

Knowledge and Independent Checks in Mīmāṃsā

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Abstract

This essay is about a classical Indian debate about the *Independent Check Thesis*, the thesis that, if an agent is to rationally believe (or judge) that she knows that p , she must rely on some source of information that provides her independent evidence about the truth or reliability of her belief (or judgement) that p . While some Buddhists and Nyāya philosophers defended this thesis, the Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsakas rejected it. Here, I reconstruct the Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsakas' arguments against the *Independent Check Thesis*. I show that these arguments reveal a tension between this thesis and a plausible principle that connects knowledge and action.

Suppose I look at the wall before me, and come to believe that it is red. As a result, I know that it is red. But how can I rationally believe that I know this? My initial perceptual belief is about the wall and its colour, but my higher-order belief is about whether I know. It's natural to think that, to form a belief about this epistemological matter, I cannot simply rely on my perceptual belief (or my introspective knowledge that I have that belief). I need some further source of information, e.g., the recent track record of my colour vision, or a recent test report from the ophthalmologist's lab, which provides evidence for the truth or reliability of my original perceptual belief. More generally, to rationally believe that I know that the wall is red, I need to run an *independent check*. This supports:

The Independent Check Thesis. If an agent is to rationally believe (or judge) that she knows that p , she must rely on some source of information that provides evidence for the truth or reliability of the relevant belief (or judgement) independently of that belief (or judgement).

The *Independent Check Thesis* is significant: if it is right, then we must reject the KK principle, i.e., the principle that, if an agent knows that p , then she is in a position to know that she knows that

*p.*¹ The *Independent Check Thesis* says that, in scenarios where an agent isn't in a position to run an independent check on a belief (or judgement), she won't be able to rationally believe (or judge) that she knows. So, if I know that the wall is red but don't have enough information about the track record of my colour vision or easy access to an ophthalmologist's lab, I won't be able to rationally believe that I know that the wall is red. If knowledge requires rational belief, an agent who finds herself in such a situation won't be in a position to know that she knows.²

The aim of this essay is to examine a classical Indian debate about the *Independent Check Thesis*.³ Some Buddhists and Nyāya philosophers (henceforth, the Naiyāyikas) wanted to preserve a version of the *Independent Check Thesis*. They subscribed to the *theory of extrinsic knowledgehood* (*parataḥprāmāṇyavāda*): roughly, the theory that we can rationally ascribe knowledge to ourselves only by running an independent check. The Mīmāṃsā philosophers (henceforth the Mīmāṃsakas) rejected the *Independent Check Thesis*. They defended the *theory of intrinsic knowledgehood* (*svataḥprāmāṇyavāda*): roughly, the view that we don't need to run an independent check in order to rationally ascribe knowledge to ourselves.

Here, I will take a careful look at this debate. I will consider a cluster of arguments against the *Independent Check Thesis*, given by a group of Mīmāṃsakas who were followers of Kumārila Bhaṭṭa (7th century CE) and therefore were called the Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsakas. In doing so, I won't be drawing directly on the works of Kumārila himself or his commentators. Rather, I will be focusing on a text called *The Raceme of Reasoning* (*Nyāyamañjarī*) written by a Nyāya philosopher, Jayanta Bhaṭṭa (9th century CE), who engaged closely with Kumārila. Jayanta's reconstruction of the Mīmāṃsā position highlights an aspect of that view which is not obvious from the work of Kumārila or his followers: namely, that the *Independent Check Thesis* is in tension with an attractive principle that connects knowledge and action.

¹ Even though the KK principle has been traditionally popular (see Hintikka 1962), Alston (1980), Feldman (1981), and Williamson (2000) have recently raised powerful objections against it. In response, there has been a resurgence of KK-defenders, such as Greco (2014), Stalnaker (2015), Das and Salow (2018), and Dorst (2019).

² The tension between the independent check thesis and the KK principle has been discussed by Greco (2014) and Das and Salow (2018).

³ For discussion, see Taber (1992), Arnold (2008), Freschi and Graheli (2005), and McCrea (2015). Matilal (1986, ch. 5) and Immerman (2018) have argued that the Mīmāṃsā position could be understood as a defence of the KK principle. Keating (forthcoming) disagrees. I respond to Keating in footnote 19.

Here is my plan. After taking care of some conceptual housekeeping in §1, I will set up the debate about knowledgehood in §2. Then, I will explain the Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsakas' arguments (as presented by Jayanta) against the *Independent Check Thesis* in §§3-5. In §6, I will consider a Buddhist response. In §7, I will sketch the positive view that Jayanta ascribes to the Mīmāṃsakas: the *Default Knowledgehood Thesis*. In §8, I will close the paper by highlighting some aspects of the Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsakas' view.

1. Conceptual Housekeeping

Indian epistemologists often theorise in terms of the notion of *pramā*. Here, I will show that the notion is intimately connected to our concept of knowledge: an episode of *pramā* is an awareness-event (*jñāna*)⁴—i.e., an experience or thought—whereby one learns or comes to know something; it is an *event of knowledge-acquisition*.

In *The Raceme of Reasoning*, Jayanta doesn't explicitly define the notion of *pramā*. Rather, he gives us a characterisation of a *pramāṇa*, a means or instrument by which episodes of *pramā* arise. He says: “A *pramāṇa* is a collection of causes (*sāmagrī*), which give rise to non-erroneous and doubt-free apprehension of an object, and which may or may not have the nature of awareness.”⁵ Let's unpack this. As Jayanta explains, the defining characteristic of a *pramāṇa* is that, if an awareness arises from a *pramāṇa*, then the relevant subject couldn't be mistaken or in doubt about the relevant object. Moreover, insofar as a *pramāṇa* is the means (or the collection of causes) by means of which such an awareness arises, it may or may not include awareness-events. For example, in the case of veridical perception, the causes of the relevant awareness include a sense-faculty, which isn't an awareness itself. In contrast, a correct inferential judgement invariably arises from other awareness-events: when I infer the presence of fire on the hill after

⁴ I am translating the expression “*jñāna*” everywhere as “awareness” or “awareness-event” instead of resorting to the usual translation “cognition.” This is because, in contemporary philosophy of mind and cognitive science, the term “cognition” is typically reserved for mental states, such as judgements or beliefs, whose contents are accessible for the purposes of verbal reports, practical reasoning, etc. However, according to some Indian philosophers, non-conceptual perceptual experiences aren't of this sort but count as *jñāna*. So, it's better to use the more neutral term “awareness” or “awareness-event” for the more general category of *jñāna*. My use of the term “awareness” has two features: first, awareness-events are non-factive (i.e., they can be false), and second, an agent needn't necessarily be conscious of all her awareness-events.

⁵ NM I.31.6-7: *avyabhicāriṇīm asandigdham arthopalabdhiṃ vidadhatī bodhābodhasvabhāvā sāmagrī pramāṇam* |

observing smoke coming out of it, my inferential judgement is caused by my initial observation of smoke and my recollection of the fact that fire always accompanies smoke.⁶

Given the kind of infallibility that Jayanta associates with the notion of *pramā*, it is tempting to think that the notion of *pramā* is nothing but our notion of knowledge. There is some plausibility to this idea: there are two important similarities between the concept of knowledge and the concept of *pramā*. First, like any belief that has the status of knowledge, any awareness that has the status of *pramā* must be *accurate* or *true* (*yathārtha*). If I perceive the mother-of-pearl before me as a piece of silver, my perceptual awareness—inssofar as it is inaccurate—isn't an episode of *pramā*. Call this the *accuracy condition* on *pramā*. Naiyāyikas such as Jayanta and (at least some) Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsakas accept the accuracy condition.⁷ Second, like any belief that has the status of knowledge, any awareness that has the status of *pramā* must be produced by a set of causes that couldn't (easily) have led to an error. In other words, an episode of *pramā* must have good causal pedigree. Call this the *pedigree condition*. Once again, some Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsakas and Naiyāyikas such as Jayanta endorse a version of this condition. For the Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsakas, if a set of causes is to produce an episode of *pramā*, those causes must be free from epistemic defects (*doṣa*) that lead to error. For some Naiyāyikas like Jayanta, the mere absence of epistemic defects isn't sufficient; the causes underlying an episode of *pramā* must also include certain positive factors—called epistemic virtues (*guṇa*)—that guarantee the truth or accuracy of the relevant awareness.⁸

⁶ Even though Jayanta is a Naiyāyika, his conception of a *pramāṇa* is unorthodox by Nyāya standards: for him, the means or instrument (*kaṛaṇa*) by which an episode of *pramā* arises isn't merely one amongst the many causes of that awareness, but rather is the entire collection of causes (*sāmagrī*) (NM I.31.10-38.11). This is incompatible with earlier Nyāya views, e.g., Uddyotakara's theory of *pramāṇas* in his sub-commentary *Detailed Commentary on Nyāya (Nyāyavārttika)* on the *Nyāyasūtra* (NV 6.7-22).

⁷ Jayanta's definition of *pramāṇa* entails the accuracy condition. Other Naiyāyikas concur: Uddyotakara says that a *pramāṇa*, i.e., the means by which episodes of *pramā* arise, is what discriminates an object (*arthaparicchadaka*) (NV 2.21-3.2), and Vācaspati Mīśra says that the distinguishing feature of a *pramāṇa* is its property of not erring from its object (*arthavyabhicāritā*) (NVT 4.1-4, 4.19-20). Some Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsakas also agree with this. Kumārila's earliest commentator, Umbeka, says that Kumārila's definition of *pramāṇa* (here, to be understood as *pramā*) rules out error (ŚVT 66.16-17), and elsewhere defines the property of being *pramā* as a property of not erring from the relevant object (*arthavyabhicāritva*) (ŚVT 56.11-14). Another commentator, Pārthasārathi Mīśra, defines the property of being *pramā* as the relevant intentional objects' property of being the way the awareness represents them to be (*viśayatathāva* or *arthatathāva*) (NRK 53.18-19; NRM 30.8-9). As McCrea (2015) notes, Kumārila's only other major commentator, Sucarita Mīśra, is an exception to this trend: he doesn't impose an accuracy condition on episodes of *pramā*.

⁸ Kumārila endorses the Bhāṭṭa version of the pedigree condition in his lost work *Great Commentary (Bṛhaṭṭīkā)* (RNA 106.9-11): "Among those [awareness-events], a *pramāṇa* [which is here equivalent to *pramā*] is accepted by ordinary people to be an awareness of a new object, which is certain, un rebutted and produced from non-defective causes"

Despite these similarities between the concept of *pramā* and the concept of knowledge, it would be wrong to treat them as the same. There are two salient differences. Here is the first one. States of knowing can be dispositional: an implicitly held belief that doesn't manifest itself through any occurrent experience or judgement could still have the status of knowledge. By contrast, for Jayanta and other Indian philosophers, mental states that have the status of *pramā* are not dispositional states; they are occurrent states—experiences and thoughts—which we have been calling awareness-events (*jñāna*). The second disanalogy is this. Many of these Indian philosophers, including Jayanta, also accept the idea that awareness-events generated by memory—recollective awareness-events (*smṛti*)—cannot be *pramā*.⁹ If episodes of *pramā* were states of knowing, this would make no sense. States of remembering do count as states of knowing.

These differences lend support to another hypothesis: episodes of *pramā* aren't states of knowing, but rather are events of *learning* or *knowledge-acquisition*, i.e., thoughts or experiences in undergoing which we learn or come to know something.¹⁰ This explains both the similarities and dissimilarities between the concept of *pramā* and the concept of knowledge. First, it explains why episodes of *pramā* are subject to both an accuracy condition and a pedigree condition: if a piece of information is true or isn't acquired from a sufficiently reliable source, one couldn't possibly learn

(*tatrāpūrvārthāthavijñānaṃ niścītaṃ bādhavarjitaṃ | aduṣṭakāraṇārābhadhaṃ pramāṇaṃ lokasammataṃ |*) In verse 47 of his *Detailed Commentary on Verse (Śloka-vārttika)* on *Mīmāṃsāsūtra* 1.1.2, he says that the status of every *pramāṇa* (here, to be understood as *pramā*) as a *pramāṇa* is intrinsic (*svataḥ*), because it is impossible for something else to produce a capacity in something when that capacity is intrinsically absent (*svato 'satī*). In his commentary, Ubbeka takes Kumārila to mean that the status of a *pramāṇa* as a *pramāṇa* doesn't depend on any positive factor like an epistemic virtue, but merely on the absence of defects (SVTṬ 54.1-21). Jayanta defends the Nyāya version of the pedigree condition at NM_P 4.2.2.2. For a later defence, see Udayana's *The Flower-Offering of Reason (Nyāyakusumāñjali)*, especially his commentary on verse II.1 (NK, pp. 210-233).

⁹ The Bhāṭtas justify this by appealing to a novelty requirement on *pramā*: namely, that an episode of *pramā* shouldn't apprehend something that has already been apprehended; it must be a source of new information. This is explicit in the passage from the *Great Commentary* quoted in footnote 8; see Kataoka (2003) for discussion. Prābhākara Mīmāṃsakas and Naiyāyikas reject this novelty requirement. They point out that, in a case where an agent undergoes a series of perceptual awareness-events that have the same content, each of the perceptual awareness-events could have the status of *pramā*. For alternative ways of ruling out recollective awareness from the scope of knowledge-events, see Śālikanātha Mīśra's *Topical Elaborations (Prakaraṇapañcikā)* (PP 124.9-125.5), Jayanta's *Raceme of Reasoning* (NM I.59.7-10 and NM I.60.50-6), and Vācaspatimīśra's and Udayana's sub-commentaries on the *Nyāyasūtra* (NVTT 17.21-18.4, NVTP 52.12-53.9).

¹⁰ We might wonder if there is a conceptual analogue of knowledge on this picture. I think there is. Typically, when an agent undergoes an episode of *pramā*, the relevant awareness produces a memory impression (*saṃskāra*) which is nothing but a dispositional state that manifests itself through later recollective awareness-events with the same content. Since this dispositional state produced by the episode of *pramā* carries the information that the agent has learnt and can be retrieved for the purposes of making verbal reports and engaging theoretical and practical reasoning, it can be treated as a state of knowing.

or come to know it. Second, it explains why episodes of *pramā* must be occurrent rather than dispositional states, and why recollective awareness-events can't have the status of *pramā*. Since episodes of *pramā* are *events* of learning or knowledge-acquisition, they have to be occurrent (and not dispositional) states. And, typically, when one remembers something, one is merely retrieving information that one had acquired from another source; one isn't learning anything new or acquiring knowledge independently of what one already had learnt.

This is how I shall understand the notion of *pramā* for the rest of our discussion. In what follows, I translate the term “*pramā*” as “knowledge-event” to capture the thought that these are events of knowledge-acquisition or learning. I use the term “method of knowing” to refer to the means by which knowledge-events arise (*pramāṇa*). Finally, I use the word “knowledgehood” to talk about the property of being a knowledge-event (*prāmānya*).

2. The Debate

In the third chapter (*āhnikā*) of *The Raceme of Reasoning*, Jayanta frames the debate about the intrinsicness of knowledgehood in the voice of his Bhāṭṭa opponent:

Something is said to be a knowledge-event (*pramāṇa*) just in case it reveals how things are. The knowledgehood of that [awareness] simply consists in its not erring from the object to be known by it (*svaprāmēyāvyaḥicāritva*). Moreover, that [knowledgehood] should be described as extrinsic only when it is dependent on other factors. But this is not dependent on other factors anywhere. For that dependence—as it exists—would pertain either to its production, or to bringing about its own effect, or to the ascertainment of knowledgehood.¹¹

The Bhāṭṭa opponent here makes two important claims. Let's flesh them out.

¹¹ NM_p §3.3: *arthatathātvaprakāśakam hi pramāṇam ity uktam | tasya svaprāmēyāvyaḥicāritvaṃ nāma prāmānyam | atas ca parāpekṣāyāṃ satyāṃ hi parata iti kathayitum ucitam | na cāsya parāpekṣā kvacid vidyate | | sā hi bhavanī utpattau vā syāt svakāryakaraṇe vā prāmānyaniścaye vā |*

First, the Bhāṭṭa claims that the status of an awareness as a knowledge-event boils down to the property of not erring from the object to be known by it (*svaprameyāvvyabhicāritva*), which is roughly the same as accuracy. This might seem questionable: we've already seen knowledge-events are subject not only to an accuracy condition but also to a pedigree condition.

Here's a possible explanation. At least some of these Nyāya and Mīmāṃsā authors think that there is an important connection between the accuracy condition and the pedigree condition: in cases where one arrives at an awareness on the basis of epistemically defective causal conditions, one comes to inaccurately represent the world.¹² For example, suppose I see what appears to be smoke coming out of a hill. I take it to be smoke, but it is only vapour. Since I take it to be smoke and I know from previous investigations that fire invariably accompanies smoke, I infer that there is fire on the hill. But suppose there is in fact fire on the hill. This is a Gettier case: we would typically say that my judgement is true but only as a matter of luck. However, Indian philosophers like Kumārila tend to deny this: they would claim that my inferential judgement is inaccurate insofar as the fire that I infer doesn't really exist on the hill. Why? The fire that I ascribe to the hill is something I believe to be the source of (or, more generally, connected to) the smoke that I take myself to have perceived on the hill. Since there is no such smoke, there is also no such fire on the hill. So, my judgement is false. The explanation generalises to other Gettier cases. This, in turn, might suggest that awareness-events which are brought about by epistemically defective causes (e.g., by defective evidence in this case) are inevitably inaccurate: they involve an element of misrepresentation. So, on a simplified version of this view, the property of being a knowledge-event—what I am calling knowledgehood—simply boils down to the property of *accuracy* (*yāthārthya*) (when restricted to non-recollective awareness-events).

Second, the Bhāṭṭa claims that knowledgehood cannot be *extrinsic*, i.e., dependent on other factors. While Jayanta's text identifies three distinct senses of extrinsicness, what matters for

¹² A good expression of this thought occurs in verses 156-64 of the section called "On Objectlessness" (*Nirālambanavāda*) in *The Detailed Commentary on Verse*, where Kumārila argues that an inferential mark (*hetu*) which doesn't exist—the misperceived smoke in one of our examples—cannot give rise to an accurate or true awareness. For the verses with Umbeka's, Pārthasārathi Mīśra's and Sucarita Mīśra's commentaries on them, see ŚVTṬ 229-231, ŚVK II.78-81, and NRK 182-4. For discussion, see Ganeri (2007, ch. 5).

our purposes is the extrinsicness of knowledgehood *with respect to ascertainment*.¹³ For Naiyāyikas like Jayanta and some Buddhists like Dharmakīrti (7th century CE) and his followers, knowledgehood is extrinsic with respect to ascertainment: in order to rationally ascertain (i.e., to judge) that an awareness is a knowledge-event, we have to rely on some awareness that is distinct from both the original awareness and an introspective awareness about it.^{14,15} Let's unpack this.

All these philosophers agree that we can learn about our own awareness-events by some method of introspection. This could be either be epistemically direct or indirect. For the Naiyāyikas and Buddhists, the method is epistemically direct (i.e., non-inferential). The Buddhists who follow Dharmakīrti think that every awareness is reflexively aware of itself. By contrast, the Naiyāyikas think that there is an inner sense (the *manas*) that gives us perceptual access to our own present, or recently past, awareness-events. By contrast, for the Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsakas, the method of introspection is (broadly speaking) inferential. On their view, whenever we undergo an awareness, the awareness makes its intentional objects manifest (*prakāṣa* or *prakāśamāna*) to us in a certain way; for example, a knowledge-event will typically do this by determining things in the

¹³ Knowledgehood can be extrinsic (i) with respect to its production, (ii) with respect to bringing about its own effect, or (iii) with respect to the ascertainment of knowledgehood. If knowledgehood is extrinsic with respect to production, then the status of an awareness as knowledge will causally depend on positive factors, e.g., epistemic virtues, distinct from the ordinary causal conditions that normally give rise to awareness-events of the relevant type. If knowledgehood is extrinsic with respect to bringing about its own effect, then an episode of knowledge will depend on other factors, e.g., an awareness of itself, in order to produce its proprietary effects, e.g., the manifestation of an object. If knowledgehood is extrinsic with respect to ascertainment, then it can be rationally ascertained only by relying on an awareness distinct from the original awareness and any introspective awareness about the original awareness. Kataoka (2003, Part 2, pp. 84-5) points out that Kumārila himself talks about intrinsicness or extrinsicness with respect to production (*utpatti*), operation (*pravṛtti*), and awareness (*jñapti*), but uses these notions interchangeably (ibid., n. 208). Umbeka distinguishes the production- and operation-related senses of intrinsicness/extrinsicness (ŚVTṬ 55.22-3), while another commentator, Pārthasārathi, distinguishes the production- and awareness-based senses (NRK 45.7-20). For differences between these commentators, see Taber (1992) and Arnold (2008).

¹⁴ Here, “introspection” means a method of learning about one’s own present, or recently past, mental states or processes. I have characterised the theory of extrinsic knowledgehood following the Nyāya opponents of the Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsakas characterise their own view: for example, see Jayanta’s *Raceme of Reasoning* (NM_P §4.2.1) as well as Vācaspati’s and Udayana’s sub-commentaries on the *Nyāyasūtra* (NVṬṬ 4.3-13 and 9.14-12.3 and NVTP 14.1-18 and 33.10-40.7).

¹⁵ Throughout this discussion, I will assume that Jayanta and his Bhāṭṭa opponents are discussing the question of how a *rational agent* comes to judge that an awareness is a knowledge-event. This is suggested by a number of passages where the Bhāṭṭa says that an agent who inquires into the epistemic status of an awareness after he has already acted on the basis of it would be “someone who inspects auspicious occasions after he is done with his wedding” (NM_P §3.3.3.4) and that this investigation would be like “an examination of the stars by someone who has already shaved his head” (NM_P §3.3.3.3.2). The idea everywhere is the same: it makes sense to find auspicious occasions before one’s wedding or to check the stars before shaving one’s head, because scheduling a wedding or a shave at the wrong time can lead to disaster (a terrible marriage or a short life). But engaging in such investigation after the deed is done is practically futile and therefore irrational.

world to be a certain way. Since these objects wouldn't be manifest to us in that way unless we were aware of them, the relevant manifestness—which we are aware of as a result of our original awareness—is inexplicable (*anupapanna*) without the existence of the original awareness. So, on the basis of that manifestness, we can infer that we are aware of those objects. On this view, we can learn about our own present or recently past mental states not by gazing inward but rather by looking outwards at the world and then making an inference. In this respect, it is similar to (but not the same as) certain transparency-based accounts of self-knowledge, which say that we can gain knowledge of mental states like belief simply by reflecting on the contents of those mental states.¹⁶

The disagreement amongst these philosophers consists in this. The Naiyāyikas and Buddhists think that, in order to rationally ascertain that an awareness is a knowledge-event, we have to resort to a method of knowing, which is distinct from the method that yields the original awareness or the introspective awareness of the relevant awareness. This is because they subscribe to a version of the *Independent Check Thesis*: they think that, in order to rationally ascertain that an awareness is a knowledge-event, we need evidence for the truth or accuracy of that awareness *independently of it*. But neither the original awareness nor an introspective awareness about it can provide such evidence. For example, when I enter a room and judge that the wall before me is red, I may become aware of my judgement by introspection. But neither my judgement nor my introspective awareness of it can give me independent evidence for thinking that I've learnt that the wall is red. I can only rationally make this judgement if there is a distinct means of knowing that indicates the truth or accuracy of my judgement. This is the sense in which knowledgehood is extrinsic with respect to ascertainment.

The Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsakas dissent from this. They think knowledgehood is intrinsic with respect to ascertainment: in order to rationally judge that an awareness is a knowledge-event, we

¹⁶ The relevant piece of reasoning is an instance of postulation (*arthāpatti*), i.e., a method of knowing where one postulates something to be true because some piece of evidence would be inexplicable without it. The view is introduced by the commentator of the *Mīmāṃsāsūtra*, Śabarasvāmin (ŚBh 32.4), and presented by Kumāriḷa at v. 182 in the section called “On Emptiness” (*Śūnyavāda*) in his *Detailed Commentary on Verse*; for explanations, see the commentaries of Umbeka, Sucarita, and Pārthasārathi (ŚVTṬ 283.20-22; ŚVK 166.8-12; NRK II.227.17-228.24). Jayanta refutes this view at length in NM I 42.14-56.3. For contemporary transparency-based accounts of self-knowledge, see Evans (1982), Dretske (1994), Gallois (1996), Moran (2001), Byrne (2005, 2018) and Fernandez (2013).

don't need anything over and above an introspective awareness about the awareness itself. For our purposes, it will be useful to focus on one Bhāṭṭa account due to Kumāriḷa's first commentator, Umbeka Bhāṭṭa (8th century CE), with whom Jayanta engages at length. For Umbeka, knowledgehood *qua* accuracy is a property of awareness-events, and, as such, can only be grasped after we have become introspectively aware of the relevant awareness-events. So, whenever we become introspectively aware of an awareness by means of the manifestness-based inference, then (absent defeating evidence) the same inference puts us in a position to rationally judge that the awareness is a knowledge-event.¹⁷ For example, when I see that the wall is red and therefore judge that it is red, I can become introspectively aware of my judgement by using the inference from manifestness. Provided that I have no reason to doubt the accuracy of my judgement, I can also rationally conclude that my judgement about the colour of the wall is a knowledge-event. This view is incompatible with a version of the *Independent Check Thesis*: it implies that no independent evidence for the truth of an awareness is necessary for us to rationally ascertain its knowledgehood.¹⁸

If we accept one more assumption about self-knowledge, this Bhāṭṭa theory of intrinsic knowledgehood will yield an argument for an analogue of the KK principle. The assumption: whenever an agent undergoes an awareness, she is in a position to rationally judge (by means of the inference from manifestness) that she is undergoing that awareness. Given this assumption, the Bhāṭṭa theory will imply that, if an agent undergoes a knowledge-event, then (absent defeating evidence) she is in a position to judge that the relevant awareness is a knowledge-

¹⁷ In his commentary on v. 84 in Kumāriḷa's *Detailed Commentary in Verse* on *Mīmāṃsāśūtra* 1.1.2, Umbeka says (ŚVTṬ 67.16-18): "This is the import: when rebutters and so on have been removed, the awareness—which is being inferred because the determination of the object is inexplicable otherwise—is inferred to be a knowledge-event" (*ayam āśayaḷ-¹⁸bādhakādinivṛttau satyāṃ arthaparicchittiyanyathānupatyā jñānam anumūyamānaṃ pramāṇabhūtam anumūyata iti*).

¹⁸ Other Bhāṭṭas defend stronger claims. Pārthasārathi thinks that introspection isn't necessary for grasping the epistemic status of one's own awareness-events. Unlike Umbeka, Pārthasārathi claims that knowledgehood (*qua accuracy*) is not apprehended as a property of an awareness. Rather, it is a feature of the intentional objects of awareness-events: namely, their property of being a certain way, i.e., the way they are represented (*viśayatathāva*). For instance, the knowledgehood of my judgement that the wall is red just consists in the wall's being red. So, we don't have to rely on introspection to grasp the knowledgehood of an awareness: an awareness can help us grasp its own knowledgehood insofar as it involves an awareness as of its intentional objects being exactly the way it represents them (NRK 53.18-20; NRM 33.4-14). When (in the absence of defeating evidence) I judge that the wall is red, since the knowledgehood of my judgement just consists in the wall's being red, I thereby apprehend its knowledgehood. Sucarita (who doesn't accept the accuracy-based conception of knowledgehood) also says something similar (ŚVK I.104.24-25 and I.105.5-7). Despite these differences, the views of these other Bhāṭṭas are compatible with (and may even entail) Umbeka's claim that, in order to rationally *explicitly* judge that an awareness is a knowledge-event (in the absence of defeating evidence), we need nothing over and above the introspective awareness of that awareness.

event. But recall: on the view we're considering, knowledgehood consists simply in accuracy (for non-recollective awareness-events). So, this view predicts that, if an agent undergoes a knowledge-event, then (absent defeating evidence) she is in a position to learn or acquire knowledge that the relevant awareness is a knowledge-event. This is an analogue of the KK principle.¹⁹

Whether these Bhāṭṭas are committed to this version of the KK principle will depend on whether they accept the extra assumption about self-knowledge. I won't try to decide that question here. I will focus solely on their arguments against the *Independent Check Thesis*.

3. Against the Independent Check Thesis: First Pass

Indian defenders of the *Independent Check Thesis* say that we can rationally judge or believe that we've learnt something only if we have access to a method of knowing that provides independent evidence for the truth of the relevant awareness. What is this method of knowing? Jayanta's imagined Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsaka considers three possibilities. First, it may be something that indicates that the causes of the awareness possess certain accuracy-conducive epistemic virtues (or are free from inaccuracy-conducive epistemic defects). Second, it may be something that indicates that there is no rebutting awareness (*bādhakapratyaya*) for the relevant awareness. Finally, it may be something that confirms the original awareness. The Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsaka argues that these proposals are indefensible. In this, and the next two, sections, I will flesh out the Bhāṭṭa arguments against these three proposals.

Consider the first proposal.

¹⁹ Keating (forthcoming) argues that Bhāṭṭas like Pārthasārathi are not committed to the KK principle. For Pārthasārathi, even after an agent has undergone a knowledge-event, a further inference is necessary for her to judge that she is undergoing the relevant awareness. From that, Keating concludes that the agent who has undergone a knowledge-event may not be in a position that her awareness is a knowledge-event. But this seems to be based on a misunderstanding of what "being a position to know" means. According to our version of the KK principle, if an agent undergoes a knowledge-event, then she is in a position to learn (by inference) that she has undergone a knowledge-event. As Williamson (2000, ch. 4) notes, to be in a position to know or learn that *p*, one doesn't have to know or learn that *p*; it only has to be the case that, if one did all that one is in a position to do in order to decide whether *p*, one would know or learn that *p*. So, when an agent has undergone a knowledge-event, if she is in position to decide by inference that she has undergone that knowledge-event (absent defeating evidence), she will be in a position to know or learn that she has undergone that knowledge-event.

Proposal 1. We rationally judge that an awareness is a knowledge-event only by determining that it was produced by epistemically virtuous causes.

The Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsaka argues that this proposal fails. According to some Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsakas, if an awareness is to be a knowledge-event, it has to be produced by a set of non-defective causes; in order to explain its epistemic status, we don't have to posit positive factors, like epistemic virtues, over and above the absence of epistemic defects. So, the first response of such Bhāṭṭas Mīmāṃsakas to *Proposal 1* is predictable: "First of all, it [the ascertainment of knowledgehood] isn't due to an awareness of the epistemic virtues of its causes. For we have just now repudiated the epistemic virtues, etc."²⁰ But note that this response isn't really convincing. While it may be true that we have no reason to posit epistemic virtues to explain how knowledge-events arise, we could still argue that we can rationally determine the epistemic status of an awareness by determining whether its causes are non-defective. So, we could endorse a modified version of *Proposal 1*:

*Proposal 1**. We rationally judge or ascertain that an awareness is a knowledge-event only by determining that it was produced by epistemically non-defective causes.

So, the basic intuition that motivates the proposal could still succeed.

Perhaps, that is why the Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsaka offers a second argument. Consider the case where I see that the wall is red. Here, the causes of my awareness include my visual sense. Given that I cannot perceive my own visual sense, I cannot discover whether it possesses any epistemic virtue (or is free from epistemic defects) by means of perception. So, I would have to rely on an inference. How can I do this? I could always perform some action which yields evidence in favour of the claim that my awareness is accurate, and, therefore, indicates that its causes possess the epistemic virtues whose absence would make an awareness inaccurate (or are free from epistemic defects whose presence would make an awareness inaccurate). In short, I must perform

²⁰ NMP §3.3.3.1.1: *na tāvat kāraṇaguṇajñānāt kāraṇaguṇānām idānīm eva nirastatvāt* |

an evidence-gathering act that yields independent evidence that the relevant awareness is accurate.²¹

In response, the Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsaka poses a dilemma: *Proposal 1** either makes any investigation into the epistemic status of an awareness futile, or faces a charge of circularity or regress.²² The argument depends on:

The Action-Knowledge Principle. An agent can rationally undertake an action on the assumption that p only if she antecedently rationally judges that she knows (or has learnt) that p .

According to the Bhāṭṭa, denying the *Action-Knowledge Principle* is costly: it makes any investigation into the epistemic status of our awareness-events futile. Both the Bhāṭṭas and their opponents agree that it is practically useful for us to determine whether or not our awareness-events are knowledge-events. Recall that, on this view, when it comes to non-recollective awareness-events, knowledgehood is nothing other than accuracy. The whole point of investigating whether an awareness is a knowledge-event is to make sure that it is accurate enough for its content to be relied upon for the purposes of planning future action. But if the *Action-Knowledge Principle* were false, then we could rationally plan and undertake actions on the basis of an awareness without antecedently determining it to be accurate. So, it would be practically useless to determine *later* whether that awareness was accurate. As Jayanta's imagined Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsaka puts the point:

Now, in those cases, the practical undertaking²³ (*pravṛtti*) must be caused by the ascertainment of knowledgehood. Or, if that weren't the case, since the practical

²¹ NM_p §3.3.3.1.2: “Moreover, an awareness about the epistemic virtues of the causes [of the relevant awareness] doesn't have any sense-faculty as its cause. For the epistemic virtues—insofar as they reside in imperceptible causes [of awareness]—are imperceptible. Rather, the nature of an epistemic virtue is to be known from the correctness of its result, i.e., the apprehension. Furthermore, for a knower who doesn't undertake an action, there is no [awareness of] the correctness of the result” (*api ca na kāraṇaguṇajñānam indriyakāraṇakam atīndriyakāraṇakādihikaraṇatvena paroḥṣatvād guṇānām | api tūpalabdhyākhyakāryaparīsuddhisamadhigamyam guṇasvarūpam | apravṛttasya ca pramātur na kāryaparīsuddhir bhavati* |)

²² The basic idea behind the dilemma is already present in Umbeka's commentary on Kumāriḷa's verses 49-51 in the section of his *Detailed Commentary in Verse* on *Mīmāṃsāsūtra* 1.1.2 (SVTṬ 56.9-25).

²³ A practical undertaking (*pravṛtti*) is not an action. As *Nyāyasūtra* 1.1.17 says, it is the commencement of linguistic, mental or intellectual, and physical activity (*vāgbuddhiśarīrāmbha*); it's taken to be synonymous with the conscious effort (*prayatna*) that an agent puts into performing an action.

undertaking would be brought about by an awareness which isn't ascertained to be a knowledge-event, what would be the point of ascertaining it later?²⁴

So, let's suppose the *Action-Knowledge Principle* is true.

Next, consider two scenarios where I arguably gain independent evidence for the status of an awareness as a knowledge-event.

Red Wall 1. I have no idea how reliable my colour vision is. I go into a room with a red wall in it, and judge that the wall is red. Later, when I am being quizzed about the colour of the wall, I unhesitatingly say that it's red. The answer is right, and I am told this. Given suitable background evidence, this shows that my judgement was produced by epistemically virtuous or non-defective causes.

Red Wall 2. I have no idea how reliable my colour vision is. I go into a room with a red wall in it, and judge that the wall is red. After coming out of the room, I wonder if I know that the colour of the wall is red. So, I go to the ophthalmologist's lab, and get my colour vision tested. The results are normal. Given suitable background evidence, this shows that my judgement was produced by epistemically virtuous or non-defective causes.

In both cases, I perform an action which yields independent evidence that my original judgement was a knowledge-event. The difference is this. In *Red Wall 1*, when I perform that action, I assume that the wall is red. In *Red Wall 2*, I don't make that assumption.

In *Red Wall 1*, the only act I perform is answering the quiz question. This act is based on my assumption that the wall is red. If the *Action-Knowledge Principle* is true, then I can rationally undertake that action only if I antecedently rationally judge that I have learnt that the wall is red. But, according to *Proposal 1**, I can do so only by inferring that my judgement about the colour of the wall was produced by epistemically virtuous or non-defective causes. But this inference must

²⁴ Ibid.: *tatredānīm prāmānyaniścayapūrvikā pravṛttir bhavet | anyathā vā 'niścitaḥ prāmānyād eva jñānāt pravṛttisiddhau kiṃ paścāt tanniścayena prayojanam |*

be based on evidence derived from some evidence-gathering act that I perform. Since *ex hypothesi* the only evidence-gathering act here is my act of answering the quiz question, the account will end up being circular. The Bhāṭṭa explains:

However, if the practical undertaking arises from an awareness that is ascertained to be a knowledge-event, one cannot avoid descending into the hell that is circularity. When a practical undertaking takes place, there is an apprehension of the correctness of the result [i.e., of the fact that the relevant awareness is true]; due to the apprehension of the correctness of the result, there is a knowledge-event regarding the virtues of the causes; due to the knowledge-event regarding the virtues of the causes, knowledgehood is ascertained; due to the ascertainment of knowledgehood, there is a practical undertaking.²⁵

The lesson: in cases like *Red Wall 1*, if the *Action-Knowledge Principle* is true, then a problem of circularity will be inescapable.

One might think that this problem only arises in cases like *Red Wall 1*, because the action, e.g., my answering the quiz question, is itself based on the relevant awareness, i.e., my judgement that the wall is red. In *Red Wall 2*, that's not the case. My action of going to the ophthalmologist's lab isn't based on my judgement. But a version of the same problem can be recreated here. When I go to the ophthalmologist's lab to get my eyes tested, I do so on a number of assumptions, e.g., the assumption that I have legs or that there is such a thing as an ophthalmologist's lab. If the *Action-Knowledge Principle* is right, I must rationally take myself to know or have learnt these facts. But, if *Proposal 1** applies to this case, I can only rationally judge that I know or have learnt such facts if I have undertaken a prior action that yields evidence that the relevant awareness-events are brought about by virtuous or non-defective causes. But, in order to rationally undertake such an action, I must (once again) antecedently take myself to know or learnt certain other facts. Thus, there will be a regress. The lesson: in cases like *Red Wall 2*, if the *Action-Knowledge Principle* is true, then a regress will be unavoidable.

²⁵ Ibid.: *niścitaḥ prāmāṇyāt tu pravṛtttau duratikramah cakrakakrakacapātaḥ | pravṛtttau satyāṃ kāryaḥ pariśuddhigrahaṇam, kāryaḥ pariśuddhigrahaṇāt kāraṇaguṇāvagatīḥ, kāraṇaguṇāvagatēḥ prāmāṇyāniścayah, prāmāṇyāniścayāt pravṛttir iti |*

The upshot is clear. If the defender of extrinsic knowledgehood accepts *Proposal 1**, she will either face a charge of problematic circularity or regress, or will have to reject the *Action-Knowledge Principle*. But, if she rejects this principle, any investigation into the epistemic status of our awareness-events will be practically futile. This is the dilemma.

4. Against the Independent Check Thesis: Second Pass

On the view under discussion, knowledgehood simply boils down to accuracy when it comes to non-recollective awareness-events. The content of an accurate awareness cannot be rebutted (i.e., shown to be false). So, one might be tempted to replace *Proposal 1** with:

Proposal 2. We can rationally judge that an awareness is a knowledge-event only by determining that there is no rebutting awareness (*bādhakapratyaya*) for it.

For example, while travelling through the desert, a traveller may see something that appears to be water on the distant horizon. Suppose she judges it to be water, and starts walking towards the spot where the water appears. If she finds no water there, she will undergo an awareness that will rebut her earlier judgement. But, if (after investigation) she undergoes no such rebutting awareness, then she may rationally conclude that her earlier judgement was a knowledge-event.

According to Jayanta's Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsaka, the success of *Proposal 2* depends on how we interpret "absence of rebutting awareness."²⁶ On one interpretation, in order to rationally judge that an awareness is a knowledge-event, the agent only has to determine that, at that specific time, the awareness is unrebutted. While she can easily determine that, it's insufficient for her to rationally conclude that her awareness is a knowledge-event. On the other interpretation, in

²⁶ NMP §3.3.3.2: "The ascertainment of knowledgehood also doesn't take place due to the determination of the absence of rebutters. For, does that absence exist at that time, or does it reside at other times? An absence that exists at that time isn't sufficient for the ascertainment of knowledgehood. For, even though no rebutter may be produced regarding fake gold, etc. for a while, the production of such a rebutter is observed at another time. By contrast, the absence of a rebutter at all times isn't apprehended by a non-omniscient person." (*nāpi bādhakābhāvaparicchedāt prāmānyaniścayaḥ | sa hi tātkālika vā syāt kālāntarabhāvī vā | tātkālika na paryāptaḥ prāmānyapariniścaye | kūtākāñcanādau kiñcit kālam anuṭpannabādhake 'pi kālāntare taduṭpādadarśanāt | sarvadā tadabhāvas tu nāsarvajñasya gocaraḥ |*)

order for an agent to rationally treat an awareness as a knowledge-event, she must determine that the awareness will remain rebutted at all other times as well. But that's an impossible task. So, *Proposal 2* fails.

To see the point more clearly, consider the traveller who judges that there is water at a distance on the horizon. Suppose she hasn't reached the spot where the water appears, but is considering whether her judgement is a knowledge-event. If *Proposal 2* is right, then she can rationally treat her judgement as a knowledge-event only by determining that there is no rebutting awareness for her judgement. But this absence of a rebutting awareness could either be an absence of a rebutting awareness at that very time, or an absence of such an awareness at all other times as well. The first option makes things too easy: since the traveller hasn't undergone any rebutting awareness yet, she can easily determine that there is no present rebutting awareness for her judgement. That's not enough for her to rationally treat her judgement to be a knowledge-event. Even in recognised cases of error, we often don't immediately get rebutting evidence against our erroneous judgements: for example, after I've judged fake gold to be real gold, I may only much later discover that my judgement was false. So, in order to rationally treat her judgement as a knowledge-event, the traveller must determine that her judgement will remain unrebutted in the future. This is the second option. But this makes it impossible for non-omniscient agents like us to rationally determine that any of our awareness-events are knowledge-events. For we cannot rationally rule out the possibility that our judgements will be rebutted by some future awareness. Even the traveller—before or after she has reached the spot on the horizon where water appeared to her and found water there—cannot rationally conclude that her judgement won't be rebutted by some future awareness.

The result: *Proposal 2* doesn't work.

5. Against the Independent Check Thesis: Final Pass

The best strategy for the defender of the *Independent Check Thesis* is to appeal to confirmation (*saṃvāda*).

Proposal 3. We can rationally judge that an awareness is a knowledge-event only by undergoing a further awareness that confirms it.

The Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsaka begins his attack on this proposal by asking what “confirmation” in this context means: does it involve undergoing an awareness that has the same content as the earlier awareness, or an awareness with a different content, or an awareness of practical efficacy (*arthakriyā*)?²⁷ Let’s consider each option in turn.

The first option—i.e., that an awareness is confirmed by an awareness with the same content—is problematic. If the confirming awareness-event has (roughly) the same content as the original one, we need to say what difference there is between the two, such that the epistemic status of the original awareness can be determined on the basis of the second. Suppose I enter a room and judge on the basis of my perception that there is a red wall before me. Then, I come out, and go into the room once more to make a judgement with roughly the same content. How can the second judgement confirm the original judgement when its own epistemic credentials are equally questionable by my lights? To confirm this second judgement, then, I would need to undergo a further confirming awareness. Thus, this proposal faces a regress worry. This was originally pointed out by Kumābila Bhaṭṭa.

On the first view, what is the difference between the earlier and the later awareness-events, such that, in virtue of being confirmed by the later awareness, the earlier awareness could attain knowledgheod? Moreover:

Those who say that earlier awareness-events have knowledgheod in virtue of being confirmed by later awareness-events wouldn’t be able to reach the end [of the sequence] even in hundreds of *yugas* [i.e., the different ages of the world, each spanning hundreds of thousands of years]. By contrast, if one were to ascribe

²⁷ NM_P §3.3.3.3: “If it is said that the ascertainment of knowledgheod takes place due to confirmation, then it should be stated what this thing called confirmation is. Is it just an awareness that has those [very same] intentional objects [as the original awareness], or an awareness of some other objects, or an awareness of practical efficacy?” (*atha saṃvādāt prāmāṇyāniścaya ucyate, tarhy ucyatām ko ’yaṃ saṃvādo nāma | kim uttaraṃ tadviśayaṃ jñānamātram, utārthāntarajñānam, āhosvid arthakriyājñānam iti |*)

knowledgehood to some awareness just intrinsically even after going quite far, then why should one be averse to doing so with respect to the first?

This is what is said [by Kumāṛila]:

On the contrary, if one were to accept the knowledgehood of some awareness just intrinsically, then why should one be averse to the same status with respect to the first?²⁸

If the first confirming awareness needs to be confirmed by another awareness, then the latter too needs to be confirmed by another (since, otherwise, its epistemic credentials would be just as questionable as the first one). So, a regress will be unavoidable. If we try to block the regress by arguing that some of these confirming awareness-events don't require further confirmation, then there's no reason why we shouldn't say that about the first awareness.

The second option—namely, that the confirming awareness should have a different content—also will lead to bad results unless it's properly restricted. An awareness with an arbitrarily different content cannot confirm another one: for example, “an awareness about a pillar doesn't constitute the confirmation for an awareness about a pitcher.”²⁹ The third option avoids this problem. It says that an awareness is confirmed by an awareness of practical efficacy. What does that mean? Consider the traveller walking through the desert. When she sees what appears to be water on the distant horizon, she judges that there is water out there. But she might not be sure if this judgement is accurate. She might know that, often, when people make similar

²⁸ NMP §3.3.3.3.1: *ādye pakṣe kaḥ pūrvottaraññāṇayor viśeṣaḥ yad uttarajññānasaṃvādāt pūrvam jñānam prāmānyam aśnūvīta | api ca—*

*uttarottarasamvādāt pūrvapūrvapramānatām |
vadanto nādhigaccheyur antam yugaśatair api | |
sudūram api gatvā tu prāmānyam yadi kasyacit |
svata evābhīdhīyeta, ko dveṣaḥ prathamam prati | |*

yad āha—

*kasyacit tu yadīyeta svata eva pramānatā |
prathamasya tathābhāve vidveṣaḥ kiṃnibandhanaḥ | | iti |*

The last verse is verse 76 in Kumāṛila's *Detailed Commentary in Verse on Mīmāṃsāsūtra* 1.1.2.

²⁹ NMP, §3.3.3.3.2: *na hi stambhajñānam kumbhajñānasya saṃvādaḥ |* We might worry that this is too quick: an awareness with a different content can confirm another awareness. For example, if you judge that there's a pitcher carrying water in front of you, your observation that there are glasses filled with water nearby can confirm the original judgement. But note that the regress worry raised earlier will arise here again.

judgements under similar circumstances, what they see is a mirage. She could, however, walk towards the spot on the horizon where the water appears. If she finds the water and is able to drink it or bathe in it, then this would show that the original judgement was capable of giving rise to successful actions. This capacity for producing practically successful actions is the practical efficacy (*arthakriyā*) of the judgement. Since this would demonstrate that the original judgement was accurate (and accuracy, in this context, is synonymous with knowledgehood), the traveller could rationally infer that her original judgement was a knowledge-event. In such cases, therefore, the agent's awareness of practical efficacy confirms her original awareness, thereby helping her determine that it was a knowledge-event.

This proposal inherits the problems of the first option. The Bhāṭṭa could again ask whether there is an epistemically significant difference between the original awareness and the awareness of its practical efficacy, which explains why the latter can confirm the former. How can the awareness of practical efficacy help us determine the epistemic status of any awareness when its own epistemic status is equally questionable by our lights? If the opponent responds by appealing to further confirming awareness-events, then there will be another regress. A different response might be that the awareness of practical efficacy is able to confirm the original awareness, simply because it is an awareness of practical efficacy. But this is a bad response. Often, false awareness-events that arise in dreams seem to be confirmed by other false judgements that arise in those very dreams about the practical efficacy of those awareness-events.

[The opponent:] But this awareness of practical efficacy arises, having as its intentional object [actions such as] drinking, bathing, etc. of a person who is in the middle of the water. So, since this awareness isn't determined to be erroneous, it gives rise to the ascertainment of knowledgehood.

[Reply:] That too is wrong. For, in the case of dreams, even the awareness of drinking, bathing, etc. is found to be erroneous (*vyabhicārin*)... Therefore, since awareness-events

about practical efficacy are determined to be erroneous [in some cases], the regress doesn't come to an end in the investigation of its knowledgehood.³⁰

So, the regress is unavoidable.

The final response to this third option is the same one that the Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsaka gave to *Proposal 1**: namely, that it either forces us to reject the *Action-Knowledge Principle* (thereby making it pointless for us to investigate or determine the epistemic status of awareness-events), or paves the way for a problematic sort of circularity or regress. Take, once again, the traveller in the desert. There are two versions of this case. Either the traveller simply starts walking towards the apparent water on the horizon on the assumption that it is water, or she doubts the presence of water but nevertheless performs the same action, because she thinks that the risk of walking towards that place will be worth taking. (These two cases are analogous to *Red Wall 1* and *2* respectively.)

In the first version of the case, either the traveller performs the relevant action because she takes herself to know (or have learnt) that what she sees is water, or she doesn't. If she takes herself to know (or have learnt) that what she sees is water, then such a judgement (if rational) must arise from an awareness of practical efficacy. But, in this case, the only act that the agent performs is the act of walking towards the water and then bathing in it or drinking it. Since that act is based on her judgement that she knows (or has learnt) that there is water out there, there is a problematic kind of circularity. Alternatively, if the agent performs the action without taking herself to know (or have learnt) that what she sees is water, then the *Action-Knowledge Principle* is false. Thus, the same argument that the Bhāṭṭa gave earlier would apply once more. If we can act on the assumption that *p* without taking ourselves to know or have learnt that *p*, what would be the point of later determining whether we know or have learnt that *p*? If the epistemic status of our awareness-events were irrelevant to practical decision-making, then investigating the epistemic status of our awareness-events at a later time would be, as Jayanta puts it, “just as futile

³⁰ NMP §3.3.3.3: *idaṃ punar arthakriyāsaṃvedanaṃ ambumadhyavartinaḥ pānāvagāhanādiviṣayam udetīty anavadhāritavyabhicāritayā tatprāmāṇyaniścayāya kalpata iti | tad apy asat | svapne pānāvagāhanasyāpi vyabhicāropalabdheḥ | ...tasmād arthakriyājñānavyabhicārādvadhāraṇāt | tatprāmāṇyaḥparīkṣyām anavasthā na sām्यati ||* For a similar point, see Vasubandhu's auto-commentary on verse 2 in *Twenty Verses (Vimsatikā)* at Vim 413.13-15.

as the examination of the stars by someone who has already shaved his head.”³¹ The analogy: astrologists advise us to examine the configuration of the stars before shaving our heads, precisely because shaving one’s head under unsuitable arrangements of the stars can have inauspicious effects on one’s life, so examining the stars after shaving one’s head is pointless.

In the second version of the case, the traveller doesn’t perform the action on the assumption that what she sees is water. But, arguably, in order to rationally undertake an action, she must assume something about her environment: for instance, she must assume that she has legs, or that there is a spot on the horizon for her to walk towards. If the *Action-Knowledge Principle* is true, then, provided that she rationally undertakes the action on the basis of such assumptions, she must rationally take herself to know (or have learnt) these claims. But, according to *Proposal 3*, that is only possible if she performs some further act that yields a confirming awareness. To undertake that action, she must rationally take herself to know (or have learnt) some other facts. So, there will be a regress. Thus, *Proposal 3* fails.

Let’s take stock. There is a single argumentative strategy that the Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsaka employs against the defender of the *Independent Check Thesis*. The Mīmāṃsaka assumes that performing an independent check on an awareness must involve either performing an evidence-gathering act that provides independent evidence for the truth of the relevant awareness, or undergoing an awareness that independently confirms the original awareness. If the defender of the *Independent Check Thesis* goes for the first option, she will face a dilemma: either she will have to reject the *Action-Knowledge Principle* (thereby making investigation into the epistemic status of awareness-events redundant) or accept a problematic sort of circularity or regress. If she goes for the second option, she will be forced to countenance a regress. In the next section, we will probe

³¹ NMP §3.3.3.3.2: “Moreover, this awareness of practical efficacy doesn’t arise in a person who doesn’t undertake any action. In that case, if the practical undertaking is caused by a determination of knowledgehood, then—just as in our discussion of ascertaining knowledgehood from the awareness of the epistemic virtues of the causes—the room for a circularity-based objection will simply remain intact. It has been said that, by contrast, if a person undertakes an action without ascertaining the knowledgehood of his awareness, then a later determination of knowledgehood—even when it arises—is simply futile just like the examination of the stars by someone who has already shaved” (*na cedam arthakriyājñānam apravṛttasya puṃsaḥ samudbhavati | tatra prāmāṇyāvadhāraṇapūrvikāyām pravṛttau kāraṇaguṇaniśceyaprāmāṇyacarcāvad cakrakacodyaprasaras tadavastha eva | aniścitaprāmāṇyasya tu pravṛttau paścāt tannirṃayo bhavann api kṛtakṣaurasya nakṣatraparīkṣāvad aphala evety uktam |*)

the strength of the Mīmāṃsaka's argumentative strategy, by considering a Buddhist response to the first of these problems.

6. A Buddhist Response

In relation to *Red Wall 1*, the Bhāṭṭa Mimamsaka argued that, if I rationally undertake an action in that situation on the assumption that the wall is red, I cannot be doing so without also rationally taking myself to know (or have learnt) that the wall is red. This was supported by the *Action-Knowledge Principle*. The motivation for the principle was just this: it is practically useful for us to investigate or determine whether an awareness is a knowledge-event because that information is relevant to our planning of future actions. If we can rely on a proposition that p in the course of planning our actions without taking ourselves to know (or have learnt) that p , then what would be the practical use of determining or investigating whether we know (or have learnt) that p ? So, denying the *Action-Knowledge Principle* makes determining or investigating the epistemic status of our awareness-events practically futile.

However, this principle was partly motivated by the assumption that knowledgehood (when it comes to non-recollective awareness-events) simply boils down to accuracy. Some Buddhists, such as Dharmakīrti (7th century CE), don't accept any straightforward accuracy condition on knowledge. Dharmakīrti offers a pragmatic conception of knowledge-events: in his *Detailed Commentary on Epistemology (Pramāṇavārttika)*, he says: "A *pramāṇa* [which here stands not only for the method of knowing, but also for the knowledge-event] is an awareness that isn't disconfirmed; the lack of disconfirmation is stable practical efficacy (*arthakriyāsthiti*)."³² If knowledge is simply awareness that reliably leads to practical success, then the natural way to test whether an awareness is a knowledge-event is to check whether it leads to practical success. So, commentators of Dharmakīrti, such as Śākyabuddhi, advocate a version of *Proposal 3*: namely, that we can rationally determine that an awareness is a knowledge-event by checking if it is practically efficacious. These writers deny the *Action-Knowledge Principle*. They think that we can rationally undertake an action on the assumption that p without taking ourselves to know (or

³² PV II v. 1abc: *pramāṇam avisaṃvādi jñānam arthakriyāsthitiḥ | avisaṃvādanaṃ...*

have learnt) that p , but that needn't make subsequent investigation into the epistemic status of the relevant awareness superfluous.

This response crucially depends on the distinction between practical undertakings of two kinds: *initial* (*ādya*) and *familiar* (*abhyasta*).³³ Imagine a farmer who wants to grow rice in his fields and has some rice-seeds. But he isn't in a position to rationally determine whether those seeds, when sown, are capable of giving rise to rice-sprouts. For example, he might worry that they are too dry. But he may take a few of them and sow them in a vessel of water. Once he sees that these seeds give rise to rice-sprouts, he may rationally conclude that the other seeds, in virtue of being of the same kind (*tajjatīya*), also have the same capacity. So, he may go ahead and sow all of them in his fields. The first undertaking is initial, while the latter is familiar. The Buddhist claims that the same is true of our investigations into the epistemic status of awareness-events. Even though an agent may not be in a position to rationally judge that a certain awareness is a knowledge-event, she may still undertake some relatively risk-free action on the basis of it. As a result, she may find out that it is a knowledge-event. But then, later, when an awareness of that kind arises again, she may—on the basis of the fact that it is an awareness *of that kind* (*tajjatīya*)—infer that it is a knowledge-event, and proceed to perform other (perhaps, more risky) actions on the basis of it. The first undertaking is initial, while the second is familiar. On this picture, determining the epistemic status of an awareness on the basis of the initial undertaking isn't useless: it helps us build up a track record for awareness-events of various kinds (by means of which we later identify awareness-events of the relevant kinds as knowledge-events).³⁴ This

³³ See, for example, Śākyabuddhi's *Notes on the Detailed Commentary on Epistemology (Pramāṇavārttikaṭīkā)* quoted in Steinkellner (1981, p. 290): "Practical undertakings based on perception are of two kinds – initial and familiar" (*dvividhā pratyakṣāśrayā pravṛttir ādyā abhyāsavatī ca* |).

³⁴ NMP, §3.3.3.3.3: "In response to that, this would be [said]. Practical undertakings are just of two kinds: initial and familiar. Of these, the first takes the form of sowing a few seeds for the sake of examining the capacity of the rice-seeds, etc. in a cup made of smooth clay that has been moistened by the water it contains. Having observed the unimpeded capacity of those [seeds] for producing sprouts in that case, the farmers sow those [seeds] in the fields without any doubt. So, this very practical undertaking is a familiar one. In the same manner, in this case too, some wise person—having initially commenced an activity simply on the basis of an awareness whose knowledgehood hasn't been examined—learns of its knowledgehood by means of his awareness of its results. Later, when an awareness of that kind arises again, he easily performs activities, e.g., practical undertakings and so on, without suspecting any fault. So, [the determination of knowledgehood at a later time] is not entirely futile" (*tatratat syāt | dvividhā hi pravṛttih—ādya ca abhyāsikī ca | tatrādya yathāvimihitasalilāvāsiktamaśṇamṛdi śarāve śālyādibhījaśaktiparīkṣaṇāya katipayabījakanāvāparūpā | tatas teṣām ankurakaraṇakauśalam avikalam avalokayantaḥ kīnāśā niḥśaṅkam kedāreṣu tāni bhījāny āvapantīti seyam abhyāsikī pravṛttih | evam ihāpi pratham aparīkṣitapramāṇabhāvād eva jñānāt kutaścīt kaścīd vipaścīd api vyavaharam ārabhya phalajñānena tasya prāmāṇyam avagacchan punas tathāvidhe bodhe jāte sati sukham eva pravṛttyādivyavahāram aśaṅkitakāluṣyaḥ karisyatīti na sarvātmanā vaiyarthyam iti |*)

response is simple and powerful, and in fact came to influence Naiyāyikas like Vācaspati Mīśra and Udayana.³⁵

Jayanta's Bhāṭṭa opponent doesn't find this argument persuasive. Before we see why, it's worth noting that this argument doesn't avoid the regress-based objection that Kumārila raises for *Proposal 3*. The objection was simply that, if an awareness is to be confirmed by a distinct awareness of practical efficacy, it's unclear why we should treat the first awareness as a knowledge-event on the basis of the second, when the epistemic credentials of the latter are just as questionable as the former. Dharmakīrti's commentators, Devendrabuddhi and Śākyabuddhi, bite the bullet here: they point out that some awareness-events, especially the awareness of practical efficacy, are to be ascribed knowledgehood intrinsically, i.e., without any independent check.³⁶ But, as we have already said, this seems arbitrary without further explanation: if the confirming awareness about practical efficacy can be treated as a knowledge-event without any independent check, then why can't the original awareness also be ascribed the same epistemic status without an independent check?

Let us now return to the farmer example. According to Jayanta's Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsaka, there is a disanalogy between the farmer example and the case of determining whether or an awareness is a knowledge-event. Why? The farmer infers that the other seeds can give rise to rice-sprouts precisely because they share certain physical features of the seeds that she sowed before and that gave rise to rice-sprouts. These physical features constitute the relevant property of *being-of-that-kind-ness* (*tajjātīyatva*), on the basis of which the farmer infers that the other seeds also have the capacity of giving rise to rice-sprouts. Since these are perceptible features of rice-seeds, the farmer can rationally conclude that the other seeds have the relevant capacity. But the same inference isn't available in the case of awareness-events.³⁷

³⁵ See Vācaspatimiśra's *Notes on the Import of the Detailed Commentary on Nyāya* (*Nyāyavārttikatātparyatikā*) at NVTṬ 10.2-16 and Udayana's *Purification of the Important of the Detailed Commentary on Nyāya* (*Nyāyavārttikatātparyapariśuddhi*) at NVTP 34.8-36.7. For discussion of this Nyāya view, see Mohanty (1989), Matilal (1986), and Phillips (2012).

³⁶ For discussion of Devendrabuddhi's and Śākyabuddhi's views, see Inami (1993). For Umbeka's reaction, see ŚVTṬ 65.12ff. For further discussion, see footnote 277 in Kataoka (2011, pt. 2).

³⁷ NMP §3.3.3.3.5: "To this, the following is said. This example is disanalogous.

What's the relevant property of *being-of-that-kind-ness* that an awareness shares with other knowledge-events? Surely, it cannot be the mere nature of the awareness (*bodhasvarūpa*) (i.e., the property of being an awareness). Since that is shared by all awareness-events, i.e., both knowledge-events and errors, it cannot decisively indicate that an awareness is a knowledge-event. So, it has to be some stronger property that can help us distinguish knowledge-events of the relevant kind from other kinds of awareness. Whatever it might be, this property of being-of-that-kind-ness must be known by means of inference from some fact either (i) about the causes of the relevant awareness (e.g., from the fact that its causes are non-defective), or (ii) about its effects (e.g., from the fact that the awareness reliably leads to practical success).

Option (i) doesn't work. The causes of an awareness, such as the sense-faculties, may not always be perceptible. The only way we can determine that the causes of an awareness are non-defective is by means of an inference from its effects. This takes us to option (ii): namely, that an awareness's being of the same kind as other knowledge-events must be inferred from its own effects. This, again, is subject to a regress worry. What are the effects from which we infer that an awareness is of the same kind as other knowledge-events? The most natural answer is that these are simply actions that the agent performs on the basis of the awareness. But, if an agent must perform some action on the basis of the relevant awareness (just as I do in *Red Wall I*) in order to determine that it is of the same kind as other knowledge-events, then the Buddhist is in trouble. She wanted to argue that it's not pointless to determine the epistemic status of an awareness by means of an initial undertaking, because that puts us in a position to tell whether *other* awareness-events of the relevant kind are knowledge-events. And that is useful because, then, we can rely on

In virtue of being of that kind, a seed of rice and so on comes to be apprehended [as a capable of producing rice-sprouts]. In that case, it is appropriate to undertake an action without doubt, since it is ascertained [to be so capable].

Since the nature of awareness doesn't vary [across different awareness-events], one should become aware of being-of-that-kind-ness in an awareness-event either on the basis of its effect, or even on the basis of its cause, but not on the basis of its own nature.

Since the causes are imperceptible, it cannot be apprehended by means of them. By contrast, it has been explained that there is no effect in the case of a person who doesn't undertake any action.

Therefore, this isn't a way of refuting the objection about futility. And, if this is so, what sort of ascertainment of knowledgehood can arise from the awareness of practical efficacy?"

(*ucyate | viśamo 'yaṃ dr̥ṣṭāntaḥ | tajjāṭiyatayā bījaṃ br̥h̥yāder yāti veditum | tatra tanniścayād yuktam nirviśaṅkaṃ pravartanam || jñāne tathāvidhatvaṃ tu bodharūpāviśeṣataḥ | kāryād vā kāraṇād vā 'pi jñātavyaṃ na svarūpataḥ || kāraṇānāṃ parokṣatvāt na taddvārā tadāgatīḥ | kāryaṃ tu nāpravṛttasya bhavatīty upavarnītam || tasmād vaiyarthyacodyasya nāyaṃ parihṛtikramaḥ | evaṃ cārthakriyājñānāt kīdr̥k prāmānyaniścayaḥ ||*)

that information for the purposes of familiar practical undertakings. However, if we have to perform an action in order to determine the epistemic status of our awareness-events on every occasion, this argument cannot succeed.

So, the Buddhist response fails.

7. The Default Knowledgehood Thesis

So far, the Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsakas' strategy has been to show that there is no independent check by running which we can rationally ascribe knowledge-events to ourselves. But the Naiyāyika or the Buddhist might point out that this Bhāṭṭa argument doesn't make the *Independent Check Thesis* any less plausible, since we have extremely good reasons for taking this thesis to be true. Suppose that I perceptually judge that there's a mug on my table. Since the causes of this judgement are non-defective, it is a knowledge-event. Let's say that I am also introspectively aware of my judgement. But, still, I may not be in a position to tell whether my judgement is a knowledge-event. Given that judgements can be both accurate and inaccurate, for all I know (independently of my judgement), my judgement may be inaccurate. So, I may rationally doubt whether my judgement is a knowledge-event. I can only rationally assuage this doubt by running an independent check. This supports the *Independent Check Thesis*.³⁸

The Bhāṭṭa responds as follows.

It is true that determination [i.e., a judgement] alone is the effect of a knowledge-event. But when that alone has been produced, it isn't apprehended as suffering from defects such as doubt, etc. Therefore, it attains default (*outsargika*) knowledgehood. The knower,

³⁸ NMP §3.4.1: “[The opponent:] At the time when an awareness is produced, the distinction between a knowledge-event and what isn't a knowledge-event isn't determined. For that reason, doubt arises by force. Mere determination is the effect of a knowledge-event. Moreover, that is a characteristic common to both accurate and non-accurate awareness-events. Furthermore, it is a well-known principle that the apprehension of a common characteristic is the cause of doubt. And, given this, without confirmation or disconfirmation by a distinct knowledge-event, how is there a determination as to whether [an awareness-event] is knowledge or something else? Therefore, both [knowledgehood and non-knowledgehood] are extrinsic.” (*nanu cotpattivelāyāṃ na viśeṣo'vadhāryate | pramāṇetarayos, tena balād bhavati saṃśayaḥ || paricchittimātram pramāṇakāryam | tac ca yathārthetarapramītisādhāraṇaṃ rūpaṃ | sādharmaṇadharmagrahaṇaṃ ca saṃśayakāraṇam iti prasiddhaḥ panthāḥ | evaṃ sthite ca—pramāṇāntarasamvādasamvādaḥ vinā | katham pramāṇetaraniṃtīr atas ca parato dvayam ||*)

who undertakes an action on the basis of the determination of an object, is caused to undertake that action only by a knowledge-event [from her perspective], not by doubt. Given that default knowledgehood is established in this manner, when in some case there is an exception (*apavāda*) [to that status], there is non-knowledgehood.³⁹

The Bhāṭṭa seems to think the following: whenever a rational agent comes to determine the world to be a certain way, her determination or judgement has the default status of being a knowledge-event from her own perspective, unless it suffers from some fault such as doubt, etc. However, in a case where there is an exception to that status, the agent judges that the relevant judgement isn't a knowledge-event.

What constitutes an exception? The Bhāṭṭa explains:

Moreover, in the case of non-knowledgehood, there must be an exception. Such exceptions are of two kinds: rebutting awareness-events and awareness-events about defects in the causes [of the relevant awareness]. That has been stated by the author of the *Commentary* [i.e., Śabara] as follows: “An incorrect awareness is simply that which has a defective cause and with respect to which there is an awareness that takes the form, ‘This is false,’ not anything else.” The author of the *Detailed Commentary* [i.e., Kumāri] has also said:

Therefore, the knowledgehood of an awareness is attained (*prāpta*) in virtue of its being an awareness. Due to an awareness of things being otherwise or of defects that originate from the causes, this is subject to an exception.

Amongst these [exceptions], a rebutting awareness arises—by way of refuting the earlier awareness-event—with respect to that intentional object. So, in virtue of having the same intentional object, it is quite clearly a rebutter. In contrast, even though an awareness of defects in the causes [of the relevant awareness] has a distinct intentional object, it attains

³⁹ NMP §3.4.2: *satyaṃ paricchitir eva pramāṇakāryam | sā punar upajāyamānaiva na sandehādīdūṣitanur upalabhyate ity autsargikam prāmāṇyam eva sā bhajate | arthaparchhedāc ca pravartamānaḥ pramātā pramāṇenaiva pravartito bhavati na saṃśayāt pravṛttaḥ | sthite caivam autsargike prāmāṇye yatra tasyāpavādaḥ kvacid bhavati tatrāprāmāṇyam | |*

the status of a rebutter (*bādhaka*) in virtue of having the same effect [as a rebutting awareness].⁴⁰

Let's unpack this.

When an agent undergoes either an awareness that rebuts her earlier awareness-event, or an awareness that points to a defect in the causal conditions that produced her original awareness, then the default status of her original awareness as a knowledge-event is defeated. Just to illustrate the point, imagine a case where I've been told by Alice that the wall in a room is red. I have no reason to doubt Alice, so I judge that the wall is red. I also immediately judge that I have learnt this on the basis of Alice's testimony. But, when I step into the room, I see that the wall is white. This perceptual awareness ascribes to the wall a colour which is incompatible with the colour ascribed to it by my earlier judgement. Since the two awareness-events ascribe incompatible properties to the same intentional object, the latter rebuts the former. So, I can no longer take myself to know (or have learnt) that the wall is red. Now, consider a different scenario. In this case, I learn on further investigation that Alice is a pathological liar. Here, I discover a defect in one of the causes of my original judgement, but this discovery doesn't straightforwardly rebut my judgement in virtue of ascribing an incompatible property to the same intentional object. However, this too should defeat my earlier attribution of a knowledge-event to myself.

These two kinds of awareness-events, as Jayanta's Bhāṭṭa correctly notes, are different. The content of the first directly conflicts with the content of my original awareness, while the content of the latter doesn't. To use contemporary terminology, the first is a *rebutting* awareness,

⁴⁰ NMP §3.4.3: *apramāṇye cāvaśyambhāvya apavādaḥ | dvividha evāpavādaḥ bādhakapratyayaḥ kāraṇadoṣajñānaḥ ca | tad uktaḥ bhāṣyakṛtā "yatra ca duṣṭaṃ karaṇam yatra ca mithyeti pratyayaḥ sa evāsamicīnaḥ pratyayaḥ, nānyaḥ" iti | vārttikakāro 'py āha— tasmād bodhātmakatvena prāptā buddheḥ pramāṇatā | arthānyathātvahetūthadoṣajñānād apodyate || iti | tatra bādhakajñānaḥ pūrvajñānopamardadvāreṇaiva tasmīn viśaye jāyata iti samānaviśayatvāt spaṣṭam eva bādhakam | karaṇadoṣajñānaḥ tu bhinnaviśayam api kāryaikyād bādhakatām pratipadyate |*

The quoted passage from Śābarasvāmin is from his commentary on *Mīmāṃsāsūtra* 1.1.5 (ŚBh 34.3-4), while the verse is verse 53 from Kumārila's *Detailed Commentary in Verse on Mīmāṃsāsūtra* 1.1.2.

while the second is an *undercutting* awareness.⁴¹ Both, however, have the same effect, i.e., casting doubt on the accuracy of my original awareness-event. While the first kind of awareness directly conveys the falsehood or inaccuracy of my original awareness, the second intimates the presence of an epistemic defect, which makes awareness-events of this sort false or inaccurate. So, even the second kind of awareness-event could be called a *rebutter* in an extended sense of the term.⁴²

What happens in a case where neither of these kinds of defeating awareness are present? Jayanta's Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsaka defends the following requirement: when an agent undergoes no rebutting or undercutting awareness corresponding to an awareness, she is *required* not to doubt that the awareness is a knowledge-event.

In a case where neither of these exceptions (*apavāda*) are observed, the default knowledgehood exists without being subject to any exception. So, there is no reason for a doubt about falsehood. This is just as has been said [by Kumāṛila]:

When no awareness of any defect has been produced, one should not suspect that [the relevant awareness] is not a knowledge-event.

That is to say:

When some doubt is produced here, it is simply apprehended by itself (*svasamvedya*): “Is that a tree-stump or person?” Who could deny it?

⁴¹ A piece of rebutting evidence against the claim that p defeats the evidential support for p by directly providing evidence for the claim that $\sim p$. In contrast, a piece of undercutting evidence against the claim that p defeats the evidential support for p not by doing so, but rather by undermining the support that some previous piece of evidence provided to the claim that p . In the framework that we are working with, there is no obvious notion of evidence other than the notion of a *pramāna*, i.e., a method of knowing. But we can still talk about rebutting or undercutting in terms of the changes in judgements that such rebutting or undercutting awareness-events bring about in minimally rational agents. For example, we can say that a rebutting awareness makes an agent give up her judgement by directly indicating that the content of that judgement is false, while an undercutting awareness makes an agent give up her judgement by directly indicating that the judgement arose from defective cases. For the distinction between rebutting and undercutting defeaters in contemporary epistemology, see Pollock (1986) and Kotzen (forthcoming).

⁴² NM_p §3.4.3.2.

When it is produced by force, it destroys all actions. Even if one were embracing one's wife, one would doubt whether it's one's mother⁴³

This gives us:

The Default Knowledgehood Thesis. If an agent judges that p , then, in the absence of any rebutting or undercutting awareness corresponding to her judgement, she is required by rationality not to doubt that she has come to know (or learnt) that p .

Why is this plausible? The argument that Jayanta's Bhāṭṭa opponent sketches proceeds from the destructive nature of doubt. Here's how we can reconstruct it. Suppose the *Default Knowledgehood Thesis* is false. Then, even though an agent may judge that p and have no evidence against the claim that p , she may be rationally permitted to doubt that she knows that p . Given that the *Action-Knowledge Principle* is true, this means that this agent (if rational) cannot undertake any action on the basis of her judgement that p . But, given that independent checks cannot help us determine whether any of our awareness-events are knowledge-events, this means that the agent won't be able to rationally undertake any action on the basis of any assumption at all. That is how doubt destroys all actions. But, surely, an agent can rationally undertake actions. So, the *Default Knowledgehood Thesis* must be true.

No obvious problem of regress arises for the *Default Knowledgehood Thesis*. Notice what it doesn't say: it doesn't say that, if an agent judges that p , then, in the absence of any rebutting or undercutting awareness corresponding to her judgement, she is required by rationality *to judge* that she knows (or has learnt) that p . If it said this, then there would be a regress. For, then, in any scenario where an agent has judged that p and has no rebutting or undercutting evidence against

⁴³ NMP §3.4.3.3.1 *yatra punar idam apavādadvayam api na dr̥syate tatra tad autsargikaṃ prāmānyam anapoditam āsta iti na mūhyātvāsankāyāṃ nimittaṃ kiñcit | yathāha*

doṣajñāne tvanutpanne nāsankyā niṣpramānatā iti | |
tathā hi

kaścid utpanna eveha svasaṃvedyo 'sti saṃśayaḥ |
sthānur vā puruṣo veti ko nāmāpahnvīta tam | |
haṭhād utpādyamānas tu hinasti sakalāḥ kriyāḥ |
svabhāryāpariraṃbhe 'pi bhaven mātari saṃśayaḥ | |

The verse from Kumārila is verse 60cd in *The Detailed Commentary in Verse on Mīmāṃsāsūtra* 1.1.2.

the claim that p , she would be required to make infinitely many judgements: the judgement that she knows (or has learnt) that p , the judgement that she knows (or has learnt) that she knows (or has learnt) that p , and so on *ad infinitum*. Surely, agents with finite cognitive resources cannot make infinitely many such judgements. The *Default Knowledgehood Thesis* avoids this problem. Suppose an agent has judged that p and has become introspectively aware of her judgement, but has no undercutting or rebutting awareness corresponding to it. Here, the *Default Knowledgehood Thesis* predicts that, if the agent were to consider whether that judgement is a knowledge-event, then she couldn't rationally remain in doubt on that matter; she would be rationally required to judge that it is a knowledge-event. Obviously, she might never become introspectively aware of her judgement at all, and thus might never consider whether that judgement is a knowledge-event. But, then, since she also won't be in doubt about whether her judgment is a knowledge-event, she would be vacuously satisfying the rational requirement laid down by the *Default Knowledgehood Thesis*.

However, we might still wonder if a version of Kumārila's regress worry couldn't be raised against this view. Surely, it's undeniable that in some cases, when we come to rationally doubt whether we have learnt something (in light of some evidence), we do run an independent check to verify if it's true. Consider a variant of the *Red Wall* cases.

Red Wall 3. I have two friends, Alice and Bob. Alice comes out of a room, and tells me that the wall in that room is red. I trust her, so I judge that the wall is red. But, then, Bob tells me that the wall is white but lit up with trick red lighting. Since I trust Bob too, I immediately judge that the wall is white but lit up with trick red lighting. But then, I realize that the two judgements conflict with each other. So, I can't take either of these judgements to be a knowledge-event.

How should I resolve the conflict? Suppose I go into the room and check if the wall is white and lit up with red light. There are (at least) two outcomes: either I will discover that the wall was genuinely red, or that it was white but lit up with trick red lighting. So, either my inquiry will yield an awareness that will confirm my first judgement, or an awareness which will confirm my second judgement. In either case, I can rationally judge that the judgement that gets confirmed is

a knowledge-event. If, according to the Bhāṭṭas, such independent checks help us determine the epistemic status of our awareness-events, wouldn't the problem of regress also arise here?

The Bhāṭṭa response here is subtle. According to the Bhāṭṭas, knowledgehood is intrinsic, i.e., we can rationally judge an awareness to be a knowledge-event without relying on a method of knowing which is distinct from the method that gives rise to the awareness itself or an introspective awareness about it. However, non-knowledgehood is extrinsic: we cannot rationally judge that an awareness is *not* a knowledge-event without running an independent check. So, even though independent checks needn't (and in fact can't) provide evidence in favour of the status of any awareness as a knowledge-event, they can dispel our doubts about the epistemic status of awareness-events by helping us identify some of them as *not knowledge-events*. The point is explained as follows.

Moreover, even in some case where a doubt is produced given the presence of some rebutting awareness, there is no regress due to the dependence on a third awareness. Furthermore, this doesn't undermine [the theory of] intrinsic knowledgehood. If a third awareness that confirms the first awareness arises, then the default knowledgehood of the first awareness simply remains intact. However, the third awareness dispels the doubt about the fictitious blemish [i.e., the epistemic defect] ascribed by the second awareness. But the knowledgehood of this first awareness doesn't obtain in virtue of its being confirmed by that third awareness. However, if the third awareness confirms the second awareness, then the first awareness lacks knowledgehood. And that is accepted simply to be extrinsic. But the knowledgehood of the second awareness doesn't obtain in virtue of its being confirmed by the third awareness. Rather, the activity of that third awareness consists in the mere resolution of the bad doubt that was raised. Further, it has been said [by Kumāṛila]:

In this way, after three or four awareness-events have arisen, no further awareness is required. And, then, one [of the two conflicting awareness-events] attains intrinsic knowledgehood.⁴⁴

The thought is this. If an agent judges that *p*, then, from her perspective, absent defeating evidence, her judgement has the default status of being a knowledge-event. But when the agent undergoes an awareness that indicates that the original judgement was faulty, she can no longer judge that the original judgement was a knowledge-event, or that the second awareness is a knowledge-event. This is exactly what happens to me in *Red Wall 3*. An agent who finds herself in this predicament may run an independent check. Even though the independent check cannot directly show that any of the awareness-events are knowledge-events, it can provide evidence that one of the awareness-events is not a knowledge-event. This can help the agent dispel her doubts about the epistemic credentials of the relevant awareness-events.

As the last part of the passage shows, the regress worry that Kumārila raised against the defender of the *Independent Check Thesis* doesn't arise here. When there are conflicting awareness-events, an agent might run an independent check to determine which of her awareness-events is not a knowledge-event. But this process needn't go beyond three or four levels of higher-order awareness. This is presumably because, typically, the third (or the fourth) awareness will rebut (or undercut) one of the earlier conflicting awareness-events. So, when the agent judges that that conflicting awareness is not a knowledge-event, the default knowledgehood of the other conflicting awareness will be restored. Thus, the regress will stop. This completes the Bhāṭṭa defence of the *Default Knowledgehood Thesis*.

8. Conclusion

⁴⁴ NMP §3.4.3.3.2: *yatrāpi ca kvacid bādhakapratyaye saṁśayo jāyate tatrāpi tṛtīyajñānāpekṣaṅgān nānavasthā | na ca tāvatā svataḥprāmānyahānīh | yatra prathamavijñānasamvādi tṛtīyajñānam utpadyate tatra prathamasya prāmānyam autsargikaṁ sthitam eva | dvitīyavijñānāropitālikakālusyaśaṅkānirākaraṇam tv asya tṛtīyena kriyate na tv asya samvādāt prāmānyam | yadi tu dvitīyajñānasamvādi tṛtīyam jñānam tadā prathamasyāprāmānyam | tac ca parata iṣṭam eva | dvitīyasya tu jñānasya na tṛtīyasamvādakṛtam prāmānyam, api tu kalpyamanakuśaṅkāśamanamātre tasya vyāpārah | uktam ca evaṁ tricaturajñānanamano nādhikā matiḥ | prārthyate tāvataivaikaṁ svataḥprāmānyam aśnute || iti |*

The verse from Kumārila is verse 61 in *The Detailed Commentary in Verse on Mīmāṃsā-sūtra* 1.1.2.

Let's sum up. The Bhāṭṭa arguments against the *Independent Check Thesis* reveal a tension between the *Action-Knowledge Principle* and the *Independent Check Thesis*. Suppose an agent judges or believes that p . If we accept the *Action-Knowledge Principle*, then it is possible for her to rationally undertake an action on the basis of that belief or judgement only if she antecedently rationally judges that she has come to know (or has learnt) that p . But, if the *Independent Check Thesis* is true, she can arrive at such a judgement only by relying on a source of information that provides her independent evidence about the truth or reliability of her belief or judgement that p . In order to gain access to such a source, the agent will (at least sometimes) have to perform an evidence-gathering act. Presumably, she will undertake such an act on the basis of some assumption that q . But, if the *Action-Knowledge Principle* is true, she can only rationally undertake an action on the assumption that q if she antecedently rationally judges that she knows (or has learnt) that q . Thus, there will be a regress.

The *Action-Knowledge Principle* also lends support to a positive proposal that Jayanta ascribes to his Bhāṭṭa opponents: namely, the *Default Knowledgehood Thesis*, i.e., roughly, the thesis that, when an agent believes or judges that p and has no defeating evidence against the claim that p , she is rationally required not to doubt that she knows (or has learnt) that p . If the *Default Knowledgehood Thesis* were false, then—even when an agent has formed the belief or judged that p and doesn't have any evidence against the claim that p —she could be rationally permitted to be in doubt about whether she knows (or has learnt) that p . But, if the *Action-Knowledge Principle* is true, then such doubt would make it impossible for the agent to rationally undertake any action on the assumption that p . If the Bhāṭṭas are right to think that no independent check can decisively show that we know (or have learnt) something, then such doubt can rationally arise for any of our beliefs or judgements, and can therefore make it impossible for us to rationally undertake any action at all. But, surely, we don't want that. So, the *Default Knowledgehood Thesis* must be true.

Given the background conception of knowledge-events that Jayanta and his Bhāṭṭa opponent are working with, the *Action-Knowledge Principle* does look quite plausible. On this view, a non-recollective awareness is a knowledge-event just in case it's accurate. So, if an agent cannot rationally judge an awareness of hers to be a knowledge-event, she cannot rationally take it to be

accurate. But if an agent cannot rationally take an awareness to be accurate, she cannot rationally ignore the possibility that it might be false. So, plausibly, it cannot be rational for her to rely on its content for the purposes of practical reasoning under such circumstances. Thus, the Bhāṭṭas—it seems—have articulated a powerful challenge to the *Independent Check Thesis*.⁴⁵

Bibliography

Primary Texts and Abbreviations

- NB *Gautamīanyāyadarśana with the Bhāṣya of Vātsyāyana*. Edited by Anantalal Thakur. New Delhi: Indian Council of Philosophical Research, 1997.
- NK *The Nyāyakusumāñjali of Śrī Udayanācārya with Four Commentaries: The Bodhinī, Prakāśa, Prakāśikā (Jalada) and Makaranda by Varadarāja, Vardhamānopādhyāya, Mecha Thakkura and Rucidattopādhyāya and with Notes by Śrī Dharmadatta (Bachchā Jhā)*. Edited by Padmaprasāda Upādhyāya and Dhundhirāja Śāstri. Benares: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series, 1957.
- NM I *Nyāyamañjarī: Sampādakagrathitanyāyasaurabhākhyatīppañīsamanvitā*. Vol. I. Edited by K. S. Varadacharya. Mysore: Oriental Research Institute, 1969.
- NM_P A Critical Edition of the *Prāmānya* Section of Bhaṭṭa Jayanta's *Nyāyamañjarī*. Edited by Kei Kataoka. *The Memoirs of Institute for Advanced Studies on Asia* 169 (2016), 562(1)-503(60).
- NRK Pārthasārathimiśra's *Nyāyaratnākara* in *Slokavārttikam Kumārilabhaṭṭapādaviracitaṃ Pārthasārathimiśraviracitayā Nyāyaratnākaravyākhyayā Sanātham*. Edited by Dwarikadas Sastri. Varanasi: Tara Publications, 1978.

⁴⁵ I am grateful to Elisa Freschi and Daniel Greco for helpful comments on earlier versions of this paper.

- NRM *Nyāyaratnamālā of Pārthasārathimiśra: With the Commentary of Rāmānujācārya, Entitled the Nyakaratna*. Critically edited with an introduction and indices, by K. S. Rāmaswami Śāstrī Śiromaṇi. Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1937.
- NV *Nyāyabhāṣyavārttika of Bhāradāja Uddyotakara*. Edited by Anantalal Thakur. New Delhi: Indian Council of Philosophical Research, 1997.
- NVTṬ *Nyāyavārttikatātparyāṭikā of Vācaspatimiśra*. Edited by Anantalal Thakur. New Delhi: Indian Council of Philosophical Research, 1996.
- NVTP *Nyāyavārttikatātparyāpariśuddhiḥ*. Edited by Anantalal Thakur. New Delhi: Indian Council of Philosophical Research, 1996.
- PP *Prakaraṇapañcikā of Śālikanāthamiśra with Nyāyasiddhi of Jaiपुरi Nārāyaṇabhaṭṭa*. Edited by A. Subrahmaṇya Śāstrī. Varanasi: Banaras Hindu University, 1961.
- PV *Pramāṇavārttikakārikā* (Sanskrit and Tibetan). Edited by Y. Miyasaka. *Acta Indologica* 2, (1971/72), 1-206.
- RNA *Ratnakīrtinibandhāvalīḥ*. Edited by Anantalal Thakur. Patna: K. P. Jaiswal Research Institute, 1975.
- ŚBh Śābarasvāmin's *Bhāṣya in Śrīmajjaiminiḥpranīte Mīmāṃsādarśane Ādītaḥ Ārabhya Dvītyādhyāyaprathamapādāntaḥ Prathamā Bhāgaḥ*. Edited by Vināyaka Gaṇeśa Āpate. Pune: Ānandāśramamudraṇālaya, 1929.
- ŚVK *The Mīmāṃsāslokaivārttika of Kumārilabhaṭṭa: With the Commentary Kāśika of Sucaritamīśra*. Parts I and II. Edited by K. Sāmbaśivaśāstri. Trivandrum: CBH Publications, 1990.
- ŚVTṬ *Slokaivārtikavyākhyā (Tātparyāṭikā) of Bhaṭṭabeka*. Edited by S. K. Ramanatha Sastri. Madras: University of Madras, 1940.
- Vim *Vimśikāvṛtti in Seven Works of Vasubandhu: The Buddhist Psychological Doctor*. Edited and translated by Stefan Anacker. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1994.

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