

Emergence, Panpsychism, and Manifestation (*Abhivyakti*)

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Abstract: This paper proposes the model of “manifestation” (abhivyakti) as an alternative to panpsychism while countering the model of hard emergence. First, it examines the passages from the Mahābhārata to contextualize the model of “manifestation” (abhivyakti). Second, it explores contemporary panpsychism and engages the examples from the Mahābhārata in this light. In conclusion, the paper advances the argument that the “manifestation” (abhivyakti) model accommodates cosmopsychism without contradicting the theory of emergence while rejecting physicalism.

Introduction

Questions such as ‘How does conscious experience arise?’ or ‘What presents phenomenality to consciousness?’ are not new. In tracing some of the earliest examples that relate to the issues of mind versus matter or body versus mind, these questions appear since the early history of philosophy. In this paper, I will examine some of the early classical examples addressing these issues in the context of the latest conversations on emergence, panpsychism, and cosmopsychism. While advancing the argument for manifestation (*abhivyakti*) in light of issues in the conversation on the nature of consciousness, the objective is to explore early references for monism/panpsychism from classical Hindu texts. In particular, I will explore the analogy of fire and the fire-log as presented in the conversation of Sulabhā in the *Mahābhārata* (MBh). This is not to reduce one set of problems to another, but to trace the relevant literature historically so that we can ground our philosophical understanding in their cultural contexts. But more than that, some of these classical metaphors force us to think differently, giving us insights for new pathways to address contemporary issues on consciousness studies.

Abhivyakti or manifestation explains that the expressed tropes of consciousness or subjectivity are not some radically new entities that are not present in causal materials. This also does not mean that these properties are a mere transformation

of foundational properties either. Just like how an oak tree manifests from an acorn, with the oak tree's latency lying in the acorn, the higher-order properties of consciousness and subjectivity are latent in matter. From classical India, some competing theories involve the Cārvāka model of emergentism, the Sāṅkhya model of fusion with the *saṃyoga* of consciousness and its tropes (*guṇa*), and the Nāgārjunian or Advaita model of non-origination (*ajāti*). Bluntly put, emergentism is akin to *creation ex nihilo*, in the sense that the effect does not exist in the cause. The model of *abhivyakti* or manifestation neither supports the 'fusion' model nor considers *creation ex nihilo*, arguing that there is latency in causal structures for the rise of the effect. I shall keep these arguments in mind when exploring examples from classical Sanskrit literature. An example that I particularly stress, that of firewood and fire, underscores the challenge: we cannot have fire without fuel, but fuel and fire are nonetheless different. However, when we analyse the basic structure, that which we call fire is merely an emergence of tropes that are pre-emergent in firewood.

For the particular model being examined here, the closest counterparts can be found in what we broadly categorise as panpsychism. However, we cannot make overly general assumptions regarding 'panpsychism'. Since the objective of this paper is to address the specific model of manifestation (*abhivyakti*), I will explore its possible congruence with contemporary models after exploring the literature for *abhivyakti*. Even so, the very concept of *abhivyakti* is vague, as different schools have used the same concept to establish different theses. Before moving forward, it is relevant that we address the parameters necessary to address the model of emanation, as the question of creation leads to the perennial problem of what it means for something to come into being. We are left with just a few options. When we say the entities come into being, do we consider cause and effect to be identical? In that case, causation does not make sense. And if the entity that comes into being is different, we need to further explain what difference implies. Is the difference between a mother and daughter donkey the same as that between a donkey and a tree? And if not, we need to introduce a new category that addresses partial homogeneity as a precondition for causality. It is within this homogeneity that we can conceive of the category of class or of universals. If what manifests is not distinct from the source, nothing has emerged; and if what has emerged is distinct from the cause, anything could give rise to anything else. The argument for manifestation addresses this issue by accepting causal singularity while acknowledging particularity of the manifest entity.

Since the contemporary discussion on panpsychism is highly nuanced, the 'manifestation' model can provide only limited original insights. This model is akin to panpsychism in the sense that they both agree that something mental extends throughout all entities that exist. 'Manifestation Model' (MM), however, stresses that something like 'experience' does not need to exist in the micro-level, for some properties may manifest only in higher-order structures that are not visible at the micro level, like the example of the seed and plant. We do not need 'micro-subjectivity' for subjectivity to arise, for the simple reason that subjectivity is not a

complex entity having parts. In some accounts, the ‘manifestation’ model can be an explanatory bridge between emergentism and panpsychism, as it does not require micro-experience or micro-subjectivity as a starting point. Just like red or yellow colours are not present in the rose plant which nonetheless has the potential to manifest them when it blossoms, in the same way, multiple properties may be latently present in causal form even though they are not yet expressed. The MM starts from the totality, seen as a singular entity full of life and conscious, retaining within its core the potency to become many. The challenge here is not in explaining the emergence of higher-order structures but rather in explaining the manifestation of basic organismic and non-organic structures as a process of self-differentiation of the singular entity. Keeping these broader philosophical arguments in mind, I divide this paper in two sections. In the first section, ‘Manifestation and Puruṣavāda’, I am analysing the classical examples. In the second section, ‘Panpsychism and Puruṣavāda’, I am comparing the nuances of the classical MM and the doctrine called Puruṣavāda with contemporary panpsychism.

Section I: Manifestation and Puruṣavāda

The model of manifestation (*abhivyakti*) in the *Mahābhārata*

Needless to say, *Mahābhārata* is like an ocean, and this selective reading cannot address the entire text, nor would this be the objective. Rather, I am extracting a few examples only to make the case that the model addressed in the *Mahābhārata* can bridge historical gaps, not just within classical India itself but also between classical Indian thinking and contemporary Western models of panpsychism and cosmopsychism. Keeping in mind that philosophical arguments are not time bound, I am also exploring examples from the early Upaniṣads (8th Century BCE) to the period of Mallavādin (5th Century CE or later).¹

In order to further delimit the scope, the *abhivyakti* model (MM) is not:

- (i) The model in which clay as the primary material turns into different pots with different shapes without any alteration in its primary state; or
- (ii) The model in which primary matter transforms [either real or illusory, giving rise to two different schools of philosophy], like the *ātman* transforming or manifesting into the sky and the rest of the elements.

Needless to say, this is also not the ‘non-origination’ (*ajāti*) model of Gauḍapāda, which rejects that there has been any deviation from the original state of what exists in the modes of becoming.

The first inspiration for this conversation is a set of selected references in the dialogue of Sulabhā and Janaka (MBh, Śāntiparvan, Ch. 320),² all of which either mention or explain the term *abhivyakti* and any other related terms such as *vyakta* or *vyakti*. While the passages are simple and examples easy to comprehend, when we

develop a model of causality based on these examples, they are not identical to the popular forms of monism or panpsychism. Neither is this property dualism, as this model does not claim that mental properties are irreducible to physical properties or vice versa. What makes the *vyakti* model truly interesting, therefore, is not in it being identical to any mainstream models but rather, in its uniqueness, not just among contemporary models but also from among mainstream models of causality in classical Hindu philosophy.

Let us start with the main metaphor. Following a crucial passage in the MBh, matter and consciousness are comparable to firewood and fire. We cannot isolate and extract fire from firewood; they are not identical; nevertheless, fire is merely an expression of the energy that is within logs. The concept of ‘manifestation’ (*abhivyakti*) here is not to argue either that the element fire is original or irreducible to the log. The argument, on the contrary, is that, that what we call fire is merely an expression of already existing energy, manifesting merely in its external property of being a log. Now, this example allows us to identify a qualitative state as distinct from the external or objective state. The quality of being fire is intrinsic to the log, but this requires friction or certain other conditions to be met for it to be expressed. It is different from the ‘micro-experience’ or ‘micro-subjectivity’ model because it does not assume there are any such states in the basic states of materiality. But it also is different from the physicalist ‘emergence’ model in the sense that what manifests is not a radically different property, and all the manifest properties are intrinsically there in the form of latency in the cause. A broadly exploited example in the literature subsequent to MBh to explain MM is that of peacock/egg.³ The core of the argument is that if you crack open the peacock’s egg, you do not see the array of colours, but when hatched and the chicks come to maturity, we see millions of colours. This example does not explain the manifest property as a simple continuum of the cause and accepts originality of the effect. At the same time, this does not argue for a complete newness as the emergentists would have advocated. Just like the energy that manifests in fire is already present in the log, the traits for colourful feathers are likewise latent in the genetic structure of the egg. The original application of *nāma-rūpa*, or name and form, suggests this very uniqueness of emergence, that the specific designation and particular structure are available only from the emergent property and are not present in its causal structure. That the *abhivyakti* model is not reducible to common monism or panpsychism can be confirmed through two additional metaphors from the MBh 12.320.95-96, given to explain the relationship between matter and consciousness: that of *lac* and mud. When the female *lac* bug *ker-rira laca* consumes wood, she secretes shellac. While the primary material is the bark, *lac* is not to be reduced to its material cause, as it emerges into something original. The example of mud is used to establish the same argument, that water and soil are different elements that commingle and constitute a new entity, with the new name and form of mud. Both examples give rise to a new name and structure. However, we can retrieve soil and water from the mud, but shellac is a new emergent property. If we read closely, these examples are not meant to establish the primacy of

consciousness, but that manifestation of consciousness is a natural process. Not all examples are the same, though. Fundamentally, describing materiality from *ur-matter* of *caitanya* is frequently found as describing *vijñāna*, or intentional modes of consciousness from inertia. For, no inertia is absolute inertia that lacks consciousness as its potential. This fluidity has historically confused scholars, as some have read MM merely a classical category of reductionist physicalism.⁴ Noteworthy in the context of Sulabhā's conversation, the 'vyakti' here underscores continuity, that complex properties of consciousness emerge from basic elemental properties found in matter. But does Sulabhā believe that there is micro-subjectivity in particles? Or are there micro-thoughts to constitute thought? Is there something like micro-transparency for the reflexivity of consciousness? I do not believe so; thus a fresh reading is relevant to place these examples in a new light.

Fire and the firewood⁵

Let us read the central passage from MBh that exploits the example of the fire-logs and fire, besides other examples. This passage comes in the MBh in the conversation between king Janaka and a hermit Sulabhā:

Just as a lamp, shining in front, illumines others while shining, the five sensory faculties comparable to the lamps in a tree are endowed with others [as their objects of illumination], while being themselves illuminated with consciousness (*jñāna*). Just as multiple ministers of a king provide different testimonies with reason, the five in the bodies are just the same. A part of consciousness (*jñānaikadeśa*) is transcendental to them. Just as the flames of a fire, or the currents of the air, or the rays of the sun, or the waves of the rivers keep coming and passing away, the bodies of those endowed with the bodies do the same when being extended. Just as one cannot see smoke or fire by picking up an axe, [people] cannot see something external to them by cutting the body with belly, arms, or legs [being seen in] the same way. By making friction on the same logs, one can see smoke and fire caused by association. Accordingly, a wise man sees his transcendental nature with equanimity of his sensory faculties.⁶

As long as we rest on the categories of identity or difference in interpreting these examples, we blunder. Fire is not identical to firewood. Neither is it radically different, as the potential of fire, its energy, is already present in the firewood. We therefore need to include a category 'difference in identity' (*bhedābheda*) to explain this type of causality, and this gives us space to introduce MM as a model distinct from existing explanatory models that stress either radical identity or radical difference.

The metaphors that come in conversation between Sulabhā and Janaka require deeper analysis. The first among these relates to sensory faculties and consciousness. Consciousness, in this metaphor, is like the light or the current that flows through all the lamps, igniting them all. There is no real hierarchy here, as it is the same consciousness that flows through different channels, manifesting through

different sensory modalities. The second example, that of ministers and the king, is a clear example of dualism. However, a dualistic explanation overlooks that the self or metaphoric king is depicted here as a ‘part of consciousness’ (*jñānaikadeśa*), with other parts being the sensory faculties, or the metaphoric ministers. The cluster of metaphors—flames, currents, rays, and waves—are all emergent properties that do not exceed the base elements—fire, air, sun, and water. Nevertheless, they each have a distinctive identity, form, and name. Finally, the friction that ignites fire in a log needs to be seen in the same light; that is, while being a new element, an emergent property, it is not absent in its primal material structure but that it only it appears as if absent. And in all these accounts, consciousness is this emergent property.

There are three sets of examples in the above passage that describe:

- (i) Sensory faculties are both self-revealing and revealing external faculties. There is no discussion regarding any additional faculty;
- (ii) Sensory faculties are similar to the ministers giving different inputs, and the higher faculty, the metaphoric king, is part of consciousness not distinct in nature from what the sensory faculties (or the metaphoric ministers) embody; and
- (iii) Life and inertia, consciousness and matter, are similar to the fire and the fire-logs, not identical but not diametrically different either.

If we were to explain consciousness along these lines, we need to introduce a third category, the friction that is necessary in addition to logs and fire, which mediates the process of manifestation. Accordingly, neuron triggering or the firing of neurons can be compared with the metaphoric friction to make fire. Reading through these reductive lines, just like the logs supervene the fire, the body supervenes consciousness. I am not seeing any problem in this causal relation, as the argument has never been about establishing a disembodied mind or consciousness expunged of materiality. The only argument is, if we consider tidal waves as epiphenomena, with fluidity in water as an emergent structure, the potential for such structure is presented in the very building blocks of what constitutes water. The fire and fire-logs example comes in the context of sensory faculties and their double-intentionality. While being directed to their reciprocal objects, they reveal themselves at the same time. The example of the king and ministers can be confusing to those unaware of the constitution of the Gaṇa-kingdom, where different clans are represented by ministers, and the king is one among them. This is how the explanation of a ‘part of consciousness’ (*jñānaikadeśa*) makes sense. The same applies to reading the epistemic process of consciousness flowing through sensory faculties, manifesting external objects. In all accounts, the familiar way of understanding consciousness as separate from materiality prevents us from faithfully reading these passages, and once we liberate ourselves from this predisposition, we can consider consciousness as an emergent structure that does not violate the claim of it being in its potential form in causal materials.

Two separate issues merge here. While the entities of fire and log have their inherent nature as to what constitutes logs as logs and fire as fire, as solidity and its burning character, it is also true that they are not entirely independent, as Nāgārjuna argues, like a man and a woman (MMK X.6). In the context of the MBh, the issue has not been about establishing that fire and fuel are two separate entities. There is no reason why we cannot have both: following MBh, there is the potential for fire in the fuel, even if not expressed; and following MBh, fuel and fire as cause and effect are mere designations. And there is no contradiction of something being both the cause and its effect, or being both the metaphoric axe and the log being chopped. For consciousness is assumed to have the potency to assume different roles, with a fraction (*bhāgaikadeśa*) assuming subjectivity, with the remainder being its object. Now, if we were to reframe a model to address consciousness along these lines, consciousness is a global event, and it assumes a pre-divided state of singularity before it separates into poles of subject and object, and what we consider as consciousness in everyday terms identified here as *vijñāna*, intentional modes that are the manifest modes, similar to fire manifesting from a fire-log. Exploring Buddhist literature further, Vasubandhu cites an example of fire and fuel in the context of refuting the Vātsīputrīya view, according to which there exists *puḍgala*, a Buddhist equivalent of the *ātman*, that, although not distinct from five *skandhas*, does have its own originality.⁷ The arguments from difference and identity, as Nāgārjuna has presented, are also present in the works of Vasubandhu, with an iteration that fire cannot be confirmed as neither identical to nor distinct from the fuel. Following both presentations, what is addressed by the Pudgalavādins is that consciousness, similar to fire, is an emergent property that cannot be simply reduced to its cause, a neural network for instance, or fire-logs in our example. They argue that, just as we do not feel heat in a log but from the fire that demonstrates this property, *puḍgala* in the same way is an emergent property, although as an epiphenomenon, it rests on causal attributes. An example from MBh is almost identical to what the Pudgalavādins present here:

Just as the fire within wood is not visible by splitting the wood, likewise is the self within the body. This is realised within the body (*atra*) only by means of yoga. Just as [the drops of] water in a river or the rays in the sun are assembled, the bodies, accordingly, [assemble] in the self.⁸

Now, the fire and log example can be further analysed with the aid of other metaphors: water and waves and sun and rays, whereby the river and the sun are not distinct from their relative properties, but they nonetheless maintain a distinctive identity.

The One and its manifestation

Following this paradigm, consciousness, life, and materiality are merely different modes or expressions of being. When we come across references to divinity, often

addressed as *puruṣa*,⁹ the person, in contrast, refers to this singularity that is inherently autonomous to manifest itself into the manifold. But here, first, the example stresses identity between *bhūta* and *bhūta*, of course one word that first refers to elements. such as earth and water, and at the same time refers to living beings. This basically rejects a dichotomy between consciousness and matter. An example from the MBh helps elucidate this:

Earth, air, sky, water, with light being the fifth one, the fundamental elements (*mahā-bhūta*), are the source for the living beings to come into being and to dissolve back. Just like the waves of an ocean, the primary elements return to the living elements (*bhūta*). Just as a turtle spreads its limbs and retrieves them back, the self that is also the elements [or the essential being of elements] comes into being (*bhūtātman*) creates and retrieves in the same way.¹⁰

The elements, accordingly, are foundational in manifesting life, similar to the ocean being responsible for waves. Conversely, the life-force is considered to be the primary element by which materiality comes into being. In reversing the example, the passage considers the emergent equates tides on water with materiality. Life, in this account, is the foundation upon which materiality emerges. The next metaphor, that of a turtle, further extends the argument that sentience, the life-force as such, lies at the foundation of creation. The universe, in this sense, is a living entity. Accordingly, what we consider to be inertia is merely the expressed or manifest aspects, the external shell of the living entity. Following this metaphor, there is neither pure materiality expunged of consciousness, nor pure consciousness expunged of materiality: if materiality explains the external or objective aspect of the same entity, consciousness underscores its internal or phenomenal domain.

The above passage consciously exploits the homonym, *bhūta*, which at times can mean base elements such as earth or water, as well as referring to living beings. Statements that *mahābhūtas* originate from *bhūtas* or living entities (plural), present the life-force in its primal form assuming the manifold. If we follow the metaphor, the primal elements are similar to tides, with living entities being the metaphoric water. The term *bhūtātman* can be explained in different ways: it can be the self that also constitutes the primal elements, or the self *of* the elements, or the essence of primal elements. This *bhūtātman* is compared with a turtle, with its extensions being the elements. However, conversely, it is when a turtle comes out of its shell that we can see a creature. And it is the mode of becoming that is underscored with the term *bhūtātman*, the self that comes into being.¹¹ Accordingly, elements and living entities, are thus not the primordial essence but manifestations. Of what? Of the 'self of the *bhūtas*' (*bhūtātman*). Accordingly, neither the selves nor the primal elements are foundational in explaining creation. Just as elements are manifest properties, so also are living beings expressions of the 'essence of *bhūtas*'. But returning to the metaphors, this essence is in itself alive. Therefore, life does not begin with the expression

of elements or the coming into being of embodied beings. The above etymology underscores dynamism: whether in material form or in the form of animate beings, this is just a process of becoming; as the essential nature, the *bhūtātman* is unfolding, expressing itself through modes of life and inertia, where all are undergoing transformation. In the above account, there is no further reduction from *bhūtātman*, the animate foundational entity that gives rise to both the animate and inanimate worlds. This is therefore a distinct model of Advaita, different from one that reduces the existents to pure essence, that is, being and consciousness (*sanmātra*, *cinmātra*). And there is nothing to indicate the foundational entity is not intrinsically changeless. If the absolute is itself animate by its very nature, mutation or transformation becomes its inherent characteristics.

The fundamental dynamism that constitutes the essential being, the *ātman*, finds its limitation in its first expression in terms of *bhūtas*, animate beings. While the animate beings are the completion of the inherent dynamism in its expressive surge, it is still an unfolding of being, and therefore a mere process. But *bhūtas*, the inanimate entities or primary elements, are further extensions of this foundational being or essence, and therefore there is less of vibrancy or dynamism in inertia. We can derive this pure dynamism from its very terminal meaning: the verbal root √*bhū* stands for *sattā* or pure being, and based on context, it can denote both the primacies of the result or the end product (*phala*), or an operation (*vyāpāra*) or pure dynamism. Thinking along the lines of *elan vital* and inherent dynamism, externality and objectivity are merely expressions of some inherent principles, or that the traits manifest in inertia and in life are already present in the primal state. If subjectivity is both dynamism and inertia, objectivity is the culmination of this inertia. Materiality, along these lines, is not something to be purged in order to recognise reality or to be liberated. The primal entity, in this regard, is both mind and matter, sentience and inertia. The terms used to describe creation and dissolution, *prabhava* and *apayaya*, further strengthen the above argument. In deconstructing *prabhava*, the syllables *pra* = forth, onward, *bhava* = becoming, defining the act of coming further into being is what is conveyed by the term that describes the process that mediates *bhūta* and *mahābhūta*. *Api* = annexing, reaching to, + *vaya* = move, refers to moving inward, or reaching to its original form, in a process of retrieval. Externality, accordingly, dissolves into being, the animate entity that has attained its own externality in relation to pure being.

Also vivid in the above examples is that there is no diametric opposition between subjective and objective, mental and physical. Just as physicality is one phase of pure being, so also are phenomenality and intentionality. If read along these lines, it is something like the pure being that expresses itself through its dynamic modes. Further expanding on the metaphor of the sensory faculties and illumination of externality, this illumination is not merely a pre-synthetic, intuitive experience, since the example of ministers and the king demonstrates that conflating data are being processed through the sensory faculties, and the self as a meta-processor synthesises the information being relayed. It is therefore problematic to translate *cid*

or any synonymous terms as ‘consciousness’, if consciousness is to be contrasted with materiality. The ability of *cid* to illumine objects arises with embodiment, and so, *cid* can be explained as latency that allows for the possibility of both materiality and subjectivity. Something similar is expressed in the modes of becoming, first expressed by life itself, and in its expression of materiality. Consciousness in these accounts is therefore creature consciousness, and its transparency is not inherently depicted by means of intentionality or propositionality.

Needless to say, these crucial passages, packed with metaphors, deserve a closer analysis in light of contemporary conversations on the nature of consciousness. To begin with, properties manifest in fire can only be properties that are latent in fire-logs. Consciousness, along these lines, is intrinsic to matter. However, it does not manifest until its conditions are met. The phenomenality of consciousness demonstrated with the metaphor of fire consuming a log and intentionality vivified in the same metaphor with fire giving heat or light are not beyond properties that are latent in the log. And this analysis is congruent with the other metaphors examined.

Is manifest property distinct from its cause?

One problem with the MM or *abhivyakti* model, and any other model of Advaita that accepts creation, is: if there is an actual causation, is the effect identical or different from its cause. In the case of identity, no causality is established. In the case of difference, nonduality is rejected. A few examples from the Upaniṣads and their analysis help us respond to this question:

- (i) Just as smoke, that is distinct [from its cause] spreads from the assembled fire with wet logs, this [creation] is an exhalation of this absolute principle (*mahato bhūtasya*).¹²
- (ii) ... Accordingly, this absolute principle that is endless [in time] and boundless [in space] is merely the mass of consciousness. This [mass of consciousness] emerges from these very basic elements [of the *mahābhūtas*] and it dissolves back into these very [elements].¹³
- (iii) Just as a spider extends [its net] and reabsorbs, just as plants grow on earth, just as hair and nails of a living person, the world comes into being from the endless [absolute in] the same way.¹⁴

Common to all these examples is that the emergent property cannot return to its primal form. Smoke cannot become again the fire-logs, a spider-web does not return to the spider’s body, and likewise, conscious subjects are distinct from the elements that constitute their corporeality. These are not the examples to demonstrate identity, unlike the examples of gold and ornaments or of clay and clay-pots. The former are examples that underscore distinction, as even the term ‘distinct’ (*prthag*) is

applied to explain the distinction between smoke and the wet logs. So the model of causality that can accommodate these examples is not the one that denies creation, or the model that grounds creation on difference, or the one that establishes creation as identical to its cause. There is something unique to the emergent structure but at the same time, there is something like it in the cause itself that is only manifest in the emergent structure. Yet again, the MM or *abhivyakti* model helps explain all these examples.

Abhivyakti in light of Puruṣavāda

I have elsewhere discussed the Doctrine of Puruṣa, an early form of monism (Timalisina 2017), with the insight that the emergence model broadly explains the monistic foundation of Puruṣavāda. In essence, Puruṣavāda maintains that the cosmic Puruṣa that is identical to singular consciousness does indeed become many while also transforming into materiality. In doing so, it neither exceeds its ontological originality, nor are the modes of expression illusory. The *Mahābhārata* exploits the model of ‘manifestation’ (*abhivyakti*) to explain this relationship. As pointed out earlier, if two theses of monism and real causation are maintained, the challenge remains in explaining plurality and difference. The concepts of inherent potencies (*śakti*) and intrinsic aspects (*kalā*) appear as several early categories that explain the manifold. Just as we find in the MBh, the aspects (*kalā*) by means of which the singular absolute assumes the manifold (e.g., MBh 12.320.114), Bhartṛhari explains this process by means of inherent potencies (*śakti*).¹⁵ That the absolute assumes the manifold by allowing its aspects to express themselves appears to be an early model, as the concept can be traced to the earliest instances found in the *Ṛgveda*; for instance, even ‘the entire world is its one quarter, and three quarters reside in the sky as deathless’ (*pādo’sya viśvā bhūtāni tripādasyāmṛtan divi | ṚV X.90.3*). As the concept of real causation becomes heavily criticised, Śāṅkara adopts the category of ‘illusory manifestation’ (*māyā*) to explain the manifold. The references for *vyakti* in the MBh rely on a philosophy that seems to be a monistic Sāṅkhya. One of the key differences in this model from mainstream Sāṅkhya is that here, the category of the ‘unmanifest’ (*avyakta*) refers to the absolute, the Brahman, and this contrasts with the manifest, the name and form (*nāmarūpa*). In the Advaita expounded by Śāṅkara, the term *avyakta* is equivalent with the category *prakṛti* within the mainstream Sāṅkhya, so that both the manifest and the unmanifest are circumscribed within the scope of metaphysical ignorance (*avidyā*).¹⁶ Indeed, one of the crucial points of debate in classical Hindu philosophy is whether the category of the ‘unmanifest’, as the causal material, is the absolute, or whether it is the threefold *guṇas* in their primal harmony as *prakṛti*. The Śāntiparvan in the MBh has an undertone of a sustained dialogue between these two types of philosophies. The term Puruṣavāda here refers to the monistic philosophy that has its roots on Vedic and Upaniṣadic references and expands throughout the era of early Śāṅkara Advaita. This particular model has had such impact that even after Śāṅkara, Buddhist and

Jain philosophers continue to criticise this model when they are arguing against Upaniṣadic Hindu philosophy.

Following Puruṣavāda as discussed by Mallavādin (Timalsina 2017), all that exists is comprised of *puruṣa*, the primordial essence that is identified as the mass of consciousness (*jñānamaya*). Suffice it to say for the current conversation that different modes of manifestation, their externality and materiality, can be compared here with different states the conscious subjects undergo in their daily life. In this mapping, just as individual selves have waking, dreaming, and deep sleep states, the collective self, *Puruṣa*, undergoes the same states, materiality and inertia, in its deep sleep states. Accordingly, plants and weeds are compared with dreaming states. In essence, just as individual subjects undergo waking, dreaming, and deep sleep states, consciousness, life, and materiality are, in the same way, transformation of the same entity. This hierarchy of consciousness makes it easy to explain creature consciousness as identical to intentional modes of consciousness, where being conscious is not identical to having some intentional object. This, however, is not the case that *cid* or *caitanya* as the base consciousness undergoes complexity in manifesting in the embodied modes with propositionality. This is not a new argument. Before closing this section, I would like to cite a few more examples from the classical texts that give some unique illustrations to demonstrate understanding consciousness in its modes of emergence.

The concept that is criticised by Mallavādin can be traced primarily in the *Vākyapadīya-Vṛtti*. In addition to the metaphors that are exploited in MBh, this commentarial text also utilises technical terms such as *vikāra* or transformation. We need to keep in mind, though, that this is not the transformation advocated by Īśvarakṛṣṇa in the *Sāṅkhyakārikā*. First, the concept of *vikāra* as transformation, with an understood sense of deformation, does not apply to creation and consciousness, where *puruṣa* is equated with consciousness and materiality, and plurality is identified as its *vikāra*. The metaphor of fire and its sparks plays a key role in the following excerpt from the *Vākyapadīya-Vṛtti*, which describes creation:

Some have the view that all transformation is an 'aspect' (*mātrā*) of the self. The self {*sa*} appears as if external, while being situated within each person. Also, because it is conventional, this [division of] inner and external [self] is merely a usage. This [convention] is not possible if there is [just] one or [if it is] formless. According to the others who follow the view of *svamātrā*, this [world] is the transformation of the single essence of the nature of the act of awareness that is of the form of all cognitions and of the form of all differences. Some say that consciousness is the origin of all entities (*bhūta*) that become distinguished like [the difference between] the oil and pulp of sesame. Others say: just as [there] are the sparks from a big fire, a thick cloud from the invisible air, the distinguishing streams of water from the 'moon-light-gems' (*candrakānta*), [trees] such as *sāla* from earth, [or] fig tree with roots from the seeds of fig, so also [is creation]; this is the view of those adopting the view of *paramātrā*. The view of those following *svamātrā* and *paramātrā* should be understood from the *Vidyābhāṣya*.¹⁷

What Mallavādin cites as the position of Puruṣavāda reads along the same lines:

That what is called Puruṣa is itself [the entities like earth, identified with the term] 'that'. Just because it is the self, [or etymologically the dynamic entity,] it has transformed [into manifold entities]. Because it is consolidation [of the fluid form], like transformation of earth, water, etc. into rice, [it has attained materiality]. [Entities are] the effects of Puruṣa {tat} like a [piece of] cloth is [comprised] of threads. It is because [entities] do not come into being in isolation of Puruṣa {tena} and do not exist in isolation of Puruṣa {tat}. It is also because [entities] are the aspects of Puruṣa {tat}, just like being brand new is the very aspect of a pot.¹⁸

These two passages have introduced some new metaphors. First, creation is not just a transformation it is a deformation (*vikāra*), meaning that there is something of its originality lost in its new emergent structure. This transformation is inherently given to subjects, that one actualises its externality by means of transformation. This position assumes plurality as inherently given in the primordial state, making the manifold as a mere process of coming to visibility. For the others who consider the primordial source as singular, assuming plurality is compared with the single firebrand manifesting multiple sparks. The passage that Mallavādin cites explains transformation in biological terms, that rice is a transformation of material objects, such as water and soil. The product here is materiality, demonstrating its emergent structure, and what is causal is the *puruṣa* that is equated with consciousness. Yet again, the concept of aspects comes into play, and in this regard, the absolute and its aspects assuming the manifold seem consistent in different iterations of emergence (*abhivyakti*). Noteworthy here is that none of these models explain creation in terms of ignorance (*avidyā*), as we encounter in the philosophy of Śaṅkara.

The monism of Puruṣavāda is not identical to the generic singularity of being. *Mahāsattā* or the most generic being, the being of all beings and things, was one of the competing models. We can compare this to Spinoza's Being,¹⁹ but it is not identical to Puruṣavāda. The Doctrine of Puruṣa is about actual generation, actual differentiation, and the unfolding of life and complex cognitive states of the mind, from basic singular consciousness, which permeates all life-forms and mental states. But from the perspective of substance monism with aspectual difference, we can compare Puruṣavāda with Spinoza's Nature. For Spinoza, Nature and God meant the same thing. This identity gives room for naturalistic philosophy to emerge, without discrediting consciousness at the core of Nature. The singular reality, whether in Spinoza or Puruṣavāda, contains the potency of self-differentiation and embodies conflicting properties ranging from being animate or inanimate, inertia or sentience. And, of course, this is distinct from Nāgārjuna's or Śaṅkara's non-dualism, which rejects creation in a real sense.

If we are looking for a model that best explains the classical examples, we are bound to find some conflicting elements in them. Fire and the sparks, for example, differ only in aspect and not in quality: a spark is a fire. Nevertheless, this does

explain weak differentiation and diversification, just as the aspect of sparks depicts separation from the flame. However, the example of the wet log and emergence of smoke is not the same. This is rather an example of the emergence of a categorically different entity that also explains that this differentiation does not violate singularity. The example of the turtle and its limbs relates to explaining the emergence of sentience from what is considered inertia. The shell here stands for inertia and what we do not see is the turtle as a complete, embodied being, the entirety of its life vibrating even in the shell, as a shell is not distinct from the turtle, which therefore comprises a living entity. There is life in nails and hair as well, and this example extends to emerging life-forms that apparently lack stand-alone subjectivity. But nail and hair are not distinct from the person to which they belong, and in that sense, their subjectivity is never violated. But these accounts certainly point to a divergence from the Advaita of Śaṅkara: from the perspective of Puruṣavāda, the waves of an ocean are not a mirage. Fire displays some genuine properties that the log does not possess. A turtle has its limbs whether it extends them or not.

Two examples from classical texts follow, explaining differentiation through reliance on biological examples:

- (i) *Nyagrodhabīja* or the seeds of a banyan tree. While this metaphor primarily refers to the difference in size between the gigantic banyan tree and its small seed, it also explains differentiation, a categorical difference between the seed and the tree. The tree resides as potential (*śaktirūpa*) within the seed, and the same applies for the tree that also retains the potential to produce more seeds.
- (ii) *Mayūrāṇḍarasa* or the fluids inside the peacock egg. This is a metaphor for the *avyakta* or the unmanifest cause, manifesting its manifold characteristics in the emergent property.

These examples explain causality in the sense that the effect is neither identical to the cause nor is it categorically different. And the logical account, that entities are either different or identical, fails to engage the categories where difference and identity are merely modes of expression or degrees of perception. Therefore, what we find in contemporary debates over cause and effect and what we glean from the classical models do not vary much when it comes to explaining causation. This means that the Nāgārjunian argument, that entities are either identical or different, does not sum up reality. For the manifold is real, it is immediately given, and no argumentation can explain it otherwise.

Mallavādin examines the doctrines of *bhāva*, where a singular essence lies at the heart of the manifold, and *svabhāva*, where the inherent nature is constantly enfold-ing and unfolding, making differentiation its inherent thrust. Compatible with naturalism, what we find in the doctrine of *svabhāva* is that emergence and differentiation is an inherent drive of what exists as the basis. This differentiation, nevertheless, cannot exceed beyond its source, in the sense that, a banyan tree always

emerges from a banyan seed, and the peacock egg does not hatch into something else. Needless to say, these models address evolution, as the difference in tropes in a new plant or a baby peacock are not rejected while accepting that, no matter what the different tropes manifest, the emergent structure is still to be identified as a banyan tree or a peacock. Following these arguments, entities function according to their inherent character. And the inherent character of *puruṣa* is that it manifests as the world and infinitely variable subjects.

Evaluating the examples

Before concluding the examination of classical examples, there are a few objections relevant to contemporary conversation:

- (i) An aggregate, *saṅghāta*, lacks its own teleology and it is an object for other's enjoyment.²⁰

This objection is raised by Īśvarakṛṣṇa, that the manifold lacks its own teleology. However, this rests on the categorical differentiation between tropes that constitute *prakṛti* and *puruṣa*, or sentience. *Puruṣa* in the above depiction is certainly not the *puruṣa* of Īśvarakṛṣṇa. Two tendencies are intrinsic to Īśvarakṛṣṇa's Sāṅkhya model: suffering is inherent with being in the world and freedom requires emancipation from inherent tropes that sustain the manifold. Furthermore, if the self, devoid of parts, is considered the absolute enjoyer, this absolute enjoyer turns out to be disengaged, transcendental, witnessing consciousness, for whom enjoyment means precisely to be disentangled. *Puruṣavāda* does not demand such separation, as what manifests as the manifold is not diametrically opposite, but rather the very extension of inherent tropes or aspects of *Puruṣa*. Engaging the classical metaphor of a dancer, the dancer of Īśvarakṛṣṇa dances for others' pleasure, but the dancer as Śiva dances for himself. The first dancer is a slave whereas the second dancer is the master.

- (ii) Anything that has parts can be annihilated. If *Puruṣa* has aspects and some aspects come into manifestation while others remain unmanifest, this makes *puruṣa* transitory.

This objection rests on the assumption that there are things that can be created out of nothing, and they can be wiped out of existence. On the contrary, entities can only be modified, altered in mode, but not entirely erased of their being. This objection conflates the categories of 'eternal' and 'constant'. The permanence of *puruṣa* that is depicted here is of the 'constant' category, that creation is not a singular event, that it is a natural unfolding of tendencies inherent to the absolute, and bondage and liberation are not to be conflated with the expression or the lack thereof of tropes of the absolute. On the contrary, realisation of this inherent nature and embracing the

flowing nature of reality in its expression of the manifold is recognised here as the highest mode of realisation.

- (iii) If creation is the manifestation of inherent properties, it would make *saṃsāra* essential to the primordial entity and its elimination would not be possible, making liberation impermanent.

Evidently, this objection does not deserve (and did not receive) close scrutiny, as it conflates the being of the world with the metaphysical confusion that makes subjects bound, due to their own misperception, or failing to recognise the continuum. All philosophies that see the world as the fundamental problem and not our misperception of it, suffer the same problem of escapism. The world, as Puruṣavāda maintains, is merely the expression of the self.

There are some objections against the above-given examples. In the case of firewood and fire, firewood does not spontaneously combust, but if an external agency is invoked, it leads to dualism. Even waves rely on wind, an external agency. This objection over-generalises the examples and depends on reasons external to the functions of these examples: if the example of fire and firewood is used to explain the emergence of inherent properties, that is, manifestation of inherent sentience in embodied forms, this does not mean that sentience and fire are identical. Sentience assumes its own agency whereas fire lacks it. In the case of the turtle, sentience translates into agency. It is the movement of spreading the limbs that confirms turtle's agency, which tallies with the understanding that the 'agent is someone who is free' (*yaḥ svatantraḥ sa kartā*), and this understanding further ties this model with Puruṣavāda. Every entity that enjoys relational freedom in expression retains its subjectivity, while absolute freedom resides in the absolute *puruṣa*, the singularity that binds all of the manifold within itself. Since nature is not inertia that is assumed to be inherently lacking freedom or agency, there is no problem in engaging enactivism from the perspective of Puruṣavāda: organisms and the environment interact with each other in the emergence of mentation and self-differentiation. The only difference is, Puruṣavāda explains creation by relying on differentiation and not synthesis. The emergence of consciousness in embodied and intentional modes is not to be conflated with the emergence of complex organisms. The theory of the emergence of complex organisms by synthesis of symbiosis does not explain pre-existing conditions, the rise of the manifold from singularity. For us to better understand nature, we have to explore beyond self-given difference and engage differentiation before addressing assemblage.

Section II: Puruṣavāda and panpsychism

From panpsychism to cosmopsychism

Both the examples cited from *Mahābhārata* and references on Puruṣavāda from various sources cut through the fundamental problem of consciousness that stems from

the understanding that physical reality and consciousness are diametrically different categories and that there is an unbridgeable gap between physical matter and consciousness. And this issue has led some to the extreme of rejecting consciousness altogether. Let us initiate the conversation by exploring some of the arguments of Chalmers with regard to the ‘hard problem’. As David Chalmers (2010, p.8) argues, ‘... even when we have explained the performance of all the cognitive and behavioral functions in the vicinity of experience—perceptual discrimination, categorisation, internal access, verbal report—there may still remain a further unanswered question: *Why is the performance of these functions accompanied by experience?*’ Before proceeding further, I should stress the central arguments that since consciousness and matter are not two different kinds of entities within the philosophical platform of our investigation, we are not investing in the ‘binding problem’. Accordingly, subjectivity in the ‘manifestation’ model resides in materiality only in its potential form, and therefore I do not consider subjectivity as an amalgamation of micro-subjectivity in the cellular structure.

From the physicalist’s perspective, the brain, which in itself is in inertia, gives rise to consciousness as an emergent property by means of neuronc interactions (Popper 1978; Crick 1994; Libet 2004), making consciousness inconceivable without the brain. Broadly relying on supervenience wherein, for example, if some alteration in B is necessary for any alteration in M, B supervenes M, this model accepts that the emergent property of consciousness relies on the brain state as a foundational necessity (McLaughlin 1997). Some physicalists also accommodate the argument that there is no supervenience but rather there lies a causal relationship between conscious states and the brain (O’Connor 2000a, 2000b). While there is no problem in a neural correlation with consciousness, the thesis that a diametric opposition between consciousness and inertia and the proposition that a radical difference between the properties of cause and effect exists, is, as Strawson argues (2006), ‘a violation of a law of nature’. Goff (2017) argues along the same lines, that physicalism is unable to account for the reality of phenomenal consciousness. Panpsychism presents an alternative to this thesis with the thesis that consciousness permeates all the basic structures of reality. Thomas Nagal (1979) argues along these lines, that ‘the basic physical constituents of the universe have mental properties’. Broadly, panpsychism comes in two different flavours: micropsychism and cosmopsychism. The first argues that the presence of complex cognitive process is a result of ‘binding’ elemental conscious states in their micro-level. The ‘combination problem’ (Seager 1995, 2010; Goff 2009; Chalmers 2013) relates to the issue of explaining how unified macro experiences emerge from micro experiences. The perspective being explored here does not need to address this problem. However, how a singular consciousness assumes the manifold still needs to be addressed. Whether consciousness is considered singular or an amalgamation of micro-states, monistic metaphysics rejects the dichotomy between mind and matter. The challenge from the perspective of cosmopsychism is to analyse the issue from the top-down model. Rather than explaining consciousness in its complexity, the argument here is not that (i) consciousness as

such is a non-fragmentary singularity, (ii) that embodiment and physicality provide the required complexity to manifest in the cognitive modes, and (iii) that embodied and intentional states are not emerging as a result of synthesis of basic conscious states, but rather, that there is a fracturing of singularity, making it possible to segment, not just in terms of different organic and cellular structures, but also in terms of different subjectivities while also constituting the subjective and objective divide. The thesis then, is that consciousness is the basis for inertia, physicality, and mentality. As a consequence, to have the body is being both a subject and also an object. This means that consciousness and materiality are not diametrically opposite entities as the emergentists have proposed.

Physical reductionism explains consciousness by reducing consciousness to physical properties. If conscious states are the brain states, 'emergence' is merely a device to explain the properties and not the substance. But this would then require a model of property dualism. If we follow interactionism, mental and physical properties are completely different and they interact in both directions, meaning that mental causation affects our physicality just like physical causation determines our mental states. Epiphenomenalism, on the other hand, maintains that while mental and physical properties are quite distinct, only physical properties affect the mental. In all accounts, following hard materialism, emergentism rests on the assumption that the mental is an emergent property of an underlying physical substrate. It is not necessary, nor is it possible, to revisit arguments for and against these models. For us to move forward, we can read Thomas Nagel (2012) and David Chalmers (2010), in particular, their arguments for the intrinsic property or their qualia, what this is like, and these arguments do not explain the qualitative state of consciousness that is absent in the corresponding physical substrate. The argument here is that consciousness is an intrinsic property and cannot be fully explained externally. It will be interesting to see how and whether some of these observations can be furthered by reading the classical examples at hand.

Both the monistic system of Puruṣavāda and cosmopsychism, a variation of panpsychism, share some common ground. First, they both maintain that consciousness is primary and intrinsically given to all that exists. They can both be explained in terms of property dualism, as something in consciousness is distinct from inertia, but that does not make them substantially different. Furthermore, they both maintain some form of emergence to explain embodied and intentional states of consciousness. If the 'assemblage' theory of De Landa is incorporated following Deleuze's initial insights, panpsychism explains new emergent properties derived from elemental properties that are not qualitatively distinct, making the case for soft emergence. There are many models within panpsychism and what is common among them is that embodied forms of consciousness are similar in kind but nonetheless distinct from the micro-level consciousness in the base structures. Most of the differences among models result from the binding problem, how lower-level consciousness assembles and gives rise to complex structures, and eventually to human consciousness. Strong panpsychism maintains that 'fundamental physical

entities have conscious experiences' (Chalmers 2016). This position leads to panexperientialism, that the ultimate constituents of physical reality are capable of having experiences, or to pancognitivism, that these constituents are endowed with cognition.²¹

By accepting mentality as fundamental to the natural world, the focus for panpsychists is to explain how the micro-levels of subjectivity and micro-levels of experience combine in giving rise to our conscious states. Even though at the first glimpse the position of the panpsychists appears indefensible, this is not the only model that they propose. Advancing the argument for panprotopsychism, Benovsky (2018, p.3) argues, 'fundamental entities' that compose a tree are not 'tree-like' or 'wood-like' or 'leaf-like', and fundamental entities that compose a brain are not 'brain-like' or 'neuron-like'. As long as panpsychists argue that there are micro-subjectivities and micro-experience and micro-cognition, and bundling these together makes our subjectivity or experience or cognition, it conflates the phenomenal quality of consciousness or self-givenness of subjectivity that we experience with size and complexity. If what makes phenomenality unique is its self-givenness, its transparency, this never is the case that my pain is given to me as a synthesis of micro-pains, neither is my subjectivity given as a collection of organic or cellular subjectivities. On the other hand, if the argument is that while mentation is foundational to nature, fundamental entities lack phenomenal qualities as well as micro-subjectivity, this model conflates with brute emergence as far as subjectivity and phenomenality are concerned. In response to these objections, Chalmers (2016, pp.179–214) proposes panprotopsychism, arguing that 'panprotopsychism is the thesis that fundamental physical entities have protophenomenal properties. Protophenomenal properties are special properties that are not themselves phenomenal (there is nothing it is like to have them) but that can collectively constitute phenomenal properties'.

If the argument for panpsychism began on the grounds that there is homogeneity between cause and effect, accepting difference between cause and effect as token while maintaining type identity, lacking and having phenomenality underscores their distinction. There is no reason to argue for panpsychism and not accept brute emergence if phenomenality and subjectivity are to be attributed to the emergent structure while also accepting that its basic constituents lack such properties. In rejection of this argument, Benovsky (2018, p.4) argues, 'properties' of macroscopic entities (both physical and mental) are a result of the *arrangement* of micro fundamental entities, but this does not mean that the micro entities must 'already have a smaller version of them'. Of course, there are no small peacocks inside the peacock eggs or small trees inside the banyan seeds. The argument, then, from panprotopsychism is that the kind of attributes that the fundamental entities possess is qualitatively distinct from what they constitute. Yet again, an assemblage theory could better explain this constitution, for, in all accounts, the emergent structure is always something unique or something more than the properties of mere parts.

Concluding remarks

What I am proposing is to invert the process that physical reductionists have proposed: rather than finding consciousness in complexity, accept two tiers of consciousness as foundational: *caitanya* on the one hand and mentation or everyday consciousness (identified by *manas* and *vijñāna* in classical Sanskrit texts) on the other. In this paradigm, base consciousness, *caitanya*, is not divided in terms of organic or inorganic. It is not lacking phenomenality or transparency, but is lacking the ways these are given to us: our embodied modes of experiences and our embodied subjectivity. In this paradigm, each cell is mirroring this very singular consciousness. Everyday consciousness, on the other hand, is an assemblage of all that has been mirrored. An organism, in this account, is subject to both the mirroring of singular consciousness and synthesising what all the lower-level-structures are processing, either in homogenous or heterogenous processes. But this 'assemblage' is not to be understood in the reductive terms, as I am using this terminology only to explain the process of 'manifestation'. Manifestation (*abhivyakti*) explains the emergence of the determined modes of consciousness from the predetermined and non-directional events of experience without negating the being of foundational consciousness. In this model, it is not necessary for each cell to experience pain for the subject to interpret the sensation in terms of pain. This is not just about explaining the basic modes of experience. Even the experience of subjectivity follows the same process of manifestation (*abhivyakti*). Someone advocating for brute emergence initiates his analysis from the basic cellular structure, studying the assemblage in the rise of complexity. What I am proposing here is to explain the elementary form of embodiment and subjectivity on the basis of nondifferentiated singularity, successively emerging by means of differentiation. What an organic structure bestows upon us is the modes of encapsulating the same singularity in a myriad of modes, in the same way different pieces of mirrors and their assemblage makes it possible to reflect the same image in endless ways. We can initiate this analysis by exploring the converging points between Puruṣavāda and dual-aspect monism. To begin with, they both accept aspects of the singular entity, *puruṣa* or phental (something that contains the aspects of the mental and the physical). One thing we should not conflate is that 'aspects' are not identical to 'properties' and so dual-aspect monism is not identical to property dualism. In property dualism, the single ontological entity, matter, is endowed with the properties of both mind and materiality. However, for dual-aspect monism, there exists only a single entity, as they call 'phental' entity, that has aspects of both consciousness and materiality. Because of the aspects sharing a single ontological status, the problems of binary causation again emerge: just like physical aspects, our brain structure determining our modes of experience, the same applies to the mind affecting physical states. Speaking in embodied terms, the person that I am is not merely mind or body: it is both. Accordingly, the aspects of mind and matter are not to be reduced one into the other. As is evident,

this example evokes the early metaphor of *puruṣa*. After all, what Puruṣavāda is saying is that mentality and materiality do not exceed the being of *puruṣa*, translated in layman's terms as a 'person', and *puruṣa* has both aspects. If the early Vedic texts used *pāda* or quarter to describe the expression of materiality, we find the terminology of *kalā* or aspects in the works of Bhartṛhari to describe the singular entity assuming the manifold by means of the expression of its aspects. In many ways, the metaphors that we explored in the earlier section can be better explained following this model. Besides the very concept of *puruṣa* or person with multiple aspects, the next example we had was of a turtle, expressing its limbs. When a turtle is completely enclosed within its shell, we only encounter its external, metaphorically material aspect, whereas when it ventures out of its shell, we see a creature, a living subject, capable of having its own phenomenal state. But in reality, the shell includes bones and nerve endings, and a turtle cannot survive without its shell. It is not like a cave for a bear or a house for the human, but rather an extension of the turtle itself. If there is no clean separation between the body and the mind, there is no separation between the turtle body and its shell. Then the convention of the turtle and its shell is similar to saying, 'me' and 'my head'.

We can read neutral monism and Puruṣavāda along the same lines, making 'manifestation' as the explanatory device for causality. The category 'phental' helps explaining reality that is neither exclusively mental nor physical. One can object to this position by pointing out that this simply tries to create a third category, a different set of entities in order to resolve the existing problem, the problem of explaining the subjective or experiential mode of presentation versus the descriptive or objective modes of presentation. A thing, in other words, is both external and internal, has both materiality and phenomenality. This indeed is not the description of what exists, as it anticipates the manifest subjective and phenomenal modes, their expressed horizons constituting externality, and the thing that is grasped as external or as an object. There is circularity in this reasoning, that there is something mind-like as well as matter-like within *ur-matter*, but these aspects are confirmed only upon the rise of sentient beings that rely on combining micro-level consciousness and subjectivity in giving rise to macro states. I do not see a problem in accepting 'phental' as merely an explanatory category, for what lies within the singular entity, the mental-type property in addition to physical-type property, is only necessary for subjects capable of conceptualisation and self-differentiation. Going back to the earlier example of fire and firewood, that something can be called 'firewood' only upon the wood being a material cause for fire. If the 'log' is its name that does not describe its aspects, 'firewood' is another name that is possible only upon the log burning.

These models require an explanatory model different from the combination theory to address consciousness, intentionality, and subjectivity, and the concept of 'manifestation' (*abhivyakti*) meets this requirement. This is not the emergence of non-existent tropes or properties, although this term has been much abused by materialists. The very terminal meaning of 'emerging' does not explain something

coming into being out of oblivion. It only explains something coming to prominence, being noticeable, or finding its distinctive identity. When fire emerges from the logs, this is a transformation of the existing potential contained within the log. The biological examples examined above, of the peacock egg and banyan seed, explain the same phenomena, that the inherent traits or potentials within the causal form of peacock egg or banyan seed do not demonstrate subjective or biological states of propagation and digestion, as long as they are not in their expressed form of peacock or tree. The body serves as a suitable metaphor for the rise of subjectivity: it is both subject and object, depending on intentionality. Here, the primordial entity *puruṣa* is not the subject but rather the totality of things and beings only in the sense of its potential to manifest in diversity. However, the rise of subjectivity is credited to externalisation, just as the emergence of *adhi-pūruṣa* coincides with the transcendence of space and manifest realms. By avoiding the category of 'combination', we also evade the problems that come with 'bundle' theory of self.

The real issue then is not of manifestation of phenomenality from inertia or of combining micro-subjectivity to constitute the type of subjectivity with which we are endowed. On the contrary, it is the issue of differentiation. When we consider the singular entity as having different aspects, we are accepting the potentials within the singular entity yet to be expressed. We can credit this very mode of expression as giving rise to the two poles of subjectivity and objectivity. Similar to a person emerging from deep sleep, gaining his subjectivity and recognising the objective world surrounding him, the *ur-matter puruṣa* comes to actualise its potentials as they are expressed, embracing the polarities of subject and object. The examples I have examined, such as that of the firebrand releasing sparks or a spider spinning its web, are used to explain differentiation, where the first example simply explains the manifold, as a single spark retains the same capacity as does the flame in generating a big fire, and the spider does recognise its net as something external to itself, and while maintaining a subject-object relationship in sustaining its web, it is also able to re-absorb it, meaning, retrieving its externality. But without a web, the spider is not a subject; subjectivity relies on objectivity.

The metaphors of seed and egg address differentiation. The single entity giving rise to the manifold can be explained, not by adopting the thesis of combination, but by relying on *abhiviyakti*, the singular entity that is endowed with multiple aspects and whose aspects or potentials are expressed when certain conditions are met. In embodied terms, a single gamete gives rise to the complexity of our body. But what is the objective of differentiation and complexity then, as it appears inherent with evolution? After reading the above passages closely, there is no problem maintaining difference in cognitive modes and consciousness, as the terminology of *vijñāna* and *caitanya* suggests. What manifests, then, are intentional, cognitive modes, relying on embodied states. And if we were to read the *Taittirīya* hierarchy of food (*anna*), life (*prāṇa*), mind (*manas*), cognition (*vijñāna*), and joy (*ānanda*) as gradually emerging (*abhiviyakta*) properties from the *ur-material* state of *puruṣa*, we do not see any

contradiction in maintaining soft materialism, as long as accepting materiality does not demand rejection of consciousness. So, the Upaniṣadic passage does not clash with saying that our mind and subjectivity arise from these very elemental entities and return to those very elements. But this metaphor needs to be understood in the way they reflect life, based on seasons. Just like the grass grow old, dies, and returns after the rain, so does life keep coming, and our intentional modes of consciousness manifest, and so does our subjectivity.

Among contemporary scholarship, Anand Vaidya (2022) and Loriliai Biernacki (2023) have engaged analytic panpsychism in light of the philosophies of Rāmānuja and Abhinavagupta.²² I find their arguments very compelling. Ganeri's (2022) exploration of 'cosmic consciousness' has helped me navigate through multiple categories introduced in contemporary conversations on cosmopsychism. Ganeri, for instance, introduces psychological monism on the grounds that the thesis of 'cosmic consciousness' is the argument that there lies a mode of consciousness in which everything is interlinked with everything else. Ganeri has also observed that from Bucke to James, the categories of psychological monism and cosmopsychism are conflated (Ganeri 2022, p.50). But when Ganeri (2022, p. 51) concludes his analysis that 'The cosmos is conscious. It is not itself personal but has a "will to personate," a craving to consolidate itself into individual persons', the thesis of cosmic consciousness becomes identical with impersonal variety of cosmopsychism that the cosmos exhibits impersonal variety of consciousness. The only reservation I have in these observations is that this study comes in the history of reading the philosophy of Śaṅkara, and Ganeri makes no effort to distinguish among various types of monistic philosophies in classical India. Whichever the form of cosmopsychism we argue for, we face the fact that the physical reality is given and none of the models of cosmopsychism reject its reality. And, cosmopsychism does not argue for two types of realities, but rather that there lies just one type of reality, the reality of the given world and consciousness is its intrinsic nature. On these accounts, our inspirations should come from elsewhere rather than grounding cosmopsychism or panpsychism in the philosophy of Śaṅkara. This tendency is all the more vivid in Albahari (2022) who introduces 'perennial idealism'. Albahari initiates her conversation with the position of Ramana, a 20th century Advaita philosopher and an esteemed Yogin. The singularity of consciousness in this model is not a thesis that explains materiality but rather, it stands on rejection of anything other than pure consciousness. So, all the conversations on inner versus outer, subject versus object, matter versus consciousness, are not explained in this model but are simply rejected on the grounds that only one kind of reality exists, the reality of consciousness, rejecting externality, materiality, or objectivity bearing any relevance. If our objective in introducing the categories of panpsychism and cosmopsychism were to address the hard problem or to explain materiality without negating consciousness, returning to a form of idealism is not the answer. This is where the classical model of Puruṣavāda and the arguments on behalf of 'manifestation' (*abhivyakti*) come into play.

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Notes

- 1 See [Timalsina \(2017\)](#) for further discussion.
- 2 Even though no systematic attempt has been made to analyse Sulabhā's philosophy, the most noteworthy analysis is that of [Fitzgerald \(2002\)](#), pp.641–677). Another noteworthy contribution on this topic is [Vanita \(2003\)](#). See also [Chakrabarti \(2014\)](#) and [Ram-Prasad \(2018\)](#).
- 3 For a conversation on Bhartṛhari's use of the metaphor of peacock's egg, see [Bronkhorst \(2001\)](#), pp.474–491).
- 4 Noteworthy discussion on this topic is of [Bhattacharya \(2005, 2006, 2007, 2012\)](#).
- 5 It is worth mentioning that the fire-logs and fire metaphor for explaining causality seems central to classical Hindu philosophy, as both Nāgārjuna and Vasubandhu utilise this metaphor to deconstruct causality. Were this a random example in an epic, I believe this would not have received such a central position. It is therefore worth exploring the nexus. The way Nāgārjuna addresses this in 15 stanzas (MMK, Ch. X)

elucidates that he is responding to some doctrine that adopted *ātman* and *bhāvas*, the self and existent entities, perceiver and what is seen, and these are two separately established entities. His *prima facie* position is most likely that of the Pudgalavādins, and it is plausible that Pudgalavādins borrowed these arguments as well as the metaphors found in earlier Hindu texts. Whatever the historical accounts, Nāgārjuna's objective of his analysis is to reject causality, and he grounds his argument on the basis that fuel and fire cannot exist in isolation (Nāgārjuna 1986). That is, something can be considered fuel only in light of fire. In order to conceive a causal relation, both entities need to be given *a priori*, and so the cause as the cause necessarily anticipates the being of its effect for it to be the cause. This co-dependence is what lies at the heart of his rejection of causality (MMK X.1–7), for without relying on both, the very sense of causality cannot be confirmed (MMK X.8–16). This criticism aims to dismantle two further categories: the self, and the concept of inherent nature (*svabhāva*), which, I argue, were originally meant to be the same thing. The concluding stanza (MMK X.16) makes it clear that the arguments here are directed against the independent existence of the self and entities (MMK X.16).

- 6 *yathā pradīpaḥ purataḥ pradīptaḥ, prakāśam anyasya karoti dīpyan |
tatheha pañcendriyadīpavṛkṣā, jñānapradīptaḥ paravanta eva || 195.9.
yathā hi rājño bahavo hy amātyāḥ, pṛtkakpramāṇam pravadanti yuktāḥ |
tadvac charīreṣu bhavanti pañca, jñānaikadeśa paramaḥ sa tebhyaḥ || 195.10.
yathārciṣo'gneḥ pavanasya vegā, marīcayo'rkasya nadiṣu cāpaḥ |
gacchanti cāyānti ca tanyamānā, tadvac charīrāṇi śarīriṇām tu || 195.11.
yathā ca kaścit paraśuṃ grhītvā, dhūmaṃ na paśyej jvalanaṃ ca kāṣṭhe |
tadvac charīrodarapāṇipādaṃ, chitvā na paśyanti tato yad anyat || 195.12.
tāny eva kāṣṭhāni yathā vimathya, dhūmaṃ ca paśyej jvalanaṃ ca yogāt |
tadvat subuddhīḥ samam indriyatvād, budhaḥ paraṃ paśyati svam svabhāvam || 195.13.* (Mahābhārata, Mokṣadharmā (XII)0.195.9–13).
- 7 See the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* (The section on Pudgalaviniścaya). Vallée Poussin (1923–1931).
- 8 *agnir dārugato yadvad bhinne dārau na dṛśyate |
tathaiivātmā śarīrastho yogenaivātra dṛśyate ||
nadiṣv āpo yathā yuktā yathā sūrye marīcayāḥ |
santanvānā yathā yānti tathā dehāḥ śarīriṇām || Mahābhārata (XII.203.39–40).*
- 9 The term *puruṣa* is used to refer both to the absolute, God, or to individual beings. To make a distinction, I have used the upper and lower case terms successively.
- 10 *pṛthivī vāyur ākāśam āpo jyotiś ca pañcamam |
mahābhūtāni bhūtānām sarveṣāṃ prabhavāpyayau ||
tataḥ sṛṣṭāni tatraiva tāni yānti punaḥ punaḥ |
mahābhūtāni bhūteṣu sāgarasyormayo yathā ||
prasārya ca yathāṅgāni kūrmaḥ saṃharate punaḥ |
tadvad bhūtāni bhūtātmā sṛṣṭvā saṃharate punaḥ || Mahābhārata (XII.187.4–6).*
- 11 Returning to etymology, the term *bhūta* has the root *√bhū*, with the suffix + *ka*. Broadly, the suffix *ka* denotes the past, but some rules apply to its application in the present tense. Even in the *vartamāna*, there is *ka*. Pāṇini expands the scope of the suffix in a few of his aphorisms. For example, *gatyarthaslisasin ... jiryatibhyas ca | Panini III.4.72*, applies the suffix in the meaning of *karṭr*, if the verbal base is *akarmaka*. And *√bhū* is actually *akarmaka*. Therefore this can be in the present sense. There is

also another *sūtra*, *ktasya ca vartamane* Pāṇini II.3.67. This is not the *sūtra* for *kta* in *vartamāna*, but it suggests that there can be *kta* in the *vartamāna* sense. For example, the meaning of *bhavanti iti bhutani* would be that they are *bhūtas* because they come into being. Rāmakaṇṭha explains why the living entities are also called *bhūtas*: *pr̥thivyādibhūtasanniveśaviśayaśarīratmakatāt sarvaprāṇibhṛto bhūtasabdenocyante* | See *Sarvatobhadra* commentary upon BG 2.29.

- 12 *sa yathārdraidhāgner abhyāhitāt pr̥thag dhūmā viniścaranty asya mahato bhūtasya niśvasitam etad...* (BĀU II.4.10).
- 13 *.... evaṃ vā are idaṃ mahadbhūtam anantam apāraṃ vijñānaghana eva | etebhyo bhūtebhyah samutthāya tāny evānu vinasyati* | (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka* II.4.12).
- 14 *yathorṇanābhīḥ srjate gr̥hṇate ca, yathā pr̥thivyām ośadhayaḥ sambhavanti* | *Yathā sataḥ puruṣāt keśalomāni, tathākṣarāt sambhavatīha viśvam* || *Muṇḍaka* I.1.7.
- 15 For Bhartṛhari's understanding of *śakti*, see [Timalsina \(2013\)](#).
- 16 For discussion, one can read the *Bhagavadgītā* commentaries on Ch. II, verse 28. And the reading of *avyakta* as *prakṛti* mirrors the ways these two categories are introduced by Īśvarakṛṣṇa (*Sāṅkhyakārikā*, verse 2).
- 17 *sarvo hi vikāra ātmamātreṭi keṣāñcid darśanam | sa tu pratipuruṣam antaḥ sanniviṣṭo bāhya iva pratyavabhāsate | rūḍhatvāc ca vyavahāramātram idaṃ antar bahir iti | na hy etad ekatve'mūrtattve vā sambhavati | apareṣāṃ sarvaprabodharūpaḥ sarvaprabhedarūpaś caikasya citikriyātattvasyāyaṃ pariṇāma ityādi svamātrāvādināṃ darśanam | caitanyaṃ bhūtayonis tilakṣodarasavat pravibhajyata ity eke | anye tv āhuḥ | tad yathā mahato'gner visphulingāḥ sūkṣmād vāyor abhraghanās candrakāntād vibhāginyas toyadhārāḥ pṛthivyā vā sālādayo nyagrodhadhānādibhyo vā sāvarohaprasavā nyagrodhā ity evamādi paramātrāvādināṃ darśanam | svaparamātrāvādināṃ darśanaṃ vidyābhāṣyebhyaḥ pratipattavyam* | *Vākyapadīya*, Vṛtti upon *Brahmakāṇḍa*, verse 128. [Sharma \(1963\)](#) edition.
- 18 *yo'sau puruṣas tad eva tat, tenātmatvena pariṇamitatvāt taddravyatvād bhūmyabādibrīhitvatat tatkāryatvāt paṭatantuvat, tena vinābhūtatvāt tadvyatirekenābhāvāt taddeśatvāc ca ghaṭasvatattvapratyagrādītuvat* | *DNC*, 185:3–186:1.
- 19 For example, 'We are accustomed to refer all individuals in nature to one genus which is called the most general, that is, to the notion of Being, which embraces absolutely all the individuals in nature'. Spinoza. *Ethics* IV pref., II: 1985, 207.
- 20 *saṅghātaparāthratvāt...* *Sāṅkhyakārikā* 17.
- 21 For categories such as panexperientialism or pancognitivism, see [Goff et al. \(2022\)](#).
- 22 For the theology of Rāmānuja and the issue of the world as God's body, one can consult the works of [Lipner \(1984\)](#), [Barua \(2010\)](#), and [Alduri \(2012\)](#).