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No Unity, No Problem: Madhyamaka Metaphysical Indefinitism

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Introduction

It is easy to see how certain things seem to depend for their existence on other, more fundamental things, like a molecule depends on its constituent atoms or a gaggle on its geese. These cases illustrate the Hierarchy Thesis, which says that irreflexive, asymmetric, and transitive metaphysical dependence relations hierarchically structure reality.[1] Standard accounts of the ontological dependence relation, the metaphysical grounding relation, and the proper parthood relation all conform to the Hierarchy Thesis and honor this structure. Commitment to the rather intuitive Hierarchy Thesis is usually accompanied by commitment to another rather intuitive claim: the Fundamentality Thesis, which simply says that there must be something fundamental. In other words, hierarchical metaphysical dependence chains don't just go on forever; they terminate in something basic, something that is itself ontologically independent.

We can push on these two theses in various ways to arrive at different pictures of the structure of reality. For instance, if I hold the Fundamentality Thesis but reject the Hierarchy Thesis, I could still maintain a familiar metaphysical foundationalist view, which says that the structure of reality is flat and, strictly speaking, only fundamentalia exist (e.g., some forms of atomism or mereological nihilism). Alternatively, if I reject the Fundamentality Thesis but maintain the Hierarchy Thesis, then I wind up with an infinitist picture on which the world is structured by unending unidirectional dependence chains. In the absence of fundamentalia, the infinitist honors the extra structural property of extendability,[2] which says that everything depends on something else. If I reject both the Hierarchy Thesis and the Fundamentality Thesis, I

1. Bliss and Priest (2018a, 2) identify four theses to which the "standard view" of metaphysical foundationalism is committed: (1) the Hierarchy Thesis; (2) the Fundamentality Thesis; (3) the Contingency Thesis, which says that fundamentalia are merely contingently existent; and (4) the Consistency Thesis, which says that the dependence structure has consistent structural properties. Here, I examine the first two theses.

2. I follow Bliss and Priest in using the term "extendability" to describe the structural property that everything depends on something else. Although the term may seem to suggest that this is a modal property, that is not intended here.

might endorse a form of metaphysical coherentism, on which things stand in mutual, or symmetrical, relations forming dependence loops or circles of one kind or another.

The endless dependence chains and dependence circles that respectively populate infinitist and coherentist structures are commonly dismissed on suspicion of entailing a vicious regress or vicious circularity. Indeed, when it comes to the structure of reality, metaphysical foundationalist intuitions have dominated throughout the history of philosophy, and that's particularly true in the history of Western philosophy. Madhyamaka Buddhist philosophy, however, offers an arsenal of anti-foundationalist arguments that may be useful for at least calling into question the warrant for taking the pervasive metaphysical foundationalist intuition for granted. But I suggest that an even more promising potential payoff of taking Madhyamaka anti-foundationalist arguments seriously stands to be gained from an analysis of the metaphysical dependence structure that follows from such arguments, which reveals that the three standard categories of metaphysical foundationalism, infinitism, and coherentism do not exhaust the possibilities for the structure of reality.

According to Mādhyamikas, the ultimate truth (*paramārthasatya*) says that all things lack ontological independence, and by implication, all things depend for their existence on something else. We might say, then, that the Madhyamaka central commitment is equivalent to the affirmation of the structural property of extendability, which we saw in the infinitist framework and which said that everything depends on something else. Clearly, extendability rules out foundationalism, which demands some independent, ungrounded element(s), yet Mādhyamikas do not affirm a straightforward infinitism or coherentism either. Instead, I'll argue that they are committed to an alternative model that breaks the mold of this standard set of three categories — a structure I call "metaphysical indefinitism."

I begin by presenting a reconstruction and analysis of a Madhyamaka anti-foundationalist argument known as the "neither-one-nor-many argument" (*ekānekaviyogahetu*), as formulated by the Indian Mādhyamika philosopher Śrīgupta (ca. seventh century)[3] in his *Commentary on the Introduction to Reality* (*Tattvāvatāravṛtti*, hereafter *Introduction to Reality*).[4] This argument constitutes the negative phase of the dialectic, which consists in the rejection of fundamentalia by way of the rejection of true unities. This first phase, then, works to demonstrate that the Fundamentality Thesis does not obtain.

I will then turn to the positive phase, the project of fleshing out the picture that follows from Śrīgupta's argument when taken together with his threefold criterion for conventional reality (*saṃvṛtisatya*). Here, I will present a two-stage model, first showing how Śrīgupta would reject the Hierarchy Thesis and next showing how he could endorse it in a qualified form. Mādhyamikas like Śrīgupta are metaphysical egalitarians of a sort: in the final analysis, nothing is ontologically independent, and so, strictly speaking, nothing is metaphysically prior to or more fundamental than anything else. Thus, Madhyamaka

3. Śrīgupta's ca. seventh century dating is supported by the relative chronology attested in Tibetan accounts of the sequence of the Mūlasarvāstivāda preceptor lineage for monastic ordination that entered Tibet: Bhāviveka (ca. sixth century) → Śrīgupta → Jñānagarbha (early eighth century) → Śāntarakṣita (eighth century) → Kamalaśīla (late eighth century). Śrīgupta has received relatively little attention in contemporary scholarship, yet his formulation of the neither-one-nor-many argument together with his threefold criterion for conventional reality made a profound impact on the history of Madhyamaka thought in both India and Tibet, most noticeably by way of his influence on Śāntarakṣita as evidenced by the extensive parallels between the TA/TAV and Śāntarakṣita's MA/MAV. It is Śrīgupta's threefold criterion for conventional reality that makes it possible to detail the metaphysical indefinitism that I sketch in part 2. Although this criterion was adopted by a great many Mādhyamikas following Śrīgupta (see note 33), Śrīgupta's account of conventional reality is importantly different from Śāntarakṣita's, Kamalaśīla's, and Haribhadra's (late eighth century) insofar as Śrīgupta does not endorse any form of Yogācāra idealism even provisionally. On Śrīgupta's place within Indian Madhyamaka, see also notes 6, 34, 60, 63, and 65.

4. The original Sanskrit of the TA and Śrīgupta's autocommentary, the TAV, are lost, and the root text survives only as embedded in the autocommentary, which is extant only in Tibetan. See Ejima (1980) for a Japanese translation of the root verses of the TA, and see Kobayashi (1992, 1994) for a Japanese translation of the TAV. All citations of the text refer by page number to the PD, vol. 116, text no. 3121, and the enumeration of the verses follows my forthcoming critical edition and annotated translation of the TAV.

dependence relations do not honor the strict asymmetrical metaphysical priority of one relatum to the other as demanded by the Hierarchy Thesis, which, given irreflexivity, also precludes transitivity. The resulting structure, characterized by irreflexivity and extendability, admits of dependence loops of greater than zero length (owing to irreflexivity) as well as dependence chains of indefinite length. And I underscore *indefinite* here by contrast with infinite, where indefinite signifies a potential, mind-dependent infinite rather than an actual, mind-independent infinite.[5] On a second level of analysis, however, I will show how the flexible ontology of Śrīgupta's Madhyamaka can support a contextualist form of the Hierarchy Thesis, which, together with his revisable theory of conventional truth, will deliver significant payoffs for the view, including its capacity to accommodate developments in scientific explanations.

1. The Negative Phase: Śrīgupta's Case against Foundationalism

In the history of Buddhist philosophy, versions of the neither-one-nor-many argument have been deployed to refute the existence of a variety of (purported) pseudo-entities, from atoms to universals. Śrīgupta grants the neither-one-nor-many argument a universal scope of application in his *Introduction to Reality*,[6] cementing its place in the Madhyamaka tradition, for which it came to be popularized as one of the five great arguments for establishing the Madhyamaka ultimate truth, which says that, in reality, nothing has ontologically independent being (*svabhāva*).

1.1. Independent Being and Mereological Dependence

Svabhāva, which I translate here as "independent being," literally means "own-being" or "being per se."[7] We might also characterize *svabhāva* as a kind of essential independence,[8] that is, a form of ontological self-sufficiency that belongs to something by its very nature.[9] There are commonly two necessary and only jointly sufficient criteria that the metaphysical foundationalist demands of foundations: (i)

5. Bohn (2018, 178 n. 38) argues that what Bliss and others term "infinitism" is more properly "indefinitism." I instead draw a distinction between two views, where "infinitism" stands for a dependence structure that allows for dependence chains that are actually and mind-independently infinite and "indefinitism" allows for dependence chains that are potentially and mind-dependently infinite. Moreover, the indefinitism I propose as characterizing Madhyamaka is neither asymmetrical nor transitive, though it is irreflexive and extendable.

6. Śrīgupta presents what appears to be the earliest extant fully developed formulation of the Madhyamaka iteration of the neither-one-nor-many argument. Śāntarakṣita's influential MA is likely an expansion of Śrīgupta's TAV, with Śrīgupta taken by the Tibetan tradition to be the teacher of Śāntarakṣita's teacher, Jñānagarbha. Śrīgupta's neither-one-nor-many argument is prefigured in the writings of Nāgārjuna (ca. second century), the progenitor of the Madhyamaka philosophical tradition; see, for example, Nāgārjuna's RĀ 1.71 and ŚS 32ab. See also Āryadeva's (third century) CŚ 14.19.

7. Unless otherwise indicated, I translate *svabhāva* as "independent being" in order to highlight that the negandum in Śrīgupta's argument is best understood as something ontologically independent and fundamental. *Svabhāva*, however, has a broad and complex semantic range, as evinced by the range of English terms contemporary scholars have used to translate it: for example, "aseity," "essence," "intrinsic nature," "substance," "self-nature," "essential nature," "inherent existence." As Nāgārjuna defines it in his MMK 15.2cd, *akṛtrimaḥ svabhāvo hi nirapekṣaḥ paratra ca* / (Ye 2011, 236); "Independent being is [i] non-accidental and [ii] does not depend on anything else." (All translations are my own.) On this stanza, see also Garfield (1995, 221) and Siderits and Katsura (2013, 155). The first property of *svabhāva*, (i) *akṛtrimaḥ*, translated here as "non-accidental," conveys both that *svabhāva* is a kind of intrinsic nature and also that it is not a conceptual fabrication, viz. it is not merely conceptually constructed, as in the case of the fictional unity superimposed on an aggregate; it is not a mere being of reason or imagination. (ii) Nor does *svabhāva* depend on anything else for its reality, as in the case of an aggregate whose reality is derivative, or "borrowed" from its constituents. See Westerhoff's (2009, 19–52) discussion of the ontological, cognitive, and semantic dimensions of *svabhāva*; in the ontological dimension, Westerhoff distinguishes three senses of *svabhāva* based on Candrakīrti's (seventh century) *Prasannapadā*: essence-*svabhāva*, substance-*svabhāva*, and absolute *svabhāva*.

8. As Tahko and Lowe (2016) explain it, if x is essentially independent, then it is part of the essence of x to be ontologically self-sufficient, i.e., x by its very nature does not depend for its existence on anything else.

9. Insofar as the category of substance is commonly regarded as something that is unitary, independent, self-sufficient, and persisting through change, substantial being can be helpfully thought of as a correlate to independent being. However, given that substance (*dravya*) (along with God, universals, inherence relations, etc.) is one among many ontological categories taken by certain of Śrīgupta's philosophical opponents to have independent being, substantial being is more properly a subcategory of independent being.

ontological independence and (ii) constituting a complete basis on which all other things depend. The Madhyamaka ultimate truth, then, as the universal negation of ontological independence is, in effect, the universal negation of foundations. To demonstrate that nothing is ontologically independent is to reject foundationalism.

In making their case against ontological independence, Mādhyamikas regularly make use of three kinds of dependence relations: causal, conceptual, and mereological. In his neither-one-nor-many argument, Śrīgupta focuses on the mereological dependence relation: his argument against ontological independence — and against foundations — turns on the universal negation of mereological independence. Śrīgupta takes up his foundationalist opponents' picture of the world, which is populated by composites and parts. Each part stands in a proper parthood relation with some composite, where x stands in a proper parthood relation with y iff x is a part of y and x is not equal to y. And each composite is mereologically dependent on its proper parts such that a composite exists only if its proper parts exist. Śrīgupta thus takes mereological dependence to be a species of ontological dependence. The mereological dependence relation is also plural inasmuch as one proper part alone is insufficient to constitute a composite; one goose does not make a gaggle.

Critical for his argument, Śrīgupta understands the mereological dependence relation to be "topic-neutral," that is, it applies to all kinds of things.[10] The composite-part relation is not limited to material things; anything that can be physically or even conceptually divided is partite — be it a molecule, a mongoose, or even a mind. To be sure, the claim that parthood is topic-neutral is not uncontroversial, but it should not seem so strange either.[11] After all, just because we might not be capable of physically dividing some minute bit of matter doesn't prevent us from identifying its parts (e.g., left side, right side). Likewise, a four-dimensionalist will find the conceptual division of a perduring object into its temporal proper parts to be perfectly reasonable, despite our inability to physically divide objects into temporal parts. And the proper parts of an abstract object like a Euclidean triangle may include its three sides and three angles. So too, Śrīgupta would argue, the proper parts of a mental representation of a chair, for instance, may include the represented seat and represented legs.[12]

It is important to keep in mind here that conceptual divisibility is not equivalent to conceptual distinction. For instance, one might think that a single thing called by two different names (e.g., the same woman considered as a "sister" and "friend") or a thing and its essence (e.g., matter and extension) are conceptually distinct though metaphysically identical. But neither the sister and friend nor matter and extension are conceptually divisible from one another in the mereological sense; extension is not a conceptually separable proper part of matter, nor vice versa. And neither is conceptual divisibility inclusive of the conceptual distinguishability of a formal aspect, as in, for instance, the distinguishability of a mouth from its smile. Rather, x is conceptually divisible in the mereological sense just in case there are conceptually isolatable proper parts ys that compose x, such that x is the sum of the ys.

If whatever has proper parts mereologically depends on those parts, then only something that lacks proper parts, viz. a mereological simple, can claim mereological independence. And on Śrīgupta's definition, only something that lacks proper parts counts as a true unity. Since

10. On issues concerning the topic-neutrality of mereology, see Johnston (2005), Varzi (2010), Donnelly (2011), and Johansson (2015).

11. This claim is by no means unique to Śrīgupta; rather, he is engaging with a supposition common among his interlocutors from competing Buddhist schools of thought that whatever can be either physically broken down or conceptually analyzable into discrete parts is not ultimately real (*paramārthasat*), viz. does not have independent being. For instance, in AKB *ad* k. 6.4, Vasubandhu explains that the mark of something that is merely conventionally real (*saṃvṛtisat*), viz. exists by conceptual designation (*prajñaptisat*), as opposed to something that is ultimately or substantially real (*dravyasat*), is that the object in question is no longer cognized (i) once it has been either actually or conceptually divided into parts or (ii) once it has been conceptually abstracted from other properties.

12. See, for instance, Leech (2016) on taking seriously (rather than just metaphorically) the mereological structure of Kantian representations.

mereological dependence is a species of ontological dependence, mereological independence, viz. simplicity, is a necessary condition for ontological independence and for fundamentality. In other words, true unity, or unity per se, is a necessary condition for independent being, or being per se.

But if there *are* no mereological simples, or true unities, then there are no candidates for independent being or fundamentality. As Leibniz puts it, "if there is nothing *truly one*, then every *true thing* will be eliminated."[13] Śrīgupta's neither-one-nor-many argument turns on this very premise, for he argues that it is precisely because there are no true unities that nothing has independent being. Nevertheless, it does not follow that there is *nothing* at all. Śrīgupta affirms the *conventional* reality of all things. In section 2, we will return to the question of what precisely it means for being and unity to have a merely conventional status, but in order to first see how Śrīgupta arrives at his anti-foundationalist conclusion, we turn to his neither-one-nor-many argument.

1.2. Śrīgupta's Neither-One-nor-Many Argument

In the opening stanza of his *Introduction to Reality*, Śrīgupta lays out the central inference of the neither-one-nor-many argument as follows:

> In reality, [*s*] all that exists externally and internally [*p*] lacks independent being,
>
> [*r*] due to lacking independent being that is either one or many, [*e*] like a reflection.[14]

Here, [*s*] denotes the subject of the inference (*pakṣa/dharmin*), [*p*] denotes the predicate (*sādhya*), or property to be proved, [*r*] denotes the reason (*hetu*),[15] and [*e*] denotes the example (*dṛṣṭānta*) in which the entailment relation between the reason property and predicate is instantiated. The operator "in reality" (*yang dag tu, *tattvatas*) signals that this inferential argument involves analysis of the subject's ultimate nature and does not bear on its status as a conventional being or a conventional unity/multiplicity.[16]

There are two points to keep in mind about the subject of the argument, <all that exists externally and internally>. First, Śrīgupta takes this subject to be all-inclusive, signifying a universal domain. Second, "exists" (*gnas*) as part of the articulation of the subject is not ontologically loaded; it does not signify any particular mode of existence, realist or otherwise. It simply means "whatever there is." I will thus use "all things" as shorthand for the subject.

Formulated in the standard three-part inference of classical Buddhist logic, the argument runs as follows:

> Thesis (*pratijñā*):
>
> *All things lack independent being.*
>
> Major premise, statement of the entailment between the reason property and predicate (*vyāpti*):

13. GP II 251/AG 176.

14. TA 1: *phyi rol nang na gnas 'di kun // yang dag tu ni rang bzhin med // gcig dang du ma'i rang bzhin nyid // bral ba'i phyir na gzugs brnyan bzhin //* (PD 3121, 101). Cf. MA 1: *bdag dang gzhan smra'i dngos 'di dag // yang dag tu na cig pa dang // du ma'i rang bzhin bral ba'i phyir // rang bzhin med de gzugs brnyan bzhin //* (Ichigō 1989, 190). MA 1 is preserved in Sanskrit in Prajñākaramati's BCAP: *niḥsvabhāvā amī bhāvās tattvataḥ svaparoditāḥ / ekānekasvabhāvena viyogāt pratibimbavat //* (Vaidya 1960, 173). For an English translation of MA 1, see Ichigō (1989, 191).

15. Although Śrīgupta does not explicitly classify the neither-one-nor-many reason, it is commonly regarded as a reason from the non-observation of the predicate (*sādhya*), or literally, the non-observation of the pervader (*vyāpakānupalabdhi*), e.g., Kamalaśīla's (ca. 740–795) MAP *ad* k.1 (Ichigō 1985, 23) and corresponding Sanskrit in Haribhadra's AAA (Wogihara 1932–1935, 624.5–7); see also Kamalaśīla's MĀ (Keira 2004, 235). This refers to the fact that the reason property is *not* observed wherever the predicate is *not* present. In other words, the property of being neither unitary nor non-unitary is *not* observed in any subject that does *not* lack independent being (i.e., in any subject that *has* independent being). The neither-one-nor-many reason is referred to as a "pervader" here since it "pervades," or exhausts all possible ways in which something could exist with independent being, viz. as a simple or as a composite of simples.

16. The use of a qualifier in Madhyamaka argumentation is, of course, a contentious and much debated issue, which Tibetan doxographers subsequently used as a differentiating criterion for assigning Mādhyamikas to the so-called *Svātantrika and *Prāsaṅgika subschools. On this issue, see Dreyfus and McClintock (2003).

> *Whatever is neither one nor many does not have independent being.*

Minor premise, predication of the reason property of the subject (*pakṣadharmatā*):

> *All things are neither one nor many.*

This argument hinges on the reason property: neither one nor many. Śrīgupta, in effect, poses a destructive dilemma, what I will call the "One-or-Many Dilemma": *if anything has independent being, then it is either one or many*.[17] He argues that nothing can satisfy either disjunct of the consequent and therefore, by modus tollens, that nothing can satisfy the antecedent.

So what are the conditions for predicating <one> or <many> of a given subject? As noted, the operator or qualifier, "in reality," in TA 1 indicates that the terms "one" and "many" in these premises should be understood as *true* unity and *true* multiplicity, where to be a true unity is to lack proper parts, viz. to be a mereological simple,[18] and to be a true multiplicity is to have proper parts, the most basic of which are themselves true unities.[19] With these definitions, Śrīgupta stipulates a foundationalist structure on which the world bottoms out in mereological simples. We can thus revise the One-or-Many Dilemma to state [One-or-Many Dilemma*]: *if anything has independent being, then it is either one simple or many simples*.

Two further points about the one-many pair in this argument merit noting. First, the terms *eka* and *aneka* translated here as "one" and "many" conform to the logical, grammatical, and conceptual structure <F> and <not-F>, which is more precisely conveyed by the translation "unity" and "non-unity." Since this pair of predicates is mutually exclusive and exhaustive, <*eka* or *aneka*> is an exclusive disjunction. If *x* has independent being, then, on pain of violating the law of excluded middle, it is either a unity or a non-unity. As Śrīgupta states, "Since [unity and non-unity] are contradictory, existing [with independent being] in any other manner is surely untenable" (TA 2cd).[20] In English, <many> is a vague predicate. The point at which a quantity becomes <many> is indeterminate (think the Sorites Paradox). <Many> is also context-dependent; what counts as <many> in some contexts might be <few> in another. Three shoes are too many for a human to wear at once and too few for a centipede. But in this argument, even a pair counts as <many>. That's because *aneka* signifies any determinate number greater than one. These definitions thus exclude an indeterminate status, as well as that of a merely conventional status, like the conventional unity of an aggregate, such as an army or a flock.

Nevertheless, the translation "one or many" has the virtue of more naturally reflecting a second feature of this disjunctive pair. When understood as the *true* unity and *true* multiplicity of a foundationalist structure, *eka* and *aneka* are a peculiar contradictory pair in that they share not only a conceptual priority relation but also a metaphysical priority relation: the *existence* of a non-unity presupposes the *existence* of some unities. A plurality presupposes singular things as its building blocks. Many and one, thus, stand in both an ontological dependence relation as well as a mereological dependence relation of a composite on its proper parts. These features of the relation between unity and

17. Notice that this dilemma is the contrapositive of the entailment relation (*vyāpti*), which is discussed below.

18. This definition, which is implicitly operative in Śrīgupta's argument, is made explicit by Kamalaśīla in his subcommentary on Śāntarakṣita's MA, where he defines "unity" in the context of this argument as follows, MAP *ad* k. 1: *cig pa zhes bya ba ni cha med pa nyid do //* (Ichigō 1985, 23); "'Unity' refers to something that lacks parts."

19. As Kamalaśīla states in his MAP: *cig shos zhes bya ba ni du ma nyid de tha dad pa nyid ces bya ba'i tha tshig go //* (Ichigō 1985, 23); "The alternative member of the pair is non-unity (*anekatva*), which is synonymous with 'consisting in discrete parts' (*bhedatva*)."

20. *'gal ba'i phyir ni rnam pa gzhan // yod par yang ni mi 'thad do //* (PD 3121, 101). To the same effect, Śāntarakṣita states in MA 62: *gcig dang du ma ma gtogs par // rnam par gzhan dang ldan pa yi // dngos po mi rung 'di gnyis ni // phan tshun spangs te gnas phyir ro //* (Ichigō 1989, 210); "Aside from unity and non-unity, an object's having some other classification is impossible, since it is established that these two are mutually exclusive."

non-unity set it apart from most other contradictory predicate pairs: while a concept like <non-blue>, for example, conceptually presupposes <blue>, the existence of something that is non-blue — say, a red apple — certainly does not require the existence of something blue.

Śrīgupta points to this metaphysical priority relation between one and many, or a unity and a multiplicity, stating, "Given that [a multiplicity] consists of many unities, if one [viz. a unity] does not exist, the other [viz. a multiplicity] is also impossible."[21] Since unity is metaphysically prior to multiplicity, if unity is rejected, then multiplicity is ipso facto precluded. Just as a forest cannot exist without trees, a composite of simples cannot exist without simples. And since a multiplicity depends for its existence on some unities, it is not a proper candidate for ontologically independent being after all. The One-or-Many Dilemma is thus simplified as follows [One-or-Many Dilemma**]: *if anything has independent being, then it is a simple*. All Śrīgupta needs to do to establish that nothing has independent being, then, is to demonstrate that there are no simples. The argument, thus, reduces to a refutation of true unity.

At this point, let's pause to rephrase the argument in more explicitly anti-foundationalist terms. To be sure, Śrīgupta's definition of true unity is a strong one, but it is not at all controversial to suppose that a foundationalist would maintain that foundations are in a strong sense, well, *fundamental*, i.e., basic, primitive, ontologically independent, and metaphysically ungrounded. And it is not far-fetched to suppose that being fundamental in these senses is incompatible with being partite. Yet Śrīgupta's argument does not even require his foundationalist interlocutors to accept the convertibility of simplicity and fundamentality — only that they accept that there exist(s) *some* true unity/unities at bedrock. Śrīgupta's argument can be structured in anti-foundationalist terms as follows:

> P1 If there are any foundations, then necessarily they either *are* true unities or bottom out in true unities.
>
> P2 There are no true unities.
>
> ∴ C1 There are no foundations.
>
> P3 A foundationalist metaphysical structure is possible only if there is some foundation.
>
> ∴ C2 A foundationalist metaphysical structure is not possible.

The real heavy lifting is, of course, done by P2, the rejection of true unities. To establish this premise, Śrīgupta's strategy is to tackle the domain of his universal subject by way of three jointly exhaustive categories. He divides the world into material things, mental things, and the grab-bag category of whatever is neither material nor mental (e.g., abstract entities).

Śrīgupta presents a systematic and exhaustive argument in his *Introduction to Reality*, which is represented in condensed form in the reconstruction below. P1 is the contrapositive of the entailment relation between the predicate and reason property, and the remainder of the premises work toward establishing the predication of the reason property of the all-inclusive subject (C2 and C3).

21. TAV *ad* k. 2b: *gcig mang po'i ngo bo yin pas de med na 'di yang mi srid pa …* (PD 3121, 102). Cf. MA 61: *dngos po gang gang rnam dpyad pa // de dang de la gcig nyid med // gang la gcig nyid yod min pa // de la du ma nyid kyang med //* (Ichigō 1989, 210); "Whatever object one analyzes, none has unity. Given that there is no unity, neither is there a non-unity." Here, Śāntarakṣita closely glosses Āryadeva's CŚ 14.19. See also MAV *ad* k. 61: *'di ltar du ma ni gcig bsags pa'i mtshan nyid do / gcig med na de yang med de / shing la sogs pa med na nags tshal la sogs pa med pa bzhin no //* (Ichigō 1985, 172); "Thus, 'non-unity' is defined as a composite of unities. If no unity exists, then neither does that [composite of unities] exist, just like if no trees exist, neither does a forest exist."

Neither-One-nor-Many Argument Reconstruction

P1 If there is anything that has independent being, then it is either a true unity or a true non-unity.	*Contrapositive of the entailment relation between the reason property and the predicate*
P2 There is a true non-unity only if there are true unities. P3 Something is a true unity if and only if it is a simple, viz. has no proper parts. P4 Whatever exists is material or mental or neither-material-nor-mental. ∴ C1 If there is a true unity, it is either a mental simple or a material simple or a neither-material-nor-mental simple. (from P3, P4) P5 There are no material simples. P6 There are no mental simples. P7 There are no neither-material-nor-mental simples. ∴ C2 There are no true unities. (from C1, P5, P6, P7) ∴ C3 There are no true non-unities. (from P2, C2)	*Proof of the predication of the reason property of the subject*
∴ C4 There is nothing that has independent being. (from P1, C2, C3)	*Thesis*

As reconstructed here, the argument rests on the subarguments in support of P5, P6, and P7, which collectively reject the existence of any kind of simple. Although a thorough treatment of this argument is beyond the scope of this paper, I will touch on Śrīgupta's subarguments against true unities in each of these three categories.[22]

22. For a detailed reconstruction and analysis of Śrīgupta's neither-one-nor-many argument, see my forthcoming translation, critical edition, and introduction to the *Tattvāvatāravṛtti*. For a discussion of Śrīgupta's neither-one-nor-many argument in discussion with Leibniz's thought, see Aitken and McDonough (2020).

Śrīgupta first targets material simples by taking up fundamental particles and posing the following dilemma: If matter is constituted by fundamental particles, those particles are either extended or unextended. (i) If extended, then fundamental particles could not be simple, because whatever is extended is (at least conceptually) divisible (into, say, a right side and a left side, etc.), and whatever is divisible has proper parts. But in that case, fundamental particles would be composites themselves and could not be fundamental after all.[23] (ii) On the other hand, Śrīgupta argues, if fundamental particles were unextended, they could never constitute an extended hunk of matter. Since unextended particles could not have spatially discrete sides at which to conjoin with neighboring particles, he reasons, the entire composite would absurdly collapse into a single unextended point. Śrīgupta summarizes the argument as follows:

> A fundamental particle could not be a [true] unity because an [extended] composite [of unextended particles] is impossible. This is because if they were unitary in nature, then facing [particles] would [absurdly] occupy a single location. Nor is it the case that fundamental particles possessed of some other kind of [extended] nature could face with one another, since in that case it would absurdly follow that [each fundamental particle] would be a manifold.[24]

23. For contemporary arguments defending the coherence of extended simples, see Markosian (1998, 2004a, 2004b) and McDaniel (2007). See McDaniel (2003) for an argument against extended simples.

24. TAV *ad* k. 2a: *rdul phra rab ni gcig pa nyid ma yin te / rang bzhin gcig pu de la mngon par phyogs par yul gcig na gnas pas na bsags pa mi rung pa'i phyir ro / rang bzhin gzhan gyis mngon du phyogs pa yang ma yin te / du ma nyid du thal bar 'gyur ba'i phyir ro //* (PD 3121, 102). Here, Śrīgupta follows Vasubandhu's line of reasoning in the Vś 12–13.

Śrīgupta concludes that, since there is no coherent story to be told about how material bodies are composed of either extended or unextended fundamental particles, there are no material simples.

Śrīgupta next argues that since fundamental particles have been rejected, whatever is purportedly founded in them — whether directly or indirectly — is thereby precluded:

> Accordingly, since [purportedly] fundamental particles in fact lack independent being, whatever is [held to be] constituted either directly or indirectly by them, such as substances that possess [particles as their] parts, as well as whatever is ontologically dependent on substances, like properties, action, universals, and so forth, are indeed soundly rejected.[25]

Once the foundations of a materialist foundationalist structure are rejected, Śrīgupta argues, the rug has been pulled out from under the entire ontological framework.[26]

Taking himself at this point in the dialectic to have rejected the possibility of material simples, and thus material foundations, Śrīgupta next targets a range of idealist foundationalist positions belonging to his fellow Buddhists from the Yogācāra tradition, by rejecting the possibility of a truly unitary mind or mental state. Śrīgupta's sustained attack on mental simples comprises his lengthiest subargument. In his rejection of material simples, Śrīgupta follows earlier Mādhyamikas like Āryadeva as well as Yogācāra Buddhists like Vasubandhu.[27] It is with the refutation of mental simples that Śrīgupta makes a unique philosophical contribution.

Since the subargument against material simples (i) targets a monadic subject, e.g., one purportedly fundamental particle, and (ii) relied on pairs of monadic properties <unitary> and <non-unitary>, and <extended> and <unextended>, we can think of that subargument as the "monadic phase" of the argument. The subargument against mental simples instead takes up a dyadic subject, the mind and mental content, or awareness (*jñāna*) and its mental representations (*ākāra*), and poses two dilemmas using two additional property pairs:

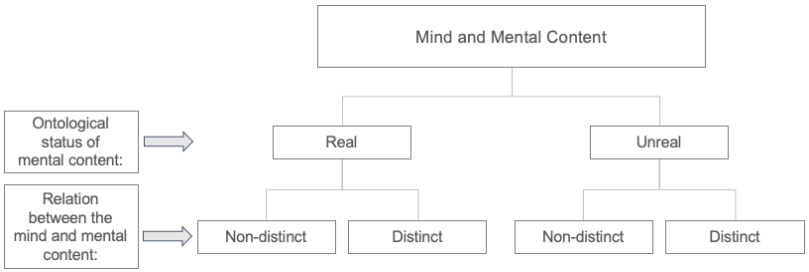
> i. Real-or-Unreal (*satya/alīka*) Dilemma: mental content is either real in the same way that the mind is supposed to be or it is an unreal figment.
>
> ii. Distinct-or-Non-distinct (*bheda/abheda*) Dilemma: the mind and mental content taken together are either one identical thing or distinct things.

25. TAV *ad* k. 3ab: *de ltar rtsom byed med pa'i phyir // rdzas la sogs pa thams cad bsal // de lta bur rdul phran rang bzhin med pa nyid yin pas na de mngon sum dang / gzhan du brtsams pa yan lag can gyi rdzas dang de la brten pa dang / yon tan dang / las dang / spyi la sogs pa'ang ring du spangs pa kho na'o //* (PD 3121, 102). Cf. MA 14–15.

26. Here, Śrīgupta references the Vaiśeṣika ontological categories (*padārtha*) of substances (*dravya*) — which claim fundamental particles as their basic parts — as well as properties (*guṇa*), action (*karma*), universals (*sāmānya*), particulars (*viśeṣa*), and the inherence relation (*samavāya*) between a substance and its properties, etc., all of which are indirectly founded in fundamental particles by virtue of ontologically depending on substances in one way or another.

27. See Āryadeva's CŚ 9.15–17. Vasubandhu uses his anti-atomist argument in Vś 11–15 to support his Yogācāra idealist thesis that all things are merely cognition (*vijñaptimātratā*), though the work done by this section of his argument is, however, much disputed. For instance, Oetke (1992) argues that the argument applies only to objects of experience and that it leaves open the possibility that material objects exist; Arnold (2008) contends that it is intended to establish metaphysical idealism; Kellner and Taber (2014) instead argue that this section must be understood within the argumentative context of the entire text, which represents an *argumentum ad ignorantiam*, and that Vś 11–15 falls under the section in which scriptural testimony (*āgama*) is precluded from serving as a means by which we can reliably gain knowledge of the existence of external objects.

Range of Views on the Mind and Mental Content



Śrīgupta runs a multitiered argument from dilemma relying heavily on a version of the law of non-contradiction (LNC), according to which contradictory properties cannot be predicated of the same subject (*viruddhadharmādhyāsa*). Using these two dilemmas, the logical space of views on the mind and mental content is as follows:

i. Mental content is real and non-distinct from the mind.

ii. Mental content is real and distinct from the mind.

iii. Mental content is unreal and non-distinct from the mind.

iv. Mental content is unreal and distinct from the mind.

Śrīgupta rejects each option in turn, arguing that there is no coherent account of how the mind could exist as a true unity. To summarize:[28] (i) Śrīgupta's argument against the first view runs the One-or-Many Dilemma on mental content. He reasons that *mental content that is real and non-distinct from the mind* is either unitary or non-unitary. This argument turns on the datum that mental content, like the perception we might have of this page, is phenomenally variegated (Skt. *citra*, Tib. *sna tshogs*). He takes it that whatever is phenomenally variegated, being always conceptually divisible into proper parts (like the perception of this word and the perception of that word), is not truly unitary. But if non-unitary mental content is non-distinct from the mind, then given the LNC, the mind too is non-unitary. (ii) But if *mental content is real and distinct from the mind*, a different problem crops up: If, as Śrīgupta's idealist foundationalist interlocutors would have it, mental content is metaphysically founded in the mind, how could it also be metaphysically distinct from (and thus metaphysically independent from) the mind? These idealist foundationalists are thus in agreement with Śrīgupta in discounting this second possible view.

(iii) Moving to the other horn, or the Real-or-Unreal Dilemma, Śrīgupta next argues that if *mental content is unreal and non-distinct from the mind*, then given the LNC, the mind too would be unreal, which is obviously an unacceptable consequence for his idealist foundationalist opponents. (iv) Finally, in tackling the view that *mental content is unreal and distinct from the mind*, Śrīgupta first points out that if mental content does not stand in an identity relation with the mind, it must nonetheless stand in *some* kind of relation with it — perhaps a causal one — in order to account for our experience of it. But only real things can stand in relations with other real things. A dragon can't cause a real forest fire. Likewise, an unreal percept could not cause a real perception of it. Moreover, Śrīgupta adds, being a mere figment, unreal mental content could not account for the phenomenal determinacy and consistency that is the default of our ordinary experience. With this, Śrīgupta dismisses the fourth and final possible way in which a mind or mental state might exist as a true unity.

Finally, in a series of additional subarguments targeting neither-material-nor-mental simples, Śrīgupta also rejects the simplicity of purportedly all-pervasive entities (*vyāpin*), like ether (*ākāśa*), space (*diś*), time (*kāla*), and the soul/self (*ātman*), all of which, he argues, are — in some manner — conceptually divisible into proper parts due to being connected with spatially or temporally discrete loci.

With the conclusion of this series of subarguments against material, mental, and neither-material-nor-mental simples, Śrīgupta takes himself to have exhausted the possibilities for how something could exist as a true unity. Since the existence of a true multitude presupposes

28. This sequence of subarguments is found at TAV (PD 3121, 102–4).

the existence of true unities, he thereby establishes the minor premise that all things are neither one nor many. And given the major premise — that whatever is neither one nor many does not have independent being — Śrīgupta concludes that all things are devoid of independent being; there are no fundamentalia of any kind.

2. The Positive Phase: Conventional Reality and Metaphysical Indefinitism

If nothing that exists is ontologically independent, then whatever exists is ontologically *dependent*. But precisely what kind of metaphysical dependence structure do Mādhyamikas endorse? This question has received surprisingly little serious attention in the secondary literature. Some have suggested that Madhyamaka endorses a kind of metaphysical coherentism (e.g., Walser 2005, 243–44; Goodman 2016, 143), others that it is instead a picture of appearances all the way down (e.g., Sprung 1977, 264; Huntington 1983, 326; Cabezón 1994, 163; Arnold 2010, 375), and still others have suggested that both coherentism and infinitism are defensible accounts of Madhyamaka (Westerhoff 2016, 356).[29] Recently, however, Ricki Bliss and Graham Priest have put forward the most technical account of the Madhyamaka dependence structure to date, claiming that it is a form of metaphysical infinitism, characterized by extendability together with the structural properties demanded by the Hierarchy Thesis, viz. irreflexivity, asymmetry, and transitivity.[30] Though a helpful starting place, their characterization does not get at the heart of what is most radical about the Madhyamaka picture. In his neither-one-nor-many argument, Śrīgupta runs a reductio on his foundationalist opponents, supposing that a strict priority relation of the kind demanded by the Hierarchy Thesis obtains between true unities and the multitude that they constitute. But according to Śrīgupta, since there are no true unities to ground a strict, asymmetrical priority relation of this kind, neither can there exist such a relation. But if Śrīgupta's Madhyamaka is not a straightforward infinitism, what is it? The resources for beginning to flesh out this picture can be found in Śrīgupta's account of conventional reality.

Upon concluding his neither-one-nor-many argument, Śrīgupta is quick to affirm the conventional reality of all things, the second of the Madhyamaka "two truths/realities" (*satyadvaya*),[31] in order to clarify that the rejection of independent being is not tantamount to nihilism. Instead, his view is intended to navigate a middle way between the realism of foundationalism and thoroughgoing nihilism:[32] the kind of being and unity that actually exist are merely conventional. But what precisely does it mean to characterize the being and unity of everything from an aardvark to an atom as "conventional"?

29. Claiming that Madhyamaka endorses a metaphysical dependence structure at all — or *any* metaphysical claims for that matter — is not uncontroversial, given that many interpreters take Nāgārjuna to be a skeptic, a mystic, or an anti-metaphysicalist, based in part on his famed and interpretively vexed statement in VV k. 29 that he has no thesis; see also YŚ k. 50.

30. See Bliss and Priest (2018b, 70–71), where they claim that Nāgārjuna's Madhyamaka conforms to this infinitist dependence structure; a similar paper with this same claim appears as Priest (2018). In the contemporary space, the metaphysical possibility of metaphysical infinitism has been defended by Schaffer (2003), Bohn (2009, 2018), Bliss (2013), Tahko (2014), and Morganti (2014, 2015). On the logical consistency of infinitism and non-well-founded set theory, see Aczel (1988); on the application of non-well-founded set theory to Madhyamaka, see Priest (2009, 2014).

31. The semantic range of the term *satya* includes "truth," "reality," "existence," and "being," and thus *satyadvaya* is commonly translated as "two truths" as well as "two realities." In this section, I translate *saṃvṛtisatya* as "conventional existence/being/reality" since Śrīgupta's definition of the conventional describes the manner of existence of appearances. However, below I will also discuss the implications of Śrīgupta's account of conventional reality on conventional truth, understood as the truth-tracking claims we make about conventionally real things. I translate *paramārthasatya* throughout as "ultimate truth" since in the present discussion it refers to the thesis of Śrīgupta's neither-one-nor-many argument, viz. the universal absence of ontologically independent being.

32. For Nāgārjuna on Madhyamaka as the middle way, see, for instance, MMK 15.2. Śrīgupta echoes this Madhyamaka refrain in TA 23: *sgro 'dogs pa dang skur pa'am // mtha' gnyis kyi ni rnam spangs pa // 'di ni dbu ma'i lam yin par // seng ge'i nga ros bstan pa yin //* (PD 3121, 110); "That the rejection of the two extremes of reification and nihilism is the path of the middle way is what was taught by the lion's roar."

Śrīgupta sets out an influential threefold criterion for conventional reality,[33] according to which whatever exists conventionally (i) is satisfactory only when not analyzed (*avicāraramaṇīya* or *avicāramanohara*), (ii) is interdependently originated (*pratītyasamutpanna*), and (iii) has the capacity for causal, or pragmatic, efficacy (*arthakriyāśakti* or *arthakriyāsāmarthya*).[34] In other words, whatever is conventionally real (i) does not withstand the kind of analysis into its ultimate nature that seeks to uncover some ontologically independent entity, and yet it (ii) comes into being in dependence on other conventionally real things and (iii) fulfills our pragmatic expectations in accordance with how it appears.

I will argue that these three criteria jointly yield a structure I call "metaphysical indefinitism," which involves dependence relations that are irreflexive and extendable, but not strictly asymmetric or transitive; admits of indefinite — but not straightforwardly infinite — dependence chains as well as dependence loops of non-zero length; and yet allows for a contextualist form of the Hierarchy Thesis that will bring the Madhyamaka ontological dependence relation closer in line with standard accounts of the metaphysical grounding and ontological dependence relations. The resulting picture supports a flexible ontology and revisable theory of conventional truth that will deliver important payoffs for the view, including its capacity to keep in step with the latest developments in scientific explanation. How, then, do Śrīgupta's three criteria for conventional reality deliver this picture?

2.1 The "Satisfies When Not Analyzed" Criterion and Infinitism vs. Indefinitism

On Śrīgupta's first criterion for conventional reality, whatever is conventionally real can satisfy our ordinary notions of existence and unity so long as it is not subjected to metaphysical analysis like that involved in the neither-one-nor-many argument.[35] Conventionally real things, Śrīgupta claims, dissolve under analysis of their ultimate nature: every object taken up for analysis is physically and/or conceptually divisible; nothing turns out to be a true unity, ontologically independent, or fundamental. Instead, <unity> and <being> are designated in dependence (*upādāya prajñapti*) upon some proper parts.[36] A gaggle is designated, or conceived in dependence on some geese, whereby it derives accidental being and accidental unity. Yet the being and unity of an individual goose is also designated in dependence on its own proper parts.[37] And aardvarks and atoms are no different. And with no

33. Subsequent endorsements of this threefold criterion include, for instance, Jñānagarbha's SDV 8, 12, and 21; Śāntarakṣita's MA 64; Kamalaśīla's MAP *ad* 64; Haribhadra's AAA (Wogihara 1932–1935, 594.18–25); the ca. eighth-century Bhāviveka's MAS 9–11 and MRP I.4; and Atiśa's (982–1054) SDA 3.

34. TA 11: *ma brtags gcig pu nyams dga' ste // de 'dra las byung de bzhin no // dngos po de dag de lta bu'i // don bya de dang de byed do //* (PD 3121, 105); "[1] Satisfactory only when not analyzed, [2] [things] arise from [causes] similar to themselves. [3] Those things enact their respective forms of causal efficacy." The TAV continues: *de lta bas na phyi rol dang nang na snang ba'i dngos po brtag pa'i spungs mi bzod pa rang dang mthun pa'i rgyus bskyed pa 'di dag ni gang las tha snyad 'dir 'gyur ba don bya ba ma brtags na nyams dga' ba nyid de dang der nye bar byed do //* (PD 3121, 105–6); "Thus, regarding these things that appear both externally and internally, which cannot withstand the pressure of analysis and which are produced from causes similar to themselves, based on which conventions (**vyavahāra*) come into being — if one has not examined their causal efficacy, one will approach satisfaction here and there." As Eckel (2008, 25) points out, Śrīgupta's TAV appears to be the earliest extant text in which we find this threefold characterization of conventional reality, with the first criterion as listed above possibly adapted from Candrakīrti (e.g., MAv 6.35), the second inherited from Nāgārjuna, and the third a repurposing of Dharmakīrti's criterion for ultimately real particulars (*svalakṣaṇa*) in PV 3.3. On these three criteria, see also Eckel (1987, 137–38 n. 104).

35. One may be reminded here of Hume's claim that the distinct and continued existence that we attribute to material objects is the work of the imagination, and although this operation of the imagination is epistemologically unfounded (Śrīgupta's first criterion for conventional reality), it is nevertheless pragmatically efficacious (Śrīgupta's third criterion for conventional reality).

36. See MMK 24.18–19. Here, Nāgārjuna identifies dependent origination with emptiness, which he in turn identifies as dependent designation. See Salvini (2011) for an argument based on grammatical analysis in support of reading Nāgārjuna as equating *upādāyaprajñapti* with *pratītyasamutpāda*, as Candrakīrti does in his *Prasannapadā ad* MMK 24.18.

37. This, of course, means that there is no deep, metaphysical difference between the unity of an aggregate like an army and the unity of something like a human organism, which also turns out to be an aggregate (of aggregates).

simples to be found upon analysis, it's aggregates — i.e., conventional unities and beings — all the way down.

Since conventional unity and conventional being are necessarily designated or conceived by some cognitive agent in dependence upon some parts, just as the unity and being of an army are designated in dependence upon some soldiers, whatever exists conventionally is in some sense mind-dependent.

In fact, in Śrīgupta's presentation of the conventional reality of all things, he glosses "things" as "things that *appear* externally and internally."[38] Whatever exists conventionally, then, is an appearance, which, by definition, exists in relation to some cognitive agent insofar as it necessarily appears *to* someone.[39] Importantly, the ontological status of dependence relations and dependence structures can be no different from that of the relata that populate the structure.[40] The unity and being of the structure too dissolve under analysis, are designated in dependence on some parts, and are mind-dependent. Thus, although dependence chains are endless insofar as they do not terminate in any ungrounded or self-grounding entity, they cannot be mind-independently infinite. They are, instead, only indefinite.

By "indefinite," I intend a kind of potential, mind-dependent infinite, as opposed to an actual, mind-independent infinite. Indefinite characterizes the relation among members in a series such that for any given member, there will always be a subsequent member; there will always be more than one may specify. In the case of an actual infinite, however, the quantity in question is put in one-to-one correspondence with the natural numbers.[41] For the Mādhyamika, then, although there is no mind-independent, actually infinite dependence chain, were one to analyze any given chain, one would never arrive at a limit. Accordingly, when it comes to mereological dependence as a subspecies of ontological dependence, any given hunk of matter — whether a canyon or a quark — is potentially indefinitely divisible, though not actually infinitely divided. In this way, Śrīgupta's metaphysical indefinitism is subjectivist and anti-realist,[42] differentiating it from realist forms of mereological infinitism that see the world constituted by mind-independent gunk.

The indefinitism that characterizes Madhyamaka dependence chains is a third alternative to the infinitism-finitism dichotomy, where finitism picks out a structure — whether foundationalist or coherentist — wherein a finite quantity of relata stand in a finite number of dependence relations. Since indefinitism follows from the mind-dependence of the structure and its members,[43] it is not simply a claim of epistemic or semantic indeterminacy. For instance, the mereological

38. See TAV *ad* 11, where Śrīgupta unpacks *dngos po* from TA 11 as *phyi rol dang nang na snang ba'i dngos po* (PD 3121, 105).

39. Here, one might draw a parallel with Kantian appearance (*Erscheinung*), which is empirically real, though transcendentally ideal. However, Śrīgupta should not be read as suggesting that there may be some non-appearing thing akin to a Kantian thing in itself (*Ding an sich*), which might claim ontological independence, since Śrīgupta argues that ontological independence is metaphysically impossible.

40. As Westerhoff (2017, 288) points out, an ontological structural realism, such as that developed by Ladyman and Ross (2007) and French (2014), which "privileges structures over the individuals individuating the structures, and attempts to dispense completely with the notion of a fundamental level" is incompatible with the Madhyamaka denial of "ultimately real entities." For the Mādhyamika, relations are no more fundamental or ontologically independent than the relata that they structure.

41. It is unclear whether or not Indian philosophers like Śrīgupta were ever actually working with the concept of a quantitative, or mathematical, infinite. Yet concepts like limitless (*anantaka*) and immeasurable (*aparimāṇa*) were commonplace and, I suggest, conform to the structural notion of an indefinite infinite. Similarly, the Sanskrit term for an infinite regress, an endless series, *anavasthā*, is suggestive in its etymology of unfoundedness, ungroundedness, or of falling without stopping.

42. For an account of Madhyamaka as a form of global anti-realism, see, for example, Siderits (1988, 1989) and Westerhoff (2011). Madhyamaka has been variously categorized as a kind of "nihilism, monism, irrationalism, misology, agnosticism, skepticism, criticism, dialectic, mysticism, acosmism, absolutism, relativism, nominalism, and linguistic analysis with therapeutic value" (Seyfort Ruegg 1981, 2). To this, we may add panfictionalism (Matilal 1970), ontological deflationism (MacKenzie 2008), conceptualism (Spackman 2014), quietism (Tillemans 2016), and realist-antimetaphysicalism (Ferraro 2017).

43. This only follows, of course, so long as the mind on which the structure depends is not itself actually infinite.

structure of a quark is not indefinite simply because it is impossible to know the dividedness of the quark in its entirety. Nor is it indefinite merely due to the limitations of our semantic or representational resources. Rather, the indefinitism of Madhyamaka dependence chains represents a kind of *metaphysical* indeterminacy; the reality of the dividedness of a given object is settled only insofar as we have (mentally or physically) carried out the division.[44] Epistemic and semantic indeterminacy may follow from this, but indefinitism is foremost a metaphysical claim.

Now, one might think that this "indefinitism" is actually a veiled form of finitism along the following lines: If the dividedness of an object is mind-dependent, and if only a finite number of divisions have been made at t_1, then the structure is finite at t_1. And if at t_2 further divisions are made, then there will be *more* parts than at t_1, but the structure remains finite and perfectly definite nonetheless. Alternatively, one might take "indefinitism" to mean that, as things stand, prior to analysis, it is unsettled as to whether or not a given object has parts; that is, when uninspected, an object is neither simple nor complex. Yet neither veiled finitism nor indefinitism about simplicity vs. complexity is what is intended by the indefinitism under discussion here. Instead, since everything is necessarily indefinitely divisible, and since divisibility is a sufficient criterion for being partite, the fact that any given object x has parts is settled *a priori*. Furthermore, the fact that x will, upon analysis, turn out to have more parts than one may specify, viz. indefinitely many parts, is settled *a priori*. What *is* unsettled prior to analysis is *which* parts get carved out and identified as the basis of imputation for x's conventional unity and being.

2.2 The Interdependent Origination Criterion and the Structural Properties of Madhyamaka Dependence Relations

So far, I've argued that from Śrīgupta's first criterion for conventional reality — that the being and unity of a conventionally real thing satisfies only when not analyzed and is designated in dependence on its proper parts — it follows that Madhyamaka dependence chains are indefinite rather than infinite. To further flesh out the properties of the Madhyamaka dependence structure, let's look to Śrīgupta's second criterion for conventional reality, which says that whatever exists conventionally comes into being in dependence on something else. This is most literally a claim about causal dependence, implying the denial of self-causation as well as a first cause and entailing causal dependence *ad indefinitum*.[45] Yet, this claim of universal dependent origination also applies to mereological dependence. After all, just as a sprout does not originate in the absence of a seed, neither does a gaggle originate in the absence of geese. On this criterion, however, neither does a seed originate in the absence of its own causes and conditions, nor a goose in the absence of its own proper parts — wings, beak, webbed feet, etc. To begin to pin down the structural properties of the Madhyamaka dependence relation that obtain in both these kinds of cases, it may be helpful to contrast it with the metaphysical grounding relation.

There are three commonly accepted features of metaphysical grounding that are *incompatible* with Madhyamaka metaphysical dependence: metaphysical grounding is standardly (i) a non-causal relation of metaphysical explanation, (ii) a relation that obtains between facts and not between things, and (iii) a priority relation.[46] That is, if x

44. This account anticipates certain elements of the resolution of Kant's second antinomy, according to which composite substances are neither composed of simples nor are they actually infinitely divided. Instead, on Kant's transcendental idealism, since the world as a totality is not given in appearance, matter is indefinitely divisible without consisting of infinitely many parts, i.e., matter is only divided insofar as we have carried out that division. As he concludes in his *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*, "Therefore, one can only say of appearances, whose division proceeds to infinity, that there are just so many parts in the appearance as we may provide, that is, so far as we may divide. For the parts, as belonging to the existence of an appearance, exist only in thought, namely, in the division itself" (4:506–7; 2002, 218).

45. This claim is not so strange given a conceptual context wherein time too has no beginning. Indeed, those upholding a beginning of time arguably take on a greater explanatory burden.

46. The features of metaphysical grounding are, of course, hotly debated, but I engage what I call a "standard account" characterized by these three features together with the three structural properties of irreflexivity, asymmetry,

is grounded in y, then y is prior to and more fundamental than x, and y metaphysically explains x (where x and y are facts). The dependence structure that Mādhyamikas like Śrīgupta affirm is broad ranging, making use of mereological, causal, and conceptual dependence relations, and it is not at all clear that any of them qualify as a (standardly characterized) metaphysical grounding relation. Madhyamaka dependence relations (i) are sometimes but not always causal and sometimes but not always involve metaphysical explanation, (ii) can obtain not only between facts but also (and perhaps more commonly) between things, and (iii) are not strict priority relations.

Let's take a closer look at the structural properties of the grounding relation that jointly enforce priority, which is the same set of three properties demanded by the Hierarchy Thesis and which yields a strict partial order: irreflexivity, asymmetry, and transitivity. To this, we can add extendability, as the infinitist would.[47] Mādhyamikas unequivocally affirm irreflexivity.[48] That's because something's being self-grounding (or standing in a reflexive ontological dependence relation) is tantamount to having independent being. And extendability is demanded by Śrīgupta's second criterion for conventional reality: that everything originates in dependence on something else.[49]

But it is clear that Mādhyamikas *do* admit of instances of symmetrical dependence.[50] Indeed, the term for dependent origination, *pratītyasamutpāda*, with its *sam-* prefix, literally means dependent *co*-origination, implicating some kind of interdependence, or mutual dependence.[51] Two things that are conceptually mutually dependent, like right and left, do not have an obvious priority relation. It is difficult to conceive of an ontology where right is more fundamental than left. At first blush, the flat, mutual dependence relation between right and left looks nothing like the hierarchical ontological priority relation that obtains between a molecule and its atoms. Yet mutual ontological dependence should not seem so strange; consider, for instance, the mutual dependence of the north and south poles of a magnet.[52]

According to the Mādhyamika, the dependence between a part and a composite is more similar to that between the north and south poles than may be initially supposed. A part might just as easily be said to

and transitivity because this provides a clear picture against which to clarify Madhyamaka dependence relations. For arguments that the grounding relation is not necessarily irreflexive, see Fine (2010), Jenkins (2011), and Krämer (2013); for a challenge to its asymmetry, see Barnes (2018) and Thompson (2018); for a challenge to its transitivity, see Schaffer (2012), where he argues that transitivity can be restored by a contrastive account of grounding. It is a contested question whether grounding even picks out fundamentally one relation (Audi 2012, Rosen 2010, Schaffer 2009, Berker 2018) or whether it denominates a plurality of relations that include, for instance, metaphysical grounding, natural grounding, and normative grounding (Fine 2012, Wilson 2014). For surveys of disputed issues related to grounding, see Correia and Schnieder (2012), Trogdon (2013), Raven (2015), and Bliss and Trogdon (2016).

47. Bliss and Priest (2018b, 7) formalize these four structural properties as follows, where $x \rightarrow y$ represents "x depends on y": (1) anti-reflexivity: $\forall x \neg(x \rightarrow x)$; (2) anti-symmetry: $\forall x \forall y(x \rightarrow y \supset \neg y \rightarrow x)$; (3) transitivity: $\forall x \forall y \forall z((x \rightarrow y \wedge y \rightarrow z) \supset x \rightarrow z)$; and (4) extendability: $\forall x \exists y(y \neq x \wedge x \rightarrow y)$.

48. For examples of Nāgārjuna's rejection of reflexivity, see MMK 3.4, 7.1, 7.8, and 7.28. These arguments can also be read as cases against the metaphysical possibility of fundamental entities that are self-grounding.

49. Extendability *qua* the dependent origination of all things is the central claim of Nāgārjuna's MMK, as made explicit in the dedicatory stanza. For instance, extendability is endorsed in terms of causal dependence at MMK 4.2c2d: *na cāsty arthaḥ kaścid āhetukaḥ kvacit* (Ye 2011, 68); "There is nothing whatsoever that exists without a cause." On this stanza, see also Siderits and Katsura (2013, 53).

50. Nāgārjuna affirms symmetrical dependence for conventionally existent things. See, for instance, MMK 8.12: *pratītya kārakaḥ karma taṃ pratītya ca kārakam / karma pravartate nâṇyat paśyāmaḥ siddhikāraṇam //* (Ye 2011, 142); "The agent exists in dependence on action, and action exists in dependence on that agent. We see no other means for establishing [them]." On this stanza, see also Garfield (1995, 181) and Siderits and Katsura (2013, 96–97). For a related point, see Nāgārjuna's ŚS 13. At times, Nāgārjuna appears to reject symmetrical dependence, e.g., MMK 6.6, 7.6, 10.8–10, 11.5, and 20.7. However, these arguments target symmetrical dependence as advanced by his realist opponents, who maintain that the relata that purportedly stand in symmetrical dependence relations have thick being (viz. ontologically independent being).

51. In fact, Candrakīrti gives one possible etymology of *saṃvṛti* (translated in this paper as "conventional") as meaning "mutual dependency" (*parasparasaṃbhavana*) (PP *ad* MMK 24.8).

52. I borrow this example from Bliss and Priest (2018a, 14).

depend on the composite as the composite on the part.[53] For instance, a human organism depends on a heart, but the heart also depends on the human organism. Two conventionally real things might thus stand in a mutual dependence relation. This admission of symmetrical dependence taken together with the commitment to irreflexivity prevents Śrīgupta from honoring transitivity.[54] Thus, unlike standard accounts of the metaphysical grounding relation, the ontological dependence relation, and the proper parthood relation — all of which conform to the Hierarchy Thesis — Madhyamaka dependence relations are neither strictly asymmetrical nor transitive.

Bliss and Priest (2018a, 2018b) present a taxonomy of sixteen structures of reality derived from the range of combinations of the four structural properties of irreflexivity, asymmetry, transitivity, and extendability.[55] Although they assign Nāgārjuna's Madhyamaka to a kind of infinitism that accommodates all four of these properties (Structure 1 in their list, an infinite partial ordering), the Madhyamaka of Nāgārjuna and Śrīgupta instead conforms most closely to Structure 7 in their list, a kind of infinitism that honors irreflexivity and extendability, but not asymmetry or transitivity. The rejection of asymmetry and transitivity undermines the priority ordering and thus admits of dependence loops, but — given irreflexivity — only loops of >0 length. And given extendability, there are no fundamental elements. Bliss and Priest argue that Structure 7 (together with the other non-standard permutations of these properties) is not only logically possible but also metaphysically possible.[56] Structure 7 meets Bliss and Priest's definition of infinitism on which "every element is ultimately ungrounded" ($\forall x \mathrm{UG}x$), where an element x is ultimately ungrounded (UG) if one never meets with a foundational element (FE) in x's dependence chain, $\forall y(x \rightarrow y \supset \neg \mathrm{FE}y)$, and extendability is entailed (2018b, 67). It does not meet their (strong) definition of coherentism, on which everything is dependent on everything else ($\forall x \forall y\ x \rightarrow y$).[57] But given that this structure permits symmetry and thus dependence loops, it may well satisfy other definitions of coherentism.

To sum up the properties of the metaphysical dependence structure that follow from these first two criteria for conventional reality: (i) everything depends on something else (extendability); (ii) nothing depends on itself (irreflexivity); (iii) some elements may be (but need not be) symmetrically dependent, admitting dependence loops of >0 length; and (iv) dependence chains are indefinite, though not actually infinite, in length. As it turns out, then, the proponents of coherentist and infinitist interpretations of Madhyamaka each have it partly right; in a way, it's both.

This has been a sketch of the first level of analysis of the Madhyamaka metaphysical dependence structure, which highlights the way in which it falls outside the standard accounts of the three categories of foundationalism, infinitism, and coherentism and also how it treads an alternative path to the infinitism-finitism dichotomy. On this picture, we might say that an organism like a human body ontologically depends on its heart, which depends on some cells, and so on, *ad indefinitum*, and yet the heart also ontologically depends on the organism.

Nevertheless, some Madhyamaka dependence relations might still

53. See, for instance, Candrakīrti's MAv 6.161ab, where he argues that, just as a whole cannot exist without parts, neither can parts exist without the whole, suggesting their mutual ontological dependence: *sattvaṃ rathasyāsti na cet tadānīṃ / vināṅginānāṅgāny api santi nāsya //* (Li 2015, 24).

54. To the best of my knowledge, transitivity was not a concept that Śrīgupta and his fellow Mādhyamikas were explicitly concerned with, so the claim that they do not strictly honor transitivity is not an independent condition but derived from the fact that they are committed to irreflexivity but not to asymmetry. They could, however, endorse a limited transitivity, such that $\forall x \forall y \forall z((x \rightarrow y \wedge y \rightarrow z) \wedge (x \neq y \wedge y \neq z \wedge x \neq z)) \supset (x \rightarrow z)$.

55. As Bliss and Priest clarify, only ten of the sixteen combinations are logically possible (2018a, 7; 2018b, 65).

56. See 2018a, 10ff. In the same volume, Barnes (2018) argues that ontological dependence is symmetrical, and Thompson (2018) argues that grounding is non-symmetric rather than asymmetric. See also Morganti (2018) for a recent case for metaphysical coherentism on which ontological dependence is symmetrical.

57. Thus, for Bliss and Priest, coherentism obtains only in the case of a preorder, which honors reflexivity, symmetry, and transitivity, and may or may not be extendable.

be helpfully discussed in terms of metaphysical grounding. I will focus on the mereological dependence relation since that looks like the most promising candidate.[58] Suppose that the Mādhyamika agrees that mereological dependence is a kind of existential dependence that can be cashed out in terms of a relation of metaphysical explanation that obtains between facts. Still, priority looks like a sticking point. I will next show how Śrīgupta's third criterion for conventional reality facilitates a second level of analysis that shows how this picture can support a qualified form of the Hierarchy Thesis and a certain degree of structural flexibility.

2.3 The Causal Efficacy Criterion and a Revisable Theory of Conventional Truth

Śrīgupta's third criterion for conventional reality says that whatever exists conventionally has the capacity for causal or pragmatic efficacy, which simply means that it can fulfill our pragmatic purposes in accordance with our expectations. If something fails to have the capacity for causal efficacy, like the apparent water of a mirage that fails to quench my thirst, then it is *not* conventionally real. Conventionally real things work, yet if we investigate their operations, we will find that they do not ultimately rest on foundations; their dependence relations do not terminate in ontologically independent beings.

Contemporary objections to Madhyamaka include the charge that its flat ontology is unable to accommodate developments in scientific explanation without resorting to a "dismal slough"[59] of "anything goes" relativism, and that Abhidharma Buddhism, for instance, read as a kind of reductionism, is more promising in this respect.[60] To the contrary, I argue that an important *virtue* of Śrīgupta's Madhyamaka is its capacity to honor scientific hierarchies as well as developments in scientific explanation without endorsing an unmitigated relativism. That's because Śrīgupta's pragmatic efficacy criterion for conventional reality supports an ontology that is not flat, but flexible.

To be sure, Mādhyamikas are — in a certain sense — ontological egalitarians, insofar as they are committed to the metaphysical impossibility of ontological independence. Strictly speaking, nothing can be said to have more ontological independence than anything else, any more than one person can be said to own more jackalopes than anyone else. So one might think that it is incoherent for a Mādhyamika — or for any anti-foundationalist for that matter — to speak of one thing's being prior to, or more fundamental than, anything else, for the rejection of foundationalism may seem to entail a flat ontology.

One, therefore, might think that it is incoherent to both reject the Fundamentality Thesis and uphold the Hierarchy Thesis. But the Hierarchy Thesis does not presuppose the Fundamentality Thesis. A hierarchical chain of metaphysical priority does not in principle require the existence of something most (or least) fundamental.[61] An indefinite (or infinite) hierarchical chain is not obviously incoherent. The fact that there is nothing absolutely fundamental no more precludes one thing's being *more* fundamental than another than the absence

58. See Cameron (2014) for an argument that the part-whole relation is an instance of the metaphysical grounding relation. See Wilson (2014) for an argument that the part-whole relation is an instance of a "small-g" grounding relation, which, together with a variety of other dependence relations, ought to be differentiated from the metaphysical explanation relation signified by the "big-g" Grounding relation. See Berker (2018) for a response to Wilson.

59. Tillemans (2011, 152) uses this expression to describe a relativist reading of Candrakīrti's Madhyamaka.

60. See, for instance, Siderits (2011), whose objection — and others like it — is based on a Candrakīrtian reading of Madhyamaka. Indeed, most serious contemporary efforts to make philosophical sense of the Madhyamaka theory of conventional reality/truth have engaged it through a Candrakīrtian lens (e.g., Cowherds 2011). Regardless of whether or not Candrakīrti could field this kind of objection, Śrīgupta's Madhyamaka is more obviously equipped to respond, in large part because of Śrīgupta's repurposing of Dharmakīrti's causal/pragmatic efficacy criterion for real particulars as one of his three criteria for real conventionals. In this, Śrīgupta is followed by Śāntarakṣita, Kamalaśīla, Haribhadra, the eighth-century Bhāviveka, Atiśa, and others.

61. Just as some kind of axiom of regularity, or axiom of foundation, is required in set theory to demand first elements in a set and rule out non-well-founded sets, similarly some constraint must be added to the metaphysical grounding relation to demand some final, ungrounded ground.

of a perfect Euclidean triangle in the world precludes one thing's being more triangular than another. A metaphysical structure might thus be egalitarian in one sense, viz. insofar as everything is the same in lacking ontological independence, and nonetheless have depth, or verticality, in another sense, viz. insofar as it might instantiate asymmetry in certain of its dependence chains.

Since Mādhyamikas admit of mutual dependence, they can accept that a composite is dependent on its parts — in some sense — and yet the parts are also — in another sense — dependent on the composite, and thus neither is strictly prior to the other. But the admission of certain kinds of mutual dependence neither rules out the possibility of asymmetrical dependence chains nor takes it for granted. Likewise, hierarchical structures are neither ruled out a priori on this picture nor are they necessary. By providing contextualist qualifications to asymmetry, the Mādhyamika could admit hierarchical structures for which the direction of priority is extrinsically determined by, for instance, a given dialogical, analytic, or scientific context.[62]

Madhyamaka anti-foundationalism is thus not a picture on which there is *no* structure, but one on which the structures are richer than might be presumed. Yet this quasi-maximalism about structure is constrained by a pragmatic understanding of which structures are salient. It can accommodate hierarchical scientific structures, but at the same time, it leaves science open to pursue other kinds of non-hierarchical, non-reductionist models.

A strict hierarchic and reductionist ontology may encourage the thought that there is a single privileged way of carving up and ordering the world. But the Madhyamaka flexible ontology can recognize scientific insights while also granting legitimacy to other ways of thinking about the world, e.g., to recognizing a certain kind of priority not just to quarks and leptons, or strings in ten-dimensional space, but also to plants, animals, people, and even — if it is useful — countries and corporations.

But conventional *truths* — as the truth-tracking claims we make about conventionally real things and structures — are not simply claims that are commonly accepted within a given society (*lokaprasiddha*); nor is causal/pragmatic efficacy underwritten by popular opinion. Śrīgupta's successor, Kamalaśīla, who endorses a version of Śrīgupta's threefold criterion of conventional reality, provides a word of caution in response to a rival Mādhyamika position that endorses a form of relativism, which sanctions common consensus as the guide to what is conventionally real.[63] Kamalaśīla observes that the general

62. Other examples of contexts that might extrinsically determine priority include the analytical context of a solitary epistemic agent, and the dialogical context of more than one epistemic agent is involved in an exchange. In the latter context, the Mādhyamika may adopt the presupposed hierarchy of the interlocutor: when the opponent is an atomist, the micro will be supposed to be more fundamental, and when the opponent is a monist, the macro will be supposed to be more fundamental. This is, of course, not to say that the Mādhyamika provisionally accepts foundationalism. Rather, they can accept the direction of contextual priority in a given dependence structure in order to demonstrate that it has no final ground. Westerhoff (2016, 372) similarly argues that a kind of "opponent-relativist feature" characterizes Madhyamaka, both in the structure of its arguments and in the theory as a whole. Siderits (2011, 178) similarly argues that Madhyamaka ought to endorse a kind of epistemological contextualism, according to which some "procedure counts as an epistemic instrument only relative to a context of inquiry, where contexts of inquiry are determined by factors such as aims of the inquirer and the methods of inquiry available to the inquirer." See also Westerhoff's (2017, 292–94) application of radical contextualist semantics to resolve apparent problems for Mādhyamikas.

63. SN (PD 3118, 1479–80); see also MAP (Ichigō 1985, 203) and MĀ (PD 3116, 1133). In his MAP (Ichigō 1985, 203), Kamalaśīla resists the definition "conventional truth" according to which it signifies commonly accepted linguistic-cognitive practices. For a translation and discussion of the relevant passage in SN, see Tillemans (2011, 153–54), where Kamalaśīla rebuts an unnamed opponent reminiscent of Candrakīrti. This points to the difference between Mādhyamikas like Candrakīrti and those in the tradition of Śrīgupta, Śāntarakṣita, and Kamalaśīla on the status of reasoning, justification, and the sources of knowledge more generally, as well as the characterization of conventional truth (differences that, among other distinctions including the style of argumentation, are implicated by the Tibetan doxographical categorizations of these figures as *Prāsaṅgika- and *Svātantrika-Mādhyamikas, respectively). As noted above, much of the secondary literature on conventional truth/

consensus is often mistaken and that a "judicious" or "discerning" person (*prekṣāvat*),[64] that is, an ideal epistemic agent, differentiates between true and false conventions (*tathyasaṃvṛti* and *mithyāsaṃvṛti*), verifying the pragmatic efficacy of a given claim or theory by utilizing the epistemic instruments of perception and inference. The Mādhyamika may thus endorse the best scientific explanations of the day as conventional truths so long as their causal/pragmatic efficacy is empirically and/or rationally verifiable.[65]

Of course, the flexibility of the ontology is further constrained by the ultimate truth: no Mādhyamika can accept a theory that includes ontologically independent elements. While the conventional truth is revisable, the ultimate truth is fixed. A reductionist ontology, like the Abhidharma theory of conventionally real composites and ultimately real, basic "dharmas," requires a settled accounting of fundamentalia for a complete theory of their final ontology. Any revision made to accommodate scientific developments at the subatomic level, then, will demand a revision of the Abhidharma ultimate truth. Mādhyamikas, however, need only revise the conventional truth. Surely a metaphysical picture with a fixed final ontology but revisable conventional truth is preferable. And given that there is, as yet, no incontrovertible scientific evidence for a bedrock of reality, so far so good.

Conclusion

I have offered a preliminary sketch of a two-stage model for understanding the metaphysical dependence structure that follows from Śrīgupta's rejection of ontological independence in his neither-one-nor-many argument, when taken together with his three criteria for conventional reality. The first level of analysis highlighted ways in which Madhyamaka metaphysical dependence relations deviate from standard accounts of the metaphysical grounding relation, ontological dependence relation, and proper parthood relation, insofar as it does not strictly honor the Hierarchy Thesis, instantiating irreflexivity and extendability but not strict asymmetry or transitivity. And given that the Madhyamaka dependence structure admits of both dependence loops as well as dependence chains that are indefinite but not actually infinite in length, this level of analysis also reveals how this structure represents an alternative model to the three standard categories of metaphysical foundationalism, infinitism, and coherentism.

Second, since this flexible ontology can support a contextualist form of the Hierarchy Thesis, it can respect certain hierarchical structures (as well as non-hierarchical structures), but whatever structure is admitted must be earned by its pragmatic upkeep. And with its revisable theory of conventional truth, Śrīgupta's Madhyamaka can accommodate the best scientific explanations of the day, with the (rather sizable) caveat that it can never admit ontologically independent fundamentalia. This two-stage analysis is not only a picture that Mādhyamikas like Śrīgupta would endorse, but it is my hope that it may also be instructive for gesturing toward the value that stands to be gained from engaging with non-standard metaphysical pictures of this kind.[66]

reality to date, including many of the critiques of its coherence, have focused on the Candrakīrtian tradition. But the so-called *Svātantrika-Mādhyamikas have a richer set of explanatory resources at their disposal when it comes to characterizing conventional reality.

64. For a discussion of Kamalaśīla's account of a discerning person (*prekṣāvat*), see McClintock (2010, 58–62; 2013) and Tillemans (2016, 143–44); on this term, see also Eltschinger (2007, 137–50; 2014, 195 n. 17, 219–34).

65. This is, of course, consistent with the reclassification of testimony (*śabda*) as a subcategory of inference (*anumāna*) in the epistemological tradition of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti, a tradition followed by so-called *Svātantrika-Mādhyamikas, including Śrīgupta, Śāntarakṣita, and Kamalaśīla. This, again, should be contrasted with Mādhyamikas like Candrakīrti who rejected Dignāgian epistemology.

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Abbreviations

AAA *Abhisamayālaṃkārāloka* (Haribhadra). Wogihara (1932–1935).
AG *Philosophical Essays* (Leibniz). (1989).
AKB *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* (Vasubandhu). Pradhan (1975).
BCAP *Bodhicaryāvatārapañjikā* (Prajñākaramati). Vaidya (1960).
CŚ *Catuḥśatakaśāstra* (Āryadeva). Lang (1986).
GP *Die Philosophische Schriften von Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz* (Leibniz). (1960). (Reference is to volume and page.)
MA *Madhyamakālaṃkāra* (Śāntarakṣita). Ichigō (1989).
MAP *Madhyamakālaṃkārapañjikā* (Kamalaśīla). Ichigō (1985).
MAS *Madhyamakārthasaṃgraha* (the eighth-century Bhāviveka). PD 3084, vol. 58, 851–53.
MAv *Madhyamakāvatāra* (Candrakīrti). La Vallée Poussin (1913); chapter 6 in Li (2015).
MAV *Madhyamakālaṃkāravṛtti* (Śāntarakṣita). Ichigō (1985).
MĀ *Madhyamakāloka* (Kamalaśīla). PD 3116, vol. 62, 1114–403; partial edition in Keira (2004).
MMK *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* (Nāgārjuna). Ye (2011).
MRP *Madhyamakaratnapradīpa* (the eighth-century Bhāviveka). PD 3081, vol. 57, 1487–567.
PD Bstan ʼgyur Dpe bsdur ma. Beijing: Krung goʼi bod rig paʼi dpe skrun khang, 1994–2008. (Reference is to text number and page number.)
PP *Prasannapadā* (Candrakīrti). La Vallée Poussin (1913).
PV *Pramāṇavārttika* (Dharmakīrti). Miyasaka (1971/1972).
RĀ *Ratnāvalī* (Nāgārjuna). Hahn (1982).
ŚS *Śūnyatāsaptati* (Nāgārjuna). Lindtner (1982, 34–69).
SDA *Satyadvayāvatāra* (Atiśa). Lindtner (1981).
SDV *Satyadvayavibhaṅga* (Jñānagarbha). Eckel (1987).
SN *Sarvadharmaniḥsvabhāvasiddhi* (Kamalaśīla). PD 3118, vol. 62, 1479–1527.
TA *Tattvāvatāra* (Śrīgupta). See TAV.
TAV *Tattvāvatāravṛtti* (Śrīgupta). PD 3121, vol. 63, 101–12.
Vś *Viṃśikā* (Vasubandhu). Silk (2016).
VV *Vigrahavyāvartinī* (Nāgārjuna). Bhattacharya (1978).
YŚ *Yuktiṣaṣṭikākārikā* (Nāgārjuna). Lindtner (1982).

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