THE ADAPTATION AND CRITIQUE OF THE ABHIDHARMIC THEORY OF PERCEPTION IN THE YOGĀCĀRA WORKS OF VASUBANDHU AND THEIR COMMENTARIES BY STHIRAMATI



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Short abstract

The purpose of the dissertation is to analyse the Yogācāra adaptation of the Abhidharmic theory of perception in the late works of Vasubandhu and their commentaries by Sthiramati. The framework of my investigation is provided by the *Triṃśikāvijñaptibhāṣya* where, following the Abhidharmic model, Sthiramati claims that all forms of consciousness necessarily possess a cognitive object (*ālambana*), a support (*āśraya*), an object-form or mode of grasping (*ākāra*) and are associated with certain mental concomitants (*caitta*). The core chapters of the thesis explore how these four constituents of the perceptual process are (re)interpreted by Vasubandhu in his Yogācāra works.

Focusing primarily on the difference between the ontological stances of the Abhidharma and the (idealist) Yogācāra works, scholarly narratives tend to emphasise the two traditions' critical relationship. However, putting the ontological perspective aside, we find remarkable continuities between their doctrines that call for more attention. In this thesis, I aim to show that, despite the various criticisms raised by Vasubandhu, the theory of perception he puts forward in his Yogācāra treatises remains continuous with its Abhidharmic past. Vasubandhu does not only preserve many of the Abhidharmic notions, definitions and even classifications concerning ordinary, unenlightened sense perception. But he also adheres to traditional frameworks such as the abovementioned fourfold model of the perceptual process, even if he spells out some of its constituents differently in terms of the entities they refer to.

The dissertation provides a close reading and historically sensitive comparison of primary sources preserved either in their Sanskrit originals or in Tibetan translations, first of all, the *Karmasiddhiprakaraṇa*, the *Pañcaskandhaka*, the *Triṃśikā*, the *Viṃśikā* (together with its *vṛtti*) as well as their commentaries by Sthiramati, the *Pañcaskandhaka-*

vibhāṣā and the *Triṃśikāvijñaptibhāṣya*. As for the Abhidharmic background, I rely on Vasubandhu's magnum opus, the *Abhidharmakośa*(*bhāṣya*) and its commentary by Yaśomitra, the *Sphuṭārthā Abhidharmakośavyākhyā*.

Long abstract

The purpose of the dissertation is to analyse the Yogācāra adaptation of the Abhidharmic theory of perception in the late works of Vasubandhu and their commentaries composed by Sthiramati. The framework I use for investigating Vasubandhu's Yogācāra theory of perception and its relation to the Abhidharmic background is provided by the *Triṃśikā-vijñaptibhāṣya* where, following the model laid out in the *Abhidharmakośa*(*bhāṣya*), Sthiramati claims that all forms of consciousness, including perception, necessarily possess a cognitive object (*ālambana*), a support or basis (*āśraya*), an object-form or mode of grasping (*ākāra*) and are associated with certain mental concomitants (*caitta*). Accordingly, the core chapters of the thesis explore how these four constituents of the perceptual process are (re)interpreted by Vasubandhu in the various strata of his *oeuvre*, especially his Yogācāra works.

Focusing primarily on the difference between the ontological stances of the Abhidharma and the (idealist) Yogācāra works, scholarly narratives tend to emphasise the two traditions' critical relationship. However, putting the ontological perspective aside, we find remarkable continuities between their doctrines that call for more attention. In this thesis, I aim to show that, despite the various criticisms raised by Vasubandhu, the theory of perception he puts forward in his Yogācāra treatises remains continuous with its Abhidharmic past. Indeed, it is essential to bring the Abhidharma and the Yogācāra traditions into dialogue in order to fully understand the Yogācāra position on perception. Vasubandhu does not only preserve many of the Abhidharmic notions, definitions and even classifications concerning ordinary, unenlightened sense perception, but he also adheres to traditional frameworks such as the abovementioned fourfold model of the perceptual process. While I focus on untangling the threads that connect the Yogācāra

views on perception to its Abhidharmic antecedents, I do not ignore the differences between their lines of thought either. Accordingly, I also try to shed light on the critical steps the Yogācāras took in reconsidering the Abhidharmic fourfold model, for instance, by rethinking what entities the individual constituents of the perceptual process really stand for.

The dissertation provides a close reading and historically sensitive comparison of primary sources preserved either in their Sanskrit originals or in Tibetan translations. The Yogācāra works I use are Vasubandhu's *Karmasiddhiprakaraṇa*, *Pañcaskandhaka*, *Triṃśikā*, *Viṃśikā* (together with its *vṛtti*) as well as their commentaries by Sthiramati, the *Pañcaskandhakavibhāṣā* and the *Triṃśikāvijñaptibhāṣya*. As for the Abhidharmic background, I rely on Vasubandhu's magnum opus, the *Abhidharmakośa*(*bhāṣya*) and its commentary by Yaśomitra, the *Sphuṭārthā Abhidharmakośavyākhyā*. I also occasionally use Vinītadeva's commentaries, the *Prakaraṇaviṃśakaṭīkā* (*Rab tu byed pa nyi shu pa'i 'grel bshad*), and the *Triṃśikāṭīkā* (*Sum cu pa'i 'grel bshad*). As the list indicates, I dedicate significant attention to the explanations provided by Vasubandhu's commentators, especially Sthiramati, throughout the dissertation. This is because in his succinct Yogācāra works, Vasubandhu does not propose a fully developed system concerning perception but only fragmented views. However, I believe that from these fragments we can extract a consistent theory by appreciating his Abhidharmic antecedents and the explanations provided by his commentators. The commentaries written by Sthiramati had a particularly important role in bringing together ideas from the various strata of the Yogācāra tradition and complemented Vasubandhu's works with crucial hermeneutical, intertextual and contextual considerations. He not only helps us better understand the content of the root texts, but he was very much aware of how deeply the Yogācāra thought is embedded in the Abhidharmic context. The parallels he draws

between various Yogācāra and Abhidharma ideas, arguments and textual passages highlight the subtleties of the relationship between these traditions. Similarly, Yaśomitra's commentary is an invaluable source for understanding Vasubandhu's Abhidharmic views and the dynamics of ideas outlined in the *Abhidharmakośa*(*bhāṣya*). Accordingly, the dissertation also aims to draw more scholarly attention to the lesser-known figures of Buddhist thought, whose works, nonetheless, essentially define the way we look at the Abhidharma and the Yogācāra traditions today.

The dissertation consists of five chapters and a brief conclusion. The first chapter of the thesis is an introduction, which has various purposes. After outlining the aim of the project, I give a summary of the content of the chapters and present those secondary sources that have served as a foundation or significantly influenced the methodology of my research. This is followed by an overview of the methodology and textual sources of the thesis. As for the methods, I dedicate special attention to clarifying how I approach Vasubandhu's doctrinally diverse corpus and use the commentaries written thereon for interpreting his ideas. Regarding the textual sources, I introduce the primary texts and editions I rely on in the dissertation, the reasons for their selection, and the various scholarly positions on the authenticity of Vasubandhu's and Sthiramati's works. I dedicate the remainder of the introduction to elucidating the conceptual and theoretical frameworks for the subsequent analysis of Vasubandhu's ideas on perception.

The second chapter serves as a more specific introduction to the following chapters. First, I survey those concepts in Vasubandhu's *oeuvre* that most closely reflect our notion of sense perception. Along the way, I introduce two important theoretical frameworks that appear in Vasubandhu's Abhidharma as well as Yogācāra works: the threefold functional analysis of the mind and the fourfold model of perception. Regarding the former, I point out that even though Vasubandhu retains this structure in his Yogācāra works, he revises

its elements in light of the distinctive conceptual framework of the tradition. Expecting a similar strategy in the case of the fourfold model of the perceptual process, in the remaining chapters of the dissertation I investigate in detail each of its four constituents: the *āśraya*, the *ālambana*, the *ākāra* and the *caitta*s.

The third chapter of the thesis examines the notion of *āśraya* in general and those entities in particular that are held to serve as a support of sense perception in the various strata of Vasubandhu's work. The first section of the chapter discusses the concept of *āśraya* in the AK(Bh), where, after looking at the rationale behind considering the sense faculties a 'support' of perception, I analyse some crucial passages that present the general features of the *indriya*s and their causal role in the perceptual process. In the second section, I turn to Vasubandhu's Yogācāra treatises, starting with the PSk's definition of *indriya*s, and overview of their characteristics in accordance with the *dhātu*-classification. I also dedicate special attention to how the *ālayavijñāna* serves as an additional *āśraya* of perception, and Sthiramati's analysis of how it relates to the other conditions of perception (the *manas*, the sense faculties, and the objects). In the last section, I look at Vasubandhu's *vijñaptimātratā* works where the notion of *indriya* is significantly reconsidered, referring not to material entities but mental seeds contained in the *ālayavijñāna*.

In the fourth chapter, I examine the concept of *ālambana*, together with other object-related terms used in Vasubandhu's corpus. Due to their close connection, I discuss the notion of *ākāra*—the form or mode in which the cognitive object is grasped—also in this chapter. After making some preliminary remarks on how these concepts are understood in the AK(Bh)'s context as well as the related secondary literature, in the second and third sections of the chapter I aim to determine whether and how the conceptual distinctions put forward in the AK(Bh) are preserved in Vasubandhu's Yogācāra treatises and Sthiramati's commentaries. In the second section, I dedicate special attention to Vasubandhu's and

Sthiramati's classification of sense objects and the philosophical controversies over their metaphysical nature, especially the real existence of shape. In the third section, I focus on how the Abhidharmic tendencies to reduce the number of real sense objects culminate in Vasubandhu's wholesale denial of the existence of any mind-independent objects of perception, and how Vasubandhu reuses the earlier arguments to prove this point. Finally, turning to Vasubandhu's and Sthiramati's scarce positive claims about the nature of the *ālambana* and *ākāra* of perception, I seek to determine which Western theory of perception is most in line with their views.

In the fifth chapter, the discussion revolves around the last element of the fourfold model of perception, the various mental concomitants (*caitta*) that accompany the sense consciousnesses. Of the fifty-one mental concomitants distinguished by the Yogācāras, I focus on the so-called universal (*sarvatraga*) concomitants, exploring how, according Vasubandhu and Sthiramati, they contribute to the arising of perception, and what they tell us about the essential features of sense perception. After analysing in the first section how the various classifications of *caitta*s and the views on their metaphysical status recorded in the AK(Bh) relate to Vasubandhu's Yogācāra works and Sthiramati's commentaries, in the second section of the chapter, I turn to the category of universal (*sarvatraga*) concomitants, which include those elements, such as contact (*sparśa*) or attention (*manaskāra*), that play the most essential role in the perceptual process. In the third section, I briefly look at the limited mental concomitants (*viniyata* or *pratiniyataviṣaya caitta*s), which shed more light on the mental processing of the 'raw' sensory information. Of the rest of the *caitta*s, I only investigate *vitarka* and *vicāra* which further illuminate the debates on the (non-)conceptual nature of perception. This is followed by a short conclusion which summarises the findings of the dissertation and points toward some further areas of future investigation.

1. Introduction

1.1. The aim of the dissertation: An investigation of the Yogācāra adaptation of the Abhidharmic model of perception

The purpose of the dissertation is to analyse the Yogācāra adaptation of the Abhidharmic theory of perception in the late works of Vasubandhu and their commentaries by Sthiramati. The framework I use for investigating Vasubandhu's Yogācāra theory of perception and its relation to the Abhidharmic background is provided by the *Triṃśikā-vijñaptibhāṣya* where, following the model laid out in the *Abhidharmakośa*(*bhāṣya*), Sthiramati claims that all forms of consciousness, including perception, necessarily possess a cognitive object (*ālambana*), a support or basis (*āśraya*), an object-form or mode of grasping (*ākāra*) and are associated with certain mental concomitants (*caitta*). Accordingly, the core chapters of the thesis explore how these four constituents of the perceptual process are (re)interpreted by Vasubandhu in the various strata of his *oeuvre*, from his *Abhidharmakośa*(*bhāṣya*) to his Yogācāra works.

Focusing primarily on the difference between the ontological stances of the Abhidharma and the (idealist) Yogācāra works, scholarly narratives tend to emphasise the two traditions' critical relationship. However, in this dissertation, I am not as much interested in the ontological position of Yogācāra as in their views on perception, assuming that we do not need to first determine the precise nature of the former (answering such questions as whether Yogācāra adopts ontological or epistemological idealism)[1] in order to explicate the latter. For instance, their view that the objects of perception are not mind-independent things or atomically construed sense objects can be complemented with

[1] On these concepts and the various forms of idealism see 1.5.4.

both realism (e.g. representative realism, according to which the perceiver directly cognises a mental object and not the actual external object) and ontological idealism.[2] Accordingly, wherever possible, I will attempt to separate the discussion of their theory of perception from questions about the underlying ontology. As we will see, the importance of distinguishing what we might call the phenomenological problems of perception from the ontological questions they raise is all the more important in light of the tendency of many Yogācāra authors to preserve the Abhidharmic model of perception as a phenomenological description of the structure in which unenlightened beings perceive the world, while replacing its metaphysical underpinning with a Yogācāra explanation.

As I aim to explore in what follows, once we put the ontological perspective aside, we find remarkable continuities between the Abhidharma and Yogācāra theories of perception, which call for more scholarly attention. Accordingly, it is essential to bring the Abhidharma and the Yogācāra traditions into dialogue in order to fully understand the Yogācāra position on perception. The Abhidharmic corpus as an attempt to transform the Buddha's teachings found in the discourses into a comprehensive and meticulous system was well-known to the early Mahāyāna thinkers and served as the background of their philosophical elaborations.[3] The different Mahāyāna schools, philosophers, and their respective works incorporated the Abhidharmic background into their line of thought in varying degrees. The connection to its Abhidharmic heritage is particularly close in the case of the early Yogācāra tradition, so much so that some of the works of the school are often said to present a third complete Abhidharma system besides the Theravāda and Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma (Gethin 1998, 207). The Yogācāras remained rather faithful to

[2] I will return to this topic in more detail in sections 1.5.2-1.5.4.

[3] As we know, Buddhist monasteries in this period accommodated monks holding different (i.e. Mahāyāna and non-Mahāyāna) doctrinal positions, provided they adhered to the same Vinaya, see Williams 2009, 4-5. For instance, Walser (2005, 87, 89) claims that Nāgārjuna most likely lived in a mixed (probably Mahāsāṅghika) monastery in Andhra Pradesh. According to the traditional biographies, Asaṅga might have belonged to the Mahīśāsaka sub-school of the Sarvāstivāda tradition (Boin-Webb 2001, xiv) and Vasubandhu travelled to Kashmir to study the Vaibhāṣika system (Anacker 1987, 14-15) before 'converting' to Yogācāra.

their Abhidharmic roots, for instance, in terms of certain basic assumptions they took for granted concerning causality or foundationalism. Although the Yogācāra is traditionally classified as a Mahāyāna school, these shared views reveal, in many respects, a closer connection with the Abhidharmic traditions than with the Madhyamaka. The Abhidharmic embeddedness of the Yogācāra ideas is especially palpable in the various works attributed to Vasubandhu, who, according to his biographies, after having Sarvāstivāda and Sautrāntika 'affiliations' and authoring one of the fundamental texts of the Abhidharma tradition, the *Abhidharmakośa* and its *bhāṣya*, became one of the founders and first systemisers of the Yogācāra school. As such, Vasubandhu's *oeuvre* is ideal for investigating the Abhidharmic foundations of the Yogācāra thought as well as the contributions made by the Yogācāras. Indeed, motivated by the Mahāyāna concept of the insubstantiality or illusoriness of all *dharma*s, they thought that many ideas of the Abhidharmic predecessors had to be reinvestigated, adapted and eventually superseded. These Mahāyānist aspirations left their mark on the Yogācāra view on perception as well, especially concerning their speculations about its ultimate nature and soteriological implications. Since I am more interested in the phenomenological description of ordinary sense perception, these issues in my investigation will mostly remain in the background.

But, as I aim to show in this thesis, despite the various criticisms raised by Vasubandhu, the theory of perception we can extract from his Yogācāra treatises remains continuous with its Abhidharmic past. Vasubandhu does not only preserve many of the Abhidharmic notions, definitions and even classifications concerning the sense perception of unenlightened beings.[4] But he also adheres to traditional frameworks such as the abovementioned fourfold model of the perceptual process or the threefold functioning of the mind, even if, as we will see, he spells out some of its constituents differently in terms

[4] Due to the limitations of the dissertation, I cannot discuss the structure or characteristics of the perception of enlightened beings, but I will make some preliminary remarks about it in section 4.3.4.

of the entities they refer to.

To my knowledge, no comprehensive research on the early Yogācāra theory of the structure of perception has been done so far. One of the reasons might be that in his succinct Yogācāra works, Vasubandhu does not propose a fully developed system concerning perception but only fragmented views. However, I believe that from these fragments we can extract a consistent theory by appreciating both his Abhidharmic antecedents and the explanations provided by his commentators. Accordingly, I will dedicate special attention to the explanations provided by Vasubandhu's commentators, especially Sthiramati, throughout the dissertation. The commentaries written by Sthiramati had an important role in bringing together ideas from the various strata of the Yogācāra tradition and complemented Vasubandhu's argumentative philosophical works with crucial hermeneutical, intertextual and contextual considerations. Similarly, Yaśomitra's commentary is an invaluable source for understanding Vasubandhu's Abhidharmic views and the dynamics of ideas outlined in the *Abhidharmakośa*(*bhāṣya*). I will also appreciate the original contributions these commentators made to Vasubandhu's arguments, and highlight when they proposed, if inadvertently, interpretations different from what might have been Vasubandhu's actual intention.

1.2. Content of chapters

The first chapter of the thesis is an introduction, which has various purposes. After outlining the aim of the project, I give a summary of the content of the chapters and present those secondary sources that have served as a foundation or significantly influenced the methodology of my research. This is followed by an overview of the methodology and textual sources of the thesis. As for the methods, I dedicate special attention to clarifying how I approach Vasubandhu's doctrinally diverse corpus and use the

commentaries written thereon for interpreting his ideas. Regarding the textual sources, I introduce the primary texts and editions I rely on in the dissertation, the reasons for their selection, and the various scholarly positions on the authenticity of Vasubandhu's and Sthiramati's works. I dedicate the remainder of the introduction to elucidating the conceptual and theoretical frameworks for the subsequent analysis of Vasubandhu's ideas on perception.

The second chapter serves as a more specific introduction to the following chapters. First, I survey those concepts in Vasubandhu's *oeuvre* that most closely reflect our notion of sense perception. Along the way, I introduce two important theoretical frameworks that appear in Vasubandhu's Abhidharma as well as Yogācāra works: the threefold functional analysis of the mind and the fourfold model of perception. Regarding the former, I point out that even though Vasubandhu retains this structure in his Yogācāra works, he revises its elements in light of the distinctive conceptual framework of the tradition. Expecting a similar strategy in the case of the fourfold model of the perceptual process, in the remaining chapters of the dissertation I investigate in detail each of its four constituents: the *āśraya*, the *ālambana*, the *ākāra* and the *caitta*s.

The third chapter of the thesis examines the notion of *āśraya* in general and those entities in particular that are held to serve as a support of sense perception in the various strata of Vasubandhu's body of work. The first section of the chapter discusses the concept of *āśraya* in the AK(Bh), where, after looking at the rationale behind considering the sense faculties a 'support' of perception, I analyse some crucial passages that present the general features of the *indriya*s and their causal role in the perceptual process. In the second section, I turn to Vasubandhu's Yogācāra treatises starting with the PSk's definition of *indriya*s, and overview of their characteristics in accordance with the *dhātu*-classification. In this section, I also dedicate special attention to how the *ālayavijñāna* serves as an

additional *āśraya* of perception, and Sthiramati's analysis of how it relates to the three other conditions of perception (the *manas*, the faculties, and the objects). Finally, in the last section, I look at Vasubandhu's *vijñaptimātratā* works where the notion of *indriya* is significantly reconsidered, referring not to material entities but mental seeds contained in the *ālayavijñāna*.

In the fourth chapter, I examine the concept of *ālambana*, together with other object-related terms used in Vasubandhu's corpus. Due to their close connection, I discuss the notion of *ākāra*—the form or mode in which the cognitive object is grasped—also in this chapter. After making some preliminary remarks on how these concepts are understood in the AK(Bh)'s context as well as the related secondary literature, in the second and third sections of the chapter I aim to determine whether and how the conceptual distinctions put forward in the AK(Bh) are preserved in Vasubandhu's Yogācāra treatises and Sthiramati's commentaries. In the second section, I dedicate special attention to Vasubandhu's and Sthiramati's classification of sense objects and the philosophical controversies over their metaphysical nature, especially the real existence of shape. In the third section, I focus on how the Abhidharmic tendencies to reduce the number of real sense objects culminate in Vasubandhu's wholesale denial of the existence of any mind-independent objects of perception, and how Vasubandhu reuses the earlier arguments to prove this point. Finally, turning to Vasubandhu's and Sthiramati's scarce positive claims about the nature of the *ālambana* and *ākāra* of perception, I seek to determine which Western theory of perception is most in line with their views.

In the fifth chapter, the discussion revolves around the last element of the fourfold model of perception, the various mental concomitants (*caitta*) that accompany the sense consciousnesses. Of the fifty-one mental concomitants distinguished by the Yogācāras, I focus on the so-called universal (*sarvatraga*) concomitants, exploring how, according

Vasubandhu and Sthiramati, they contribute to the arising of perception, and what they tell us about the essential features of sense perception. After analysing in the first section how the various classifications of *caitta*s and the views on their metaphysical status recorded in the AK(Bh) relate to Vasubandhu's Yogācāra works and Sthiramati's commentaries, in the second section of the chapter, I turn to the category of universal (*sarvatraga*) concomitants, which include those elements, such as contact (*sparśa*) or attention (*manaskāra*), that play the most essential role in the perceptual process. In the third section, I briefly look at the limited mental concomitants (*viniyata* or *pratiniyataviṣaya caitta*s), which shed more light on the mental processing of the 'raw' sensory information. Of the rest of the *caitta*s, I only investigate *vitarka* and *vicāra* which further illuminate the debates on the (non-)conceptual nature of perception.

This is followed by a short conclusion which summarises the findings of the dissertation and points toward some further areas of future investigation.

1.3. Earlier research on the Abhidharma and Yogācāra theories of perception

Although the Yogācāra theory of the structure of perception and its relation to the Abhidharmic background have not been systematically investigated in the works of Vasubandhu and Sthiramati so far, there are many scholars whose work served as a foundation for my research. With regard to the Abhidharmic theory of perception, I would highlight K. L. Dhammajoti's volume (Dhammajoti 2007a), which discusses in detail the various Abhidharmic doctrines and debates about perception. Dhammajoti analyses issues related to perception in his voluminous book on *Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma* (Dhammajoti 2015) as well. While he focuses primarily on the Abhidharmic views on perception he also often makes valuable references to their implications for the Yogācāra position. Equally significant are Collett Cox's works on Abhidharma, especially her in-depth article (Cox

1988) on the Sarvāstivāda and Dārṣṭāntika-Sautrāntika views on the possibility of non-existent objects of perception, as well as the recent article of Robert H. Sharf (2018) discussing the early Buddhist accounts of non-conceptual sense perception.

As for unearthing the connections between the Abhidharma and Yogācāra theories with a special emphasis on Vasubandhu's philosophical views, Jonathan C. Gold's works were of great significance to my enterprise. Gold's monograph on Vasubandhu's unifying philosophy (Gold 2015) aims to reconstruct Vasubandhu's intellectual identity and to point out the continuity in Vasubandhu's methodology, argumentation, etc. in the various works attributed to him by the tradition. In the course of this investigation, Gold deals with important issues concerning perception as well (some of these were critically reviewed by Franco 2017), such as its intentional character. I should also mention here Robert Kritzer, whose efforts (Kritzer 2003 and 2005) to obliterate the rigid classificatory boundaries between the Yogācāra and the Abhidharmic traditions, as well as Richard King's similar attempt (King 2008) to locate some fundamental Yogācāra doctrines in the Abhidharmic context, had a strong impact on my approach to the early Yogācāra materials.

Although Vasubandhu is one of the founders of the Yogācāra school, as is well-known, his ideas do not represent the starting point of the Yogācāra thought. The key concepts of Yogācāra have already appeared in earlier *sūtra*s, most importantly in the *Saṃdhinirmocanasūtra*,[5] and Vasubandhu's contributions are also preceded, among others, by the voluminous *Yogācārabhūmi*.[6] This earliest period of the Yogācāra tradition is analysed in depth by Lambert Schmithausen (1987) and William Waldron (2003) in their

[5] The dating of another influential Yogācāra *sūtra*, the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra*, is highly ambiguous. As Lambert Schmithausen pointed out, certain passages of the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* presuppose the existence of Vasubandhu's *Triṃśikā*, therefore the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* presumably post-dates Vasubandhu. See Schmithausen 1992. According to Étienne Lamotte, however, the oldest parts of the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* might be contemporaneous with the *Saṃdhinirmocanasūtra*, see Lamotte 1935, 25. See also Lindtner 1992, arguing that an early recension of the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* influenced Nāgārjuna and Āryadeva.

[6] Although the *Yogācārabhūmi* is traditionally ascribed to Asaṅga, most scholars agree that it is a compilation consisting of several heterogenous layers, see e.g. Schmithausen 1987, 13-14, Deleanu 2006, 154-156, Delhey 2013, 502, Kramer 2005, 3-4.

respective volumes on the concept of *ālayavijñāna*, which also reflect on important issues concerning perception in relation to the functioning of the *ālayavijñāna*. Schmithausen also occasionally extends his analysis to the works of Vasubandhu and Sthiramati.

Paul Griffiths also made invaluable contributions to the scholarship on the Yogācāra theory of perception; his article on the problem of pure consciousness in Indian Buddhism (Griffiths 1997), and his paper discussing omniscience in the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra* (Griffiths 1990) made great progress in clarifying the meanings of many technical terms crucial for understanding the Yogācāra theory of perception, such as *ākāra* or *artha*. While analysing the conception of *ākāra*, I also significantly rely on Birgit Kellner's conclusions, who, in search of the Abhidharmic antecedents of the *pramāṇavāda* application of *ākāra* (Kellner 2014), investigates in detailed the term's usages in Vasubandhu's AK(Bh) as well. Another recent article by Robert H. Sharf (2016), which examines the issue of Yogācāra is phenomenology, significantly influenced my understanding of the *sarvatraga* mental concomitants and, more generally, how to apply Western philosophical theories carefully to the Buddhist material.

As I mentioned above, my dissertation dedicates special attention to Sthiramati's commentaries. The publications of Jowita Kramer and Roy Tzohar are crucial not only for better understanding Sthiramati's role as a commentator and his original contributions to the development of Yogācāra thought in general, but also for the closer topic of my dissertation. Focusing on Vasubandhu's *Pañcaskandhaka* and Sthiramati's *Pañcaskandha-kavibhāṣā*, Kramer's various articles (especially 2013a, 2013b, 2014 and 2016a) look into such important issues related to perception as the classification and nature of the sense objects and the *caitta*s, as well as Vasubandhu's and Sthiramati's arguments for the existence of the *ālayavijñāna* as a foundation of all perceptual processes. While discussing the Yogācāra Buddhist theory of metaphor, Tzohar's recent monograph (Tzohar 2018)

touches on the question of intersubjective experience, a problem he addressed in one of his previous articles (Tzohar 2017) as well.

1.4. Methodology and textual sources

1.4.1. General remarks on the methods and sources used in the thesis

The present dissertation is a text-based, interpretative research into the development of ancient Buddhist views on perception. It aims to provide philologically accurate and contextually sensitive reconstructions and comparisons of views and arguments put forward in primary sources composed in India approximately between the 4th and 8th centuries CE. The philosophical questions raised and addressed in the dissertation are motivated and informed by the close reading of the relevant passages of the works of Vasubandhu and his commentators, especially Sthiramati and Yaśomitra. Nonetheless, I will occasionally appeal to contemporary Western philosophical theories and terminology to provide comparisons hopefully illuminating the Buddhist material.

The primary sources of my dissertation are texts preserved either in their Sanskrit originals or in Tibetan translations.[7] The Yogācāra works I use are the *Karmasiddhi-prakaraṇa*, the *Pañcaskandhaka*, the *Triṃśikā*, the *Viṃśikā* together with its *vṛtti* as well as their commentaries by Sthiramati, the *Pañcaskandhakavibhāṣā* and the *Triṃśikā-vijñaptibhāṣya*. I also occasionally use Vinītadeva's commentaries, the *Prakaraṇa-viṃśakaṭīkā* (*Rab tu byed pa nyi shu pa'i 'grel bshad*), and the *Triṃśikāṭīkā* (*Sum cu pa'i 'grel bshad*), but, due to the limitations of the dissertation, their in-depth analysis remains a project for the future. With the exception of the chapter on the mental concomitants (*caitta*), I will always deal with the *Karmasiddhiprakaraṇa* and the *Pañcaskandhaka* in subsections separate from the *Triṃśikā* and the *Viṃśikā.* I will often label the former as

[7] The English translations of the passages are my own.

Vasubandhu's 'transitional' works, while the latter as his '*vijñaptimātratā*' works. This gradual approach will help us to get a more nuanced understanding of the changes of Vasubandhu's ideas and to avoid conflating his earlier considerations with the more mature Yogācāra views adopted in his presumably later works, such as the *Triṃśikā* or the *Viṃśikā*. Of the two transitional works, it is generally the *Pañcaskandhaka* that serves as my starting point, since it contains a more systematic discussion of the constituents of the perceptual process, especially the sense objects, than the KSP, which focuses on the specific topic of theory of action.[8] As for the Abhidharmic background, I primarily rely on Vasubandhu's magnum opus, the *Abhidharmakośa*(*bhāṣya*) and its commentary by Yaśomitra, the *Sphuṭārthā Abhidharmakośavyākhyā*.

The choice of textual sources is, admittedly, selective. For instance, I completely set aside the commentaries attributed to Vasubandhu on other Yogācāra texts, such as the treatises of Asaṅga or Maitreya(nātha). This decision was necessary not only due to the limitations of a doctoral project, but is also supported by those scholars' view who, as we will see below, consider these works to be written by a different author than that of, for example, the *Viṃśikā* and the *Triṃśikā*. The same is true for the *Trisvabhāvanirdeśa* traditionally attributed to Vasubandhu. The reason I do not use this work in the dissertation is that some scholars, most notably Lambert Schmithausen (1987, 262-263, n. 101.) and Matthew Kapstein (2018), argued—to my mind, convincingly—that the traditional attribution of the work needs reconsideration. Kapstein's recent article on the *Trisvabhāvanirdeśa*'s authorship lines up compelling arguments based on historical, philological and doctrinal pieces of evidence to reject the work's traditional attribution.[9]

[8] Also, the *Pañcaskandhaka* has been preserved in its Sanskrit original and we have a detailed commentary on it by Sthiramati.

[9] Kapstein emphasises that the text is apparently not cited in any Indian works, or mentioned either by the traditional Chinese Buddhist sources (not even by Paramārtha and Xuanzang) or the Tibetan lists of Vasubandhu's works. Moreover, it does not have a Chinese translation and both the extant Sanskrit manuscript as well as its Tibetan translations are considerably late. As for the doctrinal problems, he points

To conduct a research which has a sufficiently sharp focus I also decided to put aside other commentaries or sub-commentaries traditionally attributed to Sthiramati, for example the **Sūtrālaṃkāravṛttibhāṣya*, as well as the works of other commentators, for instance on the PSk, such as the *Pañcaskandhavivaraṇa* (by Guṇaprabha) and the *Pañcaskandhabhāṣya* (attributed to *Pṛthivībandhu, but probably composed by another, unknown author).[10]

As for the methodology of my project, some concerns may arise regarding the usage of commentaries from the different strata of the Yogācāra tradition. Based on the current scholarly view on Vasubandhu's dating, Vasubandhu might have lived sometime in the fourth or fifth century CE. Stefan Anacker (1984, 10) suggested the dating 316-396 CE, while Florin Deleanu (2006, 186-194) argued that 350-430 CE seems more accurate. Sthiramati's dating is similarly uncertain, some scholars proposed that Sthiramati might have lived between 510-570 CE on the basis of a reference to his name found in an inscription of King Guhasena in Valabhī, while other scholars argued that, considering the Chinese translation of one of his commentaries, 470-550 CE seems to be a more plausible dating.[11] Whatever the exact dating of Vasubandhu and Sthiramati is, based on the current scholarly views there is approximately a hundred years (if not more) separating Vasubandhu and Sthiramati. Vinītadeva, whose commentaries I also occasionally use, is usually dated to the seventh and eighth century, suggesting that Vinītadeva might have lived at least two-hundred years after Vasubandhu's death.[12] Over a span of a hundred or

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out some inconsistencies between the *Trisvabhāvanirdeśa*'s and the *Triṃśikā*'s discussion of the *trisvabhāva* doctrine. Kapstein in his conclusion proposes that the *Trisvabhāvanirdeśa* was most likely composed by Buddhist tantric circles in the eleventh century and is not representative of the views of Vasubandhu and the early Yogācāra tradition.

[10] The attribution of the *Pañcaskandhabhāṣya* seems to be based on a misunderstanding introduced by the Tibetan translator or scribe of the work's colophon who ascribed it to Sa'i rtsa lag (rendered as *Pṛthivībandhu). Sa'i rtsa lag, however, is an alternative name of Vasubandhu, and the Tibetan translator mistook the name of the author of the root text (i.e. the *Pañcaskandhaka*) for that of the *bhāṣya*, see Kramer 2015, 281, n. 1.

[11] For a summary on Sthiramati's possible dating see Kramer 2019.

[12] Kawamura suggests that Vinītadeva might have lived between 645-715 CE. For his argumentation on Vinītadeva's dating, see Kawamura 1975, 48-56. The same dating is used by Jaini 1985, 470-471.

two-hundred years separating these commentators from Vasubandhu, the Yogācāra ideas went through significant changes, especially due to the contributions of Dignāga (who, based on the currently accepted dating, might have been a contemporary of Sthiramati)[13] and Dharmakīrti (whose works were profusely commented on by Vinītadeva). Sthiramati's and Vinītadeva's interpretations of Vasubandhu's works, therefore, might have been influenced by Dignāga's and Dharmakīrti's theories. In light of these circumstances, it is especially important, albeit challenging, not to read Sthiramati's and Vinītadeva's conclusions into our interpretations of Vasubandhu himself. In order to avoid the conflation of ideas from the different strata of Yogācāra thought, I will offer a close reading of the selected passages from Vasubandhu's works, underlining first what the texts suggest in themselves, and use the commentaries only subsequently, indicating to what extent the close reading of the root text is reinforced or expanded by Sthiramati or Vinītadeva. However, I believe that their interpretations, in most cases, follow rather closely, and offer faithful explanations of, Vasubandhu's original ideas, reflecting reliably those developments that happened at the time of the philosophical school's formation. Sthiramati and Vinītadeva, however, adopted different commentarial approaches to Vasubandhu's works, for instance in terms of their doctrinal perspectives, which influenced my decision to rely, primarily, on Sthiramati's commentaries in the dissertation. More specifically, Sthiramati's commentaries display a stronger awareness of the Yogācāra school's Abhidharmic heritage, as opposed to Vinītadeva, who tends to focus more on the distinguishing characteristics of the Yogācāra, such as its idealism.

[13] Dignāga is commonly dated to c. 480–540, see e.g. Chu 2006, 211; Eckel-Garfield-Powers 2016, 3. Kawamura (1976, 42) notes that according to Tāranātha, Sthiramati was a contemporary of Dignāga. See also Tzohar 2018, 126, n. 2. Kramer (2016, 49), citing Matsuda (2013, 52), claims that Sthiramati might have authored a no longer extant commentary on Dignāga's *Pramāṇasamuccaya*.

1.4.2. A detailed overview of the primary sources and their authenticity

Since I am investigating the early Yogācāra theory of perception through the lenses of a certain author, when selecting the works used in the dissertation, as I already indicated, I took into consideration the scholarly views on the authenticity of Vasubandhu's treatises. However, insofar as the purpose of the dissertation is to shed more light on the connections between the early Yogācāra and the Abhidharmic positions on the structure of perception, and not to reconstruct the identity of certain historical figures *per se*, determining the authorship of these works is not the main concern of the thesis. It is, nonetheless, worthwhile summarising here briefly the various hypotheses offered by scholars on the authenticity of the works attributed to Vasubandhu, and introduce the sources I use in a bit more detail.

In the case of Vasubandhu's *oeuvre*, the general concerns regarding the reliability of the traditional attribution of ancient Buddhist texts are intensified by the amount and doctrinal diversity of the works purportedly composed by Vasubandhu. Various hypotheses have been offered by scholars to solve this conundrum of which I can outline only some of the main trends here.[14] One of the most well-known but highly contested attempts to solve the problem is that of Erich Frauwallner, who proposed that there were in fact two Vasubandhus, whose biographies were mistakenly conflated by the tradition; an older Vasubandhu living in the fourth century, and a younger Vasubandhu living in the fifth century. Frauwallner's distribution of the works traditionally attributed to one and the same Vasubandhu, however, was rather controversial, since Frauwallner (1951) considered Vasubandhu the *elder* to be the author of various Yogācāra commentaries, while Vasubandhu the *younger* to be the author of the *Abhidharmakośa*(*bhāṣya*). In his volume *On the Date of the Buddhist Master of the Law Vasubandhu*, Frauwallner could not

[14] For a more detailed discussion of the various views concerning the authorship of Vasubandhu's works, see Franco 2017, 961-964, Kritzer 2005, xxiv-xxvi and Gold 2015, 2-21.

determine with certainty the authorship of several important works attributed to Vasubandhu, including the *Viṃśikā* and the *Triṃśikā*. However, in a later publication (Frauwallner 1956) he tentatively suggested that Vasubandhu the younger (i.e. the author of the *Abhidharmakośa*(*bhāṣya*)) composed the *Viṃśikā* and the *Triṃśikā* as well. Frauwallner's initial theory of the "two-Vasubandhus" was criticised by scholars, for example Padmanabh S. Jaini. He argued (Jaini 1958) that the traditional biographies correctly claim that the author of the *Abhidharmakośa*(*bhāṣya*) also composed Yogācāra works, since the commentary on the *Abhidharmadīpa* (a work composed probably by one of Vasubandhu's rivals) accuses the author of the *Abhidharmakośa* of having Mahāyānist inclinations, and even suggests that he wrote a work on the *trisvabhāva* doctrine.

Developing Frauwallner's suggestion, Lambert Schmithausen (1987, 262-263, n. 101.) proposed that the *Abhidharmakośa*(*bhāṣya*), the *Vyākhyāyukti*, the *Karmasiddhiprakaraṇa*, the *Pratītyasamutpādavyākhyā*, the *Pañcaskandhaka*, the *Viṃśikā* and the *Triṃśikā* were composed by one and the same person, that is by Vasubandhu the *Kośakāra*. According to Schmithausen, the *Trisvabhāvanirdeśa* as well as the commentaries traditionally attributed to Vasubandhu on the *Madhyāntavibhāga*, the *Dharmadharmatāvibhāga*, the *Mahāyāna-saṃgraha* and the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra* can be separated from the first group of texts on the basis that some terms and ideas that are present in the first group are missing or only marginal in the second group of texts. Robert Kritzer (2005, xxvi), like Jaini, also argues that there is evidence for the Yogācāra affinity of the author of the *Abhidharmakośa*-(*bhāṣya*), insofar as certain passages of the text show remarkable parallels with the *Yogācārabhūmi*. He adds that most scholars accept the single authorship of at least those works attributed by Schmithausen to Vasubandhu the *Kośakāra*. According to Peter Skilling (2000, 299), twelve works can be ascribed to Vasubandhu the *Kośakāra* based on cross-references found in the works of Vasubandhu and his commentators as well as on

stylistic grounds (including the sources and methodology used and the natural development of ideas). In addition to the texts mentioned by Schmithausen, Skilling also considers the *Gāthāsaṃgraha* texts and the *Trisvabhāvanirdeśa* to be works composed by Vasubandhu the *Kośakāra*.[15] Other scholars, such as Jonathan C. Gold (2015, 18-21), straightforwardly reject the "two-Vasubandhus" thesis. Gold aims to show the continuity of Vasubandhu's "interest and purpose" in the diverse works traditionally attributed to him by emphasising the recurring patterns in Vasubandhu's arguments, methodology, epistemological claims, etc. in these texts.

So far, we have discussed the broader strategies developed to account for the variety of texts ascribed to Vasubandhu. Despite the disagreements concerning the details and plausibility of Frauwallners's "two-Vasubandhus" theory, we can identify a group of texts that are justifiably regarded as the works of a single author. I consider Schmithausen's and Skilling's list of texts attributed to Vasubandhu the *Kośakāra* as a reliable guide to the historical Vasubandhu, keeping in mind the doubtful attribution of the *Trisvabhāva-nirdeśa*, emphasised both by Schmithausen and Kapstein. In what follows, I will introduce the primary sources and editions I use in the dissertation individually, and also summarise some further speculations about the authenticity of certain works of Vasubandhu and Sthiramati's commentaries.[16]

1.4.2.1. *Viṃśikā*

The most well-known and influential among Vasubandhu's Yogācāra works is probably the *Viṃśikā* or *Viṃśatikā*. It is a sophisticated and argumentative philosophical treatise dedicated to the exposition and defence of the consciousness-only (*vijñaptimātratā*)

[15] The separation of Vasubandhu the *Kośakāra* and Vasubandhu the *Bhāṣyakāra* has recently been defended and developed by Buescher (2013).

[16] I do not intend to survey here all the available editions and translations of Vasubandhu's works, but only to introduce the editions I am relying on in the dissertation. For a detailed list of Vasubandhu's works and their editions and translations available as of 2004, see Tola and Dragonetti (2004).

teaching. Most of Vasubandhu's opponents in the *Viṃśikā* are Ābhidharmikas; however, some arguments, especially those related to the denial of materiality, contain references to the views of non-Buddhists philosophical traditions as well, specifically to the Vaiśeṣika. The treatise consists of twenty-two verses and is accompanied by a concise commentary. The work is extant in Sanskrit and its manuscript was discovered in 1924 in Kathmandu, Nepal, through the efforts of Sylvain Lévi and Hemrāj Śarman. Photographs of its Sanskrit manuscript, together with the manuscripts of the *Triṃśikā* and the *Trisvabhāvanirdeśa*, were published by Katsumi Mimaki, Musashi Tachikawa and Akira Yuyama (1989), containing not only the *kārikā*s of these works, but also Vasubandhu's auto-commentary to the *Viṃśikā*, the *Viṃśikāvṛtti*, and Sthiramati's *Triṃśikāvijñaptibhāṣya*. The *kārikā*s were in circulation both with and without the commentary, as it is seen on the manuscripts published by Mimaki et al., manuscript "A" containing only the *kārikās* of the *Viṃśikā,* together with the *kārikās* of the *Triṃśikā* and the *Trisvabhāvanirdeśa*. The Sanskrit manuscript of the *Viṃśikāvṛtti* (manuscript "B" in Mimaki et al.) is incomplete and the missing first folio was reconstructed in Sanskrit (using the Tibetan and Chinese translations) by Sylvain Lévi in his edition (1925).

Besides the auto-commentary, the work was commented on by Vinītadeva and Vairocanarakṣita in Sanskrit.[17] Vinītadeva's commentary (*Prakaraṇaviṃśakaṭīkā / Rab tu byed pa nyi shu pa'i 'grel bshad*) is no longer extant in the Sanskrit original only in Tibetan translation (D 4065, see as PVṬ in the Bibliography).[18] Vinītadeva's commentary on the first ten verses of the *Viṃśikā* was translated into English by Gregory Hillis in his MA thesis (Hillis 1993). Vairocanarakṣita's short commentary (*Viṃśikāṭīkāvivṛti*), which

[17] As for the Chinese commentaries, Kuiji composed a commentary on Xuanzang's Chinese translation (see Hamilton 1938).

[18] The translation was made by a translator group including Jinamitra, Śīlendrabodhi, Dānaśīla and Ye shes sde.

contains glosses and notes for personal use on certain words or passages from Vasubandhu's *Viṃśikāvṛtti* and Vinītadeva's commentary, is preserved in Sanskrit.[19]

Various hypotheses have been proposed concerning the originality of the *vṛtti* and certain verses of the *Viṃśikā* as well. According to the colophon of the *Viṃśikāvṛtti* (manuscript "B" in Mimaki et al.), both the *kārikā*s and the *vṛtti* were composed by Vasubandhu under the title *Viṃśatikā Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi*. Although most scholars accept this attribution, powerful arguments were made by Ferenc Ruzsa and Mónika Szegedi (2015) to the effect that the philosophical inconsistencies between the verses and the commentary indicate that the *vṛtti* has been written by a different author.[20] Jürgen Hanneder (2007) raised concerns regarding the authenticity of the first verse of the text. He argued that what we know as the first verse of the *Viṃśikā* today (based on manuscript "A" in Mimaki et al.) was originally a passage of the auto-commentary composed in prose, which is confirmed by the Tibetan translations and Xuanzang's Chinese translation of the *vṛtti* as well. According to Hanneder, this prose passage was probably versified later in order to include the key thesis of the school in the version including the *kārikā*s only. Ruzsa and Szegedi disagree with Hanneder's theory and propose a different explanation of why the Tibetan translations and Xuanzang's Chinese translation do not include the first verse. According to their hypothesis, the *Viṃśikāvṛtti* originally did not contain the complete *kārikā*s but only excerpts and paraphrased passages from them. The complete verses were added later to the *vṛtti* by a redactor for the sake of convenience, except where the commentary has already quoted all segments of a given verse. On the basis of the prose passage at the beginning of the commentary, the redactor might have assumed that the text already contains the first *kārikā* in a slightly different reading, therefore did not insert the first verse separately into the *vṛtti*. The Tibetan translators and Xuanzang presumably had

[19] The *editio princeps* of Vairocanarakṣita's commentary was published by Kano (2008).

[20] The article is available in Hungarian.

access to such a version of the *vṛtti* (Ruzsa and Szegedi 2015, 117-119.). Since the text contains twenty-two verses instead of twenty as the title suggests, Ruzsa and Szegedi rather claim that the last verse should be discounted as an afterword, and the penultimate verse might be an interpolation. Their main argument for the latter is not only that adding verses to the end of a work was customary in India, but that *Viṃśikā* 21 is philosophically inconsistent with the rest of the text (Ruzsa and Szegedi 2015, 100-101.).

One of the most significant imports of Vairocanarakṣita's short (approximately one page long) *Viṃśikāṭīkāvivṛti* is that it clarifies the title of Vasubandhu's work. Although the colophon of the *Viṃśikāvṛtti* calls the text *Viṃśatikā*, the *Viṃśikāṭīkāvivṛti* through a grammatical analysis demonstrates that the correct title is *Viṃśikā*. As Kano (2008, 345 and 350) notes, this is corroborated by other sources too, for example the colophon of the oldest available palm-leaf manuscript (i.e. manuscript "A" in Mimaki et al.) as well as the Tibetan transcriptions of the Sanskrit title.[21] Vasubandhu's *Viṃśikā* is also available in Tibetan and Chinese translations.[22] The *Viṃśikā* was edited and translated into various modern languages on multiple occasions. In the dissertation I use the critical editions of Silk (2016, see as Viṃś(V) in the Bibliography) and Ruzsa and Szegedi (2015b, see as Viṃś(V)$_{RS}$ in the Bibliography). Silk's volume contains a critical edition of the Tibetan text and a new English translation as well. English translations of the *Viṃśikā* were made, among others, by Fernando Tola and Carmen Dragonetti (2004), Stefan Anacker (1984), Thomas A. Kochumuttom (1989) and Thomas E. Wood (1991).[23]

[21] According to Jonathan Silk, however, the Tibetan transcriptions read *Viṃśaka*, which is preserved in the title of Vinītadeva's commentary (*Prakaraṇaviṃśakaṭīkā*) as well, see Silk 2016, VI.

[22] The text is preserved in the Tibetan canon in two versions: the verses alone and the verses together with the commentary. The Sanskrit text was translated into Tibetan by a translator group including Jinamitra, Śīlendrabodhi, Dānaśīla and Ye shes sde (D 4056). Four Chinese translations were made of the text by Gautama Prajñāruci (T 1588), Paramārtha (T 1589), Xuanzang (T 1590) and Yijing (T 1591). See Silk 2016, VI and 27.

[23] For a detailed list of translations into non-Western languages see Tola and Dragonetti 2004, 74-76.

1.4.2.2. *Triṃśikā* and *Triṃśikāvijñaptibhāṣya*

The *Triṃśikā* consists of thirty verses and, despite its evident Yogācāra content, has a palpable Abhidharmic character. The style of the work and the classifications applied in it show close connection with the *Pañcaskandhaka*, so much so that, according to Skilling (2000, 308), the verses of the *Triṃśikā* could be seamlessly combined at certain places with the prose of the *Pañcaskandhaka*. In contrast to the *Viṃśikā*, which focuses on the explication of the *vijñaptimātratā* doctrine and hardly refers to other Yogācāra teachings, the *Triṃśikā* gives a systematic synopsis of the school's key concepts, such as *vijñānaparināṃa*, *ālayavijñāna*, [*kliṣṭa*]*manas*, *trisvabhāva* or *āśrayaparāvṛtti*. The *Triṃśikā* and the *Viṃśikā* therefore complement each other: the former provides a summary of the school's foundational doctrines and lays out a soteriological agenda, while the latter gives a philosophical defence of the Yogācāra's core teaching against the realist objections.

The work is extant in Sanskrit, and its manuscript was discovered in Kathmandu, Nepal in 1922, two years before the *Viṃśikā.* It has both Tibetan and Chinese translations.[24] According to the Chinese tradition, ten Sanskrit commentaries were composed on the *Triṃśikā*. Of these, only Sthiramati's commentary, the *Triṃśikāvijñaptibhāṣya*, has survived, but Xuanzang's *Cheng weishi lun* is held to utilise the missing commentaries as well. Xuanzang's text draws primarily on Dharmapāla's commentary, which he considers the correct interpretation of Vasubandhu's verses. Xuanzang, however, appeals only to two other commentaries regularly, that of Sthiramati and Nanda, and occasionally to the commentary of Citrabhānu (Cook 1999, 1-2). Vinītadeva's later commentary (*Triṃśikāṭīkā / Sum cu pa'i 'grel bshad*) is available in its entirety only in Tibetan translation (D 4070,

[24] The Tibetan translation of the *Triṃśikā* and the *Triṃśikāvijñaptibhāṣya* was made by Jinamitra, Śīlendrabodhi and Ye shes sde (D 4055), while the Chinese translations were made by Xuanzang (T 1586) and Paramārtha (T 1587). Paramārtha's translation is embedded in his commentary on the text.

see as TrṬ in the Bibliography) but fragments of the Sanskrit original were published by Jaini (1985).[25] It is a commentary both on Vasubandhu's *Triṃśikā* and Sthiramati's *Triṃśikāvijñaptibhāṣya*. The *Triṃśikāṭīkā* was translated into English by Leslie Kawamura in his PhD thesis (Kawamura 1975).[26] To my knowledge, no concerns have been raised by scholars concerning the authorship of Vinītadeva's commentaries and the similar commentarial strategy and style of the *Prakaraṇaviṃśakaṭīkā* and the *Triṃśikāṭīkā* also corroborate that they were composed by the same person.[27] Besides these, Vairocanarakṣita wrote short glosses on the text in Sanskrit (*Triṃśikāṭīkāvivṛti*).[28]

The Sanskrit text of the *Triṃśikā*, together with that of the *Viṃśikā*, was first edited and published by Sylvain Lévi (1925) under the title "*Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi"*, which also contains Sthiramati's *Triṃśikāvijñaptibhāṣya*. Lévi published the French translation of these texts in a separate volume (Lévi 1932). Photographs of their Sanskrit manuscript, as I mentioned above, were published by Katsumi Mimaki, Musashi Tachikawa and Akira Yuyama (1989). The *Triṃśikā* was translated into English by Stefan Anacker (1984), Thomas A. Kochumuttom (1989) and Richard H. Robinson (in Lusthaus 2002), and into German by Erich Frauwallner (1969). An English translation of the *Triṃśikā* together with the *Triṃśikāvijñaptibhāṣya* was published by Krishna Nath Chatterjee (1980), and in German by Hermann Jacobi (1932).[29] In the dissertation, I use the Sanskrit critical edition of the *Triṃśikā* and the *Triṃśikāvijñaptibhāṣya* by Buescher (2007, see as Triṃś and TrBh

[25] The Tibetan translation was made by Jinamitra, Śīlendrabodhi, Dānaśīla and Ye shes sde. There are no Chinese translations of Vinītadeva's commentaries, see Kawamura 1975, 58.

[26] There is also a Japanese translation of both the *Prakaraṇaviṃśakaṭīkā* and the *Triṃśikāṭīkā* by Yamaguchi and Nozawa in 1953.

[27] Jaini and Kawamura both accept the authority of the works attributed to Vinītadeva in the Tibetan canon, see Jaini 1985, 470 and Kawamura 1975, 56-57. In addition to his commentaries on Vasubandhu's two Yogācāra treatises, Vinītadeva composed several other commentaries as well, mainly on works attributed to Dharmakīrti, but also on Dignāga's *Ālambanaparīkṣā*. For a list of Vinītadeva's commentaries see Hillis 1993, 2-3 and Jaini 1985, 470, n. 1.

[28] Critical edition of the *Triṃśikāṭīkāvivṛti* is under preparation by Kano (2008, 344).

[29] For translations into non-Western languages see Tola and Dragonetti 2004, 60-62.

in the Bibliography), which contains the critical edition of the Tibetan text as well.[30] I will return to the speculations about the authorship of the commentaries attributed to Sthiramati when discussing the *Pañcaskandhaka* and the *Pañcaskandhakavibhāṣā.*

1.4.2.3. *Pañcaskandhaka* and *Pañcaskandhakavibhāṣā*

Vasubandhu's *Pañcaskandhaka* (or *Pañcaskandhaprakaraṇa*, as reconstructed in the Tibetan and Chinese translations), shows significant similarities with the first chapter of the *Abhidharmasamuccaya* attributed to Asaṅga, but is clearly related to the *Triṃśikā* and the *Abhidharmakośa*(*bhāṣya*) as well (Li and Steinkellner 2008, viii.). Vasubandhu's text is a concise explanation of the five *skandha*s. The text has a strong Abhidharmic character, but it also appeals to the notions of *ālayavijñāna* and [*kliṣṭa*]*manas*. The works is commented, among others, by Sthiramati (*Pañcaskandhakavibhāṣā*) and is also frequently quoted in Sthiramati's *Triṃśikāvijñaptibhāṣya*.[31] It is preserved in its Sanskrit original as well as in Tibetan and Chinese translations.[32] The Sanskrit critical edition I use in the dissertation was published by Xuezhu Li and Ernst Steinkellner (2008, see as PSk in the Bibliography).[33] Li and Steinkellner's edition also contains the Tibetan and Chinese translations of the text in an appendix. Based on the Tibetan version, English translations of the *Pañcaskandhaka* were made by Anacker (1984) and Artemus B. Engle (2009), who also provides a translation of the *Pañcaskandhakavibhāṣā* from the Tibetan.[34] Hartmut Buescher's review article (2010) on Li and Steinkellner's edition of the *Pañcaskandhaka* gives a translation of the text based on the Sanskrit edition.

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[30] The Tibetan translation of the *Triṃśikāvijñaptibhāṣya* (D 4064) was made by Jinamitra, Śīlendrabodhi and Ye shes sde.

[31] As I mentioned above, there are two other commentaries on the *Pañcaskandhaka* as well, the *Pañcaskandhabhāṣya* (by an unknown author) and the *Pañcaskandhavivaraṇa* (by Guṇaprabha)

[32] The Tibetan translation was made by Jinamitra, Śīlendrabodhi, Dānaśīla and Ye shes sde (D 4059) and the Chinese translation by Xuanzang (T 1612).

[33] Seven lines from the beginning of the text are missing. These were reconstructed by Li and Steinkellner based on the Tibetan translation and other sources.

[34] Engle 2009 also contains the Tibetan translation.

As for Sthiramati's *Pañcaskandhakavibhāṣā*, it shows essential connections with the *Triṃśikāvijñaptibhāṣya*. The connection between the two texts is made evident not only by the close similarity (often word-for-word identity) of certain passages, but by direct reference as well, since the author of the *Triṃśikāvijñaptibhāṣya* at one point advises the reader to consult the *Pañcaskandhakavibhāṣā* for a more detailed explanation of a problem.[35] The text is available in Sanskrit. In the dissertation I use the edition of Jowita Kramer (2013, see as PSkV in the Bibliography) who published both a critical and a diplomatic edition of the Sanskrit text. The text is preserved in Tibetan translation and in a Chinese rendering as well.[36]

Concerning the authorship of the works ascribed to Sthiramati, we are faced with similar difficulties to the ones raised with regard to Vasubandhu's corpus. The seventeen works attributed to Sthiramati show varying degrees of similarity (some containing evident parallels, while others seemingly not being related at all) as well as a great doctrinal variety, including commentaries on Yogācāra and non-Yogācāra sources, and even texts belonging to the tantric tradition.[37] On the basis of these problems, together with the inconsistencies around his dating, scholars, such as Jowita Kramer (2019, 456) raised the possibility that there might have been more than one Sthiramati, or some of these works were mistakenly attributed to him. Nonetheless, investigating the relations between various works of Sthiramati, Kramer has pointed out that the interrelations between the *Triṃśikāvijñaptibhāṣya*, the *Pañcaskandhakavibhāṣā* and the *Tattvārthā Abhidharmakośa-*

[35] TrBh 120.20: *vistaravicāras tu pañcaskandhakopanibandhanād veditavyaḥ* ||

[36] The Tibetan translation of the *Pañcaskandhakavibhāṣā* (D 4066) was made by the same translator group as the *Triṃśikāvijñaptibhāṣya*, but also including Dānaśīla. The *Pañcaskandhakavibhāṣā* (T 1613) was translated into Chinese by Divākara. As for the Chinese text, Kramer (2008, 149) notes that it is not a direct translation, as it is much shorter and shows some differences in its content from the Sanskrit and Tibetan versions.

[37] For a detailed list of the works attributed to Sthiramati see Kramer 2016b and 2019.

ṭīkā suggest that these works were composed by one and the same author.[38] Kramer (2016b, 49-50) also notes that the same person might have composed a commentary on the *Pramāṇasamuccaya* (not extant), and compiled the *Abhidharmasamuccayavyākhyā*.[39]

1.4.2.4. *Karmasiddhiprakaraṇa*

The *Karmasiddhiprakaraṇa* (*Las grub pa'i rab tu byed pa*) is available only in Tibetan and Chinese translations as the Sanskrit original is lost.[40] In the dissertation, I use the Tibetan edition published by Étienne Lamotte (1936). Lamotte's volume also contains one of the two Chinese translations of the text and his French translation. The Tibetan text of the *Karmasiddhiprakaraṇa* was also published by Susumu Yamaguchi (1951). The work is reminiscent of the *Abhidharmakośa*(*bhāṣya*) both in terms of its scholastic character and its tendency to reject Vaibhāṣika positions related to the theory of action. As we will see, many of the arguments discussed in the text have antecedents in the *Abhidharmakośa*(*bhāṣya*). While it has been written primarily from a Sautrāntika perspective, the text presents a theory of action and karmic continuity in terms characteristic to the Yogācāra school, such as the *ālayavijñāna*. The Tibetan text was translated into English by Stefan Anacker (1984). Another English translation was made from Lamotte's French translation by Leo Pruden (1988).

1.4.2.5. *Abhidharmakośa*(*bhāṣya*)

The *Abhidharmakośa* and its *bhāṣya* are both attributed by the tradition to Vasubandhu, even though the two texts show significant differences from a doctrinal point of view. While the verses (approximately 600) are considered to be a summary of the tenets of the

[38] For some parallel passages between the *Triṃśikāvijñaptibhāṣya* and the *Pañcaskandhakavibhāṣā*, and on the role of intertextuality in certain commentaries of Sthiramati, see Kramer 2015.

[39] The *Abhidharmasamuccayavyākhyā* seems to be a compilation of the *Abhidharmasamuccaya* and the *Abhidharmasamuccayabhāṣya*, see Kramer 2016b, 49-50.

[40] There is one Tibetan translation by Viśuddhasiṃha and Devendrarakṣita (D 4062) and two Chinese translations by Vimokṣaprajñā (T 1608) and Xuanzang (T 1609).

Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika school, the commentary is written mostly from a Sautrāntika perspective scrutinising and criticising the ideas outlined in the verses.[41] The *Abhidharmakośa*(*bhāṣya*) consists of nine chapters (the first eight contain verses with prose commentaries, while the ninth is composed entirely in prose), with the ninth focusing primarily on the refutation of the theory of the person (*pudgala*). The *Abhidharmakośa*(*bhāṣya*) is available in two Sanskrit editions. By default, I refer to the edition of Prahlad Pradhan (1975, see as AK(Bh) in the Bibliography) in the dissertation.[42] If I find its reading better, I cite the edition of Swāmī Dwārikādās Śastri (1998, see as $AK(Bh)_S$ in the Bibliography), indicating the noteworthy differences between the two editions. The *Abhidharmakośa*(*bhāṣya*) was translated into French from the Chinese and Tibetan translations by Louis de La Vallée Poussin (1923-1931),[43] and Poussin's French translation was later translated into English by Leo M. Pruden (1988-1990).[44] Since the publication of the English translation by Pruden, a new annotated English translation has been made available by Gelong Lodrö Sangpo (2012) which draws on Poussin's French translation and is complemented with an Introduction by K. L. Dhammajoti. The *Abhidharmakośa*(*bhāṣya*) was commented on, among others, by Yaśomitra (*Sphuṭārthā Abhidharmakośavyākhyā*), whose commentary is available in Sanskrit, and by Sthiramati (*Tattvārthā Abhidharmakośaṭīkā*), whose commentary is partially extant in Sanskrit (with chapter 3 and parts of chapters 2 and 4 missing) and in its entirety in Tibetan translation (D

[41] Although the commentary is generally held to be composed from a Sautrāntika perspective, it is a controversial issue whether we can talk about Sautrāntika as a unified doctrinal system at the time of the *Abhidharmakośa*. Scholars argue that it should be rather considered an interpretative method or a range of individual opinions that rely on the authority of the *sūtra*s instead of the Abhidharmic works. See Kellner 2014, 277-278, Cox 1995, 40.

[42] As for the abbreviations, I refer to the *Abhidharmakośa* as AK, the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* as AKBh, and when I refer to both of them, I use AK(Bh).

[43] The texts have two Chinese translations by Xuanzang (T 1558) and Paramārtha (T 1559), and one Tibetan translation by Jinamitra and Dpal brtsegs rakṣita (D 4089-4090).

[44] For translations into non-Western languages see Kritzer 2005, xx.

4421).[45] Due to the limitations of the dissertation (as well as the accessibility and reliability of Yaśomitra's commentary), I used the *Sphuṭārthā Abhidharmakośavyākhyā* when explicating Vasubandhu's claims in the *Abhidharmakośa*(*bhāṣya*). For Yaśomitra's commentary I used the critical edition of Swāmī Dwārikādās Śastri (1998, see as AKVy in the Bibliography)

1.5. Terminological remarks and theories of perception

1.5.1. What is perception?

There is hardly any philosophical system, whether Eastern or Western, that does not try to explain the nature of our most common experiences: our sense perceptions of the (seemingly) external reality. This interest in perception does not necessarily manifest in a systematic description of the 'mechanism' of perception, but in their recognition of the importance of understanding the phenomenology of perception as a basis for further philosophical investigations concerning, for example, epistemology, metaphysics or the philosophy of mind.

Most of us have a basic conception of what perception is, and if we were asked to give an account of it, we would probably emphasise very similar points. The Oxford English Dictionary (OED) for example defines 'perception' as 1.) "the process of becoming aware of physical objects, phenomena, etc., through the senses", 2.) "the faculty of perceiving; the ability or power to perceive" and 3.) "the mental product or result of perceiving something" (in this meaning it is synonymous with 'percept'). Reflecting a more philosophical usage, the OED also defines perception more broadly as 4.) "the process of

[45] See Kramer 2019, 457. Regarding the Tibetan translation of Sthiramati's commentary Matsuda (2013, 227-228) notes that "there is no doubt that the quality of the Tibetan translation is generally poor", and that they have "come across many cases of poorly translated passages that cast doubt on the abilities of the Tibetan translator". I did not have access to the Sanskrit text of Sthiramati's commentary. For Chinese commentaries on the AK(Bh) see Kritzer 2005, xxi-xxii.

becoming aware or conscious of a thing or things in general; the state of being aware". However, my interest here lies primarily in *sense* perception, as opposed to this broader definition, according to which all conscious mental states, including thoughts or beliefs, are considered to be a form of perception.

Initial philosophical accounts of sense perception often emphasise similar characteristics to these definitions. According to Daniel O'Brien, "perception is the process by which we acquire information about the world around us using our five senses" (O'Brien 2004). Similar description is given by Michael Martin, saying that "sense perception is the use of our senses to acquire information about the world around us and to become acquainted with objects, events, and their features." (Martin 1998.) Barry Maund defines perception as "a process by which we acquire knowledge of an objective world", emphasising that this view is the "most natural view to take of perception" (Maund 2003, 1).

All these definitions of perception contain recurring elements. One of them is that (sense) perception takes place through our sense organs, that is according to the Western tradition, mainly through sight, touch, hearing, smell and taste (in contemporary science of perception, interoception, proprioception and kinaesthesia are often added to the traditional list of external senses). The second definition of perception in the OED as a faculty, ability or capacity to perceive is also related to having sense organs. We are able to perceive objects only if all the necessary conditions are satisfied, most importantly that our sense organs are working, unimpaired or not otherwise blocked or limited, and the external conditions are also appropriate, for example there is enough light to see, etc.

Another important factor emphasised in these definitions is that perception informs us about the world. The term 'world' is a shorthand for all the things perception can present to us: as Michael Martin's definition unpacks it a bit more, we can be aware of objects and

their features, as well as events or facts. The ordinary descriptions of the world as 'objective' or 'physical' refer to what is generally called 'mind-independence', suggesting that perception is a 'presentation' of a mind-independently existing and public, i.e. intersubjectively accessible, object to a subject. On the common-sense view, perception is or at least involves a *relation* between a mind-independent, physical object and a subject.[46]

Another frequently mentioned characteristic of perception is that it is a *process*. Perception in this sense refers to the causal process connecting the object through the senses with the mind. Perception understood as a process can be set against the concept of perception construed as the product or result of this process, namely the perceptual experience (sometimes called a 'percept'). Considering that perception is ordinarily held to be a process by which we gain information about the world, the product of this process, the experience or 'percept' is what contains this information conveyed to us. The information can also be called the 'content' of perceptual experience. As a result of the perceptual process, we obtain information about the objects or facts of the world, based on which we can form beliefs and act in various ways.

That perception grants us information, however, raises several questions, for example whether perception is essentially conceptual or non-conceptual (also called as epistemic or non-epistemic by Fred Dretske). According to certain theories, there are bare perceptual experiences which do not involve any conceptualisation or interpretation on our parts, while others claim that our perceptions are essentially conceptually structured, and we necessarily perceive things through the concepts we have. Perceptual experiences as conscious states also have a phenomenal character to them, which means what it is like subjectively to have that certain experience and content (for example, it appears or 'feels' differently to the subject to see a patch of blue colour than a patch of red). These

[46] For more on the ordinary conception of perception, see Crane and French 2017.

subjective, qualitative properties of experience are often called *qualia* (in singular *quale*).

Buddhist philosophers were engaged with very similar issues. They were searching for answers, among others, to the question of the structure of perception, the nature of the constituents of the perceptual process, the number and functions of the sense faculties, the causes and conditions necessary for perception, the question whether perception is a process or a result, whether it is conceptual or non-conceptual, whether the information received through the senses can be trusted, as well as of how we form beliefs and act on the basis of the sensory information received. While, as we will see, the Yogācāras offered interesting theories concerning many of these issues, they are most widely known for their denial of perception being a relation to a physical object. As it is frequently pointed out, this view goes against the common-sense conception of perception described above. It is, however, less often investigated what interpretative possibilities this denial leaves open concerning their positive theory of perception. In order to better understand the theoretical options, it is useful to have a look at how the most important Western theories of perception construed the structure of perception. However, I should emphasise that in the dissertation I do not aim to fit, let alone, squeeze the Abhidharmic and Yogācāra views on perception into these frameworks, nor do I seek to systematically compare the Buddhist and Western views. The usage of Western concepts, however, can be instructive in approaching and understanding the Buddhist material.

1.5.2. Western theories of perception

The theory which is closest to the common-sense view of perception discussed above is often called naïve or direct realist theory of perception (but note the terminological remark at the end of this section). According to this position, perception is a direct and immediate awareness of physical, mind-independent objects, properties, or events. We can differentiate two variants of this view based on what properties are attributed to the object

independent of perception. According to the naïve realist view, objects possess all the qualities we perceive them to have. Scientific or primary quality direct realism, however, holds that although the primary qualities of the objects (e.g. shape, size, motion) are independent of the perceiving subject, the secondary qualities of the objects depend on their relation to the perceiver—for instance, an object's colour is often considered a disposition of the object to cause the perception of that colour in the perceiver, but not something actually present in the object in the way we perceive it (see O'Brien 2003, and Robinson 1999, xv). Direct realism is also often called 'relationalism', as it holds that perceptual experience is or necessarily involves a *relation* between a subject and a mind-independent object. If experience is simply constituted by the object's relation to us as subjects, then we speak about '*pure* relationalism', but if the experience is construed as something more than the mere relation, for instance, a conscious mental state involving this relation, then it is better called 'relationalism' *simpliciter*. In the Buddhist context, direct realism is most often attributed to the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika school.

The sense-datum theory, in contrast, holds that in perception we are not immediately aware of mind-independent objects, but we are in direct relation with mind-dependent or mental objects or images, so-called sense data. As such, sense-datum theory is compatible with various ontological positions which maintain that perceptual experience involves a relation to a mental object. One of these theories is the so-called indirect or representative realism. (This view is sometimes referred to as 'representationalism'. However, since in contemporary philosophical usage representationalism is another name for intentionalism, I will use the term 'representative realism'.) According to representative realism, in perception we are in direct relation with sense data caused by physical objects. These sense data are said to correspond to, and hence represent, their mind-independent causes. The extent to which sense data *resemble* the external objects, however, is a controversial issue.

The answer varies according to the different understandings of representation. Representative realists can maintain an exact resemblance between the actual qualities of the objects and the sense data, or merely a structural correspondence, but they might also adopt a 'Kantian' sort of representative realism, according to which nothing can be stated about the correspondence relation between our perceptions and the mind-independent world with the exception that the latter is responsible for the arising of our mental images.[47] In the Buddhist context, the Sautrāntikas are most often, if not universally, interpreted by scholars as endorsing a form of representative realism. Note further that sense-datum theory is also compatible with idealism. Since sense data separate us from the external world (sometimes described as constituting a 'veil of perception'), idealist philosophers called into question the existence of mind-independent objects and argued that the perceived sense data are purely mental constructions which are neither caused by nor represent objects outside our minds. As I will suggest in the chapter on the objects of perception, it is the sense-datum theory that fits in with the Yogācāra claims on perception most naturally. The sense-datum theorists, whether representative realists or idealists, assume that there is something, i.e. a sense datum, that actually possesses or instantiates the sensible property, for example shape or colour, that appears to the perceiver, and this is what the perceiving subject is related to in experience.

As we have seen, both direct realists and sense-datum theorists presume that perceptual experience involves a relation between a subject and an object (but they disagree whether this object is considered to be a physical object or a mental object). According to the adverbial theory, however, perceptual experience is non-relational. They propose that perception should be described as experiencing in a certain way or manner, rather than being aware of, and hence related to, an object (whether a physical object or a sense-

[47] For more detail about these theories, see Robinson 1999, xv-xvi. Kant's theory is also often called as 'transcendental idealism'.

datum). For example, according to the adherents of the adverbialist theory, seeing a patch of blue colour is nothing else than the modification of our mental state or experience in a way that it should be described as seeing 'bluely'. The properties we appear to perceive, then, are indeed properties of something, namely our own experiences, but not of an object perceived.

Like the adverbialist theory, the intentionalist theory of perception also maintains that perceptual experience is non-relational, in the sense that we are not in relation with sense data nor ordinary, physical objects. For the intentionalist, as opposed to the adverbialist, perceptions, like beliefs, are intrinsically intentional states with an intentional or representational content, which is simply the way the world is represented to us in that state. Some proponents of intentionalism, for example Tim Crane, also appeal to the concept of an intentional object to explain intentionality (Crane 2001b, 345). The intentional object is simply something our intentional states are about or directed upon, which, as Crane argues, can be represented in various ways, that is, with various representational *contents* (Crane 2001b, 345).[48] An intentional object, however, is not to be construed as an actual object (whether physical or mental) instantiating the properties we appear to perceive and to which we are related in perceptual experience. Just as we can think about Santa Claus without Santa Claus actually existing, the intentional objects of perception do not have to exist and instantiate the phenomenal properties that appear to us in experience. As such, according to *this* usage, intentional objects are not things in the ordinary sense, and have no ontological nature. Rather, intentional objects are similar to grammatical objects or, as Tim Crane puts it, are objects only in a "schematic, rather than a substantial way" (Crane 2001a, 22, see also Crane 2001a, 16-17).

[48] It is important to note that this concept of intentionality and the colloquial sense of intention or volition are only loosely connected. Intentions or volitions are only a particular kind of those numerous states that are directed on an object (i.e. states that are 'intentional' in the modern philosophical usage), see Crane 2011.

Another important terminological remark we should make is that intentionalism and adverbialism can be called 'act-theories' of perceptual experience, as opposed to the 'act-object' model endorsed by most relationists and the sense-datum theorists. For the act-theorists, experiences are representational acts or modes of our minds, and do not involve objects at all. Note, however, that the term is not meant to suggest any causal activity on the part of the mind. Being passively presented with an object counts as an act of perception. Relatedly, we should note that these two act-theories are also sometimes labelled as direct realism, insofar as their proponents think that we do not perceive external objects indirectly, that is through a non-ordinary, i.e. mental, object or image.

1.5.3. The problem of perception

The theories of perception discussed above had to give an account not only of veridical cases of perception, but also of the various forms of misrepresentations. The "problem of perception", as is sometimes called, appeals to the phenomena of illusions and hallucinations to call into question the ordinary or naïve realist account of perception in terms of which we are immediately aware of mind-independent objects and their qualities.[49] Illusions and hallucinations constitute different kinds of misrepresentation. Illusions are commonly held to be perceptual experiences in which we perceive physical objects, but they appear to us differently than they really are (a classical example of an illusion is that of the "crooked oar", a straight oar which appears to be bent when submerged into the water.) Hallucinations, including dreams, however, are philosophically more challenging, since in hallucinatory states we do not experience objects differently than how they are supposed to be, but rather we perceive things that are not there at all.

To resolve (or rather avoid) the problem posed by misrepresentations, relationalism is most often combined with disjunctivism. In terms of this theory, illusions and

[49] On the 'problem of perception' and Western theories as a reaction to it, see Crane and French 2017.

hallucinations are fundamentally different kinds of experiences than veridical perceptions and they do not share any common factor, as it is assumed, for example, by the sense-datum or intentionalist theories. As such, misrepresentations cannot give us any insight into the functioning of genuine perception and we do not have to give a common explanation for all types of perceptual experiences, veridical or not. Other theories of perception aimed to give a comprehensive account of perceptual experience that is applicable both to genuine perceptions and misrepresentations. Indeed, one of the main arguments for positing sense data is based on the phenomenological or subjective indistinguishability of veridical and non-veridical perceptions. According to the sense-datum theorists, it is evident that in illusions and hallucinations we are aware of sense data instead of mind-independent, physical objects. Since all forms of perceptual experiences are fundamentally of the same kind and, therefore, should be given the same account, we have to assume that sense data are present not only in misrepresentations, but also in veridical perceptions.

The adverbialists, however, deny that in order to explain either genuine perceptions or misrepresentations, we need to appeal to such controversial entities as sense-data. Although they reject the existence of sense-data, they agree that all forms of perceptual experience have to share a common factor, which, according to adverbialists, is that they are all mental events or states of mind modified in certain ways. Both in the case of genuinely perceiving and hallucinating, say, a red apple, we are experiencing in the same way, namely *redly* and *roundly*. While discussing intentionalism I have already noted that according to intentionalists, our intentional states can be directed on objects that do not exist, for example we can think of a centaur or Santa Claus. The same is true for perceptions, since in the case of illusions and hallucinations we can perceptually represent objects that do not actually exist. Intentionalists agree with adverbialists that we do not

need to posit sense-data to give an account of these phenomena. Instead, the intentionalists explain them with the intentional or representational content present in all forms of perceptual experiences. In misrepresentations, we represent things differently than they actually are or represent things that do not exist at all, but these misrepresentations have the same content as the phenomenologically indistinguishable veridical experience.

1.5.4. The concept of idealism and its various forms

According to the almost universal scholarly consensus, Yogācāra advocates some form of idealism (or phenomenology, which similarly downplays the importance of external objects by bracketing the questions about their existence). In this last section of the Introduction, I give a short overview of how idealism should be understood in this context.

Idealism is an umbrella concept used to denote various theories. One of the broadest definitions of idealism is that it maintains "the priority of the mental" (Goldschmidt and Pearce 2017, ix). Although more complex distinctions can be made along the way, we can differentiate two main forms of this priority claim: ontological and explanatory priority (Goldschmidt and Pearce 2017, ix.). The ontological priority is most often associated with George Berkeley's ontological idealism, while the explanatory priority is usually connected to Immanuel Kant's epistemological idealism.

In terms of ontological idealism, reality is fundamentally or wholly mental (Guyer and Horstmann 2019, Robinson 1999, ix). We have to make a further distinction here depending on how 'mental' is understood. According to Berkeley, all that exists are minds and objects of perception (Berkeley called these sensible objects *idea*s). The objects of perception can be considered 'mental' insofar as they are mind-dependent entities, meaning that they depend for their existence on the individual minds that perceive them (Rickless 2013, 1). These objects are, nonetheless, substantially different from minds, as they are not mind-like entities (i.e. not active, conscious perceiving substances). This

‘subjectivist’ theory can be contrasted with the views of other ontological idealists who believe that we cannot make a categorical distinction between perceiving minds and perceived objects, as everything that exists (including stones and tables) is in some sense a mind. The latter view is often attributed to panpsychists like Leibniz and absolute idealists like Hegel, for whom the whole reality is ‘mental’ in the sense of being mind-like. The explanatory or conceptual priority of the mind associated with Kant, in contrast, means that the way the sensible world appears to be structured is explained by the conceptual framework of our minds (Goldschmidt and Pearce 2017, ix). Even if there is a reality independent of our minds, we cannot have cognitive access to it, but only to the features, i.e. contents and structures, of our own minds. This view is often called epistemological idealism (Guyer and Horstmann 2019).

Despite the difference in ontology, to some extent the views of Kant and Berkeley can be compared as they both agree that the sensible world we perceive consists only of mind-dependent objects, ideas or appearances (Robinson 2009, 189-190). However, it is more important for our present purposes to take into consideration the differences between their views on the sensible world. One crucial difference concerns the role they attribute to the perceiver in perception, that is to what extent it contributes to the construction of the sensible world. In Kantian terms, the sensible world is a product of our minds insofar as it is determined by our mind’s conceptual structure. (This is related to the issue mentioned earlier that according to some philosophers, our perceptions are essentially conceptual.) Berkeley, on the other hand, maintains that we are completely passive in our sense perceptions and the ideas we perceive are caused with a fully determined content by God. Berkeley’s position that perception, as a mere reception of ideas, takes place entirely without the contribution of the perceiver’s mind is sometimes referred to as ‘Pre-Kantian Innocence’ (Stoneham 2018, 24-25) or as the ‘myth of the given’.

This is related to the question whether idealism necessarily entails anti-realism or not. If we take anti-realism as the denial of mind-independent (that is, roughly material) reality, then an ontological idealist like Berkeley is *ipso facto* an anti-realist. When I use the terms 'realism' and 'realist' in the dissertation, for instance, to describe the Abhidharmic ontology, I have this sense in mind. In this (first) sense, Kant is not an anti-realist as he does not deny the existence of the *Ding an sich*, the thing-in-itself, which exists independently of our minds. However, he is not a straightforward realist either, since he adds that it is impossible to give an account of its nature, therefore, we cannot exclude the possibility that it is in fact mental.

Nonetheless, considering that Berkeley does not deny the reality of *sensible* objects, he might not be considered an anti-realist in another sense of the term (Stoneham 2002, 38-42, cf. Stoneham 2009). According to Berkeley, perceivers are only passive recipients of ideas as we do not contribute to the way we are presented with them. Kant is anti-realist in this (second) sense, since for him, what and how we perceive is the product of our conceptualising minds.[50] Moreover, for Kant, sensible objects or appearances are "in our minds" in terms of being mental contents or items. Although this is the dominant interpretation of Berkeley as well, according to some scholars, Berkeley does not mentalise the sensible world this way, and regard ideas or sensible objects as in some sense distinct from the mind. For this reason, some interpreters prefer to call Berkeley's view 'immaterialism' as opposed to 'idealism' (Stoneham 2002, 31-38). An immaterialist or (in the second sense) realist idealist while denies the existence of matter, accepts that there is a world which, albeit mind-dependent, is not determined by our conceptual activity and is distinct from our minds.

There is hardly any form of idealism in terms of which Yogācāra (and here I confine

[50] For a similar distinction between various senses of (anti-)realism, and in what sense Berkeley and even Vasubandhu can be labelled as 'realist', see Siderits 2016, 63, 95-96.

myself to *early* Yogācāra) has not been interpreted in the scholarly literature.[51] If we take idealism in the broadest sense, that is advocating simply the 'priority of the mind', it seems to be beyond doubt that Yogācāra represents some form of idealism. The issue whether the Yogācāras attribute an ontological or merely explanatory priority to the mind, however, is still hotly debated in scholarship. Some scholars suggest a Kantian, 'epistemological idealist' interpretation, partly because Yogācāra authors seemingly do not wish to engage with ontological questions but investigate only what we are actually aware of in perception, namely the contents of our own minds.[52]

The other route to take, which is presently the dominant view in the scholarship, is to interpret Yogācāra as ontological idealism. As we have seen above, ontological idealism differs from epistemological idealism in that it entails anti-realism in the (first) sense, that is the rejection of matter. In contrast to the epistemological idealist readings, most scholars understand Vasubandhu as actually denying the materiality of the world in the *Viṃśikā*.[53] Therefore, concerning its ontological position specifically, it seems to be more appropriate to compare the Yogācāra ideas with the ontological idealist position of Berkeley, keeping in mind, of course, the obvious limitations of such a comparison, for example the theistic context of Berkeley's arguments or his acceptance of the substantial existence of the perceiving subject. Some scholars also tried to investigate the Yogācāra position in absolute idealist terms.[54] Although this interpretation seems to be implausible for many reasons and is rejected by most scholars today, the motivation behind considering the

[51] I will not identify all proponents of the respective views. For a more detailed discussion of the various positions see Kellner and Taber 2014, Trivedi 2005 or Butler 2010.

[52] Such interpretations were offered for example by Kochumuttom 1989 and Lusthaus 2002. It is, however, worth mentioning that they also highlighted some differences between the Kantian and Yogācāra theories. So much so that Lusthaus prefers to interpret Yogācāra more precisely as a form of (Husserlian) phenomenology.

[53] For Vasubandhu's arguments against materiality see Kapstein 2001. An important contribution of Kellner and Taber 2014 to the idealism debate is that they point out that even if we set aside vv. 11-15 of the *Viṃśikā* (commonly held to be the core of Vasubandhu's arguments against the material conception of the world), the *Viṃśikā*'s argumentative strategy as a whole supports an ontological idealist reading.

[54] See for example Dasgupta 1933 and Chatterjee 1975.

ālayavijñāna as a sort of absolute mind is understandable as it could more easily account for our intersubjective experiences or the fact that we can successfully interact with each other in a shared mental world than a 'subjectivist' form of ontological idealism.

As we have seen above, we can differentiate Berkeley and Kant concerning the role they attribute to the perceiver in determining the structure of the world it perceives, that is whether they are anti-realist in the second sense. From this perspective, the Yogācāra position displays stronger similarities with the Kantian view. Moreover, as we have also seen, idealists generally endorse that the sensible objects exist only in the mind as *mental* contents or items. For example, Berkeley is commonly (although, as discussed above, not universally) interpreted as advocating a sense-datum theory of perception. Kantian appearances are also often seen as mental objects in scholarly literature. Vasubandhu's arguments to the effect that the objects of perception cannot exist outside the mind suggest that he also mentalises the sensible world. However, positing sense data is not the only way of mentalising the sensible world, and ontological and epistemological idealism can be combined with other theories of perception as well. For example, Kant and Berkeley have been equally interpreted as adverbialists, regarding ideas as certain *mental* modifications, states or acts rather than objects, and Kant has also been understood as an intentionalist, who takes appearances to be merely intentional objects or contents of the representational *mental* states (see Allais 2015, 37-43). Similar interpretative possibilities can be raised in the Yogācāra context as well, which I will discuss in more detail in 4.3.4.

2. Consciousness and the fourfold model of perception

In the introduction, we took a glance at some of the manifold terminological and conceptual apparatus Western scholars rely on in their discussions of perception. As we take our first steps in unpacking what Vasubandhu and his commentators have to say about similar issues, it seems reasonable to start with identifying the term, or rather terms, Vasubandhu uses to denote our notion of (sense) perception. This is hardly an easy task not only because the Buddhist tradition often carves out, so to speak, its concepts at different joints, but also because Buddhist thinkers provide various synonyms to describe the phenomenon of perception, or consciousness more generally, with each of them carrying their own subtle connotations.

A useful place to start our investigation is a passage from the *Viṃśikāvṛtti* where Vasubandhu identifies some of the key terms that standardly refer to what we might call 'consciousness' or 'cognition':

> [The terms] *citta*, *manas*, *vijñāna* and *vijñapti* are synonyms. *Citta* here is meant together with its concomitants.[55]

The passage has an obvious parallel both in the AK and the PSk (with the latter having as its starting point the conception of *vijñāna*):

> AK 2.34ab: [The terms] *citta*, *manas* and *vijñāna* denote the same thing.[56]
>
> PSk 16.7-8: What is *vijñāna*? It is the *vijñapti* of an object (*ālambana*). That [i.e. *vijñāna*] is also [referred to as] *citta* and *manas* […].[57]

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[55] ViṃśV$_{RS}$ 135.3-4: *cittaṃ mano vijñānaṃ vijñaptir iti paryāyāḥ | tac ca cittam atra sasaṃprayogam abhipretam* | Since the Sanskrit text here is a reconstruction, I give the Tibetan translation as well. ViṃśV 30.6-9: *sems dang yid dang | rnam par shes pa dang | rnam par rig pa zhes bya ba ni rnam grangs su gtogs pa'o || sems de yang 'dir mtshungs par ldan pa dang bcas par dgongs pa'o ||*

[56] AK 2.34ab: ***cittaṃ mano 'tha vijñānam ekārthaṃ |***

[57] PSk 16.7-8: *vijñānaṃ katamat | ālambanavijñaptiḥ | cittaṃ mano 'pi tat |*

Although various English translations have been proposed for these terms, since we are looking for the Sanskrit words that reflect our notion of perception the best, I will leave them untranslated for the time being. Vasubandhu does not add any further explanation to his claim in the *Viṃśikāvṛtti*, but his account is more helpful in the AKBh and the PSk.[58] As for the context of Vasubandhu's statement in the AKBh, it follows a detailed investigation of the *citta* and the individual *caitta*s or mental concomitants. Based on the way they are used in the scriptures, Vasubandhu argues that the terms *citta*, *manas* and *vijñāna* denote the same thing (*ekārtha*).[59] The reason I did not translate *ekārtha* as having the same *meaning* is that Vasubandhu in the *bhāṣya* points out that these expressions carry different connotations. Vasubandhu provides two distinct, though interconnected, sets of interpretation of *citta*, *manas* and *vijñāna* which combine both etymological and functional explanations:

> It is [called] *citta* because it accumulates. It is [called] *manas* because it thinks. It is [called] *vijñāna* because it cognises. According to others, it is [called] *citta* because it is accumulated with virtuous and non-virtuous elements. It is [called] *manas* because it is a support. It is [called] *vijñāna* because it is supported.[60]

The first set of explanations underlines that the mind or consciousness has multiple functions. The first is accumulation. As the AKVy specifies, according to the first set of

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[58] According to Vinītadeva, *paryāya* means words that have the same foundation or ground (*rgyu*), which arguably means the identity of their referential bases. He adds that Vasubandhu introduces these synonyms for the sake of clarifying the ambiguous terminology of the scriptures. PVṬ 173b5-6: *rgyu tha dad pa med pa'i sgra ni rnam grangs su gtogs pa zhes bya ba ste* | […] *rnam grangs su gtogs pa bzhi brjod pa ni gsung rab kyi tha snyad la mgo rmongs pa med par bya ba'i phyir ro* |

[59] La Vallée Poussin (1923, 176, n. 5) identifies two such scriptural passages: Dīgha Nikāya i.21 and Saṃyutta Nikāya ii.94.

[60] AKBh 61.23-62.1 *ad* AK 2.34ab: *cinotīti cittam* | *manuta iti manaḥ* | *vijānātīti vijñānam* | *citaṃ śubhāśubhair dhātubhir iti cittam* | *tad evāśrayabhūtaṃ manaḥ* | *āśritabhūtaṃ vijñānam ity apare* | Regarding the sentence '*citaṃ śubhāśubhair dhātubhir iti cittam*', La Vallée Poussin's French translation of the AKBh (La Vallée Poussin 1923, 177)—supported by Xuanzang's Chinese rendering—reads '*citraṃ*', i.e. 'variegated' instead of *citaṃ* (cf. Schmithausen 1987, 536, n. 1433.). Pradhan and Śastri, however, both have '*citaṃ*'. In his explanation of *citta*, Vasubandhu plays on the similarity of the words *citta* and *cita*. While *citta* is a derivative of the verbal root *cit*, meaning 'to perceive, understand, think, etc.' (the past passive participle of which is *citta*), he associates it with the verbal root *ci*, meaning 'to accumulate, pile up, heap up, etc.' (the past passive participle of which is *cita*). The etymological explanation Vasubandhu uses here is not uncommon in the Yogācāra sources, see Schmithausen 1987, 536, n. 1433.

interpretation, the mind is called *citta* because it "accumulates the good and the bad."[61] This is very similar to the second interpretation of *citta* insofar as both imply that the mind is responsible for the accumulation of virtuous and non-virtuous karmic potentialities. While Vasubandhu does not identify the proponents of the second set of ideas (as he only states that it is held by 'others'), Yaśomitra does associate, at least, the second conception of *citta* with the Sautrāntika and Yogācāra views on the accumulation of karmic imprints (*vāsanā*).[62]

Another function of the mind is thinking. As the AKBh suggests, when the mind is described as *manas*, it highlights that it serves as the locus of such intellectual activities as reasoning, reflecting or conceptualising. I will set aside the second interpretation of *manas* for a moment, and look at the third function of the mind, cognising. Such a description naturally raises the question of *what* the mind cognises. Although it is not addressed by Vasubandhu here, in AK 1.16a, he explains *vijñāna* as *prativijñapti*. The term is glossed by the commentary as a cognition (*vijñapti*) or apprehension (*upalabdhi*) which can be directed at various sense object (*viṣaya*).[63] It is also emphasised by Yaśomitra—as well as other definitions of *vijñāna*, such as the one cited from the PSk—that *vijñāna* is a cognition of objects (*ālambana*).[64] The second interpretation of *vijñāna* as being 'supported' (*āśrita*) overlaps, to some extent, with this object-oriented conception of *vijñāna*. As specified by Yaśomitra's commentary, "*vijñāna* is held to arise in dependence on the two".[65] In the early Buddhist and Abhidharmic literature, the 'two' typically refers to the two factors depending on which *vijñāna* arises: a support (*āśraya*), which is most

[61] AKVy 208.15-16: *cinotīti cittam iti | kuśalam akuśalaṃ vā cinotīty arthaḥ |*

[62] AKVy 208.18-19: *citaṃ śubhāśubhair dhātubhir iti cittaṃ | vāsanāsanniveśayogena sautrāntikamatena yogācāramatena vā |* Note that Yaśomitra substitutes *vāsanā* for *dhātu*. Cf. Engle 2009, 497, n. 479, who also claims that the word 'elements' (*dhātu*) in this AKBh passage refers to the *vāsanā*s.

[63] AK 1.16a: ***vijñānaṃ prativijñaptiḥ*** | AKBh 11.7: *viṣayaṃ viṣayaṃ prati vijñaptir upalabdhir vijñāna-skandha ity ucyate |*

[64] AKVy 208.17-18: *vijānāty ālambanam iti vijñānaṃ |*

[65] AKVy 208.21-22: *āśritabhāvāpekṣaṃ vijñānaṃ dvayaṃ pratītya vijñānasyotpattir iti vacanāt |*

often identified with the sense faculties (*indriya*), and an object (which can be denoted by various terms, such as *artha*, *viṣaya* or *ālambana*).[66] Therefore, Yaśomitra's explanation suggests that the term 'supported' means that *vijñāna* arises in dependence upon a sense faculty and a sense object. Considering, however, that the word *āśraya* predominantly refers to the *indriya*s with which, as we will see in the next chapter, consciousness has a closer connection, it is possible that Vasubandhu had the sense faculties in mind specifically.

Returning to the second interpretation of *manas*, by construing it as a support (*āśraya*) the passage seems to introduce a 'faculty-like' conception of the mind arguably referring to the *manas* as the *indriya* assigned to the *manovijñāna*. This is, however, not the only possible interpretation. Concerning *manas* defined as a support, Yaśomitra quotes another verse from the AK (1.17ab) according to which, "of the six [*vijñāna*s], the *vijñāna* which has just gone out of existence is the *manas*."[67] As the context of the verse indicates, there was a considerable debate whether the *manas* should be regarded as something distinct from the *vijñāna*s or not, in which Vasubandhu endorsed the negative stance.[68] As he reiterates the idea in the *bhāṣya*, "whichever *vijñāna* has ceased in the immediately preceding [moment] is said to be the *manas* element (*manodhātu*)". He also provides two helpful similes which clarify the relation between the *manas* and the *vijñāna*s, construed as *āśraya* and *āśrita*, respectively. Vasubandhu compares the *manas* to "a son [who] is [also] the father of another, or a fruit [which] is [also] the seed of another."[69] Explaining the

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[66] I will discuss the conception of *āśraya* in detail in chapter three and the objects of perception (including the different connotations of these terms) in chapter four.

[67] AKVy 208.20-21: *āśrayabhāvāpekṣaṃ manaḥ ṣaṇṇām anantarātītaṃ vijñānaṃ yad dhi tan manaḥ ity arthaparigrahāt* | On the evolution of the conception of *manas*, see Kramer 2016a, 158-163.

[68] For some sources that posit a *manas* distinct from the *vijñāna*s, see Sangpo 2012, 393, n. 224. It is worth noting here that according to Yaśomitra, the Yogācāras also hold the *manas* to be distinct from the six *vijñāna*s, AKVy 52.15-16: *yogācāradarśanena tu ṣaḍvijñānavyatirikto 'py asti manodhātuḥ* |

[69] AKBh 11.22-23 *ad* AK 1.17ab: *yad yat samanantaraniruddhaṃ vijñānaṃ tan manodhātur ity ucyeta* | *tad yathā sa eva putro 'nyasya pitā bhavati tad eva phalam anyasya bījam iti* | $AKBh_S$ 51.8-10 has a somewhat different reading, but the content is the same.

similes, Vasubandhu says that the same man at the same time can be considered a son from the perspective of his father, and a father from the perspective of his offspring. The image of the fruit is essentially the same: the fruit is the result of the development of a plant's seed, but, at the same time, the fruit with its seeds is the cause of new plants bringing new fruits. The same is true of the relationship between the *manas* and the *vijñāna*s. The *manas*, as we have seen, is only a name given to any *vijñāna* (whether it is visual, auditory, mental, etc.) that has just ceased in the previous moment and serves as the basis (*āśraya*) of the next *vijñāna*. This new instance of *vijñāna* being supported by the previous one can also be considered a *manas* itself from the point of view of the next moment of consciousness. Therefore, considering the same mental phenomenon as a support (i.e. *manas*) or something supported (i.e. *vijñāna*) is only a matter of perspective.

It should be noted that the *manas* is not limited to serve as the support of the *manovijñāna*. As Vasubandhu in AK 1.44cd and its commentary emphasises, every type of *vijñāna* has a *manas*, i.e. an immediately preceding moment of consciousness, as its support:

> **The support of the last one [i.e. the *manovijñāna*] is past,**
> The support of the mental consciousness element (*manovijñānadhātu*) is the *manas* that has ceased in the previous moment.
> **[the support] of the five is also simultaneous.**
> The word 'also' means [simultaneous] as well as past. Among these, the eye is the simultaneous support of the visual consciousness, up to the body [which is the simultaneous support] of the tactile consciousness. The support of these is also the *manas* which is past, [therefore] these five groups of consciousness have two sense faculties as their support.[70]

According to this passage, the last, i.e. the sixth *vijñāna*, namely the *manovijñāna*, has only one support, the *vijñāna* that has just ceased in the immediately antecedent moment. Therefore, the *manovijñāna*, unlike the other forms of *vijñāna*, does not have a

[70] AKBh 34.6-10 *ad* AK 1.44cd: ***caramasyāśrayo 'tītaḥ*** | *manovijñānadhātoḥ samanantaraniruddhaṃ mana āśrayaḥ* | ***pañcānāṃ sahajaś ca taiḥ*** || *atītaś ceti caśabdaḥ* | *tatra cakṣurvijñānasya cakṣuḥ sahaja āśrayo yāvat kāyavijñānasya kāyaḥ* | *atītaḥ punar eṣām āśrayo mana ity apy ete pañca vijñānakāyā indriyadvayāśrayāḥ* |

simultaneously existing support. The other five *vijñāna*s, by contrast, have both a simultaneous support, i.e. their respective sense faculty, and a past *āśraya*, the *manas*, a similar instance of *vijñāna*, which is regarded as the similar-immediate condition (*samanantarapratyaya*) of consciousness (see also Waldron 1994, 248, n. 114). Accordingly, Vasubandhu's remark that the *manas* is an *āśraya* (and *vijñāna* is an *āśrita*) should be, presumably, taken in the broader sense that the *manas* serves as the support of all sense consciousnesses, as opposed to being the unique support or even 'faculty' of the *manovijñāna*.

After looking at Vasubandhu's distinction of the three functions of the mind (accumulation, thinking and cognising) in the AK(Bh), it seems that its *vijñāna* aspect (and its cognate *vijñapti*, i.e. 'making known') comes closest to our conception of perception. Although these terms cover more than our notion of sense perception (for instance, as we will see, according to the Yogācāras, the [*kliṣṭa*]*manas* and the *ālayavijñāna* are also forms of *vijñāna*, which, however, do not cognise distinct sense objects), the *vijñāna*s include the perceptual processes by which we acquire information about the external reality. Their arising depends on two factors, their sense faculties or *āśraya*s, and their objects. Just like our notion of 'perception' or 'cognition', *vijñāna* and *vijñapti* can indicate both the process of perceiving and its result, the mental state or 'percept'. Nonetheless, due to its wider range of meaning, I usually translate *vijñāna* as 'consciousness', while *vijñapti* as 'cognition' or even, if the context makes it clear, 'perception' (and, occasionally, quite literally as 'making known'). In light of their manifold connotations, it is almost impossible to settle on a single translation that works equally well in every context.

As we have seen at the beginning of this chapter, the equation of *citta*, *manas* and *vijñāna* appears in the PSk as well. This passage allows us to further clarify the connotations of these terms and introduce some additional ones Vasubandhu and

Sthiramati used to denote perception. The text, as its title indicates, revolves around the discussion of the five aggregates, and our passage deals with the *vijñāna skandha* in particular.[71] Like the AK(Bh), it glosses *vijñāna* as the perception of an object (*ālambanavijñapti*). Then the term is identified with '*citta*' and '*manas*', just as we have seen above. It is noteworthy that, in contrast to the *Viṃśikāvṛtti*, neither the AK(Bh) nor the PSk adds *vijñapti* to their list of synonyms. According to Hall (1986, 13), Vasubandhu's reason for listing *vijñapti* as a fourth synonym in the *Viṃśikā* might have been that *vijñapti* "designates the basic phenomenon of conscious experience, without requiring its separation into object, subject, and act of cognition". The way *vijñapti* is used in Vasubandhu's *oeuvre*, however, does not seem to justify such an interpretation, since even in his Yogācāra works, *vijñapti* is generally mentioned in the context of the cognition of an *object*, such as in the PSk (e.g. *ālambanavijñapti*) or the *Triṃśikā* (e.g. *viṣayavijñapti*). While it does not appear in the list of synonyms, both the PSk and the AK(Bh) mention *vijñapti* in their definitions of *vijñāna*. Accordingly, Vasubandhu's decision in the *Viṃśikā* to list it among the other synonyms seems to be a rather natural step towards gathering the various technical terms that refer to our mental processes.

Since Vasubandhu in the PSk presents his ideas very succinctly, it is worthwhile to look at Sthiramati's PSkV at this point. Regarding Vasubandhu's definition of *vijñāna* as *ālambanavijñapti*, Sthiramati notes that the objects of perception are of six kinds, from the visible objects to the *dharma*s, indicating the first and last group on the list of objects the sense faculties can be directed at.[72] In our search of terms that have the meaning of perception, it is important to note that Sthiramati provides further synonyms, now for *vijñapti*. According to him, *vijñapti* is interchangeable with *grahaṇa*, *avabodha*, and

[71] For a detailed exposition of the *vijñāna skandha* in the PSk and the PSkV, see Kramer 2014.

[72] PSkV 89.1-2: *sa punaḥ ṣaṭprakāraḥ rūpaṃ yāvad dharmāḥ* |

pratipatti.[73] As we have seen earlier, Vasubandhu in the AKBh (11.7) presents *upalabdhi* as yet another equivalent of *vijñapti*. Not each of these equivalents are mentioned by Vasubandhu as often as the others. In addition to *vijñāna* and *vijñapti*, he most often uses *grahaṇa* (and its related forms such as in the expression *grāhya-grāhaka*, the 'grasped and the grasper') and *upalabdhi*.

The explanations of *citta* and *manas* Vasubandhu provides in the PSk are reminiscent of, albeit not entirely the same as, the AKBh's account we have seen above. According to the PSk, *vijñāna* can be referred to as *citta* because it is variegated (*citra*). While the AKBh (61.23-62.1) traces the word *citta* back to *cita*, *citra* is another frequent etymological explanation of the term (see also fn. 60). The rationale behind describing *vijñāna* as *manas*, however, seems to be the same: it is regarded as a "*manas*-support" (*manaḥsanniśrayatā*) insofar as it serves as a support of the next moment of *vijñāna*. Alternatively, we can translate *manaḥsanniśrayatā* as *vijñāna* "having the *manas* as its support", suggesting, like AK 1.44cd, that every *vijñāna* is supported by a *manas* as one of its *āśraya*s.[74]

Sthiramati offers further clarifications here as well. He explains the variegated (*citra*) nature of *vijñāna* as referring to the diversity of the objects of perception. He says that "since the manifesting consciousnesses (*pravṛttivijñāna*) have the nature of the perception (*prativijñapti*) of objects (*ālambana*), and the perception of objects have multiple forms, the visual and other forms of consciousness arise as variegated."[75] The term *prativijñapti* is reminiscent of the terminology of the AK (1.16a) as well as the *Abhidharmasamuccaya*,[76] but its meaning does not seem to differ significantly from that of *vijñapti*. The AKVy

[73] PSkV 89.2-3: *tasya vijñaptir grahaṇam avabodhaḥ pratipattir ity arthaḥ* |

[74] PSk 16.7-8: *cittaṃ mano 'pi tat* | *citratāṃ manaḥsanniśrayatāṃ copādāya* |

[75] PSkV 89.10-12: *tatra pravṛttivijñānasyālambanaprativijñaptisvarūpatvād ālambanasya ca prativijñānam anekākāratvāc cakṣurādivijñānaṃ citram utpadyate* |

[76] See the definitions of the various forms of *vijñāna*, e.g: AS 19.18: *cakṣurvijñānaṃ katamat* | *cakṣurāśrayā rūpālambanā prativijñaptiḥ* |

simply takes *prati* to be synonymous with *vīpsā*, meaning 'successive' or 'repeated'.[77] It is worth noting that Sthiramati's explanation also has a parallel in Vasubandhu's KSP (31), which similarly describes the sense consciousnesses as variegated (*sna tshogs pa*) on account of having various objects, forms and characteristics.[78]

It is also important to highlight that Sthiramati uses the term '*pravṛttivijñāna*', i.e. 'manifest consciousness', as a collective term for the six *vijñāna*s.[79] In this regard, he follows Vasubandhu's terminology, who, as we will see below, also refers to the six consciousnesses as *pravṛttivijñāna*s in the *vijñāna* section of the PSk. The term *pravṛttivijñāna* indicates the contrast between the six manifest forms of *vijñāna* which operate on the supraliminal level, and the two unmanifest or subliminal forms of *vijñāna*, the [*kliṣṭa*]*manas* and the *ālayavijñāna*. Moreover, the expression also highlights that the *pravṛttivijñāna*s arise discontinuously while the *ālayavijñāna* functions uninterruptedly (cf. Waldron 2003, 12, 92-93). Regarding the synonymity of *vijñāna* and *manas*, Sthiramati notes that the *manas* is "the support of the immediately following moment of *citta*".[80] As he expounds this idea, "whichever of the six consciousnesses, visual and so on, ceases, it is regarded as the support of the immediately arising consciousness. Therefore, on account of being the support of the immediately following *citta*, it is called *manas*."[81]

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[77] AKVy 50.25: *pratir vīpsārthaḥ* | Accordingly, Engle (2009, 327 and 497, n. 477) translates *prativijñapti* as "recurrent awareness".

[78] KSP (31) 197.20-22: *sems ni rnam pa gnyis te* | […] *gnyis pa ni de'i dmigs pa dang* | *rnam pa dang* | *bye brag tha dad pa dag gis sna tshogs pa yin no* |

[79] PSkV 89.3-4: *sā punaḥ ṣaṭ pravṛttivijñānāni cakṣurvijñānaṃ yāvan manovijñānam* | Sthiramati in the TrBh also posits six *pravṛttivijñāna*s clearly distinguishing them both from the [*kliṣṭa*]*manas* and the *ālayavijñāna*. (TrBh 48.19-20 and 62.20-21.) However, as Delhey (2016, 18-20) points it out, one passage of the *Madhyāntavibhāgaṭīkā* (traditionally also attributed to Sthiramati) talks about seven *pravṛttivijñāna*s, including the *kliṣṭamanas* as well. The authorship of the *Madhyāntavibhāgaṭīkā*, however, is debated, see Kramer 2016b, who does not regard it as the work of the author of the PSk and the TrBh. It is worthwhile to note that verse 6 of the TSN also enumerates seven *pravṛttivijñāna*s. TSN 6: ***tad dhetuphalabhāvena cittaṃ dvividham iṣyate | yad ālayākhyavijñānaṃ pravṛttyākhyaṃ ca saptadhā ||***

[80] PSkV 89.9-10: *samanantaracittasanniśrayatām upādāya mana iti* |

[81] PSkV 90.1-4: *tathā ṣaṇṇāṃ cakṣurādivijñānānāṃ yad yan nirudhyate tat tad anantarasya vijñānasyotpadyamānasyāśrayabhāvena vyavatiṣṭhata ity ataḥ samanantaracittasanniśrayatām upādāya mana ity ucyate* |

What makes Vasubandhu's discussion in the PSk even more important is that it presents the Yogācāra adaptation of the early Buddhist and Abhidharmic understanding of the threefold functioning of the mind. This adaptation, as we will see it shortly, reappears in the *Triṃśikā* as well. In the PSk, Vasubandhu says that:

> Primarily, *citta* is the store consciousness since it is accumulated with the seeds of all karmic formations. […] Primarily, *manas* is the consciousness which has the store consciousness as its object, and which is always accompanied by delusion about the self, the false view of the self, self-pride, self-love, etc.[82]

Vasubandhu's explanation shows that the *citta* and *manas* aspects of *vijñāna* can be identified, respectively, with the store consciousness (*ālayavijñāna*) and what is labelled by Sthiramati's commentary, the defiled mind (*kliṣṭamanas*). Although, previously, Vasubandhu, and following him Sthiramati, explained *citta* by tracing it back to the term *citra*, his description of the store consciousness appeals to the alternative etymological analysis we have seen in the AKBh (61.23-62.1). The store consciousness is said to be *citta* because it is where the seeds of karmic formations (*saṃskāra*) are accumulated (*cita*).[83] This shift might indicate that *cita* was the etymological explanation preferred by the Yogācāras (which was suggested by the AKVy as well) because it is more in line with the function of the *ālayavijñāna*.

While discussing the notion of *ālayavijñāna*, Vasubandhu makes it clear that the *pravṛttivijñāna*s constitute a layer of consciousness different from their source, the *ālayavijñāna* (i.e. *citta*). Arguing for the existence of the *ālayavijñāna*, Vasubandhu remarks that "for someone who has arisen from the meditative attainment of cessation,

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[82] PSk 16.8-17.8: *prādhānyena punaś cittam ālayavijñānam | tathā hi tac citaṃ sarvasaṃskārabījaiḥ |* […] *prādhānyena mana ālayavijñānālambanaṃ sadātmamohātmadṛṣṭyātmamānātmasnehādi samprayuktaṃ vijñānam* […] |

[83] It is worth noting that verse 7 of the TSN skilfully combines the two etymological explanations. Just like the PSk, it says that the *ālayavijñāna* should be understood in terms of *cita* as it is accumulated with the imprints of defilements, while, in a way reminiscent of Sthiramati's PSkV, interprets the *pravṛttivijñāna*s as being *citra*, because they arise in variegated or diverse (*citra*) forms. TSN 7: ***saṃkleśavāsanābījaiś citatvāc cittam ucyate | cittam ādyaṃ dvitīyaṃ tu citrākārapravṛttitaḥ ||***

from the meditative attainment of non-perception, or from the [state] of beings without perception, the *pravṛttivijñāna*s, that is, the so-called perception of objects (*viṣayavijñapti*), arise again [from the *ālayavijñāna*]".[84] This suggests that Vasubandhu preferred the concept of (*pravṛtti*)*vijñāna* as a characterisation of that aspect of the mind that is defined as 'the perception of objects' (*viṣayavijñapti* or, as we have seen above, *ālambanavijñapti*).[85] Regarding the *manas*, Vasubandhu keeps its traditional name both in the PSk and the *Triṃśikā*. However, since it is always accompanied by self-related defilements, Sthiramati describes it as 'defiled' (*kliṣṭa*).[86]

The KSP's commitment to the three functions of the mind is less articulated than that of the PSk (or, as we will see it shortly, the *Triṃśikā*), which might be an indication that it was composed earlier. In KSP (31), Vasubandhu differentiates only between two kinds of mind (*sems*). The first one accumulates seeds, which, as the previous passage, KSP (30), suggests, is a reference to the maturation consciousness (*rnam par smin pa'i rnam par shes pa*, i.e. *vipākavijñāna*).[87] As such, the KSP also seems to refer to the etymological explanation '*cita*' in the case of the *ālayavijñāna*. The second form(s) of consciousness, which, based on KSP (30), refer to the six collections of consciousness (*rnam par shes pa'i tshogs drug*), are said to be variegated because they have manifold objects, forms and characteristics. Here Vasubandhu appeals to the etymological explanation '*citra*'.[88]

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[84] PSk 16.11-17.2: *yato nirodhasamāpattyasañjñisamāpattyāsañjñikebhyo vyutthitasya punar viṣayavijñapty-ākhyaṃ pravṛttivijñānam utpadyata* […]

[85] For a similar reading in the works of Asaṅga, see Skorupski 2014, 59.

[86] Although Vasubandhu simply refers to this layer of consciousness as *manas*, for the sake of unambiguity I will follow Sthiramati's terminology and call it [*kliṣṭa*]*manas*.

[87] The *vipākavijñāna* and the *ālayavijñāna* are equated in KSP (33). On this passage and the notion of *vipākavijñāna* appearing in this passage, see Schmithausen 1987, 257-258, n. 78.

[88] KSP (31) 197.20-22: *sems ni rnam pa gnyis te | de la gcig ni de'i sa bon rnams bsags pa yin no || gnyis pa ni de'i dmigs pa dang | rnam pa dang | bye brag tha dad pa dag gis sna tshogs pa yin no* || See also KSP (30) 197.11-19. Verse 6 of the TSN also distinguishes between two aspects of the mind. However, its distinction is different from that of the KSP, as the TSN distinguishes them with respect to causality. According to the text, the mind is both a cause and a result. *Citta* as a cause refers to the *ālayavijñāna*, whereas *citta* as a result stands for the seven forms of *pravṛttivijñāna*, which also includes the [*kliṣṭa*]*manas*. TSN 6: ***tad dhetuphalabhāvena cittaṃ dvividham iṣyate | yad ālayākhyavijñānaṃ pravṛttyākhyaṃ ca saptadhā ||***

Despite distinguishing only two forms of consciousness here, in a later passage (KSP 49) he mentions the *manas*. After identifying it with *vijñāna*, he describes it in terms reminiscent of the negative characterisation of the [*kliṣṭa*]*manas,* claiming that it produces a sense of 'I' and that is inclined towards future births and sense objects.[89]

As I mentioned, the Yogācāra adaptation of the threefold functioning of the mind also appears in the *Triṃśikā*, with the first half of the work revolving around the explication of the nature of these three layers of consciousness and their interaction. In the first verse, Vasubandhu sorts the eight forms of consciousness posited by the Yogācāras into three groups:

> The superimpositions of the self and the *dharma*s, which proceed in manifold ways, refer to the transformation of consciousness. And that transformation is threefold: maturation, the so-called thinking and the perception of objects.[90]

Vasubandhu's discussion of the three aspects of the mind in the *Triṃśikā* is similar to the PSk insofar as its starting point is also the conception of *vijñāna*. As Vasubandhu claims, *vijñāna* can transform into three different forms and, accordingly, fulfil three different functions: maturation (*vipāka*), which is said to belong to the *ālayavijñāna*, thinking or reflection (*manana*), which is connected to the *manas*, and the perception of objects, which, as he later clarifies, is of six kinds (*viṣayavijñapti*).[91] Unlike in the PSk and the AK(Bh), Vasubandhu does not engage in an etymological analysis or provide definitions of the terms he uses in the *Triṃśikā*. We can, however, piece a definition of *vijñāna* together from the bits of information scattered in the TrBh. According to Sthiramati,

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While the *Triṃśikā* itself does not appeal to this twofold distinction, Sthiramati introduces the idea in the TrBh (48.15-22).

[89] KSP (49) 204.6-7: *rnam par shes pa ni yid de | nga yir byas pa'i phyir ram | skye ba gzhan dang | yul la gzhol bar byed pa'i phyir yid do |*

[90] Triṃś 1-2ab: ***ātmadharmopacāro hi vividho yaḥ pravartate | vijñānapariṇāme 'sau pariṇāmaḥ sa ca tridhā || vipāko mananākhyaś ca vijñaptir viṣayasya ca |***

[91] Triṃś 2cd: ***tatrālayākhyaṃ vijñānaṃ vipākaḥ sarvabījakam ||*** Triṃś 5cd: ***tadālambaṃ manonāma vijñānaṃ mananātmakam ||*** Triṃś 5bc: ***tṛtīyaḥ ṣaḍvidhasya yā | viṣayasyopalabdhiḥ*** […] ||

vijñāna ‘cognises’ or ‘apprehends’ (*vijānāti*).[92] This explanation is identical with the one seen in the AKBh (61.24). Sthiramati furthermore claims that each consciousness (even the *ālayavijñāna* and the [*kliṣṭa*]*manas*) has an object (*ālambana*), a support (*āśraya*), an object-form or mode of grasping (*ākāra*) and is necessarily associated with certain mental concomitants (*caitta*).[93] While it is Sthiramati who identifies these constituents in the TrBh, most elements can be extracted from the *Triṃśikā* itself. For instance, in verse 5, Vasubandhu notes that the *manas* has an *āśraya* and an *ālambana*, both of which refer to the *ālayavijñāna*.[94] It is worth noting here that the term *āśraya* is also used as an epithet in place of the *ālayavijñāna* in the *Triṃśikā* in the context of *āśrayaparāvṛtti*, i.e. the ‘transformation of the support’.[95] Also, Vasubandhu dedicates a considerable part of the text (vv. 10-14.) to the enumeration of the mental concomitants that can accompany the various forms of consciousnesses. While the *Triṃśikā* does not explicitly mention the term *ākāra*, as we will see in chapter four, Vasubandhu’s claim that the *ālayavijñāna* has unconscious or not fully recognisable (*asaṃviditaka*) perceptions can be taken as a reference to the form or mode (*ākāra*) in which it grasps its objects.[96]

That Sthiramati’s description of the fourfold model of perception was influenced by the AK(Bh) becomes clear if we juxtapose AK 2.34bcd and its commentary with the TrBh’s characterisation of *vijñāna*. The AK(Bh) enumerates the same elements with regard to *citta* (which, as we have seen, is synonymous or coreferential with *vijñāna*) as Sthiramati. AK 2.34bcd claims that the mind and its concomitants have a support (*āśraya*), an object (*ālambana*), a mode of grasping or object-form (*ākāra*) and are associated with each other

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[92] TrBh 50.17: *vijānātīti vijñānam* |

[93] TrBh 62.5: *na ca vijñānam āśrayālambananirapekṣaṃ yujyata ity* […] TrBh 50.20-21: *na hi nirālambanaṃ nirākāraṃ vā vijñānaṃ yujyate* | TrBh 54.8: *vijñānañ cāvaśyaṃ caittaiḥ saṃprayuktam* | I will refer to this description in the dissertation as the ‘fourfold model of perception’.

[94] Triṃś 5bcd: ***tad āśritya pravartate | tadālambaṃ manonāma vijñānam mananātmakam*** ||

[95] Triṃś 29: *acitto 'nupalambo 'sau jñānaṃ lokottaraṅ ca tat | āśrayasya parāvṛttir dvidhādauṣṭhulyahānitaḥ* || TrBh 140.4-5: *āśrayasya parāvṛttir iti | āśrayo ‘tra sarvabījakam ālayavijñānam* |

[96] Triṃś 3ab: ***asaṃviditakopādisthānavijñaptikaṅ ca tat |***

(*samprayukta*).'[97] The *bhāṣya* also offers some brief clarifications on what these constituents mean in the Abhidharmic context. For example, it says that the mind and its concomitants have a support, because they are supported by the *indriya*s. They are also said to have an object (*ālambana*) because they apprehend a sense object (*viṣaya*). The *bhāṣya*'s remarks concerning *ākāra* are very ambiguous. However, as we will see in chapter four, it can be interpreted either as the specific mode according to which the *citta* and the *caitta*s grasp or operate towards their objects, or as the form they take on corresponding to their object. According to the text, that the *citta* and the *caitta*s are associated with each other means that they operate similarly.[98]

We can find these elements in Vasubandhu's transitional works as well, although not quite as systematically as in the AK(Bh) or Sthiramati's TrBh. For instance, in KSP (37) he claims that (in contrast to those of the *ālayavijñāna*) the *āśraya* (*rten*), *ālambana* (*dmigs pa*), *ākāra* (*rnam pa*) and distinguishing features (*bye brag*, presumably *viśeṣa*) of the six *vijñāna*s are discernible (*yongs su chad pa*). The passage also mentions that these forms of consciousness are connected both with defilements (*nyon mongs pa*) and their antidotes (*gnyen po*), which is a reference to their association with non-virtuous and virtuous *caitta*s.[99] Some of these factors also appear elsewhere in the KSP. Besides KSP (31) we looked at earlier, in KSP (29) Vasubandhu asks his opponent to tell what the *ālambana* and *ākāra* of the mental consciousness would be if it were, as the opponent presumes,

[97] AK 2.34bcd: ***cittacaitasāḥ | sāśrayālambanākārāḥ samprayuktāś ca |***

[98] AKBh 62.5-7: *ta eva hi cittacaittāḥ sāśrayā ucyante indriyāśritatvāt sālambanā viṣayagrahaṇāt sākārās tasyaivālambanasya prakāraśa ākaraṇāt samprayuktāḥ samaṃ prayuktatvāt |*

[99] KSP (37) 200.6-9: *gang zhig rten dang | dmigs pa dang | rnam pa dang | bye brag yongs su chad pa'i phyir rags pa dang | gang zhig la nyon mongs pa dang de'i gnyen po dang mtshungs par ldan pa'i phyir kun nas nyon mongs pa dang | rnam par byang ba rnam par bzhag pa dang |*

present in *nirodhasamāpatti*. In KSP (36), on the other hand, it is the opponent who asks Vasubandhu to specify what the *ālambana* and *ākāra* of the *ālayavijñāna* are.[100]

As for the PSK, regarding the six *vijñāna*s, Vasubandhu notes that they are forms of cognition (*vijñapti*) that are supported by (*saṃniśrita*) the eye, etc. and have visual forms, etc. as their objects (*ālambana*).[101] He also mentions the *ākāra* in connection with the *ālayavijñāna* as he claims that the store consciousness has its respective *ākāra* and *ālambana*, but they cannot be discerned or determined (*aparicchinna*).[102] It is worth noting that even though he does not use the term *āśraya* for the *ālayavijñāna*, as we will see it in the next chapter, the function due to which it is generally regarded by the Yogācāras as a support of perception is discussed in this treatise as well. Moreover, just like in the *Triṃśikā*, Vasubandhu dedicates a significant portion of the text to the elucidation of the *caitta*s concomitant of the mind. Thus, most works of Vasubandhu corroborate that he equally endorsed the fourfold model of perception put forward explicitly by Sthiramati in the TrBh. It is more difficult to extract this model from Vasubandhu's *Viṃśikā*. This can, however, be explained by the different character of that work, as it aims to give an argumentative defence of the *vijñaptimātratā* teaching, as opposed to laying out the key doctrines of the tradition.

After looking at the variety of terms used by Vasubandhu and Sthiramati to describe perception, in this chapter we have seen that Vasubandhu preserved, even in his Yogācāra works, both the Abhidharmic threefold functioning of the mind and the fourfold model of perception. Regarding the three functions of the mind, he brought them in line with Yogācāra notions, most notably by equating *citta* with the *ālayavijñāna*, the *manas* with

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[100] KSP (36) 199.17-18: *'o na de'i dmigs pa dang | rnam pa ci yin zhe na | dmigs pa dang | rnam pa ma chad pa yin no* | KSP (29) 196.26-28: *gal te 'gog pa'i snyoms pa'i zhugs pa rnams la yid kyi rnam par shes pa de yod na de'i dmigs pa dang rnam pa ci zhig yin* |

[101] PSk 20.2-3: *ṣaḍ vijñānadhātavaś cakṣurādisanniśritā rūpādyālambanā vijñaptayaḥ* |

[102] PSk 16.10: *tat punar aparicchinnālambanākāraṃ* […] |

the [*kliṣṭa*]*manas*, and the *vijñāna* aspect (primarily) with the *pravṛttivijñāna*s. While on the surface, the fourfold model of perception outlined in his Abhidharma and Yogācāra works seems to be essentially the same, it requires a detailed comparison to find out whether the matching labels cover the same ideas. Therefore, in the rest of the dissertation, I will go through the four constituents of the perceptual process individually to see whether Vasubandhu and Sthiramati similarly adapt these terms to the Yogācāra context. More specifically I will look at how these concepts developed in the various strata of Vasubandhu's *oeuvre* and how they relate to their Abhidharmic counterparts. While all the constituents of the fourfold model are relevant to each form of consciousness, since my primary interest lies in the five ordinary forms of sense perception specifically, I will investigate the rest, namely the *manovijñāna*, the [*kliṣṭa*]*manas*, and the *ālayavijñāna*, only to the extent they are relevant to the arising, functioning and phenomenology of sense perception.

3. The support (*āśraya*) of perception

Of the four constituents of the perceptual process, I will investigate first the concept of *āśraya*. As we have seen very briefly in the previous chapter, in the Abhidharmic theory of perception it refers primarily to the sense faculties which give rise (in collaboration with the objects) to the consciousnesses. It is, however, not only their respective sense faculties that serve as the support of the various *vijñāna*s, but the five sense perceptions are held to be supported by a 'second' *āśraya* as well, the *manas*. Before discussing how the *āśraya* of perception is (re)interpreted in the Yogācāra works of Vasubandhu and their commentaries by Sthiramati, it is worth exploring in detail how the concept is understood in the AK(Bh) in general, what the characteristics of the sense faculties are, and how they contribute to the arising of perception.

3.1. The concept of *āśraya* in the AK(Bh)

3.1.1. *Āśraya* as a support in dependence relations

The term *āśraya* is used in manifold ways in the AK(Bh). This comes from the fact that its basic meaning is quite generic. It can denote virtually any entity or event on which another depends, and it occurs in a variety of contexts ranging from how a wall supports a painting to philosophically more complex ideas such as ontological dependence. Despite the plasticity of its usage, we can find some recurring and distinct technical applications of the term in the AK(Bh). If we survey its occurrences in the text, we see that the word *āśraya* (a noun derived from the root *ā*-√*śri* meaning, in its most general sense, to rest, lean or depend on) frequently appears in the context of asymmetric dependence relationships. By

this I mean those relationships where one relatum depends on another, but not the other way round. For instance, to use a popular Buddhist example, there cannot be fire without fuel, but there can be fuel without fire.[103] As such, *āśraya* is contrasted with the notion of *āśrita* (a past passive participle of the same root) indicating something that is supported by or based on that *āśraya*. In this *basic meaning*, *āśraya* or its variants are typically predicated (as in 'X is an *āśraya* of Y') of any phenomenon that in the given context functions as a support of another.

The ways an entity may depend on another are various. Probably the most straightforward case is when it depends on something else for its *existence*, like fire does on fuel. Such existential dependence relations include one-off generative causes as well as more sustained, so-called ontological dependence relations. This latter refers to relationships where an entity requires another entity not simply for its arising but its continued existence, hence they are sometimes held to indicate a 'deeper' ontological relation than mere causal dependence (Ney 2014, 54-55, Tahko and Lowe 2020). For instance, in a quotation attributed to the Buddha, it is said that "poems are based on (*saṃniśrita*) words, and the poet is the basis (*āśraya*) of the poems."[104] It is clear that the way the poem depends on the poet is completely different to how the poem depends on its words. While the poet is only a one-off generative cause where the supported, that is the poem, can exist independently, even long after the cessation of its support, the poem only persists as long as the words constituting it exist. For describing the relationship between the poem and its words the text does not use the term *āśrita* but the related variant *saṃniśrita*. A similar contrast between these two terms can be observed in another passage of the AKBh concerning the relation between the four great elements (earth, water, fire,

[103] Besides their asymmetric existential relationship, fuel and fire also stand in a notional dependence relationship. In this sense, fuel also depends on fire, since we only call a heap of wood 'fuel' when we consider it in relation to the fire it might sustain.

[104] AKBh 81.23 *ad* AK 2.47ab: *nāmasaṃniśritā gāthā gāthānāṃ kavir āśrayaḥ iti* |

and wind) and one specific type of derivative material form accepted by the Vaibhāṣikas, the so-called unmanifest or non-informative material form (*avijñaptirūpa*).[105] The AKBh differentiates those past great elements of the body (involved in the manifest bodily or vocal actions) which served as the cause of the arising (*pravṛttikāraṇa*) of *avijñaptirūpa*, considering them to be its *āśraya*, and those present great elements of the body which are the cause of its persistence (*anuvṛttikāraṇa*), calling them its *saṃniśraya*.[106] It is important to note that the moral character of *avijñaptirūpa*, that is whether it is virtuous (*kuśala*, *śubha*) or non-virtuous (*akuśala*, *aśubha*), is defined by the moral nature of the manifest action that gave rise to it (AK 1.11 and AKBh 8.3-6).

On the basis of these examples, we might suppose that *āśraya* is used in the sense of being a one-off generative cause. However, if we survey the term's occurrences in the text, we find no such consistent terminological difference, and, in fact, *āśraya*—when used in its basic meaning—predominantly features in ontological dependence relations. Although it is sometimes challenging to fit the Buddhist examples into these categories, various forms of ontological dependence relations are differentiated in contemporary philosophical literature. These include cases where the support determines all properties of the supported, for example, *mereological dependence*, that is, the relation wholes bear to their parts, or *supervenience*, ordinarily defined as the impossibility of a change in a thing (property or fact) without there being a corresponding change in the thing (property or fact) it depends on (Ney 2014, 55-56).[107] S*ubstance-attribute* dependence, that is the idea that attributes need a substance for their existence, is also often discussed as a form of

[105] *Avijñaptirūpa* plays a crucial role in explaining the karmic efficacy of bodily and vocal actions in Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika Abhidharma. On Vasubandhu's views on *avijñaptirūpa* see Dowling 1976, Gold 2021.

[106] AKBh 199.18-20 *ad* AK 4.4cd: *prathamāt kṣaṇād ūrdhvam avijñaptiḥ kāmāvacarī atītāni mahābhūtāny upādāyotpadyate | tāny asyā āśrayārthena bhavanti | pratyutpannāni śarīramahābhūtāni saṃniśrayārthena | pravṛttyanuvṛttikāraṇatvād yathākramam |*

[107] These categories, however, are not necessarily mutually exclusive, since mereological dependence is sometimes considered to be a form of supervenience, see Kim 2005 (especially pp. 567-568).

ontological dependence (Tahko and Lowe 2020). Even though it is not standard in modern classifications, based on its broader definition seen above, it is also worthwhile to include any cause required for the sustained existence of another entity in the category of ontological dependence relations.

The AK(Bh) discusses various *āśraya-āśrita* dependence relations that can be fruitfully analysed in terms of ontological dependence or one of its sub-categories. Such *āśraya-āśrita* relationships include for example that between fuel and fire, the great elements (*mahābhūta*) and the derivative material forms (*upādāyarūpa*), or the eagerly criticised non-Buddhist conception of the *ātman* as an underlying substance of its various qualities (*guṇa*), for instance sensation or memory (on these, see Szanyi 2021). In line with our purposes, however, I will look at the dependence relation between the sense faculties and the consciousnesses specifically.

In the commentary on AK 1.45ab, Vasubandhu's opponent raises the question of why only the sense faculty is to be considered the *āśraya* of consciousness and not the object as well, when the arising of consciousness depends on both of them. The question shows that the opponent has a broader understanding of *āśraya*, including any cause of the arising of an entity. Vasubandhu specifies that in order to consider something an *āśraya* it needs to fulfil an important condition which does not hold true of the objects.

> **The eye and so on are the supports [of the respective consciousnesses], since due to the change [of the faculties], there is a change [of consciousnesses].**
> Due to the change of the eye and so on, there is a change of the [respective] consciousnesses, because they conform [to the faculties] being treated, impaired, sharp or weak. But there is no such change [of consciousness] due to the change of the visual objects, etc.[108]

Although consciousness depends on a sense faculty as well as an object for its arising, Vasubandhu claims that only the faculty serves as the *āśraya* of perception, for the change

[108] AKBh 34.19-21 *ad* AK 1.45ab: ***tadvikāravikāritvād āśrayāś cakṣurādayaḥ*** | […] *cakṣurādīnāṃ hi vikāreṇa tadvijñānānāṃ vikāro bhavaty anugrahopaghātapaṭumandatānuvidhānāt na tu rūpādīnāṃ vikāreṇa tadvikāraḥ* |

or modification (*vikāra*) of the faculty brings about a change in the respective consciousness. The object, on the other hand, does not have the same effect on consciousness. This close and invariable dependence, which is missing in the case of the objects, makes the respective faculty the support of consciousness.[109] Clarifying what sort of change he has in mind, Vasubandhu gives various examples of such modifications of the faculties: for example when one treats the eye, as Yaśomitra specifies, by applying ointment on it, when it is impaired by dust or some other substance, or when it is sharp or weak. In the case of the eye being treated by ointment or injured by dust, Yaśomitra notes that consciousness arises accompanied by pleasant (*sukha*) or unpleasant (*duḥkha*) sensation, respectively. As for the weak (*manda*) eye, he refers to old age, while for being sharp (*paṭu*), he mentions the eye of a vulture (AKVy 126.12-28). The reason why the objects are not thought to similarly modify consciousness is somewhat elucidated by Yaśomitra's sub-commentary, who outlines two opposite scenarios: (a.) the eye being in a favourable (*anugṛhīta*) condition while the visible object being damaged (*upahata*), and (b.) the eye being damaged while the object being in a favourable condition. With regard to the first case, he gives the example of those who are indifferent towards or no longer attached to the object perceived. According to Yaśomitra, their consciousness is not modified by the object, since it arises without *duḥkha*.[110] On the other hand, if their *āśraya* does not function properly, their consciousness is affected by various misrepresentations or illusions, for example, when due to jaundice (*kāmala*) one sees everything with a yellow

[109] In the same verse (AK 1.45cd), Vasubandhu notes another difference, namely, that the *indriya*s, unlike the objects, are 'not shared' (*asādhāraṇa*). What he means by this is that eye is the *āśraya* of the visual consciousness exclusively, while an object of perception, for instance a visible form, can be the object of both the eye and the mental consciousness. The *bhāṣya*, however, does not consider this remark as an explanation of why the sense faculty is the *āśraya* of consciousness, but why the consciousnesses are named after their *indriya*s. AKBh 34.27-28 *ad* AK 1.45cd: ***ato 'sādhāraṇatvād dhi vijñānaṃ tair nirucyate*** || […] *na hi cakṣur anyasya vijñānasyāśrayībhavitum utsahate | rūpaṃ tu manovijñānasyālambanībhavaty anyacakṣurvijñānasyāpīti |*

[110] AKVy 126.21-23: *tathā hi cakṣuṣy anugṛhīte rūpe copahate tadvītarāgāṇāṃ madhyasthānāṃ ca cakṣurvijñānam avikāram utpadyate | na tu saduḥkham utpadyate |*

hue, or due to ophthalmia (*timira*) one sees things covered with a 'net of hair'.[111] While, as the first scenario shows, the object does not have the capacity to modify consciousness in and of itself, the altered state of the faculties will necessarily bring about an overarching change in the mode of consciousness. The idea that the *āśraya* has a fundamental role in determining the way we perceive things, and that under its influence we may misrepresent objects, might have contributed to the development of representative realist or idealist theories of perception. We should, however, be reminded that Vasubandhu himself does not mention hallucinations here and seems to focus first and foremost on the way consciousness appears, rather than the objects we perceive as its content. Yaśomitra's example of *timira*, on the other hand, might suggest that the *āśraya* can influence not just how, but what we see—reminiscent of how Yogācāras use hallucinations as an example of perceiving non-existent objects.

The idea that the *āśrita* follows the change of the *āśraya* is also in line with a specific form of causal relationship obtaining between the great elements and derivative material forms. In the AK(Bh) Vasubandhu differentiates five ways in which derivative material forms are held to be caused by the *mahābhūta*s.[112] The second cause, which bears a name visibly related to *āśraya*, is called the supporting cause (*niśrayahetu*). With regard to the supporting cause Vasubandhu says that the arisen derivative material forms follow or conform to the great elements.[113] Accordingly, *niśrayahetu* is also called a cause of modification or change (*vikārahetu*). This relationship between primary and secondary matter is compared by Vasubandhu to the way a student relies on their teacher. Yaśomitra's remarks are especially helpful here as he glosses Vasubandhu's claim about

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[111] AKVy 126.23-25: *rūpe punar anugṛhīte parityakte cakṣuṣi copahate kāmalavyādhinā timiropaghātena vā pītadarśanaṃ bhrāntaṃ keśoṇḍukādidarśanaṃ vā pravartate* |

[112] AKBh$_S$ 355.8-9 *ad* 2.65b: *bhautikasya tu bhūtāni pañcaprakāro hetuḥ* | *katham* | *jananān niśrayāt sthānād upastambhopavṛṃhaṇāt* | Vasubandhu notes that this is a fivefold division of the efficient cause (*kāraṇahetu*). AKBh 102.26: *so 'yaṃ kāraṇahetur eva punaḥ pañcadhā bhinnaḥ* |

[113] AKBh 102.27-28: *niśrayahetur jātasya bhūtānuvidhāyitvāt puruṣakāraphalād ācāryādiniḥśrayavat* |

the derivative material forms following or conforming to the great elements as the view that they undergo a change whenever the great elements change.[114]

Vasubandhu's and Yaśomitra's analysis of the *āśraya-āśrita* relationship in terms of the supported entity conforming to the change of its support is reminiscent of our notion of supervenience.[115] Despite the similarities, there are some differences between Vasubandhu's idea and the modern conception of supervenience that should be noted here.[116] While Vasubandhu says that if there is a change in the *āśraya* there must be a change in the *āśrita* as well, supervenience is generally defined the other way round, that is, if there is a change in the supported entity there must be a change in the support as well. Vasubandhu's phrasing allows for the possibility that the support does not wholly determine the supported, or in other words, not all changes of the supported entity depend on its support. Using Vasubandhu's example of a student relying on their teacher, while a change in the teacher's thoughts will inevitably influence the student's ideas, it does not follow that all changes of the student's thinking necessarily come from the teacher.[117]

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[114] AKVy 356.14: *vikārahetutvaṃ tadanuvidhāyitvāt* | AKVy 355.26-27: *bhūtānuvidhāyitvād iti* | *bhautikaṃ bhūtāny anuvidhatte* | *tadvikāre vikārāt* |

[115] Ganeri (2012, 132-133) interprets the relationship of the faculties and the consciousnesses as supervenience. With regard to the *bhāṣya* on AK 2.65b, Goodman (2004, 398-399) argues that Vasubandhu construes the relationship between primary and secondary matter as non-reductive supervenience. As he explains, what makes his position non-reductive is that Vasubandhu accepts derivative material forms to be real entities.

[116] Discussing the relationship between the great elements and derived matter, Goodman (2004, 398-399) notes that a noteworthy difference between supervenience and the notion of *niśrayahetu* is that supervenience is generally considered a simultaneous relationship, while *niśrayahetu* exists one moment before the derivative form it produces. Nonetheless, he still calls it supervenience as it remains true that the higher-level properties metaphysically depend on a supervenience basis. In the Buddhist context, I also consider a moment delay between cause and effect to be compatible with ontological dependence. On the other hand, Goodman does not clarify whether he thinks *niśrayahetu* necessarily excludes simultaneity. In the Vaibhāṣika context the causal relationship between primary and secondary matter is simultaneous (see AKBh 145.15-18 *ad* AK 3.32b) suggesting that they most likely understood *niśrayahetu* as entailing simultaneity. Moreover, as we will see it shortly, the same passage shows that the Vaibhāṣikas, unlike the Sautrāntikas, endorsed a theory of simultaneous causation concerning perception as well, claiming that consciousness, albeit an effect, exists at the same time as its causes, the sense object and the *āśraya*, i.e. the sense faculty.

[117] For other possible ways to spell out Vasubandhu's metaphor, see Goodman 2004, 398. Vasubandhu's explanation also leaves the converse question open whether all aspects of the support are relevant to determining the nature of the supported phenomenon. While this problem is not addressed in the text, based on Vasubandhu's analogy, we might suppose that the determination relation the support bears to the

Vasubandhu's phrasing and especially his simile suggest that he had a looser sort of determination relationship in mind that we might distinguish from supervenience. At any rate, compared to Vasubandhu's weaker analogy of the student and the teacher, the relationship between the great elements and the derivative material forms displays stronger resemblance to supervenience, since it is reasonable to think that all states of the derivative material forms are determined by the great elements.

The case of the faculties and consciousnesses is more complicated, though. Our passage identifies two entities on which the arising of consciousness depends (i.e. the sense faculty and the object) and claims that it is the sense faculty that determines the mode of consciousness. It is, however, ignored here that the five sensory consciousnesses, in fact, have two *āśraya*s. Here, however, we are not told either by Vasubandhu or Yaśomitra whether and, if so, in what sense the *manas* determines or modifies consciousness. One possibility is that the *manas* is considered to be an *āśraya* only in the sense of being a necessary condition for the arising of a phenomenon, which in giving way to a new instance of consciousness does not influence the nature or mode of the five sensory consciousnesses. As such, *āśraya* is understood here in the same way as it was by Vasubandhu's interlocutor supposing that both the object and the faculty are the *āśraya*s of consciousness.

Another passage, however, appeals to the *manas* to explain the mental nature of the five sensory consciousnesses. The discussion starts from the problem that if *avijñaptirūpa* is considered to be *rūpa* on account of its basis (*āśraya*) being physical, then consciousnesses should also be physical.[118] In order to solve this conundrum, the Vaibhāṣika appeals to the twofold support of the five sensory consciousnesses, claiming that they inherit the mental

supported only concerns its fundamental aspects, as some minor changes, say, in the ideas of the teacher will not influence the ideas of the student.

[118] AKBh 9.22-23 *ad* AK 1.13d: *āśrayabhūtarūpaṇād ity apare evaṃ tarhi cakṣurvijñānādīnām apy āśrayarūpaṇāt rūpatvaprasaṅgaḥ |*

nature of the *manas*, and not, like *avijñaptirūpa*, the physical nature of their material *āśraya*s.[119] It is also worth recalling here that it is its *āśraya* that determines the moral character of *avijñaptirūpa*. We see an analogous correspondence between the moral nature of the support and the supported in the case of the *manas* as well, since, as a similar and immediately preceding condition (*samanantarapratyaya*), it induces a subsequent moment of consciousness with a similar moral quality.[120] So, while the sense faculties determine the mode of appearance of consciousnesses, hence are their *āśraya*s, they do not account for all of their modifications, as their mental and moral nature are determined by their "second" *āśraya*. In a strict sense, therefore, we cannot say that the consciousnesses supervene on their unique faculty in every respect.

Having investigated the dependence of the consciousnesses on the faculties and the concept of *niśrayahetu*, we can draw the conclusion that the essence of an *āśraya-āśrita* relationship consists primarily, if not exclusively, in determination, insofar as the *āśraya*, as the supporting relatum of an asymmetric dependence relationship, determines the fundamental nature or mode of its *āśrita*. The modification of the sense faculties or the great elements necessarily brings about the transformation of the supported entity as well. The support can determine the nature of the supported entity in various respects, such as its mode of appearance, ontological status or moral character. Furthermore, as the examined cases indicate, *āśraya* is predominantly used to characterise ontological dependence relationships, which, strictly speaking, is another necessary condition for being an *āśraya*. Broadly speaking, however, as we have seen in the case of *avijñaptirūpa*, this sort of determination is true for certain one-off generative causes as well, which explains why they can also be called an *āśraya*. Accordingly, in its basic meaning, *āśraya* might be best

[119] AKBh 10.3-6 *ad* AK 1.13d: *anye punar atra parihāram āhuḥ cakṣurvijñānādīnām āśrayo bhedaṃ gataḥ | kaścid rūpyate cakṣurādiḥ kaścin na rūpyate yathā manaḥ | na tv evam avijñaptiḥ |*

[120] See AKBh *ad* AK 2.62ab. For the various Abhidharmic solutions on how, nonetheless, consciousness moments of different moral quality can follow each other, see Cox 1995, 79-106.

construed as the basis that determines the nature or fundamental transformation of something else.

Although this usage of *āśraya* represents a significant cluster of its occurrences in the AK(Bh), we can find cases that somewhat diverge from this pattern. For instance, in the claim that the mind (*citta*) is the basis (*saṃniśraya*) of the notion of 'I' (*ahaṃkāra*), and hence is metaphorically called the *ātman,* its cognate is used to mean the referential basis of false superimposition.[121] *Āśraya*, as I mentioned, is also used in connection with substance-attribute dependence, when in chapter 9 of the text Vasubandhu criticises the non-Buddhist conception of the *ātman* (on this usage, see Szanyi 2021, 964-965). In this critical context, even though the term *āśraya* is used in the framework of an ontological dependence relationship, its core aspect of determining the nature of the supported phenomenon is missing.

As we have seen, in the AK(Bh) the term *āśraya*, especially in the context of perception, often refers to the six sense faculties serving as the support of the consciousnesses. In light of this relationship, in a few passages of the AK(Bh), *āśraya* is simply used as an epithet in place of the *indriya*s. For instance, when discussing the eighteen elements (*dhātu*), Vasubandhu notes that the twelve internal (*ādhyātmika*) ones are the six consciousnesses and the six *āśraya*s (without clarifying that the term here refers to the *indriya*s).[122] We have also seen that the six *indriya*s, construed *individually*, are regarded as *āśraya*s because each acts as the support of its respective consciousness by determining its mode of appearance or functioning. However, as some passages highlight the term *āśraya* can also refer to the six sense faculties *collectively*. This usage is made conspicuous in the commentary on AK 2.5 claiming that the basis of *citta* (*cittāśraya*) is

[121] AKBh 27.6-7 *ad* AK 1.39b: *ahaṃkārasanniśrayatvāc cittam ātmety upacaryate* | The claim shows interesting similarities with the first verse of the *Triṃśikā* (147.1-2): *ātmadharmopacāro hi vividho yaḥ pravartate* | *vijñānapariṇāme 'sau pariṇāmaḥ sa ca tridhā* ||

[122] AKBh 27.5 *ad* AK 1.39b: *ṣaḍ vijñānāni ṣaḍāśrayā ity ete dvādaśa dhātava ādhyātmikāḥ* |

the six sense faculties or the six sense spheres (*āyatana*), which are said to be the main constituents of a being (*maula sattvadravya*).[123] In the rest of the passage, Vasubandhu discusses how this sixfold *āśraya* relates to other *indriya*s, for example that the *āśraya*s can be differentiated on account of their sexual faculties (*strīpuruṣendriya*), that is whether the *āśraya* is female or male, or that the *āśraya* persists for a certain period of time by virtue of the life-faculty (*jīvitendriya*).[124] Accordingly, in several passages of the AK(Bh) the sensible translation of *āśraya* seems to be 'psychophysical basis', 'personal basis' or 'sentient being', referring to the individual the six sense faculties make up together.[125] For example, one passage (AKBh 346.17–20 *ad* AKK 6.21a) says that the stages of the path of preparation (*prayogamārga*) can be realised by a *kāmāśraya*, meaning a sentient being that resides in the *kāmadhātu*.

Although, as one of its specific referents, *āśraya* often simply means psychophysical basis (that is, the five material *indriyas* or *āyatanas* and the *manas*), the term is to be understood in a context sensitive way, insofar as the attention often shifts (or is even restricted) either to the physical or the mental constituents of a sentient being. While in certain cases, such as when talking about the body's injuries, beauty or repulsive appearance it is the bodily connotations of the term that are dominant, in soteriological contexts, more precisely in the discussion of the transformation of the support (*āśraya-parāvṛtti*), it seems more natural to interpret *āśraya* as referring primarily to the mind (*citta*) or mind-stream (*cittasaṃtati*), with its bodily connotations being marginal (for the relevant passages, see Szanyi 2021, 965-971).

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[123] AKBh 40.14 *ad* AK 2.5: *tatra cittāśrayaḥ ṣaḍindriyāṇi | etac ca ṣaḍāyatanaṃ maulaṃ sattvadravyam |*

[124] AKBh 40.14-16: *tasya strīpuruṣavikalpaḥ strīpuruṣendriyābhyāṃ sthitir jīvitendriyeṇa saṃkleśo vedanābhiḥ |*

[125] Yamabe (2018, 301, n. 67.) in this context translates it as 'personal basis', Sangpo (2012, e. g. 542-545, 648) as 'person' or 'personal basis', Schmithausen (1987, e. g. 52) renders it as 'basis [of personal existence]'.

3.1.2. The nature of *indriya*s and their role in perception

After looking at the notion of *āśraya* in general, and the rationale behind considering the sense faculties a 'support' of perception in particular, I now turn to some of those passages of the AK(Bh) that discuss the general characteristics of the *indriya*s. A good place to start our investigation is AK(Bh) 1.9 which explicates the specific material nature of the five sense faculties.

> It has been said that there are five aggregates, material form and so on. Among these:
> **Material form [includes] the five sense faculties, the five objects and the non-informative [material form].**
> The five sense faculties are the eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body sense faculties. The five objects respective to the eye, etc. sense faculties are the five sense objects, [that is] the visibles, sounds, smells, tastes, and tangibles. It also [includes] the non-informative [material form]. Such is the aggregate of material form.
> Regarding the five objects, the visibles and so on…
> **The supports of their consciousness are the eye and so on, which are of pellucid matter.**
> The five, which have the nature of pellucid material form and serve as the support of the consciousness of the visibles, sounds, smells, tastes and tangibles, are known as the eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body, respectively. As it was declared by the Venerable One: "Oh monks, the eye is an internal sense sphere, derived matter arisen from the four great elements".[126]

The passage begins with an extensional definition of *rūpaskandha*, specifying the *dharma*s falling under this category. According to the Vaibhāṣikas, the aggregate of material form includes the five *indriya*s, the five sorts of objects (*artha*) belonging to the faculties, and non-informative material form (*avijñaptirūpa*). After listing each of the eleven constituents of *rūpaskandha*, Vasubandhu turns his attention to the *indriya*s claiming that the eye and

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[126] AKBh 5.21-6.3 *ad* AK 1.9: *pañca rūpādayaḥ skandhā ity uktam | tatra | **rūpaṃ pañcendriyāṇy arthāḥ pañcāvijñaptir eva ca | pañcendriyāṇi cakṣuḥśrotraghrāṇajihvākāyendriyāṇi | pañcārthās teṣām eva cakṣur-ādīnām indriyāṇāṃ yathāsvaṃ ye pañca viṣayāḥ rūpaśabdagandharasaspraṣṭavyākhyāḥ | avijñaptiś ceti | etāvān rūpaskandhaḥ | tatra ya ete pañca rūpādayo 'rthā uktāḥ | **tadvijñānāśrayā rūpaprasādāś cakṣurādayaḥ | rūpaśabdagandharasaspraṣṭavyavijñānānām āśrayabhūtā ye pañca rūpātmakāḥ prasādās te yathākramaṃ cakṣuḥśrotraghrāṇajihvākāyā veditavyāḥ | yathoktaṃ bhagavatā cakṣur bhikṣo ādhyātmikam āyatanaṃ catvāri mahābhutāny upādāya rūpaprasāda iti vistaraḥ |* It is worth noting that the AKBh provides an alternative explanation of the compound *tadvijñānāśrayā* as *cakṣurvijñānādyāśrayā*, that is referring to the *eye*-consiousness and not the consciousness of objects. On this second interpretation, the *bhāṣya* aims to be consistent with the *Prakaraṇagrantha* (attributed to Vasumitra), which defines the eye as "pellucid matter, the support of the *eye*-consciousness." See AKBh 6.3-6.6 *ad* AK 1.9cd.

other senses consist of *rūpaprasāda*, i.e. pellucid or clear matter.[127] The text seeks justification for its claims by referring to the teachings of the Buddha, who declared that the eye is material form derived from the four great elements, namely earth, water, fire and wind.[128] Although Vasubandhu talks simply about the 'eye' and so on, other passages of the AK(Bh) elucidate that the coarse sense organs, such as the eye ball, are the *adhiṣṭhāna*s ('seat' or 'basis') of the respective faculties.[129] Apart from their material (*rūpin*) nature, the *indriya*s share other qualities as well, such as being resistant (*sapratigha*) and invisible (*anidarśana*).[130] In his commentary, Yaśomitra notes that the *indriya*s are transparent (*accha*), beyond the scope of the senses (*atīndriya*), and can only be inferred from their respective consciousnesses, as it is merely their *adhiṣṭhāna*s, such as the eye and so on that are visible.[131] Vasubandhu in chapter 9 of the AK(Bh) similarly claims that in contrast to the sense objects and the *manas* which are perceivable by direct perception (*pratyakṣa*), the five material *indriya*s can only be known by inference (*anumāna*).[132] Nonetheless, just like material objects, the sense faculties are held to be composed of atoms (*saṃcita*) (see AK 1.35d and AKBh 24.18-19), each having its unique arrangement in the *adhiṣṭhāna*s.

[127] Not all Ābhidharmikas agreed on this point, the philosopher Bhadanta Buddhadeva for instance proposed that secondary matter is nothing else than the specific state of the *mahābhūta*s. See AKBh 24.1-15 *ad* AK 1.35c. Despite their seemingly mereological dependence on the great elements, most Ābhidharmika masters, nonetheless, accepted (at least some of) the derivative material forms as ultimately real entities, that is having the same ontological status as the great elements. Masters such as Dharmatrāta or Śrīlāta questioned only the reality of *avijñaptirūpa* or the derivative tangible forms. See Dhammajoti 2015, 220.

[128] See AK 1.12ab: ***bhūtāni pṛthivīdhātur aptejovāyudhātavaḥ*** **|** The rest of the passage also explains that the four great elements "hold" their own characteristics (*svalakṣaṇa*), insofar as constituting different *dharma*s they have individual qualities, such as solidity (*kharatva*), humidity (*sneha*), heat (*uṣṇatā*) or mobility (*īraṇā*), and they also "hold" the derived material forms (*upādāyarūpa*), for the great elements serve as the support (*āśraya*) of all other material forms.

[129] See for instance AKBh 16.11 *ad* AK 1.23d, AKBh 21.6-7 *ad* AK 1.30cd.

[130] See AKBh 24.3-5. Resistance or impenetrability (*pratighāta*) is one of the possible interpretations raised in the text as the intensional definition of *rūpa.* AKBh 9.16-17 *ad* AK 1.13d: *pratighāto rūpeṇety apare* **|**

[131] AKVy 30.28-29: *rūpādiviṣayavyatiriktāny acchāny atīndriyāṇi svavijñānānumeyānīndriyāṇi yeṣāṃ cakṣurādīny adhiṣṭhānāni dṛśyante* **|**

[132] AKBh 461.6-8: *ye hi dharmāḥ santi teṣāṃ pratyakṣam upalabdhir bhavaty asaty antarāye* **|** *tadyathā ṣaṇṇāṃ viṣayāṇāṃ manasaś ca* **|** *anumānaṃ ca* **|** *tadyathā pañcānām indriyāṇām* **|** With regard to the *manas*, Yaśomitra notes that the consiousness that has just ceased in the previous moment is cognised by the mental consciousness of the following moment. AKVy 1160.16-17: *manasaś ca* **|** *kim* **|** *pratyakṣam upalabdhiḥ* **|** *samanantaraniruddhaṃ hi mano 'nantaropapannena manovijñānena vijñāyate* **|** As an alternative explanation he says that cognition cognises itself. AKVy 1160.17-18: *raktaṃ vā dviṣṭaṃ vā sukhasaṃprayuktaṃ vā duḥkhasaṃprayuktaṃ vā ity evamādi svasaṃvedyatayety apare* **|**

For instance, the atoms of the eye faculty are arranged on the pupil in the form of a cumin flower covered with a translucent membrane to protect them from scattering.[133] In another passage, Vasubandhu also explains why the six sense faculties, along with the six consciousnesses, are said to be 'internal' (*ādhyātmika*) sense spheres, while the six objects are 'external' (*bāhya*). As we have seen above (AKBh 27.6-7 *ad* AK 1.39b), since the mind (*citta*) is the support (*saṃniśraya*) of the notion of 'I', it is mistakenly called the *ātman*. Even though the Buddhists reject the notion of *ātman*, the sense faculties, on account of being its *āśraya,* are close (*pratyāsanna*) to the mind, hence are considered *ādhyātmika* ('internal', or, in a more literal translation, 'pertaining to the self'). The visual forms and so on, on the other hand, are 'external', because they are only the objects of consciousness.[134]

It is also important to clarify the various Abhidharmic positions concerning the nature of the causal relationship between the *indriya*s and the consciousnesses. While both the Sautrāntikas and the Vaibhāṣikas accepted that the consciousnesses ontologically depend on their supports, they did not agree on the simultaneity of this relationship. According to the Vaibhāṣikas, the sense faculty, as well as the sense object, exist simultaneously (*sahabhāva*) with consciousness. One of the Vaibhāṣikas' motivations for regarding perception a simultaneous causal relationship might have been that it allowed them to endorse a direct realist account of perception in contrast a representative realist theory. The Vaibhāṣika position is stated most perspicuously in the commentary on verse 3.32ab of the AKBh, where the Vaibhāṣika interlocutor says that cause and effect do not necessarily

[133] Alternatively, they are said to be arranged in the form of a ball (*piṇḍa*), but since the eye's atoms are translucent like crystals, they do not conceal one another, see AKBh 33.17-19 *ad* AK 1.44ab. For the specific arrangement of the various *indriya*s' atoms in the *adhiṣṭhāna*s, see AKBh 33.16-23.

[134] See AKBh 27.11-12 *ad* AK 1.39b: *ata ātmabhūtasya cittasyāśrayabhāvena pratyāsannatvāt | cakṣurādīnām ādhyātmikatvaṃ rūpādīnāṃ viṣayabhāvād bāhyatvam* | In the commentary on AK 1.20ab, we find another interpretation according to which, matter that forms part of an individual's continuum is internal, while that which is different from it, is external. AKBh 13.9: *ādhyātmikaṃ svāsāntānikaṃ bāhyam anyad* […] |

follow each other, but they can also be simultaneous, just like visual consciousness exists simultaneously with the eye faculty and visual form, or derivative matter with the great elements.[135] The claim is made in the broader context of investigating the relationship between sensation (*vedanā*) and contact (*sparśa*), which, according to the commentary, arise at one and the same time, because they are simultaneous causes (*sahabhūhetu*) of each other.[136] The notion of *sahabhūhetu* is explained in AKBh 2.50bd and its commentary, where Vasubandhu states that *dharma*s which are effects of each other (*mithaḥphala* or *parasparaphala*) are considered to be simultaneous causes (*sahabhūhetu*).[137] Vasubandhu's examples for such a relationship include for instance that between the *citta* and the *caitta*s or the four great elements themselves.

The concept of *sahabhūhetu* was eagerly criticised by the Sautrāntikas with their arguments targeting two different but equally important dimensions of the concept: simultaneity and symmetry. Focusing on simultaneity first, in the commentary on AK 2.51d the Sautrāntika interlocutor notes that common causal relations, such as that between the seed and its sprout, are not simultaneous. The Vaibhāṣika thus needs to explain how simultaneously arising *dharma*s can be in a cause-effect relation.[138] The Vaibhāṣika appeals to two common examples to illustrate that cause and effect can be simultaneous: the lamp and its radiance and the sprout and its shade, both of which are called into question by the Sautrāntika. The Vaibhāṣika also quotes the logicians' (*hetuka*) opinion on causation, who claim that "according to the rule that when something exists or does not exist another thing exists or does not exist, the [first] is said to be the cause, while the other

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[135] AKBh 145.15-18 *ad* AK 3.32b: *nahi na siddhaḥ kāryakāraṇayoḥ pūrvāparābhāvaḥ | sahabhāvo 'pi tu siddhaḥ | tadyathā cakṣurvajñānādīnāṃ cakṣurūpādibhir bhūtabhautikānāṃ ca |*

[136] AKBh 145.3-5: *atha kiṃ sparśād uttarakālaṃ vedanā bhavaty āhosvit samānakālam | samānakālam iti vaibhāṣikāḥ | anyonyaṃ sahabhūhetutvāt |*

[137] AK 2.50b: ***sahabhūr ye mithaḥphalāḥ*** | AKBh 83.19 *ad* AK 2.50b: *ye dharmāḥ parasparaphalās te parasparaḥ sahabhūhetur |*

[138] AKBh 84.20-21 *ad* AK 2.51d: *kiṃ tu prasiddhahetuphalabhāvānāṃ bījādīnām eṣa nyāyo na dṛṣṭa iti vaktavyam etat kathaṃ sahotpannānāṃ dharmāṇāṃ hetuphalabhāva iti |*

is the effect". As they argue, this explanation of cause and effect can be applied to simultaneously existing *dharma*s as well, insofar as "when one of them exists, all exist, or when one of them does not exist, none of them exist."[139]

Although Vasubandhu does not mention the simultaneous existence of consciousness and its causes in this passage, their case is brought up in Yaśomitra's commentary. Following the Vaibhāṣika explanation of cause and effect, the Sautrāntika says that even if we were to accept that simultaneously arising entities can be in a causal relationship, it is still unclear how they can be causes of *each other* (AKBh 85.1). As an example of a simultaneous cause-effect relationship, Yaśomitra refers to the relation between the eye-faculty and visual consciousness. Even though, according to the Vaibhāṣikas, they arise at the same time, the eye is considered the cause of visual consciousness, but not the other way around. Therefore, their relation is not symmetrical.[140]

Vasubandhu's narrow definition of *sahabhūhetu* as a symmetrical causal relationship was criticised by the Vaibhāṣikas such as Saṃghabhadra. In contrast to the AK(Bh), the *Nyāyānusāra* ascribes a broader spectrum to the term, underlining that *sahabhūhetu* refers not only to symmetrical relationships, but also to one-way relationships where, for instance, *dharma*s share or co-produce the same effect, such as in the case of

[139] AKBh 84.24-85.1: *etad dhi hetuhetumato lakṣaṇam ācakṣate haitukāḥ | yasya bhāvābhāvayoḥ yasya bhāvābhāvau niyamataḥ sa hetur itaro hetumān iti | sahabhuvāṃ ca dharmāṇām ekasya bhāve sarveṣāṃ bhāva ekasyābhāve sarveṣām abhāva iti yukto hetuphalabhāvaḥ |* This definition is reminiscent of Lewis's analysis of causation: "Had it [i.e. the cause] been absent, its effects – some of them, at least, and usually all – would have been absent as well" (Lewis 1973, 161). Note, however, that Lewis's account is counterfactual (referring to a situation which is not, but could or would have been, the case), while the Vaibhāṣika's is seemingly not. A modal account would provide us with the theoretical advantage of distinguishing constant conjunctions (i.e. that two things always occur together but one does not cause the other) from causal relationships.

[140] AKVy 290.25-26: *tadyathā cakṣuḥ sahotpannam api cakṣurvijñānena tadutpattau hetur bhavati | parasparaṃ tu kathaṃ | na hi cakṣurvijñānaṃ tasya cakṣuṣo hetur bhavatīti āha |* The same is true of the relationship between primary and secondary matter mentioned earlier. Even though they arise simultaneously, and the great elements are the cause of the derivative material forms, the latter is not the cause of the former.

consciousness and its causes (Dhammajoti 2003, 28-29, 46, 48).[141] The Vaibhāṣika aims to defend the possibility of symmetrical causation by appealing to the example of three sticks leaning against each other and staying in place by their mutual power.[142] The Sautrāntika, however, doubts whether it is indeed their mutual power that keeps them in place, or they came into being in such a way simply due to the collection of previous causes and conditions.

We can also find some important arguments against simultaneous causation elsewhere in the AK(Bh). For instance, in AK(Bh) 3.32ab the (presumably) Sautrāntika opponent denies that two phenomena arising at once could be regarded as a 'producer' and a 'produced' respectively, especially since a producer cannot produce something that is already produced.[143] Moreover, as the opponent claims, the idea of simultaneous causation contradicts the Buddha's teachings, as well as the general notion of a generative cause (*janaka*).[144] The opponent lines up various examples to illustrate that a generative cause always precedes its effect, for example, as we have seen in a previous argument, the seed always comes before its sprout, or milk precedes coagulated milk. The Sautrāntika provides an intriguing *reductio* argument as well, claiming that if we accepted simultaneous causality, then either everything would arise at the same time, or nothing

[141] For the Abhidharmic debates on the simultaneity of causation in other texts, primarily in the *Abhidharma-mahāvibhāṣā* and the *Nyāyānusāra*, see Dhammajoti 2003, Cox 1988, 42-43 and Tanaka 1985. In his article, Dhammajoti also criticises Tanaka's interpretation that *sahabhūhetu* is not a theory of causation but refers to the 'inseparability' of certain *dharma*s. Considering, however, that the Vaibhāṣika account is not counterfactual (see fn. 139) Tanaka's interpretation that *sahabhūhetu* means inseparability (i.e. constant conjunction) rather than causality is not unreasonable.

[142] On whether such examples successfully illustrate the Vaibhāṣika position, as well as on simultaneous causality and its critique in general, see also Westerhoff 2018, 67-70, 79-80.

[143] It is not made evident either by the AKBh or the AKVy that the opponent here is a Sautrāntika. However, based on the position endorsed by the opponent, La Vallée Poussin's suggestion that the interlocutor is a Sautrāntika appears reasonable. Kritzer, however, hesitates to call the opponent a Sautrāntika, on the grounds that Vasubandhu does not endorse this position, see Kritzer 1999, 133.

[144] AKBh 145.5-12 *ad* AK 3.32b: *kathaṃ sahotpannayor janyajanakabhāvaḥ sidhyati | asāmarthyāt | jāte dharme dharmasya nāsti sāmarthyaṃ* […] *iṣṭam idaṃ sūtre tv aniṣṭaṃ sparśavedanayor anyonyaphalatvam | […] janakadharmātikramāc cāyuktam |*

would arise at all.[145] The argument is best understood in the context of the doctrine of momentariness (*kṣanikavāda*). If every cause produced its effect simultaneously, then every effect would exist in the very same moment. Alternatively, if there were no temporally extended causal series, that is, if the effects did not follow their causes in time, then nothing would come into being in the subsequent moment. An apparent weakness of the argument is that it assumes that simultaneous causality is the only form of causality accepted by the Vaibhāṣikas that governs the interaction of phenomena. The Vaibhāṣikas, however, distinguished various causal relations, some of them being simultaneous, some of them sequential, thereby dispelling the opponent's criticism.[146]

The Sautrāntikas, therefore, in contrast to the Vaibhāṣikas, argued that both the object and the support of perception precede consciousness, and hence do not need to exist at the moment of perception.[147] The AKBh outlines a moment-by-moment analysis of the Sautrāntikas', or as Yaśomitra specifies, Śrīlāta's, view of the perceptual process up until the arising of sensation (*vedanā*).[148] According to his explication, in the first moment only the object and the *āśraya* exist, which are followed in the second moment by consciousness. This 'coming together' (*saṃnipāta*) of the three (i.e. the object, the faculty, and consciousness) is referred to as contact (*sparśa*). Sensation arises subsequently in the third moment, conditioned by contact.[149] The rest of the discussion, which I will put aside now, concerns how the Sautrāntikas' sequential approach to perception works when two similar (e.g. two visual) or two different (e.g. a visual and an auditory) kinds of

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[145] AKBh 145.14-15: *anyathā paraṃparāpekṣatvāt kāryakāraṇayoḥ sarvaṃ vā yugapad utpadyate na vā kadācit paścādviśeṣābhāvāt* | It is worth noting that the idea of 'co-temporary causation' was criticised by David Hume along very similar lines in his *A Treatise of Human Nature* 1.3.2 saying for example that "For if one cause were co-temporary with its effect, and this effect with its effect, and so on, 'tis plain there wou'd be no such thing as succession, and all objects must be co-existent."

[146] AKBh 145.15-18: *na hi na siddhaḥ kāryakāraṇayoḥ pūrvāparābhāvaḥ | sahabhāvo 'pi tu siddhaḥ |*

[147] AKBh 145.17-18: *tatrāpi pūrvam indriyārthau paścād vijñānam |*

[148] AKVy 475.16: *sparśād uttarakālaṃ vedanety apara iti bhadanta śrīlābhaḥ |*

[149] AKBh 145.20-21: *indriyārthau hi pūrvānto vijñānam | so 'sau trayāṇāṃ saṃnipātaḥ sparśaḥ sparśa-pratyayāt paścād vedanā tṛtīyakṣaṇa iti |*

consciousness follow each other, and whether the Sautrāntika view is compatible with the scriptural tradition, especially with the idea that *vijñāna* is always accompanied by, that is exists simultaneously with, the universal (*sarvatraga*) *caitta*s. For our purposes, it is important to note only that despite the Sautrāntika counterarguments Vasubandhu lines up various arguments in support of simultaneous causality, and (in light of the overall dynamics of the *bhāṣya*, somewhat surprisingly) lets the Vaibhāṣikas to have the last word in the debate. That Vasubandhu remained committed to the conception of *sahabhūhetu*, accepting it as valid a form of causation, will be relevant to us when discussing the Yogācāra view on the relation between the *pravṛttivijñāna*s and their *āśraya*, both with regard to the simultaneity and symmetry of this causal relationship.[150]

It is worth looking at an additional discussion in the AK(Bh), which not only tells us more about the various Abhidharmic views on the role of *indriya*s in perception but by emphasising the importance of consciousness it also points towards the Yogācāra aim of 'mentalising' perception. In AK(Bh) 1.42, we find a spirited debate between a proponent of the Vaibhāṣikas and an opponent identified by Yaśomitra as a Vijñānavādin on whether it is the eye faculty or the visual consciousness that sees the visible objects.[151] Although 'Vijñānavāda' is one of the names given to the Yogācāra tradition, we most probably do not deal with a Yogācāra opponent here. Rather it refers to the view, contrasted with the Vaibhāṣika position, that it is the eye-consciousness that sees and not the faculty.[152] The stake of the debate for the Vaibhāṣikas is to defend that vision is merely a physical process, since any concession to the "consciousness sees" option would imply that vision

[150] AKBh 85.6-7 *ad* AK 2.51d: *eṣām api nāmānye 'pi sabhāgahetutvādayo bhavantīti siddhaḥ sahabhūhetuḥ* |

[151] AKVy 114.11: *vijñānavādy āha* […] |

[152] See also Dhammajoti 2007a, 69. The position that the eye consciousness sees is generally associated with Dharmatrāta, the master of the *Mahāvibhāṣā*, see Willemen et all. 1998, 20, n. 115, Kritzer 2003, 333 and Sharf 2018, 848 (see it also for a summary of a range of opinions on this issue recorded in the *Mahāvibhāṣā*, and a list of works where the problem is discussed in detail). Cf. Dhammajoti 2007a, 24 on the confusion about the advocates of this position.

necessarily involves a certain level of mental activity and, arguably, jeopardise their direct realist position. According to the Vaibhāṣikas:

> It is the eye that sees the visible forms being conjoined [with consciousness]. It is not consciousness having that [eye] as its basis [that sees], since a concealed visible form is not seen, so it is said.[153]

It is worthwhile to point out first that Vasubandhu uses the term '*kila*' ('so they say') in the passage, suggesting that even at the time of composing the verses he had serious reservations about the Vaibhāṣika position.[154] Although the Vaibhāṣikas claim that it is the eye faculty that sees, they are forced to acknowledge right at the beginning of the dispute that the eye must be 'conjoined' with consciousness (*sabhāga*, *savijñānaka*) in order to see, otherwise, as the Vijñānavādin says, even someone who hears would be able to see.[155] The objection rests on the uni-sensory view that one cannot have multiple sense-experiences, such as vision or hearing at the same time. In light of the Vaibhāṣika's concession, the Vijñānavādin argues that if the eye is able to see only when conjoined with consciousness, then why it is not consciousness itself that sees, having the eye as its basis (*āśraya*).[156] It is important to note that even though vision is considered to be a fundamentally mental process by the Vijñānavādin, it functions in dependence on a physical eye faculty as its basis and is directed on a physical object.

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[153] AK 1.42: ***cakṣuḥ paśyati rūpāṇi sabhāgaṃ na tadāśritam | vijñānaṃ dṛśyate rūpaṃ na kilāntaritaṃ yataḥ*** ||

[154] On the usage of *kila* by Vasubandhu in the AK, see Gold 2015, 69, 265 n. 19.

[155] AKBh 30.4 *ad* AK 1.42a: *yadi cakṣuḥ paśyed anyavijñānasamaṅgino 'pi paśyet* | I translate *samaṅgin* in the sense of 'possessing' or 'engaged in', therefore the passage talks about the simultaneous presence of multiple *vijñāna*s or sense modalities. This interpretation is corroborated by Yaśomitra's commentary taking *samaṅgin* as *sammukhībhāvin* (lit. someone 'facing' another *vijñāna*) or as *vyāsakta* 'engaged in' or 'occupied with', see AKVy 113.25-26. Gold (2015, 70) translates *samaṅgin* as 'sufficient condition'. According to him, the passage says that if the eye sees then other organs should see as well, since they all provide the conditions for consciousness.

[156] AKBh 30.6-7 *ad* AK 1.42b: *evam tarhi tad eva cakṣurāśritam vijñānaṃ paśyatīty astu* |

The reason the Vaibhāṣika gives for rejecting the Vijñānavāda position is that "a concealed visible form is not seen". The argument is expounded a bit more in the commentary:

> For a visible form concealed by a wall, etc. is not seen. However, if consciousness were to see, it could not be resisted by the wall, etc. since it is not susceptible to resistance. Thus, it should see even the concealed visible forms.[157]

According to the Vaibhāṣika, the explanation of why we cannot see the objects separated for example by a wall is that the wall constitutes a physical boundary for the activity of the physical eye. But, as the argument goes, if the Vijñānavādin were right and consciousness were to see, then it could not be explained why visual consciousness, not being susceptible to resistance, cannot see through the wall. The Vaibhāṣika adds that since consciousness must exercise its function on the same object as its *āśraya*, if the eye, due to being physically impeded, cannot reach a concealed object, then consciousness cannot exercise its respective function on the inaccessible object either.[158]

In his reply, the Vijñānavādin first asks the Vaibhāṣika whether they consider vision, just like touching, to be based on a direct contact with an object, which would explain why they are so concerned with resistance.[159] What the Vijñānavādin alludes to is the differentiation of the sense faculties based on the way they grasp their objects. The AK(Bh) classifies the faculties into two groups: *prāptaviṣaya* and *aprāptaviṣaya*, that is whether they need to "reach", i.e. enter into a direct contact with their objects or not. Of the six senses, the eye, the ear and the mental faculty are considered even by the Vaibhāṣikas to be *aprāptaviṣaya*, that is not based on a direct contact, while the rest, i.e.

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[157] AKBh 30.12-13 *ad* AK 1.42cd: *yasmāt kila rūpaṃ kuḍyādivyavahitaṃ na dṛśyate | yadi hi vijñānaṃ paśyet tasyāpratighatvāt kuḍyādiṣu pratighāto nāsti ity āvṛtam api rūpaṃ paśyet |*

[158] AKBh 30.15-16: […] *vijñānasyānutpattir āśrayeṇaikaviṣayapravṛttatvāt yujyate |* Gold (2015, 70-73) gives an alternative sectioning of this and the following arguments of the debate, which, however, is different from the sectioning proposed by Yaśomitra. Gold's analysis of the 'what sees' passage is strongly criticised by Eli Franco in his review of Gold's volume, see Franco 2017.

[159] AKBh 30.16-17: *kiṃ nu vai cakṣuḥ prāptaviṣayaṃ kāyendriyavat yata āvṛtaṃ na paśyet |*

the body, the nose and the tongue need to reach their objects.[160] The Vijñānavādin therefore can only make sense of the Vaibhāṣika claim about the eye being physically obstructed if vision is considered *prāptaviṣaya.* They also point out that the Vaibhāṣika argument cannot explain why we nonetheless see objects covered by certain material coverings such as glass or water. If the eye cannot see through concealments simply due to their resistance, why glass or water do not impede vision?[161] In their positive account, the Vijñānavādin argues that we are able to see through certain physical obstructions because they do not impede light (*āloka*). A wall, unlike glass, does not let the light through, therefore no visual consciousness can arise with regard to the object behind it.[162]

One might find the concluding remarks of the Vijñānavādin problematic for a couple of reasons. For instance, it is conspicuous that there is no Vaibhāṣika answer. In the *Nyāyānusāra*, which discusses the same question from a Vaibhāṣika point of view, the Vaibhāṣikas appeal to the different atomic structure of objects. There are coverings the material structure of which impede vision and there are ones, such as glass and water, that do not.[163] Another puzzling feature of the Vijñānavāda argument is the reference to light. Vijñānavādins consider light to be material as it can be obstructed by physical entities such as the wall. The rationale behind why light cannot penetrate through certain material objects, however, seems to be identical with the missing Vaibhāṣika explanation of why sight cannot get through them: because the atomic structure of certain material coverings,

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[160] AK 1.43cd: ***cakṣuḥśrotramano 'prāptaviṣayaṃ trayam anyathā*** ||

[161] AKBh 30.17-18: *kācābhrapaṭalasphaṭikāmbubhiś cāntaritaṃ kathaṃ dṛśyate | tasmān na sapratighatvāc cakṣuṣa āvṛtasya rūpasyādarśanam |*

[162] AKBh 30.19-21: *yatrālokasyāpratibandha āvṛte 'pi rūpe tatropapadyata eva cakṣurvijñānam | yatra tu pratibandhas tatra notpadyata ity anutpannatvād āvṛtaṃ nekṣyate |* Gold (2015, 72) translates *āloka* as 'sight' here, but Yaśomitra clarifies that the passage talks about the illumination (or lack of illumination) of the object behind the concealment. AKVy 115.12-13, 16-17: *āloke hi sati viṣaya ābhāsagato bhavatīti vijñānotpattisaṃbhavaḥ |* […] *kuḍyādibhis tamasvadbhiḥ tatrāvṛte notpadyate |* The passage also underlies that, besides the presence of an object and an (unimpaired) faculty, certain external factors (such as light in this case) are also necessary conditions for perception to arise.

[163] For the Vaibhāṣika answer in detail, see Dhammajoti 2007a, 80. Dhammajoti creates a 'montage' of this debate using the AK(Bh), the *Nyāyānusāra* and the AKVy.

such as the wall, does not make it possible. The physicalist Vaibhāṣika approach to vision therefore cannot be excluded so easily based on the arguments brought up by the Vijñānavādins, since even they have to introduce a distinction of coverings on the basis of their atomic structure. However, from a Yogācāra perspective it is important that the Vijñānavādins manage to keep the 'consciousness sees' option in play, as they can provide a justification of why the immaterial nature of consciousness does not lead to chaotic experiences, such as seeing through walls. Even though this Vijñānavāda theory is still embedded in a materialist framework, by emphasising the importance of consciousness in our sensory processes, the discussion shows a conceptual shift towards the full-fledged idealist account of perception we find in later Yogācāra works.[164]

I will not give a detailed analysis of the next section of the dispute, where the Vaibhāṣika appeals to scriptural authority to back up his position that the eye-faculty sees the visible forms. A few remarks made by the Vijñānavādin, however, are relevant to our discussion. According to the Vijñānavādin, even though the *sūtra*s state that the eye sees, it is only a common way of saying that consciousness sees having the eye-faculty as its *āśraya*. In support of this claim, the Vijñānavādin cites another *sūtra* passage which says: 'having cognised the *dharma*s with the *manas*'.[165] As the Vijñānavādin argues, since the mental faculty is already past at the time of cognising, it is the *manovijñāna* that cognises the *dharma*s having the *manas* as its past support. Similarly, in the case of all perceptual processes, the function of consciousness is metaphorically attributed to the *āśraya* that supports that consciousness.[166] To illustrate their position, the Vijñānavādin cites a further

[164] Insofar as it cannot refer to limiting factors in the external or material reality, accounting for the rules and regularities of our perceptions is evidently a bigger problem for any idealist account of perception. As Viṃś 2-4 and their commentaries indicate, Yogācāras could, nonetheless, appeal to the similar maturation of the beings' *karman* or the (spatio-temporal) limitations of dreams and other illusory states to explain the regularities or intersubjective nature of our ordinary experiences.

[165] AKBh 30.21-22: *tenāśrayeṇety ayam atrābhisandhir yathā manasā dharmān vijñāyety āha* |

[166] AKBh 30.22-24: *na ca mano dharmān vijānāti* | *atītatvāt* | *kiṃ tarhi* | *manovijñānam* | *āśritakarma vā āśrayasyopacaryate* |

scriptural passage saying that the eye is only a "gate" for seeing the visible forms—a doorway where the various stimuli from the external world enter, and through which consciousness itself sees.[167] Relying on the principle that each *dharma* has a single and unique function, the Vaibhāṣika asks if it is consciousness that sees (*paśyati*), what else cognises (*vijānāti*).[168] From the question it is clear that the Vaibhāṣika intends to separate vision as a purely physical process from cognising, with consciousness having nothing to do with the perceptual processes in its narrowest sense.[169] If *vijñāna* no longer has the function of cognising, then the Vijñānavādin needs to explain which *dharma* has it. The Vijñānavādins, however, do not consider 'seeing' and 'cognising' to be two different functions, but essentially the same process.[170]

After some further arguments put forward by other schools in favour of the Vijñānavāda position (many of them elaborating on the claim that the activity of consciousnesses is only conventionally attributed to the faculty),[171] we find a position ascribed by Vasubandhu to the Sautrāntikas which shows some interesting similarities to the Yogācāra conception of the non-duality of perception. The Sautrāntikas argue that while visual consciousness arises in dependence upon the eye faculty and a visible form, in this process we cannot talk about an agent that sees or an object that is seen. Perceptual

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[167] AKBh 30.25-27: *uktaṃ ca sūtre cakṣur brāhmaṇa dvāraṃ yāvad eva rūpāṇāṃ darśanāya ity ato gamyate cakṣuṣā dvāreṇa vijñānaṃ paśyatīti* | Yaśomitra takes *dvāra* here as implying a cause (*hetu*) or support (*āśraya*). AKVy 116.12: *hetur āśraya ity abhiprāyaḥ* | The term *dvāra* is also a reference to the eye-faculty being an *āyatana*, since *āyatana* is defined as the 'gate of arising' (*āyadvāra*) of the mind and the mental concomitants (*cittacaitta*). See AKBh 13.18: *cittacaittāyadvārārtha āyatanārthaḥ* |

[168] AKBh 31.1: *yadi vijñānaṃ paśyati ko vijānāti* | As we have seen in the previous chapter, *vijñāna* is said to have the unique function of cognising (*vijānātīti vijñānam*).

[169] The *Nyāyānusāra* makes some interesting remarks concerning the Vaibhāṣika position, which are not addressed in the AK(Bh). For example, it clarifies that since the various types of consciousnesses are not different in nature, if visual consciousness sees then all other forms of consciousness should also be able to see. Therefore, the activity of seeing, hearing, etc. must belong to the faculty. As we have seen at the beginning of the debate, even according to the Vaibhāṣikas the eye needs to be conjoined with consciousness to see. In line with the *Nyāyānusāra*, however, consciousness is like fuel to the fire, suggesting that consciousness, as an underlying condition, simply sustains the eye or enables it to see. (Cox 1999, 670, and Dhammajoti 2007a, 71).

[170] AKBh 31.1-2: *yad eva hi rūpasya vijñānaṃ tad evāsya darśanam iti* |

[171] The *vijñānavāda* arguments made by others (*anye*, *apare*) are attributed by scholars to the Vātsīputrīyas and the Dharmaguptakas, see Dhammajoti 2007a, 87.

processes are 'devoid of activity' (*nirvyāpāra*),[172] and are reducible to *dharma*s construed as passive causes and effects. Therefore, such phrases as the 'eye sees' or 'consciousness cognises' are merely conventional. As it was taught by the Buddha, one should not be attached or hold on to the expressions of ordinary people.[173] Similar claims are made in chapter 9 of the AKBh, to which I will return in more detail in the next chapter of the dissertation. In a nutshell, an opponent asks Vasubandhu to explain what consciousness does in perception, since even according to the *sūtra*s, it cognises. As Vasubandhu argues, 'it does nothing'. However, since an effect conforms to its cause insofar as it comes into existence being similar to it, consciousness also becomes similar to its object-cause by taking on its form (*tadākāratā*). On the ground of this correspondence between consciousness and its object, we might say that the former cognises the latter, but actually it does not do anything.[174] Both passages, therefore, argue that *dharma*s, such as the eye or consciousness, do not have any agency (as it is misleadingly suggested by the usage of active verbs), but arise dependently on conditions.

Returning to our original discussion, various speculations have been made by scholars whether Vasubandhu favours the Sautrāntika or the 'consciousness sees' position in the debate. According to Katō, even though the Buddhist commentators believe that Vasubandhu accepted the consciousness sees option, he might have used it only to refute

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[172] Yaśomitra says that *nirvyāpāra* is synonymous with *nirīha* meaning 'inactive', and the text uses it to deny that the action (*kriyā*) is different from the agent. AKVy 118.14-15: *nirvyāparam iti nirīham | anena hi kartur arthāntarabhūtāṃ kriyāṃ pratiṣedhati |* For an analysis of the terms *vyāpāra* and *nirvyāpāra* in the later works of Śāntarakṣita, and a brief investigation of the history of the concept, see Fan 2017.

[173] AKBh 31.12-16: *atra sautrāntikā āhuḥ |* […] *cakṣur hi pratītya rūpāṇi cotpadyate cakṣurvijñānam | tatra kaḥ paśyati ko vā dṛśyate | nivryāpāraṃ hīdaṃ dharmamātraṃ hetuphalamātraṃ ca | tatra vyavahārārthaṃ cchandata upacārāḥ kriyante | cakṣuḥ paśyati vijñānaṃ vijānātīti nātrābhiniveṣṭavyam | uktaṃ hi bhagavatā janapadaniruktiṃ nābhiniviśeta saṃjñāṃ ca lokasya nābhidhāved iti |* Kritzer (2003, 333-335, 2005, 32-33) points out that the Sautrāntika argumentation presented in the AKBh shows parallels with the arguments of the YBh (especially those of the VinSg on the *Pañcavijñānakāyamanobhūmi*).

[174] AKBh 473.25-474.1: *yat tarhi vijñānaṃ vijānātīti sūtra uktaṃ kiṃ tatra vijñānaṃ karoti | na kiñcit karoti | yathā tu kāryaṃ kāraṇam anuvidhīyata ity ucyate sādṛśyenātmalābhād akurvad api kiñcit | evaṃ vijñānam api vijānātīty ucyate | sādṛśyenātmalābhād akurvad api kiñcit | kiṃ punar asya sādṛśyam | tadākāratā |*

the Vaibhāṣikas, while preferring the Sautrāntika view.[175] Dhammajoti, however, argues that in this regard we should trust the commentators' opinion, insofar as the Sautrāntika position denies the existence of the *āyatana*s, while Vasubandhu accepted them as real entities. Nonetheless, as Dhammajoti emphasises, Vasubandhu probably found the Sautrāntika conclusion reasonable as well (Dhammajoti 2007a, 23-26.). While Vasubandhu's preference in the debate is uncertain, it is important to note that in terms of the dynamics of ideas outlined in this passage, both positions make important steps towards the Yogācāra theory of perception: the Vijñānavāda view by attributing a prominent role to consciousness in the perceptual process, while the Sautrāntika view by rejecting the ultimate reality of a perceiving agent as well as a perceived object.

3.2. The concept of *āśraya* in Vasubandhu's PSk

3.2.1. The characteristics of *indriya*s in the PSk

The term *āśraya* is mentioned only a handful of times in the PSk, but all occurrences show clear similarities with the ways it was used in the AK(Bh). One of these usages is to denote the semantic basis or referent of various wrong views. Among the mental defilements (*kleśa*) listed in the PSk, Vasubandhu enumerates five wrong views (*dṛṣṭi*).[176] The first is known as the 'view of the existing self' (*satkāyadṛṣṭi*), which refers to considering the five aggregates of appropriation (*upādānaskandha*) as 'I' and 'mine'. The second wrong view called the 'view that grasps extremes' (*antagrāhadṛṣṭi*) means the adoption of such extreme positions concerning the five *skandha*s as annihilationism or eternalism. The third afflictive view, simply bearing the name 'wrong view' (*mithyādṛṣṭi*), entails the denial of causes, results, actions as well as the negation of really existing things. It is the last two

[175] The opinion of Katō is summarised by Kritzer (2003, 333; 2005, 32).

[176] For a comparison of the definitions of the five views in various texts, see Kramer 2013a, 1007-1010.

*dṛṣṭi*s known as ‘attachment to views’ (*dṛṣṭiparāmarśa*), and ‘attachment to morality and austerities’ (*śīlavrataparāmarśa*) that make an explicit reference to the concept of *āśraya*, identifying it with the five *skandha*s. *Dṛṣṭiparāmarśa* is defined as the false view of regarding the above-mentioned three views and the five *skandha*s serving as their support (*āśraya*) to be excellent or supreme, while *śīlavrataparāmarśa* is the false view that morality and religious austerities, which are based on the activities of the five *skandha*s, are purifying or conducive to liberation (PSk 9.10-10.3-8). It is worthwhile to note that both the abstract relatum and its concrete referent can be denoted by the term *āśraya*. On the one hand, it means the support on which our false views are superimposed, irrespective of what the exact referent of the term in the given context is. On the other hand, it stands for the five *skandha*s of appropriation specifically, which is reminiscent of the AK(Bh)’s application of *āśraya* as referring to the entirety of the sentient being, including its physical and mental constituents.

More important for our present purposes is that, just like in the Abhidharmic context, *āśraya* in the PSk also denotes the supports of the various consciousnesses, i.e. the six sense faculties. In his elucidation of the *dhātu* system, Vasubandhu says that the six consciousnesses are forms of cognition (*vijñapti*) that are supported by (*saṃniśrita*) the eye, etc. and have visual forms, etc. as their objects (*ālambana*).[177] The term *āśraya* (or *rten*) most probably refers to the sense faculties in KSP (37; 200.6-9) as well, where, as we have seen in the previous chapter, the text says that the *āśraya* (*rten*), *ālambana* (*dmigs pa*), *ākāra* (*rnam pa*) and distinguishing features (*bye brag*, presumably *viśeṣa*) of the six *vijñāna*s are discernible. The KSP, however, due to its different objective, does not discuss the *indriya*s systematically, therefore, I will rely primarily on the PSk here.

[177] PSk 20.2-3: *ṣaḍ vijñānadhātavaś cakṣurādisanniśritā rūpādyālambanā vijñaptayaḥ* | The following sentence shows that *saṃniśraya* and *āśraya* are interchangeable here, PSk 20.2-3: *manodhātus ta eva samanantaraniruddhāḥ* | *ṣaṣṭhavijñānāśrayaparidīpanārtham aṣṭādaśadhātuvyavasthānam* |

The PSk's discussion of the *indriya*s resembles that of the AK(Bh). Vasubandhu starts his explanation of *rūpaskandha* with an extensional definition saying that it consists of the four great elements and matter derived from the great elements (*upādāyarūpa*).[178] After spelling out the four great elements in terms reminiscent of the AK(Bh) (PSk 1.6-2.2), Vasubandhu continues with the investigation of derived matter, which is said to include the five sense faculties, the five sense objects and *avijñaptirūpa* (PSk 2.3-2.5). It should be noted that even though the description of *rūpaskandha* is very similar in the two texts, the PSk is more systematic insofar as it declares straight away that *rūpa* includes both the great elements and derived matter. In AK(Bh) 1.9, Vasubandhu does not make the distinction between primary and secondary matter immediately evident, introducing it only later.[179]

Although Vasubandhu does not give an intensional definition of *rūpa* (e.g. in terms of 'resistance', see also fn. 130) here, in his classification of the eighteen *dhātu*s at the end of the PSk, he notes that the ten material (*rūpin*) *dhātu*s, i.e. the five sense faculties and their objects, are resistant (*sapratigha*) since they can be spatially or physically obstructed.[180] Regarding the term *rūpin*, Sthiramati distinguishes between two kinds of material entities: material forms that serve as a support (*āśraya*) and material forms that are supported (*āśrita*).[181] The former presumably refers to the great elements which are the material

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[178] PSk 1.4-5: *rūpaṃ katamat | yat kiñcid rūpam sarvaṃ tac catvāri mahābhūtāni catvāri ca mahābhūtāny upādāya |*

[179] The KSP gives no such systematic discussion of the *rūpaskandha* or the body and the sense faculties. It simply mentions that the body with the faculties is an aggregate of atoms of primary and secondary matter. KSP (43-44): *lus 'di dbang po dang bcas pa'i khog la 'byung ba dang | 'byung ba las gyur pa 'dus pa'i khyad par yin no |* […] *bsags pa'i don gyis lus yin te | 'byung ba dang 'byung ba las gyur pa'i rdul phra rab bsags pa'i phyir ro |*

[180] PSk 20.13-14: *aṣṭādaśānāṃ dhātūnāṃ kati rūpiṇaḥ | ye rūpaskandhasvabhāvāḥ |* PSk 21.2: *kati sapratighāḥ | daśa rūpiṇaḥ | yatra yaś ca pratihanyate |*

[181] PSkV 122.6-7: *āśrayāśritaṃ rūpaṃ vā yathāsambhavam eṣām astīti rūpiṇaḥ |* Sthiramati clarifies that this description does not lead to the absurd consequence that, just because their *āśraya* is material, consciousnesses are also material. This remark recalls the AKBh's (9.23-25 *ad* AK 1.13d) discussion we saw earlier of *avijñaptirūpa* being material because of having a material support (*āśraya*). There an opponent argued that, by the same token, consciousnesses should also be regarded as material. As Sthiramati claims, the eye and so on are not the support (*āśraya*) of the consciousnesses in the sense of being their *ādhāra*.

*āśraya*s of the latter, i.e. the derived or supported material forms. The second category, as we have seen, includes the sense faculties, the sense objects and, according to the Vaibhāṣikas, *avijñaptirūpa*. As for the resistant nature of the ten material *dhātu*s (including the five sense faculties), Sthiramati appeals to the AKBh's threefold classification of resistance (*pratighāta*), of which it is *āvaraṇapratighāta* that pertains to the mutual obstruction of physical entities.[182] Using the definition of the AKBh, Sthiramati says that *āvaraṇapratighāta* is when "[an entity] obstructs the arising of another [entity] in its own location".[183]

Returning to the PSk, Vasubandhu emphasises that the *indriya*s consist of pellucid matter (*rūpaprasāda*) and identifies their respective sense objects, for example, the eye faculty is described as "pellucid matter, having colour as its sense object".[184] Sthiramati in the commentary (PSkV 9.5-8) likens the pellucid matter of the faculties to a clear mirror or a receptacle of water in which the reflection of an object appears. As he further elucidates, the eye is said to have colour as its sense object because 1.) it perceives colours and because 2.) it is the special or unique cause (*asādhāraṇakāraṇa*) of the appearance (*nirbhāsa*), i.e. the cognition, of colour.[185] As for the first point, it is worth noting that Sthiramati's etymological analysis of the term '*indriya*' is also related to the faculties having a particular sense object. According to Sthiramati, the sense faculties are called *indriya*, because they are 'powerful' (tracing back '*indriya*' to the root √*ind*), by which he

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PSkV 122.7-8: *na ca cakṣurādivijñāneṣu prasaṇgaḥ cakṣurādīnām ādhāratvena teṣām anāśrayatvāt* | Although the term *ādhāra* is often used interchangeably with *āśraya* (see e.g. AKBh 73.27-28), in the present context Sthiramati seems to take it as a basis or substratum that is responsible for the ontological nature of an entity. In the AK(Bh), as we have seen, the ontological nature of consciousnesses is determined by their second *āśraya*, the *manas*.

[182] PSkV 123.11-14: *pratighātas triprakāro viṣayālambanāvaraṇapratighātabhedāt* | *iha tv āvaraṇapratighātenaiva sapratighatvam iṣṭam iti pratipādayann āha* […] | Cf. AKBh 19.7 *ad* AK 1.29b. I will return to the other two forms of resistance, *viṣayapratighāta* and *ālambanapratighāta*, in the following chapter.

[183] PSkV 123.14: *āvaraṇapratighāto hi svadeśe parasyotpattipratibandhaḥ* | Cf. AKBh 19.7-8 *ad* AK 1.29b.

[184] PSk 2.6: *tatra cakṣurindriyaṃ katamat* | *varṇaviṣayo rūpaprasādaḥ* |

[185] PSkV 9.3-5: *varṇālocanād varṇanirbhāsāsādhāraṇakāraṇatvād vā varṇo viṣayo 'syeti varṇaviṣayaḥ* |

means that they 'rule' or 'control'.[186] More specifically, he says that the *indriya*s have 'power' or 'dominance' (*ādhipatya*) over the 'conglomerations' (*saṅghāta*), which, given the context of the five material sense faculties, arguably refer to the external physical objects held to be conglomerations of atoms. In the present context, the terms *ādhipatya* and *indriya* are held to be equivalents by Sthiramati. The PSkV's etymological analysis of *indriya* is in line with the AKBh's explanation, both in terms of tracing back the expression to the root √*ind* and considering *ādhipatya* and *indriya* to be interchangeable.[187] Sthiramati's second point about the visual faculty functioning as the unique cause (*asādhāraṇakāraṇa*) of the cognition of visible objects is reminiscent of AK(Bh) 1.45cd, which proposes that the faculties, unlike the objects, are 'not shared' (*asādhāraṇa*). Since objects such as colours can be perceived by multiple faculties, in this case the visual and mental faculties, the *indriya*s are the unique causes of consciousnesses. Sthiramati's remark is also related to the AKBh passage on the etymology of *indriya* just mentioned, which claims that the faculties are dominant regarding four things. Two of these are relevant to the present context: the production of consciousness together with the associated mental concomitants, and in the sense of being the unique cause (*asādhāraṇakāraṇa*) of the perception of their respective objects.[188]

As we have seen, by pointing out that it is their respective sense objects which differentiate the various sense faculties, Vasubandhu attributes an important role to the corresponding *viṣaya*s in the *indriya*s' definition. We find a reversed pattern in the case of the definition of *viṣaya*s, since he describes, for instance, the visible objects as the "object

[186] PSkV 10.1-3: *cakṣurādīni hi indantītīndriyāṇi* | *īśanta ity arthaḥ* | *ādhipatyam asmin saṅghāte kurvantīty arthaḥ* | *ataś cādhipatyārtha indriyārthaḥ* |

[187] AKBh 38.3-4 *ad* AK 2.1ab: *kaḥ punar indriyārthaḥ* | *idi paramaiśvarye* | *tasya indantīti indriyāṇi* | *ata ādhipatyārtha indriyārthaḥ* |

[188] AKBh 38.6-9: *cakṣuḥśrotrayostāvat pratyekaṃ caturṣvarthevādhipatyam* | […] *cakṣuḥśrotravijñānayoḥ sasaṃprayogayor utpattau* | *rūpadarśanaśabdaśravaṇayoś cāsādhāraṇakāraṇatve* |

of the eye; [that is] colour, shape and informative form".[189] The circularity of the definitions of the faculties and their objects is made even more explicit by Sthiramati. In the commentary, he points out the relevance of identifying the sense object of each *indriya*, as this is how we can differentiate the faculties (all similarly consisting of pellucid matter) from one another.[190] Concerning the sense objects, Sthiramati claims that just as the faculties (here called *viṣayin*, i.e. 'that which has a sense object') are distinguished from each other on the basis of their objects, likewise the objects are also distinguished on account of the faculties they belong to, for example, visible objects belong only to the eye, while sounds belong only to the ear.[191] As Sthiramati in his explanation of sound emphasises, their derived material nature is not sufficient to differentiate the sense objects, we need to indicate their sense faculties as well.[192] It is important to note that Sthiramati talks only about the five sense faculties and their objects here, putting aside the mental faculty. Otherwise, his claims concerning the objects being unique to their faculties would contradict his earlier statements about the objects being shared (*sādhāraṇa*) between faculties.

Sthiramati's comments here are somewhat ambiguous, as he does not make it clear whether it is the essentially identical nature of the sense faculties and objects that necessitates the usage of relative definitions, or although they have some specific intrinsic nature one could appeal to in order to differentiate them (e.g. the predominance of certain great elements in their atomic structure), we still define them relatively so as to make their

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[189] PSk 2.11-12: *rūpaṃ katamat | cakṣurviṣayaḥ varṇaḥ saṃsthānaṃ vijñaptiś ca |*

[190] PSkV 9.11-12: *tatra varṇaviṣayatvena śrotrādibhyo viṣayaprasādāc ca vyavacchinatti | na hi śrotrādayo viṣayaprasādo vā varṇaviṣayo 'sti |* Sthiramati underlines the material nature of the sense faculties as well, since there are other faculties which can also take colours as their objects (e.g. the mental faculty or faith) but are not material, see PSkV 9.13-16.

[191] PSkV 10.8-13: *yathaiva hi cakṣurādīnāṃ viṣayināṃ parasparato viṣayabhedena bheda uktaḥ* […] *evaṃ rūpādīnām api viṣayāṇāṃ cakṣurādibhir viṣayibhir bheda ucyate | cakṣuṣ eva viṣayo rūpam na śrotrādīnām tadviṣayāṇāṃ śabdāditvena vyavasthānāt |*

[192] PSkV 15.12-14: *śrotrasya viṣaya iti śrotrasyaiva viṣayo nānyasyendriyasyeti | evam hy upādāya-rūpatvāviśeṣe 'pi anyendriyaviṣayebhyo rūpādibhyo 'sya viśeṣa ukto bhavati |*

explanation more amenable to our common way of speaking. In any event, such relative ways of differentiating entities are used not only with regard to the sense faculties and the objects, but, as we have seen in the AK(Bh), also the consciousnesses, as they are generally told apart on account of their unique *āśraya*s. We find a similar approach in other Abhidharmic texts as well, for instance, in a debate in the *Nyāyānusāra*, the Vaibhāṣika interlocutor insists that consciousnesses, which are all identical in essence, can only be differentiated by their *āśraya* (Dhammajoti 2007a, 74-75). Nonetheless, others emphasise the importance of objects as well in telling the various consciousnesses apart. For example, Sthiramati's opponent in the TrBh raises the issue that if the *ālayavijñāna* and the *pravṛttivijñāna*s are indeed different forms of *vijñāna*, then they need to have different objects (*ālambana*).[193] Even though these are feasible ways of defining and classifying entities, the AKBh (91.26-92.2 *ad* AK 2.55d) claims that circular definitions and reasonings (*itaretarāśraya*) should be avoided when searching for the intrinsic nature of a phenomenon.

It is rather surprising that Vasubandhu in the PSk includes *avijñaptirūpa* among the constituents of *rūpaskandha*, especially as its existence is hotly disputed in the AK(Bh). Although one might entertain the idea that Vasubandhu did not rule out the existence of *avijñaptirūpa* after all,[194] it is more probable that in the PSk he aims to give an inclusive description of *rūpaskandha* gathering the most important views that were in circulation among the various Buddhist schools. A similar idea is proposed by Sthiramati, who calls the existence of *avijñaptirūpa* into question explicitly, as it cannot be verified by any of our epistemic instruments (*pramāṇa*).[195] In his introduction to the PSk, Sthiramati suggests

[193] TrBh 50.19-20: *yadi pravṛttivijñānavyatiriktam ālayavijñānam asti tato 'syālambanam ākāro vā vaktavyaḥ* |

[194] Alternatively, it might suggest that the PSk predates the AK(Bh). However, the development of certain ideas and classifications over the two works makes this possibility unlikely.

[195] PSkV 22.14-23.1: *atra ca vaibhāṣikaparikalpitavijñaptivad avijñaptir api naivāsti pramāṇāviṣayatvāt* |

that Vasubandhu's treatise was composed for the quick learners who, instead of extensive explications, require only brief summaries, as well as for the busy householders and wandering ascetics who cannot dedicate their time to study longer texts. The PSk therefore is not a place for lengthy debates, only to give pointers and concise definitions. Sthiramati makes an even more important remark later in his commentary, which is telling of his hermeneutical method of interpreting Vasubandhu's root text. Sthiramati says that when presenting the various phenomena in the PSk, Vasubandhu does not necessarily express his or a specific tradition's ultimate views but aims to comply with the opinion of the world and the diverse philosophical treatises.[196] The broader context of this claim is Sthiramati's argument (presumably inspired by the *Viṃśikā*) that, even though Vasubandhu says that colour and shape are the objects of the eye, ultimately it cannot be the case, since atoms do not exist (*aniṣpanna*). Accordingly, the putative external objects, thought to consist of the conglomerations of these very atoms, cannot be the objects of consciousness.[197] Sthiramati's remarks entail that just because, for instance, *avijñaptirūpa* is listed as a constituent of *rūpaskandha*, it does not mean that Vasubandhu actually accepted its existence. The interpretative strategy proposed here by Sthiramati will be useful for dissolving the contradictions not only in Vasubandhu's root texts, but also in Sthiramati's own commentaries, most importantly the TrBh. Vasubandhu's intention of giving a synopsis of phenomena endorsed by various Buddhist traditions is evident also from his inclusion of such conflicting theories in the PSk as the *avijñaptirūpa* and the *ālayavijñāna*.

While the main framework around which Vasubandhu organises his discussion of conditioned phenomena (*saṃskāra*) is that of the five *skandha*s, as we have seen, he also classifies them according to the *āyatana* and *dhātu* systems. Just like in the AK(Bh),

[196] PSkV 15.9-10: […] *tasmil lokaśāstraprasiddhir evātrācāryeṇānuvṛtteti gamyate* |

[197] I will return to this argument in detail in the following chapter.

Vasubandhu defines *āyatana* as "the gate of arising of consciousness".[198] Sthiramati gives various equivalents of gate (*dvāra*) such as *hetu*, *kāraṇa* or *nimitta* (all meaning cause), with *kāraṇa* being rendered by the Tibetan translation (D 4066, 243a5-6) as *byed rgyu*, that is an efficient cause (*kāraṇahetu*).[199] With regard to the *dhātu*s, Vasubandhu notes that they are devoid of activity (*nirvyāpāra*) and have their own characteristics (*svalakṣaṇa*).[200] We have already seen the notion of *nirvyāpāra* in the context of the 'what sees' debate, where the Sautrāntikas argued that vision is devoid of any activity, and we cannot talk about an agent that sees or an object that is seen, only the causal interplay of momentary *dharma*s. In a similar vein, Sthiramati in the commentary emphasises that momentary entities cannot have activity or agency (*vyāpāra*) and directs the reader to his earlier comments on *satkāyadṛṣṭi*. There he reuses some of the AKBh's arguments to reject the non-Buddhist position that a self or independent agent has to exist.[201]

We have already looked at some of the groupings of *dhātu*s Vasubandhu proposes based on their common characteristics, such as being material (*rūpin*) or resistant (*sapratigha*).[202] Besides these, Vasubandhu attributes many other characteristics to the sense faculties that are noteworthy here.[203] While the five sense faculties differ from the mental faculty in their resistant or material nature, they are equally 'invisible' or 'cannot be pointed at' (*anidarśana*) as we cannot demonstrate their spatial location.[204] The

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[198] PSk 19.8: *kenārthenāyatanāni | vijñānāyadvārārthena |*

[199] PSkV 117.6-7: *vijñānāyasya dvāraṃ hetuḥ kāraṇaṃ nimittaṃ vijñānāyadvāram |*

[200] PSk 20.9: *kenārthena dhātavaḥ | nirvyāpārasvalakṣaṇadhāraṇārthena |* For the second point, see also AKBh 112.24. It is worth noting that the same claim—namely, that (the *dhātu*s) 'have their own characteristics'—is used in AKBh 2.10 as an explanation of the term *dharma*.

[201] PSkV 119.12: *na hi kṣaṇikānāṃ vyāpāraḥ sambhavatīti pūrvam evoktam |* For Sthiramati's discussion of *satkāyadṛṣṭi*, see PSkV 55.10-61.7.

[202] It is worth mentioning that *avijñaptirūpa* is subsumed under the category of *dharmāyatana* or *dharmadhātu*, which is in line with AK(Bh) 1.15bd and KSP (14). See PSk 18.10-11 and 20.4-5.

[203] A similar, but more detailed, classification is to be found in AK(Bh) 1.29ab-40cd. Many of Sthiramati's explanations in the PSkV closely follow, sometimes almost verbatim, the arguments and remarks of the AK(Bh).

[204] The PSk explains the opposite term *sanidarśana* as the characteristic of *dhātu*s having a location which can be pointed at. PSk 20.16: *kati sanidarśanāḥ | eko rūpadhātur deśanidarśanena |*

faculties (as well as most consciousnesses and objects with the exception of three *anāsrava* entities) are also said to be related to impurities (*sāsrava*), because, as Vasubandhu claims, defilements (*kleśa*) arise with regard to them on account of (*upādāya*) being a field of perception (*pratyakṣagocaratā*).[205] This claim is somewhat unclear regarding the *indriya*s. We might take this as a reference to cases when one takes the faculties as an object of consciousness, which thus give rise to impurities. Note, however, that according to AKBh (461.6-8), *indriya*s cannot be known through *pratyakṣa*, only inference. Therefore, we might take the *indriya*s here together with their *adhiṣṭhāna*s. Sthiramati notes (PSkV 124.12-14) that these *dhātu*s are *sāsrava* because they "function accompanied by impurities" and because "defilements (*kleśa*) arise regarding them".[206] As for the realms beings inhabit, all sense faculties are present in the *kāmadhātu* and the *rūpadhātu* (even though in the latter smells and tastes are missing), but in the *ārūpyadhātu* there is only the mental faculty, since the beings who are reborn there are no longer attached to *rūpa* (PSk 21.7-10 and PSkV 125.8-126.11). Regarding their karmic status, the mental faculty (as well as the six consciousnesses and verbal and bodily informative form) can be virtuous (*kuśala*), non-virtuous (*akuśala*) and neutral or indeterminate (*avyākṛta*) depending on whether it is conjoined with virtuous or non-virtuous phenomena. The five sense faculties, however, are indeterminate.[207] Just like in the AK(Bh), the faculties and consciousnesses

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[205] PSk 21.5: *teṣu kleśotpattitaḥ pratyakṣagocaratām upādāya* | The three *anāsrava* entities are identified by Sthiramati (PSkV 125.5-7) with the truth of the path (*mārgasatya*) and the unconditioned (*asaṃskṛta*) things.

[206] Sthiramati also raises the question of how defilements, for example regarding visible forms (as a field of experience), come about when visual consciousness is without conceptualisation (*avikalpaka*). He gives a brief analysis of the arising of defilements: first, visual consciousness comes into being in dependence upon a visual form and a sense faculty, then the perceived form is conceptualised by the *manovijñāna* leading to the arising of defilements with regard to the perceived object. PSkV 125.1-3: *tathā hi cakṣuś ca pratītya rūpāṇi ca pratītya cakṣurvijñānam utpadyate cakṣurvijñānānubhūtāni rūpāṇi manovijñānena vikalpyante vikalpāc ca kleśā utpadyante iti* |

[207] PSk 22.3-5. Sthiramati notes that the *dhātu*s conjoined with *kuśala* and *akuśala* entities are not intrinsically (*svatas*) virtuous or non-virtuous. Sthiramati differentiates four perspectives from which the five sense faculties are said to be indeterminate: in an ultimate sense (*paramārthatas*), inherently (*svabhāvatas*), by way of being conjoined (*samprayogatas*) with *kuśala* or *akuśala* phenomena, or by way of their origin (*samutthānatas*), see PSkV 128.2-3. On these four categories and how they align with the AK(Bh), see Engle 2009, 510-511, n. 625.

are grouped together as internal (*ādhyātmika*) *dhātu*s, as opposed to the sense objects which are external (*bāhya*) *dhātu*s (PSk 22.6-8). Sthiramati in the commentary (PSkV 128.10-12) raises the same problem as Vasubandhu's interlocutor in the AK(Bh) concerning how we can talk about internal and external *dhātu*s if there is no self. Sthiramati reiterates the idea that the mind is the referential basis of the notion of 'I', therefore it is metaphorically called the *ātman*. The faculties, on account of being its support, are close to the mind, therefore are considered internal *dhātu*s.[208]

Vasubandhu also claims that only the seven mental *dhātu*s, that is the *manas* and the six consciousnesses, and the mental concomitants have a cognitive object (*sālambana*). The rest of the faculties do not have an *ālambana*.[209] I will return to this important distinction between the faculties in detail in the next chapter. Of the eighteen *dhātu*s, only the *manas*, the *manovijñāna* and the mental concomitants are related to conceptualisation (*savikalpa*), the five sense faculties and their respective consciousnesses are not (*avikalpaka*).[210] I will return to this topic as well in chapter five when discussing the role of the mental concomitants in the perceptual process. Out of the six faculties, five are said to be appropriated (*upātta*), in contrast to the mental faculty which is not appropriated (*anupātta*) (PSk 23.2-4). According to Sthiramati, *upātta* is ordinarily glossed as sentient (*sacetana*), so those material *dhātu*s are considered *upātta* which form part of a sentient being.[211] As such, it is not only the faculties that are appropriated but also those visible forms, smells, tastes and tangibles that belong to the faculties, that is, the coarse body (but not for example body hairs, nails or teeth that are far from the roots, or faeces, urine and

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[208] PSkV 128.12-13: *ahaṅkārasanniśritatvāc cittam ātmety upacaryate* | PSkV 129.6-7: *ataś cātmabhūtasya cittasyāśrayabhāvena pratyāsannatvāc cakṣurādīnām ādhyātmikatvam* |

[209] PSk 22.9-11: *kati sālambanāḥ* | *sapta cittadhātavo dharmadhātupradeśaś ca ye caitasikāḥ* | *katy anālambanāḥ* | *śeṣā daśa dharmadhātupradeśaś ca* |

[210] PSk 22.12-23.1: *kati savikalpāḥ* | *manodhātur manovijñānadhātur dharmadhātoś ca pradeśaḥ* | *katy avikalpakāḥ* | *śeṣāḥ* |

[211] PSkV 131.15: *yal loke sacetanam ity ucyate* | Sthiramati's claim is identical with that of AKBh 23.17 *ad* AK 1.34d. The AKVy (91.29) identifies *upātta* with *sajīva* i.e. living. PSkV 131.10-11: *tatra ye rūpa-gandharasaspraṣṭavyadhātava indriyāvinirbhāgavartinaḥ te indriyavat upāttāḥ* |

other bodily fluids). These *dhātu*s existing in the present are appropriated or made sentient by the *citta* and the *caitta*s, and the *citta* and the appropriated *dhātu*s share each other's well-being or pain.[212]

Vasubandhu also describes the five material faculties as being 'conjoined' or 'having a share' (*sabhāga*) in the sense that they have a shared or common (*sāmānya*) object with their respective consciousnesses.[213] Vasubandhu's explanation of *sabhāga* in the PSk is much narrower than in the AK(Bh). In the AK(Bh), *sabhāga* does not only characterise the material sense faculties but other *dhātu*s as well, insofar as the faculties, objects and consciousnesses mutually assist one another (*anyonyabhajana*), or, in an alternative interpretation, they are endowed with their own activity (*kāritrabhajana*).[214] In this latter sense, a *dhātu* is *sabhāga* when it performs its unique activity, for example an eye that has seen in the past, sees presently or will see in the future is *sabhāga*.[215] It is contrasted with the idea of being *tatsabhāga*, when a *dhātu* does not perform its activity in such a way.[216] Following the AS (27.32-28.2), Vasubandhu in the PSk focuses on the idea that the sense faculties and their respective consciousnesses are directed on the same object, which also recalls the 'what sees' debate, where it was stated that only a faculty that is *sabhāga* or *savijñānaka*, that is conjoined with consciousness, is able to see. However, since sharing an object is a symmetric relationship, it is unclear why in the PSk the term *sabhāga* characterises only the material faculties but not the consciousnesses as well (as it is held in the AK(Bh)). Besides restating that the visual faculty and the visual consciousness share the visual objects, Sthiramati's PSkV adds that the faculties are also conjoined with objects

[212] PSkV 131.7-8: *vartamānās tu svasattādhyāsitatvāt cittacaittaiś copāttatvād upāttā eva cakṣurādayaḥ nānupāttāḥ* | PSkV 131.14-15: *yac cittacaittair adhiṣṭhānabhāvenopagṛhītam anugrahopaghātābhyām anyonyānuvidhānāt* |

[213] PSk 23.5-6: *kati sabhāgāḥ* | *pañcādhyātmikā rūpiṇaḥ svavijñānair viṣayasāmānyatām upādāya* |

[214] AKBh 28.22-23 *ad* AK 1.39d: *sabhāga iti ko 'rthaḥ* | *indriyaviṣayavijñānānām anyonyabhajanaṃ kāritrabhajanaṃ vā bhāgaḥ* |

[215] AKBh 28.2-3: *uktaṃ bhavati yaḥ svakarmakṛt sa sabhāga iti* | *tatra yena cakṣuṣā rūpāṇy apaśyat paśyati drakṣyati vā tad ucyate sabhāgaṃ cakṣuḥ* |

[216] AK 1.39cd: ***tatsabhāgāś ca śeṣāḥ yo na svakarmakṛt ||***

in generating the visual consciousness.[217] This might be his attempt to clarify that *sabhāga* qualifies the faculties specifically because they share some activities both with the consciousnesses and the objects, while the objects and consciousnesses are not conjoined in this way. The notion of *tatsabhāga* in the PSk refers to the same five material faculties when they are not conjoined with their respective consciousnesses (*svavijñānaśūnya*). He adds that they are nonetheless similar to their own *genus* (*svajātisāmānya*), which, as the AKBh and Sthiramati's commentary explain, means that even though these faculties are not *sabhāga*, they are similar to those (*tad*) that are, as they belong to the same *genus* (hence the name *tatsabhāga*).[218]

3.2.2. *Ālayavijñāna* as an *āśraya* of perception in the PSk

In the previous chapter, we have already seen some passages from the PSk and the *Triṃśikā* where Vasubandhu talks about the close relationship between the *ālayavijñāna* and other forms of *vijñāna*. In the PSk, for instance, he said that it is from the *ālayavijñāna* where the *pravṛttivijñāna*s rearise after *nirodhasamāpatti*, *asañjñisamāpatti* or taking rebirth as a being without perception (*asañjñika*), while in verse 5 of the *Triṃśikā* he noted that the *āśraya* of the [*kliṣṭa*]*manas* is the *ālayavijñāna.* Besides, we have also seen that in the context of *āśrayaparāvṛtti* (Triṃś 29), the term *āśraya* is used as an epithet in place of the *ālayavijñāna*.[219] Although the *ālayavijñāna* is not explicitly called *āśraya* in the PSk, the reason why it is regarded as a support of perception in other Yogācāra texts is also specified here. In what follows, I am going to investigate Vasubandhu's and Sthiramati's description of the characteristics and roles of the store consciousness, focusing on those

[217] PSkV 132.9-11: *tena svavijñānena cakṣuḥ svaviṣayeṇa rūpeṇa samānam | dvayor api cakṣur-vijñānotpattāv anuguṇatvāt samānam |*

[218] PSk 23.7-8: *kati tatsabhāgāḥ | ta eva svavijñānaśūnyāḥ svajātisāmānyatām upādāya |* AKBh 28.23-24: *ye punar asabhāgās te teṣāṃ sabhāgānāṃ jātisāmānyena sabhāgatvāt tatsabhāgāḥ |* PSkV 133.1-2: *svavijñānaśūnyāś cakṣurādayas te sabhāgānāṃ cakṣurādīnāṃ cakṣurādijātyā samānā iti taiḥ sadṛśatvāt tatsabhāgā ity ucyante |*

[219] TrBh 140.4-5: *āśrayasya parāvṛttir iti | āśrayo 'tra sarvabījakam ālayavijñānam |*

remarks that illuminate how the *ālayavijñāna* relates to *pravṛttivijñāna*s and the *indriya*s, and how its conception fits in with the fourfold model of perception.[220]

In his very first remark on the *ālayavijñāna*, Vasubandhu notes that it is where the seeds or potentialities (*bīja*) of all karmic formations (*saṃskāra*) are accumulated.[221] In the *saṃskāra* section of the PSk Vasubandhu gives an extensional definition of *saṃskāra*, explaining that it includes the *dharma*s that are concomitants of the mind (*caitasika dharma*)—but not sensation (*vedanā*) and ideation (*saṃjñā*)—and also factors that are dissociated from the mind (*cittaviprayukta dharma*).[222] Sthiramati's explanation makes it clear that it is not this narrow sense of *saṃskāra* that Vasubandhu refers to in connection with the *ālayavijñāna*. According to him, all *dharma*s included in the *rūpa* and other *skandha*s are also called *saṃskāra*s because they are generated by the combination or assemblage of conditions (*pratyaya*). In the *saṃskāra* section of the PSk, Vasubandhu, nonetheless, limits his discussion to those *dharma*s that belong to the *saṃskāra skandha*, that is the *caitasika*s and the *cittaviprayukta dharma*s.[223] It is worth noting that Sthiramati's definition of *saṃskāra* (taken in its broader sense) is identical with the definition of conditioned (*saṃskṛta*) entities Vasubandhu gives in the AKBh, showing that in Sthiramati's view the terms *saṃskāra* and *saṃskṛta* are, in the present context,

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[220] Due to the limitations of the dissertation, I will focus on the philosophical content and coherence of the ideas mentioned in the text, but I will not trace back systematically the origins of Vasubandhu's and Sthiramati's claims. For more systematic discussions of the *ālayavijñāna* in the early Yogācāra literature see Schmithausen 1987, Waldron 2003 or Buescher 2008.

[221] PSk 16.8: *prādhānyena punaś cittam ālayavijñānam | tathā hi tac citaṃ sarvasaṃskārabījaiḥ |*

[222] PSk 4.3-4: *saṃskārāḥ katame | vedanāsañjñābhyām anye caitasikā dharmāś cittaviprayuktāś ca ||* For a detailed analysis of the *saṃskāra* section of the PSk and the PSkV, see Kramer 2013a. Kramer notes that the PSk's description of the *saṃskāra skandha* represents a different stage of development than that of the AK(Bh), since in the latter the *caitta*s and the *cittaviprayukta saṃskāra*s are not included in the definition of *saṃskāra* in the first chapter. Nonetheless, later it is clarified that they should also be subsumed under the *saṃskāra skandhas*, see Kramer 2013a, 988.

[223] PSkV 31.10-12: *sametya sambhūya pratyayaiḥ kṛtatvāt sarva eva rūpādiskandhasaṅgṛhītā dharmāḥ saṃskārā ity ucyante | iha tu saṃskāraskandhasaṅgṛhītā eva saṃskārā abhipretāḥ |* On the twofold meaning of *saṃskāra* referring i.) to those conditioning factors or mental traces that are left in the mind by previous actions and lead to further actions or rebirth, and ii.) to the conditioned or impermanent things, which are brought about by them, see Waldron 2003, 23 or Kramer 2013a, 988.

interchangeable (see also Engle 2009, 472-473, n. 171).[224] This broader understanding of *saṃskāra* is clearly at work when Sthiramati identifies the seeds of all *saṃskāra*s deposited in the *ālayavijñāna* with the seeds of all impure factors (*sāsrava dharma*).[225] As such, the seeds of all *sāsrava dharma*s, including, *prima facie*, those of the faculties, consciousnesses and objects, are accumulated by the *ālayavijñāna* in each passing moment, where they are continuously nourished and held together.[226]

Vasubandhu lists three characteristics of the *ālayavijñāna* that clearly distinguish it from the six *pravṛttivijñāna*s, namely that i.) its *ālambana* and *ākāra* cannot be discerned or determined (*aparicchinna*), that ii.) it is of a single kind (*ekajātīya*), and finally that iii.) it has uninterrupted continuity (*santānānuvṛtti*).[227] I will return to Vasubandhu's first remark in the following chapter, but it is worthwhile to point out in advance that the *ālayavijñāna* in this regard is in a sharp contrast with the six *pravṛttivijñāna*s which, as Sthiramati notes, have a discernible object (*ālambana*) and object-form or mode of operation (*ākāra*).[228] The fact, however, that these are not (or only hardly) discernible does not mean that the *ālayavijñāna* does not have an *ālambana* and *ākāra* at all, as it would jeopardise its status as a genuine form of *vijñāna*.[229] The second point about the *ālayavijñāna* being *ekajātīya* refers to its moral quality. The *pravṛttivijñāna*s can be of

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[224] AKBh 4.26-27 *ad* AK 1.7ab: *rūpaskandho vedanāskandhaḥ saṃskāraskandho vijñānaskandhaścetyete saṃskṛtā dharmāḥ | sametya saṃbhūya pratyayaiḥ kṛtāḥ iti saṃskṛtāḥ |*

[225] PSkV 90.10-11: *saṃskāro 'tra sāsravā dharmā abhipretāḥ |*

[226] PSkV 90.8-10: *pratikṣaṇam sarvasaṃskārabījaiś citatvāc cittam iti prādhānyena tad eva cittam | cayas tu paunaḥpunyena bījaparipoṣaḥ saṃskārabījānusyūtir vā |* In the *Nivṛtti Portion* of the YBh, the *ālayavijñāna* is said to be the source of the *pravṛttivijñāna*s, the sense faculties with their coarse bases as well as the *bhājanaloka*. Vasubandhu's claim that the *ālayavijñāna* accumulates the seeds of all *saṃskāra*s seems to point towards this interpretation. I also presume that Sthiramati by *sāsrava dharma*s refers to the same entities that Vasubandhu's PSk classifies as *sāsrava dhātu*s, see chapter 3.2.1. Note, however, that in certain early Yogācāra texts where the *ālayavijñāna* is similarly described as 'containing all the seeds' (e.g. the Initial Passage, the Basic Section, the Proof Portion and the *Pravṛtti* Portion of the YBh or the Vth chapter of the *Saṃdhinirmocanasūtra*) the *ālayavijñāna* actually contains only the seeds of the *pravṛttivijñāna*s (and sometimes also the *caitta*s) (see Schmithausen 1987, 32, 62-63).

[227] PSk 16.10-11: *tat punar aparicchinnālambanākāraṃ vijñānam ekajātīyaṃ santānānuvṛtti ca |*

[228] PSkV 92.7-8: *pravṛttivijñānaṃ hi* […] *paricchinnālambanaṃ paricchinnākāraṃ ca |*

[229] PSkV 92.13-15: *etac cālambanaṃ sūkṣmatvāl lokapaṇḍitair api duravadhāram ity ato 'paricchinnālambanākāram ity ucyate na punar anālambanam eva |*

three different kinds (virtuous, non-virtuous or neutral) on account of being conjoined with *kuśala* or *akuśala* mental concomitants. The *ālayavijñāna*, however, is accompanied only by the five universal *caitta*s (*manaskāra, sparśa, vedanā, saṃjñā, cetanā*), hence—as well as due to being a result of maturation (*vipāka*)—it is neutral (*avyākṛta*).[230] As we will see it shortly, this is in line with the Abhidharmic principle that phenomena which are a result of karmic maturation (*vipāka*) are necessarily neutral or indeterminate (*avyākṛta*). We are already familiar with the third characteristic of the store consciousness: in contrast to the six *pravṛttivijñāna*s which are occasionally inactive, the *ālayavijñāna* functions uninterruptedly. While Vasubandhu seems to connect this idea with the *ālayavijñāna* being continuously present and thus making the rearising of the six *vijñāna*s possible after longer periods of suspension (such as after *nirodhasamāpatti*),[231] Sthiramati puts greater emphasis on the *ālayavijñāna*'s uniform, as opposed to the *pravṛttivijñāna*s' constantly changing, nature during a being's lifetime. The *pravṛttivijñāna*s change not only in terms of being active or inactive, for example when different types of consciousnesses follow each other, but also in their moral qualities or the realm they pertain to.[232] It is worth noting that Sthiramati's explanation seems to presuppose the Abhidharmic uni-sensory

[230] PSkV 93.1-4: *pravṛttivijñānaṃ kuśalakliṣṭāvyākṛtajātīyam ālayavijñānaṃ tva ekajātīyam | tatra na tāvat kuśalākuśalajātīyam kuśalākuśalair asamprayogāt | tad dhi pañcabhir eva sarvatragaiś caitasaiḥ samprayujyate manaskārasparśavedanāsañjñācetanābhiḥ | ālayavijñānaṃ sasamprayogaṃ pūrvakarma-saṃskārahetuka-tvād ekāntena vipāka evety avyākṛtajātīyam eva* || As specified for instance in Triṃś 4, the *ālayavijñāna* is in fact *anivṛtāvyākṛta*, that is unobscured by defilements and neutral. The idea that the results of maturation are unobscured and neutral is also mentioned in KSP (27).

[231] PSk 16.11-17.2: *tat punar apariccchinnālambanākāraṃ vijñānam ekajātīyaṃ santānānuvṛtti ca | yato nirodhasamāpattyasañjñisamāpattyāsañjñikebhyo vyutthitasya punar viṣayavijñaptyākhyaṃ pravṛtti-vijñānam utpadyata* […] | I read the second sentence as a justification (*yatas*) of why the *ālayavijñāna* is held to function in an uninterrupted continuity. The continuous functioning of the *ālayavijñāna* in such states as *nirodhasamāpatti* and its capacity to regenerate the other forms of consciousnesses afterwards are discussed in detail in the KSP (especially 32). Vasubandhu notes here that it is the *manovijñāna* that rearises first, followed by the rest of the *vijñāna*s, according to their conditions.

[232] PSkV 93.9-16: *tathā hi cakṣurvijñānānantaraṃ śrotrādivijñānāny utpadyante śrotravijñānānantaraṃ cakṣurādivijñānāni* | […] *tathā kuśalānantaram akuśalam utpadyate akuśalānantaraṃ kuśalam* […] *nāpy ekaṃ dravyam ā maraṇād anuvartata iti* |

view of perception here, that an individual can only have one type of consciousness at a certain time (that is we cannot hear or see at the very same moment).[233]

The *ālayavijñāna*'s ability to reactivate the suspended *pravṛttivijñāna*s (*chinnapunarvṛttitā*) is at the same time one of the three kinds of proofs Vasubandhu provides for the existence of the *ālayavijñāna*.[234] Sthiramati treats the rearising of the *pravṛttivijñāna*s following unconscious meditations and the *asañjñika* state separately from their rearising after other unconscious states such as deep sleep or fainting. However, as he indicates, these cases should be understood along similar lines.[235] Vasubandhu's other proof relevant to perception is that the *pravṛttivijñāna*s are able to arise in various modes (*prakārāntara*) with regard to the object condition (*ālambanapratyaya*) due to the existence of the *ālayavijñāna*.[236] To unpack Vasubandhu's claim, Sthiramati says that the six *pravṛttivijñāna*s differ from the store consciousness insofar as they arise in different modes with regard to or in dependence on the object condition of perception (i.e. the visible forms, sounds etc., or all *dharma*s in the case of the *manas*).[237] Some perceptions are of different sense modalities (e.g. sound or visible object) or have different content (e.g. yellow or blue).[238] However, as he points out, some other modes of the *pravṛttivijñāna*s depend not only on the object, but also on the *ālayavijñāna* serving as their causal condition (*hetupratyaya*). Accordingly, the dynamically changing manifest forms of

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[233] In this regard, his commentary differs from the TrBh, where, as we will see it briefly in the next chapter, he endorses a multi-sensory view of perception.

[234] PSk 17.2-4: *ālambanapratyayāpekṣaṃ prakārāntaravṛttitāṃ chinnapunarvṛttitāṃ saṃsārapravṛtti-nivṛttitāṃ copādāya* |

[235] PSkV 101.10-13: *acittakamiddhamūrchādyavasthāsu cchinne pravṛttivijñānasantāne punar acittakamiddhamūrchāpagata ālayavijñānam antareṇa pravṛttivijñānotpattir na yujyate* | *nirodhasamāpatty-ādivyutthānacittavad ihāpi vicāraḥ kartavyaḥ* |

[236] The third kind of proof, which I will not discuss here, argues that the continuation of *saṃsāra* and the attainment of *nirvāṇa* can only be explained if there is an *ālayavijñāna*. For an overview of Sthiramati's arguments on this claim (PSkV 101.14-105.8.), see Kramer 2014, 318-319 and Kramer 2016a, 156-157.

[237] PSkV 99.8-9: *punaś cālambanapratyayāpekṣāṃ prakārāntaravṛttitāṃ upādāya pravṛttivijñānād ālaya-vijñānam anyad iti pratipattavyam* | See also PSkV 99.16-100.3.

[238] PSkV 99.12: *rūpādyākārāc chabdādyākāraḥ prakārāntaram* | […] *pītādyākārān nīlādyākāraḥ prakārāntaram* |

consciousness show a great variety also in their moral qualities or the realms they pertain to. The *pravṛttivijñāna*s having dissimilar qualities, however, cannot be the seeds of each other (for example, a virtuous moment of consciousness of a non-virtuous one, or *vice versa*), therefore we have to posit an *ālayavijñāna* containing their seeds and reactivating them after they have been interrupted.[239]

In the rest of the *ālayavijñāna*'s description, Vasubandhu gives three (loosely) etymological explanations of the term *ālaya* which shed some light on the relation of the store consciousness to the body and the material *indriya*s, as well as how it serves as an *āśraya* of perception. According to Vasubandhu, the reasons for calling this form of consciousness *ālaya* are that i.) it is the container (*ālaya*) of all seeds or potentialities (*bīja*), ii.) it is the container (*ālaya*) and cause (*nimitta*) of a sentient being's individual existence (*ātmabhāva*), and iii.) it resides or hides in a sentient being's body.[240] Evoking the terminology of the *Saṃdhinirmocanasūtra*, Vasubandhu also calls the *ālayavijñāna ādānavijñāna* noting that it appropriates or takes possession (*upādāna*) of the body (*kāya*).[241]

It is worth starting with Vasubandhu's second and third points. As for the second claim that the *ālayavijñāna* is the *ālaya* and *nimitta* of a sentient being's individual existence (*ātmabhāva*), Sthiramati takes *ātmabhāva* as a collective expression for name and form

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[239] PSkV 100.5-10: *sā ca prakārāntaravṛttitā yathā nālambananirapekṣā yujyate tathā hetupratyaya-nirapekṣāpi naiva yujyate | yaś ca yeṣāṃ bījair anugataḥ sa teṣāṃ hetupratyayaḥ | na ca pravṛttivijñānānāṃ parasparabījatvaṃ yujyate kuśalākuśalāvyākṛtānām* […] *vijñānānāṃ paryāyeṇa bhāvāt |*

[240] PSk 17.4-6: *ālayavijñānatvaṃ punaḥ sarvabījālayatām ātmabhāvālayanimittatāṃ kāyālīnatāṃ copādāya | ādānavijñānam api tatkāyopādānam upādāya |* It is important to note that the compound *ātmabhāvālayanimitta* is ambiguous. Even though the Tibetan translation and the commentaries on the PSk interpret *ālayanimitta* as a *dvandva*, thereby referring to two separate considerations (i.e. that it is a container and a cause), Schmithausen (1987, 275-276, n. 140) discards this reading, as it is not in line with the PSk's 'consistently etymological character' and translates it as 'object of clinging'. Buescher (2008, 131, n. 3.), however, disagrees with Schmithausen's alternative interpretation and translation. My analysis follows Sthiramati's suggestion of taking it as a *dvandva* compound (PSkV 106.4-5), even though this interpretation of *ālaya* does not differ etymologically from the previous one. In light of Sthiramati's understanding, Vasubandhu's explanation is not strictly etymological but rather functional.

[241] According to Buescher (2008, 131), Vasubandhu's description of the three functional aspects of the *ālayavijñāna* in the PSk corresponds to *Saṃdhinirmocanasūtra* V.3, therefore Vasubandhu's intention might have been to comment on that passage.

(*nāmarūpa*), that is the physical and psychological constituents making up a sentient being.[242] According to him, *ālaya* in this case means that it is where the individual existence of a being resides (*ālīyate*) insofar as the *ātmabhāva*, that is the psychophysical entity, comes into being by the power of the store consciousness. The idea that the *ālayavijñāna* serves as a cause (*nimitta*) of *ātmabhāva* is closely related to the previous explanation, since the individual comes to be at the moment of 'linking up' (*pratisandhi*)—that is, at the time of rebirth—as a result of the maturation of the seeds contained in it.[243] We will look at Sthiramati's analysis of how this process is to be understood shortly. However, it should be highlighted in advance that he notes that the store consciousness comes into being in a new homogenous collection (*nikāyasabhāga*).[244] In line with its usage in the PSk (see for example the definitions of *jīvitendriya* or *jāti*) and Sthiramati's commentary, the term *nikāyasabhāga* refers to the continuum of a being's *skandha*s in a single lifetime.[245] The definition of *nikāyasabhāgatā* in the PSk and the AKBh is quite telling as to why this particular concept is preferred in this context. Both texts (with differences in phrasing) explain *nikāyasabhāgatā* as the similarity of beings.[246] The AKBh differentiates two kinds of similarities, general (*abhinna*) and specific (*bhinna*).

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[242] PSkV 106.1: *ātmabhāvo nāmarūpam* | In the TrBh, Sthiramati explains *ātmabhāva* (being in that context synonymous with *āśraya*) more specifically as the matter of the *indriya*s together with their coarse seat (*adhiṣṭhāna*) and the mental constituents of a being (*nāman*). TrBh 52.14-15: *āśraya ātmabhāvaḥ sādhiṣṭhānam indriyarūpaṃ nāma ca* |

[243] PSkV 106.2-4: *ālīyate 'sminn ātmabhāvaḥ tadbalenānuvṛttita ity ālayaḥ* | […] *ātmabhāvanimittaṃ tadbījaparipoṣāt pratisandhāv ātmabhāvanirvartanāt* | Sthiramati also documents a variant reading of this passage which, instead of *ātmabhāvālaya*, reads *ātmamānālaya*. In accordance with this variant, the *ālayavijñāna* is the store and cause of the mistaken belief in a self, see PSkV 106.6-10. Schmithausen (1987, 275-276, n. 140), however, translates *ātmamānālayanimitta* as 'the object of clinging to personal existence' (see fn. 240 of this dissertation). As Buescher (2008, 120, fn. 5) notes, the reading *ātmabhāvālaya* is favoured by the PSkV as well as by another commentary on the PSk, the *Pañcaskandhabhāṣya*, and also by the text's Tibetan translation. The Chinese translation, however, follows the reading *ātmamānālaya.*

[244] PSKV 91.11-12: *vipākavāsanām āgamyālayavijñānān nikāyasabhāgāntareṣv ālayavijñānam eva vipākātmakaṃ nirvartate* | Cf. TrBh 48.17-19.

[245] For the definition of *jīvitendriya*, see PSk 15.4-5, for *jāti*, see PSk 15.8-9. PSkV 81.5-7: *teṣu ca nikāyasabhāgeṣu gatibhedena karmabhedena ca bhinneṣu pratyekam ekajānmiko yaḥ skandhasantānaḥ sa nikāyasabhāgākhyaḥ* |

[246] PSk 15.6-7: *nikāyasabhāgatā katamā* | *yā sattvānām ātmabhāvatulyatā* | AKBh 65.17 *ad* AK 2.41a: ***sabhāgatā sattvasāmyaṃ*** | […] *sattvānāṃ sādṛśyaṃ nikāyasabhāga ity asyāḥ śāstre saṃjñā* |

The general refers to the overall resemblance of all living beings, for example, being sentient in contrast to inanimate objects. The specific similarities, on the other hand, are applicable only to certain groups of beings. These include among others the realm (*dhātu*), stage (*bhūmi*) or form of existence (*gati*) in which beings are reborn, their caste (*jāti*) or gender, but also, as other Abhidharmic texts such as the *Nyāyānusāra* add, the similar functioning of their sense faculties or bodies.[247] Therefore, the *bīja*s contained in the *ālayavijñāna* determine several aspects of a being's next birth in which it shows resemblance to other members of its own group. Many of these are crucial from the point of view of perception, such as the physical apparatus it is born with or the way its sense faculties function, delimiting the range of experiences the individual is capable of.

Regarding Vasubandhu's third point about the *ālayavijñāna* residing or hiding in the body (*kāya*), Sthiramati notes that the body should be understood here as the physical body (*śarīra*) with the *indriya*s.[248] Unlike the manifest consciousnesses which are bound to their respective sense faculties, the *ālayavijñāna* pervades the entire body, and, on account of operating in conjunction with it, the store consciousness can be said to abide or dwell in the body.[249] This understanding of the *ālayavijñāna* latently abiding in the material sense faculties is the interpretation of *ālaya* endorsed in various texts Vasubandhu was most certainly acquainted with, such as the *Saṃdhinirmocanasūtra* (see Schmithausen 1987, 27). The same idea is also mentioned in the *Proof Portion* of the VinSg,[250] where, in contrast to the PSk and the PSkV, eight proofs are enumerated in support of the existence

[247] AKBh 67.16-18: *abhinnā sarvasattvānāṃ sattvasabhāgatā | pratisattvaṃ sarveṣu bhāvāt | bhinnā punas teṣām eva sattvānāṃ dhātubhūmigatiyonijātistrīpuruṣopāsakabhikṣuśaikṣāśaikṣyādibhedena pratiniyatā |* For Saṃghabhadra's definition of *nikāyasabhāgatā*, see Dhammajoti 2015, 340.

[248] PSkV 106.11-12: *kāyo 'tra sendriyaṃ śarīram |*

[249] PSkV 106.12-13: *samantaṃ hi śarīraṃ vyāpyālayavijñānaṃ vartate | ataḥ kāyapratibaddhavṛttitvāt tat kāye ālīnam iti kāyālīnam |*

[250] Schmithausen (1987, 299, n. 226) refers to the first half of the VinSg as the *Proof Portion*, since it discusses the proofs for the existence of the *ālayavijñāna*.

of the *ālayavijñāna*.[251] The first of these argues that there must be an *ālayavijñāna* that takes on a new physical body at the time of rebirth and, by latently abiding in it, keeps it, as a whole, 'appropriated' (*upātta*) throughout one's lifetime. The term 'appropriated', as we have seen the equation of *upātta* with *sacetana* and *sajīva*, is meant in the sense of keeping it sentient or alive.[252] This function is described in the *Pravṛtti Portion* of the VinSg as *āśrayakara* ('giving a support'), meaning that the *ālayavijñāna* conditions the arising of the *pravṛttivijñāna*s by maintaining the body and making the functioning of the *indriya*s possible (Waldron 2003, 112).[253] Vasubandhu's suggestion that by latently abiding in it the *ālayavijñāna* appropriates the body is parallel with the Abhidharmic idea seen earlier that the body is appropriated (*upātta*) by *citta*, which is expressly equated by him with the *ālayavijñāna* in the *vijñāna* section of the PSk.

After analysing two of Vasubandhu's three reasons for calling the *ālayavijñāna* '*ālaya*', we saw that the *bīja*s contained in it determine among others the sensory apparatus a being is born with, and that, by pervading and sustaining the body, the store consciousness serves as an *āśraya* of the functioning of the *indriya*s and, hence, is responsible indirectly for the arising of consciousnesses. The *ālayavijñāna*, however, contains not only the seeds of the future sense faculties but, as Vasubandhu's first point we put aside earlier indicates, it is the container (*ālaya*) of *all* seeds or potentialities. Due to this characteristic, the *ālayavijñāna* is often labelled as a seed-support (*bījāśraya*). For instance, the *Pañcavijñānakāyasamprayuktā Bhūmi* (PBh) of the YBh enumerates three *āśraya*s in

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[251] Kramer 2016a systematically compares the four proofs of the PSkV (see also Kramer 2014, 316-319) with the eight proofs of the *Proof Portion* and the *Abhidharmasamuccayabhāṣya*, and the six proofs of the *Mahāyānasaṃgraha*. On the eight proofs of the *Proof Portion* specifically, see Schmithausen 1987, 194-196, Griffiths 1986, 96-104.

[252] On this proof and others belonging to what is called by Schmithausen the 'somatic' aspect of the *ālayavijñāna*, see Schmithausen 1987, 195.

[253] According to Schmithausen (1987, 49), the function of keeping the body alive throughout one's lifetime should be differentiated from the function of taking possession of a new body or *ātmabhāva* at the moment of linking up (*pratisandhi*), which is often referred to by the term *ādānavijñāna* (also used, as we have seen, by Vasubandhu himself).

dependence on which the five sensory consciousnesses come into being. The first two are the same as the ones seen in the Abhidharmic context: the so-called simultaneous support (*sahabhū-āśraya*) of consciousness, which is identified with the sense faculty and the similar-immediate support (*samanantara-āśraya*), which is the *manas*. The third one, the seed-support (*bīja-āśraya*), is equated with the *ālayavijñāna*, and is described as containing all the seeds, being the appropriator (*upādātṛ*) of the *āśraya* (understood here as the psycho-physical basis) and subsumed under the category of retribution (*vipāka-saṃgṛhīta*).[254]

We have already seen some important aspects of the *ālayavijñāna* as a *bījāśraya* when discussing Vasubandhu's second argument for the existence of the store consciousness to the effect that we need to postulate it to explain how the six *pravṛttivijñāna*s arise in different modes. In that context Sthiramati underlined that the *pravṛttivijñāna*s showing a great variety, for example, in terms of moral qualities cannot be the seeds of each other, therefore an *ālayavijñāna* needs to exist storing their seeds. We have also seen Vasubandhu's claim that the *ālayavijñāna* contains the seeds of all karmic formations (*saṃskāra*), which were identified by Sthiramati with the seeds of all the impure (*sāsrava*) *dharma*s. The same idea is restated by Sthiramati in the commentary of the passage at issue now, adding that *ālaya* is to be understood as a synonym of abode or place (*sthāna*) here.[255] He also reflects on another, albeit related, semantic aspect of the term *ālaya*, 'sticking'. He approaches the idea that the *ālayavijñāna* serves as a cause of all *dharma*s from two different directions, first giving a passive, then an active interpretation of the role of the *ālayavijñāna*. In the first explanation, it is all the *dharma*s that stick to or are tied to the *ālayavijñāna* in the sense of being its effects (*kāryabhāva* or *phalabhāva*), while in the

[254] PBh 4.6-7: *cakṣurvijñānasyāśrayaḥ katamaḥ | cakṣuḥ sahabhūr āśrayaḥ | manaḥ samanantara āśrayaḥ | sarvabījakam āśrayopādātṛvipākasaṃgṛhītam ālayavijñānaṃ bījāśrayaḥ |* On this passage, see also Chu 2014, 285-287 and Schmithausen 1987, 110ff.

[255] PSkV 105.13-15: *sarvabījālayatā sarvasāṅkleśikadharmabījasthānatā | ālayaṃ sthānam iti paryāyaḥ |*

second explanation it is the *ālayavijñāna* that sticks to or is tied to the *dharma*s by being their cause (*kāraṇabhāva* or *hetubhāva*) (see also Schmithausen 2014, 139ff).[256]

As we have seen so far, Vasubandhu's previous remarks—as well as Sthiramati's comments thereon—that the *ālayavijñāna* is the container (*ālaya*) and cause (*nimitta*) of a sentient being's individual existence (*ātmabhāva*) and that it resides in the body and the *indriya*s are in line with the realist landscape of the PSk. While Vasubandhu's claims about the *ālayavijñāna* containing all the seeds or the seeds of all karmic formations (*saṃskāra*)—including, presumably, the sense faculties together with their seats, the consciousnesses, as well as the surrounding world (*bhājanaloka*)—might lend itself to an idealist interpretation, it is more likely that Vasubandhu considers the body with the faculties as well as the *bhājanaloka* to be real karmic effects (as opposed to mental representations) the seeds of which are contained in the *ālayavijñāna*.[257] The realist reading of Vasubandhu's claims in the PSk is also corroborated by the fact that, unlike for instance in the *Mahāyānasaṃgraha* or the *Abhidharmasūtra* where the idea that the *ālayavijñāna* is the source of all *dharma*s is embedded in the *vijñaptimātratā* teaching, the latter doctrine is conspicuously missing from the PSk.[258]

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[256] PSkV 105.15-16: *atha vālīyanta upanibadhyante 'smin sarvadharmāḥ kāryabhāvena tad vālīyata upanibadhyate kāraṇabhāvena sarvadharmeṣv ity ālayaḥ* | These claims are verbatim repeated in TrBh (50.15-17). Buescher (2008, 121-122) points out that Vasubandhu's description of the *ālayavijñāna* in the PSk does not reflect on the *hetubhāva* and *phalabhāva* aspects of the store consciousness. While these two associations of the term were most probably known to Vasubandhu, according to Buescher, he intentionally excluded them from his definition to follow the explanation of the *Saṃdhinirmocanasūtra*.

[257] Schmithausen (1987, 64, 203) raises this interpretation regarding the *Nivṛtti Portion*. According to Schmithausen, even in the Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma, *karman* (the seeds of which, according to the Yogācāras, are deposited in the *ālayavijñāna*) participates in the production or differentiation of the bodies of the beings as well as the external world—an idea which also features characteristically in the AS (which, as we have seen earlier, is the primary source of the PSk).

[258] Schmithausen (1987, 32-33 and n. 221-222) notes that nearly the whole of the YBh as well as many parts of other early Yogācāra texts show no sign of idealism, and even considerably later authors such as Sthiramati do not use a consistently idealist terminology, so much so that their views are often challenging to reconcile with idealism. Yamabe (1998, 19, n. 8) suggests that even Vasubandhu's Yogācāra works, such as the *Viṃśikā*, are not entirely consistent in this regard and is oscillating between epistemological and ontological idealist positions.

Sthiramati's comments on the claim that the seeds of all *saṃskāra*s are accumulated in the *ālayavijñāna* also suggest a realist reading. Using the example of visual consciousness, he seeks to explain how all impure entities (*sāsrava dharma*s) arise from the combination of four conditions (*pratyaya*):

> Of these [four], the causal condition is the imprints contained in the store consciousness. The imprints are the nourished state of the seeds due to the repeated manifestation of the karmic formations. The dominant condition is the sense faculty of the eye and so on. The similar-immediate condition is the consciousness that has just ceased to be. The object condition is the visual form, and so on.[259]

One of the most significant aspects of Sthiramati's analysis here is that it delineates how the *ālayavijñāna* operates side by side with the familiar causes of perception such as the material sense faculties. Furthermore, it also illuminates how the theory of the four conditions originating in the *sūtra*s and being widely accepted in the Abhidharmic treatises can be adapted to the Yogācāra theoretical framework by identifying the karmic imprints deposited in the *ālayavijñāna* with *hetupratyaya*. Sthiramati admits that the *sūtra*s do not talk about the causal condition, i.e. the *ālayavijñāna*, when explaining the arising of consciousness. They explicitly state only that consciousness comes into being when the sense faculty is unimpaired, and the object and attention (*manasikāra*) are present. However, as he argues, it is simply because the causal condition is always there and is very difficult to perceive.[260] Sthiramati's commentary might have been influenced here by the threefold conception of *āśraya* seen for example in the PBh. As his description suggests, each of the three *āśraya*s contribute to the perceptual process in their own way, without

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[259] PSkV 90.12-15: *tatra hetupratyaya ālayavijñānasanniviṣṭā vāsanā | paunaḥpunyena saṃskāṛāṇām samudācārād bījapuṣṭir vāsanety ucyate | adhipatipratyayaś cakṣurādīnīndriyāṇi | samanantarapratyayaḥ samanantaraniruddhaṃ vijñānam | ālambanapratyayo rūpādikaḥ |*

[260] PSkV 90.15-91.4: *tathā hi sūtre 'py uktam cakṣur aparibhinnaṃ bhavati rūpāṇy ābhāsagatāni tajjaś ca manasikāraḥ pratyupasthito bhavati evam tajjasya cakṣurvijñānasya prādurbhāvo bhavatīti* | […] *hetupratyayas tu sadā sannihitvād durvijñeyatvāc ca noktaḥ* | I will discuss the role of attention in the perceptual process in the fifth chapter. It is also worth noting that Vasubandhu in KSP (37) says that since many *sūtra*s have been lost, the fact that the extant ones do not mention the store consciousness explicitly, does not mean that one should not accept its existence.

taking over the function of any other. We should briefly set Sthiramati's description of the four conditions against that of the AK(Bh) to get a better idea of the general principles underlying the various conditions and how they interact to give rise to sensory consciousness.

3.2.2.1. The four conditions

In the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika Abhidharma, we find two different but interconnected theories for explaining causality, that of the six causes (*hetu*) and the four conditions (*pratyaya*). The doctrine of the four conditions seems to be the earlier one and can be traced back to the *sūtra*s (Dhammajoti 2015, 161).[261] Due to its clear authenticity, it was widely accepted among the Ābhidharmikas, and, as we have just seen, by certain adherents of the Yogācāra tradition as well. The doctrine of the six causes, however, is specific to the Vaibhāṣika Abhidharma (Salvini 2014, 474-475).[262] In the AK(Bh), we find the same four conditions as in the PSkV. According to Vasubandhu, the causal condition (*hetupratyaya*) refers to five of the six causes accepted by the Vaibhāṣikas, the exception being the efficient cause (*kāraṇahetu*).[263] The five causes subsumed under the category of *hetupratyaya* are the simultaneous cause (*sahabhūhetu*), the associated cause (*saṃprayuktakahetu*), the homogenous cause (*sabhāgahetu*), the pervasive cause (*sarvatragahetu*) and the retributive cause (*vipākahetu*).

We have already looked at the simultaneous cause (*sahabhūhetu*) both in its senses as a (merely) simultaneous cause—such as in the case of the Vaibhāṣika view of the simultaneous existence of consciousness and its two causes, the faculties and the objects—

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[261] Vasubandhu in the AKBh claims that we know of the four conditions from the *sūtra*s. AKBh 98.5 *ad* AK 2.61c: ***catvāraḥ pratyayā uktāḥ*** | *kvoktāḥ* | *sūtre* |

[262] Salvini also notes that according to Yaśomitra, the theory of six causes was not taught in the *sūtra*s.

[263] AKBh 98.8 *ad* AK 2.61d: ***hetvākhyaḥ pañca hetavaḥ*** **|** *kāraṇahetuvarjyāḥ pañca hetavo hetupratyayaḥ* | As Dhammajoti (2015, 163) points out, the rationale behind dividing up *hetupratyaya* into five causes might have been to give a more complex account of the interaction of the various *dharma*s, as well as to support the doctrine of their tri-temporal existence.

and as a symmetric causal relationship. Besides *sahabhūhetu,* there is another form of causation where cause and effect exist simultaneously, the so-called associated cause (*saṃprayuktakahetu*), which pertains to the relationship between the mind (*citta*) and its associated mental factors (*caitta*) specifically.[264] Vasubandhu notes that the *citta*s and *caitta*s belonging to different times and mind streams are not associated causes of each other, only those having the same *āśraya*. For instance, a moment of the eye faculty serving as the *āśraya* of visual consciousness is also the *āśraya* of the *caitta*s, such as *vedanā*, etc. associated (*saṃprayukta*) with that very eye consciousness.[265] Since *saṃprayuktakahetu* is a form of *sahabhūhetu* it needs to be clarified why they are held to be different causal relationships, nonetheless. Vasubandhu uses the example of merchants travelling together to elucidate their difference. *Sahabhūhetu*, as we have seen, is explained in terms of factors being effects of each other (*anyonyaphala*) such as travellers or merchants setting out on a journey by each other's support.[266] On the other hand, *saṃprayuktakahetu* is interpreted by Vasubandhu in terms of the *citta* and the *caitta*s being connected by the five 'samenesses' (*samatā*), just as the travelling merchants share the same food, water, etc.[267] Yaśomitra's commentary clarifies that the five 'samenesses' refer to the identity of their *āśraya*, *ālambana*, *ākāra*, *kāla* and *dravya*, noting that the connection (*saṃprayoga*) between the *citta* and the *caitta*s consists in their similar activity or functioning (*samapravṛtti*) with respect to these five things.[268]

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[264] AK 2.53cd: ***saṃprayuktakahetus tu cittacaittāḥ*** |

[265] AKBh 88.20-22 *ad* AK 2.53d: ***samāśrayāḥ*** | *samāna āśrayo yeṣāṃ te cittacaittāḥ anyonyaṃ saṃprayuktakahetuḥ* | *samāna ity abhinnas tadyathā ya eva cakṣurindriyakṣaṇaś cakṣurvijñānasyāśrayaḥ sa eva tatsaṃprayuktānāṃ vedanādīnām eva yāvan manaḥ* |

[266] AKBh 88.24: *anyonyaphalārthena sahabhūhetuḥ* | *sahasārthikānyonyabalamārgaprayāṇavat* |

[267] AKBh 88.24-26: *pañcabhiḥ samatābhiḥ saṃprayogārthena saṃprayuktakahetuḥ* | *teṣām eva sārthikānāṃ samānānnapānādiparibhogakriyāprayogavat* |

[268] AKVy 307.26-27: *pañcabhiḥ samatābhiḥ āśrayālambanākārakāladravyasamatābhir ity arthaḥ* | *samaprayogārthena samapravṛttyarthena saṃprayuktakahetuḥ* | The five elements listed by Yaśomitra are mentioned in AKBh 62.9 *ad* AK 2.34d. As for the first three, Yaśomitra notes that the *citta* and the *caitta*s arise based on the same *indriya* and object, and also share their *ākāra* insofar as when the *ākāra* of the *citta* is blue, the *ākāra* of the *caitta*s will also be blue. I will return to this issue in more detail in chapter four.

In spite of generally favouring the Sautrāntika position, Vasubandhu in the AK(Bh) accepted simultaneous causality as a valid form of causal relationship. Indeed, it is a crucial aspect of the relationship between the *ālayavijñāna* and *pravṛttivijñāna*s in the Yogācāra tradition, insofar as the *ālayavijñāna* occurs simultaneously with the *pravṛttivijñāna*s arising from it. Their simultaneity recalls the idea seen in the AK(Bh) that the *āśraya* and the *āśrita* typically stand in an ontological dependence relationship, since whenever there are *pravṛttivijñāna*s the *ālayavijñāna* is also there. However, it is not true the other way around, since in certain states, for instance in *nirodhasamāpatti* or deep sleep, there is only the *ālayavijñāna*. Nevertheless, as we will see it below, it is not only the simultaneous but also the symmetrical sense of *sahabhūhetu* that is relevant to analysing the relation between the store consciousness and the manifest consciousnesses. *Saṃprayuktakahetu*, on the other hand, seems to be less pertinent to the relationship between the *ālayavijñāna* and the *pravṛttivijñāna*s. Even though the *ālayavijñāna* exists simultaneously with the *caitta*s of the *pravṛttivijñāna*s, the *ālayavijñāna* cannot be associated (*saṃprayukta*) with the *caitta*s of the *pravṛttivijñāna*s, since they are not connected by the five 'samenesses'. As certain Yogācāra texts, such as the *Pravṛtti Portion* (see Waldron 2003, 114-115) or, as we will see it shortly, the *Triṃśikā* specify, the *ālayavijñāna* as a genuine form of *vijñāna*, nonetheless, has its own *ālambana* and *ākāra*, and is associated with its own *caitta*s (see Triṃś 3).

The other three forms of causality listed under *hetupratyaya* (i.e. the *sabhāgahetu*, the *sarvatragahetu*, and the *vipākahetu*) concern first and foremost the similarities or differences between the karmic or moral qualities of cause and effect. Regarding the homogenous cause (*sabhāgahetu*), the AKBh as a general principle says that 'similar *dharma*s are homogenous causes of similar *dharma*s', which entails that the five *skandha*s

With regard to the last two elements, Yaśomitra says that the sameness of *kāla* means that the *citta* and *caitta*s exist at the same time, while the sameness of *dravya* entails that a single *citta* is accompanied by a single *vedanā*, *saṃjñā*, etc. but not more. See AKVy 209.16-23.

pass on their moral qualities to the subsequent *skandha*s. For example, when the five *skandha*s are virtuous (*kuśala*) they function as the homogenous cause of further virtuous *skandha*s. The same is true of the defiled (*kliṣṭa*) and the neutral or indeterminate (*avyākṛta*) ones.[269] As AK(Bh) 2.52b further specifies, only those *dharma*s are considered homogenous causes of others which belong to same *nikāya* or *bhūmi*. According to the *bhāṣya*, the first refers to the five categories of how certain defilements are to be abandoned (such as by directly seeing the truth of suffering or by cultivation), while the *bhūmi*s are considered to be nine: the *kāmadhātu*, the four *dhyāna*s of *rūpadhātu* and the four *dhyāna*s of *ārūpyadhātu*.[270] The pervasive cause (*sarvatragahetu*) resembles the *sabhāgahetu* as it also produces an effect similar to the cause, but this relationship obtains only between the defiled *dharma*s. As opposed to the *sabhāgahetu*, a *kleśa* serving as the *sarvatragahetu* of another may produce a defilement that belongs either to the same or another *nikāya* (but not to a different *bhūmi*).[271] The similar effect produced either by the *sarvatragahetu* or *sabhāgahetu* is called an effect of outflow (*niṣyandaphala*).[272]

The last cause belonging to the scope of *hetupratyaya* is the maturation cause (*vipākahetu*). Unlike the previous two causes which have effects similar to them, *vipāka* is explained as a dissimilar ripening.[273] The effects of maturation come forth from morally determinate (*vyākṛta*), that is non-virtuous (*aśubha* or *akuśala*) or virtuous (*śubha*, *kuśala*)

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[269] AKBh 85.10-11 *ad* AK 2.52a: *sadṛśā dharmāḥ sadṛśānāṃ dharmāṇāṃ sabhāgahetus tadyathā kuśalāḥ pañca skandhāḥ kuśalānām anyonyaṃ kliṣṭāḥ kliṣṭānām avyākṛtā avyākṛtānāṃ* |

[270] AKBh 85.19-21 *ad* AK 2.52b: ***svanikāyabhuvaḥ*** | *svo nikāyo bhūś caiṣāṃ ta ime svanikāyabhuvaḥ* | *pañca nikāyāḥ duḥkhadarśanaprahātavyo yāvat bhāvanāprahātavyaḥ* | *nava bhūmayaḥ* | *kāmadhātur aṣṭau ca dhyānārūpyāḥ* | The *sabhāgahetu*, however, is not limited to the similarity of the moral qualities of phenomena, but has a broader scope insofar as it determines for example that barley seeds produce only barely and not rice, or which embryonic or post-embryonic stages follow each other in the course of a being's development.

[271] AKBh 89.3-6 *ad* AK 2.54ab: *svabhūmikāḥ pūrvotpannāḥ sarvatragā dharmāḥ paścimānāṃ kliṣṭānāṃ dharmāṇāṃ sarvatragahetuḥ* | […] *kliṣṭadharmasāmānyakāraṇatvenāyaṃ sabhāgahetoḥ pṛthak vyavasthāpyate* | *nikāyāntarīyāṇām api hetutvād eṣāṃ hi prabhāveṇānyanaikāyikā api kleśā upajāyante* |

[272] AKBh 94.28 *ad* AK 2.56cd: ***sabhāgasarvatragayor niṣyandaḥ*** | *sadṛśaphalatvād anayor niḥṣyanda-phalam* |

[273] AKBh 89.26-27 *ad* AK 2.54cd: *atha vipāka iti ko 'rthaḥ* | *visadṛśaḥ pāko vipākaḥ* | *anyeṣāṃ tu hetūnāṃ sadṛśaḥ pākaḥ* |

but impure (*sāsrava*) causes, as only these are accompanied by craving (*tṛṣṇā*) and have the necessary power to produce an effect.[274] Despite arising from morally determinate causes, the effect of maturation (*vipākaphala*), as a dissimilar ripening, is always karmically indeterminate (*avyākṛta*), or, as it is specified by the *bhāṣya*, unobscured by defilements and karmically indeterminate (*anivṛtāvyākṛta*). In accordance with this Abhidharmic principle, the *ālayavijñāna*, regarded by the Yogācāras as a result of maturation (*vipāka*), is also held to be *anivṛtāvyākṛta* (see for instance Triṃś 4). Moreover, an effect of maturation arises later than the cause, that is not simultaneously or immediately succeeding it.[275]

We have already seen, to some extent, how some of these forms of causation are relevant to the functioning of the *ālayavijñāna*, since Sthiramati in the PSkV argued that the *pravṛttivijñāna*s having dissimilar moral qualities cannot be the seeds of each other, therefore we need to posit an *ālayavijñāna* serving as their causal condition (*hetupratyaya*). This idea is further unpacked by him in the passage following his explication of the four conditions I quoted above. Sthiramati says that the auspicious (*puṇya*), inauspicious (*apuṇya*) and neutral (*āniñjya*) *saṃskāra*s, which are the intentions (*cetanā*), nourish two kinds of imprints in the store consciousness: the imprints of maturation (*vipākavāsanā*) and the imprints of outflow (*niṣyandavāsanā*). Based on the *niṣyandavāsanā*s new virtuous, non-virtuous and neutral *saṃskāra*s will arise from the *ālayavijñāna*, while the *vipākavāsanā*s will give rise to the *ālayavijñāna* in a new homogenous collection (*nikāya-sabhāga*), that is a future birth.[276] The two forms of imprints, as their names show, are

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[274] AKBh 89.19 *ad* AKK 2.54cd: ***vipākahetur aśubhāḥ kuśalāś caiva sāsravāḥ*** || *akuśalāḥ kuśalasāsravāś ca dharmā vipākahetuḥ* | Vasubandhu uses a botanical metaphor to explain the principles of karmic maturation, see AKBh 89.19-23.

[275] AKBh 95.11 *ad* AK 2.57a: ***vipāko 'vyākṛto dharmaḥ*** | *anivṛtāvyākṛto hi dharmaḥ vipākaḥ* | AKBh 95.15-16 *ad* AK 2.57b: ***vyākṛtodbhavaḥ*** | *kuśalākuśalaṃ hi vipākaṃ prati vyākaraṇād vyākṛtam* | *tasmād ya uttarakālaṃ bhavati na saha nāntaraṃ sa vipākaḥ* |

[276] PSkV 91.7-91.12: *tadavasthaś ca puṇyāpuṇyāniñjyān saṃskārāṃś cetanātmakān abhisaṃskaroti* | *te 'bhisaṃskṛtā nirudhyamānā ālayavijñāne vipākavāsanāṃ vā puṣṇanti niṣyandavāsanāṃ vā* | *tatra niṣyandavāsanām āgamyālayavijñānāt puṇyāpuṇyāniñjyāḥ saṃskārāḥ pravartante* | *vipākavāsanām āgamyālayavijñānān nikāyasabhāgāntareṣv ālayavijñānam eva vipākātmakaṃ nirvartate* |

related to the three forms of causation discussed above. The conception of *niṣyandavāsanā* recalls *sabhāgahetu* and *sarvatragahetu* which both produce a *niṣyandaphala*, that is a morally similar effect, while the notion of *vipākavāsanā* is reminiscent of *vipākahetu* being responsible for the future rebirth of a being. In line with the Abhidharmic views, Sthiramati also clarifies that only the non-virtuous and the virtuous but impure (*sāsrava*) factors that can generate *vipākavāsanā*s, not the neutral ones. The latter strengthen only the *niṣyandavāsanā*s as they do not bring about karmic retribution.[277]

The passage has a parallel in the TrBh where it is embedded into the context of the transformation of consciousness (*vijñānapariṇāma*). Here Sthiramati similarly differentiates two kinds of imprints that are accumulated in the *ālayavijñāna*, the imprints of maturation and the imprints of outflow. These imprints are left behind by earlier instances of the *pravṛttivijñāna*s and the [*kliṣṭa*]*manas* so they would ripen into our actual and future perceptions. Only the virtuous and non-virtuous *pravṛttivijñāna*s place both kinds of imprints into the store consciousness, the neutral ones and the defiled mind only imprints of outflow. The role of these *vāsanā*s is explained in a similar way to the PSkV. The ripening of the *vipākavāsanā*s will give rise to the store consciousness in a new homogenous collection at the time of rebirth, while the ripening of the *niṣyandavāsanā*s will generate further (morally similar) instances of the defiled mind and the manifest consciousnesses (*pravṛttivijñāna*).[278] Sthiramati's explanations also nicely adumbrate the symmetrical relationship between the *ālayavijñāna* and other forms of consciousness. Sthiramati in both works describes the *ālayavijñāna* as being 'twofold' insofar as it is both

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[277] PSkV 91.12-91.15: *tatra ye 'py anye 'kuśalāḥ kuśalasāsravāś ca dharmās teṣām apy ayam eva nayaḥ | avyākṛtās tu niṣyandavāsanām eva puṣṇanti na vipākavāsanām teṣām avipākatvāt* | Cf. AKBh 89.19-23.

[278] TrBh 48.15-22: *yatrātmādyupacāro dharmopacāraś ca sa punar hetubhāvena phalabhāvena ca bhidyate | tatra hetupariṇāmo yālayavijñāne vipākaniṣyandavāsanāparipuṣṭiḥ | phalapariṇāmaḥ punar vipākavāsanā-vṛttilābhād ālayavijñānasya pūrvakarmākṣepaparisamāptau yā nikāyasabhāgāntareṣv abhinirvṛttiḥ | niṣyandavāsanāvṛttilābhāc ca yā pravṛttivijñānānāṃ kliṣṭasya ca manasa ālayavijñānād abhinirvṛttiḥ | tatra pravṛttivijñānaṃ kuśalākuśalam ālayavijñāne vipākavāsanāṃ niṣyandavāsanāñ cādhatte | avyākṛtaṃ kliṣṭañ ca mano niṣyandavāsanām eva |*

a cause (by containing the seeds of all *saṃskāra*s) and an effect (as the nature of the seeds contained in it as well as the future existence of the *ālayavijñāna* are conditioned by these very *saṃskāra*s).[279]

We should now turn to the other three *pratyaya*s the *ālayavijñāna* as the *hetupratyaya* co-operates with in bringing about consciousness: the similar-immediate condition, the object condition, and the dominant condition. The AKBh's conception of the similar-immediate condition (*samanantarapratyaya*) referring to the *citta* and *caitta*s that have 'arisen'[280] is similar to Sthiramati's explanation in PSkV 90.12-15 according to which the *samanantarapratyaya* is the consciousness that has just ceased to be, i.e. the *manas*. The AKBh's definition, however, is phrased from a slightly different perspective in terms of temporality. As Yaśomitra clarifies, the expression 'arisen' (*utpanna*) is meant to exclude the future *dharma*s,[281] standing therefore for those past and present *dharma*s which have just given or currently give place to a new instance of the *citta* and *caitta*s. According to Vasubandhu, this condition is called *samanantara*, because it is similar to (*sama*) and immediately precedes (*anantara*) its result.[282]

In the context of visual consciousness, the object condition (*ālambanapratyaya*) is identified by Sthiramati with the visual objects (*rūpa*). The initial definition of *ālambana-pratyaya* in the AKBh is quite generic claiming that all *dharma*s can be taken as an object

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[279] Sthiramati gives a detailed explanation of the twofold nature of the *ālayavijñāna* in PSkV (91.15-92.6). Cf. TrBh 48.15-22, where he uses the *hetubhāva-phalabhāva* differentiation more broadly as characterising the transformation of consciousness (*vijñānapariṇāma*). For an analysis of the *ālayavijñāna*'s symmetrical and simultaneous relationship with the *pravṛttivijñānas* and the [*kliṣṭa*]*manas* in the early Yogācāra tradition, see Waldron 2003, 112-123. The symmetrical relationship between the *ālayavijñāna* and the *pravṛttivijñānas* is adressed in KSP (32) as well, although that account is not as detailed as the one provided by Sthiramati.

[280] AK 2.62ab: ***cittacaittā acaramā utpannāḥ samanantaraḥ |***

[281] AKVy 342.17: *utpannagrahaṇaṃ anāgatanirāsārthaṃ |*

[282] AKBh 98.10-11: *arhataḥ paścimān apāsyotpannāś cittacaittāḥ samanantarapratyayaḥ | samaś cāyam anantaraś ca pratyaya iti samanantarapratyayaḥ |* As the AKBh notes, an *arhat*'s last moment of consciousness that is the moment of entering into *nirvāṇa* is an exception to this rule. Cf. KSP (16-17). As the subsequent discussion of *samanantarapratyaya* in the AKBh demonstrates, the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika tradition held that this condition applies only to the continuity of the mind (*citta*), but not the continuity of matter (*rūpa*).

of consciousness.[283] Nonetheless, Vasubandhu also gives a more restricted list of objects according to their respective faculties. His initial description that all *dharma*s constituting reality are the *ālambanapratyaya* of consciousness is true not only of the consciousnesses taken together but also the mental consciousness (*manovijñāna*) on its own, since, in contrast to other faculties having a limited scope of objects, the *manovijñāna* cognises all *dharma*s.[284] I will return to the discussion of *ālamabanapratyaya* in more detail in the next chapter.

While the *hetupratyaya* was identified with five of the six *hetu*s accepted by the Vaibhāṣikas, the remaining sixth cause, the efficient cause (*kāraṇahetu*), also has its counterpart: the dominant condition (*adhipatipratyaya*).[285] In the context of the AKBh, therefore, the theory of six *hetu*s is completely brought into line with that of the four *pratyaya*s. Although in the PSkV the dominant condition is associated with the sense faculties, the definition of the AKBh, again, is far more generic. The text gives two explanations of *adhipatipratyaya*, both tracing the concept back to the idea of numerosity (*adhika*). According to the first interpretation, this condition is called *adhipati* because it is dominant or surpassing (*adhika*) in the sense of encompassing all *dharma*s.[286] This interpretation is corroborated by the subsequent discussion of why *adhipatipratyaya* is considered to be dominant when *ālambanapratyaya* also refers to all *dharma*s (AKBh 100.14-16.). The second interpretation of *adhipatipratyaya* understands its dominance in terms of it being a condition *for* a "dominant" number of *dharma*s. According to the *bhāṣya*, this means that all *dharma*s are a dominant condition for all conditioned things

[283] AK 2.62c: ***ālambanaṃ sarvadharmāḥ*** **|**

[284] AKBh 100.4-6: *yathāyogaṃ cakṣurvijñānasya sasaṃprayogasya rūpam* | [...] *manovijñānasya sarva-dharmāḥ* |

[285] AKBh 100.12-13 *ad* AK 2.62d: ***kāraṇākhyo 'dhipaḥ smṛtaḥ*** || *ya eva kāraṇahetuḥ sa evādhipati-pratyayaḥ* **|**

[286] AKBh 100.13-14: *adhiko 'yaṃ pratyaya ity adhipatipratyayaḥ* **|**

with the exception of themselves.[287] It is noteworthy that this description is identical with Vasubandhu's explanation of the efficient cause (*kāraṇahetu*), which similarly states that all *dharma*s are the efficient causes of all conditioned *dharma*s except for themselves. As the *bhāṣya* clarifies, they are said to be efficient causes of other *dharma*s because they do not obstruct the arising of those.[288]

While it is rather unclear to what extent a *dharma* that simply does not obstruct the arising of another can be considered a cause, this definition does not even explain why Sthiramati takes *adhipatipratyaya* to refer to the sense faculty specifically, an entity that is indeed 'dominant' in the production of sense perception. The *bhāṣya*, however, notes that in addition to the broad scope of *kāraṇahetu* discussed above, we can differentiate a primary or chief (*pradhāna*) form of efficient cause that actually brings forth the effect. Such primary efficient causes are the eye and the visible forms in the production of the eye consciousness, or food in the growth or sustenance of the body.[289] The passage also notes that even though all *dharma*s can be regarded as efficient causes on account of not obstructing the arising of others, not all of them are actual producers (*kāraka*).[290] The distinction made within the category of *kāraṇahetu* is even more conspicuous in Yaśomitra's commentary which distinguishes between primary or chief (*pradhāna*) and secondary or subordinate (*apradhāna*) efficient causes, noting that the primary efficient cause is the one that generates (*janaka*) the effect.[291] The same distinction appears later in the AKBh where an opponent asks how something that merely does not obstruct other

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[287] AKBh 100.16-17: *adhikasya vā pratyayaḥ | sarvaḥ sarvasya saṃskṛtasya svabhāvavarjyasya |*

[288] $AKBh_S$ 280.3-5: *svato 'nye kāraṇaṃ hetuḥ | saṃskṛtasya hi dharmasya svabhāvavarjyāḥ sarvadharmāḥ kāraṇahetuḥ | utpādaṃ prati avighnabhāvāvasthānāt |* AKBh 82.26-27 reads […] *sarvadharmāḥ kāraṇa-hetur utpādayati | avighnabhāvāvasthānāt |* $AKBh_S$'s reading is supported both by the AKVy as well as Jinamitra and Dpal brtsegs rakṣita's Tibetan translation.

[289] AKBh 83.8-9: *yas tu pradhānaḥ kāraṇahetuḥ sa utpādane 'pi samartho yathā cakṣūrūpe cakṣurvijñānasya āhāraḥ śarīrasya bījādayo 'ṅkurādīnām iti |*

[290] AKBh 83.12: *yasmād anāvaraṇabhāvena sarvadharmāḥ hetuḥ pratijñāyante na kārakabhāveneti |*

[291] AKVy 281.26-282.13: *sāmānyenaiva nirdeśa iti | yaś ca pradhānaḥ kāraṇahetu yaś cāpradhānaḥ sarvam adhikṛtyoktaṃ svato 'nye kāraṇaṃ hetuḥ iti | yo hi pradhāno janakaḥ sa kāraṇahetuḥ |*

phenomena can have ‘dominance’. Vasubandhu points out that an efficient cause can also have a ‘principal’ nature (*aṅgībhāva*) similar to the way the ten *āyatana*s are essential with regard to the five forms of consciousness or the beings’ *karman* with regard to the surrounding world (*bhājanaloka*).[292] The term *aṅgībhāva* is somewhat ambiguous, but according to Yaśomitra it should be understood as *pradhānabhāva* or *janakabhāva*, recalling his claims about the primary or chief form of efficient cause acting as a ‘producer’ of an effect. Yaśomitra again differentiates those forms of *kāraṇahetu* that are producers (*kāraka*) and those that are indifferent (*upekṣaka*) as to the actual production of the effect, with both of them nonetheless having a dominant effect (*adhipatiphala*).[293]

In light of the AKBh’s remarks, we can see that Sthiramati’s identification of the dominant condition of consciousness with the sense faculties goes back to Vasubandhu’s concept of the primary (*pradhāna*) efficient cause that actively contributes to the arising of consciousness. Although Sthiramati in his explanation of the four conditions mentions only the faculties as the *adhipatipratyaya* of perception, the *ādi* leaves the possibility open that, like Vasubandhu, he included in this category the sense objects as well. However, since the object is already equated with the *ālambanapratyaya*, it is possible that Sthiramati associates the *adhipatipratyaya* with the *indriya*s specifically, because of the interchangeability of the terms *indriya* and *ādhipatya* as shown by the etymological analysis of *indriya*. Moreover, if we consider the AKBh’s understanding of *āśraya* as a factor that is dominant in determining the nature or mode of consciousness (a criterion which distinguishes it from the object), then Sthiramati’s identification of the *adhipatipratyaya* with the *indriya*s is even more plausible.

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[292] AKBh 94.22-24 *ad* AK 2.56b: *anāvaraṇabhāvamātreṇāvasthitasya kim ādhipatyam | etad eva | aṅgībhāvo 'pi cāsti kāraṇahetos tadyathā pañcasu vijñānakāyeṣu daśānām āyatanānāṃ bhājanaloke ca karmaṇām* | AKBh$_S$ (328.1) reads […] *etad evādhipatyam | aṅgībhāvo 'pi vāsti* […]

[293] AKVy 328.10-12: *aṅgībhāvo 'pi vāstīti | pradhānabhāvo 'pi janakabhāvo 'pīty arthaḥ | tad anena dvividhasyāpi kāraṇahetoḥ kārakasya vādhyupekṣakasya vādhipatiphalam astīti |*

3.3. *Āśraya* in the context of the *vijñaptimātratā* teaching

So far, I have investigated the notion of *āśraya* in those treatises of Vasubandhu that have a realist ontology. Now I turn to those works that endorse the doctrine of *vijñaptimātratā*, hence are commonly regarded as idealist; the *Viṃśikā* and the *Triṃśikā*. Due to its palpable Abhidharmic character, it is worthwhile to start our investigation with the *Triṃśikā* and Sthiramati's TrBh. As I mentioned earlier, in the *Triṃśikā* the term *āśraya* appears twice, both times referring to the *ālayavijñāna*: first in relation to the [*kliṣṭa*]*manas*, which operates being supported by (*āśritya*) the store consciousness, and then as an epithet replacing *ālayavijñāna* in the context of *āśrayaparāvṛtti*. It, however, does not occur in its typical usage as a reference to the sense faculties. As a matter of fact, the *Triṃśikā* does not make any explicit speculations about the *indriya*s and the descriptions of those functions of the *ālayavijñāna* which are related to the body and the sense faculties are also virtually absent. It is only Sthiramati who sporadically discusses the *indriya*s in the TrBh.

As we have seen in the previous chapter, one of the central topics of the *Triṃśikā* is the transformation of consciousness (*vijñānapariṇāma*). In the first verse, Vasubandhu says that the *ātman* and the *dharma*s are only mistaken superimpositions on, or metaphors (*upacāra*) referring to, the transformation of consciousness, that is the interplay between the *ālayavijñāna*, the [*kliṣṭa*]*manas* and the perception of objects (*viṣayavijñapti*).[294] According to Sthiramati, the term *ātman* refers to concepts such as the self, the living soul, the beings, the humans, the men, etc., while the term *dharma* to the elements (*dhātu*), the sense spheres (*āyatana*), and the five aggregates (*skandha*), that is the internal constituents of the beings (the consciousnesses and the six sense faculties) as well as the objects.[295]

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[294] Triṃś 1-2ab: ***ātmadharmopacāro hi vividho yaḥ pravartate | vijñānapariṇāme 'sau pariṇāmaḥ sa ca tridhā || vipāko mananākhyaś ca vijñaptir viṣayasya ca |*** As for *viṣayavijñapti*, Vasubandhu does not use the term *pravṛttivijñāna* in the *Triṃśikā*, it is Sthiramati who introduces it in the commentary.

[295] TrBh 40.6-8: *ātmā jīvo jantur manujo mānava ity evamādika ātmopacāraḥ | skandhā dhātava āyatanāni rūpaṃ vedanā saṃjñā saṃskārā vijñānam ity evamādiko dharmopacāraḥ |*

Most of Sthiramati's comments on the first verse have strong idealist overtones. For instance, he explains that the above-mentioned terms refer only to the *vijñānapariṇāma* and not an actual self or *dharma*s, as they have "no existence outside of the transformation of consciousness".[296] Accordingly, the self and the *dharma*s are to be considered only metaphors or cognitive superimpositions (*upacāra*), since they are "not there".[297] He adds that the *ātman* and the *dharma*s are mentally constructed (*parikalpita*) and not ultimately (*paramārthatas*) existing phenomena.[298] Inspired, in part, by the arguments of the *Viṃśikā*, he also deems the conception of atom to be ultimately inconsistent, questioning the possibility of a materially construed external reality.[299] While most of these arguments are targeted primarily at the mind-independent existence of objects, they equally apply to the mind-independent and physical nature of the body and the *indriya*s.

Vasubandhu does not identify or elaborate on the *āśraya*s of the sense perceptions in the *Triṃśikā*, and Sthiramati's remarks also suggest that the material *indriya*s cannot serve as the support of perception. Nonetheless, when stressing that each *vijñāna* has an *āśraya*, Sthiramati adopts the traditional Abhidharmic view that the consciousnesses are supported by the sense faculties and take visual form, etc. as their objects.[300] Sthiramati also talks about the *indriya*s, for instance, when analysing the objects of the *ālayavijñāna*. However,

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[296] TrBh 40.9-11: *ayaṃ dviprakāro 'py upacāro vijñānapariṇāma eva na mukhye ātmani dharmeṣu ceti | kuta etat | dharmāṇām ātmanaś ca vijñānapariṇāmād bahir abhāvāt |*

[297] TrBh 42.4: *yac ca yatra nāsti tat tatropacaryate |* Examining Sthiramati's conception of *upacāra* in terms of a pan-figurative theory of meaning, Roy Tzohar (2018) argues that Sthiramati's understanding of metpahor (*upacāra*) as the absence of a word's primary referent from the locus of reference follows a formulaic *śāstric* definition, which is based on, for example, the *Nyāyasūtra*. Sthiramati's interpretation of *upacāra* might seem to be unusual, especially if by metaphor, similarly to Sthiramati's interlocutor in the TrBh, one understands a qualitative similarity between two entities, which allows us to apply (or 'transfer') a word or a phrase to an object not in its literal sense (e.g. 'he is a black sheep'). For suggestions that *upacāra* should not be construed as metaphor, thus limiting its scope to a theory of meaning, but as a cognitive superimposition in a broader sense, see Keating (2018), Orsborn (2019), Schlieter (2018).

[298] TrBh 42.6-7: *evaṃ vijñānasvarūpe bahiś cātmadharmābhāvāt parikalpita evātmā dharmāś ca na tu paramārthataḥ santīti* […] |

[299] TrBh 44.16-17: *na ca paramāṇavaḥ stambhādivat paramārthataḥ santy arvāṅmadhyaparabhāga-sadbhāvāt |* I will analyse some of Sthiramati's claims in more detail in the next chapter.

[300] TrBh 62.2-3: *tatra yathā cakṣurādivijñānānāṃ cakṣurādaya āśrayatvena rūpādayaś cālambanatvena prasiddhā* […] |

in contrast to his abovementioned idealist remarks and denial of atomism, in this passage he explicitly appeals to pre-idealistic concepts, for instance to the material nature of the sense faculties. The pertinent passage is from his commentary on verse 3 of the *Triṃśikā*, where, following most probably the *Pravṛtti Portion* of the YBh, Vasubandhu states that the *ālayavijñāna* has unconscious or not fully recognizable (*asaṃviditaka*) perceptions of what is appropriated (or the act of appropriation, *upādi* or *upādāna*) and of place (*sthāna*), that is, the surrounding world (*bhājanaloka*).[301] Sthiramati, also relying on the *Pravṛtti Portion*, interprets the former as an inwardly oriented perception of i.) the impressions of adhering to the imagined nature of things (*parikalpitasvabhāvābhiniveśavāsanā*) and of ii.) the *material form* of the *indriya*s together with their seats (*adhiṣṭhāna*) and the mental constituents (*nāman*) of the being.[302] The latter (ii) overlaps with Sthiramati's definition of *āśraya* taken in the sense of 'psychophysical basis'.[303] But it is not only that Sthiramati talks about the material constitution of the *indriya*s. He also alternates his interpretation of *upādi* in one and the same passage: while first, as we have seen, he takes it as an object cognised by the *ālayavijñāna*, he later understands it as an act by which the store consciousness appropriates (i.e. keeps alive or sentient) the psychophysical basis (see Schmithausen 1987, 104-105).[304] This latter understanding of *upādi* makes the pre-idealist tendency of this passage even more explicit.

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[301] Triṃś 3ab: ***asaṃviditakopādisthānavijñaptikañ ca tat*** | For the position of the *Pravṛtti Portion*, see Schmithausen 1987, 104. The term *asaṃviditaka* is reminiscent of the 8th chapter of the *Saṃdhinirmocanasūtra*, see Schmithausen 1987, 89 and 409, n. 737. As it is pointed out by Waldron (2003, 32), *upādi*, when construed as an act, refers to taking something as one's own, or to be attached or cling to something. In its objective sense, however, it can also signify the entities appropriated, usually the *skandha*s. Whether we should read the compound *upādisthānavijñaptika* as *upādivijñaptika* and *sthānavijñaptika* or as *upādi* and *sthānavijñaptika* (thus *upādi* being an act of the *ālayavijñāna* rather than an object cognised by it) divides the classical Indian commentators.

[302] TrBh 52.1-5: *yasmād ālayavijñānaṃ dvidhā pravartate | adhyātmam upādānavijñaptito bahirdhā 'paricchinnākārabhājanavijñaptitaś ca | tatrādhyātmam upādānaṃ parikalpitasvabhāvābhiniveśavāsanā sādhiṣṭhānam indriyarūpaṃ nāma ca* | On the twofold *upādāna* in the *Proof Portion* and the *Pravṛtti Portion*, see Schmithausen 1987, 90.

[303] TrBh 52.14-15: *āśraya ātmabhāvaḥ sādhiṣṭhānam indriyarūpaṃ nāma ca* |

[304] See e.g. TrBh 52.7-8: *asaṃviditaka upādir yasmin asaṃviditakā ca sthānavijñaptir yasmin tad ālaya-vijñānam asaṃviditakopādisthānavijñaptikam* | TrBh 52.14: *āśrayopādānañ copādiḥ* | According to

As we have seen earlier (fn. 258), scholars such as Schmithausen emphasise that some Yogācāra texts or authors do not consistently follow an idealist terminology. According to him, Sthiramati was probably unaware of the inconsistencies he created in the commentary by combining or juxtaposing explanations belonging to different exegetical traditions (Schmithausen 1987, 105 and n. 222, 749.). It is possible that in his attempt to give a comprehensive account of the *ālayavijñāna*'s functioning, Sthiramati inadvertently reuses explanations that contradict the ontological position of the *Triṃśikā* and certain sections of his own *bhāṣya*. It is, nonetheless, unlikely that he consciously adopts materialistic views, especially if we consider that some of his interpretations in the commentary are more explicitly idealist than the *Triṃśikā* itself. But it is also worth entertaining the idea that he was aware of the inconsistencies but saw his role as a commentator to consist in offering various interpretations rather than resolving the discrepancies present in the Yogācāra tradition. As we have seen in the PSkV, Sthiramati accounts for the tensions in Vasubandhu's root text by emphasising that it merely summarises the views of various philosophical treatises. Sthiramati might have followed a similar approach in his commentary trying to accommodate various Yogācāra perspectives.

In any event, reading the *Triṃśikā* in itself leaves the possibility open that the six *pravṛttivijñāna*s have the *ālayavijñāna* as their *āśraya*, since the *indriya*s are made superfluous by the idealist context of the text.[305] While this would be a significant reinterpretation of the coneption of *āśraya* in the case of the sense perceptions, it would still satisfy the traditional requirement that each *vijñāna* needs a support. Such a reading might be corroborated by Vasubandhu's simile of the water and its waves, inspired by the

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Vinītadeva, *upādi* and *sthāna* are both objects cognised by the *ālayavijñāna*. TrṬ 15b2-3: *kun gzhi'i rnam par shes pa gang la nye bar len pa'i rnam par rig pa mi rigs pa dang | gnas kyi rnam par rig pa mi rigs pa yod pa'i kun gzhi'i rnam par shes pa de len pa dang gnas kyi rnam par rig pa mi rigs par 'dod do |*

[305] Although there is no clear indication either in the *Triṃśikā* or the *Viṃśikā* that Vasubandhu still considered the *manas* as an *āśraya* of the consciousnesses, there is no reason why he would have dropped this idea.

fifth chapter of the *Saṃdhinirmocanasūtra*.[306] In verse 15, Vasubandhu says that the five sensory consciousnesses originate from the root consciousness (*mūlavijñāna*) in accordance with the conditions (*yathāpratyaya*). According to Sthiramati, one of the reasons the *ālayavijñāna* is called *mūlavijñāna* is that it gives rise to the sense perceptions by being their *bījāśraya*.[307] Criticising the Abhidharmic uni-sensory view of consciousness, Vasubandhu states that the various *vijñāna*s may arise individually or together, just as the waves on the surface of the water.[308] Regarding the pertinent passage of the *Saṃdhinirmocanasūtra*, Schmithausen (1987, 50-51) notes that in addition to containing their seeds, the *ālayavijñāna* also appears as a simultaneous substratum or fundamental layer of consciousness that acts as a basis of the arising of sense perceptions. The *ālayavijñāna* thus obtains a similar status in the production of the *pravṛttivijñāna*s as their simultaneous *āśraya*s, the sense faculties.

A similar idea seems to be at play in the *Triṃśikā*. As attested by the qualification *sarvabījaka* (in vv. 2 and 18), the *ālayavijñāna* is still considered by Vasubandhu to be the *bījāśraya* of perception. Verse 15, however, also highlights a closer relationship between the two forms of *vijñāna*. Whether Vasubandhu's simile of the water and its waves is to be understood as a comprehensive analogy of the relationship between the *ālayavijñāna* and the *pravṛttivijñāna*s, or is only meant to illustrate their simultaneity and the possibility of the synchronic arising of multiple sense perceptions is unclear.[309] However, if we are to take it as a comprehensive description, especially in light of the doctrine of

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[306] Sthiramati even quotes the respective passage of the *Saṃdhinirmocanasūtra* in his commentary on verse 15, see TrBh 102.18-28.

[307] The other is that the *ālayavijñāna* is what takes rebirth in the various forms of existence. TrBh 102.12-13: *pañcānāñ cakṣurādivijñānānāṃ bījāśrayatvāt tadutpatter gatiṣu janmopādānāc cālayavijñānaṃ mūlavijñānam ity ucyate* |

[308] *Triṃś* 15: ***pañcānāṃ mūlavijñāne yathāpratyayam udbhavaḥ | vijñānānāṃ saha na vā taraṅgāṇāṃ yathā jale ||***

[309] According to Schmithausen (1987, 325, n. 355), in the *Saṃdhinirmocanasūtra* the simile of the water and its waves is only used to exemplify the simultaneity of the *ālayavijñāna* and the *pravṛttivijñāna*s. The text also uses another example, the mirror and the image appearing in it, to illustrate the same point.

vijñaptimātratā, the analogy suggests that the sense perceptions are ultimately not distinct from the *ālayavijñāna*. Despite being mistakenly objectified, the *pravṛttivijñāna*s and the *ālayavijñāna* are different aspects of the same stream of consciousness, just as the waves are nothing else than modifications or states of the same body of water. Such an analysis would make the *indriya*s just as redundant as the external objects.

We can find a similar approach in the TrBh as well. When analysing Vasubandhu's claim in verse 18 about the reciprocal relationship between the *ālayavijñāna* and the sense perceptions, Sthiramati disregards the faculties and the objects. He says that visual consciousness, which arises upon the development of its own potential (*śakti*, a synonym of *vāsanā*), is the cause (*nimitta*) of the transformation of the *ālayavijñāna* and, conversely, the transformation of the *ālayavijñāna* is the cause of visual consciousness.[310] It is also worth noting that, in contrast to the position endorsed in the PSk and PSkV that it is the *indriya*s that differentiate the *vijñāna*s, Sthiramati in the commentary on verse 2ab of the *Triṃśikā* says that the consciousnesses are told apart on account of the appearance (*pratyavabhāsa*, probably a synonym of *ākāra*) of the object.[311] This change might be another indication that the *indriya*s lost their relevance in the idealist explanation of the perceptual process.

Vasubandhu's remark in verse 15 that perceptions arise 'in accordance with the conditions' (*yathāpratyaya*), however, questions whether he really wanted to bypass the sense faculties in his idealist account of perception. As we have seen in the PSkV, Sthiramati identifies the causal condition of visual consciousness with the imprints contained in the store consciousness, the dominant condition with the eye faculty, the

[310] TrBh 112.1-5: *anyonyavaśād iti | tathā hi cakṣurādivijñānaṃ svaśaktiparipoṣe vartamāne śakti-viśiṣṭasyālayavijñānapariṇāmasya nimittaṃ so 'pi ālayavijñānapariṇāmaś cakṣurādivijñānasya nimittaṃ bhavati* | Sthiramati makes this claim in defence of the position that even someone endorsing the *vijñapti-mātratā* doctrine can explain how mentally constructed phenomena (*vikalpa*) arise from the *ālayavijñāna* without the latter being assisted or superintended (*anadhiṣṭhita*) by an agent or productive cause (*kartṛ*, *karaṇa*), such as the *pradhāna* of the non-Buddhist Sāṃkhya tradition. See TrBh 110.12-112.6.

[311] TrBh 50.7-8: *rūpādiviṣayapratyavabhāsatvāc cakṣurādivijñānaṃ ṣaṭprakāram api viṣayavijñaptiḥ* |

similar-immediate condition with the previous moment of consciousness, and the object condition with the visual form. While Vasubandhu does not clarify what sort of conditions he thinks of, it is plausible that he also refers to these four conditions. Even though in his analysis of the term *yathāpratyaya* Sthiramati only says that each consciousness arises in accordance with its respective contiguous (*saṃnihita*) condition and does not mention the *indriya*s or the *adhipatipratyaya* explicitly, when arguing for the simultaneous occurrence of various sense perceptions he names two of the four conditions, the *ālambanapratyaya* and the *samanantarapratyaya*.[312]

It is also worth noting that Sthiramati places verse 26 of the *Triṃśikā* in an important narrative which elucidates why it still makes sense talking about the *indriya*s in an idealist context. Sthiramati's opponent asks that if the doctrine of *vijñaptimātratā* holds true, then how it is explained that one perceives the forms, sounds, smells, tastes and tangibles with the eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body sense faculties. As a reply, Sthiramati quotes Vasubandhu's verse stating that as long as the mind is not established in *vijñaptimātratā*, the latent disposition or proclivity (*anuśaya*) for dual grasping does not cease.[313] Sthiramati's narrative highlights why it is crucial to keep the phenomenological dimensions of any theory of perception separate from its ontological underpinnings. The duality of perception, that is the fact that perception appears as if we were grasping external objects by actually existing faculties is a feature of ordinary, unenlightened perception. A possible interpretation of this passage therefore is that even though the objects and faculties are only mental constructions, the Yogācāras can still endorse an Abhidharmic model of perception as a structural analysis of its phenomenology.

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[312] TrBh 102.14-15: *yathāpratyayam udbhava iti yasya yasya yaḥ pratyayaḥ saṃnihitas tasya tasya niyamenodbhava ātmalābhaḥ* | Sthiramati refers to the *ālambanapratyaya* and the *samanantarapratyaya* in TrBh 102.1-6, 104.4-10.

[313] TrBh 132.7-11: *yadi vijñaptimātram evedaṃ kasmāc cakṣuḥśrotraghrāṇarasanasparśanaiḥ rūpaśabda-gandharasasparśān gṛhṇātīty asya bhavatīty ata āha* | ***yāvad vijñaptimātratve vijñānaṃ nāvatiṣṭhate | grāhadvayasyānuśayas tāvan na vinivartate ||***

At this point it is worth turning our attention to the *Viṃśikā* as it helps to clarify some of the ambiguities we faced while interpreting the *Triṃśikā*. In contrast to the *Triṃśikā*, where *āśraya* is used as a reference to the *ālayavijñāna*, the term does not occur in the *Viṃśikā* at all, and even the *ālayavijñāna* is only referred to implicitly in verse 9 of the text. The *Viṃśikā*, however, discusses the status of the body and the *indriya*s, denying their material existence. This idea is expressed most clearly by Vasubandhu's opponent in the introduction of verse 19, who states that if everything is cognition only (*vijñaptimātra*), then there is no physical body (*kāya*) or speech (*vāc*). In this case, how can for instance a butcher take the life of a sheep or other animal?[314] Vasubandhu appeals exclusively to mental causes when explaining death, arguing that it is a transformation or change (*vikriyā*) brought about by a particular cognition of another being. Vasubandhu in the *vṛtti* further specifies that certain cognitions of beings are able to bring about such changes in others that lead to the obstruction of their life faculty or cuts off of their homogenous continuum (*sabhāgasantati*), ordinarily defined as death.[315]

This discussion comes after Vasubandhu's extensive criticism of the possibility of a materially construed reality (vv. 11-15), hence the opponent's interpretation that the *vijñaptimātratā* teaching entails the refutation of physicality is not unexpected.[316] Since the primary purpose of Vasubandhu's arguments in these passages is to call into question the existence of mind-independent objects, I will analyse them in the next chapter. But, as I already mentioned regarding Sthiramati's denial of the atomic theory, it also entails a rejection of the *indriya*s atomically construed. However, it is worthwhile to look at

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[314] ViṃśV 131.1-3: *yadi vijñaptimātram evedaṃ na kasyacit kāyo 'sti na vāk katham upakramyamāṇānām aurabhrikādibhir urabhrādīnāṃ maraṇam bhavati* […] |

[315] Viṃś 19 ab: ***maraṇaṃ paravijñaptiviśeṣād vikriyā*** […] | ViṃśV 133.6-9: *tathā paravijñaptiviśeṣādhipatyāt pareṣāṃ jīvitendriyavirodhinī kācid vikriyotpadyate yayā sabhāgasantativicchedākhyam maraṇam bhavatīti veditavyaṃ* |

[316] Whether verses like this actually express a wholesale denial of materiality is the subject of a long-standing debate, with proponents of both idealist and non-idealist interpretations of the *Viṃśikā*. The problem was briefly discussed in the Introduction.

Vasubandhu's verses introducing his criticism of materiality, especially verse 8-9, as they illuminate what status, according to Vasubandhu, the *indriya*s, nonetheless, have. In verses 6-7, we find Vasubandhu's well-known arguments relying on, as is often described, the principle of lightness or Ockham's razor. Vasubandhu in verse 6 tries to persuade his opponent that the guardians of hells cannot be real entities. He proposes that instead of regarding them as actual beings or an assembly of material elements (*bhūta*) appearing as hell-guardians, the opponent should entertain the idea that these are only transformations (*pariṇāma*) of consciousness itself. After all, the imprints of previous actions (*vāsanā*s) thought by the opponent to give rise to these gross karmic elements are mental. Therefore, according to the principle of lightness, it is reasonable to accept the more (qualitatively) parsimonious theory that the effects of the *vāsanā*s are also mental.[317] In the *vṛtti*, Vasubandhu's opponent, however, insists that there is an important extra-philosophical reason for accepting their material existence, as the mind-independent reality of the twelve *āyatana*s was confirmed by the Buddha himself in the scriptures (*āgama*).[318] In order to avoid a contradiction with scriptural authority, in verse 8 Vasubandhu appeals to the widespread method of differentiating the provisional (*neyārtha*) and ultimately true (*nītārtha*) teachings of the Buddha, suggesting that the real existence of *āyatana*s was taught only as a provisional teaching.[319] What the Buddha actually meant is that cognition (*vijñapti*), appearing for instance as a visual object (*rūpa*), arises from its particular seed (*svabīja*), and it is the seed and its appearance that he regarded as the two kinds of sense field (*āyatana*) of perception.[320] The idea is a bit more elaborated in the *vṛtti* of verse 9.

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[317] Viṃś 6-7: ***yadi tatkarmmabhis tatra bhūtānāṃ sambhavas tathā | iṣyate pariṇāmaś ca kiṃ vijñānasya neṣyate || karmmaṇo vāsanānyatra phalam anyatra kalpyate | tatraiva neṣyate yatra vāsanā kin nu kāraṇaṃ ||*** On the principle of lightness and for a more detailed analysis of Vasubandhu's arguments here, see Siderits 2007, 156-158 and Westerhoff 2018, 177.

[318] ViṃśV 61.1-3: *āgamaḥ kāraṇaṃ | yadi vijñānam eva rūpādipratibhāsaṃ syān na rūpādiko 'rthas tadā rūpādyāyatanāstitvaṃ bhagavatā noktaṃ syāt |*

[319] Viṃś 8: ***rūpādyāyatanāstitvaṃ tadvineyajanam prati | abhiprāyavaśād uktam upapādukasatvavat ||***

[320] Viṃś 9: ***yataḥ svabījād vijñaptir yadābhāsā pravarttate | dvividhāyatanatvena te tasyā munir abravīt ||***

Here, Vasubandhu says that a cognition having the appearance of a visual object arises from its own seed, after the seed has attained a particular transformation (*pariṇāmaviśeṣa*). The seed and the appearance of cognition were taught by the Buddha to be the eye faculty and the visual object (*cakṣūrūpāyatana*), respectively. The same is true for the other sense faculties and objects as well.[321] It is worth noting that this passage is the closest we get to the conception of the *ālayavijñāna* in the work, and even here Vasubandhu confines himself to talking about seeds, presumably in order to stay on common philosophical grounds with his Sautrāntika opponent. This is in line with the general character of the *Viṃśikā*, as it aims to keep the Yogācāra specific terminology to a minimum, so that the conclusions drawn would be more persuasive for an Abhidharmic audience.[322]

A noteworthy similarity between this passage and the ideas we find in the *Triṃśikā* and Sthiramati's TrBh is that Vasubandhu does not appeal to material causes in the explanation of the perceptual process, as he traces back the arising of cognition to its own seed, which, after going through a "particular transformation" or maturation, becomes manifest as an actual cognition.[323] Vasubandhu, however, does not deny that it is meaningful to talk about sense faculties even in such an idealist framework of perception. While, as we have seen, he does not mention them in the *Triṃśikā*, in the *Viṃśikā* he acknowledges that the Buddha talked about the existence of *indriya*s in the *sūtra*s. As such he does not want to dismiss them as constituents of the perceptual process. Their ontological status, however, is fundamentally reconsidered. In the *Viṃśikā*, he identifies the external *āyatana*s with appearances originating from karmic seeds or imprints, and the *indriya*s with seeds (most

[321] ViṃśV 69.1-3: *rūpapratibhāsā vijñaptir yataḥ svabījāt pariṇāmaviśeṣaprāptād utpadyate tac ca bījaṃ yatpratibhāsā ca sā te tasyā vijñapteś cakṣūrūpāyatanatvena yathākramaṃ bhagavān abravīt |*

[322] Vasubandhu uses a similar strategy to what we find in the works of Dharmakīrti, who in order to avoid putting off his Abhidharmic opponents too early in the debate, often appealed to shared doctrinal assumptions and frameworks, instead of more peculiar Mahāyāna beliefs. On Dharmakīrti's strategies, see e.g. Dunne 2004, 53-79, Westerhoff 2018, 252-254.

[323] On the conception of *pariṇāma* in the *Triṃśikā* and the *Viṃśikā*, see Schmithausen 1967.

likely deposited in the *ālayavijñāna*, but it is not stated explicitly).[324] One of the factors that might have propelled this latter identification is that the term *indriya*, as we have seen, refers to an entity that has the 'power' or 'capacity' to produce, in this case, the cognitions. The *bīja*s are similarly understood as 'capacities' or 'potentialities' that give rise to perceptions. In line with Vasubandhu's preference for qualitative parsimony, the capacity to generate cognition, which is a mental entity, is ascribed to the *ālayavijñāna*'s equally mental seeds or imprints as opposed to the pellucid matter of the sense faculties.[325]

However, since Vasubandhu does not talk about the *ālayavijñāna* in the *Viṃśikā* and the *indriya*s in the *Triṃśikā*, the exact relationship between the store consciousness and the faculties (construed in the *Viṃśikā* as its seeds) remains rather ambiguous in both works, allowing us only to raise a couple of speculations. Specifically, it is unclear whether by keeping the notion of *indriya* in the *Viṃśikā* (even in this reconsidered form), he aimed to align his theory with the differentiation of three kinds of *āśraya*s seen for instance in the PBh of the YBh (according to which, the faculties serve as the *sahabhū-āśraya*, the *manas* as the *samanantara-āśraya*, and the *ālayavijñāna* as the *bīja-āśraya* of perception). The answer largely depends on the question whether he considered the *ālayavijñāna* as only a sum of seeds or something different from its seeds, i.e. their container. The former option amounts to identifying the *indriya*s with the *ālayavijñāna*, regarding them merely as parts making up the whole sum of *bīja*s that is the *ālayavijñāna*. The latter option, in contrast, seems to be easier to reconcile with the idea of three distinct *āśraya*s, as it allows for a

[324] Vasubandhu in the commentary on verse 7 only says that the *vāsanā*s are contained in the mind-stream (*vijñānasaṃtāna*). ViṃśV 59.4-5: […] *tasya karmmaṇo vāsanā teṣāṃ vijñānasaṃtānasanniviṣṭā nānyatra* […] | ViṃśV$_{RS}$ (142.5) reads *vijñānasaṃtāne saṃniviṣṭā.* Vinītadeva in the PVṬ follows the same terminology and does not mention the *ālayavijñāna* either in relation to verse 7 or 9. However, regarding Vasubandhu's remarks on the 'particular transformation' of seeds, he talks about the maturation of maturation imprints (*rnam par smin pa'i bag chags*), which is a stronger reference to the *ālayavijñāna*, see PVṬ 183a1-2. It is also worth noting that, even though the identification of the *indriya*s with *bīja*s is not mentioned in the TrBh, it is present in another commentary traditionally attributed to Sthiramati, the **Sūtrālaṃkāravṛttibhāṣya*, see Schmithausen 1987, 106-107. On the authorship of the **Sūtrālaṃkāravṛtti-bhāṣya*, see Kramer 2016b.

[325] In contrast to Schmithausen, Buescher even raises the hypothesis that the early Yogācāras did not hold the *indriya*s material at all, see Buescher 2008, 67ff.

more straightforward distinction between the *indriya*s as *bīja*s and the *ālayavijñāna* as their container and, hence, between their corresponding roles in perception.

While Vasubandhu's characterisation of the *ālayavijñāna* as *sarvabījaka* or *sarvabīja-vijñāna* is not entirely decisive in this regard,[326] his efforts to prove that the *ālayavijñāna* is a genuine form of *vijñāna*, which has its own objects, *caitta*s, etc., suggest that in the *Triṃśikā*, he considers it to be more than a mere sum of seeds. This reading is further corroborated by Sthiramati's remarks: for instance, when commenting on the term *ālaya*, he notes that the store consciousness is the 'place' of the *bīja*s of all defiled *dharma*s.[327] Sthiramati does not identify the *ālayavijñāna* with its seeds even when explaining the notions of *sarvabījaka* and *sarvabīja-vijñāna*, but merely states that the *ālayavijñāna*, in contrast to other *vijñāna*s, serves as the *āśraya* of the seeds of all *dharma*s and has the capacity to give rise to all *dharma*s.[328] At any rate, neither alternative takes away from the fact that, in line with the fourfold model, Vasubandhu maintained that all *vijñāna*s have an *āśraya* even in his *vijñaptimātratā* works.

[326] See Triṃś 2cd: ***tatrālayākhyaṃ vijñānaṃ vipākaḥ sarvabījakam*** **|** Triṃś 18ab: ***sarvabījaṃ hi vijñānaṃ pariṇāmas tathā tathā*** **|** On the different interpretations of the term *sarvabījaka*, see Schmithausen 1987, 338-340, n. 428.

[327] TrBh 50.13-15: *tac ca sarvasāṃkleśikadharmabījasthānatvād ālayaḥ | ālayaḥ sthānam iti paryāyau |* As we have seen earlier, the same etymological explanation is mentioned in the PSk (17.4-6). However, there the *indriya*s are not reduced to seeds in the *ālayavijñāna*, therefore the present problem does not arise.

[328] TrBh 50.18: *sarvadharmabījāśrayatvāt sarvabījakam* | TrBh 110.17-18: *tatra sarvadharmotpādanaśakty-anugamāt sarvabījaṃ vijñānam ity ālayavijñānam |*

4. The *ālambana* and *ākāra* of perception

In the previous chapter, we looked at one of the four constituents of the perceptual process, the *āśraya*. In accordance with the Abhidharmic model of perception laid out for instance in the AK(Bh), Sthiramati in the TrBh says that each *vijñāna* also necessarily has an *ālambana* and an *ākāra*.[329] In this chapter, I investigate these and other related concepts in the various *strata* of Vasubandhu's corpus. The reason I discuss them together, and not separately as the other two constituents of the perceptual process, is that they are inextricably linked insofar as *ālambana* is the cognitive object of perception and *ākāra* is the mode it is grasped by, or the form it appears with, in consciousness. As for the object of perception in Vasubandhu's Yogācāra works, the thrust of research in the past few years has revolved almost exclusively around the issue whether his rejection of the mind-independent existence of the objects of perception amounts to an ontological or, merely, an epistemological idealist position.[330] But, as we will see, there are many other interesting aspects of the examination of the objects of perception in the Yogācāra context. Regarding the notion of *ākāra*, recent studies focused primarily on Dignāga's and Dharmakīrti's works which developed a more elaborate conception than the Yogācāra treatises of Vasubandhu, where the term is used only sporadically. The latter, accordingly, received less scholarly attention. However, there has been some valuable research done on the antecedents of the *pramāṇavāda* notion of *ākāra* in various Abhidharma works, including Vasubandhu's AK(Bh).[331] In this respect, Vasubandhu's Yogācāra works represent an

[329] TrBh 62.5: *na ca vijñānam āśrayālambananirapekṣaṃ yujyata ity* […] | TrBh 50.20-21: *na hi nirālambanaṃ nirākāraṃ vā vijñānaṃ yujyate* |

[330] See e.g. Lusthaus 2002, Kellner and Taber 2014, Finnigan 2017, Gold 2021.

[331] On the concept of *ākāra*, see e.g. Chu 2006, Dhammajoti 2007b, Kellner 2014, Zhao 2016, Sharf 2018 or the papers of the panel on the concept of *ākāra* in Buddhist soteriological and philosophical analysis at the

interesting period of transition between the Abhidharmic usage of the term and its more developed conception in the *pramāṇavāda* tradition.

Both constituents (and the philosophical problems surrounding them) can be approached and discussed from many different angles (e.g. epistemological, physiological, psychological, causal), but I have to limit myself to certain issues that arise more directly from the phenomenological description of sense perception. In the first section of the chapter, I make some preliminary remarks concerning how the concepts of *ālambana* (as well as other object-related terms) and *ākāra* are understood in the AK(Bh) and in the related secondary literature. In the following two sections, I investigate whether and how the conceptual distinctions put forward in the AK(Bh) are retained in the Yogācāra treatises of Vasubandhu and its commentaries, looking first at the PSk and the KSP, and then his *vijñaptimātratā* works. Furthermore, in the second section I discuss in detail the way the PSk, the PSkV and the KSP classify the objects of the senses, and the philosophical problems they raise concerning the status of these objects. In the third section addressing the *Viṃśikā* and the *Triṃśikā*, I examine how Vasubandhu (and following him Sthiramati) adapt certain Abhidharmic arguments in support of the *vijñaptimātratā* teaching, and how the *ālambana* and *ākāra* fit in with the idealist Yogācāra model of perception.

4.1. Terminological remarks and the Abhidharmic context

4.1.1. Sanskrit terms for the object of perception and their various connotations

As we have seen in the second chapter of the dissertation, Vasubandhu's definitions of *vijñāna* often emphasise that consciousness grasps or makes known an object, to which he refers by various Sanskrit terms. For instance, in the AK (1.16a) he explains *vijñāna* as

16th Congress of the International Association of Buddhist Studies. For an overview of these, see Kellner and McClintock 2014.

prativijñapti, which, in turn, is glossed as a cognition (*vijñapti*) or apprehension (*upalabdhi*) that can be directed at an object (*viṣaya*).[332] Similarly, in the PSk we find that *vijñāna* is the cognition or making known (*vijñapti*) of an object (*ālambana*), while in the *Triṃśikā* he differentiates a layer of consciousness called the perception of objects (*viṣaya-vijñapti*).[333] While in the *Viṃśikā* and its *vṛtti*, these object-oriented definitions of *vijñāna* are perspicuously missing, in addition to the term *viṣaya*, the text also frequently refers to the objects of perception as *artha*.[334] Even though, as these few passages already illustrate, Vasubandhu uses various terms for the objects of perception, it is only the AK(Bh) that attempts to clarify the different connotations some of these have.[335]

In the commentary on AK 1.29c, an interlocutor asks about the difference between *viṣaya* and *ālambana*. In his reply, Vasubandhu says that a *viṣaya* is something regarding to which another thing exercises its activity (*kāritra*).[336] According to Yaśomitra's clarification, the eye, ear and other faculties exercise their activity, that is seeing or hearing, towards the visible forms or sounds.[337] Thus, *viṣaya* refers, specifically, to the 'field', 'scope' or 'domain' of objects the six sense faculties can be directed at. As such, the visible objects belong to the scope of the eye, as the eye can exercise its activity only on the visible objects, but not for instance on the tangible ones, and so on. I will often simply refer to them as 'sense objects'.

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[332] AK 1.16a: ***vijñānaṃ prativijñaptiḥ*** **|** AKBh 11.7: *viṣayaṃ viṣayaṃ prati vijñaptir upalabdhir vijñānaskandha ity ucyate* |

[333] PSk 16.7: *vijñānam katamat* | *ālambanavijñaptiḥ* | Triṃś 1d-2ab: ***pariṇāmaḥ sa ca tridhā*** **||** ***vipāko mananākhyaś ca vijñaptir viṣayasya ca*** **||**

[334] See e.g. ViṃśV 119.4-5: *vināpy arthena yathārthābhāsā cakṣurvijñānādikā vijñaptir utpadyate tathoktaṃ* |

[335] As Dhammajoti (2007a, 41) notes, there is another term that is also often used to describe the object in Buddhist texts, namely *jñeya* 'knowable' or the 'objects of knowledge', which came to be synonymous with the *dharma*s. Later on, we will see that *gocara* can be used in this sense, as well.

[336] AKBh 19.16-17: *kaḥ punar viṣayālambanayor viśeṣaḥ* | *yasmin yasya kāritraṃ sa tasya viṣayaḥ* |

[337] AKVy 80.18-19: *kāritraṃ puruṣakāraḥ* | *cakṣuḥśrotrādīnāṃ rūpaśabdādiṣv ālocanaśravaṇādikāritraṃ* | Yaśomitra explains the term *kāritra* as *puruṣakāra*, i.e. human effort.

Viṣaya is contrasted with the notion of *ālambana*, which is explained by Vasubandhu as something that is grasped by the mind (*citta*) and the mental concomitants (*caitta*).[338] Yaśomitra in his commentary confirms that the visible form, etc. that is grasped by the *citta* and the *caitta*s is considered an *ālambana*, and uses the image of someone leaning on a stick (in order to walk, etc.) to illustrate how the *ālambana* supports consciousness (by being its object-condition i.e. *ālambanapratyaya*).[339] Yaśomitra's simile relies on the etymology of the term *ālambana* as a derivative of the verbal root ā-√*lamb*, meaning 'to support' or 'hold'. Yaśomitra's comment therefore underlines that the term *ālambana* does not simply stand for the object of perception but has the implication that the given object is the support or cause for the arising of consciousness. To further underline the difference between the concepts of *viṣaya* and *ālambana*, he clarifies that only the mind and the mental concomitants have *ālambana*s, while both the *indriya*s and the *citta-caitta*s have *viṣaya*s.[340] By saying that the *citta* and *caitta*s also have a *viṣaya*, he might mean that the *manas* as the sixth sense faculty has as its own sense objects, namely all the *dharma*s. But it is more plausible that what he has in mind is that the sense objects are the field of activity (*viṣaya*) of cognitions (as well as the faculties) on which they *can* exercise their function. However, insofar as a sense object becomes the *actual* object or object-condition of experience, including the first five as well as the sixth *vijñāna*, it is called an *ālambana*. This remark, then, would explain why, as we will see, Vasubandhu sometimes uses *ālambana* and *viṣaya* interchangeably in the case of *vijñapti*. Nonetheless, in line with his distinction, he refers to *ālambana* only with regard to *vijñāna*, and never the sense faculties.

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[338] AKBh 19.17: *yac cittacaittair gṛhyate tad ālambanam* |

[339] AKVy 80.20-21: *yac cittacaittair gṛhyate daṇḍāvastambhanayogena tad ālambanaṃ rūpādi* | On the four conditions, see the previous chapter.

[340] AKVy 80.21-22: *tad evaṃ sati cittacaittānām evālambanam* | *viṣayaḥ punaś cakṣurādīnām api na kevalaṃ cittacaittānāṃ* |

The AK(Bh) and the AKVy, therefore, emphasise that when an object that belongs to the field of activity of a certain faculty supports or becomes an object in a cognitive act, then it is not only a *viṣaya*, but should also be regarded as an *ālambana*, that is a cognitive or—using a standard philosophical terminology—an intentional object of perception.[341] It is important to emphasise that *ālambana*, understood as an intentional object (i.e. the object at which perception or attention is directed), is ontologically neutral, insofar as it can indicate any object a particular cognition is about, without any implications for its ontological status.[342] All it means that the object is actually grasped by a cognition. The claim that consciousness has an *ālambana*, therefore, should not be confused with the claim that perception is directed at a mental image or sense datum, or even at an actual object. Accordingly, it is compatible with all theories of perception such as intentionalism, sense-datum theory, or various forms of relationalism.

The AKBh passage does not clarify how the term *artha* relates to *viṣaya* or *ālambana*. But, as Dhammajoti (2007a, 41) notes, the objects of the senses are often denoted by the more generic term *artha*. Both the terms *viṣaya* and *artha* are often characterised as 'external' (*bāhya*), which is not so much a reference to them being material entities (especially since the *dharma*s, that is the objects of the *manas*, are also called 'external' *viṣaya*s. But rather, as we have seen earlier, it is a way of contrasting them with the internal *āyatana*s or *dhātu*s that are in some sense closer to the mind (and, of course, five of the 'internal' sense faculties are just as material as five of the 'external' *āyatana*s or *dhātu*s). When analysing Vasubandhu's later works below, I will investigate the extent to

[341] It is worth noting that in general Yaśomitra's commentary follows Vasubandhu's distinction between *viṣaya* and *ālambana* quite consistently. For instance, when commenting on Vasubandhu's remark that *vijñāna* has the function of cognising (*vijānāti*), he notes that it cognises an *ālambana*. AKVy 208.17-18: *vijānāty ālambanam iti vijñānaṃ* | On the term intentionality, see also fn. 48.

[342] With regard to Dignāga, Eckel-Garfield-Powers (2016, 10) emphasises a similar point. As for the translations of *ālambana*, we find various renderings in the scholarly literature, such as 'intentional object' (Kachru 2021, 33; Siderits 2007, 131, but note that he also translates *viṣaya* as 'intentional object'), 'experiential object' (Gold 2015, 49-50) or 'cognitive object' (Dhammajoti 2007a, 41).

which his Yogācāra texts, as well as the various commentaries written thereon, follow the terminological distinctions laid out in the AK(Bh).

4.1.2. The meanings of *ākāra* in the AK(Bh)

Another constituent of the perceptual process emphasised by Sthiramati in the TrBh is *ākāra*. As I mentioned above, the concept of *ākāra* received some scholarly attention in the recent years. Therefore, before exploring how *ākāra* is used in the Yogācāra works of Vasubandhu and their commentaries, it is worthwhile to survey the meanings or nuances of the term distinguished by scholars in the context of the AK(Bh). Particularly relevant to our discussion is the study of Kellner (2014) who, in search of the Abhidharmic antecedents of the *pramāṇavāda* application of *ākāra*, investigates in detail how the term is used in Vasubandhu's AK(Bh). In this context, Kellner distinguishes between three meanings or nuances of *ākāra*. The first, labelled as 'object-*ākāra*' or 'object-form', appears most characteristically in chapter 9 of the AKBh (473.23ff), where Vasubandhu argues that in the process of cognising an object, consciousness actually 'does not do anything'. We have already looked at this passage briefly when discussing the 'what sees problem' and the notion of *nirvyāpāra* in the previous chapter. One of Vasubandhu's arguments in support of this position relies on the premise that an effect conforms to its cause insofar as it comes into existence being similar to it. The effect, however, strictly speaking, does not do anything in this process. This is the case with consciousness as well. One might (conventionally) say that consciousness cognises the object, but it actually does not perform any activity; it simply comes into existence resembling the object.[343] In addition to its non-activity, Vasubandhu's account underscores two important factors it is

[343] AKBh 473.25-474.2: *yat tarhi vijñānaṃ vijānātīti sūtra uktaṃ kiṃ tatra vijñānaṃ karoti | na kiñcit karoti | yathā tu kāryaṃ kāraṇam anuvidhīyata ity ucyate sādṛśyenātmalābhād akurvad api kiñcit | evaṃ vijñānam api vijānātīty ucyate | sādṛśyenātmalābhād akurvad api kiñcit | kiṃ punar asya sādṛśyam | tadākāratā | ata eva tad indriyād apy utpannaṃ viṣayaṃ vijānātīty ucyate nendriyam |* For a detailed discussion of the argument in its full context, see Kellner 2014, 278-281.

worth emphasising about the arising of perception, namely that consciousness is not simply caused by an object, but also that it arises with a form (*ākāra*) resembling it.[344]

The second meaning of *ākāra* distinguished by Kellner in the AK(Bh) is that of 'mode-*ākāra*' or 'mode of grasping'. She finds this usage in AK 2.34bcd and its commentary (which is the passage that provides the fourfold framework of perception I use in the dissertation). According to this passage, the *citta* and the *caitta*s have an *āśraya*, an *ālambana*, an *ākāra* and are associated with each other.[345] Kellner compares Vasubandhu's ensuing explanation—that the *citta* and the *caitta*s have an *ākāra* because they perform *ākaraṇa* regarding the object in a particular way—with Yaśomitra's remarks in the AKVy. After analysing Yaśomitra's comments she concludes that *ākāra* in this particular passage refers to the distinctive ways or modes in which the mind and the mental concomitants, respectively, grasp or operate towards the object, for instance that consciousness (*vijñāna*) cognises the blue or yellow itself (that is, the object in general), *vedanā* experiences it in terms of sensations (i.e. as pleasurable, unpleasurable or neutral), *saṃjñā* conceptualises it (*as* a certain kind of thing), etc.[346] It is important to note that in the same verse (AK 2.34d) and its *bhāṣya*, Vasubandhu, and following him the AKVy, also mention *ākāra* as one of the five samenesses (*samatā*) i.e. the five respects in which the *caitta*s are conjoined or associated (*samprayukta*) with the *citta*.[347] As we have seen in the previous chapter,

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[344] These ideas later appear even more characteristically in Dignāga's *Ālambanaparīkṣāvṛtti* who understands *ālambanapratyaya* as an entity that produces a consciousness with its own appearance. For Dignāga's view on the object-condition, see Kellner 2014, 281-282 or Chu 2006.

[345] AKBh 62.3-7 *ad* AK 2.34bcd: ***cittacaitasāḥ | sāśrayālambanākārāḥ samprayuktāś ca |*** *ta eva hi cittacaittāḥ sāśrayā ucyante indriyāśritatvāt sālambanā viṣayagrahaṇāt sākārās tasyaivālambanasya prakāraśa ākaraṇāt samprayuktāḥ samaṃ prayuktatvāt |*

[346] AKVy 208.27–209.14: *sākārāḥ tasyaivālambanasya prakāreṇākāraṇāt | yena te sālambanāḥ tasyaivālaṃbanasya prakāreṇa grahaṇāt | kathaṃ | vijñānaṃ hi nīlaṃ pītaṃ vā vastu vijānāti | upalabhata ity arthaḥ | tad eva tathālambanaṃ vastu vedanānubhavati saṃjñā paricchinatti cetanābhisaṃskarotīty evamādi | atha vā tasyaivālambanasya vijñānaṃ sāmānyarūpeṇopalabhyatārūpaṃ gṛhṇāti viśeṣarūpeṇa tu vedanānubhavanīyatārūpaṃ gṛhṇāti saṃjñā paricchedyatārūpaṃ gṛhṇātīty evamādi |* I will return to this passage and the distinction between how consciousness and the individual mental concomitants operate towards the object in the following chapter.

[347] The other four are the *āśraya*, *ālambana*, *kāla* and *dravya*, see AKBh 62.9. The PSkV (32.13-15) also reiterates this idea.

Yaśomitra clarifies (AKVy 209.16-23) that the *citta* and the *caitta*s share their *ākāra* insofar as when the *ākāra* of the *citta* is for instance blue, the *ākāra* of the *caitta*s will also be blue. Regarding this occurrence of *ākāra*, Kellner notes that it cannot be taken in the sense of a mode-*ākāra*, but an object-*ākāra*, which implies that Vasubandhu in the verse shifts between the two meanings of *ākāra*.

Kellner locates the third meaning, which is best understood as a nuance of the sense 'mode-*ākāra*', in the context of a yogin's progression on the path to liberation. More precisely, it occurs in chapter seven of the AK(Bh) in a discussion of the sixteen aspects (*ṣoḍaśākāra*) of the four truths of the nobles, through which practitioners can contemplate objects, for instance the five *skandha*s, as impermanent, empty, etc.[348] In this context, the Vaibhāṣika attempts to identify *ākāra* with the mental concomitant *prajñā*, i.e. dicriminative insight.[349] According to Vasubandhu, such an identification is unacceptable, because it entails that *prajñā* has no *ākāra*. The rationale behind this claim is that, in light of the doctrine of the five samenesses, there cannot be present two of the same kind of mental concomitant in one moment of consciousness. Therefore, *prajñā* cannot be accompanied by another instance of *prajñā* as its putative *ākāra.* This would mean that *prajñā* does not have an *ākāra*, which, in turn, contradicts the claim that all *citta* and *caitta*s need to have one. Vasubandhu suggests another interpretation of *ākāra* instead, regarding it as the mode (*prakāra*) in which the *citta* and the *caitta*s grasp an *ālambana*.[350] Kellner (2014, 288-289) considers this as a subcategory of mode-*ākāra* because *ākāra* here does not refer to the characteristic function or operation *citta*s and *caitta*s have towards the object i.e. generic cognition, sensation, conceptualisation, etc. (as it was suggested by

[348] For the discussion of the sixteen aspects in the AK(Bh), see AKBh *ad* AK 7.13a. On the sixteen aspects of the four truths of nobles in detail, see Eltschinger 2014.

[349] I will discuss the mental concomitant *prajñā* in the following chapter.

[350] AKBh 401.20-21 *ad* AK 7.13b: ***prajñākāraḥ*** | *evaṃ tarhi prajñā sākārā na bhaviṣyati* | *prajñāntarāsaṃyogāt* | *evaṃ tu yuktaṃ syāt* | *sarveṣāṃ cittacaittānām ālambanagrahaṇaprakāra ākāra iti* | On the identification of *ākāra* with *prajñā*, see also Sharf 2018, 833, Dhammajoti 2007b, Cox 1988, 51.

Yaśomitra), but the mode they grasp the objects in terms of their content, for example as impermanent. It is important to note that some scholars, such as Cox (1988, 81, n. 92) or Griffiths (1990, 115, n. 48), do not see a sharp distinction between *ākāra* construed here as a mode of grasping and its usage found, for instance, in chapter nine. They rather suggest that Vasubandhu construes *ākāra consistently* as an object-form taken on by the *citta* and the *caittas* or, as Griffiths puts it, the phenomenological content of perception, regardless of whether it is determined by the object or the mode of apprehension.

As we have seen, the idea that the *citta* and the *caitta*s have an *āśraya*, an *ālambana*, an *ākāra* and are associated with each other is put forward in the AK, which is generally held to be composed from a Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika perspective. That this fourfold framework is compatible both with the Vaibhāṣika and the Sautrāntika theories of perception is corroborated by the fact that the *bhāṣya* presents no debates concerning its validity. This does not necessarily mean that both parties agree on what the individual terms imply or refer to. As we will see, they disagree, for instance, whether the *ālambana* could be a non-existent object or not. Similarly, when endorsing that the *citta* and the *caitta*s have an *ākāra*, the Vaibhāṣikas probably had something else in mind than Vasubandhu or Yaśomitra, namely the identification of *prajñā* and *ākāra*. This, according to Vasubandhu, however, leads to the problem described above. When Yaśomitra claims that *ākāra* (in AK 2.34bcd) refers to a mode-*ākāra* in the sense that the mind and the individual mental concomitants have their own, distinctive mode of operation towards the objects, he might have intended this as a common denominator which is compatible with both the Vaibhāṣika and the Sautrāntika views on perception. As for Vasubandhu's own interpretation of the claim that the *citta-caitta*s have an *ākāra*, it is important to keep in mind the definition of *ākāra* he gives in chapter seven as a mode of grasping of the object (*ālambanagrahaṇaprakāra*). Due to the obvious relation between the two passages

(insofar as Vasubandhu's rejection of the Vaibhāṣika identification of *ākāra* with *prajñā* in chapter seven relies on the principles laid out in AK 2.34bcd), on my reading, it sensible to read back the definition from chapter seven into to fourfold framework endorsed in chapter two. This mode of grasping, however, is not identical with Yaśomitra's mode of operation, since, as we have seen, it might concern the content of perception more generally.

The compatibility of the sense of *ākāra* as the object-form of cognitive states (discussed e.g. in AK(Bh) chapter 9 and 2.34d) with the Vaibhāṣika view of perception is more ambiguous. These are irreconcilable only if one, following the later doxographical distinction between *sākāravāda* and *nirākāravāda*, seeks to interpret *ākāra* as a sort of mental image or sense datum, rather than what chapter 9 strictly speaking says, namely that *vijñāna* as an effect comes into being resembling or (re)presenting the form of its object.[351] In this regard, it is important to point out that Kellner (2014, 281-282) does not find any explicit attribution of the AKBh's concept of object-*ākāra* to a particular school—it is ascribed to the Sautrāntikas only retrospectively. She also refers to Fukuda's paper which proposes that there is no indication that Vasubandhu regarded the notion of object-*ākāra* as incompatible with the Vaibhāṣika views. While the Vaibhāṣikas are generally held to put forward a direct realist account of perception, direct realism, as we have seen in the introduction, is not a homogenous theory, and the idea that consciousness presents the object in a certain way (e.g. blue*ly*) or with a certain phenomenological content (e.g. *as* blue) can be acceptable to certain direct realists as long as the objects are still not held to be perceived indirectly via an intermediary image. If so, this may suggest that the Vaibhāṣika view is closer to the adverbialist or intentionalist theories of perception than 'pure' relationalism. In this case, however, it is worth considering that the difference

[351] Cf. Sharf (2018, 832) who suggests that in the case of the Sautrāntikas, it is misleading to understand *ākāra* as an internal image or mental representation of the object that is grasped by the *vijñāna* and he rather takes *ākāra* as "that aspect or appearance or mode of activity of *vijñāna* that is engendered by, and accordingly 'resembles' (*sādṛśya*), the no-longer-extant perceptual object (*viṣaya*)." On the *sākāravāda* and *nirākāravāda* distinction, see Dhammajoti 2007b, Westerhoff 2018, 73-75.

between a mode and an object-*ākāra* is rather insignificant, as the object-*ākāra* is ultimately nothing but a mode of grasping, i.e. 'seeing bluely'.

4.2. The *ālambana* and *ākāra* of perception in the PSk and the KSP

4.2.1. Sanskrit object terms in the PSk and the PSkV

After briefly reviewing the range of meanings the term *ākāra* has, as well as the connotations of the terms *viṣaya* and *ālambana*, in the AK(Bh), now I turn to the issue of how these concepts are understood in Vasubandhu's Yogācāra works and their commentaries, starting with the PSk and the PSkV. Overall, the PSk consistently follows the terminological distinctions laid out in the AK(Bh). It uses the term *viṣaya*, but not *ālambana*, regarding the objects of the *indriya*s. For instance, when discussing the *rūpaskandha*, Vasubandhu classifies the objects of the senses into five kinds, each of them being described as a *viṣaya* belonging to a respective faculty: visible objects (*rūpa*), for example, are defined as the sense objects of the eye-faculty.[352] Since he analyses the *rūpaskandha*, Vasubandhu lists only five kinds of *viṣaya* here, but the *dharma*s also constitute a group of *viṣaya* belonging to the *manas*. It is worth noting that the PSk does not use the term *artha* in the sense of an object, at all.

On the other hand, when talking about *vijñāna*, Vasubandhu prefers the term *ālambana*. As I mentioned earlier, he defines *vijñāna* as the cognition of a cognitive or intentional object (*ālambanavijñapti*). Vasubandhu also sticks to this terminology when saying that the six *vijñāna*s are cognitions (*vijñapti*) supported by the eye faculty, etc. and having visible forms, etc. as their cognitive objects (*ālambana*).[353] In another passage, he says that the *pravṛttivijñāna*s arise in various modes (*prakārāntara*) depending on the object-

[352] PSk 2.11: *rūpaṃ katamat | cakṣurviṣayaḥ* […]

[353] PSk 20.2-3: *ṣaḍ vijñānadhātavaś caksurādisanniśritā rūpādyālambanā vijñaptayaḥ |*

condition (*ālambanapratyaya*). This claim, as we have seen in the previous chapter, is one of the proofs Vasubandhu gives of the existence of the *ālayavijñāna*.[354] He also uses the term *ālambana* when, in order to point out that the *ālayavijñāna* is a genuine form of *vijñāna*, he says that the store consciousness has its respective object (*ālambana*), but it cannot be discerned or determined (*aparicchinna*).[355] Similarly, he states that the [*kliṣṭa*]*manas* also has its own *ālambana*, namely the *ālayavijñāna*.[356] When giving a synonym for *pravṛttivijñāna*, Vasubandhu, however, notes that it is also called a cognition of sense objects (*viṣayavijñapti*), which shows that *vijñapti* can be combined either with the term *viṣaya* or *ālambana*.[357] As we have seen, this is compatible with the *ālambana-viṣaya* distinction of the AK(Bh).

Vasubandhu expresses most clearly that the *ālambana* terminology belongs specifically to the *vijñāna*s in his classification of the eighteen *dhātu*s. One of the characteristics based on which he distinguishes the *dhātu*s is whether they possess an *ālambana* (*sālambana*) or not (*anālambana*). He says that out of the eighteen elements only the seven mental *dhātu*s (*cittadhātu*) and a part of the *dharmadhātu*, identified by him with the mental concomitants (*caitasika*), have an *ālambana*. The other ten *dhātu*s and the rest of the *dharmadhātu* do not have a cognitive object.[358] The passage has a parallel in the AK(Bh), which presents this distinction in more detail. According to the AK(Bh)'s explanation, the seven mental *dhātu*s which have an *ālambana* are the visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, tactile and mental consciousnesses and, as the seventh, the *manas*. These are said to have an *ālambana* because they *grasp* or *cognise* a *viṣaya*. Just like in the PSk, a part of the *dharmadhātu*, namely the *caitasika*s, are also said to have an *ālambana*. The ten *dhātu*s

[354] PSk 17.2-4: *ālambanapratyayāpekṣaṃ prakārāntaravṛttitāṃ* […] *copādāya* |

[355] PSk 16.10: *tat punar aparicchinnālambanākāraṃ* […] |

[356] PSk 17.7: *prādhānyena mana ālayavijñānālambanaṃ* […] |

[357] PSk 17.1-2: […] *punar viṣayavijñaptyākhyaṃ pravṛttivijñānam utpadyata* […] |

[358] PSk 22.9-11: *kati sālambanāḥ* | *sapta cittadhātavo dharmadhātupradeśaś ca ye caitasikāḥ* | *katy anālambanāḥ* | *śeṣā daśa dharmadhātupradeśaś ca* |

which do not have an *ālambana* include the five *indriya*s (which, as we know, nonetheless have *viṣaya*s) and the five objects, as well as those elements of the *dharmadhātu* which are not concomitants (*asaṃprayuktaka*) of the mind (i.e. the *cittaviprayukta saṃskāra*s).[359]

It is also worth looking at briefly some of Sthiramati's comments on the above mentioned passages.[360] With regard to Vasubandhu's definition of *vijñāna* as *ālambana-vijñapti*, he says that *ālambana* here refers to the sense objects (*viṣaya*) of the *citta* and the *caitta*s.[361] His claim is reminiscent of the AK(Bh)'s explanation according to which an *ālambana* is something that is grasped by the mind and the mental concomitants. He also adds that there are six kinds of *viṣaya*s, from the visible forms to the *dharma*s.[362] Sthiramati, like the AK(Bh), also uses the term *prativijñapti*, for example when clarifying that visual consiousness is a cognition of a visible form and is supported by the eye-faculty.[363] Relatedly, he also remarks that the *pravṛttivijñāna*s are cognitions directed at their *ālambana*s.[364] Note that while, as we have seen, Vasubandhu defined *pravṛttivijñāna* as a cognition of a sense object (*viṣayavijñapti*), Sthiramati uses the term *ālambana* here. This again illustrates that in these contexts (unlike when analysing the structure of *vijñāna* in terms, for instance, of the fourfold model or the conditions of its arising), the terms *viṣaya* and *ālambana* can be used interchangeably. This is further corroborated by some remarks in Sthiramati's commentary. For instance when discussing Vasubandhu's definition of *saṃjñā*, which is said to be the grasping of the marks or characteristics

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[359] AKBh 22.27-23.5 *ad* AK 1.34ab: *kati sālambanāḥ katy anālambanāḥ* | ***sapta sālambanāś cittadhātavaḥ*** **|** *cakṣuḥśrotraghrāṇajihvākāyamanovijñānadhātavo manodhātuś ca ete sapta cittadhātavaḥ sālambanā viṣayagrahaṇāt* | ***ardhaṃ ca dharmataḥ*** **|** *sālambanaṃ yac caitasikasvabhāvam* | *śeṣā daśa rūpiṇo dhātavo dharmadhātupradeśaścāsaṃprayuktako 'nālambanā iti siddham* |

[360] Since Sthiramati's *bhāṣya* uses the various object terms more frequently than the root text, I cannot systematically discuss all occurrences, only some illustrative examples.

[361] PSkV 89.1: *ālambanaṃ cittacaittaviṣayaḥ* |

[362] PSkV 89.1-2: *sa punaḥ ṣaṭprakāraḥ rūpaṃ yāvad dharmāḥ* |

[363] PSkV 89.4: *tatra cakṣurvijñānaṃ cakṣurindriyāśrayā rūpaprativijñaptiḥ* | Sthiramati's explanation, however, in this case seems to draw more closely on the AS and the YBh. AS 19.18: *cakṣurvijñānaṃ katamat* | *cakṣurāśrayā rūpālambanā prativijñaptiḥ* | YBh 4.5: *cakṣurvijñānaṃ katamat* | *yā cakṣurāśrayā rūpaprativijñaptiḥ* |

[364] PSkV 89.10: *tatra pravṛttivijñānasyālambanaprativijñaptisvarūpatvād* [...] |

(*nimitta*) of an object (*viṣaya*), Sthiramati notes that *viṣaya* here means *ālambana*.[365] This comment suggests that he takes *viṣaya* as interchangeable with *ālambana* in this case as well, although we cannot exclude the possibility that Sthiramati's remark is intended to emphasise that, in the context of the *caitta*s, especially when it comes to actually grasping of the characteristics of an object, the *ālambana* terminology would have been more adequate.

However, it is not the only place where he uses these terms interchangeably, for instance he does so when commenting on Vasubandhu's differentiation of the *dhātu*s into *sālambana* and *anālambana* categories. There Sthiramati explains that *sālambana* means that these *dhātu*s have a cognitive object, and adds that the terms *ālambana*, *viṣaya*, and *gocara* are synonymous.[366] In light of Vasubandhu's classification (as well as his general terminology), however, this latter claim looks imprecise, since the reason why the five *indriya*s are not included among the *sālambana dhātu*s is exactly that they have *viṣaya*s and not *ālambana*s. The two terms thus cannot be synonymous. Accordingly, it might be more charitable to read Sthiramati as saying simply that these terms are co-referential in the context of the *vijñāna*s, insofar as they have *viṣaya*s as their *ālambana*s. That he was indeed aware of the relevance of the distinction between *viṣaya* and *ālambana* is attested in his commentary on the category of resistant (*sapratigha*) *dhātu*s, where, following the AK(Bh), he distinguished between three kinds of resistance (*pratighāta*). The first is the ordinary form of mutual physical resistance of objects (*āvaraṇapratighāta*), which, as we have seen in the previous chapter, means that a physical entity cannot be at the same locus as another. The other two are called *viṣayapratighāta* and *ālambanapratighāta*.[367] The

[365] PSk 4.1: *sañjñā katamā* | *viṣayanimittodgrahaṇam* | PSkV 29.10: *viṣaya ālambanam* |

[366] PSkV 129.15-17: *asty amīṣām ālambanam iti sālambanāḥ* | *viṣayo gocara ālambanam iti paryāyāḥ* | The term *gocara* also means 'field or scope of action' (literally a pasture for cattle), therefore it is closely related to *viṣaya*.

[367] PSkV 123.11-12: *pratighātas triprakāro viṣayālambanāvaraṇapratighātabhedāt* |

discussion of the last two forms of *pratighāta* led Vasubandhu in the AK(Bh) to draw the very distinction between the concepts of *viṣaya* and *ālambana*. According to Vasubandhu, they refer, respectively, to the way in which the *indriya*s engage with their *viṣaya*s and the mind and the mental concomitants (*cittacaitta*) with their *ālambana*s. The reason these relationships are described as 'resistance' is because, for instance, the *indriya*s cannot be active towards something other than their own *viṣaya*s, thus they are obstructed, or rather restricted, by their respective sense objects.[368]

4.2.2. The classification of *viṣaya*s in the PSk and the KSP

So far, we have investigated how the various object-related terms are used in the PSk and the PSkV, and seen that their application, in most cases, is in line with the principles laid out in the AK(Bh). In what follows, I will examine how the sense objects are classified in the PSk and what controversies arise regarding their nature in the PSkV. While it is the PSk and the PSkV that will guide my discussion in this section, I will also include the KSP which, even though does not offer a systematic classification of the sense objects, makes several remarks that are relevant to the topic of visible objects. Throughout this section, I will compare the classification and argumentation of these works with the AK(Bh) in order to see the extent to which these texts are continuous.

In the previous chapter I mentioned that Vasubandhu describes each material *indriya* as consisting of pellucid matter (*rūpaprasāda*) and having a specific sense object (*viṣaya*). For example, the eye faculty is said to consist of pellucid matter and to be directed at colour as its sense object. The rest of the sense faculties have sounds (*śabda*), smells

[368] Cf. AKBh 19.9 *ad* AK 1.29b: *viṣayapratighātaś cakṣurādīnāṃ viṣayiṇāṃ rūpādiṣu viṣayeṣu* | AKBh 19.15-18: *ālambanapratighātaś cittacaittānāṃ sveṣv ālambaneṣu* | […] *kaḥ punaḥ svasmin viṣaye pravarttamānam ālambane vā pratihanyata ity ucyate* | *tasmāt pareṇāpravṛtteḥ* | see also AKVy 80.23-25: *tathā cakṣurādi viṣayāt pareṇa na kāritraṃ karoti* | *viṣaya eva tu karoti* | *tasmāt tatra pratihanyata ity ucyate* | The AKBh also mentions the interpretation that *pratighāta* means *nipāta*, i.e. encounter. Thus, it simply refers to the activity of the *indriya* towards its own *viṣaya*. AKBh 19.19: *nipāto vā 'tra pratighāto yā svaviṣaye pravṛttiḥ* |

(*gandha*), tastes (*rasa*) and tangibles (*spraṣṭavya*) as their sense objects.[369] I also pointed out that the objects of the faculties are, in turn, defined relative to their faculties, bordering on circularity. This is underlined by Sthiramati as well, who in the PSkV says that a specific object, for example a visible from (*rūpa*), is differentiated from other objects on the basis that it constitutes, exclusively, the sense object of the visual faculty. He emphasises the exclusive relationship between sense objects and faculties (which he aptly calls *viṣayin*, i.e. 'that which has a sense object') in the case of other *viṣaya*s as well.[370]

4.2.2.1. Visible objects

The PSk classifies visible forms (*rūpa*) into three types: colour (*varṇa*), configuration or shape (*saṃsthāna*, but Yaśomitra in the AKVy also gives the synonym *ākṛti*), and informative form (*vijñapti*).[371] If we compare this passage with the AK(Bh), which also provides a classification of *viṣaya*s, we find that according to the Vaibhāṣikas, there are only two types of visible form, colour and shape, while informative form is subsumed under the category of shape.[372] While the PSk does not define *vijñapti* here, the AK(Bh) clarifies that it refers to bodily informative form (*kāyavijñapti*), that is the various shapes the body takes on due to the mind.[373] The KSP and the AK(Bh) present an alternative view, usually associated with the Sāṃmitīyas or Vātsīputrīyas, that *kāyavijñapti* is motion

[369] PSk 2.6: *tatra cakṣurindriyaṃ katamat | varṇaviṣayo rūpaprasādaḥ |* For the description of the rest of the *indriya*s, see PSk 2.7-10.

[370] PSkV 10.8-13: *yathaiva hi cakṣurādīnāṃ viṣayiṇāṃ parasparato viṣayabhedena bheda uktaḥ* […] *evaṃ rūpādīnām api viṣayāṇāṃ cakṣurādibhir viṣayibhir bheda ucyate | cakṣuṣa eva viṣayo rūpam na śrotrādīnām tadviṣayāṇāṃ śabdāditvena vyavasthānāt |* The *manas* is not included in the category of *rūpaskandha*, therefore, the exclusive relationship between the objects and faculties is to be understood only in the context of the ten material *āyatana*s.

[371] PSk 2.11-12: *rūpaṃ katamat | cakṣurviṣayaḥ varṇaḥ saṃsthānaṃ vijñaptiś ca |* AKVy 32.18: *saṃsthānam ākṛtiviśeṣaḥ |* For an overview of the content of the *rūpa* section of the PSk and the PSkV comparing it with parallel passages from the AK(Bh) and AS, see Kramer 2013b. The paper also touches on the similarities and dissimilarities between the classification of sense objects in these texts, see Kramer 2013b, 88-92. I will focus more on the philosophical debates concerning their nature.

[372] AKBh 6.9 *ad* AK 1.10a: ***rūpaṃ dvidhā |*** *varṇaḥ saṃsthānaṃ ca |* AK 4.2bc: ***kāyavijñaptir iṣyate saṃsthānaṃ*** […] | In the AKVy, Yaśomitra describes *rūpa* as the object (*artha*) of the eye, which indicates that the term has similar connotations to *viṣaya*. AKVy 32.14: *cakṣuṣo 'rtho varṇasaṃsthānabhedād dviprakāraḥ |*

[373] AKBh 192.25 *ad* AK 4.2bc: *cittavaśena kāyasya tathā tathā saṃsthānaṃ kāyavijñaptiḥ |*

(*gati* or *'gro ba*) and, as such, it is a separate kind of visible object. In the KSP, *gati* is defined as movement to another locus.[374] The Sautrāntika position, as we will see, is at the other end of the spectrum, holding that only *varṇa* exist ultimately. Moreover, Sthiramati in the PSkV even hints at the Yogācāra view that questions the atomic constitution, and hence mind-independent existence, even of colour.

Since the PSk only mentions the broad categories of *rūpa*, it is uncertain what specific elements Vasubandhu thought to belong to them. In the AK(Bh), we find an enumeration of twenty visible entities of which eight are included in the category of shape and twelve in the category of colour.[375] The text distinguishes four primary colours, namely blue (*nīla*), yellow (*pīta*), red (*lohita*) and white (*avadāta*). The same colours are listed by Sthiramati in the PSkV (11.3-4) as well. The AKBh adds that there are other (secondary) colours as well: cloud (*abhra*), smoke (*dhūma*), dust (*rajas*), mist (*mahikā*), shadow (*chāyā*), sunlight (*ātapa*), light (*āloka*) and darkness (*andhakāra*).[376] While it might be unclear to us why regard these entities as colours, we might think of them as the colour of cloud, etc. But the Vaibhāṣikas might have categorised them as *varṇa* simply because, while having no clearly defined shape, they consist of atoms with colour or, simply, colour(ed) atoms. Yaśomitra adds that in the opinion of other scholars, the secondary colours refer not only to cloud, smoke etc., but also to those colours that come into being from the combination

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[374] See AK 4.2bcd. KSP (6) 186.1-6: *gzhan dag na re de la dmigs pa'i sems las skyes pa'i 'gro ba ni rnam par rig byed yin no zhes zer ro* | […] *'o na 'gro ba zhes bya ba 'di ci yin* | *yul gzhan du 'pho ba'o* | *skye mched gang yin* | *gzugs kyi skye mched do* |

[375] AKBh 6.10-13 *ad* AK 1.10a: *tad eva rūpāyatanaṃ punar ucyate* | ***viṃśatidhā*** […] | *tad yathā nīlaṃ pītaṃ lohitam avadātaṃ dīrghaṃ hrasvaṃ vṛttaṃ parimaṇḍalaṃ unnatam avanataṃ sātaṃ visātaṃ abhraṃ dhūmo rajo mahikā cchāyā ātapaḥ ālokaḥ andhakāram iti* | AKVy 32.20: *saṃsthānam aṣṭavidhaṃ dīrghādivisātāntaṃ* | *śeṣo dvādaśavidho varṇa iti viṃśatidhā* | The AS lists additional elements as well, see Kramer 2013b, 88, 96, n. 29.

[376] AKBh 6.9: *tatra varṇaś caturvidho nīlādiḥ* | *tadbhedā anye* | AKVy 32.15-16: *varṇaś caturvidho nīlādir iti* | *nīlalohitapītāvadātā varṇāḥ* | *tadbhedā anya iti abhrādayaḥ* | The AKBh also gives some further information about some of the entities mentioned here. For instance, in contrast to *ātapa*, which is the light of the sun, *āloka* is said to be the radiance of the moon, stars, fire, medicinal herbs (the Sanskrit term for medicinal herb, *oṣadhi*, means 'light-containing'), and gems. We also understand that in the shadow visible forms remain visible, while in the darkness they are no longer visible, see AKBh 6.13-16. It is worth noting that for the Vaibhāṣikas, shadow and darkness are not simply the different degrees of the lack of light, but real entities consisting of their own atoms of colour.

(*saṃparka*) of the four primary colours, such as the colour of a crow's egg, etc.[377] According to the AKBh, some also include the sky (*nabhas*) in the list of colours.[378] These entities are mentioned in the PSkV as well, where an interlocutor raises the question of why Vasubandhu does not list amongst the visible objects cloud, smoke, dust, mist, shadow, sunlight, light, darkness, space (*abhyavakāśa*) and sky. Sthiramati answers that, unlike colour and shape, these are not held to be distinct categories of *rūpa*. This disagreement illustrates that there was a variety of classifications of *rūpa* in circulation among the Buddhist schools at the time, and, presumably, some of them even considered these entities as separate categories of visible form, as opposed to subcategories of colour, like the Vaibhāṣikas. Sthiramati in his answer emphasises that these phenomena are either spatially delimited (*paricchinnadeśa*) or not (*aparicchinnadeśa*). If they are spatially delimited, they belong to the category of shape, if not, then the category of colour. Therefore, they cannot be regarded as categories distinct from shape and colour.[379]

As for *saṃsthāna*, eight kinds of shape are mentioned in the AK(Bh): long (*dīrgha*), short (*hrasva*), square (*vṛtta*), round (*parimaṇḍala*), projecting (*unnata*), depressed (*avanata*), even (*sāta*) and uneven (*visāta*). The latter two are specified in the AKBh as flat (*samasthāna*) and ragged shape (*viṣamasthāna*).[380] We find the same list in the PSkV

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[377] AKVy 32.17-18: *apare vyācakṣate | tadbhedā anya iti nīlādivarṇacatuṣṭayasaṃparkaviśeṣāt kākāṇḍa-varṇādayo 'pi jāyante na kevalam abhrādya iti |*

[378] AKBh 6.13-14: *kecin nabhaś caikavarṇam iti ekaviṃśatiṃ saṃpaṭhanti |*

[379] PSkV 11.4-9: *abhraṃ […] nabhaś ceti te 'pi kasmād atra noktāḥ | varṇasaṃsthānavad rūpabhedatvena noktāḥ | abhrādayo hi paricchinnadeśā aparicchinnadeśāś ca | tatra ye paricchinnadeśās te saṃsthāna evāntarbhūtāḥ | ye 'paricchinnadeśās te varṇaviśeṣā eveti | na varṇasaṃsthānābhyāṃ pṛthag vyavasthā-payituṃ śakyanta itīha pṛthag noktāḥ |*

[380] AKBh 6.9-10: *saṃsthānam aṣṭavidhaṃ dīrghādi visātāntam* | AKBh 6.14: *tatra sātaṃ samasthānam | visātaṃ viṣama sthānam* | Some of the Sanskrit terms mentioned above are problematic. For instance, the term *vṛtta*, like *parimaṇḍala*, typically means 'round' or 'circular'. Its equivalent mentioned by Yaśomitra, *vartula*, also means round or circular. However, *vṛtta* is translated into Tibetan as *lham pa*, meaning square, which is, of course, in line with the elements of the list being organised in pairs of contraries. The terms *unnata* and *avanata*, are often translated as high and low. A more literal translation of the two terms is 'bent upwards' and 'bent downwards' which suggests that they have projecting or convex and depressed or concave shapes in mind (probably inspired by the shape of mountains and valleys). As for *unnata* and *avanata*, Yaśomitra notes that it is the shape of a heap or summit (*sthūla*) and a cavity (*nimna*), respectively.

(11.12-13) and the KSP (4) (185.9-15). Sthiramati, moreover, also engages in some important Abhidharmic disputes concerning the reality of shape. His presentation of these debates seems to follow the AKBh more closely, but also often overlaps with the KSP. When searching for the right definition of *saṃsthāna*, an interlocutor states that a shape, such as a long shape, is something regarding to which a perception (*buddhi*) of length arises (cf. KSP (2) 184.18-19). In his reply, Sthiramati points out that in this case shape is not distinct from colour. Elaborating on this claim he says that one has the perception, for instance, of length only if a great number of aggregated colour atoms are extended in one direction, and one perceives a short shape when there are fewer of these aggregates, etc.[381] Sthiramati follows a Sautrāntika line of argumentation here, according to which, in contrast to the Vaibhāṣika position, *saṃsthāna* is not a real entity distinct from certain arrangements of coloured atoms. In the AKBh, the Sautrāntika interlocutor concludes that ultimately (*dravyatas*) there is no shape, and 'long' or 'short' are only designations used with regard to a greater or lesser number of colour atoms extended in one direction. The Sautrāntika, like Sthiramati, then explains in the case of the rest of the shapes that which kind of arrangement of coloured atoms corresponds to which perceived form (cf. KSP (4) 185.9-15).[382]

AKVy 32.22: *unnataṃ sthūlādirūpaṃ | avanataṃ nimnarūpaṃ |* On the various shapes and their translations, see also Anacker 1984, 130-134, n. 12.

[381] PSkV 11.13-12.2: *kiṃ punar idaṃ saṃsthānaṃ nāma |* […] *yatra dīrghādibuddhayo bhavanti tad dīrghādisaṃsthānam | evaṃ tarhi na varṇādivyatiriktaṃ saṃsthānaṃ vidyate | kiṃ kāraṇam | yasmād ekadiṅmukhapravṛtte bhūyasi varṇādisaṅghāte dīrghabuddhir bhavati alpīyasi hrasvabuddhiḥ* […] | Sthiramati's description (PSkV 12.2-3) makes it clearer that the term *vṛtta* refers to square shape, since it is described as colour atoms being extended equally in four directions (*caturdiśaṃ same vṛttabuddhiḥ*), while *parimaṇḍala*, i.e. round shape, arises when the atoms extend equally in every direction (*sarvataḥ same parimaṇḍalabuddhiḥ*).

[382] AKBh 194.15-17 *ad* AK 4.3b: *nāsti saṃsthānaṃ dravyata iti sautrāntikāḥ | ekadiṅmukhe hi bhūyasi varṇa utpanne dīrghaṃ rūpam iti prajñapyate | tam evāpekṣyālpīyasi hrasvam iti | caturdiśaṃ bhūyasi caturasram iti | sarvatra same vṛttam iti |* The confusions around square and round shapes become evident in this passage as well. The shape explained as a 'multitude of colour atoms in the four directions' is referred to as *caturasra*, i.e. square, instead of *vṛtta*, and the shape characterised as an 'equal extension of colour atoms in every direction' is named *vṛtta* (which in the passages seen earlier was used in the surprising sense of square), substituting the term *parimaṇḍala*.

Perplexed by this idea, the interlocutor in the PSkV asks why it is that the perception of long, etc. is thought to arise with regard to a collection (*samudaya*) of colour atoms and not a distinct entity, namely shape. According to Sthiramati, shape cannot be a real sense object because we can perceive shapes not only visually but also by touch (*sparśana*).[383] This claim, again, is parallel with the Sautrāntika argumentation of the AK(Bh), which says that if shape was a distinct type of entity, then it would be grasped by two *indriya*s: it would be both seen by the eye faculty and touched by the body faculty.[384] But, the sense field of visible forms (*rūpāyatana*)—as it is taught by the Buddha—is not grasped by two faculties. The argument relies on the observation that shape is a common sensible as it can be seen as well as touched. However, based on the exclusivity of the sense object-sense faculty relationships, emphasised by Sthiramati as well, no such common sensibles can ultimately exist. Since shape is perceived by two faculties it follows that it is not a real entity, only a designation used to denote certain arrangements of colour atoms. Accordingly, as the rest of the argument in the PSkV goes, a faculty cannot perceive the object of another faculty and *vice versa*, as it would mean that it is pointless to posit multiple sense faculties.[385]

In the continuation of the debate, the Vaibhāṣika tries to prove that strictly speaking shape is not the object of touch, therefore the exclusive relationship between sense object and faculty is not denied. They say that a perception of shape by way of touch is not sense cognition (*indriyajñāna*), but inferential cognition (*anumānajñāna*), just as one can infer the colour of a flower from its smell.[386] The idea also occurs in the AK(Bh), which

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[383] PSkV 12.4-6: *kathaṃ punar etad gamyate varṇādisamudāye dīrghabuddhir bhavati na punar arthāntara-bhūte saṃsthāna iti | sparśanadvāreṇāpi dīrghādibuddhyutpatteḥ* […] |

[384] AKBh 194.19-23 *ad* AK 4.3c: *na tu khalu jātyantaram asti saṃsthānam | yadi hi syāt | **dvigrāhyaṃ syāt** | cakṣuṣā hi dṛṣṭvā dīrgham ity avasīyate kāyendriyeṇāpi spṛṣṭveti dvābhyām asya grahaṇaṃ prāpnuyāt | na ca rūpāyatanasya dvābhyāṃ grahaṇam asti |*

[385] PSkV 12.6-7: […] *na cendriyāntaraviṣaya indriyāntaradvāreṇa buddhir utpadyate naikendriya-vaiyarthyaprasaṅgāt |*

[386] PSkV 12.7-8: *naiva tad indriyajñānam kiṃ tarhy anumānajñānam gandhāt puṣpavarṇajñānavat |*

explains that in the case of touch, shapes are not immediately grasped, and we only remember (*smṛtimātra*) them on account of their association (*sāhacarya*) with a tangible object. The Vaibhāṣika also gives some examples of such an associative relationship, for instance when having seen the form (*rūpa*) of fire one remembers its heat, or having smelled a flower one remembers its colour.[387] Thus, according to the Vaibhāṣikas, shape is exclusively a visible object, a *proper* sensible, and is merely inferred or, based on earlier experiences, suggested to the mind when touching a tangible object, such as roughness or softness. The Sautrāntika, both in the PSkV and the AKBh, objects that while in some cases such an inferential cognition is possible, for instance a certain smell can be exclusively connected or restricted to (*niyata*) a certain flower of a specific colour, there is no such invariable correspondence (*avyabhicāra*) between tangibles and visible shapes. One cannot infer the shape of an object by simply touching its surface. The analogy drawn by the Vaibhāṣika, therefore, is inadequate.[388] Consequently, since such an inference is untenable, they have to accept that one can have a cognition, for instance, of the long shape of a pot by two faculties. On this basis, Sthiramati in the PSkV concludes that shape cannot be a real entity distinct from colour.[389]

The AK(Bh) and the KSP give a couple of arguments in support of the conclusion that shape is nothing else than the arrangement of colour atoms perceived by the mind that are not mentioned by Sthiramati in the PSkV. One of these, for instance, uses the example of a patterned carpet. In the carpet, one sees various colours and shapes at the same place. However, since according to the Vaibhāṣikas, shapes and colours are real material entities

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[387] AKBh 194.24-26 *ad* AK 4.3c: *smṛtimātraṃ tatra spraṣṭavyasāhacaryāt bhavati | sa tu sāhacaryāt bhavati na tu sākṣāt grahaṇam | yathā 'gnirūpaṃ dṛṣṭvā tasyoṣṇatāyāṃ smṛtir bhavati puṣpagandhaṃ ca ghrātvā tadvarṇa iti |* Cf. AKVy 574.11-13: *smṛtimātraṃ tatra saṃsthāne* […] *na tu sākṣādgrahaṇaṃ dīrghādisaṃsthānasya |*

[388] PSkV 12.8-9: *yathā gandhaḥ puṣpavarṇaniyataḥ na tv evaṃ sparśaḥ saṃsthāna iti viṣamo 'yam upanyāsaḥ |* AKBh 194.26-195.2: *yuktam atrāvyabhicāratvād anyenānyasya smaraṇaṃ na tu kiṃcit spraṣṭavyaṃ kvacit saṃsthāne niyataṃ yatas tatra smaraṇaṃ niyamena syāt |*

[389] PSkV 12.9-11: *tasmād ubhayendriyadvāreṇa ghaṭādivad dīrghādisaṃsthānapravṛtteḥ na tad varṇādibhyo 'rthāntaram iti |*

that possess resistance, they could not be at the same place, just like two colours cannot be at the same place.[390] Therefore, when one sees for instance a grey square on a carpet, due to their resistance, the atoms that respectively constitute colour and shape could not be at the same place. The KSP and the AKVy talk only about different shapes, but the argument works in an analogous way. It would be impossible, for instance, to see a round shape with a square shape in the middle of it, or a short shape in a long shape, since their constituting atoms (the square and round atoms, or the short and long atoms) could not be at the same place.[391] Note that the argument works both if we consider the shape of the rug itself as partially overlapping with smaller patterns within it, and if we just focus on a specific pattern of the rug that is decorated with overlapping shapes. The rest of the argument in the KSP is a bit more difficult to interpret. Setting aside the problem caused by their impenetrability, it claims that if different shapes could be at the same locus, then one would perceive every kind of shape everywhere.[392] According to my reconstruction, the argument is that when one, for instance, sees a short shape embedded in a long shape, then in the very area of the short shape one should at the same time perceive a short as well as a long shape, since the atoms of both shapes are held to be present there. But this is evidently not the case, since in that particular area one only perceives the short shape. The KSP therefore concludes that shape is not a substantially real entity, and it is only colour arranged in particular ways that one perceives as a long, etc. The KSP likens these ordinary cases of shape perception to those instances when one perceives the arrangement

[390] AKBh 195.3-4 *ad* 4.3c: *citrāstaraṇe vā 'nekavarṇasaṃsthāne darśanād bahūnām aikadeśyaṃ prāpnuyāt* | *tac cāyuktaṃ varṇavat* | It is Yaśomitra who explicitly mentions the problem of resistance, see AKVy 575.17-18: *yathā hi varṇaḥ sapratighatvād ekadeśo na bhavati* | *tathā saṃsthānam apīti* |

[391] KSP (4) 185.16-19: *ri mo bkram pa de dang de lta bur snang ba la yang dbyibs kyi blo de dang de 'byung mod kyi* | *dbyibs rigs tha dad pa dag ni yul gcig par rigs pa yang ma yin te* | *dper na kha dog dag bzhin no* | AKVy 575.16-17: *ato 'nekasaṃsthānadarśanāt bahūnāṃ saṃsthānānām ekadeśaṃ prāpnuyāt* | *yatraiva dīrghatvaṃ* | *tatraiva hrasvādigrahaṇāt* |

[392] KSP (4) 185.19-20: *'on kyang 'gyur na ni phyogs thams cad du dbyibs thams cad kyi blo 'byung bar 'gyur ba zhig na de lta yang ma yin no* |

of trees, birds and ants as actual rows or lines.[393] The same analogy is drawn in the AKBh (195.12-14): just as one merely imagines a particular arrangement of ants as a line, so too one only conceptualises particular arrangements of colour atoms as certain shapes.

Returning to the narrative of the PSkV, the next Sautrāntika argument calls into question the very concept of shaped atom itself. The Sautrāntika critique starts off from the idea that since atoms are by definition partless (*niravayava*), they cannot be distinguished from one another on the basis whether they are long, short, etc. Therefore, unlike the view that atoms are blue or yellow, etc., it cannot be maintained that there are such things as long, etc. shaped atoms. And since there are no atoms with shapes, the existence of shapes conceived as a collection of such atoms is also impossible.[394] Just like the previous arguments, these remarks from the PSkV also have a parallel in the AKBh. According to the Sautrāntikas, if shape would be a real entity, then we would be able to trace its reality back to its atoms. However, as they claim, "shape does not exist in the atoms". Therefore, since the existence of atoms with shapes is not established, the position adopted by the Vaibhāṣikas that one perceives the assemblages of these atoms as long, etc. is unsubstantiated. Since shaped particles (*saṃsthānāvayava*), unlike coloured ones, have no inherent existence (*svabhāva*), they cannot be aggregated (*saṃcaya*), either.[395]

Another possible route to take is that shape is neither a property of atoms, nor an atomic aggregate, but a unified thing or substance (*dravya*). According to the PSkV, such a view is also problematic, insofar as shapes have a near, a far and a middle part. It should be

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[393] KSP (4) 185.21-24: *de lta bas na dbyibs zhes bya ba'i rdzas gzhan ni med kyi | kha dog kho na yul gyi khyad par na gnas pa la ring po la sogs pa'i blo dag 'byung ste | dper na shing dang bya dang | grog ma la sogs pa'i dngar ka dag la 'byung ba lta bu ste |*

[394] PSkV 12.11-13.3: *na ca niravayavatvāt paramāṇūnāṃ dīrghādirūpeṇa parasparato bhedo yuktaḥ | tasmān na nīlādiparamāṇuvad dīrghādiparamāṇavaḥ santīty ataś ca saṃsthānaparamāṇusamudāyo 'pi dīrghādisaṃsthānam ity ayuktam dīrghādisaṃsthānaparamāṇvabhāvāt |*

[395] AKBh 195.8-11 ad AK: *na ca saṃsthānaṃ paramāṇau vidyate dīrghādi* […] *atha mataṃ saṃsthāna-paramāṇava eva tathā saṃniviṣṭā dīrghādisaṃjñāṃ labhanta iti | so 'yaṃ kevalaḥ pakṣapātas teṣām asiddhatvāt* […] *na ca saṃsthānāvayavānāṃ varṇādivat svabhāvaḥ siddha iti kuta eṣāṃ saṃcayaḥ | Avayava* seems to be used here as a synonym for *paramāṇu*.

noted that these are understood not as physical or atomic parts (since the line of argument presupposes that shape is an indivisible whole) but rather as phenomenological or conceptual parts. As Sthiramati argues, these parts need to be distinct from one another, otherwise they could not be perceived and not-perceived at the same time.[396] Sthiramati's argument and terminology recalls verse 15 of the *Viṃśikā*, according to which, if one conceives the eye's sense object (*viṣaya*), e.g. the blue colour, as an undivided (*avicchinna*), unified substance (*eka dravya*), then it could not be grasped and not-grasped at the same time. More specifically, it would be impossible to grasp its, say, near side, but not its far side at the same time.[397] It is, however, our evident experience that we quite often perceive the near side, but not the far side, of an object's shape.

Sthiramati also adds that shape must be necessarily divided to account for the principle of the 'difference of the related entities' (*sambandhibheda*). According to my reconstruction of the argument, if shape were not divided, then the entities related to that unified shape would not be separate (*abhinnatva*), either.[398] The term *abhinnatva* is rendered into Tibetan as *phyogs tha dad pa med pa*, which suggests that the 'difference' should be understood, first of all, in terms of spatial (*phyogs*) distinction. Sthiramati's argument seems to be related to verse 15 of the *Viṃśikā* and its *vṛtti* here as well. Vasubandhu there says that if one holds the eye's object to be 'one', then multiple (*aneka*) and separated (*vicchinna*) elephants and horses could not be in that same place.[399] What Vasubandhu probably had in mind when talking about a unified object is a stable or a field

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[396] PSkV 13.3-5: *na ca saṃsthānātmakaṃ dravyam arvāṅmadhyaparabhāgasambhavāt | na ca teṣām abhedaḥ yugapat pratyakṣāpratyakṣatvāt |*

[397] Viṃś 15ab: ***ekatve na krameṇetir yugapan na grahāgrahau*** **|** ViṃśV 105.1-5: *yadi yāvad avicchinnaṃ nīlādikaṅ cakṣuṣo viṣayas tad ekaṃ dravyaṃ kalpyate* […] *arvāgbhāgasya ca grahaṇaṃ parabhāgasya cāgrahaṇaṃ yugapan na syāt | na hi tasyaiva tadānīṃ grahaṇaṅ cāgrahaṇaṅ ca yuktam |*

[398] PSkV 13.5-7: *sambandhibhedāc ca tasyāvaśyaṃ bhedena bhavitavyam abhede vā tatsambandhīnām apy abhinnatvaprasaṅga iti |* I take *saṃsthānātmakaṃ dravyam* (from a previous sentence, see fn. 396) to be the referent of *tasya* here.

[399] Viṃś 15abc: ***ekatve na krameṇetir yugapan na grahāgrahau | vicchinnānekavṛttiś ca*** […] || ViṃśV 107.1: *vicchinnasya cānekasya hastyaśvādikasyaikatra vṛttir na syāt |* ViṃśV$_{RS}$ (150.9) reads *vicchinnāsya.*

where various animals are lined up. If shape was indeed a unified thing, then the entities related to that shape could not be separated spatially. Using Vasubandhu's example, if the square shape of a stable with elephants and horses seen inside it were a unified entity, then all the animals would be where one of them is seen. But we obviously experience these animals as occupying distinct parts of the stable and separated by empty space. A shape, however, that is at the same time occupied and not occupied with animals cannot be 'one'.[400] Shape, therefore, necessarily needs to be construed in terms of parts, and at the end of the day, atomic constituents. Returning to the context of the PSkV, the idea of shaped atoms, however, cannot be accepted. Accordingly, the text concludes, yet again, that long, short, etc. shape is only a designation of colour atoms arranged in a certain way.[401]

Even though the other two examples used in verse 15 of the *Viṃśikā* to argue against the unity of visible objects are not mentioned by Sthiramati in the PSkV, they also fit his arguments against the unity of shape very well. The first of these shows that if something is one, then we could not move through it gradually. In the *vṛtti*, Vasubandhu clarifies that if it were a unified entity, one could not walk on the ground, since with one step one would traverse all of it (such as when walking across a room or field).[402] The other point mentioned by Vasubandhu is that one should see even the tiniest things. For instance, the microscopic aquatic animals should be just as visible as the bigger ones which have the same form (*rūpa*).[403] As we have seen above, long and short (i.e. big and small) shapes are differentiated from each other on the basis of the amount of aggregates of (coloured and/or

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[400] ViṃśV 107.2-4: *yatraiva hy ekan tatraivāparam iti kathan tayor vicchedo yujyate | katham vā tad ekaṃ yat prāptañ ca tābhyāṃ na ca prāptam antarāle tacchūnyagrahaṇāt |*

[401] PSkV 13.7-8: *tasmān nāsty eva dravyataḥ saṃsthānam kiṃ tarhi varṇādiṣv eva tathā tathā vyavasthiteṣu dīrghādi prajñapyate |*

[402] Viṃś 15a: ***ekatve na krameṇetir*** […] **|** ViṃśV 105.2-3: *pṛthivyāṃ krameṇetir na syāt | gamanam ity arthaḥ | sakṛtpādakṣepeṇa sarvasya gatatvāt |* $ViṃśV_{RS}$ (150.5) marks *gamanam ity arthaḥ* as probably not being part of the original text.

[403] Viṃś 15ad: ***ekatve*** […] ***sūkṣmānīkṣā ca no bhavet* ||** ViṃśV 107.4-5: *sūkṣmāṇāñ codakajantūnāṃ sthūlaiḥ samānarūpāṇām anīkṣaṇaṃ na syāt* **|**

shaped) atoms extending into one direction. However, if shape is no longer construed in terms of atoms, but as one unified entity, than there can be no difference in size between various objects we see.

Similar dilemmas arise in the KSP (3) as well, where Vasubandhu raises and rejects three interpretative possibilities regarding the nature of shape. The first is that shape exists all the way down, as even atoms have shapes. The second is that shape belongs only to the level of aggregations of atoms. The third possibility is that shape is a unified (*gcig pu*), distinct and substantially existing entity that pervades the aggregation of (coloured) atoms.[404] The first position, as he argues, entails absurdly that one should perceive shape such as length, in each and every part of an atomic aggregate (since atoms with long shape should be present everywhere in a long object), just as we perceive colour in every part of an atomic aggregate. For instance, I should perceive a round shape when looking at any part of a round, red apple, just as I see red in every bit of it.[405] The second possibility is deemed problematic, because if shape emerges only on the level of atomic aggregates, then it is unclear why one should not construe shape as a special aggregation of colour atoms.[406] In other words, shaped atoms would lose their explanatory power, and hence be a useless hypothesis, as the aggregates of merely coloured atoms could similarly possess any shape. Vasubandhu here refutes the third case on the grounds that, if shape is understood as a unified whole pervading its parts, then we should either perceive (absurdly, again) it in all of its parts, or it cannot be a unified whole after all, as it would consist of parts (which

[404] KSP (3) 184.21-24: *ci de kha dog bzhin du rdul phra rab kyi bye brag tu 'dod dam | 'on te rdul phra rab kyi bye brag 'dus pa zhig yin nam | 'on te kha dog la sogs pa 'dus pa la khyab pa'i rdzas gzhan gcig pu zhig yin |*

[405] KSP (3) 184.25-27: *gal te rdul phra rab kyi bye brag cig yin na ni | des ni 'dus pa'i cha shas re re la ring po nyid dam thung ngu nyid la sogs pa gzung bar gyur te | dper na kha dog bzhin no |*

[406] KSP (3) 184.28-31: *'on te rdul phra rab kyi bye brag 'dus pa zhig yin na ni | de kha dog gi rdul phra rab kyi bye brag 'dus pa las khyad par ci yod de | de dag kha dog 'dus pa'i khyad par las ring po'am | thung ngu la sogs par 'gyur ro |*

together make up the shape).[407] Furthermore, as Vasubandhu claims, such a doctrine would contradict the Vaibhāṣikas' own teaching that the ten sense fields (*āyatana*) are nothing but atomic aggregates, and rather support the doctrine of the followers of Kaṇāda (*gzegs zan pa*)—the founder of the Vaiśeṣika *darśana*—that wholes (*yan lag can*, *avayavin*) are substantially real entities.[408]

Returning to Vasubandhu's categorisation of *rūpa* in the PSk, the third group of visible forms listed is *vijñapti* or *kāyavijñapti*. As we have seen above, it is understood in the AKBh as the various shapes the body takes on due to the mind.[409] A similar definition is given in the PSkV. The text states that *vijñapti* is the shape (*saṃsthāna*) of the body (*kāya*) which arises with the great elements of the body being its support (*āśraya*) and from a mind which has that shape as its cognitive object (*ālambana*). Despite its similarities to the AKBh's definition, Sthiramati's explanation seems to draw more closely on the Vaibhāṣika description presented in KSP (2), which mentions the same points.[410] Sthiramati also follows the KSP's description when explaining that informative form is called *vijñapti* because it makes known the mind that gave rise to it. The KSP, however, is slightly more specific as it clarifies that it makes known the mind that instigated it *to others*. It also appeals to the simile that the changes of one's external motions reveal the intentions in one's heart or mind (*snying*) in the same way as the waves on the surface of

[407] KSP (3) 185.1-5: *'on te kha dog la sogs pa 'dus pa la khyab pa'i rdzas gcig pu zhig yin na ni | de gcig pu nyid yin pa'i phyir dang | khyab pa yin pa'i phyir cha shas re re la gzung bar 'gyur te | thams cad la de yod pa'i phyir ro | yang na de gcig pu ma yin te | cha dang char rnam par gnas pa'i phyir ro |*

[408] KSP (3) 185.5-8: *skye mched bcu ni rdul phra rab bsags pa dag yin no zhes bya ba'i grub pa'i mtha' dang yang 'gal bar 'gyur ro | gzegs zan pa'i gzhung gis yan lag can gyi rdzas su smra ba yang spel bar 'gyur ro |*

[409] In the commentary on AK 1.10a the Vaibhāṣikas claim that those long, etc. shapes that constitute *kāyavijñapti* are mere shape without colour. AKBh 6.18-19 *ad* AK 1.10a: *asti saṃsthānato na varṇataḥ | dīrghādīnāṃ pradeṣaḥ kāyavijñaptisvabhāvaḥ |*

[410] PSkV 13.9-10: *tadālambanacittajaṃ kāyamahābhūtāśrayeṇotpannaṃ kāyasya saṃsthānaṃ* […] | KSP (2) 183.12-15: *re zhig lus kyi rnam par rig byed ni dbyibs yin te | de la dmigs pa'i sems las skyes pa yin no | gang gi dbyibs yin | lus kyi yin no |* The idea that *kāyavijñapti* has the great elements of the body as its support (*āśraya*) is mentioned separately in KSP (2) 183.19-20: *lus kyi 'byung ba chen po la rten nas 'byung ba'i phyir ni lus kyis byas pa'i las zhes bya'o |*

the water reveal the presence of a fish living hidden in a lake.[411] The idea that *kāyavijñapti* arises from a mind which has that shape of the body as its cognitive object highlights that taking on a particular bodily shape is an intentional action, that is the mind has the conscious intention of manifesting that particular shape but not another.[412]

Being defined as shape (*saṃsthāna*), *kāyavijñapti* was subject to similar criticisms to the ones concerning the notion of shape in general. In fact, in the AKBh (as well as the KSP) it is the controversial status of *kāyavijñapti* that gives the broader context of the rejection of shape as a real entity. Sthiramati in the PSkV similarly refuses the Vaibhāṣika view that *kāyavijñapti* is an actual shape on the basis that there is no such distinct entity as shape.[413] To prove that bodily informative form cannot be an ultimately real entity he uses an argument similar to the one we have seen above, when he argued that *kāyavijñapti* can neither be one (*eka*) nor divisible (see PSkV 14.1-4). As an alternative to the Vaibhāṣika definition, Sthiramati proposes that *kāyavijñapti* is the uninterrupted coming into being of the continuum (*saṃtati*) of the body at different places which is caused by an intention (*cetanā*) having that particular bodily shape as its object. Accordingly, he also offers a slightly revised explanation of why *vijñapti* is 'informative' saying that the arising of the body at different places makes known the intention that caused it.[414] Furthermore, Sthiramati adds (PSkV 14.7-8.) that the continuum of the body arises at different places due to the wind element (*vāyudhātu*).[415] Despite its overtones, Sthiramati's definition does

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[411] PSkV 13.10-11: *svasamutthāpakacittavijñapanād vijñaptir ity ucyate* | KSP (2) 184.10-15: *gzhan dag la de 'jug par byed pa'i sems rnam par rig par byed pa'i phyir te | phyi rol bskyod pa'i 'gyur ba dag gis ni | skyes bu'i snying la gnas pa'i bsam pa ston | mtsho na gnas pa'i nya ni rab gab kyang | chu'i rlabs kyi 'gyur ba rnams kyis ston |*

[412] As such, for instance the movement of the lips while someone speaks is not a *kāyavijñapti*, because one has the intention of talking but not of consciously moving the lips in a certain way. The movement of lips is simply necessary to execute the intention to talk. See KSP (2) 184.3-9 and PSkV 13.11-14.1.

[413] PSkV 14.4-5: *tasmān nāsti saṃsthānaṃ nāma dravyāntaram | ataś ca na saṃsthānaṃ vijñaptiḥ |*

[414] PSkV 14.6-10: *tadālambanacetanānimittā kāyasantater nairantaryeṇa deśāntarotpattiḥ* | […] *sā ca kāyasya deśāntarotpattiḥ svanimittaṃ cetanāṃ vijñāpayatīti vijñaptiḥ |*

[415] The view that the body is moved by the wind element is discussed in KSP (11-12 and 46). I was not able to identify the exact source of Sthiramati's definition. This explanation (whether it represents Sthiramati's

not mean that he wants to identify *kāyavijñapti* with movement (*gati*). Such an interpretation, as I mentioned earlier, is raised (presumably by the Sāṃmitīyas or Vātsīputrīyas) both in the KSP and AK(Bh). As the argumentation of the KSP makes it clear, the notion of movement requires that it is the same entity that moves from one locus to another. This idea, however, is rejected on the basis that conditioned entities are momentary, hence what appears at a different location is always a new entity, just as, they argue, it is evident in the case of a shadow or a grass fire.[416] As the AK(Bh) also affirms, we cannot talk about movement in the case of momentarily existing entities, movement is only a false conception one has with regard to their arising at different places.[417] As we have seen earlier, instead of considering it as movement, the Vaibhāṣikas propose that *kāyavijñapti* is just shape. It is worth mentioning that in the AKBh, the Sautrāntikas, like the Vaibhāṣikas, also reject the position that *kāyavijñapti* is movement in favour of the view that it is a shape. However, they make a caveat, and go on to argue, that shape is only a conventional and not ultimately real entity, either.[418] Sthiramati in the PSkV also notes that, being an intentional action, *kāyavijñapti* can be assessed as virtuous or non-virtuous. However, as he warns, properly speaking it is the intention behind it that has these ethical qualities and not *kāyavijñapti* itself (PSkV 14.10-12).

Looking at Vasubandhu's classification of *rūpa* in the PSk, one might find it surprising why Vasubandhu lists *kāyavijñapti* as a separate group of visible objects, as it is subsumed

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own view or of a specific school) seems to combine various positions mentioned in the KSP (see e.g. 2, 6, 11, 46), and see also AKBh 195.20-21.

[416] KSP (10) 188.5-9: *gal te de lta nyid yin na* | *gzhan na snang ba de ci yin* | *de nyid snang ni ma yin no* | […] *yul dang yul du gsar dang gsar* | *rtswa me lta bu'am grib ma lta bu'o* | *grib ma de nyid yul gzhan du snang ba ni ma yin te* |

[417] AK 4.2bcd: ***kāyavijñaptir iṣyate | saṃsthānaṃ na gatir yasmāt saṃskṛtaṃ kṣaṇikaṃ*** […] || AKBh 194.12-14: *tasmān nāsti bhāvānāṃ vināśahetuḥ svayam eva tu bhaṅguratvād vinaśyanta utpannamātrā vinaśyantīti siddha eṣāṃ kṣaṇabhaṅgaḥ kṣaṇabhaṅgāc ca gatyabhāvaḥ* | *gatyabhimānas tu deśāntareṣu nirantarotpattau tṛṇajvālāvat* | See also AKBh 193.3-4.

[418] AKBh 195.18-19 ad AK 4.3c: […] *sautrāntikāḥ kāṃ kāyavijñaptiṃ prajñapayanti* | *saṃsthānam eva hi te kāyavijñaptiṃ prajñapayanti* | *na tu punar dravyataḥ* | The reason why the Sautrāntikas in the AKBh appear to prefer as a conventionally more acceptable interpretation that *kāyavijñapti* is shape might be that while shape is at least susceptible to a momentary analysis, movement is by definition a temporal phenomenon.

even by the Vaibhāṣikas under shape. Relatedly, it is also unclear why, in face of the Sautrāntika critiques, he keeps the category of *saṃsthāna* in general. Vasubandhu's motive for listing these as separate categories is somewhat illuminated by Sthiramati. After commenting on *kāyavijñapti*, he says that Vasubandhu's explication of visible objects in the PSk aims to conform with both the views of the world and the treatises.[419] According to the ordinary worldview, both colour and shape are held to be the objects of the eye. Insofar as visual consciousness arises with the appearance (*nirbhāsa*) of colour having a long, short, etc. shape, ordinary people think that the eye sees not only colour and shape separately, but colour with a certain shape.[420] Similarly, *vijñapti* or *kāyavijñapti* is also held to be the object of the eye since one perceives the continuum of the body to arise at different places.[421] That Vasubandhu mentions not only shape but even *vijñapti* as a separate visible entity can also be accounted for, as Sthiramati points out, by his intent to conform to the various philosophical treatises, including the Vātsīputrīyas' view. Although Vasubandhu, in light of the worldly and philosophical opinions, organises the visible objects into these three categories, according to Sthiramati, it does not mean that he accepts the ultimate existence of any of them. As Sthiramati argues:

> Ultimately, colour, just like shape, is not the sense object of the eye. This is because external objects (*bāhyārtha*) are not the sense objects of consciousnesses, since atoms, just like shape, are non-existent (*aniṣpanna*).[422]

As this passage illustrates, even though the PSk advocates a realist ontology, some of the problems and solutions raised by Sthiramati in the commentary are already informed by the idealist speculations of the *Viṃśikā* and the *Triṃśikā* which he regards as representing

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[419] PSkV 15.9-10: *tasmil lokaśāstraprasiddhir evātrācāryeṇānuvṛtteti gamyate* |

[420] PSkV 15.3-5: *tathā hi saṃsthānaviśiṣṭaś cakṣuṣā varṇo gṛhyate na kevalaṃ saṃsthānaṃ varṇo vā dīrghādisaṃsthānaviśiṣṭavarṇanirbhāsacakṣurvijñānotpatteḥ | ato varṇaḥ saṃsthānaṃ ca cakṣuṣo viṣaya iti loke prasiddhiḥ* |

[421] PSkV 15.3-5: *tathā deśāntarotpattiviśiṣṭakāyasantatigrahaṇād vijñaptir api cakṣuṣo viṣaya iti prasiddhiḥ* |

[422] PSkV 15.7-9: *paramārthatas tu saṃsthānavan na varṇo 'pi cakṣuṣo viṣayaḥ | saṃsthānavat paramāṇor aniṣpannatvād vijñānasya bāhyārthāviṣayatvāt* | The Tibetan translation renders *aniṣpannatvād* as *ma grub pa'i phyir*, i.e. not established or non-existent.

Vasubandhu's ultimate stance on these questions. According to Sthiramati's argument, colour, just like shape, is ultimately non-existent, because atoms, whether coloured or shaped, do not actually exist. Since the existence of atoms is unestablished, external objects conceived as atomic conglomerations cannot be the sense objects of perception. I will return to this issue in more detail when investigating the status of sense objects in Vasubandhu's *vijñaptimātratā* works.

4.2.2.2. Sounds

According to the PSk, sounds are the sense objects of the ear and can have appropriated (*upātta*), unappropriated (*anupātta*) or both (*ubhaya*) kinds of great elements as their cause.[423] As we have seen in the previous chapter, *upātta* is glossed as sentient (*sacetana* or *sajīva*), which suggests that Vasubandhu's distinction concerns whether a sound is generated by material elements that are sentient (insofar as they belong to a sentient being), insentient or include both types.

In contrast to the PSk, the AK(Bh) distinguishes four kinds of sounds, each of which can be pleasant (*manojña*) or unpleasant (*amanojña*). Thus, sound is held to be eightfold by the Vaibhāṣikas.[424] Of the four kinds of sounds, two are identical with those mentioned in the PSk, namely sounds that have 1.) *upātta* and 2.) *anupātta* matter as their cause. The examples mentioned in the AKBh confirm that the classification concerns whether the source of a sound is animate or inanimate, since the first category includes, for instance, speech or the sound of the hands (presumably clapping or snapping), while the second the sound of the wind, trees, rivers, and so on.[425] With regard to *upātta* matter, Yaśomitra clarifies that it refers to those great elements that are not distinct from the present

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[423] PSk 2.13-14: *śabdaḥ katamaḥ | śrotraviṣayaḥ upāttānupāttobhayamahābhūtahetukaḥ |*

[424] AKBh 6.23-25 *ad* AK 1.10b: ***śabdas tv aṣṭavidhaḥ |*** *upāttānupāttamahābhūtahetukaḥ sattvāsattvākhyaś ceti caturvidhaḥ | sa punar manojñāmanojñabhedād aṣṭavidho bhavati |*

[425] AKBh 6.25-26: *tatropāttamahābhūtahetuko yathā hastavākchabdaḥ | anupāttamahābhūtahetuko yathā vāyuvanaspatinadīśabdaḥ |* Sthiramati gives the same examples in PSkV 16.2-4.

(*pratyutpanna*) material elements of the sense faculties (*indriya*). He also adds that the sounds having appropriated great elements as their cause are produced (directly) by the continuum of a sentient being (*sattvasaṃtānaja*).[426] Sthiramati in the PSkV also reflects on the meaning of *upātta*. In his explanation, the appropriated great elements are those that belong to (*paryāpanna*) one's individual existence (*ātmabhāva*). As we have seen earlier, in the TrBh (52.14-15) *ātmabhāva* is identified with *āśraya*, which is explained as the matter of the *indriya*s together with their coarse seats (*adhiṣṭhāna*) and the mental constituents (*nāman*) of a being. In the present context, it is the *indriya*s and their seats that are relevant. Relatedly, Sthiramati adds that *upātta* matter is that which is seized (in the sense that it is kept alive or sentient) by the mind and the mental concomitants as their physical basis (*adhiṣṭhāna*). Other elements that are not appropriated by the mind are considered unappropriated (*anupātta*).[427]

The other two categories of sounds mentioned by the Vaibhāṣikas are ones that 3.) indicate a sentient being (*sattvākhya*) and that 4.) do not indicate a sentient being (*asattvākhya*). These are somewhat elusive as they seem to overlap, at least to a certain extent, with the previous pair. The only sound that belongs to the category of *sattvākhya* is informative vocal sound (*vāgvijñaptiśabda*), which is defined as a vocal sound (*dhvani*) or sound that is speech in its intrinsic nature.[428] Sounds other than informative vocal sound

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[426] AKVy 64.13-15: *pratyutpannānīndriyāvinirbhāgāni bhūtāny upāttāni* | *anyāny anupāttāni* | […] *yathā hastavākchabda iti* | *yadi sattvasantānaja ity abhipretaḥ* | The category excludes, according to Yaśomitra, the speech or other sounds (e.g. clapping or snapping) of emanated beings, see AKVy 64.16ff.

[427] PSkV 15.17: *tatropāttāny ātmabhāvaparyāpannāni cittacaittair adhiṣṭhānabhāvenopagṛhītāni* | *viparyayād anupāttāni* | In the *āśraya* chapter, we looked at other passages as well where Sthiramati explains the term *upātta*. See especially PSkV 131.3-15, where he equates *upātta* with *sacetana* and says that the five material *indriya*s existing in the present as well as those visible forms, smells, tastes and tangibles that are not separate from the faculties are all appropriated.

[428] AKBh 196.3-4 *ad* AK 4.3d: ***vāgvijñaptis tu vāgdhvaniḥ*** **||** *vāksvabhāvo yaḥ śabdaḥ saiva vāgvijñaptiḥ* | According to Yaśomitra, a vocal sound is a sound that is a phone or speech-unit (*varṇa*) in its essence. AKVy 578.23-24: *vāgātmako dhvanir varṇātmakaḥ śabda ity arthaḥ* |

are *asattvākhya*.[429] As we have seen above, speech is also used as an example for sounds that have *upātta* great elements as their cause. Nonetheless, as Yaśomitra specifies, not all sounds that arise from *upātta* matter are *sattvākhya*. For instance, the sound of the hands clapping or snapping that was mentioned alongside speech is *asattvākhya* (just like any sound arising from *anupātta* matter), since it is not a vocal sound or sound that consists of speech units and hence does not indicate a sentient being. Conversely, certain sounds that have *anupātta* great elements as their cause can be *sattvākhya*, for instance the manifest vocal sound of an emanated or magically created (*nirmita*) being, as it, presumably, indicates its creator as a sentient being.[430] At any rate, the PSk's third category of sounds, namely those that have both appropriated (*upātta*) and unappropriated (*anupātta*) great elements (*mahābhūta*) as their cause, is also mentioned in the AK(Bh), which illustrates it with the example of a hand hitting a drum. The AK(Bh), however, remarks that it is a category accepted by 'others', and rejects it on the basis that just as colour atoms cannot be caused by two tetrads of great elements, so too is the case with sounds.[431]

The reason why Vasubandhu does not adopt the categories of *sattvākhya* and *asattvākhya* sounds in the PSk might be because they overlap with the previous pair of categories. But he appears to change his mind about 'mixed' sounds, possibly considering them a conventionally acceptable category. This might be motivated by the fact that it is

[429] AKBh 6.26-27: *sattvākhyo vāgvijñaptiśabdaḥ | asattvākhyo 'nyaḥ |* According to Yaśomitra, the term *sattvākhya* means that it 'indicates a being'. As he says, by reason of a manifest vocal sound one understands 'that this is a being'. AKVy 34.23-24: *sattvam ācaṣṭe sattvākhyaḥ | vāgvijñaptiśabdena hi sattvo 'yam iti vijñāyate |*

[430] AKVy 34.24-27: *taṃ vāgvijñaptiśabdaṃ varjayitvānyaḥ śabdo hastaśabdo 'pi yāvad asattvākhya eva* […] *| anupāttamahābhūtahetuko 'pi nirmitaśabdo vāgvijñaptisvabhāvaḥ sattvākhyaḥ |*

[431] AKBh 6.27-7.1: *upāttānupāttamahābhūtahetuko 'py asti śabda ity apare | tad yathā hastamṛdaṅgasaṃ-yogaja iti | sa tu yathaiko varṇaparamāṇur na bhūtacatuṣkadvayam upādāyeṣyate tathā naivaiṣṭavya iti |* The example of a hand hitting a drum is also mentioned by Sthiramati, see PSkV 16.4-5.

mentioned as a separate group of sounds in the AS.[432] The PSk, therefore, aims to give a more exclusive and exhaustive classification than the AK(Bh).

4.2.2.3. Smells

According to the PSk, smells, which are the sense objects of the nose, are also held to be of three kinds: pleasant (*sugandha*), unpleasant (*durgandha*) and smells that are different from these (*tadanya*), that is, neutral.[433] In the AK(Bh), we find two different ways of classifying smells. The first is the Vaibhāṣikas', and it differentiates between four types of smells. Two of these are identical with the ones mentioned in the PSk: the pleasant (*sugandha*) and the unpleasant smells (*durgandha*). The other two smells are the ones that are even (*sama*) and uneven (*viṣama*).[434] As the AKVy understands them, these expressions mean that a smell is faint (*anutkaṭa*) or strong (*utkaṭa*). Since the last two categories refer to the intensity of smell, as opposed to distinct types of smells, according to Yaśomitra, smell is actually twofold.[435] The other categorisation of smells mentioned in the AK(Bh) is attributed to the *śāstra*, referring, presumably, to Vasumitra's *Prakaraṇapādaśāstra*, a work that is often quoted by Vasubandhu. This categorisation also talks about three kinds of smells: pleasant, unpleasant, and even or neutral (*sama*) smells.[436] This is the position that Vasubandhu seems to follow in the PSk with his threefold distinction. Yaśomitra in the AKVy notes that some Abhidharma scholars interpret the third kind of smell, *samagandha*, as being a subcategory of the other two

[432] The AS lists the same three categories of sounds as the PSk but also adds another five categories that are not mentioned even in the AK(Bh), on these, see Kramer 2013b, 90. As Kramer points out, Vasubandhu and Sthiramati in some cases diverge both from the views of the AS and the AK(Bh).

[433] PSk 3.1-2: *gandhaḥ katamaḥ | ghrāṇaviṣayaḥ sugandho durgandhas tadanyaś ca |*

[434] AKBh 7.5-6 *ad* 1.10c: ***caturvidho gandhaḥ |*** *sugandhadurgandhayoḥ samaviṣamagandhatvāt |* The classification of the PSk differs from that of the AS as well, which lists six categories of smell, see Kramer 2013b, 90-91. On the classification of smells in various Indian religious traditions see McHugh 2007.

[435] AKVy 35.19-20: *anutkaṭotkaṭagandhatvād ity arthaḥ | asmin pakṣe dvividho gandha iṣṭaḥ |*

[436] AKBh 7.6-7: *trividhas tu śāstre | sugandho durgandhaḥ samagandha iti |*

kinds of smells.[437] This remark presumably means that neutral smells are either slightly pleasant or slightly unpleasant, but never completely indifferent, therefore do not constitute a separate category. Sthiramati's PSkV is quite succinct at this point. With the other two kinds of smells being fairly straightforward, he only explains the neutral (*sama*) ones, saying that they are not 'favourable' (i.e. pleasant) or 'unfavourable' (i.e. unpleasant) to the great elements of the *indriya*, namely the faculty of smell.[438] He, however, mentions another three types of smell on the basis of the AS_P (4.5-6), according to which, they can be natural (*sahaja*), like the smell of sandalwood, etc., blended (*sāṃyogika*), like the smell of an incense, or resulting from change (*pāriṇāmika*), such as the smell of a ripe mango.[439]

4.2.2.4. Tastes

Tastes are the sense objects of the tongue, and in the PSk, are said to be of six kinds: sweet (*madhura*), sour (*amla*), salty (*lavaṇa*), pungent (*kaṭuka*), bitter (*tikta*) and astringent (*kaṣāya*).[440] The AK(Bh) similarly deems them to be sixfold, listing the same elements as the PSk. Yaśomitra adds that these six are only the primary types of tastes, in fact there is a great variety of tastes as a result of their combination.[441] Sthiramati's comments are very short here as well. Besides saying that tastes are classified into six types on account of their distinctive natures, like Yaśomitra, he only adds that there is an infinite number of tastes due to the mixing of these six.[442]

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[437] AKVy 36.22: *apare punar vyācakṣate samagandha iti tayor evaikadeśa iti* |

[438] PSkV 16.7: *samagandhas tu tenendriyamahābhūtānāṃ nānugraho nopaghātaḥ* |

[439] PSkV 16.8-10: *sa ca gandhaḥ sahajaḥ sāṃyogikaḥ pāriṇāmikaś ca* […] |

[440] PSk 3.3-4: *rasaḥ katamaḥ | jihvāviṣayaḥ madhuro 'mlo lavaṇaḥ kaṭukas tiktaḥ kaṣāyaś ceti* |

[441] AKBh 7.2-4 *ad* AK 1.10bc: ***rasaḥ ṣoḍhā*** | *madhurāmlalavaṇakaṭukatiktakaṣāyabhedāt* | AKVy 35.16-17: *ṣaṇmūlajātim adhikṛtyaivam uktaṃ | rasaṣaṭkasyānyonyasamparkaviśeṣāt tv atibahuprakārā rasāḥ saṃbhavanti* | The AS puts forward other categories of tastes as well, see Kramer 2013b, 91.

[442] PSkV 16.12-17.1: *prakṛtibhedāt ṣaḍbheda uktaḥ | anyas tu bhedas tatsaṃyogabhedāt anantaś ca bhavati* |

4.2.2.5. Tangible objects

The tangible objects are the *viṣaya* of the body (*kāya*) and, according to the PSk, it includes such phenomena as smoothness (*ślakṣṇatva*), roughness (*karkaśatva*), heaviness (*gurutva*), lightness (*laghutva*), cold (*śīta*), hunger (*jighatsā*) and thirst (*pipāsā*).[443] To be precise, Vasubandhu says that these are only a portion of the tangibles (*spraṣṭavyaikadeśa*), namely the ones that are derivative tangibles. Accordingly, the list he gives here does not include the great elements, which also belong to the category of tangibles.[444] The reason he excludes them from the present discussion and focuses only on the derivative tangibles is that the *mahābhūta*s, as we have seen it in the previous chapter, are treated separately from derived matter in the PSk (1.6-2.2). The AKBh enumerates the same seven derivative tangibles as the PSk. Adding to its list the four *mahābhūta*s, the AKBh therefore distinguishes eleven kinds of tangibles.[445]

The AKBh (7.10-12) provides synonyms or short explanations for each element. The text describes, for instance coldness as 'causing desire for warmth' (*uṣṇābhilāṣakṛt*), or hunger as 'causing desire for food' (*bhojanābhilāṣakṛt*). Sthiramati in the PSkV (18.6-19.2) also briefly elucidates these elements, often in more detail than the AKBh. Since most elements on the list of tangibles are self-evident, I will not dwell on them here. It is, however, worth saying a few words about hunger and thirst. The AKBh says that with regard to hunger, one metaphorically applies the name of the effect (i.e. hunger) to the cause. As the AKVy clarifies, hunger (as well as thirst) is actually a mental (*caitasika*) *dharma.* It is caused by tangible material elements (known by the name 'hunger') inside

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[443] PSk 3.5-7: *spraṣṭavyaikadeśaḥ katamaḥ | kāyasya viṣayo mahābhūtāni sthāpayitvā ślakṣṇatvaṃ karkaśatvaṃ gurutvam laghutvaṃ śītaṃ jighatsā pipāsā ca |*

[444] Sthiramati also confirms that there are two types of tangibles, the great elements and the material forms derived from them. PSkV 17.4-5: *spraṣṭavyaṃ hi dvividham bhūtāni tāni copādāya rūpam |* The status of derivative tangibles, however, is disputed. For the views of various Abhidharma masters on the issue, see Dhammajoti 2015, 220ff.

[445] AKBh 7.8-7.10 *ad* AK 1.10d: ***spṛśyam ekādaśātmakam*** **||** *spraṣṭavyam ekādaśadravyasvabhāvam | catvāri mahābhūtāni ślakṣṇatvaṃ karkaśatvaṃ gurutvaṃ laghutvaṃ śītaṃ jighatsā pipāsā ceti |*

the stomach that are perceived by the bodily sense faculty.[446] These ideas occur in the PSkV (19.2-6) as well. Sthiramati, however, adds that the cause of hunger is the abundance or predominance of the wind element (*vāyudhātubhūyiṣṭha*), while the cause of thirst is the predominance of fire (*tejodhātubhūyiṣṭha*). Sthiramati offers a similar analysis in the case of other tangibles as well. He says that smoothness and the rest of the derivative tangibles can de differentiated from one another based on their support (*āśraya*), that is the predominance of certain great elements constituting them.[447] Sthiramati also comments on the classification of tangible objects in other works, presumably the AS. To account for why Vasubandhu, in his root text, does not mention certain tangibles, such as fainting (*mūrchā*), strength (*bala*) or weakness (*daurbalya*) (which are listed as separate categories in the AS), he claims that these entities are already included in one of the seven categories of derivative tangibles (for instance, strength is not different from roughness and heaviness).[448]

Sthiramati also engages in some philosophical debates concerning the nature of tangible objects and the idea of touch in general (PSkV 17.13-18.6). One of the debates is triggered by the claim that smoothness, etc. are tangible objects because they are touched by the body faculty. According to an opponent, since touching is a reciprocal relationship—insofar as 'whatever is touched by another, it also touches the other'—it would absurdly follow that the body faculty is also touched by the object and hence is both a faculty and an object of touch. Sthiramati in his reply emphasises that no such problem arises, since

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[446] AKVy 35.26-29: *attumicchā jighatsā caitasiko dharmaḥ | tasya kāraṇaṃ | antar udare kāyendriyeṇa yaḥ spṛśyate | sā jighatsā nāmopādāyarūpaṃ |* […] *evaṃ pipāsāpi vaktavyā |* Cf. KSP (23).

[447] PSkV 19.9-10: *ślakṣṇatvādīnāṃ tv āśrayaviśeṣāt parasparato viśeṣaḥ |* As we have seen in the previous chapter, the great elements are the *āśraya* of the *upādāyarūpa*s. For Sthiramati's explanation of each derivative tangible in accordance with the predominance of certain great elements, see PSkV 19.10-20.2. Cf. Dhammajoti 2007a, 254 for the same idea in the *Abhidharmamahāvibhāṣā Śāstra*.

[448] See PSkV 19.6-9. The AS lists another fifteen derivative tangibles, see Kramer 2013b, 91; Engle 2009, 466, n. 101. As Kramer points out, Sthiramati's opinion here is closer to the AKBh than the AS, which he even refutes.

'nothing is touched by anything'.[449] One might be tempted to read this claim as another affirmation of the *vijñaptimātratā* doctrine, but Sthiramati actually refers to the Vaibhāṣika position here. The broader context of this debate in the AK(Bh) is the distinction (we looked at earlier) between *prāptaviṣaya* and *aprāptaviṣaya* faculties, that is, between faculties that need to 'reach' their object to perception to arise and those which do not. The eye, the ear and the mental faculty are *aprāptaviṣaya*, i.e. they do not need to enter into direct contact with their objects, while the body, nose and tongue are considered to be faculties that need to reach their *viṣaya*s.[450]

Sthiramati traces the opponent's criticism back to the problem whether the constitutive atoms of the body sense faculty and the tangible object can actually touch one another or not. He considers two options: 1.) their atoms (*paramāṇu*) touch in their entirety (*sarvātmanā*), or 2.) they touch only in one spot. In the first case, it would follow that all things (*sarvapiṇḍa*) have the size of an atom, while in the second case, the concept of atom is dismissed, because it would have parts.[451] These claims are reminiscent of the argumentation of the Vaibhāṣikas from the AK(Bh), where we find the same two interpretations. The AK(Bh) adds some further remarks that help us understand Sthiramati's argumentation here better. Regarding the first option, the Vaibhāṣikas say that if atoms touched in their entirety, then all entities (*dravya*) would blend or merge into each other. According to Yaśomitra, it means that everything would be at the very same place.[452] The second option is essentially the same as the one in the PSkV. If atoms could touch in one spot, it would mean that they have parts. But atoms are supposed to be

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[449] PSkV 17.13-16: *nanu ca kāyendriyeṇa spṛśyata iti ślakṣṇatvādi spraṣṭavyam ucyate | yac ca yena spṛśyate niyogāt tad api tat spṛśatīti kāyendriye 'pi sparśatvaprasaṅgaḥ | na hi kenacit kiñcit spṛśyate |*

[450] AK 1.43cd: ***cakṣuḥśrotramano 'prāptaviṣayaṃ trayam anyathā*** ||

[451] PSkV 17.16-18: *sarvātmanā sparśane hi sarvapiṇḍāḥ paramāṇupramāṇāḥ syuḥ | pradeśena sparśane paramāṇūnāṃ sāvayavatvaprasaṅgāt paramāṇutvam avahīyate |*

[452] AKBh 32.13-14 *ad* AK 1.43d: *yadi tāvat sarvātmanā spṛśeyur miśrībhaveyur dravyāṇi |* AKVy 121.14: *miśṛībhaveyur ekadeśībhaveyuḥ |*

partless (*niravayava*) entities.[453] The Vaibhāṣikas, therefore, do not accept that atoms can touch each other.[454] As we will see it in the next section of this chapter, most of these arguments from the AK(Bh) are reused, even if for different purposes, in the *Viṃśikā* as well.

In light of this argumentation, then, the problem of the reciprocity of actual touching should not arise. Accordingly, Sthiramati in the PSkV draws the conclusion that when a *viṣaya* and an *indriya* come into being with no interval (*nirantara*) between them, then one can metaphorically say that the *viṣaya* is touched by the faculty (literally 'the thing supported by which consciousness grasps the object'), but not that the *āśraya* of consciousness (i.e. the faculty) is touched by the object.[455] This remark recalls Bhadanta Vasumitra's position in the AK(Bh)—which is approved by Vasubandhu—that atoms do not touch each other, and one merely conceives that they touch when there is no interval (*nirantara*) between them.[456] Denying the possibility of actual touch, however, leads to pressing problems, such as how the colour or shape of a flower can be damaged, if the body cannot actually touch them (or, more precisely, if it cannot touch the great elements serving as the *āśraya* of colour and shape, since colour and shape are, properly speaking, not the sense objects of touch). Sthiramati replies that these issues need further reflection

[453] AKBh 32.14-15: *athaikadeśena sāvayavāḥ prasajyeran | niravayavāś ca paramāṇavaḥ |*

[454] AKBh 32.12-13: *kiṃ punaḥ paramāṇavaḥ spṛśanty anyonyam āhosvin na | na spṛśantīti kāśmīrakāḥ |*

[455] PSkV 17.18-18.2: *tasmād viṣayendriyayor nirantarotpattau yadāśritaṃ vijñānaṃ viṣayam upalabhate tena sa viṣayaḥ spṛṣṭa ity upacaryate na tu viṣayeṇa vijñānāśrayaḥ |*

[456] AKBh 33.3: *na spṛśanti | nirantare tu spṛṣṭasaṃjñeti bhadantaḥ | bhadantamataṃ caiṣṭavyam |* *Nirantaratva* is defined as the state when there is nothing between two entities, see $AKBh_S$ 121.9-10: *tad evaiṣāṃ nirantaratvaṃ yan madhye nāsti kiñcit |* Pradhan reads *niruttaratvaṃ*, see AKBh 32.19. Cf. AKVy 121.20, 122.15. I have to add, though, that the concept of *nirantaratva* is controversial. While our passage from the AKBh (see 33.4) presupposes that there is no empty space between the atoms at all (otherwise they would move into this empty space), the *Nyāyānusāra* argues that there has to be some space between the atoms, since if there were none, it is unclear why they would not touch each other, after all. Therefore, Saṃghabhadra suggests that *nirantaratva* means only that they are close to each other with an area of space between them smaller than the size of an atom. See Sangpo 2012, 450, n. 560-562. For a recent discussion of Vasubandhu's view on contact, see Carpenter—Ngaserin 2020.

but, ending on *vijñaptimātratā* note again, he declares that such a discussion pertain only to the level of worldly conventions, but not of the ultimate truth.[457]

4.2.3. *Ākāra* in the PSk, PSkV and KSP

Before moving on to investigate the objects and forms of perception in the *Triṃśikā* and the *Viṃśikā*, we should look at the occurrences of the term *ākāra* in the PSk, PSkV and the KSP. In his Yogācāra works, Vasubandhu uses the term *ākāra* only sporadically. In the PSk, it occurs just once in relation to the *ālayavijñāna.* There he says that it has both an *ālambana* and an *ākāra,* but they cannot be discerned or determined (*aparicchinna*).[458] Vasubandhu makes the same claim in KSP (36), when an opponent asks him to specify what the *ālambana* and *ākāra* of the *ālayavijñāna* are.[459] Relatedly, in another passage of the KSP (37) we find that the *ālambana* (*dmigs pa*) and *ākāra* (*rnam pa*) of the six *vijñāna*s, in contrast to those of the *ālayavijñāna*, are discernible (*yongs su chad pa*).[460] These remarks do not clarify whether Vasubandhu uses *ākāra* in the sense of object-form (taken on by consciousness) or mode of grasping. However, since they appear in a context similar to that of the AK(Bh)—insofar as both the PSk and KSP passages rely on the principle endorsed in the AKBh that each *vijñāna*, even the *ālayavijñāna*, need to have an *ālambana* and an *ākāra*—these occurrences should be understood along similar lines, that is, as referring to the *ālayavijñāna*'s special mode of grasping. This is corroborated by a related passage in the KSP (29), where Vasubandhu asks his opponent to tell what the *ālambana* and *ākāra* of the mental consciousness would be if it were, as the opponent

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[457] PSkV 18.3-6: *puṣpādiṣu ca varṇādyupaghātas tadāśrayopaghātāt na kāyasaṃsparśād iti | varṇādy-āśryasyāpi kāyenāspṛṣṭasya katham upaghāta iti | cintyam etat | tasmāl lokavyavahāra evātrānusartavyaḥ na paramārthaḥ |*

[458] PSk 16.10: *tat punar aparicchinnālambanākāraṃ* […] | On the ambiguity of the term *aparicchinnākāra* in various Yogācāra texts, see Schmithausen 1987, 389, n. 634, 637, 733.

[459] KSP (36) 199.17-18: *'o na de'i dmigs pa dang | rnam pa ci yin zhe na | dmigs pa dang | rnam pa ma chad pa yin no |*

[460] KSP (37) 200.6-7: *gang zhig rten dang | dmigs pa dang | rnam pa dang | bye brag yongs su chad pa'i phyir rags pa dang |* […] |

presumes, present in the *nirodhasamāpatti*. According to the opponent, its *ālambana* would be cessation (*'gog pa*) and its *ākāra* tranquillity (*zhi ba*), suggesting that *ākāra* should be interpreted in this context as the mode of grasping of consciousness, rather than a specific object-form it might take on.[461]

But if we look at the PSkV's comments on Vasubandhu's claim that the *ālambana* and *ākāra* of the *ālayavijñāna* cannot be discerned, we find that Sthiramati interprets *ākāra* rather as an object-form. Like KSP (37), he says that the *ālambana* and *ākāra* of the *pravṛttivijñāna*s, in contrast to those of the *ālayavijñāna*, are discernible (*paricchinna*). He argues that the *pravṛttivijñāna*s have a discernible *ālambana* because they have visible forms, sounds, etc. as their objects, and have a discernible *ākāra* because they have the *ākāra* of the particular and common characteristics (*svasāmānyalakṣaṇa*), presumably, of those objects.[462] Based on the contrast he wants to draw with the *ālayavijñāna*, Sthiramati most likely understands *ākāra* as an object-form taken on by the consciousness in the case of the store consciousness, too. However, he refrains from going into details in this regard. Later he makes the comment, though, that the *ālambana* and *ākāra* of the *ālayavijñāna* are said to be indiscernible because the objects of the *ālayavijñāna* are so subtle that they are difficult to understand even for the wise ones.[463] While, strictly speaking, he talks only about the *ālambana*, his conclusion (*ato 'paricchinnālambanākāram ity ucyate*) suggests that the *ākāra* is similarly subtle. Due to the subtlety of the objects of the *ālayavijñāna* (and, as a matter of fact, the subliminal functioning of the *ālayavijñāna* itself), we cannot discern what equally subtle object-form (i.e. common and individual characteristics of the

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[461] KSP (29) 196.26-30: *gal te 'gog pa'i snyoms pa'i zhugs pa rnams la yid kyi rnam par shes pa de yod na de'i dmigs pa dang rnam pa ci zhig yin | gal te 'gog pa la dmigs pa dang | zhi ba'i rnam pa zhig yin no zhe na* | In light of its possible connection to the third sense of *ākāra* discussed in the context of the AK(Bh), it is noteworthy that tranquillity is one of the sixteen *ākāra*s listed in the AKBh 343.17-18.

[462] PSkV 92.7-8: *pravṛttivijñānaṃ hi rūpaśabdādyālambanatvāt svasāmānyalakṣaṇākāratvāc ca paricchinnālambanaṃ paricchinnākāraṃ ca |*

[463] PSkV 92.13-15: *etac cālambanaṃ sūkṣmatvāl lokapaṇḍitair api duravadhāram ity ato 'paricchinnālambanākāram ity ucyate na punar anālambanam eva |*

object) the *ālayavijñāna* takes on either. As scholars such as Schmithausen 1987 (410, n. 733, 743) and Kramer 2014 (322, n. 39) point out, Sthiramati's interpretation of *aparicchinna* here differs from that of Vasubandhu, who holds the *ālambana* and *ākāra* of the *ālayavijñāna* to be not determinable *at all*. While, accordingly, Vasubandhu does not make any further claims about them in the KSP and the PSk, he eventually identifies, at least, the *ālambana* of the *ālayavijñāna* in Triṃś 3ab. Therefore, Sthiramati's interpretation that the objects of the store consciousness are merely difficult to discern might be motivated by the *Triṃśikā* (or other earlier Yogācāra works which, unlike the KSP and PSk, also identify its objects).

While Vasubandhu does not explicitly use the term *ākāra* elsewhere in the PSk, Sthiramati regards one of the proofs Vasubandhu gives for the existence of the *ālayavijñāna* as relevant to it. We already looked at this passage (PSk 17.2-4) briefly from a different perspective in the previous chapter. Vasubandhu says that the existence of the *ālayavijñāna* is also substantiated by the fact that the *pravṛttivijñāna*s arise in different modes (*prakārāntara*) depending on their object conditions (*ālambanapratyaya*). When explaining the expression *prakārāntara,* Sthiramati glosses *prakāra* as *ākāra*. This association is not surprising, since, as we have seen when discussing the concept in the AK(Bh), Vasubandhu in chapter seven (AKBh 401.21) defines *ākāra* as the mode (*prakāra*) in which the *citta* and the *caitta*s grasp their objects. According to Sthiramati, when consciousness has the *ākāra* of a visible form, it is a different mode (*prakārāntara*) than when it has the *ākāra* of a sound. Specifying it more, he adds that having the *ākāra* of yellow is similarly different from the mode of having the *ākāra* of blue.[464] The former remark shows that according to Sthiramati, *ākāra* can refer to the various sensory modalities in which perception arises. The *vijñāna*s have their own modes of operation

[464] PSkV 99.12-13: *rūpādyākārāc chabdādyākāraḥ prakārāntaram | pītādyākārān nīlādyākāraḥ prakārāntaram |*

depending on whether they perceive visible objects or sounds. However, the examples of yellow or blue *ākāra* highlight that, just like in the previous passage, he understands *ākāra*, first of all, in the sense of an object-form. This is corroborated by his remark that the various *ākāra*s "could be enumerated at length", suggesting that the range of object-forms *vijñāna*s can take on is as diverse as the objects themselves.[465] What seems to connect the two pair of examples is that *ākāra* in both cases refers to the phenomenal qualities of perceiving objects, including the modality and the particular content with which it appears in consciousness. Moreover, Sthiramati's remarks in this passage are seemingly connected to the ones he makes in the previous passage (PSkV 92.7-8) insofar as perception having the phenomenal qualities of a sound or a visible form can be understood as referring to the common or generic characteristics of the objects grasped by the *pravṛttivijñāna*s, while the phenomenal qualities of blue and yellow to their particular characteristics. It is also worth mentioning that if Sthiramati's identification of *prakāra* with *ākāra* here is informed by Vasubandhu's definition of *ākāra* (from AKBh 401.21) as the mode (*prakāra*) in which the *ālambana* is grasped by the consciousness and the mental concomitants, then he probably did not see a sharp distinction, either, between *ākāra* being a mode of grasping or an object-form.

[465] PSkV 99.14: *evaṃ sarvatra vistareṇa vācyam* | Noteworthy in this context is another passage of the PSkV (89.10-12) where Sthiramati similarly seems to take *ākāra* as an object-form. When explaining why the six *pravṛttivijñāna*s are variegated (*citra*), he suggests that it is because the perceptions of objects have multiple forms (*anekākāra*) on account of their objects. PSkV 89.10-12: *tatra pravṛttivijñānasyālambanaprati-vijñaptisvarūpatvād ālambanasya ca prativijñānam anekākāratvāc cakṣurādivijñānaṃ citram utpadyate* | Sthiramati's claim probably draws on KSP (31). The passage distinguishes two forms of mind, the latter of which is described as variegated (*sna tshogs pa*), because it has various objects (*dmigs pa*), forms (*rnam pa*) and characteristics (*bye brag*). KSP (31) 197.20-22: *sems ni rnam pa gnyis te* | […] *gnyis pa ni de'i dmigs pa dang* | *rnam pa dang* | *bye brag tha dad pa dag gis sna tshogs pa yin no* |

4.3. The *ālambana* and *ākāra* of perception in the context of the *vijñaptimātratā* teaching

4.3.1. The usage of object-terms and *ākāra* in Vasubandhu's *vijñaptimātratā* work

Just like in the previous sections of this chapter, it is worth starting our discussion of the objects and *ākāra* of perception in Vasubandhu's *vijñaptimātratā* works with a brief terminological overview so that we see whether he uses the same concepts in a similar way to his previous works. In the *Triṃśikā*, the term *viṣaya* appears twice, but in the same context. As we have seen earlier, Vasubandhu differentiates three layers of consciousness in the text, calling one of them the 'perception of sense objects' (*viṣaya vijñapti*). He introduces this notion in verse 2ab and returns to it in verse 8, where he refers to it by the closely related term 'apprehension of sense objects' (*viṣaya upalabdhi*). These occurrences recall Vasubandhu's definition of *vijñānaskandha* as *prativijñapti* in the AKBh, where he similarly considers *vijñapti* and *upalabdhi* to be interchangeable and claims that cognition can be directed at various *viṣaya*s.[466] Here, again, Vasubandhu uses *vijñapti* in combination with *viṣaya* and not *ālambana* (unlike in e.g. PSk 16.7), but, as we have seen earlier, it does not make a significant difference in this context. The term *ālambana* also appears twice in the text. First in the explanation of the [*kliṣṭa*]*manas* in verse 5, where Vasubandhu, in accordance with the fourfold model, ascribes an *āśraya* and an *ālambana* to it. Both of these are identified as the *ālayavijñāna*.[467] For the second time it is used in verse 28, where Vasubandhu argues that one really abides in the state of consciousness-only when consciousness (shortened as *jñāna* here) no longer grasps any cognitive object (*ālambana*).[468] In this passage, to which I will return later to see how, if at all, it might be reconciled with the fourfold framework, there is a particular emphasis on the structure of

[466] Triṃś 2ab: ***vipāko mananākhyaś ca vijñaptir viṣayasya ca*** | Triṃś 8bc: ***tṛtīyaḥ ṣaḍvidhasya yā*** | ***viṣayasyopalabdhiḥ sā*** […] | AKBh 11.7: *viṣayaṃ viṣayaṃ prati vijñaptir upalabdhir vijñānaskandha ity ucyate* |

[467] Triṃś 5bcd: ***tad āśritya pravartate*** | ***tadālambaṃ manonāma vijñānam mananātmakam*** ||

[468] Triṃś 28: ***yadā tv ālambanaṃ jñānaṃ naivopalabhate tadā*** | ***sthitaṃ vijñaptimātratve grāhyābhāve tadagrahāt*** ||

consciousness, more precisely its dual and intentional appearance, therefore Vasubandhu adheres to the more proper *ālambana* terminology. In conformity with the terminological distinctions laid out in the AKBh, Vasubandhu, again, uses *ālambana* only in relation to consciousnesses, but not the sense faculties.

Looking at these object-terms in the *Viṃśikā*(*vṛtti*), two features of the text are conspicuous. One is that of the two terms, *viṣaya* and *ālambana*, Vasubandhu only uses *viṣaya*. Its occurrences follow a typical pattern insofar as it is used in the sense of an external *āyatana* on which a specific *indriya* or cognition can exercise its function. Relatedly, it is also used by Vasubandhu when talking about the nature (e.g. putative materiality) of the external *āyatana*s (mainly between verses 11-15 of the text).[469] It is also used in the more general sense of being a field of activity or domain, such as when Vasubandhu says that the inexpressible essence of the *dharma*s is the *viṣaya* of the Buddhas (see ViṃśV 79.1-3, but also ViṃśV 145.1-2).[470]

With regard to its object-terms, the other notable feature of the *Viṃśikā*(*vṛtti*) is that, in contrast to the *Triṃśikā* which does not use the term at all, *artha* appears in the sense of an object quite frequently. In the dialectic of the text, it typically appears in the negative context of denying its existence (cf. Dhammajoti 2007a, 41). Accordingly, *artha* is sometimes even characterised as unreal or non-existent (*abhūta*, *asat*).[471] In the *Viṃśikā*, the term seems to have the same connotations as *viṣaya*, since it is used to refer to material (in the case of the five sense faculties) as well as mental objects (in the case of the

[469] The term occurs quite frequently in the text, so I only quote some illustrative passages here. See e.g. Viṃś 11: ***na tad ekaṃ na cānekaṃ viṣayaḥ paramāṇuśaḥ | na ca te saṃhatā yasmāt paramāṇur na sidhyati*** || or ViṃśV 101.3-4: *yat tac cakṣurādīnāṃ viṣayo nīlapītādikam iṣyate kiṃ tad ekaṃ dravyam atha vā tad anekam iti* | or ViṃśV 109.2-3: *tasyāsiddhau rūpādīnāṃ cakṣurādiviṣayatvam asiddham iti siddhaṃ vijñaptimātram bhavatīti* | ViṃśV$_{RS}$ (151.4) reads *cakṣurādiviṣayatvam na sidhyatīti.* But see also e.g. ViṃśV 81.3, ViṃśV 85.1-7, ViṃśV 101.2, ViṃśV 105.1-2, ViṃśV 117.2-3.

[470] Vasubandhu also uses the term *gocara* in the same sense, see verses 21d and 22d and their commentaries.

[471] See e.g. ViṃśV 123.3-4: *evaṃ vitathavikalpābhyāsavāsanānidrayā prasupto lokaḥ svapna ivābhūtam artham paśyann* […] **|** or Viṃś$_{RS}$ 1ab: ***vijñaptimātram evedam asadarthāvabhāsanāt*** **|**

manas).[472] Hence it does not have a stronger connotation of materiality than *viṣaya*. That the text exclusively uses the terms *viṣaya* and *artha*, as opposed to *ālambana*, is in line with the primary purpose of the work of rejecting the existence of mind-independent objects in favour of the *vijñaptimātratā* doctrine.

It is important to make a few observations concerning Sthiramati's application of the various object-terms in the TrBh as well. Sthiramati also uses the term *artha* quite frequently in his commentary, typically along the same lines as the *Viṃśikā*. He tends to emphasise that the *artha* is something 'external' (*bāhya*).[473] As for *viṣaya* and *ālambana*, Sthiramati generally does not diverge from the pattern seen in Vasubandhu's works. There are, however, two instances that are worth highlighting here. The first is that, just like in the PSkV (29.10), he equates *viṣaya* and *ālambana* when discussing *saṃjñā*.[474] The second is that in his commentary on verse 17, he seemingly claims that there is no *ālambana* in dreams and other illusory states, which leads to some tensions. To illustrate the Yogācāra position that the objects of perception (and, as such, the three kinds of transformation of consciousness on which these are superimposed) are only conceptual constructions (*vikalpa*), Sthiramati appeals to the popular Yogācāra metaphor of dreams and other illusory states, in which, as he says, consciousness comes into being even without an existing *ālambana*. He adds that if the arising of consciousness was bound to an *ālambana*, then there would be no consciousness in these illusory states, since there is no object

[472] The only place where it is used in the sense of a mental object is when Vasubandhu explains that even if cognition has another cognition as its object (*artha*) (for instance when remembering), then the state of *vijñaptimātratā* is not established. See ViṃśV 79.6-7: *itarathā hi vijñapter api vijñaptyantaram arthaḥ syād iti vijñaptimātratvan na sidhyetārthavatītvād vijñaptīnāṃ* | In other instances (where the term is used in the sense of an object) *artha* refers to material objects. A paradigmatic case is when Vasubandhu claims that in dreams one sees things restricted to a certain place and time even without an actual object (*artha*). ViṃśV 189.7-9: *svapne vināpy arthena kvacid eva deśe kiñcid grāmārāmastrīpuruṣādikaṃ dṛśyate na sarvatra tatraiva ca deśe kadācid dṛśyate na sarvakālam* | In another important passage, Vasubandhu clarifies that cognition arises with the appearance (*ābhāsa*) of an object (*artha*) even without it actually existing, see ViṃśV 119.4-5: *vināpy arthena yathārthābhāsā cakṣurvijñānādikā vijñaptir utpadyate tathoktaṃ* ||

[473] See e.g. TrBh 42.19-20: *katham etad gamyate vinā bāhyenārthena vijñānam evārthākāram utpadyata iti* | or TrBh 44.20-21: *evaṃ bāhyārthābhāvād vijñānam evārthākāram utpadyate svapnavijñānavad ity abhyupeyam* | See also TrBh 42.20-23, 44.3-4, 110.1-3, etc.

[474] TrBh 56.26: *saṃjñā viṣayanimittodgrahaṇam* | *viṣaya ālambanam* |

(*artha*).[475] This latter claim seems to be problematic for two reasons. Firstly, it suggests that the terms *ālambana* and *artha* are simply interchangeable. Secondly, and more importantly, it goes against Sthiramati's earlier remarks that all instances of consciousness (including dream consciousness) have an *ālambana*.[476] A possible way to solve this conundrum is to understand Sthiramati's claim as referring to a real (*sat*), i.e. mind-independent or material *ālambana*, and not to any *ālambana* as such. This would allow for the reading that these states also have an *ālambana*, however, it is an unreal (*asat*), i.e. mind-dependent, *ālambana*.[477]

The term *ākāra* is not used explicitly either in the *Viṃśikā* or the *Triṃśikā*. However, there are implicit references to it in the *Triṃśikā* in connection with the *ālayavijñāna* and the [*kliṣṭa*]*manas*. Starting with the latter, Vasubandhu, as we have seen before, identifies both the *ālambana* and *āśraya* of the [*kliṣṭa*]*manas*, but does not tell either in the PSk or the *Triṃśikā* what its *ākāra* is. Sthiramati also does not elaborate on the *ākāra* of the [*kliṣṭa*]*manas* in the TrBh. Vasubandhu only says that it has the nature of reflection (*manana*).[478] In the VinSg section of the YBh, a similar term *manyanā*, i.e. 'conceiving', is used as a description of the *ākāra* of the [*kliṣṭa*]*manas* (cf. Schmithausen, 1987, 149-150; Kellner 2014, 286). Presumably Vasubandhu also considers *manana* as the mode of grasping or functioning (*ākāra*) of the [*kliṣṭa*]*manas*.[479]

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[475] TrBh 108.16-18: *vijñānañ ca māyāgandharvanagarasvapnatimirādāv asaty apy ālambane jāyate | yadi ca vijñānasyālambanapratibaddha utpādaḥ syād evaṃ sati māyādiṣv arthābhāvān na vijñānam utpadyeta |*

[476] As Triṃś 16 clarifies, it is the *manovijñāna* that operates in the state of dreaming, and is missing only in the state of unconscious (*acittaka*) deep sleep (*gāḍhamiddha*), see TrBh 106.11-12. Cf. Cox (1988, 52) who mentions that according to the *Nyāyānusāra*, the mental consciousness is operative during sleep.

[477] The concept of *asadālambana* was put forward by the Dārṣṭāntika-Sautrāntikas to address the problem of non-existent cognitive objects while rejecting their tri-temporal existence and keeping the fourfold model. According to the Sautrāntikas, we perceive non-existent objects in illusions and hallucinations, as well as when (for instance, in remembering or anticipating things) we perceive past or future (real or mind-independent) objects which, despite being perceived in the present, no longer or not yet exists. The latter interpretation of *asadālambana* is, of course, incompatible with reading Sthiramati as an idealist. On the non-existent objects of consciousness in an Abhidharmic context, see Cox 1988, Gold 2015 48-51.

[478] Triṃś 5bcd: ***tad āśritya pravartate | tadālambaṃ manonāma vijñānaṃ mananātmakam ||***

[479] Kellner (2014, 286) takes *manyanā* in the VinSg as a mode-*ākāra*. See also Schmithausen (1987, 444, n. 944-945).

Concerning the *ālayavijñāna*, Vasubandhu in *Triṃśikā* verse 3 says that it has unconscious or not fully recognizable (*asaṃviditaka*) perceptions of what is appropriated (or the act of appropriation, *upādi* or *upādāna*) and of the surrounding world (*bhājanaloka*).[480] Sthiramati reads *asaṃviditaka* as expressing a similar idea to *aparicchinna*, the term Vasubandhu uses to describe the *ālambana* and *ākāra* of the store consciousness in the PSk.[481] An important difference between the two texts is that while in the PSk, by *aparicchinna* Vasubandhu seemingly means that the objects and *ākāra* of the *ālayavijñāna* cannot be defined at all, he does define, at least, its objects in the *Triṃśikā*. It might explain why he changes his terminology from *aparicchinna* to *asaṃviditaka*. However, this is quite speculative, since the two terms seem to have very similar connotations (see Schmithausen 1987, 93). Since in the PSk *aparicchinna* characterises both the *ālambana* and *ākāra* of the *ālayavijñāna*, we can assume that *asaṃviditaka* is intended as a description of its *ākāra* in the *Triṃśikā* as well. At least, this is how it is understood by Sthiramati (see previous footnote).

It should be noted that Sthiramati does not repeat his comments from the PSkV (92.7-8) which suggested that the *ākāra* of the *ālayavijñāna* should be understood as an object-form rather than a mode of grasping. Sthiramati's explanations regarding the *ākāra* of the store consciousness remain rather limited in this section of the TrBh, which is not surprising considering that Vasubandhu himself does not explicitly talk about the *ākāra* of the store consciousness. However, based on other parallels between his explanation in the PSkV and the TrBh, he probably construes the *ākāra* of the *ālayavijñāna* in the same way, i.e. as an object-form. It is also worth reiterating that this section of Sthiramati's commentary is quite problematic since he sometimes talks about *upādi* as an act of the *ālayavijñāna*, as

[480] Triṃś 3ab: ***asaṃviditakopādisthānavijñaptikaṅ ca tat*** | We have already looked at the difficulties of interpreting the compound *upādisthānavijñaptika* in chapter 3.3.

[481] TrBh 54.1-2: […] *sāpy aparicchinnālambanākārapravṛttatvād asaṃviditety ucyate* |

opposed to an object cognised by it (see Schmithausen 1987, 104-106). Accordingly, Sthiramati strictly speaking states only in relation to the *ālayavijñāna*'s cognition of the surrounding world, but not *upādi*, that its *ākāra* (just like the object itself) is difficult to discern.[482] Nonetheless, Sthiramati uses the term *ākāra* quite frequently in the TrBh. Focusing on the instances most relevant to perception, we find an important cluster of its occurrences in his commentary on the first verse of the *Triṃśikā* (see TrBh 42.19-46.2), where *ākāra* appears to have two meanings: the object-form taken on by consciousness, and the form or shape of the external object itself. The context, as we will see, is Sthiramati's attempt to point out the dissimilarity between the form of the putative external object (construed in terms of atoms or atomic aggregates) and the way in which it appears to us in consciousness. I will analyse this section in detail in 4.3.3.

When it comes to the *Viṃśikā*, it is worthwhile to note that while *ākāra* is not used in the text at all, the related terms *ābhāsa* or *pratibhāsa* (meaning 'appearance') frequently occur in the sense of an object-form of perception. The idea that consciousness *appears as* or *has the appearance of* an object even though there is no such actual object, occurs numerous times in the descriptions of the Yogācāra doctrine put forward either by Vasubandhu or his imaginary opponent.[483] We will see various examples of the application of these terms when looking at Vasubandhu's criticism of material objects. The term *ābhāsa* and its variants (*nirbhāsa* in particular) also occasionally appear in the TrBh. Just like in the *Viṃśikā*, it is typically used in the sense of consciousness having the appearance of an object. For instance, in a noteworthy passage where Sthiramati comments on the layer of consciousness called *viṣaya vijñapti*, he says that the perception of objects is of six

[482] TrBh 52.2-3: *adhyātmam upādānavijñaptito bahirdhāparicchinnākārabhājanavijñaptitaś ca* | TrBh 54.1-2: *sthānavijñaptir bhājanalokasaṃniveśavijñaptiḥ | sāpy aparicchinnālambanākārapravṛttatvād asaṃvidi-tety ucyate* | The expression *sāpy* ('that also') in the latter claim, however, suggests that the same is true of *upādi* understood as an object of cognition.

[483] See e.g. ViṃśV 61.1-3: *yadi vijñānam eva rūpādipratibhāsaṃ syān na rūpādiko 'rthas tadā rūpādyāyata-nāstitvaṃ bhagavatā noktaṃ syāt* | See also Viṃś_{RS} 1ab, Viṃś 9ab, ViṃśV 69.1-7, ViṃśV 73.4-5, Viṃś 17ab, ViṃśV 119.4-5, etc.

kinds, because each *vijñāna* has the appearance of an object, such as *rūpa*, etc.[484] Here he already adapted his definition to the idealist context of the text insofar as he differentiates between consciousnesses not on account of the kinds of actual object they can be directed at, but rather the appearances of such objects.[485]

4.3.2. Vasubandhu's critique of mind-independent sense objects

As we have seen so far, although the exact categorisation of *viṣaya*s and the reality of some of the entities subsumed under these categories was a controversial issue among the Ābhidharmikas, they did not call into question the existence of external *āyatana*s in general. There is no indication in the AKBh, PSk or the KSP that Vasubandhu would have rejected their existence, either. Nonetheless, in the argumentation of these sources, we have seen a clear tendency to reduce the number of sense objects accepted as real entities. This is particularly evident in the case of visible objects, which received greater attention in the Abhidharmic debates than any other sense object.[486] As we have seen, motion as a separate category of *rūpa* was rejected both by the Vaibhāṣikas and the Sautrāntikas. Of the two remaining types of visible objects accepted by the Vaibhāṣikas, the Sautrāntikas, in turn, denied the ultimate existence of shape, maintaining that we only perceive a certain arrangement of coloured atoms as shape.

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[484] TrBh 50.7-8: *rūpādiviṣayapratyavabhāsatvāc cakṣurādivijñānaṃ ṣaṭprakāram api viṣayavijñaptiḥ* | For passages where *ābhāsa* or *nirbhāsa* are used in the sense of an object-form of consciousness see TrBh 42.20-22, 44.15-16. We will look at most of these sections in 4.3.3. Cf. 40.13-42.2, where *nirbhāsa* is used in connection with *vikalpa* (i.e. conceptual construction).

[485] Commenting on verse 8, Sthiramati more generically defines it as the grasping of an object (*viṣaya*) which has the nature of being a visible form, sound etc. See TrBh 70.6-8: *ṣaḍvidhasyeti ṣaṭprakārasya rūpaśabda-gandharasaspraṣṭavyadharmātmakasya viṣayasya yā upalabdhir grahaṇaṃ pratipattir ity arthaḥ* |

[486] The status of derivative tangibles, which was a substantial point of disagreement among the Ābhidharmikas, should also be mentioned here. As we have seen earlier (fn. 127), some Ābhidharmikas already expressed a stronger form of reductionism, for instance Bhadanta Buddhadeva proposed that secondary matter is nothing else than the specific state of the *mahābhūta*s. He is a particularly interesting case from this respect, since, as we will see in chapter 5, Buddhadeva is reductionist also with regard to the reality of all the *caitta*s. While this early reductionist tendency could have influenced Vasubandhu's Yogācāra works (cf. Buswell 1997, 572) it is important to note that Buddhadeva still accepted the real existence of *mahābhūta*s (i.e. the external *āyatana*s). It is also worth emphasising that, in the AKBh, Vasubandhu does not approve Buddhadeva's position on secondary matter or the *caitta*s. On Buddhadeva's philosophical views, see Buswell 1997 and Williams 1976.

In light of this tendency, Sthiramati's conclusion in the PSkV that colour is just as unreal as shape is perhaps not that unexpected. When discussing this remark, I mentioned that his criticism is informed by the idealist speculations, first of all, of the *Viṃśikā*. In what follows, I will now look at briefly those passages (especially verses 11-15) of the text that put forward these ideas. These verses have been discussed quite often in the scholarly literature, with most scholars concentrating on the question whether they support an ontological idealist interpretation of the *Viṃśikā*, or are compatible with a merely epistemological position.[487] When analysing these passages, I do not wish to engage directly with the idealism-debate. I am rather interested in what these verses tell us about Vasubandhu's stance on the nature of sense objects and how he reuses his earlier arguments to further reduce their number, reaching the conclusion that there are no mind-independent objects of perception at all.

We have already seen the broader context of these passages while looking at Vasubandhu's views on the *indriya*s. But it is worth recalling here that in the introduction of verse 8, the opponent insists that we have a good non-philosophical reason to reject Vasubandhu's main thesis that there are no objects (*artha*) such as *rūpa* etc., but it is cognition itself that appears that way, since the Buddha himself taught the real existence of the *āyatana*s in the scriptures (*āgama*).[488] Thus, according to his opponent, Vasubandhu's theory is in conflict with the teaching of the Buddha. In his answer, Vasubandhu points out that even though the Buddha indeed talked about the existence of the *āyatana*s, this is only

[487] For a detailed analysis of verses 11-15, see e.g. Kapstein 2001, Tola and Dragonetti (2004, 94-110) and Siderits (2007, 159-167). According to Kapstein (2001, 36-37), Vasubandhu uses a *modus tollens* argument in these verses to show that the atomic theory is necessary for maintaining that there are mind-independent, external objects, but atomism is false. Finnigan (2017, 181) also takes these verses as a proof of the impossibility of external objects. Kellner and Taber 2014 do not rely on these verses for proving the ontological idealist stance of the *Viṃśikā*. However, they propose as a hypothesis that an ontological idealist interpretation of these verses makes better sense of the overall intention and argumentative structure of the text. By contrast, Oetke (1992) argues that these verses merely prove that mind-independent objects cannot be the (direct) objects of perception, but not that they do not exist.

[488] ViṃśV 61.1-3: *āgamaḥ kāraṇaṃ | yadi vijñānam eva rūpādipratibhāsaṃ syān na rūpādiko 'rthas tadā rūpādyāyatanāstitvaṃ bhagavatā noktaṃ syāt |*

one of the occasions when he adapted his teaching to the intellectual level of his disciples. He only taught their existence with a special intention, and not because he actually believed they exist.[489] By dividing up our experiences into six internal and six external spheres of perception the Buddha wanted to introduce the disciples to the teaching of the insubstantiality of the person (*pudgalanairātmya*), that there is no distinct seer or thinker, etc. underlying our various perceptual and mental processes.[490] The Buddha taught the existence of the twelve sense fields only to those practitioners who cannot comprehend the ultimate Yogācāra teaching, which reveals not only the insubstantiality of the person but of all *dharma*s (*dharmanairātmya*). With the help of this teaching, one realises that it is only consciousness that arises with the appearance of *rūpa*, and there is no *dharma* whatsoever that could be characterised as visible form, etc.[491] Although the refutation of the ultimate existence of both the internal and the external *āyatana*s appears in these passages, there is a bigger emphasis on the critique of the sense objects, as the Ābhidharmikas were already familiar with the insubstantiality of the self, but not with the insubstantiality of the *dharma*s constituting the external world.

To prove that the objects (*viṣaya*) of visual, etc. cognitions do not really exist, Vasubandhu in verses 11-15 of the *Viṃśikā* raises and rejects various theories regarding their purported material nature. In verse 11, he mentions three ways in which the external objects may exist, all of which he deems problematic. He says that the *rūpa*, etc. *āyatana* as a sense object (*viṣaya*) cannot be 1.) unified (*eka*), 2.) atomically plural, or 3.) an

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[489] Viṃś 8abc: ***rūpādyāyatanāstitvaṃ tadvineyajanam prati | abhiprāyavaśād uktam*** […] || See also ViṃśV 65.2-3.

[490] ViṃśV 71.4-6: *dvayaṣaṭkābhyāṃ vijñānaṣaṭkaṃ pravarttate na tu kaścid eko draṣṭāsti na yāvan mantety evaṃ viditvā ye pudgalanairātmyadeśanāvineyās te pudgalanairātmyaṃ pravišanti* || ViṃśV$_{RS}$ (144.2-3) reads *dvayaṣaṭkād vijñānaṣaṭkaṃ*.

[491] ViṃśV 73.3-5: *anyatheti vijñaptimātradeśanā | kathaṃ dharmmanairātmyapraveśaḥ | vijñaptimātram idaṃ rūpādidharmmapratibhāsam utpadyate na tu rūpādilakṣaṇo dharmmaḥ kaścid astīti viditvā* | ViṃśV$_{RS}$ (144.9) reads *kaścid apy astīti*.

aggregate of these atoms.[492] The three options Vasubandhu mentions here recall those of the KSP (3), but the arguments he uses to criticise them are different. As for the overall purpose of these arguments in the two works, it is worth noting that while the KSP's discussion was limited to demonstrating that shape cannot be an ultimately real entity, in the *Viṃśikā* Vasubandhu targets all external *āyatana*s, using visual objects, including colour as well as shape, as his preferred example.

Of the three alternatives mentioned in the *Viṃśikā*, the first option—that the object is 'unified' or is 'one whole'—shows the clearest parallel with the KSP. As we remember, the KSP associated this doctrine with the followers of Kaṇāda, i.e. the Vaiśeṣika tradition. This association is confirmed in the *Viṃśikāvṛtti* as well, which says that the Vaiśeṣikas imagine the objects of the eye to be wholes (*avayavin*),[493] which, as Vasubandhu's ensuing criticism suggests, despite having parts were considered entities distinct from their parts (*avayava*). According to the *Viṃśikāvṛtti*, such a theory is unacceptable, because one cannot perceive or apprehend anywhere a whole that is different from its parts.[494] Vasubandhu does not offer further arguments here to reject this view. While he returns to the option that the object is one (*eka*) in verse 15, there he seems to have in mind a somewhat different theory which does not specify that 'unified' objects have parts.

One might wonder whether Vasubandhu's arguments in the KSP and the *Viṃśikā* against unified objects or wholes have their antecedents in the AK(Bh). Indeed, Vasubandhu's criticisms can be traced back to the commentary on AK 3.100ab. As the AKBh there clarifies, in contrast to the Vaiśeṣika view that a straw mat or a piece of cloth is an entity different from the blades of grass or threads it is woven from, the 'straw mat'

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[492] Viṃś 11abc: ***na tad ekaṃ na cānekaṃ viṣayaḥ paramāṇuśaḥ*** | ***na ca te saṃhatā*** […] ||

[493] ViṃśV 85.1-3: *yat tad rūpādikam āyatanaṃ rūpādivijñaptīnāṃ pratyekaṃ viṣayaḥ syāt tad ekaṃ vā syād yathā 'vayavirūpaṃ kalpyate vaiśeṣikaiḥ* […] |

[494] ViṃśV 85.4-5: *na tāvad ekaṃ viṣayo bhavaty avayavebhyo 'nyasyāvayavirūpasya kvacid apy agrahaṇāt* | As Chu (2006, 217, n. 20) points out, Kuiji regards this as a Sāṃmitīya position.

or ‘piece of cloth’ are only designations (*saṃjñā*) given to the blades of grass and threads assembled in a certain way. Just like when one’s mind superimposes the idea of a ‘line’ on marching ants.[495] The AKBh gives various arguments for the view that the whole cannot be distinct from its parts. One of Vasubandhu’s main arguments is that when one is in contact with only a single thread, the piece of cloth is not seen. However, if the piece of cloth would really exist as a separate entity, then what would prevent one from perceiving it when one perceives a single thread? On the other hand, if it is not present in each of them, then there is no such thing as ‘a piece of cloth’. The cloth would be only a collection of parts, which are nothing else than the threads themselves.[496] This seems to be the argument that is reproduced in the KSP, and, in a more generalised way, in the *Viṃśikā*. As we have seen, the KSP says that if shape were a unified whole pervading its parts, then we should perceive the whole shape in all of its parts, otherwise it could not be a unified whole. In the *Viṃśikā*, Vasubandhu only draws the conclusion of this argumentation that we cannot perceive anywhere a whole that is different from its parts, therefore such thing does not exist.

The other two options mentioned in the *Viṃśikā* also seem to be analogous, to some extent, with those of the KSP. Alongside the idea that shape is a unified entity, Vasubandhu in the KSP, raises (and rejects) the possibilities that shape belongs to the level of atoms (insofar as atoms individually have shapes) or that it belongs to the level of atomic aggregates. Similarly, in the *Viṃśikā*, Vasubandhu offers two atomic interpretations of *viṣaya*s. The first is that the object is atomically plural, by which, as the *Viṃśikāvṛtti* suggests, he means a mere sum of disjointed atoms, while the second is that the object is

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[495] AKBh 189.16-18: *kim atrāsiddham | anyo vīraṇebhyaḥ kaṭo 'nyaś ca tantubhyaḥ paṭa iti | ta eva hi te yathāsaṃniviṣṭās tāṃ tāṃ saṃjñāṃ labhante | pipīlikāpaṅktivat |*

[496] AKBh 189.18-20: *ekatantusaṃyoge paṭasyānupalambhāt | ko hi tadā sataḥ paṭasyopalabdhau pratibandhaḥ | akṛtsnavṛttau paṭabhāgo 'tra syān na paṭaḥ | samūhamātraṃ ca paṭaḥ syāt | kaś ca tantubhyo 'nyaḥ paṭabhāgaḥ |* For Vasubandhu’s further arguments against the conception of *avayavin* in the AKBh, see AKBh 189.20-27. For an English translation, see Sangpo 2012, 1111-1112.

an atomic aggregation. Against the former option, he argues that given that one atom in itself is unperceivable, we cannot perceive the mere sum of them either.[497] Vasubandhu's argument, again, is more generic than that of the KSP or the AKBh, where he aimed merely to show that, unlike colour, shape cannot be a property of individual atoms. Since he needs an argument that is also applicable to coloured atoms, he suggests that irrespective of whether there are atoms with shapes or colours, they cannot become an object of perception anyway, because they are imperceptible for the human eye either individually or as a mere sum. The imperceptibility of individual atoms is mentioned in the AKBh as well. The text, however, adds that even though atoms are individually imperceptible they become perceivable when they are combined (*samasta*), which arguably means that they form aggregations.[498]

Accordingly, Vasubandhu turns his attention in the *Viṃśikā* to the last option, namely that objects consist of atomic aggregates. He holds this view to be equally problematic, since an atom, when aggregated (*saṃhata*), cannot be considered a unified, partless entity (*eka dravya*) anymore.[499] Vasubandhu aims to justify this claim by analysing the ways atoms might conjoin to form aggregates. In verse 12, he outlines two alternatives which are parallel with the ones mentioned by the Vaibhāṣikas in the AKBh (32.13-15) and were repeated by Sthiramati as well in the PSkV (17.16-18). The first is an adaptation of the scenario referred to by the AKBh as atoms touching in 'one spot' (*ekadeśa*). Vasubandhu in the *Viṃśikā* argues that if atoms join one another, then they cannot be indivisible entities, because, for instance, in an aggregate consisting of seven atoms, the atom in the middle will have six parts where it conjoins the other six from the six spatial directions.[500]

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[497] ViṃśV 85.5-6: *nāpy anekaṃ paramāṇūnāṃ pratyekam agrahaṇāt* |

[498] AKBh 189.27 *ad* AK 3.100ab: *paramāṇvatīndriyatve 'pi samastānāṃ pratyakṣatvaṃ* […] |

[499] ViṃśV 85.6-7: *nāpi te saṃhatā viṣayībhavanti* | *yasmāt paramāṇur ekaṃ dravyaṃ na sidhyati* |

[500] Viṃś 12ab: ***ṣaṭkena yugapadyogāt paramāṇoḥ ṣaḍaṅśatā*** || ViṃśV 87.4-5: *ṣaḍbhyo digbhyaḥ ṣaḍbhiḥ paramāṇubhir yugapadyoge sati paramāṇoḥ ṣaḍaṅśatā prāpnoti* […] |

On the other hand, as we have seen in the AKBh, if one still insists that atoms forming aggregates are not divided into parts, then atoms need to connect to each other in their entirety. According to the *Viṃśikā*, in such a case every atom would occupy the very same place (as they would merge into one another) and the whole object would have the size of an atom.[501] Based on the principle mentioned earlier, the *Viṃśikā* adds that since an individual atom is beyond the scope of perception, the whole object of a size of an atom would be just as imperceptible.[502]

When looking at the problem of touching in the previous section, we have seen that the Vaibhāṣika reply to this issue is that atoms do not actually touch, we only say that they do so metaphorically, when the atoms are close to each other with only minimal space separating them (see fn. 456). It is worth noting that in the AKBh the Vaibhāṣikas propose that even though atoms do not touch each other, it does not follow that the atomic aggregate would fall apart when being struck, since they are held together by the wind element.[503] It is rather surprising, however, that when it comes to the touching *between* atomic aggregates, instead of further pursuing the idea that it is wind that holds the various aggregates close to each other, the Vaibhāṣikas in both the AKBh and the *Viṃśikā* propose that since the atomic aggregates, unlike the individual atoms, possess parts, nothing precludes them from touching one another.[504] Taking advantage of this claim, Vasubandhu points out that an atomic aggregate is nothing else than the atoms constituting it.

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[501] Viṃś 12cd: ***ṣaṇṇāṃ samānadeśatvāt piṇḍaḥ syād aṇumātrakaḥ*** **||** ViṃśV 89.2-4: *atha ya evaikasya paramāṇor deśaḥ sa eva ṣaṇṇāṃ | tena sarveṣāṃ samānadeśatvāt sarvaḥ piṇḍaḥ paramāṇumātraḥ syāt parasparāvyatirekād* […] |

[502] ViṃśV 89.4: […] *iti na kaścit piṇḍo dṛśyaḥ syāt* |

[503] AKBh 32.16-17: *kathaṃ citaṃ pratyāhataṃ na viśīryate | vāyudhātusaṃdhāritatvāt* | The Vaibhāṣikas differentiate two types of wind, one that disperses things, as it happens at the time of the dissolution of the world (*saṃvartanī*), while the other has the function of holding things together, just like the wind at the time of the creation of the world (*vivartanī*). AKBh 32.17-18: *kaścid vāyudhātur vikiraṇāya pravṛtto yathā saṃvarttanyāṃ kaścit saṃdhāraṇāya yathā vivarttanyām iti* |

[504] ViṃśV 89.4-6: *naiva hi paramāṇavaḥ saṃyujyante niravayavatvāt* | […] *saṃghātās tu parasparaṃ saṃyujyanta iti kāśmīravaibhāṣikās* | ViṃśV$_{RS}$ (146.17) reads *saṃhatās*. AKBh 32.20 *ad* 1.43d: *api khalu saṃghātāḥ sāvayavatvāt spṛśantīty adoṣaḥ* |

Consequently, when aggregates conjoin it is actually atoms that touch each other.[505] Therefore, even though atomic aggregates have parts, they still cannot conjoin, because, ultimately, it is the atoms that would need to be able to conjoin. Therefore, to explain how aggregates can conjoin, one needs to accept absurdly, again, that atoms have parts.[506]

Vasubandhu's subsequent argument also has its counterpart in the AKBh. The AKBh says that regardless of atoms touching or not, if they are held to have spatial divisions (such as eastern, southern etc. parts) then they cannot be partless. The AKBh raises an alternative possibility: if one does not accept them to have spatial divisions, then the problem that atoms have parts should not arise even when they touch.[507] The issue is not pursued further in the text, and it also remains unclear who endorsed this position.[508] In any event, Vasubandhu in the *Viṃśikā* reuses the first half of the argument to show that, after all, one has no choice but acknowledge that atoms have spatial divisions, i.e. they are not unified entities. Otherwise, we could not account for ordinary phenomena such as objects casting shadows or obstructing each other.[509] As Vasubandhu in the commentary of verse 14 argues, if an atom is without spatial divisions, then nothing could prevent the light from getting through the atom, and consequently the whole object, when the sun

[505] ViṃśV 89.6-91.1: *te idaṃ praṣṭavyāḥ | yaḥ paramāṇūnāṃ saṃghāto na sa tebhyo 'rthāntaram iti* || Viṃś 13ab: ***paramāṇor asaṃyoge tatsaṃghāte 'sti kasya saḥ*** || ViṃśV$_{RS}$ (147.2) reads *saṃhāto*, see also Viṃś$_{RS}$ 13ab. They consistently read *saṃhāta* instead of *saṃghāta* in the following sections as well. AKBh 33.5-6: *na ca paramāṇubhyo 'nye saṃghātā iti | ta eva te saṃghātāḥ spṛśyante* […] |

[506] Viṃś 13cd: ***na cānavayavatvena tatsaṃyogo na sidhyati*** || ViṃśV 91.4-7: *atha saṃghātā apy anyonyaṃ na saṃyujyante na tarhi paramāṇūnāṃ niravayavatvāt saṃyogo na sidhyatīti vaktavyaṃ | sāvayavasyāpi hi saṃghātasya saṃyogānabhyupagamāt | ataḥ paramāṇur ekaṃ dravyaṃ na sidhyati* | ViṃśV$_{RS}$ (147.10) reads *tasmāt paramāṇur.*

[507] AKBh 33.6-7: *yadi ca paramāṇor digbhāgabhedaḥ kalpyate spṛṣṭasyāspṛṣṭasya vā sāvayavatva-prasaṅgaḥ | no cet spṛṣṭasyāpy aprasaṅgaḥ |*

[508] La Vallée Poussin (Pruden, 1988-1990, Vol. I., 149, n. 192) points out that Saṃghabhadra reproduces this dilemma in the *Nyāyānusāra*, and attributes it to the Sautrāntikas. According to Carpenter and Ngaserin (2020), this "table-turning" claim is indeed Vasubandhu's own position in the AK(Bh), and, despite the appearances, there is much more to it than merely stipulating that atoms do not have spatial parts.

[509] Viṃś 14abc: ***digbhāgabhedo yasyāsti tasyaikatvan na yujyate | chāyāvṛtī kathaṃ vā |***

illuminates it.[510] Thus, if a tree is an assemblage of atoms, when the sun is shining, the whole tree should be illuminated. However, our evident experience is that the ground beneath the tree is in shadow, which is only possible if atoms have parts. Another example is the impenetrability of objects. If atoms had no parts or sides, then two clashing objects couldn't mutually obstruct each other. As a consequence, every object would occupy the same place and, again, everything would have the size of one imperceptible atom.[511] Vasubandhu also refuses the suggestion that the ability to cast shadow and obstruct entities belong to the complex objects (*piṇḍa*), as opposed to the atom, by appealing to the same principle he relied on in arguing that if atoms cannot conjoin, the aggregates cannot either. According to Vasubandhu, the complex objects are not different from the atoms constituting them, suggesting that if the atoms do not have these qualities than the objects cannot have them either.[512]

While, as I mentioned above, Vasubandhu starts off from the same argument both here and in the AKBh, in the latter he does not explicitly draw the conclusion that the conception of atom is inconsistent.[513] Yaśomitra, however, thinks that Vasubandhu examines this issue with the intention of arguing that the conception of atom is not established (*aparinișpatti, yongs su ma grub pa*). He clarifies that, on his reading, the AKBh's dilemma implies that atoms cannot be partless entities, since they have spatial directions, just like a heap of beans (*māṣarāśi*). Nonetheless, he notes that the Vaibhāṣikas

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[510] ViṃśV 95.1-3: *yady ekaikasya paramāṇor digbhāgabhedo na syād ādityodaye katham anyatra pārśve chāyā bhavaty anyatrātapaḥ | na hi tasyānyaḥ pradeśo 'sti yatrātapo na syāt |* ViṃśV$_{RS}$ (148.6) marks *anyatrātapaḥ* as probably not being part of the original text.

[511] ViṃśV 95.3-7: *āvaraṇañ ca kathaṃ bhavati paramāṇoḥ paramāṇvantareṇa yadi digbhāgabhedo neṣyate | na hi kaścid anyaḥ parabhāgo 'sti yatrāgamanād anyenānyasya pratighātaḥ syāt | asati ca pratighāte sarveṣāṃ samānadeśatvāt sarvaḥ saṃghātaḥ paramāṇumātraḥ syād ity uktaṃ |* ViṃśV$_{RS}$ (148.8-9) reads *na hi kaścit paramāṇoḥ parabhāgo 'sti* and (148.11) *ity uktaṃ purastāt.*

[512] Viṃś 14cd: ***anyo na piṇḍaś cen na tasya te*** || ViṃśV 99.2-3: *yadi nānyaḥ paramāṇubhyaḥ piṇḍa iṣyate na te tasyeti siddham bhavati |*

[513] According to Carpenter and Ngaserin (2020), Vasubandhu did not intend to reject atomism in the AK(Bh). But, after realising that the directionality of atomic aggregates cannot be solved, he changed his mind by the time he composed the *Viṃśikā*.

did not accept that atoms have spatial directions. They only accepted it for the aggregated forms.[514] This, however, does not mean that the Vaibhāṣikas agreed with the second horn of the dilemma, as they did not endorse the consequent of the conditional that if the atoms do not have spatial directions, then the problem of having parts should not occur even when they touch.[515]

So far Vasubandhu in the *Viṃśikā* argued that objects of perception cannot consist of atoms, whether they are conceived as a mere sum of them or atomic aggregates. As I said earlier, Vasubandhu in verse 15 returns to the possibility that the object of the eye is one, unified (*eka*) entity. While in verse 11 he connected this idea with the Vaiśeṣika theory of part-possessing wholes (*avayavin*), he seems to discuss a different position here which concerns the perception of property particulars or tropes—or in the Buddhist terminology *dharma*s—construed as unified wholes.[516] At least this is suggested by Vasubandhu's opponent, who proposes that we should put the problem of atoms and atomic aggregates aside, and rather examine the sensible properties of objects, which have such distinguishing characteristics (*lakṣaṇa*) as being the object of the eye or being blue.[517] Does not the blue patch we see exist, after all? In Vasubandhu's view, this approach

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[514] AKVy 122.23-123.14: *yadi ca paramāṇor iti vistaraḥ | paramāṇvapariniṣpattiṃ vaktukāmaḥ ācāryo vicārayati | yadi paramāṇor ekasya pūrvādidigbhāgabhedaḥ kalpyeta spṛṣṭasyānyonyam aspṛṣṭasya vā sāvayavatvaprasaṅgaḥ | na cet | kim | digbhāgabheda iti vartate | spṛṣṭasyāpy aprasaṅgaḥ | kasya | sāvayavatvasya | atra sādhanam | na niravayavaḥ paramāṇuḥ | digbhāgabhedavattvāt | māṣarāśivad iti | tad etad digbhāgabhedavattvaṃ necchanti vaibhāṣikāḥ | digbhāgabhedo hi saṅghātarūpāṇām eva kalpyate |*

[515] For Saṃghabhadra's view on this issue, see La Vallée Poussin (Pruden, 1988-1990, Vol. I., 149, n. 192).

[516] Scholars have proposed different interpretations as to the theory discussed in verse 15. According, for instance, to Tola and Dragonetti (2004, 99), Vasubandhu's arguments can be seen as an addition to the critique of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika wholes. According to Kapstein (2001, 109), the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika theory can be understood in two ways: firstly, that both the whole and the parts exist, and secondly, that only the whole exists in the strict sense. He assumes that the second alternative is being examined by Vasubandhu in verse 15. On Siderits's (2007, 165) interpretation, the property-particular theory is analysed in verse 15, according to which the objects do not consist of atomic aggregates but are bundles of property particulars, such as redness, hardness, etc. Our mind constructs the representation of the object from these qualitatively simple properties, which exist independently of the perceiving mind. On *dharma*s understood as tropes, see Goodman (2004).

[517] ViṃśV 99.4-101.2: *paramāṇuḥ saṃghāta iti vā kim anayā cintayā | lakṣaṇan tu rūpādīnāṃ na pratiṣidhyate | kim punas teṣāṃ lakṣaṇaṃ | cakṣurādiviṣayatvaṃ nīlāditvañ ca |* ViṃśV_{RS} (149.8) reads *rūpādīnāṃ yadi na pratiṣidhyate.*

presents us with the same difficulties as discussed before, insofar as any sensible property, such as a particular patch of blue colour also, is either one, unified thing or a complex of multiple parts. Since he already pointed out the problems with the latter horn of the dilemma, leading to the various problems of atomism, he now focuses on the refutation of unified sensible properties.[518] I have already discussed Vasubandhu's arguments in verse 15 when looking at the problems concerning the unity of shape presented in the PSkV, therefore there is no need to repeat them here. It is, however, important to emphasise that while the KSP's and PSkV's arguments were limited to shape as a unified object, Vasubandhu in verse 15 targets the objects of the senses in general, with a particular focus on visible objects, both colour and shape.[519] Since the idea that the object is 'one' leads to various absurdities—such as that an object cannot be perceived only partially (or grasped and not grasped at the same time), one cannot walk gradually through them—we have to accept that objects have genuine parts and, ultimately, are constituted of atoms. And the possibility that atoms themselves are unified substances was already excluded. As the text concludes in the ensuing commentary, insofar as neither of the two possible material explanations—atomism or property wholes—can account for our everyday experiences of reality, we need to accept that visible objects, etc. cannot be the sense objects of our faculties, and, consequently, the only possible theory that can account for our everyday experiences is that it is consciousness itself that appears as such.[520] Before investigating where this leaves us with regard to Vasubandhu's positive account of perception, it is also worth looking at Sthiramati's TrBh, which (even though the *Triṃśikā* itself does not offer a systematic criticism of material entities) raises concerns similar to the ones we have just

[518] ViṃśV 101.3-103.2: *tad evedaṃ sampradhāryate | yat tac cakṣurādīnāṃ viṣayo nīlapītādikam iṣyate kin tad ekaṃ dravyam atha vā tad anekam iti | kiñ cātaḥ | anekatve doṣa uktaḥ ||*

[519] ViṃśV 105.1-2: *yadi yāvad avicchinnaṃ nīlādikañ cakṣuṣo viṣayas tad ekaṃ dravyaṃ kalpyate* […] |

[520] ViṃśV 109.1-3: *tasmād avaśyaṃ paramāṇuśo bhedaḥ kalpayitavyaḥ | sa caiko na sidhyati | tasyāsiddhau rūpādīnāṃ cakṣurādiviṣayatvam asiddham iti siddhaṃ vijñaptimātram bhavatīti* | ViṃśV$_{RS}$ (151.4) reads *cakṣurādiviṣayatvam na sidhyatīti.*

seen regarding the possibility of a materially construed external reality. While many of his arguments are clearly inspired by the *Viṃśikā*, he also adds some interesting remarks of his own focusing more on the dissimilarity between the form of perception and its putative mind-independent object.

4.3.3. Sthiramati's idealist interpretation of perception and critique of similarity

Sthiramati discusses this issue while commenting on the first verse of the *Triṃśikā*, which claims that the *ātman* and the *dharma*s are only superimpositions on the transformation of consciousness (*vijñānaparināṃa*).[521] According to Sthiramati, by calling them superimpositions Vasubandhu means that the *ātman* and the *dharma*s are only designations (*prajñapti*). I already mentioned earlier that the term *dharma* refers to the *dhātu*s, the *āyatana*s, and the five *skandha*s.[522] That Sthiramati regards the *ātman* and the *dharma*s alike as mere designations, that is ultimately unreal entities, suggests that he interpreted Vasubandhu's views in the *Triṃśikā* as an ontological idealist position, perhaps inspired by a similar reading of the *Viṃśikā*, a work he did not comment on but used extensively in the TrBh. So much so that Sthiramati in the TrBh often presents Vasubandhu's views in a more straightforwardly idealist fashion than the root texts themselves, where it is much harder to find explicit ontological statements to this effect. For instance, when commenting on the opening statement of the *Triṃśikā*, Sthiramati (TrBh 40.9-11) specifies that the *ātman* and the *dharma*s refer to the transformation of consciousness and not to a *primary* self or *dharma*s, because these have "*no existence* outside of the transformation of consciousness". In another relevant passage, he states that our false superimpositions of the self and the *dharma*s, such as material forms (*rūpa*) etc. have no beginning in time and are brought about without any external or mind-independent

[521] Triṃś 1abc: ***ātmadharmopacāro hi vividho yaḥ pravartate vijñānapariṇāme 'sau*** |

[522] TrBh 40.4-8: *ātmā dharmāś copacaryanta ity ātmadharmopacāraḥ | sa punar ātmaprajñaptir dharma-prajñaptiś ca | […] skandhā dhātava āyatanāni rūpaṃ vedanā saṃjñā saṃskārā vijñānam ity evamādiko dharmopacāraḥ* |

(*bāhya*) self and *dharma*s. They are rather like—using a metaphor from the first verse of the *Viṃśikā*—a web of hairs seen by someone with an eye disease.

Sthiramati's idealist interpretation of the *Triṃśikā* is further evidenced in the narratives he gives about the purpose of the *Triṃśikā*. One of them, inspired by the first verse of the root text, is that the work aims to expose the insubstantiality of the person (*pudgala-nairātmya*) and of the *dharma*s (*dharmanairātmya*). These serve the practical and soteriological purpose of overcoming the afflictive and epistemic obstacles (*kleśāvaraṇa* and *jñeyāvaraṇa*), which are, respectively, the main hindrances to attaining liberation and omniscience. Sthiramati believes that by interiorising the *Triṃśikā*'s demonstration of the insubstantiality of the self and the *dharma*s, beings who were convinced about the existence of these entities will be able to get rid of their false views and "gradually realise, together with its fruit, the existence of consciousness only."[523]

Besides showing a way for practitioners to overcome their false conventions of the self and the objects, the text also has the more theoretical purpose, according to Sthiramati, of rejecting two common extremist doctrines (*ekāntavāda*), which can be identified with the philosophical positions of the Abhidharma and the Madhyamaka traditions. Sthiramati does not name them explicitly, but from his characterization of their views it is clear that he has these two traditions in mind. Sthiramati holds that the *Triṃśikā* intends to reject both the views that "just like consciousness, the object of consciousness (*vijñeya*) also fundamentally exists", and that "just like the object of consciousness, consciousness also exists only conventionally and not ultimately".[524] Sthiramati places the Yogācāra teaching

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[523] TrBh 38.15-17: *atha vā dharmapudgalābhiniviṣṭāś cittamātraṃ yathābhūtaṃ na jānantīty ato dharmapudgalanairātmya pradarśanena saphale vijñaptimātre 'nupūrveṇa praveśārthaṃ prakaraṇārambhaḥ* | TrBh 38.5-6: *pudgaladharmanairātmyapratipādanaṃ punaḥ kleśajñeyāvaraṇaprahāṇārtham* |

[524] TrBh 38.18-20: *atha vā vijñānavad vijñeyam api dravyata eveti kecin manyante* | *vijñeyavad vijñānam api saṃvṛtita eva na paramārthata ity asya dviprakārasyāpy ekāntavādasya pratiṣedhārthaḥ prakaraṇārambhaḥ* | Vinītadeva attributes the second view to Mādhyamikas. TrṬ 4b5-6: *dbu ma pa kha cig ni ji ltar shes bya kun rdzob tu yod kyi don dam par med pa de bzhin du* | *rnam par shes pa yang kun rdzob nyid du yod kyi* | *don dam par ni med do snyam du sems zhes grags te* |

in the middle, proposing that the objects of consciousness cannot be mind-independent (let alone material) entities, but consciousness must exist ultimately, otherwise one would commit the Madhyamaka 'mistake' of anti-foundationalism.[525]

It is the rejection of the Abhidharmic realism that provides the context of Sthiramati's critique of the mind-independent existence of sense objects. Sthiramati states again that, since the *ātman* and the *dharma*s do not exist outside of consciousness, these are only imagined (*parikalpita*) and not ultimately real entities.[526] In defence of the Abhidharmic position, an opponent raises the question of how consciousness can appear with the form (*ākāra*) of an external object (*bāhya artha*) if the latter is not the object-cause of perception. Sthiramati starts his reply by invoking the principle that "the external object is held to be the *ālambanapratyaya* of consciousness on account of generating a consciousness with its [i.e. the object's] appearance, and not simply on account of being [one of] its cause[s]; otherwise, it would absurdly follow that there is no difference between the *samanantarapratyaya* and the rest of the conditions."[527] This remark is a reiteration of the ideas we have seen in chapter 9 of the AKBh (473.25-474.2) and which reappear more clearly in Dignāga's *Ālambanaparīkṣāvṛtti* (see fn. 344). The object as the *ālambanapratyaya* of perception is not merely one of the causes of consciousness but is distinguished from other causes on the grounds that the object contributes to the arising of perception with its own appearance. Otherwise, if there was no similarity between the

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[525] TrBh 42.15-17: *evañ ca sarvaṃ vijñeyaṃ parikalpitasvabhāvatvād vastuto na vidyate vijñānaṃ punaḥ pratītyasamutpannatvād dravyato 'stīty abhyupeyam* | Since I am primarily interested in Sthiramati's opinion about the nature of sense objects here, I will not engage with his critique of the Madhyamaka view. On this see TrBh 42.9-13. Sthiramati's argumentation against the Madhyamaka view develops into a Yogācāra theory of language and meaning, see Tzohar 2018, 218-253.

[526] TrBh 42.6-8: *evaṃ vijñānasvarūpe bahiś cātmadharmābhāvāt parikalpita evātmā dharmāś ca na tu paramārthataḥ santīti vijñānavad vijñeyam api dravyata evety ayam ekāntavādo nābhyupeyaḥ* |

[527] TrBh 42.19-22: *katham etad gamyate vinā bāhyenārthena vijñānam evārthākāram utpadyata iti* | *bāhyo hy arthaḥ svābhāsavijñānajanakatvena vijñānasyālambanapratyaya iṣyate na kāraṇatvamātreṇa samanantarādipratyayāviśeṣaprasaṅgāt* | With the reading *samanantarādipratyayāviśeṣaprasaṅgāt* I follow Katsura, see Buescher 2007, 42, n. 12. According to Vinītadeva, the second sentence is Sthiramati's answer. TrṬ 7a6-7: […] *grub pa'i mtha' smra bas* | *phyi rol gyi don ni zhes bya ba la sogs pa smras te* |

external object perceived and the way consciousness appears, we would have no idea what the object of perception is, since it could not be told apart from, for instance, the *samanantarapratyaya*, i.e. the previous moment of consciousness, or the *adhipatipratyaya*, which is often identified with the sense faculty. Also, the indistinguishability of the various conditions would entail that the framework of the four *pratyaya*s put forward in the *sūtra*s is pointless.[528]

Sthiramati continues by arguing that the realist opponent cannot maintain that external objects, however construed, account for the phenomenological content or appearance of our perceptions, because there cannot be similarity between them. As such, despite what they assume, they cannot actually be the *ālambanapratyaya*s of perception, as they fail to satisfy the similarity-requirement. Sthiramati's first argument rests on the phenomenological observation that the cognitive objects (*ālambana*) of the five kinds of sensory perceptions are agglomerated objects (*saṃcita*), since they appear with such an object-form (*ākāra*) in consciousness. The objects we perceive are gross, unified objects, such as pots, chariots or trees. But, as Sthiramati continues, there are no agglomerated objects in mind-independent reality, as an agglomerate is nothing else than the mere collection of its parts (*avayavasaṃhitamātra*), since consciousness will no longer have an agglomerated object-form (*ākāra*) if we exclude or remove those parts.[529] The second half of this argument makes it clear that Sthiramati targets theories that maintain that the aggregated object emerges from, or non-reductively supervenes on, its parts, that is, the gross object is construed as an entity distinct from and additional to its parts. The criticised idea, as we have seen earlier, shows obvious similarities to the Vaiśeṣika position. But,

[528] Although not as explicitly as the TrBh, the PSkV also mentions these two criteria of an object-condition. It claims that the *ālambanapratyaya* is the cause of consciousness, and that the various *pravṛttivijñāna*s are differentiated from one another on the basis of their appearance (*pratyavabhāsa*)—which in turn depends on the *ālambanapratyaya*—but not their *samanantarapratyaya* or *adhipatipratyaya*. See PSkV 99.16-100.4.

[529] TrBh 44.1-3: *sañcitālambanāś ca pañcavijñānakāyās tadākāratvāt | na ca sañcitam avayavasaṃhati-mātrād anyad vidyate | tadavayavān apohya sañcitākāravijñānābhāvāt |*

since neither Sthiramati nor Vinītadeva associates it with any particular tradition, the argument might aim at a broader range of views, including possibly some Buddhist traditions (e.g. the Sāṃmitīyas) which accepted that the whole object is a real, emergent property distinct from its atomic parts. Sthiramati here relies on the principle we met also in the *Viṃśikā* that wholes or aggregated things are nothing else than a collection of parts. We know it from the fact that when we remove its parts (for instance dismantle the chariot or break the pot), we no longer perceive an agglomerated object. But if this entity were indeed different from its parts, we should still perceive the gross object or whole as intact as ever. This argument seems to be parallel with Vasubandhu's remark from *Viṃśikā* 11 that we cannot perceive anywhere a whole that is distinct from its parts. Accordingly, there can be no real similarity between the appearance of consciousness (as a gross object) and the way objects actually exist (as a collection of parts without there being a substantially existing whole). Sthiramati therefore draws the conclusion that perception arises in the form of an agglomerated object in the absence of an external object (which could actually instantiate such a form).[530]

While this view tried to explain the similarity between the object-form of consciousness and the external object by positing gross or whole objects existing outside our minds, the next theory targeted by Sthiramati no longer presupposes such entities but, agreeing with Sthiramati's reductionism, holds that what we perceive are *only* atoms being agglomerated (*saṃcita*). However, as Sthiramati points out, this position cannot work, either. The atoms when agglomerated cannot be the objects of consciousness, because atoms do not have the agglomerated form that appears in consciousness. The agglomerated atoms cannot actually have an agglomerated form since "atoms do not [gain] any additional property (*ātmātiśaya*) when they are agglomerated in comparison when they are not

[530] TrBh 44.3-4: *tasmād vinaiva bāhyenārthena vijñānaṃ sañcitākāram utpadyate* |

agglomerated".[531] Accordingly, if an individual atom is not similar to the way our perceptions appear, then even multiple atoms being agglomerated will not be either. In Sthiramati's terms, "atoms, just like when they are not agglomerated, cannot become the cognitive object [of perception] even when agglomerated."[532] Therefore, the same mismatch arises, again, between the form of consciousness and the external objects, since the pots, chariots, trees etc. as they appear in perception are radically different from how atoms, whether agglomerated or not, are supposed to look like in reality.

As another point reminiscent of the *Viṃśikā*, Sthiramati goes on to invoke the imperceptibility of individual atoms. As he mentions, some philosophers hold that although one atom in itself is beyond the scope of perceptibility, multiple mutually dependent atoms can be perceived.[533] Based on the principle, however, that even if in mutual dependence, atoms do not gain any additional property (*ātmātiśaya*) to when they are independent of each other, we have to accept that they are invariably (*ekāntena*) perceptible or imperceptible.[534] It means that one has to acknowledge either that since the mutual dependence of atoms is perceivable, the atoms individually are also perceivable, or that neither of them is perceivable. In either case, we end up with an absurdity.

As a continuation of his argumentation, Sthiramati remarks that even if mutually dependent atoms could become the object (*viṣaya*) of our perceptions, "there would be no difference in consciousness between the form of a jar and a wall, since atoms do not have

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[531] TrBh 44.5-7: *na ca paramāṇava eva sañcitās tasyālambanaṃ paramāṇūnām atadākāratvāt | na hy asañcitāvasthātaḥ sañcitāvasthāyāṃ paramāṇūnāṃ kaścid ātmātiśayaḥ |* The principle, as we have seen, that aggregated atoms can have no new properties that their parts do not have themselves is a crucial assumption in the *Viṃśikā* as well.

[532] TrBh 44.7-8: *tasmād asañcitavat sañcitā api paramāṇavo nāivālambanam |*

[533] TrBh 44.9-10: *anyas tu manyate | ekāika paramāṇur anyanirapekṣo 'tīndriyo bahavas tu parasparāpekṣā indriyagrāhyāḥ |* Besides the *Viṃśikā*, we have also seen this idea in the AKBh (189.27).

[534] TrBh 44.10-12: *teṣām api sāpekṣanirapekṣāvasthayor ātmātiśayābhāvād ekāntenendriyagrāhyatvam atīndriyatvaṃ vā |*

that form."[535] According to Sthiramati, it is not logical to say that the appearance of consciousness is different from the form of the sense object (*viṣaya*), because that would lead to an unwarranted overextension (*atiprasaṅga*).[536] So, if it is not the atoms that determine how an object appears in consciousness by having the same form, that is, there is no similarity between the external object and its object-form in consciousness, then it could not be explained why some of our perceptions have the form of a wall while others the form of a jar. If the atoms, whether mutually dependent or not, do not have the respective forms of a wall, as opposed to a jar, why does our respective perception appear as a wall and not a jar? This unaccountability of the specific content of perception is meant by Sthiramati when referring to the fallacy of 'unwanted overextension' (*atiprasaṅga*).

Sthiramati's last argument goes even further, calling into question the consistency of the notion of atom as a partless, not further divisible entity. He says that atoms, just like a pillar, do not ultimately exist because they have near, middle and far parts.[537] If one does not admit that atoms have eastern, southern, western, northern, etc. spatial parts, then they, just like consciousness, would not have a form or physical nature (*amūrta*), nor location.[538] Thus, as Sthiramati concludes, since external objects do not exist, we have to accept that consciousness itself arises with the form of the object, just like consciousness in a dream.[539] The principles he relies on here resemble those of the *Viṃśikā*, insofar as Sthiramati argues that one has no choice but acknowledge that atoms have parts, otherwise various absurdities follow. He mentions different issues than verse 14 of the *Viṃśikā*, which referred to the problem of casting shadow and obstruction. According to Sthiramati,

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[535] TrBh 44.13-15: *yadi ca paramāṇava eva parasparāpekṣā vijñānasya viṣayībhavanti | evaṃ sati yo 'yaṃ ghaṭakuḍyādyākārabhedo vijñāne sa na syāt praramāṇūnām atadākāratvāt |*

[536] TrBh 44.15-16: *na cānyanirbhāsasya vijñānasyānyākāro viṣayo yujyate 'tiprasaṅgāt |*

[537] TrBh 44.16-17: *na ca paramāṇavaḥ stambhādivat paramārthataḥ santy arvāṅmadhyaparabhāga-sadbhāvāt |*

[538] TrBh 18-20: *tadanabhyupagame vā pūrvadakṣiṇāparottarādidigbhedo yaḥ sa paramāṇor na syāt | tataś ca vijñānavat paramāṇor apy amūrtatvam adeśasthatvañ ca prasajyate |*

[539] TrBh 44.20-21: *evaṃ bāhyārthābhāvād vijñānam evārthākāram utpadyate svapnavijñānavad ity abhyupeyam |*

by contrast, atoms must have spatial parts, because if they did not, they would have no physical nature or form nor spatial location, and, consequently, would not be different from consciousness. Sthiramati's conclusion that, just like in a dream, consciousness itself appears as an object without any external counterpart also recalls Vasubandhu's emblematic example from verses 3 and 17 of the *Viṃśikā*.

4.3.4. Vasubandhu's and Sthiramati's positive account of the objects of perception

So far, we have seen that, according to Vasubandhu and Sthiramati, the materialist explanations of sense objects endorsed by the Ābhidharmikas, and the hypotheses of how they might account for the appearance of perception are essentially flawed. While Vasubandhu's idealist conclusion is markedly different from the Abhidharmic positions, many of the arguments Vasubandhu uses to criticise the mind-independent existence of sense objects were already known, and used against each other, by the Ābhidharmikas. Vasubandhu's idealism, therefore, does not come as an unexpected turn in the evolution of these ideas, but is a natural outflow of the Sautrāntika reductionist approach to the number of real sense objects. Their rejection of shape especially catalysed these developments. However, it is important to keep in mind that it is not exclusively Sautrāntika arguments that Vasubandhu adapts to his own purposes. Many of the arguments he presents against the tenability of the atomic theory were actually formulated by the Vaibhāṣikas, for instance against the idea of touching. Vasubandhu, presumably, realised that the arguments in circulation have far greater implications than the non-existence of shape or touch, as they also challenge the reality of external *āyatana*s in general. While Vasubandhu appealed primarily to metaphysical arguments against the mind-independent existence of phenomena, Sthiramati focused more on the phenomenological analysis of perception. He argued that in terms of the realist explanations offered by the Ābhidharmikas, no resemblance relationship can be established between the putative external objects and the

way they appear in consciousness, hence the materialist theories of sense objects cannot satisfy (at least) one of the two criteria of considering something the *ālambanapratyaya* of perception.

In light of their critique of sense objects, one might wonder if it makes sense to talk about an *ālambana* in the case of sense consciousnesses at all. While we have seen some textual passages that might point in the direction that it does not, Vasubandhu at least in the *Triṃśikā* still accepts the prerequisite that all consciousnesses have an *ālambana* (see Triṃś 5). In the *āśraya* chapter, we also saw verse 15 where Vasubandhu proposes that the sense consciousnesses come into being from the root consciousness either individually or together according to their various *pratyaya*s. This remark suggests that despite his criticism of external sense objects, he did not give up on the notion of *ālambana-pratyaya*.[540] In fact, Sthiramati explicitly mentions it in his commentary, saying that there can be the arising of multiple sense consciousnesses (even all of them at the same time) if their respective *ālambanapratyaya*s are present.[541] Apart from that ambiguous passage on dreams we touched on earlier, Sthiramati is generally committed to the view that all *vijñāna*s have an *ālambana* (TrBh 62.5). He even specifies that the six *pravṛttivijñāna*s have the visible forms etc. as their *ālambana*.[542] Such remarks by Vasubandhu and Sthiramati suggest that, at least on the level of a phenomenological analysis of perception, it is still meaningful to talk about objects. Nonetheless, as they make it clear, the intentional object cognised by the mind no longer picks out a material object in reality but is the mere appearance of consciousness.

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[540] By contrast, Chu (2014, 285) claims that, of the four Abhidharma conditions, Yogācāra texts do not keep the *ālambanapratyaya*, since it does not serve their aim to give an idealistic analysis of the arising of thought and thought concomitants.

[541] TrBh 104.6-10: *ata ekasmād api samanantarapratyayād ālambanapratyayasānnidhye dvayor bahūnāṃ vā vijñānānām utpattir na virūdhyate* | […] *tasmād ālambanasadbhāve pañcānām api cotpattir ity abhyupeyam* |

[542] TrBh 62.2-4: *tatra yathā cakṣurādivijñānānāṃ cakṣurādaya āśrayatvena rūpādayaś cālambanatvena prasiddhā naivaṃ kliṣṭasya manasa āśraya ālambanaṃ vā prasiddham* |

Since Vasubandhu's claims are rather laconic and ambiguous in this regard, we need to be cautious when speculating any further about the metaphysical status of this appearance and its relation to consciousness. We can, however, outline some possible hypotheses based on the few hints provided by him and Sthiramati. One option is that we do not ontologise this *apparent* object at all. As I mentioned in the Introduction, there are theories of perception, such as intentionalism, according to which we should not think about the intentional object of perception as an ontologically real entity. The phenomenological properties we experience are not instantiated by any actual object we perceive, let it be physical or mental (i.e. a sense datum). At first sight, it seems to work fine as an interpretation of the Yogācāra theory of perception. The idea that the object of perception, construed as a mere appearance, is nothing else but a phenomenological category is, of course, ontologically parsimonious, and, as such, is in line with Vasubandhu's general reductionist approach. It also makes good sense of the teaching of non-duality insofar as it denies that perception has a relational or act-object structure. However, the Yogācāra statements to the effect that consciousness comes into being with the appearance of an object rather suggest that they believed that the qualities that appear in consciousness are instantiated either by consciousness itself or as a sense datum consciousness is directed on—of course, the possibility that the qualities we appear to perceive are instantiated as external objects is no longer an option.

The former position would amount to an adverbialist view. Accordingly, when someone experiences a patch of blue colour as the object of her perception, this appearance is actually instantiated in or, more precisely, by consciousness which is transformed or modified in a way that we can describe as 'perceiving bluely' (as opposed to 'perceiving something blue'). As another act theory, explaining away the object-talk of our ordinary statements, it is also an ontologically parsimonious model of perception. More

importantly, it is the natural reading of many of Vasubandhu's claims, such as the ones he makes in verse 9 of the *Viṃśikā*. As we have seen earlier, according to Vasubandhu, the Buddha's teaching of the real existence of the twelve *āyatana*s is only provisional. Ultimately, cognition (*vijñapti*), having the appearance of an object, arises from a seed or imprint in the mind-stream (*vijñānasaṃtāna*, see ViṃśV 59.3-5), and it is the seed and the appearance (*ābhāsa*) with which cognition arises that were described by the Buddha as the two sense fields (*āyatana*) of perception.[543] Accordingly, Vasubandhu in the *vṛtti* clarifies that for instance in the case of a visual cognition its seed was described by the Buddha (metaphorically or conventionally) as the sense field of the eye, while its appearance consciousness takes on as the sense field of visible objects (*rūpa*). Vasubandhu adds that a cognition appearing as a visible object comes into being after its seed has attained a particular transformation (*pariṇāmaviśeṣa*).[544]

As for the theory of perception we can extract from this passage, the idea that consciousness is modified in a way that it takes on a certain appearance points towards an adverbialist, as opposed to both an intentionalist and a sense-datum theory. Nothing indicates that the appearance of the object is not actually instantiated by consciousness or that it presupposes a further entity, a mental image that appears to consciousness as its object. The idea that consciousness transforms into a state that can be described as a 'perception of objects' is, as we have seen, a characteristic teaching of the *Triṃśikā* as well (see especially Triṃś 1d-2a). Such an adverbialist interpretation, however, also has its drawbacks. The most evident one is that it cannot really account for the distinction between the *ālambana* and *ākāra* of perception, as they—both construed as the appearance

[543] Viṃś 9: ***yataḥ svabījād vijñaptir yadābhāsā pravarttate | dvividhāyatanatvena te tasyā munir abravīt ||*** As I already mentioned, Vasubandhu does not talk about the *ālayavijñāna* here (or elsewhere in the *Viṃśikā*), arguably, in order to keep the Yogācāra-specific terminology to a minimum.

[544] ViṃśV 69.1-3: *rūpapratibhāsā vijñaptir yataḥ svabījāt pariṇāmaviśeṣaprāptād utpadyate tac ca bījaṃ yatpratibhāsā ca sā te tasyā vijñapteś cakṣūrūpāyatanatvena yathākramaṃ bhagavān abravīt* | It is worth noting that the underlying idea of this passage is clearly similar to the Sautrāntika *nirvyāpāra* theory we encountered in the AKBh (see e.g. 31.12-16) earlier.

of consciousness—seem to overlap completely. This would, then, go against Vasubandhu's intention in the *Triṃśikā* to preserve the fourfold model of perception, i.e. that perception encompasses these distinct factors.[545] One way out of this problem is that *ākāra* is not understood by Vasubandhu as an object-form but rather a mode of operation, that is, the grasping of the *ālambana* (here the quality instantiated by consciousness) in a certain mode—for instance (visually, etc.) sensing, conceptualising—or under a certain aspect—for instance, as impermanent—as we have seen these senses of *ākāra* in the context of the AKBh. Still another problem remains, namely that the *ālambanapratyaya* needs to meet the two criteria of serving the object-cause of perception and accounting for its content. While these two criteria were mentioned by Vasubandhu in the AKBh, we cannot exclude the possibility that he reinterpreted the notion of *ālambanapratyaya* in his later works, and it is only Sthiramati who sticks to them in the TrBh. However, if we are about to ascribe this idea to Vasubandhu as well (which seems reasonable given that he does not put forward an alternative or revised notion of *ālambanapratyaya*), it is hard to see how the very form of consciousness, that is the 'object' understood in an adverbialist fashion, can be regarded as the cause of the arising of consciousness. That is to say, the object of perception cannot satisfy the criteria of *ālambanapratyaya* unless we suppose that it is an entity distinct from, albeit not necessarily independent of, the act or instance of perception, like a sense datum. Furthermore, the second criterion also presupposes the existence of two distinct entities that are related to one another through similarity.

As it might already be clear, the sense-datum theory can evade the difficulties I raised against the two previous—i.e. intentionalist and adverbialist—interpretations. While it is

[545] It should not be forgotten, though, that Vasubandhu does not explicitly mention *ākāra* in the *Triṃśikā*, while the *Viṃśikā* does not put forward the fourfold model of perception at all. These might suggest that Vasubandhu, despite Sthiramati's efforts to the contrary, did not accept the fourfold framework after all, at least, by the time he composed the *Viṃśikā.* However, as far as I see, Sthiramati's reconstruction is not unjustified, and the mere fact that Vasubandhu does not outline this framework in the *Viṃśikā* should not be seen as evidence that he no longer accepted it. Arguably, he is simply concerned with other issues in this primarily critical and defensive work.

less parsimonious than its alternatives, insofar as it presupposes the existence of a distinct mental object in addition to the act of perception, it is still parsimonious ontologically speaking, since it does not appeal to extramental entities to explain perception. While it is not necessarily the most natural reading of certain passages, such as verse 9 or the 'transformation'-talk we often find in the *Triṃśikā*, they do not preclude a sense-datum theorist interpretation, either. Indeed, Vasubandhu's works are standardly interpreted in terms of a sense-datum theory in the scholarship. In a recent publication, for instance, Mills (2017) claims that Vasubandhu's notion of sense object (*viṣaya*) is similar to our conception of a sense-datum, defined as a "mind-dependent object of which we are directly aware, and which has the properties that appear to us" (Mills 2017, 152-153, fn. 12). Having the *Viṃśikā*'s description of dreams in verse 3 and 17 in mind, he notes that, in Vasubandhu's view, the sense object does not exist as an external, mind-independent object but rather as a mind-dependent sense object or sense-datum, just like a dream-object is presented to us in a dream.[546]

Similar interpretations have been made concerning verse 16 of the *Viṃśikā* and its commentary, where Vasubandhu addresses the question that if there are no external objects we could perceive, how the cognition that one perceives still comes about. Vasubandhu argues that the occurrence of the cognition that 'this is perceived by me' does not prove that one is in direct contact with a mind-independent object in perception, since when it arises, the object is not actually sensed. The reason for that is that by the time the mental consciousness (*manovijñāna*) forms this judgement (*pariccheda*), the visual consciousness, as well as the object itself, in line with the doctrine of momentariness, have already

[546] It should also be noted that some scholars, mainly in the context of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti, interpret the *ākāra*, as opposed to the (distinct) *ālambana* of perception, as a sense datum, see Moriyama 2008.

ceased.[547] According to Siderits (2007, 169), by arguing in a way similar to the so-called time-lag argument, Vasubandhu aims to prove here that, contrary to the Vaibhāṣika's direct realist account of perception, one is never actually in direct contact with an external object, but only a mental object or image.[548] It should be noted, however, that the passage does not explicitly talk about mental images replacing the putative external objects of perception, and it is no less clear that the passage is meant to convey any positive account at all, as opposed to merely reusing a (presumably) Sautrāntika argument against the Vaibhāṣika direct realist theory of perceptual knowledge.[549]

In any event, as I suggested above, the most evident appeal of a sense-datum theorist reconstruction of the Yogācāra theory of perception is that it is compatible with the traditionally accepted frameworks put forward by earlier traditions. It does not only provide us with the possibility to keep the fourfold model of perception, but it can also preserve the notion of *ālambanapratyaya* as requiring the two criteria discussed above, since sense data can theoretically serve both as the cause of the arising of perception and account for the object-form of consciousness.[550]

At this point, it is also worth looking at Vasubandhu's remarks in verse 27, which further suggests that ordinary perception involves sense data. Here Vasubandhu issues a

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[547] ViṃśV 115.1-3: *yadā ca sā pratyakṣabuddhir bhavatīdaṃ me pratyakṣam iti tadā na so 'rtho dṛśyate manovijñānenaiva paricchedāc cakṣurvijñānasya ca tadā niruddhatvād iti kathaṃ tasya pratyakṣatvam iṣṭaṃ | viśeṣeṇa tu kṣaṇikavādino yasya tadānīṃ niruddham eva tad rūpaṃ rasādikaṃ vā |*

[548] See also Westerhoff 2018, 173. Mills 2017, 160-161, provides a slightly different reading, which emphasises that the passage concerns not first-order sense perceptions, but rather the 'meta-cognitions' of the *manovijñāna*.

[549] Kochumuttom (1989, 182-184), for instance, notes that Vasubandhu's reply to this objection does not attempt to deny the existence of extramental entities at all (according to Kochumuttom, he almost takes them for granted here), but only to falsify the claim that perceptual knowledge requires a direct contact with an object of perception, and hence proves its existence.

[550] In the context of Sautrāntika representative realism, Siderits (2007, 133-135) also notes that a representation or mental object can fulfil both the conditions that it is directly present (as its cause) to consciousness, and that it accounts for its content. We might also add as a helpful parallel that in this regard the Sautrāntika's as well as Vasubandhu's objects of perception are similar to Berkeleian ideas, which, as Winkler (1989, 6-7) clarifies, are not mere intentional objects, but real entities with which the mind is in a genuine relation. Moreover, ideas explain the content of the mental acts directing towards them. Both claims require that idea are actual entities distinct from the mind's acts.

warning to those Yogācāra practitioners who mistakenly believe that they have realised the state of consciousness only. He says that practitioners who simply deem the objects of consciousness to be nothing but consciousness have not yet attained the state of *vijñaptimātratā*, since they still "place something before themselves".[551] Sthiramati describes these practitioners as self-conceited who, merely having heard about the teaching, believe that they have reached the pure state of consciousness only.[552] According to him, the verse talks about those manifold meditative objects Yogācāra practitioners may place before themselves by virtue of their mind (*manasā*), such as the images of the various states of a decaying body.[553] This verse, together with Sthiramati's ensuing commentary, suggests that meditative objects are conceived as sense data, i.e. mental objects that are 'placed' before the mind grasping them. We might extrapolate this view to the realm of ordinary perception, considering the objects of the senses to be sense data as well.

Verse 28, however, highlights that one really attains the state of consciousness-*only* when the mind no longer apprehends any cognitive object (*ālambana*).[554] This warning makes it clear that, from the point of view of 'non-duality', entering in a cognitive relation with even a mental object should be avoided, since it hinders the realisation of the *vijñaptimātratā* doctrine. Commenting on this passage, Sthiramati notes that if consciousness no longer apprehends, sees, grasps or attends to any object (*ālambana*) outside the particular instance of consciousness, let it be a teaching, an instruction or an ordinary object such as colour, sound, etc., then—as a result of seeing things as they really

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[551] Triṃś 27: ***vijñaptimātram evedam ity api hy upalambhataḥ | sthāpayann agrataḥ kiñcit tanmātre nāvatiṣṭhate ||***

[552] TrBh 134.14-15: *atha vā yaḥ punar ābhimānikaḥ śrutamātrakeṇa jānīyād ahaṃ vijñaptimātratāyāṃ śuddhāyāṃ sthita iti tadgrahavyudāsārtham āha |*

[553] TrBh 136.1-4: *sthāpayann iti yathāśrutaṃ manasā bahuprakāratvād yogācārālambanānāṃ kiṃcid ity āhāsthisaṃkalikaṃ vā vinīlakaṃ vā vipūyakaṃ vā vipaḍumakaṃ vā vyādhmātakādikaṃ vā tanmātre nāvatiṣṭhate vijñānopalambhāprahāṇāt |*

[554] Triṃś 28: ***yadā tv ālambanaṃ jñānaṃ naivopalabhate tadā | sthitaṃ vijñaptimātratve grāhyābhāve tadagrahāt ||***

are, and not just like someone blind from birth—the mind's activity of grasping will come to an end with consciousness resting in its ultimate essence.[555] In other words, even if one has removed all the misunderstanding concerning the ontological nature of the objects we perceive, it is not enough to consider them to be mental. The state of mind practitioners should ultimately aim for does not involve any kind of apprehension of objects.

These passages might suggest that, in the case of enlightened beings who have attained the state of *vijñaptimātratā*, we can no longer talk about an *ālambana* of perception and, as such, the fourfold model is not relevant anymore. The questions whether there is any form of mental activity at this ultimate level at all, and if there is, how an objectless or contentless perception can be spelled out in this context is beyond of the scope of this dissertation.[556] In any event, as we have seen, Vasubandhu and Sthiramati emphasised on various occasions that the Abhidharmic structural analysis still applies to the ordinary phenomenology of sense perception, and, arguably, accounted for the fourfold model of perception and the distinction between *ālambana* and *ākāra* in terms of a sense-datum theory.

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[555] TrBh 136.9-12: *yasmin kāle deśanālambanaṃ avavādālambanaṃ prākṛtaṃ vā rūpaśabdādyālambanaṃ jñānaṃ bahiś cittān nopalabhate na paśyati na gṛhṇāti nābhiniviśate yathābhūtārthadarśanān na tu jātyandhavat tasmin kāle vijñānagrāhasya prahāṇaṃ svacittadharmatāyāñ ca pratiṣṭhito bhavati* |

[556] Vasubandhu's remarks concerning the perception of enlightened beings and the structure of their consciousness are rather limited, and he often emphasises that the buddhas' awareness is inconceivable (see e.g. Viṃś(V) 21, Triṃś 30). Even though in Triṃś 29 he says that the supramundane knowledge of the buddhas is without mind (*acitta*) and without apprehension (*anupalambha*)—understood by Sthiramati (TrBh 138.12-13) in terms of non-duality—Sthiramati in TrBh (142.6) mentions a pure cognitive object (*viśuddhālambana*) in relation to the buddhas' awareness, suggesting that enlightened beings' consciousness is still structured insofar as it has (at least) an *ālambana*. Similar claims are made in the *Madhyāntavibhāgaṭīkā* (see Griffiths 1994, 158-159). That the buddhas' awareness has an *ālambana* and an *ākāra* is also stated in the *Mahāyānasaṃgraha* (see Griffiths 1997, 87-88). Griffiths also discusses related questions in Griffiths 1986.

5. The mental concomitants (*caitta*) of perception

We have already discussed three of the four constituents of the perceptual process. As we have seen, our sources state not only that each *vijñāna* has an *āśraya*, *ālambana* and *ākāra* but that it is also necessarily associated with certain mental concomitants (*caitta* or *caitasika*).[557] In this chapter, I explore how the *caitta*s contribute to the arising of perception, and what they tell us about the essential features of sense consciousnesses. Of the Yogācāra treatises of Vasubandhu, I focus on the *Triṃśikā* and the PSk, as these are the works that investigate and provide a complete list of the *caitta*s. Since in the *Triṃśikā*, Vasubandhu only enumerates, and in the PSk, only succinctly describes the various mental concomitants, I again rely quite substantially on Sthiramati's commentaries to explicate each of the concomitants that are relevant to the analysis of perception. As before, I set these explanations against the description of *caitta*s to be found in the AK(Bh) to see how they preserve or modify the Abhidharmic interpretations.

Regarding the structure of the chapter, I proceed not according to texts but concomitants, comparing what each of our sources has to say about their relation to perception. After introducing the various classifications of *caitta*s in Vasubandhu's works and the Abhidharmic views on their metaphysical status in general, the discussion will revolve primarily around the category of universal (*sarvatraga*) concomitants, as it contains those elements, such as contact (*sparśa*) or attention (*manaskāra*), that play the most important role in the perceptual process. I also briefly look at the limited mental concomitants (*viniyata* or *pratiniyataviṣaya caitta*s), which go beyond the process of 'raw' perception and give us a glimpse into the phases of mental processing the experiental

[557] TrBh 54.8: *vijñānañ cāvaśyaṃ caittaiḥ saṃprayuktam* | AK 2.34bd: *cittacaitasāḥ* | *sāśrayālambanākārāḥ samprayuktāś ca* |

'data' undergo after being received through the senses. Of the other categories of *caitta*s, I only analyse the conceptions of *vitarka* and *vicāra* as these have obvious connection to the conceptual nature of perception.

5.1. The classification of *caitta*s in the PSk, the *Triṃśikā* and the AK(Bh)

In the PSk, all *caitasika*s are discussed in the *saṃskāra* section, with the exception of sensation (*vedanā*) and ideation (*saṃjñā*). Despite being mental concomitants, the latter are treated separately by Vasubandhu as they constitute two of the five aggregates (*skandha*).[558] Vasubandhu defines the *caitasika*s as *dharma*s that are conjoined with or concomitant of (*samprayukta*) the mind.[559] Relatedly, the AK(Bh) even points out that the mind and the *caitta*s 'cannot exist without each other'.[560] However, the way they grasp the object, as Yaśomitra notes, is different, since consciousness (*vijñāna*) apprehends the mere object (*vastumātra*) or its general form (*sāmānyarūpa*), while the *caitta*s grasps its particular form (*viśeṣarūpa*), such as how it feels, its distinctive marks (e.g. long or short), and so on.[561] We can find no such general definition of *caitta* in the *Triṃśikā* or its commentaries. Elaborating on Vasubandhu's remark in the PSk, Sthiramati appeals to the same explanation we have encountered in the AK(Bh) concerning *saṃprayuktakahetu.* He notes that the *caitta*s are conjoined (*samprayukta*) with the mind because they operate similarly (*samaṃ prayuktatvāt*), insofar as they conform to it in terms of the five

[558] PSkV 31.15-17: *vedanāsañjñayoś caitasikatve saty api vedanāsañjñāskandhasaṅgṛhītatvān na saṃskāra-skandhe 'sti saṅgraha iti* […] |

[559] PSk 4.5: *caitasikā dharmāḥ katame | ye dharmāś cittena samprayuktāḥ ||*

[560] AK 2.23a and AKBh 54.5: ***cittaṃ caittāḥ sahāvaśyaṃ*** | *na hy ete vinā 'nyonyaṃ bhavitum utsahante |*

[561] AKVy 50.24-26: *vijñānaṃ prativijñaptiḥ iti* […] *upalabdhir vastumātragrahaṇaṃ | vedanādayas tu caitasā viśeṣagrahaṇarūpāḥ |* AKVy 209.12-14: *atha vā tasyaivālambanasya vijñānaṃ sāmānyarūpeṇopa-labhyatārūpaṃ gṛhṇāti | viśeṣarūpeṇa tu vedanānubhavanīyatārūpaṃ gṛhṇāti saṃjñā paricchedyatārūpaṃ gṛhṇātīty evam ādi |* On the different operations of the *citta* and *caitta*s in various Abhidharma sources, see Dhammajoti 2015, 257-259.

'samenesses' (*samatā*), that of the *āśraya*, *ālambana*, *ākāra*, *kāla* and *dravya*.[562] As we have seen earlier, Vasubandhu uses the simile of the travelling merchants sharing the same food, water, etc. to illustrate how the mind and the mental concomitants are conjoined in these five ways (AKBh 88.24-26). With regard to this passage, the AKVy (AKVy 209.16-23) adds that the *citta* and the *caitta*s arise based on the same *indriya* and object, and they also share their *ākāra*, for instance when the *ākāra* of the *citta* is blue the form of the *caitta*s will also be blue. Furthermore, the *citta* and the *caitta*s exist at the same time, and a single moment of mind is always accompanied by a single *vedanā*, *saṃjñā*, etc. but not more of each kind of *caitta*s.

While the abovementioned definitions may suggest that the *caitta*s are real entities that are distinct from the mind, their existential status is a rather controversial issue in the Abhidharma literature. The Vaibhāṣikas in general accepted the *caitta*s as ultimately real and causally efficacious entities arising simultaneously with the mind. The Sautrāntikas, on the other hand, instead of reifying their existence, tended to interpret them as distinct modes or aspects of the mind (*cittaviśeṣa*) (see Sharf 2018, 834-835). Nonetheless, we find a great variety of Dārṣṭāntika and Sautrāntika views in the Abhidharma literature with certain masters, such as Śrīlāta, accepting the real (but successive) existence of three *caitta*s (namely *vedanā*, *saṃjñā* and *cetanā*), while others, such as Buddhadeva, rejecting the real existence of all of them in favour of the view that they are specific states of the mind.[563] As we will see it below, even though their classification shows considerable differences, Vasubandhu's list of *caitta*s found in the PSk and the *Triṃśikā* closely follows

[562] PSkV 32.13-15: *ete 'pi sparśādayo vicārāntāḥ pañcabhir āśrayālambanākārakāladravyasamatā-prakāraiś cittānuvartanāt samaṃ prayuktā iti samprayuktāḥ |*

[563] For an overview of the positions of various Dārṣṭāntika-Sautrāntika masters, see e.g. Dhammajoti 2007a, 114–132 or Yao 2005, 99–101. On Buddhadeva's reductionist position see also fn. 486.

that of the Vaibhāṣikas outlined in the AKBh.[564] This suggests that Vasubandhu in general sympathised with the range of cognitive functions differentiated and ascribed to the mind by the Vaibhāṣikas. However, whether in his Yogācāra works he considers them as real entities or, like Buddhadeva, merely specific states of the mind is a delicate issue. In the PSk, we find no indication that he would reject the real existence of *caitta*s. He, nonetheless, calls into question the reality of certain *caitta*s listed by the Vaibhāṣikas, such as *vitarka* and *vicāra*, proposing that they are only specific forms of *cetanā* or *prajñā*. But, as I just noted, he does not seem to question the, at least conventionally acceptable, rationale behind distinguishing them as distinctive cognitive functions of the mind; otherwise, he would hardly enumerate them in the *Triṃśikā*'s list of *caitta*s, as well. If we look at Vasubandhu's *vijñaptimātratā* works, the metaphysical status of the *caitta*s is more ambiguous. To be sure, Vasubandhu in the *Viṃśikā* cites a line from the *Daśabhūmikasūtra* which asserts that the three worlds are only *citta*, adding that *citta* is to be understood here together with its associates (*sasaṃprayoga*), that is the mental concomitants.[565] According to Vinītadeva's sub-commentary, the *sūtra* teaches that the three realms are minds *and* mental factors, not only minds. He says that the term 'only' (*mātra*) is for the sake of rejecting the existence of objects that are held to be independent of the mind but not that of the mental concomitants.[566] In the first verse of the *Triṃśikā*, however, we find that the *ātman* and the *dharma*s, which, as Sthiramati's clarifies, includes the *caitta*s as well, are only superimpositions on the transformation of

[564] As Kramer (2013a, 988) emphasises, the classification of *caitta*s and *cittaviprayukta saṃskāra*s in the AKBh represents a different stage of development than the PSk, the latter of which provides a very elaborate systematisation of the *saṃskāra skandha*.

[565] ViṃśV$_{RS}$ 135.1-4: *bho jinaputrāḥ evaṃ bhavati cittamātram idaṃ yad idaṃ traidhātukam iti sūtrāt | cittaṃ mano vijñānaṃ vijñaptir iti paryāyāḥ | tac ca cittam atra sasaṃprayogam abhipretam* […] |

[566] PVṬ 174a6-7: *tsam zhes bya ba smos pa gang yin pa de ni rnam par shes pa las ma gtogs pa'i don dgag pa'i phyir smos kyi | sems las byung ba rnams kyang dgag pa ma yin no |*

consciousness, as they do not exist apart from it.[567] Accordingly, strictly speaking only consciousness is real, and the *caitta*s are simply transformations of it. This suggests that the Sautrāntika interpretation of *caitta*s, as particular modes of the mind rather than real entities conjoined with it, is more compatible with this passage.

In any event, all three texts under consideration contain a detailed classification of *caitasika*s.[568] After listing the fifty-one mental concomitants (PSk 4.6-14), Vasubandhu in the PSk groups them into six categories. The first category is the universal (*sarvatraga*) concomitants containing five elements (*sparśa, manaskāra, vedanā*, *saṃjñā*, *cetanā*). The second group includes *caitta*s that are limited or bound to specific objects (*pratiniyataviṣaya*) and similarly has five elements (*chanda, adhimokṣa, smṛti, samādhi, prajñā*). The text enumerates eleven virtuous (*kuśala*) concomitants,[569] six defilements (*kleśa*) and twenty secondary defilements (*upakleśa*).[570] The last group of *caitta*s, which Vasubandhu describes as ones that can 'also be otherwise' (*anyathāpi*), includes four variable concomitants (*kaukṛtya*, *middha*, *vitarka*, *vicāra*) that can be defiling as well as non-defiling depending on the circumstances.[571]

We find essentially the same classification in the *Triṃśikā*. Although the names of some of the *caitta*s show minor differences, these changes seem to be introduced simply due to

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[567] Triṃś 1ab: ***ātmadharmopacāro hi vividho yaḥ pravartate*** | ***vijñānapariṇāme 'sau*** […] TrBh 40.7-11: *skandhā dhātava āyatanāni rūpaṃ vedanā saṃjñā saṃskārā vijñānam ity evamādiko dharmopacāraḥ* | […] *dharmāṇām ātmanaś ca vijñānapariṇāmād bahir abhāvāt* |

[568] I will not give an overall comparison of the classification of *caitta*s to be found in the PSk, Triṃś and AK(Bh), but investigate them only to the extent that is useful for discussing their role in the perceptual process. One should consult Kramer 2013a for a detailed comparison of their classification in the AKBh, Triṃś, TrBh, PSk, PSkV and also the AS and the YBh.

[569] The *kuśala caittas* are *śraddhā, hrī, apatrāpya, alobha, adveṣa, amoha, vīrya, praśrabdhi, apramāda, upekṣā, avihiṃsā*. For an English translation of the names of the virtuous *caitta*s and the *kleśa*s, see Kramer 2013a, 990-992, Engle 2009, 231.

[570] The six *kleśa*s are *rāga, pratigha, māna, avidyā, dṛṣṭi, vicikitsā*, while the twenty *upakleśas* are *krodha, upanāha, mrakṣa, pradāśa, īrṣyā, mātsarya, māyā, śāṭhya, mada, vihiṃsā, āhrīkya, anapatrāpya, styāna, auddhatya, āśraddhya, kausīdya, pramāda, muṣitasmṛtitā, vikṣepa, asamprajanya*.

[571] PSk 5.1-3: *eṣām pañca sarvatragāḥ pañca pratiniyataviṣayā ekādaśa kuśalāḥ ṣaṭ kleśā avaśiṣṭā upakleśāś catvāro 'nyathāpi* || The categories of secondary defilements and the four variable concomitants overlap to some extent. Sthiramati notes that the category of *upakleśa*s ranges from *krodha* to *asamprajanya*, but *kaukṛtya, middha, vitarka* and *vicāra*, if defiling, are also considered secondary defilements. However, they can also be virtuous (*kuśala*) or neutral (*avyākṛta*), see PSkV 34.1-7.

metrical reasons. The classification of *caitta*s is spelled out in verse 9 of the text.[572] In a similar vein to the PSk, the first group contains the universal (*sarvatraga*) concomitants with the particular *caitta*s belonging to this category also being the same. The only difference is that Vasubandhu shortens *vedanā* to *vit*, but, as Sthiramati clarifies, they are identical.[573] Instead of *pratiniyataviṣaya caitta*s, Vasubandhu calls the second category simply 'limited' (*viniyata*) concomitants, and substitutes *dhī* for *prajñā*.[574] He again differentiates three groups of morally determined *caitta*s: the virtuous (*kuśala*) ones, the defilements (*kleśa*) and the secondary defilements (*upakleśa*). We find a few variations in the names of the *caitta*s appearing in these categories as well, but they refer to the same entities.[575] Vasubandhu describes the last two pair of *caitta*s amongst the *upakleśa*s (*kaukṛtya* and *middha*, *vitarka* and *vicāra*) as being of two kinds (*dvidhā*), which is in line with his differentiation of four variable *caitta*s in the PSk. Sthiramati explains that they are of two kinds because they can be either defiled (*kliṣṭa*) or non-defiled (*akliṣṭa*). Hence, these are to be considered secondary defilements only when defiled, but not otherwise.[576]

In the AK(Bh), the universal (*sarvatraga*) and the limited (*viniyata* or *pratiniyataviṣaya*) *caitta*s are included in a single category called concomitants of 'wide extent' (*mahābhūmika*). We will look at the rationale behind the name shortly. The AK(Bh) enumerates the same ten concomitants as the PSk and the TrBh, but in a different order. The only remarkable difference is that it substitutes *mati* for *prajñā* (also called *dhī*

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[572] Triṃś 9: ***sarvatragair viniyataiḥ kuśalaiś caitasair asau | saṃprayuktā tathā kleśair upakleśais trivedanā ||***

[573] Triṃś 3cd: ***sadā sparśamanaskāravitsaṃjñācetanānvitam*** | TrBh 54.13: *vedanā vit* |

[574] TrBh 74.10: *dhīḥ prajñā* |

[575] Just to mention a few, Vasubandhu lists *apatrapā* instead of *apatrāpya*, and *ahiṃsā* instead of *avihiṃsā* in the category of virtuous concomitants. In the category of *kleśa*s, he modifies *avidyā* to *mūḍhi*, or, among the *upakleśa*s, *āhrīkya* to *āhrī* and *auddhatya* to *uddhava*. For other variations see Triṃś 10-14.

[576] TrBh 100.8-15: *ete ca catvāro dharmā dvidhā kliṣṭā akliṣṭāś ca* | […] *tatra ye kaukṛtyamiddhavitarka-vicārāḥ kliṣṭās ta evopakleśā netare* |

in the TrBh).[577] In the category of *kuśalamahābhūmika*s, which is equivalent to *kuśalacaitta*s, we find one less element than in the PSk and the TrBh as *amoha* is missing.[578] There are more significant differences in the categorisation of defilements, since the AK(Bh) introduces subcategories that are missing from the other two texts. Nonetheless, the elements of these categories greatly overlap with those enumerated amongst the *upakleśa*s in the PSk and the TrBh. However, since it is not strictly relevant to the analysis of perception, I will not discuss this topic here.[579] The AKBh also distinguishes a group of four concomitants described as undetermined (*aniyata*). This includes, as in the texts discussed previously, *kaukṛtya*, *middha*, *vitarka* and *vicāra*.[580] According to Yaśomitra's *vyākhyā*, it means that they sometimes occur in virtuous, sometimes in non-virtuous, and sometimes in neutral minds.[581]

5.2. Universal mental concomitants

After looking at a preliminary classification of the *caitta*s in the three works, I now turn to the universal (*sarvatraga*) concomitants. The category in the PSk and the *Triṃśikā* includes contact (*sparśa*), attention (*manaskāra*), sensation (*vit* or *vedanā*), ideation (*saṃjñā*), and intention (*cetanā*). Most of these are crucial for analysing perception and explaining how the sensory data is processed by the mind. When it comes to the name *sarvatraga*, we find different explanations of its meaning. In the PSkV, Sthiramati comments that, unlike the rest of the *caitta*s, the universal concomitants accompany all

[577] AK 2.24: ***vedanā cetanā saṃjñā cchandaḥ sparśo matiḥ smṛtiḥ | manaskāro 'dhimokṣaś ca samādhiḥ sarvacetasi ||*** AKBh 54.22: *matiḥ prajñā dharmapravicayaḥ |*

[578] See AK(Bh) 2.25. As Kramer (2013a, 990) points out, the reason behind it is that the AK(Bh) considers *amoha* to be part of *prajñā*, therefore it is already (implicitly) included in the first group of *caitta*s.

[579] For an exhaustive overview of the AKBh's categorisation of defilements, see Kramer 2013a, 990-995.

[580] AKBh 57.8-9: *anye 'pi cāniyatāḥ santi vitarkavicārakaukṛtyamiddhādayaḥ |* The text adds 'etc.' at the end of the list, indicating that there are more than four undetermined factors accepted by the tradition, on these see AKVy 194.24-29. See also Sangpo 2012, 765-766, n. 350.

[581] AKVy 194.23-24: *anye 'pi cāniyatā iti | ye kadācit kuśale kadācid akuśale kadācid avyākṛte cetasi bhavanti |*

instances of the mind (*sarvaṃ cittam anugacchanti*). As such they can be conjoined with defiled, undefiled or neutral states of mind in the three realms.[582] We can extract a slightly different interpretation from the *Triṃśikā*, where Vasubandhu lists the universal concomitants as accompanying all *layers* of *vijñāna*, that is the *ālayavijñāna*, the [*kliṣṭa*]*manas* and the perception of objects (*viṣayavijñapti*). This interpretation is restated by Sthiramati, who says that the universal concomitants accompany all instances of consciousnesses, adding that it means that they are invariably conjoined with the *ālayavijñāna*, the [*kliṣṭa*]*manas* as well as the *pravṛttivijñāna*s.[583] The main reason why we find two different (albeit complementary) interpretations of universality in Sthiramati's commentaries is that Vasubandhu in the PSk does not make it explicit that the *ālayavijñāna* also needs to be accompanied by *caitta*s in order to be regarded as a genuine form of *vijñāna*. As for the PSk's description of the [*kliṣṭa*]*manas*, while we get to know that it is always accompanied by four defilements,[584] Vasubandhu does not give such a clear-cut explanation of the *caitta*s belonging to it (or, as a matter of fact, to other layers of *vijñāna*) as in the *Triṃśikā*. In the latter, Vasubandhu specifies that the *ālayavijñāna* is conjoined only with the five universal *caitta*s (Triṃś 3cd), the [*kliṣṭa*]*manas* with the universal concomitants and four defilements (Triṃś 6-7ab), while the six sensory consciousnesses can be accompanied by all categories of mental concomitants (Triṃś

[582] PSkV 33.3-6: *ete hi pañca dharmāḥ sarvaṃ cittam anugacchantīti sarvatragāḥ | tathā hy ete kuśalena traidhātukenānāsraveṇa ca samprayujyante | akuśalena kāmāptena kliṣṭāvyākṛtābhyāṃ ca traidhātukābhyāṃ samprayujyante |*

[583] TrBh 72.6-9: *te punaḥ sparśamanaskārādayaḥ pañca dharmāḥ sarvacittam anugacchantīti sarvatragāḥ | tathā hy eta ālayavijñāne kliṣṭe manasi pravṛttivijñāneṣu cāviśeṣeṇa pravartante |* See also TrBh 66.16-17.

[584] PSk 17.7-8: *sadātmamohātmadṛṣṭyātmamānātmasnehādisamprayuktaṃ* […] | cf. Triṃś 6. The four are 1.) the view that considers the five aggregates to be the self or soul (*ātmadṛṣṭi* or *satkāyadṛṣṭi*); 2.) delusion regarding the self (*ātmamoha*), which is considered to be a form of ignorance (*avidyā*); 3.) pride toward having a self (*ātmamāna*); and 4.) self-love (*ātmasneha*). Although the terminology is not identical, the four defilements listed here can be identified with four of the six primary defilements, i.e. with false views (*dṛṣṭi*), confusion (*mūḍhi*), pride (*māna*) and passion (*rāga*).

9).[585] Moreover, it is emphasised both by the root text and Sthiramati's commentary that contact, attention, sensation, ideation and intention always (*sadā*) accompany the various forms of consciousnesses.[586] Therefore, the universal concomitants occur not only in all layers, but also all instances of consciousness, regardless of their moral character.

As we have seen above, the Vaibhāṣika classification of *caitta*s in the AK(Bh) differs significantly from that of the other two texts insofar as it treats the ten concomitants separated in the PSk and the *Triṃśikā* into the categories of *sarvatraga* and *viniyata* or *pratiniyataviṣaya caitta*s under the single heading *mahābhūmika*s. Nonetheless, the explanation of why they are called *mahābhūmika*s resembles that of the universal concomitants. According to the AK(Bh), they are concomitants of wide extension because they occur in 'every mind', or more explicitly, because all (*samagra*) of these ten *dharma*s are present in every moment of mind (*sarvatra cittakṣane*).[587] However, discerning their presence and individual characteristics is deemed to be utterly difficult by the text. It is likened to someone trying to tell apart the individual tastes of multiple herbs mixed together, which, however challenging, still cannot be compared to the difficulties of differentiating mental (*arūpin*) *dharma*s by the intellect (*buddhi*) (AKBh 54.24-55.2 *ad* AK 2.24). So, there is a significant difference between the AK(Bh) and Vasubandhu's Yogācāra works insofar as the former holds that there are not five but ten factors accompanying every moment of perception. Before looking at Vasubandhu's rationale

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[585] TrBh 100.16-23: *tatra yathā rūpaśabdādyupalabdhiḥ ṣaṭprakārā yathāsaṃbhavaṃ sarvaiś caitasikaiḥ saṃprayujyate sarvatragair viniyataiḥ kuśalaiḥ kleśair upakleśaiś ca* […] | *ālayavijñānan tu sarvatragaiḥ pañcabhir eva saṃprayujyate nānyaiḥ* | […] *kliṣṭaṃ manaḥ sarvatragaiḥ pañcabhiś caturbhiś ca kleśair ātmamohādibhir sadā saṃprayujyate* |

[586] Triṃś 3cd: ***sadā sparśamanaskāravitsaṃjñācetanānvitam*** | TrBh 54.12-13: *sadeti yāvad ālayavijñānaṃ tāvad ebhiḥ sparśamanaskāravedanāsaṃjñācetanākhyaiḥ pañcabhiḥ sarvatragair dharmair anvitam* | TrBh 100.22-23: *kliṣṭaṃ manaḥ sarvatragaiḥ pañcabhiś caturbhiś ca kleśair ātmamohādibhir sadā saṃprayujyate* |

[587] AKBh 54.15-16 *ad* AK 2.23cd: *tatra mahatī bhūmir eṣām iti mahābhūmikāḥ ye sarvatra cetasi bhavanti* | AKBh 54.19 *ad* AK 2.24: *ime kila daśa dharmāḥ sarvatra cittakṣaṇe samagrā bhavanti* | As evidenced by the AK(Bh), Śrīlāta, however, does not accept this interpretation of *mahābhūmika*, claiming instead that it means that they occur in all three sets of three *bhūmi*s. On these (and Śrīlāta's *cittacaitta* theory in more detail), see Dhammajoti 2007a, 114-135 (especially 120ff).

behind subscribing to another classification in his later treatises, I will discuss the five factors considered to be universal or omnipresent by all three works.

5.2.1. Contact (*sparśa*)

Looking at the AK(Bh) first, Vasubandhu explains *sparśa* as touch (*spṛṣṭi*) that arises from the convergence (*saṃnipāta*) of a sense faculty (*indriya*), a sense object (*viṣaya*) and consciousness (*vijñāna*).[588] Yaśomitra somewhat elucidates the imagery of 'touching' by saying that contact is a factor by means of which (*yadyogāt*) the faculty, the object and consciousness "as it were" touch one another.[589] By using the expression *yadyogāt*, Yaśomitra suggests that it is contact, as a distinct mental factor, that makes the sensory encounter of the three possible.[590] In another passage of the AKBh, we find that contact is the application (*abhinipāta*) of the six *āyatanas*. While the term *abhinipāta* is quite ambiguous, Yaśomitra specifies that it means activity (*pravṛtti*); in this case the activity of the sense faculties towards their respective objects.[591] The notion of *sparśa* and the issues concerning it are discussed in more detail in the *bhāṣya* on AK 3.30b, which reiterates the definition that the six kinds of contact (i.e. from visual up to mental contact) arise from the encounter of the *indriya*, *artha* and *vijñāna*.[592] As the question of an interlocutor underlines, the Vaibhāṣikas interpret convergence in line with their doctrine of simultaneous causality, since the five material *indriya*s, their objects, and the respective

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[588] AKBh 54.21-22: *sparśa indriyaviṣayavijñānasannipātajā spṛṣṭiḥ* |

[589] AKVy 187.14-15: *yadyogād indriyaviṣayavijñānāny anyonyaṃ spṛśantīva sa sparśaḥ* |

[590] In other Abhidharma texts such as Skandhila's *Abhidharmāvatāra*, *sparśa* is said to enable the mind to touch or come into contact with the object. Similar claims are made in the *Abhidharmamahāvibhāṣā Śāstra*, according to which it is a real *dharma* that allows the contact of object, *indriya* and *vijñāna* to happen. See Dhammajoti 2007a, 283-284, Sangpo 2012, 738, n. 267.

[591] AKBh 133.5 *ad* AK 3.24d: *ṣaḍāyatanābhinipātaḥ sparśaḥ* | AKVy 439.28-29: *ṣaḍāyatanābhinipātaḥ sparśa iti* | *cakṣurādīnāṃ svasmiṃ viṣaye pravṛttir abhinipātaḥ* | According to Kritzer (1999, 111-112), who investigates the conception of *sparśa* in various Abhidharma and early Yogācāra materials as a member of the *pratītyasamutpāda* formula, this second definition of contact, as we will see it shortly, is closer to the Dārṣṭāntika position.

[592] AK 3.30b: ***sparśāḥ ṣaṭ saṃnipātajāḥ*** | AKBh 143.2 *ad* 3.30b: *trayāṇāṃ saṃnipātāj jātā indriyārtha-vijñānānām* |

consciousnesses (being the effects of the first two) arise together (*sahajatva*). This conception of contact, presupposing the simultaneous presence of three factors, however, causes problems in the case of mental contact (that is, the convergence of the *manas*, the mental object and *manovijñāna*), as the *manas* is no longer present when mental consciousness arises.[593] The Vaibhāṣikas try to avoid the problem by saying that we can still talk about their encounter (*saṃnipāta*) in the sense that they stand in a cause-effect relation, or that they produce contact, as a single effect (*ekakārya*), together.[594]

Although these Vaibhāṣika definitions emphasise that contact is a distinct *dharma* arising from the encounter of three things, its reality was contested by other Ābhidharmikas.[595] The position attributed to the Sautrāntikas holds that contact is only a designation given to the event of sensory encounter itself. They cite a *sūtra* passage which states that *sparśa* is nothing else than the coming together (*saṃgati*), convergence (*saṃnipāta*) or encounter (*samavāya*) of three *dharma*s.[596] The Vaibhāṣikas, however, also appeal to a *sūtra* passage to defend their view, which, alongside the six faculties, the six objects and the six consciousnesses, lists six kinds of contacts (as well as six *vedanā*s and *tṛṣṇā*s) substantiating that contact is an entity separate from them. Otherwise, they argue, if they were the same, then the *sūtra* contains unnecessary repetition or superfluous elements.[597] They also suggest that the *sūtra* passage cited by the Sautrāntikas should be

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[593] AKBh 143.2-3: *yuktaṃ tāvat pañcānām indriyāṇām arthavijñānābhyāṃ saṃnipātaḥ | sahajatvāt | mana-indriyasya punar niruddhasyānāgatavarttamānābhyāṃ dharmamanovijñānābhyāṃ kathaṃ saṃnipātaḥ |*

[594] AKBh 143.4-6: *ayam eva teṣāṃ saṃnipāto yaḥ kāryakāraṇabhāvaḥ | ekakāryārtho vā saṃnipātārthaḥ | sarve ca te trayo 'pi sparśotpattau praguṇā bhavantīti |* The *Abhidharmamahāvibhāṣā Śāstra* also distinguishes two kinds of convergence. The first is convergence in the sense of co-arising, while the second is convergence in the sense of co-operating in accomplishing the same thing (this is identical to the second point mentioned in the AKBh with regard to mental contact), see Sango 2012, 738, n. 267.

[595] According to Kritzer (1999, 112-113), the Sarvāstivādins in their earlier texts generally considered *sparśa* a separate *dharma*, and controversies over its nature occurred in the period between the composition of the *Abhidharmapiṭaka* texts and that of the *Vibhāṣā*.

[596] AKBh 143.6-8: *kecid dhi sakṛnnipātam eva sparśaṃ vyācakṣate sūtraṃ cātra jñāpakam ānayanti iti ya eṣāṃ trayāṇāṃ dharmāṇāṃ saṃgatiḥ saṃnipātaḥ samavāyaḥ sa sparśaḥ iti |*

[597] AKBh 143.8-12: *kecit punaś cittasaṃprayuktaṃ dharmāntaram eva sparśaṃ vyācakṣate sūtraṃ cātra jñāpakam ānayanti* […] *iti atra hīndriyārthavijñānebhyaḥ sparśakāyāḥ pṛthag deśitāḥ |*

read differently, with *saṃgati*, *saṃnipāta* and *samavāya* being in ablative rather than nominative case. Accordingly, *sparśa* arises *from* the coming together, convergence or encounter of the three, and, hence, is not identical with it. They also propose that *sparśa* is said to be a cause only metaphorically, but it is actually a result.[598]

While the Sautrāntikas do not elaborate on their interpretation of *saṃnipāta* here, it is worthwhile to recall their moment-by-moment analysis of the arising of perception we looked at when investigating the Sautrāntika critique of simultaneous causality. According to Śrīlāta, in the first moment there is only the object and the *indriya,* which precede consciousness arising in the second moment. This 'coming together' (*saṃnipāta*) of the three is called contact (*sparśa*). According to Yaśomitra, the term refers to their states of being producer (*janaka*) and produced (*janita*), respectively. Contact then conditions the arising of the mental concomitant, sensation (*vedanā*), in the third moment.[599] The close relation between *sparśa* and *vedanā* is emphasised in yet another description of *sparśa* in the text (which, at first glance, reflects the Sautrāntika position) that contact being the convergence of the three can be felt as pleasurable, unpleasurable or neutral.[600]

Since the AKBh generally favours the Sautrāntika position, we might expect Vasubandhu to concede the Sautrāntika view on *sparśa* as well. Vasubandhu, however, seems to accept *sparśa* as a real *caitta*, thus taking sides with the Vaibhāṣikas.[601] The definition of *sparśa* in his Yogācāra works, however, is not entirely the same as the ones we have seen above. Vasubandhu in the PSk describes *sparśa* briefly as a 'discernment or

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[598] AKBh 143.22-23: *saṃgateḥ saṃnipātāt samavāyād iti paṭhanti kāraṇe vā kāryopacāro 'yam iti bruvanti* |

[599] AKBh 145.20-21: *indriyārthau hi pūrvānto vijñānam* | *so 'sau trayāṇāṃ saṃnipātaḥ sparśaḥ sparśapratyayāt paścād vedanā tṛtīyakṣaṇa iti* | AKVy 474.27-475.17: *tatrāpi pūrvam indriyārthau paścād vijñānam iti* | *prathamakṣaṇotpannāv indriyārthau vijñānaṃ tu dvitīye kṣaṇa iti* | […] *sparśād uttarakālaṃ vedanety apara iti bhadantaśrīlābhaḥ* | *so 'sau trayāṇāṃ sannipātaḥ sparśa iti* | *yo 'yaṃ janakajanitabhāvaḥ* | *vedanā tṛtīye kṣaṇe iti* |

[600] AKBh 140.7-8 *ad* AK 3.28ab: *trayāṇāṃ saṃnipātaḥ sparśaḥ sukhādivedanīyaḥ* | With regard to this passage Kritzer (1999, 119) notes that the Tibetan and Chinese translations read *trayāṇāṃ saṃnipātajaḥ* or *trayāṇāṃ saṃnipātāt* which confirms a Sarvāstivāda interpretation here as well.

[601] Kritzer (1999, 121) proposes that Vasubandhu in the AKBh always favours the Abhidharmic position in the debates which is in line with the Yogācāra teachings.

judgement (*pariccheda*) that arises when the three are in encounter (*samavāya*)'.[602] Sthiramati's explanation of why Vasubandhu limits himself to a concise description of the distinctive features of the concomitants, without elaborating on their functions, is that they were already explained elsewhere, presumably, having the AS in mind.[603] In line with *sparśa* being a universal concomitant, Sthiramati notes that each moment of consciousness requires the convergence (*saṃnipāta*) of a triad, which is an invariable feature of contact. As we have seen in the Abhidharmic context, he similarly identifies the triad with the faculty, the object, and consciousness.[604] If, as suggested by Sthiramati, we look at the definition of *sparśa* in the AS, we find that Vasubandhu's account shows close similarity to that, insofar as the AS explains contact as the 'discernment (*pariccheda*) of the modification of the sense faculty (*indriyavikāra*) when the three are in encounter'. The AS adds that contact has the function of providing a basis to *vedanā.*[605] The definition of the AS probably elaborates on that of the *Manobhūmi* of the YBh, according to which *sparśa*, arising from the encounter of the three, is an apprehension or ascertainment (*udgrahaṇatā*) of the pleasant, unpleasant or neutral character of the object (Kritzer 1999, 123,

[602] PSk 5.4: *sparśaḥ katamaḥ | trikasamavāye paricchedaḥ |* As we have seen from the *sūtra* passage quoted by the Sautrāntikas in the AKBh, the terms *samavāya* and *saṃnipāta* are synonymous. Kramer's (2013a, 995, 1001) comparison of the definitions of *sparśa* in various works highlights that Vasubandhu's word choice of *samavāya* differs from that of the AS, YBh and the AKBh, which all use *saṃnipāta*.

[603] PSkV 34.10-11: *iha caitasikānāṃ lakṣaṇata eva nirdeśo na karmato yathānyatra saṅkṣepasya vivakṣitatvāt |*

[604] PSkV 33.6-7: *avaśyaṃ hi sarvacittapravṛttiṣu trikasannipātena bhavitavyam trikasannipātaś ca sparśāvyabhicārīty ataḥ sparśasya sarvatragatvam* | PSkV 34.14, TrBh 54.15: *indriyaviṣayavijñānāni trīṇy eva trikam |*

[605] AS 15.18-16.1: *sparśaḥ katamaḥ | trikasannipāta indriyavikāraparicchedaḥ | vedanāsanniśrayadāna karmakaḥ |* According to Kritzer (1999, 128), the AS is the earliest source explaining contact as *indriyavikāraparicchedа*. For Kritzer's hypotheses of where the definition might spring from, see Kritzer 1999, 125-128. It is worth mentioning that in the AKBh's discussion of *pratītyasamutpāda*, *sparśa* and *pariccheda* are mentioned alongside by Vasubandhu (although not in relation to the *indriya*s), as he says that contact is a stage that lasts until the time a being is capable of discerning (*pariccheda*) whether something is a cause of pleasure, pain, etc. AKBh 132.10-11: *sa yāvad vedanātrayakāraṇaparicchedena samartho bhavati sā 'vasthā sparśa ity ucyate |* This period is identified by Yaśomitra with childhood (AKVy 438.17-20), for instance until a child is capable of determining that touching fire leads to pain.

Schmithausen 1987, 380, n. 613).[606] Even though Vasubandhu's description does not tell us what contact is a discernment or judgment *of*, based on the parallel with the AS and Sthiramati's TrBh, we can assume that it is of the modification of the sense faculty.[607] Apart from using the metaphor of touch, it is conspicuous that the Vaibhāṣika definition does not define the essence of contact intrinsically, simply stating that it arises from the convergence of three things. While the origin of Asaṅga and Vasubandhu's definition is uncertain, its revision might have been propelled by the vagueness of the Vaibhāṣika definition.

Returning to Sthiramati's comments in the PSk and the TrBh, he interprets 'encounter' (*samavāya*) as the members of the triad standing in a cause-effect relation (i.e. the object and the faculty are the causes of consciousness).[608] Assuming that Vasubandhu's and Sthiramati's interpretation of *sparśa* are in line with the Vaibhāṣika conception, the natural reading of this claim is that their encounter or causal relationship is considered to be simultaneous, rather than successive. Suggesting the simultaneity of this event, Sthiramati notes that at the very same time (*samakāla*) the convergence of the triad occurs, the sense faculty undergoes a modification (*vikāra*) that is favourable to the arising of pleasurable, unpleasurable, or neutral sensations. On Sthiramait's interpretation, change (*vikāra*) refers to that distinctive property of the faculty here by reason of which it serves as the cause (*hetu*) of a pleasurable, unpleasurable or netural sensation. In conformity with the change in the faculty, there is a discernment of the form (*ākāra*) of the object, which is to be felt as pleasurable, unpleasurable or neutral. This is described, according to Sthiramati, as

[606] Kritzer (1999, 123) notes that the definitions of *sparśa* in the earliest Yogācāra materials in general reflect the Sarvāstivāda explanation.

[607] TrBh 54.14: *tatra sparśas trikasaṃnipāta indriyavikāraparicchedaḥ* |

[608] PSkV 34.14-15: *tasya kāryakāraṇabhāvena samavasthānaṃ samavāyaḥ* | cf. TrBh 54.16.

contact.[609] The idea that the object is discerned in terms of the three kinds of sensation recalls the explanation of the YBh that *sparśa* is an apprehension or ascertainment (*udgrahaṇatā*) of the pleasant, unpleasant or neutral character of the object. Sthiramati therefore seems to introduce a two-step (but not successive) process here, which eventually leads to the arising of a certain type of sensation with regard to the object of perception. On this account, as we have also seen it in the AS, contact is characterised as giving a basis (*saṃniśraya*) for sensation (*vedanā*).[610]

Considering Sthiramati's remarks, it is somewhat ambiguous why contact is defined as a discernment of the change of the faculty, when it is actually the discernment of the form of the object. Sthiramati in his attempt to alleviate this tension gives two etymologcal explanations for *sparśa*. He says that by conforming to the modification of the faculty, *sparśa* touches or makes contact with (*spṛśati*) the faculty, or, conversely, it is touched by (*spṛśyate*) the faculty.[611] In the TrBh, he adds that in light of these explanations, even though contact has the nature of the discernment of the modification of the object, it is said to be the discernment of the modification of the faculty.[612] It is not mentioned by Sthiramati, but a possible explanation of why there is a greater emphasis on the modification of the *indriya* than the object might be related to the concept of *āśraya* we looked at in the third chapter. There Vasubandhu declared that the faculty serves as the

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[609] PSkV 34.15-35.1, TrBh 54.16-56.3: *tasmin sati tatsamakālam evendriyasya sukhādivedanānukūlo yo vikāras tena sadṛśo viṣayasya sukhādivedanīyākāraparicchedo yaḥ sa sparśaḥ | indriyaṃ punar yena viśeṣeṇa sukhaduḥkhādihetutvaṃ pratipadyate sa tasya vikāraḥ* […] |

[610] PSkV 35.3: *vedanāsanniśrayatvam asya karma* | cf. TrBh 54.14-15. This idea is in conformity with the *pratītyasamutpāda* formula, insofar as contact as the sixth link of dependent origination, gives rise to *vedanā*, the seventh link. Following the *sūtra*s, contact is described by Sthiramati as what is to be felt as pleasurable (*sukhavedanīyaṃ*), etc., while *vedanā* is the sensation of pleasure (etc.) itself, or pleasure that has been experienced (*sukhaṃ veditam*), see PSkV 35.3-4, TrBh 56.6-7. The close relationship of contact and *vedanā* is underlined in the AK(Bh) as well, which differentiates three types of contact depending on the type of sensation they are favourable to, see AKBh *ad* AK 3.31d. That contact is causally efficacious in producing *vedanā* is one of the main reasons of why it is regarded as a real entity by the Sarvāstivādins, see Sharf 2016, 782-783.

[611] PSkV 35.2: *sādṛśyenendriyaṃ spṛśatīndriyeṇa vā spṛśyata iti sparśa* | TrBh 56.3-4: *sparśaḥ punar indriyavikārasādṛśyenendriyaṃ spṛśatīndriyeṇa vā spṛśyata iti sparśa ucyate* |

[612] TrBh 56.5: *ata eva viṣayavikāraparicchedātmako 'pīndriyavikāraparicchedа uktaḥ* |

āśraya of perception since the modification (*vikāra*) of the faculty brings about a change in the respective consciousnesses as well. The object, on the other hand, does not have the same effect on consciousness. According to Yaśomitra, these modifications include for example that consciousness arises accompanied by pleasant (*sukha*) or unpleasant (*duḥkha*) sensation. It is, however, the state of the *indriya* that is dominant in determining the nature of consciousness, since the object (for example, in the case of someone who is indifferent towards them) does not have the capacity in and of itself to modify consciousness. The altered state of the faculties (e.g. *timira* or *jaundice*), however, necessarily brings about a change in the mode of consciousness.[613]

As we have seen, most of Sthiramati's explanations in the TrBh and the PSkV are identical. While we can find some differences or additional remarks in the TrBh compared to the PSkV, these are not related to the idealist context of the *Triṃśikā*. Sthiramati in his explanation of *sparśa* appeals to the traditional Abhidharmic model of perception and takes most of his interpretations over from the PSkV, without feeling the need to adjust them. As we have seen, a possible explanation of this might be that he finds the Abhidharmic framework acceptable as a phenomenological description of perception. In any event, what follows from the above analysis is that the Abhidharmic and Yogācāra interpretations of contact differ but are not incompatible. On the Sautrāntika interpretation, it is a nominal entity used to describe sensory encounter itself. According to the Vaibhāṣikas, it is a real entity that arises from the encounter of the object, faculty and consciousness, conditions sensation, and can be analysed in terms of whether it is favourable to pleasurable, unpleasurable or neutral sensations. In the Yogācāra understanding, the convergence of the triad is still a necessary element of contact, but it is

[613] A similar idea is hinted at in the *Cheng weishi lun*: "The transformative power of the sense organ is greater than that of consciousness or the object in leading to the arising of contact, and thus the *Abhidharmasamuccaya* and other texts talk about [contact] only in terms of the transformation of the organ." For the translation, see Sharf 2016, 783.

described more precisely as a discernment or distinct apprehension of the pleasurable, unpleasurable or neutral character of the object through the medium of the faculty.

5.2.2. Attention (*manaskāra* or *manasikāra*)

The second universal mental concomitant, which is also highly relevant to our analysis of perception, is attention (*manaskāra*). Its importance, as we have seen earlier, is underlined in the PSkV as well. In his description of the four conditions for perception, Sthiramati cites a *sūtra* passage according to which consciousness comes into being when the sense faculty is unimpaired and the object and attention (*manasikāra*) are present.[614] In this account, *manasikāra* is understood by Sthiramati as an equivalent of *samanantarapratyaya*, that is the previous moment of consciousness, the *manas*. If we look at the definition of *manaskāra* in the works under consideration, we find a remarkable agreement with all of them defining it as the 'bending or turning (*ābhoga*) of the mind (*cetas*)'.[615] Accordingly, Sthiramati in the PSkV as well as the TrBh describes the function of *manaskāra* as turning the mind towards the object.[616] In order to emphasise its importance in the arising of consciousness, he also says that the mind could not engage with the object if it was not turned towards it.[617]

Even though it is not mentioned by Vasubandhu himself, according to Sthiramati, *manaskāra* also has the function of keeping (*dhāraṇa*) the mind on the object. In this respect he seems to follow the AS (15.18). Sthiramati might have seen this statement as a controversial point, potentially provoking the charge of contradicting the doctrine of momentariness, therefore he added that by 'keeping' he means the repeated but individual

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[614] PSkV 90.15-91.3: *tathā hi sūtre 'py uktam cakṣur aparibhinnaṃ bhavati rūpāṇy ābhāsagatāni tajjaś ca manasikāraḥ pratyupasthito bhavati evam tajjasya cakṣurvijñānasya prādurbhāvo bhavatīti* |

[615] PSk 5.5: *manaskāraḥ katamaḥ* | *cetasa ābhogaḥ* | cf. AS 15.18, AKBh 54.23, TrBh 56.8. See Kramer's (2013a, 1014) table as well. Sthiramati gives *ābhujana* (similarly meaning bending or curving) as a synonym for *ābhoga*, see TrBh 56.8., PSkV 35.5-6.

[616] TrBh 56.8-9, PSkV 35.6: *ālambane yena cittam abhimukhīkriyate* |

[617] PSkV 33.8-9: *nirābhogasya cittasyālambane pravṛttyabhāvān manaskāro 'pi sarvatragaḥ* |

acts of turning the mind to the object.[618] Similar ideas are echoed in Yaśomitra's AKVy, who also enumerates these two functions of *manaskāra,* even though the second one does not occur in the pertinent passage of the AK(Bh). He also offers an etymological explanation according to which attention is called *manaskāra* because it is the activity of the mind, or because *manaskāra* is a factor that 'makes the mind' to turn, as we have seen, towards the object.[619]

Based on its two functions, Sthiramati draws a distinction between two kinds of *manaskāra* in order to separate the term's meditative and ordinary usages.[620] He says that the activity of keeping the mind on the object pertains to the kind of attention which is peculiar to the mental continuum (*cittasantati*) being restricted to or fixed on a (single) object, but not to the sort of attention that occurs in each individual moment of the mind.[621] In the TrBh, he clarifies that the latter form of *manaskāra* functions in individual moments, but not in the next moments (as well).[622] What seems to emerge from this passage is a distinction between a momentary and a sustained sense of *manaskāra.* If we consider a particular moment of perception in isolation, *manaskāra* simply refers to the mind's directedness on an object. It evokes the idea of intentionality, meaning that perception always attends to some object, as well as of selective attention, in as much as we always focus our attention on some particular part of the vast array of information our senses receive. For instance, visual perception has to be restricted to a particular object or part of the visual field, since it cannot take in all the information presented to it. According to the sustained sense, the mind is capable of keeping its attention on a particular object for

[618] TrBh 56.9-10, PSkV 35.7-8: *sa punar ālambane cittadhāraṇakarmakaḥ | cittadhāraṇaṃ punas tatraivālambane punaḥ punaś cittasyāvarjanam |*

[619] AKVy 187.21-23: *ālambane cetasa āvarjanam | avadhāraṇam ity arthaḥ | manasaḥ kāro manaskāraḥ | mano vā karoti āvarjayatīti manaskāraḥ |*

[620] As Kramer (2020, 329-330) points out, the Yogācāra modifies the concept of *manaskāra* insofar as it is also applied to spiritual practice.

[621] TrBh 56.10-12, PSkV 35.8-10: *etac ca karma cittasantater ālambananiyamena viśiṣṭaṃ manaskāram adhikṛtyoktaṃ na tu yaḥ praticittakṣaṇaṃ |*

[622] TrBh 56.12: *tasya hi pratikṣaṇam eva vyāpāro na kṣaṇāntare |*

successive moments of consciousness, which, from a Buddhist perspective, is especially important in a meditative context.[623] Sthiramati here cites a quote (presumably to illustrate the sustained form of attention) according to which one who has attained *manaskāra* (*manaskāralābhin*) has attained concentration (*samādhilābhin*). As he clarifies, the quote talks about a peculiar form of *manaskāra*, and not our common, object-oriented attention. Otherwise, all beings would constantly be in the state of meditative concentration (*samādhi*), since (the ordinary form of) *manaskāra* is present in each and every moment of consciousness of all beings.[624]

Sthiramati's remarks, however, raise some questions. As we have seen, he distinguishes between two forms of *manaskāra*: one that is extended in time and has the same object (qualitatively, not numerically, since, considering the teaching of momentariness, the object is always numerically different), while the other exists only in a single moment and can have different objects in different moments. However, as Sthiramati's earlier comment indicates, the sustained form of *manaskāra* is still reducible to individual moments of *manaskāra*s following one another and as such does not *really* exist. And insofar as he identifies *samādhi* with this sustained form of *manaskāra* (which, however, is not made entirely clear by him), Sthiramati's line of thought also suggests that *samādhi* is only a nominally existing entity, and not a real *dharma*.[625] Another related problem is that Sthiramati at this point leaves unspecified what, if anything, differentiates *samādhi* from ordinary forms of sustained attention, such as concentrating on the screen of the computer for a few consecutive moments.[626] Perhaps he posits two forms of sustained attention, but

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[623] The discussion of the meditative application of *manaskāra*, however, is beyond the scope of this thesis.

[624] PSkV 10-13: *yad apy atra nidarśanam ucyate samādhilābhī manaskāralābhīty ucyata iti tatra viśiṣṭa-manaskāralābhād eva manaskāralābhīty ucyate | anyathā hi sarvasattvā eva manaskāralābhinaḥ syuḥ sarveṣāṃ praticittakṣaṇaṃ manaskārabhāvāt* ||

[625] The reality of *samādhi* as a distinct *dharma* is nonetheless a controversial issue in the AK(Bh). For the debates about it see AK 8.1 and its commentary.

[626] We will, however, see some of its specific features when discussing *samādhi* as a limited mental concomitant.

it is not elaborated or argued for in the text.[627] It is nonetheless worth highlighting again that Vasubandhu sticks to his Abhidharmic definition of *manaskāra* and does not engage with its temporally extended aspect, which causes problems in Sthiramati's analysis.

5.2.3. Sensation (*vedanā*)

We are already familiar with certain features of the third universal *caitta* mentioned by Vasubandhu; sensation (*vedanā* or *vit*). According to contemporary philosophers, mental states (including perceptions) have two key features: intentionality and phenomenal character. While investigating the conception of *manaskāra*, we have seen how it might fit the idea that perceptions are intentional states, i.e. are directed on particular objects. The phenomenal character of a mental state on the other hand concerns how a mental state is felt, that is its experiential or qualitative aspect (Mendelovici and Bourget 2020). This is where the conception of *vedanā* comes into play. As we learn from Sthiramati, *vedanā* is a universal concomitant because an instance of *citta* cannot exist without having a (phenomenal) experience (*anubhava*).[628] According to Vasubandhu's definition in the PSk, which is parallel with that of the AK(Bh), *vedanā* is three kinds of experience (*anubhava*), that of pleasure (*sukha*), unpleasure (*duḥkha*) and neutral (*'duḥkhāsukha*) sensation. Something is pleasurable if we have the desire to reunite with it after it has ceased. A thing is unpleasurable, if we want to separate ourselves from it once it has arisen, and neutral (literally neither pleasurable nor unpleasurable) when none of these desires arise with regard to it.[629]

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[627] Sharf (2016, 785-787) raises similar concerns regarding Sthiramati's PSkV, setting it against the *Cheng weishi lun*'s criticism of Sthiramati's account.

[628] PSkV 33.9-10: *niranubhavasya nimittodgrahaṇanirapekṣasya ca cittasyābhāvād vedanāsañjñayor api sarvatragatvam* |

[629] PSk 3.10-13: *vedanā katamā* | *trividho 'nubhavaḥ sukho duḥkho 'duḥkhāsukhaś ca* | *sukho yasya nirodhe saṃyogacchando bhavati* | *duḥkho yasyotpādād viyogacchando bhavati* | *aduḥkhāsukho yasyotpādāt tad-ubhayam na bhavati* || cf. AK 1.14c and AKBh 10.14-15, AKBh 54.19-20 *ad* AK 2.24. While pleasure and pain (if not indifference) are paradigmatic examples for the phenomenal character of mental states, in contemporary usage the concept has a much broader spectrum, including every state for which there is

When analysing *sparśa* we have seen that contact conditions the arising of *vedanā*. Relying on the *sūtra*s, Sthiramati noted that while contact is what is to be felt as pleasurable, unpleasurable or neutral, *vedanā* is sensation itself. Relatedly, in the TrBh he claims that *vedanā* is experience in its essence.[630] The PSkV offers two interpretations of its function. Firstly, that *vedanā* as an experience makes the pleasurable, unpleasurable, or neutral nature (*svarūpa*) of the object evident (*sākṣātkarana*), and secondly that it experiences (*anubhavati*) the pleasurable, painful or neutral nature of the object.[631] These two interpretations also occur in Yaśomitra's AKVy, which adds a third interpretation of *vedanā* as the factor by reason of which the object is experienced (as pleasurable, unpleasurable or neutral).[632] It is worthwhile to point out that neutral (*'duḥkhāsukha*) sensation is considered a sensation on its own right, and not just a lack of the other two; otherwise *vedanā* would not count as a universal mental concomitant.[633] According to Sthiramati, we know about its existence from two sources: scripture and reasoning. He explains that sometimes we observe instances of the mind when neither pleasant nor unpleasant sensations are present. A moment of mind, however, cannot arise without

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something it is like to be in that state, e.g. the feeling of hot or cold, seeing colours, the sensation of nausea, etc. The examination of the question whether perception ultimately has a phenomenal character, or it is only illusory, that is, mistakenly superimposed by our higher-order cognitions, is beyond the scope of our discussion which rather stays on the level of the phenomenological datum one can give different metaphysical explanations for. For recent "illusionist" accounts of Yogācāra theory of consciousness, see Garfield 2016.

630 TrBh 56.13: *vedanā anubhavasvabhāvā* | See also TrBh 128.16-17. Cf. PSkV 31.17: *vedanā hy upabhogavastu* | In the PSkV (24.15), Sthiramati regards *anubhūti* (also meaning experience) as a synonym for *anubhava*. Yaśomitra in AKVy (48.12) adds *upabhoga* (enjoyment).

631 PSkV 24.15-25.2: *anubhūtir anubhavo vastuno hlādaparitāpatadubhayākāravinirmuktasvarūpasākṣāt-karanaḥ | athavā hlādaparitāpobhayākāravinirmuktaṃ vastusvarūpam anubhavatīty anubhavaḥ* | The first explanation can be found in the TrBh as well, with minor differences in the phrasing, see TrBh 56.13-14.

632 AKVy 48.13-15: *vastuno hlādaparitāpatadubhayavinirmuktasvarūpasākṣātkaraṇasvabhāvaḥ | anubhūyate vānena viṣaya ity anubhavaḥ | anubhavatīti vānubhavaḥ |*

633 Philosophers and psychologists have long debated over the possibility of completely neutral or indifferent sensations. While for instance Locke (*An Essay Concerninig Human Understanding*, II.xx.2, II.vii.2.) thought that there are, though pretty rarely, sensations without any pain or pleasure attached to them, Leibniz (*New Essay on Human Understanding* II.xx.2) and Berkeley (*Notebooks* 833) believed that no sensation can be completely indifferent to the perceiver. It is either that we do not notice that it is more or less pleasurable than painful, or that they are in equilibrium. But there are no sensations void of any pain and pleasure.

sensation, therefore there must be a third kind of sensation, which is also confirmed by the *sūtra*s.[634]

Besides the above-mentioned two interpretations of *vedanā*, Sthiramati also engages with the opinion of various Abhidharma scholars. He criticises the view of Saṃghabhadra who proposes that *vedanā* must be the experiencing of contact, and not of an object, otherwise we could not tell sensation apart from other mental concomitants sharing the same object.[635] Sthiramati asks rhetorically that if a mental factor such as ideation (*saṃjñā*) can be differentiated from other *caitta*s having the same object on account of its distinct activity (i.e. grasping the characteristics of objects), then why *vedanā* cannot be defined as the *experiencing* of an object?[636] Furthermore, in his view, the claim that *vedanā* is the 'experiencing of contact' can be understood in two ways, both of which raise concerns. The first possible interpretation is that sensation accompanies contact. This, however, is equally true of other *caitta*s as well, so it cannot distinguish *vedanā* from other mental concomitants. The second interpretation is that contact serves as the cause of sensation, which, again, applies to the rest of the *caitta*s as well.[637] Saṃghabhadra's opinion therefore is problematic, which is also substantiated by the fact that neither in ordinary usage nor in the philosophical treatises the term 'experience' is understood as a

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[634] PSkV 25.3-7: *kathaṃ punaḥ sukhaduḥkhavyatirikto 'nyas tṛtīyo 'nubhavo 'stīti vijñāyate | āgamād yuktiś ca |* […] *vedanāvirahitacittotpattyabhāvād apetasukhaduḥkhacittopalabdheś ceti |*

[635] PSkV 25.7-12: *vedanānubhavaḥ sparśasyety ācāryasaṅghabhadraḥ | iṣṭāniṣṭobhayaviparītānāṃ sparśānām anubhavaḥ sā vedanā |* […] *yadi ca viṣayānubhavo vedanā syāt ekālambanebhyo 'sya ko viśeṣaḥ syāt |* The interpretation that *vedanā* is an experiencing of contact is mentioned by Yaśomitra as well, see AKVy 48.15-16.

[636] PSkV 25.14-15: *athaikālambanebhyo nimittodgrahaṇādibhiḥ saṅjñādīnāṃ viśeṣa ucyate vedanāyā viṣayānubhavena kiṃ neṣyate |*

[637] PSkV 25.15-19: *sparśānubhavaś ca tatsamprayogaḥ kāraṇabhāvo vā parikalpyeta tadālambanatvāsambhavāt | tatra na bhavet samprayogaḥ sarvacaittānāṃ sparśasamprayogāviśeṣāt | nāpi kāraṇabhāvaḥ sarvacaittānāṃ sparśasya kāraṇatvāviśeṣāt |* On this argument, see also Kramer 2012, 122.

cause or result, but rather as a factor that makes something directly evident, namely, as we have seen above, the phenomenal character of the object.[638]

Based on the phrasing of Sthiramati's explanations of *vedanā* as a factor that makes evident or experiences the pleasurable, unpleasurable, or neutral nature of the object, one might think that the objects intrinsically, or irrespective of the perceiving subject, possess a nature that can be described in terms of the three sensations.[639] What makes his subsequent interpretation especially important is that it connects *vedanā* with the maturation of one's *karman* and thus forestalls this unwanted implication. Accordingly, a particular sensation experienced by an individual is the result of the maturation of their good or bad *karman*, for instance pleasure is the maturation of good *karman*.[640] While this interpretation, according to Sthiramati, needs to be reconsidered, he does not reject it outright. This is corroborated by the fact that when in his commentary on the *saṃskāra* section of the PSk he recapitulates the essential features of *vedanā*, he gives almost the same description.[641] According to Sthiramati, the main problem with this explanation is that, in line with the principles of karmic maturation (laid out among others in AK 2.57a), the effects of maturation are always unobscured by defilements and karmically indeterminate (*anivṛtāvyākṛta*). Hence, ultimately only the *ālayavijñāna* and the neutral sensation (also called *upekṣā*, i.e. equanimity) accompanying it arise from the maturation of good and bad *karman*, but not the other sensations. The latter can only be said to result from maturation metaphorically (or indirectly), on account of coming forth from the effect of maturation,

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[638] PSkV 25.19-26.1: *na ca loke śāstre vānubhavaśabdaḥ kārye kāraṇe vā prasiddhaḥ | prasiddhas tu sākṣātkāre |*

[639] The additional explanation introduced by Yaśomitra avoids this problem by saying that *vedanā* is the factor due to which the object is experienced *as* having a certain phenomenal character.

[640] PSkV 26.1-3: *evaṃ tu manyante śubhāśubhānāṃ karmaṇāṃ phalavipākaṃ pratyanubhavanty anenety anubhavaḥ | tatra śubhānāṃ karmaṇāṃ sukho 'nubhavaḥ phalavipākaḥ* […] |

[641] See also PSkV 31.17-18: *tathā hi vedanayā śubhāśubhānāṃ karmaṇāṃ phalavipākam anubhavati |*

that is the *ālayavijñāna*.[642] As Sthiramati's discussion of *vedanā* in the TrBh clarifies, both the *ālayavijñāna* and the *[kliṣṭa]manas* are accompanied by the sensation of *upekṣā*, while the sense perceptions can be of all three kinds, that is pleasurable, unpleasurable or neutral.[643]

In the rest of the PSkV, Sthiramati discusses Vasubandhu's descriptions of pleasurable, unpleasurable, and neutral entities, and puts forward various classifications of sensations following the AK(Bh) and the AS.[644] While these are not strictly related to the analysis of perception, it is worth noting that for instance he classifies *vedanā* into six types depending on the *āśraya* on the basis of which it arises. Thus, he differentiates sensation that arises through the support of the eye from that which is supported by the ear and so on. The same classification occurs in the AS and the AK(Bh) with the exception that these are more precise in specifying that visual sensation arises from the *contact* that involves the eye, the ear, etc.[645] Another classification concerns whether a sensation arises from a material *indriya* and hence is bodily (*kāyika*), or from the mind and hence mental (*caitasika*).[646]

5.2.4. Ideation (*saṃjñā*)

Of the five universal concomitants, *saṃjñā* (variously translated as ideation, recognition, conception, discrimination, perception, etc.) and the conceptual or non-conceptual nature

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[642] PSkV 26.4-5: *atra cālayavijñānam eva śubhāśubhakarmavipākaḥ | tatsamprayuktaivopekṣā paramārthataḥ śubhāśubhānāṃ karmaṇāṃ vipākaḥ | sukhaduḥkhayos tu vipākajatvād vipākopacāraḥ |* The question wether *vedanā* is an effect of maturation or not is discussed at length in AK 2.10ac and its *bhāṣya.*

[643] See TrBh 100.16-24. Even though both the *ālayavijñāna* and the *kliṣṭamanas* are accompanied by the sensation of *upekṣā*, the *ālayavijñāna*, as we have just seen, is unobscured by defilements and karmically indeterminate (*anivṛtāvyākṛta*), while the *kliṣṭamanas* is obscured by defilements and karmically indeterminate (*nivṛtāvyākṛta*).

[644] On the categories Sthiramati borrows from the AS, see Kramer 2012, 121-122.

[645] PSkV 28.1-2: *eṣa tu trividho 'nubhavaḥ pratyekam āśrayabhedāt punaḥ ṣaḍvidho bhavati cakṣuḥśrotra-ghrāṇarasanakāyamanaḥsaṃsparśajatvāt |* AKBh 10.14-15: *sa punar bhidyamānaḥ ṣaḍ vedanākāyāḥ cakṣuḥsaṃsparśajā vedanā yāvan manaḥsaṃsparśajā vedaneti |* cf. AS$_P$ 4.15-16.

[646] PSkV 28.3-4: *punar ādheyasaṅkalanato dvidhā bhidyate kāyikaś caitasikaś ceti |* cf. AS$_P$ 4.23-25, AKBh 145.2-3 *ad* AK 3.32b., see also AK(Bh) 2.7.

of perception have received the most scholarly attention in the recent years.[647] In the PSk, Vasubandhu defines *saṃjñā* as the grasping of the marks or characteristics (*nimitta*) of the object.[648] The same definition appears in the TrBh and, with slight differences in phrasing, in the AK(Bh) as well.[649] Vasubandhu in the PSk does not specify what kind of characteristics (*nimitta*) are discerned by *saṃjñā*, but he gives a long list of examples in the AKBh, for instance that someone or something is blue or yellow, long or short, male or female, friend or enemy, pleasurable or unpleasurable.[650] When explaining the meaning of *nimitta*, Sthiramati in the PSkV and the TrBh gives similar examples. He defines *nimitta* as the distinguishing feature (*viśeṣa*) of the object, which is the cause of determining (*vyavasthā*) whether an object is blue or yellow, etc.[651] Relatedly, the grasping (*udgrahaṇa*) of the characteristics of the object means that one makes, concerning for instance a blue object, a determination (*nirūpaṇa*) that 'this is blue' or (in the case of a yellow object) that 'this is yellow'. The latter sentence is phrased slightly differently in the TrBh saying that 'grasping' is making a determination that 'this is blue and *not* yellow'.[652] The point of the two passages, however, is the same; by virtue of *saṃjñā* one is able to identify or recognise the distinguishing features of objects, tell entities apart based on their dissimilar characteristics, and assign names to and make judgements about them. That the

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[647] Besides *saṃjñā*, there are other mental concomitants that are associated with conceptual knowledge or contribute to the conceptual character of consciousness, most notably *prajñā*, *smṛti*, *vitarka* or *vicāra*. I will discuss them briefly in the next section of this chapter. The topic of conceptuality and non-conceptuality have been investigated among others by Kramer 2012 and 2018 in the Yogācāra tradition, Sharf 2018 in various Abhidharma sources, or, in both, by Yao 2021.

[648] PSk 4.1: *saññā katamā | viṣayanimittodgrahaṇam |*

[649] TrBh 56.26: *saṃjñā viṣayanimittodgrahaṇam* | AK 1.14cd: ***saṃjñā nimittodgrahaṇātmikā*** || AKBh 54.20-21 *ad* AK 2.24: *saṃjñā saṃjñānaṃ viṣayanimittodgrahaḥ |*

[650] AKBh 10.17-18: *yāvan nīlapītadīrghahrasvastrīpuruṣamitrāmitrasukhaduḥkhādinimittodgrahaṇam asau saṃjñāskandhaḥ |*

[651] A very similar explanation is given by Yaśomitra, see AKVy 48.18: *nimittaṃ vastuno 'vasthāviśeṣo nīlatvādi* | See also AKVy 187.12-13: *viṣayanimittagrāha iti | viṣayaviśeṣarūpagrāha ity arthaḥ |*

[652] PSkV 29.10-12: *viṣaya ālambanam | nimittaṃ viṣayaviśeṣaḥ nīlapītādy ālambanavyavasthākāraṇam | tasyodgrahaṇaṃ nīlanirūpaṇam nīlam etat pītam etad iti* | cf. TrBh 56.26-28. TrBh 56.27-28: *tasyodgrahaṇaṃ nirūpaṇaṃ nīlam etan na pītam iti* | According to Yaśomitra, the term *udgrahaṇa* is synonymous with *pariccheda*, i.e. discernment, or more literally 'delimitation', see AKVy 48.19 and 209.10-11.

activity of *saṃjñā* is closely related to naming is made even more evident in Sthiramati's definition of *saṃjñā*, which he gives when commenting on the *saṃskāra* section of the PSk. According to that passage, *saṃjñā* has the nature of applying designations or expressions (*vyavahāra*). As Sthiramati says, by virtue of it, one grasps the characteristics of objects that are seen, heard, cognised, etc. and applies conventional designations to them such as 'it is seen' or 'it is heard'.[653]

Nonetheless, he is compelled to refine his claims and make a distinction between the degrees of conceptualisation accompanying the five *vijñāna*s and the *manovijñāna* as an interlocutor argues that the sort of *saṃjñā* accompanying the eye consciousnesses, etc. cannot have the nature of grasping the marks of an object, since these do not discriminate the features of objects in the conceptual or linguistic way assumed by Sthiramati.[654] While it is not explicitly said, the context makes it clear that the 'etc.' (*ādi*) in the opponent's critique refers only to the five sense consciousnesses, but not the mental consciousness. The opponent's remark touches on an important tension concerning the notion of *saṃjñā*. One the one hand, if it is a universal concomitant, then it should be present in all kinds of consciousness, including the sense consciousnesses. The sense consciousnesses, however, are seemingly non-conceptual. On the other hand, if it is indeed a universal factor, then its definition as the grasping of the characteristics of objects in a conceptual or linguistic way needs to be reconsidered to be applicable to sense perception.

That the sense consciousnesses are non-conceptual, while the mental consciousness is conceptual is a distinction adopted in various Abhidharma texts, including the AK(Bh),[655]

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[653] PSkV 31.18-32.2: *sañjñā vyavahāravastu | sañjñayā hi dṛṣṭaśrutamatavijñāteṣv artheṣu nimittam udgṛhya dṛṣṭādiṣu dṛṣṭaśrutamatavijñātā iti lokaḥ saṃvyavahāre pravartate* […] | The relation of *saṃjñā* to the application of language is emphasised for example in the *Abhidharmāvatāra* as well, which holds that ideation has the function of conceptually combining together a characteristic (*nimitta*) with a name (*nāman*) and a meaning (*artha*), see Dhammajoti 2007a, 107, Sharf 2018, 847.

[654] PSkV 29.12–13: *evaṃ tarhi cakṣurādivijñānasamprayuktā sañjñā viṣayanimittodgrahaṇātmikā na syāt viśeṣāsaṃlakṣaṇāt |*

[655] On the early Buddhist accounts of non-conceptual perception, see Sharf 2018.

and also appears in *Viṃśikā* 16. While, as we have seen earlier, the main purpose of the passage is to challenge the direct realist account of perception or perceptual knowledge by using a so-called time-lag argument, it also reveals that Vasubandhu divides the cognition of an object into two subsequent moments. Visual consciousness, which arises in the first moment, does not involve discernment or judgement (*pariccheda*) suggesting that it is understood as an instance of non-conceptual, bare awareness. The object is discerned only in the second moment (when the visual consciousness is no longer present) by the mental consciousness.[656] Being preoccupied with other concerns, Vasubandhu does not elaborate on the nature of these two moments of perception or the problems regarding the universality of *saṃjñā*.

We get to know a bit more about these issues from the AK(Bh). A rather well-known passage of the text that expresses the difference between the conceptual and non-conceptual nature of the mental and the sensory consciousnesses, respectively, asserts that by virtue of the eye-consciousness one knows blue but does not know 'this is blue'. However, by the mental consciousness one knows both blue and that 'this is blue'.[657] According to Yaśomitra, the latter claim means that the *manovijñāna* knows the name of the object.[658] The broader context of the AKBh's remark is the differentiation between two forms of contact called "resistance-contact" (*pratighasaṃsparśa*) and "designation-contact" (*adhivacanasparśa*). The first refers to the five forms of bodily contact, because their *āśraya*s i.e. the *indriya*s, are resistant, while the second to mental contact, since designation (*adhivacana*) or name (*nāman*) is the preeminent or additional (*adhika*) object

[656] These two moments of perception are often described by the terms *nirvikalpa* and *savikalpa* perception, see e.g. Tola and Dragonetti 2004, 111-113 or Coseru 2012.

[657] AKBh 144.2-4 *ad* AK 3.30cd: *yathoktaṃ cakṣurvijñānena nīlaṃ vijānāti no tu nīlaṃ manovijñānena nīlaṃ vijānāti nīlam iti ca vijānātīti* | The second *nīlaṃ* should be understood as *nīlaṃ iti.*

[658] AKVy 471.20: *nīlam iti ca vijānātīti* | *asyārthasyedaṃ nāmeti vijānāti* |

of mental contact.[659] The AKBh also mentions the interpretation that mental contact is called designation-contact, because the *manovijñāna*, in contrast to the five *vijñāna*s, operates with regard to its objects by appointing or assigning (*adhikṛtya*) words (*vacana*).[660]

Another passage of the AKBh worth mentioning in this context describes the Vaibhāṣika position that the five *vijñāna*s are non-conceptual (*avikalpaka*) because they are free from two of the three kinds of conceptualisation (*vikalpa*): conceptualisation consisting in recollection (*anusmaraṇavikalpa*), and conceptualisation consisting in determination (*abhinirūpaṇāvikalpa*). These are later (see AKBh 22.25-26) associated with the mental concomitants *smṛti* and *prajñā*, respectively, which I will look at briefly in the following section.[661] The sense consciousnesses, however, are not free from intrinsic conceptualisation (*svabhāvavikalpa*), which is identified with the mental concomitant called coarse examination (*vitarka*). Even though, according to the Vaibhāṣikas, the five sense consciousnesses are accompanied by this rudimentary or rough form of conceptualisation, they can still be considered non-conceptual in a way a horse with only one leg can be called a horse without legs.[662] That Vasubandhu himself did not subscribe

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[659] AKBh 143.26-144.2: *cakṣuḥśrotraghrāṇajihvākāyasaṃsparśāḥ pañca pratighasaṃsparśa ity ucyate | sapratighendriyāśrayatvāt | manaḥsaṃsparśaḥ ṣaṣṭhaḥ so 'dhivacanasparśa ity ucyate | kiṃ kāraṇaṃ adhivacanam ucyate nāma | tatkilāsyādhikam ālambanam ato 'dhivacanasaṃsparśa iti |* According to Saṃghabhadra's *Nyāyānusāra*, *nāman* is an 'additional' (*adhika*) *ālambana* of the mental consciousness because it takes both *nāman* and *artha* as its cognitive objects, while the sense consciousnesses only take *artha*, see Dhammajoti 2007a, 108. The term *kila* 'so they say' in Vasubandhu's explanation may indicate that he refers to this position of Saṃghabhadra.

[660] AKBh 144.5: *apare punar āhuḥ | vacanam adhikṛtyārtheṣu manovijñānasya pravṛttir na pañcānām |*

[661] The Vaibhāṣika position is problematic (see Sharf 2018). Some of the issues are similar to the one we are faced with concerning *saṃjñā*. If *smṛti* and *prajñā* are held to accompany every form of consciousness by the Vaibhāṣikas, then how can they say that the sense consciousnesses lack the abovementioned two forms of conceptualisation associated with these *caitta*s. I will return to this problem when discussing the *pratiniyataviṣaya caitta*s below.

[662] AKBh 22.18-22 *ad* AK 1.33ab: *yadi pañca vijñānakāyāḥ savitarkāḥ savicārāḥ katham avikalpakā ity ucyante |* ***nirūpaṇānusmaraṇavikalpenāvikalpakāḥ*** *| trividhaḥ kila vikalpaḥ | svabhāvābhinirūpaṇānu-smaraṇavikalpaḥ | tad eṣāṃ svabhāvavikalpo 'sti | netarau | tasmād avikalpakā ity ucyante | yathā ekapādako 'śvo 'pādaka iti | tatra svabhāvavikalpo vitarkaḥ |* The same principle appears in KSP (31), where Vasubandhu says that the state of *nirodhasamāpatti* can be described as 'mindless' in the sense that only the *ālayavijñāna* is present, but not the *pravṛttivijñāna*s. The KSP likens it to a stool, which even though has one leg can still be called legless. KSP (31) 197.20-25: *sems ni rnam pa gnyis te* […] *sems gnyis pa ma tshang*

to some of these views is underlined by the term *kila*, which, as Yaśomitra's commentary confirms, indicates that these are held by others (*paramata*).[663]

Returning to Sthiramati's reply to his opponent's criticism in the PSkV, he argues that the sort of *saṃjñā* accompanying the five *vijñāna*s also has the nature of grasping the marks of the objects, but it cannot clearly discriminate (*paricchedika*) them, since it is too weak (*manda*). Sthiramati adds that if the characteristics of the objects had not been grasped at the earlier or initial stage of perception, then one could not make the determination (*nirūpaṇa*) that 'this is blue' even later.[664] Sthiramati's solution is similar to the one we find in various Vaibhāṣika sources (for instance in the *Nyāyānusāra*) which also claim that *saṃjñā* (as well as other *caitta*s such as *prajñā* or *smṛti* held to be universal by the Vaibhāṣikas) is present in the sense consciousnesses, but it is weak (see Sharf 2018, 833, 846). Yaśomitra in the AKVy also refers to this solution, after raising the issue that if *saṃjñā* has the nature of discernment (*pariccheda*), then the five sense consciousnesses conjoined with it, should also be conceptual (*vikalpaka*). He confirms that this is not the case, since *saṃjñā,* when accompanying the five sense consciousnesses, is not strong

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ba'i phyir sems med pa yin te | dper na khri rkang pa gcig pa la rkang pa gzhan ma tshang ba'i phyir | rkang pa med pa zhes bya ba lta bu'o |

663 AKVy 89.21-22: *kilaśabdaḥ paramatadyotanārthaḥ* | More specifically, according to Yaśomitra, Vasubandhu's own view (which he reconstructs based on the PSk) is that *vitarka* is a special form of *cetanā* and *prajñā* (*cetanāprajñāviśeṣa*), and not a distinct *dharma* having the nature of *svabhāvavikalpa*. AKVy 89.22-23: *svābhiprāyas tu cetanāprajñāviśeṣa eva vitarka iti na svabhāvavikalpo 'nyo dharmo 'stīti* | On the controversial status of *vitarka* and *vicāra* in more detail, see the next section of this chapter.

664 PSkV 29.13-16: *sāpi nimittodgrahaṇātmikaiva na paricchedikā mandatvāt | anyathā pūrvam agṛhīte viśeṣe paścād api nirūpaṇaṃ na syāt nīlam etat pītam etad iti* | It is worthwhile to note that Sthiramati uses the same term, *pariccheda*, as in the case of *sparśa*. This suggests that contact is considered a clear and discursive discernment (*pariccheda*) of the pleasurable, unpleasurable or neutral character of the object (through the medium of the faculty). There are other overlaps as well between the definition of *saṃjñā* and *sparśa*. As we have seen, in the YBh contact is held to be an apprehension (*udgrahaṇatā*) of the pleasurable, unpleasurable or neutral character of the object, and, according to the AKBh, one of the *nimitta*s of the objects that can be discerned by ideation is its pleasurable or unpleasurable nature.

(*paṭu*) enough. The ideation conjoined with the *manovijñāna*, however, is sufficiently strong, therefore the mental consciousness is conceptual.[665]

The exact meaning of 'weak', however, is left unexplained by Sthiramati, leaving the door open for various interpretations. One possible explanation in the Yogācāra context might be that, for some reason, the activity of *saṃjñā* remains below the threshold of consciousness, just like in the case of the *ālayavijñāna* (see Triṃś 4c and TrBh 60.2-4). On this reading, the *saṃjñā* accompanying the five *vijñāna*s essentially has the same function as in the case of the *manovijñāna*, but in the sense perceptions we are simply unaware of it or cannot grasp its content clearly enough. Insofar as the activity of *saṃjñā* remains subconscious, one might say that the sense perceptions are non-conceptual. While this model makes sense in the case of the *ālayavijñāna*, which, as we have seen, has no clearly discernible objects and form (*ākāra*), the distinction between vague and clear *saṃjñā* would seem to be less warranted when it comes to the sense consciousnesses, since they are said to have clear objects.

A more probable interpretation is that sense perception involves a basic kind of conceptual recognition of the features of the objects, but it is not yet connected to language or judgements. That the form of conceptuality present on the level of the sense consciousness cannot be spelled out in linguistic terms does not mean that we cannot conceptualize the objects in some way. For instance, we might be able to point to the shade of blue as '*that* shade of blue' in our thoughts without being able to apply a specific word to it. This is a point stressed by such contemporary conceptualists as McDowell, arguing that our conceptual schemes are not limited to those we can express by general words such as 'blue' (see Maund 2003, 205-206). He claims that (in addition to assigning words to

[665] AKVy 48.20-23: *yadi paricchedātmikā saṃjñā tatsaṃprayoge nimittam udgṛhṇantīti pañcāpi vijñānakāyā vikalpakāḥ syuḥ | na syuḥ | na hi pañcavijñānasamprayoginī saṃjñā paṭvī | manovijñāna-kāyasaṃprayoginī tu paṭvīti tad eva vikalpakam uktam |*

them) we can also form judgements or beliefs about concepts already present in sense experience by assenting or dissenting (some of) its conceptual content (Maund 2003, 201-2). Accordingly, the *saṃjñā* involved in sense perceptions can be said to be weak insofar as, unlike the *manovijñāna*, the five *vijñāna*s are not able to make judgements about their conceptually structured content or apply linguistic items to what they merely conceptualise as *this* or *that* feature of an object.[666]

Third option is that the weak *saṃjñā* characterizing sense perceptions is straightforwardly non-conceptual, referring merely to perceptual or sensory discrimination of the objects' features. Contemporary non-conceptualist such as Evans or Dretske think that perception is too fine-grained to be cashed out in the concepts we have. As Evans puts it, "our repertoire of colour concepts is coarser in grain than our abilities to discriminate shades" (Maund 2003, 205). Accordingly, they argue that there is a basic, non-epistemic, non-conceptual stage of perception, sometimes called sensation, when we perceptually discriminate between objects while not possessing or applying any concepts to them. As Dretske writes, we can "be aware of blue without conceptually aware that something is (or looks) blue" (Maund 2003, 154). It is followed by an epistemic, conceptual stage, often called perception more strictly, when the sensory information provided by the first stage is judged by the mind (see Maund 2003, 200.). It is noteworthy that Sthiramati also mentions two stages of perception and argues that the *manovijñāna*'s conceptual activity would not be possible without the sense consciousnesses' basic discrimination. While it sounds like the non-conceptualist view, it is compatible with the second interpretation as well. Without

[666] While earlier (in footnote 155, on page 471), Engle 2009 seems to suggest the first reading, claiming that the sense perceptions are dull (or weak) in the sense of "undiscerning" and being unable to "identify or distinguish specific characteristics", in footnote 156 he speculates that they still have "a pre-linguistic capacity to isolate, detect, or delimit an object" from other possible sense data. He does not go on to clarify, though, how it aligns with their dullness, and whether it still counts as a conceptual capacity or not.

the conceptual content of sense experience, the *manovijñāna* could not apply linguistic concepts to it or make judgements about its content.[667]

At any rate, it is worthwhile to point out that Vasubandhu, perhaps in order to make its application more flexible, puts forward a minimalistic definition of *saṃjñā*. Even though the linguistic interpretations were most probably known to him, his definition does not refer to a necessary connection between *saṃjñā* and naming. Thus, his understanding allows that *saṃjñā* is construed simply as the conceptual or perceptual discrimination of the object's features which grounds (but not necessarily involves) the linguistic recognition that characterises the *manovijñāna*'s *saṃjñā*. Relatedly, as we will see it shortly, Sthiramati notes that not all forms of *saṃjñā* can be verbalised.

Sthiramati in the PSkV makes various classifications of *saṃjñā* according to its *āśraya* and *ālambana*. As for the *āśraya*, in a similar way to *vedanā*, *saṃjñā* is divided into six kinds distinguishing, for instance, between the ideation that arises from the contact of the visual faculty and the one based on the contact of the mental faculty. Nonetheless, as Sthiramati notes, these all have the same intrinsic nature.[668] His other categorisation concerns the cognitive object of *saṃjñā*. Sthiramati again classifies *saṃjñā* into six types depending on whether its object has a mark (*sanimitta*), does not have a mark (*animitta*), limited (*parītta*), great (*mahadgata*), immeasurable (*apramāṇa*) or whether it belongs to the sphere of nothingness (*ākiṃcanyāyatana*).[669] The last four categories are less relevant to our present purposes, as they refer to the various realms the objects of *saṃjñā* pertain to:

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[667] Sharf (2018, 847) argues that it is unclear what function mental concomitants such as *saṃjñā* can still have if they are separated from the application of names and concepts, especially considering that some Abhidharmic commentaries such as the *Abhidharmāvatāra*—or as we have just seen certain sections of Sthiramati's PSkV—associate *saṃjñā* with the application of names. Sharf concludes that the Ābhidharmikas could not give a consistent and comprehensible account of the non-conceptual nature of sense perception.

[668] PSkV 29.16: *svarūpābhede 'pi bhedaḥ sañjñāyā āśrayata ālambanataś ca veditavyaḥ | āśrayataḥ ṣaṭ sañjñākāyāḥ cakṣuḥsaṃsparśajā sañjñā evaṃ yāvan manaḥsaṃsparśajā sañjñā* | The same sixfold division occurs in the AKBh (10.18) and the AS (15.1-2).

[669] See PSkV 30.2-4: *ālambanaṃ punaḥ sanimittam animittam parīttam mahadgatam apramāṇam ākiñcanyāyatanaṃ ca* |

the limited and the great ones to the *kāmadhātu* and *rūpadhātu*, respectively, while the immeasurable objects and those belonging to the sphere of nothingness to three of the four levels of *ārūpyadhātu*.[670] Three of the six elements (*parītta*, *mahadgata*, *apramāṇa*) are also listed by Vasubandhu in the PSk as three kinds of *saṃjñā*.[671] The authenticity of this remark, however, is uncertain since it only occurs in the PSk's Tibetan translation, but missing from the Sanskrit manuscript as well as the text's Chinese translation (Li and Steinkellner 2008, 4, n. 2).[672] Sthiramati's source was most probably the AS (15.2-3), which lists the same six categories. Unlike the sixfold differentiation of *saṃjñā* based on the *āśraya*, this enumeration does not occur in the AK(Bh).

Regarding the *sanimitta* and *animitta* objects, Sthiramati says that *nimitta* in this case refers to a sign or mark that is attributed to the nature of the object by means of words (*śabda*). Therefore, when the essential nature (*svarūpa*) of an object is associated with such a verbally expressed sign, it is called *sanimitta.* Sthiramati adds that the sort of ideation having a *sanimitta* object recognises not only the ascribed (*adhyāropita*) nature of the object but also the word belonging to it.[673] This is in contrast with the category of *animitta* objects, which can refer to three kinds of things: 1.) the essential nature of objects (*vastusvarūpa*), 2.) *nirvāṇa* and 3.) the summit of existence (*bhavāgra*), which is the highest sphere of *ārūpyadhātu*.[674] Focusing on the ordinary states of perception I only mention Sthiramati's remarks concerning the first group here. He says that these are *animitta*, because they do not have a (verbal) sign ascribed to them. He refers to those beings who have not learnt the connection between words and objects. Someone (for

[670] See PSkV 31.3-6. Since these categories are not relevant to the arising of perception, I will not discuss them here. On these, see Kramer 2012 123-124.

[671] PSk 1-2: *tat trividhaṃ parīttaṃ mahadgatam apramāṇaṃ ca* ||

[672] According to Kramer (2012, 123-124), Vasubandhu's enumeration in the Tibetan translation of the PSk might be a later addition.

[673] PSkV 30.4-6: *tatra śabdadvāreṇa yad artharūpam adhyāropitaṃ tan nimittam | tena nimittena vastusvarūpaṃ sanimittam | tasmin vastuny adhyāropitaṃ rūpam etac chabdo 'sāv iti yā saṅjñā sā sanimittālambanā |*

[674] PSkV 30.7-8: *animittaṃ punar anadhyāropitākāraṃ vastusvarūpam nirvāṇam bhavāgraṃ ca |*

instance a child) might have a *saṃjñā* of the essential nature of a material form (*rūpa*) but does not know that it is called 'material form'.[675] As such, he makes clear that ideation does not necessarily require the application of words but, in its weak sense, merely refers to our universal capacity to discriminate objects sensorily, if not conceptually, in perception. This, in turn, allows our minds to make linguistically formulated judgements about them.

5.2.5. Intention (*cetanā*)

In line with being a *sarvatraga caitta*, a moment of perception is also necessarily accompanied by some kind of intention or volition (*cetanā*).[676] However, since its activity concerns first of all the theory of action and ethics, I will only discuss it briefly. The ethical dimension of the term is underlined in AK 4.1cd, where Vasubandhu says that *cetanā* is the action of the mind (*manaskarman*) from which bodily and vocal deeds arise.[677] We can find another definition of *cetanā* in the AKBh as well, which, besides reiterating that *cetanā* is *manaskarman*, adds that it is the *forming* of the mind (*cittābhi-saṃskāra*).[678] The latter idea is unpacked a bit more in the PSk, which explains *cetanā* as mental action and the forming of the mind towards what is virtuous, unvirtuous or neither of them.[679] These, according to Sthiramati, mean virtuous, non-virtuous and neutral *dharma*s or things that are beneficial, harmful, or indifferent.[680] The PSk's definition also

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[675] PSkV 30.8-10: *tatrādhyāropitanimittābhāvād* […] *animittam ucyate* | *avyutpannaśabdārthasambandhasya hi rūpasvarūpa eva sañjñā bhavati na tu rūpam iti* |

[676] The Buddhist position is not unusual, as even some Western philosophers, such as George Berkeley (see for instance *Notebooks* 823) emphasise that volition is present in all perceptions.

[677] AK 4.1cd: ***cetanā mānasaṃ karma tajjaṃ vākkāyakarmaṇī*** || AKBh 192.18: *cetanā manaskarmeti veditavyam* | For a recent discussion of Vasubandhu's theory of action in the AK(Bh), see Meyers 2017.

[678] AKBh 54.20 *ad* AK 2.24: *cetanā cittābhisaṃskāro manaskarma* | A reasonable translation of *abhisaṃskāra* in this context might be 'exertion' or 'effort'. However, as Sthiramati's discussion of the concept in the PSkV shows, it is a characteristic that is basically true of all mental factors, therefore I stuck to a more literal translation.

[679] PSk 5.6-7: *cetanā katamā* | *guṇato doṣato 'nubhayataś cittābhisaṃskāro manaskarma* |

[680] PSkV 35.15-36.1: *guṇataḥ kuśaleṣu dharmeṣu doṣato 'kuśaleṣu anubhayato 'vyākṛteṣu* | *athavā guṇata ity upakariṣu doṣata ity apakāriṣu anubhayata iti madhyastheṣu* |

seems to draw on the AS, which proposes that *cetanā* has the function of directing or urging (*preraṇa*) the mind towards what is virtuous, non-virtuous or neutral.[681] The virtuous, non-virtuous or neutral entities the mind is drawn to or directed at may include objects as well as actions. We should, however, not assume that Vasubandhu, or following him, Sthiramati, attributed any intrinsic ethical quality to objects or bodily and vocal actions (in fact, Vasubandhu in the KSP (12) straightforwardly rejects the idea that material forms, such as tangibles, can be virtuous or non-virtuous).[682] Rather, it refers to the quality of intention towards the object or that motivates the action (cf. Meyers 241-242, 258, n. 12).

Sthiramati both in the PSkV and the TrBh adds that the forming of the mind (*cittābhi-saṃskāra*) refers to the movement (*ceṣṭā*) of the *manas*.[683] In order to explain how 'movement' should be understood here, Sthiramati says that when *cetanā* is present, it is as if the mind was moving in the direction of the object. He likens it to the movement of a piece of iron caused by the force of a magnet.[684] Sthiramati also quotes a verse claiming that intention is the action of the mind, a factor due to which the inactive (*nirvyāpāra*) *manas* appears to be active (*savyāpāra*).[685] Sthiramati's interlocutor in the PSkV raises the question that if intention is already defined as the forming of the mind (*cittābhisaṃskāra*) then what need there is to say that it is also mental action (*manaskarman*). Even though, as it is emphasised by Sthiramati, *cetanā* has a preeminent role in forming the mind, other

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[681] AS 15.17: *cetanā katamā | cittābhisaṃskāro manaskarma | kuśalākuśalāvyākṛteṣu cittapreraṇakarmikā |* The wording of the AS appears in the PSkV as well, see 32.9-10: *tathā hi kuśale cittaṃ prerayaty akuśale 'py avyākṛte 'pi sukhaduḥkhādyavasthāsv api cittaṃ prerayatīti |*

[682] KSP (12) 189.15-16: *reg bya'i skye mched dge ba dang | mi dge bar 'dod pa 'di ni shā kya'i sras po'i ma yin no |* Vasubandhu repeats this claim also regarding smells and visibles in the continuation of this passage.

[683] PSkV 36.2: *cittābhisaṃskāra iti manaśceṣṭā |* cf. TrBh 58.1.

[684] PSkV 36.3-4: *yasyāṃ satyām ālambanaṃ prati cetasaḥ praspando bhavati ayaskāntavaśād ayaḥ-praspandavat |* See also PSkV 36.9: […] *vijñānasya parispanda iva yo dharmaḥ sa eva cetanā* […] | cf. TrBh 58.1-2. Yaśomitra also uses the term movement (*praspanda*) to explain *cittābhisaṃskāra*. AKVy 187.11: *cetanā cittābhisaṃskāra iti cittapraspandaḥ |* The metaphor of iron and magnet is also used in the *Nyāyānusāra*, see Sangpo 2012, 736, n. 264.

[685] PSkV 36.5-6: *kṣaṇāntarānavasthānaṃ nirvyāpāraṃ yayā manaḥ | savyāpāram ivākhyāti sā manaskarma cetanā ||*

*caitta*s also shape it. Therefore, it is necessary to specify the distinguishing mark or essential nature of *cetanā,* which consists in being a mental action.[686]

5.3. Limited mental concomitants and coarse and subtle examination (*vitarka* and *vicāra*)

As I mentioned above, we find a different classification of *caitta*s in the AK(Bh) than in Vasubandhu's Yogācāra works. Besides the five *sarvatraga caitta*s discussed so far, the Vaibhāṣikas also consider another five concomitants to be present in all moments and kinds of consiousness: *chanda* (desire), *adhimokṣa* (conviction), *smṛti* (recollection or mindfulness), *samādhi* (concentration) and *mati* or *prajñā* (discrimination). The same five elements occur in the Yogācāra list of *caitta*s as well, but are held to be *viniyata* or *pratiniyataviṣaya caitta*s, rather than omnipresent factors.[687] This flexibility introduced by the Yogācāras into their classification of *caitta*s avoids the obvious questions concerning the universality of such concomitants as *prajñā* or *smṛti* (if not *saṃjñā*) we have seen earlier. Accordingly, they do not have to explain the sense in which they are supposed to be present even in sensory perception.

As for the name of the category, Sthiramati in the PSkV and the TrBh says that, in contrast to the universal mental concomitants, the *pratiniyataviṣaya caitta*s belong to specific but not all objects.[688] In the TrBh, he adds that they can function independently of each other, thus for example when *adhimokṣa* occurs the rest of them do not need to be

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[686] PSkV 32.7-8: *cetanā hi cittābhisaṃskaraṇe pradhānam* […] | PSkV 36.7-11: *cittābhisaṃskāra ity ukte manaskarmeti kimartham | sarvair eva caitasikaiś cittam abhisaṃskriyate | tebhyo vyavacchedārthaṃ manaskarmety āha* […] *manaskarmeti cetanāyāḥ svarūpanirdeśaḥ* || That *cetanā* has a preeminent role in 'forming' (Vasubandhu does not add *citta* here), on account of having the essence of action (*karman*), is underlined in AKBh 10.21-22 as well: *sā hi karmasvarūpatvād abhisaṃskaraṇe pradhānā* | As we have seen earlier, Yaśomitra suggested that an etymological explanation of attention (*manaskāra*) is that it is the activity of the mind (*manasaḥ kāro manaskāraḥ*). However, it is important to emphasise here that *cetanā* (as opposed to attention, which is a mere cognitive function) is the volitional action of the *manas*, which potentially has a karmic result.

[687] According to Kramer (2013a, 990), this classification appears to be a Yogācāra innovation.

[688] PSkV 33.13-14: *pañca pratiniyataviṣayā iti pratiniyato viṣaya eṣāṃ na sarva iti pratiniyataviṣayāḥ* | TrBh 72.13: *viśeṣe niyatatvād viniyatāḥ | eṣāṃ hi viśeṣa eva viṣayo na sarvaḥ |*

present as well.[689] If we look at the enumeration of the ten *mahābhūmika*s in the AK(Bh), we find that Vasubandhu, again, uses the term *kila* 'i.e. so they say', indicating that he did not accept the omnipresence of all of these *caitta*s even then.[690] Yaśomitra once more reconstructs Vasubandhu's own view on the basis of the PSk, saying that *chanda* and the rest are not present in every moment of consiousness. Commenting on another verse of the AK (3.32b), he is even more explicit in saying that Vasubandhu considered *chanda*, *adhimokṣa*, *smṛti*, *samādhi* and *prajñā* to be *pratiniyataviṣaya caitta*s.[691] Relatedly, in the case of each *pratiniyataviṣaya caitta*, Sthiramati is eager to elucidate why these factors are not invariably applicable to every object and instance of consciousness. Indeed, as we will see it shortly, some of these *caitta*s seem to be only loosely, if at all, related to sense perception *per se*, and gain more relevance in ethical or meditative contexts. It is interesting to note that despite their putative universality, even the Vabhāṣikas tried to explain why some of these concomitants, such as *prajñā* or *smṛti*, do not exercise their function in sense perception. Nonetheless, even though they are considered by Vasubandhu and his commentators to be limited concomitants, some of these *caitta*s elucidate how the sense data is further processed after the perceptual process in its narrow sense took place. Therefore, I will look at them only to the extent they are relevant to perception.

The first *caitta* mentioned in this category is *chanda*, that is, aspiration or desire (which, as Sthiramati warns, should not be confused with craving, *tṛṣṇā*). Defined by Vasubandhu

[689] TrBh 74.23-25: *ete hi pañca dharmāḥ parasparaṃ vyatiricyāpi pravartante | evañ ca yatrādhimokṣas tatra nāvaśyam itarair api bhavitavyam |*

[690] AKBh 54.19 *ad* AK 2.24: *ime kila daśa dharmāḥ sarvatra cittakṣaṇe samagrā bhavanti |*

[691] AKVy 187.8-9: *kilaśabdaḥ paramatadyotane | svamataṃ tu chandādayaḥ sarvacetasi na bhavanti | tathā hy anenaivācāryeṇa pañcaskandhake likhitaṃ* […] | AKVy 478.14-16: […] *ity evamādiḥ pañcaskandhaka-grantho draṣṭavyaḥ | tatra hy uktaṃ pañca sarvatragāḥ vedanāsaṃjñāsparśamanaskāracetanāḥ | pañca pratiniyataviṣayāś chandādhimokṣasmṛtisamādhiprajñā ity evamādi |*

as a longing (*abhilāṣa*) for a desired object, it does not contribute to sense perception.[692] Of course, it might impell someone to engage with a sensory object since it can arouse the desire in someone to see or hear a particular thing.[693] According to Sthiramati, *chanda* is a limited concomitant, because it arises only with regard to those objects that one longs for.[694]

The next concomitant, which, at first glance, also seems to be only loosely related to sense perception, is *adhimokṣa* i.e. conviction. It is defined by Vasubandhu as psychological certainty (*avadhāraṇa*) that a determined or judged (*niścita*) object exists in a specific way.[695] Sthiramati regards it as a limited concomitant, because one cannot have certainty about the specific way an object exists—for instance, that it is impermanent or the source of suffering—without making a determination or judgement about it first, for instance by appealing to scripture or reasoning.[696] With regard to its definition in the AKBh (54.23), he merely gives a synonym, *adhimukti* (also meaning confidence), which allows for a similar interpretation to the one we see in the PSk. Yaśomira's commentary, however, emphasises multiple connotations of the term. He mentions the same interpretation we have seen above, understanding it as a certainty (*avadhāraṇa*) about the object existing in accordance with its stated qualities. He also gives another interpretation according to which it means 'inclination' (*ruci*) or, in a meditative context, concentration

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[692] PSk 5.8: *chandaḥ katamaḥ* | *abhiprete vastuny abhilāṣaḥ* | cf. TrBh 72.14. For a comparison of the basic definitions of *chanda* and the subsequent *caitta*s in the PSk, AS, YBh and AKBh, see Kramer 2013a, 1002-1003.

[693] PSkV 36.14-15: *darśanaśravaṇādikriyāviṣayatvena yad abhimataṃ vastu tad abhipretam* | *tatra darśana-śravaṇābhilāṣaḥ prārthanā* | cf. TrBh 72.16-17. The aspect of *chanda* as a factor motivating for action is clearly articulated in the definition of the AKBh, according to which *chanda* is a desire for action. AKBh 54.21: *cchandaḥ kartṛkāmatā* | Kramer (2013a, 1002) suggests the reading *kartukāmatā*. Dhammajoti (2007a, 283) notes that *chanda* understood in this general sense is indispensable for making any action.

[694] PSkV 36.12-14: *abhipretagrahaṇam anabhiprete cchandābhāvajñāpanārtham* | *evaṃ ca cchandasya pratiniyataviṣayatvaṃ jñāpitaṃ bhavati* | cf. TrBh 72.14-15.

[695] PSk 5.9-10: *adhimokṣaḥ katamaḥ* | *niścite vastuni tathaivāvadhāraṇam* | cf. TrBh 72.19.

[696] PSkV 37.4-5ff: *niścitagrahaṇam adhimokṣasya sarvaviṣayāsattvaprajñāpanārtham* | *na hy aniścite vastuni tathaivāvadhāraṇasambhavo 'stīti* […] | cf. TrBh 72.19-20.

(of attention on an object) according to one's resolution.[697] Saṃghabhadra in the *Nyāyānusāra*, however, mentions the view that it is regarded as a concomitant that enables the mind to operate towards an object without obstruction (Dhammajoti 2015, 86), or a factor by reason of which one decides to attend to a certain object instead of another (Sangpo 2012, 746-747, n. 272). This undertanding better explains why the Vaibhāṣikas assumed it to be a universal concomintant.

It is also worth looking at the notion of *samādhi* or concentration, which is the "one-pointed focus (*ekāgratā*) of the mind on an object that is being examined".[698] According to Sthiramati, the fact that this mental factor pertains only to objects that are being examined (*upaparīkṣya*)—that is, not to all sorts of object—explains that it is a *pratiniyataviṣaya caitta*.[699] In his discussion of *samādhi*, Sthiramati does not return to the issue of its relation to *manaskāra*. Nonetheless, besides getting to know that, unlike *manaskāra*, it is not an omnipresent factor, he tells us that it investigates the object (such as the four noble truths or the nine realms of existence) from the specific point of view of whether it is has good or bad qualities.[700] Sthiramati explains the conception of one-pointedness as the mind being directed at one and the same cognitive object (*ālambana*).[701] Similar definition of *samādhi* is given in the AK(Bh) where it is simply said to be the one-pointedness of the mind.[702] Yaśomitra adds that it is a factor by virtue of which the mind is able to proceed continuously towards a single object. It is important to note that we find some signs of

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[697] AKVy 187.23-24: *adhimuktis tadālambanasya guṇato 'vadhāraṇam | rucir ity anye | yathāniścayaṃ dhāraṇeti yogācāracittāḥ |* This latter interpretation reflects the conception of *adhimuktimanaskāra* i.e. attention through resolution (see Sangpo 2012, 746, n. 272). By means of *adhimuktimanaskāra*, the practitioner perceives an object in a certain way or having certain aspects according to their resolution (Cox 1988, 51). It is one of the three types of *manaskāra*, the other two being *svalakṣaṇamanaskāra* and *sāmānyalakṣaṇamanaskāra*, see Dhammajoti 2015, 285. On the multiple nuances of *adhimokṣa* see Dhammajoti 2015, 286-287, Sangpo 2012, 746-747, n. 272.

[698] PSk 6.1-2: *samādhiḥ katamaḥ | upaparīkṣye vastuni cittasyaikāgratā |* cf. TrBh 74.7.

[699] PSkV 38.4-5: *upaparīkṣya nānyatra | evaṃ ca samādheḥ pratiniyataviṣayatvam uktaṃ bhavati |*

[700] PSkV 38.5: *upaparīkṣye vastuni guṇato doṣato vā |* cf. TrBh 74.6-7.

[701] PSkV 38.5-6: *cittasyaikāgratety ekālambanatā | agraṃ hy atrālambanam ucyate |* […] *upaparīkṣyaṃ vastu satyacatuṣṭayam |* cf. TrBh 74.8.

[702] AKBh 54.23-24: *samādhiś cittasyaikāgratā |*

scepticism about the universal presence of *samādhi* in Yaśomitra's commentary as well, as an interlocutor asks that given the presence of *samādhi* in every instance of the mind, why one makes an effort in meditative absorption (*dhyāna*) to reach it. Adopting a Vaibhāṣika answer, Yaśomitra notes that it is for the purpose of making *samādhi* stronger, which suggests that *samādhi* in ordinary states of mind is present only in a weak sense.[703] This is corroborated in the eighth chapter of the AK(Bh) where the Sautrāntika opponent raises various concerns with regard to the Vaibhāṣika notion of *samādhi*. For instance if, in line with their momentariness, each moment of *citta* attends only to a single object, then *samādhi*, as a separate concomitant, is superfluous, or that if it is indeed a *mahābhūmika* factor, then each moment of the mind would be a state of one-pointed concentration.[704] With regard to the last point, the Vaibhāṣika emphasises that this problem does not occur, since *samādhi* is not always strong enough. Therefore, even though it is universally present in all moments of consiousness, those instances of the mind that are accompanied by a weak *samādhi*, unlike those that are accompanied by a strong *samādhi*, will not be in the state of *ekāgratā*.[705]

More relevant to our topic, as we have seen when discussing the conception of *saṃjñā*, are the mental concomitants of recollection or mindfulness (*smṛti*) and of discrimination (*prajñā*). Nonetheless, both seem to be understood by Vasubandhu and Sthiramati as cognitive processes higher order than perception, as mental acts that are subsequent to and dependent on first-order perceptions. *Smṛti* is succinctly defined in the PSk as retaining (or literally not losing, *asampramoṣa*) an acquinted object, and the mind's attentive fixing or

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[703] AKVy 187.25-27: *yadyogāc cittaṃ prabandhena ekatrālambane vartate sa samādhiḥ | yadi samādhiḥ sarvacetasi bhavati kim arthaṃ dhyāneṣu yatnaḥ kriyate | balavatsamādhiniṣpādanārthaṃ |*

[704] AKBh 433.2-433.5: *nanu ca kṣaṇikatvāt sarvaṃ cittam ekāgraṃ* […] *mahābhūmikatvāc ca samādheḥ sarvacittānām ekāgratā prasaṅgaḥ |*

[705] AKBh 433.5: *na durbalatvāt samādheḥ* | AKVy 1127.14-16: *na mahābhūmikatvāt samādheḥ sadbhāvāt sarvasya cittasyaikāgratāprasaṅgaḥ | yac cittaṃ durbalena samādhinā saṃprayujyate na tad ekāgraṃ bhavati | yat punar balavatā tac cittam ekāgram iti* […] |

noting (*abhilapanatā*) of something.[706] The definition strikes a balance between two functions generally associated with the conception of *smṛti*: a technique of focused attention employed in meditative practice, and the ordinary process of remembering.[707] *Prajñā*, on the other hand, is interpreted by Vasubandhu as the examination (*pravicaya*) of an object, which can be performed (*vihita*) either correctly, incorrectly or otherwise.[708] With regard to both *caitta*s, Sthiramati argues that they are not universally present, because *smṛti* is limited to objects that one has already acquinted with or experienced (*pūrvānubhūta*), while *prajñā* (just like *samādhi*) to ones that are under investigation (*upaparīkṣya*).[709]

As we have seen when looking at the Vaibhāṣika account of the non-conceptuality of sense perception, the five *vijñāna*s are held to be free from conceptualisation consisting in recollection (*anusmaraṇavikalpa*) and determination (*abhinirūpaṇāvikalpa*). These are absent even though *smṛti* and *prajñā*, the mental factors from which they originate, are present (albeit weakly) in the sensory consciousnesses.[710] The two forms of *vikalpa* are also discussed by Sthiramati in the PSkV. Vasubandhu in his classification of *dhātu*s in the PSk says that among the eighteen elements only the *manas*, the mental consciousness and a part of the *dharmadhātu*, more precisely the mental concomitants, are related to

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[706] PSk 5.11-12: *smṛtiḥ katamā | saṃstute vastuny asampramoṣaś cetaso 'bhilapanatā |* cf. TrBh 74.1. On the ambiguities of the term *abhilapana* see, Cox 1992, 79-82.

[707] Cox (1992) argues that there is nonetheless an underlying unity behind the apparent twofold functioning of *smṛti*.

[708] PSk 6.3-4: *prajñā katamā | tatraiva pravicayo yogāyogavihito 'nyathā ca |* Instead of 'object' Vasubandhu says 'with regard to the very same thing' (*tatraiva*). This is because in the list of *caitta*s (but not in the order of my discussion) *prajñā* follows *samādhi*, which is applicable to an object that is being investigated (*upaparīkṣya vastu*). By *tatraiva*, Vasubandhu similarly means an 'object under investigation', see PSkV 38.14: *tatraivety upaparīkṣya eva vastuni* | cf. TrBh 74.10-11.

[709] PSkV 37.12-13: *saṃstuta ity asaṃstute smṛtyabhāvapradarśanārtham | saṃstutaṃ ca vastu pūrvānubhūtam* | cf. TrBh 74.2. PSkV 38.14-39.1: *tatraivety upaparīkṣya eva vastuni | evaṃ ca samādhivat prajñāpi pratiniyataviṣayety uktaṃ bhavati* | cf. TrBh 74.10.

[710] As Sharf (2018, 844-845) points out, in the *Abhidharmamahāvibhāṣā Śāstra smṛti* is differentiated from its conceptualising activity consisting in recollection (*anusmaraṇavikalpa*) and *prajñā* from its conceptualising activity consisting in determination (*abhinirūpaṇāvikalpa*). Thus, the Vaibhāṣikas are able to maintain that *smṛti* and *prajñā* are present even in the sense consciousnesses, but do not exercise their discriminatory functions, which are active only in the case of the mental consciousness. Presumably, the Vaibhāṣika interpretation outlined in the AKBh also relies on this distinction to avoid contradiction.

conceptualisation (*savikalpa*, *vikalpaka*), since these are associated with two kinds of conceptualisation, *abhinirūpaṇāvikalpa* and *anusmaraṇavikalpa*.[711] Sthiramati identifies *anusmaraṇavikalpa* with *smṛti*, adding that it has the form or nature (*ākāra*) of retaining the object which was previously experienced by the mind. *Abhinirūpaṇāvikalpa*, on the other hand, is a particular form of discriminative insight (*prajñā*) or intention (*cetanā*). It takes the form (*ākāra*) of reasoning (*abhyūhana*) concerning the objects of the three times which are beyond the senses (*parokṣa*), making judgements such as 'this is like this and not like that'.[712] Sthiramati does not say it explicitly, but the fact that the objects of *prajñā* are beyond the senses (*parokṣa*) corroborates that *prajñā* does not concern sense perception *per se* but is conceived as a higher-order cognitive process dealing with objects not actually perceived.

It is also worthwhile to touch on Sthiramati's positive account of *smṛti* and *prajñā.* As for *smṛti*, he reflects on both its meanings of recollection and mindfulness. He says that it is due to the operation of *smṛti*—more precisely, its capacity for retaining (*asampramoṣa*) and noting (*abhilapanatā*), respectively—that one does not lose hold of a cognitive object and is able to recall, repeatedly, the object or its form (*ākāra*) that has been experienced earlier.[713] Underlining its aspect of mindfulness and attentive 'fixing', he clarifies that *smṛti* provides the mind with its ability to be fixed on an object, and not be distracted by another object or its form (*ākāra*). As such, the function of *smṛti* is to prevent

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[711] PSk 22.12-13: *kati savikalpāḥ | manodhātur manovijñānadhātur dharmadhātoś ca pradeśaḥ |* PSKV 130.9-10: *dharmadhātupradeśo 'pi samprayuktaḥ netaraḥ |* PSkV 130.8-9: *etau hy abhinirūpaṇānusmaraṇa-vikalpābhyāṃ samprayuktau tāv eva vikalpakau netarau tābhyām asamprayogāt |*

[712] PSkV 130.10-12: *tatrānusmaraṇavikalpaḥ smṛtir eva mānasya anubhūtālambanāsampramoṣākārā | traiyadhvikaparokṣārthābhyūhanākāra idam evaṃ naivam iti prajñāviśeṣaś cetanā vā 'bhirūpaṇāvikalpaḥ |* Sthiramati also quotes the definitions of the two kinds of *vikalpa* from the AS (see Engle 2009, 366). However, as Engle (2009, 511, n. 636) notes, these do not occur in Asaṅga's root text but are found in Jinaputra's commentary in a very similar phrasing.

[713] PSkV 37.13-15: *asampramoṣa ālambanagrahaṇāvipraṇāśakāraṇam | tat pūrvagṛhītasya vastunaḥ punaḥ punar ālambanākārasmaraṇam abhilapanatā |* cf. TrBh 74.2-4.

distraction.[714] The succinct definition of the AK(Bh) also stresses the idea that *smṛti* is the retaining of a cognitive object (*ālambana*), even though it is unspecified whether it should be taken in the sense of mindfulness or recollection.[715] However, if we look at the explanation of AKVy, we find similar elements to the PSkV, with Yaśomitra specifying that by reason of *smṛti*, the mind does not forget the object, and fixes or notes (*abhilapati*) it.[716]

Prajñā (or *dhī* in the TrBh), in turn, is said to have the function of examining by Sthiramati. It is held to be a dicriminative insight which can be either correct or incorrect, and is directed on entities the specific and common characteristics of which are 'mixed together'.[717] Sthiramati explains that the examination of these entities can be performed correctly, such as by means of trustworthy scriptures, inference or direct perception, as well as incorrectly, for instance by relying on wrong scriptures e.g. those of the Sāṃkhya or the Vaiśeṣika traditions, false inference or incorrect meditative concentration.[718] In the AKBh, *prajñā*, referred to as *mati* due to metrical reasons, is defined as the investigation (*pravicaya*) of *dharma*s. This explanation resembles Vasubandhu's defintion in the PSk we have seen above.[719] Yaśomitra uses the image of dispersed flowers to illustrate how

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[714] PSkV 38.1-2: *sā punar ālambanābhilapane sati na cittasyālambanāntara ākārāntare vā vikṣepo bhavatīty ato 'vikṣepakarmikā* | cf. TrBh 74.4-6.

[715] AKBh 54.22-23: *smṛtir ālambanāsaṃpramoṣaḥ* | On *smṛti* in the Abhidharma literature more broadly see e.g. Cox 1992, or, with an emphasis on the AK(Bh), see Jaini 2001. With regard to the AK(Bh)'s definition, Jaini (2001, 281-282) notes that insofar as Vasubandhu does not specify whether the object of *smṛti* is past or present, his definition can be understood both in the sense of recollection or mindfulness. Nonetheless, since verse 2.24 discusses the ten *mahābhūmika*s, it seems more likely to him that the emphasis here (but not in other passages of the text, see Jaini 2001, 284ff) is on mindfulness. It is, however, worthwhile to recall Cox's opinion (1992, 83-85) here, who points out that many Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāśika sources posit a strong relationship between mindfulness and recollection, insofar as the present activity of *smṛti* to stabilize or fix the object so that one could investigate it or make other acitivites with regard to it is a prerequisite for remembering it later.

[716] AKVy 187.20-21: *yadyogād ālambanaṃ na mano vismarati* | *tac cābhilapatīva sā smṛtiḥ* |

[717] PSkV 39.1-2: *pravicinotīti pravicayaḥ* | *samyag mithyā vā saṅkīrṇasvasāmānyalakṣaṇeṣv iva dharmeṣu vivekāvabodhaḥ* | cf. TrBh 74.11-12

[718] PSkV 39.3-4: *yuktir yogaḥ āptopadeśo 'numānaṃ pratyakṣaṃ ca* | *tena triprakāreṇa yo janitaḥ sa yogavihitaḥ* | cf. TrBh 74.12-14. PSkV 39.6-8: *ayogaḥ punar anāptopadeśo 'numānābhāso mithyāpranihitaś ca samādhiḥ* | *tena yo janitaḥ so 'yogavihitaḥ* | cf. TrBh 74.18-19.

[719] AKBh 54.22: *matiḥ prajñā dharmapravicayaḥ* |

prajñā discriminates or gathers together systematically *dharma*s that are mixed together. It classifies them, for instance, according to whether they are impure (*sāsrava*) or pure (*anāsrava*), material (*rūpin*) or immaterial (*arūpin*). This also illuminates the idea mentioned above by Sthiramati that *prajñā* is directed on entities the specific and common characteristics of which are mixed together.[720]

As we have seen earlier, besides the two forms of *vikalpa* associated with *smṛti* and *prajñā*, respectively, the AKBh also talks about a third form of conceptualisation, the so-called 'intrinsic conceptualisation' (*svabhāvavikalpa*), which is identified with the mental concomitant of coarse examination (*vitarka*). Unlike the other two forms of *vikalpa*, which only characterise the *manovijñāna*, *svabhāvavikalpa* is held to be present even in the case of the five sense consciousnesses. It is, however, not only *vitarka* that is assumed by the Vaibhāṣikas to accompany sense perception, but also its counterpart, subtle examination (*vicāra*). Even though these two *caitta*s are not *mahābhūmika*s, the Vaibhāṣikas assert that a mind belonging to the realm of desire is necessarily associated both with *vitarka* and *vicāra*.[721] According to their definition, the former is understood as the 'coarseness' or 'grossness' (*audārikatā*) of the mind, while the latter as the 'subtlety' (*sūkṣmatā*) of it.[722] However, when discussing the three forms of *vikalpa*, only *vitarka* (identified with *svabhāvavikalpa*) is said to accompany the five *vijñāna*s, without any reference to *vicāra*.[723] The intense debates concerning the reality of the two *caitta*s are documented in the AK(Bh) as well. The Sautrāntika opponent argues that *vitarka* and *vicāra* are not distinct *caitta*s, just two different states or degrees (a subtler and a coarser one) of *citta*. The same thing, however, cannot be coarse and subtle at the same time, therefore, as it is

[720] AKVy 187.16-18*: yena saṃkīrṇā iva dharmāḥ puṣpāṇīva pravicīyante uccīyanta ity arthaḥ | ime sāsravā ime 'nāsravāḥ ime rūpiṇaḥ ime 'rūpiṇa iti |*

[721] AKBh 57.12 *ad* AK 2.28: *tatra tāvat kāmāvacaracittam avaśyaṃ savitarkaṃ savicāram |*

[722] AKBh 60.25 *ad* 2.33ab: *cittaudārikatā vitarkaḥ | cittasūkṣmatā vicāraḥ |*

[723] On the conceptions of *vitarka* and *vicāra* in various Abhidharma sources, and the controversies over their presence in sense perception, see Sharf 2018, especially 838-848.

proposed by Vasubandhu, *vitarka* and *vicāra* (as, presumably, different degrees of the same *dharma*) have to exist in succession and not in the same moment of mind.[724] In order to maintain the simultaneous presence of *vitarka* and *vicāra*, the Vaibhāṣikas resorted to a strategy similar to the one used in the case of *samādhi*, *smṛti* or *prajñā*. Conveying Saṃghabhadra's position, Yaśomitra in the AKVy (206.19-23) says that the simultaneous presence of coarseness and subtlety in the same moment of consciousness according to the Vaibhāṣikas is not a contradiction, since these are dominant at different times (*prabhāvakālānyatvāt*). As such, even though both *vitarka* and *vicāra* are present, only one of them dominates in a given moment.[725]

Due to the Vaibhāṣika association of *vitarka* and *vicāra* with sense perception, it is important to see what our Yogācāra sources have to say about these two concomitants. If we compare Vasubandhu's definitions of *vitarka* and *vicāra* with each other in the PSk, we find lots of similarities. *Vitarka* is explained as an inquiring (*paryeṣaka*) mental discourse (*manojalpa*), and a particular form of intention (*cetanā*) and discrimination (*prajñā*).[726] Most of these characteristics also hold true of *vicāra*, which is described as an analysing (*pratyavekṣaka*) mental discourse, as well as a particular form of intention and discrimination. As for the latter aspect, Vasubandhu only says 'likewise' (*tathaiva*), but, as Sthiramati clarifies, it means that *vicāra*, just like *vitarka*, is *cetanāprajñāviśeṣa*.[727] The most conspicuous difference between the two is that Vasubandhu regards *vitarka* as the 'coarseness' or 'grossness' (*audārikatā*) of the mind, while v*icāra* the 'subtlety'

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[724] AKBh 61.9-12: *ekasyāṃ jātau mṛdvadhimātratā yugapan na saṃbhavati* | […] *naiva hi vitarkavicārāv ekatra citte bhavata ity apare* | AKVy 206.10-11: […] *yugapan na saṃbhavatīty arthād ayugapat sambhavatīty uktaṃ* | *tathā hi vedanā anyo vā dharmaḥ paryāyeṇa mṛdutām adhimātratāṃ ca bhajate* | Yaśomitra identifies this latter view with the position of Vasubandhu, AKVy 206.29: *naiva hi vitarkavicārāv ekatra citte bhavata ity apara ity ācāryamatam* |

[725] For Saṃghabhadra's position in the *Nyāyānusāra*, see Sangpo 2012, 426, n. 399, 771-772, n. 405).

[726] PSk 13.7-8: *vitarkaḥ katamaḥ* | *paryeṣako manojalpaś cetanāprajñāviśeṣaḥ* | cf. TrBh 98.16.

[727] PSk 13.9-10: *vicāraḥ katamaḥ* | *pratyavekṣako manojalpas tathaiva* | PSkV 74.1: *tathaiveti cetanāprajñā-viśeṣaḥ* | cf. TrBh 100.1-2.

(*sūkṣmatā*) of it.[728] Vasubandhu's description of them suggests that he favours the Sautrāntika view that *vitarka* and *vicāra* are two different degrees of the same thing, namely particular forms of *cetanā* and *prajñā*. This is corroborated by Yaśomitra's remark we have seen earlier that Vasubandhu does not accept *vitarka* as a separate mental concomitant having the nature of *svabhāvavikalpa*, but a particular form of intention or discrimination.[729] Accordingly, Sthiramati in the PSkV says that *vitarka* and *vicāra* are designations (*prajñapti*) which can be used regarding states when the mind operates together with *cetanā* (which is a state that, according to Sthiramati, lacks reasoning), together with *prajñā* (such a state involves reasoning), or together with both *cetanā* and *prajñā*.[730]

Focusing on the differences between the two *caitta*s, *vitarka* is said to be 'inquiring', because it is engaged in determining 'what this object is' (*kim etad iti*). As such, its activity resembles a sort of mental discourse.[731] Its coarseness, according to Sthiramati, means that it investigates the mere object (*vastumātra*).[732] In contrast to the activity of *vitarka*, which appears as an initial pondering or deliberation about what an object is, *vicāra* is understood as making more subtle and determinate judgements about an entity one has already encountered with. These judgements take such forms as 'this is that'.[733]

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[728] PSk 13.7-8: *vitarkaḥ katamaḥ* | […] *yā cittasyaudārikatā* | cf. TrBh 98.22-23. PSk 13.9-10: *vicāraḥ katamaḥ* | […] | *yā cittasya sūkṣmatā* | cf. TrBh 100.3. It should be noted that Yaśomitra in the AKVy (206.31-207.11) presents the view of the old masters (*pūrvācārya*) about *vitarka* and *vicāra*, which show great similarities with Vasubandhu's definitions in the PSk.

[729] It is worthwhile to mention that, unlike *abhinirūpaṇāvikalpa* and *anusmaraṇavikalpa*, Sthiramati in the PSkV does not define *svabhāvavikalpa*. However, Kramer (2018, 324) notes that Sthiramati's explanation of *saṃjñā* seems related to the concept of *svabhāvavikalpa*. For a definition of *svabhāvavikalpa* in the *Pañcaskandhabhāṣya*, *Abhidharmasamuccayabhāṣya* and Sthiramati's *Tattvārthā* commentary on the *Abhidharmakośa*, see Kramer 2018, 323.

[730] PSkV 73.8-11: *tadvaśena cittapravṛtteḥ kadācic cittacetanayor vitarkaprajñaptiḥ kadācit prajñācetasoḥ yathākramam abhyūhānabhyūhāvasthāyoḥ* | *athavā cetanāprajñayor eva vitarkaprajñaptiḥ* […] | cf. TrBh 98.19-22.

[731] PSkV 73.4-6: *paryeṣakaḥ kim etad iti nirūpaṇākārapravṛttaḥ* | *manaḥsvabhāvo jalpo manojalpaḥ* | cf. TrBh 98.17: *manaso jalpo manojalpaḥ* |

[732] PSkV 73.11-12: *cittasyaudārikateti sthūlatā vastumātraparyeṣaṇākāratvāt* |

[733] PSkV 73.13-74.1: *vicāraḥ pratyavekṣako manojalpaḥ idaṃ tad iti pūrvādhigatanirūpaṇāt* |

Since it also makes determinations, *vicāra* is considered to be a kind of mental discourse, as well. Insofar as *vicāra* is able to recognise and classify an entity, it is said to be more subtle than coarse examination, since it thoroughly analyses the object.[734] Their relation, albeit in a different respect, to language is also emphasised by the Sautrāntikas in the AK(Bh), where *vitarka* and *vicāra* are held to be the conditioning factors of speech (*vāksaṃskāra*). Those factors that are coarse are said to be *vitarka*, while those that are subtle are *vicāra*. To substantiate this view, they cite a *sūtra* passage that one speaks only after having investigated an object with *vitarka* and *vicāra*, but not otherwise.[735]

In this chapter, we have seen that in his Yogācāra works, even if not classifying them in the same way, Vasubandhu essentially adopts the Vaibhāṣika list of mental concomitants, regarding them as, at least conventionally, distinct mental processes. It is unclear if he considered them real entities, or just various modifications of consciousness, but being mind-dependent *dharma*s, he did not dismiss them either in his transitional or *vijñaptimātratā* works. As such, Vasubandhu followed the Abhidharmic fourfold model of perception in this regard as well. While the Yogācāra list of *caitta*s shows considerable similarities to that of the Vaibhāṣikas, regarding the understanding of the particular *caitta*s Vasubandhu and Sthiramati, as we have seen, sometimes followed the Vaibhāṣika (e.g. in the case of contact), sometimes the Sautrāntika position (e.g. in the case of *vitarka* and *vicāra*) more closely. However, with a bit of adaptation, many Vaibhāṣika and Sautrāntika views found their place in their theory of perception—at least, when it comes to the phenomenological structure of ordinary perceptions.

Regarding the universally present mental concomitants, Vasubandhu and Sthiramati significantly reduced their number, thus avoiding many of the pressing problems the

[734] PSkV 74.2: *paryeṣaṇato vastupratyavekṣaṇākāratvāt sūkṣma ucyate* |

[735] AKBh 61.5-7: *vāksaṃskārā vitarkavicārāḥ sūtra uktāḥ* | *vitarkya vicārya vācaṃ bhāṣate nāvitarkyāvicāryeti* | *tatra ye audārikās te vitarkāḥ ye sūkṣmās te vicārāḥ* | As for their relationship with other mental concomitants, the *Abhidharmāvatāra* notes that *vitarka* and *vicāra* have *saṃjñā* as their cause, see Dhammajoti 2015, 247.

Vaibhāṣikas had to face, for instance, due to considering such *caitta*s as *prajñā* or *smṛti* to be present even in sense consciousnesses. They, however, retained five *sarvatraga caitta*s, which define the nature of perception. Accordingly, perception always requires the contact of the faculty, the object, and the consciousness, and a preliminary discernment of the pleasurable, painful, or neutral sensation of an object (through the corresponding transformation of the faculty), which induces an actual sensation. Besides having a phenomenological character, perception is also construed as an intentional state that always attends to a particular object. Perception does not merely discriminate the features of its objects in a sensory way, but it also involves some basic, albeit pre-linguistic and pre-judgemental, ideation or conceptualisation of them. Moreover, perception is also accompanied by a certain intention to act.

6. Conclusion

In the concluding section of this dissertation, I would like to briefly recap the most important results of my research and point to some paths of investigation it opens up for the future. The purpose of the thesis was to investigate how Vasubandhu reinterpreted the Abhidharmic theory of perception in his late works, providing us with a deeper understanding of the development of the Yogācāra views from the Abhidharmic background. To shed more light on the relationship between his views and the earlier theories of perception as recorded in the *Abhidharmakośa*(*bhāṣya*), I focused on the questions whether and how Vasubandhu reuses the Abhidharmic 'fourfold model of perception' in his Yogācāra works. I used this label as a shorthand for those four entities that are held by the Ābhidharmikas to be necessary constituents of the perceptual process, namely its cognitive object (*ālambana*), support (*āśraya*), object-form or mode of grasping (*ākāra*), and mental concomitants (*caitta*). While systematically analysing each of these four constituents, we have seen that Vasubandhu is able to accommodate them in his theory of perception in all strata of his Yogācāra corpus, both in a realist and an idealist context. Indeed, when it comes to the phenomenology of ordinary, unenlightened sense perception, Vasubandhu conspicuously attempts to preserve the Abhidharmic structural analysis of consciousness.

These efforts underline how important it was for Vasubandhu to remain continuous with his Abhidharmic heritage. His adherence to Abhidharmic frameworks was motivated not primarily by the aim of making the unique doctrines (e.g. the notion of *ālayavijñāna* or [*kliṣṭa*]*manas*) of the Yogācāra school more acceptable to the Abhidharmic audience, but, as I tried to point out, Vasubandhu, as well as Sthiramati, regarded these frameworks as valid phenomenological descriptions of our sense cognitions. In contrast to the traditional

scholarly narratives which focus more on the differences between the two traditions, for instance, in their ontological positions, in the thesis, I sought to expose and bring to the fore important similarities in their theories of perception. As such, I hope that my research contributes to our understanding of the often overlooked continuities between the Abhidharma and Yogācāra traditions, and the importance of bringing them into dialogue when investigating the philosophical or religious theories and concepts of Yogācāra. Moreover, my dissertation also tried to showcase the complexity of these traditions' relationship. Even though, as we have seen, many Sautrāntika ideas essentially defined the course of development of the Yogācāra theory of perception (for instance, their reductionist approach to the objects of sense perception or rebuttal of direct realism), we cannot talk about a simple, linear progression of the Yogācāra views from certain Sautrāntika ideas. Rather, Vasubandhu often reused or recycled arguments and assumptions from the Vaibhāṣika theory of perception too (for instance, with regard to the classification and functional description of certain *caitta*s, the simultaneity of causation involved between consciousness and its causes, or even their arguments against the touching of atoms).

Focusing on the similarities, of course, is not to say that there are no important differences between their positions or that these deserve less attention. Accordingly, besides untangling some of the threads that connect the Yogācāra ideas on perception to their Abhidharmic antecedents, I also tried to clarify what critical steps the Yogācāras took in reconsidering the Abhidharmic views, for instance, in rethinking what entities the individual constituents of the perceptual process really stand for. With these important adaptations, they intended to establish the unique identity of the Yogācāra school reflecting their new ideas, for instance concerning the ultimate nature of reality or the concept of *ālayavijñāna*. These revisions, as we have seen, affect most markedly

Vasubandhu's understanding of the *āśraya* and the objects of perception in his *vijñaptimātratā* works.

In interpreting Vasubandhu's views, I significantly relied on the works of commentators, most notably Sthiramati, since he not only helps us better understand the content of the root texts, but he was very much aware of how deeply the Yogācāra thought is embedded in the Abhidharmic context. The parallels he draws in his commentaries on Vasubandhu's *Pañcaskandhaka* and *Triṃśikā* between various Yogācāra and Abhidharma ideas or textual passages are invaluable sources for studying the subtleties of the dynamic relationship between these traditions—many of which might go unnoticed without his contribution. By underlining the importance of his commentaries, this project will hopefully draw more scholarly attention to the lesser-known figures of the tradition, whose works, nonetheless, essentially define the way we look at the school today.

It is perhaps needless to say that the limitations of the dissertation did not allow me to cover every point and every source that might have been worth discussing. First of all, to get an even fuller picture, it would have been interesting to look at other commentaries as well, for instance those written on the *Pañcaskandhaka*, or evaluate Vinītadeva's commentarial contributions in a more systematic manner. It would have also been beneficial to see what Vasubandhu's theory of perception owes to the works of Asaṅga. Relatedly, a parallel research discussing the similarities and differences between the Yogācāra and the Abhidharmic views on perception through Asaṅga's corpus could also add to our knowledge of this important development. But these, as it seems, have to remain projects for the future.

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