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Abstract   The philosophy of Gauḍapāda, although found in a small treatise, has remained obscure, as both the classical and contemporary approaches to reading this philosopher have overlooked his highly original contributions. This essay explores the scope of imagination in Gauḍapāda's philosophy, with a focus on terms such as kalpanā and ābhāsa. This reading of Gauḍapāda's philosophy tallies with some of the findings in contemporary consciousness studies.

Keywords   Gauḍapāda · Kalpanā · Ābhāsa · Imagination · Consciousness · Phenomenology

Both traditional and contemporary studies on Gauḍapāda have given short shrift to the creative genius of this master. Following the traditional viewpoint, Gauḍapāda extends the then-existing Upaniṣadic philosophy that culminates in the writings of his grand disciple Śaṅkara. Following contemporary analysis, the philosophy of Gauḍapāda is heavily influenced by the Nāgārjunian Mādhyamaka dialectics.[1] What has been overlooked in both these trends of study is the way Gauḍapāda borrows from both systems to advance his own arguments. Reading Gauḍapāda in light of the early Upaniṣadic or Buddhist philosophies has its own merits. What is missing in these trends, however, is Gauḍapāda's original contribution. Since it is not possible to address the entire philosophy of Gauḍapāda in one paper, I will restrict myself to

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[1] This trend was championed by Vidhusekhara Bhattacharya and many of his arguments have been widely accepted. His commentary on GK (Bhattacharya 1992) is also exemplary. A similar trend is explicit in Jacoby (1913). For some recent studies on Gauḍapāda, see Kaplan (1987), King (1995), Fox (1993), Wood (1990), and Bouy (2000). For the influence of Gauḍapāda on Mokṣopāya, see Slaje (1996).

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analyzing a single term *kalpanā* that stands for imagination in Gauḍapāda's writings, and contextualize his thoughts in broader comparative perspectives.

While earlier studies have stressed Gauḍapāda's use of the terms such as *māyā*[2] or *ajāti* and have linked his studies with the Mādhyamaka philosophy, I contend that Gauḍapāda's application of *kalpanā*, or imagination, is original. To say something is imagined can mean the insubstantiality of the imagined object. It can also mean that entities are given reality due to imagination. Traditional readings are based on considering the fictive nature of imagination. This reading falls short, as we know today, thanks to phenomenologists,[3] cognitive scientists, and contemporary philosophers in the analytical tradition, that imagination is embedded in every instance of perception, and cannot be excluded from any specific cognitive mode. Whether or not imagination constitutes the entire reality, there is wide acceptance that imagination plays a greater role in human cognitive behavior than previously attributed. Reality, accordingly, is not merely a representation of what is 'out there,' but is a creative process where the subject actively engages in its creation. Consciousness, accordingly, is inherently creative, imagination being its essential nature. My reading of Gauḍapāda in the following pages advances and relies upon these parameters. This is not an attempt to evaluate the entire oeuvre of Gauḍapāda but only to highlight select passages relating to the nature and scope of imagination in his non-dual philosophy.

It has been generally understood that the Mādhyamikas, while propounding emptiness (*śūnyatā*), apply the term *kalpanā* and others to negate the substantiality of phenomena. Advaitins such as Gauḍapāda and Śaṅkara use the term to negate the reality of anything that is phenomenal, albeit not in the same sense that Mādhyamikas understand it. *Kalpanā* does not negate the Brahman, the foundation of imagination. A singular core of self-experience giving rise to phenomena comes to prominence when the *Yogavāsiṣṭha* and the Advaita doctrine of *Ekajīva* are studied. This concept is foundational for even the emergence of *dṛṣṭisṛṣṭivāda*, the Advaita doctrine that creation is a mere seeing, where 'seeing' stands for both pure consciousness and imagination.[4] Rather than understanding that since the world as we experience it is mere imagination, it has no substantiality, or interpreting the text as negation of the externals, I am making the argument that what we consider as real, or external, is given to consciousness through imagination, that imagination is dormant within consciousness, and it is due to imagination that our conventions arise. It also means that 'knowing' things cannot preclude imagination.

As an Advaitin, Gauḍapāda maintains that there exists just the Brahman in the absolute sense. At the same time, he also endeavors to explain the phenomena by relying on the epistemology where consciousness, the essential being of awareness-in-itself, constitutes reality the way we cognize it in our phenomenal modes. *Kalpanā* or imagination is crucial at this juncture, and if my reading is correct, this is at odds with the traditional identification of Gauḍapāda as illusionist. If what

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[2] For the concept of *māyā*, see Gonda (1952, pp. 3–62), Fort (1985).

[3] For the phenomenological study of Advaita, see Gupta (1998, 2009, 2012). This trend is found as early as Sinari (1972).

[4] For the concept of *dṛṣṭisṛṣṭi*, see Timalsina (2006). For the concept of *Ekajīva*, see Timalsina (2009).

Gauḍapāda meant is the non-duality of consciousness that is inherently imagining, creation being inherent to the imaginary power of the Brahman,[5] this understanding differs from both the traditional reading of Advaita and also from some suggestions that he has succumbed to the absolutism of emptiness. Giving imagination a status, being assigned as a property of consciousness, also brings the various monistic doctrines closer, with Trika being predominant. This reading also distinguishes Gauḍapāda's position from the Yogācāra doctrine, as the application of imagination in Yogācāra does not substantiate, or does not require that the ground wherein imagination occurs to be real.

Initial arguments stem from reading the examples of dream in the *Māṇḍūkyakā-rikā* (MK). In this text of Gauḍapāda, to dream is not to reject the phenomenality of entities but only to argue that just as a dream is but consciousness, so is the world. Consciousness, in this presentation, projects reality, as if outside, just like in a dream. Although the dream objects and the dreaming subject, including the mode of consciousness that is dreaming, are not separate, as the very consciousness constitutes itself in the triadic form of subject, object, and the epistemic mode, so is, following Gauḍapāda, the world, its perceiver, and the mode of perception, a triadic constitution of consciousness alone. If *kalpanā* is similar to dreaming, which Gauḍapāda reiterates again and again, it could not have been used to reject phenomenality but only to affirm its non-substantiality in the absence of consciousness. The later Advaitins such as Prakāśānanda and Madhusūdana Sarasvatī endeavor to prove that Gauḍapāda founded the Advaita doctrine of *Dṛṣṭisṛṣṭi* and also the doctrine of *Ekajīva*. If these doctrines are read along the lines that pure consciousness lies as the foundation which creates externality on its own, as if a dream or imagination, this understanding is identical to the proposed reading outlined above.

Hierarchy of Subjects: Initial Ground for a Discourse on Imagination

Gauḍapāda turns to the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* (MU) to establish the first platform for a discourse on imagination. Following MU, the self acquires different identities while undergoing different modes of consciousness: *vaiśvānara* refers to the subjective experience of the waking self, *taijasa* refers to that of dreaming and *prājña* to the subject in a deep sleep.[6] During these modes, the subjects have a somewhat different identity. The subject that dreams of flying cannot fly (or even believe that he can fly) when awake. The dreaming self is in this regard closer to the ego-self, or the mind, that can still imagine or hallucinate flying, even when awake. The initial ground for Gauḍapāda's reflection is, how can the same subject experience himself differently in different modes? 'Imagination' provides a proper framework for explanation, as the self 'imagines' itself differently in these different states of consciousness. Although this response can resolve the tension of multiple self-identities in different conscious states, it raises another issue of the transcendent

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[5] For the concept of *śakti* in early Advaita, see Timalsina (2013).

[6] For a select study of the states of consciousness in the philosophy of Gauḍapāda, see Fort (1980, 1985) and Sharma (2001).

self as the organizing entity for different subjective modes. For Gauḍapāda, this transcendent self is the Brahman, the essential nature of the self (*ātman*). The immediate question is, how does this self acquire different identities? And the response is, through *kalpanā*, or imagination.

The following verse is crucial to demonstrate the way the 'constructed self' is presented in GK:

> *kalpayaty ātmanātmānam ātmā devaḥ svamāyayā |*
> *sa eva buddhyate bhedān iti vedāntaniścayaḥ ǁ* GK 2.12.

> The luminous (*deva*) self, with its own *māyā*, imagines/constitutes the self on its own. He alone realizes the distinctions. This is the conclusion of the *Upaniṣads*.

This is the self-constituting self that has been identified with the Brahman, and following Gauḍapāda, this transcendent self is endowed with the power that gives finitude (*māyā*), based on the etymology of *māyā* as *yā māti*, from the root √*māṅ māne*, she who measures. This transcendent self, albeit unbound and without any subjectivity, does nonetheless constitute identity, subjecthood, and this construction is the act of imagination (*kalpayati*).

The passage cited above comes in a sequence where all the verses in GK 2.9–19 utilize the term *kalpanā*, or the terms derived of the root √*kṛp*. Noteworthy also is the fact that the term *vikalpa* is read in this sequence as synonymous with *kalpanā*. Now the issue is, what is the content that Gauḍapāda describes by using these terms? The following is the summary:

> Both in dream and waking states, there are internal and external entities, and internal entities are considered as non-existent, while the externals are 'imagined' to be real. This is the self that recognizes some entities as real and others unreal in both these states. The entities considered as internal last as long as the mind constitutes their reality and those considered as external last as long as there is a relation between the subject and object. Therefore there is nothing constituting their difference. The dim entities inside the mind and the vivid ones outside are both imagined, and the difference is constituted by the senses. The transcendent self first imagines the subject and the entities as internal and external and we remember what we experience. Just as a rope not ascertained as a rope due to darkness is imagined in varied forms, so it is with the self, and just as imagination vanishes when the rope is determined as such, this is the same case with realizing the self. What has been construed in varied forms is the very self, and this power is inherent to the self qua consciousness that gives finitude. Although self-reflexive, the self becomes finite with its own power of *māyā* (GK 2.9–19).

As the above summary clarifies, what Gauḍapāda is concerned with is the way consciousness constitutes reality. Rather than reading the above discourse as addressing mind-independent objects (a topic that in itself is problematic), we can understand Gauḍapāda if we were to read this in the context of the consciousness that constitutes internality and externality. This is also the time-constituting self, as

for Gauḍapāda, *dvayakāla*, or the time that has the dyad of subject and object embedded within, is what gives rise to the sense of externality. There is also a distinction between this time and internal time, in Gauḍapāda's term, '*cittakāla*' (GK 2.14). The duration of entities is constituted by consciousness contingent upon temporal awareness, and this awareness varies, as Gauḍapāda maintains. This sense of temporality, in Gauḍapāda's understanding, follows after consciousness constitutes the subject, since the two modes of time are subjective constructions, while time is the innermost fabric in all manifestations.

Gauḍapāda's project, therefore, is to explain the consciousness that constitutes subjectivity, and what he maintains is that this very self qua consciousness gives the sense of externality and temporality, relying on its own power that fragments this non-dual consciousness into the varied forms of subject and objects. Noteworthy also is Gauḍapāda's terminology that the self 'first imagines the subject' (*jīvaṃ kalpayate pūrvam* … GK 2.16), which is used in the singular. Subjective experience is always singular, and relying on this singularity of self-experience, a separate Advaita model of *Ekajīva*, or a single subject, has been established. However, it is not the case that Gauḍapāda only uses the singular when addressing the subject (*jīva*).[7]

In order to address the subject-constituting consciousness that is a-temporal, I will exploit another term that is frequently used in the subsequent Advaita literature, the term of *cidābhāsa*.[8] The term *jīva* does not describe the illusory and constructed nature of subjective consciousness as does *cidābhāsa*, or an appearance of consciousness. His concept of non-origination (*ajāti*) is a response to the teleological question: why does this transcendent self manifest in terms of subject and object? Gauḍapāda argues, since it is the power of imagination that is intrinsic to consciousness or the self, the power that constitutes itself as the subject while giving externality to the entities of its fancy, there is no external teleology. When articulating the reasons for creation, the use of 'intrinsic nature' (*svabhāva*) of the self, as assigned by Gauḍapāda (GK 1.9), explains the same theme. Consciousness, in this depiction, is inherently endowed with the power of imagination and it is in its act of imagination that it constitutes subjectivity and externality.

Ontology of Imagination

Rather than considering imagination as non-existent, to engage Gauḍapāda seriously requires addressing its substantiality. After all, imagination is the power of the self, and to consider imagination as non-existent is tantamount to accepting the self as illusory. On this background, the way *kalpanā* has been understood in the Mādhyamika philosophy needs to be distinguished from the Advaita use of the term, beginning with Gauḍapāda's application.

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[7] For the use of singular in describing *jīva*, see also GK 3.11.

[8] MUK 3.29–30 uses *ābhāsa* to describe the manifestation of duality. This *ābhāsa* concept gives rise to an independent Advaita model with the philosophy of Sureśvara.

Vikalpa, for Gauḍapāda, is comparable to the dream state or *māyā* (GK 1.7). This application does not deviate from that of the Mādhyamikas. Gauḍapāda, however, needs to be read without contradicting his meta-thesis that the self constitutes subjectivity and temporality, and gives rise to the dyad of subject and object. Dream, in this analysis, is crucial, as the self is autonomous in both imagining and giving the sense of reality to its imagination. The projection of consciousness as external, as is vivid in the case of dream or fancy, is what mediates sensation and the confirmation that what is experienced is real. Dream, in this reading, does not negate the substantiality of what is being dreamt, it only rejects its phenomenal distinction from the dreamer: dream entities do not exist outside of the dreaming subject. Rather than making dream arguments as metaphysical, these then need to be read as epistemological. In order to negate the substantiality of anything other than the self, Gauḍapāda makes a leap, maintaining that if there were *vikalpas*, they would subside within consciousness, returning to their primordial form (GK 1.18). An application of the term *vikalpa*, in this reading, is not to reject the substantiality of what is being experienced but only to affirm that their essential nature is consciousness or the very self. The distinction from the Mādhyamika understanding is in deriving a positive meaning, rather than interpreting it as negation of what is being experienced. In conclusion, the consciousness of externality is not categorically different, whether this externality is given to a waking self or a dreaming one.

Upon the question, what happens to entirely non-existent entities that are mere fiction, Gauḍapāda introduces a concept of 'dream-fiction,' things considered as imaginary in dreaming. When we dream, we do not just cognize entities, we also imagine and also know that what we have imagined is not real. Actually this capacity of the subject to create a fiction while dreaming is what gives substantiality to dreaming: since there are entities that are not real and are merely imagined, the dreaming subject considers the externality given to entities in dreaming as external, and therefore real. What is missing in this, though, is that this is just the power of the self to constitute a hierarchy among imaginations, making some more substantial than the other.[9]

Vikalpa also has a linguistic domain. All the verbal constructs are considered *vikalpa*, and there is no *vikalpa* in the absence of speech. Gauḍapāda's use of this term in GK 2.12 and 2.16 is noteworthy, as in these applications, the scope of speech involves subjectivity: the very subject is a linguistic construct: language precedes subjectivity.

When addressing the philosophy of Gauḍapāda, the analysis of *sat* and *asat*, or existent and non-existent, cannot preclude the aforementioned linguistic parameters. Accordingly, when Gauḍapāda explains something as *asat*, this should not be interpreted as utterly non-existent, leading to the Nāgārjunian position. On the contrary, Gauḍapāda is cleverly developing a non-dual exegesis grounded on transcendental consciousness, displacing the framework of emptiness, while exploiting terminology that allows him to reject those resisting the substantiality of what is external. Gauḍapāda is simply saying that even in the waking state, we constitute entities as non-existent (GK 2.10). Remarkably, Gauḍapāda acknowledges

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[9] This reading of dream-fantasy or dream-fiction rests on my reading of GK 2.9–10.

the creativity of consciousness, comparing the imaginary, as evident in the dream, with the externals cognized in the waking state. The object, for Gauḍapāda, then, is not something external to consciousness but the very consciousness given in terms of the external. What is out there, a bare object, is not something Gauḍapāda is interested in addressing. *Vikalpa* can only address what is within the domain of speech, and this is what is given to consciousness. Externalization, objectification, conceptualization, and recollection are the powers of the self or consciousness that Gauḍapāda describes in terms of the 'autonomous' (*prabhu*) or the luminous (*deva*).[10]

There is a third application of the term *vikalpa* in Gauḍapāda's philosophy. He is not interested in developing philosophy that is merely grounded on dry logic. He explores the ways of phenomenological reduction, ultimately going back to what is immediately given to consciousness. And this effort is supported by the idea of *vikalpa*, as this has a yogic relation with the concept of *nirvikalpa*, the state of consciousness without mental constructs. Although Gauḍapāda's yogic reduction has some resemblance to Husserl's phenomenological reduction, it is not identical. What Husserl understands as consciousness is *vikalpa* for Gauḍapāda. The subject-constituting consciousness, the foundation that gives rise to *vikalpa*, temporality, and intentionality, is just consciousness with the latency to constitute these, albeit through mere imagination. This transcendent self, foundational for the emergence of subjectivity, is reached through negation that ultimately leads to the *nirvikalpa* state. Gauḍapāda therefore argues that the reality is *nirvikalpa* (GK 2.35; 3.34). I have previously demonstrated that *vikalpa* in Gauḍapāda's terminology equates to *kalpanā* or imagination. With this, it can be concluded that just as the subject constitutes its bondage by imagining itself as bound, and just for the reason that it can, so can the self liberate itself by stopping imagination, as it can. Mind, for Gauḍapāda, is the faculty of consciousness when engaged in imagining, and when imagination ceases, there exists no mind, the essence of *amanaska yoga*. It is explicit in his writing, when he says that this *amanastā* or 'not having a mind' is a consequence of stopping the act of imagination (with the use of the term *na saṅkalpayate*) (GK 3.32). The thing-in-itself or the self that is prior to imagination, or before the rise of subjectivity, in Gauḍapāda's terminology, is *akalpaka* or not the one that gives rise to imagination (GK 3.33).

Some scholars have suggested that GK may have been written by different authors. Whether or not this is the case, there is a shift in terminology as the chapters unfold. Terms derived of the root √kṛp occur primarily in the first two chapters, while this is relatively less apparent in the last two.[11] This absence coincides with the frequency of the term *ābhāsa* in subsequent chapters. When reading GK as a single text, this makes sense, then, that *ābhāsa* and *kalpanā* are treated equally, since the term *ābhāsa* is used by Gauḍapāda to negate the externality of what is being manifest. In other words, *ābhāsa* is as much the product or state of imagination as is *kalpanā*.

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[10] For the use of *prabhu*, see GK 1.8; 2.13. For *deva*, see 1.9; 1.10; 2.12; and 2.19.

[11] There are two instances in GK 4.73–74 where the term with the root √kṛp occurs in a compound as *kalpitasaṃvṛti*.

For Gauḍapāda, imagination is required for the manifestation of the dyad of subject and object (*dvayābhāsa*) (GK 3.29, 30). His dream analogy is consistent in this application, as it is with the use of *kalpanā*. He argues that the appearance of the dyad in the waking state can be compared to a dream. What Gauḍapāda is not saying, and what most scholars mistakenly attribute to Gauḍapāda, is that subject and object do not exist: this passage only confirms that the dyad of subject and object in the waking state is as much a fabrication of consciousness as it is in dreaming. The issue is, how does consciousness give rise to externality? And Gauḍapāda is consistent in his response that it is due to its power of imagination. The appearance of the dyad of subject and object is explained again in GK 4.61–62, albeit this time with a shift in terminology for mind from *manas* to *citta*. Gauḍapāda describes the yogic state of mind devoid of objects in terms of both *nirvikalpa* and *anābhāsa* (GK 3.46). Both refer to the state of consciousness where there is no appearance of externals. Consciousness, for Gauḍapāda, pulsates or has motion, and this motion in consciousness is known through the emergence of externals. He explains *anābhāsa* again in this context, where consciousness does not pulsate in terms of giving rise to externality (GK 4.48). What is externality then? For Gauḍapāda, just as circles are seen when moving a firebrand, so are the externals generated by the pulsation of consciousness (GK 4.49–51).

For Gauḍapāda, consciousness in itself is devoid of forms, can be *aspanda* or non-pulsating, *akalpaka* or non-imagining, or *anābhāsa*, not giving rise to the externals. Examining this from Husserl's paradigm, there is nothing intentional in this consciousness-in-itself. With pulsation, or the power of imagination dormant to consciousness, it gives rise to externality through which objects are cognized. Gauḍapāda's phenomenology does not need to lead to any form of idealism, as his is not a thesis in which the mind creates external objects; it only explains how externality is given to consciousness, how the dyad emerges in consciousness, and Gauḍapāda explains that this occurs with the aid of imagination.

Let me examine a set of examples from Gauḍapāda where the term *ābhāsa* occurs in compounds:

> *arthābhāsa* or the appearance of the externals (GK 4.26),
> *jātyābhāsa* or the appearance of the universals (GK 4.45),
> *calābhāsa* or the appearance of entities in motion (GK 4.45),
> *vastvābhāsa* or the appearance of entities as lasting over a period
>   of time (GK 4.45),
> *ṛjuvakrādikābhāsa* or the appearance of shape as straight or curved
>   (GK 4.47), and
> *grahaṇagrāhakābhāsa* or the appearance of cognizing and cognizer
>   (GK 4.47).

The term *artha* is not just an object; rather it explains entities in motion ($\sqrt{\text{ṛ}}$+tha). This juxtaposes with *vastu*, where entities are viewed as lasting over a period of time ($\sqrt{\text{vas}}$ +*tu*), or entities that are motionless. In this sense, *vastu* is an opposite of *cala*, the entity that is in motion. In essence, it is an appearance, or imagination, that identifies motion or its lack within entities, and this superimposition gives the sense that entities are either in motion or not. Universals are similarly created by the mind,

as they are not just bare objects but are given sense by the mind, based on the images that it constitutes. Shape, such as being straight or curvy, accordingly, is the appearance given by mind. Entities are neither straight nor curvy: shapes are mental products. Consciousness manifesting itself as the process of cognition and the subject of cognition, accordingly, is a mere appearance. Now, going back to the equation I have made with *kalpanā* and *ābhāsa*, it is the dormant power of consciousness that constitutes these realities. What is consciousness in itself, then, is something that has neither motion, origin, or the dyad of cognizing and cognizer (GK 4.45). The term used here for consciousness is *vijñāna*. Following this application, there is no hierarchy in consciousness: what is described with terms such as *caitanya* or *prajñāna* is not distinct from that identified by *vijñāna*.

Relying on the assumption that the perceived reality is not apart from the self, Gauḍapāda argues that the very consciousness manifests in the form of the objects of dream, the act of dreaming, and the dreaming subject that perceives dream-reality. Accordingly, Gauḍapāda maintains, what is conceived in the waking state as the entities apart from the subject, and the cognitive mode, are all but consciousness itself manifest in different modalities (GK 4.64–66).

Gauḍapāda is credited for maintaining that there is no origination (*ajāti*). Following the above arguments, consciousness is not in reality constituting the externals, and therefore there is no real origination in consciousness. In other words, if the world is considered as the creation of the mind, Gauḍapāda is rejecting this thesis, as what he maintains is that consciousness is not constituting anything external to itself, for what appears as its construction is its power of imagination, and externality is grasped in this act of consciousness, a consequence of it being endowed with such power. This only problematizes the position that our perception allows us to touch upon the externals as they are, without the mediation of imagination. As Gauḍapāda maintains:

> The dyad of the entities grasped by consciousness and the grasping subject are but only the pulsation of the mind (*citta*). The mind, therefore, is [characterized] as having no intentionality of its own (*nirviṣaya*), [being] a-temporal (*nitya*), and devoid of contact with externals (*asaṅga*) (GK 4.72).

The above passage dismantles the hierarchy of the self or *ātman* and the mind or *citta*. Otherwise, Gauḍapāda would not describe the mind with the given qualifiers. Due to the fact that consciousness is autonomous in giving rise to externality with its dormant power of imagination, consciousness does not need to be always intentional, and this model deviates from what Husserl understands as consciousness. Gauḍapāda's quest for establishing *ajātivāda* needs to be read in this light, that consciousness in itself is non-intentional. And this is not to make it a transcendent consciousness, as he equates *manas* with this consciousness that in itself is devoid of objects.

If we read Gauḍapāda along these lines, we come to the conclusion that the instances of *ajāti* refer to consciousness devoid of imagination, without any appearance, and free from pulsation. Therefore, when he says 'there exists something that is not created before origination (*prāg utpatter ajaṃ*… GK 3.1), nothing originates even when it is so conceived (*na jāyate kiñcij jāyamānaṃ*…

GK 3.2). His example of the sky to describe consciousness is compelling: just as there is no origination of the sky inside a pot when a new pot is made, so also is consciousness not originated (GK 3.3–4). In his presentation, consciousness is *a priori* for any contemplation as much as for language, subject, and perception. This non-origination of Gauḍapāda, therefore, needs to be read as consciousness essentially not being modified when manifest as the externals.[12] And when the falsity of dream is given as an example to describe phenomena, this also is not to say that dreams are not real but only to say that it is not correct to consider dreams as external to consciousness. The example of dream serves Gauḍapāda well, as the dyad of subject and object is essential for dreaming, just as for perceiving. He argues, this is the pulsation of the mind that constitutes this dyad whether in dream or in the waking state, and if the mind stops its pulsation, there is no origination of the dyad (GK 3.29–31).

Describing the Commonsense

Our commonsense experience rests on consciousness giving rise to the sense of the externals as externals, subject as subject, universal as universal, and motion as motion. Whether or not consciousness in itself is altered in these apparent modifications, our cognitive activities depend upon consciousness assuming these modalities. This requires a two-tier phenomenology to address what is given in reality and what appears to consciousness as given. Gauḍapāda's terminology to describe creation in terms of *māyā* and *avidyā* suffices to develop this two-pronged strategy to describe reality. The statements such as 'no subject is ever originated' (GK 3.48), and '[the self] first imagines or constructs the subject' (GK 2.16) cannot be reconciled otherwise.

The second chapter of GK, 'not-the-way-it-is' (*vaitathya*), is primarily dedicated to explaining this paradox of creation in the absence of creation. Common examples to describe the commonsense experience involve rope-snake, magic, dream, firebrand, hallucination, and so on, where, in all examples, externality or form is given by the mind. Rather than using these examples to negate the externals, I am reading these as affirmation that they are only instances of consciousness. The difference in this reading is that it grounds consciousness and there is really no discourse on bare objects outside of what is given to consciousness. Gauḍapāda's application of the terms *kalpitasaṃvṛti* and *paramārtha* (GK 4.73–74) is noteworthy, as these terms describe the perception of externality and consciousness experiencing subject and object. In turn, phenomena are the products of imagination, although the consciousness that is grasping these as its own imagination cannot itself be imaginary, and thus is the ground consciousness. Gauḍapāda cannot negate the reality-constituting-consciousness, or his position would be identical to that of the Mādhyamikas.

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[12] This is why when he discusses the non-origination of the real nature, this relate to consciousness. See GK 3.19–22.

One needs to keep in mind that GK comes against the backdrop of the *Māṇḍūkyopaniṣad*, a text that details four states of consciousness, waking, dreaming, deep sleep, and the transcendent state where consciousness does not particularize any object while remaining translucent. Gauḍapāda's project therefore is not to address anything that is external to consciousness. He develops his philosophy to describe the varied states in which consciousness manifests, where consciousness is deluded or being unaware (*agrahaṇa*), cognizing itself as the ways it is not (*anyathāgrahaṇa*), and being aware or waking (*bodha*). To be aware is to know the way consciousness is, and to not confuse consciousness with its projection; not being aware stands for the deep sleep, and both the dream and waking states of consciousness fall under cognizing otherwise.[13]

The preferred terminology in the Advaita of Śaṅkara to describe commonsense experience is by accepting a category of 'ignorance' (*avidyā*). Gauḍapāda prefers *māyā*, which at the same time means the magical power, illusory nature, something that does not exist, and something that limits (from √*mān*).[14] Contemporary scholarship has read GK primarily through the prism of the influence of Mādhyamaka, and they are correct in many of their assessments. I differ from their reading, in particular that Gauḍapāda applied the term *māyā* in the same sense as has been used by the Mādhyamaka philosophers such as Nāgārjuna and Āryadeva. For Gauḍapāda, this *māyā* maintains the self in slumber (KG 1.16), and the self is divine in the sense that it is endowed with *māyā* (GK 2.12 and 19). Gauḍapāda also cites the Vedic passage where the term *māyā* occurs (GK 3.24).[15] One can see a fundamental difference in these two ways of using *māyā* in the passage where Gauḍapāda contends that only what exists can be differentiated due to *māyā*, and something that does not exist cannot come into being due to *māyā* (GK 3.27–28). The term for 'self' frequently occur in GK. There is, however, a noteworthy distinction in the preferred terminology. When Gauḍapāda uses the term *ātman,* the self is described as 'endowed with' *māyā* (GK 3.10). However, when he uses the term *jīva*, the self is 'constructed by' *māyā* (GK 4.69). What constitutes distinction in the non-dual self, according to Gauḍapāda, is *māyā* (GK 3.19). What has been overlooked in the contemporary readings is, that Gauḍapāda is using the term *māyā* repeatedly in its etymological meaning (with the root √*mā*, to measure. He even cites the *Ṛgveda* along with the repeated use of the term *deva* to describe the self endowed with *māyā,* preserving its earlier meaning as the magical divine power. Rather than interpreting these applications as referring to a non-existent entity, or illusion, it is reasonable that these terms are read as equivalent to *kalpanā* or imagination, a power inherent to the self that allows the self to manifest externality.

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[13] For the terminology of *agrahaṇa* and *anyathāgrahaṇa*, see GK 1.15.

[14] For examples, see: *anādimāyayā supto* GK 1.16; *ātmā devaḥ svamāyayā* GK 2.12; *māyaiṣā tasya devasya* GK 2.19; *svapnamāye yathā dṛṣṭe* GK 2.31; *ātmamāyāvisarjitāḥ* GK 3.10; *māyayā bhidyate hy etan* GK 3.19; *indro māyābhir ity api* GK 3.24; *sato hi māyayā janma yujyate* GK 3.27; *asato māyayā janma tattvato naiva yujyate | bandhyāputro na tattvena māyayā vāpi jāyate ||* GK 3.28; *māyāhastī* GK 4.44; *janma māyopamaṃ teṣāṃ sā ca māyā na vidyate |* GK 4.58; *yathā māyāmayād bījāj jāyate tanmayo 'ṅkuraḥ |* GK 4.59; *cittaṃ calati māyayā |* GK 4.61; *māyāmayo jīvo* GK 4.69.

[15] This refers to the passage: *indro māyābhiḥ pururūpa īyate | Ṛgveda* 6.47.18.

This reading of *māyā* as inherent to the self that gives rise to externality, and also the argument that *māyā* and *kalpanā* are identical, both allow the reading that consciousness in itself is endowed with the capacity to imagine, and not that what is imagined as external is in fact external, but that the essential nature of consciousness is intact even when it gives rise to externals. Imagination, along these lines, is the central driving force inherent to consciousness in the rise of subjectivity, temporality, and externality. In this reading, the intentionality of consciousness is due to its inherent power of imagination. And this power lies in the transcendent mode of consciousness, as it is essential in constituting both the subject and its field of experience.

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