HONEST TO 'GOD' AND GRAMMAR IN MEDIEVAL INDIA:

RECOVERING THE IMPORT OF A NEGLECTED BUDDHIST LECTURE

by

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(Under the Direction of Glenn Wallis)

ABSTRACT

This thesis is a translation and study of a medieval Buddhist manuscript that has been taken to provide, in the context of a lecture, an argument for the non-existence of God understood as a sentient agent. This study situates and reconstructs the argument by appealing to canonical Indian arguments for and against God and attempts to show that while the strategy employed is unique in the context of late philosophical Buddhism, it is anticipated by particular strategies employed by the Buddha in Buddhist canonical literature; the argument shows signs of synthesizing some independent arguments offered in early scholastic Buddhism into a single strategy in line with a canonical motivation. The thesis further claims that the strategy employed in this neglected manuscript has the virtue of not indulging strong metaphysical principles and enjoys a better fit with diagnostic strategies arguably central to the Early Buddhist movement. Significantly, the claim that the argument is designed to argue the non-existence of God must be refined to read that the argument attempts to show the semantic emptiness of either an affirmation or denial of a God identified as the sentient agent intentionally responsible for the creation of the world.

INDEX WORDS: The Buddha, God, Indian Theories of Inference, Philosophical Grammar, Creative Acts, Limit Effects, World Construction, The Critical and The Clinical, Negation, Exclusion, Tweedledum and Tweedledee.

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AB, The University of Georgia, 2002

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF ARTS

ATHENS, GEORGIA

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DEDICATION

— to the *vāsanas* of Bibhuti S. Yadav, …*yo'antadvaya vāsaḥ vidhūta vāsaḥ*…, for the gift of his all too short study of the Buddha's many silences.

This work was written with Dr. Trilokinath Malla in mind, in whose house I first learnt to walk, and then to read; the books, I believe, were his, as were the first annotations I can remember encountering.

May their memories remain a blessing —

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I recognize what little merit there is in this work to be the result of a manifold *citta*, or the many emotive and cognitive vectors that somehow have proved *compossible* as an influence in this essay. I also recognize, however, that there might be those who would rather I was not so generous. Some might disclaim credit on grounds of modesty, some perhaps truthfully, and others for lack of wishing to take on the charge of being guilty for what may very well be a flawed product. If there are any such cases, I can only apologize for any errors of attribution—all *such* errors are decidedly my own. What little poetry there may be is not my fault; Kapil Kachru tells me that he is probably to blame. I think it entirely possible that he is correct (I will not distinguish the personal from the academic; footnotes are entirely sufficient for that much). Glenn Wallis has been indispensable, not only for the chance to think through Buddhism for Buddhist reasons, or the opportunities to benefit from his advice and friendship, but also for the example of clarity he has set in his own work. If I have fallen short of his example it is for no lack of trying on his part. Although not directly at hand for this essay, I would like to acknowledge my teachers on matters *Dharmic*; without Shanta Ratnayaka, Dan Lusthaus, Lou Mitsunen Nordstrom, and S. N. Goenka, it is quite probable that this thesis would not have been written; without them, it is certain that it would not have had the flavor it does. Dan and Hiromi Lusthaus went out of their way to make me feel welcome; for that, I am deeply grateful. Dan Lusthaus through his own work provided an example of what still needed to be said about the work of Buddhism. My work is a simple and humble extension. I would also like to acknowledge that gentleman whose well preserved copy of Aśvaghoṣa's *Buddhacarita* lay carefully concealed in a chest in a room often opaque and always dusty. For the key to this flat, and candles with which to read by, I am grateful to Śrimati Kaul: *sabbadānaṃ dhammadānaṃ jināti*, indeed. I

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CHAPTER ONE: PREFACE

> If one traffics in talk about [means and referents of valid cognition in the absence of true criteria], one may as well trade in talk about colors in the soul, or about the peace-of-mind experienced by a pot, and so on.[1]
>
> — Jayarāśi, Eighth Century CE

Historian Romila Thappar once suggested that "a fundamental sanity in Indian Civilization has been due to an absence of Satan."[2] If we speak in the singular, either of *the* divine office named by that title or, when in a nominative mood, of *the* singular agent involved, then this seems to me an insightful, plausibly true and yet misleading thesis. The famed prosecutor of Hebraic literature [*hassāṭān*][3] may indeed have been absent, but it may be argued that his work—the cross examination of piety—was rather successfully prosecuted by *a number of* historical agents in India for much of its most celebrated periods of development. And in contrast to what is sometimes maintained about the Christian incarnation of 'the prosecutor,' *diabolos*, it does seem to be the case that an absence of sustained commitment to such an office has rendered the execution of the cross-examination of the many forms of Indian religiosity lamentably impotent. I am, of course, speaking of the long-standing tradition of philosophical interrogation, of the many years of conjectures and refutations in classical India; while unbelief in the existence of—or more pressingly, unbelief in the need for—active interrogation may be ascribed to *diabolos* as *his* victory, the same cannot be said for the arising of the

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[1] The fragment reads: "*atha … na ba …vyavahāraḥ kriyate, tadātmani rūpāstitvavyavahāro ghaṭādau ca sukhāstitvyavahāraḥ pravartayitavyaḥ.*" I follow Eli Franco's reconstruction and modify the translation offered in his *Perception, Knowledge and Disbelief*, (Motilal Banarsidass Press, Delhi, second print, 1994), p71.

[2] Romila Thappar, *Early India: From the Origins to AD 1300*, (Oxford University Press, 2000), xvii.

[3] Square brackets in the main body of the text are used to specify the Sanskrit that grounds the discussion in the text. When employed in the function of quotations, however, square brackets perform their customary duty to alert the reader as to the presence of interpolations or material extrinsic to the quoted material.

belief, with the demise of the philosophers and the disappearance in India of the sustained and *instituted* demand for piety to live up to the 'covert' inferences that supported it, that such prosecution was not necessary.[4] In such a tradition, while it lasted, even the Buddha's silence had become a *conclusion* of sorts to an argument, no longer either dogmatic abstinence or *only* therapeutic skill; it is significant that such care for what may be termed philosophical 'normalization' was taken with the teachings of a man of whom it is has *not been said*, to borrow a phrase from Candrakīrti, that he was ever 'infatuated with argumentation' [*tarka priyā*].[5]

In one of the chapters below I characterize this thesis as one oriented by an interest in an argument rather than a text. A more precise and responsible way of putting the matter, in hindsight, is to say outright that I am specifically interested in the use of what is usefully, for reasons that we will go into in this preface, called an *argument strategy*. Identifying *diabolos* with his office, one may in fact say that this thesis investigates one of the devil's many tunes, knowledge of which has in some circles been considered salutary. The particular argument that I will focus on in this thesis is only

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[4] For an astute study of the causes and consequences of the demise of a well defined philosophical arena in India, see Randall Collins, *The Sociology of Philosophies: A Global Theory of Intellectual Change*, (Belknap Press, Harvard University Press, 1998), pp270-271. A Study of the rise of these intellectual networks is discussed through p.177-262.

[5] Such is Candrakīrti's indictment of Bhāvaviveka in the opening prose section of the *Prasannapadā*, but there '*tarka*' does not mean 'argument' generally but the use of subjunctive conditionals to derive metaphysical conclusions in cases where the antecedent is, strictly speaking, unexampled in experience. The disqualification of such practice works nicely with the traditional title of the Buddha as the silent-sage (*muni*). In the canonical literature he is often shown not willing to indulge in such hypotheticals. For a striking *impression* of the Buddha's 'silence' see the 9th *sutta* of the *Dīgha Nikāya* [DN] where Poṭṭhapāda, reclining in the debating hall indulging in debates about "women and foreign towns and wars…and being and non-being," admonishes his colleagues as follows: "*Be quiet gentlemen, not a noise gentlemen! That renunciate Gotama is coming and he likes quiet and speaks in praise of quiet.*" See Maurice Walsh, translator, *Thus Have I Heard: The Long Discourses of the Buddha*, (Wisdom Publications, London, 1987), p.159 (translation modified). For the idea that argumentation is not *necessarily* antithetical to, or divergent from, the Buddha's practice, see *The Mahāsīhanāda Sutta* in the DN, especially paragraphs 4-5, *Ibid.*, p.151-2. The Discussion in the *The Brahmajāla Sutta* of the *Dīgha Nikāya* suggests that argumentation *is no more sufficient* taken on its own than meditative cultivation, asceticism, and a variety of practices usually taken to be privileged in Buddhism: the full list of practices that are insufficient without insight includes ascetic striving [*ātappa*], meditative application [*anuyoga*], zeal [*appamāda*], principled and appropriate phenomenological attending [*sammāmanasikāra*], cultivated meditative absorption [*samādhi*] and hypothetical thinking [*takki*]; *Ibid.*, paragraph 1.31, 73. One way of putting the matter would be to say *that none* of these practices or factors of practice are necessarily or independently inerrant. If one wishes to say that in Buddhism some kind of meditative practice is indeed privileged at the expense of argument, one must find *the reason* for this being the case. It is also worth noting that in certain contexts of *kavyā* literature, the word *priyā* comes close to the Greek 'philos'. In that case, *tarka-priyā* would be perhaps the closest we could get to the <u>word</u> *philosophy*; instead of wisdom (*sophia*), the appropriate affection is here directed at "arguments grounded in hypothetical antecedents."

one exemplification of the performance of such a tune and it is feasible to think of there being more cases that could benefit from the sort of examination conducted here.

Given a raucous, dialogical tradition as an intellectual horizon for the subject of my thesis and informed as to the nature of my subject matter, it might seem natural to some, depending on what a particular reader should happen to associate with the discipline that is philosophy, that I should want to characterize this thesis as one concerned with a philosophical subject. The existence of a well-defined critical tradition in India, however, actually complicates the degree to which such a characterization would be accurate: the devil's presence has always been too difficult a matter for easy assurances or lazy certitude. With our argument strategy, it is not at all clear that we are dealing with a recognizable form of the devil—it is important to remember the equivalence of person and office we effected above—and hence, it is not clear whether we are dealing with the selfsame fellow at all. Also, it is not clear to me, when speaking about a text within the Buddhist tradition (to take the example from Indian thought relevant to my thesis), that one always knows exactly what one is excluding or including with such an adjective as 'philosophical'. It is not even clear to me, with respect to the circumstances of the production of the text, the context in which it was felt necessary to write or compose it, and the concerns of the author, whether the semantic exclusions are warranted. By 'warranted' I simply wonder if our concerns would either be deemed intelligible or if intelligible, necessary by the writers and readers of texts such as the one I am concerned with in this thesis. At least, it is fair to ask whether scholars have consistently presented evidence to render habitual qualifications such as 'philosophical' *sufficiently* warranted or intelligible in all the senses mentioned above.

The problem here is not only that the text I am concerned with does not obviously fall within the philosophical tradition of conjectures and refutations [*siddhānta*],[6] the tradition I alluded to in the beginning of this work. It is true that the 'argument' that our text presents is not discussed or terribly influential in the works of the *siddhānta* tradition. It is also true that our author may be said to be one who remains unconcerned with the arguments from that tradition, or with the priorities of the *siddhānta* writers. But these are not the primary reasons on account of which it is difficult for me to call the subject of our text 'philosophical'; nor is it the case that I am troubled by so-called 'religious' elements in the work that might exclude its being philosophical. Be this as it may, I can at least say that any difficulty with knowing when to use the term 'philosophy' is admittedly more than a little embarrassing given my concern for the degree to which my thesis may be said to be 'relevant' to the text it discusses.

I like to think that, in a sense, the Buddha—one of the many important protagonists in our story—would have appreciated such discomfort. The Buddha, while not being adverse to argument *per se*, is often depicted in the Canonical literature as not always being as ready as his contemporaries to see, in any and every instance of 'intellectual curiosity' exemplified in dialogical encounters, something worth calling 'philosophical'. An anecdote illustrates this rather nicely. One fine day in the North East of the Gangetic Plain, two Brahmins[7] were walking down the road, and as is customary and appropriate given the time and their class, they began to argue. The *argument*, or philosophical dispute as they characterized it [*vivādo*], came down to the fact that one wished to maintain, generally, that 'some X ought to be considered the only appropriate and unfailing *way*

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[6] This is the name given to the tradition and genre of such writing. It is a delightful term, meaning literally "the end, or edge of validity." But this could mean one of two things—that a given referring expression has been deemed rationally corroborated by evidence or that it is now been shown to be defunct and enjoys no support whatsoever. The former is the more usual reading. On a light note, my brother frequently translates this word as "the buck stops here," indicating by this that we are in an arena where one is not entitled to simply 'use' referring expressions any longer while assuming their referents to have existential entailment.

[7] Their names are given as Vāseṭṭha and Bhāradvāja. The anecdote is taken from the 'frame story' in the *Tevijja Sutta*, *sutta* no. 13 in the Dīgha Nikāya. I have taken the Pali from the *Dīghanikāyo, Paṭhama Bhāgo*, Devanagari edition of the Pali text of the Chaṭṭha Sangāyana, (Vipassana Research Institute, Igitpuri, 1998), p.214-227.

[*magga*] to union and co-habitation with God [*Brahma*]' while the other wished to maintain that 'some other X ought to be considered the only appropriate and unfailing *way* to union and co-habitation with God'.[8] The 'debate' proves intractable and our interlocutors resolve to approach the Buddha with their difficulty. The Buddha, unfortunately, does not prove as quick on the uptake as the Brahmins. He appreciates that there are indeed two claims; he also notes that it is indeed the case that the two claims are embodied by two different persons who simultaneously wish to assert the truth of their own claims. And yet, he cannot see a 'philosophical dispute'.[9]

Though he did not make this explicit, it is easy enough to see, that on technical grounds at least, the Buddha was not without reason. A *philosophical difference* [*vivāda*], the pre-requisite for engaging in a philosophical encounter [*vigrāha*], requires, as per the criteria operative in the Buddha's India,[10] *at least* that the following condition be met: within the scope of a well-defined and attested referent there ought to be a simultaneous maintenance of two contradictory qualifications. So, we must be able to say that, *either* X, *or* ~X leads to some well-defined Y, and that both are maintained by two individuals;[11] we might then indeed be in a position to say that the interlocutors are spoiling for a philosophical fight. It seems to me that the Buddha would have wanted to see a further condition placed on the qualification 'philosophical difference.' The scope of the dispute, and the qualifications predicated of this scope, must be accredited as being not only well exampled and in

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[8] "*ayam eva ajumaggo ayamañjasāyano niyyāniko niyyāti takkarassa bramasahabyatāya…*" *ibid.*, p.214, §2. Note, that through the root '*gam*', the word I am translating as "way" [*magga*] enjoys connotations of epistemic claims to knowledge of the path and the goal, as well as indicating the desired practical correlate of achieving those goals.

[9] After repeating the claims of the Brahmins, the Buddha says: "*atha kismiṃ pana vo, Vāseṭṭha, viggaho, kismiṃ vivādo, kismiṃ nānāvādo?*" *ibid.*, p.215, §3.

[10] For a general discussion of such criteria, see Bimal Krishna Matilal, *Perception: An Essay on Classical Indian Theories of Knowledge*, (Oxford University Press, Oxford, New York, 1986), especially p.81-93.

[11] The following would also count as successfully meeting the pre-requisite, and is, indeed, more common. One can characterize the 'practical utility' of some method as a predicate, and so understand some X as being *qualified* by the property 'conducive or yielding 'communion with God' as a practical correlate', or, Y.' So here, we may see something like 'practical success' as standing to methods in the way that 'truth' does to propositions, or to cognitive judgments. (These, it should be noted, would have to be the commitments of the Brahmins; they need not belong to the Buddha). Then, either X is qualified by Y, or some ~Y. This is more readily conducive to yielding contrariness, and even a contradiction, if we allow that every X exclusively leads to either a Y or ~Y. The last may in fact have been a prerequisite condition for appropriate philosophizing as far as the Buddha was concerned. Such a discussion would take us too far astray, but the point in the main body of the text can, however, be made without it.

principle verifiable, but the interlocutors must also show that they have secured such verification of the terms in use for and by themselves, and make available a criteria for verification to others. This helps us understand the Buddha's apologetic search for the dispute in the conversation of the Brahmins.

Our Brahmin interlocutors are quick to realize that the Buddha may not simply be engaged in the time honored practice of being disagreeable on principle, and sharpen that in virtue of which they are disposed to worry. They *now* see and present only two options: for all *ways* X taught by different Brahmins, either X leads to co-habitation with God, or no X leads to such communal pleasantries. The Brahmins have charged their language with a collective anxiety that involves the whole Brahmin community, one that, once again, does seem to approximate, albeit more subtly, a philosophical difference. Given the exclusive disjunction, the appropriate 'philosophical concern' becomes: do all paths, as taught by different Brahmins, lead to union with a single state of being or to co-habitation with a God that is our God?[12]

The Brahmin is also kind enough to help the struggling Buddha along by pointing to a model to use when considering the situation. The Brahmin asks the Buddha to consider the case of several roads going to town; analogy in hand, the Brahmin then claims for himself the right to say that his question is <u>equivalent</u> to asking: "*do all such roads lead to town*";[13] his concern, on this picture, becoming: "are there some that will lead us to wander in vain?" It is this move that arrests the Buddha. Three times he asks the Brahmins whether they want to maintain that their concern with there being a royal road leading to God could be cashed out *via* an analogy to the way a road could

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[12] *kiñcāpi, bho Gotama, brāhmaṇā nānāmaggo paññapenti, … , atha kho sabbāni tāni niyyānikā niyyanti takkarassa brahmasahabyatāya.*" *Ibid.*, 215, §4

[13] "*seyyathāpi, bho gotama, gāmassa vā nigamassa vā avidhūre bahūni cepi nānāmaggāni bhavanti, atha kho sabbāni tāni gāmasamosaraṇāni bhavanti*; **evameva** *kho bho gotama, kiñcāpi brāhmaṇā nānāmaggo…* [my emphasis]," *Ibid.*, 215, §5.

be said to 'lead to' town.[14] There are two questions here: first, how could one think that one encounters *the same sort* of <u>concern</u> in a man wanting to know if a path leads to God, and in a man who wishes, like the Buddha, to go to town for brunch? Second, what could possibly motivate and ground the <u>extension</u> of the sense that 'leading to' carries? When confronted with such inappropriate reliance on extended and precarious analogies,[15] and the tacit claim to the effect that one requires and understands such extensions, what exactly is one facing? One *wants to say* that the mistake, if a *mistake*[16] is being made here, is neither philosophical nor grammatical. If it should turn out to be the case that there is some other kind of fact at work, however, how should one go about conversing about *that*? It might turn out to be the case that such a discourse is not only not philosophical, but that it is this form of analysis that may have proved far more interesting to the Buddha than a strictly construed philosophical subject.

It is difficult to say whether the Buddha was more amused than irritated, or if he was affected with a mild case of resentment at having been interrupted *en route* to his daily meal. The text tells us nothing—it does not say that he smiled, sighed, or that he put down his bowl, shifted from foot to foot; it does not even tell us if he looked his interlocutors in the eye, or that he stopped walking long enough to sit down and have a chat. Indian roads were quite busy during this period and it would have been hard to carry on a conversation walking along the road. It is at least clear, however, that there were limits to which the Buddha thought that he *had to take* philosophical

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[14] "*niyyantīti vāseṭṭha vadesi?*" Literally, "You wish *to claim* that "they *lead*," Vāseṭṭha?" The Buddha asks this question three times and the Brahmin affirms it each time. *Ibid.*, 216, §2

[15] The rest of the discourse makes clear that in the absence of a known and perspicuous referent like 'town', the only semantic unit capable of doing any epistemically respectable work in the question that represents the concern of the Brahmins is the expression 'leads to', which carries with it in the new context some of the sense it enjoys in a more well grounded context. Deprived of its semantic home, however, the expression is here drained of any precise denotation. So the question of the Brahmins has no epistemically established referent, nor a semantically obvious referent that could be thought plausible. To anticipate the discussion in chapter six, the question may be put as follows: in virtue of what, then, do the Brahmins understand their question, as they indeed *seem* to do? It is in this strategic questioning that the greatest degree of continuity between the argument strategy that the thesis is interested in and the Buddha's own practice may be registered.

[16] I intend 'mistake' here in the sense of an error made while self-consciously working out what a proposition entails logically, *using the rules* of logic.

posturing seriously. In this instance, the Buddha shows clear signs of not being entirely happy at having to punctuate the eminently 'rational activity' that is walking along a well-constructed road [*magga*] *for the sake of* lunch, with pseudo-philosophical worries articulated in terms of "the set of practical activities [*magga*] that could serve as a high-way [*magga*] to communing with God." But one senses in his extremely lucid response to the Brahmins that there are things worth taking the time for and postures worth cultivating; by way of example, one might consider the care the Buddha takes in the rest of the dialogue to excise pseudo-referents—referents such as God, the most beautiful woman in the world, the 'highest' color and the like—from dialogical instances where rationalizations of one's *world-view*, constituted in part by one's ideals of normative praxis and the characterization of the goals of such praxis, are presented in conversation. It would appear that as far as the Buddha was concerned, not only is it not polite to traffic in talk of pseudo-referents that cannot in principle be verified, but one must not lean on analogies to shore up such talk as being intuitive or well-grounded either; it is certainly not virtuous to seek to justify the employment of such pseudo-referents as necessary antecedents for a transformative, ethical praxis whose consequences are referred to only in equally precarious terms, but the ideality of which all sentient agents are expected to acknowledge. It seems that the Buddha was concerned that recourse to improper analogies may serve to repress the non-philosophical and often pathological motivations behind the *felt* necessity and appeal of such referents.[17] How exactly to characterize such an activity

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[17] We may put the point as follows, anticipating the discussion in chapter four. For the Buddha, what seemed of especial interest was the fact that we are often habitually *invested in the certainty* of some *x*, pre-theoretically understood *as* a P, being Q (where P names a category type, and Q a predicate), when we have no means of knowledge that could grant us exemplification of what P denotes, much less that there is an *x* that instances P, or that such an *x* is Q. In short, there is a lack of fit between our belief attitudes and our means of knowledge that provokes the Buddha's suspicion. We may say that he suspected that in absence of argument, or at least reflection on our situation and limitations as embodied epistemic agents, the feeling of 'certainty' is a peculiar psychological condition, one which retroactive 'argumentation and philosophical justification' may serve to repress. For what is at stake is the nature and reasons for our pre-argumentative commitment to such claims. **Technical Note**: My use of the schema '*x*, understood *as* a P, being Q' is intended to underscore the fact that the Buddha was interested in cognitions as a vehicle for knowledge of the world, and subsequently, could not consider an existence claim without a concomitant sortal or aspect-term involved at a fundamental level. No *x* is given *simpliciter* in cognition without being given as being-something. Or colorfully, as it has become customary to say, all seeing is seeing-as. But, a finer point is implicit in the Buddha's analysis, and that is that no

or pursuit—the excision of pseudo-referents and the search for the etiology of such pathology—is, however, not something broached by the redactors of the anecdote, or given to the Buddha to say in the anecdote itself. Nevertheless, if we do not know exactly what being philosophical could mean, or even whether the Buddha would have wished to ally himself with such a posture, we do know that he was keen on exposing *simulations* of philosophical dialogue. We also know that dialogue referring to 'God-like' referents as correlates to rational activity in the world often involves just such simulation. What we do not know is if the reasons for such excision or whether the means by which excisions are conducted, warrant the adjective 'philosophical'.

The text that is the focus of this thesis, approximately a thousand years later, appears concerned with *a claim* that asserts *that* God in the capacity of a sentient agent and creator of what is, exists [*asti īśvara kartā*]. More precisely, to use Bertrand Russell's words, the claim has the force of stating that any sentence constructed with "God the sentient agent" as the argument, *denotes*.[18] Take for example the sentence that might state that "God created a good world."[19] The sentence, or so the claim would entail, is not about a concept, but about a thing—God—who is actual [*asti*] and causally efficient in the world [*vṛtti*], just as colors may be said to be actual and 'play out their actuality' [*vṛtti*] in pots, in leaves and the like, and not solely *in* our bodies, or *in* our language.[20] The word I am translating as 'God' here is *īśvara,* a word deriving from the verbal root "*īś—*," meaning

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cognition is free of the operation of prior associative memory, or categorization, such that every 'atomic' assertion to the effect that *x* is Q, involves an understanding of *the sort of thing* that *x* is. This aspect, if we follow Candrakīrti's commentary, is laid out most perspicuously by Nāgārjuna in the preface to his mature work, the *Mūlamadhyamakārikā*, verses 1 and 2.

[18] See for example, Bertrand Russell, *The Principles of Mathematics*, (W.W.W Norton and Company, London, 2nd edition, 1st edition: 1903), p.53-65.

[19] For the purposes of the example, let us presume with the realists that we know already that terms like "world" and "good" denote.

[20] It is true that the analogy is provocative, and deliberatively so, in that the status of 'colors' is by no means obvious. But from the perspective of the traditions which would have wished to uphold that 'God' denotes, *it would have been obvious* that colors *just* are in the world.

"to rule";[21] the word enjoys roughly the same connotations and semantic range as the by now

familiar employment of "God" in the monotheistic traditions.[22] The text also might *appear* to provide

arguments against the existence of such a God. It is this subject—*the refutation of God*—that is at issue

when wondering whether the subject of the text is philosophical. A further fact, however, is that in

this thesis I wish to make what can only be thought to be a philosophical claim about the subject

and the deliberate manner in which the subject is handled by the text. The claim will translate as

qualifying our text in a philosophical way. The claim is that the author has treated the subject with a

minimum of presuppositions and commitments; the qualification of the text then becomes that it

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[21] *For the connoisseur:* the term usually translated as 'god' in the *Ṛg Veda* [RV] is *deva*, which has as its verbal root '*div*' meaning "to shine." Interestingly enough, the word "god" etymologically is closer in sense to "*deva*" owing to the Middle German root "*geuh*" meaning roughly "to pour or offer libations," indicating in part the sacrificial contexts for the use of this word. The derivation suggested is that from the pre-Teutonic *ghudho* or *ghuto* to old Teutonic noun *gudo*. 'Ghuto' represents the passive participle of the root *gheu*. Two Aryan roots of the required form are available—one meaning to 'invoke', the other 'to pour sacrifices to.' The noun then carries the sense of 'that which is invoked or sacrificed to." The derivation is discussed in J. H. Sobel, *Logic and Theism*, (Oxford University Press, 2004), p.9. Similarly, in the Vedic context, the word "*deva*" or "god" *had no referent* outside of the activities constitutive of the sacrifice. This sensibility on the part of Vedic composition is often obfuscated by ascribing polytheism or henotheism to this literature. Consider the following claim: "the wheel-less chariot [of the gods]…we fashioned in song and vision (RV 10.135.3)"; or the fact that when asked about the bodies of Agni and Indra, the response is "the metric schemata of poetry," [*Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa*, 5.2.4.1] and "a particular Vedic meter," [*Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, 3.15] respectively. The highest abode of the gods is, in the *Ṛg Veda*, 'the indestructible phoneme (*akṣara*) of the verse' (RV 1.164.39), and it is unambiguously stated as a doctrinal point that "it is the sacrifice, which in unfolding itself (while performed) continuously that becomes the gods" [*sá eṣá yajñás tāyámāna etā́ evá devátā bhávann eti*; from the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, 4.5.7.3]. For an illuminating discussion of this, see Charles Malamoud, "Bricks and Words: Observations on the Bodies of Gods in Vedic India," in *Cooking the World: Ritual and Thought in Ancient India*, (Oxford University Press, 1998), p.207-225. I have derived some of the above citations from this essay. Malamoud goes on to make the point that a historical tradition [*pūrva-mimāṃsa*] developed around the premise that any nominative denoting a god was a mere auxiliary of the sacrifice, having as its referent a 'means' in the sacrifice, attempting thereby to curb the 'idolatry' read into it. The consensus among scholars of the earliest strata of this literature ought to approach the point where we can then say that this tradition was not without textual support. It is the Vedāntin traditions, *relying on Upaniṣadic literature* that reifies the gods. Not incidentally, the word *īśvara* is used *with no reference to sacrifice*, and hence marks a clear departure from the "shining beings" constituted in the sacrificial arena. This is seen even in early Buddhist literature where *deva* and *issara* have very different senses; the Buddha is comfortable with the first, while the latter is dismissed without much discussion. It is beyond the scope of this essay, however, to discuss the contexts in which this concept could have originated. It is clear at least that by the time of certain *Upaniṣads* this term had come into its own; see the *Śvetāśvatara*, VI.18, and the *Īśa*, I.1.

[22] This, however, need not always be the case. Compare the use of *īśvara* in the name of the *bodhisattva* Avalokiteśvara; here the word seems to function as a term of respect for the exalted nature of a person rather than pointing to necessarily theistic properties. That having been said, even in this case one notes theistic overtones in the use of the word. *Bodhisattvas* after all increasingly came to enjoy theistic qualities save one, the property of being the unique creator of what is. For a general introduction to the status of *īśvara* as creator in Indian religion, see A. Kunst, "Man—The Creator," *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, 4, (1976): p.51-68. For a discussion of the intriguing proximity of "theistic" qualities in the self-understanding of an ostensibly non-theistic tradition, see Paul J. Griffiths, "Buddha and God: A Contrastive Study in Maximal Greatness," in Roy W. Perrett ed., *Philosophy of Religion*, (Garland Publishing, New York, 2000), p.132-61.

aspires to be philosophically virtuous in a way that other treatments of this subject are not. By 'philosophical virtue' I understand a conjunction of maximum strength of the claim made in the argument with the minimum of intractable presuppositions. I have a suspicion that a stronger claim is warranted, even though I can only provide indirect support for the plausibility of this claim in my thesis. The stronger claim amounts to saying that our author treated the subject matter in the way that he did *because* it is philosophically more virtuous.

The philosophical reader may wish to note that in this thesis I have contented myself with presenting *only* the work necessary to *reconstruct* the argument; I have had neither the time nor the space to engage the reconstructed argument in anything approaching a sustained, philosophical manner. While I do consider such criticism necessary, I also consider such work only helpful in any lasting sense if the original argument is already available and reconstructed in something like its strongest form. What that would entail is a recovery of what the argument itself may have been designed to achieve in terms of *its* philosophical *and* socio-historical situation. Keeping the unique target of the argument in mind as well as its motivations and intellectual tools would allow a critique not only to remain in a well-defined 'ball-park', but also to position itself to 'understand' the argument as a unique animal in the zoo that is intellectual history. I have used the following question as a methodological guide when presenting the reconstruction: in virtue of what could a historical reader have been 'convinced' by the argument? I like to think that the first step towards such appreciation has been made in this thesis. Also, situating the argument accurately has required attending to more than just the philosophical context of the text. Briefly, it has required asking the following question: what is at stake in maintaining or withdrawing assent to the belief that "God, or *the* sentient creator" is a denoting expression?

Beyond appearing philosophical, the text—I suggest the following tentative translation of the title:[23] *The Excision of God understood as a Sentient Creator that is indeed an Exorcism of Viṣṇu understood as the Unique Sentient Creator*—also presents itself as being a Buddhist text. By 'Buddhist' here we may simply understand that the text claims allegiance to a group styling themselves as *Bauddha*, or those who take as their model sentient agent, a *Buddha*, 'one who has awakened'.[24] I will introduce the text in chapter five. As matters stand, the text could belong to a time period anywhere from the fourth to the eighth century, with certain details of the manuscript inclining one to regard the latter date as definitive. I give reasons in chapter four for distinguishing between the argument contained in the text and the text itself, and suggest that as a whole the text may indeed date from the seventh or the eighth century, while the argument may date from some time close to Asaṅga who worked in the fourth century. I cannot rule out that certain components of the argument derive from sources as early as the second century. I do not think, however, that the argument taken as a whole, and especially if considered to answer to a single strategy, dates before the fourth. The features that lead me to believe this are assembled in the fifth chapter and distributed rather chaotically I fear through footnotes in seventh and eighth chapters.

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[23] The title is given as: *"īśvara kartṛtva nirākṛtiḥ viṣṇor ekakartṛtva nirākaraṇaṃ nāma"* This translation is exotic given the preferences of earlier translators. See chapter four for my reasons in favor of exoticism.

[24] In Buddhist thought generally, the difference between sentient agents is expressed generally in the qualitatively different sorts of intentions, speech, and behavior that result from overhauling the habitual ways in which beings interpret and understand experience. An important point is that a doctrine like 'perspectivism' is limited by the fact that not all interpretive acts are equal in that some acts foster *certain types* of orientations to the world, orientations that in turn are correlated *with certain qualitatively different kinds* of emotional and behavioral responses. This is the core-recognition of what one may term Buddhist Ethics. A lot more work would need to be done before one can present this recognition in the detail that it deserves. It is also worth noting that simply focusing on the qualitative effects of changing modes of cognition, when the effects are considered without further inquiry into the what lies at the root of man's hermeneutic projects in the world, would have been considered trivial, and not indicative of the core of the Buddha's interest, or the root of his 'ideality'. The first discourse of the Buddhist Canon, *the Net of Brahma*, is given over to an exposition of just this aspect of Buddhism by way of describing what the Buddha calls matters of 'mere morality' [*silla matta*]. Of course, given that analysis and reflection presuppose a certain disposition to the world, such matters of 'ethics' are decidedly not superfluous.

It might strike a reader as odd that I should only get to the subject of my thesis in the fifth chapter. It is not, therefore, out of line to devote a few paragraphs to help the reader navigate this essay; one may even read the following methodological comments as approximating an apology.

The reader concerned only with the argument the text presents or with matters of a textual nature regarding the manuscript may skip chapters one to four; skipping these chapters will not always effect an understanding of the argument itself, but it will hamper the degree to which one may claim to appreciate its uniqueness; also, not digesting the formal tools provided in chapters one and two might render some comments made in chapters five through eight opaque. The only chapter, however, that in its entirety presupposes knowledge of another is chapter three, relying as it does for its means of expression on the formalism developed in chapter one. Be that as it may, the materials directly relevant to textual exegesis are presented from chapter five onwards. The reader even more anxious to approach the text directly may skip the entire thesis and simply turn to chapter six in which I have included the argument in transliteration and translation. In footnotes to the translation, I have cross-referenced those terms deserving of further comment to my discussion of them in the body of the thesis. Even though the text I am interested in has been translated before on two separate occasions, I still think that being able to provide a new translation has been worth the time spent writing the entire thesis.[25] Of course, in the absence of the discussions in chapters seven and eight, I cannot defend the significance of the changes I have proposed in the translation, much less defend the claim that the argument comes out looking that much better, from a textual and philosophical point of view, for having made the changes.

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[25] See Stcherbatsky, "A Buddhist Philosopher on Monotheism" in *Papers of Th. Stcherbatsky*, translated by Harish C. Gupta, ed. Debiprasad Cattopadhyaya, (Soviet Indology Series, No.2), p.3-13. For a translation of this text based on Thomas' edition, see Georg Chemparathy's "Two Early Buddhist Refutations of the Existence of Īśvara as the Creator of the Universe," in *Beitreage zur Geistesgechichte Indiens: Festschrift feur Erich Frauwallner*, Hrsg. Von G. Oberhammer, p.85-100; the text is translated in p.97-99.

If chapters five through eight can function as a self-contained unit, one may indeed complain that the first three chapters are only an exercise in self-indulgence. This may still turn out to be the case, but I happen to consider these chapters an integral part of the work required to accurately situate our text in the history of Indian philosophical literature concerning God. In chapter three, I look back, as it were, to our argument from the perspective of Śāntarakṣita in the eighth century and his *summa* of the Buddhist philosophical responses to God, the *īśvara-parīkśa* in his *Tattvasaṃgraha.* The argument strategies that Śāntarakṣita has available to him cover arguments proposed by Vasubandhu in the fifth century, arguably the foundational figure in institutional, philosophical Buddhism, and include the technical work of the logician Dharmakīrti conducted in the seventh. This discussion, therefore, provides a touchstone against which to measure the degree to which the argument I wish to characterize as 'philosophical' would have been considered appropriately philosophical or even successful enough to adopt by the Buddhist philosophical community. As regards this rather well-individuated tradition, I defend the use of the word 'philosophical' in the introduction below and in the introduction to chapter two; the formal apparatus presupposed in the discussions of the philosophers is introduced gradually in the second chapter. To show my hand a little, it is the commitment to the formal apparatus of 'argumentation' and its fore-grounding in discussion that allows us to individuate a tradition as being philosophical. Rendering such a marker precise and stating what such commitment entails is the work of the introduction.

Chapter four involves a shift of perspective. Instead of taking the 'genre' of argument as my window into the text, I take seriously the understanding of the redactors that our text is a Buddhist one. When we speak of 'philosophy' in an unambiguous sense, we refer to a highly individuated set of concerns and techniques; it is important to realize that being Buddhist need neither be confined to accepting every single presupposition of the philosophical tradition and the self-understanding of

the activity that is philosophy in India that the Buddhist philosophers presuppose, or, for that matter, require that one necessarily be beholden to participating in any way with such a philosophical community. It is also the case, however, that not being 'philosophical' in India by no means entails that one has surrendered a concern for rationality in either the selection of one's goals or in methodology. But at its most critical, what could being Buddhist and not being philosophical mean? To this end, chapter four investigates the canonical literature of Indian Buddhism to uncover the strategies and rationales for dealing with God-talk that may have been obscured or forgotten in parts of Buddhist philosophical literature, while still being available to writers not as immersed in such a tradition. It may turn out to be the case, after all, that there are more rational options available to a Buddhist thinker by which to orient to God-talk than a narrowly construed and defined *philosophical* methodology might have allowed; such options need not be then any less rational for not conforming to the understanding of a particular tradition. More interestingly, we still do not have a precise set of criteria by which to assess the extent to which a philosophical methodology could be used to further *Buddhist* aims. Reconstructing the argument with the benefit of some knowledge of both scholastic and early Buddhism provides us with material to begin thinking through this question. I may as well say that I think this to be the most important question raised by this thesis. While the study of a neglected Buddhist lecture provides evidence that we may need to start taking this question more seriously then scholars have done so far, it does not even begin to answer it. Any time a tradition acquires new methodologies, however, such a question is bound to arise. Beyond being a serious concern for scholars, one may then extend the relevance of such a concern by citing the prospect of a less apologetic 'intellectual' manifestation of Buddhism than has been witnessed in the West.

When I discuss my 'difficulty' with the word 'philosophical' with regard to the text I am interested in, it should be realized that this difficulty is historically relative. When using the term in a

disciplined way while discussing the Indian traditions it may turn out to be the case that our text does not fulfill the criteria for being philosophical; I do, however, recognize that it might sound strange, within our current sociological context, that a text that often sounds not a little bit like the strategy of a late Wittgenstein should not immediately be called philosophical. If the self-understanding these authors posses regarding their own work and the activity required to produce it is of no consequence, then I have little defense for the time spent in the first three chapters. Still, chapter one attempts to sketch out just such an understanding that lies behind the 'philosophical traditions'; I think such work necessary because discussions of Indian 'arguments' often leave out the rationale for such practices as the Indian intellectuals engaged in. This makes it very difficult to see that one needs to ask the question: what could be Buddhist about Buddhist Philosophy, or philosophical about Buddhist praxis outside of the philosophical arena? This is a question that remains important to ask if one wishes to understand the nature and the *experienced necessity* involved in the highly singular but equally committed exclusions of 'God' as a valid referring expression that we find in historical Indian Buddhism. Why did historical Buddhists, *in different ways*, feel it necessary to deny that speaking of "God" is valid? Or, more colorfully, if Indian Buddhism is not a tradition cut out of whole cloth, where exactly do we see its edges, and what do such edges amount to? My claim is that it can be readily demonstrated that such 'edges' correspond to important differences in terms of practice; the thesis will have succeeded if it provides a way in which to see how such a demonstration may be effected. If the text that I am interested in is, as I maintain, unique in its approach to the question of the validity of God as a referring term, then we have made a gain in our understanding of Buddhism to the extent that we have recovered a hitherto, unrecognized 'thread' in what Buddhism has entailed *qua* praxis for historical Buddhists. In this way, a gain for intellectual history made by uncovering a philosophical strategy can be simultaneously a gain for the curator of the history of religions. The readers that stand to gain from a study such as this may be extended to

include historians of religion, intellectual historians, and a practitioner of a prospective Buddhism that may yet be feasible.

Even leaving the stronger claim I expressed interest in aside for now—the thesis that the author deals with the refutation of God in the manner that he did because it is philosophically more virtuous—it is clear that if the subject of the text is not philosophical, in either the Indian sense or in a broader intuitive sense of what it means to be philosophical, then my thesis is neither relevant to its subject nor warranted. This potential lack of fit between the concerns and methods of the author in question and my own work provide the grounds for my methodological embarrassment spoken of earlier. Distance from one's subject is one thing, and incommensurability another. Needless to say, I do not consider the latter a virtue.

One could of course ask why, aside from *my* philosophical predilections and interest in the text, it is significant whether or not the text is philosophical at all? Even though a direct answer will surely sound dogmatic, I do not think it untoward to hazard a guess; once we have a clear handle on what could be meant by 'philosophy' in India, I can justifiably resort to a blunt form of expression and say that the text deserves to be called philosophical just because it happens to be written in what counts as a philosophical style in India. The reason such a characterization is troubled, however, is that the text does not seem to play by *all* the rules we would expect a philosopher in India to abide by, or that a philosopher in India would see his own methodology as entailing. One may put the point as follows: the method in our text looks and handles as if it is a duck; one may then indeed justifiably insist that it be called a duck. My reservation is just that there may very well be a majority of philosophical authors in India who would not expect *this* duck to float for long in Indian, philosophical waters. I suppose that one may draw the following general lesson from this thesis: if the design for our particular duck could appear inscrutable to its philosophical cousins, then so much the worse, from the perspective of early Buddhism, for their 'brahmini' cousins.

CHAPTER TWO: INTRODUCTION

> Janaka, King of Videha, asked Yajñavalkya, "with what aim have you come: are you after cattle or subtle 'philosophic' conversations?" Yajñavalkya replied, "indeed both, your majesty."[26]
>
> — *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, Eighth Century BCE

If one has to describe my concern for clarity regarding the use of the word "philosophical," and my prioritization of this aspect of the problem with the adjective, then one may describe it as a wish to simultaneously respect three distinct sources of inspiration for this study. One group whose practice any use of the word 'philosophical' has to agree with is that of the academic curators of Indian philosophy, in whose studies, the disagreements of the philosophers are yet capable of drawing breath. Another group I have considered is the so-called 'analytic' tradition of philosophy whose conception of what is, and what is not philosophical, has increasingly come to dominate what is discussed and how in books on Indian Philosophy;[27] last but not least, it is at least fitting to consider *what in Sanskrit* the historical authors from whom we derive grist for our academic mills *could have thought* about the cultivated, hyperbolical affection [*philos*] for wisdom, or for the good, truth, arguments, propositions, as the relevant referent of affection may turn out to be depending on

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[26] From chapter 4, verse 1: "*taṃ hovāca yajñavalkya kimarthamacārīḥ paśūnicchannaṇvaritāniti. Ubhayameva samrāditi hovāc.*" Patrick Olivelle, *The Early Upanisads: Annotated Text and Translation*, (New York, Oxford University Press, 1998), p.102. I have substantively modified his translation.

[27] This is especially true of philosophers such as Bimal Krishna Matilal and a new generation of writers such as Jonardon Ganeri. In large part, the 'public' work of the former has consisted in showing that, to a highly significant and hitherto unacknowledged degree, philosophy as conceived and executed in Anglo-American academic departments existed in India for many centuries. Matilal's colleague, J. N. Mohanty, while being as well trained in analytic philosophy of language and logic, took as his concern an analysis of Indian theories regarding the foundational 'philosophical' role of consciousness in light of the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl. Their work has influenced academic scholarship on Indian Philosophy to a degree that is still difficult to assess. For the most succinct statements by these thinkers explaining their concerns and methods, see J. N. Mohanty, *Reason and Tradition in Indian Thought: An Essay on the Nature of Indian Philosophical Thinking*, (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1992), especially p.5-6; B. K. Matilal, "On the Concept of Philosophy in India," in *Mind, Language and World*, ed. Jonardon Ganeri, (Oxford University Press, 2002), p.358-370.

context. If the use of a term is not to be either misleading or frivolous it ought to be insightful in the sense of highlighting the conditions in historical India in virtue of which one can distinguish what is philosophical from what is not, while simultaneously attending to the dominant 'senses' this word has acquired through its long use and organizational role in Western culture. I would state such fidelity to our subject matter and the larger intellectual environment in which our subject is currently received to be a desideratum even if organizational terms such as philosophy, or religion were not primed and axiologically weighted, as they in fact are.

Presuming that there exists tacit agreement as to what philosophy is in the West, at least to the extent that we 'know' the individuals that *count* as philosophers by virtue of their work being included in academic syllabi, I will present my difficulty with use of the word 'philosophy' in India slowly. It is surely not contentious to state that occasional traffic with arguments does not a philosopher make. We can extend this point. It is also not the case that the presence of argument implies that, *necessarily*, we are dealing with a philosophical subject, that we are in the presence of a philosophical persona behind the text, or even that we are faced with a philosophical methodology. Otherwise we must call Vatsyāyana, the redactor of the *Kāma-Sūtra*, a *philosoph* and it is not obviously the case that he was aroused *by wisdom*, or that he conceived of sexuality—or more precisely, the cultivation and rescue of the erotic as an independent normative category from what may be deemed only functional in a biological or sociological sense—a philosophical rather than, say, an artistic or even an ethically mandated project.[28] And unlike those we would call philosophers in India, he certainly did not *believe in* some *eventual* practical correlate to theorizing, nor did he prophesy an increased likelihood of satisfaction in action undertaken in the future dependent on epistemological exactitude undertaken now. No talk of sublated 'pleasure' (be it pragmatic success in activity, peace of mind, satisfaction, bliss or what have the philosophers) to be enjoyed in the future, thank you

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[28] See the first chapter of the *Kamasutra*, newly translated by Wendy Doniger and Sudhir Kakar, *Kamasutra by Vatsyayana Mallanaga*, (Oxford University Press, New York, 2002), see especially p.11-16.

very much—or so he seems to have said. That is to say, Vatsyāyana is our exemplification of an Indian author capable of arguing and thinking rather clearly about goals of activity and the means to realize them, and not seeing in either any indication that he is thereby a philosopher, or engaging in philosophy.

Certainly, part of the trouble has to do with the presence or absence of a suitably disciplined interest in argumentation. But even if we possessed a precise model telling us what 'suitable discipline' amounts to in this instance, something more remains to be said. There is reason to suspect that, irrespective of *the manner* in which Vatsyāyana thought, or the subject matter he thought about, it may have been impossible in principle for him to conceive of himself engaged in 'philosophy' the way he might, for example, have conceived himself to be engaged in aesthetics, ethics, the science of jurisprudence, or the science of grammar, to name but a few concrete examples. The prospect of such impossibility has to do with the manner in which Indian intelligentsia had adopted the Brahmanical model of the 'aims of Person' [*puruśārtha*], which are perhaps better thought of as the 'spheres of praxis' [*artha*] that constitute the temporally extended body of *person-kind* [*puruśa*]. Generally speaking, this much had become 'obvious' to Indian intellectuals from the time of the Gupta period (approximately the third century of the common-era): the life that a human can lead, for the time that he lives, can be understood as extending by way of 'singular' modes in which one can act; such 'singular' spheres of activity are individuated by the types of goals of the activity, and the manner in which the conditions for the satisfaction of the goal are available within and to the lived-body of the human. More poetically, perhaps, one can say that each sphere of activity projects and involves a subtle extension of what may be called the body. Speaking generally, three such singular spheres of activity with their correlated referent-types were recognized.

There is the sphere of *kāma*, the aesthetic and the erotic, where the immediate sensate body (in its capacity to sense and to be sensed) is the locus of the means of activity and the locus of enjoyment of the 'fruit' of activity; there is the sphere of *artha*, the 'materially beneficial' which always includes at least an extension from the sensorial body to a wider notion of an 'appropriated'-body which subsumes our ideas of property, non-productive wealth, territory and the degree to which one can exercise political power to a general notion of capacity. The sphere of activity that is *artha* involves extending what one is likely to identify as 'the body' by increasing, through instruments and indirect control, the degree to which one can exercise effects in the world to change it in line with one's intentions; the materiality of the extension of the body with *artha* involves the incorporation of materials to provide external loci in the world in which one's agency can be sustained, through which one's intentions can be executed, and through which the effects of one's control and success may be registered by others.[29]

There is also the sphere of *dharma*, from the verbal root '*dhṛ*' meaning to sustain or hold up, the most 'refined' sphere of activity in the sense that it involves the most refined sense of 'body'. What I mean by 'refined' is easy enough to state, even if the manner in which I have phrased the matter might seem from the standpoint of Buddhists to be overtly charitable and philosophically irresponsible. The *dharmic* body is the most refined to the extent that it is the least empirically obvious of the types of body constitutive of Person-kind. *Dharma* is the sphere of the social body, the body knit together through the consistent upholding in action of the norms, duties, mores and rites of individuals prescribed *a priori* for all possible situations and interactions on the basis of one's ontological 'nature'. The body of *dharmic* man is such that 'it', if the subtle *dharmic* body belongs to a person who is, in essence, a Brahmin, can be 'polluted' by a shadow, or from *looking* into a funeral

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[29] One may, tongue not too firmly in cheek, consider this to be a case of acquiring a 'prosthetic body'.

pyre while *merely thinking* of reciting the Vedas.[30] The degree to which we can speak of 'body' here is determined by the degree to which we are comfortable speaking of and in terms of "touch" and "contact" when speaking of the effect a shadow may have on the ethical status of one's being. It is also connected to the degree to which one can see in the shadow of someone, enough 'stains' or literally 'colors' [*varṇa*] of that person's true ontological status. After all, a Brahmin need not jump at the sight of a *kṣatriya's* shadow, but only at a *śūdra's* touch, or, as the case may be, glance.

It would be wrong to think that Brahmin intellectuals were always comfortable with the refinement of the notion of body posited by *dharma* and which *dharma* required. It is in the simple fact that the conditions by which one could point to an individual's ethical 'essence' [*svabhāva*] and thereby look up the concomitant essential practices uniquely fitted for that essence [*svadharma*] are not empirical *in principle*, that some were motivated to speak of a time before the world. The point here is that if one does not find the causal conditions, through which one could know that something is essentially and *a priori* 'virtuous', *in* the world, one had better point to the causal conditions *constitutive of the world* by virtue of which, (a) the world is such that essentially, some things just are or are not virtuous and, (b) one could be in a position to know *both* (a) *and* the facts about what counts as virtuous and not virtuous. This is one motivation for going 'beyond' the world in theory (because one does so in practice), and also a motivation for introducing God-talk. What one needs is a Creator that can both shape the world in the relevant moral manner, and transmit the knowledge of such creation and of its moral fabric to interested parties in speech [*śabda*]. Such a God that is beyond the measure of epistemological justification [*apramā*] has not always come along

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[30] Charles Malamoud in an excellent (and what to my mind is still the most penetrating study of this 'system') suggests that there is an increasing objectivity and inter-subjectivity as we move from *kāma* to *dharma*. I concur in this observation but would add that the mechanism by which this is achieved is a simultaneous 'extension' of what it means to speak of a 'body' and the exteriority that 'bodies' now enjoy. See his "Semantics and Rhetoric in the Hindu Hierarchy of the 'Aims of Man'," in Charles Malamoud, trans. by David White, *Cooking The World: Ritual and Thought in Ancient India*, (Oxford University Press, 1996), 109-130. I have also benefited from Patrick Olivelle, *The Āśrama System: The History and Hermeneutics of a Religious Institution*, (New York, Oxford University Press, 1993).

for the ride with *dharma*, but is a function of an increasing awareness in the period after the rise of

Buddhism of just how 'refined' *dharmic* thinking had become in its commitment to essences.[31]

Despite what certain academic conventions and the predilections of the Brahmin class—

whose intellectual prominence and ideology in India today reflect complex socio-economic and

political facts of India under Islamic and Colonial British rule—may wish to maintain, for the time

period before the eleventh century, there is precious little ground to make any unqualified assertion

to the effect that any one sphere of activity was unquestionably more foundational than others.

Every one of these spheres of praxis could be found prioritized by some tradition along with

vigorous defense.[32] But from the time of the Gupta period, it became increasingly the case that while

different thinkers might organize the spheres differently, it occurred to very few—and this includes

Buddhist intellectuals in the monastic environment—*not to work* within the organization of praxis

suggested above.

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[31] To take but one example from dharma-śāstras, the *Manu-smṛti* begins with a request for a creation story and a validation of tradition. Some anxious Brahmins put a question to Manu: "tell us the *dharmas* of the four classes of people, tell us what ought to be done for you are the only one who knows what is to be done in this whole system made by the self-existent, self-being [*svayam-bhu*] that is beyond construal, beyond philosophical measure [*apramā*]. Verse 1.2; I have modified the translation offered in *The Laws of Manu*, trans. by Wendy Doniger and Brian K. Smith, (Penguin, 1991), p.3-6. By this time *pramā* pointed to a concern with epistemological reflection and inquiry as we will see below. The strategy of resorting to creation stories has antecedents in the practice of the *Brahmana*s, where questions posed concerning sacrificial ritual and use of implements were answered through etymology and short, 'local' creation stories. There are two differences that are important. In this literature, there is absolutely no sense in which these stories were meant to apply outside of the sacrificial arena. More importantly, no single 'story' can do duty for explaining something as total as "the world." It is not clear to me that such a question could have come up in the sacrificial arena owing to the very different sense of world operative there. A definite object or implement or act, requires a story; the world, however, is not such a type of thing, especially if not 'in' the sacrifice. Evidence for such reluctance on the part of some thinkers to bring in God in matters *dharmic* is directly available from the sixth and seventh centuries, where Kumārila Bhaṭṭa states that "it is not at all necessary for people who are conscious of their bodies, to have an idea of creation and dissolution beyond (their own bodies) with regard to the whole universe," and hence do not need to posit God. Quoted in Purusottama Bilimoria, "Hindu Doubts About God: Towards A Mīmāṃsā Deconstruction," in *Indian Philosophy of Religion: An Anthology*, ed. Roy Perret, Garland, 2000), 489. Bilimoria cites the following source, *Ślokavārttitika*; see Swami Dwarika Das Shastri ed., (Varanasi: Tara Publications, 1978), verse 112, p368. Kumārila Bhaṭṭa's work at the very least precludes any hasty sense in which we can say that to believe in and to justify the Hindu ethical system was *ipso facto* to have to posit or take recourse in a God.

[32] Kautiliya for example argues that *artha* is the 'root' of *dharma* and *kāma* (*Arthaśāstra* 1.7.7); In the *Mahābhārata*, *dharma* is said to be the means [*upāya*] of all three (*Mahābhārata*, 5.124.38); The poets, on the other hand, assure us that *kāma* is the logically prior as it is that which all three strive for. See Malamoud, (*op. cit*), 118-119. See also V. Raghavan, *The Number of Rasa-s*, Foreword by M. Hiriyanna, (The Adyar Research Center, 3rd edition, Adyar, 1975); and by the same author, *Bhoja's Śṛṅgāra Prakāśa*, (3rd edition, Madras, 1978), p464.

There was also, with time, a general agreement as to there being a fourth sphere: *mokṣa*, a category that had the effect of homogenizing any attempt to suggest that the system of the spheres of the praxis of Man was incomplete. The word *mokṣa*, through its verbal root "*muc*," speaks to the palpable sense of liberation that an arrow might be said to 'experience' when suddenly released after hours of being notched and drawn. This category in time became the single repository of *any* attempt, however otherwise foreign to the Brahmanical fold, to speak of 'liberation' beyond the realm of practices constitutive of society and engaged in by members of the social body.

Now within these four spheres, if we allow that we can 'fit' the fourth into the system of three, how could an Indian intellectual discern room for another singular sphere of activity? There are just not enough 'senses' in which one can speak of one's body to go around, an intellectual from this time might say, or just not enough kinds of 'fruit' to warrant positing a unique sort of activity. He might go on, "you have a sensate and appetitive body, a 'body' that enjoys and exercises its capacity or power and exults in its material extensions, a 'body' that is constituted by norms and rites, and, you also have the possibility by virtue of enjoying a further fact about embodiment—that is, an *ātman*, a core of interiority—to 'escape' embodiment altogether. Now, when you say that you are a 'philosopher' do you mean to say that you are an aesthete, a libertine, a court intellectual influencing the king, a priest, a judge, or perhaps a *yogi* or a *śramana* that *sometimes* argues? Now sir, he might say, I am an *aesthete* on the basis of the fact that I study the body of Man in the sphere of sensual appetite and enjoyment, and elucidate the conditions of the same. That gentleman over there calls himself a grammarian even though he does not posit a separate sphere of activity, but because there is employment of 'grammar' in the world; but you sir, when, and in the middle of doing what, do you wish to call yourself a philosopher? And if there is no sphere of activity called philosophy, what are you studying that we should recognize in you a philosopher?"

This is not a trivial question. Within the Brahmanical ideology, we must realize that whatever 'philosophy' might be, it cannot be an independent sphere of activity with its own qualitatively different type of 'fruits', with a concomitant body that could enjoy such fruits. But then, whatever else philosophy might be, if we wish this term to enjoy some degree of 'fit' with its use in the West, we cannot allow it to be 'reduced' to any one of the other spheres either. Developing on Kautilya's reflections, however, Vātsyāyana in his fourth century commentary on the *Nyāya-sūtras* does provide a place for what on the face of it, looks very much like philosophy.[33] Where Kautilya spoke of investigation [*ānvīkṣikī*] as being any form of practical deliberation whereby one selected appropriate means for ends in a rational manner, Vātsyāyana gives such 'investigation' a more narrow scope and also provides for an upper limit on the sorts of 'aims' that one can ultimately admit.[34] Vātsyāyana does not argue that there ought to be a result of philosophical practice that could not be expressed as a part of already established spheres of activity. That is, he does not try and individuate philosophy by way of individuating a unique *fruit* of philosophical activity. He does not even try and suggest that the causal mechanism between means and ends ought to be thematized differently when one speaks of a unique activity called philosophy. And yet, he suggests, there is a difference to be made between philosophy and other practices.

It is clear that Vātsyāyana seems to experience some anxiety over being classified as belonging to the liberationist camp. Why this is so is easy to explain. The difficulty is evidenced in his explicit disavowal that 'philosophical investigation' is akin to any 'knowledge of the soul'

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[33] See *Gautama's Nyāya-sūtras with Vātsyāyana's Commentary*, trans. by Mrinalkanti Gangopadhyaya, with an introduction by Desiprasad Chattopadhyaya, (Barun Maitra, Calcutta, *Indian Studies Past and Present*, 1982). See verse 1.1.1, and commentary on pages 1-5. For Kautilya's discussion of "ānvīkṣikī" see Kautilya, *Arthaśāstra*, (ed. R. P. Kangle, Bombay), chapter 1. The philosopher here should not be confused with his namesake, the author of the *Kama-Sutra*.

[34] This part of the story is lucidly treated by Jonardon Ganeri in his "The Motive and Method of Rational Inquiry" in Jonardon Ganeri, *Philosophy in Classical India*, (Routledge, 2001), 8-12. Here we are in the realm of 'philosophy' as practiced and preached by the likes of Matilal and Mohanty. The limit on what is called an "aim" is as follows: Generally, we can speak of an aim being rational if and only if the means to knowledge of that aim is validated, and if the method of such validation is argumentation (*anumāna*).

[*adhyātma-vidyā*] or part of a discourse concerning liberation [*mokṣa-śāstras*].[35] The difficulty is a natural result of the way in which the 'spheres of activity' are modeled with relation to the social world. If one does not wish to identify one's praxis as hedonistic, or materialistic—with no compunction as to which ends one wishes to aim for—and one is clearly not involved in reflections on norms and rites, then it is evident that one is not studying any phenomena or engaged in any praxis whose 'fruit' are evidently exampled as either in the social world or constitutive of such a world. Then, an interlocutor might suggest, one should be kind enough to admit that one is religious, escaping the sensuous, appetitive and social body by crawling into the soul, or extinguishing oneself in liberation.[36]

Vātsyāyana is not bullied by the options as they are presented to him. His strategy is foundational and exemplifies the generality that one has come to expect from 'philosophers'. Such generality already distances him from the particularistic tendencies of the model of the spheres of activity, wherein, depending on one's age, occupation, sex and caste, different spheres may be fore-grounded for different reasons. Vātsyāyana eludes the dilemma by focusing on what is at issue for him—activity in general—rather than concerning himself with the nature of a particular type of activity. The scheme of the aims of Man presupposes that there is such a thing as activity in general, if they are to speak of differing kinds of activity at all. But who studies 'intentional activity' in general? Vātsyāyana has the opening that he wants. His making available a unique space for philosophy proved to be highly influential, with virtually every thinker who participated in the philosophical dialogues that followed tacitly committing to Vātsyāyana's characterization and justification of this space.

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[35] *Nyāya-sūtras with Vātsyāyana's Commentary*, (op. cit), p2-3, verse 1.1
[36] I imagine such a criticism could be made by one belonging to the *lokāyata* (literally, within the sphere (*āya*) of the world (*loka*) tradition. In the *Kāma-Sūtra*, (*op. cit*) verse 15, an interlocutor from this tradition cites the deferral of 'fruit' and its non-exemplification in the social world as a sufficient condition for individuating a practice as being religious.

At the forefront, ostensibly, was the fact of intentional activity. For any activity of this kind, there was an aim in virtue of which such activity was undertaken. But *that* in virtue of which one decided to act had as its condition a body in which 'a goal of activity' could occur in the manner that it did—that is, as capable of 'provoking' an act. So along with the referent of the act, one must now speak of a 'cognitive body' in whose cognitive life the referent could occur *qua* a referent of activity. But *to whom* could it occur that there was a reason to act or to act at all? There was a third component, the agent or the cognizer. Vātsyāyana now had a 'body' to go along with his stated sphere—intentional activity *simpliciter*. Furthermore, the 'body' that he posited was considered foundational, lying at the ground or as the condition of any intentional activity whatsoever. But the body was as formal as it was foundational, consisting *in the ideal case* of three structural components—a *pramātṛ*, a *pramā*, and *prameya*; or a cognizing agent, a cognition, and the referents of cognition. The agent and the referents of cognition remained, however, only 'structural' conditions of the cognition, of the episode in the mental life of a subject in which the world was disclosed. Such episodes were now to be brought to the forefront of investigation.

I mentioned that this was the ideal case, a case in which the cognitive body becomes the philosophical body, or more appropriately, the philosopher's body. This 'idealization' results because we speak of a cognition being a *pramā* just in case the cognition in question has been produced *in such a way* that its correspondence to what is the case, in light of the categories it employs and the particulars it refers to, cannot be shown to be false either in subsequent experience or by further argument. Our cognitions correspond to a reality constituted by fundamental categories and their inter-relations accurately captured in every cognition, by the content expressed by the cognition and the way in which such content is structured.

It is in a *pramā*, a truth preserving cognition, that *prameya*, the categorically true referents in the world are disclosed to a *pramātṛ*, a cognitive agent who may now select what he or she wishes to

do based on what is the case. This is the ideal philosopher's body, where only cognitions produced in this way are used to 'see' the world from which different goals must be selected by a now truth respecting agent. It is within this 'horizon' that the philosopher studies the body, and it is the characterization of such a cognitive body upon which subsequent philosophers must conduct their investigations. For what is involved in the above sketch of the philosopher's body is a story about the *number and type* of the causal 'mechanisms' [*pramāṇas*] that provide all and only true cognitions [*pramā*], where "true" now means correspondence with the categorical nature of reality.

Speaking generally,[37] a *pramāṇa* is a specific cause of an irreducible type of true cognition [*pramā*]. The manner in which the latter are individuated is based on the different, 'singular' causal mechanisms by which they are generated. For a collection of causal factors to work and count as a *pramāṇa* requires that the collection be irreducible, and to have as their result a true cognition. The sorts of claims that are working in the background are the following:

(C1) Only some cognitions are true cognitions.

(C2) Some of these true cognitions are of a type irreducible to cognitions of another type.

(C3) Such uniquely typed cognitions are caused by a unique aggregate of causal conditions.[38]

The situation that the philosopher studies may then be described as one in which a cognitive subject has a cognition c, caused by some collection of causal factors, and the cognition expresses the fact *that* 'some *x* is R-*related*[39] to some *y*'. A true cognition is one wherein, because of the

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[37] The discussion in the following two paragraphs is indebted to J. N. Mohanty's extremely lucid discussion of this issue in his *Reason and Tradition*, (*op. cit*), p229-235.

[38] This is a summary that in outline is indebted to Mohanty's discussion of the background presuppositions of this tradition. My modifications are minimal, and made only for the sake of consistency with the focus and language of the preceding discussion.

[39] Generally speaking, the fact that cognitions express a relation between two 'reals' was not under dispute. The question was how to construe such relationality, and what number of fundamental relations one wanted to admit. This does however get a little murky when we consider including the Buddhist notion of veridical perception [*pratyākṣa*] being a case of the 'disclosure with awareness that is sensation'. Perhaps our terminology is being pushed to breaking point, but even here, it is clear that scholastic Buddhists wanted to maintain the notion of 'relation' albeit modifying it with a notion of "self-qualifying relation. [*svalakṣaṇas*]" Whether or not such a notion is even coherent, much less successful

collection of causal factors responsible for the cognition, the content of the cognition is accurate in saying that "x is *R*-related to y" just because *x* does in fact stand to *y* in a relation *R*. As my characterization of this story might suggest, specifying the truth condition of cognitions and causal descriptions concerning the *pramāṇas must already* employ a range of categories—traditional lists include sense-objects, sense-faculties, intentionality, the will or desire of the agent and the like. Consequently, there is then a story to be told about how one is in a position to use such fundamental categories or referents [*padārthas*] in one's characterization of this cognitive situation, and ultimately, there is a question to be asked concerning which cognitive tools and which categories one is to employ when one goes about analytically dissecting such a philosophical body, and not thereby presuppose that one's story has already been defended. That is, one has to report and describe the causal mechanisms that produce the different types of true cognitions without presupposing a categorical scheme that needs to be justified by recourse to just those 'causal mechanisms'.

But with this new 'body' as a background to discourse and as a *tool*—a domain of concerns that includes the categories that would be involved in true cognitions, the causal conditions of cognitions, the different mechanisms of truth preserving inferences as items *to be argued for*—the use of terms presupposing the validity of basic categories in all other discourses about the situation of Man in the world was for the first time *thematized* and placed on the table for cross-examination.[40] For while the skeleton (or formal structure) of such a body was widely accepted, there was little agreement beyond such a formal structure on any one of the specialized stories told by Vātsyāyana, except the conviction that such stories would increasingly have to involve the use of truth-preserving inferences if they were to find any purchase among interested interlocutors. And the

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remained a matter of debate within the broader Buddhist community. I recommend Dan Arnold, "Cāndrakīrti on Dignāga on svalakṣaṇas," in *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, vol. 26, Number 1, 2003.
[40] See B. Matilal, "Indian philosophy: is there a problem today?" in *Mind, Language and World*, (*op.cit*), 353.

stakes were high, for every instance of recognition, every instance of intentional activity, and every instance of practical deliberation involving the means to some ends, demanded that someone study the formal cognitive body lying at the root as the possibility of man's intelligible life in the world; what became pressing was the horizon of the philosophical body, the body that was the idealization of the cognitive body suggested by some as necessary in the multi-dimensional activities of Man. For increasingly thinkers adopted the Nyāya presupposition that all instances of acting on the basis of untrue cognitions were conducive to and constitutive of a 'sick form of life', a life lived in unrealistic expectations of the world and persistent disappointment cultivated through unsuccessful activity. Epistemology was correlated with soteric promise—one must achieve the philosophical body if one is to achieve the peace of mind that accompanies a 'healthy', or 'true' cognitive life.[41]

If it is true that we do not as yet have a clear sense of the *distinct* aims of a philosopher or a distinct category for philosophical activity, it is at least clear that the occasional use of argument does not make what we would like to call a philosopher, and that there needs to exist at least something approaching a well-defined domain of concerns and methods about which and through which a type of discourse sufficiently individuated to be called philosophical can take place. Given what we have said about the domain of the philosophical body, and the subjects thematized as being uniquely philosophical, we can also say that the form of discourse initiated was both invitational and disputational; increasingly, an expectancy and anticipation of opposition through argument came to

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[41] The influence this had on scholastic Buddhism cannot be overstated. In the sixth century, Dignāga for example, jettisoning the psychological subtlety of early Buddhism's criteria for perfection (namely the excision of the need to appropriate experience in terms of a self and what is desirable to a self) can speak of the perfection of the Buddha in terms of his being a bodying-forth of truth-preserving conditions for cognition [*pramāṇa-bhūta*]. The body of the Buddha is a body comprised only of valid means of corresponding with the world, and the experienced correlates of these means that belong to the world: a mix of ontological categorization and epistemological foundationalism that appears, at best, to be only parallel with the Buddha's analysis in the early discourses. See Dignāga's *Pramāṇasamuccaya*, verse 1; translated and annotated by Masaaki Hattori in his *Dignāga on Perception*, (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1968), see 23, and n1.3 on page 74. For the broader notion of health and other pragmatic concerns operative in the philosophical traditions, see J. N. Mohanty, "Practical Rationality in Indian Thought," in J. N. Mohanty, *Explorations of Philosophy: Volume One*, ed. by Bina Gupta, (Oxford University Press, 2001), 91-105. For an in-depth discussion and comparison of the philosophical notion of health in Nyaya and scholastic Buddhism I especially recommend Radhika and Hans G. Herzberger, "Two Truths or One?" in *Relativism, Suffering and Beyond: Essays in Memory of Bimal K. Matilal*, ed. by P. Bilimoria and J. N. Mohanty, (Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1997), 278-297.

be cultivated. Building on this point, there are some more conditions we can state in virtue of which any designation of the term 'philosophy' is appropriate.

What we would want to see in someone that traffics in arguments are certain other commitments that render the use of arguments salient. Let us consider these commitments at the very least to be an agreement about the sorts of things that one should argue about, or provide arguments for, and at least a tacit consent that these sorts of things are worth *arguing* for. Argument then enjoys a pride of place by being at least the necessary if not the sufficient condition in conducting the sort of activity one considers to be worthwhile. We also tacitly consent to the disposition that the sorts of things one wants to spend time with *via* argument, that indeed, one *should* argue about, *can be argued about.*

Now such a community can be found in India, particularly active from around the fifth century of the common-era to about the eighth century.[42] And of course, we already know one name given to the tradition in which they all agreed to belong to, thereby all along agreeing to disagree with one another. Belonging to the *siddhānta* tradition seemed to demand of a person that they had better possess a list of the sorts of things that there are, and specifically, it became obligatory to say how one could come to be in a position to state that what there is to be 'seen', relative to a particular theory, is truly what there is. This seems to have been especially necessary given the fact that the foundation of discourse rested on descriptive stories one told about the casual conditions of true cognitions which involved the use of only select categories. The sociological fact that attends the above comment is that intellectuals usually entered a discussion having already identified themselves with a tradition in which a list of fundamental categories had already been drawn up.

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[42] For an intuitive sense of how involved such a community must have been, it is worth considering that we know of at least *forty major* intellectuals from different traditions active in the production of texts and commentaries in the medieval monastic environment of India during this time period. For a partial list, see appendix 3 to Randall Collins' *The Sociology of Philosophies*, (*op.cit.*), p905-10.

Of course, if the stories told in defense of the epistemic privileging of select categories did not find much purchase with philosophers, than one's ontological claims remained at best promissory notes. In fact, the only acceptable medium to all parties concerned in which the various stories for one's ontology and epistemology could be given a fair hearing was the truth-following means of knowledge [*pramāṇa*] dubbed, literally, that which followed (on perception) [*anumāna*], and which was nothing other than the sound use of valid inference built on acceptable and epistemically modest commitments.[43] In such a situation, if no one spent the time getting right (or acceptable, which are not always the same thing) what exactly constitutes a successful argument, 'debate' could never have begun to get off the ground. It takes two wings to get off the ground, and if the opponent, or literally, the other-wing [*pūrva-pakṣa*] cannot agree on a single acceptable form of conversation, it is not clear what sense there could be in speaking about an 'opponent'. The notion of argument was, however, thematized, to varying degrees of success for differing lengths of time, and when all the relevant primitive commitments were extracted from all concerned, however tacitly, the *siddhānta* was born.

The stance assumed in this genre of literature is dialogical and confrontational. I must assume that, for any *P* I would like to assert about a subject *X*, there is an individual who must be convinced of the good sense and epistemic warrant for learning to see *P* about *X*, or *X as P*, and therefore assume, that there *might be* good reason for seeing *X as ~P*.[44] Within the scope of the argument, we assume that it is necessary to see *X* as either *P* or *~P*, and that the two alternatives mutually exhaust the possibilities. Within this well rehearsed posture, Indian philosophy covered an

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[43] For a very clear statement of the issues involved, sociological and philosophical, when speaking of logic in India, see Jonardon Ganeri, "Indian Logic and the Colonization of Reason," introductory essay in Jonardon Ganeri, ed., *Indian Logic: A Reader*, (Curzon Press, Richmond Surrey, 2001), 1-26.

[44] Hereafter, the symbol '~' will represent a negation of the referent in question. For example, ~P may be read as stating "*that* it is *not* the case that P". Unless otherwise specified, the negation should be seen as respecting the law of double negation, (~~P = P) and that a negation does carry with it assertive force to the effect that X is ~P suggests that X is some Q that excludes P. There are other models of exclusion that do not line up with this model of negation in use in Indian philosophical literature.

astonishing number of subjects with increasing technical sophistication, much of the sophistication

centering on determining precisely what exactly could count as 'good reasons', when and why.

Here then is a rough and ready litmus test to determine when one is in the presence of

'philosophical' literature in India. Assuming an identification with a certain received interpretation of

the aims of Man, possessing a rubric that includes what there is by virtue of belonging to a tradition,

and presupposing a communal audience which expects to be convinced by way of argument for the

facts under dispute, *then*—given an *argument for* stating something of the form '*X* is *P*', if one feels

that one *has* to say something categorical in an argument form to state *why the conclusion is not*

acceptable, then one is a card carrying member of the philosophical guild. That is, the style is

ampliative in an epistemic sense. Building on common grounds and commitments, it is not possible

according to the rules of this tradition to excise a claim to knowledge without thereby adding a claim

in return. This is a consequence of what a well-behaved 'argument' here means, and of the logical

structure of the arguments used to enforce agreement amongst interlocutors. The logical structure

has the consequence of seeing even in a denial of the need to assert either *P* or *~P* of some *X*, a

claim of the following type: because *X* is *M*, it could not be the case that either *P* or *~P* are relevant.

But the relevance and corroborative power of *M* in relation to *X* must then be brought to the table,

and we have effected a *closure* or *cycle* of sorts. The 'closure' is that one must have a *pratijñā*, a thesis

involving a claim that presumes correspondence with the *categorical* nature of reality, and has

existential import.[45] What being 'philosophical' here amounts to on this picture are the following

claims. In virtue of having a cognitive body as discussed above, one is already tacitly making a claim

to a philosopher's body. That is, by virtue of having referring cognitions with referential content,

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[45] There are two senses in which one may understand 'correspondence' here. One may understand correspondence as entailing congruence, or merely correlation; in the latter, there is merely some fact of the matter determining when the content of a proposition of cognition is true. For the former, an added condition is that the truth bearer must possess a structure that enjoys an isomorphism with the fact of the matter providing the condition of truth. Differences are to be found in the Indian tradition as to which type of correspondence is enjoyed by different 'means to knowledge', but for all the logicians, at least one means to knowledge must enjoy congruence with reality.

one is already implicitly posturing as if it is not only the case that one is cognizing 'X is Y', but *'that* X *is* Y'. This, on the skeleton of the body drawn up by the philosophers, is the primitive philosophical "given."

It is worth noting that we only treat of those 'things' that are *publicly* available in cognitions which by virtue of their structure and content, could be had, in an inter-subjective sense, by all concerned. The cognitive content and implicit existential presumption expressed by cognitions is one such thing. On this view, there is no 'hidden' body interfering with the causal story between world and cognizing agent resulting in the world disclosed in cognition. The philosophical body is, by virtue of being inter-subjective, *transparent*. The tacit existential presumption our cognitions carry was thought to be a significant, philosophical starting point, and not a psychological condition peculiar to humans and which needed to be analyzed as pre-rational and perhaps even biological. As psychologically naïve as this might have sounded to early Buddhism, the philosophers did not really question this root assumption. Thus one finds tacit agreement to the fact that what one needed to speak about could be transparently referred to, without bringing in categories such as embodied intentionality, the unconscious body, cognitive salience, conditioning or 'a priori' appetite for a self. Notions such as these would have threatened the catholicity of the formal structure of cognitions and diverted attention from argument to introspection and meditation on one's own embodied situation; as a direct result, the content stated by cognitions as being a fact of the world remained as deep as the surface of the embodied subject ever needed to be scratched.

The reason for the lack of patience for those who do not carry such 'theses' and arguments for their truth has also to do, as I have said, with the logical format of a valid and sound[46] argument.

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[46] These terms would be largely redundant in India. Only a sound argument was considered well-formed on account of a step requiring the use of inductive warrant or confirmation. Indian philosophers till the advent of what is called *Navya-Nyāya* in the late thirteenth century did not develop an interest for 'formal' logic as that is understood in the West, and hence investigations into formal validity did not occupy much of their time. With my drawing up of a schema one may indeed see in every employment of an inference an element of retroactive understanding of what it might mean to be

If I wanted to argue for some *Q* belonging to *X*, or the fact that one should consider *X* as *Q*, (where *Q* could be either *P* or ~*P*), the argument would have to look (in a logical sense) something like this:

1. L (*M*, *X*)

2. *When* L (*M*, *X*), *then* L (*Q*, *X*)

3. L (*Q*, *X*)

One may read the formalism (in line one for example) to say "*M* is 'located in' *X*." What one wants to state is that '*Q* is located in *X*' as well; the argument supplies the punch that says that given *M*, one has to commit to *Q*. Therefore, if it is rational to believe that '*X* is *M*' ('is' in the sense of 'having located in it'), then it is irrational, on the basis of one's commitments to step (2) on prior grounds, not to believe that '*X* is *Q*'. What the significance of using the formal device ' *L* (__ , __)' may be is discussed below.[47] *For now* one may see in the relation 'being located in' a primitive relation having some affinity with the imprecise, intuitive and yet 'primitive' sense of '*belonging*' employed, for example, even in the predicative relation P*x*, or some *x* 'belongs' to a class named P; at the very least, with practice, it need not be any more or less mysterious.[48] If reading 'L (*Q*, *X*)' as 'Q is located in X' causes qualms, one may borrow a leaf from analytic philosophical methodology and adopt the

valid, as per a sound inference having to be a substitution instance of a schema; but the schema is one that I am making explicit, and hence the point that Indian thinkers did not explicitly concern themselves on this point remains.

[47] My 'formalization' of this relation is indebted to comments made by J. F. Staal in what is perhaps still one of the best introductions to the Indian inference schema. He calls the 'location' relation an 'occurrence relation', perhaps having in mind the technical term *vṛtti*, which is used to express the idea that something is causally operative and may be said to occur, only when in a prior causal horizon. The term would be used to speak of "blue" occurring in a pot, for example, to suggest that 'blue' is *present*, in the causal sense that it can cause 'blue' to be seen as present only within a definite spatio-temporal region. Logicians have used it to speak of something 'occurring' in something else as a primitive relation. See J. F. Staal, "The Concept of Pakṣa in Indian Logic," reprinted in *Logic and Philosophy of Language*, ed. by Roy W. Perrett, (Garland Publishing, New York, 2001), 156-166. Developing on the work of Staal, wherein it became clear that whatever else had to be said about M being L-Related to X, *M was not to be thought of as the name of a class or a predicate*, I also had in mind remarks made by B. K. Matilal on two separate occasions. See his "Introducing Indian Logic (1998)" in Jonardon Ganeri, ed., *Indian Logic* (*op. cit*), 183-216 and Matilal, *The Character of Logic in India*, ed., Jonardon Ganeri and Heeraman Tiwari, (State University of New York Press, Albany, 1998), 88-126.

[48] For a rather persuasive defense of the case that our understanding or 'intuition' of the relation that is 'belonging' and 'possession' is primitive in the sense that it cannot be reductively defined in terms of other relations in a non-circular manner, see chapter one of Stanley Rosen, *The Limits of Analysis*, (Yale University Press, New Haven, 1980). Rosen wishes to extend this point to say that we cannot have a formal definition (or concept) of concept, involving as it does this "root relation" that is "belonging."

following ruse to read the formalism as stating, *Q is L-related to X*, which may dispel the immediate

discomfort of what "being located in" might mean. If I thought a copula was more tractable in the

absence of theoretical models that themselves would have to be accounted for, I would have said

that being 'L-related to' is not terribly misunderstood by incorporating the use of a copula. The use

of a copula requires two steps. In the first step, we realize that the relation that being L-related

exemplifies has as its converse, a T relation, such that if *Q is L-related to X*, then *X is T-related to Q*.

The second step would be to assert that a T-relation functions 'very much' like a copula, so we could

effectively translate any L-relation into a more normal looking copula structure.[49] I am fine with this

move as long as we see in it a translation, and not a substitution. I will resume this discussion by

specifying what is important for our purposes about the L-relation a few paragraphs below.

Before returning to the point about the ampliative epistemic proclivity of this tradition, I

would like to make a few points about my characterization of the argument scheme here. The

argument scheme I have depicted from (1) to (3) is *not* the form of the argument as it is presented in

the debate literature, where the argument is presented with an eye to the practice and norms of

debates—that is, where the argument is presented with an eye to convincing an opponent. The

scheme I have sketched out above is what one might call the 'deductive core' of the argument. At

the very least, it renders the logical reasons for why the deduction goes through more perspicuous

and allows a reader not familiar with the relevant literature to catch sight of its 'logic' at a glance.[50]

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[49] In a study of the Navya Nyāya (13th to 16th centuries), Sibajiban Bhattacharya makes this point albeit on his own (that is, in Navya Nyāya terms). He gives reasons for thinking that even though there is no explicit use of a copula in the language, the use made of the verbs 'possess' and 'have' functions, through a rule of interpretation, just in the way a copula might do in syllogisms. See his "Some Aspects of the Navya-Nyāya Theory of Inference," in Ganeri, ed., *Indian Logic*, (*op. cit*), 162-182, esp. 165-170.

[50] My sense is that such practice is not common. For an anticipation of such a presentation of an inference-schema, and a source of inspiration for the presentation here, see Sibajiban Bhattacharya, "Middle Term," *Notre Dame Journal of Formal Logic*, 9, (1968), 229-32. Sibajiban makes the point that one can, through careful steps, show how the inference (using a stock example from Indian literature), "The mountain possesses fire, for it possesses smoke, and whatever is the locus of smoke is also the locus of fire," may be seen as a substitution instance for the schema, "whatever possess that with which another thing is invariably co-present, possess that other thing." This corresponds precisely to what I have called the deductive core of the Indian inference schema. I have recently learnt that Sibajiban's paper preceded the paper

What I take to be the deductive core corresponds to an independent technical term in the literature. It is generally considered good form to express the conclusion by stating that one has provided warrant for seeing the X, *such that* Q is located in X. Now the term for the 'means to effect' such a conclusion is *sādhana*, which on our formalism, amounts to the following:

L (M, X) & (*if* L (M, X) *then* L (Q, X))[51]

Certain modifications have to be made to this scheme if it is to function as a successful argument in a debate setting; these changes are not changes in the format that I alluded to above, but a further condition that must be met for the 'inference' to go through in a non-trivial way. What I mean by "non-trivial" is simply that it is not the validity of the scheme that is in question, but the soundness. To ensure that the deductive core of the argument scheme has existential import, and that this import is rendered explicit, a further *logical* step is required.

It should be noted that the argument scheme I am discussing [the *anumāna*], while by no means the only inferential procedure studied in India, became increasingly the work-horse of the debate literature in its public and inter-sectarian guise. This has to do with the fact that such a deductive core, in addition to the extra logical step I will discuss below, was considered the only non-question begging method by which to make a philosophical gain. What is meant by a philosophical gain is simple—the inference was the only way by which to proceed from non

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published by Staal; in this case, irrespective of the chronology of my appreciation of Indian Logic, the credit for advancing our understanding ought to be redirected.

[51] I should say that with this characterization of the deductive core [*sādhana*], I have drawn a line between the pre-Dignāga practice and thinking of the art of debate and the new concern with *hetu-vidya*, the independent study of the reasons conducive to 'inference warranting relations' initiated in a clear and perspicuous manner for the first time by Dignāga. For a discussion of the degrees to which we may say that the ideas used by Dignāga were circulating in the previous generation, that is, with Asanga and Vasubandhu, see Guiseppe Tucci, "Buddhist Logic Before Dignaga: Asanga, Vasubandhu and Tarka-Sastras [sic]," in *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, 1929, 451-488. I should point out a potentially contentious fact about my characterization of the deductive core. I wish to remove grounds for suspicion by pointing out that while there is some debate about whether or not the thesis should be *mentioned* in a full-dress presentation of the inference when engaged in a formal debate, I think there is no doubt about the fact that the 'thesis statement' itself does not play a role in the 'deductive core'. That is, the thesis cannot do any logical work in the inference. Still the issue presents some vexation; see the excellent discussion in Tom Tillemans, "Pre-Dharmakirti Commentators on the Definition of a Thesis," in Tom Tillemans, *Scripture, Logic, Language: Essays on Dharmakirti and his Tibetan Successors*, (Wisdom Publications, Boston, 1999), 53-69.

contentious epistemic claims to a more serious commitment, while convincing the other of both the warrant for holding the further commitment, and specifying that such commitment was to be had on the basis of a prior acceptable commitment.

Before discussing the extra logical step that could carry this through while preserving existential import, I would like to introduce some of the technical terms from the literature. I characterized the deductive core in the following way:

1   L (M, X)

2   *When* L (M, X), *then* L (Q, X)

3   L (Q, X)

What we have done, according to the logicians, is shown a deductive relation between the Qualifiers (*dharmas*) M and Q, and the qualified locus (*dharmin*) X. The relation between M and Q is that of *hetu* and *sādhya*, or between logical ground or reason, and the target to-be-established, respectively. If we write 'H' for the *hetu*, and 'S' for the *sādhya*, the relationship that must be established is: 'if H then S'. The scope of the relation is delimited by the locus, X, which is called the *pakṣa* of the inference. If we use 'P' to name this latter term, then we can write the inference scheme in better fit with the Sanskrit theorists as follows:

4   L (H, P)

5   *When* L (H, P), *then* L (S, P)

6   L (S, P)

The 'logical step' that is missing is the following: "(*) L (H, Y) & L (S, Y)"; or equivalently: "L (H, S ; Y)." This step is called the *dṛṣṭānta*, or exemplification for the relation stated in (5) and used in the deduction of 'S' in (6). The logical role of (*) will be discussed below. What *Y* is easy to state: it is any particular locus already established as epistemically acceptable and that importantly provides a concrete scope in which the relation that one needs to use in step (5) is evidenced and

rendered *prima facie* justifiable.[52] The standard inference presented in Indian literature as discussed in academic writing looks like the following process: smoke qualifies a hill; any and all instances of smoke are instances of fire; (as can be seen in any kitchen); there is fire on that hill.

To understand the work that this inference performs in Indian debate literature, one must focus on some of the background assumptions incorporated in the very terminology and structure of the premises. The first thing to note is that our 'logical' terms are taken from the representative contents *of cognitions*.[53] Their being represented in linguistic form is secondary to the role of the inference in providing inescapable reasons[54] for learning to re-cognize a familiar locus as now qualified differently. It is, in some ways, a request to change one's aspect-seeing of a particular *subject* of cognition. The first thing to be said, therefore, is that the locus of the inference, the subject-term that provides the scope of the inference as a whole, P, must be non-controversial. That is, it should be clear that people have cognitions *of* P, (hereafter 'P'), and that we are comfortable with the export of reference from 'P' to P. Again, this is to say that there is no worry about knowing what P is, and therefore no reason to suspect that we do not know what we mean by stating that we have a cognition *of* P. We can then list the conditions which a sound inference must satisfy, at least, if it is to remain true to its posture of epistemic and ontological neutrality:

(a) Not only do we know P, and know that 'P' refers to P, but P must furthermore be *pra-siddha*. That is, on the ideal case, we should not require a theory-laden description to account for our knowledge *of* P, or our knowledge *that* P.

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[52] It is important to note that this step *is not a premise in the deduction itself*, but a precondition for the soundness of the argument, or alternatively, a precondition for presuming that the argument has existential import. To provide conditions when such 'exemplification' in (*) is relevant to *P*, the scope of the inference and justified, was the genius of Dignāga. The best discussion of this is still Richard Hayes, *Dignaga on the Interpretation of Signs*, (Kluwer Academic Press, Dordrecht, 1988), see especially 111-158.

[53] *jijñāni*; J. N. Mohanty's discussion of Indian Logic is the requisite antidote to an over-emphasis on propositions when dealing with the Indian logicians, especially in the thinkers influenced by Matilal. See Mohanty's "The Nature of Indian Logic," in his *Reason and Tradition*, (*op. cit*), 106-115.

[54] A more precise way of putting the matter would be to say that the inference represents those steps in a causal series of true cognitions, in a 'form' that preserves the truth of the claims expressed by the cognitions; the existence of the series represented by the inference provides reasons for thinking the conclusion true.

(b) Not only do we know P, but we are capable of having a cognition that presents along with P, the qualifier M, such that one can say *that* L (M, P). I described the relation between *M* and *P* earlier as being that of the relation between a qualifier [*dharma*] and a qualified [*dharmin*] respectively. It is time to finesse this relation. At its most epistemologically neutral and yet ontological, the relation described above places us in the business of speaking directly of the things themselves. A qualifier is that which we wish to speak of as being causally effective[55] in the world *within a definite and delimited spatio-temporal extent.* That is to say, one wishes to say that there are conditions of the presence and absence of the causal efficiency of that thing in the world. The qualified is the locus in the sense that it is that which provides criteria by which to speak of a thing being either 'present' or 'absent', and the region in which such causal activity of a qualifier may be said to be evident. Consider the case of seeing a blue pot. Such a relation concerns things—the causally effective 'spread' that causes the percept 'blue' to occur as being delimited to the locus denoted by 'pot'.[56] But what is important is that the cognition never deals with an isolated M or P, but with a fact that either *L* (M, P), or *T* (P, M). There are no 'unhinged' referents to cognitions.

(C) Seeing that *L* (M, P) is not, however, sufficient. The entire crux of the argument is that one must be able to see M as being a logical 'sign' [*liṅga*] that indicates or refers to a further fact *about* P. I use the phrase 'further fact' because it is not always clear that what M indicates or points to must be perceptible in principle. The move to justify M being a logical sign is the difficult part, for it

[55] Such empiricism about the referents of logical relations may occasion surprise. What I mean by 'causally effective' is intended to provide the following restricted scope on what counts as a "dharma" in Indian thinking: they are those types of things that may be said to exert a causal role within and perhaps on the locus in question. But the notion of 'cause' may be rather broad depending on the tradition in question, covering in some instances even notions such as explanatory factors, definitions, formal constitutive properties such as "being momentary" and the like. In this sense, 'universals' such as blueness, or pot-ness may, on at least one causal theory [Udayana's for example], be thought to play role in the sense that they 'restrict' and place limitations on the sorts of changes that matter can undergo.

[56] Logicians are also, however, in the habit of using relations that highlight the role of the cognition in presenting facts about the world. This would be to use the *viśeṣa / viśeṣya* distinction. In this sense, "(this is a) blue-pot [*nīlo ghaṭaḥ*]" and "of the pot, [is] the blue [*ghaṭasya nīlam*]" are different cognitions, because the terms that the cognition are about are different in each case, even though the fact expressed by both cognitions may turn out to be the same. It is important to remember the phenomenological medium in which the Indian philosophers worked if we are not to suppress or distort the concerns important to them. See Mohanty, (op. cit), 123. That having been said, for the remainder of our discussion I will use the *dharma / dharmin* distinction, highlighting aspects of the cognitive dimension when I think them important.

is by no means obvious which of the many percepts are capable of being such 'signs', and how one

is to go about establishing what the reasons are for something functioning as a sign, or to justify

what is thereby signaled. This is where (*) is important. This is the step that shows us that M is to

be treated as a logical sign, as an H,[57] and provides us with a concrete instance in which we are

familiar with this role of M. A further fact to remember, however, is that a percept need not behave

as a sign in every single locus. An M that is a logical sign for some Q in some scope Y, need not be a

sign in scope X, etc.[58] Generally then, one must show a definite locus Y where we see M behaving as

a logical sign in that it is correlated, within Y, with a fact Q about Y, giving existential import to the

relation, and in turn providing at least one necessary condition towards justifying the belief that *all

and only instances of M are instances of Q*.[59] That is, on seeing Y qualified by M, one is entitled to act as if

we had seen that Y is qualified by Q. Providing the conditions under which belief in such a relation,

that is, extending the case in (*) to P, is warranted, occupied much of the time of Indian logicians,

with the sharpening of the relation in question representing much of the advances made in this field

of Indian thought.

With this lengthy introduction, we are now in a position on formal grounds to be quite sure

of what could be meant by saying that a subject and the means by which that subject is handled

deserves the qualification 'philosophical'. It turns out that God is such a subject, being posited as a

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[57] That is, as a *hetu*.

[58] Related to this fact is the concern the Indian epistemologists showed with realizing that when dealing with cognitions, we must take seriously the distinction between M and M-like percepts that may be mistaken for M. Seeing sublimated vapors when dry ice lies on hot tarmac, however smoke-like the percept, is not warrant for pulling out a fire extinguisher. Closer to the Indian examples, fog over water is not reason to suspect a miracle. Here the locus in (*) does play an important role of ruling out the possibility and the *prima facie* suspicion that M may be a case of misrecognition. Both locus and percept should be 'definite' in the sense that the relation between locus and percept is a highly specific one.

[59] This relation is called *vyāpti*; it is defined by Dignaga as follows: "*liṅge liṅgī bhavaty eva / liṅgīny evetavat punaḥ.*" Matilal translates this as (with slight modifications of my own) as saying: "when the sign occurs, there the signaled [that of which it is a sign] has to occur as well; And if the sign has to occur somewhere, it has to occur exclusively [*eva*] where the signaled occurs." The consequence is that one may read this as saying "all and only instances of H are instances of S"; Matilal, *The Character of Logic in India*, (*op. cit*), 11. The use of the grammatical operator '*eva*' here is logically significant, and marks an innovation of Dignāga's. See Brendan S. Gillon and Richard Hayes, "The Role of the Particle *eva* in (Logical) Quantification in Sanskrit," in *Weiner Zeitschrift für die Kunde Süd-und Ost-Asiens* 26, (1982), 195-203.

conclusion of an inference of the type that we have discussed. Udayana, writing in the eleventh century, gives us the most compact argument providing the reason for incorporating God as a philosophical conclusion and as a category that should be involved in any complete account of the world.[60] By virtue of being a conclusion of an argument, God is also indirectly the subject of a *pramā*, a true cognition, being produced, as the cognition is, by the indubitable collection of causal conditions of true cognitions that comprises "inference."

Udayana seems to think the matter quite obvious, spending only two lines in Sanskrit on the argument; this is a significant fact, given that he spent some nineteen lines in a preceding discussion concerning the status of universals in relation to color patches. Udayana introduces his argument for God in the context of discussing the kinds of 'essential selves' [*ātman*] that may be thought to exist in the world. God is as obvious as the 'selves' we as sentient agents are familiar with, and as rational; that is to say, God is as obvious as the fact that self predication, the cognition that "I am" [*ahaṃ*], is a *hetu* for warranting the belief in an essential self undisclosed in experience directly. God, the other kind of self, follows almost as quickly. The argument goes as follows:

1. aṅkurādikaṃ sakartṛkaṃ kāryatvād ghaṭavad

2. itīśvarasiddhiḥ[61]

Translated in the rough for now, the argument says: "A sprout and things belonging to the

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[60] The argument does not originate with Udayana. I have chosen his presentation because of its extreme compactness. Udayana is in the historical position of being able to recover the discussions of the preceding generations of philosophers—in this sense, his work on God is something of a *summa* of previous discussions. The argument presented here was the one with the best chance of succeeding in an inter-sectarian environment where one could not hope to present premises based on the validity of scriptural testimony or ecstatic experience. Perhaps the earliest instance of this argument is from Vātsyāyana in his fifth century commentary on the Nyāya-sutras, where God is considered both a substance [*dravya*] and a 'self'. Ironically enough, there are reasons to believe that Gautama, the founder of the Nyāya tradition, may have only mentioned God in order to critique the very idea of theism. For a fuller discussion of the history of this argument, see Roger Jackson, "Dharmakirti's refutation of Theism," in *Philosophy East and West*, 36:4, October 1986, 315-348; see especially p317. See also, Karl Potter, ed., *Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies: Indian Metaphysics and Epistemology: The Tradition of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika upto Gaṅgeśa*, (Princeton University Press, 1977), p97-103.

[61] This corresponds to lines 115 and 116 in Udayana's *Lakṣaṇavalī*. A translation and discussion of this text may be found in Musashi Tachikawa, *The Structure of the World in Udayana's Realism: A Study of the* Lakṣaṇavalī *and the* Kiraṇavālī, (D. Reidel, Dordrecht, Holland, 1975), p71. The discussion of the soul is on lines 117 and 118.

same class, are possessed of the qualification 'being an effect of a sentient-agent'; [because] they are qualified by the property 'being an effect of intelligent effort'; as with a pot; as stated, God [*īśvara*] is rationally warranted [*siddhiḥ*]." God has its source in a respectable philosophical medium, and the specific idea of God is that of a sentient agent [*kartṛ*] responsible for the 'constructions' that constitute the intelligible world in which we, the other class of sentient agents, find ourselves in.

The specific idea of God that is the conclusion of the inference is that of an agent-creator, a specific kind of causal factor. The text that I am interested in calls itself a refutation of Viṣṇu as the creator, but its scope seems more ambitious. The text styles itself as a refutation of *any* Viṣṇu-like posit being *the unique* creator [*ekakartṛtva*] but reaches for a refutation of any thoughts of the office of creatorship *per se*.[62] There is, the argument would like to say, no such office and hence no officer to prosecute the relevant mandate. Talk involving such reference would then, in a very precise sense, be empty—devoid of a substantial referent external of the referring act that could serve as ground for establishing the success of reference. The point here does not privilege a particular theory of reference, whether we interpret reference in line with a philosophical realism, for example, or allow that signification in terms of both its mechanism and 'product' is wholly intra-linguistic. From the perspective of the argument, "God," or "*the creator*" wholly fails to refer in that it does not successfully individuate any referent, however construed, whatsoever. It has, if we may pun on the Sanskrit for "referent," *no aim* (*artha*).

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[62] I would like to add the minor but salient point that the scope of the title suggests that both "creator" and "Viṣṇu" are the target, something that allows one to track two potential sources for the notion of God at the same time and render the argument rather flexible in terms of the traditions it could seek to argue against. The first aspect, arguing against creator-hood, brings in the God of the philosophers who was usually posited, in the strongest form, on the basis of creator-hood. But naming the text against Viṣṇu also suggests an eye against the creator-figure of the *purāṇas*, suggesting as a source not only argument and rational warrant but also epic literature and what is sometimes called "testimony." Out of interest, we might note that the God-talk of the Brahmins would also be included under this category. The absoluteness of the social order, for example, rests on a unique and absolute source. This is important for the scope of eliminating God-talk is not simply to remove talk of God but also talk that would be attributed to an agent (speaking) God, whose words can be given special privilege if and only if he is viewed as creator.

As far as its subject matter goes this is hardly novel. We know, after all, that quite a few historical Buddhists have undertaken the call of atheism, that is, of refuting the possibility of any substantial subject locus in which "*Creator*-ship," the property of being a creator of the world, could reside.[63, 64] This might give the appearance that what we are faced with is a situation in which we have various arguments from different Buddhist scholastics over time aiming at a similar conclusion—the denial of something that could be construed as God which is offered as a philosophical posit and as a category. They are then, so to speak, involved in the same end-game, effectively drawing up a list of categories, and not finding God to belong to this list. The only difference being that of increasing philosophical dexterity and nuance.

I have already given certain sociological reasons for thinking that we ought to use the word 'philosophical' carefully. If we take "debate" as a root it is easy then to pick out a well defined period for philosophy. Dignāga in the sixth century, for example, developing on the advances made by his teacher Vasubandhu, marks a turning point in the field of Indian philosophy. Dignāga's formal inquiries into and positive contributions to thought on the nature of justification and the necessary and sufficient conditions for something counting as an instance of corroborative evidence, overhauled the then tired debate apparatus of Vātsyāyana developed in the *Nyāya-Sūtra* early in the history of Indian thought. This revolutionized Indian literature. After Dignāga, and then through the

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[63] God, of course, was not only thought to exemplify the property of being the creator; competing attributes included omniscience, moral virtue, being the perfect yogi, being free of entanglement in the suffering concomitant with volitional action and the like. For the purposes of this thesis, we need only look at creator-hood, for this is the property considered to render God unique. One immediate reason: it is by virtue of being the creator of what is, that God may be said to know what is. Śāntarakṣita suggests that this was a presupposition even among theistic traditions in India.

[64] I say this is an atheistic mandate because it seems to me a distinct requisite for an individual to be uniquely worship-worthy that he or she either exemplify such a property, or be very intimately related to the discharging of such a role; if this is the case, as I think it is, then to deny such an office simpliciter is to deny that there is a uniquely worship-worthy individual *in this sense*. This is, of course, not to excise worship or worship-like behavior—but it does seem to deny worship as conceived of in theism, the worship of something like a unique creator. The singularity of worship-worthiness seems to require that there be a unique office deserving of worship; Indeed, I cannot imagine what theism would look like without this. Rabbi Yudan would have agreed. Noting that the verb *bara* precedes *Elohim* in the first line of *Genesis*, the Rabbi suggests that this is distinctive of God: only after his work (the world) does he earn name god." *Genesis Rabbah* I.12, quoted in translation in Eugene Mihaly, *A Song to Creation: A Dialogue with a Text*, (Hebrew Union College Press, 1975), 102.

writings of Dharmakīrti, it seemed as if any text not written or 'translated' into the full dress

appearance of Dignaga's syllogisms was passé and considered not a little embarrassing. With these

thinkers scholars may speak of the Buddhist logicians and remain assured that there is indeed a well

behaved referent in the field.[65] It is to the literature of this period that I will refer when speaking of

Buddhist scholastics, wishing to indicate thereby and highlight the common prerequisites among a

community of Buddhist intellectuals from that time on.[66] Therefore, by scholastic I simply mean one

who has undergone such training.

A scholar of Indian Buddhism may justifiably protest. With this definition of scholastic I

have excluded some of the most important schools of Indian Buddhism; where are the *sarvāstivādins*,

the *yogācāra abhidharmikas*, the *pudgalavādins*, the *mādhyamikans*, to name but a few? While I wish to

rigorously distinguish these traditions from what I call 'canonical Buddhism' in chapter four, I also

wish to strenuously insist, if only as a heuristic, that these traditions be distinguished from

scholasticism as defined above. The difference can be stressed in various ways for the different

traditions listed, but globally speaking, the following strikes me as sufficient: in none of the

traditions excluded from my definition of scholasticism is the *pramāna* methodology foundational or

central to the projects embodied in the texts produced by these traditions. Aside from this central

difference, the ways in which these traditions may intersect the philosophical traditions strikes me as

a matter for refined analysis. Here at least I do not think an easy generalization helpful.

With a well defined period of scholasticism as a background, in the next chapter I will look

closer at the *formal structure* the denial of God takes in the philosophical literature, and assess whether

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[65] Tom Tillemans appears to make the same point but adds the caution that this well-defined arena of Buddhism, while clearly distinct, went 'nameless' in Sanskrit. See his *Scripture, Logic, Language: Essays on Dharmakīrti and his Tibetan Successors*, (Wisdom Press, Boston, 1999), 1-3. That is to say, as far as the Buddhist philosophers were concerned, what they were engaged in with was simply "Buddhism" normatively understood as being philosophical argumentation. To their philosophical rivals, Buddhism was simply the list of categories committed to by these Buddhist philosophers.
[66] Consider for example that by the late seventh century Dharmakīrti's *Nyāyabindu*, (or mark of Argument), had become a requirement for passing the entrance exams at Nālanda, one of the most distinguished of the Buddhist monastic training complexes. For an extended treatment and translation of this text see Rajendra Prasad, *Dharmakīrti's Theory of Inference: Revaluation and Reconstruction*, (Oxford University Press, 2002).

we have warrant to believe that there remains something to be said about the different 'senses' and commitments a *denial* of God can be said to take. Specifically, with the motivation laid out in chapter two, in chapters three, five and six, I will suggest that a difference needs to be made between 'philosophical' negation, and something that I will term 'exclusion'. It turns out, however, that this difference cannot be made *within* the formal apparatus of the philosophical traditions, but that such exclusion can be effected by normative philosophical tools, if only with a little creative ingenuity on the part of the author.

While our author *does employ* the formal tools of the philosophical traditions, it is not clear that he understands or respects the prerequisites of the philosophical community in a normative way. In the rest of the thesis, I suggest that it is possible that our author has embedded a strategy in a philosophical framework that cannot be reduced to the normative aims of the philosophical traditions; while the means to effect the conclusion appear to be rigorously philosophical, the strategy does not appear canonically philosophical in the sense that the exclusion is philosophically motivated on grounds that a scholastic Buddhist would not have had available to him, owing to a certain interpretation of the formalism current in philosophical circles, a commitment that our author does not share. Most suspiciously, the author of our text does not even seem to hold the construction of a formal inference that could convince an interlocutor as his goal. What I mean by this is that the reasons our author can cite for his position need not entail commitments the way reasons understood in a scholastic setting do; the nature of argument is configured differently in our text, to the extent that we may say that it is quite probable that *he is not, in fact, interested in arguing for the non-existence of God at all.* The subsequent chapters tell the story of how, given the parameters of philosophical inquiry in India, such a non-interest can be sustained without incurring strong metaphysical commitments; for honest to Indian intellectual life, the author of our text, however unlike the philosophers in other respects, *does feel* that disinterest at least requires its reasons.

CHAPTER THREE: BETWEEN A POT AND GOD, THE WORLD?

> Intoxicated with your splendor, you
> despise *me*, the very ground of
> your existence when the Buddhists
> turned on you.[67]
>> — Udayana, at the temple of
>> Jaganatha, to God.

One virtue of philosophical theism in India may perhaps be found in the degree to which it

troubles the temptation to draw a clear line between philosophical and religious praxis. Udayana,

writing in the eleventh century and famed as being one of the most analytic of the Indian

philosophers, had no trouble posturing as if philosophical argumentation *just is* worship; in the most

famous anthology of arguments demonstrating the conditions by which belief in God is rational,

Udayana cultivated a posture of humility wherein even feigned disbelief in the existence of God

became an opportune moment for celebratory worship of God's uniqueness. Perhaps because he

did not take seriously the idea that God could, in principle, be subject to doubt, providing rigorous

criteria by which to 'prove' the validity of God (*īśvara*) became, as he claimed in the preface, an

activity as delightful to his mind as a flower is to a bee.[68] Udayana called his text the

Nyāyakusumāñjali, a title that through a deft, exegetical move, could be used to show his hand. An

añjali is the characteristic gesture of worship: hands folded together, eyes suitably reverent, and body

bowed towards the object worthy of such feeling. This is a cultural form that an observer is likely to

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[67] The story goes that Udayana visited the temple to pay his respects to the deity; on arriving, however, he found all the entrances to the temple blocked, and his passionate appeals produced no results. It is said that he then said: "*Aiśvarya-mada-matto 'si mām avajñāya vartase, upasthiteṣu Bauddheṣu mad-adhinā tava sthitiḥ*' From the Appendix to the Bhaviṣya Purāna, quoted in D. N. Shastri, *Critique of Indian Realism: The Philosophy of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika and its Conflict with the Buddhist Dignāga School,* (Bharatiya Vidya Prakashan, Delhi, reprint 1997), n160, 120.

[68] See the opening verses of his *Nyāyakusumāñjali,* (Bharatiya Vidya Prakasana, Varanasi, India).

take as logical warrant, that is, as a *liṇga*[69] for asserting, or more technically, *seeing,* in the same locus

as the act, *that* something religious is occurring. But as every trained observer knows, a gesture is

nothing without the offering, usually an accompaniment of flowers (*kusuma*) deposited at the feet of

the worship-worthy referent. Udayana's own praxis, however otherwise religious, affords him at least

this luxury: *he,* the philosopher, can leave his flowers at home; his arguments (*nyāya*) are as sweet, and

as worthy of being received.

Secure in the fact that talk of God is an instance of epistemologically justified reference,

Udayana is concerned with noting, on the one hand, the *religious* relevance of argumentation when

God is the referent; on the other hand, Udayana wishes to underscore the fundamental rationality of

theistically construed worship. Philosophical praxis, and worship, even if practiced differently, are

equivalently justified and effectual[70]—a not inconsiderable achievement for cultural pluralism if successful.

But as an Indian saying goes, where there is a mongoose there may have been a snake.[71] As

long as Buddhism remained an institutional reality in India, Buddhists remained a threat to the self-

congratulation of a culture that increasingly sought to achieve shallow unifications in the face of

heterodox critique. In this instance, however, the Buddhist logicians would have agreed with

Udayana. They also saw that one could draw more than an analogy between the activity of arguing

for God and worship, albeit for fundamentally opposed reasons. As far as they were concerned,

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[69] For the use of this term see chapter four where I consider the Buddhist logician Dharmakīrti's attempts to provide the necessary and sufficient 'signs' (*liṇga*) whose presence can serve as logical grounds for individuating traditions as non-Buddhist.

[70] Note that this is stronger than saying that both worship and the use of "God" as a substitution instance of a referring expression are justified; it is saying that both these practices are justified in the same way, using the same 'measure' of justification.

[71] The incompatibility of Buddhist thinkers and Hindu intellectuals was evident enough for Patañjali (circa 150 BCE) in his *Mahābhāṣya* to cite 'śramana and brāhmana' along with 'cat and mouse', 'dog and fox' and 'snake and mongoose' as examples of natural hostility. Quoted in P. S. Jaini, in "Śramanas and their conflict with Brahmanical Society," in his *Collected Papers on Buddhist Studies*, (*op. cit*), 49.

indulging in arguments involving terms without sound reference is very much like pouring oblations

to one's ancestors—as pregnant with affect, and as wasteful.[72]

Not impressed with displays of enthusiasm, however pious, and inclined to view such

displays as symptomatic, the Buddhists could not take conventional attestations of belief in God—

attestations evidenced in speech, thought and behavior—to have any probative force. That left only

the inference for God based on epistemologically neutral grounds. A comprehensive response to the

inference purporting to establish warrant for belief in God may be found in Śāntarakṣita's

Tattvasaṃgraha (hereafter TS).[73] It is not always clear to me exactly how 'innovative' Śāntarakṣita's

responses to the arguments for God can claim to be; by the eighth century, he is heir to a long

tradition of philosophical refutations directed at this subject. As regards the 'inference' motivating

belief in God, it is at least certain that Śāntarakṣita's comments clearly derive from the criticism of

God conducted by Dharmakīrti.[74] Śāntarakṣita's criticism, then, qualifies as being eminently

'scholastic'. Śāntarakṣita organizes his critique of the inference around the following major concerns:

R1 Ambiguity in characterization of the H [*hetu*]

R2 The scope provided for step (*) [*dṛṣṭānta*] fails to exemplify 'S' [*sādhya*]

R3 The evidence for the inference warranting relation, *FOR ANY* X *if* L (H, X) *then* L (S, X)

[*vyāpti*], remains to be established.

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[72] To Udayana's remarks on the proximity of worship and argument one can add his contemporary Buddhist counterpart Ratnakīrti's wry observations on the trope of ritual supplication. While one sees in it something to be valorized, the other denigrates it as futile and indicative of failure of rationality. Ratnakīrti implies that an argument is only as good as its premises, and premises only workable if they refer. Some conclusions and therefore arguments, Ratnakīrti suggests, are as worthless as ritual gestures of supplication, like water offered in vain to one's ancestors. One can speak of argument and worship being similar if and only if the premises of an argument are devoid of reference, and thus are an empty gesture devoid of rational force. See Ratnakīrti's *Kṣaṇabhaṅgasiddiḥ vyatirekātmikā*, in A. C. Senape McDermot, *An Eleventh Century Buddhist Logic of 'Exists'*, (D. Reidel, Dordrecht, 1969). For the phrase "*dattajalāñjaliṅ*", see p81 (verse 14), p18, p36.

[73] I will refer to the *Tattvasamgraha of Śāntarakṣita with the commentary of Kamalaśīla*, trans. by Ganganatha Jha, vol. 1, (Oriental Series Institute, Baroda, 1987). I have modified the translation of technical terms as per the discussion in chapter one of this thesis.

[74] Dharmakīrti's criticisms are discussed in detail by Roger Jackson in his "Dharmakirti's Refutation of Theism," *Philosophy East and West*, 36:4, Oct. 1986, p315-348.

R4 Characterization of H is theory-laden and non-evident [*aprasiddha*]

R5 Owing to the problematic status of H and P, the *sādhana* as a whole is questionable.

If we remember the inference schema as expressed in chapter one, it is clear that these criticisms target the 'deductive core' and the soundness of the inference. That is, criticisms R1 to R4 attempt to yield R5, the denial that there is a sound inferential step of the following form:

L (H, P) & (*if* L (H, P) *then* L (S, P))

The claim of the theist is of course that *there is* such a mechanism furnishing good reason to believe in God. The arguments of the Buddhist scholastics target the claim to there being such a mechanism, *and do not address* the independent positing of God—there is a P, such that this P is qualified by "being a causal factor of the world"; *L* ("creator-hood"; P)—or even the status of such a posit as an indirect conclusion of the inference. That is to say, when the Buddhist scholastics say that there is no God, what they are saying more precisely is that there is no 'acceptable' argument (in the technical sense of 'argument' in Indian philosophical discussion) available that yields God as a rationally motivated conclusion. More importantly, this is *all that they are philosophically licensed to say* given the constraints placed upon them by the mode of argumentation deemed canonical.

Śāntarakṣita recognizes that the argument purporting to provide warrant for believing in God is *indirect*, or that it does not directly denote the locus that is called God.[75] That is, the argument for God is not of the following form: L (H, P) & (*if* L (H, P) *then* L (S, P)); therefore, *ineluctably*, L (Creator-hood, God); in other words, 'God' is not the scope of the 'deductive core' of the inference itself. In a very important sense, the argument is about 'the world', such that the theist claims: it is the case that for some H and some S, it is the case *that*: L (H, World) & (*if* L (H, World) *then* L (S, World)); therefore, *ineluctably*, L (S, World). The further claims required by the theist are the following: *if* L (S, world) *then* L (Creator-hood, God), and the added claim that the locus denoted by

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[75] *TS*, (*op. cit*), 85.

the further claim is just the locus that the theist is interested in. After all, even if the argument is successful, we do not know whether God conceived under the property "being the causal factor responsible for the world" is just the same God connoted by the properties "author of the Vedas," the "benevolent father of the world," and the like.

For the rest of this chapter, let us understand that 'God' both denotes and connotes, that is, as a referring expression, 'God' denotes a locus, and specifies that this locus be understood as being qualified by a specific qualification. This is a specific way of pointing to what the relation 'being located in' requires as a condition: a denotation and a concomitant connotation. One never simply mentions God, but asserts that God understood as a locus is qualified by a property. In other words, valid use of "God" [*siddha*] requires for its formulation the structure 'L (___ , ___)'. Let us also refer to the locus denoted by God as X, and the qualification "being the Creator of the World" as C.

What Śāntarakṣita is pointing to in his introductory comments but never making explicit, may be cashed out in its strongest form as follows. Given that 'C' is *only* one property, we do not know whether L (C, X) and some locus qualified and individuated under the qualification 'omniscient' denote the same locus. Given independent arguments for a definite locus X qualified by C, and some definite locus Y qualified by some qualification A ("being the author of the Vedas," for example), one would require further conditions in virtue of which one could say *that* X = Y. The situation is further troubled as Śāntarakṣita notes by the fact that *even when* we possess an argument yielding L (C, X), because of the fact that it is only the qualification C that individuates the locus X within the argument broadly construed and that C only has 'sense' based on a prior qualification of the world taken as a whole as being 'created', we do not as yet know anything else about X; we do not know, for example, whether X belongs to the category of souls [*ātma*], persons devoid of

temporal, cognitive episodes [*puruśa*], whether it is to be classed as being embodied [*sakāya*] etc.[76]

Therefore, even if successful, X is under-determined by the argument. We can then say that Śāntarakṣita is in a position to make the point that the only hold we have on what precisely C 'means' is purchased by the argument on the basis of the qualification of the world. Śāntarakṣita, however, does not appear to utilize any of the above points in his actual critique of the inference.

We do now possess a better grasp of what is meant by saying that the argument is *about the world*. Given this fact, it is instructive to note that there is nothing in the inference itself presented by the theist that commits one to the belief that the positing of a notion like "the world" is necessary. Both the meaningfulness of the posit and its necessity are assumed by the inference for its scope; beyond the presupposition of the inference, however, there is nothing that could compel me to have to involve myself with such a notion. It is easy then to see that, if the notion of 'world' is troubled, either by way of the denotation or the connotation, then the conclusion of the argument is automatically rendered suspect because we could not know clearly what 'C' in L (C, X) could mean, and this because we do not know of any context in which 'C' is used in the sense that it is being used here; importantly, we also do not have any grounds for using any further connotations 'C' might then be taken to carry from linguistic contexts not immediately invoked by that argument. This avenue to questioning the significance of God-talk is not one that the Buddhist Scholastics take; in light of chapters five and six, the avoidance of this 'feature' of the language of theism does present itself as significant.

The inference purporting to validate belief in God implicitly makes the following claims:

S1 'World' is a referring term and denotes a definite locus

S2 Given 'the world' as a non-simple locus, it is rational to pose the following question: "is the world such that it is created by a single sentient agent?"

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[76] The last is a comment made by Kamalaśila in his commentary to Śāntarakṣita's discussion. See *ibid.*, 78.

Given the role of the inference and its nature in Indian Philosophy, the existence claim made on behalf of the inference mechanism also makes the following claims:

S3 Not only is it rational to bring in God, even if only in the context of a question, but it is a causal fact about both the nature of cognitions and the relation of world and cognitive subject, that "God" should occur in the cognitive life of a healthy cognitive agent, in the manner that it does—that is, as 'the definite entity' causally responsible for 'the world'.

S4 Linking as the inference does, cognitions that lead to the question of God, the idea of God is not only wholly rational but also epistemically impeccable. The idea of God is a sound idea, in the sense that we can provide the cognitive and material conditions under which it can arise in an unequivocal sense, naturally, for any 'healthy' cognitive agent whatsoever.[77]

S3 claims a philosophical source for the idea of God, and hence grants philosophical respectability to the genre of arguing for God. So psychologically speaking, interest in God is *transparent*: the idea of God has its roots in a causal mechanism that is irreducible to certain psychological facts about the subject, or tradition or culture; it presupposes only a healthy curiosity and knowledge of the world in the form of cognitions. **S4** is likewise strong, because it asserts that whether or not one believes in God, everyone has a belief in the world *such that* God as an idea comes along for the ride as an impeccable corollary to the notion of '*the* world': God is a further fact about a world construed as a definite locus.

Let us return to the point that there is nothing *in* the inference itself that tells me why it ought to be considered inevitable, from the standpoint of the causal regularity of cognitions, that a

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[77] Vācaspati Misra, for one, recognizes and makes explicit the strength of the claims made by the inference for God. In a mini-genealogy he offers, he describes the causal process leading up-to the idea of God. He says, "Seeing some products, such as a pot and the like, being produced by some sentient being or other, we doubt whether other products such as trees, mountains, the universe and the like, are also produced by some sentient being or not. The doubt eventually leads us to infer the existence of a creator, like God." The extract may be found in Book Four of his *Tātparyaṭīkā*, quoted in Karl Potter, *Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophy*, (*op. cit*), 481-82.

cognitive agent should (a) experience a cognition that could do duty for expressing the content "the world" or (b) regard the positing of the same as rationally binding, or even sound for that matter. Why should an interlocutor take seriously the formulated proposition L (___ , The World)? What is the qualification that could even pick out such a locus as definitive?

I think that here we are faced with the central weakness of both the argument of the theist as an 'independent argument' and the responses of Buddhist scholasticism that treat the scope of the inference as unproblematic. The degree to which Buddhist intellectuals have treated 'the world' as a term designating a thing-like referent, that is, as a definite referent that can serve as a logical term, is the degree to which they have obscured something very important about what was specifically Buddhist in orientation in Indian intellectual history.[78] It seems to me that here the Buddhist scholastics have to take the idea of God seriously because of their anterior commitment to the status of 'world' as a referent.[79] Given such a posit, what we effectively will see in Śāntarakṣita's critique of

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[78] One reason why Buddhist scholastics might have been forced to accept a posit such as 'the world' may derive from the fact that Buddhist scholastics constructed a single causal theory with universal scope. The notion of God operative in the philosophical traditions is a factor in an alternative theory aiming at a similar global scope. The aim to be as exhaustive as their philosophical interlocutors in terms of the explanatory power of their theories may account for the traffic with an entity such as 'world'.

[79] This would be true even if they then interpret 'world' as a nominal term having no further reference beyond the collection of 'parts' that constitute it, because it is the *term* that does the logical work. Vasubandhu seems to have been quite comfortable with the term; setting the mood for the rest of scholasticism on this matter, he says: "of the world, no *single* efficient cause is actual; although they birth their own intentional acts, in one reiterated circumstance after another, the poor wretches with uncultured intellect who endure the matured fruit of their own acts, erroneously conceive an unsurpassable God. [*tasman na lokasyaikam kāraṇam asti. svāny evaiṣām karmāṇI tasyām tasyām jātau janayanti. akṛtabuddhayas tu varākāḥ svam svam vipākaphalam cānubhavanta iśvaram aparam mithyā parikalpayanti*; From the *Abhidharmakośa*, 2.64]. A concern that has not yet been addressed is the following: how could Buddhist scholastics work with Nyāya formalism while maintaining that no linguistic proposition of the form 'S is P' corresponds in any obvious sense to things in the world? This is a generalized way of phrasing our concern with how 'world' could be thought to do logical work. I think the key to answering this concern is to say, extending and modifying a point first made by Tom Tillemans, that it is *not just* (*pace* Tillemans) that Buddhist scholastics thought that one did not have to provide exemplification for terms that could be shown to correspond to the world, but that they equipped themselves with a background theory according to which any valid linguistic proposition could be shown to have concrete acts of 'synthesis' as its constituting cause. In this sense, every valid proposition could still be said to correspond, having at its root an interaction between sense particulars and faculties of sensation and perception. The issue is, however, complicated by the fact that different Buddhists understood what such constructions entailed in different ways. See Eli Franco, "Once Again on Dharmakirti's Deviation from Dignaga on *Pratyakṣābhāsya*," *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, 14, 1986, 79-97; See also the last chapter of Radhika Herzberger, *Bharatrihari and the Buddhists*. The point that a term, even if not enjoying direct reference to entities in the world, can do logical work remains, even if the broader (and I am tempted to say, the deeper) issues cannot be addressed in this thesis.

the theist's arguments is the fact that he positions himself so as to be able to construct an independent inference of his own that would exclude God as a rationally warranted posit.

I said earlier that all that the Buddhist scholastics are licensed to say is that there is no argument establishing warrant for believing in God as the creator of the world. The non-existence of God becomes the non-existence of an inference capable of warranting belief in God; it will turn out that the *reason for* establishing the non-existence of an inference capable of warranting belief in God is provided by another formal *inference* constructed by the Buddhists, one that would attempt to show that *the logical sign used by the theist when qualifying the world is actually correlated with a further fact about the world that excludes God*, contrary to what the theist claims. The theist, then, has simply misinterpreted his own qualifications.

As is proper given his commitment to the Indian philosophical tradition, Śāntarakṣita's independent inference is replete with existential commitments made in line with what, in the context of the discussion, is an *a priori* epistemological theory. This is as it should be for a card-carrying member of the philosophical tradition: one cannot get something (a refutation) for nothing (no prior commitments). Tracking the criticisms of the theist's argument will allow us to construct Śāntarakṣita's inference and note the commitments involved in constructing such an inference.

The argument that Śāntarakṣita is facing is one which, for our purposes, is sufficiently like the one constructed by Udayana and presented at the close of chapter one. The essential moves are as follows. We first assert that there is something like a collection of things that can be formed on the basis of the following intension: being an effect [*kāryatvād*], or more precisely, being an effect of sentient, intelligent effort [*kārya*]. It turns out that for the theist this class is equivalent to the class of all non-simples; any 'product' in this sense, or any non-simple aggregate of metaphysically simple substances, is said to have a creator [*kārtṛ*], a sentient agent that effects the construction stated to exist as a matter of fact about every aggregate of simples.

There is an ambiguity that attends such a formulation that is worth stating. Is it that for *any* compound or product we choose there is a sentient agent to be found *or*, that *there exists* a single, unique sentient agent such that the class of all non-simples is effected by it? It is not obvious on the basis of the language of the inference itself that the theist wishes to assert the 'separate' existence of a class of all compound products as being a further fact beyond the existence of the members of that class. This is worth noting because an argument for the claim <u>that</u> FOR ALL compound entities, THERE EXISTS an agent, such that every compound has an agent, is not an argument for the claim <u>that </u>THERE EXISTS an agent, such that, FOR ALL compound entities, the agent is the creator of this all. To claim that the former entails the latter is to traffic in a fallacy of quantification.[80]

Two options present themselves. It is clear that the theist can push the scope of the inference back to the 'first' instance of such composition, the first 'constructive act' as it were.[81] Another option, the one that the theist in our inference seems to be working with, is to take the 'world' itself to be a compound thing, albeit *the maximally* compound thing there is.[82] What the theist requires is the claim that all compound things—including the collection of all compound things[83]—

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[80] The standard example offered to exemplify this confusion usually asks us to compare the following claims: "Everyone is loved by someone"; "Someone loves everyone." It will be readily admitted that these are not the same claim.

[81] This is the strategy adopted by authors in the Navya-Nyāya tradition. For a discussion of their arguments, see Kisor Kumar Chackrabarti, *Classical Indian Philosophy of Mind: The Nyāya Dualist Tradition*, (State University of New York Press, Albany, 1999), p159-175. Chackrabarti discusses the proximity of this argument to the argument strategy that has come to be called "the cosmological argument" in the Western tradition.

[82] With this approach, one could if one so chose try to infer 'a first act' on the basis of there being a fact of the matter about 'creation'.

[83] Here a very obvious way to trouble the theist presents itself, perhaps one which escapes attention because of the fact that 'God' is not directly denoted in the inference. Are we to understand God to be a simple or a compound 'thing'? If simple, it seems difficult to understand how the theist wishes to say that sentient agents are compound entities. But if God is a compound thing, is it itself a part of the collection "all compound things" or not? The reader can verify the ease with which one can construct a dilemma for the theist on the basis of this question. As we will see, Śāntarakṣita will attempt to create a dilemma for the theist on the basis of another form of criticism, but his attempt does not make use of the theist's presuppositions as the above dilemma does, but incorporates, as a condition of validity, an antecedent metaphysical causal theory derived from Vasubandhu. In other words, an opportunity for arresting the argument in its tracks with no commitments beyond those presented by the theist is lost. Given what we will say in chapter six about the argument in the text that this thesis concerns itself with, this is quite significant.

are qualified by intelligent effort exhibited by a sentient agent, and the inference can begin to get off the ground.

The inference then has a definite scope—the collection of all compound things. When we discuss the exemplification of the inference I will give more details as to what the exact import of 'being a compound thing' in the theory of this tradition is. For now it is enough to state that part of what is involved in being a compound thing, or as is synonymous here, being an effect, is the fact that such things instantiate a theoretical (or, depth) structure that renders the compound 'ordered' in a highly specific sense. The full thesis of the theist then states that all instances of such ordering, or all effects revealing a theoretical structure—and the world counts as such an effect—*possess* the qualification 'being the effect of intelligent effort.' So the target of the inference, or S [*sādhya*], in this instance is the qualification: 'having a sentient agent as efficient cause'; the logical reason, or H [*hetu*] becomes: 'being of the order of an effect [*kāryatvād*]', which is equivalent to 'being a compound thing' which is equivalent to 'instantiating a theoretical structure'. As an exemplification [step (*)] one is given the case of a pot.

The exemplification offered by the theist actually grants us a clearer handle on what could be meant by 'depth structure' and consequently, also on what could be meant by 'world', the maximally compound thing that provides the scope of the inference. The immediate philosophical significance is that the exemplification is expected to grant existential import to the terms used to express the conditional involved in the deductive core of the inference. Śāntarakṣita, however, rightfully complains that it is not 'pot' understood generically, or in a non-theory-laden manner, that is doing the philosophical legwork for the theist as much as it is the Nyāya characterization of what a pot is; the work of exemplification is being done by a Nyāya depth-structure that is claimed to be instanced in the sort of fact that is referred to by 'pot' or cognized in cognitions of pots.

The Nyāya effectively see in a pot a 'fragment' of a *graph-theoretic* structure that can count as

an independent piece of that structure.[84] A graph is a simple relational structure, consisting of a set

of nodes and a set of edges, where an edge is specified by a pair of nodes. In a directed graph, the

nodes define edges that exemplify a direction. That is, the graph is ordered such that, as depicted in

figure one, (S, s1) and (s1, S) do not express the same relation.
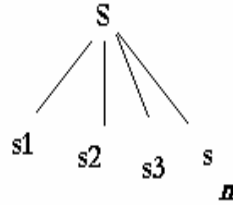

Figure 1.0

The Nyāya recognize specific, foundational categories that behave as nodes, and recognize certain

specific ways in which they may be inter-related.[85] To take but two examples: there can be no

isolated nodes, and no universal may be posited *without* an inherence relation in some substance,

whether directly or indirectly by way of some other node. A 'pot', then, is a short-hand denotation

of a fragment of such a directed graph; 'Pot' is a nominal term that is a short-hand for at least the

following facts: (1) a pot is a 'whole' constituted in part by some *n* number of simple, non-temporal

substances (in figure one, s1 to s*n*); (2) the pot is a substance not reducible to its component parts;

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[84] The leading idea here is due to Jonardon Ganeri, who is the first to have rendered this explicit. For an in-depth discussion of the graph-theoretic features of Nyāya metaphysics, see Jonardon Ganeri, "The Rational Basis of Metaphysics," in *Philosophy in Classical India*, (Routledge, London, New York, 2001), 71-80. Roughly, to be an identifiable fragment is to have a specific number of parts and a specific ordering.

[85] In the discussion that follows, I have underlined those words referring to foundational categories for the Nyāya. Generally speaking, six categories or 'types of things' were recognized, one of which functioned as an 'edge', while the others behaved as 'nodes'. Among the nodes are: substances [*dravya*], qualities [*guṇa*], universals, motions, individuators; the edge corresponds to the relation called 'inherence' [*samavāya*]. For a full history of these categories and the use to which they were put in this tradition, see D. N. Shastri, *Critique of Indian Realism: The Philosophy of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika and its Conflict with the Buddhist Dignāga School*, (*op. cit*). What is highly interesting, as Ganeri notes, is that Udayana is the first to see that the categories can be defined *entirely* in graph-theoretic terms. For example, here are some of the definitions of the principle categories important for our discussion: substance (*defn.*) = that in which inheres that in which inheres that which inheres; universal (*defn.*) = that which has nothing inhering in it, inheres, and can inhere in more than one 'node'; quality (*defn.*) = that which inheres only in 'substances' and that in which only 'universals' inhere ("universals" and "substances" being used here as shorthand for the full graph theoretic description). For more details on this and the parameters that must be met by an ordering to be well-formed, see Ganeri, *ibid.*, 74-79; see especially 79.

(3) the pot, as a further fact about the collection of simples that constitute it, <u>inheres</u> in every one of its parts, such that every part becomes uniquely a part of the whole.
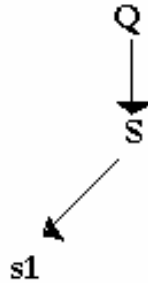
Figure 1.1

But this is not all that is given to be seen in a cognitive episode with the content 'pot'. Cognitions of pots also reveal that along with the further fact about simples, a pot as a substantial whole *can also have*, by virtue of its 'structure', inhering in it a <u>quality</u> (Q), such as a temporally and spatially specific occurrence of the color red. The situation would be something like that depicted in figure 1.1, where I have specified the new relation using an incomplete version of figure 1.0. And still the the Nyāya are not done; there is more to the structure exemplified in the case of a pot. The true situation would be one where we add that 'whole' substances and qualities are always delimited by a <u>universal</u> inhering in them. Therefore, we also *see* an N (say pot-ness) inhering in the substance pot, and a U (say red-ness) inhering in the color red, which in turn must inhere in a substance (see figure 1.2).
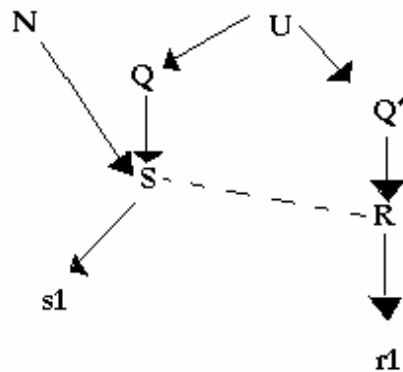
Figure 1.2

The exemplification by way of a pot also points indirectly to the fact that not only does a

fragment of a graph, an independent whole such as 'pot', enjoy an *internal* structure, but that it can

also enter into conjunctions with other substances only in certain regulated ways; furthermore,[86] no

fragment of a graph, however independent, is isolated. Consider the case of the substance 'pot'

being con-joined in a specific relation [*saṃyoga*] with a substance such as a red floor, while being

constrained by specific features of the individual graph-fragments involved in the conjunction. In

addition to the fact that the universal red-ness inheres in both the substance 'pot' and in the

substance 'floor'; it is claimed, as depicted in figure 1.2, that what we have here is a 'new' relation

(depicted by a dotted line in the figure) that some graph fragments can form with each other given

certain conditions of fit. There are conditions placed on regarding a structure counting as an

instance of a *well-formed* theoretical structure, which here means, a fragment of a graph-theoretical

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[86] I thank O. Bradley Bassler for underscoring that the unavailability of any isolated graph-fragment is not wholly captured by the recognition of what mat amount to 'partial' connectivity between specific fragments. The former needs a very strong argument for support. This can also then be recognized as being one of the stronger presuppositions of the theist. It is an open question, in light of Special Relativity, whether we can consider connectivity to be anything more than a 'local' phenomenon that is scale dependent. Consider, for example, the exotic case of the 'horizon problem' in modern cosmology. In other words, Bassler's point can cut rather deep here, for there is no evidence that we ought to regard the theist's notion of a well-formed graph-theoretical structure as 'sound'. A full discussion would take us beyond the scope of the thesis. For a popular account of the horizon problem, however, and one possible solution, see João Magueijo, *Faster than the Speed of Light: The Story of a Scientific Speculation*, (Perseus Books, 2003). Of course, less exotic problems are not hard to derive using the notion of 'light cones' and invariant 'pasts' (understanding 'past' in a space-time and not temporal sense).

structure. The details are intriguing and complicated, but for our purposes, it is enough to note that for the theist, all instances of compound substances are instances of such an ordering. The theist wishes to claim that such ordering is impossible without the presence of a sentient creator capable of holding such an 'intelligible design' in mind and bringing the same to fruition—just as we see the intricate structure of a pot being brought about by the intentions and acts of a potter, one who can instantiate the graph-fragment in reality through deliberate activity.

The motivation for God may now quickly be reconstructed. Given the fact that there is such complexity of structure and yet diversity in the kinds of independent substances available in the world, concomitant with the fact that there seem to be no 'gaps' in the causal inter-action of such individuals, it is fitting to think of there being a creator. After all, if a design as simple as a pot requires a designer and then a sentient agent capable of executing the design, what can we say about all the substances there are and their degree of causal fit with one another?

Given the anterior commitment of the Nyāya to the fact that the primitive metaphysical given is the existence of a number of simple, part-less, atomic and a-temporal substances [*paramānu*], the fact of even the simplest ordering, such as a *relation* (either <u>inherence</u> or <u>conjunction</u>) between one metaphysical simple and another *cannot* be seen as 'given', but must be thought of as an *effect* that requires causal accounting. Most pressingly on this view, it is the high-order relation between a quality and a substance, mirrored in language by the relation between subject and predicate, and evidenced as 'given' in the world in perception, that requires the positing of a unique causal factor that could account for a such complex effect as 'ordering'.

The 'world' is now to be understood as a directed graph, a whole that is the ordering and inter-relation of *all* compound substances and the structures they instantiate. The graph forms a

singular identity, one which cannot be factorized into separate and unconnected parts. The creator, then, is one who effects, in activity, having intended the set of inter-relations that is such a graph.[87]

The theist implicitly claims that such 'ordering' is a perceptually obvious fact about an obvious locus. Furthermore, the theist must employ the *vyāpti*, or the inference warranting relation, that states, as exemplified in the case of a pot, that all and only instances possessing such a graph-theoretic structure (H) are instances entailing sentient creative effort (S). Thus, indirectly, the presence of ordering entails the existence of a creator capable of effecting the design claimed to be perceived in *any* perceptual episode of the world. Furthermore, though the theist does not make this explicit, we can go ahead and say that the uniqueness of the locus that is the graph-theoretic structure as a whole secures the uniqueness of the creator said to be behind its actualization.

The logical structure of the exemplification (step (*)) involves the claim that L (H, S ; Pot). If the argument is not to be question begging, it requires at the very least that we have independently secured the following facts as being well-exampled:

(**K1**) L (H, Pot)

(**K2**) L (S, Pot)

Staying true to the requirement that every step in the deductive core be sound, Śāntarakṣita points out that the theist has not yet shown the grounds for asserting the sort of *vyaapti* that the theist requires. The case of the pot cannot furnish an S *of the relevant kind*; exemplifications like 'Pot', even if all else is considered acceptable, can only furnish us with instances of temporal, non-omnipotent, non-omniscient sentient agents who work within *antecedent* causal conditions: hardly what one would call God. Śāntarakṣita here comes very close to saying that there could be no 'effect' given in the world that could be correlated with, or *motivate the idea of* God. Indeed, all he would need to do is to see a reason for *why* no 'S' is in principle available; such an inquiry could take

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[87] See Jonardon Ganeri, *Ibid.*, 81.

him beyond stating the perceptually obvious and, one wants to say, as stated, theologically redundant point, that God is nowhere exampled as a *given* in the world. But such an approach is not operative in Śāntarakṣita's critique. Here he contents himself with what, for the purposes of the inference, is the damning observation that there is no epistemically sound construction of the relation, *if* H *then* S, because there is no exemplification of an instance in which both, H and S, are exampled in a well-defined locus.

Śāntarakṣita also helps himself to naturalistic observation to target the relation required by the theist. Generally, when we do 'see' what we are inclined to consider products exemplifying something like complex order and design, we are in a position to note a certain under-determination in what is entailed about the creative 'effort' involved. Often enough, as in the case of ant-hills and mansions, we notice not a single locus of creative agency as the theist would have us believe, but *multiple* agents working together. Furthermore, whether the agency in question is always intentional is something to be determined. Structure neither *necessarily* entails 'design' nor a 'single' agent.

I have already noted Santaraksita's complaint that the exemplification by way of a pot is a confusion of theory and description. In questioning **K1**,[88] however, Santaraksita seems to feel the need *to account* for the perceptual experience of 'pot' on his own. This is interesting, because it requires us to interpret his criticism of the theist's characterization of a 'pot' as inadequate *relative* to *a true* epistemological and metaphysical account of pot, rather than bearing in mind a more phenomenological or conventional description of the bare parameters by which 'pot' is given *relative* to the general, epistemic capacities of sentient beings. The latter would, after all, be the closest we could get to a non-theory laden description of pot. Śāntarakṣita, however, appears to be in a position to believe that such a bare description of a perceptual episode containing 'pot' as content *would not only not be sound*, but also <u>false</u>, because of its containing mention of non-exampled external

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[88] *TS*, (op. cit), 88-89.

particulars while *purporting to refer* to those particulars. In other words, a sound reference to pot in the inference *would have to be* a theory-laden description, relative to convention, one which would seek to avoid the epistemological excesses he perceives in *both*, common-sense descriptions and alternative theories.[89] In this sense I have been hasty in describing Śāntarakṣita's dissatisfaction with the theist's characterization of a pot. The problem is not so much that the theist is speaking in technical jargon when speaking of a pot; the trouble is that he is indulging in the wrong technical jargon. This point suggests a potential failing: both Śāntarakṣita and the theist refuse to see in a characterization of a pot a theory-laden *characterization* rather than a pure description, the latter being in fact what the interlocutors conceive their categorical schemes to be; and it is the theory-laden characterization that, substituting for a perceptual episode of pot, *does the logical work in the inference.* In other words, the soundness of the inference schema is purchased at the cost of sacrificing epistemic and metaphysical neutrality.

The ampliative epistemic proclivity of the philosophical tradition I spoke of in chapter one is aptly documented in Śāntarakṣita's criticism of **K1**. He wishes us to see that: because what the theist wishes to speak of by way of 'pot' is assumed to be a whole, and a further fact about the parts that constitute *the perception* of pot, we must take 'pot' to be an <u>inferred</u> consequence of perceptual experience. That is to say, 'wholes' are not to be had in perceptual experiences, and therefore the locus proffered by the theist in the exemplification is not obvious. Śāntarakṣita does not, however, stop there. The Buddhist scholastics do not only observe that 'pot' is an inferred conclusion having content going beyond that which may be said to be given in perceptual experience, but they go on to

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[89] Cf. the discussion in chapter one of the refusal to admit a term in an inference without existential presumption of the existence of certain fundamental categories. In this way, Buddhist logicians could not see in common-sense heuristic designations anything other than covert theoretical descriptions. 'Convention' could not, therefore, do any philosophical work without incorporating a detailed theoretical account of what is the case. Cāndrakīrti, following on Nāgārjuna, targeted just this aspect of Buddhist scholasticism as being non-Buddhist; see Dan Arnold, "How to Do Things With Candrakirti: A Comparative Study in Anti-Skepticism," *Philosophy East and West*, v51, p247-279; See also, Mark Siderits, "The Madhyamaka Critique of Epistemology II," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* **9**, (1981): 121-160.

suggest the mechanism for such a *conclusion* being used in experience and also interpret the nature of such a conclusion in line with their anterior metaphysical commitments. Perceived wholes do not occur *in* the world constituted by 'perceptual causal conditions' and 'faculties of perception', but *only in* the intellectual acts of interpreting, ordering and synthesizing [*vikalpa*] 'mute', non-linguistic, discrete and momentary *sensations* into the intelligible and communicable experiences in which sentient beings habitually indulge. It is from such anterior commitments that a Buddhist scholastic could state: therefore, it is obvious that *any* graph-theoretic structure based on universals inhering in substances *could not* possibly be exampled in a *spatio-temporal* locus *in* the world external to the perceiving subject.

Of course, these are strong commitments, and would require argument[90] for them to become even *prima facie* acceptable to any interlocutor not already indoctrinated into this brand of Buddhism. The immediate consequence is that, based on these claims, Śāntarakṣita cannot allow for the statement in **K1**, *L* (H, Pot), or for that matter, any claim of the form *L* (H, *x*), where *x* could be thought to be any substance locus thought to be a perceptual 'whole' enjoying properties not reducible to the properties of the parts that constitute it. Any attempt to use such an *x* as anything more than a nominal reification is not only unsound, but false, and any mention of such a nominalization is at best unsound, *because* not exampled in the world. It can easily be seen that such a line of attack invalidates **K2** as well, and therefore, the pre-requisites for constructing the inference the theist requires now seem to be on very thin ground indeed.

The reader will by now have picked up on an interesting asymmetry in Śāntarakṣita's critique of the inference for God. In **K1** and **K2**, he has suggested that both the target of the inference (S), and the scope of the inference (P, the substance in which H is said to inhere), are unsound or false; in other words, neither P nor S as configured are sound substitutions in the inference schema. *But he*

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[90] Kamalaśila provides such arguments for Śāntarakṣita's defense in *TS*, (*op. cit*), 89-90. These usually take the form of stock arguments of the Buddhist tradition presented in an extremely abridged form.

has not critiqued the posit of H, the fact of there being order, nor has he questioned that such a fact can behave as a logical sign. More specifically, he has not critiqued the idea that what H behaves as a sign for is some further fact that can account as a causal account *of* H; even on the Buddhist scholastic view, H does not refer to a metaphysically primitive fact.

Let us use the grammatical structure 'S is P' as an instance of what might count as 'ordering' for both the theist and the Buddhist scholastic. The structure points to the fact that there is some particular of which some quality is predicated; hence there is tacit suggestion that an isomorphism exists between the theoretical structure thought to be exampled in reality, and the structure expressed by the grammatical relation. On Buddhist theories of perception, an instance of the form 'S is P' is not perceptually obvious, but rather experientially 'given': that is, *we do see* in terms of such a relation, but neither such a relation nor our use of it is reliable in any straightforward sense. If we allow that such 'structured experience' can be an instance of what the theist wishes to speak of as 'world', then the Buddhist scholastic must also see in such experiences constituted in terms of the structure 'S is P' a logical sign pointing to some further fact about the locus in which this ordering is exampled. If the locus is not, as the Buddhist scholastic maintains, a substantial particular 'in' the world, what could it be?

Kamalaśila has a little fun with the specification of a locus. Because of the fact that Buddhists need not be troubled by the use of 'order' as an H, Kamalaśila suggests that the scope provided by the theist had better be such that the claims of the theist are not redundant. Both the Buddhists and the theists agree that *for some* P, there is an H such that L (H, S; P), where S refers to some causal fact about P and responsible for H. Kamalaśila's comments play on the theory-laden nature of the characterizations 'product' and 'effect of sentient effort'. His comments furthermore point to the gulf separating the realist commitments of the theist from the critical idealism of the Buddhist scholastics in the academy. The scope, as he points out, had better not be 'experience

within an embodied subject.' For example, the cognitive judgment 'This pot is blue' ['pot' = S; 'blue' = P] exampled in the experienced life of a person has as its referent *a product* of a particular *synthesis* of discrete, metaphysically *simple* sensations carried out by that *sentient agent*. Trivially then, the class of all exampled 'orderings' are such that they are the effect of sentient effort.[91] No disagreement is to be found here. But what Kamalaśila has suggested thereby is that the locus of the qualification 'H' is none other than the intentional operations of sentient agents that result in such instances of cognized 'order'.

The Buddhist scholastic is in a position to collapse the opening claim of the theist (that there is *L* ('ordering', the class of all 'products'[92])) into a claim motivating belief in an inter-subjective community of sentient agents whose collective acts are entirely sufficient to account for cognitions expressing 'order'. The graph-theoretic world is admittedly to be accounted for, but it is not to be accounted for by the positing of a unique and metaphysically privileged sentient being, on pain of ignoring the correlation that is evident between 'ordering' and *multiple* agents. Kamalaśila has pointed out that Śāntarakṣita has suggested the existence of the following truth-following causal sequence of cognitions; that is, there is the following *inference*: "every and any instance of experience (the world) to be had by multiple sentient agents possesses the qualification 'exemplifying order'; 'order' presupposes a sentient agent capable of effecting the relevant synthesis (cf. the cognition of blue-pot); consider a palace; such ordering is executed by multiple sentient agents. So too then: the world."[93] The effect is to say that a God-like causal factor is not suggested by the qualification 'being

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[91] *TS*, (op. cit), 80.

[92] Where 'product' is defined as the conjunction of two or more simples.

[93] Śāntarakṣita sums this entire line of reasoning up quite succinctly when he says: "we have no philosophical quarrel with what is claimed in general, namely that [products] have as an antecedent [condition] sentience, for the manifoldness of experience is born of intentional acts of selection. In the deductive core of the argument for [products] having an antecedent single, enduring sentient agent, the conclusion is vacuous, and [the evidence is] not on target [*lit.* deviating], because it is observed that palaces and so forth are built by many people." *buddhimatpūrvakatam ca sāmāyena yad īṣyate / tatra naiva vivādo no vaiśvarūpyam hi karmajam /80/ nityaikabuddhipūrvatvasādhane sādhyaśūnyatā / vyabhicāraś ca saudhāder bahubhiḥ karaṇekṣaṇāt /81/ TS* verses 80-81; quoted in Richard Hayes, *Principled Atheism in Buddhist Tradition*, (*op. cit*), f27, p129; his translation is available on p129. I have modified his translation in a number of places for consistency.

ordered' unless one is in the habit of naively endorsing the existential presumption of grammatical relations, or incapable of constructing a sound correlation between logical signs. That is to say, the etiology for the construction of the idea of God suggested here is that of being an inadequately rigorous epistemic agent, or being one who believes in grammar. This suggests that there is no more to be said about the idea of God then that it is a simple enough case of epistemological error.

It is difficult not to sense at the conclusion of the Buddhist scholastic critique of the theistic inference that all that has been achieved is the assertion of the truth of the following conditional: if one is a Buddhist scholastic, accepting the categories that they use, then one could not *consistently* believe that the argument of the theist is sound. The most neutral way of putting the matter is to say that the Buddhist has shown that the theist's argument for God rests on premises that are theory-laden and not obvious. If one accepts the presuppositions of the Buddhist, then one can say that not only are the premises for the theist's argument unsound, but that there exists an independent argument starting from *the theist's premise* which excludes a creator God. What the existence of the Buddhist argument does point to, however, is the fact that there is no straightforward way in which the necessity of the idea of God may be configured without further argument. The Buddhist argument does not, in turn, manage to question the idea of God taken as an atomic fact about the world. The idea *qua* idea remains unquestioned and hence, *prima facie* plausible.

But Kamalaśila tells us that Śāntarakṣita believes the posit of God when taken on its own to be internally *inconsistent*, like the notion of a 'flower blooming in the sky', and hence not plausible at all.[94] The reasons for such inconsistency largely depend on arguments first sketched by Vasubandhu and come with an exacting metaphysical price. Vasubandhu sees the internal consistency in the notion of something like God being a *causal* factor; the requirements for something counting as God

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[94] This discussion may be found in *TS*, (*op. cit*), 105-107. If it is true that the idea of God is internally inconsistent then it could not, in principle, be the conclusion of an inference; why then spend time discussing the inference? Kamalaśila says that it is because there is no use of the idea of God in the *argument itself*, and a critique of an argument must make use of those premises that are doing logical work in the argument itself.

(a maximally worship-worthy being as construed by theism) on the one-hand, and something counting as an efficient cause on the other, are antithetical.

The dilemma is not quite as neat as I will present it here, but the sketch does capture the antecedent dependence of Vasubandhu's argument on Buddhist notions of causation. The first distinction to be made is between simples and a collection of simples. We then state that only simples can exert causal efficacy at any given time. So either 'God' denotes a simple, or one should convince the theist that it is only *that* simple responsible for discharging the relevant 'theistic' effort that should be called God the creator, *even if* 'God' is *a collection* of simples; the 'whole' according to Buddhist scholasticism enjoys no more than a nominal 'subsistence'. As far as 'creation' goes, only that part of God responsible for causation at the time of creation may be called the creator. This softens the claim of theism for, on this account, simples *do not* survive the exertion of causal efficacy. All that may be said to 'exist' is that which is causally efficacious, and all causally efficacious entities are evanescent, dissipating even as they discharge their efficacy. The strength of the opening move is to say that, for all intents and purposes, we must deal with God as we would with a causally efficient simple, *whether or not the theist wishes to claim that God is a simple*; again, this dilemma is achieved by having recourse to a Buddhist scholastic metaphysic of causation.

Once we treat God as a simple, the argument gains steam: what sort of a metaphysically simple, evanescent entity could be thought to have 'the world' as an effect? The world is not just spatially complex, but highly temporally ordered, in that all causal relations show time dependent properties such as 'succession', and significantly, show the temporal property of 'temporal extension'—the world lasts longer than any single causally efficacious phenomenon that constitutes it at a particular time. Given that a simple does not last that long, we must think that this entire 'temporal ordering' which comprises the world must be present—in the form of a set of intentions such as "let event 1 happen at instance 1 AND event 2 at instance 2 AND event 3 at instance 3 and

so on—*in that simple*. Even if we allow that a simple can support such a complex structure (which

Vasubandhu would not have allowed), how does such a non-temporal set of intentions *translate*, in

time, into the play of succession that is the world? Any attempt to answer this question results in

incoherence.[95] This strategy would attempt to sketch what appears to be an *a priori* basis for the

refutation of the notion of God as a factor, but it is one that is *a priori* only on a given conceptual

scheme that itself sacrifices a neutral description for depth ontology. It remained, however, perhaps

the most influential argument in the Buddhist scholastic armory.

It is interesting to note that the only way in which the Buddhist scholastics have been able to

get rid of God is in a way that also eliminates reference to 'pots', a fact that gives one reason to

suspect that to believe that reference to pots is sound is *ipso facto* to believe in 'God the creator' being

a *prima facie* plausible referent; is this in fact the case? Is it true that as long as one does not 'doubt'

our experience of the success of subject / predicate speech and cognitions constituted in terms of

identifiable 'gross' referents like blue pots, that 'God' will come along for the ride as a viable

cognition? That would be to suggest that the idea of God is *as intuitive* as the 'idea' of pots, that the

only way to rid oneself of such a notion is to engage in a dramatic metaphysical renunciation

including systematic courses in 'perception' along Buddhist meditative lines. This is a strong

connection, however implicit the connection may remain in Buddhist writings; as long as one has

reasons to think that pots may function as referential subjects, one has, however implicitly, fostered

an orientation in which one can intuit that 'God the creator' is meaningful.

It is fitting to consider what antecedent strategies we may find in early Buddhism, if only

because the Buddha did not appear to have been taken with the idea that belief in 'God' was merely

a consequence of epistemological naivety; nor did he seem to believe the corollary, that only a

rigorous study of the depth-structure of cognitions of pots could alleviate the belief in an otherwise

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[95] The best treatment of this argument is still Richard Hayes, "Principled Atheism in the Buddhist Scholastic Tradition," in Roy W. Perrett (ed.), *Philosophy of Religion*, (*op. cit*), see esp. 112-114.

plausible notion of a creator-God. Unlike his scholastic descendents, neither pots nor God troubled him; a notion like 'the world', on the other hand, appears to have deserved a category of its own.

In chapter one I specified conditions for rendering the use of the term "Buddhist scholastic" precise. If the word "scholastic," and the argument-types valorized in this tradition, are clear, that is more than I can say about the now institutional term "*bauddha*" or "Buddhist." Certainly, the 'Buddha' is acknowledged in all of the works of the Buddhist scholastics, and ostensibly, there seems to be a large degree of continuity between their works and the works that were produced before, by Buddhists and for Buddhists. But one consequence of the 'new style' and context is that most Buddhists who took the new logic seriously also inherited a set of issues which Early Buddhism may have helped spark, but did not directly indulge in. Buddhist scholasticism then could be said to have given a new and improved language to address concerns that were not always historically part of their tradition, in a constitutive sense, but to which for some time now Buddhists wished to respond and, if their literature is any indication, to which they gave considerable thought.

I have stated that I wish to keep in mind the presence of argument as a condition for 'philosophy'. The tension, however, is that reasons may be given for why the Buddha refused to traffic in posits such as 'the world'. Those reasons, furthermore, can be assembled to give what might be called 'a philosophical picture' for such abstention. It is in this sense that one might consider the Buddha's reticence to speak of God as a philosophical conclusion, one whose premises might very well place him at odds with his scholastic descendents.

I do not think the Buddha would have been impressed with Vātsyāyana's conviction that if one did not argue in the philosophical style, one would then be reduced to poetic utterances about the state of one's soul [*ātma-vidya*], or to undisciplined talk about 'deliverance from the body' [*mokṣa-śāstra*]. Not to argue in the academic, philosophical style is not an absence of critical thinking, just as, to use one of Bibhuti Yadav's favorite examples, not eating meat in no way entails that one is

hungry. To put the matter crudely, because I do not think that Buddhists began to think critically only when they adopted certain argument strategies from later Indian traditions, it is fitting to consider what antecedent strategies we may find in early Buddhism for the lack of enthusiasm about "God" as the subject of conversation.

CHAPTER FOUR: CANONICAL ANTECEDENTS[*]

> "There are Bhaggava, some ascetics
> and Brahmins who declare as their
> doctrine that all things began with the
> creation by a God [*issara*], or
> Brahmā…" [DN, 24, 2.14]

> "…And did I ever say to you: 'Come
> under my rule, Sunakkhatta, and I will
> teach you the beginning of things'?"
> [DN, 24, 1.5]

To ask about the historical Buddha's orientation to God is to ask how the redactors of the

canonical discourses depicted the Buddha's encounters, in dialogue, with the idea of God, or

expressed belief in God. Any answer to a question concerning the Buddha's interest or, for that

matter, disinterest in God-talk, is constrained by the parameters expressed by the adjective

'canonical'. What could it mean to speak of "canonical" sources here? For the purposes of this

thesis, by "canonical" I mean that body of discourses found in the *Dīgha Nikāya* (DN), the *Majjhima*

Nikāya (MN), the *Saṃyutta Nikāya* (SN) and the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* (AN) and their *Āgamic* correlates;

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[*] The reader ought to be alerted that this chapter is not intended to be a full dress critique of any of the positions held by the Buddha that are mentioned herein. At most, one may consider this chapter to be an attempt to lay out the terms such a critique would have to take into account. One unfortunate effect this restriction may have is that this discussion might justify a belief that I am entirely in support of the manner in which the Buddha lays out his concerns and interprets the consequences of these concerns; on another front, the space restriction may also suggest the equally erroneous belief that I consider my interpretation of the Buddha's doctrines to be sufficiently justified just by material presented in this chapter. Both of these inferences are wrong. Regarding the latter belief, some points rely on ground-breaking work done in the last ten years by scholars in the field. A significant number of points, however, to the best of my knowledge, are raised here for the first time. Where existing secondary literature may be relied upon, I have listed the relevant literature in the footnotes to the chapter. As for significantly novel philosophical assertions, I hope in the future to publish some philosophical inquiries into root presuppositions of Buddhist practice. The bare minimum of this material is presented in footnotes to this chapter. These footnotes may be considered optional for the reader unconcerned for now with some finer issues regarding Buddhist thinking. I would like to thank Lisa M. Renzi for enabling a sharpening of terms and concepts employed in the following explication. The discussion has benefited greatly from her insights and concern with 'sharp' definitions. Any perceived over-reliance on phenomenological and / or existentialist idioms is decidedly no fault of hers. On the use of different idioms in the thesis, I refer the reader to my discussion of the *Uncle Charles Principle* at the end of the Preface.

the fact that I will not, however, rely on the latter for this thesis is a function of practical

convenience and does not represent a claim about the historical priority of the *Pāli* versions.

Helping ourselves to a canon as defined above, we may speak of a canonical 'Buddha'. The

definition cannot but be anticlimactic if it is to be sober; "the Buddha" simply denotes that person

whose views and actions are depicted in these canonical discourses. I agree with Rupert Gethin not

only in seeing these four collections as "constituting the essential common heritage of [Indian]

Buddhist thought," but also in seeing the extent to which many of the developments in Indian

Buddhism may be thought to be a matter of the ongoing process of working out the implications of

the material contained therein and also, I want to note, of discovering implicit or hitherto

unrecognized orientations to such material.[96]

Canonically speaking, then, what did the Buddha have to say about God? It is important to

know exactly what one is asking when one searches for the Buddha's response to what we are

inclined to call, in the singular, God. This amounts to saying that we usually allow ourselves to treat

this nominative as a logical subject term, as an ostensible substantive, and one permitting the

existential presumption of a singular entity. In short, we allow 'God' to be a viable substitution

instance of a schema such as "There exists an *x*, such that…" Of course, without argument, we

must take the presumed substitution-worthiness of "God" as an expression of habit, or of

generalized linguistic faith that the proliferation of nominatives in language has some realistic,

metaphysical analogue. Let us for now allow ourselves the luxury that we do in fact know what we

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[96] See Rupert Gethin, "The Word of the Buddha: Scriptures and Schools" in his *The Foundations of Buddhism*, (Oxford University Press, 1998), p42-43. For the reader concerned that this emphasis will introduce a sectarian, or more specifically, a Theravādin bias in my discussion of the Buddha, it should be noted that (a) Theravādin orthodoxy is very frequently *less close* to these discourses even in letter (to say nothing of the spirit) than the foundational thinkers of the Mahayāna, authors such as Asaṅga and Nāgārjuna, and that (b) apart from the increasingly apparent fact that *all* subsequent Indian Buddhist thinkers of any sectarian persuasion were thoroughly familiar with these discourses, it is important to keep in mind that sectarian disputes did not concern the discourses, but matters of exegetical principles regarding 'additions' to this core corpus. For striking evidence of (a), see "A Comparative Study of Dhyānas, according to Theravāda, Sarvāstivāda and Mahāyāna" in Walpola Rahula, *Zen and the Taming of the Bull: Towards the definition of Buddhist Thought,* (Gordon Fraser, 1978), p101-111. For (b), see Etienne Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism*, 156.

mean[97] when we use "God," or indulge in predications about God, and that we are justified in the

habit described above. I suspect that it is possible that one may detect, in many instances of such use

and reference when asking questions about God, one of several implied orientations. I see in such

'uncovering of orientations' a prerequisite for 'rational' conversation. At the very least, it is polite to

know where someone could possibly be coming from and what that individual has already

committed to, even if only dispositionally. For my purposes, such 'uncovering of orientations' is an

important prerequisite for responsibly situating the Buddha's strategy with "God."

One approach would involve a sense—and this sense may be either logical, affective or

both—that the term at hand is *privileged* in some important way. It may be as simple as noting that

despite the fact that *all* the philosophical disputes between the philosophers could be *exemplified* in

the case of a cognitive episode involving reference to a medium-sized locus such as a pot—indeed, it

could be shown that much of the *justification for* and indeed *coherence of* the philosophical and soteric

enterprise rested on the sorts of categories that one could defensibly claim to be involved in the

conditions under which one could say "there is a blue-pot over there"—few are inclined to be

'moved' by references to pots. Stereotypes of Indian intellectual life would suggest that it would not

strike someone as 'odd' that philosophers debate God in India, and such intellectual *empathy* is

certainly not *de jure* when discussing the concentrated focus philosophers indulge in when attempting

to get maximally right how exactly it is that *one ought to* think about *referring episodic cognitions that state*

<u>that</u>: *L* (blue, pot), or, blue *is located in* pot. The latter is a practice that, in extreme cases, almost

serves as a *reductio ad absurdum* demonstrating the ridiculousness of *philosophia*. It would then appear

to be the case that 'God' is soterically and philosophically worthy in a way that few other objects are.

Some might *wish* to say, it is *the* most worthy, and even an affective sense that this is the case is

enough to express the privileging of "God" I alluded to above. This is our first lesson: while "God"

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[97] Technically, that we have enough reliable semantic information that can fix appropriately determinate referents for "God."

can be represented by a singular variable in a logical schematic sentence—and therefore be relevantly similar to any medium sized correlate to cognition—it is *importantly different* from other referring terms standing in for such correlates. This difference is expressed just in the pragmatic privileging of talk involving or mentioning God.

Hence, it could be maintained, a question regarding the existence or non-existence of God (or relevantly God-like and philosophically worthy objects) ought to be dealt with sooner rather than later, perhaps even prior to all other concerns.[98] One can then claim that a philosophy that does not exercise such priority is either *profane* or *unintelligible* using one of two ways in which we could seek to cash out such priority. The category of "profane" might correlate with an affective sense of the priority of God, and to be philosophically respectable, requires that one have something approaching a *logical* criterion of priority in virtue of which we could declare a tradition trying to get by without God simply "unintelligible."

Logical criteria may perhaps be cashed out in two kinds: they may rely on a notion of practical necessity, or on some use of a notion like explanatory power. It seems to me that the former is more often found to be the criterion employed in the context of the Buddha's India, though for a number of reasons, it would be some time before we can see a logical tool being shaped out of what I am calling practical necessity; thinking in terms of practical necessity is,

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[98] Out of deference to the Western Philosophical tradition it is worth noting another way of privileging God-talk. One can maintain that precisely *because* God-talk is the most important and most consequential topic, it should only be treated after many years of study and preparation. This would be the case for Chrysippus the Stoic according to Plutarch in his *De Stoicorum Repugnantiis* (On Stoic Self-Contradictions). This has been translated by H. Cherniss, (Loeb, London*,* 1976), p429. A more subtle and indirect method *may be* inherited *via* Descartes. One only need adopt his separation of philosophy and theology as per the latter having to deal with salvation through *morality* (part 1 of the *Discourse on Method*, p.111), render the latter universal (as he does) and acknowledge the necessity that a core of morality be immune to the posture of radical doubt (part 3, p.121), thereby at least implicitly privileging practical rationality, and one can secure an irreducible core of God-talk for any philosophy. For an awareness of the privileging of practical rationality operative here, I am indebted to O. Bradley Bassler. On the basis of conversations with him, and subsequent research on Spinoza, Leibniz and Kant, I 'sense' that *this* heritage of Descartes' may prove, in light of Kant's influence, to have been one of the more powerful, formative and resilient of Descartes' strategies. See Descartes, *Discourse on the Method of Rightly Conducting One's Reason and Seeking Truth in the Sciences*, in *The Essential Descartes*, ed. Margaret D. Wilson, (Meridian, 1993).

however, a ubiquitous practice. Take for example the following dialogical instance.[99] An elderly

Nārada, well-versed and expert in Vedic lore, approaches a rather young celibate; the old mantra

expert wishes to test the following hear-say—"one who knows / experiences Self, crosses-over grief

[*tarati śokam ātmavit iti*]." He presents to the young celibate the following incomplete syllogism: I am

aggrieved [*śocāmi*], and *as I have heard* [*śrutam*], only one who knows Self crosses over grief, *therefore*

[*tasmāt*]…, *it is important for you to teach me how to uncover the Self.*" The necessity, if any, involved in this

request (for it is not a question), is dispositional and not logical. I need to know the Self, *only* because

of what is said about its role in overcoming my situation, a situation that I experience (not *judge*) as

being practically impossible. Such a disposition does not ask what exactly 'Self' is good for in terms

of the logical conditions under which 'Self' could at all be helpful in this instance; nor indeed, is

there any question as to *what* the Self could be over and above the condition predicated and bodied

forth of the speaker and expressed just by the context and use of the phrase, "*I am* aggrieved." There

is a serious question to be asked about how someone could come to understand such a line of

inquiry. After all, in effect, asking the question that the old mantra expert asks is tantamount to

claiming, almost in one breath, that I am in pain (and therefore a subject liable to pain) *and* I am

definitively not a subject liable to pain. Better, asking such a question is to demand that I had better

not be a subject liable to pain, but still identifiable with the one questioning. The suggestion that

something has to make sense even if it does not make sense is a rather pure expression of what I

would call practical necessity.

The young celibate Sanatkumāra's response, however dizzying and impressive a syllogistic

display it presents, remains dogmatic to the extent that it does not even question the nature of the

privileging of Self; the skill involved is invested in the attempt at producing a justification for the

methods by which one may hope only to alleviate, and *not to diagnose*, one's dispositionally expressed

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[99] This discussion is a paraphrase of the Nārada-Sanatkumāra dialogue in the *Chāndogya-Upaniṣad*, chapter 8, 3.

symptoms. The internal consistency of the syllogisms is bought at the cost of the referential

emptiness of the antecedents involved, relevance, and diagnostic accuracy.

The explanatory sense of logical priority God-talk may enjoy is not always as prevalent; a

genealogy of such an instance is, however, playfully presented by Asaṇga in the fourth century. The

manner in which explanatory power can make its presence felt can be seen in the following sketch.

One might think that some Y in our lives could not be the case without some X, and *if* we think that

one *needs* either an understanding of Y, or of the means to bring about $\sim Y$ necessarily, *then* X and /

or knowledge of X is necessary. To put the matter in modern jargon, we might say that we have a

situation in which we want the following to hold: we wish to maintain necessity of the consequent,

and thereby, wish to affirm the necessity of the antecedent.[100]

To speak about Y intelligibly, one had better be prepared to speak about X; otherwise, or so

the saying goes, Y is unintelligible. And since Y is experienced to begin with, this presents us with

the embarrassing case of experiencing what should not be intelligible, and because not intelligible,

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[100] I take these terms from Leibniz. In a relationship of consequence, such as "If X then Y," Y is to be understood as the consequent, and X the antecedent, and the relationship itself, that of 'consequence'. We can distribute a notion of 'necessity' then in the following ways. We can say, "*Necessarily* if X then Y" (necessity of consequence); we could say "If X then *Necessarily* Y" (necessity of the consequent); we could say "If *Necessarily* X, then Y" (necessity of the antecedent). The relations between these and the ways in which one can deduce one from the other are of course other matters. It is enough to point out that in our schema what is not even being addressed is the status of the consequence posited between X and Y, the means of knowing such a relation, to say nothing of the necessity accorded to the relation of consequence. Generally, one way of helping yourself to deducing a necessity of the consequent is one in which one is already in possession of a necessary antecedent, and has a relation of consequence that is necessary as well. That is: if it is the case that *Necessarily* if X then Y, and it is the case that it is *Necessary* that X, then one can deduce that it is the case that *Necessarily* Y. Presuming that one has reasons to think these conditions as holding just by virtue of wanting to assert the necessity of the consequent, is however, not a valid form of argument. We might also remember that in Indian thinking, validity without soundness is of little comfort or interest. Such moves are, however, repeatedly made in India even as late as the eighth century, especially when trying to motivate God-talk or talk of God-like referents. Śankara, for example, states that the pre-requisite for knowledge of *Brahman*, Being reified as a nominative subject, is desire for union with such a reality, and that this desire requires that one have already committed to a categorical distinction between those things that are impermanent, and those that are like Being, a-temporal, infinite and eternal [*tasmāt kim api vaktavyaṃ yadanantaram brahmajijñāsā upadiśyata iti ucayate nityānityavastuvivekaḥ*, in his commentary to the Brahma-sutras, quoted in Malcolm David Eckel, "Wander Lonely as a Rhinoceros," in ed., Leroy S. Rouner, *Loneliness*, (University of Notre Dame Press, Indiana, 1988), 273-294, see especially p285] Of course, Śankara takes such 'separation' that is a transcendental condition for the inquiry as *having existential import*. This sort of strategy is anticipated and soundly taken to task in the first *sutta* of the DN, where the Buddha proposes an etiology for how people can come to, not only hold the logical privileging of such terms as God, Self, Consciousness, Infinite, Finite and the like, but also come to be convinced by their commitments while repressing the practical roots of these categories in some sort of 'need'.

not possible. This would be a very embarrassing situation indeed; much better, in fact, for everyone if we hold on to *X*.

This is the second important lesson to be gleaned from investigating orientations to God-talk. Modifying a point gleaned from the first lesson, we must say that even if "God" is importantly different *qua* term from such 'humble' terms such as "pot," "body," "fire" and the like, this difference need not cut any logical ice. "God," from the perspective of its use, appears relevantly similar enough to other referring terms so as not to pose any trouble in substituting for variables in schemas such as 'If *X* then *Y*," where either the consequent or the antecedent can be humble terms, and the other be "God." That is, there is apparently no philosophical difference strong enough to council pause in expressing relationships between what may very well be, significantly unlike terms. This situation is appropriately aggravated if we consider, like the Indians largely did, that hypotheticals have, as a condition of sound substitution, well instanced examples of causal relations. This point will become important in what follows. For now it is enough to note that it is surely not obvious that we should consider talk of non-temporal, infinite things being causally—in an efficient causal sense—related to more mundane phenomena obvious. The degree to which such talk would not be obvious is the degree to which we should see a significant bias in the presumption of what may be called the *convenient homogeneity* of "God" and other singular, referring terms.

I may as well point out that given the manner in which the above example of explanatory power is presented, we are still involved with a privileging of practical necessity that, as the situation progresses, is sublated into an issue of pure explanatory completeness without a necessary correlation to pragmatic success in life. It is also worth noting that my schematic sketch of Asanga's reflections on reasons why people hold on to God-like philosophically worthy objects is actually based on his inquiry into how the notion of a personal God could have come about. The situation according to Asanga is something as follows. I wish to do an action of type A, which I know to be

qualified as being meritorious in a moral sense [*śubhe*]. Intending to do A, I wind up, however, doing what I do not want to do, which in effect, is ~A [*pāpe*], an act I deem to be 'sinful'. According to Asanga, the explanatory gap between my intentions and what are on the Buddhist view, 'hidden' embodied motivations is then *called* God, a procedure necessary if I am to believe in my self as fully conscious and sufficiently capable volitional agent. Incapable of believing that we are constituted of hidden, unconscious motives, the story goes, we introduce God *qua* external, volitional agent. The second scenario Asanga presents also takes its bearings from the need to believe in a necessary and sufficiently capable agent; acting out of the intent to produce an S-type situation in the world [*sugatau*] that I consider desirable, I actually wind up experiencing ~S [*apāyeṣu*]. To preserve the sufficiency of volitional, agent causation as an explanatory tool, (otherwise the world and its experienced states could become unbearable) I add another volitional agent [*kartā*], God, instead of thinking *my lived body and the world it intersects with* to be, in part, intractable to agent control.[101] In both cases, the need to effect closure of agent-causation is the practical need, and God packs the explanatory punch. Don't lose, but add agents, and the world is practically approachable (in the form of worship to superior agents) and explanatorily simpler—I add one of an already established kind (agents) instead of mucking about with opaque elements like the unconscious body, or embodied intentionality, and the like. From its reasoned roots in such practical dilemmas, God is free or liberated to become the object of worship.

What is important here is not the insightfulness or the psychological truth of Asanga's genealogy as such; it is enough to note that Buddhist thinkers have seen in the recourse to God-like entities a story involving something very much like explanatory and practical necessity. Such recourse tells us something about the manner in which *the importance* of God and God-like entities

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[101] From the *Yogācārabhūmi*, ed. by Vidhusheskhara Bhattacharya, Part I, (University of Calcutta, 1957). The paragraph in question is preserved in Sanskrit, see p144-45. The passage is translated in George Chemparathy's "Two Early Buddhist Refutations of Isvara as the Creator of the Universe," in *Beitrage zur Geistesgechichte Indiens: Festschrift feur Erich Frauwallner*, 85-100, p94-95.

may be configured. One straightforward consequence of such prioritization based either in

deliberation on practical dilemmas or based on a heady combination of tradition and 'feelings' is that

one might feel that questions regarding God ought to be answered, that for various reasons, a life

lived without consideration of whether or not God exists is a depraved or impoverished form of life,

a life not worth calling a life at all, or a life not capable of being lived. In this sense what one is

expressing is the feeling that the question (or such questions) be given priority—that until this

question is settled, nothing is settled.

There is also something to be said about the *nature* of question concerning God or God-like

entities. One may believe, in addition to holding the importance of such inquiry, that the type of

question here is a perfectly straight-forward question. It is, so this approach would have us believe,

perfectly clear what we are asking when we are asking this question and what we intend to refer to

by means of it; there is, in other words, a fact of the matter that renders not only reference

determinate, but that also provides an unambiguous answer to a question regarding existence and

hence non-existence. So given its importance, one should then either affirm or deny the existence of

God, for one thereby signals clearly what sort of a life one intends to cultivate or prescribe for

others. One could of course think that it is *not* a straightforward matter, but thereby think that one

has asserted something important about a clearly construed and meaningful subject. This would be

the case, for example, in the Vedāntic qualification of Brahman (that is, *Being* suitably capitalized, or

what there really *is*) as 'indefinable' (*anirvacanīya*).[102] Grammatically, this conforms to the maintenance

of the subject term in the nominative case while disavowing any successful predicate, *except of course*

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[102] The case is a little messier than this. What 'Being itself' here ought to include, on the interpretation of the tradition in question, are the pseudo-predicates "actuality or existence" (*sat*), "apperception" (*cit*) and the quale "orgasmic and uninterrupted bliss" (*ānanda*). One senses that predicating these three of Brahman would amount to a tautology given the presuppositions of this school. See Sengaku Mayeda's translation of the *Upadeśasāhasrī* of Śaṅkara in his *A Thousand Teachings*, (State University of New York Press, 1992), p19. It is worth pointing out that for Śaṅkara *īśvara* (god) and *Brahman* (Being, etc.) appear to be interchangeable to a highly significant degree. Being is the material cause of what is the case.

in this case the class name 'indefinable'. Logically, one may also consider this to say that "God" cannot be a completely vague term as coupled with non-vague identity conditions (God = God), we have the case that for *at least one* sortal predicate P that stands for an essential, defining property of God, it is maintained that there is a fact of the matter determining that God is either P or ~P.

Along with a sense of the 'import' of taking God-like objects seriously, these ways of interpreting the nature of questions concerning God give us a good sense of the logical and practical grounds for saying that a denial of God is a *significant* denial.[103]

Let us take stock of the facts with which any interpretation of the Buddha's atheism would have to contend. At no point in the discourses does the Buddha devote time to an independent analysis of what we might call God. He certainly does not seem to consider God a fundamental antecedent for ethical reflection or praxis.[104] Furthermore, not only does the Buddha not devote a separate analysis to God, he gives the impression in the discourses of being mildly surprised when the subject is introduced in conversation by others.[105] Recourse to God then seems to function as an

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[103] This sketch of 'significant denial' is inspired by and heavily indebted to Bibhuti Yadav's idea of a 'significant negation' discussed in his "Negation, Nirvana and Nonsense," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, XLV / 4 (1977), 451-471.

[104] In this, it must be said, he is not alone. Theism as construed in the West has *never* been the *dominant* leitmotif of Indian philosophy of religion, and it certainly was not even a concern among the renunciate traditions among which numbered Buddhism. The Buddha differs from even the non-theistic traditions in being non-substance oriented generally, and more specifically, arguing for the non-importance and unavailability of any locus in which 'essential person-hood' could be thought to inhere. A significant sociological fact deserves to be mentioned given the subject of this thesis and the comment made above. The first instance of a theistic cult that understood itself to be distinct from the Brahmanical tradition that one can find evidence for in India occurs in the North Western territories occupied by culturally 'foreign' rules, *specifically Greek rulers*. From the 3rd to the 2nd century BCE much of North Western India experienced the ascension of Bactrian Greeks who periodically annexed territories from the Mauryan Empire. It is in this context that a column (at Besnagar, near Bhīlsā) was erected by the Greek Ambassador Heliodorous, from the Taxila king Antialidas, in praise of an early form of Viṣṇu named Vāsudeva. The cult of the Bhāgavatas was active at least from around the first century before the common era. Meanwhile, in neighboring Śakala (Siālkot), the Greek king Menander supported Buddhism. For more details, see A. L. Basham, *The Wonder That Was India: A Survey of the Indian Subcontinent before the Coming of the Muslims*, (3rd edition, Rupa, 1967), 232-243.

[105] I think it significant to point out that the few discussions of theism that do occur in the canonical discourses are confined to DN and MN, indicating as per the interlocutors involved, that this form of discussion was indulged at an introductory level and then only with those that were outsiders, reflecting their concerns rather than the Buddha's. I for one have subscribed for some time to the notion that the different collections of discourses show a gradation of the technicality and depth involved in the formulation of the teaching, usually correlated to the seriousness and level of training of the interlocutors. SN on this reading would involve the most direct and penetrating formulations, and with SN in view, other formulations do not become inconsistent, only *indirect*. (In at least this much, I am in agreement with later *abhidhammikas*). For some support of this, see Joy Manné, "Categories of Sutta in the Pāli Nikāyas and Their

opportunity for philosophical therapy rather than edification. What is more intriguing is that the

techniques used in dissecting beliefs in God *do not* employ techniques peculiar to the subject of God;

it would appear that God-talk is not even a *specific* or individual form of cognitive (actually, at its

root, an affective) illness worth the time spent in developing appropriate forms of analyses to cure it.

God-talk is, at best, only a sub-species of a more general illness. At worst, God-talk *obscures* the 'radical'

trouble the Buddha is out to diagnose and excise, thus indirectly promoting the disease whose

continued effect warranted all this *Bauddh*-ism in the first place.

I could say: "but, *he does not speak of pots either.*" Such a comment, though revealing as we will

show to some extent below, would not seem helpful to a person convinced of the privilege God-talk

enjoys. This is a strong index of the sociological factors that go into making the academics of

religion what it is. I do not believe that there exists a book either entitled "The Buddha on the case

for The Irrelevance of the Material Constitution of Pots" or one trying to track the causes of this

gross neglect in the Buddha's discourses. The same cannot be said about books cross-examining the

supposed atheism (which sounds too suspiciously like a doctrine for what appears more like

unconcern) in Early Buddhism, even though, it is entirely possible to construct such an argument for

the irrelevance of both pots and gods on the basis of the *same* principles.[106] And arguably, it has been

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Implications for Our Appreciation of the Buddhist Teaching and Literature," *Journal of the Pali Text Society* 15 (1990): 29-87. (I am indebted to Glenn Wallis for this reference). See also Rupert Gethin's discussion of the nature of SN in his *The Buddhist Path to Awakening*, (Oneworld, Oxford, 2001), 21-26. The sense I get is that SN and AN provide the *themes* that are of central importance on the Buddha's view of Dharma; MN and DN give us instances of this in practice, as employed and exampled in conversations with interlocutors of different traditions.

[106] There remains, however, an important distinction to maintain. In the daily life lived in the world without 'analysis' of the episodes of cognition and reference that constitute the 'furniture' of our experience of the world, it would not strike us as important or even 'sane' to repeatedly pick up a material pot, to touch it with both hands or peer at it, in order to examine whether one knows what it means to say "bring me a pot." References to objects such as pots enjoy a special status. But this does not mean that these referring episodes or referring expressions or cognitions can do philosophical work for the Buddha; this is precisely what it means for them to be conventional—that is, they are not short hand for a deeper depth structure, nor are they 'fictitious'; in other words, they are not bearers of truth or falsity. Within a meditative and analytic framework, however, by purporting to refer to an *external particular*, both 'pot' [technically, any medium sized correlate to cognition, a *kasina* or *nimitta*] and 'God' would have their referring status placed in suspension. [Cf. the standard close of meditation: he is ardent, suffused with in-sight, intentional attending, free of reference *to* (something <u>in</u>) the 'world (constituted by convention; *loke*)' by way of desire (for 'the world') or discontent (with 'the world'); *ātāpī sampajāno satimā vineyya loke abhijjhā domanassaṃ*, DN ii 290.] To think that the meditative context entailed

the irrelevance of pots (or all medium sized purported 'external' particulars held to be the locus of reference; the external, independent ground for intentional *qualia*; and the object in the world wholly causally responsible for one's experience of the world) that has exercised a greater hold on Buddhist intellectuals than has a supposedly now defunct God.[107] In fact, the evidence from the conversations in the discourses would suggest that belief in God did not represent a major concern for the vast majority of the Buddha's interlocutors either. The current *academic* privileging of the Buddha's excision of God-talk, however, goes along with our verdict that, on sociological, affective and logical grounds, there are powerful antecedent inclinations to construe the quasi-denial of God as an instance of a *highly significant* denial, one that should be clarified as soon as possible. One way of putting the matter is to ask: where the later Buddhist scholastics merely filling in an important lacuna in the Buddha's position *vis a vis* "God"?

No doubt, many reasons could perhaps be given for what, from our current sociological position, must surely seem as the Buddha's oversight. We could attempt to make the socio-historical point that God, as conceived in the West, had simply not been developed at the time of the Buddha—he did not, therefore, know what he was missing; this is a sentiment that is captured remarkably well in Marco Polo's searching modal reflections: had the Buddha known or been born after Christ, the son of the one, true God, he would surely have been a saint.[108] We could surmise

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any ontological results seems to me to have been the primary departure of the Buddhist philosophers away from the canonical concerns of the Buddha. That, however, is a thesis that requires its own monograph for defense.

[107] For insight into how much of scholastic Buddhism can be extracted from their views on medium-sized cognitive objects such as pots, see "The Hindu Philosopher's Criticisms of Buddhist Philosophy," in J. N. Mohanty, *Explorations in Philosophy: Indian Philosophy*, ed. Bina Gupta, (Oxford University Press, 2001), pp114-126. Richard Hayes for one notes that even in late Buddhist scholasticism it is more primitive and already held metaphysical and philosophical principles (all exampled in the case of the 'pot') that drives the exclusion of God on pain of inconsistency. That is, God is rarely a subject of independent refutation till very late in the development of Indian thought (approximately fifth and sixth century). See his "Principled Atheism in the Buddhist Scholastic Tradition," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 16 (1989): 502-29. See especially 520-25.

[108] Marco Polo concludes his account of Sakyamuni Burkhan (sic) by saying: "for a certainty, if he had been baptized a Christian he would have been a great saint before God." (From Teresa Waugh's recent 1989 translation of his *Description of the World*) Marco Polo could not have known that the Buddha already had his own saint's day, November 27th, and that he was canonized in the Catholic Church as Josaphat. The evolution may be from *bodhisattva* ("awakening being" in Sanskrit) to Budhasaf (Arabic), to Iodasaph (Georgian), to Ioasaph (Greek) and finally Josaphat (Latin). This is also a

that while the Buddha did not have "a closed-fist" [*ācariya muṭṭhi*],[109] or that his teaching did not have

esoteric dimensions, that nevertheless he did not wish to hold forth on subjects dear to his heart.

Some scholars have tried to exact commitments to a supreme Self from the Buddha, or to a ultimate

consciousness, on the same principles, so why not purchase a commitment to God?[110] We could try

the converse as did Māra (the personification of carnal gratification and death in Buddhist

cosmology) in Aśvaghoṣa's *Buddhacarita*: we could state that the Buddha simply has no heart, or is

unfeeling perhaps, or insentient, and therefore cannot come to believe in God or state the logical

judgment that works as a corollary to his experience of grace: "I am *overwhelmed* [by God]" or "I am

incapable [without or in the face of God]."[111] Here *a-theos* (without God) and *a-citta* (without heart, or

insentient) could work as slightly awkward yet still effective synonyms. We could try the more

nuanced approach that would point out that the Buddha's discourses were context specific, being

shaped by the concerns and capacities of his audience. We could claim that Buddha was being

philosophically minimal and generally unwilling to extend his commitments as far as God. We save

the most outrageous for last: Buddha did not need to speak of God, as he himself was a

manifestation of God: *he was merely being sneaky.*

In light of Vaiṣṇavism's appropriation of the Buddha as merely an incarnation (*avatāra*) of

Viṣṇu, the Buddha on this story becoming no more than a temporary, tactical ruse His Majesty

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nice instance of reification—from a term that is a description of the practice of a type of person to a proper name. The story of this canonization is recounted in Charles Allen, *The Search for the Buddha: The Men Who Discovered India's Lost Religion*, (Carol and Graff, New York, 2002), 25-28.

[109] Buddha's insistence that his teachings be available and verifiable in principle for all who would practice is discussed in Walpola Rahula, "The Buddha on Man, His Nature and Destiny," in *Zen and the Taming of the Bull*, (Gordon Fraser, London, 1978), 49-55. See especially page 51. An intriguing contemporary case of an over-determined interpretation of the Buddha's 'silence' is Raimundo Pannikar's *The Silence of God: The Answer of the Buddha*, (Faith Meets Faith Series, Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis Books, 1989). Translated from the Italian by Robert R. Ball. One can actually read this chapter as an extended attempt to block just the strategy adopted by Panikkar.

[110] The most famous case of something like this is Rhys David's attempts to argue for a Supreme Self in the Buddha's repertoire. Attempts such as these are discussed in "The doctrine of No-Soul" in Walpola Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught*, (Gordon Fraser, London, 1978 edition), 51-66.

[111] In chapter 13, verse 16 Mara is given to say: "*na cintayatyeṣa tameva bāṇaṃ kiṃ syād acitto na śaraḥ saeṣaḥ.*" "This very arrow does not vex him; is it that he 'has no heart' or that this is not that arrow." 'Citta' which can be translated as heart or mind depending on context, usually refers to a locus of sentience, referring to the fact that one is capable of emoting.

himself adopted in order to incite people to leave sacrifice and caste towards devotion, the last may not be terribly humorous everywhere.[112] Whether or not the Buddha had a heart of his own is not for me to say; but if he did not, in any of the contexts in which he taught what has come to be called Buddhism, see any need to concern himself with God in any serious way, then it is at least possible to infer that for the sake of depicting and achieving Buddhist aims, God is not a terribly relevant subject. What is certain is that it is not feasible to state that he was ignorant of monotheism as we are familiar with this term. The citations at the head of this chapter alone would be sufficient for us not to have to take such a suggestion seriously. It should also be noted that the criterion of context-dependence cannot help a person keen on defending a theism latent in the Buddha's teachings for the simple fact that it is this very principle that can account for why the Buddha felt that he needed to discuss God at all.

If we can be comfortable thinking that the Buddha in all probability did not lose any sleep— and as he told a bleary eyed merchant, awakened one's always sleep well—over questions regarding the existence of God, we do not as yet have a clear sense of the reasons for such composure. The suggestion that the exclusion of God-talk owes its sense to a more general agnosticism cultivated by the Buddha is one that I will inquire into below. It is among the more common interpretations of the Buddha's stance on philosophical issues generally, so I wish to take it seriously. Before turning to his 'agnosticism', however, I would like to situate our discussion by incorporating something that Aśvaghoṣa, writing in the first century before the common-era, has to say regarding the manner in which to contextualize the Buddha's exclusion of God. Much of what Aśvaghoṣa has to say here is canonical in the sense that it respects, even in the letter, material found in the canonical

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[112] P.S. Jaini points to this identification as correlated with the wave of *bhaktism* emerging in the 4th to 5th centuries of the common-era. He sees such appropriations at work in the *Mahābharata*, (Book xvii, 47, 67), in the *Matsyapurānas* (47, 247) and in the *Gīta Govinda* (1, I, 9) to mention a few choice locales. Importantly, he cites the failure of a single Buddhist text to address this appropriation of the Buddha as a condition for the eventual disappearance of the need for an individuated Buddhist practice among the laity. See "Disappearance of Buddhism and the Survival of Jainism," in his *Collected Papers on Buddhist Studies*, ed. by P. S. Jaini, (Motilal Banarsidas, Delhi, 2001), 139-152.

discourses.[113] While I will, on a few points, nuance his interpretation with the help of the discourses, it is still the case that for our purposes he remains a reliable enough guide.

In the chapter recounting the Buddha's awakening, Aśvaghoṣa assigns a rather central place to the exclusion of a creator figure. Aśvaghoṣa seems to understand the exclusion of a creator figure as constituting in part what it is in 'awakening' that one wakes up to. The exclusion is not, however, direct in that one is not here offered an independent refutation of the notion of a creator figure. The latter is something that is ruled out *in principle* by what constitutes the awakening insight of the Buddha. He says of the Buddha: "with his divine visual capacity he saw that the *impetus to be* [*bhava*] is operative [*pravṛtti*] as a consequent of intentional activity [*karma*], not from a sentient creator [*kartṛ*], or from insentient materiality [*prakṛti*],[114] or from a principle[115] of self [*puruśa, ātman,* or *jīva*]; nor is it

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[113] One may effect such a comparison using Etienne Lamotte's thorough study of the context of awakening in the Buddhist Canon. See his "Conditioned Co-Production and Supreme Enlightenment," in *Buddhist Studies in Honor of Walpola Rahula*, (Gordon Fraser, London, Sri Lanka, 1980), 118-132.

[114] As we will see below, a closely allied idea in the canonical literature is that the mechanism of *karma* (intentional actions) is neither a global explanation seeking to account for material effects (such as wounds, landslides, hurricanes and the like) through a category such as intentional activity, nor is it to be understood in physicalistic terms as Jainism does. That is, intentional experience is a domain requiring its own types of conditions, namely conditions appertaining to sentience and the fact of intentionality in experience. The poet's point is that intentional experience cannot be reduced to the Sāmkhya notion of the dynamic and entirely impersonal *shtuff* that constitutes experience. As far as this point goes, he is on the right side of the canonical literature. If the poet construes the scope of the efficacy of intentional activity as extending beyond the domain of what can, in principle, be experienced by sentient beings, however, then he has 'gone beyond' what the Buddha himself seems to have understood by intentional action and its role in Buddhist thinking. See *The Moliyasivaka Sutta*, SN, XXXVI.21: "Now when ascetics and brahmans have such a doctrine and view that: "*whatever a person experiences, be it pleasure, pain or neither pain nor pleasure, all that* is caused by previous selective, intentional activity [*karma*]," then they exceed that which they could possibly know and convention [My emphasis]." See comments on '*sabba*', or 'the all' below.

[115] I use "principle" here rather literally, having in mind the root of this word in the Greek '*incipium*', suggesting as it does, combined with the prefix '*pri*,' the idea of a source. The idea proffered in the poet's last exclusion is that one cannot turn to some substance that is *beyond* the influence of conditions of embodiment causally operative within experience, to account *for* experienced states. The usual term doing duty for such a substantial further fact about persons was *atta*, or Self; other traditions, however, like Sāṃkhya and Jaininsm, had developed their own notions of such a further fact [*puruśa* and *jīva* respectively] in line with their metaphysical commitments. See *sutta* 6 and 7 in DN for a rejection of the idea of *jīva* being some further fact of the body beyond causal conditions , one that could do duty for grounding personal identity. For canonical literature mentioning and excluding the postulation of God as a causal explanation of experienced states, see AN I, 173 and the *Devadaha sutta* in MN. For scholarly discussions of these passages, see Helmuth von Glassenapp, *Buddhism—A Non Theistic Religion*, trans. Irmgard Schloegel, (New York: George Braziller, 1966), 39-96; see also Gunapala Dharmasiri, *A Buddhist Critique of the Christian Concept of God*, (Columbo, Lake House Investments, 1974).

without a cause [*ahetu*]."[116] The verse is worth spending some time on, not to learn what our poet thought awakening consists in, but because we find here the perfect hermeneutical tool to organize our examination of the context of the Buddha's exclusion of God. As we will see, the hermeneutic key is remarkably concise and helpful.

The Buddha in the preceding verses has been sitting in analytic meditation, investigating phenomena as they occur to him, finding them empty of any substantial invariant core that is exempt from causal dependence on at least one factor; his meditation is described as slicing plantain trees to find them hollow of what one was looking for.[117] It is this search, or so we are informed, that the insight into the role and consequences of intentional activity terminates. What we require is the motivation of the search.

The Buddha is shown to have already gathered this much from experience: there is a recurrent dissatisfaction evident in the behaviors and dispositions of sentient beings. Evidently dissatisfied in life, they *fear* old-age disease and death, while *craving* continued life elsewhere or *wishing* for the 'peace' of non-existence outside of the conditions of embodiment[118]—a potentially confusing state of affairs, indeed. Relying on a well rehearsed presentation of the Buddha's 'awakening insight', the poet does not embark on a discussion of the etiology presented by the Buddha in the canonical literature; Aśvaghoṣa does, however, present the 'core' idea that there is something pathological evidenced in the stereotypical behavior of sentient beings and that this pathology avails itself of diagnosis.[119]

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[116] I use E. H. Johnston's translation of verse 14.56 with modifications. The reconstruction of this verse from the Tibetan is due to him. See his translation of the *Acts of the Buddha*, (Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, second edition, 1972), 209.

[117] *Ibid.*, verse 48.

[118] *Ibid.*, verses 50-51.

[119] It is in 'pain / pleasure conditioning', or more grossly, feelings [*vedanā*] that one must look for the roots of the disease that affects sentient beings. Cf. what the Buddha is given to say in the first *sutta* of the DN: *vedanāṃ samudyañca atthaṅgamañca ādinvañca nissaraṇañca yathābhūtaṃ viditva anupādāvimukto bhikkhave tathāgato*; Experiencing / Knowing, as they are, episodes of pain / pleasure conditioning—their arising, their ceasing, their attraction, their danger—and putting them out of commission, the one *Thus Come / Thus Gone* [that is, the Buddha] is released without traces of appropriation. DN, 1: 36. [For a discussion of the centrality of "appropriation" see below]. A 'feeling' is the conditioned reification of

For the poet, the context of the Buddha's awakening then is this: whatever discontent may lie at the root of our 'discomfort in the world', *it need not* <u>necessarily</u> *be the case*. This was the insight expressed in saying that it is not right to speak of such becoming (or the *impetus* to perpetuate the felt presence of a Self) as being operative without causes and conditions [*ahetu*] on the one hand, or being determined *inexorably* by factors considered <u>external</u> to the locus that is the experiencing subject on the other. What is meant by 'external' here is a substantial entity that is not only logically independent and a category apart from the embodied subject, but also one that is not causally dependent on anything else *in the way* that *any* other factor causally responsible for how experience is

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sensations as being 'external' or 'independent' <u>states</u> desirable or repugnant to a subject understood as one *who can* <u>enter into</u> *such states* and <u>exit</u> such states. [Cf. the colloquialism: one must *reach* orgasm; or, *leave* a headache *behind*] The degree to which 'feelings' are reified *as states* [*gati*], is directly related to the reification of a <u>subject</u> of experience [constituted primarily by feeling-states] that is wished to *exist* beyond the conditions of experience while being one *for whom* experience could still be personal [*manābhisamāya*]. The 'presence' of a self in experience is a correlate of the intensity of sensations transmuted into feeling-states which can be 'enjoyed' by a subject, in which a subject can 'abide'. It is important to note that such 'feelings' are not free of subconscious traces of prior cognitive activity and conditioning; feelings are 'born' in sensations, but involve a subtle 'selection' of sensations as being desirable or repugnant along with a correlated pragmatic response, however subtle. See SN XXXVI.10, '<u>Rooted in Sensate Contact</u>' [*Phassamulaka Sutta*]' where feelings are said to be born in sensory contact with the world [*tajjam vedayitam*] that has already been primed, or 'liable to be taken in certain ways'. The word *vedayitam*, usually translated as "experienced," and generally used as a gloss for feeling, carries the root '*vid*' and connotes both 'knowledge' and 'deliberate searching'. With each intentional act whereby a new 'incarnate' identity for oneself is selected, at the subtlest level appropriating a feeling-state as being desirable for the subject along with a concomitant attribution of that feeling to causal factors external to them, beings underscore their intoxication with rebirth; with every conditioned shift of feeling states, they underscore their commitment to enduring beyond the limited 'unity' and presence their cultivated 'descent' or 'incarnation' in a feeling-state gives them. The sense of a problem occurs with the realization that beings habitually act *as if* the only relief available to them is the appropriation of an alternative feeling state as the one they wish to perdure within; that is, they know no other form of construing their relation with the world, or the survival of their sense of 'self-presence' in such a world, outside of such identifications with unstable and fleeting feeling-episodes. The 'emotional' precariousness of this strategy lies in the fact that one feels caught between what one wishes to continue to be, and what one does not wish to remain, all the while intuiting that every act of re-appropriation that one is passively subjected to, ensures the fact that one will be in a position to witness the extinction of another re-incarnation, or appropriated feeling-state. The fact of impermanence then becomes both the mechanism for release, and frustration. For the idea that the overly reified idea of rebirth is a condition of 'feelings', consider this from the Buddha: "When the average, ignorant person makes an assertion that there is a Hell under the ocean [*that is, a geographic or independent locale*], he is making a statement that is false and without any phenomenological basis [*ārabbha*; in Sanskrit, cf. *ālambana*]. The word 'Hell' is a term for sensations *taken to be* painful, unpleasant…" SN, iv, 206. For a sound thrashing of the neurotic idea held by some monks and scholars to the effect that the goal of Buddhism is complete dissociation from the sensate body, see Sutta 36 in chapter II of the SN, or the *Vedanāsaṃyutta*; the entire discourse concerns what difference there is to be made, *if both Buddhas and naïve, childish individuals experience feelings*—and the discourse *states* that they do—between the 'awakened body' and ignorant experience. The leading idea seems to be that those in possession of awareness do not 'sublimate' feelings as having roots in conditions *external* to the sensory mechanisms of the lived-body. The argument is suggested that, in fact, by virtue of sentient beings displaying the capacity to be <u>affected</u> by 'ideas', and their proclivity to attribute the cause of such affects to reified, disembodied loci such as propositions and symbols, *that it is sentient beings who are disembodied*. This discourse, however, deserves a further study of its own.

interpreted by a subject is given to be; that is, by 'external' I here mean an entity that is radically removed from the principles constituting the domain of experience. The domain of experience includes both, experience as interpreted by a subject, and the conditions by which experience is 'had' by such a subject.

It is significant to note that the two options presented by the poet, that is, that there is no cause, or that there is a necessary cause *external* to experience, *are pragmatically equivalent*. Buddhist methodology is generally dependent on the fact that within the domain of experience, phenomena obey conditionality, or the principle that for any x, there are factors that render x as x^{120} possible. The principle also says something stronger: for any x, x can only be given *as x* if certain factors are given. But this 'closure' of experience under conditionality would be broken if there were, for some x, a factor y such that y is not of the same order as x in that y enjoys some causal properties 'essentially', or for no specifiable reasons of the type x. The phenomenon x would then effectively be simply given—for we have appealed to some property that is itself not given in experience as being conditioned. The factor would be beyond interrogation. Likewise, if there were some x stipulated as being the case *without* any cause, this would amount to the same fact. If there were no cause to be spoken of, then there is no sense in speaking of rational observation along diagnostic lines, and if this diagnosed condition were deemed to be sufficiently determined by necessitating factors such as the material constitution of beings, god or a substantial and essential 'self', then there could be no clinically effective stance one could assume when diagnosing the conditions *experienced as being less than palatable*. One of the insights of the Buddha may then be phrased as follows: there is no phenomenon appertaining to the domain of sentient experience of discontent that does not obey the closure of conditionality.

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[120] The 'as' construction is intended to highlight the fact that we are interested in experienced effects, or effects that can, in principle, be experienced by sentient beings. Such effects are then to be regarded as always being experienced in an aspect-determined way. We never experience x *simpliciter*, but *x*-as-something.

To probe deeper into this 'critical and clinical' concern outlined by Aśvaghoṣa, I will use a template adopted from the Buddhist canon and exemplified in the Buddha's method of analysis to see in what ways our responses to the concerns over God ought to be constrained by the nature of the concerns of early Buddhism. By 'clinical' I wish to highlight the concern of Buddhism to diagnose and alleviate symptoms of a highly specific syndrome. By 'critical' I wish to point out the unfailing commitment shown by the Buddha in his use of a language of causes and conditions excluding recourse to *a priori* 'essences' that are causally impotent and epistemologically unverifiable. The two senses, the critical and the clinical, mutually reinforce one another as exemplified in the structure of the template below, one which can be seen as a medical model consisting of the following four parts:[121]

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[121] As a scholar of Buddhism would recognize, this is merely the four-fold noble truth declared by the Buddha to be at the cornerstone of his awakening, and his teaching career. The model corresponds to the following rubric: *duḥkha, samudāya, nirodha, mārga*. A. Wezler concludes that there is no evidence that this 'medical' framework for the four-noble truths is borrowed from earlier medical traditions; in fact, it is likely that the reverse is the case. A. Wezler, "On the Quadruple Division of the Yogaśāstra, the Caturvyūhatva of the Cikitsāśāstra and the 'Four Noble Truths' of the Buddha," *Indologica Taurinensia*, 12 (1984), 291-337. For the idea that this is *the* context of Buddhism, see for example MN. i. (379-380) which states that "the dharma *that is special* to the Buddhas is dissatisfaction, its origin, its cessation, and path." [my emphasis; *buddhānṃ sāmukkaṃsikā dhamma-desanā* = *dukkha, samudaya, nirodha, magga*; see DN I 110, MN I 380]. I would like to take the time to record my irritation with the understanding of "truth" usually employed when translating the concept of *satya*, (*sacca* in Pāli) in the phrase 'the four noble 'truths', the *cattāri ariya-saccāni*. Scholars seem to assume by rote that what is meant here is some notion of correspondence between proposition and facts in the world, a conception that is worrisome not only because there is no sense in which the Buddha seems to be working with a notion of proposition that could do duty for 'truth-bearer' here, or that he does not *on principle* wish to assume, posit or saddle himself with a list of categories using which one can indulge in predicative sentences about an external world truthfully—we must remember that he denied the use of predicates *asti* and *na-asti* which are a precondition for employing predicative structures with existential warrant—but also because it obscures the received sense of *satya* that he would be more likely to have had in mind, a sense which has very different connotations when compared to 'correspondence'. I can only *point* to this sense in a footnote. The primary senses of this word when used as an adjective in Vedic literature for example, appear to indicate the following complex of ideas: we speak of *satya* on something having been accomplished, or being in principle capable of being accomplished, or even leading to the accomplishing of something else. These senses work well with the traditional qualifications of every member of the 4 fold model as being correlated with 3 kinds of awareness: actively seeing the four conditions as being an actualized or actualizable conditions [*sacca-ñāṇa*], as being conditions which can point to an act that requires to be accomplished [*kicca-ñāṇa*], and as being conditions that are not only known now to be actualizable in principle, but that have been integrated into one's mode of living [*katta-ñāṇa*]; See Walpola Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught*, (Gordon Fraser, 1978), 94, f1. Most pertinently, when *satya* is used as a quality of Indra in RV 4.17.10, for example, it indicates an ability to bring an intention to fruition, and the ability to translate thought into successful, accomplished activity. In RV 1.51.15, Indra is considered *svarájya*, or self-governed and independent, *because* he is "*satyáśuṣma*," or as Malamoud translates it, "he whose energy becomes a reality." It is this sense of '*satya*' that I would claim to be operative in Early Buddhism, an adjectival qualification of one's mode of being in the world. One may be better served by speaking of truth in a context where we are concerned with consistency between what is intended, done and felt. At the very least, we must take what could be '*ariyan*' about the four *noble* truths more seriously; one way to do this is to go back to the normative models of successful activity in the *āryan*

1. Statement of Symptoms and Syndrome

2. Diagnosis

3. Prognosis

4. Treatment and Prescriptive Suggestions

The claim is that this model exhausts the nature and scope of the concerns of the Buddha in the canonical discourses. That is to say, this model is *the context* in which the Buddha's doctrine is to be interpreted. If the idea of God is to play any significant role for the Buddha, it would have to play a role in one of these four ways, either as part of the symptom, as part of the diagnosis or the prognosis, or as a necessary condition of the praxis constitutive of treatment. It is also the case, however, that if a direct refutation of God is really a serious desideratum for the Buddha, *then it should be made in one of these four contexts.* As it turns out, this is not in fact the case. 'God' as a referent—to say nothing of God understood as a necessary posit—appears to be *automatically excluded* by the manner in which the scope of the model is construed. The question that will occupy us in the investigation of the Buddha's agnosticism is whether this exclusion excludes the very possibility of something like a God-like creator, the possibility that one could know what one even meant by such a posit, or whether the exclusion rests on the principle that what is not immediately relevant need not be indulged, even if the positing of such an irrelevant referent is *prima facie* both consistent and plausible. We will proceed as if the latter—which has been the dominant interpretation of the Buddha's 'silence' about the existence of God—is the case for now, and take up the question after dissecting the model.

What this model assumes is this much: it requires agreement to the effect that if something has been shown to be detrimental to health, *if* it also possible to show that this detrimental factor is

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literature, the Vedas. My discussion is indebted to Malamoud, "The Vedic God of Wrath," in *Cooking The World*, (*op. cit*), 151. Malamoud cites Bergaigne for in depth discussion of 'sat' in the Vedas: *La Religion védique d'après les hymnes du Rig-Veda*, (Paris, Vieweg, Vol 3, 1883), 182f and notes; these extensive notes repay study.

un-necessitated in a psychological or logical sense, however much it may turn out to have been rendered inevitable by the continued presence of certain conditions, *then* one ought, if consistent, to take steps to excise the detrimental factor. The model does not presume any intuitive sense of what is 'wrong'. This is an often ignored characteristic of the Buddha's analysis of sentience. It is not the conception of 'health' that is truly innovative[122] so much as it is the characterization of dis-ease that he employed.[123] It is in the ability to see far reaching and even self-defeating consequences in much of the activity rationalized as being the inescapable means to some ideal of happiness or ease held out as a goal by all intentional agents, that the Buddha's innovation and analytic skill lies.

Only some of the symptoms that are depicted in the first noble truth are *obviously* discomfiting. The symptoms become increasingly subtle until the list telescopes into the syndrome

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[122] Unlike, for example, the hyperbolic talk of 'infinite orgasmic bliss' [*ānanda*] indulged in by the *Upaniṣads*. See P. S. Jaini, "States of Happiness in Buddhist Heterodoxy," in *Collected Papers on Buddhist Studies*, (*op. cit*), 3-29.

[123] The word that I am translating here as 'dis-ease' is a notoriously difficult term to translate. *Duḥkha* in this context does not simply connote pain or 'suffering' as some have suggested, for in the Buddhist context it does not baldly refer to a simple feeling state that could be opposed to pleasure, for example, but incorporates the fact that human beings are 'driven' by both pleasant and unpleasant 'feelings' while never successfully managing to sustain the former or completely avoid the latter. But this does not capture the Buddhist sense of this word completely either. One folk etymological story suggests that the picture is that of a wheel which imperfectly 'fits' the axle thus ensuring a systemic wobble along the journey, and another suggests the picture of an imperfect posture such that one's *stand* is precarious; also, generally speaking, it is true that *duḥkha is used* to suggest a condition that, at least colloquially, may be best expressed in the American slang expression, as "being a drag," suggesting brilliantly as the American does not only the sense of dismay at *having to* travel 'here' again, or repeat a certain experience, but also the *passive stance* affected in interpreting an experience deemed at once undesirable and imposed. (This is at least the way my grandmother seems to have used the term, especially when referring to the living conditions children around the age of two to five help create). Although I am not satisfied with any translation into English, there is an excellent option available in German by which one may suggest deferring the problem. Compare the word "unbehagen" translated as "discontent" in, for example, Sigmund Freud's *Civilization and its Discontents*. A letter from Freud's English correspondent, Ernest Jones, underscores some of the difficulty faced when attempting to translate the German; I came across this letter long after having cycled through options for *duḥkha* and was struck by the almost perfect fit our options enjoyed. He tells Freud that "[w]e are having a considerable discussion about the English Title of 'Das Unbehagen' and should be glad to know if you have any suggestions to offer. The old English word 'dis-ease' would be admirable for it, but for obvious reasons is no longer possible. There is a rare word in English, 'unease.' I have also suggested 'malaise,' though I do not greatly like it. 'Discomfort' seems to be hardly strong enough: 'discontent' seems too conscious." [Jones to Freud, January 1, 1930. Typescript Copy, Freud Collection, D2, LC; quoted in Peter Gay, *Freud: A Life For Our Time*, (Norton, New York, 1998), note 1, p552.] One could have said exactly the same for my choices for *duḥkha*. I have settled on 'dis-ease' for I wish to highlight its etymological connection with the word *suḥkha*, the only word that could come close to working as an *opposite*, and which connotes in the Buddhist context a sense of 'ease' and also, 'health'.

of which all other 'phenomena' listed are mere symptoms.[124] The syndrome refers to the transcendental status[125] of the *upādāna-skandhas*, the means by which sentient beings appropriate for themselves an identity as a substantial presence in the field of experience, a presence 'felt' to be independent of all causal connection to the conditions of experience. The *upādāna-skandhas* are that in virtue of which one is even aware of experience but that whereby the content of experience is predicated as belonging to a substantial 'self' *that* could be the 'subject' of all experiences, a subject construed as extending indefinitely past and indefinitely future. The *upādāna-skandhas* list the mechanisms of appropriation that constitute the basic *hermeneutical* stance through which experience can be thought or interpreted to be 'given' to such a 'temporally extended and yet unitary subject', in every instance of affective and cognitive traffic with the world.

In the first *sutta* of the MN, such appropriation is said to lie 'at the root' [*mūla-paryāya*] of what one might call the curious *spatiality* of conscious experience as reported by sentient beings. Appropriation extends to the experiencing subject a substantially present "I" in virtue of which everything experienced may be said to be out "there," not only 'outside' the cogitating subject, but also 'there' *for* such a subject to consume 'in experience'.[126] Such appropriation is pre-conscious, the simplest cognitive episodes already involving the play of the primitive relation between self and that

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[124] SN V 420; DN II 305-13; MN I 48-49; The list of symptoms is usually reduced to the truth of the fact of the five factors of appropriation by the following formulaic phrase: "in short, the five factors of appropriation are dis-ease [*saṃkhittena pañc'upādāna-kkhandā dukkhā*].

[125] By "transcendental" I understand here those factors that are responsible for the ways in which experience is available to a cognizing agent while not being always observed in the content of any given cognition in experience; they are the conditional parameters of the interpreted experience of the majority of sentient agents classed as being afflicted by distress. I cannot stress enough that these factors do not enjoy any ontological status beyond (a) their logical and causal correlation with experienced distress and (b) the diagnostic role of specifying the sufficient conditions *of* that distress. That is to say, they are not offered in the canonical literature as an exhaustive, reductive account of who human beings amount to. They are neither primitive physical nor anatomical models. See SN XXIII.2: "Any appropriate intent towards, any delight in, any thirst for the experienced materiality of the body…, for embodied conditioning,…for associative recognitions,…for pain / pleasure conditioning…, for awareness…, when one is caught up [*satta*] there, tied up [*visatta*] there, then one is said to be an identifiable 'being' [*satta*]….[J]ust as when boys or girls are playing with little sand castles, as long as they are not free from appropriate intent towards, desire for, infatuation and obsession with those sand castles, just so long they have fun with those sand castles."

[126] I am playing on the Sanskrit word for cognitive experience [*bhoga*] and cognitive subject [*bhoktṛ*], both of which derive from the root '*bhuj*' meaning 'to eat'.

which is 'felt' *as being there* for an *'I'*. In the first *sutta* of the DN, the Buddha refers to this felt

presence of a substantial subject in experience (*atta*) and the concomitant sense of what is there for

such a self, the world (*loka*) disclosed (*oloketi*) in relation to such a self, *as the stand for all orientations*

[*diṭṭiṭṭānā*][127] one could take up, or seize on [*gahita*] when interpreting experience. Reification of the

feeling and awareness that <u>there is</u>, the feeling that *in this*,[128] *I am*,[129] and the subsequent conviction

that such feelings have the sort of existential import in play when one specifies that a pot *is in* a

room, or that a pot *is* green, are expressive of the fact that appropriation is operative. It is almost as

if the Buddha wanted to say that the reason we understand predication, or the obviousness of saying

that what we recognize as blue is 'in' a pot, or that a pot <u>is</u> blue, is because we intuit, *as per a need to do*

so, that the statements "I <u>exist</u> in the world" or "I do not <u>exist</u> in the world" are meaningful

statements, and intuit the world in terms of an anterior commitment to the validity and even

soundness of such statements. If a self is appropriated and recognized as being <u>in</u>[130] the world much

in the way that a pot is <u>in</u> a room, or blue can occur <u>in</u> a pot, then it is admittedly an important

question, and perhaps even practically necessary, to ask after what counts as a part of the self, by

virtue of belonging to or occurring in the self, and, concomitantly, to ask after that which does not

so belong. But in the absence of the presumption of such a self, and the <u>extended</u> intuitiveness of

the topological relation of 'belonging' spoken of above, it becomes very difficult to understand what

one is saying when one seriously expresses a wish to the effect that "I no longer wish to be in pain,"

or more pressingly, when one confesses to an anxiety that "I may no longer be alive," etc., especially

when one behaves as if such expressed *wishes* can translate, without difficulty or ambiguity, into a

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[127] *Brahmajāla sutta*, 1.36.

[128] In the first *sutta* of the MN the Buddha actually cycles through all the prepositions one could use to relate oneself to the correlate of experience; all of them, if interpreted as having existential import, prove unstable.

[129] More precisely, the tacit commitment to the belief that the feeling "that I am…" refers to a substantial, definite entity.

[130] Or, for that matter, even if a self is intuited as being "<u>out</u> of the world." The root mechanism and presuppositions remain the same, regardless of the predicate employed. One way of thinking of this would be to consider the affect that asserting and believing "blue to be <u>in</u> a pot" could carry, by virtue of its concomitant assertion that "pot is <u>outside</u> the self," suggesting as it does, and reinforcing the belief in a definite topological locus that is the Self.

philosophical language employing predication that could successfully refer to an objective state of affairs;[131] the need to meditate on even such 'humble' dialogical instances renders it easy to see that the Buddha would have had little patience with *talk* of 'being belonging to a self'. But it is also clear that something needs to be said about *the need to* think in terms of a self that could be thought of in topological terms—either as being delimited or infinite—a need which renders linguistic constructions involving substantial reference to such a Self not only obvious, but comforting or distressing.

In ignorance of the appropriations by which such a basic hermeneutic stance is assumed, one experiences a world in which there appears to be a fact of the matter uniquely determining whether the sense that "I exist" is true or not.[132] This assumption constitutes *duḥkha*, the dis-ease bodied forth by sentient beings and evidenced by the ways in which they struggle to rationalize their activity in a manner that could fit such an unconscious presumption. Fundamentally, *duḥkha* speaks to the lack of fit between the assumption of a world in which I exist as a Self that is independent of the conditions by which I experience the world, and any forthcoming experience in the world which could corroborate such an assumption. On the contrary, experiences seem to falsify any proposal to

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[131] In light of chapter one, we may say that when the indefinite locus that is the experiencing subject is used as a *logical term* in an Indian inference scheme, we have the reification of 'self' spoken of here. Consider that one would have to reify, as loci, the terms "life," "pain" and "self" if one wishes to translate statements such as "I do not wish to die" into logically valid content-bearers. For the Buddha, as we will have occasion to mention, experience is not such a logical locus, even though we may insist that such is in fact the case.

[132] Note that such questions involve a potential category error. If it is the case that the sense that 'I am' is a matter of habitual conditioning, and affective force instead of being a referent disclosed in cognition, then it is a category error to ask for the truth of this proto-belief. Truth stands to the content of cognitions, not feelings; to the latter, if anything, gratification is the analogical correlate. In the second *sutta* of MN, the *sabbāsava sutta* (or, Discourse on the Range of Psychosomatic 'Discharge'), the Buddha lists the sorts of concerns (they may not be articulated explicitly) that presume such appropriations. These symptomatic concerns are worth quoting in some detail: "Did I exist in the past? Did I not exist in the past? ,…, Shall I exist in the future? Shall I not exist in the Future? , … , Am I? Am I not? What am I? , ... , From where came this person? To where will he go?" It is from *concerns* such as these, apparently, that the unprincipled (*ayoniso*) judgments that "I have a Self" or that "I do not have a Self" are born. That is, the *concern* for Self is an emotional investment that is sublimated into a cognitive conclusion. If such anxiety is irrational, then so is any conclusion—which in effect is a coping strategy—based on it; the Buddha goes on to give an example of such a 'conclusion': "This is my Self, which is the subject of thought and feeling, which experiences the 'fruit' of skillful and unskillful intentional activity now here and now there, this Self is permanent, stable, enduring, unchanging, remaining the same for ever and ever." I have used Walpola Rahula's translation with only slight modifications. See Walpola Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught*, (*op. cit*), 101.

translate the existential disposition that "I exist" into a judgment for which verification be available, for the simple fact that no grounds are available in virtue of which one could experience or judge the judgment that "I exist as a substantial self" to be true, *or know*, in a definite manner, what could count as an instance of verification. The cognitive judgment that there is a self never approaches the certainty of the *feeling* that there is a self, nor does it access the pre-conscious <u>thirst</u> *that there be a self*.[133] Unable to see the presumption of such a Self as an act of appropriation rather than a given, one expresses the lack of fit between assumption and experience increasingly in terms of an angst for a self that can never be experienced as being as present as 'it' should be, and yet which, *however incompletely* <u>present</u>, is always sensed as being threatened, or experienced as something *to be escaped*.[134]

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[133] That this is the fundamental syndrome that one must treat is evidenced by the simple fact that the most compact and most frequent formula describing successful treatment along the Buddhist path in the canonical literature is the following: *anūpādāyāsravebhyas cittaṃ vimuktam*; roughly, "the over-all cognitive make-up [*citta*] is released through no longer having appropriation [*upādāna*] as a base [*āsrava*]." For a discussion of this formula, see Etienne Lamotte, "Conditioned Co-Production and Supreme Enlightenment," (*op. cit*), 130-131.

[134] One can attempt to give a rather precise characterization of what the factors of appropriation amount to. They are the unique types of causally operative factors constitutive of 'experience' that, in any single episode of experience, could be used to cash out the purely formal presumption of self expressed by the indexical 'I' attending conscious experience. It is true that the 'I', or better, that experiencing in terms of 'I am', is already pregnant with existential presumption. But the identity of such an assumption can be fleshed out only through content appropriated from experience. If the existential presumption of a self may be expressed as a schematic judgment of the form "I am *x*," then the *skandhas* or *factors* are just those factors that can in principle be used to cash out the identity of such formal presumption; more colorfully, they are 'the values' of the variable presumed by the formal assumption of a Self. The five *types* of <u>values</u> then which could be used to flesh out what 'self' is are given in terms of the sensed materiality of the body [*rūpa*], episodes of feeling [*vedanā*], episodes of associative judgments [*samjñā*], embodied conditioning [*saṃskāra*] and episodic awareness *of* experience [*vijñāna*]. Of course, because such 'values' are available only given the fact of conditionality and the function of appropriation, no such identification could possibly yield *the kind of* Self the existential disposition "I am" is interpreted as being correlated with. This seems to me the deep reason for the Buddha's saying that the five factors of experience are 'empty' [*suñña* in Pali; *śūnya* in Sanskrit], that is, they have no independent 'value' or 'substance' that could do the work of grounding the wish for Self. [ssee *Suñña Sutta*, SN XXXV.85; "insofar as it is empty of a Self or anything pertaining to a Self, the world [*loka*; used here as a synonym for the five *skandhas*] is said to be empty]. For the idea that the disposition 'I am' is deeper than, and constitutive of, the affective force of appropriations in line with the schema 'I am *x*', see the *Khemaka Sutta*, SN XXII.89. Even when such substitutions of the schema are no longer made to sustain the sense of Self, the sense that 'I am' apparently remains; the discourse suggests that it is existential force of the formal presumption of self that is the harder *habit* to break. Khemaka compares the situation to a smell which pervades a cloth long after the obvious stain has been removed. *On the consequences of ignorance of such factors as formal presumption of a Self and the appropriation of factors constitutive of experience as being instances of a Self,* compare what the Buddha says in SN XXII.100, *Gaddula Sutta, The Leash*: "It's just as when a dog is tied by a leash to a post or stake: If it walks, it walks right around that post or stake. If it stands, it stands right next to that post or stake. If it sits, it sits right next to that post or stake. If it lies down, it lies down right next to that post or stake. In the same way, an uninstructed naive person regards the sensed materiality of the lived-body [*rupa*] as: "This is my own, this is my self, this is what I am.' He regards episodes of pain / pleasure... episodes of associational recognition.., of embodied conditioning ... , of awareness, as: "This is my own, this is my self, this is what I am.' If he walks, he walks right around these five factors of appropriation. If he stands, he stands right next to these five factors of appropriation. If he sits, he sits right next to these five factors of appropriation. If he

The discussion of the symptoms and syndrome of sentient life situates us firmly within a condition that has as its scope the twin co-ordinates that are the appropriation of a self and the projection of a 'world' in which such a self can persist. It is clear from the *Loka-sutta*[135] that the Buddha regards 'the world' as a viable referent only within the limits that the sentient-body places on experience. The world he is interested in thematizing is not only the world that is disclosed through the 'mute' contact of sense capacities and *sensibilia*, but the world that is appropriated as a world in which pain / pleasure conditioning (or feelings, *vedanā*) constitute *the primary* bases upon which one's appropriations (through subtle 'selections') of what will and will not be *taken to be* Self are based. 'The world' presupposes for its affective thickness, to put the matter crudely, that 'Self' *for which* it is projected and reified as a locus in which the sense of Self can be maintained through further experience; the range of different types of 'feeling-states' correlate with different 'worlds' through which the manifold and reiterated identifications constituting *the sense* that a Self is present, may be effected. It is in this sense of the 'world' that the Buddha can say: "[w]ithin this six-foot long body, with its intellection [*manas*] and the correlates of intellection [*dhammā*], there is 'the world', the arising of 'the world', the ceasing of 'the world', and the way that leads to the ceasing of 'the world'."[136]

Such a restriction of the scope of meaningful use of 'the world' on the Buddha's part was not, however, capricious, but deeply principled and consequential. We may make two points here, one from the benefit of later developments in Indian metaphysics, and the other on textual grounds. First, even in his most philosophical moods, the Buddha showed *no interest whatsoever* in substance metaphysics if by substance metaphysics one understands a concern with the nature of particulars (causally) *independent of* the phenomenological conditions by which sentient beings could possibly have awareness <u>that</u> *there are* 'things' they are conscious-of. A little naively we may put the point as

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lies down, he lies down right next to these five factors of appropriation." I have substantively modified the translation from the Pali by Thanissaro Bhikkhu.
[135] SN xii.44
[136] SN I, 62.

follows. If we allow that a cognitive episode shows the following schematic form, Px, where 'x' is a variable denoting possible subjects of experience, and 'P' a predicate class to which the subject is assigned, or under which a subject is 'sorted', then we may say the following about Buddha's interest in substance talk. Allowing that 'x' could be construed, even if only heuristically, as being either internal or external to the cognitive body, it turns out to be the case that the Buddha did not seem interested in *external* particulars, but instead was content to thematize the form of judgment Px, and the way in which such judgment-episodes were interpreted in experience.

The Buddha's interest in judgments of type 'Px' shows that his concern was with the manner in which an x is individuated as the external referent of feeling, while being 'picked out' largely on the basis of prior pain / pleasure conditioning and associative memory. The sorts of 'external' particulars he was interested in then were just those referents that functioned as indexes of what one might call affective and cognitive salience, reinforcing and provoking habitual modes of behavior. The Buddha himself states that he was more interested in the nature of the claim that *there is* x as P, when speaking of an x individuated by feelings and 'given' to the subject primarily by way of feelings, then he was in the truth *of* such a claim; that is, he was more interested in the unconscious *transformation* of affect into cognitive judgments about the external world and the concomitant *emphasis* that such conditioned judgments *be true*. In other words, why should the world be such that our 'affects' and concomitant behavior be justifiable on the basis of our affective responses corresponding exactly to the way things are 'outside' the lived-body? The Buddha was thus more interested in analyzing the tenacity of the belief that our habitual cognitions be bearers of truth and falsity regarding something that could be the 'external' world, a belief that can work to suppress insight into the role of episodic cognitions as *effects* of, and factors in, our affective conditioning.[137]

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[137] In the canonical literature, the distinction I am drawing between thematizing the nature of cognitions and thematizing that which the cognition expresses as being the case (the existential presumption and content of a cognition) is usually made by speaking of the distinction between 'cognizing [with insight]' [*jñāna*] and 'establishing oneself within what has

Simply put, there is a gap that the Buddha was keen on exposing, a gap between 'conditions of experience' and experience; the 'gap' is evidenced in the fact that we are given some *x as* P, but experience, and dispositionally commit to the fact that, *x just is* P. Concomitant with this is the peculiar behavioral response that would indicate that it is *x* being P that causes some affect *a*, when in fact it is prior affective conditioning that allows *x* to be given as *just being* P to begin with. The ubiquity and tenacity through which ignorance [*avidya*] of such gaps is displayed in sentient behavior pointed to a deeper condition that might account for the seeming irreducibility of such 'ignorance'.

The only locus in which dis-ease is expressed is the sentient locus. The referents of the Buddha's discourses, by his own explicit admission, found their causal and semantic home in the lived-body of sentient subjects. This 'lived-body' was called the *sabba*, literally, *the all*.[138] The sense capacities delimited the range of what could, in principle, be available to sense; along with the registration of the 'circuit' formed between *sensibilia* and sense capacities, (consciousness is the awareness *that* there is sense-contact) [139], this just is the all.[140] In today's parlance one might say that the only domain of quantification Buddha deemed necessary for the critical task of diagnosing the

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been cognized'. A good treatment of this is in the AN IV.24 [*Kalaka Sutta*]; See also, MN *sutta* 2; MN 58, MN 63, MN 72, AN X.93-96.

[138] See SN XXXV.23; it is also called the *sad-vijnana-kaya* (see for example, SN22.57), underscoring through "*kaya*" the embodied condition of sentience.

[139] It is important to note that 'consciousness' is the only factor that is passive. So if we are looking to the correlates of intentionality, perhaps, noematic content, this is already a product of libidinal and psycho-somatic processes For insight into this 'reactive' character of sensory-awareness, and the symptomatic character of *vijñāna*, see the privileging of *jñāna* over *vijñāna* treated most perspicuously in the Buddhist enumeration of standards by which one should orient oneself to learning the *Dharma*; see the *catuḥpratisaraṇasūtra* as studied by Etienne Lamotte, "La critique d'interpretation dans le Bouddhisme" in *Annuaire de l'Institut de Philologie et d'Histoire Orientales et Slaves*, Vol.9 (Brussels, 1949), ppp341-361. This has been translated by Sara Boin-Webb as "The Assessment of Textual Interpretation in Buddhism," in Donald S. Lopez, ed., *Buddhist Hermeneutics* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1988), pp11-27. The point here is that *jñāna* should be the resort or the reliance, not *vijñāna* for the former, unlike the latter, preserves insight into the conditions of the latter occurring *qua* effect: "*jñānaṃ Pratisaraṇaṃ. na vijñānaṃ*".

[140] Better than "the all," which implies a definiteness and totality, it is perhaps more accurate to speak of the *sabba* as being akin to the operator "any." Any referent that we can speak of in connection with the four-fold medical model is only to be had *via* this lived-body.

conditions for the possibility of the distress expressed by cognizing subjects and the clinical program of eliminating said distress was this "all."[141]

Continuing with the heuristic distinction between internal and external particulars, one may be tempted to think that substance could be smuggled in *via* reference to the cognitive subject. The Buddha, however, was careful to disentangle reference to phenomena that could be said to play a constitutive role in the cognitive life of a subject—shaping the conative and cognitive conditions of cognition—from reference to a cognitive subject construed as a *particular* substance. But mirroring the claims to God are claims about the 'Self', in terms of belief in its nature and belief in its importance.[142]The Buddha was insistent on the point that there could be no particular internal to the phenomenological realm that is 'experience' that could provide justification for belief in a Self.

About the nature of such a purported Self, taking his cue from the beliefs of those he analyzed (including himself), he surmised that only the belief in a self of a particular nature could account for the psychological dispositions and behavior of humans; and that was a belief that the self was of the nature of either existing or not-existing as a causally *external* particular of a kind we discussed earlier. The Buddha insisted that nowhere in the phenomenological realm where there any conditions given which one could either say such a self existed or did not exist; it was impossible

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[141] In the *Discourse on Seven Stands* (*sattathana sutta*, SN 22.57) the Buddha speaks of one who has 'seven stations and has three modes of investigation', as being a virtuoso along the Buddhist path. The seven stations are investigating a factor of appropriation in light of its arising, its cessation and the methodic observation of that cessation (this being the medical model), investigating its allure, its drawback, and the manner in which one can put it out of play. The three *modes of investigation* are the awareness in experience, the range of sensory contact with the world, and the fact of conditionality [*dhatus, ayatanas, and pratitya-samutpada*]. This model is apparently exhaustive of what is necessary in Buddhism. A recent work by Dan Lusthaus [*Buddhist Phenomenology*, (Curzon Press, 2003)] also approaches early Buddhism from the perspective of certain fundamental models: *skandhas, pratitya-samutpada, tri-dhaatu* and *sila-samaadhi-prajna*, as a rubric for accounting for all of Buddhist diagnostic concerns. It would appear that the Buddha had a similar idea; a comparison of the models they considered fundamental would make a great review of Lusthaus' book. Though I do not know of such a review, from the Buddha's perspective, it would appear that Lusthaus' interpretation of the focus of early Buddhism is on target.

[142] I derived a distinction that operated the same as that between 'nature' and 'importance' of a belief in my reading of the canonical literature; the specific terms I have used here, however, are from Derek Parfit, a contemporary analytical ethicist who in a variety of ways comes very close to *abhidhamma* in his orientation. See Derek Parfit, "Personal Identity," in Michael J. Loux, ed., *Metaphysics: Contemporary Readings*, (Routledge, London, 2001). p374-394. Our discussion focuses on p374-75.

that there be a 'self' of the form that people wanted there to be. In light of the fact that such 'belief' was epistemologically ungrounded, rather than give an alternative account of what 'the self' could be, he noted the minimal conditions given which one could have even come to 'feel' that there was a self of the type people believed in.

Speaking like this, however, already presupposed an orientation that was therapeutic. To one who was convinced that there were conditions by which one could secure reference to a self categorically, the Buddha declined to answer. The correlation of a reified 'world' with a reified 'self' and the affective force of such presumptions seems to have underlined the Buddha's caution with using these terms lightly; on one thing, however, he remained adamant and that was that what one tried to refer to by way of denotative expressions such as 'self' and 'world' that could be used in predicative formulations *was not of a type* that could admit of definitive logical status.[143]

There is a degree to which we may see such 'bracketing' of reference to *causally external* conditions of cognitions and feelings as being indicative of "phenomenology" as this is understood in the West. It should be noted, however, that in the absence of serious analysis and cultivation of the skills prescribed as being the Buddhist path, the Buddha would have treated "the given" as being symptomatic of certain deep-seated psycho-somatic propensities that render our cognitive and behavioral responses to 'the given' suspect. He did not appear as interested in finding a secure ground from which to specify invariant conditions that any subject would have to respect, as he was in using the 'given' to orient oneself to the critical task of uncovering those conditions whereby sentient beings were habituated to project independent subsistence onto external particulars while suppressing the unconscious thirst [*taṇhā*] *that there be* a subsisting self.

The *sabba* was that domain in virtue of which the critical could remain accurate to conditions, and in which the clinical remained relevant. Analysis presupposed the lived-body as a

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[143] See SN XII.48

condition, and transformation of the lived-body presupposed analytic intervention into the habituated ways of the body. The method usually involved causal tracking of the symptomatic feeling that there is a Self and the belief that such a Self is necessary. It should be clear that diagnosis presumes something like causal correlation, however metaphysically weak such correlation is in terms of the commitments one is forced to make. The Buddha's causal commitments were remarkably light: one speaks of necessary conditions (that may or may not be jointly sufficient to effect an observable condition) in the manner of examining causes for symptoms. Additionally, one lets the symptoms one is interested in dictate the causes and conditions one will look for.

The sorts of effects that the Buddha was interested in specifying the causal conditions for where not of a form that could be coherently accounted for by recourse to substantial particulars (such as self and God) construed to be formally and causally independent, non-temporal or eternal. Nor could they be explained by recourse to depth-substance or monism. This removes any critical motivation for bringing in God, and introduces the critical motivation for being suspicious of reference to God: for how could such reference be set up in any epistemically transparent way given the manner in which we have set the limitations of the lived-body? Given the conditions set by the domain of reference, one must see recourse to referents such as God as exuberant instances of language doing duty for cognition. This is why the Buddha could not understand 'God' as being either a causal antecedent explanation for experienced conditions, or as a goal maintained for ethical praxis or practical activity. If 'God' was to be considered a rational goal of activity, it would have to fulfill two conditions: one, it must be epistemologically sound; two, a goal must, in terms of its relevance to *praxis*, be well-formed—that is, it must be of a type that could either be experienced by sentient agents (this brings in the domain of reference) or it must be of a type that could causally *effect* experience. The last points to the reason why it will not do to have ambiguous criteria for knowing what counts as God. How is one to specify when one has actually experienced God in

anything like a non-question begging manner? If one does not know clear conditions of what could count as an instance of experiencing God, in a non-question begging way, then anything could count as such an instance, which would render incoherent the notion of a particular 'goal' of activity. The Buddha compared the use of God as an antecedent of praxis to the quest of a man in search for "the most beautiful woman in the world."

There is also a clinical issue at work in the exclusion of God-type causal referents. The pressing issue for the Buddha was the belief in the existence of loci of the type excluded by him in the way that he configured *the sabba*; mention of causally independent, invariant, perduring and yet causally impactful loci was anathema to his rather radical empiricism. If the etiology of 'pathological' beliefs in such loci could be shown as having its roots in psychosomatic conditions that could, however intractable, be transformed for the betterment of the life of a subject, then it is obvious that the Buddha would not wish to encourage thinking in terms of such 'symptomatic' beliefs, much less consider them to be philosophically meaningful. Interestingly, the claim to affective salience of ideas such as a causally interactive God fed right into the Buddha's diagnostic stance, for on his anthropological perspective, it would be miraculous that one could experience, in any affective sense, *what one claimed to experience about causally 'unreachable' referents* such as Self or God. Any instance of feeling judged as having God as a referent would be an opportunity for reflection: is the way the referent of feeling is configured honest to the conditions of sensation and feeling? In this sense, one might say, *it could not matter* in any direct sense *to any experiencing subject* whether or not God—as such an entity is configured—existed or not.[144] That one often believes that it does, points to an alternative story about the history of such feelings and their conditions.

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[144] The *sabba* allows one to track the interaction of perception and feeling. It allows one to delimit what *could be* <u>affectively</u> relevant. There may be a dissonance between the causal history giving rise to feeling, and one's interpretation of that feeling, awareness, and judgment as to the referent of feeling.

What we have shown is that God could not occur as a denoting expression in any part of the medical model. More precisely, we have seen that God understood as a causal condition, because of the requirements set by the nature of observed causal connections, could not be a coherent idea, if the causal power of such a God were thought to extend into the domain of experiential conditions. There is also, however, the idea of God *simpliciter*, the idea of some divine, disembodied sentient being. With this idea, the Buddha appeared to have been more relaxed. Generally speaking, the Buddha did not take seriously the idea that there was any coherent sense to be made of the idea of 'consciousness' in absence of the conditions provided by the sensing body.[145] But on one occasion, he told a story to explain how belief in such a condition may be possible. The Buddha seems to have interpreted the conditions for the arising of such a belief as follows. If one is to consistently believe in the notion of a disembodied God, then one has to believe that there is a locus which has no body and is relevantly God like, but also that within this locus, there are truth conditions available such that someone can think "I am a disembodied being" and have this be true.

How could one come to hold such beliefs? The Buddha's response, while humorous, is not without a function. If he can provide a story about how one could come to think something like the above, he has not only responded to what is in effect, a 'story' from the theistic traditions, but he has also given pause to any naïve belief that theistic ideas are entirely straightforward. On its own, the story in no way entails the falsity of the theistic belief; it does, however, invite further reflections on the causes for one's own commitment to the intuitiveness of the idea of disembodied sentience.

The story told by the Buddha is a simple one, if pointed. Ignorant of the nature of conditionality, and repressing the variety of experiential states available to a sentient being, a subject may 'find' himself experiencing a subtle feeling entirely devoid of any awareness of the body.

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[145] The Buddha is quite categorical about this: "my awareness is bound to my body, and tied to it: *idañ ca pana me viññānam ettha sitam ethha paṭibaddhan ti*" DN I.76. He later compares the relationship of consciousness and the body via an analogy of a gem hanging on a thread.

Ignorant of the presence of the body, even if only as a causal horizon for the availability of feelings, a being exults in the new found 'space'. Because one is ignorant of the range of experiential states, one is liable to absolutize this experience as an entirely independent world, one inhabited by only those aspects of oneself that one is aware of. Not aware of the suppressed body, one interprets oneself as a disembodied consciousness in a world devoid of materiality. This, the Buddha playfully suggests, is why Brahma thinks that he is God, and why some think that it is entirely correct that Brahma think himself to be worship worthy.

It would be easy to say that the Buddha thought God a subject that one could *not know* anything about. This might perhaps justify his lack of concern for the claims of others regarding God. But there are two ways in which we can cash out the idea that one could not know something about an *x*. One would be to say that there is a fact rendering x determinate, but that we are not in a position to know that fact. This would be agnosticism. The other way to abjure talk of x would be to say that the referent *x* is determinately fixed by a set of inconsistent sortal predicates, which particularly can be demonstrated to contain some P and some ~P. If this is the case, then one could not know anything about such an *x*, but only because we are not in a position to know what we mean by *x*. The common interpretation has been to say that the Buddha was agnostic about God.

The easiest way to grant Buddha an agnostic stance to questions concerning God is to saddle him with a global agnosticism. Those that would wish to saddle Buddha with an agnostic position regarding God or God-like things by way of saddling him with a global agnosticism, however, would have to explain away quite a lot. There are too many straightforward attributions of knowledge to Buddha to take this approach seriously. Even a more focused attribution of agnosticism to Buddha would, however, have to be severely qualified. There is, first and foremost, the simple fact that Buddha is not a Sañjaya Belaṭṭhaputta, a man susceptible to shy away from commitment to the extent that his approach has been rendered schematically as follows: for any *p*, where *p* is a

proposition expressing a belief, he *does not assert* that p, that not-p, that both p and not-p, nor that neither p nor not-p.

Richard Hayes for example speaks of "[Buddha's] well known aversion to speculative views concerning matters that are beyond man's ken," and sees this as the norm of which the Buddha's atheism is only one instance. But Richard Hayes goes out to point out consequences of such beliefs, and then cites the consequences as reasons for the Buddha's rejection of them. This is not an uncommon academic strategy, but it fails as an interpretation of the Buddha's exclusion of use of 'God' on two counts. One, the Buddha is never depicted as being agnostic as to the existence of God, and even when in an agnostic mood about certain subjects, the Buddha explicitly distances himself from strategies very much like the one Hayes saddles him with. What I mean by saying that Buddha is not easily labeled an agnostic is that he distances himself from agnosticism driven by any of the following reasons.

In the first *sutta* of the DN, the Buddha cites the following types of agnosticism individuated on the basis of the types of reasons that could be used to motivate a lack of commitment. The first type[146] concerns agnosticism regarding questions of whether something is to be counted as an instance of ethical "skillfulness or unskillfulness" [*kusala akusala va*]. The reason may be glossed as follows: For any x under discussion, it is because *I do not know* in fact whether x is a skillful factor to cultivate that I will not *say* any of the four alternatives: x is y, x is $\sim y$, x is both y and $\sim y$, x is neither y nor $\sim y$. This should be distanced from skepticism, which could assert that it was definitive that there is *no fact of the matter* between the two choices, either because neither has any good reasons, or that both have equally good reasons. Here, our agnostic does not lose sight of the fact that there is a difference to be made—it is just a personal ignorance and a fear of being caught with a falsehood that keeps him from making the decision. The second kind of agnosticism the Buddha disavows

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[146] DN 1, (*op. cit*), 2.21: "*idaṃ kusal'anti…akusal'anti yathābhūtaṃ nappajānāt*".

bears an intriguing resemblance to both Stoicism and interpretations of Buddhism that are a dime a dozen. The case here is as follows: an individual has as his motivation for not committing to a definitive statement of the form *x* is *y* because of the following reasoning: if the individual asserts either, he is stuck with a practical dilemma. The individual reasons that the practical correlate of predicating and committing to some *x* being virtuous is that he will be attracted to it; and the practical correlate of saying and committing to some x being un-virtuous is that he will be averse to it; either way, he then feels as if he is indulging in a practice that leads to attachment, and not to equanimity. Therefore, one ought not to commit to any of the four options.[147] This is not the first time that an interpretation of Buddhism current in scholarship or religious sentiment has been viciously satirized by the Buddha himself. This sort of avoidance of commitment is so much more "eel-wriggling" [*amarāvikkhepikā*]. The last two are interesting as well. One can avoid commitment for the invalid reason that one is afraid of being cross-examined. One should only have commitment if one has defended it oneself; having a position but being afraid of not being able to defend it is indication that one ought not hold the position, not because of fear of being defeated in debate, but because of not having arrived at the conclusion from reasoning.[148] The last option is a nonsensical one for the Buddha. To cite as a reason the claim "that I do not think any of the propositions in question" is ridiculous because such a person, if his claim is true, is an idiot [*momāho*] and if they do think, and have reasons for what they think, then they are either liars or are clinically impaired.

Note that in line with his general *princip* to be interested in the causes and conditions by which some things come about, he is not interested in the effect (lack of commitment) but in the reasons people give for it. Agnosticism, for the Buddha, was only justified when there was a logically indeterminate subject which could not support an exclusive disjunction. Self and World were two

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[147] *Ibid.*, 2.25: "*tatha me assa chando vā rāgo vā doso vāpaṭigho vā; yatha me assa chando vā rāgo vā doso vā paṭgho vā, taṃ mamassa upādānaṃ*"
[148] *Ibid.*, 2.26

such referents; belief in God, however, because of its incorporating categories such as permanence and causal relevance, sentience and disembodiment, bordered on not so much logical indeterminacy as it did *category confusion*. It further suffered from all the defects that reference to substantial causes and definite 'worlds' entailed for the Buddha. One maintains silence in this case, only because one has no route of fixing reference in any determinate way.

CHAPTER FIVE: INTRODUCING A TEXT AND AN ARGUMENT

> "I know what you're thinking about," said Tweedledum; but it isn't so, nohow."
> "Contrariwise," continued Tweedledee, "if it was so, it might be; and it were so, it would be; but as it isn't, it ain't. That's logic."[149]

I have intimated that this thesis concerns itself more with an argument than with a text. Certainly, the argument is to be found in a text, but it is not the text itself *qua* historical document that interests me so much as it is the material that a particular text purports to present. On the one hand, this is a methodological consequence of my interest in the *philosophical* nature of the text. On the other hand, such an emphasis remains consistent with my interest in exploring what is involved in considering the text to be Buddhist in a sense not restricted to making the historical point that the author claims to belong to a tradition considering itself to follow after the Buddha [*Bauddha*].

While I hold the text, if conceived as a historical datum, to be intriguing in its own right and well worth the attention it has received from the scholarly community thus far, it is still the case that the argument in the text has been ill-treated, when it has been taken seriously at all. If the distinction between text and argument is warranted—and, methodologically speaking, what that distinction amounts to is that after this chapter there will be no citation of concerns about the historical situation of the *manuscript* or circumstances of its reception—then I do not think it unfair to say that academic discussion of the argument has been obscured precisely owing to a concern with issues

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[149] From Chapter IV of Lewis Carroll, *Alice in Wonderland*, ed. by Donald J. Gray, (Norton, 2nd edition, New York, 1992), 139.

presented by features *of the text*; subsequently, insufficient attention has been spent on features of the argument that also call for discussion. It is partly the task of this thesis to return the argument presented by the text to the attention of scholars of Buddhist intellectual practice in India and outline features that render this argument unique.

To be precise, in the next two chapters I will attempt to show that what is philosophically significant and, for what it is worth, that what is *canonically Buddhist* (in the sense clarified in the previous chapter) about the argument, is the *strategy* behind the argument. Discovering the strategy behind the argument not only allows us to present the argument in its strongest form, both in a philosophical and textual sense, but it gives us a window into what is significant about the choice of a strategy. How much *practical ice* does a difference in strategy cut? It is this strategy that is presented in chapters five and six. I believe that this is important, for what has suffered most through inattention to the argument is the invisibility, in academic discussion, of the strategy that animates the argument. I have indicated that presenting this strategy, defending both its formulation and the claim regarding its uniqueness in a field of ostensibly similar arguments, is the work of this thesis. We already achieved some measure of success as regards the latter goal when we laid the ground for the dominant philosophical strategies that have been exercised in Indian history in chapters two and three, and discussed the consequences of strategy for Buddhist practice in chapter four. Consequently, we have gained more than a trivial appreciation for what might be involved in making a philosophical contribution to the question of God, and also in coming to appreciate what is involved in such a *philosophical* contribution counting as Buddhist. Stating the argument below will go some way towards the analysis required to discharge the claim of the uniqueness of the argument in the field of Indian philosophical discussion.

I should say that I do not council a generalization of the methodology of this thesis, for the division between the text and the argument contained therein that I sanction here is not so much an

a priori presumption as it is a conclusion of sorts based, at least in part, on the nature of the particular text in question.[150] My strategy, if I may borrow the rhetoric of Buddhism, is antidotal. I stress a distinction between text and argument to allow for an unimpeded focus on what I take to have been obscured thus far. The corrective strategy adopted here, however, will itself go unsupported because I do not see in my particular expository approach in this thesis any normative stance of a type that could foster an axiomatic attitude like the following: one *must always* consider the argument more important than the text, or worse, that matters concerning the text *are always* irrelevant. Again, not only do I not hold any such thesis, but I would not wish to suggest, let alone council, any such general methodology either. Leaning on the textual work carried out so far, I am merely *looking in*.[151] The few comments I will make about the state of the manuscript as we have it are only suggestions that should be taken into account before coming to any definitive judgment as to its age and history.

It is time, however, to introduce the relevant manuscript (hereafter **M**). My division of **M** into distinct historical and philosophical dimensions is happily facilitated by the text itself. **M**, as it was found and published by F. W. Thomas in 1903, is an extremely condensed text, taking up in Romanized Sanskrit a little less than a page.[152] **M** reveals the following structure at a glance.

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[150] I have drawn some inspiration for this in comments made by Pramod Chandra about the value of paleographic research in art history; he says in a cautionary tone: "The paleography of an inscription on a sculpture may help in determining its date, but the date of a sculpture, on the basis of its style, has an equal claim to modify our understanding of the sculpture." Earlier he says of using paleographical techniques that its conclusions are deduced not from the work of art *but from something that happens to be written on it*. Hence it cannot determine the date independently of other criteria. This parallels my concerns with the division between text and argument. See Pramod Chandra, *On the Study of Indian Art: The Polsky Lectures in Indian and Southeast Asian Art and Archaeology*, (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1983), 65-68.

[151] Someone wishing to see more work done on the textual dimensions of the manuscript, or work that goes beyond the parameters set by my research goals in this thesis, is advised to look at the sources given for this chapter in the footnote immediately below. Furthermore, I am given to understand that Signe Cohen is currently working on a project to catalogue the various texts attributed to Nāgārjuna on the basis of their authenticity. Her work expands on previous work done in this field in its use of philological techniques. Given her work on various *Upaniṣadic* fragments thus far, I expect that she will have something interesting to say about this text.

[152] T. W. Thomas' edition may be found in *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, April 1930, p345-49. Stcherbatsky notes the two original sources: the *Tanjur* edition of the Tibetan Buddhist canon housed in the Asiatic Museum of the Imperial Academy of Sciences, vol. 133, folios 346-7; The *Tanjur* edition found in London, vol. 133, folios 330-32. Originals have been found in Sanskrit and Tibetan. The edition I will refer to is the one found in "A Buddhist Philosopher on

M :   1 [Title And Statement Identifying the Goal of the Text]

1a [Verses Recording Circumstances in which the Text was composed

and identifying inspiration and dedication]

I   A [*Tweedle*]

B [*Tweedle-dum*]

C [*Tweedle-dee*]

2 Statement of the Conclusion

3 Colophon

The reasons for my idiosyncratic numbering, even if at first blush awkward, are easy enough

to state. The use of different numbering types, that is, the use of roman numerals and letters, is

intended to be significant. They correspond in a very precise way to my distinction between the

textual and philosophical dimensions spoken of earlier. They will also facilitate reference to the

manuscript; for example, if I wish to refer to the colophon, I will refer to it as **M**2, the 2nd *textual*

part of the manuscript. When referring to a point in the *argument*, I will refer to it with **M**IA*n*, or

MIB*n*, where *n* represents the line number in question. An 'I' in the reference indicates that w ehaev

entered the philosophical part of the manuscript, the section I have dubbed 'the argument'.

M1 includes a sentence identifying and naming the text: the <u>refutation</u> [*nirākṛtiḥ*] of īśvara as

the sentient agent (creator) entitled: the <u>refutation</u> [*nirākaraṇaṃ*] of Viṣṇu as the sole, (unitary and

independent) sentient agent (creator);[153] we have already briefly noted the significance of the title in

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Monotheism" in *Papers of Th. Stcherbatsky*, translated by Harish C. Gupta, ed. Debiprasad Cattopadhyaya, (Soviet Indology Series, No.2), p3-13. Hereafter **M** will in the main refer to the Sanskrit manuscript prepared by Stcherbatsky. For a translation of this text based on Thomas' edition, see Georg Chemparathy's "Two Early Buddhist Refutations of the Existence of Īśvara as the Creator of the Universe," in *Beitreage zur Geistesgechichte Indiens: Festschrift feur Erich Frauwallner*, Hrsg. Von G. Oberhammer, 85-100; the text is translated in 97-99. For more notes on **M** see Appendix A at the end of this thesis, f1.

[153] **M**1 has: "īśvara kartṛtva nirākṛtiḥ viṣṇoḥ ekakartṛtva nirākaraṇaṃ nāma." I have highlighted the word 'refutation' as that is the translation Chemparathy and Stcherbatsky adopt for *both*, "*nirākṛtiḥ*" and "*nirākaraṇaṃ*," thus treating these words as synonyms. I discuss these words a little below in this chapter, but wish to alert the reader that this is a translation practice that I am less than satisfied with.

chapter one and chapter two to the extent that I pointed out the scope of the title. It is worth noting

that the terms used, specifically the identification of the target of the argument as being the deity

Viṣṇu, do not occur again in the main body of the argument itself, that is, either in parts **M**IA, B or

C. It is however repeated in **M**2, where a sentence is included indicating the successful close of the

argument while repeating the title of the manuscript.[154] A difference worth stating is that while **M**IC

closes by saying that "a creator / God *qua* sentient agent is not exampled, or, what is at first blush

the semantic equivalent, that there is no rational warrant for speaking in terms of a creator / God

[*tasmāt asiddhaḥ kartā*], part **M**2 closes quoting **M**1 in speaking of "a refutation," using a term that is

not found anywhere in the argument itself, but *only* in **M**1 and **M**2.[155]

     M1 and **M**2 speak in terms of *nirākaraṇaṃ* and *nirākṛtiḥ*. While *this* discrepancy between text

and argument cannot point to anything conclusive, it is suggestive of the possibility that one ought

to be more circumspect assigning a single date for the manuscript as a whole. There is also a minor

irritation I would like to discuss. Translating these terms has proven to be a vexing task; while I am

not satisfied with any proffered translation, investigating the nuances of these terms has proven to

be rewarding. There is, on the one hand, the fact that *prima facie* two *different* terms are used in the

title. I have found it to be true on several occasions that when an author uses a word that 'looks'

different from another in the sense of being constructed differently from the same verbal root, there

are good reasons motivating the choice of one 'construction' over another; on the other hand, it is

not clear that there ought to be any globally applicable maxim drawn from the above instances. It is

after all perfectly plausible that an author may spice up a sentence by using words operating with

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[154] **M**2 has: "iti īśvara kartṛtva nirākṛtiḥ viṣṇoḥ ekakartṛtva nirākaraṇaṃ samāptam iti"

[155] Compare, however, the use of the word "kṛtiḥ" in the colophon **M**3.

more or less similar semantic ranges, with the semantic proximity of the words only adding to the flavor.[156]

I happen to incline in this instance towards the former and suspect that there is a reason for using two distinct words in the title of the manuscript. I will take the redactors of our manuscript at their words, and also, at their *sens* as one might say in French—that is, at the 'sense' of the words and also the differing *directions* the words enjoy by virtue of having their roots in different socio-historical conditions. In this instance the French '*sens*' is a much better translation of the Sanskrit word for meaning [*artha*] connoting as the latter does, referent, aim, target, goal and direction. In this I am departing from the practice of the two prior translators of this text. What I mean by the *sense* the redactors may have tried to express in the title is rather easy to state. The title, at the very least, seems to me to be an attempt to extend the scope of the argument. This comes through on Chemparathy's reading; he has **M**1 saying: "The refutation of *īśvara* as the Creator named *The Refutation of Viṣṇu as the Sole Creator.*"[157] On his translation, the sense I am alluding to would amount to saying that it is by virtue of "refuting" God in the capacity of a sentient agent, that the text is called a "refutation" of Viṣṇu. I would like to say this 'sense' of the title comes through clearly enough in the above translation. It appears that the redactor/s recognize that the argument they are dealing with in the text does not explicitly mention Viṣṇu as the referent, and see either (1) in the refutation of creator-ship *per se*, an argument against Viṣṇu, and that the latter has been a

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[156] I have found the *standard* dictionaries in this instance to be of little help. Apte, for example, lists exactly the same meanings for these terms. See Vaman Shivram Apte, *The Practical Sanskrit Dictionary*, (Motilal Banarsidass, 3rd edition, 1965), 556. Monier Williams has nothing to say about these terms directly. For indirect information, see his discussion of *kṛt* and *kṛtaḥ* in his *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, (Oxford Clarendon Press, 1964), 540, 301. Franklin Edgerton in his *Buddhist Hybrid Grammar and Dictionary* does not even list these terms. On the use of the prefix '*nir*' in philosophical literature, however, Betty Heimann has interesting things to say. See her *The Significance of Prefixes in Sanskrit Philosophical Terminology*, (Royal Asiatic Society Monographs 25, 1951): generally, it would appear that the significance of the prefix functions in the senses of "out of, away from, free of." I think a good comparison would be the Latin prefix '*ex*' in the word 'extinguish'. It should be noted, that it is impossible to generalize accurately with regard to prefixes in Sanskrit. I owe a sense of this to Glenn Wallis in directed study. I have also profited from discussions with Elizabeth Tanner on how best to translate the two terms.

[157] Chemparathy, "Two Early Buddhist Refutations," (*op. cit*), 97.

desideratum maintained all along by the argument or (2) that the argument on the above entailment *can* be made to speak against Viṣṇu even though such was not obviously the concern of the argument. This could be one sense of the word *nāma*; so the refutation of God as creator is *indeed* [*nāma*] a refutation of Viṣṇu as the sole creator.[158]

Is this all that there is to be said about the 'sense' of the title? On this view, if we do not look into the word *nirākṛtiḥ*, the title seems to be simply saying that it is by virtue of a refutation of creator-ship that Viṣṇu as a sole creator is refuted. The only novelty is the new specificity of scope. We could attempt to refine this so that it does not appear too trite; with this sense of the title, the idea might be to say that if there can be no locus in which creator-ship as a property can inhere, then *ipso facto* there can be no personal, monotheistic deity. We can add a cultural nuance to the title that may indeed motivate the extension of the argument to its new target. By the middle of the fourth century, the term *īśvara* had increasingly come to be associated with the figure of Śiva [cf. *maheśvara, parameśvara*]; with Viṣṇu, one would more likely find use of terms such as *bhagavāt* or *bhagavān*.[159] It is quite plausible then that a redactor felt it necessary, because it need not have been obvious, to specify explicitly that the argument is applicable to Viṣṇu as well. I think this is as far as we can go without further philological work.

The additional dimension to the sense of the title I wish to highlight turns on the fact that there is a difference to be made between ways in which we can classify a type of discourse. The first thing to say here is that my description of the sense the title enjoys has focused on the terms *īśvara* and Viṣṇu, and not on the terms indicative of the posture adopted with regard to these terms. We can, after all, classify a discourse not only by the targets and referents that focus the discussion, but also on the basis of the way in which the text goes about concerning itself with its target, and the

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[158] I am indebted to Glenn Wallis in conversation for suggesting that this is one possible interpretation of the use of "*nāma*" in the title.

[159] See Jan Gonda, *Visnuism and Saivism*, (London, 1970), 35-36; J. Gonda, *Change and Continuity in Indian Religion*, (London, 1980), 11; Tambyah Nadaraja, *The Cult of Śiva*, (Colombo, 1993), f120, p20.

manner in which it understands its own activity. Given a certain cultivated response to the positing

of God, we should ask after the motivations for taking up 'God' as a fitting subject of rational

meditation. After all, if positing God may be rationalized in ways that are not always comfortably

rational, an immediate sense that the concept of 'God' needs to be refuted need not necessarily be

any more rational either. The upshot of this is simply that one may think of a way to extend the

import of the scope of the argument by way of highlighting the practice involved or entailed by the

argument.

With this point in mind we may note the following. The only term in the title that

comfortably connotes a philosophical posture assumed by the author is the word *nirākaraṇam*, a

word that on at least one interpretation may be understood as approaching the sense of something

like a philosophical refutation reached through argument.[160] But the word "refutation" does not

capture all of the intriguing contexts in which the word "*nirākaraṇaṃ*" is employed. There is

something 'dismissive' in the sense of the latter that the former, suggesting as it does a deliberative

and involved response, does not immediately bring to mind. "*Nirākaraṇaṃ*" can mean 'to separate,'

to chase off, to scare away; it carries with it a sense of a morally weighted dismissal, as in the

disowning of one's wife, a 'willful forgetting' and also, *through expulsion*, a denial of that which is

expelled.[161] It seems to have the primary sense of rejection *through* 'elimination'. The word has a

concomitant positive sense that is quite rich: one is not only *morally* superior for having undertaken

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[160] It is at least clear that one of the senses Apte gives for this word should be considered redundant as far as philosophical vocabulary goes. Apte suggests that the word could mean "contradiction." Whatever else *nirākaraṇa* could mean, it does not mean "contradiction" or even "contrariness" as this is understood in a philosophical sense for the simple reason that there are plenty of more apt and seasoned words to choose from. See Matilal's discussion of "*pratiyogitā*," or 'being non-current in the same locus [on pain of contrariness]' and the more common term for contrariness, *virodha*, in his *The Navya-Nyāya Doctrine of Negation: The Semantics and Ontology of Negative Statements in Navya-Nyaaya Philosophy* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1968), 52-53. See also Nandita Bandyopadhyay, "The Concept of Contradiction in Indian Logic and Epistemology," in *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, 16:3, 1998, 225-246, n1.

[161] Böhtlingk gives the following meanings: "das sondern; das verjagen, verscheuchen; das verstossen einer frau; das Abweisen, zurückweisen; das entfernen, Beseitigen; das Beseitigen durch Bestreitung; das vergessen." Otto Böhtlingk, *Sanskrit Wörterbuch in Kürzer fassung*, III Band (*t-u*), (Akademische Druck-U, Verlagsanstall, Graz, 1959), 210. Cappeller lists another interesting meaning for this term: das vertreiben; see Cappeller, *Sanskrit Wörterbuch*, Zweiter Neudruck, (Berlin, Walter deGruyter & Co, 1966), 215.

such eliminations, but one has exercised a form of self-*assertion* that involves a renewed negotiation with the constituent factors that shape one's immediate experience. The extension of the scope of the argument to Viṣṇu suggests then that *a consequence* of the argument is the disowning of any contractual relationship with the idea of Viṣṇu as a unique creator. That is, given the 'argument', the author is no longer *beholden or obliged* to talk about such a one who would be God as it were a respectable logical term.[162] 'God' or the associated concept has been chased away, excised, expelled, left behind; the ground, to keep with the images conjured up by the word, *has been cleared.*

Note that in the above sketch it appears clear that it is an act, or more precisely an order of acts that results in something which can justify the evaluation that negation is at stake. This is significant, for we are likely to take negation as being a 'simple' act or operation on its own. Given some x, we operate on x in a way that may be formalized as $\sim x$, or it is not the case that x. In a truth-functional sense, we must see such a logical act as being parasitic on the truth conditions of what is being negated. Simply put, I know what it means for x not to be the case, because I can specify the conditions that could allow me to judge x to be the case. The act of negating not only does not carry its own conditions, but it is in a sense independent of those conditions just in the sense that the act does not involve any examination of those conditions. Most importantly, the method of effecting a comparison between truth conditions and the act of negation are separate. We presume that there is such a method and that such a method has already been carried out, or that it can in principle be carried out. One way to put the point of the above comments is to say that *nirākaraṇaṃ* points to an order of acts whose philosophical weight may be 'richer' than simple truth-functional negation. Just as a heuristic for now, I will let philology guide our logical observation. The etymology of *nirākaraṇaṃ* strongly suggests an "unmaking" or "undoing" of some kind. Where we

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[162] In the Nyāya tradition, a suppressed principle operative inclined one to believe that all referring terms should be taken to be instances of denoting phrases. Given *Tweedledum* and *Tweedledee*, one can point to at least one counter-example of this principle.

are expecting a simple term, say *x*, we should perhaps see something more complex, something approaching a description of the kind: *x* such that *x* is *y and? x* is related to *z*. Not only is the form of the 'negated' richer, but its exact logical structure may also be in doubt; perhaps the true description would have to be '*x* such that *x* is *y* if and only if *x* is related to *z*, where we must yet specify the exact relation of *x* and *z*.' Any such complication of the logical structure of the negated, if coupled with an interest in how the truth conditions of the description may be assessed, *ipso facto* would result in us having to see ourselves involved in a type of activity richer than simple negation. Now, if we substitute what I have said about truth conditions with what one may consider the conditions of successful definite reference, then we are very close to the sort of activity involved with *nirākaraṇam*. If the activity of securing determinate conditions of successful reference, a prerequisite for securing truth conditions, is not successful, this just is the expulsion that may be loosely interpreted as negation, or denial.

Such language of ordered acts may suggest that there is something 'ritualistic' about the process of ridding oneself of God-talk, or disowning either a praxis rationalized by way of God-talk, or one constituted with notions of God as a transcendental condition. The specter of ritual should not surprise, seeing as the verbal root *kṛ* (to make, do, construct, enact) that is the root of both *nirākaraṇam* and *nirākṛtiḥ*, is often at the base of many notions concerning ritually efficacious activity. That we should attend to the 'ritualistic' sense involved in 'cleansing ourselves of God-talk' is further suggested by what increasingly seems to me a highly imaginative employment of "*nirākṛtiḥ*." It is true that on one reading of this term, it means a 'rejection by way of expulsion' just as *nirākaraṇam* does; this does not, however, seem to have been the more prominent sense of this term.

"*Nirākṛtiḥ*," through its historical use in the various strata of Indian literature, presents us with what appears to be a remarkable genealogy of beliefs about religious practice.[163] The earliest use of this term that I have found is Vedic, where it refers to the state of being devoid of *svādhyāya*, or the daily, personal practice of the study, recitation and reflection on Vedic hymns and injunctions.[164] Literally then, one is "shapeless" or is "without form" [*niṣ* + *ā* + *kṛt*] when not constituted by the foundational rites prescribed as normatively binding. By the time of the epic literature, however, this sense of 'uncultured' and hence shapeless was already extended to mean '*a-theos*' to fit in with the rise of theistic and devotional organizations of culture. One is now shapeless if one condemns God,[165] if one shies away from God, fails to give praise and honor to God, or study the new sacred literature produced in the name of and reporting the words of God.[166] Not surprisingly, from the perspective of an initially orthopraxic and then increasingly orthodoxic tradition, our word has negative associations: one who fails to attend to God in the appropriate manner is involved in acts that are destructive and threatening to the practical tissue of a cultured society [*saṃskṛta*] under God.[167]

By using this term in the title, however, our Buddhist redactors transform this negative evaluation in two ways. The first is obvious: by simply using such a negative term to characterize their own work, or the work of the argument, they have suggested that this is an activity worth pursuing; one might say that this is an activity that at least has positive consequences even if it is not to be considered positive 'in-itself'. There is also a re-evaluation of "*nirākṛtiḥ*" in the sense that we now have a new image of what 'ritual' might mean. We are given a first step for an equally ritualistic

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[163] What follows is a very short reconstruction of the use of this term. It is therefore by no means to be considered exhaustive of all uses of this term.

[164] See Suryakanta, *A Practical Vedic Dictionary*, (Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1981), 736, 384.

[165] *nirākartṛ*, Benfey cites an instance of such use in the *Mahābhārata*, 12, 6101. Theodore Benfey, *Sanskrit English Dictionary*, (Longmans, Green, London, 1866), 477.

[166] Otto Böhtlingk cites a reference to the *Mahābhārata*, 12, 237, 37 for the following sense of the word: "der sich seiner religiösen verpflichtungen entäussert hat, die Götter nicht ehrt, die heilige schrift nich studirt." Böhtlingk, (*op. cit*), 211.

[167] Further senses given by both Capeller (*op cit*, 215) and Böhtlingk (*op. cit*, 211) are "hemmung; störung, unterbrechung." Both also cite an interesting meaning, "vergessen" (repression and forgetting) as common; I will make some use of this sense below.

consequence [*nirākaraṇa*]—the cultivated and systematic process of showing the un-tenability of certain kinds of posits, posits that reinforce a world-view along with the practices that constitute such a 'world'. One wants to say that we are here faced with something like "investigative or philosophical exorcism," a new 'kind' of ritual that, as far as we know, is primarily constructive to the extent that it is initially destructive. Keeping in mind the sense of 'exorcism', it is important to remember the sense of '*vergessen*' that the term '*nirākṛtiḥ*' can carry. In this sense, the title may be expressing the fact that we are faced with not so much a refutation of God, *as a 'forgetting' of God* to the extent that we are *not only* no longer committed to the plausibility of so much as the idea of God, but that we have removed those conditions of our dispositions in the world and habitual praxis that render God-talk more than intuitive and have excised them from our orientation to the world. I will give more precise ways, from the perspective of the argument, to cash out this idea of 'forgetting' in the next two chapters. One way of making 'forgetting' precise is that it will no longer do to pretend that there exists a logically consistent, sharp description on which to secure references to God. In the absence of any such description, any perceived intuitiveness of references to God must be seen as relying on ancillary facts: facts such as definite ritual acts of a certain kind, facts such as habit, or convention. The idea of God would then become only as necessary as a cultivated behavior can be. A complete forgetting would involve the un-conditioning of such behavioral facts, or at least a heightened awareness of the role of such ancillary facts in shoring up talk of God, rendering reference to God indeterminate.

Böhtlingk gives us the perfect note on which to wrap up our discussion of the title. If he is right in maintaining that *nirākṛti* is a common adjective for Viṣṇu, by virtue of meaning being without *gestalt* or form where this condition is construed as being worship-worthy,[168] then our title

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[168] *Ibid.*, 211. It is worth keeping in mind the well attested fact that in its inception Vaiṣṇavism was a revolt against the hierarchies and exclusivity of the Brahmanical orthopraxy, an aim to which end this tradition even appropriated the figure of the Buddha.

carries with it the suggestion that to break-up [*nirākṛtih*] the notion of an "agent-creator" is to see

Viṣṇu clearly, as an amorphous figure without ground or justification, one which should be

exorcised or be made to *give up the ghost*, a phrase which could work nicely as a paraphrastic but rather

accurate translation of '*nirākaraṇaṃ*'.[169] Being without form may further be construed, in a

philosophical sense, along the lines of the indefiniteness spoken of in the preceding paragraph in the

context of 'forgetting'. Being devoid of any 'cognitive gestalt', and if in absence of any definite

description or logically consistent structure, any appeal to the definiteness of God is a confusion of

reference to 'God' with the ancillary practices that constitute the context in which reference to God

is construed to be definite. But such a point goes beyond the perhaps trite observation that 'when

we pray, we close our eyes'. The idea here is also that in absence of any definiteness, there is no

secure way to specify when reference to God is satisfied. Securing the conditions of satisfactions

presumes that we can set up reference in a reliable way; more crudely, it requires that we know what

we are speaking about in a perspicuous manner if we are to know when to count a given episode of

reference as being a valid one. A little blasphemously we may ask: can we specify when we take the

Lord's name in vain?

    I have said that there is no evidence internal to the argument (parts **M**IA, B and C) that the

text is specifically directed at Viṣṇu as the title and conclusion maintain; indeed, the argument feels

as if it is more general in scope than merely picking out one particular monotheistic deity.[170] Of

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[169] As a point of comparison, it is instructive to consider the individuating features that Dharmakirti took to distinguish traditions as being other than Buddhist. From his perspective in the seventh century, he draws up the following list: (1) Unquestioned authority of the Vedas; (2) The doctrinal belief in a agent-creator of all that is; (3) the quest for purification through ritual baths; (4) the arrogant doctrine of caste-distinctions; (5) the practice of mortification to atone for acts considered morally heinous. [*vedaprāmāṇyam kasyacit kartṛvādaḥ / snāne dharmecchā jātivādāvalepaḥ // santāpārambhah pāpahānāya ceti / dhavastaprajñānāṃ pañcaliṅgāni jāḍye //*; From *Pramāṇavārtika svavṛtti ṭīkā*, Rahula Santkrityayana ed., (Allahabad: Kitab Mahal), p617-18] Features (1) through (4) are the cornerstones of what may, from this time on, be called "Hinduism." (5) is a feature of those traditions that while ascetic or renunciate, were not Buddhist. Our title by virtue of the use of *nirākṛtih* manages to address features (1) through (4). This is one index of what is involved in forgetting God; that is, renouncing the world of practice concomitant with it.

[170] That there are conditions which justify use of such apparent non-sequiturs is among the chief virtues of the historical Indian religious climate.

course, arguing in general against the concept of a unique creator figure responsible for 'the world'

ipso facto signals the unacceptable nature of any personification of such a role. However, the

discrepancy in the language used for describing the achievement and target of the argument when

compared to the language used by the argument itself is already suspicious and suggestive of the fact

that we have at least enough reason *to suspect* that **M**1 and **M**2 are *not necessarily* of the same time as

MIA, B and C.

It certainly would not be wrong to point out that it is **M**3 and **M**1a in conjunction that has

exercised the greatest interest of scholars. **M**3 is a very intriguing line that states that these "words of

the teacher [*ācārya*] Nāgārjuna were recorded through or by means of a student."[171] It is the mention

that these words were authored by Nāgārjuna that first grabbed my attention to this manuscript;[172]

the intriguing possibility that this was written at, or copied down from memory of an oral context, is

also strongly suggested by the fact that the argument steps are highly enthymematic. That is the

charitable way of putting the matter. One might also be tempted to say that while at best, the

arguments strike us as incomplete, at worst they may also point to a certain sloppiness in the

presentation of the argument, if not in the actual thinking itself. I do not think that such a judgment

is warranted in absence of strong textual and philosophical reconstruction; besides, it is enough to

state at least this much to make the point regarding my interest in the text: the text strikes us as

highly telegraphic even in the context of a tradition that valorizes the use of such compressed

statements. There is perhaps some correlation to be made between the fact that quite a lot of

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[171] **M**3 has: "kṛtiḥ iyam ācārya-śri-nāgārjunapādānām śiṣyeṇa likhitam." Compare the use of the word "kṛtiḥ" here with that in the title. The author of the title may have been punning on the sense that "the work or constructive act behind the work is the destructive act of rejecting God." That is, a negatively evaluated practice in Hindu Culture is here seen as actually being a positive and constructive practice. What one would need to know, however, is whether the title and the colophon are of the same date.

[172] I should say here that it is quite possible that without Dan Lusthaus, a scholar of Indian and Chinese Buddhism currently at the University of Missouri, I would not have actually encountered **M**; it is almost certain that were it not for an intriguing statement made in the colophon of **M** attributing the text to Nāgārjuna I might not have actually read it. It was my joining a conversation between Lusthaus and his colleague Signe Cohen, a Sanskritist at the University of Missouri, that prompted my interest in the question of the authenticity of **M.**

context is suppressed in the presentation and the idea that the context suggested by the colophon is in fact a lecture, and the mode of recording a student's hand or memorization. We can allow ourselves at least the following methodological strategy: if at first blush, the transition between the content expressed by the sentences does not strike us as obvious, or even obviously valid, one may then keep in mind three heuristic points. First, as we would expect of a lecture, there need be written only the minimum required to recover the import of the argument at a later date; one can always flesh out details when needed. This ties in to my second point that, for a student at the time, it may have been perfectly easy on the basis of what is written down to reconstruct a more 'coherent' and systematic argument than we might be capable of today. This could possibly rely on a fact that my third point would like to highlight, and that is the simple fact that certain concepts and terms may have been handled differently by these thinkers than they are by us. Not only may certain concepts have been more 'logically' active than we recognize, but they may have enjoyed a more pro-active salience in other respects as well. That is to say, the student need not have recorded those philosophical moves that would have been obvious *to him*. This might prove embarrassing for us in the position of scholars for we are more used to seeing and spending time on 'stock' arguments in the literature. When faced with just enough of a novel application of concepts that we think ourselves familiar with, and at that, an application that is presented only in terms of the least obvious steps, it may prove difficult to reconstruct the exact *sense* of the moves made by a thinker. We should also keep in mind that if this is indeed a lecture-situation, then we should not expect to see a tired and overhauled presentation of 'stock' material used when debating others. A lecture would give room for improvisation not afforded in the stricter settings of debate literature. One immediate consequence of this is that terms that we are familiar with from certain argumentative contexts may be used to work in slightly more creative ways. In a logical sense, this means that concepts are used

to force consequences that may or may not have been explored elsewhere. In short, *we must expect a little befuddlement* when dealing with a lecture.

The thought that we might actually have on hand notes from the famous Nāgārjuna of the *Fundamental Verses of the Middle Way*[173] fame (or notoriety, depending on one's philosophical allegiances) would have been enough to excite my curiosity. Added to that was the fact of the subject matter; Nāgārjuna does not aim an entire text, or even so much as a passage[174] at the concept of God. This renders our text importantly unique. The immediate problem with any attribution of **M** to Nāgārjuna, however, is what the part of **M** in **M**1a says.

M1a consists of verses roughly constructed in the *śloka* style, involving a couplet framed in the eight syllabic count normal within this genre. The verse, as is common with Indian manuscripts, involves a dedication and to some extent goes on to identify the circumstances under which the text was composed. It is in what the verses say that scholars find reasons to seriously question the attribution of the text to the famous Nāgārjuna. Scholars have long debated the existence of two or three people in the Buddhist tradition by the name of Nāgārjuna, a fact that renders attribution of texts to this name problematic. The exact number of individuals going by this name in Buddhist India is still contested by some, but it is clear that there are at the very least two Nāgārjuna's that ought to be distinguished. One is the *Mahāsiddha* Nāgārjuna, a figure claimed by the so-called *tantric* schools of Buddhist practice and who is thought to have lived anywhere between 400 CE to 800 CE depending on when one wishes to date the *Guhyasamāja Tantra*, a text that the *Mahāsiddha* is

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[173] *Mūlamadhyamakākārika*. This is the work that provides the reference point for all interpretations of the philosopher Nāgārjuna's works. This is also the work that provides a gauge to measure the degree to which other works attributed to this name may or may not be "authentic."

[174] This claim deserves to be qualified. As we will see in chapters five, seven and eight, there are some passages dealing with God that are thought to be authored by Nāgārjuna. Two points may be noted. One, there is no substantial agreement among scholars as to whether or not these texts should be considered authentic. To put the matter more bluntly, there is no real consensus as to what criteria to use in order to make this decision. This alone would be enough to consider any citation from Nāgārjuna beyond a small core corpus of texts to be tentative at best. In addition, I have certain positive reasons to think the texts dealing with God to be the work of someone who lived closer to the time of Asanga than that of the Nāgārjuna of the *Fundamental Verses*.

associated with. The other is of course the Nāgārjuna who is thought to have worked anywhere in the first couple of hundred years of the common era, sometimes referred to as the 'philosopher' Nāgārjuna.[175] Given the obviousness of the distinction, and even if we do not worry too much about the dates, then the content of the verse may very well be a clear indication that we ought to cease worrying about the attribution of the text.

M1a states: "Having reverentially saluted the lotus-like feet of my preceptor [*guroḥ*] and the [Buddha] Vājrasattva, and being moved by compassionate concern, I write with the aim of instructing the virtuous initiates."[176] The translation is a little awkward, but the suspects are in: *guroḥ*, the term *bhaktitaḥ*, and the 'patient' or target of the dedication, Vājrasattva. All of these terms signal tantric affiliations. Vājrasattva (literally, adamantine or diamond being) is the name of a Buddha associated with the rise of the tantric literature and practice and who makes his dramatic entrance into Buddhist literature in the *Guhyasamāja Tantra*. If the specific association between Vājrasattva and the *Mahāsiddha* Nāgārjuna were not enough, the use of the terms *bhakti*, or 'celebratory involvement

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[175] Dating Nāgārjuna can be a fun if tiresome game. On this point I have little to nothing of substance to add to what has already been threaded by scholars. All I will say is that on the basis of the number of hypotheticals involved in fixing even an approximate working date for Nāgārjuna, it is less than prudent to take any one date too seriously. The consensus seems to be based on the dating of an edict found at Nasik (Bāśri) AND the identification of the King mentioned in this edict (Gautamīputra Śātkarṇī) as the king who is a friend of the philosopher Nāgārjuna identified only as a śātavāhana King, and places the philosopher as living in the latter half of the second century. See Winternitz, *History of Indian Literatur*e, p342; he calls the date a "good working hypothesis." I suggest the following additional resources. For the traditional biographies, see Max Walleser, *Life of Nāgārjuna from Tibetan and Chinese Sources,* (Asia Major, Hirth Anniversary, 1923). Hagiographies exist in Tibetan and Chinese; for the former see *The History of the 84 Mahāsiddhas*, Taranatha's *History of Buddhism*, and Buston's *History of Buddhism*; In Chinese, hagiographies of Nāgārjuna may be found in a work attributed to Kumārajiva [T.2047] and in Hsuan-Tsang's recollections of India in the *His-yü-chi* [T2087; 929a-930a]. Outside of biographies, the texts in which mention is made of Nāgārjuna are the following: the *Lankāvatāra sutra [verses 165 and 166]*, the *Mañjuśrimūlakalpa [in T. Ganapati's edition in the Trivandrum Sanskrit series, no 70, 76 and 84, published in 1920-22, see pages 616-17]*, Bāṇa's *Harṣacarita*, and Kalhaṇa's *Rājataranganī*. All these texts, however, are too late to be of any use in dating Nāgārjuna with any precision. For a discussion of the confusion of the philosopher Nāgārjuna with the *Mahāsiddha*, see the introductory chapter of Venkata Raman, *Nāgārjuna's Philosophy as Presented in the Mahāprajñāpāramitā-Śāstra*, (Harvard Yenching Institute, Tuttle, 1966). Also see Keith Dowman's discussion of this in his *Masters of Mahamudra: Songs and Histories of the Eighty-Four Buddhist Siddhas*, (State University of New York Press, 1985), p117-22. Note that he dates the *siddha* to the 9th century. For alternative dating of the philosopher on the basis of Chinese sources, I can think of no better treatment than that found in Richard Robinson, *Early Madhyamika in India and China*, (Madison, Milwaukee, 1967), chapter one. It should be noted that not every one has a problem with the multiple personas of Nāgārjuna. Geshe Kelsong Gyatso for example calmly states that "in all, Nāgārjuna lived for over six hundred years." If this is true, then the historical point discussed above is of course moot. See Geshe Kelsang Gyatso in his *Ocean and Nectar: Wisdom and Compassion in Mahayana Buddhism*, (Tharpa Publications, London, 1995), 151.

[176] **M**1a has: "guroḥ padāvujaṃ natvā vajrasattvaṃ ca bhaktitaḥ / suśiṣya prativodhārthaṃ kṛpayā likhyate mayā //"

and devotionalism' and *guru* or 'a preceptor retroactively identified with the relevant persona of a perfect being' is suggestive of both a later date in Indian thought and of a tradition that *at the very least* is not even hinted at in terms of either doctrine or practice in the works of the older Nāgārjuna; it is also possible that one may be able to construct an argument stating that the practice of *sādhana* and analytic analysis [*vicāra*, *parīkśa*] are incommensurable if not antithetical. We do not need the overly strong case of the latter to incline ourselves to see in this text a work that could not come from the Nāgārjuna of the *Fundamental Verses*. If such identification were all that could motivate interest in the study of this text, one senses that one would not have to read the text itself for such curiosity to be deflated. The colophon and dedicatory verses are sufficient to do the job.

But we should be cautious. As Georg Chemparathy rightly notes, **M**1a gives us the *only* knock down textual reason to think that this *not* the work of the Nagarjuna of the *Fundamental Verses*.[177] And unlike Chemparathy, I am not comfortable treating the manuscript as one homogenous work. I have already indicated some reasons for thinking so. I can think of at least three others. First, we can state that it is not implausible to think of manuscripts or textual fragments being circulated without context and then getting assigned authorship and titles at some later stage, further circulating, and then getting absorbed into the self-interpretation of a tradition that would like to appropriate the manuscript for its own. Given the degree to which this is evidenced in texts for long thought to be homogenous,[178] there are more than enough grounds warranting suspicion.

To tell such a plausible story one would need to point to the shifting socio-political and ideological dynamics that could motivate and necessitate such re-appropriations. Such socio-historical conditions could range from normal patterns of change in intellectual environments (such

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[177] "Two Early Buddhist Refutations," (*op. cit*), f92, 92.

[178] Consider the work done on the various Upaniṣads for example, revealing them to be comprised of various historical and linguistic strata, and undergoing procedures of redaction for over five hundred years. Closer to the time of our text, consider the case of the *Gauḍapādīyakārikā*. This is discussed in extremely fine detail in Sengaku Mayeda, *A Thousand Teachings*, (*op. cit*), p.11-17.

as rivalry about prestige based on identification with a famous philosophical persona) to extreme cases of intellectual change. We know that something like the latter began to happen between the fourth and eighth centuries when the populace increasingly came to identify with a devotionally expressed theism and when such theism came to be reflected in the academies. Along with this one must not forget the correlated fact of increased state sponsorship of such devotional practices, specifically Vaiṣṇavism, and the emergence of a new dominating leitmotif in Indian religiosity. The upshot is simply that Buddhist intellectuals increasingly began to face a now no longer marginal theistic contender not only in the academy, but also on the ground among a population in whose understanding of the religious options available, the assimilation of Buddhism to various theistic traditions was already well under way.

An intellectual and religious tradition that thought it necessary to free itself of theistic identification or competition[179] might easily help itself to an argument that could do the work for them, one which perhaps, already exhibited features amenable to and encouraging of such appropriation. A foundational figure in common, for example, can be of great service in this regard. I do not wish to categorically assert that this is in fact what happened. I do, however, wish to point out how 'natural' it is in this context to construct a plausible scenario for retroactive appropriation of texts and arguments.

Given such a plausible scenario we add the reasons already mentioned in seeing some internal inconsistencies between the argument and manuscript sections **M**1 and **M**2. I would like to add the fact that "Nāgārjuna" mentioned in **M**3 (the colophon) identifying how this text was written

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[179] An anxiety over the proximity and similarities of certain forms of practice in Buddhism with those of theistic traditions is easily found. In the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*, for example, great pains are taken to assimilate rival practices that are ostensibly theist under the banner of Buddhism; the text declares that "…the extensive ordinances that were proclaimed in the Vaiṣṇava tantra were truly spoken by Mañjughoṣa as but a beneficently deceptive means [*upāya*] of converting people." Glenn Wallis discusses this appropriation of theistic language in order to distance Buddhism from theism and also to reach a wider audience in *Mediating the Power of the Buddhas: Ritual in the Manjusrimulakalpa*, (State University of New York Press, Albany, 2002), 46-48. For the Sanskrit of the quotation, see d13 in pages 196-97; I have modified his translation slightly.

is called an *ācārya*, which is not the same designation as *guroḥ* used in **M**1a. The terms have different

conceptual, semantic and ritual senses correlated with them. Most pertinently, the former term is

used even in monastic 'scholastic' Buddhism, while the latter is *never* used. *Mahāsiddha* traditions do

in fact use both, but when they are used, they are used to highlight different ritual roles a teacher can

play.[180] It is entirely plausible to think that the colophon could belong to an earlier time, or even a

very different tradition which has then been incorporated into a tradition in which a "Nāgārjuna"

plays the role of an initiator into an esoteric practice employing ritual and visualization techniques as

its primary method. Now we could say that the latter term is used only because of 'metric

considerations' in trying to fit the requirements of the *śloka* metric form. But this does not really

work as a reason; "*ācārya*" can be counted in the same way so as to fit exactly the same measure. The

choice of *guroḥ* in the dedicatory verses ought then to be seen as an instance of deliberate choice.

So we could identify **M**3 and **M**1a as being as old as each other and part of a homogenous

text. However, this increasingly appears as a strong assumption (if not an instance of textual naivety)

in need of argument. There is the further fact of recognizing that no identification with "Nāgārjuna"

is specifically made in the dedication verses. So even if we acknowledge that **M**3 and **M**1a are as old

as one another, and manage to defend this assumption, there is no reason to see in the verses a claim

being made about Nāgārjuna rather than a claim being made about the student who took down the

argument, or a teacher who at a later date retroactively identifies with the author of the argument.

What I am suggesting is that one must take into account something quite common in Indian

literature. Identity in dedication verses is largely an intentional and hermeneutic fact, not a historical

one. In a dedication, one positions oneself in a tradition and towards an emancipatory horizon that

one wishes to work within and renders such positioning explicit. It is more than common both to

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[180] Generally speaking, *ācārya* is a global term for one who is both accomplished and a teacher, while *guroḥ* refers to the specific role of an *ācārya* in initiating prospective trainees [*śiṣya*] through the practice of *abhiṣekha*, and the gift of a specific mantra. For a very clear discussion and schematic depiction of the path of such training, see Glenn Wallis, *Ibid.*, 134-138.

claim identification to the point of identity with a teacher many hundreds of years after that person is dead and to consider one's work to amount to a fulfillment of the intent and not the letter of that individual. Mere attribution of disciple-hood to Vājrasattvam and Nāgārjuna in the same manuscript does not then really exclude any possibility about where **M**IA and B come from, or indeed, how old the individual 'layers' of the manuscript might be.

Another point that should be kept in mind is that I do not know of any *tantric* texts that provide arguments in the style in which our text seems to present its arguments. That is to say, a potential, internal inconsistency attends us even if we go ahead and claim that the text is a homogenous whole and that it belongs to the *tantric* tradition *in toto*, for abstaining from arguing in anything approaching the Buddhist scholastic style seems to have been almost a point of doctrine for those considered part of the *Mahāsiddha* tradition. The simple fact remains that there is no easy consistency to be had between the materials used in the argument, the referent of the argument, and the tone and commitments of the verses in **M**1a.

The only systematic attempt to sort out the various texts attributed to Nāgārjuna decides that our text is neither to be thought of as being, definitively, not the work of the philosopher Nāgārjuna, or as belonging to those works we know to be composed by him.[181] That is, the text remains indeterminate, but with strong presumption in favor of its not being authentic. The reason for such indecision is a consequence of the criteria Lindtner employs. Our text cannot be ruled out in any categorical way because, as he points out, it does not cite or use a reference we know to be later than Nāgārjuna's work. Given what we have said above, Lindtner's claim will have to be modified to say: it is not the case that the argument cites any material that we know to be definitely later than the second century.

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[181] Chr. Lindtner, *Nagarjuniana: Studies in the Writings and Philosophy of Nagarjuna*, (Indiske Studier IV, Akademisk Forlag, Copenhagen, 1982), 16.

Let us take stock. The text is attributed to Nāgārjuna, and we have no criteria internal to the

text or in the attribution of the text made in the colophon to see a connection to the philosopher

Nāgārjuna. The dedication verses furnish us with reasons to identify the Nāgārjuna mentioned in

the colophon with the *Mahāsiddha*. We know then at the very least that the name Nāgārjuna was

important enough for the student to mention, and given the importance in association with an

argument, we have some reason to suspect that the colophon is attempting to render the 'argument'

itself important. This should lead us to suspect a Nāgārjuna who in some sense is already tied to a

philosophical reputation. The manner in which scholars have configured their interest in the text has

been to ask: *Should we take the text as an authentic Nāgārjuna piece*? We have some sense now of how

thin the manuscript evidence is for an unequivocal answer. With the above configuring of scholarly

concern, there is not much more we can say, but given my claim that there is warrant to distinguish

between text and argument, it is fitting to turn to see what evidence people have drawn from the

status of the argument itself. That is, a more helpful question would be to ask whether the argument

affords us any grounds to think it an authentic work from the philosopher Nāgārjuna. Obviously,

this question requires that we turn from manuscript to argument.

Stcherbatsky for one does not seem very interested in the above question. He makes two

claims. First, the arguments are an abridged form of the arguments that Nāgārjuna expounds in

other works with which we are more familiar.[182] This might lead us to suspect that he is in favor of

attributing the text to Nāgārjuna; but he later states that the arguments in the manuscript just do not

show the same 'form' as the arguments in Nāgārjuna's more mature work.[183] What he means is that

the style called "*prasangaḥ*," or 'reductio ad absurdum' as it is commonly conceived to be, whereby

both a thesis and its antithesis are demonstrated to be incoherent to the detriment of the

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[182] Stcherbatsky, "A Buddhist Philosopher on Monotheism," (*op. cit*), 4.
[183] *Ibid.*, 10

meaningfulness of the initial thesis, is not employed in the manuscript. It might be worth noting that

though the strategy is translated as a form of 'reductio', this method does not always employ the

technique of deriving an explicit contradiction from a set of premises in order to render it

problematic; what is involved is the attempt to show a given postulated thesis or interpretation of a

phenomenon to be self-defeating: whatever reasons someone offers to justify the positing of

something are demonstrated to render the posit impossible precisely because of the way in which

the *positer* has configured both the necessity of the posit and the reasons that justify its employment.

In short, the *prasangaḥ* provides a critical gain without epistemic commitment by showing an

interlocutor that he could not, on rational grounds, want what he has gone on record as stating that

he does want.

Stcherbatsky, beyond presenting the text in translation, does not actually provide us any

analysis of the arguments presented in the text. Aside from pointing out that there is no explicit use

of the technique of *prasangah*, and telling us what the colophon already tells us, Stcherbatsky does

not end up having very much to say about the nature of the argument at all. Furthermore, his

contending that there is no use of this technique of *prasangah* is itself debatable; as will be seen, not

only is the term explicitly mentioned in the text, but the technique is used to drive a dilemma

concerning the notion of a causally inter-active God. Also, the argument shows the most salient

feature of a '*prasanga*' methodology in that it does not employ a claim with existential import—what

we called a *pratijñā* in chapter one—to render the original posit of the interlocutor unacceptable.

Chemparathy adds[184] that the dialectical style is in common with the teachings and methods

of those who followed in Nāgārjuna's footsteps, but he does claim that this cannot be sufficient to

identify the text with Nāgārjuna; it might, however, prove sufficient warrant for thinking it to be the

work of someone in that school. This is saying more than just what the colophon has said because

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[184] Chemparathy, "Two Early Buddhist Refutations," (*op. cit*), 91.

the *siddha* Nāgārjuna has not been shown to be a Madhyāmika, and we are here pointing out that this argument does in fact show signs of belonging to a school that is earlier than the *Mahāsiddha* tradition.[185] Even Chemparathy, however, aside from gesturing in the direction of "dialectics," fails to specify exactly what he means by Madhyāmika method in any detail.

That the text shows no signs of being influenced by a Dignāga style specification of *vyāpti*, or the inference-warranting relation that renders an inference sound, may provide evidence for thinking the text to belong to a time period before the sixth century. This would be true unless the manuscript is correct in taking the argument to belong to the *tantric* tradition where an intentional and cultivated avoidance of the styles of the academy was the norm. As I suggested earlier, the *tantric* hypothesis is only partially successful because of the fact that *it is not that* our text does not show signs of immersion in debate literature, but that it makes its points in a style prior to the institution of Dignāga's method by the logicians. I discuss the features of the argument that lead me to believe that the argument dates sometime close to Asanga in the next chapter.

It is at least clear that we must turn to the argument in greater detail than has been done if we are to gain an appreciation for the context in which it might have operated, a necessary prerequisite for answering the question about the age of the argument. But what is the argument? If two recent glosses are to be believed, then there is not much to say about the argument. The argument is actually a pair of arguments that seem to be presented as independent arguments against a common target—the existence of a creator god in the classical sense used in theism. The two arguments have recently been summarized by Roger Jackson[186] and Georg Chemparathy.[187] For convenience and comparison, I have included their summaries below:

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[185] There is the curious fact to remember that at least one *Mahāsiddha* tradition adopted the name of not only Nāgārjuna, but that of every one of his most important students—Āryadeva, Candrakīrti, etc—in the Mādhyamika tradition. I must confess that I have not fully digested the sociological conditions responsible for such a fact.

[186] Roger Jackson, "Dharmakirti's Refutation of Theism," (*op. cit*), 7.

[187] Chemparathy, "Two Early Buddhist Refutations," (*op. cit*), 93.

Tweedledum and Tweedledee by Roger Jackson: "He cannot create the existent, since it already exists, nor the non-existent, since it cannot come to be. He cannot be self-originated, as that is a contradictory concept; or other-originated for that would entail an infinite regress of creators, even one of whom exist before God thereby vitiating his status as creator."

Tweedledum and Tweedledee by Georg Chemparathy: "He who is maker of something makes either that which is already existent or that which is non-existent or that which is both existent and non-existent. But the creator cannot be said to be a creator in any of these ways. The creator makes the other beings either he himself having an origination or without himself having an origination. But neither of these assumptions is possible."

Such, apparently, is the entire argument, or collection of arguments. If this is the case, then one may very well be inclined to follow Chemparathy in his "general impression" that "the author of the tract was no great thinker" even if one would be less inclined then to then see sloppiness as first being indicative of the Madhyāmika tradition generally, or follow him in asserting that it is possible that sloppiness probably has a "deeper mystical significance."[188] As it stands, the argument does have a bit of a *Tweedledum* and *Tweedledee* ring to it, both in form and in content. The argument sounds almost tautological, and in form, presents us with two arguments equally 'dogmatic', uninformative, separate and yet insistently presenting themselves as related. It is as *Tweedledum and Tweedledee* that I will refer to **M**IB and **M**IC hereafter.

Figure 2.0: Tweedledum and Tweedledee playing themselves.[189]

This characterization, while impressionistic, is not entirely inappropriate, nor is it intended to malign. That is, I think the argument in **M** can quite defensibly be called *Tweedledum and Tweedledee*

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[188] *Ibid.*, 94.

[189] The illustration is taken from *Alice in Wonderland*, (*op. cit*), p.138; copyright permission pending.

and that such a characterization can actually aid our search for an orientation to the argument. The proof, of course, lies in the eating; bearing in mind Alice's first documented encounter with the obtrusive pair does, however, have the salutary effect of anticipating the significance of the structure of the argument laid out in the next chapter in full dress form. It is said that when Alice found them, they were standing under a tree, each with an arm around the other fellow's neck. They were easily recognized: the one having the word 'DUM' embroidered on his collar, and the other, 'DEE'. This is pretty much the scenario presented by the scholarly presentation of the argument in **M**. One finds something very much worth calling DUM, and something else that could without reproach be addressed by DEE. As the scholars would have it, there are two and only two sections, mildly proximate, but with only a passing acquaintance. In this context, Alice's thought is worth recalling. "I suppose," she thought on sighting the pair, "they've each got 'TWEEDLE' round the back of the collar."[190] With the argument in **M**, we are fortunate in that TWEEDLE does not prove to be a much of a Snark, at least to the extent that we do not have to search long for it. Such a third is in fact there—indeed, it is self-evidently there—and including it in an analysis of the argument results in rendering our two sections thicker than water. Given the lack of mention of the section **M**IA that ought to be called TWEEDLE, it is not surprising that Chemparathy thinks there is not much to be said for the argument as a whole. Alice's experience is again relevant. Without an arm around each other's neck, neither will extend a free hand in greeting. Without a handshake, they remain unapproachable: if more easily spoken to than a wax-work, they remain less penetrable than a school-boy's grin. I submit that if the argument thus far has come across as childish, it is for want of a structure such as TWEEDLE, TWEEDLE-DUM, TWEEDLE-DEE can express.

It is worth pointing out that soon after declaring that there is not much that can be said for the text or the argument on philosophical grounds, Chemparathy goes on to make an intriguing

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[190] *ibid., p.138*

admission that is worth quoting in full: "I should indeed confess that I have not yet fully understood the idea behind the three-fold alternatives to *siddham*, *asiddham*, *siddha-asiddham*. It is quite probable that the author here refers to an argumentation which was well understood and accepted by his hearers and readers and that it thus has more than a pure eristic value."[191] The comment concerns the first half of his summary where '*siddha*' is translated as "existent." In the next two chapters I will try to present the case that a lot does in fact turn on the use of the category of "*siddham*" and that there remains a lot more to be said about an argument that *Tweedledum* and *Tweedledee* jointly work to present. At the very least, much more can be said for the argument than has been said in the discussions of this text in academic literature. And if nothing else, I take the next two chapters to be sufficient to demonstrate my conviction, as John Cleese might have phrased the matter, that mysticism, very much like plumage, "often don't enter into it."

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[191] Chemparathy, "Two Buddhist Refutations," *(op. cit.)*, f47, 97.

CHAPTER SIX: THE ARGUMENT IN TRANSLITERATION AND TRANSLATION

MIA: TWEEDLE

TRANSLITERATION♣	**TRANSLATION**
1a. asti punaḥ īśvaraḥ **kartā**	1a. –Now God, in the sense of a sentient agent, is actual.
1b. sa eva vicāryatām	1b. Let only that [claim] be analyzed.[192]
2a. yaḥ **karoti** saḥ **kartā**	2a. That which acts, is [called] a sentient agent.
2b. yaḥ **kriyāṃ karoti** saḥ **kartṛ** saṃjñaḥ bhavati	2b. That which acts [to effect] a [clearly construed] 'act' [in the world], *that* is validly classified[193] as being a sentient agent.[194]

♣ The numbering system used here is, of course, extrinsic to the manuscript. I have employed it here in order to bring out the structure of argumentation and presentation of reasons in line with the Sanskrit debate format. Subsections of a claim—the way 1.2a might relate to 1.2—correspond to the presuppositions or reason for a claim. Generally, integers refer to claims, and fractions to premises.

[192] Or, more literally, "let us *back-track*." In Buddhist phenomenology, this term marks the shift from passive perception to active attending. In one example given in the Theravāda tradition, the shift from passive perception to this form of engagement with a cognitive object may be considered analogous to the case of a bee that momentarily attracted to the smell of a flower, returns to the flower and begins to circle round the flower, and then hovers back and forth in place.

[193] The word 'classified' may be understood in two further senses: Re-cognition, and construction of a nominative referring expression.

2c. atra ca vayaṃ brūmaḥ   2c. –And here, we respond…

MIB: TWEEDLE-DUM

1   kim asau **siddhaṃ** karoti atha   1. What, does he act to effect that [sort

asiddhaṃ vā?   of an act which is of a kind] exampled in

experience and well-attested, or that [sort

of an act which is of a kind] not

exampled and not well-attested?[195]

2   atra **siddhaṃ** tāvat na kurute   2. He does not cause-to-create that [act

which belongs to the class of acts] that

we know to be exampled.

2a **sādhana** abhāvāt.   2a. The means to realize such a conclusion

Are not available.[196]

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[194] These are the conditions sound use of a language of creative sentient agent has to respect. The idea here is that from some discernible act having been performed, we correlate the act with those causal conditions necessary and sufficient to achieve it. If the principal efficient cause is a sentient being, then we can validly refer to that sentient being as an agent.

[195] Further senses of *siddha* that are worth keeping in mind are listed by *The Cologne Online Sanskrit Lexicon*: "valid (as a rule in grammar); resulting from; admitted to being true or correct; established, settled, proved, decided."

[196] In the main body of the thesis I offer a general reading of the argument proffered here. [see p.180] In this footnote I will give the specific textual version. I make use of the discussions of the inferential schema in chapter two and the discussion about philosophical theories of reference in chapter seven. The step in **M**IB2a strikes me as a play on the fact that *sādhana* can refer to the causal efficacy of factors bringing about an act, and also to the process of inferring the presence of an entity on the basis of logical signs. One can also translate this line to say: *the purported causal relation required is not found.* We must see the employment of "*sādhana*" as a creative realization of *the equivalence* in this case of the conditions of validity for God to be an inferred conclusion and the actual causal mechanism that must be in place for there to be a sound motivation for the inference. The point here seems to be that the inferential machinery starts from what is given [*siddha*] and attempts to prove something that is not yet known with surety [*sādhya*]. But this connection still requires as a condition that what is novel is the *connection* drawn between signs, not the introduction of a radically unknown sign. We have, for any act that is exampled (**a**), *L* (**k-tva, a**) *and* the relation **k-tva** *iff* **q-tva**; but here **q-tva** is

2b yathā siddhe pudgale punaḥ

kāraṇatvaṃ kartṛtvaṃ nāsti prāg eva

siddhatvāt.

2b. [Consider, by way of example, the following][197] Within an already exampled locus such as a person,[198] there is no [sign denoting a] causally efficient agent that has the property of causing some further fact [about the act]; because [the act as given] *just is* completely[199] accomplished.[200]

3. atha **asiddhaṃ** karoti cet.[201]

3. But perhaps[202] [he] acts-to-create that [act which belongs to the class of acts] which is not exampled.

3a. vāluka tailam **asiddhaṃ**; kūrma-lomādikam **asiddhaṃ**; etad eva karotu.

3a. [Creating] oil from sand, or hair from a tortoise[203] tail, etc.[204]—these are [acts that

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not of a kind that the theist requires. Saying that there is an **S**, such that *L* (**q-tva**, **S**) on the strength of providing an **a**, is tautological, and furthermore, the **S** that is implied by the availability of an **a** *is not the kind the theist requires*. So the theist must want to say that there is a **non-obvious q-tva**, call this **q''-tva**, which individuates God. But this, to be sound, requires that there be a suitable **k''-tva, a further fact** about (**a**) given along with (**a**). Such a 'further fact' is not found. My use of 'further fact' is designed to capture the logical force of "*punaḥ*." See **M**IB2b.

[197] This is the significance of using '*yathā*', or literally, 'when'; the move approximates the step of exemplification.

[198] *See discussion on p.180-3.*

[199] I see the particle '*eva*' [only, exclusively, completely] as playing some logical role here. See footnote immediately below.

[200] The author seems to take the import of *siddham* to be the following. If some term is given as being accomplished, then we must consider there, *by definition*, to be no 'further fact' constituting the effect that stands in need of further causation. To be taken as a cause of an effect is to be in a position to cause the effect considered *in its entirety*. (Highlighting this seems to be the force of the particle '*eva*'). This point stands even at a heuristic level and does not require a terribly robust metaphysics of causation. To say that something is a cause of something else, is just to say that the latter stands in no need of 'further causation', which is just to say that as far as we have individuated the effect to our satisfaction, the cause is sufficient. This is an instance of an obvious point being used to good effect in the argument.

[201] Both Stcherbatsky and Chemparathy correct Thomas here in reading "*cet*" for "*ceta*" that occurs in the manuscript published in the *Royal Society*, page 346, line 13.

[202] *Literally, the Sanskrit says 'thereupon [atha]'.* I have provided a more colloquial paraphrase in order to underscore the flow of the argument which comes through in the Sanskrit.

are] not exampled or well-attested in experience. [Let him] act-to-create just these.

3b. punaḥ atra kartṛtvaṃ na śaknoti.	3b. Again, here, there is no capacity to be an efficient-sentient cause.
3b1. kutaḥ?	3b1. For what reason?
3b2. **asiddha**tvabhāvāt.	3b2. By virtue of the [acts possessing the] property of being unexampled and not being well-attested in experience.[205]
3b3. evam asau	3b3. [Then] *even so* is that [sentient creator who is thought to act-to-create the non-exampled].[206]
4 atha **siddhaṃ asiddhaṃ** karoti.	4. Well, perhaps then[207] [he] acts-to-

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[203] *kūrma* refers to both tortoise and turtles; *loma* refers to 'hair on a tail'. It cannot be ruled out that there is an oblique reference being made here to the second incarnation of Viṣṇu as a giant tortoise. Generally, however, these are stock examples for absurd causal correlations and used as exemplifications for phenomena that are not possible given the way things are [*siddham*].

[204] The Sanskrit has '*adi*', or 'and the like'.

[205] Here we must read '*asiddham*' as implying that what is not exampled is not in principle likely to be realized given the way in which causal connections are drawn up. That is, since the category of *asiddha* is dependent of *siddha*, the degree to which the latter is seen to hold up is the degree to which the former becomes unlikely. See the discussion on page 160; the use of the term *śakti* (here used in the sense of 'causal power') might indicate that we are here deriving a metaphysical result from a purely epistemological distinction.

[206] This softens the metaphysical commitments made above. What we see here is not so much parity of cause and effect as much as it is parity of justification. If the evidence for positing a term is thin, then so-too is what is believed in. See p.180-4.

create what is both, exampled and non-exampled.

4a. tad api na ghaṭate **paraspara virodhāt**	4a. But this is not well-founded;[208] on account of a contradiction.[209]
4a1-2. yaḥ **siddhaḥ** saḥ **siddhaḥ** eva yah tu **asiddhaḥ** saḥ eva **asiddhaḥ**	4a1-2. That which is exampled, *just is* exampled; that which is not-exampled *just is* not-exampled.
4a3 tad evaṃ tadanayoḥ paraspara-virodhaḥ syād eva.	4a3 Thus there would inexorably follow a contradiction, just as…
4a3.1. yathā ca āloka-andhakārayoḥ jīvana-maraṇayoh iva.	4a3.1 if there were light *along with* darkness, life *along with* death
4a3.2. atha yatra ālokaḥ vidyate tatra andhkāraḥ na asti; yatra andhakāraḥ tatra ālokaḥ na asti eva.	4a3.2 Where one *finds* that there is light, there darkness is not actual; and where darkness [is found], there light

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[207] I am again paraphrasing '*atha*'.

[208] I originally wanted to have a little more fun with this line. One can, a little too cheekily, translate this to say "but this is not in the bag," which works colloquially for what one can, especially if one squints, read the Sanskrit to say, which is "but this is not in the pot," or "the point is not yet securely contained." By extension, I then wanted to translate the line to say "but now you have gone from the frying pan into the fire," mirroring as it does the situation in which the theist is in by virtue of seeking out a secure base from which to construct the idea of God. All this because '*ghaṭa*' does mean pot, or water-container, and also pitcher. In this context, however, the phrase '*ghaṭate*' seems to mean 'not justified by another', probably through the use of '*ghaṭa* *as a standard measure*. See the *Cologne Sanskrit Online Lexicon* for more information on *ghaṭate*.

[209] My translation here is meant to mirror the use of the ablative form of *virodha*.

is not actual.

4a3.3. yah hi jīvati saḥ jīvati eva; yaḥ mṛtaḥ mṛtaḥ eva saḥ

4a3.3 That which is alive *just is* alive; that which is dead, is only dead.

4a4. ataeva **siddha-asiddhayoḥ** ekatva-abhāvād īśvarasya kartṛtvaṃ na asti eva iti matam.

4a4. Even so, from there being no unity to be had of what is exampled and what is not-exampled, the property of being a sentient creator that would be predicated of God is unavailable.

MIC: TWEEDLE-DEE

1. kiṃ ca aparam api dūṣanaṃ syat

1. There are further defects.

2. kiṃ svayam **utpadya** parān karoti **anutpannaḥ** vā?

2. What, does he act-to-create others[210] having himself arisen,[211] or [does he act-to-create others] not having undergone arising?[212]

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[210] For a way to make the significance of "others" precise, see chapter eight.

[211] The logician unfamiliar with the Indian use of this term may substitute 'arising' with the *logically equivalent* phrase 'being the effect of efficient causation'.

[212] In Sanskrit, the use of the 'gerund' form of derivative verbal noun is often used to indicate a past, indeterminate *act*. My translation of "*anutpannaḥ*" is slightly unorthodox in that I wish to highlight the gerundival construction of "*utpadya*" earlier in the sentence. The sense of the question is nevertheless patently clear. In *Catuḥstava*, a text attributed to the philosopher Nāgārjuna, it is argued that *īśvara* must either originate from another entity, in which case his uncreatedness

2a1. **anutpādya** ca svayaṃ tāvat parān kartuṃ na śaknoti. kutaḥ?

2a1 From [his] not having undergone arising, it follows that [he] *could not have*[213] acted-to-create others. How so?

2a2. svayam eva anutpann-rūpatvāt

2a2. From the fact that he *just is*, formally, not of the order of 'arising'.

2a3. yathā anutpannasya vandhyā-tanayasya dāla-pātanādi-kriyā na pravartate.

2a3. Just as [for example], the 'biological son of a barren woman' [belonging to the category of those things that are *essentially*] not of the order of arising, cannot accomplish or exert intentional acts, such as letting fall a spade, and the like.

2a4. tathā īśvarasya api.

2a4. *Of* 'God', [then], just this is the case.

2b. Atha ca svayam **utpadya** parān karoti.

2b. Then again, perhaps he acts-to-create others having himself arisen.

2b1. tadā kasmāt **utpannaḥ**? kiṃ **svataḥ**,

2b1. From what is *that* arisen? From

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is violated, or self-originated, which is impossible, because an entity cannot be at once agent and patient of an action. See Lindtner, *Nagarjuniana*, (*op. cit*), p150-151 verses 33-34.

[213] In the strong sense of there being no 'casual capacity' [*śakti*]. In other words, an entity that is not with causes of its own is causally impotent; it is not *of a type* that could be causally efficient.

kiṃ **parataḥ**, **ubhatataḥ** va?

what: himself; another; both [himself and another]?

2b1.1 atra **svataḥ** tāvat na **utpannaḥ**.

2b1.1. Now, take himself—*he is not arisen from that.*

2b1.1a svātmani kriyā virodhāt

2b1.1a On account of there being a contradiction in the idea of 'acting-to-*create*[214] one's self.'

2b1.1b na hi kharatara-karavāla-dhārā svam ātmānaṃ chettuṃ samarthā bhavati; na hi suśikṣitaḥ api naṭa-paṭuḥ svakīyaṃ skandham āruhya nartituṃ śaknoti. kiṃ ca svayam eva janyaḥ svayam eva janaka iti evaṃ na dṛṣṭam iṣṭam vā. svayam eva pitā svayam eva putra iti naiṣa vādo lokaprasiddhaḥ.[215]

2b1.1b No blade, *however fine its edge,*[216] can succeed in cutting itself;[217] no dancer, *however skilled*, can mount his own shoulders and dance.[218] Besides, it is nowhere observed, nor would one want to say, that "that which is born is just that one which gives birth";[219] nowhere is there a *belief-committing* proposition[220] to the effect that "some one is both one's father and also one's son"[221] available in sober conversation[222] in the life-world.

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[214] My emphasis; I simply aim to highlight that *kriyā* does not represent just any activity, but activity that results in the generation of some new state-of-affairs. The contradiction then is patent.

[215] For this sentence I have followed Chemparathy's textual suggestions. See n59 on page 98.

2b1.2. atha bhavatu **parataḥ**

2b1.2 Then let it be [from] another [that God derives].

2b1.2.a evam api na ghaṭate yāvatā īśvarasya vyatirekeṇa parasya abhāvāt.

2b1.2a But this is not well-founded. On account of the fact that, [*ex hypothesi*], in the absence[223] of God, there are no 'others' to be had.

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[216] The emphasis corresponds to the use of the emphatic particle in Sanskrit, "*hi.*"

[217] The trope of distinguishing a knife from its 'edge' usually does duty for pointing to the possibility of sophistry in argument. It has a long history, one reference even being made in the canonical literature of Buddhism. In the 29th *sutta* of DN, [*Pāsādika-sutta*] we hear Uddaka Rāmaputta being censured for using locutions such as: "one can see a well-sharpened razor, but not its *edge*. [*my emphasis*]" In his commentary to this dialogue, Buddhaghosa explicitly considers this to be an instance of a sophistic posture of profundity. Quoted in Hajime Nakamura, *Gotama Buddha: A Biography Based on the Most Reliable Texts*, vol. 1, (Kosei Publishing, Tokyo, 2000), p138. The force of the example seems to be playing on this fact, suggesting that even a sophistic distinction cannot help motivate the theist's posit here.

[218] This may very well be a reference to Śiva in the form of the cosmic dancer, *naṭarāja*, or Lord of Dance. Even representations of Śiva as he undertakes the cosmic dance depict him dancing, not on his own shoulders, but *on the shoulders* of a dwarf. Our author seems to be having quite a lot of fun in this section.

[219] My colloquial translation introduces a gender bias; the Sanskrit "*janaka*" can refer to any factor involved in the genesis of something and remains gender neutral. My choice is a purely aesthetic preference, attempting to mirror the semantic relation between *janyaḥ* and *janaka.*

[220] A paraphrastic translation of *vādo*, which can mean speech, but usually indicates a position one would take sides on in a debate.

[221] From the *Seventy verses on Emptiness*, the *śunyatā śaptati*, a text attributed to Nāgārjuna, and one with strong chances of being authentic, Lindtner quotes the following:: "a father is not a son, a son is not a father, neither exists without mutuality [*anyonya*], nor are they simultaneous [*yugapat*]." Lindtner, *Nagarjuniana*, (*op. cit*), p41, verse 13. This corresponds to the choice of the example used by our author to cite the impossibility of speaking intelligibility of self-genesis, given certain norms involved when speaking of "genesis." For a similar comment in *suhṛllekha* directed against the concept of God, see *ibid.*, p218.

[222] Again, a more than strict translation, but one which I believe captures the nuances of the phrase "*loka-prasiddha.*" *Prasiddha* is used to indicate that which is antecedent to, and beyond 'doubt' in a debate setting—it is not up for grabs.

[223] I have been literal here at some cost to intelligibility. One way of translating this line is the following: if 'God' is not available as a term, then the category of 'other' is unmotivated, and even without 'sense'." This will readily be seen to be the case in a scenario considered antecedent to the 'arising' of God. Note that though the word '*vyatireka*' (translated above as "absence") can mean simple separation, or perhaps, removal, it carries with it a logical sense indicating something that has independent logical force, or something that can behave as a logical term in its own right. In this sense, if 'God' is made into a term which can support the causal predicate 'arising', it is not clear how secure the category of 'others' can remain. In later logical literature, '*vyatireka*' carries with it the sense of contra-positive. One can see how such a meaning could accrue. Here we are interested in the scenario where according to the theist, if and only if G[od], then O[thers; the class of all effects]. But what does ~G mean if not O? Or, how could one think of the situation, ~G to G, a situation that the claim 'G can arise' requires as a necessary condition? Using ~G in sense of '~G to G' undermines the sense in which O[ther] *just means* ~G in the former sense stipulated by the theist's posit of God. Equivocation or inconsistency looms ahead.

2b1.2.b. atha pāramparyād bhavatu.

2b.1.2.b But perhaps there is here [an 'indirect' arising of God as being] from a sequence.[224]

2b1.2.b.1. evaṃ ca parataḥ api anavasthā **prasaṅgaḥ** syāt.

2b.1.2.b.1 Even so, this would have the consequence of an infinite regress.

2b1.2.b.2. anādi rūpatvāt.

2b.1.2.b.2 From the fact that, by definition, [God is] essentially without beginning.

2b1.2.c. sataḥ yasya ādeḥ abhāvaḥ tasya avasānasya dūṣanaṃ abhāva eva.

2b.1.2.c. Of a being that does not have a beginning, one could not find the 'fault' of an 'end' either.

2b.1.2.c.1 bījasya[225] abhāve aṃkura-daṇḍa-śākhā-patra-phalādīnām abhāvaḥ bhavati. kutaḥ?

2b.1.2.c.1 In the absence of a seed, the stalk, shoot, branches, fruit and so on, are no longer to be had. Why?

2b.1.2.c.2 bījasya abhāvāt.

2b.1.2.c.2 Just from the fact that there is no 'seed'.

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[224] The Cologne Online Sanskrit Lexicon lists the following illustrative uses of *paramparā*: "an uninterrupted row, series, order or succession; an indirect means of conveyance, as when a horse pulls a carriage." Another very relevant term is *parampara*, whose meaning is given as: "successively, following on the other, as in a genealogy where a great grandfather is succeeded by a grandfather, who is succeeded in turn by a father and son, and so on." The leading idea here is that we way think of the generation of God as being a resultant effect of component objects that still work together in what may be taken to be a linear, organized sequence, thereby in effect constituting 'one engine' of sorts.

[225] Stcherbatsky's manuscript reads "vījasya" instead of "bījasya."

2b1.3. na **ubhayataḥ**

2b1.3 Not both [from self *and* from another].

2b1.3.1 ubhaya-doṣa-duṣṭatvāt

2b1.3.1 From the fact that one merely compounds the defects of both the above.

>> **tasmāt asiddhaḥ kartā** <<

>> therefore, '[the] Creator' is not a valid construction.[226]<<

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[226] See note 195 of this thesis.

CHAPTER SEVEN: TWEEDLE AND TWEEDLE-DUM

In chapter five I suggested a division of the argument into sections <u>A</u>, <u>B</u> and <u>C</u> and by the end of the chapter called sections <u>B</u> and <u>C</u>, on the basis of two recent academic paraphrases of the argument, *Tweedledum* and *Tweedledee* respectively. It is worth even if only to facilitate ease of reference to recall the argument *as sketched* by the scholars who do refer to this text in recent studies. The argument as per the sketch effectively went like this:

<u>B</u> : He cannot create the existent, since it already exists, nor the non-existent, since it cannot come to be.

<u>C</u> : He cannot be self-originated, as that is a contradictory concept; or other-originated for that would entail an infinite regress of creators, even one of whom exist before *īśvara*, thereby vitiating his status as creator.

If this were all that either was said in the argument, or that I thought could be said about or for this argument, I do not think a study of it would have been worth the time. On the face of it, taking the arguments independently, one senses in <u>C</u> something promising. At the very least, it does provide reasons for undermining any straightforward sense one would try to give talk of a creator. It is also then not surprising that it is this argument in part that we see picked up again in later developments in the Madhyāmika tradition.[227] This might point to a reason why the text did not survive as an independent tract for long: what was interesting and viable in it had already been resuscitated in abler philosophical contexts.

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[227] Chemparathy notes this fact; "Two Buddhist Refutations," (*op. cit*), f48, p98. The argument against *the coherence of a notion of self-causation* is made again, specifically in the context of providing arguments against God, by Śāntarakṣita in his *Tattvasaṃgraha*. See *TS* (*op. cit*), p119 in the context of discussing a self-caused material cause.

<u>B</u>, however, looks as if its author does not grasp the point of postulating the concept of a creator in the first place. A Parmenides style denial of any change (which is what denying the passage from the non-existent to the existent amounts to) is first of all, not an argument but an assertion; second, denying change is not a *specific* argument *against* a *creator*. Certainly, recourse to such drastic pronouncements will render creator-talk otiose, but it will purchase this privilege only at an astonishing metaphysical price and lack of immediate relevance to the claim at hand. At the very least one wants to hear more about how one is to interpret such an un-argued for thesis.[228]

For my purposes, what is most unfortunate about the argument as it is sketched out above is the disjunction it effects between B and C. The two parts of the text appear as logically independent quasi-reasons to avoid talk of a creator but show little to no signs of how one might see, in a logical sense, their working together to jointly present a 'picture' of why one would not wish to indulge creator-talk, philosophical or otherwise, when in a critical mood. I consider the lack of such a fit between the arguments unfortunate because it does raise the question as to what sort of a lecture this might have been. Not only are the arguments not up to snuff, but the lecture appears increasingly to be simply a dry run through the assorted, unconnected dogmas of a tradition—hardly inspiring conditions for labeling a particular tradition 'critical'. Given the promissory note signed by so many Buddhist texts in the name of independent critical thinking, one would have expected more from a lecture within such a tradition when couched in the rhetoric of inter-traditional debates.

Fortunately for the author of the text it is quite easy to show how the sketch of the arguments given above is at best only a rude approximation of the lecture in question; at worst, the sketch is in the wrong philosophical ballpark. Furthermore, not only is the sketch seriously flawed in what it purports to present but it is also importantly *incomplete*. When I labeled parts <u>B</u> and <u>C</u>

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[228] Besides, such drastic pronouncements sound closer to a *Sāṃkhya*-based metaphysics that Buddhism. Denying that there is anything but the appearance of change in the phenomena of causality is a hallmark of those systems that posit a distinction between surface phenomenological effects and a unifying, single deep-substance [*pradhāna*].

Tweedledum and *Tweedledee*, good-form alone and in this case a healthy does of literalism would have suggested a common-part, a "Tweedle" that could connect our two arguments. The lecture does in fact oblige us with the relevant part. It is suspicious then that scholars have not incorporated this part in their interpretations of the argument thus far.

While the "Tweedle" section of the argument does show us a very natural way in which sections <u>B</u> and <u>C</u> are to be understood as co-factors or moments in a larger argument, it does not immediately clear up the quixotic sketch of <u>B</u> presented above. The recovery of <u>B</u> does, however, follow soon after with only a minimum of attending to the text and a healthy knowledge of the Sanskrit Grammatical [*vyākaraṇa*] tradition. Following on a contextual reading of the force of the strategy outlined in "Tweedle," this chapter devotes itself to a reconstruction of <u>B</u> and the import of its purported conclusion.

The part of the text that I am calling "Tweedle" (hereafter, *Tweedle*) has a very precise textual correlate in the first five lines of the Sanskrit manuscript that mark the beginning of the lecture. In **M**IA we find the following:

1a. asti punaḥ īśvaraḥ **kartā**

1b. sa eva vicāryatām

2a. yaḥ **karoti** saḥ **kartā**

2b. yaḥ **kriyāṃ karoti** saḥ **kartṛ** saṃjñaḥ bhavati

2c. atra ca vayaṃ brūmaḥ

A complete translation of this passage—that is, *Tweedle*—may be found in the previous section; Here I have taken the liberty of placing in bold and enlarging words that derive from the verbal root *kṛ*, a root that includes in its semantic register "acting, doing, making, creating, producing…" along with other words connoting a dynamic and constructive act. As is evident from 1a, 2a and 2b, this root is at the heart of the strategy being outlined in *Tweedle*. It is this section that outlines how we are to take

Tweedledum and *Tweedledee* to jointly present a picture that inclines, if not persuades us to see talk involving a creator as being without reason.

Here I must pause. *One way* of making this notion of "irrationality" precise is the following. We could say that the fact that "God" is not a conclusion of any proffered sound substitution-instance of a valid inference is warrant for believing that with no other argument forthcoming, belief in God is literally irrational, being without any accepted *reason* or justification. We have an inter-subjective standard of what counts as a valid reason or justification, and this does not pass the test. The corollary then, assuming that no one would wish to say that "God" should share the status of color-patches and be considered empirically obvious, is that it is simply bad-form to use an unsupported proposition or referring expression as a premise in an argument, and so with the non-availability of God-talk as a conclusion to an acceptable argument, one should attempt to refrain from bringing 'God' into reasonable conversation *without argument. Pace* a realist theist such as Udayana then, not only is it the case that evidently not everyone speaks *of* God, but it is also the case that one could maintain, in light of not being able to derive 'God' as a sound cognition from cognitions that refer to the true categories that constitute the world, that everyone if they wish to subscribe to certain minimal norms of rational conversation *ought not to* speak <u>of</u> God, much less (and this is always more pressing) speak to another <u>for</u> God. The practical promise of philosophical conversation (that such logical purging of bad cognitive habits is therapeutic, or stronger, that *truth* qua *correspondence does in fact liberate*) is required to place ethical punch behind the logical appeal to refrain from unsupported claims. If we accept that the practical correlate of pursuing such rationality in discourse is also a fundamentally healthy cognitive orientation to the world such ethical punch is not hard to appeal to. These remarks are little more than a summary of the *siddhānta* conception of 'rationality' discussed in the first and second chapter. God, then, is *asiddha*, or without warrant, neither empirically obvious nor one with an argument furnishing the idea as a necessary conclusion.

On this picture of irrationality we can note that the atomic proposition containing God is still plausible; it is still plausible because it has not yet been shown to be *internally* inconsistent. This could yield a strategy that I would term *philosophical evasion*. The availability of philosophical evasion renders the Buddhist scholastic argument against God *philosophically* incomplete.

If a referring expression is taken as consistent on its own terms, as discussed in chapter three, and it has not been shown definitively to refer to an actual locus on epistemological grounds, one could always drive such a referring expression with bald existential import into a hypothetical to mitigate criticism. This would also, on one picture of rational argument in Indian philosophy, allow me to continue philosophical work with 'God'.[229] Also, if the referring term is internally consistent, then one may take recourse in a principle that states that it is *prima facie* justifiable to consider any nominative singular term to refer to a substantial entity, or that it denotes. Such a principle may, for example, be found to be operative in the Nyāya tradition; the correspondence is between *nāma*, nominatives, and *asti*, or 'existence'. [230]

More worrisome than philosophical evasion is the prospect of psychological evasion. One condition for psychological evasion is also a condition for philosophical evasion: taken on its own, as an atomic proposition, we can characterize what "God" would denote *were it to denote* in a consistent manner. Then it is the case that the philosophical tactic of translating a declarative structure into a hypothetical can serve to hide the following unsavory 'psychological'[231] strategy. It might allow us to treat God as an important hypothetical construct, in that the existential posit of

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[229] Compare the technique called *tarka* which involves the use of subjunctive conditionals in Indian philosophical discussion. Mohanty gives us an example of such reasoning: "(1) God created the World [assumption]; (2) If God were the creator, then he would possess a body, suffer pain, etc [premise that indicates tarka]; (3) God has a body, suffers pain, etc. [from (1) and (2) by modus ponens]; (4) But God does not have a body, etc. [premise]; (5) therefore, God is not a creator." Mohanty, *Reason and Tradition in Indian Thought*, (op. cit), 116. It is obvious that such a technique presupposes that the logical terms employed can successfully individuate a referent that is not contradictory in itself.

[230] For more details on such a principle and traditional arguments for it, see Karl Potter, "Astitva, Jñeyatva, Abhidheyatva" in Roy W. Perrett, ed., *Epistemology*, (Garland Publishing, New York, 2001), 299-305.

[231] By 'psychological' I simply mean a 'rational' strategy, or more precisely, a strategy of justification or rationalization that does not have independent argumentative force, or a way of articulating the manner in which that force is independent of (broadly construed) psychological conditions such as motivations, dispositions and the like.

God can function as an antecedent for our practical activity, and also more insidiously, as an antecedent for a world-view that could be the consequent of holding such a claim to be either true, necessary (here in the psychological sense of an antecedent rationalization required if our interpretations of ourselves and our situation in the world are to hold, given that we can conceive of no other practical option), or both.

On the Buddhist diagnostic set-up laid out in chapter four, one needs to be able to say more than just that 'God' is not available with 'rational warrant'; not only is the strategy of the Buddhist scholastics philosophically incomplete, but it is also diagnostically insufficient. Why this is not sufficient is easy to see: the logical conclusion that the *siddhānta* philosopher wishes to exult in *can be taken to be* a *premise* for a theist. One can imagine, and provide historical exemplification for, a type of thinker who can see in the non-availability of rational warrant for God-talk a fundamental motivation for believing any of the following concerning the nature of God and God-talk: God is the inspired subject disclosed to the meditating *yogi*, available experientially and recognizably *only* after long training in a discipline and interpretive framework; God-talk is revealed, inspired speech having as its premise experience of God, insight into the nature of God, and a speaking God whose words are the only measure of authority regarding knowledge of God. The above possibilities could serve as conclusions reached on the basis of seeing a failure in reason in its attempt to motivate belief in God on inferential grounds. Given the failure of demonstrations of 'God', one can imagine a more extreme situation by rendering ontological an epistemic failing, thereby committing to something like the following: what is *real* is unavailable to what is now taken to be unreal: that is, reason and much of the cognitive structure at play in the life we call the world. One might add the belief that ontological doctrines entail ethical responses. No less than in the *siddhānta*, in the justifications offered for anti-rational forms of religious practice, a 'form of life' normatively weighed and evaluated hangs on the inferences drawn through reasoning about the categorical nature of

reality. The absolute and radical 'alone-ness' [*kaivalya*] of the *yogins* is *only one such* practical correlate to the ontological and epistemic sacrifices demanded of the lived body through philosophical conclusions and justifications that may be found in India. To say that one cannot argue for God can after all be read as a request that one *had then better* work at *turning back* the intentional life of a conscious agent [*citta nirvṛtti*] that they may 'see' (or better, 'be') the *what* of God better. Our discussion of practical necessity in chapter four is relevant here; one can take the attitude that something had better make sense—that one needs to act as if it did make sense—even if it cannot be shown to make sense in any demonstrable manner. Avoidance can, after all, be cultivated.

The diagnostic incompleteness of the Buddhist scholastic strategy can be seen to be obvious if we recall the second lesson in chapter four, a lesson learnt while 'uncovering orientations' to God-talk. Diagnostic incompleteness can then be seen to follow as a consequence of philosophical incompleteness. The Buddhist scholastic critique treats "God" on par with other referring terms—in this instance, treating both 'pot' and 'God' as unwarranted reifications—thereby failing to track the equally important emphasis on "God" being importantly unlike other terms. Attacking one is not to treat the other; given the fact that one can consistently claim that "God" may not be like other singular referring terms, the Buddhist critique fails to target the very idea of God in terms that a theist, philosophical or otherwise, may chose to regard as definitive of the true sense of "God." A theist may very well conclude that the philosophical realist that constitutes the interlocutor for the Buddhist scholastic does not use "God" in a way that remains, to put the matter colorfully, honest to God. The degree to which the core idea of God remains untargeted by the argument of the scholastics is the degree to which the strategy is diagnostically insufficient. A little anachronistically, one may at once highlight philosophical incompleteness and diagnostic deficiency by saying that, *as long as the idea is maintained to be consistent*, and, if you will, that one understands what exactly it is that one believes when one believes that 'God' denotes, as long as these claims are not investigated, one

may always insist that truth is a bigger category than proof or demonstration, and thereby retroactively defend against the charge of 'lack of definitive demonstration' and justify belief.

It must be said that the sketch of "irrationality" that initiated the discussion of diagnostic and philosophical incompleteness presented above is in fact *not quite* the one I think the author of our argument is working with. The achievement of the argument is to say that it is not the case that there could be *any* philosophically sound grounds, *a posteriori* or *a priori*, for the maintenance of God as a viable *denoting term*. More precisely, he wishes to say that there could be *no* philosophically responsible way of cashing out how one could have thought the idea of "God" being a simple referring term *to be so much as a* philosophically respectable *idea*—in terms of the source for such an idea, and in terms of the *intelligibility* of that idea. If it is the case that the idea of God is not consistent—that is, there is no definite description available in which to express the idea—then one necessary condition for motivating a *rationally based* diagnostic concern has been fulfilled. In light of inconsistency, one has reasons to ask why an idea is considered obvious and necessary, and how it could have come to be formed in the first place, especially if it can be shown that such construction is not necessitated and that *any* instance of use of the word 'God' as a referring expression is unjustified, issues of verification aside.

The manner in which our author will attempt to show the inconsistency of the idea of God is a little surprising, and represents the primary reason for considering the argument *unique* in the field of Buddhist arguments against God.[232] The question that should be kept in mind while reading

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[232] I have only found one argument in the Buddhist tradition that comes close to the over-all strategy in this text. The argument derives from Asanga, and may be found in the *Yogācārabhūmi*, ed. by Vidhusheskhara Bhattacharya, Part I, (University of Calcutta, 1957). The paragraph in question is preserved in Sanskrit, see p144-45. The passage is translated in George Chemparathy's "Two Early Buddhist Refutations of Isvara as the Creator of the Universe," in *Beitrage zur Geistesgechichte Indiens: Festschrift feur Erich Frauwallner*, 85-100, p94-95. Chemparathy translates the argument (with slight modifications of my own) as follows: "Do you wish to say that the causal power to act-to-create has for its reason accomplishment of activity, or no reason? If it is this accomplishment of activity, then it is not right [to cite God as a cause of what is] as the world would have the accomplishment of activity as a cause. If [on the other hand], it has no cause, then since the world has no cause, it is not right [to maintain that God is the cause]." This part of the argument approximates what *Tweedle-dum* seems designed to argue, while the subsequent section in Asanga's discussion of God

the argument in *Tweedle-dum* is the following: without holding an anterior commitment to the idea of God, or privileging[233] any prior theoretical commitments, is it possible on the basis of cognitions one has of the world, or on the basis of one's rule-governed use of language to describe such a world, to *construct the* idea of God *as a creator* in any philosophically <u>consistent</u> manner? With *Tweedle-dee*, the following question seems to serve as a background: with the world so emptied of antecedent theoretical assumptions, and holding in mind only a minimum of logical rules, is the idea of God as a creator, when taken on its own, even consistent? If the answers to these basic questions turn out to be in the negative, then 'God' is not an idea birthed in a self-consciously philosophical setting, as that is understood by the philosophical tradition itself; but then, *what sort* of an idea is it?

I must be cautious here. There are two ways in which to interpret my claim that there is no self-conscious construction of the idea of 'God the sentient creator' in a way that could lead us to believe that it is a transparently philosophical notion. One way to say this would be to point out that there is no necessary connection in the world that could force us to construe the idea of God as being a possibility. I have no phenomenon *x*, for which I have a relation *x* iff *y*, where 'God' provides a natural 'model' for *y*. While this conclusion is in effect what *Tweedle-dum* achieves, this is not what I mean by the idea of God not being birthed in a philosophical setting. An analogy from evolutionary biology might be helpful. What I mean is that the idea of God cannot, in principle, be

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sounds as if it is targeting something similar to *Tweedle-dee*; Asanga argues: "Do you mean that God belongs to the world or that he does not so belong? If he belongs to the world, it is not correct to say that he acts-to-create the world, as he would possess the same nature as the world [that is, sharing the status of 'needing to be created']; if he does not so belong to the world, then it is not correct to say that he creates the world, since 'being liberated from it', he would stand in no relation to it." While the arguments are not the same, I must say that the strategies sound extremely similar, except for the fact that the author of our text includes the crucial section '*Tweedle*', which allows us to interpret the two arguments as working towards a common conclusion. In the use of something like the *Tweedle* section, then, the argument in our text still strikes me as unique. Of course, these comments will become clearer given our discussion of the argument in more detail. However, the parallels to Asanga's work cannot be denied, and they give us a strong reason to suspect, because of the increased logical sophistication of our argument, that our text antedates Asanga. This would put our argument sometime after the fourth century. I hope to discuss Asanga's argument in more detail at a later date.

[233] We are presupposing here that the theist wishes to maintain that the idea of God has semantic content, and is not wholly a formal posit devoid of any such semantic sense. If the theist wishes to record the beliefs of the majority of people professing to worship such a theistic figure, it seems to me that the option of treating God as a purely formal simple postulate is ruled out.

'crossed' with philosophical ideas—as terms, if you will, they belong to different species. By this I intend two things. One, we can note that from *Tweedle-dum*, we know that there could be no possible logical sign *in* the world that could behave either as the occasion for use of 'God', or provide clear conditions by which to fix a referent to the name. We do not even have a 'conventionally' fixed heuristic referent for the term God such as we do for even vague predicates such as 'is red', or 'is bald' and the like. But though such lack of means by which to 'fix the referent' is a necessary condition for not being a philosophical idea, it is not, however, a sufficient condition. We must remember that by 'philosophical' I intend the specific tradition that is the Indian dialogical tradition of conjecture and refutation *vis a vis* epistemic foundationalism. A sufficient condition for ejecting an idea from the domain of philosophical use is the discovery of an inconsistency in any description attempting to render the referent of an idea definite, or one that must stand in proxy for the idea in absence of any heuristic fixing of reference. The description of an entity, if you will, can serve as an analogue for the use of a cane in the case of a blind man. If the cane is inconsistent, no reliable use can be made of it.

In this sense, one can say that it is theism[234] that represents a renunciation from conventional reference relations, not *necessarily* philosophy. This is what the strategy of Tweedle-dee and Tweedle-dum show: one can make philosophical points without relying on a theoretical depth-structure that supplants conventional referring terms. *Tweedle-dum* will show that in absence of any referent available by conventional parameters—parameters set, for example, by such the physiological conditions for such activities as pointing, handling, seeing and the like—one is forced to use a description for God that could serve to capture some information about the referent while fixing its identity. In the absence of conventional reference, one is forced to become a realist about definiteness and reference. The philosopher, even though more often than not he does so, need not

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[234] *If by 'theism' we mean belief in the fact that 'God the sentient creator' is a denoting phrase.*

see in any instances of cognitive traffic with referents, see anything more 'precise' than indirect pointing. Because of this availability of 'convention', he can contain, should he so want, the effects of his critique of the idea of God. It is important to note that he can contain such effects, but that this in no way entails that he need to do so, or even that he be not willing to do so.

For now we need to only keep this much in mind. So far as we know, the idea of 'God as a sentient creator' is unique in that it cannot have a heuristic fixing of reference as references to pots and other medium sized physical phenomenon enjoy for certain reasons; hence, the idea of 'God' has to take recourse in a definite description if it is to be evaluated as a denoting term specifying a definite, identifiable referent. That is to say, we only know that the idea of God is unique by the way that it offers itself to analysis. Every prosaic referring term has associated with it a cognitive act, or cognitive acts, in which context it is possible to show some causal relation to the world, or at least, some conditions wherein reference is fixed even if only heuristically. 'God the sentient creator' does not seem to have any such obvious or direct tie to the world. In other words, it is not clear that it is *embedded* in convention (the full play of episodes of cognition) in quite the way that reference to pots and so forth are. But it is very important to see that such 'embedding' of other, cognitively approachable referents is *the only* difference that we can draw with 'God' that we can, *at this point at least*, be comfortable with. Just because we have conventionally fixed reference to medium sized physical objects, for example, does not mean that the ideas of every such object are, at a deep enough level, consistent, or that there is not some inconsistency buried somewhere in a description of the referential relation, or in our beliefs and attitudes with reference to such referents or referential relations. For now, all we know is that we have to look to a description to shore up talk of God, and that such description suggests that the idea of God the sentient creator is internally inconsistent. For reasons that we have discussed in chapter three and chapter four, this is a point that Buddhist scholasticism, however otherwise detailed their critique of God, could not achieve.

Why this is so is easy to state. The Buddhist scholastics did not have an argument that could show that the idea of God is internally inconsistent and hence not plausible in the exact way that this argument manages to do so. Consider that the only other argument in the Buddhist scholastic arsenal that attempted to show that 'God the sentient creator' was inconsistent, in some internal sense, relied on a framework in which 'conventional, heuristic and imprecise reference' was substituted by a theoretical apparatus in which reference was fixed to metaphysical simples construed as being definite. A colorful way of putting the import of the matter is to say that with the Buddhist scholastic strategy, the availability of a true philosophical language containing only true-born philosophical terms is presumed and considered necessary. Relative to this language then, recourse to 'God' betrays an inconsistency. Our author, however, shows that *even relative to conventional usage of terms* in which there is no pretense to such a philosophical language, 'God' is inconsistent; and, *we do not know whether a philosophical language is possible.* What is at stake is a potentially profound disagreement about the stance one adopts *vis a vis* convention. If one reads the idea of a pure, philosophical language in terms of the philosophical body as described in chapter two, we may then see that a fall out of the distinctions in the argument strategies of the Buddhist scholastic and our author is that there is a question to be asked about the praxis that one chooses to follow. Bluntly put, while the Buddhist scholastic can consider his work done with a refutation of God, our author may choose to continue to see where else definite descriptions of referents may harbor inconsistencies. That is, the inconsistencies associated with 'God', while easily drawn out in this instance, need not be contained within the idea of God. While in some sense unique, the idea of 'God' may be very much like other terms in that if we substitute a deep-structure that is not dependent on the conventional fixing of reference, we may find inconsistencies structurally akin to the inconsistencies with 'God'. In other words, one may find that there is no pure, philosophical language, or, for that matter, there may be no philosophical body to be had. Our author has made

room for a very different practice, one which can show strong sings of being commensurable with Early Buddhism in a way that Buddhist scholastic philosophical practice cannot be.[235]

Returning to our argument, and to more secure ground, we can comfortably state that one immediate consequence of treating the idea of God as internally inconsistent is surely evident by now: such a move blocks any immediate recourse to a hypothetical structure,[236] and problematizes any attempt to state that the idea of God is obvious when taken on its own, whether one construes the world as real, unreal or even irreal.

Chemparathy, unwittingly I think, points to the nuanced notion of irrationality[237] that our author is working with quite succinctly when he intimates that our text has no *pūrva-pakṣa* (counter-thesis; opponent). What he takes to be a weakness of the text is not so much a handicap as it is a clue to the nature of the argumentation conducted in our text. A *pūrva-pakṣa* is either the real or construed 'opponent' I spoke of in chapter one when I mentioned the dialogical and confrontational nature of the *siddhānta* philosophical style. It is also, however, a structure of argumentation, sketching out the 'logical space', if you will, in which these discussions and their conclusions may be interpreted.

The dialogical space is one constructed by the *pakṣa*, the scope of the debate, or the subject that the debate is about. Given the subject of debate, P, it is the case that for some relevant X, P is considered to be either X or ~X. The disjunction here is exclusive, so that P cannot be both X and ~X; it is also assumed, for the purposes of the argument, that P must be either X or ~X. The

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[235] This discussion has been deeply indebted to O. Bradley Bassler. At the oral defense of this thesis, O. Bradley Bassler called my attention to a very sloppy interpretation of the results of chapters three and four I had presented at this point in the thesis. This version is subsequent to his stimulating remarks.

[236] This also presupposes that the theist does not wish to use 'God' as a semantically empty construct, or treat the matter only with respect to the issue of 'formal validity'. Any time one tries to render what the idea of a creator God is supposed to denote, however, *Tweedledum and Tweedledee* recover their teeth.

[237] Again, on this picture of irrationality, it is not just that one does not have evidence warranting belief in God that is the issue; it is that we cannot cash out exactly that 'sense', by virtue of which someone who does not already believe in God can come to appreciate what exactly is being debated, that the idea of God is expected to carry. Any attempt to cash out that in virtue of which we 'understand' the idea presumes the validity of that very idea.

universe of discourse is exhausted by the claim and its dialectical other. The scope of the argument, P, remains 'invariant' through the debate and is not rendered the subject of scrutiny within the debate itself.

The lack of an opponent, or the structural condition the opponent represents, points to an added feature of our text: *it may not be a* 'debate' *text at all*. The philosophical tradition presumes that the opposing thesis is incarnated in another individual who commits to the opposing view in question, and who has *prima facie justifiable* reasons for holding to the thesis in question. The idea committed to by the opponent is then taken as *prima facie* plausible in that it is presumed to be the result of a philosophical question: given some P, it is rational to ask if that P is X or ~X. It is considered obvious that the terms used in the discussion transparently refer; that is, we can specify the conditions in the world given which, use and reference of the terms is justified. There is, however, no such belief necessitated in this text, simply because one is here not faced with a qualification concerning a well-defined referent, but is instead faced with a claim the scope of which is not obvious; it is not obvious for the simple reason that one cannot point to those conditions given which one can know when use of the term is appropriate. *Tweedle-dum* and *Tweedle-dee*, each give us a reason to think that this is the case.

Furthermore, the argument, taken as a whole, does not *only* consider the *a posteriori* validity of thinking of God, because the argument does not target an argument *per se*, so much as it targets the acceptability of a particular *sort of* 'proposition'. The argument takes a look at what appears to be a potential thesis, but one that is not, the author seems to have wanted to say, possible *in-itself*. Now what I mean by "possible in itself"—I realize that this is an unfortunate phrase— is intended to be strong. I think our author would want to say that it is *not only* the case that any mention of "God the creator" is not possible as a 'conclusion'—in the form of a proposition or a cognition expressing propositional content—of an inference, but that such mention also flirts with the potential charge of

being *meaningless*; it is, if you will, an occasion of 'making sounds without referents'. The notion of

'meaningless' I am adopting here is <u>relative</u> to a particular way of construing a widely prevalent

practice. If we adopt *referring*[238] *instances* from our grammatical or linguistically inflected understanding

of the world bodied forth through successful use in *every and any* context in the life-world as our

exemplary tokens of meaning-bearers, then relative to this frame of meaningfulness, any thesis about

God is meaningless in that it could not possibly refer.[239] We require only that 'propositions' refer in

the same way—that is, our linguistic and cognitive situation is homogenous *with respect to* the

operation that is *referring*: <u>meaning</u> (in the philosophical sense of 'content') is conveyed only through

reference, and reference operates in certain delimited and specifiable ways. But the strength of the

claim lies in the fact that, on this picture, not only is God talk (or understanding of 'God') not

meaningful in the sense that one could not, on rational grounds, characterize in any perspicuous way

what one is referring to with 'God the creator', but the strength of the author's position is that it

now seems *a priori incredible* that one could ever have *understood* what could have been meant, in any

specific way, by reference to God the creator.

There is a distinction to be made between ways in which one might be said to 'understand'

the employment of certain referring expressions: what is at stake is the significance of a denial of

God the creator. We saw that Buddhist scholastics would be forced to commit to the idea that it is

obvious that God talk refers, and one could clearly specify that to which the term refers; the only

trouble with the use of the term then is that the ontological conditions are not available given which

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[238] One does not have to state that all of language behaves according to the constraints of referring mechanisms; it is, however, the case, by definition, that any propositional content describing *something to be the case about something else*, involves itself with reference. I leave it for another time and for the reader to wonder as did Nagarjuna whether this 'hermeneutic situation' [*citta-gocara*] arises through a priority of the intentionality [*jñeya-jñāna*] of cognitive agents, or through the priority of the referentiality of language [*abhidheya-abhidhāna*] through which our intentionality may be structured, or whether there is even any difference to be made. (See the *ātma-parīkṣa* in his *Fundamental Verses*, verses 6-9). Since we are presupposing that the theist wishes to state some understanding of God, our recourse to reference is justified.

[239] For the purposes of this thesis I count the so-called *law* of non-contradiction as one such criterion for successful reference. We may consider it a transcendental condition for successful communication.

we could assert that "God exists" is a viable statement. The idea in our text, however, is that it is not obvious that God-talk refers to any clear and perspicuous referent that one could come to ask meaningful questions *about*, including the question of existence or non-existence. Let us take as a comparable situation—comparable as per the theist's own *use* (if not claim) of "God" as a *definite*, identifiable locus that can be expressed in the nominative case—of a pot being in a room. The author of our text may have expressed himself by saying: "I know what you mean when you say "it is not the case that the pot is in the room," *just because* I understand what is singled out by the referring terms in use and their inter-relations. That is to say, I know where and how to look for a 'pot' '*being in a room'*, and therefore see what you are asking when you ask if a pot is, or is not, in a room. But the degree to which you wish to say that you "understand" the negation at work in the case of the absent pot, is the degree to which one must *not say* that one "understands" what is being asked when one asks after the existence of a creator-God, or equivalently, whether or not 'God the creator' counts among the list of existent referents." In this sense, the strategy is more foundational.

Some sense of the multi-dimensional nature of the problem is explicitly laid out by the author in *Tweedle*. Indeed, one could not have asked for a better orientation to the question than the one he sketches out. We move from a nominative single, independent term that behaves as a referring name (*let* Φ = God) to a request that we 'look again' into the apparent *simplicity* of the term by showing its complex semantic constituents. One may think of this as a 'grammatical' correlate of meditational praxis in Buddhism; in meditation, we shift attention from what is 'given' in experience and attend to the conditions through which what is given, could be given *in the way that it is interpreted to be given*. Here, we shift attention from a simple referent to the complex referring mechanism that would need to be in place to be able to pick out a well-defined referent.[240] A suppressed claim here is that *if* no such referring mechanism should prove to be available, *then* one is dealing with neither

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[240] We must keep in mind here the way in which people ordinarily use 'God' in propositions.

'cognitions' nor concepts as a correlate to understanding, but with something more akin to 'feelings'. And feelings are not, in any tradition in India, considered an acceptable philosophical starting point. Jointly, *Tweedle-dum and Tweedle-dee* wish to say that *no such referring mechanism is in place.*

Here is how I would consider the situation 'plotted' by the first steps of the argument. To recognize its import, one only need keep in mind the requirement that there had better be an epistemically obvious causal route by which a cognition is generated, if that cognition is to be considered philosophically 'workable' with respect to its content. Habituated to using language as if it were referentially transparent, we must draw our attention to the *structure* of the 'given' by virtue of inquiring into the conditions by which one could 'follow' what is being stated only through concepts, and not feelings; often enough, the state of affairs being referred to and understood by sentient agents is in fact *not available* to epistemic agents. This is our first consequence of meditative praxis: we shift from a *passive* employment of implements operative in talk *of* the world to recover the manner in which the world *could be* disclosed *in language*, as opposed to the way we habitually construe that world *to be*[241]—*the upshot often enough is that many of the terms we thought to be doing referential work are empty—devoid of any possibly cognizable referent.* From the standpoint of philosophical semantics,

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[241] The irony of "passive employment" is only mild. It is passive in the sense that we are geared to acknowledge products or contents of intentional states and not the processes by which such are available. In this sense, we attend to the referents of words, and not the acts of reference or the mechanisms of reference. Even in the latter move, thematizing 'referentiality' may threaten to substitute one intentional 'product' for another. I should note that I am here approximating the meditative strategy suggested by the formula of *satipaṭṭhāna*: thematizing *X* in terms of, and by means of, *X*. The traditional meditation formula involves the use of a locative to express the full force of the contextualization, or 'relativization' of the inquiry conducted in meditation. The parameters of valid investigation are determined by the degree to which *the subject* being investigated is commensurable with the means by which the subject is disclosed. Or better, if a certain subject is grasped by means of some distinctive mode of awareness, say X [say motor movement, or breathing], then the subject of meditation should be understood to be the experiencing locus *given as that kind of X* [the experienced-body] to the attentive subject. (One might remember that *knowing that* is not the only form of *knowing*). Not keeping the parameters of investigation in mind would result in category-errors, something meditation is designed to reduce. Traditional aspects under which the experiencing subject is given in meditation include: the experienced body [*kāya*], pain, pleasure conditioning [*vedanā*], the factors constitutive of the Buddhist transformation of lived-experience [*dhammā*], and the *quality* of consciousness [*citta*]. In this context I am suggesting that what is being thematized and attended to here is an aspect of reference and understanding, one which is attended to *in* the context of language. Thus if the 'knowing' or understanding claimed by the theist for God-talk cannot be recuperated or made to fit work in language, then it would be a category error to speak of understanding the facts expressed by the propositions used in God-talk. One must look somewhere else for the intuitiveness of 'God'. More details on Early Buddhist meditation may be found in R.M.L Gethin, *The Buddhist Path to Awakening*, (One World, Oxford, 2001), 29-66.

the argument will state that it is not language or the world that could give us a handle on what the theist is trying *to say*; no mechanism exists which could supply the theist with those conditions that in this case a 'sound' referential mechanism requires.[242]

Schematically, one may express the situation as:

'Φ' ¬ Φ.

'¬' means "refers to," and " 'Φ' " signifies that we are attending to the referring expression that refers to Φ, the referent assumed to be in the world as a correlate to the referring expression. The schema " 'Φ' ¬ Φ " implies a shift in attention from use of a referring term to the fact that there is not only Φ, but the relation: *that* " 'Φ' ¬ Φ " Usually, one presumes, merely by using 'Φ', that there is some well-defined referent picked out by such use. The shift of attention to the schema presents us with the realization that *I may only grasp* the nature of the referent by means of the referring relation. Information about the structure and content of 'Φ' may be gleaned on the one hand, by what could do duty for referring mechanisms, such as cognitions and linguistic statements, and on the other hand, if one wishes to speak in this way, by a non-cognizable fact or facts about the matter that the referring expression attempts to capture. Outside of 'cognitive' experience, however, it is difficult to know how one could flesh out the fact of successful reference in any fine detail and yet maintain 'soundness' (as per the Indian philosophical requirements) of the terms involved.[243] If a referring expression is to have its content solely based on empirical grounds then

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[242] In the absence of such a mechanism, the theist can always fall back on the nature of inferential reasoning to do duty for direct reference in cognitions. *Tweedle-dee* is designed to take care of this defense of the 'sense' of a theistic postulate. Blocking an inference by showing a contradiction latent in it is to show that such an inference cannot substitute as a causal route to the idea of God, for it is either an unsound inference or the presumption of a problematic object which can yield a contradiction. If the inference form is valid, either form of inconsistency mentioned above would block this option for the theist.

[243] I do not include experience because experience falls into one of the above three categories or else it is not important at all. If experience is to be intelligible, then it must fall between one of the first two categories of referring mechanisms; one may consider this a requirement for the communicability of the referent. If 'experience' is such that there is no cognition of the referent, then one cannot express the 'what', the content of the experience, either as a subject of reference or as a state that is expressed by the experience, one that may be captured in propositional form. This much is achieved by way of distinguishing clearly between non-articulate 'feeling episodes' and cognitions that have inter-subjective propositional content. The point here is that as a matter-of-fact God must occur *via* language or cognitions,

one requires a referring mechanism which has, for its instances, terms which refer to empirically available facts in the world. This point about the 'soundness' of an expression is important if one wishes to maintain that the idea of God is epistemically respectable in that it is constructed from facts about the world that are ascertainable by empirical agents, using empirically obvious means, none of which requires use of theory-laden descriptions. To this effect, there is a general dictum maintained among the Sanskrit Grammarians that states: "the *activity* of designation does not obtain without empirical ground [motivating such designation]."[244] I discuss this condition in more detail below.

It is obvious that 'Φ' occurs in the lived body of a cognitive subject in a 'thick' way. That is, the term has concomitant associations in the form of feelings capable of prompting strong behavioral responses. This is a point a diagnostician would have us keep in mind, for in *the absence* of any clear philosophical motivations for use of 'Φ' or claiming to know *that* Φ, there is a question to be asked about the emotive aspects operative in the commitment to use and mention of 'Φ'. It will be readily admitted that the issue becomes quite pressing when 'Φ' is substituted by 'God'.

The argument in *Tweedledum* seems to be working with the following background assumption.[245] If we are to be sure that what we wish to speak about when using this term is indeed a matter of fact about what is really the case, or even if we wish to buttress our intuition that it is plausible that the referring expression has existential import and is not merely a matter of 'feelings'

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and must be expressible in terms of the same. 'Ineffable' experience does not help as a category here because there would be further argument required to distinguish between pain or color *sensation*, for example, which involve 'experiences' that are non-intentional and non-propositional, and something like an ineffable experience of God. That is, ineffability is too broad a category to be of use in individuating a subject term for the referring expression "God." Furthermore, distinguishing between 'ineffable' experiences would require the use of a theoretical apparatus not 'contained' in that ineffable experience, and because not obviously outside the domain of language or cognitions, this would push the problem back to looking at the sorts of cognitions that could go proxy for referring mechanisms behind the understanding of what "God" could mean. In other words, the tactic being adopted here does cut rather deep.

[244] *nānimmitā hi śabdasya pravṛthiḥ*, quoted in Radhika Herzberger, *Bharatrhari and the Buddhists: An Essay in the Development of 5th and 6th Century Indian Thought*, (D. Reidel, Dordrecht, 1986), 167.

[245] Interestingly enough, it does not quite need such a strong assumption when taken alongside *Tweedledee*; the way to soften the requirement is to state that the condition described here is a condition that a philosophical cognition is expected to meet as per the requirements of the Indian Philosophical tradition.

without clear referents, then we have to specify that *what* we are referring to, possesses, as a condition of reference, a referring mechanism that is adequate to the 'sense' the referent carries, and that the mechanism may be cashed out without question-begging epistemological assumptions. This is important if we are not confuse our ready intuition as to the definiteness of the acts in which 'God' is used—acts such as worship, prayer, communal sacrifice and the like—for an intuition that the term itself has definite denotative power. Consider this a philosophical *cum* grammatical criterion. At the very least, such analysis sets constraints pointing to when use of the term is 'well formed' [*siddham*] in a semantic and syntactic sense.

fig 1

fig 2

fig 3
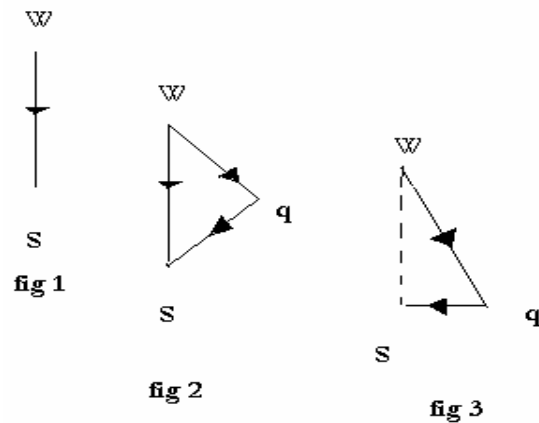
In figure one[246] we show the simplest referring relation 'Φ' can enjoy, where a term (W) on its own *only* and *directly* denotes an individual locus (S) as its referent. The theist does not want to use this mechanism for he is interested in providing a claim about a specific type of subject, that is, an individual individuated by specific properties and not merely by ostention. Such direct *pointing*, after all, is devoid of content, and the theist, furthermore, cannot want to say that God is named by acquaintance as ostention (mirrored in language commonly by definite articles or proper names)

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[246] The figure has been inspired by a figure used and discussed by Matilal in his "Grammarians on Philosophical Semantics," in Bimal Krishna Matilal, *Epistemology, Logic and Grammar in Indian Philosophical Analysis*, (Mouton, Paris, 1971), p115. My use of this figure differs given the context and the modifications I have made to the diagram to render more perspicuous the argument in the text.

generally implies. Even if such a claim should be in place, the referring expression would be meaningless, not telling us 'what' exactly is asserted to exist.

In our text, the sort of name the theist is interested in is a class name based on an intensional property; specifically, the theist is interested in using an act-name [*kriyā-śabda*] which highlights the specific categorical type of intension in virtue of which some subject is both individuated and worthy of being called 'Lord', or God; in English one might note that the issue is simply one of being desirous of reasons specifying why capitalization of the name 'god' is necessary, beyond the issues of custom and politeness. Being 'creator of the world' is one such reason. Because the specific intension used here is the primary intension—as we discussed in the argument for God in chapter two—used to individuate God in India, we cannot assume as in figure 2 that the subject has already been individuated by another property, with *this* property merely fleshing out semantic-content ascribed to an already established (in the full sense of being 'well-formed' discussed above) subject. Rather, the situation is closer to figure 3 where it is by virtue of the intension (**q**) <u>alone</u> that the referring expression indirectly may be said to denote a subject (**S**). This is the only epistemically and grammatically sound mechanism to specify the subject in question.

It is important that the mechanism chosen be that of figure 3 because a proper name on its own could not in any respectable sense be said to inspire an existence claim, unless a causal mechanism were in place to show how the naming relation could be set up on the basis of experiencing a subject directly denoted by 'God'. If one wants a referring mechanism for 'God' to be *prima facie* plausible then it would have to look something like figure 3; a causal chain of denotation going back to a first acquaintance with God himself is not such an epistemically modest proposal.[247]

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[247] In another context, the orthodox thinker Kumārilla Bhaṭṭa does consider such a case and deems it absurd. He says: "who could, at the time of creation, be in the position to be cognitively positioned to see something as "beginning"? [Therefore] How would they know someone as 'the creator'?" Quoted in Purusottama Bilimoria, "Hindu Doubts About God: Towards A Mīmāṃsā Deconstruction," in *Indian Philosophy of Religion: An Anthology*, ed. Roy Perret, Garland, 2000), 91

Again, the theist in *Tweedle* is interested in attributing existence to a posit which is not simply a proper name, but a subject qualified as being a specific kind of subject, *an agent*; hence the first line of *Tweedle*: *asti īśvara kartā*, or literally, "actual, [is] God [the] agent-subject."

The claim of the theist involves itself in two further claims. By speaking of a *kartā*, one has claimed to have the right to use 'God' as an argument in a well-formed Sanskrit sentence containing a finite verb, or one that refers to an 'act' in the world; in other words, 'God' can occur as a referring term picking out a unique causal factor causally efficient and necessary in bringing about states of affairs experienced in the world, and referred to by sentences used to speak about the world. The grammatical embedding of 'God' in sentences along with other more prosaic referring terms would then mirror the claim that God is related to other, more prosaic causal processes in the world. This is the grammatical consequence of claiming that 'God' is a well-formed [*siddha*] expression—*God-talk* can mirror everyday employment of language, by virtue of the fact that 'God' can be used as an ordinary nominative subject in an ordinary sentence describing the world.

A further import of the claim made by the theist concerns the use of *kartā* to individuate the subject at hand. By using a generic qualification, the theist is posturing as if there are valid grounds to *construct* the referring expression 'God' on epistemically neutral grounds and *points to* the available ground that could exemplify such a connotation. The presupposition here is that the theist wishes to describe the intension individuating the subject in unambiguous terms and without equivocation. When Devadatta cooks rice, Devadatta is classified as being a *kartā*; we know then, if some **S** is classified as being an agent, that there are conditions which have been met and, more importantly, that can be specified. The theist has signed a promissory note to the effect that understanding talk of God is justified by more than just recourse to convention.
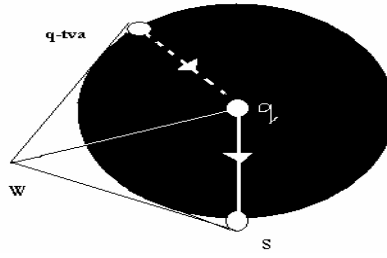
Fig 4. This figure attempts to show the ways in which (1) the metaphysical relation between **q-tva** and **S** [predicate and subject respectively depicted here as lying on the circle], (2) the epistemological relation between **q-tva** and referring term **q**, and (3) the relation between complete referring expression **W** and the subject **S**, hang together. The claim then is that sound use of **q** gives us complete access to **S**, the subject of reference. The broken white line indicates an epistemological link, and the solid line, a referential relation. As can be seen, this figure is derived from adding epistemological preconditions to the referring mechanism depicted in figure 3.

Let **q** name this intension chosen by the theist: **q** then stands for "*kartā*," which suggests that our subject be understood as belonging to the class of agents or sentient actors that can play the role of efficient causes of acts *in* the world.; in order for the referring expression to be sound, the theist has then made the claim (see figure 4)—or, on pain of incurring the charge of obfuscating the sense of **q**, the theist *is forced to make the claim*—that there is some fact in the world that warrants use of **q**. According to the rules of semantics observed in Sanskrit,[248] this fact of the matter that provides warrant for using **q** is denoted by **q-tva**, where '*tva*' is an abstract suffix employed to speak of that fact in the world in virtue of which a term may be used to predicate a quality of some subject. So the fact **q-tva** is the metaphysical property possessed by **S** in virtue of which one may use **q** to flesh out *what* **S** is supposed to be; more stringently, **q-tva** gives us the grounds for using **q**, *which is the only semantic license for mentioning **S** at all*! One may consider this to be the transition from the linguistic statement expressing the wish of the theist, '**S is q**', to the philosophical point that the theist wishes

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[248] Kātyāyana (300-200 B.C.E) explaining rule 5.1.119 of Pāṇini states that if Y is quality [*guṇa*] possessed by a substance A, and if because of A's possession of Y, A is expressed by the word 'X', then 'X-tva' or 'X-tā' denotes the quality 'Y'. [*yasya guṇasya bhāvād dravye śabdaniveśas tad-abhidhāne tva-talau*] Quoted in Bimal Krishna Matilal, *Logic, Language and Reality: An Introduction to Indian Philosophical Studies*, (Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1985), 381. Kātyāyana also holds that we apply a word to express an object or substance on the basis of apprehending the fact of some quality [of that substance]; Pātañjali explains this (in his commentary to Pāṇini's rule 5.2.219) as follows: "a referring term [*śabda*] is applied to denote a referent [*artha*] on some epistemological ground, and it is this ground which is expressed by the addition of the abstract suffix –tva." Quoted in Matilal, *Epistemology, Logic and Grammar in Indian Philosophical Analysis*, (*op. cit*), f21, p114.

to speak of '**the S such that S is (or belongs to) q**', which is then claimed to express the cognitive

and logical fact <u>that</u> **L (creator-hood, God)**, but which, honest to the fact that we have to defend

our construction of the referring expression 'God' as being non question-begging, can *only for now* be

parsed as expressing the fact that: L (**q-tva, '*the S such that S is q*'**). In other words, except for the

qualification **q, S** is empty of semantic content and plays a purely structural part in the claim.[249] If

the philosopher wishes to respect the posture of epistemological modesty, then there is work to be

done before the claim of the theist can be expressed in a form that would allow it to do

philosophical work in the Indian Philosophical arena.

The condition depicted in figure 4 is to be seen as a further condition for the referring

mechanism to be epistemologically sound. In our case, the relevant metaphysical property would be

kartṛtva, or the property of being an agent. So the theist's claim has become that there is a

property—*kartṛtva*—possessed by the subject, and it is in virtue of this property, that the subject is

both well individuated and said to exist. Given the role of **q** in picking out the subject of reference,

it is clear that the former claim is a pre-requisite for making the latter claim. If the referring

mechanism depicted in figure 4 does not work, then the existence claim cannot begin to be made on

account of the 'semantic' emptiness of the subject.

At the end of the argument in *Tweedledum* [**M**IB4a4] the conclusion of the argument is stated

as: *īśvarasya kartṛtvaṃ na asti eva*; or quite literally, "thus, *of* God [*īśvarasya*] the property of being a

creator [*kartṛ--tva*] is not actual [*na asti*]." The consequence of the argument, following on our

introductory comments, may now be read as saying that because of the fact that there is no **q-tva** to

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[249] The immediate consequence of this recognition is that saying that "S exists" is redundant, and a logically empty
statement. One must remember that given what the theist wishes 'S' to be, it cannot be claimed to be an epistemically
obvious definite locus, and hence does not enjoy any semantic capacity beyond the qualification which picks it out. But
this is only an extreme case of a more general condition that one cannot have semantic content, even when one picks
out a subject locus through ostention, or by way of demonstratives in linguistic contexts, without the use of
qualifications. Cf. 'This here,' 'This pot over here', This 'pot which is earthen' is 'blue' and the like. But the use of
demonstratives and ostention as an empirical ground are ruled out by the nature of the theist's claim. The subject of the
theist's claim has to hang on a qualification, whichever qualification the theist deems most suitable for the job.

be had,[250] there is no **q** which could be used to individuate, in a clear and sound manner, a subject that would be God. So we must then wonder how one could construct an epistemically respectable referring expression that could tell us what "God" is supposed to denote. Given the comments on Sanskrit philosophical semantics sketched out above, we are in a position to appreciate the import of the conclusion of *Tweedledum*. What remains to be reconstructed is the means by which the argument attempts to reach such a conclusion.

Given that we are given God as a subject only by means of the qualification 'is an agent-creator', *Tweedle* makes the observation that 'creator' is a relational posit. This observation has logical and semantic consequences. If the *relata* of the relation that is tacitly appealed to are invalidly assumed, then use of the relation cannot be said to be sound. This observation does a lot of work in parts <u>B</u> and <u>C</u> of the argument. The immediate logical consequence is that if there is a claim that

$$L \text{ (actuality ; } \mathbf{S} :^{251} \textbf{\textit{S is a creator}}) \qquad\qquad \text{[L1; see } \mathbf{M}\text{IA1]}$$

then we must see in this claim (as per our discussion of Sanskrit semantics) a prior claim that *there is,*

$$L \text{ (q-tva ; } \mathbf{S} : \textbf{\textit{S is q}}) \qquad\qquad \text{[L2]}$$

and following on the comments made about the relationality of the notion of 'creator', we observe that what is required, in a logical sense, is the truth of the following claim:

there is,

$$L \text{ ('being created', Y)} \qquad\qquad \text{[L3]}$$

That is, there must be some locus which has the property 'being created by the subject claimed to be a creator'; let us name the property 'being created by an agent', **k-tva**. L2 holds *if and*

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[250] Note that in the conclusion for *Tweedle-dum*, the author uses the predicate '*nāsti*' when characterizing an extensional posit, q-tva, but uses the term '*asiddha*' when speaking of 'God' in the conclusion of *Tweedle-dee*, suggesting there that one has not yet succeeded in individuating a referent that could support the predicates *asti* or *nāsti*. In other words, 'God' is a linguistic construction that is *not of a form* [*a-siddha*] that can bear truth or existence predicates.

[251] Read ':' to say "such that."

only if L3 does. This comment relies on the simple observation that 'creates' is a two-place relation, such that to say that some x is a creator, is to immediately state that there is some y, such that x is C-related to y, or x_χ_y; we may understand 'being C-related' to specify that x 'creates' y.[252] This logical point accomplishes first and foremost that we are no longer licensed to see in the scope of an inference a claim that could be taken as 'referring' *independently* of another proposition. Independence here is excluded in two senses: first, the theist's claim is not logically independent of a certain fact of the matter about a locus that has the property 'being created'; the second sense in which independence is no longer possible concerns the *sense* of the claim, and the conditions under which such sense may be declared sound in a grammatical *cum* philosophical manner.

For L2 to be a completely transparent claim, we need to see that L3 is a claim that can be met by the theist, and that the sense of 'created' does not shift from L2 to L3. What 'being the creator' could mean in L2 is delimited by what 'being an effect' could mean in L3, and *vice versa*. The effects we have available set the constraints on the sort of creator one could wish to speak about in L2. This point is effectively made in **M**IA2a, 2b.

When the theist is saying that there exists a God who is a creator, he does not just mean that there exists a causal factor; the theist wants to say that there is a full-blooded agent, one with an intentional life of its own, one that is intentionally responsible for certain effects.[253] But then what we could mean by 'created' likewise shifts. What we mean by 'created' ought to be an intended act that (a) *has been* realized and (b) *principally* orchestrated by the entity thought to be the agent, even if the entity is not the sole, sufficient cause. A person merely thinking about an act is not an agent, nor

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[252] Note that this 'relationality' cannot be expressed in the formal language employed by the logicians, where each individual relation enjoys independent 'sense', and the primitive relation is between locus and what is located in it. Here we have a competing primitive relation that involves two *loci*, and hence cannot be translated into a subject / predicate form without distortion of its sense. Also, the relation required of L2 and L3 is a bi-conditional, unlike the relation in the inference warranting relations deemed sufficient for pushing through a deduction in Indian logic.

[253] Pāṇini [aphorism 1.4.46] defines *kartā* by the idea of *svatantra*, or independence. A causal agent then is one who is independent, and *kriyānukūlakṛtimān*, i.e, an agent is one who possess *kṛti*, the volition to act, upon which follows *kriyā*, or efficient activity. See Mohanty, *Reason and Tradition in Indian Thought*, (*op. cit*), 260.

is one who thought about an act and watches another sentient agent happen to bring about the same action. For our purposes, however, what is important is that *the act* that is both, the intentional goal of the sentient agent and the 'product' of the collective acts of that individual, *is definitive* of the sense in calling some entity an *agent*. We speak of 'agent' *only* in the context of such an act [*kriyā*]. Therefore, if we wish to individuate the subject the theist is interested in reliably, it just will not do to say that God is an agent; such a description is incomplete. This is pointed out in **M**IA2a. Nor will it do to specify schematically that 'God is an agent' because 'God does *a*', where '*a*' denotes some particular act 'we know not which'; this is simply tautological from a grammatical point of view and philosophically unsound. Nor does one wish to say: God is an agent-creator who simply *does* with no patient of activity. That would, on the one hand, remove the epistemic basis from which we are supposed to derive the sense of God. On the other hand, this is also grammatical non-sense. An agent [*kartṛ*] is partially defined by *that in virtue of which* an act is even undertaken, and that state of affairs which could tell us that an act has been or is being enacted; in other words, an agent requires the *karman* of the act.[254] We only speak of agents and patients of activity when there is an act that is being or has been undertaken; and an act is only possible when those causal factors [*kāraka-s*]—expressed in language by use of 'agent and patient' models—that *work* towards the act's successful accomplishment or realization [*siddham*], are already established and capable of being causally effective.[255] When one speaks of an agent in this sense, then, the patient comes along for the ride.

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[254] It should be remembered that these are grammatical classifications. Pāṇini defines a *karma* as "*kartur īpsitamam karma* [1.4.49]; *tatha yuktam cānīpsitam* [1.4.50]" or "that which is most desired by the agent is the *karma*." In modern practice, that declension of a word which works in a sentence to express the *karma* of the act, is usually called the 'accusative case', a deformation of the sense the 'cases' enjoyed in Sanskrit Philosophical Linguistics.

[255] Herzberger notes that the vocabulary of grammatical analysis has been modeled after the vocabulary of sacrificial practice. In sacrifice, an act [*kriyā*] had to be brought about [*sādhya*] through well-orchestrated means [*sādhana*] consisting of material objects such as sticks, animals and the like. The means are glossed as having the nature of already being accomplished or available [*siddhasvabhāva*], and the act is glossed as having the nature of something 'to yet be accomplished or available' [*sādhyasvabhāva*]. See Radhika Herzberger, *Bharatrihari and the Buddhists*, (*op. cit*), 19. Generally, the following cases were considered as operating in a sentence with the nature of 'already being accomplished': the nominative, accusative, instrumental, dative, ablative and locative. The verb in a sentence expressed that act which had the nature of the 'to be accomplished'. Note also the correspondence between the language of grammatical analysis and

Our author is merely requesting that the theist not be so bashful when offering the full description of the claim—what exactly is it that the agent-creator that would be God *does*?

The grammatical criterion for sound semantic usage of the intension 'creator' spells out the conditions that the theist is implicitly laying claim to; **M**IA2b renders this precise: *yaḥ **kriyāṃ karoti** saḥ **kartṛ** saṃjñaḥ*[256] *bhavati*, or "that which acts [to produce for its *effect*] a well-defined 'act' comes to be designated an Agent." The epistemological condition then becomes that there had better be an act that could motivate the assignment of 'creator-ship' to God. That is, we require claim L3 to hold, or that there is an act which has the qualification of being created by something like a theistic creator. The entire denotative chain the theist requires if he wishes the construction of the idea of 'God the creator' to be referentially and epistemically transparent goes something like this: in virtue of some property **k-tva** (the property of being the effect of a theistic creator) and because **k-tva** is necessarily correlated with a **q-tva**, one may see this as a result of intelligent effort, and then speak of a locus which is qualified by **q-tva** and one which can be classified as being **q**, or being a sentient creator. Then, and only then, do we know[257] what is expressed by speaking of an **S, such that S is q**.

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logic, where the deductive core is also called *sādhana*, and the desired conclusion, the *sādhya*. The author of our text seems to be bringing these two uses of the concept of 'means to effect a desired conclusion' closer together.

[256] The term 'saṃjñā' in Buddhist scholastic phenomenology is defined as "*viṣayanimittidgrahaṇa*" by Vasubandhu in his commentary to the Abhidharmakośa [AbhKB II. 24]. One may translate this to read as saying "saṃjñā is the grasping [in an apperceptive act] of the sense-datum by way of the efficient cause [of that sensation]." My translation; the Sanskrit is quoted in Sue Hamilton, *Identity and Experience*, (Curzon Press, London, 2000), n34, p63. In Early Buddhism the term seemed to have functioned in the sense of associative recognition. The Buddhist scholastic definition, however, by way of using the idea of the content of cognition being conditioned by way of the efficient causal conditions for cognition [*nimitta*] is closer to the use of this term in Philosophical Semantics in India, where *saṃjñā* usually refers to the primary designation of a word in its nominative use. Compare the preceding comments about the need for a '*nimitta*' to render denotation sound. Also, by way of indirect support for the grammatical emphasis used here, it is suggestive to compare the use of '*bhavati*' in line 2b of *Tweedle* [**M**IA2b] with Vāmana Jayāditya's comment that under Pāṇini's rule 5.1.119, the empirical reason or ground [*nimitta*] for the application of a word in its primary designation is expressed by the word '*bhāva*'. See Matilal, Epistemology, Logic and Grammar in Indian Philosophical Analysis, (*op. cit*), n183, p109.

[257] In the technical sense of our 'knowing-that' having a determinate and verifiable referent as the correlate to our understanding, instead of vague associations being the primary motivation of the belief that there exists a referent that stands to our intuition or behavior expressive of the fact that we understand.

The argument in *Tweedle-dum* proceeds fairly quickly. At the end of *Tweedle*, our author took the first Buddhist step of seeing a *process* of class inclusion and exclusion 'behind' a *prima facie* simple name. It is the process that results in something like a description which could individuate the individual in question, or better, *warrant* thinking about such an individual in the first place. The theist must wish to say that the name of God is a short-hand for such a process. What our author pointed to is the following grammatical quirk about the claim that the theist is making. The description "Devadatta cooked some rice," has an act behind the description, 'cooking rice', such that one can specify the grounds for speaking of an *x*, such that *x* is 'the cooker of rice', or perhaps more lazily, x is 'a cook'. What is crucial for our purposes is to note that we could not qualify an 'agent' until we had before us the patient in or through which one might have intuited that there was an act worth individuating as being a specific kind of act. I am entitled to speak of something having been done only when I can provide the conditions in virtue of which I can say that *something*, somewhere, has changed in some specific way. An 'act' is well-defined only to the degree that the specification of the definite locations and conditions under which one is supposed to look for the act are accurate and the degree to which it is 'obvious' that such an act is a matter of intention.

This privileging of intuition may seem philosophically suspicious. We can possibly take recourse in the fact that *we tend to know* when an 'act' shows signs of the deliberate ordering of causal conditions in an instrumental fashion that is indicative of sentient agency being one causal condition. Recourse to 'intuition' then need not be taken to be anything more than the fact that we know, in speech, when to speak of something counting as an instance of creative, sentient effort. Our linguistic practice is rule-governed and successful—this ought to be sufficient to serve as a parameter to gauge the degree to which the linguistic practice of the theist is well-behaved. If the theist wishes to make more than just a point about the convention of using a rule-governed language of sentient, creative effort, then at least one condition he must satisfy is a degree of fit with ordinary

use, even if for his purposes this is not entirely sufficient. The upshot is that here it does not matter exactly how we individuate an act as being an act of sentient effort: it is the theist who has presupposed that we can.

But in virtue of what are we even hunting for a unique creator? What is **the** *act* that warrants a creator in the singular? And what could *its locus* possibly be? Indeed, *in the grammar* of sentient activity, what in the world could *a singular* act be? According to a grammatical rule of Sanskrit grammar, we must see the verb 'creates' as placing restrictions on the sorts of nouns it can take. That is, every verb, in the language of Sanskrit Grammarians, has certain semantic expectations [*ākāṅkṣā*] that delimit when we may say that a sentence, formed with certain nouns used in conjunction with the verb, is well-formed [*siddha*]. The condition of a sentence when the nouns employed 'fit' semantically—or rather, where there is an absence of semantic incompatibility or contrariness—is also more generally referred to as *yogyatā*.[258] One may understand this point by interpreting sentence construction from a finite verb as a process of substituting variables in a schema with concrete nouns. Every finite verb belongs to an implicit sentence schema; so, the verb 'creates' [*karoti*] may be thought to have the schema 'α __ creates __ β' associated with it, where α and β can be substituted by concrete nouns, such as in the sentence "Devadatta creates cooked-rice." The theist presupposes that 'God' is a valid substitution of α in the schema associated with the verb 'creates'. One point we have made is that such a substitution is incomplete and unwarranted in the absence of an available substitution instance for β. This would be a requirement for any linguistic employment of God in a speech-context to be valid, principled, and grammatically sound, *even if we could* have an idea of God that is consistent and even epistemologically grounded.

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[258] This is just an anticipation of the belabored example that one does not want to say something to the effect that "green ideas__ sleep __ furiously."

Were there even some act that supports the use of God as a sentient agent we must ask *when else*, in the daily life of the world, we could have *occasion* to *mention* God in this way, that is, as a substitution instance of a well-formed sentence expressing a thought about phenomena in the world? Beyond this, however, *Tweedle* also indicates that we have no way of constructing an idea *of* God as a creator beyond the qualification 'is a creator' which could only have sound epistemological roots in a context in which some instance of β possessed the relevant inference warranting property of 'being an effect of a theistic sentient agent.' This is a stronger point than saying that, even if the idea of God is a sound one, we have no empirically motivated occasion to bring it into conversation.[259]

The strongest point made by *Tweedle-dum* may also strike a reader as being its most obvious: *there could, in principle, be no act required by the theist which could be a substitution instance of β*, and therefore, there could be no *valid* construction of an idea of God as a creator. Any and every act that one could have empirical grounds for speaking of, that is every act that could be used as a substitution for β in a sentence schema, shows no logical sign motivating belief in a creator God. Every substitution instance of β, can be paired with a well-formed substitution instance of α, and therefore, excludes, almost by definition, any warrant one might propose on epistemically sound grounds for seeing a theistic creator *as necessary or intelligible*. What is tacitly being said here is that 'the world' is not a suitable patient of activity from this epistemological and grammatical stance, and hence *cannot be used* to motivate belief in God in an inference that, *as per* rhetoric, ought not to bring in theory-laden posits. The positing of an idea of God becomes then either *redundant* or groundless. The idea is that if one uses an acceptable act, then one has all the grounds required for the causal accounting of an

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[259] It is worth noting that a first act, or even a first cause, even if we can make these notions coherent, taken on their own neither imply anything 'theistic' about the relevant causes of individual acts in the world subsequent to genesis, nor to they imply the worship-worthiness of *a being*.

act. Tacking on a further causal agent without specific grounds, would threaten to undermine the entire notion of causal connection. If God's causal power is invoked without his causal efficacy being grounded in any specific locus, then we no longer know what it means to speak of something being an efficient cause of something else—taken to its conclusion, any phenomenon which is held to antecede another could become a cause of any posterior phenomenon, resulting in the semantic emptiness of the notion of causes and effects. On the other hand, if God is seen as having a *further* causal role to play in some specific locus, then this is groundless. As far as we can ascertain without invoking theory-laden descriptions, there is no fact-of-the-matter available to us that could necessitate the construction of God as a causal fact for experienced phenomena.

The leading idea in the argument is that '*a*', the act that can provide grounds for speaking of an agent, *must be* either *siddham* [**S**] or *asiddham* [**~S**]. We have noted that the act must be able to support the notion expressed in L2, that *L* (**q-tva, S**), by virtue of giving us grounds for L3, or that *L* (**k-tva, a**). The author is making the meta-logical point that we need to know if the 'scope' of inference a theist would require could ever, in principle, be a sound one. For any act that the theist would like to use, we can ask the question whether it is an act that we have grounds for using. What is at stake, ostensibly, is whether an act has **k-tva**; the author is reminding the theist that any act that could be said to have **k-tva** had better be 'sound' taken on its own. That is to say, a well-formed premise requires that *both*, '**a'** *and* **k-tva,** be exampled and epistemically acceptable. This is just to ask whether an '**a**' belongs to the category of *siddha*, a category comprising of those 'things' which we have warrant to speak of. Construed at its least metaphysical, belonging to this category just implies that a phenomenon occurs as being situated in a causal nexus and that it is exemplified.[260] If we can say that it is not acceptable that an act belong to the both **S** *and* **~S**, then we can say that the disjunct is exclusive. That is, any exampled act that could exemplify **k-tva**, must belong to either **S** or **~S**.

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[260] One may even consider this an obvious entailment; the verbal root of *siddha*, *sādh*, carries connotations of accomplishment, successful completion, or something having been achieved.

The author seems to want to say that any attempt to say that an act could belong to both would not itself have empirical support; that is, such a move would itself be *asiddha*, without empirical warrant or rational support. The idea seems to be that it is *in principle* impossible for a cognitive agent to be in a position ever to experience any phenomenon that could warrant maintaining that the conjunction of **S** and **~S** is consistent, and therefore, one could not be in a position to know what could be meant by saying that some '**a**' is both **S** and **~S**. [see **M**IB4a-4.3] This would indeed be enough to rule out the possibility of using an '**a**' that is both **S** and **~S** to motivate an epistemologically valid construction of the idea of God.

Beyond explicitly maintaining that the disjunction between **S** and **~S** is exclusive, the author tacitly adopts the exhaustiveness of the distinction; he does not even consider the possibility that an act could be spoken of as being neither **S** nor **~S**. This is interesting, for some Buddhist thinkers would take an idea through the entire range of logical possibilities which includes, *prima facie*, the idea that one could beg off from a dilemma by questioning the degree to which a categorical distinction can exhaust the scope of the inference. Apparently, this is not an option for the theist. If one requires justification for this, one might lean on the following points. When speaking of an *act* that one wishes to admit into philosophical discussion, one *would not like to say of it* that it is neither the case that it is exampled, nor that it is unexampled. Any reason for speaking of an act that could be introduced into philosophical discussion presupposes that the act has been exampled; any reason for speaking of an act having been exampled seems to rule out the possibility of saying that such an act is unexampled, and vice-versa. At the very least, to claim otherwise would require a lot of philosophical leg-work to make it sound less strange then it does as matters stand. A stronger reason may also be given to block any complaint about the presumed exhaustiveness of the distinction between **S** and **~S**. To say that 'neither **S** nor **~S**' is a possibility is to claim that our entire basis for reasoning in a public setting is without justification; the necessity based on invariable correlation, for

example, is dependent on the exhaustiveness of this distinction, however heuristically one may wish to treat such a condition. The author's meta-logical strategy should then be seen to be inviolable in a philosophical setting where the formal inference is valorized as the primary vehicle of philosophizing.

Of a normal act-term then, one would like to speak of acts being effected, "realized" or accomplished: there, *the table is now clean.* "Cleaning" then is an act-term that one can speak of, without too much metaphysical weight, as being *accomplished.* Within a category of such acts, the author wants to say [**M**IB2], one cannot say that "here, from the basis of such accomplished acts, there is evidence of theistic effort." The reason is that for no act that is *siddham* [**M**IB2A], could one find the logical means necessary to effect the conclusion that "God is the creator [of those acts]." The reason for this is just the reason an act may be validly classified as belonging to **S**. To be exampled just means that there are sufficient causes. For any non-question begging criterion of what being **S** entails, the criterion for inclusion *ipso facto* excludes correlation to some further cause that is not evident as being part of the 'exampled' and sufficient means of bringing about the act in question. This is more obvious given the class of acts we are interested in, the class of acts that are a result of deliberate, intelligent effort. Any act we know to be the fruition of such sentient effort, and that is exampled, has an accompanying agent that can be appealed to without undue epistemological excess.[261] Better, saying that such an agent can be found does not tax our epistemic bounds.

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[261] It is worth noting that our author does not need to commit to a strong metaphysical scope for this argument. The scope of quantification may be understood to be indefinite, such as "for all the acts that we have grounds of speaking of…" Even if indefinite, the range of such 'intelligent' acts is quite tractable given the delimited range the conditions of experience impose on the sorts of acts that one can encounter as *obviously* being instances of intelligent activity; the onus would shift to the theist having to provide an acceptable act that can suggest an agent that is not part of the class of already accepted agents (belonging to **S**) formed using such a scope, or to suggest what is wrong about holding to such an indefinite scope. Rendering an indefinite extension a totality is a further move of the theist that must be seen as a presupposition and that has to be argued for by the theist. The trick, if it is possible, is to justify the definiteness of scope without presupposing something very much like a theistic creator-figure, or for that matter, an office of creation. The latter, of course, does not in of itself entail anything necessarily theistic, a central weakness of all cosmological arguments. The trick necessary for the theist—to render the scope definite and to show that such definite scope can behave as a logical term capable of supporting the predicate 'being an effect' in a non-question begging manner—is not as easy as it sounds. One can understand the last to be a historical and philosophical point. A historical example will

The move made in [**M**IB2a] then has the effect of saying: no act could be in a position to motivate God as an idea, or equivalently, bear the property necessary to establishing a creator God as a non-question begging 'conclusion' drawn solely from the world. Any act we have, if it has the property **k-tva**, does indeed have correlated with it the property **q-tva,** but one which can only be exampled in entities that seem quite definitively *non-theistic.* After all, every causal factor of the relevant kind that we are interested in, occurs as being, like the act, a member of **S** which implies, before all else, that it is itself a product of *causal* correlations.[262] This is a slightly quixotic way of saying that the idea of a first cause *cannot be an empirically motivated idea*; therefore, the idea of God is not empirically motivated. That is, even if we have an act **a**, and see in it **k-tva**, and we note the fact that **k-tva** is invariably correlated with some **q-tva**, we must see such correlation as holding *within a specific domain that is well established.* The way to put the matter in the symbolism of inference is to say that for any relation of the kind, *if* **k-tva** *then* **q-tva**, there is some locus C that *can be defined* such that it is the case *that* L (**k-tva** & **q-tva**, C), where C comprehends both '**a**' *and* the **S such that S is q** as being facts *about* C. (Compare the correlation of smoke with fire on a hill, or within a kitchen). This is the logical realization of the simple observational insight that intelligent, goal-directed sentient activity is known only as being embodied and grounded in contexts that are already available. If

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suffice for now. Maimonides, for one, recognized this as being one of the central problems with the arguments for the existence of God among the Islamic *Mutakallimun* philosophers: is one trying to show that "the world is created and therefore that the world has a creator," or, "that the world has a creator and therefore that the world is created"? Quoted in Harry Austryn Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Kalam*, (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1976), 382. Wolfson cites the following source for Maimonides' point: <u>Moreh</u> I, 74 (1), p150, 1.23.

[262] A stronger point may be intended here by the author of the argument given what has been said about the relationship between **q-tva** and **k-tva**. The sorting of a subject term by virtue of its causal role *cannot* be used in a metaphysical sense because such sorting is dependent on highly specific contexts. Thus the idea might be that there is no empirically sound way in which to give the attribute 'creator-hood' in a universal or context-independent sense to any subject term; the attribution of agent-hood to a subject is something only determined in certain contexts, contexts which include the sort of question that one asks on encountering an act. So any subject that could be in a position to become an agent-creator then presupposes the existence of a well-defined 'locus' which could be used to specify different subjects in terms of different relations as needed by speaking agents who wish to speak about the act. This could be an argument trying to dissuade the use of grammar for metaphysics, by pointing out the right way to read grammatical categories. When rice is being cooked in a pot, the pot can function as the causal locus of the act, it can function as the patient of the activity (by virtue of collecting the patient of activity as 'rice in a pot') etc. There is nothing 'essential' about the attribution of these causal functions.

every acceptable **a** is found to be already within such a C, such that no property can be found motivating an extension beyond the set of every locus that could be such a C for some **a**,[263] then there could be no empirical grounds for some theistic creator, simply because we know of no act that could be both the effect of intentional effort *and relevantly theistic in having no such C.*

This is the force of the exemplification offered in [**M**IB2b]. *Within*[264] the context of any well-established locus, for example, take a temporally and spatially indefinite but particular locus classified as being a person, there could be no phenomenon found that is exampled *in* that locus *and that still goes* without sufficient causal conditions that could be specified as being *within* that locus. What seems to be going on here is that for any phenomenon we wish to use as a motivation for constructing the notion of a cause, we should see that effect as being indexed to the locus in which such an effect is found. So if a person may be described as being a p-type locus, then any effect that is experienced as being an effect unique to such a locus may be called a p-type effect, or p-effect for short. The statement made by the author of the argument is specifically that, for any p-effect that may be deemed unique there is a p-cause such that, one cannot say that a p-effect requires that we go beyond the parameters established by the locus for an explanation. The general point, however, seems to be that it is perfectly easy to find, for some well-observed and non theory-laden description of an effect, a locus C, such that one may describe it as being a c-effect with the appropriate c-causes *that are sufficient.* Consider the case of 'seeing a color patch to be blue'. Such a p-effect can have the p-efficient causal conditions: the faculty of vision, associative recognition and the 'ability to be conditioned by visual stimuli'. One may also, in Buddhist phenomenology ('p' stands for "phenomenological"), regard the 'contact' of faculty and stimulus as being a p-condition. But what if we wish to characterize the physicality of the sensory stimulus? If one needs to speak of such a

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[263] This would be true even if we allowed a C to have the property of being 'created'.

[264] I see this as being the significance of the use of the locative construction of the nominative for 'person' used in the text [*pudgale*].

context, then one may embed the p-locus in a wider context, say, a physical one, C, such that we now describe a photon and rods and cones as being the c-causes of vision now understood as a c-effect. (Here we could think of the difference between c-effects and p-effects as being the difference between sensation and perception). I think this is sufficient to get the hang of what I was after in describing the availability of a given locus for any effect that is suitably well-determined.[265] Here we note that such an exercise is in no way *a priori*; we let the sort of effect, our means of acquiring the 'effect' and what we are interested in explaining *determine* the sort of casual conditions we need to specify. That is an important point—even 'sufficiency' is dependent on our interest and theoretical commitments. What could the theist wish to explain such that we should see in the casual nexus of an act merely *insufficient* conditions?

In using an exemplification of 'person' the author shows an awareness that the locus of relevance for theistic discussions is the locus of sentience. The example is deliberately provocative and suggests that it may not be a fact about the world that motivates the idea of God. At least, if it is an idea about the world, it is an idea of the world which is construed as being a world in which 'persons' understood *in a certain way* are thought to be found. An anxiety over the status of the world as created may in fact be an indication that the motivation to think of a creator-figure is the *need to think* that a certain relation between the world and persons holds, owing to an anterior commitment

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[265] One thing that is crucial to note is that the ability to specify causes is intimately linked to the technology and the means with which 'effects' are made available. An 'effect' such as threshold sensitivity is not necessarily made available in the same way that effects such as 'recognition' are made available. The latter is intra-cognitive, while the former presupposes other means of registering phenomena that are not p-type themselves. Note also that should there be an explanatory 'gap' between p-effects and c-causes, such that c-causes cannot sufficiently determine p-effects, (as I suspect is the case), then such a 'gap' threatens the construction of a 'world' that could be understood to be homogenous with respect to causation: c-type and p-type loci might be incommensurable simply on account of the types of means they have to disclose 'effects': 'apperception is not of the same type as an electron gun or a fundoscope, etc.' But if p-effects can be sufficiently accounted for by p-causes, then there is no immediate philosophical need to wish to bridge such a 'gap', unless one already believes that there is either a third locus which could ground both P and C, or that one locus could be used to account for the other given sufficient time. But these are projects that are not, taken on their own, in any way indicative of theism. The reason for this is obvious: we do not have to allow ourselves any knowledge about which types of loci are primary, or even how many loci are in fact incommensurable, or even if there are any such. Also, such incommensurability does not trouble clinical Buddhism, as it is consistently interested in p-type effects for which no c-type causes can be specified as sufficient. Plants, for example, do not experience dissatisfaction.

to <u>what</u> 'persons' may be thought to entail. But in invoking an exemplification of 'person', there is a difference to be made between what we think a person entails (a theory-laden account of persons), as opposed to the terms in which phenomena observed within the parameter established by sound use of 'persons' may be described in a non-question begging manner. Positing persons in terms of mind / body distinctions, souls, principles of life, or what metaphysically deep fact have you, is such a theory-laden description. The author of our argument is bold enough to suggest that even here— perhaps the prime locus of relevance for *belief* in God—there is no *reason* (in the sense of logical sign) warranting 'transcending' the world in search of causes, for one lacks the sort of effect which could force us to do so.[266] The claim being made here then is that any phenomenon that may be validly said to be an instance of creative activity, occurring within the range of conditions that allows us to use the term 'person', can be accounted for, in terms of *just the* conditions that comprise what we wish to call persons. Furthermore, if one acts and behaves as if a soul exists, that should then be seen as an instance of confusing habit for description, a habit that would require argument if it is to be able to do any philosophical work of justification. Here, however, we are in firm Buddhist terrain, in what may be termed, proper Buddhist concerns.[267] The point that there is no epistemic basis for

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[266] Any reason proffered must be described in non-ambiguous terms.

[267] Vasubandhu for one is explicit that it is belief in an essential self that underscores and motivates belief in God. Presumably then, arguments showing the untenability of such a self would dissolve committed belief in God. He does not, however, expand on this point. See *Abhidharmakośa*, 5, 8, IV, p.19. Some of the Buddhist arguments of the time period ($4^{th} – 5^{th}$) may be read as working on developing just this point. It will be enough to cite some examples. It is worth noting the following corresponding literature from other Madhyamika writings. Citations are from Chr. Lindtner, *Nagarjuniana: Studies in the Writings and Philosophy of Nagarjuna*, (Indiske Studier IV, Akademisk Forlag, Copenhagen, 1982). The most direct case is in *Bodhicittavivaraṇa*, a text that Lindtner is comfortable treating as an authentic Nagarjuna text (page 180). Even though this text is one of the most often quoted works of Nagarjuna, especially by Bhavyaviveka, I am uncomfortable according it authenticity for two reasons: one, Cāndrakīirti never quotes it; second, the text uses a vocabulary that shows heavy reliance on categories that are usually to be found in the writings of Asanga. At any rate, the argument here goes as follows: [Verse 4, p187]: when the further-fact about personal identity [*ātman*] projected [*kalpita*] by the heterodox [*tīrthika*] is cross-examined [**vicāryamāna**] logically [*yuktyā*] it cannot be seen to fit with any of the factors conducive to the appropriation of such a Self [*skandhas*]. In verse 5, the argument continues: "if Self just is these factors of appropriation, it would have to share their attributes, but you want Self to have permanence [*nitya*]." He further says that you do not want to use a container-contained relationship [*aadhaara-aadheya-bhaava*] to ground the self as such a relation is not possible between permanence and impermanence. In verse 6, he states that in the absence of a permanent locus like the self, how can a creator (*kaaraka*) be permanent? [Note: here it is a permanent subject that provides the q for inferring the existence of the creator]. If there were a *dharmin* [subject] one may begin investigating its *dharmas* [qualifiers] in the world [*loke*], but no such appropriate subject is to be found: there is no permanent thing

constructing the idea of God remains for the 'conviction' that there is a further fact about persons,

after all, is something for which the Buddhists have long had the critical and clinical tools to discuss.

At the very least, if one sets down to arguing for such a further fact, one is no longer arguing for

God, but perhaps for why it is *important* (a p-effect?) that God is needed to exist, or perhaps why, in

the absence of any possible causal route to "God the creator," (as will become apparent from

Tweedle-dee), one is so confident about one's assertion. But this would point to a different

conversation; in all likelihood, a more diagnostically relevant one.

Out of respect for completeness and, perhaps, also from knowing the predilections of the

linguistic practices sometimes exemplified in theistic behavior, our author takes the idea that the act

required by the theist might belong to **∼S** seriously [**M**IB3]. Could an act that has not been

exemplified have the relevant property **k-tva**? The author lists a few examples of what could count

as such an act—the act of squeezing oil from sand; creating hair from a tortoise [**M**IB3a]; one could

have added, wine from water, or acts of a similar exotic nature, acts that if exampled, would be

genuine instances of *creativity*. But what could be meant by saying that such acts count as instances of

∼S? There is, after all, a distinction to be drawn between saying that a description of an act is *a priori*

inconsistent, the point that an act is deeply and in principle impossible as per the requirements of

some theoretical account of what is possible, and the softer point that an act is, as far as we know

(based on examples of acts that we have knowledge of), not exemplified and in all probability, on

the basis of the acts we know to be exampled, *not likely* to be exampled. It is the last point that I

think is being made here. Note that the latter does not require that we have a theoretical account for

what is and what is not possible; all we need is to say that an act that is neither exampled nor likely

to be exampled cannot do the work the theist would need it to do. Even though the author is not

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internal or external to phenomenological field. (This is the reciprocal of 6—there is no causal relationship between the 2 categories). In 9, the phenomenological field is specified to be the domain of *skandha, dhaatvaayatana, graahya, graahaka*. (Lindtner, (op. cit), p.189.

making a strong point about the theoretical structure of possibility and impossibility, he can be read as saying a little bit more than just saying that the premise of the theist takes the form of a hypothetical (as a categorical statement it would be unsound), both in terms of the locus and the qualification. The theist is not interested in making a claim about the future likelihood of there being an agent that could effect the *likely* creative act, *rendering sand into oil*. He wants to say that there already is a theistic agent, and one whose presence can be corroborated on the basis of creative activity that has been achieved. As stated like this, *on the basis of causal conditions already in place*, such an act is excluded as being relatively impossible. 'Relative' here simply indexes the modal characterization of an act to the causal conditions that we are aware of, causal conditions that are already given. *Within these conditions*, we can say: oil and sand are nowhere to be found as co-present in the same locus, and given their properties, it would require a radical over-turning of causal conditions to render this possible. Consider what would have to change for wool to grow from a shell.

The point that seems to be made here is that even if such an event is likely, it would require us to change quite radically what we would mean by a creative act, a causal factor, and the nature of causality. If God was posited as a causal factor responsible for such a relatively impossible and unexampled act, then the meaningfulness of this claim would be undermined, just because of its reliance on a category that undermines causal regularity and the notion of causal factors and invariance that come along for the ride with causality. God becomes a well established causal factor responsible for undermining causal invariance—this approaches an inconsistency because we understand by a causal factor a phenomenon that interacts with other phenomena in determined ways, determined by casual rules observed in experience. This is what was meant by the author by saying that by definition, a creator does not have the causal capacity to create such a law-threatening event.

We know that the theist cannot get a sound argument from using the category **~S**, and even if plausible as a hypothetical, such an appeal would have to be assessed in terms of the ways in which it would change causal rules by which we have set up the invariant relations that govern our belief that inferences are justifiable. The practical cost for a philosopher in India if he wishes to engage in *such* hypothetical justification for God would be quite expensive.

To believe that phenomena do not even yield enough invariances upon which thought may find some purchase is not to find an argument for the idea of God, but to give up on argumentation as it is practiced and understood in India. One may add the idea that to claim *not believe in* such causal correlations is to introduce a potential inconsistency with one's actions in a world that is understood and interacted with and *through having committed to such* correlations, however tacitly we body forth such awareness of correlation in our behavior. Furthermore, the 'instability' that should be seen in causal regularity is not really evidenced, beyond the maintenance of claims that assert the availability of examples that belong, as far as we know, to ~S. This is a weak form of begging the question, for we are asked, without real evidence, to believe in causal irregularities, to say nothing of having to believe in the existence of an agent necessarily correlated with such irregularities and presumed on the basis of the same. We must remember the context of the argument; in the Indian context of argumentation, one can only use non-contentious and exemplified facts to ground further philosophical work, if that work aims at concluding in a thesis with existential import. To use an architectural metaphor common in epistemology, if the foundations are shaky, then the idea so constructed may not be construed as resting on firm ground, nor can such a proposition be taken as a ground on its own. An idea, especially one dressed in the garb of a proposition that refers, can only be as 'obvious' as the means of constructing it and the grounds for such construction allow it to be. If one has to rest on 'miracles' that have the unfortunate habit of either not being verifiable, or when verified, of being an instance of some more tractable causal facts whose exemplification one was

hitherto *ignorant of*, then the idea of God is similarly extra-ordinary and to be treated in the same way

a seasoned farmer, or better, housewife might treat reports of 'miraculous' transformations of

perfectly ordinary causal factors in her larder; that is, with suspicion. The author of the argument

uses an old adage to good effect here: effects of a certain kind have causes of a certain kind. If the

effect is to be thought of as miraculous and shy of imminent verifiability, then so is the idea of

God—in short, we have no grounds for saying that the idea of God is either empirically obvious or

experientially intuitive [**M**IB3b3].[268] Or, one has as little reason to think that a tortoise will sprout a

winter coat as one has to construct the idea of a theistic creator; in the language of 'conditions'

developed in chapter four, one may say that no true-type conditions are available that could *force*

such a concept upon us. Also note that if one has to point to an improbable phenomenon, one

which is effectively non-exampled and not likely to be exampled, then one has not really fixed

conditions for the substitution of "God" in a schema to be sound. We must then say that the use of

"God" in justificatory apparatus of the Indian inference remains semantically 'thin', bordering on

empty. Simply put, I have no determinate idea of the sort of "agent" required to accomplish such a

non-exampled act. Of course, if one has reasons to think that there are well-established causal

principles operating 'behind' what another is liable to consider miraculous, such that the effects may

be repeatable, then the argument has returned to the first horn of the dilemma.

Given the exclusiveness and the exhaustiveness of the distinction between **S** and **~S**, and

because **S** is the only viable option for a rationally defensible strategy for constructing the notion of

a creator God, we can conclude that no attempt to ground the meaningfulness of the idea of God

from the qualification 'being a creator' could be an instance of a well-formed and sound referential

construction [**M**IB4a4]. Although a suspicion has been raised by the argument as to the intelligibility

of the extension of the predicate 'being a sentient creator', the full force of suggesting that God-talk

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[268] Technically, trying to 'prove' something on the basis of reasons that are themselves in need of argument is called '*sādhya-sama.*"

is incomprehensible requires the argument from *Tweedle-dee*. But the chief strength of the argument so far is not only that the idea of God cannot be used as an atomic proposition with obvious existential import in an Indian inference schema, but also that it is now increasingly clear that it is no longer 'obvious' what the proposition that expresses the referent of belief in a creator God says; it is also clear that no 'obvious' truth-preserving causal mechanism is in place such that we could see 'God *qua* creator' as a sound conclusion of empirically sound cognitions of the world. To put the matter colorfully, and yet accurately, we may say that the author has shown that there could be no perspicuous 'signs' of God <u>in</u> the world, unless one already 'reads' the world with something like 'God' in mind. This might be a habit, certainly, but one without probative force when taken on its own. Besides, there remain, as the author of the argument suggests, "further defects."

CHAPTER EIGHT: TWEEDLE-DEE AND TWEEDLE

> Freed of demonstratives in the context of a
> basic sentence, names are like so many crows
> hovering, willing to alight simultaneously on a
> single pole.
> —Dignāga[269]

From *Tweedledum* at least this much is clear—one cannot rely on our notion of a creative 'act'

to individuate much less constitute in any straightforward sense, the entity in question that the theist

wishes *to speak about*. That is to say, it is because we do not know what the theist means by 'act' that

we do not quite know what could be *meant* by speaking of an agent of that act, much less an entity

that persists before and after becoming the agent of the act, one that enjoys an independence from

that act. The reason that I do not know what could be meant by 'act' is that for any act I can speak

of with epistemic warrant or use with grammatical validity, I see no logical or grammatical indication

that leads me to suspect that a further attribution of agent-hood to an agent of the type that the

theist is interested in, is necessary. There is no *further* logical or grammatical fact about acts or act-

terms that requires a further agent—given all the acts we 'can have', we have all the agents that we

need. To put this in terms of the stock examples of Indian philosophy, I can have 'boiling water' or

'the smell of rice', or 'kitchen utensils busy on a fire' in virtue of which I could say, there is an act

such as 'rice-being-cooked'. It follows trivially that I then have grounds, grammatical and logical, for

needing to speak of 'a cooker', and grounds for calling some Devadatta a 'cooker of rice'. Speaking

of "<u>the</u> creator" requires an act suitably muscular to give me the necessary grounds for indulging

both the definitive article and the sense of sentience that talk of 'the creator' connotes; *Tweedledum*

wants to say that such a move is an impossibility—for any act we can have there is a locus of an act,

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[269] From the auto-commentary (*vṛtti*) to the *Pramāna-samuccaya*; See Radhika Herzberger, *Bharatrihari and the Buddhists*, (*op. cit*), 156 for a translation and discussion.

and given a locus in which an act can act, the act in question could never be *the kind of act* necessary to speak of the creator. If you have found acts, then they are not the right sort of act; and if you think you have found something that you think can do the inferential work to individuate a creator, then it is not what anyone would wish to call an *act* at all.[270]

Hence the conclusion of *Tweedledum*, in light of our description of *Tweedle*, may be expressed as saying: since you have no grounds for speaking of an act '*a*' that could warrant the attribution of **q-tva** (the property of being a creator), you do not have what you needed, **the S such that S is q**, the entity such that it is a creator. Our author's Sanskrit is even more compressed: *īśvarasya kartṛtvaṃ na asti eva*; or quite literally, "thus, *of* God [*īśvarasya*] the property of being a creator [*kartṛ-tva*] is not actual." If we remember our Sanskrit grammar and keep in mind that the genitive case is the only case which does not play a causal role in a sentence, relating as it does nominatives with nominatives and not verbs, it is not inappropriate to *translate* the conclusion which does in fact employ the genitive into the language of classes with the primitive relation of 'belonging'. The conclusion would then read in one of two ways: either it is the case that some *x* named God does not belong to the class of agents, or that sentient agency is not included in the formulation of an *x* that would be God. One might be tempted to think that thereby the author has shown that employment of 'God' in conversation is then conclusively invalid.

This last move might well be too fast for an interlocutor. "What, dear sir," he might say, "could you mean by saying that you do not *know about* some Devadatta when rice is not being cooked?" Certainly, one is in the habit of looking for *someone* called a cook only when seeing an act relevantly like cooking; we look for *someone who is still around* and who can be charged with the act only on having already seen the act and determining the sort of chap responsible. But one is equally

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[270] For example, to say that the construction of the 'set of all acts' is an act that requires accounting might invoke the charge of 'fallacy of composition'. Even if not fallacious, we have no grounds for treating it as an 'act' in an unequivocal sense.

in the habit, when *hearing* of or *meeting* someone,[271] to ask what they have done, or what they are about to do. It is true that sometimes we look for acts only on seeing someone we think might be an agent." The interlocutor might thus complain of the asymmetry the Buddhist has enforced in his criteria for individuating acts and agents. Furthermore, just because something cannot be expressed as a substitution instance of a sentence scheme does not mean that it is without any other philosophical basis; nor does the grammatical employment of 'acts' and 'agents' necessarily exhaust the *sense of* agency that can be spoken about in a non-grammatical, *technical* context. The interlocutor may agree with the Buddhists in that, in the context of a sentence purporting to refer to states-of-affairs in the world, it is the verb that grounds the 'sense' that the nouns have and determines their degree of fit. But this does not necessarily mean that nouns may not be employed in contexts removed from sentences (*cf.* the use of nouns in L-relations in the inference schema), or that such use would thereby have incomplete 'sense'.[272] Most importantly, even by the criteria of the strategy in *Tweedle*, <u>because</u> one is using grammatical criteria, one is not entitled to make conclusions about subjects understood *as substances*.[273]

"Dear sir," such an interlocutor might continue, "'agent' is only a grammatical *sortal*, a grammatical category that carves perfectly decent entities *only in* terms of how they causally interact to produce an act. Do not allow your grammar to do your philosophical work for you. Besides, such grammatical sorting presupposes that which must be sorted: an "agent" presupposes an *individual*

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[271] In light of what we have said about proper names and direct denotation in *Tweedle*, such a move would not work in the context of seeking to individuate God in an inter-sectarian environment. But the broader point that one can individuate the referring expression **'S such that S is q'** by way of leaning on the nominative might have more mileage.

[272] This point is made by Nyāya thinkers. In this case, however, it is difficult to see how one could avoid seeing the concepts involved as relational, and hence the idea of God as an agent remains potentially incomplete.

[273] Such a strategy could be adopted from the point, perfectly acceptable to the Buddhists, that neither *kartṛ* nor *kriyā* are to be understood as metaphysical substances [*dravya*]. A skilled realist, however, could, like Patañjali, easily revert the point to say that, just because the grammatical categories do not enjoy a one-to-one correspondence with 'substances', no obvious conclusion cashed out in terms of substances can be reached on the basis of an argument using grammatical categories. For more details, see Kamaleswar Bhattacharya, "On The Relationship Between The Vigrahavyāvartanī and the NyāyaSūtras," *Journal of Indo-European Studies*, Vol. 5, no 2, Summer 1977, 265-271; see f21, p269-271. The fact that grammatical categories do not imply any substance commitments is one of the virtues of the strategy in *Tweedledum*. The interlocutor's charges only have strength if and only if the conclusion of *Tweedledum* is misread as pointing out that no S such that S is q *exists*. That, however, is not what the conclusion is saying.

who can 'enter' into an act, that is, can *initiate* it, and importantly, can *exit* the act. If activity on your grammatical theory is circumscribed by a variety of causal factors, this means that the agent is certainly *a horizon* of the act, and also that the individual who enters into this context *qua* agent, extends indefinitely beyond into further act-contexts, past and present. Devadatta, as you well know, enjoys his tobacco *after* his rice, *and then* he will play some chess. I applaud, sir, your taking the language of the gods seriously, but *a single sentence* is not exhaustive of what can be said about *the world, nor is a sentence type*."

Such an objection only has weight if the conclusion is misread as claiming something about *the subject* of the expression, **the S such that S is q**. But all *Tweedledum* is saying is that such an *expression* is not well-formed, because no **q-tva** has or *could be* provided by the theist. There are other ways, however, in which interlocutors may blunt the force of *Tweedledum*. A second interlocutor might say: "well, it is true that God cannot become a well-formed subject in the context of any single sentence, but this is as it should be. God is the antecedent condition for any and every single sentence to be true; that is, as every sentence describes an act in the world, God is just the name for the locus of activity [*adhikārana*] presupposed by all acts. This is a well-formed causal function."

Such a move, however poetic or inspired, requires some philosophical justification if it is to work as a rationally motivated strategy. It is feasible to think that some justification is available. An interlocutor might suggest that the rampant empiricism displayed by the author in *Tweedle-dum* and demanded of the theist is uncalled for. After all, easing the empiricist requirements, one can use a notion of semantic expectancy to provide grounds for the meaningfulness and plausibility of the idea of God; even if not empirically sound or exampled, such grounds would be grammatically valid and therefore at least, in absence of any direct disconfirmation, *prima facie* plausible. One might say that in the sentence schema for the verb 'creates' [*karoti*], 'God' can function as a valid substitution instance of α, while some idea like 'the world', or 'the set of all acts', or some suitable definite

totality, can do duty for β.[274] We could generate the following grammatically valid sentences: "God

creates the World"; "God *created* the World."

Of course, there is the complaint that with the patient 'the world', one is not in a position to

know exactly what 'creates' or 'created' here mean. Without further comment, and in light of

Tweedledum, we would have to see such a sentence as trafficking in equivocation. Still, inspired

perhaps by the liberation from Buddhist empiricism, the theistic interlocutor may go on to suggest a

way out. One might suggest that the sort of creating that we are involved with here is a special kind

of creating, a 'creating' that derives part of its unique sense from the uniqueness of the patient of

such creative activity.[275] As it is a special form of creating, the author of our argument may have

been right in pointing out the potential sloppiness involved in using an unqualified sense of creation

when speaking about God. One ought to specify that the sentence should read: "God **T-creates** the

World"; or "God **T-created** the World." This would point out that the creative act here is a **T**heistic

creative act, one that is only *more or less* relevantly like[276] what we mean by 'creation' when speaking

about ordinary sentient agents. Furthermore, the theist could agree with the argument in *Tweedle-dum*

that such an 'act' is nowhere to be exampled in experience; it is a unique 'act', and *Tweedle-dum* serves

to reinforce the belief that the idea of the agent of such an act is a unique and, in principle, non-

empirically based idea. If one has the right to think of the world, as one *can and does* think *of* the

world as a single referent, then one surely has the right *at least to think* of an agent for the arising of

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[274] There is a serious question to be asked regarding the logical independence of a notion that could do duty for the world. Is it possible to construct the idea of a definite totality capable of supporting causal predicates such as 'being an effect' without presupposing the idea of initial cause? If it is not, then recourse to something like 'the world' would be question-begging and inconclusive.

[275] One might note that with regard to this point the Sanskrit theologians are sloppier than the redactors of the *Book of Genesis*. Great pains are taken in Genesis to use a unique verb expressing creative activity for the act of forming the world [*bara*], in contradistinction to verbs used to denote other creative acts subsequent, authored by God or Man. This subtlety appears lost at least in English translations of this book. I owe this point to Dan Lusthaus in conversation.

[276] Such relevance between '**T-creation**' and 'creation' may be purchased by specifying that the essential features for calling something a creative act are as follows: if an act introduces (or manifests) some phenomenon that was not present before based solely on impersonal causal factors, then such an act is a 'creative act', or one having a sentient agent as a necessary condition. The world, in terms of its arising at some particular time, could be thought to answer to this description and so one might say that the act that brought this about is relevantly a creative act.

that world. It is, the theist may say, elementary grammar without the asphyxiating emphasis on empirical support.

Tweedle-dee appears designed to track just such a strategy. Having made his point about the lack of any empirical grounds that could be appealed to in order to motivate the notion of God as a creator, (ruling out any *empirically based etiology* for the idea of God as a creator), *Tweedle-dee* suggests just how remarkable an *idea of God* as a sentient creator is, regardless of how one finesses the idea of creation. It is important to note that in order to render this comment forceful, *Tweedle-dee* has to incorporate the insights into the relationality of the theist's claim first sketched in *Tweedle*. If the theist can potentially make a move away from *soundness* to an issue of *a priori validity*, the author now suggests that there is more discomfort to be had at the end of such a road. What remains invariant here is the fact that what is at stake is not just a single term, but the intelligibility of a certain kind of relation. The potential strategy of the theist rests on the use of a sufficiently complete and definite substitution instance of β. This is the minimal requirement for God to be a valid substitution of α. But *Tweedle-dee* will suggest that the positing of a suitable substitution of β, one that can be *logically independent* of a substitution instance of α, actually renders the purported instance of α *internally inconsistent* or *self-defeating*. In light of the fact that the idea of God as a creator is not empirically mandated, and that even if one turns away from empiricism, that it can then be shown, on *a priori* grounds,[277] to be logically contradictory, *why would one insist on* needing *such a 'concept'*, if *concept* it is? If no phenomenon in the world can behave as a logical sign motivating the construction of God, and even 'the world' held out as an abstract idea seems to exclude the notion of a creator God, what sort of a 'philosophical' idea is this?

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[277] Note that these are the grounds chosen by the theist. Also, what is *a priori* difficult to cash out is not the idea of God taken on its own (as is done, for example, in so-called ontological arguments for the necessary existence of God), but the idea of the *connection* between God and 'others' entailed in the notion of a casually active God. Dealing with the latter is a central weakness (along with what are often enough philosophically arbitrary definitions of this necessary being), of ontological arguments.

The idea whose construction we are interested in derives from the claim *that* **there is an S such that S is q**. On the basis of *Tweedle-dum* we learned that the idea of a unique **S such that S is q** cannot be empirically sound owing to non-availability of any locus instantiating **q-tva**, the necessary condition for attribution of **q** to be warranted. If **q** were the only individuation of **S**, then the referring expression seeking to denote **S** is not well-formed. The theist suggests the alternative construction by way of the relation S_ χ _ $\hat{\mathbf{W}}$**,** where '$\hat{\mathbf{W}}$' refers to some world-like entity, and 'χ' refers to the two-place relation 'is the sentient creator of'. More perspicuously, what the theist is suggesting is that **S** denotes a subject *x* such that '*x*_ χ _ $\hat{\mathbf{W}}$' is true. We are trying to individuate the subject now, not by the qualification, but by way of the nominatives involved in expressing what one might call *a state of affairs*. As such, because the state of affairs is plausible and grammatically valid, one can maintain that the construction of the idea of God is likewise valid. If one is to block this strategy, one must look to the state of affairs expressed by '*x* _ χ _ $\hat{\mathbf{W}}$' to see if it is indeed, as the theist maintains, *prima facie* plausible. As might be expected, the issue hangs on the manner in which one may try to make the denotation of $\hat{\mathbf{W}}$ logically precise. The argument in *Tweedle-dee* is designed to suggest that given a sufficiently precise description of $\hat{\mathbf{W}}$**,** the idea (to use a vague term) expressed by '*x* _ χ _ $\hat{\mathbf{W}}$' is internally inconsistent.

There is a way to give a rather intuitive and yet philosophical justification for a *formally* well-formed construction of the idea of $\hat{\mathbf{W}}$. I will give a very rough description of how such a construction might go; for our purposes, the exact details are unimportant to the problem at hand—any trouble *or devil* in the details is a further worry for the theist, not for the author of the argument who seems quite content without the posit of something like $\hat{\mathbf{W}}$. What we need for our construction is a simple 'operator' that would represent the (iterative) activity of selecting efficient causes for observed effects. We require a range representing the widest possible, 'sound' universe of discourse

[ф],[278] and use the operator to pair those members *taken to be* 'effects' with those members that could be picked out as being 'causes' for such effects. This co-domain of the resultant ordered-pairs[279] would then represent what we wish to call $\hat{\mathbf{W}}$. *At its most general*,[280] the import of the operator (where the operator is represented by *f*) may be represented by the following procedure:

$$\mathbf{\Pi}^{281} x \, \mathbf{\Pi} y \ \mathbf{C}^{282} \ \text{ф}, f \, [\, y \,] \rightarrow^{283} [\, x, y \,] \ \textit{such that} \ 'x \_ \chi \_ y' \ \text{is true.}$$

This is not sufficient, however, to render $\hat{\mathbf{W}}$ *precise*. We require that the complement of $\hat{\mathbf{W}}$ not be empty if reference to $\hat{\mathbf{W}}$ is to count *as justified*. (We need to know what would not count as an instance of successful reference). In this case, a more pressing problem for the theist is that he wishes $\hat{\mathbf{W}}$ to support predicates of the form 'is the effect of', which presupposes, by definition, that we should be able to speak of a complement to the class represented by $\hat{\mathbf{W}}$. What the theist requires to make his notion of the world precise is at least this much: the theist must show that for *at least one x* that belongs to ф, there is an *ε* that may be found in ф *such that* '*ε* _ χ _ *x*' is true; but *for no y* belonging to ф, is it the case that *y* _ χ _ *ε* is true. Let us call *ε* a 'limit effect'. Such a limit effect

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[278] This universe of discourse is just the class **S** (all things *siddham*) used in *Tweedle-dum*. Recognizing this is the corrective antidote to my rather brash use of the category of the *a priori*. I think a sense of what I am after with this word, however, does come through. Keeping the universe of discourse that is a condition for soundness in mind will soften any perceived imprecision in use of the categories *a priori* and *a posteriori*. A full discussion of their validity would take us out of the scope of the present discussion. For a brief defense of the way in which I see these terms as warranted, see Radhika Herzberger's discussion of the mode of inference warranting relation called *svabhaava-hetu*, or 'formal definition as logical sign' in the last chapter of *Bharatrihari and the Buddhists*, (*op. cit*).

[279] More precisely, the set formed by collecting all the members of the ordered pairs is what is required. One can later, if one so wished, 'order' the members of this class according to a temporal index. Again, I am comfortable treating this entire operation as having no more than heuristic value; justifying such a construction on stronger grounds is up-to the theist. One thing the theist will need is a way to specify the uniqueness of the limit effect and its causal connection to all other effects. The theist will need to set up an ancestral relation in order to ensure that from the limit effect, all other effects follow through an iterative procedure. I thank O. Bradley Bassler for stressing this point.

[280] I believe such an operation is general enough to capture the medieval Western scholastic distinction between horizontal and vertical causation. This may be important, because not all cosmological arguments use efficient causation to generate a temporal series going back in time. What this general operator is designed to secure is a precise logical characterization of what I will call a *limit effect* which is required to render the distinction between world and god precise. I believe that both horizontal and vertical causation, if they are to be used to try and motivate God as a causal factor, require such a notion of *a limit effect*. Be that as it may, the operator does justice to the manner in which Indian theorists would have to think of God based on the notion of material and efficient causation that does tend to be based on something like horizontal causation. One may to differentiate 'horizontal causation' from 'vertical causation' in that the latter allows for simultaneity of cause and effect, while the former does not. In Indian thinking, 'arising' denotes an instance of temporal, horizontal efficient causation.

[281] Read: 'for all'

[282] Read: 'belongs to'

[283] Read: 'associates with *y* an *x*'

would indeed make the notion of $\hat{\mathbf{W}}$ precise, but it is not yet sufficient to motivate the idea of a theistic creator. Let us take *the simplest form*[284] of motivating a theistic creator, and assume that the iterative procedure f does in fact 'follow' a temporal sequence, such that it can be shown that the limit effect is also an instance for what we might call "the first act." Granted this, we can then say that $\hat{\mathbf{W}}$ is a logical locus, one which can support the predicate 'being an effect of…'; why this is so is simple to state: to create $\hat{\mathbf{W}}$, rather, to **T**-create $\hat{\mathbf{W}}$, is just to **T**-create such an $\underline{\varepsilon}$.[285]

A fact that I have not yet mentioned concerns a condition that must be met by the theist if the use of the notion of a limit effect to motivate the idea of God is to be justified. The theist must hold that *there is no x* belonging to φ that goes without a cause. Such a principle could even count as a condition for the successful *completeness* of the iterative procedure used in generating $\hat{\mathbf{W}}$, and may perhaps, given the nature of φ, be thought to be a 'sound' and justifiable principle. It should be noted, however, that on its own, *this principle does not guarantee finding a suitable limit effect*. Principle in hand, however, *and if we could claim for ourselves* the right to use a limit-effect $\underline{\varepsilon}$, we could plausibly think that we can generate the well-formed statement that 'there exists an S such that S _ χ _ ε is true'. Let us further note that S neither belongs to φ nor to $\hat{\mathbf{W}}$; it does not belong to $\hat{\mathbf{W}}$ for obvious reasons, and it cannot be thought to belong to φ if only for the reason that the construction of $\hat{\mathbf{W}}$ cannot be question-begging if it is to motivate the idea of God.

This is an important point in the Indian setting, for the only term that gives us a handle on whether our reasoning is sound is ostensibly $\underline{\varepsilon}$, that, deriving from φ, is known to be 'found' on the

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[284] In the case of vertical causation, one would have to collect all the limit effects, possibly one for each instance of time, and demonstrate that every cause that can be found for every limit effect, *is in fact just one cause*. This is patently a harder undertaking.

[285] The points I will make below will work for a variety of ways of interpreting this notion of a limit effect. One can take it to mean that the creator is the creator of the limit effect (singularity here being temporal location); the creator is the creator of any and every limit effect; or, more outlandishly, one may be in a position to resist forming a totality by way of a 'first' act, perhaps begging off for reasons to maintain an (set-theoretic) infinite extension into the past, and claim that $\hat{\mathbf{W}}$ **itself** is the relevant limit-effect. All of these strategies would perforce involve further complications; here we are interested just in the general complications that arise from maintaining that an entity may be thought to be responsible for such a limit effect; I will not undertake to inquire whether the thought of such a limit effect is justified. The question is rather whether *the simultaneous affirmation of the existence of God **and** of a limit effect is justified.*

basis of a principle that states that *every* effect has a causal antecedent, and a 'construction procedure'

which requires us effectively to treat every 'cause' as a potential <u>effect</u>. So we have, as per the theist's

own procedure of justification, reason to believe the following:

(1) $\Pi x\,\Im y : y \_ \chi \_ x$[286]

We then have a statement to the effect, that

(2) $\Im z : z \_ \chi \_ \epsilon$

(1) and (2) together justify the opening question of *Tweedle-dee*, namely [**M**IC2]: is there a *t*

such that

(3) $\Im t : t \_ \chi \_ z$

is true? We must remember that the only evidence we have to believe the plausibility and soundness

of what 'z' <u>represents</u> (namely, "God the creator"), for it is not a term that belongs to **φ,** is the

ostensible soundness of ϵ *along with* the relation represented by '$\_ \chi \_$'. The strategy of *Tweedle-dee* is to

say that any answer to the opening question winds up in inconsistency.

Let us say that the situation represented by (3) is false; God has no antecedent causal

conditions in virtue of which we can specify when 'God arises', or even, by extension, when

reference to God is sound. So what we are required to believe, with no further reasons, is that along

with (2), it is the case that

(4) $\Im z : \Pi x \sim [\, x \_ \chi \_ z\,]$

One would be justified that taken on its own, given the way in which we have specified the

domain of quantification, to think that (4) is potentially, internally incoherent. If the domain is 'all

effects', then we can read (4) as saying that there exists an effect which is not an effect. However,

recognizing that we are in the business of wishing to impose the domain of quantification on the

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[286] read "Π" as the operator "for all"; read "Э" as the operator "there exists"; and the relation "χ" as "is the creator of…" The colon (" : ") is to be read as saying "such that."

theist, he can consider, to start with, an alternative domain of quantification and deny the patent incoherence of (4). But taken together, (1) and (4) can be seen to be jointly inconsistent. And there are ways of persuading the theist as to see that the domain that is a collection of causes is effectively a collection of effects on the basis of his own need to motivate the idea of God. On the demonstrated validity of (1) as evidenced in the generation of ς, a condition for yielding the z that we are interested in, we have reason to believe (2) *but not* (4); similarly, the use of the operator f that the theist required further inclines us to see (2) as valid, but not (4). This is stronger then saying that the theist is faced with an inconsistency, because (4) furnishes us with one very good reason to doubt the reasons for holding (2), the motivation for the idea of God, to be true—that is, saying that (3) is not the case is not only inconsistent, but potentially self-defeating.

To see how the author of the argument achieves this point we need to make the following distinction. Let us see, in the absence of any direct evidence that z belongs to $\boldsymbol{\varphi,}$ that the situation is as follows. We have z, the logical term, representing what we would call God the creator; as matters stand, however, z can only be thought to denote on the strength of ς *along with* the relation represented by '_ χ _'. Otherwise, we must suspect, for all the reasons listed in this paragraph, that z *does not denote*—it is a purely linguistic term. What the author suggests in **M**IC2a1 is that *if* (3) is not thought to hold, **then** *there are positive reasons* to think that z is only a linguistic term, one which *by definition* cannot be held to have any causal function in the world. The author seems to see in the specification of a God that would be creator—a specification that would look in the rough as follows: $\ni z$ [$\ni y$ [z _ $\boldsymbol{\chi}$ _ y] **&** ~ $\ni x$ [x _ χ _ z]]—a patent inconsistency of a kind which attends the linguistic phrase: "the biological son of a barren woman. [**M**IC2a3]" What buttresses the belief that one has positive reasons to see the theist as dealing with a formally inconsistent term is just the belief that for every term denoting a causally efficient condition in the world, (1) seems to

hold true.[287] Even if we accept that our terms range over causally efficient conditions, statement (4) is not free of problems even if it escapes immediate incoherence. For (4) can only be read otherwise as saying that "there is a self-caused cause," a claim that is safely handled within the argument itself.[288]

This leaves the theist with the option of construing (3) to be true. This, according to the author, leaves us with only three options. One could try to say that (3) is true because what (2) is saying is in fact that

(3a) $\ni z : z \_ \chi \_ \varepsilon$ **&** $z \_ \chi \_ z$ [see **M**IC2B1.1]

The trouble with this—the claim that there is a self-caused cause—is that if we know what the first half of the conjunction expresses, and we know the conditions by which what is expressed is true, then we do not know what the latter conjunct *is saying*. This is just entailed by the fact that as matters stand, the expression '$z \_ \chi \_ z$', all else remaining unequivocal, is incoherent [**M**IC2b-2b1.1a]. Furthermore, as the author mentions quite pointedly, the form of expression required to state what is expressed in (3a) is quite 'odd' from the perspective of everyday, rule-governed linguistic practice [**M**IC2b1.1a]. If we would not wish to speak like this, in any instance of conversation about the world, why would we wish not only to now speak in exactly such contradictions, but further claim to *understand* them? The author almost appears to suggest that we lack the practice required for such cognitive challenges, neither seeing nor speaking in terms of these kinds of explicit contradictions in the life-world. More pertinently, without an anterior commitment to the complex of associations with the linguistic term 'God', why should we expect or valorize nonsense, when we know of no precise reason to see them as being necessary? In the face of incoherence, one should ordinarily wish to think again about what one was trying to say;

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[287] Although this is not explicit in the argument, one could see this as the employed *vyāpti* in the argument, with the example of "the biological son of a barren woman" functioning as the exemplification of the relation expressed in the *vyāpti.*
[288] I thank O. Bradley Bassler for this comment.

incoherence, after all, functions to suggest that the associated subject term is *impossible*. Pointedly, recourse to such inevitably inconsistent expressions just serves to say that one does not know what one is talking about in the first place. Defining a subject in terms of contradiction is to say that the subject is not well-defined. Of course, one may wish to lay claim to a refined notion of 'true-contradictions'.

But one could then shy away from an explicit incoherence and attempt to say that (3) is true because what (2) expresses is that

(3b) $\exists z : z - \chi - \varepsilon$ **&** $\neg z - \chi - z$ [see **M**IC2b1.2]

where ' $\neg z$ ' refers to 'any x such that x is not *equivalent* to z', z being defined by the relation in (2). What could count as an instance of $\neg z$? We could try two strategies, yielding two different statements from (3b). We could say that (3b1) all x 'subsequent to and including' ε can function as instances as $\neg z$, or we could say that (3b2) all x 'preceding ε and including z' are instances of $\neg z$. By definition of ε, and the criteria for the specification of z in (2), however, no $\neg z$ understood as in (3b1) *is available* as a valid substitution in (3b). z *and ¬z have been configured to be such by (3b) and (3b1), that in absence of z, there is no ¬z to be had!* [**M**IC2b1.2a]. Besides, saying that there are members of $\hat{\mathbf{W}}$—which is what we are effectively saying in (3b1)—that can sufficiently account for $\hat{\mathbf{W}}$ by way of accounting for ε, is just to say that we do not need to see z as being God.

The characterization in (3b2) may initially *look* more promising, especially when it is interpreted the way the author of the argument suggests [**M**IC2b1.2.b]. The author suggests that we consider z to be the fruition of a *process* represented by $\neg z$. One can consider, by way of analogy, the generation of a 'blossoming tree' from a seed; z is like the blossoming tree, only the end-product in a hierarchical series of causes, grouped as being one process, and $\neg z$ is its most causally efficient terminus. If we allow this, however, then we have replaced one infinite regress ($\hat{\mathbf{W}}$ without any effects construed as limit effects) with another (the process represented by $\neg z \rightarrow z$), albeit an

infinite regress with a personality, a history as a lived subject, and a name—God. Philosophically, however, the two regresses, from the perspective of logical structure, are indistinguishable. It is not difficult to see why this is the case. What we have been given in the specification of z as a complement of $\hat{\mathbf{W}}$ is an 'upper bound' on z, but z has not been shown to have a 'lower bound', precisely because it has not been shown to have a spatio-temporally <u>definite</u> causal antecedent. One may now complain that this 'definite' causal antecedent has been given as being $\neg z$. Such a move remains, however, merely a token gesture at blocking the infinite regress: if $\neg z$ is suitably definite, then we have merely moved the question one step back, such that we direct all the questions of *Tweedle-dee* at $\neg z$ instead of targeting z, and we are off without hope of hitting rock bottom. On the other hand, if $\neg z$ can be thought to do duty for the 'eternal' presence that ostensibly is God, then this just is, *by definition*, an infinite regress. Again, should there be any complaint at the evaluation of an infinite regress being philosophically suspicious, one may merely redirect any such consternation to the appropriate juncture, and wonder, mimicking the chagrin of the theist: what is so bad with the infinite regress represented by the operator designed to yield the world? If one is comfortable with an infinite regress, why did the theist need to take recourse in God?

We could attempt to say that it is both the case that z is created by itself, and by $\neg z$. Far from being a resolution, however, this response pushes back the contradiction to the initial formulation of (3) that the theist was interested in; the theist's argument cannot then begin to get of the ground. What this move would admit in effect is that the idea of God as a sentient creator is potentially inconsistent semantically, and definitively contradictory at the level of syntax. There is no valid, rule-governed procedure for me to consistently construct the idea of God as a sentient creator; in other words, there is no inferential route that generates an internally consistent idea of God the creator. It is with both *Tweedledum* and *Tweedledee* in mind that the author can state: "therefore, '[the] sentient creator' is not a well-formed expression."

I have said in the introduction to this thesis that my goal has not been to provide a detailed philosophical criticism of the argument given in *Tweedledum and Tweedledee*. For what it is worth, while I think that the argument is right in focusing on those aspects of the claim to the existence of a creator figure that it does, it requires significant work before it can become as effective as it shows the potential of being. I would still, however, claim that the central insight that the argument brings to bear on the discussion of theism is interesting; more importantly, I think the sort of questions that the argument *allows* to be asked concerning the central claim of theism, are the right sorts of questions one must ask given an awareness of the problematic nature of <u>idea</u> of the God *qua* idea. I take the demonstration of such awareness to be the central import of the argument; hence the title of the thesis: *honest to* 'God', and Grammar, where "grammar" serves as a cover term for those ways in which we may provide a philosophically perspicuous expression of what could be understood when we appear to *understand* 'ideas' such as God.

In *lieu* of a conclusion proper, a few remarks concerning the argument as it is revealed after this study are not out of place. What *Tweedledum* achieves, in effect, is to say that there is no epistemically respectable way to pass from the idea that " $\Pi x \Im y : y \_ \chi \_ x$ "[289] to the idea that " $\Im x : \Pi y \, x \_ \chi \_ y$ "; it is, of course, the latter that the theist needs. Supplementing what may appear as an insignificant logical point,[290] however, is the fact that this 'epistemic constraint' is forced upon the theist on the grounds of 'semantic intelligibility' and the question of the meaningfulness of the extension of sense that 'being a sentient agent' could enjoy in the context of speaking of a theistic figure. What *Tweedledum* then shows is that such an extension could not be one motivated on purely epistemological grounds. The compulsion to use the formulation that " $\Im x : \Pi y \, x \_ \chi \_ y$ "

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[289] As before, read "Π" as the operator "for all"; read "Э" as the operator "there exists"; and the relation "χ" as "is the creator of…" The colon (" : ") is to be read as saying "such that."

[290] Given the historical context of the argument, however, such awareness is not insignificant. But, logically speaking, the difference is 'trivial.' This fact raises a pertinent diagnostic question: if the logical skill required to see the difference is indeed minimal, why are such mistakes still habitually committed when thinking of "God"?

must come from elsewhere. A little more precision is called for; what the argument shows is that, on the basis of our employment of the semantic terms 'agent' and 'effect of sentient activity', there could be no non theory-laden understanding or motivation to speak of a unique sentient agent responsible for something like 'the world.' While *on its own* it does not show that there is no *philosophical* motivation for the idea of God, the argument does give reasons for thinking that the 'intelligibility' of the idea of God, if understood as implying a sort of understanding that could be made philosophically respectable, already involves a lot of 'theoretical' leg-work already. To put the matter colorfully, the argument suggests that the idea of God is not one that could be derived from a world stripped of antecedent assumptions. When one views the world with an eye to emptying observation of deep-seated commitments, there appears no logical / epistemological sign [*liṅga*] that could necessitate the idea of God.

Tweedldee furthers the work of *Tweedledum* while complicating any attempt to suggest that the idea of God, while not epistemically respectable, could be derived from a philosophical extension of the sense of 'agent-activity'. By taking aim at the *a priori* claims embedded in the idea that "Эx :Πy x _ χ _ y", the argument indicates the intellectual work someone would have to go through *just* to render the idea even logically *consistent*. Taken on its own, in a context where we discount concerns with convention, habit or associations that the idea of God may carry, the idea of God does not seem terribly self-evident or philosophically 'virtuous'; in fact, the idea of God does not seem to be one whose reference could be cashed out in a philosophically perspicuous manner, given the way this is understood in the Indian tradition.

The upshot is simply that the author of *Tweedledum* and *Tweedledee* does not need to be able to say that 'God does not exist'; what he is in a position to say is that "I do not see what you mean to refer to with this idea, and therefore, philosophically speaking, do not see how you could straight-forwardly *understand* this idea." One need not 'refute' what one does not understand; and in a

philosophical setting, given the rhetoric of neutrality, the author has shown that the meaningfulness of the idea requires some explaining. The meaningfulness of the idea of God, in terms of a philosophically inflected understanding of reference, is not obviously sound; in terms of logic, it is inconsistent; and in terms of epistemology, question-begging. But then it is no longer the claim about the existence or non-existence of God that is intellectually interesting, but the manner in which the intelligibility of such an idea *may be cashed out*. If 'understanding' cannot be cashed out in terms of the philosophical body spoken of in chapter one, what additional 'faculties',[291] or what complex of available psychological conditions, must one appeal to in order to configure the *intelligibility* of the idea of God? The question drives us to think in terms that a strictly defined philosophical methodology may not allow. I think it is Jonathan Swift who said that *one cannot reason a man out of what he was not reasoned into to begin with*. The insight is appropriate here; if the idea of God involves antecedent commitments that are not philosophical, then if one is to stay honest to the idea of God, then one ought not treat the idea as one either deriving from argument, or one tractable in an argument setting, no more than one would seek to utilize 'the biological son of a barren woman' in questions of the truth or falsity of episodic cognitions occurring in the world. Rather, one must focus on the contexts in which such propositions occur *as meaningful instances of reference to the world,* to say nothing of them occurring as *valid and sound*. Accessing such contexts, however, requires a form of analysis foreign to Indian philosophy normatively construed. For one thing, *propositions* can no longer be taken as properly basic.

The potential attractiveness of the argument lies in the fact that it incorporates grammatical insight from 'everyday' grammatical relations in which there is thought to be successful reference to 'agents' and 'activity' without thereby committing oneself to interpreting either the referent or the

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[291] It is interesting to note how one might have to make additional theoretical claims in order to account for the obviousness of something like 'God'. It is often the case that a full-blown theoretical anthropology comes along for the ride when justifying the many commitments belief in the intelligibility and self-evidence of the idea of a creator-God can entail. Consider just by way of example the notion of '*sensis divinitatis*' operative in Calvanism.

referring mechanisms as involving metaphysical substances; its price remains rather light. Shunning substance then, our argument allows us to use a minimal of 'sectarian' presuppositions *via* recourse to a *quasi*-depth grammar used by all parties involved, and suggests a very specific logico-grammatical index of the problem with God-talk in terms of *just that* grammar. From the perspective of this argument, recourse to God-talk *necessarily* involves a grammatical form that threatens to express grammatical and logical nonsense, albeit a very precise form of nonsense in that we can see how such forms *are derived* from ordinary grammatical relations.

In some sense, however, localizing where such excess occurs is the 'easy part'. I suggested that the argument strategy is potentially a very rewarding line of inquiry. One can suggest two different avenues in which the argument strategy may be fruitfully extended. One avenue is critical. The low metaphysical price of the strategy, and the potentially rich insights into the nature of reference, make this strategy ideally suited to study the nature of reference in finer detail. Are there any other inconsistencies waiting for us in suitably muscular structural descriptions of everyday episodes of successful reference? The key would be to mimic the way in which *Tweedle-dee* exposed the acts of construction that could provide the idea of 'God' with definite sense. How would ideas such as essence, externality of perceptual objects, self and the like fare under such investigation? I am willing to conjecture that for such cases suitable limit effects may be constructed that place the original idea in the same position 'God' found itself in *vis a vis* the limit effect that came along with the notion of the world.[292] Such a result would be philosophically rich indeed and would have the corollary that my translation of *vergessen* in the title of the manuscript must be revised. If the conjecture is correct, then it is entirely likely that the author of the argument did not consider inconsistency internal to a referring term to be unique to 'God', even if this idea gave him a particularly easy example of such inconsistency. If 'God' is non-unique in this sense, then there may

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[292] O. Bradley Bassler in communication suggested this as a possible course of action for the author of the argument. I do not know at the time of writing whether or not he would be willing to bet on this conjecture.

or may not be one spirit bedeviling the prospect of a philosophical language; more poignantly, it may not be language that is the culprit, but the way in which we inhabit and construe reference. If such is the case, then exorcism is simply a disenchantment with the equivalence of reference-bearers and truth bearers.

Another avenue for extension may be found in a diagnostic concern. Asanga once cautioned that one ought not to be too keen on debate because rare is a concern for '*para-citta*', the complex conative and cognitive conditions constituting the historical life of another [*para*], in which, for example, 'God the creator' can occur as a meaningful, relevant and denoting phrase. Specifying that the conditions under which this can be the case are not philosophical is to say that from the philosophical perspective, belief in God must seem 'alien'; but the first principle of the Buddhist clinical, anthropological project must be that no belief, *qua* a cognitive and conative condition, can be *radically* 'alien' to a diagnostic apparatus designed to track the various 'beliefs that organize sentient behavior and their complex conditions'. The philosophical extension of the argument becomes clinically relevant: what is the correct way to draw up an analogy between belief in the externality and determinateness of referents such as pots, and the incapacity to see that 'god as a sentient creator' is an idea excluded by the very conditions that motivate it'? If reference is generally and systemically infected with indeterminateness, what is the nature of the conditions which allow us to treat reference as effectively 'fixed'? What is the relation between forms of life such as religious practice, and daily traffic with medium sized cognitive objects?

Buddhist scholarship, if it attempts to provide rigorous criteria by which to assess and appreciate the critical components of such a clinical program, remains, however, in its infancy. At least arguments such as *Tweedledum and Tweedledee* point in the right direction—that is, to aims that may be characterized as properly '*bauddha*', or even *bodhi-pakṣya*, or that which takes the part or side

of awakening and tracks the prospect of awakening from every instance in which experience is

sacrificed for endured necessities.

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