Article

Reflections on Some Misrepresentations of Buddhist Philosophy & a Quantum Buddhist Mind-only Solution (Part II)

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ABSTRACT

The metaphysical implications of the *Yogācāra-Vijnanavada* 'consciousness-only' school of Buddhist psycho-metaphysics has become an issue of some debate amongst some Western philosophers with an interest in Buddhist philosophy. The 'canonical' view amongst many significant scholars is that, as the name suggests, this perspective asserts that the ultimate nature of the process of reality is nondual primordial consciousness/awareness. On this 'Idealist' view the external apparently material world is considered to be a mind-created illusion. However, some contemporary Western philosophers are offering seemingly more materialist, or non-committal as to the existence of an external material world, versions. This article examines such claims and exposes their deficiencies. A quantum-Mind-Only *Yogācāra-Vijnanavada* perspective is explored.

Keywords: Engaging Buddhism, consciousness-only, mind-only, three-nature theory, quantum consciousness potentiality, quantum Darwinism, ground-consciousness, store-consciousness, collective karma, quantum mind-created reality.

(*Continued from Part I*)

Mind-Only Buddhism asserts that what appears to be an external 'material' world is in fact a matter of interactions and transformations of insubstantial mind-like energetic fields. And, today, physics has found this to be true. Thus in a book entitled *Quantum Reality* Jonathan Allday tells us that:

> Now, from a philosophical point of view, this is rather big stuff. Our whole manner of speech … rather naturally makes us think that there is some stuff or *substance* on which properties can, in a sense, be glued. … Philosophers have been debating the correctness of such arguments for a long time. Now, it seems, experimental science has come along and shown that, at least at the quantum level, the objects we study have no substance to them independent of their properties.[1]

And the recent discovery of the Higgs field and boson at the Large Hadron Collider indicates that:

> It seems logical that there should be some ultimate constituents, some undeniable reality that underpins the world we see around us and which lends it form and shape. If matter is endlessly divisible, then we would reach a point where the constituents themselves

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> become rather ephemeral - to the point of non-existence. Then there would be no building blocks, and all we would be left with are interactions between indefinable, insubstantial phantoms which give rise to the appearance of substance. Unpalatable it may be but, to a large extent, this is precisely what modern physics has shown to be true. Mass, we now believe, is not an inherent property or 'primary' quality of the ultimate building blocks of nature. In fact, there is no such thing as mass. Mass is constructed entirely from the energy of interactions involving naturally massless elementary particles. The physicists kept dividing, and in the end found nothing at all.[2]

All the phenomena of the apparently 'material' world arise from interactions of insubstantial, immaterial quantum fields. And, of course, consciousness and awareness must also reside and emerge from these fields, there is nowhere else that subjective aspects of the process of reality could arise from. This means that both the objective and subjective aspects of the process of reality arise from immaterial quantum fields of potentiality, just as the Yogācāra psycho-metaphysical worldview indicates.

The physicist David Bohm referred to the immaterial quantum field of potentiality as the "implicate order." Bohm was led to his notion of the "implicate order" by the quantum fact that:

> …one finds, through a study of quantum theory, that the analysis of a total system into a set of independently existing but interacting particles breaks down in a radically new way. One discovers, instead, both from consideration of the meaning of the mathematical equations and from results of the actual experiments, that the various particles have to be taken literally as projections of a higher-dimension reality which cannot be accounted for in terms of any force of interaction between them.[3]

It is this "higher-dimension reality" that Bohm called the "implicate order." This level of quantum potentiality Bohm considered as being the quantum ground out of which both the subjective and objective realms of the experiential "explicate" world emerge:

> If matter and consciousness could in this way be understood together, in terms of the same general notion of order, the way would be opened to comprehending their relationship on the basis of some common ground. Thus we could come to the germ of a new notion of unbroken wholeness, in which consciousness is no longer to be fundamentally separated from matter.[4]

Furthermore Bohm, like Stapp, considered that the "common ground" was closer to the nature of consciousness than the apparently material world:

> … consciousness has to be understood in terms of an order that is closer to the implicate than it is to the explicate. … The question which is arises here, then, is that of whether or not (as was in a certain sense anticipated by Descartes) the actual 'substance' of consciousness can be understood in terms of the notion that the implicate order is also its primary and immediate actuality.[5]

A similar observation has been made by Bernard d'Espagnat, a physicist and philosopher of science who is one of the world's leading authorities on the metaphysical implications of quantum physics:

> …some data are now available that tend to suggest that, far from being a mere efflorescence from neurons, thought has structures that might be, somehow, directly

> connect to those of 'the Real.' … They consist of a kind of parallelism between, on the one hand, the structures of thought and, on the other hand, the structures of quantum mechanics…[6]

In his book *Mind, Matter and Quantum Mechanics* Stapp writes that as a result of quantum discoveries:

> The physical world thus becomes an evolving structure of information, and of propensities of experiences to occur … The new conception essentially fulfils the age old philosophical idea that nature should be made out of a kind of stuff that combines in an integrated and natural way certain mind-like and matter-like qualities, without being reduced to either classically conceived mind or classically conceived matter.[7]

Such a quantum viewpoint, which suggests that the fundamental ground of the process of reality is a stream of immaterial information that gives rise to the dualistic world, clearly maps onto the notion of the Yogācāra 'ground-consciousness'. Stapp also asserts that "in quantum mechanics the physically described part is mind-like" and therefore his perspective "reduces at a deep ontological level to a fundamentally mind-like nondual monism."[8] In other words, Stapp, like Bohm, indicates that the fundamental quantum ground of reality is a nondual monistic field of mind-like potentiality from which all the phenomena of the dualistic world emerge. Stapp's notion of an "evolving structure of information" quite clearly corresponds to the Yogācāra notion of the 'ground consciousness' which carries all the potentialities for possible experience. The conceptual model of the process of reality indicated here is one within which a subjective and an objective aspect of experience arise together from the ground consciousness on the basis of previous moments of similar experiences, perceptions and actions:

> A seed or predisposition is activated and simultaneously produces both an object and a cognizing subject, much as in a dream.[9]

The result of each moment of perceptive experience, each intention, and each action is a strengthening of the latency within the ground consciousness for that event to occur again, and, when there is an activating resonance within the ground-consciousness, a 'moment of experience' is produced within a mental continuum. The continuous operation of this mechanism produces an interdependent subjective-objective dualistic field of experiences within an overall universal stream of awareness-potentiality.

The quantum perspective exactly matches the fundamental Yogācāra psycho-metaphysical insight of the paratantra alayavijnana, or ground continuum of nondual consciousness. Another image used by Bohm which matches the Yogācāra psycho-metaphysical worldview is that of a holomovement:

> …what carries the implicate order is the *holomovement,* which is unbroken and undivided totality. In certain cases we can abstract particular aspects of the holomovement …, but more generally, all forms of the holomovement merge and are inseparable.[10]

In an interview for Omni magazine Bohm explained:

> I propose something like this: Imagine an infinite sea of energy filling empty space, with waves moving around in there, occasionally coming together and producing an intense pulse. Let's say one particular pulse comes together and expands, creating our

> universe of space-time and matter. But there could well be other such pulses. To us, that pulse looks like a big bang; in a greater context, it's a little ripple. Everything emerges by unfoldment from the holomovement, then enfolds back into the implicate order. I call the enfolding process "implicating," and the unfolding "explicating." The implicate and explicate together are a flowing, undivided wholeness. Every part of the universe is related to every other part but in different degrees.[11]

Another example that Bohm gives is that of the way in which a radio or TV electromagnetic wave encodes the transmitted content within, or on top of, another frequency. The original content is 'unfolded' by tuning to the carrier frequency. Each sentient being 'unfolds' a continuum of experience from out of the holomovement which takes place within the implicate order. For Bohm the process of reality is the unfolding of an experienced world from the potentialities within the holomovement; the unfolding of lived experience from the implicate order. This unfolding from the implicate order Bohm considered to occur through the operation of the same mechanism as a hologram is activated.

According to Yogācāra all of the three natures are in also non-natures, but they are non-natures in different ways. The imaginary nature, or what Jeffrey Hopkins terms the "imputational nature," is a 'character non-nature' because the 'characters' which appear to be independent aspects of the process of reality are entirely non-existent as independent characters. The other-dependent, which Hopkins calls the "other-powered nature" is a non-nature because the elements of this nature are momentary appearances which depend upon fleeting causes and conditions. Hopkins explains this:

> Other-powered natures do not have the power to stay for a second moment … since they are under the influence of the force of causes and conditions outside themselves. … these causes and conditions are predispositions, internal seeds, etchings on the mind by former perceptions that, when activated, produce the appearance of an object and a consciousness that pays attention to it. The same seed causes the appearance of the object and the appearance of the subject, much as in a dream.[12]

Other-powered, or other-dependent natures, then, do not have their own self-power, they do not produce themselves; they are produced by the power of previous occurrences. They are therefore 'production non-natures', they do not produce themselves. An important aspect of this non-nature, however, is that the other-powered, or other-dependent nature is not completely and absolutely non-existent, in the way that the imaginary nature is. In his description of the 'existence' of the various natures Vasubandhu playfully employs notions of existence and nonexistence. The reader has to be sensitive to levels of existence and nonexistence because Vasubandhu says that all three natures have the "characteristics of existence and non-existence." The important issue, however, is the manner of 'existence' or 'nonexistence'. Thus when describing the imaginary, or imputational, nature Vasubandhu writes:

> Since it is apprehended as being existent,
> While being utterly nonexistent,
> The imaginary nature
> Is thought of as having the characteristics of existence and nonexistence.[13]

The imaginary, then, is "utterly non-existent," its characteristic of 'existence' is in fact a completely mistaken apprehension. The other-dependent nature, however, 'exists' as an illusory appearance:

> Since it exists as an illusory entity
> And is non-existent in the way it appears
> The other-dependent nature
> Is said to have the characteristics of existence and non-existence.[14]

The point here is that, although the appearing elements of the other-powered, other-dependent nature do appear, therefore they 'exist' as appearances, they do not exist in the way that they appear (i.e. the imaginary nature) and they do not exist by their own power. When it comes to the consummate, perfect, perfected, or, as Hopkins terms the final nature, the "thoroughly-established nature," according to Vasubandhu:

> Since it exists as nonduality
> And is the very nonexistence of duality
> Thus, the perfect nature
> Is thought of as having the characteristics of existence and nonexistence.[15]

Once the nonexistence of duality is experientially realized then the direct knowledge of the 'existence' of the true ultimate reality of the nondual realm of *dharmadhatu*, with its experience as nondual wisdom-awareness becomes active. The 'ultimate non-nature' or 'consummate non-nature' refers to the fact that the ultimate nature lacks any trace of duality, it is, so to speak, pure nondual potentiality. It is *dharmata,* the ultimate nondual experiential ground wherein mind-generated dualistic illusions are etched, although the nature of *dharmata* always remains nondual.

In its objective aspect *dharmata*, the ultimate nondual mind-stuff of the process of reality, can be identified with what the physicist Wojciech Zurek calls quantum "dream stuff":

> …quantum states, by their very nature share an epistemological and ontological role – are simultaneously a description of the state, and the 'dream stuff is made of.' One might say that they are *epiontic*. These two aspects may seem contradictory, but at least in the quantum setting, there is a union of these two functions.[16]

Thus quantum "dream-stuff" can be conceived of as nondual quantum potentiality wherein "epistemological" acts of perception can create dualistic ontological appearances. These dualistic appearances are called *dharmas* in Yogācāra terminology, as opposed to *dharmata* which makes up the nature, the "dream-stuff," of *dharmas*. As Stapp points out:

> … in quantum mechanics the physically described part is mindlike. Thus quantum mechanics conforms at the *pragmatic/operational* level to the precepts of Cartesian duality, but reduces at a deep *ontological* level to a fundamentally mindlike nondual monism.[17]

Stapp's "fundamentally mindlike nondual monism" is at the nondual level of *dharmata*, the "dream-stuff" of the process of reality. Zurek also indicates that ultimately the dualistic process of reality arises from the alternatives within quantum potentiality due to the operation of consciousness:

> …the ultimate evidence for the choice of one alternative resides in our illusive consciousness.[18]

Another quantum physicist, Vlatko Vedral, has also concluded that the process of reality has a non-material basis, he:

> …passionately believes units of information – not particles – are the building blocks of humanity and everything that surrounds us. Information, he maintains, is what came before everything else. It is akin to God.[19]

Vedral has also noted the parallels between quantum discoveries and the Buddhist notion of emptiness:

> …quantum physics is indeed very much in agreement with Buddhistic emptiness. [20]

Vedral's insight implicitly identifies the ground of 'emptiness' as a quantum field of informational potentiality in a manner which is in line with the Yogācāra view of emptiness. According to Traleg Kyabgon Rinpoche for example:

> That is a unique feature of the Yogacarin presentation of emptiness, because emptiness is normally understood as a complete negation or a completely negative term rather than something positive. Here, once subject and object are negated, emptiness, which is reality, is affirmed in its place. A short passage from the *Madhyantavibhanga* says, "Truly, the characteristic of emptiness is nonexistence of the duality of subject and object, and the existence of that nonexistence." "The existence of that nonexistence" is reality. Duality is removed, but emptiness itself is another kind of existence.[21]

Here it is clearly stated that the ground of emptiness is a nondual "positive phenomenon" characterized as being the *existence* of the 'nonexistence of the duality of subject and object.' In other words the ground of emptiness is a nondual ground of potentiality from which the phenomena of duality, the appearance of the phenomena of the dualistic world, arises. Again we see that the meeting of quantum and Yogācāra is dramatic.

In his article *The Computational Universe* the physicist Seth Lloyd indicates that the universe computes itself by "registering itself"[22] and this process must begin long before life gets on the scene:

> Life is not the original information processing revolution. The very first information processing revolution, from which all other revolutions stem, began with the universe itself. … The big bang was a bit bang. Starting from its very earliest moments, every piece of the universe was processing information. The universe computes. It is this ongoing computation of the universe itself that gave rise naturally to subsequent information-processing revolutions such as life, sex, brains, language…[23]

Lloyd avoids referring to consciousness but given the fact that it is now clear that consciousness does operate at the quantum level it is natural to consider such acts of internal quantum "registration" as being acts of cognition, which leads to a fully quantum cognition-only (*vijnaptimatra*) perspective. Such a psycho-metaphysical perspective is entirely in line with the quantum psycho-metaphysics presented by Stephen Hawking and Leonard Mlodinow in their book *The Grand Design: New Answers to the Ultimate Questions of Life*:

> We are the product of quantum fluctuations in the very early universe. [24]

The big bang was the first cascade of 'creation operations' within the pre-existing quantum field of potentiality which eventually gave rise to the current universe. The quantum field gave rise to

the apparent world of materiality as well as the qualitative aspect of dualistic awareness or consciousness which is embodied within sentient beings. Hawking and Mlodinow indicate the crucial 'epiontic' role that consciousness plays in the development of the universe:

> Quantum physics tells us that no matter how thorough our observation of the present, the (unobserved) past, like the future, is indefinite and exists only as a spectrum of possibilities. The universe, according to quantum physics, has no single past, or history.
> The fact that the past takes no definite form means that observations you make on a system in the present affect its past.[25]

According to Hawking and Mlodinow, observers, or what Wheeler called 'observer-participants,' are able to weed out possible universes, and thereby select those which remain in the possibility mix, even backwards in time. Thus one of the central chapters in *The Grand Design* is entitled 'Choosing Our Universe':

> The idea that the universe does not have a unique observer-independent history might seem to conflict with certain facts that we know. There might be one history in which the moon is made of Roquefort cheese. But we have observed that the moon is not made of cheese, which is bad news for mice. Hence histories in which the moon is made of cheese do not contribute to the current state of our universe, though they might contribute to others. This might sound like science fiction but it isn't.[26]

According to this perspective, the reason why the moon is not made of Roquefort cheese is because the observer participants of this particular universe have observed that the moon is not made of cheese. The observations made by the observer-participants have filtered out the possibility of a cheese moon and also, at the same time, have determined the possibilities that are projected into the future. According to Wheeler:

> The coming explosion of life opens the door to an all-encompassing role for observer-participancy: to build, in time to come, no minor part of what we call its past – our past, present and future – but this whole vast world.[27]

The role of consciousness, operating through a quantum field of mind-like informational potentiality, has become central to our current understanding of the process of reality. We live in a quantum-Yogācāra universe wherein what appears to be an independent material world "out there" is a matter of congealed mental imagery projected into nondual mindlike quantum "dream-stuff."

Given the above considerations, Garfield's account of the three Yogācāra natures and non-natures can be seen to be deficient. With respect to the character non-nature Garfield writes:

> Emptiness with respect to characteristic … corresponds to the imagined nature. Objects are empty of the characteristics we naively impute to them. When I see ordinary physical objects around me, for instance, I take my sensory faculties to deliver them to consciousness as they are. But I know that that is crazy. My visual awareness, for instance, is a result of the interaction of external objects with my eyes, my nervous system, etc., creating a state of consciousness to which-as Berkeley pointed out-resemblance of external objects makes no sense at all. Objects are empty of the characteristics I take them to have.[28]

This exposition is misleading precisely because it is based on the assumption of the existence of external "ordinary physical objects," which is contrary to Yogācāra psycho-metaphysics. Thus Brunnhőlzl translates Vasubandhu's description of the imaginary nature as being "utterly non-existent," and Garfield just as "non-existent." Garfield's mistaken understanding, however, allocates the imaginary nature to a kind of intervening mental image that is imposed on an "ordinary physical object" "out there" in an external world (figure 2), for Garfield it is this mental image that is the imaginary nature. For Brunnhőlzl, who presents the correct version, there is no cup beyond the mental image, and both the perceiving consciousness and the apparent image perceived, which are ultimately nondual, arise from the alayavijnana, the ground consciousness (figure 3). When this perceptual process is viewed as a 'real' duality, with the 'cup' being "out there," then the imaginary nature is operative.

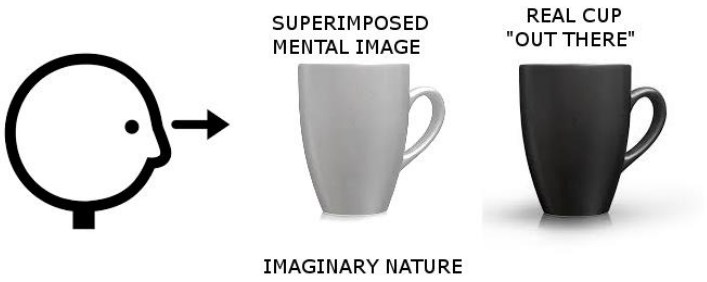

Figure 2

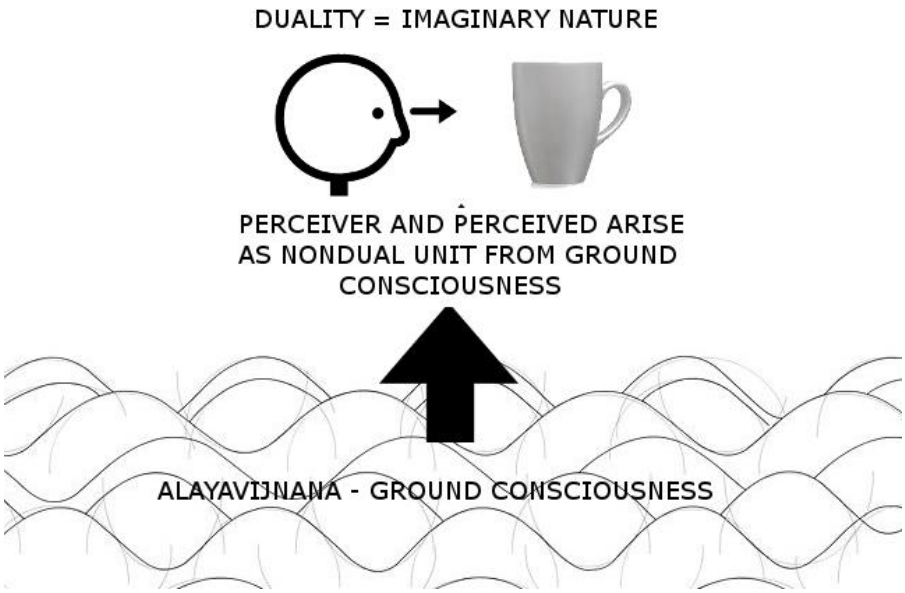

Figure 3

According to Brunnhőlzl:

> To give a brief and general idea, the other-dependent nature is the mistaken imagination that appears as the unreal entities of subject and object, because these are appearances under the influence of something other, that is, the latent tendencies of ignorance. It appears as the outer world with various beings and objects; as one's own body; as the sense consciousnesses that perceive these objects and the conceptual consciousnesses that thinks about them; as the clinging to a personal self and real phenomena; and as the mental events, such as feelings, that accompany all these consciousnesses. Thus false imagination is what bifurcates mere experience into seemingly real perceivers that apprehend seemingly real objects. This very split into subject and object – the imaginary nature – does not exist even on the level of seeming reality, but the mind that creates this split does exist and function on this level. … The perfect nature is emptiness in the sense that what appears as other-dependent false imagination is primordially never established as the imaginary nature. As the ultimate object, this emptiness is the sphere of nonconceptual wisdom, and its nature is phenomenal identitylessness.[29]

A hugely important point here is the fact that according to Yogācāra spiritual psycho-metaphysics the ultimate perfect, or consummate, nature is "the sphere of nonconceptual wisdom." It is the result of a dramatic insight accompanied by an apparent 'transformation' (*asrayaparivrtti*) which is described Brunnhőlzl:

> …the whole point in terms of dharmadhatu, natural purity, buddha nature, or the luminous nature of mind is that there is absolutely no transformation of anything into anything else. Rather, the revelation of mind's primordially pure nature as fruitional enlightenment only appears as a change of its state from the perspective of deluded mind – seeming to be obscured before and then unobscured later.[30]

A realization of the 'perfect' or 'consummate' nature, then, is also a "revelation of mind's primordially pure nature as fruitional enlightenment." Garfield' account, however, completely drops this psycho-spiritual dimension:

> … the dependent nature may be more or less ontologically neutral, referring only to the causal role of our cognitive activity in experience, when we construct objects of experience, we actively imagine them to exist in a certain way. As a consequence, to understand their reality, their mode of being independent of that construction, we must empty them of that we imaginatively attribute to them.[31]

This vague, imprecise (what does "*more or less* ontologically neutral" mean?) and misleading characterization of the 'dependent nature' and the 'perfect' 'consummate' and 'thoroughly-established' nature suggests that the final nature is nothing beyond "emptying" "ordinary physical objects" of any imaginative, and imputational overlays. This upside-down mistaken viewpoint empties the notion of the ultimate nature of any significance, philosophical or spiritual, whatsoever. What exactly is the perfect ultimate nature? According to Garfield it consists of apprehending "ordinary physical objects" as they really are in their own physical nature, which, as Kant indicated, is an impossibility. According to the correct Yogācāra psycho-metaphysics the ultimate 'perfect' nature consists in a direct apprehension of the nondual luminous nature of the mind-energy which is the source of all phenomena, which, according to Yogācāra Buddhism, is a possibility.

Garfield's account of the 'production-non-nature' is also mistaken and misleading:

> Emptiness with respect to production … corresponds to the dependent nature. That is, these phenomena are empty of independence of our cognitive and perceptual processes, despite the fact that we naively take the objects of our perception to be independent.[32]

But this is not a correct characterization of the 'production-non-nature', it is, rather, a reformulation of Garfield's misunderstanding of the 'character-non-nature'. The notion of the 'production-non-nature' highlights the fact that the appearances of the 'other-dependent nature' are not 'self-powered', they are 'other-powered'; they are a result of vast numbers of previous moments of perception; they are based upon 'habit energies'[33] within the alayavijnana.

Garfield appears to indicate that the Yogācāra perspective involves the existence of independent external objects, of which the inherent properties cannot be directly known because they are masked by a veil of perception. But this is wrong. Yogācāra psycho-metaphysics indicates that perceptual activity in some way creates the appearances of an external world. We can understand the cogency of this claim in a quantum context by considering Zurek's 'Quantum Darwinism' proposal. The 'Darwinian' aspect of this quantum perspective relates to Zurek's assertion that the states of quantum information which are capable of being disseminated are those which are the "fittest." On this view what appears to be a 'material' world is in fact nothing more than a flimsy quantum informational "advertising billboard":

> The main idea of quantum Darwinism is that we almost never do any direct measurement on anything … the environment acts as a witness, or as a communication channel. … It is like a big advertising billboard, which floats multiple copies of the information about our universe all over the place.[34]

The "advertising billboard" is not a 'material' construction, it is rather a quantum-informational structure which has somehow been etched into the all-pervasive quantum dream-stuff, and the experiences of all sentient beings are generated on the basis of an interaction of their minds and the quantum informational dream-structure of the "billboard." This account, of course, bears an uncanny resemblance to the Yogācāra notion of the alayavijnana. Zurek does not say where this billboard comes from, but taking into account the foregoing discussion of the relationship between consciousness and quantum potentiality, consciousness being the activator of quantum potentialities through "acts of registration," it is clear that it is the repeated perceptions on the part of the vast community of sentient beings which build up the quantum informational structure. As Stapp points out:

> Each subjective experience injects one bit of information into this objective store of information which then specifies … the relative probabilities for various possible future subjective experiences to occur.[35]

Thus our experiences of what Garfield calls "ordinary physical objects" are in fact *not* experiences of "ordinary physical objects," at all. They are experiences generated on the basis a vast collection of previous repeated experiences, echoing over vast time scales, experiences which have become "fittest" because they are etched, by continuous repetition, into the informational dream-stuff of the quantum realm. In this way, then, it turns out that what appears to be an independent external world, including our bodies and sensory apparatus, is nothing of the sort, it is mind-dependent illusion generated from a developing pool of quantum information, which itself depends upon the interacting minds.

We can now turn our attention to Garfield's misrepresentation of Vasubandhu's magician generated elephant analogy. He translates the thirtieth verse of the *Trisvabhavanirdesa* as follows:

> The root consciousness is like the mantra
> Reality can be compared to the wood.
> Imagination is like the perception of the elephant,
> Duality can be seen as the elephant.[36]

Here is Brunnhőlzl's version:

> The root-consciousness is like the mantra,
> Suchness is regarded as similar to the wood,
> Imagination is considered like the appearing aspect of the elephant
> And duality is like the elephant.

And here is Stefan Anacker's version:

> The root-consciousness is like the mantra;
> Suchness is like the wood;
> Discrimination is like the elephant's appearance,
> And duality is like the elephant itself.[37]

All versions are more or less in agreement apart from Garfield's use of the term 'Reality' instead of 'Suchness.' 'Suchness', *tatatha* or *dharmata* is the ultimate "dream-stuff" of the *dharmadhatu*, which is the space encompassing the potentiality for all phenomena, the mind-like ultimate nature of all phenomena. As long as the root-consciousness (*alayavijnana*) operates within the *dharmadhatu* dualistic appearances arise and are taken to be real appearances.

Garfield's use of the term "Reality", however, allows him to concoct a perverse and incorrect interpretation. The term 'Reality', correctly understood as indicating the immaterial ultimate 'Reality' of luminous nondual mind-energy, can stand in for *tatatha* or *dharmata* but Garfield chooses to offer a completely spurious and misguided *materialist* account of Vasubandhu's Mind-Only analogy. According to Garfield, Vasubandhu's verses:

> …certainly invites an idealistic interpretation … But it does not *force* such a reading. … Vasubandhu is arguing only that subject-object duality is unreal, just as the mantra causes the elephant to appear, that duality in our experience is caused to appear by our root-consciousness, what we might anachronistically call our neurocognitive processes.
>
> Does Vasubandhu side here with Berkeley … Not obviously. Let us parse stanza 30 with care. Part of the causal basis for experience is the root-consciousness/our psychological processes, just as part of the basis of the audience's experience of the elephant is the mantra. So far, so good. Nothing idealistic, but nothing on the other side either. But now we get to reality. To what is it compared? To a pile of sticks. They are certainly material in the analogy, and external to the minds of the audience. Moreover, they are seen as *sticks* by the magician doing the conjuring – and even by the audience when the spell wears off.[38]

This bizarre account indicates how perverse interpretations of Buddhist metaphysics can be when they are concocted through the distorting lens of the false imagination of Western analytic philosophy. And it looks for all the world as if such concoctions are not in search of clarity or

elucidation, but rather the maintenance of a certain style of Western academic discourse. If clarity were the goal then anyone concerned with the meaning and truth of Buddhist metaphysical doctrines, which make clear assertions about the 'empty', 'mind-like' nature of the apparently physical world, would certainly need to take into account the modern discoveries of quantum physics, as the Dalai Lama often suggests.

Garfield tells us that "Vasubandhu is arguing," but this is not correct; Vasubandhu is *describing* the psycho-metaphysical structure of the process of reality; and his description involves the elephant "magic show" analogy, which Garfield mangles for his own purposes. Garfield claims that the analogy does not "*force*" an idealistic viewpoint, but he claims this by illicitly isolating a few verses from their overall context. He *forces* a possible non-idealistic reading by ignoring the overall context. Admittedly Garfield also says that the fact that the wood or sticks in the analogy are material in nature:

> …does not *force* a nonidealist reading. After all, this is only an analogy. Just as the nonexistence of the elephant doesn't force idealism, the existence of the sticks doesn't force materialism.[39]

However, the point is that the very act of reinterpreting Vasubandhu's verses in such a contrary manner by ignoring the overall consciousness-only context of Vasubandhu's work undermines the Yogācāra worldview in a quite perverse fashion. And this procedure leads to a perverse conclusion which has absolutely nothing to do with Vasubandhu or Yogācāra:

> So, then, on this view, what am I? I am, independent of my experience, just what the elephant … is; a pile of sticks by the road that I have never encountered directly; and probably never will.[40]

It is unfortunate that Vasubandhu used the image of a block of wood, or pile of sticks, to represent the *immaterial* ultimate "dream-stuff" of 'suchness', or *dharmata*, because it may lend Garfield's mistaken account a modicum of plausibility for the unwary.

Vasubandhu's elephant "magic show" analogy is very similar to an analogy of the quantum situation used by physicist and philosopher Bernard d'Espagnat:

> …a rainbow, obviously, may not be considered an object-per-se. For, indeed, if we move it moves. Two differently located persons do not see it having its bases at the same places. It is therefore manifest that it depends, in part, on us. … But still, even though the rainbow depends on us, it does not depend exclusively on us. For it to appear it is necessary that the sun should shine and that raindrops should be there. Now similar features also characterize quantum mechanically described objects, that is, after all … any object whatsoever. For *they* also are not 'objects-per-se'. The attributes, or 'dynamical properties,' we see them to possess depend in fact on our 'look' at them…[41]

In this analogy (figure 4) the sun, raindrops and observer correspond to the other-powered, other-dependent realm of interdependent causes and conditions which produce an appearance of the rainbow. The rainbow is not an external object but it appears to be so. If one were to take the appearance to be a really existing object "out there" then this would be the imaginary, imputational nature. In this analogy we can identify the interdependent causal nexus as the 'mantra', the rainbow as the appearance of the elephant, the belief in its reality as corresponding to the belief in an external elephant. The space within which this all takes place is the

dharmadhatu, the space of phenomena, which in Vasubandhu's analogy corresponds to the wood. D'Espagnat tells that all phenomena are like such rainbows, or, as the physicist and philosopher Victor Mansfield, author of *Tibetan Buddhism and Modern Physics*, has pointed out:

> We can now demonstrate that 'quantum moons' do not exist when unobserved. Such 'experimental metaphysics' has an extraordinary resonance with the Middle Way Buddhist principle of emptiness…[42]

The term "quantum moon" derives from a remark that Einstein made to fellow physicist Pascual Jordon:

> We often discussed his notions on objective reality. I recall that during one walk Einstein suddenly stopped, turned to me and asked whether I really believed that the moon exists only when I look at it.[43]

At the quantum level this is the case. The 'particles' of the subatomic world emerge from eternal insubstantial quantum fields:

> Quantum field theory, the tool with which we study particles, is based upon eternal, omnipresent objects that can create and destroy those particles. These objects are the "fields" of quantum field theory. … quantum fields are objects that permeate spacetime … they create or absorb elementary particles … particles can be produced or destroyed anywhere at any time.[44]

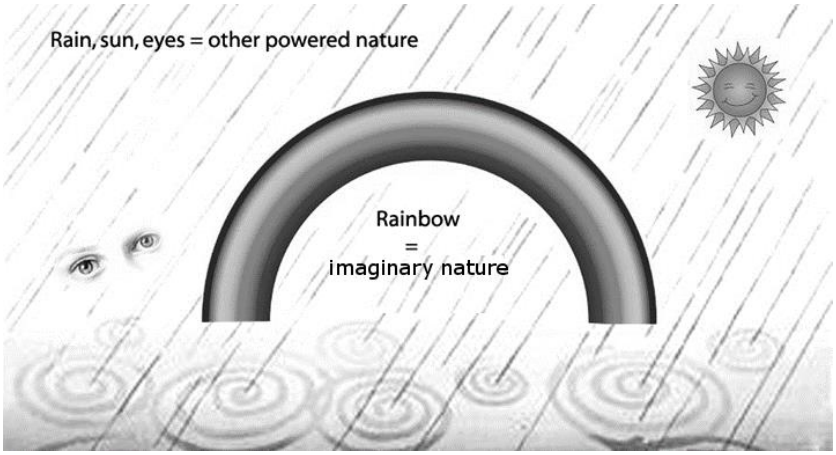

Figure 4

And they are created by interaction with consciousness:

> The physicist John Wheeler once proposed a challenge: How can you best describe quantum mechanics in five words or fewer … When I posed this question about quantum mechanics the best answer was …"Don't look: waves. Look: particles."[45]

This means that at more macroscopic levels the world around us is a kind of collective illusion, a "magic show" dependent upon consciousness. The reality is that, as many quantum physicists now know in various formulations, the moon only exists, and is not made of Roquefort cheese, because a community of a vast number of sentient beings, over vast time scales, have been looking at it, and this has left moon-experience potentialities in the "dream-stuff" of the

"implicate" quantum ground-consciousness. This is pretty much in line with the 'idealist' view of Yogācāra. So much for analytical philosophy, well, what can you expect from a cowherd?

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(*The End*)