# *Studies*

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# The World in Indian and European Philosophy

**Abstract**

*The world is a comprehensive concept of the area of external experience in which all objects appear as external to our consciousness. It is also the area of becoming, transience and disappearance, resp. of birth, life and death (physiology, philosophical physics, cosmology). The being itself, on the contrary, is conceived as what is and does not become (ontology, metaphysics). Philosophy investigates what is object of our cognition, but also what should be the object of our activity (ethics, practical philosophy). Philosophy can try to understand the nature of consciousness and reason from the experience of the world, or it can try to assess the truth or the appearance of the world that we experience from the assessment of our cognitive faculties (epistemology). Both approaches have been confirmed in India and West in different periods. Some examples will be considered and compared.*

**Keywords**

Indian philosophy, Western philosophy, world, ontology, cosmology, epistemology, ethics

## Basic Concepts of the World in Western and Indian Philosophy

The *world* is a comprehensive concept of the area of external experience where all objects appear as external to our consciousness.

In the Indian tradition of thought and philosophy, correspondences between the macrocosm and the microcosm have been a theme since the oldest *Ṛgvedic* texts. These correspondences describe the organization of the world in the *Puruṣasūkta* (*Ṛksaṃhitā* [RS] X 90.13–14), but also appear in funeral hymns as a part of questions about fate after death (e.g. RS X 16.3).[1] This is important because the question of the structure of the world arises as an existential

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For the text, I used the editions (Aufrecht, ed. 1877, $^{3}$1955); (Nooten & Holland, eds. 1994); (Sātvalekar /sine anno/).

question in order to know the fate of mortals (in life and) after death. Of the five most common correspondences (*eye – Sun*, *mind – Moon*, *breath – Wind*, *word* / *speech – Fire*, *ears – directions of the space in the world*) in the Vedas (RS, *Upaniṣads*), the first correspondence, *eye* / *sight – Sun*, is elaborated in Hellenic tradition in Plato's *Politeia* (book 6),[2] the third, *breath – Wind*, in Anaximenes' fragments,[3] while for the rest we must more deeply understand their probable reflexes in the myth of the goddess Athena,[4] in Heraclitus' fragments, and possibly in Parmenides' imagery of the chariot,[5] but this exceeds the scope of this paper. In short, not only the general correlation between the microcosm and the macrocosm, but also the examples of correspondences that we find in the Vedas can also be found in the Hellenic tradition, and may, at least in part, represent a common ancient (Indo-European) heritage.

In that universe, the macrocosm, which later in the *Purāṇas* will be called *brahmāṇḍa* "Brahman's / Creator's egg"[6] (however, *the universe* / *celestial sphere*, is already in the *Aitareya-upaniṣad* I.1 from the 6th or 5th century B.C.[7] compared to an egg, *aṇḍa*),[8] the mortal body also appears as a microcosm, which in later Tantras will be called *kṣudrabrahmāṇḍa* "a small Brahman's egg".[9]

The world is also the area of becoming, φύσις, *bhava*, and for living beings of birth, γένεσις, *jāti*, in contrast to the level of the being, τὸ ἐόν, *sat*, which is, ἔστι, *asti*. Therefore, the becoming is also the realm of transience and decay, φθορά, *kṣaya*, and for living beings of death, θάνατος, *maraṇa*.[10]

At the level of the being, τὸ ἐόν, *sat*, the laws of reason or logic operate, which precede experience, and the reasoning about the contradiction between the statements that something is and that it is not, is based on them. The ontological axiom or postulate that the being cannot not exist, and therefore neither become nor decay in time, is based on the logical principles of identity and contradiction. This ontological fundamental principle, which occurs in Uddālaka Āruṇi (in *Chāndogya-Upaniṣad* VI)[11] and in Parmenides (fr. 2, 7, esp. 8),[12] does not refer to the realm of external experience, but to the intellectual notion of the being, preceding experience.

Since this axiom refers to the first principle that precedes the world, in the religious understanding this principle is represented as the Creator or God, in Plato the Demiurge, Δημιουργός (in *Timaeus*), in India Tvaṣṭar / Viśvakarman / Prajāpati / Brahman.[13] To that extent, ontology or the first philosophy, ἡ πρώτη φιλοσοφία[14] (which later accidentally came to be called metaphysics) can also be understood as a philosophical theology, θεολογία,[15] that conceives of a transcendent God.

The origin of the world of becoming, φύσις, was then interpreted as originating from this ontological principle, both in Hellenic philosophy and in Indian philosophy, and the theory of this world was called in Greek physics, φυσιολογία[16] or τὰ φυσικά. In the course of history, it came to be called cosmology (in the 18th c., by Chr. Wolff) when it refers to the universe, the macrocosm, and physiology when it refers to the physical body, the microcosm (and care for it, medicine). When it refers to the non-corporeal microcosm, the soul, it can be called psychology (first used by M. Marulus in the 16th c., then by Goclenius). If in theology one tries to understand the immanent God in the world as well, then he is understood as immanent in the world of becoming as an incorporeal universal being, macrocosmic soul, spirit or intellect.[17]

In the Western philosophical tradition, implicitly since Antiquity, and explicitly since Christian Wolff, in addition to general ontology, its specific areas, theology, cosmology and psychology, have been also distinguished. In these areas, since Antiquity, the world of becoming has been linked with the primordial being (they were radically distinguished by Parmenides, but the relationship between the two was sought by Socrates and Plato) through the (conceptual) 'form' (ἰδέα, εἶδος, μορφή; lat. *forma*, *species*). In Aristotle, namely, ἔστι and φύει or γίγνεται, i.e. 'is' and 'becomes' or 'is born', are connected so that what is only potential (δυνάμει) is understood as becoming (through γένεσις or ποίησις) what it was meant to be (τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι, ἡ κατὰ τὸν λόγον οὐσία = οὐσία ἄνευ ὕλης) when it manifests itself and becomes realized (ἐνεγείᾳ) according to its essence (τὸ τί ἐστιν, οὐσία) or (conceptual) form (ἰδέα, εἶδος) in the matter: the germ of a man becomes a man, an oak seed becomes an oak, an idea of a sculptor becomes a sculpture when materialized in stone or bronze. This (conceptual) "form" or species (εἶδος, *species*) is logically determined through genus (γένος, Latin genus) and difference (διαφορά, Latin *differentia* [*specifica*]). Thus, physics was interpreted as a dynamic ontology. For Aristotle, it is no longer two separate worlds, material and ideal, but the ideal (εἶδος, form) manifests itself by realizing itself in the matter (ὕλη). In this way, Aristotle connected the understanding of the world

2
The text in (Burnet 1902).

3
The text in (Diels-Kranz 61951, repr. 1996, p. 95).

4
See (Ježić 1987, pp. 46–47); (Ježić 2016a, pp. 21–24).

5
See Sextus Empiricus in (Diels-Kranz 1996, pp. 227–228): he interprets the wheels as representing ears turned to two directions (crossing the directions to Night and Light – to West and East).

6
It is easiest to look s.v. in Sanskrit dictionaries of Monier-Williams 1899, or Mylius 2005, etc. The term occurs many times in Purāṇic texts, and one Purāṇa has the title *Brahmāṇḍa-Purāṇa*.

7
For the dating see e.g. (Olivelle 1998, pp. 12–13).

8
The text in (Limaye & Vadekar 1958), (Olivelle 1998), (Ježić 1999).

9
See e.g. (Woodroffe [10]1974, p. 22, 49, 240, 318).

10
For terminology see (Ježić 1992, pp. 433–434), (Ježić 2016a, pp. 83–86).

11
The text in (Limaye & Vadekar 1958), (Olivelle 1998).

12
The text in (Diels-Kranz 1996), (Mikecin 2018).

13
The name Tvaṣṭar is attested already in the *Ṛksaṃhitā* (it has an even deeper prehistory), both Tvaṣṭar and Viśvakarman in the *Vājasaneyi-saṃhitā* 31.17 (*Puruṣasūkta*) in the *Yajurveda*, Prajāpati is the most common name of God Father or Creator in the *Brāhmaṇas*, and the name Brahman is often used in that sense in post-Vedic literature.

14
As called by Aristotle in his *Metaphysics*.

15
The term occurs in Plato's *Politeia* 379a (on the goodness of God), and Aristotle in *Metaphysics* E 1026a speaks of φιλοσοφία θεολογική (identical with the "first philosophy").

16
Aristotle uses the verb, φυσιολογέω in the *Metaphysics* 988b, and the noun in *De sensu* 442b.

17
There are many examples of such or some related notion: Anaxagoras, Plato's *Timaeus*, neoplatonists, Boethius, Patricius, Schelling, etc. In India: *Aitareya-Upaniṣad*, Vedānta, esp. Rāmānuja, etc.

(τὰ φυσικά) with ontology (ἡ πρώτη φιλοσοφία, metaphysics), the world of becoming with the conceptual forms of the being, and thereby significantly influenced the further development of philosophy and all sciences.[18] He himself founded many sciences, natural and social sciences and humanities (zoology, botany [developed by his disciple Theophrastus], to a large extent ethics and politics, then law, economics, poetics, rhetoric), and included others in the system (mathematics, astronomy).

Basically, such a conceptual division of philosophical areas continues with Aristotle to Arabic philosophy (*falsafa*) and to Thomism, Scotism, to Wolff and neoscholastics, and indirectly, in rearranged forms, to a number of other philosophical systems until our time, up to our systematizations of scientific areas.

In the Indian tradition, one strives to reach the knowledge of ontological principles with similar rational notions and laws, by distinguishing what these notions and laws mean when they "relate to God or the celestials", *adhidaivatam*, when they "relate to the self, spirit or soul", *adhyātmam*, and when they "relate to the world of becoming and material nature", *adhibhūtam*.[19] Such a division, which is comparable to the division into theology, psychology and cosmology, appears already in the Vedic texts (the Brāhmaṇas and) the Upaniṣads, and is essentially preserved until the medieval scholastic systems of Vedānta, which are based on the Upaniṣads.

The main alternative current of thought does not start from ontology and does not derive the theory of cognition from psychology as a special ontology, but it is in the framework of the critique of cognitive faculties (theory of cognition, gnoseology, epistemology) that it derives our forms of perception and concepts and, finally, our experience of the world. This approach was not unknown to ancient philosophy (Parmenides' knowledge and opinion; Plato's allegory of the cave, ἀνάμνησις, investigations into the nature of knowledge), nor to medieval Western philosophy, but it prevailed only in the modern age, announced by Descartes, opposed by Locke, and systematically elaborated by Kant. In Indian philosophy it predominates in its own way from the beginnings in the Upaniṣads, continues in Buddhism and in several philosophical systems, especially in Sāṃkhya, Yoga and Vedānta. Here, the world does not appear as reality (in which we really live), which we recognize as it is, but as a product of our cognitive faculties that conjure up the world as a phenomenon or appearance (in which we find our way in practical life, *vyavahāra*), but that do not reveal it as it is. And liberation from suffering, which comes to the focus of existential questions, is understood as liberation from being constrained by the world (through compulsions / necessity, *niyati*, and suffering, *duḥkha*), such as it appears to us as a phenomenon or even as an illusion.

Already in Socrates, Plato and the Sophists, alongside the world of nature, the world of society and state emerges with its ethical and political laws. Aristotle, in addition to theoretical philosophy (the first philosophy [ontology] and its specific areas concerning God, nature and soul, and special sciences, natural sciences, especially life sciences), conceived also practical (ethics, politics, law, economics) and poietic philosophy (rhetoric, poetics). In Hellenistic philosophy the common division of philosophy will be the division into logic, physics and ethics.

In modern philosophy since the 17th century, rationalism and empiricism have been preparing the ground for a mature formulation of questions about the relationship between their approaches: what in our cognition precedes in

the intellect (a priori) and what follows experience (a posteriori)? The question has been most clearly demonstrated in the differences of opinion between Locke and Leibniz.

In classical German philosophy, the "Copernican turn" first appeared with Kant, and, according to it, our transcendental forms of perception of space and time and the transcendental notions of our understanding (12 *categories*, *reine Verstandesbegriffe*)[20] precede (a priori) our experience and "prescribe" laws to the experienced world, i.e. formulate them according to our rational patterns applied to the contents of experience. But even so, we do not reach a comprehensive concept of the world as a whole. This concept belongs to transcendental notions of our intellect (*ideas*, *reine Vernunftbegriffe*) that our experience can never fill with content, but our intellect (*Vernunft*) outlines them as regulative frameworks for experiential cognition.

Among the following thinkers, Fichte reduced the natural world to the not-I and gave it only a practical function in the moral self-realization of the I which has to overcome nature in order to become fully autonomous, i.e. equal to itself (I should become = I). Schelling reintroduced philosophy of nature into his system of identity (of spirit and nature). Hegel divided his encyclopaedic system of philosophy into logic, philosophy of nature and philosophy of spirit, which resembles Hellenistic patterns. In principle, he was the most successful among them in reintroducing into the abstract concepts of philosophy the fullness of content that philosophy once sought to attain in Aristotle. As his philosophy of nature does not include man, he is understood only in the philosophy of the spirit. This philosophy is divided into the philosophy of the subjective, objective and absolute spirit (cf. Barišić 1992). In this sense, it could be said that his philosophy of nature and philosophy of spirit together build his philosophy of the world. Furthermore, that the philosophy of nature and that of subjective spirit correspond to ancient physics and psychology, the philosophy of objective spirit to Aristotelian practical philosophy, and that the philosophy of absolute spirit corresponds partly to poietic philosophy, and partly complements it with aspects of the philosophy of (revealed) religion and the philosophy of philosophy itself (as the self-knowledge of the intellect).[21]

In Indian philosophy, we can find relatively realistic systems such as the Brahmanical system of Vaiśeṣika (perhaps also Nyāya), Jainism and partly

18

The text: (Jaeger 1957, passim, esp. Z 7 1032a 12 – 1032b 14), Cf. Bonitz, *Index Aristotelicus* 764a 50ff.

19

Such a division occurs in many passages in the *Brāhmaṇas* and *Upaniṣads*, e.g. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad* II.1 or *Kauṣītaki-Upaniṣad* IV, etc. In *Kauṣītaki-Upaniṣad* III, along with the opposition of *adhidavatam* and *adhyātmam*, there occurs the complemetarity of the physiological / cosmological and psychological / epistemological perspective which are designated as *adhibhūtam* and *adhiprajñam*.

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If the pairs of opposites he mentions in the categories of modality and relation are counted as two terms each, then the number is 17 in total (but this counting obscures the structure of the system). In *KrV*, Kant adds to these notions 8 principles: the axiom of transcendental forms of perception, the principle of anticipation of empirical perception, three principles of the analogy of experience and three principles of empirical thinking.

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The last mentioned science of the absolute spirit rounds off the system as designed already in Hegel's grounding philosophical science: science of logic. That reminds of Thomas of Aquinas' systematic cycle of *universalia ante res, in rebus* and *post res*.

Buddhist Sarvāstivāda: they all know the system of four or five material elements (*mahābhūta*, στοιχεῖον, elementum) and some kind of atomism. But cognitive-critical systems have also been well-attested from the beginning, such as the theory of cognition in some Upaniṣads (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, *Kauṣītaki*, etc.), phenomenological theory of cognition in the Sāṃkhya (and Yoga) system, Buddhist theories of our (experiential) cognition, which they see divided into the areas of *nāman* and *rūpa* (subject and object), distinguishing between the higher and the lower level of cognition (Madhyamaka), or else the illusory, the causal or relative and the emancipated or absolute cognition (Yogācāra); such an approach is represented in Brahmanism by some Vedānta schools (Śaṃkara) in their Upaniṣad-based outlook.

We will take a closer look at a cosmological system attested in the Vedas and, especially, in the *Aitareya-Upaniṣad*, which sees the world as a living and intelligent being, and thereafter at the Brahmanical / Hindu phenomenological system of Sāṃkhya, as well as at Buddhist teachings, which interpret the world as a construction of our sensory and rational data, which is only apparent and illusory. The first, Vedic system has a counterpart in Plato, resp. in the Pythagoreans, and the approach in the second and third system, the Sāṃkhya system and Buddhist schools, became more pronounced in the West, after having been announced by Descartes, only in modern philosophy from Kant, classical German idealism and Schopenhauer onwards,[22] to Husserl and the phenomenologist and existentialist philosophers.[23]

These are some basic examples, and I apologize for bothering readers with things that may seem familiar to them. Moreover, this is no occasion to dive into the presentation of later Indian logically fully elaborated philosophical systems, Buddhist like the Madhyamaka or Yogācāra system, or Brahmanical like the Vedānta system.[24] And yet, I hope that I will present these basic examples in a different and more coherent perspective than they are usually presented in standard handbooks. I shall try, as a philologist, not to follow secondary textbooks, but, as far as possible in a readable succinct presentation, the formulations in original texts.

## Vedic Cosmology and Western Parallels

In *Ṛ̊ksaṃhitā* X 90, Puruṣa "Man" who has "a thousand heads, a thousand eyes and a thousand feet" is the deity praised in the hymn. He has covered the Earth from everywhere and still rises some distance above it (v. 1). Although many scholars speak of a mythical giant,[25] and some of an abstract idea of "sacrifice",[26] the expressions should be understood neither literally, nor abstractly, but as a riddle. I will start from the assumption that a being that rises above the Earth, embracing it from all sides, and has a thousand eyes, should be recognized as the starry Sky! As it is further said that it encompasses all beings and all times (past and future) and that Heaven, Atmosphere and Earth became from its parts (v. 14), we can say that it is the entire universe or the macrocosm. As it is also said that the Sun was created from his sight, the Wind from his breath, the Fire (and Indra) from his speech, the Moon from his mind, and the Directions (east, south, west, north) from his hearing, it implies that the (divine) constituents of the universe have been created from his cognitive and vital faculties (according to the previously mentioned correlations), and this means that he possesses breath – therefore he is a living being, and mind – therefore he is a rational living being (in addition to sight, hearing and

speech). And that is the notorious definition of man in Western philosophy. That is why the poet calls the universe or the macrocosm Puruṣa "Man"![27]

This is exactly how Plato in the *Timaeus*, in the Pythagorean tradition, calls the universe (κόσμος, τὸ πᾶν) "a living being with soul [breath] and mind" (τὸ ζῷον ἔμψυχον ἔννουν, Tim. 30b, 34b, i.e. *animal rationale*), which is the same as Puruṣa "Man"! He has only taken a step further and says that this universe does not need eyes, nor ears, nor breath, nor arms, nor legs, nor other organs attributed to Puruṣa in the *Ṛksaṃhitā* – but he enumerates them all,[28] so he still knows that they belong to the tradition, which is corresponding to the Indian one (Tim. 33c and d.).[29]

Of course, *Timaeus* has its innovations, such as attributing to the atoms of different elements the forms of geometric bodies known to Greek mathematics (tetrahedron, hexahedron, dodecahedron, icosahedron), but the core of the account of creation seems to be cognate with the Vedic one!

From the Vedic hymn it can be seen that the Vedic poet knows the solstice and equinox points through which the Sun passes at three levels of its path during

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It is surprising how Schopenhauer at the very beginning of his work states this relationship between the modern European philosophy and ancient Indian thinkers: "Die Welt ist Vorstellung. Neu ist diese Wahrheit keineswegs. Sie lag schon in den skeptischen Betrachtungen, von welchen Cartesius ausging. Berkeley aber war der erste, welcher sie entschieden aussprach: er hat sich dadurch ein unsterbliches Verdienst um die Philosophie erworben, wenn gleich das Uebrige seiner Lehren nicht bestehn kann. Kants erster Fehler war die Vernachlässigung dieses Satzes, wie im Anhange ausgeführt ist. – Wie früh hingegen diese Grundwahrheit von den Weisen Indiens erkannt worden ist, indem sie als der Fundamentalsatz der dem *Vyasa* zugeschriebenen Vedantaphilosophie auftritt, bezeugt W. *Jones*, in der letzten seiner Abhandlungen: On the philosophy of the Asiatics; *Asiatic researches*, Vol. IV, p. 164: *the fundamental tenet of the Vedanta school consisted not in denying the existence of matter, that is of solidity, impenetrability, and extended figure (to deny which would be lunacy), but in correcting the popular notion of it, and in contending that it has no essence independent of mental perception; that existence and perceptibility are convertible terms*. Diese Worte drücken das Zusammenbestehn der empirischen Realität mit der transscendentalen Idealität hinlänglich aus." (Schopenhauer 1977) Available at: http://www.zeno.org/Philosophie/M/Schopenhauer,+Arthur/Die+Welt+als+Wille+und+Vorstellung/Erster+Band/Erstes+Buch (accessed on 15 December 2023).

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Croatian philosopher Veljačić, who later became Bhikkhu Ñānajīvako, tried to make our modern understanding of Buddhist doctrine easier by comparison with Husserl's phenomenology (Veljačić 1958, pp. 100–102): phenomenological reduction is compared to Buddhist reductionist method of meditation (*jhāna / dhyāna*), the classification of elements of consciousness into noetic and noematic is compared with the *rūpa-jhāna* and *arūpa-jhāna* meditatitve processes, and the noematic transcendence is found in Buddhist meditation as noematic transcendence immanent in our consciousness.

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Some basic literature on Buddhism will be mentioned later. As the Vedānta will not be presented in this paper, I may mention two basic works on it, (Deussen 1912, repr. 1973) and Nakamura (I 1983, II 2004). The best book on the Vedānta in Croatian is (Andrijanić 2012).

25

Cf. (Geldner 1951, vol. III, pp. 286–289).

26

Cf. (Jamison & Brereton 2016, vol. III, pp. 1537–1540); (Witzel & Gotō 2007).

27

Cf. (Ježić 1999, pp. 250–252); (Ježić 2016a); (Ježić 2016b, pp. 159–180).

28

This could be due to Xenophanes, who before him rejected anthropomorphic traits with respect to the spheroidic God. Cf. (Diels-Kranz 1996, Xenophanes, Lehre, p. 116 ff (Arist. de Melisso, Xenophane, Gorgia cc. 3. 4. esp. 977a, b.), p. 135 ff (esp. fr. 23–26)).

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Cf. (Ježić 2016a, pp. 123–127).

the year, and probably also distinguishes among the fixed stars those that are stationary close to the north pole (*ṛṣayaḥ*) and those that the Moon (and also the Sun, but this is not visible) catches up and passes through them in its circuit of the celestial belt (*sādhyāḥ*). Of course, for Plato in the *Timaeus* too, the stars are deities, essential for the image of the universe, in contrast to the mythical deities that we only know about only from the poets (Tim. 39e–41c).

The hymn *Ṛksaṃhitā* X 90 is so important that it was adopted by all other Vedas and Vedic schools, including the collection of mantras "sacred formulations" of the *White Yajurveda*, *Vājasaneyi-saṃhitā* (VS) XXXI, where the 16-stanza hymn is expanded by a further 6 stanzas. And in the first of them (VS XXXI 17), it is clearly said that Puruṣa, i.e. the universe, that is "born from the beginning" (RS X 90.7: *jāta agrataḥ*), is not the first being or principle, but he "came forth (or evolved) in the beginning from the Creator" *Viśvakarmaṇaḥ samavartata-agre*. The Creator is called Tvaṣṭar 'Carver/Carpenter/Architect' or Viśvakarman 'He whose work is the universe'! Just as in Plato the universe was created by the Creator, Demiurge!

The *Aitareya-Upaniṣad* builds on such a tradition in the Vedas, where the number of correlations between the faculties both of the macrocosm and the microcosm (they are comparable) and the deities in the macrocosm increased from five to eight. It is even more important that the form of the universe is compared to an egg (*yathā-aṇḍa*). Just as in Parmenides it has the shape of a sphere, and in Plato, Demiurge shaped it circularly with a pair of compasses (or a lathe; ἐτορνεύσατο, τόρνος). And philosophically, perhaps the most important claim is that all the faculties of microcosmic beings (e.g. humans), born within the world, return to the macrocosmic deities (sight to the Sun, hearing to the Directions, intelligence to the Moon, etc.), but that the Creator himself entered in every being as its spirit / soul (*ātman*), so that part of the being (man) is immortal: whoever knows this achieves immortality.

Similarly, in the *Timaeus*, the Creator gives the deities the task to shape the mortal parts of mortal beings, but he himself creates the cosmic soul and the immortal part in mortal beings (which will later be reborn and transmigrate, even in forms of animals), and the wise will become immortal after death (Tim. 90c–92). [30]

It is an ancient representation of the world in Indian and Hellenic philosophical thought, undoubtedly largely inherited from deep (Indo-European, and perhaps even deeper) antiquity. In this representation much is known about the structure of the world (from a geocentric perspective though, in which Heaven is a sphere, ball or egg), and the universe is imagined as a living and intelligent being! Regarding the fate of men and mortal beings, this representation says that their mortal parts die, but the immortal part is reborn or they (if they realize their immortal part) achieve immortality in Heaven. Therefore, this idea is not only cosmological, but also soteriological. Philosophy serves not only to know the world, but also to rescue the knower/philosopher from mortality in the world!

## Sāṃkhya Phenomenology and Western Parallels

In some Upaniṣads, a system of cognitive faculties is developed. Thus, in *Kauṣītaki-upaniṣad* (KṣU) III, we no longer speak only of mind (*manas*), sight and hearing (as in Puruṣasūkta), but to mind or reason (*manas*) five cognitive faculties (*prajñāmātrā*) are added – sight, hearing, smell, taste (tongue)

and touch (body), and faculties or organs of action – speech, organ of seizing (hands), organ of movement (legs) and the generative organ (sexual organ). In addition, intellect or wisdom (*prajñā*) is superimposed on mind or reason. All the cognitive and active faculties that will later be adopted by the Sāṃkhya philosophical school (or system) are already listed there, only the fifth active organ of digestion (anus) will be added. Thus, in the Sāṃkhya, all five senses will be taken over, and the number of active organs will be equalized to it. The breath as the faculty that makes life possible is left out here because it will be included in another physiological subsystem of the five breaths. In addition, in the Sāṃkhya the *prajñāmātrās* will be called *indriyas* (which can also be philologically derived from the KṣU), the *prajñā* itself will be called *buddhi*, and the concept of individualized intellect, individual consciousness – ego (*ahaṃkāra*), will be additionally introduced.[31]

The outcome of this development of psychology and theory of cognition from the Upaniṣads up to the classical Sāṃkhya is that now the world is no longer taken realistically, naively as the real world, but is broken down into five areas of sense objects (bhūtamātrās, already in KṣU called bhūtamātrās): visible (*rūpa*), audible (*śabda*), olfactory (*gandha*), palatable (*rasa*) and tangible (*sparśa*). It is from the impressions or information received from these five areas that in our individual consciousness (*ahaṃkāra*) the representations of five material elements are constructed or constituted: the representation of ether from the data of hearing, of air from the data of touch and hearing, of fire from the data of touch, hearing and sight, of water from the data of touch, hearing, sight and taste, and of earth from the data of all five senses. The more material an element is, the more sensory data are needed to constitute its representation. Materiality is thus understood as sensory complexity. However, the aforementioned senses are such cognitive faculties which present to us the representations of material elements and of all corporeal beings composed of them as external world outside the ego or our individual consciousness (they do not develop directly "from (i.e. inside) the individual consciousness, *ahaṃkāra*", like the senses and their areas, or the active faculties, but indirectly "from the sensory areas, *tanmātras*", i.e. outside the *ahaṃkāra*). The world is therefore a representation (*Vorstellung*), as Schopenhauer would say, or phenomenon, as Husserl would call it, both based on Kant's philosophy.

But there is another deep coincidence. Sāṃkhya assumes that this representation or phenomenon nevertheless has some basis in an unknowable primordial principle or "proto-reality" (*prakṛti*) from which all "objectivity" of objects of our consciousness arises, and from this "objectivity" our senses receive different kinds of information in accordance with the nature of each sense. The "proto-reality" itself is unmanifested (*avyakta*) and it is only by the effects it causes (which arise or "develop" from it) that we conclude that this first cause too must exist. "Objectivity", therefore, is not without a basis, but it is reduced to an appearance, and its ultimate cause (primordial principle) is never revealed to us in its original nature. Therefore, our knowledge is not without a basis, but it does not reach that basis (i.e. the proto-reality). This term, *prakṛti* "proto-reality", is most often mistranslated as "nature". Under the term "nature" we could first of all imagine the material nature consisting

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For all mentioned elements and correspondences see (Ježić 1987), (Ježić 2016a), and (Ježić 2016b).

31
See (Ježić 1999) and (Ježić 2018, pp. 127–153).

of material elements, but in the case of *prakṛti*, that is unmanifested, the first manifestation proceeding from it is intellect or (universal) consciousness, *buddhi*, and the last products "developed" from our sensory areas are material elements outside our individual consciousness. The notion of *prakṛti* perhaps best corresponds to Kant's "thing in itself"" (*Ding an sich*), which is unknowable, but must exist and is the *Ursache*, the external cause, of the appearing world which is the object of our experience, but we experience this world only according to our cognitive faculties (including transcendental forms of perception – space and time – and transcendental notions – the 12 categories).

The basic preserved text of the Sāṃkhya philosophical system, the *Sāṃkhyakārikās* (SK),[32] dates from the 4th century A.D. at the latest, but *Kauṣītaki-upaniṣad* III, where we already find all essential Sāṃkhya terms and notions, originates (e.g. according to Olivelle 1998, pp. 12–13) from the 6th or 5th century B.C. Thus, this basically phenomenological philosophical system in India (often rather misinterpreted in the secondary literature) was attested some 23 to 24 centuries before Kant, and several decades more before Schopenhauer, who was already much better acquainted with Indian philosophy than Kant. Accordingly, it preceded Husserl some 25 centuries.

And what about the will (*Wille*), if we want to ask the question in the terms of Schopenhauer? The organ of will (*adhyavasāya*) is *buddhi*, intellect or consciousness, and, by implication, *ahaṃkāra*, the individualized consciousness. According to Sāṃkhya, we are bound to the world by three mental states (*bhāva*) with favourable and unfavourable aspects: desire (*rāga*, to which we are all subject) and desirelessness (*virāga*), supernatural power (*aiśvarya*, as acquired by yogins) and lack of power (*anaiśvarya*), righteousness (*dharma*, by which we sustain the world) and unrighteousness (*adharma*) (SK 13). The favourable and unfavourable aspects are not equivalent, but they determine the (favourable or unfavourable) fate in the world, while Indian philosophy seeks the path of liberation from the world, so fate in the world is not the ultimate aspiration of the wise. Favourable aspects of these states bring good *karman* (the fruit of good deeds), while unfavourable aspects bring bad *karman* (a bad fate in the world of reincarnation as the fruit of bad deeds). It is in the fourth state of knowledge (*jñāna*) or ignorance (*ajñāna*) that lies the decision about whether we will free ourselves from being bound in the world of rebirth (*saṃsāra*) and thus subject to suffering (*duḥkha*), or not. Therefore, the seven aspects of the four states (*bhāva*) bind us to the world, although not in an equal way, and only one – knowledge (*jñāna*) liberates from it. That is why we should be focused on that eighth aspect – the attainment of knowledge.

It is interesting that the intellect or consciousness (*buddhi*) for the teachers of Sāṃkhya is universal, one for all, but that the subject of consciousness, *puruṣa*, is not one, but individual, and therefore we are many. It is only because of the confusion of the subject of consciousness (*puruṣa*) and consciousness (*buddhi*; intellect) that it seems to us that intellect is also individual, that everyone has 'his own mind' (as Heraclitus would say, fr. 2), and thus an illusion of ego (*ahaṃkāra*), the individual intellect or consciousness, is created. And it is within that ego that appear or 'develop' (*vyakti*, *pariṇāma*) the mind or reason (*manas*) and, on the one hand, the five senses (*jñānendriya*) with which we perceive objects – i.e. through the five areas of their objects (*tanmātra*) we constitute the image of the world (outside the ego) – and, on the other hand, the five organs of action (*karmendriya*) with which, through our will that sets them in motion, and through the mind that coordinates them, we act in the world.

At the same time, the multiplicity of *puruṣas*, the subjects of consciousness, explains why each of us has a different destiny and why, when one attains liberation (*mokṣa*, *kaivalya*), others are not yet liberated thereby.

And what kind of knowledge liberates from reincarnation, from birth and death and from rebirth and redeath? Sāṃkhya starts from the existential and epistemic position in which we find ourselves. The subject of consciousness observes the objects with his consciousness. He himself can never be an object of observation, but he can understand, or conclude from his observation, that he must be, and that he is an (unmanifested, *avyakta*) subject of consciousness (*puruṣa*) while he observes objects through consciousness (SK 6, 17). This starting point can be compared to Descartes' "Cogito, ergo sum." (and perhaps also to Augustine's doubt, which testifies to the existence of the doubter), and then with Kant's transcendental apperception (which connects the acts of intellect and reason with a single transcendental subject of consciousness). In Sāṃkhya, therefore, the unmanifested subject of consciousness (*puruṣa*) is distinguished from all objects, and even from the intellect or consciousness (*buddhi*) and from all the faculties of the individual consciousness or ego (*ahaṃkāra*).

This complete inversion of attributes and renunciation to identification not only with objects, but also with the consciousness or the intellect by which these objects, including even the consciousness itself and its aspects, are perceived and comprehended, has practical confirmation in the related, but practice-oriented, philosophical system of Yoga. In the fundamental manual, the *Yogasūtra* (YS), it is said that the discipline of mind, Yoga, is precisely "the cessation of all kinds of revolving (*vṛtti*; i.e. activities) of consciousness (*citta* = *buddhi*)" (YS 2). But this is not meant as an unconscious state, but a state in which the "observer" (*draṣṭar*; subject of consciousness) remains alone "in his form", i.e. in his nature or essence; it is the state of self-awareness or self-cognition of the observer![33] In this fundamental distinction between the subject of consciousness and all objects, even the faculties of our consciousness, Sāṃkhya and Yoga are astonishingly radical for a Westerner. And that state, which should be reached through the deepest knowledge of Sāṃkhya and the extremely demanding practice of classical Yoga meditation, represents the liberation (*mokṣa*, *kaivalya*) of the subject of consciousness (*puruṣa*) from the attachment to the world to which it is bound by its illusory ego, which constitutes that world with its cognitive powers (*indriya*). The individualized consciousness (*ahaṃkāra*) does this when it is moved by the seven aspects of the four mental states (*bhāva*), and not by knowledge alone (*jñāna*). However, this knowledge is not only rational or intellectual knowledge, but knowledge that is acquired through deep spiritual immersion and discipline, it is not a knowledge that we know, but the knowledge that should radically change us and finally liberate us. This change and liberation is the essence of philosophy, which Sāṃkhya coincidentally calls *jijñāsā* "the desire for knowledge/wisdom" (SK 1).[34]

32
Two decent editions I consulted: (Mainkar 1972) and (Pandeya 1967).

33
The edition consulted is (Śrī-Nārāyaṇamiśra 1971). A classical translation: (Woods, 1914, repr. 1972).

34
A good survey of the Sāṃkhya tradition: (Larson and Bhattacharya 1967).

## Old Buddhism and Western Parallels

The reason for seeking the knowledge of Sāṃkhya and Yoga is the experience of suffering / unhappiness / literally "stuckness (of an axis in the nave of a wheel)" (*duḥkha*). This "stuckness" in the world is in fact stuckness in our ego (Sāṃkhya: *ahaṃkāra*; Yoga: *asmitā*), and the illusion that this ego is a real entity comes from ignorance (*avidyā*, *ajñāna*). These systems developed within the framework of Brahmanism / Hinduism somewhat simultaneously with the development of Buddhism and Jainism in India (starting from the 5th century B.C.). It is possible that they took such a starting point under the influence of Buddhism and Jainism.

Buddhism does not start from an ontological or cosmological approach (as neither Sāṃkhya nor Yoga do). It could be said that its starting point is existential, that it starts from the position of beings in the world who are exposed to suffering. Buddha's teaching did not interpret the world, but our position in it. While Brahmanism / Hinduism, and even Jainism, have an elaborate cosmology, Buddhism does not talk about the structure of the universe, material and spiritual, but about the possibilities of birth and existence in different "worlds", which means destinies: in the world of humans, in the supernatural world of celestials (*deva*), in the world of supernatural opponents of the celestials (*asura*), in the world of animals, in the world of the deceased (ghosts), or in an infernal world. All these worlds, or types of destinies, are in constant change, nothing is permanent, everything is transitory: *sarvam anityam*. That is why in each of these worlds, although some are full of pleasure and others of pain, transience causes aging and death, and therefore suffering: *sarvaṃ duḥkham*. The lifespan of a celestial is much longer than that of a mortal, but it is not eternal. And beings that are transitory and subject to suffering do not have their essence or "self" (*ātman*) in them, therefore they are "without a self": *sarvam anātma*. These are the three basic existential attitudes. Whoever does not accept them does not become a Buddhist. Those who accept them should not waste time on ontological (metaphysical) questions that divert thought from existential questions.

While in the Upaniṣadic philosophy the notion of self (*ātman*) was used in an ontological sense: the self is the being itself (*sat*, τὸ ἐόν, *ens*) when it is known through inner knowledge, introspection, and not through ontological speculation. It is the first principle, and is therefore the basis of everything, universal and all-encompassing. Therefore, one can say: "All (and everything) is *ātman*. / All is (my true) self.", which means "My true self is All (and everything)." Or more typically: 'I see all beings in my self, and my self in all beings.'[35] And that is a liberating realization. On the contrary, the Buddha does not use the term "self" (*ātman*) in a theoretical or ontological sense, but in an empirical, worldly sense, for the individual self of every being, a term closer to "ego", so when he says "Everything is without a self.", he is saying that each individual being is without its own self or an essence in itself, and therefore lacks its self. Therefore, the Buddha contradicts the Brahmanical philosophy rhetorically, but not logically, because he does not use the word *ātman* in the same sense.

He uses a different spiritual pedagogy. He did not incorporate the path of liberation into the image of the world, but he incorporated the image of the world into "the path leading to liberation from suffering" (*duḥkhanirodhagāminī pratipad*), as he called the fourth of the four noble truths he preached. And those four noble truths (*catvāri āryasatyāni*) are: the truth about suffering

("Everything is subject to suffering [lit. 'stuck (as an axis in the nave of a wheel)']"), the truth about the origin of suffering ("The cause of suffering is craving."), the truth about the cessation of suffering ("With the disappearance of the cause, suffering also disappears.") and the truth about the middle path that leads to the liberation from suffering (which is eightfold). After the purpose of knowledge has been set in this way as freedom from suffering or "stuckness", which is presented in the four noble truths, Buddhism builds its whole conceptual system in the framework of these four existential "truths".[36]

Within the framework of the first truth, five encompassing categories (five "trunks of clinging", *upādāna-skandha*) are dealt with, which include everything that can be an object of our experience (*anubhava*), namely 1. everything that is knowable by our senses (*rūpa*), and thus it belongs to the external world, 2. pleasant, painful and indifferent feelings (*vedanā*), 3. perceptions or senses (*saṃjñā*), which, in addition to the five senses, in Buddhism include mind or reason (*manas*) too, with which we perceive the objects of thought (*dharma*), 4. the constituents (coefficients, motives) of consciousness (*saṃskāra*), a concept that is the most difficult to find a correlate in Western philosophy, but is crucial in Buddhism, and 5. consciousness itself (*vijñāna, citta*). Something needs to be said about the "constituents of consciousness". They include a) constituents related to our cognition or theoretical intellect (contact of a cognitive faculty with an object, mindfulness, etc.), which are morally neutral, and b) constituents related to our will or practical intellect (motives), which can be 1. *akuśala* "not-good / bad / negative" (desire, hate, delusion, anger, hypocrisy, envy, etc.), and should be abandoned, or *kuśala* "good / positive" (desirelessness, courage, undertaking, indifference, non-violence, etc.) and should be encouraged, because they lead to enlightenment and liberation. Constituents, therefore, somewhat correspond to virtues and vices, but they are not understood as forms of external behaviour or as character properties, but as stimuli in our consciousness that must be mindfully monitored and mastered. This is the area (*skandha*) where complex Buddhist psychology has developed, and on which Buddhist spiritual discipline is largely focused. Among these five *skandhas*, "trunks" or categories, *vedanā* branches into three main branches, *saṃjñā* into six, *saṃskāra* into about forty, while *vijñāna* or *citta* "consciousness" is mostly considered one. Because of this branching, the categories are called "trunks" (*skandha*), which cannot be understood from the usual translations, for example into English as "aggregates".

Already schools of older Buddhism encompassed feelings, perceptions and constituents with the term *caitta* "(*dharmas*) within consciousness", and thus contrasted them with the category of *rūpa* "sensorily cognizable (*dharmas*)". Of these *rūpadharmas*, one school counts 28 (*theravāda*) and another 11 (*sarvāstivāda*), but this is because the latter divided the category into *rūpa-dharmas* in the proper sense and *rūpa-citta-viprayukta-dharmas*,

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Cf. *Īśā-Upaniṣad* 6; *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad* 4, 4.23; *Bhagavad-gītā* 5.7c; etc.

36
There are too many passages to cite. The standard edition of the Buddhist canon *Tipiṭaka* (*Tripiṭaka*) is that of the Pali Text Society, London: *Vinayapiṭaka* 1881–1883; *Suttapiṭaka* 1882–1917; *Abhidhammapiṭaka* 1883–1923. Good short surveys: (Schumann 1973, esp. pp. 39–83); (Lamotte 1984, pp. 41–58); (Schlingloff 1962, pp. 42–118); (Schlingloff 1963). In Croatian: (Veljačić 1958, $^{3}$1982, pp. 75–113).

"*dharmas* that are distinguished from what is sensory (external; *rūpa*) and from what is inherent in consciousness (internal; *caitta*)". The latter are, for example, origin, duration, destruction, transience, etc., because these are very important *dharmas* for Buddhism, but they are not immediately perceptible to the senses at any moment, and yet they are not only internal, but refer to processes in the external world.

Thus, within the framework of the presentation of the first existential noble truth, a whole system of concepts developed, some of which refer to the external world (*rūpadharmas*), and these are included in the first category or "trunk" (*skandha*), while others refer to the contents of consciousness (*caitta-dharma*). or consciousness itself (*citta-dharma*, *vijñāna*). The old dichotomous division of the objects of knowledge into "names" (*nāman*), and "forms/phenomena perceptible by senses" (*rūpa*), objects we give names to, was then applied to this division between the external world and the consciousness, and *rūpa-dharmas*, on the one hand, began to be denoted in Buddhism by the name *rūpa*, and *caitta-dharmas* and *citta-dharma*, on the other hand, by the name *nāma(n)*. Thus, the compound *nāma-rūpa*, starting from the meaning "name and form", has been philosophically generalized to a meaning that is probably best translated and interpreted as "subject" and "object", subject with its consciousness as opposed to the external object of cognition.[37] This shift led to the deepest stratum of interpretation of the concept of our "ignorance" (*a-vidyā*) in Buddhism as the division of our cognition into *nāma(n)* "subject" (which cognizes) and *rūpa* "object" (which is the external object of cognition). And that external object of cognition is the "world", as understood by Buddhism. However, in such a divided cognition, we do not recognize the world as it truly is (because we are "stuck" in our illusory "self" – which corresponds in Buddhism to "ego" – and separated from other beings in the world). We perceive the world of phenomena (in our consciousness) as it is not truly, as "not such (as it is)" (Vasubandhu: *vitatha*). However, this does not mean that it is not there at all, and especially not that there are no others. Buddhism is not solipsism. This means only that this kind of knowledge of ours does not correspond to the highest truth (*paramārtha*), but is only sufficient for everyday orientation (of an unliberated spirit) in the world (*saṃvṛti*, the veiled truth), as say the followers of the Madhyamaka school. Or even more complicated, as the followers of the Yogācāra school say, through everyday sensory knowledge we come to know the world of phenomena whose own nature (*svabhāva*) is illusory (*parikalpita*); with rational knowledge offered by the Buddhist doctrine, we learn about the relative world of notions whose nature is conditioned or caused by something else (*paratantra*); and with the knowledge of the freed spirit, such as is attained by enlightenment (*bodhi*) and liberation or extinction (*nirvāṇa*) due to deep contemplation (*samādhi*), we come to know the undivided absolute truth where the true nature of everything is absolved from the illusory division (*pariniṣpanna*).

This is where we come to the concepts of subject and object which appear in Western modern philosophy since Descartes, and are especially developed in classical German philosophy. We also come to concepts that can be compared with subjective and illusory, objective and scientific, and absolute forms of spirit in which the subjective and objective cannot be separated anymore, such as are art, religion or philosophy, as understood by the thinkers of classical idealism. It is not the same, but it is comparable. Modern Western philosophy may be richer in concepts and contents, and even more luxurious in terms of

civilizational attainments, like an intellectual feast, but the old Buddhist philosophy (and similarly Sāṃkhya and Yoga, and even Vedānta in Brahmanism) is more deeply rooted, more radical and perhaps sincerer and more consistent in its conclusions, and especially in their application in life and spiritual discipline. Somewhat like when the Benedictine Henri Le Saux wrote to his abbot in France that these Indian spiritual teachers, *saṃnyāsins*, like Ramana Maharshi, have similar principles of holy life as our Saint Benedict, the difference from us being only that "they take it seriously".

Already from the elaboration of the first truth, it is obvious that the Buddhist doctrine elaborates much more the inner experience, for which it distinguishes as many as four categories (*skandha*), and encompasses the outer experience with only one category. This is so because the Buddha already believed that we must change ourselves first, not the world, and we will achieve this by abandoning evil and developing good constituents of consciousness, and only thereafter is it possible to change the world as well, for example through non-violence (*ahiṃsā*), which is seen as the highest moral principle, or compassion (*karuṇā*), which, along with wisdom (*prajñā*), is the most valued virtue of beings on the path to enlightenment (*bodhisattva*). And of course, also because the ultimate goal, liberation from the world, cannot be achieved through the world, but by withdrawing from it.

It is even more obvious from the formulations of the second and third noble truths how much attention is paid to inner experience in Buddhist knowledge. The second truth explains the origin and the third the cessation of suffering or "stuckness" in the world (*duḥkha*). These two truths interpret the chain of twelve links of phenomena in the 'world', which means in our experience of the world – which can be represented in Indian culture as a cycle of rebirths and deaths through repeated lives (*saṃsāra*). The second noble truth explains the origin of suffering from the first cause to the last effect in the cycle of rebirths (*saṃsāra*), and the third explains that with the removal of each cause, in the same order (as in the second truth), its effect will also be removed. This chain of conditioned becoming (*pratītya-samutpāda*) interprets the law of the production of the world (as *saṃsāra*): 1. when there is ignorance (*avidyā*), 2. there appear constituents of consciousness (*saṃskāra*) appropriate to ignorance; when there are (such) constituents, 3. (an appropriate) consciousness (*vijñāna*) is created; when there is (such) consciousness, 4. it is split into subject and object of consciousness (*nāma-rūpa*); when there is a subject and an object, 5. they split all six cognitive "repositories" (five senses and mind / reason; *ṣaḍāyatana*) accordingly; when the six cognitive "repositories" are (thus split), 6. there arises contact (*sparśa*) of each sense or mind with its respective object; when this cognitive contact occurs, 7. a feeling is born from it (*vedanā*: pleasant, unpleasant or indifferent); when there is feeling, 8. from it arises a desire (*tṛṣṇā*) to enjoy some object or to avoid another; when there is desire, 9. then clinging or attachment (*upādāna*) to objects of desire is born; when there is clinging, 10. there is becoming (*bhava*; it can be understood as the conception of the next life); when there is becoming, 11. there is birth (*jāti*); when birth occurs, 12. aging and death (*jarā-maraṇa*) inevitably follow.

37
One should note the difference with respect to Sāṃkhya, where *puruṣa* denotes the subject of consciousness without the (instrument of) consciousness (*buddhi*), while in Buddhism *nāman* means subject which comprises the consciousness with its contents (in a way closer to the German philosophical notion of *Geist*).

In that chain of conditioned becoming, one can notice that the first nine links describe internal causation inside the consciousness, and only the last three external consequences in the fate in the world. Again, this shows how much attention Buddhism pays to inner experience and strives to enable its followers to master it. But at the same time, this also shows how it interprets the world and causality in the world, not cosmologically but existentially, as fate caused by our consciousness and the ignorance that determines it. The world of reincarnations (*saṃsāra*) and fate in it are seen as the (deceptive) flow of our consciousness (*citta-santāna*) and as our experience originating inside this consciousness.

What is not in our sensory perception (*sparśa*), feelings (*vedanā*), desires (*tṛṣṇā*) and clingings (*upādāna*) does not exist in our experience of the world. And what is in them would not appear as it does if our consciousness (*vijñāna*) had not been split into the subject and object of consciousness (*nāma-rūpa*) by means of its constituents (*saṃskāra*) due to ignorance (*avidyā*). Consequently, all six of our cognitive faculties (*saḍāyatana*: five sensory and the sixth rational) are split in the same way. And our entire inner experience that leads to clinging (*upādāna*) is then the cause of repeated becoming (*bhava*), birth (*jāti*) and dying (*maraṇa*).

Within this experience or flow of consciousness there are, of course, differences because our constituents of consciousness (*saṃskāra*) – according to how much the bad (*akuśala*) prevail or are abandoned, and how much the good (*kuśala*) are encouraged and developed – determine the type of destiny, or 'the world' (in the narrower sense), in which we will be born: the world of humans or the world of animals, the world of the celestials or the world of their adversaries, the world of the wandering dead spirits or an infernal world. Related constituents, or, in other words, matching *karman* (acts by thought, word, deed or way of life), cause a related destiny of beings and the birth in the same 'world' (in the narrower sense).

And in order to achieve deliverance from this conditioned existence, which includes subjection to suffering, the Buddha's doctrine teaches a path of liberation that shows, perhaps even more than the demanding path of Yoga and Sāṃkhya, what comprehensive efforts and determination are needed to get rid of such conditioned, relative world, and to approach a liberated, absolute state of freedom. (The usual English translation of *samyak* in the titles of the eight tracks of the path of liberation is "right (view, intention, speech, action, etc.)", because the translators did not recognize what sense would have the original meaning "turned towards each other, entire, complete, comprehensive", but the Buddhist view is not that our view or speech is simply right or wrong, but that it is comprehensive or partial.) This war against the submission to suffering should be waged on eight battlefields, in three realms: intellect (*prajñā*), morality (*śīla*) and contemplation (*samādhi*). In the realm of the intellect, one should develop 1. a comprehensive view / understanding (*samyagdṛṣṭi*; as provided by the Buddha's teaching) for the sake of true knowledge, and 2. a comprehensive intention / will (*samyagsaṃkalpa*) for the sake of proper action and living. In the realm of morality, one should 3. cultivate comprehensive speech (*samyagvāc*) which is not partial, 4. comprehensive activity (*samyakkarmānta*) which is not selfish, and 5. comprehensive way of life (*samyagājīva*) which is considerate to all others. In the realm of contemplation, one should 6. make comprehensive effort (*samyagvyāyāma*) to control the constituents of consciousness, abandon the bad and cultivate the good, 7.

cultivate comprehensive mindfulness (*samyaksmṛti*) to do everything collected and focused, and 8. practice comprehensive contemplation (*samyaksamādhi*) which, through deeper and deeper spiritual exercises, leads to a complete transformation, a reversal of the support (*āśrayasya parāvṛttiḥ*) which will no longer be 'stuck' in the isolated 'self' or ego, and finally to the state of the inner absolution, liberation, peace and extinction of all unrest (*nirvāṇa*).

The complexity of the messages of the Buddha's noble truths, including the eightfold path of liberation, has two insights for presuppositions. First, although this world appears to us only in the forms conveyed to us by our specific faculties of cognition (*saṃjñā*, *āyatana*), it appears only as an appearance that is with respect to the unmanifest true reality (*paramārtha*) untrue, "not such (as it is)" (*vitatha*), veiled (*saṃvṛta*) and illusory (*parikalpita*), it is nevertheless an apparently real world for us. In Buddhist view it is not predominantly because of its coherence, consistency, regularity, as Descartes or Husserl would think – although Buddhism teaches about the interdependence of phenomena and the causality of their appearance – *pratītya-samutpāda*. However, we accept this world as real, in the first place, because it binds us with submission to suffering (and pleasure) and causes our craving (*tṛṣṇā*) and clinging (*upādāna*)! That is what the Buddhists picturesquely, or mythically, represent in the figure of the torturer and tempter Māra. It could be said: we are forced to recognize this world as real under torture (and temptation). That means: due to suffering (*duḥkha*). That is why the Buddha centres his teaching on suffering: because it is the reason of the reality of this world. This insight is truer to life, from the existential point of view much deeper than the intellectualist views of reality in Western philosophers. And this view may encourage compassion (*karuṇā*) much stronger than the intellectualist view. This was in the West recognized by Schopenhauer.

The second insight, following from this one, is that only by winning the difficult octathlon (fourth truth), can we achieve liberation from that craving and clinging (second and third truths), and thus from their consequence – submission to suffering. Although the two conceptions of freedom can be compared with each other, the Buddhist understanding of liberation is, if not intellectually, then existentially much more demanding than the brilliant speculative idea of "the progress of the idea of freedom in the world" (Hegel). And it requires a readiness for complete renunciation (*tyāga*) and complete fearlessness (*abhaya*). These are exceptionally deep and demanding insights, from which we can learn a lot.

## The Presuppositions of Practical Philosophy in India and Western Parallels

Concerning all what has been said, it may seem to a Westerner that these Indian philosophical systems, and probably also their religions, may be rich and deep, but that neither the cosmological understanding of the world like that in the *Puruṣasūkta* or the *Aitareya-upaniṣad*, nor the acosmic one like that in Buddhism, and in its own way in both Sāṃkhya and Yoga, in spite of beautiful expressions, do give impetus to any constructive action in the world. In addition, they seem to ignore the world of practical philosophy in Aristotle's sense, or "objective spirit" in Hegel's sense, that is, society and state. They are not as focused on the human world as Western philosophy is since the time of the Sophists, and especially since the time of the Enlightenment. Whether

they look at the world as really such as we perceive it, or as a phenomenon as constituted by our faculties of cognition, they have in mind nature, and even the universe, more than the human world in itself. They may emphasize the inner experience, but because of this they withdraw from the outer world. From a Hegelian point of view, where the objective spirit is conceived as active in the world through law (*Recht*), morality (*Moralität*) and social order (*Sittlichkeit*; family, society, state), it may seem that the aforementioned Indian philosophical systems cannot have an effect in the world. A notable part of Hegel's disciples turned gradually to revolutionary action in the world, and Indian philosophical immersion and non-violence could not look convincing to them.

However, such a Western and modern judgment of ours would be wrong. From the tradition of Sāṃkhya and Yoga originates the *Bhagavadgītā* poem embedded in the great epic *Mahābhārata*. In it, the charioteer Kṛṣṇa instructs the hero Arjuna about action (*karman*) that will not cause consequences in *saṃsāra*, this world in which we live and where we are reborn. Arjuna is a great hero who is not afraid of death, but he is afraid of committing the inevitable sin in a fratricidal battle. The lesson goes far beyond the scope of the occasion in which it is given. Kṛṣṇa explains how one should act without committing sin. The doer must completely renounce the fruits of his actions (*karmaphala*) and do them only out of duty (*dharma*), the ultimate purpose or sense of which is the preservation of the entire world (*lokasaṃgraha*). The cause of sin, and thus the fruits of *karman*, actions, are the selfish motives from which we act, such as lust and anger. Selfless action out of duty, even when it is hard, does not bring bad results:[38]

BhG 2.47. *Work (*karman*) alone is your proper business, never the fruits (it may produce). Let not your motive be the fruit (*phala*) of the work, nor your attachment to (mere) worklessness (*akarman; *inactivity)*.

48. *Stand fast in Yoga, surrendering attachment. In success and failure be the same, and then get busy with thy works! Yoga means "sameness" and "indifference" (*samatva*)*.

3.37. *Desire it is, anger it is – arising from the constituent of passion (*rajas*) – all-devouring great sin, know that this is (your) enemy in this world!*

3.41. *Therefore, restrain the senses first: strike down this sin which destroys what we know (from sacred books) and what we discern (from life)!*

The ultimate meaning of selfless action (*lokasaṃgraha*, maintenance of the world) is expressed in the following stanza:

3.25. *As ignorants perform their works attached to the action, so should the knower perform works unattached, willing to work on the maintenance of the world (*lokasaṃgraha*)*.

This teaching in the *Bhagavadgītā* is called *karmayoga* "discipline / restraining (*yoga*) of actions". Our action must therefore be such that we do it, not out of any selfish motivation, interest, desire for any fruit, but out of duty, and that duty (*dharma*) must be such that it serves the maintenance of the entire world (*lokasaṃgraha*)! It means that the principle of this duty must be in accordance with the imaginable general legislation that should serve the whole world. Is not this principle of action free from sin completely consistent with Kant's categorical imperative (*Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*, § 7)?

There is, therefore, a form of Yoga, Karmayoga, which differs from the Yoga of non-action (*nivṛtti*) in that it is practiced in action (*pravṛtti*), and which

does not advocate withdrawing from the world (be it real or just an appearance), but acting in it for the sake of its maintenance (because others in that world are not an illusion, even if we do not get to know them in full truth). It is in this form of Yoga that an ethical principle which anticipates European philosophy by more than two millennia is clearly stated, however briefly. This teaching of one of the most sacred texts of Brahmanism/Hinduism, the *Bhagavadgītā*, has influenced Indians and some Westerners for millennia to this day. Therefore, Indian philosophy is not devoid of the power of action. The most recent great example of a man who, following these very words from the *Gītā*, while in addition accepting the principle of non-violence from Jainism, Buddhism and Christianity, changed India and influenced a large part of the world in an unprecedented way is Mahātmā Gāndhī.[39]

How old this lesson from the multi-layered text of the *Bhagavadgītā* may be, can only be deduced indirectly. It is very likely, since in the Buddhist canon *Tripiṭaka* we have traces of polemics with some parts of the *Bhagavadgītā*,[40] that the great Indian king Aśoka (273/269–232 B.C.), who adopted Buddhism, was partially influenced by the *Bhagavadgīta* in his rock edicts (so that the cited passages of the *Gītā* must have been older). He presented his understanding of his duty ((in the Buddhist spirit) as work for the "good of the whole world" (*sarva-loka-hita*). This could be his response to the concept of the *lokasaṃgraha* "maintenance of the whole world" from the *Gītā*. He considered this work for the "good of the whole world" as his "debt to beings", and for a Buddhist this includes people, his subjects, but also animals, all sentient beings. He wants to perform his duty "for the sake of men and animals". Therefore, he says that he demands from himself as king and from his successors, and then from his subjects, a "supreme effort" to work "for the good of the whole world".

Aśoka ruled all of India except the extreme south, the entire area of today's Afghanistan and part of Iran for about forty years. He had diplomatic relations with all the Hellenistic kings (rock edicts 2 and 13). During his reign, the Seleucids weakened because they lost Bactria and Parthia. Rome was beginning a life-and-death battle with Carthage. China was in the period of "warring kingdoms". Aśoka was the most powerful ruler in the world in his time. But he did not conquer other countries with war, but started to conquer the world with *dharma* (*dhammavijaya*): he sent Buddhist missionaries to other countries, among other purposes also for the establishment of "two medical cares – for humans and animals" (*manussacikicchā ca pasucikicchā ca*). These missionaries began to turn Buddhism into a world religion. After Aśoka's reign, India was not the same as before anymore. Even Brahmanism / Hinduism became ennobled by the non-violence of Buddhism (*ahiṃsā*, *avihiṃsā*), and the Brahmans, who used to offer animal sacrifices, largely accepted vegetarianism, and so did a large part of the population. All this has characterized India to some extent to this day. A few months ago, a replica of Aśoka's capital with lions, which symbolized the Buddha, was placed on the Indian Parliament as part of the celebration of 75 years of Indian independence.

38
Following the text: (Belvalkar 1947); (Belvalkar 1968). Among the translations in English the following two can be mentioned for this purpose: (Buitenen 1981); (Zaehner 1969).

39
For a larger picture see: (Ježić 2021); (Ježić 2022, pp. 105–127).

40
Cf. (Upadhyaya 1971); (Szczurek 2008).

We are used to seeing revolutions in the 20th century only where they were bloody: in the former Soviet Union, in Mexico, in the former Yugoslavia, in China, in Vietnam, Cambodia and Korea etc. Many of these countries today no longer have the order that the revolutions created because their leaders believed that the goal justified the means, and they introduced totalitarianism and caused tens of millions of human victims. Just as fascism and national socialism did. Of course, neither Marx nor Nietzsche are directly to be blamed for this, let alone Hegel, but still revolutionary ideologies had incentives in their works. On the other hand, we do not usually think of India's independence or the creation of the European Union as revolutions because they were not bloody. And yet these were the greatest peace-making processes in the 20th century, as also the greatest revolutions if revolution is a struggle for human freedom and national and social rights. And they gave the most lasting and so far the most beneficial fruits. At the head of one of them as its symbol, often organizationally, and always morally stood Mahātmā Gāndhī, looking up to the teachings of the *Bhagavagīta*, Tulsīdās' *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Sermon on the Mount*. Thus, such texts and their philosophy can really change the world. Even one of the fathers of the European Union, Robert Schuman, is in the process of being beatified.

Therefore, both Brahmanical philosophy, especially Karmayoga, and Buddhist philosophy, especially the ethical principles of Śīla, as well as the Christian worldview and philosophy that coincides with them in many respects, although they are aimed primarily at changing oneself, rather than the world, can certainly not only help understand the world, either as a reality or as a construction of our consciousness from the data of our experience, but they can also help change it. They can show themselves as a theoretical, but also as a practical philosophy, the philosophy of the "objective spirit", and can achieve that change by following the Indian or European formulation of the categorical imperative, i.e. by working for the sake of the "maintenance of the world" or for the "good of the whole world". They can achieve it in a much more successful, beneficial and, we hope, more lasting way, than when violence pretends to follow the "ruse of the (universal) intellect" (*List der Vernunft*, Hegel) or "historical necessity" (Marx), especially if it requires the supremacy of a nation, race or class and its dictatorship.

In accordance with such a philosophy of disinterested duty, what should guide us in life and action? As a conclusion, I will quote the words of one of the greatest and noblest rulers in the history of mankind, Aśoka from his 6th rock edict:[41]

*I am never satisfied with (my) exertion and performance of work. It is my conviction that it is my duty (that I should work for) the good of the whole world. And the root of it is again: exertion and performance of work. There is no better deed than the good of the whole world. And whatever I strain myself for – what (purpose it serves)? (I do it) in order to discharge the debt (that I owe) to living beings! May I make them happy here (in this world), and in the other world may they deserve heaven!*

41
The text: (Hultzsch [2]1969); (Ježić 2012).

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**Mislav Ježić**

## Svijet u indijskoj i europskoj filozofiji

**Sažetak**

*Svijet je sveobuhvatan pojam područja vanjskoga iskustva u kojem se svi predmeti pojavljuju kao izvanjski našoj svijesti. To je također područje nastajanja, prolaznosti i nestajanja, odn. rođenja, života i smrti (fiziologija, filozofijska fizika, kozmologija). Samo suće, naprotiv, poima se kao ono što jest i ne postaje (ontologija, metafizika). Filozofija istražuje ono što je predmet naše spoznaje, ali i ono što bi trebao biti predmet našega djelovanja (etika, praktička filozofija). Filozofija može pokušati razumjeti prirodu svijesti i uma iz iskustva svijeta ili može pokušati procijeniti istinu ili pojavnost svijeta koji doživljavamo iz procjene naših spoznajnih moći (epistemologija). Oba su pristupa potvrđena u Indiji i na Zapadu u različitim razdobljima. Razmotrit će se i usporediti neki primjeri.*

**Ključne riječi**

indijska filozofija, zapadna filozofija, svijet, ontologija, kozmologija, epistemologija, etika

**Mislav Ježić**

## Die Welt in der indischen und europäischen Philosophie

**Zusammenfassung**

*Die Welt ist ein umfassender Begriff des Bereichs der äußeren Erfahrung, in der alle Objekte als außerhalb unseres Bewusstseins erscheinen. Dies ist auch der Bereich der Entstehung, der Vergänglichkeit und des Verschwindens, bzw. der Geburt, des Lebens und des Todes (Physiologie, philosophische Physik, Kosmologie). Das Seiende selbst wird, im Gegenteil, als das, was ist und nicht wird verstanden (Ontologie, Metaphysik). Die Philosophie untersucht das, was der Gegenstand unserer Erkenntnis ist, aber auch das, was der Gegenstand unseres Handelns sein sollte (Ethik, praktische Philosophie). Die Philosophie kann es versuchen, die Natur des Bewusstseins und der Vernunft aus der Welterfahrung zu verstehen, oder kann es versuchen, die Wahrheit oder das Erscheinungsbild der Welt zu beurteilen, die wir aus der Beurteilung unserer Erkenntniskräfte erleben (Epistemologie). Beide Zugangsweisen wurden in Indien und im Westen zu unterschiedlichen Zeiten bestätigt. Einige Beispiele werden in Betracht gezogen und verglichen.*

**Schlüsselwörter**

indische Philosophie, westliche Philosophie, Welt, Ontologie, Kosmologie, Epistemologie, Ethik

**Mislav Ježić**

# Le monde dans la philosophie indienne et européenne

**Résumé**

*Le monde est un concept englobant la sphère de l'expérience externe dans laquelle tous les objets apparaissent comme externes à notre conscience. C'est également le domaine du devenir, de la transience et de la disparition, à savoir, respectivement de la naissance, de la vie et de la mort (physiologie, physique philosophique, cosmologie). L'être lui-même, au contraire, est conçu comme ce qui est et ne devient pas (ontologie, métaphysique). La philosophie examine l'objet de notre cognition, mais aussi ce qui devrait être l'objet de notre action (éthique, philosophie pratique). La philosophie peut tenter de comprendre la nature de la conscience et de la raison à partir de l'expérience du monde, ou elle peut s'appliquer à évaluer la vérité ou l'apparence du monde que nous percevons à partir de l'évaluation de nos facultés cognitives (épistémologie). Les deux approches ont été confirmées en Inde et en Occident à différentes époques. Certains exemples seront examinés et comparés.*

**Mots-clés**

philosophie indienne, philosophie occidentale, monde, ontologie, cosmologie, épistémologie, éthique