



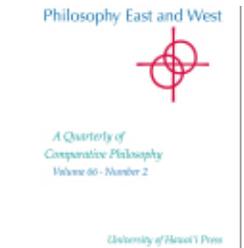
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KAŚMIR TO PRUSSIA, ROUND TRIP: MONISTIC ŚAIVISM AND HEGEL



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We offer obeisances to Lord Śiva, guru of knowledge, lord of the dance, who purifies by the very utterance of his name, who transcends all dualities. May he grant us permission to argue with his devotees. May he also give us his blessings to convince them.

Properly speaking, comparative philosophy does not lead toward the creation of a synthesis of philosophical traditions (as in world philosophy). What is being created is not a new theory but a different sort of philosopher. The goal of comparative philosophy is learning a new language, a new way of talking. The comparative philosopher does not so much inhabit both of the standpoints represented by the traditions from which he draws as he comes to inhabit an emerging standpoint different from them all and which is thereby creatively a new way of seeing the human condition.¹

The first two sections of this essay, “Crazy Enough” and “The Sine of Śiva,” present the chief doctrines of monistic Kaśmiri Śaivism and then elucidate them through comparisons to contemporary science. The next section, “Śaivism in Prussia,” shows that Śaivism can be transposed into Fichte’s philosophy and so set on a trajectory toward Hegel. “Points of Tangency” discusses some crucial similarities and differences between Śaivism and Hegel, and finally, “Hegel in Kaśmir” urges that, while Śaivism reaches Prussia, the conceptual resources to articulate Hegel’s Absolute are in Kaśmir.

Crazy Enough?

We are all agreed that your theory is crazy. The question that divides us is whether it is crazy enough to have a chance of being correct. My own feeling is that it is not crazy enough.²

During the ninth to twelfth centuries in Kaśmir, India's northernmost state, interconnected lineages are devoted to Śiva. Some are dualist, claiming that Śiva and the universe are individually distinct. Others primarily emphasize Śakti, Śiva's consort. Still others are monistic, believing that everything is Śiva and that Śakti is his power manifested.³ This essay focuses on monistic Kaśmiri Śaivism and the Recognition Doctrine (*Pratyabhijñā*), articulated by Somānanda (ca. 875–925), Uṭpaladeva (ca. 900–950), and Abhinavagupta (ca. 950–1020).

Whereas the unqualified nondualism (Advaita Vedānta) of Śaṅkara (ca. 788–820) maintains that Brahman alone is real and that the universe is unreal, monistic Kaśmiri Śaivism insists that the universe is real because it is the manifestation of Śiva's power (Śakti). Śaṅkara further asserts that Brahman is wholly inactive (*niṣkriyā*) and motionless (*acalā*), while Śaivism claims that Śiva, through his Śakti, is active (*kriyā*). Śiva's power is identical, moreover, to its manifestation. Although there is only Śiva, there is a continual, dynamic, and energetic pulsation within Śiva. More precisely, Śiva is this pulsation, which eternally generates and destroys the universe. Although finite individuals may initially experience themselves as distinct, they really are the pulsations generated by Śiva and these pulsations are Śiva. Everything is ultimately Śiva.

This can initially be explicated by turning to an analysis of the "oriental despot." Almost ninety years ago, K. W. Buckler observed:

The Eastern King . . . stands for a system of rule of which he is the incarnation, incorporating into his own body, by means of certain symbolical acts, the persons of those who share his rule. They are regarded as being parts of his body, *membra corporis regis*, and in their district or sphere of activity, they are the King himself—not servants of the King but 'friends' or *members* of the King, just as the eye is the *man* in the function of sight, and the ear in the realm of hearing.⁴

As a first approximation, then, everything is Śiva in that all things are his members, and so they signify and represent him.

However, the identity of Śiva and the universe is even more intimate than this. According to the Śaiva metaphysics of causation, an effect must already exist in, or pre-exist, its cause (*satkāryavāda*).⁵ Everything is Śiva, Śaivism further urges, as every piece of gold is fully gold; a piece of gold is itself gold, not a part, member, or aspect of gold. Hence, "Śiva" functions as the name of a natural kind.⁶ Issues regarding the unity of a kind and about how many kinds exist are usually distinct from issues concerning ontological unity. They coincide in Śaivism, however, because it holds that there is only one kind: Śiva.

The name "Supreme" (Anuttara) is sometimes used when referring to Śiva in the moment of his unmanifest singularity, which encompasses Śiva, Śakti, and all of Śiva's manifestations. This moment is logical, not chronological, as Śiva is always

manifesting himself. Śiva is inseparable from his Śakti, his power of manifestation. His pulsation and manifestation are necessary. This process is analogous to a non-linear recurrence relation, whose outputs are necessary but cannot be predicted in advance of their generation. Śiva's manifestation happens through emanation. Anuttara initially emanates Śakti—while still remaining Anuttara. Anuttara is unaffected by the emanation of Śakti. One divides into two. Unlike most divisions, where the one that is divided into two becomes one-half of what it was, this One is unaffected by the division. Even if the infinite set of natural numbers is divided into two—the sets of even and odd numbers—although each set is infinite, there now are two sets where there had been one. The closest mathematical approximation to Anuttara would be the absolute infinite, introduced by Georg Cantor (1845–1918), an infinity that transcends the transfinite numbers.

A series of emanations proceeds from Śakti, each member of the series emanating from its predecessor, until the universe becomes manifest in a recognizable form. Beginning with the emanation called “Māyā Śakti,” the knowledge that the emanation is Śiva becomes veiled and must be regained.⁷ Māyā is not illusion for Śaivism, as it is for Advaita Vedānta, but rather Śiva's creative power by which he hides himself. Since everything is Śiva, he hides only from himself. (Why does Śiva eternally hide from himself, it may be asked parenthetically, manifesting himself as the universe but allowing [supposed] parts of the universe, finite consciousnesses, to be initially ignorant that they are Śiva, only later to recognize that identity? Hide-and-seek is Śiva's play [*krīḍā*], his game, what he does. This just is how Śiva manifests himself.) While the perspective that one is separate from or other than Śiva is an error, Śaivism holds that this error is a partial truth that must be made whole. Unlike Neoplatonism's doctrine of emanation—where all of the emanations are less than the One and each succeeding emanation is less real, pure, perfect, and divine than its predecessor—each of Śiva's emanations is fully Śiva.

Each person's ultimate goal is, for Śaivism, to become free from the cycle of reincarnation through recognizing one's identity with Śiva, experiencing directly that “I am Śiva.” “And devotion of the highest sort (*parābhakti*),” Mark S. G. Dyczkowski notes, “is itself the unifying penetration (*samāveśa*) into the Godhead.”⁸ Recognizing that “I am Śiva” does not mean that multiplicity is lost. Rather, it is seen as Śiva's manifestation—and so as “my own” manifestation. “To free oneself is not to get rid of the phenomenal multiplicity, but to gain access to a state of consciousness where objectivity still appears, but as the product of this constant and infinite creativity of consciousness,” Isabelle Ratié explains, “and where subjectivity still appears, but as the source of universal creativity, and not as the limited individuality which I ordinarily attribute to myself: to free oneself is to recognize oneself as the universal Self endowed with this infinite power (*śakti*) which is inseparably knowledge and action.”⁹ Individuals who have recognized their identity with Śiva thereby effectively cease to be as finite individuals, in a sense, as they are now Śiva (who they always were) and not the finite individuals they believed themselves to be. Finite individuals still continue, in another sense, as they now realize that, as individuals, they are merely one narrow frequency of an infinite spectrum. Identification is with the entire

spectrum, not a frequency. Because a frequency still exists after identification with the spectrum occurs, it is better to regard individuals as expanding their sense of identity until reaching Śiva, thereby discovering their true self, rather than as being obliterated.

Śaivism would accept panpsychism, according to which consciousness—or, more cautiously, mindedness—is a property of matter. Śaivism maintains, moreover, that matter's essential property is consciousness (*cit*). Śiva is wholly consciousness, as is his manifestation as the universe. Everything is consciousness. However, Śiva's consciousness is nonintentional. It has no object of consciousness, it is not conscious of anything. An imperfect example of this would occur if persons could experience, say, joy or bliss, where they were conscious solely of bliss but were not blissful about anything. Śiva's consciousness is omniscient but simultaneously nonconceptual, nonintentional, and nonrepresentational. Śiva understands nothing, thinks about nothing, has representations of nothing. Śiva's lack of physical and conceptual boundaries leads to Śaivism's compatibility with the extended-mind thesis in contemporary philosophy of mind. This thesis states that an individual's mind can extend beyond an individual's physical body.¹⁰ Śaivism substantially extends this. While the extended mind thesis still maintains a distinction between mind and body, Śaivism ultimately finds no difference in them. All things share—indeed, all things are—a single nonintentional consciousness: Śiva.

What is at stake in Śaivism's contention that Śiva is consciousness? Even if all things are Śiva's manifestation, why insist that everything is consciousness? One might wonder, after all, how a nonintentional consciousness differs from insentience. Whereas Śaṅkara's Brahman is wholly static, Śaivism would respond, Śiva is entirely active. He is an eternal pulsation of energy, always productive, creative, and alive, continually manifesting himself, even when he hides himself (from himself). Consciousness most aptly describes this, not insentience, not (what initially appears to be) lifeless and inert matter.

The Sine of Śiva

The idea that an individual can find God is terribly self-centered. It is like a wave thinking it can find the sea.¹¹

"Since the human understanding has wandered over countless subjects in various ways through many centuries," Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) writes, "it can hardly fail that for anything new something old should be found that has some similarity with it."¹² Although the scholars about whom Kant complains use this as an excuse to dismiss the new, it can instead function as the first step of comprehension. Comparing the new with the old can elucidate the new. The converse also holds: it can hardly fail that, for anything old, something new should be found that has some similarity with it. Contrasting the old (which is initially strange) in terms of the new (which is initially familiar) can elucidate the old. What seemed too bizarre to merit attention can then be recognized as crucially relevant.

A sine wave is a useful model to explicate monistic Kāśmiri Śaivism. As a first approximation, Śiva could be thought of as an agitator immersed in a liquid. The agitator pulsates at a constant rate. Its pulsations create waves in the liquid. As these stabilize and their interference patterns positively augment each other, the universe is generated. What appear as things, objects, and matter, as well as time and space, actually are these waves, vibrating at different frequencies. The universe dissolves as the waves become unstable and negatively interfere. When the waves wholly cancel each other, so that the universe no longer exists, the waves still are present, albeit in a state of complete mutual cancellation. The disadvantage of this model is that it presupposes a fundamental dualism by postulating two substances—a central agitator and a medium in which waves are propagated—and so implies that things and persons are at best similar, but not identical, to Śiva.

A better model would be a physical system that contained only a pulsar: a neutron star rotating around its own axis and emitting a beam of energy. The pulsar itself would be energy, following the special relativity theory of Albert Einstein (1879–1955) that mass is equivalent to energy: $m = e/c^2$ (where m stands for a physical system's relativistic mass, e for that system's total energy, and c^2 the speed of light squared). Mass and energy are a physical system's properties. So are time and space, spacetime, and gravity. Einstein dispenses with a medium, such as ether, to propagate waves. This provides a monistic model that approximates Śaivism. Each person's ultimate goal would be, in this model, to recognize one's identity with the universe, to experience directly that "I am the physical system."

Śiva is immanent in the universe, according to the pantheism of Somānanda, and so is identical to Śakti. He is identical to his manifestation as the universe. Pierre Macherey's interpretation of Spinoza's substance would apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to Somānanda's Śaivism:

Substance does not precede its modes or lie behind their apparent reality, as a metaphysical foundation or a rational condition, but, in its absolute immanence, it is nothing other than the act of expressing itself immediately in all its modes, an act that is not itself determined through the relations of modes to each other but that is to the contrary their effective cause. There is therefore nothing more, nothing less either, in substance than in its affections: it is that which expresses the immediate identity between the unity of nature and the infinite multiplicity of being that constitutes it without "composing" it, and it is irreducible to the formal principle of an order.¹³

Somānanda would dispense with a pulsar emitting energy waves, to return to the model above. Instead, the waves would propagate themselves, as in a massive scalar field, a field where a real number value is associated with every point in space.¹⁴ Such a field would self-gravitate, would attract itself to itself, and so evolve over time. Śiva would be identical to the waves and the waves would be inseparable from their movement, just as Śiva and Śakti (his power) are inseparable.

Śiva transcends the universe, according to the panentheism of Utpaladeva and Abhinavagupta, and so exceeds Śakti.¹⁵ The universe goes through pulses, eternal cycles of creation, dissolution, and re-creation. These cycles are the external

manifestation of Śiva's internal pulsating energy. Although the energy waves are emanations of the pulsar, its existence is independent of them. Utpaladeva and Abhinavagupta believe that Śiva is both the waves and the pulsar that transcends them. Somānanda, Utpaladeva, and Abhinavagupta agree that the universe is Śiva's manifestation. They further agree that Śiva is the material and efficient cause of everything, and so all agency is finally Śiva's. A potter, for example, does not make the pot. Śiva—who is the potter, the clay, the wheel, the kiln, the kiln's fire—makes the pot. And the pot is also Śiva. Yet, there is a decisive difference between the pantheism of Somānanda and the panentheism of Utpaladeva and Abhinavagupta. Suppose that Śiva's Śakti no longer existed, *per impossible*, so that Śiva had no manifestation. In Somānanda's pantheism, Śiva also would not exist. In Utpaladeva and Abhinavagupta's panentheism, by contrast, he would be wholly unaffected.¹⁶

Initially, it appears that the sine-wave model has limitations. As a rational reconstruction of Śaivism, it suggests that Śiva's manifestation as the universe is a mechanical and determinist process. The pulsar eternally radiates energy waves, which positively or negatively interfere with each other, resulting in the universe's creation and dissolution. This is in deep tension with alternative descriptions of Śiva as having intentions and positing the universe into existence as a yogi can conjure things into existence. The universe becomes manifest when Śiva opens his eyes (*unmeṣa*), it is said, and is unmanifest when he closes them (*nimeṣa*). Śaivism asserts that Śiva is omniscient and omnipotent, and is consciousness. It also insists that he has free will. If these descriptions are emphasized, Śaivism is a theism. At the level of experience and devotion, the theistic description is primary.

At the philosophical level, however, the sine-wave model is primary. The model's limitations are intractable. Śiva's consciousness is nonintentional, as discussed in the next paragraphs, and this is incompatible with a theistic description. In the Śaiva texts, moreover, nonintentionality receives comparatively greater emphasis than does theism. Although these texts present the theistic description as literal, these passages should be interpreted metaphorically.¹⁷

Intentionality is a requisite for purposeful action, even if intentionality need not require conscious awareness, and so the theistic description—according to which Śiva posits the universe as a yogi conjures objects into existence—cannot be maintained. This is not to deny that Śiva could perform nonintentional actions or even have nonintentional intentions. Such claims, however, cannot be coherently *thought*, as Śaivism itself recognizes, and so philosophy cannot follow this path. If Śaivism can proceed further, philosophy can see neither it nor the path it follows. In the terms of contemporary cosmology, Śaivism would be beyond philosophy's event horizon.

Hence, although Śaivism says that Śiva manifests the universe through his free will, this should be interpreted as meaning that Śiva manifests without anything external to him impeding or hindering his manifestation. This is so because there is nothing external to Śiva. Śiva is said to be omnipotent. Śiva's manifestation occurs without any impediment. His Śakti is necessary; that and how Śiva's manifestation occurs are necessary. Since his consciousness is nonintentional, Śiva could not have willed that his manifestation be different. Śiva is also said to be omniscient. He knows

everything, since everything is Śiva and Śiva is consciousness. Paradoxically, as Śiva's consciousness is nonintentional, he doesn't know anything. Hence, Śiva does not know himself or the relation between himself and Śakti (that is, between himself and his manifestation as the universe). It is only from the standpoint of finite consciousness that these can be discerned.

Śiva is consciousness, as discussed above, and everything is consciousness. Nothing is other than Śiva, although (most of) the universe is other than the consciousness of finite individuals. Hence, Śaivism is a metaphysical idealism. Nicholas Rescher writes:

Metaphysical idealism is the philosophical position that reality is somehow mind-correlative or mind-coordinated—that the real objects comprising the “external world” are not independent of cognizing minds, but have an existence correlative to mental operations. The doctrine centers on the conception that reality as such reflects the workings of mind. And it construes this as meaning that the inquiring mind itself makes a formative contribution not merely to our understanding of the nature of the real but even to the resulting character we attribute to it.¹⁸

Although there is a world that is external to the consciousness of finite individuals, it is not external to—but rather is—Śiva's consciousness. Rescher distinguishes causal idealism and supervenience idealism. Causal idealism maintains that “everything there is, apart from minds themselves, arises causally from the operations of minds,” and supervenience idealism claims that “everything there is, apart from minds themselves, is supervenient upon the operations of minds.”¹⁹ Śaivism's position is stronger than these. It would add that there is nothing apart from Śiva's consciousness and that the relation between Śiva and the universe is constitutive, not merely causal or supervenient. “Perhaps the most radical form of idealism is the ancient Oriental spiritualistic or panpsychistic idea—renewed by Christian Science—that minds and their thoughts are all there is; that reality is simply the sum total of the visions (or dreams?) of one or more minds,” Rescher suggests, adding that “Berkeley's immaterialism is a position much along these lines.”²⁰ This formulation is closest to Śaivism, but Śaivism is not an immaterialism.

Śaivism contains relevant similarities to the idealism of George Berkeley (1685–1753). Berkeley argues that nothing is mind independent and, further, that nothing is alien to consciousness, a standpoint fervently upheld by Śaivism. There is, nevertheless, a divergence. Berkeley is an immaterialist. He denies that there are material things, insisting rather that what are believed to be material things are only ideas of minds. Śaivism would not agree with this, even if it were further stipulated that material things as well as minds are ideas in Śiva's consciousness. Why not? Perhaps against his intentions, Berkeley supports a form of dualism, not between matter and mind, but between minds and ideas. Minds have ideas and ideas are in minds, according to Berkeley, but neither is reducible to the other. Śaivism advocates a substance monism, which maintains that the universe contains only one kind of stuff or entity. Śaivism further insists that material things, minds, and ideas are Śiva's manifestations, his consciousness; they are Śiva.²¹ “The Pratyabhijñā philosophy does not

escape what seems to be the fate of every idealism—that of having to pay the meta-physical price of solipsism,” Ratié writes; “according to Utpaladeva and Abhinavagupta, ultimately there exists only one single universal subject.”²² This is not precise. Solipsism is the fate, not of every idealism—as an idealism could posit an irreducible multiplicity of consciousnesses—but rather of every monism that asserts that there is only one subject, even if it manifests the universe.

“Precisely what physics has taught us is that matter in the sense of extended stuff is an emergent phenomenon that has no counterpart in fundamental ontology,” the authors of *Every Thing Must Go* announce.²³ In classical and relativistic physics, mass and energy are a physical system’s properties. In relativistic physics, either matter or fields are regarded as that which has or bears those properties.²⁴ Mass and energy are the same property, Einstein and Leopold Infeld (1898–1968) argue, and their apparent distinction results from the ways this property is measured.²⁵ Because matter and fields both have mass and energy, which Einstein and Infeld claim are the same property, it is impossible to distinguish between matter and fields. Einstein and Infeld maintain that a physics could be constructed using only fields, and they further suggest that fields are fundamental. Claiming that fields are fundamental presupposes that there is a distinction between matter and fields, however, and Einstein and Infeld deny this. Elie Zahar urges that what is fundamental is an “I-know-not-what” that manifests itself as either mass or energy.²⁶ This “I-know-not-what,” Śaivism would add, is consciousness—Śiva’s consciousness. Śaivism claims that nothing is external to consciousness, to be sure. The point is that nothing is external to Śiva’s consciousness, though, not that nothing is external to the consciousness of a finite individual. There is a sense in which nothing is external to a finite individual’s consciousness, of course, but only insofar as that individual overcomes finitude, recognizing that what appeared to be a finite individual is actually Śiva’s manifestation, and so is Śiva.

Śaivism in Prussia

Would it be too Spenglerian to suggest that in Abhinava we have found the Indian counterpart to Hegelian thought? Not only is the supreme principle a notion of reflexive (self-objectifying) consciousness, but Abhinava’s Sanskrit is at least as German as Hegel’s German is Sanskrit. . . .²⁷

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831) claims that no philosophy is external to his system. What initially appear to be alternative philosophies are actually moments of the Hegelian system, one-sided expressions of the full truth that misunderstand themselves as that truth. This contradiction, between what a philosophy believes itself to be and what it actually is, causes it to fail by its own criteria of success and so engenders a successor philosophy. Unsurprisingly, Hegelians will say that this holds for Kaśmiri Śaivism. They will charge that Śaivism cannot articulate a difference, although it asserts one, between Śiva (Anuttara) as the absolute fullness of being and the complete lack of being. Hegelians will further accuse Śaivism of being unable to maintain a distinction between complete nonconceptual consciousness and the

absence of consciousness. Finally, Hegelians will allege that the difference between things is merely modal, despite Śaivism's intentions, as everything is Śiva's manifestation. Difference is reduced to identity—and so to nothing.

The correctness of these indictments is even evidenced historically, as some Śaivas insist that Śiva is Non-being (*abhāva*). "Although not a well known doctrine and not, it seems, extensively elaborated in Śaiva circles," Dyczkowski observes, "Non-being has at times figured as the supreme principle identified with the Emptiness (*śūnya*) of indeterminate consciousness."²⁸ It is significant that one of Śaivism's crucial metaphors to describe Anuttara is uncreated pure light (*prakāśa*). Hegel writes:

The common practice is to *imagine* being, as if it were a picture of pure light, the clarity of unclouded seeing, and then nothing as the pure night—and the distinction between the two is then enshrined into this well-known sensuous difference. But in fact, if this very seeing is more accurately imagined, one can readily perceive that in absolute light one sees just as much and just as little as in absolute darkness; that the one seeing is just as good as the other; that pure seeing is a seeing of nothing. Pure light and pure darkness are two voids that amount to the same thing. Only in determinate light (and light is determined through darkness: in clouded light therefore), just as only in determinate darkness (and darkness is determined through light: in illuminated darkness therefore), can something be distinguished, since only clouded light and illuminated darkness have distinction in them and hence are determinate being, *existence*.²⁹

When inserted into Hegel's system, Śaivism enacts the fundamental moment in his *Logic*. Being, as the most general concept, cannot be distinguished from Nothing. A distinction between Being and Nothing is *meant* but it cannot be *said*. The continued attempt to articulate a distinction initiates an oscillation between Being and Nothing that gives rise to the concept of Becoming. Since Becoming requires something that becomes, Determinate Being arises. And so it continues for several hundred pages, until the Absolute Idea is finally articulated. Hegelians can concede that Śaivism has the honor of instantiating the beginning of Hegel's system, but, they would add, Śaivism is almost wholly conceptually impoverished.

As sublations go, this one is quick—and significant! For most of his life, Hegel asserted that there is no genuine philosophy in India. Having reached this conclusion, he still continues to read extensively about India. He eventually acknowledges that there is genuine philosophy in India, but he insists that philosophy begins in the West, in ancient Greece.³⁰ If Śaivism can inaugurate Hegel's system, however, then philosophy also begins in India.

Another sublation is possible, though, one that is more subtle, mediate, and, hopefully, interesting. The strategy will be to argue that Kāśmiri Śaivism can be transposed into the philosophy of Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762–1814). Having done this, Śaivism then enters a dialectic that departs from Fichte, moves to Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling (1775–1854), and finally reaches Hegel.³¹

Fichte claims that the I (consciousness) necessarily posits the not-I (matter). This positing is necessary because the I must have something against which it limits and

checks (*Anstoß*) itself. Were there to be no check, the I would infinitely expand and dissipate. Hence, although the I has conceptual priority, the I has always already posited the not-I. The not-I is not other than or alien from the I, ultimately, because the not-I actually is the I in its posited moment. Fichte maintains that matter can be explained if consciousness is presupposed (idealism). Matter exists because it is posited by consciousness. He denies that consciousness can be explained if matter is presupposed (Fichte refers to the philosophy that presupposes matter as “dogmatism”; less pejoratively, it is “materialism”). He asserts this because he agrees with Kant that matter is inherently inert. Kant accepts the inertia principle of Isaac Newton (1643–1727), according to which an object’s state of motion alters only through contact with an external force. Thus, Kant concludes that matter is “lifeless.”³²

Based only on this cursory description of Fichte’s philosophy, it will be apparent that there are substantial differences between it and Kāśmiri Śaivism. Śaivism maintains that Śiva manifests the universe and that both are consciousness. Fichte claims that the I posits matter, but that only the I is consciousness. Nevertheless, there are significant correspondences. It is arguable that there is no distinction, per se, between Śaivism’s manifestation and Fichte’s positing. Moreover, manifestation and positing necessarily occur.³³ Śiva and the I are each a nonintentional consciousness and so there may be no distinction there, either.

Schelling has an initial objection to Fichte’s philosophy. Schelling argues that there is no reason to privilege the I over the not-I. This is so because the I necessarily posits the not-I; indeed, the I eternally becomes the I in the moment of positing the not-I. Each is mutually dependent on the other. Later, Schelling is also impressed with experiments involving magnetism and electricity, experiments that suggested that matter is inherently energetic, and so he adopts a panpsychism. This allows him to claim that consciousness can be explained if matter is presupposed because matter itself is enminded. Consciousness is the result of the complexity in the arrangement of matter.³⁴ The Absolute is the indifference point that is prior to all distinctions, including that between subject and object, and everything emerges from it. It cannot be comprehended conceptually, although it can be experienced nonconceptually in art.

Utpaladeva and Abhinavagupta insist that Śiva transcends his manifestation. Somānanda could respond by noting that they agree that Śiva necessarily manifests himself. Somānanda could further urge that it is not clear in what Śiva’s transcendence consists. He could say that the claim that Śiva is transcendence is an unsupported assertion. He could then conclude that Śiva’s manifestation is Śiva, without remainder. Because Śiva necessarily manifests himself, there is no reason to privilege Śiva over his manifestation. If there is still a moment of transcendence in Somānanda’s Śaivism, it is that he believes that, although discrete instances of Śiva’s manifestation are comprehensible, Śiva—as a totality—is not. If Utpaladeva and Abhinavagupta correspond to Fichte, Somānanda plays Schelling. The chronological development is from Somānanda to Utpaladeva and Abhinavagupta. When Utpaladeva and Abhinavagupta are transposed into Fichte and Somānanda into Schelling,

however, then Somānanda's pantheism represents a development beyond Utpala-deva and Abhinavagupta's panentheism.

Hegel takes his leave of Schelling because of the Absolute. To simplify to the extreme, Hegel insists that persons be able to say what they mean. As Frederick C. Beiser notes, "what Kant claimed reason could not know—the absolute or unconditioned—Schelling wrote volumes about."³⁵ Schelling means to refer to the Absolute and he means to say something meaningful about it, but, Hegel protests, he is unable to do so because Schelling's Absolute is wholly nonconceptual; it is a moment of identity that excludes all difference. Even though Schelling asserts that the Absolute can be nonconceptually experienced in art, persons are unable to determine whether a current experience of the Absolute is the same experience as one previously had, to communicate what they have experienced, or to know whether anyone else has experienced it.³⁶ Hegel complains:

Dealing with something from the perspective of the Absolute consists merely in declaring that, although one has been speaking of it just now as something definite, yet in the Absolute, the $A = A$, there is nothing of the kind, for there all is one. To pit this single insight, that in the Absolute everything is the same, against the full body of articulated cognitions, which at least seeks and demands such fulfillment, to palm off its Absolute as the night in which, as the saying goes, all cows are black—this is cognition naïvely reduced to vacuity.³⁷

By "the Absolute," Schelling means Being in the profoundest and most complete sense, but—to return to a point made above—what he says is indistinguishable from Nothing. Moreover, as Śaivism can discern the relation between Śiva and Śakti solely from the standpoint of finite consciousness, it is only from the standpoint of human consciousness that anything can be thought or said about the Absolute. From the perspective of Śiva and Schelling's Absolute, if it is permissible to speak of "perspective" in this context, there is only an eternal darkness that is not even an absence of light.

Hegel's Absolute, by contrast, is "the full body of articulated cognitions," and it is most fully experienced and grasped through philosophy, not art. It is not prior to all distinctions but instead is a result of their conceptual articulation. As a first approximation, the Absolute is a narrative—better, a conversation—that develops historically, discerning the relations between nature and culture, articulating their significance, and explaining—to use the phrase of Wilfrid Stalker Sellars (1912–1989)—"how things in the broadest possible sense of the term hang together in the broadest possible sense of the term."³⁸ There can be only one conversation, Hegel maintains, and so his Absolute is a monism. Were there two conversations, their relations would then be discerned, and so there would be one. This conversation is a metaphysics, moreover. Whereas Schelling would say that the universe is the Absolute's manifestation, Hegel effectively reverses this. If the universe is the totality of articulated cognitions, rather than the universe being the Absolute's manifestation, the Absolute is the universe's manifestation.

Points of Tangency

God is the tangential point between zero and infinity.³⁹

This section briefly discusses several points of contact and areas of divergence between the philosophies of Kaśmiri Śaivism and Hegel.

In his discussion of other Śaiva lineages, Abhinavagupta engages in a process of what Alexis Sanderson refers to as “overcoding.”⁴⁰ That is, Abhinavagupta does not present them as alternatives to his version of Pratyabhijñā. Rather, he attempts to encompass or assimilate them and so arrives at a synthesis whereby they are regarded as components of that larger whole. Mistaken beliefs are not wholly erroneous but are instead one-sided and inadequate expressions of the complete truth. Hegel shares this approach to error, sublating other philosophies. The chief difference is that, whereas Abhinavagupta incorporates other lineages into Pratyabhijñā by interpreting them metaphorically and analogically, Hegel engages in a process of internal criticism. He argues that other philosophies fail according to their own criteria of success, engendering successor philosophies that address these limitations but then, too, subsequently fail. He claims that this process can be viewed, in retrospect, as culminating in his own philosophy.

Śaivism and Hegel each emphasize the importance of recognition but their interpretations of this are significantly different. As discussed above, recognition is primarily a theological phenomenon for Śaivism, occurring when an individual realizes that “I am Śiva.” For Hegel, recognition (*Anerkennung*) is social. Persons are embedded in a network of other persons. Who they are and what rights and duties they have are consequences of being recognized as such by others.⁴¹

As noted above, Śaivism accepts the extended-mind thesis. So does Hegel.⁴² Again, though, they significantly differ on how they interpret it. The former urges that the universe and all of its particulars, as manifestations of Śiva’s consciousness, are consciousness. Complementing his views on social recognition, Hegel claims that potentially all of humanity constitutes an extended mind. While this extended mind would achieve consensus about some matters, it would contain dissensus and so would further extend the picture of the scientific community found in Edwin Hutchins’s *Cognition in the Wild*, Karin Knorr Cetina’s *Epistemic Cultures*, and Lynn Hankinson Nelson’s *Who Knows*.⁴³

Śaivism and Hegel each accept monism. Śaivism is a solipsism, as Ratié observes, because it holds that Śiva is the sole universal subject. Finite minds are real but they are Śiva’s manifestations. Even though Hegel’s Absolute is one universal subject, his philosophy is not a solipsism because the One is never one.

Beginning with an individual’s most elementary and immediate experience of subjective awareness (*prakāśa*), Śaivas argue that all objects are objects as experienced, and so there is nothing external to consciousness. They further urge that experience is essentially recognitive (*vimarśa*). The recognition that a thing has previously been experienced as a constitutive aspect of the experience of that thing, and so even the most immediate experience, is recognitive.⁴⁴ Because everything is Śiva,

all experience is ultimately Śiva's own self-recognition. These Śaiva doctrines could be usefully contrasted with Hegel's account of the emergence of consciousness, self-consciousness, and the absolute in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, the categories in his *Science of Logic*, and religions in his *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*. One main difference between Śaivism and Hegel would be that the latter believes that their emergences are humanity's collective historical achievement.

Utpaladeva and Abhinavagupta identify self-recognition with the principle of supreme speech (*parāvāk*) of Bhartṛhari (ca. 450–510), according to which language ultimately refers to Brahman. Śaivism takes the phonemes of the Sanskrit alphabet to be language's fundamental units. Phonemes are nonintentional, without any content, conveying no information. Although phonemes have no semantic or pragmatic meaning, Śaivism regards them as containing all meanings. As such, phonemes are that aspect of language that most approximates Śiva's own consciousness.⁴⁵ As discussed above, the goal of Śaivism is to realize one's identity with Śiva, to experience directly that "I am Śiva," and so to recognize one's identity with Śiva. One method to achieve this recognition is by chanting a mantra—or, better yet, by silently thinking it—concentrating solely on the mantra's phonemes and ignoring its meaning. In this way, Śaivism believes, an individual's consciousness can become identical with Śiva's.

Śaivism maintains that the Śiva transcends thought. By contrast, Hegel insists that the Absolute is fully comprehensible. He would vehemently reject Śaivism's recommendation that individuals concentrate on the phonemes of mantras. Rather than chanting, he would say, persons should study philosophy. Nevertheless, there is a crucial point at which the views of Śaivism and Hegel touch. The phonemes of a Śaiva mantra are sounds without determinate meaning. So are the words of Hegel's mechanical memory.⁴⁶

He distinguishes between retentive memory (which recollects names), reproductive memory (which can manipulate and combine items remembered), and mechanical memory (the content of which is meaningless).⁴⁷ Hegel further distinguishes between "representational names" and "names as such." A representational name can denote a particular thing, a universal, or an attribute. Representational names are public, not personal or idiosyncratic; in the fullest sense, they are signs, entirely arbitrary designators. Representational names acquire their meaning in a linguistic community, specifically that of experts. In contrast, names as such are representational names that, in mechanical memory, are stripped of their meaning. A representational name can lose its meaning by incessantly repeating it, for instance, and children can memorize poems they do not comprehend.⁴⁸ A name as such is a sound with no referent; it is a homophone of the representational name from which it is derived. "It is in names that we *think*," Hegel believes.⁴⁹ Hence, thought both needs and can transcend language. Thought first must have representational names. These can be stripped of their meaning to create names as such. Thought then pours its own conceptual content into names as such. This content is itself generated by thinking only with names as such. Initially meaningless names as such function as "markers" that can abbreviate or expand other meaningless names as such. In this

way, names as such acquire meaning by abbreviating or expanding other names as such.

Hegel in Kaśmir

Eventually, all things merge into one, and a river runs through it.⁵⁰

Kaśmiri Śaivism represents a conceptual advance beyond Śaṅkara's Advaita Vedānta. It is not only an illusion that the universe is real; if only Brahman is real, that illusion is also an illusion. For Śaivism, the One—Anuttara, Śiva prior to the emanation of Śakti—divides into two. Through emanation, Śiva manifests himself as the plurality and multiplicity that is the universe. Although this is identity (Anuttara) and difference (the universe), identity is privileged. Identity emanates difference; they are not mutually co-determining. The universe is Śiva's manifestation, yet Śiva remains unaffected by and unaware of the universe. The Śaiva's goal is to recognize and directly experience that "I am Śiva." The focus is on the ineffable Anuttara, however, not the universe's multiplicity. It is symptomatic that Śaivism is wholly uninterested in investigating the universe. Indeed, that would be a distraction from recognizing that "I am Śiva."

Hegel's absolute, by contrast, is the identity of identity and difference. There is an obvious sense in which the *identity* of identity and difference also privileges identity. Here, though, identity is not the reduction of difference to sameness. Instead, identity is the comprehension of how things hang together *and* how things are what they are as a result of how they hang together. Hegel stands between analytic philosophy and structuralism. Analytic philosophy, in its heroic moment, maintains that to completely understand a thing is to analyze it into its constituent and simple parts, where a simple part has a positive identity. Structuralism claims that things have no positive identity. As a point on a grid is that specific point because it is not any other point, for structuralism a thing's identity is wholly negative; it is not any other thing. A full understanding of a thing is to specify its relations to all other things. (Poststructuralism adds that a complete specification is impossible.) Analytic philosophy privileges simples; structuralism structures. By contrast, a thing is what it is as a result of the system of relations in which it is embedded, for Hegel, and that system is the system it is because of the things that constitute it. Comprehending both aspects together, in a unitary field of inquiry, is the identity of identity and difference.

It was shown above that Śaivism can be inserted into a trajectory that leads to Hegel. When it reaches Hegel, not only has it become a Hegelianism but Hegel has altered, too. Śiva is in Prussia but Hegel must visit Kaśmir. It is unfortunately still fashionable in some quarters to denounce Hegel's Absolute for eliminating difference and to accuse it of reducing plurality, multiplicity, and diversity to sameness, identity, and empire. Reading Hegel with Kaśmiri Śaivism provides the resources to reject such misinterpretations.

Hegel's Absolute is a metaphysical monism. However, this is not precise. Although he rejects dualism and pluralism, Hegel has a metaphysics according to

which the One is never fully one. That is to say, there is a constitutive split, or gap, within being or reality itself. This split is simultaneously the One's condition of possibility and what prevents it from ever becoming fully whole. Without the gap that forever prevents the One from finally becoming one, there would be only one and so there would not be anything at all. The bare concept of Being is unstable and passes over into Nothing, as Hegel argues in his *Logic*, and so a One that is completely One would be None. His philosophy is an identity of identity and difference, where difference is contained in and constitutes identity itself.

Is there an English translation for this Hegelese? Almost. Hegel's Absolute is the comprehension of how things hang together. More precisely, it is the simultaneous comprehension of how things are constituted by their membership in a system of relations and how that system emerges from its members. This is not the static block universe of eternalism, where the present, past, and future exist. As a first approximation, it is a growing block universe, where the present and past, but not the future, exist. What needs to be added, though, is that while the universe is growing, it is not a block. The present can ontologically alter the past, for Hegel, as things retrospectively posit their presuppositions. The causes of the Arab Spring do not exist prior to the Arab Spring, for example; rather, they exist only with the Arab Spring itself. Finally, the present is partially constituted by the future it projects.

Was this always Hegel's philosophy or is it instead an anachronistic interpretation, conjured after reading Śaivism? Both! Hegel's philosophy itself depends on the contributions of its readers. "Because Hegel proceeds by showing, where we are supposed to reap the philosophical benefits of those displays, even though often we can only do so by being far more sophisticated about those displays and the principles displayed than the observed form of consciousness itself," says Kenneth R. Westphal. He clarifies: "the line between what is strictly speaking to be found in his text and what we may only be able to be read into or out of it simply may not exist."⁵¹ It is an anachronism that, retrospectively projected into Hegel's philosophy, constitutes it.

May the wise, who discern subtleties, ignore what has been overstated, omitted, or inadequately expressed. Is a bee, eager to taste the nectar of the rose, troubled by its thorns?

Śakti, who saves us from all misfortunes, is victorious! Śiva, who pervades all things through his glorious Śakti, is victorious! Elephant-faced Gaṇeśa, who overcomes all obstacles, is also victorious!

Notes

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for Indian Philosophy and Religion's Conference on "Knowledge, Reality and Value: East & West," in Kolkata on January 4, 2013; at the Northwest Philosophy Conference at Oregon State University on October 26, 2012 (Stuart Ray Sarbacker is thanked for his commentary); and at a joint Department of Philosophy and Summer Research Colloquium at Lewis & Clark College on September 7, 2012. Samantha Park Alibrando, Paul T. Allen, Kisor Kumar Chakrabarti, Edward Cushman, Elena Hoff, Sarah Marchand Lomas, William A. Rottschaefer, McKenzie Judith Southworth, and two anonymous readers for *Philosophy East and West* are thanked for useful comments. Lewis & Clark College provided support through a Research Grant.

- 1 – Littlejohn, "Comparative Philosophy," accessed February 12, 2016.
- 2 – Niels Bohr (1885–1962) to Wolfgang Pauli (1900–1958), in New York in 1958, after Pauli's presentation of Werner Heisenberg (1901–1976) and Pauli's theory of elementary particles; quoted in Dyson, "Innovation in Physics," pp. 79–80.
- 3 – See Sanderson, "Purity and Power among the Śivas of Kashmir," pp. 190–216; Sanderson, "The Hinduism of Kashmir," pp. 99–126; Sanderson, "The Śaiva Age," pp. 41–349.
- 4 – Buckler, "The Oriental Despot," p. 239.
- 5 – See Ratié, "A Śaiva Interpretation of the *Satkāryavāda*," pp. 127–172.
- 6 – Edward Cushman is thanked for this suggestion.
- 7 – It is not possible to discuss the Śaiva account of the emanation of intentionality in terms of speech indexicals or the grammar of action, from "I" (*aham*) through "I am this" (*ahamidam*) to "this" (*idam*).
- 8 – Dyczkowski, *The Stanzas of Vibration*, p. 177.
- 9 – Ratié, "Otherness in the Pratyabhijñā Philosophy," p. 344. See also Alper, "Śiva and the Ubiquity of Consciousness," pp. 345–407.
- 10 – See Clark and Chalmers, "The Extended Mind," pp. 7–19.
- 11 – Templeton, "The Quotable Sir John."
- 12 – Kant, Preface, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, p. 5, Ak 4:255.
- 13 – Macherey, *Hegel or Spinoza*, p. 200.
- 14 – Paul T. Allen is thanked for this suggestion.
- 15 – An anonymous reader for *Philosophy East and West* is thanked for noting that, in addition to the comparativist parallel with Hegel's philosophy articulated in this essay, another would be to Byzantine theology, especially Palamism, the system of Gregory Palamas (1296–1359). Gregory's actuality or *enérgeia* (ἐνέργεια) is a close counterpart, virtually a reflection, of Abhinavagupta's Śakti. In this respect, it represents the general Orthodox Christian picture that, while the names of God are not God, God is fully revealed in the names of God. See Bradshaw, *Aristotle East and West*; Finich, "Neo-Palamism, Divinizing Grace, and the Breach between East and West," pp. 233–249; Isaeva, "The Concept of Energies," pp. 147–161.

- 16 – For a discussion of Somānanda’s pantheism and Utpaladeva and Abhinavagupta’s panentheism, see Nemeč, *The Ubiquitous Śiva*.
- 17 – Kisor Kumar Chakrabarti is thanked for this suggestion.
- 18 – Rescher, “Idealism,” p. 318.
- 19 – Ibid.
- 20 – Ibid.
- 21 – See Ratié, “The Dreamer and the Yogin,” pp. 437–478, and Ratié, “Can One Prove that Something Exists Beyond Consciousness?” pp. 479–501. Also see Lawrence, “Proof of a Sentient Knower,” pp. 627–653.
- 22 – Ratié, “Otherness in the Pratyabhijñā Philosophy,” p. 367.
- 23 – Ladyman and Ross, *Every Thing Must Go*, p. 20.
- 24 – Cf. Fernflores, “The Equivalence of Mass and Energy.”
- 25 – Einstein and Infeld, *The Evolution of Physics*. Einstein and Infeld’s view is controversial. An alternative is that mass and energy are different properties; among those who accept this, some affirm and others deny that transformations of mass into energy and energy into mass are genuine physical processes; see Fernflores, “The Equivalence of Mass and Energy.”
- 26 – Zahar, *Einstein’s Revolution*.
- 27 – Gerow, “Abhinavagupta’s Aesthetics as a Speculative Paradigm,” p. 191 n. 41.
- 28 – Dyczkowski, *The Stanzas of Vibration*, pp. 211–216.
- 29 – Hegel, *The Science of Logic*, p. 69.
- 30 – See Halbfass, *India and Europe*, pp. 84–99.
- 31 – Wai Chee Dimock writes:
- Texts . . . do a lot of traveling: across space and especially across time. As they travel they run into new semantic networks, new ways of imputing meaning. Such changes in the registers of reception, making a text continually interpretable, also mean that any particular reading is no more than a passing episode in a history of readings. . . . A reading is topical, circumstantial, and bound to appear obtuse to future readers who, living among other circumstances and sensitized by other concerns, bring to the same words a different web of meanings. (Dimock, “A Theory of Resonance,” p. 1061)
- 32 – Kant, *Philosophy of Material Nature*, pp. 105–106.
- 33 – An anonymous reader for *Philosophy East and West* is thanked for suggesting that there are striking parallels between Abhinavagupta’s self-revealing Brahman (*Īśvara*) and—rather than Hegel’s spirit (*Geist*)—Fichte’s image of the absolute I (*absolute Ich*). Fichte conceives of the absolute I as the pure being, an active (*tätige*) entity with an inner striving (*Streben*), that is reminiscent of Śaivism’s Śakti. Indeed, Śaivism does correspond more closely to Fichte’s

philosophy than to Hegel's. It is this very correspondence that allows Śaivism to be inserted into a dialect that leads to Hegel's philosophy.

- 34 – Cf. Beiser, *German Idealism*, pp. 465–595; Friedman, “Kant, Skepticism, and Idealism,” pp. 26–43; Richards, *The Romantic Conception of Life*, pp. 114–203 and 289–312; Grant, *Philosophies of Nature after Schelling*.
- 35 – Beiser, *German Idealism*, p. 466.
- 36 – The difficulties confronting Schelling's Absolute are analogous to those that Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889–1951) poses for a private language in his *Philosophical Investigations*.
- 37 – Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, sec. 16, p. 9.
- 38 – Sellars, *Science, Perception and Reality*, p. 1.
- 39 – Jarry, *Exploits & Opinions of Doctor Faustroll*, p. 114.
- 40 – See Sanderson, “The Doctrine of the Mālinīvijayottaratantra,” pp. 281–312.
- 41 – Cf. Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition*; Williams, *Hegel's Ethics of Recognition*; Pippin, *Hegel's Practical Philosophy*.
- 42 – Cf. Crisafi and Gallagher, “Hegel and the Extended Mind,” pp. 123–129; Friedman and Parvizian, “The Extended Mind Rehabilitates the Metaphysical Hegel,” pp. 636–658.
- 43 – Hutchins, *Cognition in the Wild*; Nelson, *Who Knows*.
- 44 – See Lawrence, *Rediscovering God with Transcendental Argument*.
- 45 – See Alper, *Understanding Mantras*; Padoux, *Vāc*; Padoux, *Tantric Mantras*.
- 46 – Samantha Park Alibrando, Sarah Marchand Lomas, and McKenzie Judith Southworth are thanked for discussions about Śaivism's mantras and Hegel's mechanical memory.
- 47 – For expository purposes, we follow John McCumber's interpretation, articulated in *The Company of Words: Hegel, Language, and Systematic Philosophy*. Cf. Derrida, “The Pit and the Pyramid,” pp. 69–108; Houlgate, “Hegel, Derrida, and Restricted Economy,” pp. 79–93; Nicolacopoulos and Vassilacopoulos, “On the Systematic Meaning of Meaningless Utterances,” pp. 17–26; Winfield, “Identity, Difference, and the Unity of Mind,” pp. 103–127.
- 48 – Cf. Staal, *The Fidelity to Oral Tradition and the Origins of Science*, pp. 31–32:
- A prerequisite for the traditional study of ritual is that the student knows his own Veda by heart. He must know it thoroughly, from beginning to end. When given any couple of words, he must be able to continue the recitation from there. If he is good or takes pleasure in games, he can recite it backward; recite every other word; do with the words anything that a computer can be programmed to do; single out or count their occurrences, group them together according to certain criteria; in brief, perform the kinds of

exercise of which the *vikṛti* “modifications” are simple examples. On this foundation he can learn to change the traditional order that he has committed to memory; and here we witness the beginning of those extraordinary exercises that are the bread and butter—or rice and ghee—of Vedic ritual. Most of these make no sense in terms of meaning (for the meaning has never been learnt), and often little sense even in terms of form; because many of them were, at the outset and at least in part, either due to intuitions that are no longer recoverable, or simply due to chance. Once put together, these exercises can be learnt. There may be elements that facilitate their study, for example, the occurrence of certain words; such as the word for dawn—*uṣas*—that the pupil will be familiar with even if he need not know what it means. Or “Agni,” for that matter; much more common and familiar; yet to the young scholar who is beginning to find his way in the ritual maze, primarily nothing but a sound.

49 – Hegel, *Philosophy of Mind*, p. 199, sec. 462, remark.

50 – Maclean, *A River Runs through It*, p. 104.

51 – Westphal, *Hegel’s Epistemological Realism*, p. 139.

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