The rise and fall of the mind in western and India philosophies,

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Preamble
Psychoanalysis regards everything mental as primarily unconscious in the first place. The quality of consciousness may or may not be present. Therefore, the unconscious is a constant state which is visited by the conscious mind. Even in sleep and deep sleep states our unconscious mind is activate. Freud sets up a template for various levels of consciousness, reaching deep into the unconscious. But how deep?

In the Indian tradition of The Yoga Sutras, Patanjali also claims that there are three levels of the mind- buddhi, manas and ahamkara. Buddhi is the conscience and it disciplines sensory desires of the lower minds. Manas is the sensory realm of the mind; the desiring part. Ahamkara is the identity or ego. Patanjali has a theory of klesas that just look like a bundle of unconscious sedimentations.

But what, if any, is the possible connection between Freud and Patanjali at a more theoretic level? Has mind a spiritual quality in Freud as it is in Patanjali, or is purely physical and material – as Larson claims this to be eliminative-style move in Samkhya, and by implication in Yoga? If consciousness is reduced or reductively explained as the function of myriads of neurons, receptors, molecules, and cells bombarding one another, then what does this explanatory and causal model do or augur for the unconsciousness, which is at least modeled on a non-physical psyche or even language (as in Lacan)? Is the unconscious as light as a ball of *cottonwool*, easy of levitation?

These are some of the issues I wish to address in this short essay. But let me begin with some general reflections on the nature of consciousness and where current studies are leading us towards; I will begin with Descartes and make a detour through
the Nyaya view. I will then return, not to Patanjali’s Yoga as such, but to Ramanuja’s yoga of consciousness to explore some aspects of the unconscious as understood in the Vedanta tradition. I will conclude with an alternative proposal of a ‘mentalese in qualia only’.

I. Descartes’s Substance Dualism

René Descartes started his search for truth and wisdom with an examination of the human mind; the house of our conscious and unconscious thoughts. Descartes claimed that nothing can be proven unless all doubt is removed from the mind. Who am I? He further claimed that the essence of a human being is to be found in the fact that he/she can think. A revolutionary thinker or his time, Descartes decided that in order to establish just what defines human essence, we must question the very foundations of human existence. After all, how do we really know the truth about anything? Descartes suggested that for all we know, we might be the victims of a malicious demon who tricks us into accepting things as reality that are, in fact, illusions. It is from this skeptical perspective that Descartes decided to establish his argument. So through a series of personal meditations (intellectual contemplation rather than mantric repetition), he proceeded to examine traditional thought, deliberately raising doubts about all of his own pre-existing ideas and personal beliefs.

When Descartes decided to question the groundwork of human existence he was compelled to ask: How do I know what is real? In order to build some sort of concrete notion of reality, Descartes set out on a personal exploration, stripping himself of all of his previously accepted tenets ie: I am a man ... My senses demonstrate the truth....There is a God... He then proceeded to ask questions such as: Who am I? Do the things I experience through my senses really exist or are they simply imagined? How can I prove the existence of God? Descartes surmised:

2Descartes, ibid, p. 23.
I realized that it was necessary, once in the course of my life, to demolish everything completely and start again right from the foundations if I wanted to establish anything at all in the sciences that was stable and likely to last.\textsuperscript{3}

At this point everything became a giant question mark. For Descartes, all his preconceived thoughts needed to be proven - all of the things he formerly accepted uncritically could not be perceived as reality. It is this process of doubting which is referred to as Descartes' 'method of doubt\textsuperscript{4}', doubt plays a crucial role in his quest to discover what defines the essence of a human being.

Descartes concluded that the \textit{intellect} is the essential key to true knowledge. He therefore separates the mind from the senses (sensory perception). Descartes argues that our senses can deceive. For instance, not everything we see is an adequate reflection of how things actually are. Descartes gives the example of the distorted shape of a stick when seen in water. The jagged appearance of a stick recognized by visual perception is not the true state of the stick. By using the discerning part of the mind we realize the true nature of the stick.

In the process proving that a human being is, in essence, a thinking thing, Descartes' explored the relationship between body and mind. He explained that a human being is made up of two different substances: matter (body; the material world) and mind (intellect; the non-material world). He used the term substance dualism\textsuperscript{5} to describe this.

After exploring the credibility of his senses and his intellect, Descartes felt he was in a position to declare what he could know for certain. After lengthy meditation he came to the conclusion that the first thing that he could be absolutely sure of was the fact that he was \textit{doubting}, therefore because he was doubting he must \textit{exist}. Descartes also concluded that he was doubting through a process of \textit{thought} therefore, he must be a

\textsuperscript{3}Descartes, \textit{ibid}, p12.  
\textsuperscript{4}Reason & Experience; Theories of Knowledge A Study Guide, published by Deakin University, Geelong, 1996; first published 1989, p.20.  
\textsuperscript{5}\textit{Ibid}, p.59.
thinking thing. Consequently, Descartes considered that he had established a certainty
‘I doubt, therefore I am thinking, therefore I exist’.

‘I think, therefore I am.’

So in effect Descartes identified the mind with consciousness, the principle of
awareness, or vice versa. Consciousness is of the essence of the mind, albeit as a
substance that is non-corporeal and absolutely distinct and separate from the corporeal
body. The mental, or thought substances are bound in part to the material body senses
(res extensa, possessing of primary qualities); but the perceptions from these thought
processes, res cogitans are secondary in kind. In separating the material from the
mental, Descartes was moved to make this profound observation:

“now, when I am beginning to achieve a better knowledge of myself and the
author of my being… that I can clearly and distinctly understand one thing apart
from another… I can infer directly that my essence consists solely of the fact
that I am a thinking thing…it is certain that I (that is my soul, by which I am
what I am) am really distinct from my body and can exist without it.’

Consciousness as the ‘mental’ is also a way of underscoring our essential subjectivity:
that is to say, there is a domain of experience within the life of each individual which
is circumscribed by a deeply-felt subjectivity – the capacity of thought, pure
intellectual ideas, some even profoundly innate, and the subject as the locus and
owner of a range of experiences, which remain, for most part, private and internal,
coded in memory and the individual self’s own language-game, as it were. And it is
what also stamps the ownership of propriety of these experiences as belonging to a
distinct ‘I’, (Freud’s Id), ‘mine’, ‘me’, ‘I am seeing the table.’. There are, as
psychoanalysis has amply shown, several dimensions and levels of this subjectivity:
conscious and unconscious, subconscious, possibly as consciousness in some quaint

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6 Descartes, ibid, p.17.
sense that survives the individual’s death, at least in her works and in the memories of others left behind. One of the enduring virtues of the Descartes’ model is that by focusing on the mental, the ‘ghost inside’, it kept the challenge of the inexorable subjective in the fore-front and it has continued to rear its cinematic head to critique unbending naturalist accounts. Many traditions have wondered who is the ‘I’ that sees and hears, that listens and speaks, that thinks and writes, and even thinks about thinking? So in some, in the Cartesian model, it is a mental non-material substance (incorporeal mind tied to a spiritual self) that is separate and independent of the corporeal body (physical matter, biological nervous system and brain), that makes possible this self-consciousness of an extended being (res extensa) amidst all the furniture of the universe.

In any event, it is to the ‘mind’ that Descartes’ rationalism leads, as he sets out to complete the paradigm of knowledge that has established ‘that there is something special – something non-natural – about the human mind; that the individual has special and authoritative access to his own consciousness’.6 Descartes anchors the essence, the mind, the rational soul of his ‘thinking thing’ to an intellectual basis, which means intellectus purus, pure understanding.

However, there is a deep problem with this model. Ontological or substance dualis has not got us very far, and if anything – going by current wisdom in Philosophy – has rather got in the way of clear thinking in respect of this inquiry. The problem has not so much been in what we have been led to believe on the mind (or the broadly spiritual) side of the equation but in respect of the tacit intuition about the material substance. As David Ray Griffin has pointed out (rephrased by George Shields,9) that the Cartesian formula of res extensa as representing the essence of matter has impacted on both the materialist and the dualist traditions alike: “(S)ince consciousness has been regarded as the opposite of extended matter, those who presuppose Cartesian matter are then logically forced into two divergent paths, each rife with difficulty and paradox: either completely reduce consciousness to extended matter (or eliminate consciousness entirely) or ontologically separate it from the

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6 Descartes, Meditations on First Philosophy, Cambridge University Press (1999), p 54
material domain. On the first option, we end up with a most implausible denial of the reality of consciousness and its qualia, and, on the second, we give up naturalism and thus introduce notions of occult agency (among other perplexities).

II. Nyaya Dualism with Reversed Extensa

Now let us look at the Nyaya view. This is best represented in the Nyaya of the Middle Period represented by Jayanta, Udayana, Bhasarvajña, and the author of Bhasa-parichheda. However, here I will discuss Kisor Chakrabarti’s recent distilled reformulation of the classical and middle period Nyaya position as it is also more accessible in the Cartesian language we have begun with. The Nyaya shifts the burden of extension (vibhu) from material substance to the non-material substance called atma (self). Atma is pervasive: although not all-pervasive, and hence has limits to its pervasiveness, because it is basically atomistic in the Nyaya formulation, and all atomistic entities have their own unique dimensions of time-space. (Hence also the difference between Nyaya atmA (feminine gendered) and Vedantic atman (neuter) which is one and the same as Brahman, the all-perpasive infinite Being-over-being).

It is to be noted specially that what we might call ‘mind’ in Indian philosophy, manas, is placed squarely on the side of the material (the body-senses complex), and the subjective is placed on the side of the spiritual self (atma). Apart from these – rather significant differences – the basic the facticity of dualism works in the more or less the same way in both models. In order words, consciousness is supervenient on the self, not on the corporeal body, even if some causal factors (asadharanakarana) are necessary to trigger or ‘awaken’ consciousness from its zoombie-like slumber in the bosom of the self. The atma having the property of extension and not the material substance is instructive (for my own derivative position as well), and this provides

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10 I have discussed this period and its quaint occultism in a paper on ‘Prameyas (things, events) and J L Shaw on avayavipratyaksa in the Nyåya and the troubled ontology of Middle Nyaya Realism’, forthcoming in a volume on The Philosophy of Jay L Shaw, Kolkata (details withheld).
11 Kisor Kumar Chakrabarti (1999) Classical Indian Philosophy of Mind: The Nyaya Dualist Tradition (Albany: State University of New York Press), pp. 210-211. Kisor hails from an ancestry of distillers who by the time of the British sahibs gave us the best of distilled Bengali Rum. It is this first pukka alcoholic drink to arrive in Australia, that rendered its White-settler community into near-zoombie like state, and understandably heralded, a century on, among the staunchest realist following in the philosophical camp ever to walk the face of the earth. Realists such as David Armstrong consulted Kisor when re-inventing the medieval theory of real universals, but dismissed the Nyaya position on universals as being ‘rather nominalist’ (Personal conversation with Armstrong after the departure of Kisor on a short fellowship at the University of Sydney).
some resolution to the kinds of problems that have been raised with Descartes’ insistence that it is the body alone that has *res extensa*. How can an inert substance-base extend all the way out to the distant stars that we see on a clear night, but which are not there at this moment since they may well have exploded into nothingness by now? And how do the senses bring back the fine sound of speech and the subtle vibrations of music? But then a spiritual substance that shares no properties with essentially physical things with physical properties – the light of the distant now extinct stars, the vibrations of sound, the *rasa* of massala-dosa or of Bengali macchi, perhaps even real universals, etc., -- be causally capable of interacting, interjecting itself with doses of what relative to its own self-nature (*svabhava*) would be rather gross impressions of the *dravya* of matter? While in Descartes’ case the causal interaction problem was posed inside or within the ambience of the corporeal body (hence the dubious solution of the pineal glands), in the case of Nyaya (and with all views that ascribe extension to non-corporeal substance), the causal interaction problem is deferred to a location (or pervasion perhaps) exceeding way beyond the tender-ends of the sensory organs – in fact, in the locus of the object of perception and sensory reception itself (the cat on the mat, whether present or absent), the distant stars, the universals grasped in one sweep of the visible beauty of the cosmos, etc, etc.

The same problem of causality remains. Neither the Cartesian nor the Nyaya reversal gets us out of this paradox, as both are anxious to reduce consciousness in the direction of the purely spiritual, the ‘occult agency’, without providing a satisfactory answer to the major question of how can substances of entirely different nature or kind be said to interact at all?

In other words, it is laudable that that we are asked to recognize this unique suggestion coming from the Nyaya: namely, that, unlike as in Cartesian dualism where it is the material substance (the body and its sense-organs) that has extension, in the Nyaya, it is the essence of the self, the non-material substance, that has *vibhu* or (literally ‘extensional pervasion’) that makes possible this extension.  

12 I have discussed this view in detail in another paper (unpublished), ‘Extra-sensorial liaisons of 4D Yogins : enigma extolled by Nyaya; impeachable to Mimamsas’, a view best expounded in Visvantha’s *Bhasa-Pariccheda*. The mystical disembodied (or twin) self extended to other, even distant, egological bases is rendered as *vibhuti*, and may claim to itself yogic awareness of others’ mental states, notwithstanding problems of individuation, confusion of ego-identities, and zealous expropriations.
There is a same old causal impasse here as in the Cartesian (or any other) model of mind-body dualism *qua* realist ontology (as distinct from aspectual or discourse dualisms). The analogy of my thought moving the pen (or to a postmodernist, the act of writing re-inscribing ideas in the head) will not work in the context of accounting for how the mental or spiritual substance, which has none of the properties of matter (and cannot even be said to occupy space for that matter or spirit), could move the physical (or vice versa), and not just whisk right through the physical base (body, brain, pineal point) as low-frequency radio waves do without necessarily breaking into sound or noise at every point. We are left with an unworkable epiphenomenalism. The concept of intentionality captures at least part of of the problem of the extensional orientation, but surely the function of intentionality would appear to be centrally located neither in an inactive *atma* nor in a non-extensional Cartesian mind; in part this would seem to belong to the *manas* in the Nyaya theory, and in part to the embodied mind of the Cartesian variety *in extensio*. A *manasic mind* would be a more plausible conception, and I have some sympathy with this hydridized phenomenon (e.g. it is plausible via Bollywood that ‘*man-me-man lagan hochuka aur magan-bhi aabeitha*: mind-in-mind and amorous fidelity infused’). But all of this might be too prolix; in the interest of parsimony, it would be far simpler to attribute intentionality to a set of mentalese qualia that are not arrested by the weight of any occult entity – such as *atma* or Mind – and is free to, as it were, to wonder and wander in and out of the embodied binding identity that the apperception of the *qualias-in-temporality* provides it with also (*aham-pratyaya*).

### III The Occult Excesses

Moreover, ascribing states of consciousness to the disembodied self (*atma*) as a *property* (*guna*) or *qualia* – which is really the heart of the Nyaya account of consciousness - presents the further difficulty of separately establishing the existence of *atma*, which is an even more formidable challenge than establishing a non-materialistic Cartesian mind. It is interesting though that the Nyaya ‘mind’ (*manas*) is more akin to the Aristotelian *communis sensus* (the ‘common sense’) than it is to the Cartesian mind, as it is described virtually as the sixth sense-organ and yet distinct from the body and its basic sense-organs. However, locating the mind as a cognitive-

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13 See Patrick Foster’s review of Kisor Chakrabarti in *Sophia* vol 40 no 2 December 2001, pp. 73-75
affective hermes or conduit in some nebulous space between the given material substance (constituting the body and its sense-organs) and a supposed spiritual substance does not resolve the problem of a more plausible explanation of just how it is that two entirely and essentially different kinds of substance can work through a medium that does not share the properties (fully or even partially) of one side of the divide. Just the same problems arise for other Indian accounts: in respect of the ‘inner sense’ antahkarana in Vedanta, ‘intelligence’, manas-citta in Samkya-Yoga, and in Mimamsa with its own variant concept of the ‘mind-function’, manapratyaya, although not a supplemental sense-organ. There is something missing here in all these accounts; and what is missing is not some thing but an explanation of the transparency of atma (spiritual self-substratum) to the body qua mind and vice versa. It is often said that at death the atma, like the electricity in the table lamp, departs from the body, and cripples or renders dysfunctional the mind, like the globe of varying voltage and amps, and there is no possibility of consciousness states thereafter in the body. But what is this an evidence of? The absence of evidence to the contrary does not amount to evidence of absence.

It seems that we need to free ourselves from the erstwhile polarity of ‘inside’ and ‘outside’, i.e. of trying to locate consciousness within the mortal frame (whether in the cinema of the ‘Cartesian theatre’, the supposedly non-physical mind), or, in some single spot within the body, such as the brain, much less in a single spot within the brain (the ‘Center of Narrative Gravity’). Our mental life, and if intentionality is anything to go by, is located neither outside in the world, nor inside our body. Perhaps in the new language that we are desperately in quest of we may have to speak of consciousness as that which is both constituted by and constitutive of the body (not just the brain) and the mind (as the meaning-act and intention giving or tending instrument, antar-drstikarana). This sure does sound circular, but it is not viciously so; it is defeasible. Because, what we are trying to do is to avoid both the horns of the Cartesian-implied dilemma that we pointed to a moment ago: (i) the mind (alone) is responsible for consciousness; (ii) the natural world is itself generative of consciousness. I am tempted to say, consciousness begins with (i), and matures with (ii), and yet – when we take in the historical dimension or long-term persistence of
consciousness as of time (which is how I would re-write Heidegger’s much clichéd ‘Being and Time’) – consciousness curiously also constitutes (i) and (ii).

IV Historicizing Consciousness

To develop this point a bit further, by historical consciousness I mean the collective repository or archeology of the inner-time consciousness across the board picking up on discrete human experiences. There is, as it were, a cumulative growth of consciousness states, layers upon layers, like fossils, now perhaps inert but once upon a time every bit was consciously felt and owned (or ‘pre-loved’) by some living agency. The agents may be ‘dead’ or mute but the discrete train of traces or subtle effects, as it were, are brought forward as many artifacts, testimonies, records, achievements, merits and sins, values and aspirations – indeed, the outer-time consciousness or history in that more Hegelian sense – from generation to generation, epoch to epoch, and so on. How dare we leave consciousness out of the movement and trajectory of history, human and other sentient history (unless, we have moved through life like stars and galaxies governed by unself-conscious hidden laws of nature)? For, the very sense of history is the collective self-consciousness and reflection upon the folding layers of qualias, such as are attached to whole groups’, races’, or communities ‘I’s (or ‘we’s), replicating in many ways the individual’s narratives and life-stories writ large (as when we speak of civilizations, the preserve of cultures, transcendental self-identity of enclosed communities, etc.).

This back-logged consciousness also creates us in a manner of speaking; meaning that each individual (body-mind complex) inherits or imbibes fragments (in Hindustani there is a universalizing poetic image of ‘chand ka tukra’, ‘bits of the moon’) of the collectively conscious subjectivity or transcendental *qualia* (again, in a contingently historical property sense, rather than pre-assigned ontological sense). There is no *gunatita*, but rather it is itself property-propertied, *kevalam gunatva-gunam*; or substanceless property; hence the new discourse of to ‘mentalese qualia only’. It is this that enables (or em-powers) many a capacity, and identifies us as distinct individuals belonging to distinct communities, not least of which are speech-language or *lingua franca*, discourse, self-story or social identity, moral values, religion, aspirations, and so on. And we pass these on, somewhat transformed, evolved or
regressed, often without self-conscious authorial imprimatur) to the next generation, ad infinitum. We should not lose sight of this unique dimension of transparency (as trans-parenting) of consciousness, which I have called constitutive - although some philosophers will still argue that it is merely correlative.14

V. Branching Consciousness and Binding Awareness

Nevertheless, like history, the next moment is never the same because it is ‘interpreted’ or formed and fused through the antecedent moments. This was the genius also of the Buddhist theory of consciousness in its recognition of the branching effect, the mereological spread over finite time of a self-narrating, self-referring, stream of conscious-ing moments bound together (the ‘binding’ effect) in a loosely unified field, we like to call ‘self’ (not as an irreducible substance here), whose present self-awareness and knowledge of the world are supervenient upon properties and relations left-over from all the past experiences (conscious-ing states), and whose future is likewise determined by or is a mere trajectory of the vanishing present. Beneath all this noise so to speak, and beyond also, is nothing but emptiness – meaning, no-self, no-soul, no-mind, no-God, no-Brahman, no-Absolute, just nothingness. (There are, of course, subtleties and differences within Buddhist schools, such as Yogacara and Sautrantika and Madhyamika, that we need not go into here).

Western cognitive psychology and various consciousness theorists have preoccupied themselves far too much with the issue of the so-called ‘binding problem’, whereby disparate sensory impressions and inputs flooding in at different moments in the cognitive apparatus through which awareness might be coordinated seem to be experienced simultaneously. However, the promising cover of the binding solution has been somewhat blown, for this is the same sort of route followed earlier by theorists who proposed unity of apperception, regularity of associations within a bundle of perceptions or sensory impressions, and causal networks within branching streams of conscious life series each complete with its own distinct memory identities derived from experiences unique to that particular set, and so on. The simultaneity draw or pull seems to have been suggested by computational processes where various

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14 Shields (op cit) mentions William Seager and Jaegwon Kim in a related contestation over correlative versus constitutive implications.
different inputs of data and equation, electric current and, say, telephonic sound additions, can suddenly produce a three-dimensional representation of a speaking robot (just one better than a conceivable human ‘zoomie’) who trots out results of complicated calculations than a consciously intelligent human subject may not be able to compete with that relative speed.

So essentially, I have, argued for a historicized theory of consciousness that as it were ‘cooks’ a quasi-substantial plenum or continuum of consciousness from sedimentations of contingent evolving (or devolving) human experiences in a collective march of instrumental and practical reason, and delivers at any specific point in historical time, the qualia of consciousness, complete with subjectivity (however fragmented or fractured and fractorous), and intentionality. We have the advantage in this account of retaining the ‘mental’ – or better, ‘mentalese’ – character of consciousness that are highlighted and basic to the two theories of consciousness considered so far, namely, Cartesian and Nyaya, but like the empiricists Locke and Hume, and the phenomenologists Husserl to J N Mohanty, we eschew from making any ontological commitments to the ‘true, real, essential substance-ness (dravyatva)’ of what is essentially a motley bag of qualias. John Locke15 referred to consciousness as a sense of self-knowledge, something acquired; it is verily our mental capacity to reflect upon ourselves. Hence, another way to describe consciousness is with reference to any property that can know itself. If one is still pressed for an argument for what we essentially are by some process of internal reflection or introspection, the best we have is the Humean version: ‘I looked inside myself and found no ‘I’, only a bundle of perceptions’, which echoes well the Buddha’s much earlier conclusion: “Everything we are is the result of what we have thought”; perhaps even the eighteenth-century model: ‘I wittily joke, therefore I am (intelligence)’; or the Australian realist version: ‘I drink, therefore I am; if you don’t think I exist, mate, better buy your own beer [in] the next round… good on ye’ for the larger!’

VI Reductionist and Eliminative Qualias

Coming back to the point about the historicality of consciousness and its cumulative effect on phenomenal experiences in every next moment, this however in itself might

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not, as it clearly need not be, essential to consciousness, for if there were just one person (a *purusa*) in the whole universe who lived only temporarily without progeny (*aprajapati*) we would not necessarily want to deny consciousness to the *Mahapurusha*. The difference nevertheless will be in the qualia of consciousness, the properties that is, which will be one of degree rather than of kind, just in the way your or my consciousness have refracted through many previous (time-sequenced) and different prisms (spatially) of conscious-ing moments. Suffice it however to show that consciousness is *something*, it is profoundly enigmatic but a sure remainder in human experiences. This would suggest an irreducible core within consciousness or at least in the explanations and definitions of consciousness. Now this has been a moot issue and subject of much debate in recent works in philosophy and psychology on consciousness. But reductionism is alive and well in several quarters, some more ruthlessly eliminative than others. For example, Daniel Dennett does not believe that irreducibility in respect of the arresting mystery of subjectivity is such a big deal: that is to say, the reference to the subjective, to intentionality, can be carved off, and these too can be reduced to ordinary biological, *physical* features of the brain (qua Searle and the Churchlands), *and* exhaustively redefined in third-person (ordinary thing-language) descriptions and criteria (e.g. our experience of heat is redefined in terms of kinetic energy that increases mean temperature). Such a redefinition eliminates any reference to the subjective appearances, the way heat or colour appears to individuals.¹⁶

VII Non-reductionist Qualias

There are some philosophers, such as Thomas Nagel, Roger Penrose, and David Chalmers,¹⁷ who have resisted ironing out the perspectivism of persons into the smooth objectivity of the world of physics, much less in terms of unbending hard-wired materialism. They urge that even if consciousness is not mystery, it is still unexpected from an objective approach to *what it is like* inwardly to be in a conscious state and to have conscious (or unconscious) experiences which we may never be able to pass on, again, to the table or the computer that are in some ways the only

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‘witnesses’ to these ruminations in the early hours of each morning (while the resident dogs seem to have a better sense of my angst). Given these characteristics, consciousness is at least ‘surprising’, as Chalmers puts it.\textsuperscript{18} And so these philosophers believe that there is at least an epistemological irreducibility of mental processes to brain states that calls into question all attempts at one-sided elimination. Thus Nagel has argued, that ‘(t)he subjectivity of consciousness is an irreducible feature of reality – without which we couldn’t do physics or anything else – and it must occupy as fundamental a place in any credible world view as matter, energy, space, time, and numbers’\textsuperscript{19}. Any ‘correct theory of the relation between mind and body would radically transform our overall conception of the world and would require a new understanding of the phenomenon now thought of as physical. Even though the manifestations of mind evident to us are local – they depend on our brains and similar organic structures – the general basis of this aspect of reality is not local, but must be presumed to inhere in the general constituents of the universe and the laws that govern them.’\textsuperscript{20}

Nagel’s epistemic non-reducibility (with a remainder) reinforces the point I have been trying to press here about the involvement of the larger picture, so to speak, of the world as a constitutive element in the emergence of consciousness, neither inside in the brain nor wholly outside in the heavens: but in the matrix that holds them together in an organic whole. Again, I agree with Nagel that the same entity can have causally emergent physical and mental properties; this is called by Nagel, and others, the ‘dual-aspect theory’; I prefer to call it, \textit{non-dual naturalist emergentism}, in which the necessity of an absolute ontological substratum to consciousness is eliminated. However, this position does not argue for a wholesale elimination of mental concepts in the explanation (for the ‘mentalese’ has a central role to play in terms of phenomenal properties that are supervenient upon physical occurrences, but they could also be dependent upon other inter-looping phenomenal properties or qualia). Nor does the non-eliminative view of our mental world imply that we succumb to some version of ontological transcendentalism or the ‘mystical’ within subjectivity and intentionality!

\textsuperscript{18} Chalmers is drawing on some famous expressions made famous by Nagel, Lewis, and others. P. 5, and onwards.
\textsuperscript{19} 1986, pp. 7ff
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid p. 8
VIII. Process Theory’s Non-reductionist Naturalism

Such a position, which echoes recent developments in Process Para-Philosophy, retains intact a common sense commitment to non-reductionist naturalism, while at the same time assuming a broad ‘radically empiricist’ notion of the data a theory ought to accommodate, including the capacity for nonsensory (‘extra-sensory’) perception, by virtue of admitting a role for the Nyaya’s notion of mensa extensa, the mind as having its own extension (in cohorts with res extensa within an organized division of labour). This overcomes the difficulties of accounting for the emergence of consciousness and its properties from purely extensional matter on the one hand, and pristinely extensional psyche on the other hand. The same topoi can have both these correlative qualias or aspects, if we allow qualias to be supervenient and the primary function in the equation of consciousness (C {hook both ways ][ } [h]P(q,q)).

The mentaelse qualia are in and of themselves constitutive or productive of consciousness. We may still be burdened, indeed haunted, by the same sort of problem that arises in attempting to make links from observing behaviour and properties of neurons and synaptic responses to stimuli inserted and observed from without to subjective states and intentionality experienced within; and vice versa. But there is a not implausible answer to this quandary from three possible quarters, which I shall now explore.

IX. Psychoanalysis and the Cell of Consciousness

Now Psychoanalysis associates ‘consciousness’ with the human psyche, yet when discussing the pleasure principle Freud refers to potential energy. This concept of energy relates to Freud’s computational model which creates an analogy between the human psyche and the workings of a computer.

‘The energy of the network is viewed as potential energy that the system tends to minimize, the network is not isolated but is instead subject to energy shocks. The energy shocks depend on the response the network gives to externally imposed inputs, and the effect of any

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21 As noted from Shields’ review of Griffin’s work cited earlier.
22 I owe this part of the discussion to Jane Wiesner, from her unpublished paper she shared with me: ‘In Search of Consciousness- Philosophy and Psychoanalysis’. I have cited from her paper at length, without the intrusion of quote marks, with her permission.
shock is to add energy to the network. … The network learns through psychological Darwinism; those network arrangements are fittest that minimize the long-run energy shocks, and the fittest survive. ..Freud’s view is that we are biological machines; we compute and learn by means of the pleasure principle, and we change our state according to physical law. Our nervous states include energy distributions that are representational and have a linguistic structure”23.

This release of energy is something that affects us both on a mental and a physical level. But does this mean that a human cell has ‘consciousness’? If so, is it something that can be altered by the state of our emotions? It is now becoming a growing belief in some western circles that the human body and mind are “one”. This bodymind connection is the subject of the book, The Molecules of Emotion24 by Candace Pert. Pert scientifically links human emotions to biochemistry suggesting that what we ‘think’ manifests and is reflected in our physical state. To Pert, mind and body are very much of a one piece, functionally and epistemically.

Like Freud’s computational analysis, Pert describes the human body as a biological network of systems that are interconnected. To Pert, our physical health is just a manifestation of the bodymind response to thought. She explains that every thought we have has an accompanying emotion which triggers the release of ligands (information molecules). Ligands bind to the cell’s receptors and pass information into the cell. These ligands can be in the form of antigens (toxins, viruses or bacteria), drugs, hormones, peptides, neuropeptides and/or neurotransmitters. Ligands are vehicles of communication between cells and organs in the body. Pert identifies neuropeptides25 and their receptors as molecules that are the substrates of emotions and she claims that these molecules are in constant communication with the immune system. Hence, what we think manifests in form and often sadly, in disease.

25 Neuropeptides are neuronal secretions; informational substances. Receptors receive information into the cell. Pert uses this analogy on page 25 of Molecules of Emotions: a cell is an engine that drives life, receptors are buttons that push the control panel of the engine and the peptide (a kind of ligand) is the finger that pushes the button.
In the past, many have used the term ‘mind over matter’. Pert’s discoveries suggest that we can no longer isolate the mental from the physical and that the mind can indeed rule over the body. In Pert’s language, ‘consciousness’ does not just exist in a mental/spiritual realm, it also exists in the physical body on a molecular level. The bodymind connection is a continuum - our emotions affect the state of tension in the body and alternatively, physical tension affects our emotions.

Evidence of the human body’s innate information process is provided by its multitude of functions. For instance, the human bodymind can digest food, pump blood, produce hormones, conceive a child, all while composing a symphony and fighting an infection. Where do these instructions come from if not from the body’s own biological information processing system (or inherent language)?

How does nature instruct a tree to grow if not by some inherent system of processing information? If consciousness is purely different forms of energy and all that exists is made up of a energy (refer to Einstein’s mass-energy relationship) then surely consciousness is an innate language present in all things; a language that operates on different levels depending on the sophistication of the information processing involved.

All of this theorising leads us to further questions: Is a higher level of consciousness defined by intelligence (intelligence meaning aware, insightful and wise)? If this is so, then surely intelligence is not measurable by education and academic ability but simply by the individual’s capacity to discern; to be wise. In this sense, intelligence is related to a person’s ability to control the influences of the unconscious mind. It is represented by the individual’s degree of mental freedom from the controlling and programming influences of unconscious mind. Many philosophers agree that our environment can condition us to behave a certain way. It would seem that the only way we can fight this conditioning is through the use of our intellect.

It was just such a quest to fathom the complexities of the mind, that led Freud to the discovery of the unconscious - the subterranean world of thoughts below the surface
of the conscious mind. To Freud\textsuperscript{26} there are three different states of mind, only one of which is a conscious state, these are; the unconscious, the conscious and the pre-conscious\textsuperscript{27} (the pre-conscious is where information is stored eg what a person had for breakfast, but remains easily accessible and can be recalled when desired; these memories can be accessed at any time).

Freud identified the unconscious as the mental realm responsible for our irrational or neurotic behaviour. He maintains that there is a difference between what we do with conscious awareness and what we are compelled to do by unconscious ‘prompters.’\textsuperscript{28} Freud suggested that neuroses is caused by the repression of unfulfilled wishes (desires) usually associated with sexual wishes and the guilt attached to these wishes; we push certain thoughts below the surface of our conscious mind because our psyche is unable to deal with them. Interestingly, Freud claimed that even in a conscious state what is unconscious is still present.

Psychoanalysis regards everything mental as primarily unconscious in the first place. The quality of consciousness may or may not be present. Therefore, the unconscious is a constant state which is visited by the conscious mind. Even in sleep our unconscious mind is activate. The goal of psychoanalysis is to allow the person to access the unconscious and deal with the issues repressed at a conscious level.

\textbf{X. Patanjali’s Yoga Consciousness}

Now on the Indian side, in \textit{The Yoga Sutras},\textsuperscript{29} Patanjali also claims that there are three levels of the mind. \textit{Citta} is the name given to the totality of the mind. The three components are – \textit{buddhi}, \textit{manas} and \textit{ahamkara}. Patanjali’s philosophy compels the adept to use his/her higher mind. \textit{Buddhi} (otherwise known in Samkhya as the \textit{Mahat} or intellect) is used to discipline and control the sensate desires of the lower minds: \textit{cittivrtti norodha}. \textit{Manas} is the sensory realm of the mind; the desiring part. \textit{Ahamkara} is the identity or ego.

\textsuperscript{28} “prompters” is a word used by American Philosopher U.S. Anderson for the things that prompt us to act they we are not aware of – Freud’s repression wishes manifesting into neurotic actions.
These levels of mind are related to the two aspects of the self, which in Hinduism is referred to as atman and jiva. The atman represents the higher self where the seer, the all-knowing source of awareness within the person, merges with Purusha (the eternal spirit). The jiva represents the part of the self that is limited by the sensory world. It is here that the mind is focused on the world of matter and subject to illusion. Frankly, as should be obvious from the preceding discussions, I am more interested in the jiva as the constituted and constituting locus of binding qualias – the stukAsthaApaka or grand-stand of knitted qualias - then I am within the ambit of the principle of Atman, but which, as I said earlier, gets us far too much into the realm of the occult. The Jainas for this reason, I would proffer, preferred this more minimalist conception of the aware-ness making sense than that of Atman.

Dreams and fantasies are paramount to Freud’s theories. He claimed that our repressed wishes manifest in symbolic form in our dreams. Through analysizing our dreams and our fantasies and through free association techniques we can become aware of what is repressed and learn to deal with it on a conscious level. Therefore, the process of psychoanalysis helps us to understand what lies beneath the surface of the mind. Freud explained the workings of the psyche through three agencies of the human personality; the id, the ego and the superego. Freud refers to the id (the child ego) as the area of the psyche linked to primitive urges and desires. For instance, the id constitutes infant urges for gratification. When these urges are met the individual experiences what Freud terms the Pleasure Principle; a release of tension or cathexis of energy.

Freud completes the picture of the psyche with two other ego states, which are in my view ways of representing the different bindingly bounded bundles of distinctive qualias, of various levels of complexity (they are related to each other through principles of inherence, transparency and transference – images reflecting across three darkened mirrors facing each other at an angle). The first of this is the Superego (parent ego). It develops from a person’s internalization of the moral demands made by society. This phase takes place during the resolution of the Oedipus complex when the individual identifies with parental dictates. The Superego is where the individual’s
feelings of guilt arise. This development is often demonstrated when we see a small child playing house and acting out a parental reprimand with friends or play things.

The *Ego* (adult ego) develops from the infant state. Through the inevitable frustration of dealing with external realities the infant learns to adapt itself to the exigencies of reality, this is what Freud calls the *Reality Principle.* In other words, this state develops as the child tries to make sense of the world around him/her. He/she learns to negotiate with others and realises that other people can be manipulated. Where the pleasure principle dominates the id, the reality principle dominates the ego.

Both Freud and Patanjali, it would seem, associate pain with ignorance. Freud’s pain is represented by the internal conflict we experience when our desires are not met (basic drives); the uncompromising and demanding id. Ignorance is founded on our inability to conquer these unconscious drives. Patanjali’s concept of pain is also derived from ignorance; a state of *unawareness.* Freud’s theory also suggests that we can be conscious and unconscious (the principle of unawareness) at the same time. In other words, we may be conscious of the world around us but still remain oblivious to the influences of our unconscious mind; how it provokes certain behaviour. For instance, a clinical analysis might declare a person fully conscious – alert and aware of who he/she is – yet all the while that person’s unconscious mind may be manufacturing responses to repressed memories that he/she is totally unconscious of. One example of this is someone who continually overeats to the point of obesity. This person may do so as a form of self-punishment or because of an oral fixation\(^\text{30}\) yet still remain oblivious to why he/she is doing it. Patanjali also teaches that we are *conscious yet unconscious.* A duality expressed by our tendency to bury our *consciousness* underneath an attachment to the sensory/material world; a veil of illusion.

The influence of eastern philosophy on Freud’s views, which came via Schopenhauer’s extensive dabbling into Buddhist and Vedanta thought, is reflected in

\(^{30}\) Oral Fixation: Freud identified the oral stage of development as the first postnatal year when the libido is initially focused on the mouth and its activities e.g. nursing enables the infant to be gratified through a pleasurable reduction in tension in the oral region. Encyclopedia Britannica Multimedia Edition, article - Sigmund Freud, The Development of Human Behaviour: Theories of development: Psychoanalytic theories CD 98.
other areas of his studies. For example, he claimed the existence of an innate and regressive drive for stasis within the human psyche; a drive that aims to end life’s inevitable tension.

“This striving for rest Freud christened the Nirvana Principle and the drive underlying it the death instinct, or Thanatos, which he could substitute for self-preservation as the contrary of the life instinct, or Eros.”

XI. RAMANUJA, the Mimamsaka Borrowings

Now I come, finally, to Ramanuja. I am not as much interested in Ramanuja’s metaphysical excesses, much less his theistic qualifications to Sankaran advaita (nondualism) as I am in his more muted and mundane concept of consciousness for which he relies on a realist epistemology. The individual and the Absolute (Brahman) are related in Ramanuja’s metaphysics in a sort of identity-in-difference relation. I leave the ‘identity’ side to the more moksa-mired Sankars of the Brahmanic orders, while I move to the more subaltern (subultahua) concerns of the side of the ‘difference’ qua difféance. For Ramanuja, clearly, consciousness is a part of the whole i.e., Brahman; however, there is the human side of consciousness as experienced in everyday life and this appears to have marked by an entirely different and real set of qualities. Its first mark is that consciousness is inherently and non-negotiably intentional; hence the facticity of intentionality of consciousness ought to belong to this locus. Sarirasariribhava, dharmabhutajnana, dharmabhutajnana and bhedabheda are technical wordings he often uses in his analogy. For Sankara consciousness is the essence of atman. Ramanuja however differentiates atman and Brahman, at one significant level – that of human embodiment (avataras and Sabhi Babas notwithstanding); for Ramanuja consciousness is only the essence of Brahman, and in the atman it is an attribute, a property, a quality. This is instructive and important for my evolving theory of consciousness, as the descriptive metaphysic that follows from the kind of analysis Ramanuja provides for the attribute he calls consciousness (in embodied experience) is just what my theory needs, albeit, minus the further assumption of the atman as its necessary locus (jiva could do the same job with little to no metaphysical assumptions and Vedantic hybris, for Mimamsakas, to whom Ramanuja indeed owes much for this elegant thesis).

Now here the distinction that Ramanuja makes between ‘primary definition’, svarupalaksana, and tatastralaksana, ‘secondary definition’, is apposite. While the svarupalaksana encompasses all the wonderful attributes of Brahman spoken of in the Upanisads and the Brahmasutras: Sat-Cit-Ananda; under the tatastralaksana he includes a lot more than Sankara is moved to: srsti, sthiti, and laya, jnana, and consciousness. In Ramanuja’s understanding primary and secondary attributes are not devided equally or identically between Brahman and atman. So, jnana is not primary svarupa of atman, but it is tatastha. Or conversely, cit (as distinct from Cit) is not primary to Brahman, but it so only for jivatman. If follows that for Ramanuja, consciousness can be tatastha – accidental, contingent and not Absolute, but sufficient for our empirical jiva to function. Hence, the analysis of conscious in Ramanuja differs on this count from analysis of consciousness in Sankara – especially, concerning the phenomenology of everyday consciousness, such as, perception - outer state and inner states of the mental.

In his commentary on the Vedantasutras, ‘Sribhasya’, Ramanuja considers consciousness to be an ‘illumining’, a ‘making present’ here and now function, i.e. presenting of an object to a subject, by consciousness’s own existence and not through the agency of something else.\(^32\) As Julius Lipner explains:

> For Ramanuja, the relation between the atman and consciousness in its various ramifications may best be examined by a form of introspective self-awareness in which the knower catches itself at work, so to speak. For it is only in and through consciousness that the atman can be present to itself, understand its essence and look into the grounds of its being.\(^33\)

Why would Ramanuja say that consciousness is an ‘illumination’ by its own and not through another agency? Ramanuja’s central point is that consciousness is sui generis, but this does not necessarily commit him to a svarupalaksana position; rather only at the level of secondary definition of atman, as experience of self. The terms ‘anubhuti’, and ‘atma’ i.e., consciousness and the self are not synonymous. Unlike

\(^33\) Lipner, ibid, p.49.
Ramanuja, Advaitins consider anubhuti is atma. There is nothing to say that anubhuti cannot be svyamprakasa (self-illumined); another knowledge is not necessary to manifest anubhuti, i.e. the experience of being conscious (even in its intentionality pose). Consciousness does not need another consciousness to know consciousness; it can be its own intentional object.

Ramanuja accepts that consciousness is svyamprakasa; but for him there are two types of consciousness. The two types of consciousness are: dharmabhuta-jnana and dharmabhuta-jnana, the substantive and attributive consciousness respectively. Dharmibhuta consciousness is adhara, the foundational consciousness that makes the self aware of itself. Dharmabhutajnana is the attributive consciousness that qualifies each jivatma. ‘In fact, the stuff of the flame (tejas) may be spoken of as functioning both as substance and as quality’. Further, ‘Jivatmas’ are several; they are conscious, they each have their own knowledge base and items of knowledge – ‘dharmabhuta jnana’. The objection rises, if so, what is the expression of ‘my knowledge is lost’ and ‘I have got new knowledge’; what do they mean? Hence knowledge can be lost and gained also. Ramanuja says that dharmabhutajnana in an individual’s samsaric life has the capacity to contract (nastam) and expand (utpannam).

In Advaita, if anubhuti becomes object of another knowledge then it is not anubhuti at all. In contrast to this, for Ramanuja – ‘vartamanadasayam’ occurs at the moment in time when the visaya is understood, the nature of anubhuti is to shine forth in its locus. When the object is cognized, the knowledge itself by its own light illuminates the locus of its experience – the object out there.

XII. Ramanuja on other states of consciousness : ‘andhahkarana’

The Upanisads recognized susupti, deep sleep, as a profound state of an individual, in its more unconscious modality. Ramanuja’s treatment of susupti clarifies distinctive features of his position on the conscious self. Both Ramanuja and Sankara agree that although in

34 Lipner, ibid, p.51.
35 ‘mama jnana nastham’ and ‘jnananam utpannam’
36 ‘visayaparakasana velayam svasttayaiva svasrayam prati prakasamanatva anubhuti,'
susupti there is an inactivity of the senses, consciousness nevertheless persists. Their disagreement is about the manner in which consciousness is interred and manifests itself.

Ramanuja does not agree the Advaitic view that one’s ‘I’ awareness is the product of ego that ceases to exist, and only the undifferentiated underlying consciousness exists; such an underlying consciousness can be identified with absolute atman or the supreme self. And the Advaitin’s claim is that this Advaitic view can be proved using the phenomenon of deep sleep where there exists no awareness of one’s own ‘I’. In other words, individual consciousness ‘in and through one’s I-awareness is an illusion, a superimposition on absolute consciousness, to be sublated in liberation permanently as it is in susupti temporarily’.37 Ramanuja cannot accept the Advaitic view of susupti where the non-dualist conclusion is drawn from that judgment, but he agrees with his opponent on the post-susupti form of experiences ‘I slept well’, ‘I was conscious of nothing, not even myself’, and on this count rejects the essential non-duality of consciousness at this level as well. Ramanuja even warns not to valorize susupti on its face-value, if face value is taken, not only self-awareness is denied, but even so-called ‘pure consciousness’ itself is, for one can say comfortably after waking up that he ‘was conscious of nothing’. The intentional character of this anubhuti is retained intact. Ramanuja’s affirmation is that when the susupti experience is analyzed, it shows that during susupti consciousness does persist in the form of ‘self-awareness’ and ‘susupti’ foreshadows (prefigures) a form of salvific bliss (dowunderanada). Ramanuja’s main argument is that the first person ‘I’ that cannot escape or ceases to exist in susupti, in the same way this is the case in pre-susupti and post-susupti experiences of the same person: ‘I did this’, ‘This was experienced by me’ etc. This judgment is not possible unless the same ‘I’ is a continuing base or apperception. Consciousness continues or ambles along in its merry-jolly form throughout sleep, as evident in the form of a flickering reflection ‘I had a wonderful dream: I was the made the Chief Minister of Lanka’.

Lipner rightly remarks, ‘it appears that for Ramanuja dreamless sleep is a state of pure reflexive awareness, in which the atman is aware only of itself as ‘I’;38 but the I-reality is not clear and distinct due to the predominance of the tamasic quality that veils it. But it

37 Lipner, ibid, p58
38 Lipner, ibid, p.59.
does not mean that Ramanuja agrees that there is no ‘I’ in the duration of sleep; in fact, ‘there is no loss even in susupti of I-awareness right up to wakefulness, on account of the atman flickering in its sole form as the ‘I’’.\(^{39}\) I prefer to call this latter ‘I’ that is wakefully (to itself but not to the empirical ego) present in sleep and dreamlessly present in deep sleep (but not to the dream sub-ego), and all but veiled over by other kinds of tamas in the unconsciousness, or under the drowsiness of an anesthetic shot, or after excessive consumption of rasmalai sufficient to render it zoombie-like, (a common site outside K C Das’s), verily the ‘andhah-karana’). It is curious that this counterfactual to the antahkarana was never thought of in the tradition, that would cockle the hearts of both Freud and the Maithiliguru Gaudapada. But I think I have found it, or rather traces of it in its linga form yet to be fully exploded in its conceptual fullness, in the side of Ramanuja’s ego psychology which he owes to the Mimamsa influence, deadly against the Middle-period Nyaya and Vedanta occultism.

Hence, it follows that the individual self (jiva) in its daily sojourn undergoes three states of consciousness: waking, dreaming, and deep sleep. Jiva, the individual self, is awake in order to apprehend the sense objects, associated with a physical body, with sense organs and mind (manas) with the mental modifications (vrttis) without which there would be no connection with sense objects.\(^{40}\) In dream state, the mind features as an adjunct, a qualia-sthana of (jiva) and the jiva through the mind rendered unconscious, experiences the impressions fixed on the mind from its waking state.\(^{41}\) Deep sleep is a state without a trace of any particular cognition as to what is happening to the jivatman, save for the empirical ‘I’ that continues to manifest to itself as ‘I’ even during sleep.\(^{42}\) For the Visistadvaitins it is not necessary to assume that there is a pure consciousness behind the veil of self ignorance that one experiences in deep sleep. Ramanuja follows Yamuna’s coinage of the term yogyanupalabdhi, the ‘competent non-cognition’ to prove the non-existence of so-called Advaitins pure consciousness. According to Yamuna, if pure-consciousness were to be present in sleep, it would have been remembered as such after waking or in waking state awareness. The fact is contradictory; therefore pure-consciousness is not present in the

\(^{39}\) Lipner, ibid, p.161.
\(^{41}\) Ibid. Although Comans is taking these descriptions for Sankara’s Brahmastraabhasya, the analysis so far is common to both Advaita and Visistadvaita.
\(^{42}\) Comans, Ibid, p. 7.
deeper states of sleep. Ramanuja develops this argument, as there is no recollection of pure consciousness after sleep or swoon, there is no such thing as pure consciousness. Rather it is the empirical ‘I’ that persists since it is still not, indeed never in any of these states, negated.

However, the objection from the rival (Advaitin) camp is that the empirical ‘I’ is negated and indeed pure consciousness persists in post-susupti state, as the sleeper upon waking is prone to reflect: ‘I did not know anything during sleep’. Ramanuja is aware of the Advaitic retort that in the post-susupti state one is prone to say ‘I did not know anything’ may still require the connecting apparatus of the empirical ‘I’ or ahamkara that connects the object that was absent there in sleep. And yet some evidence seems to suggest that this empirical ego is absent in the non-waking states we are concerned with. As Comans puts it, ‘Visistadvaita is hard pressed to maintain that empirical ‘I’ is not negated during sleep. On the contrary, the evidence is that the empirical “I” is negated during sleep. Yet there still remains a continuity of being between the waker and the sleeper for upon waking there is no sense of non-being, but rather there is a sense of continuity of being, for the waker does not think that he is essentially different from the one who was asleep.’

But, Yamuna would say that the absence of one thing and loss of something else (empirical ‘I’ in this instance) need not require for its recollection a third thing, tertium quid, the re-emerged pure self (‘Comans suddenly shifts to calling it, with upper case, C, ‘Consciousness’) that Advaita seems to want to resuscitate in the Brahmasutra account. The Visistadvaitins are not interested in proliferating the base from which such recollections are being made. The continuity is accounted for in terms of the empirical ‘I’ having been submerged, rather than negated altogether. It is the same empirical ‘I’ that is present to itself and to the objects of its senses in waking (aham-pratyaya in pratyaksajnana, dharṁabhutajnana); absent to itself in sleep but present to impressions of the senses from previous moments and recollections (qua dharṁabhutajnana); absent to itself and to all impressions in deep sleep, but for certain traces (samkarasa) that continue not in the ‘eye of the ‘I’’ but in the vortex of

\[\text{43 Comans, Ibid, p.7.}\]  
\[\text{44 Comans, Ibid, p23}\]  
\[\text{45 Comans seems to confuse absence or negation, as he terms it, of the empirical ‘I’ in sleep as evidence of the persistence of self, presumably as pure consciousness. But this is a long shot; a rationalist like Parfit will want to negate all sense of ‘I’, empirical ‘I’ included, in sleep precisely because he wants to claim that there is no real continuity of an abiding self-identity other than memory recollections and branching awareness processes. So fighting against the Visistadvaitins is not going to make gainful scores for Sankara or the Advaita position as Comans thinks he is doing, rather he should have seen this as a victory for Ramanuja and Yamuna.}\]
peripheral (laghuvibhu) awareness to which the ‘I’ suddenly wakes up and claims proprietorship or disowns the imagery painted therein (as the examples have illustrated).

In postmodern language this insight is captured in less prosaic terms, by Joseph Margolis discussing dreams in Freudian thought, and I quote: ‘dreams, then, taken in the usual Freudian sense, signify an absent that is present because it is decipherably absent, determinately absent, however difficult and approximate our science. In the jargon, dreams signify an alterity that is hidden, obscured, displaced, deformed, censored: it leaves a trace in what is manifest but can be recovered because it is present (as absent).’46 The absence of self ‘must be operative within the sign for it to operate as such’47. That sign in Ramanuja’s psychology is the ‘I’, albeit the empirical (vyavaharika, laukika, subaltern, sadharana, maamuli, paratah as alterity [that is, recognized by and in the other person]), self.

XIII. Atman Eliminated and Consciousness liberated in Qualia Kaivalya

All this goes to show that our awareness can be divided into two types – the waking state and non-waking state. Within the non-waking state, sometimes though we are not aware of the outer world, we go into the inner world i.e., we dream. But rest of the non-waking state is the deep sleep where we get into the deeper level of sleep, during that time we know nothing and this is our everyday experience. The fact that a person recovers his consciousness after deep sleep means that it was present even in sleep, though he was not conscious of it. In deep sleep the self perceives nothing and is of the nature of inactive consciousness. But it is arguable what kind and level of consciousness we are talking about here. At the time of deep sleep, the speech, eye, ear, mind are restrained. Sankara identifies the world ‘akasa’ with the supreme self48 and says when the organs are restrained; the self rests in its own self. ‘(I)t is the general Vedanta doctrine that at the time of deep sleep the soul becomes one with the highest Brahman, and that from the highest Brahman the whole world proceeds, inclusive of prana, and so on’.49 If, deep sleep allows jiva to become unified with supreme Brahman, the locus of the jiva, then why should not every one gets liberated in sleep?

46 ‘Deconstruction; or, the mystery of the mystery of the text’, Estratto, dalla Rivista di Estetica n. 14/15 – 1983 – Anno XXIII (Torino), pp 73-88, p. 77.

47 Margolis is citing Gayatri Spivak from her Preface to Grammatology. I have ironed out the primal mantra somewhat to yield a ‘vac’ effect in the Visistadvaita ontology.

Through his emphasis on *tasthatalaksana*, secondary attributive description, and analysis of the various stages of consciousness Ramanuja has brought the theory of consciousness in the different states of mind that we pass through – and he limits himself to the traditional three states of waking, dream, and deep sleep, Ramanuja has underscored the contingency of consciousness and its supervenience on qualities that we have called qualias. This fits well the kind of position I have been developing, without the prolixity and encumbrances of the metaphysical assumptions of pure consciousness or non-corporeal substance or *dravya* that ontological dualist theories are wont to hang their theories on. Non-dualism, qualified in the direction of the ordinary language of consciousness and common sense, in Ramanuja’s descriptive metaphysics (without fraying into his soteriological agenda and theistic preoccupations) serve the purpose far better than the Advaitin position. And here the reformed Mimamsaka is redeemed.

**Conclusion**

To bring this discussion to a close, let me highlight again some salient issues and characteristics of consciousness that have been uncovered in order that the discussion moves forward rather than backward in the multi-disciplinary inquiry that we are all engaged in. Here are 10 significant points (with two supplements) I have argued for in this short analysis:

1. *Consciousness* is the name for the preeminent principle of awareness in every day experience that is responsible for making an occurrent self-consciously (or self-awareingly) an experience: it is what illuminates an experience – we may call this the conscious mind;
2. consciousness has content but no particular form; it takes the form or contours of the occurrent experiences which the awareness shadows or witnesses, albeit not as an entity distinct from sensations, feelings, cognitions and other mental states as mapped in phenomenological analysis;
3. awareness may be submerged or suspended as in unself-conscious processes, dreams and deep sleep states – or the unconscious;

4. there is (either way) an irreducible core of subjectivity and intentionality that makes the conscious mind more than all sensations, bodily ascriptions, experiences, including the “I-sense” and moral knowledge;

5. it is thus more than the physiological-neural and synaptic-receptor, etc. activities inside the brain or sense-organs (manas included);

6. the processes and brain mechanisms observed or chartered from outside (or yogically, i.e. mystical-meditative introspection) yield at best correlates and not what is constitutive of consciousness in all its complexity;

7. basically, consciousness is constituted by and constitutive of the world (recurrently birthing) within a historical and social-cultural process; this is the horizon of the transcendental subjectivity into which the individuated subjectivity is fused; in other words,

8. the ‘Narrative Gravity’ extends beyond the individual ‘owner’ to the larger cumulative historical dimension that constitutes the world and interactively the qualias of all consciousness (i.e. differentially spaced branching streams of conscious-ings each of which creates its own contingent ‘I-feeling’);

9. it follows from 4 and 8 above that consciousness is not a substance (materialistic or spiritual and non-corporeal) but a phenomenal property qualia (or intertwined clusters of qualias) and there is no such thing as ‘pure’ or ‘absolute consciousness’ in the metaphysical sense (it could be transcendental in the phenomenological sense, as in the ‘inner core structuring noema’);

10. we need principles of phenomenological supervenience in lieu of unidirectional causal language (thus, e.g. mental event $M$ is supervenient on physical event $P$ which is observed from outside as $P^*$, ceteris paribus), mereological apperception (identity is generated from within the branching and binding series), and a more inclusive ontology of non-dual naturalism (aspectual or property dualism within ‘natural’ philosophy) to re-define and refine our understanding of consciousness

11. this would help eradicate outmoded discourses of mind-body dualism and epiphenomenalism (Cartesian and Indian), false identifications (upadi, adhyasa) of consciousness with Self, Soul, Spirit, God, Brahman, Absolute, Nirvana- or Svarga-bhokta (each of whose existence remains in doubt);
12. By such a test, we will have put the Grand Narrative of the Mind to rest, and given the life of the mind a chance.
Summary of Indian Theories of the Mind

From the Indian side, I would like to throw in three rather perfunctory theories of the mind, albeit in the context of a discourse about a larger ontology the mind is inextricably an element of, essentially, accidentally, or elemently. These are: Samkhya-Yoga, Vedanta (Ramanuja), contemporary Nyaya.

My claim will be that whatever other deep metaphysical or spiritual undergrowth might inform or be thought to be foundational to one or other of the Brahmanical schools within Indian thought (from Ayurveda, medical texts to later-day logicians), we can still find well-developed theories, or perhaps traces echoing comparable theories in the Hellenic tradition, on the materiality of the mind, in so far as anything like a ‘mind’ is accepted by these schools, and there seems always to be an untidy remainder between the high-flights of a spiritualises metaphysics (e.g, atman, Brahman, purusha) and fully-fledged naturalism (embodiment, real qualia), that answers to questions such as: ‘What is on your mind?’, ‘Did the affliction of the mind affect the body, and vice versa?’ ‘Can your mind control these strong emotions?’ ‘Is your mind too attached to the objects of sensations?’ ‘Has your mind lost all powers of moral discrimination?’ etc. Such a discourse would be empty if there wasn’t some kind of understanding or presupposition about mental states with certain distinctions; the question is, ‘Exactly what?’ The material is rich, as it is ambivalent and daunting for a historian of philosophy at least. Let us look at some quick samples. We being with human awareness and what this might involve.

Samkhya-Yoga claims that there are three levels of mental processing in an individual each corresponding to a distinct awareness-state: manas, ahamkara, buddhi. These could even be regarded as distinct mental faculties, unified in a superintending faculty (mahant). Manas is the called the ‘mind-organ’, that assimilates and synthesises sense impressions acting as a purveyor of information and it brings about awareness of the objects reached out by the senses (sensory-organ contact, as a causal condition, is neither always necessary nor sufficient for this ‘awareness’ to arise). It is also a
unifier of the inputs from the various sensory-organ, being itself a super-organ (of the size, sometimes said metaphorically (?), of the liver or the kidney, etc.) Functionally, it has some resemblance to Aristlotle’s ‘communis sensus’. What do we make of this mind?

*Ahāmkara* is the principle of individuation, self-identification or ego-sense, which functions like Kant’s unity of apperception of experiences. This is the embodied, related-to-other or self in recognition of its own alterity; this is not the sense of the ‘I am Atman, or the great Self’, that arises that are said to arise at advanced levels of yogic or nirvanic attainments. It is perhaps ‘nirvana lite’ or even at its deepest level, *atma-lite* known as *sakshin* or ‘witness-awareness’. The latter is an important conception for contemplative self-awareness, etc, which is tantamount to a theory of ‘two minds’. Now that itself is a remarkable suggestion. I doubt there is anything comparable in Descartes (though a simulacrum in his predecessors, Ignatius of Loyola and Eckhart). An elegant phenomenological study on this analysis, first begun by Mohanty and Saxena, was published recently.

The third level, *Buddhi* is the finest and most subtle aspect of human awareness, often equated with the conscience, the faculty of judgment or decision that determines a reasoned response-tracking, and deeper understanding of abstractions, universals, moral laws, and other enigmas that Heidegger would say lay concealed in the ‘House of Being’ or the *templum*, etc.

Larson claims this particular analysis is to be read as an eliminative-style move in Samkhya at least, meaning that there is no necessity to assume any kind of substantial base to the mind, and that one can stay comfortably with a qualitative (*guna*) constellation; i.e. as mentalese qualia. Larson is able to say this because a cautionary claim rests in the dualist system according to which the singular *purusha*, essential spirit, of which there are trillions, does not stir or do anything or is even self-aware until it comes in contact with *Prakriti*, nature (think of Timaeus’s hyle). Materiality – like creation, gods and time elsewhere – are after-effects of this originary ‘2-to-tango’ or ‘Big Bang’ event. Mind is one of the middling evolutes, after intelligence sediments in the large lava-like *mahat*. (de Chadin found reinforcement in such a
theory which he found echoed in Ramanuja’s ontology). Mind is important nevertheless, as the ‘window to the external and internal world’. However – and this is where the challenge for theorists lie – the mind is held responsible for all the wrongs, and the derailment that has gone on, and considered to be the chief obstacle to a stoic, ascetic, life of askesis and compassion and self-realization, etc. What is so terribly wrong with the mind: why is it not being worshipped as the citadel of reason here? .) How there be morality without the latter? Is the mind shockingly full of emotions, lust and desires? ‘These two, experience and emancipation, are created by the mind (ie., buddhi) and function only in the mind (citta)...In the mind alone are bondage, which is the failure to fulfil the purpose of purusha, emancipation, which is completion of that purpose.’ (Yyasa commentary on YS 11.18).

Mind is the condition or the possibility of experience, but why it mind also become a seat of evil and deceit, and self-deceit indeed; and the telos, true intentionality, located elsewhere? Like Descartes’s own demon! Now who cannot see cross-cultural convergences here? At least on the ‘negatives’? (You can hear another Yogi on this: ‘Everyone in the world reco’nises Evil when they see it; no one wants it; and our friends in the East will be freed of the mind shortly.)

The Yoga tradition itself develops a rather more refined and sanguine (I think I mean, reasonable and reliable, as in testimonial witness), conception of the mind, for which it provides a better term, citta, ‘base consciousness’. All experiences are modifications, rather than evil-turning, of this consciousness. A lot more is packed into citta than we had in the earlier manas; hence, memory, recollection from deeper recesses, past lives, the unconscious and even to a degree the collective unconscious (cultural and social universals, jatis), are built into the theory (possibly from insights developed in the alternative shramanic or yogic-psychology schools, notably Jain and Buddhist).

There seems to be more of all this in later systems (late Upanishads, e.g. Pangaala, Mahanarayanana), and various others right through to the Bhagavadgita that takes up the Samkhya-Yoga challenge as it ‘buys out’ the mind altogether (almost, except that it retains the Vedanta proclivity for intellectual curiosity as well). The symbol of the
chariot is replayed: the senses are like horses; the mind with the ego the reins, and the *buddhi* the charioteer. Pick your choice.

Does it make for a functionalist or a structuralist account of mental processes?

There is no agreement among contemporary Indian philosophers on this matter, but it presents a point of interaction with ancient Western quandaries also.

(iv) Vedanta, associated with the names of Sankara (8th century CE) and Ramanuja (11th century CE) and known for its metaphysical excesses, which the Buddhist have spent time ravaging. However, there is a side to Ramanuja’s analysis of embodied consciousness which is closer to modern phenomenology than it is to, say, Sankara’s metaphysical absolutism. In what could be described as Ramanuja’s phenomenology of everyday consciousness, mental states are reductively intentional, accidental, contingent and not absolute in any sense of the term. Consciousness’s function is one of ‘illumining’ or ‘making present’ objects to the subject as the agent-cogniser. He adds that consciousness has its own property of self-illumining (*svayamprakasha*); it does not stand in need of another property or substance for this *sui generis* function. Curiously, Ramanuja’s analysis of mental states draws its illustration and test-cases from all three states: waking, dream, and deep-sleep. Is there any value to resorting to non-conscious or unconscious states for such an analysis? Perhaps there is, even if only of heuristic value. Vedanta begins with ‘one-mind’ but ends up with individualised minds, each haunted by its own distinctive set of experiences, existential angsts, emotion turmoils, memories, private language-games (‘dog-house of being’, rather than ‘God-House of Being’), and destiny that could trek off in any number of directions…. But this is unlike all other ‘one-mind’ cosmic visions one reads elsewhere.

Finally, the neo-Nyaya and its contemporary incarnation. Here I simply focus on Kisor Chakrabarti’s work. Chakrabarti wants to suggest that there is a kind of deep
dualist motivation at work in the structure of the Nyaya conception of the mind, beginning with its padartha ontology and ending with painstaking analysis in subsequent Nyaya thinking on the workings of the mind, structure of cognition, and the pre-linguistic, that apparently address and resolve the erstwhile ‘mind-body’ and knowledge conundrums.

Indeed, Chakrabarti seems to want to applaud this episteme of mental state dualism in the way in which Cartesian dualists and perhaps rigid epiphenomenologists at one time celebrated dualist tendencies in Western philosophy of mind. To be sure, Chakrabarti is not an unmitigated Cartesian dualist; he admits there are problems with the more ‘simple-minded’ conception with its tripartite division that Descartes had promulgated, but some redress emerge from the classical Nyaya monadology. Such haunting questions as, how can two apparently distinctive categories (substances or properties), mind and body, thought and object, cognition and thing, be said to interact or connect, appear to have new light shed on them here.

Chakrabarti is wrong. I wish to show that this approach to ‘classical’ Indian philosophy of mind is dated; this route has been tried before, by Western scholars writing on Indian philosophy and their native apologists. Nyaya philosophy of mind has not dealt adequately with the question of intentionality and emotions: ‘love devotion and surrender’; and the neo-Nyaya rejoinder to Buddhist challenges is no better for this. Dualism (or dualistic mentalism) remains more a rhetorical troupe from which to launch a whole series of reflections in the contemporary philosophy of mind; the West has settled for some kind of monism (or non-dual mentalese by another name). In short, the mind-body dualism problem as we have historically (and culturally perhaps) become accustomed to in Western thought does not translate itself easily into other intellectual traditions; and it is a false move to think that they do, the persuasive solutions notwithstanding. Why Chakrabarti did not read psycho-onto trinitism or pluralism (deha-manas-atma), in Nyaya is also rather puzzling.

On a closer reading of Nyaya texts, this strategy appears to me to founder on two other ground. The Nyaya atma in its original zombie-like state does not have seamless or even serial consciousness as its essential characteristic, and so it cannot be compared to Descartes' mind (nor to the Cartesian soul. There is a something, however, like this ‘soul’ in early Ayurveda theory, en route to a theory of the
separable mind). Manas, on the other hand, is far too close to the embodied and *communis sensus* apparatus, as shown in the preceding parts, to be considered to be 'mind' in any disembodiable or epiphenomenal sense. Nyaya’s atomistic *atma* (as distinct from the universalized al-pervasive Vedanta idealism of ‘one-mind’) is the same as Mimamsakas’ pluralism of *atma*, but the latter do not think of it as mind (rather only the recipient of sacrifice and liberation through Testimony).

Last but not least, the Nyaya thesis is not able to give an adequate account against the Buddhists and Mimamsakas of the constituents and structure of cognition; Bimal Matilal toasted to Frege’s Bhartharean adage: ‘cognition is shoot through with language’; but Jayanta’s analysis of the supposedly pre-linguistic *nir-vikalpa* (inchoate, indeterminate) phase suggests that it is the same as *savikalpa* (fully-blown, determinate) phase. Mohanty is still looking for pure intentionally amidst the chaos. It is very worrying indeed. Nyaya is not able to handle conceptual determinants *qua concepts* and this points to the biggest glaring hole in NandKishor’s Nyayafriendly-Mind.

*Kaise kahoon manaki batiya…?* (Gwaliaghanara lyric)

How can I tell you (the unspoken speech of) my mind?