religions

MDPI

Article

Non-Dual Śaivism and the Panentheism of Karl Christian Friedrich Krause

Klara Hedling [1] and Benedikt Paul Göcke [2,*]

[1] Department of Philosophy, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM 87131-000, USA; khedling@unm.edu
[2] Chair for Philosophy of Science and Philosophy of Religion, Faculty of Catholic Theology, Ruhr-Universität Bochum, 44780 Bochum, Germany
* Correspondence: benedikt.goecke@rub.de

Abstract

This paper explores striking philosophical parallels between Karl Christian Friedrich Krause's 19th-century articulation of panentheism and the much earlier non-dual Śaiva philosophy of the Pratyabhijñā school in Kashmir. While Krause is widely credited with coining the term *panentheism*, models of divine immanence and transcendence akin to panentheism are already present in the Pratyabhijñā tradition. Through comparative analysis, the study identifies key convergences between these two systems in their metaphysics of ultimate reality, their accounts of liberation through knowledge, the role of the teacher in the liberative process, their views on the purpose of creation and their respective treatments of evil. The paper concludes by examining significant points of divergence, shedding light on the distinctive trajectories and theological commitments of each tradition.

Keywords: Krause; panentheism; Pratyabhijñā; non-dual Śaivism

check for updates

Academic Editor: Jeffery D. Long

Received: 16 May 2025
Revised: 13 June 2025
Accepted: 17 June 2025
Published: 24 June 2025

Citation: Hedling, Klara, and Benedikt Paul Göcke. 2025. Non-Dual Śaivism and the Panentheism of Karl Christian Friedrich Krause. *Religions* 16: 823. https://doi.org/10.3390/rel16070823

Copyright: © 2025 by the authors. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

1. Introduction

Panentheism is an often-discussed alternative to classical theism, and almost any discussion of panentheism begins by acknowledging Karl Christian Friedrich Krause (1781–1832) as the philosopher who coined the term. However, although Krause introduced the word *panentheism*, panentheistic models of God can already be found in ancient Indian traditions, particularly in the Pratyabhijñā system, a school within the non-dual Śaivism of Kashmir.[1] This article offers a comparative analysis of Krause's panentheism and the Pratyabhijñā philosophy of non-dual Śaivism. The goal is not to establish a direct historical line of influence—although Krause's known interest in Indian philosophy makes such influence plausible—but rather to draw attention to the remarkable philosophical parallels between these two traditions. Despite their distinct cultural and historical contexts, both systems articulate a vision of absolute reality as simultaneously immanent in, and transcendent of, the world. They converge strikingly in (1) their respective foundational metaphysics of ultimate ground, (2) their accounts of liberation as a process of knowledge and recognition, (3) their corresponding accounts of the means of liberation and the need for a teacher, (4) their respective stance on the purpose of creation, and, finally, (5) their account of evil. By placing these systems in dialogue, we aim to illuminate the inner logic and distinct contours of each, while also contributing to broader philosophical debates about the nature of the Absolute, the world, and the human condition as part of a cross-cultural philosophy of religion. The comparison not only sheds light on neglected dimensions

of Krause's panentheism but also opens new interpretive pathways for understanding non-dual Śaivism beyond its usual doctrinal boundaries.

2. The Philosophy of Non-Dual Śaivism

The Pratyabhijñā system articulates a monistic and panentheistic philosophy centred on the recognition (*pratyabhijñā*) of one's true nature as none other than Śiva, the Absolute and all-encompassing divine reality. This recognition is not acquiring something new but realising an eternal identity—the individual self (*jīva*) has always been Śiva. However, due to ignorance (*avidyā*), this truth has been forgotten. Liberation (*mokṣa*) is thus the direct knowledge of one's inherent divinity, which alone is necessary and sufficient to break free from the cycle of suffering and transmigration (*saṃsāra*). The earliest articulation of this system can be traced to its founder, Somānanda (c. 900–950 CE), author of *Śivadṛṣṭi* (Vision of Śiva). However, it was his disciple, Utpaladeva (c. 925–975 CE), who systematically developed its core doctrines in the *Īśvarapratyabhijnākārikā* (Stanzas on the Recognition of the Lord, ĪPK) along with a commentary (*Īśvarapratyabhijñākārikāvṛitti*) and a longer auto-commentary (*Īśvarapratyabhijñāvivṛitti*), now known only in fragments (Ratié 2016a, 2016b, 2020, 2021, 2022). Abhinavagupta (c. 975–1025) further refined these doctrines through his commentaries (*Īśvarapratyabhijnāvimarśinī* and *Īśvarapratyabhijnāvivṛtivimarśinī*) as well as in his magnum opus *Tantrāloka* (Light on the Tantras, TĀ). Abhinavagupta's disciple, Kṣemarāja (c. 1000–1050 CE), also played a crucial role in distilling these teachings, particularly in his *Pratyabhijnāhṛdaya* (The Heart of Recognition), a concise summary of the school's key doctrines.

This section explores the core philosophical tenets of Pratyabhijñā, focusing on: (1) the metaphysical understanding of Śiva as both transcendent and immanent; (2) the system's view of liberation (*mokṣa*) and its relation to ignorance (*ajñāna*); (3) the means of attaining knowledge of the Absoute, (4) the purpose of creation; and (5) the question of evil. These explorations position the Pratyabhijñā system within the broader panentheistic thought, illustrating its unique perspective on the Absolute, the universe, and finite beings.

2.1. Metaphysics of the Absolute in Pratyabhijñā

In the Pratyabhijñā school, Śiva is the singular (*eka*), infinite (*ananta*), all-encompassing (*pūrṇa*), autonomous (*svatantra*) consciousness (*cit*), the substratum of all reality and the source of all phenomena. Pratyabhijñā advances a form of philosophical idealism, affirming that Śiva is the sole reality and nothing exists outside this singular consciousness. Somānanda, regarded as the school's founder, initially articulated a pantheistic framework wherein Śiva is fully identified with the universe. As Nemec observes, "Śiva is never a passive, transcendent, and inaccessible deity, but rather is ever fully engaged in manifesting all the appearances and activities that constitute the very existence of the universe" (Nemec 2011, p. 25). However, Utpaladeva and Abhinavagupta refined this vision into a panentheistic framework, positing that the universe is a manifestation or appearance (*ābhāsa*) of Śiva, yet neither ontologically identical to nor reducible to Him. Śiva pervades all creation while simultaneously transcending it, establishing His nature as both immanent (*viśvamaya*) and transcendent (*viśvottīrṇa*). This relationship between the Absolute and the world forms the foundation of Pratyabhijñā's panentheism, wherein creation unfolds as a free manifestation of Śiva's will (*icchāśakti*), giving rise to all multiplicity without compromising His inherent unity and absolute freedom. Despite this cosmic play, Śiva remains utterly free and unaffected by His own manifestation.

Central to Pratyabhijñā metaphysics is Śiva as an autonomous (*svatantra*), self-aware consciousness characterised by two inseparable aspects: *prakāśa* (luminosity) and *vimarśa* (reflective awareness).[2] *Prakāśa* denotes the illuminating aspect—the pure light of con-

sciousness that reveals all phenomena while remaining their unchanging ground. *Vimarśa* is the reflexive awareness that enables Śiva to be self-aware. As Utpaladeva states: "The essential nature of light is reflective awareness (*vimarśa*); otherwise, light, though 'coloured' by objects, would be similar to an insentient reality, such as crystal and so on" (ĪPK[3] 1.5.11, 118).[4] Without *vimarśa*, consciousness would passively reflect objects like an inert crystal, whereas *vimarśa* ensures that Śiva's light illuminates while remaining aware of itself as the source. This capacity for self-awareness distinguishes sentient consciousness from insentient matter (*jaḍa*), a concept Pratyabhijñā develops in response to Buddhist logico-epistemological accounts of self-awareness (*svasaṃvedana*) while reinterpreting it with a Śaiva ontological framework.

The Pratyabhijñā tradition employs the metaphor of a mirror to illustrate Śiva's relationship to His manifestations (*ābhāsa*-s). Abhinavagupta's *Paramārthasāra* (Essence of Ultimate Reality) likens the world's appearance within consciousness to images reflected in a mirror—distinct in form yet ultimately inseparable from it (Bansat-Boudon and Tripathi 2011, p. 112).[5] The world appears differentiated both internally and in relation to consciousness but remains, in truth, non-different from consciousness. The world is thus not external to Śiva but a reflection within His consciousness. Because this reflection is contained within the Absolute, Pratyabhijñā thinkers regard it as fully real. Moreover, the mirror analogy highlights the tradition's panentheism: just as a mirror reflects images without changing its essential nature, Śiva manifests the universe within Himself while remaining unaltered. Thus, His transcendent nature and oneness remain intact.

Śiva manifests the universe through His power (*śakti*), which is synonymous with *vimarśa*. This creative power is neither external nor necessitated but a free, spontaneous play (*krīḍā*) within consciousness. According to *svātantryavāda*, the doctrine of absolute freedom, Śiva's will (*icchā*) alone is sufficient to generate the cosmos. As Utpaladeva states: "Indeed, the Conscious Being, God, like the yogin, independently of material causes, in virtue of His volition alone, renders externally manifest the multitude of objects that reside within Him (ĪPK 1.5.7, 116).[6] Creation is thus not an act of compulsion or fragmentation but an autonomous, joyous self-expression of Śiva. As the sole cause of manifestation, He requires no external medium; the universe emerges spontaneously from His sovereign will. Unlike a sequential process of cause and effect, creation is direct, unmediated self-revelation. Though manifesting as the universe, Śiva remains transcendent, beyond limitation, and eternally free—His non-dual nature untouched by creation.

Creation in Pratyabhijñā follows a top-down model where absolute consciousness contracts (*saṃkoca*) from pure subjectivity into empirical multiplicity through the successive manifestation of thirty-six *tattvas* (ontological categories). At the highest level, Śiva exists as an undifferentiated, self-luminous consciousness. Through His *śakti*, this consciousness progressively assumes differentiated forms, culminating in the material universe. A key moment in this process is the emergence of *māyā*, the principle of limitation that introduces differentiation. Unlike Advaita Vedānta, which treats *māyā* as an illusory appearance (*vivarta*), Pratyabhijñā understands it as Śiva's power—His freedom to assume finite forms in a play of self-concealment. As Ratié explains, *māyā* is not a deceptive appearance distinct from reality but an aspect of consciousness itself, enabling the manifestation of variety (Ratié 2016c, p. 16). Through *māyā*, Śiva veils his infinite nature, giving rise to the illusion of separation and the experience of bondage (*paśutva*).

This apparent limitation is not an ontological fall but a cognitive contraction—a temporary obscuration of self-recognition (*pratyabhijñā*). Liberation (*mokṣa*) is the dissolution of this ignorance, the realisation that subject and object, self and world, are expressions of the same consciousness. As Abhinavagupta describes, Śiva's self-concealment is an act of absolute freedom (*svātantrya*), a cosmic game (*krīḍā*) in which He appears fragmented while

remaining fully aware of His unity: "Because this Highest Lord [that is consciousness] accomplishes the most difficult deeds, due to its pure freedom, it is skillful in the game (*krīḍā*) of self-concealment. Concealing oneself whereas one's nature remains unveiled—this is precisely the Omnipresent Lord's *māyā* from which comes all this variety found in the universe" (Abhinavagupta in (Ratié 2016c, p. 16)). Even bondage, then, is nothing but the free play of consciousness.

Furthermore, the process of manifestation is cyclical, characterised by creation (*sṛṣṭi*), maintenance (*sthiti*), and dissolution (*pralaya*). Śiva withdraws and recreates the universe as an expression of His will, demonstrating His transcendence and immanence. This eternal cycle highlights Śiva's dynamic engagement with the cosmos, wherein the universe is continuously reabsorbed into and reemerges from consciousness. Thus, the Pratyabhijñā of Utpaladeva and Abhinavagupta articulates a distinctly panentheistic vision: the universe is Śiva's self-expression, wholly pervaded by Him, yet He remains beyond it. Unlike pantheism, which equates God with the universe, or classical theism, which separates God from creation, Pratyabhijñā asserts that Śiva is simultaneously immanent and transcendent. He manifests as all things, yet no finite entity exhausts His being. The world is neither separate from Him nor entirely identical to Him, but rather, it is the reflection of consciousness itself, which reveals itself in infinite ways.

2.2. Bondage and Liberation

In Pratyabhijñā, bondage (*bandha*) arises from Śiva's self-imposed limitation and apparent forgetfulness of His true nature.[7] As the absolute subject, Śiva identifies with the body-mind apparatus, leading to a limited and incomplete understanding (*apūrṇa-jñāna*) of reality (TĀ[8] 1.26).[9] As Abhinavagupta explains, ignorance (*ajñāna*) is the root cause of transmigration, and only through knowledge can liberation (*mokṣa*) be attained: "Here [in our tradition] all the scriptures unanimously declare that ignorance is the cause of transmigration and knowledge alone that of freedom" (TĀ 1.22).[10] *Māyā*'s veiling power manifests through five coverings (*kañcukas*): limited action (*kalā*), limited knowledge (*vidyā*), attachment or desire (*rāga*), necessity (*niyati*), and time (*kāla*), which together create the illusion of finite existence. This self-limitation causes Śiva, who is inherently limitless, to perceive Himself as constrained by time and causality. A central concept in understanding bondage is the Śaiva doctrine of impurities (*mala*), which obscure the self's true nature. The dualist Śaiva Siddhānta school holds that the self is veiled by three impurities: individuality (*āṇavamala*), differentiation (*māyīyamala*), and action (*kārmamala*). While the dualist tradition regards these impurities as real substances (*dravya*) that can only be removed through ritual (*karma*), and especially the initiation ritual (*dīkṣā*), Pratyabhijñā reinterprets them as forms of ignorance or erroneous attitudes of the individual subject (Torella 2017, p. 183). Therefore, knowledge is necessary and sufficient for liberation (*mokṣa*), as it removes the veils of ignorance.

Liberation, or recognition (*pratyabhijnā*), is the realisation that one is Śiva and that the universe is an expression of one's infinite consciousness. Once this truth is recognised, the individual transcends the illusion of limitations and regains their true identity with Śiva, which paradoxically, was never lost in the first place. As Kṣemarāja notes, even in bondage, the individual is Śiva, albeit in a contracted form: "The individual experient also, in whom *citi* or consciousness is contracted, has the universe [as his body] in a contracted form" (Kṣemarāja in (Singh 1963, p. 43)).[11] In this contracted state, the individual engages in the divine acts—creation, maintenance, dissolution, concealment, and grace—but with limited awareness. Liberation is not an escape from the world but an awakening to the divine within it. The goal is unity-consciousness, where the entire universe is perceived as Śiva, and the individual experiences the bliss of absolute I-consciousness (*parāmarśa*). Notably,

Pratyabhijñā emphasises *jīvanmukti*, liberation while alive. Once ignorance is removed, the individual lives fully aware of their identity with Śiva, experiencing the world as a divine play of consciousness. This contrasts with the dualist Śaiva Siddhānta, which holds that liberation is only possible after death (*videhamukti*).

2.3. The Means of Liberation and the Role of the Teacher

While the recognition of one's true nature depends on individual effort, it also requires Śiva's grace (*anugraha*), which facilitates this insight. *Śaktipāta*, or the "descent of power", is central to spiritual maturity and readiness for liberation. Although *śaktipāta* is indispensable, it does not negate the need for knowledge; instead, it accelerates the recognition process by making the aspirant more receptive to realising their Śiva-nature. Abhinavagupta explains that the intensity of *śaktipāta* varies, corresponding to different means (*upāya-s*) of liberation: "Thus, while the Lord reveals Himself in all His fullness to one person (*pramātṛ*), [He does so] to another part by part, progressively" (TĀ 1.140).[12] The more intense the grace, the more direct the path. Aspirants with the deepest desire for liberation (*mumukṣu*) receive the most intense form of grace, leading them swiftly toward freedom, while those who still desire worldly enjoyment (*bhoga*) or supernatural powers (*siddhi*-s) experience a milder form of grace, resulting in a more gradual path.

Pratyabhijnā outlines four distinct means (*upāya-s*) of liberation, arranged in hierarchical order: "the non-means" (*anupāya*), "the divine means" (*śāṃbhavopāya*), "the empowered means" (*śāktopāya*) and "the individual means" (*āṇavopāya*). *Anupāya* is the most direct, where recognition occurs spontaneously without effort, accessible only to those receiving the highest degree of grace. As the *Tantrāloka* states, "For some [elevated souls], Śiva Himself manifests in an instant, just as an entity manifests clearly to one whose senses are fully functional, without having to apply the mind to determine its nature" (TĀ 1.147).[13] *Śāṃbhavopāya* emphasises direct, non-conceptual awareness (*nirvikalpa*) of one's identity with Śiva, transcending mental constructs and focusing purely on consciousness. *Śāktopāya* employs reasoning (*ūhaḥ*) and contemplation (*bhāvanā*) as the means to realisation, relying on correct reasoning (*sattarka*), aided by scriptures (*āgama*) and a teacher's guidance. Finally, *āṇavopāya,* the most accessible means, involves external practices such as mantra utterance (*uccāra*), bodily postures (*karaṇa)*, and meditation (*dhyāna*), which purify the mind and prepare the aspirant for higher states of awareness (TĀ 1.170).[14] Each *upāya* builds on the one below it, gradually leading the aspirant to the highest means, *anupāya*, which is paradoxically a "no-means" because it is spontaneous and requires no method.

The *guru* (teacher) holds immense importance in this tradition as the embodiment of Śiva and a conduit for Śiva's grace. The guru guides the disciple through the various means of liberation. However, although the role of the teacher is critical in transmitting the teachings and bestowing grace, Pratyabhijñā emphasises that liberation ultimately comes through knowledge. The *guru* helps the disciple overcome ignorance, but the disciple's recognition of their true nature as Śiva brings liberation. Thus, the varying degrees of *śaktipāta* shape the aspirant's journey, with divine grace as the primary catalyst for recognition, working in tandem with knowledge as the essential condition for liberation. The structured nature of the *upāya-s* reflects a systematic approach to spiritual development, where knowledge and grace converge to facilitate spiritual transformation.

2.4. Purpose of Creation

In Pratyabhijñā, liberation is recognising oneself as Śiva, the infinite, omnipotent consciousness manifesting as the universe. The goal of life is to realise this unity with the Absolute, leading to unity-consciousness. But why does Śiva create the world, leading to

the apparent separation from universal consciousness? Pratyabhijñā explains that creation is both necessary and free. It is Śiva's nature to manifest, and the universe reflects Śiva's self-awareness (*vimarśa*). Just as light shines by nature, manifestation is an inevitable expression of Śiva's being. At the same time, creation is a spontaneous act of will (*icchā*), driven by Śiva's freedom (*svātantrya*), not by external necessity. Śiva manifests, sustains, and dissolves the universe through His free will. As Kṣemarāja states, "The absolute *citi* [consciousness] of its own free will is the cause of the *siddhi* [accomplishment] of the universe" (Kṣemarāja, in (Singh 1963, p. 34)).[15] Śiva manifests, sustains, and dissolves the universe through His free will. This raises a fundamental question: if creation is inherent to Śiva's nature, does He have any choice but to create? Or, given His absolute freedom, can He refrain from manifesting? Pratyabhijñā rejects necessity governing Śiva's actions, asserting that creation is an act of free creativity. While Śiva could theoretically not create, His freedom is expressed through the pulsation (*spanda*) of creation and dissolution. Periodic dissolution (*pralaya*) shows that creation is neither necessary nor arbitrary but a continuous expression Śiva's freedom.

From Śiva's perspective, creation is divine play (*krīḍā*), a spontaneous act of self-expression. It is an unfolding of His own nature, not driven by necessity but by the intrinsic freedom of consciousness. For the finite subject (*paśu*), however, creation takes on a teleological role, allowing finite beings to rediscover their true, infinite nature. Through this process, Śiva witnesses Himself in both His finite and infinite aspects. Thus, creation has a dual purpose: for Śiva, it expresses His freedom and serves as the means through which He comes to know Himself; for finite beings, it is an opportunity to recognise their unity with Him. In this sense, finitude is necessary for the divine to fully experience its own totality. Ultimately, the purpose of creation in Pratyabhijñā is for absolute consciousness to know itself.

2.5. The Question of Evil

In Western theodicy, the problem of evil arises from reconciling an omnipotent, omnibenevolent God with the existence of evil and suffering. In contrast, Pratyabhijñā addresses the issue through the concepts of limitation, ignorance and finitude. Rooted in panentheism, it asserts that nothing exists outside of Śiva. Evil is not an independent force but a consequence of Śiva's self-limitation in manifesting the world. Its existence reflects Śiva's absolute freedom (*svātantrya*), unfolding through the divine play of creation. Abhinavagupta and Utpaladeva do not treat evil as a theological problem like Western theodicy does. Since all phenomena are manifestations of Śiva's consciousness, the Pratyabhijñā framework lacks a dualistic opposition between good and evil. As Nelson observes, "Abhinavagupta and his tradition, in terms of theological discourse, have scarcely anything to say on evil as it might problematise conceptions of God, for it seems to them not a problem" (Nelson 2016, p. 2). Because Śiva is both transcendent and immanent, what is perceived as evil arises not from an external force but from ignorance (*ajñāna*), which distorts recognition of Śiva's omnipresence. This suffering and limitation are not contradictions to Śiva's nature but expressions of His self-awareness.

Dualities like good and evil, pleasure and pain, emerge from Śiva's creative will (*icchā*), but they are not ultimate oppositions—rather, they are relative distinctions that dissolve upon recognising the unity underlying all reality. Within the realm of *māyā*, evil arises from the fragmented perspective of individual consciousness, making it a temporary distortion rather than a fundamental flaw in creation. From Śiva's absolute consciousness, even suffering is subsumed within divine freedom, playing a role in the process of self-discovery. Unlike Western notions of evil as *privatio boni* (the absence of good), Pratyabhijñā acknowledges that evil has a provisional reality within *māyā*, though it is confined to finite

consciousness. For the limited subject (*paśu*), suffering appears real, but upon recognising unity with Śiva (*pratyabhijñā*), the distinction between good and evil dissolves. Both Utpaladeva and Abhinavagupta emphasise that suffering, though experienced as real, serves a functional role in recognition. In this view, even ignorance and suffering are expressions of Śiva's creative freedom, acting as catalysts for self-realisation.

Pratyabhijñā avoids the typical problem of evil by asserting that Śiva is both beyond and within creation. While evil exists within finitude, it does not compromise Śiva's freedom or unity. What appears as evil from a limited perspective is ultimately reconciled in divine consciousness, where all dualities dissolve in Śiva's unbroken self-awareness. This shifts the discussion from a moral opposition to an epistemological limitation: evil is real within manifestation but not ultimate. The suffering that arises from contracted consciousness serves a higher purpose, propelling individuals toward self-recognition. From this standpoint, the experience of evil is a necessary stage in self-realisation. Śiva's manifestation of finitude includes the possibility of suffering, but this suffering drives beings toward recognising their essence as Śiva. In this sense, evil and suffering have a teleological function, facilitating the rediscovery of one's innate divinity. Ultimately, Pratyabhijñā reframes the problem of evil as an issue of ignorance rather than a flaw in creation. Dualities such as good and evil are expressions of Śiva's freedom, and suffering is a necessary stage in the journey toward self-recognition, where all distinctions dissolve in non-dual consciousness.

3. The Philosophy of Karl Christian Friedrich Krause

Karl Christian Friedrich Krause (1781–1832) left posterity an impressive and astonishingly contemporary work of philosophical creativity, which not only covers numerous topics of theoretical and practical philosophy, but can also be seen in the history of philosophy as one of the first works from a European pen which, in the sense of intercultural philosophy, acknowledges the often overlooked philosophical resonance between Indian thought and European traditions, alongside the obvious influence of Greek philosophy, and combines them with Platonic metaphysics and Kant's transcendental philosophy to form a system of philosophy.[16] Today, however, Krause is largely forgotten in both German and Anglophone philosophy. This is all the more astonishing when one considers not only that Krause wrote seminal works in the fields of logic, animal ethics and the philosophy of law, for example, but also when one takes into account his influence in Spain and Latin America: In Spain and Latin America, Krause is regarded as one of the greatest German philosophers ever.[17] The reason for his esteem there is that Krause's philosophy was a major driving force behind Spanish and Latin American modernism and had an enormous influence on, if not made possible, parts of Latin American liberation philosophy and theology, as elaborated in the work of Lucio Gero, for example.[18] Even the Argentinian Jorge Mario Bergoglio, today known to a wider public as Pope Francis, shows subcutaneous traces of Krause's influence on his thinking, which is particularly evident in the encyclicals *Laudato Si* and *Fratelli tutti*. As Wollgast (1990, p. 71) states: 'No German philosopher has influenced the intellectual development of Spain and large parts of Latin America as strongly as Krause.'

3.1. Metaphysics of the Absolute in Krause

Krause was confident that "panentheism will be the one and only accepted, indeed the only valid system of science (...) since it provides the unfolding of the structure of the one pure, complete, and whole truth" (Krause 1890, p. 21). On Krause's panentheism, everything is in God, i.e., in the Absolute, because the Absolute is the one, the same, and whole being. If the Absolute is the one, the same, and whole being, then it follows, according to Krause, that the world, and therefore everything finite, is ultimately grounded

ontologically and epistemologically in the Absolute, and is thereby essentially similar to it. It also follows that the world, being grounded and limited by the Absolute, must, at the same time, be a metaphysical part of the Absolute and as such a relational-intrinsic determination of it. In order to be able to capture this relationship between, on the one hand, the Absolute as the one, the self-same and whole being and, on the other hand, the world as a finite relational-intrinsic determination of the Absolute, constituted and grounded by the Absolute, Krause distinguishes different perspectives on the Absolute and its relation to the world:

(1) Insofar as the world is thought of as a relational-intrinsic determination of the Absolute, the Absolute is thought of as the *Om-Essence*.[19]
(2) Insofar as the Absolute is thought of as the one whole and self-same being, together with its parts and their relations, it is thought of as the *Or-Essence*. *Or-Essence* is the thought of the one, infinite and unconditioned being, together with its parts and their relations, outside of which there is nothing.
(3) If the Absolute is thought of as a whole that has metaphysical priority over its parts, then the Absolute is thought of as the *Ur-Essence*: "God is also Ur-Essence, i.e., God as a whole being is prior to, and over and above, all that God [i.e., Or-Essence] is in, under, and through itself"(Krause 1828, p. 310).

Deploying the concepts of the different perspectives on the Absolute, Krause can clarify the dialectical relation between the world and the Absolute as follows: The fact that the world is *in* God means that it is what it is, because it is a metaphysical part of the Absolute: "I use here [. . .], following current usage, 'in' of finite beings and essences (*Wesen und Wesenheiten*), and thereby indicate that the higher whole is this finite, as its part. Therefore, this finite part is the same as the whole in pure essence. However, it is limited in such a way that the limit of the finite is in common with its whole. But this limit does not limit or circumscribe the whole as a whole (*diese Grenze aber nicht das Ganze als Ganzes begrenzt oder umgrenzt*)" (Krause 1869, p. 307). For God's relationship to the world, this understanding of the world's being in God, according to Krause, follows: "Through this, therefore, is proven the fundamentally important distinction between the following two propositions: *The world is outside of God,* and *The world is outside of God as the Ur-Essence*. The first sentence is fundamentally false, because apart from [*Or-Essence*] nothing is conceivable, in that the infinity and unconditionality of God would be denied by the slightest external appearance. But the other sentence: that the world is outside of and under God, insofar as God is *Ur-Essence*, states a fundamental essential property of God (*eine Grundwesenheit Gottes*)" (Krause 1828, p. 310).

That is: "I distinguish God from the world, as prior to, and over and above the world, that is, as Ur-Essence, God as Ur-Essence is demarcated, distinguished, from the whole world (*abgegrenzt unterschieden von der ganzen Welt*). Therefore, the world is thought outside of, and under God as Ur-Essence" (Krause 1828, p. 310). In more detail, based on the distinction between Or-Essence and Ur-Essence, Krause is able to infer: "Therefore, the old dispute about the relation of God to the world, 'whether God is extra-worldly, and the world is an extra-divine being, or not,' is satisfactorily solved. For, by distinguishing [the Absolute] from itself as Ur-Essence, it is seen that God, as one, is the self-same whole Or-Essence, neither outside nor above, nor on, nor in the world. But, certainly, in Himself, under Himself, and through Himself, God is also the world (*auch die Welt ist*). Also, God as Ur-Essence is outside and above the world. And the world is outside of Him as Ur-Essence. And, finally, God as Ur-Essence is also united with the world, united with Reason, with Nature, and with the union of both, as also with humanity" (Krause 1828, p. 401).

3.2. Bondage and Liberation

A necessary and sufficient condition to understand the truth of panentheism, according to Krause, is to obtain intellectual intuition of the Absolute. Without intellectual intuition of the Absolute, according to Krause, human beings are deluded about their true essence and true existence as being divine themselves. In more detail, according to Krause, there are four essential insights obtained in the intellectual intuition of the Absolute, which together lead to the liberation of the human being: (1) *The Primacy of Knowledge*: Knowledge, according to Krause, is a necessary condition for personal liberation. (2) *The Primacy of God*: God, that is, the ultimate foundation and ground of empirical reality, is the proper and, ultimately, the only object of knowledge and devotion. (3) *The Primacy of Existential Transformation*: There is a close connection between knowledge, spirituality, and the transformation of one's own existence because to gain knowledge of ultimate reality is also a kind of prayer and meditation. Knowledge of ultimate reality and religious devotion do not exclude but condition and enhance each other. (4) *The Proper Goal of Life*: The goal of life is to become similar to God because, ultimately, everything is an organic and integral part of the one divine being itself. He who has obtained these insights as part of the intellectual intuition of the Absolute is liberated in this very life.[20]

3.3. The Means of Liberation and the Role of the Teacher

Although, according to Krause, each individual is responsible for obtaining the vision of God themselves—"Everyone must find this basic insight within themselves; it could not be forced into them from the outside" (Krause 1869, p. 49)—he was aware that not everyone could easily obtain the intellectual intuition of the Absolute without a teacher at their hands. He, therefore, developed a methodological prolegomena, which aims to evoke each human being's ability to obtain intellectual intuition of the Absolute and thus enable them to liberate themselves from the metaphysical ignorance about their true nature. Krause calls this methodological prolegomena the "analytic-ascending part of science" and qualifies it thus: "The analytic-ascending part of science starts with those immediately certain recognitions, which we find in every consciousness, and through self-observation it proceeds steadily to higher recognitions until intellectual intuition is obtained, which has to happen according to this procedure if genuine insight into ultimate reality is possible for the human mind" (Krause 1868, p. 4).

In other words, the task of the analytic-ascending part of philosophy is to show that any human being is already always implicitly aware of the knowledge grasped explicitly in the intellectual intuition of the Absolute. To show this, Krause reflects on our transcendental constitution and points the reader to the conclusion that our concept of the Absolute is validated through the Absolute itself. As he argues, in a nutshell, "by way of being aware of this thought of the Absolute, we are at once aware that this thought, even as our own thought, cannot be grounded and caused through us ourselves, nor through any finite being. Instead, the possibility and actuality of this very thought can only be thought of as grounded through the content of this thought, that is, through the Absolute itself. (. . .) The reason is that according to the principle of sufficient reason the thought of the Absolute as a thought of a being, which is unconditioned, infinite and absolute Being cannot be considered other than being itself caused through the content of it, i.e., through the Absolute itself" (Krause 1869, p. 256). In metaphorical terms, recurring to the allegory of light, Krause describes the knowledge of God as follows: "This knowledge of God is pure, original and certain in itself; its light does not take its glow from another light—it bears witness to itself. Those who are pure of heart recognise and feel him, the One, the Eternal, and the world and humanity as his great work, as the eternal kingdom of God" (Krause 1820, p. 56).

Once the intellectual intuition of the Absolute is obtained, the proper part of philosophy, which Krause calls the "synthetic-descending part of science", is available to the human mind. It starts to unfold what is apprehended in the intuition of the Absolute: "Based on the recognition of the Absolute as apprehended in intellectual intuition the unfolding of every true recognition as being grounded in the one infinite und unbounded principle of being and recognition can be addressed as the sole task of the synthetic-descending- part of philosophy" (Krause 1869, p. 20). Because the intellectual intuition of the Absolute is the recognition of the highest principle of being and recognition it follows that the unfolding of this intuition provides a system of philosophy which itself is organic in the following sense: "The system of philosophy denotes the whole of recognition, in which every particular recognition, as a part of the system, on the one hand is united with every other recognition as well as on the other with the whole system of recognition as such. (. . .) And since parts, which within a whole are united amongst each other and with the whole as such, can be addressed as elements of an organism, it follows that we can address the whole of science as an organism of recognition" (Krause 1868, p. 1).

3.4. Purpose of Creation

If the Absolute is not opposed to the world, that is, if the world is a relational-intrinsic determination of the Absolute, and if the Absolute is everything finite in itself as a (metaphysical) part, then it follows, according to Krause, that the spatio-temporal history of the world is an intrinsic-relational determination of the Absolute as well. What happens in the world is not without consequences for the Absolute, because the history of the world is metaphysically nothing other than the one life of the Absolute; everything that happens in the world is part of the one divine life, because sensu stricto nothing is outside the Absolute: "God is in Himself the one life, supremely as Ur-Essence, but then as being in Himself the organism of all final-beings or finite beings (*Endwesen oder endlichen Wesen*). Therefore, the one life of God contains the life of Reason, the life of Nature, and both united as the life of Humanity" (Krause 1874, p. 188). Because, furthermore, according to Krause, the Absolute as the one self-same and whole Being is the free cause of its infinite life, it follows that every free finite being ipso facto participates in the infinite freedom of the Absolute. As Krause says: "God freely causes the steady becoming of His one life [that is, the steady cause of the existence of the world as an expression of God Himself, BPG], and, like Him, all finite beings also cause their inner finite life in Him with finite freedom. [. . .] The one life of God is an organic whole. And all finite beings, insofar as they live, are also united with each other, and with God as the Ur-Essence. And every finite life of every finite being is a finite organic whole, akin to the one organic life of God, therefore also the life of every human being and the life of humanity" (Krause 1874, p. 188).

On Krause's panentheism, the freedom of each human individual, in other words, is nothing but a finite part of God's absolute freedom, who is every finite being in Himself: "The freedom that I have is God's; a primal (*urendlicher*), inner part of the one freedom of the Absolute (*der Einen Freiheit Wesens*). For I am not an independent being (*alleinständiges Wesen*), but the Absolute in itself is me (*Wesen ist in sich ich*). [. . .] This [freedom] is an originally finite (*urendliche*) freedom that God has 'allowed (lent)' (*'gelassen (verliehen)'*) to himself, [as being in himself the world]" (Krause 1892b, p. 125). According to Krause, empirical reality ultimately thus should be understood as a divine poem in which humanity plays a significant and substantial role: "The world is an essential poem of God, as the original artist" (Krause 1892a, p. 271).

Human beings, in other words, because God is them in Himself, are obliged to use their freedom to realize their eternal divine essence in the temporal world and to turn empirical reality into a mirror of the one infinite and unconditioned divine being. In pursuing this task

of participating in the divine narration, according to Krause, human beings are specifically called upon to build the covenant of humanity, which is the ideal of a cosmopolitan civil society encompassing all people and which is based on the absolute equality of all people regardless of origin, gender, age, culture, religion or physical constitution: "All human beings, and only all human beings, are the whole of humanity on earth; all human beings, without distinction of age, sex, class, character, nation, age or circumstance, at all possible stages of human formation, All are and remain members of the One Humanity on earth. They are therefore all capable of entering into the society of men. The whole of humanity on earth can and should for this very reason become conscious of itself in the Human Federation; all its members can and should work together as a whole in order to be and live as One Humanity" (Krause 2009, p. 168).

3.5. The Question of Evil

Evil, according to Krause, is that which is contrary to life and therefore contrary to the realisation and actualisation of the essence of finite entities, each of which, as being divine in itself, has a natural right to realise what it is supposed to be. It is, for example, evil to withdraw water, food or education from human beings, because this prevents humans from realising their essence as moral and rational animals.

On Krause's panentheism, the possibility of evil in the world is a necessary consequence of the world's finitude, that is, the possibility of evil in the world is due to the fact that the world is the realm of finitude, and is limited in infinite ways; as Krause says: the world is infinitely finite. Therefore, because the world is itself part of the all-encompassing divine being—the world's infinite finitude is encompassed by the infinite infinity of the divine being—it follows that on Krause's panentheism, the possibility of evil in the world is part of the divine essence itself. Although God, considered as Orwesen, that is, considered as the one, self and whole being, is free of evil as such, the possibility of evil belongs to the organic essence of the divine being; it belongs to the inner structure of the divine organism, where finitude has its place.

Evil, though, is not only a possibility. The limitation of the world too often leads to human ignorance of their divine nature and therefore to ignorance of what is the right thing to do. As Krause says: "But since, according to the eternal law of life in God, the life of all finite beings is formed in the limitation of the world, so that man and the societies of men forget for a time the true, the good and the beautiful, God and their own nature, and are then guided by merely subordinate individual instincts according to the hope of pleasure and the fear of pain in determining their will: they then do not determine themselves purely according to the moral law, and do not choose with freedom the good from the good, but only that which is according to their desires, or even that which they erroneously consider good, although it is intrinsically contrary to life, that is, evil" (Krause 1829, p. 540). Evil, according to Krause, when and where it occurs in the world, provides an opportunity to grow in character, to overcome it, and thus to become ever more similar to God Himself. As Krause says: "The human race must [. . .] grow little by little, spread over the whole earth, freely form all individual capacities and bring them to high excellence. The peoples must [. . .] form themselves independently. Then they will fight evil (*Uebel*) freely" (Krause 1900, p. 4).

4. Commonalities and Differences: Non-Dual Śaivism and the Panentheism of Karl Christian Friedrich Krause

Based on the brief outline of some of the central tenets of non-dual Śaivism and the panentheism of Karl Christian Friedrich Krause, it is possible to identify systematic commonalities in their philosophical approaches to ultimate reality and the goal of human

life. However, the main difference between the two systems of philosophy, concerns the question wheter the "I" (*Ego*) is relatively or absolutely identical to the Absolute.[21] In non-dual Śaivism, the "I" is absolutely identical to the Absolute; in Krause it is not.

4.1. Commonalities

Both non-dual Śaivism and Krause's panentheism are built on the same philosophical insight, on which outside of the Absolute (God, Śiva, Oressence) nothing exists, and nothing is conceivable. This insight in turn leads both of them to the philosophical need to identify finite empirical reality either as a (metaphysical) part of the Absolute or as a manifestation or expression of the Absolute itself, which manifestation, however, is not to be thought of as ontologically separated from or ontologically added to the Absolute. Let us call this feature Axiom 1: *All of reality is divine*.

As a consequence of their model of the Absolute as all-encompassing, both non-dual Śaivism and Krause affirm a panentheistic system of philosophy which not only holds that all finite entities are in God, but that God at the same time is both immanent in the finite world and transcends it as its ultimate ground: *That God is the world 'in' Himself as Om-Essence*, and *that the world is the manifestation of Śiva* on the one hand, and *that God as Or-Essence is beyond the world*, and *that Śiva is more than what he manifests as the finite world* on the other, express the same philosophical insight into the structure of ultimate reality. Let us call this Axiom 2: *The divine is both immanent and transcendent to finite reality*.

In light of Axiom 1 and Axiom 2, the perspectives of non-dual Śaivism and Krause's philosophy, on how to address the different aspects of the Absolute, can also be mapped onto each other: While in non-dual Śaivism the difference between Śiva and *śakti* is the difference between the Absolute as such (*śiva*), on the one hand, and its creative powerto manifest the universe (*śakti*), on the other, in Krause's panentheism this difference is expressed as the distinction between *Or-Essence*, understood as the Absolute as such, and *Ur-Essence*, seen as the causative aspect of the Absolute, which metaphysically grounds the finite world. Let us call this Axiom 3: *The divine appears to the human mind as a vexing image*.

On both non-dual Śaivism and Krause's panentheism, furthermore, the Absolute is not only mere objectless consciousness, it is not *nirguṇa brahman* (Brahman without attributes), but it is the epitome of self-consciousness, *saguna brahman* (Brahman with attributes): In fact, it is the one originally self-conscious being, which knows itself completely, and through this self-knowledge knows every finite entity as belonging to its very own essence: *Or-Essence*, that is Śiva, knows that He is everything in and trough Himself. Let us call this Axiom 4: *The divine is the one paradigmatic fully self-conscious subject*.

When it comes to the existence of the world, another commonality appears: Both non-dual Śaivism and Krause assume that the existence of finite reality is embedded in profound metaphysical freedom and, at the same time, necessary in its very existence: For non-dual Śaivism, the chief characteristic of God is his freedom, his autonomy, and his independence. Consequently, the creation of the finite world is the expression of Śiva's absolute freedom (*svātantrya*). However, *to freely create a world* belongs to Śiva's nature and finds its expression in the cyclic procedure of creating and annihilating the world. According to Krause, basically the same situation occurs: God freely creates the world, because God is the one truly unconditioned being, which could not be conditioned to create the world by anything apart from his own nature: Therefore, God freely creates the world, but to create a world belongs to the divine essence itself, since finitude is part of the essence of the Absolute considered as Om-Essence. Let us call this Axiom 5: *The divine is the free cause of the finite world, although creating a world belongs to the essence of the divine.*

Based on their shared insights concerning the metaphysical foundations of all of reality, expressed in Axioms 1–5, it seems only natural to find further commonalities between Non-

dual Śaivism and Krause's panentheism concerning their respective stance on the ultimate purpose of all of creation: non-dual Śaivism holds that the ultimate purpose of creation is the free play of Śiva's nature. Krause, in a similar vein, argues that the purpose of creation is for God to freely realise his eternal divine essence in a temporally infinite universe. On neither account is the purpose of creation something external to the Godhead, but rather a self-realisation of the infinite divine being which, through the creation of the finite world, mediates Himself with Himself as an expression of His infinite divine life. Let us call this Axiom 6: *The ultimate purpose of creation is the free unfolding of the eternal divine nature in an infinite temporal universe.*

Based on this stance on the ultimate purpose of all of creation, non-dual Śaivism and Krause specify the particular purpose of human life as follows: In non-dual Śaivism, the finite being, that is, the limited self has "forgotten" its true nature as Śiva and the purpose of spiritual practice is to recognise one's identity with God and regain knowledge of one's true Self, which is why it is called the system of recognition (*pratyabhijñā)*—the purpose of human life is to recognise one's self as God. Regarding the purpose of human beings, Krause argues that the purpose of human life is to recognise that God in Himself is my Self, which on Krause's panentheism entails recognising to do the good just because it is good, since this is what it means to freely contribute to the realisation of the eternal divine nature in a temporal universe. Let us call this Axiom 7: *The purpose of human life is to recognise one's divinity.*

Apart from their commonalities concerning their metaphysical outlook on ultimate reality and the purpose of creation, non-dual Śaivism and Krause's philosophy also agree on the importance of knowing God and the liberating effects of grasping the true nature of the divine being. While non-dual Śaivism stresses that a mystical experience or contemplation of God, which transcends reason, is necessary for personal liberation in this life, Krause emphasises that only the intellectual intuition of the Absolute liberates the individual human being and enables it to live in full harmony with the divine being in this life. Although at first it might seem that there is a difference between the concept of a mystical experience of God and the concept of the intellectual intuition of God, a closer look reveals that both terms refer to the same and unique act of recognition in which God Himself is grasped as far as it is possible for finite beings like us, in such a way that the ultimate cause of this recognition is understood to be God Himself. Let us call this Axiom 8: *The nature of the divine being is accessible in and through a special act of immediate intuition, ultimately caused by the divine being itself.*

Although, according to Krause, any human being is capable of this intuition of the Absolute, Krause would agree with non-dual Śaivism that many human beings will need a teacher to obtain knowledge of ultimate reality. Let us call this Axiom 9: *A teacher can evoke the special act of immediate intuition of the divine being in his fellow humans*.

4.2. Differences

Based on the above analysis, it is no surprise that it is hard to find crucial differences between non-dual Śaivism and Krause's panentheism. Axioms 1–9 together form a single paradigm of ethico-metaphysical philosophical reflection, which conditions, roughly, a particular outlook on reality as a whole. Non-dual Śaivism and Krause think along the same lines. However, the devil is in the details, and there may be two differences between Krause and non-dual Śaivism, which, depending on one's own context, may turn out to be marginal.

The first difference is revealed through a closer look at Axiom 7: *The purpose of human life is to recognise one's divinity.* For Krause, to realise one's own divinity is to realise one's own freedom, which in turn, according to Krause, entails the insight that one's freedom

should be used according to the principle of morality (*Sittlichkeit*), since Krause was enough of a Kantian to hold the deep conceptual relation between freedom and morality. The ultimate purpose of human life, in light of their divinity, then, is for humans to act morally and to realise the good just because it is good, and for no other motivation. Consequently, because God is every finite entity in Himself, the self-realisation of the divine being, which is all of reality in and through Himself, is the self-realisation of freedom according to the principle of morality, which entails that all of reality has a teleological and normative spin to it. Therefore, Krause would add Axiom 7a to accompany Axiom 7, in the following vein: Axiom 7a: *Realizing one's divinity entails a teleological and normative outlook on all of reality and leads to the need to live a life according to the principle of morality.*

While non-dual Śaivism would agree with Krause's premise that recognising one's divinity is synonymous with recognising one's freedom, it departs significantly from the idea that this freedom entails adherence to a binding moral principle. The non-dual Śaiva corpus explicitly challenges dualistic ethical frameworks, as exemplified in the twenty-ninth chapter of Abhinavagupta's *Tantrāloka*, which prescribes transgressive rituals involving "impure" substances (such as alcohol) and antinomian practices (such as ritualised sexuality). These acts are not endorsements of amorality, but pedagogical tools designed to dismantle rigid distinctions between purity and impurity, sacred and profane, good and evil. Through the integration of opposites, the practitioner comes to experientially realise that all phenomena—including the morally contested—are expressions of Śiva's singular, non-dual consciousness. This recognition renders conventional moral categories provisional rather than absolute and subverts the Vedic-brahmanical ethics of obligation.

Non-dual Śaiva metaphysics further complicates the notion of a universal moral principle by positing Śiva as the sole agent (*kartṛ*), whose free and playful creativity (*krīḍā*) encompasses all dualities, including those of virtue and vice. Yet, to characterise this tradition as amoral would be mistaken. Scholars may have too readily dismissed it as lacking an ethical foundation.[22] For instance, *Tantrāloka* 8.288-289ab explicitly lists virtues such as nonviolence (*ahiṃsā*), truthfulness (*satya*), and rectitude (*ṛjutā*) as essential for the unliberated individual (*paśu*), who remains bound by karmic laws.[23] For the aspirant, ethical discipline serves to refine awareness and cultivate the recognition of one's innate divinity. Even the liberated being (*jīvanmukta*)—though no longer constrained by *karma*—is portrayed as embodying compassion (*karuṇā*), truthfulness, and selfless service. However, in this case, ethical behaviour arises not from duty or obligation but as a spontaneous expression of non-dual awareness. The *jīvanmukta* is an instrument of Śiva's will, free from attachment to moral categories or outcomes. Thus, while Krause's Axiom 7a links divinity with a teleological and moral order, non-dual Śaivism offers a different, though not entirely opposed, view: Axiom 7b: *Realising one's divinity reveals the non-dual nature of all existence, dissolving the illusion of separateness. For the unliberated, ethical conduct purifies and prepares the mind for this realisation. For the liberated, morality arises not as a duty but as the spontaneous outflow of awakened awareness—effortless, uncontrived, and inseparable from the play of Śiva.*

Another critical difference between the two systems of philosophy concerns the logic of identity and the mereological interpretation of the consequences of Axiom 1, Axiom 4, and Axiom 7. On the one hand, Krause was quite clear that the Ego is not identical to Or-Essence: The Ego, as any other entity apart from Or-Essence, is finite and conditioned and therefore cannot be God Himself, who is unconditioned and infinite.[24] Therefore, Krause's panentheism entails *that God in Himself is the Ego*, and that the divinity of the Ego, as the one of any other finite and conditioned entity, consists in its being a metaphysical part of the one infinite and unconditioned divine being. As its metaphysical part, the Ego is only relatively identical to the Absolute, not absolutely identical to the Absolute as such. Let's call this Axiom 10: *The Ego is relatively, but not absolutely identical to the Absolute as such.*

In stark contrast, non-dual Śaivism asserts the absolute identity of the individual with Śiva. Liberation (*mokṣa*) involves recognising oneself not merely as "like Śiva" (*śivatulya*) but as Śiva Himself in every respect—including as the efficient and material cause of the universe (Sanderson 1992, p. 290). Let us call this Axiom 10a: *The Ego is absolutely identical to the Absolute as such*. This distinction mirrors the historical debate within Śaiva traditions. The dualist Śaiva Siddhānta (akin to Krause) holds that even post-liberation, individuality persists; the goal is to become similar to Śiva (*śivatulya*), not identical. Non-dual Śaivism, however, rejects this compromise: the liberated soul is Śiva, leaving no ontological distinction. These divergent views directly shape Axiom 7: *The purpose of human life is to recognise one's divinity.* For non-dualists, this recognition entails realising one's identity as the very creator of the universe. For Krause (and the dualist Śaiva Siddhānta), it means achieving divine likeness without surrendering individuality.

5. Conclusions: Panentheism as Indian Philosophia Perennis

There are astonishing similarities between non-dual Śaivism and Krause's panentheism. Both agree on a set of fundamental assumptions belonging to a perennial philosophy that enables the liberation of human beings by emphasising their divine nature and the divine nature of all finite reality. Before outlining these axioms, it is important to note that this comparative study not only highlights profound philosophical affinities and divergences between these two systems but also exemplifies how placing distint traditions in dialogue can enrich cross-cultural philosophy of religion. By illuminating each system's unique approach to the Absolute, creation, and human self-realisation, such engagement opens new avenues for understanding perennial themes in the philosophy of religion beyond conventional doctrinal boundaries.

Axiom 1: All of reality is divine.
Axiom 2: The divine is both immanent and transcendent to finite reality.
Axiom 3: The divine appears to the human mind as a vexing image.
Axiom 4: The divine is the one paradigmatic fully self-conscious subject.
Axiom 5: The divine is the free cause of the finite world, although creating a world belongs to the essence of the divine.
Axiom 6: The ultimate purpose of creation is the free unfolding of the eternal divine nature in an infinite temporal universe.
Axiom 7: The purpose of the life of humans is to recognise their divinity.
Axiom 8: The nature of the divine being is accessible in and through a special act of immediate intuition, ultimately caused by the divine being itself.
Axiom 9: A teacher can evoke the special act of immediate intuition of the divine being in his fellow humans.

The difference between non-dual Śaivism and Krause's panentheism seems to concern the particular specifications of the purpose of human life and the relation of identity between the Ego and the Absolute as such.

Krause would argue for the truth of Axioms 7a and Axiom 10:

Axiom 7a: Realising one's divinity entails a teleological and normative outlook on all of reality and leads to the need to live a life according to the principle of morality.
Axiom 10: The Ego is relatively, but not absolutely identical to the Absolute as such.

Non-Dual Śaivism, in contrast, would argue for the truth of Axiom 7b and Axiom 10a:

Axiom 7b: Realising one's divinity reveals the non-dual nature of all existence, dissolving the illusion of separateness. For the unliberated, ethical conduct purifies and prepares the mind for this realisation. For the liberated, morality arises not as a duty but as the

spontaneous outflow of awakened awareness—effortless, uncontrived, and inseparable from the play of Śiva.

Axiom 10a: The Ego is absolutely identical to the Absolute as such.

Author Contributions: K.H. is responsible for Section 2, B.P.G. is responsible for Section 3. The rest of the paper is written together by K.H. and B.P.G. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research was funded by the John Templeton Foundation grant number 62954. Theopinions expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the views of the John Templeton Foundation.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: No data were collected for this article.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declares no conflict of interest.

Notes

1 Non-dual Śaivism of Kashmir, often somewhat imprecisely referred to as 'Kashmir Śaivism,' encompasses a range of Tantric Śaiva traditions that flourished in India during the early medieval period, approximately between the fitfth and thriteenth centuries. The term can be misleading, as these traditions did not emerge exclusively in Kashmir and include both dualistic and non-dualistic systems centered on the worship of Śiva. Among the non-dual systems, the Pratyabhijñā tradition—primarily an exegetical and philosophical articulation of the Trika system—emerged in the late ninth century with Somānanda and developed especially during the tenth and eleventh centuries through figures such as Utpaladeva, Abhinavagupta, and Kṣemarāja, with its influence continuing into the thirteenth century. For a comprehensive analysis, I refer the reader to the work of Alexis Sanderson, whose contributions to the field are invaluable (see Sanderson 1988, 2007, 2009, 2015).

2 Derived from the Sanskrit root *mṛś* ("to touch, feel, perceive, reflect, investigate"), *vimarśa* signifies that absolute consciousness is inherently self-aware. Scholars translate it variously: Alper (1987) as "judgement", Dyczkowski (1987) and Torella ([1994] 2013) as "reflective awareness", Sanderson (1988) as "self-cognition", Ratié (2016c) as "act of realisation", Timalsina (2020) as "reflexivity", and Biernacki (2023) as "active awareness". These interpretations highlight *vimarśa* as the self-referential and self-grasping nature of consciousness—an awareness that not only illuminates but also evaluates, recognizes, and dynamically engages with itself.

3 Hereafter, when I cite ĪPK I refer to Torella ([1994] 2013)'s critical edition and annotated translation of the *Īśvarapratyabhijñākārikā* with Utpaladeva's *Vṛtti*.

4 ĪPK 1.5.11: *svabhāvamavabhāsasya vimarśaṃ viduranyathā | prakāśo'rthoparakto'pi sphaṭikādijaḍopamaḥ ||*.

5 PS 12–13: *darpaṇabimbe yadvannagaragrāmādi citramavibhāgi | bhāti vibhāgenaiva ca parasparaṃ darpaṇādapi ca || vimalatamaparamabhairavabodhāttadvadvibhāgaśūnyamapi | anyonyaṃ ca tato 'pi ca vibhaktamābhāti jagadetat ||*.

6 ĪPK 1.5.7: *cidātmaiva hi devo'ntaḥsthitamicchāvaśādbahiḥ | yogīva nirupādānamarthajātaṃ prakāśayet ||*.

7 This "forgetfullness" is not to be taken literally as a cognitive deficiency. In the Pratyabhijñā tradition, it refers to a self-imposed veiling—an expression of Śiva's absolute freedom (*svātantrya*) to manifest multiplicity and limitation while remaining unchanged in essence. The apparent paradox of the Absolute "forgetting" itself is addressed within the tradition as part of Śiva's playful self-concealment (*tirodhāna*) and eventual self-recognition (*pratyabhijñā*).

8 Hereafter, when I cite *Tantrāloka* (TĀ), I refer to Dyczkowski (2023)'s translation and explanatory notes on *Tantrāloka* (Volume 1, Chapter 1) with Jayaratha's commentary.

9 TĀ 1.26: *ato jñeyasya tattvasya sāmastyenāprathātmakam | jñānameva tadajñānaṃ śivasūtreṣu bhāṣitam ||*.

10 TĀ 1.22: *iha tāvatsamasteṣu śāstreṣu parigīyate | ajñānaṃ saṃsṛterheturjñānaṃ mokṣaikakāraṇam ||*.

11 PH 1.4: *citisaṃkocātmā cetano 'pi saṃkucitaviśvamayaḥ |*

12 TĀ 1.140: *ataḥ kaṃcitpramātāraṃ prati prathayate vibhuḥ | pūrṇameva nijaṃ rūpaṃ kaṃcidaṃśāṃśikākramāt ||*.

13 TĀ 1.147: *yathā visphuritadṛśāmanusandhiṃ vināpyalam | bhāti bhāvaḥ sphuṭastadvatkeṣāmapi śivātmatā ||*.

14 TĀ 1.170: *uccārakaraṇadhyānavarṇasthānaprakalpanaiḥ | yo bhavetsa samāveśaḥ samyagāṇava ucyate ||*.

15 PH 1.1: *citiḥ svatantrā viśvasiddhihetuḥ|*

16 Cf. Göcke (2018, 2024b) for a general introduction into the philosophy of Karl Christian Friedrich Krause'.

17 Cf. Dierksmeier (2013, 2022) for a further analyses of Krause's impact on Spanish and Latin American philosophy. Cf. Birnbacher (2022) for Krause's theory of animal rights, and Meixner (2022) for an analysis of the importance of Krause's logic.

18 Although Krause was brought up as a protestant, Christian doctrine only plays a minor role in his system of philosophy. Based on his panentheistic philosophy, Krause, for instance, was quite critical of the assumption that Jesus of Nazareth is the only

begotten son of God. On Krause's account, each and every human being can realize their divinity as much as Jesus of Nazareth did: To realize one's divinity, for Krause, meant to realize one's true humanity. Cf. Göcke (2024a, 2025) and Medhananda (2022) for further analysis.

[19] According to Krause, the prefixes "Om", "Or", and "Ur" both originate in Sanskrit and belong to a proper German scientific language (*Wissenschaftssprache*). They denote different aspects of an organic whole: "Om", used as a prefix to essence, designates the unity of the parts of that essence, "Or", used as a prefix to essence, designates the totality of that essence, and "Ur" denotes that essence insofar as the whole has priority over its parts.

[20] Cf. Göcke (2024a) for a further analysis of Krause's general stance on Indian philosophy.

[21] For an analysis of Krause's influence on Arthur Schopenhauer and his understanding of Indian philosophy, cf. Göcke (2020).

[22] I am grateful to Brett Parris (2025) for challenging the assumption that Pratyabhijñā lacks an ethical foundation, and I refer the reader to his recent doctoral thesis: *Yogic Metaethics: Comparing Patañjali's Yoga, Nondual Śaivism, and Vedānta*, DPhil thesis, Faculty of Theology & Religion, University of Oxford, 2025, pp. viii + 292.

[23] TĀ 8.288-289ab: *bhuvanaṃ dehadharmāṇāṃ daśānāṃ vigrahāṣṭakāt | ahiṃsā satyamasteyaṃ brahmākalkākrudho guroḥ ||śuśrūṣāśaucasantoṣā ṛjuteti daśoditāḥ |*.

[24] Cf. Krause (1889, p. 56): "'Now if the basic view: I, were the principle, then this thought: I, would have to be quite sufficient in itself,—no other thought than I would have to be possible; for even the thought of something other than the I is the indication to the I that the thought of the I does not concern all thoughts. Accordingly, the basic view: I, cannot be regarded as the principle of the one whole science".

References

Alper, Harvey P. 1987. Svabhāvam avabhāsasya vimarśam: Judgment as a Transcendental Category in Utpaladeva's Śaiva Theology. *Adyar Library Bulletin* 51: 176–41.

Bansat-Boudon, Lyne, and Kamalesha D. Tripathi. 2011. *An Introduction to Tantric Philosophy: The Paramārthasāra of Abhinavagupta with the Commentary of Yogarāja*. Critical Edition and Annotated Translation. London: Routledge.

Biernacki, Loriliai. 2023. *The Matter of Wonder: Abhinavagupta's Panentheism and the New Materialism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Birnbacher, Dieter. 2022. Karl Christian Friedrich Krause on Animal Rights. *European Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 14. [CrossRef]

Dierksmeier, Claus. 2013. Krausism. In *A Companion to Latin American Philosipohy*. Edited by Susana Nuccetelli, Ofelia Schutte and Otávio Bueno. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 110–23.

Dierksmeier, Claus. 2022. Krause's Ethics as a Precursor to Capability Theory. *European Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 14: 83–107. [CrossRef]

Dyczkowski, Mark. 1987. *The Doctrine of Vibration: An Analysis of the Doctrines and Practices of Kashmir Shaivism*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Dyczkowski, Mark. 2023. *Tantrāloka: The Light on and of the Tantras*. Commentary by Jayaratha. Translated by Mark S. G. Dyczkowski. Independently published. vol. 1, chp. 1.

Göcke, Benedikt Paul. 2018. *The Panentheism of Karl Christian Friedrich Krause (1781–1832). From Transcendental Philosophy to Metaphysics*. Oxford and Berlin: Peter Lang.

Göcke, Benedikt Paul. 2020. Karl Christian Friedrich Krause's Influence on Schopenhauer's Philosophy. In *The Oxford Handbook of Schopenhauer*. Edited by Robert Wicks. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 29–48.

Göcke, Benedikt Paul. 2024a. Indian in Spirit? Karl Christian Friedrich Krause's Panentheism and the Vedic Traditions. In *Panentheism in Indian and Western Thought. Cosmopolitan Intervention*. Edited by Benedikt Paul Göcke and Swami Medhananda. London: Routledge, pp. 164–95.

Göcke, Benedikt Paul. 2024b. *Panentheism and Cosmopolitanism. A Short Introduction into the Philosophy of Karl Christian Friedrich Krause (1781–1832)*. Berlin: Peter Lang.

Göcke, Benedikt Paul. 2025. Freemasonry as the Nucleus of the Human League—Karl Christian Friedrich Krause's Interpretation of Regular Freemasonry as a Precursor of a Cosmopolitan Civil Society. *Religions* 16: 600. [CrossRef]

Krause, Karl Christian Friedrich. 1820. *Höhere Vergeistigung der echt überlieferten Grundsymbolik der Freimaurerei in Zwölf Logenvorträgen*. Dresden: Arnoldische Kunst-und Buchhandlung.

Krause, Karl Christian Friedrich. 1828. *Vorlesungen Über das System der Philosophie*. Göttingen: Dieterische Buchhandlung.

Krause, Karl Christian Friedrich. 1829. *Vorlesungen Über die Grundwahrheiten der Wissenschaft, Zugleich in Ihrer Beziehung zu dem Leben. Nebst Einer Kurzen Darstellung und Würdigung der Bisherigen Systeme der Philosophie, Vornehmlich der Neusten von Kant, Fichte, Schelling und Hegel, und der Lehre Jacobi's*. Göttingen: Dieterische Buchhandlung.

Krause, Karl Christian Friedrich. 1868. *Erneute Vernunftkritik*. Prague: Verlag von F. Tempsky.

Krause, Karl Christian Friedrich. 1869. *Der zur Gewissheit der Gotteserkenntnis als des Höchsten Wissenschaftsprinzips Emporleitende Theil der Philosophie*. Prague: F. Tempsky.

Krause, Karl Christian Friedrich. 1874. *Das System der Rechtsphilosophie. Vorlesungen für Gebildete aus Allen Ständen*. Herausgegeben von Karl David August Röder. Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus.

Krause, Karl Christian Friedrich. 1889. *Zur Geschichte der Neueren Philosophischen Systeme*. Aus dem handschriftlichen Nachlasse des Verfassers, herausgegeben von Paul Hohlfeld und August Wünsche. Leipzig: Otto Schulze.

Krause, Karl Christian Friedrich. 1890. *Das Eigenthümliche der Wesenlehre nebst Nachrichten zur Geschichte der Aufnahme Derselben, Vornehmlich von Seiten Deutscher Philosophen*. Aus dem handschriftlichen Nachlasse des Verfassers herausgegeben von Dr. Paul Hohlfeld und Dr. August Wünsche. Leipzig: Otto Schulze.

Krause, Karl Christian Friedrich. 1892a. *Anschauungen oder Lehren und Entwürfe zur Höherbildung des Menschheitlebens*. Aus dem Handschriftllichen Nachlasse des Verfassers herausgegeben von Dr. Paul Hohlfeld und Dr. August Wünsche. Band 3. Leipzig: Otto Schulze.

Krause, Karl Christian Friedrich. 1892b. *Zur Religionsphilosophie und speculativen Theologie*. aus dem handschriftlichen Nachlasse des Verfassers herausgegeben von Paul Hohlfeld und August Wünsche. Leipzig: Otto Schulze.

Krause, Karl Christian Friedrich. 1900. *Der Menschheitbund Nebst Anhang und Nachträgen*. Aus dem Handschriftliche Nachlasse von Karl Chr. Fr. Krause herausgegeben von Richard Vetter. Berlin: Verlag von Emil Felber.

Krause, Karl Christian Friedrich. 2009. *Philosophisch-freimaurerische Schriften 1808–1832*. Edited by Johannes Seidel S. J., Enrique M. Urena, Erich Fuchs and Pedro Alvarez Lazaro. Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog.

Medhananda, Swami. 2022. Panentheism and the 'Most Nonsensical Superstition' of Polytheism: A Critical Examination of K. C. F. Krause's Reception of Vedānta and Hindu Religion. *European Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 14: 187–208. [CrossRef]

Meixner, Uwe. 2022. K. C. F. Krause: The Combinatorian as Logician. *European Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 14. [CrossRef]

Nelson, Lance. 2016. Is God Good? Aquinas, Śamkara, Abhinavagupta, Balinese Śaivism, and the Problematics of the Argument from Evil. *Journal of Hindu-Christian Studies* 29: 3. [CrossRef]

Nemec, John. 2011. *The Ubiquitous Śiva: Somānanda's Śivadr̥ṣṭi and His Tantric Interlocutors*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Parris, Brett W. 2025. Yogic Metaethics: Comparing Patañjali's Yoga, Nondual Śaivism, and Vedānta. Ph.D. thesis, Faculty of Theology & Religion, University of Oxford, Oxford, UK; pp. viii + 292.

Ratié, Isabelle. 2016a. Some Hitherto Unknown Fragments of Utpaladeva's Vivṛti (I): On the Buddhist Controversy over the Existence of Other Conscious Streams. In *Utpaladeva, Philosopher of Recognition*. Edited by Raffaele Torella and Bettina Bäumer. New Delhi & Shimla: DK Printworld in Association with the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, pp. 224–56.

Ratié, Isabelle. 2016b. Some Hitherto Unknown Fragments of Utpaladeva's Vivṛti (III): On Memory and Error. In *Around Abhinavagupta: Aspects of the Intellectual History of Kashmir from the Ninth to the Eleventh Century*. Edited by Eli Franco and Isabelle Ratié. Leipziger Studien zu Kultur und Geschichte Süd- und Zentralasiens. Berlin: LIT Verlag, pp. 375–400.

Ratié, Isabelle. 2016c. Utpaladeva and Abhinavagupta on the Freedom of Consciousness. In *The Oxford Handbook of Indian Philosophy*. Edited by Jonardon Ganeri. Oxford: Oxford University Press, chp. 23.

Ratié, Isabelle. 2020. Some Hitherto Unknown Fragments of Utpaladeva's Vivṛti (II): Against the Existence of External Objects. In *Śaivism and the Tantric Traditions: Essays in Honour of Alexis G.J.S. Sanderson*. Edited by Dominic Goodall, Shaman Hatley, Harunaga Isaacson and Srilata Raman. Leiden and Boston: Brill.

Ratié, Isabelle. 2021. *Utpaladeva on the Power of Action: A First Edition, Annotated Translation and Study of Īśvarapratyabhijñāvivṛti*. Edited by Michael Witzel. Harvard Oriental Series; Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, vol. 96, pp. xv + 395, chp. 2.1.

Ratié, Isabelle. 2022. Some Hitherto Unknown Fragments of Utpaladeva's Vivṛti (IV): On Non-being and Imperceptible Demons. In *'Verità e Bellezza': Essays in Honour of Raffaele Torella*. Edited by Francesco Sferra and Vincenzo Vergiani. Napoli: UniorPress, vol. 2, pp. 929–64.

Sanderson, Alexis. 1988. Śaivism and the Tantric Traditions. In *The World's Religions*. Edited by Stewart R. Sutherland, Leslie Houlden, Peter Clarke and Friedhelm Hardy. London: Routledge, pp. 660–704.

Sanderson, Alexis. 1992. The Doctrine of Mālinīvijayottaratantra. In *Ritual and Speculation in Early Tantrism: Studies in Honour of André Padoux*. Edited by Teun Goudriaan. Albany: SUNY Press, pp. 281–311.

Sanderson, Alexis. 2007. The Śaiva Exegesis of Kashmir. In *Mélanges Tantriques à la Mémoire d'Hélène Brunner/Tantric Studies in Memory of Hélène Brunner*. Edited by Dominic Goodall and André Padoux. Pondicherry: Institut français d'Indologie/École française d'Extrême-Orient, pp. 231–443.

Sanderson, Alexis. 2009. The Śaiva Age: The Rise and Dominance of Śaivism during the Early Medieval Period. In *Genesis and Development of Tantrism*. Edited by Shingo Einoo. Institute of Oriental Culture Special Series; Tokyo: Institute of Oriental Culture, University of Tokyo, vol. 23, pp. 41–350.

Sanderson, Alexis. 2015. Śaiva Texts. In *Brill's Encyclopedia of Hinduism*. Edited by Knut A. Jacobsen. Brill: Leiden & Boston, vol. 6, pp. 10–42.

Singh, Jaideva. 1963. *Pratyabhijnāhr̥dayam: The Secret of Self-Recognition*. Critical Edition and Annotated Translation. Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass.

Timalsina, Sthaneshwar. 2020. Vimarśa: The Concept of Reflexivity in the Philosophy of Utpala and Abhinavagupta. *Acta Orientalia* 80: 98–121. [CrossRef]

Torella, Raffaele. 2013. *The Īśvarapratyabhijñākārikā of Utpaladeva with the Author's Vṛtti*. Critical Edition and Annotated Translation. Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass. First published 1994.

Torella, Raffaele. 2017. Śaiva Non-Dualism. In *Indian Epistemology and Metaphysics*. Edited by Joerg Tuske. London: Bloomsbury Academic, pp. 183–205.

Wollgast, Siegfried. 1990. *Karl Christian Friedrich Krause (1781–1832)—Ein Deutscher Philosoph mit Weltgeltung*. Sitzungsberichte der Sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig. Philologisch-Historische Klasse Band. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, vol. 129, pp. 65–108.

Disclaimer/Publisher's Note: The statements, opinions and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of MDPI and/or the editor(s). MDPI and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions or products referred to in the content.