Dharmakīrti versus Akalaṅka

on the Nature, Object, and Structure of Perception



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اَلا یا اَیُّهَا السّاقی اَدِرْ کَأسَاً و ناوِلْها
که عشق آسان نمود اوّل ولی افتاد مشکلها[1]

Hey, Ho, Hello, O wine-pourer!
Circulate a wine-cup and pass it around.
For love seemed easy at first
But difficulties eventually arose!

- Ḥāfeẓ

[1] *Divān-e Ḥāfeẓ* 1.1, p. 18.

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Abstract

This thesis reconstructs and analyses the philosophical debate between the Buddhist philosopher Dharmakīrti (between mid-6th and mid-7th century CE) and the Jaina philosopher Akalaṅka (c. 8th century CE) regarding the nature, object, and structure of perception (*pratyakṣa*) qua source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*). Through a comparative study of Dharmakīrti's *Pramāṇavārttika* and *Pramāṇaviniścaya* alongside Akalaṅka's *Laghīyastraya* and *Nyāyaviniścaya*, this thesis shows that there are three main points of contention between Dharmakīrti's theory of perception and Akalaṅka's theory of perception: (1) Is perception non-conceptual (Dharmakīrti) or conceptual (Akalaṅka) in nature? (2) Does perception apprehend forms (*ākāra*) internal to awareness (Dharmakīrti) or mind-independent external objects (Akalaṅka)? and (3) Is perception structured non-dualistically (Dharmakīrti) or dualistically (Akalaṅka)? While chapters 1 and 2 introduce Dharmakīrti's theory of perception and Akalaṅka's theory of perception respectively, each of the subsequent chapters (chapters 3, 4, 5) examines a particular point of contention by (a) explaining the philosophical issue at stake, (b) reconstructing and analysing the arguments advanced by both sides for their respective positions, and (c) reflecting on the significance of the debate. Through philologically accurate reading of the primary texts, philosophically charitable analysis of the individual arguments, and judicious engagement with classical commentaries, this thesis argues that the Buddhist and the Jaina theories of perception under discussion are *philosophically* interesting because both of them are characterised by a distinctive combination of philosophical commitments not found in the theories of perception defended by other classical Indian philosophical schools (*darśana*). While Dharmakīrti defends the unique triad of perceptual non-conceptualism, epistemic idealism, and non-dualism with a hitherto unseen philosophical rigour, Akalaṅka carves an equally novel path for himself through his defence of a thoroughgoing

perceptual conceptualism and a defiant common-sense realism. By bringing to light this sophisticated Buddhist-Jaina philosophical debate, this thesis may contribute to the following areas of study: (1) The reception of Dharmakīrti's philosophy by Jaina philosophers, (2) The philosophical polemics of marginalised Jaina philosophers such as Akalaṅka, and (3) The history of Indian philosophy understood as an integral part of the global history of philosophy.

Acknowledgements

As I sit down to write these acknowledgements, I feel like a tiny rivulet trying to gaze up at the vast clouds raining support, encouragement, and inspiration from the sky. Impossible as the task might be, I shall at least make a valiant effort.

Firstly, I wish to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor: Diwakar Acharya. What can I say about him? His knowledge of Sanskrit and Indian culture, acquired through a combination of traditional and Western methods, is simply unparalleled. I have never met anyone so enthusiastic about reading Sanskrit texts and so generous with their time. Yet, somewhat miraculously, the burden of knowledge has not taken away a single ounce of his delightful humour and infectious optimism! I think this verse by the Persian poet Sa'di perfectly captures my feelings:

بگفتا من گِلی ناچیز بودم

ولیکن مدتی با گُل نشستم[1]

It said: 'I was an insignificant particle of mud.

Nevertheless, I dwelt with the rose for a while.'

Secondly, I wish to thank each and every one of my Sanskrit, Pāli, and Prakrit teachers: Jim Benson, Christopher Minkowski, Sarah Shaw, Victor D'Avella, Pandit Damodar Shastri, Seema Chauhan, Samaṇī Sangeet Prajna, Buddhist monks at the University of Hong Kong, and the anonymous traditional pandit in Bangalore. Without their teaching and guidance, I would never

[1] *Golestān*, p. 3, l. 21.

have been able to learn these extremely difficult classical languages. In many ways, they are the foundation stones underlying the edifice of this thesis.

Thirdly, I wish to thank the teachers responsible for my academic training in Western and Indian philosophy: Mark Wildish, Max Deutsch, David McCarthy, Joe Lau, Chiara Robbiano, Nilanjan Das, Samaṇī Pratibha Pragya, Jan Westerhoff, and many others. I would be immensely satisfied if this thesis reflects even a fraction of the knowledge you have imparted to me!

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Lastly, though most importantly, I would like to express my deepest love and gratitude towards my parents and siblings for supporting my crazy decision to spend five years of my life studying a dead language! Thank you for always being there for me!

To all my beautiful muses, thank you for keeping me sane and alive:

آن که ناوک بر دل من زیر چشمی می‌زند

قوتِ جانِ حافظش در خندهٔ زیر لب است[2]

The one who shoots an arrow from the corner of her eye onto my heart,

The sustenance of Ḥāfeẓ's soul lies in her soft giggles.

- Ḥāfeẓ

[2] *Divān-e Ḥāfeẓ* 30.7, p. 76.

Abbreviations

The Sanskrit texts are listed in the standard order of the *devanāgarī* alphabet.

AŚ	*Aṣṭaśatī*
AS	*Aṣṭasahasrī*
ĀM	*Āptamīmāṃsā*
KK	*Kathākośa*
TSa	*Tattvasaṃgraha*
TV	*Tattvārthavārtika*
TS	*Tattvārthasūtra*
DPr	*Dharmottarapradīpa*
DPa	*Dhātupāṭha*
NKC_1	*Nyāyakumudacandra* (vol. 1)
NKC_2	*Nyāyakumudacandra* (vol. 2)
NBi	*Nyāyabindu*
NBT	*Nyāyabinduṭīkā*
NV	*Nyāyaviniścaya*
NVV	*Nyāyaviniścayavivaraṇa*
NS	*Nyāyasūtra*
PM	*Pramāṇamīmāṃsā*
PV_M	*Pramāṇavārttika* (with Manorathanandin's commentary)
PV_P	*Pramāṇavārttika* (with Prajñākaragupta's commentary)
PVV	*Pramāṇavārttikavṛtti*
PVSV	*Pramāṇavārttikasvopajñavṛtti*
PVSVT	*Pramāṇavārttikasvopajñavṛttiṭīkā*
PVA	*Pramāṇavārtikālaṅkāra*
PVi	*Pramāṇaviniścaya*
PS	*Pramāṇasamuccaya*
PST	*Pramāṇasamuccayaṭīkā*
BU	*Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad*
MS	*Mīmāṃsāsūtra*
LT	*Laghīyastraya*
LTSV	*Laghīyastrayasvopajñavivṛti*
Vi	*Viṁśikā*
ŚV	*Ślokavārttika*
SAS	*Saṃtānāntarasiddhi*
SP	*Sambandhaparīkṣā*
SS	*Sarvārthasiddhi*
SV	*Siddhiviniścaya*
HB	*Hetubindu*

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Conventions

- Sanskrit verses are highlighted in **bold** and *italicised*.
- Sanskrit prose is *italicised*.
- Unless explicitly noted otherwise, the *sandhi* of Sanskrit passages has been regularised in accordance with the rules of Pāṇini's *Aṣṭādhyāyī*.
- Sanskrit passages have been reproduced exactly as presented in the printed edition(s). No extra punctuation has been added. I have relied on my own understanding and judgement when construing the passages.
- Unless explicitly noted otherwise, all translations are mine.
- Translations contain square brackets […] and round brackets (…). Square brackets contextually supply English words without any equivalent in the original Sanskrit in order to aid comprehension. Round brackets supply original Sanskrit words in order to illuminate the relationship between Sanskrit passage and English translation.

Introduction

This thesis reconstructs and analyses the debate between the Buddhist philosopher Dharmakīrti and the Jaina philosopher Akalaṅka regarding the nature, object, and structure of perception.[1] In the grand tradition of Indian storytelling, let us begin with a thrilling story about the life of Akalaṅka:[2]

> *mānyākheṭanagare rājā śubhatuṅgo mantrī puruṣottamanāmako bhāryā padmāvatī putrāv akalaṅkaniṣkalaṅkau | ... sakalāsadvyāpārān parihṛtyāśeṣaśāstrāṇi tābhyām adhītāni | bauddhadarśanaparijñātus tathābhūtasya kasyacin mānyākheṭe abhāvāt tatparijñānārtham atīvājñacchātrarūpaṃ dhṛtvā mahābodhisthāne mahābauddhaparijñātur dharmācāryasya pārśve chātravṛttyā sthitau sa coparitanabhūmau vijātīyaṃ pariśodhya vandakānāṃ bauddhavyākhyānaṃ karoti | tau cājñau bhūtvā mātṛkāṃ paṭhantau tad ākarṇayataḥ | akalaṅkadevaś ca tayor madhye ekasaṃstho niṣkalaṅko dvisaṃsthaś cintayati | evam ekadā tad vyākhyānayatas tasya dignāgācāryeṇānekāntaṃ dūṣayatā pūrvapakṣatayā saptabhaṅgīvākye likhite 'śuddhatvāt parijñānaṃ na sambhavati | tato vyākhyānaṃ saṃvṛtya sa vyāyāme gataḥ | akalaṅkadevena ca tad vākyaṃ śodhitvā dhṛtam | tena cāgatya tad vākyaṃ śodhitaṃ dṛṣṭvoktaṃ kaścij jaino yathāvajjainamataparijñātā vandakaveṣadhārī bauddham adhīyāno dhūrtas tiṣṭhati | sa pariśodhya māryatām ity uktvā śapathādinā sarve 'pi pariśodhitāḥ | punar jinapratimollaṅghanaṃ kāritāḥ | akalaṅkadevena pratimopari sūtraṃ prakṣipya sāvaraṇeyam iti saṃkalpaṃ kṛtvā tadullaṅghanaṃ kṛtam | tataḥ katham api jainam`

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[1] For the dates of Dharmakīrti and Akalaṅka, see § 1.1.1, p. 24 and § 2.1.1, p. 63 respectively.

Unless explicitly noted otherwise, the terms 'Buddhist' and 'Jaina' refer to the Buddhist and Jaina philosophical systems defended by Dharmakīrti and Akalaṅka respectively throughout this thesis.

[2] There are equally fascinating stories about the life of Dharmakīrti. However, these stories have not been discussed here because they are comparatively well-known in modern scholarship (Westerhoff 2018: 217-220; Yiannopoulos 2020: 9-10) and because they are mostly found in Tibetan sources which the present author cannot read (Chimpa and Chattopadhyaya 1970).

alakṣayatā punaḥ kāṃsyabhājanāni bahūni ekatra goṇyāṃ nikṣipya ekaikasya vandakasya chātrakasya ca śayanasya samīpe ekaikam upāsakādikaṃ dattvā tāni kāṃsyabhājanāni dūrad utkṣipya nikṣiptāni | tato raudre mahati tacchabde samutthite akalaṅkaniṣkalaṅkau pañcanamaskāraṃ smarantāv utthitau | tatas tau bauddhācāryasamīpe nītau | bhaṇitaṃ ca bho bho ādeśinn etau tau dhūrtau chātraveṣadhāriṇau jainau labdhāv iti śrutvā tenoktaṃ saptamabhūmāv etau dhṛtvā paścād rātrau mārayitavyāv iti | tatas tau saptamabhūmau nītvā dhṛtau | tato niṣkalaṅkenoktaṃ bho akalaṅkadeva asmābhir guṇān upārjya darśanasyopakāraḥ kaścid api na kṛtaḥ | evam eva maraṇam āyātam iti | etac chrutvā akalaṅkadevenoktaṃ mā visūraya | jīvanopāyo 'dyaiko vidyate | idaṃ chatraṃ hastena dhṛtvā ātmānaṃ prakṣipyāvāṃ gṛhītavātaṃ chatraṃ gatvā yatra bhūmau lagiṣyati tato nirgatya yāsyāva iti paryālocya rātrāv etat sarvaṃ kṛtvā nirgatya gatau | ardharātre gate māraṇārthaṃ yāvat tāv anveṣitau tāvan na dṛṣṭau | atha upari vāṭikāyāṃ pattane cānveṣyamāṇau tau na dṛṣṭau | tato nirgatāv iti jñātvā tatpṛṣṭhato 'śvavārā lagnāḥ | uccalitadhūlirajo dṛṣṭvā tān āgacchato jñātvā niṣkalaṅkenoktaṃ bho akalaṅkadeva tvam ekasaṃstho mahāprājño darśanopakārakaraṇārtham atra padminīṣaṇḍamaṇḍite sarovare praviśyātmānaṃ rakṣaya | māṃ mārge gacchantaṃ dṛṣṭvā mārayitvā ete vyāghuṭanti lagnāḥ | iti tadvacanād akalaṅkadevo jhaṭiti sarovare praviśya padminīpatraṃ mastakopari dhṛtvā sthitaḥ | niṣkalaṅkaḥ śīghraṃ naśyan rajakena karpaṭāni prakṣālayatā uccalitadhūlirajo dṛṣṭvā kṣubhitacittena pṛṣṭaḥ | kimarthaṃ bhavān naśyatīti | tenoktaṃ śatrubalaṃ paśyaitad āgacchati | tat tu yaṃ paśyati taṃ mārayati | tadbhayād ahaṃ naśyāmīti śrutvā so 'pi tenaiva saha naṣṭaḥ | naśyantau tau dvau dhṛtvā mārayitvā uttamāṅgaṃ gṛhītvā ca pṛṣthato lagnā vyāghuṭya gatāḥ | tato akalaṅkadevaḥ sarovarān nirgatya gacchan katipayadinaiḥ

kaliṅgadeśe ratnasaṃcayapuraṃ prāptaḥ |[3]

'In the city of Mānyākheṭa,[4] there lived a king named Śubhatuṅga with a minister named Puruṣottama. Puruṣottama had a wife named Padmāvatī. Puruṣottama and Padmāvatī had two sons named Akalaṅka and Niṣkalaṅka.

…[5]

Having given up all bad activities, Akalaṅka and Niṣkalaṅka studied each and every *Śāstra*.[6] Due to the absence of anyone who had become a scholar of Buddhist philosophy in Mānyākheṭa, the two of them assumed the appearance of extremely ignorant students and took up the life of students in the proximity of a great Buddhist scholar-cum-Dharmācārya (*mahābauddhaparijñātṛ/dharmācārya*)[7] in *Mahābodhi* monastery (*sthāna*) in order to acquire thorough knowledge of Buddhist philosophy. Having removed non-Buddhists, the Buddhist Ācārya used to give lectures on Buddhism to Buddhist monks (*vandaka*) on the uppermost floor [of the monastery]. And, pretending to be fools reciting from the manuscript (*mātṛkā*),[8] Akalaṅka and Niṣkalaṅka used to listen to the lecture on Buddhism. And, amongst the two of them, Akalaṅkadeva, who was able to learn after hearing something once (*ekasaṃstha*), and Niṣkalaṅka, who was able to learn after hearing something twice (*dvisaṃstha*), used to reflect

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[3] KK 2, p. 3, ll. 12-13, 22-24, p. 4, ll. 1-23, p. 5, ll. 1-17.

The *Kathākośa* frequently deviates from standard Pāṇinian Sanskrit because it is ultimately modelled on Prakrit sources (Upādhye 1974: 20-27). As such, the *sandhi* of this Sanskrit passage has not been regularised.

[4] Mānyākheṭa/Mānyakheṭa is the ancient name of the modern town of Malkhed in Karnataka, India.

[5] Within this ellipsis, Akalaṅka and his younger brother Niṣkalaṅka are playfully given the vow of celibacy (*brahmacarya*) by their parents for a period of eight days. Once the eight days have elapsed, the parents begin to search for suitable spouses for their sons. However, Akalaṅka and Niṣkalaṅka refuse to give up the vow of celibacy and instead decide to refrain from marriage throughout their lives (KK 2, p. 3, ll. 13-22)!

[6] Any branch of systematic knowledge as opposed to belles-lettres (*kāvya*).

[7] It is unclear whether one of these two adjectives is the proper name of the individual. Throughout the rest of my translation, I refer to this individual as 'Buddhist Ācārya'.

[8] The word '*mātṛkā*' might also refer to the technical matrices (*mātṛkā*/*mātikā*) found in the Abhidharma Piṭaka, though nothing in the subsequent story suggests this technical meaning.

[on the lecture].[9] One day, while he was thus giving a lecture on Buddhist philosophy, the Buddhist Ācārya could not understand the formulation of the [Jaina] method of sevenfold conditional predication (*saptabhaṅgī*) written as the *pūrvapakṣa* by Ācārya Dignāga during the course of his [i.e. Ācārya Dignāga's] refutation of the [Jaina] theory of many-sidedness (*anekānta*) because it [i.e. Ācārya Dignāga's formulation] was incorrect. Therefore, the Buddhist Ācārya paused his lecture and went to do exercise. And, Akalaṅkadeva corrected that formulation and kept it there. Having returned and having seen that the formulation had been corrected, the Buddhist Ācārya said: 'There is some Jaina rogue who knows the Jaina [philosophical] position as it really is (*yathāvat*) and stays in our midst studying Buddhist philosophy wearing the disguise of a Buddhist monk. Let him be examined and killed!' Having said this, the Buddhist Ācārya examined everyone under oath and so forth. Then, the Buddhist Ācārya made everyone step over the Jina's image. Akalaṅkadeva threw a string over the image and stepped over the image with the mental resolution (*saṃkalpa*): 'This image is obstructed/concealed (*sāvaraṇa*)'. Then, unable to find the Jaina in any way, the Buddhist Ācārya placed many brass vessels into a single jute-bag (*goṇī*), gave [i.e. placed] one Buddhist lay-worshipper [holding a jute-bag containing brass vessels] near the bed of each and every Buddhist monk and student, and made them lift those brass vessels high up and drop them [on the ground]. Then, when the loud and terrifying sound of those brass-vessels arose, Akalaṅka and Niṣkalaṅka woke up reciting the *pañcanamaskāra*.[10] Then, the two of them were taken to the Buddhist Ācārya. And, the following was said: 'O teacher, these two Jaina rogues wearing the disguise of students have been caught'. Having heard this, the Buddhist Ācārya said: 'Keep the two of them on the seventh floor and kill them later at

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[9] I would like to thank Prof. Harunaga Isaacson for pointing out that the adjectives '*ekasaṃstha*' and '*dvisaṃstha*' mean something like 'learning/understanding after hearing/being taught something once' and 'learning/understanding after hearing/being taught something twice' respectively in story-literature (*kathā*).

[10] The *Pañcanamaskāra*, paying homage to the *Arhats*, *Siddhas*, *Ācāryas*, *Upādhyāyas*, and *Sadhus*, is the most important *mantra* in Jainism.

night!'. Then, Akalaṅka and Niṣkalaṅka were taken to the seventh floor and kept there. Then, Niṣkalaṅka said: 'O Akalaṅkadeva, we have not made any contribution whatsoever to [Jaina] philosophy (*darśana*) despite acquiring many [intellectual] qualities. Death has come just like that.' Having heard this, Akalaṅkadeva said: 'Do not be despondent! There is still one way of saving our lives. Let us hold this umbrella in our hands and hurl ourselves forward. Having travelled by holding onto the umbrella driven by the air, we'll escape from the place where the umbrella touches the ground and start our journey!' Having reflected in this manner, the two of them did all this at night, escaped, and started their journey. Upon the passing of midnight, when the two of them were sought in order to be executed, they were not seen. Next, the two of them were still not seen while being sought upstairs, in the garden, and in the town. Then, having realised that the two of them had escaped, horsemen followed them closely.

Seeing the rising particles of dust and realising that those horsemen were approaching, Niṣkalaṅka said: 'O Akalaṅkadeva, you are able to learn after hearing something once (*ekasaṃstha*) as well as a great scholar! You should protect yourself by entering this lake adorned with thickets of lotuses so that you might make a contribution to [Jaina] philosophy. Seeing me walking on the road, these horsemen following us closely will kill me and turn back.' In accordance with his brother's words, Akalaṅkadeva immediately entered the lake, placed a lotus leaf on his head, and remained there. Niṣkalaṅka was running away quickly when he was questioned by a washerman who was washing clothes and who was frightened upon seeing the rising particles of dust: 'Why are you running away?'

Niṣkalaṅka replied: 'Look at the enemy army- it's coming here! Indeed, the enemy army is killing any person it sees! I am running away out of fear of the enemy army!'

Hearing this, the washerman too ran away with Niṣkalaṅka.

The horsemen following close behind captured those two who were running away, killed them, took their heads, turned back, and went away. Then, Akalaṅkadeva came out of the pond, walked for a few days, and reached the city of Ratnasaṃcaya in the country of Kaliṅga.'

While the first half of the story ends here, the second half of the story describes a high-stakes philosophical debate between our protagonist Akalaṅka and a Buddhist scholar named Saṃghaśrī with divine intervention by Jaina and Buddhist goddesses. At the end of the story, Akalaṅka wins the philosophical debate, thereby establishing the superiority of Jainism over Buddhism.[11] This entertaining narrative is found in Prabhācandra's (c. 1077 CE)[12] *Kathākośa*. Prabhācandra's narrative is the earliest known biography of Akalaṅka within the Jaina tradition. However, insofar as it was composed almost three centuries after Akalaṅka's floruit, Prabhācandra's narrative must be treated as hagiography rather than history. Despite this fanciful character, Prabhācandra's narrative contains important insights about Akalaṅka's philosophical project and his subsequent reception within the Jaina tradition. Let us dissect the salient features of this narrative.

Prabhācandra's narrative begins with Akalaṅka and his younger brother Niṣkalaṅka[13] rigorously studying each and every *Śāstra*. This slightly exaggerated description is not far off the mark because Akalaṅka's philosophical treatises display penetrating knowledge of almost every philosophical school current during his time. However, Prabhācandra's narrative consistently emphasises Akalaṅka's special interest in Buddhist philosophy and his hostile interactions with Buddhist philosophers. While Prabhācandra does not provide any explanation for Akalaṅka's fascination with Buddhist philosophy, this narrative trope can be easily explained when we

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[11] For a detailed analysis of the second half of the story, see Granoff (1985: 460-462).

[12] Granoff 1989: 110; Upādhye 1974: 19-20.

[13] Akalaṅka does not mention any younger brother in his treatises. Given the synonymous name he shares with his more famous older brother, Niṣkalaṅka is probably a literary invention for dramatic purposes.

recognise that Indian philosophy was revolutionised by the logico-epistemological turn initiated by Diṅnāga[14] and Dharmakīrti during the sixth and seventh centuries of the Common Era.[15] Almost every Indian philosophical school was forced to respond to these Buddhist innovations through a complex amalgamation of acceptance and critique.[16] Given that the Buddhist epistemological school (*pramāṇavāda*)[17] was the most influential philosophical school during his lifetime, it is unsurprising that Akalaṅka gravitated towards the study of Buddhist philosophy. Yet, the narrative emphasises that Akalaṅka did not acquire second-hand knowledge of Buddhist philosophy from his Jaina teachers but instead disguised[18] himself as a Buddhist novice in order to secretly listen to lectures on Buddhist philosophy delivered by a Buddhist scholar in a Buddhist monastery. Irrespective of its historical accuracy, this narrative trope suggests that Akalaṅka's knowledge of Buddhist philosophy is faithful to the original Buddhist sources rather than a weak second-hand straw-man designed for polemical purposes. As we begin to examine Akalaṅka's philosophical treatises in the subsequent chapters, this narrative trope will be substantiated by Akalaṅka's rigorous and charitable engagement with the ideas of his Buddhist opponents, especially Dharmakīrti. The decisive moment in the narrative occurs when the Buddhist Ācārya delivers a lecture on Diṅnāga's refutation of the Jaina theory of many-sidedness (*anekāntavāda*).[19] It is well-known that Buddhist *pramāṇavādins* such as Diṅnāga and Dharmakīrti devoted considerable attention to polemically refuting the ideas of non-Buddhist philosophical schools.[20] However, Prabhācandra's narrative is

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[14] The name is alternatively spelled as Diṅnāga/Dignāga. Henceforth, I use the spelling 'Diṅnāga' throughout this thesis.

[15] Eltschinger 2010: 397-401; see also § 1.1.2.

[16] Eltschinger 2010: 432-433.

[17] A neologism coined for the Buddhist logico-epistemological school consisting of Diṅnāga, Dharmakīrti, and their commentators.

[18] The narrative trope of secrecy must be understood within the context of the competitive and prestigious nature of philosophical debates in classical India.

[19] See § 2.1.2, pp. 68-69 for an explanation of the Jaina theory of many-sidedness (*anekāntavāda*).

[20] Westerhoff 2018: 219-220.

somewhat anachronistic because it was Dharmakīrti rather than Diṅnāga who objected to the Jaina theory of many-sidedness.[21] Nonetheless, it is this very Buddhist attack on Jaina philosophy which instigates the series of hostile events that ensue in the narrative. Indeed, as we shall see, the desire to respond to Buddhist objections to Jaina philosophical theories is an important motivation underlying the composition of Akalaṅka's philosophical treatises. In Prabhācandra's narrative, Akalaṅka notices that Diṅnāga's formulation of the seven conditional predications (*saptabhaṅgī*) within the Jaina theory of conditional predication (*syādvāda*) is incorrect. This is a frequent complaint raised by Akalaṅka and his fellow Jaina philosophers against their Buddhist opponents: Buddhist philosophers such as Dharmakīrti criticise Jaina philosophical theories without bothering to accurately understand those theories.[22] Prabhācandra's narrative continues with Akalaṅka secretly correcting Diṅnāga's incorrect formulation of the seven conditional predications and the Buddhist Ācārya becoming furious when he discovers that someone has actually presented the Jaina philosophical theory accurately (*yathāvat*)! Once again, this episode highlights Akalaṅka's mastery of Jaina philosophy and the disingenuousness of Buddhist *pramāṇavādins* who are content with presenting straw-man versions of complex Jaina ideas. Prabhācandra's narrative subsequently turns into a thriller with murderous Buddhists chasing the fleeing Jaina brothers. The murderous slaughter of his younger brother Niṣkalaṅka gives rise to Akalaṅka's vengeful, though ethically permissible, desire to vanquish his Buddhists opponents in philosophical debate. When we step back and reflect on the narrative, we realise that the narrative makes two important points about Akalaṅka. Firstly, Akalaṅka is presented as an extremely influential Jaina philosopher whose knowledge of Jaina

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[21] PV_M 3.180cd-3.184ab, pp. 351-352.

I have not been able to find any evidence of Diṅnāga's engagement with Jaina philosophy in his magnum-opus, the *Pramāṇasamuccaya*. However, most of Diṅnāga's philosophical treatises are no longer extant in the original Sanskrit but instead survive solely in Chinese and/or Tibetan translations. Furthermore, some of Diṅnāga's philosophical treatises have been irrevocably lost. As such, it is entirely possible that Diṅnāga's refutation of Jaina *anekāntavāda* is either waiting to be discovered or lost.

[22] See § 2.2.1.2, pp. 84-85.

philosophy and skill in philosophical debate is unmatched.[23] Secondly, Akalaṅka is presented as a serious student of Buddhist philosophy (especially the works of Diṅnāga and Dharmakīrti) irked by straw-man Buddhist refutations of Jaina philosophy and deeply committed to demonstrating the superiority of Jaina philosophy by polemically defeating his Buddhist opponents. This thesis vindicates these two aspects of Akalaṅka's biography by showing how Akalaṅka provides a robust and comprehensive defence of Jaina philosophical theories through rigorous and penetrating critique of the philosophical theories espoused by his Buddhist opponents, especially Dharmakīrti. Furthermore, this thesis takes the high-profile and contentious nature of this Buddhist-Jaina philosophical debate seriously by uncovering the underlying *philosophical* differences between the Buddhist and Jaina positions.

This thesis examines a single aspect of Dharmakīrti's and Akalaṅka's philosophical systems, namely, their respective theories of perception (*pratyakṣa*). This choice of topic reflects the distinctive nature of Indian philosophy during the second half of the 1st millennium CE. As a result of the logico-epistemological turn initiated by Diṅnāga, epistemological questions regarding the nature of knowledge (*pramāṇaśāstra*) began to be viewed as more foundational and more basic than ontological questions regarding the existence of entities.[24] In particular, Indian philosophers started spending most of their energy on examining the number, types, and nature of knowledge-generating processes i.e. sources of knowledge (*pramāṇa*).[25] Within classical Indian philosophy, the most commonly accepted sources of knowledge were perception (*pratyakṣa*), inference (*anumāna*), and verbal testimony (*śabda*).[26] Amongst these sources of knowledge, every philosophical school with a

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[23] The fact that Akalaṅka's biography is placed second within Prabhācandra's vast story-collection testifies to Akalaṅka's importance in the subsequent Jaina tradition.

[24] Eltschinger 2010: 400.

[25] Phillips 2021.

[26] Ibid.

positive epistemological project[27] viewed perception as the foundational source of knowledge upon which all other sources of knowledge depend. In particular, the Buddhist epistemological school of Diṅnāga and Dharmakīrti emphasised the unique status of perception by arguing that perception is the sole source of knowledge capable of apprehending ultimately real entities.[28] This, in turn, influenced critics of Buddhist *pramāṇavāda* such as Akalaṅka to come up with their own sophisticated theories of perception. As such, the amount of ink spilt on perception is virtually unmatched by the amount of ink spilt on other sources of knowledge (except inference). Given that Dharmakīrti and Akalaṅka themselves viewed perception as a uniquely important source of knowledge, it is natural to choose perception as the subject-matter of this comparative study of Dharmakīrti and Akalaṅka.

Before beginning our investigation, it is useful to review the nature and extent of modern scholarship on Dharmakīrti and Akalaṅka. Many modern scholars have hailed Dharmakīrti as "one of the most brilliant figures Indian philosophy ever produced" and his works as "one of the most decisive contributions to the universal history of philosophy".[29] Given this well-deserved high praise, it is unsurprising that Dharmakīrti's works have received substantial critical attention over the last century. For example, Shcherbatskoĭ (1930), Mookerjee (1975), Steinkellner (1971), Katsura (1984), Dreyfus (1997), and Dunne (2004) are excellent studies of Dharmakīrti's overall philosophical project across his multiple philosophical treatises. As a result of Dharmakīrti's reputation, the exegetical works of his commentators such as Prajñākaragupta[30] and

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[27] This qualification serves to exclude Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka and other skeptical schools who do not have any positive epistemological project.

[28] PS 1.2abc, p. 1, ll. 14-20; PV_M 2.1-2.3, pp. 110-112.

[29] Eltschinger 2010: 397, 433.

[30] See Watanabe (2000), Franco (2007), Moriyama (2014), and Moriyama (2021).

Manorathanandin[31] have also attracted significant scholarly interest. By contrast, Akalaṅka is relatively unknown amongst modern scholars of Indian philosophy outside the very small circle of specialists on Jaina philosophy. Despite being hailed as "the father of Jaina logic",[32] Akalaṅka's works have received very little scholarly attention. Within the Anglophone world, there are two notable exceptions to this dominant trend of neglect. The first exception is Shah (1967) who undertook a groundbreaking comparative study of Dharmakīrti and Akalaṅka. Shah's monograph not only systematically reconstructs Akalaṅka's metaphysics, epistemology, and logic but also compares them with the metaphysics, epistemology, and logic of Dharmakīrti. The second exception is Balcerowicz (2005a, 2005b, 2016b) who has written several excellent articles on selected aspects of Akalaṅka's philosophy. Insofar as it is a comparative study of Dharmakīrti and Akalaṅka, this thesis is inspired by Shah's monograph as well as Balcerowicz's articles. In my view, any modern scholarly study of Akalaṅka must adopt this comparative approach because Akalaṅka's philosophical treatises presuppose intimate knowledge of Dharmakīrti's philosophical system.[33] Furthermore, this comparative approach contributes to the growing field of Dharmakīrtian studies by showing how Dharmakīrti's innovative ideas were received by Jaina philosophers such as Akalaṅka.[34] Despite following his comparative approach, this thesis overcomes two major defects of Shah's otherwise-excellent monograph. Firstly, Shah attempts the impossible task of covering the entirety of Dharmakīrti's and Akalaṅka's philosophical thought within the span of 300 pages. While this approach provides an excellent overview of the ideas of both thinkers, it is unfortunately lacking in the detailed analysis of individual arguments and problematic passages. Unlike Shah's monograph, this thesis chooses depth over breadth by presenting a comprehensive analysis of one

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[31] See Pecchia and Philip (2015).

[32] Cort 2011: 299.

[33] See § 2.2.1.2, pp. 79-85.

[34] For the reception of Dharmakīrti's theory of inference by Jaina philosophers, see Gorisse (2015) and Gorisse (2020).

selected aspect of Dharmakīrti's and Akalaṅka's philosophical thought, namely, their respective theories of perception. Secondly, for reasons that are not entirely clear, Shah decided to play the role of a judge by presenting his own subjective evaluations about the 'winner' of this philosophical debate between Dharmakīrti and Akalaṅka. Shah's clear preference for Dharmakīrti over Akalaṅka frequently mars his analysis of the Jaina position. Unlike Shah, I strive for objectivity and neutrality in my presentation of the arguments advanced by both sides. As such, the five core chapters of this thesis almost exclusively focus on reconstructing and analysing individual arguments, objections, and responses. My occasional evaluative remarks are restricted to minutiae such as the preferability of a certain interpretation or the plausibility of a certain objection. It is only after completing the primary task of objective analysis in the five chapters that I present my personal philosophical views regarding this Buddhist-Jaina debate in the conclusion.

This thesis is organised as follows: chapters 1 and 2 provide an overview of Dharmakīrti's and Akalaṅka's philosophical systems, each of chapters 3, 4, and 5 analyses a particular point of contention between Dharmakīrti's theory of perception and Akalaṅka's theory of perception, and the conclusion presents a sympathetic evaluation of the relative strengths of both theories. Before diving into the debate, it is important to discuss the nature and methodology of this thesis. Since they flourished in different centuries, Dharmakīrti and Akalaṅka could not have possibly met each other. As such, this thesis does not present an actual *historical* debate between two individuals. Instead, this thesis presents a *philosophical* debate between two equally compelling, yet conflicting, philosophical worldviews. The history of philosophy presents numerous examples of important philosophical debates between individuals with conflicting worldviews who never actually met each other due to the constraints of space and time. To cite a famous example, the philosophical debate between the rationalism espoused by Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz and the empiricism espoused by Bacon, Locke, and Hume was a major driving force of

early-modern European philosophy despite the fact that none of these individuals met each other for an actual historical debate.[35] In the same way, this thesis shows that the debate between Dharmakīrti's perceptual non-conceptualism, epistemic idealism, and non-dualism and Akalaṅka's perceptual conceptualism, common-sense realism, and dualism was one of the most sophisticated philosophical debates in Indian philosophy during the second half of the 1st millennium CE. Furthermore, Akalaṅka's rebuttal of Dharmakīrti's philosophical theories is usefully presented as a debate because it allows the reader to focus on the *philosophically* significant disagreements between the two thinkers. Indeed, this framing of a Buddhist-Jaina philosophical debate ultimately derives from Akalaṅka's treatises which present Dharmakīrti's Buddhist philosophical theories as the initial position (*pūrvapakṣa*) and then proceed to dissect, challenge, and refute them with the final position (*siddhānta*) consisting of Akalanka's Jaina philosophical theories. I follow the same pattern of initially presenting Dharmakīrti's position and subsequently presenting Akalanka's counter-position with the crucial difference that I avoid making any judgement about the 'winner' of this debate. Finally, this thesis has three important methodological commitments: philological accuracy, philosophical charity, and commentarial engagement. The principle of philological accuracy means that this thesis strives to reconstruct the original meaning and the original context of the Sanskrit textual sources as accurately as possible. As far as possible, I have tried to avoid distorting the meaning of these texts in accordance with my own intellectual biases. The principle of philosophical charity means that this thesis strives to present the most rational and strongest possible analysis of arguments whenever the arguments themselves can be plausibly analysed in multiple ways. This is because of my underlying commitment to demonstrating the modern philosophical relevance of classical Indian philosophy. The principle of commentarial engagement means that this thesis strives to engage with the interpretations and arguments found in later Sanskrit commentaries on the philosophical treatises of Dharmakīrti and Akalaṅka. There are two

[35] See Thomas (2014).

motivations underlying this principle. Firstly, classical commentators on Dharmakīrti and Akalaṅka usually deal with the same set of themes and ideas as Dharmakīrti and Akalaṅka themselves but in greater detail. Thus, engaging with these commentaries allows us to understand the reception and development of philosophical arguments across time within a particular philosophical sub-school. Secondly, the extremely terse and complicated verses (*kārikā*) found in Dharmakīrti's and Akalaṅka's treatises are usually unintelligible without the assistance of a prose commentary. Thus, engaging with the interpretations offered by later commentators is usually a matter of practical necessity. Nevertheless, my engagement with these commentaries is subject to two important limitations. Firstly, I carefully select the most important explanatory glosses and the most interesting arguments without undertaking a comprehensive study of these commentaries in their own right. Secondly, I reject any commentarial interpretation which clearly distorts the meaning of Dharmakīrti's and Akalaṅka's verses. With these two caveats, I firmly believe that traditional Sanskrit commentaries are indispensable tools for deciphering the sophisticated arguments embedded in the root-text (*mūla*) as well as moving the philosophical debate forward.

§ 1 *Dharmakīrti's Theory of Perception*

This chapter presents an overview of Dharmakīrti's theory of perception within the context of his epistemology and ontology. Section § 1.1 begins by introducing the life and works of Dharmakīrti. This is followed by a concise intellectual history of Indian Buddhist philosophy prior to Dharmakīrti, especially Abhidharma and Diṅnāga. Having situated Dharmakīrti within the history of Buddhist philosophy, section § 1.2 discusses the apologetic motivation and hermeneutic challenges of Dharmakīrti's philosophical treatises. This is followed by an analysis of Dharmakīrti's epistemology, especially his definition of *pramāṇa*, and his parsimonious ontology consisting of particulars (*svalakṣaṇa*) and universals (*sāmānyalakṣaṇa*). Finally, this section examines Dharmakīrti's theory of perception, especially the definition of perception, the four kinds of genuine perception, and the four kinds of pseudo-perception (*pratyakṣābhāsa*).

§ 1.1 Historical Context

§ 1.1.1 *Who was Dharmakīrti?*

Dharmakīrti (between mid-6th and mid-7th century CE)[1] is widely regarded as one of the greatest classical Indian philosophers.[2] There is very little reliable historical information about Dharmakīrti's life. According to late Tibetan hagiography, Dharmakīrti was born in south India and later moved to Nālandā.[3] It is relatively certain that Dharmakīrti was a teacher at the Buddhist university of Nālandā.[4] From an introductory verse in the *Pramāṇavārttika*,[5] we learn that Dharmakīrti's ideas did not attract much attention during his lifetime. Nonetheless, Dharmakīrti's fame grew so rapidly after his death that his ideas were discussed "in *every* Mahāyāna Buddhist philosophical work written after his time in South Asia".[6] This towering influence continues to the

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[1] Following Frauwallner, most scholars date Dharmakīrti between 600 CE and 660 CE (Frauwallner 1961: 137). This dating was challenged by Krasser (2012) who proposed an earlier sixth-century date (c. 550 CE) based on Bhāviveka's alleged knowledge of Dharmakīrti. Krasser's arguments were refuted by Franco who cautiously concluded that "our current dating of Dharmakīrti … does not rest on solid foundations and is to some extent suppositious" (Franco 2018: 132). This is hardly surprising given the absence of reliable historical evidence regarding the lives of most classical Indian philosophers. Eltschinger (2020) provides a useful summary of the debate surrounding Dharmakīrti's dates. For the purposes of this thesis, Dharmakīrti's precise dates are not very important. This is because all proposed dates entail that Dharmakīrti flourished prior to Akalaṅka (c. 720-780 CE). I follow Eltschinger (2020: 157) and Kellner (2017: 307) in their imprecise dating of Dharmakīrti to sometime between the middle of the sixth and the middle of the seventh century of the Common Era (c. 550-660 CE).

[2] Eltschinger 2010: 397.

[3] Ibid., 398.

Tibetan historians state that Dharmakīrti was ordained by Dharmapāla (Eltschinger 2010: 398).

[4] Taber 2022: 303.

[5] ***prāyaḥ prākṛtasaktir apratibalaprajño janaḥ kevalaṃ***
nānarthy eva subhāṣitaiḥ parigato vidveṣṭy apīrṣyāmalaiḥ |
tenāyaṃ na paropakāra iti naś cintāpi cetaś ciraṃ
sūktābhyāsavivardhitavyasanam ity atrānubaddhaspṛham || (PV_M 1.2, p. 2)
'As a general rule, people are attached to the vulgar and have a feeble intelligence. Not only do they not desire well-spoken utterances (*subhāṣita*), they are afflicted with stains of jealousy and thereby despise [the speakers of these utterances]. Therefore, I do not harbour any notion that this [philosophical treatise] will benefit others. Nonetheless, my heart's desire is fixed on [composing] this [treatise] because my heart's addiction to well-spoken utterances has been increased by long and repeated practice.'

[6] Dunne 2004: 1-2.

present day: Tibetan monastic scholars regularly recite, study, and debate the Tibetan translations of Dharmakīrti's Sanskrit works.[7]

During his lifetime, Dharmakīrti composed the following seven philosophical treatises:

(i) *Pramāṇavārttika*: A massive work in four chapters dealing with inference-for-oneself (*svārthānumāna*), *pramāṇas* and the Buddha (*pramāṇasiddhi*), perception (*pratyakṣa*), and inference-for-others (*parārthānumāna*) respectively.[8] In addition, Dharmakīrti himself composed a prose commentary on the first chapter called *Pramāṇavārttikasvārthānumānavṛtti*.

(ii) *Pramāṇaviniścaya*: An important work in three chapters dealing with perception, inference-for-oneself, and inference-for-others respectively.[9]

(iii) *Nyāyabindu*: A short treatise in three chapters dealing with perception, inference-for-oneself, and inference-for-others respectively.

(iv) *Hetubindu*: A short treatise discussing the logical reason (*hetu*) within the context of inference.

(v) *Sambandhaparīkṣā*: A short treatise devoted to refuting all kinds of relations (*sambandha*), including the relation of causality, between real entities.

(vi) *Saṃtānāntarasiddhi*: A short treatise proving the existence of other mental streams (*saṃtāna*) within an idealistic worldview.

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[7] Ibid., 2.

[8] This is the order of chapters accepted by the oldest commentators Devendrabuddhi (c. 630-690 CE) and Śākyabuddhi (c. 660-720 CE) (Kellner 2004: 149). At some point between Śākyabuddhi and Prajñākaragupta (c. 750-810 CE), the order of the chapters was changed in order to harmonise with the chapter sequence of Diṅnāga's *Pramāṇasamuccaya*: *pramāṇasiddhi*, *pratyakṣa*, *svārthānumāna*, and *parārthānumāna* (Kellner 2004: 149). According to Śākyabuddhi, Dharmakīrti analyses inference-for-oneself before *pramāṇa* because a correct understanding of inference is a necessary precondition for evaluating the competing definitions of *pramāṇa* found in different philosophical schools (Kellner 2004: 152-156).

My arguments and analysis throughout this thesis assume the older chapter sequence of the *Pramāṇavārttika*. However, my citations from PV_M in the footnotes employ Manorathanandin's later revised chapter sequence in order to allow the reader to easily locate the relevant passage in the printed edition.

[9] Eltschinger 2010: 397.

(vii) *Vādanyāya*: A short treatise on the grounds for victory and defeat in debates (*vāda*).[10]

As we can observe, Dharmakīrti's treatises are largely devoted to epistemology, especially examining the sources of knowledge (*pramāṇa*). Given the vast and complex nature of Dharmakīrti's oeuvre, it is unsurprising that important parts of his works have not yet received the required critical attention in modern scholarship. As a small step towards filling this lacuna, this thesis undertakes a careful study of Dharmakīrti's theory of perception as presented in chapter 3 of his *Pramāṇavārttika* and chapter 1 of his *Pramāṇaviniścaya*. I refer to Dharmakīrti's shorter works such as the *Nyāyabindu*, *Hetubindu*, and *Saṃtānāntarasiddhi* as and when required. Since Dharmakīrti did not compose any auto-commentary on chapter 3 of his *Pramāṇavārttika*, I refer to Prajñākaragupta's (c. 750-810 CE)[11] *Pramāṇavārtikālaṅkara* and Manorathanandin's (c. second half of the 11th century CE)[12] *Pramāṇavārttikavṛtti*, the two most important commentaries on the *Pramāṇavārttika* extant in Sanskrit, for clarification on points of difficulty.[13]

§ 1.1.2 *Pre-Dharmakīrtian Buddhist Philosophy*

Dharmakīrti is the foremost representative of the Buddhist epistemological school (*pramāṇavāda*) founded by Diṅnāga (c. 480-540 CE).[14] Historically speaking, Buddhist

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[10] Ibid., 397-398.

With the exception of the *Saṃtānāntarasiddhi* surviving in Tibetan translation, the remaining works are extant in the original Sanskrit (Eltschinger 2010: 398). A complete Sanskrit manuscript of the *Sambandhaparīkṣā* was recently discovered and edited by Steinkellner (2022).

[11] Buswell and Lopez 2014: "Prajñākaragupta (T.)".

[12] Pecchia and Philip 2015: 39.

Although Manorathanandin's dating is conjectural, Vādirājasūri's (c. 1025-1042 CE) lack of familiarity with Manorathanandin's commentary lends credence to a late 11th century CE date.

[13] As a general rule, Manorathanandin provides a literal gloss on Dharmakīrti's verse whereas Prajñākaragupta develops the ideas present in Dharmakīrti's verse. As such, I tend to prefer Manorathanandin's explanation over Prajñākaragupta's explanation of a difficult/ambiguous verse.

[14] For Diṅnāga's dates, see Eltschinger (2010: 400), Tillemans (2021), and Buswell and Lopez (2014: "Dignāga (T.)").

pramāṇavāda displaced earlier Abhidharma scholasticism to emerge as the dominant form of Buddhist philosophy in early-medieval India (c. 6th-13th centuries CE).[15] In important ways, Dharmakīrti's treatises synthesise the fundamentals of the Abhidharmic worldview with the innovations of Diṅnāga. Thus, it is necessary to understand both Abhidharma and Diṅnāga's philosophy in order to fully comprehend Dharmakīrti's philosophical project.

Historically speaking, Abhidharma[16] emerged as a specific exegetical method for classifying and categorising the Buddha's teachings (*dharma*).[17] This early phase was characterised by the creation of lists of technical elements (*mātṛkā*).[18] Over time, the technical elements enumerated in these lists became the argumentative material for philosophical discussions.[19] In this way, exegetical concerns eventually gave rise to rational enquiry in order to discover the true nature of reality.[20] The central philosophical project of the various Abhidharma schools was the exhaustive enumeration of *dharmas*: the various possible types of experiential occurrences and thereby the fundamental constituents of reality.[21] Through an application of the principle of mereological reductionism,[22] *dharmas* eventually came to be understood as momentary partless property-particulars.[23] Two developments, especially prominent within northern

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[15] Eltschinger 2010: 399-400.

[16] Throughout this summary, 'Abhidharma' refers to northern Sanskrit Abhidharma rather than southern Pāli Abhidhamma because the former rather than the latter was known to Diṅnāga and Dharmakīrti.

[17] Dessein and Weijen 2016: 1.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid., 5-6.

[20] Ibid., 1-2.

[21] Ronkin 2022.

[22] The principle of mereological reductionism states that complex wholes are ultimately unreal (Siderits 2015: 17).

[23] Ronkin 2022.

The closest parallel in modern analytic philosophy is trope theory (Maurin 2018).

Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma, deserve special attention:

(i) Every *dharma* is defined by a particular intrinsic nature (*svabhāva*).[24]

(ii) Every present *dharma* has causal functioning (*kāritra*).[25]

Thus, *dharmas* are psycho-physical events characterised by a distinctive intrinsic nature and performing a specific function. This Abhidharmic worldview is counter-intuitive because it rejects our ordinary conception of the world as a collection of spatiotemporally extended objects. This counter-intuitiveness is resolved by an appeal to the Buddhist theory of two truths: conventional truth (*saṃvṛtisatya*) and ultimate truth (*paramārthasatya*).[26] A statement is conventionally true if it is "acceptable to common sense and consistently leads to successful practice".[27] By contrast, a statement is ultimately true if it corresponds to the way things really are independently of our pragmatic interests.[28] Given that it is pragmatically useful, our ordinary conception of the world as a collection of spatiotemporally extended objects is conventionally true. In this way, Abhidharmic reductionism does not dismiss our common-sensical worldview as completely erroneous. Nonetheless, the Abhidharmic theory of ontologically primitive *dharmas* is regarded as ultimately true because it captures the underlying nature of reality.[29] However, it is important to remember that each of these *dharmas* is a *type* of ontological primitive with innumerable *tokens*.[30] Each token of a given type possesses the same defining characteristic (*svalakṣaṇa*) as other tokens of the type.[31] For example, each and every earth *dharma* bears the same defining characteristic of 'hardness/

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[24] Ronkin 2022.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Arnold 2005: 21.

The theory of two truths originated in early Buddhist scriptural exegesis (Siderits 2007: 56-58).

[27] Siderits 2007: 56.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Arnold 2005: 21.

[30] Ibid., 18.

[31] Ibid., 18-19.

resistance' (*kāṭhinya*).[32] Thus, the defining characteristics (*svalakṣaṇa*) of *dharmas* are abstract types within the Abhidharmic scheme of analysis.[33]

With the rise of increasingly trenchant Mahāyāna criticism of the fundamental presuppositions of Abhidharma, Abhidharmic scholasticism began to decline towards the end of the Gupta Empire (c. 320-550 CE).[34] A new paradigm for Indian Buddhist philosophy was created by the innovative works of Diṅnāga (c. 480-540 CE). In many ways, Diṅnāga accepts the insights of Abhidharmic analysis as evidenced by his commentary on Vasubandhu's (c. 4th-5th century CE)[35] *Abhidharmakośa*.[36] For example, the principle of mereological reductionism and the theory of two truths remain operational within Diṅnāga's works.[37] In important ways, however, Diṅnāga fundamentally transforms the basic contours of the Abhidharmic worldview.[38] In contrast to the long list of *dharmas* within Abhidharma, Diṅnāga creates a radically simplified epistemology and ontology:

> ***pratyakṣam anumānaṃ ca pramāṇe …***
>
> *te dve eva yasmāt*
>
> *…* ***lakṣaṇadvayam*** |
>
> ***prameyaṃ ...*** ||
>
> *na hi svasāmānyalakṣaṇābhyām anyat prameyam asti | svalakṣaṇaviṣayaṃ ca pratyakṣaṃ*

[32] Ibid., 19.

[33] Ibid., 19-20.

[34] Dessein and Weijen 2016: 15.

[35] Gold 2022.

[36] Arnold 2005: 14.

[37] Ibid., 22-23.

[38] Ibid., 17.

sāmānyalakṣaṇaviṣayam anumānam iti pratipādayiṣyāmaḥ |[39]

'Perception and inference are the two sources of knowledge (*pramāṇa*).[40]

There are only two sources of knowledge because:

There are two kinds of objects of knowledge (*prameya*).

This is because there does not exist any object of knowledge other than particulars (*svalakṣaṇa*) and universals (*sāmānyalakṣaṇa*). We shall show that particulars are the object of perception and universals are the object of inference.'

There are several noteworthy features to this laconic characterisation. Firstly, unlike earlier Ābhidharmikas and Yogācārins who regarded Buddhist scripture (*āgama*/*āptāgama/buddhavacana*) as a separate source of knowledge, Diṅnāga rejects scripture as an independent source of knowledge distinct from perception and inference.[41] This, in turn, signals a move away from the exegetical and classificatory dimensions of Abhidharma towards philosophy as pure rational enquiry. Secondly, unlike the 75 *dharmas* of Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma,[42] Diṅnāga simplifies his ontological primitives into two basic kinds: particulars (*svalakṣaṇa*) and universals (*sāmānyalakṣaṇa*). Particulars are apprehended by perception whereas universals are apprehended by inference. Thus, Diṅnāga's works signal a shift towards a radically parsimonious ontology and epistemology. This simplified ontology, in turn, is analysed using the Abhidharmic theory of two truths: particulars alone are

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[39] PS 1.2abc, p. 1, ll. 15-20.

[40] Grammatically speaking, the word '*pramāṇa*' is ambiguous because the *-ana* suffix gives the meaning of both 'instrument' (*karaṇa*) as well as 'action' (*bhāva*). Thus, the word '*pramāṇa*' means both 'the instrument/ means of knowing [something]' and 'the action of knowing [something]'. In Buddhist and Jaina epistemological contexts, the word '*pramāṇa*' is typically applied to perception, inference, and verbal testimony i.e. various sources of knowledge. Therefore, as a general rule, the word '*pramāṇa*' is translated as 'source of knowledge' throughout this thesis. As we shall see, however, Dharmakīrti ultimately rejects the dualism underlying this epistemological model. In such contexts, the word '*pramāṇa*' is left untranslated.

[41] Tzohar 2017: 261.

This does *not* mean that Diṅnāga rejects Buddhist scriptural teachings. Instead, he thinks that the truths contained in Buddhist scripture are knowable by means of perception and inference (Tzohar 2017: 261-262, n. 2).

[42] Ronkin 2022.

ultimately real whereas universals are purely conventional.[43] Ultimately real particulars (*svalakṣaṇa*) are inexpressible in language:

> ***yatas tat paramārthena na tasya vyapadiśyate*** ||[44]
>
> 'The object from which [awareness is produced] exists ultimately (*paramārthena*). An ultimately real object cannot be named.'

This half-verse highlights Diṅnāga's radical transformation of the Abhidharmic concept of *svalakṣaṇas*. While *svalakṣaṇas* were understood as abstract defining characteristics individuating particular *dharmas* within Abhidharma, *svalakṣaṇas* become unique and inexpressible particulars apprehended by perception in Diṅnāga's *Pramāṇasamuccaya*.[45] Thus, the Abhidharmic classification of 75 ultimately real types (*svalakṣaṇa*) of *dharmas* with innumerable tokens is replaced by Diṅnāga's theory of innumerable ultimately real tokens (*svalakṣaṇa*).[46] Diṅnāga's relentless application of the Abhidharmic principle of mereological reductionism means that *svalakṣaṇas* are no longer defining characteristics possessed by *dharmas* but instead ontological primitives which cannot be characterised by any property other than their being themselves.[47] These *svalakṣaṇas* are inexpressible because the universalising nature of language cannot pick out irreducibly unique entities.[48] Nonetheless, these inexpressible particulars are ultimately real because they are causally efficacious, i.e. they have the capacity to produce awareness of themselves.[49] By

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[43] Arnold 2005: 23-24.

[44] PS 1.15cd, p. 6, l. 21.

[45] Arnold 2005: 28.

[46] Ibid.

[47] Ibid., 30.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid., 28.

contrast, verbalisable universals are mental constructs devoid of causal efficacy.[50] Alongside this ontological simplification through a reconceptualisation of the role of *svalakṣaṇas*, Diṅnāga moves away from the realistic framework of Abhidharma towards a kind of idealism.[51] More broadly, Diṅnāga's works initiated a 'logico-epistemological turn' in Indian philosophy whereby epistemology and logic became the focus of philosophical theorising.[52] While earlier Abhidharma had focussed on the ontological classification of the fundamental constituents of reality (*dharma*) within the context of intra-Buddhist dialectics, Buddhist *pramāṇavāda* began to focus on epistemology and logic in order to defeat non-Buddhist opponents in philosophical debates.[53]

§ 1.2 Ideas

§ 1.2.1 *Philosophical Project*

As a member of Buddhist *pramāṇavāda*, Dharmakīrti refines and develops the trajectory of thought initiated by his intellectual forefather Diṅnāga. Before diving into particular ideas and theories, however, it is important to understand the overall purpose and style of Dharmakīrti's philosophical treatises. The two most important aspects of Dharmakīrti's philosophical project are:

(i) Buddhist Apologetics

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[50] Ibid., 29.

[51] Ibid., 22-23.

The move towards idealism is most evident in Diṅnāga's *Ālambanaparīkṣā*. For an analysis of the precise kind of idealism defended in the *Ālambanaparīkṣā*, see Duckworth, Eckel, and Garfield (2016: 6-9).

[52] Eltschinger 2010: 400.

[53] Ibid.

(ii) Levels of Analysis

Let us examine these aspects one by one.

§ 1.2.1.1 *Buddhist Apologetics*

The modern reader of Dharmakīrti is confronted with the following question: what motivated Dharmakīrti to compose his dense, complex, and innovative philosophical treatises? Without paying attention to the purpose of his philosophical theorising, we are likely to miss the wood for the trees. The underlying motivation of Dharmakīrti's philosophical project becomes clear in chapter 2 of his *Pramāṇavārttika*:

> ***tadvat pramāṇaṃ bhagavān …*** |[54]
>
> 'In that way, the Blessed One [i.e. the Buddha] is a source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*).'

Manorathanandin explains that the Buddha is a *pramāṇa* because his central teachings, namely the four noble truths (*āryasatya*), satisfy the criterion of epistemic reliability (*prāmāṇya*).[55] Dharmakīrti spends the rest of chapter 2 providing a full-fledged rational defence of Buddhist religious doctrines.[56] This includes rigorous philosophical arguments for rebirth, *karman*, and the four noble truths.[57] Arguably, these three doctrines constitute the very core of the Buddhist religious worldview. This highlights the importance of Buddhist apologetics in Dharmakīrti's philosophical project. It is not unreasonable to suppose that one of Dharmakīrti's motivations behind developing

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[54] PV_M 1.9a, p. 9.

[55] PVV 1.9a, p. 9.

See § 1.2.2, pp. 42-43 for Dharmakīrti's definition of *pramāṇa* and his criterion of epistemic reliability (*prāmāṇya*).

[56] Jackson 1988: 336.

[57] For Dharmakīrti's proof of rebirth and *karman*, see PV_M 1.82-1.121 (pp. 39-53). For Dharmakīrti's proof of the four noble truths, see PV_M 1.149-1.207 (pp. 62-81).

innovative epistemological tools was the formulation of "the most compelling possible defense of Buddhism as a religious system".[58]

This interpretation is confirmed by the fact that non-Buddhist philosophical schools are critiqued throughout the *Pramāṇavārttika*. In chapter 1, Dharmakīrti rejects the epistemic reliability of the authorless Veda accepted by the Mīmāṃsakas.[59] In chapter 2, Dharmakīrti refutes the existence of God (*īśvara*) accepted by theistic schools.[60] For the purposes of this thesis, Dharmakīrti's critique of Jainism is most relevant:

etenaiva yad ahrīkāḥ[61] ***kim apy ayuktam ākulam*** |

pralapanti pratikṣiptaṃ tad apy ekāntasambhavāt ||

sarvasyobhayarūpatve tadviśeṣanirākṛteḥ |

codito dadhi khādeti kim uṣṭraṃ nābhidhāvati ||

athāsty atiśayaḥ kaścid yena bhedena vartate |

sa eva viśeṣo 'nyatra nāstīty anubhayaṃ param ||

sarvātmatve ca sarvasya bhinnau syātāṃ na dhīdhvanī |

bhedasaṃhāravādasya tadabhedād asambhavaḥ ||[62]

'By this very [refutation of the Sāṃkhyas], that illogical and confused thing [i.e. *anekāntavāda*] which the shameless ones [i.e. Jainas] (*ahrīka*)[63] blabber has also been refuted

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[58] Jackson 1988: 336.

[59] PV_M 3.224-3.230, pp. 367-370.

[60] Ibid., 1.10-1.30, pp. 10-19.

See Jackson (1986) for a discussion of Dharmakīrti's arguments.

[61] While Manorathanandin reads '*āhrīka*' with *vṛddhi* of the initial vowel (PVV 3.180cd-3.181ab, p. 351), Karṇakagomin's non-*vṛddhi* reading '*ahrīka*' is more standard and grammatically preferable (PVSVT 1.183cd-1.184ab, p. 339, l. 10).

[62] PV_M 3.180cd-3.184ab, pp. 351-352.

[63] A derogatory reference to naked Digambara Jaina monks (PVV 3.180cd-3.181ab, p. 351).

due to the possibility of one-sidedness (*ekānta*). If every entity had two natures [i.e. own-nature and other-nature], it would undermine the distinctive nature (*viśeṣa*) of the entity. As a result, why wouldn't someone rush towards a camel when commanded to eat curd? Thus, there exists some distinction (*atiśaya*) by means of which an entity is different. That very distinction does not exist in any other entity. Hence, an entity does not have two natures (*anubhaya*) but instead is distinct (*para*) [from other entities]. And, if every entity did have every single nature, then awareness (*dhī*) and language (*dhvani*) would not be distinct from each other. As a result of the absence of difference between awareness and language, the [Jaina] theory of difference-cum-identity would be impossible.'[64]

Dharmakīrti's verses attack the distinctively Jaina theory of many-sidedness (*anekāntavāda*) according to which every real entity has innumerable contrary characteristics (*dharma*).[65] Dharmakīrti argues that Jaina *anekāntavāda* leads to an undesirable consequence (*prasaṅga*): if every entity has innumerable contrary characteristics, then there does not exist any principled way of individuating two distinct entities. As a result, every entity must be identical with every other entity. However, this makes worldly activity (*vyavahāra*) impossible: if curd is ultimately identical with camel, then why wouldn't someone rush towards a camel when commanded to eat curd? The fact that this does not happen proves that every real entity has a distinctive intrinsic nature (*svabhāva*) which distinguishes it from other real entities. Far more important than the merits of Dharmakīrti's objection is the very fact that he spends four verses refuting Jaina *anekāntavāda*. Almost no Buddhist philosopher prior to Dharmakīrti had engaged with the Jaina theory of many-sidedness. This, in turn, shows the comprehensiveness of Dharmakīrti's polemics: almost every major non-Buddhist philosophical school of his time is critiqued in the *Pramāṇavārttika*.

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[64] The words within square brackets have been supplied from Manorathanandin's commentary (PVV 3.180cd-3.184ab, pp. 351-352).

[65] Mundra 2022: 137.

Dharmakīrti's Buddhist apologetics and inter-religious polemics are two sides of the same coin because both seek to demonstrate the superiority of Buddhism over competing religious and philosophical systems. As we begin to analyse Dharmakīrti's theory of perception, we must never forget the Buddhist orientation of his philosophical system. In important ways, Dharmakīrti is interested in epistemology and logic in order to rationally demonstrate the possibility of the Buddhist path to liberation.[66]

§ 1.2.1.2 *Levels of Analysis*

Having understood the overall purpose of Dharmakīrti's philosophical project, let us now turn our attention to a peculiar feature of Dharmakīrti's treatises, especially the *Pramāṇavārttika*. On a superficial reading, the *Pramāṇavārttika* seems to be internally inconsistent. The reader encounters "*multiple* and even *incompatible* ontologies" in different sections of the text.[67] For example, we find the following verse in chapter 3:

> ***tasyāviśeṣe bāhyasya bhāvanātāratamyataḥ*** |
> ***tāratamyaṃ ca buddhau syān na prītiparitāpayoḥ*** ||[68]
> 'Given the absence of difference between external objects [insofar as all of them are constituted by pleasure, pain, and so forth], there would not be any difference (*tāratamya*) between pleasure and pain in our awareness (*buddhi*)[69] due to the difference between our dispositions (*bhāvanā*) [towards different objects].'[70]

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[66] Eltschinger 2010: 400.

[67] Dunne 2004: 53.

[68] PV_M 2.270, p. 199.

[69] See p. 42, n. 90.

[70] The words within square brackets have been supplied from Manorathanandin's commentary (PVV 2.270, p. 199).

This verse refutes the Sāṃkhya theory that all external objects have the same nature of pleasure, pain, and delusion by appealing to the different degrees of pleasure and pain produced by different external objects.[71] This objection suggests that Dharmakīrti accepts the existence of external objects. Slightly later in the same chapter, however, we encounter the following statement:

> *…* ***nārtho bāhyo 'sti kevalaḥ*** ||[72]
>
> '… The external object, by itself (*kevala*), does not exist.'

This verse-quarter denies the existence of external objects. Prime facie, the text seems to be internally inconsistent because it both accepts and denies the existence of external objects. This is just one of the numerous examples of logical contradiction encountered by the reader of the *Pramāṇavārttika*. Dharmakīrti employs multiple descriptions of reality in the *Pramāṇavārttika* and these descriptions appear to be mutually incompatible.[73] This raises a hermeneutic problem: how do we charitably interpret the *Pramāṇavārttika* as espousing a consistent philosophical position?

The outlines of a solution are found in the Abhidharmic theory of two truths according to which there is a distinction between conventional truth and ultimate truth. However, while earlier Abhidharma philosophers had accepted two different descriptions of reality corresponding to the two kinds of truth, Dharmakīrti's *Pramāṇavārttika* employs multiple conflicting descriptions of reality. This suggests a sliding scale of analysis in which less accurate conventional descriptions of reality are gradually superseded by more accurate ultimate descriptions of reality.[74] In general, the inaccuracy of a description results from the error of grasping something which is not-X as X

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[71] PVV 2.270, p. 199.

[72] PV_P 3.336d, p. 388.

[73] Dunne 2004: 53.

[74] Ibid.

(*atasmiṃs tadgrahaḥ*). Following Dunne (2004), we can distinguish between four different levels of analysis arranged in increasing order of accuracy:[75]

(i) Common-Sense Realism: This corresponds to the common-sensical understanding of ordinary people in the world. The fundamental error underlying this level of analysis is the acceptance of the existence of complex wholes over and above their constituent parts. From the religious point of view, common-sense realism leads to the pernicious belief in a self (*ātman*) existing over and above the five aggregates. Since this is the most inaccurate description of reality, Dharmakīrti almost always mentions common-sense realism in a polemical context.[76]

(ii) Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika Abhidharma: This level of analysis applies the principle of mereological reductionism in order to reduce complex wholes into their constituent parts. This produces an ontology of irreducible mental and physical *dharmas*. Nonetheless, this description is erroneous because it claims that some *dharmas* (such as colour) have spatial extension and other *dharmas* have temporal extension.[77] This, in turn, violates the principle of mereological reductionism. While Dharmakīrti sometimes employs this level of analysis, he usually critiques the ontology presupposed by it.[78]

(iii) Sautrāntika external realism: This level of analysis takes the principle of mereological reductionism to its logical conclusion by rejecting all forms of spatial and temporal extension. Instead, *dharmas* are analysed as momentary partless phenomena without extension. Nonetheless, this description is erroneous because it accepts extra-mental matter as ultimately real. This is the level of analysis most frequently employed by Dharmakīrti.[79]

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[75] Dharmakīrti himself does not mention these four levels of analysis. Nonetheless, Dharmakīrti's earliest commentators Devendrabuddhi and Śākyabuddhi make a distinction between these levels, especially between the third and the fourth level of analysis (Dunne 2004: 56, n. 9).

[76] Dunne 2004: 56-57.

[77] Ibid., 57.

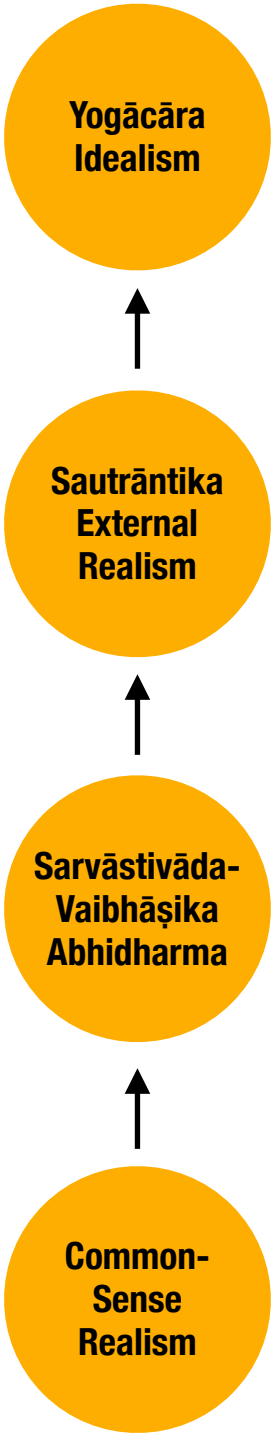
[78] Ibid., 58.

[79] Ibid., 58-59.

(iv) Yogācāra idealism: This description of reality excludes any reference to extra-mental matter. Instead, awareness is said to apprehend forms (*ākāra*) internal to awareness. Some early commentators refer to this level of analysis as '*antarjñeyavāda*' i.e. the view that the objects of awareness are internal to awareness.[80] Dharmakīrti consistently employs this level of analysis in only one significant section of his *Pramāṇavārttika*.[81]

[80] The label '*antarjñeyavāda*' is used by early commentators such as Śākyabuddhi and Vinītadeva (c. 645-715 CE) (Dunne 2004: 59-60, n. 14; Jaini 1985: 470). The commentator Karṇakagomin (c. 800 CE) uses the synonymous designation '*antarjñeyanaya*' (PVSVT 1.100, p. 210, ll. 14-15; Dunne 2004: 59-60, n. 14; Balcerowicz 2016a: 446).

[81] The relevant section is the lengthy discussion about source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) and result (*phala*) at the end of chapter 3 of the *Pramāṇavārttika* (Dunne 2004: 59-60, n. 14).



Flow-chart 1: Levels of analysis in Dharmakīrti's Pramāṇavārttika

In this way, Dharmakīrti creates a hierarchy of levels of analysis in which less accurate but commonsensical views are superseded by more accurate but counterintuitive views.[82] Each

[82] Dunne 2004: 55.

subsequent level of analysis is more ultimately true than the preceding level of analysis. Thus, these seemingly conflicting descriptions of reality are not actually contradictory because they are applied at different levels of discourse.

However, this solution raises a new puzzle: why employ less accurate descriptions of reality? If the goal of philosophical enquiry is the discovery of truth, then what purpose is served by enumerating strictly false descriptions of reality? At this stage, it is worth remembering that the goal of Dharmakīrti's philosophical project is the elimination of ignorance (*avidyā*) which perpetuates our suffering in the cycle of transmigration (*saṃsāra*).[83] An extremely complex, though true, description of reality may exceed the abilities of the audience and thereby fail to remove their ignorance.[84] As a result, a more accurate description of reality may be superior *analytically* but inferior *soteriologically*.[85] Therefore, it is necessary to teach more accessible, though less accurate, descriptions of reality in order to relieve sentient beings of their suffering.[86] This, in turn, parallels the skilfulness in means (*upāyakauśalya*) employed by the Buddhas who adapt their message to the needs of a particular audience at a particular place and time.[87] In short, Dharmakīrti employs a hierarchy of increasingly accurate descriptions of reality in order to gradually lead deluded sentient beings to freedom from suffering.

§ 1.2.2 *Epistemology and Ontology*

Having understood the overall structure and purpose of Dharmakīrti's philosophical

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[83] PV_M 1.7b, p. 7; Dunne 2004: 53-54.

[84] Dunne 2004: 54.

[85] Ibid.

[86] Ibid.

[87] Ibid., 55.

treatises, let us now examine Dharmakīrti's epistemology and ontology. As a consequence of the logico-epistemological turn initiated by Diṅnāga, Dharmakīrti views epistemology as more fundamental than ontology. This explains why the *Pramāṇavārttika* begins with an analysis of inference-for-oneself (*svārthānumāna*). For the purposes of this thesis, Dharmakīrti's extended analysis of source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) and epistemic reliability (*prāmāṇya*) at the beginning of chapter 2 is most relevant. Dharmakīrti provides a terse and precise definition of *pramāṇa*, the central concept in classical Indian epistemology:[88]

> ***pramāṇam avisaṃvādi jñānam arthakriyāsthitiḥ*** |
>
> ***avisaṃvādanam ...*** ||[89]
>
> 'A source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) is a non-contradictory (*avisaṃvādin*) awareness (*jñāna*).[90] Non-contradiction (*avisaṃvādana*) is the presence (*sthiti*) of *arthakriyā*.'

Dharmakīrti defines source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) as non-contradictory awareness. The mention of the word '*jñāna*' clarifies that, strictly speaking, a source of knowledge is always a mental awareness rather than a physical object. Any non-contradictory i.e. harmonious awareness counts as a source of knowledge. This raises the obvious question: what is non-contradiction (*avisaṃvādana*)? Non-contradiction is defined as the presence of *arthakriyā*. In other words, an

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[88] Phillips 2021.

[89] PV_M 1.3abc, p. 3.

[90] In chapter 3 of the *Pramāṇavārttika*, Dharmakīrti argues that pleasure (*sukha*) is a *jñāna* (PV_M 2.251-2.254, p. 195). This shows that the Sanskrit word '*jñāna*' means 'awareness' rather than 'cognition' in Dharmakīrti's treatises. This is because the Oxford English Dictionary defines cognition as "the action or faculty of knowing taken in its widest sense, including sensation, perception, conception, etc., as distinguished from feeling and volition; …" ("cognition, n." 2022). Thus, the word 'cognition' covers all kinds of knowledge but excludes feeling. It is meaningless to assert that the feeling of pleasure (*sukha*) is a cognition (*jñāna*) within the conceptual scheme of Anglophone analytic philosophy. Given that Dharmakīrti classifies pleasure as a kind of *jñāna*, '*jñāna*' must be translated by some English word with a broader semantic range than the word 'cognition'. Hence, the word '*jñāna*' and its Sanskrit synonyms have been translated as 'awareness' throughout this thesis.

awareness is a source of knowledge if and only if it possesses *arthakriyā*.[91] Within Dharmakīrti's philosophical system, the word '*arthakriyā*' is semantically rich and ambiguous. The compound '*artha-kriyā*' has two different meanings depending on whether the word '*artha*' is interpreted as 'purpose' (*prayojana*) or 'object' (*vastu*). On the former interpretation, *arthakriyā* means 'pragmatic efficacy' whereas, on the latter interpretation, *arthakriyā* means 'causal efficacy'.[92] Dharmakīrti's commentators usually seem to prefer the former interpretation. For example, Prajñākaragupta glosses the compound '*arthakriyāsthiti*' as follows:

> *arthasya dāhapākādeḥ kriyāniṣpattis tasyāḥ sthitir avicalanam avisaṃvādanaṃ vyavasthā vā* |[93]
>
> '*Arthakriyā* is the accomplishment of a purpose (*artha*) such as burning, cooking, and so forth by means of activity (*kriyā*). The presence i.e. non-deviation of *arthakriyā* is non-contradiction (*avisaṃvādana*) or establishment (*vyavasthā*).'

The examples provided by Prajñākaragupta show that the concept of *arthakriyā* is intimately connected with our pragmatic activity. A similar pragmatic interpretation is implicit in the following remarks by Manorathanandin:

> *yathopadarśitārthasya kriyāyāḥ sthitiḥ pramāṇayogyatā 'visaṃvādanam | ataś ca yato jñānād arthaṃ paricchidyāpi na pravartate pravṛtto vā kutaścit pratibandhāder arthakriyāṃ nādhigacchati tad api pramāṇam eva pramāṇayogyatālakṣaṇasyāvisaṃvādasya sattvāt* |[94]
>
> 'The presence of the activity of an object in accordance with the way it is presented

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[91] Dharmakīrti inherits the concept of *arthakriyā* from the Sautrāntikas who define existence as a thing's being capable of *arthakriyā* (Mikogami 1979: 79-80).

[92] Yiannopoulos 2020: 282.

[93] PVA 1.1bc, p. 4.

[94] PVV 1.3bc, p. 3.

constitutes [awareness's] capacity (*yogyatā*) for being a source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*)[95] and this, in turn, is non-contradiction. And, therefore, if a person does not engage in activity (*pravartate*) even after ascertaining the object by means of an awareness or if he engages in activity but fails to accomplish his pragmatic goal (*arthakriyā*) due to some obstacle and so forth, that awareness too is actually a source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) because of the existence of non-contradiction characterised by the capacity for being a source of knowledge.'

Manorathanandin twice employs the verb '*pra* + *vṛt*' which usually means 'to engage in activity'. This, in turn, supports the pragmatic interpretation of *arthakriyā* as pragmatic efficacy. This pragmatic interpretation of *arthakriyā* entails a pragmatist theory of epistemic reliability (*prāmāṇya*)[96] according to which an awareness is a *pramāṇa* if it leads to successful pragmatic activity:[97]

prāmāṇyaṃ vyavahāreṇa … |[98]

'[There is] epistemic reliability (*prāmāṇya*) by means of worldly activity (*vyavahāra*).'

Dharmakīrti's verse-quarter states that worldly activity is the criterion for determining whether a given awareness is epistemically reliable or not. This, in turn, confirms our interpretation of *arthakriyā* as pragmatic efficacy. In other words, an awareness counts as a source of knowledge if it is conducive to successful pragmatic activity (*arthakriyā*). Nonetheless, this straightforward pragmatic interpretation of *arthakriyā* is complicated by the following verse:

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[95] I follow Taber's (2022: 310) interpretation of the compound '*pramāṇayogyatā*'.

[96] Literally, 'that which pertains to a source of knowledge' i.e. 'epistemic reliability'. Epistemic reliability (*prāmāṇya*) corresponds to justification rather than truth in modern analytic philosophy (Tillemans 2021).

[97] Taber 2022: 310.

[98] PV_M 1.7a, p. 6.

... śābde 'py abhiprāyanivedanāt ||[99]

'[There is non-contradiction] even in the case of linguistic awareness because it makes known the intention (*abhiprāya*) [of the speaker].'

The purely pragmatic interpretation of *arthakriyā* is problematic because certain kinds of awareness seem to be epistemically reliable despite not leading to any kind of pragmatic activity. For example, a substantial part of our linguistic communication, though epistemically reliable, does not serve any pragmatic purpose. In such cases, a different interpretation of *arthakriyā* is required. Following Dharmakīrti's verse, Manorathanandin explains how the ascertainment (*pratipatti*) of the intrinsic nature (*svarūpa*) of awareness constitutes the *arthakriyā* of these kinds of awareness.[100] In such cases, *arthakriyā* is the mere causal functionality of awareness as a real mental event.[101] Thus, the causal interpretation of *arthakriyā* as causal efficacy is appropriate in certain contexts. Given the relative weight of the evidence, we may tentatively conclude that *arthakriyā* primarily refers to pragmatic efficacy and secondarily refers to causal efficacy. An awareness counts as a source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) if it possesses *arthakriyā* understood as either pragmatic efficacy or causal efficacy. As we shall see, these two divergent conceptions of *arthakriyā* are actually compatible with each other.

This concise, though somewhat ambiguous, definition of *pramāṇa* is supplemented by a second definition of *pramāṇa* presented a few verses later:

ajñātārthaprakāśo vā … ||[102]

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[99] Ibid., 1.3cd, p. 4.

[100] PVV 1.3cd, p. 4.

[101] Yiannopoulos 2020: 298-299.

[102] PV_M 1.7c, p. 8.

‘Or [a source of knowledge is an awareness] presenting (*prakāśa*) a previously unknown (*ajñāta*) object.’

Dharmakīrti’s second definition explicitly mentions a common assumption of most classical Indian theories of *pramāṇa*: a genuine source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) must lead to knowledge of a new object. This is because the very concept of *pramāṇa* includes the element of discovery signifying an addition to our knowledge.[103] This explains why most classical Indian philosophical schools do not accept memory as a source of knowledge:[104] genuine memory merely re-presents previously known objects instead of presenting new previously unknown objects.[105] However, Dharmakīrti’s motivation is slightly different because his second definition serves to exclude post-perceptual conceptual ascertainment (*adhyavasāya*) of objects from the realm of *pramāṇa*.[106] This is because conceptual ascertainment merely re-apprehends the object which has already been apprehended by non-conceptual perception.[107] The relationship between the first definition and the second definition of *pramāṇa* initially seems to be unclear. Dharmakīrti’s usage of the particle ‘or’ (*vā*) might suggest that the second definition is an alternative to the first definition. However, Manorathanandin convincingly shows that the two definitions require each other (*parasparasāpekṣa*).[108] This is because an awareness has pragmatic efficacy (*arthakriyā*) insofar as it motivates the knower to potentially obtain or abandon the object apprehended by it.[109] However, it is always the initial apprehension of the object which motivates the knower to obtain or abandon the object rather than

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[103] Sharma 1996: 30.

[104] Interestingly, Akalaṅka is a notable exception to this general trend because he accepts memory (*smṛti*) as a source of knowledge (LTSV 10cd-11ab, p. 5, ll. 1-3).

[105] Sharma 1996: 30-31.

[106] Taber 2022: 311.

[107] See § 3.2.5, pp. 142-144.

[108] PVV 1.7c, p. 8.

[109] Taber 2022: 311.

the second or third apprehension of the object.[110] Thus, a pragmatically efficacious awareness necessarily presents a previously unknown object.[111] On the flip side, an awareness of a previously unknown object necessarily motivates the unenlightened desirous knower to potentially obtain or abandon the object. In this way, the two definitions complement each other.[112]

Having defined source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) and having established the pragmatic criterion of epistemic reliability (*prāmāṇya*) at the beginning of chapter 2, Dharmakīrti lists the two sources of knowledge and their respective objects at the beginning of chapter 3:

> ***mānaṃ dvividhaṃ viṣayadvaividhyāc chaktyaśaktitaḥ*** |
> ***arthakriyāyāṃ keśādir nārtho 'narthādhimokṣataḥ*** ||
> ***sadṛśāsadṛśatvāc ca viṣayāviṣayatvataḥ*** |
> ***śabdasyānyanimittānāṃ bhāve dhīsadasattvataḥ*** ||
> ***arthakriyāsamarthaṃ yat tad atra paramārthasat*** |
> ***anyat saṃvṛtisat proktaṃ te svasāmānyalakṣaṇe*** ||[113]
>
> 'Sources of knowledge (*māna*) are twofold because there are two kinds of objects (*viṣaya*). There are two kinds of objects in accordance with the capacity and lack of capacity for causal activity (*arthakriyā*).[114] Hairs and so forth [seen by persons afflicted with *timira* eye-disease] are not real objects because they are not determined (*adhimokṣa*)[115] to be real objects [by

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[110] Ibid.

[111] Ibid.

[112] Although the second definition might be implicit in the first definition, Prajñākaragupta explains that the contents of a definition must be explicit (PVA 1.5c, p. 30). This is why Dharmakīrti explicitly formulates the second definition.

[113] PV_M 2.1-2.3, pp. 110-112.

[114] Given that the next verse mentions the causal factors (*nimitta*) giving rise to awareness, *arthakriyā* must refer to causal efficacy in this context.

[115] I follow Manorathanandin's (PVV 2.1cd, p. 111) interpretation and Franco's and Notake's (2014: 29) translation of '*adhimokṣa*' as 'determination'.

ordinary people]. Furthermore, there are two kinds of objects in accordance with similarity and absence of similarity, the state of being the object of language (*śabda*) and the state of not being the object of language, and the arising and the non-arising of awareness when there is the presence of causal factors (*nimitta*) other than the object itself. Anything which is capable of causal activity is ultimately real (*paramārthasat*) in this treatise. Everything else has been declared to be conventionally real (*saṃvṛtisat*). These two [kinds of objects] are the particular (*svalakṣaṇa*) and the universal (*sāmānyalakṣaṇa*) respectively.'

Dharmakīrti subscribes to the theory of 'the settlement of distinct objects for different sources of knowledge' (*pramāṇavyavasthā*) according to which every source of knowledge apprehends a different kind of object. Given that there are two sources of knowledge, there must be two different kinds of objects. The two sources of knowledge are perception (*pratyakṣa*) and inference (*anumāna*). Perception apprehends particulars (*svalakṣaṇa*) whereas inference ascertains universals (*sāmānyalakṣaṇa*). Particulars, by definition, are unique entities which are completely distinct from each other.[116] Given their utter uniqueness, particulars cannot be expressed in language. This is because language necessarily refers to generic types.[117] Crucially, our awareness of particulars is produced by the particulars themselves. This shows that particulars have the capacity for causal activity (*arthakriyā*). Universals, by contrast, ostensibly capture the similarity between two or more entities. Insofar as they are generic types, universals are expressible in language. Most importantly, our awareness of universals is not produced by the universals themselves. This is because universals are conceptual constructs fabricated by the mind. As such, universals lack the capacity for causal activity (*arthakriyā*). However, Dharmakīrti's ontology should not be misinterpreted as a kind of dualism between particulars and universals. This is because Dharmakīrti employs the Abhidharmic

[116] Taber 2022: 316.

[117] See § 3.2.2, pp. 135-137.

theory of two truths in order to argue that causally efficacious particulars are ultimately real whereas causally inefficacious universals are purely conventional. It is important to observe how causal efficacy (*arthakriyā*) serves as the criterion of ultimate reality. Partless momentary particulars have the capacity to produce awareness of themselves. This causal power bestows ultimate reality on particulars. By contrast, conceptually constructed universals lack the capacity to produce awareness of themselves. This absence of causal power means that universals are not ultimately real. However, given that they are useful in ordinary life, universals are conventionally real. We can now appreciate how the two different interpretations of *arthakriyā* are related to each other. While discussing the ontological reality of particulars, Dharmakīrti highlights their causal capacity (*arthakriyā*) to produce awareness of themselves. On the other hand, while discussing the epistemic reliability of awareness, Dharmakīrti highlights awareness's capacity to lead to successful pragmatic activity (*arthakriyā*). Thus, the causal interpretation of *arthakriyā* predominates in ontological contexts whereas the pragmatic interpretation of *arthakriyā* predominates in epistemological contexts. However, these two conceptions of *arthakriyā* are complementary because successful pragmatic activity ultimately depends on causally efficient particulars.[118]

The radically parsimonious nature of Dharmakīrti's ontology and epistemology is striking. At the level of ultimate reality, the world is constituted solely by unique, inexpressible, momentary, partless particulars. The theory of *pramāṇavyavasthā* means that ultimately real particulars are apprehended by perception and not by any other source of knowledge. Thus, perception is the pre-eminent source of knowledge because it alone provides direct access to the ultimate nature of reality. This, in turn, highlights the importance of perception within Dharmakīrti's philosophical system. This parsimonious ontology is expanded to accommodate universals at the level of conventional reality. Once again, the theory of *pramāṇavyavasthā* means that universals are

[118] Yiannopoulos 2020: 286.

apprehended by inference and not by any other source of knowledge. Insofar as it apprehends conventionally real universals, inference counts as a source of knowledge. However, strictly speaking, inference is a kind of erroneous falsification of the unique and inexpressible nature of ultimately real particulars.[119] Dharmakīrti's epistemology and ontology bear a strong affinity with the epistemology and ontology defended by his intellectual forefather Diṅnāga.[120] Following Diṅnāga, Dharmakīrti accepts only two sources of knowledge (*pramāṇa*), namely, perception and inference.[121] Like Diṅnāga, Dharmakīrti accepts two types of objects of knowledge (*prameya*), the particular and the universal, apprehended by these two sources of knowledge.[122] Most importantly, Dharmakīrti inherits Diṅnāga's innovative understanding of *svalakṣaṇa* as inexpressible tokens rather than the traditional Abhidharmic understanding of *svalakṣaṇa* as definable types with innumerable tokens.[123] Dharmakīrti's minimalist reductionist ontology is complemented by a sustained critique of the ultimate reality of universals.[124] Dharmakīrti argues that universals are mere exclusions (*apoha*) i.e. differences shared by some particulars as opposed to other particulars.[125] Insofar as universals qua exclusions are assigned as the meaning of words by conventional usage (*saṃketa*), language is purely conventional.[126] There is no 'eternal' or 'natural' relation between a word and its referent. Instead, the relation between a word and its referent is

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[119] PV_M 2.55, p. 132.

[120] Dharmakīrti's most important innovations vis-a-vis Diṅnāga are found in his theory of inference. These innovations include the development of the conditions allowing logical validity and the development of three kinds of valid inferential reasons (*hetu*) (Eltschinger 2010: 401).

[121] PS 1.2ab, p. 1, l. 15.

For Dharmakīrti, Buddhist scriptural teachings such as the four noble truths are knowable through certain kinds of perception and inference (Taber 2022: 310).

[122] PS 1.2bc, p. 1, ll. 17-20.

[123] Arnold 2005: 28.

[124] PV_M 2.5-2.50, pp. 114-130.

[125] Taber 2022: 313.

[126] PV_M 2.159-2.160, p. 166; Taber 2022: 313-314.

arbitrary because it is ultimately grounded in our pragmatic interests.[127] The final element of Dharmakīrti's ontology is the momentariness of all ultimately real entities.[128] Dharmakīrti inherits the theory of momentariness from Abhidharma but provides innovative proofs for this counter-intuitive thesis.[129] Dharmakīrti's radical ontology ultimately leads to a strong anti-realism which rejects our ordinary world of complex and enduring objects such as tables and chairs.[130]

§ 1.2.3 *Perception*

Having understood Dharmakīrti's overall epistemology and ontology, let us now focus our attention on Dharmakīrti's theory of perception. In his *Pramāṇavārttika*, Dharmakīrti defines perception as follows:

> ***pratyakṣaṃ kalpanāpoḍhaṃ …*** |[131]
>
> 'Perception is [awareness] devoid of conceptualisation (*kalpanā*).'

This remarkably concise definition defines perception as non-conceptual (*nirvikalpa*) awareness. Historically speaking, Dharmakīrti's definition of perception is identical to Diṅnāga's definition of perception.[132] While detailed examination of the nature and function of conceptualisation (*kalpanā*/*vikalpa*) is the subject-matter of chapter 3, we can presently understand perception qua non-conceptual awareness as a bare awareness of an ultimately real particular (*svalakṣaṇa*) without

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[127] Taber 2022: 313-314.

[128] Ibid., 314.

[129] Especially noteworthy is Dharmakīrti's *sattvānumāna* which seeks to prove that every real entity is momentary simply by virtue of the fact that it exists (PVi 2.54, pp. 79-80).

[130] Taber 2022: 313.

[131] PV_M 2.123a, p. 154.

[132] See § 3.1.1, p. 117.

determinate identification according to genus, quality, or any other linguistic notion.[133] However, this straightforward definition gives rise to a philosophical puzzle: a person afflicted with *timira* eye-disease[134] has a non-conceptual awareness of unreal hairs.[135] If perception qua *pramāṇa* is simply non-conceptual awareness, then the diseased individual's non-conceptual awareness of unreal hairs too counts as perception. However, this is absurd because his awareness is obviously erroneous and an erroneous awareness cannot be a source of knowledge. In order to solve this philosophical puzzle, Dharmakīrti emends his definition of perception in the *Pramāṇaviniścaya*:

> ***pratyakṣaṃ kalpanāpoḍham abhrāntam ...*** |[136]
>
> 'Perception is [awareness] which is devoid of conceptualisation (*kalpanā*) and non-erroneous (*abhrānta*).'

The addition of the qualifier 'non-erroneous' (*abhrānta*) serves to exclude erroneous non-conceptual awareness arising from defective sense-faculties.[137] Insofar as perception qua *pramāṇa* must be non-erroneous, the diseased individual's erroneous awareness of unreal hairs does not count as perception. In this way, Dharmakīrti's definition of perception in the *Pramāṇaviniścaya* improves upon his definition of perception in the *Pramāṇavārttika*. In summary, any non-conceptual and non-erroneous awareness counts as perception qua *pramāṇa* within Dharmakīrti's philosophical system.

Having defined perception in general, Dharmakīrti identifies four different kinds of

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[133] Taber 2022: 314.

[134] Dunne (2020: 573) and Yiannopoulos (2020: 73) identify *timira* with myodesopsia or optical floaters. In my view, the precise medical identification of *timira* is not very important because *timira* merely serves as an example of sensory impairments distorting perceptual awareness. Hence, the word '*timira*' has been left untranslated throughout this thesis.

[135] PV_M 2.293, p. 206.

[136] PVi 1.4ab, p. 7.

[137] Taber 2022: 314.

perception:[138]

(i) sensory perception (*indriyajñāna*)

(ii) mental perception (*manovijñāna*)

(iii) self-reflexive perception (*ātmasaṃvedana*)

(iv) yogic perception (*yogijñāna*)

Dharmakīrti provides a definition of each of these four kinds of perception in his *Nyāyabindu*, beginning with sensory perception:

> *indriyajñānam* |[139]
>
> 'Awareness [produced] by the sense-faculties (*indriya*).'

This *sūtra* simply lists the name of the first kind of perception: sensory perception (*indriyajñāna*). Dharmakīrti's commentator Dharmottara (c. 8th century CE)[140] explains that sensory perception depends on (*āśrita*) the sense-faculties.[141] In other words, sensory perception is awareness produced by any one of the five sense-faculties.[142] Dharmakīrti next proceeds to define mental perception:

> *svaviṣayānantaraviṣayasahakāriṇendriyajñānena samanantarapratyayena janitaṃ tan manovijñānam* |[143]
>
> 'Mental perception is [awareness] produced by the immediately preceding condition (*samanantarapratyaya*), i.e. sensory perception, which is co-active (*sahakārin*) with the

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[138] NBi 1.6-1.7, pp. 54-56.

[139] Ibid., 1.8, p. 56.

[140] Buswell and Lopez 2014: "Dharmottara (T.)".

[141] NBT 1.8, p. 56.

[142] The five sense-faculties are the faculty of sight, the faculty of hearing, the faculty of smell, the faculty of taste, and the faculty of touch.

[143] NBi 1.9, p. 57.

object immediately following [the sensory perception's] own object.'[144]

Mental perception is a kind of awareness arising immediately after sensory perception.[145] The precise nature and function of mental perception is unclear and controversial: it seems to be a non-conceptual mental image of the next moment of the object apprehended by sensory perception.[146] Dharmakīrti next proceeds to define self-reflexive perception:

sarvacittacaittānām ātmasaṃvedanam |[147]

'The self-reflexive awareness of every moment of consciousness (*citta*) and its mental concomitants (*caitta*).'

Each and every awareness, whether non-conceptual or conceptual, is immediately and directly aware of itself. This self-reflexive awareness is a kind of perception because it is non-conceptual and non-erroneous. Interestingly, Dharmakīrti employs distinctively Abhidharmic terminology when he distinguishes between a moment of consciousness (*citta*) and its mental concomitants (*caitta*).[148] In his *Pramāṇavārttika* and *Pramāṇaviniścaya*, by contrast, Dharmakīrti generally operates with a simpler model of a stream (*saṃtāna*) of momentary awarenesses. In these works, the Abhidharmic distinction between a moment of consciousness (*citta*) and its mental concomitants (*caitta*) is largely absent.[149] This, in turn, shows the diversity of Dharmakīrti's philosophical thought where older Abhidharmic ideas in some treatises are replaced by the newer ideas of Diṅnāga in other treatises. Dharmakīrti concludes this sub-section with a definition of yogic perception:

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[144] I follow Kobayashi's (2010: 237) translation with some minor changes.

[145] Kobayashi 2010: 243.

[146] Taber 2022: 315.

[147] NBi 1.10, p. 64.

[148] Ronkin 2022.

[149] The words '*jñāna*', '*dhī*', '*buddhi*', '*citta*', and '*manas*' become synonyms for 'awareness' in the *Pramāṇavārttika* and *Pramāṇaviniścaya*.

bhūtārthabhāvanāprakarṣaparyantajaṃ yogijñānaṃ ceti |[150]

'And, yogic perception is [awareness] arising from the culmination (*paryanta*) of a superior degree (*prakarṣa*) of meditative cultivation (*bhāvanā*) of real entities.'

Yogic perception is direct, vivid, and non-conceptual experience of real objects resulting from intense meditative cultivation.[151] The addition of the word 'real' (*bhūta*) is crucial because meditators sometimes perceive unreal entities through intense meditative cultivation. Such non-conceptual awareness does not count as yogic perception qua *pramāṇa* because the object of the awareness does not actually exist.[152] Dharmottara explains that genuine yogic perception apprehends real entities such as the four noble truths (*āryasatya*).[153] Direct yogic perception of the four noble truths, in turn, leads to freedom from transmigratory suffering. Thus, yogic perception is intimately connected with Buddhist soteriology. For the purposes of this thesis, sensory perception and self-reflexive perception are most relevant. Sensory perception, especially the paradigmatic case of visual perception, is the subject-matter of chapters 3 and 4 whereas self-reflexive perception is the subject-matter of chapter 5. Mental perception and yogic perception are beyond the scope of this thesis.

Having understood the four different kinds of genuine perception, let us now turn our attention to pseudo-perception (*pratyakṣābhāsa*). Unlike genuine perception, a pseudo-perception is an erroneous awareness of some unreal object. Given this erroneous nature, a pseudo-perception is not a source of knowledge. Dharmakīrti distinguishes between four different kinds of pseudo-

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[150] NBi 1.11, p. 67.

[151] Taber 2022: 315.

[152] Ibid.

[153] NBT 1.11, p. 67.

perception:

> ***trividhaṃ kalpanājñānam āśrayopaplavodbhavam*** |
>
> ***avikalpakam ekaṃ ca pratyakṣābhaṃ caturvidham*** ||[154]
>
> 'Pseudo-perception (*pratyakṣābha*) is fourfold. It consists of three kinds of conceptual awareness and one kind of non-conceptual awareness arising from the impairment (*upaplava*) of the sensory bases (*āśraya*).'

Dharmakīrti's classification of pseudo-perception is loosely inspired by Diṅnāga's analysis of pseudo-perception in his *Pramāṇasamuccaya*.[155] At the most basic level, there are two types of pseudo-perception: conceptual pseudo-perception and non-conceptual pseudo-perception.[156] Given that perception is defined as non-conceptual awareness,[157] it is easy to understand why any kind of conceptual awareness falls under the category of pseudo-perception. In subsequent verses, Dharmakīrti lists the three kinds of conceptual pseudo-perception:

(i) conceptual awareness dependent on linguistic convention (*saṃketasaṃśraya*).[158]

(ii) conceptual awareness consisting of the superimposition of another object (*anyārthasamāropa*).[159]

(iii) conceptual awareness requiring the recollection of what has been previously experienced (*anubhūtasmaraṇa*).[160]

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[154] PV_M 2.288, p. 204.

[155] Though both Diṅnāga and Dharmakīrti accept three kinds of conceptual pseudo-perception, the three kinds actually enumerated by the two are very different (PS 1.7cd-1.8ab, p. 3, ll. 16-17). It is unclear whether Diṅnāga accepts any kind of non-conceptual pseudo-perception (Dunne 2020: 577). By contrast, Dharmakīrti very clearly accepts a kind of non-conceptual pseudo-perception (PV_M 2.288, p. 204).

[156] Dunne 2020: 575.

[157] PV_M 2.123a, p. 154.

[158] PV_M 2.290, p. 205; Dunne 2020: 575.

[159] Ibid.

[160] PV_M 2.292, p. 206; Dunne 2020: 575.

An example of the first kind of conceptual pseudo-perception is the judgement: 'This is a pot'.[161] Whilst many philosophers regard these conceptual judgements as a form of perception, Dharmakīrti and his commentators argue that the ascertainment of a pot involves the mental combination of many distinct momentary particulars and the application of an arbitrary linguistic designation to this mental construct.[162] An example of the second kind of conceptual pseudo-perception is the illusory perception of water in a mirage.[163] This kind of pseudo-perception involves the superimposition of something which is not-X (water) onto X (heated sand). An example of the third kind of conceptual pseudo-perception is the inference of a pot.[164] This inference requires the recollection of a previously experienced pot. This dependence on memory necessarily excludes such conceptual awareness from the domain of perception. Having explained the three kinds of conceptual pseudo-perception, Dharmakīrti analyses non-conceptual pseudo-perception:

> ***apavādaś caturtho 'tra tenoktam upaghātajam*** |
>
> ***kevalaṃ tatra timiram upaghātopalakṣaṇam*** ||[165]
>
> 'In this [fourfold classification of pseudo-perception] (*atra*), the fourth kind of pseudo-perception is an exception (*apavāda*) [to the general definition of perception as non-conceptual awareness]. By means of this, pseudo-perception arising from the impairment [of the sense-faculties] has been stated. The sole mention of *timira* eye-disease there [in Diṅnāga's *Pramāṇasamuccaya*][166] (*tatra*) is a synecdoche (*upalakṣaṇa*) for all impairments

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161 PVV 2.290, p. 205.

162 PVV 2.290, p. 205; Dunne 2020: 575.

See § 3.2.5, pp. 142-144.

163 PVV 2.290, pp. 205-206.

164 Ibid., 2.292, p. 206.

165 PV_M 2.293, p. 206.

166 PS 1.8ab, p. 3, l. 17.

[of the sense-faculties].'[167]

A person afflicted with *timira* eye-disease sees unreal hairs in his field of vision. Crucially, the appearance of these unreal hairs is clear, vivid, and non-conceptual.[168] Nonetheless, this non-conceptual awareness does not count as perception qua *pramāṇa* because the hairs do not actually exist.[169] Instead, the unreal hairs appear due to some impairment of the perceiver's sense-faculties. Thus, non-conceptual awareness produced by defective sense-faculties is the fourth kind of pseudo-perception. Interestingly, Dharmakīrti's verse states that this kind of non-conceptual pseudo-perception is an exception (*apavāda*) to the general definition of perception as non-conceptual awareness. This, in turn, shows that there is no real conflict between Dharmakīrti's definition of perception in the *Pramāṇavārttika* and Dharmakīrti's definition of perception in the *Pramāṇaviniścaya*. Although the word 'non-erroneous' (*abhrānta*) is not explicitly used in the definition of perception in the *Pramāṇavārttika*, the requirement of non-erroneousness is implicit because erroneous non-conceptual awareness produced by defective sense-faculties is classified as a kind of pseudo-perception.[170] Thus, Dharmakīrti understands perception as non-conceptual and non-erroneous awareness throughout his oeuvre.

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[167] The words within square brackets have been supplied from Manorathanandin's commentary (PVV 2.293, p. 206).

[168] Dunne 2020: 577.

[169] This is known by the fact that the diseased individual cannot accomplish any pragmatic activity (*arthakriyā*) with the perceived hairs.

[170] PV_M 2.288, p. 204.

§ 1.3 Conclusion

Dharmakīrti is one of the towering giants of Buddhist philosophy who influenced virtually all subsequent philosophical thought in India and Tibet.[171] This chapter has shown how Dharmakīrti's innovative sophistication stems from his complex synthesis of northern Sanskritic Abhidharma schools (especially Sautrāntika) and the *pramāṇavāda* of Diṅnāga. This complex synthesis is made possible by an expansion of the Abhidharmic theory of two truths into a series of hierarchically arranged levels of analysis gradually ascending towards the ultimate truth. These levels of analysis, in turn, are situated within a Buddhist apologetic framework devoted to establishing the epistemic reliability of the Buddha and the veracity of fundamental Buddhist doctrines such as the four noble truths.[172] As we analyse Dharmakīrti's theory of perception, it is important to never lose sight of the apologetic motivations underlying his philosophical theorising. Within this overall framework, Dharmakīrti examines the central problems of epistemology and ontology. In general, the logico-epistemological turn initiated by Diṅnāga means that epistemology becomes more fundamental than ontology within Dharmakīrti's treatises.[173] Dharmakīrti's epistemology revolves around the concept of 'source of knowledge' (*pramāṇa*) which is defined as awareness conducive to successful pragmatic activity (*arthakriyā*). Unlike most of his Buddhist predecessors (except Diṅnāga) and unlike most non-Buddhist philosophical schools (except Vaiśeṣika), Dharmakīrti accepts only two sources of knowledge: perception and inference. This parsimonious epistemology is mapped onto an equally parsimonious ontology: perception apprehends unique, inexpressible, momentary, partless particulars (*svalakṣaṇa*) whereas inference

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[171] Dunne 2004: 1-2.

[172] Jackson 1988: 336.

[173] Eltschinger 2010: 400.

apprehends generic universals (*sāmānyalakṣaṇa*).[174] While universals are conceptual constructs of the mind, particulars are ultimately real because they possess causal efficacy (*arthakriyā*). Given that perception alone apprehends ultimately real particulars, perception is the pre-eminent source of knowledge within Dharmakīrti's philosophical system. This foundational status of perception motivates my interest in Dharmakīrti's theory of perception.

While this chapter has introduced the nature, scope, and purpose of Dharmakīrti's philosophical project, the subsequent chapters (chapters 3, 4, and 5) analyse selected aspects of Dharmakīrti's theory of perception as well as their reception by the Jaina philosopher Akalaṅka. Given the limitations of space and time, I have chosen three important and distinctive aspects of Dharmakīrti's theory of perception: perceptual non-conceptualism, epistemic idealism, and non-dualism. As we have seen, Dharmakīrti defines perception as non-conceptual and non-erroneous awareness.[175] This very definition entails a commitment to perceptual non-conceptualism. Dharmakīrti's understanding of conceptualisation (*kalpanā*/*vikalpa*) as well as his arguments for the non-conceptual nature of perception are discussed in chapter 3. As we have seen, Dharmakīrti's hierarchically arranged levels of analysis culminate in Yogācāra idealism. Chapter 4 argues that Dharmakīrti's Yogācāra is best understood as a form of epistemic idealism. This is followed by an analysis of Dharmakīrti's arguments for epistemic idealism, especially the famous *sahopalambhaniyama* inference. Finally, chapter 5 examines Dharmakīrti's theory of self-reflexive awareness (*svasaṃvedana*) and its relationship with the Mahāyāna Buddhist teaching of non-dualism (*advaya*). This chapter concludes with reflections on Dharmakīrti's metaphilosophy and soteriology. In my view, Dharmakīrti's theory of perception is *philosophically* interesting because it radically challenges the assumptions prevalent in 1st millennium CE Indian philosophy as well as

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[174] PV_M 2.1-2.3, pp. 110-112.

[175] PVi 1.4ab, p. 7.

modern analytic philosophy. As far as I am aware, no classical Indian philosopher prior to Dharmakīrti (except Diṅnāga) explicitly defended a theory of perception combining perceptual non-conceptualism, epistemic idealism, and non-dualism. Most classical Indian philosophical schools such as Nyāya and Mīmāṃsā rejected perceptual non-conceptualism by arguing that perception involves both a non-conceptual stage as well as a conceptual stage and rejected epistemic idealism by arguing that perception apprehends external objects.[176] Furthermore, Dharmakīrti comprehensively defends the non-dual nature of awareness almost a century before associated versions of non-dualism were defended by Advaita Vedāntins such as Maṇḍana Miśra (late 7th century-early 8th century CE)[177] and Śaṅkara (c. 8th century CE)[178]. Likewise, epistemic idealism and non-dualism have very few proponents in modern analytic philosophy. This shows that Dharmakīrti's theory of perception is unique by both classical and modern standards. This uniqueness, in turn, raises the exciting possibility of discovering new solutions to old philosophical problems.

[176] Matilal 2020: 241-245; Taber 2005: 23-38.

[177] Johnson 2010: 197.

[178] Dalal 2021.

§ 2 *Akalaṅka's Theory of Perception*

This chapter presents an overview of Akalaṅka's theory of perception within the context of his epistemology and ontology. Section § 2.1 begins by introducing the life and works of Akalaṅka. This is followed by a concise intellectual history of Digambara Jaina philosophy prior to Akalaṅka, especially Umāsvāmin's *Tattvārthasūtra* and Samantabhadra's *Āptamīmāṃsā*. Having situated Akalaṅka within the history of Jaina philosophy, section § 2.2 examines Akalaṅka's philosophical ideas. I begin by highlighting the systematic, innovative, and polemical nature of Akalaṅka's philosophical project. This is followed by an analysis of Akalaṅka's epistemology, especially his definition of *pramāṇa*, and his many-sided (*anekānta*) ontology. Finally, this section examines Akalaṅka's theory of perception, especially the definition of perception, the three kinds of genuine perception, and the four stages of sensory perception.

§ 2.1 Historical Context

§ 2.1.1 *Who was Akalaṅka?*

Akalaṅka (c. 8th century CE)[1] is widely regarded as one of the greatest philosophers of the Digambara[2] Jaina tradition. We do not find reliable historical information about Akalaṅka's life in either his works or the works of his contemporaries.[3] As we have seen, later Jaina story-collections (*kathākośa*)[4] state that Akalaṅka was born in the city of Mānyākheṭa in the south.[5] He was the eldest son of Puruṣottama, the minister of King Śubhatuṅga (commonly known as Krishna Rāja I)[6] of the powerful Rāṣṭrakūṭa dynasty.[7] The ecumenical Rāṣṭrakūṭa sovereigns provided substantial patronage to Jaina intellectuals as well as Jaina institutions.[8] In all likelihood, Akalaṅka flourished during a period of political expansion and economic prosperity under the Rāṣṭrakūṭas.

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[1] Bowker 2000.

Given that his works display knowledge of the ideas of Bhartṛhari, Kumārila, Dharmakīrti, and Prajñākaragupta, Akalaṅka could not have flourished before the eighth-century of the Common Era (Śāstrī 1939: 16). After carefully examining the available historical evidence, Mahendrakumāra Śāstrī, the modern editor of Akalaṅka's philosophical treatises, tentatively places Akalaṅka between 720 and 780 CE (Śāstrī 1939: 32). Contemporary scholars such as Dundas (2002: 87) and Balcerowicz (2016b: 994) follow Mahendrakumāra's dating. For the purposes of this thesis, it is sufficient to observe that Akalaṅka flourished more than a century after Dharmakīrti.

[2] For the major differences between Digambara Jainism and Śvetāmbara Jainism, see Dundas (2002: 45-59).

[3] Śāstrī 1939: 11-13.

[4] The two main sources are Prabhācandra's prose *Kathākośa* (c. 1077 CE) and Brahmacārin Nemidatta's versified *Ārādhanākathākośa* (c. 16th century CE) (Śāstrī 1939: 1; Granoff 1989: 110; Upādhye 1974: 19-20). Since these story-collections were composed hundreds of years after Akalaṅka's death, they must be viewed as hagiography rather than history.

[5] Śāstrī 1939: 11.

[6] According to historians, Krishna Rāja I reigned from 758 CE to 773 CE (Middleton 2015: 770).

[7] Śāstrī 1939: 11-12.

[8] For a detailed study of the relationship between the Rāṣṭrakūṭa dynasty and Jainism, see Nāgarājayya (2000).

Amongst Akalaṅka's works, the following four independent philosophical treatises (*prakaraṇa*) are most important:

(i) *Laghīyastraya*: A short treatise of 78 verses divided into three chapters with a prose auto-commentary called *Laghīyastrayasvopajñavivṛti*. The three chapters introduce (*praveśa*) sources of knowledge (*pramāṇa*), viewpoints (*naya*), and scripture (*pravacana*) respectively.[9] The first chapter on sources of knowledge is further sub-divided into four sections discussing perception (*pratyakṣa*), object [of awareness] (*viṣaya*), indirect awareness (*parokṣa*), and scripture (*āgama*) respectively.[10] Akalaṅka's prose auto-commentary explains the meaning of each verse and polemically engages with non-Jaina opponents.[11] The *Laghīyastraya* is the simplest and the clearest philosophical treatise composed by Akalaṅka.

(ii) *Nyāyaviniścaya*:[12] A long treatise of 480 verses divided into three chapters. The subject-matter of the three chapters (*prastāva*) is perception (*pratyakṣa*), inference (*anumāna*), and scripture (*pravacana*) respectively. The title of the *Nyāyaviniścaya* is probably inspired by Dharmakīrti's

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[9] Mahendrakumāra speculates that the *Laghīyastraya* originally consisted solely of the first two chapters on *pramāṇa* and *naya* (Śāstrī 1939: 34). There are two pieces of evidence supporting this hypothesis. Firstly, we find the following sentence at the end of chapter 2:
iti pramāṇanayapraveśaḥ samāptaḥ | (LT p. 17, l. 17)
'Here ends the introduction to sources of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) and viewpoints (*naya*).'
Secondly, chapter 3 dealing with scripture begins with a new benedictory verse (LT 51). These two pieces of evidence suggest that the *Laghīyastraya* originally consisted of two chapters and the third chapter was initially composed as an independent treatise. At some point, Akalaṅka and/or his commentators combined the two treatises to form the *Laghīyastraya* i.e. 'The Triad of Very Simple [Chapters]' (Śāstrī 1939: 34-35). For the purposes of this thesis, I treat the *Laghīyastraya* as a unified work consisting of three chapters because this is how the work has been received and studied in the subsequent commentarial tradition as well as modern scholarship.

[10] Śāstrī 1939: 35.

[11] Interestingly, Akalaṅka's commentarial style closely resembles Dharmakīrti's commentarial style because both thinkers use the verse as a springboard to develop new ideas in the commentary (Śāstrī 1939: 35-36).

[12] There are no known extant manuscripts of Akalaṅka's *Nyāyaviniścaya*. Mahendrakumāra culled and reconstructed the verses of the *Nyāyaviniścaya* from Vādirājasūri's commentary (Jaina 1959: 65).

Pramāṇaviniścaya.[13] Given that we do not possess Akalaṅka's prose auto-commentary on the verses,[14] the *Nyāyaviniścaya* is a dense and challenging philosophical treatise.

(iii) *Pramāṇasaṃgraha*: A short treatise of 87.5 verses divided into nine sections with prose auto-commentary. According to Mahendrakumāra, "the language and especially the content of the *Pramāṇasaṃgraha* is very complex and difficult to understand".[15] In all likelihood, the *Pramāṇasaṃgraha* was Akalaṅka's final composition and represents the mature stage of his philosophical thought.[16]

(iv) *Siddhiviniścaya*: An extensive versified treatise divided into twelve chapters with prose auto-commentary. It deals with epistemological concepts such as sources of knowledge (*pramāṇa*), viewpoints (*naya*), and angles of analysis (*nikṣepa*).[17]

In addition to these four independent philosophical treatises,[18] Akalaṅka composed two exegetical commentaries (*bhāṣya*):

(i) *Tattvārthavārtika*: An extensive prose commentary on Umāsvāmin's *Tattvārthasūtra* dealing with Jaina cosmology, metaphysics, and ethics.[19]

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[13] Śāstrī 1939: 37.

While Buddhist logic (*nyāya*) solely consists of sources of knowledge (*pramāṇa*), Jaina logic (*nyāya*), following TS 1.6, consists of both sources of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) and viewpoints (*naya*) (Śāstrī 1939: 34). This might explain why Akalaṅka uses the word '*nyāya*' instead of the word '*pramāṇa*' in the title of his treatise.

[14] On the basis of occasional mentions by later commentators, Mahendrakumāra speculates that Akalaṅka must have composed a prose auto-commentary on the *Nyāyaviniścaya* (Śāstrī 1939: 38-39). However, there are no known extant manuscripts of the auto-commentary.

[15] This is my literal English translation of the following sentence from Mahendrakumāra's Hindi introduction (Śāstrī 1939: 39):

इस ग्रन्थ की भाषा और खासकर विषय तो अत्यन्त जटिल तथा कठिनता से समझने लायक है ।

[16] Śāstrī 1939: 39.

[17] Jaina 1959: 93.

[18] Akalaṅka composed three other philosophical treatises: *Pramāṇaratnapradīpa*, *Nyāyacūlikā*, and *Pramāṇalakṣaṇa*. No manuscripts of the first two treatises have been discovered so far whereas the extant manuscripts of the third treatise remain unpublished (Balcerowicz 2016b: 995, nn. 4-5). In the absence of manuscript evidence, it is possible that the first two treatises are mere attributions.

[19] Jaina 1959: 62-63.

(ii) *Aṣṭaśatī*: A prose commentary, amounting to 800 verses, on Samantabhadra's *Āptamīmāṃsā*.[20] Besides these authentic works, a large number of religious, poetic, and ritual texts such as *Svarūpasambodhana*, *Akalaṅkapratiṣṭhāpāṭha*, *Akalaṅkaprāyaścittasaṃgraha*, and *Akalaṅkastotra* are attributed to Akalaṅka within the Digambara Jaina tradition.[21] However, modern text-critical scholarship has shown that these texts were not composed by the eighth-century philosopher Akalaṅka.[22] Nonetheless, the very attribution of these works to Akalaṅka highlights his authority and importance within the Digambara Jaina tradition.

Akalaṅka's authentic works are fundamentally devoted to solving the problems of epistemology. Akalaṅka's style of argumentation has been described as "rigid, compact and complicated".[23] However, Akalaṅka is not just a dry logician because he frequently makes "proverbial, idiomatic, illustrative and axiomatic statements full of wit and humour".[24] Despite their philosophical depth and historical significance, Akalaṅka's works have received very little attention in modern Indological scholarship.[25] As a small step towards remedying this unjustified neglect, this thesis undertakes a careful study of Akalaṅka's theory of perception as presented in his independent philosophical treatises, especially the *Laghīyastraya* (with auto-commentary) and the *Nyāyaviniścaya*. I occasionally refer to Akalaṅka's exegetical works such as the *Aṣṭaśatī* whenever

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[20] Ibid., 63-64.

[21] Ibid., 67.

[22] Śāstrī 1938: 53-58.

Mahendrakumāra speculates that these texts were composed by other individuals named 'Akalaṅka' who flourished after the 8th century CE (Jaina 1959: 67).

[23] Jaina 1959: 95.

[24] Ibid., 96.

[25] It is a reflection of the sad state of affairs that there does not exist a complete English translation of any work by Akalaṅka. Based on second-hand information, the situation seems to be much better in the Francophone world where Clavel (2008) has completed a translation and study of the *Laghīyastraya* with auto-commentary. Within the Indic world, there are Hindi translations and studies of Akalaṅka's works such as Jñānamatī (2004). However, Mahendrakumāra's masterful summary of Akalaṅka's philosophy remains unsurpassed to this day (Śāstrī 1939: 43-106).

required. Given their concision and complexity, Akalaṅka's verses are often difficult to understand. As such, I consult Prabhācandra's (c. 980-1065 CE)[26] *Nyāyakumudacandra*, the earliest extant commentary on Akalaṅka's *Laghīyastraya* and *Laghīyastrayasvopajñavivṛti*, as well as Vādirājasūri's (c. 1025 CE)[27] *Nyāyaviniścayavivaraṇa*, the earliest extant commentary on Akalaṅka's *Nyāyaviniścaya*, for clarification on points of difficulty.

§ 2.1.2 *Pre-Akalaṅka Jaina Philosophy*

Akalaṅka is one of the foremost representatives of the Digambara Jaina philosophical tradition. Unlike their Śvetāmbara Jaina counterparts, Digambara Jainas believe that most of the original scriptures (*āgama*) taught by Mahāvīra have been lost.[28] Given this unique position on scripture, Digambara Jaina philosophy did not emerge out of scriptural exegesis in quite the same way as many other Indian philosophical traditions. Instead, the foundation of most[29] Digambara Jaina philosophy is Umāsvāmin's[30] (c. 4th-5th century CE)[31] *Tattvārthasūtra*. Umāsvāmin's

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[26] For the historical evidence supporting this dating, see Śāstrī (1941: 48-58).

[27] This is the year in which Vādirājasūri, by his own admission, completed his poem called *Pārśvanāthacarita* (Jaina 1949: 58-64).

[28] Dundas 2002: 61.

The oldest extant scripture (*āgama*) accepted by the Digambaras is the 'Scripture in Six Parts' (*ṣaṭkhaṇḍāgama*) composed by the monk Dharasena in the middle of the second century CE (Dundas 2002: 63-64).

[29] The other foundational source of Digambara Jaina philosophy are the Prakrit treatises ascribed to Kundakunda (c. 2nd-3rd century CE). In important ways, Kundakunda's works represent a mystical strand of Digambara Jainism which lays emphasis on "reflection, meditation, and spirituality more than on asceticism and penance" (Balcerowicz 2017: 191; Dundas 2002: 107-110). For the purposes of this thesis, however, Kundakunda's works are not very important because Akalaṅka's treatises do not betray any influence of Kundakunda's mysticism and his quasi-Buddhist theory of two viewpoints (*naya*) (Dundas 2002: 108-109).

[30] The author of the *Tattvārthasūtra* is called Umāsvāti by Śvetāmbaras and Umāsvāmin by Digambaras (Soni 2003: 26; Balcerowicz 2017: 191). Since Akalaṅka is a Digambara Jaina philosopher, I employ the Digambara name Umāsvāmin throughout this thesis.

[31] The estimates for Umāsvāmin's date range from the second to the fifth century CE. In recent times, however, most scholars prefer the fourth or fifth century CE (Dundas 2002: 86-87; Soni 2003: 26; Balcerowicz 2017: 191).

Tattvārthasūtra is a systematic codification of Jaina soteriology, ontology, epistemology, cosmology, and ethics into short mnemonic rules (*sūtra*) composed in Sanskrit.[32] For the purposes of this thesis, the *Tattvārthasūtra's* ontology and epistemology are most relevant. The *Tattvārthasūtra* divides existents into two broad categories: living (*jīva*) and non-living (*ajīva*).[33] The former category consists of the self/soul (*ātman*) characterised by the transformation of consciousness (*upayoga*).[34] The latter category is sub-divided into five types: matter (*pudgala*), medium of motion (*dharma*), medium of rest (*adharma*), space (*ākāśa*), and time (*kāla*).[35] Cumulatively, self, matter, medium of motion, medium of rest, space, and time constitute the six fundamental substances (*dravya*) of Jaina ontology.[36] Every substance, in turn, possesses multiple properties (*guṇa*) and modifications (*paryaya*/*paryāya*).[37] Pūjyapāda's (c. 540-600 CE)[38] *Sarvārthasiddhi*, the oldest extant Digambara commentary on the *Tattvārthasūtra*, explains that properties are the similar and generic aspects of a substance whereas modifications are the particular and distinctive aspects of a substance.[39] Nonetheless, every real entity is a sui generis (*jātyantara*) object with properties and modifications as its two aspects rather than a combination/mixture of its properties and modifications.[40] For example, a gold necklace has the substance (*dravya*) of gold, the property (*guṇa*) of being yellow in colour, and the modification (*paryāya*) of

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[32] Dundas 2002: 86.

[33] TS 5.1-5.3.

[34] *upayogo lakṣaṇam* | (TS 2.8)

I follow the earliest Digambara commentator Pūjyapāda's interpretation of the word '*upayoga*' as transformation (*pariṇāma*) of consciousness produced by external and internal factors (SS 2.8, p. 163, ll. 3-4).

[35] *ajīvakāyā dharmādharmākāśapudgalāḥ* | *kālaś ca* | (TS 5.1, 5.39)

[36] TS 5.2.

[37] *guṇaparyayavad dravyam* | (TS 5.38)

[38] For Pūjyapāda's dating, see Balcerowicz (2016a).

[39] SS 5.38, p. 309, ll. 5-6.

[40] Shah 1999: 5.

being a necklace. However, the gold necklace is not merely a combination of yellow colour and necklace modification but instead a sui generis object. Furthermore, every real entity is characterised by origination (*utpāda*), cessation (*vyaya*), and permanence (*dhrauvya*).[41] For example, when a gold necklace is melted and turned into a gold bracelet, the gold necklace persists as gold qua substance and ceases as necklace qua modification.[42] Thus, one and the same entity is permanent qua substance and impermanent qua modifications. In this way, every real entity possesses seemingly contradictory characteristics[43] such as permanence and impermanence, similarity and particularity, and so on.[44] This is the Jaina theory of many-sidedness (*anekāntavāda*):[45] every real entity possesses infinitely many, including opposite, characteristics (*anantadharmātmaka*).[46]

Within this ontological framework, the *Tattvārthasūtra* enumerates two ways of acquiring knowledge of real entities:[47]

pramāṇanayair adhigamaḥ |[48]

'There is knowledge (*adhigama*) [of real entities] by means of sources of knowledge

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[41] *utpādavyayadhrauvyayuktaṃ sat* | (TS 5.30)

[42] Nyāyavijaya 1998: 330-331.

[43] From the Jaina point of view, these opposite characteristics are not actually contradictory.

[44] Shah 1999: 5.

[45] The compound '*anekāntavāda*' can be interpreted in two ways depending on how we divide the individual words within the compound: 'the theory of non-one-sidedness' (*an-eka-anta-vāda*) and 'the theory of many-sidedness' (*aneka-anta-vāda*) (Acharya 2014: 300). Akalaṅka favours the former interpretation in polemical contexts and the latter interpretation when presenting his own position. For the sake of consistency, I translate '*anekāntavāda*' as 'the theory of many-sidedness' throughout this thesis.

[46] LT 9cd-10ab; Shah 1999: 5.

[47] For the complex history of traditional Jaina epistemology prior to Umāsvāmin's *Tattvārthasūtra*, see Balcerowicz (2016b: 995-1006).

[48] TS 1.6.

(*pramāṇa*) and viewpoints (*naya*).'[49]

Pūjyapāda explains that a source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) leads to knowledge of the entirety of a real entity whereas a viewpoint (*naya*) leads to knowledge of limited aspects of a real entity.[50] Although every real entity has infinitely many characteristics, ordinary people usually attend to just a single characteristic of a real entity at any given time.[51] This awareness of a particular characteristic of a real entity gives rise to a limited and one-sided judgement called viewpoint.[52] These viewpoints are partially true but they must be prevented from lapsing into dogmatism by qualifying them with the particle '*syāt*'[53] i.e. 'in a certain way', 'from a certain standpoint', 'in some respects'.[54] The word '*syāt*' expresses conditionality which leaves open the possibility of different, including opposing, viewpoints.[55] In other words, a viewpoint is true relative to the particular characteristic(s) of the real entity under consideration.[56] By contrast, a source of knowledge apprehends the entirety of a many-sided (*anekānta*) object.[57] The *Tattvārthasūtra* enumerates two types of sources of knowledge: direct (*pratyakṣa*) sources of knowledge and

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[49] The words within square brackets have been supplied from Pūjyapāda's commentary (SS 1.6, p. 20, l. 2).

[50] SS 1.6, p. 20, ll. 8-9.

[51] Shah 1999: 6.

[52] Ibid.

For an overview of the seven viewpoints enumerated in TS 1.33, see Matilal (1983: 41-46).

[53] Most Jaina philosophers such as Prabhācandra gloss the particle '*syāt*' with '*kathañcit*' which, in turn, is glossed as '*kenacit prakāreṇa*' (NKC_2, p. 691, l. 14). Thus, the particle '*syāt*' does not have the optative sense of 'maybe' or 'perhaps' in these statements. Instead, the particle '*syāt*' means 'in a certain way/ manner' (*kenacit prakāreṇa*).

[54] Shah 1999: 6.

The theory of seven-fold conditional predication (*syādvāda*) is not found in Umāsvāmin's *Tattvārthasūtra* and Pūjyapāda's *Sarvārthasiddhi* (Shah 1999: 8; Balcerowicz 2020). The above presentation of *syādvāda* ultimately derives from Samantabhadra's *Āptamīmāṃsā*. For a concise introduction to this important Jaina theory, see Matilal (1983: 52-56).

[55] Shah 1999: 6.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Pūjyapāda was the first Jaina philosopher to explicitly use the term '*anekānta'* i.e. 'many-sidedness' (Balcerowicz 2020).

indirect (*parokṣa*) sources of knowledge.[58] Each of these two categories is further sub-divided into different kinds of epistemically reliable awareness (*jñāna*). Firstly, there are two indirect (*parokṣa*) sources of knowledge:

(i) Sensory awareness (*matijñāna*) is awareness produced by the five sense-faculties (*indriya*) and the mind (*anindriya*).[59] Umāsvāmin lists memory (*smṛti*), conception (*saṃjñā*), reflection (*cintā*), and understanding (*abhinibodha*) as synonyms of the word '*mati*'.[60]

(ii) Verbal awareness (*śrutajñāna*) is awareness involving words and language.[61] The two main kinds of verbal awareness are testimonial and scriptural. While the former depends on the testimony of ordinary individuals, the latter depends on the teachings of the omniscient Jinas.[62] Umāsvāmin states that verbal awareness (*śrutajñāna*) is always preceded by sensory awareness (*matijñāna*).[63]

Secondly, there are three direct (*pratyakṣa*) sources of knowledge:

(iii) Clairvoyance (*avadhijñāna*) is the supra-sensory ability of gods, demons, and morally advanced human beings to perceive macroscopic physical objects beyond the range of the sense-faculties and the mind.[64]

(iv) Telepathy (*manaḥparyayajñāna*) is the supra-sensory ability of morally advanced human beings to directly observe the thoughts of other minds.[65]

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[58] TS 1.10-1.12.

Within the *Tattvārthasūtra*, the word '*pratyakṣa*' denotes direct awareness of the self (*akṣa=ātman*) unmediated by any physical organ whereas the word '*parokṣa*' denotes indirect awareness of the self mediated by the sense-faculties and/or the mind (SS 1.12, p. 103, ll. 1-2; Balcerowicz 2016b: 1001). This is quite different from the meaning of the words '*pratyakṣa*' and '*parokṣa*' in non-Jaina philosophical texts.

[59] *tad indriyānindriyanimittam* | (TS 1.14)

[60] *matiḥ smṛtiḥ saṃjñā cintā 'bhinibodha ity anarthāntaram* | (TS 1.13)

[61] SS 1.9, p. 94, ll. 1-2.

[62] Balcerowicz 2016b: 998-999.

[63] *śrutaṃ matipūrvaṃ dvyanekadvādaśabhedam* | (TS 1.20)

[64] SS 1.9, p. 94, l. 3; Balcerowicz 2016b: 999-1000.

[65] SS 1.9, p. 94, ll. 3-4; Balcerowicz 2016b: 1000.

(v) Absolute knowledge/omniscience (*kevalajñāna*) is the literal comprehension of "everything at once, all things past, present and future, distant and sublime, material and mental".[66] The attainment of omniscience is the goal of the Jaina path of purification because it is tantamount to liberation.[67]

In this way, Umāsvāmin accepts five different kinds of epistemically reliable awareness (*jñāna*) qua source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*).[68] For the purposes of this thesis, sensory awareness (*matijñāna*) is most relevant. It is important to observe that *matijñāna* includes almost every kind of sensory and mental process including perception, inference, and memory.[69] Historically speaking, the overlapping of perceptual and mental processes in the vague and ill-defined category of *matijñāna* was a source of difficulty for later Jaina philosophers.[70] Furthermore, Umāsvāmin classifies perceptual awareness qua *matijñāna* as an indirect (*parokṣa*) source of knowledge rather than a direct (*pratyakṣa*) source of knowledge. Since perception is usually classified as a direct (*pratyakṣa*) source of knowledge in non-Jaina philosophical schools, Umāsvāmin's unique classification gave rise to hermeneutic puzzles for later Jaina philosophers engaging with their non-Jaina counterparts.[71] Another uniquely Jaina phenomenon was the distinction between awareness (*jñāna*) and perceptual experience (*darśana*) as the two kinds of transformation of consciousness (*upayoga*).[72] Perceptual experience is temporally prior, indistinct, and lacks definite content

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[66] Balcerowicz 2016b: 1000.

[67] I borrow the felicitous phrase 'Jaina path of purification' from the title of Jaini's (1979) seminal book.

[68] *matiśrutāvadhimanaḥparyayakevalāni jñānam* | (TS 1.9)

[69] Balcerowicz 2016b: 998.

[70] Ibid.

[71] The source of these puzzles lay in the fact that the word '*akṣa*', commonly understood as 'sense-faculty' (*indriya*) by non-Jaina philosophers, was understood as 'self' (*ātman*) by early Jaina philosophers (SS 1.12, p. 103, l. 1).

[72] *upayogo lakṣaṇam* | *sa dvividho 'ṣṭacaturbhedaḥ* | (TS 2.8-2.9)

Pūjyapāda's commentary on the latter *sūtra* lists the two kinds of *upayoga*:
sa upayogo dvividho jñānopayogo darśanopayogaś ceti | (SS 2.9, p. 163, l. 7)

(*anākāra*) whereas awareness is temporally posterior, distinct, and has definite content (*sākāra*).[73] Neither Umāsvāmin nor Pūjyapāda explain what 'definite content' (*ākāra*) means.[74] This, in turn, creates new opportunities as well as new challenges for later Jaina philosophers such as Akalaṅka. In summary, Umāsvāmin's epistemological toolkit consists of seven viewpoints (*naya*) and two sources of knowledge (*pramāṇa*). These viewpoints and sources of knowledge lead to comprehension of many-sided (*anekānta*) real entities.[75]

While Umāsvāmin's *Tattvārthasūtra* distills the teachings of the Jaina scriptures, the age of philosophy proper begins with Siddhasena Divākara's (before c. 500 CE, pre-Diṅnāga)[76] *Sanmatitarkaprakaraṇa* and Samantabhadra's (c. 6th century CE, post-Diṅnāga)[77] *Āptamīmāṃsā*.[78] Since Akalaṅka wrote a commentary on the *Āptamīmāṃsā*, it is worth examining the distinctive features of Samantabhadra's *Āptamīmāṃsā* vis-a-vis Umāsvāmin's *Tattvārthasūtra*. Firstly, Samantabhadra's *Āptamīmāṃsā* marks a stylistic shift within the Digambara Jaina philosophical tradition. Departing from the *sūtra* style of Umāsvāmin's *Tattvārthasūtra* and the commentarial prose of Pūjyapāda's *Sarvārthasiddhi*, Samantabhadra's *Āptamīmāṃsā* is framed as a versified philosophical eulogy to the Jina. Samantabhadra's adoption of Sanskrit verse for philosophical purposes reflects the growing influence of the *kārikā* style of composition in Indian philosophy

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[73] SS 2.9, p. 163, ll. 9-11; Balcerowicz 2017: 193.

[74] Balcerowicz 2017: 193.

[75] Shah 1999: 6-8.

[76] For the historical evidence supporting this dating, see Balcerowicz (2001: 368-369).

[77] Samantabhadra's dates are very controversial with estimates ranging from the second century CE to the eighth century CE (Balcerowicz 2016a: 457-458). Balcerowicz (2016a: 453-456, 469) places Samantabhadra between 530 CE and 590 CE on the basis of Samantabhadra's purported knowledge of Dharmakīrti. Since Dharmakīrti's precise dates are uncertain, this entire argument is a house of cards. Shah (1999: 33) dates Samantabhadra around 550 CE. In the absence of any conclusive evidence, I follow Shah (1999) and Balcerowicz (2016a) by conservatively dating Samantabhadra to the sixth century CE.

[78] Shah 1999: 8-9.

during the mid-1st millennium CE.[79] Secondly, Samantabhadra provides rigorous philosophical arguments in defence of his Jaina philosophical theories.[80] This is very different from Umāsvāmin's approach of authoritatively proclaiming the Jaina position on various philosophical matters. Thirdly, unlike Umāsvāmin, Samantabhadra polemically engages with non-Jaina philosophical schools such as Buddhism, Sāṃkhya, and Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika.[81] Samantabhadra's polemical engagement is made possible by placing the theory of seven-fold conditional predication (*syādvāda*), the formalised description of many-sided (*anekānta*) real entities, at the very centre of his philosophical system.[82] Samantabhadra argues that the one-sided (*ekānta*) theories of non-Jaina philosophical schools cannot account for the totality of any real entity.[83] These three innovative features of Samantabhadra's *Āptamīmāṃsā* had a profound influence on Akalaṅka who composed versified philosophical treatises filled with rigorous arguments defending Jaina philosophical theories as well as polemically refuting non-Jaina philosophical theories.

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[79] For example, Bhartṛhari's (c. 460-510 CE) *Vākyapadīya*, Diṅnāga's *Pramāṇasamuccaya*, Kumārila's (c. first half of 7th century CE) *Ślokavārttika*, and Dharmakīrti's *Pramāṇavārttika* are composed in the *kārikā* style (Ferrante 2020: 147; Taber 2005: 1).

[80] Shah 1999: 10-11.

[81] For example, ĀM 37-40 refutes the Sāṃkhya theory of a permanent *puruṣa*, ĀM 41-54 refutes the Buddhist theory of momentariness, and ĀM 61-66 refutes the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika theory of universals inhering in particulars.

[82] Shah 1999: 10-11.

[83] Ibid., 10.

§ 2.2 Ideas

§ 2.2.1 *Philosophical Project*

As a Digambara Jaina philosopher, Akalaṅka inherited and developed the trajectory of philosophical thought initiated by Umāsvāmin and Samantabhadra. However, Akalaṅka found himself in a very different situation from his predecessors because he flourished in a philosophical world which had been completely transformed by the innovative ideas of the Buddhist philosophers Diṅnāga and Dharmakīrti.[84] As such, Akalaṅka's motivations for composing his philosophical treatises differ significantly from the motivations of his predecessors. Before delving into particular theories and arguments, it is important to understand the nature and purpose of Akalaṅka's philosophical project. The two most important aspects of Akalaṅka's philosophical project are:

(i) Systematisation and Innovation

(ii) Polemics

Let us examine each of these aspects one by one.

§ 2.2.1.1 *Systematisation and Innovation*

While Umāsvāmin and Samantabhadra provide a comprehensive overview of the essential points of Jaina philosophy, the relatively concise nature of their treatises means that very little elaboration is provided.[85] For example, neither Umāsvāmin nor Samantabhadra provides a definition of key epistemological concepts such as source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*), perception (*pratyakṣa*), and inference (*anumāna*). By contrast, Akalaṅka's philosophical treatises are more

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[84] Eltschinger 2010: 399-400.

[85] Shah 1999: 11.

ambitious in their scope. Akalaṅka not only defines perception[86] and inference[87] but also provides a detailed analysis of the different types of perception and inference. Besides expanding on the ideas mentioned by Umāsvāmin and Samantabhadra, Akalaṅka addresses new philosophical problems which were not discussed by either of his predecessors. For example, Akalaṅka has sophisticated theories about the relationship between the objects of different sources of knowledge[88] and awareness's awareness of itself.[89] Furthermore, Akalaṅka plays an important role in the creation of a systematic Jaina philosophical outlook. Besides providing the most comprehensive defence of the many-sided nature of real entities (*anekāntavāda*) until his time,[90] Akalaṅka analyses each of the seven viewpoints (*naya*) enumerated in Umāsvāmin's *Tattvārthasūtra*.[91] Most importantly, Akalaṅka integrates the theory of many-sidedness (*anekāntavāda*) and the theory of viewpoints (*nayavāda*) within the grand framework of the theory of seven-fold conditional predication (*syādvāda*).[92] Akalaṅka makes this unified theory of seven-fold conditional predication the very fulcrum of his philosophical system. This, in turn, allows Akalaṅka to create a unified and distinctively Jaina philosophical system which was a necessary pre-requisite for entering the competitive world of philosophical debate in classical India.[93]

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[86] LT 3a.

See § 2.2.2, pp. 88-89 and § 2.2.3, pp. 95-96.

[87] LT 12cd-13ab.

[88] NV 5.

[89] Ibid., 13.

[90] Shah 1999: 11.

[91] LT 38-44.

[92] Briefly, Akalaṅka analyses *syādvāda* as the synthesis of multiple viewpoints because each of the seven conditional predications (*saptabhaṅgī*), when taken individually, represents a genuine viewpoint. On the other hand, the seven conditional predications of *syādvāda*, when taken collectively and iterated with respect to different characteristics (*dharma*), represent the semantic formalisation of many-sided Jaina ontology (LTSV 62, p. 21, ll. 14-26). Akalaṅka's integrated framework of *syādvāda* is foreshadowed in Samantabhadra's ĀM 104.

[93] The systematisation of Jaina philosophy by the Digambara philosopher Akalaṅka and his Śvetāmbara contemporary Siddhasena Mahāmati (c. 710/720-770/780 CE) explains why Buddhist philosophers such as Śāntarakṣita (c. 725-788 CE) began to devote entire chapters in their philosophical treatises to the refutation of *syādvāda* (TSa 1709-1785; Balcerowicz 2016b: 994; Goodman 2022: 1).

Besides systematising the ideas of Umāsvāmin and Samantabhadra, Akalaṅka is an original thinker in his own right. Within the Digambara Jaina philosophical tradition, Akalaṅka's important innovations include rejecting the external object (*bāhyārtha*) as the cause of awareness (*jñāna*),[94] accepting awareness's self-reflexive awareness (*svasaṃvedana*) of itself,[95] and reducing all kinds of inferential reasons (*liṅga*/*hetu*) to just one kind of inferential reason called 'inexplicability otherwise' (*anyathānupapatti*).[96] While some of these innovations reflect the influence of non-Jaina philosophers such as Dharmakīrti, other innovations are the natural consequence of internal developments within the Jaina philosophical tradition. Despite the radical nature of some of these innovations, it is important to remember that Akalaṅka's philosophical system operates within a Jaina religious framework. The benedictory verse of the *Laghīyastraya* states that knowledge of the true nature of one's own self (*ātman*) is the goal of the Jaina religious path.[97] The closing verse of the *Laghīyastraya* re-iterates this sentiment by describing the goal of attaining the abode (*sthāna*/*pada*) of pure (*akalaṅka*) and great (*mahat*) souls.[98] In other words, Akalaṅka envisions the attainment of liberation through self-knowledge as the final goal of the Jaina religious path. While philosophical enquiry into the true nature of reality is necessary for the attainment of liberation, knowledge obtained through philosophical enquiry, by itself, is not

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[94] LTSV 52, p. 18, ll. 11-12.

See § 2.2.3, pp. 98-99.

[95] NV 13.

See § 5.2, pp. 278-282.

[96] LTSV 12cd-13ab, p. 5, ll. 16-18.

This innovation of economising inferential reasons to 'inexplicability otherwise' (*anyathānupapatti*) suddenly appears in the works of eighth century CE Jaina philosophers such as Akalaṅka and Siddhasena Mahāmati. It is very likely that the source of this innovation is the now lost *Trilakṣaṇakadarthana* of the Digambara Jaina philosopher Pātrasvāmin (Balcerowicz 2003: 343-344).

[97] LT 1.

[98] Ibid., 78.

sufficient for the attainment of liberation. Knowledge must be accompanied by asceticism (*tapas*), namely the performance of austerities and the strict observance of Jaina ethical rules, in order to destroy karmic bondage.[99] When karmic bondage has been completely destroyed, the self attains the bliss (*sukha*) of liberation.[100] In this way, knowledge obtained through philosophical enquiry is necessary but not sufficient for soteriological purposes.[101] Thus, Akalaṅka's philosophical system must be situated within the broader context of the Jaina path of ethical and ascetic purification towards the goal of liberation (*mokṣa*). As we begin to examine Akalaṅka's philosophical ideas, it is important to remember the soteriological orientation of his philosophical system.

§ 2.2.1.2 *Polemics*

An outstanding feature of Akalaṅka's philosophical treatises is the extensive criticism of virtually every non-Jaina philosophical school. While explaining the seven genuine viewpoints (*naya*) enumerated in the *Tattvārthasūtra*,[102] Akalaṅka maps the corresponding pseudo-viewpoints (*durnaya*) onto the most important non-Jaina philosophical schools of his time.[103] Akalaṅka's polemics may be succinctly described using the following table:

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[99] Ibid., 76cd.

[100] Ibid.

[101] This, in turn, is a re-statement of TS 1.1:
samyagdarśanajñānacāritrāṇi mokṣamārgaḥ |
'Right faith, right knowledge, and right conduct is the path to liberation (*mokṣa*).'

[102] TS 1.33.

[103] A genuine viewpoint (*naya*) is a correct description of one aspect of an object (*samyag-ekānta*) because it takes into account other aspects of the object instead of negating them. By contrast, a pseudo-viewpoint (*durnaya*) is an incorrect description of one aspect of an object (*mithyā-ekānta*) because it explicitly or implicitly negates other aspects of the object (LT 30).

Genuine Viewpoint	Pseudo-Viewpoint(s)	Reason
Universal Viewpoint (*saṃgrahanaya*)	Upaniṣadic doctrine of *Brahman* (*brahmavāda*) i.e. Advaita Vedānta	Rejects differences as unreal
Comprehensive Viewpoint (*naigamanaya*)	Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika and Sāṃkhya	Erroneously asserts that whole-part, substance-property, universal-particular, and self-quality are completely distinct from each other
Practical Viewpoint (*vyavahāranaya*)	Madhyamaka Buddhism and Yogācāra Buddhism (esp. Dharmakīrti)	Erroneously asserts that everything is empty/mind-only
Present Viewpoint (*ṛjusūtranaya*)	Dharmakīrti	Rejects similarities as unreal

Table 1: Genuine Jaina viewpoints and pseudo non-Jaina viewpoints[104]

As we can see, Akalaṅka's classification covers almost all important non-Jaina philosophical schools of his time.[105] While non-Jaina philosophical schools are analysed as dogmatic and one-sided (*ekānta*), the Jaina philosophical outlook is presented as complete and many-sided (*anekānta*).[106] Thus, the theory of viewpoints (*nayavāda*), embedded with the larger framework of the theory of seven-fold conditional predication (*syādvāda*), becomes a polemical weapon in Akalaṅka's philosophical treaties.

While he polemically engages with most philosophical schools of his time, Akalaṅka's harshest criticism is reserved for Buddhists, especially the Buddhist philosopher Dharmakīrti.[107] This is evident from the content, style, and tone of his philosophical treatises. For example, immediately after the benedictory verse of the *Laghīstraya*, Akalaṅka states the following:

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[104] LT 38-43.

Akalaṅka lists pseudo-viewpoints corresponding to the first four viewpoints-dealing-with-objects (*arthanaya*) but does not list pseudo-viewpoints corresponding to the last three viewpoints-dealing-with-language (*śabdanaya*) (LT 38-43, 72).

[105] A notable exception is Mīmāṃsā. However, Akalaṅka engages with the Mīmāṃsā argument against omniscience elsewhere (LTSV 4, p. 2, ll. 8-16).

[106] LT 50.

[107] Śāstrī 1939: 42.

santāneṣu niranvayakṣaṇikacittānām asatsv eva cet

tattvāhetuphalātmanāṃ svaparasaṃkalpena buddhaḥ svayam |

sattvārthaṃ[108] ***vyavatiṣṭhate karuṇayā mithyāvikalpātmakaḥ***

syān nityatvavad eva tatra samaye nārthakriyā vastunaḥ ||[109]

'If streams (*santāna*) of awarenesses, which are unconnected [i.e. dissimilar], momentary, and lack any relation of cause and effect at the level of ultimate reality, are actually unreal, then the Buddha himself is established by means of his own conceptualisation (*svasaṃkalpa*) and the conceptualisation of others (*parasaṃkalpa*) for the sake of [benefitting] sentient beings out of compassion. In that case, the Buddha would have the nature of illusory (*mithyā*) conceptualisation just like eternal entities [such as *īśvara*, *brahman* etc.]. As a result, a real entity (*vastu*) would not have any pragmatic/causal efficacy (*arthakriyā*) in that theory (*samaya*).'[110]

Akalaṅka's verse is filled with references to Dharmakīrti's philosophical theories. Akalaṅka specifically mentions mental streams (*santāna*), momentary (*kṣaṇika*) awareness, conceptualisation (*saṃkalpa/vikalpa*), and pragmatic/causal efficacy (*arthakriyā*) within a single verse. Besides mentioning these distinctively Buddhist ideas, Akalaṅka's verse betrays his mastery of Dharmakīrti's philosophical treatises. For example, when Akalaṅka talks about awareness lacking any causal relation at the level of ultimate reality, he is alluding to verse 3.4 of the *Pramāṇavārttika* in which Dharmakīrti concedes that the very criterion of causal efficacy (*arthakriyā*) is purely

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[108] Mahendrakumāra's edition of LT 2 reads '*sattvārtha*' without the final *anusvāra*. This is grammatically incorrect because the non-vocative nominal '*sattvārtha*' and the verb '*vyavatiṣṭhate*' cannot form a compound with each other. Hence, I follow Prabhācandra's grammatically correct reading of '*sattvārthaṃ*' (NKC_1, p. 5, ll. 4-5).

[109] LT 2.

[110] The words within square brackets have been supplied from Prabhācandra's commentary (NKC_1, p. 4, ll. 22-25, p. 5, ll. 1-12).

conventional.[111] Akalaṅka's precise knowledge is remarkable because this verse is frequently ignored even by modern scholars of Dharmakīrti.[112] In his Hindi introduction, Mahendrakumāra poetically states that Akalaṅka "appropriates Buddhist treatises through his unprecedented contemplation".[113] Any close reader of Akalaṅka's treatises would find this assessment to be accurate. Returning to the verse, Akalaṅka targets the Buddhist foundations of Dharmakīrti's philosophical system by arguing that Dharmakīrti's theory of the illusory nature of causally connected mental streams entails that the Buddha qua mental stream too is completely illusory. How can an illusory Buddha be a reliable source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*)? This, in turn, directly contradicts Dharmakīrti's assertion that "the Blessed One is a source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*)".[114] This deployment of Buddhist philosophical theories against the epistemic authority of the Buddha reflects the sophisticated nature of Akalaṅka's polemics. Besides appreciating the philosophical content, it is important to observe that the above verse occurs at the very beginning of the *Laghīyastraya* before Akalaṅka discusses his own philosophical theories. This suggests that anti-Dharmakīrti polemics is an essential rather than accidental feature of Akalaṅka's philosophical project.

A large part of Akalaṅka's treatises is devoted to the refutation of Dharmakīrti as well as other Buddhist *pramāṇavādins* such as Diṅnāga and Prajñākaragupta.[115] Besides the above verse, there are numerous examples of Akalaṅka quoting or paraphrasing Dharmakīrti. For example,

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[111] PV_M 2.4, pp. 112-114.

See § 5.1, pp. 266-267.

[112] For example, Eltschinger's (2010: 397-440) masterful summary highlights the centrality of causality within Dharmakīrti's philosophical system but fails to mention Dharmakīrti's concession of the purely conventional nature of the causal relation.

[113] The original Hindi sentence runs as follows: "… बौद्धशास्त्रों का अतुलभावनापूर्वक आत्मसात्करण … "(Śāstrī 1939: 41).

[114] PV_M 1.9a, p. 9.

[115] Śāstrī 1939: 25.

Akalaṅka's auto-commentary on verse 6cd-7ab of the *Laghīyastraya* states the following:

> *arthakriyārthī hi pramāṇam apramāṇaṃ vānveṣate* |[116]
>
> 'For a person desirous of [accomplishing] pragmatic activity (*arthakriyā*) investigates [whether a given awareness is] a source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) or not a source of knowledge (*apramāṇa*).'

This, in turn, is a direct quotation with minor omissions of the following statement from Dharmakīrti's *Hetubindu*:

> *arthakriyārthī hi sarvaḥ prekṣāvān pramāṇam apramāṇaṃ vānveṣate* |[117]
>
> 'For every prudent person desirous of [accomplishing] pragmatic activity (*arthakriyā*) investigates [whether a given awareness is] a source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) or not a source of knowledge (*apramāṇa*).'

This is just one of the numerous examples of Akalaṅka quoting Dharmakīrti.[118] However, like most classical Indian philosophers, Akalaṅka does not explicitly mention the source of his quotations. More interestingly, Akalaṅka sometimes subtly modifies Dharmakīrti's verses in order to invert their meaning. For example, Dharmakīrti states the following in his *Pramāṇaviniścaya*:

> ***sahopalambhaniyamād abhedo nīlataddhiyoḥ*** |[119]
>
> 'There is non-difference between blue and awareness of blue because of the rule of simultaneous perception.'

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[116] LTSV 6cd-7ab, p. 3, l. 11.

[117] HB, appx. 7, p. 53, l. 16.

[118] For other examples, see Śāstrī's (1939: 25-26) introduction.

[119] PVi 1.54ab, p. 39.

See § 4.3.3, pp. 202-203.

In his *Nyāyaviniścaya*, Akalaṅka inverts this half-verse by adding the negative particle '*na*':

> ***sahopalambhaniyamān nābhedo nīlataddhiyoḥ*** |[120]
>
> 'There isn't non-difference between blue and awareness of blue because of the rule of simultaneous perception.'

Such inverted quotations are employed as polemical devices throughout Akalaṅka's treatises. Besides these quotations, Akalaṅka sometimes freely paraphrases Dharmakīrti:

> ***saṃhṛtya sarvataś cintāṃ …*** |[121] [Dharmakīrti]
>
> 'Having withdrawn reflection (*cintā*) from everything …'
>
> ***saṃhṛtāśeṣacintāyāṃ …*** |[122] [Akalaṅka]
>
> '[During the state] in which one has withdrawn all reflection (*cintā*) …'

These quotations and paraphrases demonstrate Akalaṅka's precise knowledge of Dharmakīrti's treatises. Dharmakīrti emerges as the chief philosophical opponent throughout Akalaṅka's works. However, Akalaṅka's polemical engagement with Dharmakīrti is not confined to the realm of philosophy but frequently extends to the realm of derisive satire. As discussed in the previous chapter, Dharmakīrti calls Digambara Jainas 'shameless' (*ahrīka*) during his refutation of the Jaina theory of many-sidedness (*anekāntavāda*).[123] This insult seems to have inspired Akalaṅka's satire of

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[120] NV 83cd.

See § 4.4.1.1, pp. 218-219.

[121] PV_M 2.124, p. 154.

See § 3.2, p. 129.

[122] LT 23c.

[123] PV_M 3.180cd, p. 351.

the Buddha as well as Buddhists.[124] For example, while answering Dharmakīrti's objection to *anekāntavāda*, Akalaṅka states the following:

> ***pūrvapakṣam avijñāya dūṣako 'pi vidūṣakaḥ*** ||
>
> ***sugato 'pi mṛgo jāto mṛgo 'pi sugatas tathā*** |
>
> ***tathāpi sugato vandyo mṛgo khādyo yatheṣyate*** ||
>
> ***tathā vastubalād eva bhedābhedavyavasthiteḥ*** |
>
> ***codito dadhi khādeti kim uṣṭram abhidhāvati*** ||[125]
>
> 'Someone who refutes his opponent's position (*pūrvapakṣa*) without even understanding it is a buffoon (*vidūṣaka*). The Buddha (*sugata*) too was born as a deer [in a previous life] and the deer too was born as the Buddha [in a later life]. Nonetheless, just as the Buddha is regarded as worthy of obeisance and the deer is regarded as fit for consumption [by Buddhists], in the same way, there is the establishment of difference and non-difference [between real entities] by virtue of the real entities themselves. Therefore, would someone rush towards a camel when commanded to eat curd?'

In response to Dharmakīrti's objection that the Jaina theory of many-sidedness (*anekāntavāda*) absurdly entails the identity of everything, Akalaṅka argues that every real entity possesses common, common-cum-unique, and unique characteristics.[126] Thus, curd and camel, though identical in some respects, are distinct in other respects.[127] Hence, someone commanded to eat curd does not rush towards a camel. Akalaṅka illustrates his argument using an example from the past lives (*jātaka*) of the Buddha. Although the deer in a past life and the Buddha in a future life are

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[124] See NV 48, 52, and 85cd-86ab for Akalaṅka's hilarious satire of the Buddha as well as Buddhists.

[125] NV 372cd, 373-374.

[126] LTSV 62, p. 21, ll. 16-19.

[127] Śāstrī 1939: 42.

identical in some respects, Buddhists don't worship the deer and eat the Buddha because they crucially differ in other respects![128] Besides providing an interesting argument, it is striking that Akalaṅka's response mocks Dharmakīrti's ignorance of the subtleties of Jaina *anekāntavāda* by calling him a 'buffoon' (*vidūṣaka*) and implicitly criticises the Buddhist practice of meat-eating.[129] This highlights the humorous and satirical nature of Akalaṅka's polemics against Dharmakīrti. Such verses show that polemical refutation of Dharmakīrti and other Buddhist *pramāṇavādins* is integral to Akalaṅka's philosophical project. This, in turn, justifies the subject-matter of this thesis.

§ 2.2.2 *Epistemology and Ontology*

Having understood the overall nature and purpose of Akalaṅka's philosophical project, let us now turn to Akalaṅka's epistemology and ontology. Under the influence of the logico-epistemological turn initiated by Diṅnāga and Dharmakīrti,[130] Akalaṅka regards epistemology as more foundational than ontology. This is why Akalaṅka begins both the *Laghīyastraya* and the *Nyāyaviniścaya* with the definition and classification of different sources of knowledge (*pramāṇa*). Unfortunately, however, Akalaṅka does not provide the complete definition of a source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) within a single verse but instead makes scattered remarks about the defining characteristics of a source of knowledge throughout his philosophical treatises. As a result, Akalaṅka's definition of a source of knowledge must be reconstructed by collating his scattered remarks. The most extensive characterisation of a source of knowledge occurs in the last chapter of the *Laghīyastraya*:

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[128] Ibid.

[129] Early Buddhist monastic codes (*vinaya*) did not prescribe vegetarianism (Mcdermott 1989: 273-275). However, vegetarianism was prescribed in later Mahāyāna Sūtras such as the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* (Ham 2019: 133-153).

[130] Eltschinger 2010: 400.

vyavasāyātmakaṃ jñānam ātmārthagrāhakaṃ matam |

grahaṇaṃ nirṇayas tena mukhyaṃ prāmāṇyam aśnute ||[131]

'It is accepted that determinate (*vyavasāyātmaka*) awareness apprehends both itself as well as an object (*artha*). Therefore, apprehension (*grahaṇa*) consisting of ascertainment (*nirṇaya*) enjoys preeminent (*mukhya*) epistemic reliability (*prāmāṇya*).'

This characterisation essentially states that a source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) is a determinate (*vyavasāyātmaka*) awareness (*jñāna*) which apprehends both itself (*ātman*) as well as some object (*artha*). As the commentator Prabhācandra points out, every word in this definition serves a specific purpose. Firstly, the word 'awareness' (*jñāna*) serves to exclude sense-faculties and other causes of awareness from counting as a source of knowledge.[132] Secondly, the use of the word 'determinate' (*vyavasāyātmaka*) means that every source of knowledge has the nature of ascertainment (*nirṇaya*). This, in turn, serves to exclude non-conceptual awareness from counting as a source of knowledge.[133] Finally, the word 'apprehends both itself as well as an object' (*ātmārthagrāhaka*) reminds the reader that every source of knowledge has a dual nature. This definition is supplemented by the following characterisation found in the first chapter of the *Laghīyastraya*:

yad yathaivāvisaṃvādi pramāṇaṃ tat tathā matam ||[134]

'Whichever [awareness] is non-contradictory (*avisaṃvādin*) in whatsoever way, that awareness is accepted as a source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) in that very way.'

In this half-verse, Akalaṅka states that non-contradiction (*avisaṃvāda*) is a defining characteristic

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[131] LT 60.

[132] NKC_2, p. 680, ll. 6-7.

[133] Ibid., ll. 4-5.

[134] LT 22cd.

of a source of knowledge. Interestingly, this characterisation is identical to Dharmakīrti's definition of a source of knowledge in the second chapter of his *Pramāṇavārttika*.[135] This shows how Akalaṅka, despite the polemical nature of his philosophical project, is deeply influenced by Dharmakīrti's innovative ideas.[136] However, Akalaṅka's understanding of non-contradiction (*avisaṃvāda*) is completely different from Dharmakīrti's understanding of non-contradiction. While Dharmakīrti defines non-contradiction in terms of pragmatic efficacy/causal efficacy (*arthakriyā*), Akalaṅka defines non-contradiction as follows:

> *pramāṇāntarābādhanaṃ pūrvāparāvirodhaś cāvisaṃvādaḥ* |[137]
>
> 'Non-contradiction (*avisaṃvāda*) is the absence of sublation (*abādhana*) by other sources of knowledge and the absence of [internal] inconsistency (*avirodha*) between prior and posterior parts.'

Akalaṅka defines non-contradiction very literally as the absence of external and internal contradiction. In other words, a genuine source of knowledge is not contradicted by any other source of knowledge and does not have any internal inconsistency.[138] Lastly, Akalaṅka provides the following characterisation of a source of knowledge in his commentary on Samantabhadra's *Āptamīmāṃsā*:

> *pramāṇam avisaṃvādi jñānam anadhigatārthādhigamalakṣaṇatvāt* |[139]
>
> 'A source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) is a non-contradictory awareness because it is characterised by knowledge (*adhigama*) of a [previously] unknown (*anadhigata*) object

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[135] PV_M 1.3abc, p. 3.

[136] Śāstrī 1939: 43.

[137] LTSV 42, p. 14, l. 21.

[138] Shah 1967: 189.

[139] AŚ 36, p. 38.

(*artha*).'

This definition adds a new dimension to Akalaṅka's concept of a source of knowledge. A genuine source of knowledge is devoid of contradiction (*visaṃvāda*) because it always leads to knowledge of a previously unknown object.[140] This, in turn, is identical to Dharmakīrti's second definition of a source of knowledge.[141] Once again, this highlights Dharmakīrti's profound influence on Akalaṅka's thought. Combining these characterisations scattered throughout Akalaṅka's works, a source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) may be defined as an awareness (*jñāna*) which is:

(i) Determinate (*vyavasāyātmaka*)

(ii) Free from external and internal contradiction (*avisaṃvādin*)

(iii) An apprehension of both itself (*ātman*) and a previously unknown (*anadhigata*) object (*artha*)

While characteristic (i) is ultimately borrowed from the *Nyāyasūtra's* definition of perception,[142] characteristics (ii) and (iii) reflect the influence of Dharmakīrti. In this way, Akalaṅka's definition of *pramāṇa* combines elements of Nyāya's epistemic realism with elements of Dharmakīrti's epistemic idealism in order to create a unique epistemological framework.[143]

Having defined a source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*), Akalaṅka classifies sources of knowledge into two broad categories:

pratyakṣaṃ viśadaṃ jñānaṃ mukhyasaṃvyavahārataḥ |

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[140] Within the Jaina ontological framework of many-sidedness (*anekāntavāda*), every awareness qua source of knowledge apprehends a different characteristic (*dharma*) of a real entity (Shah 1967: 189-190). This difference of object, in turn, ensures that a particular awareness qua source of knowledge cannot be contradicted by another awareness qua source of knowledge.

[141] PV_M 1.7c, p. 8.

[142] NS 1.1.4.

[143] The criterion of 'non-contradiction' (*avisaṃvāda*) reflects a kind of coherentist theory of justification acceptable to Buddhist idealists. By contrast, the criterion of 'determinate (*vyavasāyātmaka*) awareness of an external object (*artha*)' reflects a kind of correspondence theory of truth acceptable to Nyāya realists. For the coherentist theory of justification, see Olsson (2021). For the correspondence theory of truth, see David (2022).

parokṣaṃ śeṣavijñānaṃ pramāṇe iti saṃgrahaḥ ||[144]

'Perception (*pratyakṣa*) is clear (*viśada*) awareness. There are two kinds of perception: primary (*mukhya*) perception and conventional (*saṃvyavahāra*) perception. All other kinds of awareness are indirect (*parokṣa*). Perception and indirect awareness are the two sources of knowledge (*pramāṇa*): this is the summary.'

Like Dharmakīrti, Akalaṅka accepts two sources of knowledge. However, while perception and inference are the two sources of knowledge within Dharmakīrti's philosophical system, Akalaṅka accepts perception (*pratyakṣa*) and indirect awareness (*parokṣa*) as the two sources of knowledge. Perception is positively defined as clear (*viśada*) awareness[145] whereas indirect awareness is negatively defined as non-perceptual awareness i.e. unclear awareness. Both of these categories have multiple sub-types. Firstly, there are two kinds of perception (*pratyakṣa*): conventional perception (*sāṃvyavahārikapratyakṣa*) and primary perception (*mukhyapratyakṣa*). Conventional perception is mundane awareness produced by the sense-faculties and the mind.[146] By contrast, primary perception is extra-sensory awareness arising from the innate capacity of the self (*ātman*) without the assistance of the sense-faculties and the mind.[147] Secondly, indirect awareness (*parokṣa*) is a catch-all category which includes inductive reasoning (*tarka*),[148] inference (*anumāna*),[149] verbal awareness (*śruta*),[150] and many other kinds of awareness. The flexible and potentially limitless nature of this category is revealed in the following remarks by Akalaṅka:

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[144] LT 3.

[145] Akalaṅka's definition of perception is analysed in § 2.2.3.

[146] LTSV 4, p. 2, l. 8.

[147] LTSV 4, p. 2, l. 8; Shah 1967: 230.

[148] LT 11cd-12ab.

[149] Ibid., 12cd-13ab.

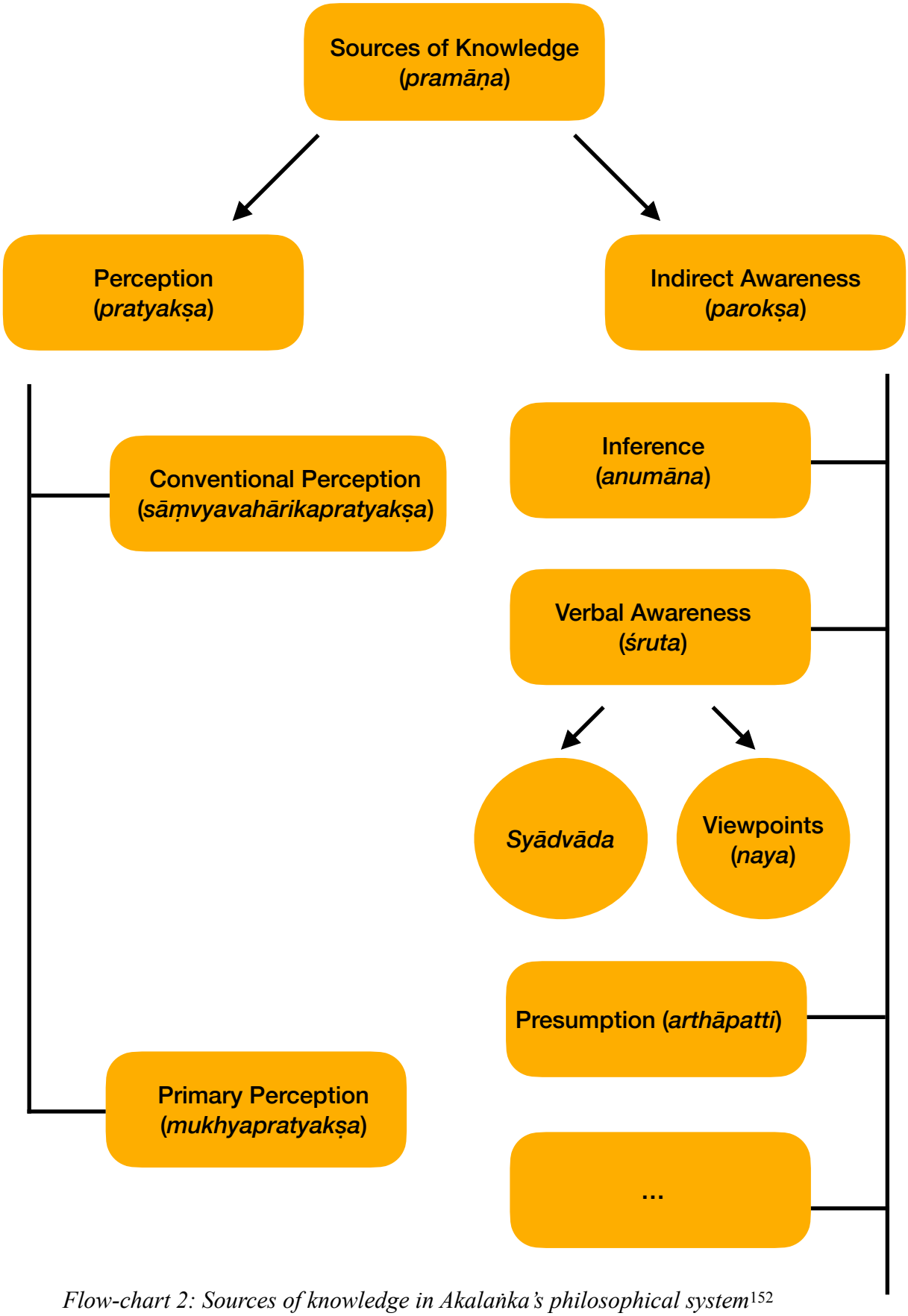
[150] Ibid., 26.

arthāpattir anumānāt pramāṇāntaraṃ na veti kiṃ naś cintayā sarvasya parokṣe 'ntarbhāvāt | tat samañjasaṃ pratyakṣaṃ parokṣaṃ ceti dve eva pramāṇe anyathā tatsaṃkhyānavasthānāt |[151]

' 'Is presumption (*arthāpatti*) a different source of knowledge from inference or not?' - what's the point of our reflection [on these questions]? This is because all [these sources of knowledge] are included within the category of indirect awareness (*parokṣa*). Therefore, it is correct to assert that there are only two sources of knowledge, perception (*pratyakṣa*) and indirect awareness (*parokṣa*), because otherwise the number of sources of knowledge would be unsettled (*anavasthāna*).'

This passage demonstrates the flexible nature of the category of indirect awareness (*parokṣa*) which essentially includes any kind of epistemically reliable non-perceptual awareness. The mention of the undesirable consequence of non-settlement of the number of sources of knowledge towards the end of the passage suggests that the actual number of sources of knowledge is potentially limitless. This, in turn, highlights Akalaṅka's willingness to accept the diversity and complexity of our ordinary epistemic practices. Nonetheless, for the sake of theoretical parsimony, Akalaṅka classifies sources of knowledge into perception and indirect awareness with the latter functioning as a completely open-ended category. Putting these diverse strands together, we may visualise Akalaṅka's epistemological framework as follows:

[151] LTSV 21, p. 7, l. 26, p. 8, ll. 1-2.



Flow-chart 2: Sources of knowledge in Akalaṅka's philosophical system[152]

[152] The theory of seven-fold conditional predication (*syādvāda*) and viewpoints (*naya*) are the two applications (*upayoga*) of verbal awareness (*śruta*) (LT 62).

This open-ended epistemological framework is complemented by an equally open-ended many-sided (*anekānta*) ontology:

> ***tad dravyaparyāyātmā 'rtho bahir antaś ca tattvataḥ*** |[153]
>
> *bhedābhedaikāntayor anupalabdher arthasya siddhir anekāntāt | nāntar bahir vā svalakṣaṇaṃ sāmānyalakṣaṇaṃ vā parasparānātmakaṃ prameyaṃ yathā manyate parair dravyaparyāyātmano 'rthasya buddhau pratibhāsanāt* |[154]
>
> 'Therefore, objects (*artha*) having the nature of both substance and modifications ultimately (*tattvatas*) exist externally as well as internally.
>
> Due to the non-perception (*anupalabdhi*) of one-sided (*ekānta*) difference (*bheda*) and one-sided non-difference (*abheda*), there is the establishment of objects by means of many-sidedness (*anekānta*). It is neither the case that the object of knowledge (*prameya*) exists either [solely] internally or [solely] externally nor the case that the object of knowledge is either a particular (*svalakṣaṇa*) without the opposite [universal] nature or a universal (*sāmānyalakṣaṇa*) without the opposite [particular] nature as accepted by our opponents (*para*). This is because objects having the nature of both substance and modifications manifest in awareness.'

Every real entity is many-sided (*anekānta*) because it has the nature of both substance (*dravya*) as well as modifications (*paryāya*), both universal (*sāmānya*) as well as particular (*viśeṣa*), and so on. Nonetheless, every real entity is a sui-generis (*jātyantara*) object rather than a mere combination of these different characteristics.[155] Akalaṅka defends the many-sided nature of real entities by

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[153] LT 7cd.

[154] LTSV 7cd, p. 3, l. 24, p. 4, ll. 1-2.

[155] Shah 1999: 5.

appealing to our ordinary sensory perception: objects manifest in our perceptual awareness with many different, including opposite, characteristics. This many-sided ontology is situated within a realist framework which accepts the existence of both mind-independent external objects as well as mind-dependent internal objects. As far as the relationship between real entities is concerned, Akalaṅka's position may be characterised as '*bhedābheda*', i.e. 'difference (*bheda*) as well as non-difference (*abheda*)'.[156] In other words, every real entity is different from other real entities in some respects and identical to other real entities in other respects. Interestingly, Akalaṅka presents his many-sided ontology in opposition to unnamed opponents (*para*) who subscribe to a one-sided (*ekānta*) ontology. Akalaṅka's usage of distinctively Buddhist terminology such as '*svalakṣaṇa*' and '*sāmānyalakṣaṇa*'[157] suggests that his unnamed opponents are the Buddhist philosophers Diṅnāga and Dharmakīrti. Thus, Akalaṅka implicitly contrasts his many-sided conception of real entities with Dharmakīrti's one-sided conception of real entities:

	Akalaṅka	Dharmakīrti
bheda-abheda	Every real entity is different from other real entities in some respects and identical to other real entities in other respects.	Every (ultimately) real entity is completely different from other (ultimately) real entities.
viśeṣa-sāmānya	Every real entity is both a particular as well as a universal.	Every (ultimately) real entity is a particular.
antar-bahir	There exist mind-dependent real entities as well as mind-independent real entities.	Every (ultimately) real entity is mind-dependent.

Table 2: A comparison of Akalaṅka's ontology with Dharmakīrti's ontology[158]

As far as the relationship between the sources of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) and the objects

[156] Akalaṅka's *bhedābheda* is very different from the *bhedābheda* school of Vedānta. Though both accept difference as well as non-difference, Akalaṅka is concerned with the relationship between any two real entities (*vastu*) whereas Vedāntins are concerned with the relationship between the individual self (*ātman*) and the Supreme Self (*brahman*) (Nicholson 2007: 371-385).

[157] The words '*svalakṣaṇa*' and '*sāmānyalakṣaṇa*' are technical terms employed by Diṅnāga (PS 2bc, p. 1, ll. 19-20) and Dharmakīrti (PV_M 2.3, p. 112) to refer to particulars and universals respectively.

[158] This table presents Dharmakīrti's ontology at his highest level of analysis i.e. Yogācāra idealism (Dunne 2004: 53-60).

of knowledge (*prameya*) is concerned, Akalaṅka defends the theory of 'the confluence of the objects of different sources of knowledge' (*pramāṇasamplava*) according to which every real entity is, in principle, knowable by means of both perception as well as indirect awareness.[159] For example, the fire on a mountain can be known by means of inference when the knower is far away and by means of sensory perception when the knower is nearby. This, in turn, is directly opposed to Dharmakīrti's theory of 'the settlement of distinct objects for different sources of knowledge' (*pramāṇavyavasthā*) according to which perception solely apprehends particulars and inference solely apprehends universals.[160] By contrast, Akalaṅka argues that both perception as well as indirect awareness apprehend both particulars as well as universals. This, however, raises a puzzle: if both perception as well as indirect awareness can apprehend one and the same object, how can they apprehend a previously unknown (*anadhigata*) object which, as we have seen, is a defining characteristic of every genuine source of knowledge?[161] The solution to this puzzle lies in Akalaṅka's many-sided (*anekānta*) conception of real entities. Insofar as every real entity has infinitely many characteristics (*anantadharmātmaka*),[162] different sources of knowledge, even when they apprehend one and the same entity, always apprehend different characteristics of the entity.[163] Returning to our earlier example, perception apprehends fire as a burning orange flame whereas inference apprehends the same fire as the unseen cause of smoke. In this way, both perceptual awareness of the fire as well as inferential awareness of the fire satisfy the requirement of apprehending a previously unknown object because they apprehend different characteristics of the fire. Thus, both perception and indirect awareness count as sources of knowledge because they apprehend many-sided real entities.

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[159] NV 5.

[160] PV_M 2.1ab, p. 110.

[161] AŚ 36, p. 38.

[162] LTSV 62, p. 21, ll. 20-21.

[163] Shah 1967: 189-190.

§ 2.2.3 *Perception*

As we have seen, Akalaṅka simply defines perception (*pratyakṣa*) as 'clear (*viśada*) awareness (*jñāna*)' in his *Laghīyastraya*.[164] In order to understand this definition, however, we must understand what Akalaṅka actually means by the word 'clear' (*viśada*). This is explained in the following verse:

> ***anumānādyatirekeṇa***[165] ***viśeṣapratibhāsanam*** |
>
> ***tad vaiśadyaṃ mataṃ buddher avaiśadyam ataḥ param*** ||[166]
>
> 'The manifestation of particular features (*viśeṣa*) [of an object] in excess of (*atireka*) [the particular features manifesting in] inference and other [indirect] sources of knowledge is accepted as the clarity (*vaiśadya*) of awareness. Anything other (*para*) than this is accepted as the non-clarity (*avaiśadya*) of awareness.'

The word 'clear' (*viśada*) in the definition of perception refers to the manifestation of particular features (*viśeṣa*) of the object such as its colour, shape, and location.[167] For example, an awareness of fire counts as perception if it presents specific features of the fire such as its orange colour, its particular location near a tree on a mountain-peak, and so on. Though particular features also

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[164] LT 3a.

Akalaṅka provides a more sophisticated definition of perception in his *Nyāyaviniścaya* (NV 3). This definition is discussed in § 3.1.2.

[165] The first *pāda* of this *anuṣṭubh* verse is hyper-metric because it contains nine syllables. I have not come across any variant readings of the first *pāda* in older editions of the *Laghīyastraya* and its commentaries. In her recent edition (Clavel 2008: 18, l. 14) and French translation (Clavel 2008: 8, n. 4) of the *Laghīyastraya*, Clavel proposes the emendation '*anumādyatirekeṇa*' in order to make the first *pāda* metrical. Since almost all manuscripts support the hyper-metrical reading, I have decided to follow the hyper-metrical reading. The meaning remains the same in either case.

[166] LT 4.

[167] NKC_1, p. 74, ll. 15-18.

manifest in indirect awareness, the quantity and quality of the particular features manifesting in perceptual awareness far exceeds the quantity and quality of the particular features manifesting in indirect awareness. For example, inferential awareness of a fire does not possess the same level of detail and vividness as perceptual awareness of the same fire. Thus, the definition of perception as clear awareness simply means that perceptual awareness apprehends more vivid particular features of the object than indirect awareness.[168]

Having defined perception in general, Akalaṅka classifies perception into two broad categories: primary perception (*mukhyapratyakṣa*) and conventional perception (*sāṃvyavahārikapratyakṣa*).[169] These two categories are further sub-divided into three kinds of perception:

> *tatra sāṃvyavahārikam indriyānindriyapratyakṣam | mukhyam atīndriyajñānam |*[170]
> 'Amongst them (*tatra*), conventional perception consists of sensory perception and mental perception. Primary perception is extra-sensory awareness.'

By dividing the category of conventional perception into two different sub-types, Akalaṅka ultimately accepts three different kinds of perception:

(i) sensory perception (*indriyapratyakṣa*)

(ii) mental perception (*anindriyapratyakṣa*)[171]

(iii) extra-sensory perception (*atīndriyajñāna*)

Let us examine the definition of each of these three kinds of perception.

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[168] The quasi-phenomenological nature of the criterion of clarity (*vaiśadya*) ensures that both primary perception and conventional perception, despite their very different causes, count as perception.

[169] LT 3b.

[170] LTSV 4, p. 2, l. 8.

[171] The word '*anindriya*', literally 'quasi sense-faculty', is a Jaina technical term for the mind (*manas*) found in the *Tattvārthasūtra* (TS 1.14) and Pūjyapāda's *Sarvārthasiddhi* (SS 1.14, p. 109, l. 3).

Towards the beginning of the *Nyāyaviniścaya*, Akalaṅka defines sensory perception as follows:

> ***hitāhitāptinirmuktikṣamam indriyanirmitam*** |
>
> ***yad deśato 'rthajñānaṃ tad indriyādhyakṣam ucyate*** ||[172]
>
> 'Sensory perception (*indriyādhyakṣa*) is said to be that awareness of an external object (*artha*) which is partial (*deśatas*),[173] produced by the sense-faculties, and suitable for the obtainment and abandonment of beneficial (*hita*) and detrimental (*ahita*) [objects] respectively.'

This concise definition of sensory perception has three important aspects. Firstly, sensory perception is a partial/limited (*deśatas*) awareness of an external object. This is a natural consequence of the Jaina theory of many-sidedness (*anekāntavāda*). Since every real entity actually has infinitely many characteristics, sensory perception necessarily apprehends only a finite number of those characteristics. This, in turn, highlights the partial nature of our ordinary sensory perception when compared to the complete nature of the extra-sensory perception of omniscient Jinas. Secondly, sensory perception qua source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) is intimately connected with worldly activity. This is because sensory perception of external objects allows the perceiver to successfully accomplish his pragmatic goals. Elsewhere in his *Laghīyastraya*, Akalaṅka stresses this pragmatic dimension of sources of knowledge by stating that worldly activity (*vyavahāra*) serves as

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[172] NV 4.

[173] Elsewhere (LTSV 61, p. 21, l. 6), Akalaṅka uses the word '*prādeśika*' to describe sensory perception. In this context, the synonyms '*deśatas*' and '*prādeśika*' refer to the partial nature of sensory perception rather than the spatially restricted nature of sensory perception. This, in turn, is consistent with the meaning of the word '*deśa*' in Jaina ethical treatises (*caraṇānuyoga*). For example, the Jaina layperson's vows are described as '*deśa-virati*' i.e. 'partial/limited (*deśa*) abstention from harmful activities' (Jaini 1979: 119). This interpretation is confirmed by Vādirājasūri who states that sensory perception apprehends an object partially (*pradeśatas*), not completely (*sarvākāreṇa*) (NVV, p. 106, ll. 3-5).

the test of any given awareness's epistemic reliability (*prāmāṇya*).[174] Thirdly, sensory perception is produced by the sense-faculties. On the surface, this seems like a trivial point. However, this triviality disappears when we encounter the following passage in Akalaṅka's auto-commentary on the *Laghīyastraya*:

> *... arthasya tadakāraṇatvāt tasyendriyānindriyanimittatvād arthasya viṣayatvāt | na hi tatparicchedyo 'rthas tatkāraṇatām ātmasātkuryāt pradīpasyeva ghaṭādiḥ |*[175]
> '… This is because the external object (*artha*) is not the cause of that [i.e. awareness] given that the sense-faculties and the mind (*anindriya*) are the causes of awareness whereas the external object is the object (*viṣaya*) of awareness. For the external object which is ascertained by awareness cannot serve as the cause of awareness just like the pot etc. [which is illuminated by the oil-lamp] cannot serve as the cause of the oil-lamp.'

This remarkable passage rejects the popular view that external objects are the cause (*kāraṇa*) of perceptual awareness. Instead, Akalaṅka states that perceptual awareness and external object share the relation of ascertainer (*paricchedaka*) and ascertained (*paricchedya*) respectively.[176] While Sautrāntika Buddhists insist that the cause and the object of perception must be identical,[177]

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[174] ***prāmāṇyaṃ vyavahārād dhi …*** | (LT 41a)
'For epistemic reliability (*prāmāṇya*) [follows] from worldly activity (*vyavahāra*).'
This, in turn, is reminiscent of Dharmakīrti's (PV_M 1.7a, p. 6) position that worldly activity (*vyavahāra*) is the criterion of epistemic reliability (*prāmāṇya*). However, unlike Dharmakīrti, Akalaṅka does not define a source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) in terms of pragmatic efficacy (*arthakriyā*). For Akalaṅka, awareness qua *pramāṇa* is conducive to worldly activity because it accurately apprehends some external object. Thus, successful pragmatic activity is the natural consequence rather than the defining characteristic of a source of knowledge within Akalaṅka's philosophical system.

[175] LTSV 52, p. 18, ll. 12-13.

[176] Śāstrī 1939: 74.

[177] Siderits 2007: 130-137.

Akalaṅka attributes the following position to an unnamed, most likely Sautrāntika Buddhist, interlocutor:
na hi buddher akāraṇaṃ viṣaya ity etat prativyūḍham | (LTSV 44, p. 15, ll. 13-14)
'Thus, we have refuted the following position: 'For something which is not the cause of awareness cannot become the object of awareness'.'

Akalaṅka disambiguates the two concepts by arguing that the cause (*kāraṇa*) of sensory perception, namely the sense-faculties, cannot become the object (*viṣaya*) of sensory perception and the object (*viṣaya*) of sensory perception, namely external objects, cannot serve as the cause (*kāraṇa*) of sensory perception. This rejection of the external object's causal role allows Akalaṅka to solve the vexed time-lag problem surrounding perception[178] and explain how awareness can apprehend past, present, and future objects.[179] Akalaṅka gives the example of an oil-lamp illuminating a pot in order to illustrate the non-causal relationship between perceptual awareness and external object. Just as an oil-lamp produced by its own causes such as oil illuminates a pot produced by its own causes such as clay, in the same way, sensory perception produced by its own causes such as the sense-faculties illuminates i.e. apprehends an external object produced by its own causes such as material atoms.[180]

Having defined sensory perception, Akalaṅka defines mental perception as follows:

> *anindriyapratyakṣaṃ smṛtisaṃjñācintābhinibodhātmakam* |[181]
> 'Mental perception (*anindriyapratyakṣa*) has the nature of memory (*smṛti*), recognition (*saṃjñā*), inductive reasoning (*cintā*), and inference (*abhinibodha*).'

Just like in the works of Dharmakīrti, the category of mental perception has a vague and somewhat

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[178] Sautrāntika Buddhists argue that external object qua cause must necessarily be temporally prior to perceptual awareness qua effect. However, this creates a time-lag between external object and perceptual awareness. This, in turn, gives rise to the absurd possibility that the external object might cease to exist at the moment when it is actually perceived (Siderits 2007: 133-137). However, if we accept Akalaṅka's position that the external object is not the cause of perceptual awareness, then this entire time-lag problem disappears.

[179] NV 41cd-42a.

[180] Śāstrī 1939: 74.

[181] LTSV 61, p. 21, l. 7.

nebulous role in Akalaṅka's philosophical treatises.[182] Briefly, Akalaṅka identifies mental perception with pre-linguistic[183] forms of memory, recognition, inductive reasoning, and inference. These kinds of awareness count as perception because they involve clear (*viśada*) mental awareness of external objects without the mediation of language. By contrast, linguistic forms of memory, recognition, inductive reasoning, and inference count as indirect awareness (*parokṣa*) because they involve unclear (*aviśada*) mental awareness of external objects mediated by language.[184]

Lastly, Akalaṅka defines extra-sensory perception (*atīndriyajñāna*) as follows:

> ***lakṣaṇaṃ samam etāvān viśeṣo 'śeṣagocaram*** |
>
> ***akramaṃ karaṇātītam akalaṅkaṃ mahīyasām*** ||[185]
>
> 'The definition [of extra-sensory perception] is the same [as the definition of perception in general]. Just this much is distinctive [to extra-sensory perception]: all [objects] (*aśeṣa*) lie within its domain (*gocara*), it is non-sequential, it transcends the sense-faculties, it is pure, and it belongs to great beings [i.e. Jinas].'[186]

Just like other kinds of perception, extra-sensory perception too is a clear (*viśada*) awareness. However, unlike sensory perception and mental perception, extra-sensory perception does not depend on the sense-faculties and the mind. Instead, extra-sensory perception is the simultaneous

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[182] In order to overcome this ambiguous status, Vādirājasūri (NVV, p. 111, ll. 24-26) identifies mental perception (*anindriyapratyakṣa*) with self-reflexive awareness (*svasaṃvedana*) which is accepted as the third kind of perception by Dharmakīrti (NBi 1.10, p. 64). This identification is problematic because Akalaṅka accepts self-reflexive awareness (*svasaṃvedana*) but rejects the classification of self-reflexive awareness as a kind of perception (*pratyakṣa*) qua source of knowledge (NV 163cd-164ab). For Akalaṅka's arguments against self-reflexive awareness counting as a kind of perception, see § 5.4.3, pp. 321-322.

[183] This important qualification is found in LT 10cd-11ab. This verse is discussed in § 3.1.2.

[184] LT 10cd-11ab.

[185] NV 168cd-169ab.

[186] The words within square brackets have been supplied from Vādirājasūri's commentary (NVV, p. 544, ll. 5-14).

awareness of all real entities by the enlightened self (*ātman*). In other words, extra-sensory perception is the omniscient awareness of the Jinas. This shows that Akalaṅka's category of extra-sensory perception (*atīndriyajñāna*) corresponds to Umāsvāmin's category of absolute knowledge/ omniscience (*kevalajñāna*).[187] However, despite this continuity, Akalaṅka's classification of the three kinds of perception subtly overturns Umāsvāmin's epistemological framework. In his *Tattvārthasūtra*, Umāsvāmin classifies sensory awareness (*matijñāna*) as an indirect (*parokṣa*) source of knowledge.[188] By contrast, sensory perception and mental perception are classified as direct/perceptual (*pratyakṣa*) sources of knowledge within Akalaṅka's philosophical system. This difference might be explained by the fact that, unlike Umāsvāmin's *Tattvārthasūtra*, Akalaṅka's philosophical treatises are polemical compositions written for an inter-religious audience. Most non-Jaina philosophical schools classify sensory perception as *pratyakṣa* rather than *parokṣa*.[189] In order to polemically engage with his non-Jaina opponents, Akalaṅka might have felt the need to adopt the shared terminology and classificatory scheme of inter-religious *pramāṇaśāstra*. Nonetheless, as a member of the Jaina philosophical tradition, Akalaṅka would not have wished to explicitly reject Umāsvāmin's classification. In order to arrive at a compromise between Umāsvāmin's *Tattvārthasūtra* and inter-religious *pramāṇaśāstra*, Akalaṅka comes up with the ingenious division of *pratyakṣa* into conventional *pratyakṣa* and primary *pratyakṣa*.[190] Conventional *pratyakṣa* consists of sensory perception (*indriyapratyakṣa*) and mental perception (*anindriyapratyakṣa*) and thereby corresponds to *pratyakṣa* as understood in non-Jaina philosophical schools. By contrast, primary *pratyakṣa* consists of extra-sensory perception (*atīndriyajñāna*) and thereby corresponds to *pratyakṣa* as defined in Umāsvāmin's *Tattvārthasūtra*.

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[187] TS 1.9.

[188] Ibid., 1.9-1.12.

[189] For example, the *Nyāyasūtras* (NS 1.1.4), the *Mīmāṃsāsūtras* (MS 1.1.4), and Buddhist *pramāṇavādins* (PS 1.3c, p. 7, l. 7) classify sensory perception as *pratyakṣa*.

[190] LT 3ab.

By labelling the distinctively Jaina understanding of *pratyakṣa* as primary (*mukhya*) and the non-Jaina understanding of *pratyakṣa* as conventional (*sāṃvyavahārika*), Akalaṅka ensures that he does not step outside the boundaries of Jaina orthodoxy.[191] Our sensory awareness of the world counts as a kind of *pratyakṣa* simply because of the conventional meaning of the word '*pratyakṣa*' in ordinary discourse.[192] By contrast, the omniscient awareness of the Jinas is the genuine world-transcending kind of *pratyakṣa*.[193] Despite this glorification of primary perception, Akalaṅka spends far more time analysing the nature of conventional perception in his philosophical treatises. In addition to these classificatory innovations, Akalaṅka disambiguates and refines Umāsvāmin's coarse categorisation of the different kinds of epistemically reliable awareness (*jñāna*). For example, Umāsvāmin lists the words '*smṛti*', '*saṃjñā*', '*cintā*', and '*abhinibodha*' as synonyms of the vague category of 'sensory awareness' (*matijñāna*).[194] By contrast, Akalaṅka disambiguates these five synonyms into five distinct types of awareness: sensory perception (*mati/matijñāna*),[195] memory (*smṛti*), recognition (*saṃjñā*), inductive reasoning (*cintā*), and inference (*abhinibodha*).[196] While the first type of awareness corresponds to sensory perception (*indriyapratyakṣa*), pre-linguistic forms of the remaining four types of awareness fall within the category of mental perception (*anindriyapratyakṣa*).[197] Thus, we encounter increasing philosophical complexity and sophistication in Akalaṅka's philosophical treatises as compared to Umāsvāmin's *Tattvārthasūtra*.

While Akalaṅka accepts three different kinds of perception, Akalaṅka's theory of

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[191] This entire explanation is found in Vādirājasūri's commentary (NVV, p. 96, ll. 19-28).

[192] NVV, p. 96, ll. 26-27.

[193] Ibid., p. 115, ll. 20-21.

[194] *matiḥ smṛtiḥ saṃjñā cintā 'bhinibodha ity anarthāntaram* | (TS 1.13)

[195] LT 5-6ab.

[196] Ibid., 10cd-11ab.

[197] LTSV 61, p. 21, l. 7.

sensory perception (*indriyapratyakṣa*) is most relevant for the purposes of this thesis. In the *Laghīyastraya*, Akalaṅka presents a detailed analysis of sensory perception into four sequential stages:

> ***akṣārthayoge sattāloko 'rthākāravikalpadhīḥ*** |
>
> ***avagraho viśeṣākāṅkṣehāvāyo viniścayaḥ*** ||
>
> ***dhāraṇā smṛtihetus tan matijñānaṃ caturvidham*** |[198]
>
> 'When there is connection (*yoga*) between sense-faculty and external object, there is [initially] the seeing (*āloka*) of the bare existence (*sattā*) [of some object]. This turns into[199] sensation (*avagraha*) which is a conceptual (*vikalpa*) awareness of [universal] features (*ākāra*)[200] of the object [besides its existence]. Sensation turns into cogitation (*īhā*) which is the expectation (*ākāṅkṣā*) of particular features (*viśeṣa*) [of the object]. Cogitation turns into perceptual judgement (*avāya*) which is the ascertainment (*viniścaya*) [of particular features of the cogitated object].[201] Lastly, retention (*dhāraṇā*) [of the perceptual judgement] is the cause of memory (*smṛti*). Thus, sensory perception (*matijñāna*) is fourfold.'[202]

This division of sensory perception into four sequential stages is unique to Jaina philosophy. This division has a long history in the Jaina philosophical tradition because Umāsvāmin's *Tattvārthasūtra* already lists sensation (*avagraha*), cogitation (*īhā*), perceptual judgement (*avāya*),

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198 LT 5-6ab.

199 Akalaṅka simply lists the different stages of sensory perception one after the other in the nominative. Prabhācandra supplies the words '*tadanu bhavati*' i.e. 'after that becomes' in order to highlight how a preceding stage sequentially transforms into a subsequent stage (NKC_1, p. 116, ll. 7-8).

200 I follow Prabhācandra's gloss of the word '*ākāra*' as '*sattvasāmānyād avāntaro jātiviśeṣo manuṣyatvādiḥ*' i.e. 'specific universals (*jāti*) such as human-ness and so forth intermediate from the universal of [bare] existence' (NKC_1, p. 116, l. 9). I deliberately avoid translating the word '*ākāra*' as 'form' because the word 'form' has distinctively Buddhist connotations which are absent in Akalaṅka's verse.

201 I follow Prabhācandra's gloss of the word '*viniścaya*' as '*ākāṅkṣitaviśeṣaviniścaya*' i.e. 'the ascertainment of particular features of the cogitated [object]' (NKC_1, p. 116, ll. 13-14).

202 I follow Balcerowicz's (2016b: 1001) translation of '*avagraha*' as 'sensation', '*īhā*' as 'cogitation', '*avāya*' as 'perceptual judgement', and '*dhāraṇā*' as 'retention'.

and retention (*dhāraṇā*) as the four sequential stages of sensory awareness (*matijñāna*).[203] Within Akalaṅka's analysis, the process of sensory perception begins with connection (*yoga*) between sense-faculty and external object. In his auto-commentary, Akalaṅka explains that there are two kinds of sense-faculties: sense-faculty qua cluster of matter (*dravyendriya*) and sense-faculty qua modification of the self (*bhāvendriya*).[204] While the former category consists of the physical sense-organs, the latter category consists of the self's power to apprehend objects (*labdhi*) and the self's activity of apprehending objects (*upayoga*).[205] On the other hand, external objects having the dual nature of permanent substance (*dravya*) and impermanent modifications (*paryāya*) constitute the object of sensory perception.[206] For sensory perception to arise, there must be some connection (*yoga*)[207] between sense-faculty and external object. Given that Akalaṅka explicitly rejects the external object as the cause of perceptual awareness, this connection (*yoga*) cannot be any kind of physical contact (*saṃyoga*) between sense-faculty and external object.[208] Instead, both Akalaṅka[209] and his commentator Prabhācandra[210] explain that this connection (*yoga*) between sense-faculty and external object is characterised by a kind of suitability (*yogyatā*) such as the suitable (*yogya*) spatial location of sense-faculty and external object.[211] Just as an oil-lamp illuminates a pot located in the

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[203] *avagrahehāvāyadhāraṇāḥ* | (TS 1.15).

While the *sūtra* simply lists the four terms, Pūjyapāda's *Sarvārthasiddhi* (SS 1.15, p. 112, l. 1) explains that the order of the four terms reflects the sequence of their arising.

[204] LTSV 5, p. 2, l. 22.

Akalaṅka inherits this two-fold classification of sense-faculties from Umāsvāmin's *Tattvārthasūtra* (TS 2.15-2.18).

[205] LTSV 5, p. 2, ll. 22-23.

[206] Ibid., 5, p. 2, ll. 21-22.

[207] In his auto-commentary, Akalaṅka uses the synonym '*saṃnipāta*' (LTSV 5, p. 2, l. 21).

[208] NKC_1, p. 116, ll. 4-5.

[209] LTSV 5, p. 2, l. 24.

[210] NKC_1, p. 116, l. 4.

[211] LTSV 5, p. 2, l. 24; NKC_1, p. 117, l. 2.

same room rather than a pot located in a different room, in the same way, sensory perception apprehends an external object existing in a suitable spatial location. This spatial restrictedness of perception does not entail that the external object is the cause of perceptual awareness any more than the spatial restrictedness of illumination entails that the pot is the cause of the oil-lamp.

Immediately after the sense-faculty is suitably connected with the external object, there arises an indeterminate perceptual experience (*darśana*) of the bare existence of some undefined object.[212] Perceptual experience (*darśana*) is temporally prior to determinate awareness (*jñāna*) and lacks definite content (*anākāra*).[213] This indeterminate perceptual experience does not count as a source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) because it does not actually provide the perceiver with determinate knowledge of the external object.[214] This indeterminate and non-conceptual perceptual experience is followed by the first determinate and conceptual stage of sensory perception called sensation (*avagraha*). Sensation conceptually apprehends universal features (*sāmānya*)[215] of the object besides its existence (*sattā*).[216] While Akalaṅka himself does not provide any examples, Pūjyapāda gives the example of conceptually apprehending white (*śukla*) colour (*rūpa*) which is a generic feature shared by many different objects.[217] Sensation is followed by the second stage of sensory perception called cogitation (*īhā*). Cogitation involves critical reflection on the sensory data in order

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[212] LTSV 5, p. 2, l. 24.

Akalaṅka inherits the category of perceptual experience (*darśana*) from Umāsvāmin's *Tattvārthasūtra* (TS 2.8-2.9; SS 2.9, p. 163, l. 7).

[213] SS 2.9, p. 163, ll. 9-11; Balcerowicz 2017: 193.

[214] Prabhācandra argues that the existence of indeterminate perceptual experience (*darśana*) can be inferred from the first stage of determinate awareness i.e. sensation (*avagraha*) (NKC_1, p. 116, ll. 18-19).

[215] It is important to remember that universals (*sāmānya*) are similar transformations (*sadṛśapariṇāma*) shared by many different objects rather than abstract eternal entities in Akalaṅka's philosophical system (LTSV 66-67, p. 23, ll. 3-4).

[216] This is because bare existence (*sattā*) has already been apprehended during indeterminate perceptual experience.

[217] SS 1.15, p. 111, ll. 4-5.

to ascertain particular features (*viśeṣa*) of the sensed object.[218] Returning to Pūjyapāda's example, the perceiver strives to know whether the sensed white colour belongs to a crane (*balākā*) or a banner (*patākā*).[219] Cogitation is followed by the third stage of sensory perception called perceptual judgement (*avāya*).[220] Perceptual judgement involves ascertainment of the particular features (*viśeṣa*) of the cogitated object.[221] In the above example, the perceiver ascertains that the object of his perception is a crane (*balākā*) by apprehending the fluttering of wings.[222] In this way, perceptual judgement positively ascertains the true nature of the object. Perceptual judgement is followed by the fourth and final stage of sensory perception called retention (*dhāraṇā*). As the name suggests, this stage involves retention of the perceptual judgement for future recollection.[223] In the above example, retention of the perception of the crane allows the perceiver to recognise the identity of the crane seen the following day with the crane seen the previous day.[224] Akalaṅka argues that retention qua latent mental impression (*saṃskāra*) counts as awareness qua source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) because it is ultimately grounded in the accurate ascertainment of the object.[225] In this way, sensory perception consists of four sequential stages each of which is a determinate and conceptual awareness (*jñāna*). In his next verse, Akalaṅka explains how every preceding stage acts

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[218] LTSV 5, p. 2, l. 25; Balcerowicz 2016b: 1001.

[219] SS 1.15, p. 111, ll. 5-6.

[220] Śvetāmbara Jaina philosophers frequently read '*apāya*' instead of '*avāya*' in TS 1.15 (Balcerowicz 2016b: 1001). On this reading, the third stage of sensory perception involves the removal/exclusion (*apanoda*) of non-existing characteristics of the object (Shah 1967: 28-29).

[221] LTSV 5, p. 2, l. 26.

[222] SS 1.15, p. 111, ll. 6-7.

[223] LTSV 6ab, p. 3, l. 1.

[224] SS 1.15, p. 111, l. 7, p. 112, l. 1.

[225] LTSV 6ab, p. 3, ll. 1-2.

as the source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) for the subsequent stage as the result (*phala*).[226] In other words, sensation (*avagraha*) as the *pramāṇa* gives rise to cogitation (*īhā*) as the result, cogitation as the *pramāṇa* gives rise to perceptual judgement (*avāya*) as the result, and perceptual judgement as the *pramāṇa* gives rise to retention (*dhāraṇā*) as the result. Akalaṅka argues that source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) and result (*phala*) are identical with each other in some respects (such as apprehending the same object) and distinct from each other in other respects (such as arising at different moments of time).[227] Akalaṅka's acceptance of identity-cum-difference between source of knowledge and result contrasts with the ultimate identity of source of knowledge and result in the works of Diṅnāga[228] and Dharmakīrti[229]. Akalaṅka concludes this discussion by applying the Jaina theory of many-sidedness (*anekāntavāda*) to his fourfold analysis of sensory perception:

> *kathaṃcid abhede 'pi pariṇāmaviśeṣād bhedaḥ* |[230]
>
> 'Though there is absence of difference (*abheda*) [between the four stages of sensory perception] in some respects (*kathaṃcit*), there is difference (*bheda*) [between the four stages of sensory perception] due to their particular transformations (*pariṇāma*).'

The four stages of sensory perception are identical to each other in some respects and distinct from each other in other respects. As Mahendrakumāra explains, the four stages of sensory perception are identical to each other insofar as each of them is a determinate awareness (*jñāna*) which, in turn, is

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[226] LT 7ab.

This verse divides the four stages of sensory perception into forty-eight sub-types on the basis of the twelve kinds of objects apprehended by each stage. For the list of the twelve kinds of objects, see TS 1.16. For a brief explanation of these twelve kinds of objects, see SS 1.16 (pp. 112-114)).

[227] LTSV 6cd-7ab, p. 3, ll. 18-19.

[228] PS 8cd, p. 3, ll. 22-23.

[229] PV_M 2.330cd-2.331, p. 218.

See § 5.3.3, pp. 297-298.

[230] LTSV 5, p. 2, l. 26.

a characteristic (*dharma*) of the self.[231] At the same time, the four stages of sensory perception are distinct from each other insofar as each of them is a particular transformation (*pariṇāma*) with its own distinctive nature.[232] In this way, Akalaṅka's analysis of the four stages of sensory perception reflects his broader ontological framework of *anekāntavāda*.

The profound impact of the distinctively Jaina ontological framework of many-sidedness (*anekāntavāda*) and the distinctively Jaina epistemological framework of sevenfold conditional predication (*syādvāda*) is most clearly evident in Akalaṅka's analysis of pseudo-perception:

> ***pratyakṣābhaṃ kathaṃcit syāt pramāṇaṃ taimirādikam*** |
>
> ***yad yathaivāvisaṃvādi pramāṇaṃ tat tathā matam*** ||[233]
>
> 'Pseudo-perceptions (*pratyakṣābha*) such as the perception of two moons by a person afflicted with *timira* eye-disease (*taimirika*)[234] should be [accepted] as a source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) in some respects (*kathaṃcit*). Whichever [awareness] is non-contradictory (*avisaṃvādin*) in whatsoever way, that [awareness] is accepted as a source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) in that very way.'

Akalaṅka and his commentator Prabhācandra explain that the perception of two moons is non-contradictory (*avisaṃvādin*) with respect to the moon's whiteness, roundness, and other such

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[231] Śāstrī 1939: 52.

[232] Ibid.

[233] LT 22.

[234] Akalaṅka's auto-commentary explains that a person afflicted with *timira* eye-disease sees two moons (LTSV 22, p. 8, ll. 10-11). This contrasts with Dharmakīrti's presentation in which a person afflicted with *timira* eye-disease sees unreal hairs (PV_M 2.1cd, p. 111). Irrespective of which of the two accurately represents the symptoms of *timira* eye-disease, the philosophical point remains valid in both cases.

qualities and contradictory (*visaṃvādin*) with respect to the number of moons.[235] Thus, the diseased individual's perception of two moons is a source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) in some respects and not a source of knowledge (*apramāṇa*) in other respects. This, in turn, is an example of the application of the Jaina theory of sevenfold conditional predication (*syādvāda*) to the analysis of perception. By adding the particle '*syāt*' i.e. 'in a certain way, in some respects', dogmatic one-sided statements such as 'The perception of two moons is a source of knowledge' and 'The perception of two moons is not a source of knowledge' are conditionalised with respect to a particular set of parameters such as the whiteness of the moon and the number of moons respectively. This, in turn, allows these two superficially contradictory statements to be true at the same time. It is important to observe that Akalaṅka's application of *syādvāda* to his theory of perception destabilises the very rules of the game of Sanskrit epistemology (*pramāṇaśāstra*). Almost all classical Indian philosophical schools start out with the assumption that a given awareness is either a *pramāṇa* or a non-*pramāṇa*. However, if each and every awareness is both a *pramāṇa* in some respects as well as a non-*pramāṇa* in other respects, then the entire edifice of *pramāṇaśāstra* seems to collapse. When applied to his theory of perception, Akalaṅka's argument entails that there is no such thing as pure genuine perception (*pratyakṣa*) and pure pseudo-perception (*pratyakṣābha*). Instead, each and every perceptual awareness lies on a spectrum between pure genuine perception and pure pseudo-perception. This, in turn, undermines the foundational dichotomies (such as *pramāṇa* vs. *apramāṇa* and *pratyakṣa* vs. *pratyakṣābha*) of *pramāṇaśāstra*. However, Akalaṅka does not always apply this highly refined *syādvādic* epistemological framework to his theory of perception. Instead, Akalaṅka usually speaks as though there is a straightforward binary distinction between genuine perception and pseudo-perception.[236] This might be understood as an attempt to polemically engage with non-Jaina opponents on their own conceptual terrain. Nevertheless, Akalaṅka resorts to his distinctively

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[235] LTSV 22, p. 8, ll. 10-11; NKC_2, p. 523, ll. 10-14.

[236] For example, Akalaṅka's definition of perception assumes that certain kinds of awareness count as genuine perception simpliciter (LT 3ab).

Jaina epistemological framework whenever he wishes to highlight the dogmatic one-sidedness of non-Jaina theories of perception.[237]

§ 2.3 Conclusion

Akalaṅka is a towering giant of Jaina philosophy who has frequently been heralded as "the father of [Digambara] Jaina logic".[238] Akalaṅka's extensive and sophisticated philosophical output fundamentally revolutionised Jaina epistemology.[239] This chapter has contextualised Akalaṅka's philosophical ideas within the preceding Digambara Jaina philosophical tradition, especially Umāsvāmin's *Tattvārthasūtra* and Samantabhadra's *Āptamīmāṃsā*. I have shown how Akalaṅka reconciles old concepts inherited from the Jaina tradition with new ideas emerging in inter-religious *pramāṇaśāstra*. This is necessary for Akalaṅka's overall philosophical project of creating a well-defined and consistent Jaina philosophical system in order to polemically refute non-Jaina opponents, especially Dharmakīrti. This philosophical enterprise, in turn, is oriented towards the Jaina soteriological goal of achieving liberation (*mokṣa*) from transmigratory existence (*saṃsāra*).

Within this philosophical framework, Akalaṅka spends most of his time examining the central problems of epistemology and ontology. Akalaṅka's definition of *pramāṇa* as non-

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[237] In the above example of pseudo-perception, Akalaṅka implicitly challenges the assertion, found in the works of Vasubandhu (Vi 1, p. 4) and other Yogācārins, that our ordinary perception of the external world is illusory just like the erroneous perception of the individual afflicted with *timira* eye-disease by pointing out that the diseased individual's perception too is a source of knowledge in some respects!

[238] Cort 2011: 299.

I have inserted the word 'Digambara' within square brackets because Siddhasena Mahāmati is regarded as "the father of Jaina logic" within the Śvetāmbara Jaina tradition (Balcerowicz 2016b: 994).

[239] Balcerowicz 2016b: 994.

contradictory (*avisaṃvādin*)[240] awareness which apprehends a previously unknown object (*anadhigatārthādhigama*)[241] is a great example of Dharmakīrti's influence on Akalaṅka's epistemology. Nonetheless, this influence does not make Akalaṅka's definition derivative because Akalaṅka reinterprets non-contradiction (*avisaṃvāda*) as the absence of external sublation and internal inconsistency instead of the capacity for successful pragmatic activity (*arthakriyā*).[242] In direct opposition to Dharmakīrti, Akalaṅka argues that the two sources of knowledge i.e. perception and indirect awareness apprehend both particulars as well as universals.[243] Akalaṅka's theory of perception reflects his highly idiosyncratic and individualistic way of thinking. Despite being a staunch realist who defends the existence of many-sided (*anekānta*) external objects, Akalaṅka rejects the causal role of the external object in generating perceptual awareness just like Buddhist idealists such as Dharmakīrti. Similarly, Akalaṅka's position that pseudo-perceptions too count as sources of knowledge in some respects shows that he is willing to go beyond the conventional boundaries of Sanskrit epistemology.

While this chapter has introduced the nature, scope, and purpose of Akalaṅka's philosophical project, the subsequent chapters analyse selected aspects of Akalaṅka's theory of perception with a special emphasis on the polemical critique of Dharmakīrti's theory of perception. Given the limitations of space and time, I have chosen three distinctive aspects of Akalaṅka's theory of perception which most strikingly contrast with Dharmakīrti's theory of perception: perceptual conceptualism, common-sense realism, and dualism. As we have seen, Akalaṅka defines *pramāṇa* as determinate (*vyavasāyātmaka*) awareness.[244] This definition entails a commitment to perceptual

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[240] LT 22cd.

[241] AŚ 36, p. 38.

[242] LTSV 42, p. 14, l. 21.

[243] NV 5.

[244] LT 60.

conceptualism according to which perception qua source of knowledge is necessarily conceptual in nature. Akalaṅka's understanding of conceptualisation (*vikalpa*/*kalpanā*) as well as his objections to Dharmakīrti's perceptual non-conceptualism are discussed in chapter 3. Akalaṅka's definition of *pramāṇa* as the apprehension of a previously unknown external object (*artha*) entails a commitment to realism. Akalaṅka's refutation of Dharmakīrti's Yogācāra idealism as well as his defence of common-sense realism are discussed in chapter 4. Finally, chapter 5 explores Akalaṅka's dualistic epistemology which upholds the distinction between apprehending subject and apprehended object. After examining Akalaṅka's refutation of Dharmakīrti's non-dualism, chapter 5 concludes with some reflection on Akalaṅka's metaphilosophy. In my view, Akalaṅka's theory of perception is *philosophically* interesting because it is completely unique in the history of 1st millennium CE Sanskrit philosophy in two important respects. Firstly, Akalaṅka's distinctively Jaina analysis of sensory perception into four sequential stages does not have any parallel in non-Jaina philosophical schools. This distinctive analysis entails novel conclusions such as the inclusion of retention (*dhāraṇā*) within the perceptual process. Secondly, as far as I am aware, no classical Indian philosopher prior to Akalaṅka explicitly defended a theory of perception combining perceptual conceptualism with common-sense realism. Most realist philosophical schools such as Nyāya[245] and Mīmāṃsā[246] rejected perceptual conceptualism by arguing that perception involves both a non-conceptual stage as well as a conceptual stage whereas Buddhist *pramāṇavādins* such as Dharmakīrti[247] rejected both perceptual conceptualism and common-sense realism. Thus, Akalaṅka's theory of perception is unique in classical Indian philosophy of the 1st millennium CE. This uniqueness, in turn, raises the exciting possibility of discovering new solutions to old philosophical problems.

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[245] Matilal 2020: 241-245.

[246] Taber 2005: 23-38.

[247] PV_M 2.123a, p. 154.

§ 3 *Is Perception Conceptual?*

This chapter seeks to answer the following question: does perception involve concepts?[1] Do we simply perceive the world around us or do we always perceive the world *as* something? At first glance, it seems that our ordinary perception of the world is obviously conceptual. For example, I see my grey laptop on the brown table in front of me. Insofar as I see things such as laptops and tables, my perception involves the concepts of 'laptop' and 'table'. This suggests that our ordinary perception is conceptual. Critical reflection, however, disarms us of this certainty. Suppose that I happen to come across a previously unseen object. Insofar as I have never learnt any word for this object, I would seem to lack any concept of this object. Nevertheless, I do perceive the object when it is in front of me. This suggests that at least some of our ordinary perceptions do not involve concepts. Furthermore, infants and animals do perceive the world around them despite seemingly lacking the relevant linguistic and inferential capacities associated with concepts.[2] Thus, our ordinary experience seems to present us with conflicting cases of non-conceptual perception as well as conceptual perception. This raises the philosophical question of the real nature of perception: is perception non-conceptual, conceptual, or both?

Before we begin to answer this question, we must equip ourselves with some important definitions and distinctions from modern analytic philosophy. Firstly, there is a distinction between non-conceptual mental states and conceptual mental states. A mental state is conceptual if it

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[1] For a useful overview of the modern debate regarding the nature and ontological status of concepts, see Margolis and Laurence (2022). For the purposes of this introduction, we can simply understand concepts in terms of ordinary ideas such as 'table' and 'chair'. The more technical Buddhist and Jaina definitions of concept/conceptualisation will be introduced in § 3.1.

[2] Chaturvedi 2022: 2.

involves linguistic concepts such as ‘table’ and ‘chair’. On the other hand, a mental state is non-conceptual if it does not involve such concepts. Proponents of perceptual non-conceptualism argue that perception is a non-conceptual mental state whereas proponents of perceptual conceptualism argue that perception is a conceptual mental state. Secondly, there are two different kinds of non-conceptualism: state non-conceptualism and content non-conceptualism.[3] According to state non-conceptualism, a perceptual state is non-conceptual when the perceiver stands in a concept-independent relation to his/her perception.[4] A perceiver stands in a concept-independent relation to his/her perception when he/she lacks some or all of the concepts necessary for an accurate specification of the contents of the perceptual state.[5] By contrast, according to content non-conceptualism, perceptual states are non-conceptual because the representational content of perceptual states is different *in kind* from the representational content of conceptual states such as beliefs and judgements.[6] The difference between these two kinds of non-conceptualism can be illustrated using a simple example. Suppose that I see a pangolin for the first time in my life. Since I do not possess the concept of ‘pangolin’, my initial perception is non-conceptual. Now suppose that I acquire the concept of ‘pangolin’ from a zoologist. Would my subsequent perception of the pangolin be non-conceptual or conceptual? A state non-conceptualist would argue that my subsequent perception is conceptual because I have now acquired the relevant concept necessary for specifying the contents of my perception. By contrast, a content non-conceptualist would argue that my subsequent perception remains non-conceptual because the rich and vivid contents of perceptual experience cannot, in principle, be fully captured by concepts. In other words, content non-conceptualism draws a fundamental distinction between the vividly iconic content of perception and the conceptual content of non-perceptual mental states such as judgements. State non-

[3] Bermúdez and Cahen 2020.

[4] Chaturvedi 2022: 2.

[5] Bermúdez and Cahen 2020.

[6] Chaturvedi 2022: 2.

conceptualism, on the other hand, is compatible with perception having the same kind of content as non-perceptual mental states such as judgements.[7] Hence, it is logically possible to accept state non-conceptualism about perception without thereby accepting content non-conceptualism.[8]

An alternative understanding of our perceptual experience is found in the perceptual conceptualism developed by McDowell (1994) and others. According to McDowell, conceptual capacities are operational "not only in judgements … but already in the transactions in nature that are constituted by the world's impacts on the receptive capacities of a suitable subject".[9] In other words, sensory impressions already present things as being thus and so. Thus, our perception of the world is always concept-laden. It is a myth to suppose that there is some "pure" sensory encounter with the world unmediated by concepts. Instead, as McDowell explains, "conceptual capacities are already operative in experience itself".[10] To affirm this is to assert that the world always appears in a certain way in our perception. On this view, a judgement such as 'This is blue' does not superimpose any new kind of content onto my perception of blue but merely endorses the conceptual content that is already present in my perception of blue.[11] In summary, we can distinguish between three different positions regarding the nature of perception:

(i) State non-conceptualism

(ii) Content non-conceptualism

(iii) Conceptualism

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[7] Bermúdez and Cahen 2020.

[8] Some philosophers have recently challenged this claim by arguing that state non-conceptualism entails content non-conceptualism (Bermudez 2007: 66-69; Toribio 2008: 351-361). Irrespective of whether this is the case, it is useful to distinguish between a weaker version of perceptual non-conceptualism based on the perceiver's conceptual capacities and a stronger version of perceptual non-conceptualism based on the very content of perception.

[9] McDowell 1994: xx.

[10] Ibid., 62.

[11] Ibid., 48-49.

This threefold distinction will be employed throughout this chapter.

This chapter reconstructs and analyses the debate between Dharmakīrti and Akalaṅka regarding the role of conceptualisation in sensory perception (*indriyapratyakṣa*). Section § 3.1 compares and contrasts the ways in which Dharmakīrti and Akalaṅka understand conceptualisation. In section § 3.2, I examine Dharmakīrti's central arguments for the non-conceptual nature of perception. This, in turn, is followed by a careful analysis of Akalaṅka's objections to perceptual non-conceptualism and his defence of perceptual conceptualism in section § 3.3. This section highlights the role of Dharmakīrti's commentators such as Prajñākaragupta and Akalaṅka's commentators such as Vādirājasūri in moving the philosophical debate forward through their sophisticated arguments. While modern analytic philosophy has reached a quasi-consensus that the "distinction between conceptual and non-conceptual representations is largely terminological",[12] this chapter shows how the debate between Dharmakīrti's perceptual non-conceptualism and Akalaṅka's perceptual conceptualism is a rich and substantive debate about the nature of perception.

§ 3.1 What is Conceptualisation?

Throughout this thesis, the English word 'conceptualisation' translates Sanskrit words such as '*vikalpa*' and '*kalpanā*'.[13] A common feature of these Sanskrit words is that they are derived from the verbal root 'kḷp'. Though it literally has the meaning of adequacy/capacity (*sāmarthya*),[14]

[12] Chaturvedi 2022: 2.

[13] In their recent translation of *Pramāṇavārttika* 3.1-3.63, Franco and Notake translate the word '*kalpanā*' as 'conceptual construction' in accordance with Dharmakīrti's understanding of *kalpanā* as mental fabrication (Franco and Notake 2014: 83). The word 'construction', however, does not reflect Akalaṅka's understanding of *kalpanā* as accurate ascertainment of real objects. Hence, I have chosen the more neutral translation 'conceptualisation' for both Dharmakīrti and Akalaṅka.

[14] DPa, no. 762, p. 20.

the verbal root 'kḷp' also possesses numerous cognitive meanings such as imagining, supposing, considering, and reflecting. However, the words '*vikalpa*' and '*kalpanā*' have a more precise and technical meaning in philosophical discourse. Let us examine Dharmakīrti's and Akalaṅka's understanding of these technical terms.

§ 3.1.1 *Dharmakīrti's Definition of Conceptualisation*

Within Buddhist *pramāṇavāda*, Dharmakīrti's predecessor Diṅnāga had defined conceptualisation (*kalpanā*) as follows:

> ***pratyakṣaṃ kalpanāpoḍhaṃ nāmajātyādiyojanā*** |[15]
> 'Perception is [awareness] devoid of conceptualisation (*kalpanā*). Conceptualisation is the joining of names (*nāman*), universals (*jāti*), and so on.'

According to Diṅnāga, perception is non-conceptual awareness of an object such as blue (*nīla*) whereas conceptualisation is linguistic ascertainment of the object *as* blue (*nīlam iti*).[16] Conceptualisation (*kalpanā*) is defined as the qualification of a real object by linguistic constructs such as names, universals, and so on.[17] In other words, conceptualisation is a linguistic awareness which arises after pure perception and superimposes linguistic constructs onto the pristine perceived particular (*svalakṣaṇa*). Diṅnāga's examples of conceptualisation are carefully selected to show the merely nominal and conventional status of ontological categories (*padārtha*) such as substance, quality, and universal accepted by Jainas, Naiyāyikas, and other realists.[18]

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[15] PS 1.3cd, p. 2, ll. 7, 9.

[16] Ibid., 4, p. 2, ll. 20-21.

[17] Ibid., 1.3cd, p. 2, ll. 10-12.

[18] Ibid.

Dharmakīrti largely follows Diṅnāga's definition of conceptualisation:

pratyakṣaṃ kalpanāpoḍhaṃ pratyakṣeṇaiva sidhyati |

pratyātmavedyaḥ sarveṣāṃ vikalpo nāmasaṃśrayaḥ ||[19]

'Perception is [awareness] devoid of conceptualisation (*kalpanā*): this [fact] is established by means of perception itself. Conceptualisation (*vikalpa*) is association (*saṃśraya*) with names (*nāman*). Conceptualisation is individually (*pratyātman*) cognisable for everyone.'

While Diṅnāga lists different kinds of words such as proper names (*nāman*), words denoting universals (*jātiśabda*), and so forth in his auto-commentary,[20] Dharmakīrti only uses the word 'name' (*nāman*). However, it is very likely that Dharmakīrti uses the word '*nāman*' in a broader sense to refer to all kinds of words as arbitrary names for inexpressible particulars (*svalakṣaṇa*). Just like Diṅnāga, Dharmakīrti defines conceptualisation as awareness connected with any kind of language. The phenomenon of conceptualisation is said to be self-evident insofar as all sentient beings are aware of linguistic awareness in their own minds.[21] A more precise definition of conceptualisation is found in Dharmakīrti's *Nyāyabindu*:

abhilāpasaṃsargayogyapratibhāsā pratītiḥ kalpanā |

tayā rahitaṃ timirāśubhramaṇanauyānasaṃkṣobhādyanāhitavibhramaṃ jñānaṃ pratyakṣam |[22]

'Conceptualisation (*kalpanā*) is awareness whose appearance (*pratibhāsa*) is capable (*yogya*) of being connected with language (*abhilāpa*).

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[19] PV_M 2.123, p. 154.

[20] PS 1.3cd, p. 2, ll. 10-12.

[21] PVV 2.123, p. 154.

[22] NBi 1.5-1.6, pp. 47, 54.

> Perception is awareness devoid of conceptualisation and free from errors (*vibhrama*) produced by *timira* eye-disease, quick movement, travelling in a ship, violent jolt, and so forth.'

The *Nyāyabindu* improves on the *Pramāṇavārttika's* definition of conceptualisation by adding the crucial word 'capable' (*yogya*) in order to ensure that any awareness which is capable of being, though not actually, connected with language also counts as conceptual.[23] This explains why the awareness of illusory complex substances such as a chariot counts as conceptualisation even when the word 'chariot' is not actually associated with the awareness.[24] Insofar as it is *capable* of being expressed by means of conventional words and concepts, the awareness of complex wholes is conceptual. Besides improving his definition of conceptualisation, Dharmakīrti's *Nyāyabindu* clarifies his definition of perception. This is because the *Nyāyabindu*, just like the *Pramāṇaviniścaya*, explicitly states the non-erroneous nature of genuine perception which was implicit in the *Pramāṇavārttika*.[25] Thus, an awareness counts as genuine perception if and only if it is devoid of both conceptualisation (*kalpanā/vikalpa*) as well as error (*vibhrama/bhrānti*). Later commentators such as Manorathanandin largely follow Dharmakīrti's definition of conceptualisation. For example, Manorathanandin's *Pramāṇavārttikavṛtti* defines conceptualisation as "awareness connected (*saṃsargavat*) with a signifier-form (*vācaka*) and a signified-form (*vācya*)".[26] Manorathanandin's definition helpfully glosses Dharmakīrti's somewhat vague term 'language' (*abhilāpa*) as the relation between signifying words and signified objects. Any

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[23] This crucial word 'capable' (*yogya*) is not found in Diṅnāga's definition of conceptualisation. However, Diṅnāga's commentator Jinendrabuddhi argues that this requirement is implicit in Diṅnāga's definition (PST 1.3d, p. 37, ll. 16-17, p. 38, ll. 1-2).

[24] Dharmottara gives the example of an infant's conceptual awareness of his mother's breast despite the fact that the infant lacks the appropriate words to describe this awareness (NBT 1.5, pp. 48, 50-51).

[25] NBi 1.5-1.6, pp. 47, 54; PVi 1.4ab, p. 7; PV_M 2.288, p. 204.

See § 1.2.3, pp. 57-58.

[26] *vācyavācakākārasaṃsargavatī pratītiḥ kalpanā* | (PVV 2.126, p. 155).

awareness possessing this signifier-signified relation counts as conceptualisation because it involves the superimposition[27] of a purely mental signifier onto a hypostatised object of signification.

It is clear from the preceding discussion that Dharmakīrti accepts perceptual non-conceptualism. Nonetheless, it remains an open question whether Dharmakīrti's perceptual non-conceptualism is best characterised as state non-conceptualism, content non-conceptualism, or something else. Chaturvedi (2022) has convincingly shown that Dharmakīrti subscribes to a strong version of content non-conceptualism.[28] This is because Dharmakīrti views the content of non-conceptual perception and conceptual awareness as essentially different from each other in terms of their representational structure, causal origin, and phenomenal experience. Insofar as it is associated with language, any conceptual awareness of an object is necessarily endowed with a propositional structure that expresses a predicative relation.[29] For example, my conceptual awareness of a blue object *as* blue can be expressed in terms of the following proposition: 'This is blue'. By contrast, non-conceptual perception is free from language. As a result, the object of perception is not predicatively structured.[30] For example, my non-conceptual perception of blue cannot be expressed in terms of any proposition. Insofar as the difference between non-conceptual perception and conceptual awareness arises from their differing representational contents rather than the capacities of the perceiver, Dharmakīrti's theory of perception is a version of content non-conceptualism.[31] Decisive evidence in favour of a content non-conceptualist interpretation is provided by Dharmakīrti's rejection of the claim that the perceptual awareness of infants lacking linguistic

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[27] Vādirājasūri provides a useful definition of superimposition (*samāropa*) as "conceptualisation which ascertains not-X (*atasmin*) as X (*tat*)" (NVV, p. 124, l. 22).

[28] Chaturvedi 2022: 1-20.

[29] Ibid., 3-4.

[30] Ibid., 4.

[31] Ibid., 3-4.

capacities is entirely non-conceptual.[32] Dharmakīrti argues that infants would never be able to acquire the cognitive ability of associating words with objects in accordance with linguistic conventions if their perceptual awareness was purely non-conceptual.[33] In other words, infants must already possess a subtle degree of conceptualisation in order to be able to learn the linguistic conventions.[34] This example shows how Dharmakīrti thinks that an awareness can be conceptual even when the cogniser (such as an infant) lacks the relevant concepts required to characterise his/her awareness.[35] This constitutes a rejection of state non-conceptualism according to which the non-conceptual or conceptual nature of a mental state depends on the conceptual capacities of the cogniser. Instead, Dharmakīrti accepts content non-conceptualism according to which perception, unlike conceptualisation, is a vivid non-conceptual awareness of ultimately real particulars.[36] Furthermore, Dharmakīrti's analysis of infant-awareness shows that he has a very broad and charitable definition of conceptualisation which includes but is not limited to the perceiver's linguistic capacities.[37] Thus, Dharmakīrti does not try to win the debate by unfairly defining conceptualisation in very narrow terms. This creates the possibility of a substantive rather than merely terminological debate between Dharmakīrti and his Jaina opponents.

§ 3.1.2 *Akalaṅka's Definition of Conceptualisation*

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[32] PV_M 2.141-2.142, p. 159.

[33] PV_M 2.142, p. 159; Chaturvedi 2022: 7.

[34] Chaturvedi 2022: 7.

[35] Both Diṅnāga's commentator Jinendrabuddhi and Dharmakīrti's commentator Dharmottara give the example of an infant sucking at his mother's breast in order to illustrate how conceptual awareness is independent of the linguistic capacities of the cogniser (PST 1.3d, p. 38, ll. 2-3; NBT 1.5, pp. 50-51). This, in turn, shows how later commentators within Buddhist *pramāṇavāda* continued to subscribe to content non-conceptualism.

[36] Chaturvedi 2022: 10-11.

[37] Ibid., 6.

Unlike Dharmakīrti's definition of perception, Akalaṅka's definition of perception does not explicitly mention the word 'conceptualisation' (*kalpanā*/*vikalpa*):

> ***pratyakṣalakṣaṇaṃ prāhuḥ spaṣṭaṃ sākāram añjasā*** |
>
> ***dravyaparyāyasāmānyaviśeṣārthātmavedanam*** ||[38]
>
> '[Wise people] state the definition of perception to be clear (*spaṣṭa*) and truly (*añjasā*) form-possessing (*sākāra*) awareness (*vedana*) of both external objects (*artha*) such as substances (*dravya*), modifications (*paryāya*), universals (*sāmānya*), and particulars (*viśeṣa*) as well as itself (*ātman*).'[39]

This definition characterises perception as 'form-possessing' (*sākāra*) awareness. What, however, does 'form' (*ākāra*) mean within Akalaṅka's philosophical system? Within Dharmakīrti's philosophical system, 'form' (*ākāra*) refers to the manifestation or representation of an object within awareness. In the *Pramāṇavārttika*, for example, Dharmakīrti argues that blue is merely a form (*ākāra*) within awareness rather than an external object (*artha*) because our recollection of the awareness of blue necessarily involves a recollection of the intentional object blue.[40] This shows that Dharmakīrti subscribes to the theory of awareness with form (*sākārajñānavāda*).[41] On a first reading, we might be tempted to conclude that Akalaṅka's use of the word 'form-possessing' (*sākāra*) indicates a point of agreement between Dharmakīrti and Akalaṅka. However, this appearance is illusory because Akalaṅka actually refutes Dharmakīrti's theory of awareness

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[38] NV 3.

[39] This is the more sophisticated definition of perception from the *Nyāyaviniścaya* which substantially expands on the simpler definition of perception found in the *Laghīyastraya* and discussed in § 2.2.2 and § 2.2.3.

[40] PV_M 2.247, 2.302, 2.382, pp. 193, 209, 233; NVV, p. 287, ll. 23-24.

[41] See § 4.3.1, pp. 192-195.

with form (*sākārajñānavāda*) in his *Nyāyaviniścaya*.[42] This means that the compound 'form-possessing' (*sākāra*) found in Akalaṅka's definition of perception cannot be interpreted as an affirmation of awareness with form in the Dharmakīrtian sense. Fortunately, Vādirājasūri's *Nyāyaviniścayavivaraṇa*, the definitive classical commentary on Akalaṅka's *Nyāyaviniścaya*, provides an alternative Jaina interpretation:

> *pratyakṣaṃ savikalpakam eva jainasya yad āha sākāram iti | savikalpakatvaṃ ca nāmajātyādiviṣayatvaṃ na caitad vastutaḥ sambhavati niśitavicāravajranipātākṣamatvāt kevalam adhyāropasiddham | ... iti ced atrāha 'añjasā' iti tattvata ity arthaḥ |*[43]
>
> '[Jaina:] For Jainas, perception is only conceptual (*savikalpaka*) since Akalaṅka says: 'form-possessing' (*sākāra*).
>
> [Buddhist:] For perception to be conceptual, it must have names, universals, and so on as its object. This, however, is not possible at the level of ultimate reality (*vastutas*) because it cannot endure the hurling of the sharp thunderbolt of critical reflection (*vicāra*). Instead, the conceptual nature of perception is established solely by means of superimposition (*adhyāropa*).
>
> …
>
> [Jaina:] Anticipating this objection, Akalaṅka says: '*añjasā*', i.e. 'truly/really/at the level of ultimate reality' (*tattvatas*).'

Vādirājasūri's commentary makes two important points. Firstly, Vādirājasūri explicitly glosses the compound 'form-possessing' (*sākāra*) as 'conceptual' (*savikalpaka*). Thus, for Akalaṅka and his commentators, 'form' (*ākāra*) refers to conceptualisation (*vikalpa*) of the object rather than to some

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[42] NV 21.

See § 4.4.1.2, pp. 233-238.

[43] NVV, p. 86, ll. 21-23, p. 87, l. 1.

representation of the object within awareness. Akalaṅka's verse rejects Dharmakīrti's conventionalisation of conceptualisation by including the adverb 'truly' (*añjasā*) as a qualifier of the word 'conceptual' (*sākāra*). Thus, the conceptual nature of perception is not an illusory superimposition but instead ultimately real. Secondly, Vādirājasūri's use of the word 'only' (e*va*) as a qualifier of the word 'conceptual' (*savikalpaka*) in the first line shows that Akalaṅka, unlike Dharmakīrti, regards all perception qua source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) to be conceptual.[44] Thus, Akalaṅka subscribes to a version of perceptual conceptualism according to which our conceptual capacities are already operational in perception. Sensory perception, from the very first stage of sensation (*avagraha*) to the final stage of retention (*dhāraṇā*), is a conceptual apprehension of the world.[45]

While the above equation of form (*ākāra*) with conceptualisation (*vikalpa*) highlights Akalaṅka's commitment to perceptual conceptualism, it does not actually clarify his understanding of conceptualisation. This explanation is provided by Vādirājasūri's grammatical analysis of the word '*sākāra*':

> *sākāram iti | karotir atra niścayārthaḥ | ... āṅ abhivyāptāv abhivyāptiś ca śaktyapekṣayā ... | śakyaviṣayābhivyāpī niścayas tena saha vartata iti sākāraṃ pratyakṣalakṣaṇam* |[46]
>
> 'In the word 'form-possessing' (*sākāra*), the verbal root 'kṛ' [to do, to make] has the meaning of ascertainment (*niścaya*). … The verbal prefix 'ā' has the meaning of pervasion (*abhivyāpti*). And, pervasion depends on the power (*śakti*) [of awareness]… . [An awareness] existing with ascertainment (*niścaya*) which pervades as much of the object as it is capable of

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[44] As discussed in § 2.2.3, Akalaṅka accepts non-conceptual perceptual experience (*darśana*) as a causal reality but not as perception qua source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) (Shah 1967: 243).

[45] LT 5-6ab.

[46] NVV, p. 99, l. 29, p. 100, ll. 1-4.

(*śakya*) is said to be an ascertaining (*sākāra*) awareness. In this way, the definition of perception is ascertaining (*sākāra*) awareness.'[47]

Having glossed 'form-possessing' (*sākāra*) as 'conceptual' (*savikalpaka*), Vādirājasūri glosses 'form' (*ākāra*) as 'limited ascertainment' (*śakyaviṣayābhivyāpin niścaya*). This, in turn, illuminates Akalaṅka's understanding of conceptualisation. Conceptualisation is ascertainment (*niścaya*) of a given object. This ascertainment is necessarily limited in its scope because non-omniscient conventional perception (*sāṃvyavahārikapratyakṣa*) only ascertains some aspects of an object and not others. This understanding of conceptualisation is repeated with subtle variation throughout Vādirājasūri's commentary:

> *... viśeṣeṇa saṃśayādivyudāsena kalpanaṃ samarthanaṃ vikalpo nirṇaya iti yāvat ...* |[48]
> 'Conceptualisation (*vikalpa*) is *kalpana*, i.e. establishment (*samarthana*) with particularity (*viśeṣa*), i.e. by means of the removal of doubt etc. In other words, conceptualisation is nothing but ascertainment (*nirṇaya*).'

This shows how Akalaṅka and his commentators understand conceptualisation (*vikalpa*/*kalpanā*) as limited ascertainment (*niścaya/nirṇaya*) of an object. This, in turn, fits remarkably well with Akalaṅka's definition of a source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) as determinate (*vyavasāyātmaka*) awareness.[49] Does conceptualisation qua ascertainment involve language? An answer is found in the following verse from the *Laghīyastraya*:

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[47] Vādirājasūri interprets form (*ākāra*) as limited ascertainment (*niścaya*) by grammatically deriving this particular meaning from the various possible meanings of the verbal prefix 'ā' and the verbal root 'kṛ'. This highlights the importance of Sanskrit grammar within classical Indian philosophy.

[48] NVV, p. 120, ll. 2-3.

[49] LT 60.

See § 2.2.2, p. 86.

jñānam ādyaṃ matiḥ saṃjñā cintā cābhinibodhikam |

prāṅ nāmayojanāc cheṣaṃ śrutaṃ śabdānuyojanāt ||[50]

'The first kind of awareness [i.e. perception (*pratyakṣa*)][51] includes [sensory perception], memory (*mati=smṛti*), recognition (*saṃjñā*), inductive reasoning (*cintā*), and inference (*ābhinibodhika*) when they occur before the joining of language (*nāman*).[52] [The four, beginning with memory, become] the other kind of awareness, namely verbal awareness (*śruta*), when there is the joining of language (*śabda*).'[53]

This verse explicitly states that sensory perception as well as certain kinds of memory, recognition, inductive reasoning, and inference are free from language (*nāman*/*śabda*). Putting these disparate strands together, we observe that Akalaṅka characterises perception as follows:[54]

(i) clear (*viśada/spaṣṭa*)

(ii) conceptual (*sākāra=savikalpaka*)

(iii) non-linguistic (*aśābda*)

If one accepts Dharmakīrti's definition of conceptualisation as the joining of language (*śabda*), then features (ii) and (iii) are simply contradictory.[55] That Akalaṅka does not find it contradictory to simultaneously characterise perception as conceptual and non-linguistic proves that he understands

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[50] LT 10cd-11ab.

[51] Akalaṅka uses the word '*pratyakṣa*' in both a broader sense as well as a narrower sense. In the broader sense, *pratyakṣa* is the first of the two *pramāṇas* consisting of sensory perception, mental perception, and extra-sensory perception. In the narrower sense, *pratyakṣa* frequently refers to sensory perception consisting of the four stages of sensation (*avagraha*), cogitation (*īhā*), perceptual judgement (*avāya*), and retention (*dhāraṇā*) (LT 3; NV 3). Obviously, *pratyakṣa* in the narrow sense is a subset of *pratyakṣa* in the broader sense.

[52] As discussed in § 2.2.3, pre-linguistic memory, recognition, inductive reasoning, and inference together constitute mental perception (*anindriyapratyakṣa*).

[53] For a detailed discussion of the various possible interpretations of this problematic verse, see Balcerowicz (2005b). My translation largely follows the interpretation defended by Balcerowicz which, in turn, is identical with the interpretation offered by Mahendrakumāra in his Hindi introduction (Śāstrī 1939: 36; Balcerowicz 2005b: 343, 387-388).

[54] Balcerowicz 2005b: 384.

[55] NBi 1.5-1.6, pp. 47, 54.

conceptualisation as a kind of ascertainment (*niścaya/nirṇaya*) rather than the association of language. Yet, Dharmakīrti and Akalaṅka seem to be in agreement when they both characterise perception as awareness free from language (*nāman*/*śabda*). Critical reflection, however, shows this convergence to be illusory. This is because some kinds of inference (*ābhinibodhika*) are free from *śabda* within Akalaṅka's philosophical system whereas all kinds of inference count as conceptual awareness involving *śabda* within Dharmakīrti's philosophical system.[56] This suggests that Dharmakīrti and Akalaṅka understand *śabda* in different ways. For Akalaṅka, memory and inference count as perception (*pratyakṣa*) when they are free from *śabda* and count as indirect awareness (*parokṣa*) when they involve *śabda*. This suggests that Akalaṅka basically understands *śabda* as verbalised speech. Memory qua mental image and inference-for-oneself are free from *śabda* qua verbalised speech whereas communicating one's memory to others and inference-for-others involve *śabda* qua verbalised speech. For Dharmakīrti, by contrast, all kinds of awareness besides non-conceptual perception involve *śabda*. This suggests that Dharmakīrti understands *śabda* more broadly as any kind of linguistic notion or concept irrespective of whether it is physically verbalised or purely mental.[57] In light of their differing understandings of *śabda*, we can now see that Dharmakīrti and Akalaṅka agree that perception is free from *śabda* qua verbalised speech. One can, after all, perceive something without talking about it. Instead, the central dispute is about whether perception as a source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) is free from all kinds of linguistic concepts as Dharmakīrti maintains or whether perception as a source of knowledge necessarily involves unverbalised linguistic concepts as Akalaṅka maintains.

In summary, Dharmakīrti defines conceptualisation in terms of language whereas

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[56] LT 10cd-11ab.

[57] Durveka Miśra's sub-commentary on Dharmottara's commentary on Dharmakīrti's *Nyāyabindu* speaks of an 'internal language' (*antarjalpa*) distinct from manifested/externalised (*āvirbhūta*) speech (DPr 2.45, p. 145).

Akalaṅka does not view language as the defining feature of conceptualisation.[58] As a perceptual non-conceptualist, Dharmakīrti understands conceptualisation as the mental superimposition of illusory linguistic constructs onto the pristine particular (*svalakṣaṇa*) apprehended by perception. On the other hand, as a perceptual conceptualist, Akalaṅka understands conceptualisation as the ascertainment of diverse, though limited, aspects of real entities.[59] When Dharmakīrti states that perception is non-conceptual, he is claiming that perception qua *pramāṇa* is free from the mental superimposition of linguistic concepts. When Akalaṅka states that perception is conceptual, he is claiming that perception qua *pramāṇa* is a concept-laden ascertainment of limited aspects of many-sided (*anekānta*) objects. From Dharmakīrti's point of view, a conceptual judgement such as 'This is blue' falsifies perception because perception apprehends a pristine particular without superimposing any concept such as 'blue'. From Akalaṅka's point of view, however, a conceptual judgement such as 'This is blue' does not falsify perception because perception already apprehends the object *as* blue.

§ 3.2 Dharmakīrti's Proof of Perceptual Non-Conceptualism

In his *Pramāṇavārttika*, Dharmakīrti frequently reflects on the nature and function of conceptualisation in diverse contexts such as the definition of perception, the refutation of universals, the epistemic reliability of inference, and so on. In this section, I analyse Dharmakīrti's main arguments for the non-conceptual nature of perception as well as his objections to the epistemic reliability (*prāmāṇya*) of conceptual awareness. Before turning to these arguments, however, it is worth mentioning Dharmakīrti's practical meditative method for directly experiencing

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[58] NVV, p. 195, ll. 12-13.

[59] Ibid.

the non-conceptual nature of perception:

> ***saṃhṛtya sarvataś cintāṃ stimitenāntarātmanā*** |
>
> ***sthito 'pi cakṣuṣā rūpam īkṣate sākṣajā matiḥ*** ||[60]
>
> 'Having withdrawn reflection (*cintā*) from everything and though abiding with a still mind (*antarātman*), a person sees visual form (*rūpa*) by means of the faculty of sight: that is sensory perception.'

Even when one's mind is tranquil and completely free from discursive conceptualisation, one continues to perceive objects. Since perceptual awareness continues to arise in the absence of conceptualisation, it follows that the intrinsic nature of perception must be non-conceptual. Though Dharmakīrti's argument bears some resemblance to arguments from introspection[61] in modern analytic philosophy, there is a crucial difference between the two. While modern arguments usually rely on the introspective evidence of ordinary people, Dharmakīrti's argument relies on the introspective evidence of advanced meditators capable of freeing their minds from all discursive thought. This highlights the inseparability of philosophy and meditative practice within Dharmakīrti's philosophical system. We shall return to this important point in chapter 5.[62]

Besides presenting this practical meditative method for directly experiencing the non-conceptual nature of perception, Dharmakīrti presents several philosophical arguments for perceptual non-conceptualism. Let us now examine these arguments one by one.

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[60] PV_M 2.124, p. 154.

[61] For a philosophical overview of introspection, see Schwitzgebel (2019).

[62] See § 5.3.4, pp. 298-301.

§ 3.2.1 *The Argument from Memory*

Dharmakīrti argues that conceptualisation does not directly arise from any ultimately real particular (*svalakṣaṇa*) qua object of perception but instead arises from the recollection of previously learnt linguistic conventions (*saṃketa*).[63] Insofar as it depends on the purely mental faculty of memory, conceptualisation cannot be regarded as perception:

> ***saṃketasmaraṇopāyaṃ dṛṣṭasaṃkalanātmakam*** |
>
> ***pūrvāparaparāmarśaśūnye tac cākṣuṣe katham*** ||[64]
>
> 'How can that [conceptualisation] (*tat*), which [arises] by means of the recollection (*smaraṇa*) of linguistic conventions (*saṃketa*) and which has the nature of joining together (*saṃkalana*) [language] with perceived [particulars], exist in visual perception which is devoid of any reflection/consideration (*parāmarśa*) of prior and posterior?'

Conceptualisation requires the use of memory.[65] For example, we conceptualise a cow as a 'cow' by recollecting the word 'cow' learnt during our childhood and associating this word 'cow' with the perceived cow. This is the first premise of Dharmakīrti's argument:

P_1 Conceptualisation involves recollection of previously learnt linguistic conventions.

The implicit second premise of this argument is the widespread classical Indian view that memory is neither a part of the perceptual process nor a source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*). Both claims are intuitive. We can remember a cow even when our sense-faculties are not operational. This shows that memory is distinct from perception.[66] Furthermore, within classical Indian epistemology, an

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[63] Shah 1967: 203.

[64] PV_M 2.174, p. 171.

[65] PVV 2.174, p. 171.

[66] Akalaṅka challenges this dominant view by including retention (*dhāraṇā*), the cause of memory, within sensory perception and pre-linguistic memory (*smṛti*) within mental perception (LT 6a; LTSV 61, p. 21, l. 7).

awareness counts as a source of knowledge if and only if it leads to knowledge of some new and previously unknown object.[67] Since genuine memory merely apprehends previously apprehended objects, it cannot be a source of knowledge. The second premise can be stated as follows:

P_2 Recollection of previously learnt linguistic conventions is distinct from perception qua source of knowledge.

These two premises entail the following conclusion:

C Conceptualisation is distinct from perception qua source of knowledge.

This argument aims to show that perception cannot be identical with conceptualisation because the latter involves non-perceptual recollection of previously learnt linguistic conventions. By the law of excluded middle, it follows that perception is non-conceptual. Dharmakīrti enumerates two key features of conceptualisation which distinguish it from perception:

(i) The recollection of previously learnt linguistic conventions.

(ii) The mental process of superimposing these recollected signifiers onto perceived particulars.

Neither the process of memory nor the process of mental superimposition counts as sensory perception because both of them can occur without the functioning of the sense-faculties. Given that it involves these two non-perceptual processes, conceptualisation cannot be identical with perception qua source of knowledge.

In response, a perceptual conceptualist might concede that conceptualisation involves recollection of previously learnt linguistic conventions. Nonetheless, the particular signifier recollected and associated with a given object is not arbitrary but instead determined by the nature of the object. For example, a healthy and competent perceiver does not conceptualise a perceived horse as a donkey. Since the particular signifier recollected depends on the perceived object, the

[67] Shah 1967: 209-210.

involvement of memory does not falsify conceptual awareness.[68] Anticipating this kind of objection, Dharmakīrti states the following:

> ***saṃketasmaraṇāpekṣaṃ rūpaṃ yady akṣacetasi*** |
>
> ***anapekṣya na cec chaktaṃ syāt smṛtāv eva liṅgavat*** ||[69]
>
> 'If visual form (*rūpa*) is capable of producing perceptual awareness by depending on the recollection of linguistic conventions and if visual form is not capable of producing perceptual awareness independently of such recollection, then visual form would only be capable of producing recollection (*smṛti*) [rather than perception] just like an inferential reason (*liṅga*) [is only capable of producing recollection of the invariable concomitance between probans and probandum rather than actual inferential knowledge].'[70]

Dharmakīrti argues that the perceptual conceptualist's acknowledgement of the necessity of memory for the arising of conceptualisation proves that the external object,[71] by itself, is not sufficient for producing conceptualisation. Analysed sequentially, the external object first triggers recollection of some previously learnt linguistic convention. This is followed by the association of the recollected signifier with the object. This, in turn, gives rise to conceptual awareness. However, Manorathanandin points out that an external object which has not yet been perceived cannot actually trigger recollection of previously learnt linguistic conventions.[72] A perceiver must first see the horse in front of his eyes before the horse can trigger recollection of the word 'horse'. Insofar as it precedes the recollection and association of language, this initial apprehension of the object must

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[68] NV 89.

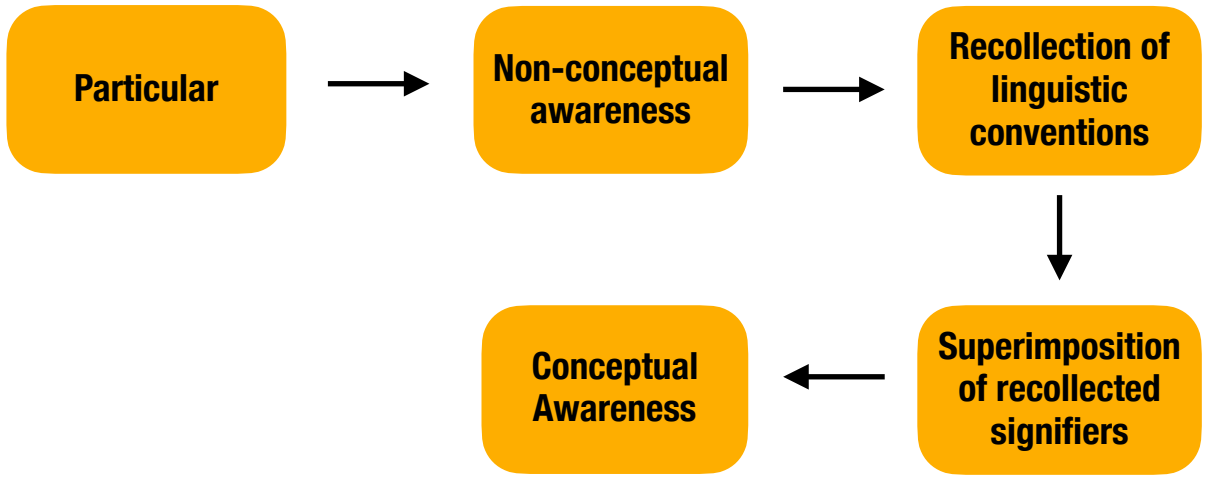
[69] PV_M 2.186, p. 174.

[70] The words within square brackets have been supplied from Manorathanandin's commentary (PVV 2.186, p. 174).

[71] Dharmakīrti's references to external objects reflect the Sautrāntika level of analysis and/or the temporary acceptance (*abhyupagama*) of external objects for the sake of argument with realist opponents.

[72] PVV 2.186, p. 174.

be non-conceptual. Thus, Dharmakīrti's analysis of conceptualisation may be visualised as follows:



Flow-chart 3: Dharmakīrti's analysis of conceptualisation

Within Dharmakīrti's analysis, only non-conceptual awareness is directly produced by the ultimately real particular. Thus, strictly speaking, non-conceptual awareness alone counts as perception (*pratyakṣa*). By contrast, the proximate causes of conceptualisation are recollection and superimposition. Hence, conceptualisation does not count as perception because it is not directly produced by ultimately real particulars.

In the next verse, Dharmakīrti's analysis of conceptualisation is challenged by an imaginary interlocutor who denies the existence of non-conceptual awareness intervening between external object and memory.[73] Instead, the interlocutor argues that contact between sense-faculty and external object immediately triggers the recollection of relevant linguistic conventions by virtue of the power of the external object. This, in turn, gives rise to conceptual perception of the object. Dharmakīrti responds by observing that the interlocutor's analysis too entails that conceptual

[73] PV_M 2.187, p. 174.

awareness arises from memory rather than the external object.[74] How can any awareness count as perception when its proximate cause is recollection of past experiences rather than a presently existing external object? Thus, the interlocutor's rejection of non-conceptual awareness is problematic.[75] In this way, Dharmakīrti's argument from memory strives to demonstrate the fundamentally non-perceptual character of conceptual awareness by showing how memory rather than the external object is the proximate cause of conceptualisation.

§ 3.2.2 *The Argument from Ontology*

Dharmakīrti's second argument for perceptual non-conceptualism is grounded in his distinctive ontology. As we have seen, Dharmakīrti accepts two different types of entities corresponding to the two levels of ultimate reality and conventional reality: unique momentary partless particulars (*svalakṣaṇa*) and conceptually constructed universals (*sāmānyalakṣaṇa*) respectively.[76] While particulars are capable of causal/pragmatic activity (*arthakriyā*), universals lack the capacity for causal/pragmatic activity.[77] Besides their capacity for causal/pragmatic activity, there are three important differences between particulars and universals: particulars are unique, inexpressible in language, and cannot be apprehended by means of causes other than the particulars themselves whereas universals are similar (*sadṛśa*), expressible in language, and

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[74] Ibid.

[75] As we shall see, the interlocutor's analysis bears some resemblance to Akalaṅka's refutation of non-conceptual perception. Nevertheless, there is a crucial difference because Akalaṅka would reject Dharmakīrti's claim that memory is a pre-requisite for conceptual awareness. Within Akalaṅka's analysis of sensory perception, conceptual perceptual judgement (*avāya*) is the cause of retention (*dhāraṇā*) and thereby memory (*smṛti*) rather than the other way round (LT 5-6ab).

[76] PV_M 2.3, p. 112.

See § 1.2.2, pp. 47-49.

[77] PV_M 2.3, p. 112.

apprehended by means of causes other than the universals themselves.[78] While ultimately real particulars are apprehended by perception, inference apprehends conventionally real universals. This is the foundation for Dharmakīrti's ontological defence of perceptual non-conceptualism:

> ***ekatra dṛṣṭo bhedo hi kvacin nānyatra dṛśyate*** |
> ***na tasmād bhinnam asty anyat sāmānyaṃ buddhyabhedataḥ*** ||
> ***tasmād viśeṣaviṣayā sarvaivendriyajā matiḥ*** |
> ***na viśeṣeṣu śabdānāṃ pravṛtter***[79] ***asti sambhavaḥ*** ||
> ***ananvayād viśeṣāṇāṃ saṃketasyāpravṛttitaḥ*** |[80]
>
> 'Since a distinction (*bheda*) perceived in one [entity] is not perceived in any another [entity], there does not exist any further universal (*sāmānya*) distinct from the distinction itself because the awareness [of the universal] is not different [from the awareness of the particular]. Therefore, the particular (*viśeṣa*) is the object of each and every sensory awareness. There does not exist any possibility of the application (*pravṛtti*) of words to particulars. This is because of the non-applicability of linguistic conventions (*saṃketa*) [to particulars] due to the absence of positive concomitance (*ananvaya*) between particulars [and words].'

Within Dharmakīrti's ontology, every particular (*svalakṣaṇa*) is a completely unique entity which does not resemble any other entity. By contrast, language functions through similarity because any word such as 'cow' refers to many numerically distinct cows. Given the completely unique intrinsic nature (*svabhāva*) of every particular and given the imprecise generalising tendency of language,

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[78] Ibid., 2.2, p. 112.

[79] I prefer Prajñākaragupta's reading of the genitive '*pravṛtteḥ*' (PV_P 3.127, p. 247) over Manorathanandin's reading of the locative '*pravṛttau*' (PV_M 2.127, p. 155). The argument remains the same on both readings.

[80] PV_M 2.126-2.128ab, p. 155.

words can never capture the rich irreducible specificity of a particular.[81] Dharmakīrti's argument from ontology proceeds as follows:

P$_1$ Every particular is unique (*asadṛsa*) and completely distinct from every other particular.

P$_2$ Words solely refer to similar (*sadṛsa*) universals.

Therefore,

C Words do not refer to particulars.

Since conceptualisation involves the association of language and since language only refers to universals, particulars cannot be conceptualised. Insofar as it does not apprehend ultimately real particulars, conceptualisation is not epistemically reliable at the level of ultimate reality. This conclusion, in turn, serves as an indirect argument for the existence of non-conceptual awareness:

> ***sāmānyavācinaḥ śabdās tadekārthā ca kalpanā*** |
>
> ***abhāve nirvikalpasya viśeṣādhigamaḥ katham*** ||[82]
>
> 'Words refer to universals and words are the sole object of conceptualisation. If non-conceptual [awareness] did not exist, how would there be knowledge (*adhigama*) of particulars (*viśeṣa*)?'

The first half of this verse reiterates the conclusion of the previous sub-argument: conceptualisation apprehends words which, in turn, refer to universals. The second half of the verse provides the main argument for the existence of non-conceptual awareness:

P$_1$ Both particulars and universals are objects of knowledge (*prameya*).

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[81] PVV 2.126, p. 155.

Dharmakīrti's argument bears some resemblance to the 'richness argument' and the 'fineness of grain argument' for perceptual non-conceptualism in modern analytic philosophy (Chaturvedi 8-11). Briefly, these two arguments assert that the vivid details of perceptual awareness quantitatively and qualitatively outstrip our conceptual capacities (Chaturvedi 2022: 8). See Chaturvedi (2022) for the similarities and differences between Dharmakīrti's argument and these modern arguments.

[82] PV$_M$ 2.183, p. 173.

P_2 Conceptual awareness solely apprehends universals.

Therefore,

C There must exist non-conceptual awareness for the apprehension of particulars.

Universals, insofar as they are the referent of words, must be ascertained by conceptual awareness involving language. Particulars, insofar as they are inexpressible, must be apprehended by non-conceptual awareness free from language. In this way, Dharmakīrti establishes different objects for different kinds of awareness.

Insofar as he subscribes to the Jaina theory of many-sidedness (*anekāntavāda*), Akalaṅka accepts the existence and knowability of particulars as well as universals.[83] Thus, premise P_1 of the main argument is uncontroversial. Furthermore, like realist Naiyāyikas and Mīmāṃsakas, Akalaṅka accepts that words refer to universals.[84] Thus, premise P_2 of the sub-argument is uncontroversial. Hence, Akalaṅka would most likely respond by denying premise P_1 of the sub-argument. Within Akalaṅka's philosophical system, every real entity is identical with other real entities in some respects and distinct from other real entities in other respects.[85] This partial identity between real entities entails the existence of real universals qua similar transformations (*sadṛśapariṇāma*).[86] These real universals, in turn, are the referents of language. In this way, language can adequately capture the nature of reality because there are real similarities between different entities. Thus, for Akalaṅka, real entities can be apprehended by means of conceptual awareness. Hence, I have named Dharmakīrti's argument 'the argument from ontology' because the plausibility of this argument ultimately hinges on the existence of utterly unique particulars and the non-existence of real universals.

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[83] LT 66-67.

[84] McCrea 2000: 431.

[85] LT 66-67.

[86] Śāstrī 1939: 81-82.

§ 3.2.3 *The Differing Objects of Perception and Conceptualisation*

Dharmakīrti's third argument for perceptual non-conceptualism is grounded in the analysis of the contents of conceptual awareness:

> ***asyedam iti sambandhe yāv arthau pratibhāsinau*** |
>
> ***tayor eva hi sambandho na tadendriyagocaraḥ*** ||
>
> ***viśadapratibhāsasya tadārthasyāvibhāvanāt*** |
>
> ***vijñānābhāsabhedaś ca padārthānāṃ viśeṣakaḥ*** ||[87]
>
> 'For there is a relation (*sambandha*) between only those two entities which manifest in the following relation: 'This [signifying word] belongs to this [signified object]'. At that time, there does not exist [any object] within the range (*gocara*) of the sense-faculties because we do not perceive any object having a clear (*viśada*) appearance (*pratibhāsa*) at that time. And, the difference between appearances within awareness is the distinguisher (*viśeṣaka*) of objects (*padārtha*).'

At the most basic level, linguistic conventions (*saṃketa*) involve a relationship between signifier (*śabda*) and signified (*artha*) established through popular usage (*rūḍhi*).[88] For example, the conceptual awareness of a linguistic convention such as 'The word 'cow' refers to a cow' ascertains a relationship between the word 'cow' and the cow-object. Dharmakīrti argues that the object of this conceptual awareness cannot be identical with the particular (*svalakṣaṇa*) apprehended by perception. This is because there are two major differences between the object of conceptual awareness and the object of perceptual awareness. Firstly, conceptual awareness of linguistic

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[87] PV_M 2.129-2.130, pp. 155-156.

[88] Ibid., 2.37, p. 126.

conventions can arise even when there is no real object (such as a cow) present in our visual field. By contrast, perceptual awareness can only arise when there is some real object (such as a cow) present in our visual field. This difference suggests that the object of linguistic signification is a mental construct rather than a real perceptible particular. Secondly, the object of conceptual awareness is unclear (*aviśada*). When we ascertain the relationship between signifier and signified, the purely mental idea of the signified cow is faint, dull, and lacking in detail when compared to our vivid visual perception of a cow. Insofar as the appearance of objects within awareness is the sole basis for ascertaining their nature and identity,[89] it is reasonable to conclude that objects with different appearances within awareness are, in reality, different objects. Since the unclear signified cow has a very different appearance from the clear perceived cow, the signified cow must be a distinct object from the perceived cow. Since conceptual awareness solely apprehends the unclear signified object rather than the clear and vivid object, it follows that the object of conceptual awareness is distinct from the object of perception. This indirectly proves the non-conceptual nature of perception.

Dharmakīrti provides another argument for why perception and conceptualisation have different objects:

> ***avyāpṛtendriyasyānyavāṅmātreṇāvibhāvanāt*** |
>
> ***na cānuditasambandhaḥ svayaṃjñānaprasaṅgataḥ*** ||[90]
>
> 'This is because, for someone whose sense-faculties are not operational, perception does not arise merely by [hearing] the words of another person. And, [a signifier] cannot [lead to awareness of the signified object] when their relationship (*sambandha*) has not been declared

[89] This principle is a logical consequence of Dharmakīrti's epistemic idealism. See § 4.1, pp. 182-187.

[90] PV_M 2.132, p. 156.

because of the undesirable consequence (*prasaṅga*) of awareness [of the object] on its own (*svayam*) [i.e. merely by hearing the name of the object without prior knowledge of linguistic conventions].'[91]

If the object of conceptual awareness was identical with the object of perception, then we would be able to apprehend a previously unapprehended perceptible object simply by hearing the name of the object.[92] However, this is not seen to be the case. Hearing the word 'blue' cannot lead a blind person to awareness of the colour blue. This shows that the object of conceptualisation is different from the vivid particular apprehended by perception. In the second half of the verse, Dharmakīrti argues that signifying words can lead to knowledge of their signified objects only when the listener already knows the relevant linguistic conventions (*saṃketa*). However, linguistic conventions are completely arbitrary because they depend solely on the pragmatic interests of a given community of speakers.[93] For example, the word 'unicorn' refers to an utterly non-existent entity because this is the meaning fixed by customary usage (*rūḍhi*).[94] This suggests that language is merely conventional rather than a reflection of reality. If the objects of conceptual awareness were ultimately real, we would be able to apprehend them independently of our knowledge of arbitrary linguistic conventions. Since this is not seen to be the case, conceptualisation must be purely conventional given that it depends on our arbitrary linguistic conventions. Perception, insofar as it apprehends ultimately real particulars, must be free from our arbitrary linguistic conventions. This, in turn, means that perception is non-conceptual.

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[91] The words within square brackets have been supplied from Manorathanandin's commentary (PVV 2.132, p. 156).

[92] PVV 2.132cd, p. 156.

[93] Dharmakīrti employs the arbitrary nature of linguistic conventions in order to make another argument for perceptual non-conceptualism. Insofar as it involves arbitrary linguistic conventions, conceptualisation depends on the desires and pragmatic interests of the knower. On the other hand, perception is independent of the desires and pragmatic interests of the knower because we do not simply perceive whatever we wish to perceive. This shows that perception must be distinct from conceptualisation (PV_M 2.176, p. 171).

[94] PV_M 2.37-2.38, p. 126.

§ 3.2.4 *The Argument from Mental Distraction*

Dharmakīrti's fourth argument for perceptual non-conceptualism proceeds from the phenomenon of continuing to perceive objects when one's mind is distracted:

> ***anyatra gatacitto 'pi cakṣuṣā rūpam īkṣate*** |
>
> ***tatsaṃketāgrahas tatra spaṣṭas tajjā ca kalpanā*** ||[95]
>
> 'A person, even when his mind is directed elsewhere, continues to see visual form (*rūpa*) by means of his faculty of sight. In that case, the absence of apprehension [i.e. absence of recollection] of the conventional designation (*saṃketa*) of that [perceived object] is evident. And, conceptualisation arises from that apprehension [i.e. recollection] of conventional designations.'

It is often the case that our mind is distracted by the conceptualisation of some past or future object.[96] Even when our mind is distracted, we continue to perceive objects within our perceptual range as long as our sense-faculties are operational and necessary supporting conditions such as adequate light are present. For example, I continue to see the open book in front of me even while I am daydreaming about my future vacation. My lack of mental attention on the object of perception means that I can neither recollect nor superimpose the previously learnt word 'book' onto the book being perceived presently. In the absence of such recollection and superimposition, my awareness of the book remains free from conceptualisation. In other words, I am not conceptually aware of the book as a 'book' during a state of mental distraction. Nevertheless, I continue to perceive the book with my eyes. This perception of the book without the involvement of concepts during a state of

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[95] Ibid., 2.175, p. 171.

[96] PVV 2.175, p. 171.

mental distraction is an example of sensory perception without conceptualisation. This, in turn, shows that conceptualisation is not an intrinsic feature of perception but something superimposed onto perception by the mind.

§ 3.2.5 *Explaining Away Ordinary Conceptual 'Perception'*

Besides providing arguments for the non-conceptual nature of perception, any perceptual non-conceptualist must explain how and why we seem to perceive the world around us in conceptual terms. For example, we ordinarily perceive blue as 'blue' and not as an inexpressible momentary particular. Indeed, most ordinary perceivers are not aware of any non-conceptual perception of pristine blue distinct from the conceptual perception of blue as 'blue'. Dharmakīrti explains the arising of our ordinary, yet erroneous, conceptual perception as follows:

> ***manasor***[97] ***yugapadvṛtteḥ savikalpāvikalpayoḥ*** |
> ***vimūḍho laghuvṛtter vā tayor aikyaṃ vyavasyati*** ||[98]
> 'A bewildered person (*vimūḍha*) ascertains the identity of conceptual and non-conceptual awareness (*manas*) due to their simultaneous (*yugapad*) arising (*vṛtti*) or rapid (*laghu*) [sequential] arising (*vṛtti*).'

The simultaneous or rapid sequential arising of non-conceptual awareness and conceptual awareness misleads the perceiver into ascertaining their identity or even denying the existence of non-conceptual awareness altogether. Just like the rapid projection of still images creates the illusion of movement in modern cinema, in the same way, the rapid succession with which non-

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[97] I prefer Manorathanandin's reading of the genitive dual '*manasoḥ*' rather than the printed edition's reading of the genitive singular '*manaso*' because the word '*manas*' is best construed as a noun qualified by the adjective '*savikalpāvikalpayoḥ*' (PV_M 2.133, p. 156; PVV 2.133, p. 157).

[98] PV_M 2.133, pp. 156-157.

conceptual awareness and conceptual awareness arise one after the other misleads the perceiver into superimposing features of later conceptual awareness onto earlier non-conceptual perception. This, in turn, explains why we ordinarily think that perception is conceptual. A perceiver can recognise the erroneousness of his ordinary conceptual 'perception' through careful philosophical analysis accompanied by meditative insight.

Having explained the cause of our erroneous belief in conceptual perception, Dharmakīrti explains the mechanism by which our mind conceptualises unreal objects:

> ***viśeṣaṇaṃ viśeṣyaṃ ca sambandhaṃ laukikīṃ sthitim*** |
>
> ***gṛhītvā saṃkalayyaitat tathā pratyeti nānyathā*** ||[99]
>
> 'A person cognises such [complex entities] by first apprehending the qualifier (*viśeṣaṇa*), the qualified (*viśeṣya*), the relationship (*sambandha*) between qualifier and qualified, and worldly convention (*sthiti*) [separately] and then putting them all together. [This awareness of complex substances qualified by qualifiers] does not arise in any other way.'

Let us take the example of our ordinary perception of a green leaf. Though it appears to be a direct reflection of reality, Dharmakīrti argues that our ordinary 'perception' is actually a combination of multiple awarenesses of distinct green-particulars arising and ceasing moment after moment. Rapid succession tricks the mind into combining these distinct green-particulars into a unified aggregate and designating this aggregate with the word 'leaf'. This, in turn, gives rise to conceptual ascertainment of a leaf possessing the property of being green. In other words, every conceptual awareness of a complex substance qualified by properties and universals is the product of mental combination of ultimately distinct particulars. Elsewhere in the *Pramāṇavārttika*, Dharmakīrti argues that realist postulates such as substance (*dravya*), action (*karman*), universal (*sāmānya*),

[99] Ibid., 2.145, p. 160.

number (*saṃkhyā*), inherence (*samavāya*), contact (*saṃyoga*), and separation (*vibhāga*) are mental constructs produced by the combination of distinct particulars and the superimposition of linguistic conventions.[100] Insofar as it depends on the recollection and superimposition of latent mental impressions (*saṃskāra*) of arbitrary linguistic conventions, conceptualisation does not accurately reflect the nature of ultimate reality.[101] On the other hand, conceptualisation is useful in ordinary life precisely because it depends on arbitrary linguistic conventions governed by the pragmatic interests of a community of speakers. In this way, Dharmakīrti's approach explains both the conventional epistemic reliability (*prāmāṇya*) and the ultimate epistemic unreliability (*aprāmāṇya*) of conceptualisation. By contrast, non-conceptual awareness is produced by the power of ultimately real particulars.[102] Insofar as it arises from the power of ultimately real particulars, non-conceptual perception accurately apprehends those particulars.

§ 3.2.6 *Summary*

Dharmakīrti defends perceptual non-conceptualism according to which all epistemically reliable perception, whether sensory perception, mental perception, self-reflexive perception, or yogic perception, is free from conceptualisation.[103] Non-conceptual perception apprehends the inexpressible intrinsic nature (*svabhāva*) of ultimately real particulars (*svalakṣaṇa*) whereas conceptual awareness superimposes language onto these inexpressible particulars.[104] Since the content of non-conceptual perception is different in kind from the content of conceptual awareness, Dharmakīrti's perceptual non-conceptualism is best understood as a kind of content non-

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[100] Ibid., 2.6, p. 114.

[101] Ibid., 2.185, p. 174.

[102] PV_M 2.185, p. 174; PVV 2.185, p. 174.

[103] NBi 1.7-1.10, pp. 56-57, 64, 67.

[104] The intrinsic nature of a particular is ultimately identical with the particular.

conceptualism. Insofar as conceptual awareness necessarily involves erroneous superimposition of language onto inexpressible particulars, non-conceptual perception alone counts as a source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) at the level of ultimate reality. Dharmakīrti provides various kinds of arguments for his perceptual non-conceptualism. Some of Dharmakīrti's arguments, such as the argument from ontology, are unlikely to convince non-Buddhists because they presuppose distinctively Buddhist ontological commitments. However, other arguments such as the argument from memory are quite formidable because they are grounded in a rigorous analysis of the perceptual process. Crucially, Dharmakīrti's perceptual non-conceptualism entails that our ordinary conceptual 'perception' of the world is fundamentally mistaken.

§ 3.3 Akalaṅka's Proof of Perceptual Conceptualism

Akalaṅka's theory of perception, as presented in the *Laghīyastraya* and the *Nyāyaviniścaya*, involves a robust defence of perceptual conceptualism. Indeed, Akalaṅka stands out from his predecessors and contemporaries in the 1st millennium CE because he is unique in maintaining that all perception qua source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) must be conceptual. Akalaṅka's defence of perceptual conceptualism goes hand in hand with his trenchant critique of Dharmakīrti's perceptual non-conceptualism. In this section, I analyse Akalaṅka's central objections to perceptual non-conceptualism supplemented by interpretive assistance and additional objections from Vādirājasūri's *Nyāyaviniścayavivaraṇa*. The following are Akalaṅka's main objections to Dharmakīrti's perceptual non-conceptualism:

(i) Establishing the epistemic reliability of conceptual awareness

(ii) Refuting pragmatic activity as the criterion of epistemic reliability

(iii) Rejecting Dharmakīrti's definition of conceptualisation

(iv) Reductio ad absurdum of the non-referentiality of language

Let us analyse each of these objections one by one.

§ 3.3.1 *Establishing the epistemic reliability of conceptual awareness*

As we have seen, Dharmakīrti provides a pragmatic definition of a source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) according to which any awareness capable of leading to successful pragmatic activity (*arthakriyā*) counts as a source of knowledge.[105] Temporarily accepting (*abhyupagama*) Dharmakīrti's definition of *pramāṇa*, Akalaṅka argues that conceptual awareness is a source of knowledge because it is conducive to pragmatic activity (*arthakriyā*):

> ***saṃtānāntarasadbhūteś cānyathānupapattitaḥ*** |
>
> ***vikalpo 'rthakriyākāraviṣayatvena tatparaiḥ*** ||
>
> ***jñāyate*** ... |[106]
>
> 'And, since the existence of other mental streams (*saṃtāna*) is inexplicable otherwise (*anyathānupapatti*), conceptualisation (*vikalpa*) is known to have an object (*viṣaya*) conducive to pragmatic activity (*arthakriyā*) by those intent on accomplishing some pragmatic activity (*tatpara*).'[107]

Akalaṅka infers the epistemic reliability of conceptualisation from Dharmakīrti's acceptance of the existence of other mental streams (*saṃtāna*) besides his own.[108] We can better understand

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[105] PV_M 1.3, p. 3.

See § 1.2.2, pp. 42-43.

[106] NV 65-66a.

[107] This inference is based on the uniquely Jaina inferential reason (*hetu*/*liṅga*) of 'inexplicability otherwise' (*anyathānupapatti*). See Balcerowicz (2016b: 1016-1021).

[108] SAS 1, p. 1.

Akalaṅka's argument by formulating it as a reductio ad absurdum:

P_1 My awareness of other mental streams is conceptual.

P_2 The objects of conceptual awareness are unreal.

Therefore,

C Other mental streams are unreal.

This conclusion is unacceptable to Dharmakīrti who accepts the existence of other mental streams. While premise P_2 presents Dharmakīrti's understanding of the nature of conceptual awareness, premise P_1 requires justification. The mental stream of another person is a causal sequence of awarenesses arising and ceasing moment after moment. Insofar as anything extending over time counts as a complex whole, the mental stream of another person is a complex whole. However, insofar as complex wholes are conceptual constructs, mental streams qua complex wholes can only be apprehended by conceptual awareness. Since Dharmakīrti accepts the existence of other mental streams and since other mental streams are necessarily apprehended by means of conceptual awareness, Dharmakīrti must concede that at least some kinds of conceptual awareness apprehend real objects. Furthermore, my conceptual awareness of other mental streams allows me to successfully interact with other people in the world. Insofar as any awareness conducive to pragmatic activity (*arthakriyā*) counts as a source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*), my pragmatically efficacious conceptual awareness of other mental streams must also count as a source of knowledge. Akalaṅka's argument shows that at least some kinds of conceptual awareness, such as the conceptual awareness of other mental streams, have a real object conducive to pragmatic activity. Though Akalaṅka's argument seems promising, Dharmakīrti could respond by accepting the argument's conclusion: some kinds of conceptual awareness are sources of knowledge. This is because Dharmakīrti himself thinks that inference (*anumāna*), despite being a kind of erroneous conceptualisation, is a source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) because it is conducive to pragmatic

activity.[109] Crucially, my awareness of other mental streams is inferential rather than perceptual: I do not perceive another person's mind but instead infer the existence of another person's mind from his/her perceptible actions.[110] Thus, Akalaṅka's argument merely proves that certain kinds of conceptual inferences, such as the conceptual inference of another person's mental stream, are sources of knowledge. This, in turn, is something which Dharmakīrti himself accepts at the level of conventional reality. In the absence of any independent argument for the perceptual nature of my conceptual awareness of other mental streams, Akalaṅka's argument fails to show that conceptual *perception* is a source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*).

A deeper problem, however, lies in the apparent tension between Dharmakīrti's criterion of pragmatic activity (*arthakriyā*) and Dharmakīrti's definition of perception as non-conceptual awareness. Insofar as it merely apprehends momentary particulars, how can non-conceptual awareness lead to successful worldly activity involving everyday objects such as chairs and tables? In his auto-commentary to the *Laghīyastraya*, Akalaṅka puts the objection as follows:

> *sarvasyaiva nirvikalpakajñānasya … prāmāṇyaṃ na syāt tataḥ saṃvyavahārābhāvāt | arthakriyārthī hi pramāṇam apramāṇaṃ vānveṣate* |[111]
>
> 'No non-conceptual awareness whatsoever can have epistemic reliability (*prāmāṇya*) … because of the absence of [successful] worldly activity (*saṃvyavahāra*) by means of non-conceptual awareness. For a person desirous of [accomplishing] pragmatic activity (*arthakriyā*) investigates [whether a given awareness is] a source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) or not a source of knowledge (*apramāṇa*).'

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[109] PV_M 2.55-2.56ab, pp. 132-133.

[110] SAS 1, p. 1; Perrett 2017: 65-66.

[111] LTSV 6cd, p. 3, ll. 9-11.

In order to better understand Akalaṅka's argument, let us take the example of a simple pragmatic activity such as buying fruits from a fruit-seller. This simple pragmatic activity requires conceptual awareness of 'fruit', 'money', 'fruit-seller', and so on. Akalaṅka argues that it is simply not possible to successfully accomplish any pragmatic activity solely by means of non-conceptual awareness. How can non-conceptual awareness of momentary particulars give rise to worldly activity which requires conceptual awareness of medium-sized objects? A possible solution is found in the following passage by Dharmakīrti's commentator Manorathanandin:

> *prāmāṇyaṃ vyavahāreṇārthakriyājñānena | yasya sādhanajñānasya tādātmyād anubhūte 'pi prāmāṇye sāśaṅkā vyavahartāro 'nabhyāsavaśād anutpannānurūpaniścayās tatrārthakriyājñānena prāmāṇyaniścayaḥ | anyatra tu vibhramaśaṅkāsaṃkocād utpattāv eva svarūpasya prāmāṇyasya svato gatir ity uktam* |[112]
>
> 'There is epistemic reliability (*prāmāṇya*) [of awareness] by means of worldly activity (*vyavahāra*) i.e. by means of the awareness of pragmatic activity (*arthakriyā*). Even when the epistemic reliability of a certain instrumental (*sādhana*) awareness has already been experienced because it has that nature (*tādātmya*), worldly agents (*vyavahartṛ*) might be full of doubt due to their lack of repeated practice (*abhyāsa*). Hence, the suitable ascertainment (*niścaya*) [that the awareness is epistemically reliable] might not arise in them. In such cases, there is the ascertainment of epistemic reliability by means of the awareness of pragmatic activity. In other cases, by contrast, knowledge (*gati*) of [awareness's] epistemic reliability, just like knowledge of [awareness's] intrinsic nature (*svarūpa*), arises on its own (*svatas*) as soon as [the awareness] arises because of the contraction (*saṃkoca*) of any suspicion of error [due to repeated practice].'

[112] PVV 1.7a, p. 6.

The epistemic reliability (*prāmāṇya*) of a new or unfamiliar perception can only be ascertained by means of successful pragmatic activity. For example, an inexperienced traveller must determine the epistemic reliability of his/her perception of water in the desert by attempting to perform the pragmatic activity of drinking. However, in cases of familiar perception, repeated practice (*abhyāsa*) allows the perceiver to recognise the epistemic reliability of his/her perception without actually engaging in pragmatic activity. For example, suppose that our perception of water in a water-bottle is regularly followed by the sensation of the quenching of thirst. When this becomes sufficiently familiar through repeated practice, we will be able to ascertain the epistemic reliability of our perception of water in the water-bottle as soon as the perception arises without actually having to drink the water. In a similar vein, Dharmakīrti's commentator Prajñākaragupta explains how repeated practice (*abhyāsa*) bridges the gap between non-conceptual perception of momentary particulars and pragmatic activity directed towards complex future objects.[113] Repeated practice misleads the perceiver into superimposing an illusory identity between the real presently perceived water-moment and the unreal water-moment to be obtained in the future.[114] This superimposition of identity onto two ultimately distinct entities is not arbitrary but instead depends on conventional relations such as causality.[115] In other words, a future water-moment is superimposed onto a present water-moment if the latter is the material cause (*upādāna*) of the former.[116] Similarly, a simultaneously arising (*sahabhāvin*) distinct *dharma* such as touch is superimposed onto the present water-moment if they both depend on the same causal aggregate (*sāmagrī*).[117] Putting these two kinds of superimposition together, there is the conceptualisation of a complex whole called 'water' possessing multiple properties and persisting over time. This conceptually constructed water, in

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[113] NVV, p. 44, l. 26, p. 45, l. 1.

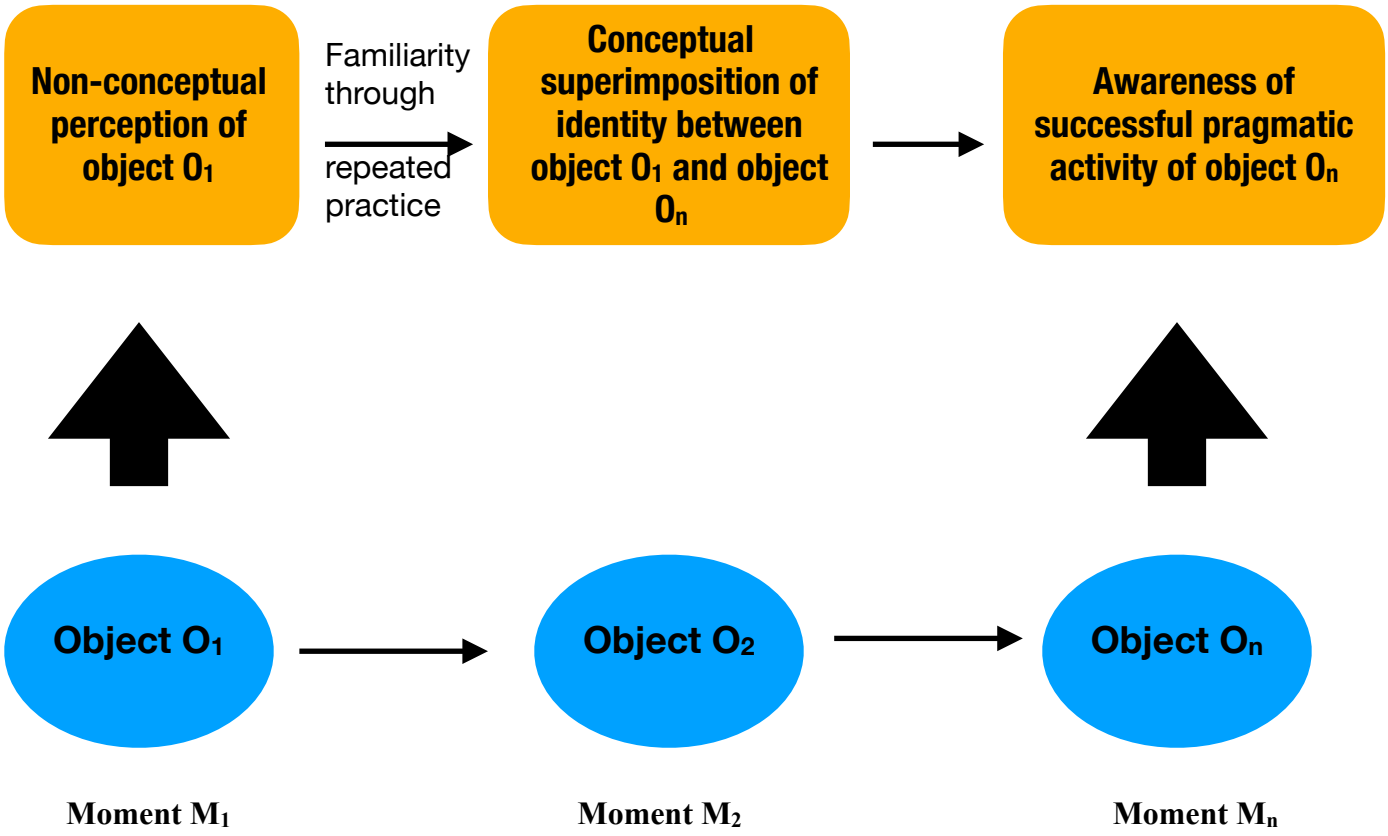
[114] PVA 2.5a, p. 26.

[115] NVV, p. 107, l. 11.

[116] Ibid., p. 107, ll. 8-9.

[117] Ibid., p. 107, ll. 9-10.

turn, motivates the perceiver to act for the sake of drinking water in the future. Taking Manorathanandin's and Prajñākaragupta's explanation into consideration, Dharmakīrti's analysis of pragmatic activity may be visualised as follows:



Flow-chart 4: Dharmakīrti's analysis of pragmatic activity

As we can observe, non-conceptual perception actually apprehends only a presently existing object.[118] Familiarity through repeated practice, however, leads to the conceptual superimposition of identity between this perceived object and some future object. This conceptual awareness, together with the perceiver's desires, motivates the perceiver to act in order to successfully accomplish some pragmatic activity.

[118] As we shall see in § 4.3.1, perception technically apprehends the particular which ceased to exist in the immediately preceding moment rather than the particular existing in the present moment. Nevertheless, the philosophical point under consideration here remains the same in both cases.

Vādirājasūri challenges the Buddhist theory of repeated practice (*abhyāsa*) as follows:

abhyāsād arthadṛṣṭau ca sāphalyaṃ nākṣasaṃhateḥ |[119]

'And, if there was the visual perception of an object through repeated practice (*abhyāsa*), then [pragmatic] success would not [arise] from the collection of sense-faculties.'

In Dharmakīrti's analysis of pragmatic activity, the most proximate and most effective cause of successful pragmatic activity is the conceptual awareness of the identity between the perceived object and some future object as a result of repeated practice rather than non-conceptual awareness of the presently existing object. Since Dharmakīrti defines source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) in terms of pragmatic activity (*arthakriyā*), conceptual awareness alone should count as a source of knowledge because it is the only direct cause of pragmatic activity. Vādirājasūri's objection may be formulated as follows:

P_1 Any awareness conducive to pragmatic activity is a source of knowledge.

P_2 Only conceptual awareness is conducive to pragmatic activity.

Therefore,

C Only conceptual awareness is a source of knowledge.

Premise P_1 simply restates Dharmakīrti's definition of *pramāṇa*. Premise P_2 is justified by Dharmakīrti's analysis of pragmatic activity as presented in flow-chart 4. Since a source of knowledge must be the most effective cause (*sādhakatama*) of the desired pragmatic activity, conceptual awareness alone counts as a source of knowledge.[120] Akalaṅka argues that this pragmatic efficacy of conceptual awareness is best explained by supposing that conceptual awareness apprehends real objects:

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[119] NVV, p. 24, l. 3.

[120] Ibid., p. 61, l. 13.

āhur arthabalāyātam anartham avikalpakāḥ ||[121]

'Perceptual non-conceptualists (*avikalpaka*) [i.e. Dharmakīrti and his commentators] declare that [conceptual awareness] which has arisen from the power of real objects (*artha*) to lack a real object.'[122]

In this way, Akalaṅka provides a pragmatic defence of the epistemic reliability of conceptual perception and the reality of the objects apprehended by conceptual perception using Dharmakīrti's own definition of *pramāṇa*. Non-conceptual perceptual experience (*darśana*), on the other hand, merely grasps the bare existence of an object.[123] Since it neither ascertains particular features of the object nor leads to successful pragmatic activity, non-conceptual perceptual experience (*darśana*) does not count as perception (*pratyakṣa*) qua source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*).[124]

The fact that this kind of argument was a very effective line of attack against Dharmakīrti's perceptual non-conceptualism is shown by the divergent, sometimes inconsistent, views of different Buddhist commentators on the relative capacity of non-conceptual awareness and conceptual awareness to lead to successful pragmatic activity. For example, Manorathanandin frequently argues that conceptual awareness cannot lead to successful pragmatic activity:

sā ca saṃketasaṃskāraprabodhamātrabhāvinī nārthādhīneti na teṣāṃ sāmarthyaṃ samarthayati |[125]

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[121] NV 89cd.

[122] The implicit acceptance of the external object as the cause of conceptual awareness in this half-verse must be understood as a temporary acceptance (*abhyupagama*) of Dharmakīrti's Sautrāntika level of analysis according to which external objects are both the cause (*kāraṇa*) as well as the object (*viṣaya*) of perceptual awareness. As discussed in § 2.2.3, Akalaṅka himself rejects the causal role of external objects in generating perceptual awareness.

[123] LT 5; Shah 1967: 221.

[124] LTSV 6cd-7ab, p. 3, ll. 9-11; Shah 1967: 221.

[125] PVV 2.6, p. 115.

> ‘And, since that [conceptual awareness] arises solely from the awakening of latent mental impressions (*saṃskāra*) of linguistic conventions (*saṃketa*) without depending on any real object (*artha*), [Dharmakīrti] does not accept their capacity [for pragmatic activity (*arthakriyā*)].’

Since it arises from latent mental impressions of arbitrary linguistic conventions rather than ultimately real particulars, conceptual awareness lacks the capacity to lead to successful pragmatic activity. Insofar as they are merely fictive constructs of the mind, the objects of conceptual awareness do not actually exist. In this way, Manorathanandin dismisses conceptual awareness as purely conventional (*sāṃvṛta*) and useless (*akiṃcitkara*).[126] Manorathanandin instead argues that only non-conceptual perception leads to successful pragmatic activity.[127]

At the same time, Dharmakīrti’s commentators are acutely aware of the necessity of conceptualisation for acting in our ordinary world of medium-sized objects. For example, the simple pragmatic activity of drinking water requires conceptualising water as a substance existing across time. In order to explain these empirical facts, Manorathanandin elsewhere accepts the pragmatic efficacy of conceptual awareness.[128] According to Manorathanandin, conceptual awareness presents temporally and spatially extended external objects due to the power of beginningless ignorance.[129] When conceptual awareness presents these illusory objects, the unenlightened perceiver’s worldly interests naturally impel him/her to act in order to obtain or abandon those objects. This explains why conceptual awareness, though erroneous, can lead to

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[126] Ibid., 1.5ab, p. 5.

[127] Ibid.

[128] Ibid., 2.13ac, p. 118.

[129] Ibid.

successful pragmatic activity (*arthakriyā*).[130] A similar concession is found in Prajñākaragupta's argument for the epistemic reliability of inference (*anumāna*):

> *pratyakṣe 'pi kathaṃ pravartate | tatrāpi naiva prāptavyarūpaparicchedaḥ | saṃnihitamātrasya paricchedāt | pratyutārthe pratyakṣam evāpravartakaṃ saṃnihitamātrasya pariprāpteḥ | tatrāpi tadekatvādhyavasāyād eva vṛttir bhāvini vastuni |*
>
> ...
>
> *yathaiva hi pratyakṣaṃ saṃnihitarūpādimātragrāhi vikalpāntareṇaikatvādhyāse sati pravartakaṃ tathā 'numānaṃ ... |*
>
> ...
>
> *tasmād abhipretārthāvisaṃvādāt pramāṇaṃ na vastugrahaṇam upayogi | anyathā pratyakṣam apramāṇam eva bhavet |*[131]
>
> 'How does someone engage in worldly activity in the case of perception as well? Even in the case of perception, the ascertainment (*pariccheda*) of the visual object (*rūpa*) to be obtained (*prāptavya*) does not actually exist because perception solely ascertains a [spatiotemporally] proximate (*saṃnihita*) [object]. On the contrary, perception alone (*eva*) cannot lead to worldly activity directed towards an object because perception merely reaches up to a proximate [object]. Even in the case of perception, there is activity (*vṛtti*) directed towards a future object only through the ascertainment (*adhyavasāya*) of its identity with the proximate [perceived object].
>
> …
>
> For just as perception solely apprehends a proximate visual object and leads to worldly activity only when there is the superimposition (*adhyāsa*) of identity by another conceptual

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[130] Ibid.

[131] PVA 3.56, pp. 216-217.

awareness, in the same way, inference (*anumāna*) too …

…

Therefore, [inference] is a source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) because of the non-contradiction (*avisaṃvāda*) of our intended (*abhipreta*) purposes. The [mere] apprehension of a real object (*vastu*) is not useful. Otherwise, perception too would not, in fact, be a source of knowledge [because perception too leads to pragmatic activity solely by means of conceptual awareness].'

At the level of conventional reality, worldly agents search for a source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) in order to accomplish their desired practical goals.[132] Insofar as it merely apprehends momentary partless particulars, non-conceptual perception by itself cannot lead to successful pragmatic activity. It is only the later conceptual awareness arising from the earlier non-conceptual perception which enables the perceiver to act in the world. In other words, non-conceptual perception of the intrinsic nature of a particular does not serve any pragmatic purpose. By contrast, conceptual awareness leads to successful pragmatic activity by erroneously superimposing the future object of action onto the present object of perception. Insofar as pragmatic activity (*arthakriyā*) is the defining criterion of a source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*), conceptual awareness, though erroneous, ought to count as a source of knowledge. Interpreted thus, Prajñākaragupta's argument for the epistemic reliability of inference seems to entail the epistemic reliability of conceptual perception. Reading more closely, however, we notice that Prajñākaragupta merely accepts the necessity of conceptual awareness for successful pragmatic activity without thereby accepting conceptual awareness as a distinct source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*). This might be because Dharmakīrti defines *pramāṇa* as:

[132] HB, appx. 7, p. 53, l. 16; LTSV 6cd-7ab, p. 3, l. 11.

Both

(i) Awareness conducive to pragmatic activity (*arthakriyā*).[133]

And

(ii) Awareness apprehending a previously unknown (*ajñāta*) object.[134]

Since conceptual awareness does not apprehend any ultimately real particular which has not already been apprehended by non-conceptual perception, conceptual awareness does not satisfy requirement (ii). Hence, despite its pragmatic efficacy, conceptual awareness does not count as a source of knowledge.

Akalaṅka might respond by arguing that non-conceptual perception and inference, the two sources of knowledge accepted by Dharmakīrti, also fail to simultaneously meet both requirement (i) as well as requirement (ii). While non-conceptual perception does apprehend previously unknown particulars, it does not lead to any successful pragmatic activity. Inference, on the other hand, is pragmatically efficacious but it does not apprehend any previously unknown ultimately real particular. Thus, Dharmakīrti's addition of requirement (ii) to the definition of *pramāṇa* in order to exclude conceptual perception unwittingly leads to the undesirable consequence that no awareness whatsoever satisfies the requirements for counting as a source of knowledge. On the other hand, if requirement (ii) were to be removed, conceptual perception rather than non-conceptual perception would count as a source of knowledge because the former rather than the latter leads to successful pragmatic activity. In this way, Akalaṅka strives to show that non-conceptual perception cannot be a source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*). Insofar as it highlights the internal inconsistency between the pragmatic definition of *pramāṇa* and the theory of non-conceptual perception within Dharmakīrti's philosophical system, Akalaṅka's argument is best

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[133] PV_M 1.3ac, pp. 3-4.

[134] Ibid., 1.7c, p. 8.

understood as an internal critique of Dharmakīrti's perceptual non-conceptualism.

§ 3.3.2 *Refuting pragmatic activity as the criterion of epistemic reliability*

While the previous argument sought to establish the epistemic reliability of conceptual perception using Dharmakīrti's criterion of pragmatic activity, the second argument challenges Dharmakīrti's analysis of pragmatic activity (*arthakriyā*) as the criterion of epistemic reliability (*prāmāṇya*). Within Dharmakīrti's analysis (see flow-chart 4), the later awareness of successful pragmatic activity such as drinking proves the epistemic reliability of the earlier non-conceptual perception of water. While repeated practice (*abhyāsa*) usually allows the skilled perceiver to ascertain the epistemic reliability of a familiar perception at the very moment the perception arises, the epistemic reliability of a completely new and unfamiliar perception must be ascertained by means of successful pragmatic activity (*arthakriyā*) in the future.[135] In this way, successful pragmatic activity in the future serves as the foundational criterion of epistemic reliability within Dharmakīrti's philosophical system.[136] Vādirājasūri provides the following objection to successful pragmatic activity (*arthakriyā*) serving as the foundational criterion of epistemic reliability (*prāmāṇya*) within Dharmakīrti's philosophical system:

> *na ca tenānyaviṣayeṇa sādhanajñānasyātītasya prāmāṇyaṃ śakyam avagantum adhyakṣasyātītaviṣayatvābhāvāt* |[137]
>
> 'And, the epistemic reliability (*prāmāṇya*) of a past instrumental awareness (*sādhanajñāna*) cannot be known by means of that [future awareness] having a different object because perception does not have [i.e. apprehend] a past object.'

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[135] PVV 1.7a, p. 6.

[136] PV_M 1.7a, p. 6.

[137] NVV, p. 72, ll. 12-13.

Dharmakīrti's theory of momentariness entails that object O_n apprehended by the later awareness of successful pragmatic activity is not identical with object O_1 apprehended by the earlier non-conceptual perception.[138] How can a later awareness's capacity for pragmatic activity (*arthakriyā*) establish an earlier awareness's capacity for pragmatic activity given that they apprehend completely different objects? Insofar as goal-driven pragmatic activity aims to obtain or abandon future objects, the criterion of pragmatic activity (*arthakriyā*) necessarily requires an ontology of objects persisting across time. This, however, is incompatible with Dharmakīrti's theory of momentariness.

Besides the fact that they apprehend completely different objects, Vādirājasūri argues that any connection, causal or otherwise, between earlier non-conceptual perception and later awareness of successful pragmatic activity cannot be ascertained by means of perception and inference, the two sources of knowledge accepted by Dharmakīrti:

> *asāram etat sādhyasādhanasambandhāpratipattāv anumānānudayāt | tatpratipattiś ca na pratyakṣāt tatprāmāṇyāniścayāt |*
> *… kathaṃ vā pratyakṣeṇa prāg api toyatatprayojanayoḥ pūrvāparasamayabhāvinoḥ sambandhavedanam |*
> *… nāpy ekam ubhayasamayavyāpi pratyakṣaṃ kṣaṇikatvāt sarvabhāvānām |*[139]
> 'This [inference of the connection between the awareness of water and the awareness of pragmatic activity] is useless (*asāra*) because inference (*anumāna*) cannot arise in the absence of knowledge (*apratipatti*) of the invariable concomitance (*sambandha*) between probandum (*sādhya*) and probans (*sādhana*). And, there cannot be knowledge of this invariable

[138] See flow-chart 4.

[139] NVV, p. 74, ll. 5-6, 8-9, 13.

concomitance through perception because the epistemic reliability (*prāmāṇya*) of perception has not yet been ascertained.

…

On the other hand, how can there be awareness of the connection (*sambandha*) between water existing at an earlier time and the pragmatic activity of water existing at a later time by means of perception existing at that earlier time?

… Nor can a single perception pervade [i.e. exist at] both times because of the momentariness of all existents [within Dharmakīrti's philosophical system].'

How can a perceiver ascertain the causal connection between an earlier perception of water and a later awareness of successful drinking the water and thereby judge his/her earlier perception of water to be epistemically reliable? Any inferential explanation relying on induction from past experiences acquired through repeated practice (*abhyāsa*) creates a vicious circle in which the epistemic reliability of perception depends on inference and the epistemic reliability of inference, in turn, depends on perception.[140] Perception too cannot establish any causal connection between the earlier awareness of water and the later awareness of successful pragmatic activity because perception solely apprehends momentary particulars within Dharmakīrti's philosophical system. Thus, the perception of water at moment M_1 can apprehend neither the future pragmatic activity at moment M_n nor the causal relationship between the perceived water and the future pragmatic activity.[141] The same applies to the awareness of pragmatic activity at moment M_n vis-a-vis the past perception of water. Thus, neither non-conceptual perception nor inference can ascertain any connection, causal or otherwise, between perception of a momentary particular and the subsequent

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[140] PVA 2.4c, p. 24.

Within Dharmakīrti's philosophical system, the epistemic reliability of inference depends on perception because knowledge of the invariable concomitance between probandum and probans is ultimately grounded in the perception of momentary particulars.

[141] See flow-chart 4.

awareness of successful pragmatic activity. In the absence of any such ascertainment, it is unclear how the epistemic reliability of perception can be established by means of future pragmatic activity. In this way, Vādirājasūri seeks to show that pragmatic activity (*arthakriyā*) as the criterion of epistemic reliability is incompatible with Dharmakīrti's momentary ontology and Dharmakīrti's sparse epistemology of merely two sources of knowledge.

Lastly, Vādirājasūri argues that the criterion of pragmatic activity (*arthakriyā*) cannot account for the epistemic reliability of various kinds of perception accepted by Dharmakīrti himself:

> *kiṃ pravartakatvena prāmāṇyaṃ vyāptam | ... vyāptam eveti cen na svasaṃvedanayogipratyakṣayor aprāmāṇyaprasaṅgāt | na hi svasaṃvedanaṃ svarūpe 'nyatra vā pravartakaṃ svarūpasyānubhūtatvād anyasya cāviṣayatvāt | nāpi yogī tatpratyakṣāt kvacit pravartate kṛtārthatvāt | vastuyāthātmyaviṣayatvāt prāmāṇyam indriyapratyakṣe 'pi samānam |*[142]
>
> '[Jaina:] Is epistemic reliability (*prāmāṇya*) [fully] pervaded by the instigation of worldly activity (*pravartakatva*)?
>
> [Buddhist:] Yes, it is [fully] pervaded [by it].
>
> [Jaina:] That is not correct because it would lead to the undesirable consequence of the epistemic unreliability (*aprāmāṇya*) of self-reflexive perception and yogic perception. For self-reflexive perception does not instigate worldly activity directed towards the intrinsic nature (*svarūpa*) [of awareness] or directed towards something else. This is because the intrinsic nature [of awareness] has already been experienced [by self-reflexive perception] and anything other [than this intrinsic nature] cannot become the object [of self-reflexive perception]. Nor does the *yogin* engage in worldly activity directed towards any [object] as a

[142] NVV, p. 106, ll. 3-5.

result of his/her yogic perception because he/she has already accomplished all goals (*kṛtārtha*). Therefore, the epistemic reliability [of self-reflexive perception and yogic perception] follows from the fact that their object (*viṣaya*) is the true nature (*yāthātmya*) of a real entity (*vastu*). The same [criterion of epistemic reliability] also applies to sensory perception.'

Vādirājasūri rejects the pragmatic criterion of epistemic reliability by arguing that self-reflexive perception (*svasaṃvedanapratyakṣa*) and yogic perception (*yogipratyakṣa*), though accepted as two of the four kinds of genuine perception by Dharmakīrti, do not lead to any pragmatic activity.[143] Insofar as it merely apprehends the intrinsic nature of awareness, self-reflexive perception cannot lead to any pragmatic activity directed towards external objects. Enlightened *yogins*, on the other hand, no longer have the desire to act for worldly ends on the basis of their yogic perception. Thus, pragmatic activity (*arthakriyā*) is a very narrow criterion of epistemic reliability (*prāmāṇya*) because it cannot account for the epistemic reliability of two kinds of genuine perception accepted by Dharmakīrti himself.[144] Instead, Vādirājasūri proposes a different criterion for determining the epistemic reliability of both sensory perception as well as extra-sensory perception: apprehension of the true nature of the external object. Unlike Dharmakīrti's pragmatic criterion, this is a truth-based criterion of epistemic reliability. For Akalaṅka and his commentators, a source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) is capable of leading to successful pragmatic activity (*arthakriyā*) because it ascertains the true nature of its object rather than the other way round. At this stage, the Buddhist interlocutor

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[143] NBi 1.7-1.10, pp. 56-57, 64, 67.

See § 1.2.3, pp. 52-55.

[144] In the case of auditory awareness, Dharmakīrti and his commentators interpret *arthakriyā* simply as awareness's self-reflexive apprehension of its own intrinsic nature (PVV 1.3cd, p. 4). If *arthakriyā* is understood in this broader sense, then self-reflexive perception and yogic perception would possess *arthakriyā* and thereby count as sources of knowledge. Vādirājasūri objects that if *arthakriyā* is simply defined as awareness's self-reflexive apprehension of its own intrinsic nature, then erroneous auditory awareness and erroneous yogic perception too would possess *arthakriyā* and thereby count as sources of knowledge (NVV, p. 72, ll. 16-18).

objects to Vādirājasūri's truth-based criterion of epistemic reliability by pointing out that both real and illusory objects manifest in very similar ways within awareness.[145] Hence, there does not exist any non-circular way of distinguishing between true and false awareness besides the former's capacity and the latter's lack of capacity to lead to successful pragmatic activity. In this way, the Buddhist interlocutor reanalyses apprehension of the true nature of the object in terms of successful pragmatic activity.[146] Vādirājasūri responds by restating his initial objection: epistemic reliability (*prāmāṇya*) of awareness cannot be grounded in pragmatic activity (*arthakriyā*) because many kinds of epistemically reliable awareness, such as self-reflexive perception and yogic perception, do not lead to any pragmatic activity whatsoever. In this way, Vādirājasūri strives to show that pragmatic activity (*arthakriyā*) is not a very plausible criterion of epistemic reliability (*prāmāṇya*). Insofar as it highlights the incompatibility of the criterion of pragmatic activity with Dharmakīrti's momentary ontology as well as Dharmakīrti's acceptance of self-reflexive perception and yogic perception, Vādirājasūri's argument is best understood as an internal critique of the ontology and the epistemology underlying Dharmakīrti's perceptual non-conceptualism.

§ 3.3.3 *Rejecting Dharmakīrti's definition of conceptualisation*

As we have seen, Dharmakīrti defines conceptualisation (*vikalpa*/*kalpanā*) as awareness associated with or capable of association with language (*śabda*/*abhilāpa*).[147] Vādirājasūri challenges Dharmakīrti's definition of conceptualisation as follows:

> *… sa eva tadabhilāpo vaktavyaḥ | padaṃ vākyaṃ veti cen nanu vākyaṃ nāma padasaṃdohakalpitaṃ nākhaṇḍaikarūpaṃ tasya niṣetsyamānatvāt | tataḥ padayojanayā*

[145] NVV, p. 106, ll. 12-13.

[146] Ibid.

[147] PV_M 2.123, p. 154; NBi 1.5-1.6, pp. 47, 54.

tadavakḷptiḥ kartavyā padānāṃ cānusmaraṇopasthitānām eva yojanam | na ca padam api kiṃcid akhaṇḍaikarūpaṃ … na ca varṇā nirbhāgā dīrghādivyavahārābhāvaprasaṅgāt | … tato varṇaprakḷptir api smaraṇopanītatadbhāgayojanayaiva sampādayitavyā | tāvac caivaṃ prakriyā yāvat paryante nirbhāgāḥ śabdaparamāṇavas teṣām cāśakyasaṃketatvenānabhilāpasambandhād asmaraṇaṃ … | tatra ca kathaṃ svābhilāpasambaddhatayārthavyavasāyaḥ | … tan nābhilāpavattvaṃ vikalpalakṣaṇam asambhavād iti |[148]

'[Jaina:] … That very 'language' (*abhilāpa*) must be explained.

[Buddhist:] [Language consists of] words or sentences.

[Jaina:] Surely (*nanu*), a sentence is indeed conceptualised (*kalpita*) by means of a collection (*saṃdoha*) of words. A sentence does not have a single indivisible form/nature (*rūpa*) because that will be refuted [later on]. Hence, a sentence must be built up (*avakḷpti*) by joining together (*yojanā*) words and there can be the joining together of words only when they have been brought to mind (*upasthita*) by recollection (*anusmaraṇa*). Nor can a word be something having a single indivisible form/nature. … And, [linguistic] sounds (*varṇa*) too cannot be partless because of the undesirable consequence of the absence of usage (*vyavahāra*) of long [and short] sounds. … Hence, the building up of sounds too must be accomplished solely by the joining together of sound-parts which have been brought to mind by recollection. And, this kind of procedure (*prakriyā*) continues until partless sound-atoms (*śabdaparamāṇu*) [have been reached] in the end. However, these partless sound-atoms are not connected with language (*abhilāpa*) because they cannot become objects of linguistic convention (*saṃketa*). Hence, these partless sound-atoms cannot be recollected. … And, in that case, how can there be the ascertainment (*vyavasāya*) of the object as connected with its own (*sva*) signifier (*abhilāpa*)? … Therefore, conceptualisation cannot be defined as [awareness] possessing

[148] NVV, p. 137, ll. 14-24.

language (*abhilāpavat*) because that is impossible [within Dharmakīrti's philosophical system].'

Following the principle of mereological reductionism, Dharmakīrti rejects the existence of complex wholes by breaking them down into ultimately real partless particulars.[149] Vādirājasūri ingeniously applies Dharmakīrti's reductionist logic to Dharmakīrti's definition of conceptualisation. In order for his definition of conceptualisation as awareness capable of association with language (*abhilāpa*) to make sense, Dharmakīrti must provide a plausible account of what 'language' (*abhilāpa*) actually consists of. Applying Dharmakīrti's own principle of mereological reductionism, sentences, words, and linguistic sounds can be broken down into smaller and smaller linguistic units. This process continues until we reach partless sound-atoms (*śabdaparamāṇu*). However, none of these partless sound-atoms bears any linguistic meaning within our ordinary linguistic conventions (*saṃketa*). Hence, language (*abhilāpa*) qua relation between signifying words (*vācaka*) and signified meanings (*vācya*) cannot consist of meaningless sound-atoms. This is because the recollection and combination of meaningless sound-atoms cannot give rise to meaningful words and sentences.[150] Thus, Dharmakīrti's definition of conceptualisation as awareness capable of association with language is problematic because Dharmakīrti cannot provide a plausible characterisation of language (*abhilāpa*) given his commitment to the principle of mereological reductionism.

Elsewhere in his commentary, Vādirājasūri highlights the inconsistency between Dharmakīrti's definition of conceptualisation and Dharmakīrti's momentary ontology:

kiṃ ca kaḥ punar ayaṃ vikalpaḥ ko vā tasya viṣayaḥ | gaur iti parāmarśo vikalpas tasya

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[149] Ronkin 2018.

[150] To put the point more generally, how can the combination of parts lacking property X give rise to wholes possessing property X given the principle of mereological reductionism? This objection applies to Dharmakīrti's ontology quite generally.

gakārādir viṣaya iti cen na tasya samastasyaikavikalpavedyatvāyogāt kramabhāvitvāt |

…

vyasta eva sa tadviṣaya iti cen na prativarṇaṃ vikalpabhedaprasaṅgāt | asty eva tathā tadbhedas tathā ca parasya vacanaṃ 'gakārādivarṇavikalpānām api krameṇodayam āsādayatām ekatvābhāva'[151] *iti tad idam asambaddham ekatvādhyavasāyasyaivam abhāvaprasaṅgāt tadadhiṣṭhānasya gaur ity ekasya vikalpasyābhāvāt |*

…

vastuvṛttiparyālocanayā tad uktaṃ saṃvṛttyā tu sa evāyam ity ekatvakalpanayā tadekatvaṃ na nivāryata iti cen nanu vastuvṛttiparyālocanāyāṃ tā eva vikalpā na sambhavantīti pratipāditaṃ tat kathaṃ teṣāṃ krameṇodayavattvam anyad vā sambhavati |[152]

'[Jaina:] Furthermore, what is this conceptualisation (*vikalpa*) and what is the object of conceptualisation?

[Buddhist:] Conceptualisation is the recollective judgement (*parāmarśa*) 'cow' (*gauḥ*) and the syllables 'g', 'au', and so on are the object of conceptualisation.

[Jaina:] That is not correct because it is not possible (*ayoga*) for the combined (*samasta*) syllables 'g', 'au', and so on to be apprehended by a single [momentary] conceptualisation given that these syllables arise in a sequence [at different moments].

…

[Buddhist:] Very well, let each separate/distinct (*vyasta*) syllable such as 'g' become the object of conceptualisation.

[Jaina:] That is not correct because it leads to the undesirable consequence of a different conceptualisation [apprehending] every individual syllable.

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[151] This statement is a quotation from Prajñākaragupta's *Pramāṇavārtikālaṅkara* (PVA 3.133, p. 249). Modern scholars have rarely observed how Vādirājasūri frequently cites, reconstructs, and charitably analyses the arguments of his Buddhist opponents.

[152] NVV, p. 90, ll. 6-7, 9-13, 19-22.

[Buddhist:] There actually exists a different conceptualisation [apprehending] every individual syllable. This is precisely the statement of our opponent [i.e. Prajñākaragupta]: 'Insofar as they arise in a sequence, conceptualisations of the different syllables 'g' and so on are not identical'.

[Jaina:] This is not relevant here. This is because [Prajñākaragupta's statement] leads to the undesirable consequence that there does not exist any [illusory] ascertainment (*adhyavasāya*) of identity [between non-conceptual awareness and conceptual awareness] because the basis (*adhiṣṭhāna*) of that ascertainment, a single unified conceptualisation of 'cow', does not exist.

…

[Buddhist:] That statement was made with reference to ultimate reality (*vastuvṛtti*). At the level of conventional reality (*saṃvṛtti*), however, there is the conceptualisation of identity [between different syllables of the word '*gauḥ*'] as follows: 'This [syllable 'g'] is identical with that [syllable 'au' and so on]'. In this way, the single unified nature of conceptualisation is not rejected [at the level of conventional reality].

[Jaina:] Isn't it the case that, with reference to ultimate reality, it is taught (*pratipādita*) that those very conceptualisations are impossible? So, how is it possible for those conceptualisations to arise sequentially or in any other way [at the level of ultimate reality]?'

This passage is exemplary of the philosophical gems scattered throughout Vādirājasūri's commentary. At the most fundamental level, Vādirājasūri highlights the inconsistency between the following two propositions:

(i) Language is sequential.

(ii) Conceptual awareness is momentary.

Proposition (ii) is a logical consequence of Dharmakīrti's theory of momentariness. Proposition (i) is justified because syllables, words, and sentences are always heard and comprehended in a

sequence. This is verified by our occasional experience of failing to comprehend the meaning of an incomplete word or sentence. Propositions (i) and (ii) are contradictory because momentary conceptual awareness, by definition, cannot apprehend sequential language. Prime facie, Dharmakīrti's theory of momentariness is inconsistent with his definition of conceptualisation as awareness associated with inevitably sequential language. There are two possible ways in which Dharmakīrti might attempt to resolve this inconsistency. The first solution involves denying proposition (i) by breaking down language into smaller and smaller units until one reaches momentary partless sound-atoms. As we have seen, however, these meaningless sound-atoms do not bear any relation to our ordinary language use. The second solution involves reconciling the two seemingly contradictory propositions using the Buddhist distinction between conventional reality and ultimate reality. Since non-momentary objects can exist at the level of conventional reality, a single conceptual awareness lasting for many moments apprehends sequential syllables, words, and sentences at the level of conventional reality. Thus, at the level of conventional reality, proposition (i) holds true whereas proposition (ii) does not. On the other hand, at the level of ultimate reality, proposition (ii) holds true whereas proposition (i) does not because a momentary awareness apprehends a momentary partless sound-atom. Since linguistic meaning is purely conventional, the question of the linguistic meaning of sound-atoms simply does not arise at the level of inexpressible ultimate reality. Vādirājasūri tersely rejects this solution by pointing out that conceptual awareness is merely conventionally real within Dharmakīrti's philosophical system and hence conceptual awareness, whether momentary or otherwise, cannot exist at the level of non-conceptual ultimate reality. Hence, it does not make any sense to speak of a momentary conceptual awareness apprehending a momentary sound-atom at the level of ultimate reality. Despite its seeming plausibility, Vādirājasūri's response completely misses the mark because the momentary awareness of a sound-atom as pure sound devoid of linguistic meaning is actually non-conceptual rather than conceptual. There does not appear to be any inconsistency in Dharmakīrti's acceptance of sequential

conceptual awareness of sequential language at the level of conventional reality and momentary non-conceptual awareness of momentary sound-atoms at the level of ultimate reality. In the absence of any independent objections to the Buddhist theory of two truths, the Buddhist theory of two truths seems to resolve the contradiction between the sequential nature of linguistic conceptualisation and the momentary nature of all phenomena.

As we have seen, Dharmakīrti defines conceptualisation as awareness capable of being connected (*saṃsargayogya*) with language.[153] Vādirājasūri challenges this definition by arguing that the joining/association (*yojanaṃ*/*saṃsarga*) of two or more entities is impossible within Dharmakīrti's philosophical system:

> *daṇḍijñānāt pūrvaṃ daṇḍapratibhāsaṃ devadattapratibhāsaṃ ca vikalpadvayaṃ tad iti cet sambhavaty atra pratyekaṃ darśanaṃ na punar yojanaṃ kṣaṇikatvena paścāttadabhāvād dvayasyaikīkaraṇāyogāc ca | nanv idam eva punar yojanaṃ yat taddvayena ubhayapratibhāsam ekaṃ daṇḍijñānam upajanyata iti cen na taddvayasya yugapadasambhavād anabhyupagamāt |*[154]
>
> '[Buddhist:] Before the [conceptual] awareness of [a complex whole such as] a stick-bearing person (*daṇḍin*), there exist two [separate] conceptualisations: one conceptualisation having the appearance of a stick and another conceptualisation having the appearance of Devadatta. [Jaina:] In this case, the individual (*pratyeka*) perception [of stick and Devadatta separately] is possible but joining them together (*yojana*) is not possible because any given entity ceases to exist at a later moment due to momentariness and because it is impossible to make two entities [with distinct intrinsic natures] one [in Dharmakīrti's philosophical system].

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[153] NBi 1.5, p. 47.

[154] NVV, p. 161, ll. 19-22.

> [Buddhist:] Surely, joining together (*yojana*) just means that a single conceptualisation of a stick-bearing person, possessing the appearance of both stick as well as Devadatta, is produced by those two [simultaneous] conceptualisations.
>
> [Jaina:] That is not correct because of the impossibility of two [or more] simultaneous (*yugapad*) conceptualisations given that it is not accepted (*anabhyupagama*) [by you].'

According to Dharmakīrti, the conceptual awareness of complex wholes is produced by the joining together of multiple awarenesses of distinct particulars. However, Vādirājasūri poses the following question to Dharmakīrti: do these multiple awarenesses which must be joined together arise sequentially or simultaneously? Given Dharmakīrti's commitment to momentariness, sequential awarenesses cannot be joined together because an earlier awareness would cease to exist at the time of a later awareness. The sole alternative is that the conceptual awareness of complex wholes such as a stick-bearing person is produced by the simultaneous arising of the simpler conceptual awareness of a stick and the simpler conceptual awareness of a person. However, Dharmakīrti explicitly rejects the possibility of two or more conceptual awarenesses arising simultaneously.[155] Since sequential arising and simultaneous arising exhaust the logical possibilities, Dharmakīrti's understanding of conceptualisation as the joining together of two or more entities seems to be inconsistent with Dharmakīrti's other philosophical commitments. For these reasons, Vādirājasūri rejects Dharmakīrti's definition of conceptualisation.

§ 3.3.4 *Reductio ad absurdum of the non-referentiality of language*

According to Dharmakīrti, words cannot refer to ultimately real entities, i.e.

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[155] ***… dṛṣṭaṃ na vikalpadvayaṃ sakṛt*** | (PV_M 2.178ab, p. 172)
'… two conceptualisations are not seen at the same time (*sakṛt*).'

inexpressible particulars.[156] Insofar as it superimposes language onto inexpressible particulars, conceptual awareness is necessarily erroneous. Akalaṅka presents a reductio ad absurdum of Dharmakīrti's position:

> ***abhilāpatadaṃśānām abhilāpavivekataḥ*** |
>
> ***apramāṇaprameyatvam avaśyam anuṣajyate*** ||[157]
>
> 'The non-existence of any source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) and any object of knowledge (*prameya*) necessarily follows as an undesirable consequence from [Dharmakīrti's position] that language (*abhilāpa*) and the constituent parts (*aṃśa*) of language are devoid of (*viveka*) [ultimately real] objects (*abhilāpa*).'[158]

Akalaṅka's argument may be stated as follows:

P_1 If language did not refer to real objects, then there would not exist any source of knowledge and any object of knowledge.

P_2 There exist sources of knowledge and objects of knowledge.

Therefore,

C Language refers to real objects.

It is obvious that premise P_2 would be accepted by Dharmakīrti who regards both perception and inference as sources of knowledge.[159] Hence, the key point of contention between Dharmakīrti and Akalaṅka is the reductio ad absurdum contained in premise P_1. Unfortunately, Akalaṅka does not provide any justification for premise P_1 in the terse *kārikās* of his *Nyāyaviniścaya*. Luckily, Vādirājasūri's commentary supplies the missing links of the argument:

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[156] PV_M 2.2, p. 112.

[157] NV 7.

[158] For the etymological derivation of the two different meanings of the word '*abhilāpa*', see NVV (p. 136, ll. 6-7).

[159] PV_M 2.1ab, p. 110.

tathā hi svārthaviśeṣe nirṇīte śabdaviśeṣe smṛtiḥ syān nānirṇīte …

…

asyāś ca tatra tadyojanāyāṃ svārthaviśeṣanirṇaya ity anyonyasaṃśrayaḥ | tan nābhilāpasyābhilāpena sambandhaḥ |

…

tad evam abhilāpatadaṃśānām abhilāpavivekato vikalpābhāva eva prāptas tadabhyupagame ca nirvikalpakasyākiṃcitkaratvān na pramāṇam ata eva na prameyam ity apramāṇaprameyatvaṃ tadvivekato 'vaśyam anuṣajyate |[160]

'Likewise, there can be recollection (*smṛti*) of a particular word only when its own particular object has been ascertained and not when its own particular object has not been ascertained …

…

However, there can be ascertainment of its own particular object only when the particular word has been recollected and joined with the particular object. Therefore, there is the fault of mutual dependence (*anyonyasaṃśraya*). Thus, there cannot be any relation (*sambandha*) between language (*abhilāpa*) and object (*abhilāpa*).

…

So, insofar as language and the constituent parts of language are thus devoid of [ultimately real] objects, the non-existence of conceptualisation actually follows as a result. And, if the non-existence of conceptualisation is accepted, there would not exist any source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) because non-conceptual awareness [by itself] does not actually accomplish anything (*akiṃcitkara*). As a result of the non-existence of any source of knowledge, there would not exist any object of knowledge (*prameya*). Therefore, the non-existence of any source of knowledge and any object of knowledge necessarily follows as an undesirable

[160] NVV, p. 136, ll. 7-10, 14-16.

consequence from [language being] devoid of [ultimately real] objects.'

According to Dharmakīrti's perceptual non-conceptualism, non-conceptual perception apprehends the pristine particular untainted by mental superimposition. This non-conceptual perception is followed by the recollection and superimposition of an arbitrary word such as 'blue' onto the perceived particular.[161] This superimposition, in turn, gives rise to the erroneous conceptualisation of an illusory blue object. Vādirājasūri highlights a circularity implicit in Dharmakīrti's analysis of conceptualisation:

(i) In order to recollect the word 'blue', we must first ascertain the perceived particular as blue.

(ii) In order to ascertain the perceived particular as blue, we must first recollect the word 'blue'.

It is obvious that propositions (i) and (ii), when combined with each other, create a vicious circle. Within Dharmakīrti's theory of conceptualisation, it is unclear why the perception of a blue particular almost always triggers recollection of the correct word 'blue' rather than incorrect words such as 'green' or 'red'. Insofar as he does not accept the existence of external objects at the level of ultimate reality, Dharmakīrti cannot explain this phenomenon in terms of the power of the external object which produced our perception.[162] The sole alternative to this realist explanation is that our mind somehow ascertains the perceived object-form (*ākāra*) within awareness as blue which, in turn, leads to recollection of the correct word 'blue'. Thus, proposition (i) is justified. However, according to Diṅnāga and Dharmakīrti, ascertainment of the perceived particular *as* blue basically consists of the conceptual judgement *that* it is blue.[163] However, in order to formulate this conceptual judgement, we must already have recollected the word 'blue'. Thus, proposition (ii) is also justified. In this way, a vicious circle has been created between ascertainment and recollection.

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[161] PV_M 2.174, p. 171.

[162] Ibid., 2.335, pp. 219-220.

See § 4.1, pp. 182-187 for an overview of Dharmakīrti's epistemic idealism.

[163] PS 4, p. 2, ll. 20-21.

Ascertainment of a given object as blue presupposes recollection of the word 'blue' whereas recollection of the correct word 'blue' instead of some incorrect word such as 'red' presupposes ascertainment of the object as blue. This vicious circle shows the impossibility of conceptual awareness as defined by Dharmakīrti.[164] As we have seen, Akalaṅka argues that non-conceptual awareness lacks any pragmatic efficacy. Given the impossibility of conceptual awareness and the uselessness of non-conceptual awareness, there cannot exist any source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) whatsoever as per Dharmakīrti's criterion of pragmatic activity (*arthakriyā*). In the absence of any source of knowledge, the objects of knowledge (*prameya*) too cannot be established. Thus, Akalaṅka's argument is a reductio ad absurdum of Dharmakīrti's position that ultimately real entities cannot become objects of linguistic signification. Insofar as it entails the undesirable consequence of the non-existence of any source of knowledge and any object of knowledge, Dharmakīrti's radical perceptual non-conceptualism is deeply problematic.

§ 3.3.5 *Summary*

Akalaṅka concludes the discussion by quoting and rejecting Dharmakīrti's definition of perception:

> ***pratyakṣaṃ kalpanāpoḍhaṃ pratyakṣādinirākṛtam*** |[165]
>
> 'Perception (*pratyakṣa*) as [awareness] devoid of conceptualisation (*kalpanā*) has been refuted by means of perception and so on [i.e. other sources of knowledge such as inference].'

The first *pāda* cites the definition of perception found in Dharmakīrti's *Pramāṇavārttika* and the

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[164] According to Akalaṅka and his commentator Vādirājasūri, perception conceptually ascertains particular features of an external object on its own (*svatas*) without requiring the recollection and association of language (NVV, p. 198, ll. 4-5). In this way, Akalaṅka avoids falling into the vicious circle.

[165] NV 150ab.

second *pāda* argues that Dharmakīrti's definition of perception as non-conceptual awareness is refuted by various sources of knowledge (*pramāṇa*). This, in turn, reflects Akalaṅka's strategy in this debate regarding the non-conceptual or conceptual nature of perception. As we have seen throughout section § 3.3, Akalaṅka devotes most of his energy to formulating innovative and sophisticated arguments refuting Dharmakīrti's perceptual non-conceptualism. By contrast, Akalaṅka does not provide too many positive arguments establishing perceptual conceptualism. This is because Akalaṅka regards perceptual conceptualism as the default and common-sensical theory of perception which is verified by our ordinary conceptual perception of the world as well as our conceptual pragmatic activity. Insofar as our ordinary perception conceptually ascertains particular features of external objects, Akalaṅka feels that the burden of proof falls on the perceptual non-conceptualist to show that, contrary to our ordinary conceptual perception, genuine perception is free from conceptualisation. As such, Akalaṅka thinks that the refutation of Dharmakīrti's perceptual non-conceptualism is sufficient to establish perceptual conceptualism as the default and common-sensical theory of perception.

§ 3.4 Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated the philosophical centrality of conceptualisation (*vikalpa*/*kalpanā*) in the debate surrounding the nature of perception between Dharmakīrti and Akalaṅka. This centrality of conceptualisation is evident in both Dharmakīrti's definition of perception as non-conceptual (*kalpanāpoḍha*) awareness and Akalaṅka's definition of perception as clear and conceptual (*sākāra*) awareness of many-sided (*anekānta*) external objects.[166] While Dharmakīrti understands conceptualisation as the superimposition of illusory linguistic constructs onto pure perception, Akalaṅka understands conceptualisation as the non-verbalised ascertainment

[166] PV_M 2.123ab, p. 154; NV 3.

of particular features of an external object.[167] Taking into account their differing definitions of conceptualisation and language, this chapter has shown how Dharmakīrti and Akalaṅka agree about the absence of verbalised language in perception. Instead, this debate about conceptualisation ultimately hinges on the involvement of mental linguistic concepts in perception qua source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*). This chapter has argued that Dharmakīrti defends a version of content non-conceptualism according to which the inexpressible representational content of non-conceptual perception is completely different from the linguistic content of all kinds of conceptual awareness. By contrast, Akalaṅka accepts a version of perceptual conceptualism according to which our conceptual capacities are always already operational in our perceptual encounters with the world. Though rarely mentioned by either side, there is an underlying soteriological dimension to this philosophical debate. While the benedictory verse of Dharmakīrti's *Pramāṇavārttika* praises the Buddha as someone who has shaken off the web of conceptualisation (*kalpanājāla*) that binds sentient beings in the cycle of transmigration (*saṃsāra*), the second last verse of Akalaṅka's *Laghīyastraya* praises the Jina as someone whose wisdom is capable of directly perceiving the division between the world (*loka*) consisting of six substances and the non-world (*aloka*) consisting of empty space.[168] Thus, the enlightened Buddha's non-conceptual awareness of reality directly contrasts with the omniscient Jina's conceptual awareness of reality. This soteriological opposition is mirrored in the philosophical debate surrounding the nature of perception: erroneous conceptualisation falsifies non-conceptual perception for Dharmakīrti whereas conceptual perception is a reliable source of knowledge for Akalaṅka.

Most of this chapter has been devoted to analysing the most important arguments put forward by Dharmakīrti, Akalaṅka, and their respective commentators. Dharmakīrti's theory of

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[167] PV_M 2.123, p. 154; LT 10cd-11ab; NVV, p. 120, ll. 2-3.

[168] PV_M 1.1, p. 1; LT 77; NKC_2, p. 879, n. 1.

perception constitutes one of the most robust and comprehensive defences of content non-conceptualism in classical Indian philosophy. It is a mark of Dharmakīrti's genius that he refutes the epistemic reliability of conceptualisation from many different, yet complementary, perspectives: ontology of momentary particulars, analysis of the objects of different kinds of awareness, and the involvement of memory. Dharmakīrti's arguments strive to show that perception is pure pre-linguistic sensation free from later mental conceptualisation.[169] While non-conceptual perception alone is epistemically reliable, Dharmakīrti and his commentators seem to recognise the pragmatic efficacy, perhaps even pragmatic necessity, of conceptual awareness. Though Dharmakīrti's objections are applicable to Akalaṅka's perceptual conceptualism, Dharmakīrti does not explicitly engage with the Jaina theory of perception in four sequential stages found in Umāsvāmin's *Tattvārthasūtra* and the works of other early Jaina philosophers.[170] By contrast, Akalaṅka's treatises betray both positive and negative influence of the highly innovative theory of perception developed by Diṅnāga and Dharmakīrti.[171] Akalaṅka's defence of perceptual conceptualism is ultimately grounded in his conviction that every genuine source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) must be action-guiding.[172] This, in turn, means that every genuine source of knowledge must represent the world as populated by the complex and enduring entities which are the objects of our ordinary worldly activity. Insofar as this is a conceptually structured representation of the world, perception or any other source of knowledge must necessarily be conceptual. Most interestingly, Akalaṅka derives his conception of *pramāṇa* as action-guiding from Dharmakīrti himself.[173] Akalaṅka consistently argues that Dharmakīrti's definition of source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) as awareness conducive to pragmatic activity (*arthakriyā*) is incompatible with Dharmakīrti's perceptual non-conceptualism

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[169] Guerrero 2013: 82, n. 41.

[170] TS 1.15.

[171] See Balcerowicz (2016b).

[172] LT 41a.

[173] PV_M 7a, p. 6.

because non-conceptual perception of inexpressible particulars cannot lead to the accomplishment of any pragmatic activity whatsoever. This is part of Akalaṅka and his commentator Vādirājasūri's broader argumentative strategy of refuting Dharmakīrti's perceptual non-conceptualism by highlighting internal inconsistencies within Dharmakīrti's philosophical system: the complex sequential nature of pragmatic activity is incompatible with the ontology of momentary partless particulars and the pragmatic efficacy of conceptual awareness contrasts with the uselessness of non-conceptual awareness. Besides highlighting these internal inconsistencies, Akalaṅka shows how Dharmakīrti's analysis of conceptualisation is implausible because it creates a vicious circle between ascertainment and recollection. Unlike Dharmakīrti's arguments, Akalaṅka's objections are explicitly directed against Dharmakīrti's theory of non-conceptual perception. Akalaṅka considers the refutation of Dharmakīrti's perceptual non-conceptualism as sufficient to establish our default and common-sensical understanding of perception as conceptual ascertainment of limited aspects of external reality. While Dharmakīrti's perceptual non-conceptualism culminates in the inexpressibility of ultimately real entities, Akalaṅka's perceptual conceptualism paints a realist picture of the underlying harmony between our concepts and reality. Furthermore, this chapter has shown how commentators such as Prajñākaragupta, Manorathanandin, and Vādirājasūri not only aid our understanding of Dharmakīrti's and Akalaṅka's difficult verses but also move the philosophical debate forward through their sophisticated arguments.[174]

Dharmakīrti's extremely charitable understanding of what counts as conceptualisation and the wide variety of arguments offered by both sides ensures that this philosophical debate between Dharmakīrti's perceptual non-conceptualism and Akalaṅka's perceptual conceptualism is rich, substantive, and sophisticated. In this respect, this classical Indian philosophical debate offers

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[174] While there have been selective studies of Prajñākaragupta's *Pramāṇavārtikālaṅkara* such as Kobayashi (2011) and Bae (2021), Vādirājasūri's equally dense and equally rewarding *Nyāyaviniścayavivaraṇa* has largely been ignored in contemporary scholarship.

a way out of the terminological impasse between non-conceptualists and conceptualists in modern analytic philosophy.[175] While a complete evaluation of this philosophical debate would require an investigation into Dharmakīrti's and Akalaṅka's contrasting ontologies, it is reasonable to conclude that Akalaṅka successfully shows how Dharmakīrti's strict perceptual non-conceptualism can neither explain our ordinary epistemic practices nor provide a reliable basis for our ordinary worldly activity. However, this may not be a serious objection from Dharmakīrti's point of view because Dharmakīrti's perceptual non-conceptualism ultimately aims to overcome rather than justify our illusory ordinary beliefs and practices.[176] Hence, the next chapter will turn to the question of whether the external world apprehended by our ordinary perception is actually real or merely an illusion.

[175] Chaturvedi 2022: 2.

[176] PV_M 7b, p. 7.

§ 4 *The Object of Perception*

This chapter discusses the object of our perceptual awareness. It seeks to answer the following question: what is perception *about*? At first glance, this might seem like a silly question. We know exactly what perception is about. After all, we perceive tables, chairs, buildings, and trees. These are the objects of perception. However, the phenomenon of optical illusions (such as a stick immersed in water appearing bent) forces us to make a distinction between the way things *appear* in perception and the way things *actually* are. This, in turn, raises the following question: does the appearance of objects within perception correspond to any objective external world outside perception? Traditionally, there have been two basic answers to this question: realism and idealism. An introductory textbook in contemporary metaphysics defines realism as follows:

"The world is a mind-independent structure: it consists of objects whose existence, character and relations are fixed independently of what we happen to say, believe, or desire."[1]

In other words, realists answer the question affirmatively: there exists an objective external world beyond the appearances within perception. Furthermore, most realists think that the appearance of objects within perception, barring exceptional cases of perceptual error, is a generally reliable guide to the real nature of those objects outside perceptual awareness. By contrast, idealists answer the question in the negative by arguing that our conceptual mind plays a very significant role in the construction of the so-called 'mind-independent objective world'.[2] Modern analytic philosophy distinguishes between two main kinds of idealism:

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[1] Loux 2001: 49.

[2] Loux 2006: 259.

(a) Metaphysical Idealism: The entirety of reality is constituted by something mental such as mind or awareness.[3]

(b) Epistemic Idealism: Everything we know is dependent on the mind.[4]

Though these two positions are closely related, they are logically distinct from each other. Metaphysical idealism is a theory about the nature of reality which seeks to answer the following question: 'What ultimately exists?'. According to metaphysical idealism, only mental phenomena such as awareness is ultimately real whereas the mind-independent external world does not actually exist. By contrast, epistemic idealism is a theory about the nature of knowledge which seeks to answer the following question: 'What can we know?'. Epistemic idealism argues that the object of awareness is purely mental. On some formulations, epistemic idealism remains silent on the existence of a mind-independent external world whereas, on other formulations, epistemic idealism accepts the existence of an unknowable mind-independent external world.[5] In other words, epistemic idealism is logically consistent with both the existence and the non-existence of the external world.[6] However, as a general rule, idealists consider our ordinary perception to be erroneous because the way objects appear in our perception is not the way they actually are.

This chapter reconstructs and analyses the debate between Dharmakīrti and Akalaṅka regarding the object of sensory perception (*indriyapratyakṣa*). Section § 4.1 argues that Dharmakīrti is best interpreted as defending a version of epistemic idealism within a sliding scale of analysis. Section § 4.2 shows how Akalaṅka defends a version of common-sense realism inherited from the preceding Digambara Jaina philosophical tradition. Having contrasted the philosophical positions defended by these two thinkers, I analyse their arguments for their respective positions in the last

[3] Guyer and Horstmann 2022.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Arnold 2008: 15.

two sections. Section § 4.3 shows how Dharmakīrti's epistemic idealism is the logical culmination of a progressive series of arguments beginning with the Sautrāntika defence of the theory of awareness with form (*sākārajñānavāda*) and ending with the famous *sahopalambhaniyama* inference. Section § 4.4 analyses Akalaṅka's proof of common-sense realism beginning with Akalaṅka's objections to Dharmakīrti's arguments for idealism and ending with Akalaṅka's positive arguments for the existence of external objects. The chapter concludes by reflecting on the key takeaways from this Buddhist-Jaina philosophical debate.

§ 4.1 Dharmakīrti's Epistemic Idealism

As we have seen, Dharmakīrti's philosophical treatises employ a sliding scale of analysis in which "more accurate descriptions of what we perceive and think supersede less accurate ones".[7] Dunne identifies four different levels of analysis arranged in increasing order of accuracy:[8]

(i) Common-sense realism

(ii) Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika Abhidharma

(iii) Sautrāntika external realism

(iv) Yogācāra idealism

For the purposes of this chapter, it is important to observe the progression from a realist worldview to a more idealist worldview. Nevertheless, the diversity of these levels of analysis means that Dharmakīrti's *Pramāṇavārttika* cannot be straightforwardly read as an idealist treatise in the same

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[7] Dunne 2004: 53.

See § 1.2.1.2, pp. 37-40.

[8] Dunne 2004: 53-64.

way as Vasubandhu's *Viṃśikā*.[9] The two most frequently employed levels of analysis in the *Pramāṇavārttika* are Sautrāntika external realism and Yogācāra idealism. Scholars such as Dunne distinguish between the two by arguing that the Sautrāntika level of analysis accepts the existence of both external and internal particulars (*svalakṣaṇa*) whereas the Yogācāra level of analysis accepts the existence of only internal particulars (*svalakṣaṇa*).[10] On this reading, the Sautrāntika level of analysis is a kind of realism, albeit very different from common-sense realism, whereas the Yogācāra level of analysis is a kind of idealism. However, Arnold has pointed out that the Sautrāntika and the Yogācāra levels of analysis actually share the same epistemology.[11] According to Sautrāntika representationalism, a momentary external particular transfers its form (*ākāra*) to awareness before going out of existence. Perception apprehends this form of the external particular within awareness rather than the external particular itself.[12] This Sautrāntika theory of awareness with form (*sākārajñānavāda*) naturally leads to epistemic idealism because the object of perception is a form (*ākāra*) or appearance (*ābhāsa*) internal to awareness rather than any external object. This epistemic idealism is common to both the Sautrāntika and the Yogācāra levels of analysis.[13] Arnold argues that Dharmakīrti's Yogācāra passages simply make explicit the extent to which Sautrāntika representationalism is compatible with, even entails, epistemic idealism.[14] The difference between these two levels of analysis lies in their ontology rather than their epistemology. At the Sautrāntika level of analysis, Dharmakīrti accepts the existence of external particulars as the cause of perceptible forms within awareness.[15] At the Yogācāra level of analysis, however, Dharmakīrti

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[9] For a defence of the idealist reading of Vasubandhu's *Viṃśikā*, see Kellner and Taber (2014).

[10] Dunne 2004: 59.

[11] Arnold 2008: 5.

[12] Kellner 2017: 312-313.

[13] Arnold 2008: 5.

[14] Ibid., 17-18.

[15] Kellner 2017: 313.

rejects the Sautrāntika postulation of imperceptible external objects which serve no explanatory purpose. This is because the restricted nature of perception can be explained in purely idealistic terms involving the regular awakening of latent mental impressions (*vāsanā*) giving rise to internal forms (*ākāra*) within awareness.[16] Besides demonstrating their explanatory redundancy, Dharmakīrti's Yogācāra arguments highlight the absence of any source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) proving the existence of external objects.

At this stage, the modern reader of Dharmakīrti is confronted with the important hermeneutic question of whether Dharmakīrti's Yogācāra level of analysis is best interpreted as a kind of metaphysical idealism or as a kind of epistemic idealism. Our interpretive choice makes a substantive philosophical difference because metaphysical idealism completely rejects the existence of external objects whereas epistemic idealism simply argues that the objects of awareness are internal rather than external to awareness. However, some Indologists have argued that this distinction between metaphysical idealism and epistemic idealism is an anachronistic superimposition of the categories of modern analytic philosophy onto classical Indian philosophy. For example, Oetke states that it is likely that Buddhist idealists such as Vasubandhu were not "fully aware of the difference" between these two kinds of idealism.[17] Fortunately, the following passage from Manorathanandin's *Pramāṇavārttikavivṛti* refutes Oetke's objection:

> *na tathāpi parokṣasya bāhyasya sādhakasyābhāve 'pi nābhāvasthitir iti cet pratibhāsamānaṃ jñānaṃ bāhyaṃ tu na pratibhāsata eveti tāvataivābhimatasiddheḥ | sādhakapramāṇarahitapiśācāyamānabahirarthaniṣedhenāsmākam ādaraḥ | yadi tu tanniṣedhanirbandho garīyān sāṃśatvānaṃśatvakalpanayā paramāṇupratiṣedha ācāryīyaḥ*

[16] Ibid., 314, 318.

[17] Oetke 1992: 222.

paryeṣitavyaḥ |[18]

'[Sautrāntika:] That is not correct because, despite the absence of any proof (*sādhaka*) for imperceptible (*parokṣa*) external [objects], there is not the establishment (*sthiti*) of the non-existence [of external objects].

[Yogācārin:] 'Awareness manifests whereas the external [object] does not actually manifest'- by just this much, there is the establishment of our accepted [position]. This is because we care (*ādara*) about the negation of external objects which are like ghosts (*piśāca*) devoid of any source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) proving their existence (*sādhaka*). However, if the obstinate desire (*nirbandha*) to negate external objects is stronger, then the teacher [Vasubandhu's] refutation of atoms (*paramāṇu*), by postulating (*kalpanā*) them as either wholes with parts or indivisible parts, should be sought.'

This remarkable passage comments on the final verse of the section of the *Pramāṇavārttika* (verses 3.320-3.336) critiquing external objects. The Sautrāntika interlocutor points out that Dharmakīrti's Yogācāra arguments, even if they are successful, merely prove that there is no source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) proving the existence of external objects. However, absence of evidence is not evidence of absence. Thus, Dharmakīrti's Yogācāra arguments fail to prove the non-existence of external objects. In response, Manorathanandin concedes that Dharmakīrti's Yogācāra arguments simply show that there is no source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) proving the existence of external objects. Manorathanandin distinguishes Dharmakīrti's idealism from Vasubandhu's idealism by arguing that the latter, unlike the former, further proves the non-existence of external objects irrespective of whether they are imagined to be complex wholes, atomic aggregates, or atoms. Manorathanandin's distinction between these two varieties of Buddhist idealism corresponds remarkably well with the

[18] PVV 2.336, p. 220.

modern distinction between metaphysical idealism and epistemic idealism.[19] Vasubandhu's idealism is a kind of metaphysical idealism because it strives to prove the non-existence of external objects. Insofar as it argues that there is no source of knowledge proving the existence of external objects, Dharmakīrti's idealism is a kind of epistemic idealism because it is fundamentally concerned with what can and cannot be known. Dharmakīrti's epistemic idealism may be summarised as follows:

> The objects of awareness are mental forms (*ākāra*) or appearances (*ābhāsa*) internal to awareness. There does not exist any source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) proving the existence of awareness-independent external objects.[20]

In some modern formulations, epistemic idealism is ontologically neutral because it commits itself neither to the existence nor to the non-existence of external objects. Viewed thus, Dharmakīrti's epistemic idealism seems like a weaker version of Vasubandhu's stronger metaphysical idealism.[21] However, Kellner and Ratie argue that this interpretation fundamentally misunderstands the scope and methodology of Dharmakīrti's philosophical system.[22] Within Dharmakīrti's theory of inference, the inferential reason (*hetu/liṅga*) consisting of 'non-perception of an otherwise perceptible entity' (*dṛśyānupalabdhi*) establishes the non-existence (*abhāva*) of the entity.[23] For example, when we fail to perceive a pot in a situation in which all other factors (such as light etc.) necessary for perception are present, we can justifiably infer the non-existence of the pot. Crucially, this inferred non-existence is a situation-specific absence rather than an absolute non-existence. The absence of any source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) proving the existence of an entity merely

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[19] Ratie (2014: 362-369) argues that a similar distinction between metaphysical idealism and epistemic idealism is found in the Śaiva non-dualist school of Utpaladeva and Abhinavagupta, thereby showing that classical Indian philosophers were aware of the distinction between different kinds of idealism.

[20] Arnold 2008: 22.

[21] Arnold 2008: 16; Ratie 2014: 359-360.

[22] Kellner 2017: 319-320; Ratie 2014: 360-362.

[23] Kellner 2017: 319.

establishes the situation-specific absence rather than the absolute non-existence of the entity because it is always logically possible for an entity to exist even when there is no source of knowledge proving its existence. Thus, within Dharmakīrti's epistemological framework, it is simply not possible to prove the absolute non-existence of any entity.[24] Hence, Dharmakīrti should not be viewed as a 'mere' epistemic idealist who is neutral on the ontological status of external objects. Instead, given the priority of epistemology to ontology, the following ontological question no longer makes any sense within Dharmakīrti's philosophical system: do external objects, whose existence is not established by any source of knowledge, actually exist?[25] Manorathanandin's comparison of external objects to a particular class of ghosts (*piśāca*) is instructive: just as it is meaningless to assert or deny the existence of imperceptible ghosts, in the same way, it is meaningless to assert or deny the existence of unknowable external objects. To use Ratie's felicitous formulation, Dharmakīrti's epistemic idealism is not "ontologically neutral" but instead "neutralises all ontological questions".[26]

§ 4.2 Akalaṅka's Common-Sense Realism

Historically speaking, Akalaṅka inherits common-sense realism from the preceding Digambara Jaina philosophical tradition, especially Samantabhadra's *Āptamīmāṃsā*. In his *Āptamīmāṃsā*, Samantabhadra identifies two one-sided (*ekānta*) viewpoints to be avoided: metaphysical idealism and extreme realism.[27] Samantabhadra rejects metaphysical idealism on

[24] Ibid., 319-320.

[25] Ibid., 320.

[26] Ratie 2014: 360-361.

[27] ĀM 79, 81.

epistemological grounds: if external objects did not exist, then all of our ordinary awarenesses and judgements would turn out to be false. This, in turn, would undermine the most fundamental epistemic distinction between genuine sources of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) and pseudo sources of knowledge (*pramāṇābhāsa*).[28] In other words, our ordinary epistemic practice of distinguishing between genuine sources of knowledge and pseudo sources of knowledge requires the existence of an objective external world to serve as the standard of truth. By contrast, extreme realism argues that each and every awareness corresponds to a mind-independent external reality. Samantabhadra rejects extreme realism because it cannot account for our ordinary experience of perceptual error.[29] Rejecting these two extremes, Samantabhadra expounds a common-sense realism which accepts the existence of mind-independent external objects.[30] Unlike extreme realists, however, Samantabhadra does not think that every single awareness corresponds to some external object. Instead, some awarenesses are sources of knowledge because they accurately capture the nature of external objects whereas other awarenesses do not count as sources of knowledge because they do not accurately capture the nature of external objects. This is a characteristically many-sided (*anekānta*) view because it respects the diversity of our ordinary epistemic practices in which we encounter both genuine sources of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) as well as pseudo sources of knowledge (*pramāṇābhāsa*). Samantabhadra argues that our diverse epistemic practices are fully intelligible only on a realist ontology:

> ***buddhiśabdapramāṇatvaṃ bāhyārthe sati nāsati*** |
>
> ***satyānṛtavyavasthaivaṃ yujyate 'rthāptyanāptiṣu*** ||[31]
>
> 'An awareness or an utterance (*śabda*) is a source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) only when a

[28] Ibid., 79.

[29] According to Shah (1999: 74), Samantabhadra's critique of extreme realism targets the Prābhākara Mīmāṃsaka who considers perceptual errors to be epistemically reliable.

[30] ĀM 83.

[31] Ibid., 87.

> [corresponding] external object exists and not when a [corresponding] external object does not exist. Likewise, the settlement (*vyavasthā*) of the truth and falsity [of awareness or utterance] is possible only when there is the obtainment and non-obtainment respectively of the external object.'

In other words, a realist ontology postulating the existence of mind-independent external objects amenable to pragmatic activity is necessary in order to make sense of our most fundamental epistemic intuition, namely, the distinction between true epistemically reliable awareness and false epistemically unreliable awareness.

Samantabhadra's common-sense realism[32] is the default assumption of Akalaṅka's philosophical treatises. Akalaṅka further fleshes out Samantabhadra's minimalist sketch of common-sense realism in his philosophical treatises. As we have seen, the *Nyāyaviniścaya's* definition of perception lists the various kinds of entities apprehended by perception: substances (*dravya*), modifications (*paryāya*), universals (*sāmānya*), and particulars (*viśeṣa*).[33] Every external object is a sui-generis entity having the nature of both substance and modification as well as universal and particular.[34] The substance explains the unity and continuity of the object whereas the modifications account for diversity and change in the object.[35] A universal consists of similar transformations (*sadṛśapariṇāma*) of different objects whereas a particular consists of dissimilar/

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[32] I use the qualifier 'common-sense' in order to distinguish Samantabhadra's and Akalaṅka's brand of realism from the reductionist realism of the Sautrāntika Buddhists. Common-sense realism respects our ordinary understanding of perception whereas reductionist realism rejects and revises our ordinary understanding of perception. For example, Akalaṅka's common-sense realism accepts ordinary objects such as tables and chairs as the object of perception whereas the Sautrāntika Buddhist's reductionist realism accepts momentary partless particulars as the object of perception.

[33] NV 3.

See § 3.1.2, p. 122.

[34] Shah 1999: 5.

[35] LT 66-67; Clavel 2008: 117.

unique transformations of a given object.[36] Besides these external objects, perception apprehends itself by means of self-reflexive awareness.[37] Perception qua awareness too has the same many-sided nature consisting of substances, modifications, universals, and particulars. In the *Laghīyastraya*, Akalaṅka provides a concise summary of his ontology:

> ***tad dravyaparyāyātmārtho bahir antaś ca tattvataḥ*** ||[38]
>
> 'Therefore, objects having the nature of both substance as well as modifications really (*tattvatas*) exist externally and internally.'

In other words, many-sided external as well as internal objects are the objects of knowledge (*prameya*) for sources of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) such as perception and inference. This, in turn, highlights Akalaṅka's twofold commitment to common-sense realism. Firstly, Akalaṅka accepts the existence of external objects outside the perceiver's mind. Secondly, excluding exceptional cases of perceptual error, perception generally apprehends the real nature of these external objects. The former amounts to metaphysical realism about the existence of external objects whereas the latter amounts to epistemic realism about the objects of perceptual awareness. Thus, Akalaṅka is a full-fledged common-sense realist in the domain of both metaphysics as well as epistemology.

§ 4.3 Dharmakīrti's Proof of Epistemic Idealism

Dharmakīrti's clearest and most concise statement of epistemic idealism is found in his *Pramāṇavārttika*:

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[36] Śāstrī 1939: 81-82.

[37] See § 5.2, pp. 278-282.

[38] LT 7cd.

ātmā sa tasyānubhavaḥ sa ca nānyasya kasyacit |

pratyakṣaprativedyatvam api tasya tadātmatā ||

nānyo 'nubhāvyas tenāsti tasya nānubhavo 'paraḥ |

tasyāpi tulyacodyatvāt svayaṃ saiva prakāśate ||[39]

'That experience (*anubhava*) is the intrinsic nature (*ātman*) of that [awareness] and that experience is not of anything other [than awareness]. The restricted nature of the objects (*prativedyatva*) of perceptual awareness too consists of this fact of awareness having the intrinsic nature of experience. Awareness does not have any object of experience (*anubhāvya*) other [than the intrinsic nature of awareness] and there does not exist any other/further (*apara*) experience of awareness [by another awareness]. Because the state of having a subject of apprehension and an object of apprehension (*tasya*)[40] also faces similar objections (*codya*),[41] awareness alone shines forth by itself (*svayam*).'

In other words, the object of awareness is not some external object distinct from awareness. Instead, the object of all awareness, whether perceptual or otherwise, is the form (*ākāra*) or appearance (*ābhāsa*/*pratibhāsa*) within awareness or, more precisely, awareness itself. In this section, I analyse Dharmakīrti's central arguments for epistemic idealism. Dharmakīrti's proof of epistemic idealism involves four distinct steps:

(i) Establishing the theory of awareness with form (*sākārajñānavāda*)

(ii) Refuting Sautrāntika representationalism

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[39] PV_M 2.326-2.327, p. 217.

The second verse reappears with slight modifications in Dharmakīrti's *Pramāṇaviniścaya* (PVi 1.38, p. 35).

[40] This interpretation of the word '*tasya*' as '*grāhyagrāhakabhāvasya*' is derived from Manorathanandin's commentary (PVV 2.327, p. 217).

[41] This ablative clause concerns the non-dual structure of awareness. See § 5.3.2, pp. 287-292 for Dharmakīrti's refutation of subject-object duality.

(iii) Positive arguments for epistemic idealism

(iv) Living without external objects

Each subsequent step builds on the preceding step and consists of multiple arguments. Let us examine each of these steps one by one.

§ 4.3.1 *Establishing the theory of awareness with form*

Dharmakīrti inherits from the Abhidharma tradition a commitment to mereological reductionism according to which there does not exist any ultimately real complex whole over and above the parts. This, in turn, means that Dharmakīrti usually understands external objects as either partless atoms or atomic aggregates. As we have seen, this is very different from Akalaṅka's common-sensical understanding of external objects as medium-sized substances with perceptible properties. Dharmakīrti's atomistic conception of external objects must always be kept in mind while reading his critique of external objects. Despite defending a reductive analysis of external objects, Ābhidharmikas belonging to the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika tradition were realists about the object of perception: perception directly apprehends atomistic external objects.[42] In other words, the object of perception is some external object outside awareness. The first step in Dharmakīrti's proof of epistemic idealism is the refutation of this Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika theory by arguing that the object of perception is not the atomistic external object but instead a representation of the atomistic external object within awareness.

Dharmakīrti begins his defence of the theory of awareness with form (*sākārajñānavāda*) by refining his characterisation of a source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*).[43] Any action K usually has

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[42] Ronkin 2022.

[43] PV_M 2.301, p. 208.

several causes such as A, B, C, and D. Amongst these causes, the cause (say cause C) which gives rise to action K immediately without any intervention is known as the instrumental cause (*sādhana*).[44] In the context of epistemology, the instrumental cause alone counts as the source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) for the resulting (*phala*) knowledge of the object.[45] On the basis of this understanding of *pramāṇa*, external factors such as sense-faculty and object contact are rejected as candidates for perception qua *pramāṇa* because they are not the most proximate and most instrumental cause of the resulting perceptual awareness.[46] Instead, Dharmakīrti argues that the form (*ākāra*) of the object within awareness is the most proximate and most instrumental cause of the resulting perceptual awareness:

> ***tasmād yato 'syātmabhedād asyādhigatir ity ayam*** |
> ***kriyāyāḥ karmaniyamaḥ siddhā sā tatprasādhanā*** ||
> ***arthena ghaṭayaty enāṃ na hi muktvārtharūpatām*** |
> ***anyaḥ svabhedāj jñānasya bhedako 'pi kathaṃcana*** ||[47]
>
> 'Therefore, the distinctive intrinsic nature of awareness from which there is the restriction (*niyama*) of the action [of knowing] to a particular object (*karma*) as follows: 'This is the knowledge (*adhigati*) of this [object]', that distinctive intrinsic nature of awareness is established as the instrumental cause [i.e. *pramāṇa*] (*prasādhana*) of the action [of knowing]. This is because, even if something other than [form-possession] could somehow distinguish awareness due to its own distinctive nature, it would still be the case that nothing, except [awareness's] possession of the form of the external object (*artharūpatā*), can unite

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[44] PV_M 2.301, p. 208; PVV 2.301, pp. 208-209.

[45] This conception of *pramāṇa* is also found in the works of Jaina philosophers such as Hemacandra:
… *pramāṇaṃ pramāyāṃ sādhakatamam* … | (PM 1, p. 52)
'… A source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) is the most instrumental cause of the [resulting] knowledge (*pramā*).'

[46] PVV 2.301, pp. 208-209.

[47] PV_M 2.304-2.305, p. 209.

knowledge with the external object.'

These two verses are meant to answer the following question: what makes it the case that a given awareness is an awareness of blue rather than an awareness of yellow?[48] In other words, what explains the restricted nature of perceptual awareness? Dharmakīrti argues that the restricted nature of perceptual awareness can be explained neither by sense-faculty and object contact nor by the external object. Sense-faculty and object contact does not constitute a satisfactory explanation of the restricted nature of perceptual awareness because contact is a quality (*guṇa*)[49] which inheres in the entirety of the external object whereas perception usually apprehends only a part of the external object.[50] On the other hand, there are two reasons for rejecting the external object as the restrictor of perceptual awareness. Firstly, any explanation of perception's restriction to a given external object in terms of that very external object is circular because the explanation presupposes that which it is supposed to explain. Secondly, Dharmakīrti's theory of momentariness entails that the atomistic external object ceases to exist at the moment when perceptual awareness of the object arises. How can a presently non-existing external object restrict the content of a presently existing perceptual awareness?

These arguments cumulatively suggest that there must be something intrinsic to perceptual awareness which explains the restricted nature of perception and links perceptual awareness to the external object. Dharmakīrti argues that this feature must be awareness's possession of the form (*ākāra*) of the external object:[51]

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[48] PVV 2.305, pp. 209-210.

[49] Dharmakīrti's interlocutor is the Naiyāyika who understands contact as a quality (*guṇa*) inhering (*samavāya*) in the entire substance.

[50] Kellner 2017: 314.

[51] Ibid.

tasmāt prameyādhigateḥ sādhanaṃ meyarūpatā |

sādhane 'nyatra tatkarmasambandho na prasidhyati ||[52]

'Therefore, [awareness's] possession of the form of the object of knowledge (*meyarūpatā*) is the instrumental cause [i.e. *pramāṇa*] of the [resulting] knowledge of the object (*prameya*). If anything else was the instrumental cause [i.e. *pramāṇa*], then the relation between the action [of knowing] and the object [of knowledge] would not be established.'

In this way, Dharmakīrti defends the theory of awareness with form (*sākārajñānavāda*) as opposed to the theory of awareness without form (*nirākārajñānavāda*) current amongst his Brahmanical opponents.[53] The theory of awareness with form, when coupled with Dharmakīrti's theory of momentariness, entails that the object of perceptual awareness is not the external object itself but instead the form (*ākāra*) of the external object within awareness. This, in turn, leads to a representationalist theory of perception whereby our perception of the external object is always indirect because it is necessarily mediated by the representation of the external object within awareness.[54] A momentary atomistic external object transfers (*arpaṇa*) its form (*ākāra*) to perceptual awareness before going out of existence at moment M_1 and the perceptual awareness subsequently apprehends the transferred object-form at moment M_2. This Sautrāntika theory of awareness with form (*sākārajñānavāda*) and the resulting representationalist theory of perception is Dharmakīrti's first step away from common-sense realism according to which perception directly apprehends external objects.[55]

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[52] PV_M 2.306, p. 210.

[53] Kellner 2017: 313.

[54] Ibid.

[55] Ibid., 312-314.

§ 4.3.2 *Refuting Sautrāntika representationalism*

During the first step of his proof of epistemic idealism, Dharmakīrti argued that the form (*ākāra*) of the external object transferred to perceptual awareness rather than the external object itself is the object of perception.[56] During the second step of his proof, however, Dharmakīrti challenges the Sautrāntika assertion that the form (*ākāra*) internal to perceptual awareness resembles an external object outside perceptual awareness:

> ***kārthasaṃvid yad evedaṃ pratyakṣaṃ prativedanam*** |
>
> ***tad arthavedanaṃ kena tādrūpyād vyabhicāri tat*** ||[57]
>
> '[Yogācārin:] What is the awareness of the external object (*artha*)?
>
> [Sautrāntika:] This very perception which is a restricted awareness [by virtue of form-possession].
>
> [Yogācārin:] Why does that constitute an awareness of an external object?
>
> [Sautrāntika:] Because the form possessed by awareness resembles an external object.
>
> [Yogācārin:] That resemblance to an external object is erroneous (*vyabhicārin*).'

According to Sautrāntika representationalism, perception apprehends the form (*ākāra*) of the external object within awareness rather than the external object itself. This naturally gives rise to a skeptical question: how do we know that the form internal to perceptual awareness resembles some external object given that we never directly/independently perceive external objects? Any simplistic theory of invariable positive concomitance between the form of perceptual awareness and the form of the external object is problematic because there are uncontroversial cases, such as the perception of unreal hairs by a person afflicted with *timira* eye-disease, where the form internal to perceptual

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[56] PV_M 2.301-2.319, pp. 208-214.

[57] Ibid., 2.320, p. 215.

awareness does not resemble any external object. Having highlighted the failure of resemblance (*sārūpya*) in instances of pseudo-perception, Dharmakīrti argues that resemblance also fails to apply to genuine perception:

> ***sarūpayanti tat kena sthūlābhāsaṃ ca te 'ṇavaḥ*** |[58]
>
> 'And, how can those atoms resemble that [awareness] which has a gross (*sthūla*) appearance?'

The fundamental problem with Sautrāntika representationalism is that there does not exist any resemblance between ultimately real atomistic external objects and the gross medium-sized objects appearing in perceptual awareness. Applying the principle of mereological reductionism, Sautrāntikas conceptualise external objects as atomic property-particulars.[59] However, these atomic external objects do not appear in our perceptual awareness. Instead, spatially extended property-possessing substances usually appear in our perceptual awareness. Thus, the form internal to perceptual awareness does not resemble the atomic external objects accepted as ultimately real by the Sautrāntikas. Kellner labels this argument as 'the argument from incongruence' because it shows the incongruence between that which causes perception i.e. atomic property-particulars and that which appears in perception i.e. spatially extended property-possessing substances.[60] Putting these two arguments together, resemblance (*sārūpya*) fails in the case of both pseudo-perception and genuine perception. Thus, resemblance is not a sound reason for inferring the existence of imperceptible external objects as the cause of the perceptible forms appearing within perceptual awareness. Hence, the form possessed by awareness does not resemble any external object.[61]

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[58] Ibid., 2.321cd, p. 216.

[59] PV_M, p. 216, n. 1; Kellner 2017: 314.

[60] Kellner 2017: 314-315.

From verse 3.194 to verse 3.224 of the *Pramāṇavārttika*, Dharmakīrti refutes an alternative Sautrāntika theory according to which the cause of perceptual awareness is the atomic aggregate rather than the individual atoms (Kellner 2017: 315).

[61] PV_M 2.322, p. 216.

The Sautrāntika might object to Dharmakīrti's argument by pointing out that external objects must exist, otherwise there would not be any cause for the forms appearing in awareness.[62] Dharmakīrti responds to this objection as follows:

> ***kasyacit kiṃcid evāntarvāsanāyāḥ prabodhakam*** |
>
> ***tato dhiyāṃ viniyamo na bāhyārthavyapekṣayā*** ||[63]
>
> 'A given awareness actually awakens (*prabodhaka*) the inner latent mental impression (*vāsanā*) of some [other] awareness. There is restriction (*viniyama*) [of the forms] of awarenesses through that [awakening of inner latent mental impressions] and not due to dependence on external objects.'

There is no need to postulate the existence of external objects in order to provide a causal explanation for perception. This is because a purely internalist explanation of the arising of perceptual awareness is possible. The latent mental impression (*vāsanā*) of a past experience is awakened by a particular awareness and this awakened impression, in turn, gives rise to a new perceptual awareness. The form (*ākāra*) of this new perceptual awareness is determined by the kind of latent mental impression which gave rise to the perceptual awareness.[64] Thus, external objects are not required in order to provide a causal account of perception. In this way, Dharmakīrti shows that external objects are ontologically redundant within the Sautrāntika framework because perception merely apprehends a form internal to itself.

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[62] Kellner 2017: 315.

[63] PV_M 2.336, p. 220.

[64] Kellner 2017: 315.

§ 4.3.3 *Positive arguments for epistemic idealism*

Having shown that external objects serve no explanatory purpose within Sautrāntika representationalism, Dharmakīrti provides two unique arguments for epistemic idealism. These two arguments, without any clear historical precedent in the Buddhist tradition, constitute the core of Dharmakīrti's critique of external objects.[65] In his meticulous analysis, Iwata names the first argument 'the *saṃvedana* argument'.[66] The *saṃvedana* argument proceeds from a conceptual analysis of the nature of awareness (*jñāna*/s*aṃvedana*). As we have seen, Dharmakīrti analyses the intrinsic nature of awareness in terms of direct experience (*anubhava*).[67] Dharmakīrti argues that awareness cannot apprehend any external object outside itself precisely because awareness has the intrinsic nature of direct experience.[68] Dharmakīrti's auto-commentary on the *Pramāṇaviniścaya* explains how the analysis of awareness as direct experience logically entails the imperceptibility of external objects:

> *saṃvedanam ity api tasya tādātmyād tathāprathanaṃ na tad anyasya kasyacid ātmasaṃvedanavat | tato 'pi na tad arthāntare yuktam |*[69]
>
> 'What is called "awareness" (s*aṃvedana*) is just appearing-in-a-certain-way (*tathāprathana*) because awareness has that nature. Awareness is not of anything else just like self-reflexive awareness (*ātmasaṃvedana*) [is not of anything else]. For this reason too, it is not possible that awareness applies to any object other than awareness.'[70]

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[65] Ibid., 316.

[66] Iwata 1991: 9-15.

[67] See the beginning of § 4.3.

[68] Kellner 2015: 113.

[69] PVi 1.54, p. 42, ll. 3-4.

[70] I largely follow Kellner's (2015: 112-113) translation with some minor changes.

This short prose passage supplies the missing premises of Dharmakīrti's *saṃvedana* argument. Dharmakīrti begins by defining the intrinsic nature of awareness:

P_1 Awareness has the intrinsic nature of experience (*anubhava*).

This experience is further analysed as follows:

P_2 Experience is appearing-in-a-certain-way (*tathāprathana*).

To assert that awareness has the intrinsic nature of experience is simply to assert that awareness has the intrinsic nature of appearing-in-a-certain-way. This conceptual analysis is followed by a grammatical-cum-philosophical analysis of the notion of appearing:

P_3 Appearing-in-a-certain-way is an intransitive action rather than a transitive action.

The verbal root '*prath*' as well as equivalents such as '*bhā*', '*bhās*', and '*khyā*', meaning 'to appear', are intransitive verbal roots in Sanskrit. Nevertheless, the deeper philosophical point is not contingent on the subtleties of Sanskrit grammar. Instead, Dharmakīrti is arguing that awareness qua appearing-in-a-certain-way is a self-sufficient action. The action of appearing does not require any object (*karman*) external to itself unlike transitive actions such as reading and pushing. While it makes sense to ask 'what did you read?' or 'what did you push?', it is meaningless to ask 'what did you appear?'.[71] These three premises together entail the following conclusion:

C_1 Awareness is an intransitive action rather than a transitive action.

This, in turn, is equivalent to the following:

C_2 Awareness does not have any external object outside itself.

This is a novel and interesting argument which employs logical and conceptual analysis of the nature of awareness to show that awareness cannot apprehend external objects. We might object that awareness qua knowing (*jñāna*) is obviously a transitive action as shown by the transitive nature of Sanskrit verbal roots such as '*vid*', '*jñā*', '*budh*', and so on. We can, after all, ask

[71] Kellner 2015: 113.

the question: 'what did you know?' Thus, our ordinary understanding of awareness qua source of knowledge supports the transitive nature of awareness. This, in turn, suggests that awareness must have some object (*karman*) outside itself. However, Dharmakīrti and his commentators argue that our ordinary understanding of awareness, though pragmatically useful, is philosophically misguided. Instead, Dharmakīrti proposes a more accurate conceptual analysis of the intrinsic nature of awareness as appearing-in-a-certain-way irrespective of how we use the word 'awareness' (*jñāna*) in our ordinary life.[72] While our ordinary linguistic and epistemic practices are pragmatically useful conventional truths (*saṃvṛtisat*), the definition of awareness as appearing-in-a-certain-way (*tathāprathana*) is meant to capture the ultimately real (*paramārthasat*) intrinsic nature of awareness. At the level of ultimate reality, awareness simply arises with the intrinsic nature of appearing just like light has the intrinsic nature of luminosity. Insofar as it has the intrinsic nature of intransitive appearing, awareness cannot apprehend any external object outside itself.[73] Thus, Dharmakīrti's *saṃvedana* argument strives to show that mind-independent external objects cannot become objects of awareness given that the intrinsic nature of awareness is intransitive appearing.[74]

Dharmakīrti's second argument for epistemic idealism is the famous *sahopalambhaniyama* inference. Just like the *saṃvedana* argument, the *sahopalambhaniyama* inference involves an analysis of the intrinsic nature of awareness. At the heart of this complex argument, there lies the simple observation that all of our epistemic evidence for the existence of so-called mind-independent external objects is necessarily mediated by the mind. This argument occurs once in the *Pramāṇaviniścaya* and twice in the *Pramāṇavārttika*. Despite many similarities,

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[72] Ibid.

[73] Ibid.

Later Buddhist philosophers such as Śāntarakṣita argue that external objects, insofar as they are insentient (*jaḍa*), cannot appear in awareness because 'appearing' requires the nature of 'shining forth' (*prakāśa*) which belongs exclusively to awareness (TSa 2000; Kellner 2015: 113).

[74] Kellner 2015: 112-113.

there are subtle, yet important, differences between these different versions of the argument. It is useful to begin with the *Pramāṇaviniścaya*'s lucid formulation of the *sahopalambhaniyama* inference:

> ***sahopalambhaniyamād abhedo nīlataddhiyoḥ*** |
>
> *na hi bhinnāvabhāsitve 'py arthāntaram eva rūpaṃ nīlasyānubhavāt tayoḥ sahopalambhaniyamād dvicandrādivat | na hi anayor ekākārānupalambhe 'nyopalambho 'sti* |[75]
>
> 'There is absence of difference [i.e. identity] (*abheda*) between blue and the awareness of blue because of the rule of simultaneous perception (*sahopalambhaniyama*).
>
> This is because, even though they appear to be different, visual form (*rūpa*) [such as blue] is not actually distinct from the experience of blue because of the rule of simultaneous perception of those two just like [the simultaneous perception of] two moons etc. This is because, when there is the non-perception of one of these two forms, there does not exist any perception of the other form as well.'

Dharmakīrti's verse concisely states the intended conclusion of the inference: the identity of any object such as blue and the awareness of that object. The inferential reason (*hetu*/*liṅga*) supporting this conclusion is *sahopalambhaniyama*, literally 'the rule (*niyama*) of simultaneous (*saha*) perception (*upalambha*)'. At the most basic level, *sahopalambhaniyama* means that object and awareness are always perceived simultaneously with each other. However, following classical Buddhist commentators, Kellner notes that the word '*saha*' in *sahopalambhaniyama* should not be interpreted as mere simultaneity.[76] This is because mere simultaneity does not entail identity given that ontologically distinct objects can sometimes be perceived simultaneously. This is why the word

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[75] PVi 1.54ab, p. 39, l. 14, p. 40, ll. 1-3.

[76] Kellner 2015: 114; Iwata 1991: 66-103.

'*niyama*' in *sahopalambhaniyama* is crucial: the word '*niyama*' highlights the invariable and necessary nature of the joint perception of object and awareness over and above any accidental simultaneity.[77] This means that the *sahopalambhaniyama* inference is based on the necessary joint perception of object and awareness rather than their accidental simultaneous perception. Hence, it is more accurate to translate the compound '*sahopalambhaniyama*' as 'necessary joint perception' rather than 'the rule of simultaneous perception'.

However, what does it mean to say that object and awareness are necessarily perceived jointly? In the *Pramāṇavārttika*, Dharmakīrti analyses this single assertion into two distinct propositions:

> ***nārtho 'saṃvedanaḥ kaścid anarthaṃ vāpi vedanam*** |
>
> ***dṛṣṭaṃ saṃvedyamānaṃ tat tayor nāsti vivekitā*** ||[78]
>
> 'No object whatsoever is seen to be experienced without awareness and no awareness whatsoever is seen to be experienced without an object. Therefore, there does not exist any difference (*vivekitā*) between object and awareness.'

The first three *pādas* of this verse analyse the inferential reason of necessary joint perception (*sahopalambhaniyama*) into two distinct propositions:

S_1 Whenever an object is experienced, an awareness is experienced.

S_2 Whenever an awareness is experienced, an object is experienced.

According to proposition S_1, whenever I perceive an object such as blue, I am necessarily aware of my perception of blue as well. According to proposition S_2, whenever I am aware of my perception

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[77] Kellner 2015: 114.

This crucial point is clarified in the *Pramāṇavārttika* (PV_M 2.388, p. 235) where the word '*niyama*' is glossed with the adverbial instrumental '*niyamena*' meaning 'as a rule, invariably, necessarily'.

[78] PV_M 2.390, p. 235.

of blue, I necessarily perceive the blue object as well. If both propositions S_1 and S_2 were shown to be true, then object and awareness would satisfy the requirement of necessary joint perception (*sahopalambhaniyama*). This, in turn, would entail the identity of object and awareness because there does not exist any necessary joint perception of distinct entities such as blue and yellow.[79] This is because we frequently perceive distinct entities such as blue and yellow separately from each other. By contrast, when we do not perceive entity X without entity Y and entity Y without entity X in any situation whatsoever, it is reasonable to conclude that entity X and entity Y are actually identical with each other. Thus, if both propositions S_1 and S_2 were shown to be true, the identity of object and awareness would follow as a consequence. In addition to the thesis (*pratijñā*) and the probans (*sādhana*), the classical Indian inference requires an example (*dṛṣṭānta*). The following half-verse from the *Pramāṇavārttika* provides a relevant example:

> ***bhedaś ca bhrāntavijñānair dṛśyetendāv ivādvaye*** |[80]
>
> 'And, people with erroneous awareness would perceive a difference [between object and awareness] just like people with erroneous awareness [i.e. people afflicted with *timira* eye-disease] perceive a difference [i.e. two moons] even when there exists only one moon.'

A person afflicted with *timira* eye-disease sees two moons in the sky.[81] However, there is only one moon in the sky. Thus, the two moons appearing in the diseased individual's pseudo-perception are not actually two distinct entities but instead one and the same entity appearing as two. In the same way, a blue object and an awareness of the blue object appear to be two distinct entities in our ordinary perception. Nevertheless, this appearance of a distinction between object and awareness is illusory because awareness simply apprehends a form (*ākāra*) internal to itself at the level of

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[79] Ibid., 2.389cd, p. 235.

[80] Ibid., 2.389ab, p. 235.

[81] PVV 2.389ab, p. 235.

ultimate reality.

Having understood the overall structure of the *sahopalambhaniyama* inference, let us now examine the plausibility of the two propositions S_1 and S_2. Intuitively, it seems that proposition S_2 is more plausible than proposition S_1. This is because one's awareness of a given perception necessarily involves awareness of the object of perception.[82] For example, when I am aware of my perception of blue, I am inevitably also aware of the object of my perception, namely, blue. To deny proposition S_2, we would to have imagine a contentless perception devoid of any intentional object. Awareness of such a contentless perception would count as an example of object-less awareness. However, it is difficult to imagine any completely contentless perception. Instead, proposition S_1 is the more controversial premise of the *sahopalambhaniyama* inference. It is unclear why every perception of an object must be accompanied by an awareness of the perception as well.[83] On the contrary, we seem to frequently perceive external objects without simultaneously being aware of our perception of those objects. Dharmakīrti justifies proposition S_1 as follows:

> ***apratyakṣopalambhasya nārthadṛṣṭiḥ prasidhyati*** ||[84]
>
> 'The perception of an object is not established for someone who does not perceive his own perception.'

This requirement, dubbed the 'knowledge-requirement' by Kellner, states that each and every awareness must be known or apprehended in some way.[85] Dharmakīrti argues that knowledge of awareness is necessary for establishing (*pra*+*sidh*) knowledge of the object. In other words,

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[82] Kellner 2015: 114.

[83] Ibid.

[84] PVi 1.54cd, p. 40, l. 13.

[85] Kellner 2011: 420.

knowledge of awareness is a necessary pre-condition for knowledge of the object of awareness.[86] However, why should we accept this seemingly arbitrary knowledge-requirement? Dharmakīrti justifies the knowledge-requirement as follows:

> *na hi viṣayasattayā viṣayopalambhaḥ kiṃ tarhi tadupalambhasattayā | sā cāprāmāṇikā na sattānibandhanān vyavahārān anuruṇaddhi | tadaprasiddhau viṣayasyāpy aprasiddhir ity astaṅgataṃ viśvaṃ syāt sato 'py asiddhau sattāvyavahārāyogyatvāt | tasmān nānupalabhamānaḥ kasyacit saṃvedanaṃ vedayate nāma kiṃcit |*[87]
>
> 'For there is the perception of an object not due to the existence of the object but instead due to the existence of the perception of the object. And, when the existence of the perception of the object is not epistemically reliable (*aprāmāṇikā*), it cannot be conducive to worldly activities dependent on the existence [of the perception of the object]. When the perception of the object is not established, the object too is not established. As a result, everything would go astray (*astaṅgata*) because an entity, though real, cannot be customarily (*vyavahāra*) regarded as existent as long as it remains unestablished. Therefore, someone who is not apprehending the awareness (*saṃvedana*) of some object does not actually apprehend any object.'

Dharmakīrti argues that any given object can only be known when the awareness of the object is known. Thus, in the absence of knowledge of awareness, knowledge of the object would remain unestablished. Without knowledge of the object, however, the entire range of worldly activities presupposing knowledge of the object would become impossible.[88] This, in turn, is an absurd consequence because we do act on objects in the ordinary world! In order to avoid this absurd consequence, we must accept the knowledge-requirement: every awareness must be known in some

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[86] Ibid.

[87] PVi 1.54cd, p. 41, ll. 1-5.

[88] Kellner 2011: 420-421.

way or the other in order for the object of awareness to be established. This, in turn, entails that proposition S_1 is true because every awareness of an object must necessarily be accompanied by the awareness of the awareness as well. However, Kellner has shown that Dharmakīrti's argument for the knowledge-requirement is logically invalid because the fact that knowledge of any object presupposes the *existence* of awareness does not entail that the awareness itself must be *known* in order for the object to be known.[89] As such, it is unclear why perceptual awareness must be known/apprehended in order to know/apprehend the object of perceptual awareness. Phenomenologically speaking, we do seem to perceive various objects without any further awareness of our perception. Hence, proposition S_1 is implausible because it is contingent on the seemingly dubious knowledge-requirement.

Insofar as it involves the implausible proposition S_1, the *Pramāṇaviniścaya's* version of the *sahopalambhaniyama* inference might be characterised as strong.[90] By contrast, a weaker version of the *sahopalambhaniyama* inference is found in the *Pramāṇavārttika*:

> ***darśanopādhirahitasyāgrahāt tadgrahe grahāt*** |
>
> ***darśanaṃ nīlanirbhāsaṃ nārtho bāhyo 'sti kevalaḥ*** ||[91]
>
> 'Because of the non-perception [of an object such as blue] without the additional qualifier (*upādhi*) of awareness (*darśana*) and because of the perception [of an object such as blue]

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[89] Ibid., 421.

For a rejoinder to such objections, see Lo (2018: 553-576).

[90] In this context, 'strong' and 'weak' refer to the ontological and epistemological commitments implicit in the premises rather than the plausibility of the conclusion. In other words, everything else being equal, the strong version of an argument is less plausible than the weak version of the same argument.

[91] PV_P 3.336, p. 388.

I slightly prefer Prajñākaragupta's reading of the adjective '*kevalaḥ*' qualifying the 'external object' (*bāhyārtha*) (PV_P 3.336, p. 388) over Manorathanandin's reading of the adverb '*kevalam*' (PV_M 2.335, pp. 219-220).

> when there is the perception of the additional qualifier of awareness, awareness has the appearance of [objects such as] blue. There does not exist any external object by itself (*kevala*).'[92]

This weak version of the argument is identical to the strong version discussed above except for the addition of the word 'additional qualifier' (*upādhi*).[93] While this might seem like a trivial difference, it leads to a subtle reformulation of proposition S_1:

S_1' Whenever an object is experienced, it is experienced as qualified by awareness.[94]

The *Pramāṇaviniścaya's* strong version of the *sahopalambhaniyama* inference had claimed that awareness is necessarily apprehended whenever the object of awareness is apprehended. While this strong claim seems difficult to justify, the *Pramāṇavārttika's* weak version of the *sahopalambhaniyama* inference simply claims that an object is necessarily apprehended as qualified by awareness whenever it is apprehended. As such, this weak version does not presuppose the knowledge-requirement according to which each and every awareness must be known/apprehended in some way. Instead, the revised proposition S_1' merely asserts that every perception of a so-called external object is necessarily qualified by awareness.[95] Prime facie, the revised proposition S_1' is more plausible than the earlier proposition S_1. Though proposition S_1' might be weaker, this weak version of the *sahopalambhaniyama* inference nevertheless aims to establish the same conclusion as the strong version: the object of awareness is not distinct from awareness. In other words, awareness does not apprehend any mind-independent external object outside itself.[96]

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[92] I follow Kellner's (2015: 115) translation of '*upādhi*' as 'additional qualifier'.

[93] Kellner 2015: 115.

[94] Ibid.

[95] Ibid.

[96] Ibid.

While both versions of the *sahopalambhaniyama* inference reject external objects as the object of awareness, an alternative interpretation of the *sahopalambhaniyama* inference is sanctioned by Dharmakīrti himself:

> ***asty eṣa viduṣāṃ vādo bāhyaṃ tv āśritya varṇyate*** |
>
> ***dvairūpyaṃ sahasaṃvittiniyamāt tac ca sidhyati*** ||[97]
>
> 'This [theory of awareness-only (*vijñaptimātratāvāda*)] is the theory of the wise [Yogācārins]. However, [awareness's] possession of two forms [i.e. own-form and object-form] is described by resorting to the external object [accepted by the Sautrāntikas]. And, [awareness's] possession of two forms is established through the necessary joint awareness [of object and awareness].'[98]

This verse is important for two reasons. Firstly, it is one of the very rare mentions of the sliding-scale of analysis found in Dharmakīrti's own treatises. Dharmakīrti states that the Yogācāra theory of awareness-only (*vijñaptimātratā*) is the theory accepted by wise people. Nevertheless, Dharmakīrti sometimes speaks of awareness possessing the form of an external object by temporarily accepting the existence of atomic external particulars postulated by the Sautrāntikas. This shows the hierarchical ordering of Yogācāra idealism and Sautrāntika external realism: while the latter is useful in certain contexts for particular purposes, the former is the theory of the wise (*viduṣāṃ vādaḥ*).[99] Thus, this verse lends credence to the sliding-scale of analysis proposed by classical and modern commentators of Dharmakīrti. Secondly, the latter half of the verse argues that the necessary point perception (*sahasaṃvittiniyama/sahopalambhaniyama*) of object and awareness establishes the twofold nature of awareness, namely, the fact that awareness possesses both an own-

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[97] PV_M 2.398, p. 238.

[98] The words within square brackets have been supplied from Manorathanandin's commentary (PVV 2.398, p. 238).

[99] Dunne 2004: 53-64; PV_M 2.398, p. 238.

form as well as the form of an external object. This might seem puzzling because it suggests that the *sahopalambhaniyama* inference, usually interpreted as an argument for idealism, can also be used to prove that awareness possesses the form of an external object! On the basis of this verse, Kellner claims that "the [*sahopalambhaniyama*] inference does not refute external objects on all interpretations he [=Dharmakīrti] himself considers legitimate".[100] In my view, however, this confusion can be avoided if we distinguish between epistemic idealism and metaphysical idealism and recognise that Dharmakīrti is committed to the former rather than the latter.[101] According to the above verse, the *sahopalambhaniyama* inference proves that awareness possesses two forms (*ākāra*): a subjective apprehending (*grāhaka*) form and an objective apprehended (*grāhya*) form.[102] Crucially, both these forms are internal to awareness. In other words, the *sahopalambhaniyama* inference demonstrates that the object of awareness is internal to awareness i.e. epistemic idealism. However, the *sahopalambhaniyama* inference does not prove metaphysical idealism, namely, the view that external objects do not exist. As such, the *sahopalambhaniyama* inference is ontologically neutral because it can be fleshed out in terms of both Sautrāntika external realism and Yogācāra-Vijñānavāda metaphysical idealism. This is precisely why Dharmakīrti says that the twofold nature of awareness can be described by resorting to external objects.[103] In other words, the twofold nature of awareness is consistent with Sautrāntika external realism. Despite this ontological neutrality, the *sahopalambhaniyama* inference is epistemologically decisive because it shows that the object of perception must be internal to perceptual awareness. As Arnold has argued, Dharmakīrti regards epistemic idealism as precisely the position shared by the Sautrāntika and the Yogācāra levels of analysis.[104] Thus, the above verse does not contradict an idealist reading of the

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[100] Kellner 2015: 112.

[101] Arnold 2008: 22.

[102] Krasser 1994: 650.

[103] PV_M 2.398, p. 238.

[104] Arnold 2008: 17-18.

sahopalambhaniyama inference because the *sahopalambhaniyama* inference merely proves the identity of object and awareness from their necessary joint perception.[105] This simply means that the object of awareness is internal to awareness: an epistemic idealist conclusion.

In summary, the *sahopalambhaniyama* inference is best interpreted as an epistemological argument for epistemic idealism. Kellner's observation that the *sahopalambhaniyama* inference "does not refute external objects on all interpretations" is trivially true because this epistemological argument was never designed to refute the ontological existence of external objects.[106] The upshot of my proposed interpretation is that the different versions of the *sahopalambhaniyama* inference found in Dharmakīrti's treatises can be viewed as a fine-tuning of the premises in order to prove the same conclusion: identity of object and awareness.

§ 4.3.4 *Living without external objects*

Dharmakīrti's idealist theory of perception must explain several seemingly realist features of our ordinary perception. Firstly, our ordinary perception seems to apprehend external objects. Why does the object of perception appear to be external to awareness if it is actually internal to awareness? Secondly, we ordinarily distinguish between genuine perception and pseudo-perception on the basis of whether the object of perception does or does not correspond to some mind-independent external object. How would we distinguish between genuine perception and pseudo-perception in the absence of external objects? Finally, it is unclear how there could be widespread intersubjective agreement between the perceptions of different perceivers in the absence

[105] PVV 2.336, p. 220.

[106] Kellner 2015: 112.

of external objects.[107] Dharmakīrti must provide a purely mental explanation of these features of our ordinary perception. In the absence of such an explanation, Dharmakīrti's idealist theory of perception would be less plausible than a realist theory of perception.

Dharmakīrti's overall strategy involves explaining away some features of our ordinary perception as being the product of ignorance (*avidyā*) and explaining other features of our ordinary perception in terms of the awakening of latent mental impressions (*vāsanā*).[108] The fact that perception seems to apprehend objects external to awareness is an erroneous (*bhrānta*) appearance resulting from beginningless ignorance (*avidyā*):[109]

> ***svabhāvabhūtatadrūpasaṃvidāropaviplavāt*** |
>
> ***nīlāder anubhūtākhyā nānubhūteḥ parātmanaḥ*** ||[110]
>
> 'There is the appearance (*ākhyā*) of the experience of objects such as blue due to the cognitive distortion (*viplava*)[111] consisting of the superimposition (*āropa*) of the awareness of the object-form, which is the intrinsic nature [of awareness], [onto external objects]. The appearance of the experience of objects such as blue is not due to the experience of something whose nature is distinct [from awareness].'

Ignorance (*avidyā*), which is the fundamental condition of our existence in the cycle of

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[107] Ibid., 115.

[108] Ibid.

[109] PV_M 2.389ab, p. 235; PVV 2.337, p. 220.

[110] PV_M 2.432, p. 247.

[111] Following Yiannopoulos (2020: 284), I translate the synonyms '*viplava*' and '*upaplava*' as 'cognitive distortion'.

transmigration (*saṃsāra*), leads to a kind of systematic cognitive distortion (*viplava*).[112] This systematic cognitive distortion involves the outward projection of an object-form (*viṣayākāra*) internal to awareness. This, in turn, leads to the construction of an illusory external world.[113]

Dharmakīrti explains other features of our ordinary perception such as the distinction between genuine perception and pseudo-perception, the spatiotemporally restricted nature of perception, and the intersubjective agreement between the perceptions of different perceivers in terms of the awakening of latent mental impressions (*vāsanā*).[114] Every experience, perceptual or otherwise, leaves an impression in one's mental stream (*saṃtāna*).[115] This latent mental impression is awakened at a later time when the appropriate set of causal factors are present. This awakened impression, in turn, gives rise to an awareness having the same nature. This mechanism of latent mental impressions explains the difference between genuine perception and pseudo-perception:

> *upaplavavāsanāvisaṃdhidoṣād aprabuddhasyāpy anāśvāsikaṃ vyavahāram utpaśyann ekam apramāṇam ācakṣītāparam āsaṃsāram aviśliṣṭānubandhaṃ dṛḍhavāsanātvād iha vyavahārāvisaṃvādāpekṣayā pramāṇam* |[116]
>
> 'Seeing the untrustworthy/unreliable (*anāśvāsika*) worldly activity (*vyavahāra*) of even an unawakened [awareness] because of a cognitively distorted (*upaplava*) latent mental impression's fault of absence of connection (*visaṃdhi*) [with successful worldly activity], one might call one [awareness] a non-source of knowledge (*apramāṇa*). On the other hand, one

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[112] Kellner 2015: 107.

See § 5.3.3, pp. 292-297 for a detailed analysis of the nature and function of ignorance (*avidyā*) within Dharmakīrti's philosophical system.

[113] Kellner 2015: 107.

[114] PV_M 2.336, p. 220; Kellner 2015: 115.

[115] Kellner 2015: 115.

[116] PVi 1.58cd, p. 43, l. 14, p. 44, ll. 1-2.

might call another [awareness], which is not separated from its result/consequence (*anubandha*) till the cycle of transmigration (*saṃsāra*) [continues], a source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) on the basis of its non-contradiction with worldly activity as a result of [arising from] a strong (*dṛḍha*) latent mental impression.'

A genuine perception arises from the awakening of a strong (*dṛḍha*) latent mental impression which is conducive to successful worldly activity (*arthakriyā*). By contrast, a pseudo-perception arises from the awakening of a cognitively distorted latent mental impression which lacks any connection with successful worldly activity.[117] The spatiotemporally restricted nature of perception and the intersubjective agreement between the perceptions of different perceivers can similarly be explained in terms of the awakening of latent mental impressions. As Vasubandhu argues in his *Viṃśikā*, the spatiotemporally restricted nature of perception does not prove the existence of external objects because dream awareness is spatiotemporally restricted despite obviously lacking any corresponding external object.[118] Similarly, Vasubandhu argues that intersubjective agreement between the perceptions of different perceivers does not prove the existence of external objects because the perceptions of different hell-beings apprehend the same river of pus (*pūyanadī*) even when no such river of pus actually exists outside their minds.[119] In this way, Buddhist idealists such as Vasubandhu and Dharmakīrti explain various features of our ordinary perception in purely mental terms without postulating the existence of external objects. This explanatory power, in turn, bolsters the plausibility of epistemic idealism as a theory about the object of perception.

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[117] Kellner 2015: 115.

[118] Vi 3ab, p. 189.

[119] Ibid., 3bcd, p. 189.

Within both the Buddhist and the Jaina tradition, philosophical reflection sometimes involved cosmological speculation regarding supernatural realms.

§ 4.4 Akalaṅka's Proof of Common-Sense Realism

As we have seen, Akalaṅka defends common-sense realism which involves a commitment to both:

(i) Metaphysical Realism: There exist mind-independent external objects.

(ii) Epistemic Realism: These mind-independent external objects are the object of perception.

Akalaṅka devotes a considerable number of verses to refuting both Vasubandhu's metaphysical idealism as well as Dharmakīrti's epistemic idealism.[120] Akalaṅka's proof of common-sense realism involves two distinct, yet related, argumentative strategies:

(a) Refuting Dharmakīrti's arguments for epistemic idealism

(b) Positive arguments for common-sense realism

Both strategies involve many different arguments. Let us examine them one by one.

§ 4.4.1 *Refuting Dharmakīrti's Arguments for Epistemic Idealism*

§ 4.4.1.1 *Refuting the sahopalambhaniyama inference*

As we have seen, Dharmakīrti employs two main argumentative strategies to prove epistemic idealism. The first strategy is fundamentally intra-Buddhist because it presupposes the Abhidharmic framework of mereological reductionism and momentariness. From this Buddhist starting point, Dharmakīrti argues that a representationalist theory of perception based on awareness with form (*sākārajñāna*) is superior to direct realism based on formless awareness (*nirākārajñāna*).

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[120] Akalaṅka provides a concise summary of Vasubandhu's metaphysical arguments against the existence of external objects (NV 86cd-88ab). This shows Akalaṅka's familiarity with the works of Buddhist philosophers besides Diṅnāga and Dharmakīrti. Akalaṅka's refutation of Vasubandhu's metaphysical idealism is beyond the scope of this thesis.

This, in turn, is followed by a critique of the Sautrāntika postulation of imperceptible external objects. On the other hand, Dharmakīrti's second argumentative strategy does not presuppose the distinctively Buddhist framework of mereological reductionism and momentariness. This second strategy includes the *saṃvedana* argument and the *sahopalambhaniyama* inference. Dharmakīrti's first argumentative strategy does not greatly trouble Akalaṅka because he does not accept the principle of mereological reductionism and the theory of momentariness presupposed by those arguments. From Akalaṅka's point of view, Dharmakīrti's second argumentative strategy is far more troubling because it purports to prove idealism from neutral premises acceptable to non-Buddhists. This is why Akalaṅka devotes most of his energy to refuting the *sahopalambhaniyama* inference.

Akalaṅka's clearest critique of the *sahopalambhaniyama* inference is found in his *Aṣṭaśatī*, a commentary on Samantabhadra's *Āptamīmāṃsā*. While Samantabhadra's verse simply challenges the Yogācāra-Vijñānavāda theory of awareness-only (*vijñaptimātratā*) without mentioning the *sahopalambhaniyama* inference, Akalaṅka's commentary on the verse undertakes a detailed examination of the *sahopalambhaniyama* inference.[121] Akalaṅka begins by providing a clear and concise paraphrase of the *sahopalambhaniyama* inference found in Dharmakīrti's *Pramāṇaviniścaya*.[122] Having stated the *sahopalambhaniyama* inference, Akalaṅka notes the following:

> *siddhe 'pi pratiṣedhaikānte vijñaptimātraṃ na sidhyet tadasādhanāt* |[123]
> 'Even if the one-sided (*ekānta*) refutation [of difference between object and awareness] was established, awareness-only (*vijñaptimātra*) would not be established because of the absence of proof (*asādhana*) of awareness-only.'

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[121] ĀM 80; AŚ 80, p. 73.

[122] AŚ 80, p. 73.

[123] Ibid.

Akalaṅka argues that the *sahopalambhaniyama* inference, even if it was successful, would merely prove the absence of difference between object and awareness rather than the theory of awareness-only (*vijñaptimātratā*) and the consequent non-existence of external objects. This remark suggests that Akalaṅka, just like Manorathanandin, is aware of the distinction between different kinds of idealism. Beyond this, it is debatable whether this remark shows that Akalaṅka views Dharmakīrti's *sahopalambhaniyama* inference as a failed argument for metaphysical idealism rather than as a possible argument for epistemic idealism. In my view, Akalaṅka's remark is best understood as a commentarial technique for linking his refutation of Dharmakīrti's *sahopalambhaniyama* inference with Samantabhadra's refutation of the Yogācāra-Vijñānavāda theory of awareness-only (*vijñaptimātratā*).[124] Nevertheless, it is very likely that Akalaṅka considers metaphysical idealism and epistemic idealism to be two sides of the same coin because both positions refuse to accept that perception apprehends mind-independent external objects.[125] Akalaṅka's critique targets this very refusal to accept mind-independent external objects as the object of perception.

Akalaṅka begins by challenging Dharmakīrti's assertion that necessary joint perception (*sahopalambhaniyama*) of two or more entities logically entails their identity:

> *sahopalambhaniyamaś ca syād bhedaś ca syāt | kiṃ vipratiṣidhyeta*
>
> *svahetupratiniyamasambhavāt* |[126]
>
> 'There might be both necessary joint perception (*sahopalambhaniyama*) as well as difference

[124] ĀM 80.

[125] The distinction between metaphysical idealism and epistemic idealism is not uncontroversial in modern analytic philosophy. Scholars such as Ewing (2012: 3-4) reject the distinction between metaphysical idealism and epistemic idealism and instead propose a distinction between metaphysical and epistemological arguments for idealism itself understood as a metaphysical position (Guyer and Horstmann 2022).

[126] AŚ 80, p. 73.

(*bheda*). Why should this be rejected given that it is possible [for two or more entities] to be restricted by their respective causes [such that they are necessarily perceived jointly]?'

The phenomenon requiring explanation is the necessary joint perception of any two entities such as X and Y. Dharmakīrti argues that the necessary joint perception of entity X and entity Y entails their identity. However, Akalaṅka proposes an alternative explanation: entity X and entity Y are necessarily perceived jointly due to the power of their respective causes. Akalaṅka's alternative explanation is consistent with entity X and entity Y being distinct from each other. Given that this alternative explanation is possible, Dharmakīrti's inference of identity from necessary joint perception is logically fallacious. While Akalaṅka's *Aṣṭaśatī* merely proposes a possible alternative explanation, Akalaṅka's *Nyāyaviniścaya* provides a more detailed critique of the invariable concomitance between necessary joint perception and identity underlying the *sahopalambhaniyama* inference:

sahopalambhaniyamān nābhedo nīlataddhiyoḥ |

viruddhāsiddhasaṃdigdhavyatirekānvayatvataḥ ||[127]

'The absence of difference [i.e. identity] (*abheda*) between blue and the awareness of blue does not follow from their necessary joint perception (*sahopalambhaniyama*) because the positive concomitance (*anvaya*) and the negative concomitance (*vyatireka*) [between necessary joint perception and identity] is contradicted [by counterexamples] (*viruddha*), unproved (*asiddha*), and doubtful (*saṃdigdha*).'

Akalaṅka's verse challenges Dharmakīrti's *sahopalambhaniyama* inference by rejecting the

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[127] NV 83cd-84ab.

Śāstrī's edition of NV 84ab reads '*vyatirekānanvayatvataḥ*' in the second *pāda* of the verse. Since this reading is hypermetric, I have chosen Vādirājasūri's metrically correct and philosophically superior reading '*vyatirekānvayatvataḥ*' (NVV, p. 357, ll. 20-21).

invariable positive and negative concomitance between necessary joint perception (*sahopalambhaniyama*) and identity (*abheda*) presupposed by the inference. Akalaṅka argues that this invariable concomitance between necessary joint perception and identity is logically invalid for the following three reasons:

(i) It is contradicted by counterexamples (*viruddha*).

(ii) It is unproved (*asiddha*).

(iii) It is doubtful (*saṃdigdha*).

Due to the terse nature of the *kārikā* style of composition, Akalaṅka's verse does not explain how and why the invariable concomitance between necessary joint perception and identity is contradicted by counterexamples, unproved, and doubtful. Fortunately, Vādirājasūri's commentary provides a detailed analysis of all three objections. Let us examine each of these objections one by one.

Akalaṅka's first and most important objection to the *sahopalambhaniyama* inference argues that the invariable concomitance between necessary joint perception (*sahopalambhaniyama*) and identity (*abheda*) is contradicted by counterexamples (*viruddha*). Vādirājasūri provides a counterexample showing how two distinct entities such as entity X and entity Y can be perceived simultaneously due to their respective causes.[128] Vādirājasūri gives the risqué example of a lover simultaneously perceiving the two breasts of his beloved.[129] However, this simultaneous perception of the two breasts obviously does not prove that the two breasts are identical with each other! Rather, the two breasts are distinct from each other but happen to be perceived simultaneously due to various accidental causes. This example shows how two ultimately distinct entities can be perceived simultaneously. This, in turn, constitutes a counterexample to the invariable

[128] NVV, p. 358, ll. 2-3.

[129] Ibid., p. 358, ll. 4-5.

concomitance between *sahopalambhaniyama* and identity. However, Vādirājasūri's counterexample is problematic because it uncharitably interprets *sahopalambhaniyama* as simultaneous perception. If *sahopalambhaniyama* merely referred to simultaneous perception, then the *sahopalambhaniyama* inference would not be sound because ontologically distinct objects such as two breasts are sometimes perceived simultaneously. However, *sahopalambhaniyama* actually refers to necessary joint perception: awareness is necessarily perceived whenever the object is perceived and, similarly, the object is necessarily perceived whenever awareness is perceived.[130] Though the two breasts of a woman are *occasionally* jointly perceived, they are not *necessarily* jointly perceived. This is because it is possible to perceive one breast without perceiving the other. Thus, the occasional joint perception of two breasts does not constitute *sahopalambhaniyama* understood as necessary joint perception. As such, Vādirājasūri's example is not a successful counterexample to the invariable concomitance between necessary joint perception and identity.

While the above counterexample uncharitably interprets *sahopalambhaniyama* as merely occasional joint perception, Dharmakīrti's *sahopalambhaniyama* inference is most formidable when *sahopalambhaniyama* is understood as necessary joint perception.[131] Fortunately, however, Vādirājasūri is aware of this more charitable and accurate interpretation of *sahopalambhaniyama*. Vādirājasūri argues that this interpretation of *sahopalambhaniyama* as invariable/necessary joint perception is problematic because it makes the *sahopalambhaniyama* inference dependent on the unpersuasive Buddhist theory of momentariness:

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[130] Kellner 2015: 114.

[131] Ibid.

It is worth mentioning that Akalaṅka considers and rejects three alternative interpretations of *sahopalambhaniyama*: (a) necessary perception of a single entity (*ekopalambhaniyama*), (b) the state of being apprehended by a single awareness (*ekajñānagrāhyatva*), and (c) the state of not being apprehended by something other than itself (*ananyavedyatva*) (AŚ 80, p. 73). Since none of these alternative interpretations of *sahopalambhaniyama* is endorsed by Dharmakīrti, they are not discussed in this thesis.

api caivaṃ vikalpāvikalpayor api manasor ekatvaprasaṅgaḥ sahopalambhaniyamāt | asti hi tatrāpi tanniyamo manasor yugapadvṛtter iti vacanāt | aniyataiva tatra tadvṛttiḥ kevalasyaiva nirvikalpasya pratisaṃhāre vikalpasya cendriyavyāpāroparame darśanād iti cen na tarhi nīlatajjñānayor tanniyamaḥ kevalasyaiva tajjñānasya viṣayāntare nīlasyāpi jñānāntare darśanāt | tad anyad eva jñānaṃ nīlaṃ ca pūrvāparaikatve pramāṇābhāvasya nivedanāt | ... katham evaṃ vikalpetarayor apy asahabhāvinor anyatvāt sahapratipannayos tanniyamo na bhavet |[132]

'[Jaina:] Furthermore, there would thus be the undesirable consequence of the identity of conceptual awareness and non-conceptual awareness too because of their necessary joint perception. For there exists necessary joint perception with respect to those two kinds of awareness as well because of [Dharmakīrti's] statement: 'Due to the simultaneous arising of [conceptual and non-conceptual] awareness.'[133]

[Buddhist:] The simultaneous arising is not actually necessary/invariable (*aniyata*) there because of the perception of solely non-conceptual awareness during the state of withdrawal from all conceptualisation (*pratisaṃhāra*) and because of the perception of solely conceptual awareness when there is the cessation of the functioning of the sense-faculties.

[Jaina:] If this is the case, then there would not be necessary joint perception of blue and the awareness of blue because of the perception of solely that very awareness [apprehending] a different object and because of the perception of solely blue in a different awareness.

[Buddhist:] That awareness [apprehending some object other than blue] and that blue [apprehended by some other awareness] are actually different [from the initial awareness and the initial blue respectively] because it has been explained that there does not exist any source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) for the identity of prior and posterior [temporal parts].

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[132] NVV, p. 358, ll. 25-26, p. 359, ll. 1-5.

[133] PV_M 2.133, pp. 156-157.

…

[Jaina:] If this is the case, how would there not be the necessary joint perception of conceptual awareness and non-conceptual awareness apprehended simultaneously [i.e. at the same moment] given that the conceptual awareness and the non-conceptual awareness arising at different moments count as distinct?'

Vādirājasūri begins his objection by arguing that non-conceptual awareness and conceptual awareness must be identical with each other because Dharmakīrti himself admits that they are often seen to arise simultaneously. Vādirājasūri's imaginary Buddhist interlocutor responds by pointing out that *sahopalambhaniyama* refers to necessary joint perception rather than occasional joint perception. Non-conceptual awareness and conceptual awareness do not satisfy the requirement of necessary joint perception (*sahopalambhaniyama*) because non-conceptual awareness is sometimes apprehended without conceptual awareness in non-conceptual meditative states and conceptual awareness is sometimes apprehended without non-conceptual awareness when the sense-faculties are not operational. By contrast, object and awareness are necessarily jointly perceived because we never perceive any object without the awareness of the object and any awareness without some object. In response, Vādirājasūri challenges Dharmakīrti's assertion that object and awareness are necessarily jointly perceived. Let us suppose that a blue object O is perceived by some awareness A. The *sahopalambhaniyama* inference states that object O is necessarily jointly perceived with awareness A and awareness A is necessarily jointly perceived with object O. This, in turn, allows us to infer the identity of object O and awareness A. However, Vādirājasūri argues that the same object O might also be apprehended by other awarenesses such as awareness B and awareness C. For example, the same blue basket might be perceived by one awareness today and another awareness tomorrow. Conversely, the same awareness A might apprehend other objects such as object P and object Q. For example, a given awareness might perceive a blue basket as well as a yellow book.

Thus, object O and awareness A do not actually satisfy the requirement of necessary joint perception. Insofar as they are not necessarily jointly perceived, object O and awareness A cannot be identical with each other. Since O and A are variables representing any object and any awareness respectively, the *sahopalambhaniyama* inference stands refuted. In response, Vādirājasūri's Buddhist interlocutor argues that the blue object apprehended by awareness B and awareness C is not the same as the blue object O apprehended by awareness A. Likewise, the awareness apprehending other objects such as object P and object Q is not the same as awareness A which apprehends object O. This is because of the Buddhist theory of momentariness according to which entities existing at different moments are actually distinct entities. As a result, the blue object P apprehended by awareness B at moment M_2 is actually distinct from the blue object O apprehended by awareness A at moment M_1. Similarly, the awareness B apprehending object P at moment M_2 is actually distinct from the awareness A apprehending object O at moment M_1. In this way, the Buddhist theory of momentariness re-establishes the necessary joint perception of object O and awareness A because the former is not apprehended by any other awareness and the latter does not apprehend any other object. Given that they satisfy the requirement of necessary joint perception (*sahopalambhaniyama*), object O and awareness A must be identical with each other. However, there are two reasons why invoking the Buddhist theory of momentariness makes the *sahopalambhaniyama* inference a unpersuasive argument. Firstly, this strategy makes the *sahopalambhaniyama* inference, Dharmakīrti's central argument for epistemic idealism, contingent on the Buddhist theory of momentariness. This is worrisome because the Buddhist theory of momentariness is not convincing to anyone who does not already accept the extreme mereological reductionism of Abhidharma philosophy. Secondly, invoking the Buddhist theory of momentariness makes the *sahopalambhaniyama* inference either trivially true or vastly over-applicable (*ativyāpti*). If entities existing in the present moment alone are ultimately real, then all real entities, by definition, are necessarily jointly perceived. Thus, all real entities satisfy the requirement of

necessary joint perception (*sahopalambhaniyama*). Hence, all real entities must ultimately be identical with each other! For example, non-conceptual awareness and conceptual awareness arising at the same moment must be identical with each other because they are necessarily jointly perceived given that the theory of momentariness entails that they are completely distinct from any awareness existing at any other moment. This absurd consequence suggests that there is something fundamentally wrong with Dharmakīrti's *sahopalambhaniyama* inference and his associated framework of momentariness even if we may not be able to put our finger on the precise problem. In brief, Akalaṅka's first objection shows that the *sahopalambhaniyama* inference is either contradicted by counterexamples (*viruddha*) on a weak reading of *sahopalambhaniyama* as occasional joint perception or contingent on the unpersuasive Buddhist theory of momentariness on a strong reading of *sahopalambhaniyama* as necessary joint perception.

Akalaṅka's second objection to the *sahopalambhaniyama* inference argues that the invariable concomitance between necessary joint perception (*sahopalambhaniyama*) and identity (*abheda*) cannot be proved/established (*asiddha*) by means of any source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*).[134] Vādirājasūri explains this objection as follows:

> *pṛthagupalambhābhāva iti cet kutas tatpratipattiḥ | pratyakṣād iti cen na pratibandhābhāvāt | tādātmyaṃ pratibandha iti cen na pratyakṣasya tadvad abhāvatvāpatter hetor vā pratyakṣavat bhāvarūpatvopanipātāt | tadutpattir iti cen nābhāvasya sakalaśaktivikalatayā kāraṇatvānupapatteḥ |*
>
> ...
>
> *nāpy anumānāt tatparijñānaṃ pratyakṣābhāve tadanavatārāl liṅgābhāvāc ca | tad dhi liṅgaṃ na bhāvarūpaṃ tasya pratyakṣavat tatrāpratibandhāt | ... nāpy abhāvarūpaṃ tatrāpi kutas*

[134] NV 83cd-84ab.

tatpratipattir ityādes tādātmyādiparyantasyopanipātāt |... tan nānumānād api tatparijñānam ity ajñātāsiddhatvād ahetur evāyam |[135]

'[Buddhist:] [Necessary joint perception is] absence of separate perception (*pṛthagupalambhābhāva*).

[Jaina:] How can that be known?

[Buddhist:] From perception.

[Jaina:] That is not correct because of the absence of any [ontological] relation (*pratibandha*) [between absence of separate perception and necessary joint perception].

[Buddhist:] Identity (*tādātmya*) is the [ontological] relation.

[Jaina:] That is not correct because perception would turn into an absence just like the absence of separate perception or the inferential reason (*hetu*) [i.e. absence of separate perception] would turn into an existent just like perception.

[Buddhist:] Arising from that [i.e. causality] (*tadutpatti*) is the [ontological] relation.

[Jaina:] That is not correct because it is not possible for an absence to serve as the cause [of perception] given that an absence lacks all [causal] power (*śakti*).

…

Nor can the absence of separate perception (*tat*) be known through inference because inference cannot operate in the absence of perception and because of the absence of any inferential reason (*liṅga*). For the inferential reason cannot be an existent because any existent, just like perception, cannot have an [ontological] relation with an absence. … Nor can the inferential reason be an absence because the same objection beginning with (*ādi*) 'How can that [inferential reason qua absence] be known?' and ending with (*paryanta*) 'Identity (*tādātmya*) and so forth…' mentioned above would apply. … Hence, the absence of separate perception cannot be known through inference as well. Therefore, this [absence of

[135] NVV, p. 363, ll. 21-24, 26-28, p. 364, ll. 1-2.

separate perception] is, in fact, a pseudo/fallacious inferential reason (*ahetu*) because it cannot be known and proved/established in any way.'

Just like every other inference, the *sahopalambhaniyama* inference ultimately depends on an invariable concomitance (*vyāpti*) between the probans (*sādhana/hetu/liṅga*) consisting of the necessary joint perception of object and awareness and the probandum (*sādhya*) consisting of the identity of object and awareness. However, in order to establish *necessary* joint perception of object and awareness, we would have to perceive every single object and every single awareness in the universe. Since this is not possible for non-omniscient beings such as ourselves, necessary joint perception of object and awareness must be reanalysed into its logical equivalent, i.e. absence of separate perception (*pṛthagupalambhābhāva*) of object and awareness. In other words, we never perceive any object without awareness and any awareness without object. However, Akalaṅka argues that absence of separate perception (*pṛthagupalambhābhāva*) merely proves absence of difference (*bhedābhāva*) rather than identity.[136] This is because an absence cannot prove an existent. Hence, we can reanalyse the invariable concomitance underlying the *sahopalambhaniyama* inference as follows:

V Absence of separate perception of object and awareness is invariably concomitant with absence of difference between object and awareness.

The plausibility of the *sahopalambhaniyama* inference depends on the validity of invariable concomitance V. In order to prove this invariable concomitance, however, we must first acquire knowledge of the absence of separate perception of object and awareness. How can this be known? Vādirājasūri argues that the absence of separate perception of object and awareness cannot be known by means of either perception or inference, the two sources of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) accepted by Dharmakīrti. Absence of separate perception of object and awareness cannot be known

[136] AŚ 80, p. 73.

through perception because the two ontological relations (*svabhāvapratibandha*) accepted as real by Dharmakīrti, namely identity/class inclusion (*tādātmya*) and causality (*tadutpatti*), cannot hold between an absence (absence of separate perception of object and awareness) and an existent (perception).[137] This is because both of these ontological relations apply solely to real existents such as the ontological relation of class inclusion between *śiṃśapā* tree and tree or the ontological relation of causality between fire and smoke.[138] Since absences (*abhāva*) are not real within Dharmakīrti's philosophical system, there cannot be any ontological relation between absence of separate perception and perception. Thus, absence of separate perception of object and awareness cannot be known through perception. Likewise, absence of separate perception of object and awareness cannot be known through inference because the inferential reason (*hetu*/*liṅga*) must either be an existent or an absence. If the inferential reason was an existent, then the same objection of the impossibility of any ontological relation between an existent (inferential reason) and an absence (absence of separate perception) would apply. If the inferential reason was an absence, then we would have to specify another source of knowledge for this second absence and the same set of objections would repeat itself. Thus, the absence of separate perception of object and awareness cannot be known by means of any source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*). As a result, invariable concomitance V is not valid. Therefore, the *sahopalambhaniyama* inference does not succeed.

Despite its seeming plausibility, Vādirājasūri's objection fundamentally misunderstands the status of absences (*abhāva*) within Dharmakīrti's philosophical system. Though absences are not real, Dharmakīrti regards absences as objects of knowledge (*jñeya*) because they are intimately tied to our pragmatic interests.[139] Within Dharmakīrti's typology, absences are effectively a kind of

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[137] PVSV 1.3, p. 24, ll. 4-5.

[138] PVSV 1.3, p. 20, ll. 1-2; AŚ 80, p. 73.

[139] PV_M 2.7cd, p. 115; Hugon 2011: 373.

universal (*sāmānya*) because universals can be based on existents, non-existents, or both.[140] Given that they are universals, absences can be known through inference. According to Dharmakīrti's theory of inference, we can infer the absence of a given entity using the inferential reason (*hetu*) of 'absence of perception of an otherwise perceptible entity' (*dṛśyānupalabdhi*).[141] If necessary joint perception (*sahopalambhaniyama*) of object and awareness is understood as the absence of separate perception (*pṛthagupalambhābhāva*) of object and awareness, then it becomes a kind of absence knowable through the inferential reason consisting of absence of perception of an otherwise perceptible entity (*dṛśyānupalabdhi*). The separate perception of object and awareness is, in principle, a perceptible phenomenon. However, Dharmakīrti argues that we never actually perceive any object separate from awareness and any awareness separate from object. Thus, the requirement of absence of perception (*anupalabdhi*) of an otherwise perceptible entity (*dṛśya*) is fulfilled. This is a valid inferential reason for inferring the absence of separate perception of object and awareness within Dharmakīrti's philosophical system. This absence of separate perception of object and awareness can, in turn, be used to prove the identity of object and awareness using the *sahopalambhaniyama* inference. Thus, Vādirājasūri's claim that the absence of separate perception of object and awareness cannot be established by means of any source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) whatsoever is simplistic because Dharmakīrti can utilise a *dṛśyānupalabdhi*-type of inference for this purpose. Thus, Akalaṅka's second objection to the *sahopalambhaniyama* inference does not succeed.

Akalaṅka's third objection to the *sahopalambhaniyama* inference argues that the invariable concomitance between necessary joint perception and identity is doubtful (*saṃdigdha*). Vādirājasūri explains this objection as follows:

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[140] PV_M 2.51cd, p. 131; Hugon 2011: 373-374.

[141] PVSV 1.3, p. 20, ll. 1-2.

avirodhe gavāśvādau kiṃ na tadupalambha iti ced abhede 'py ekāṇumātre kiṃ na syāt | svahetutas tathānutpatter iti cen netaratrāpi samānatvād gavāśvāder api tatas tathānutpatteḥ | tato yatra svahetusāmarthyaṃ tatra bhavaty eva bhede 'pi tadupalambha iti siddhaṃ saṃdigdhavyatirekatvam | ... vyatirekasaṃdehe 'nvayasaṃdehasyāpy āvaśyakatvāt |[142]

'[Buddhist:] If there isn't any contradiction [between necessary joint perception and difference], then why isn't there joint perception with respect to [distinct entities such as] cows, horses, and so forth?

[Jaina:] Even when there is identity (*abheda*) [such as] in the case of merely a single atom, why isn't there joint perception?

[Buddhist:] Because it does not arise as jointly perceived due to its own particular cause.

[Jaina:] That is not correct because the same [explanation] would apply to the other case as well: [distinct entities such as] cows, horses, and so forth too do not arise as jointly perceived due to their own particular causes. Thus, wherever there exists the capacity of own particular causes, in those cases, there actually is joint perception [of two or more entities] despite difference. Therefore, it is established that the negative concomitance (*vyatireka*) [i.e. concomitance between absence of necessary joint perception and difference] is doubtful (*saṃdigdha*). … When there is doubt with respect to the negative concomitance, there must necessarily be doubt with respect to positive concomitance (*anvaya*) as well.'

Vādirājasūri's imaginary Buddhist interlocutor argues that there is an invariable concomitance between necessary joint perception and identity because distinct entities such as a cow and a horse are not necessarily jointly perceived. Vādirājasūri objects by providing the counterexample of a single atom. Though a single atom is identical with itself, it is not perceived at all. This constitutes an example of identity without necessary joint perception. This, in turn, undermines the invariable

[142] NVV, p. 364, ll. 7-12.

concomitance between necessary joint perception and identity. The Buddhist interlocutor responds by arguing that a single atom is not perceived due to specific causes such as its smallness of size. Vādirājasūri notes that this Buddhist response effectively concedes that not all identical entities are necessarily jointly perceived. Instead, the requirement of necessary joint perception of identical entities can be overturned by specific causes. However, if this is the case, then necessary joint perception of two or more entities does not entail their identity because their necessary joint perception can be explained in terms of their own specific causes. Thus, the invariable concomitance between necessary joint perception and identity is doubtful. While Vādirājasūri's objection is interesting, it is fundamentally based on a misunderstanding of Dharmakīrti's *sahopalambhaniyama* inference. The *sahopalambhaniyama* inference argues that the necessary joint perception of entity X and entity Y entails the identity of entity X and entity Y. This logical entailment is not equivalent to the converse logical entailment that the identity of entity X and entity Y entails the necessary joint perception of entity X and entity Y. Vādirājasūri's counterexample of a single atom merely refutes the latter logical entailment rather than the former logical entailment. However, the fact that an identical entity such as a single atom is not necessarily jointly perceived or, indeed, perceived at all does not prove that necessarily jointly perceived entities are not identical with each other. Furthermore, Vādirājasūri's counterexample of a single atom would not greatly trouble the epistemic idealist Dharmakīrti who does not accept the existence of imperceptible external atoms at all. Thus, Akalaṅka's third objection to the *sahopalambhaniyama* inference does not succeed.

Having critiqued the invariable concomitance between necessary joint perception (*sahopalambhaniyama*) and identity (*abheda*), Akalaṅka questions the validity of the example (*dṛṣṭānta*) of the pseudo-perception of two moons by a person afflicted with *timira* eye-disease:

dṛṣṭānto 'pi sādhyasādhanavikalas tathopalambhābhedayor arthe pratiniyamād bhrāntau tadasambhavāt | nanu cāsahānupalambhamātrād abhedamātram | kathaṃcid arthasvabhāvānavabodhaprasaṅgāt |[143]

'[Jaina:] The example [of the pseudo-perception of two moons by a person afflicted with *timira* eye-disease] too lacks the probandum (*sādhya*) and the probans (*sādhana*) because [necessary] joint perception [i.e. the probans] and identity [i.e. the probandum] are restricted to real objects (*artha*) given that they are impossible in cases of perceptual error (*bhrānti*).

[Buddhist:] But, surely, the mere absence of difference (*abhedamātra*) follows from the mere absence of separate (*asaha*) perception [even in cases of perceptual error]?

[Jaina:] [That is not correct] because of the undesirable consequence of the absence of knowledge of the intrinsic nature of a real object in some way.'[144]

Akalaṅka argues that the erroneous perception of two moons by a diseased individual does not constitute a valid example of the *sahopalambhaniyama* inference because it lacks both the probandum of identity as well as the probans of necessary joint perception. This is because necessary joint perception and identity are real relations which can only characterise real existents. However, the perception of two moons is an example of a pseudo-perception in which one of the objects appearing in awareness, the second moon, does not actually exist. How can a non-existent entity (the second moon) be identical with an existent entity (the first moon)? How can a non-existent entity be jointly perceived with an existent entity given that the non-existent entity does not actually exist? Dharmakīrti would respond by arguing that the example of the pseudo-perception of two moons is simply meant to illustrate the invariable concomitance between necessary joint perception and identity. However, we must carefully distinguish between the perception of healthy

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[143] AŚ 80, p. 73.

[144] The words within square brackets have been supplied from Vidyānanda's commentary (AS 80, p. 389, l. 4, p. 390, l. 1).

individuals and the perception of diseased individuals afflicted with *timira* eye-disease. While healthy individuals perceive the single moon without any illusory doublet, diseased individuals necessarily perceive the moon together with an illusory doublet. In this example, the diseased individual represents the ordinary human being who necessarily perceives object and awareness together with each other. By contrast, the healthy individual represents the enlightened perceiver who sees through the illusory nature of this object-awareness duality and solely perceives awareness.[145] In other words, two or more identical entities are necessarily jointly perceived by deluded people who fail to recognise their identity. By contrast, people who recognise their identity no longer jointly perceive multiple entities but instead simply perceive a single entity. Once it has been correctly understood in this manner, we can see that Dharmakīrti's example (*dṛṣṭānta*) of the *sahopalambhaniyama* inference does not presuppose any real relations between non-existent entities and existent entities. Instead, Dharmakīrti deliberately gives the example of a perceptual error because he wants to highlight the erroneous nature of our ordinary experience of some kind of distinction/duality between object and awareness. Thus, Akalaṅka's objection to the example of the *sahopalambhaniyama* inference does not succeed.[146]

In summary, Akalaṅka critiques Dharmakīrti's *sahopalambhaniyama* inference both in the *Aṣṭaśatī* and in the *Nyāyaviniścaya*. Vidyānanda and Vādirājasūri, the respective commentators on the aforementioned works, provide an even more detailed refutation of the *sahopalambhaniyama* inference. This extensive engagement shows that Akalaṅka and his commentators considered the *sahopalambhaniyama* inference to be Dharmakīrti's main argument for idealism. Akalaṅka and his commentators employ a wide variety of arguments in their refutation of this inference: potential

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[145] Kellner 2017: 312.

[146] Vādirājasūri argues that the pseudo-perception of two moons is not a valid example of the *sahopalambhaniyama* inference because the two moons appear as two distinct entities in our awareness (NVV, p. 364, ll. 13-17). Needless to say, this objection is unconvincing because Dharmakīrti's point is precisely that the two apparently distinct moons are actually identical in reality.

counterexamples to the invariable concomitance between necessary joint perception and identity, the dependence of this invariable concomitance on unpersuasive Buddhist theories such as momentariness, and the ontological problem of real relations involving absences. While some of these objections are formidable, others are not very convincing. Cumulatively, however, Akalaṅka's objections cast doubt on the soundness of Dharmakīrti's *sahopalambhaniyama* inference for epistemic idealism.

§ 4.4.1.2 *Refutation of sākārajñānavāda*

Assuming that Akalaṅka's refutation is successful, the *sahopalambhaniyama* inference fails to prove that the object of perception is internal to awareness. This, in turn, creates the possibility that the object apprehended by perception is a mind-independent external object. However, there are two competing kinds of realism: Sautrāntika representationalism and common-sense realism. While the former argues that we indirectly perceive external objects via representations of those objects within awareness, the latter argues that we directly perceive external objects. In order to establish common-sense realism, Akalaṅka must show that common-sense realism is superior to Sautrāntika representationalism. This is why Akalaṅka challenges the theory of awareness with form (*sākārajñānavāda*) which lies at the heart of Sautrāntika representationalism:

> ***nirākāretarasyaitat pratibhāsabhidā yadi*** |
>
> ***tatrāpy anarthasaṃvittāv arthajñānāviśeṣataḥ*** ||[147]
>
> '[Buddhist:] Awareness with form (*nirākāretara*) possesses this [restricted knowledge of real external objects] by means of the difference between appearances (*pratibhāsa*).

[147] NV 21.

> [Jaina:] [That is not correct] because, despite the difference between appearances, there would not be any difference between the awareness of a real external object (*artha*) and the awareness of an unreal object (*anartha*).'

Both the Sautrāntika representationalist and the common-sense realist accept the existence of external objects. However, both of them must answer the following question: how do we know that perception apprehends external objects? The common-sense realist has a straightforward answer: we are aware of our perception directly apprehending external objects. On the other hand, the Sautrāntika representationalist has a more indirect answer: we are aware of the representation/form (*ākāra*) of the external object manifesting within perceptual awareness rather than the external object itself. Crucially, the object-form within perceptual awareness resembles (*sarūpa*) the form of the external object. Akalaṅka objects to Sautrāntika representationalism by pointing out that there is no way of knowing that the object-form within perceptual awareness resembles the form of the external object in the absence of independent knowledge of the form of the external object. In other words, the Sautrāntika theory of resemblance (*sārūpya*) is problematic because the purported resemblance between the form of awareness and the external object is simply unknowable. Insofar as we do not know whether the form of a given perceptual awareness resembles any external object or not, we have no way of distinguishing between the form of a real external object and the form of an unreal object manifesting within perceptual awareness. In other words, we have no way of distinguishing between genuine perception and pseudo-perception because both of them merely apprehend forms internal to themselves which may or may not resemble any external object. As Vādirājasūri succinctly explains, Sautrāntika representationalism is flawed because there is no way of knowing whether the object-form within perceptual awareness actually resembles the form of the external object without independent knowledge of the form of the external object.[148] As a result, we

[148] NVV, p. 225, ll. 1-2.

can never know whether we are actually perceiving a real external object within Sautrāntika representationalism. Thus, the external objects accepted by the Sautrāntikas become epistemically inaccessible metaphysical postulates quite similar to the mysterious unknowable ghosts (*piśāca*) mentioned by Manorathanandin![149] Furthermore, Akalaṅka points out the impossibility of genuine resemblance (*sārūpya*) within Dharmakīrti's philosophical system:

> ***sārūpye 'pi samanveti prāyaḥ sāmānyadūṣaṇam*** |[150]
> '[Dharmakīrti's] refutation of universals (*sāmānya*), for the most part (*prāyas*), applies to the theory of resemblance (*sārūpya*) as well.'

Throughout his *Pramāṇavārttika*, Dharmakīrti provides several arguments to prove that universals (*sāmānya*) are not ultimately real.[151] Akalaṅka cleverly notes that Dharmakīrti's refutation of universals should refute the Sautrāntika theory of resemblance (*sārūpya*) as well. This is because resemblance too is a universal rather than a particular (*svalakṣaṇa*). Insofar as it is a universal, resemblance cannot be ultimately real within Dharmakīrti's philosophical system. However, if resemblance is not ultimately real, it is unclear how the object-form within perceptual awareness can actually resemble the form of the external object. Thus, the Sautrāntika theory of resemblance (*sārūpya*) is inconsistent with Dharmakīrti's refutation of universals. For all of the above reasons, Sautrāntika representationalism is not a plausible theory of perception.

As we have seen, Sautrāntikas argue that the theory of awareness with form (*sākārajñānavāda*) provides the best explanation for the restricted nature of perception.[152] The

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[149] PVV 2.336, p. 220.

[150] NV 28ab.

[151] PV_M 2.3, p. 112.

[152] Ibid., 2.304-2.306, pp. 209-210.

reason why a given perceptual awareness apprehends blue rather than yellow is that the awareness has the form (*ākāra*) of blue rather than the form of yellow. In the absence of the form of blue, there would be nothing to restrict the perception to the apprehension of blue. As a result, formless (*nirākāra*) awareness would be able to apprehend any object whatsoever. Vādirājasūri challenges this Buddhist argument as follows:

> *kalpayatāpi hy ākāraṃ śaktir abhyupagantavyā tadabhāve tasyaiva niyatasyāsambhavāt | tathā ca tadavastha evārthaḥ svaśaktito vedanasya viṣayaniyamam avakalpayatīti vyartham arthākārakalpanaṃ saṃvedanasya | yuktaṃ caitad arthasyaivam eva siddheḥ | ākāravāde hi na tasya siddhiḥ pṛthag adarśanāt |*[153]
>
> 'For someone postulating form (*ākāra*) [within awareness] must nonetheless accept the power [of external objects] because that very restricted (*niyata*) form [within awareness] would be impossible in the absence of the power [of external objects]. And, thus the external object abiding in a particular condition, through its own power, brings about the restriction (*niyama*) of the object of awareness. Therefore, the postulation of an object-form (*arthākāra*) belonging to awareness is useless. And, this is correct because this is precisely how external objects are established. For external objects are not established within the theory of [awareness with] form because external objects are not perceived separately [from the form].'

Vādirājasūri argues that the form internal to perceptual awareness, by itself, cannot restrict the object apprehended by perception. This is because, in the absence of any external constraint, perceptual awareness would be able to assume any form whatsoever. Thus, the Sautrāntika theory of awareness with form (*sākārajñānavāda*) cannot explain the restricted nature of perceptual awareness without invoking the power (*śakti*) of external objects to generate perceptual awarenesses with those forms. Thus, the restricted nature of perceptual awareness ultimately depends on the

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[153] NVV, p. 245, ll. 17-20.

causal power of external objects within the Sautrāntika philosophical framework. Indeed, the Sautrāntikas would not be able to establish the existence of external objects if they rejected the causal power of external objects. Insofar as the power of external objects is both necessary and sufficient for explaining the restricted nature of perception, the postulation of forms (*ākāra*) internal to awareness is redundant because it does not serve any explanatory purpose. Thus, the main Sautrāntika argument for the theory of awareness with form (*sākārajñānavāda*) loses all its force. At this stage, the Sautrāntika representationalist might reasonably wonder how Akalaṅka would explain the restricted nature of perception given that he accepts neither the theory of awareness with form (*sākārajñānavāda*) nor the causal power of external objects to produce perceptual awareness.[154] In response, Akalaṅka argues that a given perceptual awareness apprehends a particular object such as blue and not any other object such as yellow because that particular perceptual awareness has the power (*śakti*) to apprehend blue rather than yellow.[155] Once again, the Sautrāntika representationalist might object that the mere power (*śakti*) of perceptual awareness cannot restrict the object of perception without some additional internal feature (such as form) restricting the object of perception. Akalaṅka responds to this objection as follows:

> ***atadarthaparāvṛttam atadrūpaṃ tadarthadṛk*** ||
>
> ***athedam asarūpaṃ kim atadarthanivṛttitaḥ*** |
>
> ***tadarthavedanaṃ na syād asamānām apohavat*** ||[156]
>
> 'A given awareness, despite lacking the form of the external object, perceives [solely] that (*tat*) [particular] external object because it has turned away (*parāvṛtta*) from all other (*atat*) external objects. Now, why can't this awareness, despite not resembling (*asarūpa*) [any

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[154] See § 2.2.3, pp. 98-99 for Akalaṅka's rejection of the external object as the cause of perceptual awareness.

[155] NV 39cd-40a; NVV, p. 249, l. 6.

[156] NV 28cd-29.

external object], apprehend [solely] that [particular] external object by turning away (*nivṛtti*) from all other external objects just like the exclusion (*apoha*) of dissimilar entities?'

Akalaṅka gives the counterexample of Diṅnāga's and Dharmakīrti's theory of exclusion (*apoha*). According to the theory of exclusion, a word such as 'cow' picks out cows rather than horses simply through the exclusion (*apoha*) of non-cows.[157] Obviously, this exclusion is not a real existent but merely an absence. Akalaṅka argues that if the referent of words can be restricted without any real feature intrinsic to language, then the object of perception too can be restricted without any real feature internal to perceptual awareness. In other words, the existence of form (*ākāra*) or any other feature internal to awareness is not required to restrict the object of awareness. It is worth remarking that Akalaṅka's argument is a polemic against Dharmakīrti highlighting the parallels between Dharmakīrti's theory of exclusion (*apoha*) and Akalaṅka's theory of awareness without form (*nirākārajñānavāda*). Ultimately, however, Akalaṅka argues that the object of perception is restricted by a given awareness's power (*śakti*) to apprehend a particular external object instead of some other external object.[158]

Having refuted the Sautrāntika theory of awareness with form (*sākārajñānavāda*), Akalaṅka attacks the Sautrāntika understanding of external objects:

atyāsannān asaṃsṛṣṭān aṇūn evākṣagocarān |

aparaḥ prāha tatrāpi tulyam ity anavasthitiḥ ||[159]

'Another person [i.e. the Sautrāntika] declares that extremely proximate (*atyāsanna*) uncombined (*asaṃsṛṣṭa*) atoms alone constitute the objects of the sense-faculties. The same

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[157] Tillemans 2021.

[158] NV 39cd-40a.

[159] Ibid., 101.

[objection] would apply to that [position] as well: the non-establishment (*anavasthiti*) [of perception].'

The external objects accepted by the Sautrāntikas are momentary atomic property-particulars. These atomic particulars are said to give rise to perceptual awareness due to their spatiotemporal proximity. Akalaṅka objects to this Sautrāntika theory by arguing that perception would not be established as a source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) if indivisible atoms were required to be the object of perception. This is because we never actually perceive indivisible atoms in our ordinary perception! In summary, both common-sense realism and Sautrāntika representationalism accept the existence of mind-independent external objects. However, Akalaṅka argues that common-sense realism alone establishes the existence of perceptible and pragmatically useful external objects whereas Sautrāntika representationalism culminates in the absurd postulation of imperceptible and useless external atomic particulars.[160] In other words, common-sense realism is more plausible than Sautrāntika representationalism if we wish to accept the existence of external objects.

§ 4.4.2 *Positive Arguments for Common-Sense Realism*

§ 4.4.2.1 *Distinguishing between genuine perception and pseudo-perception*

Having refuted Dharmakīrti's two main arguments for epistemic idealism, Akalaṅka provides his own positive arguments for the superiority of common-sense realism over idealism. Akalaṅka's first argument is based on our ordinary epistemic practice of distinguishing between genuine perception and pseudo-perception. Any theory of perception must provide a reliable basis

[160] Somewhat surprisingly, Akalaṅka agrees with Dharmakīrti's argument that Sautrāntika representationalism necessarily entails epistemic idealism. Both Akalaṅka and Dharmakīrti view Sautrāntika representationalism as an impossible compromise between realism and idealism. In a similar vein, the Mīmāṃsaka Kumārila Bhaṭṭa argues that the Sautrāntika theory of awareness with form is a gateway to idealism (Taber 2010: 283).

for making this crucial distinction. According to Akalaṅka's common-sense realism, a perception is true if it apprehends real external object(s) whereas a perception is false if it apprehends unreal object(s). Thus, the mind-independent external world serves as an objective criterion for determining the truth-value of our perception. By contrast, epistemic idealists such as Dharmakīrti argue that the object of our perception is actually a form internal to awareness. Insofar as the appearance of external objects in our ordinary perception is the result of a systematic cognitive distortion (*viplava*/*upaplava*), all of our ordinary perception must, strictly speaking, be erroneous.[161] This, however, seems to undermine the ordinary epistemic distinction between genuine perception and perceptual error. Akalaṅka argues that it is self-refuting to assert that all of our ordinary perception is erroneous:

> ***vibhrame vibhrame teṣāṃ vibhramo 'pi na sidhyati*** |[162]
>
> 'If each and every awareness is an error (*vibhrama*), then even the fact that those awarenesses are errors cannot be established.'

Akalaṅka interprets Dharmakīrti's epistemic idealism as a kind of illusionism (*vibhramavāda*) because Dharmakīrti's epistemic idealism considers the appearance of external objects within perceptual awareness to be a systematic cognitive error. Akalaṅka argues that this illusionism is self-refuting because the erroneous nature of any given perception cannot be established without the assistance of some other true perception. Vādirājasūri provides a detailed explanation of Akalaṅka's terse argument. According to Dharmakīrti, our ordinary perception is erroneous because it presents unreal external objects. However, how can we know that a given perception is erroneous? Dharmakīrti must provide some source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) for this alleged fact. Insofar as inference (*anumāna*) is regarded as a kind of error within Dharmakīrti's philosophical system, the

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[161] Kellner 2015: 107.

[162] NV 54ab.

source of knowledge must be perception itself.[163] At this stage, the following dilemma arises: is the perception of the erroneous nature of all perception itself erroneous? If this perception too is erroneous, it cannot serve as a source of knowledge for the erroneous nature of all perception.[164] On the other hand, if this perception is true, it undermines Dharmakīrti's contention that all perception is erroneous.[165] Thus, Dharmakīrti's theory of the erroneous nature of all perception is self-refuting.

Though it might seem convincing, Akalaṅka's argument relies on an uncharitable interpretation of Dharmakīrti's position. Dharmakīrti certainly does not claim that *all* perception is erroneous. As we shall see, Dharmakīrti accepts awareness's self-reflexive perception (*svasaṃvedana*) of itself as an ultimately reliable source of knowledge (*pāramārthikapramāṇa*).[166] Thus, there is a type of ultimately reliable perception which sublates our ordinary misperception of external objects within Dharmakīrti's philosophical system. Nevertheless, Akalaṅka might wonder how this ultimately reliable self-reflexive awareness can allow us to distinguish between genuine perception and perceptual error in the context of our everyday worldly activity. In response, Dharmakīrti would argue that the conventional epistemic reliability (*prāmāṇya*) of our ordinary perception depends on the perceptual awareness's capacity for pragmatic activity (*arthakriyā*) rather than correspondence to a mind-independent external world.[167] A perception is (conventionally) true if it is capable of leading to successful pragmatic activity whereas a perception is (conventionally) false if it is incapable of leading to successful pragmatic activity. In other words, we need not

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[163] PV_M 2.55ab, p. 132.

[164] NVV, p. 321, l. 19.

[165] Ibid., p. 321, ll. 19-20.

[166] PVi 1.58cd, p. 44; Dunne 2004: 317.

See § 5.1, pp. 267-270.

[167] PV_M 1.7a, p. 6; PVi 1.58cd, pp. 43-44.

Dharmakīrti's solution, of course, assumes the Buddhist theory of two truths: conventional truth and ultimate truth.

postulate the existence of external objects in order to explain the truth and falsity of our ordinary perception. However, Akalaṅka finds Dharmakīrti's solution implausible because it does not explain how our ordinary perception leads to successful pragmatic activity despite presenting ultimately illusory external objects. While Dharmakīrti does not explicitly address this problem in the domain of perception, he addresses a similar problem in the domain of inference. According to Dharmakīrti, each and every kind of inference is ultimately erroneous because it apprehends unreal conceptually constructed universals (*sāmānyalakṣaṇa*).[168] Nevertheless, inference is a source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) because it is conducive to successful pragmatic activity (*arthakriyā*).[169] Just like Akalaṅka, Dharmakīrti's imaginary opponent wonders how an erroneous awareness can lead to successful pragmatic activity. Dharmakīrti answers this objection by giving the example of two people who have the erroneous perception of a gem with respect to the light of a gem and the light of a lamp respectively.[170] Though both perceptions are erroneous, the misperception of the light of the gem as a gem will eventually lead to the successful attainment of the gem whereas the misperception of the light of the lamp as a gem will not lead to the successful attainment of the gem.[171] This example shows how some erroneous awarenesses lead to successful pragmatic activity whereas other erroneous awarenesses do not. In the same way, though all of our ordinary perceptions are ultimately erroneous, some of our ordinary perceptions lead to successful pragmatic activity whereas others do not. The former count as true perceptions whereas the latter count as false perceptions. Akalaṅka objects to Dharmakīrti's solution as follows:

> ***parituṣyati nāmaikaḥ prabhayoḥ paridhāvatoḥ*** ||
>
> ***maṇibhrānter api bhrāntau maṇir atra duranvayaḥ*** |

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[168] PV_M 2.55, p. 132.

[169] Ibid., 2.56, p. 133.

[170] Ibid., 2.57, p. 133.

[171] Ibid.

sati bhrānter adoṣaś cet tat kuto yadi vastu na ||

kāmaṃ sati tadākāre tad bhrāntaṃ sādhu gamyate |[172]

‘[Buddhist:] When two people [with the erroneous perception of a gem] run towards the light [of a gem] and the light [of a lamp] respectively, one of them is indeed satisfied [through the eventual attainment of the gem].

[Jaina:] In this [example], the gem is difficult to attain (*duranvaya*) from the erroneous perception of the gem given that it is an error.

[Buddhist:] This objection does not apply because there is an error with respect to a really existing (*sat*) [gem].

[Jaina:] How can that be the case if no external object (*vastu*) actually exists? Very well (*kāmam*)! That [erroneous perception of the light of the gem as a gem] can be rightly understood to be erroneous [through the eventual attainment of the gem] provided that there exists a real gem.’

Akalaṅka challenges the validity of Dharmakīrti’s example purporting to show that an erroneous awareness too can lead to successful pragmatic activity. Akalaṅka argues that the misperception of the light of the gem as a gem can lead to the successful attainment of the gem provided that there actually exists a real gem producing the light! This is only possible if medium-sized external objects actually exist. Within Dharmakīrti’s idealist worldview, however, the light of the gem and the light of the lamp are merely forms (*ākāra*) internal to awareness. How can we accomplish the pragmatic activity of obtaining the gem if no real gem actually exists? Dharmakīrti would respond by arguing that the gem too is a form internal to awareness. Obtaining the gem simply means experiencing an awareness with the form of gem-obtainment. Akalaṅka objects by pointing out that these forms internal to awareness are not restricted by any external object within Dharmakīrti’s idealist

[172] NV 60cd-62ab.

worldview. In the absence of any real gem qua external object, it is difficult to explain why a perceptual awareness possessing the form of gem-light eventually gives rise to a perceptual awareness possessing the form of a gem whereas a perceptual awareness possessing the form of lamp-light does not give rise to a perceptual awareness possessing the form of a gem. Dharmakīrti might appeal to the power of latent mental impressions (*vāsanā*) in order to explain these causal regularities in our perception. This is because these latent mental impressions are themselves restricted by the past experiences of a given mental stream (*saṃtāna*). However, Akalaṅka rejects Dharmakīrti's theory of latent mental impressions for two reasons. Firstly, the precise mechanism of the functioning of these latent mental impressions is unclear. Beyond a few vague remarks, Dharmakīrti does not really explain how latent mental impressions can account for various seemingly realistic features of our ordinary perception.[173] Secondly, Akalaṅka observes that true perception is necessarily distinct from false perception because the former, unlike the latter, almost always agrees with the perceptions of other perceivers present in the same time and place.[174] In the present example, my attainment of the gem is perceived by other people nearby. How would an epistemic idealist such as Dharmakīrti explain this widespread intersubjective agreement between the true perceptions of different perceivers?[175] Dharmakīrti might argue that the distinct mental streams of different perceivers are such that the same kind of latent mental impression, the impression of a gem, is awakened in each of them at the same moment. At this stage, however, Dharmakīrti's explanation begins to sound implausible. This is because Dharmakīrti's explanation amounts to the claim that the perception of the same object by distinct mental streams is a pure coincidence because these distinct perceptions do not actually share any common cause. While

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[173] Yiannopoulos 2020: 323.

[174] NV 46.

[175] As we have seen, Vasubandhu gives the counterexample of multiple hell-beings perceiving the same river of pus (*pūyanadī*) even when no such river of pus actually exists outside their minds in order to show that intersubjective agreement does not prove the existence of external objects (Vi 3bcd, p. 189). However, this counterexample is likely to persuade neither the Jaina who subscribes to a different cosmology from the Buddhists nor the modern philosopher who does not subscribe to any such cosmology.

coincidences are logically possible, they rarely constitute a satisfactory explanation. In particular, Dharmakīrti's idealist explanation is far less plausible than Akalaṅka's realist explanation: multiple perceivers perceive the same object due to the existence of a mind-independent external object perceptible by everyone. This mind-independent external world, in turn, serves as the criterion for distinguishing between genuine perception and perceptual error. In this way, Akalaṅka shows how the existence of external objects provides the best explanation for the truth or falsity of any given perception as well as the intersubjective agreement between the perceptions of different perceivers.

§ 4.4.2.2 *Differing pragmatic efficacies of awareness and object*

While his first argument is grounded in our ordinary epistemic distinction between genuine perception and perceptual error, Akalaṅka's second argument for common-sense realism is based on the difference between the pragmatic efficacy of mere awareness and the pragmatic efficacy of a real external object. Akalaṅka explains this difference by giving the following example:

> ***na hi jātu viṣajñānaṃ maraṇaṃ prati dhāvati*** |
>
> ***asaṃś ced bahirarthātmā …*** ||[176]
>
> 'For the [mere] awareness of poison never leads to death if there does not exist [any poison] having the nature of a real external object.'

Suppose that there are two people, one of whom mentally imagines the act of drinking poison from a chalice and another person who actually drinks poison from a chalice. We observe that the latter person dies whereas the former does not. What explains these contrasting pragmatic consequences given that both of them have a qualitatively identical awareness of the same intentional object,

[176] NV 69ab.

namely, poison? Akalaṅka argues that the existence of poison qua mind-independent external object is the distinguishing factor in the latter case. In other words, the latter person dies because he drinks real poison whereas the former survives because he does not drink any real poison.[177] Thus, the existence of external objects explains the differing pragmatic efficacies of thinking about activity X versus actually performing activity X. As we have seen, however, Dharmakīrti explains the differing pragmatic efficacies (*arthakriyā*) of different kinds of awareness in terms of the strength of the latent mental impressions (*vāsanā*) which give rise to them.[178] This purely mental explanation is consistent with Dharmakīrti's epistemic idealism. Akalaṅka objects to this idealist explanation as follows:

> ***na hi keśādinirbhāso vyavahāraprasādhakaḥ*** |
> ***vāsanābhedād bhedo 'yaṃ siddhas tatra na sidhyati*** ||
> ***tanmātrabhāvo dṛṣṭānte sarvatrārthopakārataḥ*** |
> ***pāramparyeṇa sākṣād vā parāpekṣāḥ sahetavaḥ*** ||
> ***vicchinnapratibhāsinyo vyāhārādidhiyo***[179] ***yathā*** |[180]
>
> '[Jaina:] For the appearance of hair etc. [in the perception of a person afflicted with *timira* eye-disease] does not lead to the accomplishment (*prasādhaka*) of [successful] worldly activity.
>
> [Buddhist:] This difference [between the pragmatic efficacy of genuine perception and the pragmatic efficacy of pseudo-perception] is established by means of the difference between latent mental impressions (*vāsanā*).

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[177] NVV, p. 338, ll. 10-11.

[178] PVi 1.58cd, pp. 43-44.

[179] Śāstrī's edition of NV 98b reads '*vyavahārādidhiyo yathā*' in the second *pāda* of the verse. Since this reading is hyper-metrical, I have chosen Vādirājasūri's metrically correct reading '*vyāhārādidhiyo yathā*' (NVV, p. 403, ll. 8, 17-18).

[180] NV 96-98ab.

> [Jaina:] In that example, it is not established that [the pseudo-perception of unreal hair] arises solely from latent mental impressions because there is the assistance (*upakāra*) of external objects in every [perception] either directly (*sākṣāt*) or indirectly (*pāramparyeṇa*). This is just like [speakers'] awarenesses of speech/utterance (*vyāhāra*) etc. depending on something else insofar as they require a cause and manifest in a restricted (*vicchinna*)[181] [manner].'

Akalaṅka gives the example of a perceptual error which does not lead to successful pragmatic activity: the perception of unreal hair by a person afflicted with *timira* eye-disease. Once again, the differing pragmatic efficacies of genuine perception and perceptual error is a fact requiring explanation. Akalaṅka's imaginary Buddhist interlocutor provides a purely mental explanation of this phenomenon in terms of the differences between latent mental impressions. Vādirājasūri remarks that this difference is based on the relative strength and weakness of different latent mental impressions.[182] This, in fact, is identical to the explanation provided by Dharmakīrti in his *Pramāṇaviniścaya*.[183] Akalaṅka objects to this idealist explanation by arguing that both genuine perception and pseudo-perception depend on real external objects either directly or indirectly. For example, when someone erroneously perceives an unreal woman, this pseudo-perception depends on real external objects in both directions. The person must have apprehended a real woman at some point in the past in order for the latent impression of a woman to be formed in his mind. This latent mental impression, in turn, gives rise to the erroneous perception of a woman when it is awakened by specific kinds of causes.[184] In this way, the pseudo-perception of an illusory woman

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[181] I follow Vādirājasūri's interpretation of '*viccheda*' as 'restriction of place etc.' (*deśādiniyama*) (NVV, p. 403, l. 23). Hence, I translate '*vicchinna*' as 'restricted [in terms of place etc.]'. However, the word '*vicchinna*' can be interpreted in two other ways as 'distinct [manner of articulation]' and 'interrupted/ disconnected'. Irrespective of the reader's preferred interpretation, the main argument remains the same in all cases.

[182] NVV, p. 402, l. 18.

[183] PVi 1.58cd, pp. 43-44.

[184] NVV, p. 403, ll. 12-13.

depends on the true awareness of a real external object at some point in the past. Similarly, the pseudo-perception of an illusory woman ultimately depends on the awareness of a real external object in the future. This is because a perceptual error can only be recognised as a perceptual error when it is sublated by a later true awareness. In the present example, the person might walk up to the woman and see that it is actually a cardboard cut-out! However, this sublation by a later true awareness would become impossible if each and every awareness arose from latent mental impressions and apprehended illusory mental objects as argued by Dharmakīrti.[185] In this way, knowledge of the erroneous nature of a pseudo-perception requires the awareness of a real external object at some point in the future. Thus, every perceptual error indirectly depends on the awareness of real external objects in the past and in the future. Of course, every genuine perception directly depends on a real external object.[186] In this way, Akalaṅka argues that both genuine perception and pseudo-perception directly or indirectly require the assistance of real external objects. Nevertheless, genuine perception and pseudo-perception have differing pragmatic efficacies due to the (spatiotemporally qualified) existence of the perceived object in the former case and the (spatiotemporally qualified) non-existence of the perceived object in the latter case. Thus, Akalaṅka shows that the existence of external objects provides the best explanation for not only the differing pragmatic efficacies of different kinds of awareness but also the phenomenon of perceptual error.[187]

§ 4.4.2.3 *External objects as the condition of the possibility of inference-for-others and verbal communication*

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[185] Ibid., p. 403, ll. 1-3.

[186] Ibid., p. 403, l. 14.

[187] Elsewhere, Akalaṅka suggests that the restricted nature of the object of perception in terms of location, time, size, and so on proves that perception apprehends mind-independent external objects (NV 43-44ab). As we have seen, however, Vasubandhu provides the successful counterexample of dream-awareness which exhibits all of these features without apprehending any external object (Vi 3ab, p. 189).

Perhaps the most interesting Jaina argument for common-sense realism is found in Vādirājasūri's *Nyāyaviniścayavivaraṇa* rather than Akalaṅka's philosophical treatises. While commenting on Akalaṅka's verse refuting the *sahopalambhaniyama* inference, Vādirājasūri raises a novel objection to Dharmakīrti's epistemic idealism. Vādirājasūri begins by noting that epistemic idealism entails that the object of my perception is, strictly speaking, distinct from the object of another person's perception.[188] As evidence, Vādirājasūri cites the following statement from Dharmakīrti's commentator Prajñākaragupta:

> ***sa eva dṛśyate 'nyenety etad eva na sidhyati*** |[189]
>
> 'That very object [perceived by me] is [also] perceived by another person: this very [claim] is not established.'

Thus, epistemic idealism entails that the objects of the perceptions of different perceivers are distinct from each other. Vādirājasūri argues that this logical consequence of epistemic idealism is problematic:

> *... evaṃ parārthānumānasya vyāpatteḥ | tat khalu svadṛṣṭārthaprakāśanam | svadṛṣṭasya vādipratipannasya trirūpaliṅgasya pareṇāparijñāne kathaṃ taṃ prati tatprakāśanam arthavat jātyandhaṃ prati rūpaprakāśanavat* |[190]
>
> '… If this is the case, there would be the destruction (*vyāpatti*) of inference-for-others (*parārthānumāna*). 'Inference-for-others is certainly the making known (*prakāśana*) of an object perceived by oneself'.[191] If the threefold inferential reason (*liṅga*) perceived by oneself

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[188] NVV, p. 360, ll. 11-22.

[189] PVA 3.331cd-3.333ab, p. 366.

[190] NVV, p. 361, ll. 9-11.

[191] Vādirājasūri quotes the definition of inference-for-others (*parārthānumāna*) attributed to a Buddhist Ācārya, most probably Diṅnāga, by Manorathanandin at the beginning of his commentary on chapter 4 of Dharmakīrti's *Pramāṇavārttika* (PVV 4.1, p. 413).

and ascertained by the speaker (*vādin*) cannot be known (*parijñāna*) by another person, how can the making known of the inferential reason to that other person serve any purpose just like the making known of colour (*rūpa*) to a person who is blind by birth serves no purpose?'

Inference-for-others (*parārthānumāna*) involves the making known of an inferential reason (*hetu*/*liṅga*), such as the effect consisting of smoke, perceived and ascertained by oneself to another person. Knowledge of this inferential reason together with knowledge of the invariable concomitance between fire and smoke allows the listener to infer the existence of fire. Vādirājasūri argues that inference-for-others would be impossible within an idealist worldview because the existence of a shared external world is a necessary prerequisite for such inferences. If the object of my perception is internal to my own mind and thereby distinct from the objects of the perceptions of other perceivers, the public activity of the giving and taking of reasons becomes impossible. This is because it is unclear how the listener can understand the speaker's communication of the inference of fire from smoke if he has not perceived the same inferential reason (smoke) as the speaker. If the listener's world of experience is completely different from the speaker's world of experience, then inference-for-others becomes impossible. Within an idealist worldview, the speaker's communication of the inferential reason would not serve any purpose because it would be completely unintelligible to the listener given that the listener does not share the speaker's world of experience. In other words, epistemic idealism entails the impossibility of intersubjective verbalised inferences because every perceiver lives in his/her own distinct inner world of experience. However, the very fact that inference-for-others is seen to be possible in our ordinary lives proves the existence of a mind-independent external world accessible to everyone.

Having shown the impossibility of inference-for-others within an idealist worldview, Vādirājasūri argues that verbal communication would be impossible without external objects:

asādhāraṇatve viṣayasya vacanaprabandhasyāpy asya vaiyarthyāpatteḥ prakāśitasyāpi pareṇāparijñānād aparijñātasya ca pārārthyānupapatteḥ | ... tatparijñāne tu katham asādhāraṇatvaṃ viṣayasya svaparapratipattiviṣayasya tattvānupapatteḥ | tad ayaṃ sādhāraṇatāṃ vacanasya pratipadyamāno nīlāder eva kiṃ na pratipadyeta |[192]

'If the object of awareness (*viṣaya*) is not common (*asādhāraṇa*) [to multiple people], then there would be the undesirable consequence (*āpatti*) of the uselessness of this verbal composition (*vacanaprabandha*) as well because another person would not be able to understand (*aparijñāna*) this verbal composition even when it has been made known (*prakāśita*) and because it is impossible for a verbal composition to benefit others when it has not been understood.

…

On the other hand, if that verbal composition can be understood [by others], then how can the object of awareness not be common [to multiple people] because it is impossible for an object of awareness, which is an object of knowledge (*pratipatti*) for both oneself as well as others, to be specific [to a single person]? Therefore, given that he accepts that speech (*vacana*) is common [to multiple people], why does he [i.e. the Buddhist] not accept that objects such as blue are common [to multiple perceivers]?'

Vādirājasūri argues that successful communication between language-users proves the existence of a shared external world. According to Dharmakīrti's epistemic idealism, the object of my perception is known only to myself because it exists within my own mind. Hence, my words must ultimately refer, through exclusion (*apoha*) or otherwise, to my own private mental experiences. This, in turn, makes it difficult to explain how another person can understand the meaning of my words given that the referents of my words, my private mental experiences, are not accessible to anyone else. Thus,

[192] NVV, p. 362, ll. 9-14.

Dharmakīrti's epistemic idealism makes verbal communication impossible. However, verbal communication is possible because we do actually verbally communicate with each other in our ordinary lives. Vādirājasūri argues that it is a condition of the possibility of verbal communication that at least some of our words refer to publicly knowable objects. To put the point in another way, the existence of a shared external world available to both the speaker and the listener is a necessary precondition for successful communication. This, of course, does not mean that every word refers to a real external object. Instead, the very fact that some words do not refer to publicly available external objects is known through rational discussion in the public sphere: an activity presupposing the existence of a shared external world! In response, the Buddhist idealist might deny the epistemic reliability of inference and the reality of verbal communication. This, of course, is consistent with Dharmakīrti's theory of two truths according to which ultimate reality consists solely of directly experienced self-reflexive awareness.[193] If inferential reasoning and verbal communication are themselves illusory, then we need not postulate the existence of external objects in order to explain their possibility. However, this Buddhist response is ultimately self-refuting because the very articulation of this response presupposes the epistemic reliability of inferential reasoning and the reality of verbal communication! Vādirājasūri's argument may be summarised as follows:

P_1 We engage in shared inferential reasoning and verbal communication in our ordinary lives.

P_2 The existence of a mind-independent external world is a necessary precondition for shared inferential reasoning and verbal communication.

Therefore,

C There exists a mind-independent external world.

As we have seen, the central argument justifying premise P_2 is the fact that shared inferential reasoning and verbal communication necessarily require a set of objects common to multiple perceivers whereas epistemic idealism entails the distinctness of the objects apprehended by

[193] See § 5.1, pp. 267-270.

different perceivers. Dharmakīrti might respond by arguing that the objects apprehended by different perceivers are sufficiently similar to each other due to various mental causes such as latent mental impressions.[194] This similarity rather than the existence of a mind-independent external world makes inference-for-others and verbal communication possible. However, there are two reasons why this Buddhist response is problematic. Firstly, Dharmakīrti rejects the existence of ultimately real universals (*sāmānyalakṣaṇa*).[195] Thus, there cannot exist any real similarity between the mental forms apprehended by different perceivers within Dharmakīrti's philosophical system. Secondly, the apprehension of similar mental forms by different perceivers cannot explain the entirety of our inferential reasoning and verbal communication. While our inferential reasoning and verbal communication are imprecise in some contexts, they are extremely precise in other contexts.[196] This kind of precise inferential reasoning and verbal communication requires the apprehension of *identical* external objects rather than merely *similar* mental forms. Thus, premise P_2 is justified. As we have seen, the denial of premise P_1 is ultimately self-refuting. Premises P_1 and P_2 together entail the existence of external objects. Thus, the very fact that inference-for-others and verbal communication are possible proves the existence of a shared mind-independent external world.

Vādirājasūri's argument for common-sense realism bears a strong resemblance to the transcendental critique of empiricism and idealism developed by Kant, Sellars (1997), McDowell (1998, 2009), and Arnold (2008).[197] A transcendental argument shows that "certain facts are required for experience to have the structure it does".[198] The Western transcendental critique of

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[194] NVV, p. 361, l. 12.

[195] PV_M 2.3, p. 112.

[196] For example, the exact sciences require precise inferential reasoning and verbal communication.

[197] Arnold 2008: 22-26.

[198] Sacks 2005: 450.

idealism argues that any experience worth its name must, in principle, be capable of being brought into the "logical space of reasons".[199] This logical space of reasons involves the inferential activity of justifying one's beliefs through conceptually structured expression. Insofar as any perception is capable of being brought into this logical space of reasons, conceptual capacities are always at work in any meaningful perceptual experience.[200] This Western transcendental critique parallels Akalaṅka's defence of the conceptual nature of all perception qua source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*). On the other hand, it is diametrically opposed to Dharmakīrti's perceptual non-conceptualism. From this starting-point of the essentially conceptual nature of every meaningful perception, the Western transcendental critique argues that the contentful nature of perception[201] cannot be explained solely in terms of the intrinsic nature of perceptual awareness.[202] Instead, this contentful nature shows that perception is necessarily world-disclosing. While idealists begin with the way things appear inside awareness and are driven to skepticism about the reality of any entity outside awareness, the transcendental critique begins with the evident fact that perception presents a world to us.[203] A necessary precondition of the possibility of this perceptual experience of a world is the actual existence of a mind-independent external world.[204] This is because the idealist ultimately cannot provide a convincing and coherent account of how and why perception *seems* to present an external world at all when no such external world actually exists.[205] This argument is paralleled by Akalaṅka's insistence that Dharmakīrti's theory of latent mental impressions, an alternative idealist account of perception, is hopelessly doomed to failure not only because it cannot explain several

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[199] Sellars 1997: 76; Arnold 2008: 23.

[200] Arnold 2008: 23.

[201] The 'contentful nature of perception' refers to the fact that perception appears to be *about something*.

[202] Arnold 2008: 23; McDowell 2009: 231.

[203] Arnold 2008: 24.

[204] McDowell 1998: 257-258; Arnold 2008: 24.

[205] Arnold 2008: 24-25.

features of our ordinary perception but also because it is ultimately incoherent. The transcendental dimension of the Western transcendental critique is paralleled by Vādirājasūri's argument that the existence of a mind-independent external world is a necessary precondition for the very possibility of our shared inferential reasoning and verbal communication. Though there are important differences between the two,[206] Akalaṅka's critique of Dharmakīrti's perceptual non-conceptualism and epistemic idealism bears strong affinities with the neo-Kantian transcendental critique of empiricism and idealism insofar as both emphasise the necessarily conceptual and world-disclosing character of perception.

§ 4.4.2.4 *Perceptual evidence for external objects*

So far, most of Akalaṅka's positive arguments for common-sense realism have been inferences to the best explanation. These arguments pick out a particular feature of our ordinary perception and show how realism rather than idealism provides a more plausible explanation of this feature. However, inferences to the best explanation yield probable rather than certain conclusions. As such, Akalaṅka has not yet offered any decisive evidence proving the existence of external objects. This shortcoming is remedied by Akalaṅka's final argument for common-sense realism. Having cleared the ground through his detailed refutation of Dharmakīrti's epistemic idealism, Akalaṅka argues that our ordinary perceptual experience proves the existence of external objects:

> ***ātmanānekarūpeṇa bahirarthasya tādṛśaḥ*** |
>
> ***vicitraṃ grahaṇaṃ vyaktaṃ viśeṣaṇaviśeṣyabhāk*** ||[207]

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[206] Most of the Jaina arguments discussed in section § 4.4 are not transcendental arguments from a fact to the necessary conditions for the possibility of that fact. Nonetheless, Vādirājasūri's argument that the existence of external objects is a necessary precondition for the very possibility of shared inferential reasoning and verbal communication certainly has the flavour of a transcendental argument.

[207] NV 9.

‘There is clearly (*vyaktam*) the manifold/variegated (*vicitra*) apprehension of external objects possessing many different characteristics (*tādṛś*) by means of the intrinsic nature (*ātman*) [of perceptual awareness] possessing many different characteristics. This apprehension clearly possesses both qualifiers (*viśeṣaṇa*) and qualified (*viśeṣya*).’

Our ordinary waking perception provides evidence for the existence of medium-sized (*sthūla*) external objects such as tables and chairs. This perceptual evidence for external objects is never actually sublated by any other source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*). Insofar as it is the foundational source of knowledge, perception proves the existence of external objects. In contrast to Dharmakīrti’s rejection of the ultimate epistemic reliability of our ordinary perception, Akalaṅka takes our ordinary perception at face-value because it makes no sense to deny something directly experienced by everyone.[208] Thus, ordinary perception provides the most conclusive evidence possible for the existence of external objects. Furthermore, ordinary perception establishes the many-sided (*anekānta*) nature of the external object as both substance-mode as well as universal-particular.

Akalaṅka concludes by highlighting the superiority of his common-sense realism over Dharmakīrti’s epistemic idealism:

tasmān naikāntato bhrāntir nāsatsaṃvṛtir eva vā |

ataś cārthabalāyātam anekātmapraśaṃsanam ||[209]

‘Therefore, there is neither one-sidedly/exclusively (*ekāntatas*) error (*bhrānti*) nor one-sidedly/exclusively unreal convention (*asatsaṃvṛti*). And hence there is the praising of many-

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[208] In a similar vein, Samantabhadra praises the Jina for teaching a doctrine which is not contradicted by our ordinary understanding (*prasiddha*) of the world (ĀM 6-7).

[209] NV 91.

sided (*anekātma*) [awareness] obtained (*āyāta*) from the power of external objects.'

Dharmakīrti's epistemic idealism is narrow and one-sided (*ekānta*) because it dismisses our ordinary perception as either wholly erroneous or merely conventional. This wholesale rejection of our ordinary perception is problematic because we cannot make sense of our epistemic practices and our pragmatic activities without invoking our ordinary perception. By contrast, Akalaṅka's common-sense realism distinguishes between genuine perception and pseudo-perception in accordance with our ordinary epistemic practices instead of dismissing the entirety of our ordinary perception as either wholly erroneous or merely conventional. Given that our ordinary perception presents us with external objects and given that our ordinary perception is never completely sublated, we must accept the existence of real external objects. This, in turn, leads to a more many-sided (*anekānta*) ontology consisting of both mental awarenesses and external objects. Accepting mind-independent external objects as the object of perception provides the most coherent, comprehensive, and plausible explanation of our ordinary perceptual experience which, after all, must be the desired goal of any theory of perception.

§ 4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has examined two very different answers to a very simple question: what is the object of perception? I have argued that Dharmakīrti's philosophical treatises, despite their multiple levels of analysis and diverse argumentative strategies, are best interpreted as defending a kind of epistemic idealism according to which the object of perception is a form (*ākāra*) or appearance (*ābhāsa*) internal to perceptual awareness. On the other hand, I have shown how Akalaṅka's philosophical treatises defend a kind of common-sense realism according to which the

object of perception is a mind-independent external object. In other words, this philosophical debate between Dharmakīrti and Akalaṅka boils down to the perennial philosophical debate between idealism and realism across diverse philosophical traditions.

Unlike various forms of theistic idealism in the Western tradition,[210] Dharmakīrti's epistemic idealism is the result of an uncompromisingly atheistic empiricism akin to the philosophical paradigm of the modern sciences. The background to Dharmakīrti's Yogācāra idealism is the Sautrāntika reductionist project of discovering the ultimately real *dharmas* underlying conventional reality. Given the partless and momentary nature of these *dharmas*, Sautrāntikas encounter the vexed time-lag problem: momentary external *dharmas* already cease to exist by the time they are perceived.[211] This, in turn, leads the Sautrāntikas to formulate a representationalist theory of perception according to which we perceive mental representations produced by external objects rather than the external objects themselves. However, just like the modern scientific paradigm, Sautrāntika representationalism leads to a fundamental mismatch between the way the world appears in our ordinary perception (medium-sized objects) and the way the world actually is (momentary partless particulars). Dharmakīrti's genius lies in his recognition that this representationalist theory of perception as well as the resulting insurmountable gap between experience and reality logically entail epistemic idealism. Insofar as we perceive mental representations rather than external objects, we have no good reason to postulate the existence of unknowable external objects. The restricted nature and other features of our ordinary perception can be explained purely in terms of the awakening of latent mental impressions (*vāsanā*) of prior awarenesses. Hence, by the principle of ontological simplicity (*lāghava*), an idealist ontology is preferable to a realist ontology. This, in turn, highlights the uniqueness of Dharmakīrti's epistemic

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[210] The most notable example is the theistic idealism of George Berkeley (Downing 2021).

[211] Arnold 2012: 188.

idealism: the seemingly rational commitments of a reductionist ontology and a representationalist theory of perception culminate in the unknowability of the mind-independent external world! Dharmakīrti's main argument for epistemic idealism, the *sahopalambhaniyama* inference, is a novel argument without any clear precedent in the Buddhist tradition and without any clear parallel in the Western philosophical tradition.[212] The necessary joint perception (*sahopalambhaniyama*) of object and awareness means that objects only seem to be independent from awareness by virtue of the intrinsic properties of awareness.[213] Dharmakīrti's *sahopalambhaniyama* inference highlights the incoherent nature of realism because the realist distinction between the subjective apprehension characteristic of awareness and the objective world apprehended by awareness is itself knowable solely through awareness. The central insight of Dharmakīrti's epistemic idealism is that awareness is prior to and independent of the world.[214] In this way, Dharmakīrti's epistemic idealism rejects our ordinary understanding of perception in favour of a more accurate theoretical account.

On the other hand, Akalaṅka's defence of common-sense realism stands out amongst the revisionist and illusionist approaches to perception dominant in classical Indian philosophy during the 1st millennium CE.[215] However, far from representing a radical innovation, Akalaṅka's common-sense realism is continuous with the views of earlier Jaina philosophers such as Samantabhadra. Instead, what is unique about Akalaṅka's common-sense realism is the range and depth of his arguments within the context of his polemical engagement with Dharmakīrti. I have shown how Akalaṅka employs a twofold argumentative strategy in his defense of common-sense

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[212] Kellner 2017: 317.

[213] Arnold 2012: 175.

[214] Ibid., 175-176.

[215] A notable exception to these revisionist and illusionist approaches to perception is Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika. From Akalaṅka's perspective, however, Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika too represents a revisionist rather than common-sensical approach because of their acceptance of bizarre notions such as inherence (*samavāya*) and abstract universals such as 'existence' (*sattā*) itself (LT 39-40).

realism. Akalaṅka's first argumentative strategy involves the refutation of Dharmakīrti's arguments for epistemic idealism, especially the theory of awareness with form (*sākārajñānavāda*) and the *sahopalambhaniyama* inference. Akalaṅka's detailed critique of the *sahopalambhaniyama* inference in both his exegetical commentaries and his philosophical treatises shows that he considers the *sahopalambhaniyama* inference to be Dharmakīrti's most important argument for epistemic idealism. Akalaṅka's central objection to the *sahopalambhaniyama* inference is that it assumes an invariable concomitance between necessary joint perception and identity which is unproved, doubtful, and contradicted by counterexamples.[216] Having refuted Dharmakīrti's arguments for epistemic idealism, Akalaṅka's second argumentative strategy involves a series of positive arguments for the existence of external objects. Most of these arguments are inferences to the best explanation which argue that a particular feature of our ordinary perception is better explained by common-sense realism than epistemic idealism. However, Akalaṅka's clinching evidence for common-sense realism is our ordinary perception of mind-independent external objects which is never sublated en masse. Besides analysing Akalaṅka's arguments, I have shown how Vādirājasūri presents a unique transcendental argument for common-sense realism according to which the existence of external objects is a necessary precondition for the very possibility of our ordinary discursive practices of shared inferential reasoning and verbal communication. Any attempt to deny the reality of these discursive practices is self-refuting because this very denial is only intelligible at the level of rational linguistic discourse! In this way, Akalaṅka's common-sense realism highlights the inescapable veracity of our ordinary perception because any attempt to dismiss the entirety of our ordinary perception as erroneous or reduce our ordinary perception to a purportedly more fundamental level is self-refuting given that the very articulation of any such theory necessarily occurs in the world of ordinary perception. Akalaṅka challenges Dharmakīrti's conception of awareness as autonomously intelligible by arguing that awareness cannot be contentful without

[216] NV 83cd-84ab.

being *about* the external world.[217] Akalaṅka mocks the absurdity of idealism by remarking that Buddhist idealists are stupider than simple cowherds![218] This satirical comparison illuminates Akalaṅka's commitment to our common-sensical understanding of perception as the apprehension of mind-independent external objects and his associated skepticism of dogmatic philosophical theorising divorced from our ordinary experience.

The modern significance of this classical Buddhist-Jaina philosophical debate lies in the unique arguments for epistemic idealism advanced by Dharmakīrti and the robust common-sense realism defended by Akalaṅka. While Dharmakīrti's *sahopalambhaniyama* inference and *saṃvedana* argument open up new argumentative strategies for idealism, Akalaṅka's common-sense realism provides a roadmap for defending our ordinary prescientific understanding of perception. While a complete evaluation of this complex debate would require further study, a few initial judgements are possible. Given that Akalaṅka does not seem to be aware of the weak version of the *sahopalambhaniyama* inference, Dharmakīrti's weak version of the *sahopalambhaniyama* inference remains unrefuted. On the other hand, Vādirājasūri's transcendental argument is an incisive and persuasive argument for common-sense realism which was not anticipated and answered by Dharmakīrti. While this chapter has examined the object of perceptual awareness, Dharmakīrti ultimately considers this very subject-object structure of our ordinary awareness to be illusory. Hence, the next chapter will turn to the question of whether the dualistic structure of awareness is actually real or merely an illusion.

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[217] Arnold 2012: 185.

[218] NV 51cd-53ab.

§ 5 *Subject-Object Duality*

This chapter discusses the *structure* of awareness. It seeks to answer the following question: does awareness have a dualistic structure or a non-dualistic structure?[1] By 'dualistic awareness', I refer to awareness structured by the duality between subject and object.[2] By 'non-dualistic awareness', I refer to awareness devoid of this subject-object duality. Thus, this chapter seeks to discover whether awareness is structured by subject-object duality or not. At first glance, the answer to this question seems obvious: awareness is dualistically structured. For example, when I perceive a table, my perception is differentiated into apprehending subject (my awareness) and apprehended object (the table). This is why I am able to make statements such as 'I saw the table'. From the point of view of our ordinary experience, it seems impossible to imagine any awareness devoid of this subject-object duality. However, our common-sensical dualistic awareness of the world is challenged when we reflect on our awareness of awareness. For example, when I closely observe a painting, I am keenly aware of my awareness of the painting.[3] Is this awareness of awareness a higher-order apprehension of one awareness by another awareness[4] or a given awareness's self-reflexive apprehension of itself? For reasons to be discussed later in this chapter,

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[1] By 'awareness', I refer especially to perceptual awareness because both Dharmakīrti and Akalaṅka present their respective theories about the structure of awareness within their respective chapters on perception. Nevertheless, the scope of this chapter is broader because the non-dualistic or dualistic structure of awareness applies to all kinds of awareness whether perceptual or otherwise.

[2] Loy 1997: 1.

There are many other kinds of dualities in classical Indian philosophy such as the duality between Supreme Self (*brahman*) and Individual Self (*ātman*) in Dvaita Vedānta. However, the duality between apprehending subject (*grāhaka*) and apprehended object (*grāhya*) is most relevant within the context of this philosophical debate between Dharmakīrti and Akalaṅka.

[3] Prado 1978: 135.

[4] For a critical survey of the different kinds of higher-order theories of consciousness current in modern analytic philosophy, see Gennaro (2004).

both Dharmakīrti and Akalaṅka argue that this awareness of awareness is ultimately a kind of self-reflexive awareness.[5] In other words, my awareness of my perception of the painting is ultimately explained by the perceptual awareness's self-reflexive awareness of itself. However, if this is the case, then it seems that there is least one kind of awareness free from subject-object duality: self-reflexive awareness. This is because there does not exist any distinction between apprehending subject and apprehended object within self-reflexive awareness given that self-reflexive awareness, by definition, involves an awareness apprehending itself rather than some other object. Thus, self-reflexive awareness seems to constitute an example of non-dualistic awareness. As we shall see, non-dualists such as Dharmakīrti argue that this non-dual self-reflexive awareness is somehow more foundational and more real than our ordinary dualistic awareness of the world.[6] For the purposes of this chapter, the terms 'non-dualism' and 'dualism' may be defined as follows:

> *Non-Dualism*: There exists an ultimately real non-dual awareness transcending our ordinary dualistic awareness of the world.
>
> *Dualism*: All awareness, whether ordinary or transcendent, is structured by subject-object duality. There does not exist any non-dual awareness.

This chapter reconstructs and analyses the debate between Dharmakīrti and Akalaṅka regarding the structure of awareness. Section § 5.1 shows how non-dual self-reflexive awareness is both the ultimately reliable source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) as well as the ultimate reality within Dharmakīrti's sliding scale of analysis. Section § 5.2 argues that Akalaṅka's works are best interpreted as reconciling dualism with self-reflexive awareness. Having presented Dharmakīrti's non-dualism and Akalaṅka's dualism in the first two sections, I analyse their arguments for their

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[5] PV_M 2.249, p. 194; NV 3.

[6] Taber 2022: 316-317.

respective positions in the last two sections. In section § 5.3, I show how Dharmakīrti's non-dualism logically follows from his theory of self-reflexive awareness and his relentless application of the principle of mereological reductionism. This section concludes with a discussion of the soteriological and metaphilosophical dimensions of Dharmakīrti's non-dualism. Section § 5.4 analyses Akalaṅka's objections to Dharmakīrti's non-dualism as well as Akalaṅka's reconciliation of dualism with self-reflexive awareness. This section concludes with a comparison of the contrasting metaphilosophies of Dharmakīrti and Akalaṅka. As we shall see, this classical Buddhist-Jaina philosophical debate between non-dualism and dualism goes beyond the narrow confines of philosophy[7] in two important ways. Firstly, this debate is a metaphilosophical reflection on the possible limits of rational philosophical inquiry.[8] Secondly, given that the realisation of non-dual awareness is intimately connected with liberation from the cycle of transmigration (*saṃsāra*) within Dharmakīrti's philosophical system, this debate is a meditation on the soteriological goals of philosophical inquiry.[9] Thus, this chapter is a sustained reflection on non-dual awareness and the possible limits of rational philosophical inquiry.

§ 5.1 Dharmakīrti's Non-Dualism

In the last few chapters, we have been examining Dharmakīrti's theory of sensory perception as non-conceptual and non-erroneous awareness.[10] Sensory perception is a source of

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[7] Answers to the question of what constitutes 'philosophy' vary across time and culture. Within the modern Anglophone world, the dominant paradigm of analytic philosophy emphasises "the role played by *logical analysis*" (Beaney 2021). More broadly, modern analytic philosophy is the rational enterprise of proving and disproving theories through the intersubjective sharing of reasons. Throughout this chapter, I operate with this conception of philosophy as the *rational* quest for truth.

[8] Yiannopoulos 2020: 381.

[9] Taber 2022: 316-317; Yiannopoulos 2020: 225.

[10] PV_M 2.123, p. 154.

knowledge (*pramāṇa*) because it is conducive to pragmatic activity (*arthakriyā*). This is because, unlike the conceptually constructed universals ascertained by inference, perception apprehends ultimately real particulars (*svalakṣaṇa*).[11] Ultimately real particulars, in turn, are distinguished from conventionally real universals by their causal efficacy (*arthakriyā*).[12] Thus, *arthakriyā* serves as the criterion of both epistemic reliability (*prāmāṇya*) and ontological reality within Dharmakīrti's philosophical system. However, at the beginning of the chapter on perception in the *Pramāṇavārttika*, an imaginary interlocutor questions the ultimate reality of *arthakriyā*:

> ***aśaktaṃ sarvam iti ced bījāder aṅkurādiṣu*** |
>
> ***dṛṣṭā śaktir matā sā cet saṃvṛtyāstu yathā tathā*** ||[13]
>
> '[Objection:] Everything lacks the capacity [for *arthakriyā*].
>
> [Response:] Seeds etc. are seen to possess the capacity (*śakti*) [for *arthakriyā*] with respect to sprouts and so forth.
>
> [Objection:] That capacity [of seeds etc.] is accepted conventionally (*saṃvṛtyā*).
>
> [Response:] Very well, let it be so.'

The interlocutor[14] argues that causal efficacy (*arthakriyā*), identified as the criterion of ultimate reality by Dharmakīrti, is itself purely conventional. Manorathanandin's commentary explains that the cause-effect relationship cannot be established by means of either perception or inference.[15] In other words, identifying any entity as either the cause or the effect of some other entity is a kind of conceptual construction (*kalpanā*).[16] Hence, *arthakriyā* qua causal efficacy or pragmatic efficacy

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[11] Ibid., 2.1ab, p. 110.

[12] Ibid., 2.1bc, p. 111.

[13] Ibid., 2.4, pp. 112-114.

[14] Given that he rejects the ultimate reality of *arthakriyā* qua causal efficacy, Dharmakīrti's imaginary interlocutor is probably the Mādhyamika Buddhist.

[15] PVV 2.4, p. 113.

[16] Ibid., 2.4, p. 114.

cannot be ultimately real. If *arthakriyā* itself is purely conventional, how can it serve as the criterion for distinguishing between ultimately real entities and conventionally real entities? At this stage, it looks like the interlocutor has landed a fatal blow to Dharmakīrti's philosophical project. Surprisingly, however, Dharmakīrti responds by calmly accepting the interlocutor's argument: *arthakriyā* is indeed purely conventional.[17] However, this is not a problem because perception and inference, the two sources of knowledge accepted by Dharmakīrti, are themselves purely conventional (*sāṃvyavahārika*).[18] The purely conventional criterion of *arthakriyā* is sufficient for establishing the epistemic reliability (*prāmāṇya*) of these two conventional sources of knowledge (*pramāṇa*).[19] This means that our entire analysis of Dharmakīrti's theory of perception in the last few chapters, including the distinction between ultimately reliable non-conceptual perception of mental forms (*ākāra*) and erroneous conceptual awareness of illusory external objects, has been purely conventional because the very criterion of *arthakriyā* is purely conventional.

Dharmakīrti's admission of the purely conventional nature of *arthakriyā* raises the possibility that there exists some totally different kind of awareness which is ultimately epistemically reliable. Dharmakīrti explicitly affirms the existence of ultimately reliable awareness in the *Pramāṇaviniścaya*:

> *sāṃvyavahārikasya caitat pramāṇasya rūpam uktam ... | cintāmayīm eva tu prajñām anuśīlayanto vibhramavivekanirmalam anapāyi pāramārthikapramāṇam*

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[17] Many modern scholars of Dharmakīrti tend to dismiss Dharmakīrti's striking admission of the purely conventional nature of causality. For example, Dunne (2004: 79) says that "such radical anti-realism is not germane for us now" if we wish to understand most of Dharmakīrti's philosophical project. Yet, recognising the purely conventional nature of causally efficacious particulars is essential for understanding the non-dualism at the heart of Dharmakīrti's philosophy.

[18] PVV 2.4, p. 114.

[19] Ibid., 2.4d, p. 114.

abhimukhīkurvanti |[20]

'And, this nature (*rūpa*) of conventional (*sāṃvyavahārika*) sources of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) has been stated … .

However, those cultivating the very wisdom (*prajñā*) consisting of contemplation (*cintā*) turn towards the ultimate source of knowledge (*pāramārthikapramāṇa*) which is imperishable (*anapāyin*) and flawless due to lack (*viveka*) of error (*vibhrama*).'

After examining the definition and nature of perception, Dharmakīrti concludes the first chapter of the *Pramāṇaviniścaya* by stating that his entire analysis of perception thus far has been purely conventional (*sāṃvyavahārika*). In the final analysis, our sensory perception, even when it is a highly refined non-conceptual apprehension of forms internal to awareness, is purely conventional and provisional. There is a radically different kind of awareness which is the ultimate source of knowledge (*pāramārthikapramāṇa*). Unlike conventional modes of awareness dependent on sensory perception and inferential reasoning, this ultimately reliable awareness can only be attained through the cultivation of transcendent contemplative wisdom (*prajñā*). While this passage points towards some ultimately reliable awareness transcending sensory perception, it does not describe the nature of this ultimately reliable awareness and does not explain why sensory perception, even when it is non-conceptual and idealist, still involves some kind of error. These details are provided in the following verses from the *Pramāṇavārttika*:

paricchedo 'ntar anyo 'yaṃ bhāgo bahir iva sthitaḥ |

[20] PVi 1.58, p. 44, ll. 2-5.

jñānasyābhedino bhedapratibhāso hy upaplavaḥ ||[21]

tatraikasyāpy abhāvena dvayam apy avahīyate |

tasmāt tad eva tasyāpi tattvaṃ yā dvayaśūnyatā ||[22]

'This part [of awareness] which seems to exist externally is different from the [seemingly] internal ascertainment (*pariccheda*): this appearance of difference (*bheda*) in an undifferentiated (*abhedin*) awareness is a cognitive distortion (*upaplava*). Due to the non-existence (*abhāva*) of even one of them in awareness, both of them are abandoned. Therefore, this alone is the real nature (*tattva*) of awareness too: emptiness (*śūnyatā*) of duality (*dvaya*).'

Sensory perception, even when it is non-conceptual and idealist, is phenomenologically structured by subject-object duality. There is always a first-person sense of awareness as belonging to oneself together with a third-person sense that the object of awareness exists out there in the external world.[23] In other words, sensory perception consists of both the apprehending subject form (*grāhakākāra*) as well as the apprehended object form (*grāhyākāra*).[24] For reasons to be discussed later in this chapter, Dharmakīrti considers this subject-object duality to be a systematic cognitive distortion (*upaplava*). Insofar as it is always structured by this subject-object duality, our sensory perception is necessarily erroneous.[25] This is because awareness is empty of subject-object duality at the level of ultimate reality. This non-dual awareness, in turn, is the ultimate source of knowledge

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[21] This is Prajñākaragupta's reading of the third and the fourth *pādas*. Manorathanandin instead reads '*jñānasyābhedinau bhinnau pratibhāso hy upaplavaḥ*' (PV_M 2.212, p. 182). On Manorathanandin's reading, the third *pāda* and the fourth *pāda* are two separate sentences. This is slightly worse because the word '*pratibhāsa*' in the fourth *pāda* requires a genitive specifying the entity *of which* it is an appearance (*pratibhāsa*). Thus, we would have to perform a case-transformation (*vibhaktiviparinamana*) by changing '*jñānasyābhedinau bhinnau*' to '*jñānasyābhedinor bhinnayoḥ*' in order to supply the genitive required in the fourth *pāda*. Since Prajñākaragupta's reading does not involve any such case-transformation, I have chosen Prajñākaragupta's reading.

[22] PV_P 3.213-3.214, p. 288.

[23] Yiannopoulos 2020: "Abstract".

[24] PVV 2.213, p. 182.

[25] Yiannopoulos 2020: "Abstract".

(*pāramārthikapramāṇa*).[26]

This ultimately reliable non-dual awareness is intimately connected with self-reflexive awareness. In order to appreciate this relationship, however, we must first understand Dharmakīrti's theory of self-reflexive awareness:

> ***aśakyasamayo hy ātmā rāgādīnām ananyabhāk*** |
>
> ***teṣām ataḥ svasaṃvittir nābhijalpānuṣaṅginī*** ||[27]
>
> 'Since the intrinsic nature (*ātman*) of [affective states] such as lust (*rāga*) cannot become the object of linguistic convention (*samaya*), it cannot be experienced by anyone else. Therefore, the self-reflexive awareness (*svasaṃvitti*) of those [affective states such as lust] is not associated with language (*abhijalpa*).'

In simple terms, self-reflexive awareness (*svasaṃvitti*) is awareness's awareness of itself. Dharmakīrti illustrates self-reflexive awareness using the example of the sensation of lust (*rāga*). Whenever I experience lust, I am aware of my experience of lust because lust is nothing other than the experience of lust.[28] The intrinsic nature of this self-reflexive awareness of lust cannot be expressed in language. This is just another way of saying that no other person can truly understand what my inner subjective experience of lust feels like. Insofar as it is not capable of association with language, my self-reflexive awareness of lust is non-conceptual. Furthermore, my self-reflexive awareness of lust cannot be erroneous because I must necessarily be aware of my experience of lust in order to experience lust.[29] This means that the self-reflexive awareness of affective mental states

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[26] Ibid., 305.

[27] PV_M 2.249, p. 194.

[28] Yiannopoulos 2020: 423.

[29] Ibid., 424.

such as lust is non-conceptual and non-erroneous. Given that these are the two defining features of perception, the self-reflexive awareness of affective mental states counts as perception (*pratyakṣa*) qua *pramāṇa*.[30] This explains why Dharmakīrti classifies self-reflexive awareness (*svasaṃvedana*/ *svasaṃvitti*) as one of the four kinds of epistemically reliable perception.[31] While the above verse argues for the self-reflexive awareness of affective mental states such as lust, this self-reflexive awareness is actually generalisable to all mental states. This is because affective features such as desirability and undesirability are built into every single awareness as the subjective aspect of awareness.[32] This means that every awareness, whether non-conceptual or conceptual, is non-conceptually and self-reflexively aware of itself. Given that it is a kind of perception, self-reflexive awareness counts as a source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*). Thus, every single awareness counts as perception qua *pramāṇa* with respect to its self-reflexive awareness of itself.[33] Having understood Dharmakīrti's theory of self-reflexive awareness, we are now in a position to appreciate how self-reflexive awareness is intimately connected with the non-dual structure of awareness. When any given awareness is aware of itself, it reflexively acts upon itself as both agent (*kartṛ*) and patient (*karman*).[34] In this self-reflexive state, there is no longer any dualistic distinction between apprehending subject and apprehended object. Thus, self-reflexive awareness is necessarily non-dual. This means that, at the level of ultimate reality, self-reflexive awareness is not distinct from non-dual awareness because awareness is non-dualistically structured precisely by virtue of the fact that it is self-reflexively aware of itself.[35] This non-dual self-reflexive awareness is both the source

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[30] PVV 2.249, p. 194; Yiannopoulos 2020: 424.

[31] See § 1.2.3, p. 54.

[32] Yiannopoulos 2020: 385-386.

[33] Ibid., 298-299.

[34] Ibid., 222.

Strictly speaking, this 'acting' is metaphorical because there does not exist any causal activity (*vyāpāra*) at the level of ultimate reality (Yiannopoulos 2020: 222).

[35] Yiannopoulos 2020: 374.

of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) and the object of knowledge (*prameya*) at the level of ultimate reality.[36]

Having shown that ultimate reality is constituted by non-dual self-reflexive awareness, Dharmakīrti highlights the difference between conventional reality and ultimate reality:

> ***tadbhedāśrayiṇī ceyaṃ bhāvānāṃ bhedasaṃsthitiḥ*** |
>
> ***tadupaplavabhāve ca teṣāṃ bhedo 'py upaplavaḥ*** ||[37]
>
> 'And, this establishment of distinction (*bheda*) between existents (*bhāva*) depends on the distinction between apprehending subject and apprehended object (*tad*).[38] However, when that distinction between apprehending subject and apprehended object is a cognitive distortion (*upaplava*), then the distinction between existents too is a cognitive distortion.'

At the level of conventional reality, every particular (*svalakṣaṇa*) possesses a unique intrinsic nature (*svabhāva*) which distinguishes it from all other particulars.[39] In other words, distinction between entities is fundamental to the empirical world of perceptual experience.[40] Dharmakīrti argues that the distinction between different particulars ultimately depends on the fundamental distinction between apprehending subject and apprehended object.[41] However, if this very subject-object duality is illusory, then there cannot exist any distinct entities at the level of ultimate reality. Instead, non-dual awareness alone is ultimately real.[42] Thus, conventional reality is strictly opposed to ultimate reality because conventional reality is grounded in distinctions (*bheda*) whereas ultimate

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[36] Ibid., 382.

[37] PV_M 2.214, p. 182.

[38] The word '*tad*' refers back to the duality (*dvaya*) between apprehending subject and apprehended object mentioned towards the end of the preceding verse (PV_M 2.213, p. 182).

[39] PV_M 2.2, p. 112.

[40] Taber 2022: 316.

[41] PV_M 2.214, p. 182.

[42] Taber 2022: 316-317.

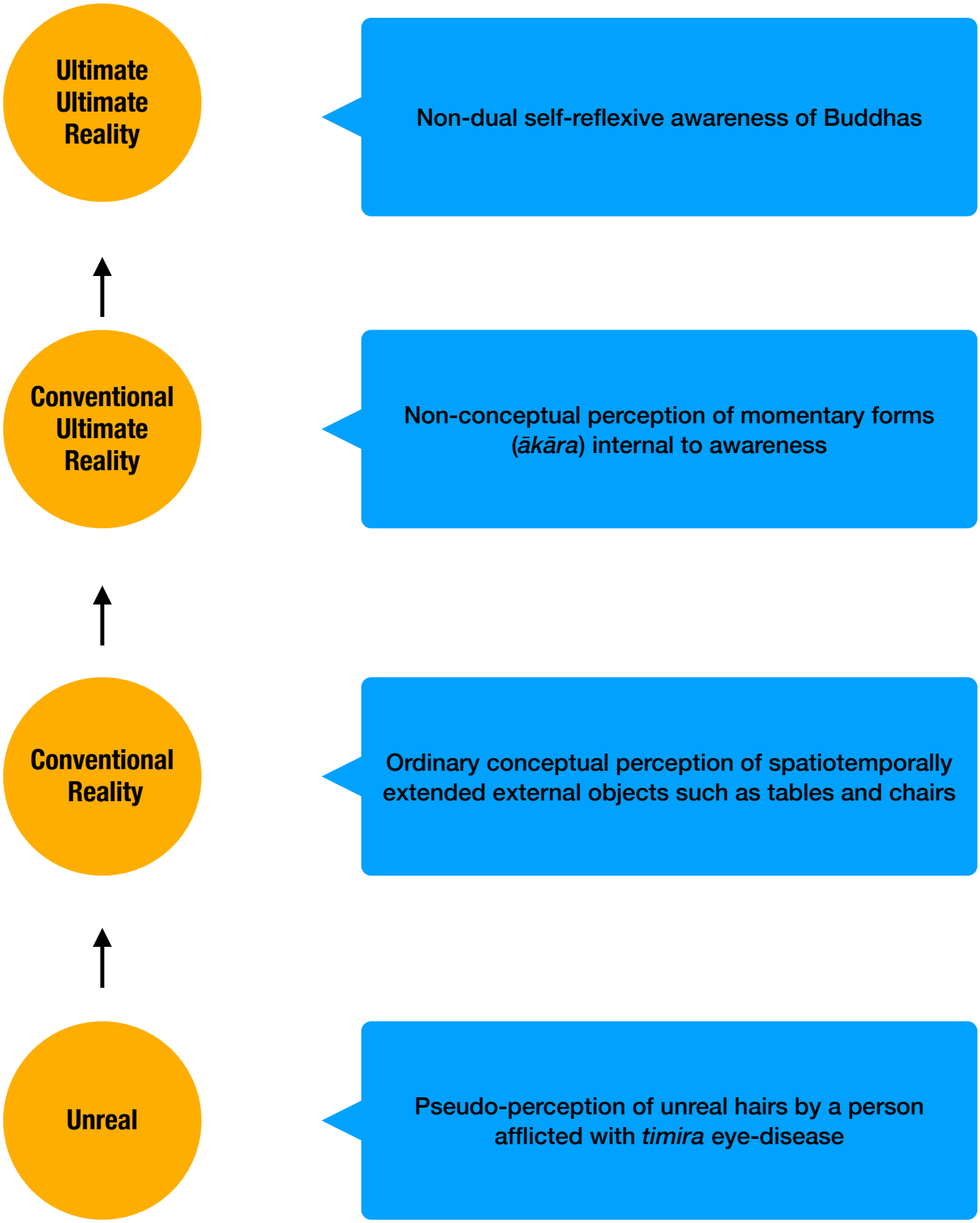
reality is free from all distinctions (*abheda*/*advaya*).[43] In the next verse, Dharmakīrti argues that an entity cannot have any intrinsic nature (*svabhāva*) other than the state of being either an apprehending subject (*grāhaka*) or an apprehended object (*grāhya*).[44] However, given that this subject-object duality is unreal, all phenomena are ultimately devoid of intrinsic nature (*niḥsvabhāva*). Thus, entities have a real intrinsic nature (*svabhāva*) at the level of dualistic conventional reality whereas they are empty of intrinsic nature (*niḥsvabhāva*) at the level of non-dual ultimate reality.[45] Similarly, while conventionally real entities possess causal activity (*vyāpāra*), ultimately real non-dual awareness lacks causal activity (*nirvyāpāra*).[46] Thus, the nature of ultimate reality strongly conflicts with the nature of conventional reality. Far from being a contradiction, however, this opposition highlights the illusory nature of the conventional reality apprehended by deluded sentient beings suffering in the cycle of transmigration (*saṃsāra*). Putting these pieces together, we may represent the levels of analysis within Dharmakīrti's philosophical system as follows:

[43] PV_M 2.214, p. 182.

[44] Ibid., 2.215, p. 183.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Ibid., 2.216, p. 183.



Flow-chart 5: Levels of analysis in Dharmakīrti's system with special reference to perception

Dharmakīrti's analysis moves closer and closer to the true nature of reality as we move upwards.[47] From the point of view of a higher level of reality, every lower level of reality is purely conventional. For example, non-conceptual perception of mental forms is ultimately real relative to our ordinary conceptual perception of external objects but conventionally real relative to the non-dual self-reflexive awareness of Buddhas. As we can see, non-dual self-reflexive awareness is the most accurate and most profound level of reality within Dharmakīrti's philosophical system.

§ 5.2 Akalaṅka's Dualism

In the last two chapters, we have seen how Akalaṅka analyses perception as conceptual awareness of real external objects. This interpretation of Akalaṅka is uncontroversial because Akalaṅka explicitly defends both perceptual conceptualism as well as common-sense realism.[48] When we turn to the question of the structure of awareness, however, we are faced with two interpretive dilemmas. Firstly, Akalaṅka does not explicitly express his commitment to any kind of dualism (*dvaita*/*dvayavāda*) despite devoting numerous verses to refuting Dharmakīrti's non-dualism. What should we make of Akalaṅka's reluctance to identify himself as a dualist by providing positive arguments for dualism? Secondly, 'dualism' is a notoriously vague term with

[47] The distinction between two different levels of ultimate reality i.e. conventional ultimate reality and ultimate ultimate reality is not attested in classical commentaries on Dharmakīrti's philosophical treatises. Yet, modern scholars such as Prueitt (2019: 49) have defended this distinction between two different levels of ultimate reality. In my view, this distinction is essential because momentary causally efficient particulars (*svalakṣaṇa*) are the ultimate reality *underlying* our ordinary experience whereas non-dual self-reflexive awareness is the ultimate reality *transcending* our ordinary experience. While conventional ultimate reality provides causal explanations of *how things work* (*arthakriyā*), ultimate ultimate reality rejects causality for liberating insight into *how things are* (Prueitt 2019: 61). These two kinds of ultimate reality are distinct domains which cannot be reduced to each other (Prueitt 2019: 57). In simple terms, *how things work* has nothing to do with *how things are* (Prueitt 2019: 61). Instead, these two levels of ultimate reality serve different purposes: conventional ultimate reality explains ordinary *saṃsāric* experience whereas ultimate ultimate reality liberates from ordinary *saṃsāric* experience.

[48] As we have seen, Akalaṅka defines perception (*pratyakṣa*) as conceptual (*sākāra*) awareness of many-sided external objects (*artha*) (NV 3). This shows Akalaṅka's commitment to perceptual conceptualism and common-sense realism.

many possible interpretations in classical Indian philosophy (such as Madhva's Vedāntic dualism between God and individual selves) and modern analytic philosophy (such as substance dualism between immaterial self and material body).[49] This raises the question of the precise kind of dualism at stake in Akalaṅka's debate with Dharmakīrti. Given these two interpretive dilemmas, the following exposition of Akalaṅka's dualism should be viewed as a rational reconstruction of the position implicit in the *Laghīyastraya* and the *Nyāyaviniścaya*.

A relatively clear statement of various kinds of real dualities occurs in the context of Akalaṅka's discussion of the self (*ātman*):

> ***satyaṃ tam āhur ācāryā vidyayā vibhramaiś ca yaḥ*** |
> ***yathārtham ayathārthaṃ vā prabhur eṣo 'valokate*** ||[50]
> 'Teachers (*ācārya*) declare to be true (*satya*) this [perceptible] sovereign (*prabhu*) [self (*ātman*)] who perceives the real (*yathārtha*) by means of knowledge [i.e. the power of apprehending objects as they really are] and the unreal (*ayathārtha*) by means of errors [i.e. the power of apprehending unreal objects].'[51]

Akalaṅka's verse argues that the self (*ātman*) is perceptible[52] and possesses the capacity for apprehending both itself as well as other objects.[53] Quite incidentally, this verse shows that Akalaṅka accepts the following dualities as ultimately real:

(i) Duality between apprehending self (*ātman*) and apprehended object (*artha*).

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[49] Bartley 2015: 248-257; Loose, Menuge, and Moreland 2018: 1.

[50] NV 37.

[51] The words within square brackets have been supplied from Vādirājasūri's commentary (NVV, p. 282, ll. 9, 21, p. 284, ll. 1-3).

[52] NVV, p. 284, ll. 1-3.

[53] Ibid., p. 282, ll. 2-3.

(ii) Duality between true awareness of real objects and false awareness of unreal objects.

While duality (ii) is an epistemic duality between epistemically reliable awareness and epistemically unreliable awareness, duality (i) is an ontological duality between subject and object. Both the epistemic duality as well as the ontological duality are ultimately real within Akalaṅka's philosophical system. Thus, Akalaṅka's position is best characterised as a kind of epistemological-cum-ontological dualism. For the purposes of this chapter, Akalaṅka's ontological dualism between the self as the subject of apprehension and the external world as the object of apprehension is most relevant. This ontological dualism is evident throughout Akalaṅka's philosophical treatises:

> ***yadā yatra yathā vastu tadā tatra tathā nayet*** ||
>
> ***atatkālādir apy ātmā …*** |[54]
>
> 'Though it does not exist at the same time, in the same place, and in the same manner [as the object], the self (*ātman*) can lead the object (*vastu*) [to manifestation within awareness] in accordance with the object's time, place, and manner.'

Akalaṅka's ontological dualism between apprehending subject and apprehended object directly contrasts with Dharmakīrti's rejection of subject-object duality. Though Akalaṅka never explicitly uses the terms 'dual' (*dvaya*) or 'dualism' (*dvaita*) as a self-designation, we can rationally reconstruct Akalaṅka's ontological dualism from several of his arguments. Important evidence supporting our rational reconstruction is found in Vādirājasūri's commentary:

> ***askhalatpratibhāsaṃ yaj jñānaṃ saṃvādavat tathā*** |
>
> ***dvaitādi tasya saṃvedyaṃ vidyamānaṃ kathaṃ na tat*** ||[55]
>
> 'When an awareness is harmonious (*saṃvādavat*) and its appearance (*pratibhāsa*) is unerring

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[54] NV 41cd-42a.

[55] NVV, p. 335, ll. 26-27.

(*askhalat*), how can the object (*saṃvedya*) of that awareness such as duality (*dvaita*) and so forth not be real existents (*vidyamāna*)?'

We will analyse Vādirājasūri's argument later in this chapter.[56] For our present purposes, it is sufficient to observe that Vādirājasūri explicitly uses the word 'duality' (*dvaita*). This duality (*dvaita*), in turn, is said to be a real existent (*vidyamāna*). Thus, Vādirājasūri's commentary supports our rational reconstruction of Akalaṅka as a proponent of dualism.

A natural corollary of Akalaṅka's dualism is his rejection of the theory of non-dualism as false. While discussing the nature of mental streams and yogic perception, Akalaṅka states the following:

āyātam anyathādvaitam api cettham ayuktimat ||[57]

'Otherwise, non-dualism (*advaita*) would be reached [as a consequence]. And, thus, it would be illogical (*ayuktimat*).'

This half-verse argues that a particular philosophical position is problematic because it entails non-dualism (*advaita*). In other words, Akalaṅka presents non-dualism as the undesirable consequence (*prasaṅga*) of a reductio ad absurdum. This terse remark, in turn, shows that Akalaṅka rejects the theory of non-dualism. In summary, Akalaṅka is an epistemological-cum-ontological dualist who rejects all forms of non-dualism.

Alongside this dualism, Akalaṅka accepts the theory of self-reflexive awareness (*svasaṃvedana*/*svasaṃvitti*). For a moment, let us return to Akalaṅka's definition of perception in

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[56] See § 5.4.2.4, pp. 319-320.

[57] NV 81cd.

the *Nyāyaviniścaya*:

> ***pratyakṣalakṣaṇaṃ prāhuḥ spaṣṭaṃ sākāram añjasā*** |
>
> ***dravyaparyāyasāmānyaviśeṣārthātmavedanam*** ||[58]
>
> '[Wise people] state the definition of perception to be clear (*spaṣṭa*) and truly (*añjasā*) conceptual (*sākāra*) awareness (*vedana*) of both external objects such as substances (*dravya*), modifications (*paryāya*), universals (*sāmānya*), and particulars (*viśeṣa*) as well as itself (*ātman*).'

This definition states that perception consists of both object-awareness (*arthavedana*) and self-awareness (*ātmavedana*). We have already analysed perception qua object-awareness in the last two chapters. However, what does it mean to say that perception involves self-awareness (*ātmavedana*)? As usual, Vādirājasūri's commentary provides an explanation:

> *… tad eva ca sakalasyārthavedanasyāpi svasaṃviditatvam avasthāpayati | tata idam uktaṃ 'pratyakṣalakṣaṇam ātmavedanam' iti | na cārthajñānānāṃ svasaṃviditatve kaścid api virodhas tasya nirbādham anubhūyamānatvāt* |[59]
>
> '… And, that alone establishes the self-reflexively aware nature (*svasaṃviditatva*) of each and every object-awareness (*arthavedana*). Therefore, this has been stated [by Akalaṅka]: 'Self-awareness (*ātmavedana*) is a characteristic (*lakṣaṇa*) of perception'. And, there does not exist any contradiction (*virodha*) whatsoever in object-awarenesses being self-reflexively aware [of themselves] because their self-reflexively aware nature is [always] being experienced without sublation (*bādhā*).'

In other words, self-awareness (*ātmavedana*) means that each and every awareness of external

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[58] Ibid., 3.

[59] NVV, p. 83, ll. 28-29, p. 84, l. 1.

objects (*arthavedana*) is self-reflexively aware of itself. Vādirājasūri argues that we directly and immediately experience this self-reflexive awareness. Thus, like Dharmakīrti, Akalaṅka is committed to the theory of self-reflexive awareness (*svasaṃvedana*/*svasaṃvitti*) according to which each and every awareness is self-reflexively aware of itself.

Interestingly, Akalaṅka's argument for self-reflexive awareness bears a striking resemblance to Dharmakīrti's argument:

> ***sukhaduḥkhādisaṃvitter avitter na harṣādayaḥ*** |[60]
>
> 'Joy (*harṣa*) and so forth would not [arise] from the absence of awareness (*avitti*) of the awareness (*saṃvitti*) of pleasure, pain, and so forth [i.e. affective mental states].'

Just like Dharmakīrti, Akalaṅka establishes self-reflexive awareness using the example of affective mental states such as pleasure and pain. Vādirājasūri explains that the awareness of pleasure is not a distinct entity from the pleasure itself.[61] This is because any affective mental state such as pleasure is nothing but the awareness ('feeling') of that affective mental state. However, if we were not directly aware of our awareness/feeling of pleasure, we would not experience the resultant affective mental state of joy. The fact that we experience joy whenever we feel pleasure proves that we must be aware of our awareness/feeling of pleasure. Akalaṅka argues that this awareness of awareness is best understood as awareness's self-reflexive awareness of itself.[62] Thus, affective mental states such as pleasure and pain are self-reflexively aware of themselves.[63] Just like Dharmakīrti,

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[60] NV 15ab.

The second *pāda* is unmetrical because the heavy fifth syllable violates the rules of the *anuṣṭubh* metre. I am not aware of any variant readings and there does not seem to be any straightforward way of emending the available reading in order to resolve this metrical irregularity.

[61] NVV, p. 207, ll. 9-10.

[62] NV 13-18.

[63] NVV, p. 207, ll. 9-11.

Akalaṅka generalises from the self-reflexive awareness of affective mental states to self-reflexive awareness as a feature of each and every awareness. Historically speaking, it is very likely that Akalaṅka borrowed the theory of self-reflexive awareness from Buddhist *pramāṇavādins* such as Diṅnāga and Dharmakīrti. There are two reasons justifying this conclusion. Firstly, to the best of my knowledge, the concept of self-reflexive awareness (*svasaṃvedana/svasaṃvitti*) is not found in pre-Dharmakīrtian Jaina philosophy. For example, the concept of self-reflexive awareness is entirely absent from Umāsvāmin's *Tattvārthasūtra* as well as Samantabhadra's *Āptamīmāṃsā*.[64] Secondly, Akalaṅka's main argument for self-reflexive awareness, the argument from infinite regress, strongly resembles Dharmakīrti's main argument for self-reflexive awareness.[65] Given the chronological priority of Dharmakīrti over Akalaṅka, we can safely conclude that Akalaṅka borrowed the concept of self-reflexive awareness from Dharmakīrti rather than the other way round. This, in turn, explains the striking similarities between Dharmakīrti's theory of self-reflexive awareness and Akalaṅka's theory of self-reflexive awareness. Nevertheless, as we shall see later in this chapter, Akalaṅka's understanding of the nature and epistemic status of self-reflexive awareness differs significantly from Dharmakīrti's understanding. While Dharmakīrti subscribes to non-dualism precisely because he considers self-reflexive awareness to be the ultimately real nature of each and every awareness, Akalaṅka accepts the theory of self-reflexive awareness whilst simultaneously remaining committed to a strong epistemological-cum-ontological dualism.[66] In this way, self-reflexive awareness plays a very different role within Akalaṅka's philosophical system. Thus, far from passively borrowing a Buddhist idea, Akalaṅka actively modifies Dharmakīrti's theory of self-reflexive awareness for his distinctively Jaina philosophical purposes. However, Akalaṅka must

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[64] By the time of Vādirājasūri, however, the originally innovative concept of self-reflexive awareness was identified with the traditional Jaina category of mental perception (*anindriyapratyakṣa*):
anindriyapratyakṣaṃ tu sarvacetasāṃ svasaṃvedanaṃ … | (NVV, p. 111, l. 24)
'On the other hand, mental perception (*anindriyapratyakṣa*) is the self-reflexive awareness (*svasaṃvedana*) of all awarenesses …'

[65] See § 5.3.1, pp. 283-287 for Dharmakīrti's argument and § 5.4.1, pp. 306-309 for Akalaṅka's argument.

[66] Yiannopoulos 2020: 289-290.

show that awareness's self-reflexive awareness of itself is consistent with the dualistic structure of awareness. This overall goal of reconciling the two seemingly contradictory theories of self-reflexive awareness and dualism will guide our analysis of Akalaṅka's arguments in section § 5.4.

§ 5.3 Dharmakīrti's Proof of Non-Dualism

Thus far, Dharmakīrti has defended the position that sensory perception is actually non-conceptual awareness of mental forms rather than conceptual awareness of external objects. However, from the perspective of ultimate ultimate reality, this non-conceptual perception of mental forms is purely conventional because it is structured by illusory subject-object duality. At the highest level of analysis, non-dual self-reflexive awareness alone actually exists.[67] As such, the arguments analysed in this section aim to prove non-dualism from the starting-points of perceptual non-conceptualism and epistemic idealism. Dharmakīrti's proof of non-dualism involves four distinct steps:

(i) Establishing self-reflexive awareness

(ii) Defending the non-dual structure of awareness

(iii) Explaining away ordinary dualistic awareness

(iv) Soteriology and metaphilosophy

Each step builds on the preceding step and involves multiple arguments. Let us examine these steps one by one.

§ 5.3.1 *Establishing self-reflexive awareness*

[67] PV_P 3.213-3.214, p. 288.

Every awareness, whether non-conceptual or conceptual, is self-reflexively aware of itself.[68] Given that it is non-conceptual and non-erroneous, self-reflexive awareness (*svasaṃvedana*) counts as perception (*pratyakṣa*) qua source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*). As discussed in section § 5.1, Dharmakīrti begins his defence of self-reflexive awareness by showing how affective mental states such as lust are necessarily self-reflexively aware of themselves.[69] This is followed by a long argument proving that affective mental states such as lust involve both object-awareness (*arthavedana*) and self-reflexive awareness (*svātmavedana*).[70] This shows that affective mental states such as lust resemble non-affective perceptual and inferential mental states because both kinds of mental states apprehend some object. This relevant similarity, in turn, allows Dharmakīrti to generalise from the self-reflexive awareness of affective mental states to the self-reflexive awareness of all mental states.[71]

Besides the above argument, Dharmakīrti's most important argument for self-reflexive awareness is the argument from infinite regress. As we have seen, Dharmakīrti defends the knowledge-requirement according to which each and every awareness must be known or apprehended in order for the knowledge of the object of the awareness to be established.[72] Dharmakīrti considers two possible ways in which any given awareness might be known:

(i) By itself

(ii) By some other awareness

The first option corresponds to the theory of self-reflexive awareness (*svasaṃvedana*) whereas the

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[68] PV_M 2.287, p. 204; Yiannopoulos 2020: 298.

[69] PV_M 2.249, p. 194.

[70] Ibid., 2.266, p. 198.

[71] For a detailed analysis of this argument, see Yiannopoulos (2020: 414-455).

[72] Kellner 2011: 420.

See § 4.3.3, pp. 205-207.

second option corresponds to the theory of other-awareness (*parasaṃvedana*). In order to establish the theory of self-reflexive awareness, Dharmakīrti must show that the theory of self-reflexive awareness is more successful than the theory of other-awareness in fulfilling the knowledge-requirement. Dharmakīrti presents the following argument from infinite regress (*anavasthā/aniṣṭhā*) in order to refute the theory of other-awareness:

> *anyenāpi saṃvedanopalambhe so 'py asiddhaḥ saṃvedanaṃ na sādhayatīty upalambhāntarānugamaḥ | tan na tāvad ayaṃ puruṣaḥ kaṃcid arthaṃ pratyety upalambhaniṣṭhāṃ pratīkṣamāṇa ekāsiddhau sarvāsiddheḥ | na copalambhānām utpattiniṣṭhety andhamūkaṃ jagat syāt | kvacin niṣṭhāyāṃ sa svayam ātmānaṃ viṣayākāraṃ ca yugapad upalabhata iti tadanye 'pi tathā syur viśeṣahetvabhāvāt* |[73]
>
> 'If there is perception of awareness by means of another [awareness], then that [second-order] perception too, as long as it is unestablished, cannot establish the [first-order] awareness. Therefore, there would follow another [third-order] perception. As a result, firstly, this person would not be aware of any object whatsoever while he is waiting for the end (*niṣṭhā*) of those perceptions. This is because all perceptions would remain unestablished as long as one perception remains unestablished. And, secondly, there would not be any end to the arising of perceptions. Therefore, the world would become blind and dumb. If there was an end somewhere, then that [final] perception would, by itself (*svayam*), simultaneously perceive both object-form (*viṣayākāra*) and itself (*ātman*). However, if this is the case, then let perceptions other than that final perception also be like that [final perception] because of the absence of any cause for difference [between these perceptions].'

Dharmakīrti argues that the theory of other-awareness is implausible because it leads to an infinite regress. This is because the theory of other-awareness states that any given awareness A_1 is known

[73] PVi 1.54cd, p. 41, ll. 8-13.

or apprehended by some other awareness A_2. However, the knowledge-requirement states that knowledge of awareness is a necessary precondition for knowledge of the object of awareness. Thus, the object of awareness A_2 i.e. awareness A_1 cannot be known until awareness A_2 itself is known. However, the theory of other-awareness entails that awareness A_2 cannot know itself. Thus, we must postulate a third awareness A_3 which knows or apprehends awareness A_2. This process would continue indefinitely and thereby lead to an infinite regress of awarenesses apprehending other awarenesses. This infinite regress is fatal because any given awareness such as awareness A_n cannot be known and established until its higher-order awareness A_{n+1} is known and established. Since the chain of awarenesses is infinite, no awareness whatsoever would be known and established. This, however, is an absurd consequence. Thus, the argument from infinite regress refutes the theory of other-awareness. This argument from infinite regress, in turn, serves as a premise in the following argument for self-reflexive awareness:

P_1 Every awareness is known (knowledge-requirement).

P_2 Awareness can be known either by means of self-reflexive awareness or by means of another awareness.

P_3 Awareness cannot be known by means of another awareness (argument from infinite regress).

Therefore,

C Every awareness is known by means of self-reflexive awareness.

This is Dharmakīrti's main argument for self-reflexive awareness.[74] This argument involves two crucial steps. Firstly, Dharmakīrti argues that knowledge of awareness is a necessary prerequisite for knowledge of the object of awareness. Secondly, Dharmakīrti shows that awareness cannot be

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[74] In his *Pramāṇasamuccaya*, Diṅnāga makes a similar argument for self-reflexive awareness with a crucial difference (PS 1.11-1.12, p. 5, ll. 1, 5, 8, 10, 13). While Dharmakīrti's argument begins with the knowledge-requirement (premise P_1), Diṅnāga's argument begins with the so-called 'experience-requirement' (Kellner 2011: 418). Briefly, the experience-requirement states that every genuine memory presupposes prior experience (Kellner 2011: 418). Insofar as memory of any past experience involves memory of both object and awareness, every awareness must have been experienced in the past (Kellner 2011: 419). Diṅnāga combines the experience-requirement with the argument from infinite-regress in order to establish self-reflexive awareness.

known by another awareness because it leads to a fatal infinite regress. These two steps together entail that every awareness is known by itself. This is simply awareness's self-reflexive awareness of itself. However, we might reasonably wonder how an awareness can apprehend itself. Surely, every entity acts on some entity other than itself just like an axe cuts a tree rather than itself.[75] In response, Dharmakīrti clarifies the concept of self-reflexive awareness using the analogy of light:

> ***prakāśamānas tādātmyāt svarūpasya prakāśakaḥ*** |
>
> ***yathā prakāśo 'bhimatas tathā dhīr ātmavedinī*** ||[76]
>
> 'Just as it is accepted that shining (*prakāśamāna*) light (*prakāśa*) illuminates (*prakāśaka*) itself (*svarūpa*) because it has that very nature, in the same way, awareness is aware of itself (*ātman*).'

This light analogy illustrates the concept of self-reflexive awareness by showing how an entity can act upon itself. When light shines forth, it illuminates both its surroundings as well as itself. No second light is needed to illuminate the first light. Insofar as light illuminates itself, we have a convincing example of reflexivity in our ordinary experience.[77] Just as light illuminates both other objects as well as itself, awareness apprehends both object-form (*ākāra*) as well as itself. Just as illumination is the very nature of light, being aware is the very nature of awareness. Hence, every awareness is necessarily self-reflexively aware of itself. Given that it is common to each and every awareness, self-reflexive awareness constitutes the intrinsic nature of awareness.[78] Since this self-reflexive awareness is not associated with language, it is non-conceptual. Furthermore, while awareness of a given object might be erroneous, awareness's awareness of itself cannot be

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[75] MacKenzie 2007: 46.

[76] PV_M 2.329, p. 218.

[77] Watson 2014: 411.

[78] Taber 2022: 317.

erroneous. Thus, self-reflexive awareness counts as perception qua source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) because it is both non-conceptual and non-erroneous.[79]

§ 5.3.2 *Defending the non-dual structure of awareness*

Having established the existence of self-reflexive awareness, Dharmakīrti proceeds to prove the non-dual structure of awareness. As we shall discuss later in this section, non-dual awareness qua ultimate ultimate reality is not fully amenable to rational philosophical analysis.[80] Nevertheless, Dharmakīrti does provide a sophisticated philosophical argument for non-dual awareness: the neither-one-nor-many argument. Dharmakīrti's neither-one-nor-many argument is grounded in the Buddhist principle of mereological reductionism according to which any partite complex whole is ultimately unreal and only simple partless entities are ultimately real.[81] Dharmakīrti argues for the non-dual structure of awareness using the principle of mereological reductionism:

> ***anyathaikasya bhāvasya nānārūpāvabhāsinaḥ*** |
> ***satyaṃ kathaṃ syur ākārās tadekatvasya hānitaḥ*** ||
> ***anyasyānyatvahāneś ca …*** |[82]
>
> 'Otherwise [if the duality between apprehending subject and apprehended object was real], how could one single entity [i.e. awareness] appearing with multiple forms truly possess [those multiple] forms (*ākāra*)? This is because the unity/oneness (*ekatva*) of that [awareness]

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[79] PVV 2.249, p. 194; Yiannopoulos 2020: 424.

[80] Yiannopoulos 2020: 273-274.

See § 5.3.4, pp. 298-301.

[81] Siderits 2015: 17.

[82] PV_M 2.358-2.359a, p. 226.

would be lost. And [if awareness was truly one], the [mutual] distinction (*anyatva*) between distinct [appearances] would be lost. … ’

The neither-one-nor-many argument critiques dualistic sensory perception. Even when it is understood as non-conceptual awareness of mental forms, sensory perception continues to present us with phenomenological variegation.[83] For example, my sensory perception of a garden remains variegated in terms of content due to the appearance of multiple colours such as green, brown, and yellow even when my perception is not associated with language and even when the object of my perception is not assumed to exist outside my mind.[84] Furthermore, my sensory perception of the garden is structured by subject-object duality because it has the structure of a subject apprehending some object. However, the appearance of variegated content and the dualistic structure entail that the perceptual awareness is a partite complex whole. This is because the perceptual awareness is composed of a minimum of two parts: apprehending subject form (*grāhakākāra*) and apprehended object form (*grāhyākāra*). However, given that the intentional object of sensory perception is variegated, the apprehended object form too is a composite entity. As a result, perceptual awareness is always a partite complex whole. However, the principle of mereological reductionism states that all partite complex wholes are ultimately unreal. Thus, dualistic sensory perception too is ultimately unreal. At this stage, a realist Ābhidharmika interlocutor objects that the phenomenon of variegation does not entail the composite nature of perceptual awareness because the variegated sensory perception of the garden can be broken down into individual perceptual awarenesses with their own individual objects. Insofar as each perceptual awareness apprehends a single object, each perceptual awareness counts as an ultimately real partless entity. Dharmakīrti responds by arguing that these

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[83] Yiannopoulos 2020: 494.

[84] In a similar vein, Akalaṅka argues that we continue to perceive medium-sized (*sthūla*) objects possessing many different natures (*anekasvabhāva*) even after we have withdrawn from reflective conceptualisation (LTSV 23, p. 8, ll. 18-19). While this empirical fact proves the ultimate reality of many-sided (*anekānta*) objects for Akalaṅka, the same empirical fact proves the ultimately erroneous nature of non-conceptual sensory perception for Dharmakīrti.

distinct perceptual awarenesses with their own individual objects cannot account for the phenomenon of variegation.[85] This is because we do not phenomenologically experience many different perceptual awarenesses with their own individual objects but instead experience a single perceptual awareness presenting many different objects. Furthermore, these distinct perceptual awarenesses with their own individual objects are still structured by subject-object duality. Insofar as they are composed of the two distinct parts of apprehending subject and apprehended object, these dualistic perceptual awarenesses do not actually qualify as ultimately real partless entities. In summary, sensory perceptual awareness can be neither one nor many. A single perceptual awareness with variegated content would be a partite complex whole which, by the principle of mereological reductionism, cannot be ultimately unreal. On the other hand, many distinct perceptual awarenesses with their own individual objects would not be able to account for the brute fact of phenomenological variegation.[86] Insofar as every real entity must be either one or many, variegated and dualistic sensory perceptual awareness cannot be ultimately real.

The neither-one-nor-many argument hinges on two key premises: the experience of phenomenological variegation and the principle of mereological reductionism. Dharmakīrti's main point is that these two premises work against each other because the former requires perceptual awareness to be composite whereas the latter entails the unreality of composite entities. The following verses highlight the underlying tension between variegated perceptual experience and the dictates of rational philosophical analysis:

citrāvabhāseṣv artheṣu yady ekatvaṃ na yujyate |

saiva tāvat kathaṃ buddhir ekā citrāvabhāsinī ||

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[85] Yiannopoulos 2020: 494.

[86] Ibid.

idaṃ vastubalāyātaṃ yad vadanti vipaścitaḥ |

yathā yathārthāś cintyante viśīryante tathā tathā ||

kiṃ syāt sā citrataikasyāṃ na syāt tasyāṃ matāv api |

yadīdaṃ svayam arthānāṃ rocate tatra ke vayam ||[87]

'[Buddhist:] If objects with variegated (*citra*) appearance [such as butterflies] cannot be a single entity, how indeed (*tāvat*) can that very awareness having a variegated appearance be a single entity (*eka*)? [This is why] the wise declare this [fact] which is entailed by the power of real entities (*vastu*): 'In whatsoever way entities (*artha*) are reflected upon, in each and every way they dissolve'.

[Opponent:] Might that variegation (*citratā*) exist within a single [awareness]?

[Buddhist:] [That variegation] does not exist within that awareness either. However, if this is pleasing to the entities themselves, who are we [to object] to that?'

The principle of mereological reductionism applies not only to external objects but also to awareness. Just like variegated colour (*citra*) is a composite whole rather than a single entity, awareness with variegated (*citra*) appearance too counts as a composite whole rather than a single entity.[88] Thus, the principle of mereological reductionism entails the unreality of composite variegated awareness. Though the phenomenon of variegation is an intrinsic feature of our perceptual awareness of the world, rational philosophical analysis shows that variegation, whether internal or external to awareness, cannot be ultimately real. In other words, we have reached a state of aporia in which our ordinary perceptual awareness of the world stands at loggerheads with the conclusions of rational philosophical analysis. The entities of perceptual experience, irrespective of whether they are understood as composite external objects or variegated internal awarenesses,

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[87] PV_M 2.208-2.210, pp. 180-181.

[88] Ibid., 2.200, p. 178.

cannot clear the touchstone of philosophical examination. As Manorathanandin explains, the neither-one-nor-many argument proves that our variegated sensory perception of the world is ultimately illusory:

> *avastu ca pratibhāsate ceti vyaktam ālīkyam* |[89]
>
> 'It is unreal (*avastu*), yet it appears: the falsehood (*ālīkya*) is evident.'[90]

Variegated dualistic awareness, though commonly experienced, is ultimately unreal. This is the conclusion of the neither-one-nor-many argument:

P_1 Variegated dualistic awareness is composed of parts.

P_2 Any entity composed of parts is ultimately unreal (principle of mereological reductionism).

Therefore,

C_1 Variegated dualistic awareness is ultimately unreal.

Assuming Dharmakīrti's framework of epistemic idealism, the above conclusion serves as a premise in the following argument for non-dualism:

P_3 Variegated dualistic awareness is ultimately unreal.

P_4 There exists some ultimately real entity (foundationalism).[91]

Therefore,

C_2 Undifferentiated non-dual awareness is ultimately real.

For the purposes of this chapter, the foundationalist premise P_4 is uncontroversial because it is accepted by both Dharmakīrti and Akalaṅka. Insofar as every variegated dualistic awareness is

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[89] PVV 2.210, p. 181.

[90] Manorathanandin's explanation corresponds to the False Imagist reading (*alīkākāravāda*) of Dharmakīrti's non-dualism (Dunne 2004: 403, n. 13; Yiannopoulos 2020: 271-272). For a discussion of the two competing interpretations of Dharmakīrti's non-dualism, see § 5.3.4, pp. 303-305.

[91] Unlike anti-foundationalist Prāsaṅgika readings of Nāgārjuna, Dharmakīrti is committed to foundationalism according to which there is an ultimate reality i.e. the way things really are independent of our conventions (Westerhoff 2009: 199-224; Siderits 2007: 180-207).

composite, undifferentiated non-dual awareness alone can be truly partless.[92] By the principle of mereological reductionism, partless non-dual awareness alone counts as ultimately real. In this way, the principle of mereological reductionism entails the unreality of composite dualistic awareness and the ultimate reality of partless non-dual awareness. This, in turn, constitutes a proof of non-dualism.

§ 5.3.3 *Explaining away ordinary dualistic awareness*

Dharmakīrti's non-dualism entails a radical illusionism about our ordinary dualistic awareness. From the perspective of the ultimate ultimate reality of non-dual awareness, our ordinary dualistic awareness of the world is completely illusory. Insofar as he rejects our ordinary dualistic awareness as illusory, Dharmakīrti must explain how the error of subject-object duality arises in the first place. In the absence of any explanation, Dharmakīrti's non-dualism would be implausible. In order to meet this requirement, Dharmakīrti presents ignorance (*avidyā*) as the underlying cause of our illusory dualistic awareness:

> ***yathāsvampratyayāpekṣād avidyopaplutātmanām*** |
> ***vijñaptir vitathākārā jāyate timirādivat*** ||[93]
> 'Awareness (*vijñapti*), having the unreal forms [of apprehending subject and apprehended object], arises through dependence on its own particular (*yathāsvam*) [causal] conditions (*pratyaya*) for people whose nature is cognitively distorted (*upapluta*) by ignorance (*avidyā*) just like [the illusory awareness of two moons arises] for people afflicted with *timira* eye-disease etc.'

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[92] Yiannopoulos 2020: 494.

[93] PV_M 2.217, p. 183.

As unenlightened sentient beings, our awareness is distorted by ignorance (*avidyā*). Ignorance, through the mechanism of latent mental impressions (*vāsanā*), gives rise to the error of subject-object duality in our ordinary awareness.[94] This ignorance is beginningless (*anādi*) because it is the underlying cause of the beginningless cycle of transmigration (*saṃsāra*).[95] As such, there cannot be any more fundamental cause of ignorance itself. However, what exactly is ignorance (*avidyā*)? While Dharmakīrti sometimes defines ignorance (*avidyā*) as conceptualisation (*vikalpa*), the equation of ignorance with conceptualisation only holds at the level of conventional ultimate reality consisting of non-conceptual perception of mental forms.[96] In order to realise the ultimate ultimate reality consisting of non-dual awareness, the mere overcoming of conceptualisation is not enough. This is because the appearance of subject-object duality is actually a non-conceptual error rather than a conceptual error.[97] This is evident from the fact that sensory perception, despite being non-conceptual, is nevertheless structured by subject-object duality.[98] Furthermore, Dharmakīrti's analogy for illusory dualistic awareness is the pseudo-perception of two moons by a person afflicted with *timira* eye-disease. As we have seen, Dharmakīrti classifies the diseased individual's awareness of two moons as a kind of non-conceptual pseudo-perception in his fourfold classification of pseudo-perceptions (*pratyakṣābhāsa*).[99] Thus, the dualistic structure of our ordinary awareness is a non-conceptual error. As such, dualistic awareness cannot be the product of

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[94] Dunne 2020: 572; Yiannopoulos 2020: 154.

[95] Yiannopoulos 2020: 55, n. 83.

The centrality of ignorance is evident in the early Buddhist analysis of ignorance (*avijjā*/*avidyā*) as the first link (*nidāna*) in the twelve-fold chain of dependent origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*/*pratītyasamutpāda*) (Gethin 1998: 141-142).

[96] PVSV 1.100, p. 210, l. 2; Dunne 2020: 572.

[97] Dunne 2020: 572-573.

[98] PV_M 2.123ab, p. 154; Dunne 2020: 572.

[99] PV_M 2.293, p. 206.

See § 1.2.3, pp. 57-58.

ignorance understood as conceptualisation.[100] This brings us back to our original question: what precisely is the nature of ignorance (*avidyā*) which serves as the underlying cause of the non-conceptual error of subject-object duality? While it is difficult to find a precise definition of ignorance in Dharmakīrti's *Pramāṇavārttika*, Manorathanandin's commentary provides a useful gloss on the word '*avidyā*':

> *anādyavidyopaplutātmanām aprahīṇākliṣṭājñānānāṃ*[101] *puṃsāṃ* … |[102]
>
> 'For human beings whose nature is cognitively distorted by beginningless ignorance (*avidyā*) i.e. those by whom undefiled ignorance (*akliṣṭājñāna*) has not been abandoned … '.

As we can see, Manorathanandin glosses the word 'ignorance' (*avidyā*) with the compound 'undefiled ignorance' (*akliṣṭājñāna*). Undefiled ignorance is a technical Mahāyāna term denoting "a form of ignorance that affects those who have destroyed the *kleśāvaraṇa* (afflictive obstructions) but not the *jñeyāvaraṇa* (cognitive obstructions)".[103] This means that people with undestroyed cognitive obstructions (*jñeyāvaraṇa*) experience undefiled ignorance (*akliṣṭājñāna*).[104] These cognitive obstructions (*jñeyāvaraṇa*), in turn, are said "to result from fundamental misapprehensions about the nature of reality".[105] It is said that advanced Bodhisattvas destroy these ingrained cognitive obstructions "by perfecting their understanding of emptiness (*śūnyatā*)".[106] Putting all these pieces together, we can surmise that ignorance (*avidyā*) in the present context

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[100] Yiannopoulos 2020: 111, n. 69.

[101] Sāṅkṛtyāyana's edition reads '*aprahīṇākliṣṭajñānānāṃ*' (PVV 2.217, p. 183). Since ignorance (*avidyā*) obviously cannot be identical with undefiled *knowledge* (*akliṣṭajñāna*), the reading must be emended to '*aprahīṇākliṣṭā***ā**jñānānāṃ'. My proposed reading would appropriately equate ignorance (*avidyā*) with the technical Mahāyāna category of undefiled ignorance (*akliṣṭājñāna*).

[102] PVV 2.217, p. 183.

[103] Buswell and Lopez 2014: "akliṣṭājñāna (T.)".

[104] The set of people with undestroyed cognitive obstructions includes *arhats* and ordinary sentient beings but excludes perfectly enlightened Buddhas (Buswell and Lopez 2014: "akliṣṭājñāna (T.)").

[105] Buswell and Lopez 2014: "akliṣṭājñāna (T.)".

[106] Ibid., "jñeyāvaraṇa (T.)".

refers to a special kind of ignorance, namely, undefiled ignorance (*akliṣṭājñāna*) which stems from a fundamental misapprehension of the nature of reality. This fundamental misapprehension of the nature of reality is fuelled by the power of beginningless latent mental impressions (*vāsanā*).[107] While this definition of ignorance as a fundamental misapprehension of the nature of reality is helpful, it is somewhat tautological. This suggests that a precise philosophical analysis of the nature and origins of ignorance might be impossible because ignorance systematically distorts our awareness and thereby serves as the most fundamental cause of our deluded transmigratory experience. Given that it is the very root of our ordinary painful existence, ignorance cannot be reduced to anything more foundational through philosophical analysis. As such, ignorance virtually functions as a pre-philosophical existential given within the Buddhist worldview.

Besides being an existentially given fundamental misapprehension of the nature of reality, ignorance (*avidyā*) is sometimes presented as an active creative force distorting every aspect of our ordinary experience. This understanding of ignorance is suggested by Dharmakīrti's famous example of the power of *mantras*:

> ***avibhāgo 'pi buddhyātmā viparyāsitadarśanaiḥ*** |
> ***grāhyagrāhakasaṃvittibhedavān iva lakṣyate*** ||
> ***mantrādyupaplutākṣāṇāṃ yathā mṛcchakalādayaḥ*** |
> ***anyathaivāvabhāsante tadrūparahitā api*** ||[108]
>
> 'Although it is free from differentiation (*avibhāga*), the intrinsic nature of awareness appears to be differentiated into awareness of apprehending subject (*grāhaka*) and awareness of apprehended object (*grāhya*) to people whose perception (*darśana*) has been made erroneous

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[107] Yiannopoulos 2020: 111, n. 69.

[108] PV_M 2.354-2.355, p. 225.

(*viparyāsita*).[109] This is just like shards of clay etc. which, despite lacking any such form, actually appear otherwise [as gold etc.] to people whose sense-faculties have been distorted (*upapluta*)[110] by mantras etc.'

While non-dual self-reflexive awareness is the ultimately real intrinsic nature of awareness, awareness appears to be structured by subject-object duality to ordinary sentient beings overpowered by ignorance. This illusory dualistic awareness of ordinary sentient beings overpowered by ignorance is compared to the erroneous awareness of people whose sense-faculties have been overpowered by *mantras*. Through this analogy, the power of ignorance is compared to the power of *mantras*. This suggests that ignorance, like *mantras*, is an active creative force casting a deluding spell on the experience of ordinary sentient beings. While the precise ontological status of ignorance remains unclear,[111] Dharmakīrti's analogy shows how ignorance actively distorts our experience of reality by creating the illusory appearance of subject-object duality. In other words, the non-conceptual error of subject-object duality arises naturally (*prakṛtyā*) from the systematic cognitive distortion (*upaplava*) produced by ignorance (*avidyā*).[112] Given that it is not a conceptual error produced by mental superimposition, the error of subject-object duality cannot be overcome by merely reappraising the content of our awareness.[113] Instead, eliminating the non-conceptual error of subject-object duality requires transforming our awareness through meditative cultivation

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[109] Dharmakīrti's use of the causative past passive participle '*viparyāsita*' instead of the simple past passive participle '*viparyasta*' points to the unexpressed agent in the instrumental: ignorance (*avidyā*).

[110] This is the same verb (*upa* + *plu*) used to describe the systematic cognitive distortion (*upaplava*) produced by ignorance.

[111] The central dilemma is the following: is ignorance itself an ultimately real entity or not? See § 5.4.2.2 for Akalaṅka's refutation of both logical possibilities.

[112] PV_M 2.362cd-2.363, p. 227.

[113] Conceptual errors can be corrected by reappraising rather than modifying the content of our awareness. For example, when I erroneously perceive a rope as a snake through the conceptual superimposition of the concept of 'snake' onto a rope, this conceptual error can be eliminated by forming the correct conceptual judgement 'This is a rope' (Dunne 2020: 579).

(*bhāvanā*) on the Buddhist path.[114]

Once we transcend the illusory distinction between apprehending subject and apprehended object, we realise that our earlier dualistic analysis of sensory perception as a non-conceptual source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) of mental forms was purely conventional:

> ***avedyavedakākārā yathā bhrāntair nirīkṣyate*** ||
>
> ***vibhaktalakṣaṇagrāhyagrāhakākāraviplavā*** |
>
> ***tathā kṛtavyavastheyaṃ keśādijñānabhedavat*** ||[115]
>
> 'Just as deluded people (*bhrānta*) perceive [awareness] ultimately devoid of apprehending subject form (*vedakākāra*) and apprehended object form (*vedyākāra*) as [awareness] in which there is the cognitive distortion (*viplava*) consisting of the divided characteristics of apprehending subject form and apprehended object form, in that way (*tathā*), this [awareness with difference between apprehending subject form and apprehended object form] is established just like the differences (*bheda*) within the awareness of illusory hairs etc.'

From the perspective of enlightened non-dual awareness, the dualistic sensory perception of unenlightened sentient beings is illusory just like the pseudo-perception of unreal hairs by a person afflicted with *timira* eye-disease. As long as the diseased individual perceives unreal hairs, he can continue to examine the illusory objects of his awareness. In the same way, we can distinguish between source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*), object of knowledge (*prameya*), and result (*phala*) at the

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[114] Yiannopoulos 2020: 375, n. 175.

See § 5.3.4, pp. 298-301.

[115] PV_M 2.330cd-2.331, p. 218.

level of conventional reality and conventional ultimate reality.[116] However, at the level of ultimate ultimate reality, the conceptually constructed distinction between action (*kriyā*) and factors instrumental in bringing about the action (*kāraka*) disappears.[117] Thus, there does not exist any distinction between source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*), object of knowledge (*prameya*), and result (*phala*) within the ultimate ultimate reality of non-dual awareness. Instead, non-dualism entails the ontological identity of instrument and action as well as subject and object.[118] In other words, the entire philosophical edifice erected by Dharmakīrti throughout his philosophical treatises crumbles upon the attainment of enlightened non-dual awareness. From the perspective of the Buddha's enlightened non-dual awareness, the entire enterprise of *pramāṇaśāstra* is a philosophical game played by ignorant sentient beings trapped in the cycle of transmigration (*saṃsāra*) because *pramāṇaśāstra* presupposes the fundamental error of subject-object duality.

§ 5.3.4 *Soteriology and metaphilosophy*

While this section has focussed on the analysis of philosophical arguments thus far, it is necessary to go beyond the narrow confines of rational philosophical analysis in order to fully understand Dharmakīrti's non-dualism. This is because non-dual awareness is not a conventional source of knowledge (*sāṃvyavahārikapramāṇa*) useful for accomplishing our worldly goals.[119] On the contrary, non-dual self-reflexive awareness is the ultimate source of knowledge

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[116] Manorathanandin provides the following list of *pramāṇa*, *prameya*, and *phala* at the level of conventional ultimate reality:
tad evaṃ prameyo grāhyākāraḥ pramāṇaṃ grāhakākāraḥ phalaṃ svasaṃvid iti darśitaṃ bhavati | (PVV 3.337, p. 221)
'Thus, it has been shown that the apprehended object form is the object of knowledge (*prameya*), the apprehending subject form is the source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*), and self-reflexive awareness is the result (*phala*).'

[117] PV_M 2.318-2.319, p. 214.

[118] Yiannopoulos 2020: 226.

[119] Ibid., 483.

(*pāramārthikapramāṇa*) precisely because the realisation of non-dual awareness leads to the ultimate (*paramārtha*) soteriological goal of liberation from the cycle of transmigration (*saṃsāra*).[120] Given that the purpose of non-dual awareness is soteriological rather than practical, Dharmakīrti's non-dualism must be understood within the context of the Buddhist religious path to enlightenment. It is the realisation of non-dual awareness which distinguishes the Buddhas from unenlightened sentient beings:

> ***asaṃviditatattvā ca sā sarvāparadarśanaiḥ*** |
>
> ***asambhavād vinā teṣāṃ grāhyagrāhakaviplavaiḥ*** ||[121]
>
> 'And, the real nature (*tattva*) of awareness [as empty of subject-object duality] is not known to everyone with inferior perception (*aparadarśana*) because of the impossibility of their [ordinary awareness] without the cognitive distortions (*viplava*) of apprehending subject and apprehended object.'

Insofar as our awareness is invariably distorted by subject-object duality, ordinary sentient beings such as ourselves can never fully comprehend the Buddha's non-dual awareness. In other words, there is a radical difference between our ordinary dualistic awareness and the Buddha's enlightened non-dual awareness.[122] Since philosophical argumentation is necessarily grounded in our ordinary dualistic awareness of the world, it naturally follows that the Buddha's non-dual awareness is not

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[120] PVi 1.58, p. 44, ll. 2-5; Yiannopoulos 2020: 483.

[121] PV_M 2.218, p. 184.

[122] Despite this radical difference, there is some continuity between our ordinary dualistic awareness and the Buddha's enlightened non-dual awareness because both kinds of awareness are self-reflexively aware of themselves (PV_M 2.332, p. 218). The luminous self-reflexive nature of awareness remains the same irrespective of whether one is a deluded sentient being or the Buddha (Yiannopoulos 2020: 376). The difference lies in the Buddha's realisation and our lack of realisation of awareness's luminous non-dual self-reflexive nature.

fully amenable to rational thought.[123] This, in turn, shows the limits of rational philosophical analysis for the understanding of non-dual awareness. While it can destroy erroneous misconceptions[124] and point towards ultimate ultimate reality, rational philosophical analysis cannot lead to the complete comprehension and realisation of ultimate ultimate reality. It is important to observe that this very assertion is a metaphilosophical reflection on the nature and limits of philosophy. Metaphilosophy is "the branch of philosophy that asks what philosophy is, how it should be done and why we should do it".[125] In other words, metaphilosophy is a second-order reflection on the nature and limits of philosophy. Throughout his philosophical treatises, Dharmakīrti makes important remarks on the nature, purpose, and limits of philosophy.[126] Nevertheless, Dharmakīrti does not formulate any systematic metaphilosophical theory.[127] Thus, Dharmakīrti's metaphilosophy must be reconstructed from his passing remarks and the overall structure of his philosophical system. In the present context, Dharmakīrti's theory of non-dual awareness entails the following metaphilosophical commitments:

M_1 The ultimate nature of reality cannot be known through rational philosophical analysis.

M_2 There are suprarational modes of knowledge such as meditative insight.

While metaphilosophical commitment M_1 limits the scope of rational philosophical analysis,

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[123] In this respect, Dharmakīrti follows his predecessor Vasubandhu who states the following at the very end of his *Viṃśikā*:
... *sarvathā sā tu na cintyā buddhagocaraḥ* || (Vi 22cd, p. 199)
'… However, that [theory of awareness-only] cannot be reflected upon completely because it is the object [of knowledge] of the Buddhas.'

[124] In the *pramāṇasiddhi* chapter of his *Pramāṇavārttika*, Dharmakīrti states the purpose served by philosophical treatises:
… *śāstraṃ mohanivartanam* | (PV_M 1.7b, p. 7)
'… *śāstra* is the means of turning away (*nivartana*) from delusion (*moha*).'

[125] Overgaard, Gilbert, and Burwood 2013: vii.

[126] For example, PV_M 1.7b (p. 7) states the purpose served by philosophical treatises, PV_M 1.143 (pp. 59-60) shows how the realisation of selflessness leads to freedom from rebirth, PV_M 2.210 (p. 181) points out the destructive nature of rational philosophical analysis with wry humour, and PV_M 2.218 (p. 184) argues that non-dual awareness lies beyond the understanding of deluded sentient beings.

[127] The dispersed nature of Dharmakīrti's metaphilosophical remarks suggests that he did not consider metaphilosophy to be a distinct branch of philosophy.

metaphilosophical commitment M_2 defends the epistemic reliability of suprarational modes of knowledge. Given that rational philosophical analysis necessarily presupposes dualities and distinctions, the ultimate ultimate reality of non-dual awareness lies beyond its reach. Instead, rational philosophical analysis can only take us as far as the perceptual non-conceptualism and epistemic idealism of conventional ultimate reality. This, in brief, is the underlying justification for metaphilosophical commitment M_1. Metaphilosophical commitment M_1, in turn, entails metaphilosophical commitment M_2 because the fact that ultimate ultimate reality cannot be known through rational philosophical analysis suggests that there must be some suprarational way of knowing ultimate ultimate reality. In the present context, the suprarational mode of knowledge is the perfection of wisdom (*prajñāpāramitā*) attained through meditative cultivation (*bhāvanā*) on the Buddhist path.[128] If we accept the definition of mysticism as "a nonsensory awareness or a nonstructured sensory experience granting acquaintance of realities or states of affairs that are of a kind not accessible by way of ordinary sense-perception structured by mental conceptions, somatosensory modalities, or standard introspection",[129] then the realisation of non-dual awareness would count as a 'mystical experience'. However, this interpretation would be anachronistic because Dharmakīrti rarely, if ever, emphasises the mystical dimension of non-dual awareness. Instead, Dharmakīrti understands non-dual awareness as a transcendent kind of awareness directly experienced by the Buddhas. This, in turn, highlights the importance of enlightened beings (such as the Buddhas and advanced Bodhisattvas) who directly experience the ultimate nature of reality which is unknown to ordinary sentient beings. Thus, Dharmakīrti's non-dualism is a profound comment on the limitations of rational philosophical analysis when it comes to realising the ultimate soteriologically efficacious nature of reality.

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[128] Yiannopoulos 2020: 375, n. 175.

[129] Jones and Gellman 2022.

Dharmakīrti's non-dualism is intimately connected with the cardinal Mahāyāna teaching of emptiness (*śūnyatā*):

> ***na grāhyagrāhakākārabāhyam asti ca lakṣaṇam*** |
>
> ***ato lakṣaṇaśūnyatvān niḥsvabhāvāḥ prakāśitāḥ*** ||
>
> ***vyāpāropādhikaṃ sarvaṃ skandhādīnāṃ viśeṣataḥ*** |
>
> ***lakṣaṇaṃ sa ca tattvaṃ na tenāpy ete vilakṣaṇāḥ*** ||[130]
>
> 'And, there does not exist any defining characteristic (*lakṣaṇa*) outside [i.e. other than] the apprehending subject form and the apprehended object form. Therefore, insofar as they are empty (*śūnya*) of defining characteristic, [all phenomena] have been shown to lack intrinsic nature (*niḥsvabhāva*). All particular (*viśeṣatas*) defining characteristics of the [five] aggregates (*skandha*) and so forth are delimited (*upādhi*) by causal activity (*vyāpāra*). However, that causal activity itself is not ultimately real (*tattva*). For this reason too, these [five aggregates and so forth] lack any defining characteristic (*vilakṣaṇa*).'

Philosophical analysis of the defining characteristic (*lakṣaṇa*) or the intrinsic nature (*svabhāva*) of any entity presupposes:

(i) Duality between apprehending subject and apprehended object which, in this context, consists of the duality between characteriser and characterised.

(ii) Some real causal activity (*vyāpāra*) performed by the defining characteristic or intrinsic nature.

Thus, philosophical analysis of the intrinsic nature of any entity presupposes the existence of various dualities and distinctions. However, from the perspective of enlightened non-dual awareness, all dualities and distinctions are illusory. Thus, the intrinsic nature of any entity cannot be ultimately real. At the level of ultimate ultimate reality, all phenomena are empty of intrinsic nature (*niḥsvabhāva*). Similarly, epistemic reliability (*prāmāṇya*) is determined by the criterion of

[130] PV_M 2.215-2.216, p. 183.

causal efficacy/pragmatic efficacy (*arthakriyā*) in the conventional world of ordinary experience. From the perspective of ultimate ultimate reality, however, the causal relation too is a conceptual construction.[131] Therefore, all kinds of causal activity (*vyāpāra*) cease upon the attainment of non-dual awareness. Since the intrinsic nature of any entity presupposes the existence of causal activity, all phenomena are empty of intrinsic nature at the level of ultimate ultimate reality. In this way, the illusory nature of subject-object duality entails the emptiness of all phenomena. Insofar as emptiness (*śūnyatā*) is presented as the liberating insight in many Mahāyāna Sūtras, Dharmakīrti's non-dualism clearly serves a soteriological purpose.[132]

Having discussed the soteriological implications of Dharmakīrti's non-dualism, let us now turn to the nature of enlightened awareness. When a practitioner eliminates subject-object duality through meditative cultivation, the latent mental impressions responsible for producing the dualistic structure of awareness cease to exist.[133] At this stage, luminous non-dual self-reflexive awareness shines forth by itself:

… svayaṃ saiva prakāśate ||[134]

'… that [non-dual self-reflexive awareness], in fact, shines forth by itself.'

Thus, enlightenment involves a radical cognitive transformation whereby the structure of awareness changes from dual to non-dual. However, Dharmakīrti's commentators disagree about the precise nature of this enlightened non-dual awareness. The central point of dispute is the following:

Are mental forms (*ākāra*) present in enlightened non-dual awareness?

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[131] Ibid., 2.4, pp. 112-114.

[132] For a survey of the different kinds of emptiness within the Mahāyāna tradition, see Harvey (2013: 114-150).

[133] Yiannopoulos 2020: 378-379.

[134] PV_M 2.327d, p. 217.

According to the False Imagist reading (*alīkākāravāda*) of Dharmakīrti defended by Ratnākaraśānti (c. 970-1045 CE),[135] the intentional content of awareness i.e. mental forms (*ākāra*) completely disappear upon the attainment of enlightened non-dual awareness.[136] In other words, there is no longer any perception of forms such as blue or yellow within non-dual awareness. This is because awareness with intentional content is always dualistically structured whereas enlightened awareness is necessarily non-dual.[137] According to Ratnākaraśānti, the destruction of dualistic latent mental impressions leads to the experience of non-dual awareness as pure illumination (*prakāśamātra*) devoid of mental forms and subjectivity.[138] Jñānaśrīmitra (c. 980-1030 CE),[139] Ratnākaraśānti's chief opponent, defends a True Imagist reading (*satyākāravāda*) of Dharmakīrti according to which the very notion of a contentless awareness is absurd.[140] This is because every awareness, whether ordinary or enlightened, must have some intentional content. According to Jñānaśrīmitra, Dharmakīrti's non-dualism entails a complete identity between awareness (*jñāna*) and mental form (*ākāra*). Thus, Jñānaśrīmitra argues that the Buddha's enlightened awareness involves a kind of wondrous non-duality (*citrādvaita*) in which there no longer exists any duality between awareness and its variegated appearances.[141] In this way, we find two competing ways of understanding the nature of enlightened non-dual awareness amongst Dharmakīrti's commentators.[142] Despite this interpretive dispute, Dharmakīrti's commentators agree that non-dual self-reflexive awareness

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[135] Tomlinson 2019: 2.

[136] Yiannopoulos 2020: 273, 399.

[137] Ibid., 379-380.

[138] Ibid., 381.

[139] Tomlinson 2019: 2.

[140] Tomlinson 2019: 8; Yiannopoulos 2020: 12-13, n. 23.

[141] Tomlinson 2019: 7-8.

[142] In my view, Ratnākaraśānti's False Imagist reading is more faithful to Dharmakīrti's *Pramāṇavārttika* than Jñānaśrīmitra's True Imagist reading because, as discussed in § 5.3.2, Dharmakīrti's neither-one-nor-many argument rejects mental forms (*ākāra*) as the intentional content of awareness due to the fact that mental forms display unreal variegation.

constitutes the ultimate nature of reality.

§ 5.4 Akalaṅka's Proof of Dualism

As discussed in the last two chapters, Akalaṅka defends common-sense realism according to which our ordinary conceptual perception of the world is generally epistemically reliable. Given that our awareness of the world is always dualistically structured, it is unsurprising that Akalaṅka accepts the reality of subject-object duality. However, a simple appeal to our ordinary dualistic awareness is hardly sufficient for establishing dualism. This is because Dharmakīrti provides various arguments for the illusory nature of our ordinary experience of subject-object duality. In order to establish dualism, Akalaṅka must show that Dharmakīrti's arguments against subject-object duality do not succeed. Furthermore, Akalaṅka accepts the theory of self-reflexive awareness according to which each and every awareness is self-reflexively aware of itself. Prime facie, self-reflexive awareness supports non-dualism because it involves an entity acting upon itself. In order to successfully defend dualism, Akalaṅka must show that awareness's self-reflexive awareness of itself is consistent with subject-object duality. Finally, Akalaṅka must engage with Dharmakīrti's overarching metaphilosophical commitment that non-dual awareness qua ultimate ultimate reality lies beyond the scope of rational philosophical analysis. The convergence of these diverse issues makes Akalaṅka's proof of dualism quite rich and complex. For the sake of clarity, Akalaṅka's proof of dualism can be divided into four distinct steps:

(i) Establishing self-reflexive awareness

(ii) Refuting non-dual awareness

(iii) Reconciling self-reflexive awareness with subject-object duality

(iv) Metaphilosophy

Each step builds on the preceding step and involves multiple arguments. Let us examine these steps one by one.

§ 5.4.1 *Establishing self-reflexive awareness*

The first step of establishing self-reflexive awareness is common to both Dharmakīrti's proof of non-dualism and Akalaṅka's proof of dualism. As discussed in section § 5.2, Akalaṅka argues that every awareness is self-reflexively aware of itself. Just like Dharmakīrti, Akalaṅka presents affective mental states such as pleasure and pain as the paradigmatic cases of self-reflexive awareness.[143] In order to generalise from the self-reflexive awareness of affective mental states to the self-reflexive awareness of all awarenesses, however, Akalaṅka must show that the theory of self-reflexive awareness (*svasaṃvedana*) is superior to the opposing theory of other-awareness (*parasaṃvedana*). According to the theory of other-awareness, any given awareness is apprehended by some other awareness. Akalaṅka objects to the theory of other-awareness as follows:

> ***vimukhajñānasaṃvedo viruddho vyaktir anyataḥ*** |
>
> ***asaṃcāro 'navasthānam aviśeṣyaviśeṣaṇam*** ||[144]
>
> 'The awareness (*saṃveda*) of an awareness which has turned away from itself (*vimukha*) [i.e. an awareness which is not self-reflexively aware of itself] is contradictory (*viruddha*). If there was manifestation (*vyakti*) [of the awareness] by means of another [awareness], then there would be the absence of transfer (*asaṃcāra*) due to an infinite regress (*anavasthāna*). As a result, there would be the absence of both qualified [i.e. awareness] as well as qualifier [i.e.

[143] NV 15ab.

[144] Ibid., 20.

awareness's relation to the object].'[145]

According to the theory of other-awareness, any given awareness A_n is apprehended by a higher-order awareness A_{n+1}. However, this higher-order awareness A_{n+1} too requires another higher-order awareness A_{n+2} in order to be apprehended. This process continues with every higher-order awareness, thereby leading to an infinite regress of awarenesses.[146] This infinite regress is fatal because it means that awareness cannot 'transfer' (*asaṃcāra*). However, what does it mean for awareness to be unable to 'transfer'? The answer, surprisingly, is found in Diṅnāga's *Pramāṇasamuccaya*:

> ***viṣayāntarasaṃcāras tathā na syāt sa ceṣyate*** |[147]
> 'In that way (*tathā*), [awareness] would not be able to move to another object (*viṣayāntarasaṃcāra*). However, it is accepted that [awareness] does move to another object.'

If there was an infinite chain of higher-order awarenesses apprehending lower-order awarenesses, every awareness (except the first) would have some other awareness as its object. Insofar as this infinite chain of awarenesses would never come to an end, awareness would never be able to move (*asaṃcāra*) to apprehending some other object.[148] In our ordinary perceptual experience, however, awareness does actually move to some other object. For example, my awareness of blue is followed by the awareness of some other object such as yellow. This would not be possible if the awareness of blue generated an infinite regress of higher-order awarenesses apprehending lower-order awarenesses. Thus, the theory of other-awareness stands refuted because it entails the undesirable

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[145] The words within square brackets have been supplied from Vādirājasūri's commentary (NVV, pp. 213-215)).

[146] NV 22-23ab.

[147] PS 1.12cd, p. 5, l. 13.

[148] Kellner 2011: 416.

consequence of a fatal infinite regress of awarenesses.

The opponent might object to Akalaṅka's argument from infinite regress by wondering why every single awareness must necessarily be apprehended. Why not avert the infinite regress by supposing that some higher-order awareness A_{n+q} is not further apprehended by any other awareness? This objection shows that Akalaṅka's argument from infinite regress implicitly assumes that every awareness must be known/apprehended in some way. This premise, in turn, is identical to Dharmakīrti's knowledge-requirement! In some ways, this is hardly surprising because Akalaṅka's argument from infinite regress strongly resembles Diṅnāga's and Dharmakīrti's argument from infinite regress. This fact was well-known to Akalaṅka's commentators. While Akalaṅka himself does not explicitly mention the knowledge-requirement, Vādirājasūri cites the famous half-verse[149] from Dharmakīrti's *Pramāṇaviniścaya* in order to defend the knowledge-requirement![150] Vādirājasūri justifies the knowledge-requirement by arguing that the object of awareness would not be restricted (*viṣayaniyama*) in the absence of knowledge of awareness.[151] Thus, every awareness must be known in some way. Putting all these pieces together, Akalaṅka's argument for self-reflexive awareness may be stated as follows:

P_1 Every awareness is known (knowledge-requirement).

P_2 Awareness can be known either by means of self-reflexive awareness or by means of another awareness.

P_3 Awareness cannot be known by means of another awareness (argument from infinite regress).

Therefore,

C Every awareness is known by means of self-reflexive awareness.

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[149] Dharmakīrti's half-verse, translated and analysed in § 4.3.3, is the following: *apratyakṣopalambhasya nārthadṛṣṭiḥ prasidhyati* | (PVi 1.54cd, p. 40)

[150] NVV, p. 209, ll. 27-28.

[151] Ibid., p. 210, ll. 12-14.

As we can observe, Akalaṅka's argument is identical to Dharmakīrti's main argument for self-reflexive awareness.[152] Akalaṅka's use of the word '*asaṃcāra*', Akalaṅka's argument from infinite regress, and Vādirājasūri's quotation of Dharmakīrti's knowledge-requirement cumulatively demonstrate that Akalaṅka's proof of self-reflexive awareness is heavily indebted to Diṅnāga's and Dharmakīrti's proof of self-reflexive awareness. This, in turn, suggests that Akalaṅka borrowed the theory of self-reflexive awareness from Diṅnāga and Dharmakīrti.

§ 5.4.2 *Refuting non-dual awareness*

Akalaṅka's *Nyāyaviniścaya* provides one of the most detailed and sophisticated refutations of non-dualism surviving from Indian philosophy of the 1st millennium CE.[153] Besides arguing against Dharmakīrti's theory of non-dual awareness, Akalaṅka playfully satirises the sheer absurdity of Dharmakīrti's non-dualistic worldview. Given that it dismisses the entirety of our ordinary experience as merely illusory, Dharmakīrti's non-dualism offends Akalaṅka's common-sense realist sensibilities. In this sub-section, I analyse the four main arguments advanced by Akalaṅka:

(i) How can non-dual awareness be established?

(ii) How can non-dual awareness manifest dualistically?

(iii) Which non-dualism?

(iv) The reality of dualities

While the first three arguments are objections to Dharmakīrti's non-dualism, the final argument is a

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[152] See § 5.3.1, p. 285.

[153] The theory of non-dualism was very influential in Indian philosophy of the 1st millennium CE with competing versions defended by Yogācāra Buddhists and Advaita Vedāntins. While refutations of non-dualism began to proliferate during the 2nd millennium CE, refutations of non-dualism during the 1st millennium CE are rarer and hence historically more valuable. The most important critic of non-dualism prior to Akalaṅka was the 7th century CE Mīmāṃsaka philosopher Kumārila Bhaṭṭa (Glucklich 2007: 176).

positive argument for dualism. Let us examine these arguments one by one.

§ 5.4.2.1 *How can non-dual awareness be established?*

Akalaṅka begins his refutation of Dharmakīrti's non-dualism by arguing that non-dual awareness cannot be established either by means of itself or by means of something else:

> ***svatas tattvaṃ kutas tatra vitathapratibhāsataḥ*** ||
>
> ***mithas tattvaṃ kutas tatra vitathapratibhāsataḥ*** |[154]
>
> 'How can [non-dual] ultimate reality (*tattva*) [be established] by means of itself (*svatas*) given that there is the appearance of illusory[155] [differentiation] there? How can [non-dual] ultimate reality [be established] by means of something else (*mithas*) given that there is the appearance of illusory [differentiation] there?'[156]

The proponent of non-dualism must prove the ultimate reality of non-dual awareness. There are two possible ways in which non-dual awareness might be established:

(i) By means of itself (*svatas*)

(ii) By means of something else (*mithas/paratas*)

Akalaṅka argues that neither option is feasible in the case of non-dual awareness. Option (i) fails because non-dual awareness does not actually manifest by itself. We never experience any pure non-dual awareness devoid of all distinctions. On the contrary, our ordinary awareness of the world is always structured by distinctions (*bheda*).[157] Thus, dualistic awareness rather than non-dual

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[154] NV 56cd-57ab.

[155] Akalaṅka temporarily accepts (*abhyupagama*) Dharmakīrti's claim that our ordinary differentiated awareness of the world is illusory.

[156] The words within square brackets have been supplied from Vādirājasūri's commentary (NVV, p. 323, ll. 3-11).

[157] NVV, p. 323, ll. 6-7.

awareness is self-establishing. On the other hand, option (ii) is equally problematic. Firstly, non-dual awareness is not *actually* established by means of something else because every entity gives rise to differentiated awareness. Irrespective of whether it is produced by external objects, the sense-faculties, or the mind, awareness is always structured by subject-object duality. Secondly, non-dual awareness *cannot* be established by means of something else because the very existence of some entity distinct from non-dual awareness would undermine the theory of non-dualism. In this way, non-dual awareness cannot be established either by means of itself or by means of something else. Given that non-dual awareness cannot be established, Dharmakīrti's theory of non-dualism stands refuted.

In response to this objection, Dharmakīrti would almost certainly choose option (i) as his preferred way of establishing non-dual awareness. As discussed earlier, Dharmakīrti argues that non-dual awareness shines forth by itself (*svayam*) when ignorance has been destroyed through meditative cultivation.[158] From Dharmakīrti's point of view, the dualistic structure of our ordinary awareness does not carry any argumentative weight because our ordinary awareness is cognitively distorted by ignorance. Non-dual awareness manifests by itself when this ignorance has been eliminated. In other words, non-dual awareness is actually self-establishing. However, non-dual awareness is self-establishing for the Buddhas who have eliminated ignorance rather than deluded sentient beings who are conditioned by ignorance. The Buddha's non-dual awareness transcends both our ordinary dualistic awareness as well as our dualistic philosophical analysis. In this way, Dharmakīrti's response to Akalaṅka's objection ultimately hinges on his distinctive metaphilosophical commitments. While we must postpone our discussion of Akalaṅka's critique of Dharmakīrti's metaphilosophy, we might presently observe the virtual absence of independent

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[158] PV_M 2.327d, p. 217; Yiannopoulos 2020: 378-379.

See § 5.3.4, pp. 302-303.

philosophical arguments for non-dual awareness within Dharmakīrti's oeuvre. Dharmakīrti's sole argument for non-dual awareness, the neither-one-nor-many argument, would not persuade Akalaṅka because it presupposes distinctively Buddhist commitments. From Akalaṅka's perspective, Dharmakīrti's neither-one-nor-many argument assumes the dubious Buddhist principle of mereological reductionism. Given that he has already refuted the principle of mereological reductionism in other contexts,[159] Akalaṅka does not feel obliged to respond to Dharmakīrti's neither-one-nor-many argument for non-dual awareness. Insofar as his present objection demonstrates that non-dual awareness cannot be established in any way intelligible to ordinary human beings, Akalaṅka would consider this as a major victory in his battle against Dharmakīrti's non-dualism.

§ 5.4.2.2 *How can non-dual awareness manifest dualistically?*

Akalaṅka's second objection begins by observing that our ordinary awareness of the world is always structured by subject-object duality. Irrespective of whether this dualistic awareness is considered to be real or illusory, the very appearance of dualistic awareness is a phenomenon requiring explanation. Akalaṅka argues that the appearance of dualistic awareness cannot be explained by Dharmakīrti's theory of non-dualism:

> ***advayaṃ dvayanirbhāsaṃ sadā ced avabhāsate*** |
>
> ***na svato nāpi parato bhedaparyanuyogataḥ*** ||[160]
>
> '[Buddhist:] Non-dual (*advaya*) [awareness] always manifests with the appearance of duality

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[159] Akalaṅka rejects both the Nyāya theory of the whole inhering in its parts as well as the Buddhist theory of mereological reductionism to atomic parts (NV 110cd-111ab). Akalaṅka argues that Dharmakīrti's partless (*anaṃśa*) particulars cannot be real because they are not known by means of perception and inference (LT 17).

[160] NV 50.

(*dvaya*).

[Jaina:] [Non-dual awareness] cannot [manifest with the appearance of duality] either by means of itself (*svatas*) or by means of something else (*paratas*) because of the refutation [of non-dual awareness] through distinctions (*bheda*).'

Both Dharmakīrti and Akalaṅka agree that the awareness of ordinary human beings is dualistically structured. This empirical fact must be explained by both sides. From Akalaṅka's point of view, awareness manifests with the appearance of subject-object duality because there is *actually* a real distinction between apprehending subject and apprehended object. However, Akalaṅka argues that Dharmakīrti's theory of non-dualism cannot provide an adequate explanation for the appearance of subject-object duality. If non-dual awareness alone is ultimately real, how can dualistic awareness even manifest in the first place? Once again, there are two possibilities:

(i) Non-dual awareness manifests with the appearance of duality by means of itself (*svatas*).

(ii) Non-dual awareness manifests with the appearance of duality by means of something else (*paratas*).

Option (i) is implausible because it is impossible for any entity with intrinsic nature N to manifest with the opposite nature ~N by means of itself. If non-dual awareness alone is ultimately real and if it is always self-reflexively aware of itself, how can it manifest with the appearance of duality without any external cause? Perhaps, option (ii) is more promising because some other entity might be able to make non-dual awareness manifest with the appearance of duality. This is what Dharmakīrti seems to suggest when he argues that ignorance (*avidyā*) is the underlying cause of dualistic awareness.[161] However, Akalaṅka rejects option (ii) because the existence of any entity distinct from non-dual awareness would undermine the theory of non-dualism. If ignorance is postulated as the cause of dualistic awareness, then ultimate reality consists of two distinct entities:

[161] PV_M 2.217, p. 183.

non-dual awareness and ignorance. This, in turn, contradicts the theory of non-dualism. On the other hand, if ignorance too is ultimately unreal, then ignorance cannot explain the manifestation of dualistic awareness. This is because an unreal entity cannot give rise to anything. Thus, Dharmakīrti's theory of non-dualism is implausible because it cannot provide a plausible explanation for the appearance of subject-object duality. Akalaṅka's argument may be summarised as follows:

P_1 If non-dual awareness alone is ultimately real, then awareness cannot manifest with the appearance of subject-object duality.

P_2 Awareness does manifest with the appearance of subject-object duality.

Therefore,

C It is not the case that non-dual awareness alone is ultimately real.

This modus tollens[162] argument refutes Dharmakīrti's theory of non-dual awareness. Interestingly, Akalaṅka's argument bears a strong resemblance to transcendental arguments in the Western philosophical tradition. As we have seen, a transcendental argument shows that "certain facts are required for experience to have the structure it does".[163] In the present context, Akalaṅka's argument shows how the existence of real dualities and distinctions is a necessary precondition for the very possibility of the manifestation of dualistic awareness. Non-dualism is incoherent because it cannot explain why our ordinary awareness of the world *seems* to be dualistically structured. There are two reasons why Akalaṅka's argument is very powerful. Firstly, Akalaṅka's argument merely assumes the appearance of subject-object duality without assuming the ultimate reality of this appearance. Given that it is a feature of our ordinary awareness, the *appearance* of subject-object duality cannot be denied. Secondly, Akalaṅka's argument deals with the necessary preconditions for the arising of

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[162] If P, then Q. Not Q. Therefore, not P.

[163] Sacks 2005: 450.

See § 4.4.2.3, pp. 253-255.

our ordinary dualistic awareness rather than the Buddha's enlightened non-dual awareness. Hence, Dharmakīrti cannot respond to this argument by resorting to his metaphilosophical commitment that non-dual awareness lies beyond the scope of rational philosophical analysis. In this way, Akalaṅka shows that Dharmakīrti's theory of non-dualism is implausible because it cannot explain the appearance of subject-object duality in our ordinary awareness.[164]

§ 5.4.2.3 *Which non-dualism?*

In order to understand Akalaṅka's third objection to Dharmakīrti's non-dualism, we must recognise that many different kinds of non-dualism were current in Indian philosophy during the 8th century CE. Besides the theory of non-dual awareness propounded by Dharmakīrti, there was a tradition of Vedāntic non-dualism (*advaitavedānta*) renewed[165] by Maṇḍana Miśra in the late 7th and early 8th century CE.[166] Briefly, Maṇḍana Miśra's Vedāntic non-dualism defends the identity of the individual self (*ātman/jīva*) with the Supreme Self (*brahman*).[167] A necessary consequence of this Vedāntic monism is the rejection of all distinctions as illusory. Our ordinary differentiated awareness of the world is purely conventional and lasts as long as we do not realise

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[164] Dharmakīrti might respond to Akalaṅka's objection by arguing that conventionally real ignorance explains the manifestation of conventionally real dualistic awareness. Upon the attainment of non-dual awareness, both dualistic awareness as well as ignorance cease to exist. Hence, there does not exist any phenomenon (such as the appearance of subject-object duality) requiring explanation at the level of ultimate ultimate reality.

[165] The earliest extant treatise within the philosophical school of Advaita Vedānta is the *kārikās* on the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* by Gauḍapāda (Potter 2014a: 103). Though his dates are contested, Gauḍapāda must have lived in the 6th century CE or earlier because one of his *kārikās* is cited by the Buddhist philosopher Bhāviveka (c. 500-570 CE) (Potter 2014a: 103-105).

[166] Maṇḍana Miśra's exact dates are a matter of scholarly dispute. Johnson (2010: 197) dates Maṇḍana Miśra very roughly from the 7th century CE to the 8th century CE. However, Maṇḍana's citation of Kumārila and Dharmakīrti shows that he must have flourished after them (Potter 2014b: 346). In any case, a late 7th century CE or early 8th century CE date would allow for the possibility that Maṇḍana's works were known to Akalaṅka (c. 8th century CE).

[167] Potter 2014b: 346.

the ultimate reality of non-dual *Brahman*.[168] With this necessary background, let us now turn to Akalaṅka's objection:

> ***anādinidhanaṃ tattvam alam ekam alaṃ paraiḥ*** |
>
> ***samprītiparitāpādibhedāt tat kiṃ dvayātmakam*** ||
>
> ***grāhyagrāhakavad bhrāntis tatra kiṃ nānuṣajyate*** |[169]
>
> 'A single (*eka*) ultimate reality (*tattva*) without beginning and without end is sufficient (*alam*), enough (*alam*) with other [entities]! Would that [non-dual ultimate reality] have the nature of duality (*dvaya*) due to the distinction (*bheda*) between pleasure, pain, and so forth? Why wouldn't it follow as an undesirable consequence that it [i.e. the distinction between pleasure, pain, and so forth] is an error (*bhrānti*) just like the [distinction between] apprehending subject and apprehended object is an error?'

The first line of this verse-set describes a non-dual ultimate reality. Given that it is qualified by the adjective 'beginningless and endless' (*anādinidhana*), this non-dual ultimate reality must be eternal. This suggests that Akalaṅka's verse refers to Vedāntic non-dualism rather than Buddhist non-dualism. This is because Vedāntic scriptures such as the *Upaniṣads*[170] as well as philosophical treatises composed by Vedāntins such as Maṇḍana Miśra[171] frequently describe *Brahman* as an eternal entity. By contrast, Buddhist non-dualists such as Dharmakīrti usually describe ultimately real non-dual awareness as 'imperishable' (*anapāyin*) but almost never as 'beginningless',

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[168] Ibid.

[169] NV 76-77ab.

[170] A representative example from the early *Upaniṣads*:
tad etad brahmāpūrvam anaparam anantaram abāhyam | (BU 2.5.19, p. 74)
'Thus, this *Brahman* is without a before, without an after, without an inside, and without an outside.'

[171] For the mention of the eternality of the Self in Maṇḍana Miśra's *Brahmasiddhi*, see Potter (2014b: 355).

'endless', or 'eternal'.[172] Fortunately, Vādirājasūri confirms our interpretation of Akalaṅka's verse by qualifying the noun 'ultimate reality' (*tattva*) with the adjective 'possessing the form of *Brahman*' (*brahmarūpa*) in his explanatory gloss.[173] Thus, Akalaṅka's verse refers to the Vedāntic non-dualism defended by Maṇḍana Miśra and others.[174] Having summarised Vedāntic non-dualism, Akalaṅka formulates his objection to Dharmakīrti's non-dualism: assuming that ultimate reality is non-dual, what reason do we have for supposing that non-dual ultimate reality consists of non-dual self-reflexive awareness rather than non-dual eternal *Brahman*? Given that there are competing versions of non-dualism, Dharmakīrti must show that his theory of non-dualism is superior to other versions. If Dharmakīrti cannot show this, it would follow that Vedāntic non-dual *Brahman* is just as real as Buddhist non-dual awareness. Dharmakīrti's acceptance of his Vedāntic opponent's position, in turn, would constitute a ground for defeat (*nigrahasthāna*) in the competitive world of philosophical debate in classical India.[175]

Akalaṅka argues that there is no principled way for Dharmakīrti to distinguish his theory of non-dualism from Vedāntic non-dualism. Dharmakīrti might object to Vedāntic non-dualism by arguing that non-dual monistic *Brahman* is refuted by our perceptual experience of distinctions such as the distinction between pleasure and pain. However, this objection is not available to Dharmakīrti because the same objection would apply to Dharmakīrti's non-dual awareness. If our ordinary perceptual experience of distinctions can successfully refute Vedāntic non-dualism, then the same perceptual evidence can successfully refute Dharmakīrti's non-dualism

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[172] To assert that non-dual awareness is 'imperishable' (*anapāyin*) simply means that it never (*na*) goes away (*apaiti*) from our experience. This is very different from asserting that an entity is beginningless and endless i.e. eternal. The latter assertion has a cosmological dimension which is absent in the former assertion.

[173] NVV, p. 344, l. 14.

[174] I deliberately use the word 'others' to leave open the possibility that Akalaṅka might have known the works of earlier Advaita Vedāntins such as Gauḍapāda and contemporary Advaita Vedāntins such as Śaṃkara.

[175] 'Admission of the [opponent's] position' (*matānujñā*) is one of the twenty-two grounds for defeat (*nigrahasthāna*) listed in Gautama's *Nyāyasūtra* (NS 5.2.1; Todeschini 2010: 55).

as well. If Dharmakīrti rejects our ordinary differentiated awareness as illusory, then the same response would be available to the Vedāntin. Dharmakīrti might object to Vedāntic non-dualism by denying the existence of non-dual *Brahman* because we never experience any such entity. Once again, the same objection would apply to Dharmakīrti's non-dualism: non-dual awareness does not exist because we never experience any such entity.[176] If Dharmakīrti responds by claiming that non-dual awareness is directly experienced by the Buddhas, then the Vedāntin would respond by claiming that non-dual *Brahman* is directly experienced by those who are 'liberated while living' (*jīvanmukta*). Thus, there does not seem to be any principled way of distinguishing between Dharmakīrti's non-dualism and Vedāntic non-dualism. More generally, the theory of non-dualism precludes the very possibility of real distinctions. Even if Dharmakīrti was somehow able to formulate a real distinction between non-dual awareness and non-dual *Brahman*, the very existence of this real distinction would undermine his theory of non-dualism. Akalaṅka's argument may be formulated as a reductio ad absurdum:

P_1 Ultimate reality is non-dual.

P_2 If ultimate reality is non-dual, then Vedāntic non-dualism is just as true as Buddhist non-dualism.

Therefore,

C Vedāntic non-dualism is just as true as Buddhist non-dualism.

Premise P_2 is justified because the theory of non-dualism entails the non-existence of any real distinction between Dharmakīrti's non-dualism and Vedāntic non-dualism. It is obvious that conclusion C is unacceptable to Dharmakīrti. Since the assumption that ultimate reality is non-dual leads to this undesirable consequence, it follows that ultimate reality is not non-dual. This, in turn, constitutes a refutation of the theory of non-dualism. Akalaṅka's objection ingeniously pits Dharmakīrti's non-dualism against Vedāntic non-dualism. From Akalaṅka's point of view, Buddhist

[176] NVV, p. 344, ll. 18-19.

non-dualism and Vedāntic non-dualism are two sides of the same (faulty) coin because both of them deny the epistemic reliability of our ordinary differentiated awareness of the world.

§ 5.4.2.4 *The reality of dualities*

The three arguments analysed thus far highlight the philosophical problems faced by non-dualism. Akalaṅka considers these objections to be sufficient for refuting Dharmakīrti's theory of non-dual awareness. Given that our ordinary awareness of the world is naturally structured by subject-object duality, Akalaṅka does not feel obliged to present positive arguments for dualism. This is because the overwhelming amount of perceptual evidence in favour of subject-object duality means that dualism is the correct theory by default. Once again, Akalaṅka's common-sense realism takes our ordinary experience as the standard for judging the plausibility of any philosophical theory. While Akalaṅka himself does not formulate any positive argument for dualism, Vādirājasūri argues for the existence of dualities based on the evidence of our ordinary experience:

> ***askhalatpratibhāsaṃ yaj jñānaṃ saṃvādavat tathā*** |
> ***dvaitādi tasya saṃvedyaṃ vidyamānaṃ kathaṃ na tat*** ||[177]
> 'When an awareness is harmonious (*saṃvādavat*) and its appearance (*pratibhāsa*) is unerring (*askhalat*), how can the object (*saṃvedya*) of that awareness such as duality (*dvaita*) and so forth not be real existents (*vidyamāna*)?

Vādirājasūri's argument for dualism is remarkably simple. Each and every awareness, without exception, manifests with subject-object duality. Most of these dualistic awarenesses are harmonious (*saṃvādavat*) because they are free from internal contradiction and external sublation.

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[177] Ibid., p. 335, ll. 26-27.

Given that they fulfil the criteria of epistemic reliability (*prāmāṇya*),[178] these dualistic awarenesses count as sources of knowledge (*pramāṇa*). If dualistic awareness is a reliable source of knowledge, then the object(s) of dualistic awareness must be real. Thus, the dualities and distinctions apprehended by dualistic awareness are ultimately real. This, in turn, is a simple, yet powerful, argument for dualism grounded in our ordinary experience of the world.

§ 5.4.3 *Reconciling self-reflexive awareness with subject-object duality*

As discussed earlier, the theory of self-reflexive awareness seems to entail non-dualism because it involves an entity acting on itself rather than something else. If awareness is self-reflexively aware of itself, then the duality between apprehending subject and apprehended object seems to disappear.[179] This explains why proving the theory of self-reflexive awareness is the first step in Dharmakīrti's proof of non-dualism. By contrast, Akalaṅka accepts Dharmakīrti's theory of self-reflexive awareness without accepting his overarching framework of non-dualism. This raises the following question: how does Akalaṅka reconcile self-reflexive awareness with subject-object duality? In order to answer this question, we must first appreciate the fact that there is a crucial difference between Dharmakīrti's understanding of self-reflexive awareness and Akalaṅka's understanding of self-reflexive awareness. Within Dharmakīrti's philosophical system, self-reflexive awareness is one of the four kinds of perception (*pratyakṣa*).[180] Classifying self-reflexive awareness as a kind of perception means that self-reflexive awareness counts as a reliable source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*). Indeed, Dharmakīrti views non-dual self-reflexive awareness as the ultimate

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[178] See § 2.2.2, p. 88.

[179] Yiannopoulos 2020: 222, 289-290.

[180] NBi 1.7-1.11, pp. 56-70; PVV 2.249, p. 194; Yiannopoulos 2020: 424.

See § 1.2.3, p. 54.

source of knowledge (*pāramārthikapramāṇa*).[181] By contrast, Akalaṅka accepts the existence of self-reflexive awareness but does not classify self-reflexive awareness as a kind of perception.[182] In other words, self-reflexive awareness does not count as a reliable source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) within Akalaṅka's philosophical system. Akalaṅka challenges Dharmakīrti's classification of self-reflexive awareness as perception qua source of knowledge by providing counterexamples involving self-reflexive awareness without perceptual knowledge:

> ***adhyakṣam ātmavit sarvajñānānām abhidhīyate*** ||
>
> ***svāpamūrcchādyavastho 'pi pratyakṣī nāma kiṃ bhavet*** |[183]
>
> '[Buddhist:] The self-reflexive awareness (*ātmavit*) of all awarenesses is designated as perception (*adhyakṣa*).
>
> [Jaina:] Can even someone in a state of sleep (*svāpa*), stupor (*mūrcchā*), and so on really be a perceiver (*pratyakṣin*)?'

Akalaṅka's verse does not reject the existence of self-reflexive awareness but instead challenges Dharmakīrti's classification of self-reflexive awareness as a kind of perception (*adhyakṣa/ pratyakṣa*) qua source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*).[184] Akalaṅka's argument against self-reflexive awareness qua perception is remarkably simple. If the self-reflexive awareness of each and every

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[181] PVi 1.58, p. 44, ll. 2-5.

[182] NV 15ab.

Although Akalaṅka defines perception as both object-awareness (*arthavedana*) and self-awareness (*ātmavedana*), it does not logically follow that self-reflexive awareness is a kind of perception (NV 3). This is because, if $X = A \cup B \cup C$, it does not logically follow that $C = X$. For example, Akalaṅka's definition of perception as conceptual (*sākāra*) awareness does not entail that every conceptual awareness counts as perception because of the obvious counter-example of conceptual inferential awareness (NV 3). In the same way, every perceptual awareness is self-reflexively aware of itself but this does not entail that self-reflexive awareness, by itself, counts as perception.

[183] NV 163cd-164ab.

[184] While Akalaṅka rejects the classification of self-reflexive awareness as perception qua *pramāṇa*, Vādirājasūri classifies self-reflexive awareness as mental perception (*anindriyapratyakṣa*) qua *pramāṇa* (NVV, p. 111, l. 24; see p. 281, n. 64) This is an example of how Vādirājasūri sometimes transforms Akalaṅka's ideas.

awareness counts as perception, then the self-reflexive awareness of someone who has fainted or fallen asleep too counts as perception.[185] This, in turn, entails that a sleeping person or a fainted person is a perceiver because he/she has epistemically reliable perception in the form of self-reflexive awareness. However, this is simply absurd because a person does not actually have any perceptual knowledge of the world when he has fainted or fallen asleep. This, in turn, constitutes a reductio ad absurdum of Dharmakīrti's position that self-reflexive awareness counts as perception qua source of knowledge. Once again, Akalaṅka's argument relies on our ordinary understanding of who counts and who does not count as a knowing perceiver. Akalaṅka's argument shows how bare self-reflexive awareness is too meagre to count as perception qua source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*), let alone as the ultimate source of knowledge (*pāramārthikapramāṇa*). If the mere presence of self-reflexive awareness was sufficient for an awareness to count as a source of knowledge, then each and every awareness of each and every sentient being would count as a source of knowledge. This universality of self-reflexive awareness qua source of knowledge would, in turn, entail the absence of any distinction between enlightened Buddhas and deluded sentient beings. Given that it entails these absurd consequences, self-reflexive awareness cannot be classified as perception qua source of knowledge. Instead, according to Akalaṅka, self-reflexive awareness is a feature of each and every awareness but it does not count as perception qua source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*). Incidentally, this argument shows that Akalaṅka did not *passively* borrow the theory of self-reflexive awareness from Diṅnāga and Dharmakīrti. On the contrary, Akalaṅka actively transformed the Buddhist theory of self-reflexive awareness in accordance with the special requirements of his Jaina philosophical system.

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[185] If Dharmakīrti and his commentators argue that states of deep sleep and stupor lack any awareness whatsoever, then they would effectively be admitting that the mental stream (*cittasaṃtāna*) is interrupted during these states. Given that awareness alone is ultimately real within Dharmakīrti's idealist worldview, this would be tantamount to denying the existence of the individual during states of deep sleep and stupor (NV 164cd).

Having shown that self-reflexive awareness is not a source of knowledge, Akalaṅka argues that self-reflexive awareness, far from entailing non-dualism, is actually inconsistent with non-dualism:

> ***yathaivātmāyam ākāram abhūtam avalambate*** ||
>
> ***tathaivātmānam ātmā ced abhūtam avalambate*** |
>
> ***na svasaṃvedanāt … ***||[186]
>
> '[Buddhist:] Just as this intrinsic nature (*ātman*) [of awareness] takes an unreal (*abhūta*) form (*ākāra*) as its object, in the same way, this intrinsic nature [of awareness] takes its own unreal nature as its object.
>
> [Jaina:] That is not correct because of the self-reflexive awareness [of the intrinsic nature of awareness]. …'

The imaginary Buddhist interlocutor claims that the intrinsic nature of awareness as apprehending subject (*grāhaka*) is just as unreal as the mental form (*ākāra*) apprehended (*grāhya*) by awareness.[187] The unreality of subject-object duality, in turn, entails non-dualism. Akalaṅka responds by arguing that the intrinsic nature of awareness cannot be unreal because it is directly and immediately known through self-reflexive awareness. This shows that Akalaṅka, unlike Dharmakīrti, does not consider self-reflexive awareness to be the intrinsic nature of awareness. This is because self-reflexive awareness is a self-referential process which presupposes the existence of some real entity serving as the substratum of this process. As we have seen, Dharmakīrti illustrates the concept of self-reflexive awareness using the example of light. Just as light illuminates itself, in

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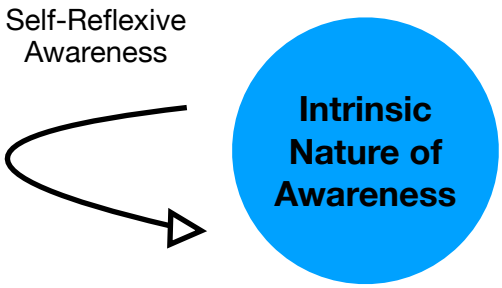
[186] NV 35cd-36c.

[187] NVV, p. 277, ll. 26-27.

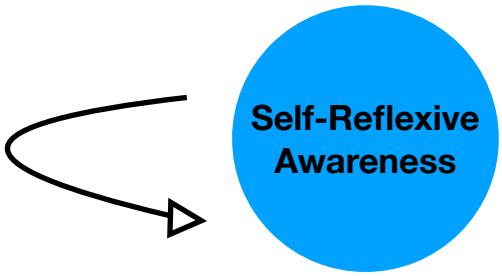
Incidentally, Akalaṅka's imaginary Buddhist interlocutor interprets Dharmakīrti's non-dualism in False Imagist (*alīkākāra*) terms.

the same way, awareness is self-reflexively aware of itself.[188] However, Akalaṅka's point would be that light's self-illumination of itself presupposes the existence of light as a real substratum.[189] In the absence of any substratum, it is difficult to explain *what* is actually illuminating/aware of itself. This real substratum must be the intrinsic nature of awareness because it is this very intrinsic nature which is self-reflexively aware of itself:



Flow-chart 6: Akalaṅka's analysis of self-reflexive awareness[190]

By contrast, Dharmakīrti regards self-reflexive awareness itself as the ultimately real intrinsic nature of awareness:[191]



Flow-chart 7: Dharmakīrti's analysis of self-reflexive awareness

[188] PV_M 2.329, p. 218.

[189] It is unpersuasive to assert that light itself is simply pure illumination (*prakāśa*) because the self-illuminating light must be composed of some material substratum (such as atoms).

[190] The arrow indicates that the intrinsic nature of awareness apprehends itself by means of the process of self-reflexive awareness.

[191] Taber 2022: 317; Yiannopoulos 2020: 289-290.

Akalaṅka argues that Dharmakīrti's analysis of self-reflexive awareness is absurd because there cannot be any self-reflexive awareness without the existence of some real entity which is self-reflexively aware of itself. Insofar as Dharmakīrti equates the intrinsic nature of awareness with self-reflexive awareness, it logically follows that self-reflexive awareness qua intrinsic nature of awareness self-reflexively apprehends itself. However, it makes no sense whatsoever to claim that self-reflexive awareness is self-reflexively aware of itself! According to Akalaṅka, the real entity which is self-reflexively aware of itself must necessarily be distinct from the process of self-reflexive awareness. Thus, the intrinsic nature of awareness must be distinct from self-reflexive awareness. Self-reflexive awareness is simply the process by which the intrinsic nature of awareness apprehends itself. Since self-reflexive awareness requires the existence of a substratum distinct from self-reflexive awareness, the theory of self-reflexive awareness contradicts non-dualism. From Akalaṅka's perspective, the intrinsic nature of awareness serves as the substratum of self-reflexive awareness. Vādirājasūri explains that the intrinsic nature of awareness simply consists of the state of being an apprehending subject (*ālambaka*).[192] This is because every awareness, whether perceptual or otherwise, apprehends something. This intrinsic nature of awareness as apprehending subject is established by means of self-reflexive awareness. Given that every apprehending subject requires some object of apprehension, self-reflexive awareness indirectly establishes the apprehended object. In this way, awareness qua apprehending subject and external object qua apprehended object together constitute subject-object duality. Thus, Akalaṅka's theory of self-reflexive awareness entails dualism.

It follows from Akalaṅka's analysis that self-reflexive awareness involves awareness becoming aware of its own intrinsic nature of being a subject apprehending some object. Since

[192] NVV, p. 277, ll. 23-24.

awareness's apprehension of objects is conceptual, awareness's self-reflexive awareness of its own intrinsic nature must also be conceptual. Thus, self-reflexive awareness involves conceptual apprehension of the dualistic structure of awareness. Given that self-reflexive awareness is associated with the conceptual nature and the dualistic structure of awareness within Akalaṅka's philosophical system, we can safely conclude that Akalaṅka has radically transformed Dharmakīrti's theory of non-conceptual and non-dual self-reflexive awareness. While Dharmakīrti uses self-reflexive awareness to demonstrate the illusory nature of our ordinary dualistic awareness, Akalaṅka uses self-reflexive awareness to establish the epistemic reliability of our ordinary dualistic awareness.

§ 5.4.4 *Metaphilosophy*

Having discussed how Akalaṅka reconciles self-reflexive awareness with dualism, let us now turn to the rational reconstruction of Akalaṅka's metaphilosophy.[193] Before beginning his refutation of non-dualism, Akalaṅka states the following:

> ***pramāṇam ātmasātkurvan pratītim atilaṅghayet*** |
>
> ***vitathajñānasaṃtānaviśeṣeṣu na kevalam*** ||[194]
>
> 'With regard to the particular streams (*saṃtāna*) of [supposedly] illusory awarenesses, one can go beyond our [ordinary] ascertainment (*pratīti*) by acquiring some source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*), not by itself (*kevala*) [i.e. without acquiring any source of knowledge].'

Before commencing his refutation of Dharmakīrti's theory of non-dual awareness, Akalaṅka makes

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[193] I deliberately use the phrase 'rational reconstruction' because Akalaṅka's philosophical treatises do not have any separate section or chapter dealing with metaphilosophy. My rational reconstruction pieces together a coherent metaphilosophical position from Akalaṅka's occasional and dispersed remarks on the methodology and purpose of philosophical inquiry.

[194] NV 49.

this very important metaphilosophical remark. Any philosophical theory, especially one that rejects our ordinary understanding of the world, must be backed by reliable sources of knowledge (*pramāṇa*). Within the world of philosophical discourse, it is unpersuasive to merely assert that a given theory is true without providing any supporting evidence consisting of some reliable source of knowledge. This suggests that Akalaṅka has the following metaphilosophical commitment:

M_1 The ultimate nature of reality can be known through reliable sources of knowledge (*pramāṇa*).

It is a fundamental prerequisite of *pramāṇaśāstra* that every claim must be backed by some reliable source of knowledge. This, in turn, means that every philosophical claim must be rationally[195] defensible in a philosophical debate.[196] Akalaṅka's rationalistic metaphilosophy excludes the possibility of true philosophical theories which are not rationally defensible. As such, it is absurd to claim that non-dual awareness or some such purported reality lies beyond the scope of rational philosophical analysis.

At first glance, Akalaṅka's rationalistic metaphilosophy seems to be contradicted by his acceptance of the Jina's transcendental extra-sensory perception (*atīndriyajñāna*).[197] According to Jaina scriptures, omniscient Jinas directly perceive the entirety of reality at every moment.[198] Surely, the Jina's extra-sensory omniscience lies beyond our rational analysis just like the Buddha's non-dual awareness? If this is the case, Akalaṅka cannot deny the possibility of real entities lying outside the scope of rational philosophical analysis without undermining the religious foundations of Jaina philosophy. However, it is important to recognise that the Jina's omniscient knowledge

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[195] I use the word 'rational' in a broad sense to refer to any philosophical theory capable of being established by means of some source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*).

[196] For an overview of the tradition of rational philosophical debate in classical India and the contributions of Jaina philosophers to this tradition, see Gorisse (2021: 35-49).

[197] NV 168cd-169ab.

See § 2.2.3, pp. 100-102.

[198] Jaini 1974: 75-77.

does not actually lie outside the scope of rational philosophical analysis within Akalaṅka's philosophical system. As we have seen, Akalaṅka is committed to a rationalistic metaphilosophy according to which every claim must be established by means of some reliable source of knowledge. In the case of extra-sensory matters, the reliable source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) is scripture (*śruta*).[199] Although we do not directly perceive the extra-sensory entities known to the Jina, the Jina's extra-sensory knowledge lies within the domain of our rational understanding because we can acquire this extra-sensory knowledge through the study of Jaina scriptures.[200] The epistemic reliability of scripture, in turn, lies within the domain of rational philosophical debate. Indeed, Akalaṅka provides various arguments to defend the Jina's extra-sensory omniscience against Mīmāṃsaka objections.[201] Once established, the Jina's omniscience proves the epistemic reliability of the Jaina scriptures recording his teachings. Given that the epistemic reliability of scripture is established by rational argumentation and given that the meaning of scripture is understood through the application of rationally defensible hermeneutic principles,[202] the essential content of the Jina's extra-sensory omniscient knowledge does not lie outside the scope of rational philosophical analysis using *pramāṇas*.

At first glance, Akalaṅka's strategy of bringing Jaina religious doctrines within the sphere of rational philosophical analysis does not seem to be particularly distinctive because the same strategy is employed by Dharmakīrti. Besides providing sophisticated philosophical arguments for central Buddhist religious doctrines such as the four noble truths,[203] Dharmakīrti

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[199] See LT 26 for Akalaṅka's acceptance of scripture (*śruta*) as a source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*).

[200] While they do not literally contain the entirety of the Jina's omniscient knowledge, the Jaina scriptures are said to contain the essence of the Jina's omniscient knowledge.

[201] LTSV 4, p. 2, ll. 8-16.

[202] These hermeneutic principles include angles of analysis (*nikṣepa*) and frames of enquiry (*anuyoga*) (TS 1.5, 1.7-1.8).

[203] PV_M 1.149-1.207, pp. 62-82.

argues that the Buddha is a source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) in matters of soteriological significance.[204] Given that the Buddha is shown to be a source of knowledge by means of rational philosophical argumentation and given that the theory of non-dual awareness was taught by the Buddha, the theory of non-dual awareness is indirectly established by means of a source of knowledge. Thus, Dharmakīrti's theory of non-dual awareness does not violate the rules of *pramāṇaśāstra* by asserting the existence of some entity which lies beyond the scope of rational philosophical analysis using *pramāṇas*. If this is the case, then there is no significant difference between Dharmakīrti's and Akalaṅka's metaphilosophical commitment to rational philosophical analysis. Although this response seems plausible, there are actually three important differences between Dharmakīrti's metaphilosophy and Akalaṅka's metaphilosophy. Firstly, the precise relationship between *pramāṇaśāstra* and transcendental knowledge is very different in the works of Dharmakīrti and Akalaṅka. In Akalaṅka's philosophical treatises, knowledge acquired through rational philosophical analysis is partial/incomplete whereas the Jina's omniscient knowledge is complete.[205] Nevertheless, the Jina's transcendental knowledge neither contradicts the conclusions of rational philosophical analysis (i.e. *pramāṇaśāstra*) nor contradicts our ordinary experience of the world.[206] Instead, the Jina's transcendental knowledge complements and completes the partial knowledge we have acquired from *pramāṇaśāstra*. By contrast, Dharmakīrti and his commentators regard *pramāṇaśāstra* as purely conventional (*sāṃvyavahārika*).[207] From the perspective of the Buddha's enlightened non-dual awareness, dualistic rational philosophical analysis is merely a useful fiction. Thus, the Buddha's non-dual awareness contradicts and transcends the fictions of *pramāṇaśāstra*. This shows that there is a genuine difference between Dharmakīrti and Akalaṅka in terms of their respective metaphilosophical commitment to the ultimate epistemic reliability of

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[204] See PV_M 1.34 (p. 20) for Dharmakīrti's acceptance of the Buddha as a source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*).

[205] NV 168cd-169ab.

[206] ĀM 6.

[207] PV_M 1.7ab, pp. 6-7; PVV 1.7ab, pp. 6-7.

rational philosophical analysis i.e. *pramāṇaśāstra*. In particular, Dharmakīrti's non-dualism entails a rejection of Akalaṅka's metaphilosophical commitment M_1 according to which the ultimate nature of reality can be known through reliable sources of knowledge (*pramāṇa*). Secondly, unlike Akalaṅka, Dharmakīrti does not accept scripture (*āgama*/*buddhavacana*) as a distinct source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) separate from perception and inference.[208] This is unproblematic in most cases because Dharmakīrti establishes Buddhist scriptural doctrines such as the four noble truths by means of either perception or inference.[209] However, non-dual awareness cannot be established by means of either perception or inference.[210] Thus, in the case of non-dual awareness, Buddhist scriptures containing the Buddha's words are the only source of knowledge available to ordinary sentient beings. However, Dharmakīrti's refusal to accept scripture as a distinct source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) means that he cannot establish non-dual awareness by appealing to Buddhist scriptures. Given that non-dual awareness cannot be established by means of any source of knowledge, Dharmakīrti's non-dualism transgresses the boundaries of rational philosophical analysis using *pramāṇas*. By contrast, Akalaṅka accepts scripture (*śruta*) as an independent source of knowledge in extra-sensory matters.[211] This, in turn, allows Akalaṅka to bring the Jina's transcendental extra-sensory knowledge within the domain of *pramāṇaśāstra*. Thirdly, Dharmakīrti's theory of non-dual awareness cannot, in principle, be established by means of any source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) whatsoever. Although Dharmakīrti defends the Buddha's epistemic reliability in such soteriological matters,[212] Akalaṅka argues that the Buddha cannot serve as the source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) for non-dual awareness:

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[208] PV_M 2.1ab, pp. 110-111.

[209] Ibid., 1.149-1.207, pp. 62-82.

[210] Given that inference presupposes a distinction between probandum (*sādhya*) and probans (*sādhana*), any inferential argument for non-dualism would be self-refuting.

[211] LT 26.

[212] PV_M 1.34, p. 20.

na jñāyate na jānāti na ca kiṃcana bhāṣate |

buddhaḥ śuddhaḥ pravakteti tat kilaiṣāṃ subhāṣitam ||[213]

‘ ‘He is not known, he does not know [anything], and he does not say anything. Yet, the Buddha is the flawless (*śuddha*) teacher (*pravaktṛ*)!’- this, reportedly (*kila*), is the eloquent speech (*subhāṣita*) of these [Buddhists]!’

Akalaṅka’s satirical verse argues that the Buddha qua *pramāṇa* cannot teach non-dual awareness or anything else. This is because, at the level of the ultimate ultimate reality consisting of non-dual awareness, the Buddha himself is not real! How can the words of a purely conventional Buddha, who does not actually exist at the level of ultimate ultimate reality, serve as the source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) for ultimate ultimate reality? Given that it is impossible to establish non-dual awareness by means of any source of knowledge whatsoever, Dharmakīrti’s non-dualism transgresses the boundaries of *pramāṇaśāstra*.[214] These three pieces of evidence highlight the underlying differences between Dharmakīrti’s metaphilosophy and Akalaṅka’s metaphilosophy. While Dharmakīrti’s non-dualism stresses the limits of rational philosophical analysis, Akalaṅka’s common-sense realism defends the power of rational philosophical analysis grounded in our ordinary experience.

From Akalaṅka’s perspective, Dharmakīrti’s rejection of rational philosophical analysis for mystical non-dual gnosis represents an absurd irrationalism which violates the rules of *pramāṇaśāstra*. From our unbiased contemporary perspective, however, it is important to recognise that these contrasting metaphilosophical commitments represent contrasting evaluations of philosophy. There is no sense in which one metaphilosophical commitment is more correct than the other. Any argument Akalaṅka might advance in defence of his metaphilosophical commitment to

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[213] NV 92.

[214] Yiannopoulos 2020: 381.

pramāṇa-based rational philosophical analysis would be circular because it would presuppose that which it seeks to establish. On the other hand, any argument Dharmakīrti might advance in defence of his metaphilosophical commitment to suprarational modes of knowledge such as meditative cultivation of non-dual awareness would be self-contradictory because it would undermine that which it seeks to establish. Thus, these metaphilosophical commitments are best understood as foundational axioms regarding the scope and limits of rational philosophical analysis which cannot themselves be proved or disproved through rational philosophical analysis. Viewed in this light, this discussion highlights Dharmakīrti's metaphilosophical pessimism and Akalaṅka's metaphilosophical optimism about the power of philosophy to answer questions about the ultimate nature of reality.

§ 5.5 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the debate between Dharmakīrti and Akalaṅka regarding the structure of awareness. While Dharmakīrti's non-dualism argues that luminous self-reflexive awareness is free from subject-object duality, Akalaṅka's dualism argues that awareness, though self-reflexively aware of itself, is always structured by subject-object duality. These opposing positions can be fruitfully understood using the categories of identity (*abheda*) and difference (*bheda*). According to Dharmakīrti, ultimately real non-dual awareness is a unitary entity free from all distinctions (*abheda*).[215] By contrast, Akalaṅka is a common-sense realist who accepts both identity (*abheda*) as well as difference (*bheda*).[216] Awareness, just like every other entity, is unitary

[215] PV_M 2.354-2.355, p. 225.

[216] LT 7cd; LTSV 7cd, p. 3, l. 24.

in terms of substance (*dravya*) but differentiated in terms of modifications (*paryāya*).[217] While Dharmakīrti's non-dualism entails a radical illusionism about our ordinary dualistic experience of the world, Akalaṅka's dualism defends the common-sensical dictates of our ordinary dualistic experience.

Most of this chapter has been devoted to analysing the arguments advanced by both sides for their respective positions. Surprisingly, both Dharmakīrti and Akalaṅka begin with the same first step of establishing self-reflexive awareness (*svasaṃvedana*) through a refutation of the opposing theory of other-awareness (*parasaṃvedana*) using the argument from infinite regress. This striking resemblance shows that Akalaṅka borrowed the theory of self-reflexive awareness from Diṅnāga and Dharmakīrti. Nevertheless, Akalaṅka significantly transforms the Buddhist theory of non-dual self-reflexive awareness by arguing that every awareness apprehends both itself as well as some intentional (usually external) object distinct from itself.[218] Furthermore, while Dharmakīrti considers non-dual self-reflexive awareness to be the ultimate source of knowledge, Akalaṅka argues that self-reflexive awareness is too meagre to count as perception qua source of knowledge.[219] These contrasting conceptions of self-reflexive awareness lead Dharmakīrti and Akalaṅka to the polar opposites of non-dualism and dualism respectively. According to Dharmakīrti, non-conceptual, non-erroneous, and universal self-reflexive awareness proves the intrinsically non-dual structure of awareness because self-reflexive awareness involves awareness apprehending itself rather than some other object.[220] By contrast, Akalaṅka argues that self-reflexive

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[217] This is why the label '*anekāntavāda*' is more accurate than the label 'dualism' for Akalaṅka's philosophical outlook. According to Akalaṅka's *anekāntavāda*, awareness is singular in terms of substance, dual in terms of subject-object duality, and plural in terms of various other modifications. Nevertheless, I have chosen the label 'dualism' in order to contrast Akalaṅka's understanding of the structure of awareness with Dharmakīrti's understanding of the structure of awareness.

[218] MacKenzie 2007: 41; NV 3.

[219] PVi 1.58, p. 44, ll. 2-5; NV 163cd-164ab.

[220] Yiannopoulos 2020: 222, 374.

awareness presupposes the existence of a distinct substratum, namely the intrinsic nature of awareness qua apprehending subject, which is actually aware of itself.[221]

Besides the argument from self-reflexive awareness, Dharmakīrti's main argument for non-dual awareness involves a relentless application of the principle of mereological reductionism inherited from the Abhidharma tradition. If all composite wholes are ultimately unreal, then composite dualistic awareness consisting of both subject form and object form must also be unreal. While Dharmakīrti's argument might be persuasive in an intra-Buddhist context, it is unlikely to convince non-Buddhists such as Akalaṅka who do not accept the principle of mereological reductionism in the first place. Thus, Dharmakīrti does not actually provide any independent argument for non-dualism which might persuade a non-Buddhist interlocutor. By contrast, Akalaṅka provides several independent arguments against non-dual awareness. While Akalaṅka's initial argument highlights the absence of any source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) for the existence of non-dual awareness,[222] Akalaṅka's most powerful argument asserts that our ordinary experience of dualities and distinctions cannot be explained within the framework of non-dualism.[223] Dharmakīrti's explanation of ordinary dualistic awareness in terms of ignorance (*avidyā*), if successful, refutes non-dualism because it entails the existence of some other entity distinct from non-dual awareness.[224] This impossibility of explaining the appearance of subject-object duality within the framework of non-dualism, in turn, serves as the basis of Akalaṅka's transcendental argument according to which ultimately real dualities and distinctions are a necessary precondition for the very possibility of the appearance of differentiated awareness. Akalaṅka's third argument

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[221] NV 35cd-36c.

[222] Ibid., 56cd-57ab.

[223] Ibid., 50.

[224] PV_M 2.217, p. 183.

pits Dharmakīrti's non-dual awareness against the non-dual *Brahman* of Advaita Vedānta.[225] This, in turn, shows Akalaṅka's intimate knowledge as well as rejection of the various competing versions of non-dualism current in Indian philosophy during the 8th century CE. Having refuted non-dualism, Akalaṅka establishes dualism by appealing to our ordinary dualistic experience of the world. Akalaṅka's unflinching commitment to common-sense realism grounded in our ordinary experience is evident throughout his defence of dualism.

In my estimation, Akalaṅka's arguments incisively and persuasively demonstrate the *philosophical* untenability of Dharmakīrti's non-dualism. Nevertheless, this debate between Dharmakīrti's non-dualism and Akalaṅka's dualism is ultimately a sustained reflection on the scope and limits of rational philosophical analysis. At heart, Dharmakīrti's non-dualism is not a philosophical theory describing our ordinary experience but instead a roadmap for transcending the illusory and unsatisfactory realm of our ordinary experience. Given that it is the art of making subtle conceptual distinctions, it is unsurprising that rational philosophical analysis cannot establish the existence of non-dual awareness transcending all distinctions. On the contrary, pure non-dual gnosis as the summum bonum of the Buddhist path of meditative cultivation is fully comprehensible to the Buddhas alone.[226] By highlighting this soteriological dimension of non-dual awareness, Dharmakīrti stresses the limits of rational philosophical analysis. This aspect of Dharmakīrti is usually ignored by modern scholars who prefer to present Dharmakīrti as the torchbearer of logical reasoning in classical India.[227] While this is partially true, modern scholarship has generally failed to notice the deep pessimism about the power of reason lying at the heart of

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[225] NV 76-77ab.

[226] At the end of his *Saṃtānāntarasiddhi*, Dharmakīrti states that "the omniscient gnosis of the Buddha is inconceivable because it completely transcends the domain of thought and language" (SAS 93, p. 4; Yiannopoulos 2020: 381-382).

[227] For example, Taber (2022: 303) states that Dharmakīrti's works "represent collectively a systematic, *rational defence* of the main teachings of the Buddha …" [emphasis added].

Dharmakīrti's non-dualism. By contrast, Akalaṅka surprisingly emerges as the champion of reason in this philosophical debate. Akalaṅka is unwilling to entertain the possibility of any non-dual gnosis lying beyond the realm of rational philosophical analysis. In contrast to Dharmakīrti's description of the Buddha's enlightened awareness as inconceivable (*acintya*),[228] Akalaṅka argues that every aspect of the Jina's omniscient knowledge is either directly or indirectly rationally defensible. Akalaṅka's optimism about the power of reason stems from his conviction that the Jina's transcendent knowledge completes rather than contradicts our ordinary understanding of reality. Akalaṅka's rationalistic metaphilosophical commitment to *pramāṇaśāstra* goes hand in hand with his realist commitment to ordinary perceptual experience. In this way, this classical Buddhist-Jaina debate about the structure of awareness raises profound, perhaps irresolvable, questions about the nature and limits of philosophical inquiry.

[228] SAS 93, p. 4.

Conclusion

What should a rational person think and believe when two equally intelligent individuals present equally persuasive arguments for diametrically opposed conclusions? This is the peculiar problem faced by the reader of this stimulating philosophical debate between the Buddhist philosopher Dharmakīrti and the Jaina philosopher Akalaṅka regarding the nature, object, and structure of perception. Having analysed the sophisticated arguments advanced by both sides for their respective positions, a philosopher would naturally want to adjudicate or, at least, evaluate this debate: whose arguments are more persuasive and what, after all, is the truth of the matter? Insofar as most ancient cultures (such as India and Greece) viewed philosophy as the search for truth,[1] we would be failing to do justice to Dharmakīrti and Akalaṅka if we do not take their philosophical theories seriously as potentially true or false theories. Thus, any *philosophical* reading of Dharmakīrti and Akalaṅka must evaluate the plausibility of their philosophical ideas.

Having understood why it is necessary to evaluate this philosophical debate, we are confronted with the conundrum of how to evaluate this evenly-fought contest between Dharmakīrti and Akalaṅka who present equally persuasive, yet diametrically opposed, theories of perception. There are three possible solutions to this conundrum. The first solution to this conundrum denies the assumption of equal plausibility by asserting that the arguments advanced by one philosopher are actually more plausible than the arguments advanced by the other philosopher. Within modern scholarship, this approach is best represented by Shah's (1967) groundbreaking comparative study of Dharmakīrti and Akalaṅka. While he concedes that the arguments advanced by Akalaṅka against

[1] In his illuminating article entitled 'What is Philosophy, Really?', Hansson (2018: 221) remarks that the ancient Greeks understood philosophy as "a means to find the truth in a wide variety of matters". Similarly, philosophy was understood as a quest to discover the truth in classical India.

Dharmakīrti's theory of perception are "intelligent, logical, illuminating, and … novel",[2] Shah ultimately adjudicates this philosophical debate in favour of Dharmakīrti. At the end of the chapter comparing Dharmakīrti's and Akalaṅka's theory of perception, Shah states that "Dharmakīrti's theory of perception stands unrefuted so long as the fundamental metaphysical doctrine of momentarism remains unshaken".[3] Given that Shah elsewhere judges "the Buddhist concept of reality as momentary" to be more logical than the Jaina concept of reality as "variable constant", the aforementioned statement clearly constitutes a verdict in favour of Dharmakīrti's theory of perception.[4] With respect to the debate between Dharmakīrti's epistemic idealism and Akalaṅka's common-sense realism, Shah opines that "… the logic of subjective idealism seems to be irrefutable. … Dharmakīrti seems to be correct when he asserts that the being of a thing consists in its being experienced.".[5] Thus, Shah clearly judges Dharmakīrti's theory of perception to be more plausible than Akalaṅka's theory of perception. However, the problem with Shah's evaluation is that it appears partial and unconvincing to an unbiased reader. It makes little sense to defend Dharmakīrti's potentially plausible perceptual non-conceptualism on the basis of the far more counter-intuitive and implausible Buddhist theory of momentariness. Furthermore, as we have seen in chapter 4, Akalaṅka's sophisticated objections to the *sahopalambhaniyama* inference and Vādirājasūri's brilliant transcendental argument for common-sense realism show that Dharmakīrti's epistemic idealism is far from being "irrefutable". Moreover, Shah's evaluation ignores the very plausible arguments advanced by Akalaṅka against Dharmakīrti's highly counter-intuitive theory of non-dualism. As such, we cannot straightforwardly adjudicate this philosophical debate in favour of Dharmakīrti. Nor is it possible to straightforwardly proclaim Akalaṅka as the 'winner' of this philosophical debate. Akalaṅka's perceptual conceptualism, though attractive, seems to concede

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[2] Shah 1967: 247.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid., 75.

[5] Ibid., 186.

Dharmakīrti's philosophical point by accepting the existence of non-conceptual perceptual experience (*darśana*) prior to conceptual awareness (*jñāna*).[6] Why not suppose that this immediate and conceptually unmediated perceptual experience of the object is more accurate than the later conceptually mediated awareness of the same object? Furthermore, as we have seen in chapter 4, it is highly questionable whether Akalaṅka's objections to Dharmakīrti's *sahopalambhaniyama* inference actually succeed. Moreover, as we have discussed in chapter 5, Akalaṅka's very plausible objections to Dharmakīrti's non-dualism are rendered somewhat irrelevant by the fact that non-dual gnosis ultimately lies beyond the domain of rational investigation within Dharmakīrti's philosophical system. Thus, the first solution of adjudicating this extremely complex and sophisticated philosophical debate in favour of either Dharmakīrti or Akalaṅka seems to fail.

The second solution to this conundrum assumes a neutral stance by suspending judgement about the outcome of this philosophical debate. If the arguments advanced by Dharmakīrti and Akalaṅka are equally persuasive, then we do not have any principled basis for adjudicating this philosophical debate in favour of either side. This neutrality might additionally entail a kind of philosophical skepticism according to which the objectively true answer to these philosophical questions either does not exist or cannot be known. While skepticism is always an important contender in every philosophical debate, the problem with this skeptical neutrality is that it creates a model of fossilised scholarship according to which the modern scholar must simply excavate philosophical theories from classical Indian philosophical treatises without taking them seriously as potentially true or false descriptions of reality. Insofar as it reads classical Indian philosophical treatises in a purely philological-cum-historical vein, this skeptical neutrality does a great disservice to classical Indian philosophers like Dharmakīrti and Akalaṅka who clearly understood their philosophical enterprise as a search for truth. In some ways, this approach mistakes

[6] See § 2.2.3, p. 105.

philosophical disengagement for disinterested scholarship. However, philosophical engagement and disinterested scholarship are not mutually exclusive because we can read classical Indian philosophical treatises in an objective manner whilst simultaneously critically engaging with their sophisticated philosophical ideas.[7] Indeed, some scholars have argued that writing the history of Indian philosophy inevitably involves *doing* philosophy.[8] This philosophical engagement, in turn, is crucial for demonstrating the modern philosophical relevance of classical Indian philosophical treatises.

If philosophical partiality and philosophical disengagement are equally problematic, how should we engage with classical Indian philosophy without compromising on our scholarly objectivity? In my view, the Jaina theory of viewpoints (*nayavāda*) offers a promising model for a new mode of scholarly engagement with classical Indian philosophy.[9] Stripped down to the bare essentials, the theory of viewpoints teaches that superficially contradictory statements/theories can be reconciled by supplying the different contexts/parameters within which each of them holds true. In other words, neither selective partiality nor skeptical neutrality is the sensible way of responding to any apparent logical contradiction. Instead, we must strive to reconcile the superficially contradictory statements by objectively disambiguating their respective contexts. To borrow Ganeri's felicitous formulation, the Jaina theory of viewpoints shows that "it is possible for there to

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[7] An excellent example of philosophical engagement combined with disinterested scholarship is Arnold's (2005) philosophically illuminating and historically sensitive study of Buddhist *pramāṇavāda*, Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsā, and Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka.

[8] Westerhoff 2018: 284-285.

[9] I wish to stress that my creative modern application of distinct viewpoints (*naya*) to this philosophical debate between Dharmakīrti and Akalaṅka is inspired by, though ultimately discontinuous with, the classical Jaina theory of viewpoints (*nayavāda*). There are two different dimensions to this discontinuity. Firstly, the classical Jaina theory of viewpoints generally consisted of seven fixed and well-defined viewpoints deriving from *Tattvārthasūtra* 1.33. By contrast, my modern approach accepts innumerable viewpoints reflecting the diversity of our ordinary epistemic practices. Secondly, the classical Jaina theory of viewpoints was primarily employed as a polemical tool in order to demonstrate the superiority of Jaina philosophical ideas over non-Jaina philosophical ideas. By contrast, my modern approach avoids this religious bias by placing non-Jaina as well as Jaina philosophical theories on an equal footing.

be pairs of genuinely alternative epistemic stances and no facts by virtue of which one is more correct than the other".[10] Returning to the debate between Dharmakīrti and Akalaṅka, what kinds of contexts/parameters might we supply in order to reconcile Dharmakīrti's perceptual non-conceptualism, epistemic idealism, and non-dualism with Akalaṅka's perceptual conceptualism, common-sense realism, and dualism? Is there any way in which Dharmakīrti and Akalaṅka might be understood as adopting genuinely alternative epistemic stances (*naya*)[11] towards perception? In my view,[12] Dharmakīrti's and Akalaṅka's diametrically opposed theories of perception are best understood as the natural outcome of two contrasting epistemic stances towards perception: the transformative/normative epistemic stance and the practical/descriptive epistemic stance.[13] While both epistemic stances study the phenomenon of perception, they differ fundamentally in terms of their goal. Dharmakīrti's theory of perception is best understood as a transformative/normative theory of perception because it is most fundamentally concerned with transforming our ordinary perception of the world in accordance with the normative soteriologically efficacious perception of the Buddhas. By contrast, Akalaṅka's theory of perception is best understood as a practical/descriptive theory of perception because it is most fundamentally concerned with accurately describing our ordinary perception of the world in order to facilitate successful worldly activity. When viewed in this light, we realise that these two theories of perception are not actually contradictory because they adopt fundamentally different epistemic stances towards our ordinary perception of the world. The very first word in the benedictory verse of Dharmakīrti's *Pramāṇavārttika* is '[the Buddha] whose form is profound and noble as a result of shaking off the

[10] Ganeri 2019: 7.

[11] Within this context, I follow Ganeri's (2019: 7) translation of '*naya*' as 'epistemic stance' rather than 'viewpoint'.

[12] It is worth reiterating that this is my modern sympathetic evaluation of this classical Indian philosophical debate rather than a historically accurate description of the way in which Dharmakīrti and Akalaṅka themselves understood their respective theories of perception.

[13] In some ways, my two proposed epistemic stances correspond to the two truths accepted by Buddhist philosophers with the crucial difference that there is no sense in which one epistemic stance is more true/more real than the other epistemic stance within my evaluative scheme.

snare of conceptualisation' (*vidhūta-kalpanā-jāla-gambhīra-udāra-mūrti*).[14] This, in turn, clarifies Dharmakīrti's epistemic stance towards our ordinary perception: our ordinary conceptual and dualistic perception of the world must be abandoned in favour of the Buddha's enlightened non-conceptual and non-dualistic perception because the former binds sentient beings to the cycle of transmigration (*saṃsāra*) whereas the latter liberates sentient beings from the cycle of transmigration. Given this fundamentally normative orientation, Dharmakīrti's theory of perception may not always accurately describe our ordinary perception of the world but it does present a powerful roadmap for completely transforming our ordinary perception of the world into a higher and more rarified kind of perception. This, in turn, explains why Dharmakīrti's theory of perception fits remarkably well with meditative cultivation and does not fit very well with worldly activity. By contrast, the very first word in the benedictory verse of Akalaṅka's *Nyāyaviniścaya* is '[Mahāvīra] whose form is unique as a result of attaining knowledge of all well-known real objects' (*prasiddha-aśeṣa-tattva-artha-pratibuddha-eka-mūrti*).[15] It is important to observe that Akalaṅka describes the objects of the Jina's knowledge as 'well-known [in the world]' (*prasiddha*). This, in turn, clarifies Akalaṅka's epistemic stance towards our ordinary perception: our ordinary conceptual and dualistic perception of the external world, which is well-known to ordinary people and conducive to successful worldly activity, must be accurately understood through rigorous philosophical analysis. In other words, Akalaṅka's theory of perception does not attempt to transform our ordinary perception of the world in accordance with some normative ideal[16] but instead provides a detailed analysis of our ordinary perception of the world. This, in turn, explains why Akalaṅka's theory of perception is remarkably conducive to worldly activity but offers little scope for transforming, let

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[14] PV_M 1.1, p. 1.

[15] NV 1.

[16] The present discussion deals with Dharmakīrti's and Akalaṅka's theories of sensory perception (*indriyapratyakṣa*) rather than their theories of yogic/extra-sensory perception (*yogipratyakṣa*/*atīndriyajñāna*). While omniscient extra-sensory perception is a normative ideal within Akalaṅka's philosophical system, there is an important difference because the Jina's omniscient extra-sensory perception *completes* rather than *contradicts* our ordinary sensory perception of the world.

alone transcending, our mundane perception of the world.[17] This distinction between the transformative epistemic stance and the descriptive epistemic stance dissolves the apparent contradiction between Dharmakīrti's theory of perception and Akalaṅka's theory of perception because there does not exist any contradiction in describing ordinary perception as conceptual and dualistic awareness of the external world whilst simultaneously attempting to transform this ordinary perception into non-conceptual and non-dual self-reflexive awareness.[18] On my evaluation, Dharmakīrti's theory of perception is plausible relative to the epistemic stance of transformation whereas Akalaṅka's theory of perception is plausible relative to the epistemic stance of description. In simple terms, it is not contradictory to accept Dharmakīrti's theory of perception as a guide for meditative transformation and Akalaṅka's theory of perception as a guide for practical action. Although Dharmakīrti did not regard his theory of perception as purely transformative and Akalaṅka did not regard his theory of perception as purely practical, my reconciliatory approach deliberately selects the dominant and most persuasive aspects of both theories. Somewhat surprisingly, my evaluative classification of Dharmakīrti's theory of perception as transformative and Akalaṅka's theory of perception as practical fits remarkably well with the fundamental religious teachings of early Buddhism and early Jainism respectively. Early Buddhism analysed ignorance (*avijjā*/*avidyā*) as the first link in the twelve-fold chain of dependent origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*/*pratītyasamutpāda*) which is constitutive of the unsatisfactory cycle of transmigration (*saṃsāra*).[19] Insofar as ignorance was viewed as the fundamental existential

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[17] This is unsurprising because, within Akalaṅka's realist worldview, the path to liberation lies in continuously expanding our ordinary knowledge of the world in order to encompass newer and newer characteristics (*dharma*) of many-sided (*anekānta*) objects. In other words, the aim is not to *transform*/*transcend* our ordinary perception of the world but instead to continuously *enrich* it. In this sense, Akalaṅka's theory of perception facilitates our progress towards the soteriological goal of liberation by presenting a highly detailed and sophisticated analysis of our ordinary perception of the world.

[18] Of course, Jaina philosophers such as Akalaṅka would deny the very possibility of such transformation. In my view, however, philosophical argumentation cannot adjudicate on the possibility or impossibility of transforming our ordinary perception through meditative cultivation.

[19] Shulman 2008: 304.

problem, the solution was sought in the cultivation of transformative wisdom (*paññā/prajñā*).[20] This religious dismissal of our ordinary understanding of the world as ignorance and the normative prescription of transformative wisdom is mirrored in Dharmakīrti's theory of perception which similarly dismisses our ordinary perception of the world as illusory and normatively prescribes the cultivation of non-conceptual and non-dual self-reflexive awareness in order to attain enlightenment. By contrast, the fundamental existential problem in early Jainism was the accumulation of karmic matter (*kamma*/*karman*) as a result of the performance of violent/harmful activities (*hiṃsā*).[21] Insofar as unethical action was viewed as the fundamental cause of bondage in the cycle of transmigration, the solution was sought in the performance of ethical action or, strictly speaking, the avoidance of all action. Given that this religious discourse was primarily concerned with action, it is unsurprising that early Jainism favoured a common-sensical conception of the world as populated by agents and patients of actions. This common-sense realism of early Jainism is mirrored in Akalaṅka's theory of perception which similarly focusses on ordinary perception as a guide to practical action in the world. In this way, Dharmakīrti's and Akalaṅka's contrasting epistemic stances towards perception may be fruitfully understood as a philosophical expression of the underlying difference between the Buddhist and the Jaina diagnosis of our existential predicament.

Having arrived at a useful, though inevitably preliminary and somewhat subjective, evaluation, let us now turn to the lessons that can be drawn from this classical Buddhist-Jaina philosophical debate for modern scholarship on Indian philosophy. In my view, this debate between Dharmakīrti and Akalaṅka convincingly demonstrates the necessity of abandoning the school-based model of Indian philosophy in favour of a philosopher-based model of Indian philosophy. By the

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[20] Walpola and Demiéville 1998: 21.

[21] For the historical development of the Jaina doctrine of *kamma*/*karman*, see Wiley (2000: 1-40).

school-based model, I refer to the study of Indian philosophers in terms of their affiliation to a particular philosophical school (*darśana*) such as Nyāya, Buddhist Yogācāra, and so on.[22] By the philosopher-based model, I refer to the study of Indian philosophers in terms of their individual philosophical output as well as their distinctive intellectual context. When we initially encounter the figure of Akalaṅka, we might be tempted to study him as a purely Jaina philosopher. However, this thesis has shown how the ostensibly Jaina philosopher Akalaṅka is heavily influenced by the ostensibly Buddhist philosopher Dharmakīrti. This influence is so great that substantial portions of Akalaṅka's philosophical treatises are virtually unintelligible without prior knowledge of Dharmakīrti's philosophy. If we were to adopt the school-based model of Indian philosophy, we would naturally pair the study of the Jaina philosopher Akalaṅka with the study of some other eminent Jaina philosopher such as Yaśovijaya Gaṇi (c. 1624-1688).[23] This, however, would be absurd because Akalaṅka knew nothing about the techniques of Navya Nyāya which were essential to Yaśovijaya's philosophical project[24] and Yaśovijaya lacked the detailed knowledge of Dharmakīrti's philosophy which was essential to Akalaṅka's philosophical project. It follows that the study of the Jaina philosopher Akalaṅka must be paired with the study of the Buddhist philosopher Dharmakīrti whereas the study of the Jaina philosopher Yaśovijaya must be paired with the study of Navya Nyāya. This, in turn, highlights the limitations of the school-based model of Indian philosophy. Despite being a Jaina philosopher, Akalaṅka propounded several innovative ideas (such as the lack of any causal relationship between external object and perceptual awareness)[25] which were not always accepted by other Jaina philosophers. The distinctiveness of

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[22] While the most cutting-edge research on Indian philosophy (such as Adamson and Ganeri (2020) and Ganeri (2021)) has begun to move away from the school-based model, the school-based model remains the dominant model in primers to Indian philosophy (such as Sarma (2011) and Bartley (2015)). This, of course, creates a negative image of Indian philosophy in the academic world because it presents Indian philosophy as a collection of dogmatic schools rather than as a tradition of brilliant thinkers coming up with innovative ideas through rigorous philosophical debate.

[23] For Yaśovijaya Gaṇi's dates, see Ganeri (2011: 32).

[24] Ganeri 2011: 32-35.

[25] See § 2.2.3, pp. 98-99.

Akalaṅka's intellectual context as well as the uniqueness of his philosophical ideas together demonstrate the importance of adopting the philosopher-based model of Indian philosophy. The philosopher-based model allows us to transcend narrow school affiliations in order to obtain a more complete picture of the formative influences on and the subsequent influence of a particular philosopher as well as the particular philosopher's idiosyncratic way of thinking. For example, this thesis has shown how any modern history of the influence and reception of Dharmakīrti's philosophy must necessarily go beyond the long lineage of Buddhist commentators in India and Tibet in order to accommodate Jaina philosophers such as Akalaṅka.[26] In short, this thesis illustrates the importance of engaging with particular Indian philosophers and their individual philosophical output in order to write a more accurate and more stimulating history of Indian philosophy.

This thesis has shown how Akalaṅka creates a systematic and distinctively Jaina theory of perception whose central features are defined in opposition to the central features of Dharmakīrti's theory of perception. The juxtaposition of these two diametrically opposed theories of perception presents the modern reader with the most divergent possible views on the nature, object, and structure of perception. This, in turn, explains the immensely fascinating and rewarding nature of this philosophical debate between Dharmakīrti and Akalaṅka. There are at least two ways in which the line of enquiry pursued in this thesis might be fruitfully expanded in the future. Firstly, the philosophical debate between Dharmakīrti and Akalaṅka was not restricted to the nature, object, and structure of perception but instead included many other points of contention such as the nature and types of inference. While some scholars have begun to examine this sophisticated Buddhist-

[26] During the last decade or so, the field of Dharmakīrtian studies has slowly begun to engage with the reception of Dharmakīrti's philosophy by non-Buddhist philosophers. For example, the recent publication of the proceedings of the Fifth International Dharmakīrti Conference (Kellner, McAllister, Lasic, and McClintock 2020) includes chapters on the reception of Dharmakīrti's philosophy by Jaina philosophers such as Akalaṅka, Śaiva philosophers such as Kṣemarāja, and Mīmāṃsā philosophers such as Kumārila Bhaṭṭa.

Jaina debate regarding inference,[27] this is a rich topic with immense scope for further research. Secondly, this Buddhist-Jaina philosophical debate did not end with Dharmakīrti and Akalaṅka but instead continued to flourish between their respective commentators. This thesis has touched on this subsequent debate by occasionally discussing interpretations and arguments advanced by Dharmakīrti's commentators such as Prajñākaragupta and Akalaṅka's commentators such as Vādirājasūri. However, these occasional discussions barely scratch the tip of the iceberg because the number and the complexity of the arguments advanced by these later commentators increases exponentially. Perhaps, most interestingly, it would be worth investigating whether Dharmakīrti's later commentators ever respond to the objections raised by Akalaṅka and his Jaina commentators. Based on my cursory reading of this extensive corpus, I am skeptical about the possibility of finding sustained Buddhist responses to Jaina objections. In his recent dissertation examining the works of the Śvetāmbara Jaina philosopher Haribhadra Sūri (c. 700-770 CE),[28] Mundra writes that "the asymmetrical relation between Jains and non-Jains continues to manifest in widespread quotational and archival practices in the centuries after Haribhadra- Jains always responding to other thinkers although usually ignored, and often preserving others' manuscripts better than they do themselves- and can surely be found in other practices beyond the textual as well".[29] I believe that this asymmetrical relationship similarly applies to the philosophical debate between Dharmakīrti, Akalaṅka, and their respective commentators, though I am happy to be proved wrong. However, if we do not find any serious Buddhist engagement with the sustained polemical critique advanced by Akalaṅka and his Jaina commentators, it might be worth reflecting on the possible social, political, and religious factors responsible for the marginalisation of Jaina philosophers. This, however, is a question suitable for historians rather than philosophers. For my part, I have tried to utilise my

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[27] See Shah (1967: 248-283) and Gorisse (2020).

[28] Mundra 2022: 22.

[29] Ibid., 268.

philosophical training to accurately reconstruct, charitably analyse, and ultimately bring to life this sophisticated philosophical debate between Dharmakīrti and Akalaṅka regarding the nature, object, and structure of perception. I hope that this thesis makes a modest contribution to the history of Indian philosophy and promotes the inclusion of Indian philosophy within the standard philosophy curriculum.

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Āptamīmāṃsā

ĀM See *Aṣṭaśatī*.

Kathākośa

KK *Prabhācandra's Ārādhanā-Kathā-Prabandha or Kathākośa*. Māṇikachandra D. Jaina Granthamālā no. 55, A. N. Upādhye (ed.). Vārāṇasī: Bhāratīya Jñānapīṭha, 1974.

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DPr *Paṇḍita Durveka Miśra's Dharmottarapradīpa [Being a sub-commentary on Dharmottara's Nyāyabinduṭīkā, a commentary on Dharmakīrti's Nyāyabindu]*. Bhoṭadeśīya-Saṃskṛta-Granthamālā vol. 2, 2nd edition, Dalsukh Bhai Malvania (ed.). Patna: Kashiprasad Jayaswal Research Institute, 1971.

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NKC$_2$ *Nyāyakumudacandra of Śrīmat Prabhācandrācārya: A Commentary on Bhaṭṭākalaṅkadeva's Laghīyastraya*. Vol. 2, 1st edition, Mahendrakumāra Śāstrī (ed.). Bombay: Māṇik Chandra Digambara Jaina Series, 1941.

Nyāyabindu

NBi See *Dharmottarapradīpa*.

Nyāyabinduṭīkā

NBT See *Dharmottarapradīpa*.

Nyāyaviniścaya

NV *Akalaṅkagranthatraya*: *Laghīyastraya with Auto-Commentary, Nyāyaviniścaya, and Pramāṇasaṅgraha*. Granthāṅka no. 12, Mahendrakumāra Śāstrī (ed.). Ahmedabad: Siṅghī Jaina Granthamālā, 1939.

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NVV *Nyāyaviniścayavivaraṇa of Śrī Vādirājasūri: The Sanskrit Commentary on Bhaṭṭākalaṅkadeva's Nyāyaviniścaya*. Jñānapīṭha Mūrtidevī Jaina Granthamālā, Saṃskṛta Grantha no. 3, vol. 1, Mahendrakumāra Jaina (ed.). Kashi: Bhāratīya Jñānapīṭha, 1949.

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PM *Hemacandra's Pramāṇamīmāṃsā: A Critique of Organ of Knowledge: A Work on Jaina Logic*. International Centre for Jaina Studies Publication no. 6, Nagin Shah and Sukhlal Sanghvi (eds.). Ahmedabad: Gujarat Vidyapith, 2002.

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PV_M *Dharmakīrti's Pramāṇavārttika: With a Commentary by Manorathanandin*. Rāhula Sāṅkṛtyāyana (ed.). Patna: Bihar and Orissa Research Society, 1937.

PV_P *Pramāṇavārttikabhāṣyam or Vārtikālaṅkāraḥ of Prajñākaragupta: Being a Commentary on Dharmakīrti's Pramāṇavārttikam*. Rāhula Sāṅkṛtyāyana (ed.). Patna: Kashi Prasad Jayaswal Research Institute, 1953.

Pramāṇavārttikavṛtti

PVV See PV_M.

Pramāṇavārttikasvopajñavṛtti

PVSV *Ācārya Dharmakīrti's Pramāṇavārttika: The Svārthānumānapariccheda with Auto-Commentary and Karṇakagomin's Commentary*. Rāhula Sāṅkṛtyāyana (ed.). Allahabad: Kitab Mahal, 1943.

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PVSVT See *Pramāṇavārttikasvopajñavṛtti*.

Pramāṇavārtikālaṅkāra

PVA See PV_P.

Pramāṇaviniścaya

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LT See *Nyāyaviniścaya*.

Laghīyastrayasvopajñavivṛti

LTSV See *Nyāyaviniścaya*.

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