UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Santa Barbara

The Religious, Political, and Medical Roots of Personhood in Pre-Classical India

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in Religious Studies

by

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Matthew Ian Robertson

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

If a person is truly a world unto him or herself, and if that world has behind it the full force and scope of Time's transformational powers, then there should be no end to my thanks. This I take to be the appropriate attitude in all endeavors; nevertheless I would like to acknowledge several key individuals who have shaped my thinking on the matters addressed in the following pages.

Boundless thanks to the following:

To my parents, Edward "Chip" D. Robertson Jr. and Reneé Ann Robertson, whose love, support, and friendship have been a constant; whose kindness and generosity have time and again proven to be inestimable; and whose willingness to let their son to discover his own path have been a wellspring of courage.

To my partner and soon-to-be wife, Alexandra Olympia Hendley, my steadfast beacon of kindness, my paragon of heart, the Sun of my love. Thank you for listening to all of my ideas, all of my rambling odes to the world, and all of my scheming to think beyond mere flesh.

To my siblings, Meredith Koschak and Kip Robertson, whose care for their brother is absolute, and whose devotion to making a lasting, positive impact on the world is a source of deep admiration.

To my dissertation committee co-chairs, professors David G. White and Barbara A. Holdrege, committee member professor Vesna A. Wallace, and former advisor and continuing mentor Thomas A. Carlson. My engagement with the world, in thought and action, has been profoundly shaped by your living example. I hope this work proves the beginning of a long career that will honor your teaching and friendship.

To Dr. Ravi Mooss, Vaidya at the Aatma Clinic of Anandapuram, Kerala. Your dream of boundless human health is a source of inspiration. May the bitterness of your medicines bear out the sweetness of a well-lived life.

To my former mentors at St. John's College, Santa Fe, especially David Starr, who first introduced me to the world of the *Mahābhārata*, sparking thereby an endless source of fascination. May the search for better questions outlive us all.

To Andrew, Nate, and Shane, who have helped to give musical expression to many of the ideas contained in these pages, and who have proved to be an endless source of laughter, camaraderie, and support. Old Man is truly among the best things of my life.

To Michael, my giant brother from another, whose insight and capacity for love is unparalleled. To think with you is to come home. May you forever be blessed.

To Laura, Paul, and Milo, who are true family, and who are missed all too often.

To Chandler, Jeff, and Tom, whose passion for thinking and earnestness in the search for truth inspired unforgettable conversations. It was and remains an honor.

And last, but certainly not least, to Miro, my cat, who teaches patience in the face of the mysteries and travails of human-to-animal communication, and who inspires laughter and appreciation every day.

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ABSTRACT

The Religious, Political, and Medical Roots of Personhood in Pre-Classical India

by

Matthew Ian Robertson

The *puruṣa*—the "person" addressed throughout Indic texts—is not a microcosmic replication of the macrocosmos; he is the phenomenal world itself. This dissertation provides a textual and historical examination of the *puruṣa* concept in the Vedic Saṃhitās, Brāhmaṇas, Upaniṣads, Pali Nikāyas, pre-classical Saṃhitās of early Āyurveda, and the *Mahābhārata*. I argue that, contrary to the dominant scholarly position, the cosmos is only 'in' the person insofar as the person *expands* to be the same measure as the cosmos. In the political and religious poetry of the Vedas, the person is modeled after Indra, who creates the world by swelling to its limits in the guise of the Sun. In the Brāhmaṇas, the sacrificer toils to become like Indra, to discover the *puruṣa* in the Sun, and thereby attain the immortal expansiveness of *svarga-loka*. In the Upaniṣads, the person is the recursively reproducing, blissfully autophagous eater of the world, who transcends space and time by "yoking" up to ever greater expanses through yoga. In the early teachings of the Buddhist Pāli canon, the person is non-different from the "empty" elementality of the world, and the *bhikkhu* meditates on this fact to extinguish his belief in self, person, or world. These earlier views of the person are synthesized and given paradigmatic expression in the pre-classical Saṃhitās

of Āyurveda and the *Mahābhārata*, where the logics of Yoga and early Sāṃkhya dictate that person and world are "identical" and "the same measure." In the words of the foundational *Caraka Saṃhitā*, the pre-classical person who is fully realized, "bears the yoke" of the world as the sovereign master of its materiality, harmoniously conjoined to the phenomenal totality that is named *puruṣa*.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Aitareya Brāhmaṇa	AiB
Aitareya Upaniṣad	AiU
Āpastamba Śrauta Sūtra	ĀpŚS
Arthaśāstra	AŚ
Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdayam	AH
Atharva Veda	AV
Ayurvedadīpika	AD
Aṅguttara Nikāya	AN
Bhagavad Gītā	BhG
Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad	BĀU
Caraka Saṃhitā	CS
Chāndogya Upaniṣad	ChU
Digha Nikāya	DN
Harivaṃśa	HV
Īśā Upaniṣad	IU
Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa	JB
Kaṭha Upaniṣad	KU
Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad	KauU
Mahābhārata	MBh
Maitri Upaniṣad	MU
Majjhima Nikāya	MN
Manusmṛti	MS
Mokṣadharmaparvan	MDhP
Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad	MuU
Ṛg Veda	RV
Saṃyutta Nikāya	SN
Sāṃkhya Kārikā	SK
Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa	ŚB
Suśruta Saṃhitā	SuS
Śvetaśvātara Upaniṣad	ŚvU
Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa	TB
Taittirīya Saṃhitā	TS
Taittirīya Upaniṣad	TU
Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā	VS
Vāstusūtra Upaniṣad	VsU
Viśuddhimagga	Vsm
Vyādha Gītā	VG
Yoga Śāstra	YŚ
Yoga Sūtras	YS

Introduction

"This Person is truly the whole world, what has been and what is yet to be."

– *Puruṣa Sūkta*

"His likeness became every form
to reveal the form that is his.
By his magic powers Indra travels in many forms:
all ten-hundred of his steeds are yoked."

– *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*

"This person is the same measure as the world."

– *Caraka Saṃhitā*

Personhood

Personhood—the fact or quality of being a person—designates an immediacy that can neither be ignored nor fully anticipated. There is a certainty that it belongs to us, but also a vagueness as to what this means. Hence we meagerly apply equally vague synonyms when speaking of a person as an individual, a self, a body, a human being, and so on. Nevertheless we are pressed to rise above this persistent obscurity insofar as personhood continually announces itself as a fundamental issue in matters legal, medical, biological, ethical, cultural, sociological, anthropological, philosophical, theological, etc. As a result, the concept of the person, like the issue of personhood, is at once over- and underdetermined. The veritable glut of arguments—scholarly or otherwise—about the nature of personhood attest simultaneously to our keen interest in asserting what constitutes personhood and our utter inability to determine anything with satisfaction.[1]

[1] The lion's share of such attempts could nevertheless be considered as directly informed by debates in Western Christian and philosophical thought. Arising from the humble beginnings of the Latin *persona* (Greek πρόσωπον)—a term used for the masks worn by dramatic actors "through" which their voices "sound" (*per* + *sonare*)—the sense of "person"

While scholarly attention to the subject of personhood in Indic religious traditions cannot be said to be so abundant, Indic sources themselves clearly share an abiding and fundamental concern with the nature of the person and with personhood in general. This is evident in the sustained attention paid to the *puruṣa* concept, which is also the surest Sanskrit cognate to the English "person." Beginning with the latest layer of the *Ṛgveda* (RV), the *puruṣa* concept accedes to a position of fundamental importance in Brahmanical thought in the paean of RV 10.90, the famed Puruṣa Sūkta. Here, a primordial, cosmogonic Person—possessed of "a thousand heads, a thousand eyes, and a thousand feet (or shadows)"[2]—gives rise to the diversity of existence through his sacrificial dismemberment. This *sūkta* is roughly coeval with the earliest layer of the *Atharvaveda* (AV),[3] which contains two further paeans (AV 10.2 and 11.8). There, the *puruṣa* is strikingly more human, though he is "possessed" (*ā* + √*viś*) by cosmic and divine forces who have settled into his body "like cows into a cow stall."[4] From this point on, the uses of the *puruṣa* concept more or less follow this dual designation as either, or even simultaneously, indicative of the mortal human being or the ultimate cosmic and spiritual reality. It is in this manner a fundamental concern of Indic sources (especially orthodox Brahmanical sources) to determine the nature of the relationship between the Person as an originary cosmic (or, more accurately, "macranthropic"[5]) being and the person as a mortal human.[6] This in turn signals a

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familiar today developed out of early theological debates regarding the manner in which a unitary God expresses his nature in Trinitarian fashion, and especially the union of divine and mortal natures in the figure of Christ.

[2] RV 10.90.1—*sahasraśīrṣā … sahasrākṣaḥ sahasrapāt* |

[3] I address the historical relationship between these two texts and its importance for Indic thinking about the *puruṣa* concept in chapters one and two.

[4] AV 11.8.32—*…gāvo goṣṭha ivāsate* ||

[5] As famously recognized by Biardeau (1976: 108).

fundamental concern with the nature of the relation between the human person and the world in which his existence takes place. In other words, at the heart of Indic thinking about personhood lies a simultaneous thinking about the world, which has, since the time of the Puruṣa-sūkta, also been known simply as the "Person."

In addition to this theme of conflating person and world (more about which I'll say shortly), another dimension of Indic thinking about personhood has been highlighted in three scholarly works from the last half century, all of which examine personhood according to its inherent relation to the notion of Otherness. First, McKim Marriott's highly influential investigation of social transactions in Hindu culture shows the "divisibility of the person," in the sense that his personhood is inseparable from "what goes on *between*" himself and other actors (1976: 109). A person is thus a "dividual" rather than an individual, an open psycho-physical being established by the transactional give-and-take of "substance codes," especially those determined by one's social status (*varṇa*) or by one's position within the four stages of life (*varṇāśrama dharma*).[7] Second, Frederick Smith's seminal investigation of possession phenomena in South Asian traditions problematizes the Maussian distinction between "person" and "self"[8] and determines personhood to be characterized by its "fluidity,

[6] The situation is quite different in the early Buddhist sources, where the primary concern involves the disavowal of the reality of the person, cosmogonic or otherwise (see especially Collins 1982). Nevertheless, early Buddhism still develops its argument for the non-reality of the person through an analysis of the mortal human's elemental relation to the cosmos-at-large (see chapter three). In this regard, the early Buddhist treatment of the person follows the pattern previously established in the orthodox traditions.

[7] Marriott notes that this give and take "is equally represented in the classical medical texts of Caraka and Suśruta and in popular ideas of health and diet" (Marriott 1976: 111). Thus duly accords with the relationship between person and world (or rather, person *as* world) that I analyze in chapter four.

[8] Mauss sees Christianity as having most decisively made this distinction, arguing that the "self" is, in Smith's words, "a metaphysical foundation, a rational substantiality,

divisibility, and penetrability," according to which events of "dissociation and fragmentation (sometimes called possession) produced an alienness that at least temporarily overshadowed the familiarity of the person and rendered the self Other" (2006: 19). Finally, David G. White similarly refers to the openness of the Indic person through his paradigm-upending reappraisal of the yogi as a radical extrovert, whose ability to enter the bodies of others allows him to act on all the registers of "the fluid Indic categories of personhood and identity… [T]he yogi is the archetypal 'other' to the South Asian 'self'" (2009: 253). Each of these scholars demonstrates the considerable difficulty of describing Indic thinking about personhood in typical Western terms of selves and others,[9] as well as the far-reaching importance of learning to think about persons (and here I refer specifically to those agents who are "doing" religion) in specifically Indic terms.

The present dissertation aims to further develop the research on Indic personhood and its inherent relation to Otherness through a focused examination of the person concept (*puruṣa*) as it appears in texts from the Vedic period through the pre-classical period (c. 1500 BCE – 400 CE). I argue that the characteristic indiscreteness of the person—its inability to be coherently distinguished from Otherness, both spatially and temporally—is indicative of the fundamentally *expansive* or *extensional* nature of the person in Indic thought. In other words, the openness of the Indic person to Otherness is due to the fact that he—and a person is

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indivisible and individual;" by contrast, the "person" is a socio-culturally conditioned "objectification and representation of selfhood" (Smith 2006: 19). By contrast, personhood in Indic traditions is "sometimes, though not always, contiguous with selfhood" (ibid.: xiv; see also my remarks below on the "Honey Doctrine").

[9] Though, since the time of Augustine at least, certain strands of Catholic theology have wrestled with questions of the soul's simultaneous intimacy and alienness. See, for instance, *Confessions*, Book 10.16, and more recently Jean Luc Marion's extended meditation on this theme in his monograph, *In the Self's Place* (2012).

nearly universally male in these contexts—is "spread" or "stretched outwards" in such a manner that he is essentially coterminous with the phenomenal totality of his existence, and thereby interwoven with the phenomenal realities of others, all of which are circumscribed especially by the horizons of perception.[10] Consequently, we find a whole series of practices throughout the early history of Indic religiosity that are aimed at developing the person's capacity to extend and expand not simply into, but *as* the world, and therefore to master and, in a sense, embody this Otherness that a person is. The manners in which this is the case in Indic thought and practice, which will form the central subject of this investigation, afford a basic maxim: *personhood = worldhood*. By considering personhood in this manner, I hope to avoid, or at least productively reframe, the dualistic tendencies expressed in discourses on selves and others,[11] and to highlight instead a more idiomatic understanding of the category of the person as it is expressed by Indic texts themselves.[12]

The orienting quotes provided in the epigram to this introduction are representative of the idiomatic modes by which this maxim is expressed. It will therefore be of benefit to

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[10] This should not be taken to contradict Smith's well-reasoned argument for the centrality of possession phenomena in Indic traditions by leaving no room for a more or less passive reception of outside forces. It is interesting, however, to note that Smith sees women as the primary targets of possession events, while the *puruṣa* concept is overwhelmingly masculine-gendered.

[11] A related theoretical approach was recently provided by Csordas (1990), who draws primarily upon the work of Merleau-Ponty and Bourdieu; though Smith (2006: 20) is right to criticize Csordas's presentation of the self as prior to the person.

[12] I take as my guiding impulse in this regard the argument forwarded by Barbara Holdrege in her recent work on the theme of embodiment in discourses of Kṛṣṇa *bhakti*: "In order to establish 'theory parity' in our investigations as part of the post-colonial turn [against the 'European epistemological hegemony'], we also need to consider the potential contributions of 'the Rest of the World' …, and it is therefore important for scholars of religion to excavate the resources of particular religious traditions and to generate analytical categories and models … that are grounded in the distinctive idioms of these traditions" (2015: 11).

pause and consider one of them, taken from the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*'s (BĀU) "Honey Doctrine" (*madhu-vidyā*), more deeply. According to this doctrine, a *puruṣa* is discernible in various constituents of the human body (an *adhyātma puruṣa*) which corresponds to a *puruṣa* discernible in various constituents of the world-at-large. So, for instance, "this immortal, shining *puruṣa* that is in the waters and, with respect to the body, the immortal, shining *puruṣa* that is in semen—this is verily he who is this self (*ātman*); this is immortal, this is *brahman*, this is the whole."[13] The same is true for fire, wind, *dharma*, humanity, and so on in a long series of correspondences. The significance of these correspondences—their meaning and function as opposed to their bare structure—is forcefully expressed in the final conclusion that the *puruṣa* is the "fort-dweller (*puriśaya*) in all the forts," who equally and unitarily dwells throughout the diversity of embodied selves in the broader cosmos. Hence, the *puruṣa* "is the immortal; it is *brahman*; it is the Whole;" and it is the "*brahman* [who is] this *ātman* here [and] which perceives everything."[14] This the "Honey Doctrine" otherwise puts in terms derived from an older Vedic model, signaling the Upaniṣad's understanding of the connection between the Vedic characterization of Indra and the *puruṣa* concept: "His likeness became every form to reveal the form that is his. By his magic powers Indra travels in many forms: all ten-hundred of his steeds are yoked." The construction of personhood in Indic traditions frequently meets with this kind of talk that blurs the lines between person, self, and world. It is moreover precisely through the recognition of this person's true nature—alternatively deemed *brahman*, or the "power of expansion"—that a human

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[13] BĀU 2.5.2—*yaś cāyam āsv apsu tejomayo 'mṛtamayaḥ puruṣo yaś cāyam adhyātmaṃ raitasas tejomayo 'mṛtamayaḥ puruṣo 'yam eva sa yo 'yam ātmā | idam amṛtam idaṃ brahmedaṃ sarvam*

[14] BĀU 2.5; translated by Olivelle 1996: 30-33.

expands to the same scope, becoming the world-sized *puruṣa* that "perceives everything." As that which is refracted and reflected throughout all sites of manifestation, as the "fort-dweller in all forts," the person is at once subject, object, and the agent that animates and exercises both, the self and its other.

We see the same basic idea expressed in the Puruṣa-sūkta, where the primordial Puruṣa is both the cosmic sacrifice, its sacrificed victim, and the sacrificer. It is he whose apportionment generates the diversity of the cosmos and he who is recuperated as a cosmic unity through that apportionment, and therefore he who "is truly the whole world, what has been and what is yet to be."[15] Likewise, Āyurveda's *Caraka Saṃhitā* (a treatise that I will argue draws significantly from the Brahmanical conception of the cosmos as an on-going sacrifice) conceives of person and world, subject and object, according to their simultaneity when it states, "this *puruṣa* is the same measure as the world." In such manners, the other-ing of the self and the self-ing of the other is also the world-ing of the person. So conceived in myriad manners and toward a multitude of conceptions about the goal of religious practice, the uses of the *puruṣa* concept give rise to an impression of a mind-boggling overlap of interwoven and intersubjective worlds, arising and receding throughout time and space as a simultaneity of identity in the midst of difference.

Persons, Bodies, and Microcosmology

This framing of things will aid us in thinking not only about persons, selves, and others, but also about bodies as they are represented in Indic discourses. As open and permeable, transmutable and easily dissociated from physicality, bodies frequently get conflated with

[15] The Brāhmaṇas and Upaniṣads further develop this vision through their portrayal of Puruṣa-Prajāpati, who generates all creatures within his own cosmic body then enters into each and every one as the experiencer of all possible existences.

the categories of person and self in studies of Indic traditions.[16] It is my contention that any such consideration of bodies in Indic traditions can be contextualized and made more intelligible through the analysis of the person concept and its relation to worldhood. Accordingly, bodies—especially physical, human bodies—are secondary characteristics of persons. Indic traditions identify personhood with a phenomenal immediacy—a worldhood or *loka*-lity—out of and after which any consideration of bodies must follow. What a number of Indic traditions aim towards is thus not the transformation of bodies per se, but the transformation of this immediacy, the improvement of its scope and comprehension.[17] Physical bodies are therefore little more than sites to be transgressed so that the inherent expansiveness and self-relationality of personhood can be revealed.

This poses a significant challenge to the commonly espoused view that the person in Indic traditions is a microcosm, or "little world," and that his body therefore contains within it the faithful replication of all that exists outside it. Such a view is not sufficient or appropriate to the core feature of the Indic understanding of persons: that person and world are essentially, substantially, and phenomenally the same. Indeed, many of those instances

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[16] We might therefore challenge Steven Collin's claim that "the body is a necessary but not sufficient condition of personhood" insofar as the category of the body, and its automatic association in Western thought with the physical human form, is deeply problematized by Indic discourses on bodies (1985: 73). See, for instance, the introduction to Holdrege's recent monograph, *Bhakti and Embodiment* (2015), which provides an overview taxonomy of the many kinds of bodies in Indic discourses. See also Arno Böhler's essay on "Open Bodies" (2009), in which he interprets Indic bodies as simultaneously "local entities" and "*world wide*" entities, "a priori in touch with the environment they are surrounded by" (110-111; emphasis in original).

[17] Böhler writes, "Since in ancient times *improving* one's existence meant to make it vaster, wider, broader" and so forth (2009: 111; original emphasis). See also Alter's interpretation of Āyurveda as a "mode of radical self-improvement" towards the ends of "expansion and perpetual growth rather than incremental enhancement" towards an identifiable condition of homeostasis (1999: 44, *et passim*).

that are most famously considered to be evidence in favor of the microcosmological view of the person in early Indic religiosity in fact argue the precise opposite. The embodied person does not discover the totality of the world by turning inwards; he rather discovers his macranthropic worldhood by turning outwards to attain to (that is, to construct in accordance with tradition) his fundamental continuity with the world.

It would do well for the reader to remember that the world is not conceived as an object in early Indic thought. It is instead conceived in terms of the immediate, phenomenal, experiential basis of personhood. As Gonda correctly observed half a century ago, the world in Indic thought is first designated by the Sanskrit *loka*, a term which signifies an open, light-filled space (1966: 9-12). Connected to the verbal roots √*ruc* ("to shine") and √*lok* ("to perceive"), the term *loka* captures the "locality" of perceptual horizons. Jan de Vries comment on the world concept in Celtic religions is equally relevant here: "In this concept could thus be united the aspect of the sky and the open space in the forest. Was not such a lighted-clearing [*Lichtung*] viewed as a little cosmos [*kleiner Kosmos*], which spread out under the bright sky as a sacred site?"[18] This is, I argue, the sole manner in which it is acceptable to refer to the person as a "little cosmos," or microcosm, i.e. when that cosmos is coterminous not with the contours of the physical body, but with the horizons of perception.

As I noted earlier, the religious practices of early India, at least up to the threshold of classical period of Hinduism,[19] aim to transform these horizons, to expand them beyond all constrictions, and therefore to embody the kind of light (like that of the Sun) that fills "this

[18] DeVries 1961: 190; cited in Gonda 1966: 12.

[19] Or, as we might equally say, prior to that time when the dualism of Īśvarakṛṣṇa's "classical" reformulation of Sāṃkhya effected a decisive split between person (*puruṣa*) and world (*prakrti*).

whole world" (*idam sarvam*). It is with this in mind that I will refer to the person as an *expansive* being, and attempt to demonstrate the myriad ways in which he attempts to augment his expansive capacities, thereby changing the manners in which his personhood and worldhood coincide.

As it stands in the study of Indic religious traditions today, the microcosm-to-macrocosm paradigm is an artifact of perennialistic biases, which are themselves indebted to a reductive thinking in terms of Western and Christian worldviews.[20] It is a paradigm that scholars have linked to such diverse notions as the theological doctrine of *imago dei*,[21] Leonardo DaVinci's "Vitruvian Man,"[22] and the dubiously antique hermeticism of the *Emerald Tablet*;[23] and it is generally treated as a constant in Indic thought.[24] As the exogenous 'other' to the West's Christianity, Indic religiosity was thus frequently conceived in terms already familiar to the endogenous 'other' that was Western occultism and esotericism. Consequently, the notion of the person and its relation to the world in Indic sources has been interpreted in a manner that seems more familiar to characteristically Western kinds of

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[20] A historical examination of the advent of microcosmology in Indological scholarship is currently in preparation by the present author. Research thus far suggests that the microcosmological paradigm was transposed into modern Indology in the mid-nineteenth century, through a complicated set of interactions between medical and esoterically oriented trends of thought. The popularization of perennialistic doctrines through the efforts of groups like Blavatsky and Olcott's Theosophical society played an especially important role in generalizing the microcosmological paradigm to Indic traditions. A tentative *terminus a quo* for the use of "microcosm" with specific reference to Indic traditions appears to be Thomas A. Wise's 1845 ethnomedical study, *Commentary on the Hindu System of Medicine*.

[21] White 2011: 83

[22] Wayman 1982: 183-190

[23] Wujastyk 2009: 195; Varenne 1976: 30.

[24] In a representative tone, Jean Varenne writes that microcosmology is "precisely what traditional Brahmanism has been teaching persistently for five thousand years, from the *Veda* to Ramakrishna and Aurobindo" (1976: 30).

thinking than to any one Indic text. The balance of this investigation will provide multiple opportunities to reassess this paradigmatic view of the person that is so widely and uncritically accepted among Indologists, elevating in its place the idioms of Indic expression. With this in mind, we can therefore turn to a brief summary of each chapter's contents.

Chapter Summary

In chapter one, I examine the earliest textual roots of Indic thinking about personhood in the Vedic period (c. 1500 BCE – 800 BCE). I argue that these roots are found in the *Ṛg Veda*'s (RV) mythology of Indra, who attains an expansively solar kind of sovereignty through ritual interactions with Agni and Soma. These interactions are in turn mapped upon the natural world, especially according to the daily and yearly "swellings" of the Sun that "create" the world by expanding to fill it with light. In the youngest layer of the RV's hymns, these qualities are quite suddenly re-inscribed on the figure called "Puruṣa," who was "spread out" as the sacrifice in ancient times to become all that exists, "what has been and what is yet to be."[25]

From this point onwards, the *puruṣa* concept becomes central to Vedic-era thinking about human sacrificial activity and its relationship to sovereignty. This is especially the case in the *Brāhmaṇa*s, the exegetical texts that elaborate upon the poetics and ritual actions encoded in the hymns of the Vedic Saṃhitās. There it is announced that, should the human *puruṣa* attain to true sovereignty, he too must "spread" himself out as the sacrifice in order to become the "same measure" as the sacrificial cosmos. Likewise, he must identify himself with the daily and yearly transformations of the Sun, and its most sovereign aspect as Death, in order to become (like Indra and the Puruṣa before him) the sovereign whole of the cosmos.

[25] RV 10.90.2—*puruṣa evedaṃ sarvaṃ yad bhūtaṃ yacca bhavyam*

This genealogical transformation of sovereign personhood, from Indra to Puruṣa to human sacrificing *puruṣa*, finds a likely historical basis in the popular influence of the *Atharva Veda* (AV), a text coeval with the youngest layer of the RV wherein the Puruṣa first appears. In the AV the *puruṣa* term receives its earliest sustained attention. The characterization of the *puruṣa* as *bráhman* in the AV parallels its characterization of the *brahmacārin*, an early ascetic forerunner to the *dīkṣa* of Vedic ritualism who wanders throughout the world "practicing expansion" in imitation of the Sun and Indra and as the student of Death. Thus, by borrowing from the characterization of the *brahmacārin*, and applying this to uses of the *puruṣa* concept, the AV likely served as a bridge between the ritual mythology of the RV and the extended speculation on the *puruṣa* concept in the *Brāhmaṇa*s, all the while paving the way for the rise of wandering asceticism among Upaniṣadic sages.

In chapter two, I trace the further development of the *puruṣa* concept in the diverse asceticism-driven traditions of the Upaniṣads. On one hand, the *puruṣa* here retains its Vedic-era association with creative solar sovereignty, and in this regard the term *puruṣa* is frequently used as a synonym for the Upaniṣadic absolutes, *brahman* and *ātman*. On the other, a *puruṣa* is frequently nothing more than a mortal, male human being. This is, I argue, in keeping with the rise of individualism that other scholars have discerned in the period of the second urbanization.[26] These dual uses reflect the manner in which the Upaniṣads are at pains to explain and validate the highly personal nature of one's relation to the absolute

[26] E.g., Olivelle (1996). The person remains fundamentally "dividual;" nevertheless, as the communal and public aspect of ritual receded, along with the centrality of brahmin-centered polity, diverse forms of religious practice arose that thrived in conditions of comparative isolation and were comparatively 'personal,' intimate. This is the sole sense in which I will refer to an "individual."

Person, and to provide the means to a final reconciliation of one's mortal, phenomenal existence with the cosmically expansive nature of the absolute.

I isolate a number of key themes by which the early and middle Upaniṣads navigate the double nature of this *puruṣa*, as the mortal person and immortal Person. For instance, as a mortal, the person is an eater of foods that are digested by the fires of the stomach. These fires ultimately transmute food into semen, a substance phenomenally conceived as simultaneous with the blissful experience of an orgasm and thereby with the re-production a man through his sons, who mark the continuation of the father's world. As an immortal, the Person is identified with all food and also as the eater thereof. His digestive fire is like that of the Sun—pervasive, expansive, all-consuming—and the procreative bliss he generates thereby is immeasurable. He is both life and death, the motor and the fuel that propels the wheel of *saṃsāra* ever-onwards; he dwells as light in the space of the heart, which is conceived as vast void as big as the world. Something like a synthesis of these themes appears in the middle Upaniṣads, via the elucidation of yoga as a technique for bridging the difference between mortal person and immortal absolute. By controlling the senses and *prāṇa*, a yogi surmounts existence in *saṃsāra* by embodying in the figure of the immortal Person, as the *ātman* who is *brahman*, and as the sovereign god who yokes all beings just as a skillful charioteer yokes his horses.

In chapter three, I examine the relation between person and world in the Buddhist Pali Canon. There the Buddha frequently defines the person in terms of his elemental composition. These elements comprise the whole of the world, are impermanent, subject to change, and therefore must be treated in a spirit of detachment and recognized as "not mine… not the Self." Importantly, by cultivating a detachment to elementality, the person

garners the detached nature of those elements themselves, correcting thereby his mental contact (*phassa*) with the materiality of the world in a manner that leads toward the final liberation of *nibbana*. This goal, I argue, is reflected in the use of the *kasiṇa* practice in the *Culasuññata Sutta*. At the conclusion of this *sutta*, the Buddha describes the penultimate (i.e. pre-mortem) "non-voidness" that persists at the moment of final liberation as an abiding of perceptual "extensions" (*āyatana*s) that effectively constitutes the identification of the "selfless" person with the perceptual horizons of the world.

In chapter four, I examine the *puruṣa* concept in the early texts of Āyurveda: the *Caraka Saṃhitā* (CS) and *Suśruta Saṃhitā* (SuS). These texts contain a coherent expression of a theory of personhood that is paradigmatic to the pre-classical period of Indic religious history. The person is here considered the "same measure" as the world especially according to the manner in which his sense powers, called *indriya*s, engage with the world. In the idiom of Āyurveda, this engagement is fundamentally dietary; perceiving is therefore a kind of eating that ultimately indicates the manner in which a person "yokes to," which is to say "makes use of," the world. Ideally this yoking/use is balanced and harmonious, reflecting the wholesome state in which of person and world are "joined" in "sameness." (*samayoga*). Āyurveda's diagnostic and therapeutic procedures are, I show, a direct reflection of this understanding of the person as fundamentally joined with the world.

This is directly related to Āyurveda's stated spiritual aims, which describe the liberation of the person in a monistic yet cosmopolitan idiom. Liberation in this idiom hinges upon the possibility of developing a "truthful perception" (*satyā buddhi*) of the person's intimate relation to the world, a relation which is governed by a logic of identity (*sāmānya*). Having

attained this perception, the knowledge arises that "I am the whole world," and therefore that the person is the sovereign author of his own pleasures and pains.

In chapter five, I examine the *puruṣa* concept in the layers of the *Mahābhārata* (MBh). I identify a series of distinct considerations about the *puruṣa* ranging from considerations of manly sovereignty to considerations of macranthropic or divine cosmology that form the basis of the self-expansive practices of yogis. In this manner, the MBh's approach to personhood recapitulates the meanings of *puruṣa* in the Vedic Saṃhitās, Brāhmaṇas, and Upaniṣads. It also develops, in all but its latest layer, an understanding of the yogic path to liberation that directly echoes what is found (originally, perhaps) in the Āyurvedic material. In other words, the MBh likewise gives expression to the pre-classical paradigm of personhood, a fact which is further borne out by the close parallels between the Āyurveda's characterization of the physician and the MBh's characterization of yogis. Consequently, I argue for a significantly closer relationship between Āyurveda and the ascetic elements of the pre-classical Brahmanical tradition than has been usually presumed.[27]

In chapter six, I provide a fresh interpretation of the Sukanyā narrative, which I argue offers a clandestine narrativization of the pre-classical paradigm of personhood. The Sukanyā uses the theme of madness in order to link questions about the wholeness of the sacrifice and the relative power of brahmins and kṣatriyas to a specifically pre-classical concern with the rectification of the relationship between person and world. The relationship between priest and king is seen to mirror the relation between Āyurvedic physician and patient in their confrontation of the powers of Time, which eats all living beings.

A Final Reflection Before Commencing

[27] In accordance with the analyses of Zysk (1991).

As I mentioned in a footnote above, the accepted etymology of "person" refers to the Latin *persona*, a term originally used to denote the mask worn by a dramatic actor. It is the apparatus "through" which the actor's voice "sounds," and thus it is that by which others—that is, ourselves—recognize the quality and character of the actor. In accordance with this etymology, Western thinking about personhood emphasizes the social dimension of personhood, i.e. the manner in which the human agent is set in relation to and recognized by other human agents. This *setting in relation to humanity* inherent in the etymology of the term "person" is noteworthy insofar as it clearly informs the still-prevalent conception of personhood forwarded by Marcel Mauss: Mauss distinguishes the idea of the person as a primarily social designation that is to be set apart from the subjective awareness of the "self." But while this captures something of the orientation of personhood, it does not afford a view that can respond adequately to the many challenges—legal, medical, etc.—that the question of what constitutes personhood raises. For instance, in what sense are the coma patients Nancy Cruzan and Terri Schiavo "persons" if their "vegetative" state precludes reciprocity in their relation to others? Likewise, can non-human animals (or environmental entities) be persons if their relation to humans is not of an equal footing? In other words, can personhood be more than a simple mirroring of our embodied and social selves?

It is my broader hope that new responses to quandaries such as these can arise through a clarification of the kind of personhood illuminated by the *puruṣa* concept. Indeed, the etymology of *puruṣa* suggests such possibilities: Derived from the verbal root √*pṝ*, meaning "to fill, to cherish, to grant abundantly, to become complete, to fulfill, to cover completely, overspread, surround, enrich, spend completely," the term *puruṣa* expresses precisely the excessiveness of personhood that the person, framed in terms of a *persona*, fails to express.

That is, if it is true that the *persona* concept poses limitations based upon its insistence on a mirroring-kind of relationality, then a corrective may be discerned in the extravagance of the *puruṣa* concept and in the inherent willingness of Indic thinking about personhood to incorporate the full scope of the otherness of the world.

Chapter 1: The Expansive Personhood of Sovereigns in the Vedic Period

1.1 Puruṣa in the Ṛg Veda

Our examination of Indic notions of personhood begins with the earliest of Indic religoius texts, the *Ṛg Veda* (RV). Here, the term "*puruṣa*," its transformations, and compound forms are rare, occurring a mere twenty-nine times. Moreover the majority of these occurrences appear in the tenth maṇḍala, the youngest stratum of the RV's hymns.[1] Within the earlier strata we only find abstractions like *puruṣya*, *puruṣatā*, and *puruṣatrā*, signifying "manhood," "manliness," or "humanity." This reflects the fact that, at its roots, "[t]he *Rig Veda* is a book by men about male concerns in a world dominated by men."[2] Consequently the person is, in the earlier layers, narrowly but generically conceived as a paradigmatically masculine human male. The *puruṣa* is not yet 'a person' in the abstract, individualistic sense, nor 'the Person,' in the technical sense appropriate to the Puruṣa Sūkta.[3] As both Whitaker (2011) and Proferes (2007) have argued, the hymns of the RV are

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[1] Jamison and Witzel (1992) date the RV to the second half of the second millennium BCE. As for the dating for each of the ten *maṇḍala*s, I follow Whitaker (2011: 6), who arranges them into three layers. The earliest of these includes the 2nd-7th *maṇḍala*s, the so-called "family books" (with the 4th-6th being the oldest of these). The 8th *maṇḍala* belongs to the middle layer, while the 1st and 10th *maṇḍala*s belong to the youngest layer. The 9th collects materials from all three layers.

[2] Doniger 1981: 245. The masculine gendering of religious texts and religious agents remains the norm throughout much of the early history of Indic religions. I will, for this reason, employ masculine pronouns throughout unless explicitly invoked to do so by the texts themselves.

[3] A seeming exception appears at RV 7.104.15, which reads "May I die today if I am a sorcerer, if I have burned the breath of a *pūruṣa*" (*adyā murīya yadi yātudhāno asmi yadi vāyus tatapa pūruṣasya*). The sense of *pūruṣa* here is clearly individualistic, but as Jamison & Brereton make clear: "This long and rambling hymn coming at the very end of the VIIth Maṇḍala is obviously an addition to the original collection, not only on formal grounds but on those of content" (2014: 1014).

far more interested in warrior gods and men who sacrifice and perform heroic feats, or in kings who rule over the five peoples of the world. These are commonly referred to by the terms *nár* and *vīrá* ("heroic," "virile" man), and their transformations *nṛmṇá* and *vīryà* ("heroism," "virility"). Such terms clearly outstrip *puruṣa* in importance, both in the earlier hymns and arguably in the entirety of the RV.[4]

The use of the *puruṣa* term in an abstract or technical sense begins in the comparatively late first and tenth *maṇḍala*s. For instance, in the first *maṇḍala*, Rudra is called a "slayer of men" (*pūruṣaghnaṃ*),[5] while Indra is called a "slayer of those who are not men" (*apūruṣaghnaṃ*).[6] These instances carry forward the 'manly' associations of *puruṣa* while also reinforcing the typical relation that these two gods have with people in general: Rudra is a dangerous force to be reckoned with, while Indra is a protector and most-powerful (or most 'manly') sovereign. Increasingly familiar uses begin to appear in the tenth *maṇḍala*. A particularly interesting occurrence is found at RV 10.51, in which Agni turns his back from the sacrifice as a doe turns from a hunter's bow, then hides himself in the waters and in the plants. Soon, however, he is coaxed back into his sacrificial duties by the gods, and will once more convey the sacrificial oblations to the gods on the condition that he receives the fore and after portion of the offerings, as well as the "ghee in the waters" and the "*puruṣa* in the plants." It is tempting to see in this an early formulation of the immanent and hidden

[4] Whitaker 2011: 4. According to Parpola (2002: 43-102; 2006: 173-174), the introduction of *puruṣa* as a technical term in Indic thought was not the result of an innovation by Ṛgvedic priests, but rather by Atharvan priests, who were part of a non-elite folk tradition that existed on the literal fringes of the Ṛgvedic orthodoxy, and whose presence on the subcontinent predates the arrival of the Ṛgvedic Aryans. I address this argument further below.

[5] RV 1.114.10

[6] RV 1.133.6

puruṣa, often portrayed in later texts as thumb-sized and dwelling within creatures' hearts. Yet images of an internal, hidden *puruṣa* are found nowhere else in the RV, which suggests that this "*puruṣa* in the plants" is essentially aberrant. Consequently, the possibility that the RV is even nascently aware of the doctrine of an immanent *puruṣa* (commonplace from the Upaniṣadic period onward) falters from a lack of corroborating evidence.

The RV's farthest reaching most developed vision of the *puruṣa* concept is found in the famous Puruṣa Sūkta. It is here that *puruṣa* first appears as the cosmos-sized man whose body parts were divided and apportioned in an ancient sacrifice. Over half of the Ṛgvedic occurrences of the term *puruṣa* appear in this *sūkta*, and this tells us first that the hymn contains the most focused of all Ṛgvedic statements about *puruṣa*. Naturally then, it should serve as important landmark in our search for the term's significance. However, this also tells us that the hymn's elevation of the term is anomalous, and therefore that a new perspective on *puruṣa* must have developed between the early and later layers of the RV. Whence, then, this new vision, this sudden lofty elevation of the *puruṣa*?

As I argue below, the Puruṣa Sūkta's contents reflect an innovative and culminating reformulation of several poetic themes found throughout the rest of the RV—most notably spatial themes of solar pervasion and expansion, and martial themes of striding out past all restrictions or overpowering through greatness. These themes, I argue, continue the earlier characterizations of Indra, the warrior king of the gods, who attains to a solar kind of sovereignty through his interactions with Agni and Soma, the expansive substance-deities who are the essence of the sacrifice. Through them, Indra is identified with the totality of the world, which he rules over with a might that is synonymous with his great size. The Puruṣa of the eponymous *sūkta* is an expressly solar sovereign patterned after these mythic events;

and thus like Indra, the Puruṣa establishes a pattern of sovereignty-conferring sacrificial action which his mortal counterpart is compelled to imitate.

The Puruṣa's mortal counterpart is the human *puruṣa*, about which the later Brāhmaṇas speak at considerable length. Therein it is announced that, should this *puruṣa* hope to attain the sovereignty that passed from Indra to Puruṣa, then he too must expand and become this whole world. That is, he can only become a sovereign *puruṣa* by discovering his capacity for expansion, a feat which he achieves in the act of "spreading out" the Puruṣa—himself—to be sacrificed. In practice, this involves a hugely complicated host of considerations, including the re-inscription of himself in accordance with the rhythms of the natural world, the yearly transformation by which living things blossom and wither, and the daily flights of the Sun across the vault of the heavens.[7] The sacrificing human *puruṣa* thereby seeks to identify himself with the whole of the world, to become the equal of its measure, and to transcend its mortal nature by becoming Death itself.

This development of the *puruṣa* concept in the Brāhmaṇas was not orthogenetic. Instead, the steady transformation of Indra into the Puruṣa, and of the Puruṣa into the sacrificing human *puruṣa*, corresponds to the initial (and likely hesitant) acceptance of material from the popular tradition of the *Atharva Veda* (AV) into the elite orthodoxy of Ṛgvedic Brahmanism.[8] We see evidence of this on two levels: first, in the unique elevation of the

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[7] All this has its source in the earlier poetics of Indra, Agni and Soma. In a time characterized by a relative paucity of technological media and in a landscape not thoroughly dominated by human structures, Indra, Soma, and Agni were writ large across the face of nature. Yet the reverse of this is equally true. As I show below, the three central deities of the Ṛgvedic cultus were clearly conceived in accordance with the rhythms of the natural world—Indra, Soma, and Agni *are* the temporal world, its source, and its sustaining force.

[8] Based upon its mention of iron technology (which is absent in the RV), scholars date the AV to ca. 1200-1000 BCE, roughly the same period ascribed to the latest layer of the RV. See, e.g., Witzel 2003: 68.

puruṣa concept in the AV, where it is consistently conceived in terms of solarity, expansiveness, and sovereignty; and second, in the figure of the *brahmacārin*, who appears for the first time in the AV, who embodies the cosmicized experience of Indra-who-will-become-Puruṣa, and whose characterization directly overlaps that of the *puruṣa* concept found in the Brāhmaṇas. From this time on, the *puruṣa* concept becomes increasingly individualistic and phenomenalistic in nature, directly paving the way for the speculations of the Upaniṣadic sages, who refer to the *puruṣa* as both *brahman* and *ātman*.

As a final note at the outset, take heed that at no point do the texts and practices I address here indicate that the goal of Vedic ritualism is to replicate the divine macrocosm within the bodily human microcosm. Rather, they indicate an aim toward magnification and expansion, throughout both space and time. These aims are encapsulated by and applied directly to the *puruṣa* concept, the significance of which is thus truly world-sized.

1.2 Dimensions of Mythic Personhood

1.2.1 World-Sized Gods in the RV

If the *puruṣa* concept is truly "world-sized," and moreover based upon the mythos of Indra, Agni, and Soma, then we should find evidence of this in the associations of these three deities with the Ṛgvedic conception of the world, or *loka*.[9] Indeed, in the RV the term

[9] As Gonda (1966) notes in his near-exhaustive study of the term, *loka* is, like *puruṣa*, rare in the RV, appearing a mere thirty-eight times. Etymologically, *loka* is a term linked to light. Derived from the verbal root √*ruc*, meaning "to shine," a *loka* is essentially an open space in which there is light and thus perception (√*loc*, √*lok*; ibid.: 9-11). A *loka* is thus, in a most general sense, the location in which one's perceptual, phenomenal existence takes place. A far more common phrase translated as "world" is *idam sarvam*, literally "this whole." The meanings of *loka* and *idam sarvam* frequently overlap; however, *loka* tends to express a more specialized sense, tied to the sacrificial dynamics of the cosmos. In order to better highlight this special sense and thus provide a precise analysis of the term *loka*, and in order that this study does not grow to unwieldy proportions, I will not systematically address uses of *idam sarvam*.

loka is most frequently associated with Indra, and secondarily with Agni and Soma.[10] Collectively, these three are the central deities of the Vedic cultus and "the preeminent promoters" of the *ṛṣi*s' poetic inspirations.[11] Through their interactions, the *loka* is conceived as fundamentally sacrificial—pervaded by the two sacrificial substance deities, Agni and Soma—and martial—ruled over by the sovereign prowess of Indra.[12] Consequently, they establish a precedent: the one who successfully performs a fire sacrifice and drinks *sóma*, as did Indra, slays his enemies, overcomes rival sacrificers, and thereby creates, masters, and embodies a "wide *loka*" proper to sovereign warriors and sacrificers alike.

The sacrificial nature of the *loka* is established in the characterizations of Agni and Soma, the divine agencies and instruments of the sacrifice who create the world by their expansive natures. A representative verse states: "Agni and Soma, having expanded (√*vṛdh*) by a *bráhman*,[13] you two have created a wide *loka* for sacrifice."[14] Here, the *loka* is depicted

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[10] Less often, *loka* is associated with Viṣṇu, Mitra and Varuṇa, and Bṛhaspati. Viṣṇu is typically paired with Indra, and together they perform feats that are elsewhere performed by Indra alone. Mitra and Varuṇa are typically portrayed as guardians of the *loka*, while Bṛhaspati's relation to the term *loka* likewise repeats that of Indra. This repetition is unsurprising: Whitaker (2011: 24), following Schmidt (1968), refers to Bṛhaspati as Indra's "priestly alter ego" who "leads a cohort of prototypical poet-priests, the Aṅgirases, in helping him smash open the *valá* cave to release the sun and cows." See also Gonda (1966: 17) for further resonances between Indra and Bṛhaspati based on the motif of cosmic expansiveness and the act of propping apart the world-halves.

[11] Holdrege 1996: 234.

[12] A readily apparent shift in the usage of *loka* occurs in the tenth *maṇḍala*. Here, *loka* ceases to be used exclusively as a totalizing concept and begins to refer to a series of distinct worlds (viz., the world of the fathers, the world of immortality, etc.).

[13] A *bráhman* is both a 'sacred formulation' uttered by sacrificing brahmins, as well as the 'power of expansion' (√*bṛh+man*). Thus, the *bráhman mantra*s are formulas that 'expand' their intended object, which is here Agni and Soma, fire and liquid. In a directly related fashion, Indra is made strong and large by the praises (*stoma*) of sacrificers (Whitaker 2011: 143-146).

[14] RV 1.93.6cd—*agnīṣomā brahmaṇā vāvṛdhānoruṃ yajñāya cakrathur u lokam* ‖ The later *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (BĀU) and the *Suśruta Saṃhitā* (SuS) both carry forward

as that which is expressly "for sacrifice" because it is created by the expansion of the sacrificial deities, Agni and Soma. The extent of the *loka* is precisely the extent of these two, and thus the manner in which they extend—their precise role in this sacrificial world—is of signal importance.

As the 'igneous' deity par excellence, Agni expands as fire and light. Hence he is called "all pervasive [and] far radiant."[15] He is the "large god" (*mahān deva*) who, when birthed at the beginning of the day, is established as the *hotṛ* priest while seated upon the lap of his mother, the *loka*.[16] He is thus the rising Sun, which rests upon the lap of the horizon at dawn, as well as the terrestrial fire, which is seated upon the lap of earth. Indeed, Agni exists wherever there is fire and light. His fire is also fiercely powerful, as he destroys all those enemies who are "yoked against" his favored sacrificers,[17] while those he favors are granted a "comfortable *loka*."[18]

Soma, whose nature contrasts that of Agni with the liquidity of "extracted" (√*su*) juices, is praised simply as the "maker of the *loka*" (*lokakṛt*),[19] or more specifically as "he who made light for the day."[20] This latter claim refers to the identification of Soma with the waters upon which the solar Agni rests in the heavens. These *sómic* waters, rather than dousing the flames of the Sun, are the substrate through which its luminosity pervades. They

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this identification of the world with the sacrifice insofar as they characterize the *loka* as two-fold: fiery and cool, *agneya* and *saumya*.

[15] RV 5.4.2b—…*vibhur vibhāvā*

[16] RV 5.1.6—*agnir hotā ny asīdad yajīyān upasthe mātuḥ surabhā u loke*. See also RV 3.29.8

[17] RV 5.4.5c—*viśvā agne abhiyujo vihatyā*.

[18] RV 5.4.11ab—*yasmai tvaṃ sukṛte jātaveda u lokam agne kṛṇavaḥ syonam*

[19] See e.g., RV 9.2.8; 9.6.21

[20] RV 9.92.5—*jyotir yad ahne akṛṇod u lokam*

are the open road along which the rays of the Sun travel to fill the world with light and heat, and it is precisely in this regard that Soma is a "maker of the *loka*."

Agni and Soma are thus intertwined in an all-important fashion in the RV. They are the source and extent of the *loka* because they are the divinely expansive forces by which light spreads. And because a *loka* is by definition a lighted clearing, there could be no *loka* without the continued presence of light.[21] Otherwise, there is a darkness that constricts and confines, and the *loka* itself is in danger. So above all, the Ṛgvedic poets desire a world for sacrifice, and therefore, in the course of their sacrifices, they invoke a divine and sovereign hero who can wield the expansive powers of Agni and Soma and ensure the existence of the *loka*.

The sovereign hero of this sacrificial *loka* in the Vedic period, the deity who best wields and embodies the expansive and creative powers that Agni and Soma confer through sacrifice, is Indra. It is thus unsurprising that the preponderance of RV verses in which the term *loka* appears feature Indra, especially as he performs his quintessential heroic deed, the slaying of the demon Vṛtra. Indra's slaying of Vṛtra has long been recognized as the central cosmogonic narrative in the RV.[22] In broad strokes, the tale involves an "obstructing" serpent-demon named Vṛtra, who has enclosed (√*vṛ*) the waters in a mountain. Indra drinks *sóma* in a sacrifice and thereafter expands, both in size and strength, to prop apart the heavens from the Earth, creating a "wide *loka*" therein. Indra then smashes Vṛtra with his *vajra*-weapon, resulting in numerous outcomes—he wins the Sun; he sets loose the waters;

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[21] Drawing together the theme of expansion and light, Gonda writes, "[v]erbs, originally meaning 'to extend, spread, or penetrate,' not infrequently assumed the sense of 'filling with, bestowing upon,' on the one hand and that of 'being light, illustrious, illuminating' on the other" (1957: 129).

[22] Beginning with Brown (1942) and affirmed by Kuiper (1962, 1970).

he retrieves the cows from the Vala cave; and he gives birth to the Sun, the heavens, and the dawn—all of which signify the saving of the *loka* from destruction, which is synonymous with its creation.

In the lead up to the slaying of Vṛtra and the creation of the *loka*, Indra undertakes a *sóma* rite. Consequently, Indra and Soma are poetically conceived as partners in the slaying of Vṛtra (and other rivals) and in the creation of the *loka*. RV 2.30 concisely conveys this partnership and the correspondence of sacrifice, martial prowess, and world creation: "O Indra, just as you slayed [Vṛtra] in the beginning, so slay our rival… For you two [Indra and Soma] tear away the determination [of him] whom you combat, but you are both rousers of [even] a feeble man who performs sacrifice. You, Indra and Soma, entered into us—create a *loka* in this fearful place."[23] Here, as elsewhere,[24] the poet explicitly links the creation of a *loka* with the destruction of Vṛtra, which is achieved by virtue of a strength gained through the alliance of Indra and Soma. Importantly, this strength is transferable through the medium of the sacrifice. In other words Indra, in his alliance with Soma, is conceived as a paradigmatic generator of the *loka*, whose power can enter into human sacrificers to render them Indra-like, emboldening them to repeat his cosmogonic and martial exploits. As RV 6.23 states, "Let Indra be the drinker of the pressed *sóma*, the mighty one ever leading the singer forward with his help, the maker of a *loka* for the hero and the *sóma*-presser, the giver

[23] RV 2.30.4cd, 6—*yathā jaghantha dhṛṣatā purā cid evā jahi śatrum asmākam indra* ‖ … *pra hi kratuṃ vṛhatho yaṃ vanutho radhrasya stho yajamānasya codau* | *indrāsomā yuvam asmāṃ aviṣṭam asmin bhayasthe kṛṇutam u lokam* ‖

[24] E.g., RV 7.89.5; 10.180.3

of goods to his praiser, even a feeble one."[25] The sacrificing drinker of *sóma* thereby gains Indra-like might, which, "in the beginning," allowed Indra to slay Vṛtra and create the *loka*. Likewise, RV 4.17, a hymn which begins by declaring, "you, O Indra, are large (*mahān*),"[26] calls Indra a "creator [who] bestows strength to the one desirous of a *loka*."[27] It is by virtue of this slaying that the *loka* is said to *belong* to Indra, who "possesses stones [to press *sóma*]."[28] Naturally, Indra's characterization overlaps with that of Soma insofar as both are characterized as ones who "will make a wide *loka* for us."[29]

As mentioned earlier, in the poetic language of the RV, the slaying of Vṛtra is also synonymous with the loosing of pent-up waters. These waters then begin to flow toward Indra as a sign of his newly attained sovereignty, which is parallel to the way in which *sóma* flows to him in "streams of honey"[30] that "rain"[31] on him. His mastery of the waters is in this way proximate to his unparalleled appetite for *sóma*, which he is said to imbibe from the very moment of his birth in sacrificial settings. Consequently, Indra's characterization in the RV and his relation to the *loka* is especially dependent upon his specific relationship with

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[25] RV 6.23.3—*pātā sutam indro astu somam praṇenīr ugro jaritāram ūtī* | *kartā vīryāya suṣvaya u lokaṃ dātā vasu stuvate kīraye cit* || Jamison and Brereton's translation, modified (2007: 805). See also vs. 7 of this hymn.

[26] RV 4.17.1a—*tvam mahāṃ indra*. On the translation of *mahān* as large, see van Buitenen 1964.

[27] RV 4.17.17d—*…kartem u lokam uśate vayodhāḥ* ||

[28] RV 3.37.11cd—*loko yas te adriva indra…*

[29] RV 7.84.2d—*uruṃ na … kṛṇavad u lokam*

[30] See RV 9.73.2c—*mádhor dhārābhir*

[31] See RV 10.116.1—*píba mádhvas tṛpád indrā vṛṣasva*. The raining of honeyed streams of *sóma* on Indra, which signifies both his cosmic expansiveness and his sovereignty, will receive a drastically altered significance in later traditions. For instance, in the MBh, the parable of the "Man in the Well," speaks of a man who hangs upside-down in a pit, consuming streams of honey that represent the fleeting desires that distract him from the dangers of approaching death.

Soma: Soma-*qua-sóma* is the source of his might, a sign of his sovereignty, and coincident with his ability to create the *loka*.

Indeed, the prime effect of Soma on Indra is that he swells both in might and in size. As Whitaker notes, the RV's poets "repeatedly assert that imbibing *sóma* causes the drinker to increase in size and strength" (2011: 146). This is vividly expressed in a later Ṛgvedic paean to *sóma*'s magnifying effects:

> Because the five peoples have not appeared to me to be even a speck… Have I drunk the *sóma*? Yes! Because the world-halves are not equal to even one wing of mine… Have I drunk the *sóma*? Yes! By my greatness (*mahitva*) I have surmounted heaven and this great earth. Have I drunk the *sóma*? Yes![32]

Drinking *sóma*, the hymn states, is associated with a "greatness" that makes all else appear small. As the most celebrated drinker of *sóma*, Indra is inconceivably large (*mahān*), greater even than the two world halves. When this expansive power of Soma is instilled in Indra, his greatness in size coincides with his might (*śávas*). Whitaker further notes that, in the earliest strata of RV texts, *śávas* is used as a synonym for *mahitvá* insofar as it is by might that Indra drives apart the world halves (2011: 126). Hence, "no limit has been established for this might of yours; thus with this greatness he [Indra] drove apart the two world-halves."[33] Elsewhere a poet states: "Drink *sóma* for magnified Indra-power (*indriyá*), to smash Vṛtra… Drink of the honey to satisfaction."[34] Thus the drinking of *sóma* at the sacrifice recalls the

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[32] RV 10.119.5-8; trans. Jamison and Brereton 2014: 1590.

[33] RV 6.29.5ab—*na te antaḥ śavaso dhāyy asya vi tu bābadhe rodasī mahitvā* |

[34] RV 10.116.1—*pibā somam mahata indriyāya pibā vṛtāya hantave… piba madhvas tṛpad*. The smashing of obstacles is in this verse is dependent upon the magnification of *indriyá*, a term that will eventually come to signify the sense powers. As I show in chapter four, the characterization of the sense powers as '*indriya*s' in the *Caraka Saṃhitā* perpetuates the expansive characterization of *indriyá* in the RV. In the later source, the sense powers are considered "expansive" insofar as they reach out toward sense-objects in the phenomenal horizon.

key elements of the Indra-Vṛtra conflict: Indra's expansion in might and size, which corresponds to the creation of the *loka*, which further corresponds to the destruction of his constrictive rival.

As a result of this *sóma*-induced expansion, Indra and Indra-like sacrificers become fiery, solar, and thus Agni-like: "With the pressing stone, one is magnified (√*mah*) into Soma… Where the light is inexhaustible, in which world the Sun is placed, place me, O Soma, in the immortal, undecaying world. O drop, flow around for Indra."[35] This solar imagery appears again in a hymn to Indra, where the poet pleads, "as one who knows, lead us to a wide *loka*, to solar light, to fearlessness and well-being."[36] This same hymn then lauds Soma as "this wise one who measured out the six wide [quarters], outside from which there is no world."[37] Consequently, the extent of Soma is the extent of the whole of the world, which is in turn measured by the extent of the Sun's—Agni's—light. By drinking *sóma*, Indra attains to that same luminous expanse. In fact, in his *sóma*-induced victory over Vṛtra, Indra is directly identified with the Sun: "O Vṛtra-smiter—whatever today you have risen over, o Sun, all that is under *your* will, Indra."[38] In this regard it is telling that Agni is occasionally given the epithet, "killer of Vṛtra" (*vṛtrahan*), which is otherwise restricted to Indra.[39] Hence the slaying of Vṛtra is said to result in Indra's winning of the Sun, the expansive rays of which extend throughout the whole of the world, eclipsing all other celestial lights and terrestrial fires with its great luminosity. This Sun rests like an egg in the cosmic (*sómic*) waters of

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[35] RV 9.113.6c, 7—*grāvṇā some mahīyate… yatra jyotir ajasraṃ yasmiṃl loke svar hitam* | *tasmin māṃ dhehi pavamānāmṛte loke akṣita indrāyendo pari srava* ||

[36] RV 6.47.8ab—*uruṃ no lokam anu neṣi vidvān svarvaj jyotir abhayaṃ svasti*

[37] RV 6.47.3cd—*ayaṃ ṣaḷ urvīr amimīta dhīro na yābhyo bhuvanaṃ kac canāre*

[38] RV 8.93.4; trans. Jamison and Brereton 2014: 1194; emphasis in original.

[39] See, e.g., RV 10.69.12.

space,[40] and by its expansive luminosity it pervades these waters, which are thereby imbued with the Sun's sovereign luminosity. Thus by killing Vṛtra, Indra comes to embody and exemplify both Agni and Soma, who are equally implicated in the creation of the *loka* with which they are coextensive, and which is ruled over according to the sovereign and sacrificial powers they confer.

To this triad of Indra, Agni, and Soma—the central Vṛtra-smashing, luminous lords of the sacrifice in the RV—Viṣṇu is sometimes added as a fourth. Verses that associate the term *loka* with Viṣṇu naturally emphasize similar themes. At RV 7.99.4ab, the sacrificial and fiery quality of *loka* is emphasized: "You two [Indra and Viṣṇu] made a wide *loka* for sacrifice by generating the Sun, the dawn, and the fire."[41] Viṣṇu is again invoked at RV 8.100.12, wherein his wide-striding activity is paired with Indra's creation of the *loka* by the slaying of Vṛtra: "O companion Viṣṇu, stride out (*vi-√kram*) farther. Heaven grant a *loka* for the *vajra* to prop apart. We two will slay Vṛtra…"[42] A similar sentiment is conveyed at RV 4.18.11: "Then Indra said as he was about to smash Vṛtra: 'Viṣṇu, my companion, stride out widely.'"[43] According to one etymology, Viṣṇu is the "All-Pervader" (*√viś*) who lives up to his name by striding out, or advancing in a superlative fashion. Indra's name (derived from *√in*) also carries connotations of "pervasion," and additionally of "force," "advancing," and

[40] As in RV 10.121.

[41] RV 7.99.4ab—*uruṃ yajñāya cakrathur u lokaṃ janayantā sūryam uṣāsam agnim*. See also Gonda (1966: 27), who cites SB 10.5.4.1 and 10.5.2.8, where the "one who knows this [i.e., the unity of Agni's forms] thus becomes that whole Agni who is the space-filler," and Sāyaṇa's commentary, which says that this person, like Agni, becomes "ruler of the *loka*."

[42] RV 8.100.12—*sakhe viṣṇo vitaraṃ vi kramasva dyaur dehi lokaṃ vajrāya viṣkabhe* | *hanāva vṛtraṃ*… ||

[43] Translated by Jamison and Brereton 2014: 587.

"mastery."[44] His pairing with Indra in these verses is therefore indicative of a significant overlap in their characterization. The two are creators of the *loka* by virtue of a pervasive expansion that is synonymous with the slaying of Vṛtra, who "covers," "surrounds," and "obstructs" (√*vṛ*). That is, by slaying Vṛtra, the sovereigns Viṣṇu and Indra advance (or "stride out") beyond the boundary-*qua*-Vṛtra.

Indeed, the sovereign status of Indra and Viṣṇu derives both poetically and linguistically from this overcoming of limiting obstacles. As Gonda notes, one of the more frequent adjectives paired with the term *loka* in the RV is *uru*, signifying a "wide world" (1966: 18, *et passim*). A related term is *ūrū*, "the thighs," which the Puruṣa-Sūkta portrays as the well-spring of the *vaiśya* class over which rulers and brahmins alike dominate. Both of these terms, *uru* and *ūrū*, derive from the verbal root √*vṛ*, like the name "Vṛtra." And as we saw above, the killing of Vṛtra and the creation of the *loka* are essentially synonymous achievements. Hence there is a clear play on the theme of √*vṛ* at work between the wideness of the world, the overcoming of the world-obstructer Vṛtra, and the mass of peoples which sovereign rulers are charged with protecting.[45] As the prototypical sovereign, Indra is thus considered *uruvyacas*, "widely extending," and *urujrayas*, "extending over a wide space."[46]

[44] See Chakravarty, who argues that Indra was originally an adjective describing a human leader "who vanquished enemies and released waters" (1995: 33).

[45] In the MBh, Bhima promises that he will smash Duryodhana's thighs for the latter's part in the humiliation of Draupadī at the dicing. He finally fulfills this promise in the *Śalyaparvan*, and this event marks the de facto victory of the Pāṇḍavas in the great war. By smashing Duryodhana's thighs (*ūrū*), Bhima symbolically revokes Duryodhana's sovereignty over the wide expanse (*uru*) of the *loka*. It is further significant that just prior to their encounter Duryodhana has used his control over the elements (which he touts as his proper claim to sovereignty—see Malinar 2012) to conceal himself within the waters of a lake. This could signify, following Proferes (2007: 77-113), sovereignty in its latent condition, comparable to a fire hidden in the waters.

[46] Gonda 1957: 128.

Insofar as the *vajra* is the symbol of the king's sovereignty over his peoples as well as the instrument of Vṛtra's demise, it is particularly significant that the *loka* is made into a wide expanse because it has been propped apart by the *vajra*. That is, the king's symbol of sovereignty over the peoples of the wide world is the means by which he overcomes rivals, which is parallel to the way he 'creates' the world by becoming world-sized through the sacrifice.

1.2.2 The Temporality of Loka Creation

The story of Indra's original rise to sovereignty is a timely affair. The *sóma* rite is the event at which this multivalent event takes place, where Indra, Agni, and Soma (and sometimes Viṣṇu) combine forces to defeat Vṛtra and create the *loka*, and where the sacrificial nature of the *loka* is revealed. Through this association with the *sóma* rite, the stories of *loka* creation and the killing of Vṛtra are mapped onto (at least) two temporal registers. The first of these stems from the fact that the hymns that tell the tale of Indra's victory are primarily associated with the midday pressing of the *sóma*.[47] Here the identification of Indra with the Sun is clearly indicated. The daily climb of the Sun (which, as noted earlier, was birthed by Indra) to its zenith-point in the midday sky is parallel to the way in which Indra swells in both might and size after drinking *sóma*. This is the time of day in which heat of the Sun reaches its greatest strength, as well as when the light of its rays covers the greatest expanse, abolishing the concealments of shadows and darkness. Hence, the midday-pressing at the *sóma* ritual signifies that each day the *loka* is renewed; each day

[47] So noted by Jamison & Brereton (2014: 39). The morning pressing (taking place at dawn), is associated with the Vala-cave tale (i.e., the rescuing of the cows from the Paṇis), which is sometimes conflated with the Indra-Vṛtra tale.

is a sacrifice in which the *loka* expands to match the extent of a sovereign Indra, who is sacrificially imbued with the powers of Agni and Soma.[48]

The second temporal register implicated by the association of the Indra-Vṛtra tale with the *sóma* ritual is the year. As Whitaker notes, citing Kuiper (1962), "the *sóma* ritual was performed at the beginning of the New Year… [during] the annual rebirth of the universe from the darkness, oppression, and chaos of a long wintry night" (2011: 7).[49] The New Year was thus a time in which, "through the performance of *sóma* rituals, early Vedic Āryans reenact[ed] Indra's cosmogonic and martial acts, while also marking the beginning of the migratory season" (ibid.). In other words, and according to the idiomatic expressions of the Vedic period, the performance of the New Year *sóma* rite and the heroic clash between Indra and Vṛtra both mark the yearly transition of Vedic culture from *kṣema* to *yoga*—from a sedentary to a migratory existence; from a state of peaceful rest to one of martial exploits. A verse from the RV's eighth *maṇḍala* ties these themes together: "You [Indra] are master of peace (*kṣema*) and hitching up for war (*prayuja*)… O blameless slayer of Vṛtra, wielder of the *vajra*, drink of the *sóma*!"[50] A later hymn in the tenth *maṇḍala* reiterates this characterization through the lens of a boastful warrior's cries: "Like Indra, I am a slayer of

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[48] The symbolic meaning of Viṣṇu's three strides, as connected by the Indra-Vṛtra tale to this process, adds weight to this interpretation. See below on the theme of measurement.

[49] See also Witzel (2003), who aligns both the Soma ritual and the Mahāvrāta rite with the New Year. According to another of Kuiper's works, "the oldest nucleus of the Rigveda was a textbook for the new year" and this accounts "for the endlessly repeated references to Indra's fight with Vṛtra, and for the hymns to Agni and Uṣas, if these may be taken to celebrate the reappearance of the sunlight after a period of winter darkness" (1960: 222).

[50] RV 8.37.5—*kṣemasya ca prayujaś ca tvam īśiṣe… vṛtrahann anedya pibā somasya vajrivaḥ*

rivals, invulnerable and indestructible… Having taken [for myself] war and peace (*yogakṣemaṃ*), may I become the highest."[51]

Now it is precisely when Indra is engaged in his warrior's exploits that he could be said to have entered the mode of "yoga." His quintessential act in this mode is the slaying of Vṛtra, which coincides with his cosmic expansion through *sóma*-drinking, his creation of the *loka* by propping apart the world-halves, and his ascension to absolute sovereignty through the performance of the *sóma* rite at the time of the New Year. Hence, Indra's prototypical sovereignty derives from his mastery of this early type of 'yoga,'[52] which rescues the world from peril at the beginning of the New Year through a warrior's act of solarized expansiveness.[53]

Such passages may be read as precursors to the abstract temporal thought of texts that have inherited parts of Indra's characterization. For instance, in the AV, we read that Kāla,

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[51] RV 10.166.2-5—*aham asmi sapatnahendra ivāriṣṭo akṣataḥ… yogakṣemaṃ va ādāyāham bhūyāsam uttama*. This hymn contains is the sole use of the compound *yogakṣema* in the RV, which is indicative of the relative lateness of the compound. Its late entry into the Vedic conceptual wheelhouse could perhaps explain why Indra is not more explicitly associated with the concept of yoga in the earlier books of the RV.

[52] A discussion of *yoga-kṣema* in the later *Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā* (*MS*) at verse 3.2.2 (quoted in White 2009: 65) associates yoga with "advancing" (*pra-√kram*) and "wandering" (*yāyāvara*). In the Pāli canon, wandering ascetics are depicted as undergoing periods of sedentary life during the rainy season. It is during these sedentary periods that the Buddha debated wandering ascetics from other traditions, often converting them (ideologically 'conquering' them) in the process. The natural vicissitudes of the seasons therefore imposed a pattern of existence on later mendicant ascetics which paralleled the activities of Vedic martial sovereigns.

[53] A verse from the earliest layer of the RV, later repeated in the "honey doctrine" of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (BĀU), offers an alternative approach to Indra's 'yoga' that speaks to his mastery of all forms: "He possesses a form corresponding to every form… by his *māyā*, Indra goes about in many forms, for ten-hundred steeds are yoked (*yuktā*) for him" (RV 6.47.18). In the absence of a temporalized framing, the verse suggests that, as the sovereign imbiber of *sóma* par excellence, Indra has free movement within the space that he, filled with *sóma*, himself fills. As a result, he exercises a mastery over form, a mastery which is here qualified as an act of 'yoga.'

or Time, “drives [on a chariot led by a] seven rayed (or reined) horse.”[54] The same hymn holds that “seven wheels drive Time… [of which] *amṛta* is the axle.”[55] These verses approximate a set of verses in the famous “Riddle Hymn” of the RV (1.164): “Seven yoke the one-wheeled chariot drawn by one horse with seven names… The seven who are standing on this chariot, [for them] the seven horses draw the seven-wheeled [chariot].”[56] Houben (2000), following Geldner (1951), identifies the one-wheeled chariot with the Sun, while the seven who stand on one chariot are sacrificing priests (or alternatively, primordial seers[57]) who sacrificially interact with the Sun in order to regulate time.[58] This indicates that the characterization of Time in the AV is derived from the earlier characterization of the Sun, which is further identified with the chariot-yoking, cosmically-expansive, warrior-sovereign Indra: “They say it is Indra, Mitra, Varuṇa, and Agni, and also it is the winged well-feathered [bird] of heaven [i.e., the Sun].[59] Existing as one, *vipra*s speak about it in many ways.”[60] The inclusion of Mitra and Varuṇa in this verse is reflective of the generally sovereign characterization of the Sun. As Indra is predominately associated with periods of *yoga*, Mitra and Varuṇa are gods of the peaceful periods of *kṣema* (of friendly compacts and

[54] AV 19.53.1a—*kālo aśvo avahati saptaraśmiḥ*

[55] AV 19.53.2—*sapta cakrān vahati kāla…amṛtaṃ nv akṣaḥ*

[56] RV 1.164.2-3; cited in Brereton (1991), pp. 1-2.

[57] See especially Brereton (1991), which notes the uses of “Seven Sages” as a reference to Ursa Major.

[58] Houben 2000: 520. Alternatively (or perhaps simultaneously), the horse should be identified with the Sun, his seven names referring to the seven names/tongues of fire (personal communication, David White, Oct. 2015).

[59] In RV 4.26-27, the bird of heaven (*śyena*) is ridden by Indra as he steals the *sóma* from a *gandharva*.

[60] RV 1.164.46—*indram mitraṃ varuṇam agnim āhur atho divyaḥ sa suparṇo garutmān* | *ekaṃ sad viprā bahudhā vadanti*

laws). In this way, the sovereign figures Indra, Mitra, and Varuṇa would embody the regular transformations of the nature of sovereign power over the course of a solar year, from migrations and martial activities during the appropriate seasons to the sedentary mode of existence dictated by winter or the rainy seasons when travelling activities would be impractical or impossible.

1.2.3 Summing up Mythic Personhood

The poetic images examined so far form the RV's core vocabulary for thinking about spatially and temporally expansive sovereign gods in a world of sacrifice. Indra is the central figure, who, by taking on the expansive powers of Soma and Agni at the sacrifice, is able to both expand himself to the far reaches of the cosmos and to overcome his perennial nemesis, Vṛtra. This is not an isolated event, located somewhere in the hoary past; rather it is intimately linked to the cycles of the day and the year, the sole temporal cycles with which Vedic thinkers were concerned.[61] Consequently, the qualities of the Sun and its movements across the vault of heaven throughout the day and the year were especially important, and appear to have told the stories of Indra and Vṛtra and the sacrifice in their own fashion.

Because all of the elements of these stories are still present to the minds of Vedic period thinkers, and because the sacrifice of the cosmos is on-going, it is possible to not only commemorate but relive these events and thereby adorn oneself with their significance. This is precisely what occurs in sacrificial settings, where human sacrificers are transformed into the agents of the originary and on-going sacrifice of the cosmos. In this regard, Indra serves as prototype for these human sacrificers who wish to echo Indra's deeds and thereby attain his sovereign state of existence. Implicitly, the human sovereign is one who becomes, like

[61] That is, the Vedic period is unaware of the grand time-scales of *yuga*s and *kalpa*s, which only begin to be considered in the pre-classical period.

Indra, Soma, and the Sun, cosmically expansive and identified thereby with the spatio-temporal whole of the world over which he rules. He is the one who stands, as Indra did, as the quaffer of *sóma*, the "yoga"-warrior who hitches up his chariot to overcome enemies and boundaries alike, and the creator of the *loka* at the rebirth of the year.

With this we inch ever-closer to our target of the Vedic-era understanding of the person's, or *puruṣa*'s, relation to the world, or *loka*. For if the *loka* is conceived primarily along the lines of the mythic exploits of divine figures like Indra, then mortal humans can access that *loka* so-conceived through the medium of sacrifice alone. In other words, the RV's understanding of what it means to be a person 'in' the world can only be properly glimpsed according to the transformation of the person that takes place through sacrifices. Thus our analysis now begins to shift away from the strictly poetic and the mythic and towards the practices and experiences of sovereign, sacrificing humans.

1.3 The Ritual Generation of Human Sovereigns and the Supplanting of Indra

The way in which these themes applied to sacrificing human sovereigns has been extensively studied by Proferes in his *Vedic Ideals of Sovereignty and the Poetics of Power* (2007). A central hypothesis of this work is that there "was a three way identification between the king, the tribal fire, and the sun" (ibid: 77). The tribal fire, which was established at the heart of the tribe, was a literal consolidation of the fires of multiple clans (*viś*). For this reason it was named Agni Vaiśvānara—the "fire common to all men"—and given the epithet *saprathas*—the "extensive one."[62] The Sun bore the same name insofar as

[62] As in *Taittirīya Saṃhitā* (TS) 7.1.11. Within the early Upaniṣads, Agni Vaiśvānara has been reinterpreted as the digestive fire (see BĀU 5.9). This in turn paves the way for Āyurveda's fascination with diet in a fiery world of food.

its pervasive light extended across all of space and filled the world of men with light. Such fiery qualities were ritually conferred upon a human king primarily through the Agnicayana and Rājasūya, rites that aimed, through manipulations of fire and the performance of watery unctions, to identify the king with the Sun's pervasive and luminous dominion, thereby remaking him into the expansive Agni Vaiśvānara.

A culminating moment in the Agnicayana and Rājasūya is the unction rite, during which "a solar persona of the king was constructed from the solar powers conferred upon him by the waters used to anoint him: from the unction waters the king arises as the sun.... he, like the sun, will fill all space" (ibid: 82-85).[63] This worked because the unction waters were identified with both *sóma* and the cosmic waters in which the Sun resides. The rays of the Sun's light travel along these *sómic* waters, which act as the substrate by which the Sun's light extends to the limits of the cosmos. Consequently, the waters were considered a transfer medium, through which the human king could receive the luminous "splendor" (*varcas*, and later, *tejas*) that extends across all of space. Because the waters of the heavens were not able to be directly collected for use in the sacrifice, the waters used in the unction were, like the clan fires that were consolidated into the tribal fire, gathered from widely available sources (rivers, lakes, the sea) and consolidated into a single water representing the sum total of all waters. Thus the waters, like the clan fires, were identified with the clans over which the king would exercise his pervasive dominion. This grants the formula: "*Clans consolidate clan fires in the king's tribal fire (= sun)* as *unction waters (= clans) consolidate splendor (= sovereignty) in the king (= sun)*" (ibid: 105; emphasis in original).

[63] Elsewhere Proferes writes, "the motif of spatial extension is fundamental to the Vedic discourse on rule and kingship" (ibid: 142).

The human leader's attainment of expansive sovereignty through solar identification and watery unction followed the divine model of Indra's rise to absolute sovereignty and his subsequent loosing of the waters through the slaying of Vṛtra. According to Proferes, RV 10.124 (which records a version of Indra's rise to power and subsequent defeat of Vṛtra[64]) demonstrates that "in order to rule, Indra must command fire, water, and the principle of food generated by the interactions of these two elements, represented by the *sóma* plant and its luminous juices" (ibid: 112). His command of fire, water, and *sóma-qua*-food serves as the model by which later sacrificing sovereigns will attempt to lure these elements and their powers over to their side.[65] As we saw above, these requisites for sovereignty and successful sacrifice (with the addition here of food[66]) are in the RV identified with the totality signified by the term *loka*. The hymn goes on to identify Indra with the Sun,[67] and thus Indra himself is identified with the cosmically pervasive fire (Agni) and its expansive luminosity

[64] According to Brereton (in Jamison and Brereton, 2014: 1599-1600), the hymn narrates the conferral of sovereignty on a new king following the death of a previous ruler.

[65] The successful performance of sacrifice (and the failure of rival sacrificers) is likened to making the *loka* and all the gods "mine" at RV 10.128.2, which states, "Mine be all the gods at competing invocation: The Maruts together with Indra, Viṣṇu, and Agni. Mine be the midspace, let it be a wide *loka*." Jamison and Brereton translation (2014: 1606), modified.

[66] Through the mastery of waters, the sovereign king is construed as the one who provides food for the multitudes (*viś*). These multitudes are themselves identified with the waters. In his solarity, however, the sovereign is construed as an eater of food, and likewise as an eater of the clans (see Proferes 2007: 99). Here, we glimpse a precursor to two notions that are further developed in later contexts: first, sovereignty is intimately related to issues of food, and the sovereign himself is the greatest of all eaters of food; second, in the interactions between food, fire, and water, we find a precursor to later portrayals of the contrary actions of Sun and moon (the latter of which comes to be identified with Soma). The first of these notions will be examined further in the following chapter. As for the second, later traditions note that whereas the liquidity of the moon makes plants grow, feeding them so that they swell with *rasa*, the Sun desiccates the earth by the heat of its rays (see White 1996: 19-32.) The sovereign king approximates both of these roles in his solar character, his *sóma* drinking, and his subsequent mastery of the waters.

[67] Through the proxy-symbol of the goose; see Proferes 2007: 110-11.

(waters/Soma). Hence, in order for the sovereign to become expansively identified with Indra, and thus a pervader of all space and a creator of the *loka*, the sovereign must undergo a ritual transformation that confers upon him the powers of the Sun and the waters (Agni and Soma) and a mastery of food.

Now this ritual transformation should not be misrepresented as simply an intellectual exercise, devoid of any experiential component. Instead, the affective dimensions of this transformation are signaled in a passage we cited earlier (RV 10.119), wherein the *sóma* drinker views the *loka* as if from on high: "the five peoples have not appeared to me to be even a speck… By my greatness (*mahitva*) I have surmounted heaven and this great earth. Have I drunk the *sóma*? Yes!" The exalted experience of the sacrificer is thus one of solar supremacy and surmounting greatness, conferred by *sóma* and indicative of a condition in which the *loka* is filled by the sacrificer's own radiance. It is a transformation of a uniquely personal sort, and in this regard it disrupts the formulaic identification of the sacrificer with Indra. Even though Indra remains the prototype for such a transformation, and even though the transformed human sovereign retains an Indra-like characterization, the affective and personal dimensions of this transformation make it possible to overwrite Indra with new names and new meanings, effectively supplanting his sovereign position.

This is precisely what begins to occur in the youngest layer of the RV, its tenth *maṇḍala*, in which we are unexpectedly confronted with two new Indra-like and cosmically expansive sovereigns: Prajāpati and Puruṣa. The first of these, Prajāpati, rises to prominence in the stanzas of the famed Hiraṇyagarbha Sūkta at RV 10.121, which figures importantly in the Agnicayana rite. In the course of this rite, a *yajamāna* drinks *sóma* and thereby rises to *svargaloka*. In Proferes' reading, the usual translation of *svargaloka* as "the heavenly realm"

is deficient. Rather the term should be read as "the open space [*loka*] conducive [*ga*] to the solar realm [*svar*]" (Proferes 2007: 136). In other words, the Agnicayana is not a rite by which a sacrificial patron is transported to a heavenly realm, but rather is a rite by which the patron becomes as expansive as the Sun. Through his identification with Prajāpati, the *yajamāna* is said to become the sole king of the world according to his "magnificence" (*mahitvā*); "these directions" (*imāḥ pradiśa*) are said to be his; he "extends through space in the atmosphere" (*antarikṣe rajaso vimānaḥ*); and he "encompassed all the creatures" (*viśvā jātāni pari tā babhūva*).[68] This characterization of the *yajamāna* as Prajāpati, the "Lord of the Creatures," effectively usurps the poetic imagery of sovereign expansiveness originally associated with Indra. Thus Prajāpati, like the *yajamāna* who becomes him, is the inheritor of a paradigm that was originally established in the figure of Indra and his sacrificial and martial helpers, Agni and Soma.

The Puruṣa of the Puruṣa Sūkta, which is used in numerous Vedic rites,[69] is likewise constructed around a redeployment of Indra's poetic imagery. As I suggested at the outset of this chapter, the Puruṣa Sūkta (and thus the RV's loftiest vision of the *puruṣa*) follows the theme of a sovereign, cosmic expansion through spatializing expressions of pervasion, enveloping, and expansion, and martial expressions of advancing widely and a greatness that overpowers. As spatially expansive, Puruṣa "pervasively enveloped the earth,"[70] which he

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[68] I follow Proferes (2007) for this last translation, despite the fact that the genders of *viśvā* and *jātāni* are not in agreement.

[69] Of special interest is its use in the *puruṣa-medha*, the so-called "human sacrifice" ritual. According to *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (ŚB) 13.6.2.12, The sixteen verses of the Puruṣa Sūkta are recited in the presence of the human victims (*paśu*s) in order to magnify (√*mah*) the *yajamāna* (who is ultimately identified with the victim).

[70] RV 10.90.1c—*sabhūmiṃ viśvato vṛtva*

subsequently "grows beyond by food."[71] His essentially solar and fiery nature is announced in the very first verse by the compounds *sahasrākṣa* ("thousand-eyed") and *sahasrapāt* ("thousand-footed" or "shadowed"[72]), terms that elsewhere in the RV are used as epithets for Agni and Sūrya, respectively.[73] The immediately following claim, that Puruṣa "rose beyond [by] ten fingers (*daśāṅgulam*)," is likely another reference to the Sun: Outside of the ninth, *sóma-maṇḍala* of the RV, the phrase "ten fingers" (*daśa kṣipa*) refers to the fashioning of fire by the manipulation of the fire-drill and the birth of the Sun at dawn.[74] To say that Puruṣa rises by "ten fingers" therefore identifies him as a fire, whether kindled by human hands in a sacrificial enclosure or by divine artifice in the heavens. This would in turn clarify why Puruṣa is considered thousand-eyed (as the thousand rays of the Sun and fire) and thousand-shadowed (as the source of cast shadows).[75] Finally, as the Sun that rises daily

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[71] RV 10.90.2—*annenātirohati*

[72] I follow Falk (1987: 126-127) and White (2009: 134-135) for this translation, which I attempt to justify further below.

[73] See Brown 1931: 109-110.

[74] E.g. RV 1.144.5; 3.23.3. Throughout the *sóma-maṇḍala*, ten-fingers (or, poetically, ten "maidens") refers to the hands as the means by which *sóma* is pressed. As Mus (1968, p. 549) demonstrates, ten fingers also refers to the measure of a person's face (from the chin to the hairline) and thus ten fingers indicates the head. This double signification finds combined expression in the later mythology of the Pravargya rite in the ŚB (14.1.1), where the Sun is said to be the head of Viṣṇu, who is here the first of the gods to complete the sacrifice. I address this rite further below.

[75] Shamasastry (1938: 200) claims that the *daśāṅgula* measure refers to the length of the shadow cast by a twelve-*aṅgula* tall gnomon on the summer solstice. This is untenable. Using the NOAA's Solar Calculator (http://www.esrl.noaa.gov/gmd/grad/solcalc/) I determined the time of solar noon for several important sites on the subcontinent (including Shamasastry's home of Mysore) for the date of the solstices and equinoxes. By using this data to calculate the length of a 12-unit tall gnomon's shadow at these times and dates, I have confirmed that such a gnomon never casts a 10-unit tall shadow at solar noon on any of these important dates. The same is true for the approximate times of the morning and afternoon *sóma*-pressings. (As Falk notes (1987: 125), these are times—approx. 9am and 3pm—when the gnomon-*pauruṣa* and its shadow—a *pauruṣī*—are the same length.) It is

and pervasively covers the Earth with light and shadow over the course of the year, Puruṣa is rightly "this whole world, what has been and what will be."[76]

This expansive and solar imagery begins to mix with martial imagery in the third verse: "Due to the greatness (*mahimātas*) of him being so great, Puruṣa is the superior conqueror (*jyāyān*)."[77] In the immediately following verse, he, like Viṣṇu, "strode widely (*vi*+√*kram*) toward the various directions, upon the earthly and the heavenly."[78] Finally, the themes of spatial expansiveness and sovereign superiority are expressed through the image of Puruṣa's oddly recursive birth: "Wide-shining majesty (*virāj*) was born from Puruṣa; [and] Puruṣa was born from wide-shining majesty."[79] This image of successive and mutual births of Puruṣa from Virāj and Virāj from Puruṣa may indicate a transference of the status of Puruṣa to successive sovereigns, who in each instance derive their sovereignty from their "wide-shining" expansiveness. If this is the case, the Puruṣa Sūkta is not just a cosmogonic account that is conceived on the model of Indra's expansive solar greatness; it is also a narrative that establishes the transferable nature of sovereignty (here made synonymous with being a

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therefore altogether unlikely that the measure of ten-*aṅgula*s could have meaningfully referred to a gnomon.

[76] RV 10.90.2ab—*puruṣa evedaṃ sarvaṃ yad bhūtaṃ yacca bhavyam* | I take this claim to encapsulate the later claims to those various creatures who are born from Puruṣa and the origination of the four social *varṇa*s from the parts of Puruṣa's body.

[77] RV 10.90.3ab—*etāvānasya mahimāto jyāyāṃśca pūruṣaḥ*

[78] RV 10.90.4.cd—*tato viṣvaṅ vyakrāmat sāśanānaśane abhi*. Note that in the later 'subtle body' mapping of the BĀU (at 2.1.19), the term *puruṣa* is given a folk etymological relation to *pur*, or "citadel," which Rau (1976, discussed in Bryant 2001) interprets as originally consisting of concentric ramparts. One of Indra's epithets in the RV is *purandara*, "the destroyer of citadels." The fact that Puruṣa (or a *pūruṣa*) strides out widely in all directions could be read as a martial metaphor pointing to Indra's expansive breaking-through of rival fortifications (belonging, e.g., to the Dāsas) and his resultant sovereignty over all lands. (For a discussion of the BĀU verse, see White 2009: 131.)

[79] RV 10.90.5ab—*tasmādvirāḷajāyata virājo adhi pūruṣaḥ*

spatially expansive *puruṣa*) and asserts an inherent relation between sovereignty and a sacrificial act of cosmogonic import. That is, sovereignty and the creation of the *loka* are not acts exclusive to Indra, but rather belong to *any person* who would so transform himself by ritual action.

The tenth *maṇḍala* of the RV, in which these supplantings of Indra's status occur, thus records an expansion of the core Ṛgvedic worldview. No longer is Indra the sole name by which the cosmically large and solar sovereign of the *loka* can be known. The sovereign remains one who is identified with the *loka*, and in this regard he remains Indra-like; yet now he may be known either as Prajāpati, the "lord of the creatures," or simply as Puruṣa, "the Person."[80] As the *puruṣa* is the sustained point of focus in this dissertation, it is this latter development that most draws our attention. For in the texts that follow this latest layer of the RV, the *puruṣa* concept takes on an ever-expanding significance. For the present chapter, this is reflected in the way that the *puruṣa* becomes a central focus of all sacrificial speculation and the sustained subject of ritual transformations.

1.4 Puruṣa, Ritual, and the Measurement of the Sovereign Loka

We can begin to demonstrate the expansion of the *puruṣa*'s role in later texts indirectly, via an examination of Viṣṇu as he is portrayed in the Brāhmaṇas, especially the *Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa* (ŚB). In these texts, Viṣṇu begins to play a more prominent role in the sacrifice that is exemplified by the royal *yajamāna*'s repetition of his "three strides" (*trivikrama*). Such a repetition is enjoined at critical moments over the course of several sovereignty-conferring rites. A *yajamāna* should enact the strides (on a tiger skin pelt) at the close of a

[80] I will suggest one factor that precipitated this development in the final section of this chapter.

rite,[81] each stride measuring upward from the earth, to the midspace, and finally to the heavens where the Sun-*qua*-Viṣṇu properly resides. In this regard the strides are representative of the sacrificer's attainment of *svargaloka*, and his identification with the sovereign solarity of Viṣṇu. Quite naturally, a *yajamāna* performing the Rājasūya repeats the three strides immediately following his unction with the waters.[82] In the Agnicayana the performance of the strides is coupled with the Vātsapra, an homage given to the multiple forms of Agni. Both the three strides and the Vātsapra are said to create the world and its creatures. Furthermore these two are identified, respectively, with the day and the night, the two halves of the year as the Sun follows its northerly and southerly courses, and with periods of 'yoking' and 'unyoking,' parallel in import to the periods of *yoga* and *kṣema* (the former of which we saw associated with Indra in the RV).[83] We might therefore say in a still early sense that the ritual reenactment of the three strides of Viṣṇu, which themselves echo the earlier exploits of Indra, constitute (either alone or in conjunction with the Vātsapra) the 'full measure' of the spatio-temporality of the *loka*.[84]

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[81] Or, coupled with the Vātsapra, at both the beginning and close of a period of *dīkṣā*.

[82] ŚB 5.4.2.6

[83] See especially ŚB 6.7.4.7-15

[84] An alternative etymology for Viṣṇu's name points to √*vay*—"to draw lines, guide straight, make a framework"—and thus Viṣṇu is the "surveyor" god (see White 2009: 283, n.70).

In the RV, Viṣṇu's strides are either vertical, matching the ascent of the Sun to its high-point in the sky, or all-covering and occurring thrice (perhaps corresponding to the full transit of the Sun over the course of a day). In the ŚB, when these strides are vertical, they are more likely to be paired with a Vātsapra performance. This provides a clue as to why the Vātsapra is portrayed as counterpart of the three strides in the ŚB: The strides refer the sacrificer to the celestial solar realm (and the day), while the Vātsapra refers the sacrificer back to the terrestrial fire (and the night). The implied incompleteness of Viṣṇu following his strides, marked by the need to step back down to earth, is translated into the separation of Viṣṇu's head from his body in the mythology of the Pravargya rite.

The association of Viṣṇu with measuring out the *loka*, an act coincident with the creation of the *loka*, informs an essential element of ritual activity—namely, the measuring out of ritual space. It is precisely by measuring out this space, by reenacting the creation of the *loka*, that a sacrificing *puruṣa* recreates himself as the *loka*. As Falk (1987) astutely points out, Viṣṇu is especially associated with stick-like forms in middle-Vedic literature. Following Shamasastry (1938), he argues that among the many sticks that are identified with Viṣṇu, the gnomon was perhaps most important.[85] More recently, Malville writes, "In the gnomon we encounter the remarkable union of a technical device used to determine true cardinality with a powerful cosmogonic symbol" (2008: 50). In other words, the gnomon—or, to put it bluntly, a stick in the ground—provided a truly sophisticated means by which a person could orient himself in and to the *loka* according to a cosmic standard. The measuring capacity of Viṣṇu-*qua*-gnomon was operationalized by Vedic-era architects and applied to the building of sacrificial enclosures. By tracing the daily path of the Sun according to the shadow cast by a twelve-*aṅgula* tall gnomon, the architects of sacrificial enclosures established the east-west orientation of their structures. The shadow of the gnomon effectively repeated Viṣṇu's strides as it crossed the outer rim of the sundial early in the day, reached its highest stride at noontime, and then again crossed the outer rim later in the day. These first and last strides indicated a true east-west, or "*prācī*" line, allowing the builders of sacrificial enclosures to orient their constructions eastward (toward the rising Sun), while the middle-most stride provided a rough north-south line.

Precision is important here because the sacrificer is attempting make himself identical to these cosmic forces, but this orientational operation will naturally produce inaccuracies due

[85] The main points of both authors' arguments are summarized in White 2009: 133-135. I attempt to gently expand upon their insights here.

to the continuous declination of the Sun, even during the equinoxes when the Sun's course most closely affords a true east-west orientation. A possible method to correct for this inaccuracy, described by Malville (2008), involves drawing three concentric circles with the gnomon placed at their common center. When the path of the Sun's shadow is measured across these three circles, the resultant east-west lines can be averaged to produce a more accurate orientation. We find sundials displaying precisely such concentric circles in both ancient Harappan sites and 11th century sundials.[86]

According to a variant formulation of the *trivikrama* in the RV, Viṣṇu does not take three upward strides, but rather strides out three times in a pervasive fashion: "Viṣṇu is he who measured out the earthly realms three times exactly, for Manu, who was hard-pressed."[87] This variation thus affords a second possible interpretation, in which the three strides indicate an averaging operation that allowed for a more accurate measuring of space and time.

A third possibility, this time inclusive of both variants on Viṣṇu's strides, attempts to account for the declinational cycle of the Sun over the course of the year coupled with the importance of the equinoxes and solstices to the ritual calendar. The two solstices—literally, the "stoppings" of the Sun—trace the northernmost and southernmost arcs of the Sun across the vault of the sky, the points at which the Sun's rising or lowering in the sky stops and reverses course. The equinoxes trace a middle arc between these two extremes and moreover afford the truest measurement of the east-west *prācī* line. Hence, on the face of a sundial, the gnomon's shadow traces a rather distinct pathway on these days that could easily have

[86] E.g. the Kiranada Kallu—see images in Rao 2005: 507.

[87] RV 6.49.13; trans. Jamison and Brereton, modified (2014: 843).

represented three "strides." If we consider the winter solstice's shadow-arc (the longest arc across the face of the sundial) to be the first "stride," then the following "strides" would record the Sun's successive upward advance, from its lowest to its highest transit through the heavens. This long-term operation would thus measure out all of space three times over and all of time (i.e., the year) through three successive strides.[88] Falk follows this same interpretational pattern in his reading of the three *pada*s at RV 1.22.17 (though he, focusing on the shadow's ascent outwards across the face of the sundial rather than the ascent of the sun, assigns the first step to the summer solstice). As he writes, "The three 'footprints' of the shadow [marking the midday points on the solstices and equinoxes] would thus divide the year into four quarters, each representing ninety days in the Vedic year of 360 days."[89]

Witzel (2005) argues that the winter solstice arc points to yet another Vedic-era stick-in-the-ground, this time associated with ritual chariot races. Here, the far pole around which competing chariots must turn represents a point of danger "where chariots often crash. In the same way the sun is in danger of getting stuck at its winter solstice point of 'turning' at its southmost rising late in December" (Witzel 2005: 31). This racing rite is poetically encoded in the Saramā hymn of RV 10.108, wherein the turning point of the winter solstice is likened to the faraway-to-the-south home of the Paṇis, who have stolen the cows that Indra will soon rescue. As we saw earlier, the rescuing of cows is a poetic image that, like the slaying of Vṛtra, records an act of cosmogonic import. It is furthermore associated with the morning-pressing in the *sóma* rite, and thus with the rising of the Sun at dawn. Here the rescuing of

[88] Falk notes that monthly markings of the midday shadow over the twelve months of the Hindu lunar calendar year would have reproduced Viṣṇu's seven steps, a variant on the three steps that Falk takes to be specifically indicative of the year (1987: 125-126).

[89] Ibid: 128-129.

the cows is akin to rescuing the Sun from its southernmost position, which inaugurates the eventual return of vitality at the coming of spring.

I take all of this to once again reflect the fact that the solar cosmogony of the Vedic Saṃhitās and its ritual reenactment by sacrificing sovereigns does not refer itself to an isolated moment, but instead a continuous process. Like sacrificial activity, cosmogony is ongoing and rhythmically cyclical; it pulses with the solstices and equinoxes around which ritual activities are structured. The rhythm is thus all in the Sun, and while Viṣṇu is associated with gnomons, poles, and other stick-like forms, these are all, properly speaking, ultimately indicative of the dynamics of the Sun, which not only pervades and generates the *loka*, but also subjects it to the rhythmic transformations of the seasons.

A key moment in this rhythm is the New Year. Note first that there is some debate regarding the exact time of the Vedic New Year.[90] Most scholars settle either on the vernal equinox or summer solstice, with a minority accepting the winter solstice. In all likelihood the time of the New Year is a shifting target (subject to the vicissitudes of climate, geography, and culture) and Vedic-era texts may themselves have recorded conflicting traditions. Regardless of the precise moment, however, the New Year is consistently treated as the anniversary of the *sóma* rite at which Indra slew Vṛtra, and thus of the solar expansion by which Indra (and the human sovereign in imitation of Indra) creates the world. It is therefore significant that this event is given a kind of 'gnomic' resonance in other contexts. For instance, the *Mahābhārata* (MBh) speaks of an earlier time when Indra gifted the sovereign Vasu Uparicara with a bamboo pole, called "*Maha*." Vasu honored Indra for this gift by inaugurating a tradition of driving the pole into the ground at the end of the year and

[90] The main positions of this debate are summarized by Whitaker 2011: 7, 168 n.15.

then decorating it on New Year's day.[91] Agrawala (1970) argues for the pre-Vedic antiquity of this celebration by noting its parallels to the maypole festival of Teutonic cultures.[92] This decorated pole, the MBh tells, is a form of Indra, and therefore symbolizes the cosmogonic expansion of Indra who, like a pole, propped apart the two world-halves.[93] According to Nilikaṇṭha's commentary,[94] the specific form of Indra that is worshipped hereby is his *haṃsa-rūpa*, his "goose-form," which is a well-known symbol for the Sun. Finally, the *Pariśiṣṭa*s of the AV record a set of rites to be performed during the *Indramahotsavaḥ*, the "festival of the Indra-pole."[95] Following purificatory preparations and the strewing of the sacrificial grass, a priest takes hold of the king, and performs the *rāṣṭra-samvarga*, or "the absorption of the kingdoms," saying, "Indra [who is] coming hither; Indra the protector; Indra the ruler; O Indra, expand (√*vṛdh*) this *kṣatriya* for me."[96] Afterwards they raise the pole with the mantra: "I have erected you (√*hṛṣ*) in [our] midst; the sky is [thereby] fixed, let

[91] See MBh 1.57.1-32. This description obviously recalls the Maypole of European tradition.

[92] See Agrawala 1970: 63-65.

[93] Kramrisch interprets Indra's cosmogonic role architecturally: "Indra himself was part of his cosmic architecture… its central pillar that supports heaven" (1991: 101). This same image points forward to the *Yogaśāstra* (YŚ) of Hemacandra, where the yogin is said to expand to the upper and lowermost limits of the *loka* by assuming the shape of a *daṇḍa* (*YŚ* 11.51, translated in Quarnström 2002: 184).

[94] Cited in Agrawala 1970: 52. Agrawala notes a later slippage that identifies the *maha* with Śiva, indicating yet another overlap between Indra and Rudra-Śiva.

[95] Still "celebrated [today] as the Indra-Jatra in Kathmandu, a festival that features parading cosmic poles (the miniature temples with their 30-foot spires). This too occurs around the summer solstice. At its conclusion, the king of Nepal mounts the temple chariot and exchanges tunics with Red Matsyendra, the patron deity of Kathmandu" (David White, personal communication).

[96] AV 19.1.6—*arvāñcam indraṃ trātāram indram indraḥ sutrāmā imam indra vardhaya kṣatriyaṃ me*

every clan wander about you."[97] The *kṣatriya* king thereby is expanded in the form of the pole, which embodies Indra as the Sun and his expansive cosmogonic act. The concluding verse to this rite demonstrates that this is a creative act of specifically sovereign importance: "Day after day [the one who celebrates the *Indramahotsava*] becomes a conqueror of his kingdom. He alone becomes ruler on this earth. The one who knows this does not perish before old age."[98] In short, this Indra-like ruler embodies the Sun which, day after day and year after year, rises to "conquer" the *loka*. He is the Sun in the midday sky—the time of the midday *sóma*-pressing that is ritually associated with the Indra-Vṛtra tale—and the Sun of the summer solstice, both being times when the might and heat of the Sun, and thus of Indra, are at their greatest.

If there is any true Vedic antiquity to this tradition of the New Year Indra-pole, then it is but a small step to see how all this measuring of the *loka* with sticks finally relates to the *puruṣa* concept and thereby the human sacrificer seeking sovereignty. To wit, the New Year also marks a time for constructing the sacrificial enclosure for the *sóma* rite. In order to properly orient the enclosure, an east-west *prācī*-line would have to be determined through the use of a gnomon and sundial, which is to say through the use of Viṣṇu's three steps (in one of the fashions we have here described). Once properly oriented, the sacrificial enclosure would itself be measured out with a stick of equal height to the *yajamāna*, the one who will transform himself into Indra, Viṣṇu, the Sun, and the Puruṣa over the course of the

[97] AV 19.1.7—*ā tvā ahārṣam antar dhruvādyaur viśas tvā sarvā vāñchantu iti*

[98] AV 19.3.9—*śvaḥśvo 'sya rāṣṭraṃ jyāyo bhavati eko 'syāṃ pṛthivyāṃ rājā bhavati na purā jarasaḥ pramīyate ya evaṃ veda*

sacrifice, and thereby (re-)generate the *loka* as its sovereign master.[99] In the later *Arthaśāstra* (AŚ), this *yajamāna*-high stick is called a *pauruṣa* (or *gārhapatya-pauruṣa*), a term which also refers to a standardized measure of ninety-six *aṅgula*s. However, in the same text the term *pauruṣa* also refers to a gnomon of twelve *aṅgula*s.[100] This application of the name *puruṣa* across distinct measures reflects the fact that a *puruṣa*, whether as the hopeful human sovereign or as the gnomon, embodies the sovereign powers of the cosmos and therefore acts as the standard of measure for the *loka*. In other words, in ritual contexts the *puruṣa* is, by his identification with the sovereign Sun that fills the *loka*, the literal measure of all things.

This close association of *puruṣa* with measurement takes on an even greater significance in the ŚB, and this in turn further demonstrates the developing nature of the *puruṣa* concept in the later Vedic period. The ŚB frequently uses the compound "*puruṣasaṃmita*," meaning "*puruṣa* is the same measure," for the first time in the broader Vedic corpus. As if it were stating a basic premise as well as an inevitable conclusion (a skeleton key of sorts for our interpretation) the ŚB declares, "verily this is the extent of *puruṣa*: *puruṣa* is the sacrifice [and] the sacrifice is the same measure (*saṃmita*) as *puruṣa*" and "whatever the measure of that [sacrifice], just so much does this one [i.e., the *puruṣa*] obtain."[101] In other words, sacrifice not only reveals the true extent and measure of a person, it also serves as a

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[99] ŚB 10.2.2.6 declares that the altar is measured "by a *puruṣa* with outstretched arms, for *puruṣa* is the sacrifice by which the whole world is measured." Other verses hold that the orientation lines for the altar's construction are measured in *puruṣa*-arm lengths (ŚB 1.2.5.14), and that the 'wings' of the altar are measured by a *puruṣa*'s finger-breadths (ŚB 10.2.1.2).

[100] Falk 1987: 123-124.

[101] ŚB 3.1.4.23—*etāvānvai puruṣaḥ puruṣo yajñaḥ puruṣasammito yajñaḥ… yāvatyasya mātrā tāvantamevainayaitadāpnoti*

mechanism for a strictly personalized expansion toward the attainment of a greater measure and a more extensive *loka*.

One of the ways this is shown to be true is through acts of speech that are powered by *prāṇa*, the "vital breath." In the context of the kindling of the sacrificial fire, the *yajamāna* is said to "extend (√*tan*) these [three] *loka*s" through a triple recitation; and by extending them, "he gains these *loka*s."[102] Employing his triple *prāṇa*s in the recitation, the *yajamāna* is himself "extended without interruption" (*saṃtatamavyavacinnaṃ*) over the same expanse. This helps us make sense of another passage (ŚB 3.1.4.23) in which the thirty-one syllables of the *anuṣṭubh* meter are identified with the thirty-one parts of *puruṣa* (ten fingers, ten toes, ten *prāṇa*s, and the *ātman*), who is moreover equal in measure to the sacrifice. Insofar as the *prāṇa*-powered faculty of speech is able to pervasively fill the whole world, the *puruṣa* too is able to extend outwards by chanting verses in ritual settings.

Another means by which the *puruṣa* and the sacrifice measure up to each other is found at ŚB 6.2.2.3-4, wherein a group of sacrificers called Carakas ("Wanderers") are said to sacrifice a male goat in order to complete the restoration of Prajāpati. Here the sacrifice, which is Prajāpati, is said to be twenty-one-fold (comprised of twelve months, five seasons, three worlds, and the Sun). Puruṣa is there likewise given as twenty-one-fold (comprised of ten fingers, ten toes, and an *ātman*) for "*puruṣa* is Prajāpati and Prajāpati is Agni. Whatever is the extent of Agni—whatever is his measure—by that much this one [i.e. the *puruṣa*-*yajamāna*] is enkindled."[103] To say, as this verse does, that the *puruṣa* is "enkindled," and

[102] ŚB 1.3.5.13—…*etallokāṃ saṃtanotīmāmllokāṃ spṛṇute*

[103] ŚB 6.2.2.4—*puruṣaḥ prajāpatiḥ prajāpatiragniryāvānagniryāvatyasya mātrā tāvataivainametatsaminddhe*. See also a related passage at ŚB 6.7.3.11-12, which declares that Agni is "vast" (*bṛhat*), that the *yajamāna* is Agni, and thus however great Agni is, the *yajamāna* takes hold (√*dhā*) of that same extent when he sacrifices. The reach of a kindled

thus extended specifically according to the extent that Agni is extended in the sacrifice marks an important shift away from the earlier Vedic worldview. Whereas in the RV the solar relation between the sovereign and the world has an all-or-nothing character to it (the sovereign extends like the rays of the Sun to pervade the *whole* world), in the Brāhmaṇas, by which time the Vedic rites no longer belong to sovereigns alone, the expansive attainments of sacrificers are individualized. In other words, whereas the sovereign *puruṣa* of the RV attains identification with *the* world, totalistically conceived, the *puruṣa-yajamāna* of the ŚB more often attains to *a* world, whose limits are commensurate to his ritual activity.[104] As Brian K. Smith puts it, "[t]he dimensions of the sacrificer's self or being are correlative to the rituals he sponsors and participates in" (1989: 103).[105] We find a related and more succinctly expressed version of this same idea in the BĀU's use of the term "*sva-loka*," or one's "own world," which moreover demonstrates the universalization of sacrifice to all aspects of existence that has taken place in the Upaniṣads and which I will address in the following chapter. Thus, through the motif of the *puruṣa* as a measure, the ŚB carries forward the poetics of solarity and extension found in the RV, while simultaneously pointing

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fire, whose expansive luminosity links the terrestrial Agni to the Sun itself, is thus taken to be equal to the reach of the *puruṣa*.

[104] Though the sovereign is still identified with the entirety of the world, as evidenced by his identification with the *lokampṛṇa iṣṭakā*, the "world-filling brick" of the sacrificial altar. (See ŚB 8.7.2.2; 9.4.3.5; cf. Gonda 1957:135-136.)

[105] Smith further argues that, through his ritual work, the *yajamāna* constructs a specifically individualized *daiva ātman* that corresponds to a specifically individualized *svargaloka*. I find this argument untenable, or at least representative of a minority position in the Brāhmaṇas. More often, and Smith's citations could equally be read in this direction, the Brāhmaṇas speak of *svargaloka* being attained in varying degrees. In other words, sacrificers do not construct individualized *svargaloka*s, but rather attain the same *svargaloka* to lesser or greater extents, and this is synonymous with the lesser and greater extensions of one's person through sacrificial acts.

forward to the increasingly individualistic worldview associated with the *śramaṇic* culture of the Upaniṣadic period.

1.5 Puruṣa and Death

1.5.1 Puruṣa as Death in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa

A similarly transitional motif is found in the way these verses on the "Wanderer's" sacrifice correlate the Sun with the *ātman* (both of which constitute the twenty-first element of Prajāpati and *puruṣa*, respectively). The Sun is thus tacitly identified as the Self and truest body of the human *puruṣa*. The Upaniṣads frequently repeat this identification, and thereby they characterize the *ātman* in terms commensurate to the ŚB's characterization of the Sun, which in turn directly invokes its thinking about Death and Death's relation to the *puruṣa*. These themes are explored primarily in the tenth book of the ŚB, which speaks simultaneously about the *puruṣa* in the *maṇḍala* of the Sun and the identification of the Sun with Death. For instance, ŚB 10.5.1.5 identifies the three forms of ritual speech (*Ṛk*s, *Sāman*s, and *Yajus*es) with the three aspects of the Sun (*maṇḍala*, *varcas*, and *puruṣa*, respectively). In the immediately following verse, each of these solar aspects is called a *loka*, and thus the *puruṣa* of the Sun is actually a *loka* that corresponds to the *yajus* formulas.[106] When all three of these solar aspects, or *loka*s, are taken together they constitute an immortal aspect that avoids Death. By sacrificing with them, taking on thereby the triple nature of the Sun, the sacrificer aligns himself with this immortal *ātman*.

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[106] ŚB 10.5.2.1. The ŚB is in the lineage of the *Yajur-Veda*.

In other words, these verses suggest that the path to immortality does not require that Death be conquered;[107] it requires instead an identification with Death itself. After declaring that the *puruṣa* in the solar *maṇḍala* is, in fact, Death,[108] an important verse states:

> There is this verse: 'In the midst of Death there is the deathless,' for this Death is nearer to the deathless. 'The deathless is founded on Death,' for the *puruṣa* in this one [i.e. in the solar *maṇḍala*] burns [√*tap*] that which is dependent upon this [solar] *maṇḍala*. 'Death is the wearer of the shining light,' for verily the shining light is Āditya [the Sun], who shines in the day and night. He enters everywhere, for he turns round by this [solar] one. 'The *ātman* of Death is in the shining one' for the *ātman* of this *puruṣa*[109] is in this [solar] *maṇḍala*.[110]

The "founding" of the deathless on Death tells us that Death can only be transcended through an identification with Death. And true to the poetic forms of the RV, this requires an identification with the Sun—or more accurately, with the *puruṣa* in the Sun.[111] This is the *puruṣa* that "enters everywhere," and is thus naturally (at least from a later Upaniṣadic perspective) identified with the *ātman*. Thus the verse at once demonstrates a commitment

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[107] Instances of the warrior's conquering advance upon the Sun-*qua*-Death are discussed in White 2009: 59-67.

[108] See ŚB 10.5.2.3. The same notion is more succinctly expressed a few verses later (in vss. 13 & 23 of the same section) with the words "*sa eṣa eva mṛtyuḥ ya eṣa etasminmaṇḍale puruṣo*" ("The *puruṣa* that is in this [solar] *maṇḍala* is verily Death").

[109] The later *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa* (JB), which contains an early version of the *pañcāgni-vidyā* (better known to the Upaniṣads—see the following chapter), notes that those who fail to attain the immortal status of the Sun give their *ātman* back to the Sun after death, then they are dragged off by the Seasons (who travel along the Sun's rays) to be (eventually) reborn on Earth.

[110] ŚB 10.5.2.4—*tadeṣa śloko bhavati antaram mṛtyoramṛtamityavaraṃ hyetanmṛtyoramṛtam mṛtyāvamṛtamāhitamityetasminhi puruṣa etanmaṇḍalam pratiṣṭhitaṃ tapati mṛtyurvivasvantaṃ vasta ityasau vā ādityo vivasvāneṣa hyahorātre vivaste tameṣa vaste sarvato hyenena parivṛto mṛtyorātmā vivasvatītyetasminhi maṇḍala etasya puruṣasyātma*

[111] The means for attaining this identification are, unsurprisingly, sacrificial. As the JB argues, the attainment of the Sun and *svargaloka* (by which one avoids repeated death) depends upon the natural linkage between the terrestrial and celestial aspects of Agni—that is, the linkage between the sacrificial fire and the Sun. For the JB passage see Bodewitz 1973: 72-74.

to the solar poetics of the RV while pointing forward, arguably all the way to the poetic characterization of Kṛṣṇa in the BhG as the blindingly solar site of all death and destruction and the immortal foundation upon which all mortal existence is founded. Should the sacrificer of the ŚB wish to accede to this rather lofty identification, the ritual is the means that allows him to "ascend upwards" (*ūrdhvam ut√kram*) and "pervade" (*√ap*) that solar self.[112]

Another set of passages in the ŚB relates the mythical origins of this unique relation between mortal sacrificers, the Sun, and Death.[113] According to the tale, the goddess Aditi—whose name suggests "devouring" (*√ad*) as well as "boundlessness" or "immensity" (*a+√dā*)—had eight sons, the first of the *deva*s. But the eighth of these was under-formed and aborted. This son was named Mārtāṇḍa, the one that was born from a "dead egg," and it was said that he was "equal in measure to a *puruṣa*" (*puruṣasammita*).[114] His divine brothers looked piteously upon their aborted sibling and sought to reform him into the shape proper to his measure.[115] Surprisingly, however, the *puruṣa*-shape which they bestow upon their "dead egg"-brother is not that of a human, but that of the Sun, Āditya, the shining one who is identified with Death. The myth closes by declaring that "these creatures are his," meaning that all mortal beings have their basis in the revived dead egg that is the Sun, and which moreover is the true form and measure of the *puruṣa*. It is as if to say that all mortal beings, and especially all sacrificing, human *puruṣa*s, were in reality so many extensions of Death who is the Sun. Thus by returning to the source from which they extend through

[112] ŚB 10.5.2.6. This verse provides the *adhiyajña* interpretation. The *adhyātma* interpretation that follows associates the aspects/*loka*s of the Sun with the parts of the eye.

[113] This mythology expands upon a mythic fragment found in RV 10.72.

[114] ŚB 3.1.3.3

[115] ŚB 3.1.3.4—*taṃ vicakruryathāyam puruṣo*

sacrificial activity (which is, of course, predicated upon the fiery consumption of oblations and the sacrificer's identification with that activity), the sacrificer avoids Death by becoming the immortal person that Death is.

Before we begin to think that the ŚB's views on sacrifice are wholly macabre, however, we must highlight and reemphasize the paradox that this Death-identification indicates. In short, to become identified with Death is to become the underlying *puruṣa* or *ātman* of all that is mortal. Such a claim is common to the Upaniṣads, but it also appears just as forcefully in the ŚB. As ŚB 10.6.1.11 reads, "This Agni-Vaiśvānara," i.e., the universal fire that is "common to all men" and that thus announces their mortality, "is simply *puruṣa*. He who knows Agni-Vaiśvānara in the form of *puruṣa*, as established within the *puruṣa*, he wards off Death and attains all life."[116] In other words, the identification with Death is, in fact, the end of death, and the arising of the fullness of life. In this regard, the ŚB seems to echo a whole host of practices that are found throughout the world (especially those associated with Proto-Indo-European culture), which announce that it is possible to reach death before dying, and thereby to find the true effulgence of life by embracing death in some significant fashion.[117] Life comes from death, and radically so.

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[116] ŚB 10.6.1.11—*sa eṣo'gnirvaiśvānaro yatpuruṣaḥ sa yo haitamevamagniṃ vaiśvānaram puruṣavidham puruṣe'ntaḥ pratiṣṭhitaṃ vedāpa punarmṛtyuṃ jayati sarvamāyureti*

[117] I refer here to the practices of *fana* in Sufi mysticism, of "dying to Christ" in the Christian tradition, of *katabasis* in Orphic initiation (and related acts of shamanic initiation found throughout the globe), and others of a similar sort—all of which portray survival-encounters with death that are thematically parallel to a number of Indic notions (such as the 'returning of rivers to the ocean' of *brahman*, or Naciketas' journey to Yama's realm in the Upaniṣads, or even the practice of absolute surrender to Kṛṣṇa outlined in the Gītā) as well as more modern philosophical notions (such as Georges Bataille's "Practice of Joy Before Death").

As was the case in the *sóma* rite, this language of attaining the fullness of life through an identification with Death is not simply a matter of abstract correlations, but rather corresponds to a phenomenal, experiential rebirth realized through ritual activity. As Kaelber (1978) shows, the initiatory rites (*dīkṣā*) described in the Brāhmaṇical literature are filled with mixed imagery of death and rebirth: The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* (AiB) holds that the initiand (*dīkṣita*) takes on "the form of one dead," while according to the ŚB, the rebirth of Prajāpati occurs when Death carries him as an embryo over the course of a year.[118] Accordingly, the initiation period is a time fraught with potential danger, due to both the need for exactitude in the ritual proceedings and from the physical toll taken by fasting and exposure to intense and prolonged heat. Speaking to this latter danger, Knipe (1975) notes that a sovereign *yajamāna* must perform a *dīkṣā* of twelve days in a small hut prior to the performance of the Aśvamedha. "By the twelfth day his *tapas* should reach a climax in a state of exhaustion, the ritual equivalent of death," only after which can the sovereign be refashioned into the sacrificial cosmos (Knipe 1975: 99).[119] If it is therefore true that the preparatory *dīkṣā* aims at bringing about a visceral confrontation with Death, then it is also true that the full purpose of the *dīkṣā* is realized through the sacrificial proceedings proper; for these ultimately bring about the decisive identification of one's own person with Death-*qua*-the Sun, and the simultaneous attainment of the immortal (or in later contexts, "unborn") *ātman* or *puruṣa* of the Sun.[120] As an important verse puts it, the sacrificer "is

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[118] Kaelber 1978: 57-59.

[119] The exhaustion of the *dīkṣita* is parallel to the exhaustion experienced by Prajāpati after he generates the cosmos. In both cases the ritual activity that follows aims to put the exhausted one back together, as one reborn, or reconstituted as a living whole.

[120] As Kaelber (1978: 65-73) demonstrates, there is a shift in soteriological language, from the Vedic period to the Upaniṣadic period (during which time Brāhmaṇical thought and

joined with Death [and] he is born from it. [Thereby] he is released from Death. Indeed, the sacrifice becomes his self (*ātman*); having become that sacrifice, he is saved from Death. By this, all of him that is offered in sacrifice is released from Death."[121]

1.5.2 Death in the Pravargya

To my thinking, the mythology and rituals associated with the Pravargya rite provide the most intelligible expression of these themes. The Pravargya rite is itself somewhat unique among those found in the Brāhmaṇas. According to Houben it is "one of the few rituals that has been explicitly referred to in the Ṛgveda," and its association with the Aśvin twins suggests that it may have roots in pre-Vedic, Indo-Iranian culture (1991: ix).[122] Yet it has also played an important role in bridging between Vedic and later paradigms, at least until the time of the MBh in the pre-classical period. We see this bridge built explicitly in the *madhu-vidyā* section of the BĀU, and again in the Sukanyā section of the Vanaparvan of the MBh, both of which deal, directly or indirectly, with the riddle of the "head" of the sacrifice. I will address these later texts and their fascinating and cryptic exposition of the ritual aspects of the Pravargya in the penultimate chapter. Here, I will focus exclusively on the Pravargya's opening mythology as found in Brāhmaṇa texts, which should suffice to

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practice was increasingly confronted by *śramaṇic* forms of thought and practice), in which metaphors of wombs and rebirth are increasingly replaced by metaphors about the "unborn" and existences that lie "beyond the womb."

[121] ŚB 11.2.2.5—*tadenamupariṣṭānmṛtyoḥ saṃskaroti tadenamato janayati sa etam mṛtyumatimucyate yajño vā asyātmā bhavati tadyajña eva bhūtvaitanmṛtyumatimucyata eteno hāsya sarve yajñakratava etam mṛtyumatimuktāḥ* ||

[122] As Jamison and Brereton note, "the Aśvins were worshiped already during the Indo-Iranian period and in the Pravargya rite, which is not a soma ritual. But already in the Ṛgvedic period the Aśvins were recipients of soma, and by the time of the later Veda the Pravargya rite had been incorporated into the soma tradition" (2014: 6).

illustrate the way in which sacrificial rituals fulfill the purposes of the *dīkṣita*'s encounter with Death, as well as demonstrate several links the rite forges between Vedic, extra-Vedic, and bourgeoning post-Vedic worldviews.

The ŚB's treatment of the Pravargya rite begins with an origin myth. All the *deva*s, minus the Aśvin twins, gather together at the site called Kurukṣetra to take part in a *sattra*, a sacrificial *sóma* drinking "session." This particular *sattra* includes a more-or-less friendly competition in which the first among them to complete the sacrifice will win glory (*yaśas*). Viṣṇu is the eventual winner, and thus he was cloaked in glory and "became the best of the gods."[123] Henceforth, the text says, "he who is Viṣṇu is [to be known as] the sacrifice; [while] he who is the sacrifice is Āditya," the Sun.[124] Thus the glory which Viṣṇu attained by completing the sacrifice is nothing less than the sacrificial cosmos itself, which is "headed" by the Sun.

The other gods are naturally envious of this and soon after resolve to take Viṣṇu's glory for themselves by force. But Viṣṇu, ever jealous of his supremacy, takes up a bow nocked with three arrows and holds the gods at bay. Locked in a divine standoff, the gods secretly conscript a group of ants to chew through Viṣṇu's bow-string and disarm him. When the ants succeed, the bow-string snaps with such force that it decapitates Viṣṇu, sending his head flying forth, after which that part alone is known as Āditya. Meanwhile Viṣṇu's body, now literally a "headless sacrifice" (*aśiras yajña*), lies stretched toward the east. Its essence, the *rasa* of the sacrifice, pours forth onto the ground and the gods scramble to purify it

[123] ŚB 14.1.1.5—*sa devānāṃ śreṣṭho'bhavat*

[124] ŚB 14.1.1.6—*sa yaḥ sa viṣṇuryajñaḥ sa sa yaḥ yajño'sau sa ādityas*

(*sam*+√*mṛj*). For this reason, the text states, the Pravargya is known as *saṃraj*, the "universal ruler."

With Viṣṇu 'mortally' wounded, Indra seizes the opportunity to rush forward and stretch his body atop Viṣṇu's, aligning limb to limb, completely enfolding him (*pari*+√*grah*). In this manner, the text says, he gains for himself that glory of Viṣṇu. We have to assume that this act includes Indra enclosing not only Viṣṇu's body, but Viṣṇu's head as well, for otherwise, the solar glory that is Viṣṇu's would not have become Indra's. Now "Indra is glory," while "he who knows thus, verily, becomes glorious" just like Indra. This poses a riddle for sacrificers about how one comes to "know" that Indra is glory. As is often the case in Indic thought, 'knowing' here signifies more than conceptual understanding. Here, knowing that Indra is glory is the same as knowing the means by which Indra attained glory: by 'measuring up' to Viṣṇu; by making his body coextensive with that of Viṣṇu. Accordingly, the text declares that if one understands this act, then he too will be able to extend his body and thereby 'measure up' to the glory that is Indra's and Viṣṇu's.

Ritually speaking, it is the knowledge and performance of the Pravargya rite that allows one to know and thus repeat Indra's extensional act, which effectively restores the head of the sacrifice. Mythically speaking, the head is restored by the Aśvin twins, who learn the necessary restorative art (i.e., the steps of the Pravargya rite) from Dadhyañc Ātharvaṇa, the sole figure who knows this secret other than Indra. Earlier I noted that the Aśvins were absent from the *sattra* that kicked off this heady conundrum. In certain tellings of the Pravargya origin myth, their absence is explicitly by design, for the Aśvins are considered impure due to their practice of medicinal arts and their habit of wandering about in the world of mortals. In other words, though the Aśvins are *deva*s, they are marginalized *deva*s

because they wander in spaces beyond the purified confines of the *deva*s' immortal existence and into the impure spaces of mortal human existence.[125] This is important insofar as the sacrificer, who aims to repeat the restorative act of the Aśvins, is likewise drawn into a marginal condition—somewhere between mortality and immortality, impurity and purity—by his initiation prior to the performance of the Pravargya. Thus both the myth and the sacrifice are based upon the inclusion of marginalized, limnal figures who highlight the paradoxical relation of mortality and immortality. This inclusion is necessary, for without the full and proper 'recapitulation' of the sacrifice—the rejoining of its mortal and immortal aspects—it remains headless, and therefore incomplete. Meanwhile Indra jealously guards his glory and has promised to decapitate Dadhyañc Ātharvaṇa should he attempt to teach others his secret knowledge. So deprived of the knowledge necessary to make the sacrifice complete, the gods must go on "toiling" (√*śram*) with their headless sacrifice.[126]

I will save the details of the full solution to this problem, which will require an analysis of the ritual elements of the Pravargya (including the *avāntaradīkṣa* that precedes the rite's performance), for the penultimate chapter. What is important to emphasize here is that the sacrifice cannot be complete so long as its head, the Sun, is not reattached to the sacrifice so as to fully enliven it. Otherwise the sacrifice is essentially dead on the ground. It will still

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[125] The Aśvins, as Parpola (2005) notes, are also marginalized insofar as their pre-Vedic, proto-Indo-European heritage transcends the confines of the Ṛgvedic, Indo-Aryan orthodoxy. Hence the inclusion of the Pravargya rite, predicated upon the mythically important role of the Aśvins, represents a tacit admission that the orthodox ritual techniques derived from the hymns of the RV could not respond adequately to certain quandries posed by sacrificial activity—especially the quandry of the sacrifice's *toilsome* nature (see below).

[126] This claim to the toilsome nature of sacrifice is echoed in a teaching given by Aśvapati Kaikeya in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (5.11-24). Aśvapati declares that those who venerate the heavens (*divam*) as the *ātman* press Soma "ceaselessly and without a break" (trans. Olivelle 1996: 144). In fact, he continues, the heavens are but the head of the *ātman*. His teaching culminates with an outline of the macranthropic nature of the *ātman* and an outline of the *prāṇāgnihotra*.

generate an essence, a *rasa*—albeit one in need of purification—but it could not grant the brilliant glory it should without the connection to its solar head. In other words, the sacrifice (which is the "same measure" as the *puruṣa*) can embody the totality of the year, the worlds, and everything therein, only if the source of this—the all-pervasive Sun—is drawn meaningfully into the proceedings that otherwise take place within the sacrificial enclosure alone.

The proper completion of the sacrifice, which is simultaneously the healing of a mortally wounded Viṣṇu, is also indicative of the sacrificial transformation of all of the elements of sacrifice, including the cosmos and the sacrificer, into a *whole*. In other words, we might say that the Pravargya restores the cosmos so that it is no longer merely *viśva*—a sum total of all parts—but now also *sarva* and *kṛtsna*—an encompassing whole, a completeness, or unity expressed by an "inability to discern defectiveness" or injury.[127] Hence, when the Pravargya rite is identified with Prajāpati in the ŚB (14.1.2.18) it is said that Prajāpati becomes both "limited and unlimited" (*parimitaścāparimita*), and thus "whole and complete" (*sarvam kṛtsnam*) through the completion of the sacrifice.[128] Likewise the sacrificer becomes one

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[127] Gonda 1975: 496. The terms *kṛtsna* and *sarva* express closely related meanings. Both carry a sense of a restored wholeness; *sarva* refers to a wholeness or unity while *kṛtsna* is used (in this context, at least) to signify that all the parts of a whole have been restored into a unity. Notably, Dadhyañc, the bearer of the knowledge of the Pravargya, is introduced as one who knows "how to restore the head of the sacrifice and how the sacrifice becomes complete (*kṛtsna*)" (ŚB 14.1.1.18). See also ŚB 14.1.2.3ff.

[128] Along similar lines, the Aśvins and Cyavana are both called "incomplete" or "defective" (*asarva*) in the Sukanyā myth (ŚB 4.1.5.10 ff). The former pair are incomplete because they have not received their share of the sacrifice. Upon their return to the sacrifice, however, they are expressly identified as the union of heaven and earth (through the link between the terrestrial and solar Agnis) and thus as "*sarva*" (ŚB 4.1.5.16). Meanwhile, Cyavana is incomplete in a first sense because of his extreme age, and in a second because that age is the result of his being left behind on earth (like others in the lineage of the Atharvāṅgirases) after the completion of an earlier sacrifice.

who is *sarva* and *kṛtsna* through the rite; he is limited as one who is embodied while alive, yet unlimited through the experiential identification with the "whole" of the cosmos brought about in the rite.

Still, the attempt to complete the sacrifice (and thus the sacrificer and the cosmos) via the restoration of its head is no simple task. There is the standing threat of violence from Indra, and if the Aśvins' dealings with Dadhyañc Ātharvaṇa are any indication, anything less than a greatly heroic attempt to achieve it can bring about death by beheading. Without the essential link, Death prevails, for the sacrifice thereby remains a toilsome, bleeding, and ultimately mortal affair. This also says that one must toil until Death is overcome through the restoration of the solar head—that sacrifice is itself a kind of *śramaṇa*. But with that essential link, which is to say, through the preparation and performance of the Pravargya, the dying and headless form of the cosmic sacrifice is healed, the *puruṣa* within the solar *maṇḍala* attained, the need for toiling at an end, and the sacrificial confrontation with Death survived. The sacrificer will be "joined" with Death and thereby "born" and "released" from it. And just as elsewhere, the survival of the sacrificial confrontation with Death confers a fullness of life that is associated with the Sun. In the text's words: "Now he who either learns and takes part in this [i.e., the Pravargya], he enters into (*pra*+√*viś*) this life and this light."[129]

1.6 From Sovereignty to Asceticism: Symbols in transition and the *brahmacārin* of the *Atharva Veda* as a key transitional figure

As I suggested above, the details of the Pravargya rite gesture beyond the bounds of the Ṛgvedic orthodoxy. This is reflected by elements of the Pravargya's origin myth: its

[129] ŚB 14.1.1.33—*athaitadvā āyuretajjyotiḥ praviśati ya etamanu vā brūtebhakṣayati*

representation of the Aśvin twins as marginal figures who are excluded from the sacrifices of a core cohort of Vedic deities,[130] its insistence upon the toilsome nature of sacrifice, and its suggestion that the true ends of sacrifice are reached through an encounter with Death. All these are evidence of the way the Pravargya works to incorporate apparently novel notions into the elite orthodox culture associated with the RV. The familiar language of solarity and expansion, expressed in the Pravargya mythology through the figures of Viṣṇu and Indra, is henceforth fused with the experiential language of being joined with Death and thereby "released" from it. Certainly, this is an intriguing turn of thought. It reflects both the willingness of the elite tradition to assimilate popular influence and, more importantly, it reflects a clear shift in the way that personhood is conceived. We can therefore round out our present discussion by asking: What sources prefigure the Brāhmaṇas' need to confront Death, to surmount it, and so overcome the toilsome nature of sacrifice? Moreover, what prefigures the willingness to employ marginal figures in order to do so? In short, what brought about this expansion of the orthodox Vedic tradition?

The fact that the secret knowledge of the Pravargya is held by an Atharvan named Dadhyañc is most significant in this regard. For it suggests that the knowledge of the Atharvans, originally expressed in the hymns of the AV, is key. The AV was itself originally a marginal text.[131] This is true both in terms of form and content. In terms of form, the AV

[130] Jamison and Brereton write, "the Aśvins were worshipped already during the Indo-Iranian period and in the Pravargya rite, which is not a soma ritual.… [but] by the time of the later Veda the Pravargya rite had been incorporated into the soma tradition" (2014: 6).

[131] Though the Atharvan tradition was not unknown to the poets of the RV, as Parpola suggests (2006: 173-174). The names Atharvan and Aṅgiras appear as mythic agents even in the earliest layers of the RV. Because the AV tends to cite the earliest layers only of the RV, scholars generally accept that the first and tenth *maṇḍala*s of the RV are roughly contemporaneous with the earliest portions of the AV (see Jamison and Brereton 2014: 4).

tends to contain verses in the *anuṣṭubh* meter, whereas the RV employs either *gāyātrī* or *jagatī*. In terms of content, Jamison and Brereton note that the AV originally "stands outside of this [i.e., the Ṛgvedic] ritual system" in part because it "consists primarily of hymns and spells of a more 'popular' nature, often [aimed at] magical or healing" ends (2014: 4). In other words, while the RV is arguably an elite text whose contents were meant especially for those with sovereign or priestly status, the AV is a text for the populace at-large, and quite possibly a populace that resided beyond even the geographic bounds of Ṛgvedic culture (see below). Thus, while the AV contains hymns and refers to rites that obviously accord with the content of the RV (from which it often cites),[132] it also contains a wealth of hymns aimed at warding off evil spirits and diseases, at establishing popular rites for the dead, and at proscribing the proper care of deceased ancestors.

Keeping the marginal status of the AV in mind, there are two clear reasons in favor of the notion that the novel content of the Pravargya rite in the Brāhmaṇical literature is evidence of the incorporation of Atharvan concepts into an orthodox Ṛgvedic framework. First is the likelihood that the *puruṣa* concept was first developed in the AV, and that the association of *puruṣa* (via the Sun) with Death in the ŚB is due to the AV's novel association of *svargaloka* with the dead. Second is the fact that the practice of encountering and overcoming-by-becoming Death is first shown in the AV, namely through the figure of the *brahmacārin*, whose practices stand as forerunner to all initiatory *dikṣā*s like the one encoded in the Pravargya myth. By demonstrating these points in turn, we can glimpse one of the key forces behind the development of the *puruṣa* concept.

[132] See especially Proferes' examination of AVŚ 3.22 (2007: 81-85).

Near the outset of this chapter I noted that the term *puruṣa* is rare in the RV. Over half of its occurrences appear in the latest layer of its text, which is roughly coeval with the AV. The term *puruṣa* occurs about three times as frequently in the AV (not counting the *pariśiṣṭa*s). This indicates that the *puruṣa* concept was both more familiar and important to the Atharvans, which reflects the popular nature of its hymns. When the AV directly addresses the *puruṣa* (the AV specifically devotes two lengthy hymns to this term: 10.2 and 11.8), it foreshadows many of the themes that we highlighted from the ŚB and its treatment of the Pravargya rite. AV 10.2 and 11.8 both spend considerable time enumerating the various "parts" of the *puruṣa*, including anatomical parts and more abstract parts like courage, heroism, etc. AV 10.2 gradually conflates these parts of the *puruṣa* with the parts of the cosmos-at-large, then declares *brahman*—a concept that is most expressly connected to the cosmic "power of expansion" first in the AV[133]—as their mutual source and true identity. AV 11.8 likewise identifies the *puruṣa* with *brahman*, and then identifies *brahman* with the *loka*.[134] The AV is also the first text to use the term *saṃmita*, which is frequently used in the ŚB in the compound *puruṣa-saṃmita* to denote the "equal measure" of the *puruṣa* and the sacrifice, etc. The same sense appears in the AV when it states that a brahmin is the same measure as the three *loka*s,[135] and also when a white-footed sheep,

[133] On the shades of meaning of *bráhman* in the Vedic Saṃhitās, see Gonda 1962.

[134] AV 11.8 also provides an intriguing image of the gods, born from their previous selves, entering into the *puruṣa*, in a manner that simultaneously evokes narratives of birth and the replication of the father in the son (well-known in later Upaniṣadic sources, see the following chapter), as well as the locations of the gods in the body of the *puruṣa* as enumerated in the *Caraka-Saṃhitā* (see chapter four).

[135] AV 12.3.20—*trayo lokāḥ saṃmitā brāhmaṇena*

offered in sacrifice, is deemed equal in measure to the *loka*.[136] Consequently both the ŚB's portrayal of the *puruṣa* and its frequent reference to "equal measures" cannot be traced to any earlier text than the AV.

Even more significantly, both of the AV's *puruṣa*-centered hymns associate the *puruṣa* with the Sun (or Agni) and the *ātman*. Thus, AV 10.2.32 states, "In that golden vessel… whatever *ātman*-possessing *yakṣa* is in that, that indeed a knower of *brahman* knows."[137] This knower of *brahman* is none other than the one who knows the "fort of *brahman*" (*puraṃ … brahmaṇaḥ*) which is the *puruṣa*.[138] In a like manner, AV 11.8.31 states that "The gods assigned Sūrya, the Sun, as the sight of the *puruṣa*, the wind (Vāta) as his *prāṇa*, and extended the other *ātman* to Agni. Accordingly, a knower thinks, 'this *puruṣa* is *brahman*.'"[139] All of this suggests that the extension of sovereignty-related themes to any given sacrificing *puruṣa* (sovereign or not) that we see in the Brāhmaṇas is a direct result of the early inclusion of the 'popular' content of the AV alongside the elite orthodoxy of the Ṛgvedic tradition.[140]

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[136] AV 3.29.3—*… śitipādam aviṃ lokena saṃmitam*. This phrase is repeated in vss. 4-5 of the same hymn.

[137] AV 10.2.32—*tasmin hiraṇyaye kośe… | tasmin yad yakṣam ātmanvat tad vai brahmavido viduḥ ||*

[138] AV 10.2.30

[139] AV 11.8.31-32ab—*sūryaś cakṣur vātaḥ prāṇaṃ puruṣasya vi bhejire | athāsyetaram ātmānaṃ devāḥ prāyachann agnaye || tasmād vai vidvān puruṣam idaṃ brahmeti manyate |*

[140] Related to this incorporation of more 'popular' material is the advent of poetic elevations of the *puruṣa* in the latest layers of the RV. These later layers are thought to be contemporaneous with the earliest layers of the AV, which also contain its unique treatments of the *puruṣa*. As I noted above (see n.131 above), when the AV cites from the RV, it does so from the earlier layers of the RV. The AV does contain its own version of the Puruṣa Sūkta, but this is found in the much later *pariśiṣṭa*s. The prevalence of the term *puruṣa* in the AV and its obviously late inclusion (as a term of special focus) in the hymns of the RV both suggest that the elevation of the *puruṣa* in the RV's tenth *maṇḍala* is the result of an early, partial incorporation of terms that were first expressed in the AV. In other words, the

The open acceptance of the AV into the Vedic corpus just begins to show in texts like the ŚB, where it first appears alongside the *traya-veda*—the *Ṛg*, *Yajur*, and *Sama* Vedic Saṃhitās.[141] Indeed, the mere fact that Death has been brought into the equation of the Sun and the *puruṣa* is evidence of the assimilation of the Atharvan tradition into the core Vedic worldview, for it is in the AV that *svargaloka* is first sustainedly conceived in relation to the dead.[142] After the AV, the ritualized ascent to *svargaloka* through the performance of a rite

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presentation of the *puruṣa* as a cosmic, sovereign figure and the highest of philosophical categories was originally a hallmark of the Atharvan tradition. Indeed, Parpola (2002, 2006) argues that the *puruṣa* of RV 10.90 is actually the result of a historical encounter between the Ṛgvedic Aryans and "an earlier wave of Aryans whose traditions seem to be continued in the *Atharvaveda*" (2006: 173-174). Likewise Witzel, noting first that many of the AV's "sorcery rites" likely predate the RV, comments on the contents of the tenth maṇḍala of the RV: "proto-AV hymns must have been taken over into this late RV book from the original 'floating mass' of *Ur*-AV hymns where they were codified as Ṛgvedic hymns at the time of the collection of the 'great appendix,' RV 10" (1997: 277). The appearance of the Puruṣa Sūkta would thus evidence the incorporation of a preexisting popular tradition into the Ṛgvedic orthodoxy. The fact that the Puruṣa Sūkta only mentions a threefold Veda is likewise evidence both of the lateness of this hymn and of the uncompiled, popular nature of the Atharvan tradition at this time.

However, even if we reject Parpola's proposition of a two-staged Aryan migration into the subcontinent, there is still reason to consider the Puruṣa Sūkta a post-Atharva-Vedic addition to the hymns of the RV. As Whitaker notes, the term *rājanyà*, used in the Puruṣa Sūkta to denote the group of warriors derived from Puruṣa's arms, is a hapax legomenon to the RV. He therefore tentatively dates this hymn to the post-Ṛgvedic Brāhmaṇical period, arguing that it "presents us with a substantial reformulation of Vedic ritual, social, and political relationships, and it constructs a form of masculinity founded on the image of a universal everyman rather than on the manly war god Indra… [in order to] legitimize a different post-Ṛgvedic worldview, yet attaching it to the *Ṛgveda* to legitimize [its] vision as authentically Vedic" (2011: 137). Note also that the verbal root √*rāj* means both "to reign" and "to shine."

[141] Though the inclusion of the AV within the orthodox Vedic corpus would remain contentious for some time. According to Marko Geslani (2011: 1, n.4), as late as the 14th century CE, Sāyana took time in the introduction to his commentary on the AV to refute those who would regard the AV as a non-requisite addition to ritual knowledge. For a brief history of the early inclusion of the AV alongside the *traya veda* (i.e. the *Ṛg*, *Yajur*, and *Sāma* Vedic Saṃhitās), see Holdrege 1996: 31, 425 n.16.

[142] The earliest characterization of *svargaloka* as a realm of the dead in the RV is found in 10.4.10-12, and thus in the latest layer of the RV that is coeval with the AV. This suggests

like the Agnicayana is no longer solely a matter of the sovereign's living identification with the solar expansiveness of Indra. It is rather the hoped-for destination of every person who departs from this life. This view has clearly been assimilated into the ŚB insofar as rites like the Agnicayana are now equally a matter of a *puruṣa* encountering and overcoming-by-becoming Death. Yet this newly transformed, sovereignty-conferring ritual retains its orthodox credibility precisely because it remains modeled after characteristically Ṛgvedic mythic accounts (like the decapitation of Viṣṇu that leads to Indra's rise to prominence).[143] Thus once again it appears that the AV stands as the earliest possible source that would explain how a language of death (and subsequent rebirth) began to accompany the language surrounding ritual transformations of the person's relation to the world.

Compelling as these conceptual assimilations are, however, without evidence of historical agents directly influencing the aims and structure of sacrificial rituals, the above claims remain speculative. I therefore propose the *brahmacārin* as just such an agent. The AV is the first text to celebrate at any significant length socially marginal and peripatetic figures like the *vrātya* and the *brahmacārin*, the latter of which (etymologically speaking) "wanders about as *brahman*" and thus "practices expansion" (√*bṛh*).[144] His early "career is in large measure a forerunner *and* legitimating model for the initially heterodox practices of

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that the appearance of *svargaloka* as a place/condition proper to the dead in the RV is, like the *puruṣa*, originally an Atharvan innovation.

[143] One of the most prominent mythic accounts in the Brāhmaṇas, the creatively dispersive death of Puruṣa-Prajāpati, is perhaps less reflective of a Ṛgvedic heritage precisely because its heritage likely lies somewhere outside the bounds of Ṛgvedic tradition.

[144] Despite the fact that the *brahmacārin* is typically characterized by "Vedic studentship" and his practice of celibacy, these etymological characterizations of the *brahmacārin* (which imply that the *brahmacārin* is somehow related to *brahman qua* the pervasive cosmic force) are justified by the earliest characterization of the *brahmacārin* at AV 11.5. For a recent analysis of the early significance of the term *brahman*, its relation to speech and the power to bring about expansion (similar to the effects of *sóma*), see Sandness (2007).

ascetics later assimilated into orthodoxy."[145] The *brahmacārin*, as he is portrayed in the AV, is furthermore characterized according the solarized poetics of sovereignty and sacrifice that we find in the RV, even as he performs the asceticism of *tapas* in order to effect a uniquely personal transformation. He therefore appears as a natural forerunner to the *dīkṣita*'s encounters with Death in the Brāhmaṇical sacrifices and thus a natural bridge between the Atharvan and Ṛgvedic traditions. Indeed, we might further add that the *brahmacārin* is also a natural bridge between the Vedic Saṃhitās and Upaniṣads, the latter of which are grounded especially in the ascetic's *tapas*-driven realizations of Self.[146] Thus, by the time of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (ChU), the hidden truth of sacrifice is identified with the *brahmacarya* of the *brahmacārin*.[147]

The earliest sustained portrayal of the *brahmacārin* appears at AV 11.5, where we find the *brahmacārin* taking on the characteristics of cosmicized kings, especially Indra, through *tapas*.[148] The seventh verse of this hymn reads: "The *brahmacārin* generated [through *tapas*]

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[145] Kaelber 1989: 110. Kaelber further draws parallels between the *brahmacārin* (whose austerities build up the heat associated with reserved sexual fluids) and the *dīkṣita-yajamāna* of the Pravargya rite (whose sacrificial exposure to heat associates him with rainfall and other fertile powers). For details, see ibid: 17-27.

[146] The texts of the middle and late Vedic period, beginning with the AV, begin to draw correlations between *tapas* and *dīkṣā*. The ŚB draws an explicit parallel at 3.4.3.2. On this subject, see Kaelber (1976: 357-361), and Malamoud (1996: 44-46) who notes that the verbal root of *dīkṣā* is √*dah*, meaning 'to burn.'

[147] ChU 8.5.1—*atha yad yajña ity ācakṣate brahmacaryam eva tat* |

[148] DeSmet describes this earliest *brahmacārin* "not as a student but a specialist of *tapas* from which he gains the Brahman-power" (1972: 262). His divergence from the later paradigm (centered on celibacy) is seen in AV 11.5.12, where he is said to copulate (*anu*+√*bhṛ*; see Kajihara 1995: 6, n.19 for this translation) with and rain semen upon the earth.

Note also that the Keśin of the late Ṛg Vedic hymn 10.136 may already represent an extension of Indra's characterization to early forms of asceticism. Of course, the Keśin is explicitly characterized as similar to Rudra in this hymn. However, in a manner similar to Indra, the Keśin "bears Agni" and "the world-halves" (*keśy agniṃ… bibharti rodasī*). He

brahman, the waters, the *loka*, Prajāpati—the most exalted one—[and] *Virāj* [or 'Widely-Shining Majesty']; having become Indra, he crushed the Asuras."[149] The *brahmacārin* is thus lauded alongside the loftiest of creative and sovereign principles. Typically we would read this kind of high praise as reflecting the kathenotheistic tendency of early Brahmanism. However, as a later verse (vs.16) clarifies, here it denotes a step-wise generative process: after Prajāpati was generated, he "extended" himself, and after this the *brahmacārin*, as Virāj, transformed into Indra. In other words the *brahmacārin* touches the sovereign core of Indra's nature; hence, it is through the practice of *brahmacarya* that Indra is said to have become the king of the gods. In a related manner, *brahmacarya* is said to be the means by which the gods attained immortality, or a king protects his realm. In short, *brahmacarya* is the key to success in sacrifice, and the secret element that grants access to sovereignty and immortality. Consequently all those who attain the fruits of sacrifice are implicitly, even retroactively, identified as *brahmacārin*s.

There is perhaps some measure of justification for this retroactive identification insofar as Indra is consistently associated with √*bṛh*-derived terminology. He has long been identified with the priest Bṛhaspati, the "Expansive (√*bṛh*) Lord," or "Lord of the *brahman* [*qua* sacred formulation]." Later, in the middle-Vedic *śrauta* literature this priestly identity is expanded to the *brahman* itself. Thus in one instance we read: "The *brahman* is Indra by

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"beholds the sun entirely; it is said that the Keśin is this light" (*viśvaṃ svar dṛśe keśīdaṃ jyotir ucyate*). Finally, the fact that the Keśin "pounds She Who is Unbent" (*pinaṣṭi smā kunannamā*) is parallel to the claim that Indra "bent low those that had to be bent" (RV 2.24.2—*nántvāny ánaman ni*). Given this, as well as the mutual relation of Indra and Rudra to *brahman*, the degree to which Indra, the Keśin, and Rudra overlap in their character is a subject worthy of further investigation.

[149] AV 11.5.7—*brahmacārī janayan brahmāpo lokaṃ prajāpatiṃ parameṣṭhinaṃ virājam* | …*indro ha bhūtvāssurāṃs tatarha* ||

virtue of [his] brahminhood."[150] The perspective is reversed and the *brahman* given a sovereign characterization in the Brāhmaṇas and the *śrauta* literature when the *brahman* states: "I am the Lord of the Earth, I am the Lord of the World, I am the Lord of the great Creation."[151] All this suggests that the exalted status of the *brahmacārin* of the AV is derivative of Indra in his expansive priestly identity, and thus closely related to Indra-like sovereign and solar figures, Prajāpati and Puruṣa.

Hence just as Indra and other sovereigns are especially characterized by an identification with the Sun, the *brahmacārin* of the AV is repeatedly given a solar characterization. This fiery identity, beyond the mere fact that the *brahmacārin* generates creation through *tapas*, is emphasized in AV 11.5.24-26: "The *brahmacārin* bears a shining *brahman*… Fashioning these things, the *brahmacārin* stood on the back of the sea, practicing *tapas* in the ocean. He—bathed, brown, and ruddy [like the Sun]—shines much upon the earth."[152] The image of the *brahmacārin* shining as *brahman* while practicing *tapas* in waters directly identifies him with the Sun that rests upon the cosmic waters as well as with the king who takes on that same solar identity through unctions at the traditional fire sacrifice. In a like manner, vss. 5-6 of this hymn describe the *brahmacārin* as born in the east before travelling, as a "long-bearded *dīkṣita*" (*dīkṣito dīrghaśmaśruḥ*) from the eastern to the northern ocean. Thus, as Kajihara argues, it is likely that "the subject of the hymn… is not the *brahmacārin* on earth,

[150] *Āpastamba Śrauta Sūtra* (ĀpŚS) 11.19.8; translated in Heesterman 1993: 151. See also pp.157-159 of this work, which notes parallels between Indra and Rudra and the role of the *brahman* priest as the healer (*bhisaj*) of the sacrifice. Indra's identification with *brahman* is reiterated in the *subrahmaṇya* invocation at ĀpŚS 10.28.4; 11.3.14; 11.20.3; 11.21.8; and 12.3.15 (See ibid: 273, n.88).

[151] See Heesterman (1993: 159, n.97), for a list of verses in which this statement appears.

[152] AV 11.5.24-26—*brahmacārī brahma bhrājad… tāni kalpan brahmacārī salilasya pṛṣthe tapo 'tiṣṭhat tapyamānaḥ samudre* | *sa snāto babhruḥ piṅgalaḥ pṛthivyāṃ bahu rocate* ||

but the sun whose activities in the universe… are described as the functions of a cosmic *brahmacārin*" (1995: 4). Naturally, the *brahmacārin* is conceived as coextensive with all of space and time: "past and future, day and night, the lord of plants [i.e., Soma], and the year with its seasons—they are born of the *brahmacārin*."[153] Clearly, all three—Sun, sovereign, and *brahmacārin*—by virtue of this shared set of images, are identified with each other as self-expansive and luminously extensive beings.

Thus, on one hand, the status of the *brahmacārin* in the AV is parallel to the status of Indra and the sovereign king in the RV. Each is spatially and temporally expansive through an identification with the Sun. Such figures thereby embody not only the whole of the *loka* but also its rhythmic transformations, its blossoming and withering over the course of the year. Implicitly, the nature of human sovereignty, which through the *brahmacārin* has been newly associated with the individual who practices *tapas*, is portrayed as a function of one's capacity to be expansive, which is in turn a function of one's identification with the Sun and the solar figures, like Indra and Viṣṇu, who generate the *loka* via acts of expansion and extension, which is to say through acts of sacrifice *and* asceticism.

On the other hand, the *brahmacārin* is one who goes beyond the pale of Ṛgvedic culture, and who therefore is a likely point of contact between the elite Ṛgvedic orthodoxy and the marginalized and popular traditions associated with the AV. Along these lines, Heesterman (1995) portrays the *brahmacārin* as embodying the seasonal oscillation between *yoga* and *kṣema*, reflected in the alternating periods of Vedic study under a teacher and wandering

[153] AV 11.5.20—*oṣadhayo bhūtabhavyam ahorātre vanaspatiḥ* | *saṃvatsaraḥ saha ṛtubhis te jātā brahmacāriṇaḥ* || The addition of *oṣadhi*s and Soma in this context is a natural one if we consider how in later texts plants are fed by the rays of the moon, which is identified with Soma, and this feeding by which plants swell with *rasa* is in turn subject to the influence of the Sun as it makes its yearly transit through northerly and southerly courses. On this subject, see White 1996: 19-32.

beyond the bounds of Vedic society.[154] This habit of stepping out beyond the bounds of Vedic society is expressed in the ritual setting of the *mahāvrāta* rite, during which a *brahmacārin* must step outside of the ritual enclosure to verbally abuse a prostitute (*puṃścali*), who then ritually copulates either with the *brahmacārin* or a man from Magadha.[155]

Most importantly, the *brahmacārin*'s engagement with these sovereign and solar dynamics of expansion is also an engagement with Death. Both AV 6.133.3 and 11.5.14 declare that the *brahmacārin* is the student of Death (like Naciketas in the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*), and thus his solar characterization must be understood as somehow thanks to his tutelage under Death. As I noted earlier, in the Brāhmaṇas the initiatory *dīkṣā* requires that the *dīkṣita* "take the form of one dead." It is for this reason that Kaelber sees in the *brahmacārin* a forerunner of the *dīkṣā*, indeed "perhaps the first *dīkṣita,*" and thus a means by which the practices of *tapas* were assimilated into the orthodox Ṛgvedic fold (1981: 98).[156]

Consequently, the Brāhmaṇas' association of the initiated *yajamāna* with Death through the Sun should be considered as derived in part from the earlier association of these themes

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[154] The transition between these periods of the brahmacārin's life was governed by the effects of the rainy season. Heesterman writes: "The ritual texts still know the division of the brahmacārin's year in two opposite phases, the actual teaching period in the teacher's household and a free period during the second part of the year," which then concluded just prior to the onset of the rains. During this latter period, brahmacārin's would join "bands of warrior-herdsmen [who have] set out form their home bases" (1995: 640-641). Heesterman (1981: 251-271) and Witzel (2003: 88) both argue that these roving bands reflect the temporary transfiguration of the *brahmacārin* into a *vrātya*, whom the AV also lauds as both cosmic in scope and power and marginal with respect to Vedic society.

[155] See Eliade 1969: 103-105.

[156] Heesterman compares the *dīkṣita* to the *vrātya* on the grounds of their similar "'betwixt and between'" status, and further compares the *vrātya* to the *keśin* (1962: 8, 16). His assertion that the *vrātya* is an "authentic Vedic Aryan" (ibid: 36) does not critically examine the relation between the RV and AV.

in the figure of the *brahmacārin*. In other words, the *brahmacārin*, who was marginalized for a time by his association with the Atharvan tradition, is a bridge between the Indra-centered sacrificial techniques of sovereignty associated with earlier layers of the RV and the individual/*puruṣa*-centered sacrificial techniques of the ŚB, which in turn eventually developed into the highly individualistic and asceticism-driven speculations of the Upaniṣads. Thus the transposition of elements of his character to the *yajamāna* in the Brāhmaṇas—wherein these elements are specifically linked to the *puruṣa* who is likewise rooted in the Atharvan tradition—is early evidence that the scope of the Ṛgvedic orthodox worldview has itself expanded.

It might at first appear that this line of argument has disparaged the integrity of the RV. It certainly aims to raise an awareness of the importance of the AV to the religion of the Vedic period well beyond what the texts of the Vedic orthodoxy admit on their own. But let it be emphasized that one of the core principles of the Ṛgvedic orthodoxy is a recognition of—indeed a reverence for—the capacity for expansion and extension. Just as a *puruṣa* in the Brāhmaṇas attains to the fullness of life and immortality by expanding and extending beyond its normal bounds, here too the tradition of the orthodoxy associated with the RV survives, becoming itself immortal, through technique of expansion and extension. Thus it is entirely natural for Indra to take on the names Puruṣa and Prajāpati; and it is entirely natural for the Indra-like sacrificer to not only expand himself as the sovereign ruler of the *loka*, but to encounter and overcome Death as well.

Concluding Remarks

The relationship between the person and the world has already undergone a significant series of transformations throughout the Vedic period. At the earliest stage, the person was

conceived as a sovereign who was identified primarily with Indra, the king of the *deva*s. Through the ritual means that operationalized this identification, the sovereign person took on the extensive and expansive qualities of Agni (in the guises of the Sun and sacrificial fire) and of Soma (as *sóma*), to gain the greatness and might of Indra, the prototype for all human sovereigns. Precisely through this process, the sovereign was identified with the cosmos itself, which he then creates and sustains in accordance with the temporal cycles of the day and the year through his mighty and sacrificial acts.

In the latest stratum of the RV, this sovereign was given a new name, Puruṣa. Building upon the insights of Parpola and Whitaker, I argued that this is, at least in part, due to the incorporation of a marginalized popular tradition that is represented in the AV. Later, and thanks to the ascription of sovereign, solar, and *puruṣa*–like qualities upon the once socially marginal figure of the *brahmacārin*, this name was transferred to all sacrificers, regardless of their regal status or lack thereof. Thus the *yajamāna* became *puruṣa*, who, like Indra-like sovereigns, ritually transforms himself into the sacrifice, into the Sun, and even into Death through techniques that measure him out into the expanses of space and time.

Considering these themes, select fragments from Megasthenes' *Indika*[157] prove to be of significant interest. Here we find narrative accounts of Alexander's exchange with a brahmin ascetic (or "gymnosophist" in Megasthenes' terming) named, Dandamis. Alexander demands and audience with Dandamis, the apparent leader of a sect of forest dwellers, on the strength of his sovereign status as a "Son of Zeus."[158] Dandamis rebuffs Alexander's

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[157] Fragments 55, in *de Bragmanibus* (1668), and 55B, in *De Moribus Brachmanorum* (1668); translated in McCrindle 1877: 123-129.

[158] Here it is worth reminding ourselves that the name Zeus closely correlates to the Sanskrit *dyaus*, while his Roman counterpart, Jupiter, correlates to the Sanskrit compound

demand by dismissing the latter's claim to sovereignty: "How, then, can he be the lord of all, who has not yet crossed the river Tyberoboas,[159] nor has made the whole world his abode, nor crossed the zone of Hades, nor has beheld the course of the sun in the center of the world?" (McCrindle 1877: 128). These criticisms read as criteria for the recognition of sovereignty that bear a direct resemblance to the features of *puruṣa*-hood that we have discerned here. Crossing into all inhabited lands and making the whole world one's abode evokes Indra's process of filling the world and breaking past all limiting boundaries. Beholding the course of the Sun in the center of the world evokes the ritual and temporal dynamics of solar identification. And crossing the zone of Hades evokes the sacrificer's transformative encounter with Death.

The fact that a "gymnosophist" ascetic—ostensibly one who has given up the practice of Vedic sacrifice—can so deftly summarize the Vedic-era nature of sovereign personhood hints at the manner in which Vedic-era, Brahmanical ideology continues unabated in later Upaniṣadic discourses. Or perhaps it is these ascetics who mark a return to the wandering practices of *brahmacārin*s and the like, who transformed the nature of Vedic sovereignty by the introduction of the *puruṣa* (and his encounters with the Death in the Sun) as a key point of consideration. As we turn now to an analysis of the uses of *puruṣa* in the Upaniṣads, we must keep these points of continuation and innovation in mind in order to discern the distinctive features of personhood and its relation to worldhood in the Upaniṣadic era.

Before this, however, we must finally note the conspicuous absence of microcosmology in these Vedic-era contexts. Nowhere do we find either a clear replication of the cosmos

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dyaus-pitṛ, literally "sky father." In the earliest strata of the RV, Dyaus Pitṛ is named as the father of Indra. See RV 4.17.4.

[159] Located by Wilford (1809: 70) to the east of the Ganges, in the region of Magadha.

within the contours of the person's body, or evidence of a inward turn at all. Instead, we consistently find that the person is, to use an ultimately Western idiom of expression, externalized, and thus recognizable in terms of the outer, worldly facts of his existence. In a more properly Vedic idiom, the person is one who swells and becomes large; he is enkindled and expanded; and he spreads throughout the world with rays of light until he is equal to the measure of the sacrificial cosmos. It is only because of this capacity that the person is capable of attaining a sovereign status, or even a state of existence that transcends death.

Chapter 2: Recursive and Self-Relational Personhood in the Upaniṣads

Context

The Upaniṣads developed during a time of significant social and political change. Over the course of their history, the center of political power gradually shifted first to the east, from the Madhyadeśa of the Kurus to Videha, a region that stood at the crossroads of tradition and innovation,[1] then further east to the region of Magadha, the birthplace of Jainism and Buddhism. With each of these shifts the Brahmanic orthodoxy of the Kurus saw its power further outstripped by those eastern traditions that the Vedic era texts associate with the Asuras, the enemies of those gods who were led by Indra. Economies likewise shifted, from the semi-nomadic, cattle herding tribalism of the Vedic Aryans to a sedentary agriculturalism established around the cultivation of rice and barley. The rise of agriculture in turn fostered the growth of the population and the development of urban centers; trades and crafts flourished, giving rise to the development of an extensive trade network along the *uttarapatha*, the "upper highway" that stretched from the northwestern region of Gandhara to the southeastern Gangetic plane. Such a network was useful not only to a mobile population of tradesmen, but also wandering ascetics of uncounted stripes,[2] who took more or less temporary residence on the outskirts of towns and cities that provided the crucial

[1] That is, while the center of power shifted eastward, there was a simultaneously ideological shift (among Brahmanic circles) westward. This is shown by the fact that the Vedic texts geographically associated with Videha bear more in common with the traditionalism of the western Vedism of the Punjab than those texts associated with Madhyadeśa. My account of this historical shift (and those that follow) follows especially the work of Witzel (1997), but I have also taken into account the work of Olivelle (1998: 4-7), Jamison & Witzel (2003: 86-87), and Patton (2004: 46-47).

[2] Olivelle 1998: 6-7.

social support for their unique lifestyles. In other words, this expansion of society's bounds, which fostered the fruitful confrontation of eastern and western ideological traditions, provided the space and social conditions necessary for the rise of these exceptional kinds of religious, ascetic, and wandering lifestyles.[3]

The rise of these ascetic wanderers in a world that seemed ripe for their presence has a longer history that could be said to follow closely the early history of the *puruṣa* concept that we sketched in the preceding chapter. There we saw how the rhythmic vacillations of the year—between seasonal periods of life's blossoming and withering on the earth; between social periods of *yoga* and *kṣema*—deeply informed the core mythology of the brahmin poets, involving especially the story of Indra's self-expansive battle against his constrictive and perennial foe, Vṛtra. A sacrificer near the end of the Vedic period would reenact this story, and thus the rhythm of the year, through the performance of sacrifices in his effort to inscribe himself with Indra's expansive greatness and might. Figures like the *vrātya* and the *brahmacārin* of the Atharvan tradition sought roughly the same by directly exposing themselves to the rhythms of the world, inscribing it upon their very being. Of these two, the *brahmacārin* is perhaps the most significant for the prehistory of the Upaniṣads,[4] for it was he who first cloaked himself in the "heat" of ascetic practices (*tapas*) to transform into an Indra-like sovereign who wandered outside the confines of the

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[3] See Olivelle 1993 on the connection between urbanization, wilderness space, and the development of ascetic institutions. The *āśrama* system that develops out of the rise of wandering asceticism is, in Olivelle's reading, evidence that the "leaders of the deviant world" of asceticism sought "acceptance, patronage, and economic advantage within the broader society" (1993: 96).

[4] On the *vrātya*'s importance for later traditions, see Jamison & Witzel, who argue that "the structure of the Buddhist *saṅgha* takes up some *vrātya* features" (2003: 86).

sacrificial arena,[5] and who thereby arguably paved the way for the eventual acceptance of the heterodox *śramaṇic* traditions that were increasingly encountered as the centers of power shifted eastward. It was likewise he who was first conceived as the *puruṣa* in the mode of the "fort of *bráhman*" (AV 2.28; 10.2).[6] And finally it is likely he (as I argued in the previous chapter) who helped to introduce the concept of the Puruṣa, as a cosmos-sized parallel to Indra, to the Ṛgvedic tradition—a Puruṣa that would then be extensively elaborated in the Brāhmaṇas before returning to its roots in wandering asceticism in the Upaniṣads.

The transition between the appearance of the Atharvan tradition (*terminus a quo* 1200 BCE) and the earliest Upaniṣads occurs in these Brāhmaṇas, which record a series of changes taking place within the orthodox culture of Vedic *śrauta* ritual. In the light of a fading tradition, brahmin exegetes sought to renew the significance of ritual by explaining the complex series of "bonds," or "equivalences" (*bandhu*s) between the sacrifice, the sacrificer, and the sacrificial world in which he dwelled as the "same measure." These explanations show the steady inclusion of the speculative elements of the Atharvan tradition on the nature of the *puruṣa*; hence it is here that the *puruṣa* (and all the spatio-temporal expansiveness this figure implies) is extensively associated with the *ātman*—an association

[5] Reminiscent of the early Upaniṣadic sage, Yajñavalkya, who (according to BĀU 6.5.3) is said to have received the *mantra*s the Vājasaneyi-Saṃhitā (the "White" Yajurveda), directly from the Sun.

[6] Typically, in the Vedic period the term *brahman* refers to a sacrificing priest's "sacred formulations," the utterances that ground the efficacy of sacrificial activity. The AV is the first text to use this term in a fashion that begins to resemble the universal, absolute, and impersonal *brahman* of the Upaniṣads.

that earlier appears in AV 10.2[7]—in a manner that shows the latter term's initial transformation into the abstract technical term at the heart of Upaniṣadic speculation. As I showed in the preceding chapter, the ŚB addresses this *puruṣa*/*ātman* through a solarized poetics of sovereignty and death—themes that are earlier united in the *brahmacārin* of AV 11.8 and that continue throughout the Upaniṣads.

The Upaniṣads—a class of speculative texts that describe the "hidden connections" that transcend the confines of ritual action[8]—further develop these themes while otherwise dissociating the practices of asceticism from the actual performance of Vedic era rituals (of either the Ṛgvedic or Atharvavedic sort). That is, the Upaniṣads represent a "thorough rethinking of the existing correlative premises [found in the Brāhmaṇas], in part influenced by late Vedic social conditions;" and in this regard, they represent "the almost inevitable outcome of intellectual development of the Brāhmaṇa period, when such questioning was prominent both inside and between the Vedic schools" (Witzel 2003: 83). But in line with this questioning spirit (and the shifting socio-political tides of the era), their contents, though frequently returning to the sacrificial poetics of expansiveness, solarity, sovereignty, death, and immortality, are widely divergent.

A key source of this divergence lies in the appearance and slow acceptance of an ideology that arose out of Magadha to the (relatively far) east. This eastern ideology problematized the role of action (*karma*), ritual or otherwise, as a response to an

[7] The hymn culminates by invoking an "*ātman*-possessing *yakṣa*" that is known by the "knowers of *brahman*."

[8] Smith 1989: 31-32.

ignominious pattern of death and rebirth over vast scales of time (*saṃsāra*).[9] As Bronkhorst has consistently argued (1998, 2007), this ideology was only hesitantly accepted among Upaniṣadic authorities, and otherwise made to appear Vedic, in some cases by overwriting the original Upaniṣadic material (2007: 120-122). The Upaniṣads' innovation in response to this ideological crisis is the notion of a core Self (*ātman*), which is identical to the ever-expansive and unchanging animating force of the cosmos (*brahman*), and which is therefore essentially immortal, unborn, and unaffected by *karma*. The present chapter investigates, among other things, the relation of the *puruṣa* concept to this innovation, and the development throughout the Upaniṣadic period of a new, corresponding understanding of personhood.

The key development in the personhood concept during this period conforms to the rise of individualism and ascetic modes of life in the midst of the many socio-political changes I outlined above.[10] Effectively, the Upaniṣads democratize the Vedic period's understanding, according to which the person is a sovereign sacrificer with the capacity to expand to the full scope of the world. In extending this capacity to all, the Upaniṣads conceive expansion in increasingly phenomenalistic and personal terms. In other words, the Upaniṣads argue that a world "is" because every *puruṣa* naturally extends and expands as a world that is experienced from the center of his embodied Self. Worldhood is thus something inherent to

[9] In the words of Geen (2007: 100), the contact with the eastern ideology inspired a "critical suspicion of action." Geen convincingly argues that the orthogenetic aspect of the acceptance of a belief in *saṃsāra* derived from preexisting conceptualizations of fear (of outside "others," and thus of dualistic, agonistic existence). Fear is, in the Upaniṣadic perspective, diametrically opposed to the bliss of *brahman* and arises due to the creation of an interiority, or a "side" to stand on. See below.

[10] Though the initial impetus for this shift is likely, as De Smet (1972) argues, to be found in the early peripatetic activity of figures lauded as early as the time of the AV. On the role of urbanization, see Olivelle 1996: xxiv-xxix.

any person, though it is also something that can and should be manipulated to bring an end to the crisis of *saṃsāra*. This suggests that the apparent microcosmological thinking that we find in these texts likely serves a provisional function only. The connections, equivalences, and correlational correspondences found therein are in fact pedagogical tools for those who wander; their ultimate aim is the (generally) monistic identification of the person with the whole of the world through a variety of means that demonstrate the person's inherent capacity to expand and extend. The ideal *puruṣa* who has realized his self-expansive nature in *brahman*, the *ātman*, and this "whole world" through his asceticism is a sovereign being who wins complete freedom from the consequences of action and the cycle of rebirth.[11] So in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (BĀU), we read:

> This immense, unborn self (*ātman*) is none other than the one consisting of discernment (*vijñānamayaḥ*) here among the vital functions (*prāṇa*). There, in that space within the heart, he lies—the controller of all, the lord of all, the ruler of all! He does not become more by good actions or in any way less by bad actions.... It is he that Brahmins seek to know by means of vedic recitation, sacrifice, gift-giving, austerity, and fasting. It is he, on knowing whom, a man becomes a sage. It is when they desire him as their world that wandering ascetics undertake the ascetic life of wandering.[12]

The balance of the chapter will be devoted to determining the nature of the *puruṣa* who is discerned through wandering asceticism and conceived in manifold ways throughout the early and middle Upaniṣads. I will proceed more or less chronologically and thematically, attempting to draw connections between various Upaniṣadic doctrines where applicable and of interest. The history of the *puruṣa* concept in these Upaniṣads is admittedly somewhat

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[11] Through a knowledge of the basis of all action—the *ātman*. The Upaniṣads differ on whether this is achieved by the living, as with the *jīvan mukta*, who possesses a freedom of movement in the worlds, or only at death, as with the *videha mukta*, who "goes" to *brahman* after leaving his body. The distinction between and textual history of these alternatives is discussed in Fort 1994.

[12] BĀU 4.4.22; trans. Olivelle 1998: 125, modified.

chaotic, evidence of the changing nature of the times and the regionality of the speculative ascetic traditions the Upaniṣads record. This is, however, no detriment to the inherent interest of their contents and will not stop us from determining something like a basic Upaniṣadic understanding of personhood. This understanding involves a number of themes—food, *prāṇa*, bliss, procreation, the enigmatic space of the heart, death and immortality, and finally, yoga—that are affiliated by considerations of recursiveness and self-relationality. It is these considerations that best characterize the Upaniṣadic paradigm of personhood, which captures in so many ways the Upaniṣads' need to account for complexity in light of their (usually) monistic claims. The person is realized through asceticism and yoga as recursive and self-relational, as the all-inclusive One whose expansiveness produces a world of vast diversity, and as the Many that are ultimately unified in the singular immensity of the unborn and inactive Self.

2.1 The Eaters of the World

In our analysis of the RV we discussed the person's (*viz*. the sovereign sacrificer's) capacity to expand to the utmost reaches of the cosmos. This capacity was explained to be the result of sacrificial activity patterned after the mythic exploits of Indra and the yearly dynamics of the Sun. Later, in the Brāhmaṇas, the *puruṣa-yajamāna*'s expansiveness was conceived with greater variability, as essentially commensurate with the extent of his sacrifices. The logic in this latter case is explicitly a matter of feeding fires—the extent to which Agni is fed by offerings is the extent to which the *puruṣa-yajamāna* is "enkindled" like Agni. The best-fed fire is the Sun, and so the potential sovereign aspires to kindle himself by feeding Agni extravagantly through great sacrifices. Consequently the sovereign is conceived, like the fire he feeds, as a great "eater" of food, while his greatness—the extent

of that which he eats—is commensurate to the reach of his fire's light. Insofar as the sovereign is Sun-like, his fire is the best-fed and the greatest eater; for the Sun's light extends throughout the whole world.

"Eating," in the idiomatic sense appropriate here, is simultaneous with "enjoyment" and "possession" (√*bhuj*). Thus to feed Agni, and thereby become a sovereign, Sun-like eater, reflects the sacrificer's desire to enjoy and possess the cosmos by identifying himself with it. These meanings overlap most famously in the *Bhagavad Gītā*, where Kṛṣṇa is characterized as the highest object of devotion (*bhakti*, derived from √*bhaj*) who nevertheless consumes (√*bhuj*), with his fearsome and fiery mouths, the multitude of beings who exude from his inscrutable surface. But prior to this most famous figuration of an autophagous cosmos, the Upaniṣads argued that every living being is inherently, and to a variable extent, an "eater" of a world that is his own.

BĀU 1.4.15-16 addresses this theme through the concept of a *sva loka*:[13] "Now, he who departs from this *loka* not having beheld (*a*+√*dṛś*) his own world (*svam lokam*), he, not knowing it, does not eat it (√*bhuj*), just like a Veda that is not recited or a rite left undone… The *ātman* alone should be honored as *loka*. He who honors the *ātman* as *loka*, his rite never decays because, by the intention of the *ātman*, whatever he desires, he creates."[14] A person

[13] The context of these verses is noteworthy. Beginning at BĀU 1.4.11, a cosmogony loosely based upon the Puruṣa Sūkta appears in which *brahman* does not become fully "expanded" (*vyabhavat*) until it generates the four *varṇa*s and *dharma*. *Brahman*, the nature of which is to develop through "expansion" (√*bṛh*), is then mapped onto the macranthropic Puruṣa of the Puruṣa Sūkta. *Brahman* is thus tacitly linked the *puruṣa*, and both are linked to the generation of the *loka* by a process of expansion.

[14] BĀU 1.4.15—*atha yo ha vā asmāl lokāt svaṃ lokam adṛṣṭvā praiti sa enam avidito na bhunakti yathā vedo vānanukto 'nyad vā karmākṛtam* | … *sa ya ātmānam eva lokam upāste na hāsya karma kṣiyate* | *asmād dhy evātmano yadyat kāmayate tattat sṛjate* ||

should thus "eat" the world, which is to say, make it his "own," seeing it[15] and knowing it as such. Unlike the rites of traditional sacrifice, the effect of this realization "never decays," meaning that it averts the crisis of *saṃsāra* by referring to the undecaying and inactive basis of all action, the *ātman*. The verses that follow describe precisely how *ātman* and *loka* coincide:

> Now this *ātman* is the *loka* of all beings. He who makes offerings and sacrifices is by this a *loka* for gods. He who recites [the Vedas] is by this [a *loka*] for the Ṛṣis. He who offers to the ancestors and desires progeny is by this [a *loka*] for the ancestors. He who provides shelter and food for men is by this [a *loka*] for men. He who procures grass and water for livestock is by this [a *loka*] for livestock.[16]

All these acts are in ways in which a person feeds and sustains others. The gods are fed and sustained by sacrifices, ancestors by rites and the continuance of the family line, livestock by food and water, etc. Thus a person's world is his own not only because he "eats" it, but also because he feeds beings therein. A *loka* extends as wide as one feeds and sustains others

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[15] The emphasis on "seeing" the world as one's own reflects the etymology of *loka* (as described by Gonda 1966: 9-11). Derived from √*ruc*, meaning "to shine," a *loka* is at its core a lighted clearing in which perceiving takes place. The verbal roots √*loc* and √*lok*, both meaning "to see," reflect this link between the world and visual perception. Consider also the *Aitareya Upaniṣad*'s (AiU) opening cosmogony, which concludes: "He [the *ātman*], being born, looked upon the creatures. 'Who will declare there to be another here?' [he thought]. [But] he saw only this *puruṣa*, who is *brahman*, the highest, [and said,] 'This [*idam*] have I seen [*adarśam*]!' Therefore he is named 'Idandra' … though cryptically he is called 'Indra' … because the gods are fond of what is hidden." (AiU 1.3.13-14—*sa jāto bhūtāny abhivyaikhyat kim ihānyaṃ vāvadiṣad iti* । *sa etam eva puruṣaṃ brahma tatamam apaśyad idam adarśam iti* ॥ *tasmād indandro nāma* । … *indra ity parokṣena* । … *parokṣapriyā iva hi devāḥ* ॥)

[16] BĀU 1.4.16—*atho ayaṃ vā ātmā sarveṣāṃ bhūtānāṃ lokaḥ* । *sa yaj juhoti yad yajate tena devānāṃ lokaḥ* । *atha yad anubrūte tena ṛṣīṇām* । *atha yat pitṛbhyo nipṛṇāti yat prajām icchate tena pitṛṇām* । *atha yan manuṣyān vāsayate yad ebhyo 'śanaṃ dadāti tena manuṣyāṇām* । *atha yat paśubhyas tṛṇodakaṃ vindati tena paśūnām* ।

and the network of food relations in which one is involved constitutes one's *sva loka*.[17] The resulting paradox is that the person is both a feeder and an eater of the world that is, in either case, his own Self. He is sustained throughout this activity because it is based in the *ātman*, the creative source by which one creates whatever one desires—namely an endless expanse of food.[18] So if a person knows and perceives the whole world as his own Self, then here he becomes one who is both food and an eater of food. He is the creator and the created; he is the undecaying source of the food that he himself is and eats.

The reduction of the cosmos to the status of food stretches all the way back to the Vedic Saṃhitās.[19] The Vedic sovereign's status is reflected in the fact that he is considered both an eater of the clans and the procurer of their food (Proferes 2007: 99). The Brāhmaṇas expand this line of thought to establish a hierarchical "order of species," of eaters and the eaten.[20] The Upaniṣads then transpose these views to the new *saṃsāric* context in which not even the

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[17] Some aspects of these relations have been described in McKim Marriott's 1976 essay, "Hindu Transactions: Diversity without Dualism," which examines the often *varṇa*-circumscribed nature of food networks that inform the characteristically "dividual" nature of persons socialized according to the schematic of a cosmic Puruṣa.

[18] ChU 8.1-2 links the creation of all desires by the *ātman* to the oft repeated theme of free movement (*kāmacāro*) in all worlds (*sarveṣu lokeṣu*). Whatever a knower of *ātman* desires (where *ātman* is the *brahman* in the vast, cosmically scaled space of heart), a world 'rises up' (*sam+ut+√stha*) in which that desire can be fulfilled.

[19] Olivelle writes, "In few other cultures does food play as central a role in cosmological speculations, ritual practice, and social transactions as in India. Not only is the creative act closely associated with the creation of food in Brahmanical myths and theology, but even the creator god Prajāpati is often depicted as food" (1995: 199).

[20] See Smith 1990: 180, *et passim*. See also ŚB 13.6.1-2, which discusses the performance of the Puruṣamedha rite and enjoins the recitation of the Puruṣa Sūkta. According to this text, Puruṣa-Nārāyaṇa first undertook the Puruṣamedha in order to "stand over all beings and be this whole world" (ŚB 13.6.1.1—*atitiṣṭheyaṃ sarvāṇi bhūtānyahamevedaṃ sarvaṃ syām*). A folk etymology then defines *puruṣa* as that which abides (*√śī*) in the stronghold (*pur*) that is the worlds (*lokā*). Finally, *medha* is defined as food (*anna*), and thus the performance of the Puruṣamedha secures the whole world as food for the sacrificer.

souls of the dead are free of the food cycle. As B.K. Smith humorously reflects, "in the Upanishadic view it is the soul of the dead man that reappears on each table of the cosmic restaurant" (1990: 183). Naturally, the one who surmounts this cyclic existence is a truly sovereign eater of food. Yet the paradoxical nature of this sovereignty remains: by escaping *saṃsāra*, becoming thereby one with *brahman*, he also becomes the food that all beings eat. The state of immortality is, in effect, also one of profuse mortality.[21]

The cosmos in its truest aspect—that is, as *brahman*—is thus a kind of feeding frenzy that directly informs the Upaniṣadic understanding of the *puruṣa*. BĀU 1.4 begins by evoking the macranthropic nature of the cosmos, stating: "In the beginning the *ātman* alone was this world, in the form of a *puruṣa* (*puruṣavidhaḥ*)."[22] By dividing itself into male and female halves, this *puruṣa*-shaped *ātman* generated Agni (from the female aspect) and Soma (from the male aspect), who are also called "eater" (corresponding to all that is *āgneya*) and "eaten" (corresponding to all that is *saumya*). This dichotomy establishes the most basic nature of the cosmos: "The extent of the whole world is 'food' and 'eater of food.' Soma is verily the food; Agni is the eater of food."[23] Hence, the *puruṣa*-shaped cosmos is a continual site of self-consumption, compelled by the interactions of the two sacrificial substance-deities, Agni and Soma. The world is a great cosmic sacrifice, in which the liquid food

[21] Later poetically depicted in the BhG as the catastrophic surface of Kṛṣṇa's *viśvarūpa*, all living beings streaming irresistibly into its fiery maws.

[22] BĀU 1.4.1—*ātmaivedam agra āsīt puruṣavidhaḥ*

[23] BĀU 1.4.6—*etāvad vā idaṃ sarvam annaṃ caivānnādaś ca* | *soma evānnm agnir annādaḥ* |

oblations of Soma are poured into the consuming fires of Agni. It eats, and just so it is eaten.[24]

Another passage in the BĀU reconceives Agni-the-eater as both Sun and Death. After doubling himself in a fit of hunger, "Death observed, 'If I kill this [second self (*ātman*)], I will reduce [my supply of] food.' So with that speech and with that [second] *ātman* he emitted this whole world.... 'Death eats all'—that is the Aditi-ness (√*ad*) of Aditi [the Sun]. The one who knows this, the Aditi-ness of Aditi, becomes an eater of this whole world and the whole world becomes his food."[25] Hence, the mortal aspect of the cosmos is fundamentally self-consumptive—Death emits the universe as his second self and as food, which he endlessly eats. "The one who knows" this likewise knows the world as his Self and thus eats the food that he emits from, and as, himself. He is the immortal whose very way of being is defined by an ever-renewed mortality. He is moreover a sovereign, signalled by the fact that the story of Death's hunger is framed as the secret meaning of the Aśvamedha rite, the most famous of those rites that consolidates sovereignty in a human king.[26] Though his sovereignty is not of the sort accessible to sacrificing royalty alone, for the mouth by which the sacrificer-*qua*-Death eats the world—the mouth of both the sacrificial horse and the Sun—is named Agni Vaiśvānara, the "fire common to all men."

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[24] See also TU 2.2.1—"From food beings come into being; by food, once born, they grow. 'It is eaten and it eats beings.' Therefore it is called 'food.'"

[25] BĀU 1.2.5—*sa aikṣata yadi vā imam abhimaṃsye kanīyo 'nnaṃ kariṣya iti* | *sa tayā vācā tenātmanedaṃ sarvam asṛjata... sarvaṃ vā attīti tad aditer adititvam* | *sarvasyāttā bhavati sarvam asyānnaṃ bhavati ya evam etad aditer adititvaṃ veda* ||

[26] BĀU 1.2.7 depicts Death's act of self-doubling as a suicidal act of sacrifice: In toiling to re-create himself he is totally exhausted and becomes a "bloated" (*aśvat*) corpse, which he deems fit for sacrifice (*medhya*). This is the origin of the *aśva-medha*, or "Horse Sacrifice."

According to BĀU 5.9, "this fire common to all men is that which is within *puruṣa*. Food is cooked by it."[27] In the Vedic period, Agni Vaiśvānara referred to a kingdom's communal fire that symbolized the king's sovereign and creative expansiveness. By identifying it with the digestive fires within every person, the BĀU universalizes this sovereign fire. Moreover, the individual's digestive fire is ascribed creative capacities similar to those originally restricted to sovereigns according to its role in the processes of reproduction and the cycle of rebirth. This refers us to the Upaniṣads' earliest systematic understanding of transmigration, the "five fires doctrine" (*pañcāgnividyā*), according to which, the end result of the digestive process is semen. Consequently the food that a man eats is transformed into the medium by which he generates offspring, which is the key mechanism by which the dead are reborn on earth: Those dead who are doomed to be reborn abandon their bodies and go to the moon, where "they become food. There, the gods feed on them, as they tell King Soma, the moon: 'Increase! Decrease!' When that ends, they pass into this very sky, from the sky into the wind, from the wind into the rain, and from the rain into the earth. Reaching the earth, they become food. They are again offered in the [digestive] fire of man (*puruṣa*) and then take birth in the fire of woman."[28] This is, of course, the "path of the ancestors" (*pitṛ-yāna*) of the five-fire doctrine, which conceives the cosmic cycle of rebirth as nothing more than the food-wise transmutation of the dead into the "well-made" (*sukṛta*) and blissful stuff of semen.[29]

2.2 The Bliss of Food

[27] BĀU 5.9—*ayam agnir vaiśvānaro yo 'yam antaḥ puruṣe* | *yenedam annaṃ pacyate* |

[28] BĀU 6.2.16; trans. Olivelle 1998: 149.

[29] See Olivelle 1997 and below.

The second and third chapters of the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (TU) offer a complex expansion of these themes in their exploration of the five *ātman*s of a *puruṣa*, often erroneously called "sheaths" (*kośā*[30]), and the reducibility of all things to the status of food. The verses begin with an account of the origins of food, the essence of which—its *rasa*—gives rise to a *puruṣa*:

> From *brahman*, in other words from this self (*ātman*), space came into being; from space, air; from air, fire; from fire, the waters; from the waters, the earth; from the earth, plants; from plants, food; and from food, *puruṣa*. He—that is, this *puruṣa*—is made of the *rasa* of food. This [*rasa*] is verily his head; this his right half, this his left; this is his body (*ātman*); this is the bottom that is a resting place…. Verily creatures are born of food, and whatever [else] is situated on the earth…. Once born, they grow by food; it [i.e. *brahman*] is eaten and it eats beings, therefore it is called "food."[31]

With a proto-Sāṃkhya flair, the TU describes the generation of all things through an initial process of elemental accretion and transformation that reaches back to its ultimate source in the *ātman*/*brahman*. A *puruṣa* is a final result of this process, generated by food's essence, or *rasa*. Consequently the first of the *puruṣa*'s five *ātman*s is said to be made of food (*annamaya*). The next *ātman* consists of *prāṇa*: "The *ātman* consisting of *prāṇa* is in the midst of and different than this [*puruṣa*] that consists of the *rasa* of food. By that [*ātman*], this *puruṣa* is filled. This *ātman* has the form of *puruṣa*. According to the *puruṣa*-shape of

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[30] The term *kośa* only appears once in the whole of the TU, in a reference to Indra as the "covering of *brahman*" (TU 1.4.1—*brahmaṇaḥ kośo'si*).

[31] TU 2.1-2—*tasmādvā etasmādātmana ākāśassaṃbhūtaḥ* | *ākāśādvāyuḥ* | *vāyoragniḥ* | *agnerāpaḥ* | *adbhyaḥ pṛthivī* | *pṛthivyā oṣadhayaḥ* | *oṣadhībhyo'nnam* | *annātpuruṣaḥ* | *sa vā eṣa puruṣo'nnarasamayaḥ* | *tasyedameva śiraḥ* | *ayaṃ dakṣiṇaḥ pakṣaḥ* | *ayamuttaraḥ pakṣaḥ* | *ayamātmā* | *idaṃ pucchaṃ pratiṣṭhā* | … *annādvai prajāḥ prajāyante* | *yāḥ kāśca pṛthivīṃ śritāḥ* | … *jātānyannena vardhante* | *adyate 'tti ca bhūtāni* | *tasmādannaṃ taducyata iti* |

the *puruṣa* made of food, [this *ātman* consisting of *prāṇa*] is *puruṣa*-shaped."[32] Its head is the out-breath; its right side the inter-breath; its left side the in-breath, its bottom the earth. Three more *ātman*s, consisting of mind (*manas*), discernment (*vijñāna*), and bliss (*ānanda*), are listed in turn, each with a corresponding and increasingly abstract *puruṣa*-form.[33]

According to Freedman (2012: 332), "rather than being a description or a theory of man and his configuration," the second chapter of the TU is "primarily a manual" that details a non-ritualized performance[34] of the Agnicayana, the "piling of Agni."[35] The mythic history of this rite tells of the rescue of Prajāpati from death after his constituent parts had been scattered in the process of generating the cosmos. The *yajamāna* who performs the Agnicayana rite likewise saves himself from death; he, like Prajāpati, turns to Agni and says "*saṃdhehi*!"—"put me back together!" Hence the *yajamāna* becomes, like Prajāpati, an

[32] TU 2.2—*tasmād vā etasmād annarasamayāt* | *anyo 'ntara ātmā prāṇamayaḥ* | *tenaiṣa pūrṇaḥ* | *sa vā eṣa puruṣavidha eva* | *tasya puruṣavidhatām* |

[33] These five *puruṣa*-forms are given in their correspondences in the following chart:

ātman	head	right-side	left-side	*ātman*	bottom
annamaya	*rasa*	*rasa*	*rasa*	*rasa*	*rasa*
prāṇamaya	out-breath	inter-breath	in-breath	*ākāśa*	earth
manomaya	Yajus	Ṛks	Sāmans	instruction	Atharvans
vijñānamaya	*śraddha*	*ṛta*	*satya*	*yoga*	*maha*
anandamaya	love	delight	joy	bliss	*brahman*

[34] Bhṛgu, studying under Varuṇa in TU 3, discovers these five *ātman*s (there called *brahman*s) by practicing *tapas*.

[35] The Agnicayana altar is bird-shaped, a configuration alluded to in the TU insofar as the five *ātman*s are composed of a head (*śiras*), two wings (*pakṣa*), and tail/base (*puccha/pratiṣṭhā*). While Freedman is undoubtedly correct in linking TU 2 to the *agnicayana* rite, he further interprets the Upaniṣad as a manual for a strictly *interiorized* or *implosive* journey undertaken by the departed ascetic-*yajamāna*. I take issue with this reading below.

agni-cit, one who has been "(re)constructed (or piled) as and by Agni."[36] It is also said that he thereby ascends to *svarga-loka*. In the previous chapter, we saw that the Agnicayana, like the Rājasūya, functions to confer sovereignty upon a human king, and this in turn entails the identification of the human king with the Sun so that he too "will fill all space."[37] The world of this king-*qua*-Sun is *svarga-loka*, a term which signifies (again, following Proferes 2007) the realm of the Sun's immortal transit. The *yajamāna*'s ascent to *svarga-loka* is thus synonymous with his becoming *agni-cit*: by being piled like or as Agni, the *yajamāna* becomes identified with the fiery Sun whose light fills all space. To be saved from death in this manner is to attain a state of pervasive expansion and identification with the extent of the cosmos itself; to be put back together like Prajāpati is to be rejoined with the whole of the world.

The penultimate verses of the second chapter of the TU reflect these earlier ritual considerations in their portrayal of the path of the dead man who knows *brahman*:

> He who is this one in the *puruṣa* and he who is there in the Sun—he is one. He who knows this [*brahman*], having departed from this world, he advances over[38] to the *ātman* made of food. He advances over to the *ātman* made of *prāṇa*. He advances over to the *ātman* made of mind. He advances over to the *ātman* made of discernment. [And finally] he advances over to the *ātman* made of bliss (*ānanda*).[39]

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[36] See Freedman 2012: 329-330

[37] Proferes 2007: 85

[38] See White (2009: 68-74) on the use of verbs meaning "to advance, assault" (√*kram*) to describe the warrior's or yogi's process of dying

[39] TU 2.8—*sa yaś cāyaṃ puruṣe* | *yaś cāsāv āditye* | *sa ekaḥ* | *sa ya evaṃvit* | *asmāl lokāt pretya* | *etam annamayam ātmānam upasaṅkrāmati* | *etaṃ prāṇamayam ātmānam upasaṅkrāmati* | *etaṃ manomayam ātmānam upasaṅkrāmati* | *etaṃ vijñānamayam ātmānam upasaṅkrāmati* | *etam ānandamayam ātmānam upasaṅkrāmati* |

The path of the dead is thus a path through the *puruṣa*'s five *ātman*s that culminates in the bliss that is proper to the knower of *brahman*.[40] This is the TU's innovation, that the process by which one becomes an expansive *agni-cit*, by which one ascends through death to *svarga-loka*, reveals the blissful nature of *brahman*. This leads us to inquire further into the meaning of bliss and its relation to *puruṣa*, the Sun, and *brahman*.

The significance of bliss in this context is given at TU 2.7:

> That which is well-made (*sukṛta*) is nothing but semen (*rasa*), for when a *puruṣa* here obtains semen, he comes to possess bliss. Now, who would breathe in, who would breathe out, if this bliss were not here in the space [in the heart]; for that alone can grant bliss. When a man finds his support within that which is invisible, incorporeal, indistinct, supportless, and free from fear, then he becomes free from fear. For only when he creates an interiority (*udaram antaraṃ*) does fear come upon him.[41]

By translating *rasa* in this verse as "semen," I follow Olivelle (1997), who points us toward three important considerations. First, *rasa* is the pith of any given thing, its essence. When food is consumed, the end result of the process of digestion is semen, and thus the essence of food is semen. Second, semen is the physical counterpart of the bliss of orgasm and is therefore, in the Indic view, indistinct from it. Consequently, the five *ātman*s, which progress from the *ātman* made of food to the *ātman* made of bliss, may obliquely indicate the path of what is consumed on its way to bliss, which is in this case homologous to the

[40] TU 2.8 notes that the greatest of all possible measures of bliss belongs to *brahman*.

[41] TU 2.7—*yad vai tat sukṛtam* | *raso vai saḥ* | *rasaṃ hy evāyaṃ labdhvānandī bhavati* | *ko hy evānyāt kaḥ prāṇyāt* | *yad eṣa ākāśa ānando na syāt* | *eṣa hy evānandayāti* | *yadā hy evaiṣa etasmin adṛśye 'nātmye 'nirukte 'nilayane 'bahye pratiṣṭhāṃ vindate* | *atha so 'bhayaṃ gato bhavati* | *yadā hy evaiṣa etasminn udaram antaraṃ kurute 'tha tasya bhayaṃ bhavati* |

My translation follows Olivelle's (1997: 166), with the exception of the term *udaram*, which Olivelle (following Rau 1981, but diverging from the vulgate) reads as '*u daram*' ("a hollow or a fissure"). In either case, a spatial separation is suggested. On the significance of fear in this passage, see Geen 2007.

path of the dead. Finally, without this bliss of semen, nothing would "breathe in" or "breathe out." In other words, the whole of existence depends upon bliss as a foundation, and this is patently observable through the progenitive effects of semen. The important point in all this is not, however, the sexual nature of the blissful *ātman*, but rather the meaning of the association of the *ātman* with blissfulness.

A passage from the BĀU directly addresses this association with reference to the bliss of an orgasm: "Just as a man, completely enveloped by a woman lover knows nothing at all about 'outside' or 'inside,' just so this *puruṣa*, completely enveloped by the *ātman* of wisdom, knows nothing at all about 'outside' or 'inside.'"[42] In other words, the bliss of the *ātman*, like the bliss of a sexual orgasm, is characterized by an experience of spatial indistinction. We see the same conception at work in the TU passage just cited, where the blissful state is described as "invisible, incorporeal, indistinct, supportless," and associated with the element of space (*ākāśa*), which in early systematizations of the five elements is taken to be the foundation of the other four (wind, fire, earth, and water).[43] Bliss if furthermore contrasted with the fearful state that results from the creation of an interiority, which is to say, a "side" to stand on. With such language the TU argues that knowing the oneness of the *brahman* that lies within both the *puruṣa* and the Sun is the same as knowing the state of spatial indistinction experienced in (orgasmic) bliss. In other words, bliss describes a phenomenal experience of spatial indistinction to match the metaphysical mechanics of a sovereign's expansive identification with the cosmos.

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[42] BĀU 4.3.21—*tad yathā priyayā striyā saṃpariṣvakto na bāhyaṃ kiṃcana veda nāntaram evam evāyaṃ puruṣaḥ prājñenātmanā saṃpariṣvakto na bāhyaṃ kiṃcana veda nāntaram* ǀ

[43] This is especially true in the Pāli canon, where the elements (there, *dhātu*s) likely received their earliest systematic treatment.

In his 2002 article, "Le monde dans le corps du Siddha," David White considers a closely related set of ideas about the body of the Tantric Siddha, which will help us to better understand the spatial indistinction of bliss. He refers to the Siddha's body as a "möbius universe," meaning that the Siddha is, like a möbius strip, categorically one-sided. In other words, what is inside the Siddha's body is simultaneously outside, and not by a fact of replication. Rather, the distinction between inside and outside is rendered utterly meaningless—just as it is in the bliss of orgasm—by the perfected nature of the Siddha, and thus the Siddha is "one-sided." As a result, textual descriptions of a Siddha's (so-called "subtle") body that appear to outline the correspondence between his microcosmic body and the cosmos-at-large in fact intend to demonstrate the Siddha's one-sided identity with the universe. When the Siddha becomes one-sided with the universe, he sees as the godhead sees, looking "out" into the universe by looking "into" himself. The möbius self/universe of the Siddha is thereby experienced simultaneously "as a world in which he lived, and a world that lived within himself" because "above and below, inside and outside, even time and space" have converged (White 2002: 210-212).

A cosmogonic narrative that appears in the TU immediately following its initial discussion of the blissful ātman evocatively echoes this paradoxical situation:

> The creator desired: "Let me become many, let me procreate." He heated up [by] *tapas*. Having heated [by] *tapas*, he emitted this whole world. Whatever is [in] this world, having emitted that, he verily entered into (*anuprāviśat*) that.[44]

[44] TU 2.6—*so'kāmayata* | *bahu syāṃ prajāyeyeti* | *sa tapo'tapyata* | *sa tapastaptvā* | *idaṃ sarvamasṛjata* | *yadidaṃ kiṃca* | *tathasṛṣṭvā* | *tadevānuprāviśat* |

As with the Siddha's godhead, the TU's unnamed progenitor of beings[45] creates the world into which he then enters. Initially one, he becomes the many and thus interacts only with himself, for he lives in a world that he himself is. The procreative nature of this account is highly suggestive of the sexualized bliss we noted earlier, and the account does indeed lead immediately to the TU's statements about semen and bliss. Bliss, then, is the heavily implied foundation of the created world that the creator fills. And though unnamed, the creator is in all likelihood not meant to be distinguished from the blissful *brahman* who is within the *puruṣa* and the Sun. Consequently, by entering into the condition of the *ātman* that consists of bliss, one is identified with the blissfully creative *brahman*, and therefore identified with the whole emitted world as the one who has entered into it. Like the Siddha, the blissful Self of the TU is both a world in which to live and that which lives in it, utterly pervasive and extending everywhere.[46]

Directly opposed to the nature of this blissful *ātman* is fear, which comes upon a man only when he has created an interiority. This means that the departed's advance toward the blissful *ātman* is not, as Freedman and others interpret it, an interiorized, implosive journey.[47] Rather, the departed *puruṣa* who advances to the *ātman* made of bliss advances toward one-sidedness. Having reached bliss, he is at once in the Sun and the person; and like

[45] Prajāpati is likely implied, as the creative process here (impelled by *tapas*) is similar to the more elaborately described creative process carried out by Prajāpati in the Agnicayana-related mythology of the ŚB.

[46] Further parallels to this passage appear in the "Rite of Transfer," involving a dying father and son, which I discuss in the conclusion below.

[47] Freedman 2012: 335. Goudriaan likewise holds that "[t]he progression towards the innermost core of the Self [in the TU] is from gross to subtle, from material to spiritual, from exterior to interior" (1992: 166).

the Sun, he pervades the whole world.[48] In the language of both the RV and the BĀU, the sovereignty of the Sun (as Aditi) is established by characterizing it as the eater of food par excellence. Thus it is unsurprising that all of these themes are linked together at the close of the TU, where the one who reaches the *ātman* made of bliss is conceived as a Solar and sovereign eater of food:

> He who is this one in the *puruṣa* and he who is there in the Sun—he is one. He who knows this, having departed from this world, … he advances over to the *ātman* made of bliss; *and eating whatever he likes and assuming whatever appearance he likes* he travels across these worlds and sings this Sāman:
>
> Hā u vu! Hā u vu! Hā u vu!
> I am food! I am food! I am food!
> I eat food! I eat food! I eat food!
> …
>
> I am food! I eat him who eats the food! As the Sun, the light, I have conquered the whole world![49]

2.3 Problematizing the Spatiality of the Person

2.3.1 The Rope of Food in BĀU 2.2

The issue of how to address the confounding spatiality of the *puruṣa* proves to be the basis for a number of otherwise cryptic passages scattered throughout the Upaniṣads. An especially enigmatic attempt appears in a passage in the BĀU that poses and solves the

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[48] This is precisely the manner in which the Agnicayana reconstructs the disintegrated Prajāpati—not as a limited construction strictly identified with the sacrificial altar, but rather as the whole of the world whose inherent connectivity has been reestablished by the ritual act. That is, the Agnicayana aims at restoring the ordered, connected nature of Prajāpati, and thus at *repairing* Prajāpati by making his pervasive and unitary nature explicit once more. For a comprehensive treatment of the way in which Puruṣa-Prajāpati is repaired through sacrifice, see B.K. Smith (1989), pp. 50-81.

[49] TU 3.10—*sa yaś cāyaṃ puruṣe* | *yaś cāsāv āditye* | *sa ekaḥ* | *sa ya evaṃvit* | *asmāl lokāt pretya* | … *etamānandamayamātmānamupasaṅkrāmya* | *imāṃllokankāmannī kāmarūpyanupsaṃcarann* | *etathsāma gāyannāste* | *hā u vu hā u vu hā u vu* | *ahamannamahamannamahamannam* | *ahamannādo' hamannādo' hamannādaḥ* | … *ahamannamannamadantamādmi* | *ahaṃ viśvaṃ bhuvanamabhyabhavām* | *suvarna jyotīḥ* |

riddle of the "youngling" (*śiśu*)—the sacrificial calf that is hitched to a post by a rope. Brereton (1991) has already significantly advanced our understanding of this passge in arguing that the youngling is the *madhyama prāṇa*, the "middle breath," while the post and rope are *prāṇa* and food, respectively. Based on formal similarity with other texts, he further argues that the youngling is the fire and Sun, that the seven sages who are identified with the seven *prāṇa*s are also the seven stars of Ursa Major, and that, as a whole, the text "affirms a homology between the human head and the world." Thus in Brereton's reading, the text maps out a microcosm-to-macrocosm replication of the world within the person's head (1991: 13).

However, while the series of homologies that Brereton establishes is convincing, by characterizing their significance in this way he has underemphasized the role that food (not *prāṇa*!) plays as BĀU 2.2's central organizing theme. In vs. 1, the rope that hitches the youngling to the post is named "food." In vs. 2, it is said of the one who knows the way in which seven divine forces/entities attach themselves to the eye of the person, "his food will never decrease."[50] The next verse cites a *śloka* from the AV to establish the identity of the seven seers (of Ursa Major) as the *prāṇa*s, to which is added an eighth, which is "speech joined to *brahman*." Finally, vs. 4 links speech to food according to the name of the last of the seven seers, Atri: Atri is speech; thus when one "eats" (*atti*), he does so with speech. The passage concludes, "the one who knows this becomes the eater of this whole world and the whole world here becomes his food."[51] Thus the whole of BĀU 2.2 orients itself toward food, and thus the way the text portrays food should orient our interpretation.

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[50] BĀU 2.2.2—*nāsyānnaṃ kṣīyate ya evaṃ veda*

[51] BĀU 2.2.4—*sarvaysāttā bhavati* | *sarvam asyānnaṃ bhavati ya evaṃ veda* ||

According to the opening image of the text, the youngling is tied to a post by a rope, and the *rope* is identified with food. This image provides the interpretational orientation we need to fully understand the repeated references to food and the nature of the connections between head and cosmos, or *prāṇa* and fire: Just as a rope links a youngling to a post, in the same manner, food links the middle *prāṇa* to the rest of the *prāṇa*s. The metaphor is essentially digestive, but with the qualification that the whole world is characterized as a digestive process. Analogously, the Sun is linked to the terrestrial fire (and the whole world) by its rays that eat food. And finally, the head is linked to the vault of the heavens through speech (by which one eats). In each case, food establishes an extensional linkage—a rope—between spatially disparate elements. Thus, rather than establishing a mere series of replications across the categories of person and world, the text demonstrates their potential continuity. The homologies that the text establishes are ultimately indicative of the extensional relation between the person and the world, where the end result is that the person is conceived as cosmically expansive. For only in this manner could the text intelligibly say, "When a man knows this, he becomes the eater of this whole world, and the whole world here becomes his food."

This line of interpretation is bolstered if we turn to AV 10.8.9, which contains the *śloka* that the BĀU cites in this passage. It reads: "A bowl with its mouth sideways, and bottom-side up—in it is placed the glory of all forms (*yaśo nihitaṃ viśvarūpam*). Seven Seers sit there together; they have become the herdsmen (*gopā*) of the Great One (*mahato*)."[52] What is most significant about this verse for our purposes is that in the BĀU, "the Great One" has been either supplanted by or further specified as "Speech" (*vāc*). However, in keeping with

[52] AVŚ 10.8.9—*tiryagbilaś camasa ūrdhvabudhnas tasmin yaśo nihitaṃ viśvarūpaṃ* | *tad āsata ṛṣayaḥ sapta sākaṃ ye asya gopā mahato babhūvuḥ* ||

the spatially expansive meaning of *mahat*, Speech remains that by which one 'eats the whole world that has become his food.' Furthermore, the following verse in the AV (10.8.10) refers to this Great One as "He who is yoked (√*yuj*) before and afterwards, who is yoked everywhere (*sarvataḥ*) and to everything (*viśvato*)."[53] In other words, the Great One of the AV hymn is a cosmically expansive figure (who seems to anticipate the pre-classical era's vision of the cosmic yogi)—not a homologous stand-in for the cosmos but one who is joined with the cosmos itself—and this characterization is poetically extended in the BĀU to Speech through the image of the youngling that is tied to a post by the rope of food/speech. The overall effect of the passage thereby attempts to rethink the spatiality of the person by establishing a series of homologies that indicate the way in which a person can discover his own capacity to extend, via a "rope," to the far reaches of the cosmos. Were this rope-*qua*-food not the central organizing principle of the passage, we would be completely justified in accepting a microcosm-to-macrocosm interpretation. But this interpretation falls away in light of the importance of the rope, which links human to cosmos just as the Great One is "yoked" everywhere and to everything.

2.3.2 The Heart

Another, more common manner of addressing the spatiality of the person—a kind of "daytime" model to match BĀU 2.2's "nighttime" model—is found in the theme of the "cave" or "space" of the heart.[54] In several places, the Upaniṣads explicitly link the heart to

[53] AVŚ 10.8.10—*yā purastād yujyate yā ca paścād yā viśvato yujyate yā ca sarvataḥ* |

[54] See e.g. *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (KU) 1.14; 2.12; 3.1; and Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad (MuU) 2.1.8, 10; 2.2.1; 3.1.7. See also ŚvU 2.10, where the cave is a literal space in which one should seek to engage in the yogic practice. The result of his practice is the recognition of the "God that pervades all the quarters," whose "face is everywhere [and] stands turning west toward men" as does the Sun, and "who has entered (*ā*+√*viś*) all beings (*viśvaṃ bhuvanam*)" (ŚvU 2.16-17; tr. Olivelle 1996: 256).

the Sun according to their 'anatomical' similarity. So ChU 8.6 describes the heart's manifold "tubes" or "arteries" called *nāḍī*s:

> Now, these *nāḍī*s of the heart consist of the fineness of orange, white, blue, yellow and red. The Sun up there, likewise, is orange, white, blue, yellow, and red. Just as a long highway traverses two villages, one nearby and one far away, so also these solar rays traverse both worlds (*ubhau lokau*), the one down here and the one up above. Extending (*pra*+√*tan*) out from the Sun up there, they slip (√*sṛp*) into these *nāḍī*s here, and extending out from these *nāḍī*s here, they slip into the Sun up there.[55]

Both heart and Sun radiate with luminous rays/*nāḍī*s that extend from a central point and "slip" into each other. To borrow a metaphor from the BĀU, these rays are the "rope" by which the underlying unity of the heart and the Sun is to be understood. The analogy that the ChU employs is expressive of the same underlying unity, but is all the more interesting because it speaks directly from an awareness of the expanding scope of contemporary Indic society: just as a village extends outward by its highways and thereby grows larger by joining with other distant population centers, the heart and Sun unite in their own cosmic polity (i.e. *brahman*[56]) via their rays. A person conceived in these terms is in a first sense in two villages, or two worlds. One is centered on but extends outward from the mortal heart, while the other is centered on and extends outward from the immortal Sun in the heavens. However in a second sense, the two are united via the highway-like extension of rays, just as many villages are united in a polity.

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[55] ChU 8.6.1-2—*atha yā etā hṛdayasya nāḍyas tāḥ piṅgalasyāṇimnas tiṣṭhanti śuklasya nīlasya pītasya lohitasyeti* | *asau vādityaḥ piṅgala eṣa śukla eṣa nīla eṣa pīta eṣa lohitaḥ* || *tad yathā mahāpatha ātata ubhau grāmau gacchatīmaṃ cāmuṃ caivam evaitā ādityasya raśmaya ubhau lokau gacchantīmaṃ cāmuṃ ca* | *amuṣmād ādityāt pratāyante tā āsu nāḍīṣu sṛptāḥ* | *ābhyo nāḍībhyaḥ pratāyante te 'muṣminn āditye sṛptāḥ* ||

[56] The Sun and the heart are both equated with *brahman* in various fashions throughout the early Upaniṣads. BĀU 4.1.7 and 5.3 explicitly equate the heart with *brahman*. The Sun is frequently invoked as the door to immortality throughout the Upaniṣads, and by the time of the *Maitri Upaniṣad* it is explicitly identified as the doorway to *brahman*.

The relation between the heart and the Sun is like a polity in another sense as well. For the heart is conceived as a creative sovereign just as the immortal Sun has been conceived since the Vedic period. This is conveyed in Upaniṣadic discussions of dreams, that state in which the heart's light has withdrawn into itself in the same way that the Sun withdraws its rays as it sets. In the BĀU Yājñavalkya states: "In the place where he dreams [i.e., in the heart], taking materials from the entirety of the *loka*, taking them apart and fashioning them himself, he dreams with his own luster, with his own light. Here, this *puruṣa* is his own light."[57] Because he resorts to this, "his own light," a person "is a creator"[58] in dreams. He attains thereby the state of a great sovereign, as Ajātaśatru notes in a separate passage that substitutes *prāṇa* for light: "Just as a great king (*mahārāja*), having taken hold of a nation, wanders at will among his own people, just so, having taken hold of these *prāṇa*s, [the dreamer] wanders at will in his own body."[59] The logic here is essentially Vedic—the Sun-like sovereign is the unity of a nation and thus he moves freely along its ray-like roads—while the application of this logic to dreams is wholly Upaniṣadic in the way that it conflates the world with the individual person.

In the discussions of dreamless sleep, the conflation between individual person and world becomes even more pronounced, and the distinction between them all the blurrier. In dreamless sleep, the person retreats fully into the "citadel of the heart" (*purītat*), where the *ātman* resides and where "he, just as a young man, or a great king or a great brahmin, having

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[57] BĀU 4.3.9—*…sa yatra prasvapity asya lokasya sarvāvato mātrām apādāya svayaṃ vihatya svayaṃ nirmāya svena bhāsā svena jyotiṣā prasvapiti* | *atrāyaṃ puruṣaḥ svayaṃjyotir bhavati* ||

[58] BĀU 4.3.10—*sa hi kartā*

[59] BĀU 2.1.18—*sa yathā mahārājo jānapadān gṛhītvā sve janapade yathākāmaṃ parivartetaivam evaiṣa etat prāṇān gṛhītvā sve śarīre yathākāmaṃ parivartate* || See also *Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad* 4.19-20.

reached the oblivion of bliss (*atighnīm ānandasya)*, lies asleep."[60] Bliss (*ānanda*) and being struck down as one dead (*ati*+√*han*) go hand-in-hand in dreamless sleep. In bliss lies the expansive "one-sidedness" proper to a creator god who emits the world before entering into it in order to experience, or "eat" it; Death is precisely the creative sovereign who, in the guise of the Sun, "eats" the whole world. So while one's heart works by light to produce a world of dreams (in the midst of one's own body), the *ātman* that resides in the citadel of the heart transcends the apparent difference of heart and Sun, of worlds whose only sensible connections are the highway like rays. In other words, the "one-sided" creativity of the *ātman* creates both the heart's world of dreams and the waking world of the Sun, a point which Ajātaśatru makes with the following analogies: "Just as a spider sends forth a thread, just as tiny sparks are emitted from a fire, verily, just so from this *ātman* springs all the *prāṇa*s, all the *loka*s, all the gods, and all beings. The secret connection of this is the real of the real. For the *prāṇa*s are real, and this *ātman* is the real of *prāṇa*s."[61] A later passage echoes this formulation when the *ātman* is referred to as "this *puruṣa* consisting of discernment among the *prāṇa*s; [it is] the inner light in the heart."[62] Thus, whereas the *prāṇa*s generate the dreamer's reality—as the "real" basis of dream *loka*s—in an exactly like manner the *ātman* is the real basis that generates the perceptual, phenomenal reality of the person. All *loka*s—that of the dreamer, of the waking person, or of the liberated *ātman*—appear as a function of the luminous and *prāṇic* extension (the "ropes" or "rays" by which a

[60] BĀU 2.1.19—*sa yathā kumāro vā mahārājo vā mahābrāhmaṇo vātighnīm ānandasya gatvā śayīta*

[61] BĀU 2.1.20—*sa yothor.ãvābhis tantunoccared yathā agneḥ kṣudrā viṣphuliṅgā vyuccaranty evam evāsmād ātmanaḥ sarve prāṇāḥ sarve lokāḥ sarve devāḥ sarvāṇi bhūtāni vyuccaranti* | *tasyopaniṣat satyasya satyam iti* | *prāṇā vai satyaṃ teṣāṃ eṣa satyam* ||

[62] BĀU 4.3.7—*yo 'yam vijñānamayaḥ prāṇeṣu hṛdy antarjyotiḥ puruṣaḥ* |

world is extended) that links and unites the *ātman* that is simultaneously in the Sun and the space of the heart.

A further elaboration on these themes is found in the *Kauṣitaki Upaniṣad*'s (KauU), which clarifies the role of *prāṇa* in the *ātman*'s extension of the world from its one-sided center.

> When a *puruṣa* is asleep and sees no dreams, then these become unified within this *prāṇa*: it [i.e. *prāṇa*] pervades speech along with all names, it pervades sight along with all forms, it pervades hearing along with all sounds, it pervades the mind along with all thoughts. [But] when he awakes, just like sparks from a blaze of fire, so from this *ātman* these *prāṇa*s disperse to their stations, and from the *prāṇa*s disperse the gods, and from the gods, the *loka*s.[63]

The *prāṇa*s of the deep-sleeping *puruṣa* have coalesced into a single form within "this *ātman*." Now the KauU also holds that the *ātman* is nothing more than *prāṇa*, so the unification of *prāṇa*s actually occurs within the *prāṇa* that is the *ātman*. In this state they burn like a unitary flame, but upon waking, they scatter like sparks, creating a phenomenal web of *prāṇa*; for "sight pours out (*abhi*+√*sṛj*) from that [*prāṇa*] all forms, and it is by sight that *prāṇa* attains all forms," etc.[64] In other words, the dispersal of *prāṇa* extends a sensorium. It is then from this sensorium thus dispersed that the gods arise, who in turn give rise to the *loka*s.[65]

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[63] KauU 3.3—*yatraitatpuruṣaḥ suptaḥ svapnaṃ na kañcana paśyatyathāsminprāṇa evaikadhā bhavati tadainaṃ vāksarvairnāmabhiḥ sahāpyeti cakṣuḥ sarvai rūpaiḥ sahāpyeti śrotraṃ sarvaiḥ śabdaiḥ sahāpyeti manaḥ sarvairdhyātaiḥ sahāpyeti sa yadā pratibudhyate yathāgnerjvalato visphuliṅgā vipratiṣṭherannevamevaitasmādātmanaḥ prāṇā yathāyatanaṃ vipratiṣṭhante prāṇebhyo devā devebhyo lokās*

[64] KauU 3.4—*cakṣurasmātsarvāṇi rūpāṇyabhivsṛjate cakṣuṣā sarvāṇi rūpāṇyāpnoti*

[65] The closing section of the KauU (4.20) relates these *prāṇa*-based sensory dynamics to the themes of eating and sovereignty: "These *ātman*s [that are identified with the *prāṇa*s that enliven the senses and from which the gods and *loka*s spring] cling to this *ātman*, just as a tribe (*svās*) clings to a chief (*śreṣṭhin*). Thus just as a chief eats through his tribe, or rather

All this reflects the fact that the interior (a "space" or a "cave") of the heart is the site of a spatial enigma. And it must be so precisely because it is the privileged residence for the creative *ātman* in the *puruṣa*, which is "large, heavenly, of inconceivable form; yet it appears more minute than the minute. It is farther than the farthest, yet it is here at hand; it is right here within those who see, hidden within the cave [of their heart]."[66] This cave of paradoxical dimensions is otherwise conceived as a "space" in the ChU: "That which is called '*brahman*' is verily this space outside a *puruṣa*. The space that is outside a *puruṣa* is verily the space that is inside a *puruṣa*. The space that is inside a person is verily this space that is inside the heart."[67] A closely related passage reads: "As big as this space [outside us] is this space within the heart. Both heaven and earth are placed within it; both Agni and Vayu, and Sun, and Moon; both lightning and the stars. That which is here [in space] and that which is not, that whole is united in the heart."[68] The heart has all this space—its cave holds so much—because it is space, which makes it very hard to place. The way in quickly becomes the way out as the heart, one's *own* heart, swells to the scope of the whole world. With this in mind, Malamoud wrote that the vacuous space of the heart "cannot be merely

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just as the tribe eats the chief, in this very manner this *ātman* consisting of knowledge eats through these other *ātman*s, and in this same manner these *ātmans* eat this *ātman*." There is a democratizing thrust to this passage, evident in that the person's true chief is the *ātman*, which "eats" itself through the *prāṇa-ātman*s that project the *puruṣa*'s sensorium.

[66] MuU 3.1.7—*bṛhac ca tad divyam acintyarūpaṁ sūkṣmāc ca tat sūkṣmataraṁ vibhāti* | *dūrāt sudūre tad ihāntike ca paśyatsv ihaiva nihitaṁ guhāyām* || Translated by Olivelle 2006: 63. See a related set of verses at ChU 3.12.7-8; 3.13.7; 3.14.3, cited in connection with RV 10.90.3 in White 2009: 93.

[67] ChU 3.12.7-9—*yad vai tad brahmetīdaṃ vāva tad yo 'yaṃ bahirdhā puruṣād ākāśaḥ* | *yo vai sa bahirdhā puruṣād ākāśaḥ* || *ayam vāva sa yo 'yam antaḥ puruṣa ākāśaḥ* | *yo vai so 'ntaḥ puruṣa ākāśaḥ* || *ayam vāva sa yo 'yam antarhṛdaya ākāśaḥ* |

[68] ChU 8.1.3—*yāvān vā ayam ākāśas tāvān eṣo 'ntarhṛdaya ākāśaḥ* | *ubhe 'smin dyāvāpṛthivī antar eva samāhite* | *ubhāv agniś ca vāyuś ca sūryācandramasāv ubhau vidyun nakṣatrāṇi* | *yac cāsyehāsti yac ca nāsti sarvaṃ tad asmin samāhitam iti* ||

reduced to an absence: it is, first and foremost, a lump or swelling;" it may be characterized as a "void" (*śūnya*), but a void is "swollen" and "grown-large" (*śūna*) (1996: 72).

2.4 Puruṣa and Yoga in the Middle Upaniṣads

2.4.1 Yoga in the KU

So far we have addressed the pervasive importance of food, bliss, *prāṇa*, and the heart to the Upaniṣads' understanding of the person. These themes indicate two overlapping models by which the spatiality of the person is conceived: (1) the person extends throughout the world by "eating" or linking up to greater portions of the world via "ropes;" and/or (2) the person is inherently spatially enigmatic or "one-sided," as we have put it, and thus possesses, rightly, neither an inside nor an outside. Beginning with the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (KU), these models coalesce within a novel reconception of the term "yoga" as a method by which to realize the one-sided identity of the *puruṣa* in the heart and the Sun.[69] This reconception takes place alongside several other conceptual firsts for the Upaniṣads: The KU is the first to use the term *saṃsāra* to refer to the problem of repeated death; it is the first to employ an early Sāṃkhyan hierarchy in order to define the term *puruṣa*;[70] and it is the first to portray *puruṣa* as *aṅguṣṭha-mātra*, or "thumb-sized." All of these firsts contribute to the KU's presentation of yoga, which consequently appears to be especially innovative; yet the context in which all of these firsts are marked is also a familiar one, rooted in a reinterpretation of sacrifice and built upon the insights of earlier Upaniṣads. Most notably,

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[69] In this regard, yoga is both a distinct practice and a practical result. That is, the result of *doing* yoga is (among other things) the *state* of yoga, or "yoked" union.

[70] An overview of the KU's "proto-Sāṃkhyan" metaphysics is given by Larson 1972: 96-99. Note that because the "proto" prefix implies that Īśvarakṛṣṇa's now "classical" Sāṃkhya is the "real" Sāṃkhya (with all previous Sāṃkhyas its fledgling aspirants), I will prefer to use the phrase "early Sāṃkhya" throughout.

the KU is, like the TU before it, structured around a reinterpretation of the Agnicayana rite. So, with regard to the KU's hero, Naciketas, Brian Black notes: "Not only is *naciketas* one of the names associated with the fire altar in the *agnicayana*, but also Naciketa's father, Vājaśravas, appears in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* as performing and teaching about the *agnicayana*" (2007: 46).[71] Likewise, whereas the KU is dramatically centered on a conversation between Naciketas and Death (Yama) that takes place in Death's house, the Agnicayana's dramatic context involves Prajāpati's resurrection (as Agni) from a death-like state after his initial act of creation. Furthermore, just as the sacrificer who performs the Agnicayana attempts to discover the immortal *puruṣa* in the Sun who is Death through the performance of that rite,[72] the KU's practitioner of yoga attempts to expose the *puruṣa* who is synonymous with the immortal *brahman*. The employment of such familiar themes as these alongside all of the firsts contained in the Upaniṣad demonstrates that the KU aims to bring the core meaning of the *svargaloka*-seeking activity of the Agnicayana into a new age, whose crisis is determined by the idea that life is ultimately a miserable round of rebirths, against which the old sacrificial habits could not contend.

To this end, the third chapter of the KU speaks of "two drinkers of truth," who dwell "in the *loka* of the well-done (*sukṛta*),"[73] who know the five fires or the three Naciketas-fires, and who have thus "entered the secret place in the highest region beyond." These two are called "Shadow" and "Light" by those who know *brahman*, names reflecting the existence

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[71] Black 2007: 46. As Black further notes (180, n.29), the KU's link with the TU and the Agnicayana is forged in the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* (TB); the KU's narrative (in the 1st, 2nd, and 4th chapters) matches the one found at TB 3.11.8.

[72] See, e.g., ŚB 10.5.2.3, and the previous chapter of this dissertation.

[73] "Well-done" both in the sense that they have performed the task to be performed and in the sense that, like semen, they have been transmuted, or cooked, into the very stuff of the blissful *ātman*.

of two complimentary yet inverse paths, both of which lead to the transcendence of *saṃsāric* existence. These two paths correspond first to two kinds of sacrificial knowledge addressed by the Upaniṣad—the *pañcāgni-vidyā*, or "five fire doctrine," and the three fires of Naciketas. They further correspond to the "internal" and "external" paths to *brahman*: one leading "inward" to the cave of the heart; the other leading "outward" to the "highest step of Viṣṇu." Throughout the remainder of the text, the KU further encodes these two paths in its two expositions of an early Sāṃkhyan hierarchy, which in turn reflect the KU's approach to the problem of the "bilocation of the *puruṣa*," i.e. the apparent replication of the *puruṣa* across internal and external registers (White 2009: 88-91). Finally, the KU addresses this spatially (dis)orienting problem, with an aim to collapse the difference between the two paths, through its redefinition of the term "yoga."

In shorthand, the KU intimates that one of these paths—it is impossible to determine which is "Shadow" and which is "Light"[74]—is based upon the *pañcāgni-vidyā*, or "five fires doctrine," which was already well-known to earlier texts.[75] At base, the *pañcāgni-vidyā* describes the fiery and liquid interactions that constitute the sacrificial, digestive motor of

[74] KU 6.5 holds that *loka* of *brahman* is akin to both shadow and light, but other Upaniṣads are more ambiguous about the significance of "shadow." For instance, BĀU 3.8.8 says that the imperishable (on which space is woven) is devoid of shadow, while BĀU 3.9.14 says that the *puruṣa* consisting of shadow has the heart as its *loka* and is the goal of every person. And yet BĀU 2.1.12 identifies this same shadow-*puruṣa* with Death (knowing whom, one attains a full life).

[75] JB 1.17-18, 45-46, 49-50; ŚB 11.6.2.6-10; BĀU 6.2.9-16; & ChU 5.4-10. Olivelle (1999: 68) associates Naciketas with Śvetaketu, the ignorant youth whose tale introduces the earlier Upaniṣadic versions of the *pañcāgni-vidyā*. Both youths fall out with their fathers, and in the KU, Death calls Naciketas' father "Uddālaka Āruṇi," which is the name of Śvetaketu's father in the BĀU and ChU. Helfer (1968: 351-352) argues that Naciketas' name is derived from *na+√cit*, meaning, "he did not know," which would suggest that "Naciketas" is an epithet of Śvetaketu, who was ignorant of the five-fire doctrine.

the cosmos.[76] A series of offerings is made into one of five fires—the heavens, the rain clouds, the earth, a man, and a woman—which in turn produce that which is offered into the next fire in the sequence. So, at the highest level, the *deva*s offer *śraddha* into the heavenly fire whose firewood is the Sun.[77] This offering produces King Soma, who is in turn offered into rain clouds, producing rain. The offering of rain engenders the growth of food, which when consumed by a man is transmuted by the fires of digestion into semen, which when offered into a woman's womb gives rise to a new human being. In each case, an offering is made into a kind of fire that "eats" the offering and transmutes it into the next offering in the series.

To this, the five-fire doctrine, the texts then add a sixth, the cremation fire, into which a man is offered upon his death. Out of this final fire a "*puruṣa*, the color of the shining Sun, arises."[78] With this, a circle has very nearly been closed, as the person has again returned to that solar state associated with the first of the five fires. The full closure of this circle, and thus an early iteration of the transmigrational scheme,[79] occurs in the immediately following

[76] As Knipe (1972: 10, 15-18) observes, the number five on its own denotes a spatial totality, as reflected especially in the five-layered altar of the Agnicayana rite.

[77] In the earlier account of the JB, we find *amṛtam āpas* (the "immortal water") rather than *śraddhā*. Jurewicz (2000: 184-187) identifies both *amṛtam āpas* and *śraddhā* with the dead, who are offered into the crematory fire during *śraddhā* rites just as Soma or ghee is offered into the sacrificial flames. In this fashion the *pañcāgni-vidyā* is a doctrine of cyclic existence, which is further operationalized to explain the *pitṛyāna*, or "path of the ancestors," proper to those who do not escape rebirth.

[78] BĀU 6.2.15—*puruṣo bhāsvaravarṇaḥ saṃbhavati*. This cremation fire is explicitly identified with the Sun in the *JB* version (1.46), wherein both are named Agni Vaiśvānara.

[79] Early in two senses: first, insofar as the term *saṃsāra*, arguably a form of shorthand for the Upaniṣadic *pañcāgni-vidyā*, has yet to appear, and second because, as Jurewicz has convincingly argued, the *pañcāgi-vidyā* is rooted in the mythic origins of the *agnihotra* and *agnicayana* rites, which explain precisely how Prajāpati perpetuates existence by transforming himself into the food that he, in various forms, consumes. Thus in comparing the *pañcāgni-vidyā* to the *agnihotra*, "Dead people who are the food of the world [via the

discussion of the two paths of the dead, the *pitṛ-yāna* and the *deva-yāna*, which are associated with the yearly southerly and northerly courses of the Sun, respectively. Briefly, the texts state that those who do not know the *pañcāgni-vidyā* eventually pass from the *pitṛ-loka* into the Moon, wherein the gods feed on them before they again fall to earth as rain, becoming food, then semen, then are reborn as living beings once more. Meanwhile, those who understand the cyclic, transmigratory, and self-consuming nature of reality encoded in the *pañcāgni-vidyā* do not become lost in the consumptive fires of the cosmos. Instead, they journey after their death beyond the Sun until they reach the *loka*s of *brahman*, from which they are not reborn. These knowers have effectively identified themselves with the transcendent source of existence—identified with Prajāpati in earlier iterations of the *pañcāgni-vidyā*—and thus they have "confirm[ed] the identity of the subject and the object," which is to say the identity of the fire and the offering, the eater and the eaten (Jurewicz 2000: 194). The extensional logic underpinning this collapse into identity is especially well-expressed in the *JB*, which holds that the dead (if they possess the proper knowledge) are led by the Seasons (*ṛtavaḥ*) along rays of light to the Sun, who states, "Who thou art, that one am I. Who I am, that one thou art."[80] Thus the transmuted essence rendered by an initial offering into the Sun, the first of the five fires, is successively transmuted in the remaining four fires until it becomes a *puruṣa*. Offered once again into the crematory fire at death, the *puruṣa* potentially returns to the source from which he was originally extended by riding upon the rays of light that have, throughout his life, maintained the linkage between his mortal and immortal, solar selves. These are the transcendently identified "knowers" of the

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course of the *pitṛ-yāna*] constitute the dead milky [*saumya*] part of Prajāpati who is killed and eaten by his fiery [*agneya*] part" (2000: 192).

[80] JB 1.18; trans. Bodewitz 1973: 54.

pañcāgni-vidyā to which the KU refers in its discussion of two paths as the knowers of five fires, distinguishing them (by the nature of their knowledge/practice, not by the result) from those who know the three Naciketas fires.

The three Naciketas fires, with which it appears that the rest of the KU is concerned, refer to the triple-Naciketas of KU 1.15-18. As the text makes relatively clear, these three are the sacrificial fire altar, a disk of gold,[81] and Naciketas himself. All three are *agni*s, and thus reflect the simultaneity of Agni in the sacrificial fire, in the heavens as the Sun, and in the heart of the sacrificer. Consequently, we can map these three fires onto the three levels of Brahmanical interpretation: sacrificial (*adhiyajña*), divine (*adhidaiva*), and self-oriented/bodily (*adhyātma*), respectively. Linking these three *agni*s is, of course, their mutual solarity, but also their association with the attainment of a state beyond repeated death. As KU 1.18 states, "Having known these three—the thrice Naciketas-fires—he who piles (√*ci*) Naciketas from that knowledge, he goes beyond suffering and delights in *svarga-loka* having cast aside the noose of death before him."[82] In other words, one who "piles," or builds himself up (as Agni does for Prajāpati in the Agnicayana) according to the triple identity of the fire altar, the Sun, and the sacrificer—who com-piles the *adhiyajña*, *adhidaiva*, and *adhyātma*—he extends beyond his mortal state and so avoids death.

[81] This is Olivelle's translation of the phrase "*sṛṇkāṃ … anekarūpāṃ*" (see his note at 1996: 377), which follows that of Bodewitz (1985). In their reading, the gold disk would be worn on a chain by a *yajamāna*, before being placed beneath the bricks of the fire altar. Śaṅkara reads the phrase as a "tinkling, many-colored, jeweled necklace" (*vicitrāṃ sṛṅkāṃ śabdavatīṃ ratnamālāṃ*). Müller (1884) follows Śaṅkara while Whitney (1890) leaves the term untranslated.

[82] KU 1.18—*triṇāciketastrayametadviditvā ya evaṃ vidvāṃścinute nāciketam* | *sa mṛtyupāśān purataḥ praṇodya śokātigo modate svargaloke* ||

The KU calls this triply identified fire the "highest Naciketas fire,"[83] and speaks of it from a double perspective, either as the *puruṣa* in the Sun or as the *puruṣa* in the cave of the heart. White (2009: 88-91) refers to this double perspective as the problem of the "bilocation of the *puruṣa*," and it relies upon two early enumerations of the (early) Sāṃkhyan hierarchy of *tattva*s, the first referring to the Sun, the second to the heart. The first enumeration appears near the end of Death's teaching to Naciketas (KU 3.9-11). It follows and is informed by the analogy (at KU 3.3-4) of the body (*śarīra*) as a chariot, the *ātman* as its owner, the intellect (*buddhi*) its driver, the mind its reins, the *indriya*s its horses, and the sense objects its paths. So "yoked" (*yukta*) to mind and *indriya*s, the *ātman* is called an "eater" (*bhoktṛ*) who must rein in his sensory horses should he hope to escape *saṃsāra*.[84] Hence:

> The man whose understanding (*vijñāna*) is the charioteer and his mind the reins reaches the highest path, that highest step of Viṣṇu. Higher than the *indriya*s are the objects; higher than the objects is the mind; higher than the mind is the intellect; and higher than the intellect is the immense *ātman*; higher than the immense *ātman* is the unmanifest; and higher than the unmanifest is the *puruṣa*. Nothing is higher than *puruṣa*. He is the path; he is the highest way.[85]

So, by skilled use of the chariot one attains the "highest step of Viṣṇu," which, as we showed in the previous chapter, alludes to the highest point reached by the Sun in its daily course across the vault of the heavens, and which is here further identified with the *puruṣa*

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[83] The main discussion of the KU's third chapter begins (at 3.2) with the third-person plural imperative: "May we, desirous of crossing to the fearless, be adequate to the highest Naciketas fire."

[84] KU 3.4-8

[85] KU 3.9-11—*vijñānasārathiryastu manaḥ pragrahavānnaraḥ* | *sādhvanaḥ pāramāpnoti tadviṣṇoḥ paramaṃ padam* || *indriyebhyaḥ parāhyarthā arthebhyaśca paraṃ manaḥ* | *manasastu parā buddhirbuddherātmā mahānparaḥ* || *mahataḥ paramavyaktamavyaktātpuruṣaḥ paraḥ* | *puruṣānna paraṃ kiṃcitsā kāṣṭhā sā parā gatiḥ* ||

as the highest *tattva* in this early Sāṃkhyan hierarchy. This suggests that the first place that the KU exhorts its hearers to seek the *puruṣa* is not within, but outside themselves.

The second enumeration of the early Sāṃkhyan hierarchy, slightly different from the first, appears in the KU's sixth and final chapter. "Higher than the *indriya*s is the mind; *sattva* exceeds the mind. Above *sattva* is the immense *ātman*, while the unmanifest surpasses the immense one. But beyond the unmanifest is the *puruṣa*—he alone extends everywhere and is signless—having known whom a man is liberated and attains immortality."[86] The sense objects have been omitted, *sattva* has replaced the *buddhi*, and there is no mention of a cosmological metaphor like the "highest step of Viṣṇu." Instead there is a return to the language of the heart we encountered in the ChU:

> There are one hundred and one *nāḍi*s of the heart. One of them runs up to the summit [of the head]. Ascending by it he reaches immortality. All the others stride outward. The thumb-sized *puruṣa* within the *ātman* is ever seated in the heart of beings. With firmness (*dhairyeṇa*) one should pull that out from one's own body like a reed from a stalk of muñja grass. One should know that as the shining immortal one; [indeed,] one should know that as the shining immortal one.[87]

These verses begin with a direct citation from ChU 8.6.6, which in its original context, as we saw earlier, explicitly links the heart to the Sun. There, the rays of the Sun are said to "slip" into the *nāḍi*s of the heart, creating a continuum between the two. As I showed above, this continuum reflects the simultaneity of an inward and an outward movement associated with the attainment of the *puruṣa*. And this in turn reflects the spatial ambiguity of the heart in

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[86] KU 6.7-8—*indriyebhyaḥ paraṃ mano manasaḥ sattvamuttamam* | *sattvādadhi mahānātmā mahato avyaktamuttamam* || *avyaktāttu paraḥ puruṣo vyāpakāliṅga eva ca* | *yaṃ jñātvā mucyate janturamṛtatvaṃ ca gacchati* ||

[87] KU 6.16-17—*śataṃ caikā ca hṛdayasya nāḍyastāsāṃ mūrdhānamabhiniḥsṛtaikā* | *tayordhvamāyannamṛtatvameti viśvannanyā utkramaṇe bhavanti* || *aṅguṣṭhamātraḥ puruṣo' antarātmā sadā janānaṃ hṛdaye saṃniviṣṭaḥ* | *taṃ svāccharīrātpravṛhenmuñjādiveṣikāṃ dhairyeṇa taṃ vidyācchukramamṛtaṃ taṃ vidyācchukramamṛtamiti* ||

the earlier Upaniṣads. Immediately following this citation, the KU describes the *puruṣa* as the size of a thumb (*aṅguṣṭhamātra*) and dwelling in the heart. Already, the mention of measurements recalls the identifications between the *puruṣa*, Viṣṇu, and the Sun that were established in Vedic-era texts. We can rest assured that this is the meaning that the KU intends insofar as elsewhere it refers to the "dwarf seated in the midst" who directs the in- and out-breaths.[88] According to the *Vāstusūtra Upaniṣad* (VsU), a later architectural treatise that continues to employ the *puruṣa* as a standard of measurement for its practices, the thumb is simply a poetic referent of light: "Since it is the nature (*bhāva*) of the thumb-sized *puruṣa* to spread out [or extend (*pra*+√*bhū*)], 'thumb-sized' alternatively means 'a measure of light.' [In this regard,] it is like a *yupa* post."[89] In other words, the "thumb-sized" *puruṣa* is yet another reference to the solarized *puruṣa* that measures out the cosmos by the rays it extends. In more practical terms, it is especially noteworthy that, from a strictly human perspective, the Sun can itself be conceived as "thumb-sized:" An extended thumb held out at arms-length will neatly cover the orb of the Sun, allowing a viewer to gaze upon the radiance of the Sun's coronal light—the rays by which it measures—without being overwhelmed by the blinding intensity of the solar orb itself.[90] Naturally then, when the

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[88] KU 5.3—*madhye vāmanamāsīnaṃ*

[89] VsU 4.1—*yathā aṅguṣṭhamātrapuruṣasya bhāvaḥ prabhavati vikalpena aṅguṣṭhamiti jyotirmātram* | *sa yupasya daṇḍa iva* |

The *yupa* is the post to which the sacrificial victim is tied. If the post is homologized with the Sun, then is the mortal victim, tied to the Sun, like a second Sun that will be subsumed ("eaten") by the *yupa*-Sun at death?

[90] Consider also MBh 5.45, in which Sanatsujāta lauds the Lord beheld by yogins. The Lord is called *puruṣa* when identified with an expressly solar *mahātman* (vs. 15), and it is this *puruṣa-mahātman* that is said to be thumb-sized (vs. 24).

puruṣa is called "thumb-sized," he is also depicted as a "smokeless fire"[91] and the "shining immortal one."[92]

This thumb-sized, solar *puruṣa* should be drawn *out* from the body (its unnecessarily limiting associate) like a reed from a stalk of muñja grass. Now this specific allusion to muñja grass is not incidental. According to the ŚB, the ropes that harness steeds to chariot yokes and by which they are reined are made from woven muñja grass. Muñja grass is also used to kindle the sacrificial fires. ŚB 6.3.1.26 refers to both of these functions: "[The sacrificial horses] are harnessed with halters of muñja grass. [Meanwhile,] Agni strode out/away from the *deva*s. He entered (*pra*+√*viś*) the muñja grass. Due to that it [i.e., the reed] is hollow; due to that its interior is as if stained by smoke. Hence that reed is the womb of Agni."[93] So when Agni abandoned the sacrifice, he hid himself—that is, he became latent—within the reed of the muñja grass. As a consequence, these reeds are viewed as the smoke-stained wombs from which Agni is born again and again through kindling. The KU is likely recalling this story when it exhorts the listener to pull his "shining immortal" *puruṣa* out from his body.

Another section of the ŚB that pointedly employs the muñja grass metaphor links the thumb-sized *puruṣa* to Indra. This section tells the tale of the *sóma* draught called "Mahendra," which is itself a retelling of the Indra-Vṛtra encounter. As the story goes in this iteration, Indra needed the aid of the Maruts in order to defeat Vṛtra, and so in exchange for their participation he promised them a share in the *sóma* rite. However, the slaying of Vṛtra

[91] KU 4.13—*aṅguṣṭhamātraḥ puruṣo jyotirivādhūmakaḥ* |

[92] KU 6.17—*aṅguṣṭhamātraḥ puruṣo … śukramamṛtaṃ*

[93] ŚB 6.3.1.26—*te mauñjībhirabhidhānībhirabhihitā bhavanti* | *agnirdevebhya udakrāmatsa muñjam prāviśattasmātsa suṣirastasmādvevāntarato dhūmarakta iva saiṣā yoniragner…*

stained both Indra and the Maruts with the crime (*papman*) of violence. If Indra is to retain his sovereign preeminence, he must remove this stain.

> Then, when all was conquered and secure from foes, just as a reed is extracted from muñja grass, the *deva*s extracted the god [Indra] from all violation when they drew the Māhendra draught. Thus just as a reed should be without a sheath, this one [i.e., Indra, or the Indra-like *yajamāna*] is freed from all criminality when he draws the Māhendra draught. Just so, that is to say, he draws the Māhendra draught. Before the attack on Vṛtra this one was [merely] 'Indra,' but having killed Vṛtra, just as a *mahārāja* conquers, thus he became 'Mahendra.' For that reason he draws the Māhendra draught. And indeed this [draught] makes this one great (*mahāntam*) for the attack on Vṛtra. For that reason also he draws the Māhendra draught. [Finally,] he draws it with the *śukra*-cup, for *śukra* is he who burns [i.e., the Sun] and truly that one is great. Due to that he draws [the Māhendra draught] with the *śukra*-cup.[94]

Explicitly, the drawing-out of Indra from criminal culpability—as a reed from a stalk of muñja grass—is equated with the drawing of the draught that makes Indra cosmically large for the sake of slaying Vṛtra. The *deva*s draw this draught specifically with the *śukra*-cup, which is the cup identified with the Sun, who is also "great" in a cosmically pervasive sense. As we just saw, the thumb-sized *puruṣa* is invoked as the "shining immortal" who burns "like a smokeless fire." Clearly, the KU is aware of these solar and sovereign significations when it instructs its hearer to draw the *puruṣa* out like a reed from a stalk of muñja grass, for it is through this act that the *puruṣa* is pulled out of the body and thereby ex-posed as the shining immortal one, who in earlier contexts was identified with both Indra and the Sun. In other words, the drawing out of the thumb-sized *puruṣa* is actually a means of making

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[94] ŚB 4.3.3.16-17—*taṃ devāḥ* | *sarvasminvijite 'bhaye 'nāṣṭre yatheṣīkām muñjādvivṛhedevaṃ sarvasmātpāpmano vyavṛhanyanmāhendraṃ grahamagṛhṇaṃstatho evaiṣa etadyatheṣīkā vimuñjā syādevaṃ sarvasmātpāpmano nirmucyate yanmāhendraṃ graham gṛhṇāti* || *yadveva māhendraṃ grahaṃ gṛhṇāti* | *indro vā eṣa purā vṛtrasya badhādatha vṛtraṃ hatvā yathā mahārājo vijigyāna evam mahendro 'bhavattasmānmāhendraṃ grahaṃ gṛhṇāti mahāntamu caivainametatkhalu karoti vṛtrasya badhāya tasmādveva māhendraṃ grahaṃ gṛhṇāti śu pātreṇa gṛhṇātyeṣa vai śukro ya eṣa tapatyeṣa u eva mahāṃstasmācukrapātreṇa gṛhṇāti* ||

oneself one-sidedly great, of "spreading out in all directions" like the rays of the Sun and the *nāḍī*s of the heart, and thereby of overcoming the limitations of embodied mortality. The major point is not to show the correspondence between a microcosmic and thumb-sized *puruṣa* in the heart and a macrocosmic *puruṣa* in the figure of the Sun (a.k.a. "Viṣṇu's highest step"), but rather to reinterpret that correspondence as concealing an underlying fact of identity. It is precisely from this perspective that the KU declares that the *puruṣa* is the foundation of all *loka*s, and thus "there is no diversity at all; he who sees any diversity here goes from death to death."[95]

The way to this unifiedly inward and outward condition is, in the KU's final chapter, the practice of yoga, and thus the proper use of one's own chariot rig-body. As noted earlier in the KU's third chapter,

> The one who has no understanding (*vijñāna*), along with an unyoked mind, his *indriya*s are uncontrolled, like a charioteer's bad horses. But the one who possesses understanding along with a yoked mind, his *indriya*s are controlled, like a charioteer's good horses. The man who doesn't possess understanding, who is unmindful and constantly impure, he does not obtain that [highest path] and he continues along [within] *saṃsāra*. But the man who understands, who is mindful and always pure, he attains that highest step [of Viṣṇu], from which he is not born again.[96]

In other words, the attainment of the highest step of Viṣṇu is dependent above all upon the good control of one's steed-like *indriya*s. The *indriya*s are not withdrawn or absorbed into a higher category of existence but are simply controlled, obedient, and thus able to stop or start at the willing of the charioteer. Hence KU 6.11's redefinition of yoga in these terms:

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[95] KU 4.11—*neha nānāsti kiṃcana* | *mṛtyoḥ sa mṛtyuṃ gacchati ya iha nāneva paśyati* ||

[96] KU 3.5-8—*yastvavijñāvānbhavatyayuktena manasā sadā* | *tasyendriyāṇyavaśyāni duṣṭāśvā iva sāratheḥ* || *yastu vijñānavānbhavati yuktena manasā sadā* | *tasyendriyāṇi vaśyāni sadaśvā iva sāratheḥ* || *yastvavijñānavānbhavatyamanaskaḥ sadāśuciḥ* | *na sa tatpadamāpnoti saṃsāraṃ cādhigacchati* || *yastu vijñānavānbhavati samanaskaḥ sadā śuciḥ* | *sa tu tatpadamāpnoti yasmādbhuyo na jāyate* ||

"'That is yoga,' they think—the holding firm of the *indriya*s. Then one is undistracted; indeed yoga is both arising and receding."[97] In other words, the yoga of the KU has everything to do with the skill by which one employs the *indriya*s, and likewise with the attainment of the highest step of Viṣṇu. The resultant, "yoked" state is likewise identified as free from distraction (*apramatta*) and moreover identified with the dynamics of "arising and receding" (*prabhavāpyayau*), which is parallel to the skillful charioteer's ability to control his horses, to set them forth in motion or bring them to a halt.[98]

On its own, the KU does not elaborate further upon any of the points contained in this definition. This gives the impression that important contextual information, about which an early hearer of the Upaniṣad would have presumably been aware, has been neglected or lost. However, it is already clear that the KU's presentation of yoga draws upon earlier sacrificial paradigms as it carries forward earlier Upaniṣadic notions of the identification of the Sun and the heart, as well as the sovereign mastery that "eats" the world. If we want to further develop our understanding of yoga and its relation to the themes of spatial indistinctiveness and the extensionality of the *puruṣa*, then we must look forward to correlate the elements of the KU's definition of yoga with those appearing in later Upaniṣads. Though this too will force us to look backwards, for like the KU, these later Upaniṣads continue to support their innovations by reference to earlier contexts.

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[97] KU 6.11—*tāṃ yogamiti manyante sthirāmindriyadhāraṇām | apramattastadā bhavati yogo hi prabhavāpyayau* ||

[98] There is little clarified by existing translations of the dual compound *prabhavāpyayau*. Its first member, *prabhava*, clearly denotes 'production' or a coming 'forth' into 'being.' Its second, *apyaya*, literally means a 'going' (√*i*) to 'nearness' or 'union' (*api*), but also has the sense of 'vanishing,' as when a river vanishes by joining the ocean. The meaning is thus suggestive of expansion and contraction, development and dissolution, and semantically parallel to the terms *pravṛtti* and *nivṛtti* ('appearance' and 'disappearance,' but also 'activity' and 'renunciation').

2.4.2 **Puruṣa***'s Undistracted Yoga*

As we just noted, the first sign of success in yoga is that one becomes *apramatta*, a term typically translated as "undistracted," as I have done above. But more literally (and at times more appropriately, as may be the case here) it means "un-maddened," i.e., "sober" or "sane."[99] The term is rare in Vedic era texts,[100] while among earlier Upaniṣads it appears twice in the ChU, in both cases providing exhortations for verses to be sung with minds "thinking undistractedly" (*dhyāyann apramattaḥ*) upon one's desires.[101] However, within the middle Upaniṣads the term is found solely in discussions—the KU's and the ŚvU's—of yoga. The KU uses *apramatta* to characterize the yogi's control of the *indriya*s, and in a similar manner, the ŚvU uses it to characterize his suppression of the *prāṇa*s, which are also likened to unruly horses: "Suppressing the breaths here, he is yoked to the effort. When the breath is expended he should exhale from one nostril. Just like a carriage yoked to bad horses, the knowing mind should hold this, undistracted (*apramattaḥ*)."[102] In other words, just as a charioteer should rein in his bad horses, a yogi should rein in his breath until his

[99] Of course, what constitutes "madness" in these contexts is quite removed from modern senses of the term. As to what *does* constitute "madness" in this and other "yogic" contexts, see my discussion of the Sukanyā narrative in the penultimate chapter.

[100] *Apramatta* doesn't appear in the RV (though the intoxicating effects of *sóma* are frequently described in √*mad*-based terms), and it appears only three times in the ŚB (3.2.2.22; 8.6.3.21; & 14.1.3.2), which I discuss below. The term *appamatta* appears quite frequently in the Pāli *sūtta*s, typically to refer to an unwavering focus in meditation (as, for instance, when the Buddha first enters into the four *jhāna*s). However, the lateness of the Pāli texts makes it impossible to say whether the same sense of the term should be applied to Upaniṣadic occurrences.

[101] See ChU 1.3.12 & 2.22.2.

[102] ŚvU 2.9—*prāṇān prapīḍyeha sa yuktaceṣṭaḥ kṣīne prāṇe nāsikayocchavasīta* | *duṣṭāśvayuktam iva vāham evaṃ vidvān mano dhārayetāpramattaḥ* ||

body no longer bucks in deoxygenated paroxysms. In either case, whether the yogi controls his breath or his senses, the effort finds success when there is no distraction.

In describing the opposite of this, a verse in the KU holds that "the highest path does not shine upon the distracted fool (*bālaṃ pramādyantaṃ*)."[103] This "highest path" remains inaccessible to the one who is not *apramatta*; but it is opened through yoga, which is also to say "when the five [*indriya*s-*qua*-]knowledges stand down (*ava√sthā*)."[104] Clearly then, yoga in these early contexts is aligned with the notion of the highest path, a term expressive of Viṣṇu's solar form, which is also indicative of the condition of *apramatta*. In this regard the few uses of *apramatta* in the ŚB are instructive. In ŚB 3.2.2.22, Agni is called *apramatta* insofar as his unflagging light guards a sleeping man from danger.[105] In ŚB 8.6.3.21, Agni is urged to "shine a thousand-fold, undistracted." Finally, ŚB 14.1.3.2 instructs the Brahman priest at the outset of the Pravargya rite to "sit undistracted, [as] we shall restore the head of the sacrifice," immediately after which that Brahman is identified with the Sun.[106] Taken together, these early uses tell us that the state of *apramatta* was especially associated with fire and light, and thus with shining rays that reach outwards. The term *apramatta* thereby links the sane, sober, and undistracted holding of the reins that control the *indriya*s and *prāṇa*s to the undistracted shining forth of Sun and fire, which further links the masterful yogi-charioteer to the solar Viṣṇu.[107]

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[103] KU 2.6—*na sāmparāyaḥ pratibhāti bālaṃ pramādyantaṃ*

[104] KU 6.10—*yadā pañcāvatiṣṭhante jñānāni … tāmāhuḥ paramāṃ gatim* ||

[105] *Apramatta* is used there to gloss *Vājasaneyi-Saṃhitā* 4.14, which invokes Agni to ensure that *manas*, *ayus*, and *prāṇa* return to a sleeping man upon waking.

[106] ŚB 14.1.3.2—*apramatta āssva yajñasya śiraḥ pratidhāsyāma*. This last use will prove especially significant for the meaning of √*mad* terms in the *MBh*

[107] As we shall see in the penultimate chapter, these links continue and multiply in the context of the *Mahābhārata*. *Apramatta*, along with relatedly √*mad*-derived terms there

However, in the ŚvU's discussion of yoga, all parallels between yogis and supreme gods belong to Rudra. The stage is set by the first five verses of the ŚvU's second chapter (which contains its discussion of yoga), which repeat almost word-for-word verses from the eleventh book of the *Vājasaneyi-Saṃhitā* (VS).[108] These are verses originally employed during the construction of the firebird altar of the Agnicayana rite, and therefore they contain a wealth of allusions to the identity of the terrestrial fire (*purīṣyāgni*) and the Sun (as Savitṛ), both of which are there said to measure out all of space by the extensiveness of their rays. The verses cited in the ŚvU are filled with the language of "yoking:" they liken Savitṛ to a charioteer who yokes the *deva*s with his extended rays, and this in turn is likened to the way that *vipra*-poets yoke their minds to extend thoughts toward the Sun in the heavens. In the ŚB's exposition of this passage—found in the same section that referred to muñja grass as Agni's womb—both thoughts and *deva*s are interpreted as *prāṇa*s.[109] In these terms, then, the ŚvU frames its discussion of yoga (as the "undistracted" suppression of the *prāṇa*s) according to a sacrificial paradigm that characterizes "yoking" as a solar, extensional act. The "undistracted" yogi is therefore implicitly a charioteer of the sort patterned by Savitṛ.

2.4.3 The Creativity of the Yogi: Expansion and Contraction

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prove especially important in communicating the deeply felt link between yoga, sovereignty, sacrifice, and the power of Time in the "epic" period of Indic thought.

[108] This in itself is a bit odd, as the ŚvU is in the Taittirīya branch of the Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda. However, verses 2.1-5 of the ŚvU hew much closer to the VS's text (at 11.1-5) than the *Taittirīya-Saṃhitā*'s (TS) corresponding lines at 4.1.1.1-2.

[109] This is the same passage that contains the justification for why muñja grass is considered the womb of Agni, thus suggesting the tantalizing possibility that the origins of the KU's and ŚvU's discussions of yoga lie in a reinterpretation of the Agnicayana rite as it is described in the ŚB.

In explicit terms, however, the ŚvU doesn't speak of the human yogi's realized state through imagery of chariots and solar extensions.[110] Instead, the yogi's practice results in the knowledge of the god, who, in a proto-Paśupati style, releases the yogi from all fetters (*paśu*s). This corresponds to the fact that the extensional language that the ŚvU borrows from the VS's praise of Savitṛ is here directed to Rudra, the god of the ŚvU. And still yet, Rudra is nowhere called a yogi but is instead called *puruṣa*! The ŚvU thus blurs the distinction between Rudra, *puruṣa*, and the yogi. It cloaks Rudra with a monotheistic garb patterned on the creative sovereignty of the Ṛgvedic Puruṣa, and further inscribes him with the "yoked" language of the Agnicayana. The result, as we shall see shortly, is a depiction of Rudra as expansive origin and contractive end of all existence.

In this manner, the third chapter of the ŚvU praises Rudra, with frequent reference to earlier texts, as one who "has not tolerated a second who would reign over these worlds by his sovereign powers."[111] He is the "color of the Sun,"[112] as well as "thousand-headed, thousand-eyed, and thousand-footed" (or "shadowed," as we saw in the preceding chapter).[113] In this fashion, he covers (*ā*+√*vṛt*) the entire *loka*,[114] even while he is aloof, for he is "seemingly [possessed] of the qualities of all the *indriya*s, [yet] he is devoid of all the *indriya*s."[115] His most distinguishing quality is his "spreading everywhere due to [his]

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[110] ŚvU 2.12-13 holds that the yogi "will no longer experience sickness, old age, or suffering" and that he will possess "lightness, health, the absence of greed, a bright complexion, a pleasant voice, a sweet smell, and very little faeces and urine" (tr. Olivelle 1996: 256).

[111] ŚvU 3.2; Olivelle's (1996) translation.

[112] ŚvU 3.8—*ādityavarṇaṃ*

[113] ŚvU 3.14—*sahasraśīrṣā puruṣaḥ sahasrākṣaḥ sahasrapāt*

[114] ŚvU 3.16

[115] ŚvU 3.17—*sarvendriyaguṇābhāsaṃ sarvendriyavivarjitaṃ*

capacity for *vibhuti*,"[116] which is to say, his "omnipresence" or "pervasion" of the cosmos by which he dwells as the "concealed association of all beings."[117] Accordingly, he is spatially and temporally immanent and transcendent. He is *the* person, so to speak, who is "thumb-sized" (*aṅguṣṭhamātra*) even as he is "possessed of greatness" (*mahimān*), who is "the minuteness of the minute and the greatness of the great,"[118] and who abides throughout the grand cycles of time within which all births and deaths take place. This last characterization is demonstrated by the fact that Rudra-*puruṣa* is "this one who turns forth (*pra+√vṛt*) reality"[119] as well as the one who, "having united all beings at the end of time, contracted (*saṃ+√kuc*)."[120] In other words, as *puruṣa* he extends from himself all of spatio-temporality, with its beings and worlds that are yoked to him (as the *deva*s to Savitṛ), before drawing those worlds and beings back into himself at the close of a temporal cycle, all the while himself untouched by time and thus "unaging [yet] ancient."[121] Rudra is thus, despite the fact that he is not explicitly called a yogi, the one who is (to borrow the language of the KU) yoked to both the "arising and receding" of beings.[122]

While the ŚvU addresses these themes through the lens of its devotional monotheism, posing thereby a separation between God and the human yogi, the same themes are transferred to the human yogi in the sixth chapter of the *Maitri Upaniṣad* (MU), a late pre-

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[116] ŚvU 3.21—*sarvagataṃ vibhutvāt*

[117] ŚvU 3.7—*nikāyaṃ sarvabhūteṣu gūḍhaṃ*

[118] ŚvU *3.20—aṇor aṇīyān mahato mahīyān*

[119] ŚvU 3.12—*sattvasyaiṣa pravartakaḥ*

[120] ŚvU 3.2—*saṃcukocāntakāle saṃsṛjya viśvā bhuvanāni*

[121] ŚvU 3.21—*ajaraṃ purāṇaṃ*

[122] I've supplied "of beings" on the basis of *Māṇḍukya Upaniṣad* 6 (*prabhavāpyayau hi bhūtānām*), the sole other Upaniṣadic passage to contain the compound *prabhavāpyayau*.

classical era text that is coeval with Patañjali's *Yoga Sūtras* (YS), the *Bhagavad Gītā* (BhG), and the *Mahābhārata*'s Mokṣadharmaparvan (MDhP).[123] Note how the MU's account of yoga practice fuses the doctrines of *prāṇa*-restraint and *indriya*-control found in the ŚvU and KU in order to describe the yogi's vision of the supreme reality (here identified with the *praṇava*, Om):

> Now it has also been said elsewhere: "[When] the *indriya*s are held within, like in sleep, the powerful one who is in the cave of the *indriya*s sees, as in a dream, with the purest thought, that which is called *praṇava*—the shining leader, who has abandoned sleep, aging, death, and sorrow. Thus he also becomes one called *praṇava*, a leader of shining form, who abandons sleep, aging, death, and sorrow." Thus it has been said:
>
> "Because he yokes in various ways
> The whole world, the Om sound, and then *prāṇa*—
> Or rather because *they* yoke *him*—
> For that reason, [this practice] is called 'yoga.'
> The oneness of the *indriya*s, the mind, and *prāṇa*,
> And just so the complete abandonment of every state [of being or mind]—
> That is called 'yoga.'"[124]

Initially the text argues that the practitioner of yoga is one who masters the *indriya*s so that he can hold them "within," just as one does involuntarily while asleep. In this condition, the *indriya*s "see" naught but the Om, and thus the yogi becomes that Om himself. However, this act does not cut off his access to the world outside, for he thereby yokes *prāṇa* to the Om and to the whole world *just as they also yoke him*. In other words, a practice that at first

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[123] White 2009: 89.

[124] MU 6.25—*athānyatrāpyuktam nidrevāntarhitendriyaḥ śuddhitamayā dhiyā svapna iva yaḥ paśyatīndriyabile'vivaśaḥ praṇavākhyaṃ praṇetāraṃ bhārūpaṃ vigatanidraṃ vijaraṃ vimṛtyuṃ viśokaṃ ca so'pi praṇavākhyaḥ praṇetā bhārūpaḥ vigata nidraḥ vijaraḥ vimṛtyurviśoko bhavatītyevaṃ hyāha*
evaṃ prāṇamathoṅkāraṃ yasmātsarvamanekadhā |
yunakti yuñjate vāpi yasmādyoga iti smṛtaḥ ||
ekatvaṃ prāṇamanasorindriyāṇāṃ tathaiva ca |
sarvabhāvaparityāgo yoga ityabhidhīyate ||

blush appears to effect a total interiorization ultimately effects a radical exteriorization. By seeing the Om, the yogi becomes radically one—his *indriya*s are united with *prāṇa* and the mind, while all the various states of being are abandoned in favor of embracing the whole.

Consequently, the "holding" of the *indriya*s is in fact their union with the greater sum of the person, the wholeness of the world, of the Om, and thereby the yoked *expansion* of the *prāṇa*s, a fact that the following passage makes clear.

> Now it has also been said elsewhere: "Just as a fisherman draws up living beings in the waters with a net, [then] offers [them] to the fire in his belly, just so indeed one draws up these *prāṇa*s with the "Om," [then] offers [them] into the fire of well-being (*anāmaya*). Henceforth he is as a heated clay pot. Thus just as a ghee-filled heated pot flares up at the contact of straw and timber, just so indeed does this one called "*prāṇa*-less" flare up upon contact with *prāṇa*. Now what flares up is this form of *brahman*, it is the highest step of Viṣṇu, it is the terribleness (*rudratva*) of Rudra—this is that *ātman*, apportioned into innumerable parts, that fills these *loka*s." Thus it has been said:
>
> > "Verily, as sparks from a fire,
> > Just so the rays of light from the Sun."
>
> Thus,
>
> > "The *prāṇa*s, etc., rise up here [on the earth]
> > As before, in due order."[125]

The layering of images in this passage is striking. The image of a fisherman dragging fish from the water with a net is first aligned with the drawing up of *prāṇa*s through the uttering of the Om sound. The utterance of this sound is then likened to the placing of food into the

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[125] MU 6.26—*athānyatrāpyuktaṃ : yathā vāpsu cāriṇaḥ śakunikaḥ sūtrayantreṇoddhṛtyodare'gnau juhotyevaṃ vā va khalvimānprāṇānomityanenoddhṛtyānāmaye'gnau juhoti atastaptorvivaso'tha yathā taptorvi sārpistṛṇakāṣṭhasaṃsparśe-nojjvalatītyevaṃ vā va khalvasāvaprāṇākhyaḥ prāṇasaṃsparśenojjvalati atha yadujjvalatyetadbrahmaṇo rūpaṃ caitadviṣṇoḥ paraṃ padam caitadrudrasya rudratvametattadaparimitadhā cātmānaṃ vibhajya purayatīmāṃ lokānityevaṃ hyāha:*

vahneśca yadvatkhalu visphuliṅgāḥ suryānmayukhāśca tathaiva tasya

prāṇādayo vai punareva tasmād abhyuccarantīha yathākrameṇa ||

digestive fires, though the fire into which Om is offered is cryptically called *anāmaya*, literally "free from illness." Then both of these images are aligned with the heating of a ghee-filled clay pot, as would occur in a sacrificial setting, especially the Pravargya rite that was discussed in the previous chapter (and to which I will return in the penultimate chapter). The yogi is heated (√*tap*) like this pot, so that upon contact with fuel he flares up. The fuel is *prāṇa*, but the yogi-*qua*-heated-pot is not the body. It is rather the solar form of *brahman*, that highest step of Viṣṇu, which is further identified with the terribleness of Rudra, and which (in line with its solarity) "fills these *loka*s" as the *ātman* that has been fashioned into innumerable forms. A final analogy then emphasizes the oneness that underlies multiplicity through the images of sparks rising from a fire and rays of light emanating from the Sun, which are in turn likened to the arising of *prāṇa*s that animate creatures. The sustained sense is that the yogi develops a heated-potentiality that flares up and expands outwardly to unite with that which "fills these *loka*s." By his offering of *prāṇa*s, the yogi causes his fiery clay pot Self to flare out like/as the rays of the Sun and reveal the pervasive unity of the fiery *loka*. He becomes himself like the cosmogonic Puruṣa, like Indra, and like Prajāpati, who expand to cosmic proportions in a creative alliance with the fiery luminosity of the cosmos.

Next, there is a contractive movement that corresponds to the *prāṇa*-fueled movement of creative expansion. At MU 6.28, the experience of the yogi who has reached the "abode of bliss" in the heart is described:

> He … stands in his own greatness. And as a result of this, he sees [the *brahman*,] which is itself standing in its own greatness, and views the wheel of *saṃsāra* as a wheel that has been rolled back (*ā*+√*vṛt*). It has been said: "The embodied one who is constantly yoked for six months, who is released, his eternal, transcendent, and mysterious properly aligned yoga rolls forth (*pra*+√*vṛt*)."[126]

[126] MU 6.28; my translation is based on White's (2009: 94).

This passage again addresses the way in which the yogi's "inward" journey (this time into the heart) produces its "outward" effect. Situated within the heart, the yogi "stands in his own greatness" and thereby sees the greatness of *brahman*. He then transcendently views the wheel of *saṃsāra* "rolled back"—an image that corresponds to the contractive action of Rudra at the end of time, as well as the "receding" aspect of yoga in the KU. Then, after a period of time in this contractive state (which White (2009: 94) correlates with the six months of the year leading up to the winter solstice), the yogi reverses the movement to "roll forth"—an image that matches Rudra's turning-forth as well as the "arising" aspect of yoga in the KU. The yogi-*puruṣa* is thus one who recapitulates the alternating expansive and contractive movements of cosmogony; and he does so precisely through the performance of a yoga that "properly aligns" him with the courses of time, the cyclical blossoming and withering of existence.

Concluding Remarks

It is noteworthy just how much these early kinds of yoga differ from the yoga described in Patañjali's *Yoga Sūtra*s (YS). The latter, a reformed kind of yoga based upon the dualistic metaphysics of Īśvarakṛṣṇa's "classical" Sāṃkhya, defines yoga by the term *viyoga*, a state of absolute "disjunction" of the *puruṣa* from the phenomenal world of *prakṛti* that is synonymous with the cessation of the turnings of the mind and the state of total isolation (*kaivalya*). By contrast, the yoga of these Upaniṣads is expressly a matter of unification with the world and a mastery of the expansive and contractive "turnings" of the cosmos. That is, whereas the yoga of Patañjali isolates the *puruṣa* from the phenomenal world *prakṛti*, the Upaniṣadic yoga outlined here effectively subsumes all that could be deemed *prakṛtic* within

the *puruṣa*.[127] Notably, the language that describes this subsumptive, *puruṣa*-centric yoga in these Upaniṣads builds upon the same themes of luminous expansiveness, spatial indistinctiveness, and sovereign mastery that were central the Vedic-era understanding of the *puruṣa* in its relation to the *loka*. In this manner, the yogi of these Upaniṣads is significantly indebted to the earlier sovereign and cosmogonic figures like Indra and Prajāpati.

Evidence of a more or less direct link between such figures and this expansive, subsumptive kind of yoga can be found in the characterization of Indra in the famed *madhu-vidyā*, or "Honey Doctrine" of the BĀU. This doctrine, which I will investigate in greater detail in the penultimate chapter, establishes the underlying identity of the *puruṣa* (consisting of *tejas* and *amṛta*) that is discerned in various locations of the cosmic sphere (earth, wind, waters, etc.) and the *puruṣa* (again, consisting of *tejas* and *amṛta*) that is discerned in the body (*adhyātma*). At each point, the text argues that these paired *puruṣa*s are not actually distinct, but are rather "the immortal, *brahman*, the whole." "Verily," the *madhu-vidyā* concludes, "this *puruṣa* is the fort-dweller in all forts (*puriśaya sarvāsu pūrṣu*). By him there is nothing that has not been covered; by him there is nothing that has not been enclosed."[128] This claim is then followed by a citation from an earlier Ṛgvedic hymn (6.47.18) that links the omnipresence of *puruṣa* to Indra's 'yogic' *māyā*: "He possesses a form corresponding to every form… by his *māyā*, Indra goes about in many forms, for his

[127] Along these lines, Kambi is very nearly on the mark when he notes that, in comparison to the KU's yoga, the yoga of Patañjali "is not changing the mind [and *indriya*s, etc.] into *Puruṣa* but into *Prakṛti* as it is a modification of *Prakṛti*" (1981: 251).

[128] BĀU 2.5.18—*sa vā ayaṃ puruṣaḥ sarvāsu pūrṣu puriṣayaḥ* | *nainena kiṃ canānāvṛtam* | *nainena kiṃ canāsaṃvṛtam* ||

ten-hundred steeds are yoked (*yuktā*)."[129] Whereas in its original context, this verse spoke to anxieties regarding Indra's capricious support of rival groups,[130] here it reflects a wholly positive vision of Indra as the *puruṣa* who is omnipresent because he is "yoked" to all beings and is therefore "without a before or an after, without an inside or an outside."[131]

Another parallel characterization is discerned in the unnamed creator god of the TU, whose self-relational, self-extensional, and self-consumptive nature evokes the kind of yoga outlined here. Like Rudra, who turns forth space and time before contracting it, like the human yogi of the MU who "rolls" the cosmos forward and backward, and like the KU's yoga of "arising and receding," this unnamed creator is one who blissfully extends all of existence from himself and then enters into each and every part therein. The significance of this creative act is explicitly reproductive: "that one made *ātman*s for itself, therefore it is called 'well-done' (*sukṛta*). Indeed, that which is well-done is *rasa* [i.e., semen]; and having obtained this *rasa*, one becomes blissful."[132] Through his own movement through contraction and expansion, the yogi of the MU who has reached the "abode of bliss" reproduces through himself this creative process; he fills the *loka*s by his own luminous nature in the same fashion that the unnamed creator extends the worlds into which he enters. Hence, in the creative dimensions of yoga, the yogi is effectively a master of reproduction as the activity behind the development of all diversity.[133]

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[129] BĀU 2.5.19—*rūpaṃrūpaṃ pratirūpo babhūva… | indro māyābhiḥ pururūpa īyate yuktā hy asya harayaḥ śatā daśeti |*

[130] According to Jamison & Brereton, 2014: 833-838.

[131] BĀU 2.5.19—*…apūrvam anaparam anantaram abāhyam |*

[132] TU 2.7—*tadātmāna svayamakuruta | tasmāttatsukṛtam ucyata iti | yadvai tatsukṛtam | raso vai saḥ | rasa hyevāyaṃ labdhvānandī bhavati |*

[133] This accords with Bronkhorst's observation that the early Upaniṣads resist the Magadhan notion of an essentially inactive Self by positing the *ātman* as the "unborn" agent

Such links, between yoga, sovereign creators, and the process of reproduction (which, we should note, invokes the fiery transmutation of food), are perhaps most humanly expressed in the "Rite of Transfer" (described in the BĀU 1.5.17 and then modified and elaborated in the KauU 2.14), in which a dying father "completely gives over" (*sampratti*) his life by entering into (*ā+√viś*) his son.[134] The thinking that underpins this rite can be traced to AV 11.8, one of two Atharvan hymns praising the origins and cosmic significance of the *puruṣa*. There, the gods are depicted as being reborn from their former selves (reflecting the common Indic understanding of the son's relation to the father[135]), after which they "enter" (*ā+√viś*) into a renewed *loka* called *puruṣa*. The BĀU returns to these ideas of fathers, sons, and renewed *loka*s:

> When a man thinks he is going to depart [from this world], then he says to [his] son, "You are *brahman*, you are the sacrifice, you are the *loka*." The son replies [with the same words]… Indeed, of such an extent is this whole world. [The father then says:] "Being this whole, may he eat [on behalf of] me from

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behind all action (see 2007: 32-59, 269). In granting the yogi cosmically creative qualities, the yoga of the KU and later Upaniṣads follows suit. For potential links between this active view to liberation and its relation to Vedic thought, see Kahrs (2013), who distinguishes inactive, Upaniṣadic views of liberation from those espoused by the Mīmāṃsakas and Grammarians in the same period; though Kahrs likely overstates the allegiance of the Upaniṣads to a conception of the liberated Self as inactive.

[134] The KauU version (2.14) describes in greater detail the ritual method of this transfer. In Olivelle's translation of the text, "After the house has been strewn with fresh grass, the fire has been kindled, and a pot of water has been set down along with a cup, the father lies down covered in a fresh garment. The son comes and lies on top of him, touching the various organs of the father with his own corresponding organs" (Olivelle 1996: 214-215). There are parallels in this ritual method to later rites of revivification in the Tantric practice of *śava-sādhana* and certain iterations of initiation into Tantric practice in general, both of which involve entry into other bodies through the so-called 'subtle physiology' of *nāḍī*s. Two further parallels appear, quite surprisingly, in the Old Testament (1 Kings 17:17-24; 2 Kings 4:29-37). Here, Elijah (in 1 Kings) or Elisha (in 2 Kings) revive a child by laying atop his body a number of times and praying to Yahweh. Elisha's account explicitly indicates that the process involved aligning his and the child's mouth, eyes, and hands.

[135] The father-son relationship is explicitly invoked in these verses; see AV 11.8.8-10.

> here." …When a man who knows thus departs from this world, then he enters into his son by these *prāṇa*s.[136]

A son is the second self of the father; but he is also, in parallel with the AV's vision of the *puruṣa*, the *loka*, *brahman*, and the sacrifice. Hence the dying father—himself also the *loka*, *brahman*, and the sacrifice—enters once again into the *loka*, *brahman*, and the sacrifice by entering into his son. In a manner quite parallel to the creation narrative in the TU, the father is conceived as one who has generated the whole by producing a son with his "well-made" *rasa*, and who then enters into it, precisely via the *prāṇa*s that, in the model of yoga, provide a substrate by which yogis unite with the whole or otherwise come to know the creative yogi god who extends and withdraws the world. Moreover, just as the TU's teaching on bliss culminates in an expansive characterization of the one who "eats the whole world," the son—who was generated in the bliss of procreation—is here characterized as an eater (√*bhuj*) who will, as the whole, eat on behalf of the father. Finally, these dynamics are once again evocative of the Agnicayana rite, in which Agni, who is Prajāpati's son, reconstitutes his father's broken self (becoming thereby a father to his father) and thus saves the whole world. Hence the father and the world are saved from death and dissolution by being "piled" as a son—as an "eater" (an Agni) who thereby embodies both the nature of the person and the world.

It is this recursive view of things—this sense that each being originates from and lives as an expression of the creative capacity that continuously expands into ever-renewed phenomenal worlds—that perhaps best characterizes the understanding of the person given

[136] BĀU 1.5.17—*yadā praiṣyan manyate 'tha putram āha tvaṃ brahma tvaṃ yajñas tvam loka iti* | *sa putraḥ pratyāha … etāvad vā idaṃ sarvam* | *etan mā sarvaṃ sann ayam ito bhunajad iti* | *… sa yadaivaṃvid asmāl lokāt praity athaibhir eva prāṇaiḥ saha putra āviśati* |

throughout these Upaniṣads. In this, the person's capacity for extension and expansion stands as a fundamental proposition, which the authors of the Upaniṣads encoded in their teachings with the tropes of food and bliss, solar hearts, breaths and yoga, in their effort to reconcile a receding past with the revolutionary ideas of *saṃsāra* and *mokṣa*. These ideas fundamentally altered the Indic worldview and exploded the sense of the crisis faced by humanity. No longer does a sovereign alone save his people from the fearful and woeful states of existence, for every existent being is blissfully complicit in their propagation. As father to son, as creator god to the world of beings, beings arise for the enjoyment (that is, the "eating") of the worlds that they themselves are. Henceforth the one Person, extending everywhere, procreates himself through these beings, through their bliss, and thus through the worlds that he founds and that they are. The one Puruṣa, the cosmos itself in which all beings are allied, expands itself into a multiformity of beings and *puruṣa*s who reside in worlds commensurate to their own selves.

Chapter 3: The Elementality of Personhood in Early Buddhism

Introduction

The Buddhist understanding of the person is, in key respects, remarkably different from what we found in the (roughly contemporary) Upaniṣadic tradition. At the most fundamental level, the Upaniṣads posit the existence of an eternal and essential Self (*ātman*, *atta*) that is untouched by the karmic traces of activity; that this Self is non-different from *brahman*, the expansive and omnipresent principle or force that underlies worldly existence; and that this Self appears in and as the world in accordance with the recursive, self-relational understanding of personhood that I outlined in the previous chapter. By contrast, Buddhism posits that no such autonomous and unchanging Self exists, and therefore that persons and worldly phenomena are impermanent, empty of any inherent nature, dependently arising and ceasing. This arising and ceasing occurs because the person clings to the notion of the Self and the permanence of all phenomena, while shrinking from the idea that all is ultimately ephemeral. As a result, the person experiences a life characterized by suffering (Skt. *duḥkha*, P. *dukka*). A different kind of person—in a sense not really a "person" at all—"awakens" to the central and interrelated truths of the impermanence of all phenomena (Skt. *anitya*, P. *anicca*), their lack of an unchanging and autonomous essence, or Self. (Skt. *anātman*, P. *anātta*), their dependent way of arising (Skt. *pratītyasamutpāda*, P. *paṭiccasamuppāda*), and their empty way of abiding (Skt. *śūnyatā*, P. *śuññatā*). This "awakened" one is a Buddha, who has attained freedom from suffering.

Yet despite the fact that early Buddhist teachings maintain that no person truly exists (in a permanent, substantial sense), they still show an interest in elaborating on the nature of the person. How it does so reflects the Buddha's method of teaching in a manner that

corresponds to the intellectual capacity of a student. As Steven Collins observes, when a *sutta* addresses the laity or the non-specialist through "simple narrative or ethical/behavioral material," then "the words 'self' (*attā*) and 'person' (*purisa*/*puggala*) can be used without technical qualms" (1982: 77). By contrast, when members of the monastic community are the intended audience, then the terms "self" and "person" are "rigorously excluded" (ibid.: 149).[1] This double manner of speaking about persons and selves reflects the distinction, made much of later in the Madhyamaka tradition, between "conventional" and "ultimate" truths. Briefly, when the Buddha refers to persons, worlds, and the constituent elements of which they are comprised as existent entities, he speaks from the point of a conventional, or provisional truth. Conversely, he speaks from the point of ultimate truth when he asserts that nothing—neither person nor world—truly exists, that everything is impermanent and dependently arisen, and thereby empty of any inherent existence.[2]

My interest in the present investigation is not, however, directly concerned with these ultimate, ontological views of the self and personhood. Rather I seek to assess the metaphysical conception of personhood that the Buddha teaches in the *sutta*s of the Pāli

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[1] Except when the point is to establish "an intransigent symbolic opposition to Brahmanical thought" (Collins 1982: 77).

[2] A later and not well-preserved Buddhist sect, the Pudgalavādins—espousers of the "doctrine that there is a person" and the dominant Buddhist sect in mid-7th century CE India (according to the Chinese traveler Xuanzang)—conceived of the "person" around the "middle way" idea that declaring a thing to exist or not exist was itself a form of conventional discourse. Consequently, they argued that the "person" concept must be understood via a middle path between two extremes: as neither eternal nor non-eternal, as neither identical to nor different from the five aggregates (*skandha*s), or as both identical to and different from the aggregates (Bronkhorst 2009: 78-79; Duerlinger 2003: 45, 74, 148-150).

Canon.[3] There are variations on this conception, though all variations conceive of the person as an aggregate of elements (*dhātu*s). The predominant variation lies in the Buddha's repeated observation that both person and world are materially comprised of the primary elements: earth, water, fire, wind, and (in some enumerations) space. That is, when speaking of the person, the Buddha most often emphasizes the person's materiality, one reason for which I will suggest below. The person is, of course, not simply material; he is a conscious, mental being as well. The Buddha refers to this mentality-*cum*-materiality with the compound "name-and form" (*nāma-rūpa*), or alternatively by the five-fold schema of the *skandha*s or "psychophysical aggregates" that make up a person.[4]

As I will argue here, the point of intersection of the person's materiality and mentality, designated by the term "contact" (*phassa*), is crucial to the person's ability to progress toward the extinction of suffering, and thus crucial to the Buddha's understanding of the person. After first addressing the material and mental ways in which the Buddha describes the person, and the nature of their "contact," I will turn to an analysis of an early Buddhist technique that manipulates the nature of contact by using the elements as a meditative prop in progress toward more advanced levels of concentration on the path to liberation. This is

[3] As I make note of below, there is a certain, albeit limited, similarity between these metaphysics and those of Sāṃkhya, which likewise conceives of the material make-up of both persons and worlds in terms of fundamental elements (*mahābhūta*s): space, air, fire, water, and earth. In Sāṃkhya, these elements relate intimately to the way in which the sense powers and the mind perceive the world. This is not the case in the Buddhism of the Pāli canon. It isn't until later that certain elements of Buddhism would begin to show an increased acceptance of Sāṃkhyan metaphysics (while, however, always rejecting the existence of an inactive Self-*qua-kṣetrajña*, *puruṣa*, or *ātman*), a reflection of the fact that Sāṃkhyan metaphysics became, according to Jean Filliozat, "part and parcel of the intellectual baggage common to all Indian thinkers" (1970-71: 416; cited in White, 1996: 20).

[4] It is possible that the definition of the person in terms of the *skandha*s was a later development; see Bronkhorst 2009: 28n.53.

the *kasiṇa* practice, which is invoked in discussions of "supernatural powers" (Skt. *ṛddhi*, P. *iddhi*), and described in the *Culasuññatā Sutta* as key to the meditative descent into "emptiness," the subsequent realization of *nibbana* (Skt. *nirvāṇa*), and the complete and total destruction of (re)birth, or cyclic existence (*saṃsāra*). This analysis will afford us with two conclusions, important for contextualizing the pre-classical paradigm of personhood that I will develop in the chapters that follow. First, early Buddhist teaching (like Āyurveda and Yoga, especially as the latter is presented in the *Mahābhārata*) specifically operationalizes its treatment of the elementality of the person and world toward the end of suffering and the realization of extraordinary states of human existence. In this regard, the teaching of the elementality of the person conveys both a starting point for contemplation and a final realization; in other words, it functions simultaneously on the "conventional" and "ultimate" levels of Buddhist discourse. Second, the state attained through the realization of emptiness reflects a theory of personhood in which the existent person, in his most basic and untainted state, is non-distinct from the extension of his phenomenal, perceptual awareness into the world. This signifies that once the point of contact between the materiality and mentality of the person has been rectified, then the person may abide both *in* and *as* the world, elementally speaking, without clinging to the notion of the Self.

As indicated above, I will restrict this investigation primarily to an analysis of Pāli canon *sutta*s. Consequently, some of the subjects discussed, especially the Buddhist understanding of the elements and its uses of the kasiṇa meditation, will not reflect the further elaborations that occur in later works, like Vasubandhu's encyclopedic *Abhidharmakośa* or Buddhacarita's practical manual, the *Viśuddhimagga*. The intention in this regard is not to neglect the contents of these later, often more complex doctrines that have since been

effectively canonized; it is instead to highlight, to the extent possible, those doctrines which the historical Buddha likely espoused or were otherwise appropriate to his era.[5] This will serve to create a surer basis by which to compare early Buddhist teachings to those found in other traditions during the *śramaṇic* period, which will in turn allow us to better assess the relative influence of various Indic traditions on the formation of the pre-classical period's paradigm of personhood.

3.1 Conceptions of the Person in Early Buddhist Thought

Central to the Pāli Canon's theory of personhood is the notion that the person is a composite entity comprised of various elements (*dhātu*s). These elements can be either material or mental, physical or psychic.[6] But when the term "person" is defined, most often the emphasis is on those material elements that both Buddhism and other traditions recognize by the term *mahābhūta*. Whereas these *mahābhūta*s are counted as five in number, Pāli *suttas* frequently count four only. Usually presented in an order reflecting an increase of gross substantiality, these four are wind, fire, water, and earth. To these, a fifth is sometimes added, space, which is conceived as the subtlest substratum element in which the other four

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[5] In this, I have attempted to follow the method outlined in Bronkhorst's *Buddhist Teaching in India* (2009: 1-9). He notes: "Even though we cannot exclude the possibility that the seeds of what later became the dharma theory," as it is classically expressed in Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośa*, "may have been present in the teaching of the Buddha, we must abandon the idea that these approached anything resembling a full-blown metaphysical framework" (ibid.: 5). It is this nascent metaphysical framework that is primarily of interest at present, the tenets of which have been identified based upon a lack of evidence of contradictory statements in the Pāli *sutta*s and a general suspicion of teachings that "are presented in the form of lists, [given] the possibility of later scholastic influence" (ibid.: 8).

[6] The *sutta*s of the Pāli canon count *dhatu*s in multiple of fashions, according to a variety of considerations (collected in the *Bahudātuka Sutta*). The most frequently appearing enumerations count five material elements—earth, water, fire, wind, and space (though space is sometimes omitted and only four counted)—or eighteen elements, arranged in six triplets comprised of a sense faculty element, sense object element, and sense consciousness element, with the mind is here counted as a sense faculty).

develop.[7] A sixth, the consciousness-element (*viññana-dhātu*), is also occasionally added. Their relation to the make-up of the person (Skt. *puruṣa*, *pudgala*; P. *purisa*, *puggala*) is repeated in several fashions throughout the Pāli Canon. A passage from the *Majjhima-Nikāya* (MN) bluntly states: "this person (*purisa*) is the four great elements."[8] The person is in this regard a being that is fundamentally possessed of form. Consequently, his material constituents are closely related to that of the entire cosmos, which is comprised of the very same elements. Hence, "whatever is derived from the four great elements is form, for all form derives from the four great elements."[9] The person therefore arises out of the elemental materiality of the greater cosmos and when he dies his elements disperse back to their cosmic source: "This person (*purisa*) is the four great elements. When he dies, the earth element goes into and merges with the earth-body, the water element goes into and merges with the water-body, the fire element goes into and merges with the fire-body, the wind element goes into a merges with the wind-body, and the sense faculties (*indriyāni*) go to and enter space."[10]

In another passage, these elements are portrayed as giving rise to specific parts of the person's "internal" make-up. For instance, the "flesh and heart" (*maṃsaṃ… hadayaṃ*) are comprised of the earth element; "fat and saliva" (*meda… kheḷa*) are comprised of water; the fire is at work in the "consumption and digestion of food" (*asitapītakhāyitasāyita*); the wind

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[7] In Buddhist cosmogony, the cosmos and its elements develop by a process of accretion and combination. Hence, the qualities of earth include all those qualities ascribed to water, and so on.

[8] MN i.515—*cātummahābhūtiko ayaṃ puriṣo*

[9] MN ii.262—*yaṃ kiñci rūpaṃ cattāri ca mahābhūtāni catunnañ ca mahābhūtānaṃ upādāya sabbaṃ rūpan ti*

[10] SN iii.206-207—*catummahābhūtiko ayam puriso yadā kālaṃ karoti pathavīpathavīkāyam anupeti anupagacchati* | *catummahābhūtiko ayam puriso yadā kālaṃ karoti pathavīpathavīkāyam anupeti anupagacchati* | *ākāksam indriyāni saṅkamanti āyanti*

is seen in the breaths, and the space in the bodily apertures.[11] The point of this enumeration is ultimately to connect the "external" (*bāhira*) manifestation of the elements to their "internal," or "personal" (Skt. *adhyātma*, Pa. *ajjhattika*) counterparts, and thereby to collapse their difference by showing that, for instance, "the personal earth element and the external earth element are just this earth element. It is not mine, it is not me, it is not my self."[12] Thus by knowing the non-difference of person and cosmos in these elemental terms, and thereby the indifference and *im*personality of the elements themselves, one becomes "disenchanted" (*nibbindati*) with the elements and "dispassionate" (*vi+√rāj*) toward their workings.

The cultivation of this dispassion and disenchantment is in line with the Buddha's aim to show that there is no basis by which to assert the ultimate existence of the person or the world out of which his material constitution arises. It reflects the Buddha's approach to the body as an object of dispassionate contemplation, which produced some of early Buddhism's more macabre forms of practice:

> A bhikkhu reviews this same body, however it is placed, however disposed, by way of elements thus: "In this body there are the earth element, the water element, the fire element, and the air element." Just as though a skillful butcher or his apprentice had killed a cow and was seated at the crossroads with it cut up into pieces; so too, a bhikkhu reviews this same body … by way of elements thus: "In this body there are the earth element, the water element, the fire element, and the air element" (MN i.57-58; trans. Bodhi 1995: 148).

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[11] MN i.421-423

[12] MN i.421—*yā ca rāhula ajjhattikā paṭhavīdhātu yā ca bāhirā paṭhavīdhātū paṭhavīdhātur ev' esā* | *taṃ n' etaṃ mama n' eso 'ham asmi na m' eso attāti…* |

A similar sentiment is found at MN 112, where each of six elements (the standard five plus the *viññāṇadhātu*) is considered "not the self" (*anattata*). The disavowel of "mineness" is also important to the "Caraka's Yoga Tract." See CS 4.1.153; translated in Wujastyk 2012: 31-42.

Contemplating thus, a *bhikkhu* becomes "independent, not clinging to anything in the world" (ibid.). It moreover prepares him for the practice of the "nine charnel ground contemplations," according to which a *bhikkhu* observes a dead body in various stages of decomposition, all the while "contemplating the body as a body internally, externally, and both internally and externally" (ibid.), which is to say, both personally and *im*personally, and thus as the fate not only of the dead but also of himself.

What is most interesting about the development of this dispassionate attitude is that, by observing the bare elementality of the body, the person actually strives to become more like those elements that constitute his materiality. Along these lines, the Buddha urges his pupil Rāhula to "develop meditation that is like water … Just as people wash clean things and dirty things, excrement, urine, spittle, pus, and blood in water, and the water is not repelled, humiliated, and disgusted because of that, so too, Rāhula, … when you develop meditation that is like water, arisen agreeable and disagreeable contacts will not invade your mind and remain" (MN i.423-424; trans. Bodhi 1995: 530). Each of the elements is in turn described in a similar fashion to emphasize their natural indifference to different kinds of contact, which is indicative of their lack of essential selfhood. The point of the cultivation of an awareness of the elemental nature of personhood is thus not to disavow one's elemental nature *per se*, rather it is to thoroughly recognize it, and so discern that the person is, like the elements of which he is comprised, impermanent, dependently arisen, and empty of Self.

These material, formal considerations are further developed by the inclusion of several mental, psychic elements. Note that the division of the physical from the psychic, the material from the mental, is not indicative of a Cartesian mind-body dualism. Rather it refers to the fact that the person's engagement with his materiality and that of the cosmos is

inflected or in-formed by the influence of conscious states (and vice versa). This conglomerative interaction of the material and the mental is designated by the compound, *nāma-rūpa*, "name and form." *Rūpa* refers to the formal, elemental aspect of existence that we described above, while *nāma* refers to the psychical conceptualization of formal existence. Their mutual inflection is seen in practices like the charnel ground contemplations or the meditation that is "like" water insofar as these aim toward a conceptual reinterpretation of formal existence that rejects its "personalization" and instead cultivates the awareness of its impermanence, impersonality, and indifference.

One of the most important considerations of the person based upon his combined materiality and mentality involves the schema of the five "aggregates" (Skt. *skandha*, P. *khandha*). To the form-aggregate (*rūpa*) is added the mental aggregates of feeling (*vedanā*), discernment (Skt. *saṃjñā*; Pa. *saññā*), mental formations (Skt. *saṃskāra*; Pa. *saṃkhāra*), and consciousness (Skt. *vijñāna*, Pa. *viññāṇa*). By clinging to these aggregates as "I" or "mine," they become a "burden," the continued bearing of which defines the ultimately non-substantial entity called "person" (*puggala*). As verses from the *Bhāraharā sutta* (SN iii.25-26) state:

> The five aggregates are truly burdens,
> The burden-carrier is the person.
> Taking up the burden is suffering in the world,
> Laying the burden down is blissful.[13]

This bearing of the burden of the aggregates is thus one of the causes of suffering. To lay down this burden, to bring an end to the clinging to the aggregates is synonymous with the cessation of the person and the world as they are conceived.

[13] SN iii.26; trans. Bodhi 2000: 872

It is interesting to note that in the expansion of the elemental conception of the person to include the mental in addition to the material, no direct or inherent link is forged between the two. That is, no mechanism or process is described by which materiality translates into a mental experience. They are simply said to arise dependently and to be rejected equally as 'not the Self.' However, it is central to the Buddhist program of liberation that their relationship to each other must be rectified. More specifically, the person's progress toward the recognition of his Self-less nature requires that he cultivate the appropriate mental attitude—i.e., an attitude devoid of clinging —toward his material aspect.[14] So, in the *Chabbisodhana Sutta*, the Buddha states: "I have treated the earth element as not self, with no self based on the earth element. And with the destruction, fading away, cessation, giving up, and relinquishing of attraction and clinging based on the earth element, of mental standpoints, adherences, and underlying tendencies based on the earth element, I have understood that my mind is liberated" (MN iii.31; trans. Bodhi 1995: 905). In other words, by correcting the mental attitude to materiality, the person's psychic life is brought in line with the inherent non-Self-ness of the elements. This means that the point of intersection at which materiality is translated into the mentality of the person is a crucial concern, and that if the person is to develop an appropriate reaction in response to the physical nature of the person and the world, he must identify the moment at which this materiality is misapprehended as evidence of Self.

[14] Of course, the clinging to all five aggregates—material and mental—should be brought to an end. Nevertheless, the Pāli *sutta*s most often emphasize a rectification of one's mental attitude toward his or her material elementality.

This moment, this point of intersection between mentality and materiality is found in the processes of sensation and perception.[15] The early Buddhist analysis of sensation and perception differs importantly from that of the Sāṃkhya system, which builds instead upon the understanding of sensation and perception found in the coeval Upaniṣadic tradition. In the Sāṃkhya system, perception forms a direct link between the materiality of the person and his mentality. Both the person and cosmos are comprised of the five great elements (space, air, fire, water, and earth), as are the person's five sense faculties (*indriya*s). It is because of this material similarity alone that the *indriya*s are capable of perceiving (by reaching out and grasping) sense objects comprised of the same elements. The eye, for example, which is made of the fire element, sees light, which is nothing more than fire; the tongue, made of the water element, tastes flavors (*rasa*s), which are nothing more than water; and so on. The link between materiality and mentality through perception is not as direct in early Buddhist doctrine. Indeed, as noted above, upon death a person's *indriya*s are thought to return to the space element out of which they originally arose, rather than to their Sāṃkhyan correspondents.[16] In early Buddhist doctrine, sensation and perception arise instead out of the three-way "contact" (Skt. *sparśa*; Pa. *phassa*) of a sense faculty (*indriya*), sense object (Skt. *viṣaya*; Pa. *visaya*), and the corresponding sense consciousness (Skt.

[15] In this instance, I mean "sensation" and "perception" in their colloquial senses; I am not referring to the technical considerations of "feelings" and "discernment" found in the analysis of the *skandha*s.

[16] This reflects the fact that, as Sue Hamilton notes, the *indriya*s are, properly speaking, neither "forms" (*rūpā*) or sense "organs," nor are they counted among the mental, or "formless" *skandha*s (1996: 17-22). They are rather, as the *Sāmaññaphala Sutta* aptly proposes and as is appropriate to their association with the element of space, like "gates" or "doors" which must be guarded (*Digha Nikāya* (DN) i.70).

vijñāna; Pa. *viññāṇa*).[17] The first two of these, the sense faculty and sense object, are more fundamental insofar as they afford the condition for the arising of sense consciousness. When considered together they constitute an *āyatana*—a term that is typically translated as a "base" or "realm" of perception—of which there are twelve, corresponding to each of the six types of sense faculties and their corresponding objects.[18] Without this "base," there can be no phenomenal event of perception, as the conditions for the arising of sense consciousness are lacking. But with the presence of an *āyatana*, there is the arising of a corresponding sense consciousness and thus the perceptual event known as "contact."[19]

Contact is thus, in the words of Sue Hamilton, the basis out of which "all cognitive activity, of whatever nature, arises;" and consequently it is directly implicated in the "cognitive experience [which] subsequently leads either to progressing along the path to liberation or to remaining in bondage within *saṃsāra*" (1996: 14). The *Chachakka Sutta* elaborates on the role of contact (Skt. *spṛśa*; Pa. *phassa*) in generating these cognitive experiences. As it states, when there is the three-way contact of sense power, sense object, and sense consciousness, a feeling (*vedanā*) arises. Feeling does not here refer to sentiments or a particular sensation; rather it refers to that which colors the whole of one's perceptual experience.[20] Accordingly, feeling is conceived in two fashions: first, feeling is of six types,

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[17] The arising of sense consciousness is effectively synonymous with the event of contact; the *sutta*s nevertheless treat the two separately.

[18] The *āyatana*s are sometimes counted as six-fold based on the six pairings of sense object and sense power. The twelve are: sight and visible objects, hearing and sounds, taste and flavors, touch and tangible objects, olfaction and odors, and the mental power and thoughts.

[19] This three-fold basis of contact gives rise to a consideration of eighteen *dhātu*s, consisting of six triplets of sense power, sense object, and sense consciousness.

[20] Hamilton 1996: 45-46. This sense of "feeling" is comparable to Heidegger's use of "mood" (*Befindlichkeit*) as that which characterizes Dasein's manner of Being-in-the-world.

each corresponding to the six sense powers, e.g. sight-feeling, hearing-feeling, etc.; second, and more important to the program of liberation, feeling is three-fold: pleasant, painful, or neither-painful-nor-pleasant. In reaction to feeling (conceived in both senses), craving arises, prompting thereby the mental states and actions that seek to perpetuate, avoid, or otherwise remain ignorant about the feeling born of contact. So long as there is craving, there is also a sense of mineness, of identification with the perceptual event of contact that arises out of the meeting of sense organ, object, and sense consciousness, which in turn gives rise to feelings and their attendant cravings. The *sutta* therefore teaches that it is better to develop the understanding that these are "not mine… not my self." As a result, the underlying tendency to seek out pleasurable feelings, etc., is abandoned. The bhikkhu develops disenchantment and dispassion, which in turn leads to liberation.

In this regard, contact can be viewed as the fulcrum of suffering in *saṃsāra*. In other words, the eradication of suffering that arises in dependence upon craving and attachment could be achieved through the reconfiguration of contact. The elder bhikkhu Nandaka suggests just such a reconfiguration involving the severing of the connection, forged through craving, between sense powers and sense objects. Ministering to a group of bhikkhunis, he provides the analogy of a skillful butcher who deftly removes the outer flesh of a cow by severing all of its connective sinews, ligaments, and tendons, and then replaces that flesh so that it now hangs detachedly. The inner flesh, he explains, represents the six internal/personal *āyatana*s (i.e., the six sense powers). The outer flesh represents the six external *āyatana*s (i.e., the six objects of sense). The sinews, ligaments, and tendons are the lustful cravings that develop as a result of contact (fostering the faulty conception of mineness). When these are cut away by the butcher's "knife of noble wisdom"—a wisdom

that does not assert mineness—the bhikkhuni short-circuits the usual progression from contact to craving. The *sutta* does not suggest thereby that the bhikkhuni ceases to experience perceptual events, but it does suggest that by redressing the perceptual event of contact itself, she no longer binds the sense powers to their objects with cravings and mineness as sinews and the like bind hide to meat.

In a related manner, the Buddha speaks of "guarding" the sense powers. According to the *Saṃyutta Nikāya*'s (SN) "Simile of the Tortoise," the bhikkhu should guard his sense powers from grasping at the "signs and features" of the sense objects in the same way that a tortoise draws its limbs into its shell when a predator approaches. However, this does not mean precisely that the sense powers withdraw from their objects entirely. It once again signals the cultivation of detachment toward the sense objects, not allowing the "evil unwholesome states" of pleasure or pain, hankering or aversion, "covetousness or displeasure" to overwhelm. As a consequence, the guarding of the senses can result in the eradication of the sense of "I" and "mine" that is ultimately responsible for the perpetuation of the craving and attachment that give rise to suffering.

3.2 Elements, Iddhis, and the Phenomenal Remnant of Emptiness

An early Buddhist meditation practice that aims to manipulate the processes underlying contact toward precisely these ends is the *kasiṇa* meditation.[21] The Pāli term *kasiṇa* is a synomym for the Sanskrit term *kṛtsna*, meaning "all, whole, entire." Earlier, we saw this latter term used in the context of the Pravargya rite, where it described the condition of

[21] There are several types of kasina meditation, only some of which take the elements as their object. (Other kasina meditations include a meditation on specific colors, for instance.) I will focus exclusively on these elemental kasina meditation practices, as these are the type represented in the Pāli literature.

"wholeness" resulting from the restoration of the sacrificial head and the link between the sacrificer and the cosmos that is "headed" by the Sun (see chapter one). This reflects its basic meaning, according to which, a number of related parts are considered in terms of their underlying unity or wholeness.[22] In the Pāli canon, the "wholeness" proper to the *kasiṇa* practice is first expressed according to the manner in which it causes an object of meditation to occupy the "whole" of the meditator's phenomenal awareness.[23] Through the *kasiṇa* practice "the practitioner obtains perfect coincidence between his thought and the object—that is, he unifies the mental flux by suspending every other psychic activity."[24] In other words, the *kasiṇa* practice cultivates "wholesome" cognitive states that, as Sue Hamilton noted, contribute to the progression toward liberation. Note also that the *kasiṇa* meditation has an effect similar to that described in the Upaniṣads in terms of bliss: in both cases there is a collapse of subject and object into a uniform phenomenal awareness, a state of "one-sidedness" in which meditator = meditative object.[25] The earliest mentions of the *kasiṇa* practice in the Pāli canon obliquely refer to this state when the Buddha notes that the *kasiṇa* practitioner "contemplates the [elemental] *kasiṇa* above, below, and across, undivided and immeasurable." In a second sense, the *kasiṇa* meditation reflects a restoration of the individual's realization of the "wholeness" of the elements, in the sense that the elements pervade both the person and the world that are, in both cases, "not mine… not the self." The aim of *kasiṇa*—a practice whose name is synonymous with its result—is thus the "direct

[22] *Kṛtsna* is semantically somewhere between the terms *viśva* (an enumerative "all" *qua* "every-thing") and *sarva* ("all" *qua* the "whole," not considered in terms of parts).

[23] The Pāli word "*kasiṇa*" thus functions like others in the Sanskrit language—e.g. *tapas*, *yoga*, *prasad*, *kṛtyā*, etc.—in that it refers simultaneously to a procedure and its practical result.

[24] Eliade 1969: 194.

[25] See chapter two of this dissertation.

knowledge" that the person and the world constitute an unbroken whole, which is ultimately to be recognized as "not mine… not my Self."

In practicing the *kasiṇa* meditation,[26] the practitioner gazes upon a meditative object, which is also referred to as a *kasiṇa*. It is typically circular in shape and symbolizes either one of the first four "formal" elements (earth, water, fire, air), one of four colors (dark blue, red, yellow, and white),[27] or the "formless" elements of space and consciousness (*viññāna*).[28] As the meditator directs his gaze to the *kasiṇa*, he repeats the name of the element or color and contemplates its qualities and its transformations. All the while, he remains "pervading himself with the conviction that the atoms of his body are composed of this substance… until the mind falls into a kind of 'mesmeric trace;' then the sign (*nimitta*) is manifested."[29] With the arising of the "sign," the meditator can perfectly reproduce the object in his mind's eye, as if the object were before his open eyes. He is then exhorted to "mentally dematerialize it and free it of limits," which results in a growing luminosity shining through the object; finally, the object is imagined as expanding in size until it is limitless and infinite.[30]

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[26] Here I follow the descriptions given by De La Valleé Poussin (1898: 94-97), Eliade (1969: 193-198), and Clough (2012: 61).

[27] The colors may have corresponded to the elements. However, as Wynne notes, "[i]n some late Upaniṣads and Tantric literature, such as the *Yogatattva Upaniṣad* and the *Śaṭcakranirūpaṇa*, element meditation usually involves the visualization of the element *as* a colour. But these texts are much later than the early Pāli texts, and cannot be taken as evidence that the colours correspond to the elements" (2007: 30; emphasis added).

[28] The "object" for contemplating these formless elements could be "*aloka*" ("light," as in "a circle of light thrown upon a wall"), or "*parichinnakasa*" ("space," as that glimpsed through a crack, or as in a bit of sky "seen through a hole in a roof"); see De La Valleé 1898: 94.

[29] De La Valleé Poussin 1898: 94.

[30] Clough 2012: 61. A modern analog to the *kasiṇa* practice so described is the technique of "sigil magick." Sigil magick begins with the verbal clarification of a desire, which is

De La Valleé Poussin argues that the association of elements, colors, circles, and vision in the *kasiṇa* practice shows that it is related to the association of *nāḍī*s and *prāṇa*s with colored rays of light in the ChU' linking of the heart to the Sun.[31] The comparison is an apt one insofar as, there as well as here, the point is to collapse the distinction between internalities and externalities,[32] which, as we saw above, is a key point in the Buddha's discussions of the elements. This suggests that the aim of the *kasiṇa* practice is to directly operationalize the Buddha's understanding of the impersonality and indifference of the elements, to bring that understanding to the light of direct knowledge. By perceptually fusing a link between himself and the *kasiṇa*-object, the meditator enters into the state of "wholeness," without internalities or externalities. The result is one of total identification—the *kasiṇa* practitioner "knows" the object because he has transformed himself into it, pervading his atoms with its substance and making the two into one (ultimately boundless) whole.

The Buddha demonstrates the high value ascribed to the *kasiṇa* meditation when he notes, "thereby many disciples of mine abide having reached the perfection and consummation of direct knowledge."[33] This refers directly to the fact that, through the repeated performance of the *kasiṇa* procedure, the meditator enters into a series of (sometimes four, sometimes eight) progressively transformative states of meditative

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subsequently transcribed as a visual object, the "sigil," that artistically encodes the desire in a symbolic form. The practitioner then concentrates upon this sigil until he or she becomes capable of perfectly holding its image in the mind's eye. Once this is achieved, the final step is for the image to be "forgotten"—banished from conscious awareness—usually through an autoerotic ritual in which the practitioner imaginatively dematerializes the mental image of the sigil at the moment of orgasm.

[31] De La Valleé Poussin 1898: 94-97. The ChU passage appears at 8.6.

[32] See chapter two of this dissertation.

[33] MN ii.15; trans. Bodhi 1995: 640.

absorption, called *jhāna*s.[34] The first four are based in the experience of form (*rūpa-jhāna*s). The first two of these are characterized by an increasingly heightened experience of bliss that "pervade[s] this body, so that there is no part of his whole body unpervaded."[35] In the last two, this bliss is supplanted by states of "neither- pleasure-nor-pain," and sublimated by a "more subtle" kind of pleasure. Critically, when the *kasiṇa* meditator grows capable of entering into and abiding in the fourth *jhāna*—the last of the meditative states which still relate to the realm of form[36]—he is able to attain an elemental mastery over materiality that is parallel to the portrayals of the *aiśvarya* and *siddhi*s of *yogis* and other ascetics described throughout pre-classical literatures.[37]

As I noted above, the Buddha holds that through *kasiṇa* practice one attains "direct knowledge," which translates the term *abhiññā* (Skt. *abhijñā*). *Abhiññā* can refer to the direct knowledge of the *dhamma*, but in this context it more properly refers to a kind of special knowledge that confers supernatural powers of mastery. In the Pāli literature, such

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[34] The *jhāna*s are regularly described immediately following (the usually partial) descriptions of the *kasiṇa* practice, which only implies their connection; but they are directly connected in the *Dhammasangaṇi* (§160, *et passim*; translated in Rhys-Davids 1900: 43ff.). Clough (2012: 8) associates passages that deal with the *jhāna*s with the path of tranquility meditation (*samatha-bhāvanā*), which he distinguishes from, and considers as preparatory to, the path of insight meditation (*vipassanā bhāvanā*).

[35] MN ii.15; trans. Bodhi 1995: 640.

[36] The *kasiṇa* practice focused upon the "formless" realms of space and consciousness are for this reason not suitable for entering the fourth *jhāna*; rather space and consciousness are useful in attaining and identical to the first two "formless spheres" that are associated with the "formless" (*arūpa*) *jhāna*s (Wynne 2007: 29; Clough 2012: 61). The attainment of the four formless spheres/*jhāna*s leads directly to the attainment of *nibbana*.

[37] Of special interest is a passage at MBh 12.228.13-15, which reads: "The one who, restrained in speech, enters into (*prati+√pad*) the seven recollections of wholeness (*sapta… dhāraṇāḥ kṛtsnā*)… gradually he enters into earth, wind, space, and water, and attains mastery (*aiśvaryam*) of light, the *ahaṃkāra*, and the *buddhi*. In due course he attains the mastery of the unmanifest (*avyaktasya*). Having attained these powers (*vikramā*), he is yoked to yoga (*yuṅkte sa yogataḥ*)." I will address this elemental mastery in its relation to Brahmanical forms of yoga and related practices in chapter five.

mastery includes the supernormal powers called *iddhi*s. The term *iddhi* corresponds to the Sanskrit *ṛddhi*, (derived from √*ṛdh*), which signifies success and attainment, but also growth and increase. The *iddhi*s of elemental mastery—the abilities to pass through solid objects, to swim through the earth or walk on water—clearly show that the meanings of "growth" and "increase" should not be neglected. For by these *iddhi*s, a meditator is able to extend his reach throughout the elemental substratum of the cosmos in order to directly manipulate the elemental make-up of the world. In other words, by developing a direct knowledge of the elements through the *kasiṇa* practice, by identifying himself with them, he, in a sense, "grows" to their same extent and "increases" the extent of his reach throughout the elemental cosmos. For instance, in order to attain the third *iddhi*—the power by which one "goes unhindered through walls"—the meditator first enters the fourth *jhāna* by meditating upon the space *kasiṇa*, after which the he can transmute the elemental makeup of any given object into space, allowing him to pass through the object at will. The same basic process underlies the *iddhi*s of diving into the ground as if it were water, or walking on water, or of seeing with the divine eye: through a meditation upon the water *kasiṇa*, the earth is transmuted into water; by meditation upon the earth *kasiṇa*, water is transmuted into earth; by meditation upon the fire/light *kasiṇa*, all obstructions to visual perception are transformed into light, the substratum by which sight takes place.[38] Consequently, by using the *kasiṇa* practice to enter into the direct knowledge of the elements—identifying himself, in a sense, with the elements; becoming "one-sided" with them in their pervasion of the cosmos—the practitioner attains the ability to extend in order to manipulate the elemental makeup of the world around himself. He becomes a master of materiality, whose "growth"

[38] Though only a Buddha's divine eye is said to be capable of seeing all of space and time without error.

in meditative practice is matched by his ability to "increase" his effective presence in the world, to extend his transformative reach, so to speak, well beyond the confines of his body.[39]

These supernormal powers are not, however, an end in and of themselves. Rather they are natural consequences of the knowledge of the elements that finally results in the cultivation of the attitude of indifference and dispassion that we addressed earlier. Indeed the power one attains over the elements through the *kasiṇa* practice is direct evidence of their insubstantiality and impermanence, and their interdependent origination. So, after the mastery of the elements by the practice of *kasiṇa* and the cultivation of the four form-based *jhāna*s, the Buddhist program next proceeds to the cultivation of four formless *jhāna*s, synonymous with the ascent through the four "formless realms" (*arūpa-loka*) that lie nearest the threshold between phenomenal existence and *nibbana*. These realms are, in ascending order, the realm of infinite space, the realm of infinite consciousness, the realm of nothingness, and the realm of neither-perception-nor-non-perception.

The progression, from *kasiṇa* practice to the jhānas leading to the *samāpatti* of the formless realms and to *nibbana*, is outlined in the *Cūḷasuññata Sutta*, in which the Buddha describes to Ānanda the process of phenomenal descent from ordinary awareness into emptiness, from conventional reality to the ultimate truth of *nibbana*. The completion of this descent is portrayed as synonymous with the eradication of ignorance, the destruction of

[39] A related set of attainments that reflects "growth" and "increase" is the "immeasurable liberation of the mind" (*cettovimutti*), which corresponds to the four *brahmavihāra*s. Clough (2012: 41-42) defines the latter thusly: "The *brahma-vihāras* involve imaginatively pervading one's environment, all the way from one's own person to one's enemies and eventually to the entire universe, with pure or 'divine' (*brahma*) states of mind" such as "loving kindness" (*mettā*), "compassion" (*karuṇā*), "empathetic joy" (*muditā*), and "equanimity" (*upekkhā*).

birth, and the liberation of the mind (MN iii.108); consequently its finer points remain a subject of contention among the various sects of Buddhism through their attempts to better understand the nature of the descent and realization so described therein.[40] Yet though the final meaning of the various stages described here is up for debate, it is accepted that the *sutta* outlines an early Buddhist form of practice, the results of which were highly valued. Lobsang Dargyay further suggests that "the concept of voidness, as introduced in this sutta, is not a philosophical theory, but a … practice that ends in 'fullness'" (1990: 83).

The path toward the meditative abiding in emptiness, as it is described in the *Cūḷasuññata Sutta*, proceeds in the following manner. A *bhikkhu*, sitting at the edge of a village, first dispels thoughts of the village to gain a single-pointed meditative perception of the forest. The perception of the forest alone corresponds to the emptiness of the perception of the village. Then, he attains a singleness of perception subtler than before by engaging in the *kasiṇa* meditation on the earth element. Perceiving only earth, making that perception single and the "whole," he enters into the emptiness of both village and forest. "Just as a bull's hide becomes free from folds when fully stretched with a hundred pegs," the Buddha states, "so too, a *bhikkhu*—not attending to any of the ridges and hollows of this earth, to the rivers or ravines, the tracts of stumps and thorns, the mountains and uneven places—attends to the singleness dependent on the perception of the earth" (MN iii.105). The perception of the earth element overwhelms phenomenal awareness and "empties" the perception of anything else. The end result is a vast uniform expanse, a featureless "whole" of earth. From the meditation on the earth element, the *sutta* skips over the four form-based *jhāna*s to arrive

[40] A summary of several historical positions on this text and the meanings of emptiness appears in Lobsang Dargyay's "What is Non-Existent and What is Remnant in Śūnyatā" (*Journal of Indian Philosophy* 18(1): 81-91 1990).

at the four formless realms. The likelihood that a progression through the four form-based *jhāna*s is here implied is suggested in the *Viśuddhimagga* (Vsm, 10.6-7), where it is argued that the emptying of the earth element involves practicing the earth-*kasiṇa* for the sake of entering the four *jhāna*s, finally surmounting which, one attains the perception of the realm of infinite space. So, by thus "emptying" the singular perception of the earth element, the *bhikkhu* ultimately arrives at the "non-emptiness" of the base of infinite space. Following the realm of infinite space, the *bhikkhu* arrives successively at the realms of infinite consciousness, of nothingness, and of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, voiding each in turn. Finally, the *bhikkhu* arrives to the state of *animitta cetosamādhi*, the "signless" or "measureless (*a+ni√mā*) concentration of the mind." This measureless mind-state is precisely that in which the awakening of liberating knowledge and the culmination Buddhist practice occurs. And as the *sutta* describes, all that remains in this highest state of emptiness is the "non-emptiness" of the "six bases [of perception] (*saḷāyatana*) that are dependent on this body (*kāya*[41]) and conditioned by life" (MN iii.108). So curiously, at the end of the descent into emptiness, each step of which expands an awareness of the emptiness of phenomenal existence, the *bhikkhu* arrives at a pure perceptual experience, a simple phenomenal awareness that is free of the taints that lead to rebirth. "He understands: 'Birth is destroyed, the holy life has been lived, what had to be done has been done, there is no more coming to any state of being'" (MN iii.108).

Is the practice of emptiness then, and the state most closely associated with the liberating insight of *nibbana*, an affirmation of embodiment? Certainly not, if the "six bases" of

[41] Given the immediate context, there is no reason to think that this *kāya* refers to anything other than the physical body; though it is worth noting that the state of buddhahood, especially in later tradition, deeply problematizes the nature of the "bodies" to which the Buddha (or buddhas) correspond. See especially Radich 2007 & forthcoming.

perception—the *saḷ-āyatana*s—are properly understood. These are the six pairs that refer to both the sense powers and their respective objects: sight and vision, ear and hearing, nose and olfaction, tongue and taste, skin and touch, and mind and thought.[42] The fact that these twelve are counted as six relates to the etymology of the term *āyatana*—*ā*+√*yam*, "to extend, stretch." This core meaning is reflected in *āyatana*'s first order meanings: "stretch, extent, reach;" "region, sphere, locus;" and "occasion" ("āyatana," PTS dictionary). An *āyatana* is thus not a "base" in the sense of a fixed location, but rather refers to the "upon which," or "through which" perceptual activity takes place. The *saḷ-āyatana*s are in this sense synonymous with one's phenomenal field—the "extent" of vision, etc.[43]—which the meditative descend into voidness confirms as being dependent upon the body and conditioned by life. The final effect of the descent into voidness is thus the clarification of these perceptual extensions, precisely so that the intersection of mentality and materiality in the event of contact no longer gives rise to the unwholesome, craving-laden mental states that perpetuate the person's belief in his substantiality and possession of a self. In the *sutta*'s words, "his *mind* is liberated from the taint of sensual desire, from the taint of being, from the taint of ignorance.... He understands, 'This *field of perception* (*saññāgataṃ*) is void of the taint of sensual desire, ...of the taint of being, ...of the taint of ignorance" (MN iii.108; trans. Bodhi 1995: 969-970, emphasis added).

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[42] See, however, the *Nidāna Saṃyutta* (e.g. SN ii.3), where the sense powers alone are called *āyatana*s (Hamilton 1996: 16).

[43] So Sue Hamilton writes, "what is meant [by the term *āyatana*] is the sphere or extent of vision, hearing, taste, and so on, the locus (in a non-physical sense) of the senses, which establishes the foundation (again in a non-physical sense) of the psychological life of the individual" (1996: 17). Hamilton further interprets the term *indriya* to mean "'power' or 'faculty'" and *dhātu* to mean "'phenomenon'" (ibid.). This is suggestive of the way that Buddhism understands such things in terms of dependent (and volitionally produced) *events* rather than in terms the interactivity of essentialized object, organs, or elements.

Concluding Remarks

What does all this finally say about the early Buddhist conception of personhood, specifically as it relates to the broader questions about the nature of personhood in Indic traditions? Throughout this chapter I have undertaken the limited task of describing the Buddha's teaching on the metaphysics of the person along two lines: first in terms of the person's elemental and mental aspects, and their interaction via "contact" and the perceptual extension of the six *āyatana*s; second according to the role of the *kasiṇa* practice in manipulating this understanding of the person toward the final liberation from rebirth. I have not addressed at any length the Buddha's view that, in reality, no persons or worlds are seen to exist once there is a realization of the fundamental emptiness of existence. I have also not addressed the ways in which Buddhism unconsciously repeats or actively repudiates Brahmanical views of personhood. I am referring in this regard to the use of epithets like "Great Person" (*mahāpurisa*), or "Unique Person" (*ekapuggala*), that work to reinscribe Brahmanical views of personhood with Buddhist ones; or the comparison of the Buddha, *arhats*, and *bodhisattvas* to greatly expansive lights; or their possession of a loving kindness (*metta*) that extends to *brahmaloka*—all characterizations that seem to repeat the earlier Brahmanical conceptions of the expansive and extensional nature of sovereign personhood.[44]

What I have shown is that early Buddhist doctrine considers the person and the world to be the same in terms of their material, elemental composition. The Buddha exploits this

[44] Consider also the following verse from the *Jātaka*s (II 260): "Time (*kāla*) eats all beings, along with itself, but he who eats time, he cooks the cooker of beings." As Collins notes, "'He who eats time' is a name for the enlightened person" (1992: 228). This is a clear appropriation of the Brāhmaṇical and Āyurvedic consideration of Time as a digestive fire, repurposed to frame the way that the enlightened person "eats the time of rebirth in the future by the Noble Path … [and cooks] the craving which cooks beings in hell" (ibid.). The comparatively later date of the *Jātaka*s suggests that there is a historical progression of appropriation of Brāhmaṇical themes in Buddhist literature.

similarity in order to teach *anatta*, or no-Self, and also to teach the cultivation of dispassion and detachment toward the material aspects of phenomenal existence. He argues that such an attitude is in fact inherent to materiality itself, and thus while in one sense the Buddha espouses the repudiation of elemental, material reality, this is more or less tantamount to the renunciation of *attachment* to elementality rather than an attempt to forcefully check or otherwise abandon its activity. Hence, a *bhikkhu* should cultivate a meditation that is "like" the elements in order to practice the detachment and dispassion demonstrated by the elements themselves. This aim necessitates redressing the point of intersection between the person's material and mental aspects, which Buddhist doctrine identifies with the perceptual event of "contact," at the coincidence of sense faculty, sense object, and sense consciousness. By ensuring thereby that contact does not give rise to unwholesome mental states, a *bhikkhu* fosters wholesome ones that no longer incorrectly ascribe "I" and "mine" to the ultimately impersonal and indifferent activity of the elements.

I have argued that the *kasiṇa* practice is one technique forwarded to directly redress the event of contact and the meditator's reaction to the nature of the elements. Because it inculcates a direct knowledge of and identification with the elements, it provides direct insight into their lack of inherent nature and thus their fundamental mutability. Precisely because he has realized the nature of the elements and knows directly the Self-less manner in which he is "like" them, the adept can transform the elements of his body or the world at will, in some cases extending the reach of his activities across otherwise inconceivable distances. There is thus an intimate link between directly knowing and mastering the elementality of the person and attaining liberating insight into the fundamentally indifferent and self-less nature of the person. It is therefore entirely natural that Buddhist doctrine views

the supernatural abilities as a natural consequence of progress along the path toward the attainment of *nibbana*, synonymous with the recognition of the truths of no-Self, emptiness, dependent origination, and impermanence. The state that corresponds to such recognition is described in the *Culasuññata-Sutta* as the baseless remaining of the six *āyatana*s, the six "extensions" of perception that are "dependent on the body and conditioned by life." In other words, the person who has attained *nibbana* dwells in the Self-less extension of a unitary, phenomenal "field of perception" that is henceforth void of the causes of suffering and rebirth. This tells us that the Buddha's portrayal of the person, as comprised of elements that are perceptually connected to the mind via the "extensional" event of contact, is more descriptively and pedagogically powerful than it first appears. Absent the clinging of attachment that karmically taints the person with future rebirths, the 'personhood' (to the extent that this term is still applicable) of one who has reached *nibbana* is precisely as the Buddha describes it in the *Culasuññata Sutta*: an abiding of the elements and perceptual extensions, a phenomenal "wholeness" that is, like the elements the comprise the person, dependently arisen, impermanent, without Self, and empty of essence.

I would add to this that such a person is not necessarily, nor need be, a Buddhist, as the Buddha's closing remarks to this *sutta* make clear:

> Ānanda, whatever recluses and brahmins in the past entered upon and abided in pure, supreme, unsurpassed voidness, all entered upon and abided in this same pure, supreme, unsurpassed voidness. Whatever recluses and brahmins in the future will enter upon and abide in pure, supreme, unsurpassed voidness, all will enter upon and abide in this same pure, supreme, unsurpassed voidness (MN iii.109; trans. Bodhi 1995: 970).

It is this that most provocatively suggests a link between the Buddhist understanding of elementality and other traditions—especially Yoga and Āyurveda—that connects the

mastering of the elements to the attainment of an expansive mode of existence in which personhood and worldhood coincide.

In other important respects, however, and as the following chapter will show, the link, proposed most famously by Zysk (1991), between early Buddhism and Āyurveda falters especially on the grounds of their respective views of personhood. This is in large part due to Buddhism's lack of a robust adherence to the Sāṃkhyan view of elementality. Āyurveda can perhaps count itself indebted to Buddhism's comparatively early (we must assume) focus upon the elemental materiality of the person and the world. However the former's theoretical commitment to the role of the elements in the processes of digestion (via the transmutation of the *rasa*s of food) and perception (via the elemental link-up between sense power and sense object), and the sophisticated argument for the identification of person and world that results from these commitments, these stand well beyond pale of early Buddhist thought. Along such lines it is tantalizing to note that, although the Buddha was himself cared for by the famed early physician Jīvaka Kumārabhacca (who reportedly trained in Āyurvedic medicine at the university of Taxila, far to the west), when the Pāli canon portrays Buddhist agents ministering to the sick, they advise detachment and dispassion only.[45]

While Zysk is likely correct to assert that medical knowledge was practiced in Buddhist *saṅghas* in the early centuries CE (roughly around the establishment of the *Vinaya* texts), there is little reason to believe that there was any substantive or formative link between Buddhism and medicine, Āyurvedic or otherwise, prior to this period. It stands to reason that

[45] See, e.g. the *Anāthapiṇḍikovāda Sutta*, in which the titular householder, whose body is racked by terrible pains, is advised to meditate thusly: "I will not cling to the earth element … I will not cling to the water element …" and so on in a litany against clinging in all its forms. No attempt to minister to his pains in any true medical sense is made.

early Buddhists would have come into some degree of contact with physicians, either over the course of extended sojourns in the rainy season, during which debates between *śrāmaṇic* groups would take place, or in the course of the travels of Buddhist missionaries to far away lands. This is, however, a far cry from Zysk's argument for a direct link between Buddhism and formation and the spread of Indian medicine as a specifically "empirico-rational" science. This is not to say, though, that Āyurveda has necessarily stronger connections to Brahmanism. Albrecht Wezler's perspective on these points is invaluable; as he notes "[t]here can indeed hardly be any doubt that the contributions of the *trayī-vidyā*-Brahmins to the beginnings of Āyurveda were at best marginal" (1995: 222). Wezler suggests instead that the truer claim to the roots of medical knowledge and practice may not even belong to those of a primarily "religious" occupation. According to a verse in the *Suśruta Saṃhitā*, "one should seek effective medicines from these individuals: those who subsist on roots, cowherds, ascetics, hunters, and others who wander in the wilds."[46]

[46] SuS 1.37.8—*gopālās tāpasā vyādhā ye cānye vanacāriṇaḥ* | *mūlāhārāś ca ye tebhyo bheṣajavyaktir iṣyate* || (This verse previously cited by Wezler, 1995: 228.)

Chapter 4: Person as World in Early Āyurveda

Introduction

In the preceding chapters I examined the nature of the relationship between the person (*puruṣa*) and the world (*loka*) across the major periods of early Indic religious history. At this point it should be clear that, from the Vedic period onward, the nature of this relation is of a central importance, despite the otherwise radical differences evident between traditions. A deeper point of continuity lies in the fact that, within each tradition, the person was conceived as possessing an inherent capacity to, in some sense, extend and expand. Through this capacity, the person was thought to be capable of fundamentally altering the nature of his relation to the world, and therefore the nature of his relation to himself, toward the ends of securing future well-being or a final release from the sufferings of existence. The very same "extensional" understanding of the person and his relation to the world appears yet again in the pre-classical period texts of Āyurveda, India's premier medical tradition. Indeed, early Āyurveda marks a direct continuation of themes scattered throughout each of the traditions we have encountered thus far. In this regard, the theory of personhood in early Āyurveda is paradigmatic of the pre-classical period. Given this paradigmatic sifnificance, a brief review of these themes will help to contextualize the investigation of Āyurveda's theory of personhood that follows.

In the Vedas, the notion of the person develops out of its characterization of Indra, the sovereign king of the gods who creates the world and smashes his enemies by expanding to the very limits of the cosmos. A person is thus a cosmically political and religious entity who, through acts of sacrifice, shapes himself in the image of Indra, becoming thereby identical to and master of all of space and the temporal rhythms of the year. These ideas

further developed in the Brāhmaṇas, wherein the human who toils in sacrifice is conceived as "equal in measure" (*saṃmita*) to the world and the sacrifice and therefore a master of life and death.

In the Upaniṣads, whose speculations record a democratizing shift in focus toward the individual and his subjective, phenomenal reality, the person is conceived as the eater of the world that is his Self. In bliss, he recursively reproduces himself as the creatively sovereign origin of all phenomenal worlds. And through the practice of yoga he masters his perceptual experience and thereby ex-poses the Self as the union of all things as they arise and recede.

The Buddhist Pāli canon rejects this notion of Self, positing instead the emptiness of all things in their lack of inherent essence. The liberating realization of this lack is aided by learning the elemental nature of the person, which is to say the indifferent, indeed impersonal nature of what it means to be a person. By rectifying one's perceptual engagement with the elements, the practitioner becomes himself impersonal. By meditating on the elements with the *kasiṇa* practice, he enters into progressively deeper states of concentration until, freed from clinging to the illusions of Self, he abides in the pure perceptual extension of the world, certain in the knowledge that not future birth awaits.

These are the key aspects of prior tradition that play a formative role in the early treatises of Āyurveda. As in the Vedic period, the Āyurvedic person exists in a fundamentally sacrificial cosmos and possesses an inherent capacity to realize his own sovereign identification with the whole world. As in the Upaniṣads, the Āyurvedic world is conceived as a fundamentally digestive sensorium governed by the logics of yoga. As in the Pāli canon, the Āyurvedic person and world are fundamentally elemental in nature and deeply informed by the nature of perceptual extension. And as in all of these traditions, the

central, sustained concern of Āyurvedic thought and practice is the regulation of the relation between the person (*puruṣa*) and the world (*loka*). It expresses this concern in terms of "harmonious conjunctions" (*samayoga*), "equilibirums" (*sāmya*), and various kinds of "appropriateness" (*sātmya*), and argues that the *puruṣa* is identical to, and the "same measure" (*saṃmita*) as the *loka*. Consequently, it is the person who, by acts of extension and expansion, first creates for himself the conditions of sickness or health, misery or joy, mortality or immortality.

The present chapter will demonstrate these features of Āyurveda's paradigm of personhood in several steps. First, I will examine definitions of the term *puruṣa* contained within in the two earliest Āyurvedic texts—the *Caraka-Saṃhitā* (CS) and *Suśruta-Saṃhitā* (SuS)—in order to show the essential relation between the terms *puruṣa* and *loka*. Second, I will contextualize these definitions alongside several synonyms of health and illness that dictate the fundamentals of Āyurvedic theory and practice, including *samayoga* ("equal yoking," or "joining in the same"), *dhātu-sāmya* ("equilibrium of the constituents"), and several types of *sātmya* ("appropriateness"). These terms demonstrate the way in which therapeutic practices seek to restore the *puruṣa* to a relation of identity with the *loka*. Finally, I will examine the Āyurvedic theory of perception, which describes the way in which the *puruṣa* and *loka* coincide through a fundamentally 'yogic' process. All of this will provide us with a valuable overview of Āyurvedic thought and practice, as well as provide us with a jumping-off point for contextualizing Āyurveda alongside its most contemporary religious text, the epic *Mahābhārata* (MBh). As will be shown in the chapters that follow, the most fundamental characteristics of Āyurvedic philosophy and practice are preserved and given narrative life in the MBh. It is in this manner that Āyurveda shares in the MBh's concerns

with sacrifice, sovereignty, the power of time, and the person's expansive and extensional relation to the world.

4.1 Historical Background: The Early Texts of Āyurveda

The exact dating of Caraka's and Suśruta's foundational texts is uncertain, though both belong firmly to the pre-classical period. The *Caraka*, which is typically considered the older of the two, is dated by Meulenbeld to sometime between 100 BCE and 150-200 CE. However, a root text, the *Agniveśa-tantra*, containing the teachings of Punarvasu Ātreya to his pupil Agniveśa, almost certainly preceded the work compiled by Caraka and given his name.[1] Wujastyk (1998: 40) allows for a slightly earlier date for the CS based upon its terminological relationship to early Buddhist texts, establishing a *terminus a quo* of sometime between the third and second centuries BCE. In relation to other traditions existing during or around this period, the CS clearly predates the classical Sāṃkhya of Īśvara Kṛṣṇa (350 CE), espousing its own monistic brand of proto-Sāṃkhya. It directly cites from the *Vaiśeṣika Sūtras* of Kanada (2nd cent. BCE). And it contains a wealth of technical vocabulary familiar to Buddhist sources, most notably the framing of health and disease (in certain portions of the text only) with terms of *sukha* and *duḥkha*. All of this is complicated by the fact that there are several layers of accretion evident in the text itself, an otherwise reasonable feature given the encyclopedic nature of the its contents.

The dating of the *Suśruta*, which likewise suffers from issues of accretion, is far less certain. Nevertheless there are several reasons to suspect that it is later than the CS. The Sāṃkhya doctrines it contains are closer to the classical doctrine, and thus later than those

[1] And later edited and "completed" by Dṛdhabala (4th-5th cent. CE). See Wujastyk (1998: 39-41) and Meulenbeld (1999: 105-115).

found in the CS. Portions of its *Śarīra-sthāna* appear to have been borrowed from the CS, in some places showing elaborations indicative of the relative lateness of the text. The SuS is explicitly mentioned in the Bower Manuscript, which establishes a *teminus ad quem* of the beginning of the fifth century CE. Wujastyk (1998: 104-105) argues that the root text—a work dealing exclusively with surgical procedures—can be dated to c. 250 BCE based upon the mention of a "statement by Suśruta" contained in a work by the grammarian Kātyayana.

From a theoretical standpoint, the previous commitments and unique positions of these texts are equally difficult to qualify. Compared to the CS, the SuS contains far fewer passages of a theoretical intent. Whereas the CS contains passages on the mechanics of perception, the origins of diseases and their cures, and the paths to liberation from suffering—including a unique doctrine on *yoga*—the SuS is a comparatively dry text, whose sustained focus is the enumeration and technical display of curative measures and surgical procedures. Both texts agree on certain basic points, however: the procedures for diagnosis of illness, the importance of diet, the theory of *rasa*s, the co-inherence of the five great elements in the person and the world, and the central importance of the *puruṣa* as the recipient of cures. Both texts likewise contain unique mixtures of Vaiśeṣikan, Sāṃkhyan, and Buddhist philosophical positions, synthetically reworked toward the ends of Āyurvedic thought and practice.

With respect to earlier traditions, Zysk has duly noted the stark change in tone from the medical paradigm of the *Atharva-Veda* to that of the CS and SuS.[2] Yet outside of the

[2] Though the claim made by Frederick Smith (2006: 556), that "Caraka and Suśruta attempted to forge an empirical medical system, in part by expunging from their texts material from the *Atharva-Veda* and its supporting literature," must be taken with a grain of salt, as the sections on *bhūtavidyā* attest. These precisely mirror a section of the *Vana-parvan* of the *Mahābhārata* that deals with the origin of the god Skandha. All three of these

specific medical knowledge of the earlier traditions, there are a number of ways in which early Āyurveda carries forward the assumptions and worldviews of the past. For instance, the Āyurvedic assertion that the cosmos is essentially digestive in nature is based upon the dual characterization of the cosmos as fiery and watery, *agneya* and *saumya*, which was first explicitly expressed in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, but arguably present in the earliest strata of the *Ṛg-Veda*. Āyurveda, following the linguistic trends of the middle-Upaniṣadic period, also employs a broadly "yogic," or √*yuj*-based, vocabulary—that is, it thinks about things in terms of the way they are "yoked," "joined," "used." Along these lines it develops an outline of the practice of yoga for the sake of liberation that is likely an "adaptation of extremely old ascetic material known to us mainly from Buddhism."[3] Finally, and as I will spend the bulk of the time demonstrating below, Āyurveda carries forward the extensional paradigm of the *puruṣa* that is common to all of the traditions discussed so far, in which the *puruṣa*, in his truest nature, is an all-pervasive and sovereign figure who has established his identity with the entirety of the world. Taking all of this into consideration, it is clear that Āyurveda records a deeply historically rooted and uniquely cosmopolitan tradition that favors neither the ritualism of the Vedas nor the philosophical speculations of orthodox or heterodox traditions. It therefore presents us with an understanding of the person that is less theologically or doctrinally specific in character, and therefore more generally representative of Indic notions of personhood. Early Āyurveda did not attempt to divorce itself entirely

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sources, linguistically speaking, follow the logic of possession as it is laid out in the *Atharva Veda*. As Marcy Braverman (2003: 13) has shown, the verbal root √*viś* is consistently used across all of three to describe cases of madness brought about by possession.

[3] Wujastyk 2012: 35. The *Caraka*'s section on yoga for liberation is reproduced in the 4th-5th cent. CE *Yogayajñavalkya-Smṛti*, which demonstrates the currency Āyurvedic thought held even within "religious" circles.

from "religiously" associated metaphysics; rather, it embraced the most basic features of an Indic understanding of the person and his relation to the world.

Yet it is precisely this broadly accepted understanding of the person that has been misrepresented by previous scholarship on Āyurveda, which has instead universally presumed the relation between person and world to be as that between microcosm and macrocosm. To cite just a few recent examples: Meulenbeld (1999: 42) suggests the "parallelism between microcosm and macrocosm is stressed" in the CS's understanding of the body. Wujastyk (2009: 195), after citing a wide range of apparent examples of microcosmological thought in Indian traditions, compares a highly relevant section of the CS (4.5) to the "Hermetic postulate" ("As above, so below") from the Egyptian text, *The Emerald Tablet*. Kakar (1982: 293n.26) mistranslates from the same section: "the person is a *miniscule image* of the great cosmos."[4] Finally, Cerulli (2012: 29) summarizes the aims of Āyurveda with the words: "When an ayurvedic physician treats a patient, therefore, he or she must attempt to reestablish the lost balance between the somatic microcosm of the patient and the universal macrocosm."[5]

The problem with these microcosmological interpretations of Āyurveda's notion of the person is that it misrepresents the traditions own claims about the person and its relation to the world. Nowhere in either the CS or the SuS is the relationship between the person and the world discussed in terms of the *piṇḍa-brahmāṇḍa* pairing, a the hallmark of (presumed)

[4] Emphasis added. Presumably, this is a translation of CS 4.5.3 ("*puruṣo'yaṃ lokasaṃmitaḥ*"). His fanciful rendering of this phrase is itself evidence of the uncritical attitude that scholarship has most often taken towards the use of the microcosmological paradigm.

[5] Cerulli here cites David G. White's *The Alchemical Body* (1996: 15-23, 218-262). More recently, however, White has led the call for a reexamination of microcosmology in Indic thought. See n.69 below.

microcosmological formulations in later purāṇas and tantras—in fact, the term *brahmāṇḍa* doesn't appear at all. Nor are there any other terminologies that unequivocally express such a relation. To blithely say, therefore, that the Āyurvedic physician should treat the patient as a microcosmic re-presentation of the macrocosmos is to fail to take seriously the texts' own terms. The most of important of these is surely *puruṣa*, the subject of all Āyurvedic discourse. It is toward a fresh examination of this subject that we now turn.

4.2 Early Āyurveda's Definitions of Puruṣa

4.2.1 Suśruta's Definitions of Puruṣa

Suśruta first defines the term *puruṣa* near the outset of his medical treatise with an aim to establish it as the focal point of Āyurvedic practice:

> In this *śāstra*, the coming together (*samavāya*) of the five great elements in the embodied condition[6] is called '*puruṣa*.' The [medical] practice is in this; he [*puruṣa*] is the basis [of practice].[7]

The "five great elements" (*pañca-mahā-bhūta*s) mentioned here are space, wind, fire, water, and earth. The SuS asserts that the *puruṣa*—the "patient" at the center of its theory and practice—is nothing more than an embodied being in which these five have "come together" (*sam*+*ava*+√*i*). In other words, the SuS takes a strictly materialist stance regarding its subject. This fact has been covered over by historical commentators and modern translators alike, who render the term *śarīrin* as a synonym for the *ātman*, the *jīva*, or consciousness.[8]

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[6] I have rendered the term *śarīrin*, in the compound *pañcamahābhūtaśarīrisamavāyaḥ*, in the locative sense, "…in the embodied condition," because the term *samavāya* typically expresses a relation of "this is in that." See below.

[7] SuS 1.1.22 - *asmin śāstre pañcamahābhūtaśarīrisamavāyaḥ puruṣa ityucyate* | *tasmin kriyā so 'dhiṣṭhānaṃ…* A repetition of this definition appears at SuS 3.1.16.

[8] For instance, P.V. Sharma's (2013: 16) translation reads, "In this scripture, puruṣa is defined as the combination of five mahābhūtas and consciousness." To my knowledge, Meulenbeld (1999: 203) provides the sole exception in his *History of Indian Literature*,

The unnecessary elaboration on *śarīrin* attempts to ascribe something aloof to the *puruṣa*, or an aloofness to the *puruṣa* itself, thus making Āyurveda more readily comparable to the philosophical systems (especially Sāṃkhya and Vaiśeṣika) with which it shares many features. However, the materialistic stance of the SuS with respect to the *puruṣa* is affirmed at 1.1.38, where the *puruṣa* is defined as "the assemblage of originating substances, called *bhūta*s, etc. and also the diverse primary and secondary parts, [including] skin, flesh, bone, [etc.]."[9]

The text goes on immediately to explain why the *puruṣa* stands as the focal point of Āyurvedic practice. Interestingly, the reason has less to do with the nature of the *puruṣa* and more to do with the nature of *loka*:

> Why [is *puruṣa* the basis]? Because of the two-fold nature of the *loka*. Indeed the *loka* is… doubly characterized as hot/fiery (*agneya*) and cool/liquid (*saumya*). Through [a process of] complexification, the world is five-fold [i.e. composed of the five great elements]. And thereafter, the community of beings is four-fold, comprised of (1) beings born of sweat, (2) beings born from eggs, (3) beings born from sprouting, and (4) beings born from wombs. Among these, the *puruṣa* is at the forefront (*pradhāna*). All else is his paraphernalia (*upakaraṇa*). Accordingly, the *puruṣa* is the basis [of medical practice].[10]

Here the *puruṣa* is portrayed as the foremost result of a combinative process. The fiery and liquid aspects of the *loka* interact, generating the five great elements that comprise not only

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where he notes (summarizing the above verse), "In this science, the puruṣa is the *living body*, composed of the five mahābhūtas" (emphasis added).

[9] SuS 1.1.38—*tatsaṃbhavadravyasamūho bhūtādiruktastadaṅgapratyaṅgavikalpāśca tvaṅnāṃsāsthi…*

[10] SuS 1.1.22—*kasmāt lokasya dvaividhyāt loko hi … dvividhātmaka evāgneyaḥ saumyaśca tadbhūyastvāt pañcātmako vā tatra caturvidho bhūtagrāmaḥ saṃsvedajarāyujāṇḍajodbhijjasaṃjñaḥ tatra puruṣaḥ pradhānaṃ tasyopakaraṇamanyat tasmāt puruṣo 'dhiṣṭhānam* ||

the *puruṣa* but the whole *loka* and its entire community of beings.[11] The foremost, or most essential of these beings is the *puruṣa*, who relates to everything else in the *loka* as to paraphernalia, or instrumental extensions of himself. Āyurveda is unabashedly anthropocentric. Yet it is an inherently disrupted anthropocentrism, for both the *puruṣa* and the *loka* bear identical elemental compositions. Moreover, the *puruṣa* is here called *pradhāna*, which in a first sense signifies that the *puruṣa* is the "most essential," or perhaps even the "originator" of those instrumental extensions of himself.[12] In its more philosophically familiar sense, however, it signifies the "material nature" of *prakṛti* in Sāṃkhyan thought, which in its classical formulation is categorically opposed to the *puruṣa*. Here the *puruṣa is pradhāna*, and by claiming thus the SuS tacitly rejects the dualism of classical Sāṃkhya.[13]

This would seem to contradict a third definition of *puruṣa*, appearing in the *Śārīrasthāna*'s chapter on "The Bodily-Consideration of All Beings" (*sarvabhūtacintā-śārīraṃ*). It opens with an enumeration of the twenty-four unconscious *tattva*s of classical Sāṃkhya, then defines *puruṣa* as the conscious, twenty-fifth *tattva*. In line with the classical doctrine, the unconscious *tattva*s are said to "exhibit activity for the sake of the liberation

[11] I have omitted the two-fold distinction of *loka* as *sthāvara* and *jaṅgama* because it is superfluous to the present argument.

[12] In the identification of *puruṣa* with *pradhāna* the text clearly announces its departure from the strict dualism of Kapila's classical Sāṃkhya. Such a departure is also in keeping with several passages in the MBh that likewise fail to uphold a dualistic relation between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*, despite an otherwise ready acceptance of Sāṃkhyan cosmology and metaphysics.

[13] Moreover, it positions the SuS alongside other "proto-Sāṃkhyan" systems that proliferated from the time of the middle-Upaniṣads through the remainder of the pre-classical period.

(*kaivalya*) of the *puruṣa* from *pradhāna*."[14] Whereas the first of the *Suśruta*'s definitions of *puruṣa* identified it with *pradhāna*, and the second defined it according to its materiality, this third definition defines *puruṣa* by its opposition to *pradhāna*. A contradiction of this sort wouldn't normally raise suspicions, given the fact that SuS was probably compiled over multiple centuries. However, in this case several features of the surrounding text suggest that this Sāṃkhyan enumeration is a later interpolation meant to distinguish the *Suśruta*'s views from that of a relatively late brand of classical Sāṃkhya. For instance, the eleventh verse of this chapter, which immediately follows the Sāṃkhyan definition of *puruṣa*, expressly sets up an opposition to this view with the words, "But in medicine" (*vaidyake tu*). This contrastive conjunction is then followed by a shift in the text from prose to verse in *anuṣṭubh*, marking a return to the core teaching of Dhanvantari, the mythic originator of the *Suśruta*'s knowledge, and thus a return to a historically prior portion of the text.[15] The relative lateness of the Sāṃkhyan material is evidenced by a list of correspondences between the natural (*adhibhūta*), divine (*adhidaiva*), and human (*adhyātma*) spheres of existence. Roşu (1978: 134) notes that the exact same list of correspondences appears in the *Tattvasamāsasūtra*, a Sāṃkhyan text that dates to sometime after the fourteenth century CE.[16] It was precisely during this later period that, according to Larson (1979: 152), Sāṃkhya experienced a revival. Consequently it is not difficult to imagine that this revival brought with it a renewed tendency to interpret other disciplines in a Sāṃkhyan light. The

[14] SuS 3.1.8—*pradhānasya puruṣakaivalyārthaṃ pravṛttimupadiśānti*

[15] Given the versification of Dhanvantari's statements on Āyurveda throughout the SuS, the formal shift of the text alone strongly suggests the lateness of the Sāṃkhyan view of *puruṣa*, even without the words, "But in medicine."

[16] Roşu follows Müller's translation of the *Tattvasamāsasūtra* in his *Six Systems of Indian Philosophy*, pp. 264-265). On the date of the *Tattvasamāsasūtra*, see Larson 1979: 152.

inclusion of these later Sāṃkhyan concepts in the *Suśruta* followed by the words, "But in medicine," likely indicates that the distinction between Āyurvedic and Sāṃkhyan views was highlighted in order to combat an increasingly common misrepresentation. Finally, the close of the chapter notes that the views of both "our own *tantra* and another,"[17] i.e. Sāṃkhya, have been addressed. In sum, and in contrast to what others have assumed,[18] the SuS consciously and expressly distinguishes its understanding of the *puruṣa* from that of classical Sāṃkhya.

The proper Āyurvedic perspective is established in a series of intervening verses. First, *prakṛti* is redefined (according to the view of those with "broad vision") with the synonyms "nature" (*svabhāva*), "Lord" (*īśvara*), "time" (*kāla*), "chance" (*yadṛccha*), "order" (*niyati*), and "transformation" (*pariṇāma*).[19] Aside from the term *īśvara*, these terms are associated with heterodox positions in the *Mokṣadharmaparvan*,[20] and with atheistic positions in the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*.[21] Yet by the inclusion of the synonym *īśvara* in this list—associated with the orthodox theistic position in the *Mokṣadharma* and *Śvetāśvatara*—the SuS demonstrates its tendency toward inclusivism (despite its earlier dismissal of Sāṃkhya). According to this inclusive perspective, *prakṛti*, so defined, gives rise to the five elements, from which all existent beings in turn develop. This cosmological schematic is important to

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[17] SuS 3.1.22

[18] E.g. Gupta (1978).

[19] SuS 3.1.11

[20] Vassilkov (1999) demonstrates that, in the MDhP, the doctrines of *svabhāvavāda*, *kālavāda*, and *yadṛcchāvada* are ascribed to Asura, and thus heterodox, authorities. See also Bedekar (1992) on *svabhāva* and *kāla*.

[21] That is, positions that are subordinate to and sublimated within the theistic, *īśvara*-centered position. For *kāla*, *svabhāva*, *niyati*, and *yadṛcchā* (along with *bhūtāni*, *yoni*, and *puruṣa*) see ŚvU 1.2; God is called *īśvara* at vs. 6.7; and god is ascribed power over transformation (*pariṇama*) at vs. 5.5.

the Āyurvedic perspective insofar as the "use [of *prakṛti*] has been advocated in medicine always, because there is no consideration other than the beings composed of five *mahābhūta*s therein."[22] In other words, the *Suśruta*'s materialism grounds its thinking about living beings as well as the capacity to cure their diseases—both beings and the world in which they live develop directly out of *prakṛti*.

The phenomenal, perceptual aspect of reality is likewise explained by this same *prakṛtic*, elemental similarity, because, as the next verse states, "a person always grasps a sense object[23] with its corresponding sense power"—for instance, a sound is grasped by the power of hearing—"due to their similar [*prakṛtic*] origin."[24] We'll return to this theory of perception later on. For the present I want to emphasize the way the SuS enfolds the *puruṣa*, both materially and perceptually, within *prakṛti*, and moreover without recourse to a final, higher metaphysical separation of these two terms. As the penultimate verse to the chapter aptly states, "all these [elements] are penetrated (*praviṣṭa*) into one another."[25] Consequently, the earlier definition of the *puruṣa* as the "coming together of the five elements in the embodied condition"—which the author cites in the context of this discussion[26]—needs to be read in an active sense. As thoroughly intermeshed with *prakṛti* via the elemental *bhūta*s, the *puruṣa* is a continuous "coming together," an ever-shifting site of elemental transaction.

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[22] SuS 3.1.13; trans. Sharma 2013: 122

[23] "Object" is here used in a general and abstract sense. E.g., sound, generally speaking, is the object of hearing. See below on the process of perception in the CS.

[24] SuS 3.1.14—*indriryeṇendriyārthaṃ tu svaṃ svaṃ gṛhṇāti mānavaḥ* । *niyataṃ tulyayonitvānnān…* ॥

[25] SuS 3.1.21; trans. Sharma 2013: 125

[26] See SuS 3.1.16. This verse specifies the *puruṣa* in question as the "*karma-puruṣa*," which Das Gupta identifies with the *bhūtātma* discussed at SuS 3.4.3.

In its definitions of the *puruṣa*, the SuS repeatedly emphasizes the material, elemental constitution of the *puruṣa* and the significance that this has for the course of treatment of disease. Such an emphasis indicates that the *puruṣa* is not meaningful to the *Suśruta* as an object of spiritual consideration, but rather that his significance is medical and therefore restricted to the facts of his materiality, which ground the very possibility of curing his illneses. That is, the material, elemental constitution of the *puruṣa* provides the clearest proof that the administration of cures, procured from the '*prakṛtic*' world, is effective. The elemental world can be used to positively affect the elemental body, and thus the entire world is a pharmacopoeia, a maker of cures, and an instrument (*upakaraṇa*) or resource at the disposal of the *puruṣa*. Not only a resource, however; both the world and the person penetrate each other via the elemental and perceptual link that is forged in their material similarity. With all this in mind, we can turn to the *puruṣa* of the *Caraka Saṃhitā*, where ideas such as these are developed further.

4.2.2 Caraka's Definitions of Puruṣa

When we turn to the *Caraka Saṃhitā* (CS), the definitions of *puruṣa* grow more numerous and more complex. In keeping with this increased complexity, the CS elaborates on the strict materialism of the SuS. The CS explicitly invokes consciousness (*cetana*), the mind (*sattva* or *manas*), and the *ātman* as integral elements of the *puruṣa*'s constitution. In all of its definitions, however, it echoes the SuS in emphasizing the centrality of *puruṣa* to Āyurvedic thought and practice, and in emphasizing his interpenetrative elemental non-difference from the world.

The opening chapter of the first book of the CS devotes the bulk of its content to a general theoretical outline of the practice of medicine. Central to this outline is a discussion

of six key terms—*sāmānya*, *viśeṣa*, *dravya*, *guṇa*, *karma*, and *samavāya*—that are more commonly associated with Vaiśeṣikan philosophy.[27] The *Caraka*'s first definition of *puruṣa* is awkwardly inserted within this discussion, just prior to its definition of the term *dravya*. Its odd placement in the text suggests that it is a later interpolation; and given its content, it is likely provided by an authority with Sāṃkhyan leanings.[28] It reads:

> Mind (*sattva*), self (*ātman*), and body (*śarīra*) are like a tripod. Through their conjunction (*saṃyogāt*), the *loka* is established (√*sthā*); that is the foundation of everything. And that [conjunction] is called *puruṣa*, who is conscious and the subject of this Veda. It is for the sake of the *puruṣa* that this Veda is expounded.[29]

Though defined in a noticeably different fashion than in the SuS, the *puruṣa* remains the central subject of Āyurveda. Likewise, the *puruṣa* remains a combination of several factors. These are mind, self, and body, which, according to Cakrapāṇi (the *Caraka*'s most famous commentator), are shorthand for the twenty-four *tattva*s of Sāṃkhya.[30] More unique to the CS, however, is the connection drawn here between the *puruṣa* and the *loka*. The *loka* is established (literally "stands") upon the three-way conjunction of mind, *ātman*, and body, and this conjunction by which the *loka* stands is called *puruṣa*, the "foundation of everything." In other words, the *loka*—or perhaps 'a' *loka* is more appropriate here[31]—exists

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[27] The six terms are otherwise recognized as the central categories (or *padārtha*s) of Vaiśeṣika. The order in which they are typically presented is altered in the CS (Vaiśeṣikan texts prefer to begin with *dravya*, *guṇa*, and *samavāya*); moreover each term takes on a special meaning within the context of Āyurvedic theory.

[28] Cakrapāṇi's commentary to these verses explicitly invokes Sāṃkhya.

[29] CS 1.1.46-47—*sattvmātmā śarīraṃ ca trayametattridaṇḍavat* | *lokastiṣṭhati saṃyogāttatra sarvaṃ pratiṣṭhatam* || *sa pumāṃścetanaṃ tacca taccādhikaraṇaṃ smṛtam* | *vedasyāsya tadarthaṃ hi vedo'yam saṃprakāśitaḥ* ||

[30] "Body" would thereby include the elements, the sense powers, and the sense objects, while "mind" would include the *buddhi* and *ahaṁkāra*.

[31] See chapter three, especially its discussion of "*sva-loka*s."

solely because *puruṣa* exists.

As in the SuS, the significance of this claim lies in the identical material constitutions of the *puruṣa* and the *loka*. This fact is signaled in the immediately following verse, which perhaps helps to explain the interjectory position of the verses on *puruṣa*: "space and the other elements [viz. wind, fire, water, and earth], the *ātman*, the mind, time, and the regions of space, taken together, constitute materiality (*dravya*)."[32] The original intent of this verse is to define *dravya* alongside five other Vaiśeṣikan terms that are meant to theoretically ground the entirety of Āyurvedic practice.[33] The placement of a definition of *puruṣa* just prior to this definition of *dravya* demonstrates an attempt to forge a link between Sāṃkhya and Vaiśeṣika through these two terms, or rather, to distinguish Āyurveda as a coherent synthesis of Sāṃkhyan and Vaiśeṣikan views. Thus, if we take the five elements as a synonym for the *puruṣa*'s body and perceptual faculties, then the same factors which constitute *puruṣa*, plus the regions of space and time, constitute the entirety of materiality (*dravya*). In other words, the direct relationship between the *puruṣa* and the *loka* in the Sāṃkhyan definition of *puruṣa* is equally demonstrated by the Vaiśeṣikan definition of *dravya*.

This comparison of *dravya* to *puruṣa* demonstrates the uniqueness of the *Caraka*'s theoretical commitments. Whereas the SuS often appears to distance itself from classical and later Sāṃkhya,[34] the CS attempts to synthesize Sāṃkhya with Vaiśeṣika, or at least mitigate the appearance of irresolvable differences. Indeed, of the two earliest Āyurvedic treatises (the SuS and the CS), the *Caraka* is undoubtedly the more cosmopolitan of the two, a fact which means a great deal for the historical and social position of this text, as I intend to

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[32] CS 1.1.48—*khādīnyātmā manaḥ kālo diśaśca dravyasaṃgrahaḥ* |

[33] I address these terms in detail below.

[34] Though perhaps tacitly aligning itself with earlier "proto-Sāṃkhyas;" see n.13 above.

demonstrate in the conclusion to this thesis. For the present, it is important to note that the kind of Sāṃkhya with which the CS concerns itself predates the classical, dualistic form of Sāṃkhya popularized by Īśvarakṛṣṇa (ca. 350 CE), and hews more closely to the "proto-Sāṃkhyas" that proliferated during the early Buddhist and pre-classical periods.

Those centuries bore witness to an impressive diversity of views, expressing variations on themes that would later solidify into the established doctrines of classical Hinduism. Because many of these have only been partially recorded and are generally poorly understood, we can be certain of little except for the fact that there was a vibrant exchange of ideas in which early physicians took part. Gathering alongside ascetics and sages of all stripes within the temporary dwellings erected for wandering ascetics during the rainy seasons, or in the courts of royals who sought to foster and collect the wisdom of the kingdom's best and brightest, a whole host of doctrines and practices were debated and exchanged. Among those doctrines, the most prevalent were those that are now recognizable as related to the schools of early Buddhism, "proto-Sāṃkhya," and early Vaiśeṣika. The *Caraka*'s synthetic reworking of such doctrines into a cohesive "Science of Life" is a hallmark of its distinctiveness and inclusivism, a fact further confirmed by its remaining definitions of *puruṣa*.

The opening chapter of the *Caraka*'s fourth book, "The Section on the Body" (*śārīra-sthāna*), is entirely devoted to a lengthy theoretical discussion on "The Divisions of *Puruṣa*" (*katidhā-puruṣīyaṃ*). In the course of determining these divisions and their implications for the normal, supernormal, and diseased states of the *puruṣa*, we are given two distinct definitions of *puruṣa*, each differently counting the number of "elements" (*dhātu*s) of which it is composed. The first counts six-elements and corresponds most closely to Vaiśeṣikan

and early Buddhist views; the second counts twenty-four elements and represents an early version of the Sāṃkhyan view (counted among the various "proto-Sāṃkhyas" by Larson).[35] They are presented one after the other, without any elaboration on their possible interconnection, and thus in a fashion that belies the innovative way in which the *Caraka* attempts to synthesize these otherwise competing philosophical viewpoints.

The first definition reads, "*puruṣa* is recalled as the elements of space, etc., with consciousness (*cetana*) as the sixth. [However,] even the element of consciousness alone is recalled as that which is known as *puruṣa*."[36] It should be readily apparent that this definition echoes the first definition we saw in the SuS (where *puruṣa* was "the coming-together of the five elements…"), differing solely by the substitution of "consciousness" for "the embodied condition." The stable feature across both is the assertion that the five great elements are central to the constitution of *puruṣa*, which, as we saw earlier, implicitly links the constitution of *puruṣa* to the constitution of *loka*.

The philosophical affiliation of the six-element view of *puruṣa* is difficult to discern, though a brief foray into these difficulties will help to demonstrate the complicated way in which the *Caraka* incorporates and attempts to synthesize the three major traditions that I mentioned earlier (early Buddhism, Vaiśeṣika, and "proto-Sāṃkhya"). Cakrapāṇi and modern translators alike assign the six-element view to Vaiśeṣika. However, neither the term *puruṣa* nor *dhātu* appear in foundational *Vaiśeṣika Sūtra*, which is dated to the second

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[35] On the links in this chapter with Vaiśeṣika and Sāṃkhya, see Comba (2011). Comba fails to mention the link with early Buddhism.

[36] CS 4.1.16—*khādayaścetanāṣaṣṭhā dhātavaḥ puruṣaḥ smṛtaḥ* | *cetanādhāturapyekaḥ smṛtaḥ puruṣasaṃjñakaḥ* ||

century BCE.[37] They do, however, appear some eight hundred years later in Praśastipada's famous commentary on that text. The clearest and earliest parallel is found in the *Dhātuvibhanga Sutta* ("The Exposition of the Elements") in the Pāli canon's *Majjhima Nikāya* (MN). There we read, "this person (*purisa*) consists of six elements (*chaddhāturaḥ*), six bases of contact, and eighteen kinds of mental exploration, and he has four foundations."[38] Shortly thereafter, the six elements are identified as "the earth element, water element, fire element, air element, space element, and the consciousness element."[39] The Āyurvedic six-element definition matches the beginning of the Buddhist definition, substituting only *cetanā* for *viññaṇa*, but the Buddhist definition elaborates well beyond the former. This greater elaboration suggests a later date for the Buddhist definition, or at least a modification of an earlier, less complex doctrine. At any rate, a common origin for both must be assumed. Against the possibility of a Buddhist origin, and in a rare act of citation, the *Caraka* itself names the sage Hiraṇyākṣa ("Golden Eye") as the champion of the *ṣaḍ-dhātu* definition of the *puruṣa*.[40] The relevant verses portray Hiraṇyākṣa as an opponent of the theory (espoused by Vāryovida, whose doctrinal affiliations are unclear) that *rasa*—likely synonymous with semen in this context—is the source of both the *ātman* and of all diseases. Instead, Hiraṇyāķsa offers the view that both the *puruṣa* and diseases are born from six *dhātu*s (*ṣaḍdhātuja*), a view that he holds originates in the Sāṃkhyan tradition as the combination of five elements and the *ātman*.

[37] This does not mean that the CS predates or is otherwise unaware of Vaiśeṣika in its earliest form. According to Comba (2011: 43-44), the chapter currently under consideration (the "Divisions of *puruṣa*" in the *Śārīrasthāna*) directly cites the *Vaiśeṣika Sūtra* four times.

[38] MN iii.239; trans. Bodhi 1995: 1088.

[39] MN iii.239—*paṭhavīdhātu āpodhātu tejodhātu vāyodhātu ākāsadhātu viññāṇadhātu*

[40] See CS 1.25.14-15

Thus the six element view of the *puruṣa* manages to encapsulate the considerable difficulties inherent in determining the philosophical affiliations of early Āyurveda. The commentarial tradition and modern translators hold that it is of Vaiśeṣikan origin; though this is a demonstrably premature association. The textual evidence points to stronger parallels with early Buddhism; though the elaborateness of the Buddhist view makes it difficult to unequivocally assert a Buddhist origin. Finally, the CS itself suggests a Sāṃkhyan origin via the claims of Hiraṇyākṣa; though nowhere else, to my knowledge, is Sāṃkhya (even in its diverse "proto" incarnations) associated with a six-element view. What is instead clear, regardless of its actual origins, is that the six element view is associable with all three philosophies, and thus more likely part of the common heritage of the thought of the pre-classical period to which early Buddhism, Vaiśeṣika, "proto" Sāṃkhya, and the *Caraka* all belong.

Returning now to the *Caraka*'s views on the *puruṣa*, the verse that immediately follows the six-element view offers a second definition, this one possessing clearer philosophical associations: "*Puruṣa* is recalled as that which is twenty-four-fold according to the division of the elements (*dhātu*s), viz. the mind, the ten [sensory and motor] powers, the [five] sense objects, and *prakṛti*, which is comprised of eight elements [viz. the five great elements plus *ahaṁkāra*, *mahān*, and *avyakta*]."[41] As should be readily apparent, the twenty-four-element view of the *puruṣa* matches the schema of *tattva*s found in classical Sāṃkhyan philosophy, albeit with one crucial difference. To wit, in the *Caraka*, *prakṛti* is considered part of *puruṣa*, while in classical Sāṃkhya a strict dualism separates *puruṣa* from *prakṛti*. We already saw that the *Suśruta* likewise diverged from classical Sāṃkhya through its

[41] CS 4.1.17—*dhātubhedena caturviṃśatikaḥ smṛtaḥ* ǀ *mano daśendriyāṇyarthāḥ prakṛtiścāṣṭadhātukī* ǁ

materialism and its identification of *puruṣa* with *pradhāna*. Having now witnessed a more explicit divergence in the *Caraka*, we can firmly assert that early Āyurveda rightly counts itself among the various "proto" Sāṃkhyas that were common to pre-classical period, most of which likewise did not espouse a dualistic separation between the *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*.

A later gloss (appearing at CS 4.1.63-64) on the twenty-four elements that make up the *puruṣa* parses them into two categories: *prakṛti*[42] and *vikārā* ("transformations"). *Prakṛti* includes both the five material elements as well as the ego (*ahaṁkāra*), the intellect (*mahān* or *buddhi*), and the unmanifest (*avyakta*). The remaining sixteen *dhātu*s that are counted as "transformations" include the mind, the ten sensory and motor powers, and the five objects of the senses. These are the "transformations" of the "source" materials that are collectively called *prakṛti*. A second dichotomy is established between the "unmanifest" (*avyakta*)—which is called the "knower of the field" (*kṣetrajña*)—and the rest of the elements of *prakṛti* and the *vikārā*s—which are called, collectively, the "field" (*kṣetra*). Regardless of how the elements are organized and divided, however, they are all collectively considered components of the *puruṣa*. The twenty-four element view therefore holds that the *puruṣa* is not a separate, isolatable object of consideration. Rather the *puruṣa* is essentially non-different from all of that which makes up its phenomenal existence. The *puruṣa* is both the "originating" elements and their transformations. It is the powers of sense and their respective objects. It is the phenomenal "field" of its existence as well as the knower of that field. To put this in the language of person and world: the person is not a part of the world,

[42] The term *prakṛti* is notoriously difficult to translate, signifying a "source" or "origin," material and/or phenomenal existence, or simply that which is *not puruṣa*. In this context, it stands for the material elements as well as the "conscious" elements of the puruṣa (the ego, the intellect, and the "unmanifest," which is elsewhere identified with the *kṣetrajña*, or "knower of the field." As is common practice, I will leave the term untranslated in order to better let the text speak for itself.

the world is a part of the person!

Immediately following these last two definitions of *puruṣa* there is a lengthy discussion concerning the processes of sensation and perception and their significance for the nature of the *puruṣa-loka* relation. I will spend considerable time addressing this discussion below, for it is a crucial part of the puzzle that justifies how the *loka* is merely a part of *puruṣa*. But for the present it will suffice to note that the processes of sensation and perception are founded upon the co-inherence of the five great elements across the terms *puruṣa* and *loka*, and thus these processes help establish the functional manner in which *puruṣa* and *loka* coincide.

A final definition of *puruṣa* appears in the fifth chapter of the *Śārīrasthāna*, entitled "The Concatenation of *Puruṣa*" (*Puruṣa-Vicayaṃ*)—so named because it describes in detail the correspondences that "link together" the *puruṣa* and the *loka*.[43] It begins, like other definitions of *puruṣa* in the *Caraka* and the *Suśruta*, with the six-element view. This time the sixth element is neither the embodied condition (*śarīrin*), nor consciousness (*cetana*), but *brahman*, identified with the supreme principle since the time of the *Atharva Veda* and the Upaniṣads, which is here said to be synonymous with the "unmanifest" (*avyakta*).[44] This variation in itself is noteworthy insofar as it vaguely evokes the speculations of the Upaniṣadic *śramaṇa*s.[45] However, it is the context in which the variation appears that most

[43] I am grateful to David G. White for suggesting this translation of the term *vicaya*.

[44] CS 4.5.4—*...pṛthivyāpastejo vāyurākāśaṃ brahma cāvyaktamiti eta eva ca ṣaḍdhātavaḥ samuditāḥ puruṣa iti śabdaṃ labhante* ||

[45] The chapter on the whole is difficult to categorize, and thus uniquely Āyurvedic. Its speculative content is most closely relatable to the monistic asceticism associated with the Upaniṣads and certain portions of the *Mahābhārata*. Its insistence upon the importance of the "true *buddhi*" is proto-Sāṃkhyan, And stylistically it contains enumerations of appropiate actions and signs of spiritual progress that are reminiscent of passages in the Pāli canon. The general sense is that this chapter embodies the *Caraka*'s skill in synthesizing the various *śramaṇic* views available at the time that it was compiled.

draws our attention. In an earlier discussion on the development of a fetus in the womb, Punarvasu Ātreya, the primary expounder of the *Caraka*'s teaching, makes the following claim after describing the way the various parts of the fetus develop from the five great elements: "Verily, this *puruṣa* is the same measure as the *loka*. However many distinct beings possessing form there are in the *loka*, there are that many in the *puruṣa*. Whatever is in the *puruṣa* is in the *loka*. Those who are awake (*budhā*) desire to see thusly."[46] Presently, one of Ātreya's pupils, Agniveśa, is confused as to the meaning of the claim that "the *puruṣa* is the same measure as the *loka*." It is a fortunate confusion, for the ensuing explanation determines with absolute clarity whether it is proper to conceive of the *puruṣa* as a microcosmic replication of the macrocosmic *loka*.

Ātreya explains: "'The particular parts of the *loka* are innumerable. Likewise, the particular parts of the *puruṣa* are innumerable. Allow me to cite some of the manifest beings that are identical (*sāmānya*) among these two by describing them in detail.'"[47] Note here that Ātreya uses the term *sāmānya* to define the manner in which these beings exist in the person and the world. It is a term that has a specialized meaning in Āyurveda that is closely related to its literal meaning. Compounded from the terms *sama* and *anya*, a relationship of *sāmānya* between two terms signifies that each is an "other" (*anya*) that is nonetheless the same (*sama*). Insofar as this matches the etymological meaning of the term "identity," as I

[46] CS 4.4.13—*evamayaṃ lokasaṃmitaḥ puruṣaḥ* | *yāvanto hi loke murtimanto bhāvaviśeṣāstāvantaḥ puruṣe yāvantaḥ puruṣe tāvanto loke iti budhāstvevaṃ draṣṭumicchanti* ||

[47] CS 4.5.4—*aparisaṃkhyeyā lokāvayavaviśeṣāḥ, puruṣāvayavaviśeṣā apyaparisaṃkhyeyāḥ; teṣāṃ yathāsthūlaṃ katicidbhāvān sāmānyamabhipretyodāhariṣyāmaḥ*

and others understand it,[48] such a translation is preferred over the less clearly related translations "common" or "general." I'll return to a fuller analysis of the technical meaning of *sāmānya* in the Āyurveda momentarily. In the meantime, we can continue to follow Ātreya's explanation:

> "O Agniveśa, understand this with a single-pointed mind. The combination of six dhātus is known by the term '*puruṣa*'—namely [those six are] the "earth element, water element, fire element, wind element, space element, and *brahman* who is unmanifest." Just so the combination of these six dhātus is known by the term '*puruṣa*.' Of this *puruṣa*, the form is earth, the wetness is water, the heat is fire, the *prāṇa* is wind, the hollows are the sky, the *ātman* within is *brahman*. Indeed, just as the Brāhmī[49] manifests in the *loka*, just so the *antarātmikī*[50] that is to be attained manifests in *puruṣa*. The manifestation of *brahman* is Prajāpati in the world, the manifestation of the *ātman* within is *sattva* in the *puruṣa*. That which is Indra in the world is the *ahaṃkāra*, or ego, in *puruṣa*, Āditya is [its habit of] taking (*ādāna*), Rudra is wrath, Soma is clearness (*prasāda*), the Vasus are pleasure, the Aśvins are beauty, the Maruts are power, the Viśvedevas are all the senses and sense objects, *tamas* is delusion, light is knowledge. [On a temporal register,] the creation of the world is the placing of *puruṣa* in the womb. Likewise, the *kṛta* yuga[51] is

[48] The word "identity" derives from a duplication of the Latin term *idem* (*idem et idem*, or "the same and the same"). In Greek, the term is τὸ αὐτὸ (meaning "the same," as in *tautology*), which Plato glosses as ἕκαστον ἑαυτῷ ταὐτόν, "each (itself) the same for itself" (*Sophist*, 254d). In both the Latin and the Greek cases—and, as I will argue here, in the Āyurvedic case—identity indicates a *relation* of sameness. This relation allows difference to persist within sameness. Such an understanding of identity-in-difference is in fact common within Hindu thought: In the Upaniṣads, the *ātman*, though misidentified with the transmigratory soul, retains its essential identity with *brahman*. The transformation of *śakti*s in Kashmiri Śaivism and the concept of *acintyabhedābheda* among Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas likewise express an identity concept of this sort. The re-envisioning of the relation of identity between the person and the world that we find in Āyurveda requires, above all, an encounter with this relational conception of identity.

[49] I.e., the *śakti* of Brahmā

[50] The feminization of a pair that would normally be presented as *brahman* (n.) and *ātman* (m.) is difficult to explain without assuming a later interpolation by a later tantric authority. Regardless of its origins, the presence of the pair provides further evidence of the uniquely synthetic and cosmopolitan nature of the *Caraka*'s views.

[51] The term *yuga* signifies a "world age," which, as the etymology of *yuga* suggests (derived from the verbal root √*yuj*, "to yoke; to join"), indicates the manner in which the supreme principle, in it is purest form, relates to (or "joins" to) manifest existence. Over

infancy, the *tretā* yuga is youth, the *dvāpara* yuga is old age, the *kali* yuga is decay/disease, [and] the end of the yugas is death. Thus, by this kind of reflection one should know the identity (*sāmānya*) of the distinct parts of the *puruṣa* and the *loka*,[52] [even with regard to what has] not been declared, Agniveśa!"[53]

This passage, along with the phrase "*puruṣa lokasaṃmita*" is one of the most oft-cited passages given in support of the view that microcosmological thinking is common to the various strains of Indian thought. While the preceding chapters have hopefully been successful in demonstrating that this is not truly the case—that instead the relationship existing between the person and the world, the *puruṣa* and the *loka*, is more clearly one of extension and expansion, and that the nature of this relationship, whether it will be decisively one of identity or of difference, is always a stake throughout the diverse forms of Indic spirituality—the present passage more likely reveals the spurious character of supposed microcosmological formulations. Without doubt, the above most immediately suggests the kind of replicative correspondence proper to microcosmological thought. The

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time, this relation degrades as the supreme principle, however it is conceived, becomes increasingly less "joined" to manifest phenomenal reality.

[52] The CS records the very first usage of the compound *lokapuruṣa*. This is surprising given its usual association with Jain cosmology. Unfortunately, the absence of an early textual record of Jainism, coupled with an apparent absence of unique Jain doctrines in early Āyurveda, casts a shadow of doubt upon any attempt to assess the historical significance of this first appearance of the *lokapuruṣa* compound.

[53] CS 4.5.4-5— *tānekamanā nibodha samyagupavarṇyamānānagniveśa* । *ṣaḍdhātavaḥ samuditāḥ 'puruṣa'iti śabdaṃ labhante; tadyathā---pṛthivyāpastejo vāyurākāśaṃ brahma cāvyaktamiti, eta eva ca ṣaḍdhātavaḥ samuditāḥ 'puruṣa' iti śabdaṃ labhante* ॥ *tasya puruṣasya pṛthivī mūrtiḥ, āpaḥ kledaḥ, tejo+abhisantāpaḥ, vāyuḥ prāṇaḥ, viyat suṣirāṇi, brahma antarātmā* । *yathā khalu brāhmī vibhūtirloke tathā puruṣe+apyāntarātmikī vibhūtiḥ, brahmaṇo vibhūtirloke prajāpatirantarātmano vibhūtiḥ puruṣe sattvaṃ, yastvindro loke sa puruṣe+ahaṅkāraḥ, ādityastvādānaṃ, rudro roṣaḥ, somaḥ prasādaḥ, vasavaḥ sukham, aśvinau kāntiḥ, marudutsāhaḥ, viśvedevāḥ sarvendriyāṇi saevendriyārthāśca, tamo mohaḥ, jyotirjñānaṃ, yathā lokasya sargādistathā puruṣasya garbhādhānaṃ, yathā kṛtayugamevaṃ bālyaṃ, yathā tretā tathā yauvanaṃ, yathā dvāparastathā sthāviryaṃ, yathā kalirevamāturyaṃ, yathā yugāntastathā maraṇamiti* । *evametenānumānenānuktānāmapi lokapuruṣayoravayavaviśeṣāṇāmagniveśa sāmānyaṃ vidyāditi* ॥

elements and various divinities (all of which are subsumed under the sixth *dhātu*, *brahman*) each take a distinct form when "in" either the *puruṣa* or the *loka*. It is this locative construction that prematurely suggests that the *puruṣa* is here synonymous with the body. However, as a previous definition of *puruṣa* demonstrated, Āyurveda considers the person to be non-different from the phenomenal "field" of his existence, a perspective replicated in the above list by the identification of the Viśvedevas with the sense powers *and* their objects, and more generally by the qualification of the *puruṣa-loka* relation with the term *sāmānya*. This same phenomenal non-difference is further demonstrated in the back-and-forth between Ātreya and Agniveśa that immediately follows the enumeration of the *puruṣa* and the loka's identical parts.

> Then Agniveśa said: "Verily this is all, without exception, just as it has been told by the Venerable one regarding the identity of the *puruṣa* and the *loka*. But what is the purpose of this teaching on identity? The Venerable one replied: "Listen, Agniveśa! Seeing equally the *ātman* in the entire *loka* and the entire *loka* in the *ātman*, the true *buddhi* arises.[54] Indeed, seeing the entire world in the Self one becomes the Self alone, the author of pleasure and suffering—it is not otherwise. Due to having the nature of action, the Self/*puruṣa* is constrained (*yukta*) by causes and the like. [However,] having known, "I am the whole *loka*," the ancient wisdom that leads to emancipation is aroused. In this case, the word *loka* refers to that which requires conjunction (*saṃyoga*); for due to [this underlying fact of] identity, the entire *loka* is a combination of six *dhātu*s.[55]

[54] Roşu (1978: 136 n.2) argues that the term *loka* in this context means "human." He cites Cakrapāṇi's commentary, which clarifies that *loka* does not here mean *jagad-rūpa*, i.e. the "form of the world." The significance of Roşu and Cakrapāṇi's notes lies first in their correct apprehension that the *puruṣa* and the *loka* are in fact synonymous, and that the term *loka* should be stripped of its objectively oriented and spatially distinctive meanings. Second, in that already by Cakrapāṇi's time, objectivist assumptions about the *loka* had become prevalent. We can speculate that such meanings were less prevalent at the time of the *Caraka*'s compilation, with the more originary sense of *loka*—as a phenomenal space or lighted-clearing in which perceptual experience takes place—still in common use.

[55] CS 4.5.6-7—*evaṃvādinaṃ bhagavantamātreyamagniveśa uvāca – evametat sarvamanapavādaṃ yathoktaṃ bhagavatā lokapuruṣayoḥ sāmānyam* । *kinnvasya sāmānyopadeśasya prayojanamiti* ॥ *bhagavānuvāca – śṛṇvagniveśa sarvalokamātmanyātmānaṃ ca sarvaloke samamanupaśyataḥ satyā buddhiḥ samutpadyate* ।

In Ātreya's reply, the term *ātman*, or Self, suddenly replaces *puruṣa*, which confirms our earlier suspicion that the *puruṣa* is not synonymous with the body in these passages. The *ātman* and *loka* are equally seen as "in" each other to the point that there should be an explicit self-identification with the *loka*. The final claim, that the *loka* is that which requires a conjunction (*saṃyoga*) is a technical restatement of this self-identification, which suggests that the manner in which the *puruṣa*/*ātman* is identical to the *loka* is inherently yogic. This, as we will see in the investigation that follows, is precisely the case according to the theoretical underpinnings of Āyurvedic thinking about diet and perception. Consequently, the "purpose" of the knowledge that the *puruṣa* is the same measure as the *loka*, along with their various points of identity, remains appropriate to the practice and theory of Āyurveda, first and foremost because it grounds the possibility of utterly eradicating conditions of disease (*duḥkha*). As such, the claim to the fundamental identity of person and world represents the loftiest and rarest of Āyurvedic aims. Though insofar as it remains rooted in the six-element view of the *puruṣa*, it is rests at the very basis of Āyurveda. It is to the full investigation of these points that we now turn.

4.3 The Logic of Sāmānya

As mentioned earlier, the *Caraka Saṃhitā* opens with a discussion of six key terms—*sāmānya*, *viśeṣa*, *dravya*, *guṇa*, *karman*, and *samavāya*—that are otherwise familiar to

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sarvalokaṃ hyātmani paśyato bhavatyātmaiva sukhaduḥkhayoḥ kartā nānya iti | *karmātmakatvācca hetvādibhiryuktaḥ sarvaloko'hamiti viditvā jñānaṃ pūrvamutthāpyate'pavargāyeti* | *tatra saṃyogāpekṣī lokaśabdaḥ* | *ṣaḍdhātusamudāyo hi sāmānyataḥ sarvalokaḥ* ||

Vaiśeṣikan philosophy.[56] These terms provide the initial foundation from which Āyurvedic therapeutics proceeds. The first two, *sāmānya* and *viśeṣa*, repeatedly appeared in Ātreya's demonstration of the identity of the *puruṣa* and *loka*. In the opening of the treatise, they are woven into the mythological origins of the Āyurveda. As this origin story goes, a group of great rishis, seeing that diseases were an impediment to long life and the effort towards spiritual progress, sent one among their number, named Bharadvāja, to Indra, who alone was their "refuge" (*śāraṇa*) in this matter. Indra duly teaches Bharadvāja the science of life, which he quickly grasps and passes on to his cohort of sages. "These great rishis saw with the eye of knowledge *sāmānya*, *viśeṣa*, *dravya*, *guṇa*, *karman*, and *samavāya*. Having understood that, they undertook the performance of the precepts declared in this treatise."[57] In line with the mythological elevation of these six terms, they are the first terms defined in the *Caraka*. The first two of these, *sāmānya* and *viśeṣa*, are the very first terms which the text defines, prior even to its definitions of *puruṣa*, or even of *ayus* ("life"). Consequently, the meaning of these terms importantly qualifies not only our understanding of the *puruṣa* and its relation to the *loka*, it qualifies our understanding of the entire endeavor of Āyurveda. The definition reads:

> Always, for all beings, *sāmānya* is the cause of growth/extension, while *viśeṣa* is the cause of diminution. Activity (*pravṛtti*) is of both [kinds]. *Sāmānya* generates oneness, while *viśeṣa* effects separateness (*pṛthak*).[58]

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[56] Vaiśeṣika presents the terms in a different order, and gives each a meaning that overlaps with, but differs in technical application, the meanings proper to the Āyurvedic context.

[57] CS 1.28-29—*maharṣayaste dadṛśuryathāvajjñānacakṣuṣā | sāmānyaṃ ca viśeṣaṃ ca guṇān dravyāṇi karma ca || samavāyaṃ ca tajjñātvā tantrektaṃ vidhimāsthitāḥ | lebhire…*

[58] *Pṛthak*, according to Brian K. Smith (1989), is juxtaposed in the *Brāhmaṇa*s with *jāmi*, 'similarity,' and indicates an essential and problematic tension in Vedic cosmology that can only be addressed through continual acts of sacrifice. See especially ch. 3 of Smith's work.

> Again, *sāmānya* is for the sake of equality (*tulya*), while *viśeṣa* [is for the] opposite.[59]

The author here provides three synonyms for *sāmānya*, juxtaposing it at each point with its opposite term, *viśeṣa*. In the Sanskrit, the three synonyms that define *sāmānya* are *vṛddhikāraṇa*, *ekatvakara*, and *tulyārthatā*—words that literally signify 'the cause of growth/extension,' 'the making of oneness,' and 'for the sake of equality,' respectively. The three that define *viśeṣa* are *hrāsahetu*, *pṛthaktvakṛt*, and *viparyayaḥ*—'the cause of diminution,' 'effects separateness,' and 'opposite [to equality],' respectively. The claim that "activity is of both kinds" refers specifically to therapeutic activity, and thus to the two basic effects of prescribed substances or behaviors. A simple illustration of these effects is inadvertently provided by Zimmerman (1982: 160, 172-173), who notes that a diet of meat (*māṃsa*) is prescribed for a patient who is too thin or suffering from a wasting disease (like *raja-yakṣma*, or "royal consumption"). Because the flesh to be eaten bears a relation of *sāmānya* to the flesh of a patient, it will bring about a growth of flesh in the latter's body. By contrast, a vegetarian diet would logically be prescribed to one with an excess of flesh, for the relation of *viśeṣa* that subsists between patient's flesh and vegetal matter will bring about the diminution of flesh in the former. When a relation of *sāmānya* is present, a tendency toward unification and equality persists (the two meats—the eaten and the eating flesh—become one greater meat); when a relation of *viśeṣa* is present, the opposite takes place. In a very real sense, then, the term *sāmānya* signifies that one thing is, or can be made, the "same" (*sāma*) as another (*anya*), which is expressed in the implicit Āyurvedic maxim, 'You are what you eat.' Something of this order is equally signified by the claim that the relation

[59] CS 1.1.44-45—*sarvadā sarvabhāvānāṃ sāmānyaṃ vṛddhikāraṇam* | *hrāsaheturviśeṣaśca pravṛttirubhayasya* || *sāmānyamekatvakaraṃ viśeṣastu pṛthaktvakṛt* |*tulyārthatā hi sāmānyaṃ viśeṣastu viparyayaḥ* ||

between the *puruṣa* and the *loka* is qualified as *sāmānya*, that the *puruṣa*, as the subject of Āyurvedic discourse, is the same as its other, the *loka*.

To further explain the significance of these terms: In his commentary to CS 1.1.45, Cakrapāṇi refers to the second and third synonyms for *sāmānya*, "oneness" and "equality," noting that *sāmānya* can refer to the cow-ness of cows—their common feature that neither resides specifically in any given cow, nor is altered by the individual differences between multiple cows—or, by the same logic, to the fact that all people who cook food can be considered cooks. The subtle import to these examples lies in the fact that when something is designated by the term *sāmānya*, that something cannot be localized to one or any number of sites. Cow-ness is not itself replicated through the replication of cows. Thus in no way does *sāmānya* indicate the kind of replication proper to microcosmological formulations, primarily because it confounds thinking in terms of spatial localization. Rather, when there is a relation of *sāmānya* between *puruṣa* and *loka*, persisting over and beyond their apparent distinctiveness (*viśeṣa*), the *puruṣa* should be understood to be extensively united with and equal to the *loka*.[60]

An example from the *Aṣṭāṅga-Hṛdayam*'s (AH) discussion of the "vital points" (*marman*s) helps to further clarify the meaning of *sāmānya* in Āyurvedic discourse. As is etymologically evident, *marman*s are so called because striking them can cause death (√*mṛ*). They are quite literally "mortal spots" on the body. According to AH 2.4.39, they are

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[60] Here the divergence of Āyurveda from classical Sāṃkhya is once again in evidence. As Malinar (1999) notes in her analysis of the term *sāmānya* in the *Sāṃkhya-Kārikā* and its commentaries, the absolute distinctiveness of *puruṣa* from *prakṛti* is signaled by the association of the term *sāmānya* with *prakṛti*, while "the *puruṣa* is qualified as *asāmānya* or *niḥsāmānya*" and is thus "never identical with anything except himself" (p. 624). In other words, *puruṣa* is defined in classical Sāṃkhya as that which is utterly distinct and in no way identifiable with the materiality of *prakṛti* (or the *loka* to which it corresponds).

capable of bringing about death precisely "because they are, equally, seats of *prāṇa*" (*prāṇāyatana-sāmānyāt*), and in this regard the various *marman*s are characterized by their underlying "unity" (*aikyaṃ*). Thus in a first sense, each of the *marman*s are "equal" insofar as they are "seats of *prāṇa*." In a second, even more significant sense, however, they are "one" because striking any one of the *marman*s can bring about death. It is not necessary to strike *all* of the seats of *prāṇa* found in a person's body in order to kill him; striking *any one* of these seats will suffice. This is because the *marman*s are "one" insofar as they invariably act as portals to the seat of *prāṇa* by which a person lives. Despite the fact that there are multiple *marman*s, each refers to a unitary, single seat of *prāṇa*. To emphasize this point, each *marman* does not represent a distinct site at which *prāṇa* resides, but rather is akin to a distinct point of ingress that leads towards the same destination—the "seat of *prāṇa*"— as other such points.

Thus when it is said that Rudra in the *loka* is wrath in the *puruṣa*, what is meant is that it is precisely the same Rudra in both the *loka* and the *puruṣa*, who can nevertheless be glimpsed from a variety of perspectives and so appear to be multiple or in many locations at once. In the Āyurvedic view, Rudra remains one and equal to himself, but he appears in distinct forms across distinct registers through a process that I have so far described in terms of extension and expansion, coupled with a faulty understanding (*asatya buddhi*) regarding the identity of person and world. If we are to take this claim seriously, then the portrayal of Rudra as replicated within innumerable microcosmic beings, and thus the portrayal of the *puruṣa* as the microcosmic replication of the *loka*, willfully misrepresents a fundamental characteristic of the Āyurvedic worldview.

The foundations of this way of thinking can be potentially traced back to the Atharvan tradition, specifically AV 11.8, one of its hymns on the *puruṣa*. The parallels begin to become clear in vs. 8, which asks, "Whence was Indra born? Whence Soma? Whence Agni? Whence did Tvaṣṭṛ come into being? Whence was the Placer born?" The answer the hymn gives is that "Indra was born from Indra, Soma from Soma, Agni from Agni," and so forth; then it concludes, "those were the ten gods who were born from the former gods. Having given a *loka* to [their] sons, in what *loka* do they sit?" This last line provides the proper interpretational orientation. We can immediately rule out any interpretation based upon ideas of reincarnation or grand cycles of cosmic time, because the AV is too old and too geographically removed a text to be aware of the *yuga*s or even the concept of *saṃsāra*, both of which are more properly associated with the *śramaṇic* period and Magadhan culture. Instead, the last line introduces the concept of passing a *loka* on to one's son(s). A following verse then describes the parts of the *puruṣa*'s body coming together before again asking, "in what *loka* does one enter into?" The implication, confirmed in the next verse, is that the *puruṣa* is the *loka* in which the gods sit: "These gods, named 'pourers together,' brought together what is brought together. Having poured together the whole mortal, the gods entered the *puruṣa*." The overall sense is first that the gods come into existence through the birth of the *puruṣa*, which is synonymous with the birth of a *loka*, and second that the gods who appear 'out there' in the world rely upon the birth of the *puruṣa* for that appearance. In other words, the gods are in the *loka* solely by virtue of the fact that the gods are in the *puruṣa*. For the *loka*, as the *Caraka* will later put it, is established *on* and *through* the *puruṣa*.

4.4 The Logic of Samavāya and the Five "Great Beings"

In Vaiśeṣikan sources, the terms *sāmānya* and *viśeṣa* are two parts of an epistemological triad, which is rounded out by the term *samavāya*. Praśastipada, the 6th CE commentator on the *Vaiśeṣika-Sūtra*s, defines this last term, *samavāya*, as "the relationship subsisting among things that are inseparable… such relationship being the basis of the idea that 'this is in that.'"[61] For example, a piece of cloth consists of yarn, and thus the qualities of yarn are inherent (*samavāya*) in the cloth; there is no cloth without the yarn. Earlier, we saw the term *samavāya* used to describe the constitution of *puruṣa* in the SuS. There, the five great elements "came together" (*sam+ava+√i*) to "inhere" within an embodied condition, which corresponds to the form of the *puruṣa*. We can qualify that definition further at this point to emphasize that just as yarn inheres in a piece of cloth, so too the five elements inhere in the embodied *puruṣa*. Already we can see that *samavāya* more likely approximates microcosmological thinking than does the term *sāmānya*, or as I have translated it, "identity;" *samavāya* expressly denotes the compositional relation between a whole and its parts, as well as the relation between two objects of similar constitution. The CS defines *samavāya* precisely along these same lines.

> *Samavāya* [indicates] the condition of separation (*pṛthak*) proper to [different things composed] of earth, etc., regarded according to their qualities. It [*samavāya*] is an innate [condition] because where there is a material thing (*dravya*) the quality there is not fixed (*aniyata*).[62]

In other words, *samavāya* signals the condition whereby, for instance, two pieces of cloth, both of which are made from the same yarn, exist in separate forms and exhibit different qualities. The yarn "co-inheres" in both pieces of cloth. In precisely the same fashion, two

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[61] *Padārthadharmasaṃgraha* 2.2.14; trans. Radhakrishnan & Moore 1957: 399.

[62] CS 1.1.50—*samavāyo'pṛthagbhāvo bhūmyādīnāṃ guṇairmataḥ* । *sa nityo yatra hi dravyaṃ na tatrāniyato guṇaḥ* ॥

*puruṣa*s can exist separately, exhibit different qualities, and yet be equally composed by the five elements. Note further that the meaning of *samavāya* is qualified by the term *pṛthak*, or "separation." As we saw above in the *Caraka*'s definition of *sāmānya*, *pṛthak* is also given as a synonym for *viśeṣa*, or difference, which is exactly opposite of the term *sāmānya*.

Consequently, were the *puruṣa* a microcosmic replication of the macrocosmic *loka*, we would expect their relation to be expressed by the term *samavāya*, not *sāmānya*. Indeed, microcosmological thinking does operate according to the logic of "this is in that;" i.e., whatever is in the macrocosm is also in the microcosmic person (who is moreover distinct and separate, like the cloth). But in the passage that most directly refers to the nature of the relation between the *puruṣa* and the *loka*, the term *sāmānya* is used rather than the term *samavāya*. Hence all thinking in terms of "this is in that," of separateness or qualitative difference, or even of bodies that contain or are contained, does not apply. The pointed use of the term *sāmānya* necessitates instead that we think of the *puruṣa*'s relation to the *loka* according to its synonyms: growth/expansion, oneness, and equality. And yet when the *puruṣa* is defined with reference to the five elements, we more often find the term *samavāya*, whereas we might otherwise expect the term *sāmānya*, given Ātreya's pointed insistence that the person and world are "identical."

Indeed, the realization of the *sāmānya* of person and world seems to be of a rarer sort than the more common recognition of their equal, co-inherent composition by the five elements. Consequently, the question of whether Āyurveda's thinking in terms of the co-inherence of elements across the terms person and world truly reflects the microcosmological paradigm, or whether it merely reflects "a general world-outlook in which man and nature are intimately interrelated, because everything in nature too is made

of the same stuff, namely matter in its five forms," remains to be satisfactorily answered.[63] Furthermore, even if the logic of *samavāya* does indicate the presence of microcosmological thought, it must be admitted to be of a 'soft' sort, because it fails to account for the replicative co-inherence of divine forces and sacred geographies that we find in the so-called microcosmological formulations of later Yogas and Tantras.[64] The primary source of hesitation on this issue rests on the nature of the elements according to which the logic of *samavāya* is applied.

The five great elements—the *pañca-mahā-bhūta*s—are, literally speaking, five "great beings." They are living entities in and of themselves, and they are "great" because they are ubiquitous in manifest reality, comprising both the "moving and unmoving" beings, as well as the person and the world. As "be-ings," they are not static in nature, but continually involved in processes of interaction and transformation. As Pierre Filliozat noted in his analysis of the term *mahābhūta*, the verbal root √*bhū*, which is the basis of the term *bhūta*, "refers to being considered in the process of creation, the idea of being produced, taking birth, becoming, getting enriched, etc."[65] Thus it is according to their processual nature that these "great beings" must be rightly understood.

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[63] Chattopadhyaya 1977: 54. Note that Chattopadhyaya, reflecting the considerable confusion and lack of systematic thought plaguing indological applications of the microcosmological paradigm, soon thereafter refers to the human as a microcosm and "epitome of nature" before citing the universally misinterpreted phrase from CS 4.5, "*evam ayaṃ lokasammitaḥ puruṣaḥ*" (ibid).

[64] "So-called" only insofar as even these (comparatively) 'hard' microcosmological formulations may not rightly indicate the presence of the microcosmological paradigm. See especially David White, "On the Magnitude of the Yogic Body."

[65] Pierre Filliozat. "Bhūta-Mahābhūta," in *Kalātattvakośa*, vol. III. Edited by Bettina Bäumer. New Dehli, Motilal Banarsidass, 1996: 50.

The significance of these living, changing elements in Āyurvedic thought cannot be overstated. They serve not only as substratum for the person and the world, they deeply inform the way that person and world interact in order to manifest states of health or disease. Āyurveda is famous for its insistence on the importance of diet to the health of a patient, but ultimately the consideration of diet reflects a deeper consideration of the countless combinations of elements and their potential and observable effects on living beings. The elements are likewise implicated in the processes of perception—the latter relying upon a pattern of elemental similarity in order to function at all. In fact, nearly everything about the health or ills of a person can be better understood through a consideration of the five great elemental beings. Consequently, if we examine the fundamentals of Āyurvedic theory and practice, keeping in mind the living, processual nature of the elements that co-inhere in the person and world, as well as the final relation of identity that is said to persist throughout the seeming difference of person and world that is implied by their elemental co-inherence, then we should be able to better understand what it means that the *puruṣa* is the "same measure" as the *loka* and how this relation of identity is both concealed and potentially recovered.

4.5 Fundamentals of Āyurvedic Theory and Practice

As I mentioned earlier, the practical significance of the terms *sāmānya* and *viśeṣa* in Āyurveda relates to the way in which medicinal substances and therapeutic practices are prescribed. If we return to this practical significance, we can demonstrate further the significance of the *puruṣa-loka* relation to Āyurvedic theory and practice.

As Ātreya's careful explanation of the *sāmānya* relation suggests, the realization that "I am the whole world" requires rare insight. Far more common is the conviction that the self and world are distinct, a conviction which translates into a very real experience of

difference. This latter kind of person, however, is Āyurveda's primary target—the human that is born, grows, eventually dies, and thus undergoes a natural span of human life. The consequence of such a person's failure to realize his identity with the world is that he routinely makes bad use of the world that he is. Āyurveda's consideration of the person's "use" of the world, from a linguistic and practical standpoint, reflects its tendency to think in terms of *yoga*. That is, the notion of "use" in Āyurveda, whether it be the use of food, of time, or of one's own body, is more properly a "linking up," a "joining," or more literally, a "yoking." Consequently, states of disease and health are defined according to the manner in which one is '"yoked" to the world. A set of verses in the *Caraka*'s *Sūtra-sthāna* establishes this yogic etiology thusly: "The body and the mind are considered the two seats of diseases. The established cause of diseases, and likewise of states of health, for both seats is three-fold: the improper (*mithyā*), deficient (*na*), or excessive (*ati*) yoking (*yoga*) of the objects of the sense powers, the intellect (*buddhi*), and time (*kāla*). By contrast, the yoking that is equal (*sama*) is the cause of healthy states."[66] In any given circumstance, there is a proper time and reason[67] to "yoke to"—or more colloquially, "join with"—the manifold objects of the senses (which includes foods, insofar as eating is ultimately a means of "yoking" to tastes, or *rasa*s). When considerations of time, intellectual reasoning, and available objects of the sense powers are all properly aligned, then an "equal" yoking takes place that reflects a

[66] CS 1.1.54-55—*kālabuddhīndriyārthānāṃ yogo mithyā na cāti ca* ǀ *dvayāśrāṇāṃ vyādhīnāṃ trividho hetusaṃgrahaḥ* ǁ *śarīraṃ sattvasaṃjñaṃ ca vyādhīnāmāśrayo mataḥ* ǀ *tathā sukhānāṃ yogastu sukhānāṃ kāraṇaṃ samaḥ* ǁ

[67] Reason is described as the *buddhi*'s function at CS 1.11.25, which reads: "The *buddhi* is that which sees conditions (*bhāvān*) arising from the union (*yogajān*) of many causes. It is to be known as reasoning (*yukti*), [which accounts for] the three times [past, present, and future]." An earlier verse (CS 1.11.20) links the *buddhi* to the processes of perception (*pratyakṣa*).

harmonious equilibrium between the person and the world, which in turn corresponds to states of health. However, if this yoking occurs in a way that is inappropriate given the circumstances, then the result is a state of disease. Such an inappropriate yoking is subdivided into three types: "improper" (*mithyayoga*), "deficient" (*ayoga*), and "excessive" (*atiyoga*). The result, in either case, is a disequilibrium, an imbalance that manifests both within the person's body (causing it to breakdown prematurely, like a poorly maintained chariot[68]) and between the person and the world as states of disease. The equal yoking of *samayoga* is thus indicative of the central aim of Āyurveda. It denotes at once a prescribed practice as well as a practical result,[69] which is primarily characterized by the harmonious joining of the person and the world in a state of equality.

The vast complexities of Āyurveda begin to tumble out of this recognition of *samayoga* as synonymous with conditions of health and ease. While it would be impossible in the present space to assess all the theoretical and practical nuances that develop out of a consideration of *samayoga*, we can nevertheless highlight some of the most significant terms, all of which are likewise synonymous with conditions of health, as a means of further

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[68] The analogy of body and chariot first and most famously appears in chapter three of the KU in a passage that describes an early kind of yoga (as the "reining in" of the horse-like senses) and contains a proto-Sāmkhyan hierarchy that is topped by the *puruṣa*. On the use of chariot analogies in Āyurveda, see below on "timely and untimely death."

[69] In this regard, the term *samayoga* has a semantic function like that of *kṛtyā* or *prasāda*. See White (2012b) on *kṛtyā* and Pinkney (2013) on *prasāda*. In his analysis of the fundamentals of Āyurveda, White (1996: 20) glosses *samayoga* as "the harmonious conjunction of microcosmic and macrocosmic 'climates.'" I will read the term in light of two of White's later works – "On the Magnitude of the Yogic Body" (2011) and "How Big Can Yogis Get? How Much Can Yogis See?" (2012a), as well as Fitzgerald's "The Sāṃkhya-Yoga 'Manifesto' at Mahābhārata 12.289-290" (2012), all of which help problematize the validity and usefulness of the microcosm/macrocosm distinction.

demonstrating the significance of the identity-relation proper to the *puruṣa* and *loka*.[70] To that end, I will presently discuss the term *dhātu-sāmya* ("equilibrium of the elements"), as well as three of the various kinds of *sātmya* ("appropriateness"): *ṛtu-sātmya* ("seasonal appropriateness"), *deśa-sātmya* ("appropriateness to place"), and *okaḥ-sātmya* ("behavioral appropriateness"). By briefly examining these synonyms for health we can better acquaint ourselves with the fundamentals of Āyurvedic theory and practice, which inevitably proceed toward an appreciation of the claim that the *puruṣa* is identical to the *loka*.

4.5.1 dhātu-sāmya

According to the twenty-four element view discussed earlier, every living *puruṣa* is a site of transformation (*vikāra*). The primary modality by which such transformation takes place in Āyurvedic thought is digestive. In this regard, Āyurveda echoes earlier traditions of Indic thought by relying upon the dichotomy between the eaters and the eaten, and between the fiery *agneya* and liquid *saumya* aspects of the *loka*. According to these earlier traditions, food grows by virtue of the watery *rasa* imparted by Soma, the Moon, while it is "cooked" by the heat of Agni, in the dual guise of the Sun and the fires of digestion. The constant interaction between that which eats and that which is eaten, between fire and water, provides the motor underlying the continual transformation of the elements into the manifold beings in the cosmos. In Āyurveda, this paradigm informs the observation that diet has a direct impact on the internal ecology of the person. This internal ecology consists of *dhātu*s, which in this context signifies the constituents of the physical body. All of these constituents are considered transformations of the five elements, those "great beings" (*mahābhūta*s) that

[70] Broad overviews of Āyurvedic theory can be found in Das Gupta (1952, vol. 2), Kutumbiah (1969), Chattopadhyaya (1977), and Jolly (1977) while more focused, or partial examinations appear in Zimmerman (1980, 1982), Alter (1999), and White (1996).

make up both the person and the world. In the body, the *dhātu*s include seven tissue elements or "layers" (*rasa*, blood, muscle, fat, bone, marrow, and semen), as well as three "humors," or *doṣa*s, which are prone to causing a disordering of the bodily system.[71] These latter three are "windy" *vāta* (or *vāyu*), "bilious" *pitta*, and "phlegmatic" *kapha* (or *śleṣma*).[72] Zimmerman describes the interaction of the *doṣa*s with the other bodily *dhātu*s thusly:

> The *doṣa*s are really specific waste products of digested food, occurring [in times of illness] in quantities greater or lesser than needed to maintain normal health. They act as vitiators by disrupting the normal balance of the bodily elements (*dhātu*s)… and the resulting disequilibrium of the bodily elements produces disease.[73]

Normally, the *doṣa*s accumulate and subside in the body with a natural rhythm that follows the cycle of the seasons; and insofar as this remains the case, they positively contribute to the health and long life of a *puruṣa*. When they are disturbed and fall into disorder, however, they cause harm.[74] A verse in the opening chapter of the CS declares, "the purpose of this science is declared to be the practice of [bringing about] an equilibrium of the humors and bodily elements (*dhātu-sāmya*)."[75] This equilibrium, achieved first and foremost through

[71] In both the CS and SuS, *doṣa*s, meaning "faults" or "deficiencies," are also known as *mala*s, meaning "filth" or "impurities," or simply as *dhātu*s, and counted alongside urine and feces. On the manner in which Vāgbhaṭa (author of the later AH) distinguishes between *dhātu*, *doṣa*, and *mala*, see Das Gupta 1952: 327-329.

[72] *Vāta* forms through a combination of the space and wind elements (with wind predominating); *pitta* forms through a combination of the water and fire elements (with fire predominating), and *kapha* forms through a combination of water and earth elements (with water predominating). The broader Indic heritage of the *doṣa*s is evidenced by their predominating elements—wind, fire, and water—which in turn correspond to the Vedic substance-deities Vayu, Agni, and Soma.

[73] Zimmerman 1991: 29.

[74] CS 1.12.13

[75] CS 1.1.53cd—*dhātusāmyakriyā coktā tantrasyāsya prayojanam* ||

diet, is synonymous with states of health. By contrast, illness is synonymous with the disequilibrium of the humors and bodily elements (*dhātu-vaiṣamya*) that is likely to result from the excessive, deficient, or improper use of foods.[76] The equilibrium of health must be vigilantly guarded, because both person and world—equally composed of the five elements—are in a state of perpetual, digestive transformation. The fiery digestive process that transforms the elements into the constituents of the human body is never completed. The body that would appear to demarcate the separation of the person and the world—as a microcosm within the macrocosm—is itself only a conformationally stable point in an endless flux of elements. In the language of the CS, *puruṣa* is "constantly arising" (*pāraṃparyasamutthitāḥ*) and "never similar" (*na… sadṛśa*).[77] Disease thereby arises when the flux of the embodied *puruṣa*, by virtue of a contrary dietary interaction with the world, moves at cross-purposes—that is, in an imbalanced or disharmonious manner—with respect to the greater digestive flux of the world.

The unique consequence of this line of thinking in Āyurveda is that, due to the transference and transformation of the five elements that occurs through the consumption of food, the distinctiveness of person and world is actually most apparent when the disharmonious states of illness prevail, whereas the two become increasingly indistinct

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[76] See the *Caraka*'s examination of the origin of disease (1.25), which features a long discussion of food and its various merits and demerits.

[77] See CS 4.1.46. Kakar (1982: 230) translates the full passage thusly: "[N]othing about the body [*puruṣa*] remains the same. Everything in it is in a state of ceaseless change. Although in fact the body is produced anew every moment [*navā navāḥ*], the similarity between the old body and the new body gives the apparent impression of the persistence of the same body." Sharma and Dash (2013) construe this passage as reflecting the position of a *nāstika* interlocutor that is to be refuted; however, as a set of closely following verses shows (CS 4.1.49- 51), Āyurveda adheres to the momentariness of the body but asserts a stable "agent" (*kartṛ*), named "*puruṣa*," that persists throughout.

through the development and maintenance of harmonious, healthful states. In the yogic language of Āyurveda to which I alluded earlier, the distinctiveness of person and world is characterized by the disharmonious conjunctive states of *mithyayoga*, *atiyoga*, and *ayoga*, which are broadly conceived as a source of illnesses and miseries. With respect to diet, the improper, excessive, or deficient conjunction of the person with the various *rasa*s of food skews the "constantly arising" constituents of the body toward a state of disequilibrium that disregards, arrests, or otherwise impedes the naturally in-distinguishing flux of both person and world. But if one's diet is appropriate to this natural flux, then there is an equal yoking (*samayoga*) between the person and the world through the digestion of food. The *doṣa*s naturally accumulate and disperse at the proper times, and the constituent elements of the body are maintained in their proper proportion (*dhātu-sāmya*).

4.5.2 ṛtu-carya & ṛtu-sātmya

As the above suggests, the role of time in establishing the harmonious conjunction between the person and the world is of crucial importance. The qualities of foods and their flavorful *rasa*s naturally change throughout the seasons, with different *rasa*s ripening as each comes into its own, appropriate time. In this regard, the conception of time in Āyurvedic thought carries forward the thinking about the year first articulated in the Brāhmaṇical literature on the Vedas. According to this earlier tradition, the dual, digestive nature of the world—*agneya* and *saumya*; fires and waters; eater and eaten—is temporalized by the cosmic oscillations of the two halves of the year and the cycle of seasons. For half of the year, the Sun (Agni) follows a northerly course, climbing higher in the sky and increasing the heat of its flames. As the one named "Aditi," the Sun is a voracious eater

(√*ad*),[78] whose rays, like flaming tongues, lick up the juices (*rasa*s) of the living beings, desiccating the world. During the other half of the year, the Sun follows a southerly course, its zenith and its heat receding. The cool rays of the Moon (Soma) predominate in this semester, restoring the liquidity of *rasa* to the living beings of the world. Taken together, the two halves of the year beat out the endless rhythms of life and death. In the view of Āyurveda, these cyclic rhythms of Agni and Soma, facilitated by the constant motion of wind, propels a ceaseless flux of liquids amidst the five elements of the cosmos that is ultimately responsible for the regular appearance of the different *rasa*s, or "tastes," of food. According to the SuS, "Some say, due to the Agni-ness and Soma-ness of the world, *rasa*s are considered two-fold: *agneya* and *saumya*. Sweet, bitter, and astringent tastes are *saumya*, while acrid, sour, and salty tastes are *agneya*."[79] Thus *rasa* takes on a six-fold flavor profile that roughly accords with the two halves of the year. The *saumya* flavors correspond to the cooler parts of the year (early winter, late winter, spring), while the *agneya* flavors correspond to the hotter parts (summer, rains, and autumn).

This dichotomy of *rasa*s is complicated by the fact that the flavors are further influenced by the predominating element with which a *rasa* has joined. According to the CS, a *rasa* is initially tasteless. It collects in the Moon and subsequently falls to the earth from the atmosphere, whereupon it joins with plants, animals, etc., all of which are variously composed of the five elements.[80] It is in this elemental joining that the quality of taste in a *rasa* develops. "Of the six *rasa*s, a sweet taste is found in the water element, sour in earth

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[78] Alternatively, Aditi is the "taker" (*ā*+√*dā*) or the "boundless" one (*a*+√*dā*).

[79] SuS 1.42.7—*kecidāhuḥ agnīṣomīyatvājjagato rasā dvividhāḥ saumyāścāgneyāśca* | *madhuratiktakaṣāyāḥ saumyāḥ; kaṭvamlalavaṇā āgneyāḥ* |

[80] The cycle of *rasa*s follows the basic outline of the *pañcāgni-vidyā* in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (ChU 5.3-10), and thus the path of reincarnation for the dead.

and fire, salty in water and fire, acrid in fire and wind, bitter in wind and space, and astringent in wind and earth…So the *rasa*s are six in number due to the predominance or otherwise of the five elements, while the predominance or otherwise of the five elements in turn depends on the six seasonal variations of time."[81] Consequently, a person's elemental makeup changes throughout the two halves of the year by virtue of the seasonal menu of available *rasa*s. This in turn has an effect on the *doṣa*s of the body, and thus on the broader equilibrium (or disequilibrium) of the bodily constituents. The logic of all this follows the logic of *sāmānya* and *viśeṣa*, because each of the *doṣa*s either increases or decreases in response to the ingestion of the elementally derived tastes. For instance, the *kapha doṣa* ("phlegm"), which is predominated by the water element, naturally accumulates during the winter months, in the cool/liquid *saumya* half of the year. The sweet, bitter, and astringent *rasa*s develop in the foods and substances proper to this time of year, and thus these tastes are implicated in the natural accumulation of *kapha*. If they are enjoyed judiciously—or "evenly" (*sama*)—during their natural season, the *saumya* tastes do not vitiate the natural accumulation of *kapha*. In this case, the "even use" of seasonal foods constitutes an equal-yoking (*samayoga*) with time. If however, one gorges on sweets during the winter (an "excessive use," or *atiyoga*), eschews them entirely (*ayoga*), or enjoys them improperly during other times of the year (*mithyayoga*), then they are likely to bring about *kapha*-related illnesses.

Thus, throughout the course of the year, a person should keep to a diet that is appropriate to the season. The notion of "seasonal appropriateness," or *ṛtu-sātmya*, serves as a constant call, beckoning the person to see himself as joined to the temporal flux of the world and

[81] CS 1.26.40; trans. Sharma & Dash 2014, vol. II: 463, modified.

therefore to practice the routine of the seasons (*ṛtu-carya*). Noticing that the world has grown cool with the approach of winter, to continue our earlier example, the Āyurvedic physician too notices the cooling of his patients, and sees this working out through the accumulation (of a natural, excessive, or deficient sort) of the *kapha doṣa* that is appropriate to the season. He further notices that disorders of *kapha* are likely to occur in the spring time, when *kapha* is out of its season and *vāta* is beginning to undergo its own natural accumulation.[82] In other words, just as every food and flavor has its season, so too every potential illness is uniquely marked by time. By paying close attention to the temporal behavior of a disease, the physician may more directly confront it.[83]

The *Caraka* also speaks of "timely and untimely" afflictions, the right time and the wrong time to administer medicaments via the compound *kālākāla*. A timely affliction is the decrepitude or death brought on by old age, or an illness predetermined by karmic fate (*daiva*); an untimely affliction is brought on by human agency (*puruṣakāra*), indicating the unwitting misuse of the world.[84] Hence, "it is directly evident that actions, speech, and food

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[82] When disease arises due to an excessive accumulation of a *doṣa*, the physician prescribes foods with qualities opposite to the vitiated *doṣa* (following the logic of *viśeṣa*). Consequently, he is enjoined to build up a pharmacopeia of foods and herbs collected at the height of their season. The *Caraka* says, "because of the *saumya* and *agneya* nature of the world, *saumya* plants should be collected in *saumya* seasons while *āgneya* plants should be collected in *āgneya* seasons; in this way their qualities are retained." The physician's pharmacopeia is essentially a storehouse of times, and through his prescriptions he pits time against itself in an effort to restore a temporal balance or "sync" to a patient who has fallen out of the normal temporal flow.

[83] See, for instance, on the counterintuitive treatment of fever with hot water at CS 3.3.39-40.

[84] The presence of debates on the relative importance of *puruṣakāra* vs. *daiva* ("human effort vs. fate") in the *Vimānasthāna* is an indication of its contemporaneity with certain portions of the *Mahābhārata*, in which such debates first begin to occur (e.g. the *Vana-parvan*, *Udyoga-parvan*, *Mokṣadharma-parvan*, and *Bhagavad Gītā*).

taken at the wrong time leads to an undesirable result, while otherwise they are agreeable."[85]

In another passage untimely afflictions are described by comparing a life to a chariot and the body to its axle:

> "Listen Agniveśa! As a chariot is joined (*samāyukta*) to an axle, possessing by nature the qualities of an axle, being driven and kept-up in every respect, that axle reaches a timely end after its natural span [of existence] runs out. In the same way a life that has attained a body, by nature possessed of strength and being treated appropriately, reaches death at the end of its natural span. That death is [called] timely. However if the axle is overburdened, driven on uneven roads, taken off-road, [etc.] …it meets a premature end. Likewise, a life that is overstrained, [etc.] …meets a premature end. That death is [called] untimely.[86]

A life is like a chariot in that both are designed to take on the things of the world. The use of the world and the body, like the use of an axle, requires care and attention, and above all an awareness of just how great a burden it can rightly withstand. The even use of a life, which is to say the observance of *samayoga*, grants a life the full expression of its natural and karmically determined capacities, just like a chariot driven on even roads. By aligning oneself with time through the observance of *ṛtu-sātmya* and *ṛtu-carya*, a life is extended to its natural limits. In other words the expanse of time that is a person's own, which is determined by nature (*prakṛti*) and by karmic fate (*daiva*), can be realized only by the appropriate, even use of time and the world known as *samayoga*. Otherwise mistreated, through the excessive, deficient, or improper use of time and the world, such a bad yoking of

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[85] CS 4.6.28—*pratyakṣaṃ hyakālāhāravacanakarmaṇāṃ phalamaniṣṭaṃ, viparyaye ceṣṭaṃ*

[86] CS 3.3.38—*tamuvāca bhagavānātreyaḥ, śrūyatāmagniveśa yathā yānasamāyukto+akṣaḥ prakṛtyaivākṣaguṇairupetaḥ sa ca sarvaguṇopapanno vāhyamāno yathākālaṃ svapramāṇakṣayādevāvasānaṃ gacchet, tathāyuḥ śarīropagataṃ balavatprakṛtyā yathāvadupacaryamāṇaṃ svapramāṇakṣayādevāvasānaṃ gacchati; sa mṛtyuḥ kāle* । *yathā ca sa evākṣo 'tibhārādhiṣṭhitatvād-viṣamapathād-apathād… paryasanāccāntarā+avasānamāpadyate, tathāyurapyayathābalamārambhād… antarāvasānamāpadyate, sa mṛtyurakāle…* ॥

life to body—as of axle to chariot—cuts short the temporal expanse of a life.

Finally, to all these temporal considerations must be added the obvious fact that the Āyurvedic physician's arsenal of treatments does not target time writ-large in the cosmos—what Zimmerman calls the "objective framework of time"—that is identical to the seasonal cycle of the year. That target arguably belongs to the Brāhmaṇical sacrificers, who perform the "articulating activity" (*ṛtu*) of sacrifice toward the end of maintaining the appropriate articulations (*ṛta*) of the cosmos and its temporal rhythms.[87] Instead, the physician concerns himself solely with the "subjective" time of the patient, which can be viewed from two perspectives. First, the physician attempts to adjust the subjective time of the patient that it may better sync-up with objective time, in precisely the fashion that I have outlined above. Summarizing this approach to time, Zimmerman writes: "sickness is a kind of being-out-of-phase, and medicine an art of good conjunctions—maintaining or restoring in each particular person a good use of time that is common to all."[88] This reflects the keeping of good health through practicing "seasonal appropriateness," which Zimmerman here portrays as synonymous with the temporal aspects of the "even use" / "joining in the same" of *samayoga*. From the other perspective, the physician is aware that objective time is occasionally out of joint. As is increasingly witnessed in our current era of climate change, the seasons may fail to exhibit their usual characteristics. This bodes ill for usual growth of crops and the general health of the soils, which in turn impedes the natural accumulation and subsiding of bodily *doṣa*s and diminishes the potency of naturally occurring medicaments.[89]

[87] Zimmerman 1980: 100; here summarizing from Lilian Silburn's *Instant et Cause* (1955).

[88] ibid.: 101.

[89] See CS 3.3.4, which links these abnormalities to the occurrence of epidemics.

Thus just as a person is capable of excessively, deficiently, or improperly "yoking" himself to time, so too can objective time exhibit such detrimental conjunctions. "One may conceive of the physician's practice as one of confronting time," as White (1996: 23) notes, insofar as "the physician pits himself against Time's excessive or insufficient conjunctions," which are "capable of destroying life."

The *Caraka* holds that these cases of objective temporal disharmony are ultimately caused by the bad acts of men. "The root of this is either the non-adherence to *dharma*, or an evil act performed previously;"[90] in other words, *karma* and fate (*daiva*), both of which stem from past human action, are responsible for the disjunctures of time that result in the outbreak of epidemics.[91] For our purposes, this means that a person's temporal identity, the scope of his temporal expanse, extends even beyond his current lifetime. A person is his expanse of time in such a manner that he can, from the forgotten vantage of a past life, actively shape the behavior of the cosmos in order to afflict himself (and countless others) for past misdeeds. Such a line of argument considerably raises the stakes regarding the importance of practicing seasonal appropriateness through the "even use" of time.

4.5.3 deśa-sātmya

The consideration of the "appropriateness" (*sātmya*) of time stands alongside several other considerations of appropriateness, all of which descriptively and prescriptively circumscribe the Āyurvedic approach to health. In determining the nature and necessary course of treatment for any given illness, the physician develops a highly individualized portrait of the patient. This portrait demonstrates that Āyurveda conceives of the person as

[90] CS 3.3.20—*tasya mulamadharmaḥ tanmulaṃ vā'satkarma purvakṛtaṃ*

[91] Ātreya extends this line of thinking toward the outbreak of war, afflictions by malevolent spirits like *rakṣasa*s, and curses.

an extensional being whose existence, illness, and health, cannot be separated from spatial and temporal expanses in which his life takes place. Consequently, the physician must take a number of factors into consideration regarding their appropriateness to the given scenario. These factors include the place (*deśa*) where a disease takes place, the birth (*jāti*) of the one who ails, the time factors (*ṛtu* & *kāla*) of the disease, and the habitual (*okas*) idiosyncrasies of the specific patient.[92] Since the intensity and duration of the seasons varies from place to place, and since each location has its own native assortment of foods and herbs—its own pharmacopeia—the course of treatment for patients in different locales will naturally differ. Likewise, if a patient originally hails from one locale, but grows sick while living in another, his illness will likely require a modified course of treatment compared to the natives. In short, patients bear within themselves the identifying marks of the places to which they belong. Treatment regimes should therefore be "appropriate to the place" (*deśa-sātmya*). The term "place" (*deśa*) bears a double meaning; it means both the type of land in which a patient currently lives (and in which available medicinal substances—foods and herbs—grow), as well as the patient himself.[93] The determination of what is appropriate to the place (regardless of how "place" is conceived) involves a practice called "inspection of the ground" (*bhūmi-parīkṣā*): "The doctor has to know the region in which the patient is born, grew up or has developed the disease. The peculiarity of the land should be noted, the food habits of its inhabitants, their way of life, physical vitality and character. The doctor must also note the general conditions of the health of the region's inhabitants, the special features

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[92] The *Suśruta* (1.35.40) lists nine types of *sātmya* (*deśa*, *kāla*, *jāti*, *ṛtu*, *roga*, *vyāyāma*, *udaka*, *divāsvāpna*, and *rāsa*). The *Caraka* defines *sātmya* as a general quality of wholesomeness, but tends to limit discussions to *okaḥ-sātmya* and its relation to diet; see 3.1.19-20 and 3.8.118.

[93] CS 3.8.84

of their habitat, their inclinations, the kinds of diseases that they most often contract and also what is generally considered wholesome or unwholesome in this region."[94] Because the person's body is comprised of transformations of the five elements, and because these elements develop into various *rasa*s that are unique to the topography in which they appear, the process of digestion is a means by which the land in which one lives is translated into the body itself. In other words, the ecologies of person and world naturally tend toward a state of non-difference. Consequently, a person born in a dry region, raised on a diet of foods appropriate to that region, is himself a region characterized by that same dryness. His natural levels of the fiery *pitta doṣa* would be higher than those of less dry regions and he would therefore be inured to all sorts of *pitta*-related disorders. If such a person were to move to a region of wet marshes, however, where the foods that grow reflect the wetness of marsh-lands, then compared to natives of the region, such a person would be at an increased risk for developing illnesses brought on by the natural accumulation of the watery *kapha doṣa*. A person can gradually acclimatize himself to a new region, but the key point is that a person is identified with the topological expanses to which he typically belongs—the person *is* his place; just as he *is* his time. As thoroughly caught up in the digestive transformation of the elements that suffuse both person and world, spurred on by the perpetual interactions of the *agneya* and *saumya* aspects of the *loka*, the person's existence is entrenched in the world in which he moves and the passage of time.

4.5.4 okaḥ-sātmya

The possibility of changing this place, and thus of developing the non-difference between person and world, refers to the consideration of "habitual appropriateness" (*okaḥ*-

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[94] CS 3.8.92-93; trans. Kakar 1982: 228.

sātmya). Etymologically related to the Greek term οἶκος ("house"), and thus to the English terms "economics" and "ecology," the Sanskrit term *okas* refers at once to a dwelling as well as to a pattern of behavior.[95] In the Āyurvedic context these two meanings collide. As a pattern of behavior, it refers primarily to diet. The *Caraka* states, "the *upayoktṛ* [i.e. the one who "yokes up"] is he who takes food and on whom depends habitual appropriateness."[96] Also, "the [diet] that becomes suitable due to customary use is called 'habitually appropriate.'"[97] What one continually eats, which is naturally informed by the region where one lives and its seasonal vacillations, becomes appropriate to the person simply by a matter of habitual "taking up." Thus the development of *okaḥ-sātmya* represents the possibility of avoiding the typically negative effects of excessive, deficient, and improper "yoking" to the *rasa*s of food. But it does not mean that any kind of diet can become appropriate through habituation; it merely means that the extent of negative effects can be mitigated through acclimatization.

Along this line of thought, a person can develop a broad appropriateness by systematically habituating himself (that is, by "yoking up") to a broader spectrum of *rasa*s. Thus the *Caraka* distinguishes diets as either superior (*pravara*), inferior (*avara*), or middling (*madhya*). A diet that includes all the *rasa*s (here reductively conceived as the seven kinds of tastes) is superior, and thus equates with a superior kind of habitual appropriateness. By expanding one's diet to include all the *rasa*s, one quite literally expands one's spatial and temporal identity. In other words, because habitual appropriateness is so

[95] *Okas* is derived from √*uc*, meaning "to take pleasure in," "to be accustomed," or "to be suitable."

[96] CS 3.1.22—*upayoktā punaryastamāhāramupayuṅkte, yadāyattamokasātmyam*

[97] CS 1.6.49—*upaśete yadaucityādokaḥsātmyaṃ taducyate*

intimately related to the typical dietary habits of a specific place and time of year, the *okas* of the person indicates both a pattern of digestive behavior and the manner in which he dwells. Again, the person *is* his place; he *is* his time. Because he is the *upayoktṛ*, he becomes his place and time by "yoking up" with food—which is to say, by joining the *saumya* essence of food with the *agneya* fires of his digestion—and he can expand this time and place by yoking up to a broader array of foods. Of course, in doing so he must remain vigilantly aware of the proper time and place for all things: "Even if he is used to the superior type of *sātmya*, i.e. the habitual intake of substances having all the six tastes, the individual should adopt only the wholesome diet," which takes into account factors like the nature of the food, its preparation, its quantity, its place of origin, and time of year.[98] In Zimmerman's apt words, "the cycle of the seasons" along with the peculiarities of place, diet, and so forth, "is an education, a methodical development of habits, from which there results (as we would be tempted to say, considering the meaning of *okas* as a 'house, residence') a well-regulated idiosyncrasy, consisting of reactions well-attuned to the stimuli of the external milieu."[99]

4.6 The Overarching Importance of Samayoga

According to Āyurveda's understanding of health, its approach to etiology, and its diagnostic and therapeutic procedures, the "Science of Life" is founded upon the conception that the person is an expansively spatial and temporal entity. If the person could be isolated from the world or time, if he were a true microcosmos, he would already possess a fully sufficient ecology within himself and the physician's in-depth consideration of the external

[98] CS 3.1.20-21; trans. Sharma & Dash 2013, vol. II: 123,

[99] Zimmerman 1980: 106.

facets of the person would be superfluous. In other words, the physician would need only restore proper balance to the internal state of the *doṣa*s. But what constitutes this proper balance can only be understood in relation to what is external. Hence *samayoga*—the goal and the method of "even use," "harmonious conjunction," or "yoking in the same"—belongs simultaneously to the patient's internal and external constitutions. The person *is* this span of time and space; the person is *identical* to the world despite their seeming difference. Should a person fully realize this, that the *puruṣa* is the *loka* and the *loka* is the *puruṣa*, he would "become the author of [his own] pleasure and pain" and thereby, as expansive, become capable of bringing both his internal and external ecologies into a harmonious conjunction that collapses their difference.

As I have noted repeatedly in the present chapter, both the person and the world are composed of the same five elements—the "great beings" of space, wind, fire, water, and earth. When *puruṣa* is considered a site of transformation (*vikāra*), this is ultimately a reference to the continuous transformation of elements that plays out primarily through digestive means. In the current section I have shown the extensive significance of the digestive transformation of the elements, relating at once to temporal, spatial, and behavioral considerations, all of which aim toward the establishment of a harmonious conjunction (*samayoga*) between person and world that collapses their difference. However, the digestive perspective is not the sole lens by which Āyurveda understands the vast implications of the transformation of the great elements. Thus while diet informs one manner in which a person becomes as "great" as the great elemental beings, there are other dimensions—namely the perceptual dimension—in which the transformations of the great beings play a pivotal role in determining the extensional nature of the person and its

fundamental non-difference from the world.

Indeed, Āyurveda's theory of the processes of sensation and perception, like Āyurveda's extensive ruminations on diet, is founded upon the elemental similarity of person and world, and therefore it further helps us understand the transformation of elemental forms underlying the *puruṣa* and *loka* relation. That is, an analysis of this theory in the *Caraka* demonstrates that the processes of sensation and perception offer yet another perspective on the identity of the person and the world. This identity is either concealed or revealed by the processes of perception. For most individuals, those primary targets of Āyurvedic theory and practice, concealment predominates, in particular by virtue of the absence of the *satyā buddhi*, the "true understanding" that would otherwise reveal a person's all-pervading extensionality. It is this more common experience of perception that gives *puruṣa* the appearance of separateness and difference. By contrast, an accurate apprehension of the nature of perception actively contributes to a recognition of the relation of *sāmānya* that, in truth, characterizes perceptual processes, and therefore actively contributes to the healthful aims of *samayoga* and *sātmya*. In other words, prior to the enlightened and supremely healthy state of *puruṣa-loka* equivalence, a fundamental self-misrepresentation of *puruṣa* (as characterized by *viśeṣa* and *samavāya*) predominates, and thus the various parts of *puruṣa* and *loka* a perceived as distinguished by their characteristics. Thus without further ado, we now turn to a full explanation of these perceptual processes and their influence on the health or illness of the *puruṣa*.

4.7 The Process of Perception in Caraka-Saṃhitā 4.1

Earlier I argued that the use of the term *samavāya* in Āyurveda, signifying the co-inherence of the elements across the terms *puruṣa* and *loka*, more closely approaches

microcosmological thought than does the term *sāmānya*, because the former faithfully adheres to the logic of “this is in that.” However by restricting itself to a consideration of the five *mahā-bhūta*s, and therefore by ignoring the potential co-inherence of divine agents and sacred geographies that is central to the microcosmologies of later Yogas and Tantras, the microcosmology of Āyurveda indicated by the term *samavāya* would have to be considered a “soft” sort. When we examine the Āyurvedic theory of perception, it becomes clear that even this “soft” charge of micocosmological thought does not rightly stick. For when the logic of elemental co-inherence is operationalized in the processes of perception—that is to say, when the co-inherence of the “great be-ings” is properly ‘enlivened’—then this co-inherence appears instead to signal that, through acts of perceptual extension that are tantamount to acts of creation and authorship, the *puruṣa* is the “same measure” as the *loka* because he *is* the extent of his perceptual and phenomenal experience. Consequently, the knowledge of this approaches the “true understanding” that the entire *loka* is in the Self just as the Self is in the entire *loka*, and therefore it is an important factor in achieving and maintaining greater states of health.

At the outset of the *Caraka*’s *Śarīra-sthāna*, Agniveśa poses a series of questions to Ātreya concerning several aspects of *puruṣa*. Among them include questions regarding the constitution of *puruṣa*, its relation to *prakṛti* and the *ātman*, and the manner in which its illnesses are to be treated by a physician. However, one of these questions in particular stands out with regard to the present investigation: “The knowers of the *ātman* say that it is actionless and independent, a ruler who goes everywhere and is all-pervading… [Yet if it is]

all-pervasive, how does one not see what is concealed by walls and mountains?"[100] As Ātreya answers to this question and the others reveals, everything about the *puruṣa*, and certainly its states of health or disease, can be said to hinge upon the nature of the process of perception. This process involves a series of creative linkages whereby the *puruṣa* "creates" the *loka* in which it is found through its innate extensional capacity. Ultimately, the process of perception reveals that the *puruṣa* is inherently a yogi, who extends a world outward from his own unmanifest center, a world that is the "same measure" has himself.

Two sets of verses lay the groundwork for Ātreya's exposition of perception. First, at CS 4.1.22-23 we read:

> A sense object is grasped by a sense power[101] along with the mind. It is assembled (*kalpyate*), by the mind, but it is raised due to a defect (*doṣa*), or perhaps a *guṇa*… The *buddhi* is that which is characterized by ascertainment. [In perception] the *buddhi* is prior. By it he switches (*vi-√vas*[102]) [between the perceptual and active faculties] to speak or to act.[103]

Later on, at CS 4.1.54, perception is obliquely tied to the *ātman*:

> The *ātman* is a knower, and his knowledge originates through yoking with the instruments [i.e., the mind, the *buddhi*, the five powers of action—hands, feet, voice, etc.—and the five sense powers[104]]. By unyoking [from the

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[100] CS 4.1.5, 8—*niṣkriyaṃ ca svatantraṃ ca vaśinaṃ sarvagaṃ vibhum* । *vadantyātmānamātmajñāḥ kṣtrajñaṃ sākṣiṇaṃ tathā* ॥ … *napaśyati vibhuḥ kasmācchailakuḍyatiraskṛtam* ।

[101] While it is common to translate *indriya* as "sense organ," I render it here as "sense power" for two reasons. First, it is closer to the literal sense. Second, it avoids the potential pitfall of overly 'physiologizing' Āyurveda's presentation of *puruṣa*.

[102] This verb literally signifies "to change dwellings" and "to shine forth." Insofar as these meanings coincide, the *buddhi*'s role here is evocative of a passage in the Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad (2.12-13), which holds that *brahman* "shines forth" (*√dīp*) through speech when one is speaking, through sight when one is seeing, etc.

[103] CS 4.1.22-23—*indriyeṇendriyārtho hi samanaskena gṛhyate* । *kalpyate manasā tūrdhvaṃ guṇato doṣato'thavā* ॥ … *yā buddhirniścayātmikā* । *vyavasyati tayā vaktuṃ kartuṃ vā buddhipūrvakam* ॥

[104] In a following verse (CS 4.1.56), the instruments are enumerated as the mind, the intellect, and the active and intellectual faculties (*mano buddhirbudhhikarmendriyāṇi ca*).

> instruments] or by [bringing about] the spotlessness of the instruments, knowledge does not arise.[105]

According to these verses, the initial moment of perception occurs in the three-way linking up of the mind, the sense powers, and their objects. The "sense powers" (*indriya*s), typically five in number, do not refer to organs of sense, but rather the "powers" of these organs: hearing, touch, sight, taste, and smell. Their "objects,"—a somewhat inaccurate translation of a variety of terms, including *artha*, *viṣaya*, *gocara*, or *guṇa*—are not objects in the typical sense (like a cup or pack of matches), but rather the objects *of* the sense powers: sound is the object of hearing, sight of seeing, etc.[106] The "mind" (*manas*) in this case is characterized by what it does, which is "assemble" (√*kḷp*) the sense object to which it is linked via the sense powers. In turn, the production of the objects is impelled by a pre-existent defect (*doṣa*) or *guṇa*, the latter of which refers to the three Sāṃkhyan *guṇa*s (*sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*) that are typically associated with mental states in Āyurveda. The role of the *buddhi*, which is in some sense "prior" to what has so far taken place, is to act as a guide, ascertaining the nature of the object and determining the kind of actions that each moment of perception will (or should) elicit. Finally, the knowledge of what is thereby perceived and acted upon is the purview of the *ātman* alone, which knows by "yoking" to all the previously listed "instruments," including the sense powers, their objects, the mind, and the *buddhi*. Perceiving, which occurs via "grasping," is thereby distinguished from knowing, which

This is a strikingly different use of *karaṇa* than we find in the SuS 1.22, where a *karaṇa* indicates literally any means by which the *puruṣa* relates to the world that diminishes or ameliorates its condition.

[105] CS 4.1.54—*ātmā jñaḥ karaṇairyogāj jñānaṃ tvasya pravartate* | *karaṇānāmavaimalyādayogādvā na vartate* ||

[106] See also CS 1.8.11.

occurs via "yoking." In this regard, the *ātman* is singled out as the yoking, and thus yogic, subject.[107]

From a top-down, hierarchical perspective, one's knowledge, and thus the final manner in which objects are perceived, relies first upon the ascertaining activity of the *buddhi*, then second upon the manner in which the mind "assembles" sense objects, and then finally upon the "grasping" relation between the sense powers and their objects. These are the essential elements to the process of perception. In order to move beyond this rather broad procedural understanding of the process, we can begin at the bottom of the perceptual hierarchy and examine more fully the relation between the sense powers and their objects.

Several scattered verses in the *Katidhā-Puruṣīyaṃ* demonstrate this relation:

> The sense powers of space etc. are yoked one to the other with each exceeding the last.[108] The five [sense powers], through which the *buddhi* acts (*pra*+√*vṛt*)[109], are inferred through action… The great elements are space, wind, fire, water, and earth. Their qualities are [respectively] sound, touch, form, taste, and smell… The objects of sound, etc., are to be known as ranges, horizons, [or] qualities.[110]

In Āyurveda, the relation between sense powers and sense objects is founded on their mutual composition by the five great elements. The sense power of space—that is, the power of

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[107] As I show below, the common Indic truism that "knowing" coincides with mastery and instrumentality remains true in the Āyurvedic context.

[108] The sense powers 'exceed' each other by their capacity to grasp elements which are themselves increasingly complicated. Space has a single quality, and each succeeding element possesses the qualities of the preceeding elements. In this manner, the elements are produced through a process of accretion, complication, and de-subtlization.

[109] Literally, "turns forth." In other words, the *buddhi* exercises its capacity for ascertainment by operating "through" the sense powers. The *buddhi* is not reactive, spurred into action by the sense powers, for as we noted earlier, the *buddhi* is "prior" to the sense powers.

[110] CS 4.1.22, 27, 31(cd)—*ekaikādhikayuktāni khādīnāmindriyāṇi tu* | *pañca karmānumeyāni yebhyo buddhiḥ pravartate* || … *mahābhūtāni khaṃ vāyuragnirāpaḥ kṣitistathā* | *śabda sparśaśca rūpaṃ ca raso gandhaśca tadguṇāḥ* || … *arthāḥ śabdādayo jñeyā gocarā viṣayā guṇāḥ* ||

hearing—corresponds to the "quality" (*guṇa*), and thus the sense object associated with space, which is sound. Touch is the quality of wind, sight the quality of fire, etc. Consequently, inference suggests that perceptual activity is indicative of an inseparable association between the sense powers and the elements whose qualities are the objects of sense. We also learn that the sense powers 'exceed' each other by their capacity to grasp elements which are themselves increasingly complicated. This reflects the fact that the elements are not unique in relation to each other, but rather come into existence through a process of development by complexification. Such is already signaled by the Sanskrit term for "element," *mahā-bhūta*, which, as I noted earlier, denotes the living, processual nature of these "great be-ings." When space (*ākāśa*) develops an additional quality it exceeds itself, growing thicker in a sense, and becomes wind; in the same manner, wind becomes fire, fire becomes water, and water becomes earth. Each element retains the qualities of those that precede it, and thus earth (*pṛthivī*), the fifth and "thickest" element, possesses the qualities of all the other elements. The same is here declared true for the sense powers and their objects, which are thus "yoked" to and "exceed" each other through the same process of accretion and complexification (or *sthūla*-fication, to use the vernacular idiom). Finally, it is because of this inherent elemental sameness that a link is forged between the sense powers and their respective objects, a link through which the former may extend in order "grasp" the latter. Importantly, the sense objects are defined not as objects in the typical sense, but rather as "ranges" (*gocarā*), "horizons" (*viṣayā*), and "qualities" (*guṇā*), the significance of which we'll turn to momentarily.

First, however, we should deepen our understanding of the sense powers by examining a parallel passage in the *Sūtra-sthāna* of the CS:

> Thus [the five sense powers] are understood through inference. They are characterized as a whole by a transformation of the five great elements. Of those sense powers that exist, *tejas* appears according to its distinctiveness in sight, space in sound, earth in smell, and water in taste. Thus, a sense power only grasps after an object of the same characteristic [element], according to whatever [element] distinctly characterizes a sense power, hence according to inherent nature and expansiveness.[111]

Here again, the five sense powers are expressly conceived as transformations of the five great elements. Hence, the power of sight perceives luminosity because it is a transformation of *tejas*, and so on. Just as in the previous passage, a sense power is capable of grasping a sense object only because both have the same elemental composition. The present passage then attempts to deepen our understanding of this process by arguing that the process of perception-by-elemental-sameness demonstrates the "inherent nature" (*svabhāva*) and "expansiveness" (*vibhūtva*) of the sense powers. The first of these terms, *svabhāva*, refers us once again to the elemental sameness of the sense powers and their objects. The inherent nature of the ear is the element space and the same is true for sound; thus it is entirely "natural" that the ear would be capable of grasping sound.

The second term, *vibhūtva*, requires more explanation. According to Cakrapāṇi, *vibhūtva* means *śaktatva*—"capacity," or "power"—which, though not exactly clarifying, does shift our attention to the *activity* of the sense powers. Following the spirit of Cakrapāṇi's suggestion, we can assume that the term *vibhūtva* refers to the peculiar "grasping" manner in which sense powers and elements interact, which in turn reflects Āyurveda's acceptance of the *prāpyakāra* theory of perception that is shared by all of the major schools of Indian philosophy. According to this theoretical perspective, the fact that the sense powers are said

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[111] CS 1.8.14— *tatrānumānagamyānāṃ pañcamahābhūtavikārasamudāyātmakānāmapi satāmindriyāṇāṃtejaścakṣuṣi, khaṃ śrute, ghrāṇe kṣitiḥ, āpo rasane, sparśane'nilo viśeṣeṇopapadyate* । *tatra yadyadātmakamindriyaṃ viśeṣāttattadātmakamevārthamanugṛhṇāti, tatsvabhāvādvibhutvācca* ॥

to “grasp” their respective sense objects is to be understood literally, not as a figure of speech. Thus, according to all of the orthodox schools of Indian philosophy, perception occurs through direct contact between sense power and sense object.[112] The *Caraka* attests to this same view when it declares that “the sense of touch alone pervades all the senses;” hence whenever sensation occurs, it is because a sense power has “touched” its object.[113] In grasping, a sense power actively reaches out to contact, or even “con-form” to the given object of sense.[114] Thus the sense powers are “expansive” because wherever and whenever a sense object appears, this is due to the fact that the sense powers have already expanded outwardly to link up with those objects in phenomenal space.

The sense powers would not engage in this expansive activity, however, were it not for the influence of the mind, the *buddhi*, and the Self-as-knower. As we saw earlier, a sense power grasps its sense object in conjunction with the mind. As one verse succinctly puts it, “the sense powers are capable of grasping objects when they are preceded by the mind.”[115] This prior activity of the mind refers to the fact that a sense object “is assembled (√*kḷp*) by the mind… It is born there, in a horizonal expanse (*viṣaye*).”[116] In other words, when a sense object is grasped by a sense power, the mind first “assembles” (√*kḷp*) that sense object out of a horizonal expanse, which is to say out of a broad field of previously indistinct yet potentially sensible elements. That horizonal expanse opens up and is ‘assembled’ (√*kḷp*) in

[112] White 2009: 125. My description of the *prāpyakāri* theory of perception relies on White’s analysis in *Sinister Yogis* (see especially pp. 123-126).

[113] CS 1.11.38; translated by Sharma & Dash 2014: 223)

[114] White 2009: 125. Āyurveda is unique among the *prāpyakāra* theories of perception in that this “con-forming” takes place only after the *manas* “in-forms” the sense object. I address this below.

[115] CS 1.8.7—*manaḥpuraḥsarāṇīndriyāṇyarthagrahaṇasamarthani bhavanti* ||

[116] CS 4.1.22cd – *kalpayate manasā… jāyate viṣaye tatra* ||

such a way that the perception of that sense quality can occur. To put this in a more relatable context, consider what occurs during a conversation between two people in a noisy conference hall. The sum total of all sounds in the hall corresponds to the *viṣaya*, the "horizonal expanse" of all sounds. Yet despite this indistinct babel, it is little feat to focus in on the conversation at hand. According to the logic of Āyurveda, this is possible because the mind (following the selective ascertainment of the *buddhi*) assembles only that sound that is clearly perceived out of the broader horizonal expanse of sounds.[117]

In this regard, Āyurveda's theory of perception upends our usual understanding of the perceptual process, which is rooted in objectivist assumptions that portray the perceiver as a passive recipient of sensible forces stemming from an undisturbed, preexistent world. Instead, Āyurveda emphasizes our active role in sensation and perception—a sense power actively extends outward in order to grasp its object, which is in turn assembled by the mind. Hence Āyurveda's extensional view of perception reflects a deeply subjective process. Āyurveda is not, to be sure, solipsistic, nor does it subscribe to Vedānta's *māyā-vada*, nor otherwise deny the reality of the world. But it does insist that the objects of sense are informed, in the literal sense of "given form," by the mind. Hence the way that the world is perceived, or misperceived, is a direct result of the way a mind actively shapes perception. Finally, this shaping activity of the mind is impelled to act, either properly or improperly, by some preexisting condition—referring either to an imbalance among the *doṣa*s or psychic *guṇa*s, or to previous *karma*. In non-*karmic* cases, defects in the perceptual faculties arise due to the excessive, deficient, or improper joining (*ati-yoga*, *a-yoga*, *mithya-yoga*) of the

[117] A related visual analogy can be made with the autostereogram, or "Magic Eye" image. Through the relaxing of the eyes, the mind spontaneously arranges a field of initially meaningless and chaotic colors into a distinct visual object that, in being grasped, quite literally jumps out at the viewer.

mind, the sense powers, and their objects.[118] This implicitly dictates that the mind, sense powers, and sense objects should be joined "evenly" (*samayoga*), which thereby refers their proper use to a regimen of behavioral moderacy in line with the transformations of time, place, etc., that we addressed earlier with reference to diet.

The selective ascertainment of sense objects, the focusing of attention on one or another sensory phenomenon, is the work of the *buddhi*. The *buddhi* "turns forth" toward these sense objects-*qua*-horizons. In this light, the *buddhi* selectively opens up horizons of perceptible sense phenomena by deciding in advance what the mind should produce/assemble. The *buddhi* thus plays an extremely important role, like a hand that directs a flashlight's beam in the dark, thereby serving as the basis by which all actions, like speaking, manipulating, etc., are carried out. As we saw earlier, one becomes the author of his own pleasures and pains only after the "true understanding" of the *satyā buddhi* has arisen. Therefore the knowledge that the *puruṣa* is the *loka*, that the Self is everywhere, is first and foremost acquired through the proper, or "true" function of the *buddhi*.[119]

To all this must now be added the role of the *ātman*-as-knower. As we translated above, the *ātman* knows by "yoking with instruments," and these instruments include the *buddhi* and all the faculties (mind, sense powers, powers of action) which it governs by its power of ascertainment. This final step is a specifically yogic process, which further suggests that a kind of unknowing through unyoking is possible and maybe even desirable. This indicates that, for the CS, yoga—broadly conceived as fundamental to the perceptual process and

[118] CS 1.8.15

[119] The early Āyurvedic treatises are rather coy about what precisely characterizes the true function of the *buddhi* (beyond the fact that it reveals the identity relation of the *puruṣa* and the *loka*). More forthcoming is the coeval *Mahābhārata*, whose statements on the *buddhi* and its role in perception and misperception I will analyze in the following chapter.

therefore to the particular manner in which phenomenal reality appears—possesses an all-important significance for the health or illness of the *puruṣa*. What then is the relationship between the yogic *ātman* and *puruṣa*?

The first chapter of the *Śarīra-sthāna* (entitled "*Katidhā-Puruṣīyaṃ*" or, "The Many Parts of the *Puruṣa*") declares that the *ātman* is pervasive (*vibhu*), unmanifest (*avyakta*), a field-knower (*kẹtrajña*), and a 'Doer' (*kartṛ*).[120] Other verses in this chapter declare that *puruṣa* is composed of twenty-four elements, the final eight of which, called *prakṛti* when taken as a set, are the five *mahābhūta*s, the ego, the *mahān* (an alternative designation for the *buddhi*), and the unmanifest. Thus the unmanifest *avyakta* is considered one aspect of *puruṣa*. The CS identifies this unmanifest aspect with the field-knower, and thus with the *ātman*.[121] Likewise, *puruṣa* is elsewhere also called a Doer (*kartṛ*) and a Knower (*boddhṛ*).[122] Finally, insofar as the *mahān* (literally, "the great") is an aspect of the *puruṣa*, *puruṣa* is "possessed of pervasiveness" and thus "goes everywhere."[123] These overlapping characteristics demonstrate that the terms *ātman* and *puruṣa* are virtually interchangeable in the CS.[124] More specifically, the *ātman*, like *prakṛti*, is considered an aspect—the unmanifest

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[120] See CS 4.1.54-57, 61.

[121] See CS 4.1.61.

[122] See CS 4.1.39.

[123] CS 4.1.80—*vibhutvamata evāsya yamāt sarvagato mahān*. The remainder of this verse provides the answer to Agniveśa's question about the mundane limitations of *puruṣa*'s powers of perception. It is the *ātman* which is able to see what is hidden by manifest objects like hills and mountains. Conceivably, the *puruṣa*'s powers of perception are unhindered precisely to the extent that *puruṣa* recognizes and identifies with its unmanifest aspect, the *ātman*.

[124] It should be emphasized that this interchangeability does not represent a demotion of the *ātman*. Truly, the *ātman*, in its association with unmanifestation, knowing, etc., is the most exalted aspect of *puruṣa*, and moreover it is the sole aspect of *puruṣa* that remains when *puruṣa* recedes into unmanifestation at the time of death. Nevertheless the CS does construe the *ātman* as part of *puruṣa* so long as *puruṣa* exists. A clearer line is drawn

aspect—of *puruṣa*, which here serves as a totalizing rubric.[125] It is with this in mind that Ātreya states, "thus every limb [of *puruṣa*], produced and arisen, is declared in full. Upon dissolution [i.e., death], *puruṣa* is unyoked again from becomings and desires. From unmanifestation he goes to manifestation, and from manifestation to unmanifestation again… he goes round and round like a wheel."[126] By the alternations of life and death, the *puruṣa* alternates between the manifestation of the active *puruṣa* in phenomenal reality and the unmanifest state of the *puruṣa-qua-ātman*.

Hence, nothing about the process of perception can be fully understood without taking into consideration the fact that everything—phenomenal manifestation and the knowledge and variable experiencing of it—proceeds from and depends upon the existence of the *puruṣa*. This is why *puruṣa* is elsewhere called a creator and a cause. In a set of verses that again emphasize the identification of *puruṣa* and *ātman*, we find that "no connection and no release should exist if *puruṣa* did not exist. On that account, *puruṣa* is considered a cause by

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between *puruṣa* and the *paramātman*, which is beginningless and simple, whereas *puruṣa* comes periodically into existence and is a "mass" (*rāśi*). The *paramātman* therefore seems to represent the condition to which one accedes by a final 'unyoking' (*viyoga*), the details of which are discussed at the close of the *Katidhā-Puruṣīyaṃ*. On this subject, see Wujastyk (2012).

[125] Previously, scholars (e.g. Comba 2011) have read *Katidhā-Puruṣīyaṃ* of the *Śārīra-sthāna* as containing an olio of hopelessly contradictory philosophical positions of Vaiśeṣikan, Sāṃkhyan, and Buddhist provenance, stitched crudely together. Whatever merit such a position may hold for the whole of the CS, I suspect that it is ultimately untenable with regard to the *Katidhā-Puruṣīyaṃ* for at two reasons. First, the portrayal of *prakṛti* as a portion of the totality of *puruṣa* demonstrates with absolute clarity the divergence of the CS from classical Sāṃkhya. Second, while the CS is certainly aware of the philosophical positions of these various schools, citing verbatim from their original sources (except, perhaps, in the case of Sāṃkhya), the CS manages to avoid contradictions by repeatedly emphasizing *puruṣa* before all other categories.

[126] CS 4.1.67-68—*tataḥ sampūrṇasarvāṅgo jāto'bhyudita ucyate* ǀ *puruṣaḥ pralaye ceṣṭaiḥ punarbhāvairviyujyate* ǁ *avyaktād vyaktatāṃ yāti vyaktād avyaktatāṃ punaḥ* ǀ …*cakravat parivartate* ǁ

knowers of causes. If the *ātman* should not be a cause, light, etc., [i.e., manifest phenomena] should be characterized as causeless. Moreover knowledge about these should not arise, nor should there be any use for it."[127]

The means of this creation is *samyoga*—"conjunction," or more literally, "yoking together." "Everything manifests from conjunction; without that, nothing at all exists."[128] The whole perceptual apparatus of the *puruṣa*, from the *pañcamahābhūta*s, to the sense powers, the mind, etc., arises in manifestation through conjunction.[129] The fact that manifestation relies upon a "yoking together" signifies that *puruṣa* is, properly conceived, a yogi. Hence, "one should know as highest the bearing of the yoke (*yogadharaṃ*) of the sense objects, the mind, sense powers, and the *buddhi*. This mass, which consists of twenty-four elements, is known as *puruṣa*."[130] The *puruṣa* is this 'bearer of the yoke,' the one whose yoga supports and unifies the elements of phenomenal and transmigratory existence through acts of extension. It is hardly a surprise then that *samayoga*—the harmonious conjunction, or yoking-in-the-same, of *puruṣa* and *loka*—is the central aim of the Āyurvedic practice.

The Āyurvedic theory of perception thus portrays the *puruṣa* as identical with the *loka*. The *loka*, however, is not an objective sum of all space and/or time. Rather it is coterminous with the phenomenal reality of the *puruṣa*, the sum total of its involvements. This *puruṣa*, through the decisive capabilities of the *buddhi* and the mind's powers of assembly, extends

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[127] CS 4.1.41-42—*na bandho na ca mokṣaḥ syāt puruṣo na bhavedyadi* | *kāraṇaṃ puruṣastasmāt kāraṇajñairudhāhṛtaḥ* || *na cet kāraṇamātmā syād bhādayaḥ syurahetukāḥ* | *na caiṣu saṃbhavej jñānaṃ na ca taiḥ syāt prayojanam* ||

[128] CS 4.1.57cd—*samyogādvartate sarvam tamṛte nāsti kiṃcana*

[129] See CS 4.1.34.

[130] CS 4.1.35— *buddhīndriyamanorthānāṃ vidyādyogadharaṃ param* | *caturviṃśatiko hyeṣa rāśiḥ puruṣasaṃjñakaḥ* || See a parallel statement at CS 1.25.3-4, which describes a meeting between Ātreya and other sages on the "origins of that mass of sense objects, mind, sense powers, and *ātman* that is known as *puruṣa*, and also of his diseases."

into a horizon of sensible phenomena, according to the natural expansiveness of the sense powers and their elemental relation to the various sensible objects. These sense objects are assembled into readily recognizable forms by the mind according to qualities and defects that are specific to the given person; and thus the whole of phenomenal appearance is a reflection of the individual who experiences it. Each *puruṣa* uniquely bears the yoke of its own phenomenal reality, though no bearing could be considered higher than that which is achieved through *samayoga*, and thus through the *buddhi* that ascertains truth (*satyā*) and consequently recognizes the underlying identity of person and entire world. With this realization, the individual's bearing of the yoke ceases to be merely his own, becoming instead the bearing of all yokes. This is the *yogi* par excellence: "He is possessed of pervasiveness because he is Great and spreads everywhere. And due to the total fixing of the mind, [his] *ātman* sees what is concealed. [Though] constantly connected with the [individual] mind by consequence of the acts of the body, one should know that he enters every womb, even as he abides in a single womb."[131]

Yet because this true *yogi*'s realization is so rare, a physician must aim instead at regulating the nature of the *puruṣa*'s extension and conjunction in order to foster phenomenal states of health, which is to say, in order to foster a spatially and temporally appropriate conjunction between the *puruṣa* and his own, limited *loka*—the *loka* that he in fact *is*. For it is through his limited acts of perception (or, in dietary terms, his limited "eating" of the world) that any given *puruṣa* is always and already a *loka*, which extends from himself as the yoke borne within a phenomenal horizon.

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[131] CS 4.1.80-81—*vibhutvamata evāsya yasmāt sarvagato mahān* । *manasaśca samādhānāt paśyatyātmā tiraskṛtam* ॥ *nityānubandhaṃ manasā dehakarmānupātinā* । *sarvayonigataṃ vidyādekayonāvapi sthitam* ॥

Concluding Remarks

Both in terms of diet and perception, the Āyurvedic *puruṣa* is conceived as a phenomenal totality that extends so as to be the "same measure" as the *loka*. In particular, the co-inherence of the five elements in the person and the world, when understood according to the processual nature of those "great beings," serves as the critical component that describes the manner in which person and world coincide. Through diet, the person takes part in the endless digestive cycles of the world, in the process taking on the *rasa*s of the elements, along with the characteristics of the lands where he lives and the times in which he is alive. Through perception, the person yokes himself to the entirety of his phenomenal field, forging links across elemental chasms within his horizonal range. In both cases, the person's extensional acts are conceived according to a logic of yoga, especially the logic of "equal use" or "yoking in the same" of *samayoga*, which provides the foundation for Āyurveda's thinking about health and disease.

The logic of *samavāya* prevails in matters of diet and perception, where the *mahābhūta*s are consumed or perceptually yoked in a manner that shows the "co-inherence" of person and world. Earlier we saw the logic of *sāmānya* applied to a final attainment, the "true understanding" of the basic identity of the person and the world. The two correspond as concrete to abstract, as physics to poetry. The logic of *samavāya* explains how the person is the world, while the logic of *sāmānya* strikes at a faulty understanding that fails to see the underlying unicity of things. In each case they forcefully argue that the person, who is a world, is as great and expansive as the "great beings" and divine forces that constitute his existence.

In rendering this view of personhood, innovatively fusing thereby doctrines from the

previous traditions of Brahmanical sacrifice, Upaniṣadic speculation, and Buddhist teaching with the more contemporary and properly pre-classical traditions of Sāṃkhya, Vaiśeṣika, and Yoga, Āyurvedic doctrine is broadly representative of pre-classical conceptions of personhood throughout Indic traditions. That is, Āyurveda provides us with a robust theory of personhood that is paradigmatic of the pre-classical period of Indic thought and practice. While the specific vocabulary of Āyurveda is however unique, henceforth the person will be conceived in much the same manner until the onset of the classical period, when a decisive rethinking of the relationship between person and world occurs.[132] Before this rethinking occurs, the person will remain—despite a vast host of shifting formulations—a fundamentally expansive being, capable of mastering and manipulating the elemental basis of his existence, yoking variously thereby the many beings of the cosmos to his magnificent Self, which is, at base, identical to the whole of the world.

[132] Exemplified by classical Sāṃkhya's critical positing of an insurmountable separation of person (*puruṣa*) and world (*prakṛti*).

Chapter 5: The Pre-Classical Puruṣa in the Mahābhārata

Introduction

The preceding chapter outlined the major features of Āyurveda's conception of the person before suggesting that this conception is paradigmatic of pre-classical period notions of personhood. The present chapter will give weight to this suggestion through an investigation of the expressions of personhood discernible in the uses of the *puruṣa* concept throughout the many verses of the great pre-classical 'epic' text,[1] the *Mahābhārata* (MBh). Here, and despite the many, sometimes radical shifts in doctrinal perspective, the basic and paradigmatic features of pre-classical personhood—extensionality, expansiveness, a rooting in an elemental and sacrificial understanding of the cosmos, and an emphasis on the ways in which person and world coincide (or "join") through techniques broadly linked to Yoga—remain more or less consistent.

There are nevertheless inherent, historical challenges posed by this final investigation insofar as the development of the MBh spans more than seven centuries,[2] during which the center of the Brahmanic society associated with the *traya-Veda* shifted gradually eastward across Madhyadeśa and into the power centers of Magadha, surviving, though not unchanged, ideological confrontations with the Buddhists and the Jains, as well as political confrontations with invading Greeks under Alexander of Macedonia and soon after the rise

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[1] The MBh does not precisely conform to the classic (Greek) character of an "epic" text; however, due its massive scope and familial resemblance to other forms of epic poetry, and because it remains common practice in scholarship to refer to the text as an epic, I will continue to use the term here.

[2] According to Fitzgerald (2007: 52), the MBh initially developed sometime after 400 BCE, reached an early point of completion (the "core narrative") between 200 BCE and the year zero, and finally attained the more or less fixed form it holds today during the Gupta period, between 300 and 450 CE.

of a Mauryan polity that by and large rejected *brāhmaṇya* rule. Thus pressed, the MBh provided its Brahmanic composers an opportunity to make sense of the complexities of their present while maintaining a traditionalist argument for a return to the social and political values of the past. The result is sprawling, unabashedly complex and essentially cosmopolitan narrative that nevertheless skews towards a glorification of the supernatural might and righteousness of brahmins and the kings who follow their guidance.[3]

Helpful in dealing with the historical complexities of the MBh is Vassilkov's (1995) "typological" reassessment. Summarizing the current view of comparative epic studies, he identifies three distinct layers corresponding to distinct epic styles.[4] The first and earliest layer he calls "archaic," in reference to an epic's tendency to mold "historical material on the [more ancient] patterns of [divine] myth and ritual" (1995: 250). In the context of the MBh this would refer to the way that narrative sections are actively structured around Vedic-era ritual proceedings and the mythologies that undergird them. For instance, the narrative of the slaying of Jarāsaṃdha (briefly analyzed by Vassilkov;[5] I investigate its relation to the term *puruṣottama* below), is structured around the mythology of Indra's confrontation with Vṛtra, which in turn comprises the liturgy to the Rājasūya rite. The second layer is the "classical heroic," in which the exploits of more or less human heroes

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[3] This essentially the view of Bronkhorst (2016) and Fitzgerald (2007). I'll address their analyses of the historical context of the MBh in greater specificity in the following chapter.

[4] These "layers" are not always reflective of a historical priority in terms of dates of composition (see Brockington, 1998:132-134). Previously, Hopkins (1901) delineated five historically distinct textual layers. His third through fifth layers roughly correspond to Vassilkov's third layer, subdivided into a theistic layer, in which Kṛṣṇa is elevated to the position of godhead, followed by the composition of the majority of the post-battle books and the separation of the Śānti- and Anuśāsana-parvans, followed by a final layer of addendums and interpolations.

[5] See Vassilkov, 1995: 251-252 for this brief analysis.

reflect a crisis in which the “glorious” traditions of the past are under threat; the “general outlook becomes definitely pessimistic” as “the myth of the End of the World acquires great significance” as the background of the heroes’ deeds (ibid.). The core narrative of the familial conflict between the Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas, reflecting a historical struggle for control of the region of Madhyadeśa and set against the background of an apocalyptic culling of the ruling class, is representative of this middlemost layer. Finally, the “late” layer reflects the incorporation of theistic, philosophical, and didactic passages alongside or within the narrative structure. The entirety of the Mokṣadharmaparvan (MDhP), for instance, would be counted as belonging to this layer of the epic.[6]

Scholarship suggests further subdivisions of the late layer in several fashions that vary according to the focal point of consideration. So, for instance, it is held that the theistic content either precedes or follows the inclusion of the philosophical content. The former position has been most recently argued by Vassilkov (2005), while the latter is argued by Malinar (2009).[7] In reviewing their positions, we can note that the apparent historical priority of the theistic or philosophical content varies according to the passage under examination, and that no clear line of orthogenetic development is discernible. However, the theistic content I will examine here tends to show a reliance upon philosophical (especially early Sāṃkhyan) thought, and therefore I will tend to treat the theistic as a subsequent development. This is the case with respect to the theistic statements in the Jarāsaṃdha tale that serve to elevate Kṛṣṇa to the status of a supreme god through an enumeration of early

[6] This layer can be further subdivided into pre-classical-late and classical-late layers. Such a further division accounts for the presence of ‘classical’ dualistic Sāṃkhya doctrines, which did not appear until the very end of the epic’s proposed period of composition.

[7] See these works for a review of previous literature on both sides of this debate.

Sāṃkhyan categories and a demonstration of yogic power. The same is noticed of the first eleven chapters in the *Bhagavad Gītā* (BhG), which initially deal with the nature of *dharma* and action in the philosophical terms of early Sāṃkhya and Yoga before introducing a devotional theology of Kṛṣṇaism that attempts to reinterpret those earlier philosophical positions.[8]

A second consideration of layers attends the philosophical content on its own, the need for which is amply demonstrated by the many iterations of Sāṃkhya espoused throughout the MBh. For the most part, the Sāṃkhyas found in the MBh—and those that I will address here—are of an early, pre-classical sort. This means that the strict dualism between *prakṛti* (as the insentient content of phenomenal existence) and *puruṣa* (as the conscious witness, drawn by ignorance into a confused association with *prakṛti*) has not yet developed to the extent that it would in Īśvarakṛṣṇa's now "classic" Sāṃkhya doctrine in the *Sāṃkhya Kārikā* (SK). Nearly a century ago, Johnston noted that "Primitive Sāmkhya," as he called its earliest form, does not make "as sharp a division between the soul and the twenty-four physical *tattvas* as the SK does… [T]he earliest known form that salvation takes postulates that the soul does not pass beyond the realm of all three *guṇa*s of the *avyakta*, but beyond *rajas* and *tamas* alone" (1937: 52-53). Johnston misleadingly treats early Sāṃkhya as singular—prior to the SK's authoritative expression, there were many Sāṃkhyas, variations on the theme of the enumeration of the basic contents of the cosmos—but he is correct in dissociating early Sāṃkhya from the classical soteriology of *puruṣa*'s total isolation from

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[8] Malinar (2009) distinguishes earlier and later layers within these chapters along these same lines. The earlier layer corresponds to the non-theistic, Upaniṣadic doctrines of chapters 2-7 (into which occasional theistic interpolations have been made), while the later layer is identified with the theistic elevation of Kṛṣṇa in chapters 8-11. Even later, and thus technically beyond the scope of the core narrative of the BhG, are chapters 12-18. See Malinar (2009: 187) for her full comments on this subject (especially n.194).

prakṛti, otherwise known as *kaivalya*. In fact, several early forms of Sāṃkhya—typically the earliest—appear almost monistic, or at least resigned to an eternal association between the witness (alternately referred to as *puruṣa*, *kṣetrajña*, *ātman*, etc.) and the witnessed phenomenal reality (*prakṛti*, *sattva*, *kṣetra*, *brahman*, etc.). This helps to explain why these early Sāṃkhyas so frequently drew no distinction between their own terms and those more typically associated with Vedānta (i.e. Upaniṣadic, monistic) philosophy, such as *brahman* and *ātman*. So Chakravarti, in responding to the question of whether the MBh follows the "true Sāṃkhya view," notes that "both Āsuri and Pañcaśikha, who are held as reputable teachers of Sāṃkhya even by the orthodox school, are found to advocate the doctrine of *brahman* as the one universal soul with whom the individual souls are united at the time of liberation" (1951: 60). The earliest Sāṃkhyas found in the MBh are thus portrayed as comfortably situated alongside and even accepting of Upaniṣadic doctrine. This is only surprising from the strictly dualistic viewpoint of classical Sāṃkhya; it is wholly unsurprising when Sāṃkhya is considered historically, and thus according to its first appearance in the KU. There too, the highest Sāṃkhyan category—the *puruṣa*—is "understood in terms of Brahman" (Larson: 1979: 27). This has led Vassilkov to conclude the following:

> Madeleine Biardeau (1994: 26) remarks correctly that the proto-Vedānta [i.e. Upaniṣadic monism] and Sāṃkhyayoga 'were perhaps not clearly distinguished' for their contemporaries and, probably, for the early thinkers themselves. Each 'system' freely borrowed specific notions and terms from the rivals and reinterpreted them in the light of its own ideas. The two vocabularies (Vedāntic and Sāṃkhyayogic) are used in the Upaniṣads concurrently and interrelatedly, sometimes even indiscriminately. The proto-Vedānta texts sometimes use, e.g., the term *puruṣa* to designate *ātman* or even *brahman*… [while] the Sāṃkhyayoga, as we can see, e.g., in the BhG, used the term *ātman* as the synonym of *dehin* or *puruṣa*, and the term *brahman* as the synonym of *prakṛti* (2005: 249-250).

This pattern of conflating Upaniṣadic categories with those of Sāṃkhya is important to recognize insofar as it remains the norm in depictions of early Sāṃkhya as an essentially syncretic and cosmopolitan doctrine in the MBh.

It is noteworthy that this syncretic form of early Sāṃkhya in the MBh—with its monistic tendencies and conflation with Upaniṣadic terms—is often parallel to the early Sāṃkhya found in the *Caraka Saṃhitā* (CS). We dealt with this Sāṃkhya in the previous chapter, where we saw the *puruṣa* identified as the twenty-fourth member in a nested hierarchy of *tattva*s, and consequently as the creative source and master of the lower constituents it subsumes. Dasgupta aptly summarizes Caraka's position on these points:

> Caraka identifies the avyakta part of prakṛti with puruṣa as forming one category… This avyakta and cetanā [i.e., the conscious *puruṣa*] are one and the same entity. From this unmanifested prakṛti or cetanā is derived the buddhi, and from the buddhi is derived the ego (*ahaṃkāra*) and from the ahaṃkāra the five elements and the senses are produced, and when this production is complete, we say that creation has taken place…. [F]rom the puruṣa [*qua*] the unmanifest (*avyakta*), all the manifested forms—the evolutes of buddhi, ahaṃkāra, etc.—appear (1952: 214-215).

As noticed by both Dasgupta (1952) and Larson (1979), this form of Sāṃkhya is significantly similar to that taught by Pañcaśikha to his royal pupil, Janaka, in the MDhP. Another parallel doctrine that has so far escaped mention—in which Janaka again plays the part of pupil—is found in the so-called Vyadha Gītā, which, like the CS, espouses a twenty-four-fold *tattva* scheme that equates *puruṣa* with the *avyakta*. Such texts should be recognized as among the earliest complete Sāṃkhya doctrines of the pre-classical period.

Somewhat later are those Sāṃkhyas that incorporate theistic doctrines. A model transitional text is found in the Sabhāparvan's Jarasāṃdha tale (which in part works to establish the divinity of Kṛṣṇa as the *puruṣottama*). There, Kṛṣṇa is identified with the unmanifest *prakṛti* (*prakṛtir avayktā*) that is the origin and end of the worlds comprised by

the *tattva*s. The BhG (in its earlier layers, see below) further develops this theistic form of Sāṃkhya by subsuming sacrificial and Upaniṣadic doctrines (and more subtly, Buddhistic and Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika doctrines), as well as an early Sāṃkhyan portrayal of individual *puruṣa*s and an eightfold *prakṛti*, all under the heading of Kṛṣṇa as the divine *īśvara,* the sovereign yogi god who is the goal of both yogis and Sāṃkhyas, as well as *saṃnyāsa*s and *tapasvin*s, and the origin and end of all that exists. These doctrines differ considerably from the Nārāyaṇa-centered Sāṃkhya found in the MDhP.[9] Thus even in the theistic layer of the MBh we find forms of Sāṃkhya that are noticeably closer to the earliest Sāṃkhyas than to later (more dualistic) Sāṃkhyas.[10]

It is important to note that all of this breaking-down of the MBh into layers does not indicate a refusal to "take serious[ly] the Sanskrit tradition's idea that the Mahābhārata is a coherent object;" nor does it suggest that the MBh is a "monstrosity to be tamed" or otherwise unable to be read "for its wisdom and beauty."[11] For part of this wisdom and beauty entails recognizing how the MBh relishes in its own layered nature. As Vassilkov writes, the "true uniqueness" of the MBh lies in its peaceable layering of old and new: "new

[9] Discussed in Fitzgerald 2012.

[10] It should be noted that some scholars hold that Sāṃkhya was theistic from the start. Vassilkov has most recently championed this view, stressing the fact that "proto-Sāṃkhyayoga and theism already formed a unity in some of the Upaniṣads which pre-date the BhG, such as the Kaṭha or Iśa Upaniṣads" (2005: 231). Biardeau similarly argues that the dualism of Īśvarakṛṣṇa's classical Sāṃkhya did not arise until the original, theistic "structure [was] decapitated, losing the supreme *puruṣa* from which formerly everything issued and in which everything had to be reabsorbed. The system [thereafter] becomes overtly dualistic" (1994: 118). Bronkhorst (1981) conservatively identifies a theistic trend of Sāṃkhya with the Seśvarayoga tradition—perhaps an early name for the Pañcaratrā school. Bronkhorst emphasizes that yoga is, prior to Patañjali, not a philosophical school but a widely accepted method of self-observation that complimented various schools of thought. References to 'Yoga' in lists of philosophical doctrines, are likely references to Nyāya in his view.

[11] As suggested by Aditya Adarkar (2008: 305-306).

elements are not fighting against old until the total extermination of the latter; in many cases the new elements are just super-imposed upon the old, forming layer upon layer, becoming somehow connected and united in a kind of symbiotic system" (1995: 255). The same is true with regard to the *puruṣa* concept in the MBh. Like Kṛṣṇa's *viśvarūpa*, which expresses the consolidation of all existence as well as the (attempted) consolidation of all competing philosophical doctrines, the *puruṣa* concept in the MBh consolidates the understandings of personhood expressed in the Vedic Saṃhitās and Brāhmaṇas, in the Upaniṣads, in Sāṃkhya and Yoga, and in Āyurveda's cosmopolitan medical philosophy. The *puruṣa* is *ātman*, *brahman*, *kṣetrajña*, *avyakta*, *prakṛti*, and so on. It is a broadly paradigmatic concept with a veritable excess of meaning whose contours we shall here attempt to discern.

In the previous chapter I suggested that the Āyurvedic understanding of the *puruṣa* was especially representative of the pre-classical period by virtue of its philosophical and doctrinal cosmopolitanism that had manifested through the creative fusion of Brahmanic and *śramaṇic* traditions. As suggested by the preceding discussion, in the present chapter I will argue that the MBh, in all but its latest layers, tends to espouse roughly the same pre-classical paradigm of personhood. To briefly review, this paradigm entails that personhood and worldhood are essentially non-different. This is true in both cosmological and phenomenalistic terms—the person is his world of phenomenal experience, but also the entirety of the cosmos; though this later fact is only rarely realized. The argument for the identity of person and world relies first upon the dynamics of sacrifice—the fiery transformation of the cosmos through an essentially digestive process. It further relies upon the conception of material reality in terms of the *mahābhūta*s—the elemental and perceptual stuff of the cosmos—and their special relation to the *puruṣa* (who is, in this material sense,

frequently conflated with the Upaniṣadic absolute, *brahman*). As has been shown throughout the preceding chapters, this understanding of the person is historically rooted in earlier traditions, and the MBh more or less recapitulates this history in its layered presentation of the *puruṣa*. To all this, the MBh adds further depth to the *puruṣa* concept by envisioning it through a narrative context that is fixated at turns on issues like the end of the world, the power of Time and fate, the role of God, and the fundamental ignorance, confusion, and bewilderment that attends human existence.

As an introductory example to the MBh's way of expressing the pre-classical paradigm of personhood, consider the following assessment delivered by Aśvatthaman in the opening of the Sauptikaparvan:

> "Intelligence differs from one man to the next, and yet each is happy with his own insight… All think their own understanding the best, forever lauding their superior intellect, forever denigrating the rest… Thanks to the unfathomable nature of their thoughts, there is a difference between man and man—each is bewildered in a different way. For just as a skilled doctor, having diagnosed a disease according to the book, in practice prescribes a medicine to effect a cure specific to each case, so men use their intellect, harnessed to insight, to put their intended actions in to practice—and other men revile them because of that" (MBh 10.3.3-10; tr. W.J. Johnson 1998: 14).

Each person lives in a world uniquely suited to himself; each is "bewildered in a different way." The polysemy of the MBh, the way that it narratively unifies its layers upon layers, rests precisely on the compounding of this bewilderment across the epic's many characters—their poor decisions, their curses and their pronouncements, all stacking across oceans of time to produce a virtually indecipherable world that leans heavily toward catastrophe. What is most intriguing (and pre-classically significant) about Aśvatthaman's analysis of this situation is that it derives from and gives insight into the medical perspective. The skilled doctor knows the diagnosis as it is contained in the texts (*śāstra*s), but modifies

this according to the specific case each patient presents. He does not allow the texts to become his sole lens upon the patient; he practices a diagnosis based upon his direct observations. This reflects the Āyurvedic practice of treating the person as a phenomenal *world* unto him or herself, a fully immersed, 'subjective locus,' or *loka*, of times, places, habits of eating and perception, etc. Aśvatthaman's reasoning indicates a closely related logic—each person chooses a different course because of the uniqueness of his own bewilderment, his *loka*-lity, to use the Āyurvedic idiom. So the prime motivator of the MBh's conflict, its suffering, and its dis-ease, is grounded in the clashing of so many bewildered worlds. Every person in this tale is, through the thoughts that bewilder, a world that lauds itself and forever denigrates the rest.

There is, however, an ideal kind of world, a person who is the world in a manner that decisively outstrips all other person-worlds, whose world is not bewildered. Such a person is a sovereign being who has (in the more or less majority view of the MBh) attained the perfections described by early Sāṃkhya and contemporaneous depictions of Yoga, and whose divine prototype in the epic is the *puruṣottama*, Kṛṣṇa.[12] In what follows I will investigate the development of this paradigmatically pre-classical understanding of the *puruṣa* across the layers of the MBh's voluminous text. I'll structure this investigation—to the extent possible, given the text's tendency toward superimposition—according to the basic structure of Vassilkov's layered typology. I will, however, use different terms for these layers that are more specific to the pre-classical context of the MBh. So, rather than the

[12] In Āyurveda too there is such an ideal person. This is precisely the person who knows that the *puruṣa* is identical to the *loka*, who is a sovereign author of his own pleasures and pains. But it is also the ideal physician, who is characterized by the texts as a "knower of reality" (*tattvavit*), and who, by all counts, is essentially non-different from the yogi of the MBh. I will conclude the present chapter with a comparison of these ideal persons.

"archaic," I will refer to the "Vedic," the "mythic," or the "ritualistic." Rather than the "classical," I will refer to the "narrative." And rather than the "late," I will refer to the "didactic," the "philosophical," or the "theistic." I want to emphasize that my choice in following this structural model has not resulted merely from theoretical considerations, but rather has arisen as a sensible approach because the data on the *puruṣa* concept in the MBh naturally lends itself to such a structure. I begin by showing how the colloquial uses of "*puruṣa*" and *puruṣa*-based terms, which make up the majority of uses in the epic, evidence a retention of earlier mythic tropes regarding manliness, Indra-like warrior traits, and the overcoming of rivals, all of which contribute to the political vision of *puruṣa*s in the MBh. With this in mind, I turn next to the Sabhāparvan's highly complex consideration of the term *puruṣottama*, a term that defines Kṛṣṇa as the supremely sovereign deity of the epic's cosmos, and which is constructed on simultaneously mythic, narrative, theistic, and philosophical grounds. From here I address the further development of the theistic and philosophical *puruṣa*, turning toward the cosmologically significant *puruṣa* described as a yogi god in the *Bhagavad Gītā* (BhG). Finally I return to the human *puruṣa* who most closely corresponds to this lofty philosophical and theistic vision of 'the' *puruṣa*, and his place in a cosmos so construed. This is the *puruṣa* that is described in early Sāṃkhyan philosophical portions of the epic (especially the Araṇyakaparvan's Vyadha Gītā), according to which the MBh's theistic portrayal of Kṛṣṇa was likely first conceived. By so tracing the development of the *puruṣa* concept, we arrive at a fair understanding of the MBh's pre-classical paradigm of personhood, one that accounts for all but the very latest layer to the text, when the dualism of the classical era decisively reconceives the fundamental relation

between the person and the world that had otherwise survived, in some form or another, over the nearly two previous millennia.

5.1 The Sovereign Manhood of a Puruṣa

In the MBh, variations on the term "*puruṣa*" occur nearly two thousand times.[13] The vast majority of these occurrences reflect two kinds of colloquial usage. In the first, "*puruṣa*" is used to refer to any given person, similar in manner to the generic use of the name "Devadatta" in grammatical texts. Often this person is the subject of normative discourses on conduct that demonstrate the negative effects of bad karma, the virtues of adherence to *dharma*, etc. To be a person, in these cases, is to exist within the cosmological framework of the epic and the (Brahmanically skewed) ideologies espoused throughout the lands of Bhārata. In the second—more prevalent than the first—"*puruṣa*" is used to evoke the power of warriors, chiefs among men who have attained their power through virility and martial prowess. For instance, there are scores of phrases like "tiger among men" (*puruṣavyāghra*) or "bull among men" (*puruṣarṣabha*) that account for roughly two-sevenths of all occurrences of *puruṣa* in the epic. These terms and others[14] serve as laudatory addresses that refer back to earlier associations of powerful warrior gods with similarly powerful animals. So, as pointed out in Acharya's (2013) recent investigation into the roots of Pāśupata Śaivism, Indra has long been considered a bull-like man. In a hymn in the *AV* that likely

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[13] To be precise, *puruṣa*, its nominal transformations and compounded forms occur one thousand, nine hundred and seventy-seven times in the critical edition of Sukthankar et al. (1933-60).

[14] Related terms include *puruṣasiṃha* ("lion among men"), *puruṣaśārdūla* ("leopard among men"), *puruṣaśreṣṭha* ("best of men"), *puruṣasattama* ("chief among men"), *puruṣapravīra* ("virile hero among men"), and *puruṣamānin* ("honored among men"). These laudatory terms are contrasted with disparaging terms like *puruṣādhama* ("lowest of men"), *puruṣādaka* ("man-eater"—usually applied to *rākṣasa*s), *kimpuruṣa* ("mongrel") and *kāpuruṣa* ("coward").

portrays a precursor to the "cow *dharma*" (*godharma*) performed by later Pāśupata adepts, Indra is portrayed as an ox among cattle, who is then identified in ritual contexts with the human sacrificer and the heated *gharma* pot (itself a proxy for a solarized sovereign among men[15]). Mythically speaking, this coincides with Indra's performance of the "vow of the draft-ox" (*anaḍudvrata*), carried out for the sake of the gods after the killing of Vṛtra. The human sacrificer who likewise performs this vow is an "Indra born in the midst of men; a heated *gharma* that wanders, shining brightly."[16] He thus stands out among men just as a draft-ox stands out among cattle.[17] The continual designation of *kṣatriya*s in the MBh as "bulls among men" no doubt relies upon the strength of the earlier association of Indra, as the brightly shining sovereign, with the bull. In this way, there is quite likely something of sovereignty lurking behind every linking of *puruṣa* with mighty animals, which is entirely natural insofar as *puruṣa*-hood, in its earliest sense, is fundamentally about sovereign status.

As I showed in the analysis of Vedic personhood, the Ṛgvedic *puruṣa* is conceived in terms previously reserved for mighty warrior sovereings like Indra and his sovereign human counterparts. In line with this, when the MBh expressly declares who or what should be called *puruṣa*, questions of might and sovereignty are frequently at issue. For instance, Duryodhana treats his discontent at the success of the Pāṇḍavas as a sign of his right to be called *puruṣa*:

> I eat and dress just as any low person (*kupuruṣa*), and [therefore] I bear a terrible impatience while enduring the passage of time. The impatient one who overpowers [even] his own subjects when they stand with a rival, [who

[15] See my investigation of the Pravargya rite in relation to the story of Cyavana and Indra in the Araṇyakaparvan in the following chapter.

[16] AVŚ 4.11.3ab—*índro jātó manuṣyèṣv antár gharmás taptáś carati śóśucānaḥ* |

[17] See AVŚ 4.11.2

> is] liberated from the afflictions brought on by rivals, he is verily called *puruṣa*.[18]

In Duryodhana's eyes, the designation "*puruṣa*" requires foremost that he behave in an irascible and warrior-like fashion. He views all obstacles, be they political rivals, disloyal subjects, or the passage of time itself as that which must be overcome—all must be brought under the aegis of his own supremacy. The sentiment is wholly Vedic, an echo of the original *puruṣa*, Indra, who overcame his constrictive rival, Vṛtra, in order to establish his own sovereign supremacy.

We might expect such traditionalist boasting from Duryodhana,[19] but he is not alone in this view. Arjuna too chides Duryodhana in the build-up to the war by questioning his virility in the following terms:

> The one who, having recourse to his own virility [alone], challenges rivals without fear, fulfilling his might, he is verily called *puruṣa*. [But] the *kṣatriya* by birth alone, who, because he is powerless, challenges rivals but relies upon the virility of others, he is the vilest *puruṣa* in the world.[20]

Even Kuntī preys upon the demands of manliness when she urges Yudhiṣṭhira to follow the tenets of *kṣatriya-dharma* and fight the Kauravas:

> One is a *puruṣa* to the extent that he is impatient and indignant. But the one who is patient and apathetic is neither man nor woman… A man is called "*puruṣa*" because he is a match for a citadel (*pura*) [and therefore stands firm

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[18] MBh 2.45.12-13—*aśnāmy ācchādaye cāhaṁ yathā kupuruṣas tathā* | *amarṣaṁ dhāraye cograṁ titikṣan kālaparyayam* || *amarṣaṇaḥ svāḥ prakṛtīr abhibhūya pare sthitāḥ* | *kleśān mumukṣuḥ parajān sa vai puruṣa ucyate* ||

[19] According to Malinar, Duryodhana "declares himself to be the overlord of the gods and demons as the master of ritual. Apart from his *tejas*, his command of 'ritual invocation' (*abhimantraṇa*) is regarded as the instrument and source of his power" (2012: 59). Malinar contrasts this more or less traditional view of sovereignty, based upon the mastery of ritual mantras, with the Pāṇḍava's and Kṛṣṇa's Yoga-based claims to sovereignty.

[20] MBh 5.160.3-4—*svavīryaṁ yaḥ samāśritya samāhvayati vai parān* | *abhītaḥ pūrayañ śaktiṁ sa vai puruṣa ucyate* || *paravīryaṁ samāśritya yaḥ samāhvayate parān* | *kṣatrabandhur aśaktatvāl loke sa puruṣādhamaḥ* ||

> against rivals]. They say that a man who lives like a woman is [therefore] improperly named.[21]

Statements like these illustrate a pervasive stance taken by the epic toward the *puruṣa*-concept. To be a true *puruṣa*, one must first and foremost behave like a warrior who cannot tolerate the constrictive success of his rivals. In basing her definition of a *puruṣa* on the term's etymological relation to a citadel (*pura*), Kuntī further highlights this militaristic and political perspective. It corresponds to a view so prevalent in the epic, and so internalized to the culture it portrays, that the Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas literally descend into base name-calling just before marching out to war, repeatedly provoking each other to "be a man!" (*puruṣo bhava*).[22] Underlying these schoolyard taunts is, however, a deeper, divinely rooted imperative: 'Be like Indra! Strike out against the forces that constrain you!"[23]

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[21] MBh 5.131.30, 33—*etāvān eva puruṣo yad amarṣī yad akṣamī | kṣamāvān niramarṣaś ca naiva strī na punaḥ pumān || … puraṁ viṣahate yasmāt tasmāt puruṣa ucyate | tam āhur vyarthanāmānaṁ strīvad ya iha jīvati ||*

[22] See MBh 5.157-159

[23] In responding to such imperatives, warriors hope to achieve renown. To be one whose praises are sung long after death is highly valued in the MBh and directly implicated in its understanding of the *puruṣa*. Hence, "the praise of meritorious action touches heaven and earth. As long as that praise exists, so long is one called *puruṣa*" (MBh 3.191.21). Likewise, when the god Dharma, disguised as a riddle-dispensing *yakṣa*, asks Yudhiṣṭhira "Who is a *puruṣa*?," the latter correctly replies, "One is called *puruṣa* as long as he is famed" (MBh 3.297.63). Similarly, in the RV Indra is said to swell (in size and might) through the *stoma*s of the rishis, and in the *Brāhmaṇa*s a *puruṣa-yajamāna* is "extended" by his *prāṇa*-powered chants.

Compare this attitude to that found in the epic of Gilgamesh, in which the titular hero continually struggles against his inevitable mortality until he finally resigns himself to the immortality of fame and lasting works. Returning home from a failed search for the cure to death, he urges his ferryman, Urshanabi, to view the extent of his kingdom—his great work—as the lasting sign of his life: "Go up, Urshanabi, onto the wall of Uruk and walk around.… Did not the Seven Sages themselves layout its plan? One league city, one league palm gardens, one league lowlands, the open area of the Ishtar Temple, three leagues and the open area of Uruk it (the wall) encloses" (Kovacs, 1989: 3). Gilgamesh identifies himself with the extent of his kingdom, while his immortality has virtually been realized by the enduring fame of his life's tale. The Seven Sages he mentions are the Abgal or Apkallu,

Such an exhortation reflects the MBh's ambivalence toward Indra. As is evident from episodes like his confrontation with the Bhārgava sage Cyavana in the Araṇyakaparvan, the MBh frequently treats Indra as a foil for demonstrating the superior power of brahmins, yogis, *tapasvin*s, and other *śrāmaṇa*s of all stripes. The sovereignty of kṣatriya kings is thereby poetically humbled by and subordinated to the awesome power of brahmins and ascetics. In spite of this, Indra retains, and is praised for, his fundamental association with sovereignty. The Vedic-era, mythic view of Indra as the sovereign *par excellence* continues to find purchase through the treatment of the *puruṣa* as an unflinching warrior and the direct linking of personhood to issues of sovereignty. "Thus, even as he is being superseded in the later stages of the epics, Indra is still being praised for his lordship and creative power—a powerful tribute to his former status" (Brockington, 2014: 72). And it is with this retention of Indra's originary model of sovereignty as a background that all truly new epic perspectives on personhood and sovereignty are forged.

In the Udyogaparvan, Gāndhārī provides an emblematic demonstration of the epic's novel perspective in her attempt to convince Duryodhana that he must restrain his *indriya*s and thereby control his desire and anger before he can rightly rule:

> A kingdom, O greatly wise one, cannot be obtained, protected, or even enjoyed by one's own desire [alone], O bull among Bharatas. Indeed one whose *indriya*s are not subdued shall not command the kingdom for long, but the one whose self is conquered, O wise one, he governs the kingdom. Desire and anger drag a *puruṣa* away from [his] goals, but having conquered these two, a king conquers the great earth (*mahīṃ*). This greatness (*mahat*) is indeed the power of the lord of the *loka*.… [D]esiring greatness (*mahat*) one

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advisors to the first human kings who were created by the god Enki prior to the great flood. They emerged from a primordial ocean (Abzu, "deep water;" cf. Skt. *apsu*) and had the tails of fish, though relief-depictions portray them as bird-headed or winged. In these respects, they are evocative of the *saptarṣi*s, the "Seven Sages" of Vedic tradition who are most readily identified with the seven stars of Ursa Minor that circumambulate the polestar (*dhruva*) (see Brereton 1991).

> should bind [one's] *indriya*s to *artha* and *dharma*. Through restraint of the *indriya*s the *buddhi*[24] expands, just as Agni expands through kindling … Who first conquers just himself, as if he were the kingdom, does not seek to win over friends and enemies in vain.[25]

Just as Indra's sovereignty resulted from an enemy-conquering act of self-expansion by which he was identified with the entirety of the *loka*—an act repeated by human sacrificers—Duryodhana must learn to view himself as identified with the lands he wishes to rule. However, instead of a sacrificial means to this end, Gāndhārī urges the yogic practice of mastering the *indriya*s, the senses wherein the expansive power of Indra has since come to reside. By becoming a precise wielder of his *indriya*s, he conquers desire and anger, and thereby wins the 'great' expanse of the earth. The proof is in the expansion of the *buddhi* (the intellectual faculty of perceptual com-prehension), which swells like a well-fed fire, just as Indra swelled by means of sacrifice. In this, Gāndhārī demonstrates the pre-classical period's shift in thinking about sovereignty and *puruṣa*-hood—while the central import of an expansive greatness remains intact, the means have drastically shifted from a sacrificial paradigm to an ascetic and perceptually-driven paradigm that is informed by Sāṃkhya and Yoga. Henceforth, true sovereigns will retain their Indra-like greatness and might, thereby

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[24] Here the proper sense of *buddhi* is likely closer to "perceptual comprehension" than to its usual translation, "intellect." The etymological significance of the term "intellect," of course, covers perception, but this has been covered over in contemporary usage by the senses of abstracted understanding, reasoning, or cogitation. For want of a clearer English cognate, when the usual translation of *buddhi* with the term "intellect" could be potentially misleading, I will leave the world untranslated.

[25] MBh 5.127.21-25, 28—*na hi rājyaṃ mahāprājña sven akāmena śakyate* ǀ *avāptuṃ rakṣituṃ vāpi bhoktuṃ vā bharatarṣabha* ǁ *na hy avazyendriyo rājyam aśnīyād dīrgham antaram* ǀ *vijitātmā tu medhāvī sa rājyam abhipālayet* ǀ *kāmakrodhau hi puruṣam arthebhyo vyapakarṣataḥ* ǀ *tau tu śatrū vinirjitya rājā vijayate mahīm* ǁ *lokeśvaraprabhutvaṃ hi mahad etad durātmabhiḥ* ǀ … ǁ *indriyāṇi mahat prepsur niyacched arthadharmayoḥ* ǀ *indriyair niyatair buddhir vardhate 'gnir ivendhanaiḥ* ǁ … *ātmānam eva prathamaṃ deśarūpeṇa yo jayet* ǀ *tato 'mātyān amitrāṃś ca na moghaṃ vijigīṣate* ǁ

earning the right to be considered a *puruṣa*, but they will do so according to the requirements of this new paradigm.

5.2 The Supreme Sovereignty of the Puruṣottama

We can see this quite clearly in the narrativization of the MBh's theology, according to which a primeval *puruṣa*, a *puruṣottama*, is the unrivaled sovereign of both the lands of Bhārata and the entirety of the cosmos. Naturally, our attention turns to Kṛṣṇa, who is most often referred to by the honorific, *puruṣottama*. *Puruṣottama*, or "supreme person," is a new term to the MBh that signifies a king among kings, a sovereign of all sovereigns, and the true master of the cosmos. According to a folk etymology provided by Saṃjāya (at MBh 5.68.10), it derives from a combination of the terms *pūraṇa* ("filling") and *sadana* ("dwelling"). Thus the *puruṣottama* is the *pūra-sadana*, the one who "fills" the cosmos and "dwells" in every part. This recalls the portrayal of Kṛṣṇa's *viśvarūpa* in the BhG—his 'body' the site at which all birth, existence, and destruction take place; his immeasurable *tejas* suffusing all beings. This "sovereign form" (*rupaṃ āiśvaraṃ*), as Arjuna calls it, is, according to Kṛṣṇa, the manifestation of his "sovereign yoga" (*yogam āiśvaram*).[26] This suggests that the term *puruṣottama* not only serves to distinguish Kṛṣṇa as the greatest god of the epic, it also imbues him with a kind of sovereignty closely related to that described by Gāndhārī (and thus tied to, among other considerations appropriate to the pre-classical period, Yoga). As the pinnacle of this kind of sovereignty, an investigation into the term *puruṣottama* will help to illuminate the new significance granted to the *puruṣa*-epithet in the MBh.

[26] BhG 11.8.

Here, the story of the Pāṇḍavas' conflict with Jarāsaṃdha, which defines the term "*puruṣottama*" through a veiled retelling of the Vedic-era conflict between Indra and Vṛtra, is of particular interest. The surface story of this conflict involves Yudhiṣṭhira's quest to perform the Rājasūya rite and attain universal sovereignty. In order to clear the way for this most illustrious sacrifice, Yudhiṣṭhira must overthrow the current universal ruler (*saṃrāj*), a Magadhan king of miraculous birth named Jarāsaṃdha Bārhadratha,[27] as well as his chief ally, a traitorous former feudatory of Kṛṣṇa named Śiśupāla. Jarāsaṃdha, unlike previous universal sovereigns, has claimed his position through force.[28] Of the one-hundred-and-one current kings of Bhārata, fourteen have become his allies, while the rest (save Yudhiṣṭhira) are locked away in a "cow-pen for [sovereign] *puruṣa*s" (*puruṣavraja*).[29] Jarāsaṃdha, who gave one of his daughters in marriage to Kṛṣṇa's boyhood rival, Kaṃsa, also invaded Kṛṣṇa's lands and forced his people to retreat to the well-defended mountain citadel at Dvāraka. Should Yudhiṣṭhira wish to become himself a universal sovereign (and thereby also aid Kṛṣṇa's people), he must topple Jarāsaṃdha and gain the favor of the jailed kings.

As he councils Yudhiṣṭhira to wage war, Kṛṣṇa repeatedly refers to the ways in which Jarāsaṃdha's rule has stood as a personal affront to himself. In addition to the treachery of his former tribesman, Śiśupāla, and Jarāsaṃdha's direct attack on Kṛṣṇa's tribe, there is also one king among Jarāsaṃdha's allies named Pauṇḍraka Vāsudeva, who has the audacity to

[27] So named because he was born in two halves, which were put together (*saṃ+dhā*) by the *rākṣasi* Jarā. His all-encompassing sovereignty was destined "from birth," according to Kṛṣṇa (see MBh 2.13), and is described in familiar solar metaphors: "On the heads of all those whose heads have been anointed he shall blaze forth, he shall outshine their light as the sun outshines the light of the stars. In attacking him kings of plentiful forces and mounts shall go to their perdition, as moths in a flame" (MBh 2.17; tr. van Buitenen).

[28] See MBh 2.14. Jarāsaṃdha is further distinguished as a *pāśupata*, a devotee of Śiva who is prepared to sacrifice rival kings like *paśu*s.

[29] MBh 2.13.64e

call himself the *puruṣottama*: "That wicked one, who is known among Cedis as the *puruṣottama*, he thinks himself the *puruṣottama* in this *loka*. Due to his perpetual delusion, he takes the name that is mine."[30] In other words, there can be only one *puruṣottama*, and his name is Kṛṣṇa Vāsudeva. Interestingly, in comparison with the many expressly theistic uses of *puruṣottama* in the MBh, Pauṇḍraka seems to take the name as a political title, and this perhaps helps to explain the particular umbrage Kṛṣṇa takes with it.[31] A true *puruṣottama* must have the kind of divine qualities that Kṛṣṇa alone possesses, and which transcend mere human sovereignty. For this other Vāsudeva to pretend to such status makes a mockery of it. Such wrangling over a title is, after all, meant to be instructive; for leading up to this point in the story, Kṛṣṇa's divine status is relatively underdetermined. As van Buitenen puts it, "[t]hat Kṛṣṇa is a hero [at this point in the MBh] cannot be doubted; that he is a God remains to be seen" (1975: 24). Pauṇḍraka Vāsudeva's claim to the status of *puruṣottama* therefore refers us to a moment in history when the title "*puruṣottama*" needed to be distinguished from other kinds of *puruṣa*-based epithets for human sovereigns. Hence, the working out of the conflict with Jarāsaṃdha helps establish the special status of a *puruṣottama* and its specific association with Kṛṣṇa. In other words, the conflict between the Pāṇḍavas and Jarāsaṃdha—which concludes with Yudhiṣṭhira's Rājasūya and a miraculous affirmation of Kṛṣṇa's rightful status as *puruṣottama*—functions in part to establish the expressly theistic character of the *puruṣottama* and the proper relation between this "supreme person" and a merely human sovereign *puruṣa*.

[30] MBh 2.13.17-18—*…puruṣottamavijñāto yo 'sau cediṣu durmatiḥ* || *ātmānaṃ pratijānāti loke 'smin puruṣottamam* | *ādatte satataṃ mohād yaḥ sa cihnaṃ ca māmakam* ||

[31] Van Buitenen's speculates that the passage portrays "one Kṛṣṇaite faction from Mathurā denouncing another faction from Puṇḍra" (1975: 26). I suspect rather that we are seeing here a term in transition from a political to a theistic significance, as I explain below.

At this point it is worth recalling that the whole of the Jarāsaṃdha conflict—including the killing of Jarāsaṃdha and the ensuing Rājasūya in which Yudhiṣṭhira (eventually) receives the full support of the other kings of the land—is in part a retelling of the conflict between Indra and Vṛtra.[32] Here, Kṛṣṇa and the Pāṇḍavas are collectively cast in the role of Indra, while Jarāsaṃdha and his allies enact Vṛtra's role. Just as Vṛtra stole the cows and penned them in a mountain cave, so too Jarāsaṃdha kidnapped the kings and imprisoned them; just as Indra killed Vṛtra and released the cows (or waters; marking in either case the rescue of the Sun from its nadir at the winter solstice), so the Pāṇḍavas kill Jarāsaṃdha and release the kings; finally, "after killing Jarāsaṃdha, the Pāṇḍavas return home on his chariot, which turns out to be the very chariot on which Indra fought against Vṛtra."[33] These parallels tell us that the performance of the Rājasūya and the attainment of universal sovereignty is, in the pre-classical period, on par with, or written over the kind of sovereignty—i.e., creative and *loka*-sustaining—attained by Indra through his victory over Vṛtra. But added to this is the importance of establishing a theistic basis for that kind of sovereignty, which in this case relies upon the divine status of Kṛṣṇa as the *puruṣottama*.

In the Jarāsaṃdha tale, the divinity of Kṛṣṇa is declared and then violently demonstrated through the beheading of Śiśupāla at Yudhiṣṭhira's Rājasūya. As the consecratory ceremonies wind down, Yudhiṣṭhira decides to grant Kṛṣṇa the guest gift, following the urging of Bhīṣma. Śiśupāla, who has come to pay tribute along with the other kings of Bhārata, balks at the idea because Kṛṣṇa is neither a king, a brahmin, nor a guru. *Dharma*, as Śiśupāla understands it, dictates that one of the other kings, brahmins, or gurus in attendance

[32] See Vassilkov, 1995: 251-252.

[33] Ibid., 252. This is the same chariot on which Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa will later ride in the war at Kurukṣetra. See the analysis of chariot riding teams in the following chapter.

is a more worthy recipient. By showing undue preference to Kṛṣṇa, Yudhiṣṭhira betrays a misunderstanding of *dharma* that disqualifies him from the sovereign status he seeks. From Bhīṣma's perspective, Śiśupāla has not seen Kṛṣṇa for the true king, brahmin, and guru that he in fact is. Indeed, Bhīṣma argues that Yudhiṣṭhira's claim to sovereignty is actually bolstered by his preference for Kṛṣṇa above all others in attendance because Yudhiṣḥtira thus shows favor to the *puruṣottama*, the one whose sovereignty founds that of earthly, mortal kings. Bhīṣma makes his case in early Sāṃkhyan terms, and thus the meaning of the term *puruṣottama* essentially follows from early Sāṃkhya's (more or less monistic) understanding of the *puruṣa* as the highest *tattva* that subsumes (as source and master) the lower *tattva*s: "Krṣṇa," he states, "is the origin of the worlds, and likewise [he is] their end. This entire existence is fixed to the deed of Kṛṣṇa. Acyuta is the unmanifest *prakṛti*, the eternal agent, supreme among all beings; hence he is the eldest. The *buddhi*, the *manas*, the *mahān*, wind, light, waters, space, and earth, the four-fold existence—all is situated in Kṛṣṇa."[34] Characterized as the subsumptive whole, non-different from unmanifest *prakṛti*, Bhīṣma distinguishes Kṛṣṇa as 'the' *puruṣa* in the mode of early Sāṃkhya,[35] and this sets the stage for his claiming of the *puruṣottama* title in its full theistic significance.

[34] MBh 2.35.22-24—*kṛṣṇa eva hi lokānām utpattir api cāpyayaḥ* | *kṛṣṇasya hi kṛte bhūtam idaṁ viśvaṁ samarpitam* || *eṣa prakṛtir avyaktā kartā caiva sanātanaḥ* | *paraś ca sarvabhūtebhyas tasmād vṛddhatamo 'cyutaḥ* || *buddhir mano mahān vāyus tejo 'mbhaḥ khaṁ mahī ca yā* | *caturvidhaṁ ca yad bhūtaṁ sarvaṁ kṛṣṇe pratiṣṭhitam* ||

[35] The early character of the passage is attested by the fact that Kṛṣṇa is not here named the "Īśvara" of later, twenty-six *tattva* versions of Sāṃkhya, nor is he conceived as fundamentally aloof from creation, as the *puruṣa* of the twenty-five *tattva* Sāṃkhya.

By contrast, Śiśupāla is a "puerile *puruṣa*" who "does not realize that Kṛṣṇa is always and everywhere."[36] In other words, Śiśupāla has not grown large enough in wisdom to comprehend the cosmic scale of Kṛṣṇa's sovereign *puruṣa*-hood. So whereas Bhīṣma makes a philosophically informed theistic appeal to Kṛṣṇa's sovereign status, Śiśupāla seeks in responding to refocus the debate on political and other more secular considerations. He chides Bhīṣma, saying he only praises Kṛṣṇa because of his political loyalties, and then questions Kṛṣṇa's manhood for openly acknowledging that his wife, Rukmiṇī, had previously belonged to another. In other words, Śiśupāla believes not only that Kṛṣṇa is not a *puruṣa* in a sovereign sense, but also that he can't even claim the quintessential manhood of a *puruṣa*. At this bold attempt to publicly strip Kṛṣṇa of all levels of *puruṣa*-hood, the final affront has been issued as Kṛṣṇa swiftly beheads Śiśupāla without a further word. A great radiance (a 'thumb-sized' *puruṣa*?) then leaves Śiśupāla's body and enters his killer. It is a decisive moment that, in one fell swoop, removes all doubt about Kṛṣṇa's manhood, his sovereignty, and his theistic supremacy. It is moreover at this precise moment that all the surrounding kings, knowing that they have witnessed a miracle, recognize Kṛṣṇa as *puruṣottama*.[37] But if Kṛṣṇa is the true *puruṣottama*, and in this regard the clearest stand-in for Indra in the conflict with Vṛtra, what then becomes of Yudhiṣṭhira's claim to universal sovereignty? What sovereign status is left to one who accepts subordination to sovereignty of the supreme person?

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[36] MBh 2.35.26—*ayaṃ tu puruṣo bālaḥ śiśupālo na budhyate* | *sarvatra sarvadā kṛṣṇaṃ…*

[37] MBh 2.42.24—*tad adbhutam amanyanta dṛṣṭvā sarve mahīkṣitaḥ* | *yad viveśa mahābāhuṃ tat tejaḥ puruṣottamam* ||

The relation between a *puruṣottama* and a human sovereign is established according to parallels between the structures of the Sabhāparvan and the Rājasūya rite as represented in the *Brāhmaṇa*s. As van Buitenen argues (1975: 22), the guest gift given to Kṛṣṇa finds a parallel in the gift of leftover unction waters[38] to the newly consecrated king's heir apparent. In the portrayal of the Rājāsūya in the ŚB (5.4.2.8), this heir is the king's son. Kṛṣṇa is perhaps a viable son-like heir because, as van Buitenen notes, he orchestrated the assassination of Jarāsaṃdha and the release of the imprisoned kings, which effectively secured the necessary endorsements for Yudhiṣṭhira to perform the Rājasūya rite (ibid.: 24-26). A more compelling rationale for declaring Kṛṣṇa both a son and an heir derives from the fact that, in the Rājasūya, the gift of the remnant unction waters immediately follows the sacrificer's performance of the Viṣṇu strides. As I showed in chapter one, these strides represent a solarizing and sovereignty conferring moment in sacrificial settings. They express the sacrificer's greatness through an act of cosmic ascendancy that grounds his sovereignty in the prototypical sovereignty of the Sun-*qua*-Viṣṇu. Effectively, it is a moment in which the sacrificer is reborn as a *son* of Viṣṇu.[39] Hence by granting Kṛṣṇa the guest gift, the originary sovereignty of Viṣṇu is recognized as the genealogical source and ultimate resting place of all sovereignty.

[38] These waters are a potent ritual substance in need of proper disposal. They are imbued with the glory of sovereignty itself, much like the cosmic waters that serve as the substrate for the spreading of the Sun's rays. As ŚB 5.4.2.10 notes, any final residue is to be offered to Rudra, the usual recipient of the remnant in sacrificial settings. Note that it is to Rudra-Śiva that Jarāsaṃdha planned to sacrifice his captive kings, who perhaps represented a remnant or excess of his own universal sovereignty (see below).

[39] Heesterman notes that the application of the unction waters is the moment in which the sovereign takes on his new "cosmic body," becoming the firm pillar around which the cyclic forces of the cosmos rotate (1975: 116-122). It is in this regard a moment in which birth and death are united in a manner analogous to the sacrificing *puruṣa*'s immortalization via his identification with Death (see chapter one).

But if Viṣṇu is the father of sovereignty in this sense, why should Kṛṣṇa, Viṣṇu's *avatāra*, be cast in the role of the son at Yudhiṣṭhira's consecration? First, the giving of the gift, modeled after the gift of leftover unction waters, should adhere to the significance ascribed to any sacrificial remnant. The remnant "expresses the whole and is at the same time the principle of continuity, the seed of a new production cycle."[40] Consequently, insofar as the gift represents the "whole" of sovereignty, it rightly belongs to the *puruṣottama*, who is source or "seed" of all future claims to sovereignty and therefore the "father" of all future sovereigns. Second, in treating the father as his son/heir, Yudhiṣṭhira recognizes the recursive relationship between fathers and sons that we saw in our analysis of the "rite of transfer" in the Upaniṣads. These two logics—of remnants and of fathers and sons—are expressed together in the ŚB's treatment of the Rājasūya. There, when the newly consecrated sovereign gifts the leftover unction waters to his son, he should say (in part citing RV 10.121), "O Prajāpati, you alone encompass all forms; that for which we sacrifice to you, let it be ours! Let us be lords of wealth! … he who is the son makes the father; he who is the father makes the son; he thereby joins the virility (*vīrya*) of these two."[41] The heir-apparent—the king's son—is the one here addressed as Prajāpati. So the king (a father) treats his son as the cosmic father of all sovereigns, and in this manner the son stands as a father while the father stands as the son. The giving of the gift/remnant links in this way the recursive understanding of genealogical succession to the cosmological and theistic basis of sovereignty. In the ŚB's view, all sovereignty and all sons proceed from Prajāpati, the primordial progenitor. Hence all sovereigns must be reborn as Prajāpati through sacrifice,

[40] Heesterman, 1975: 125.

[41] ŚB 5.4.9— *prajāpate na tvadetānyanyo viśvā rūpāṇi pari tā babhūva … tadyaḥ putrastam pitaraṃ karoti yaḥ pitā tam putraṃ tadenayorvīrye vyatiṣajati*

and likewise all heirs to sovereignty must themselves be identified with the source of sovereignty that exists in and through their forefathers. When this model is transcribed to the Kṛṣṇaite theism of the MBh, Kṛṣṇa stands as the most natural heir-apparent because—as the *puruṣottama*, as Viṣṇu—he is identified with the sovereign source of existence, a fact which Bhīṣma duly notes in justifying his choice of Kṛṣṇa above all the other kings in attendance. And insofar as the father and son have this recursive relationship, each giving renewed birth to the other,[42] it makes perfect sense that Yudhiṣṭhira, who has been reborn as a sovereign and so must (in giving the guest gift) take on the role of the father, would entrust his sovereignty to Kṛṣṇa as the son who will ultimately father all future sovereigns.

To sum up, the clarification of the *puruṣottama* epithet and its rightful association with Kṛṣṇa takes place on two levels. First, and most bluntly, through the slaying of Śiśupāla, after which the kings of the world recognize Kṛṣṇa by that title. Second, and in a manner at once more subtle and more indebted to Brahmanical tradition, Kṛṣṇa is recognized as the *puruṣottama*—the genealogical source of sovereignty—through the giving of the guest gift.[43] Before we move on we must wonder how these two seemingly disconnected statements on the nature of the *puruṣottama*—one rooted in philosophical claims and bolstered by a forceful display of violence, the other rooted in complex considerations of ritual and

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[42] Again, as in the "rite of transfer," in which a dying father transfers himself into his son and the son becomes a *loka* for the father. The significance of the father-son relation for the Rājasūya rite was previously discussed by Heesterman (1975: 124-125), who emphasizes the sacrificer's symbolic death and rebirth.

[43] According to Malinar (2007: 11-13), a similar logic underlies the politics of *bhakti* outlined in the BhG: "*Bhakti* is the very affection and loyalty one shows towards another because one finds oneself in a relationship that is as close and indissoluble as kinship.... Arjuna is depicted, at least temporarily, as the ideal king because he is made the ideal *bhakta*, the loyal follower who can expect to receive his share of Kṛṣṇa's power and, ultimately, his transcendent state of being."

genealogy—are related, if at all. After all, the whole issue of the true significance of the *puruṣottama* epithet began with the false claim of Pauṇḍrika Vāsudeva, who only tangentially relates to the adversarial relationship between Kṛṣṇa and Śiśupāla. The answer again stems from the structure of the Rājasūya, though this time it specifically involves the ceremonial chariot race that follows the gift of the unction waters. At a certain point in this race, the newly consecrated king must shoot an arrow at a rival king. Heesterman suspects this reflects a moment of transfer (like that between dying father and son), when the sovereignty of the new king is symbolically affirmed by the 'death' of a previous king (1975: 138-139). In further support of Heesterman's suspicion, Śiśupāla is said to have been born with four arms (like Kṛṣṇa/Viṣṇu) and three eyes (like Śiva), which then fell off when he was placed on the lap of Kṛṣṇa in a sign of his eventual death. This raises the possibility of some overlap in the characters Śiśupāla and Pauṇḍrika Vāsudeva—one who was born looking like Kṛṣṇa (*and* Śiva, by his third eye), the other who aims to take Kṛṣṇa's name. In his analysis of Jain versions of the Jarāsaṃdha story, Geen argues that Jarāsaṃdha, Śiśupāla, and Paundraka Vāsudeva have been condensed into a single, "paradigmatic nemesis, the *prativāsudeva*" (2009: 66). Here, the rival king at whom the Rājasūya sacrificer's arrow flies would therefore be this *prativāsudeva*, whose role in the MBh has been dispersed over three characters. Kṛṣṇa attains his sovereign status as *puruṣottama* in the MBh by overcoming this nemesis in the guise of Śiśupāla.

The layering of references is, in this relatively short tale, extremely complex yet remains consistent. In the paradigmatically polysemous fashion of the MBh's narrative, the story of Yudhiṣṭhira's rise to sovereignty—which is no less Kṛṣṇa's rise to *puruṣottama*—finds its basis and justification in the tale of the primordial conflict between Indra and his nemesis,

Vṛtra, which is then refracted through several elements of the structure of the Rājasūya. The giving of the leftover unction waters, which relies upon the recursive understanding of familial and sovereign genealogy, informs the giving of the guest gift to Kṛṣṇa. And the slaying of Śiśupāla that naturally follows this gift adheres not only to the structure of the Rājasūya's chariot race, but also to the theistically oriented concept of the *prativāsudeva* and Bhīṣma's theistic conception of early Sāṃkhyan philosophy. The result is a coherent narrative that otherwise conceals a complex argument to define the term "*puruṣottama*" in mythic, ritual, philosophical, and theistic terms. It also seeks to clarify the MBh's position on human sovereigns, otherwise known as *puruṣa*s: Human sovereignty is ever-reliant upon its divine basis, its true source and eternal heir; and Yudhiṣṭhira's relation to Kṛṣṇa, as *saṃrāj puruṣa* to *puruṣottama*, is deliberately structured around that fact.

5.3 The Cosmic Yogi

After the events at Yudhiṣṭhira's Rājasūya, the revelations of Kṛṣṇa's divine nature evolve incrementally until reaching a definitive climax in the theophany of the BhG. Some of these revelations are presented in the form of long praises, as when Saṃjaya declares Kṛṣṇa the *puruṣottama*, who "by his own yoga makes go around and around, ceaselessly, the wheel of the world" and who "beguiles the worlds with is own yoga."[44] Others conceive the Absolute in terms that only obliquely refer to Kṛṣṇa, as in Sanatsujāta's teaching to Dhṛtarāṣṭra, which concludes with a poetic praise of the "eternal Bhagavan beheld by yogis." This Bhagavan is the *mahātma puruṣa* who is drawn by horses across the sky as the Sun,

[44] MBh 5.66; trans. van Buitenen (1975: 336).

and finally who is known when "one sees oneself in all creatures yoked to their various tasks."[45]

One revelation that stands out in particular is the revelation of the *mahat* form in the Udyogaparvan. Kṛṣṇa manifests this form before an audience of Kuru kings and sages that have been gifted with divine sight. The language of this passage is in itself interesting insofar as it contains no direct mentions of yoga, sovereign *puruṣa*s, or *puruṣottama*s. The language is instead sacrificial in tone and replete with images of fire. It emphasizes thereby the Vedic pedigree of Kṛṣṇa's divine supremacy; but it also anticipates the precise means by which his "sovereign yoga" (of cosmic expansiveness) is thought to work. Sent as a final envoy to Duryodhana, capping a long series of arguments in favor of pursuing peace with the Pāṇḍavas, Kṛṣṇa resorts to a demonstration of his unassailable nature:

> While deluded you think I am one man, Suyodhana; and in your ignorance you attempt to seize me, [as if you have] me surrounded. Here indeed are all the Pāṇḍavas, the Andhakas, and the Vṛṣṇis. Here are the Ādityas and Rudrās, the Vasus and the Maharṣis…. [Then,] out of this smiling Kṛṣṇa, thirty thumb-sized and lightning-like magnificent selves sprang, flashing like fire…. From the eyes, nostrils, and ears on all sides, a magnificently terrible flash of fire, covered in smoke, shown forth; and rays, like those of Sūrya shown through pores of his skin…. Having seen that astonishing magnificence (*mahat*) of Mādhava on the floor of the assembly hall, the drums of the gods sounded and a shower of flowers fell.[46]

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[45] MBh 5.45.23; trans. van Buitenen (1975: 294).

[46] MBh 5.129.2-4, 11, 14—*eko 'ham iti yan mohān manyase māṃ suyodhana* | *paribhūya ca durbuddhe grahītuṃ maāṃ cikīrṣasi* || *ihaiva pāṇḍavāḥ sarve tathaivāndhakavṛṣṇayaḥ* | *ihādityāś ca rudrāś ca vasavaś ca maharṣibhiḥ* || … *tasya saṃsmayataḥ śaurer viyudrūpā mahātmanaḥ* | *aṅguṣṭhamātrās tridaśa mumucuḥ pāvakārciṣaḥ* || … *netrābhyāṃ nastataś caiva śrotrābhyāṃ ca samantataḥ* | *prādurāsan mahāraudrāḥ sadhūmāḥ pāvakārciṣaḥ* | *romakūpeṣu ca tathā sūryasyeva marīcayaḥ* || … *tad dṛṣṭvā mahad āścaryaṃ mādhavasya sabhātale* | *devadundubhayo neduḥ puṣpavarṣaṃ papāta ca* ||

This *mahat* form, according to which Kṛṣṇa is the "greatness" that subsumes all powers divine and human, is a flaming affair. Kṛṣṇa—like the gods, men, and weapons springing from himself—burns like a massive fire and shines like the Sun. This blinding brilliance, paired with the appearance of the gods and their human incarnations at particular parts of his body, harks back to the Vedic portrayals of sovereigns as imbued with the solarity that links all fires, ritual and digestive. It moreover repeats imagery first found in the RV's Puruṣa Sūkta: Agni, in his association with priestly activities, blazes in Kṛṣṇa's mouth; the *lokapala*s, royal protectors of the *loka*s, spring like lightning from his arms. They appear "thumb-sized," which as we saw in our investigation of Upaniṣadic-era *puruṣa*s, is shorthand for the expansive solarity that undergirds the KU's exposition of yoga. Kṛṣṇa is presented as the origin of these lesser solarities; he is the one who, to paraphrase the Upaniṣadic tradition, draws these luminous and thumb-sized divinities from his body like a reed from its sheath. In this regard, the Vedic pedigree of Kṛṣṇa's sovereignty is implicitly reconceived in yogic terms; the godhead is a sovereign master of the sacrificial cosmos as well as a cosmic yogi, whose expansive solarity demonstrates his yoking of all that exists.

This first tentative association of sacrificial sovereigns and yogis is made explicit in the *Bhagavad Gītā*. There, Kṛṣṇa is portrayed as the master of sacrifice precisely because he is the lord of yoga (*yogeśvara*), which means, among other things, that he is united with the sacrificial cosmos itself. Hence Kṛṣṇa is depicted in terms analogous to the Ṛgvedic *puruṣa*,[47] the originary sacrifice: he is the subject of a continuous immolation, an undying

[47] The *puruṣa* concept in the BhG in fact represents multiple doctrines throughout the text, owing in part to the BhG's layered nature and its syncretism. In agreement with Malinar (2012), I discern three layers in the text: (1) an early layer that reframes Upaniṣadic monism in terms of disinterested, sacrificial action (or *karmayoga*); (2) a middle layer that theistically reinterprets *brahman* as Kṛṣṇa and that introduces the notion of devotional

sacrifice whose mortal nature—those divine and human forms that he founds—forms the exposed surface of his otherwise infinite and immortal nature.[48] Like Indra before this *puruṣa*, who creates the cosmos by an act of sacrificial self-expansion, and who, according to the BĀU "Honey Doctrine," "possesses a counter-form to every form, all ten hundred of his steeds are yoked," Kṛṣṇa is that light whose rays reach out and suffuse all of existence. Moreover, like the *yajamāna* of the *Brāhmaṇa*s, who attains immortality by becoming the *puruṣa* in the Sun called Death, and like the Upaniṣadic identification of Agni with the eater of all things, Kṛṣṇa burns as the fires of Time, destroying all beings and swallowing them in his inescapable and fiercely tusked mouths.

The Cosmic Yogi is a figure that subsumes all these qualities, re-establishing thereby the traditions of the past, as well as the nature of the relation between person and world, upon the foundation of yogic metaphysics. In brief, this is a metaphysics of self-expansion that is predominately described in terms of the activity of light. Kṛṣṇa's expansive luminosity is the means by which he suffuses, founds, and connects all the existent beings of the comsos. Three verses in the BhG succinctly address the metaphysical status of the Cosmic Yogi. Kṛṣṇa declares,

> There is nothing that could exist without existing through me, whether animate or inanimate. There is no end to my divine expansion . . . . Whatever being possesses the power of expansion, or possesses sovereignty, or is endowed with strength, understand that he originates from a fraction (*aṃśa*) of my splendor (*tejas*).[49]

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relinquishment of acts (*bhaktiyoga*); (3) and a later layer of loosely connected addenda and sectarian reformulations.

[48] Recall how, in the *Brāhmaṇa*s, the Sun was identified with Death, but was nonetheless the source of immortality in its *puruṣa* aspect. See chapter one.

[49] BhG 10.39cd-41—*na tad asti vinā yat syān mayā bhūtaṃ carācaram* ‖ *nānto'sti mama divyānāṃ … yad yad vibhūtimat sattvaṃ śrīmad ūrjitam eva vā* | *tat tad evāvagaccha tvaṃ mama tejo'ṃśasaṃbhavam* ‖

In other words, everything that exists as distinct in the cosmos exists as a share of that by which the entirety of the cosmos originates. As that expansive origin, Kṛṣṇa fills the cosmos with the *tejas* that he essentially is (and which all that is essentially is as well). Every existent being therefore relates to Kṛṣṇa in the same luminous manner as the *prativāsudeva* Śiśupāla, whose fraction of *tejas* was re-integrated with its source at death; and in the same manner as the fiery gods sparked forth, thumb-sized, from his blinding *mahat* form in the Udyogaparvan. Consequently, the one who knows Kṛṣṇa knows that he is equally in all beings, a characterization that reconfigures, in devotional and theistic terms, the earlier portrayal of the human yogi (described at BhG 5.18-19, 21) whose "Self is yoked to the yoga of *brahman*" (*brahmayogayuktātmā*), who "sees [*brahman*] equally" in all beings (*samadarśinaḥ*), who has a "mind established in that equality" (*sāmye sthitaṃ*), and who is therefore like *brahman*, which is "faultless and equable" (*nirdoṣaṃ hi samaṃ*).

Whereas Kṛṣṇa is the embodiment of the unity of all existence, what has been and what is yet to be, existent beings experience the cosmos in terms of difference and multiplicity. The BhG suggests several means of overcoming this limited experience. A person may partake (√*bhaj*) in Kṛṣṇa's nature through single-pointed devotion (*bhakti*). He may develop a thorough knowledge of his true self as the living element of the whole cosmos in *jñāna-yoga*. Or he may relinquish the fruits of his acts to Kṛṣṇa—the true recipient of all sacrifices and the eater of all oblations—through the practice of disinterested action, or *karma-yoga*. This last method bears some further scrutiny insofar as it helps determine the precise nature of the relation between the human person and the cosmos that Kṛṣṇa fills and sustains with his yoga.

The BhG portrays the *karma* yogi as the true renunciant (*saṃnyāsa*) who renounces the fruits of his acts (as opposed to the total renunciation of activity in general) by making each act a sacrifice. He makes this sacrifice to the Upaniṣadic Absolute, *brahman*; for "*brahman* is the offering, *brahman* is the oblation poured out by *brahman* into the fire of *brahman*; [hence] *brahman* is to be attained by him who always sees *brahman* in action."[50] *Brahman* is in this context treated as analgous to the *prakṛti* of Sāṃkhya, which is known through the wisdom path of *jñānayoga*. The wise follower of Sāṃkhya is not attached to action, for he knows that all action is really "the *guṇa*s turn[ing] among the *guṇa*s," and therefore "one acts according to one's own *prakṛti*."[51] The *karma* yogi practices this knowledge with his renunciation, acting without regard for outcomes, and with his mind and senses restrained from the objects of desire and composed in the Self. His self is thereby said to be "yoked to yoga," and he therefore "sees the Self present in all beings and all beings in the Self."[52]

But whereas the activity of the *karma* yogi is characterized by total detachment, his mastery of yoga coincides with a mastery of the active forces of creation. By sacrificing and renouncing the results of all acts to *prakṛti* / *brahman*, the yogi identifies himself with this true source of activity. In other words, the result of the detached action of *karmayoga* is not liberation from the active dimension that is *prakṛti* / *brahman*, as is true for classical Sāṃkhya. The BhG ever argues in favor of action in the world for the sake of its maintenance;[53] so the yogi's practice must by default lead him to an unassailable affirmation

[50] BhG 4.24; trans. Sargent 1994: 224.

[51] BhG 3.28, 33— *guṇā guṇeṣu vartanta .... sadṛśaṃ ceṣṭate svasyāḥ prakṛteḥ*

[52] BhG 6.29—*sarvabhūtastham ātmānaṃ sarvabhūtāni cātmani | īkṣate yogayuktātmā sarvatra samadarśanaḥ* || See parallel statements at BhG 4.35; 5.7; and 6.32.

[53] This purpose is encapsulated in the term *lokasaṃgraha* (the "holding together of the world"), which Kṛṣṇa uses to describe the final aim of the yogi's action in the world and the

thereof. Malinar (2007: 111-113) convincingly argues this same point in her reading of the compound *sarvabhūtātmabhūtātma* as "[the one whose] elemental Self is the elemental Self of all beings" (in other words, the one whose active self is *prakṛti* / *brahman*), instead of the usual "[one whose aloof, non-active] Self has become the Self of all beings." This implies that the yogi's restraint of the mind and senses functions essentially as we saw it in the Āyurvedic literature, where the elemental composition of the *indriya*s allows for the possibility that one could perceive far off objects via the universally connected substratum of elements in the cosmos. In Malinar's words, the yogi's restraint of his faculties allows him to connect "with the cosmological dimension of his 'active self' [i.e., *brahman* / *prakṛti*] in that all his faculties are depersonalized and can therefore *expand* into their cosmological and thus unspecified form" (2007: 112; emphasis added).[54] Consequently, the realized yogi is one whose action is the action of *brahman* / *prakṛti*, the cosmic source of activity, and therefore the yogi accrues no further karma by acting in the world.

The very same is otherwise put in terms of the ascetic practices of the *tapasvin*: When a human yogi performs ascetic practices (*tapas*), he stokes (√*tap*) his own fiery essence, increasing thereby the reach of his own light, or splendor (*tejas*). By virtue of strengthening his luminous nature, the yogi becomes capable of forging connections between himself and other beings or even the entirety of the cosmos, thereby 'yoking' (√*yuj*) himself to the world beyond his body via the cosmic network of light.[55] Thus linked up to the vastness of the

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key reason for why Arjuna should participate in the battle. Its significance is otherwise expressed through the *viśvarūpa*, in which all the beings of the cosmos are literally 'held together' in Kṛṣṇa's body.

[54] See also BhG 5.7, where the one who is "yoked to yoga" (*yogayukta*) has attained the "being of *brahman*" (*brahmabhūta*).

[55] See White 2009: 58–82.

cosmos, the accomplished yogi is also an *īśvara*, a sovereign Lord who "has creative, elemental control of the bhūtas (the five elements) of which the whole material world is made" (Fitzgerald 2012: 276).

5.4 Becoming the Cosmic Puruṣa: Human Beings in the Yoga-World

5.4.1 A Person made of Great Beings

The yogi's control of these elemental "beings" is a consequence of his identification with the *brahmabhūta*, which in turn indicates that his "being" is synonymous "the power of expansion." Hence in his active capacities, he has become a "great Self" (*mahān ātmā*), coterminous with the entirety of the cosmos.[56] When transferred to the language of early Sāṃkhya, these designations signify that the yogi has extended himself to a point of identification with the "great elemental beings" (*mahābhūta*s) that pervade the cosmos, along with their source and master that corresponds to his own highest nature (*prakṛti*). A *puruṣa*, in this early Sāṃkhyan language, is made of these great beings. Consequently a person has an entirely natural pathway to the sovereign state of the self-expansive yogi: master the *mahābhūta*s, become a master of yoga.[57]

The *mahābhūta*s feature in a number of passages throughout the MBh, but these are primarily concentrated in the philosophical, didactic portions of the twelfth and fourteenth books that explicate, in a host of fashions, the practice of yoga according to variations of

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[56] See Malinar 2012: 110-111; Fitzgerald 2012: 280 n.39; and White 2009: 172-173.

[57] As described in chapter three, a parallel logic appears in the Pāli canon's depictions of the *kasiṇa* practice. The bhikkhu uses one of the elements as a meditative prop, making it the "whole" (P. *kasiṇa* = Skt. *kṛtsna*) of his awareness so that he may know it so thoroughly that he gains mastery over it. Out of this practice arise the *iddhi*s of walking on water, diving into the earth, etc.; in at least one instance (the *Culasuññata sutta*) it is preparatory toward the attainment of *nibbana*. For a cogent review of the *kasiṇa* practice and how it generates *iddhi*s, see Clough 2012: 41, 61, 149-152, & 157-159.

Sāṃkhyan metaphysics and cosmology. In such passages, the *mahābhūta*s are not simply the material building blocks of the cosmos, but, as in Āyurveda, the perceptual and perceptible stuff of the cosmos that is grasped by the *indriya*s according to their elemental similarity. This is suggestive of the fact that a person can change the nature of his relation to the cosmos by changing the way these *indriya*s are employed. The yogi is thus urged to master the *mahābhūta*s by "conquering" or "restraining" his *indriya*s, and to "know" the *mahābhūta*s by their role in the phenomenal scheme of the cosmos.

And yet no two of these discussions of the *mahābhūta*s are exactly alike. There is a considerable difference between the kinds of Sāṃkhyan schemes developed—the number of *tattva*s varies between twenty-four and twenty-six;[58] sometimes *bhava*s are listed where *guṇa*s would be expected; etc. Those that we are interested in here are of the historically earlier sort—materialistic, accepting of Upaniṣadic monism, based upon a twenty-four-fold scheme of *tattva*s, etc.—and therefore not likely to contradict Kṛṣṇa's continual exhortations (for Arjuna and Yudhiṣṭhira) to act in the world, as the BhG says, for the sake "holding together the world" (*lokasaṃgraha*). In such passages, the yogi's aim better accords with the human-*īśvara* ideal, a mastery that affirms activity on a cosmic scale.

We see related doctrines in the early Āyurvedic literature; and both Āyurveda and the MBh's early Sāṃkhyan portrayals of yoga are based upon the idea that the person and the world alike consist of "great beings" that can be mastered for the purposes of mastering one's inherently expansive nature. In fact, the theory of personhood developed in the epic's treatment of yoga (again, in early Sāṃkhyan terms) is fundamentally similar to the theory of

[58] As a general tendency, 24 *tattva* schemes are more materialistic and amenable to Upaniṣadic doctrines, 25 *tattva* schemes skew closer to Īśvarakṛṣṇa's 'classical' doctrine, and 26 *tattva* schemes mark later returns to a theistic framework, headed by an *īśvara-qua*-god who subsumes all *puruṣa*s and *prakṛti*.

personhood developed in early Āyurveda. The person is expansive and capable of altering the extent of this expansion through the manipulation of the "great beings" that make up both the world and himself. The MBh thus adheres to the pre-classical paradigm of personhood as it is expressed in early Āyurveda. As the ensuing demonstration of this paradigm, as it is expressed in the MBh, will show, the process of mastering the elements, of becoming a *yogeśvara*, or "lord of yoga," is essentially the same as the process of increasing the health of the *puruṣa* in early Āyurveda.

We begin by looking at the Vyādha Gītā (VG) in the Āraṇyakaparvan, a text that contains the most direct parallel in the whole of the MBh to the *Caraka*'s argument for the identity of the *puruṣa* and *loka*. It is a lengthy didactic section that spans a wide range of topics and is structured around a teaching given by an unnamed hunter (*vyādha*) to Janaka, the king of Videha.[59] The fact that it is a lowly hunter that instructs Janaka is significant: hunting, like curing the sick, is an impure profession in the eyes of the contemporary *dharma* literature. The *Manusmṛti* (MS) holds that a brahmin must "never eat … food given by a physician, [or] a hunter."[60] Hunting is also listed as one of the four fatal vices that can ruin a king.[61] And yet hunters serve an undeniably important function. Living in the forests,

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[59] Videha is in the region of Greater Magadha and Janaka is frequently depicted as receiving instruction from various *śramaṇic* figures. White (2009: 143-144), following Bronkhorst (2007), writes, "figures like Janaka… would have been exemplars of the new creative synthesis [of brāhmaṇic and śramaṇic ideology and practice] that was emerging during that [pre-classical] period, precisely the period in which what can only be termed as an explosion of yoga references appeared."

[60] MS 4.212; trans. Olivelle, 2004. The impurity of food given by such agents transfers to the brahmin: "The food of a physician is pus; the food of a promiscuous woman is semen; [etc]" (MS 4.220; ibid.).

[61] See, for instance, MS 7.50. The full list includes drinking, gambling, women, and hunting—traditional pastimes of kings that are liable to over-indulgence. I will address these vices in the following chapter.

at the literal edges and interstices of *dharmic* society, a hunter keeps the population of wild animals in check and away from human habitations, which in turn helps clear the way for the expansion of societal boundaries. He freely roams between settled lands and possesses an intimate knowledge of the wilds, hence he is a trusted witness in boundary disputes,[62] as well as trusted source for medicinal herbs.[63] In other words, it is certain that he associates with the many types of *śramaṇa*s who wander in those wilds—"at once within and without the *dharmic* norm"—including those ascetic physicians of early Āyurveda and other followers of early Sāṃkhya doctrines (Malamoud 1996: 81).[64]

The *mahābhūta* theory espoused by the VG's hunter follows this early Sāṃkhyan view: it forms part of a twenty-four-fold *tattva* scheme that equates the *puruṣa* with the unmanifest aspect of *prakṛti* (i.e., *avyakta*) in a manner similar to that found in the CS and other early Sāṃkhya texts. And in line with the typical blurring of the distinction between Upaniṣadic doctrines and those of early Sāṃkhya, the hunter does not identify his exposition of the *mahābhūta* theory with Sāṃkhya, but with the *brāhmī vidyā*, the "divine knowledge" that relates to *brahman*. He begins:

> This entire, unconquerable world and all its creatures consist of the *mahābhūta*s, O Brahmin; beyond this there is nothing. The *mahābhūta*s are

[62] MS 8.259-260: "When native inhabitants of neighboring villages are unavailable as witnesses to a boundary, however, he may even question the following men who roam the forest: hunters, fowlers, herdsmen, fishermen… [etc.]" (trans. Olivelle 2004: 142).

[63] SuS 1.37.8; cited in Wezler 1995: 228.

[64] On the link between Āyurvedic physicians and *śramaṇa*s, see Zysk 1991: 26-33 and Bronkhorst 2007: 56-60. Both, however, overemphasize the separation between physicians of Brahmanic and *śramanic* backgrounds (see the introduction and conclusion to this dissertation, and the concluding remarks to this chapter). On the association of the Sāṃkhyan *mahābhūta* theory with *śramaṇism*, see Filliozat 1996: 64-71. Jainism and Buddhism both espouse a four element view (though Buddhism later accepts *akāśa* as a fifth element). Larson (1979: 93-94) provides a further comparison between these traditions and Sāṃkhya on the basis of the doctrines of suffering (*duḥkha*) and liberation (*kaivalya*).

> space, wind, fire, waters, and earth. Sound, touch, form, fluidity, and smell are their [respective] qualities. All of these qualities (*guṇā*) relate to each other, and in all, the qualities of each previous one, one after the other, [exist] in three conditions (*guṇiṣu triṣu*). And a sixth one, consciousness, is [otherwise] known by the name "mind" (*manas*). The *buddhi* is the seventh, and beyond this is the *ahaṃkāra*. [Adding to these] the five senses and likewise *rajas*, *sattva*, and *tamas*—this is collectively known as a seventeen-fold, imperceptible heap, the *avyakta*. Here, with all the [five] objects of the senses, with both the manifest (*vyakta*) and the unmanifest (*avyakta*), is that well-hidden one that is twenty-four-fold. This is the species (*guṇa*) that consists of both the perceptible and the imperceptible.[65]

Here, as throughout pre-classical literature, the *mahābhūta*s are not simply elements but rather the perceptual, perceptible 'stuff' of the cosmos. They comprise absolutely everything that exists, both materially and phenomenally. Personhood arises out of the conglomeration of these elements, with their sensory and sensible qualities, the (for lack of an idiomatic term) 'psychical' *tattva*s, mind (*manas*), intellect (*buddhi*), ego (*ahaṃkāra*), and the triad of *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas* (not clearly identified with the evolutionary *guṇa*s of the classical system or the affective *bhāva*s more common to early Sāṃkhya[66]). The counting of these elements at first appears inaccurate, but in fact it reflects a specific way of counting the elements of a nested hierarchy.[67] The first sum of seventeen counts the five *mahābhūta*s, *manas*, *buddhi*, and *ahaṃkāra* (= eight), plus the five *indriya*s, *rajas*, *sattva*, and *tamas* (=

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[65] MBh 3.201.15-20—*idaṃ viśvaṃ jagat sarvam ajayyaṃ cāpi sarvaśaḥ* | *mahābhūtātmakaṃ brahman nātaḥ parataraṃ bhavet* || *mahābhūtāni khaṃ vāyur agnir āpas tathā ca bhūḥ* | *śabdaḥ sparśaś ca rūpaṃ ca raso gandhaś ca tadguṇāḥ* || *teṣām api guṇāḥ sarve guṇavṛttiḥ parasparam* | *pūrvapūrvaguṇāḥ sarve kramaśo guṇiṣu triṣu* || *ṣaṣṭhas tu cetanā nāma mana ity abhidhīyate* | *saptamī tu bhaved buddhir ahaṃkāras tataḥ param* || *indriyāṇi ca pañcaiva rajaḥ sattvaṃ tamas tathā* | *ity eṣa saptadaśako rāśir avyaktasaṃjñakaḥ* || *sarvair ihendriyārthais tu vyaktāvyaktaiḥ susaṃvṛtaḥ* | *caturviṃśaka ity eṣa vyaktāvyaktamayo guṇaḥ* ||

[66] See van Buitenen 1956 on the historical priority of *bhāva*s. As he argues, in the earliest formulations, these *bhāva*s "still derive from" the *puruṣa*, rather than from a separate *prakṛti* (157).

[67] Described as the "x+1" counting scheme by Knipe (1975: 8; Knipe is here interpreting Bergaigne's (1883) articulation of Vedic theories of "cosmic correspondences").

sixteen), and finally the unmanifest *avyakta*, which is the previous sixteen taken collectively and counted as the seventeenth. The remaining elements include the five objects of sense (= twenty-two; listed as the "qualities" of the *mahābhūta*s in the above passage), which are together known as the manifest (*vyakta*; = twenty-three). When the seventeen-fold *avyakta* and six-fold *vyakta* are taken in combination, they constitute a twenty-fourth, a "well-hidden one" that the text will later refer to as the *ātman*, and then as the *puruṣa*.

These calculations aside, the verses that follow show that the hunter's understanding of this twenty-four-fold assemblage is especially concerned with the functioning of the *mahābhūta*s and the linkage between them, their perceptible qualities, and the five *indriya*s by which they are perceived. He counts fifteen of these perceptible qualities, and these "turn" in all beings (√*vṛt*) as the "foundations of worlds."

> [When] the qualities do not surpass each other [i.e., when they are harmoniously balanced] there is prosperity and health, O brahmin. But when moving and unmoving beings approach a state of disharmony, then, in the course of time the embodied one attains to another body. In due order beings perish and in due order they are born.[68]

There is no mention of *doṣa*s here, but the basic idea, involving the delicate balance of the elements, is patently Āyurvedic. Insofar as an elemental harmony prevails (the nature of which is not elaborated in the text), there is both health and life. A seemingly inevitable state of disharmony, however, corresponds with illness and, eventually, death. Implicitly, the *indriya*s that perceive the qualities of the elements play a role in whether the elemental qualities exist in a state of harmony or disharmony, and this is affirmed by the verses that follow:

[68] MBh 3.202.8-10ab—*ete pañcadaśa brahman guṇā bhūteṣu pañcasu* | *vartante sarvabhūteṣu yeṣu lokāḥ pratiṣṭhitāḥ* | *anyonyaṃ nātivartante saṃpac ca bhavati dvija* || *yadā tu viṣamībhāvam ācaranti carācarāḥ* | *tadā dehi deham anyaṃ vyatirohati kālataḥ* || *ānupūrvyā vinaśyanti jāyante cānupūrvaśaḥ* |

> Whatever it is that one emits for oneself (Ā √*sṛj*) by means of the *indriya*s, that is called "Manifest." That which is beyond the *indriya*s, grasped by sign [alone] is called "Unmanifest." Those who, each for himself, grasp these—those [qualities of] sound and the rest—for so long as that embodied one holds the *indriya*s here, he suffers. [But if] *he sees the Self spread out in the* loka *and the* loka *spread out in the Self*, [then] knowing the near and the far, fixed upon the truth, he sees all beings, all elements.[69]

The way beyond deadly disharmony thus rests upon the way one approaches the qualities of the elements with the *indriya*s. The trick is to not grasp at these qualities—which the hunter sees as actively "emitted" by oneself as manifest reality—but rather to see the Self that naturally extends throughout the whole world. In other words, the grasping after the qualities of the immediate sensory world is an impediment to the expansive, all-seeing state that is accessed when one's focus is fixed upon the *ātman*. It is a claim that blurs the line between psychology and ontology, revealing the source of manifest reality through the repurposing and subsequent expansion of one's sensory/phenomenal experience.[70]

In this regard it is noteworthy just how closely the call to see "the Self spread out in the world and the world spread out in the Self" echoes the CS's doctrine of the *satyā buddhi*, by which one, having seen the world in the Self and vice versa, recognizes that "the *puruṣa* and the *loka* are the same measure." The likely close association of hunters and the wandering physicians of early Āyurveda is thereby further attested.[71] So too is the likelihood that the VG and CS's *Puruṣa-Vicayam* belong to the same time period and doctrinal context. This is

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[69] MBh 3.202.11-13—*indriyaiḥ sṛjyate yad yat tat tad vyaktam iti smṛtam* | *avyaktam iti vijñeyaṃ liṅgagrāhyam atīndriyam* || *yathāsvaṃ grahakāny eṣāṃ śabdādīnām imāni tu* | *indriyāṇi yada dehī dhārayann iha tapyate* || *loke vitatam ātmānaṃ lokaṃ cātmani paśyati* | *parāvarajñaḥ saktaḥ san sarvabhūtāni paśyati* ||

[70] This is parallel to the way that Sāṃkhya blurs the line between psychology, cosmology, and metaphysics.

[71] It is impossible to resist noting the closeness of the terms *vyādha*—a "hunter" who "pierces" beasts—and *vyādhi*—the "disease" that "strikes" into living beings.

a context (and later verses in the VG strengthen this estimation) in which Yoga remains a practice primarily of controlling the *indriya*s, and in which Sāṃkhya remains enmeshed with the concepts of Upaniṣadic monism. It is therefore a context much closer to that of the middle Upaniṣads—especially the teaching of the KU—than to later pre-classical texts (like the later layers of the MDhP, or the MaiU) where the doctrines of Yoga and Sāṃkhya are further developed and more clearly distinguished from earlier Upaniṣadic speculations.

The verses that then follow heighten the hunter's association of Sāṃkhyan and Upaniṣadic doctrines by invoking the "being of *brahman*" (*brahmabhūta*)—a term that described the state of the realized yogi in the earliest layer of the BhG—which is coincident with the unimpeded functioning of the luminous *buddhi*.

> Seeing all beings always and in all conditions, the complete yoking (*saṃyoga*) to the being of *brahman* is not obtained through what is inauspicious. For those who have overcome the affliction that is born of bewilderment and that lies at the root of knowledge, the *loka* is seen through the path of knowledge and by the shining forth of the intellect (*buddhi*).[72]

So the one who is capable of seeing the self spread out in the *loka* and vice versa is one who effects a "complete yoking" to the *brahmabhūta*, the "being of *brahman*." This *brahmabhūta* was also an important concept in the earliest layer of the BhG's text. There it was identified with the state attained by a yogi just prior to his final liberation at death. He is, in this condition, no longer identified with his activities, and dispassionately moves through the world of the elements and their qualities. This makes him "a very powerful being, what is called elsewhere a *siddha* or *īśvara*," at once the creative agency of the entire cosmos and an exceedingly powerful agent within it (Malinar, 2007: 110-111). By this yogic union with

[72] MBh 3.202.14-15—*paśyataḥ sarvabhūtāni sarvāvasthāsu sarvadā* | *brahmabhūtasya saṃyogo nāśubhenopapadyate* || *jñānamūlātmakaṃ kleśam ativṛttasya mohajam* | *loko buddhiprakāśena jñeyamārgeṇa dṛśyate* ||

brahman alone is the affliction of bewilderment overcome, after which the whole *loka* is seen through the "shining forth of the *buddhi*."

Seeing the Self, becoming *brahman*, or letting the *buddhi* shine forth—all of these synonyms for the yogi's greatest attainment return us to the subject of the proper use of the *indriya*s in relation to the qualities of the *mahābhūta*s. To wit, in what way does the control of the *indriya*s free the yogi's sight, allowing him to see both the "near and far"? In other words, where are the *indriya*s restrained if it is not 'in' the body?

> That about which you ask me, O *vipra*, is known as this whole world, the root of *tapas*, the power of perceiving/understanding (*buddhimat*), the faceless and unparalleled Lord, eternally unchanging, the womb of the Self, the person without beginning or end. The *indriya*s are this whole world, both heaven and hell… This entire method of Yoga is encapsulated in the holding of the *indriya*s… Through the indulgence of the *indriya*s one attains a bad consequence (*doṣa*), to be sure. But when they are held together, one attains perfection (*siddhi*). The one who attains mastery of the eternal six in the Self, he is a conqueror of the *indriya*s—he is not yoked by evils or misfortunes.[73]

Again, the theme of health or illness arises through the association of *doṣa* with the indulgence of the *indriya*s. By contrast, a "holding together" is responsible for "perfection." The goal is thus to "conquer" the *indriya*s, though what this "conquering" means remains unclear. A more or less standard academic interpretation argues that the conquering of *indriya*s is commensurate to the holding back or forceful checking of the *indriya*s—in other words a stopping of the externalization of the senses and a meditative internalization into

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[73] MBh 3.202.16-17ab, 18ab, 19-20—*anādinidhanaṃ jantum ātmayoniṃ sadāvyayam* | *anaupamyam amūrtaṃ ca bhagavān āha buddhimān* | *tapomūlam idaṃ sarvaṃ yan māṃ viprānupṛcchasi* || *indriyāṇy eva tat sarvaṃ yat svarganarakāv ubhau* | … *eṣa yogavidhiḥ kṛstno yāvad indriyadhāraṇam* | … *indriyāṇāṃ prasaṅgena doṣam ṛcchaty asaṃśayam* | *saṃniyamya tu tāny eva tataḥ siddhim avāpnute* || *ṣaṇṇām ātmani nityānām aiśvaryaṃ yo 'dhigacchati* | *na sa pāpaiḥ kuto 'narthair yujyate vijitendriyaḥ* ||

subtle forms of consciousness.[74] However, the hunter has just identified the *indriya*s with "this whole world," rendering the dichotomy of internal versus external rather meaningless. The following verses, drawing directly upon the doctrines of the KU, offer a further challenge to the standard interpretation:

> The body of a *puruṣa* is seen [to be like] a chariot; the *ātman* is called the charioteer and the *indriya*s are called horses. The prosperous one with good horses is undistracted by these [sense objects]. With tamed [horses], one wanders pleasantly, like a skillful chariot driver. The skillful one who should hold the reins/rays of the six eternal and restless *indriya*s in the Self, he shall be the most excellent charioteer. As in charioteering, one should take hold of the *indriya*s [that have been] let-loose, like horses on a cart path; by holding these, one should win the eternal (*dhruva*).[75]

Rather than a forceful stopping of the *indriya*s, the yogi holds them as a charioteer holds tamed horses. They remain active, but they are not prone to lead the yogi where he does not choose. Indeed, he leads them anywhere he likes because they are not restlessly drawn to objects of desire or unwilling to approach objects of aversion. They are not in the body; rather they are in the Self, which extends everywhere. In this condition, as a later verse attests, the *indriya*s are "dispersed" (*vi+prati+√pad*), meaning they are capable of apprehending sensible objects wherever the Self resides, which is, in fact, everywhere.[76]

[74] The prevalence of this interpretation is likely the result of a backwards reading of the term *pratyāhāra* ("withdrawal [of the senses]"), one of the limbs of Patañjali's classical Yoga, onto the earlier association of Yoga with "the firm holding of the senses" (*sthirāmindriyadhāraṇāṃ*), as in KU 6.11, or the "restraint" of the senses (*niyata*) found in other texts.

[75] MBh 3.202.21-23—*rathaḥ śarīraṃ puruṣasya dṛṣṭam; ātmā niyantendriyāṇy āhur aśvān* | *tair apramattah kuśalī sadaśvair; dāntaiḥ sukhaṃ yāti rathīva dhīraḥ* || *ṣaṇṇam ātmani nityānām indriyāṇāṃ pramāthinām* | *yo dhīro dhārayed raśmīn sa syāt paramasārathiḥ* || *indriyāṇāṃ prasṛṣṭānāṃ hayānām iva vartmasu* | *dhṛtiṃ kurvīta sārathye dhṛtyā tāni jayed dhruvam* ||

[76] See MBh 3.202.25: "When those six [senses], which are bound to the pursuit of the fruit [of acts] because of delusion, are dispersed, then the student finds the fruit that is born

This accords with Malinar's reading, cited earlier, of the yogi of the BhG, who has become *sarvabhūtātma* (the "elemental Self of the whole world").

The mention of the "eternal" *dhruva* in this context is especially significant, as it expressly links the hunter's teaching to earlier texts of Yoga. Since the time of the RV, the term *dhruva* has signified both the celestial polestar (around which circle the "seven *ṛṣi*s" of the Little Dipper[77]), and the notion of one who is absolutely fixed, immovable, and thus eternally situated in the highest station. Such a one has been associated with Yoga since the middle Upaniṣads. For instance, the KU associates the *dhruva* with the "great, expansive Self" (*mahāntaṃ vibhumātmānaṃ*) that is realized through not grasping after immediately sensible objects in the world: "Fools pursue outward desires, and enter the trap of death spread wide. But the wise know what constitutes the immortal, and in transitory things (*adhruva*) here do not seek the eternal (*dhruva*)."[78] The broader point here is that through the practice of restraining the senses from their desire-impelled grasping after the sense objects, one doesn't perceive less; rather, one perceives a great deal more because of having fallen in line with the "expansive Self" that pervades all of elemental existence.[79]

Further affirmation of this reading of the control of the senses comes from a section of the MDhP (12.316) that repeats several of the verses cited here from the VG. It is almost

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of concentration" (*yeṣu vipratipadyante ṣaṭsu mohāt phalāgame* | *teṣv adhyavasitādhyāyī vindate dhyānajaṃ phalam* ||).

[77] See Brereton 1991; discussed in chapter two of the present work.

[78] KU 4.2; trans. Olivelle 1998: 391, modified.

[79] A related passage with a theistic spin appears at ŚvU 2.15: "He who is yoked to the true Self (*ātmatattvena*), to the highest light, he should see the true *brahman* (*brahmatattvaṃ*) here. Having known that god [i.e., Rudra], the unborn *dhruva* that is not stained by all of reality (*sarvatattva*), he is liberated from all nooses" (*yad ātmatattvena tu brahmatattvaṃ dīpopameneha yuktaḥ prapaśyet* | *ajaṃ dhruvaṃ sarvatattvair viśuddhaṃ jñātvā devaṃ mucyate sarvapāśaiḥ* ||)

certainly a historically later section that has clearly been reworked by multiple authors,[80] but it is nevertheless instructive for its use of a clever analogy to describe the perceptual reality of a realized yogi:

> By the control of the senses, the embodied one is like [a parched man], satisfied by rain showers. *He sees the Self spread out in the* loka *and the* loka *spread out in the Self*. Empowered by the sight of the near and the far, he does not see a limit to knowledge, always seeing all beings in all states. Completely yoked to the being of *brahman*, he does not arrive at misfortune; through knowledge he surpasses the manifold afflictions born of bewilderment.[81]

The control of the senses is here portrayed as granting access to a kind of totalizing perceptual experience, whereas the general form of perceptual existence, in which the *indriya*s are not controlled, is considered too limited to really quench one's underlying thirst for seeing. In other words, the restraint of the senses from immediately present sense objects results in a paradoxical condition of perceiving a greater expanse, not a lesser one. Hence, one who "reins-in" the *indriya*s is actually inundated with a vastly larger phenomenal expanse, a happy torrent of perceptual rain. As before, he is "yoked" to the "being of *brahman*," and thereby avoids the "afflictions born of bewilderment" (perhaps of the *buddhi*) precisely insofar as he attains the "sight of the near and the far" and always sees "all beings in all states." In short, the person, who grasps the unmanifest aspect of himself through the control of the senses, becomes perceptually, and thus elementally and

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[80] The text repeats in part the Sāṃkhyan *tattva* scheme we cited earlier in defining the *puruṣa*, but its counting of the *tattva*s—arriving at a total of twenty-five—is utterly fanciful (see MBh 12.316.44-47ab). The repetition is therefore inexplicable unless we postulate a reworking of the text by a later author with classical Sāṃkhyan affiliations.

[81] MBh 12.316.50-52—*indriyair niyatair dehī dhārābhir iva tarpyate* | *loke vitatam ātmānaṃ lokaṃ cātmani paśyati* || *parāvaradṛśaḥ śaktir jñānavelāṃ na paśyati* | *paśyataḥ sarvabhūtāni sarvāvasthāsu sarvadā* || *brahmabhūtasya saṃyogo nāśubhenopapadyate* | *jñānena vividhān kleśān ativṛttasya mohajān* ||

phenomenally speaking, huge. How then, we must next ask, is it that one becomes bewildered and therefore afflicted? What impedes the realization of the true state of the *puruṣa*, and conversely what impels the expansive holding of the reins of the senses?

5.4.2 Non-Cosmic Puruṣas in the MBh and the Misperception of the Loka

The proper course of action in any scenario is difficult to discern. As we saw Aśvatthaman argue at the opening of this chapter, each person uses his intellectual/perceptual faculty (i.e., his *buddhi*) to discern how best to apply his human effort (*puruṣakāra*), but he should be aware that the surging course of divine fate (*daiva*) may outstrip him; indeed, fate may even delude him into choosing the course of failure for himself. "Human action," Kṛṣṇa declares, "is always doubtful."[82] The sole course that provides any relief from the anxieties of human uncertainty is to attain the same nature as Kṛṣṇa, who is Time itself, by becoming a self-expansive lord of Yoga. We have already discussed the role of the *mahābhūta*s in becoming a great yogi, and noted how this state is tied to the unimpeded functioning of the *buddhi* (or the *satyā buddhi* in the Āyurvedic parlance). The MBh also spends considerable energy addressing the defects of the *buddhi* that lead to the misuse of the *indriya*s and the *mahābhūta*s, as well as the transformation of the *buddhi* that allows one to become a master of yoga and transcend the dichotomy between human effort and fate.

In terms of the defects of the *buddhi*, the MBh is persistently concerned—especially when fate and human effort are being discussed—that things do not appear as they truly are. The misperception of the world and the correct course of action are viewed as key causes of suffering and of catastrophes like the war at Kurukṣetra. For instance, in a scene at the close

[82] MBh 5.75.6, trans. van Buitenen 1978: 352.

of the Sabhāparvan, Dhṛtarāṣṭra laments the regretful events at the dicing match between Duryodhana and Yudhiṣṭhira. Knowing that ruin is on the horizon, and perhaps chastising himself for so easily yielding to his son's ways, he says:

> When the gods bring about a *puruṣa*'s downfall, they drag away his *buddhi* so he sees things backwards. When his annihilation has arrived and his *buddhi* is clouded, the wrong course appears prudent [and this conviction] cannot be dislodged from [his] heart. As annihilation approaches, the wrong [course] appears as the right one, while the right one appears as wrong—and a man is content with that! Time does not raise up a stick and smash someone's head; the strength of time is just this inverted view of things![83]

The same language of inversion is repeated by a despondent Yudhiṣṭhira following Aśvatthaman's rampage in the Sauptikaparvan: "The wrong [course] appears as the right one and likewise the right one appears to be wrong. This victory has become a defeat, therefore victory is the highest defeat!"[84] The point in both cases is that a certain understanding of the world and the course of events is elusive, and whether the right or the wrong course is chosen, it is the intellectual/perceptual faculty of the *buddhi* that decides because it is this *buddhi* that is responsible for how a person sees and understands the world. But there is a troubling stipulation: the *buddhi* is subordinate to Time, which uses the gods to cloud a man's perceptions and understanding so that a man sees the world as if upside-down.[85]

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[83] MBh 2.72.8-11—*yasmai devāḥ prayacchanti puruṣāya parābhavam* | *buddhiṃ tasyāpakarṣanti so 'pācīnāni paśyati* || *buddhau kaluṣabhūtāyāṃ vināśe pratyupasthite* | *anayo nayasaṃkāśo hṛdayān nāpasarpati* || *anarthāś cārtharūpeṇa arthāś cānartharūpiṇaḥ* | *uttiṣṭhanti vināśānte naraṃ tac cāsya rocate* || *na kālo daṇḍam udyamya śiraḥ kṛntati kasya cit* | *kālasya balam etāvad viparītārthadarśanam* ||

[84] MBh 10.10.12—*anartho hy arthasaṃkāśas tathārtho 'narthadarśanaḥ* | *jayo 'yam ajayākāro jayas tasmāt parājayaḥ* ||

[85] The parable of the upside-down hanging man, appearing in the Strīparvan (MBh 11.5-7; translated in Fitzgerald 2004: 37-39) and the Jain text, the *Samarādityakathā*, (2.55-80; translated in De Bary 1960: 56-58) portrays existence in *saṃsāra* as that of a man who has

In the Āyurvedic theory of perception, the *buddhi*'s primary role is like that of attention, selecting what objects the *manas* and *indriya*s will engage. It is the *buddhi* that chooses, in this sense, how the person will 'yoke-up' to the world of *mahābhūta*s. The "true perception," or *satyā buddhi*, is therefore coveted in the Āyurvedic theory by virtue of its association with the perfect perception and understanding of the world (as identical to one's Self) and a sovereign mastery over the states of health and disease. This suggests that when the *buddhi* is not "true," when it is confused as to the true perception of one's Self and its relationt to the world, then the result will be misperceptions that have a deleterious effect upon a person's well-being.

This is precisely what we see in several instances of misperception in the MBh. The most obvious of these occurs during Duryodhana's stay at Yudhiṣṭhira's assembly hall in the Sabhāparvan, just prior to the dicing match. The assembly hall was built for the Pāṇḍavas by Maya, the divine architect of the Daityas and master of illusions (*māyā*), at the urging of Kṛṣṇa, who asked Maya to "build an assembly hall where we might see the intentions of divine beings, Asuras, and men."[86] The resulting structure was erected on a stretch of land that was "possessed of the qualities of all the seasons, divinely beautiful, pleasing to the mind, and measured ten thousand cubits in every direction."[87] It is a veritable monument to the confounding courses of Time, of divine works and human acts, and in this regard it is

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become entangled in the vines of a great tree in a great forest. He hangs upside down over a pit of snakes while a stream of honey pours from a beehive above into his mouth. The honey is so delightful that he becomes oblivious to the dangers that approach him from all sides. It is this upside-down view of life that sends him, again and again, to death and rebirth.

[86] MBh 2.1.11—*yatra divyān abhiprāyān paśyema vihitāṁs tvayā | āsurān mānuṣāṁś caiva tāṁ sabhāṁ kuru vai maya ||*

[87] MBh 2.1.19—*sarvartuguṇasaṁpannāṁ divyarūpāṁ manoramām | daśakiṣkusahasrāṁ tāṁ māpayām āsa sarvataḥ ||*

prone to test the trueness of one's *buddhi*. During his visit to this rather unique palace, Duryodhana faces this test and fails. When he comes upon a crystal slab in the floor, he mistakes it for water and hitches up his garment only to find that no water is there. When he comes upon a pond of crystalline water with lotuses, he mistakes it for another slab and falls in with his clothes on. All this happens, according to the text, because his "*buddhi* had become confused."[88]

This and other instances where a confused *buddhi* is blamed for misperceptions or misfortunes are furthermore frequently tied to √*mad*-derived terms, especially *pramāda*, a kind of madness characterized by "negligence," "distraction," or "drunkenness." Thus, as Duryodhana's stumbles through the illusions of Maya's hall, humiliated and dejected at the success of his rivals (which, as we saw earlier, no true *puruṣa* should tolerate), he is described as "distracted" (*pramatta*).[89] We find the same alliance of terms when the maiden Sukanyā pricks the eye of the aging and anthill-encased sage Cyavana with a thorn: According to the text, she does so "because of a confused *buddhi*,"[90] but also because she is "drunk" (*madena*).[91] Likewise, as Yudhiṣṭhira laments his reversal of fortune in the Sauptikaparvan, he repeats over and over that his warrior brethren have been slain "due to negligence" (*pramādāt*).[92] And as Yudhiṣṭhira gambles away his kingdom and his family, he is said to be "maddened by the madness of gambling."[93]

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[88] MBh 2.43.4—*buddhimohitaḥ*

[89] MBh 2.43.17

[90] MBh 3.122.12—*buddhimohabalāt*

[91] MBh 3.122.9

[92] MBh 10.10.16-23

[93] MBh 2.60.4—*dyūtamadena matte*. I address the significance of madness to the MBh further in the following chapter.

These moments of misperception, brought about by a *buddhi* that is somehow "mad," contribute heavily to the plot's progress towards greater and greater misfortune as well as to the belief that Fate (*daiva*)—the power often ascribed to the arcane force known as the Puppet Master (*Dhātṛ*)[94]—is absolute. For it suggests that when people act in the world as they perceive it, the world can turn against them in a characteristically malicious fashion.[95] Thus the distracted and confused Duryodhana decides in the midst of his dejection that, "Fate is supreme, I think; the action of a man is useless."[96] Draupadī also speaks passionately in favor of this opinion as she argues with Yudhiṣṭhira about the power of the Puppet Master during their exile in the forest. "How," she asks, "did the *buddhi* born of an addiction to dice befall you? … Truly the Lord Puppet Master alone brings about everything for beings—bliss and misery, pleasure and pain—even before the seed [that leads to one's birth] is emitted. … Behold this power of *māyā* that is wielded by the Master, who kills beings with beings having confused them with his *māyā*... Yoking them together and breaking them apart, O Bhagavan, that spontaneously acting power plays with beings like a child plays with toys. The Puppet Master does *not* treat beings like a mother and father; he acts out of passion, just like any another creature!"[97] Insofar as the Puppet Master's power is

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[94] My translation follows the analysis of Madeleine Biardeau (1985: 13-14), who connects Draupadī's impassioned speeches on the power of the Dhatṛ to her patronym, Pāñcālikā, one meaning of which is "she who is a puppet."

[95] As Shulman writes in his analysis of the dicing match, *daiva* is characterized in the epic as "destructive, dis-integrating, crooked and unbalancing" force (1992: 359).

[96] MBh 2.43.34—*…daivaṁ paraṁ manye pauruṣaṁ tu nirarthakam*

[97] MBh 3.31.18cd, 21, 31, 36-37—*katham akṣavyasanajā buddhir āpatitā tava* ǁ *… dhātaiva khalu bhūtānām sukhaduḥkhe priyāpriye* ǀ *dadhāti sarvam īśānaḥ purastāc chukram uccaran* ǁ *… paśya māyāprabhāvo 'yam īśvareṇa yathā kṛtaḥ* ǀ *yo hanti bhūtair bhūtāni mohayitvātmamāyayā* ǁ *… saṃprayojya viyojyāyaṃ kāmakārakaraḥ prabhuḥ* ǀ *krīḍate bhagavān bhūtair bālaḥ krīḍanakair iva* ǁ *na mātṛpitṛvad rājan dhātā bhuteṣu vartate* ǀ *roṣād iva pravṛtto 'yam yathāyam itaro janaḥ* ǁ

identical to that of Time, Draupadī's comments here are actually quite representative of the epic's cosmological outlook. Yudhiṣṭhira calls them "heresy" insofar as they encourage a disregard for *dharma*,[98] but she is certainly not alone in her opinion. Dhṛtarāṣṭra cites the absolute power of Fate as a means of rationalizing his overriding love for Duryodhana. Duryodhana uses his belief in Fate to rationalize away violations of *dharma* and the deceptive practices of Śakuni at the dicing match.[99] Indra's asuric interlocutors in the Śantiparvan all espouse different doctrines of the inexorable power of Time.[100] Likewise, Aśvatthaman, just prior to slaughtering the sleeping Pāṇḍava army, feels the "whirligig of Time" and notes that everything would have turned out exactly the same regardless of human effort.[101] And certainly Kṛṣṇa, as the *puruṣottama* who is also Time itself, advocates Fate's supremacy when he argues that the slaughter of the warriors on the battlefield is already accomplished.

Even Yudhiṣṭhira, who ever-adheres to the validity of *dharmic* acts, recognizes the inexorability of Fate when he accepts the challenge of the dicing match, even though he agrees with Vidura that the game will lead to disaster: "Greatly fearsome gamers have been gathered together; the gamblers with *māyā*'s tricks are here. But Fate's design commands this world, no doubt about it… Fate blinds judgment (*prajñāṃ*) just like a brilliant light upon the eye. A man follows the command of Fate as if bound by a fetters."[102] It is then

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[98] MBh 3.32.1—*nāstikyaṃ tu prabhāṣase*

[99] See MBh 2.43

[100] I address these dialogs in detail in the following chapter.

[101] MBh 10.1.65; trans. Johnson 1998: 10.

[102] MBh 3.52.14, 18—*mahābhayāḥ kitavāḥ saṃniviṣṭā māyopadhā devitāro 'tra santi* | *dhātrā tu diṣṭasya vaśe kiledam… daivaṃ prajñāṃ tu muṣṇāti tejaś cakṣur ivāpatat* | *dhātuś ca vaśam anveti pāśair iva naraḥ sitaḥ* ||

during the dicing, and under the sway of *daiva* (which in this case is both clearly a matter of "fate" as well as of the "divine" course of events set into motion by the incarnation of the gods on the earth in response to the descent of the Asuras), that Yudhiṣṭhira is said to be "maddened" by the play of dice.

There is a particular poetic language, involving gaping and gruesome maws, that is employed to describe the way in which Time, or Fate, controls beings, "dragging away" their *buddhi*s and leading to catastrophe. Hence Yudhiṣṭhira's acquiescence to Fate's power in this moment signals the opening of the "Gate of Kali," which appears like the "gaping maw of destruction."[103] (Meanwhile, Duryodhana, with his mad *buddhi*, instead believes the dicing match will "open the gates of heaven" in yet another instance of the inversionary power of Time.[104]) In a similar manner the terrifying mouths of Kṛṣṇa's *viśvarūpa* are revealed in response to Arjuna's confused *buddhi* in the BhG. This is reportedly the true nature of reality, identified at turns with *brahman*, the Self of all beings, and the goal of Yoga. And through the *buddhi*, the fearsome nature of these mouths is transformed into one's own blissful Self.[105] Along these lines, the earliest layer of the BhG teaches that a "knower of *brahman* [possesses] a firm, unconfused *buddhi*" (5.20); that the bliss of the *ātman* is "grasped by the *buddhi*" (6.21). The yogi who attains these things is a *buddhimat* (4.18); he possesses an "even *buddhi*" (6.9, *samabuddhi*); and he surpasses karma because he is "yoked to the *buddhi*" (2.39, 50). By contrast there is no *buddhi* in one who is "unyoked" (2.66), and "one is destroyed due to the destruction of the *buddhi*" (2.63).

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[103] MBh 2.45.50—*kalidvāram … vināśamukham*

[104] MBh 2.54.15

[105] As in the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, where the bliss of *brahman* is equated with the realization of one's own self-consumptive nature ("I am food! … I eat food!").

Making the perceptual powers of the *buddhi* true in their workings is thus of deeply felt importance in the MBh. And it is through the control of the senses that masters the *mahābhūta*s that this better *buddhi* arises. Put another way, it is through the core function of Yoga practice that "one becomes freed from distraction (*pramāda*)."[106] (KU 6.11). This allows, in the words of the hunter, for the Self to be seen as spread out in the *loka*, as when the world is seen "by the shining forth of the *buddhi*." Such a *buddhi* is no longer deluded by the wandering of *indriya*s after restless passions; as a result, it shines freely upon the "great beings" of the cosmos, both near and far. It is in this regard that a synonym for the *buddhi*, from the time of earliest Sāṃkhya on, is *mahat*, the "great" expanse of the cosmos. It is one's own "elemental self" (*bhūtātmā*), synonymous with the inherent "greatness" of the *puruṣa* that has been sought through acts of sacrifice,[107] through the penance of *tapas*,[108] and here through yoga.[109]

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[106] KU 6.11—*apramattastadā bhavati*

[107] See chapter one. For instances in the MBh, see for instance 12.29.43, where the founding king Bharata is said to have performed one thousand Aśvamedhas and one hundred Rājasūyas along the Sarasvatī, Yamuna, and Ganges rivers. By virtue of this, "among all kings, none were able to match that great sacrifice (*mahat karma*) of Bharata, as mortals cannot fly in the sky with their arms" (tr. Fitzgerald 2004: 230, modified). Bharata's great sacrifice reflects the great expanse of his kingdom; it also recalls the ŚB's understanding that a *puruṣa* is the "same measure" (*saṃmita*) as his sacrifices.

[108] See chapter two. For instances in the MBh, see for instance 12.19.26: "O Arjuna, a knower of *dharma* always obtains happiness by renunciation, discovers the *mahat* through the *buddhi*, and obtains the *mahat* through *tapas*" (*tapasā mahad āpnoti buddhyā vai vindate mahat* | *tyāgena sukham āpnoti sadā kaunteya dharmavit* ||). The discovery of the *mahat* via the *buddhi* is of signal interest to the epic's thinking about personhood insofar as the misapprehension of the true nature of reality—especially the course of Time—is a primary point of reflection among its characters.

[109] There are certainly other avenues to 'greatness'—Karna seems partial to heroic acts that increase one's renown, for instance. The present discussion will, however, be limited to a consideration of yoga as it illuminates the MBh's engagement with early Sāṃkhyan thought and its understanding of the *puruṣa*.

In sum, a person, in the truest sense, is a great being. He is the expansiveness of *brahman*, the Self of the entire expanse of the elemental cosmos (*sarvabhūtātmā*), a *mahān ātmā*, and a master of the *mahābhūta*s. He is moreover, and regardless of whether he recognizes any of this, a natural yogi because he is made of great elemental beings. His *indriya*s, themselves made of the elements, are the world itself, a world that expands through Yoga across the vast courses of extended great beings. When these *indriya*s are rightly held in Yoga, the true light of the *buddhi*, and thus the true character of the world and the Self, shines forth like a brilliant light. A person's *buddhi* is then *mahat*, just as his Self is *mahān*, taking part even in the sovereign and surpassing greatness of the *puruṣottama*.

Summary Observations on the Puruṣa Concept in the MBh

At its most colloquial level, the *puruṣa* is a masculine warrior and sovereign, whose activities must accord with the manliness proper to *puruṣa*s. This representation harks back to the earliest Indic thinking about personhood, as told through the story of Indra's victory over Vṛtra. Implicit in this thinking is an urging to be a "big" man by obliterating all rivals who would oppose one's sovereign supremacy over the lands and peoples of Bharata. The sovereignty of such a *puruṣa* is, however, founded upon the originary sovereignty of the *puruṣottama*, the "best of men," who is overwhelmingly identified with Kṛṣṇa in the epic. The relation between sovereign human *puruṣa*s and the divinely sovereign *puruṣottama* is brilliantly encoded in the tale of Yudhiṣṭhira's royal consecration and evokes the Indic understanding of genealogy, in the recursive passing of worlds from fathers to sons.

These primarily sacrificially-oriented visions of personhood are otherwise subordinated to the epic's pervasive concern with the dynamics of Yoga, which are deeply inflected by the psychological-*cum*-cosmological metaphysics of early Sāṃkhya and a bourgeoning

Kṛṣṇaite devotional theism. The role of the *puruṣottama* is thereby reconfigured according to the divine vision of the Cosmic Yogi, whose yogic pervasion of the cosmos and mastery over its elementality establishes a path by which a person might transcend the suffering of *saṃsāra* and attain to that same pervasion and mastery. Through the heroic taming of the *indriya*s, a person gradually gains power over the elements with which his *indriya*s interact and of which all existence is materially composed. He comes to perceive thereby the Self that suffuses all existence, linking it together by its inherently yogic nature. Such a mastery is moreover synonymous with the attainment of a properly functioning *buddhi*—the faculty of perception and understanding through which the cosmos is apprehended—which is otherwise liable to errors of misperception that compound suffering. In this way, a person is not led unawares to destruction by Fate, not made the plaything of the Puppet Master, and not driven to the madness experienced when the world remains cruelly unintelligible.

All this essentially adheres to the pre-classical paradigm of personhood, according to which the relation between the person and the world, mediated primarily by the yogic nature of perception and its relation to the elementality of person and world alike, are of key interest. But here, the paradigm is subordinated to the concerns—about Fate and value of human effort; about the role of God and the need for a divinely guided polity under *brāhmaṇya* rule—that structure the Brahmanical response to the crisis of the epic period. In this regard, the conception of personhood found in the MBh fails to be as thoroughly cosmopolitan as that of early Āyurveda. While key aspects of both Āyurveda's and the MBh's conceptions of personhood can be clearly discerned in the Vedic Saṃhitas, in the Upaniṣads, and in the *sutta*s of the Pāli canon, where concerns like sovereignty and sacrifice, eating and reproduction, and expansive elementality, respectively, first develop, Āyurveda

retains a broader applicability, and lacks the doctrinal specificity of the MBh's narrative arc. Consequently the Āyurvedic conception of personhood is in a sense more emblematic of pre-classical Indic traditions in general. Nevertheless, the doctrinal distinctions of the MBh are ones of addition, politically and theologically motivated overlays upon an otherwise established paradigm of personhood centered upon the notion that a person is fundamentally identical to the world—that *personhood is worldhood*—and therefore that at the heart of all human striving in the face of obstacles like oppressive powers of Fate, confusions as to the true nature of reality, or the existence of suffering in general, lies a need to reestablish harmony in the relationship between person and world.

5.5 The Buddhi and the Yogi-Physician

The above suggests that the "great" yogis of the MBh bear a basic resemblance to the yogically conceived *puruṣa* of Āyurveda. We can therefore deepen our understanding of the epic's theory of personhood and its relation to Āyurveda's pre-classical paradigm of personhood by directly examining parallels between these two sources. This will serve to both conclude our investigation of the *puruṣa* concept in the MBh and to narrow the doctrinal gap that has announced itself between Āyurveda and the MBh on the counts of their political and theological differences. That is, the similarities between the *puruṣa* of Āyurveda and the yogis of the MBh are significantly deeper than has been shown thus far.

In chapter four I elucidated Āyurveda's argument for the identity of the person and world, *puruṣa* and *loka*. In the current context, the salient points to recall are, first, that the knowledge of this identity (*samānya*) coincides with the arising of the "true perception/understanding" of the *satyā buddhi*, and second, that the therapeutic endeavor aims toward this end in its attempt to establish an "equal yoking," or "balanced engagement"

(*samayoga*) of person and the world through the elemental dynamics of diet and perception. This makes the person a natural yogi in the eyes of Āyurveda. In the course of the present chapter, I have shown how the MBh also conceives of the *puruṣa* as a natural yogi, here also in a manner reliant upon the cosmology of early Sāṃkhya. The yogi's aim, to realize his identity with the divine yogi who extends the whole cosmos, is, like Āyurveda's aim, founded on an elemental understanding of the cosmos, the person, and the dynamics of perception. Here too the *buddhi*, the intellectual faculty of perceptual understanding (or simply the "intellect," as I will refer to it for the remainder of this chapter), plays an important role as an indicator of one's mastery of yoga and advancement toward the realization of the identity of human and cosmic *puruṣa*. This urges a brief return to the texts of early Āyurveda in order to draw a final comparison between the ideal physician and the epic yogi. The ideal Āyurvedic physician is, I believe, a yogi of just the sort we have described here.

As in the MBh, a properly functioning intellect is coveted in the Āyurvedic tradition. The CS, which is otherwise (and probably originally) known as the *Agniveśa Tantra*, states that Agniveśa was the first among Punarvasu's pupils to grasp the knowledge of Āyurveda because of his "unique intellect" (CS 1.1.32). Thenceforth, a physician should be endowed with the knowledge of Āyurveda as well as a skillful intellect: "The teaching [of Āyurveda] is a light whose purpose is elucidation; [likewise] the [purpose of the] intellect is the seeing of the *ātman*. A physician endowed with both teaching and intellect[110] does not err in treating the patient" (CS 1.9.24). By contrast, a physician with an "impaired intellect, the

[110] In this context, the activity of the *buddhi* is defined as "reasoning" (*yukti*) as it considers the causative factors of events (CS 1.11.25).

equal of Maitreya," will constantly err in his treatments (CS 1.10.22).[111] This tendency to err arises because, without a properly functioning intellect, there will be misperceptions of reality of a sort directly parallel to those described in the MBh: "The unbalanced (*viṣama*) application [of the intellect] in which the impermanent is viewed as permanent, or the disadvantageous is viewed as beneficial: that is to be known as a disturbance of the intellect. [When the application is] balanced (*samaṃ*), the intellect assuredly sees [clearly]."[112] The same sentiment is expressed a bit more forcefully, and furthermore linked to the concept of the *satyā buddhi*, in the *Caraka*'s description of a *budha*, an "awakened one," who "sees everything just as it is by the light of the intellect of truth."[113] The importance of the intellect for a physician is thus clearly established as necessary for the proper perception of reality, which is crucial to the physician's diagnosis and treatment of disease. But the success of any such treatment rests on a final and surprising qualification—the physician must use the intellect to "see the *ātman*." What, then, does this seeing entail, and what does it mean for our understanding of the Āyurvedic physician—indeed for the whole endeavor of Āyurvedic practice—in relation to the pre-classical tradition of the MBh with which it is contemporary?

As noted in the previous chapter, the Āyurvedic view considers the intellect to be multiform; it "turns forth," or "e-volves" (*pra+√vṛt*) through the actions of the senses and conforms to each perceptual moment (CS 1.1.24; see also 1.1.32-34). In this way it is like the light from a lamp; it conforms to the contours of the room in which it is placed. This luminous nature of the intellect is emphasized in a passage in the Vimānasthāna that

[111] The identity and affiliations of this pseudo-physician, Maitreya, are not given in the text.

[112] CS 4.1.99—*viṣamābhiniveśo yo nityānitye hitāhite* | *jñeyaḥ sa buddhivibhraṃśaḥ samaṃ buddhirhi paśyati* ||

[113] CS 1.11.16— *satāṃ buddhipradīpena paśyetsarvaṃ yathātatham* ||

connects the diagnostic and therapeutic activity of a fully realized physician directly to the peculiar capacity of the intellect to interact with the *ātman*:

> The clear-sighted should know diseases thoroughly, through the teaching of an authority, by the action of direct perception, and by inference. Likewise a knower of causes (*arthavit*) [should know] the origin [of diseases] having examined everything entirely. As a result, he should come to dwell (*adhi*+√*vas*) continuously in the real world (*tattve*) and [therefore do precisely] what is to be done. In attaining the superior knowledge of reality and of what is to be done, he is not confused (√*muh*). Not confused, he attains the result that arises on account of a lack of confusion. A knower of reality (*tattvavit*) who does not penetrate (*ā*+√*viś*) the *antarātman* of a sick patient with the light of the intellect and gnosis does not [in actuality] treat the disease."[114]

A truly skillful physician is one who has been quite literally transformed by his education, his sharpened perception, and his inferential knowledge. Dwelling in truth, he can be said to see things as they truly are and therefore knows precisely what is to be done in a given situation. He has abolished confusion and therefore sees with the "light of the intellect," a feat reserved in the MBh for those who have "become *brahman*," etc. Cakrapāṇi, commenting on the above, writes, "gnosis means the teachings (*śāstra*). The intellect of gnosis is a perfected (*kṛtā)* intellect."[115] That is, the ideal physician's intellect is a perfected one, which according to the root text possesses the most remarkable talent of being able to fully penetrate (*ā*+√*viś*),[116] by its light (*pradīpena*), the "Self in the midst" (*antarātman*) of a

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[114] CS 3.4.9-12—*āptataścopadeśena pratyakṣakaraṇena ca* | *anumānena ca vyādhīn samyagvidyādvicakṣaṇaḥ* || *sarvathā sarvamālocya yathāsaṃbhavamarthavit* | *athādhyavasyettattve ca kārye ca tadanantaram* || *kāryatattvaviśeṣajñaḥ pratipattau na muhyati* | *amūḍhaḥ phalamāpnoti yadamohanimittajam* || *jñānabuddhipradīpena yo nāviśati tattvavit* | *āturasyāntarātmānaṃ na sa rogāṃścikitsati* ||

[115] *Ayurvedadīpika* (AD) 3.4.9-14—*jñānaṃ śāstraṃ, tatkṛtā buddhiḥ jñānabuddhiḥ* |

[116] Cakrapāṇi writes, "He penetrates (*ā*+√*viś*) means he plunges into (*ava*√*gāh*) [the *antarātman*] with the *buddhi*." (AD 3.4.9-14—*āviśati buddhyā'vagāhata ityarthaḥ* |)

Cakrapāṇi concludes his commentary on this passage by suggesting, "in the context of medicine, *antarātman* means *antaḥśarīra*" (*āntarātmānamiti vaidyapakṣe antaḥśarīram*).

patient.[117] It is moreover considered a necessary talent for the successful treatment of disease, and one by which the physician is considered a *tattvavit*, a "knower of reality." These are extraordinary claims, and certainly not ones we would expect given the usual characterization of Āyurveda as India's first "empirico-rational science."[118]

The earliest recorded depictions of the penetration of the *antarātman*, or "Self in the midst" as I have translated it here, are found in the KU *and* ŚvU.[119] There we find analogies that are likely precursors to the physician's understanding of the intellect's activity. The KU states: "Just as the one Agni, having entered the world, became a form corresponding to every form, just so the one Self in the midst of all beings (*sarvabhūtāntarātmā*) becomes a form corresponding to every form and [yet] remains outside [these forms]… The one ruler, the Self in the midst of all beings, who makes his single form manifold—the wise ones who see that abiding in the themselves, for them there is eternal bliss, while for others there is none."[120] The *ŚvU* echoes this in its description of Rudra as "the one god concealed in all

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Though his substitution is not especially clarifying. Monier-Williams glosses *antaḥśarīra* as "the internal and spiritual part of man," while Wujastyk (2009) has convincingly argued that the physiological representation of the body in Āyurveda is a colonial-era phenomenon. The most conservative reading of these verses would suggest that the physician simply employs his knowledge and intellect in order to understand the patient's disease fully.

[117] These are acts of 'possession,' according to Frederick Smith, whose significance—expressed through *ā+√viś* terms—is nearly synonymous with the full scope of Indic religiosity. (See Smith 2006: xxii.) In the CS, the language of *ā+√viś* is also used to describe the manner in which *bhūta*s (here, typically malicious spiritual entities) 'seize' and 'possess' human beings.

[118] First deemed by Zysk (1991).

[119] A clearly related narrativization of penetration that does centers on the "gate of *brahman*" rather than the *antarātman* appears in MaiU 6.28-30.

[120] KU 5.9, 12—*agniryathaiko bhuvanaṃ praviṣṭo rūpaṃ rūpaṃ pratirūpo babhūva* | *ekastathā sarvabhūtāntarātmā rūpaṃ rūpaṃ pratirūpo bahiṣca* || … *eko vaśī sarvabhūtāntarātmā ekaṃ rūpaṃ bahudhā yaḥ karoti* | *tamātmasthaṃ ye 'nupaśyanti dhīrāḥ teṣāṃ sukhaṃ śāśvataṃ netareṣām* ||

beings (*sarvabhūteṣu*), all-pervading, the Self in the midst of all beings (*sarvabhūtāntarātmā*)… The wise ones who see that abiding in themselves, for them there is eternal bliss, while for others there is none."[121] Consider also these verses from MBh 12.187:

> Thus this entire world of moving and unmoving beings consists of the intellect. From the intellect is arises and to it it dissolves, thus it is proclaimed. It [the intellect] is the eye by which one sees, it hears by the ear, it is said; it is said he smells odors thus, and it is born as taste through the tongue. It touches by the skin. The intellect is repeatedly transformed. It is the means by which something is assembled is the mind. The residing place of the intellect is in the five different sense objects. Those five *indriya*s, they say, are presided over by the unseen one.[122]

In these verses, the *antarātman* is described like the Āyurvedic intellect: an unseen one that spreads everywhere in the world and takes the form of every perceptible form. The similarities tell us that the "reality knowing" physician's intellect can penetrate the same Self in the midst seen by the Upaniṣadic "wise ones" precisely because the intellect functions in the same manner as the *antarātman*. It further suggests that these ascetic "wise ones" share an ancestral link to the *tattvavit* physician.

The KU's sixth chapter aligns these wise ones with the "knowers of yoga," who restrain their *indriya*s like charioteers restrain unruly horses. It refers to the wise one as he who knows the "separate nature of the senses; their rise and fall as they come separately into being," then shortly thereafter defines yoga as the holding firm of the senses and "the coming-into-being as well as the ceasing-to-be" (KU 6.6, 11; trans. Olivelle, 1996). So the

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[121] ŚvU 6.11-12—*eko devaḥ sarvbhūteṣu gūḍhaḥ sarvavyāpī sarvabhūtāntarātmā* | … *tamātmasthaṃ ye 'nupaśyanti dhīrāḥ teṣāṃ sukhaṃ śāśvataṃ netareṣām* ||

[122] MBh 12.187.17-20—*iti tanmayam evaitat sarvaṁ sthāvarajaṅgamam* | *pralīyate codbhavati tasmān nirdiśyate tathā* || *yena paśyati tac cakṣuḥ śṛṇoti śrotram ucyate* | *jighrati ghrāṇam ity āhū rasaṁ jānāti jihvayā* || *tvacā spṛśati ca sparśān buddhir vikriyate'sakṛt* | *yena saṁkalpayaty arthaṁ kiṁ cid bhavati tan manaḥ* || *adhiṣṭhānāni buddher hi pṛthag arthāni pañcadhā* | *pañcendriyāṇi yāny āhus tāny adṛśyo'dhitiṣṭhati* ||

overlap in characterization we suspect between the ideal physician of Āyurveda and the wise ones of the KU and ŚvU is, more properly speaking, an overlap between physician and yogi. Indeed, there are striking parallels between this physician's penetrative process and the penetrative process by which a yogi or tantric guru penetrates others and turns them onto a path that leads to the cessation of suffering. In fact, Cakrapāṇi explicitly links the two when he notes that "the otherwise invisible passage of a karmically determined self (*ātman*) into the embryo growing inside a woman's womb is apprehended through the 'yogi eye' (*yogicakṣus*) of yogis."[123] If, then, it is accurate that early Āyurveda developed in a culture of wandering asceticism at the fringe of orthodox vedic society,[124] then this overlap is further support of the thesis, forwarded by White (2009: 145), that "the non-vedic aspect of the yoga of entering foreign bodies had its origins in some other non-vedic (or pre-vedic) tradition." It further urges that the CS be counted among the early sources on the yoga of entering other bodies that later proliferated in the philosophical and tantric literature of the medieval period.

Summarizing the metaphysics underlying this type of yoga, White writes, "Yogi perception arises when one's own self or mind is yoked, via a ray of perception, to another being's self inside that other being's body" (2009: 160). As I demonstrated in the previous chapter, the dynamics of perception in early Āyurveda involves an extensional linking up of

[123] White 2009: 161; Cakrapāṇi's comments refer to CS 4.2.35 (Ācārya 1941: 305).

[124] In chapter one I argued that the rise of the *puruṣa* concept in the Vedic period was in part precipitated by the inclusion of initially heterodox practices and personalities contained in the *AV*, especially the *brahmacārin*, who dramatically bore the marks of Indra's supremacy and *puruṣa*-hood by virtue of his wandering asceticism. In chapter two I showed how the *puruṣa*-concept was increasingly democratized yet retained its lofty association with the sovereign and spiritual supremacy of Indra. It is therefore the *puruṣa* of śramaṇic culture, broadly speaking, that lays the groundwork for Āyurveda's conception of the person.

the *ātman*, *buddhi*, *manas*, *indriya*s, and the *artha*s, or objects of the senses. By the extension of the sense powers across networks consisting of the *mahābhūta*s, the *puruṣa* generates its own entire phenomenal field. Because the person is typically afflicted with sensations of aversion and attachment to objects in this phenomenal field, he cannot see beyond obstructions or comprehend the all-pervasiveness of the *ātman*. But should this karmic obstacle be overcome, all obstacles to perception would fall. In the *Caraka*'s words:

> Indeed the embodied *ātman* pervades all; with the *indriya*s he touches only himself. But though always abiding in all abodes, the *ātman* does not experience (√*vid*) sensations (*vedanāḥ*). Just so it is omnipresent, and because of this it is great (*mahān*) and pervades all. Through the com-position (*samādhānāt*)[125] of the *manas*, the *ātman* can see what is concealed. By consequence of the *karma* of the body, one is constantly bound with the *manas*. Yet though abiding in a single womb, one should know it moves in all wombs.[126]

Āyurveda treats the *ātman* as an aspect of the *puruṣa*, as the *puruṣa* is that subsumptive being who is both the *ātman* and the sum total of its phenomenal involvements; he expands and extends into and as the phenomenal world to touch "only himself." The *puruṣa* is most properly identified with the *ātman* only after that capacity for extension and expansion has reached its utmost limits, when the "true understanding" (*satyā buddhi*) arises that the *puruṣa* is the "same measure" as the *loka* and the *ātman* and the *loka* are equally "spread out." The yogi is just such a one whose perceptual capacities allow them to "'touch and take

[125] I follow White (2009: 155) in translating *samādhāna* as "com-position," who notes that it is a term associated with yoga, rather than Sāṃkhya. Praśastapāda links the com-position of the mind (within the *ātman*) to the special nature of yogi-perception and this is directly linked to the manner in which a yogi is able to perform superhuman acts of perception (ibid: 155-156). The meditative dimensions of this operation are evident in the semantic overlap between *samādhā* and *samādhi*.

[126] CS 4.1.79-81—*dehī sarvagato'pyātmā sve sve saṃsparśanendriye* | *sarvāḥ sarvāśrayasthāstu nātmā'to vetti vedanāḥ* || *vibhūtvamata evāsya yasmāt sarvagato mahān* | *manasaśca samādhānāt paśyatyātmā tiraskṛtam* || *nityānubandhaṃ manasā dehakarmānupātinā* | *sarvayonigataṃ vidyādekayonāvapi sthitam* ||

measure of every being at every level in the hierarchy of transmigrations'" (White, 2009: 166; citing Mus, 1968: 562). White further notes that "the philosophical axiom that yogis have a special type of perception that enables them to *see things as they truly are* is predicated on the presupposition, common to virtually *all* of the Indic philosophical schools, that yogis are able to move between, inhabit, and even create multiple bodies" (2009: 160-161; emphasis added). The skilled physician depicted in the *Vimānasthana* is precisely one who knows reality; he dwells in the truth[127] that is seen by the light of the intellect/understanding, through which his perception takes place. Consequently it is entirely in keeping with the above characterization of realized *puruṣa*s and yogis that such a physician should be capable of penetrating the "Self in the midst" of the sick patient.

The concept of the *satyā buddhi* is unique to the CS, appearing five times in the entirety of the text. Three of these appearances are in the context of the discussion on the *puruṣa* as the "same measure" as the *loka*. This discussion contains no direct mentions of yoga as a practice, but the other occurrences of the *satyā buddhi* concept directly invoke yoga and yogis. For instance, in the *Sūtrasthāna* the author argues that good sleep brings about health and happiness "just as the *satyā buddhi* brings about the *siddhi* of a yogi."[128] In a similar vein, *Caraka*'s "Yoga tract,"[129] appearing at the close of the first chapter of the *Śarīrasthāna*,

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[127] I have translated *tattva* in the Vimānasthāna passage by the terms "truth" and "reality," as best suits the context. The doctrine of yoga contained in the first chapter of the Śarīrasthāna holds that the "power of recollecting reality (*tattva-smṛti-balam*) is the one path of liberation that is expounded by liberated people, going by which one does not return again. Yogis call this the path of yoga" (CS 4.1.150-151ab—*etattadekamayanaṃ muktairmokṣasya darśitam* | *tattvasmṛtibalaṃ, yena gatā na punarāgatāḥ* || *ayanaṃ punarākhyātametadyogasya yogibhiḥ*).

[128] CS 1.21.38—*…yoginaṃ siddhyā satyā buddhirivāgatā* ||

[129] So-called by Wujastyk (2012), who provides a translation and brief examination of the diverse sources that contribute to this highly syncretic and early text of yogic practice.

invokes the *satyā buddhi* as proper to yogis while also defining yoga as the "recollection of reality" (*tattvasmṛti*).

> By the liberated ones this power of recollecting reality (*tattvasmṛtibalaṃ*) is seen as the one path of liberation, going by which one does not return. Again, this is called the path by yogis of yoga. And the reckoning of the *dharma*s by Sāṃkhyas is called the path of liberation by the liberated. All that possesses a cause is suffering, is without self, and transient; and [as such] it is not the effect of the *ātman*… In that case [a sense of] ownership arises so long as the true understanding (*satyā buddhi*) does not arise, by which a knower, having known 'I am not this, this is not mine,' turns beyond everything.[130]

The first half of this passage (vss. 150-151) identifies yoga as a "path of liberation" that relies upon the "power of recollecting reality." This in turn is identified with the "Sāṃkhyan" notion of reckoning *dharma*s—a surprisingly Buddhist twist on the classical Saṃkhyan practice of reckoning *tattva*s.[131] The association of both Yoga and Sāṃkhya with the recollection of *tattva*s firmly associates the ideal physician—who, as we just saw, is himself a "knower of *tattva*s" who "dwells in reality"—with both yogis and followers of Sāṃkhya. The second half of this passage is undeniably Buddhist in tone, from the emphases on suffering, selflessness, and transience, to association of the *satyā buddhi* with the knowledge, "I am not this, this is not mine."[132] In effect, the *Caraka*'s use of the *satyā buddhi* places special emphasis on yoga, but more interestingly it reflects early Āyurveda's attempt to synthesize a yoga practice out of Vaiśeṣika, Sāṃkhya, and Buddhism. These physicians

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[130] CS 4.1.150-153—*etattadekamayanaṃ muktairmokṣasya darśitam* । *tattvasmṛtibalaṃ, yena gatā na punarāgatāḥ* ॥ *ayanaṃ punarākhyātametadyogasya yogibhiḥ* । *saṃkhyāsadharmaiḥ sāṃkhyaiśca muktairmokṣasya cāyanam* ॥ *sarvaṃ kāraṇavadduḥkhamasvaṃ cānityameva ca* । *na cātmakṛtakaṃ taddhi tatra cotpadyate svatā* ॥ *yāvannotpadyate satyā buddhirnaitadahaṃ yayā* । *naitanmameti vijñāya jñaḥ sarvamativartate* ॥

[131] Previously noted by Wujastyk 2012

[132] According to the Buddha, this is how a *bhikkhu* should consider the elements found equally in one's own body and in the world. See, for instance, *Aṅguttara-Nikāya* (AN) ii.165.

seem to have therefore counted themselves as yogis by virtue of their clear apprehension of the *tattva*s via their attainment of the *satyā buddhi*; but they also seem to have more generally counted themselves among all *śramaṇa* philosophers.

The MBh repeats the identification of yogis with "knowers of *tattva*s" (*tattvavit*s) in several places. For instance, in the MDhP, Bhīṣma states: "The knower of reality (*tattvavit*), having achieved through yoga the com-position [of the mind] in the *ātman*, having given up this body, he attains the state that is difficult to obtain."[133] The same identification is drawn in the lengthy conversation between Vyāsa and his pupil/son Śuka at MBh 12.244-245, which provides another clever analogy to describe the yogi's way of dwelling in the world:

> Just as the rays of light spread uniformly [as one light]—in appearing, they abide and move [simultaneously]; released from bodies, they expand through *loka*s—just so the superhuman beings [expand]. Just as the glow of the sun is perceived in a reflection in the water, a [merely human] being sees [only] the reflection of *sattva*… Released from the body, the knowers of reality (*tattvajñā*), whose *indriya*s are disciplined, see by their own reality [rather than through a reflection]…. The self of beings (*sattvātmā*) abides in the power of the yogis of yoga. For these [yogis], the impermanent is ever permanent; the *bhūtātman* is constantly with the qualities, moving, unaging and immortal…. That excellent fraction of *tejas*—the *bhūtātman* situated in the heart—is [typically] covered by *rajas* and *tamas*, and people don't perceive it in manifestations (*mūrti*). [However,] having reached the highest of both yoga and *śastra* in desiring to attain one's own *ātman*, [the yogi] breathes in the formless that resembles a *vajra*.[134]

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[133] MBh 12.289.35—…*ātmasamādhānaṃ yuktvā yogena tattvavit* | *durgamaṃ sthānam āpnoti hitvā deham imaṃ nṛpa* ||

[134] 12.245.2-4, 6cd-7, 11-12—*yathā marīcyaḥ sahitāś caranti; gacchanti tiṣṭhanti ca dṛśyamānāḥ* | *dehair vimuktā vicaranti lokāṁs tathaiva sattvāny atimānuṣāṇi* || *pratirūpaṁ yathaivāpsu tāpaḥ sūryasya lakṣyate* | *sattvavāṁs tu tathā sattvaṁ pratirūpaṁ prapaśyati* || … *vimuktāni śarīrataḥ* | *svena tattvena tattvajñāḥ paśyanti niyatendriyāḥ* || …. *vaśe tiṣṭhati sattvātmā satataṁ yogayoginām* || *teṣāṁ nityaṁ sadānityo bhūtātmā satataṁ guṇaiḥ* | … *cariṣṇur ajarāmaraḥ* || *tam evam atitejoṁśaṁ bhūtātmānaṁ hṛdi sthitam* | *tamorajobhyām āviṣṭā nānupaśyanti mūrtiṣu* || *śāstrayogaparā bhūtvā svam ātmānaṁ parīpsavaḥ* | *anucchvāsāny amūrtīni yāni vajropamāny api* ||

Here the yogi is portrayed as both moving and stationary, precisely in the same manner that rays of light both continuously move outward from their source and appear to stand fixed as they fill a space with light. This analogy appears earlier in the *Īśā Upaniṣad* (IU), a short hymn to the Puruṣa whose true form is concealed by the solar disk. The Sun's rays spread out and fill the world with light in such a manner that this Puruṣa is both moving and unmoving, completely stationary and the swiftest of all. This in turn refers back to the Ṛgvedic depiction of Indra as both the Sun and the rays by which he expands throughout the *loka*. The yogi is thus Puruṣa- and Indra-like, but here according to a specific set of criteria, including a knowledge of reality (*tattvajñā*) that releases him from the physical body, and a discipline of the *indriya*s that has exposed the elemental self of beings (*bhūtātmā*, *sattvātmā*). It is, of course, the nature of luminous bodies to expand, and Vyāsa uses this fact to heighten the distinction between the superhuman yogi, who sees reality through and as himself, and the merely human being, whose natural expansiveness has been concealed by *rajas* and *tamas*, and who therefore sees reality dimly, as in a watery reflection. Vyāsa's yogi is thus called a "knower of reality," and clearly similar to the ideal *puruṣa* and physician of Āyurveda.[135]

As should now be apparent, the traditions of Āyurveda and the MBh are extensively parallel in terms of their understanding of the person. Taken together, they thus espouse what I have termed the pre-classical paradigm of personhood. This paradigm artfully combines sacrificially-oriented considerations of sovereignty with the phenomenalistic

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[135] The concluding verse of this section declares, "Having known the seven subtle ones [i.e. the elements, mind, and intellect] and the six limbs of Maheśvara, the one who is firm in the use of *pradhāna* (*pradhānaviniyogasthaḥ*) reaches the highest *brahman*." The invocation of Maheśvara intriguingly points to a continued, yet nebulous association between wandering ascetics and physicians, yogis, and the early Śaiva cultus. These associations merit further investigation in a future work.

cosmologies of the Upaniṣads and early Sāṃkhya and relies upon the method of yoga as a means of manipulating one's relation to the whole of the cosmos. The pre-classical *puruṣa* is that being who struggles against the imperfections of his intellect in the hopes of seeing the world as it truly is: his own Self, spread out in the form of *the* Puruṣa, the source and sustainer of existence, the impeller of all action beyond the taints of karma, the sovereign *puruṣottama* who, by virtue of his yoga, holds together the whole world.

In the following chapter, I will provide a final demonstration of this paradigm, unmired at last from the direct consideration of "*puruṣa*" and *puruṣa*-based terminologies. Now that we have excavated the theory of personhood paradigmatic to the pre-classical traditions of the MBh and Āyurveda, I will demonstrate the narrative framing of this paradigm, which should show the degree to which the importance of the person's relation to the world was felt. To be healed of disease, to be a whole person, and to know the true nature of oneself in a world that is otherwise punctuated with suffering and confusion—this is the crisis that the pre-classical paradigm of personhood works to overcome.

Chapter 6: The Tale of Cyavana and Indra: A Case Study in the Narrativization of the Pre-Classical Paradigm of Personhood

Introduction

In the Āraṇyakaparvan of the *Mahābhārata* (MBh), during the course of their *tīrtha* tour, the Pāṇḍavas come to the region of the Narmadā river. Their guide, Lomaśa, declares this site to be at "the junction of the *treta* and *dvāpara yuga*s,"[1] memorializing the fantastic events that took place then and there. The tale he then relates—the story of Cyavana Bhārgava, how he was restored to a youthful condition by the Aśvin twins and married to Sukanyā, how he then brought the Aśvins into the fold of the *soma*-drinkers, and finally how he overcame Indra by conjuring the *mahāsura* Mada, the great demon of "madness"—is an exemplary one in the MBh for multiple reasons: (1) It demonstrates the characteristic manner in which the MBh attempts to explain Vedic sacrificial proceedings through coded narratives; but (2) reconceives the significance of those proceedings according to the shifted paradigms of the pre-classical period (involving theistic considerations, uncertainties about the course of Time, questions about the nature of sovereignty and its relation to the problems of violence and action, the power of ascetic brahmins, etc.); which (3) conspires to demonstrate the nature of the person and his place in a world that is often bewildering to the point of a consuming madness. In short, the tale of Cyavana unites some of the most pervasive themes in the whole of the MBh in a manner that elegantly reflects the way in which the epic's authors wove into the tapestry of their world the innovative insights of originally non-orthodox traditions of asceticism and wandering.

My aim in what follows is first clarify the layers of meaning in this tale, especially its

[1] MBh 3.121.19 - *saṃdhir… tretāyā dvāparasya ca*.

climactic moment of conjuration, and its relation to more broadly (often more directly) conceived themes in the MBh. Doing so affords an opportunity to show how the MBh demonstrates its commitment to the pre-classical paradigm of personhood that I have described throughout the preceding chapters of this dissertation. That is, the Cyavana tale in the Sukanyāparvan exemplifies the MBh's thinking about personhood, and this despite the fact that it makes no direct claims with regard to the *puruṣa* and contains no allusions to the *puruṣa*s of Sāṃkhya, Yoga, Vedānta, etc. It is instead a tale of the person in relation to Time that is steeped in the lore of sacrifice and of royal import. It is unique in the manner that it presents the pre-classical notion of personhood in this otherwise traditionalist garb. But this uniqueness only further demonstrates the extent to which the authors of MBh gave themselves over to the cosmopolitanism of the pre-classical age.

The Sukanyāparvan expresses the pre-classical paradigm of personhood through its suggestion that madness is a problem of cosmic proportions. Madness takes varied forms throughout the epic, from neglect and distraction (*pramada*), to drunkeness and excitement (*mada*), to pride and arrogance (*durmada*), to insanity (*unmada*). Generally speaking, it is a condition coincident with a confusion of the *buddhi*, which, as we saw in the previous chapter, forces a misperception of the world that leads to a person's undoing. Cyavana's tale begins with a moment of pleasantly distracted drunkenness when the maiden Sukanyā unintentionally pricks Cyavana in the eye with a thorn.[2] It culminates with Indra, the king of the gods, facing down a madness of cosmic proportions—the conjured demon, Mada—that will swallow all things should he fail to bend his knee to Cyavana's awesome ascetic power:

> By the strength of the Rishi's *tapas*, [his] *kṛtyā,* the massive-bodied, greatly-virile *mahāsura* named Mada, sprang to life. Neither gods nor demons could

[2] MBh 3.121

> comprehend his body; his great mouth was terrible and filled with sharp tusks. One of his jaws rested on the earth, the other reached heaven. His four teeth extended a thousand *yojana*s … his arms, resembling mountains, extended equally ten thousand [*yojana*s], his eyes resembled the sun and moon, his mouth like death…. His mouth gaping—terrible to behold—[looked] like he would forcefully swallow the universe. Completely enraged, he attacked Indra to devour him."[3]

The sheer size of Mada is evidence of the strength of Cyavana's *tapas*, for only by virtue of an ascetic power that is itself capable of extending its reach to the utmost limits of the cosmos could Cyavana conjure a demon of such proportions. But note how the image of Mada is not singular to the MBh; there is an obvious analog in the description of Kṛṣṇa's *viśvarūpa* in the *Bhagavad Gītā* (BhG).[4] Like Mada, Kṛṣṇa too is gaping- and tusk-mawed, terrifying, swallowing living beings, and as extensive as the universe. And like Mada, Kṛṣṇa too appears in this awesome form at a culminating moment of time; indeed, he appears as Time itself, ready to turn the wheel of the ages. Mada is, however, no god; he is a *kṛtyā*, a sorcerer's conjured artifice. But the parallels between the appearances of Kṛṣṇa and Mada remain intriguing, for they suggest that madness and the true nature of reality are somehow intertwined.

Historically, the √*mad*-derived terms I deal with here have not been translated to reflect

[3] MBh 3.124.19-24—*tataḥ kṛtyā samabhavad ṛṣes tasya tapobalāt* | *mado nāma mahāvīryo bṛhatkāyo mahāsuraḥ* | *śarīraṁ yasya nirdeṣṭum aśakyaṁ tu surāsuraiḥ* || *tasyāsyam abhavad ghoraṁ tīkṣṇāgradaśanaṁ mahat* | *hanur ekā sthitā tasya bhūmāv ekā divaṁ gatā* || *catasra āyatā daṁṣṭrā yojanānāṁ śataṁ śatam* | … || *bāhū parvatasaṁkāśāv āyatāv ayutaṁ samau* | *netre raviśaśiprakhye vaktram antakasaṁnibham* || … | *vyāttānano ghoradṛṣṭir grasann iva jagad balāt* || *sa bhakṣayiṣyan saṁkruddhaḥ śatakratum upādravat* | *mahatā ghorarūpeṇa lokāñ śabdena nādayan* ||

[4] Another obvious analog is the fierce demon who holds the Buddhist *bhavacakra* in his fanged mouth, and who symbolizes Time and Impermanence, which circumscribe the wheel of being. Because I am primarily concerned with themes found in Hindu texts, and specifically those in the MBh, I will not explore resonances with the Buddhist *bhavacakra* here.

their original relation to madness. For instance, *pramāda*, a term we saw allied with misperceptions of the *buddhi* in the previous chapter, is usually translated as "negligence" or "distraction," terms that are sufficient to its contextual meaning, but that otherwise occlude the *pramāda*'s original relation to √*mad*. It is part of the present chapter's aim to restore this original relationship and thereby reveal the significance of madness to the MBh's understanding of the person.[5] The issue of madness, I argue, is another means by which the MBh demonstrates its commitment to the view that the person is non-different from the world, that the person is an expansive entity who either aligns truthfully or falsely with the world, and who is thus either sane or mad to the extent that he understands that he is the world. Highlighting this expansive paradigm of the person as it is told in the Sukanyāparvan will bring us before a rich complex of notions that connect the MBh's metaphysics of the

[5] The semantic range which √*mad* covers varies according to the available dictionary sources. Monier-Williams provides: exaltation, inspiration, intoxication, drunkenness, insanity, etc. Apte provides a similar range, but includes the verb's most obvious cognate: madness. By here translating the many terms that contain √*mad* as "madness," I am following Apte, and certainly the cognate which the root √*mad* provides. A further word of explanation is, however, required. To wit: I shall translate terms like *pramāda* as simply, "madness." This will likely appear foolish to some readers. I could just as easily, and perhaps more correctly, translate such terms with "negligence," "drunkenness," "pride," and so on. The intention in translating such terms universally as "madness"—thus highlighting their relation to madness, or "becoming mad"—is not to occlude or ignore the breadth of meaning belonging to √*mad*-derived terms. Clearly, the meaning of such terms is altered by the addition of prefixes or through adverbial and adjectival transformations. Nevertheless, it is from the root √*mad* that such terms arise. Consequently, my aim is to suggest a return to a more originary, Indic understanding of "madness," and therefore I understand the meaning of terms like *pramāda* to be modifications of madness. That is to say, "negligence," "intoxication," "pride," and the like are all specific, nuanced forms of madness, both in the structure of the Sanskrit terms that denote them and in the semantic meanings they express. Thus *mada* would indicate the "madness" of intoxication, *pramāda* the "madness" of negligence, etc. "Madness" should thus not be understood by the reader in terms of its present day significations, *viz.* anger and insanity, alone or even at all. Instead, "madness" should be read as the overarching term that links together the Indic notions of negligence, intoxication, pride, etc. as various types of "madness." These nuanced meanings will have to be kept in mind by the reader so as not to fall into the error of an overly simplistic reading of what follows.

person to the so-called "proto-Aryan" theory of double kingship, the Vedic concern with the "wholeness" of the sacrifice, the interrelations of sovereignty and madness, and the power of Time. Moreover, in what follows I will demonstrate that a specifically Indic problem of identity rests at the heart of the sources considered here. Madness—which is to say, the many kinds of madness exemplified by √*mad*-derived terms—appears to be directly tied to this identity crisis, especially in the MBh's confrontations with the issues of sovereignty, sacrifice, and the all-consuming power of Time.

6.1 Madness and Kings

The MBh lists four vices (*vyasanaṃ catuṣṭayam*) that plague kings especially and threaten their sovereignty (*śrī*)—hunting, liquor, gambling, and women—and this list corresponds precisely to the list of sites in which Cyavana apportions the *mahāsura* Mada after he has sufficiently frightened Indra in the Sukanyāparvan.[6] Significantly, these vices are also the sources from which Mada had "previously been brought forth again and again."[7] Naturally, √*mad*-derived terminologies frequently attend discussions of these vices. Of these four, however, the last three most relevantly draw our attention. For instance, and as scholars with an eye to Indo-European mythic structures have noted, the relationship between liquor (mead—cognate with √*mad*) and kingship represents an extremely ancient

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[6] Drinking (of intoxicating liquor—*pānam*) is mentioned alongside "women, gambling, [and] hunting" (*striyo 'kṣā mṛgayā*) in scattered places throughout the MBh. This exact sequence of terms is found at MBh 3.14.7, 5.33.74, and 12.28.31 and usually comprises a list of four (termed *vyasanaṃ catuṣṭayaṃ* at 3.14.4); however, 5.33.74 expands this list to seven vices (here, termed *sapta doṣāḥ*), adding "abusive language" (*vākpāruṣyaṃ*), "cruel punishment" (*daṇḍapāruṣyam*), and "abuse of wealth" (*arthadūṣaṇam*). Other places in the MBh containing variants on this list include MBh 2.61.20 (which replaces *striyaḥ* with *grāmye atisaktatām*, translated by van Buitenen as "fornicating") & 3.125.8 (which directly links these vices to the supernaturally maddening Mada).

[7] MBh 3.125.8—*pūrvasṛṣṭāṃ punaḥ punaḥ*

mythic trope, both within and beyond geographically South Asian contexts.[8] These scholars have demonstrated that liquor is a double-edged sword (or rather, a fickle woman identified with mead, e.g. Medb, a name which is itself cognate with √*mad*) which can confer the the felicity of sovereign power or cruelly take it away. In the RV, the associations of the king of the Gods, Indra, with the "honey" (*madhu*) of Soma—that "exhilarating drink" (*madira mandī*)—are rife.[9] In the Soma-Maṇḍala, the "drop" of Soma (*indu*) is said to "flow for the sake of Indra" (RV 9.113). Georges Dumézil (1973: 70-84) argues that the central problem of sovereignty in I-E myths is reflected in the myth of the ancient king Yayāti, who is saved from a downfall by his daughter Mādhavī and her four sons. Mādhavī's name is, of course, derived from *madhu* - the honeyed wine so important to I-E tales of universal sovereigns. Jaan Puhvel (1987: 256-262) goes so far as to speculate that the universal sovereign (*samrāj*), Yayāti, bore the "suppressed allonym" Madhu.[10] The king would himself thus be the archetype of the close association between royalty, intoxicating liquor, and the femininity of sovereign power.[11]

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[8] See, e.g., Puhvel (1987) and Dumézil (1973).

[9] RV 10.94; see also RV 10.119; 9.113; 8.48; et al. for indications of the Ṛgvedic notion of Soma as an intoxicant (√*mad*) and its basic associations with honey (*madhu*) and Indra.

[10] Puhvel suggests that Yayāti is the prototypical *samrāj* whose story "goes to the heart of Indo-European kingship" (1987: 261). However, Yayāti is but one of several universal sovereigns treated in the MBh, and the category of *samrāj* in the MBh may be better exemplified by the figures Vasu Uparicara and Hariścandra. Interestingly, none of these figures is mentioned in Kṛṣṇa's list of important *samrāj*s at MBh 2.14.11, which instead lists Yauvanāśva, Bhagīratha, Kārtavīrya, Bharata, and Marutta. It is furthermore worth noting in this connection that one of Kṛṣṇa's epithets is "Mādhava," a descendent from the Madhu lineage. Kṛṣṇa is also known as the "slayer of [the demon] Madhu" (*madhusūdana*), the tale of which is narrated at *Harivaṃśa* (HV) 44.

[11] On a related note, in the later MBh tale about Vipula (a descendent of the Bhṛgu clan), who protects of Ruci from a lusty Indra, the association of all women with intoxication and madness is signaled by their designation as *pramadā*—"sex-crazed women." In true

The themes of intoxication, madness, and sovereignty are likewise allied in the dice game. When king Nala is possessed by Kali, the demon of the losing throw, he gambles away his fortune, "completely maddened by the madness of the dice."[12] The same comes to Yudhiṣṭhira: when he gambles away his fortune, his kingdom, his brothers, his wife, and himself, the bewildered king is "maddened by the madness of gambling."[13] In a description that echoes the descriptions of the *mahāsura* Mada and the terrifying *viśvarūpa* of Kṛṣṇa, the advent of the dice match between Duryodhana and Yudhiṣṭhira is likened to the appearance of the Gate of Kali (*kalidvāra*), revealing a gaping "maw of destruction."[14] Furthermore, in an important passage that encapsulates the intersections between gambling, liquor, and the unforeseeable waxing and waning of sovereign power, Vidura pleads with the gamblers as Śakuni successively divests Yudhiṣṭhira of his wealth with words he attributes to the Bhārgava Kāvya Uśanas: "The mead drinker, having found mead indeed does not perceive [his] fall; having ascended he either sinks down or finds his ruin. [Likewise,] this man, maddened by the dice-play, does not look about [himself, just like] a drunk. And having picked a fight with great warriors, does not perceive his [coming] downfall."[15]

The implied lesson in such verses is that the sovereign should be constantly undistracted, or sober (*a-pra-√mad*), for the activities associated with his station make him particularly

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Bhārgava fashion, Vipula's protective strategy involves the supernatural feat of occupying the same physical space as Ruci's body via a yogic "yoking" of himself to her person.

[12] MBh 3.56.10—*akṣamadasaṃmattaṃ*

[13] MBh 2.60.4—*yudhiṣṭhire dyūtamadena matte*; Draupadi immediately echoes this sentiment, stating that the "bewildered king has been maddened by the madness of the game" (*mūdho rājā dyūtamadena matta*).

[14] MBh 2.45.50—*vināśamukha*

[15] MBh 2.55.4-5—*madhu vai mādhviko labdhvā prapātaṃ nāvabudhyate* | *āruhya taṃ majjati vā patanaṃ vādhigacchati* || *so 'yaṃ matto 'kṣadevena madhuvan na parīkṣate* | *prapātaṃ budhyate naiva vairaṃ kṛtvā mahārathaiḥ* ||

vulnerable to madness, the loss of sovereignty, and untimely death. This implicitly aligns the sovereign with the yogi, who from the time of the KU onwards, has been one who is characteristically “undistracted” (*apramatta*). Along the same lines, the Buddha is described as “undistracted” when he enters into the four *jhana*s. Thus the king’s sober grasp of his own sovereign status is precisely parallel to the *yogi*’s grasp of his *indriya*s, or the Buddha’s grasp of meditative concentration.[16] Hence, in several didactic portions of the MBh, *pramāda* is held up as a failure of kings, while good kings practice *apramāda*, generally translated as “diligence,” or “vigilance.” The two opposed terms are part of a more or less standardized list of vices and virtues of successful and failed kings, and this makes their broader significance in the MBh easy to miss. Two episodes, involving the sovereigns Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Yudhiṣṭhira, bring this broader significance immediately to the fore.

In the first episode, Dhṛtarāṣṭra, who is tragically unable to dissuade his son Duryodhana from declaring war on the Pāṇḍavas (or otherwise put his foot down as a father and regent might do), is visited by Sanatsujāta, one of the seven mind-born sons of Brahmā. Vidura has called upon Sanatsujāta in order to convince Dhṛtarāṣṭra to take steps to arrest his son lest (among other conditions such as old age and death, fear and indignation, etc.) madness and power (*madodbhavau*) overwhelm (*vi-√sah*) him (Dhṛtarāṣṭra).[17] Sanatsujāta’s counsel

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[16] As we saw in chapter three, entrance into the *jhana*s is requisite to the practice of realizing emptiness (*śūnyatā*). Later Buddhist literature on emptiness echoes the KU’s characterization of the yogi as “undistracted.” For instance, in defining emptiness, Candrakīrti cites a verse from a Mahāyāna text, the *Anavataptahṛdāpasaṃkramaṇa-sūtra*: “What arises due to conditions is not arisen. There is no arising of it due to inherent essence. What is dependent on conditions is [therefore] called ‘empty.’ One who knows emptiness is not distracted” (*Prasannapadā* 239: *yaḥ pratyayairjāyati sa hyajāto no tasya utpādu sabhāvato ‘sti* | *yaḥ pratyayādhīnu sa śūnya ukto yaḥ śūnyatāṃ jānati so ‘pramattaḥ* ||).

[17] MBh 5.41.11—…*yathainaṃ na jarāntakau viṣaheran bhayāmarṣau kṣutpipāse madodbhavau*…

begins with a startling claim: “The notion of death that is agreed upon by the *kavi*s is a delusion. I say that madness (*pramādaṃ*) is death! I say that constant vigilance (*sadāpramādam*) is immortality! The Asuras were overcome due to madness alone; through vigilance they were the very essence of *brahman*.”[18] Here, the reversal of the Asuras’ status is portrayed as the direct consequence of their distraction, their negligence, their madness.

The very same logic appears when Yudhiṣṭhira learns of the slaughter of his sleeping comrades at the hands of the mad-sacrificer Aśvatthaman. The tenth chapter of the Sauptikaparvan, which we might characterize as a lament on the power of *pramāda*, repeats like a mantra how the mighty warriors of Yudhiṣṭhira’s army have been slain due to the madness of negligence (*pramādāt*).[19] He wails, “Here, in the world of living beings, there is indeed no greater killer of men than madness. All sense abandons the madman, and nonsense completely possesses him.”[20] In short, madness inaugurates a complete reversal in the lives of men. Where there was life, the onset of madness brings death; where there was sense, nonsense takes over. Yudhiṣṭhira catalogs these reversals as he laments their arrival. “The sensible path is hard to know even for those with divine sight. . . . Nonsense resembles sense, and likewise sense appears as nonsense. This victory appears like defeat; therefore victory is the highest defeat!”[21]

In the Mokṣadharma section of the Śantiparvan, a series of didactic dialogs (found in

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[18] MBh 5.42.4-5—… *moho mṛtyuḥ saṃmato yaḥ kavīnām* | *pramādaṃ vai mṛtyum ahaṃ bravīmi sadāpramādam amṛtatvaṃ bravīmi* || *pramādād vai asurāḥ parābhavann apramādād brahmabhūtā bhavanti* |

[19] See MBh 10.10.16, 18, 19, 21, & 23

[20] MBh 10.10.19—*na hi pramādāt paramo ‘sti kaś cid vadho narāṇām iha jīvaloke* | *pramattam arthā hi naraṃ samantāt tyajanty anarthāś ca samāviśanti* ||

[21] MBh 10.10.10-12—*durvidā gatir arthānām api ye divyacakṣuṣaḥ …. anartho hy arthasaṃkāśas tathārtho ‘narthadarśanaḥ* | *jayo ‘yam ajayākāro jayas tasmāt parājayaḥ*

MBh 12.215-220) takes place between Indra and three of his former Asura adversaries—Prahlāda, Bali, and Namuci—who have since fallen from their state of kingly effulgence. Prahlāda and Namuci are bound in chains and under the control of their enemies, while Bali has had the misfortune of being reborn as a donkey. All three, moreover, have come to believe in the absolute power of Time, for they are kings who have been "smashed by Time's staff."[22] Finally, while each attempts to instruct Indra according to three distinct doctrines of Time's supremacy—Prahlāda relates the *svabhāvavāda*, Bali relates the *kālavāda*, while Namuci speaks on the god of Fate (*Dhātṛ*)—there is a basic lesson underlying their differences. To wit, because the sovereignty of Time is absolute, Indra cannot hope to avoid a similar downfall; rather he should prepare himself to accept his own inevitable fall.

Prahlāda's advice is for Indra to 'get wise' to the natural "rolling forth and rolling back of beings."[23] Whereas normally the terms *pravṛtti* and *nivṛtti* would signal, respectively, worldly activity and renunciation or inactivity, here I have translated them according to their most literal senses in order to signal the temporal considerations underlying Prahlāda's advice. As David Shulman argues in his analyses of the dicing sequence and the myth of

[22] MBh 12.216.1—*kāladaṇḍavinispiṣṭa*.V. M. Bedekar (1992) has demonstrated that the uneasy acceptance and incorporation of the doctrines of the absolute power of time (especially the *kālavāda* and *svabhāvavada*) at certain places in the MBh—like here in the MDhP, or in the BhG. Such doctrines were originally considered heterodox doctrines in the Vedic tradition because they negated or minimized human free will and moral responsibility. Therefore these doctrines are often promulgated by Asuras. However, here, as in the BhG, the MBh begins to show the post-Vedic thinkers' change in attitude toward these doctrines. Thus the advice given by Asuras to Indra itself becomes advice for the once and future king Yudhiṣṭhira, and the supreme god himself, *Kṛṣṇa*, becomes a strong proponent for the absolute power of Time. On the subject of doctrines on the power of Time, see also Vassilkov (1999) and Hudson (2013: 146-177).

[23] MBh 12.215.14—*pravṛttiṃ ca nivṛttiṃ ca bhūtānāṃ*

Śiva as Sthāṇu, the cosmos regularly undergoes periods of production and retraction in order to rejuvenate itself, and this cyclic process is signaled by the terms *pra-* and *ni-√vṛt*.[24] Indeed, if the description of Kṛṣṇa's *viśvarūpa* in the *Bhagavad Gītā* (BhG) is any indication, the cosmos is perpetually rolling forth and rolling back the beings that it manifests. If, then, there is any use to the advice given by Prahlāda, it is in the exhortation to just 'roll with it,' so to speak, recognizing that when *pramāda* and *apramāda* alternately come upon him (and it is here that such standardized lists mentioned earlier appear) it is but the turning of the wheel of Time. In this regard, the more usual senses of *pra-* and *ni-√vṛt*—activity and renunciation—announce themselves once more, but these are plainly based upon the underlying notion of the rolling of Time's tides.[25]

In the dialog that follows between Indra and Bali, a similar espousal of the absolute sovereignty of Time occurs. But to this now familiar framework is added the figure of Śrī, a luminous woman, "blazing with her own splendor,"[26] who has left the body of the wretched Bali. Indra asks her a crucial question: "O Irresistible One [Śrī], what was done by me or by

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[24] See especially Shulman (1992: 358), and Shulman (1986: 108).

[25] As I briefly noted above, the CS, immediately following its discussion of the relation between *loka* and *puruṣa* in the "Puruṣa Vicayam," engages in a discussion of the terms *pra-* and *ni-vṛtti*. These terms are here directly related to the CS's understanding of yoga, and more specifically *viyoga*, which is Kaviratna & Sharma (1996 vol.2: 481) rightly translate as "dissolution." Briefly, *pravṛtti* acts lead to dissolution—that is, death in the case of mortals and dissolution in the case of the cosmos—whereas *nivṛtti* acts lead to the cessation of death and dissolution. We might summarize these passages as arguing that *pravṛtti* is the source of all that is temporal, and therefore temporary, whereas *nivṛtti* marks a return to all that is atemporal. The general sense is that the one who is capable of consciously and sustainedly "yoking" himself to that which is characterized by *nivṛtti* is the one who simultaneously "yokes" himself to the totality of existence, and who thereby sees *loka* in *puruṣa* and *puruṣa* in *loka*, despite and throughout their temporal transformations. In this regard, see especially CS 4.5.8-22.

[26] MBh 12.218.3—*dīpyamānā svatejasā*

Bali [such that] you abandon him?"[27] Śrī replies, "Neither the Placer nor the Ordainer enjoins me in any way, Time has simply turned around, Śakra!"[28] Thus the woman who is historically related to all considerations of sovereignty in I-E mythic structures, and moreover related to the themes of intoxication and madness, finally appears in the MBh's context as intimately related to the passage of all-powerful Time. When Śrī abandons those who have striven to attain her, she does so solely because of the passage of Time, which "rolls" both beings and their prosperity in and out of manifestation.[29]

At the close of their meeting, Bali warns Indra of the coming of his own fall from grace, once again highlighting the temporal elements of the comings and goings of Śrī: "So long as the sun shall shine forth in the east, so shall it shine in the south, the west, and the north. When the sun does not set at midday, then there will be war between Asuras and Devas again, and I shall conquer you. When the sun, standing in one spot, comes to burn (√*tap*) all the worlds, then I shall conquer you in the battle between Devas and Asuras, O Indra!"[30] Indra responds that the course of the sun and the year has been firmly established by Brahmā—for half of the year the sun follows a northerly course, while for the other half it follows a southerly course, thereby "sending forth the cold and the heat."[31] "Never," he

[27] MBh 12.218.9—*kim idaṃ tvaṃ mama kṛte utāho balinaḥ kṛte duḥsahe vijahāsi?*

[28] MBh 12.218.10—*na dhātā na vidhātā māṃ vidadhāti kathaṃ cana / kālas tu śakra paryāgān*

[29] Those figures who are shocked by the reversals of fortune brought about by the passage of Time exhibit a disjuncture with Time, much like the patient of the Āyurvedic physician. Quite literally, they have failed to "keep up with the times."

[30] MBh 12.218.30-32—*yāvat purastāt pratapet tāvad vai dakṣiṇāṃ diśam* || *paścimāṃ tāvad evāpi tathodīcīṃ divākaraḥ* | *tathā madhyaṃdine sūryo astam eti yadā tadā* | *punar devāsuraṃ yuddhaṃ bhāvi jetāsmi vas tadā* || *sarvālokān yadāditya ekasthas tāpayiṣyati* | *tadā devāsure yuddhe jetāhaṃ tvāṃ śatakrato* ||

[31] MBh 12.218.36—*śītoṣṇe visṛjan*

believes, “has the sun halted midway [in its course] and scorched (√*tap*) [the worlds].”[32] But surely Indra has missed Bali’s metaphorical point. If the sun were to halt in the middle of its transit through the sky, it would completely burn up (*saṃtāpa*) the world with its incessant rays. Likewise, should a king fail to pay heed to the natural course of Time’s ebb and flow, if he should fail to remain vigilant, no longer acting out of necessity alone but rather out of a mad sense of personal grandiosity or a need to maintain his royal status, then he would become like a sun halted in its course.[33] He would scorch the worlds and press his enemies to war. The dialog between Indra and Namuci that immediately follows confirms this reading of Bali’s solar/temporal metaphor when it warns that “beauty fails because of a complete scorching (*saṃtāpād*). *Śrī* fails from a complete scorching. Life and just so *dharma* fail because of a complete scorching.”[34]

Is this complete scorching of the worlds by sovereigns gone mad truly inevitable as Bali suggests? In this regard, the fallen Asura kings stand as an affirming testament. For though they were once a virtuous race, they became “maddened by sovereignty” because they were unable to “let go of this mad life of *śrī*.”[35] To this it must be added that, in the logic of the MBh, no sovereign power is more vigilant and thus deserving of its sovereignty than Time. Time “has no master, is undistracted (*apramatta*), and perpetually cooks living

[32] MBh 12.218.34—*ādityo naivatapitā kadā cin madhyataḥ sthitaḥ*

[33] According to Proferes, the Vedic-era *abhiṣeka* rite confers a solar body upon the king: “The qualities of the sun—its splendor, its powerful heat, its unrestricted movement across and ascent over, and its ubiquitous permeation—can henceforth be applied equally to the king” (2007: 113).

[34] MBh 12. 219.5—*aṃtāpād bhraśyate rūpaṃ saṃtāpād bhraśyate śriyaḥ / saṃtāpād bhraśyate cāyur dharmaś caiva*

[35] MBh 12.220.60, 64—*aiśvaryamadas . . . . muñcemaṃ śrībhavaṃ madam*

beings…Time is undistracted and goes on burning living beings who are mad."[36]

6.2 The Mastery of Madness and the Return to Wholeness

The fire of Time that cooks living beings is, in the language of the MBh, a great sacrificial fire. The sacrificial context brings all the themes addressed above together under a single framework. According to the main plotline of the MBh, the natural world of the earth has grown overpopulated and overburdened—we might even say 'ill'—by the descent of the power-mad (*vīryamadā*, *mattā madabalena*) Asura souls upon her soil, and only a massive sacrifice in the form of a bloody war between rival kings can relieve her of this weight.[37] The great sacrifice of battle at *kurukṣetra* will moreover mark the juncture between two ages—the *dvāpara* and *kali yuga*s—and in this respect the battle-sacrifice represents a turning of the tides of Time. But this is not the first time in the MBh that the turning of Time's tides has been marked by conflict and sacrifice, for the conjuration of the *mahāsura* Mada by Cyavana in the midst of a Soma rite also marked a juncture between *yuga*s. Consequently, by taking a closer look at some of the elements that combine to produce this earlier event, it is possible to take one step closer to understanding the significance of madness to the MBh. This will involve closely examining aspects of Cyavana Bhārgava, especially his use of *kṛtyā*, and the role of the Aśvin twins and their mythological relation to the "head" of the sacrifice.[38]

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[36] MBh 12.220. 94-95—*anīśasyāpramattasya bhūtāni pacataḥ sadā . . . . apramattaḥ pramatteṣu kālo jāgarti dehiṣu*

[37] See MBh 1.58.25-34

[38] I won't attempt to exhaustively unravel the mystery of the head of the sacrifice here. All the same, my investigations suggest a new perspective on the puzzle it represents through a consideration of two of the divine agents who are usually present when the question of the head arises: the Aśvin twins.

Previous scholarship on Cyavana Bhārgava has emphasized the transformations of his character and associated narratives through the Vedas, Brāhmaṇas, and the MBh (Doniger 1985; Goldman 1977; van Buitenen 1975); his resonances with Indo-European mythic structures (Puhvel 1987); his similarities to Śiva in the wrecking of Dakṣa's sacrifice (Brodbeck 2009); or his ascetic connection to Vālmīki (Patton 2008; Goldman 1976; Shulman 1978; Leslie 2003). What is initially significant about Cyavana in the present context is that he, true to his Bhārgava name, is prone to wrathful displays of supernatural power. From the very moment of his birth, his irascibility and fiery nature are on full display. The fetal Cyavana prematurely aborts himself from his mother's womb out of sheer anger[39] when his mother is seized by the lustful *rākṣasa* Puloman. His tiny body already burns with the brilliance of the sun (*ādityavarcasa*), and this radiance turns the *rākṣasa* to ashes (*bhasmasāt*).[40] The greater violence of this tale, however, belongs to Cyavana's father, Bhṛgu. Furious that his wife was seized because of what he perceives as a betrayal by Agni, Bhṛgu curses the fire to become omnivorous. The curse precipitates a dreadful crisis, for as even the love-sick *rākṣasa* Puloman is aware, Agni perpetually abides within all living beings.[41] Should Agni suddenly become completely omnivorous, all those beings would be consumed by the fire that dwells within them. Moreover, Agni acts as the mouth of the gods;

[39] MBh 1.6.2: "Cyavana fell from (*cyutaḥ*) his mother's womb out of anger, thus he is [called] Cyavana" (*roṣān mātuś cyutaḥ kukṣeś cyavanas tena so 'bhavat*).

[40] This fiery quality of Cyavana never fades; in the *Sukanyā* myth, the narrator Lomaśa says Cyavana is *mahātejā* and *mahādyuti* (MBh 3.122.1-2). Note that these descriptors apply even as Cyavana remains motionless in his practice of *vīrasthāna*, "the standing of the hero." This practice recalls the myth of Śiva as Sthāṇu, which has been wonderfully analyzed by Shulman (1986). Cyavana's mimicry of Śiva also appears in the Anuśasanaparvan (MBh 13.50), where we see Cyavana standing motionless in a confluence of waters.

[41] MBh 1.5.23—*tvam agne sarvabhūtānām antaś carasi*

an omnivorous Agni would thereby feed the gods with all sorts of impure substances. The solution to this conundrum is that only certain parts of Agni's body shall be omnivorous,[42] while all that Agni consumes shall be purified, and so suitable for consumption by the gods. As this origin story makes abundantly clear, the Bhṛgus are true masters of fire.[43] More specifically, they are masters of the fire-based sorcery of the *AV*, which, as Goldman notes, "is commonly referred to in the Atharvan literature as the Bhṛgvāñgirasa, the Veda of the Bhṛgus and the Āñgirasas" (1977: 147). The Bhārgavas' mastery of fire proper to Atharvanic sorcerers is once again on display in the Sukanyā myth when Cyavana conjures Mada with an act of *kṛtyā*.

Hans-Georg Türstig (1985: 77), writing on "The Indian Sorcery Called *abhicāra*," declares: "Very cautiously *kṛtyā* may be called a distinct female entity who is to be created, can be used and destroyed and who serves a malevolent purpose." This definition has obvious drawbacks for the present study's purposes, as Cyavana's conjuration of Mada does not involve the creation and subsequent destruction of Mada, but rather involves a summoning and subsequent dispersal. Additionally, the *mahāsura* Mada is clearly male, and no female intermediary—beyond the mere mention of the word *kṛtyā*—appears to play a role. In a commentary to the *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* by Bhaṭṭotpala (cited in Türstig 1985: 75), a slightly nuanced definition of *kṛtyā* is offered: "*kṛtyā* is a woman caused through *abhicāra* spells to rise from a fire for killing an enemy." The key addition in this definition is the mention of *abhicāra* spells. In the MBh, *abhicāra* appears most relevantly in the discussions

[42] Thus the person's digestive fires do not consume, but rather sustain him.

[43] Elizarenkova (1995: 21) notes that in the RV, the Bhṛgus are said to be the first to generate fire. As we will see below, this would place them in the privileged position of having first established a connection between the fire of the sun and the fire of man, and thus render them masters of the early metaphor for double kingship.

between Kuntī and Pāṇḍu as they search for a loophole to the curse that prevents Pāṇḍu from having intercourse and thereby fathering children.[44] Kuntī employs *abhicāra* in order to summon into manifestation, in a yogic-fashion, Sūrya, Dharma, and Vāyu, who in turn impregnate her with the Pāṇḍava boys. Clearly, this manner of summoning is far closer to the *kṛtyā* employed by Cyavana to summon Mada.

David White deepens our understanding of *kṛtyā* with his examination of the term in the *Netra Tantra*: "[I]t is a Tantric (if not a Vedic) commonplace to identify a being or deity with a mantra—the acoustic ground or correlate of the being, which can be used to create, manipulate or identify with that entity. Beings and the mantras that create or denote them are virtually indistinguishable, and so too is the practice or manipulation of the mantra or device." (2012b: 163).[45] In the context of the Sukanyā myth, this suggests that Cyavana employs *mantra*s of madness in order to summon Mada, and moreover that he does so madly, or at least as one who has mastered madness. In short, an air of madness thoroughly suffuses the scene. Initially, this seems (beyond the fact that *soma* is an intoxicant) like a nonsensical conclusion to reach, even if it follows the logic of *kṛtyā*. It begins to make greater sense after recalling that the events of the Sukanyā myth take place at the juncture of the *treta* and *dvāpara yuga*s. Insofar as Time, which is *apramatta*, cooks living beings who are *pramatta*, and insofar as the *pramatta* of beings most clearly sets in when Time and the

[44] MBh 1.109-114. The details of these discussions that result in the births of the Pāṇḍavas are rather convoluted but seem to go directly to the heart of the MBh's portrayal of the relation between yoga, birth, and the descent of *amśāvatāra*s. It moreover bears striking similarities to later, tantric notions of yoga. Future research should clarify the particulars of this episode in its relation to *abhicāra* spells, so-called "subtle body" yoga, and the resulting parentage of the Pāṇḍavas by yogic *ménage-à-trois*.

[45] See White 2012b: 163. *Kṛtya* counts itself among a larger set of ritual terms that denote both the ritual activity and the result. See also, for instance, Pinkney (2013: 751) on *prasāda*.

fortunes of beings are about to turn (√*vṛt*), then we should certainly expect the air of madness to hang thick over the proceedings of Cyavana and Indra's *soma*-drinking session.

The final cause in this scenario, for which the efficient cause of Mada is employed, is the inclusion of the Aśvin twins in the *soma* rite. The relationship established between Cyavana and the Aśvins is longstanding and consequential for the Sukanyā tale. It refers us directly to the divine twins' capacity as healers, for they have been Cyavana's rejuvenators since the time of the RV. Cyavana is otherwise famous for his association with the Āyurvedic rejuvenation treatment (*rasāyana*) called *cyavanaprāśa*, the "food of Cyavana," so named in homage to this divine restoration.[46] In the Sukanyāparvan, this restoration involves a ceremonial bath that echoes the rebirth of the sovereign in the *abhiṣeka* unction rite into his solar, resplendent sovereign form.[47] For Cyavana, the result is that he not only becomes young again, he now also possess the "same appearance" (*tulyarūpa*) as the handsome Aśvin twins. Thus Cyavana acts not simply on behalf of the Aśvins in advocating for their inclusion in the *soma* session, he also acts, in a 'formal' sense, *as* the Aśvin twins. But then who are the Aśvins in this scenario, besides divine physicians?

The practice of medicine, which regularly requires contact with impure substances, assigns the Aśvins to the role of the third function in Dumézil's tri-functional schema, and

[46] As Roşu (1975) notes, these rejuvenation therapies are most often paired with therapies to increase sexual potency (*vajīkaraṇa*). The first half of the Sukanyāparvan, involving the marriage of Cyavana to the youthful Sukanyā, obliquely concentrates on these combined themes.

[47] The AH refers to two rejuvenation therapies, the best of which (*kuṭīprāveśika*) involves placing the patient in a triple-walled, pitch-dark hut (*kuṭī*) and undergoing a series of purificatory practices (oleation and sudation) until his former youthfulness returns. The dark and womb-like nature of the *kuṭī* suggests the symbolic mechanism behind this rejuvenating rebirth, and moreover approximates a key part of the "intermediary initiation" (*avāntaradikṣa*) that is requisite for all performers of the Pravargya rite (to which I'll return shortly).

this begets the typically accepted explanation for their role in the conflict between Cyavana and Indra. To wit, the impurity of the third function normally disqualifies participation in the highly purified setting of sacrificial rites, but as the virtue of the *yuga*s successively declines, so too the purity standard for inclusion in sacrificial proceedings. Because the *soma* rite in the Sukanyāparvan takes place at the inauspicious onset of the *dvāpara yuga*, the impurity of the Aśvins no longer disqualifies them from their share. This is, I believe, a doubly insufficient explanation insofar as it (1) fails to properly appreciate the symbolic heritage of the Aśvin twins[48] and (2) the significance of their association with the medical profession, beyond concerns of ritual purity.

The symbolic heritage of the Aśvins stretches back to the chariot-centered culture of the Proto-Aryans, which Parpola (2005) has wonderfully examined. In that age, he writes, "[t]he two-man team of warrior and charioteer was deified. . . . the Nāsatyas, like the Dioskouroi in Sparta, were models of [the] dual kingship [exemplified by these two-man teams]. The twins represented dualistic cosmic forces, day and night, birth and death," and to this I would add, heaven and earth (2005: 2). This ideal of dual kingship is the foundation for all insistences upon the necessity of *brāhmaṇya* rule, which is thus only truly realized when the dualities of earth and heaven, birth and death, etc. are embodied by the *brahman* and *kṣatra* powers:

> The idea of such a dual kingship manifests itself above all in the integral connection of *kṣatra*- 'political power' and *brahman*- 'sacred power,' the two concepts being represented by the king and the royal chief priest. . . . This dual kingship is associated with the chariot and therewith the Aśvins for. . . '*formerly the kings' chief priests used to be their charioteers so that they could oversee that the king did not commit any sin*' (ibid: 16).[49]

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[48] For which I will draw primarily upon Parpola (2005). See Jog (2005) for a competent and thorough, but general survey of the Aśvins' characterization through the early post-"epic" period.

[49] The emphasized text indicates Parpola's translation of JB 3.94.

This model carries through to the MBh in three ways. First, and most obviously, there are the many tales in which sovereigns are brought low because they reject the dual sovereignty of *brāhmaṇya* rule, and therefore refuse the wisdom of brahmins, especially Bhārgavas. For examples we need look no further than the pretext for Cyavana's humiliation of Indra, but consider also the *deva*s words when the ascetic brahmins of the earth are harassed by Vṛtra's army of Kāleyas: "When the brahmins are lost, the earth will go to its destruction. When the earth is lost, heaven will go to its destruction."[50] Second, the two Aśvin *aṃśāvatāra*s, Nakula and Sahadeva, conform to the priestly and royal complementarity of the Vedic Aśvins (Wikander 1957). While generally weakly characterized in the MBh, of the Pāṇḍava twins, Nakula tends to act like and associate with Bhima, who exemplifies *kṣatra* power, while Sahadeva clings more closely to Yudhiṣṭhira, who best embodies the *brahman*. Finally, the framing of these ideas in a chariot motif returns in a didactic passage from the *Śāntiparvan* between Indra and the demon Prahlāda. When Indra inquires as to how Prahlāda gained his sovereignty, Prahlāda responds: "I guide the wise sayings of those who advise me and ride along behind them. These men feel free when they speak to me and always guide me… The wisdom in the mouth of the brahmins is an immortal nectar upon the earth."[51] The Prahlāda's metaphor shifts from its original pattern, with the king is here represented as the driver and the words of the brahmins are the horses; nevertheless, the comparison to the Vedic-era model of dual kingship is not a strained one.

How then might this new perspective on the Aśvins apply to their appearance in the

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[50] MBh 3.101.4—*kṣīṇeṣu ca brāhmaṇeṣu pṛthivī kṣayam eṣyati* | *tataḥ pṛtivyāṃ kṣīṇāyāṃ tridivaṃ kṣayam eṣyati* ||

[51] MBh 12.124.33-37; trans. Fitzgerald 2004: 482.

Sukanyāparvan? Recall that since the time of the RV, the chariot-driving Aśvins have been associated with the dawn and the passage of the sun over the course of the day.[52] According to Parpola (2005: 22), the fundamental significance of the Aśvins' association with the sun lies in their identification with fire: "The sun and the fire—the day sun and the night sun—thus seem to be the cosmic and atmospheric phenomena that the two Aśvins as the dual kings were originally conceived of as representing." This identification is strengthened by the fact that "Agni is the divine priest, the *purohita* of the gods.[53] As Agni conveys the offerings to the gods, he is the 'charioteer of the rites.' 'Fire' is therefore called *vahni-* 'driver, charioteer,' from the root *vah-* 'to drive in a chariot, convey by carriage'" (ibid: 23). The chariot and the Aśvins (who bear the longest association with chariots among all the gods of the Vedic pantheon), as the means by which the sacrificial oblations are conveyed from mortals to immortals, are thus the linkage between heaven and earth, between the divine and the mortal, and between the sacrificial fire and the primordial fire that courses through the sky, marking the turn of the wheel of Time. From this perspective, Indra's denial of the Aśvins' participation in the *soma* rite begins to appear exceedingly foolish,

[52] Parpola (2005) notes that the passage from day to night to day is understood to be like the turning of a chariot wheel in RV 6.9.1 & 1.185.1. The former reads - "'*the white day and the black day - (the pair of) light and darkness - manifestly turn around*.' The color terms here used of day and night, *arjuna-* 'white' and *kṛṣṇa-* 'black,' are connected with the two members of the chariot team in the Mahābhārata" (2005: 20). Olivelle (1996: 366), citing Witzel, offers another spin on this trope derived from KauU 1.4a - "the wheel of the day has two sides, the one that is bright and seen during the day, and the other that is dark during the night. The night, likewise, has bright and dark sides, seen during the night and day, respectively. When one is on top of heaven one sees these two wheels spinning beneath him."

[53] By the time of the MBh, the role of *purohita* has been transferred to Bṛhaspati, a son of Añgiras and thus one associated with a mastery of fire and the sorcery of the *AV*.

even mad. To deny the Aśvins a place because “they walk in the world of mortals”[54] is to deny that which makes the sacrifice effective and the immortality of the gods possible. For the gods’ continued immortality depends upon their being fed by sacrificing mortals, and this in turn depends upon the means by which food is conveyed to them. This dependence is the result of the gods’ own doing, for having ascended to heaven, and moreover having covered their tracks so that men would not follow, the gods separated themselves from the oblation that sustains their immortality. As Malamoud explains: “It now falls to humans to offer the oblation, and to the gods the consumption thereof, whereas in the beginning, the gods, as masters of the whole of sacrifice, played both roles simultaneously” (1996: 203).

Malamoud’s phrasing here is telling—the gods are no longer masters of the *whole* of the sacrifice. Thus, when the gods suffer from an incomplete, or “headless” sacrifice, part of what is signaled by this is the exclusion of the mortal element and the denial of its necessary relation to immortality, which we have shown is represented by the Aśvins.[55] The BĀU contains the earliest Upaniṣadic reference to the enigma of the sage Dadhyañc’s honeyed head as revealed to the Aśvin twins. Herein, each verse lauds various elements of the manifest cosmos as “the honey of all beings.”[56] And each verse ends with the phrase, “this is the immortal nectar, this is *brahman*, this is the whole.”[57] This wholeness is established in the Upaniṣad by virtue of a *puruṣa*-based conjunction between the person and world. For

[54] MBh 3.124.12—*loke carantau martyānāṃ*. The denigration of the Aśvins finds its earliest moment in TS 6.4.9.1-3, where the gods collectively state: “these two physicians, who roam with humans, [are] very impure” (cited in Zysk 2000: 22).

[55] Citing TS 2, Heesterman (1993: 248, n.113) notes, “Going to heaven through the sacrificial victim and fearing that men would come up after them, the gods ‘cut off its [the victim’s] head and made the vital fluid (*medha*) gush forth.’” See also ŚB 3.8.3.1, 12.

[56] See BĀU 2.5—*sarveṣām bhūtānāṃ madhu*

[57] BĀU 2.5—*idam amṛtam idam brahmedaṃ sarvam*

instance, the verse lauding the waters proclaims "the *puruṣa* consisting of *amṛta* and *tejas* in the waters, and, within oneself, the *puruṣa* consisting of *amṛta* and *tejas* consisting of semen, this one is verily he who is this Self."[58] Having run down a list of cosmic elements, a verse concludes "this self is verily the overlord of all, he is the king of all beings."[59] Clearly, by virtue of the correspondences the previous verses address, this king is always double—both within the world and within the individual person. None of this is too surprising from an Upaniṣadic perspective, but the four verses that follow all relate this double king who comprises the whole to "that honey that Dadhyañc Ātharvaṇa told to the Aśvins!"[60] In other words, according to the BĀU, the honey that is the secret of the sacrifice, by which the sacrifice has its "head," involves the revelation of the conjunction underlying the doubleness of all that relates to the Self and comprises the whole, and this in turn expresses the inherent relation of an identity that manifests as the difference between all that is internal (or, simply, related to the body) and all that is external, much in the same manner that is outlined in the metaphysical passages of the CS on the relation between *puruṣa* and *loka*.

This interpretation is greatly strengthened by taking into consideration the insights of Michael Witzel (1987) in his analysis of the literary device of the frame story, which takes as its case-study the Cyavana legend that first appears in its elaborated forms in the ŚB and the later *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa* (JB).[61] What is most worthy of note here is that the JB's

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[58] BĀU 2.5.2—*yaś cāyam āsv apsu tejomayo 'mṛtamayaḥ puruṣo yaś cāyam adhyātmaṃ raitasas tejomayo 'mṛtamayaḥ puruṣo 'yam eva sa yo 'yam ātmā*

[59] BĀU 2.5.15—*sa vā ayam ātmā sarveṣāṃ adhipatiḥ sarveṣāṃ bhūtānāṃ rājā*

[60] BĀU 2.5.16-19; the refrain is "*idam vai tan madhu dadhyaṅṅ ātharvaṇo 'śvibhyām uvāca*"

[61] The legend appears at ŚB 4.1.5, 14.1.1.17-24, and JB 3.120-128. Witzel's examination of these sources concerns the manner in which various Brahminical re-tellers and

telling, which is closest in form and content to that of the MBh, provides an *adhiyajña* interpretation of the Aśvin's restoration of the head of the sacrifice as a justification for the inclusion of the Pravargya ritual in the *soma* rite. Witzel concludes: "The background is sufficiently clear. Two ritually motivated legends, the Cyavana story (the Aśvins get a draught of *soma*) and the Dadhyañc story (restoring the severed head, the Pravargya, of the *soma* rite) have been put together in a period not much earlier than the older Brāhmaṇa period" (1987: 407). Moreover, the JB combines this *adhiyajña* interpretation with an *adhidaiva* one when it states: "The head of the sacrifice (of the gods) which was severed, that is that Āditya (the sun), it alone is the Pravargya (pot/ritual)."[62]

According to Jan E. M. Houben's (2000) identification of the various elements of the Pravargya ritual in the riddle hymn of RV 1.164, the *adhidaiva* interpretation of the Pravargya ritual (*viz*., the identification of the *gharma* pot with the sun) is not new to the JB. It is already quite developed in the Ṛg-Vedic period. The relevant steps of the Pravargya ritual are as follows:[63]

1) To the accompaniment of recitations, a fire is built up around a pot that has been filled and anointed with ghee.
2) A cow and goat are milked. A combination of their milks is poured into the now fiery-hot pot, which results in a brilliant pillar of flame that briefly shoots forth from the pot.
3) Offerings are made to Indra and the Aśvins from the slightly-cooled pot into the fire.

If these steps of the Pravargya ritual are considered alongside the riddle language of RV 1.164, it becomes clear that the heating of the *gharma* pot transforms it into a second sun,

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revisionists combined previously unrelated narrative fragments in order to justify inclusions and revisions to the structure of a ritual. It is unnecessary to fully recount his findings here.

[62] JB 3.126—*tad yat tad yajñasya śiro'cchidyateti, so'sav ādityaḥ, sa u eva pravargyaḥ*. Translated in Witzel (1987: 406).

[63] I will follow Houben's description of the rite throughout.

for it has been heated by Agni, who is the sacrificial fire as well as the fire of the sun. When the milk mixture is poured into the fiery pot, the momentary burst of flame diffuses the power and form of Agni into the middle regions of the atmosphere that separate the heavenly sun from the earthly fire.[64] In this manner, the essential identity that appears in the conjunction of the double fires of earth and heaven, an identity that is elsewhere represented by the Aśvin twins, is manifestly established.

Furthermore, RV 1.164 extends this principle of identity (again, discovered through a conjunction that manifests accross difference) to the initiated sacrificer (and here we discover the *adhyātma* interpretation), who is identified with the *gharma* pot through a series of preparatory acts that mimic the Avāntaradīkṣā—a year-long initiatory rite that accompanies a *brahmacārin*'s instruction in the Pravargya mantras (see Houben 2000: 503, 512-513). The Avāntaradīkṣā is a classical period rite; however, as Houben has noted, the verses in RV 1.164 that seem to indicate an initiation (especially vs. 37) can be equally applied to a *brahmacārin* in the middle of the Avāntaradīkṣā or the *gharma* pot in the middle of the Pravargya ritual:[65] Both the *brahmacārin* student and the *gharma* pot are "prepared" in a secluded place; the student is blindfolded and not allowed to see the sun or fire while the pot is wrapped in black antelope hide; and finally, when the blindfold is

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[64] Notably, RV 1.164.1 mentions three brothers - the eldest a dear aged priest (*vāmasya palitasya hotṛ*), the youngest "ghee-backed" (*ghṛtapṛṣṭhaḥ*), and the middle "ravenous" (*aśnaḥ*). Following Houben's analysis, the youngest is the terrestrial fire as well as the *gharma* pot, the eldest is the long-lived and long-beloved fire of the sun, and the middle is fiery power of lightning (Houben reads *aśnaḥ* as the gen. sing. of *aśman*). Insofar as this interpretation is correct, we would expect the Pravargya's concluding offerings to the Aśvins and Indra to reflect this tripartite spatial division of Agni/fire.

[65] As Houben (2000: 522) notes, "[t]he verses between 1 and 20 [of RV 1.164]. . . are mainly devoted to the Sun or to its temporal correlate, the Year [i.e., the length of the Avāntaradīkṣā], and as such they are suitable for recitation at the heating of the pot until it 'shines together with the Sun,' as the Taittirīya mantra TĀ 4.7.1(3) has it."

removed, the student discovers his own inner fire, which has been enlivened in him by renewed sense-contact with the sun and the sacrificial fire, just as the uncovered *gharma* pot is made into a second sun by its contact with fire. Hence, just like the *gharma* pot, the *brahmacārin* is given over to his essentially solar nature, thereby realizing within himself the conjunction of a double sun through the initiation of the Avāntaradīkṣā.

This initiatory revelation is replicated in the Pravargya. Thus, insofar as the head of the sacrifice is the *gharma* pot that becomes Āditya, and moreover insofar as the pot replicates the initiate of the Avāntaradīkṣā, it is clear that the Pravargya ritual centers on the establishment of the conjunction between—indeed, the identity of—the terrestrial mortal and the heavenly (immortal) sun. That is, the human initiate, who stokes the fire that transforms the *gharma* pot into Āditya, is the head that holds the "honey of all beings" and makes a sacrifice whole precisely because he establishes this conjunction. And while all three of these elements—the *gharma* pot engulfed in terrestrial fire, the initiate, and heavenly (immortal) sun—form the centers around which the Pravargya ritual and, consequently, the mystery of the honeyed head of the sacrifice revolve, the mystery of the ritual contained in RV 1.164 asserts: These three already belong together in their sameness. Thus the Pravargya ritual makes explicit—and even palpable through the heat of the flames—the secret knowledge of the conjunction of the double sun/fire and the essential relation of identity that manifests as a difference between sacrifice, cosmos, and the human.

Armed with all this, we can now return to the MBh's narration of the encounter between Indra, Cyavana and the Aśvins. It now conclusively appears that, rather than an inclusion of the third-function deities in the Soma rite, Cyavana's insistence on the inclusion of the Aśvins, as well as his *kṛtyā*-derived demonstration of the madness inherent in their

exclusion, speaks directly to the long held association of the Aśvins with the Pravargya rite, the head of the sacrifice, and the necessary connection between human and divine, or earthly and heavenly, spheres that is restoratively mediated by sacrifice.[66] Hence, despite the fact that the MBh's narration of the encounter between Cyavana and Indra contains no direct references to the head of the sacrifice or the Pravargya rite, any hearer of this tale who possessed a knowledge of ritual would immediately recognize that Cyavana's forceful inclusion of the Aśvins in the company of soma-drinkers *is* the inclusion of the Pravargya rite. Without the Pravargya the sacrifice is incomplete—the gods would thereby receive no nourishment from any Soma rite that excludes it. Such a rite would be, in the language of the ritualists, "headless," or in the *kṛtyā*-language of Cyavana, "mad." Moreover, as Parpola has shown, the Aśvins are originary stand-ins for the necessary relation between the earthly and the heavenly, as well as the terrestrial fire and the heavenly sun; they are the double kings who are represented in the human sphere by the relation between brahmins and kṣatriyas, between chariot-drivers and chariot-warriors, who are here equally represented by the brahmin sage Cyavana and the divine kṣatriya Indra.

These resonances are further deepened when we consider ŚB 4.1.5, which contains an early version of the Cyavana myth that closely resembles the version of events in the MBh. Here, it is noted at the outset that "when the Bhṛgus… attained the heavenly world, Cyavana the Bhārgava… was left behind here [on earth], decrepit and ghostlike."[67] The Bhṛgus'

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[66] As a passage in the *Taittirīya Saṃhitā* (TS) states, "They drew this Aśvin portion [of *soma*] for those two; thereupon, verily, the two replaced the head of the sacrifice; [hence] when the Aśvin portion is drawn, [it is] for the restoration of the sacrifice" (TS, 6.4.9.1; translated in Zysk 1991: 22).

[67] ŚB 4.1.5.1—*yatra vai bhṛgavo vāṅgiraso vā svargaṃ lokaṃ samāśnuvata taccyavano vā bhārgavaścyavano vāṅgirasastadeva jīrṇiḥ kṛtyārūpo jahe*. This passage is noted by Leslie (2003: 132-134) in her analysis of the Sukanyā myth, which emphasizes, among other

abandonment of Cyavana on the mortal plane is echoed in a passage in the TS where it is said that the gods, "going to heaven through the sacrificial victim and fearing that men would come up after them …'cut off its [the victim's] head and made the vital fluid (*medha*) gush forth.'"[68] As the gods leave behind the head of the sacrifice, the Bhṛgus leave behind Cyavana, and thus the Aśvins' restoration of the head of the sacrifice, which thereby reestablishes the connection between the earthly and heavenly spheres, is analogous to the Aśvins' restoration of Cyavana to a youthful condition, indeed, a condition that the Sukanyā myth tells us matches the youth and beauty of the immortal Aśvins themselves.

Finally, it is important to remember that, insofar as any of this applies to the MBh's confrontation between Indra, Cyavana, and the Aśvins, it must do so according to the MBh's pervasive concern with Time. When Cyavana demands that the Aśvins be included in the Soma rite, conjuring Mada in order to bring this about, the event itself marks the procession of the wheel of Time and the transition from the *dvāpara* to the *treta yuga*. The relation of the double king, it is observed, is replicated by the relation between Cyavana and Indra, as priest to warrior-king, or chariot-driver to chariot-warrior, just as it is replicated by the roles of Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna[69] (and thus of Nārāyaṇa and Nara) in the great war. This suggests that, according to the logic of the MBh, at the turning of the tides of Time the relation between the two kings—chariot-driving priest and chariot-warrior king—and moreover the conjunction between mortals/earth, and immortals/heaven, as well as the conjunction between human and cosmos, must be reestablished.

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things, the association of Cyavana's aged condition and subsequent restoration to youth with rejuvenating preparation called *cyavanaprāsa*.

[68] See n.55 above.

[69] See n.52 above.

Concluding Remarks

The conjuration of Mada, a demon who has, through Cyavana's ascetic prowess and skill in *kṛtyā* sorcery, expanded to the utmost reaches of the cosmos, is a masterful expression of some of the MBh's most significant and pervasive themes: the expansive metaphysics of the person, the problem of madness among sovereign kings, the overwhelming power of Time, the interrelation between priestly and royal powers, and the role played by fire sacrifice in establishing correspondences between heaven and earth and human and cosmos.

At the forefront of these themes is the interrelation between royal and priestly powers that has been so enigmatically embodied by the Aśvin twins in the encounter between Cyavana and Indra. This interrelation is a discussed directly and at length in the first section of the Śāntiparvan. In a representative passage, the two powers, *brahman* and *kṣatra*, are related thusly: "These two are forever joined (*sam-√yuj*) in mutual support. The *kṣatra* is the womb of the *brahman*, the brahmins are the womb of the *kṣatra*. These two, constantly relying upon each other, create the great foundation of royal sovereignty (*śrī*). If their ancient union is split, everything becomes completely muddled."[70] In turn, this interrelation that founds *śrī* bears a direct relation to the conjunction between heaven and earth: "When the brahmins have perished, the earth will fall to its perdition. When the earth has perished, heaven will fall to perdition."[71] Thus underlying this seemingly political interrelation is the deeper need for establishing a firm relation between the spheres of cosmic existence and the individual person who necessarily relates to them. It is essentially this same relation, I have argued, that founds the aims and practices of the Āyurvedic physician under the terms

[70] MBh 12.74.11-12 – *etau hi niyasaṃyuktāv itaretaradhāraṇe* | *kṣatraṃ hi brahmaṇo yonir yoniḥ kṣatrasya ca dvijāḥ* || *ubhāv etau nityam abhiprapannau saṃprāpatur mahatīṃ śrīpratiṣṭhām* | *tayoḥ saṃdhir bhidyate cet purāṇas tataḥ sarvaṃ bhavati hi saṃpramūḍham*

[71] MBh 3.101.4; trans. van Buitenen.

samayoga and *ṛtu-sātmya*.

Hence, the meaning of Mada in the MBh, like that of *pramāda* for kings, is found in the necessity of establishing a proper conjunction between the various spheres of existence and likewise between the individual person and the cosmos at large (as both space and Time). Meanwhile, this proper (or harmonious) conjunction is itself indicative of the expansive nature of the person and the interrelation between difference and identity. The interactions between priest and king, like those between the Āyurvedic physician and his patient, are ultimately aimed at bringing about a harmonious conjunction between the person and the cosmos, which is to say, between the person and the turning of the tides of Time. This requires nothing less than seeing the world in the person and the person in the world. Seeing thus, there arises a wisdom which confers sovereignty and a mastery over the elements of the cosmos, which then allows one to become the author of one's own pleasures and pains.

The ultimate sovereign author of all pleasures and pains is, in the MBh, Time itself.[72] As we noted above, Time "has no master, is undistracted [*apramatta*], and perpetually cooks living beings…Time is undistracted and goes on burning living beings who are mad." Such "mad" beings, like those warriors at the sacrificial battle on the *kurukṣetra*[73] or Indra at Cyavana's *soma* rite, knowingly or unknowingly face the terrifying, gaping maw of Time itself, which arises most fearsomely in both cases at a transition between *yuga*s.[74] In the BhG, it is Kṛṣṇa who assumes the role of Time and thus the role of the ultimate sovereign.

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[72] In the BhG, Kṛṣṇa assumes the role of Time and thereby subsumes many of the agents and other considerations we have discussed here: He is Indra (10.22); he is Bhṛgu (10.25); he is Prahlāda (10.30); he is the gambling of the dishonest and the *tejas* of *tejasvin*s (10.30).

[73] ŚB 14.1.1.1 names *kurukṣetra* "the gods' place of divine sacrifice" (*devānāṃ devayajanam*).

[74] On the prevalence of the association of Time, Fire, and mouths in the MBh, see Vassilkov (1999: 20-24).

As the tides of Time turn, so sovereignty turns. Yet, as far as the BhG is concerned, that sovereignty forever remains with Kṛṣṇa, the *yogi* of Time whose cosmic *vibhūti* extends his person across the entire expanse of the cosmos.

As I noted earlier, the Āyurvedic physician's practice is essentially one of confronting Time, or as Zimmerman puts it, "restoring the good use of Time that is common to all." Indra's confrontation with madness is, in this regard, a kind of "untimely" affliction, and Cyavana's conjuration of Mada could thereby be read as an attempt to restore the proper balance to Indra's internal and external constitutions.[75] In so doing, Cyavana has effectively demonstrated the madness of Indra's pride, and thereby collapsed the difference between the internal and the external.

The image of Mada's expansive form is, as I noted at the outset of this chapter, significantly similar to the image of Kṛṣṇa described in the eleventh chapter of the BhG. Both Kṛṣṇa and Mada are described as possessing gaping maws filled with huge tusks, rushing to swallow up all living beings. Both strike terror into the hearts of those who witness their forms. And both of their terrifying forms arise at the juncture of *yuga*s, when the threat of the death of all creatures signals the turn of Time. To these descriptive similarities, the present examination has revealed a further similarity: both seem to function as a means to reestablish the conjunctive correspondences that render this fundamentally sacrificial cosmos "whole." Consequently Cyavana, the Bhārgava master of fire rites who conjures Mada for this purpose, and Kṛṣṇa, who establishes this purpose as the ultimately sovereign function of Time, demonstrate an aim that is intimately related to the aims of the Āyurvedic physician. As Āyurveda, Kṛṣṇa, and Mada all seem to agree, Time 'cooks' beings

[75] That is, the "internal" state of Indra's false sense of supremacy has been corrected by the external appearance of Mada, who frightens him to the point that he acquiesces.

and thereby sets what has become dangerously out of balance aright. But Time's ultimate victory of death and dissolution can be allayed, if only for a while, by actions that seek to restore the person's balanced correspondence to the cosmos, his identity-in-difference, and his appropriateness to Time. Only by diligently establishing oneself in cosmic correspondence, conceiving thereby one's true, expansive identity, can a person hope to avoid, or at least defer, his downfall in times gone mad.

To say that the Sukanyā narrative expresses a worldview that is parallel to that found in early Āyurveda, and that Cyavana is the representative agent thereof, is not to say that there is some direct connection between ascetic Bhārgava priests—and the Atharvan tradition more generally speaking—and early Āyurveda. The fact that no explicit Āyurvedic doctrines are contained in the narrative is evidence enough of the lack of direct connection between the two. However, this does not discount the likelihood that it is through the ascetic culture that developed within the Atharvan tradition that Āyurveda and its attendant worldview began to gain acceptance within Brahmanic circles. Over the course of the preceding chapters, I have argued that the *puruṣa* concept first developed within the Atharvan tradition, and was thenceforth associated strongly with *śramaṇa* traditions generally. Āyurveda develops directly out of these *śramaṇa* traditions, loosely affiliated above all by the practices of wandering and other forms of peripateticism beyond the bounds of human settlements in the jungles, deserts, and mountains whence the knowledge of medical herbs and other such treatment methods originated. The worldview of Āyurveda and its specific knowledges belongs especially to these *śramaṇa*s, a fact confirmed by Suśruta when he notes that "cowherds, ascetics, hunters, those who subsist on roots, and others who wander

in forests—medicines may be solicited from such as these."[76] In the previous chapter, we saw Āyurvedic knowledge espoused by just such a hunter. We also saw the close association between the ideal Āyurvedic physician and the MBh's yogi. And we further saw the extensive parallelism between the Āyurvedic and epic views of personhood. Given all this, it does not seem too far a stretch to imagine that Cyavana's asceticism, his affliction of Śaryati with an essentially medical condition, and his rejuvenation at the hands of the divine Aśvin physician-twins, are all suggestive of the link between the events in the Sukanyā narrative and the pre-classical period's valuation of medical knowledge. As I have argued here, this valuation is profoundly expressed through the humiliation of Indra, in which a conjured Mada robs the king of the gods of all sensibility, albeit momentarily, for the sake of attempting to reestablish the harmonious conjunction of heaven and earth, mortal and immortal, etc. But should all this fail to impress, I would offer one last consideration.

In the beginning of the Aśvamedhaparvan, Yudhiṣṭhira's advisors tell a series of tales meant to restore his wavering *buddhi* and thus compel him to resume his sacrificial activity in the wake of the bloody war. Vyāsa counsels that no guilt belongs to Yudhiṣṭhira, for it is the *puruṣa* alone who acts. Kṛṣṇa continues this thread by telling a surprising version of the Indra-Vṛtra battle, in which Vṛtra successively obstructs each of the five *mahābhūta*s, from the grossest (earth) to the most subtle (space), thereby robbing existence of smell, taste, touch, sight, and sound in turn. Indra duly defeats Vṛtra in each of these "attacks," but in the final assault, Vṛtra attacks the very greatness of Indra, checking him on all sides and robbing him of all sensibility (precisely the effect of Mada). He is revived by the *rathaṃtāra*, the *sāman* of the "oblation carrying" Agni, and thus a *sāman* closely associated with the primary

[76] SuS 1.37.8—*gopālās tāpasā vyādhā ye cānye vanacāriṇaḥ* | *mūlāhārāś ca ye tebhyo bheṣajavyaktir iṣyate* || Previously cited in Wezler 1995: 228.

purpose of the Aśvin twins as the establishers of the connection between the earthly and heavenly spheres,[77] the mortals and the gods, through the terrestrial and solar fires. Yudhiṣṭhira, according to Kṛṣṇa, now faces a similar battle, one of "internal illness" in his words. It is a battle between *mṛtyu* and *brahman*, between mortality and the immortal power of expansion. It is furthermore a battle between "mineness" (*mama*), which "revolves in the mouth of death" and "not mineness" (*na mama*).[78] In other words, it is a battle in which victory requires casting aside one's limited, embodied self in favor of the greatness of the expansive *ātman*, by which one becomes a tireless servant of irrepressible Time itself.

Kṛṣṇa's tale explicitly invokes the Āyurvedic knowledge of internal and external diseases, placing it appropriately in the context of a discussion of the *mahābhūta*s. He combines this knowledge with that most famous of all Vedic era tales, Indra's battle with Vṛtra, which scholars have noted arguably forms the basis for the many vacillations taking place over the course of the MBh's grand narrative—a touchstone of sorts for all narrative and ritual progression. Finally, his lesson for Yudhiṣṭhira is one of health and holism, a call to align his internal state with the needs of a world so badly in need of repair and rejuvenation. To be clear, Āyurveda does not share the epic's belief that such healing can only come in the reestablishment of *brāhmaṇya* rule; but the epic has nonetheless conceded that the knowledge and practices that heal may derive from śramaṇic practices originating outside the orthodox Brahmanism associated with the three-fold Veda. In other words,

[77] In the TS, the *rathaṃtāra* is paired with the *bṛhat sāman*, as earth is paired with the heavens (e.g. 7.1.4, *et passim*), as *brahman* with *rajanya*, or Agni with Indra (7.1.1).

[78] The elevation of the "not mine" perspective is familiar to the Pāli canon, where the Buddha regularly urges *bhikkhu*s to recognize that which is "not mine, not the self." Such a doctrine stands in stark contrast to the earlier Upaniṣadic ideal of seeing the whole as "I" *aham*.

despite its calls for a return to tradition, it is the epic that records Brahmanism's transformation by inclusion, instead of a strict retrenchment of Brahmanic values.

Conclusion

The Pre-classical Paradigm of Personhood, Reviewed

Over the course of the preceding chapters I traced the historical development of the *puruṣa* concept from the Vedic period (c. 1500 BCE) through the pre-classical period (c. 400 CE) in order to identify the dominant trends in thinking about personhood that contributed to what I have identified as the pre-classical paradigm of personhood. This paradigm is expressed through several key themes: From the Vedic period (as represented by the Vedic Saṃhitās and the Brāhmaṇas), the key theme is that of a sovereignty coincident with an act of cosmic self-expansion. This in turn relies upon the sacrificial view of the cosmos, and especially the role of the fiery Sun as that which extends throughout the cosmos, along the liquid substratum of Soma, subsuming all beings under its influence and linking them by light. I treated the śramaṇic period in two stages, first dealing with the Upaniṣads (early and middle: c. 700–300 BCE) and second with the *sutta*s of early Buddhism in the Pāli canon. According to the *puruṣa* concept as represented in the first of these, the themes of eating and recursion through reproduction play a crucial role. In the middle Upaniṣads, these themes are subordinated to the nascent paradigm of yoga, which would subsequently develop toward a more or less stable expression by the pre-classical period. In the *sutta*s of early Buddhism, the *puruṣa* concept was dominated by a consideration of its (impersonal, empty) elementality, a feature it shared in common with the world-at-large. All of these themes—of fire and expansive sovereignty, of eating and recursive reproduction, of yoga, and of elementality—coalesce distinctively in the pre-classical period's paradigm of personhood.

According to this paradigm, the person is a fundamentally expansive being, not reducible to the physicality of the body but instead roughly coterminous with the full spatial and temporal extent of his phenomenal experience. Insofar as he is not liberated, the person's expansive capacities are limited to the world of everyday, mortal human experience. But if he is a perfected yogi, and therefore liberated from the bonds of karma and human embodiment, or if his perceiving *buddhi* has become "true" (*satyā*), then his expansive capacities are stretched beyond all normal constraints to a point of coterminality with the entire cosmos or, in theistic traditions, to a coincidence with the self-relational experience of the godhead.[1]

What this signifies, first and foremost, is that the person, from the time of the Vedic Saṃhitās until roughly the end of the pre-classical period, cannot rightly be conceived as a microcosmic replication of the macrocosmos. Despite the fact that the texts appearing during these two millennia contain numerous expressions of structural correlations between embodied human beings and the world-at-large, the function and meaning of these correlations in fact militates against the microcosmological interpretation. The point is, at every turn, to collapse the difference between person and world, precisely because personhood is understood to be the same as worldhood. The exact meaning of this equation has shifted at each turn, and the preceding chapters have traced these shifts. But something like a definitive expression arose during the pre-classical period, according to which all objectification of the person—in terms of bodies or the like—is subordinated to a paradigmatically phenomenalistic understanding. The person's world is delimited by the horizons of his perception—broadly conceived as his dietary enjoyment of the world in the

[1] Though the godhead may retain a more fundamental transcendence over any of its creations, depending on the tradition.

Āyurvedic idiom—but these limits will fall away in the discovery of the person-*qua*-Self, the immanently expansive and intersubjective basis of all possible perceptual realities.

As I have argued, this paradigm is most coherently expressed in the early texts of Āyurveda, especially the CS and its uniquely cosmopolitan doctrine that combines elements of Vaiśeṣika and Buddhist philosophy with an early, monistic form of Sāṃkhyan cosmology-*qua*-anthropology and yoga-based (meta)physics. Āyurveda encapsulates the paradigm by the claims that "this person is the same measure as the world;"[2] that "one should know the identity (*sāmānya*) of the distinct parts of the person and the world;"[3] and that "seeing equally the Self in the whole world and the whole world in the Self, the true perception (*buddhi*) arises… Having known, 'I am the whole world,' the ancient wisdom appropriate to liberation is aroused."[4] Roughly the same can be found scattered throughout the earlier strata of the MBh, though there the emphasis is skewed more explicitly toward yoga. Moreover the MBh's paradigm is deeply inflected by the crisis faced by Brahmanic culture throughout the pre-classical period (Fitzgerald, 2007), a crisis that manifests (in part) as an urgent questioning about the role of Time and Fate and the relative importance of human effort. Across both sources we find sustained emphases on the person's elementality, the connection between this elementality and his perceptual experience of the world, and the means by which he may master these facts of his existence and thereby tap into his inherent capacity for self-expansion to clarify his fundamental identity with the world.

Importance of Conclusions to the Field of South Asian Religious Studies

[2] CS 4.5.3

[3] CS 4.5.5

[4] CS 4.5.7

Despite the fact that the microcosmological paradigm fails to appropriately capture the idiomatic nature of personhood in early Indic texts, scholars consistently continue to portray the person of Indic traditions as a microcosmic replication of the macrocosmos. This is, as I suggested in the introduction, a trend that began in middle of the 19th century, when the term microcosm was popularly used as a synonym for the human body. Since that time, the microcosmological paradigm has been applied liberally and without regard for the differences between traditions or the vagaries of historical development, until the very idea of microcosmology became essentially canonized as a perennial truth of South Asian religiosity, "from the *Veda* to Ramakrishna and Aurobindo" (Varenne 1976: 30). This has in turn heavily contributed to the idea that the person need turn nowhere other than his own embodied self to complete his spiritual quest. Consequently, South Asian religiosity is conceived as a perennially inward-turning, self-centered affair. Meanwhile the religious South Asian is cast as a meditator who stills his mind in equipoise, practicing to envision the (usually *cakra*-laden) landscape of his subtle body and thereby awaken to the nascent divinity within his embodied microcosmic self. In still more recent times, this search for inner realization has conjoined with the perfection of the outer body through the practice of meditative stretching yogas that not only strengthen the body, they grant the hot-bodied yogi solace and reprieve from the outside world.

I have sought to problematize these bodily microcosm-oriented, inward-turning, and consciousness-privileging visions of Indic religiosity by looking beyond the body to the person as he is conceived in first two millennia of recorded Indic religiosity. I have drawn attention to the idiomatic nature of personhood in Indic traditions and exposed its essential relationship to worldhood. The person is, properly speaking, neither body nor microcosm;

rather he is non-different from the horizons of his phenomenal existence. His spiritual endeavor, therefore, requires no simple inward, meditative turn, but rather a turning to the whole of his phenomenal existence. He must come to recognize and thereby overcome the self-differencing that precludes the recognition of his more fundamental worldwide identity—his worldhood. This, I argue, is a sustained aim of Indic traditions from the Vedic period through the pre-classical period.

By conceiving of personhood in terms of worldhood, the present investigation has also sought to redress the need for speaking in terms of self and other, or in any other manner that is reactive to, and therefore forefronts, the kinds of thinking and experiencing that Indic traditions actively seek to problematize and remedy. Put differently, I argue that, at least with regard to the Indic notion of personhood, it is preferable to speak about Indic traditions from the perspective of their being accomplished rather than from the perspective of their being just commenced. This is not to suggest that we presume a full understanding of the experiential dimensions of Indic discourses of enlightenment. Rather it represents an attempt to speak in terms that are faithful to traditional idioms, and thus to avoid potentially problematic designations like the dichotomization of self and other, or "possession phenomena."

The emphasis on traditional idioms also affords a more precise understanding of the traditions of the pre-classical period, when the paradigm of personhood-as-worldhood became a common feature of Indic traditions in general. Along these lines, I have paid special attention the early tradition of Āyurveda, which stands as a highly cosmopolitan source whose treatment of personhood is broadly representative of the pre-classical period of Indic religiosity. This has in turn contributed to a reappraisal of the position of early

Āyurveda relative to contemporary orthodox and heterodox schools of thought. Whereas Āyurveda has most often been distinguished from orthodox Brahmanism—on the grounds that physicians were excluded from sacrificial proceedings unless the proper purificatory rites were performed and because its methods lack the "magico-religious" character of Atharvan ritual healing—its treatment of the category of the person is deeply influenced by a Brahmanical worldview. Foremost in this regard are Āyurveda's "digestive" conception of the cosmos and its association of the themes of health, expansive worldhood, and sovereign autonomy in the cosmos. This does not, however, mean that Āyurveda is primarily Brahmanical, as evidenced especially by its incorporation of diverse śramāṇic doctrines, all of which were initially beyond the pale of Vedic ritualism but many of which were reconciled with traditional Brahmanism by the conclusion of the pre-classical period. Foremost among these doctrines is the elemental view of the cosmos and its relation to perception, the pervasive reliance upon yoga as both physics and metaphysics, and the fusion of elements of Sāṃkhya, Vaiśeṣika, and Buddhism into a coherently synthetic theory of health and disease. Given all this, the argument over Āyurveda's Brahmanical or Buddhist pedigree should be abandoned in favor of more focused and substantive investigations into, for instance, the manner in which so many cultural elements and competing doctrines coalesce more or less coherently in Āyurvedic theory, and the historical, political, and sociocultural factors that made this coalescence possible and successful. We should also look further into the overlap discerned in the characterizations of vaidyas and yogis, and what this overlap means for the early history and cultural significance of yoga during the pre-classical period. With such thoughts in mind, I propose several directions by which to extend these investigations.

Future Directions 1: Further Investigations into Pre-Classical India

Throughout this dissertation, I have treated the notion of personhood found in Āyurveda and the early strata of the MBh as characteristic of the pre-classical paradigm of personhood. Nevertheless, this designation remains tentative insofar as I have not included pre-classical era Buddhist texts outside of the Pāli canon, Jain texts, or Brahmanical works other than the MBh. In terms of Buddhist texts, further investigations should include the portrayal of early Sāṃkhya in Aśvaghoṣa's *Buddhacaritā*, and Vasubandhu's encyclopedic treatment of Buddhist doctrine in the *Abhidharma* texts.[5] Of particular interest would be an investigation of the now-defunct (but then-popular) Pudgalavāda school.[6] This school, in an effort to make sense of transmigration, asserted the paradoxical existence of the person (*pudgala*), conceived in the manner of fire: Fire inheres where there is fuel, as personhood inheres where there is bodily form and the like. When no fire is present, however, this does not indicate the absolute destruction of fire, but rather that speaking of the fire in terms of arising or ceasing does not rightly apply. Such is the manner in which the Tathāgata is compared to an extinguished flame (as in the *Aggivacchagottasutta*), both being "deep, immeasurable, unfathomable as the great ocean." In the same manner, the Pudgalavādins argue that, upon attaining Nirvana, the person, like the Tathāgata, is neither existent nor non-existent but "deep, immeasurable, and unfathomable." Priestly (1999: 173-177) sees in

[5] Though Vasubandhu's treatment post-dates the rise of the Gupta Empire, typically treated as synonymous with the conclusion of the Brahmanical synthesis. Nevertheless, his work would provide a compelling view to the sectarian divides affecting Buddhism leading up to this time, among which are counted competing visions of the category of the person (*pudgala*) and its reality or unreality.

[6] Significant investigations into the doctrines of the Pudgalavāda school can be found in Priestley (1999) and Duerlinger (2003).

this attitude a direct parallel to the characterization of fire found in the RV and in scattered verses throughout the Upaniṣads.

Likewise the doctrines of early Jains, such as they can be discerned, must be factored into our reading of pre-classical personhood. For the Jains enjoyed state sponsorship during the third century BCE under the Candragupta Maurya and thus were an important feature in the religious landscape of pre-classical South Asia. Jain cosmology also centers on the notion of a "Lokapuruṣa"—a cosmos-sized person—at the apex of which reside perfected beings called Siddhas; nevertheless, the concept of the Lokapuruṣa does not appear until significantly later texts, which suggests that Āyurveda was perhaps the source of the Jain cosmological doctrine. The eleventh chapter of the *Yogaśāstra* of Hemacandra (12th century CE) provides further intriguing parallels to the yogic techniques of self-magnification through its portrayal of the yogi's practice of stretching himself to the limits of the cosmos. This expansive state is identified with the realization of the subtle body and is considered requisite to final liberation. Should the roots of such later Jain doctrines be traceable to the pre-classical period, the role of Jains in the development of the pre-classical paradigm of personhood might prove highly significant.

Finally, there are numerous Brahmanical texts from the pre-classical period I have not consulted, choosing instead to take the contents of the MBh as broadly representative. The examination of Brahmanical personhood in the pre-classical period could be further supplemented and contextualized by an examination of *Dharmasūtra*s and *Arthaśāstra*s, in which we find legal considerations of heredity, ownership, and social relations, or political considerations of the qualities of sovereigns and the administration of kingdoms, all of which would surely provide unique perspectives on the pre-classical framing of the person.

There also remains work to be done on the social and political role of early Āyurvedic physicians in the pre-classical period, and especially their relation to the broader culture of asceticism that flourished throughout this period. I have already suggested a closer link between these physicians and early doctrines of yoga than has yet been recognized. Further investigation should clarify the significance of this link, its relation to the presence of physicians in Buddhist circles, and the exchange of ideas among various ascetic orders that took place during their rainy-season sojourns. Recent work on the medical geography of the CS shows the strong association of this text with regions along the *uttara-patha*, or upper-highway, the main byway for trade in northern India during the pre-classical period that was instrumental in fostering the second urbanization (Bhavana and Shreevathsa, 2014).

All of this would contribute to further clarifying our understanding of the transition from pre-classical to classical modes of thought. This transition is best exemplified by the sudden rise of Īśvarakṛṣṇa's dualistic brand of Sāṃkhya, espoused in his now classic *Sāṃkhyakārikā*, and the fall away from monistic philosophy (until its effective resurrection by Śaṃkara). From this point onwards, the term *puruṣa* becomes roughly synonymous with the aloof consciousness that is dualistically opposed to *prakṛti*. As I noted in chapter four, this *puruṣa* no longer relates to the world in terms of identity (*sāmānya*); rather it is characterized as utterly unique and therefore isolated (*niḥsāmānya*). At present, we are left to wonder what precipitated this stark change. Perhaps it marks an early attempt to internalize or reframe the Buddhist disavowel of the world and the self, or an attempt to repudiate the drive towards a materialistic mastery of the cosmos so common to expressions of yoga prior to Patañjali. In any case, having provided a clearer picture of the *puruṣa* concept in the pre-classical period than was previously available, we are now in a position to

ask more focused research questions about this transition and the nature of the crisis that precipitated it.

Future Directions 2: Microcosmology in the Ancient World

This investigation has shown on numerous counts that the ascription of microcosmology to Indic traditions is misguided; and that instead, the person of Indic traditions should be considered in terms of a capacity to expand, or in terms of macranthropology. I have paid special attention to the absence of the microcosmological paradigm in Āyurvedic thought—one of the most oft-cited sources in favor of the paradigm—in order to show that the person of Āyurvedic thought is in fact conceived as the "same measure" as the world of phenomenal experience, and therefore possesses a capacity to recognize his identity with the whole world.

Recent scholarship has likewise argued against the ascription of microcosmology to the medical traditions of ancient Greece. Instead, "medical theories—both Hipppocratic and non-Hippocratic—became models for a makranthropic approach to nature."[7] By comparing the data on Indic personhood developed here with a complimentary analysis of personhood in the Hippocratic corpus and other Greek medical discourses, and by further correlating this with historical data on Indo-Greek interactions during the pre-classical period of South Asian history, it will be possible to develop a more accurate understanding of the relationship between Greek and Indic medical traditions, which share many theoretical similarities.

Future Directions 3: The History of a Conflation

[7] Le Blay 2005: 251

As I suggested in the introduction, the mid-nineteenth century ascription of the microcosmological paradigm to Indic traditions was facilitated in part by the conflation of Western forms of esotericism (an endogenous 'other') with the broadly conceived traditions of the East (an exogenous 'other'). A better understanding of the history of this conflation would likely prove beneficial to further extricating current Indological research from the modes of misrepresentation of the past. Such a project would involve an investigation of the history of Western Indological scholarship in the nineteenth century, and especially the broader intellectual culture to which the Indologists of this period belonged. I have already suggested the likely importance of theosophy in the establishment of common Indological tropes. To this should be added a consideration of the transitioning landscape of medical thought in this period. Western medicine was only beginning to turn towards scientific empiricism in the mid-nineteenth century, and there was considerable contention between those early converts to scientific medicine and those who clung to the paradigms of the past (many of which were deeply informed by physician-occultists like Paracelsus, whose medical theories were based in the microcosmological paradigm[8]). The extent to which these medical—and other—considerations played in solidifying the West's vision of Indic traditions should be investigated both to better understand the history of the profession and to begin to open more productive lines of dialog between the traditions of East and West.

[8] Note how parallel certain expressions of Paracelsus's theory of "signatures" can appear compared to Āyurveda's theory of *sāmānya*: "What then is *ferrum*? Nothing other than Mars. What is Mars? Nothing other than *ferrum*. This means that both are *ferrum* and Mars…. He who knows Mars knows *ferrum* and he who knows *ferrum* knows what Mars is" (cited in Agamben 2009: 37). *Ferrum*-ness is Mars-ness, and vice versa. The two are not linked according to a replicative similarity of properties or attributes; rather *they bear the same signature*. We could immediately transcribe this statement into Āyurvedic language: Mars and *ferrum* are related in terms of *sāmānya*; they are "others" that are nonetheless unitary, or "the same."

Directly related to this is the transmission of the microcosmological paradigm—and of Greek philosophical traditions in general—to Europe via the medical, religious, and philosophical traditions of the Middle East beginning with the Sasanian Empire (3rd-7th centuries CE).[9] Pahlavi sources from this period also attest to an interest in Indian medical traditions, resulting in the creation of a "Greek-Indian *mélange*," that eventually was "transmitted to other civilizations to become part of the culture of medieval Western Europe" (Delaini: 127). The conflation of Indic traditions with microcosmology, it appears, took place in stages, and a survey of the sources relevant to each stage, compared to the original idioms of the Greek and Indic traditions, would allow us to trace a genealogical history of the microcosmological paradigm and its eventual conflation with all of Indic thought.

So What?

"Nature puts no question and answers none which we mortals ask. She has long ago taken her resolution." Henry David Thoreau, *Walden* xvi, 1

As this investigation concludes, we might be permitted a small space to ask "so what?" Specifically, why is it important to correct our understanding of personhood in the contexts I have addressed? The first and most immediately relevant answer is also the most obvious: to correct the false narratives of previous Indological scholarship in order to develop a more accurate, idiomatic understanding of personhood in Indic contexts. The notion that the person is a microcosm, and therefore that his hopes for release from the vicissitudes of mortal human life consist in an inward, isolationist turn, cannot be considered accurate for all Indic traditions, and certainly not for those that we have examined here.

[9] Especially through writers like Ibn Rushd, otherwise known by the name Averroes, whose interpretation of Aristotle was of singular importance to Thomas Aquinas.

This has the further value of throwing our own contemporary assumptions about the nature of personhood, Indic or otherwise, into a new light.[10] As David White noted in his reexamination of the subtle body in medieval yoga tradition, the idea that man is a microcosm corresponds to a series of notions that "ground western religious anthropology," including the doctrine of *imago Dei*, the notion that the human being was created in the image of God (2011: 83). Derived from the claims of Genesis 1:26, the *imago Dei* doctrine is not simply a basis for comparison, but highlights the distinctively creative nature of humanity, which in turn sets the human apart from all other creatures according to his inherent right—indeed his divinely ordained mandate—to dominate all of nature: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." It is this originary proclamation, according to Thomas Carlson, that "yields in its modern extensions the human project of a domination, both conceptual and practical" (2008: 5). In other words, the human potential for sovereignty rests upon the imagistic repetition[11] of the divine in the human. In Christian theological interpretation, from at least the time of Augustine onwards, the hallmark of this imagistic framing of the human, and thus the source of its right to sovereignty, is the linking of mortal human to transcendent God by the quality of rational thought. This link was forged by borrowing the emanationist logic of Neoplatonism, the school of thought which likewise

[10] There are a number of avenues for productive comparison that arise out of the Indic conception of personhood, some of which I signalled in the introductory chapter. However, in order to wrap this investigation up posthaste, here I will focus on one that seems most relevant to both the pre-classical period of Indic traditions and to our present.

[11] The Latin *imāgō* means "copy, imitation, likeness" as well as "ghost, apparition" and "conception, thought." It is cognate with the Sanskrit *yama*, meaning "twin" (m.), or "pair" (n.).

imported microcosmological anthropology into Christian theology. As the *imago* of the triune God, man is a "little world" precisely because he, unlike other creatures, possesses the rational faculty of the divine. He is both matter *and* rational spirit.

It is through the inheritance of this paradigm that Augustine, seeking the true image of God, "commands his mind to pull itself away from the body and to 'know itself' *as an immortal mind*" (Nightingale 2011: 117). Inheriting the same, Descartes famously conceived of the separation of immaterial mind-soul from material body. The paradigm likewise informs Hegel's teleological history, which sought to reunite material world and Spirit (*Geist*) via the dominating transformation of the former, through the exercise of human rationality, into the concrete likeness of the latter. In these and other manners, the supposedly better, divine part of the human being is thrust outside of the world. In his lower material nature he is of the world, creaturely in his own right. But in the rational, divine working of his God-given mind-soul, he transcends all creatureliness; he is himself *creative*, and thereby rightfully exercises in the world some measure of the sovereign dominance of the Lord.

Falling prey to the impetus of such characteristically Western modes of thought, Indologists and post-colonial Hindu nationalists alike have privileged those elite discourses that identify the person with consciousness and that place that consciousness both beyond the vicissitudes of the world and at the apex and center of religious thought and practice. Turning inward to the mysteries of human consciousness is thus conceived as the highest aim of Indic religiosity. Yet, as I have urged throughout, prior to the radical separation of *puruṣa* from the material world in Īśvarakṛṣṇa's "classical" Saṃkhyā, the person and the world were not so easily distinguished. Even in the midst of the crisis of *saṃsāra*, according

to which the person's truest nature, his "Self," was conceived as unborn and inactive, its essential and ongoing relation to the world-at-large—to *brahman*, the cosmic power of growth and expansion; or to God, whose lower nature suffused and controlled the materiality of the world—was not questioned.

Man's project of domination, of overcoming nature because he does not, in his "highest" aspect, necessarily belong to it, is not readily found in the Indic traditions I have examined here. Instead there is a subordination, a deferral of the merely human to the greater movement of the world by which the divine or the absolute is made manifest. Consider, for instance, that as Arjuna stands before the revelation of God's "all-form" in the *BhG*, he finds only a deepening lack of comprehension—indeed a sheer terror takes hold—because the highest aspect of the person, the *puruṣottama*, exemplifies the absolute failure of the human intellect. The same terror grips Indra when the turning tides of Time appear in the guise of Mada. Likewise, as Aśvatthaman gives his life over to Śiva, the divine expression of the end of time itself, by the sacrifice of his worldly, elemental body, he deems his act "barely imaginable" by thinking men. In these examples we glimpse the Indic avowal to reason's inability to grasp the courses of that which supports the world. Thus, before the *puruṣa* was conceived as absolutely distinct from both mind and body, before it became pure, aloof, and isolated consciousness, its hopes for sovereign liberation consisted in submitting rather than in dominating or surmounting. More to the point, the sovereignty of this *puruṣa*, prior to the "classical" formulation of Saṃkhyā, rested in subordinating one's own rationally derived impulses to rhythms of the whole world, and in training one's intellect (*buddhi*) to become true (*satyā*) by recognizing one's identity with the world. Liberation, even in the midst of the crisis of *saṃsāra*, did not originally mean total escape into an indeterminable dwelling

beyond. It meant a kind of total yet unaffected participation. It meant a "bearing of the yoke" of the world, exemplified by the sacrificer's identification with the mortality-transcending cosmic expansiveness of the Sun, by the ascetic's identification with the world via the *ātman* that abides in all wombs and possesses a "counter-form" to every form, by the physician's program of becoming "appropriate" to the Time that "cooks" and consumes all beings by establishing a wide-ranging and harmonious conjunction with the world—need I go on?

The environmental crisis that our planet and all the species it supports now faces has been precipitated in part by a theological anthropology that subordinates the world to the project of domination by a rational intellect deemed divinely transcendent. This is diametrical to what we find in the Indic traditions examined here, where the intellect, or *buddhi*, is wholly worldly, and where the inactive transcendence of the absolute (at least in the non-Buddhist sources) remains immanent to and subsumptive of worldly affairs. The dominant scholarly narrative that frames the Indic project of liberation as a strictly inward turn fails to fully appreciate this and therefore tends to see the training of the intellect as a program of withdrawal from the world. Consequently it also fails to see Indic personhood as tied to a project that aims to train the intellect to accord with the sovereign activity of the world or the inactive Absolute (or God) that is immanent to it. Might we not, then, begin to wonder how our precarious future might be better guided by a vision of ourselves as persons whose truest nature resides outwards, in the world, rather than inwards, in our thoughts? Might we not wish to pursue a sovereignty based upon a subordination to the world rather than upon its domination?

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