal question and the question of justification is indicative of the fact that epistemic inquiry in India is primarily driven by pragmatic rather than normative concerns (that is, by concerns about how we come to believe something rather than why might we be justified in believing it). Indeed, if Indian epistemologies treat as warranted only that cognition which corresponds to its object and

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9. I follow Thompson's (2007b: 38–43) account of the relevance of dynamic systems theory in bridging human experience and cognitive science. This conception of enactive and embodied cognition finds its roots in Husserl's notion of the life-world (*Lebenswelt*). The paradigm of embodied and enactive cognition is explored at length in Dreyfus (1979), Hutchins (1995), Clark (1997), Hurley (1998), Lakoff and Johnson (1999), Noë (2004), Gallagher (2005), and Thompson (2007b).

10. This account of the relevance of dynamic systems theory to understanding cognition in causal terms follows closely Varela (1999) and Thompson (2007a). As Thompson notes, "because dynamic systems theory is concerned with geometrical and topographical forms of activity, it possesses an ideality that makes it neutral with respect to the distinction between the physical and the phenomenal, but also applicable to both" (2007a: 357).

11. Mohanty (2000: 149).

is produced in the right way, it seems to me, they have a way of explaining epistemic dispositions as resulting from our embodied condition (rather than as attitudes of a disembodied cogito serving the justification of its beliefs).[12]

This book should be of interest both to philosophers looking for non-Western approaches to consciousness and cognition, and to scholars of Indian and Buddhist philosophy primarily interested in various aspects of the Buddhist epistemological tradition. For the benefit of readers with little or no background in Indian and Buddhist philosophy I have adopted throughout English equivalents of technical philosophical terms, providing the original Sanskrit term in parentheses where necessary. In order to capture the polysemy of Sanskrit philosophical concepts and show sensitivity to context, occasionally a key technical term would have more than one English equivalent. For instance, *vijñāna* is translated both as "consciousness" and as "cognitive awareness," since it designates both a basic form of sentience and a discerning type of awareness. Likewise, *pramāṇa*,[13] which I will translate as "source of knowledge" or "reliable cognition," could be rendered as "epistemic warrant" (since it also refers to the specific aspect or quality of a cognition that makes it an instance of knowledge[14]). Brief explanations for the choice of English equivalents of Sanskrit philosophical concepts are provided in

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12. As it turns out, recent research programs in cognitive psychology have not validated the distinction between causal and normative account of our epistemic intuitions. Indeed, traditional normative accounts of epistemic intuitions have been challenged in recent years by a substantive body of empirical research, which shows that there are significant variances across cultural subgroups in the way the objects of experience are described and categorized. These studies appear to confirm Alvin Goldman's (1992: 160) point that the perceived uniformity of our epistemic intuitions is most likely attributable to the "fairly homogeneous subculture" to which philosophers belong. See Nisbett and Ross (1980), Haidt, Koller, and Dias (1993), Weinberg, Nichols, and Stitch (2001), and especially Nichols, Stich, and Weinberg (2001) (the last two studies for an interesting take on epistemology as ethnography). I thank my colleague Sheridan Hough for bringing to my attention the relevant work of Nichols to the topic of the empirical investigation of our epistemic intuitions.

13. This key term is variously translated as "true cognition" or even "truth," and more literally as "means of knowledge," though the sense of the term varies significantly depending on the context. For instance, Matilal (1985: 203) takes *pramātva*, usually translated as "truth," to be just one of meanings of *prāmāṇya*, the theory of the means for the apprehension of truth. Following his brief survey of various translations in French and German for *pramāṇa*, Ruegg (1994b: 403–404) observes that although we do not yet have a satisfactory translation, "means" or "instrument of knowledge (or cognition)" captures the sense of the term in its technical use. At least in the Buddhist context, a *pramāṇa* is primarily concerned with, and oriented toward, achieving pragmatic aims, and thus bears on objects capable of bringing about intended results. See also Hugon (2011).
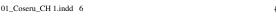
14. The notion of "epistemic warrant" I have in mind here is as developed by Alvin Plantinga who extends the traditional notion of epistemic justification (of true beliefs) also to include as a necessary condition for the warrant the optimal functioning of one's cognitive systems in the production of the respective belief. See Plantinga (1986, 1993).

the footnotes, where the reader will also come across modern philosophical glosses on different concepts and theories.

Now, let me briefly explain why I am situating my project at the intersection of phenomenology and analytic philosophy of mind. First, in the giving and defending of "reasons" Nyāya and Buddhist epistemologists operate on similar principles to those found in the tradition of analytic epistemology. Drawing from contemporary debates in epistemology between, for instance, internalists and externalists, or foundationalists and coherentists, becomes an essential and indispensable step in assessing the positions of the Buddhist epistemologists on such topics as the nature of evidence.[15] But it also guarantees an innovative treatment of these South Asian philosophical materials: the goal is to go beyond the task of historical reconstruction and endeavor to propose novel solutions to enduring and genuinely universal philosophical problems.[16] Second, the Abhidharma traditions with their phenomenological approach to investigating the elements of existence and/or experience provide the basis on which Dignāga, Dharmakīrti, and their followers deliberate on such topics as the ontological status of external objects and the epistemic import of perceptual and intentional states of cognitive awareness. Finally, approaching historical authors that belong to a different cultural and philosophical horizon than that of the modern West also demands that hermeneutical considerations come into play.

In framing the approach of this book in philosophical terms I do not mean to downplay alternative methodologies, principally those concerned with text-critical (that is, philological) issues pertaining to editing and translating Buddhist philosophical texts.[17] Nor do I want to imply that such studies fail in some significant way to capture the scope of the Buddhist epistemological enterprise. My contention is simply that our understanding of, and engagement with, the Buddhist epistemological project is better served by the methodologies and conceptual resources of philosophy. The real challenge, as I see it, is devising the best possible approach to integrating such complex and diverse epistemological canons as those of classical India and the West.[18]

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15. For an Indian philosophical account of evidence, see Matilal (2002b). For a contemporary philosophical account of evidence, see Achinstein (2001).

16. For an encouraging recognition of the universality of some of our philosophical problems, and the ways in which comparative philosophy can make a compelling case for integrative solutions that bridge the cultural and historical divides between Western and non-Western philosophy, see Strawson (1998: 327).

17. Detailed discussions pertaining to the translation and interpretation of Buddhist philosophical literature are found in Lopez (1988), Powers (1993), Ruegg (1995), and Tillemans (1997). I address some of these interpretive issues in chapter 2.

18. Significant contributions in this direction are found in Matilal (1971, 1986), Mohanty (1992b), Dreyfus (1997), Ganeri (1999a, 2001), Siderits (2003), and Arnold (2005a).

The working assumption of this book is that the tradition of episte-mological inquiry within Buddhism could be seen as advocating a form of naturalism that links it strongly to the Sautrāntika and Yogācāra[19] formu-lations of Abhidharma reductionism. Although epistemological theories in Buddhism ultimately attempt to justify a core set of Buddhist principles, and thus reflect specific doctrinal concerns, questions regarding the *founda-tion* of these principles are addressed on both metaphysical and empirical grounds. I will argue that naturalized epistemology (and phenomenology) and the cognitive sciences which inform it share with the Buddhist episte-mological tradition of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti a common concern: devel-oping a theory of knowledge that does not divorce logical arguments from descriptive accounts of cognition. For the Buddhist, the ultimate source of these descriptive accounts is the Abhidharma, in its specifically Sautrāntika-Yogācāra synthesis of thinkers like Vasubandhu (c. 350 C.E.).[20]

We must be careful, however, not to read too much into a philosophical program whose roots are historically and culturally different that those of the modern West. At the same time we can (and indeed should) profit-ably engage the thought of historical Buddhist thinkers when such thought addresses perennial philosophical problems. Such investigations, of course, must be mindful of Hans-Georg Gadamer's caveat about the objectivist claim that it is possible to interpret the thought of a historical author in such a way as to suggest that the interpreter does not enter in the event.[21]

One of the most enduring themes of the Sanskritic philosophical tradi-tion is the debate over the number and nature of reliable means of belief formation (although, this tradition is principally concerned with cognitive "events" or states of "cognition" (*jñāna*) that are epistemically warranted

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19. Sautrāntika and Yogācāra stand respectively for "Follower of [Canonical] Discourse School" and "Practice of Yoga School."

20. Vasubandhu is generally thought to have written his earlier works, in particu-lar the *Abhidharmakośa*, from a Sautrāntika perspective, while most of his later trea-tises are expositions of various aspects of Yogācāra philosophy. This claim is based on the assumption that there is only one Vasubandhu. On the hypothesis of two Vasubandhus, proposed because of discrepancies in matters of style and doctrine in the works that are attributed to him, see Frauwallner (1951).

21. Gadamer (1975) argues for the well-known "pluralist" or "anti-objectivist" view, according to which understanding a text, historical event, or cultural phe-nomenon is a complex process in which there is a "fusion of horizons," such that the object of interpretation and the interpreter's perspective are not easily distin-guished. Gadamer's insistence on there being a plurality of views does not mean that he endorses a type of relativism (he does acknowledge that there are criteria for distinguishing between right and wrong interpretations). Rather, he simply insists that an interpreter's prejudices and prejudgments (*Vorurteile*) are not only inescap-able but also indispensable, for no interpreter stands outside the horizon of history. For a critical defense of Gadamer's view that objectivism is not possible because the object of understanding is always constituted anew in each act of understanding, see Weberman (2000).

(*pramā*), rather than with "beliefs" proper[22]). Much of this debate centers on an examination of our cognitive capacities and on issues pertaining to the structure and function of Sanskrit grammatical thought. While controversies are at the heart of any tradition of epistemological inquiry, in India they most often reflect (and are enforcing of) scholastic and doctrinal affiliation: philosophical views are framed within a specific scholastic paradigm which is in turn expanded within a genre of commentarial literature that seeks to explain and facilitate access to the original insight. When innovation occurs, as it often does, it is presented as statements or modes of reasoning that make explicit what might have only been alluded to in a canonical or foundational text of that particular school of thought.

Dignāga's *Pramāṇasamuccaya* ("Collection on the Sources of Knowledge," hereinafter the *Collection*) is generally recognized as the first systematic treatment of the sources of knowledge from a Buddhist perspective. Indeed, Dignāga (c. 480–540) is rightly credited with having inaugurated a new era in Indian thought with his synthesis of epistemological, grammatical, and psychological theories.[23] This new model of epistemological inquiry, which is expanded in great detail less than a century later by Dharmakīrti (c. 600–660)[24] (and significantly altered in certain respects) rests on two sets of premises: first, it adopts a specific view of language as a means of reasoning and deliberation first articulated in the Sanskrit grammatical tradition but also formalized by the early Naiyāyikas; second, it incorporates insights from the Abhidharma traditions concerning the phenomenology of perception and conceptual cognition.

The specifics of these two sets of premises, their formative influence, and the manner in which they contributed to the development of a Buddhist epistemology of perception, in particular as reflected in the encyclopedic work of Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla—the *Tattvasaṃgraha* ("Compendium of True Principles") and its *Pañjikā* ("Commentary"),[25] hereinafter the *Compendium* and its *Commentary*—form the major coordinates of this book. These two sets of premises were instrumental in the adoption by the Buddhist epistemologists of a phenomenological perspective in describing the role of perception for knowledge. Key to this phenomenological account of perception is the notion that self-awareness is constitutive of perception.

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22. For discussions of the difference between cognitive "events" and states of "belief," see Matilal (1986: 101ff.), Mohanty (1992b: 134–135), and Patil (2009: 42–43). For an account of "belief" that captures both its dispositional (or occurrent) and phenomenal (or conscious experience) aspects, see Schwitzgebel (2002).

23. Dignāga's contribution to the development of Indian logic and epistemology is treated at length in Vidyābhuṣaṇa (1921), Mookerjee (1935), Frauwallner (1959), Hattori (1968), Hayes (1988), Matilal (1998), and Pind (2009).

24. For a review of the debate about Dharmakīrti's dates, see Lindtner (1980).

25. For recent reviews of the scholarly literature on the TS/P, see Funayama (1992), Steinkellner and Much (1995), and McClintock (2010).

I will argue that—in conceiving of self-awareness as constitutive of perception— Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla, like other followers of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti, share a common ground with phenomenologists in the tradition of Edmund Husserl and Maurice Merleau-Ponty,[26] and with analytic philosophers of mind interested in phenomenal consciousness,[27] all of whom contend that perception is best understood as bearing intentional content. I refer here primarily to the notion of "intentionality" as initially developed by Brentano and (following him) by Husserl and Merleau-Ponty. On this phenomenological account of intentionality, to perceive an object (or to have a perceptual experience) is to apprehend an intentional relation: whether the object intended in perception (the one the perception is *of*) is real is less important than how it is intended or that it is intended. Indeed, one of the features of intentionality is that it reveals the co-constitutive nature of perception and that which is perceived; as such, it *discloses* the world rather than attempting to establish a relationship to a discrete, "external" world. I shall argue that the Buddhist epistemologists' treatment of self-awareness (*svasaṃvedana*) displays similar features.

Can knowledge be established on a foundation of phenomenal or conscious experience, specifically on a type of cognitive awareness that is nonconceptual and inerrant, as the Buddhist epistemologists claim? Isn't this type of foundationalism, like the sort one associates with the sense data theorists, a discredited philosophical program (as Wilfrid Sellars and all critics of the "Myth of Given" have argued)? Can the Buddhist epistemologists' definition of perception be justified in terms of our understanding of the phenomenology of perception? Is it correct to assume that what turns the continuous flow of experience into perceptually distinct objects are the conceptual and categorizing tendencies of an embodied mind? Finally, how might we reason on the basis of such empirical testimony? These questions are at the heart of a lengthy philosophical dispute between the Buddhist epistemologists and their opponents, chiefly the Naiyāyikas and the Mīmāṃsakas. Insofar as this dispute can be integrated into contemporary philosophical debates, it ought to invite the same sort of scrutiny one would expect of all enduring philosophical problems, regardless of their historical origin. If philosophical issues raised by the Buddhist epistemologists can be shown to have any

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26. Note that philosophical phenomenology as currently understood is a heterogeneous discipline, including, but not limited to, such subfields as *transcendental phenomenology* (concerned with how objects are constituted in pure awareness), *naturalistic phenomenology* (concerned with how consciousness presents the natural things), *existential phenomenology* (concerned with the experience of choice and action in concrete situations), and *hermeneutical phenomenology* (concerned with the interpretive structure of experience). For a detailed survey of the various subfields of phenomenology, see Embree et al. (1997).

27. Including such representative accounts as one finds in Siewert (1998), Kriegel (2009), Chalmers (2010), Bayne (2010), and Schwitzgebel (2011).

relevance beyond the confines of the history of Indian and Buddhist thought, the need to engage them from the perspective of our expanded understanding of the nature of consciousness and cognition (as exhibited, for instance, in the sciences of the mind) becomes imperative. I spell out the reasons for such an engagement, while addressing a broad set of methodological and metatheoretical issues, in chapter 2.

The Buddhist epistemologists advance what might initially look like a representationalist theory of knowledge. On closer scrutiny, this apparent "representationalism" in effect masks a complex phenomenalism that ascribes nonconceptual cognitive content to direct experience, as well as a causal theory of cognition that aims to explain the relation between varying modes of awareness and their corresponding constitutive elements. In order to fully unpack this Buddhist theory of knowledge I shall draw from the internalism vs. externalism debate in analytic epistemology,[28] and the critique of that debate from the standpoint of philosophical phenomenology.[29] The guiding methodological insight at work in this book is that a phenomenological account of perception on models first provided by Husserl and Merleau-Ponty best serves to translate the intuitions of the Buddhist epistemologists about the cognitive function of perception. Given the immediacy and directness of sense experience, as defined by Dignāga, Dharmakīrti, and their followers, the sense-object relation is an issue of continuous concern (just as for Husserl perception and that which is perceived is ultimately constituted by intentional content). The Buddhist epistemologist thus insists on treating each cognitive event as a new introduction to an object. Furthermore—as I will demonstrate—this continuing concern for the sense-object relation also explains why the Buddhist epistemologist treats cognition as bearing the characteristic marks of embodiment: it is the dynamic of the five aggregates[30] that ultimately gives the cognitive event its expression.

The theory of knowledge advanced by Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla resembles Western variants of representationalism as proposed by, among others, Descartes and Locke. These similarities, however, extend only as far as the

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28. Following Kornblith (2001: 4ff.), I understand this debate as an outcome of the dilemmas faced by the Cartesian epistemologist, whose internalist perspective on the justification of belief must confront the possibility that such internal belief could be dubitable, and thus be constrained to find a way to coordinate internal belief with external reality.

29. Such a critique is advanced by, among others, Carman (1999, 2007), Siewert (2005), Thompson (2007a), and Zahavi (2004a, 2009).

30. The Buddhist answer to the problem of personal identity stands in contradistinction to most classical philosophical attempts to reduce the individual, or his or her mind, to some metaphysical core such as a "soul" or "self." Instead, the individual personality is regarded as the dynamic product of the five aggregates of grasping: form or body, sensations, apperception, volition or dispositional formations, and consciousness. See chapter 3 for a detailed analysis of the five aggregates.

general view of representationalists who admit that while perception may provide immediate access to the domain of phenomenal experience, we come to apprehend it as a realm of discrete entities only as a result of categorical and conceptual discriminations. These conceptual discriminations (or representations) are in fact the cognitive counterparts of empirical objects, although the precise ontological status of empirical objects is a matter of dispute among representationalists. Indeed, it is hard to find a general definition of representationalism in Western (or for that matter South Asian) philosophy of mind that adequately covers the various theories subsumed under it. Although most proponents of representationalism agree on the existence of different "mediums" of representation (e.g., ideas, images, language, symbols, etc.), there is significant debate concerning the content and nature of these representations and the causal relations that obtain between that content and its referent (viz., the empirical reality).[31] This explains in part why representationalists can hold both internalist and externalist positions.[32] Seeking to reconcile nominalist views of concepts (which regard concepts as abstract objects) with realist views of mental content, some have proposed that we treat mental content as a mode of presentation that views concepts as psychological properties of mental representations.[33]

For Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla, as for all Buddhist epistemologists, the apprehension of a resemblance (*sādṛśya*) between different objects, which marks the transition from an indistinct perceptual experience to a distinct cognitive event, is in itself a form of conceptual apprehension. It should be noted that unlike, say, Locke's attempt to solve the problem of representationalism by dissociating between two types of ideas (viz., sensible and intelligible), Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla regard any cognitive event that involves discerning or discrimination as bearing the characteristic of conceptuality. While this position implies that resemblance relations should be taken as unreal—and here Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla are in agreement

31. The dominant view, known as the representational theory of mind, is that the internal systems of representations have clear structure and a language-like syntax. This view has also come to be known, after Fodor (1975), as the *language of thought hypothesis*.

32. An example of a realist form of representationalism is articulated by the psychologist Max Velmans who argues for a distinction between *descriptions* of phenomena (which represent the phenomena themselves) and *theories about* phenomena (which represent their causes and several other inferred patterns). For Velmans, even appeal to such categories as "universals" to describe the phenomena or their causal relations suggest that "there is a 'reality' which is like something" (Velmans 2000: 163). For a general overview of representationalism in Western philosophy from Plato and Descartes to contemporary cognitive philosophers, see Watson (1995). A detailed survey of representational theories of consciousness is found in Lycan (2006).

33. This is particularly the case with the unified theory of concepts advanced by Laurence and Margolis (2003, 2007).

with Dharmakīrti's critique of relations—this does not necessarily invalidate representationalism. For Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla, representationalism reflects an understanding of the nature of epistemic practices rather than commitment to a certain ontology. What we perceive is mediated by our internal expectations, propensities, as well as the range of our sensory systems.[34] How we identify and conceive of what is perceptually apprehended, however, depends on our linguistic and conceptual practices.[35]

This approach to cognition represents an important aspect of Buddhist epistemology and demands a closer and more detailed scrutiny than this introduction can provide. For the moment, let me clearly emphasize its significance for one of the premises outlined above, namely, that conceptual analysis is a reliable source of knowledge only to the extent that it is grounded in nondeceptive and inerrant experiences. As I shall argue at length in chapter 6, the observation of similarity between objects is not the direct cause of internally apprehended relations of resemblance. Instead, the representational content is generated following a process of aspectual rendering, which is in keeping with the reflexive nature of cognitive events. The cognitive model which Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla develop—primarily in their discussion of the characteristics of external objects—centers on the theory of cognitive aspects (*ākāravāda*), more specifically on the notion that in cognizing we are directly acquainted both with the phenomenal content (*viṣaya-ākāra*) and the phenomenal character (*jñāna-ākāra*) of experience. While this model finds parallels in the sense data theories advanced by Bertrand Russell and George E. Moore, I will argue that Husserl's phenomenological account of intentional objects offers a more viable alternative.

Like many of their predecessors, Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla are preoccupied with explaining what exactly lies at the juncture of perception and conception. As in many other instances, Dharmakīrti provides the standard answer. For him, conceptual cognitions arise from grasping an object by means of an act of recognition (*pratyabhijñāna*) that brings it under a certain concept. However, the concept by means of which an object is grasped as such, say as a "blue lotus," does not entirely correspond to the perceptual aspect of the object as phenomenally given. Rather, how the object is conceived also depends upon the evocative capacity of language, as the medium of conceptual apprehension, to represent the object.[36] For Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla,

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34. Whether the appearance of an object in cognition is due to the apprehension of a sensory object (*viśaya*) or merely to the presence of an internal object (*ālambana*) is a complex issue that calls into question the ontological positions of the Buddhist epistemologists. This issue is addressed below (chapter 4.4).

35. See, for example, TS 1214–1217 and TSP, *loc. cit.*

36. Dharmakīrti defines a concept as "a cognition with a phenomenal appearance that is capable of being conjoined with linguistic expression" (NB I, 5: *abhilāpasaṃ sargayogyapratibhāsā pratītiḥ kalpanā*).

this argument provides sufficient ground for claiming that conceptions have the capacity to capture the contents of experience only to the extent that we bracket common assumptions about the function of linguistic reference, a position that finds full expression in the semantic theory of exclusion (*apoha*). For example, the category of distinction (*vyavaccheda*), which can be universally applied to all objects of experience, is not an intrinsic feature of the object, but of the cognitive process that entails the recognition of contrasting features in the apprehension of objects.

It is perhaps safe to assume that the origins and development of Buddhist epistemology as a distinct type of discourse mark the gradual acceptance of certain canons of logic and argumentation by those Buddhist philosophers who regarded polemical engagement with their Brahmanical opponents as vital to influencing their standing in the wider philosophical community. A good reason for this engagement might have been an eagerness on the part of the Buddhists to guarantee that their mode of argumentation is commensurable with the methods of reasoning formulated by the Naiyāyikas. Perhaps the most important concern of the Buddhist epistemologists, one that finds a clear articulation in the *Compendium* and its *Commentary*, is the need to withstand the criticism that core doctrinal principles such as those of momentariness and dependent arising cannot be defended on rational grounds (or, as the case may be, lack empirical support).

As Buddhist philosophers would argue, our cognitive propensities are beginningless, each thought being merely the continuation of an endless series of previous thoughts, which constantly inform, influence, and direct our intentional acts.[37] These cognitive propensities manifest most vividly as traces of memory and conceptual elaborations. The Buddhist epistemologists came to reject memory as a reliable source of knowledge and to regard conception as completely dissociated from perception. While an exploration of the historical context in which this dissociation occurred is beyond the scope of this book, in chapter 3 I offer a speculative reconstruction of the sort of empirical reasons that might warrant limiting perception (as a source of knowledge) to nonconceptual states of cognitive awareness.

In this regard, it ought to be noted that—for the Buddhist epistemologists—perception is not only an epistemic modality for establishing which cognitive event (or what aspect of it, and under which circumstances) counts as knowledge but also a cognitive process to be understood within the framework of classical Abhidharma psychology. Indeed, Nyāya and Buddhist philosophers did not make a radical distinction between epistemological and psychological accounts of cognition (at least not in the way that dominant currents in modern Western philosophy drifted away from naturalist explanations

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37. See AKBh *ad* AK III, 19d.

after Kant).[38] It is precisely the practice of translating logical arguments back to their perceptual source that resulted in Indian theories of inference being branded as forms of psychologism, a derogatory label for the seeming conflation of logical reasoning with the psychology of perception mainly associated with Gottlob Frege and the tradition of logical positivism. That exclusionary branding no longer holds true. As Francis Pelletier, Renée Elio, and Philip Hanson[39] argue in their examination of what Willard Van Orman Quine called "the old anti-psychologistic days,"[40] the newly expanded understanding of our cognitive architecture provided by the sciences of the mind makes it possible to be psychologistic about logic, albeit in a novel way. I shall explore the implication of this resurgent psychologism for our evaluation of the Indian theories of inference in my brief treatment of the semantic theory of exclusion in chapter 4.

In this book I am primarily concerned with the analysis of perception, although an account of the relation between perception and conception will also be provided. The analysis of perception provides the empirical foundation that gives Buddhist epistemology its pragmatic anchorage. The precise definition of perceptual knowledge (an important subject of dispute among the Indian epistemologists) led to several interpretive solutions, the details of which form the primary contents of my analysis. Dharmakīrti's overarching influence on subsequent generations of Buddhist and Brahmanical philosophers meant that his ideas took on the appearance of a standard account of the Buddhist epistemological standpoint. While no one disputes the paramount importance of Dharmakīrti, both Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla display a sufficient degree of originality in espousing their views to warrant an independent consideration.[41] Our main source, the *Compendium* and its *Commentary*, is not only a vast collection of Buddhist doctrines recorded in the second half of the eighth century C.E. but also a highly polemical work bearing testimony to the sustained disputes between Buddhist and Brahmanical philosophers during what is perhaps the golden era of Indian philosophy. The polemical nature of the *Compendium* and its *Commentary* is further evinced by the importance that Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla accord to issues of metaphysics and epistemology in their attempt to refute a multitude of views and establish their own perspective on the nature of reality. This Buddhist perspective on the nature of reality is anchored in a thorough defense of the principle of dependent arising. The aim of chapter 5 is to examine the

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38. See Mohanty (1992b: 130).
39. Pelletier, Elio, and Hanson (2008: 9ff.).
40. Quine (1969: 84).
41. Unless, of course, one is specifically concerned with the various ramifications of Dharmakīrti's epistemological innovations as reflected in the work of his immediate commentators, as is the case in Dunne (2004), or in the works of his Tibetan interpreters, as is the case in Dreyfus (1997).

context and scope of Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla's encyclopedic work and map out its epistemological and ontological concerns, with a focus on the tension between epistemic dispositions and altruistic concerns.

More immediately, the three principal points of debate that form the subject of the present investigation concern: (1) whether a perception that is "devoid of conception" (*kalpanāpoḍha*) can be said to be cognitive, and if so in what sense; (2) what is the precise relation between language and conceptual analysis, and what sort of causal conditions, if any, are at work in the generation of meaning from verbal content; and (3) in what ways do the Abhidharma analyses of consciousness and cognition constrain the Buddhist epistemologist's understanding of the epistemic role of perception. Chapter 6 and parts of chapter 4 deal with these three principal points of debate.

Adequately addressing these issues demands that the views of Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla are separately treated, taking into account their individual styles of argumentation and their specific audiences. However, while seeking to locate differences in their approaches, one should not overlook the fact that in the *Compendium* and its *Commentary*, Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla concern themselves with answering questions that form an integral part of the Buddhist epistemological enterprise, and their solutions to these questions are to a large extent contingent on its conceptual and theoretical resources.[42] This enterprise is concerned, *inter alia*, with answering the following questions: What forms the proper basis of a knowledge event? What sort of objects do perceptual cognitions ultimately intend? Is perceptual knowledge representational in character or should it rather be understood as a type of embodied action? What sort of phenomenological account of perception does the Buddhist epistemological tradition advance? These questions are taken up in chapter 7, which addresses the wider philosophical implications of the Buddhist analysis of particulars in the context of contemporary debates about foundationalism in epistemology and phenomenology.

In the end, no discussion about perception and its mode of presentation can take place outside the horizon of consciousness. It is consciousness that ultimately provides the evidential ground for all modes of inquiry. For the Buddhist epistemologists consciousness, as reflexive awareness, is not just another event in the chain of dependently arisen phenomena but its disclosing medium. The precise nature of this reflexive awareness is the subject of chapter 8, in which I argue for the possibility of an intentional but

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42. For several arguments about why the TS/P might be regarded as an epistemological (that is, as a *pramāṇa*) work, primarily on account of its structure and scope, see Blumenthal (2004: 30ff.) and McClintock (2010: 61–62). Indeed, the emphasis on reasoning (*yukti*), and on a specific audience composed primarily of so-called "proponents of reasoning" (*nyāyavādins*), is a clear indication to this effect. It is generally assumed that Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla adopt mainly a Madhyamaka position in their later works.

nonrepresentational form of consciousness. I conclude in chapter 9 with some reflections on the promise of cross-cultural approaches to Buddhist philosophy of mind, with hopes of tackling, among other issues, the old dilemma of the distinction between seeing and seeing as from the perspective of an enactive approach to cognition. For the Buddhist, thus, perceiving reality ultimately marks an intentional orientation in a world that is experientially constituted. Examining the nature of this distinctive perceptual orientation in the arena of current philosophical debates is the main concern of this book.

CHAPTER 2

Naturalizing Buddhist Epistemology

There are several ways of approaching the Buddhist epistemological tra-
dition, as our brief introductory survey of the context and scope of this
enterprise demonstrates. In addressing the issue of methodology I also wish
to make clear that much as we may strive for a philosophically illuminating
and textually accurate account, certain presuppositions remain implicit in
any theoretical endeavor. These presuppositions primarily, but not exclu-
sively, concern the method and style of argumentation, and the theoretical
intuitions that inform one's argumentative strategies. In approaching the
Buddhist epistemological tradition from the perspective of phenomeno-
logical naturalism I regard its arguments as articulating a specific type of
discourse, in which descriptive accounts of experience and rational justifi-
cation are locked into a twin concern. At the same time I am aware that we
need to engage the arguments of the Buddhist epistemologists in ways that
make their thought relevant to contemporary philosophical debates. This
necessity is both historical and theoretical; however, it is impeded by herme-
neutical difficulties arising from the intimate connection in India between
philosophical reflection and the language in which it was conducted, namely
Sanskrit. Hence, a detour through the linguistic theories of the Sanskrit
grammarians is an almost unavoidable hurdle in getting the right spin on
the Buddhist wheel of reasoning.

The Buddhist epistemologist's broadly empirical approach to knowledge
means that reasons, though articulated in the language of Sanskrit gram-
matical thought, are also meant to provide an account of how things are
before we set out to theorize about them. For the Buddhist, this theorizing
accords with the phenomenological stance that perception represents a form
of implicit knowing that cannot be improved upon by conceptualization.
The Buddhist response to how language and conceptual analysis can operate
as reliable cognitions is captured by the well-known semantic theory of

(17)

exclusion (*apoha*), whose operating premise is that "exclusion" and "negation" serve as the only effective ways of using linguistic signifiers without subscribing to a correspondence theory of truth. Although a full account of the *apoha* theory falls outside the scope of this book, the Buddhist account of perception I offer here raises some important issues for conceptual analysis and has a number of consequences for our understanding of the role and function of linguistic reference that are worth further investigation. In what follows, I address a broader set of methodological and metatheoretical concerns that, I hope, will showcase the importance of empirical research and theoretical intuitions in advancing the study of Indian and Buddhist philosophy.

2.1 DOCTRINE AND ARGUMENT

Let us begin, first, by clarifying the scope of Buddhist philosophy by addressing the idiosyncratic and nonspecific use of "philosophy" in the study of Indian and Buddhist traditions. Most often such use pertains simply to historical treatments of philosophical ideas rather than philosophy proper, and thus reflects certain disciplinary biases characteristic of modern Indological and Buddhological research. Can we develop a genuinely philosophical approach to Buddhist thought? William Edelglass and Jay Garfield have recently claimed that we can if we proceed to explain that, like their Western counterparts, Buddhist philosophical concerns too can be classified along metaphysical, epistemological, ethical, and hermeneutical lines.[1] If the goal of Buddhist metaphysics is to explain the nature of reality such that gaining insight into this nature eliminates confusion, Buddhist epistemology lays the methodological foundation for achieving this goal. Likewise, ethical and hermeneutical considerations come into play when the goals are establishing the appropriate rules of moral conduct or resolving doctrinal disputes. Correctly identifying and categorizing not just texts and authors, but their respective views and arguments, is a first step in framing a genuinely philosophical approach to Buddhist thought.[2] Thus, rather than seeking to find out whether the various schools of Buddhism have any parallels in Western thought, a more productive attempt is to work out a broad consensus about the nature and scope of philosophical inquiry.

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1. Edelglass and Garfield (2009: 4).
2. Similar efforts to frame a genuine philosophical approach, in this case for Indian philosophy more generally, are found in Matilal (1986), Bilimoria (1988), Mohanty (1992b), Bhattacharyya (1993), Chakrabarti (1999), and Ganeri (2001, 2011b, 2012). Addressing the so-called dogmas of Orientalism, Matilal also takes issue with the "pop mysticism" that is characteristic of vulgarizing presentations of Indian philosophy, in particular of Advaita Vedānta and Madhyamaka Buddhism (Matilal 2002a: 370–376).

In his comprehensive discussion of lexical equivalents of "philosophy" in Indian languages, Wilhelm Halbfass noted that while parallels with what is commonly designated as "philosophy" in the West are clearly to be found in the Indian and Buddhist doxographical literatures, this is philosophy as defined by tradition, that is, as "a spectrum of firmly established, fully developed doctrinal structures" and not as "as an open-ended process of asking questions and pursuing knowledge."[3] While I agree with Halbfass that the presence of an "open-ended" process of philosophical inquiry is precisely why Western philosophy has undergone such dramatic changes in modern history[4]—such that many of its traditional inquiries are no longer regarded as being within its purview—this is by no means an exclusive feature of Western thought, but it is also true of philosophical movements in India, as evinced by the tradition of philosophical debate (*vivāda*).

Modern definitions of philosophy restrict its domain of activity only to that type of thinking which operates as a rational and critical appraisal of all modes of knowledge, including knowledge itself. It is largely this definition that is partly responsible for the false dichotomy between rational or argumentative and interpretive or speculative that has often been used to dissociate analytic from phenomenological and hermeneutical philosophy, and more generally Western from non-Western philosophy (the same fault line is often seen as separating modern philosophy from medieval scholasticism). An often cited example of this dichotomy is Anthony Flew's uncharitable remark: "Philosophy, as the word is understood here, is concerned first, last and all the time with argument. It is, incidentally, because most of what is labeled *Eastern Philosophy* is not so concerned—rather than any reason of European parochialism—that this book draws no material from any source east of Suez."[5]

The past three decades have seen numerous examples—besides efforts to bridge analytic and phenomenological traditions[6]—of work in Indian and Buddhist philosophy that are rigorously argumentative in precisely the sense that Flew reserved for Western philosophy.[7] For the most part these studies

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3. Halbfass (1988: 273).

4. As the authors of the *Oxford Companion to Philosophy* remind us: "[m]ost definitions of philosophy are fairly controversial . . . because what is called philosophy has changed radically in scope in the course of history, with many inquiries that were originally part of it having detached themselves from it" (Honderich 1995: 666). This is also true to a certain extent of philosophical movements in India, although the effort to preserve continuity with the past remains a defining characteristic of the Indian style of philosophical inquiry.

5. Flew (1971: 36).

6. See, for instance, Petitot et al. (1999), Smith and Jokic (2003), Smith and Thomasson (2005), and Christensen (2008).

7. See, especially, Matilal (1986), Ganeri (1999a, 2001), Garfield (2002), Siderits (2003), Arnold (2005a), Patil (2009), and D'Amato, Garfield, and Tillemans (2009).

focus primarily on those traditions of argumentative philosophy, chiefly the Nyāya, Madhyamaka, and Buddhist epistemology, where the giving and examination of reasons takes center stage.[8] There is, however, a plurality of views regarding the scope of these argumentative practices, an issue I will explore at length in chapter 4. A central point of controversy concerns the authority of verbal or scriptural testimony, so that affirming or denying it operates as a criterion for doxographical classification. For instance, while the Naiyāyikas include verbal testimony (which refers specifically to the words of the Vedas) in their list of epistemic warrants, they do not regard it as intrinsically ascertained, as do the Mīmāṃsakas (for whom the Vedas are authorless (*apauruṣeya*) and thus infallible). The Nyāya position is summed up well by Satischandra Chatterjee who notes that, "while the validity of verbal testimony depends on its being based on the statement of a trust-worthy person, its possibility is conditional on the understanding of the meaning of that statement."[9] Thus, whereas the Naiyāyikas regard investigation by means of reasoning (*ānvīkṣīkī*) as an appropriate description of their philosophical practices,[10] Mīmāṃsā philosophers have tended to rebuke its excessive use.[11] A similar difference in attitudes toward the role of rational inquiry is at work within the Buddhist tradition: indeed, the adoption of certain canons of positive argumentation by Dignāga, Dharmakīrti, and their followers would encounter strong opposition from antirealist Mādhyamika philosophers like Candrakīrti (c. 600–650).

Tillemans (2008a) does a wonderful job of laying out the scope and range of both Buddhist and Brahmanical concerns with matters of argumentation. These concerns include, but are not limited to, such issues as establishing canons of right thinking and rules of debate, articulating the difference between arguments for oneself and for the other, addressing the problem of universals and the relation between language and conceptual thought, critically evaluating the role of scripture and scholastic affiliation in debate, and deciding the number and nature of epistemic warrants, as well as the criteria under which logical reasons can be warranted. See also contributions by Arnold (2008b), Dreyfus (2008), McClintock (2008), Siderits (2008), and Tillemans (2008b) to the same volume.

8. The Sanskrit term commonly employed to refer to this form of argumentative philosophy is *ānvīkṣīkī* (lit. "investigating by means of reasoning"). On the appropriateness of using *ānvīkṣīkī* as an equivalent for "philosophy," including other Sanskrit cognates such as *tarkavidyā* ("science of logic") and *hetuśāstra* ("theory of reasoning"), see Hacker (1958: 54–83), Halbfass (1988: 263–286), and Matilal (2002a: 358–369).

9. Chatterjee (1950: 317).

10. First employed by Kauṭilya in his *Arthaśāstra* I.2. 1–12.

11. Considering the adoption of *ānvīkṣīkī* as a defining term for "philosophy" Matilal remarks: " . . . at some point in history there was not much difference between the use of the term 'ṣaṭ-tarkī' and ṣaḍ-darśana,' and hence the equation *ānvīkṣīkī = darśana* (a *rūdra śabda*) = philosophy was possible" (2002a: 365). Regardless of whether such an equation was possible, it is safe to say that this debate is indicative of the presence in Sanskrit philosophical literature of a plurality of attitudes regarding the proper nature of philosophical inquiry.

It is this varying attitude toward the role of rational inquiry that is ultimately instrumental in differentiating between philosophy as a quest for reasons (*hetuvidyā*) and philosophy as a path (*darśanamārga*), even though this differentiation does not necessarily point to separate domains of activity but rather to separate stages in the pursuit of a common goal. Karl Potter is perhaps the first to have coined the term "path philosophy" [12] to account for the common preoccupation among Indian philosophers with finding a path to complete freedom (*mokṣa*) and the means for achieving it. Some of the greatest Indian philosophers (e.g., Nāgārjuna, Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja, etc.) count as path philosophers, precisely for the fact that they provide a role model for those who seek such freedom, however it may be defined.[13] And there are few traditions of reflection in which the concept of path (*mārga*) is more central than Buddhism. To help us distinguish between various aspects of what may be properly called "path theory," Robert Buswell and Robert Gimello have proposed the following taxonomy: (i) the relationship between the path and the ideal person (i.e., the Buddha); (ii) the path in relation to its obstacles; (iii) the difference between the path of knowledge (*jñāna-mārga*) and the path of purification (*visuddhi-mārga*); (iv) the tension between path-oriented goals and scholasticism; and (v) the position of "path-theory" vis-à-vis hermeneutics, religion, and culture.[14] The concept of "path" acts as a central interpretive category due to the manner "in which it incorporates, underlies, or presupposes everything else in Buddhism, from the simplest act of charity to the most refined meditative experience and the most rigorous philosophical argument."[15] From a traditional point of view, the common goal of this "path" philosophy is emancipation from cyclic existence (*saṃsāra*), regardless of the manner in which this goal is defined and pursued by each school.[16] Something like a path-oriented attitude toward the scope of philosophical inquiry is at work in most Indian schools of thought, except perhaps for the Cārvāka physicalists, whose secular and skeptical agenda sets

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12. This coinage is reminiscent of the classical Hellenistic sense of *philia sophia* (lit. "love of wisdom"), since, on the whole, Indian and Buddhist philosophers seem to address the same broad metaphysical and moral concerns that preoccupy Platonist and Stoic philosophers. The historian of philosophy Pierre Hadot is perhaps the strongest advocate of such a definition of philosophy. Hadot insists that classical philosophers viewed their professional pursuits as "an effort to live and think according to the norms of wisdom" (Hadot 1995: 59).

13. As Potter noted, "a person who is ready to get on a path is sometimes called an *adhikārin* by Indian path philosophers. The *adhikārin* must have considerable experience in getting to know himself, for he has come a long way in the search for freedom" (1963: 37).

14. Buswell and Gimello (1992: 2–36).

15. Buswell and Gimello (1992: 6).

16. The Buddhists refer to it as cessation (*nirvāṇa*), indicating a state that marks the end of cyclical existence (*saṃsāra*), while all Brahmanical schools refer to this final goal as liberation (*mokṣa*).

them apart from this general path orientation. For the most part the modern Western understanding of the goal of philosophical inquiry is devoid of any reference to the need for overcoming the limitations of the human condition. Where such references are encountered, as in the case of existential phenomenology, the goal is most often defined in secular terms.[17]

2.2 REASON AND CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS

If engaging the arguments of the Buddhist epistemologists in ways that make their thought relevant to contemporary philosophical debates is the goal, then adopting some of the principles, positions, and strategies that inform these debates becomes inevitable. Buddhist epistemology done in an analytical or phenomenological mode is no longer traditional Buddhist *pramāṇavāda* ("doctrine of epistemic warrants") but a new type of philosophical discourse informed by, and reflecting, contemporary philosophical concerns. In that regard, some of the methodological principles characteristic of the contemporary philosophy of discourse,[18] in which the views of historical authors and those of modern interpreters are made to enhance each other, also become relevant. This discursive approach raises the issue of the relationship between epistemology and hermeneutics, even though the Buddhist epistemologists are not necessarily preoccupied with problems of interpretation (although some of those traditions which they critique, principally the Mīmāṃsā, do have these concerns), but rather with establishing the grounds for knowledge.

   A good example of how the philosophy of discourse can be applied to the Buddhist tradition, albeit in a different context, is found in Bernard Faure's epistemological critique of Chan Buddhism. Tracing the varied contours of

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17. One of the most influential examples of "secular" existentialism is Heidegger's definition of the human condition in terms of *Dasein*. Heidegger conceives of the *Dasein* as a particular way of being-in-the-world rather than a mode of existence that is defined by the attempt to transcend the limitations of the human condition (1986: 321ff.). However, given their predominantly religious and soteriological concerns, nineteenth-century precursors to existentialism like Kierkegaard may be viewed as sharing some of the same concerns as these Indian "path" philosophers.

18. By "philosophy of discourse" I mean specifically the rhetorical turn in twentieth-century Western philosophy, characterized primarily as an attempt to distance philosophical arguments from a pretense of methodological neutrality. This is by no means a unitary movement, but encompasses the works of major thinkers such as Heidegger, Habermas, Bakhtin, Foucault, and Derrida. Derrida, for instance, has consistently argued that philosophy, despite all its attempts to reorganize itself as a form of meta-discourse, is bound to remain permanently subjected to the uses of metaphor: "Présence disparissant dans son propre rayonnement, source cachée de la lumière, de la verité et du sens, effacement du visage de l'être, tel serait le *retour* insistant de ce qui assujettit la métaphysique à la métaphore" (Derrida 1972: 320).

comparison, counterpoint, and intertwining that hermeneutical philosophy engenders, Faure not only champions the case for using modern theoretical frameworks, but explains why certain methodological assumptions underpinning the interpretation of classical non-Western traditions need to be called into question:

[E]ach methodological approach creates its own object and must in turn be questioned, on not only methodological grounds but also hermeneutical and epistemological grounds. Above all, we must always keep in mind that each approach, however "objective" it claims to be, has certain ideological implications and fulfills specific functions within the academic field. Even if Pierre Bourdieu rightly urges us to "objectify the objectification itself" and to clarify the position of the writer, this does not entail, as he seems to believe, that doing so will secure a much-vaunted "scientificity."[19]

Faure calls attention to the obvious fact that humanistic disciplines are primarily concerned with the analysis and interpretation of cultural artifacts, and as such are shaped by trends and mentalities specific to a given culture or epoch and its intellectual critics. Unless philosophical inquiry is regarded as (or simply reduced to) theorizing on the basis of the empirical results of natural science, it cannot be said to operate on a scientific model. Rather, it too depends upon a communicative model, which cannot achieve objectivity simply by bringing one's own methodological and critical thinking principles in line with established canons of scholarly analysis and rational inquiry. Of course, one could go as far as to claim that even theorizing on the basis of empirical data involves interpretation and carries in its wake the prospect of ambiguity and difference: the lesson of naturalized epistemology, as Quine argued in his now classic essay "Two Dogmas of Empiricism,"[20] is that theories are underdetermined even by the best observational data, given the latter's episodic, fragmentary, and limited reach.[21] Furthermore, the persistence of performative traits, as well as the inescapability of the first-person

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19. Faure (1993: 4). A similar approach is adopted by Gómez (1995: 206), who suggests that "we will be well advised . . . . to open the field [i.e., Buddhist studies] to alternative models"; he gives several examples of attempts already undertaken in this direction, including Gudmunsen's (1977) contrasting of Buddhist and poststructuralist theories of language, and Tuck's (1990) hermeneutics of comparative philosophy approach. For a different perspective on the uses (and abuses) of theory in the field of Buddhist studies, see Cabezón (1995) and Tillemans (1995).

20. Quine (1951).

21. In naturalized epistemology, the view that theories are underdetermined by empirical data is sometimes invoked as providing a ground for fallibilism, and for asserting that our knowledge claims are at most derived from inferences to the best explanation. Fallibilism is more problematic for normative epistemology than for intentionalist and causal accounts of knowledge such as those advanced by Indian and Buddhist philosophers. Indeed, the Buddhist epistemologist would favor the

perspective, is central to any type of philosophical discourse, for no philosophical argument obtains outside the horizon of a person's consciousness in which a given tradition of reflection becomes operational.

In the case of engaging the arguments and argumentative strategies of classical Buddhist and Indian philosophers there is the additional discursive layer of the commentarial tradition, in which every major work is embedded. Although a commentary may enjoy a certain autonomy, it most often remains inextricably tied to the original text in terms of its topic and stated purpose.[22] It is a well-known feature of Indian philosophical writing that it often operates on a synchronic model. As a consequence historical considerations are not given precedence over philosophical ones in comparing and contrasting the views of authors from different historical periods. The tradition is treated as a chorus of several voices operating on different scales but nevertheless in synchrony.

This absence of historical referentiality in Indian philosophical literature has been attributed in part to the preeminence of ritual and the ritual hermeneutics developed in the Mīmāṃsā tradition, which interpreted the Vedic rituals as a form of participation in a constant renewal of past events that effectively telescoped the historical dimension.[23] That even the Buddhists, who rejected the authority of the Vedas and disengaged from participation in Vedic rituals, nonetheless retained this ahistorical model clearly suggests that this pervasive absence of historical referentiality in classical India is a vexing problem. An interesting outcome of this lack of historical referentiality is the fact that India developed some of most complex doxographies to be found in any classical philosophical tradition.[24] This preference for doxographical argumentation also explains why South Asian philosophers do not usually claim to be innovators, even when they do improve upon or substantively alter doctrinal positions held as authoritative within a particular school.

As is often the case, a commentator that flourished at a much later period would analyze a text for a completely different audience than the one intended

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view that our knowledge claims align closely with practical interests. For a discussion of fallibilism and its implications for normative epistemology, see Stanley (2005).

22. On rare occasions a commentary may become a self-standing work. In our case, one example is Dharmakīrti's *Pramāṇavārttika* ("Commentary on the Sources of Knowledge," hereinafter the *Commentary*), which although conceived as a commentary on Dignāga's *Collection*, eventually came to replace it and became the root text for nearly all subsequent treatments of topics that Dignāga had dealt with in his original work.

23. See Pollock (1989: 607).

24. Typically, authors are classified either according to scholastic affiliation, that is, as a Naiyāyika ("reasoner"), Mīmāṃsaka ("investigator of the profound [meaning]"), Pramāṇika ("epistemologist"), or doctrinally, as a "propounder of duality" (*dvaitavādin*), a "propounder of emptiness" (*śūnyavādin*), "propounder of aspectual cognition" (*sākāravādin*), etc. Cf. Houben (2002: 473).

by its original author. That means we, as modern readers of these texts, tread on fewer certainties (*niścaya*) than might otherwise be assumed. In order to compensate for this lack of certainty, it becomes necessary to reconstruct philosophical arguments and to find adequate interpretive strategies, while at the same time keeping in mind that one writes for a modern audience that often shares different concerns than those envisaged by traditional authors. I am well aware that such "reconstructions" play at most a heuristic function, facilitating our understanding of distant philosophical ideas, so that we may reclaim them for ongoing philosophical debates. To claim otherwise would be akin to recreating the past to suit modern sensibilities. In effect, arguing against the alleged scientificity of text-based scholarship in the study of Buddhist philosophy, some interpreters have claimed that a translation that presents the original text accurately is in fact impossible. Thus, Luis Gómez: "With de Man, I believe translation is impossible, and with Foucault I regard interpretation as the insertion into a text of a new and foreign voice—hence, a 'displacement of authority'."[25] Insofar as philosophical progress is made by building on previous arguments, such "displacement of authority" is in effect unavoidable.

Whether one strives for a base line account of the thought of a seminal Buddhist author[26] or for the sort of philosophical reconstruction that brings such an author in conversation with modern philosophers, interpreting the "original" intent remains an issue of continuing concern. It is a given that both Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla are syncretic thinkers and, as such, adopt different perspectives depending on the types of arguments and audience they engage with. Consensus on how best to understand the philosophical position of a historical author in this case is perhaps a nonissue given that interpreters participate in what Paul Ricoeur calls a "conflict of interpretation" (on account of the fact that, as the medium of symbolic expression, linguistic and theoretical constructs are susceptible to continuing exegesis).[27]

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25. Gómez (1995: 208). Gómez reacts against what he calls the "fundamentalism" of text-based Buddhist scholarship: "When I say that translation is impossible and interpretation is fraudulent, I refer to certain ideas of translation and interpretation. That is to say, a translation that represents the original accurately is impossible. The only perfect translation that can be is the original itself. . . . A 'critical apparatus' that gives us the true and original social and psychological reality of the text's meaning is absurd, by virtue of the gulf to which the 'apparatus' bears witness, and by virtue of the fact that no one can represent accurately and thoroughly the social and psychological reality of anything—not even his or her own reality" (1995: 208–209).

26. Such is the case, for instance, with Dunne's (2004) presentation of Dharmakīrti's philosophy as articulated in his principal work and the earliest available commentaries, chiefly those of Devendrabuddhi and Śākyabuddhi.

27. Even though Ricoeur (1969) admits that language, as the field of symbolic expression, and the interpretive strategies deployed in order to explicate it, are mutually constituted, this does not mean that interpretations are not relative to the

Furthermore, even in epistemology arguments and theories are part of a discourse of interpretation and reinterpretation, one that often poses as many new problems as it solves. By engaging the works of Buddhist and Brahmanical philosophers not merely as historical materials (presumably, documenting a mode of thinking that belongs exclusively to a particular philosophical culture and epoch) but rather as different modes of philosophical inquiry, we are challenged to revisit and reconceive philosophical problems of enduring value. In his landmark study of Dharmakīrti's philosophy as reflected in Tibetan sources—*Recognizing Reality*[28]—Georges Dreyfus offers an elaborate treatment of the problem of universals, a major topic of Dharmakīrti's discourse, and a classic example of an enduring theme of scholastic philosophy.[29] In concluding his analysis, Dreyfus admits that neither antirealist nor realist solutions are in the end satisfactory. The issue is not whether universals are real, but whether they are effective as philosophical categories, and whether or not Dharmakīrti's mode of discourse is sufficiently ambiguous to accommodate opposing interpretations:

The problem of universals has been raised again and again and alternative solutions proposed. None of them, however, has been considered completely satisfactory, although each can be defended. . . . The repetition of this scenario across cultures suggests that problems such as these are of a peculiar nature. The problem of universals

theoretical structures of various hermeneutical protocols (e.g., semantic, ontological, exegetical, historical, etc.).

28. The title of this book is in many respects a "homage" to the sort of critical engagement with the Buddhist epistemological tradition that Dreyfus advances in his book.

29. Treating Buddhist philosophy as a form of scholasticism, similar to medieval European scholastics, has received a mixed response in Buddhist studies circles. Cabezón, who adopts the term and pleads in favor of its usage in Buddhist studies, suggests that there is nothing to fear in scholasticism per se or its ideological implications. Seeking to emancipate it from its medieval European origins, Cabezón proposes that we adopt a more benign view of scholasticism and regard it as an indispensable method for historical analysis: "Any project that seeks to examine an issue such as language in a scholastic philosophical tradition must, it seems to me, describe the views of that particular school, discuss the sources upon which such a system is based, but more important it must explain why particular sources were relied upon and why those sources were read in the way they were" (Cabezón 1994: 10). In a different take on the relevance of scholasticism as a methodological category in Buddhist studies (which is also a critical review of Cabezón's proposal) van der Kuijp does not view scholasticism as an idiosyncratic feature of medieval European attempts to appropriate Aristotle. Van der Kuijp suggests, on the contrary, that scholasticism could also be viewed as characteristic of traditional monastic Buddhism. For example, the study and transmission of the works of Dharmakīrti follow a specific scholastic pattern: "unlike the temporary proscription of some of Aristotle's works from the Parisian academic scene in the early thirteenth century, Dharmakīrti's writings enjoyed fairly continuous study, first in India until at least the fifteenth century and, with a minimum of friction, in translation in the Tibetan cultural area from the eleventh century to the present" (van der Kuijp 1998: 563).

is not empirical. Appealing to some hitherto unknown facts or a new theory is of little help. Defensible solutions are proposed but philosophers keep arguing, for the conflict is not just about finding a solution but also about what would a solution look like if it were found.[30]

This notion that the problem of universals is not empirical reflects, however, a tacit commitment to a version of the classical theory of concepts. Recently, Dreyfus has revised his earlier view by advancing a naturalized account of concept formation that is "causally constrained."[31] On this new interpretation of Dharmakīrti's understanding of the cognitive function of conception, language is anchored in concrete and pragmatic (rather than merely epistemic) situations. Citing the pre-reflective cognitive aspect of color perception, Dreyfus sees categorization practices as subservient to the "dictates of our perceptual apparatus,"[32] concluding that our judgments of similarity (and/or difference) result simply from the fact that we are "naturally" disposed, perhaps for evolutionary purposes, to apprehend similarity in the empirical domain. Dreyfus's conclusion, that "for Dharmakīrti this is all there is to say,"[33] seems to suggest that he now favors an empirical approach to the problem of universals, even as he interprets the function of conceptual cognition in the Buddhist epistemological context in antirealist terms. As I will argue later on, a naturalized approach to epistemology has the added advantage of opening the discussion about universals also to input from the sciences of cognition, which provide not only new ways of mapping our cognitive architecture but also new insights about the nature, acquisition, and function of concepts. Does that make the problem of universals an empirical one? Perhaps. But it does not make a naturalized account of universals less susceptible to interpretation.

Let me briefly note that the so-called *classical theory of concepts*, which has dominated philosophical and grammatical accounts of concepts in both India and the West from ancient times to the middle of the twentieth century, has been supplanted by several new theories.[34] The classical theory (also known

30. Dreyfus (1997: 447–448).
31. Dreyfus (2011: 210). Note that, against strong conceptualist readings of Dharmakīrti's nominalism as advanced, for instance, by Siderits (1999), Dreyfus now proposes a low-level "embodied" account of concept acquisition and use based on our direct experience of difference and similarity.
32. Dreyfus (2011: 220).
33. Dreyfus (2011: 220).
34. I follow the comprehensive survey of theories of concepts in Laurence and Margolis (1999). Chakrabarti and Siderits (2011: 15–24) also offer a very useful review of Western theories of concepts, highlighting both similarities and differences mainly with Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika, and Buddhist theories, though they do not seem to address the issue of whether Indian theories fall under the classical view of concepts.

as the *definition view*) takes concepts (primarily those that correspond to the lexical items of natural languages) to be structured mental representations that possess within themselves the necessary and sufficient conditions for their application, and are ultimately reducible to features that express sensory or perceptual properties. But this theory (and its variants) cannot adequately answer a series of crucial problems: (i) there are few, if any, cases of well-defined concepts; (ii) naturalized epistemological arguments against analyticity challenge the notion that concepts have definitions; (iii) one can be erroneously in the possession of a concept, so its use cannot be traced back to its definition; (iv) both concepts and categorizations admit of a certain degree of indeterminacy, further undermining the view that determinate answers can always be obtained from set definitions; and (v) concepts and categorizations admit of a certain degree of typicality, which means that not all instances of categorizing something under a certain concept are on par.[35]

While most new theories of concepts[36] set out to answer the challenges posed by these problems, few depart from the notion that, as fundamental constructs in any theory of mind, concepts must necessarily be understood in terms of their structure. The *prototype theory of concepts*, for instance, states that concepts or words are not governed by definitions but by open-ended sets of properties, which are context specific and can occur in different arrangements. To use an example, the word "tree" (*vṛkṣa*), which encodes the notion of a flowering plant with leaves and branches, can, on this theory, be extended to accommodate nonflowering plants (mosses), plants with needles instead of leaves (conifers), and plants with leaves but not branches (ferns). This theory avoids some of the difficulties posed by the classical account of concepts: specifically the problem of analyticity, which stipulates that concepts must encode the necessary conditions for their application.

The only theory of concepts that regards their representational or semantic content as having no structure is *conceptual atomism*. Conceived primarily as a reaction to descriptivist theories of meaning (as advanced, among others, by Saul Kripke and Hilary Putnam), conceptual atomist takes the view

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35. This last problem is first documented in Rosch and Mervis (1975). When presented with the task of categorizing entities such as fruit types or bird species under the category of how "good they are" or how "typical they are," Rosch and Mervis discovered that subjects have no problem ranking the members of various categories (apples, pears, pomegranates, etc.) in ways that cannot be accounted for by appealing to the definitional view of concepts, since the features picked by these concepts ("fruit" or "bird") were not shared by the individual members in the group. For example, Laurence and Margolis (1999: 25) cite a study in which robins were identified as highly "typical" birds because they have most of the features commonly identified with birds, whereas chickens and vultures, judged to have fewer bird features, were classed as less typical.

36. Laurence and Margolis identify at least four new theories of concepts: (1) the prototypical; (2) theory-theory; (3) neoclassical; and (4) conceptual atomism.

that a concept's content is determined not by its structure or definition but by its "standing in an appropriate causal relation to things in the world."[37] As its most influential proponent, Jerry Fodor explain conceptual atomism in terms of information processing models that account for the reliable correlations that can be established between two types of events in a causal chain. On this account, the mental content expressed by a given concept, say that of "cow," conveys information about the thing it designates when it reliably correlates with its establishing causal factors. Thus the concept of "cow" is a negative one in that it does not correlate with universal concepts such as "animal" or defining characteristics such as "dewlap." Rather, it performs its indexical or semantic function insofar as there is a causal relation such that some individual cow comes under the concept "cow" just in case it instantiates the property of being a cow. Fodor explains instances of erroneous uses of the concept (as when, for example, "cow" is used for a misidentified horse) as being asymmetrically dependent on the lawful relations that establish concepts as the designators of certain properties.[38] The aspect of this theory that interests us as having potential relevance for interpreting the semantic theory of exclusion (*apoha*) is that relations among concepts are not constitutive of their content. The advantage of this theory is that it takes structure and reference to be merely associated with the concept rather than being constitutive of its nature.

As these new theories suggest, a naturalized account of concepts offers new ways of examining the traditional issues of definition, categorization, and reference, such that questions about the effectiveness of universals as categories of thought are not divorced from questions about their acquisition and pragmatic function. The naturalized approach itself is not, however, unproblematic: although the sciences of cognition make claims of objectivity, empirical results acquire the status of knowledge only insofar as they are interpreted in light of a given hypothesis, and, as we noted above, theories are in general underdetermined by the empirical data. Indeed, some critics of the explanatory gap between physical processes and consciousness have proposed that we think of this gap in phenomenological rather than ontological terms. This proposal locates the gap in the different ways in which the discourse of the physical and the discourse of the mental actually proceed. The gap, it is claimed, is between two sets of concepts rather than between mind and world or, in Buddhist terms, between the domain of conceptual construction and a direct (perceptual) openness to what is given.[39] But this

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37. Laurence and Margolis (1999: 60). As we will see below (chapter 4), this seems to be precisely the kind of account of linguistic reference that Dharmakīrti's relation of causal generation (*tadutpatti*) implies.

38. Fodor (1987) calls his theory the *asymmetric dependence theory*.

39. Stoljar (2005) calls this the "phenomenal concept strategy."

view, which reflects a commitment to reductive physicalism (that is, to the notion that even phenomenal concepts can be explained in physical terms), runs counter to the conceivability thesis: it is plausible that phenomenal concepts are either explainable in physical terms (in which case, they do not capture our epistemic situation) or they are not (in which case, they do have the capacity to describe the character of phenomenal knowledge).[40]

2.3 INTERPRETATION AND DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Let's return for now to the question of interpreting Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla's texts, specifically to their defense of a specific account of perceptual knowledge. Is this account empirically and/or phenomenologically anchored? Or is it a purely speculative account? And does it bear any resemblance to similar accounts in Western philosophy? As these questions indirectly suggest, the problem of interpretation is also one of methodology. Nevertheless, one must remain open to the possibility that the results of interpretation might not always fit within existing theoretical frameworks. One option, perhaps the most common, is to continue redefining (and refining) the less controversial aspects of doctrine and seek new texts and contexts in an ever-growing web of interstitial discourse.[41] An alternative option, the one adopted in this book, is to blur the boundary between theory and method and pursue a model of analysis that allows modern philosophical perspective to play a role in the analysis and transmission of Indian and Buddhist philosophy. The result is an open attitude toward exegesis that does not sacrifice the tension between textual analysis and representation, between traditional perspectives and modern philosophical interpretations.[42]

This method of mediating between the discourses of Buddhist and Western philosophers is sufficiently flexible to allow both analytic epistemology and phenomenology to play a role in the process of analysis and interpretation. The relevance of theoretical and methodological discussions in both analytic

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40. See Chalmers (2006) for a detailed defense of the view that accounts of phenomenal concepts derive either from an epistemic relation of acquaintance or from demonstrative or indexical accounts of reference.

41. The "interstice" is one of the preferred organic metaphors of the French poststructuralist tradition. Blanchot, Foucault, Derrida, and Deleuze, among others, make ample use of it. The interstice offers an epistemological model of fluidity, indeterminacy, and decentered intertextuality. It can also signify spaces (or discontinuities) between the text and the apparatus of references and cross-references that are the necessary ingredient of any work of scholastic philosophy.

42. Faure defines his epistemological critique of Chan not as a comparative enterprise "on the basis of superficial terminological resemblances" but rather as an effort "to intertwine and cross-graft these various types of discourse, in the hope that they might enhance each other" (1993: 11).

epistemology and phenomenology to specialized fields such as Buddhist philosophy cannot be overestimated. Ever since Theodore Stcherbatsky's influential neo-Kantian reading of Dharmakīrti, following his translation and analysis of Dharmottara's *Nyāyabinduṭīkā* ("Commentary on a Drop of Reasoning"), philosophers and Buddhologists have pondered the implications of such highly interpretive approaches to the history of Buddhist thought.[43] Some have taken issue with the fact that Stcherbatsky interpreted Dignāga's semantic theory of exclusion through Dharmakīrti's lenses and viewed all intellectual movements in India as "systematic reactions to trends within immediately preceding intellectual movements."[44] Others have faulted Stcherbatsky for his Kantian inspired a priori framework in his interpretation of Dharmakīrti's reason of essential nature (*svabhāvahetu*).[45] But even critics admit that Stcherbatsky viewed the Buddhist epistemologists as active participants in the pan-Indian disputes concerning various epistemological concepts and theories, and as such worthy of a thorough philosophical approach.[46]

Stcherbatsky appears to have favored a thematic approach to the study of Buddhist epistemological literature, as well as a willingness to engage the Buddhist philosophers not only as a Buddhologist and historian of ideas but also as a Western philosopher well acquainted with the dominant philosophical currents of his time. Stcherbatsky also realized that literal translations of Buddhist technical terms faced the risk of philosophical opacity and insisted on the importance of finding points of convergence between Western and Buddhist philosophical theories: "When the subject of discourse consists in a deduction of one proposition from two or several others...we have no doubt that it is a syllogism. But when we are faced by the necessity of deciding whether a characteristic act of our understanding is to be rendered as judgment, we must know what a judgment is."[47] Despite Stcherbatsky's insistence on the importance of being philosophically sensitive as a translator and interpreter of Buddhist philosophical texts, philology continues to command the study of Buddhist philosophy. The philological approach relies on the principle that texts can (be made to) speak for themselves. A widely shared assumption is that taking a neutral stand is not only desirable but also possible, and that the text-critical methodology can effectively retrieve the *mens auctoris*.

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43. Cf. Steinkellner (1973: 120–124), van der Kuijp (1979: 6–8), Herzberger (1986: 219–223), and Hayes (1988: 11–16).

44. See Hayes (1988: 12).

45. See Steinkellner (1973).

46. Indeed, Stcherbatsky's extensive appendices to his *Buddhist Logic* include translations and discussions of relevant parts of Vācaspati Miśra's *Nyāyavārttikatātparyaṭīkā* and *Nyāyakaṇikā*, as well as a detailed overview of the dispute surrounding the Buddhist theory of perception, from Vasubandhu and Dignāga to Dharmakīrti, Vinītadeva, Jinendrabuddhi, and Dharmottara.

47. Stcherbatsky (1930: I, 226–227).

For instance, in his discussion of the merits of the philological method in comparison with other approaches, Tom Tillemans notes that most philologists labor under "the conviction that by understanding in real depth the Buddhist languages, and the history, institutions, context and preoccupations of an author and his milieu, progress can be made toward understanding that author's thought."[48] Although most philologists work primarily with texts and historical records, the shift from textual exegesis to making claims about understanding the actual thought of an author comes rather naturally to a philologist. The successful deployment of the philological method by scholars such as Ernst Steinkellner in understanding "the mind" of a historical figure like Dharmakīrti is often invoked to remind philosophers just how much progress can be make in understanding historical authors by delving into their texts. But showcasing the merits of the philological approach need not imply that scholars should forgo philosophical analysis altogether. Indeed, as some of the most valuable contributions to the study of Buddhist philosophy have shown, one can draw extensively from Western philosophical sources and remain faithful to a historical author without couching one's interpretations, as Tillemans puts it, "in the same problematic or obscure language that is the author's."[49] At the same time, Tillemans indicates that he is only going part of the way in his philosophical appraisal of Buddhist thought: "using philosophical tools is not, however, an attempt at appropriating Dharmakīrti so that he might somehow become relevant to a contemporary Buddhist philosophy."[50] Contemporary philosophy, it is claimed, has moved beyond the concerns of seventh-century philosophers such as Dharmakīrti, whose thought has little relevance beyond what some would call Buddhist "theology" or "soteriology."

This claim that Dharmakīrti's philosophical system, with its reductionism, its strict mind–body dualism, and its highly fragmented ontology of partless atoms, should prove less appealing to modern philosophers is, however, unwarranted. There are many aspects of Dharmakīrti's philosophy, and indeed of the Buddhist epistemological enterprise as a whole, that are dated; there is also, however, much that has both enduring appeal and modern relevance. Dharmakīrti's causal account of knowledge, the practice of bracketing ontological commitments while examining mental content, and a systematic and rigorous first-person perspective are good examples of these.[51]

In bridging Western and Buddhist philosophical traditions significant progress has been made in the nearly three quarters of a century since

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48. Tillemans (1995: 269).
49. Tillemans (1999: 4).
50. Tillemans (1999: 5).
51. If Dan Arnold's recent attempt to interpret Dignāga's and Dharmakīrti's notion that reflexive awareness (*svasaṃvedana*) is ultimately the only warranted cognition as some sort of commitment to a version of Kantian metaphysical idealism is any indication, the Buddhist epistemological tradition continues to invite novel philosophical reassessment. See especially Arnold (2005a, 2009).

Stcherbatsky's pioneering work.[52] Although today we are in a better position to assess the scope of the Buddhist epistemological tradition, agreement about how best to translate its arguments using the vocabulary and methods of Western philosophy is yet to be reached. Given the radical diversification of logic and epistemology in the past century, the nonspecific use of Buddhist "logic" or "epistemology" can be problematic. An unavoidable consequence of using "logic" or "epistemology" in a transcultural sense is that it can easily obscure the fact that the Indian theory of inference (*anumāna*), although neither a type of Aristotelian syllogistic logic nor something similar to modern predicate calculus, nevertheless has its internal order and coherence. As Mohanty pointed out some time ago, what we have here is a "striking combination of cognitive psychology" with the "needs of a dialogical-disputational context and the strictly logical demand of validating a belief."[53] Moreover, the recognition that conventional syllogistic logic covers just first-order logic and that there are a wide variety of "logics" (modal, temporal, counterfactual, many-valued, probabilistic, non-monotonic, fuzzy, etc.), makes it possible to assume that the Indian theory of inference can either be assimilated to one (or several) of these new logics or accommodated as a new type of logic.

Of course, the proposal that we altogether abandon the concept of syllogism as an accurate description of the "inference for the other" (*parārthānumāna*) in Buddhist "logic" as employed by early generations of scholars is not new. Reacting against the superficial similarity and trivial uses of the Aristotelian syllogism, Tillemans claims that such uses "blur the philosophically interesting points where Buddhist logic is *sui generis*."[54] This argument rests on the notion that in the inference for the other the thesis statement (*pakṣavacana*) is not derived, as in the syllogism, from two premises, in this case from the necessary presence of the similar (*sapakṣa*) and dissimilar (*vipakṣa*) examples. Rather, the inference for the other is concerned with the validity of the reason on which the inference is based and with the relationship of pervasion (*vyāpti*) that obtains between the corresponding terms. Nonetheless, some critics have argued against this narrow definition of the syllogism as a system of formal logic and also against the notion that the absence of probandum (*sādhyanirdeśa*) is a specific characteristic of the argument for the other.[55]

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52. Among the most recent contributions to this growing and increasingly sophisticated rapprochement of Buddhist and Western debates in metaphysics, epistemology, and philosophy of language are Tillemans (1999), Garfield (2002), Siderits (2003), D'Amato, Garfield, and Tillemans (2009), and Siderits, Tillemans, and Chakrabarti (2011).

53. Mohanty (1992b: 105).

54. Tillemans (1991: 81) See also Tillemans (1984) for an earlier presentation of the same critique.

55. See especially van Bijlert (1989: 88–90). For a detailed discussion of various positions modern scholars have adopted on the nature of *parārthānumāna* and the

I want to claim that, in light of our consideration so far of the argumentative strategies of the Buddhist epistemologists, the so-called Buddhist "logic" or "epistemology" may be best described as a system of pragmatic or context-dependent reasoning. Unlike the deductive systems of semantic reasoning, which are context-free, pragmatic reasoning is largely inductive and encompasses the types of logic (non-monotonic and paraconsistent) that represent reasoning from premises that are context specific. On this model of pragmatic reasoning, while a sentence φ may be a pragmatic consequence of a set of premises ϕ it need not be a pragmatic consequence of a larger set of premises $\varphi \cup \Psi$.[56] Indeed, following Dignāga's inductive model of reasoning, we reason by first observing the occurrence of certain properties in an object or class of objects and the nonoccurrence of those same properties when the object is absent. We establish that in order for a linguistic utterance to acquire the status of logical proof, the reason (*hetu*) must be present in the thesis (that is, in the position that is stated), be also present in similar positions, and be absent from all dissimilar positions. This is Dignāga's well-known model of the triple inferential mark (*trairūpya*), which operates by deriving hypothetical statements from past observations of the inductive domain. Take the example of empirical objects: experience reveals that all objects which come into existence due to causes and conditions are impermanent, for whatever is produced must necessarily cease. Conversely, a permanent object cannot be produced. Thus, a proposition of the type "Sound is impermanent, because it is a product," is true so long as we do not encounter an example of permanent (or indestructible) sounds. Were we to come across such a counterexample, the proposition will be falsified. Shoryu Katsura has defined this type of logic as "hypothetical reasoning based on induction."[57] To the extent that this system of reasoning, which is based on the observation and nonobservation of evidence, is open to revision so as to accommodate cases where there is a violation of the linguistic convention, we may describe it as a system of pragmatic reasoning. Dharmakīrti's attempt to ground reasoning on a stronger principle than mere observation and nonobservation of the evidence would lead him to postulate that there must be some "essential connection" (*svabhāvapratibandha*) between the thesis and what is to be demonstrated in order to provide a stronger basis for reasoning. But even though this essential connection is meant to overcome the challenge posed by reliance on hypothetical reasoning, it is not pragmatically neutral, since Dharmakīrti's ultimate criterion for truth is the causal efficacy of cognitions.

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function of the thesis (*pakṣa*) in the reasoning model of the triple inferential mark (*trairūpya*), see Oetke (1994: 27ff.).

56. For an account of pragmatic reasoning, see Bell (2001: 46ff.).
57. Katsura (2007: 76).

It should be possible, therefore, to make the Buddhist epistemological program of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti, particularly as adopted by Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla, relevant to contemporary philosophical debates if we adopt a broader view of the scope of "Buddhist philosophy." It has been claimed that any attempt to define "Buddhist philosophy"—as encapsulated in the works of such classical philosophers as Nāgārjuna, Vasubandhu, Dharmakīrti, and Śāntarakṣita—in contemporary terms is inevitably bound to reflect the intellectual proclivities of the interpreters themselves.[58] Typical examples, for instance, include viewing Nāgārjuna as a proto Wittgenstein or Dharmakīrti as an earlier version of Husserl. While such highly interpretive approaches to Buddhist thought may prove problematic, no approach, insofar as it operates within the horizon of contemporary philosophical concerns, can escape this unavoidable predicament. As Matthew Kapstein puts it, rightly in my view:

Our problem is not to discover, *per impossibile*, how to think Buddhism while eliminating all reference to Western ways of thought; it is, rather, to determine an approach, given our field of reflection, whereby our encounter with Buddhist traditions may open a clearing in which those traditions begin in some measure to disclose themselves, not just ourselves.[59]

Such an approach can indeed be devised if one engages Buddhist thinkers like Dharmakīrti or Śāntarakṣita *philosophically*, that is, in the same way one reads Descartes or Kant as informers of contemporary philosophical debates. This engagement, however, is not free of interpretive concerns, specifically when the intention of the originator of a specific idea is not obvious. Although Buddhist hermeneutical theories distinguish between the intentional (*ābhiprāyika*) and implied (*neyārtha*) uses of the meaning of a given text, they do not dissociate between the *meaning* (or the objective sense) of a text in its own historical context (conceived as a true reflection of the author's intention) and its *significance*, that is, whatever an interpreter makes of the respective text in his or her own context.[60] As Gadamer has convincingly demonstrated, it is impossible to ascertain the intention of the author while also claiming that meaning is intrinsic to the text itself. Rather, interpretation works by effecting a "fusion of horizons":

58. See Tuck (1990). Reflecting on the attempt to make Buddhist philosophers relevant to contemporary debates in Western philosophy, by looking for theoretical and conceptual affinities, Conze (1967: 226) claimed that such efforts were not only "objectively unsound" but in fact had not been successful in interesting "Western philosophers in the philosophies of the East." Conze's skepticism about the efficacy of the comparative method has had a significant impact in certain quarters of the Buddhist studies field, where a lack of philosophical expertise in the translation and interpretation of Buddhist philosophical literature continues to be easily tolerated.

59. Kapstein (2001: 3).

60. As proposed by, among others, Hirsch (1976, 1984).

Every age has to understand a transmitted text in its own way, for the text is part of the whole of the tradition in which the age takes an objective interest and in which it seeks to understand itself. The real meaning of a text, as it speaks to the interpreter, does not depend on the contingencies of the author and whom he originally wrote for. It certainly is not identical with them, for it is always partly determined also by the historical situation of the interpreter and hence by the totality of the objective course of history.[61]

Understanding the meaning of a text and, by implication, inferring the intention of the author, is therefore inextricably linked to the interpreter's own intentionality and self-understanding.[62] If the meaning of a text is historically contingent, it cannot form an object of methodological analysis, for the analysis in turn depends upon whatever significance an interpreter attributes to the original text in the first place. Indeed, the distinction between *meaning* and *significance* cannot be upheld if one is committed to the notion that uncovering the "original" meaning of a text is part of an interpreter's self-understanding.

   If Gadamer is right (and we have good reasons to believe that he is), then an "objectivist" and "historicist" paradigm of interpretation, such as one often finds in text-critical studies of Buddhist epistemology, is problematic. While few scholars dispute the effectiveness of text-critical approaches in recovering the works of classical Buddhist authors, weighing in the philosophical import of their ideas demands a certain degree of philosophical expertise.[63] Of course, the question of how to approach a philosopher from a former age and/or a different culture does not invite a straightforward answer. In a study of the overall scope of Dignāga's philosophy, Richard Hayes draws a similar distinction between philosophically and historically oriented approaches to Indian and Buddhist philosophy, highlighting both

   61. Gadamer (1975: 261–262).
   62. As Gadamer states, for example, in his discussion of the hermeneutical implications of biblical exegesis, "the texts of the New Testament are themselves already interpretations of the Christian message; they do not wish to call attention to themselves, but rather to be mediators of this message" (1976: 58). By analogy, we could assert that the texts of the Buddhist epistemological tradition do not wish to draw attention to them as textual materials fit for exegesis but rather to mediate our understanding of various logical and epistemological arguments in relation to a specific topic.
   63. Referring to the authority that dictionaries and other lexical tools have enjoyed in the translation and interpretation of Buddhist philosophical works, Ruegg (1995: 146–147) points out that the philological method, quite apart from whatever one may claim in its name, is not immune to "lexical incoherence." One example of such incoherence that is pertinent to our study is the translation of *saṃjñā/sañña* and of *pratyakṣa* by the same English word "perception." As Ruegg notes, "[I]f in a well thought-out and coherent terminology *saṃjñā* is to be translated by 'perception', *pratyakṣa* could not be, and conversely" (1995: 146).

differences and points of convergences. Although he regards both philosophical and historical approaches as legitimate, Hayes seems to suggest that the historical model is preferable owing to its more intimate connection with the task at hand: elucidating the thought of the traditional author.[64] In the majority of cases, however, a historical approach to classical Indian and Buddhist philosophy is likely to uphold the distinction between the meaning of a text and its significance and to regard contemporary philosophical concerns as being at variance with those of premodern philosophical traditions.

Neither approach, however, falls entirely outside the scope of comparative philosophy. But the practice of comparative philosophy, where typically the methods, theories, and conceptual resources of one tradition are used for solving problems in the other, all too often ends up with asymmetric and incongruous conceptual schemes. The typical response to the conundrums of comparative philosophy has been to eschew it altogether in favor of new forms of scholasticism almost exclusively concerned with text-critical issues and intradoctrinal disputes specific to any of the major Asian philosophical traditions. A more interesting response has come recently from Mark Siderits in the form of a new style of philosophical inquiry he calls "fusion philosophy."[65] Simply put, fusion philosophy is the counterpoising of distinct philosophical traditions for the purpose of solving problems that are central to philosophy.

Whether or nor fusion philosophy holds the promise of making philosophy a truly global and cross-cultural enterprise, the possibilities that it opens up, not just for solving problems but also methodological dilemmas that are central to philosophy, are numerous. Such possibilities are already apparent in works that adopt a constructivist and cosmopolitan[66] rather than purely exegetical approach to the study of premodern philosophical traditions. Various obstacles, however, still stand in the way of such an enterprise given that, as Garfield reminds us, "we operate in the shadow of colonialism and its intellectual wing, orientalism."[67] It is not the legitimacy, let alone the absence of works dedicated to translating and commenting on Asian texts for Euro-American audiences, or vice versa, that is at stake, but the deeply problematic nature of these intercultural philosophical ventures. The problematic nature

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64. Hayes (1988: 2ff.).
65. Siderits (2003: 1).
66. Flanagan (2011: 2), who introduces the term, defines the "cosmopolitan" style of doing philosophy as the "exercise of reading and living and speaking across different traditions as open, non-committal, energized by an ironic or skeptical attitude about all the forms of life being expressed, embodied, and discussed, including one's own." The cosmopolitan philosopher is thus both a listener and a speaker for the philosophical traditions (and currents) he or she engages with, and lives "at the intersection of multiple spaces of meaning."
67. Garfield (2002: 230).

concerns the types of inquiries that must accompany such enterprises, without which we cannot begin to talk about a single truly intercultural tradition. Garfield's list includes inquiries into:

> the historical conditions under which it takes place; into the respective characters of each of the textual traditions brought thereby into contact; into the relations they bear to one another; into the nature and the very possibility of the linguistic and cultural translation such interchange involves; and finally into the very possibility of reading a text into a tradition that is not one's own.[68]

While I agree that such inquiries are a valuable and perhaps indispensable component of any cross-cultural philosophical enterprise, they can become overly restrictive when it comes to pursuing questions that are central to philosophy. If the Buddhist epistemological program is to be made continuous with contemporary philosophical concerns, then, we may legitimately ask whether it is to be treated as a system of formal logic, as a type of cognitivism, or, as I claimed above, a system of context-dependent reasoning.

   Furthermore, a text-critical approach to Indian philosophical literature has no equivalent in the Indian doxographical traditions, where authors are principally concerned with philosophical problems per se (rather than with influences and historical considerations), in much the same way modern philosophers address certain problems as not necessarily contingent upon the historical and sociocultural contexts in which they are formulated.[69] The method of discourse analysis does create, however, a different sort of tension between, on the one hand, the claim that interpretation is never final—because each act of interpretation displaces auctorial intent and makes a new claim of authority—and on the other, the insistence that certain philosophical problems (if not necessarily the solutions to these problems) have a perennial status. A topical or tenet-based approach[70] to addressing—in the hope

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68. Garfield (2002: 231).

69. Eltschinger (2008: 532) makes a similar point when he argues that Buddhist philosophical texts, specifically those that reflect the concerns of Mādhyamikas and the Buddhist epistemologists (and employ their discursive strategies), insofar as they focus on issues of logic and argumentation, are not easily (if at all) reducible to the historical circumstances of their production (or localizable in terms of socioreligious concerns).

70. Tenet systems, which are philosophical summaries (*siddhānta* lit. "demonstration") of the viewpoints of different schools and subdivisions of those schools, developed into an extensive literary genre in the Buddhist monastic institutions, first in India and subsequently in Tibet. Playing in some regards the same role as technical manuals do today, they centered on core Buddhist doctrines and aimed to give a clear exposition of each philosophical viewpoint that could then be criticized or defended in philosophical debate. Among the most significant contributions made by Tibetan authors to the tenet literature, two works deserve mention:

of solving—philosophical problems, no matter what their original source, is precisely what Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla adopt in the *Compendium* and its *Commentary*.

The methodology of discourse analysis aims to interrogate the Buddhist philosophical texts, to force them outside of their traditional context and to ask of them questions that could not otherwise be asked. In this process of decontextualization one cannot claim a neutral standpoint. Rather, each operation of decontextualization creates in turn its own context, perhaps that of a contemporary Buddhist philosophy or simply of a philosophical discourse in which the arguments and argumentative strategies of Buddhist philosophers are at least worthy (if not yet equal) contributors. But in order to succeed, this methodology of discourse analysis must show tolerance for discontinuity, difference, and ambiguity. I want to claim that classical thinkers like Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla, whose interests were sufficiently broad, may be found to entertain, without losing consistency altogether, views that vary on several counts, as suggested in the hyphenated doxographical designation of their philosophical positions as Svātantrika-Mādhyamika or Yogācāra-Mādhyamika. This situation is not specific to Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla alone, but can also be found in Dharmakīrti (and many of his commentators), on whose views they rely to a great extent. In Dharmakīrti's case, a good example of such discontinuity is found in his attitude toward the ontological status of external objects, which is at best ambiguous and at worst contradictory.[71] Thus, when Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla attempt to clarify their own position regarding the reality of external objects in the *Bāhyāthaparīkṣā* ("Examination of External Objects"), they seem to advocate a natural progression from a Sautrāntika realist position to an idealist (or perhaps phenomenalist) Yogācāra position, although this latter position creates certain tensions in their attempt to demonstrate, elsewhere in the *Compendium* and its *Commentary*, that it is real objects or particulars that are apprehended in perception.[72]

Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa's (1648–1721) *Great Exposition of Tenets* (*Grub mtha' chen mo*) and Lcang-skya-rol-pa'i-rdo-rje's (1717–1786) *Presentation of Tenets* (*Grub pa'i mtha'i rnam par bzhag pa*).

71. See, for example, PV III, 194–224 and 333–341, where there is no clear indication as to whether Dharmakīrti adopts the view of those who hold objects of perception to be internal (*antarjñeyavādin*) or of those who consider them to be external (*bāhyārthavādin*).

72. In this chapter of the TS/P, the authors appear to advocate the notion that external objects (*bāhyārtha*) are illusory constructs on the grounds that "grossness" (*sthulatva*) does not really exist and that what is termed grossness is merely a conceptual construct resulting from the perception of aggregated entities. This chapter contains a detailed defense of atomism and of the possibility of ascertaining the veridical nature of cognition without appealing to the principle of correspondence (*sadṛśya*). See especially TS 1972–1978 and TSP *loc. cit*.

2.4 LOGIC AND THE SUBJECTIVITY OF THOUGHT

Acknowledging the possibility that Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla adopt different viewpoints depending on whether they discuss the nature of external objects or the character of internal states of cognitive awareness is therefore crucial to explaining these apparent inconsistencies. Any attempt to abstract the complex and often contradictory contents of experience (i.e., to make sense of what is going on) sooner of later must confront the limits of thought. The assumption that Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla (like any other Buddhist philosopher before or after them) cannot hold contradictory viewpoints because of a well-established prohibition against "contradiction" (*virodha*) in Indian philosophy is thus unwarranted.[73] Such prohibition does not necessarily imply that Indian philosophers cannot be found to contradict themselves. Even when Buddhist philosophers invoke the schema of two truths to explain how a proposition can be affirmed from one perspective and denied from another, contradictions can persist. Logical reasoning, after all, is also a matter of conjecture.[74] Indeed, any philosophical view may be deemed false or even incoherent if it is not supported by an empirical account (and/or rationally justified in light of some plausible hypothesis) or lacks an orderly continuity with previously stated positions.

As the eloquent and sometimes playful critique of a skeptic such as Jayarāśi (fl. c. 800) shows, epistemologists (whether Buddhist or Brahmanical) get themselves into all sorts of contradictory situations by trying to uphold various logical positions. One of Jayarāśi's strategies, as Eli Franco has clearly shown, "is to take a Buddhist argument, originally formulated against the Naiyāyikas or the Mīmāṃsakas, and to apply it against the Buddhists themselves."[75] One such example, for instance, is Jayarāśi's use of a Buddhist argument against the idea that the universal resides entirely in the particular or in part of it, to refute the Buddhist's own claim about the production of cognition (which, the Buddhist asserts, has no parts).[76]

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73. In a discussion of the significance of Nāgārjuna's tetralemma (*catuṣkoṭi*), Tillemans (1992: 195) makes a broad assumption that is somewhat relevant to my discussion: "The prohibition against 'contradiction' (*virodha*) is accepted by all schools of Indian philosophy, including the Buddhist schools. It would thus be surprising if a treatise by a great Buddhist philosopher were to go against such a key principle."

74. Incidentally, *tarka*, the technical term for "logic" or the "science of logic," also means "conjecture" or "supposition" from √*tark*, "to suppose," "suspect," or "conjecture."

75. Franco (1994: 475).

76. Franco summarizes Jayarāśi's position as follows "if a cognition is produced completely by its object, it cannot be produced by other causal factors; if it is partly produced by the object, it would have parts and lose its unity. . . . If the causal efficiency of an object is exhausted in producing its cognition, it cannot produce the object in the next moment. Nor can it produce the object with only part of itself, because it has no parts" (1994: 477).

It is partly on the basis of a perceived discrepancy between logic and phenomenal experience that Mādhyamikas like Candrakīrti launch a critique of the Buddhist epistemological program.[77] This book preempts such unwarranted criticism by adopting a different theoretical perspective, one that does not aim to solve inconsistencies when and where found, but rather asks whether such inconsistencies reflect an attempt to reveal the inherently contradictory nature of the subjective domain when confronted with the objective order of logical truths. In Western philosophy, this resistance to reconciling such inconsistencies would eventually lead, through the genesis of Husserl's work—from *Experience and Judgment* to *Ideas I*—to the birth of phenomenology. To the young Husserl it was obvious that even though true and false judgments "contain no subjective words such as 'evidence'...they derive their sense and legitimacy from evidence."[78] Husserl would eventually reject the empiricism of his teacher Franz Brentano and come to embrace the idealism of his mathematician friend Georg Cantor.[79] Even so, in *Logic and Transcendence* Husserl recognizes that logic turns both toward ideal objects and toward the subjective modes of reasoning that ground our thought. When a proposition is judged true "in the evidence of a fulfilling adequation,"[80] it becomes true *once and for all* so that its contradictory opposite is false. The problem, however, as Husserl himself was forced to admit, is that "once and for all" is a subjective locution that belongs to the subjective experience of temporality. Logical reasoning takes place in a horizon of experience that is inherently subjective and temporal.

Now, unlike the deductive system of Aristotelian syllogistic logic (or modern predicate calculus), Indian logic is grounded in a concern with specifying the criteria of empirical knowledge. Claims, including claims that are rooted in relations of logical entailment, do not just present us with facts about the respective subject matter. How might we distinguish, then, between the way logical subjects and logical predicates function, and the subjective aspects of thought? On the standard answer, we might follow the model offered by Frege or Strawson, and distinguish between meaning and reference. All we have to do then is cast a given sentence in a canonical form of *S* is *p*. Following this formal casting, the meaning of the predicate term becomes a concept which has the capacity to sort through the various objects of experience. But this process of formalization takes place within a horizon of reflection where predicates (*exist*, *believe*) are turned into concepts, which eventually

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77. See PrasP II, 58–77, and translation in May (1959). For detailed treatments of the main issues that Candrakīrti addresses in his critique of Dignāga's definition of perception, see Siderits (1981), Sprung (1979), and Arnold (2005a).

78. Husserl (1969: 194).

79. See Hill (2009) for a presentation of the crises and theoretical conflicts that mark the genesis of Husserl's phenomenology.

80. Husserl (1969: 194).

acquire the status of ideal entities (rendered in standard notations such as *b* (*X*, *p*) or "*x* believes that *p*"). With a system of ideal entities and operators in place, it becomes possible to engage in different types of knowledge enterprises (inferring general statements from particular premises) in different domains (philosophy, sociology, biology), where various forms of entailment control how concepts operate and claims to knowledge are advanced. What this sort of analysis masks is the fact that such claims to knowledge are not primitive. Rather, they derive from implicitly pragmatic contexts where our dialogical exchanges might have the form *b* (*X*, *p*) or *S* is *p*, but in reality are concerned not with representing facts or establishing logical truths, but with acquiring, perfecting, and transmitting practical knowledge and skills.[81]

As Bimal Krishna Matilal noted, while dispelling some of the misunderstandings of early interpreters of Indian logic, no system of logic operates outside the domain of pragmatic or evidence-based reasoning:

[I]n spite of the neatness, elegance, and precision of a deductive system like that of Aristotle, it is undeniable that a good deal of our actual reasonings may not follow the deductive pattern. The reasoning of an experimental scientist, a historian or an ordinary man trying to ascertain the truth of a particular matter, is a reasoning from what may be called "evidence" to what we can call "conclusion." Even most of our philosophical arguments, where we try to depend more or less upon empirical evidence, belong to this type of inference.[82]

A system of logical reasoning necessarily presupposes that the validity of an argument is not contingent on the truth of its premises but simply on the argument's logical structure. Matilal simply makes the case that whether we are dealing with deductive or inductive arguments we invariably find ourselves having to turn away from the actual structure of the argument and appeal to experience or to a coherent system of beliefs when trying to establish the truth of a proposition. But experience is no less contradictory. Indeed, Dharmakīrti was among the first to consider factual contradictions, which he traced to cognitions apprehending a change in the causal series affecting both perceiver and object perceived, as when a sensation of hot is replaced by a sensation of cold in the same locus.[83] Arguably most contradictions, not just

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81. Discussing Husserl's conception of world as horizon, Welton (2003: 226ff.) notes that in expressing our practical involvement with situations and things our language is descriptive rather than representational. Our pragmatic uses of language and reasoning in these situations (building a house, fixing a car) function as tools that enable us to work with others, rather than "mirrors that reflect the world."

82. Matilal (1985: 89). Indeed, for Dharmakīrti, evidence of an empirical (*read* perceptual) kind is actually necessary for the justification of certain inferential procedures. Cf. McClintock (2010: 71).

83. See NB III, 75–76. For a very informative discussion of the concept of contradiction in Indian philosophy, see Bandyopadhyay (1988).

those of the factual type, have their basis in experience, for our descriptions of reality are ultimately anchored in the life-world.

Alternatively, following Dreyfus's proposal for regarding Dharmakīrti's pragmatic approach toward ontological questions as operating on an "ascending" or "sliding" scale of analysis, we may also assume that different descriptions of reality, though mutually contradictory, are meant to be hierarchically structured.[84] Dharmakīrti's (and, following him, Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla's) adoption of seemingly contradictory viewpoints is not, as Dreyfus notes, "an example of confusion or a deviant logic, for Dharmakīrti sees these propositions as logically contradictory, but he also sees them as complementary or at least pragmatically compatible."[85] We may view this operational pragmatism, therefore, as an example of the common Buddhist trope of expedient means (*upāyakauśalya*) since these different descriptions of reality are not logically equivalent but rather hierarchical.[86]

2.5 COGNITION AS ENACTIVE TRANSFORMATION

It is a common feature of Indian philosophical systems to argue for preserving the tradition—or more specifically the words of the tradition (*śruti* or *āgama*)—as conveying a vision of reality that is not apparent, but requires constant actualization through a dynamic praxis of interpretation. This praxis, which involves listening to a set of axiomatic statements (*śrutamayī*), reflecting upon their intended meaning (*cintāmayī*), and actualizing their significance in an enactive manner (*bhāvanāmayī*), is essentially an epistemic practice.[87] Its foundation is to be found in various types

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84. See Dreyfus (1997: 83, 99, 104), where he refers to Dharmakīrti's adoption of different perspectives regarding the nature of reality as an "ascending scale of analysis." Dreyfus identifies in total four positions from which Dharmakīrti appears to operate, in which "three assume the existence of external objects while the fourth one rejects this presupposition." The fourth position is that of Yogācāra, which rejects the reality of external objects. See also Dunne (2004: 65–79), who calls the fourth and highest level of analysis at which Dharmakīrti presumably operates "epistemic idealism," a position which differs from that of "external realism"—the ontological standpoint from which Dharmakīrti defends most of his philosophical positions. Kellner (2010) has recently called into question the "sliding" scale of analysis model on account of the complexity of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti's account of the epistemic function of self-awareness. See also chapter 7, below.

85. Dreyfus (1997: 99).

86. See also Dunne (2004: 83ff.) and McClintock (2010: 86–87). The notion of different levels of analysis is in fact an integral part of Buddhist hermeneutics, finding full exposition in texts such as the *Saṃdhinirmocana-sūtra* ("Examination of the Profound Meaning"), whose composition answers the demand for accommodating seemingly conflicting statements found in the *Nikāyas* ("discourses").

87. See, for example, Vasubandhu's discussion of this progression toward the contemplative realization of wisdom in AKBh *ad* AK VI, 5ab: *nāmālambanā kila śrutamayī*

of meditative attainments that are discussed at length in the vast corpus of Abhidharma literature, specifically in the main texts of the Sautrāntika and Yogācāra Abhidharma schools. In its advocacy of disciplined observation and mental training, the Yogācāra school in particular provides the pragmatic and phenomenological tools that Buddhist epistemologists require in order to map out the cognitive domain.[88] It is this praxis, which leads Buddhist epistemologists to claim that the Buddha, whose views they propound, is a true embodiment of the sources of knowledge (*pramāṇabhūta*).[89]

But the Buddhist epistemologist's appeal to the Buddha as an enlightened knower to justify his or her claim that perception and inference are trustworthy sources of knowledge—because the Buddha declares them to be so—involves a certain circularity. Steinkellner explains this circularity rather well:

(1) Our ordinary valid cognitions (*pramāṇa*) establish the authority of the Buddha's teaching (*buddha-vacana*); (2) the validity of our cognitions (*prāmāṇya*) is understood as their reliability (*avisaṃvaditva*); (3) reliability depends on successful activity (*puruṣārtha-siddhi*); (4) all human goals are determined by the "ultimate goal" (*nirvāṇa*); the "ultimate goal" is indicated in the Buddha's teaching (*buddha-vacana*).[90]

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prajña/nāmārthālambanā cintāmayī/kadācidvyañjanenārthamākarṣati kadācid arthena vyañjanam/arthālambana eva bhāvanāmayī.

88. Critics of the revealing capacity of meditative practices (for instance, Franco 2009), just like critics of the efficacy of phenomenological reduction (*epoché*), often claim that the insights thus gained at best give us another theoretical perspective rather than pre-theoretical access to experience itself. For a synthetic overview of the evidence and arguments in support of the efficacy of meditative practices to regulate attentional and affective processes, see Lutz, Dunne, and Davidson (2007). For a phenomenological account of the pragmatics of experience, see Depraz, Varela, and Vermersch (2003). I discuss this issue below (chapters 6 and 7).

89. The idea of embodying the sources of cognition is a translation of the Sanskrit concept of *pramāṇabhūta*. The first attested use of "*pramāṇabhūta*" is found in Patañjali's *Mahābhāṣya* on Pāṇini I.1.1, *vārttika* 7: *pramāṇabhūta ācāryo darbhapavitrapāṇiḥ śucāv avakāśe prāṅmukha upaviśya mahatā prayatnena sūtrāṇi pranayati sma*. In his translation of this *vārttika*, Filliozat (1975: 376) adopts the meaning "le Maître qui possède l'autorité" on the basis of the common commentarial definition of *pramāṇabhūta* as *pramāṇyam prāptaḥ*. For the occurrence and meaning of this key concept in grammatical and philosophical texts, see the detailed treatment in Ruegg (1994b). For a discussion of Dharmakīrti's gloss on this term in his *Commentary* (PV II, 7a: *tadvat pramāṇaṃ bhagavān*) and the interpretation of "*tadvat*," see Krasser (2001). A general discussion of the use of epithets and arguments in the Buddhist epistemological tradition is found in Jackson (1988). Further analyses of *pramāṇabhūta* are found in and Vetter (1964), van Bijlert (1989), Steinkellner (1983, 1994), Tillemans (1993), Franco (1997), and van der Kuijp (1999), and Dunne (2004).

90. Steinkellner (2003: 328).

This circularity refers to the fact that perception and inference are taken to be instrumentally capable of demonstrating that the Buddha is a trustworthy teacher. Because of his trustworthiness, his teachings are valid and provide further proof that only perception and inference qualify as sources of knowledge (again, to come full circle, because the Buddha has established that to be the case).[91] Does appeal to the authority of the Buddha as a true embodiment of the sources of knowledge undermine the Buddhist epistemological stance? Not necessarily. Indeed, as Franco notes in his detailed treatment of Dharmakīrti's appeal to the Buddha as the embodiment of reliable cognition, "Dharmakīrti argues here . . . that the Buddha used perception and inference, not that they are valid because of him."[92] Precisely what it means to "embody" the sources of reliable cognition remains an open question, regardless of whether Dharmakīrti's argument is found to be circular or not. It is not enough to say that the Buddha is a true embodiment of reliable cognition: one must also specify how. Dharmakīrti's answer to the "how" invokes three elements: the Buddha embodies the sources of knowledge by means of his compassion and knowledge, and by means of the actions that bear testimony to his knowledge and compassion.[93] But neither listing the Buddha's attributes nor the fact that he reasons and acts on the basis of compassion and knowledge justify the veracity of *our* cognitions (and the sources thereof).

This appeal to authority and particularly to the Buddha's extraordinary cognitive abilities raises another important question: do Buddhists regard epistemological reasoning as in some sense having a soteriological dimension? After all, the Buddha is no ordinary thinker, since he presumably reasons (at all times) from the perspective of an enlightened being. Then, should Dignāga and Dharmakīrti's epistemological method, much like Nāgārjuna's dialectics, be seen as having a special kind of critical or even therapeutic function: perspicacious reasoning in the first case and the relinquishing of all views in the latter?

It has been argued that the tradition of reflection inaugurated by Dignāga and Dharmakīrti does not have as its sole concern the establishment of stringent rules of debate.[94] For instance, in addressing Dharmakīrti's specific use of inference of the cause from the effect (*karyānumāna*), Steinkellner has argued on more than one occasion that it is reasonable to assume that

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91. Various formulations of this argument, first proposed by Nagatomi (1959) and Vetter (1964), are also found in Franco (1997, 1999) and Dunne (2004).

92. Franco (1999: 65).

93. Cf. PV II, 282, and its translation and discussion in Franco (1997: 21).

94. Arguments in favor of viewing Buddhist epistemology as having a soteriological function are found in Steinkellner (1982), van Bijlert (1989), Hayes (1984), and Jackson (1993). These authors usually criticize earlier treatments by Stcherbatsky (1930: 37) and Conze (1962: 264), who regarded *hetuvidyā* as a secular activity.

Dharmakīrti's motive is ultimately soteriological in that "he wants to investigate whether a kind of 'progressive, proleptic causality,' necessarily to be acknowledged as a real soteriological fact in the conception of progress toward Buddhahood" has a rational basis.[95] Progress toward Buddhahood depends on the possibility of effecting some radical change in the mental continuum, the ultimate result of which is a transformation of the basis (*āśrayaḥ parivartate*), that is, effectively a transformation of the constitutive elements of existence and/or experience. But is this cognitive and affective transformation possible, as it is claimed in the contemplative and ethical literature? And if it is possible, can a descriptive account of its underlying causal mechanism, one that is sufficiently compelling, be offered? However we may answer these questions, it is worth noting that Dharmakīrti's position toward the natural efficacy (*bhāvaśakti*) of certain forms of meditation indicates that he was indeed familiar with the literature on meditation and ritual practice.[96] It is most likely under the influence of such literature that he developed his proof for taking yogic perception (*yogipratyakṣa*) as a source of reliable cognition. Dharmakīrti's acknowledgment of the possibility and indeed efficacy of supernormal vision (*atīndriyadarśana*) and supernormal knowledge (*atīndriyajñāna*) may indeed have had a definitive impact on his epistemological theories.[97]

For Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla perception, specifically a disciplined mode of perceptual attentiveness, becomes essentially the enactive awareness that allows for the contents of experience to be transformatively understood (and realized). Such proof of the efficacy of yogic perception is advanced in defense of the notion that one can attain a vision of selflessness through cultivation (*abhyāsa*), though this so-called proof is merely pointed at rather than rationally justified.[98] As the author of an important text on medita-

95. Steinkellner (1999: 35).

96. Eltschinger (2001: 8) has adduced significant evidence that Dharmakīrti refers to certain Tantric texts such as the *Kādambarī* and *Megha Sūtra* verbatim and thus appears to endorse the efficacy of certain meditative practices.

97. Dunne (2006) takes the view that Dharmakīrti's epistemological account of perception discounts any appeal to the notion that special forms of cognitive awareness such as yogic perception represent a full-blown encounter with the real. Taking the exact opposite view, Eltschinger (2009) has recently marshaled copious evidence (both textual and analytical) for taking Dharmakīrti's account of yogic perception as epistemically warranted. I discuss the issue of yogic perception below (see chapters 6 and 8).

98. See TSP *ad* TS 1360, and discussion in McClintock (2011: 200). As McClintock notes, in what appears to be the final proof of the Buddha's omniscience (see TS 2048–2049), Śāntarakṣita describes omniscience by pointing to the specific character of his enlightened state, rather than to a particular vision, since omniscience is said to be nonperceptual in character. Omniscience is a state of effortless (*anābhoga*) knowledge of all things (*sarvajña*), though it is debatable whether Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla understand omniscience to lack any phenomenal character.

tive cultivation, Kamalaśīla makes clear that even a state of non-ordinary or supramundane cognition, though nonconceptual in character, is not to be understood as lacking any mentation (*manasikāra*). Such a state of cognitive awareness is typically a form of insight (*prajñayā*) by means of which one gains direct knowledge of various phenomena.[99] What Kamalaśīla argues against is the mistaken view that meditative cultivation essentially amounts to casting aside all mental activity and achieving a state of unconscious concentration (*asaṃjñīsamāpatti*).[100] Like Śāntarakṣita, Kamalaśīla clearly emphasizes that meditative practice should not be regarded as antithetical to philosophical inquiry and debate, but rather as an extension of it.

It has also been argued that with Dignāga and Dharmakīrti there is an important shift in Buddhist attitudes toward the role of philosophical debate: it is the soundness of arguments rather than winning a dispute that becomes the defining characteristic of Buddhist epistemology.[101] Philosophical debates in classical India (as elsewhere) were elaborate staged confrontations that often impacted a scholar's reputation and academic career. That tradition of debate, which continues to this day in the Tibetan monastic communities, is understood to have a threefold aim: (1) help the opponent overcome his wrong views, rather than embarrass him; (2) posit the right view by clearing whatever uncertainties arise due to mistaken beliefs; and (3) resolve whatever inconsistencies and criticism might arise from one's position. It is this final need to remove misconceptions and philosophical biases often stemming from commonsense assumptions that could provide a justification for treating epistemic inquiry as an essential preparatory step for further training involving contemplative practices.[102]

It remains, however, a matter of conjecture just how far we can advance the claim that the arguments of the Buddhist epistemologists are entirely circumscribed by a soteriological *telos*—that of developing an enlightened perspective on the nature of things (and not simply that of winning debates and vanquishing opponents). As will be argued in chapter 5 despite the fact that ethical and religious concerns are not altogether absent, Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla clearly state that the nature of their project is primarily epis-

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99. *Bhāvanākrama* I, 212.

100. Note that Kamalaśīla composed the *Bhāvanākrama* ("Stages of Meditation"), essentially a philosophical manifesto for the gradualist path of cultivation, in response to the Great Debate of Lhasa (*c.* 792) between the Chinese and Korean Ho-shangs Chan teachers and the highly scholastic Indian tradition that he and Śāntarakṣita represent. See Demiéville (1947, 1952), Gómez (1987), McRae (1987), and Ruegg (1989a) for an account of this debate.

101. Dharmakīrti makes this argument in VN XXII, 15–20, where he differentiates between the debate strategies of those seeking victory (*vijigīṣuvāda*) and those who adhere to the methods of reasoning (*nyāyānusaraṇam*) simply in order to help others reach the correct view. Cf. Jackson (1987: 5).

102. Cf. Perdue (1992: 8–13)

temological. As an encyclopedic work composed with the explicit purpose of teaching the fundamental principles of Buddhist philosophy, the *Compendium* and its *Commentary* are both complex and far-ranging in scope. It is essentially a syncretic work addressing a large and diverse philosophical audience. It is conceivable, therefore, that in adopting this syncretic approach, Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla embrace all the pragmatic aspects of their discursive enterprise, including the need to persuade their audience that the sort of philosophical progress in understanding they argue for reflects an implicit hierarchy of knowledge.

This notion that philosophical arguments bear an undisclosed rhetorical residue is not an alien concept for our Buddhist authors. Indeed, Indian philosophers, even when they rejected the suggestive power of words (*dhvani*) (as did the Naiyāyikas and the Mīmāṃsakas),[103] were aware that words had both literal and intended meanings, and that telling the difference between the two depended on more than stating the intention. Words are suggestive in ways that transcend individual usage. Theories of rhetoric like that developed by Ānandavardhana (fl. c. 860 C.E.) in his *Dhvanyāloka* ("Illumination of the Suggestive Power of Words") argue that in order to deliver an effective discourse and capture the audience, the suggestive meaning (*vyañjanā*) must dominate the literal sense (*vācyārtha*).[104] In his elaborate commentary on Ānandavardhana's theory of suggestion, Abhinavagupta (c. 975–1025) makes a compelling case for treating even philosophical arguments as rhetorical constructs. When philosophical disputation is carried on in a public setting, arguments have pragmatic effects: they inspire in an audience certain emotive states (*bhāva*) and can engender sympathetic feelings toward the cause or object of those emotive states, that is, the meaning, purpose, or aesthetic form of the discourse. In an argument aimed primarily at the Mīmāṃsakas, who regard the apprehension of aesthetic sentiments (*rasa*) as nothing more than ascertaining another person's mental state (*paracittavṛttimātra*), Abhinavagupta defends the view, common among the Ālaṃkārikas ("aestheticians"), that the power of suggestivity (*vyañjakatva*) goes well beyond inferential comprehension:

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103. The dispute between the philosophers and the Ālaṃkārikas centers on the various attempts on the part of philosophers to explain or assimilate suggestion (*dhvani*) into inference (*anumāna*), implication (*arthāpati*), metaphor (*lakṣaṇa*), etc. The reader is directed here to consult Amaladass's (1984) excellent exploration of the philosophical implications of *dhvani*. For a discussion of the parallels between the hermeneutical use of intentional (*ābhiprāyika*) and implied (*neyārtha*) meanings in Buddhist literature, and the use of suggestive and resonant meanings by the Ālaṃkārikas, see Ruegg (1989b).

104. See DĀ, k.13: *yatrārthaḥ śabdo vā tam artham upasarjanīkṛtasvārthai/vyaṅktaḥ kāvyaviśesaḥ sa dhvanir iti sūribhiḥ kathitaḥ //* "Poetry as a distinctive literary form which the wise call *dhvani*, is that [type of discourse] in which the [literal] sense or the word, subordinates its own meaning, [and] suggest that [nonliteral, for example, poetic] meaning."

The Mīmāṃsaka, who are aware of our own manner of cognizing, should be asked this question: Is it the case that becoming aware of the aesthetic sentiment is merely the apprehension of another mental state? [We urge you:] Do not commit the error [of thinking so]. What aesthetic sentiment can one experience by inferring mental states that reflect worldly matters? The experience of aesthetic sentiment is a supramundane delight, truly an enjoyment of the emotive factors (*vibhāvas*), etc., which are the soul of poetry. One should not reduce it to memory, inference and the like. Rather, the aesthete, whose mind has reached perfection in the ability to make inferences of the cause from the effect, cognizes the emotive factors, etc., not in a detached manner, but by becoming sensitive to their delight or, in other words, by developing sympathy towards them. This [sympathetic attitude] is the source that nurtures the full enjoyment of the aesthetic sentiment which arises from it. The nature of this cognitive state is pure enjoyment of the emotive factors, which arise from one's own identification with them. [This is] an experience that reaches out to a different state than [what can be achieved through] recollection and inference. This enjoyment has not arisen as a result of having used some source of knowledge, so that it might qualify as memory.[105]

For Abhinavagupta it is this sympathetic attitude that creates in an aesthetically sensitive audience the disposition to act in an involved manner. His claim is that what one apprehends in a discourse is not merely due to the types of arguments and argumentative strategies employed but also to the power of suggestion to induce certain dispositions and emotional responses that go beyond mere verbal comprehension. I think a similar suggestive purposefulness is also apparent (though not explicitly stated) in the manner in which Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla present their arguments in the *Compendium* and its *Commentary*.[106] To give but one example of such a discur-

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105. DĀ, 1.18: *idaṃ tāvadayaṃ pratītisvarūpajñe mīmāṃsakaḥ: kimtra paracittavṛttimātre pratipattir eva rasapratipattir abhimatā bhavataḥ? na caivaṃ bhramtavyaṃ; evam hi lokagatacittevṛttyanumānamātram iti kā rasatā? yas tva laukikacamatkārātmā rasāsvādaḥ kāvyagatavibhāvādicarvaṇaprāṇe nāsau smaraṇānumānādisābhyena khilīkārapātrīkartavyaḥ/kiṃ tu laukikena kāryakāraṇānumānādinā saṃskṛtahṛdaye vibhāvādikaṃ pratipadyamāna eva na tāṭasthyena pratipadyate api tu hṛdayasaṃ vādādāparaparyāya sahṛdayatvāparavaśikṛtatayā pūrṇībhaviṣyad rasāsvādāṅkurī bhāvenānumānasmaraṇādisaraṇimanāruh yaiva tanmayī bhavanocitacarvaṇaprāṇatayā/na cāsau carvaṇā pramāṇāntarato jātā pūrvaṃ, yenedānīṃ smṛtiḥ syāt/.* Translation, slightly adjusted for consistency, per Ingalls, Masson, and Patwardhan (1990: 162).

106. McClintock (2010) offers a detailed reconstruction of the "rhetoric of reason" in the TS/P. Her main focus is the concept of omniscience (*sarvajñā*) as presented in the final chapter. McClintock makes extensive use of Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's (1969: 45) notion that "the goal of argumentation…is to create or increase the adherence of minds to the theses presented for their assent." A rhetoric based on the idea that argumentation operates as principal motivator for undertaking specific actions nicely complements the traditional theories of suggestion (*vyañjanā, dhvani*) (as the main motivator for undertaking specific actions) developed by the Indian

sive strategy, Kamalaśīla declares that in Śāntarakṣita's presentation of the Buddha's teachings, an intelligent reader will find a goal that is worth pursuing and the means for accomplishing it:

Considering the stated purpose [of this work], an intelligent reader would actively engage in studying the teachings [contained therein], having heard [the author] assert their intended purpose, specially [having taken into consideration] that there is nothing that could invalidate such an assertion. Only by means of an impending cause does a person resort to any action. Regarding the question under consideration, apart from our assertion [viz., statement of purpose] no other impending cause can be found; [indeed] no action would take place prior to stating the significance of this work.[107]

This argument—which states that for any intelligent person the Buddha's teachings would prove not only reasonable but sufficiently appealing to compel such a person to actively study them—is but one of the (rhetorical) strategies that Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla employ. Whereas such a strategy, which aims to give reasonable assertions enough suggestive power to impend action, may prove effective in drawing the attention of a disinterested reader, it is not enough to persuade many of those whose views are debated at great length in the *Compendium* and its *Commentary*. In order to achieve their goal of persuading an educated audience that there is great merit in undertaking the study of Buddhist philosophy, Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla make use of a wide range of arguments, including their appeal to the extraordinary cognitive capacities of the Buddha.

2.6 PHENOMENOLOGICAL EPISTEMOLOGY AND THE PROJECT OF NATURALISM

In approaching the arguments of the Buddhist epistemologists from the methodological standpoint of phenomenological naturalism I will draw freely from current debates in analytic epistemology and phenomenology,[108] particularly in relation to the project of naturalism.

Ālaṃkārikas, with which both Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla would have been acquainted. See, for example, TS 911–913, 1011–1017 and TSP *loc. cit.*, where Śāntarakṣita discusses Bhāmaha's theory of the suggestivity of words and responds to his criticism of *apoha* as found in his *Kāvyālaṃkāra* ("Ornament of Poetry") 6, 16–19.

107.   TSP *ad* TS 1–6: *tadvadihāpi avyāhataprayojanādivākyaśravaṇācchāstreṣu pravarttamānāḥ prekṣāpūrvakāriṇo bhaviṣyanti; upāyenaiva pravṛtteḥ/na hy atrāpi pravṛttā vabhyupāyāntaramasti; śāstrārthasya prākpravṛtteratyantaparokṣatvāt/.*

108.   Henry Pietersma's discussion of the nature and scope of phenomenological epistemology is helpful and relevant here. See Pietersma (2000: 8–11). For a

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The naturalistic turn in contemporary epistemology represents an indirect response to a growing body of scientific data pointing to the fact that ordinary sensory experience is not a trustworthy source of knowledge. More specifically, naturalism represents an attempt to integrate the evidence from psychology (more specifically from cognitive psychology and cognitive neuroscience) in settling questions about how we acquire our beliefs. I have already noted that the tradition of epistemological inquiry within Buddhism, insofar as it addresses questions regarding the foundation of knowledge not only on logical but also on empirical and phenomenological grounds, could be seen as advocating a form of naturalism that links it strongly to psychology, in this case to Abhidharma reductionist accounts of experience. The question now before us is whether extending the Abhidharma analyses of consciousness and cognition to take into account the findings of cognitive science alters in a fundamental way the scope of Buddhist epistemology, and whether phenomenological naturalism offers a viable way of making the Buddhist project continuous with contemporary philosophical concerns.[109]

Insofar as epistemological inquiries in both India and the West are seen as traditionally operating with the presupposition that (at least under certain conditions) perception is a reliable cognition, and opens up to a domain of external objects, they fall under what Husserl calls the "natural attitude." Against this widespread orientation, Husserl proposed that epistemology adopt a transcendental orientation and concern itself not with the objects of perception (or conception) but with the intentional acts themselves. As a constitutive aspect of consciousness, intentionality thus captures the specific *orientation* that marks the character of different states of cognitive awareness. Given their commitment to reflexivity, the Buddhist epistemologists in effect approach experience as a phenomenological epistemologist would, that is, by cultivating a reflective perspective on the act of cognizing itself. This is evident, for instance, in the dual-aspect theory of cognition advanced by the Yogācāra, which is integral to the Buddhist epistemological enterprise. Unlike the Nyāya external realist, the Buddhist epistemologist does not describe cognitive experience from a third-person perspective, that is, in terms of a natural relation between what Armstrong calls the "belief state" and "the situation which makes the belief true."[110] Rather, as we shall see in

comprehensive treatment of phenomenology and the project of naturalism, see Petitot et al. (1999).

109. Garfield (2012) makes a compelling case for why recent advances, for instance, in the phenomenology and cognitive science of attention, perception and memory are much more likely to tells us just how well grounded (empirically rather than metaphysically), if at all, these Abhidharma analyses of consciousness and cognition really are, rather than provide justification for the truths of classical Buddhist metaphysics.

110. Armstrong (1973: 157).

our discussion of Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla's examination of perception, a pre-reflective first-person orientation is always implicit in the Buddhist epistemological account of cognition.

Now, the Abhidharma philosophical project is also reductionist in that it analyses phenomena by reducing them to their constitutive elements, which alone are taken to be ultimately real. In the case of its analysis of persons or selves, the Abhidharma reduces the individual to an impersonal and impermanent stream of psychophysical elements in a causal series.[111] But as we shall see in the next chapter, the Buddhist is not an eliminativist. Although persons may be reduced to their more basic constitutive elements, cognitive awareness itself, insofar as it functions as an explanatory principle, is irreducible. Phenomenological naturalism thus offers a promising way to retain the horizon of experience provided by what Husserl calls the life-world (*Lebenswelt*), which scientific naturalism must presuppose, and at the same time recognize that science too "streams into" this horizon of experience.[112]

Quine's influential analysis of the failure of traditional epistemology to answer the problem of the foundation of our beliefs ended with a proposal that we abandon a priori reasoning and devote ourselves instead simply to studying the psychological processes by which we form beliefs. Quine's proposal did not go unchallenged,[113] and so in response to many of his critics Quine would subsequently reformulate some of his earlier views by allowing epistemology to play its traditional normative functions in addressing questions of value and moral judgment.[114] Nevertheless, he has helped inaugurate a new movement in epistemology where stronger forms of naturalism now exist side by side with other, more moderate forms,[115] which allow for evaluative questions about rationality, justification, and knowledge to be pursued in a traditional manner.[116] But even advocates of this weaker form of naturalism agree that the sciences of cognition have much to contribute in resolving epistemological problems.

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111. Mark Siderits offers what is perhaps the most thorough and philosophically interesting account of Buddhist Reductionism. Drawing from analytic philosophy of mind, Siderits proposes something analogous to the notion that persons nonreductively supervene on the aggregates. See Siderits (2003: 89–96).

112. See Husserl (1970a: 113) and discussion in Thompson (2007a: 83).

113. See Kim (1988), BonJour (1994), Foley (1994), Fumerton (1994), and Almeder (1998) for various critiques of Quine's arguments and attempts to reinstate traditional epistemology as a first science.

114. See, for example, Quine (1981).

115. Kornblith (1997, 1999) and Stich (1990) have argued against rationality as a foundational principle for traditional epistemology.

116. See Goldman (1992a) for a critique of the notion of justified belief in epistemology. The mutual relevance of epistemology and cognitive science is addressed in Goldman (1992b, 1993).

The methodological strategy I pursue here is largely indebted to an emerging consensus that philosophical inquiry as currently understood must take the empirical and cognitive sciences seriously. Epistemology, and Buddhist epistemology in particular, has always had close ties to the philosophy of perception. But the philosophical questions about perception that Buddhist and Western philosophers have traditionally pursued—What is the difference between perception and conception? What is the difference between sensation and perception? What is the difference between perception and action? In what sense is perception a source of knowledge?—are now part of a wider research program that addresses questions that could not have been raised but for advances in the empirical study of cognition.[117] If philosophers both East and West have traditionally regarded perception as an essential but perhaps not central component of any theory of knowledge, the notion that perception may actually play a larger role than hitherto thought is relatively new. The findings of both phenomenology and embodied cognitive science suggest that perception is in effect normative: how an object appears depends in large measure on there being an optimal context for its apprehension.[118] In examining the Buddhist epistemological account of perception, I adopt (and adapt) this important (phenomenological) notion, first articulated by Merleau-Ponty, that in perceiving we naturally tend toward clarity, and toward reaching a maximal grip of apprehensibility. Perception in effect is a type of embodied action, an engagement and entanglement with situations and things. Of course, the Buddhist is not a stranger to the principle of clarity, since she too understands the veridicality and efficacy of cognitions in terms of their degree of clarity, distinctness, or vividness (*spaṣṭa*).

For instance, research on imagery over the past three decades has revealed that our thinking and discursive capacities, including the use of words and abstract concepts, engage a series of imagery processes associating each sensory stimulus with symbolic structures that manifest internally as mental images.[119] The specific nature of these internal images is still a subject of dispute. Proposals range from Kosslyn's early pictorial framework of analysis, in which images are treated as mental depictions of cognitive processes, to descriptive theories based on semantic models, advocated mainly by Pylyshyn.[120] A third proposal, which has received significant attention in recent years, centers on the notion that perception does not operate as a pas-

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117. A similar view with respect to the centrality of perception theories for contemporary philosophy of mind is articulated in Nanay (2010: 3).

118. For a recent philosophical treatment that explores and expands Merleau-Ponty's account of the normativity of perceptual experience, see Kelly (2010). The normative representation of objects and evidence for ecological bias in object recognition are explored at length in Konkle and Oliva (2006).

119. See, for example, Kosslyn (1980, 1994).

120. See, for example, Pylyshyn (1981, 1999).

sive faculty that merely relays information from the sensory domain to the mind, but rather that it plays an active role in constructing its apprehended objects. Known as the perceptual activity theory, this new proposal blurs the boundary between indirect perception and imagination and suggests that imagery should in fact be viewed as a process of perceptual projection.[121] This process of perceptual projection, however, does not involve the experience of internal mental images. Rather, on a phenomenological account of imagination such as we find, for instance, in Husserl's analysis of imagination, in visualizing an object we mentally enact or embody a possible perceptual experience.[122]

This research has significant implications for those seeking to translate and interpret non-Western contributions to philosophy of mind. By providing more adequate empirical knowledge concerning the nature and function of human cognition, the sciences of the mind open up new possibilities for understanding the various factors that inform, condition, and constrain our reasons, motivations, and experiences. While any attempt to do justice to the complex ramifications of modern research on perception and imagery is far beyond the scope of this book, where appropriate I shall seek to explore the implication that such research might have for our understanding of the Buddhist epistemological perspective on the interplay between perception and conception. Indeed, to the extent that Buddhist epistemology is anchored in the reductionist accounts of Abhidharma traditions, it already understands cognition in terms of a complex nexus of psychophysical causes and conditions. For the Buddhist, the cognitive process cannot be explained outside this nexus of apparent and less apparent (in the case of memories and impressions resulting from past actions) causal and conditioning factors. In adopting the approach of phenomenological naturalism, I want to emphasize the pragmatic character of epistemic inquiry in the Buddhist tradition and, at the same time, suggest that ongoing debates in the interdisciplinary field of cognitive science concerning the mind–body problem, the cognitive functions of perception, concept formation, and the nature of illusions, are not irrelevant to the translator and interpreter of Buddhist philosophical texts.

Take for instance the mind–body problem, generally associated with the Cartesian legacy of postulating a radical chasm between the physical and the mental domains. The mind–body problem, then, becomes the problem of how a nonphysical thing can interact with or otherwise receive input from the physical domain. Reactions to this problem in contemporary philosophy of mind and cognitive science range from the utterly dismissive (there is no mind–body

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121. Among its main proponents are Ellis (1995), Ramachandran and Hirstein (1997), Noë (2004), and Thompson (2007a).
122. See Husserl (2006). For a phenomenological critique of the mental imagery debate, see Thompson (2007a).

problem, because what we call "mind" is just a folk-psychological notion for a wide range of cognitive states that can be understood in terms of underlying neuro-physiological processes)[123] to the downright skeptical (it can never be resolved, a position also known as mysterianism).[124] For eliminativists, who adopt a reductive physicalist position, mind and cognition are merely emergent properties of complex neural assemblies in the brain.[125] Harder to classify, and considered by their proponents as lying outside the divide between dualism and physicalism, are supervenient theories, which claim that mind supervenes over the physical domain but is not reducible to it.[126] Sharing some common positions with the supervenient theories, dual-aspect theories of mind argue that while experience requires a complex neural architecture for its realization it must nonetheless be treated as a fundamental non-supervenient property of the natural world.[127] Finally, there are the less common, but well articulated, reflexive models of consciousness, which postulate that mind and matter are part of the continuum of existence, co-originate and are codependent in their manifestations—a complex position with several variants (sometimes associated with certain forms of panpsychism).[128]

Now, the Buddhist epistemologist's answer to the mind–body problem is framed both by discussions about the basis or support of cognition (that is, by questions which ask what causes the arising of cognition given her metaphysical commitment to the momentary nature of all phenomena) as well as by a commitment to reflexivity. Awareness is thus constitutive of a constant and continuous stream of discrete cognitive events (including, but not limited to, various conditioning and dispositional factors). For the Buddhist epistemologist, then, the mind–body problem is not the problem of how cognition can arise from, or otherwise relate to, the causal order of the

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123. A view advocated by, among others, Hardcastle (1995), Flanagan (1992), Churchland (1986), and Churchland (2002).

124. For a detailed working out of this position, see McGinn (1991).

125. A now classical eliminativist position on the mind is found in Dennett (1991).

126. The supervenience thesis can be summed up as follows: if y is supervenient on x, then for any x-type phenomenon there must be a y-type phenomenon. In the language of emergence, mental characteristics are dependent, or supervene on physical characteristics in that the mental cannot undergo an alteration in some respect that is not reflected in an alteration of the physical. As Kim notes, the supervenience thesis is to be understood as a conjunction of two claims: "*the covariance claim*, that there is a certain specified pattern of property covariation between the mental and the physical, and the *dependence claim*, that the mental depends on the physical" (Kim 1993: 165, emphasis in original). For an early treatment of supervenience in philosophy of mind, see Horgan (1982, 1984).

127. Such a theory is advanced by Chalmers (1996).

128. For a well-articulated reflexive theory of mind, see Velmans (2000). The Husserlian phenomenological tradition takes consciousness to be inherently reflexive. For a recent reworking of the reflexive nature of consciousness, see Janzen (2008) and Kriegel (2009). I discuss the reflexivity thesis below (chapter 8).

physical domain but of how this causal order, which also includes irreducible cognitive elements, conditions the arising of specific cognitive events. For instance, while taking up the issue of the relation between cognition and the body Dharmakīrti is clear that cognition cannot arise from something non-cognitive, that is, it cannot arise from the body to the extent that the body is taken to be merely the material substrate of being. Against the challenge of the Cārvāka physicalist, who claims that cognition finds its ultimate source in the physical body, Dharmakīrti invokes the principle of "unwarranted consequences" (*atiprasaṅgāt*):[129] there must be limits to what can cause what. Otherwise, any causal chain could give rise to anything: yogurt could be produced as easily from clay as from milk, a dog could give birth to a pig, and so on. Dharmakīrti seems to be advancing here something like an argument to the best explanation: "let only what is observed as the cause always be considered the cause."[130] That is, like causes like, except when intervening factors bring about a transformation at the basis (as in the caterpillar's metamorphosis into a butterfly). Such appeal to natural causation makes the Buddhist epistemologist who follows Dharmakīrti's account of the relation between cognition and the body a sort of naturalist, even though, in the end, Dharmakīrti takes a non-reductionist stance on consciousness.

Leaving aside exegetical concerns about working out the best possible reconstruction of the Buddhist epistemological project (one that is both historically and textually accurate) critics might still point out that Buddhist epistemology operates on soteriological rather than naturalist grounds: its ultimate aim is demonstrating the validity of the Buddhist path and its corresponding metaphysical doctrines. Of course, on a purely doctrinal reading of the Buddhist epistemological enterprise, soteriological concerns might not resonate well within the generally secular framework of modern scientific and philosophical inquiry. This book, however, advances a different claim: namely, that the Buddhist epistemologist's reliance on a version of empiricism and on certain widely shared canons of positive argumentation, seems to disqualify, at least in principle, any appeal to religious authority.

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129. See PV II, 35–36ab.
130. PV II, 44cd. Cf. Taber (2003: 492). See also Franco (1997: 105ff.).