Animal-oriented *laukikanyāyas*

On some uses of analogical maxims concerning animals in selected Vedāntic contexts

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This contribution analyses some common uses of illustrations and analogical maxims related to the animal kingdom in general and some animals in particular. Indeed, Sanskrit philosophical texts occasionally resort to everyday life scenarios that are readily accessible to human experience in order to clarify sophisticated theories, doctrines or complex theoretical disquisitions. The maxims that portray specific natural and cultural situations and analogise them with specific theoretical contexts are called *laukikanyāya*s. These *laukikanyāya*s, which are usually built upon the observation of nature, are frequently modelled after animals, taking into account certain physical or behavioural traits that may be either tangible or cultural. A well-known example found in the *Adhyāsabhāṣya* (Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda's introduction to his *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya*) will serve as a methodological starting point for the analysis.

Keywords: non-human animals, analogical maxims, *laukika-nyāya*, *lūtā* "spider," *cakora* "eastern partridge."

1. Introduction[1]

Indeed, Sanskrit philosophical texts occasionally draw on everyday life situations that are immediately accessible to human experience in order to elucidate intricated theories, doctrinal positions, or complex textual argumentations. A distinctive form of such illustrative strategies and reasonings is found in *laukikanyāya*s: maxims that capture specific natural or cultural scenarios and apply them analogically to abstract theoretical contexts.

This essay examines the use of illustrations, metaphors and analogical maxims involving animals, both in general and with reference to particular species. To that end, I begin with a set of general

[1] This research was made possible thanks to the financial support of Next Generation EU – PRIN 2022, project "For a Multivocal History of the Attitudes Towards Non-human Animals in South Asia. Ethics, Practices, Symbolism. Investigating New and Unsolved Issues," CUP D53D23012710006.

reflections on the ancient cultural and intellectual presupposition that gave rise to *laukikanyāya*s. I then follow a sort of methodological and epistemological path outlined by Śaṅkara's reflections on humans and animals in the *Adhyāsabhāṣya.*

The term *nyāya* has been employed with a range of meanings over time. In what follows, I shall briefly address those nuances most pertinent to the investigation of *laukikanyāya*s (variously translated as 'proverbial analogical maxims, popular maxims, analogical reasonings'), while also attempting to sketch the historical development of this particular textual device.

Many of these maxims are grounded in close observation of the natural world, with a significant number modelled after animals, drawing upon their physical characteristics, behavioural patterns, or culturally ascribed traits. These *laukikanyāya*s, often shaped by a form of zoological scrutiny as well as mythological resonances, serve to clarify complex textual contexts. In the central part of this essay, I shall concentrate on two examples concerning causality and agency developed within the Advaita Vedānta tradition, tracing their textual foundations and briefly considering the theoretical contexts in which they are deployed. Finally, I shall situate the hermeneutic device of animal-oriented-*laukikanyāya*s within broader a global philosophical perspective.

To do so, the analysis must be framed within a broader context, one that stems from an attitude characteristic of the archaic layers of Sanskrit literature.

As a matter of fact, since the earliest Vedic tradition, the unique quality of vision has established the distinct and superior ontological status of the primordial seers: *ṛṣir darśanāt* 'Is seer because of [his] sight,' as Yāska (5th cent. BCE) states in the *Nirukta* 2.11 (Sarup 1984: 29 and 50).

The exalted ontological status of poet-seers in relation to ordinary human beings is determined by one of their primary and distinctive characteristics (*lakṣaṇa*), namely sight, observation, and vision (Gonda 1963).[2] Their ability to perceive the connective tissue of the cosmos entails a penetrating and integrative form of observation. Inspired by this *in-sight*, Vedic poets unveil various forms of homologies and correspondences (*bandhu*, *nidāna*) across manifold domains of existence (Ganeri 2018: 173-181; Brereton 1990, 118; Gonda 1965: 1-29).[3]

[2] See the *Padārthadharmasaṃgraha* (1994: 57) and Torella (2011: 98) on the passage.

[3] The earliest Indian use of animals in literature was probably as similes. As Stephanie Jamison (2009 and 2013: 76) has pointed out, such similes abound already in the *Ṛg Veda*. A god is compared to a bull or a horse; tenderness is like a cow lowing for her calf. There are other metaphors like *narasiṃha* 'man-lion,' *puṃgava* 'man-bull,' *siṃhadaṃṣṭra* 'lion-toothed,' *rājasiṃha* 'king-lion,' etc. What is significant in these metaphors is that a particular characteristic is singled out as defining a specific animal and constituting its very nature (*svabhāva*). The association of a particular species with a set of physical, moral and intellectual qualities with personality traits plays a central role in animal usages in later texts (Olivelle 2013: 4-6).

Nature and its elements have been central to the meticulous observation of poet-seers. Therefore, Vedic seers' vision integrates both external and internal dimensions, encompassing their own being, the surrounding world, and all living entities, including humans and non-human animals.[4] This inquiry specifically examines the physical, psychological, and environmental analogies (*sādharmya, lit.* 'homogeneousness') and differences (*vaidharmya*) between humans and non-human animals, seeking to bridge seemingly incompatible domains (Pellegrini 2011: 106–107; Halbfass 1991: 268–272). As a result, texts addressing metaphysics often depict the state of a realized sage as one who perceives a fundamental sameness (*sama*) everywhere.[5] Thus, despite superficial distinctions rooted in the psycho-physical sphere, a focus on the metaphysical essence of the self (*ātman*) reveals profound analogies, assimilations, and even instances of identification (Nelson 2006: 189-190).

2. Human and non-human animals

When considered solely in its corporeal and cognitive aspects, the human being possesses nothing fundamentally distinct from other creatures (see Pinotti 1994: 103–121). In a brief passage of the *Adhyāsabhāṣya* ('Commentary on Superimposition'),[6] Śaṅkara's observation of a multi-level correspondence between non-human animals and human animals serves as the foundation for a series of the analogical reflections of this essay.

According to Śaṅkara there is a fundamental error that causes a confusion common to both humans and non-human animals. This misconception, technically referred to as *adhyāsa*—typically translated as 'superimposition'—results in a shared epistemic limitation. Consequently, through the metaphysical analysis of humans, we can counterintuitively identify certain epistemic characteristics of non-human animals as well, since both are equally confined within their psycho-physical aggregates. Indeed, similar reactions in discerning individuals—possessing a higher degree of intelligence—and

[4] Hadot (2004: 210-216) points out that since the dawn of antiquity, it has been believed that the poet is the true interpreter of nature, possessing knowledge of all its secrets. This stems from the notion that nature itself acts as a poet and that its creation is a kind of poem. Although Hadot (2004: 210–211) focuses specifically on Plato's *Timaeus*, nonetheless he mentions also the relevant Stoic theme of the 'Poet of the universe.'

[5] As pointed out by Nelson (2006: 179-182) see for example *Bhagavadgītā* (BG 5.18: *vidyāvinayasapanne brāhmaṇe gavi hastini | śuni caiva śvapāke ca paṇḍitāḥ samadarśinaḥ* || "The wise perceive the same essence in a learned and humble Brahmin, in a cow, in an elephant, even in a dog and in a man of the lowest rank"), but in the Upaniṣads there are plenty of examples.

[6] The *Adhyāsabhāṣya* (AB) serves as the preface to the *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* (BSBh or *Śārīrakamīmāṃsābhāṣya* 'The Commentary on the Investigation of the Embodied Self'), Śaṅkara Bhagavadpāda's commentary (8th century) on the *Brahmasūtra* (BS 'Thread of Statements about *brahman*').

instinct-driven animals in comparable situations involving pleasant (*anukūla*) or unpleasant (*pratikūla*) stimuli demonstrate that both are subject to the same superimposition:

> *paśvādibhiś cāviśeṣāt | yathā hi paśvādayaḥ śabdādibhiḥ śrotrādīnāṃ saṃbandhe sati śabdādivijñāne pratikūle jāte tato nivartante anukūle ca pravartante | yathā daṇḍodyatakaraṃ puruṣam abhimukham upalabhya māṃ hantum ayam icchatīti palāyitum ārabhante, haritatṛṇapūrṇapāṇim upalabhya taṃ pratyabhimukhībhavanti | evaṃ puruṣā api vyutpannacittāḥ krūradṛṣṭīn ākrośataḥ khaḍgodyatakarān balavata upalabhya tato nivartante, tadviparītān prati pravartante | ataḥ samānaḥ paśvādibhiḥ puruṣāṇāṃ pramāṇaprameyavyavahāraḥ | [...]*
>
> Also because [in regards to empirical behavior], there is no difference [of human beings] from the animals. In fact, animals turn away from a sound or other [stimuli] when it appears to be unpleasant once it has come in contact with hearing, while they move towards when it appears pleasant. For example, by noticing a man approaching with a raised stick [they consider] "He wants to beat me" and start to run away. [On the contrary,] they approach upon noticing a [man] holding some green grass in his hand. Similarly, intelligent human beings, upon noticing fierce-looking strong persons yelling with upraised swords, turn away, but draw near to those who appear friendly. Thus, the empirical behavior of human beings with respect to means of knowledge and [their] objects is similar to that of animals [...].

Drawing on the reactions of humans and animals, this passage highlights analogies—both positive and negative[7]—that invite deeper metaphysical and methodological reflections. In Śaṅkara's time (8th cent.), such analogies were part of a widely shared perspective, having already taken the well-structured form of proverbs, analogical reasoning, and maxims. These formulas served to clarify and convey complex abstract concepts and theories through vivid illustrations and metaphors. In this manner, the true essence of abstraction is revealed within a framework of what might be termed 'concrete metaphysics' (Cacciari 2023).[8]

[7] It is worth highlighting a well-known stanza from the introduction of the *Hitopadeśa* (1.25, see Pellegrini 2011: 106-108): *āhāranidrā bhayaṃ maithunaṃ ca sāmānyam etat paśubhir narāṇām | dharmo hi teṣām adhiko viśeṣo dharmeṇa hīnāḥ paśubhiḥ samānāḥ* || "These are the shared characteristics of humans and animals: feeding, sleeping, fearing, and mating. However, *dharma* is the added value and distinguishing feature of humans. Deprived of *dharma* [humans] are similar to animals." The *Śrīsūktāvalī* 21 (Lindtner 1993: 215) presents a significant variant: instead of *dharmo hi teṣām ... dharmeṇa...*, it substitutes *jñānaṃ narāṇām... jñānena*, emphasizing knowledge (*jñāna*) as the distinguishing factor. See also *Aitareya Āraṇyaka* (2.3.2, Keith 1909: 112 and 216-217; Halbfass 1991: 269-271).

[8] One of the traditional Sanskrit renderings of the word 'metaphysics' is *tattvajñāna*, meaning 'knowledge of the principle(s),' where the compound is interpreted as a *ṣaṣṭhītatpuruṣa*. Alternatively, less conventionally—though contextually significant, particularly when linked to knowledge gained through the observation of nature—the compound may be read as a *pañcamītatpuruṣa*, signifying 'knowledge [derived] from the principles [or elements].'

2. *Laukikanyāya*s

The doctrines of Brāhmaṇas and Upaniṣads, which associate immanent with the transcendent, unify seemingly disparate domains through the invisible *fil rouge* of homologies (*bandhu*). These homologies, in turn, rest upon the unique underlying rhizome of the entire phenomenal universe: the *brahman*, the principle articulated within the Upaniṣasic episteme (*aupaniṣadapuruṣa*, *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 3.9.26) as the solid foundation of all phenomena (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6.1.3).[9]

The Brāhmaṇa-Upaniṣad contexts, characterized by macro-microcosmic homologies, provide an ideal cultural background for the gradual development of analogical, proverbial, or interpretative maxims known as *nyāya*s. These maxims, derived predominantly from the observation of the world, are aptly termed *laukika*, meaning 'worldly,' 'common, popular,' or 'general.' Consequently, *laukika-nyāya* means 'practical maxim' or 'analogical principle/maxim.' These *nyāya*s emerge from meticulous empirical observations of daily life, microcosmic human experience, the natural world, and the richly diverse Indian cultural milieu. Simultaneously, due to their intrinsic connection to the macrocosm through homologies, they serve as potent tools for exemplifying universal principles and concepts.

The term *nyāya* has various uses, and while a full account would be too broad,[10] its meaning in this context is often associated with analogy, illustration, simile, reasoning, or proverb. Although the emic tradition and the titles of collections explicitly use the compound *laukika-nyāya*, this term rarely appears in the texts themselves.[11] Rather, when such maxims are employed, the term *nyāya* is often

[9] *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* 2.5, *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6.2.1 and 7.24.2, *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* 2.2.15.

[10] For the strictly logical and epistemological connotations of the term *nyāya*, see the *Nyāyakośa* (Jhalakīkar 1967: 409–412; see also Kaul 2020: 163-164). Indeed, it may be hypothesized that the use of the term *nyāya* to denote analogical or interpretative maxims ultimately originates within the domain of logical-inferential thought, given that one of its meanings is 'five-membered syllogism' (*pañcāvayavavākya*, Jhalakīkar 1967: 410). A *laukikanyāya*, in fact, refers to a regularly occurring (*niyata*) natural event, thereby granting empirical accessibility and offering a tangible exemplar of more subtle cognitive processes. Within the structure of inference (*anumāna*), the example (*udāharaṇa* or *dṛṣṭānta*) functions as the instance in which the presence of the probandum (*sādhya*) is definitively established (*siddha*) through repeated observation (*bhūyodarśana*) of the invariable concomitance (*vyāpti*) between the probans (*hetu*) and the probandum (*sādhya*). This very regularity—whereby an imperceptible entity (*parokṣa*) is corroborated through empirical observation (*pratyakṣa*)—may, by extension, account for the use of the word *nyāya* in the designation l*aukikanyāya*.

[11] In his commentary on *Brahmasūtra* 4.1.5 (BSBh 2000: 836-837), Śaṅkara briefly reflects on a specific *laukikanyāya* (*utkṛṣṭadṛṣṭir hi nikṛṣṭe 'dhyasitavyeti laukiko nyāyaḥ* "the analogical maxim that the superior perspective should be ascribed to the inferior element") and its utility, broadly generalizing its application within a debate. An objector argues that a *laukikanyāya* is not appropriate for guiding or resolving textual matters (*na ca laukikanyāyena śāstrīyā dṛṣṭir niyantuṃ yukteti*), whereas Śaṅkara contends the opposite: *nirdhārite śāstrārtha etad evaṃ syāt | sandigdhe tu tasmiṃs tanirṇayaṃ prati laukiko 'pi nyāya āśrīyamāṇo na virudhyate |* "Once the meaning of the scriptural passage has been established, it is as it is. But when it is in doubt, even an analogical maxim invoked to determine that [meaning] is not in contradiction." To this, numerous commentaries add further insights: *Bhāmatī* by Vācaspati Miśra (10th cent.), the *Nyāyanirṇaya* by Ānandagiri (13th cent.), and the brief reflections in

omitted (particularly in ancient texts, whereas its usage becomes more frequent in later works; see Rastogi 1984: 28-41, Kaul 2020: 163-164), while its specific sense of 'analogy' or 'resemblance' is conveyed through the affix *-vat* ('as, like, likewise, in the manner of').

However, in order to outline the path of the word *nyāya* it could be worth noting that numerous Sanskrit philosophical texts—primarily independent treatises from the medieval or early modern periods—feature the term *nyāya* in their titles. Indeed, in many instances, the term's meaning seems to bear no direct connection to its more widely known logical or epistemological connotations. For example, within the context of Advaita Vedānta, two significant texts stand out: *Śārīrakanyāyasaṃgraha* by Prakāśātman Yati (10th cent.) and the *Vaiyāsikyanyāyamālā*, alternatively attributed to Bhāratī Tīrtha, Mādhava, or Vidyāraṇya (14th cent.). In the first example, within the framework of the *Vivaraṇa* tradition, Prakāśātman provides a concise yet comprehensive exposition of the *Brahmasūtra*s (*BS*), organizing the text into sections and thematic units (*adhikaraṇa or nyāya*, Uskokov 2022: 33*).*[12] Conversely, the *Vaiyāsikyanyāyamālā* serves as a metrical compendium rooted in the *Vivaraṇa* tradition, exclusively focusing on the headings shaped as interpretative rules and principles (*nyāya*) articulated in the *BS* and the *BSBh*. Preceding the *Vaiyāsikyanyāyamālā* is a parallel compendium on the *nyāya*s of *Pūrva Mīmāṃsā*, composed by Mādhavācārya and titled *Jaiminīyanyāyamālā*.[13] Thus, the titles of these texts suggest that the term *nyāya* refers to interpretative principles, reasoning, analogies, or maxims (Pellegrini 2018: 602-603).

Among these *nyāya*s are the traditional *laukikanyāya*s—proverbial analogical maxims distinctive of the Indian cultural milieu. They employ metaphors, similes, and correspondences to convey philosophical or technical insights rooted in everyday empirical observation (Jacob 2004: i–iv; Sharma 1989: 1–3). It is also worth noting that in its endeavor to reflect on and analyze the ritualistic statements of the Vedas, the intellectual tradition of *Pūrva Mīmāṃsā* developed a set of interpretative principles, commonly referred to as *nyāya*s *(or paribhāṣā)*. These *nyāya*s represent a significant contribution of the *mīmāṃsaka*s to the hermeneutic methodology of South Asian intellectual traditions. In the course of this interpretative work, they also addressed epistemological and metaphysical issues, such as those

Bhāṣyaratnaprabhā by Govindānanda (c. 1550–1650). Govindānanda describes the *laukikanyāya* as a 'systematizer, regulator' (*niyāmaka*), highlighting the utility of its meaning as being non-contradictory (*laukikanyāyāviruddhārtha*) to the message that Śaṅkara seeks to convey.

[12] Within the framework of the three canonical sources of Vedānta, known as the *prasthānatrayī* ('three points of departure'), the *Brahmasūtra* embodies the logical and axiomatic foundation (*nyāyaprasthāna* 'argument departure point;' Uskokov 2022: 11).

[13] This text, closely aligned with Jaimini's *Mīmāṃsāsūtra*, was further elucidated by Mādhavācārya himself through the commentary *Jaiminīyanyāyamālāvistara.*

concerning the nature and validity of knowledge (Solomon 1969: 389-390). Notably, these *nyāya*s, which originated as concise *sūtra*s, evolved into formulations that synthesized and explicated various outcomes in a systematic manner.[14]

In this perspective, *laukikanyāya*s are analogical maxims grounded in natural and cultural foundations, possessing such profound hermeneutic cogency and efficacy that they can elucidate intricate textual doctrines and complex passages, particularly in philosophical, rhetorical, and linguistic contexts (Jacob 2004: i).[15] They achieve this by drawing on illustrations of both common and uncommon situations that individuals might encounter in life (Lanata 1994: 38–41).

As a matter of fact, *laukikanyāya*s are extraordinarily pervasive, appearing across an extensive range of texts spanning diverse genres and origins. Numerous examples are already present in foundational early works, such as Patañjali's *Mahābhāṣya* (2nd cent. BCE), where their application appears to have been a well-established practice. In the *Mahābhāṣya*, Patañjali elucidates (*vyākhyāna*) certain *sūtras* accompanied by *vārttika*s, employing a dialogical style characterized by a series of components: questions (*praśna*), illustrations (*dṛṣṭānta*), examples (*udāharaṇa*), counter-examples (*pratyudāharaṇa*), answers (*uttara*), objections (*ākṣepa*), doubts (*saṃdeha*), and their resolutions (*samādhāna*). This methodical progression guides the reader step by step toward the final and definitive conclusion (*siddhānta*). As Sharma aptly notes (2017: 32):

> His [= Patañjali's] discussion of *utsarga* (general), *viśeṣa* (exception), *śeṣa* (residual), *pratiṣedha* (negation), *atideśa* (extension), *niyama* (restriction) and *asiddha* (suspension) rules regularly draw parallels from the outside world. Devadatta, Yajñadatta, Viṣṇumitra and Kauṇḍinya are the most famously cited individuals when it comes to illustrations focusing on folk maxims (*laukika-nyāya*s) and injunctions.[16]

[14] For example, when Madhusūdana Sarasvatī cites *sūtra*s from the *Mīmāṃsāsūtra* or the *BS*, he frequently concludes them with expressions such as *iti nyāyāt*, *iti nyāyasiddhaḥ*, or similar formulations (Pellegrini 2018: 609-610). In contrast, when Madhusūdana discusses passages from the *Yogasūtra* and the *Sāṃkhyapravacanabhāṣya* (usually called *Vyāsabhāṣya*), he refrains from employing the term *nyāya* (see also Staal 1975).

[15] See Jacob's preface to the second edition (1910), as included in Jacob (2004).

[16] Abhyankar (1961: 212) cites numerous *nyāya*s from the *Mahābhāṣya* and observes: "Maxim, a familiar or patent instance quoted to explain similar cases... The word came to be used in the general sense of Paribhāṣās or rules of interpretation many of which were based upon popular maxims as stated in the word laukikanyāyasiddha by Nāgeśa. Hemacandra has used the word *nyāya* for Paribhāṣā-vacana. The word is also used in the sense of general rule which has got some exceptions..." See also Renou (1942: 184-185), Kane (1977[v2]: 1339-1351) and the *Vācaspatyam* (Tarkavācaspati 2006: 4155-4158). Also relevant is the list of fifteen *nyāya*s employed by Abhinavagupta, as presented by Rastogi (1984). In his essay, Rastogi (1984: 27-28) classifies the use of the maxims into two categories: basic *nyāya*s and ordinary *nyāya*s. The former are employed "to convey or clarify the logical or metaphysical standpoint of the system on a particular issue," whereas the latter "have purely illustrative function and are resorted to exemplify a situation or fact."

Thus, in this context, in addition to listing some intriguing and pertinent examples, we will focus on two case-studies of *laukikanyāya*, aiming to explain their meaning, trace their textual origins, and demonstrate their significant utility within their respective contexts of application. It is also worth mentioning that Jacob (2004: ii) organizes his collection into three sections, each dedicated to a semantic macro-area encompassed by *laukikanyāyas*:[17]

1. illustrations (*dṛṣṭānta*),
2. interpretive rules (including *paribhāṣā* 'meta-rules,' *niyama* 'restrictive rules,' and *vyavasthā* 'systematization, disposition, and limitation of use'), and
3. topical or thematic divisions (*adhikaraṇa*).

It is worth noting, however, that despite the significance of *laukikanyāya*s, to the best of my knowledge, there is not a single text that systematically addresses their theoretical framework or functions: they are merely employed and collected. Nevertheless, owing to their distinct hermeneutic importance, numerous collections of *laukikanyāya*s have been compiled over time. Aufrecht's *Catalogus Catalogorum* (Aufrecht 2001: 5471 and 1292) references the *Laukikanyāyamuktāvalī*, a collection and explanation of proverbial expressions as employed in philosophical and related works, attributed to a certain Prakāśātman (likely different from the Advaita author of the 10th century). Additionally, Aufrecht mentions the *Laukikanyāyaratnākara* by Raghunātha Varman, along with its abridged version, the *Laukikanyāyasaṃgraha* (16th century), by the same author. Lastly, it cites the *Laukikabhānavādarahasya*, possibly compiled by Laiṅgika (date unspecified).[18]

In 1873, Tārānātha Tarkavācaspati included 151 *nyāya*s in his lexicon, the *Vācaspatyam* (Tarkavācaspati 2006: 4158-4170). Additionally, a highly useful list of *laukikanyāya*s with explanations is found in an appendix to Vaman Shrivram Apte's *Practical Sanskrit-English Dictionary* (Apte 1957: 52–76).[19] The list of the *Vācaspatyam* and Apte's appendix may have served as the

[17] Jacob (2004: ii) further observes that, although many of his esteemed predecessors have rendered the term *nyāya* as 'maxim,' he disagrees. This stance arises from the term's extensive range of applicability, even when restricted to *laukikanyāya*. Accordingly, he suggests leaving it untranslated.

[18] The *New Catalogus Catalogorum* (Dash 2013: 319-320), by listing only seven collections of *laukikanyāya*s, does not contribute any substantial additions to the list provided in the *Catalogus Catalogorum* (2001).

[19] See Jacob (2004: i): "In Târânâth Tarkavâchaspati's *Vâchaspatyam* we have a list of 151 *nyâya*s, popular and technical; but references to works where they are to be found are few and far between, and this considerably lessens their value. Thirty of these were reproduced in V.S. Âpte's dictionary, in 1890, but with the same defect. Again, in 1875, Paṇḍit Satyavrata

foundation for G. A. Jacob's pioneering work, the *Laukikanyāyāñjali: A Handful of Popular Maxims* (Jacob 2004), originally published in 1893 and revised in subsequent enlarged editions (1904, 1907, 1910). Jacob's collection remains one of the two primary collections frequently consulted today. The second collection I have examined is the well-known *Bhuvaneśa Laukikanyāyasāhasrī* (Sharma 1989², I ed. 1962–63).[20] These two works represent a significant basis for my own analysis.

3. *Laukikanyāya*s focused on non-human animals

In addition to the aforementioned general considerations, it is worth noting that the above-mentioned collections include several *laukikanyāya*s pertaining directly or indirectly to non-human animals. These *laukikanyāya*s are referenced across a remarkably diverse range of texts and contexts.[21] Their empirical, cultural, and textual foundations are readily accessible, enabling readers to uncover deeper meanings within certain textual issues through an analogical process.

Below follows a concise selection of particularly widespread and thought-provoking *laukikanyāyas.* As is evident, this list is by no means exhaustive but rather indicative. The *laukikanyāya*s presented here, along with many others, portray coherent natural scenarios and can be applied to almost all doctrinal and technical śāstric contexts. This versatility not only serves distinctly different purposes but also accommodates a range of interpretative nuances.

1. *ajagaravṛttinyāya* 'the maxim of acting like a python' (Sharma 1989: 311 n. 958) refers to an individual who is content with whatever fate provides. It specifically characterizes a distinct mode of procuring sustenance (*vṛtti*) practiced by ascetics of the highest order. These ascetics, akin to boas or pythons, make no active effort to obtain food but instead wait impassively for sustenance

Sâmaśramī published a small pamphlet of 36 popular maxims together with a large number of purely technical ones, and professed to give a reference for each of them..." I thank my friend and colleague Antonio Rigopoulos for this suggestion.

[20] Refer to the extract from the preface to the first edition in Jacob (2004: v–vi). The foundational references for this essay are Jacob (2004) and Sharma (1989). *En passant*, there is an older tool (1927), but still useful for our purpose. It is a collection from various sources of gnomic and free verses, proverbs, *subhāṣita*, striking verses, and *laukikanyāya*s, translated by Pavolini (1991).

[21] Regarding the two collections under examination, Jacob (2004) ensembles a total of 493 *laukikanyāya*s, out of which 86 mention animals. In comparison, Sharma (1989) records 1000 *laukikanyāya*s, 136 of which include animals in their phrasing. Another list of 166 *laukikanyāya*s—specifically relevant to Dharmaśāstra and largely drawn from the Pūrvamīmāṃsā—is provided by Kane (1977: 1339-1351). At the beginning of this list, Kane notes: "It would be helpful to the students of Pūrvamīmāṃsā and of Dharmaśāstra, if some of the important and frequently cited maxims (*nyāya*s) of the former, are brought together in one place... Kumārila particularly, is very fond of employing Nyāyas in the Tātravārtika e.g.... (on Jai. II.1.8) he employs five different nyāyas..."

to come before them, relying entirely on divine grace (see *Mānavadharmaśāstra* 4.196 in Olivelle 2008: 78-79, 97).

2. *kākatālīyanyāya* 'the maxim of the crow and the palmyra fruit' (Apte 1957: 58; Jacob 2004: 17[1]; Sharma 1989: 30-31 n. 55; Tarkavācaspati 2006: 4161)[22] illustrates a scenario in which a palmyra fruit falls upon a crow's head, symbolizing two events occurring simultaneously without any causal connection. This maxim is used to signify an unexpected and purely coincidental occurrence.
3. *kākadadhighātakanyāya* 'the maxim of the crow ruining the curd' (Apte 1957: 58; Jacob 2004: 34[3]; Kane 1977: 1342; Tarkavācaspati 2006: 4161) conveys the idea that if someone is tasked with protecting yogurt from crows, it does not imply that other animals capable of spoiling it are free to do so. Here, the term 'crow' (*kāka*) serves as a representative symbol, encompassing not only crows but also other creatures capable of compromising the yogurt.
4. *kuñjarasnānanyāya* 'the maxim of the bath of the elephant' (Sharma 1989: 296 n. 894) illustrates a useless action through a moment in the lives of elephants, who, upon emerging from water with a freshly cleansed body, immediately use their trunks to sprinkle dust or soil onto their bodies.
5. *kūpamaṇḍūkanyāya* 'the maxim of the frog in the well' (Apte 1957: 59; Jacob 2004: 19-20[1]; Sharma 1989: 38-39 n. 74; Tarkavācaspati 2006: 4162) illustrates, on the one hand, a frog living in a well, convinced that the well constitutes the entire world. On the other hand, it serves as a metaphor for a person of limited knowledge and intellect who, despite his/her narrow perspective and lack of initiative, arrogantly believes he/she possesses a comprehensive understanding.
6. *kīṭabhṛṅganyāya* "the maxim of the warm and the wasp" or *kīṭabhramaranyāya* "the maxim of the warm and the hornet" (or even *bhramakīṭaranyāya*) "the maxim of insect and the hornet" (Sharma 1989: 50 n. 110) illustrates a scenario in which an insect, caught by a hornet, becomes so overwhelmed by the hornet's buzzing that it begins to perceive the sound as originating from itself. In this state, the insect loses the sense of distinction from its predator and, consequently, all fear. This analogy is employed to describe a person who, through constant meditation on an object, ultimately identifies entirely with the object of contemplation (see *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* 7.1.27-32 in Sharma 2024: 270 and 276).
7. *maṇḍūkaplutinyāya* 'the maxim of the frog leap' (Apte 1957: 69; Jacob 2004: 41[1]) draws on the imagery of a frog jumping from one point to another, touching only discontinuous spots along the way. This analogy is employed by commentators on Pāṇini's *Aṣṭādhyāyī* to describe a type of recurrence or percolation (*anuvṛtti*), where a word metaphorically 'leaps' over an intermediate rule to connect

[22] Analogous to the *kākatalīyanyāya*, there is also the *ajākṛpāṇīnyāya* 'the maxim of the she-goat and the sword' (Jacob 2004: 11).

with another. It serves to elucidate the discontinuity in the scope of a rule within grammatical analysis (D'Avella 2018: 139).

8. *mātsyanyāya* 'the maxim of the fish' (Apte 1957: 69; Jacob 2004: 57[2]; Sharma 1989: 94 n. 230) is based on the natural observation that a small and weak fish is eaten by a larger and stronger one, thus illustrating how the strong dominates over the weak.[23]
9. *varam adya kapotaḥ śvo mayūrād iti nyāyaḥ* 'the maxim of better a pigeon today than a peacock tomorrow' (Apte 1957: 71; Sharma 1989: 234 n. 677), like the English proverb 'a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush,' advises seizing something concrete and immediate, albeit more modest, rather than pursuing something better that may perhaps come in the future.
10. *simhāvalokananyāya* 'the maxim of the lion's glance' (Apte 1957: 75; Jacob 2004: 52[1]; Tarkavācaspati 2006: 4169) is grounded in the lion's habit of surveying all sides, or scanning back and forth, when bringing down prey to ensure that no antagonist approaches. Similarly, the lion's gaze in a text signifies a careful overview of both the previous and following sections.

In addition to these *laukikanyāya*s, which explicitly include animal names in their formulation, there are others that focus on animals without explicitly mentioning their names:

1. *nityacikitsādhiṣṭhātṛ* lit. 'the overseeing [principle] of daily medical therapy,' which I am about to analyze.
2. *nīrakṣīranyāya* or *nīrakṣīravivekanyāya* 'the maxim of the discrimination between water and milk' (Apte 1957: 59 and 65-66; Sharma 1989: 56 n. 125) alludes to a popular Indian belief according to which the wild goose or swan (*haṃsa*) possesses a distinctive tract: from a mixture of water and milk, it is able to drink only the milk, leaving the water aside. This analogy exemplifies acute discernment (*viveka*).
3. *śṛṅgagrāhikānyāya* 'the maxim of the [action] which seize the horn' (Apte 1957: 73; Sharma 1989: 252-253 n. 748), without directly mentioning an animal but only a part of its body, is employed as a synecdoche, when a single limb is defined to represent the whole body, much like when a cowherd is asked to identify his cow from a heard and seizes the horn of that cow to show it to the owner (see *Mahābhārata* 5.45.9).

[23] This is a very well-known *laukikanyāya* mentioned in the Kauṭilya's *Arthaśāstra* 1.4.13-14 (*aprāṇītaḥ tu mātsyanyāyam udbhāvayati | balīyān abalaṃ hi grasate daṇḍadharābhāve ||* "13. If not used at all, it gives rise to the law of the fishes. 14. For, the stronger swallows the weak in the absence of the wielder of the Rod," Kangle 1986: 6[1] and 10[2]). There is also a *mahāmatsyatīranyāya* 'the maxim of the big fish and the bank' (Sharma 1989: 298 n. 897), taken from the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (4.3.18).

4. *sthāvarajaṅgamaviṣanyāya* 'the maxim of the poison [respectively] of static and dynamic entities' (Sharma 1989: 92 n. 226), distinguishes the poison of plants and metals, which is the *sthāvaraviṣa* 'the poison of the static,' and the poison of animals, which is the *jaṅgamaviṣa* 'the poison of the dynamic.' Both are fatal, but it is said that the *sthāvaraviṣa* nullifies the effects of *jaṅgamaviṣa*, and vice versa.[24]

Having previously presented only a few insightful *laukikanyāya*s among the innumerable possibilities, I will now proceed to a more detailed analysis of only two specific examples: one direct and one indirect. This will allow me to illustrate their textual application and development, as well as their cultural foundation. Although the analysis of the following examples is centered on Advaita Vedānta, precisely because both are employed with specific purposes within that *śāstra*, I wish to confirm that *laukikanyāya*s are, in fact, used across several technical *śāstra*s, while their poetic origins and reverberations are found in Vedic hymns, epics, and poetry (*kāvya*).

4.1. *Lūtatantunyāya*: the spider and its threads

In Western attempts to prove God's existence through reason, analogies between the world and human-made artifacts were widely employed. The order, complexity, and harmony of the machine-like-world seemed to imply not chance, but the design of an intelligent being superior to humans. Yet within this framework, David Hume (1711–1776) argued that the world resembles not a machine, but rather an animal or a plant. Accordingly, in *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion*, he asserts (Hume 1779[2]: 141-142; see Eltschinger-Ratié 2023: 285-286):

> The Brahmins assert, that the world arose from an infinite spider, who spun this whole complicated mass from his bowels, and annihilates afterwards the whole or any part of it, by absorbing it again, and resolving it into his own essence. Here is a species of cosmogony, which appears to us ridiculous; because a spider is a little contemptible animal, whose operations we are never likely to take for a model of the whole universe. But still here is a new species of analogy, even in our globe. And were there a planet wholly inhabited by spiders, (which is very possible) this inference would there appear as natural and irrefragable as that which in our planet ascribes the origin of all things to design and intelligence [...].

[24] The *Mahābhārata* (1.55) narrates a tale that aligns closely with this theme. Bhīma, having consumed food laced with poison by Duryodhana, is cast into a river and eventually descends to the underworld. There, he is bitten by snakes, whose venom neutralizes the poison from the food. As a result, Bhīma regains consciousness and emerges unharmed.

The spider to which Hume refers is indeed mentioned by a widely known *laukikanyāya*: the *lūtatantunyāya* 'the maxim of the spider and its threads' (Sharma 1989: 181 n. 502) or *ūrṇanābhinyāya* 'the maxim of the spider' (Sharma 1989: 258-259 n. 767).[25]

The analogy arises from zoological observation: spiders (*lūta, ūrṇanābhi* or *ūrṇanābha* 'from whose navel comes the wool') both spin and retract threads from their own bodies; these very threads are produced and withdrawn through the deliberate will of the spiders themselves. Philosophically, the spider's body serves as the material cause (*upādānakāraṇa*) of the web, while its conscious will acts as the efficient cause (*nimittakāraṇa*). This implies that, within a single organism, both the psychic-conscious and physical-unconscious dimensions together embody the two distinct forms of causality. Indeed, Advaita Vedānta draws upon the *lūtatantunyāya* to demonstrate that *brahman* is inseparably (*abhinna*) both the material and the efficient cause of the universe. Thus, in the non-dualistic (*advaita*) Vedānta, this *laukikanyāya* is frequently invoked to elucidate the important doctrine of the inseparability of material and efficient causality of *brahman*.

All in all, the textual origins of the *lūtatantunyāya* can be traced back to the Upaniṣads, specifically to the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (2.1.20):

> *yathorṇanābhis tantunoccared yathāgneḥ kṣudrā visphuliṅgā vyuccaranty evam evāsmād ātmanaḥ sarve prāṇāḥ sarve lokāḥ sarve devāḥ sarvāṇi bhūtāni vyuccaranti | tasyopaniṣat satyasya satyam iti | prāṇā vai teṣām eṣa satyam ||*
>
> As a spider sends forth its thread, and as tiny sparks spring forth a fire, so indeed do all the vital functions (*prāṇa*), all the worlds, all the gods, and all beings spring from this self (*ātman*). Its hidden name is "The real behind the real," for the real consists of the vital functions, and the self is the real behind the vital functions (Olivelle 1998: 62-65).

To demonstrate that the self, namely the unalterable *brahman*, is responsible for the manifestation of all things, the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* presents various examples drawn from nature, the first of which is precisely that of the spider (*ūrṇanābhi*). Śaṅkara's commentary on this passage is notably extensive, ranging well beyond the hermeneutics of *brahman/ātman* causality (*Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* 1986: 157-175).

Following the structure of the radical text, Śaṅkara explains the examples, beginning with the spider (*ūrṇanābhiḥ = lūṭākīṭaḥ*). As a unique entity, the spider emits (*uccaret*) and moves (*udgacchet*)

[25] The *lūtatantunyāya* is absent from Jacob 2004. For references to the spider in Indian mythology, see De Gubernatis (1987: 171-174).

through its web (*tantunā*), which is not distinct from itself (*svātmāpravibhaktena*). There is no other agent (*kārakāntaram*) responsible for the emission of the web (*tasyodgamane*) apart from the spider itself (*svato 'tiriktam*). In the same way, everything, all beings (*bhūtāni brahmādistambaparyantāni prāṇijātāni*) are originated from the self (*sarva eva ātmānaḥ*).

Thus, as with the sparks that develop from fire (*agniviphuliṅgavat*), from the self (*yasmād ātmanaḥ*) arises this phenomenal universe (*jagad idam*), composed of both movable and immovable beings (*sthāvarajaṅgamam*), which, in that very self (*yasmin*), dissolve (*pralīyate*) like bubbles of water and, during the period of preservation (*sthitikāle*), remain as that same substance (*yadātmakam*). Here lies the secret teaching (*upaniṣat*)[26] concerning the self, which is nothing other than *brahman* (*tasya asya ātmano brahmaṇaḥ*).

In addition to the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, there are two other *loci classici* for the *lūtatantunyāya*. The first is the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 1.1.7:

> *yathorṇanābhiḥ sṛjate gṛhṇate ca yathā pṛthivyām oṣadhayaḥ saṃbhavanti |*
> *yathā sataḥ puruṣāt keśalomāni tathākṣatāt saṃbhavatīha viśvam ||*
>
> As a spider spins out threads, then draws them into itself; as plants sprout out from the earth; as head and body hair grows from a living man; so from the imperishable all things here spring (Olivelle 1998: 436-437).

and the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 6.10:

> *yas tūrṇanābheva tantubhiḥ pradhānajaiḥ svabhāvataḥ |*
> *deva ekaḥ svam āvṛṇot sa no dadhāt brahmāpyayam ||*
>
> The one God who covers himself with things issuing from the primal source, from his own inherent nature, as a spider, with the threads—may he procure us dissolution in *brahman* (Olivelle 1998: 430-431).

Although the example of the spider in *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 6.10 refers not only to the manifestation of all things but also to their reintegration into *brahman*, the commentary attributed to Śaṅkara on this

[26] As in the beginning of the *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣadbhāṣya* (1986: 1-4) and the *Kaṭhopaniṣadbhāṣya* (*Upaniṣad* 2002: 174-175), Śaṅkara here also offers an explanation of the term *upaniṣad* (Pellegrini 2010: 145-149).

passage is not relevant.[27] In contrast, the gloss on *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 1.1.7 is worth quoting more thoroughly:

> *bhūtayonir akṣaram ity uktam | tat kathaṃ bhūtayonitvam ity ucyate dṛṣṭāntaiḥ—yathā loke prasiddhaḥ ūrṇanābhiḥ lūṭākīṭaḥ kiñcit kāraṇāntaram anapekṣya svayam eva sṛjate svaśarīrāvyatiriktān eva tantūn bahiḥ prasārayati punas tān gṛhṇate ca gṛhṇāti svātmabhāvam evāpādayati | [...] yathaite dṛṣṭāntāḥ, tathā vilakṣaṇaṃ salakṣaṇaṃ ca nimittāntarānapekṣād yathoktalakṣaṇāt akṣarāt sambhavati samutpadyate iha saṃsāramaṇḍale viśvaṃ samastaṃ jagat | anekadṛṣṭāntopādānaṃ tu sukhāvabodhārtham ||`
>
> As stated, [in the preceding verse],[28] the imperishable [*brahman*] is "the source of beings" (*bhūtayoni*). [But] how can it be the source of beings? This is explained through illustrations. Just as in everyday experience the *ūrṇanābhiḥ*, the invertebrate[29] [named] spider, without any cause other than itself, creates threads clearly distinct from its body, it [then] spreads them (*sṛjate*) outside and [eventually] reabsorbs them (*gṛhṇate*), [that is] takes them back [into itself], it makes them one with itself [= reabsorbs them into himself] or, in other words, returns them to the very condition of itself [...] Just as these illustrations [suggest], from the imperishable thus defined, without the need of any other efficient cause, *sambhavati* arises here (*iha*) in this circle of becoming *viśvam*—the whole universe— whether different or analogous. Whereas, the inclusion of multiple illustrations serves the purpose of facilitating an easy understanding.

Moreover, in addition to the Upaniṣads and their glosses, this specific theory, technically called *abhinnanimittopādānakāraṇatva* 'the inseparable efficient and material causation' of *brahman*, is defended in Śaṅkara's commentary on the *Brahmasūtra* (BSBh) *ad* 1.4.23: *prakṛtiś ca pratijñādṛṣṭāntānurodhāt* "Therefore, following (*anurodha*) the thesis (*pratijñā*) [expressed in *Chāndogya*

[27] Here is the specific passage of the commentary on *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 6.10 (*Upaniṣad* 2002: 1294): *yas tantunābha iti | yathorṇanābhir ātmaprabhavais tantubhir ātmānam eva samāvṛṇoti tathā pradhānajair avyaktaprabhavair nāmarūpakarmabhis tantusthānīyaiḥ svam ātmānam āvṛṇot sañchāditavān sa no mahyaṃ brahmaṇi apyayaṃ brahmāpyayam ekībhāvaṃ dadhād dadātv ity arthaḥ ||* "*yas tantunābha*, he who concealed (*āvṛṇot*) himself (*svam*), just as a spider covers itself with threads emerging from itself—so too, with the effects of the primal source (*pradhānajaiḥ*), namely names, forms and actions arising from the unmanifest, which are comparable to threads—may he (*sa no*) grant (*dadhād* = *dadātu*) me *brahmāpyayam*, the merger into *brahman*, that is, union [with *brahman*]. This is the meaning."

[28] *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 1.1.6: *yat tad adreśyam agrāhyam agotram avarṇam acakṣuḥśrotraṃ tadapāṇipādam | nityaṃ vibhuṃ sarvagataṃ susukṣaṃ tad avyayaṃ yad bhūtayoniṃ paripaśyanti dhīrāḥ ||* "What cannot be seen, what cannot be grasped, without colour, without sight and hearing, without hands and feet; What is eternal and all pervading, extremely minute, present everywhere—That is the immutable, which the wise fully perceive." See Olivelle (1998: 436-437) with slight variations. Olivelle seems to overlook the translation of *bhūtayoni* 'source of beings' (Olivelle 1998: 629), which Śaṅkara glosses as *bhūtānāṃ kāraṇam* "the cause of beings."

[29] Although the term *kīṭa* denotes an 'insect' or a 'worm,' strictly speaking, the spider is not specifically an insect but an arthropod, a type of invertebrate characterized by an exoskeleton composed of a chitinous cuticle, a segmented body, and paired jointed appendages (Pollard 2024).

Upaniṣad 6.1.3][30] and the illustration (*dṛṣṭāntā*) [quoted later in *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6.1.4],[31] [*brahman*] is [both] the material (*upādāna*) cause (*prakṛti* 'the original matter') and (*ca*) the efficient cause (*nimitta*) [of the universe]." (BSBh 2000: 337; Uskokov 2022: 11-12).[32]

Indeed, the object of Vedānta's soteriological inquiry is *brahman* as defined in BS 1.1.2. However, this raises a further question: what kind of causality befits the absolute (*kim ātmakaṃ punar brahmaṇaḥ kāraṇatvaṃ syāt*): material causation (*prakṛtitve = upādānakāraṇatve*), as in the case of clay or gold (*mṛtsuvarṇādivat*) used for vessels or jewelry (*ghaṭarucakādīnām*), or efficient causation (*nimittatve = nimittakāraṇatve*), as in the case of the potter or the goldsmith (*kulālasuvarṇakārādivat*)? For the opponent, it is correct to regard the supreme *īśvara* solely as an efficient cause, with its effect being the insentient (*acetana*) and impure (*aśuddha*) phenomenal universe. Conversely, we observe that the material cause and the effect are uniform (*kāryakāraṇayoḥ sārūpyadarśanāt*), and thus, the material cause of the universe, characterized by impurity, must be something different than the supremely pure *brahman* (*pariśyeṣād brahmaṇo 'nyad upādānakāraṇam aśuddhyādiguṇakam*, BSBh 2000: 339; see also BS 2.1.4-6).

At this point, Śaṅkara replies: *prakṛtiś copādānakāraṇaṃ ca brahmāvagantavyaṃ nimittakāraṇaṃ ca* "*Brahman* is to be considered the source, that is, both the material cause and the efficient cause" (BSBh 2000: 339), and not just the efficient cause. All in all, in many passages of *śruti*—such as the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (6.1.2-6) and others—the initial thesis (*pratijñā*)[33] and the illustration (*dṛṣṭānta*)[34] are aimed not only at proving *īśvara*'s material causation but also its efficient causation. For, beyond *īśvara*,

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[30] *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6.1.3: [...] *yenāśrutaṃ śrutaṃ bhavaty amataṃ matam avijñātaṃ vijñātam iti* [...], "[... so you must have surely asked about that rule of substitution] by which one hears what has not been heard of before, thinks of what has not been thought of before, and perceives what has not been perceived before?" (Olivelle 1998: 246-247). The chapter of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* goes on to present Being (*sat*) as that thing from which everything else originates, so if *sat* is not the material cause then both the thesis and the illustration of the text would be meaningless (Uskokov 2022: 75).

[31] *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6.1.4: *yathā saumyenaikena mṛtpiṇḍena sarvaṃ mṛṇmayaṃ vijñātaṃ syāt | vācāraṃbhaṇaṃ vikāro nāmadheyaṃ mṛttikety eva satyam* | "It is like this, son. By means of just one lump of clay one would perceive everything made of clay—the transformation is a verbal handle, a name—while the reality is just this: 'It's clay.'" (Olivelle 1998: 246-247).

[32] The causality of *brahman* is discussed in general in the BSBh *ad* 1.1.2 (2000: 45-55), with the well-known definition (*lakṣaṇa*) *janmādy asya yataḥ* ("That from which [comes] the emergence, etc., of this [phenomenal universe]"), based on the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (3.1.1-6). Furthermore, in the BSBh 2.1.1-10, 2.1.14-20 and 2.1.21-22 another non-dualistic model is presented, along with a discussion on it, where *brahman* itself is the cause. See also Uskokov (2022: 63-87).

[33] Various other passages from the Upaniṣads, such as *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 1.1.2 and 1.1.7, *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 4.5.6–8, and *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* 3.1.1 (already quoted in BSBh 1.1.2), are interpreted by Śaṅkara with the aid of *Aṣṭādhyāyī* 1.4.30 (*janikartuḥ prakṛtiḥ*). According to this rule, the *prakṛti*, or *upādānakāraṇa*, is syntactically indicated by an ablative of origin (*yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante* "That from which these beings arise...").

[34] See the long discussion in BSBh 2.1.14 and, on the issues, Timalsina (2014: 193-197).

no other superintending principle (*nimittatvaṃ tv adhiṣṭhātrantarābhāvād adhigantavyam*) is found (BSBh 2000: 340).

Without delving further into the debates that have unfolded over the centuries, I would like to conclude this analysis by mentioning the well-known Advaita-primer, the *Vedāntasāra* (2001: 14-15) by Sadānanda Yogīndra (15th cent.). Although the *Vedāntasāra* is brief and clearly intended for beginners in Advaita Vedānta, it does not fail to reference the *lūtatantunyāya*, with Sadānanda being well aware that this analogy can effectively illustrate the doctrine of *abhinnanimittopādānakāraṇatva*, aiding in its precise comprehension.

The *Vedāntasāra*'s gloss *Vidvanmanorañjanī* by Rāmatīrtha (17th cent.) allows us to contextualize the discussion. The preceding sections present the two powers (*śaktidvayam*) by which ignorance (*ajñāna*) is manifested: veiling (*āvaraṇa*) and projection (*vikṣepa*). Conditioned by such an ignorance, *īśvara* (that is, the consciousness presenting itself as the supreme deity, *īśvaracaitanya*) becomes the cause (*kāraṇa*) of the phenomenal universe (*jagat*). At this point an objector raises the question: what kind of cause? Is it a material cause (*upādāna*), that is, the substance from which the universe is made? Or an efficient cause (*nimitta*), the instrumental, conscious cause capable of acting on substance? Or is it both causal possibilities (*ubhayam*, Jacob 2000: 13-14)? To this question, Sadānanda's root-text responds (Jacob 2000: 14-15):

> *śaktidvayavadajñānopahitaṃ caitanyaṃ svapradhānatayā nimittaṃ svopādhipradhānatayopādānaṃ ca bhavati | yathā lūtā tantukāryaṃ prati svapradhānatayā nimittaṃ svaśarīrapradhānatayopādānaṃ ca bhavati |*
>
> The consciousness conditioned by ignorance, characterized by the two powers, becomes the efficient [cause] by its own prevalence and the material [cause] by the prevalence of its own accidental condition (*upādhi*) [that is its body]. Just as a spider, by its own prevalence, becomes the efficient [cause] of the web-effect and the material [cause] due to the prevalence of its own body.[35]

Therefore, in *īśvara*, both causations of the effect-universe are indistinctly found—the material and the efficient causes (*abhinnanimittopadānākāraṇatva*)—just as a spider (*lūtā* = *ūrṇanābhi*) is both material and

[35] The two key terms are *svapradhānatayā* and *svopādhipradhānatayā*, glossed by the *Vidvanmanorañjanī* (Jacob 2000: 16) as *kūṭasthacaitanyasvarūpāvabhāsitayā* "as illuminated by the intrinsic nature of the unalterable [= immovable] consciousness" and *upādhyuparaktasattāsphūrtirūpatayā* "as a form of appearance of reality tinged by [= reflected on] an accidental condition." The *lūtatantunyāya* in also mentioned in the *Sarvavedāntasiddhāntasārasaṃgraha* 334.

efficient cause of the web.[36] Consequently, the *Vidvanmanorañjanī* concludes the explanation by further elaborating on the classical example of the spider (Jacob 2000: 16):

> *yathā lūtā tantunirmāṇe prasiddhakārpāsatūlakāṣṭhayantrādisahāyam anapekṣyaiva tantūn ātānavitānātmakaṃ ca tatkāryaṃ jālarūpaṃ sṛjaty evam īśvaraḥ prāk sṛṣṭer eka evādvitīyo 'sahāya eva svamāyāśaktyāveśamātreṇa liṅgādibrahmāṇḍāntaṃ jagat srjed iti bhāvaḥ |*
>
> In the same way that a spider certainly does not require the aid of well-known [substances such as] the cotton tree, the cotton [itself], the yardstick, the loom, and so on to create the threads, but rather extends them as its own effect (*tatkāryam*), forming a web composed of interconnected threads, similarly, prior to manifestation, the lord—truly one without a second—manifests the universe, from the subtle body to [all] the worlds, without relying on any [other] aid, by merely penetrating in his own creative power. This is the [intended] meaning.

Indeed, the *lūtatantunyāya* provides a valuable empirical example for upholding the Advaita Vedānta's central principle of non-duality. There is, in fact, only one cause, not many, and that is *brahman*, which manifests itself as itself, by itself in itself. As a result, effects are merely apparent modifications (*vivarta* = *vikāra*) of that same cause, which is *brahman*, and thus cannot be truly separate from it. If this were not the case, non-duality would suffer fatal consequences.

In conclusion, due to its evocative, metaphorical, and synthetizing capacity, the empirical observation encapsulated in the *lūtatantunyāya* acts as a wise and clear illustration of a highly complex and debated theory, with numerous metaphysical and ontological implications.

4.2. Agency, medicine, and the partridge: the *cikitsādhiṣṭhātṛ* as a hidden *laukikanyāya*

Noteworthy and of singular import is the dual commentary on the *Kena Upaniṣad*, the attribution of which to Śaṅkara appears incontrovertibly established (Mayeda 1967: 33–55).

The *Padabhāṣya* constitutes a more elementary and didactic exegesis, whereas the *Vākyabhāṣya* exhibits a higher degree of linguistic sophistication and intellectual refinement.[37]

At the very outset of the *Kenopaniṣadvākyabhāṣya* (*ad* 1.1; 1997: 3-17), one encounters an example of an indirect *laukikanyāya*, as frequently occurs, signaled solely by the indeclinable comparative suffix *-vat*. This particular instance is absent from the collections consulted and, to the best of my

[36] See also Solomon (1969: 122 and 280), who includes the ensuing Vedāntic discussion of *pariṇāmopādāna* 'material cause of a real transformation' and *vivartopādāna* 'material cause of an apparent transformation.'

[37] The individual words in this expression are: *nitya* 'daily,' *cikitsā* 'medicine' or 'medical therapeutics, therapy, prevention' and *adhiṣṭhātṛ* 'overseeing, ruler, superintending, presiding, governing, tutelary.'

research, appears unattested in other texts as well. Consequently, the analysis will rely exclusively on *Kenopaniṣadvākyabhāṣya*'s textual occurrence. The expression under scrutiny is *nityacikitsādhiṣṭhātṛvat*, which, if rendered literally as 'like the overseeing [principle] of daily medical therapy,' proves to hold neither a literal nor a contextual sense.

To grasp the precise import of this analogy and the doctrinal framework within which it is deployed, it is imperative to engage in a reflective analysis that situates it within the discourse articulated by Śaṅkara. Faithful to his non-dualistic orientation, Śaṅkara elucidates the opening passage of the Upaniṣad with meticulous consistency.

In *Kena Upaniṣad* 1.1, a student, driven by an earnest desire to comprehend the nature of the inner self (*pratyagātmaviṣayajijñāsuḥ*), poses the following inquiries to the teacher with the aim of attaining precise knowledge of the intrinsic essence/nature of the self (*ātmasvarūpatattvavijñānāya*): Who compels the mind to engage with its objects? What governs the vital force (*prāṇa*) at its inception? Who impels speech? Which deity directs vision and hearing?[38] At the very outset of his commentary, Śaṅkara emphasizes that it is through the realization of *ātman* that ignorance—the realm of death—can be eradicated (*tena ca mṛtyupadam ajñānam ucchettavyam*), as the cycle of becoming (*saṃsāra*) is contingent upon it (*tattantro hi saṃsāro yataḥ*). Accordingly, given that the true nature of the *ātman* remains unknown, the student's inquiry to discern it is entirely justified (*anadhigatatvād ātmano yuktā tadadhigamāya tadviṣayā jijñāsā*). Indeed, the Upaniṣad commences precisely with the intention of revealing the *ātman*, which is of the nature of the absolute *brahman (Kenopaniṣadvākyabhāṣya* 1997: 3 and 5*)*.

The attainment of knowledge concerning a given and perfect principle such as the *aupaniṣada ātman* is inherently unattainable through means like ritualistic or contemplative practices (*nahi svabhāvasiddha vastu siṣādhayiṣyato sādhanaiḥ svabhāvasiddhaś cātmā tathā nāpipayiṣitaḥ*). This is because the self, as the innermost essence, is perpetually realized (*ātmatve sati nityāptatvāt*). Moreover, a given and perfect entity like *ātman* cannot even be subjected to a desire for transformation, as it is, by its very nature, eternal, immutable, non-objective, and formless (*nāpi 'vicikārayiṣitaḥ, ātmatve sati nityatvād avikāritvād aviṣayatvād amūrtatvāc ca, Kenopaniṣadvākyabhāṣya* 1997: 11 and 13).

Moreover, the *ātman* is not something that can be purified (*na ca saṃcikīrṣitaḥ*), as it is fundamentally without a second (*ananyatvāc ca*), there is no one else who can purify it. Liberation is

[38] *keneṣitaṃ patati preṣita manaḥ kena prāṇaḥ prathamaḥ praiti yuktaḥ | keneṣitāṃ vācam imāṃ vadanti cakṣuḥ śrotraṃ ka u devo yunakti ||* "By whom impelled, by whom compelled, does the mind soar forth? By whom enjoined does the breath, march on as the first? By whom is this speech impelled, with which people speak? And who is the god that joins the sight and hearing?" (Olivelle 1998: 364-365).

nothing but a permanent and ever-existing state (*nityatvaṃ ceṣṭaṃ mokṣasya*), that is the realization of one's timeless nature. Indeed, any attribution of distinct characteristics to the self cannot be enduring, nor can the acquisition of something external be eternal (*na ca vastvantarādhānaṃ nityam, prāptir vā vastvantarasya nityā*). Consequently, for one in whom knowledge has dawned, the undertaking of any action becomes inconceivable (*ata utpannavidyasya karmārambho 'nupapannaḥ*). For this reason, from its very opening verse, the Upaniṣad imparts a precise teaching on the nature of the self to those whose intellect has turned away from external objects (*ato vyāvṛttabāhyabuddher ātmavijñānāya*). This serves as Śaṅkara's doctrinal prelude (*Kenopaniṣadvākyabhāṣya* 1997: 13).

Śaṅkara's commentary on this verse, which is notably elaborate, opens with a succinct statement (*saṃgrahavākya*) elucidating the necessity and appropriateness of the question. The inquiry presupposes a specific inferential mark (*liṅga*): for any non-sentient and inert object or entity to move or engage in action, the supervision of a conscious agent is indispensable (*pravṛttiliṅgād viśeṣārthaḥ praśna upapannaḥ*).[39] Indeed, it is evident that the motion of chariots, for example, is governed by a conscious individual and not by inert entities (*rathādīnāṃ hi cetanāvadadhiṣṭhitānāṃ pravṛttir dṛṣṭā, nānadhiṣṭhitānām*). Similarly, activity is observed in all inert components of the psycho-physical aggregate, beginning with the mind (*manaādīnāṃ cācetanānāṃ pravṛttir dṛśyate*). This observation, therefore, serves as compelling evidence for the existence of a supervising conscious principle (*tad dhi liṅgaṃ cetanāvato 'dhiṣṭhātur astitve*). Indeed, the mind, along with other sensory faculties, is invariably set into motion (*karaṇāni manaādīni niyamena pravartante*); yet such activity is inconceivable in absence of an overseeing conscious principle (*tan nāsati cetanāvaty adhiṣṭhātary upapadyate*) that governs and sustains it. In the present context, however, this conscious principle is invoked in a broad sense, without a precise delineation of its nature. Thus, the inquiry posed by the Upaniṣad—aimed at discerning such a specific nature and render it intelligible—is entirely appropriate and logically coherent (*tadviśeṣasya cānadhigamāc cetanāvatsāmānye cādhigate viśeṣārthaḥ praśna upapadyate, Kenopaniṣadvākyabhāṣya* 1997: 13 and 15).

Śaṅkara proceeds with his exegetical analysis by concentrating specifically on the mental apparatus, or the internal organ, which is mentioned first in the verse. Indeed, without the activation of the mind, any other specific perception becomes indistinct or even impossible.

By whose mere will (*kasyecchāmātreṇa*), then, does the mind direct itself toward its objects—engaging with them (*mana patati gacchati*)—and invariably activate itself in relation to them (*svaviṣaye*

[39] Compare with BSBh *ad* 2.2.18-22, where Śaṅkara emphasizes the necessity of a conscious entity, asserting that without it, an inert object cannot fulfill even the slightest instrumental function.

niyamena vyāpriyata ity arthaḥ)? At this juncture, Śaṅkara affirms that the analogy with inert objects reaches its conclusion in the clarification that the phrase "[By whom] the mind... is impelled" refers to the entirety of internal organ (*antaḥkaraṇam*), that is, the psycho-cognitive apparatus, namely the instrument through which thought arises and which, as such, functions as the instrumental cause of all cognitions (*manute 'neneti vijñānanimittam antaḥkaraṇaṃ manaḥ preṣitam ivety upamārthaḥ, Kenopaniṣadvākyabhāṣya* 1997: 15).

Śaṅkara clarifies that, in this context, the participles *iṣita* 'directed' and *preṣita* 'impelled' cannot be interpreted in their literal sense (*na tv iṣitapreṣitaśabdayor arthāv iha saṃbhavataḥ*). This is because the self does not direct the mind and other faculties toward their respective objects in the manner a teacher guides his/her students (*na hi śiṣyān iva manaādīni viṣayebhyaḥ preṣayaty ātmā*). Rather, being of the nature of consciousness—eternally distinct and separate from all phenomena—the *ātman* acts solely as the instrumental cause of the activity of the mind and other faculties, comparable to "the overseeing [principle] of daily medical therapy" (*viviktanityacitsvarūpatayā tu nimittamātraṃ pravṛttau nityacikitsādhiṣṭhātṛvat, Kenopaniṣadvākyabhāṣya* 1997: 15 and 17).

In this instance, the typically Śaṅkarian discourse unfolds smoothly, without significant issues, until the example, whose literal translation neither aids in contextual understanding nor proves intelligible on its own. Fortunately, Ānanda Giri acknowledges the peculiar nature of the expression and, to elucidate its true meaning, provides the following gloss (*Kenopaniṣadvākyabhāṣya* 1997: 15 and 17):

> *viṣayagrahaṇārthaṃ nityacikitsāyām adhiṣṭhātuś cakorasya saṃnidhimātreṇa yathā rājabhojanādipravṛttinimittatvaṃ tadvad ity arthaḥ |*
>
> This is the meaning [of Śaṅkara's statement, which recalls that] this occurs precisely in the same manner as the [action of the] eastern partridge (*cakora*),[40] which, overseeing [the king's] daily medical therapy, serves as the instrument by which the king turns to his food, solely due to its proximity.[41]

[40] It concerns the chukar partridge (*Alectoris chukar*), or the eastern partridge also found in Asia, in some respects similar to the red-legged partridge (*Alectoris* or *Perdix rufa*), as identified by Monier-Williams (1995: 380), but which, unlike the former, is not widespread in Asia (Johnsgard and Wright 1988).

[41] One of the consulted editions of the *Kenopaniṣadvākyabhāṣya*, published by Kailāśāśram in Hṛṣikeś, includes highly valuable contemporary annotations (the *Govindaprasādinī ṭippaṇī*, 1963) authored by Svāmin Viṣṇudevānanda Giri (*Kenopaniṣadvākyabhāṣya* 1997: 15): *nityacikitsā kṣudvyādhipratīkārarūpā bhuktis tatra pravṛttyapravṛttiniyāmakatvād adhiṣṭhātā cakoraḥ | sa hi bhuktisamaye saṃnihitaḥ saviṣānnopasthitimātreṇa netre nimīlayati nānyatheti tena parīkṣya rājño bhojane pravṛttir ity āśayena vyācaṣṭe – nityetyādinā |* "Daily therapeutic care consists in nourishment, which takes the form of counteracting hunger and illnesses. Since it governs the inclination towards or the withdrawal from this sphere [of nourishment], the entity overseeing

Thus, Ānanda Giri uncovers the identity behind Śaṅkara's enigmatic simile: it is the well-known *cakora bird*, the 'eastern partridge,' specifically the chukar partridge which frequently features in Sanskrit literature due to its various distinctive traits.[42]

Indeed, as can be inferred from numerous passages, the *cakora* is culturally believed to possess an intrinsic characteristic, a kind of unconditional reflex. In the presence of poison or a substance mixed with poison, it exhibits a spontaneous reaction: its eyes close, becomes pale (*akṣivairāgya,* see *Aṣṭāṅgahṛdaya Sūtrasthāna* 7.16: *cakorasyākṣivairāgyam*), or, according to some accounts, turns red when exposed to the poison.[43]

In the context of the *Kenopaniṣadvākyabhāṣya* under discussion, the emphasis lies on the instrumental or accessory nature (*nimittatva*) of the agency of *ātman* in relation to the internal and external sensory faculties.

In many statements concerning manifestation (*sṛṣṭivākya*) in the Upaniṣads, causality is generally attributed to *brahman*/*ātman* (Uskokov 2022: 121-123).[44] In this context, specific causality has also been previously observed (see § 4.1). In that instance, within the framework of a temporary attribution (*adhyāropa*), a conventional and empirical (*vyāvahārika*) aspect of *ātman* is demonstrated.

Here, however, the focus shifts to the subsequent negation of those attributions (*apavāda*), as Śaṅkara himself regards the sections from 1.1 to 2.3 as explicitly non-dualistic (*advaitaśruti*), wherein

it is the eastern partridge (*cakora*). Indeed, when it is present at the time of the meal, it [= the partridge] closes its eyes at the mere presence of food mixed with poison but not otherwise. Through this [faculty], the king is guided in the act of partaking of the meal after [such an] examination has been conducted. Based on this implicit purport, [the commentator] elucidates [the verse] beginning with *nitya*."

[42] In certain instances, the attributes of the *cakora* overlap with those of the *cātaka/caṭaka* (*Clamator jacobinus*), to which poetic literature ascribes a distinctive trait: it is said to subsist solely on raindrops that fall when the moon occupies the constellation (*nakṣatra*) of Svātī. In other texts (*Kathāsaritsāgara* 5.3.246, 7.8.148, 8.6.211, 9.1.154, 12.9.11, 12.10.50, 12.19.78, 12.22.41, 12.26.45), the *cakora* is depicted as a bird that feeds exclusively on moonbeams. For example, consider the verse cited by Rājaśekhara (10th cent.) in the *Kāvyamīmāṃsā* 17 (2000: 267-268): [...] *jyotsnāpānamadālasena vapuṣā mattāś cakorāṅganāḥ* "The female *cakoras*, intoxicated and frenzied, with their bodies languid with the madness of feeding on moonbeams." Another remarkable feature of the *cakora* is its melodious song, alongside its highly praised flesh, has earned it frequent acclaim in literary and cultural traditions. See also De Gubernatis (1987: 238-242).

[43] Further insights into the *cakora* may be glanced from its appearances in literary texts, which underscore its multifaced significance, symbolic, poetic, and practical. Notable examples include its mention in the *Mahābhārata* (1.94.14, 3.112.2, 7.102.36) and the *Kathāsaritsāgara* (6.5.45, 6.8.102, 15.2.211, 17.1.22). See Monier-Williams (1995: 380).

[44] For example: *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 1.2.1-7, 1.4.1-8, 4.11-17, 5.5.1-4; *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 2.23.2-3, 6.2.3*; Aitareya Upaniṣad* 3.1-12*; Taittirīya Upaniṣad* 2.1.1, 3.1.1; *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 1.1.7-8; *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 6.2, 5-6, 9-10, 16-18; Uskokov (2022: 89-103).

causality of any kind is denied as the ultimate teaching regarding the true nature of *brahman*/*ātman*. Within this framework, it becomes imperative to evaluate the nature of *brahman*/*ātman*'s agency.[45]

The entire passage of the *Kenopaniṣadvākyabhāṣya* is elucidated through the analogical illustration of the *nityacikitsādhiṣṭhātṛ*. What, then, characterizes the agency of *ātman* (Timalsina 2014: 191)?

The illustration of the *cakora* serves as a particularly apt metaphor to illustrate the type of agency referenced in the Upaniṣads with regard to *ātman*. Just as the eastern partridge (*cakora*) engages in no activity, intention, or involvement concerning the king's meal, yet, by its very nature, involuntarily signals—through a simple innate reflex—whether the food is poisoned or not, its agency is merely instrumental (*nimitta*) in relation to the following king's actions.

Similarly, *ātman* assumes a purely *nimitta* 'instrumental' or 'accessory' role.[46] While remaining non-agentive (*akartṛ*), its inactive presence is both sufficient and essential for the activation of any faculty, without actual involvement, will, or intention toward the act, and without ever assuming real agency (*kartṛtva*).

5. Conclusion: towards an AOO

In this preliminary survey, *laukikanyāya*s were briefly introduced, and two cases related to non-human animals were selected and analyzed. Throughout the survey we observed that recent collections of *laukikanyāya*s include within the category of *nyāya*s a number of topics found in core *śāstra*s (Vyākaraṇa, Mīmāṃsā, Nyāya, Kāvya, Vedānta, Sāṃkhya, and Vaiśeśika), such as *sūtra*s, verse excerpts, 'systematizations,' dispositions and limitations of use (*vyavasthā*), metaphors, examples, and interpretive meta-rules (*paribhāṣā*). Thus, while many *nyāya*s are indeed *laukika*, others are entirely *śāstrīya*, which implies that they lie somewhat outside the scope of straightforward empirical observation.

Moreover, as far as we have seen, Upaniṣads (along with the Vedic Saṃhitās and epics, see Jamison 2009 and 2013; Olivelle 2013) are replete with examples, metaphors, reasonings, similes, and analogies

[45] In the Advaita Vedānta, the *adhyāropāpavādanyāya* traces its bases in Śaṅkara's *Bhagavadgītābhāṣya ad* 13.13 (BGBh 1936: 554) and Maṇḍana Miśra's *Brahmasiddhi* (1937: 26). See also Sharma (1989: 25-27, n. 47) and Jacob (2004[2]: 2-3).

[46] The well-known admonition of Kṛṣṇa to Arjuna in the *Bhagavadgītā* (11.33) reads: "Be a mere instrument, O Arjuna" (*nimittamātraṃ bhava savyasācin*). A similar notion of instrumentality is invoked by Śaṅkara himself in the introduction to his commentary on *Bhagavadgītā* 2.10: "Then, the glorious Vāsudeva, desiring to teach precisely this [truth], having taken Arjuna as an instrument for the benefit of all humanity, begins his teaching with verse 2.10" (*arjunaṃ nimittīkṛtya sarvalokānugrahārtham*). This parallel highlights the theme of selfless action and the subordination of personal agency to a higher, universal purpose—a central motif in the *Bhagavadgītā*. Commentaries on BG 11.33 do not add anything relevant.

that are either directly or indirectly related to animals. Consequently, hundreds of *laukikanyāya*s have been created based on these. These *laukikanyāya*s become valuable interpretive tools, bridging the often-separate domains of *śāstra* and *loka*. Therefore, the immediate capacity of *laukikanyāya*s to explain *śāstra* by exemplifying it with *loka* grants them effective, operative, and significant hermeneutic validity.[47] Indeed, these *laukikanyāya*s serve a dual hermeneutical and explanatory function: not only do they help the reader grasp the complexities of abstract theories, but they also assist the author in making those theories comprehensible.

We have seen that non-human animals are privileged subjects of observation, as they provide enlightening analogies and interpretative examples. Indeed, their naked lives (Agamben 1995) embody a higher degree of adherence to nature and its rhythms,[48] which is precisely the domain of the observation of Vedic seers. Consequently, my focus on animals is based on a strong presupposition: this ontological and metaphysical inquiry draws on the macro-micro-cosmic homologies that underpin the Upaniṣadic reflection on unity,[49] as well as the ensuing contemplative practices (*upāsana*).

Furthermore, in order to situate animal-oriented-*laukikanyāya*s within a global perspective, I may recall one of the most recent developments in contemporary ontology, clearly influenced by Heidegger's metaphysics, which was first proposed by Harman (2002) and later reused and reshaped by Bryant (2011). Although my viewpoint diverges significantly from the ultra-reductionist tendencies of the two authors, their methodological and theoretical approaches interestingly reject the notion of a privileged position of human existence in the world and broaden their scope to include the existence of non-human objects (Harman 2002: 16). This anti-anthropocentric trend is referred to as Object-

[47] It is worth briefly mentioning some of the most well-known and widely applicable *laukikanyāya*s in the *śāstra*s. For example, Jacob cites *yat kṛtakaṃ tad anityam* "Anything that is artificial is non-eternal" (1904: 62[1]); *ubhayataḥ pāśā rajjuḥ* "A rope that binds at both ends" (1904: 28[3]); *viśvajinnyāya* 'the logic behind the *viśvajit* sacrifice' (1904: 127-128[3]). Additionally, Sharma (1989) provides several examples, listed by their numbering in the text: *ekasaṃbandhidarśanam aparasaṃbandhismārakam iti nyāyaḥ* 'the maxim [stating that] the vision of one related thing is the reminder of another related thing' (11); *lakṣaṇapramāṇābhyāṃ vastusiddhir iti nyāyaḥ* 'the maxim [stating that] through definition and means of knowledge, an entity is indeed established' (72); *kaimutikanyāyaḥ* 'the maxim of the "how much more?"'(108); *vīcitaraṅganyāyaḥ* 'the maxim of [the spread like] a sequence of waves' (228); *prayojanam anuddiśya na mando 'pi pravartata iti nyāyaḥ* 'the maxim of [stating that] even a fool does not act without a motive' (359); *rāhoś śīra iti nyāyaḥ* 'the maxim of Rāhu's head' (460): *na hi kaścit kṣaṇam api jātu tiṣṭhaty akarmakṛd iti nyāyaḥ* 'the maxim [stating that] no one can remain inactive even for a moment' (725); *duḥkham eva sarvvaṃ vivekina iti nyāyaḥ* 'the maxims [stating that] everything is nothing but sorrow for one who discriminates' (870). Of course, many others could be cited.

[48] For discussions on animal raw knowledge, see Mills (2021: 301-302), Phillips (2012: 5), and Anrò in this issue of the Journal.

[49] Explicit references to cosmic equations and homologies are already found in the dialectical debates and enigmatic riddles of the *brahmodya* (Ganeri 2018; Gonda 1969; Thomson 1997).

Oriented Ontology (OOO). According to OOO, objects are not ontologically exhausted by their relationships with humans, as they exist independently of human perception.[50]

Mutatis mutandis, OOO may serve as a starting point for new perspectives. Indeed, we can hypothesize and develop an Animal-Oriented Ontology (AOO) by utilizing animal-oriented *laukikanyāya*s as efficacious and incisive multilayered hermeneutical tools. Through these tools, animal behavior and animality *tout court* may assert its own independent theoretical dignity (Cimatti 2013, 2018), guiding us towards unexpected horizons.

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