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JAYARĀŚI'S DELIGHTFUL DESTRUCTION OF EPISTEMOLOGY



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“When, in this way, the principles are entirely destroyed, all everyday practices are made delightful, because they are not deliberated.”

Jayarāśi, *Tattvopaplavasiṃha*

Contemporary scholars often consider the anti-religious Cārvākas to be a philosophical aberration from the largely religious context of classical Indian philosophy. Additionally, some scholars have discounted the importance of philosophical skepticism in classical Indian philosophy. It should not be a surprise, then, that Jayarāśi Bhaṭṭa (ca. 770–830 C.E.¹), who, I will argue, is both a Cārvāka and a skeptic, is often overlooked in contemporary studies of Indian philosophy. In this essay I will explain why I think we ought to see Jayarāśi as both a Cārvāka and a skeptic and what kind of Cārvāka skeptic he might be. My aim is to show that Jayarāśi is not a skeptic about the external world or other minds, nor even a global skeptic about knowledge claims in general; rather, Jayarāśi is best interpreted as a skeptic about epistemology.

My plan is to begin with a defense of Cārvāka studies and a brief discussion of skepticism in Indian philosophy to show that the general study of Cārvāka and skepticism as well as the study of Jayarāśi in particular can contribute toward a richer understanding of the diversity of Indian thought. Then I will say a bit about the kind of skepticism I wish to attribute to Jayarāśi. Next I will turn to Jayarāśi's *Tattvopaplavasiṃha* (*Tattva-upaplava-siṃha*) (Lion of the destruction of principles—hereafter, *TUS*) to show its main purpose: the denial of what contemporary epistemologist Michael Williams calls “epistemological realism.” Toward this end, I will make a case study of Jayarāśi's arguments against the epistemological theories of Dignāga (ca. 480–540 C.E.) and Dharmakīrti (ca. 600–660 C.E.). Then I will summarize some reasons why my view of Jayarāśi as skeptic about epistemology gives the most charitable interpretation of the text. And what is the point of Jayarāśi's destruction of epistemology? This is where I find it helpful to compare Jayarāśi's outlook to semantic contextualism in contemporary epistemology: In the context of epistemology, epistemology self-destructs; in the context of everyday life, there is no need for epistemology. Lastly, I consider how Jayarāśi's skepticism might serve his Cārvāka sympathies. Jayarāśi's delightful destruction of epistemology clears the ground for a form of life free from the temptation to use epistemology as a support for any religious worldview.

An obvious difficulty in the study of the Cārvāka school is an almost complete lack of primary texts. Cārvāka views are described in texts of other schools, but there are no genuine texts available, with the sole exception of Jayarāṣi's *TUS*. While there are references to Cārvākas or others with similar views scattered throughout a variety of texts including the Vedas and the Pāli Canon,² the most often cited representation of Cārvāka views continues to be Mādhava's *Sarvadarśanasamgraha* (Collection of all philosophical systems). In this text, Cārvāka opinions are set forth as follows. In metaphysics, Cārvākas are worldly (hence their alternate name, Lokāyata, which means "prevalent in the world" or "disseminated among the people") and materialist, denying the existence of a non-material soul, karma, and rebirth. In epistemology, Cārvākas are represented as holding that perception is the only *pramāṇa* (means of knowledge), as well as offering a technically sophisticated critique of inference.³ In ethics, Cārvākas are fiercely anti-religious, holding pleasure to be the ultimate end of life, and they claim that their view should be accepted out of kindness to living beings.

Radhakrishnan and Moore's influential *Sourcebook in Indian Philosophy* contains clear examples of what I call the "Cārvāka as Exception" view. In the General Introduction, Indian philosophy is deemed to be chiefly "spiritual." The very phrase "except the Cārvāka" then appears no less than four times in the following nine pages (Radhakrishnan and Moore 1989, pp. xxiii–xxxi). The "Cārvāka as Exception" view continues to be fairly standard over fifty years later. Cārvākas are usually presented in sharp contrast against the background of *mokṣa*-seeking or soteriological presuppositions of Indian philosophers. The prevailing opinion seems to be that since the Cārvākas were such an exception to the "essence" of Indian philosophy, they are not of much interest. I would not deny that the Cārvākas were in most ways exceptions to the rule of their fellow philosophers; however, rather than an excuse to ignore or quickly dismiss them, I think this makes them all the more interesting. We may find that the Cārvākas were more diverse and sophisticated than anyone has suspected. We may even find philosophically fruitful invitations to comparative studies. But we will never find out as long as the "Cārvāka as Exception" view discourages us from looking.

Nonetheless, there has been some recent interest in Cārvāka. Chattopadhyaya's *Lokāyata: A Study in Ancient Indian Materialism* presents Cārvāka as a precursor to Marxist dialectical materialism; one point of inspiration is the ambiguity of the word "Lokāyata," which can mean "prevalent among the people" as well as "worldly" (Chattopadhyaya 1973, pp. 1–4). While Chattopadhyaya's work has its merits as a creative and provocative intellectual history, many scholars have overlooked it due to its speculative and overtly political nature.⁴

Jayatilleke's *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge* contains a valuable chapter on ancient Indian materialism and makes a distinction between three kinds of Cārvāka views: those that accept only perception, those that accept perception and a form of inference limited to perceivable objects, and, lastly, those that reject all *pramāṇas*

(Jayatilleke 1963, pp. 71–72). The first group consists of the Cārvākas of the *Sarvadarśanasamgraha*, the second is represented by Purandara, and the third by Jayarāṣi. Purandara’s “more educated” (*suśikṣitatara*) strain of Cārvāka is discussed by Jayanta in the *Nyāyamañjarī*. Pradeep Gokhale offers a valuable reconstruction of Purandara’s view that answers objections leveled at the perception-only view and avoids accepting trans-empirical uses of inference (Gokhale 1993). Recent work by Ramkrishna Bhattacharya offers valuable collections of Cārvāka fragments found in various texts (Bhattacharya 2002, 2010, 2011). Bhattacharya also suggests that the original Cārvāka position was more like Purandara’s than the perception-only view found in the *Sarvadarśanasamgraha* (Bhattacharya 2010).

Richard King’s *Indian Philosophy* contains a section titled “Indian Materialism—A Counter-Example” (King 1999, pp. 16–23). Although King believes Cārvāka is unlikely to become a major interest due to pervasive materialism in the West and the Western preconception of Indian philosophy as spiritual, he admonishes readers to remain intellectually honest in recognizing the diversity of Indian philosophy (p. 22). Daya Krishna uses Cārvāka in his forceful polemic against the essential spirituality of Indian philosophy (Krishna 1997, p. 4). While diving into the controversy concerning the “essence” of Indian philosophy would take me far afield, I can assert uncontroversially that the study of Cārvāka can reveal a rich diversity within Indian philosophy. More controversially I also suggest that a more in-depth understanding of Cārvāka might incite us to revisit the question of the extent to which Indian philosophy is essentially soteriological or spiritual and the extent to which such categories make sense in a classical Indian context.

Jayarāṣi’s *TUS*, which is the only candidate we currently have for an authentic Cārvāka text, was familiar to some classical Indian philosophers. Śrī Harṣa, for instance, refers to Cārvākas that do not accept any *pramāṇas*, which is probably a reference to Jayarāṣi or other skeptical Cārvākas. In the *Khaṇḍanakhaṇḍakhādyā* he denies that entering into a philosophical debate entails that both parties accept the existence of *pramāṇas* “because one understands the extensive discourses of Cārvākas, Mādhyamikas and so forth even though they do not accept that (i.e., that the *pramāṇas* exist)” (Śrī Harṣa 1979, p. 7).⁵ The Jain philosophers Anantavīrya, Vidyānanda, and Malliṣena Sūri all refer to Jayarāṣi more directly: Anantavīrya refers to Jayarāṣi by name, Vidyānanda refers to a *tattvopaplavavādin*, and Malliṣena Sūri refers to the *TUS* by name.⁶ The Naiyāyika Bhāsarvajña discusses many of Jayarāṣi’s arguments in detail in an attempt to refute them.⁷

Despite the fact that a manuscript of the *TUS* was rediscovered in 1926 and an edition published in 1940, there has been relatively little scholarly interest in the text (Sanghavi and Parikh 1987, “Introduction”; Franco 1994, p. xi). Interestingly, a translation of one chapter of the *TUS* appears in Radhakrishnan and Moore’s *Sourcebook*, and Jayarāṣi has been mentioned in other influential studies of Indian philosophy (Radhakrishnan and Moore 1989 [1957], pp. 236–246; Potter 1977, p. 50). However, it remains the case that Jayarāṣi is sometimes discussed briefly, but scholars of classical Indian philosophy rarely give his text in-depth treatment.⁸

An immediate challenge in the study of Jayarāṣi is the question of his doctrinal affiliation. Was Jayarāṣi a Cārvāka? If the *Sarvadarśanasamgraha* were to give the criteria of Cārvāka membership, Jayarāṣi would fail the test. Jayarāṣi not only denies all *pramāṇas*, he even denies that the materialist principles of Bṛhaspati, the putative founder of Cārvāka, can be established when fully examined. Thus, it seems that Jayarāṣi accepts neither the epistemology nor the metaphysics of the Cārvāka school and must be denied membership, despite his professed adherence to the intentions of Bṛhaspati. This is the most common argument against counting Jayarāṣi as a Cārvāka.⁹

Sanghavi and Parikh offer a response to this argument. According to them Jayarāṣi is a member of a “particular division” of the Cārvāka school for the reason that Bṛhaspati is the only philosopher that he quotes favorably. They offer an explanation for his apparent repudiation of Bṛhaspati’s materialism: “Jayarāṣi thus disposes of the orthodoxy and starts, so to say, with the permission of his Guru, by removing him out of the way, on his campaign of demolishing the doctrines of other schools” (Sanghavi and Parikh 1987, p. xii). In other words, Jayarāṣi takes up the negative wing of Cārvāka argumentation with such force that he must demolish even the positive program of other Cārvākas in order to complete his task—in effect, he “out-Bṛhaspatis” Bṛhaspati.

Jayatilleke also views Jayarāṣi as a representative of one branch of Cārvāka. He rejects A. K. Warder’s suggestion that Jayarāṣi is a positivist to put forward the claim that he is “an absolute nihilist in his metaphysics though he may be called a logical sceptic in so far as he is sceptical of (i.e., doubts or denies) the possibility of knowledge” (Jayatilleke 1963, p. 82). According to Jayatilleke, while Jayarāṣi’s arguments are mostly epistemological, chapter 8 of the *TUS*, which is on the soul, shows that Jayarāṣi also has a nihilist metaphysical agenda. However, Jayatilleke sees Jayarāṣi as a “pragmatic materialist,” since he recommends materialism on quotidian, not metaphysical, grounds (Jayatilleke 1963, pp. 82–91).

Richard King suggests that “we should consider the possibility that Jayarāṣi was in actual fact a sceptic with Lokāyata sympathies” (King 1999, p. 19). The question here is whether Jayarāṣi was a skeptic first and a Cārvāka second or vice versa, a question Stephen Phillips also considers (Phillips 1995, pp. 71–73). Although I’m not convinced that it is always worthwhile to pigeonhole classical Indian philosophers into one particular school,¹⁰ at the very least we should admit that Jayarāṣi represents a skeptical subschool of Cārvāka, which is distinct from those schools that admit as *pramāṇas* perception or a limited form of inference.

There are two main reasons to see Jayarāṣi as a representative of a skeptical subschool of Cārvāka. First, as mentioned above, some classical Indian philosophers such as Śrī Harṣa refer to a skeptical branch of Cārvākas (*Khaṇḍanakhāṇḍakhāḍya*; see Śrī Harṣa 1979, p. 7), which gives some evidence for Jayatilleke’s suggestion that Jayarāṣi represents a skeptical subschool.

Second, other schools, such as Buddhism, Mīmāṃsā, or Vedānta, exhibit internal diversity; there is no reason to conclude that Cārvāka could not exhibit similar diversity. It would be a mistake to deny that Madhyamaka is really a Buddhist school

because Mādhyamikas do not accept the view of their fellow Buddhists that there are two means of knowledge (*pramāṇas*) just as it would be a mistake to deny that Prabhākāra and Bhaṭṭa Mīmāṃsā are both Mīmāṃsā schools despite their differences in epistemology, or to deny that Advaita, Dvaita, Viśiṣṭādvaita, et cetera can all be Vedānta due to their extensive metaphysical differences. Likewise, it would be a mistake to view Cārvāka as a monolithic philosophical bloc incapable of internal diversity. As Bhattacharya notes (2010), there is evidence of at least four commentators on Bṛhaspati's lost *Cārvākasūtra*: Kambalāśvatara, Purandara, Aviddhakarṇa, and Udbhaṭa. These commentators did not agree on everything—Udbhaṭa, in fact, may even have been a metaphysical dualist! Despite the evidence he gives of this internal diversity, Bhattacharya nonetheless assumes that there must have been one “*original* Cārvāka position,” which he takes to be closer to the view of Purandara that admits of inference insofar as it can be confirmed by experience (Bhattacharya 2010, p. 423). Bhattacharya suggests that later commentators either supported this original position, as did Purandara, or strayed from it, as did Udbhaṭa.

I'm not so sure that even if there were one original Cārvāka position there would be enough evidence to say much about the details of that position. We have only fragments of Bṛhaspati's original text, and the earliest evidence suggests that there were a variety of materialist, skeptical, and anti-religious philosophers who constituted the historical background of later Cārvāka developments. For instance, the *Samaññaphala Sutta* (*Dīgha Nikāya* 2; see *Dīgha Nikāya* 1995) relates the stories of several possible proto-Cārvākas: Purana Kassapa denies karmic retribution or reward for one's actions, Ajita Kesakambalin offers a materialist view in which the person is annihilated at death, and Sañjaya Belatthaputta refuses to put forward a view in a strikingly skeptical fashion. While it is possible that Cārvāka developed from one source at the expense of others, I think that the evidence—scanty though it may be—suggests that the traditions that later came to be labeled as Cārvāka were quite diverse from the beginning and that Cārvāka retained this internal diversity as it developed.

While none of this provides strict proof that Jayarāśi was a genuine Cārvāka, my hope is simply to show that there are reasons to think Jayarāśi may have represented one of several diverse strands of Cārvāka. Near the end of this essay I will give more reasons to include Jayarāśi in the Cārvāka camp. For now I will suggest that, given the evidence of internal diversity of metaphysical and epistemological views, one plausible criterion for Cārvāka membership is that the philosophers in question see their work as part of the pursuit of an irreligious way of life, which in the classical Indian context would consist in a rejection of the authority of the Vedas or of religious teachers such as the Buddha and Mahāvīra. This criterion gives less weight to following the letter of Bṛhaspati and more to following the spirit of his irreligiousness. My more inclusive criterion can accommodate a dualist like Udbhaṭa, the Cārvākas of the *Sarvadarśanasamgraha*, and Purandara's limited endorsement of inference. As I will show, Jayarāśi satisfies this criterion in a unique and fascinating way.

To sum up, there is evidence to suggest that Jayarāśi belonged to a skeptical branch of Cārvākas, but he also gives us good reason to rethink some of the ways we

carve up the philosophical landscape of classical India. In my view Jayarāṣi really is a Cārvāka, but the Cārvāka family is big enough to include a skeptic.

Skepticism in Indian Philosophy?

Philosophical skepticism has been extremely influential in the development of Western philosophy, but some scholars have doubted that philosophical skepticism had much influence in classical Indian philosophy. John Koller, for example, claims, “Skepticism has not been warmly received by Indian philosophers over the ages” (Koller 1977, p. 155). In his view, although there have been some skeptics, such skeptical doubts have not had much influence. Koller speculates that the Indian emphasis on self-knowledge has helped Indian philosophers avoid excessive skeptical doubts (p. 163). Dipanikar Chatterjee largely agrees with Koller and goes further to claim, “the Indian philosophical tradition lacks a thorough system of skepticism” (Chatterjee 1977, p. 195). Chatterjee explains that even the heterodox schools (Cārvāka, Jain, and Buddhist) did not deny that knowledge was *possible* in an epistemological sense (p. 198). For the Cārvāka position, he relies entirely on the *Sarvadarśanasamgraha*, and he does not mention Nāgārjuna or Śrī Harṣa, both of whom deny (at least in some contexts) that any means of knowledge (*pramāṇas*) can be established.¹¹

Many scholars disagree with Koller and Chatterjee. Some suggest that skepticism was a philosophical preoccupation of classical Indian philosophers, and others have shown that there were in fact philosophical skeptics in Indian philosophy. Karl Potter has been so bold as to state, “It is the business of speculative philosophy in India to combat skepticism and fatalism” (Potter 1977, p. 50). While Potter is not always clear on the distinction between mere doubt and epistemological skepticism, he sees Indian philosophers as engaged in the defense of liberation (*mokṣa*) and its possibility from all doubts, both of the everyday and epistemological varieties. B. K. Matilal has remarked that skepticism has “formed an important part of philosophic activity in almost all ages everywhere” (Matilal 2002, p. 73).

Early Buddhist texts contain several references to thinkers who seem to express philosophical skepticism.¹² Jayatilleke has suggested that such skeptics even influenced Early Buddhist philosophy (Jayatilleke 1963, chap. 3). Richard Hayes has identified a kind of skepticism within the Buddhist tradition from the Nikāyas up until at least Dignāga; Hayes calls this “skeptical rationalism . . . according to which there is no knowledge aside from that which meets the test of logical consistency, and moreover very few of our beliefs meet this test” (Hayes 1988, p. 41).¹³

Many scholars have discussed the idea that Nāgārjuna could be seen as a philosophical skeptic of some kind (Garfield 2002; Dreyfus and Garfield 2011; Hayes 1988, pp. 51–62; Matilal 1986, pp. 46–68; Matilal 2002, p. 77; Kuzminski 2007; Kuzminski 2008). Matilal discusses Nāgārjuna, Jayarāṣi, and Śrī Harṣa as three major examples of skepticism in Indian philosophy, since all three rely explicitly on *vitaṇḍā* or *prasaṅga* forms of argument in which no positive thesis is put forward

(Matilal 2002, pp. 74, 76). Eli Franco refers to Nāgārjuna, Jayarāśi, and Śrī Harṣa as “the three pillars on which Indian scepticism rests” (Franco 1994, p. 13).

The scholars discussed here have shown that there are grounds to believe there were skeptics within a distinctively Indian context, such that Indian skeptics often use *prasaṅga* arguments and give reasons to doubt that *pramāṇas* can be justified. I hope to offer some support for the conclusion that not only did forms of philosophical skepticism motivate Indian philosophers, but that there were in fact philosophical skeptics in classical Indian philosophy, with Jayarāśi as one of the main examples.

Skepticism about Epistemology

Having given some reasons to think that Jayarāśi may be a Cārvāka skeptic, I would like to say a little more about what kind of skeptic Jayarāśi might be. Toward that end, I think we need to expand our skeptical vocabulary, because the sense in which contemporary philosophers tend to understand skepticism is not quite up to the task. As I will argue, Jayarāśi should be read as a skeptic about epistemology rather than an epistemological skeptic. That is, the target of Jayarāśi’s skepticism is not our knowledge claims *per se*, but rather the activity of epistemology (*pramāṇavāda*).

The best way to clarify the idea of skepticism about epistemology is to contrast it with the variety of epistemological skepticism most familiar in Western thought: skepticism about the external world. Since at least the seventeenth century,¹⁴ external-world skepticism in Western thought has usually been based on arguments from ignorance of the kind found in Descartes’s First Meditation (Descartes 1984, pp. 13–15). The basic argument is:

If you know things about the external world, then you must know you are not dreaming. But you do *not* know you are not dreaming. Therefore, you do not know things about the external world.

One may insert one’s favored skeptical hypothesis: hallucination, evil demon, computer simulation, brains-in-a-vat, et cetera. The basic idea is the same: because we can’t tell the difference between how we think the world is and how things could be in some crazy skeptical scenario, all our knowledge of the external world is dispatched with by a simple *Modus Tollens* syllogism.¹⁵

Notice here that our allegedly innocent conception of knowledge is itself never challenged. Philosophers are assumed to have captured the truth of human epistemic practice, or at least *ideal* epistemic practice. External world skepticism simply shows that our concept of knowledge surprises us by failing to apply in the most banal circumstances. Thus, it is a form of epistemological skepticism, using epistemological concepts to deny knowledge that we normally take ourselves to possess.¹⁶

Skeptics about epistemology see things differently. While external world skeptics claim that no one really knows anything about the external world, skeptics about epistemology may ask whether the conception of knowledge employed by epistemologists is defective. In some sense, this sort of questioning has led to industries in the analysis of concepts of knowledge, both in Western and Indian epistemology. But

a skeptic about epistemology might then wonder how we can expect such analysis to be successful, or whether a complete philosophical analysis of epistemic activity is desirable or even possible. It is such doubts that distinguish skepticism about epistemology from external world skepticism and other kinds of epistemological skepticism such as skepticism about other minds or skepticism about induction.¹⁷

One of the clearest examples of skepticism about epistemology is the Pyrrhonism of Sextus Empiricus. Pyrrhonism is a way of life with the goal of suspension of judgment (*epochē*), which brings about tranquility (*ataraxia*). Sextus' arguments are offered not as statements of fact or hurdles toward a later assertion, but as medicine intended to cure those distressed by dogmatic beliefs (*PH* 3.280). There are three main points of this interpretation of Sextus: first, Sextus' target is belief¹⁸ rather than knowledge; second, Sextus' Pyrrhonism is entirely practical, having no theoretical commitments whatsoever; third, when Sextus discusses epistemological questions he is not putting forward an epistemological theory, but rather he "extends *epochē* into epistemology itself" (Williams 1988, p. 586). It is in these senses that I think Sextus can be read as a skeptic about epistemology.¹⁹

It should be noted that Pyrrhonists are not just skeptical about epistemology. As Robert Fogelin argues, Pyrrhonism "uses self-refuting philosophical arguments, taking philosophy as its target" (Fogelin 1994, p. 3). While Sextus doesn't put forward his own definition of philosophy, he does tell us that he relies on the Stoics' idea that philosophy consists of three parts:

The Stoics and some other[s] say that there are three parts of philosophy—logic, physics, ethics—and they begin their exposition with logic. . . . We follow them without holding an opinion on the matter. . . . (*PH* 2.2)

What the Stoics call logic includes what philosophers today would call epistemology, and what they call physics includes what contemporary philosophers would think of as metaphysics. Sextus says that Pyrrhonists don't have their own opinion about what philosophy is for the simple reason that Pyrrhonism is not about putting forward and defending positions on philosophical matters such as the true nature of philosophy; rather, as Sextus says earlier, Pyrrhonism is an ability to reach equipollence between opposing views, which leads to suspending judgment and experiencing tranquility (*PH* 1.4).

Similarly, I will argue that reading Jayarāśi as working with his opponents' definitions of the means of knowledge rather than putting forward any theory of his own makes the best sense of his text. One difference between Sextus and Jayarāśi is that Sextus criticizes almost everything his Stoic opponents would think of as philosophy, while Jayarāśi is more narrowly focused on epistemology (*pramāṇavāda*). This shouldn't be surprising, since Indian philosophy generally took an epistemological turn in the several hundred years following Dignāga (ca. 480–540 C.E.). I will say more in later sections about why I think Jayarāśi concerns himself with epistemology, but for now I simply mean to point out that Sextus and Jayarāśi are both skeptics about epistemology, by which I mean that they are skeptics about what their contemporaries thought of as systematic discourse about knowledge.

I also suggest that Nāgārjuna could be read as a skeptic about epistemology (and perhaps about other areas of philosophy as well, especially metaphysics). Although I cannot argue for this interpretation here, I will give a brief characterization. In this interpretation Nāgārjuna has two general phases in his philosophical procedure. The first phase is that of offering arguments *for* the conclusion that everything is empty of essence (*svabhāva*). Here Nāgārjuna is more-or-less anti-realist, as Siderits (2000) proposes. But I don't think anti-realism is the end of the line for Nāgārjuna. In a second phase Nāgārjuna demonstrates that the idea of the emptiness of essence has the peculiar property of undermining not only all other views, but even itself, thus leaving a thorough Mādhyamika without any views, theses, or positions whatsoever. This second phase is what mystical interpreters claim is a step to a further ineffable realization, but in this interpretation it represents nothing but the purging of the impulse to offer systematic theories about topics in areas such as epistemology and metaphysics. Much like Sextus, Nāgārjuna's aim is to achieve a mental peace consisting in the cessation of conceptual proliferation (*prapañca*).²⁰ Nāgārjuna's most explicit critique of epistemology comes in his *Vigrahavyāvartanī* (VV), which focuses on the epistemology of the Nyāya school. Although the VV is primarily concerned with the first phase as a critique of Nyāya realist epistemology, it does contain some statements that could be interpreted as expressions of the second phase, most famously VV 29, in which Nāgārjuna says he has no thesis (*pratijñā*). Entering into the controversy about whether Nāgārjuna is a skeptic is beyond my purposes here, although I would point out that several recent scholars have pursued interesting comparisons between Sextus and Nāgārjuna.²¹

None of this should be taken to overlook the many differences between Sextus, Nāgārjuna, and Jayarāśi.²² Rather, skepticism about epistemology is a broad category encompassing many diverse individuals. These individuals share some commonality, however. The benefit of a new term for an overarching category is that we need not claim, for example, that Jayarāśi is a Pyrrhonist, or that Sextus is a Mādhyamika. Instead of viewing Indian philosophers in Western terms or vice versa, the category of skepticism about epistemology is sufficiently strange to be cross-cultural from the start.

But what exactly are these skeptics skeptical *about*? What do they mean by "epistemology"? As mentioned earlier, Sextus' critique of epistemology centers on the division of philosophy that the Stoics called logic. Nāgārjuna's main target in the VV is the discourse on *pramāṇa* (means of knowledge) as conceived by his Nyāya interlocutor; Nāgārjuna's commentator Candrakīrti is just as skeptical about Dignāga's Buddhist epistemology (*Prasannapadā*; see Candrakīrti 1960, pp. 20–25). In the *TUS* Jayarāśi also critiques Nyāya epistemology (chapters 1 and 7) and Buddhist epistemology (chapters 4, 5, and 9). Additionally Jayarāśi critiques almost every epistemological theory of his day, with chapters on Mīmāṃsā (chapters 2, 5, and 10) and Sāṃkhya (chapter 6) as well as chapters on specific means of knowledge such as testimony (*śabda*—chapter 14) and comparison (*upamāna*—chapter 11). Since the historical scope of Jayarāśi's critique is so wide, it is more difficult to define the target of his critique in historical terms. I think it makes more sense to ask what it is that

these diverse schools have in common. In the next section, I will try to be more precise about the specific philosophical core that serves as the underlying target of Jayarāṣī's critique.

Jayarāṣī's Denial of Epistemological Realism

Jayarāṣī's skepticism is more straightforward than what some scholars think of as Nāgārjuna's skepticism. It may be that, as a Cārvāka, Jayarāṣī was unencumbered with the task of showing that his skepticism fits with particular religious doctrines; in fact, he doesn't even claim to ultimately accept *Cārvāka* doctrines! Concerning the common Cārvāka materialist view that everything is constituted from the four material elements of Earth, Air, Water, and Fire, Jayarāṣī says, "The principles of Earth, etc. are extremely well-established in the world. Even these, upon being examined, are not established. How much less the others?" (*TUS* 0.2).²³

Jayarāṣī's arguments are almost exclusively directed toward epistemology. In the introduction to the *TUS*, Jayarāṣī lays out an argument that sets up the template for the remainder of the text:

The establishment of the means of knowledge (*pramāṇas*) is based on a true definition. And the establishment of the objects of knowledge (*prameyas*) is based on the means of knowledge. When that [true definition] does not exist, then how could those two [i.e., the means and the object of knowledge] be the subject of everyday practice toward existing things? (*TUS* 0.3)²⁴

This argument can be made more precise by construing the premises as biconditional statements and rephrasing the last sentence from a rhetorical question into a conclusion:

One can establish the *pramāṇas* if and only if one can establish a definition of the *pramāṇas*. One can establish the *prameyas* if and only if one can establish the *pramāṇas*. Therefore, if one cannot establish a definition, then one cannot establish either the *pramāṇas* or the *prameyas*.²⁵

This argument is valid and the goal of the *TUS* is to establish that it is sound by showing that the antecedent of the conclusion is true (i.e., that the definitions of *pramāṇas* cannot be established), which would then show that neither the *pramāṇas* nor the *prameyas* can be established.²⁶ In this way, Jayarāṣī attempts to demonstrate the futility of epistemology.

In interpreting Jayarāṣī's rejection of epistemology, I suggest that it would be helpful to consider what Michael Williams calls "epistemological realism." Williams defines this thesis in the following passage:

Since, if human knowledge is to constitute a genuine kind of thing—and the same goes for knowledge of the external world, knowledge of other minds, and so on—there must be underlying epistemological structures or principles, the traditional epistemologist is committed to *epistemological realism*. This is not realism within epistemology—the thesis that we have knowledge of an objective, mind-independent reality—but something quite different: realism about the objects of epistemological inquiry. (Williams 1996, p. 108)

Epistemological realism asserts that there are “objects of epistemological inquiry” and that such objects constitute natural kinds that stand in need of discovery or clarification by epistemologists. Examples of such objects are structures underlying all human knowledge and “knowledge of the world *as such*,” or the idea of one generic source for all knowledge of the external world (Williams 1996, p. 103). Such “objects” are not particular objects of perception such as tables and chairs or particular cognitions, but more abstract theoretical objects that Williams, following Stanley Cavell, calls “generic objects.” Williams says, “claims involving generic objects . . . are intended as generic—thus representative—claims. Reference to generic objects is a generalizing device” (Williams 2004, p. 192). In other words, epistemological realism allows epistemologists to investigate knowledge *in general*, rather than specific episodes of knowledge or specific kinds of knowledge such as pottery or astrophysics.²⁷ For example, epistemological realism allows epistemologists to wonder how we know anything about the external world in general because it says there is some such object called “knowledge of the external world” to worry about: “to suppose that knowledge of the world, as such, is even a potential object of theory or reflection, we have to conceive of our epistemic capacities in a special way” (Williams 2004, p. 195). In normal contexts, one may wonder whether one is drinking Earl Grey or Darjeeling tea; in skeptical, epistemological contexts, one wonders how one knows that such things as tea, rabbits, computers, trees, et cetera exist at all. Epistemological realism is the presupposition that there is a theoretical object of investigation, the overarching category of all knowledge in general, that has enough theoretical integrity to be worth worrying about.

I obviously do not mean to assimilate Jayarāśi to the whole of Williams’ theory, but I want to suggest that epistemological realism is a profitable way to think about what Jayarāśi is denying. Jayarāśi denies the objects of epistemology in the Indian context. He tries to show that we have no reason to consider structures of knowledge called *pramāṇas*. This is not a metaphysical thesis that such things really do not exist, but an epistemological argument that it is impossible to know about such things whether they exist or not. It is, however, a peculiar sort of epistemological argument, for rather than putting forward a thesis in epistemology it amounts to demonstrating that epistemology as practiced by the *pramāṇavādins* is impossible in its own terms.

Buddhist Epistemological Realism: Dignāga and Dharmakīrti

To make the case that Jayarāśi denies epistemological realism, or something like it, it will help to show that two of his targets, Dignāga and Dharmakīrti, accept something very much like epistemological realism. I will then summarize some of Jayarāśi’s arguments against Dignāga and Dharmakīrti, which will offer an example of his denial of epistemological realism. I should reiterate that epistemological realism is *not* the same as metaphysical realism. Therefore, even if Dignāga or Dharmakīrti were metaphysical idealists (which Dharmakīrti, at least, very well may be), they can still be epistemological realists in that they think there are objects of epistemological inquiry.

In the *Pramāṇasamuccaya* (Collection on the means of knowledge), Dignāga claims that the two *pramāṇas* (means of knowledge) are *pratyakṣa* (perception) and *anumāna* (inference).²⁸ Why two? Dignāga answers: “*Pratyakṣa* and *anumāna* are the two *pramāṇas*. There are these two alone, because the knowable object (*prameya*) has two characteristics” (*PS* 1.2a–c).²⁹ These two characteristics are *svalakṣana* (particular) and *sāmānyalakṣana* (universal). Dignāga explains that “*pratyakṣa* has the particular as its object and *anumāna* has the universal for its object” (*PS* 1.2c).³⁰ This is a strictly exclusive dichotomy; any *pramāṇa* must be either *pratyakṣa* or *anumāna*, but not both, and any *prameya* must be either *svalakṣana* or *sāmānyalakṣana*, but not both.³¹ The key distinguishing feature between *pratyakṣa* and *anumāna* is that “*pratyakṣa* is free from *kalpanā* (imagination, conceptual construction)” (*PS* 1.3a).³² *Kalpanā* is “the joining together of something with names, universals, etc.” (*PS* 1.3d).³³ Any *pramāṇa* that partakes of conceptual construction cannot be *pratyakṣa* and it cannot be memory, re-cognition, et cetera; hence, it must be inference. Dignāga asserts, “Thus, it is established that *pratyakṣa* is free from conceptual construction” (*PS* 1.12d).³⁴ Since freedom from conceptual construction is the means of demarcating *pratyakṣa* from *anumāna*, Dignāga has demonstrated his twofold definition.

While Dharmakīrti generally agrees with Dignāga, I will mention three of his differences. First, Dharmakīrti adds “non-erroneous” (*abhrāntam*) to the definition of *pratyakṣa*. Dignāga is a type of phenomenalist such that we can never be wrong *that* we are sensing such-and-such because conceptualization is the sole source of error, which makes *pratyakṣa* non-erroneous simply by virtue of being unconceptualized.³⁵ Dharmakīrti, however, added “non-erroneous” perhaps in order to account for perceptual errors based purely on defects in the sense organs such as jaundice or *taimira* eye disease, although there is considerable controversy about Dharmakīrti’s intentions on this issue.³⁶ For Dignāga, every perceptual cognition is non-erroneous, but for Dharmakīrti some perceptual cognitions are erroneous even though they are free from conceptualization.³⁷ Second, Dharmakīrti introduces the concept of *arthakriyā*, which has been translated as “fulfillment of human purpose” or “telic function” (Katsura 1984, pp. 218–219; Dunne 2004, p. 273). The idea is that *pramāṇas* can successfully lead one to fulfill a purpose. Third, Dharmakīrti claims that inference is guaranteed by the “natural relation” (*svabhāvapratibandha*) between the evidence (*hetu*) and that which is to be proved (*sādhyā*).³⁸ This theory is incredibly complex, but the idea seems to be that we can reduce all relations between universals to relations between particulars that have natures (*svabhāva*) that are related causally or as an identity³⁹ (Dunne 2004, p. 152). These relationships between particulars then guarantee inferential cognitions despite the non-existence of universals.

I claim that the theories of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti constitute a variety of epistemological realism. Why? Because *pratyakṣa* and *anumāna* as well as *svalakṣana* and *sāmānyalakṣana* are taken as real objects of epistemological inquiry. The fact that *pratyakṣa* and *anumāna* are fundamentally different types of cognitions is not itself conceptually constructed, although all of our words about this distinction are.

Dignāgan dualism maps on to a part of reality that forms the object of epistemological inquiry. While one might argue that “natural kinds” do not exist for Buddhists like Dignāga and Dharmakīrti for the reason that universals do not exist, Dharmakīrti does introduce the concept of a “natural relation” (*svabhāvapratibandha*), which explains how inferences can work in the absence of real universals. At the very least, the categories of perception and inference map on to real particular cognitions with real natures and causal relations. In short, Dignāga and Dharmakīrti are epistemological realists because there are such things as perception, inference, and particulars for their epistemological theories to be about.

To get a sense of the flavor of Jayarāśi’s argumentation and how it is intended to support the overall goal of the text and to refute Buddhist epistemological realism, I will look at two arguments in chapter 3 of the *TUS*.⁴⁰ The first argument concludes that the Buddhists cannot explain the difference between *pratyakṣa* and *anumāna*, and the second argues that we cannot even talk or think about there being two *pramāṇas* in any case! My goal here is not to evaluate these arguments, although this would be a worthwhile pursuit elsewhere; here I simply want to show how a careful reading of these arguments supports my interpretation of Jayarāśi’s overall aim. While I do think these arguments provide significant philosophical challenges that *pramāṇavādins* and those who study them ought to consider, a complete evaluation of whether these arguments are successful is beyond my purposes here.

The Non-establishment of Difference Argument

This argument takes an explicit *prasaṅga* form and begins with Dignāga’s assertion that there is a strict duality of *pramāṇas*. Jayarāśi asks, “this duality, is it due to (1) a difference of individuals, (2) a difference of form, or (3) a difference of objects?” (*TUS* 3.3).⁴¹ For ease of exposition, I will use a numbering system for the options (*vikalpas*).

1. The first *vikalpa* is easy to dispense, since Jayarāśi immediately points out that there are innumerable individual cognitions, and hence there would be innumerable *pramāṇas* rather than two. Additionally, cognitions cannot be differentiated by their character as cognitions, because they all share this character—as soon as they no longer share this character, they are no longer cognitions!⁴²

2. The second *vikalpa*, representing Dharmakīrti’s opinion that the difference is due to a difference of form (*ākāra*), is discarded by first noting, “Perception and inference have no other form except the form of a cognition.”⁴³ If they did have some other form, they would no longer be cognitions. Also, a cognition cannot have multiple forms, “because it has an undivided nature.”⁴⁴ I am not clear on exactly why this follows, but the idea seems to be that when universals are denied and only the existence of self-characterized particulars is retained, there is no longer any basis for asserting that one thing can possess more than one form. In this case it may help to think of *ākāra* more specifically as “appearance” rather than just generally as “form.”

Then it makes more sense that a bare particular can have only one appearance, especially if one considers the particular from a more phenomenalist standpoint in which the particular simply *is* an appearance.

3. After dispensing with *vikalpas* 1 (difference in individuals) and 2 (difference in form), Jayarāśi moves to the third, on which he spends most of his time developing *prasaṅgas* within *prasaṅgas*. This was the view that the difference in *pramāṇas* is due to the difference in objects.

3.1. Jayarāśi begins with *anumāna* and asks, “Is it (i.e., the inferential cognition) (1) that which has a particular such as fire, et cetera, as its object, (2) that which has an existing universal as its object, (3) that which has an unreal universal for its object, (4) that which is without an object, or (5) that which has the rest of itself as its object?” (*TUS* 3.331).⁴⁵

3.1.1. For the first sub-*vikalpa*, Jayarāśi points out that if inference has the particular as its object, then it is the same as *pratyakṣa*, which also has the particular as its object. Jayarāśi considers the Dharmakīrtian objection that the general property (that this is a fire) is grasped by *anumāna*, while the specific property (*this* fire) is grasped by *pratyakṣa*; even then, Jayarāśi answers, this “general property” is a particular general property, so there is still no difference.

3.1.2. The second *vikalpa* was that inference has an existing universal as its object. This would make both *pramāṇas* the same, since the universal would become a particular. Franco reconstructs a reason for this in Buddhist terms: “everything existing is a particular; the universal exists; therefore the universal is a particular” (Franco 1994, p. 426 n. 176). Furthermore, according to the Buddhists, universals, being eternal, cannot cause cognitions or give their forms to cognitions. Lastly, if *anumāna* grasps existing universals, then the Buddhists could not maintain that inference is ultimately erroneous (*bhrānta*), because it would be grasping an existing thing.

3.1.3. The third *vikalpa* was that inference has a non-existent universal as its object. Jayarāśi replies, “then this (i.e., inferential cognition) is not erroneous, because a non-existent object exists as its own form” (*TUS* 3.331).⁴⁶ By this he means either that the object (*viśaya*) as intentional content exists by virtue of being a mental form and thus is not truly non-existent, or that he is referring to an earlier part of the *TUS* (1.1ba) “where he proves that there is no difference between the objects of valid and false cognitions” (Franco 1994, p. 428 n. 180). He also repeats the point that a non-existent thing can neither cause cognitions nor provide its form to them; if it could, it would be real, just like a particular, and hence there would be no difference between a particular and a universal.

3.1.4. The fourth *vikalpa* was that inference is without an object. Jayarāśi cleverly notices that if inference has no object, then there is no object to be different from the object of *pratyakṣa*. Neither could it be erroneous, since erroneousness is a relation between an object and a cognition.

3.1.5. The fifth *vikalpa* was that inference has the rest of itself (*svāṃṣa*) as an object. The idea seems to be that one part of the inferential cognition would constitute

the object of another part of the same cognition. Perhaps this means that an inference would function by reasoning about an introspected past experience, which would take place within a single cognition, although Jayarāṣi does not say exactly what he means here. He does say that if it is the case that an inferential cognition has the rest of itself as its object, then it has a particular (i.e., that particular cognition itself) as an object, not a universal. Nor would inference be erroneous, “because the rest of itself does not delude [the cognition]” (*TUS* 3.331).⁴⁷ An inferential cognition is alleged to be erroneous because the whole thing is conceptualized, not because one part of the cognition deludes the other.

3.2. Having tried to show that it is impossible to establish that *anumāna* is different from *pratyakṣa*, Jayarāṣi turns to show that it is also impossible to establish that *pratyakṣa* is different from *anumāna*. He gives three more *vikalpas*: “Is it (i.e., *pratyakṣa*) (1) that which has a particular such as form, et cetera as its object, (2) that which has itself as its object, or (3) that which has both [a particular and itself] as its object?” (*TUS* 3.332).⁴⁸

3.2.1. The first sub-*vikalpa* is incorrect, since Buddhists maintain that every cognition cognizes itself and “because when that [cognition] is not cognized, there is no cognition of that [object]” (*TUS* 3.332).⁴⁹ The idea here is that if there were only cognition of the object in the absence of self-cognition, then one would not even know the object itself. Dharmakīrti uses this idea in his arguments for the self-luminosity (*svaprakāśa*) of cognition; he claims that “seeing an object is not established for a person who has not apprehended [one’s own] perception” (*Pramāṇaviniścaya*; see Dharmakīrti 2007, 1.54).⁵⁰ The evidence for an object’s existence is a cognition of it, and the evidence for a cognition is an apprehension of itself, so there must be an apprehension of the cognition in order for there to be evidence of the object itself. Hence, perception cannot, according to the Buddhist theory, have merely a particular as an object.

3.2.2. The second *vikalpa* was that the cognition would be its own object. This is not possible, because to be an object of cognition is both to cause that cognition and give the form to the cognition. But, nothing can cause itself or give its own form to itself, so it cannot be that cognition has only itself as an object. Furthermore, if cognition has only itself as an object, there is no way to assert a difference between *pratyakṣa* and *anumāna*, since both kinds of cognition would have themselves as objects.

3.2.3. The third *vikalpa* was that both the cognition and the particular are the object of *pratyakṣa*:

This is also incorrect, because of the fact that one apprehension is established by means of the exclusion of a second form. And if grasping a cognition is just grasping a form, then either the form would have the form of the cognition, the cognition would have the form of the form, or grasping the form would not *establish* the form. (*TUS* 3.332)⁵¹

The first point is that to grasp one form, the cognition must exclude all others and cannot grasp any others. Hence, a cognition cannot grasp both the object and itself at the same time. The second point is that even if one claims that one cognition some-

how simultaneously apprehends itself and a visible form, then either one must have the form of the other (and thus the cognition still apprehends only one form) or the cognition cannot establish the object, along the same lines discussed in the first *vikalpa* (3.2.1). In any case, Jayarāśi asserts, “And furthermore we do not see one thing with a duality of forms” (*TUS* 3.332).⁵² If Jayarāśi is right that we never observe these alleged dual-formed cognitions, this ought to militate against accepting them as firmly established.

Thus, by a systematic process of elimination, Jayarāśi tries to show that there is no possible avenue for establishing that there is any real distinction between *pratyakṣa* and *anumāna*.⁵³

The Impossibility of Considering Duality Argument

Almost as an afterthought, Jayarāśi offers another argument meant to clinch his case. I call this second argument “The Impossibility of Considering Duality Argument.” It is, as Franco claims, “one of the most brilliant arguments in the *TUS*” (Franco 1994, p. 430). Jayarāśi begins with the notion that *pratyakṣa* apprehends itself and *anumāna* apprehends itself, but neither can apprehend the other according to Dignāga’s strict dualism. Jayarāśi concludes, “Thus, talking or thinking about the number [of *pramāṇas*] being two is impossible” (*TUS* 3.3a).⁵⁴ Franco spells out the presupposition that makes the argument work: “In order to determine the number of means of valid cognition, one has to have them all as the object of one and the same cognition.” Since this is impossible, “whatever the number of means of valid cognition may be, there is no way of knowing it” (Franco 1994, p. 430).⁵⁵ Thus, Jayarāśi’s argument rules out the possibility of even *considering* the Buddhist thesis that there are two *pramāṇas*. He ends the chapter with the following: “And when this (i.e., there being two *pramāṇas*) is not possible, saying ‘There are only two *pramāṇas*’ is the gesticulation of a fool” (*TUS* 3.3a).⁵⁶

Why Jayarāśi Is a Skeptic about Epistemology

I have only discussed a small part of the *TUS*, and Jayarāśi criticizes other schools of his day just as forcefully (Nyāya, Mīmāṃsā, Sāṃkhya, the Grammarians, etc.), so it should not be thought that he has some specifically anti-Buddhist agenda. His philosophical destruction is an equal-opportunity policy.⁵⁷ However, by delving into some of his specific arguments against Buddhist epistemology, I hope to have shown three interesting features of Jayarāśi’s general procedure. First, Jayarāśi uses *prasaṅga* arguments along the lines of *vitaṇḍā* debate. He uses the commitments of his opponents to draw out the unwanted consequences (*prasaṅga*) of these views without putting forward any counter-thesis of his own; thus it should not be thought that in denying epistemological realism Jayarāśi affirms some theory of epistemological *anti*-realism. Second, Jayarāśi’s arguments are epistemological, as shown especially in the “The Impossibility of Considering Duality Argument” and by the fact that his conclusions are almost always that some thesis is not established, as opposed to claiming that

some object of theory does not exist. Jayarāśi is not putting forward a metaphysical theory or saying that epistemologists are wrong about a particular thesis in epistemology; rather he is saying that given his opponents' assumptions it is impossible to know anything whatsoever about the topics of epistemology. Third, Jayarāśi intends the arguments of the *TUS* to work together to show that his opponents cannot establish anything about the *pramāṇas* or the *prameyas*. As Stephen Phillips suggests, "the bottom line seems to be that we need not bother ourselves, according to Jayarāśi, with what philosophers have to say, and should go on with our lives" (Phillips 1995, p. 73).

Some readers might object that Jayarāśi's arguments are not directed toward the general rejection of epistemology as such, but rather toward specific philosophical targets. After all, the *TUS* contains chapters on Nyāya, Mīmāṃsā, Buddhism, Sāṃkhya, et cetera as well as chapters on specific *pramāṇas* such as comparison and testimony, but no chapter on epistemology in general. Thus, my interpretation goes too far in attributing to Jayarāśi such a general attack on epistemology.

In response I note two reasons to attribute a general rejection of epistemology to Jayarāśi. First, the introduction of the text contains an argument template indicating Jayarāśi's general strategy, which is to show that none of the existing definitions of *pramāṇas* can be established. Somewhat like Pyrrhonian modes such as the Mode of Infinite Regress or the Mode of Circularity (*PH* 1.15), Jayarāśi's argument in the introduction is meant to be a basic argument pattern than can be applied anytime a philosopher attempts to establish a *pramāṇa* theory. The task of the *TUS* is to show how this general template can be applied to the most popular philosophical schools of the day, but I can see no reason why Jayarāśi would not apply the same template to any other proposed definition of *pramāṇas*. If an epistemologist asked Jayarāśi what he's rebelling against, he'd reply, "What've you got?"

Second, my interpretation of Jayarāśi as a skeptic about epistemology makes more sense of the text as a whole. If Jayarāśi had some specific epistemological quibble with the schools he critiques, one would expect him at some point to explain what these specific quibbles are. Instead, however, one finds Jayarāśi using a particular point against one school and then later in the text making the opposite point against another school. For instance, in arguing against the Naiyāyikas, he says that universals can't exist (*TUS* 1.13a2), and a few chapters later he also rejects the Buddhist rejection of universals (*TUS* 4.25d). It might seem that he is simultaneously denying and affirming the existence of universals. But consider the following explanation by Eli Franco:

Unless we want to affirm that they are simple contradictions and that the man is a fool, something like the following explanation has to be accepted: Jayarāśi affirms statements incompatible with his opponent's view, and which he thinks the opponent cannot refute without getting himself into trouble. . . . While dealing with different theories, Jayarāśi makes different statements in the different corresponding contexts. . . . Thus all affirmations of Jayarāśi's, whether they are expressed in a positive or in a negative form, should be understood as negations of their opposite, which do not affirm anything at all. (Franco 1984, pp. 128–129)

While Jayarāṣi doesn't make the Sanskrit grammatical distinction between *prasajya* and *paryudāsa* negation, Jayarāṣi's negations should be understood as *prasajya* negations, meaning that his negations do not accept the presuppositions of his opponents. The stock example of a *prasajya* negation is "this is not a brahmin," whereas a *paryudāsa* negation is "this is a non-brahmin." The first negation does not assume that there is a person or object present, it simply denies the proposition "this is a brahmin." The second negation, on the other hand, assumes that there is a person present who belongs to some other class; this is a negation of the term "brahmin." Jan Westerhoff calls *prasajya* and *paryudāsa* negations "non-implicational propositional negation" and "implicational term negation," respectively (Westerhoff 2006, p. 369).⁵⁸ Since Jayarāṣi uses *prasajya* negations, I should reiterate once again that his denial of epistemological realism does not at all imply that he accepts some theory of epistemological anti-realism, in which one continues to engage in epistemology without assuming the existence of real epistemological objects such as *pramāṇas*.

While some scholars have lamented the "unprincipled" nature of Jayarāṣi's skepticism in that he has no ultimate philosophical point (Phillips 1995, p. 73), I think that, for Jayarāṣi, being unprincipled is the point. If Jayarāṣi had some principled epistemological point, his text would be quite puzzling, if not entirely incoherent. But if you look at him as a skeptic about epistemology who uses any available means for the purpose of undermining epistemologists' confidence in their theories, his eclectic strategies make perfect sense. One would expect to find different strategies employed against different opponents—you need the right tool for each job. This would be more effective in serving the goal of undermining epistemology.

Another possible objection to my interpretation is that the *TUS* tells us almost nothing about what Jayarāṣi wants to accomplish with all these *prasaṅgas*, so my interpretation goes far beyond the available textual evidence. First of all, I admit that Jayarāṣi says very little about his intentions, but we can glean something from the introduction, which I have already discussed, and from a provocative statement near the end of the text, which I will discuss in the next section. Second, the *TUS* is not all that unusual among classical Indian texts in being amenable to multiple interpretations. Nāgārjuna's *MMK* is perhaps the most conspicuous example. In India, Tibet, East Asia, and the West, the *MMK* has been interpreted in a dizzying variety of ways: Nāgārjuna has been seen as everything from a preeminent metaphysician to a preeminent anti-metaphysician, from a skeptic to a mystic, from an anti-realist to a deconstructionist *avant la lettre*. I am not claiming that all of these interpretations are equally plausible, but it is reasonable to suspect at this point that further appeals to textual evidence by themselves are not going to solve the interpretive issues involved in the *MMK*. While the *TUS* has not received a panoply of interpretations like the *MMK*, I don't think that simple citations of textual evidence are going to give a definitive answer about how to interpret the *TUS*, either. We need to appeal to other criteria, such as the principle of charity. While it is possible to read Jayarāṣi as an epistemological skeptic who concludes that all knowledge claims are invalid, the problem with this interpretation is, as I pointed out earlier, that it leaves Jayarāṣi with

no response to an obvious charge that he contradicts himself. As I will argue in the next section, reading Jayarāśi as a skeptic about epistemology is more charitable, since it makes sense of what look like flatly contradictory statements, and it gives him a response to the self-refutation objection.

Some readers might wonder whether Jayarāśi could be compared more favorably with contemporary varieties of anti-realist or anti-foundationalist critiques of traditional epistemology; rather than a skeptic, perhaps Jayarāśi is really an anti-realist, anti-foundationalist critic of realist, foundationalist epistemology. If the target of his critique is something called epistemological realism, then perhaps it makes sense to think of him as an epistemological anti-realist. This would be to see Jayarāśi along similar lines as the anti-realist interpretation of Nāgārjuna given by Mark Siderits. According to Siderits, Nāgārjuna's rejection of essences should be construed in anti-realist terms: "To say that all 'things' are empty is just to make the anti-realist point that we cannot give content to the metaphysical realist's notion of a mind-independent reality with a nature (whether expressible or inexpressible) that can be mirrored in cognition" (Siderits 2000, p. 24). Jan Westerhoff takes the point of the *VV* to be that of arguing for a positive epistemological theory: "an epistemological theory that incorporates empty epistemic instruments" (Westerhoff 2010, p. 69). This theory rejects foundationalism in favor of "a contextualism asserting that what counts as epistemic justification is always dependent on factors extrinsic to the instruments, such as the set of objects among which the inquiry is conducted" (Westerhoff 2010, p. 82). Perhaps Jayarāśi is closer to an anti-realist, anti-foundationalist Nāgārjuna than he is to any sort of skepticism.

Anti-realism and anti-foundationalism make a certain amount of sense with regard to Nāgārjuna; Siderits' anti-realism gives a plausible interpretation of what it might mean to argue for emptiness (*śūnyatā*) of essence (*svabhāva*), while Westerhoff's anti-foundationalist contextualism might be an epistemology compatible with anti-realism. However, Jayarāśi doesn't seem to have any such positive philosophical intentions. There is nothing in the *TUS* that corresponds to Nāgārjuna's continual endorsement of emptiness; there is simply no part of the *TUS* that could be construed as a positive endorsement of an anti-realist, anti-foundationalist epistemology. Granted, my interpretation also goes beyond the text just as an anti-realist or anti-foundationalist interpretation of Jayarāśi would, but I manage to make charitable sense of the text without importing a positive epistemological theory into an almost wholly negative text. It may sound odd to call anti-realist or anti-foundationalist epistemologies positive theories; however, such theories make claims about both what knowledge is and what it is not (e.g., knowledge lacks a single foundation, it does not require semantic realism, it is dependent on context, etc.).⁵⁹ But there are no similar claims or philosophically constructive tendencies in the *TUS*. Given the general negative thrust of the text, I think Jayarāśi would critique an anti-realist, anti-foundationalist epistemology just as forcefully as he would critique any other epistemology, although of course we have no way of knowing what an eighth-century philosopher would say about developments in the twentieth and twenty-first

centuries. It could be that Jayarāṣi would delight in contemporary developments and change his destructive ways, but I find it more likely that Jayarāṣi would place anti-realism and anti-foundationalism on his list of theories that cannot be established.⁶⁰

Other readers might object that my interpretation adds nothing new to the study of Jayarāṣi in particular or Indian philosophy in general. After all, my reading of Jayarāṣi relies on insights from previous scholars such as Jayatilleke, Phillips, and Franco. Additionally, Jayarāṣian skepticism is similar to recent skeptical interpretations of Nāgārjuna, so it has already been established that this type of skepticism exists in classical Indian thought. I admit that I have been influenced by the work I have cited here. I am particularly indebted to Eli Franco's groundbreaking work on Jayarāṣi. However, I think my interpretation is unique in identifying the target and scope of Jayarāṣi's skepticism. Franco, for instance, doesn't distinguish Jayarāṣi's skepticism from epistemological skepticism; he defines skepticism as "a philosophical attitude which consists of doubting knowledge claims in all areas" (Franco 1994, p. 1), and he includes Jayarāṣi in the class of skeptics for whom "the real issue is how to face and react to the lack of certainty in all matters from everyday life to religious beliefs and scientific theories" (p. 42). Other scholars have maintained that Jayarāṣi has some positive views. For instance, Piotr Balcerowicz claims that Jayarāṣi actually denied the existence of universals and that it is possible that "what Jayarāṣi had in mind was that for all our practical activities . . . the world of our actions . . . is 'here and now' and retains its ultimate validity, even though we are incapable of its proper philosophical analysis" (Balcerowicz 2011, sec. 2.3). Also, Shuchita Mehta claims that Jayarāṣi affirms that "no verbal expressions can grasp the 'Tattva'" (Mehta 2010, p. xvi).

On the other hand, I have argued that Jayarāṣi is not a global epistemological skeptic and does not make any philosophical claims. Rather, he is a skeptic about philosophy with a particular emphasis on epistemology. His doubts are not extended to a scope so wide as "knowledge claims in all areas." Neither does he discuss a lack of certainty in everyday or scientific matters, nor does he make any positive philosophical claims, even about the limits of human knowledge or what lies beyond such knowledge. Instead, the targets of his negative arguments are the philosophical schools of his day. As a skeptical Cārvāka, he sees a connection between his critique of epistemology and the Cārvāka critique of religious views.

While I think Nāgārjuna and Jayarāṣi may have a similar skeptical attitude about epistemology, there is a major difference in that if Nāgārjuna is a skeptic the point of Nāgārjunian skepticism would be to overcome attachment to philosophical views, which is in line with the Buddhist goal of overcoming suffering that arises from attachment. Jayarāṣi, however, is not a Buddhist. The point of Jayarāṣian skepticism is to overcome epistemology, which was often used in classical India to bolster religious worldviews (including Buddhism). Jayarāṣi hopes to be free, not from *samsāra*, but from the epistemological dogmatism that detracts from one's enjoyment of everyday life. Therefore, Jayarāṣi expands our understanding of Indian skepticism by

showing us what a uniquely Cārvāka form of skepticism looks like. As the only complete, primary text of the Cārvāka school currently available, the *TUS* is well worth our attempts to understand it more thoroughly.

To sum up, we should read Jayarāśi as a skeptic about epistemology for three reasons. First, my interpretation makes sense of the observation that the template in the introduction of the *TUS* can be applied to *pramāṇa* theories more generally. Second, it is a more charitable interpretation in that it makes sense of the text without attributing to Jayarāśi obvious problems of self-contradiction and self-refutation. Third, skepticism about epistemology makes more sense of the negative character of the *TUS* than would any sort of interpretation that attributes to Jayarāśi an anti-realist or anti-foundationalist epistemology. In addition to these reasons in its favor, my interpretation adds to our understanding of Indian philosophy; while I rely on the work of previous scholars, my interpretation is unique in how I identify the target and scope of Jayarāśi's skepticism and its place in classical Indian philosophy.

I am willing to give Jayarāśi the benefit of the doubt that he is not the self-contradicting buffoon that a casual reading of the text might suggest. Jayarāśi is up to something interesting after all, but the *TUS* is not a constructive work of philosophical theory building. That is simply not his intention. Next, I will turn to what it is that Jayarāśi might hope to accomplish as a skeptic about epistemology.

Jayarāśi and Contextualism

While Jayarāśi is not interested in constructing epistemological theories, there may be some kinds of knowledge or cognitions that we are able to talk about, namely those at the level of everyday practice (*vyavahāra*). Jayarāśi ends the *TUS* with a rare positive statement that explains what might result from his philosophical destruction: "When, in this way, the principles are entirely destroyed, all everyday practices are made delightful, because they are not deliberated" (*TUS* 14.5).⁶¹ As long as we stick with our quotidian pretheoretical opinions about what it means to know or cognize things, maybe there is no problem. Perhaps the problem only comes when we enter epistemological terrain.

My inspiration for this suggestion comes from contextualism in contemporary epistemology, which is the idea that knowledge is somehow relative to context. This can be construed in several ways. For David Annis, justification is relative to context (Annis 1978). For Michael Williams, knowledge is relative to the context of its specific domain of inquiry (Williams 1996, 2004). The most common type of contextualism in contemporary epistemology claims that *ascriptions* of knowledge, such as "S knows that P," are context sensitive. Since this is an epistemological theory about ascriptions of knowledge, I will call this "semantic contextualism in epistemology" to distinguish it from forms of contextualism about language more generally. Stewart Cohen, Keith DeRose, and David Lewis are prominent defenders of semantic contextualism in epistemology (Cohen 2000, DeRose 1995, Lewis 1999). Cohen explains: "the truth value of sentences containing the words 'know' and its cognates will de-

pend on contextually determined standards” and these standards are the “contexts of ascription” which “vary depending on things like the purposes, intentions, expectations, presuppositions, etc., of the speakers who utter these sentences” (Cohen 2000, p. 94). To say “Sally knows that she has hands” is true when uttered in normal everyday contexts, but false when uttered in epistemological contexts, such as a philosophy classroom in which external world skepticism is discussed. This transformation is the result of the standards used in the context of the discussion; the standards are set by the discussants, although not necessarily explicitly. Semantic contextualism in epistemology is seen as a way to make sense of external world skepticism without letting it have too much impact in regular life.

I should distinguish semantic contextualism in epistemology from other kinds of contextualism. The contextualist epistemology that Westerhoff (2010) wants to attribute to Nāgārjuna in the VV is closer to Michael Williams’ issue contextualism in which knowledge is relative to a specific issue or subject that structures a context of inquiry, although Williams does not endorse semantic or metaphysical anti-realism (Williams 1996, chap. 6).⁶² The difference here is that Williams’ contextualism and the contextualism of Westerhoff’s Nāgārjuna see as many contexts as there are contexts of inquiry (e.g., a context for astronomy, a context for epistemology, a context for musical theory, a context for zoology, etc.); however, semantic contextualism in epistemology requires only two contexts: epistemology and regular life outside epistemology. Another famous example of what might be called contextualism is a contextualism about meaning in classical Indian philosophy of language expressed most famously by Grammarians such as Bhartṛhari. As opposed to theories of meaning given by Bhaṭṭa Mīmāṃsā in which words have atomic meaning independent of sentences, Bhartṛhari’s sentence holism states that a word only has meaning in the context of a sentence.⁶³ This debate concerns the phenomenon of meaning in general and focuses on the relationship between words and sentences; semantic contextualism in epistemology, on the other hand, is a theory specifically about the meaning of epistemic terms and says nothing about whether such terms are meaningful atomically or in the context of a sentence.

While Jayarāśi wouldn’t accept semantic contextualism as an epistemological theory, perhaps we can make sense of his remarks about everyday practice (*vyavahāra*) by appealing to the distinction between the contexts of epistemology and regular life that lies at the heart of semantic contextualism in epistemology. If one goes down the rabbit hole of epistemology, one will see that the whole enterprise of establishing *pramāṇas* is futile. If one avoids epistemology, then perhaps there is no problem at all—one can go on discussing knowledge in an everyday context. In the context of epistemology, epistemology self-destructs; in the context of everyday practice, there is no need for epistemology.

Since using epistemic terms is usually thought of as part of everyday practice (it is hard to imagine everyday practice without any epistemic terms at all), I think it is very likely that Jayarāśi himself would continue to use such terms as long as he is in the everyday context. To give an example, Jayarāśi might utter both of the following sentences:

1. "It is not the case that Devadatta has a perception of a cup" (in the context of epistemology).
2. "Devadatta has a perception of a cup" (in the context of everyday practice).

While it initially appears that these sentences directly contradict each other, there is no contradiction, because the two sentences are uttered in different contexts. From within the context of epistemology, Jayarāśi would attempt (and fail) to adequately define epistemic terms like "perception" (*pratyakṣa*) within the philosophical framework given by his opponents; thus, it turns out that poor Devadatta does not—at least by the standards of the *pramāṇavādins*—have a genuine perception of a cup. Keep in mind, also, that the negation in statement one is a *prasajya* or non-implicational propositional negation, so it remains the case that Jayarāśi never affirms anything in the context of epistemology. In the context of everyday practice, however, Jayarāśi very well might utter the sentence "Devadatta has a perception of a cup," using "perception" in its everyday sense with no attempt at epistemological examination.

The comparison to the two-context aspect of semantic contextualism in epistemology helps to explain Jayarāśi's citation of the following saying in the introduction to the *TUS*: "Regarding worldly everyday practice, a fool and a philosopher (*pañḍita*) are similar" (*TUS* 0.1).⁶⁴ In the everyday context, whether one is a simple fool or a sophisticated philosopher (*pañḍita*) makes no difference, and the text goes on to show that the theories of epistemologists undermine themselves in an epistemological context.

The best reason to read Jayarāśi as embodying a kind of contextualism is that this would help him respond to the age-old objection that skepticism is inconsistent or self-refuting, which is one of the most common objections raised against philosophers such as Sextus, Nāgārjuna, and Jayarāśi.⁶⁵ John Koller states the charge against Jayarāśi quite clearly: "The skeptic's paradox is this: If he does not know that the evidence for knowledge claims is inadequate, he has no reasons for his skepticism. But if he does know, then he clearly accepts (operationally, at least) a satisfiable criterion of adequate evidence, and, to this extent is not a skeptic" (Koller 1977, p. 158). It seems that Jayarāśi is in danger of falling into a trap in which either his conclusion is entirely irrational and should have no effect on us, or it is blatantly self-refuting such that the truth of the conclusion that no *pramāṇas* can be established implies its own falsity, since some means of knowledge must be established in order to show that no means of knowledge can be established. Can Jayarāśi avoid this trap?

I think Jayarāśi could answer to this charge, which was also leveled by classical Indian philosophers such as Vidyānanda and Bhāsarvajña.⁶⁶ First of all, Jayarāśi uses the *vitaṇḍā* style of argumentation, which is merely criticizing an opponent's thesis without putting forward a counter-thesis. In the *Nyāya Sūtra*, *vitaṇḍā* is distinguished from friendly discussion (*vāda*) and disputation (*jalpa*). *Vitaṇḍā* is a subset of *jalpa*: "*Vitaṇḍā* is that [*jalpa*], which is without the establishing of a counter-position" (*Nyāya Sūtra*; in Gautama 1985, 1.2.3).⁶⁷ Jayarāśi is a *vaitaṇḍika* revealing the groundlessness of his opponents' theses in their own terms without positing a claim of his own. Thus, Jayarāśi might expect his demonstrations to have an effect on his

opponents, since his arguments rely on their own assumptions, and furthermore, there is no self-refutation, because Jayarāṣi does not enter a positive claim in the epistemological context to contradict his negative claims in that context.⁶⁸

A second consideration is that skeptics often have a way of using language that differs radically from the usual philosophical mode. For example, Sextus says a skeptic has no beliefs and Nāgārjuna purports to establish no thesis (*pratijñā*) (*PH* 1.7; *VV* 29); a common way to make sense of these seemingly nonsensical statements is to interpret the goal of Sextus and Nāgārjuna as a sort of therapy meant to induce a reaction in the reader. Skeptics need not use language for the common philosophical purpose of establishing theses and supporting substantive beliefs; to hold skeptics to these standards constitutes a hermeneutic error. An argument is sometimes thought of as a set of statements meant to support another statement, which is the conclusion, and a statement is defined as a claim that something is either true or false. But I don't think Jayarāṣi is proffering arguments in *that* sense, because he isn't using statements put forward as truth-claims (at least not in an epistemological context). While it may appear that he is using standard philosophical arguments, he is in fact doing something quite different, because the goal is not to support a particular conclusion in epistemology, but rather to stop trying to support epistemological conclusions altogether.⁶⁹ For Jayarāṣi and Pyrrhonians like Sextus, the charge of self-refutation "is mainly due to a misunderstanding of the sceptic's use of language and his frame of mind" (Franco 1994, p. 37).⁷⁰ This answer to the charge of self-refutation explains how Jayarāṣi could say anything about the topics that arise in an epistemological context. He is free to use language to make arguments in this context without thereby committing himself to acceptance of any counter-thesis or opposing theory.⁷¹ Furthermore, a form of contextualism could explain how he might even *use* epistemic concepts in a regular context without contradicting his vehement rejection of any such concepts in the context of epistemology.

Here one might object that there is a contradiction in my interpretation. Versions of contextualism in epistemology, whatever else they may be, seem to be epistemological theories. Hence, I have attributed a contextualist epistemological theory to Jayarāṣi while simultaneously denying that he accepts any epistemological theory.

The problem with this objection is that it assumes I am claiming that Jayarāṣi actually accepts a contextualist theory of knowledge, as contemporary proponents of contextualism clearly do and as Westerhoff claims Nāgārjuna does. But I have not claimed that Jayarāṣi accepts any version of contextualism. I am not claiming that he endorses any semantic theory about epistemic terms; in fact, he might even reject such a claim much as he rejects other epistemological claims.⁷² What I am claiming is merely that the distinction between the context of epistemology and the context of regular life can help us make sense of Jayarāṣi's philosophical practice. We can see him as *embodying* a sort of contextualism rather than arguing for it: in epistemological contexts, he accepts nothing (not even contextualism), but in regular contexts, he might accept some everyday knowledge claims.

Toward this end, Jayarāṣi may have been inspired by certain elements in the larger Cārvāka tradition. According to Mādhava's *Sarvadarśanasamgraha*, it was the

standard Cārvāka opinion that activity in the world does not rest on philosophically established inferences (Mādhava 1977, p. 4). According to Purandara-type Cārvākas, everyday practice requires only a type of inference that is “well-established in the world” (*lokaprasiddha*), but does not require the use of trans-empirical inferences.⁷³ Assuming these texts give even remotely accurate accounts of ideas that had been prevalent among some Cārvākas, the notion that one can act in the world in the absence of certain kinds of epistemologically established beliefs was probably familiar to Jayarāśi. Jayarāśi simply pushes this idea further to eliminate epistemologically established perceptions and, indeed, epistemological justifications of any kind.

How to Be a Cārvāka Skeptic, or, How to Stop Worrying and Love a Life without Epistemology

Jayarāśi’s skepticism brings two elements together: the denial of epistemological realism and a kind of contextualism that makes room to enjoy everyday practice. Jayarāśi is not denying that anyone really knows anything, as would a global epistemological skeptic; rather, he doubts that it makes sense to worry about whether anyone really knows anything. Therefore, Jayarāśi expands Cārvāka irreligiousness to a suspicion about the possibility of epistemological theory in general, which in his day was intimately connected with purveyors of religious worldviews. We can see how his skepticism serves his Cārvāka sympathies; as Franco puts it, “in spite of the enormous differences in ontology and theory of knowledge, in ethical matters and in anti-clerical attitude, which formed the hard core of the Lokāyata, Jayarāśi remained a true heir of Bṛhaspati” (Franco 1994, p. 47).

Is Jayarāśi’s therapy meant for intellectuals with certain training or for anyone with impulses toward epistemology?⁷⁴ Jayarāśi suggests that in everyday life we simply don’t need epistemology to get along, and once you start doing epistemology, it subverts itself (but perhaps you need a good skeptic to demonstrate this). Although those with training in the schools of classical Indian philosophy are the specific targets of Jayarāśi’s destruction, Jayarāśi-style *prasaṅga* arguments could be raised against any theory with epistemological pretensions. However, I think Jayarāśi’s immediate targets are scholastic, professional philosophers and anyone who uses their efforts to support a religious worldview. This fits well with his Cārvāka tendencies and is entirely in line with what I take to be the true criterion for Cārvāka membership in the classical Indian context, namely, that he sees his work as contributing to the pursuit of an irreligious way of life.

A Jayarāśian life would not be simply anti-intellectual, for, at least in his moods captured in the *TUS*, Jayarāśi displays a keen philosophical intellect and familiarity with the sophisticated epistemological theories of his day. Yet he does quote the fragment mentioned earlier: “Regarding worldly everyday practice, a fool and a philosopher are similar” (*TUS* 0.1). Might this indicate that a fool and a philosopher really are the same?

Philosophers who begin in the earnest search for philosophical insight may be initially troubled by their inability to establish epistemological theories. Following

Jayarāśī's destruction to its end may lead one to develop a particular attitude toward epistemological speculation. It would be self-contradictory to say (in an epistemological context) that one knows that epistemological theorizing is a hopeless task, but it may be that going through the rapturous route of Jayarāśīan destruction leaves one without a taste for epistemological theory building. Why build theories when destroying them is so much fun? But I don't think Jayarāśī's destructive tendencies are all fun and games. He raises a serious question about whether philosophy—at least of the epistemology-centered variety popular in his day—leads to a good life. Through his delightful destruction, he shows how to stop worrying about epistemology and love a life without it. And this attitude can only be fully appreciated after going through the purgative therapy, just as one can only fully appreciate the paradoxicality of a paradox by trying to solve it. Jayarāśīan skepticism is, strangely enough, an attitude only fully available to those who have attempted to traverse the paths of epistemology. This full appreciation is one sense in which a Jayarāśīan skeptic would be different from a person who simply never considers the problems of epistemology. The fool and the Jayarāśīan skeptic are slightly different after all, albeit not in knowledge or wisdom, but in the timbres of their attitudes.

It is worth noting that Jayarāśī never explicitly refers to any sort of insight or illumination—mystical, philosophical, or otherwise. In the absence of such language, I think his statement “all everyday practices are made delightful, because they are not deliberated” (*TUS* 14.5) should be taken as purely descriptive. He is simply describing the state of mind that might follow his philosophical destruction, but he is not giving any normative argument in favor of his approach. While the gerundive form *ramaṇīya*, which I have translated as “delightful,” could be translated by the more normative-sounding phrase “should be enjoyed,” either translation is acceptable (Monier-Williams 1994, p. 868). A more descriptive nuance makes more sense in this context.

I find it helpful to compare Jayarāśī to what some have claimed is the descriptive nature of Pyrrhonism. R. J. Hankinson describes Sextus' attitude extremely well:

Sextus does not, at the basic level, offer an argument for a way of life, or try to convince us that it is the better one. . . . What he does is describe a condition, and a response to it. If you recognize the condition, then you may be helped by the response. If you don't, well maybe you don't really have it, or maybe you are simply indulging in denial—either way the Pyrrhonist cannot help you. And in particular to the person who says that he sees nothing attractive in the Pyrrhonian way of life, the Pyrrhonist has, appropriately, nothing whatsoever to say. (Hankinson 1995, p. 308)

Jayarāśī is far less explicit on this matter than Sextus (Sextus describes the nature of his practice in some detail in book 1 of the *PH*). Furthermore, I rather suspect Jayarāśī would have some dismissive, mocking words for those who disagree with his way of life. However, I think it makes sense to emphasize the descriptive, as opposed to normative, nature of what we might call (for lack of a better term) Jayarāśī's positive program. Of course, it could be that Jayarāśī has some sort of normative argument, but has simply neglected to spell it out. It is also possible that he thinks the

demolition of his opponents' views gives a normative argument in that it leaves readers with nowhere else to turn. But again, I would appeal to the generally negative character of the text. Having spent over one hundred pages of densely packed Sanskrit attempting to demolish every *pramāṇa* theory he could think of, it is hard to see how Jayarāṣi *could* give a positive, normative argument for a way of life—on what basis would such an argument rest? While it is possible he has some sort of method of illumination outside of the *pramāṇas*, he never explains it or hints at anything of the kind. For these reasons, I think Jayarāṣi's statements about everyday life in the absence of epistemological theory should be read as purely descriptive statements given in the absence of any further epistemological justification.

All of this probably sounds pretty strange to the majority of philosophers who see their task as offering reasons and arguments in favor of particular views. It sounds strange to me. However, it is worth considering that skeptics such as Sextus and Jayarāṣi might be a good deal happier than those who stake their happiness on the coherent establishment of some philosophical or religious worldview. Jayarāṣi describes a situation in which the refusal of religion, by way of destroying the epistemological theories used to establish religious doctrines, can lead to a happy life. Contrary to the contemporary notion of skepticism as a threatening cloud hanging on the horizon of our cognitive lives, Jayarāṣi, much like his Pyrrhonian counterparts, demonstrates that a skeptical life just might be a life worth living.

Conclusion

In this essay I have argued that Jayarāṣi should be read as a skeptic about epistemology. I also hope to have shown that the study of Cārvāka and skepticism can increase our understanding of classical Indian thought. Jayarāṣi is important in this process, since he exemplifies Cārvāka and skepticism in a unique and fascinating way. By delving into Jayarāṣi's interaction with Dignāga and Dharmakīrti, I have shown that Jayarāṣi argues in a *vitaṇḍā* style of pure criticism with no counter-thesis, and that Jayarāṣi's arguments are epistemological in the strange way that they deny that epistemology is possible. I then argued that my interpretation makes the best sense of the text and that it makes a contribution to our understanding of the *TUS* and its place in classical Indian philosophy. By comparison with the contemporary ideas of epistemological realism and semantic contextualism in epistemology, I have argued that Jayarāṣi can be fruitfully interpreted as doubting that epistemology is possible, but nonetheless allowing himself to engage in some contexts of everyday epistemic activity. Lastly, I have offered some suggestions about how my interpretation makes sense of Jayarāṣi's status as both a Cārvāka and a skeptic.

Of course, I can't be entirely sure that any of this is what Jayarāṣi really meant; there is simply too little textual evidence about what he intended his labyrinthian *prasaṅgas* to accomplish. However, I have claimed that my view at the very least offers a coherent, charitable interpretation of the *TUS*. Even if my interpretation is not correct, I hope to have shown how Jayarāṣi inspires us to ask interesting questions about the place of skepticism in the classical Indian tradition in particular and in epistemology more generally.

Notes

I would like to thank John Taber, Stephen Harris, Don Levi, and the anonymous reviewers at *Philosophy East and West* for their helpful comments on earlier drafts of this article.

The following abbreviations for classical sources are used in the text and notes:

MMK *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* of Nāgārjuna. See Nāgārjuna 1997.

PH *Pyrrhōneoi Hypotypōseis* of Sextus Empiricus. See Sextus Empiricus 2000.

PS *Pramāṇasamuccaya, Chapter One*, of Dignāga. See Dignāga 2005.

TUS *Tattvopaplavaśiṃha (Tattva-upaplava-siṃha)* of Jayarāśi Bhaṭṭa. Three editions consulted; see Jayarāśi Bhaṭṭa 1987, 1994, and 2010.

VV *Vigrahavyāvartanī* of Nāgārjuna. See Nāgārjuna 1994.

- 1 – Jayarāśi's dates, like the dates of many classical Indian philosophers, are difficult to determine with any precision. The date given is from Franco 1994, p. xi. For more details on attempts to date Jayarāśi, see Sanghavi and Parikh 1987, pp. iv–xi; Franco 1994, pp. 9–15; and Balcerowicz 2011.
- 2 – For example, *R̥g Veda* 8.89 and the *Brahmajāla Sutta (Dīgha Nikāya* 1.34). For collections of later Cārvāka fragments found in various texts, see Bhattacharya 2002, 2010, 2011.
- 3 – The main critique of inference is that there is no way to establish the pervasion (*vyāpti*) of the proof (*sādhana*) and that which is to be proved (*sādhya*). It cannot be perceived, since one cannot perceive the future and the past. It cannot be inferred or known by testimony (*śabda*), since either of those options would constitute an infinite regress (*anavasthā*). Furthermore, the notion of a special cause or extraneous condition (*upādhi*) creates a problem. A stock example of an *upādhi* is wet fuel as a cause of smoke rather than merely fire. It is not just fire that causes smoke, since fire using dry fuel or fire in a red-hot iron ball do not produce smoke. The presence of this *upādhi* (wet fuel) is what accounts for the invalidity of the inference, “there is smoke on the mountain, because there is fire on the mountain.” A true pervasion (*vyāpti*) must consist of a necessary connection (*avinābhāva*), which means one must rule out any *upādhis*. See Gangopadhyay 1971 for a detailed treatment of *upādhi* in Nyāya. According to the Cārvāka position in the *Sarvadarśanasamgraha* (Mādhava 1977), one cannot know that there is a necessary connection, because one would have to know the absence of *upādhis*. Knowing the absence of *upādhis* is problematic, since cognizing an *upādhi* would require cognizing the *vyāpti*, and cognizing the *vyāpti* would require cognizing the *upādhi*. Hence, there is the fallacy of mutual dependence (*parasparāśraya*), and a successful inference can never be proved. Lastly, there is an account of successful activity without inference: “Activity with regard to a cognition of fire and so forth immediately following a cognition of ‘smoky’ (*dhūmra*), etc., is made possible (*yujyate*) by error or by

being based on perception" (*dhūmrāḍijñānānantaram agnyāḍijñāne pravṛttiḥ pratyakṣamūlatayā bhrāntiyā vā yujyate*. [*Sarvadarśanasamgraha*; see Mādhava 1977, p. 4. For the full critique of inference, see Mādhava 1977, pp. 3–4. All translations from Sanskrit are my own unless otherwise noted]).

- 4 – Eli Franco somewhat uncharitably describes Chattopadhyaya's work as a "fascinating Marxist science fiction saga" (Franco 1994, p. xii). Richard King, however, favorably cites Chattopadhyaya several times (King 1999, pp. 19, 20, 133). Chattopadhyaya has also edited a comprehensive anthology of primary and secondary sources on Cārvāka (Chattopadhyaya 1990).
- 5 – *tadanabhyupagacchato 'pi cārvākamādhymikāder vāgvistarāṇaṃ pratīyamānatvāt* (*Khaṇḍanakhaṇḍakhādyā*; see Śrī Harṣa 1979, p. 7).
- 6 – References to Jayarāṣi by Jain philosophers and others are discussed in Sanghavi and Parikh 1987, pp. iii–xi.
- 7 – Franco discusses Bhāsarvajña's treatment of Jayarāṣi in great detail in an appendix titled "Bhāsarvajña and Jayarāṣi: The Refutation of Scepticism in the *Nyāyabhūṣana*" (Franco 1994, pp. 553–586).
- 8 – For examples of mentions of Jayarāṣi, see King 1999, p. 19, and Ganeri 2001, pp. 27–28. There are exceptions to this trend, most notably Eli Franco's several in-depth studies of Jayarāṣi (1983, 1984, 1994). Also, Stephen Phillips discusses Jayarāṣi in some detail vis-à-vis Jayarāṣi's influence on Śrī Harṣa (Phillips 1995, pp. 71–74). See also work by Walter Ruben (1958), D. K. Mohanta (1989, 1990, 2009), Narayan Champawat (1995), and Piotr Balcerowicz (2011).
- 9 – Chattopadhyaya, for instance, denies that Jayarāṣi is a Cārvāka on precisely these grounds, claiming that the work is mere extreme skepticism (Chattopadhyaya and Gangopadhyaya 1990, p. 491) and at another point that it may be an idealist work (Chattopadhyaya, in Franco 1994, p. xii). Ramkrishna Bhattacharya attempts to give evidence that Jayarāṣi was not a Cārvāka in that he refers to Bṛhaspati as "Lord" (*bhagavān*) and as "preceptor of the gods" (*suraguru*) (*TUS*, pp. 45, 125; Bhattacharya 2002, p. 629 n. 43). Here I think Jayarāṣi could simply be facetious or satirical as he often is elsewhere. Also, the "*bhagavān*" could simply be a term of respect and is directly followed by a quote denying the existence of another world (*paraloka*). "*Suraguru*" is an epithet for Bṛhaspati (Monier-Williams 1994, p. 1234); using this name need not imply the existence of the divine any more than using the name "Devadatta." For more discussion of arguments claiming that Jayarāṣi cannot be a Cārvāka, see Franco 1994, pp. xi–xiii.
- 10 – It may be best to take Daya Krishna's advice to question the whole game of doctrinal affiliation and take the schools of Indian philosophy as "styles of thought which are developed by successive thinkers, and not fully exemplified by any" (Krishna 1997, p. 13). In Krishna's view, Indian schools should be seen as "schools" of Western philosophy such as empiricism or idealism. Just as

Berkeley is both an empiricist and an idealist, why can we not see Jayarāṣi as both a Cārvāka and a skeptic?

- 11 – I will discuss skeptical interpretations of Nāgārjuna later in this section and in the next section. Śrī Harṣa’s situation in the *Khaṇḍanakhaṇḍakhādyā* is complex and the subject of some debate. Phyllis Granoff tends to emphasize Śrī Harṣa’s purely critical tendencies in his refutations of philosophical doctrines such that he “never independently proves anything at all” (Granoff 1978, p. 54). She notes his rejection of all definitions of *pramāṇas*, his refutation of metaphysical realism in Nyāya, Mīmāṃsā, and Jainism, and his arguments against the notion of conventional reality (*saṃvṛttisattva*) in Buddhism and Vedānta (Granoff 1978, pp. 3, 54–56). Stephen Phillips disagrees with her interpretation and interprets Śrī Harṣa as having a “positive program”: “Śrīharṣa is an Advaitin, proffering considerations that urge acceptance of the Advaita view. Some of his refutations—particularly in the first portion of his text—may be read as indirect proofs and thus be themselves positive argumentation bolstering planks of the Advaita stance” (Phillips 1995, p. 77). Phillips notes that Śrī Harṣa provisionally accepts scripture (*śruti*) as a *pramāṇa* (although even scripture is eventually sublated by “supreme mystical awareness”) and interprets all of his negative arguments as offering support for a positive ontological argument with the Advaita conclusion that “Brahman is to be accepted” (Phillips 1995, pp. 82–83).
- 12 – For instance, Sañjaya Bellatthaputta seems to engage in a skeptical refusal to answer in the *Samaññaphala Sutta* (*Dīgha Nikāya 2*; see *Dīgha Nikāya* 1995).
- 13 – Hayes also offers some favorable comparisons between the Buddha in the Nikāyas and Pyrrho as well as some of Nāgārjuna’s statements and the Pyrrhonian ideal of suspension of judgment (Hayes 1988, pp. 51–62). Hayes reads Dignāga as an inheritor and innovator within the tradition of skeptical rationalism such that “as a skeptic his main interest was not to find a way to increase our knowledge but rather to find a way to subtract from our opinions” (Hayes 1988, p. 111).
- 14 – There is some debate about whether ancient Pyrrhonists ever broached the subject of the external world. Burnyeat (1982) argues that there was nothing at all like external-world skepticism in Pyrrhonism, while Fine (2003) argues that there was something similar. A clear discussion of the matter can be found in Thorsrud 2009, pp. 182–183.
- 15 – While Jayarāṣi is not an epistemological skeptic about the external world, there may be something similar to external world skepticism in the work of Vasubandhu (in his Yogācāra works) and Gauḍapāda, especially if those philosophers are not read as traditional idealists. Skepticism about the external world is the epistemological view that we don’t know whether or not there is an external world, while traditional idealism is the metaphysical rejection of the existence of the external world. According to some non-idealist readings of

Vasubandhu and Gauḍapāda, their point is not that the external world doesn't exist, but that we should focus on what we do know directly: our cognitions. A few non-idealist readings of Vasubandhu are Kochumuttom 2008; Hall 1986; and Hayes 1988, pp. 96–104. Some non-idealist readings of Gauḍapāda are Kaplan 1992 and King 1995, chap. 5.

- 16 – The distinction between epistemological and conceptual skepticism is with regard to the object of skepticism. Whereas external world skepticism is epistemological, skepticism about epistemology tends to be conceptual in that it “concerns the very intelligibility of a domain of propositions” (Garrett 2004, p. 71). For more on this distinction and many other such distinctions, including domain, character, degree, and persistence, see Garrett 2004, pp. 69–73. These distinctions are originally Robert Fogelin's, but Garrett has organized them nicely.
- 17 – A good example of this distinction is Peter Unger's global epistemological skepticism in his book, *Ignorance: A Case for Scepticism*. Unger argues that nobody actually knows anything and claims that philosophy might prove itself useful in reformatting our language in light of this fact (Unger 1975, pp. 313–319). Despite his pessimism about knowledge, his optimism about epistemology never dims.
- 18 – Whether the beliefs Pyrrhonists attempt to abstain from holding are beliefs about only “non-evident” matters (the “urbane” or “some belief” interpretation) or beliefs of any kind whatsoever (the “rustic” or “no belief” interpretation) is a question of interpretation that goes back thousands of years and continues today. Some good sources on this debate are Thorsrud 2009, chap. 9, and Burnyeat and Frede 1997.
- 19 – Hankinson 1995, Fogelin 1994, Williams 1988, and Thorsrud 2009 have been particularly influential in my interpretation of Pyrrhonism. Adrian Kuzminski has also highlighted some interesting parallels between Pyrrhonism and Madhyamaka, which have in turn influenced my conception of skepticism about epistemology (Kuzminski 2007, 2008).
- 20 – The main advantage of this interpretation is that it can account for the presence of both phases in a way that is able to take both fully seriously. This is in contrast to anti-realist interpretations (for instance, Siderits 2000) that emphasize the first phase and mystical interpretations (for instance, Murti 1955) that emphasize the second phase. It sometimes seems as if Nāgārjuna is offering straightforward arguments for emptiness, because he is giving straightforward arguments for emptiness, and it sometimes seems as if Nāgārjuna is rejecting all views because he is rejecting all views (even those of the first phase).
- 21 – Some recent discussions of Madhyamaka and Pyrrhonism include Arnold 2005, pp. 131–142; Burton 1999, chap. 2; Kuzminski 2007 and 2008; and Dreyfus and Garfield 2011.

- 22 – For example, Adrian Kuzminski offers helpful comparisons between Madhyamaka and Pyrrhonism, but in his view Sextus and Nāgārjuna become nearly identical (Kuzminski 2007, 2008). However, I see a big difference in method between Sextus and his Indian counterparts: Sextus seeks to suspend judgment by showing the equal convincingness of two opposed theories, whereas Nāgārjuna and Jayarāśi tend to show that *all* possible options are unconvincing. Furthermore, Nāgārjuna and Jayarāśi differ in that Nāgārjuna uses his methods for a Buddhist goal of non-attachment, whereas Jayarāśi is irreligious.
- 23 – *pr̥thivyādīni tattvāni loke prasiddhāni. tāny api vicāryamāṇāni na vyavatiṣṭhante. kiṃ punar anyāni?* (*TUS* 0.2. Note: the numbers given for citations of the *TUS* correspond to Franco’s numbering system for the Sanskrit text based on subjects discussed [Franco 1994, p. 55]. Where page numbers are given, I am citing the page numbers from the Sanghavi and Parikh edition. The 2010 edition of the *TUS* edited by Shuchita Mehta and translated by Esther Solomon has been specifically cited as needed).
- 24 – *sallakṣaṇanibandhanam mānavyavasthānam. mānanibandhanā ca meyasthitiḥ. tadabhāve tayoh sadvyavahāraṣayatvaṃ katham. . . .* (*TUS* 0.3).
- 25 – Enthusiasts of logic might want this symbolized. Let N = establish *pramāṇas*, Y = establish *prameyas*, and D = establish definition. P1: N ↔ D. P2: Y ↔ N. C: ~D → ~(N ∨ Y). I am not entirely sure that my conclusion fits the Sanskrit “*sadvyavahāraṣayatvaṃ*.” I suspect that “being the subject of everyday practice toward existing things” or, as Franco says, “being talked about as real” (Franco 1994, pp. 69–71) both amount to something like being established (*vyavasthānam*, *sthiti*, etc.). Jayarāśi’s idea is that if the *pramāṇas* cannot be defined, it does us no good to engage in everyday practice (*vyavahāra*) with regard to *pramāṇas*, at least as epistemologists define them. The word “*vyavahāra*” includes “thinking, speaking and acting” (Franco 1994, p. 302 n. 10) and comes from the root √*vyavhr*, which can mean “to exchange . . . to be active or busy . . . to carry on commerce” (Monier-Williams 1994, p. 1034). I think of *vyavahāra* as being good enough for making business deals or, to use a contemporary idiom, being close enough for horseshoes and hand grenades.
- 26 – One could also claim that one or both of the premises are false, which would make the argument unsound. I am not sure if these premises were widely accepted by Indian philosophers of Jayarāśi’s day or not. Alternatively, the argument would still be sound if both sides of both biconditionals were false. Since all the variables would be false, ~D and ~(N ∨ Y) would be true, making ~D → ~(N ∨ Y) true, but not merely vacuously true. Since Jayarāśi means to deny D, N, and Y, this would seem to be his take on it.
- 27 – A clear example of this generalizing feature is found in Descartes’s First Meditation: “for the purpose of rejecting all my opinions, it will be enough if I find in each of them at least some reason for doubt. And to do this I will not need to run through them all individually, which would be an endless task. Once the

foundations of a building are undermined, anything built on them collapses of its own accord; so I will go straight for the basic principles on which all my former beliefs rested" (Descartes 1984, p. 12).

- 28 – While *pratyakṣa* is usually translated as “perception,” I follow Hayes in thinking that Dignāga seems to mean something closer to what we would mean by “sensation,” since “perception” has the connotation of “seeing something as something” whereas “sensation” retains Dignāga’s sense of bare awareness with no concepts whatsoever attached (Hayes 1988, p. 134). However, since *pratyakṣa* generally means something closer to “perception” for other Indian philosophers, I will translate it as “perception” to avoid confusion. I will translate *anumāna* as “inference” with the following caveat from Shastri: “Dignāga’s inference thus embraces, besides our inference, all that we would call judgment, intellection, ideation, thought, reason, etc., every cognitive process, except pure passive sensation” (Shastri 1997, p. 62). Most often, however, I will try to avoid translating these terms to retain some of their semantic particularity.
- 29 – *pratyakṣam anumānaṃ ca pramāṇe te dve eva. yasmāt lakṣanadvayam | prameyaṃ* (PS 1.2a–c).
- 30 – *svalakṣanaviṣayam ca pratyakṣaṃ sāmānyalakṣanaviṣayam anumānam. . .* (PS 1.2c).
- 31 – Why do two *pramāṇas* follow from the existence of two *prameyas*? Part of the answer may be grammatical. *Pramāṇa* is literally “the instrument of veridical cognition” and *prameya* is a gerundive that literally means “that which is to be veridically cognized.” If there are two things to be veridically cognized and these two things are radically dichotomous, it seems to follow—at least for Dignāga—that the means or instruments of cognizing these two things must also be dichotomous.
- 32 – *pratyakṣaṃ kalpanāpoḍham* (PS 1.3a).
- 33 – *nāmajātyādiyojanā* (PS 1.3d).
- 34 – *tathā pratyakṣaṃ kalpanāpoḍham iti sthitam* (PS 1.12d).
- 35 – Dignāga seems to hold the view that *pratyakṣa* cognitions are sense data that are incorrigible or undoubtable in the sense discussed by J. L. Austin (Austin 1962, chap. 10).
- 36 – The controversy begins with Dignāga’s discussion of error at PS 1.7cd–1.8ab, in which he uses the word “*sataimira*” (lit., “with the *taimira* eye disease”), and his argument against the Nyāya theory of perception, which allows for errors based solely on defects in a sense organ (PS 1.3.1; Hattori 1968, pp. 122–123 n. 3.7; Taber 2005, p. 173 n. 96; Franco 1986, pp. 79–80). Jinendrabuddhi and Dharmakīrti take “*sataimira*” as a separate kind of error, thus necessitating the addition of “non-erroneous” to make sense of this kind of non-conceptual error

(Hattori 1968, pp. 95–96 n. 1.53; Taber 2005, p. 173 n. 96). Hattori and Franco, however, suggest that Dignāga did not accept “*sataimira*” as a separate kind of error. Hattori translates *sataimira* as “accompanied by obscurity,” which modifies “*pratyakṣābhāsa*” (“false appearance of perception”) (Hattori 1968, p. 28). Franco’s position is that Dignāga, at least in writing the *vṛtti*, takes even *sataimira* cognitions to be caused by the mind, and thus such cognition is simply a subset of error based on conceptual construction (*bhrānti*): “The eye by itself does not have the capacity of ‘inventing’ the image of a caul, what it could do at most is to disturb the mind in such a way, that a mental cognition of a caul is produced” (Franco 1986, p. 93).

- 37 – Franco suggests that Dignāga may have been pushed into this rather radical position by a consideration of the skeptical arguments of Nāgārjuna in *MMK* and *VV*, which threatened to undermine *pramāṇa* theory (Franco 1986, pp. 86–92).
- 38 – For a discussion of the translation of *svabhāvapratibandha*, see Dunne 2004, p. 151 n. 17.
- 39 – Thus, talk of “fire” and “smoke” as universals can be reduced to causal relationships between causal continuums of fire particulars and smoke particulars, and talk of “macadamias” and “nuts” can be reduced to an identity relation such that any particular macadamia is automatically a particular nut.
- 40 – This chapter concerns the Buddhist definitions of *pramāṇa*. In the first half, Jayarāśi argues that the definitions of *pramāṇa* as both the apprehension of a previously unapprehended object (*anadhigatāgantr*) and as that which is non-contradictory (*avisaṃvādin*) are incoherent. The latter part of the chapter contains the arguments I consider here. Note that both chapter headings and paragraphs were created by Sanghavi and Parikh in their edition of the text (Sanghavi and Parikh 1987, p. ii).
- 41 – *tad dviṭvaṃ kiṃ vyaktibhedenākārabhedena viṣayabhedena vā?* (*TUS* 3.3).
- 42 – All of my characterizations of Jayarāśi’s “Non-establishment of Difference Argument” in the next few pages come from *TUS* 3.3–3.332 unless otherwise noted.
- 43 – *jñānākāravatirekeṇa pratyakṣānumānayor nākārāntaram asti* (*TUS* 3.32).
- 44 – *tasyābhinnātmakatvāt* (*TUS* 3.32).
- 45 – *kim agnyādisvalakṣaṇaviṣayaṃ vidyamānasāmānyaviṣayaṃ apāramārthikasāmānyaviṣayaṃ vā nirviṣayaṃ vā svāmśaviṣayaṃ vā?* (*TUS* 3.331).
- 46 – *na tarhi tasya bhrāntatāsataḥ svena rūpeṇa vidhyamānatvāt* (*TUS* 3.331).
- 47 – *svāmśasyāvañcanāt* (*TUS* 3.331). While Jayarāśi probably intends us to resolve the *sandhi* as “*avañcana*” (non-delusion), it is possible that he intends “*āvañcana*,” which would mean that the parts of cognition are always connected or literally are “flowing near” (*āvañcana*) each other (Monier-Williams

1994, p. 154). In this case, the parts of a cognition cannot be separated in order for one part to lead the other astray.

- 48 – *rūpādisvalakṣaṇaviṣayam ātmaviṣayam ubhayaviṣayaṃ vā?* (TUS 3.332).
- 49 – *tadanavagatāv etadgatyabhāvāt* (TUS 3.332).
- 50 – *apratyakṣopalambhasya nārthaḍṛṣṭiḥ prasidhyati* (Pramāṇavinīścaya; see Dharmakīrti 2007, 1.54). For further discussion of Dharmakīrti’s argument, see Franco 1994, pp. 429–430 n. 183.
- 51 – *tad apy ayuktam, ekopalambhasya dvitīyākāraparihāreṇa vyavasthitatvāt. yadi ca rūpagrḥīter eva jñānagrḥītis, tadā rūpasya jñānarūpatā, jñānasya vā rūpa-rūpatā, rūpagrḥīter vā rūpavyavasthāpakatvam* (TUS 3.332).
- 52 – *na caikasyākāradvayaṃ paśyāmaḥ* (TUS 3.332).
- 53 – Dignāga and Dharmakīrti could perhaps reply to Jayarāśi’s arguments. Dignāga might ask why it is that one cognition cannot have two forms. Jayarāśi asserts this in “The Non-establishment of Difference Argument” (*vikalpas* 2 and 3.2.3). Perhaps these are options for establishing the difference between perception and inference, since a perception would have a particular and itself as its object while an inference would have a universal and itself as its object. Jayarāśi may be right that Dignāga is committed to the ontological reality of only one form per object, since *pramāṇa* and *pramāṇa-phala* are ultimately identical. Even so, Dignāga has established that a single cognition has two-forms (*dvi-rūpa*): the form of itself and the form of the object. Dignāga means that a single cognition, being a unique particular, ultimately has just one form, but that that form itself has two aspects. Therefore, the difference between perception and inference is established by the different aspects of their forms. But, then, Jayarāśi might ask, if one takes *rūpa* or *ākāra* in the sense of “appearance,” Dignāgan phenomenalism makes it difficult to see how one particular can *have* more than one appearance if that particular simply *is* an appearance.
- 54 – *evaṃ dvitvasaṅkhyāvyavahārānupapattiḥ* (TUS 3.3a). Interestingly, Candrakīrti offers a similar argument against Dignāga:
- Furthermore, if it is said that there are two *pramāṇas* through adherence to two characteristics—particular and universal, then that characterized thing, of which there are two characterizing marks (i.e., particular and universal), does that exist, or on the other hand, does it not exist? If it exists, then there is another third *prameya* than those two, so how are there two *pramāṇas*? On the other hand, if that which is characterized does not exist, then the characterization is also without a basis, so how could there be two *pramāṇas*? (*Prasannapadā*; see Candrakīrti 1960, p. 20, lines 20–23)
- 55 – Jayarāśi considers the objection of a Buddhist *pūrvapakṣin*: “But then someone might object that the ascertainment of two [*pramāṇas*] is due to conceptualization. This is not correct. Even that conceptualization does not grasp two [*pramāṇas*], because it concludes in the cognition of itself. Or if it did grasp [two *pramāṇas*], then the [Buddhist] position would be abandoned” (*atha vikal-*

pena dvayāvdhāraṇam iti cet. tad ayuktam, asāv apy ātmasaṃvedanaparyavasitatvān na dvayaṃ grhṇāti. grahaṇe vābhyupetahānam [TUS 3.3a]. Jayarāśi is pointing out that a conceptual cognition by definition cannot apprehend a perceptual cognition directly. If it could, Buddhists would abandon their position that perception is free from conceptualization, because this alleged cognition capable of ascertaining both perception and inference would be conceptual, not perceptual.

- 56 – *tadanupapattau ca dve eveti jaḍaceṣṭitam (TUS 3.3a).* Perhaps one feature shared by many Cārvākas is that they do not consider *ad hominem* attacks to be unfair!
- 57 – Nonetheless, Jayarāśi does not spend equal time criticizing every school. Vedāntins and Jains are not discussed in great detail, and Madhyamaka is not mentioned at all. Jayarāśi discusses what seems to be an early pre-Śāṅkara version of Vedānta in the chapter on the soul (*TUS*, p. 81), and he refutes the Jain theories of the soul (pp. 76–79), but spends little effort on the epistemological doctrines of either school. There is an affinity between Jayarāśi and Madhyamaka in style of argument and in their skeptical approach. Perhaps Jayarāśi simply did not feel the need to criticize a school so similar to himself. It is also possible, as Hayes has argued (Hayes 1994), that Madhyamaka was simply never a popular or philosophically important school in classical India. Of course, why Jayarāśi chose to criticize the schools he did remains a matter of speculation. It could very well be that these were simply the schools with which he was familiar for completely contingent personal reasons.
- 58 – Westerhoff gives a clear exposition of the *prasajya-paryudāsa* distinction and its role in understanding the Madhyamaka *catuṣkoṭi*. He also makes an interesting comparison to the contemporary distinction between choice negation and exclusion negation (Westerhoff 2006, pp. 368–370).
- 59 – Dreyfus and Garfield claim that Candrakīrti could be seen as a “constructive Pyrrhonian” who “offers us a description of our epistemic practices *just as practices*, that is, without defending them, as well as a critique of any possible defense of those practices” (Dreyfus and Garfield 2011, p. 126). Although Jayarāśi mentions everyday practice (*vyavahāra*), he does not say anything particularly constructive about it.
- 60 – Just for a bit of fun, let’s apply Jayarāśi’s general procedure to some of the self-referential peculiarities of global anti-realism. Here’s what I think he might say: Is anti-realism true or is it false? If it is false, then we need not bother with it. If it is true, then is it true under some conceptual description or under no conceptual description? If it is true under no conceptual description, then there is one thing, namely anti-realism itself, that is true outside our purposes, intentions, et cetera, and just fits things as they really are. Then it would seem that anti-realism must take a realist theory with regard to its own truth, and hence imply its own falsehood, because there is one counter-example to global

anti-realism: namely, its own truth. On the other hand, if anti-realism is true under some conceptual description, then under *which* description is it true? Its own? This would seem to be begging the question, for anti-realism is true only if anti-realism is true. Some other description? Then which one? Under philosophical analysis in general? But then why do some respectable philosophers uphold realism while utilizing the same basic concepts of logic and philosophical practice? Maybe it is true only under the description of proper philosophical analysis? But then, this is just anti-realism itself, which implies once again that the theory is question begging. Therefore, anti-realism is not established.

- 61 – Franco gives his translation of this passage in his introduction (Franco 1994, p. 44), and it appears in the Sanghavi and Parikh edition as follows: *tad evam upapluteṣv eva tattveṣv avicāritaramaṇīyāḥ sarve vyavahārā ghaṭanta iti* (TUS, p. 125).
- 62 – Williams argues that we should be deflationists about truth and that “metaphysical realism has no particular connection with any sceptical problems or answer to them” (Williams 1996, p. 266).
- 63 – For a collection on Bhartṛhari that includes several papers on his sentence holism, see Bhate and Bronkhorst 1993. Sen and Matilal (1988) discuss the debates between Bhartṛhari, the Prabhākhāra Mīmāṃsakas, and the Bhaṭṭa Mīmāṃsakas, and they compare these debates to contemporary discussions of Frege’s context principle.
- 64 – *lokavyavahāraṃ prati sadṛśau bālapaṇḍitau* (TUS 0.1). While this fragment may initially appear to be a Cārvāka maxim, some scholars argue that it is probably of Buddhist origin (Bhattacharya 2002, p. 620; Franco 1994, p. 43).
- 65 – For discussion of how Pyrrhonists and Academic skeptics answered such charges, see Thorsrud 2009, pp. 4–6, 80–83, 136–146. In VV 5–6, Nāgārjuna raises a version of a self-refutation objection from Nyāya. In *Nyāya Sūtra* 2.1.12–13 a Madhyamaka-style argument against *pramāṇas* is considered and rejected as self-contradictory.
- 66 – Vidyananda’s critique occurs in his *Pramāṇaparīkṣa* (Franco 1994, p. 33). Franco discusses Bhāsarvajña’s critique in the *Nyāyabhūṣaṇa* in some detail (Franco 1994, pp. 553–581).
- 67 – *sa pratīpakṣasthāpanāhīno vaitaṇḍā* (*Nyāya Sūtra*; see Gautama 1985, 1.2.3). Vātsyāyana, in his *Nyāyabhāṣya*, claims that a *vaitaṇḍika* actually has a view, but simply does not put it forward as a thesis during the debate: “That very thing which is said and characterized as a negation of that other [view], *that* is the view of the *vaitaṇḍika*, but it is not the case that some thing, which is this thing to be proved (*sādhya*), is established as a thesis (*pratijñā*)” (*yad vai khalu tatparapratīśedhalakṣaṇaṃ vākyaṃ sa vaitaṇḍikasya pakṣaḥ, na tv asau kiñcid arthaṃ pratijñāya sthāpayatīti* [Vātsyāyana 1985, 1.2.3]). Uddyotakara, in his *Nyāyavārttika*, doesn’t necessarily think the *vaitaṇḍika* has a view on the sub-

ject of the debate, but he does think the *vaitaṇḍika* accepts at least four things: “In accepting the refutation, [the *vaitaṇḍika*] admits (1) the view to be refuted, (2) that he considers the view to be incorrect, (3) that there is a propounder [of the other view], and (4) that there is an asserter (i.e., himself)” (*dūṣaṇam abhyupagacchan dūṣyam abhyupaiti ayathārthāvabodham pratipadyate pratipādayitāraṃ pratipattāraṃ ca*. [Uddyotakara 1985, 1.2.3]). For more on early Nyāya attempts to formulate a theory of debate, see Preisendanz 2000.

- 68 – Jayarāśi also avoids a problem that Stanley Cavell raises about external-world skepticism. According to Cavell, skeptical arguments about the external world do not mean what they are purported to mean, because epistemologists put forward a claim in “a non-claim context,” that is, that a claim that nobody knows anything about the external world is not properly a claim at all, since such a claim “must be the investigation of a concrete claim if its procedure is to be coherent; it cannot be the investigation of a concrete claim if its conclusion is to be general” (Cavell 1979, pp. 218–220). In other words, a skeptical claim cannot be both meaningful (where, as Wittgenstein argues, meaning must be embedded in a specific inquiry) and general (where the claim concerns knowledge as such). For Jayarāśi and other skeptics about epistemology, the fact that they are not making a positive claim is itself the point of such skepticism.
- 69 – Do such skeptics accept the basic principles of logic? I see two possible answers in Jayarāśi’s case. First, perhaps Jayarāśi must accept at least the principle of non-contradiction, since a *prasaṅga* argument only works by revealing a contradiction. Jayarāśi rejects epistemology precisely because it leads to contradictions. On the other hand, perhaps Jayarāśi points out contradictions merely because his opponents think contradictions are to be avoided while he himself has no opinion on the matter.
- 70 – This mistake is one that “views the Sceptic’s mental life from the standpoint of the Dogmatist, and assumes that, even after the Sceptical medicine has taken its effect, the structure of the Sceptic’s assents and dissents will remain largely the same as before” (Hankinson 1995, p. 286). Thorsrud sees Pyrrhonism as a practice rather than a theory or set of beliefs, so the charge of inconsistency is a category mistake: “Just as it is neither consistent nor inconsistent to ride a bicycle, the practice of scepticism, in so far as it is something the sceptic *does*, can be neither consistent nor inconsistent . . .” (Thorsrud 2009, p. 146).
- 71 – Whether Jayarāśi uses language in this skeptical, uncommitted way in everyday contexts is difficult to determine. He may well use language in a straightforward way as long as he is not doing epistemology, or, alternatively, he may appear to use language in a normal way in everyday contexts by saying the same things as everyone else, but he may in fact have a radically different attitude toward the things he says.
- 72 – Jayarāśi might find particular delight in a recent criticism by Elke Brendel, who exploits a self-referential peculiarity of contextualism in somewhat the same

way that Jayarāṣi exploits an issue of self-reference for Dignāga in the Impossibility of Considering Duality Argument. Brendel argues that contextualism faces a serious problem in that “there is no context in which the contextualist can claim to know that her theory is true” (Brendel 2005, p. 38). Brendel’s conclusion is that the main theses of contextualism, when combined with other plausible theses about knowledge, generate the contradiction that a contextualist both knows and does not know that contextualism is true in the same context (pp. 47–51).

73 – *purandaras tvāḥ*—“*lokaprasiddham anumānaṃ cārvākair apīṣyata eva, yattu kaiścl laukikaṃ mārgam atikramyānumānam ucyate tanniśidhyate*” (Bhattacharya 2002, p. 608). Bhattacharya quotes this from Kamaśīla’s *Tattvasaṃgraha-pañjikā*. Additionally, Jayanta’s *Nyāyamañjarī* attributes to the “well-educated Cārvākas” the view that “the determination of the number of *pramāṇas* is not possible” (*aśakya eva pramāṇasaṅkhyāniyama iti suśikṣitacārvākāḥ*) (Bhattacharya 2002, p. 609).

74 – There is a similar question about Nāgārjuna. The direct targets of Nāgārjunian therapy are certain bits of scholastic theory, although such bits are built on a common human impulse: the desire to “get things right” and the tendency to cling to theories once they are formulated. Jayarāṣi has a similar attitude, although his is not tied to specific Buddhist attitudes about desire and clinging. Tom Tillemans considers a similar question of whether the idea of *svabhāva* is a purely academic abstraction or something inherent in people’s ordinary thinking (Tillemans 2007, pp. 520–523).

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