

Persons Keeping Their Karma Together The Reasons for the Pudgalavāda in Early Buddhism

‘Nagasena is a name, O King, a convenient designation.’

‘What makes it convenient, Reverend Sir, to have such a designation?’

‘That so considering these aggregates together serves our purposes, your Majesty.’

‘But how is it that just this way of grouping the aggregates and not some other serves our purposes?’

‘Because our purposes are thus-and-so, and not such-and-such. If they were such-and-such, different ways of grouping and designating aggregates would be convenient.’

‘But what are these purposes, noble Nagasena, and how? My purpose was to come to this meeting. How can *that* – the purpose – be just a name for its constituent parts? For it was only this intention that moved me, and the chariot-parts (conveniently-named), to get here.’

‘This must be granted, O King.’

‘And what, good Bhikkhu, is my purpose with you? My purpose may have brought you here. But neither my aims nor anyone else’s grew you up from a small boy into the monk you are today. Yet without that, how could I invite you to this discussion?’

‘Actions and their consequences, Venerable Nagasena, belong to *me*, King Milinda, not to the elements (though granted, they are not apart from their elements). Just so, the boy-Nagasena-elements belong to each other and to the novice-Nagasena-elements and to the Nagasena before me now. And this is not because it is convenient to consider it so; rather, it is convenient and indeed possible so to consider it because it is in fact so.

‘This is no *further* fact, venerable Sir, no extra entity; this is just the very fact you already recognize, namely that Nagasena is a *convenient* designation, not a random one – that is to say, some causal streams are *really* individuated.’

You will not find this passage in the *Milindapañha* as we have it, because King Milinda was not a Pudgalavādin.

Neither were the authors of the *Dialogues with King Milinda* Pudgalavādins, though there should have been plenty of them about to consult regarding improvements to the text, had the authors wished. From around the second century after the Buddha’s *parinirvana*, there were Buddhist monks adhering to the ‘personalist’ interpretation of the Buddha’s teachings on the self; eventually, at least four different schools included ‘personalism’, the *pudgalavāda*, in their view; the earliest espousers of this doctrine flourished,¹ and in the 7th century C.E., nearly a quarter of Buddhist monks in India were ‘Pudgalavādins’.² So it was no negligible fringe group of Buddhists holding that something called the ‘person’ really existed.

¹ See Thích Thiên Châu, *The literature of the personalists of early Buddhism* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1999), according to whom the personalist Vātsīputrīya school as ‘one of the most powerful and flourishing of early Buddhism’ (10).

² See Ganeri, *Concealed Art of the Soul* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007) 162-3; and Priestley, *Pudgalavāda Buddhism: The Reality of the Indeterminate Self* (Toronto: Centre for South Asian Studies, University of Toronto, 1999, 2), who observes that at this time just one of the *pudgalavāda* schools, the Sāṃmitīya, ‘was second only to the Mahāyāna in the number of its adherents’.

I. PUDGALAVĀDINS AS PHILOSOPHERS

This may seem shocking at first. For surely what is distinctive of Buddhist religio-philosophy is precisely the denial of the existence of such a self. Call it ‘person’, a ‘being’, a ‘living thing’ or whatever you like, that which answers to the sense of ‘I’ is what the Buddha taught us is the source of suffering if ‘clung to’. “I too do not see any doctrine of self that would not arouse sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair in one who clings to it.”³ One might be tempted to think that if people calling themselves Buddhists could deny the existence of ‘self’, while asserting the existence of a ‘person’, then the *anattā* or no-self position of the Buddhist must not have amounted to much. To deny the *ātman* was no more than a linguistic taboo.⁴ It was not a serious philosophical position, well-articulated and maintained for defensible reasons.

I think such a social-functional explanation of the no-self position does an injustice both to the studiously ambiguous position that emerges from the Buddha’s discourses, and to the serious effort by the Buddha’s followers to interpret his teachings correctly. It is not altogether clear that the Buddha, as recorded in the discourses, categorically denies anything that might be called self, and every variant by another name.⁵ In fact what emerges in the centuries immediately following his *parinirvana* is a dispute over exactly what the Buddha did mean to assert and deny on the matter. And when Buddhists divide over this issue, they do not quibble about words – *pudgalavādins* and their detractors refer equally to ‘beings’, ‘persons’, ‘self’ in such contexts, the attention remaining focused throughout on whether this supposed entity is or is not an unchanging, independent principle such as the Brahmanical philosophers call *ātman*.⁶ Any distinct, therefore eternal and unaffected principle with which to identify was certainly denied by the Buddha, and specified as a wrong view, leading to suffering. At the same time, the Buddha himself used all the words cognate with self, and frequently reasoned as if a person could be re-identified as the same individual over time. And he was just as adamant that nihilism was not an option. So there was considerable work in interpretation to be done in order to determine what the right view was.

Since the best evidence available – namely, the discourses of the Buddha as they had been remembered by his followers in the years following his *parinirvana* – was both ambiguous and

³ *Majjhima Nikāya* i.137, Sutta 22: *Anlagaddūpama Sutta*. In *Middle-Length Discourses of the Buddha*, translated by Bhikkhu Nāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi (Boston: Wisdom Publications 1995).

⁴ The phrase is from Steven Collins, *Selfless Persons* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1982, 77). The denial of self amounted, says Collins, to a ‘linguistic taboo’, whose function was to distinguish Buddhism from Brahmanical outlooks.

⁵ Leonard Priestley brings this out nicely in the first chapter of his excellent monograph on the *pudgalavāda*, *Pudgalavāda Buddhism*. See also Schmidhausen “Spirituelle Praxis und philosophische Theorie im Buddhismus,” *Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft und Religionswissenschaft* 57 (1973), pp. 161–1186, and Frauwallner (*Geschichte der indischen Philosophie*, vol. 1. Salzburg 1953, 217–225) – modern scholars who deny that outright rejection of self was an original part of the Buddha’s teachings, rather than a later accretion or interpretation of those teachings.

⁶ Cf. Priestley, *Pudgalavāda Buddhism*, 81–82: “In the *Vijñānakāya*, one of our earliest sources, the Pudgalavādin is represented as saying, ‘There is a self (*ātman*), a sentient being (*sattva*), a living being (*jīva*), a being who is born (*jantu*), a being who is nourished (*poṣa*), an individual (*puruṣa*), a pudgala’ (T 1539, 542c24 f.)”

conflicting, this meant that citing scripture was not enough to settle disagreements, though much scripture would certainly be cited in such disputes. Each party could as easily cite passages in support of their position as they could explain through re-interpretation the passages cited against them. Principles of interpretation were developed – in particular, the distinction between literal or definitive and indirect or non-definitive teaching (*nītārtha/neyārtha*) – and their application was then in turn contested.⁷

Not only were the specific applications of interpretive principles contested, so too were the candidate texts to which they might apply. For at the time the *pudgalavāda* was being articulated, criticized and defended – and persuading many committed Buddhists – the canon had not been fixed among the various parties to the debate. Even if disagreement began as the simple matter of trying most faithfully to interpret the teachings of the Buddha, these difficulties – together with the Buddha’s own admonishment that one appeal to one’s own experience and understanding in seeking the truth, rather than simply taking his word for it – meant that eventually appeal must also be made to what position is the most reasonable and defensible.

While a dispute between the Pudgalavādins and their opponents was indeed an attempt to lay claim to ‘what the Buddha taught’, that dispute was nonetheless philosophically grounded and motivated as well – it was one that necessarily took place through arguments and critique, giving reasons why, among the possible interpretations consistent with scripture, this or that was to be taken as definitive.⁸ I shall be exploring what those distinctively philosophical pressures might have been that drove or inspired some Buddhists to claim that persons existed, and what theoretical work such a claim might have been doing in their overall view.⁹

⁷ The distinction has authority in the Nikāyas (see, for instance, *Anguttara Nikāya* i 60: “There are these two who misrepresent the Tathāgata. Which two? The one who represents a Sutta of definitive meaning as a Sutta of non-definitive meaning, and the one who represents a Sutta of non-definitive meaning as a Sutta of definitive meaning.”). Unfortunately, there is no authoritative sūtra indicating which sayings fall into which category, so that intra-Buddhist dispute often involved debate over whether a saying agreed to be the Buddha’s is to be taken literally or not. This is particularly so in the dispute over the person, since the Buddha-*dharmā* – spoken in ordinary language often for ordinary listeners – invariably makes reference, implicitly or explicitly, to persons, beings, living things, and so on.

⁸ Priestley and Châu, who have done some of the most comprehensive recent work on the *pudgalavāda*, as well as Venkataramanan, explore and expound the *pudgalavāda* as if it were adhered to only because some happened to think this the best interpretation of the Buddhist sūtras. According to Châu, the Pudgalavādins got this view from a thorough study of the scriptures: “It is probable that this very specific, difficult to express, position was established after the Pudgalavādins had fully studied the attitude and findings of the Buddha and his disciples on false views concerning the world and self” (*Literature of the Personalists*, 150). Priestley is even more explicit that regard for right interpretation was the motivating factor in those espousing the *pudgalavāda*: “To the Pudgalavādins themselves the whole matter must have appeared otherwise. We can guess from their patient insistence on the actual words of the Buddha, whatever their apparent inconsistencies, that they believed that they were simply presenting what the Buddha himself had taught, without presuming interpretation” (*Pudgalavāda Buddhism*, 118). Since, however, the Pudgalavādins apparently laid claim to a non-standard canon of sūtras, in order to support their view (Vasubandhu, §2.6.1 of Duerlinger’s translation), this seems an inadequate motivation for insisting on a position which often attracted virulent hostility from fellow Buddhists.

⁹ Among recent scholars, I think Duerlinger does the most to take the *pudgalavāda* philosophically seriously.

II. THE *PUDGALA*: ULTIMATELY REAL, SUBSTANTIAL, BOTH, OR NEITHER?

There are essentially three substantial sources available to us in attempting to reconstruct the view of the *pudgalavādins*, and their reasoning behind it, in its earliest formulations.¹⁰ Two of these, the first sections of the *Kathāvatthu*, and the ninth chapter (or appendix) to Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, are written by opponents of the *pudgalavāda*. Less substantial, but also falling into this category are Harivarman's *Tattvasiddhiśāstra* (or *Satyasiddhiśāstra*), and the Sarvāstivādin *Vijñānakāya* (which is largely similar to the Theravādin *Kathāvatthu*, though less elaborate).¹¹ As hostile exegetes, we cannot be certain that they represent the *pudgalavāda* reliably, and these texts often present it elliptically. We cannot even be entirely certain that the view the *Kathāvatthu* argues against is same as the view Vasubandhu argues against – for apart from questions of misrepresentation, there is the possibility that the *pudgalavāda* itself developed and grew more sophisticated over time, in the face of critique.¹²

Our third significant source for the *pudgalavāda* might be thought to operate as a check on such ambiguities, for they are the four texts written within schools espousing the *pudgalavāda*.¹³ These are preserved only in Chinese translations, and unfortunately often have to do with the *pudgalavāda* only in parts; largely they concern other views held by these schools.¹⁴ Of these four texts, the *Sāṃmitīyanikāyaśāstra* has the most useful material for reconstructing the claim that the person exists and the reasoning behind it.¹⁵

(James Duerlinger, *Indian Buddhist Theories of Persons*, London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003).

¹⁰ Although later Buddhist philosophers (including Candrakīrti, Bhavaviveka, Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla in his commentary on Śāntarakṣita) continued to engage with the *pudgalavāda*, my own discussion will remain with the earlier formulations of the view, and responses to it.

¹¹ The *Satyasiddhiśāstra* is translated into English as *Satyasiddhiśāstra of Harivarman*, vol. II, English Translation by N. Aiyaswami Sastri. (Oriental Institute, Baroda 1978, 296). There are several more minor sources, earlier as well as later; see Priestley's broad and detailed treatment of the *pudgalavāda* literature remaining to us (*Pudgalavāda Buddhism*, Chapter 2).

¹² Priestley offers an account of how the *pudgalavāda* may have shifted over time (*Pudgalavāda Buddhism*, 71, 87-88). However, the specific change of position that he recommends – namely, from declaring the person 'not a substance', to declaring the person 'neither substance nor non-substance', to finally agreeing that their *pudgala* is, after all, a substance – is not, as will become clear below, one that I think did happen.

¹³ These are the *Sānmīdībù lùn* (or *Sāṃmitīyanikāyaśāstra*), the *Lü èrshìèr míngliǎo lùn* (or *Vinayadvāvimśatīvyakti*), the *Sānfādù lùn* and the *Sì ēhánmù chāojiě*. These are counted as three by Priestley, the last two evidently being translations of the same text, the *Tridharmakhaṇḍaka* (or *Tridharmakaśāstra*, as Chāu has it; the Chinese transliterations I am using are those used by Priestley, as are the reconstructed Sanskrit titles). These two translations diverge substantially, however, at certain points, so that one may actually get information in one not found in the other. Indeed, Priestley argues, 71, that "the disagreement between the *Sānfādù lùn* and the *Sì ēhánmù chāojiě* in their versions of the *Tridharmakhaṇḍaka*'s account of the second kind of conception is so extensive that the versions must surely represent different stages not only in the development of the text, but also in the elaboration of the doctrine which it presents."

¹⁴ Chāu (*The Literature of the Personalists of Early Buddhism*) has detailed information about the history and content of these treatises in particular.

¹⁵ The *Sāṃmitīyanikāyaśāstra* has been translated into English by K. Venkataramanan, 'Sāṃmitīya-nikāyaśāstra', *Visvabharati Annals* 5 (1953) 153-243.

II.i. *The pudgala exists, really and ultimately...*

According to the *Kathāvatthu*, the fundamental thesis under dispute is whether “The person is found to exist really and ultimately”.¹⁶ By ‘person’ is meant indifferently, ‘self, being, vital principle’.¹⁷

The generous gloss on ‘person’ makes it clear that we have to do here with a dispute over how things are, not a mere quibble over how things are to be called. If the commentator, and indeed the text itself, is not prejudicing the case irreparably against the Pudgalavādin, then it must be that what is meant by these various terms – person, self, being, vital principle – is still to some extent up for grabs.

Though a contentious position, the Pudgalavādins were not *heretics* in virtue of this claim about the person.¹⁸ They were never actually treated as non-Buddhists, nor were the arguments against non-Buddhist adherents to the self thought to be sufficient against the Pudgalavādins. In fact, a number of different ‘self substitutes’ developed within Buddhism over time and through argument and reflection.¹⁹ What we find is that the Pudgalavādins, like their Buddhist opponents, were very clear about their fundamental agreement with the *anattā* teachings of the Buddha: there is no substantial, simple, and eternal ‘self’, with identity and existence of its own, separate and separable from all other factors. Whatever the *pudgala* (*sattva*, *ātman*, call it what you will) may be, and whatever it means to assert its real existence, it is certainly *not* the endorsement of the Ātman of the eternalists. If the Pudgalavādin’s opponent could prove, as he wished, that adherence to the *pudgalavāda* could not in fact be distinguished from commitment to an eternal soul, the Pudgalavādin would acknowledge himself defeated and forced to abandon the view.

So what should this claim that the person exists ‘really and ultimately’ amount to, if not the assertion of a substantial, independent Self? According to Buddhaghosa’s 5th C. commentary, to exist really and ultimately means, ‘that which is not to be apprehended as not fact, like magic, a mirage and the like; actual’ (real), and ‘that which is not to be accepted as hearsay; highest sense’ (ultimate).²⁰ This bland formulation is not very informative; it indicates only that ‘really existing’ and ‘existing ultimately’ are contrastive notions, contrasted namely with ‘illusionary’ and ‘merely

¹⁶ Since Buddhist schools generally agree there to be some conventional or constructed sense in which person-talk and self-talk is not just permissible but correct, I find Duerlinger’s exposition of the Pudgalavāda simply confusing. See remarks below, esp. n. 51.

¹⁷ ‘*attā satto jīvo*’. *The Debates Commentary (Kathāvatthupparakāraṇa-Aṭṭhakathā)*, trans. Bimala Churn Law. Oxford: Pali Text Society 1999, n. 5 to section I.1.[8].

¹⁸ Contra Duerlinger most strongly, who describes Vasubandhu as trying to ‘wipe out’ this heretical view. But also Chāu uses the notion of ‘heretical’, as if this were the significance of the view and objections to it. Heresy in any case seems a most inapt notion to bring to the discussion. ‘Ex-communicated’ (literally, being thrown out of the community) generally resulted from failure of discipline, not failure of doctrine or ‘view’.

¹⁹ Chāu has a list of five non-*pudgala* self substitutes of various early Buddhist schools (*Literature of the Personalists*, 138-41); see also Collins, *Selfless Persons* 230-244, and for withering remarks as well, Conze (132-33).

²⁰ *The Debates Commentary (Kathāvatthupparakāraṇa-Aṭṭhakathā)*, I.1.[8].

what is said to be so'. Mirages and magic are not downright and absolutely false; there is *something* or *another* really, truly going on when a mirage appears. But what is really there is not what appears to be there, as in the case of magic tricks. So likewise, what is accepted on hearsay need not be false; it is unverified, accepted as given for the sake of convenience.

This insistence that the *pudgala* is ultimately real thus hints at one of the oldest epistemological-metaphysical distinctions in Buddhist philosophy, between that which is ultimately true or real (*paramārthasat*) and that which is conventionally true or real (*saṃvṛtisat*).²¹ There are different ways of cashing out this fundamental distinction between conventional and ultimate reality, and different interpretations of what those ways are.²² But there are two principles which must be observed by any interpretation, and carefully balanced: First, there is no escaping that the distinction is a hierarchical division – ‘ultimate’ is better than ‘convention’, *more* real, *more* true, *more* correct, accurate or precise. Second, and in tension with this, this hierarchy must be maintained without losing sight of the fact that conventional truth must nevertheless be *true*. One way to think of how these two principles might be jointly respected, without committing to one interpretation over the others is by appeal to the ‘in virtue of’ relation. That is to say, it is *because* ultimate reality is as it is that particular conventions are indeed correct or true; they are well-grounded.²³ Conventional truths are true *in virtue of* how things stand ultimately, even when they do not actually describe or capture that ultimate reality accurately.

This distinction makes extremely minimal claims about the respective natures of ultimate and conventional reality, or criteria for determining into which class a candidate truth might fall. There is primarily only the asymmetrical relation between them to tell the difference. Thus the much-used example of the chariot as a conventional, but not ultimate, reality:

It is because of the pole because of the axle, the wheels, the body of a chariot, the flag-staff of a chariot, the yoke, the reins, and because of the goad that ‘chariot’ exists as a

²¹ See Priestley, *Pudgalavāda Buddhism* 84, for the antiquity of this distinction, particularly relative to the familiar distinction between substantial and conceptual reality, discussed below.

²² Vasubandhu’s account of *saṃvṛtisat* as opposed to *paramārthasat* at AK6.4 is well known (that which remains after analysis, even mental analysis, is *paramārthasat*; what does not resist analysis is *saṃvṛtisat*); Dharmakīrti (PV 2.3, 3.3) makes the distinction according to whether or not something is capable of causal influence. For Candrakīrti’s definition, see *Prasannapadā* 24.8; for Śāntideva’s, see *Bodhicaryāvatāra* 9.2. For general discussion, see Mervyn Sprung ed., *The Problem of Two Truths in Buddhism and Vedānta* (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1973).

²³ This would be respected by, for instance, Vasubandhu’s definition. ‘Being useful’ plays a significant role in Mark Siderits’ account of what makes a conventional truth well-grounded, but the structural point is essentially the same: “standing behind every conventionally true statement is some (much longer) ultimately true statement that *explains why accepting the conventionally true statement leads to successful practice*” (*Buddhism as Philosophy*, (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett 2007) 58; emphasis mine). Compare also, 62: “for every statement that is conventionally true, there is some (much longer) ultimately true statement that explains why it works.” Presumably ultimate reality does not actually explain why ‘it works’ or is useful, but rather describes how things ultimately are such at, given certain ends, such conceptions will be useful. I return to this below.

denotation, appellation, designation, as a current usage, as a name.²⁴

In addition to the dependency relation, what is evident is the close connection here between convention and convenience, and the way we talk – or conceptions. Conventional realities are those convenient ways of talking that may not be strictly accurate, but they are very effective in communicating efficiently, for pragmatic ends – so that it is no wonder that the later distinction, between substantial and conceptual reality (*dravyasat* and *prajñaptisat*²⁵) becomes assimilated to the earlier distinction between ultimate and conventional existence.²⁶ That conceptual reality (*saṃvṛtisat*) should be co-extensive with conventional reality (*prajñaptisat*) does not seem objectionable; all of our conventional truths will be conceptual.²⁷ But the assimilation of ultimate and substantial reality is not obviously so harmless. For this introduces something decidedly new: before, we could be open about what might turn out to be ultimately real; now, it is asserted that *only* substances are ultimately real. The only way to be ultimately, *really* real is to be a substance – *paramārthasat* is *dravyasat*.²⁸ Any other sort of reality is derivative, based on substances and real in virtue of their reality.²⁹

The metaphysics within which the Pudgalavādins – like almost all Buddhists³⁰ – operated, came to recognize only two ways in which something can be real: either it is a substance, or it is conceived based on substances, these conceptions being designated true (or realities) in virtue of being based on, or dependent upon, what is ultimately (or *really*) real – namely, substances. Indeed, it is probably more correct to say that the only mode of being recognized is substantial being, for

²⁴ *Milindapañha* (*Milinda's Questions*, translated by I. B. Horner. Oxford: Pali Text Society 1996) 27. The example is drawn originally from SN I.135, the verses of the bhikkhunī Vajirā to Māra, to which Nagasena goes on to refer.

²⁵ I will not try to argue for one interpretation rather another of *prajñapti* and *prajñaptisat*. It has to do with conceiving and mental activity; but see important arguments by Ganeri for why we should *not* take it to mean 'nominal', or assume automatically that 'conceptually real' means *illusory* or *fictitious*. However, when contrasted with substantial reality it is inferior, as conventional is inferior to ultimate reality.

²⁶ See Paul Williams here on the equivalence, 'On the Abhidharma Ontology', 237 (*Journal of Indian Philosophy* 9 (1981): 227-57). See also Priestley, "The 'true and ultimate' seems to be what is later defined as the substantial (*dravya*) in contrast to the conceptual entity (*prajñapti*)" (*Pudgalavāda Buddhism* 94).

²⁷ Though one might wonder whether all conceptual truths are thereby merely conventional, and not ultimate truths: If reality is intelligibly structured, as Plato, Aristotle or the Nyāyaikas held, then some concepts could *get it right* and so be ultimately true – not merely convenient conventions.

²⁸ See, e.g., Paul Williams, 'On the Abhidharma Ontology', *JIP* 1981. I shall have more to say about the translation of *dravyasat* as 'substantial reality' below. Briefly, in philosophy, substance does duty as 'individuator', 'essence', 'that which underlies' and 'that which persists through change'. The Buddhist 'ultimately realities' will not turn out to play this lattermost role – nothing does; but as the first three familiar senses of substance *are* relevant to that which is *dravyasat*, I have chosen to stick with this familiar term of art, for this I believe is where the discussion is to be properly located.

²⁹ Paul Williams describes the situation thus: "The secondary existent is dependent upon mental and linguistic construction, synthesis out of more fundamental and indubitable elements. These primary existents, on the other hand, are those elements which make up the synthesised existents and therefore cannot themselves have the sort of dependence which the latter enjoy.... A primary existent is primary and thus independent because it is the basis upon which rests secondary existents such as most of the objects of our everyday world." ('On the Abhidharma Ontology', 240).

³⁰ Mādhyamikas excepted

the conceptions derived based on those have a similarly derivative existence – insofar as they are *real*, it is in virtue of the reality of the substances on the basis of which they are conceived. In this respect, the choice to render these ultimate realities by ‘substance’ is deliberate: they are that which underlie phenomena as we experience them, and thus that which grounds or justifies those experiences. But this, note, goes one step further than the original distinction, appealed to by Buddhaghosa, between ultimate and conventional reality.

One important consequence of assimilation of substantial to ultimate reality is that qualities, for instance – conceived as *modifications of substances* – are not really real. Quantity, position, relation and all the other ways in which substances might be disposed, taken singly or in combination, are not real.³¹ Either these experienced phenomena are themselves substances – in the minimal sense of independently specifiable individuals³² – or else the experience of them must be explained in some other way, via the imposition of our mental activity onto the really existing substances. The Abhidharmikas, that is to say, stoutly reject any categorial schema.³³ Substances themselves may come in different kinds of course, but it would be wrong to say that they differ from one another in their qualities, for this would imply a substance distinct from its qualities, and in which the qualities inhere – and this is precisely the sort of metaphysical picture that is rejected. It may be more correct to say that each substance, each ultimately existing individual, simply is the quality or factor which differentiates it from others.

³¹ One is tempted to call such a conception of being ‘impoverished’ but for the determination and tenacity required to maintain it.

³² Whether conceived of as colour tropes, pain tropes (cf. Ganeri, *Philosophy in Classical India*, Ch. 4), or in some other way; the Buddhists call them *dharmas*. The Abhidharma canon in fact has an entire treatise on ‘conditional relations’ (*paccaya*), the exhaustive *Paṭṭāna*. What becomes clear is that conceiving a *paccaya* as a *dhamma* amounts to making relations into discrete individuals, just like every other *dhamma*. While such a *dhamma* might ‘link’ two other *dhammas*, its doing so involves no alteration to its specific character, or to that of the ‘linked’ *dhammas* – we have simply a series of *dhammas*. It is no wonder that later Buddhist philosophers asked *when* such a *dhamma* was supposed to arise (with the previous or the subsequent *dhamma* in a series, if they are temporally related); and that much later Prabhācandra, commenting on Dharmakīrti’s *On Relations*, says: “In the presence of something, something comes into existence and in the absence of that it does not come into existence... If this is so, then let those very two aspects (*bhāvābhāva*) be taken as the cause-and-effect relationship; what is the need of postulating an unreal relation?” (The comment is on *kārikā* 11-12 of Dharmakīrti’s *Sambandha-parīkṣa*, “If (you say that) cause-and-effect relationship is the relation which is of the nature of *anvaya-vyatireka* (i.e. in the presence of a cause an effect is seen and in the absence of it no effect is seen), then why not the same two (*bhāvābhāva* i.e. *anvayavyatireka*) be taken as the cause-and-effect relationship?”, *The Philosophy of Relations*, translated by V. N. Jha. Bibliotheca Indo-Buddhica No. 66. Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications 1990)

³³ and according to Paul Williams, for instance, rightly so: ‘Indeed it is by no means clear by what criteria we can talk of different *sorts* of existence... but the notion that two entities exist in different ways is itself paradoxical, for existence would not seem to be the sort of thing which could be divided into different types.’ (‘On the Abhidharma Ontology’ 228). Collett Cox argues that the Sarvāstivādins did indeed recognize “at least four separate abstract typologies of existence... the very presence of these typologies demonstrates that existence was not considered to be uniform; experienced objects do not simply exist or not exist, but rather can exist in different ways” (‘From Category to Ontology: The Changing Role of Dharma in Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma’. *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 32 (2004): 543-972, 569). However, it is not clear to me that the three she identifies actually are different modes or ways of being (in the sense of a categorial schema), rather than derivations on the one primary mode of being.

What exactly it means to be a substance, and therefore what substances there are, can be explained in different ways. Substance may not be ‘stuffy’ or material in any way, for instance. For the Buddhists, substance centrally includes the notions of individuality and exclusion. We see already in the *Kathāvatthu* the expectation that if two entities are both ultimately real, then they must be distinct from each other (see *Kathāvatthu* I.i.130 ff). If each individual obeys the relentless laws of homo-categoriality – particularly, exclusion of other – then both distinctness and identity between two entities does not admit of degrees.³⁴ In the absence of any differentiation in *modes of being*, and in *aspects of being*, any two (purported) substances are either in fact the very same individual substance, unqualifiedly; or else they are utterly distinct from one another. Over and over again we see the Abhidharma philosophers – whether in the *Kathāvatthu* or Vasubandhu in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* – pressing this point insistently against the Pudgalavādins: their ‘person’ must be either identical with the substantial entities known to exist (in which case their claim collapses), or it must be utterly distinct and distinguishable from those, and so be a substantial, independent individual in its own right (the unacceptable ‘eternalist’ position).³⁵ If it is neither the same nor different, then it cannot be a substance at all – and this, in their view, is tantamount to acknowledging that it is not ultimately real.

II.ii. ... but not in the way of a substance

This final move is the one the Pudgalavādin resists. The person admittedly is not a substance; nevertheless, we cannot therefore conclude that the person does not exist ultimately. The *pudgala* might be really real, but ‘not in the way that (other) real and ultimate things are’ (*Kathāvatthu* I.i.1). By insisting that the person is ultimately real, the Pudgalavādin wants to reject the standard Abhidharma view that the person is merely *prajñaptisat* – a conceptual or conventional reality, whose reality is a borrowed one, grounded on the ultimate reality of its constituent parts.³⁶ But they want to do this without rejecting the Abhidharma metaphysical framework altogether – so that, while their position does not seem an unreasonable or especially complicated one, it turns out to be an incredibly difficult position to articulate.

³⁴ See Duerlinger, 265 ff., esp. 278 for discussion of view that all phenomena are substances.

³⁵ e.g. KV I.i.17: “Is the person known in the sense of a real and ultimate fact, and is material quality one thing and the person another? [P: Yes] Is material quality one thing and the person another? [P: Nay, that cannot truly be said.] Acknowledge the refutation: If the person and material quality be each known in the sense of real and ultimate facts, then indeed, good sir, you should also have admitted that they are distinct thing.” (*Kathāvatthu - Points of Controversy*, translated by Shwe Zan Aung and Mrs. Rhys Davids. Oxford: Pali Text Society 2001 reprint of 1915 edition). In the next sections (§18-73), the same argument is made concerning fifty-five other acknowledged ultimately real entities, e.g. feeling, perception.

³⁶ In taking the Pudgalavādin at his word here, and granting that he means the person to be ultimately real – and specifically not *just* conceptually real – I go against the current grain: Duerlinger, Châu and Priestley all take it that the position defended is, in spite of appearances, that the person is a conceptual reality in some aberrant sense rejected by other Buddhists who acknowledge the conceptual reality of persons.

For consider one obvious way to hold that the person is real, but not a substance: Introduce a variety of categories, all of them various ways of being really real, only one of which is ‘substantially’. A Naiyāyika, or an Aristotelian for example, might ask whether it is even coherent to claim that the *only* way to exist is substantially – even substances cannot be, if there are not other modes of being by which they are qualified and individuated.³⁷ To be is to be a ‘this something’, and this requires that there be kinds and qualities and relations. If qualities, relations and so on can be really real, just as real as the substances which they qualify and relate, then the person could be some such non-substantial, ultimately real entity.

But the Pudgalavādins do not want to take that route. Their argument is not with the criteria of being – what existence means, nor therefore with what existing things there are, in general. Their aim is not a wholesale rejection of the Abhidharma metaphysical project. Much more modestly, they want *within that framework* to articulate a single principle which struggles to find voice, and which they feel must nevertheless be accommodated. The Pudgalavādins want to insist that the person is *really*, ultimately real, without its thereby being a substance; and, conversely, they want to insist that though the person is not a substance, neither is it thereby only a conceptual entity (and so derivatively real).³⁸ And this is a real challenge to the Abhidharma metaphysics of their opponents. There can be real things that are not substances – at least, there must be this one, the *pudgala*. (Why they want to claim this will be investigated in Sections III and IV.) And since being ultimately real means precisely not having derived or deceptive reality, as conventional realities have, there are non-substances that are *not* conceptual realities – the distinction between conceptual/conventional reality, and *substantial* reality is not exhaustive.³⁹

Since the Pudgalavādins certainly do not want to assert that the self is a substance, we might put their view more circumspectly as the claim that “the person is not *just* a conceptual reality”. There is something more to it than that. Although there is of course a concept of a person,

³⁷ Prabhācandra commenting on Dharmakīrti’s *Sambandha-parīkṣa*, kārikā 3, credits his opponent with thinking real individuals *require* relations: “A positive entity requires that (relation, this is what you say)” (*The Philosophy of Relations (Containing the Sanskrit Text and English Translation of Dharmakīrti’s Sambandha-parīkṣa with Prabhācandra’s Commentary*). By V. N. Jha. Bibliotheca Indo-Buddhica No. 66. Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications 1990; comment on *kārikā* III).

³⁸ I suspect that missing this challenge – that is, assuming the Pudgalavādins agree that ‘substantial’ and ‘conceptual’ are exhaustive options – explains why Chāu, for instance, credits the Pudgalavādins with the view that the person is simply a conventional or conceptual reality; their denial that the self is a substance is taken immediately for the assertion that it is both conceptual, and not ultimate. Priestley also assumes the Pudgalavādins accept the exhaustiveness of the substantial-conceptual distinction: “Either their belief was that the *pudgala* could be indeterminate and yet substantial, or else they held it to be conceptual and yet ‘true and ultimate’” (*Pudgalavāda Buddhism*, 84); but of course there is a third option, namely, that the self is ultimate but not substantial. See also Duerlinger, *Indian Buddhist Theories of Persons*, 132.

³⁹ According to Vasubandhu, the Pudgalavādins hold that “a person is not substantially real or real by way of conception” (AKB §2.1.1, tr. Duerlinger; AKB 9; DS ed. 1192.7 “it exists neither as substantial nor as conceptual”, [*naiva hi dravyato-sti, nāpi prajñaptataḥ*]). Priestley does not so much ignore this possibility as find it frankly unintelligible: “Certainly the Vātsīputrīya’s contention that the *pudgala* is neither conceptual nor substantial seems absurd” (*Pudgalavāda Buddhism*, 99); like Williams, he is persuaded of the fundamentals of Abhidharma ontology.

the correct account of that concept will not follow the manner of other constructed concepts. In the ordinary case, a conceptual reality is grounded on its constituent elements, and borrows its reality exclusively from them, from the efficacy of using them, or both. These constituents are all different from each other, different from the reality conceived, and they are ultimately real. In the case of the person, however, conceiving it is grounded not just on constituent elements, but on some other ultimate reality (call it the ‘person’) as well. It is in virtue of eyes, hands, volitions, cognitions, and *the pudgala* that one correctly conceives of ‘a person’. Since the challenge is to the exhaustiveness of the *dravyasat-prajñaptisat* distinction, or – to put the same thing another way – to the assimilation of *paramārthasat* and *dravyasat*, it is no surprise that in the *Kathāvatthu* these two different ways of formulating the *pudgalavāda* should come to the same: (1) The person is found as ultimately real, *but not in the way other ultimate realities are*;⁴⁰ and (2) although there is indeed a conceptual reality to the ‘person’, the story of its reality is not the same as that given for other conceptual realities.⁴¹

My suggestion is this: It was the attempt to assert the ultimate reality of something not a substance, without dropping the basic non-categorical schema, that drove the Pudgalavādins to express themselves in the neither-nor language for which they were viciously mocked. And it was the attempt to articulate a kind of reality for which there is no space within the metaphysical framework which drives the Pudgalavādins to assert that the person is *avaktavya*, literally ‘not to be said’, or ineffable, inexplicable.⁴² For what it positively is, is literally – without abandoning the framework entirely – unsayable. And yet it is from within the framework that the need to posit some such reality is felt to arise. Unfortunately, both the ‘neither-nor’ language, and the *avaktavya* claim make it difficult to determine what exactly their position was, and more importantly, why they held it. In our efforts at what must then be a bit of philosophical imaginative reconstruction, we will discover that both the ‘what’ and the ‘why’ mutually illuminate each other: as we uncover what the person is, so will the reasons for insisting upon its reality become clearer.

III. WHAT IS THE PUDGALA, AND WHAT IS IT FOR?

What is the problem that positing a really existing person is supposed to solve? Why insist it really exists? And how is it not a substance?

⁴⁰ KV I.1.1

⁴¹ KV I.1.171-192

⁴² Duerlinger (61n29, 66n66) strongly favours ‘inexplicable’ over ‘ineffable’, rejecting the common view that the Pudgalavādins are claiming that the person cannot be spoken of or conceived. But of course one can say a lot, especially negatively, *about* something, without having the vocabulary or conceptual means of articulating what something *is*. I think it is this latter inability which leads the Pudgalavādins to say of the person that it is *avaktavya*. Duerlinger’s objection to ‘ineffable’ – which, incidentally, shares its construction with *avaktavya* – stems from his insistence that the best formulation of the *pudgalavāda* is in terms of the person as a conceptual reality, which its ‘inconceivability’ would seem to preclude.

III.i. *Unity With, and Without, Selves*

The substantial-self hypothesis of Brahmanical thought serves three philosophical functions: it provides a subject (enjoyer), an agent, and a unifier.⁴³ The Self – the substantially existing individual, distinct from the transient physical and psychological events in a life – is that which *has* experiences, initiates action, and that in virtue of which temporally, numerically and modally distinct experiences can belong to, or be parts of, the same whole. These phenomena of cross-modal unity and unity over time, and these logical principles of experience (agency and subjectivity) are what the Buddhist who wants to dispense with self must explain in some other way.⁴⁴

Of these outstanding explanatory tasks, the Pudgalavādin is primarily concerned with problems of unity in multiplicity, and questions of individuation that attend them.⁴⁵ This is not a new observation – those scholars who have concerned themselves with the *pudgalavāda* have generally observed that the central concern is something to do with unity.⁴⁶ We witness this interest in complex unity – that is, unity-in-multiplicity – in the Pudgalavadins’ three ways of designating the person: namely, on the basis of the aggregates, on the basis of transition, and on the basis of cessation.⁴⁷ It is important to be clear that these are *grounds for designating a group of elements as a pudgala*;⁴⁸ although the *pudgala* is not without them, they are not what the *pudgala* is. In marking these out as the territory of concern, the Pudgalavādins are clearly interested in the unity consisting of constituent substances of an individual at a time (aggregates), and with the continuity and the distinctness of continua over time (transmigration and cessation); that is to say, with individuation – which becomes especially clear in designating the person based on cessation, where questions of unity-in-multiplicity cannot arise, though continuity and individuation of continua can.

In the matter of the person, or self, the Pudgalavādins are thus positioning themselves as a third alternative – neither Brahmanical, nor Abhidharmika. As is the way in such Buddhist debates, this will be articulated as the middle and moderate position between two unacceptable extremes –

⁴³ Cf. Vasubandhu, *On the Five Aggregates*, § 5 (translated Anacker, *Seven Treatises*, 74)

⁴⁴ For ongoing disputes between Buddhists and Naiyāyikas over whether any non-substantialist (Buddhist) account could be adequate to this task, see Arindam Chakrabarti, ‘I Touch What I Saw’ (*Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 52 (1992) 103-117), Jonardon Ganeri, ‘Cross-Modality and the Self’ (*Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 61 (2000) 639-657) and *The Concealed Art of the Soul* (Oxford: OUP 2007), chapter 7.

⁴⁵ Priestley also finds concerns with agency and subjectivity; but these may well be closely related to the more prominent interest in unity.

⁴⁶ Conze, *Buddhist Thought in India*, 126-128; Châu, *Literature of the Personalists*, 161

⁴⁷ See especially the *Sammitīyanikāyaśātra* for the three bases of the *pudgala*. The *Tridharmakhaṇḍaka* does not use the word ‘transition’ to describe the second basis, but both versions we have do point to unity over time, whether indicating just the past (*Sānfādū lùn*), or bringing in both past and future (*Sì ēhánmù chāojiè*).

⁴⁸ Or, in the case of cessation, that there has been a person and whether that person exists or not is now indeterminate.

between the eternalism of Brahmanical thinking, which takes self to be an independently existing unity, and (on the other hand) the inadvertent nihilism of the other Abhidharma Buddhists, who have done away with a really existing self altogether.⁴⁹

Naturally, the non-Pudgalavādin Buddhists see it otherwise. They present their own position as the middle between extremes – casting the Pudgalavādins as inadvertent eternalists – by acknowledging the conceptual reality of the self (thus, avoiding nihilism), while denying its substantial reality.⁵⁰ The self is, then, like every other purported complex whole – a supposed unity projected by the conceiving mind onto a multitude of really existing discrete substances. While there is basis in ultimate reality for each of the constituents, there is no basis in ultimate reality for considering that there is some *one* thing there; for ultimately, they are not one, but many.⁵¹ The convention that there is one thing here will be true, but only derivatively, in virtue of the reality of the constituents thus conceived.

Were the unity itself, as such, to have some basis in ultimate reality, the story goes, then this basis would have to be some new thing, distinct and existing separately from the other constituents. This is a consequence of the non-categorial metaphysics which recognizes no ‘modes’ of being.⁵² Something existing in this way would of course be a substantial individual, on a par with its constituent substances. Such substantial unities in the case of individual living beings are Selves.

The Brahmanical philosopher readily objects that this Buddhist non-self view cannot account for various *experiences* of unity – e.g., complex perception, memory, desire. If experiences

⁴⁹ In this early period Nāgārjuna and his followers were often taken by Buddhists to have fallen into the nihilistic extreme – and Vasubandhu, for instance, does not waste many words saying so (AKB §3.10, Duerlinger translation).

⁵⁰ See Harivarman as a representative spokesman of this view: “To say that the soul exists in the ultimate sense is *satkāyadr̥ṣṭi*, and to say that the soul does not exist in the empirical sense is the wrong view, *mithyādr̥ṣṭi*. But it is right view (*samyak-dr̥ṣṭi*) when we say that the soul exists empirically and does not however exist ultimately... Thus is to be understood the statement that soul exists and that it does not exist.” (As freely translated by N. Aiyaswami Sastri (*Satyasiddhiśāstra of Harivarman*, vol. II. Oriental Institute, Baroda 1978), 295).

⁵¹ This is the point I think Duerlinger badly confuses in his account of Vasubandhu and his debate with the Pudgalavādins. To agree that *something* is ultimately real, when one conceives of person or any other unity, is not to concede that *the person* is ultimately real. (see, e.g. *Indian Buddhist Theories of Persons*, 11-12: “these conventional realities ultimately exist” is his view of the *pudgalavāda* thesis in the *Kathāvatthu*, indeed of the Theravada view. Similar remarks are found pp. 10-12, 20 and elsewhere.) See Harivarman’s reply to the *naif* who supposes “There may not be any harm in calling the five aggregates of elements as the soul”: on the contrary, “The advocate of the soul thinks that the soul is one. Then the five aggregates would be one. This is faulty.” (*Satyasiddhiśāstra* 292-92); cf. Harivarman, (*Satyasiddhiśāstra* 73): “The aggregates are other than *pudgala* because the former is five whereas the latter is one. If the soul exists at all it ought to be other than the aggregates.”

⁵² It is curious that Paul Williams readily endorses the non-categorial metaphysics of the Buddhists (in ‘On the Abhidharma Ontology’, 228, n. 36 above), but in section 4 of ‘The Absence of Self and the Removal of Pain – How Santideva Destroyed the Bodhisattva Path’ (*Altruism and Reality: Studies in the Philosophy of the Bodhicāravatāra*. First Indian Edition, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass 2000 (First published Britain 1998)) he strongly resists the mode of argument which goes on to insist that if the whole is real, it must be some distinct individual in addition to the parts. Of course, as he says, this is not what we *mean* when we say the whole is ‘more than’ the sum of its parts; but ‘we’ probably do not ordinarily work within a default metaphysics that is so minimal as the Buddhist one (if, indeed, we are able to make good sense of what we *do* mean at all).

are not anchored to individuated owners, the Nyāyaika objects,⁵³ then they might arise in any old order, so that it would be possible for Devadatta to recall what Yajñadatta once experiences. But in fact this does not happen.

Vasubandhu's response is simply: 'there is no connection [between causal continuum Devadatta and causal continuum Yajñadatta] since these two minds are not related as cause to effect within one continuum.'⁵⁴ That is to say, it just happens, as a matter of fact, that experiences do not ever take that kind of 'trans-personal' order. There need be no unitary owner to explain the fact that Devadatta 'recalls' only his own previous experiences. The relations between elements are those of spacio-temporal proximity.⁵⁵ There is no other way for elements to be connected, and there is no significant differentiation within this kind. Any two elements either are spacio-temporally connected, or they are not. These connections follow patterns, some of which we conveniently designate 'persons'.

III.ii. *Inadequacy of Selfless Unity*

But when we consider how our bodies are in constant interaction with our physical environments, and indeed with other minds, it becomes clear that this answer will not do.⁵⁶ Causal connectedness cannot be all there is to 'belonging to', or individuating groups of aggregates or causal streams; it does not suffice to decide the question of which elements belong to which other elements or to which causal continua.⁵⁷ For causal continua do overlap and intersect.

Consider: My verbal expression may give rise to several instances of hearing; but only one of those is counted as being in the same continuum as the vocal expression. Your intention to help may cause innumerable consequences – movements, sounds, feelings, desires. But only some of these effects will be counted as being in the causal continuum conventionally designated 'you'; some will not. If all we have is the one sort of relation between ultimately real substances, then we cannot appeal to this to explain the difference. Although this point is not explicitly stated, it is what makes the Nyāya challenge 'Why doesn't Devadatta remember Yajñadatta's experiences?' a potent one. Individuating causal streams into distinct continua presupposes that some connections are

⁵³ Uddyotakara, for instance, commenting on *Nyāyavārttika ad Nyāyasūtra* I.1.10

⁵⁴ ABK IX, §4.1 of Duerlinger's translation. It is, of course, an anachronism to suppose Vasubandhu responds to Uddyotakara; but the *Nyāyasūtra* itself already contains the seeds of the objection.

⁵⁵ So, contiguity (at a time), or succession (causal connectedness); 'causal' connections are not robust, on the Buddhist account.

⁵⁶ Duerlinger rightly notes in his commentary (242) that it will not: 'Minds in different causal continua of aggregates, he assumes, cannot be appropriately causally related, but he does not explain what constitutes aggregates being appropriately causally related or what constitutes aggregates belonging to different causal continua of aggregates. He *cannot distinguish* [as the Nyāya do]...Unfortunately, this view does not explain how different causal continua of aggregates are to be distinguished from one another.' (emphasis mine)

⁵⁷ This resembles the 'sophisticated' version of Siderits' second 'circularity' objection (*Personal Identity and Buddhist Philosophy*. Ashgate 2003, 45).

special in some way – and our convenience, these just happening to matter to us more than those (or to be more useful), won't do, for it is the fact of these special kinds of connections *really* existing that *makes* such connections useful.⁵⁸ The Buddhist might reply, as Vasubandhu does, that it is simply a fact that this experience-*dharma* here does not cause a subsequent experience-*dharma* there.⁵⁹ But since this is not always the case, since sometimes some *dharmas* within one continuum-stream do cause *dharmas* to arise in other continua, this response does not meet the objection. If Devadatta's vocal act causes a hearing-consciousness to arise 'over there' – in what one would conventionally call Yajñadatta – why is that hearing-consciousness not part of Devadatta, especially if that hearing-consciousness is causally connected to the pain-consciousness that arises as 'Yajñadatta's fist' hits 'Devadatta's face'? Alternatively, the question is, why would it never be convenient to consider them so? The hearing-consciousness, like the speech-intention and the speech-act, are all causally connected to the aggregate-stream conventionally designated 'Devadatta'.

Why won't appeal to the principle of convenience and efficacy governing concept formation suffice to individuate persons?⁶⁰ There are, I think, two reasons. The first is that making judgements of convenience relies on two factors, both of which are problematic in the case of persons. The first factor is *purposes*: It is only convenient or efficacious to group aggregates one way rather than another provided we have some ends for which so grouping them is useful. The King wants to be able to get to his meeting with Nagasena, and in general wants to be able to get to various places quickly and comfortably. And so it is convenient to think of a certain aggregation of elements as 'a chariot'. But such ends are themselves constructed, arising only within conceptual reality. Conventional reality is thus presumed in making judgements of convenience. But this conventional reality is populated with persons, above all oneself – it is by thinking of Nagasena as 'whole' that King Milinda is able to conceive a desire to see him, and it is by presuming himself 'the same person' at the beginning and end of any journey that the King might conceive a desire to go anywhere. The circularity seems to be this: It is only convenient to grasp a group of aggregates together as a person given some ends; and these ends are conceivable in the first place only by

⁵⁸ I think this gets at Paul Williams' objection (*Studies in the Philosophy of the Bodhicāravatāra: Altruism and Reality*. First Indian Edition, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass 2000 (First published Britain 1998)). Essentially the same objection is made to Parfit's attempt to do without any mechanism for stream-individuation (see discussion in Ganeri, *Concealed Art of the Soul*, 187). Siderits offers difference in quantity in place of difference in quality, and proposes to meet the objection in terms of 'maximal causal connectedness', and an appeal to consequentialism (*Personal Identity and Buddhist Philosophy*, 45-50). One peculiarity of such a defense is that, to the extent that it succeeds, it undermines any motive we might have had to abandon notions of the self, or to suppose that it was holding these very notions which led inevitably to suffering.

⁵⁹ Compare Parfit: when you know all the facts of the sequence of the aggregates there is not some further fact that you still do not know. Whether in addition one wants to designate a situation as 'this (same) person' is a matter of decision.

⁶⁰ Mark Siderits' account (*Buddhism as Philosophy*, Ch. 3 and 4) emphasizes this means of individuating persons.

thinking in terms of persons.⁶¹ Having ends presupposes the individuation that ‘useful for some end’ is supposed to engender. The only end which may not be thus dependent upon presuming persons would be aiming at nirvana – and for this, thinking in terms of persons is a positive obstacle.⁶²

The second factor on which judgements of convenience rely is that ultimate reality be such that constructing concepts this way rather than that way is effective.⁶³ If, however, the appeal to efficacy is circular, and so empty, in the case of persons, then this element of a supposed judgement of convenience becomes simply an appeal to how things ultimately are, namely these *dharmas* really are, in some important sense, related *exclusively* to each other – and not to other *dharmas* with which they causally interact.⁶⁴ But this just is the *pudgalavāda*.

A second consideration making appeals to convenience inadequate is similar to the problematic presumption of persons in order to have (most) ends at all. Given our shifting concerns, it seems likely that different attributions of belonging would be more convenient under different circumstances. Gathering one subset together as ‘the person’ may be convenient under some circumstances, which grouping aggregates differently is convenient under other circumstances, or for other ends. What the Abhidharma Buddhist has not explained is how, if persons are purely ‘convenient designators’, they remain the same throughout changes in ends and purposes. If, however, it is *overall* convenient to have conceptual unities that do not so shift their boundaries, then this brings us swiftly to the deeper question of appeals to global unity, and the entitlement or conditions for making such an appeal. I will address this in section IV.ii.(b).

The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika opponent might think that the only way to explain this is to posit the real existence of two distinct individuals – Devadatta and Yajñadatta – to whom some but not other experiences belong. This is where the Pudgalavādins want to stake their middle ground. They are alert to the fact that the ultra-minimalist Buddhist view inevitably *presumes* the individuation of person-constituting-aggregates and person-constituting streams.⁶⁵ The view must be able to

⁶¹ Siderits suggests addressing this part of the objection by appeal to consequentialist principles, arguing that at least one end can be impersonally conceived (*Personal Identity and Buddhist Philosophy*, Ch. 3). It seems the point is that there is some impersonal end, reduction of suffering, best attained by conceiving of ourselves as persons with local aims and projects. I’m not sure this solution works.

⁶² Siderits seems to acknowledge this difficulty (*Buddhism as Philosophy*, 83). The end which he proposes, with respect to which conceiving of aggregates as persons is convenient, is ‘reducing suffering’; but it is precisely for this quite general end that it is uncertain whether thinking in terms of persons is a help or a positive hindrance.

⁶³ Compare Siderits, *Buddhism as Philosophy*, 75: “As Nāgasena said, the conventional truth is that we are persons. This is conventionally true because it is ultimately true that these present *skandhas* are the cause of the future *skandhas* in this series.”

⁶⁴ “Might this not explain why we conveniently designate the one series as ‘me’ and the other as ‘you?’” Siderits asks (*Buddhism as Philosophy*, 83). “Might this not be the ultimate truth that makes it conventionally true that we are distinct person?”

⁶⁵ Note the regularity with which reductionist responses to concerns about continuity, the sameness of the person over time, presume that we have already individuated a distinct causal stream.

discriminate between distinct persons – particularly, as we will discuss below, in order to articulate the phenomena of perception and karma; and it can only do so by in practice recognizing that some elements and streams belong together, and not to others.⁶⁶ But the Pudgalavādins want to grant the metaphysically most minimal claim possible; so they will insist on the reality of ‘belonging to’, but without supposing the separate existence of someone or some thing to whom these elements belong.⁶⁷ They belong to each other, not to some further substance.

III.iii. Pudgala-Unity

Such a view recognizes that *individuation* of causal continua is presupposed, not projected. That some elements belong to each other, and not to any others, is *really*, ultimately true.⁶⁸ This would mean that we are *correct* – getting rightly at the way things ultimately are – in regarding just these and not other constituents together, as being bound to one another in a way they are not bound to other ultimately real elements. But it is not so in the way that other ultimate truths are, for it is not a substance; it is not an individual with a separate, distinct identity of its own.⁶⁹ The basis for regarding these aggregates *as a person* is not just the aggregates, but more precisely ‘the fact that these elements are thus-and-so disposed with respect to one another’.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Parfit’s reductionist reply to essentially the same objection requires appeal to ‘in the particular life that contains [x]...’; Parfit glosses this by referring ‘this’ life to the one that ‘is now directly causally dependent on body A’, grounding the individuation of persons on the individuation of lives, and grounding this in turn on the individuation of bodies (*Reasons and Persons*, Oxford: Clarendon Press 1984, 226). But of course, with their belief in reincarnation – that ‘the same’ causal stream extends through several different bodies and types of body – such a strategy, even if it works in principle, is not available to the Buddhist.

⁶⁷ Because this introduces no ‘separately existing entities’ (*Reasons and Persons*, 275), and yet also insists on the reality of this fact of belonging together – which might *consist in* the aggregates being thus and so disposed (if you had to point to where it happens), but which goes beyond the mere recognition of the existence of each individual element – I am not certain whether this view should be considered reductionist on Parfit’s terms, or as a variant of the ‘further fact view’ (*Reasons and Persons*, 210). I am tempted to think that the reductionist/non-reductionist positions as Parfit describes them – with the ‘further fact view’ falling among the non-reductionists (e.g. *Reasons and Persons*, 279) – are not the exclusive and exhaustive options he supposes (*Reasons and Persons*, 216, 273: “a fundamental choice between two views”). At any rate, for what it is worth, if reductionists, then the Pudgalavādins are of the sort that accept Parfit’s theses (3) and (5), but not (4), the person is its constituents, or (9) a complete description of reality could be impersonal (*Reasons and Persons*, 211–212).

⁶⁸ So we should be cautious about describing the Pudgalavādin’s view as that the “pudgala something more than the reunion of its constituents...” as, for instance, Châu does (*Literature of the Personalists*, 161).

⁶⁹ Thus I think Duerlinger is correct in describing the *pudgalavāda* view as asserting that ‘persons’ do not have identity of their own. His account, however, leaves it unclear why they would assert such a thing, or what they might mean by it.

⁷⁰ “We, however, plead that *the five aggregates put together form the soul*” (*Satyasiddhisāstra*, tr. Sastri, 70; emphasis mine). Against this we must set a remark from *Sns*: “Now we say, where (the Buddha) has spoken (of it to) the Srāvakas he has done so (only) as based on the elements, that is all. There is no other self... Now we say, the Buddha said that the person exists as conditionally cognized. Therefore that which is (here referred to) is only the (objective) counterpart of this (cognition) and not any real self” (177 of Ventakaramanan’s translation). Since the Saṃmīṭīyas have just asserted that “that the self exists etc. can be said” (175), we might suppose that these arguments (on page 177) are aimed at those who mean by asserting the real existence of the self to assert the *separate* existence of a distinct individual, something the Saṃmīṭīyas, and all

Thus we have two reasons why the *pudgala* will not conform even to the very early, canonical Abhidharma notion of a relation: First, the *pudgala* is not a single dyadic relation between two individuals, nor could it be conceived as a series of such relations without missing the point; second, the *pudgala* is not an isolatable, distinct individual with its own unchanging identity, as the *paccayas* are meant to be. Without simply *being* the aggregated elements (for the *pudgala* is rather the fact of their belonging together, not to others, and not others to them), still it is not different from or separable from these.⁷¹ So far from excluding other substances (as one substance excludes another), ‘persons’ so understood would in fact have their particular identities determined by their constituent substances. Indeed, we can see that the *pudgala* described here would even necessarily reflect the particular nature and qualities of different elements taken together.

We see in the *Kathāvatthu* how the ‘person’ takes the character of the aggregates, without becoming the same as them.⁷² According to the *Kathāvatthu* I.i.171-181, the person, though conceived based on aggregates that are transient, does not share this transience with them (§171); yet it does share in other of their properties: the concept of good or bad person can be derived from good or bad feelings respectively (§174-175), and also from good or bad consciousness (§177-178); and even the concept of a seeing person can be based on sight (§180). The *pudgala* inherits the distinctive qualities of its aggregates, but it does not become two persons just because there are two elements (§183). And while each moment of consciousness has or belongs to a person, it is not the case that each *new* moment signifies or belongs to a *new* person (§186, 193). All of this is exactly how it should be, if the person is regarded as the reality that these and no other aggregates belong only to each other.

This is one way to read the much-discussed fuel-fire analogy, without over-reading it.⁷³ The Pudgalavādins liken the relation between *pudgala* and its aggregates to the relation between fire and fuel.⁷⁴ A lot of energy can be put into trying to think exactly what the relation between fire and fuel is – how it should be different from the relation between chariots and their parts; and then further, how the philosophers of that time might have expected us to conceive of the fire-fuel relation. But the sūtras collected as the discourses of the Buddha give us on several occasions the

Pudgalavādins, would reject.

⁷¹ See especially *Kathāvatthu* I.i.130-145, where the *pudgala* cannot be said to be different from any of the *skandhas*, the *āyatanas* the *dhāthas* the *īndriyas*, or any of the other *dharmas*; and yet neither is it simply identical with any or all of them together (§138-141). Compare also what we see in the *pudgalavāda* texts, that it is impossible to say whether person is same or different (*Ssu* 4c24-25), separate or not separate (*Tds* 19a26) from *dharmas* existing at the three time (see Châu, *Literature of the Personalists* 91-2; the texts cited are the two translations of the *Tridharmakhaṇḍaka*, the *Sānfādù lùn* and the *Sì ēhánmù chāojiě*, respectively. See also Châu 156-57).

⁷² See Graham Priest’s argument that this will be a feature of whatever it is in virtue of which a manifold constitute a genuine unity, in ‘The *Parmenides*: A Dialethic Interpretation’, 4-5

⁷³ See Duerlinger’s concern (*Indian Buddhist Theories of Persons*, 64n48), that concentrating exclusively on this one analogy for how to think of the relation of *pudgala* and aggregates distorts our interpretation.

⁷⁴ See Vasubandhu, *AKB* 9, sections 2.1.3 of Duerlinger’s translation.

observation that a fire is *named* according to its kind of fuel. Thus, for example *Majjhima Nikāya*, Sutta 38:

... a fire is reckoned by the particular condition dependent on which it burns – when fire burns dependent on logs, it is reckoned as a log fire; when fire burns dependent on faggots, it is reckoned as a faggot fire; when fire burns dependent on grass, it is reckoned as a grass fire; when fire burns dependent on cowdung, it is reckoned as a cowdung fire...⁷⁵

Different fires are distinguished in kind and named according to their kind of fuel. That this is the correct way of distinguishing fires suggests a particularly close relation between fuel and fire, without identifying them. It is precisely by not being able to exist separately from the fuel that the fire is rightly named according to its fuel, without being identified with that fuel. So similarly with the person: Without being identical to the aggregates, it borrows its qualities from them.⁷⁶

This point will hold just as much for complex unity at a time,⁷⁷ as for unity through change over time.⁷⁸ Just as it is ultimately true that these aggregates belong together, so is it ultimately true that some elements existing at different times genuinely belong to one another, and not with others. This is why the Pudgalavādins argue that to deny the *santānin*, ‘possessor of continuity’ would indeed be to deny continuity (*santāna*).⁷⁹ This need not be a rehash of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika claim that there are no experiences without an experiencer – indeed, there is reason to think that the Pudgalavādin would reject such a claim.⁸⁰ If the *santānin*, ‘possessor of continuity’, is the *pudgala*, and the *pudgala* is just the fact that these and not other aggregates are connected to each other as they are not to others, then denying the *pudgala* will indeed be tantamount to denying continuity.

⁷⁵ *Mahātaṇhāsankhaya Sutta*, in the *Majjhima Nikāya* i.260, translated by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi (Boston: Wisdom Publications 1995); see also, for instance *MN* ii.182, sutta 96: *Esukāri Sutta*, where the analogy is specifically used to model the relation of rebirth to circumstances.

⁷⁶ I do not want to pretend that this exhausts what might be got from reflection on the fire-fuel analogy, which does indeed warrant reflection. Among others, it is worth attending to another use of the fire-fuel analogy to person-aggregates in the context of the question ‘Where does the liberated person go upon entering final nirvana?’ as found, for example in the *Aggivacchagotta Sutta* (*Majjhima Nikāya* i.486-488, sūtra 72). And there is a rather different, also well-known use of the analogy to illustrate someone who has ‘burned up’ sensual attachments (see e.g. *Majjhima Nikāya* ii.203-4, sutta 99: *Subha Sutta*; ‘like a fire that burns independent of fuel such as grass and wood’).

⁷⁷ the person designated by way of the aggregates: ‘a person is not substantially real nor real by way of conception, being conceived in reliance upon aggregates which pertain to himself, are acquired, and exist in the present.’ (ABK IX, trans. Duerlinger, 2.1.1)

⁷⁸ the person designated by way of transmigrating, whose primary concern is with karma, with the appropriateness of morally inflected causes and consequences. This focus on karma may be significant, and will be discussed below.

⁷⁹ Though perhaps not in the way Chāu intended it: “The specific relationship between the *pudgala* and the supports is explained by the continuity of a single individual independent of others. There is continuity (*santāna*), there is therefore a possessor of continuity (*santānin*). According to the Pudgalavādins, to deny the possessor of continuity is to deny continuity.” (*Literature of the Personalists* 161)

⁸⁰ The experiencer or subject of experiences, and the agent of action are two traditional roles of ‘self’ that the Pudgalavādin does not seem especially concerned to revive. Note, for example, that they deny that the *pudgala* is the experiencer of pleasure, according to KV I.i.154; and further, the fruit and the experiencer of the fruit cannot be said to be two different things, at KV I.i.203.

In the metaphysics of non-substantial individuals conceived as ‘streams’, persons are ‘stream-individuators’,⁸¹ though not by being themselves individuals, nor by being *agents* holding or bringing moment-*dharma*s together. Rather the *pudgala* is the fact that these *dharma*s do *really* belong together; it marks the recognition that this is an ultimate truth, really real, not a convenient convention or handy way of conceptualizing what is ultimately really there. On the other hand, it is not a substance; not *dravya-sat*, nor ‘haecceity’, ‘thisness’. Nor is the person the provider of individuating characteristics – all characteristics are provided by the constituent *dharma*s. Moreover, any set of aggregates would fail to capture the person unless it included not only every element that ever arises in this causal stream, but also somehow included just that cessation to which this stream led. The aggregates, and even the transition from one group and kind of aggregates to another, are the bases of the person; but they cannot exhaustively define the person.

What the Pudgalavādin sees – and his Buddhist opponent would rather ignore – is that mere proximity at a time, and mere causal connectedness over time are not sufficient to determine which are the correct and incorrect ways of grouping aggregates in our conceptualizations of ‘many as one’. Neither is ‘our convenience’ the missing part of the explanation. It would be, at least sometimes (and perhaps generally), more convenient *not* to recognize certain causal connections as distinct, integrated and excluding all others – for many aggregates rightly excluded from some unity might well be causally connected to it in relevant ways. Moreover, appeal to ‘our convenience’ (or indeed, to ‘relevance’) presupposes purposes for which some, but not other ways of subdividing aggregates will be useful. But such aims can only arise and be articulated within conceptual reality. That is to say, having purposes at all *presupposes* subdivisions among generically similar causal connections which are supposedly only made based on the principle of convenience. The Pudgalavādin recognizes and avoids this circularity by acknowledging that in one central case, our convenience does not determine but rather tracks the different ways in which aggregates are related – either as forming a unity, or as being collocated or causally connected without forming a unity. Taking certain collocations of elements to be a single thing is correct because they really do belong to each other in some way that they *do not* belong to the other elements.⁸²

Do we want to say that the *pudgala* thus *explains* why persons don’t intersect?⁸³ Since it is itself ‘inexplicable’, we might rather say that *pudgala* names the fact that there are causal chains and connections which are special and different from others (the difference between my perception causing my subsequent perception, or my perception causing my desire, and my perception causing

⁸¹ Châu, *Literature of the Personalists* 135, describes the person as individuator, or devised for ‘enhancing the principle of individuation’.

⁸² Situating these views within Parfit’s discussion, we might think of Pudgalavādins as reductionists who insist that elements require ‘the right sort’ of connectedness in order to constitute persons, while the non-Pudgalavādins must insist that *any sort* of connectedness will do – since after all, there is only the one sort, viz. proximity-succession, undifferentiated.

⁸³ as Châu writes, *Literature of the Personalists*, 161

your perception, or my volition causing your desire).⁸⁴ The rival Abhidharma account recognizes, and can recognize, no real difference here.⁸⁵ But *that these elements belong to each other*, and not to other elements also proximate or causally connected, the Pudgalavadins contend, is a basic fact which we perceive; and they recognize that it is only by perceiving this that we can claim that certain associations of elements *are* significant, and that our discrimination of distinct causal continua *as distinct* are correct.

This, I suggest, is what it means to say that the Buddha, using his omniscience, “sees beings decreasing and being reborn”, as the scriptures record, and yet the person is not itself a visible object like colour (*Kathāvatthu* I.i.198-99). According to Vasubandhu, this point is generalized across all sense modalities, as indeed it should be if ‘perceiving the person’ amounts to perceiving that certain elements or streams belong together. Vasubandhu presents the claim as a response to an epistemological objection, regarding how we come to know the person:

They must state by which of the six consciousnesses a person is known to exist. They say that a person is known to exist by all six. They explain how by saying that if a consciousness is aware of a person in dependence upon a visible form known to exist by means of the eye, it is said that a person is known to exist by means of the eye; but it is not said that the person is or is not the visible form.⁸⁶

Vasubandhu criticizes this claim, insisting that either one perceives only the aggregates, in which case “the same account can be given of milk or other such [complex] things” – so the person is every bit as conceptual as, and no more ultimate than, every other complex phenomenon; or else one must see something distinct from them, which would make the person a visible phenomenon (or audible, etc.), and one separate from the rest of the visibles (audibles, etc.) constituting the basis on which we conceive the person. Even worse, Vasubandhu continues, since “each of the five organs encounters its own domain and objects. None encounters the domain and objects of another”, if the Pudgalavādins insist we might perceive the person equally with any of the sense-modalities, then the person must be *both* essentially visible *and* essentially audible *and* essentially tactile, and so on. And this is clearly incoherent.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Siderits’ account of the Abhidharma position actually acknowledges this need, in a footnote: “Where there are the *right kinds of causal connections*, it is conventionally true that punishment is deserved even when ultimately distinct *skandhas* are involved.” (*Buddhism as Philosophy*, 67n16). Defending the ultra-minimalist account, Siderits would no doubt explain ‘right kind’ by reference to efficacy. But since we seek here ‘whatever is the responsible agent’, the only thing that could make these connections ‘the right ones’ is that those previous *skandhas* really are responsible, in some way others are not.

⁸⁵ It simply happens that some sub-divisions of inter-connected *dharma*s are usefully grouped together, given our purposes.

⁸⁶ AKB IX, §2.5 of Duerlinger’s translation, as likewise the quotations in the remainder of the paragraph.

⁸⁷ We might think that this would not be true of the consciousness ‘sense-modality’, and that it – like Plato’s *psyche* in the *Theaetetus* – could be called in to access equally any of the modes of sensory input. Consciousness, however, on the Abhidharma account is not that sort of thing, for it too is just a *skandha*: a heap of distinct kinds of consciousnesses, eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness, etc. Vasubandhu clarifies that the ‘mind-organ’ does not perceive objects, for it is incapable of grasping anything *as an object*. It is ‘mental-consciousness’ that grasps mental objects – but presumably, if the Pudgalavādins adopt this

But the Pudgalavādin's position here is not so incoherent as Vasubandhu makes it appear.

IV. FROM THE EPISTEMOLOGY OF PERSONS TO METAPHYSICS

IV.i. Answering Vasubandhu

There are two towers on the hill, at some distance from each other. There is no question but that you come to know the towers by perception, and this perception is visual perception. You see the towers, and this is your access to them. Now, what about the space between them, or the fact that they are at some distance from each other?

Space, according to the Buddhists, is acausal, so the distance itself cannot give rise to the perception of distance.⁸⁸ But this knowledge or awareness also cannot be identical simply to awareness of either or both of the two towers. They are perceptions of towers, and as such do not themselves indicate anything about distance, which is not of course a tower. This question is simpler than, but structurally similar to the question of how we could come to know the *pudgala*, if the foregoing account of what the *pudgala* is meant to be is broadly correct.

Within the Buddhist framework, there are two options: Either you come to know this by perception, or by inference. It may *feel* like it is just perception. But of what, and via which mode of perception? If this seems impossible to answer, we might then have recourse to inference, as follows: I see one tower; I see a second tower; and I infer from their non-identity that there must be a distance between them.⁸⁹ But it is immediately clear this merely relocates the same problem. For if it is by their non-identity that I draw this inference (and how else would I? What other sort of inference might it be?), then we must wonder how it is that *the non-identity* was apparent to me. Did I *perceive* that these two towers are not identical, or did I infer it? If an inference, on what basis? If a perception, what strange sort of perception is this? 'Non-identity' is not a visible quality, nor an audible one...and so on.

Perhaps, then, we should return to our initial inclination to say that we perceive the distance between the towers, and face head-on the question: What sort of perception is this? It is not a visual perception of the space itself, since that causes no perception whatsoever to arise; and

explanation of (now merely apparent) cross-modal perception of the person, then they have granted the whole point, viz. that the person as such is *prajñaptisat*, conceptual.

⁸⁸ This is the standard Buddhist account, but there were dissenters. The *Kathavatthu* records briefly a debate between the Theravādins and Buddhists who argued for the ultimate reality and indeed the perceptibility of space (*Kathavatthu* VI.6-7). And according to Vasubandhu, the space between objects is an unconditioned but perceptible *dharma* (*AKBh* I.5, I.28).

⁸⁹ According to Buddhaghosa, "In 'the interval between two trees,' here, the shape of the trees is seen with the eye, but as to the interval, there being no shape to it, it is space'; that which appears is an act of ideation, not of sense-cognition." (*KVP-A* VI.7). Collette Cox ('From Category to Ontology', 557-58) has a useful discussion of the treatment of the reality of space in the *Mahāvibhāṣā*, according to which space is acausal but can be known via *prasaṅga*-type arguments, and transcendental-type arguments.

it is not the same as the visual perception the two towers or of either one of them. In this case, however, one might say there is a positive perception of a grassy knoll, namely of precisely that grass knoll by which the towers are separated.⁹⁰ It is by this that one infers the distance between the towers.

This will not quite suffice – for now I perceive three things: two towers and a grassy knoll. And if it is by inference from these perceptions that I should come to know the distance at which the towers stand, then similar issues of ordering and relatedness arise: Is it by perception or inference that I recognize the difference between the two towers, and that the grassy knoll is between, not beside them? Since there is nothing for such an inference to be based on – except a perception of the very fact – it seems here too we must appeal to perception.

This, I suggest, is the kind of issue the Pudgalavādins are trying to raise about the person. Just as, apparently, in seeing the two towers I thereby see they are at some distance from each other, so in perceiving some portion of perceptible person-constituting aggregates I therewith perceive the person. And since person-constituting aggregates belong to various kinds, then we might appeal to any sense modality in the same way as a route to come to know the person. It is not the distance between the aggregates, however, but their belonging together – belonging to each other – that one perceives through any perception of person-constituting aggregates. Thus the epistemological claim of how we come to know the *pudgala* crosses into metaphysical territory of what is there to be known.

IV.ii. *Persons /v/ Non-Personal 'Wholes'*

If this line of thought shows anything, there is a danger it may thereby have shown too much. For it looks now as if I perceive some whole – “two towers at some distance from each other” – every bit as ultimately real as the person. But the Pudgalavādins do not actually want to say that in every composite perception some whole is perceived. There is supposed to be something special about the aggregates comprising the person.

Now in the case of the towers on the hill, it looked like there might be an alternative account – what feels like perception is in fact a subtle inference, so that there need be no ‘distance’ as such perceived. Can this deflationary, inferential, account of perceiving the distance between the towers on the hill be made to work, after all? If so, does it work as well in the case of perceiving a person in the aggregates? If so, we may have lost one argument for supporting the *pudgalavāda*. If not, however, and if the inferential account does work for towers, then so much the better. We will have seen the kind of point the Pudgalavādins want to make, without making that point apply

⁹⁰ Or, according to Vasubandhu, it is light and darkness that is perceived, ‘a certain type of colour’ (AKBh I.28).

indiscriminately to everything.⁹¹

In the case of the towers on the hill, I might perceive a tower, perceive a grassy knoll, and perceive a tower; and then I have to put all these discrete moments of eye-consciousness together. This would be the story of how I perceive that there are two towers at some distance from each other, without having to grant what seems like ‘*seeing* the distance between the towers’ or ‘seeing that they are at a distance’. Now there must arise here a question of composition: If these are discrete moments of eye-consciousness, how are they to be put together? What ordering principles are there? How do I know the difference between two moments of eye-consciousness of the same tower, plus a moment of grassy-knoll-eye-consciousness, on the one hand; and an eye-consciousness of a tower, one of a grassy knoll, and one of a second tower, on the other? (The tower-eye-consciousnesses only need be similar, not even identical, for this to be a problem.)

Instead of appealing directly to perception, we might instead recall that I never have just three moments of visual consciousness at my disposal. The mind should so order these three visual impressions at issue that they make most sense of the rest of the information available to me, so that I am able to function in the world and navigate my way round it. This would be something like the principle of convenience: when confronted with a manifold of simples, the mind so orders these as to be successful and efficient in action.

One might wonder whether this supposedly deflationary account can in fact dispense with assertions about reality genuinely being so ordered, and this order being fully real. But let us allow for the moment that it can, for there is another question more relevant to the intra-Buddhist dispute about the person: Supposing the inferential account succeeds for grassy knolls and towers, can it work just as well for persons and their aggregates? Or in that case is there yet something left unaccounted for?

There are, I think, two reasons why the inferential account given of how two towers can be known to be at a distance from one another will not work when we turn to explaining the perception of the person.

IV.ii.(a) *What Is Perceived When There is a pudgala, and Otherwise Not?*

The first reason is the absence of a suitable correlate to play the role of the ‘grassy knoll’ in

⁹¹ Priestley’s first (and ultimately rejected) interpretation, and those of many other commentators who focus on the ‘wholeness’ and ‘unity’ factors of the *pudgala*, do not present views that enable us to make a principled distinction between the wholeness or unity of the *pudgala*, and that of other non-personal complex wholes, such as mountains, plants, and chariots (artefacts). See for instance the following description of the view ascribed to the Pudgalavādins: “They maintain that it is ‘true and ultimate’ in the special sense that its existence and functions are not reducible to those of its constituents; its relation to the five aggregates is indeterminate because, although it is not reducible to them, neither is it independent of them.” (*Pudgalavāda Buddhism*, 101)

our tower example.

If I can just infer from seeing the grassy knoll that the towers stand at some distance from each other, this is on the basis of something I straightforwardly perceive: the grassy knoll. But in the case of the person, there is no such basis. Persons differ at least from the example given, if not from all complex unities, in having no possible basis for such an inference except the person itself. This we must then come to know by perception. The explanation unnecessary for towers on hills is unavoidable in the case of persons: *Through* perceiving the aggregates, any subset of them, through any modality, we perceive by that same sense-modality *that just these aggregates belong together*. And I am able to do this because there is really something there to perceive – namely, their belonging together, or to one another; that is, the person.

What is this ‘belonging together’? What does one perceive in perceiving the aggregates that makes it correct to judge ‘this is a person’? It cannot simply be the recognition that these aggregates exist in close spacio-temporal proximity, for this is generally true of all aggregates that are merely imputed to be wholes; in fact it is also, as we saw above, true of elements both within and outwith the set of elements rightly judged to be constitutive of a particular person. We perceive ‘these belong to each other’ only in some special cases. One plausible way of describing what is special about these cases is that they involve the sort of groupings at a time and over time that are marked by *new functionality*, and by *development*.

Thich Thiên Châu cites an analogy drawn between the person and an eye:

Just as, through a reunion of the four great elements (*caturmahābhūtasamyoga*) there is a dharma ‘eye’ (*caḥsus*), so, through the reunion of the five aggregates (*pañcaskandhasamyoga*), there is a dharma ‘individual’ (*pudgala*).⁹²

Functional unity certainly is something special about persons. Because they are just this sort of bundle of matter, conception and intention, they can do particular kinds of things, like commit murder (something with specific karmic consequences), rather than just disturb other agglomerations of elements in various ways.

But if the self were absolutely non-existent, then there could not be the killing of beings nor the killer would have anything killed. There would be nothing like theft and robbery, heresy and lewdness, telling lies and drinking wine... good and bad would yield neither freedom nor bondage; even bondage would have no one bound. There would be neither the

⁹² Châu, *Literature of the Personalists*, 159. The passage comes from the *Mahāprajñāpāramitāsāstra*, Vol. I, p. 43. The passage goes on to say that, according to the Vātsīputryas, “the *pudgala* is a fifth category, an ineffable (*avaktavya*) dharma, contained in the basket of texts (*piṭaka*)”; presumably, the eye does not also belong to this fifth category, so the analogy must be only a suggestion of a direction of thought than a very close similarity.

doer nor the deed nor any result thereof.⁹³

Murder cannot be done by aggregates taken as such, for all they do is to rearrange other aggregates. The *killing* disappears. *Killing* is something that only certain aggregations can do, because they are together, and taken as a *whole*. And indeed, it is something about functional unity that explains why one can be guilty of killing a cow, but not of ‘killing’ a clay-cow. “If living beings are only names, then just as killing a clay ox does not entail the guilt of killing, so if one kills a real ox there should be no guilt.”⁹⁴ There is an important difference between living and non-living beings, which means that living beings can do things and have things done to them that inanimate beings cannot. It is tempting, then, to think of this special coherence generally in terms of the emergent characteristics such bundles have in virtue of being bundled precisely with each other and not with others.

The trouble is, mere functionality does not distinguish persons from chariots. The very reason it is convenient to designate certain bundles as ‘chariots’ is, presumably, the new or emergent functionality of chariot-constituting aggregates – a phenomenon noticed as an ‘emergent functionality’ only because of our interests in moving easily from place to place. Only such and such a configuration of such and such aggregates gives rise to a vehicle-capacity, and this capacity to be a means of conveyance is what *interests* us about this particular conjunction of aggregates, just so (and not otherwise) delineated. Chariots cannot be *killed*, but they can be destroyed. Yet, persons are ultimately real, and chariots are not. Evidently the new functionality present when person-constituting aggregates are present is thought to differ significantly in kind from the ‘new functionality’ that emerges from the aggregation of chariot-constituting elements.⁹⁵ And indeed, one might well think there is something distinctive about organic functioning – something reflected in the difference between being dismantled and being killed. But pointing to functionality itself does not sufficiently get at it.

Perhaps focusing on notions of ‘development’ will be more illuminating. To illustrate development, the *Kathāvatthu* offers the example of a girl becoming a woman (KV I.i.193), and Vasubandhu supplements the point with examples of a person becoming a grammarian, or a priest (AKB §3.4).⁹⁶ Such aggregations display characteristics markedly different from other aggregations,

⁹³ *Sns.*, p. 177 of Venkataramanan’s translation.

⁹⁴ Harivarman’s *Satyasiddhiśāstra*, as translated by Priestley, *Pudgalavāda Buddhism*, 96.

⁹⁵ I think in general not enough attention has been paid to the fact that it is only the *pudgala* that is supposed to be ultimately real – not just any functional unity; our explanations of why the Pudgalavādins held the view must therefore recognize some difference between these sorts of unities, otherwise their arguments for persons turn out to be arguments for holism in general, which is certainly not a position they would endorse.

⁹⁶ The *Vijñānakāya* contains a longer treatment of such ‘developments’, in the fourth section of the second chapter, as translated by Watanabe (*Philosophy and Its Development in the Nikāyas and Abhidhamma*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1983) 187-189.

such as chariots.⁹⁷ When we speak of a girl becoming a woman, the very notion of development picks out an internal coherence through change, independently specifiable and indeed only making sense *as development* by reference to the previous stages.⁹⁸

In contrast to the case of the chariot, it is precisely by disregarding considerations of usefulness, and looking only at the different parts and their relations at different times, that we can make sense of the notion of development, and growth.⁹⁹ The different stages in the succession and the different elements at a time have a coherence that cannot be explained in the same way as the unity of chariot parts over time – as our convenience, our aims, and our mental activity simplifying the manifold disparate elements and their conjunctions. What we acknowledge in the very conceiving of ‘becoming a grammarian’ or ‘growing into a woman’ is the fact that certain elements *really* belong only to each other, and that it is only in recognition of this that we conceive of the girl growing into a woman in the first place. On my hypothesis that the *pudgala* amounts to the fact of certain elements *really* belonging only to each other, the claim is that this ‘belonging to’ is basic – ultimately true, and not explicable in any other terms, or by reference to anything else.

We may now have a criterion, or joint pair of criteria, for distinguishing *which* bundles imply persons. And we have thereby the beginnings of an explanation *why* there must be ultimately true persons for any person-constituting aggregates, but not of all bundles. In the first place, person-constituting bundles have emergent functionality – can do now things *only* when they and their activities are taken as wholes. Secondly, and relatedly, this new functionality is *not* one that answers to our needs, but one to which we are responsive. This emerges from a consideration of the very notion of ‘development’ or growth, which is conceivable precisely because it is *perceived to be there* – and not because we have a standing interest in the end-product. These joint criteria are satisfied only in the case of living beings.

I think we can make the line of thought more precise, and more compelling, by considering just what is special about the acquired characteristics belonging only to whole person-constituting bundles – our example of ‘new functionality’ already gave us a hint of this. We can do this by returning to the towers on the hill. I said above that there are two divergences between the tower-case and the person-case, and looking at the second now might help to clarify what is distinctive of aggregations which are, by their inter-relations, persons.

⁹⁷ “man is something different from a chariot”, Châu reminds us (146).

⁹⁸ Reinforcing the impression that a special kind of continuity is at issue, is *KV* I.i.183-88, where each moment of consciousness, of seeing, etc. has person, but *not* each new moment is a new person. *Milindapañha* 40 attempts to account for such notions by way of dependence; but since any given state of affairs arises in dependence on a wide variety of conditions, this cannot pick out the developmental trajectory. There must be some implicit recognition of some ‘special kind’ of dependence relating posterior to prior states.

⁹⁹ What Aristotle recognized must be an ‘internal principle of change’, only more minimally construed.

IV.ii.(b) *Persons as Sources of Unity*

The second disanalogy between the tower-on-the-hill and the aggregates-and-their-person cuts deeper than the first. The ‘inference’ explanation as described above was crucially incomplete. For without acknowledgement, it relied on the unity of the cognizer to provide coherence to the sense impressions. In a way, this is no more than what the standard Abhidharma account grants – minds supply the perception of unity when confronted with what is in fact a manifold. But what such an account overlooks is that a *unified* cognizer is thereby smuggled in.

If the preferred Abhidharma account of causal succession of moments of consciousness with no real fact about inter-relatedness were true, then, the Pudgalavādin claims, “the Buddha could not be omniscient, because a mind with its mental factors is momentary, it cannot know all things. But a person may know all things”.¹⁰⁰ But forget knowing all things – even knowing those two towers on the hill are standing at some distance from each other would be impossible. In our earlier story, we generously allowed a mind that ‘so orders the manifold’ as to make most sense, or be most convenient and coherent.¹⁰¹ The principle of convenience is thus allowed its due. But, whether in a single complex case or in the vastly complex case of omniscience, such cognitions require that there be some kind of unity in discerning the manifold together to determine which groupings will be convenient and coherent. This source of unity might be an extra element, as a Brahmanical soul or, more minimally, as a Kantian agent; or it might be that we could give a still more minimal account and simply say that the fact of the making-coherent, the fact of mental organization is basic. It is a bare, brute – but inescapable – fact of the matter that certain groups of cognitions display a categorically different sort of integrity from the run-of-the-mill causal connectedness between aggregates in general. The complex cognition is possible because the perception – and consciousness-*dharma*s *here* just are related to one another in a distinctive way – in a person-constituting way.¹⁰² This is the most minimal explanation possible, and I suggest is the one the Pudgalavādins are insisting must be accepted as the only way to do justice to the phenomena *without* adopting a substantialist theory of self.¹⁰³ Unfortunately admitting the ultimate reality of complex facts, rather than simple substances – of relations whose character is determined and indeed constituted by their relata – is not expressible within the framework of Buddhist metaphysics – and comes to be positively rejected.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ Duerlinger translation §3.1

¹⁰¹ Śrīdhara later makes this by his time rather familiar point.

¹⁰² The alternative of course is to drop the inference-account of complex cognition in all cases in favour of the perception-account – but this would only have the unfortunate consequence of making all complex wholes (and even complex states of affairs) really, ultimately there to be perceived and not merely imputed by the cognizer.

¹⁰³ It might be worth asking why the Kantian view would not be accepted – was it not conceived of? Or is it rather that it shows up in the current metaphysical framework as simply a variant of the substantial self?

¹⁰⁴ See Dharmakīrti, *On Relations*, where the primary objections rely implicitly on the presumption that

The second ‘disanalogy’ between our two cases thus shows that what is special about persons is that they are unity-conferring in virtue of being organized in special ways distinguishing them from other sorts of continua. This is the distinctive emergent functionality which cannot be explained by appeal to convenience, because it grounds the very possibility of any such appeal. There are not ‘stream-individuators’ for all complex phenomena because persons are the individuators for all other continua, through the sort of activity that constitutes them as the distinctive sort of unity they are. Moreover, the ‘new functionality’ specific to persons is not just that they grow and reproduce – plants do that;¹⁰⁵ it is rather that their growing and their emergent functioning indicate a unity between a variety of different sorts of elements, specifically including perceptual elements and cognitions, as well as desires – and only *thereby* are they able to be sources of the sorts of cognitions in virtue of which *prajñaptisat*, conceptual reality, can arise. And only then can *karma*, and the specific responsibility that comes from realized intentions, arise.

V. KARMA & DEVELOPMENT

We saw that the texts suggest that person-constituting bundles are distinct in kind because of (1) their growth or development – a sort of development in which the end is not given by any interests or desires of ours; and (2) their emergent functionality. The emergent functionality of particular interest is the ability to conceive of aggregates as unities, the experience of ‘many’ as ‘one’.¹⁰⁶ It is from this that the distinctively person-related functions emerge, most centrally *action*. For *karma* is not just any knocking together of discrete substances. Only a certain subset of such interactions qualify as that peculiar phenomenon ‘action’. Having its source in the unity-conferring configuration of intentions, perceptions, consciousnesses... that is a person, enables action to have moral and not just material characteristics, which therefore attract moral and not just material consequences.

We can see this confirmed if we return to the three bases of designation of the person – the aggregates, transmigration and cessation. In the *Sammitīyanikāyaśāstra*, considering especially the designation of the person based on transmigration, we see that what most frequently emerges as the point of concern is not the theoretical question about whether the person reborn is the same

anything really existing must be a substance. (*The Philosophy of Relations* (Containing the Sanskrit Text and English Translation of Dharma Kīrti's Sambandha-parīkṣa with Prabhācandra's Commentary). Trans. V. N. Jha. Bibliotheca Indo-Buddhica No. 66. Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications 1990)

¹⁰⁵ If plants don't pose a problem (and there is no evidence that they did) then this means it is not organic unity that is at issue, any more than structure/function: it is karmic (i.e. specifically mind-body, thought-action) unity.

¹⁰⁶ This might be an alternative explanation of the close connection Priestly explores between conceptual reality and the *pudgala*.

person as the one whose incarnation immediately preceded,¹⁰⁷ but rather points about *karma*.

As to the deeds, one does one's own deeds. But what does self-done mean? A. It means that one receives (the fruits of one's own deeds). What does one's own deed mean? It means (to make) a distinction (between the deeds of oneself and those of another). But why? Because (the results of one's deed) do not go to another. (Sns I (165))

We saw above the claim in the *Sammitīyanikāyaśāstra* that “there could not be the killing of beings nor the killer would have anything killed... good and bad would yield neither freedom nor bondage... There would be neither the doer nor the deed nor any result thereof.” This claim that denying the person is tantamount to denying the possibility of ethical goodness is prominent also in the *Kathāvatthu* (KV I.i.200-216), where the Pudgalavādins are pressed to answer questions such as “Are ethically good and bad acts (karmas) known to exist? And the doer of them also? And the instigator also? And the enjoyer of the effect – is he also known to exist?” – and to demand answers from their opponents in return.¹⁰⁸

In some way, the ‘person’ signifies the connection between *this* act and *that* rebirth, or between *this* *tṛṣṇā* and *this* rebirth.¹⁰⁹ But why did the Pudgalavādins insist that there really be some ‘person’, in order individuate *tṛṣṇas* and correlate them correctly to appropriately individuated rebirths? Were the Pudgalavādins the unwitting victims of Brahmanical thinking, supposing that moral phenomena – unlike all other phenomena – require some substrate to inhere in, if they are to exist at all? I think not.

A more compelling explanation of *why* the Pudgalavādins saw the annihilation of moral phenomena in the elimination of the person is that these moral phenomena require that distinct kinds of elements relate to each other in specific ways not accounted for in the patterns of any one sort of element taken on its own. Within a kind, the laws or patterns of succession are fixed relative to one another: *Sammitīyanikāyaśāstra* III (201): “There is a the fixed order about rūpa.” But in questions of *karma* what becomes inescapably an issue is the appropriate fitting-together of a variety of *kinds* of elements – typically the physical and the ‘mental’ types of elements – patterns of succession not determined or exhausted either by the rules of succession of matter, or by the rules of succession of moments of consciousness, or intention, etc. It is through intention, a mental factor, that a distinctive sort of cause is set into effect; and it is generally through body or form (*rūpa*) that these effects arise, generally as suffering.¹¹⁰ Only this sort of interaction between kinds

¹⁰⁷ The *Kathāvatthu* focuses a lot on this, to the detriment of the Pudgalavādin.

¹⁰⁸ KV I.i.212, as translated by Shwe Zan Aung and Mrs. Rhys Davis.

¹⁰⁹ See the concern for linking one rebirth to another in the *Kathāvatthu*, I.i.158-170, particularly §166-169 where it is acknowledge that the answer cannot be ‘sameness of any of the aggregates’. For discussion of the need for some such link, see also Châu, *Literature of the Personalists*, 166; and for the discussion of the problem of *karma*, 174.

¹¹⁰ Because of the belief in ‘formless’ realms where *karma* can mark the connection between action and result,

of elements gives rise to the distinctive order of succession singled out and designated *karma*. In fact, we might think of *karma* as the name for the patterns by which different types of *dharma*, each with their own logic of succession internal to their kind, are organized with respect to one another.

So in the *Kathāvatthu* we see that we cannot say that the maker of *karma* is distinct from *karma* made (I.i.214), since the person just is the fact that these aggregates so belong to each other as to constitute morally inflected actions and results. Likewise, the fruit and experiencer thereof cannot be said to be two different things (*Kathāvatthu* I.i.203). Only because these aggregates do belong together can this later event be the ‘fruit’ of an earlier event.

CONCLUSION:

We have highlighted now two ways in which the collection of elements constituting persons differ from those constituting non-personal complex unities. In the first place, persons develop over time, and do not just change; and they do not develop for the purpose of creating a previously desired and conceived of functionality (as happens when a chariot is built). Rather, it is because this order of changes really belongs together in a distinctive way that we are able to conceive of the organism as growing. In the second place, persons are not plants. It may be that all organisms develop; but that anything can be conceived of as developing, or any complexity conceived as such at all, requires the real unity of complex persons. That is to say, the very possibility of conceptual reality – and also of the categorically complex phenomena constitutive of *karma* and its links to its appropriate fruit – rests on the real reality of just those interactions of matter, intention, perception, cognition and consciousness rightly perceived as belonging to each other, and not to other elements.

The *pudgala* is, on this view, the mutual-relatedness of diverse kinds of elements at a time and over time. And it is just that belonging together which constitutes the possibility for moral agency, development, and unifying conceptualized reality. The capacities to serve as a moral agent and to develop are not reducible to the aggregates themselves, for all these presuppose the reality of some but not other elements’ belonging together. None of this, note, implies the existence of an immaterial substantial substratum for the aggregates.

The non-categorical metaphysics to which the Buddhists were committed, however, prevented there being any intelligible way of expressing this position. The *pudgala*, taken as a unique sort of fact about belonging-together, was *sui generis* – a fifth kind, as they maintained. But it is the nature of this kind of thing not to be separable from its constitutive elements, and to gain its specific character through the history of those constitutive elements. It is thus no substance, no

it may not necessarily have to do with dualistic concerns about the integration of mind and matter, but rather with the integration of the five main sorts of *dharmas* more generally.

‘underlying subject’ of properties, nor an active agent of unity distinct from the unique unity it is (though of course it is the source of unified conceptions, *prajñaptisat*). But that these very elements belong exactly to each other, that they really do interact with each other in ways different in kind from the interactions of elements generally – this truth cannot be eliminated, nor merely conceptual.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- *Abhidharmakośa and Bhāṣya of Vasubandhu with Sub-Commentary of Yaśomitra*. Edited by Swami Dwarikadas Shastri. Bauddha Bharati Series, vols. 7-8 in one volume. Varanasi: Bauddha Bharati. 1970-73, reprinted 1981
- *Kathavatthu - Points of Controversy, Or Subjects of Discourse*, ed. Tr. Shwe Zan Aung and Mrs. Rhys Davids, Oxford: Pali Text Society, 1915.
- *Kathāvatthupparakaraṇa-Aṭṭhakathā*
- *Milindapañha - Milinda's Questions*, translated by I. B. Horner. Oxford: Pali Text Society 1996
- Bhikkhu Bodhi and Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, translators. *The Middle-Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikāya*, Boston: Wisdom, 1995.
- Bodhi, Bikkhu. *Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Saṃyutta Nikāya*, Boston: Wisdom, 2000.
- Chakrabarti, Arindam. “I Touch What I See”
- Châu, Thích Thiên. *The Literature of the Personalists of Early Buddhism*. English Translation by Sara Boin-Webb, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1999.
- Collins, Stephen. *Selfless Persons*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982.
- Conze, Edward. *Buddhist Thought in India: Three Phases of Buddhist Philosophy*, George Allen & Unwin, 1962.
- Dube, S. N. *Cross-Currents in Early Buddhism*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1980.
- Duerlinger, James. *Indian Buddhist Theories of Persons*, London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003.
- Dutt, Nalinaksa. *Buddhist Sects in India*, Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1970.
- Ganeri, Jonardon. *The Concealed Art of the Soul*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- ———. *Philosophy in Classical India*
- ———. “Cross-Modality and the Self”. *Journal of Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 61/3, 2000: 639-658
- Kapstein, Matthew. *Reason's Traces*, Boston, MA: Wisdom, 2001.
- Parfit, Derek. *Reasons and Persons*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986.
- Priestley, Leonard C. D. C. *Pudgalavāda Buddhism: The Reality of the Indeterminate Self*, Toronto: Centre for South Asian Studies, University of Toronto, 1999.
- Schmithausen, Lambert. “Spirituelle Praxis Und Philosophische Theorie Im Buddhismus.” *Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft und Religionswissenschaft* 57 (1973): 161-86.
- Siderits, Mark. *Personal Identity and Buddhist Philosophy*. Ashgate 2003
- Siderits, Mark. *Buddhism as Philosophy*. Indianapolis: Hackett 2007
- Sprung, Mervyn, ed. *The Problem of Two Truths in Buddhism and Vedānta*. Dordrecht: Reidel, 1973.

- Stcherbatsky, Theodore. *The Soul Theory of the Buddhists (With Sanskrit Text)*, Delhi: New Bharatiya Book Corp, 2003.
- Vasubandhu. *Abhidharma-Kośa-Bhāṣya*, ed. Translated from the Sanskrit by Louis de la Vallee Poussin Pruden, and from the French into English by Leo, vol. 4 Volumes. Asian Humanities Press, 1988.
- Venkataramanan, K. “Saṃmitīya-Nikāya-Śāstra”. *Visvabharati Annals* 5 (1953): 153-243.
- Warder, A. K. *Indian Buddhism*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1970.
- Watanabe, Fumimaro. *Philosophy and Its Development in the Nikāyas and Abhidhamma*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1983.
- Williams, Paul. “On the Abhidharma Ontology.” *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 9 (1981): 227-57.
- ———. *Studies in the Philosophy of the Bodhicāravatāra: Altruism and Reality*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2000.