Seeing, in a dream, the sunrise to the west, he was certain that the teacher Dharmottara had entered the country.¹

The language of philosophy always has something inappropriate about it and in its intention always pursues more than can be found in its assertions or by simply taking it at its word. The words that carry its concepts, words that have been coined in it and passed down, are not firm markers and signals through which something can be univocally designated.²

How should we translate philosophy? How can we translate philosophy? It “has something inappropriate about it,” it is not “firm,” not “fixed,” and its words cannot be “univocally designated.” Philosophy involves interpretation, it requires it. But the drive to translate philosophy runs up against the demands philosophy places on its reader. How can we determine where our interpretation, our reading, has gone too far? Or, does it even make sense to think of the interpretation of this kind of text going “too far”? The translator of philosophy must first interpret the text before they can translate it, and once they have interpreted it, they must ask what the relationship between their interpretation and the “original” text is.

The translator of the ⁸th century Buddhist philosophical text the *Nyāyabinduṭīkā* or *A Commentary on the Drop of Reason* confronts each and every one of these questions and many more. The *Nyāyabinduṭīkā*, written by Dharmottara, presents an exhaustive theory of knowledge that covers the processes, psychology, and ontology involved in attaining knowledge. The text’s movements are rather different from the movements of western epistemological texts; its theory

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¹ sa svapne paśicimāśāyāṃ lakṣayann udayaṃ raveḥ |
deśe dharmottarācāryaṃ praviṣṭaṃ sādhv amanyata || RT 4.498

² HG In *GR*, 66.
of knowledge is unlike its western counterpart, it is articulated in its own tradition, which precedes it by more than a thousand years, and it is in dialogue with an expansive philosophical textual tradition that simply cannot be understood in its entirety. The text itself is intertextual. It is twofold; it consists of an earlier short treatise, the 7th century Nyāyabindu or The Drop of Reason by Dharmakīrti, and of Dharmottara’s later commentary on this text. The Nyāyabindu states that, “perception’s object is the particular” and that, “a particular is an object whose appearance in a cognition differs depending on the particular’s proximity or distance.” What is this “particular”? how should we understand it? Its role in the perceptual process is clearly important. It is the exclusive object of perception and “only it ultimately exists.” The “particular” is the linchpin of Dharmakīrti’s philosophy. It is where ontology and epistemology meet. But the status of this term is not clear, it is not fixed in Dharmakīrti’s text, it is polyvocal. It is ambiguous. It requires interpretation.

In this paper, I will discuss how this term exemplifies the difficulty of translating philosophy. I will attempt to position myself and my translation of the first section of the Nyāyabinduṭikā, the section on perception, within the context of retranslation, reading, and retranslation theory. I will argue that the practice of translating a text like this—in relation to the original text, to other translations, and to existing scholarship—provides an opportunity to re-theorize retranslation. Retheorizing from the position of practice will produce a discussion of retranslation that recognizes the complexity of causal factors and networks that lead to the production of all translation, not just retranslation. While many theories of retranslation emphasize the importance of increased knowledge of the source text and its reception, they mistake the way this information comes to bear on the act of retranslation and how retranslation relates to preceding translations. Retranslations, no matter how many dust jackets or reviewers say so, are not increasingly more accurate or more definitive, whatever that means. Instead, we should appraise translations in terms of the particularity of their project. My translation does not, in theory or reality, replace the translation of Fyodor Ippolitovich Stcherbatsky from 1930. Similarly, his translation does not suffer from some lack or insufficiency that makes it an inadequate choice for English readers hoping to learn something about South Asian Buddhist

3 The translation is my own. 1.12 tasya viṣayaḥ svalakṣaṇam. And 1.13 yasyārthasya sannidhāṇāsannidhānābhyāṃ jñānapratibhāsahedastat svalakṣaṇam. Shastri (ed.) NBP, 39 and 40.
4 1.14 tadeva paramārthasat. Sharti (ed.) NBP, 41.
philosophy. What distinguishes our translations is their differences, their respective attempts to translate ambiguity into English, and how that attempt succeeds and fails. In other words, each of our translations represents an interpretation of the text. They represent sets of decisions made about how to best translate something obscure and these interpretative decisions can, to some extent, be said to reside in the polyvocality of the original.

I will start by examining some of the difficulties that the texts context and philosophic tradition place on the English translator. Next, I will address Stcherbatsky and what can be gleaned about his translation project, including some of his biographical details, his overarching perspective on non-western philosophy and intellectual traditions, and the specific strategies he adopts to translate Dharmottara’s text. This discussion will lead into my own translation project and the decisions I make to bring some of the ambiguity and obscurity of the original text into English. Drawing on these discussions, I will finish by considering some of the theoretical implications that my discussion of Stcherbatsky and my translation experience can provide retranslation theory.

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The Nyāyabinduṭīkā presents a particular challenge to the translator of philosophy because it falls outside the domain of the western philosophical traditions. The different cultural and geographic context highlights the already complicated task of translating philosophical texts within the western tradition, broadly defined. While it is true that philosophical texts written in European languages frequently entail their own difficulties, the additional difficulty in the translation of non-western thought is the absence of a shared vocabulary and even radically divergent methods of philosophical inquiry.5

The Nyāyabindu consists of three chapters of 20-30 concise sentences each outlining Dharmakīrti’s epistemology. Its first chapter focuses on his theory perception, while the second and third chapters focus on his two theories of inference. Dharmottara’s 8th century commentary (ṭīkā) on this text attempts to explain Dharmakīrti’s arguments, refute other interpretations, and defend its epistemology against non-Buddhist opponents. However, Dharmottara’s originality as a philosopher should not be overshadowed by the genre in which he writes. Although

5 This is not to suggest that western philosophical vocabularies are stable or static, but just that there is more that we share from one western philosophical tradition to another. I would suggest that this sense of a shared vocabulary is not always actual.
Dharmottara sets out to explain the philosophical theories of Dharmakīrti, and may have even thought that he was doing only that, Dharmottara develops, refines, adapts the epistemological theories presented in the *Nyāyabindu*.

The translator of Dharmottara has to be aware of these innovations and their different philosophical context.

Broadly, epistemology is concerned with what we can reliably know as well as the limits and the conditions of knowledge. In the western tradition since Plato, the majority of philosophers describe knowledge as some kind of justified true belief. In this system, someone can claim to know something if they form a belief in appropriate circumstances, if they are committed to that belief, i.e. they are not just speculating, etc., and if the belief is true. Indian epistemological traditions, on the other hand, emphasize the different ways that we can know things. In place of in-depth considerations of what constitutes justified true belief, South Asian epistemologists are most often concerned with the process of knowing, of the different ways or means of gaining knowledge. These means of knowledge are called *pramāṇa*, but the cognitive events they produce are also called *pramāṇa*. The different means of knowledge include perception in every non-skeptical South Asian tradition of philosophy, but some traditions include inference, testimony, scripture, analogy etc., in this list. The basic idea is that there are processes, be them mental or physiological, that allow us to gain knowledge and when these processes are properly defined, we can further understand the circumstances in which we can trust our cognitions and when we cannot.

In this text Dharmakīrti and Dharmottara only accept two means of knowledge, namely perception and inference. Starting with the late 5th century Buddhist philosopher Dignāga, members of his philosophical school started to explain ontology and epistemology as mutually constitutive, tying each means of knowledge with a kind of entity. Drawing on the work of this earlier theorist, Dharmakīrti and Dharmottara claim that there are only two kinds of entities, particulars (*svalakṣaṇa*) and universals (*sāmānyalakṣaṇa*) and that they are the objects of perceptions and inference respectively. Along with this division in ontology, most Buddhist

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6 LM & PP *BPLI*, esp. 16-20.

7 I translate the Sanskrit term *jñāna* as ‘cognition’ because, unlike awareness, it is not dispositional and although it can be used to signify the process of knowledge, e.g. perception, it also serves to designate the result of that a process, i.e. a cognition of something.

philosophers in South Asia argue that there are two levels of existence and two ways in which an entity can exist; one is conventionally existent (saṁvṛtisat) and the other is ultimately existent (paramārthasat). Consistent with the theory of two truths, only particulars (svalaksana) truly exist, while universals are only conventionally true. What does it mean for something to be conventionally true and ultimately true? Something is conventionally true if it allows us to conduct ourselves in the world, if it serves as an expedient to our thinking and conduct. But if we examine the ontological status of the things we take to be true we realize that they are not all truly existent in the way we thought. Thus, universals are conventionally true because they allow us to schematize the world, to communicate, and achieve knowledge of objects that we cannot perceive through inference, but there is no reality to universals outside of the human mind. The universal is a useful fiction.

Particulars are somewhat different and the way these entities are interpreted has been a point of contention for both modern and pre-modern scholars of Buddhism. No matter how the particular is understood, according to Dharmakirti it is the object of perception. Thus, while we might suppose that a course object like a pot is the object of our perception of that pot, Dharmakirti argues that our perception is actually only of the particular, while the recognition of the thing we see starts to attribute certain universals to it and sees it as a pot and not just a particular. But even this example obscures the ambiguity of the particular. The translator might interpret the particular as a collection of atoms with similar characteristics that we take as “numerically one in being many things.” To make the situation more complicated for the translator, most Buddhists do not believe in the existence of stable entities because nothing persists according to their philosophy. Over time, this insight gave rise to the theory of the momentariness of all entities. In this theory, not only do things not persist but they cannot have duration either. Thus, while it makes sense for Dharmakirti to claim that particulars are the objects of perception, in reality each perception, or perceptual event, perceives a momentary particular that ceases to exist the moment after it is seen.

9 Ibid.
10 Christine Keyt quoted in RR “STDN,” 48.
11 How the theory of momentariness arose philosophically and historically does not concern us here.
12 This is the logical consequence of Dharmakirti’s arguments which Dharmottara synthesizes and tries to explain in terms that are consistent with Dharmakirti’s preceding epistemological theory.
Inference is based on perception because the human mind requires observation of particulars and individual events and relationships to be able to perform inferential reasoning. For example, if we infer the existence of fire on a distant mountain from the smoke we see rising from it, it is clear that the fire we are inferring is not a unique, real particular, but an aggregate entity constructed by the mind. Furthermore, our capacity to even infer fire from smoke relies on the fact that we have *seen* fire and smoke before, that we know the connection between the two, that we have never seen smoke without fire, and that we have never observed smoke without fire. Nevertheless, even though inference is dependent on a non-existent object, a universal, it is a means of knowledge because it can lead us to actual fire. Both Dharmakīrti’s text and Dharmottara’s text are intended to explain how this theory of knowledge can function given the complications this ontology entails.

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In *Buddhist Logic*, a two-volume collection written from 1930 – 1932, Fyodor Stcherbatsky attempts to address the difficulties and complexities of Dharmakīrti and Dharmottara’s texts through an extensive critical apparatus, a philosophical translation of the entire the *Nyāyabinduṭīkā*, and appendices which include translations of other influential South Asian philosophers in dialogue with the *Nyāyabinduṭīkā* and the Buddhist philosophical tradition. For this work and others, Stcherbatsky is widely acknowledged as one of the most important founding scholars of Buddhist studies in the west. Coming to prominence in the late 1800s, Stcherbatsky made use of the wealth of research produced by the scholars who preceded him (such as Vasiley Vasilyev, who was the first person in Europe to report on the existence of Sanskrit philosophical manuscripts such as the *Nyāyabinduṭīkā* in Tibet in the middle of the 19th century) and was able to further their work through rigorous philological training in Russia, Vienna, Tibet, India, and Mongolia. Although cultural appropriation and the use of translation as a means of exploitation were widespread in the colonial context, Stcherbatsky “clearly perceived the significance of the study of Indian philosophy not only for Indology but also for

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13 This three-fold test was introduced by Dignāga, who was pointed out earlier.
14 NT ST
the understanding of the intellectual and spiritual history of mankind” and he attempted to bring non-western philosophy into conversation with western audiences.\(^{15}\)

Stcherbatsky’s respect for the texts he read and translated encouraged him to adopt an approach to writing and translation that was not oriented towards specialists in South Asian and Tibetan thought. In the practice of translation “Stcherbatsky stressed the need for what he called ‘philosophical’ (as opposed to more literal ‘philological’) translations of Sanskrit and Tibetan works, and he strove to render into current Western terms the ideas and the technical terminology of the original texts.”\(^{16}\) This approach allowed Stcherbatsky to avoid the scholarly tendency, which is widespread even today, to stick very closely to the lexical and syntactic aspects of Sanskrit originals, producing “translations that are highly [linguistically] accurate but nearly impossible for those who do not have firsthand knowledge of the primary languages to really understand.”\(^{17}\) Indeed, Stcherbatsky seems to have hoped that exposure to Buddhist logic and epistemology would not only prove the universality of certain philosophical problems and be of some use to those in the west who hoped to reformulate logic and epistemology in the early 20\(^{th}\) century, but he also hoped that this exposure would encourage the western philosopher to interpret Indian philosophy in western terms and western philosophy in Indian terms.\(^{18}\)

Although Stcherbatsky is not exactly clear about his method of translation, especially in terms of specifics, it is clear that one of his primary objectives was to produce translations that “aim at being intelligible” and that show Buddhist logic in its “historical connections.”\(^{19}\) Along with his attempt to render technical Sanskrit in a more intelligible English, Stcherbatsky also provided innumerable footnotes that contextualize philosophical points, provide explanations, clarifications, references, and literal renderings of difficult lines that “enable the reader to fully appreciate the sometimes enormous distance which lies between the words of the sanscrit [sic] phrasing and their philosophic meaning.”\(^{20}\) [emphasis mine] Stcherbatsky’s non-specialist audience and attempt to render Sanskrit philosophy in intelligible English also has other effects.

\(^{15}\) DSR “DTS,” 213.
\(^{16}\) Ibid. 213 – 214.
\(^{17}\) LM & PP BPLI, 35.
\(^{18}\) FTS BL vol. 1, XII.
\(^{19}\) FTS BL vol. 2, V.
\(^{20}\) Ibid.
For example, his comparative perspective encouraged him to find existing philosophic terminology to translate the technical vocabulary of Sanskrit philosophy. To this end, he tried to translate Sanskrit philosophy “by employing the vocabulary of the 19th century philosophers, especially the later Kantians and Hegelians.”

Even though a wealth of research on South Asian and Tibetan Buddhist philosophy preceded Stcherbatsky, a fact he openly acknowledges, he still resorts to what is frequently termed a domesticating approach to translation (i.e. he tries to bring the source text to the target audience). Interestingly, Stcherbatsky ended up translating Dharmakīrti’s particular (svalakṣaṇa) as the “thing-in-itself.” He consciously employed a Kantian reading of the term that saddles the particular (svalakṣaṇa) with strong European philosophical associations. Tracing out the consequences of this method of translation, however, Rajam Raghunathan argues that, while Stcherbatsky’s domesticating translation is not always the most accurate, his decision to render philosophically ambiguous terms in the original with similarly nebulous western philosophical concepts allows him “to convey the interpretative ambiguity surrounding the postulate [i.e. the particular (svalakṣaṇa)] in terms of a similarly indeterminate notion in the Kantian system” and that this constitutes a rather “perceptive hermeneutic strategy.”

Furthermore, Stcherbatsky’s use of Kantian philosophical terminology goes beyond this single instance. For example, he compares the term self-cognition (svasamvedana) to transcendental apperception, judgement or determination (adhyavasāya) to schematization, and conceptualization (kalpanā) to transcendental illusion.

Following Raghunathan, I would argue that Stcherbatsky’s use of western concepts to translate Buddhist philosophy is not very different from more contemporary attempts to use comparison to interpret South Asian and Tibetan thinkers, in particular Dharmakīrti. This hermeneutic method can be used “to determine the vocabulary of inquiry” and “to suggest a view of Dharmakīrti’s tradition that facilitates its integration into the history of human ideas.” But as Georges Dreyfus also points out, “integrating Indian or other cultures to a history written from this perspective is not without danger[... and] runs the risk of obliterating the particularities.”

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21 DSR “DTS,” 214.
22 FTS BL vol. 2, V.
23 RR “STDN,” 51.
24 Ibid. 50.
25 GD RR, 11.
hard to ignore the importance of comparison in hermeneutic endeavors where the object of inquiry is different from the cultural and historical context of the interpreter. The necessary use of comparison to interpret radically different systems of thought is not unique, but instead just shows the comparative nature of all attempts at understanding.  

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Fyodor Stcherbatsky’s publications, especially *Buddhist Logic*, are among the foundational texts available in English for those who wish to study South Asian and Tibetan Buddhism. Although his method of translation and analysis may produce its own interpretive problems for the English reader and foreclose some interpretive options open in the Sanskrit text, his work benefits from two facts: first, as we just saw, his approach to the philosophy of Dharmakīrti and Dharmottara is intentional and systematic, second, Stcherbatsky is forthright about his project, interpretations, and audience. These two facts must not be overlooked. Not only do they help the English reader understand what Stcherbatsky has brought to the text, or what he has done to it in translation, and why he has made these decisions, but it also betrays, I will argue, the sense in which Stcherbatsky came to understand a philosophic tradition radically different from the western ones with which he was familiar.

The context in which translation occurs is immensely important for determining what is available in the target culture that the translator can use to translate the text and how the translation will be undertaken, intentionally or not, and how it will be received. The degree of interconnectivity and the role multiple causation plays in retranslation brings to bear on how we should think of retranslation. As we saw in the introduction, I am not committed to the idea that my retranslation will serve to attack and replace the work of Stcherbatsky and neither am I committed to the idea that Stcherbatsky’s translation has no value for us today. Instead I will try to locate the value of translation outside of the dominant theoretical discourse of lack and progress in retranslation. In an attempt to do this, I acknowledge my indebtedness to Stcherbatsky, the increased knowledge of South Asian intellectual traditions in English, and my own context, but I also do not claim that these factors over-determine what I can achieve in translation. There are almost always choices. In the following, I will outline my own translation project by emphasizing how my context has affected my approach, by highlighting features of

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26 This point will be revisited later.
the *Nyāyabinduṭīkā* that make it a good candidate for retranslation, and by orienting my translation towards Stcherbatsky’s.

Although the context of my translation project determines many of my choices, it also provides points of reference for new translation decisions. As we saw earlier, many contemporary translations of Sanskrit texts, especially philosophical texts, are “nearly impossible for those who do not have firsthand knowledge of the primary languages to really understand.”²⁷ Sanskrit philosophy, which is almost exclusively published in academic settings, is no different. If we pick a scholarly paper at random, we can observe how its translation strategies, whether through its textual apparatuses or even more basically through its syntax and style, prevent most readers from approaching the text. For example, take the 2012 paper on arguments for the validity of Hindu scripture by Elisa Freschi and Kei Kataoka, two very reputable Sanskrit scholars. The following quote presents their translation of a passage explaining how Buddhist philosophers try to prove the validity of their scripture through the reliability of the Buddha. To quote Freschi and Kataoka’s translation:

Moreover, the⁸⁸ Buddhists, etc., insist—in order to establish the validity of their own Texts (*āgama*)—that the Buddha, etc., are reliable [speakers]. They could also claim, in order to establish this [validity], that a Buddhist monk (*vandaka*), etc., is their own “exemplary person”.⁹³[footnotes in the original]²⁸

This quote exhibits the kind of translation strategies that have been instructive for my own translation practice. Although the majority of the decisions made in the translation serve to foreground scholarly transparency and do not need to be discussed here, what I want to draw attention to is the unapproachability of this translation visually and stylistically. The number of textual additions overshadow the text. The translation requires so much of its reader it is likely to turn most of them away, even if they were interested in the material. This kind of translation is both insular, in that it is uninterested in engaging readers outside a particular discipline, and unclear.

Stcherbatsky is also beholden to some of these scholarly translation conventions in his own work. His commitment to the context, or “historical connections”, encourages him to use

²⁷ This may simply indicate that the intended audience of these translations is a small group of scholar. Cf. p 9.
²⁸ EF & KK “JVSTOV,” 38.
footnotes to do most of this work, while his “aim at being intelligible” encourages his use of parentheses to *add* information he feels is required for understanding by context. I do not deploy either of these strategies in my own translation because they draw the reader away from the text. Additionally, I contend that the use of these textual devices has the tendency to carry the reader past the intricacies of the text without them fully engaging in the complexity of its arguments. By way of comparison, I will examine our translations side-by-side to observe the effects these strategies have in translation. The opening of the *Nyāyabinduṭiṅkā*, contains a discussion of the first claim of Dharmakīrti’s *Nyāyabindu*, which states, “The accomplishment of all human objectives is preceded by accurate cognition. Thus, it is taught.”\(^{29}\) The following shows Stcherbatsky’s translation of two sentences from Dharmottara’s first paragraph alongside my translation and the original.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dharmottara’s original</th>
<th>Stcherbatsky’s translation</th>
<th>My translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yasmāt samyagyānapūrvikā sarvapuruṣārthasiddhiḥ, tasmāt tatpratipattaye idam ārabhyate ity ayam atra vākyārthāḥ. (Shastri 6)</td>
<td>Because (he says) all successful human action is preceded by right knowledge, therefore this (phenomenon) must be investigated, and with this aim the present treatise is undertaken. Such is the meaning of the (prefatory) sentence.(^{3}) [footnote in the original] (Stcherbatsky 1)</td>
<td>Dharmakīrti wrote this text to teach accurate cognition because the accomplishment of all human objectives is preceded by it. This is the full meaning of his opening assertion.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These two passages help illustrate the variety of divergent translation strategies in Stcherbatsky’s and my translations, but, for the moment, I want to make an observation about the use of parentheses and footnotes. While parentheses may help to indicate what words or expressions are found in the original and which are not, and can signal a kind of translation transparency to the

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\(^{29}\) My translation. samyagyānapūrvikā sarvapuruṣārthasiddhiḥ iti tad vyutpādyate. Shastri (ed.) *NBP*, 4.
reader, they do little more than that, especially for a non-specialist audience. As previously mentioned, the use of parentheses signals a scholarly transparency intended for other scholars. Once the decision is made to address a non-specialist audience, this strategy tends to become counterproductive for the reader. It seems likely that this kind of translation decision will serve, not to assist the reader, which is what it does in the scholarly context, but to mystify them. The use of footnotes and endnotes can elicit the same apprehension in the reader, but more importantly they are disruptive to the reading process. They constantly draw the reader away from the text to the paratext for assistance. I am not suggesting that the translator should not add information to provide important contextual, technical, or stylistic information, but that this work does not need to be signaled in the body of the translation. For example, important contextual information in my translation will be included in a glossary according to page and line number, but without signaling this information in the body of the translation. The absence of these notes encourages readers of the text to trust themselves as they read and to be comfortable with the suspension of closure.

My translation decisions in the example above help identify two of the factors which affect my translation. First, my goal is to produce a translation that is accessible to most interested readers. While this audience may be more helpfully identified as a philosophically oriented audience, I try to translate in such a way as to allow even the non-philosopher to read my translation. Dharmottara’s text is very accessible compared to many others in Sanskrit which makes it a good candidate for this kind of translation project. Second, my context, by and large, is scholarly. The norms and practices of the scholarly discipline influence my translation decisions in often unconscious and unpredictable ways. But scholarly translation practices also provide one of the points of departure for my own translation decisions. In the tradition of philosophy, countless academics and scholars in the western philosophical tradition have derided non-western philosophy and many scholars of non-western philosophy have decried the longstanding prevalence of ethnocentrism in philosophy and philosophy departments across the U.S. and abroad. The parochialism of philosophy in the west has innumerable causes, but one

30 While it is essential that the translator is honest and clear about what they have done in the translation process, there is no reason for this honesty to take place in the body of the text. It can be pointed out in introductions, prefaces, etc.

31 This decision is informed, in part, by Sheridan Blau’s concept of performative literacy. SB LWTTR
that I hope to address by translating to a philosophically inclined audience is to improve the basic accessibility of Sanskrit philosophical texts through the readability of my translation.

Compared to many other Sanskrit philosophical texts, especially those available in English translation, the *Nyāyabinduṭīkā* is stylistically more accessible and a more manageable length. It is a very effective introduction to both Buddhist epistemology and South Asian philosophic methods of writing and argument. While many Sanskrit philosophical texts are deeply interwoven with the traditions from which they arise, the scope of the *Nyāyabinduṭīkā* is more general in its terminology and topic. Most Sanskrit philosophic translations are rather unwieldy in their length and rather technical in their language, but the *Nyāyabinduṭīkā* stands out as a more comprehensive philosophical text, even though it is relatively short, and, therefore, as a more accessible candidate for translation. The text is also highly accessible in Sanskrit.

Dharmottara is a clear and precise writer. His style reflects the communicative and stylistic achievements of the long tradition of commentary in Sanskrit philosophical and intellectual writing and provides another point of instruction for the English reader. While other Sanskrit writers push the limit of the level of precision possible in the language, which can obscure the authors arguments even in Sanskrit, Dharmottara strikes a balance between concision and precision.

In spite of Dharmottara’s precision, his text is not always clear, it is often ambiguous, and sometimes obscure. These features of the original text present a particular challenge to the translator. As we saw earlier, Stcherbatsky addressed some of these difficulties, such as terminological ambiguity, by adopting translation strategies that maintain ambiguity on the word to word level and more systematically. Maintaining this ambiguity is particularly difficult when obscurity is taken into account. In Stcherbatsky’s case, the use of Kantian terminology allows the translated text to maintain some of this ambiguity, but pulls it into the western philosophic tradition. One of my primary interests in maintaining ambiguity is whether we can do this while keeping resonances with western philosophic traditions at a minimum. Thus, while Stcherbatsky maintains the ambiguity rather ingeniously, he forecloses certain interpretive options open in the original and brings Buddhist epistemology closer to the western tradition. I have tried to avoid the over-determination that some of these resonances bring to Dharmottara’s text by avoiding

32 Some scholars have argued that this is a feature of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti’s philosophical project as well. Cf. LM & PP *BPLI*, 14 – 15.
more loaded philosophical vocabulary. Where Stcherbatsky uses the “thing in itself” to translate the *svalaksana*, I am content with the ambiguity and vagueness that “the particular” brings to the text. It seems to me that the degrees of ambiguity that we touched on earlier are included in the use of the more general, standard term “particular”. Thus, when Dharmakīrti claims, “perception’s object is the particular”, it might mean that perception shows a particular in the absolute sense (i.e. as the totally unique particular without extension and duration) or in the more general sense (i.e. as the opposite of a universal and thus any particular object, e.g. a jar, tree, etc.). Or the particular might signify a number of intermediate positions between these two extremes, for example, the particular taken as a collection of atoms with similar characteristics that we take as numerically one in being many things. Stcherbatsky’s translation is also helpful in identifying other likely targets for terminological slippage in translation. For example, some contemporary scholars translate the effectual or efficacious capacity (*prāpaka*) (lit. “leading to, conveying, procuring”) of the cognition, which identifies it as a valid cognition or *pramāṇa*, as “intentional”. Without getting into the myriad contemporary philosophical associations this translation brings to the text, this translation has the additional downside of leaving out, or overshadowing, the causal relationship the efficacious capacity (*prāpaka*) of cognition carries. In basic terms, intentionality is a cognition’s capacity to be about, or directed towards, its object while efficaciousness (*prāpakatva*) signifies a cognition’s capacity to lead the person who has it to the object or the particular they perceived.

Stcherbatsky’s translation continues to exert influence in South Asian studies. His translation, as Raghunathan has argued, does not simply represent the ethnocentric translation practices of an early 20th century scholar, but instead constitutes a much broader and systematic interpretation through translation. As he read through Sanskrit and Tibetan texts, he saw Kant everywhere. Even though I do not see Kant in Dharmakīrti and Dharmottara and do not want to bring him into my translation, I find Stcherbatsky extremely instructive in formulating my translation decisions. Importantly, I am also influenced by the scholars that preceded him and by those that followed him. There are so many influences in my decision to translate what I choose to translate and how, that I cannot identify most of them. This is part of the multi-causal web that

33 Cf. p 5.
34 DA *BBB*, 44.
produces and influences translation and defies the dominant retranslation theories. So, how should we re-theorize retranslation?

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While translation theory has flourished for decades, speculation about the unique role of retranslation in the translation process is much more recent. Although retranslation theory has recently experienced some reformation and development through theoretical reorientation, empirical investigation, and experimental practice, the vast majority of discussions of retranslation stem from Antoine Berman’s theory of retranslation or the retranslation hypothesis. According to Françoise Massardier-Kenney, the retranslation hypothesis maintains that first translations tend to be more domesticating in their approach to translation, thus reducing the “alterity” of the source text, and that “it is in the aftermath of a ‘blind and unhesitating’ first translation that the possibility of ‘an accomplished translation rises’. Along with an emphasis on sequence, the retranslation hypothesis also stresses the role of temporality in retranslation. According to the metaphor of the retranslation hypothesis:

Translations are ‘hot’ when they have to be done on the spot, with the translation appearing right after the original work and with no research knowledge available yet on the work in question, and ‘cold’ if enough time has passed for the translator to resort to research and audience responses when preparing her/his translation. The relevant body of knowledge accessible to the translator would explain the increased ‘accuracy’ which may appear in a later translation. [emphasis mine]

The retranslation hypothesis is committed to two essential suppositions: first, it holds that the translator’s intuitions about the expectations of the target audience determine their choices about prevailing norms in the target language, second, it maintains that increased knowledge about the source text and context will help improve the translator’s ability to accurately represent the source text in the target language. Thus, the retranslation hypothesis provides an explanatory model for evaluating translation and retranslation while also providing one way to evaluate the value of retranslation. That is to say, the second or third translator can use the translations that

35 FMK “TRR,” 73.
36 Ibid.
37 OP & KK “RT,” 32.
precede her as well as the increased temporal distance from the source text and the increased scholarly output it affords to correct the errors of earlier translation(s). As a result, the retranslation hypothesis provides an account for both the material facts of retranslation, i.e. its marketability both in practice and theory, as well as its cultural value, i.e. why anyone should spend their time translating a text that has already reached the target culture.

According to the retranslation hypothesis, retranslation should correct the missteps of the preceding translation(s). Thus, my retranslation of Dharmottara should address Stcherbatsky’s translation successes and failures in order to create a more accurate translation. In Antione Berman’s Toward a Translation Criticism, he asserts that translation criticism “means, fundamentally, bringing out the truth of a translation” and that “the critic must shed light on the reasons for the translation’s failure […] and prepare the space for a retranslation without acting as an advice giver.”38 But, as Françoise Massardier-Kenney, Outi Paloposki and Kaisa Koskinen, and others have pointed out, this theory of retranslation is both theoretically shortsighted and empirically inconsistent.39 Massardier-Kenney has helpfully pointed out the theory’s reliance on the “discourse of lack.” As she puts it, “Berman’s significance as a thinker of translation leads to an entire critical discourse on retranslations as expressing a default, a deficiency, or decaying of first translations.”40 As time goes on, more distance is gained from the source text, and more knowledge about the source text, source culture, reception, and the target culture becomes available. Then the (re)translator can appraise the failures of preceding translations, i.e. their deficiency, decay, and lack, and produce a more accurate retranslation. According to Massardier-Kenney, even the people who have tried to avoid the discourse of lack in their consideration of retranslation are still committed to a teleological model of translation where the purpose of translation is to represent the content, meaning, or truth of the source text. This model replaces the negative discourse of lack with the somewhat more positive discourse of progress.41

These retranslation theories are neither philosophically or theoretically compelling nor are they consistent with empirical data. Paloposki and Koskinen contend that “Source- or target-orientedness may also be dependent on the observer’s viewpoint: at some other time in history

38 AB TTC, 3 & 7.
39 FMK “TRR,” OP & KK “RT,” and TS “NBHI”
40 FMK “TRR,” 74.
41 Ibid.
(or in the future) or with a different audience there may be a demand for target-oriented (second) translations [also]."\textsuperscript{42} Through their empirical studies of retranslations in Finnish they are able to problematize not only the assumptions of the retranslation hypothesis, but also Berman’s commitment that we can definitively assess the closeness and accuracy of a translation.\textsuperscript{43} Instead, they conclude:

That it is the local context that is often conclusive in the final make-up of the retranslation and that it is the individual commissioners and actors, i.e. translators and other agents, who should be given more emphasis in the study of retranslation. Our results also point in the direction of multiple causation. What lies behind a phenomenon as complicated as retranslation necessarily seems to be caused by a multiplicity of different factors in different combinations: retranslation cannot be encapsulated by a simplistic cause-and-effect formula.\textsuperscript{44}

The work of Massardier-Kenney and Paloposki and Koskinen encourages the question: can we formulate a theory of retranslation that avoids the discourse of lack, the emphasis on progress, and can account for the dizzying complexity of competing factors and causal relations that produce, not only retranslation, but first translations as well?

In Berman’s \textit{Toward a Translation Criticism}, he employs the work of hermeneutic theorists Paul Ricoeur and Hans Robert Jauss. In particular, he uses the concept of the horizon of understanding to discuss the translating position and the translation project. According to Berman, “the horizon can be defined as the set of linguistic, literary, cultural, and historical parameters that ‘determine’ the ways of feeling, acting, and thinking of the translator.”\textsuperscript{45} But, for Hans-Georg Gadamer, the hermeneutic philosopher who is most associated with the concept of the horizon, the role of history in the process of understanding is much more robust, indeed the very idea of the horizon for Gadamer is meant to account for how our hermeneutic position is totally mediated by our historically effected consciousness. Gadamer explains that, “the definition of the hermeneutical problem has been fundamentally pushed away from a subjective and psychological basis and moved in the direction of an objective meaning [a meaning coming

\textsuperscript{42} OP & KK “RT,” 30.
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid. 30.
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid. 46.
\textsuperscript{45} AT \textit{TTC}, 63.
from the object] mediated by effective history."\(^{46}\) This reorientation of hermeneutics avoids purely subjective interpretation and interpretation that tries to uncover the psychological intention of the speaker or author—as Gadamer asks, “Is the meaning of a text really exhausted by arriving at the meaning that was psychologically “intended” by the author, the \textit{mens auctoris} [the mind of the author]?"\(^{47}\) His hermeneutics refocus the interpreter on the object of understanding. But this objectivity should not be misunderstood. Objective meaning is not an objective fact in the traditional sense. As Richard Palmer points out, “a text, according to Gadamer, does not just express feelings or the mind of the author. In its highest forms—in sacred texts, in poetry, in law, even in works of art—the work causes truth to emerge, or in Heidegger’s terms, it ‘brings truth to stand.’”\(^{48}\) The emergence of truth through text is one way of thinking about objective meaning and this emergence is different from the process representation that produces more \textit{accurate} retranslations. For Gadamer, the emergence of the truth from the text is achieved through engaging the text dialectically, but this process of engagement is mediated by effective history. It does not make sense to refer to this process of understanding, from one period to the next, as a kind of straightforward progress. For example, Gadamer explains that the words that carry the concepts of philosophy:

originates in the communicative movement of human interpretation of the world, a movement that takes place in language, and is further developed and transformed and enriched as time goes on; then they move into new contexts and connections that cover over the older connections; and then these sink halfway into being unthought before being brought to life again through a thinking that questions.

The process of understanding Gadamer describes is constantly being oriented through the historically situated position of the interpreter. The meaning, truth, or matter of the text is constantly engaged in interpretation and arises through the movement of communication in language. But in the process of this origination the concepts are always changing, becoming overshadowed, changed, and re-emphasized through the act of interpretation.

Gadamer’s philosophical hermeneutics reorients the discourse of lack in very simple terms. The (re)presentation of translation no longer simply constitutes a representation of the

\(^{46}\) HG in \textit{GR}, 62.  
\(^{47}\) HG in \textit{GR}, 57.  
\(^{48}\) RP \textit{GR}, 43.
original text in totally stable terms. The objective meaning of the text does not stand alone for our analysis; it is “mediated by effective history.” Gadamer contends that consciousness is historically effected, it is influenced by the historical moment in which it exists. Along with the importance of our historically situated consciousness, Gadamer argues that all human experience is linguistically mediated;\(^{(49)}\) any attempt to understand the objective meaning of the text is effected by the historical context of the interpreter and their linguistically mediated experience. This means that “understanding is in fact only possible when one brings one’s own presuppositions into play” because one must acknowledge that their interpretation is achieved through their own schematization of the world and their willingness to let go of or adapt their presuppositions.\(^{(50)}\) In this sense, the understanding of the text’s objective meaning, what Gadamer sometimes calls the matter of the text, is influenced by both the temporal context as well as the individual’s own schematization of the world. This process brings the interpreter and the text together, so to speak, and the interpreter reaches an understanding with the text. Importantly, this understanding does not fix the meaning or matter of the text or limit it. It provides an avenue to understanding whereby the horizon of the interpreter and the horizon of the texts are fused\(^{(51)}\) signifying an act of understanding where the text and the interpreter have come to an understanding of the matter.\(^{(52)}\)

The paradigm example of coming to an understanding is dialogue or conversation. The fact of conversation implies a willingness on the part of both parties in conversation, while reaching an understanding implies that the two conversational partners have reached an agreement, they have reached a ground of understanding.\(^{(53)}\) While the basic model of reaching an

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\(^{(49)}\) HG In \textit{GR}, 65.  
\(^{(50)}\) HG In \textit{GR}, 62 & HG “RMPJ” In \textit{PHG}, 29.  
\(^{(51)}\) HG In \textit{GR}, 62.  
\(^{(52)}\) The reason the objective meaning or matter of the text is not fixed in this process has to do with Gadamer’s use of Heidegger, especially Heidegger’s theory of truth. For Heidegger, truth is the unconceiling of b(B)eing. But this unconceiling also implies the conceilement of other things. Being may be unconceiled in one way in one instance while it may change the next. In part this seems to be a result of Heidegger’s use of ontotheology and its capacity to structure an epochs metaphysics. In order to move beyond this structure, Heidegger maintains that we most develop the right phenomenological comportment, called “dwelling”, towards the phenomenological presencing of entities. Importantly, this presencing of the entity “both precedes and exceeds all conceptualization”. This has important ramifications for the move from reading to production/translation. IT \textit{HAA}, 21. Esp. chpt 1 – 3 for a discussion of ontotheology, truth, and ontological pluralism or plural realism.  
\(^{(53)}\) HG In \textit{GR}, 70.
understanding is dialogue in the ordinary sense of the word, we are left asking how dialogue takes place when the interpreter has no conversational partner, that is to say, when they interpret a text? The interpreter serves as both conversational partners when interpreting a text, they both question and answer. “But this dialogue of the understanding reader with himself seems not to be a dialogue with the text, which is already fixed and definitively given.”54 [emphasis mine]

Gadamer explains that texts, at least those that do not merely serve to communicate some information, are not fixed or definitively given, which is what makes them texts in the highest form, as Palmer pointed out earlier. More traditional concepts of interpretation which posit the fixed and definitively given text “do not take into account how much of ourselves must come into play and is at stake when we encounter works of art and studies of history.”55 The role we play in the interpretive process is compared to play or a game. The metaphor of the game allows Gadamer to describe the site of understanding, emphasize its process, and eschew complete subjectivity—the participants cannot do whatever they want—or objectivity—the game is no mere object.56 The linguistically mediated experience of the interpreter might be said to help them build their strategy in the game while the rules of the game constrain the use of those strategies. Therefore, we cannot speak of a fixed truth, matter, or meaning of the text which translation can reproduce in ever more accurate and precise forms through successive retranslations. Instead, how the interpreter or translator plays the game of interpretation determines the outcome of their translation and this play is in turn affected by both history and language as well as the site of the game.

My translation and Stcherbatsky’s are not at odds with one another. My translation does not replace Stcherbatsky’s. They are in dialogue with each other, with the “original” text and its context, with the knowledge that surrounds them, with the historical and cultural context that they inhabit, and with the subjectivity of the people that produced them. If we adopt Gadamer’s insights about the historically situated character of the interpreter, or in this case the translator, we can identify many more of the translation strategies, motivations, and interpretations that

54 HG “RMPJ” In PHG, 43.
55 Ibid. 27.
56 Ibid. 43 & 27.
affect translation than the retranslation hypothesis can. Additionally, Gadamer’s idea that the interpreter must bring their presuppositions or prejudices to the act of interpretation implies a kind of comparative reading that accounts for Stcherbatsky’s use of Kant and my own use of Stcherbatsky and others. At the basis of Stcherbatsky’s translation of the Nyāyabindujīkā, is his attempt to understand a very different intellectual and philosophic tradition. This shows that “hermeneutics and interpretation serve reading, for reading is at the same time understanding” and that, as Gadamer points out, “reading possesses an even wider circumference” than speech.\textsuperscript{57} Importantly, Gadamer differentiates this reading from the reproductive act that follows it in the case of translation. He claims that, in reading “the sensory reality of the meaning [Sinnwirklichkeit] culminates in all its reality in the performance of reading itself, not in something else that happens subsequent to it. So the fulfillment of the event of understanding in the case of reading does not entail—as it does in the case of reproduction—being realized in a new sensory appearance.”\textsuperscript{58} Even though Gadamer does not think that the act of reproduction is necessary for understanding, he implies that the fulfillment of meaning can be further reached in the act of reproduction which follows reading. This fact, coupled with Stcherbatsky’s linguistically mediated experience, allows him to arrive at an understanding of the Nyāyabindujīkā that reiterates his historical moment and intellectual position, emphasizing his translation as his interpretation of Dharmakīrti and Dharmottara. Following this logic, it will be left to others to determine how my own moment, mediated experience, and translation strategies effect my translation of the Nyāyabindujīkā.

\textsuperscript{57} HG “RMP” In \textit{PHG}, 51.

\textsuperscript{58} Ibid.