world-view of any tradition. As the ideologies have been the cause for ecological crisis, corrective ideologies would be remedial towards bringing in solutions to it. The whole study taken for the research focuses on the contemporary crisis of ecology and looks for an effective change in one’s conception about nature in the light of concept of māyai in Tirumandiram. Having emerged from the Tamil cultural and philosophical tradition, Tirumandiram is potential in giving a corrective notion to human-nature relationship by its affirmative and realistic approach to the material and the physical world. It is supposed that the realistic notion of the material nature ever upholds the constructive relationship. The following two chapters would dwell on such realistic conceptions of the world in Western and in Tamil systems to paving a strong foundation for the realism in the concept of māyai in Tirumandiram.

CHAPTER 2

MATERIAL REALITY IN WESTERN AND INDIAN SYSTEMS

A search for knowledge, truth and wisdom is what the word ‘philosophy’ (in Greek philosophia) literally means by ‘love of wisdom.’ Philosophy originates as the fruit of critical reflection on man, world and the Absolute and their mutual relationship. It gives human beings a comprehensive view of reality and their place in it. Philosophy as a fundamental discipline and an intellectual activity has left with the humanity a rich heritage of thinking patterns, presuppositions, concepts and theories. Philosophical systems, though geographically influenced, are universal, transcending cultures, religions and ethnic identities. Every culture and nation has produced philosophies and philosophers.

179 However, psychological and sociological factor contributing and influencing human activities are not oversighted or underestimated. Limited scope of the study allows us to focus only on ideologies influencing human activities – again not only human activities but everything of human.
Various individual thinkers and traditions have speculated, reflected and conceptualized the reality of the matter which surrounds them. Their experience of the physical body within and the material objects outside has led them to come up with their own concepts of the material reality. The materiality is an inevitable reality. Philosophizing could never take place in its absence; in a sense that it has either to be accepted or rejected as a reality in any system of thought. No wonder it is, that in every philosophical system material reality is accounted for affirmatively or negatively. In this chapter we attempt to survey the concept of material reality in both Western and Indian philosophical traditions, prominent among many others. The illustration particularly picks up the realistic approach to engage in a discourse about the human conception about the physical world.

2.1. Realistic Approach to Matter

Generally the term ‘Realism’ refers to the existence of material objects as they are and as opposed to the abstract or ideal. It refers to the existence of objects of everyday practical life, dealing with facts, physical universe, events and necessities of life. Existence of these things is accounted to be real with their own properties or qualities. Despite the fact of human likes and dislikes all existing things have their existence in a realistic sense. Existence of various material objects and their material source is held as ontologically real. Accepting things as they are is known as realism in its actual spirit and essence. Such a realistic approach to matter is found in many systems.

2.2. Realism in Western Tradition

Realism in the Western thought has various concerns. Ancient Greek thought largely represented by Plato and Aristotle dwelt on the reality of the material objects and argued whether it existed as an idea apart from the external world or as the universal inherent in the things themselves. Trends in medieval Western thought either supported Platonic or Aristotelian view points with an addition that universals existed in God's creative mind before the
material universe. Cartesian dualism in the modern period clearly affirmed that
the external matter is independent and distinguished from mind. They are not
directly perceived but only causally inferred. The existence of matter is inferred
from the ideas that are modes of mind caused by matter. Empiricism of John
Locke affirmed that ideas are signs of things and from ideas we infer things.
Ideas are directly perceived and we infer the existence of external objects from
them. Therefore, in modern philosophy realism in its most general form,
known as naïve realism asserts that objects in the external world exist
independently of the perceiver. In the twentieth century realism in the West has
catered to the needs of analytical and empirical science and common sense.

2.2.1. Ancient Greek Atomism

The ancient Greek atomism of Democritus in the fifth century BC dwelt
on the search for the fundamental substance that made the material objects.
The indivisible particles called ‘atoms’ were considered to be the base for all
the material and physical world.180 The term ‘atom’ (atomon – Gk), literally
meaning ‘uncuttable,’ was coined in the fifth century BC by Leucippus and
Democritus to suggest that these unbreakable physical particles were the
ultimate constituents of phenomenal bodies.181 Of course the later theorists in
the fourth century BCE spoke of ‘partless’ or ‘minimal’ magnitudes or bodies
focusing mostly on the mathematical aspects of the physical entities in their
discourse on material reality.182 The Epicureans later have combined both the
physical and mathematical approaches and theorized the material reality as they
were further analyzable into irreducibly small magnitudes. The discussion on
the physical and mathematical indivisibility in the ancient Greece was on the
indivisibility of the fundamental base of the physical bodies. For instance, in
the conceptual arguments of the Eleatic philosopher like Parmenides the

argument that ‘that-which-is’ is indivisible is taken to mean that if a thing were divisible anywhere it would have to be divisible everywhere.\textsuperscript{183} The Atomists on the other hand had a solution that a physical body is divisible in some places but not others and they held that atom is indivisible and unchangeable, yet plural in varying shapes and sizes.\textsuperscript{184} The emergence of such thesis of Epicurian mathematical or absolute \textit{minima}, as above stated, could not adequately answer the Eleatic puzzles that such atoms must have parts and whether or not they are divisible or indivisible, measurable or immeasurable.\textsuperscript{185} Therefore, the absolute minima were considered as altogether partless portions of the physical body. Even though the opponents of atomists like skeptics, stoics and even Aristotle, could point out many conceptual difficulties in such a theorization, the ancient Greek atomists’ understanding of the material reality won many adherents in the Renaissance period and in the modern physics.\textsuperscript{186}

\section*{2.2.2. Material Universe in Plato}

Realism in the Western thought has captured the attention of the philosophers from ancient Greek period onwards, specifically during the contemporary analytical tradition. Plato’s doctrine centers around a theory that the world which appears to our senses in some way defective and there is a more real and perfect realm with entities called ‘forms’ or ‘ideas’ that are eternal and changeless.\textsuperscript{187} This realm is advocated in some sense as paradigmatic for the structure and character of the physical world. The many observable objects that appear beautiful, good, just etc. draw their characteristics from the corresponding idea of the one object that is beauty,

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\textsuperscript{184} For elaborate discussion refer, S. Makin, ‘The Indivisibility of the Atom,’ \textit{Archiv Fur Geschichte der philosohie}, Vol.71, 125-149.
\textsuperscript{187} W.T. Stace, \textit{A Critical History of Greek Philosophy}, 207-211.
\end{flushright}
goodness, justice itself. This distinction of the material world and the ideal world from which the material and objective universe receive its authentication is conceived in platonic theory leading to understanding of reality in a bifurcated way that there is the greater reality of the forms and the defectiveness of the corporeal world. The dualism of spirit and matter that the spirit or soul is a different sort of object from the body and independent of the existence of the body for its functioning is grasped in the nature of the platonic theory of forms.

For Plato, ideas alone were objectively real and they exist apart from any mind independently in the Ideal World. Things are mere copies or reflections of these ideas. In the writings of Plato we come across the presentation of the world of Ideas not as a dramatic, fictional world but as philosophical debates. These philosophical discussions form vivid portraits of a social world and comments on the social milieu. Even for conceiving the ideal world Plato had to depend on the concrete world of living. “In any case, despite the great sympathy Plato expresses for the desire to shed one's body and live in an incorporeal world, he devotes an enormous amount of energy to the task of understanding the world we live in, appreciating its limited beauty, and improving it.” Even when Plato speaks of his predecessor Socrates he presents him as a man who does not have his head in the clouds and as one who does not want to escape from the everyday world but to make it better. Again in Laws we find Plato having a great detail and length about political and practical issues, as a person who wants to contribute something to the improvement of

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188 Ibid., 184.
the lives in this sensible and imperfect realm.\textsuperscript{193} Even in much celebrated Platonic idealism, we have traces of realism.

\subsection*{2.2.3. Material Reality in Aristolean Metaphysics}

In his metaphysics which he calls as ‘first philosophy,’ Aristotle deals with causes and principles as the most fundamental entities. Aristotle distinguished between things that are “better known to us” and things that are “better known in themselves.”\textsuperscript{194} For him we could arrive ultimately at an understanding of things in themselves, by first beginning to study the things known to us.\textsuperscript{195} From the study of nature and objective world of the ordinary experience one could arrive at the general and abstract principles.

For a successful investigation of the world, Aristotle brings in the theory of causality in his metaphysics.\textsuperscript{196} Any consistent enquiry into the nature of material reality begins investigation of the relevant causes of a variety of natural phenomena,\textsuperscript{197} such as “why each thing comes into existence, why it goes out of existence, why it exists”.\textsuperscript{198} He points out the four types of causes, namely, the material cause: “that out of which”, the formal cause: “the form”, “the account of what-it-is-to-be”, the efficient cause: “the primary source of the change or rest”, the final cause: “the end, that for the sake of which a thing is done”, explains the reality of a thing. Aristotle expects the student of nature to

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\item \textsuperscript{198} John M. Ed., \textit{Plato: Complete Works} (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997), \textit{Phaedo}, (96 a 6-10).\end{itemize}
have mastered these principles before engaging in the investigation of any aspect of the natural world.\(^\text{199}\)

In his analysis of categories he distinguishes substance and accidents. Substances are unique in being independent things, where as the other categories all depend somehow on substances.\(^\text{200}\) The non-substances all owe their existence to substances, that is, each non-substance “is in something, not as a part, and cannot exist separately from what it is in”\(^\text{201}\) The substances are the subjects ‘in’ which the non-substances are ontologically dependent and there is an inherence relation between them. For Aristotle each substance is composed of matter and form.\(^\text{202}\) The matter may exist independently of substance, even as constituting a definite individual substance but it is not as such any definite individual and not separate from the form of that substance.\(^\text{203}\) In Aristotlean terms, although matter is in a sense separate and a subject, ‘some this,’ it cannot be both separate and some this.\(^\text{204}\)

In the hylomorphic presentation of substance as composed of matter and form, the substance is mostly described by the name of its form rather by that of its matter.\(^\text{205}\) For Aristotle, the form of such a hylomorphic compound substance becomes its essence and not its matter. A substantial form is the

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The essence of a substance and are universals. The matter of a substance is the stuff it is composed of; the form is the way that stuff is put together.\textsuperscript{206}

Another key Aristotelian distinction between potentiality (\textit{dunamis}) and actuality (\textit{entelecheia}) is the distinction between the power within that a thing has to produce a change. Potentiality is the power that a thing has to produce a change and is the “source of change in something else (or in itself \textit{qua} other).”\textsuperscript{207} In another sense the potentiality is the exercise of such a power, \textit{kinēsis}, a movement or process.\textsuperscript{208} It is also not just a thing's power to produce a change but rather its capacity to be in a different and more completed state, the actuality. Considered as matter, it remains only potentially the thing that it is the matter of. Only when it is actualized the potentiality is considered to be so. As Aristotle gives form priority over matter, similarly he gives actuality priority over potentiality.

In Aristotelian metaphysics, the general aim of rational inquiry into the nature of reality is to advance from what is ‘better known to us’ to ‘what it is by nature.’ In his realistic approach to material reality he begins his inquiry from those aspects of reality that are familiar to human beings, the ‘appearances,’ the empirical data. Such empirical inquiry proceeds from these particular observations to the generalization that leads to causes and to universals. That experience leads one to principles is the realist conception of inquiry and knowledge. Aristotelian metaphysics vouches for the beliefs and theories that are validated as true in so far as they grasp the reality that we inquire into, following such a realist approach.

\textbf{2.2.4. Medieval Thinkers on Material Reality}


\textsuperscript{207} Refer; Michael Frede, “Aristotle's Notion of Potentiality in \textit{Metaphysics \Theta}.” in \textit{Scaltsas}, 173-194.

In the medieval scholastic philosophical rendering realism was given a different meaning. The metaphysical enquiry on the reality of the world during this period was centered on the question of universals. Medieval realism holds that universals really exist independently, before the material and physical world where many individuals possessing these universals are found. Platonic understanding of existence of a world of ideas independently of the empirical world is often associated with medieval realism. For Augustine, universals existed before the material universe in God's creative mind. This viewpoint was expanded by twelfth century ultra-realists, such as Duns Scotus, Odo of Tournai, and William of Champeaux, to posit that the logical and real orders are exactly parallel.

Realism is contrasted with conceptualism and nominalism, in the famous scholastic debate on the problem of universals. While affirming the universals existing, conceptualism holds that they exist only in the mind where conception takes place. Nominalism on the other hand would hold that universals do not exist at all in actual sense. The universals are merely names. They are no more than words used to describe specific objects.

Moderate realism of medieval period plays down the two extremes. It denies the independent existence of the universals by saying that they exist only in so far as they are found in individual things. For Aristotle, universals are present in the things themselves and they exist in the mind only as abstractions. Thomas Aquinas in his *Summa Theologica* amended this ultra-realist position

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210 Realism in the medieval period dwells on the notion what is real and on its answer that the universals are real. This would characterize what we term as ‘medieval realism.’
212 Universals are the terms or properties that are applied to many things at a same time in contrast to particular properties that can only be applicable to a single specific individual. For instance, red, good, beauty can be found in many, where as ‘Aristotle,’ ‘Ephesus,’ can be found only in a single individual.
by developing Aristotle's doctrine that universals have a being only in material objects.\textsuperscript{215} According to Aquinas we cannot assert that universals exist wholly apart from individual objects inasmuch as we know of them only through sensory impressions of individual objects.\textsuperscript{216} Thus universals are abstracted from the knowledge rooted in individual things.

Thus, in medieval Western thought there were two schools. Extreme realism, represented by William of Champeaux held that universals exist independently of both the human mind and particular thing. It is a theory closely associated with that of Plato. Rejecting this view moderate realism was proposed by Thomas Aquinas and John of Salisbury. Based on Aristotle it held that universals exist only in the mind of God, as patterns by which he creates particular things.

2.2.5. Modern and Contemporary Understanding of Material Reality

Answering the problem of the external world has been a constant concern throughout the history of human thought. The problem of realism concerns proofs for the existence of the world “external” to the interiority of consciousness. Cartesian classic subject/object distinction presupposed a sharp ontological boundary between interior mental life (\textit{res cogitans}) and exterior physicality (\textit{res extensa}).\textsuperscript{217} Philosophers down the ages have dealt with this distinction as it is difficult if not impossible to amply connect these two ontological worlds once cleaved by naïve dualism. The modern and contemporary understanding of material reality begins with the highlighting the well-known radical dualism of Descartes and stays close to Idealist camps.

2.2.5.1. Cartesian Dualism of Mind and Matter

\textsuperscript{216} Paul J. Glenn, \textit{The History of Philosophy}, 236-242.
\textsuperscript{217} Paul J. Glenn, \textit{The History of Philosophy}, 268-272.
Descartes introduction of a radical dualism of ‘matter’ and ‘mind,’\textsuperscript{218} has triggered the question of existence of material reality in the modern period with a renewed focus apart from ancient and medieval discourse on the same. Descartes clearly affirms that the external matter is independent and distinguished from mind. They are not directly perceived but only causally inferred. The existence of matter is inferred from the ideas that are modes of mind caused by matter.\textsuperscript{219} For John Locke ideas are signs of things and from ideas we infer things. Ideas are directly perceived and we infer the existence of external objects from them.\textsuperscript{220} John Locke’s account of abstraction focuses on human mind framing the abstract ideas through the primary and secondary data or qualities from the substance. Lock’s empiricism presupposes the belief in material substance and its existence distinct from ‘ideas,’

Unlike common view, as held by Descartes\textsuperscript{221} and Locke, that human beings are aware only of the ‘ideas,’ ‘sensations,’ or ‘perceptions,’ which are somehow or other produced in our minds by the external objects, Berkeley holds that there is no distinction between the ‘ideas’ perceived and the ‘real’ objects hidden beyond them. This he fears would hypothesize the existence of ‘real’ objects as causes of ideas, with the denial of other possible cause like God. Again he questions on the feasibility of inert matter involving actively on production of ideas in the mind. His conviction that there is no such thing as ‘matter,’ or bodies ‘without the mind,’ is firmly emphasized in his famous dictum, ‘esse est percipi,’ – ‘to be is to be perceived.’\textsuperscript{222} Overriding the Lockean distinction between ‘qualities,’ and ‘ideas,’ and ignoring Locke’s supposition of a ‘substratum’ in the external objects, for the ‘qualities,’\textsuperscript{223}

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  \item \textsuperscript{218} Antony Flew, \textit{Western Philosophy} (London: Thames and Hudson, 1971), 284.
  \item \textsuperscript{219} Jadunath Sinha, \textit{Indian Realism} (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1999), 35.
  \item \textsuperscript{220} Paul J. Glenn, \textit{The History of Philosophy}, 285.
\end{itemize}
Berkeley argues in his *The Principles* that there is no external, material world. The objects are mere collections of ‘ideas,’ that are either produced by God as ‘ideas’ or by human minds as ‘sensations.’ His theory, ‘immaterialism,’ is seen in the context of rapid developments in science offering a key to understanding the true nature and function of the material world and philosophical skepticism about the very existence of the material world. He rejected the bodies ‘without the mind.’ Berkeley insists that there can be no substance apart from the perceiving mind. The ontological status of an object is given only perception of either human or Divine mind. From his empiricist position in epistemological consideration, Berkeley’s basic metaphysics turn to be ‘idealism,’ or ‘immaterialism.’ Cartesian dualism thus paves a solid foundation for the reductionist position of the physical.

2.2.5.2. Reality in Kantian Transcendental Idealism

In its Kantian sense, realism is contrasted with idealism. As Immanuel Kant in the modern Western philosophy synthesized early modern rationalism and empiricism, he set the discussion in favour of human understanding of reality. The rise and successes of modern science engendered widespread confidence and optimism about the power of human reason to control nature and to improve human life. The radical commitment of Enlightenment to the sovereignty of reason led to many consequences, replacing traditional authorities of moral and religious, with that of individual human reason and threatening to undermine all moral and religious values. To this crisis of Enlightenment, Kant responds in the *Critique of Pure Reason* with his concern to examine whether, how and to what extent human reason is capable of being.

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The possibility of *a priori* knowledge of an intelligible world is analyzed if it is independent of the human understanding and of the sensible world.

Kant held a revolutionary position that one can have *a priori* knowledge about the general structure of the sensible world as it is not entirely independent of the human mind. For him, the sensible world, or the world of appearances, is constructed by the human mind from a combination of sensory matter received passively and *a priori* forms supplied by cognitive faculties. *A priori* is only about the aspects of the world that are put into them already. Thus according to him, *a priori* knowledge is possible only if and to the extent that the sensible world itself depends on the way the human mind structures its experience.

The famous Copernican revolution of Kant rejected the assumption that all cognition must conform to the objects and pronounced that the objects must conform to human cognition. For Kant, both sensibility and understanding are working together to construct cognition of the sensible world. This characterizes Kantian metaphysical theory of Transcendental Idealism that human beings experience only appearances, *phenomena* (things as appear to be) not things in themselves, *noumena*. It essentially distinguishes between a world of appearances and another world of things in themselves. Things in themselves are absolutely real in the sense that they could exist and have their own properties even if no human beings were around to perceive them. Appearances, on the other hand, are not absolutely real. Their existence and properties depend on human perceivers. They do exist in the mind of human beings.

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229 Ibid., 25-34.
perceivers, as they are mental entities or mental representations. Such a claim makes the transcendental idealism to be a form of phenomenalism reducing the objects of experience to mere subjective mental representations. All spatial temporal objects fall into this category of appearances. Kantian assumption of things in themselves is required to explain how human mind constructs appearances. Things in themselves are therefore a sort of theoretical posit, whose existence and role are required by the theory but are not directly verifiable. When asserting that things in themselves are real and appearances are not, Kant denies that appearances are unreal. They are just as real as things in themselves but are in a different metaphysical class.

In the modern Western period, Cartesian dualism leads to a certain exaltation of the mind, Berkelean ‘perceiving’ mind is posited as the authenticator of the existence of the external objects. Kantian idealism distinguishes the ‘real’ noumena and ‘apparent’ phenomena. Therefore, in rationalist, empiricist and idealist discourse, there is an assertion that objects in the external world exist. It is either affirmed as existing independently of the perceiver or as dependent of the perceiving mind or mutually confirming.

2.2.5.3. The “Post-modern” Challenge

While the realists strive to provide a philosophical proof that the external world does exist independently of the mind, the validity of such a thesis has various kinds of rational arguments for and against. The lack of decisive proof for the existence of the external world, as Kant himself says, is a great “scandal of philosophy”. In the contemporary discourse the issue of realism still furthered more in a direction whether the reality of the world needs

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to be proved for its existence and whether it is capable of proof rather than the attempts of proofs. In the anti-realist ‘postmodern’ conceptions phenomena such as knowledge, evidence, truth and reality are all ‘social constructions.’ The implications are that one need to reject what is constructed as the world or reality. There are serious interchanges between the contemporary realists and the postmodern relativists or skeptics.  

The contemporary realism discourse also dwells on the logical empiricist concern about the knowledge of unobservable ‘theoretical’ entities. Any theory, about observable or non-observable entities could be acceptable only when it has empirically adequate observations, as in scientific notion. Traditional empiricism depended on experience or sensation as the source of all ideas of all observable and non-observable external worlds. Rejection of any theory about non-observable entities in scientifically tempered attempts as ‘unknowable’ and therefore meaningless, is part of anti-metaphysical crusade where empirical ‘science’ is claimed to have better perspective and conclusion than speculative ‘metaphysics.’

Scientific realists have the pent of mind that the successful scientific research brings in knowledge of certain thing only when it is ‘theory-independent phenomena.’ They set aside both skepticism and pre-conception about the external world. Post modern approach with non-foundationalist


conception of knowledge is seemingly tend to favour the articulation of a conception of approximate truth rather than absolutizing neither the approach nor the result.\textsuperscript{241} The historical development of scientific theories too reflects progress by successive approximation to the truth about the observables and even in that sense, the once a ‘non-observable.’\textsuperscript{242} The realists rush to take the argument in their favour that improvements in approximation of knowledge about external world depends on the improvement of the methods of knowing rather than the external world itself.\textsuperscript{243}

Realists tend to push their cause in their favour in ontological discussion of Being too. For instance, in the ontologist Heideggerian thought pattern earthly entities exist independently of human disclosure. However their being depends on how humans take them to be in relation to human concerns. Along with \textit{Dasein} as ‘being-in-the-world,’ entities within-the-world have come to play in the Heidegger’s ontology necessarily, proposing a seemingly convergence of his thought with the thesis of realism that the external world is really present-at-hand.\textsuperscript{244} The existential assertion of \textit{Dasein} does not deny entities within-the-world. Heidegger’s ‘Being-in-the-world’ is seen as a philosophical alternative to the classical theories of human mind or consciousness.\textsuperscript{245} Heidegger’s methodology in \textit{Being and Time} entails a

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{245} In modern philosophy perception is understood in terms of a container wherein the mind becomes a storehouse for all mental representations or impressions of the external world. Epistemological theories of correspondence is derived from such conception that the ‘outside’ object has to correspond to ‘inside’ subject. The isolated mind or consciousness is found to be there inevitably. This unquestioned premise of a Self or Mind standing apart from the external world by such mediating representations, as held by Neo-Kantian representationalism is challenged in the contemporary discourse, as found in Heidegger and others.
\end{itemize}
nonrepresentational direct realism and Heidegger’s ontology captures the most desirable elements of both realism and idealism, without collapsing into either anthropomorphic idealism or naïve realism.  

Realists in the contemporary philosophical discussion affirm that the reality is completely independent of conceptual schemes, language analysis, affirmations and beliefs. Beliefs, theories and concepts come to be only in correspondence to reality and these are only approximations of reality. Every new observation of the reality brings in a closer understanding and better comprehension of reality, rather than denial of any such reality which is absolutely affirmed by certain beliefs or concepts.

2.3. Realism in Indian Tradition

Throughout Indian philosophical debates there had been many arguments between idealism and realism. Buddhist realists, especially Vaibhāśika and Sautrāntika, the Jains, Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, Sāṁkhya-Yoga and the Mīmāṁsakas give arguments to establish the reality of the external world compatible with each one’s system of thought. Subjective idealists like Vijñāvādins and Absolute idealists like Advaitins have established their positions arguing against realism in Indian thought. For the Yogacāras the only reality is the mere cognition free from the distinction of subject and object. The external world does not exist, since its existence cannot be proved. The Advaitins argue from a world view that accepts only the reality of the Absolute. In every Indian system, each metaphysical position of reality of the material world is ascertained with the epistemological considerations in these traditions.

2.3.1. Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika on Material Categories

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The multifarious elements of human experience are classified by the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣīka thinkers under seven categories (padārthas).249 Padārthas constitute the several classes or groups into which the objects of the universe can be divided. According to Vaiśeṣīka knowledge is invariably objective, and all objects are name-able too. Name-ability does not necessitate the complete knowledge about an object; rather it demands that we know that it exists (sat) in order to name it. Vaiśeṣīka position is that all the beings of the universe can be brought under the seven categories (padārthas) of being: (i) dravya (substance); guṇa (quality); karma (action); samānya (universal); viśesa (particular); samavāya (necessary relation); abhāva (absence or negation).250 Substance is defined as the substratum, in which qualities and actions inhere and is also the material cause of composite things produced from it. Substance signifies the self-subsistence and independent nature of things. Quality is that being which is different from substance and activity and, by itself, is without qualities and activities. Qualities pertain to one or more substances and by themselves cannot stand for a thing. In contrast to the substance, quality cannot exist independently by itself. Action, like quality, belongs to and inhere in substance, and this represents various kinds of movements. Universal is that which is eternal and inhere in many as common characteristic of the things belonging to the same class. It exists in substances, qualities and actions. Particularity is opposed to universal and it exists in ultimate, eternal substances. Particularity is ultimate differentiator and it is that which distinguishes the eternal substances (material as well as non-material) from one another. Samavāya is the eternal and inseparable relation. In the necessary and intimate relation, at least one member is inseparable from the other and the separation of them implies the destruction of at least one of them. Necessary relation is different from conjunction (samyoga) which is a separable relation.

249 The padārthas of Nyaya- Vaiśeṣika may be compared to the ‘ten categories’ of Aristotle. The literal meaning of the word padārtha can be: ‘the meaning (artha) of a word (padā)’ or ‘an object (artha) signified by a word (padā)’
Samavāya is found among substance and qualities, substance and actions, particular and universal, ultimate things and particular and whole and parts. Negation is the absence of something somewhere and not absolute nothing (sūnya). It is a relative category and negation necessarily presupposes some affirmation: negation is always negation of something, not a thing in itself. All the categories except abhāva are positive while abhāva is negative.²⁵¹

### 2.3.2. Sāṁkhya Dualistic Realism

The Sāṁkhya metaphysics shows great advance over other schools of philosophy and it presents a qualitative dualism of spirit and matter, puruṣa and prakṛti.²⁵² All material or natural entities have a share in the prakṛti as it is the primeval material that is in the process of becoming and change, and constitutes everything from inorganic matter to mind.²⁵³ For Sāṁkhya, prakṛti, which is unconscious, constitutes the world of change and transformation. On the contrary, the puruṣa is pure consciousness and numerous. Beings are classified into three groups: the Absolute spirit, beings which are composite of spirit and matter and the purely inorganic beings. Īśvara is the Absolute spirit, human beings and all other living beings are considered to be of spirit and matter and all inorganic beings are purely material or natural.²⁵⁴

The whole change and dynamism of prakṛti proceeds according to a definite causality called, satkāryavāda.²⁵⁵ The entire reality is implicit in the prakṛti in an un-manifest state that becomes manifest through the evolution. The total number of evolutes or principles (tattvas) that emerge through tripartite transactions (gunaparināma) is twenty three. If puruṣa and prakṛti are

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²⁵⁴ Ibid., 10.
²⁵⁵ *Satkāryavāda* is the theory that the effect preexists in the cause. Accordingly no new creation is possible, what is ‘new’ or the ‘effect’ is only the explicitation of what is implicit in the cause.
added we get the total twenty five principles of the Sāṁkhya System. They are buddhi, ahaṁkāra and manas, then five sense organs (jñāṇendriyas), five motor organs (karmēndriyas), five subtle elements (tanmātras) and five gross elements (mahābhutas).256

As prakṛti is constituted of three guṇas, namely, sattva, rajas and tāmas, the essential characteristics of the physical universe is classified into three. The different names and forms of things in the universe are due to the preponderance of one or the other of the three guṇas. These principles were invested with cosmic dimensions in the proto-Sāṁkhya, but in the classical Sāṁkhya they are considered to be predominantly psychic in character: i.e. they are thought of as the categories necessary to elaborate a particular anthropological philosophy of dualism and a particular doctrine of liberation.257 The entire evolution of prakṛti is for the purpose of liberating each individual puruṣa. Evolution of pañcabhūta is to serve the purpose of the puruṣa.

Prakṛti, by nature, is potential and the things of the world are capable of further perfection because of the presence of prakṛti in them.258 Evidently a pure spirit is no more perfectible as the prakṛti is not present in it. At the same time, prakṛti stands always in need of the spirit, puruṣa as the potentialities of the prakṛti can be realized only under the influence of the puruṣa. As prakṛti is functioning under the influence of puruṣa, it can share the consciousness of puruṣa and can become conscious as is the case of the human being.259 Thus the mind in human being is the matter made conscious by the reflection of the

256 Vincent Gabriel Furtado, Classical Samkhya Ethics, 12.
259 Vincent Gabriel Furtado, Classical Samkhya Ethics, 34.
consciousness of the puruṣa. This approach towards the mind altogether eliminates the mind-body dichotomy.260

The prakṛti is incapable of manifesting itself without the presence of the puruṣa; it can manifest only when it experiences the nearness of a puruṣa which actually instills a purpose in prakṛti.261 This means the externalisation of prakṛtic activity needs a purpose: it should be seen by the puruṣa or the puruṣa should derive enjoyment in seeing prakṛti and the prakṛti should feed the puruṣa with experience.262 Here again, Sāṁkhyan realistic dualism does not propagate hardcore dichotomy of matter and spirit, but rather an interrelation and interdependence of the dual entities.

The Sāṁkhya while advocating the dualism of prakṛti and puruṣas, holds a theory of matter giving a realistic account of the nature of all that there is. The totality of material objects is prakṛti and every phenomenon in Prakṛti is an admixture of all the three kinds of gunas, and the proportions in which they are blended in it determine its character. This presents not just that of a totality of things, but also the identity of a particular thing. If puruṣas are excluded the Sāṁkhya view of things is mere materialistic and naturalistic. Teleologically prakṛti evolves from its pristine condition, into the kind of world-order of diverse kinds of material things is associated with puruṣa making it capable of perceiving things, feeling pleasures and pains, and to satisfy desires. It is only within such a world-order that the purposes of puruṣa, such as to enjoy diverse experiences (bhoga) and to be liberated (apavarga), can be effectively served. And the supreme end of a puruṣa which Prakṛti serves is his liberation (apavarga or mokṣa).263

262 Vincent Gabriel Furtado, Classical Samkhya Ethics, 31.
2.3.3. Mīmāṁsa on the Real World of Actions

The Mīmāṁsa school of thought has a primary objective of constructing a metaphysical theory to justify the Vedic ritualism. It believes in the reality of the world and human life and activities performed in this world are real, not mere illusion or dreams. In their enquiry about the nature of right action, they affirm that the very essence of human existence is action. Without action human happiness and destiny cannot be attained. With all its myriad objects the physical world is real. The various objects of the world serve us as the fruits to be suffered and enjoyed. The world has always been as it is without a beginning or an end. The world’s objects are formed out of matter in accordance with the karmas of the souls. It believes that there is infinite number of souls. They are eternal but they undergo transmigration due to their karmas performed when encased in real bodies in a real world. When a man performs any ritual, there arises in his soul a potency, which produces in future the fruit of the action at an opportune moment. Although Mīmāṁsa does not enter into any philosophical analysis of the universe it welcomes philosophical discussion that will further an understanding of right action as enjoined in the Veda.264

2.3.4. Vedāntic Understanding of Material World

Vedānta tradition draws its inspiration from the Upaniṣads as the essence of the Vedas. The philosophical tradition of Vedānta is not a homogenous and monolithic teachings of the Upaniṣads. It is diverse, influential and intellectually stimulating thought systems that have been developed in India. The fundamental philosophical problematic of entities of

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the jīva and jagat, self and the world dominate the philosophical debates in all
the Vedanta schools. Speaking in diverse voice, they spell out their concept
of the nature of ultimate reality and its relation to the individual self and to the
empirical world. Prominent among them are the following: the Advaita
Vedānta of Adi Śāṅkara, the Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta of Rāmānuja, the Dvaita
Vedānta of Madhva, the Dvaitādvaita Vedānta of Nimbāraka, the
Śuddhādvaita Vedānta of Vallabha and the Acintya-Bhedābheda Vedānta of
Caitanya.

2.3.4.1. Dualism of Dvaita Vedānta

Dvaita system of philosophy posits more than one fundamental
metaphysical principle or category to explain the universe. While admitting of
two mutually irreducible principles as constituting reality as a whole, Dvaita
regards only one of them, God, as independent (svatantra) and the other, all
finite reality, as dependent (paratantra). All finite reality comprising the
prakṛti, puruṣas, kāla, karma, svabhāva, etc is real and eternal. They are
dependent completely on the other for its being and becoming. They are not
inspite of the Lord; but because of Him. Thus the unity, sovereignty and
independence of God are made consistent with the claims of reason and the
demands of metaphysics. Another aspect of Dualistic thought, is its realistic
attitude to the experiences of life. Finite experiences of embodied existence
and human efforts to achieve liberation from bondage have both a real value

266 R. Balsubaramanian, Intro., Theistic Vedanta. Vol.II. Part 3 of History of Science,
Philosophy and Culture in Indian Civilization. Reprint (New Delhi: Centre for Studies in
Civilizations, 2003), xxxi-xxxiii.
267 The English equivalent of “Dvaita” is dualism. In Western philosophy dualism is a theory
which admits two independent and mutually irreducible substances. It is a theory in which a
fundamental two-fold distinction is drawn, as used in Cartesian distinction between two
substances, mind and matter; as in Plato’s distinction between the intelligible and the sensible
and in Fichte’s between ego and the non-ego.
268 B.N.K Sharma, Madhva’s Teachings in His own Words, 4th edn. (rpt. 1951; Mumbai:
Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1997), 37.
and validity of their own and are not mere bubbles of avidya as Advaitins hold it. The Dvaita system has been the chief rival in thought to the Advaita of Śankara, in the history of Indian Philosophy. It stood up for realism in Indian thought against all forces of Idealism and acosmism.269

2.3.4.2. Advaita on World of Illusion

In Advaita Vedānta, māyā is limited, purely physical and mental, illusory reality that veils the true Self. For Śankara, māyā is neither existent nor non-existent, neither sat nor asat.270 Since Brahman is the only truth and reality. Since māyā causes the material world to be apparently seen and experienced it is true at for sometime, vyāvahārīka satta. It is not true always as anything that is sat has to be unsublated. The reality of the world is sublated once knowledge dawns.271 It is untrue and non-reality, asat, in comparison to the Brahman, the one Absolute truth, pāramārtika satta. Hence māyā is not false; it is true but untrue in comparison with the absolute truth.272 For Advaita, māyā is not also totally asat, for, anything non-reality cannot be experienced and seen. The world of māyā is however experienced as real, at least for sometime for the realized Self, and always real for those in ignorance. Māyā is neither real nor unreal, sat or asat categorically and it is best described as anirvacanīya, indescribable.273

272 P.T. Raju, Structural Depths of Indian Thought (New Delhi: South Asian Publishers, 1985), 382.
Māyā has two primary functions, namely to obscure the true self and to project the something else on it. These two principal functions, concealment and projection are powers of māyā, called as vikṣepa śakti and āvarna śakti. The famous example of the rope-snake is brought to explain these aspects of māyā throughout the Advaitic discourse on māyā. The material world is nothing but the product of māyā, apparently real and empirically true for sometime. The world is not absolutely real, for, its substratum, the Brahman alone is the ultimate reality. Speaking on the relationship of the Ultimate Reality and of the apparent reality , the world, Śaṅkara uses an important brahma-vivarta-vada.274

In a way, Advaita denying the reality of the world in itself as true, posits on to the Brahman, the true reality.275 For all practical and empirical purpose, the reality of the world is held somehow. Ultimately it denies the reality of the physical in its own sense. Positively it is held that the reality of the world is enhanced with its fundamental justification of its existence lies in the Absolute reality, the Brahman. Thus dispensing the duality of the spirit and matter, Advaita Vedānta strongly advocates the monism, oneness of reality.276

2.3.4.3. Viśiṣṭādvaita on Māyā 277

Ramanuja’s Viśiṣṭādvaita278 employs the logical categories of identity, difference and identity-in-difference (bheda, abheda and bheda-abheda) to

274 Satischandra Chatterjee & Dhirendramohan Datta, An Introduction to Indian Philosophy. 8th Ed. (Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1984), 376ff.
277 We use the term ‘māyā’ in its Sanskritized form in this section and the following sections as it is used by different Indian systems and thinkers.
278 The term ‘Viśiṣṭādvaita’ signifies the non-duality (advaita) of Brahman constituted by (visista) its real parts, which are the conscious souls (cit) and the unconscious matter (acit). Literally it means the identity of the qualified; and the implication is that the body being the
delineate the nature and significance of the ultimate realities: God, matter and soul. For him, the highest Self with matter and souls as its body constitutes the conception of the supreme reality: \textit{prakaradvaya-visistaika-vastupratipadanena samanadhikaranyam ca siddham}.\footnote{George Thibaut, trans. \textit{The Vedanta-Sutras with the Commentary by Ramanuja}, Vol.48. in \textit{The Sacred Books of the East Series} (rpt.1896; Delhi: Low Price Publications, 1996), 138&145.} The unity, which is identity or non-duality, ascribed to Brahman is not a distinction-less unity. Within God there are mutually distinguishable substances, the conscious soul and the unconscious matter.\footnote{George Thibaut, trans. \textit{The Vedanta-Sutras with the Commentary by Ramanuja}, Vol.48. in \textit{The Sacred Books of the East Series} (rpt.1896; Delhi: Low Price Publications, 1996), 102.}

Among three ultimate ontological entities, God alone is conceived to be the absolutely independent entity where as souls and matter are dependent on God. God is seen as the soul whose body is constituted by matter and spirit.\footnote{Jadunath Sinha, \textit{Indian Philosophy}, Vol II. (rpt. 1952; Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1999), 145-154.} As the \textit{antarayamin}, God controls matter and spirit, but significantly God is not affected by the misery and imperfection of embodiment.\footnote{S. Radhakrishnan, \textit{Indian Philosophy}, Vol.II, 2nd Impression (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2009), 640-641.} Consciousness is not the essence of self, but its eternal quality according to Ramanuja. The bondage of self to the body is due to karma and liberation is possible by constant meditation on God as the dearest object of love (\textit{bhakti}). Intense practice of this \textit{bhakti} or \textit{upasana} brings about the destruction of all karmas that cause the embodiment and the self thus liberated.\footnote{Satischandra Chatterjee, \textit{An Introduction to Indian Philosophy}, 386.}

The other schools of Vedānta developed by Nimbara, Vallabha and Caitanya propose different model of relationship between the Absolute self, empirical soul and the world. \textit{Dvaitādvaita vāda}, theory of dualistic non-dualism of Nimbara, emphasizes the difference and non-difference real mode of the Self; all intelligent and non-intelligent beings constitute the varied modes of Brahman.
simultaneously. A distinction is made between the independent reality of Isvara and the dependent realities of jiva and prakrti. The relation that exists between the jiva, the world and God cannot be elucidated exclusively in terms of either absolute identity or absolute difference. He considers both difference and non-difference to be real. Critiquing the vivarta (illusion) theory of the world, Nimbarka claims that the world cannot be explained away as a mere illusion. The world is a manifestation (parinama) of what is already contained in a subtle form in the nature of Brahman.\textsuperscript{284}

Suddhādvaita of Vallabha holds that the whole world is a real entity and is not distinct from Brahman, subscribing to the thesis of pure non-dualism. Rejecting the conception of maya as the creative principle of Brahman, Vallabha says it would only imply the admission of a second entity besides Brahman. Brahman can create the world without any necessary connection with the principle of māyā, for he creates the whole world by the mere force of his will. By the process of evolution (avirbhāva) and involution (tirobhāva) of its qualities, Brahman becomes whatever it wills.\textsuperscript{285}

Caitanya’s theory of incomprehensible difference cum identity, acintya bhedābheda vāda, conceives Brahman as personification of love and grace, as creator of the soul and the world. Though separate and distinct from God, they are dependent on God because none of these can exist apart from God. In other words, they are neither identical (non-different) with God nor different from him. This conceptual categorization of relation has come to be known as acintya-bheda-abheda or the incomprehensible difference cum non-difference.\textsuperscript{286}

2.3.5. Monistic Materialism of Cārvāka

\textsuperscript{284} S. Radhakrishnan, \textit{Indian Philosophy}, Vol.II, 703-704.
\textsuperscript{286} S. Radhakrishnan, \textit{Indian Philosophy}, Vol.II, 711.
The materialist philosophers of India known as Cārvākas believe only in the reality of the matter and none other. Though their original texts are not extant, theirs is the philosophy that has been thoroughly criticized and vehemently rejected in almost all works of other schools of philosophy in India. The human goal according to them is only material wealth and physical pleasure. Their concern is this worldly. Hence their metaphysical position is centered around only material world. Arguing that only perception is the valid means of knowledge, Cārvāka builds up the metaphysical system of material monism. According to the valid source of knowledge only material world is real as it is perceivable.287 Regarding the substance out of which the entire physical universe is made, Cārvāka accepted only the four elements which are observable viz. earth, fire, air and water, refusing to accept the fifth, unobservable element of ether. For them different things in the world were made up of varying combinations of these four basic elements. Refusal to accept any kind of ‘self’ or ‘spirit’ which is not observed as the cause of this world, Cārvāka holds that the combinations of the four material elements by the intrinsic characters of the elements themselves. Even the so called ‘self’ or ‘consciousness,’ accordingly to them is only the combination of these elements. To the objection as to how the self which is conscious in character can be produced by unconscious physical elements, the reply is by way of the example of betel leaf, betel nut and lime, none of which is red, but still producing red colour when chewed together as in the chewing of a pān. When human person, according to the Cārvāka, dies, nothing survives and the body disintegrates into the original four elements. Anything ‘super natural’ or ‘supersensuous’ is out rightly rejected by Cārvāka as they are beyond the purview of sense perception and cannot be validated by it. Totally trusting in the human senses, even

though criticised for its limitations by all others, Cārvāka emphasized on the verifiability of truth only by ordinary sense experience.\textsuperscript{288}

2.3.6. Jaina Theory of Substance

The philosophical outlook of Jainism is based on a common sense type of realism and pluralism. For them the objects in this world are many in number and are also real. The world consists of different substances, \textit{dravya}. Every substance has got innumerable qualities, essential (\textit{guna}s) and accidental (\textit{paryāya}) qualities.\textsuperscript{289} According to Jainas both change and permanence are real as the seeming contradiction between them vanishes when \textit{syadvāda} (theory of partial judgment) is applied. The Jainas reject both \textit{kṣanikavāda} (theory of momentariness of Buddhists) and reject \textit{nityavāda} (theory of permanence of the Vedantins). Substances can be classified as both extended and non-extended. All substances, except time which is devoid of extension, are considered to be extended. Extended substances are innumerable and are referred by the general name \textit{astikāya}.\textsuperscript{290} Such objects which are extended are classified by the Jainas as animate or living being (\textit{jīva}) and inanimate or non-living matter (\textit{ajīva}).\textsuperscript{291}

The physical living bodies are made of earth, water, fire and air. All such non-moving substances (\textit{sthavara}) have one sense, namely that of touch. On the contrary moving substances (\textit{trasa}) are two sensed namely worms, three

\textsuperscript{288} Satischandra Chatterjee, \textit{An Introduction to Indian Philosophy}, 53-60.
\textsuperscript{289} Chandradhar Sharma, \textit{A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy}, 62-63.
\textsuperscript{290} It is named such because every substance exists like a body. \textit{Kāya} means that which possesses extension. The word \textit{astikāya} means anything that occupies space or has some pervasiveness.
\textsuperscript{291} The Jainas consider soul or \textit{jīva} as an extended substance, unlike the popular notion that soul is that which is opposed to body and is non-extended. According to Jainas, soul expands and contract according to the dimensions of the body which they occupy. However, the differentiation is made between the liberated souls and the bonded ones. While the emancipated \textit{jīvas} transcend all, the \textit{jīvas} in bondage are either moving or immobile. Among the non-moving fettered souls the Jainas consider those living in bodies made of earth, water, fire, and air or plants.
sensed like ants, four sensed like bees and five sensed like man. This
distinction among moving substances is based on the senses that are active. The
immobile living substances have the most imperfect kind of bodies when
compared to the mobile living substances. The Jainas regard even the four
elements as being animated by souls, that is the particles of earth etc have soul
in the sense that there is consciousness present in them although this
consciousness is not as differentiated as in the case of a higher being.

The Jainas classify this kind of substance into four namely,
*pudgalastikaya, akāsastikaya, dhamastikaya, adharmastikaya.* The word
“pudgala” means matter and since it occupies space it is *astikaya.*
Etymologically it means that which is liable to integration and disintegration.
Material substances combine together to form larger wholes and can also brake
up into smaller and smaller parts. The smallest part of matter which cannot be
further divided is called as atom (*aṇu*) that are eternal and possess qualities like
touch, taste, smell and colour. All material substances, physical bodies and
objects of nature are produced by the combination of atoms. Even mind, speech
and breath are products of matter. *Dhamastikaya* and *Adharmastikaya* stand
for two kinds of inanimate substances, mobility and immobility.

*Akāstikaya* or Space has a function of affording room for the existence
of all extended substances. It is based on this category that the Jainas classify
substances as *astikaya.* Soul, matter, dharma and *adharma* exists in space. The
existence of space is inferred and not perceived because substances which are
extended can have extension only in space, and that space is called as *akasa.*
Here *akāsa* is a necessary condition. Likewise, if we say that substances are
those that pervade, then there must be something that is pervaded. That which
pervades is called as substance while that which is pervaded is space. Jainas
distinguish two kinds of space namely *lokakāsa* and *alokakāsa.* *Lokakāsa*
stands for space containing the world and *alokakāsa* stands for empty space

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292 Chandradhar Sharma, *A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy,* 64.
that exists beyond *lokakāsa*. Time or *kāla* is *anastikaya* or Non-extended which is the only substance according to the Jainas, because it is an indivisible substance and cannot be characterized by space.

### 2.3.7. Buddhist Notion of Material Reality

#### 2.3.7.1. Bāhya-pratyakṣa-vāda and Bāhyānumeya-vāda

*Vaibhāṣika* and *Sautrāntika* schools of Buddhism agree with each other on the point that both internal and external objects are real. But in perceiving the external objects there is a disagreement between them. These objects are directly perceived and not inferred from their ideas or representations in the mind. *Vaibhāṣika* school advocates direct realism, *bāhya-pratyakṣa-vāda* that external objects are perceived directly. *Sautrāntika* holds on to a theory of inferability of external objects, *bāhyānumeya-vāda* or representationism. It explains that the external objects are non-mental reality which can be inferred to exist outside the mind. For the *Sautrāntika*, the external objects are not objects of perception but are inferred from their cognitions that are effects of external objects. Representationism basically is concerned about the cause of perception of external objects. Further in criticizing the position that the external objects are perceived, subjective idealist like *Yogacāra* question that when we perceive an object we perceive only the form of the internal cognition of the object not the form of the external object. For them the external objects cannot be apprehended except through the form of a cognition.

#### 2.3.7.2. Śūnyavāda of Mādhamika Buddhism

In *Nāgārjuna’s* *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, the *śūnyatā*, voidness, is carefully presented as not to be made as another metaphysical ‘ism.’

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295 Sinha, *Indian Realism*, 43.
296 We are also made well aware how the later interpretations and renderings of Madhyamika are very close to the metaphysical idealism. C.W. Huntingdon, *The Emptiness of Emptiness:*
speaks of realities taught by the enlightened ones, namely, lokaṃvṛtisatyam - the conventional reality of the world, and satyaṃ paramārthaḥ - reality as the ultimate.\textsuperscript{297} Nāgārjuna’s philosophy of sūnyatā is a critical response to views held by Sāṃkhya and Vaiśeṣika that the objects of perception possess substantive qualities in the external world.\textsuperscript{298}

2.3.7.3. \textit{Vijñaptimātra-vāda} of Yogācāra

Yogācāra\textsuperscript{299} school of Buddhism, while paying attention to issues like cognition, consciousness, perception and epistemology, claims directly that external objects do not exist, paving a foundation for metaphysical idealism in Buddhist tradition.\textsuperscript{300} Accordingly what exists is \textit{vijñaptimātra}, ‘only-cognition,’ or ‘nothing-but-cognition,’ or generally, ‘consciousness-only,’ or ‘mind-only.’ Claim of such a doctrine apparently a claim that the mind alone is real and everything else is created by the mind.\textsuperscript{301} Interpreting Yogācāra doctrine of consciousness as a form of metaphysical idealism has a difficulty. “Tellingly, no Indian Yogācāra text ever claims that the world is created by the mind. What they do claim is that we mistake our projected interpretations of the world for the world itself, that is, we take our own mental constructions to

\textit{An Introduction to Early Indian Madhyamika} (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1989), 61-62.
\textsuperscript{299} The term ‘yogācāra’ is assigned to this school as it provides a comprehensive, therapeutic framework for practices that would lead to the goal of enlightened cognition. With study of operation of mind and the question of consciousness the school has wider perspectives on meditation, psycho analysis and epistemology.
\textsuperscript{300} Anacker, S. \textit{Seven Works of Vasubandhu} (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass 1984), 183-190.
be the world.” Generally Yogācāra’s epistemological analyses are interpreted as metaphysical pronouncements.

In the ultimate analysis, consciousness, *vijñāna* for Yogācāra is not the ultimate reality or solution, but rather the root problem. In Yogācāra one finds epistemological concerns are focused more than the metaphysical arguments on the existence or nonexistence of something, *astināsti*, *bhāvābhāva*. Ontological consideration on being and nonbeing is subjected to understanding of cognition or rather right understanding, *samyagiñāna*. For Yogācāra, in that case generally for Buddhist traditions, the goal is not the construction of a perfect ontology but on pragmatic destiny of removal of ignorance for cessation of suffering. “Stated bluntly, Buddhism is concerned with seeing, not being, that is, epistemology rather than ontology.”

For the Yogācāra, the projective conceptual construction, *kalpanā*, and the everywhere-present imaginary constructions, *parikalpa* and *parikalpita* are the cause of the world. Their analysis of *abhūtaparikalpa*, imagining something in a locus in which it does not exist, means *prapañca* to be a proliferation of conceptual constructions rather than actual physical world. ‘Objects’ for the Yogācārins are cognitive objects, not metaphysical entities. Their attempt is not to offer one more ontology of the objects but to eliminate predilections that make people cling to such theoretical constructions. In short, one can say that according to Yogācāra, all ontologies are epistemological

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305 For example, even Madhyamakas who are known to have questioned widely the feasibility of knowing the reality, emphasize on the understanding of the locus of error and thereby on the correction of the way of cognition.
307 Anacker, S. *Seven Works of Vasubandhu* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass 1984), 89.
constructions. For them understanding of how and why construction of ontology take place would necessarily follow understanding of cognition. True to Buddhist tradition, Yogācāra keep up the ontological silence. The reason may be stated that if they are to offer a metaphysical description it may end up in projective reductionism of describing or projecting on something what one wishes reality to be. They press the need for right cognition or enlightened cognition that is free of all cognitive errors, nirvikalpajñāna, ‘cognition without imaginative construction.’

2.3.7.4. Sarvāstivāda of Hīnayāna Buddhism

Abhidharmika schools of Buddhism were distinct schools emerged out of efforts to understand the Buddha’s traditional teachings that only ‘insight’ allows one to isolate and remove the causes of suffering. While Abhidharma analysis is innovative with method of textual exegesis and reasoned arguments, it dealt with the question of whether factors exist as real entities or merely as provisional designations. They initiated debates on differing models for mental processes especially perception. The discourse of them demonstrated that no permanent, unchanging, independent ‘self’ is to be found in an entity as a whole. It is neither in any of the constituents that comprises the entity nor outside the entity. All entities are impermanent arising and passing away without any constant essence. Abidharmakas enumerated

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310 As it is meant by Yogācāra, vijñaptimātra - mistaking one’s projections as reality on which one is projecting.
312 ‘Abhidharma’ stands for a genre of texts, analytic method and insight for right comprehension of Buddhist teaching. Its purpose is soteriological goal of attaining enlightenment.
the fundamental truth of existence as essenceless and impermanent, marking a different ontological model.  

Sarvāstivādins constructed a distinctive ontology professing that everything exists and offering a radical interpretation of impermanence as momentariness. For them all factors constituting experience exist separately, arising and passing away within the span of a single moment. In a reality which is constituted of an array of numerous momentary factors, continuity is commonly experienced. “A factor arising in one moment could not act as a condition for an as yet nonexistent future factor, and that subsequent factor could not be said to be conditioned by a past and nonexistent factor of the previous moment.” For them each factor is characterized by both an intrinsic nature and an activity of arising and passing away due to the influence of conditions. The intrinsic nature exists unchanged and the activity exists only in the present moment. Only those factors with intrinsic nature and the activity are considered to exist as real entities. The composite objects with many factors constituting ordinary experience exist only provisionally. Conditioning becomes possible only due to intrinsic nature.

Such an ontological model of Sarvāstivādins became the subject of heated debate and was rejected by other Abhidharmika schools who claimed that factors exist only in the present and not in the past and future. Factors do

not exist as isolated units of intrinsic nature that manifest a particular activity through the influence of other isolated conditions.\textsuperscript{317}

The Sarvāstivādins enumerated seventy-five factors (\textit{dharma}) categorized in five groups: material form, mind, mental factors and factors dissociated from material form and mind and unconditioned factors.\textsuperscript{318} According to them the sense organ grasps the object and consciousness apprehends the general character of the object. The object becomes internalized as an ‘object-support’. In this model of consciousness, erroneous cognition is possible. Error thus lies in the internal object-support, not in the external object. For the sense organs, the object exists as a real entity and its function as an object verifies its existence as a real entity. Both the object and sense organ condition the arising of a simultaneous apprehending consciousness. Apprehending mental consciousness includes really existent objects and the composite entities of ordinary experience, which exist only provisionally.\textsuperscript{319}

\textbf{2.3.8. Māyā in Medieval Bhakti Traditions}

Māyā in certain religious traditions of India would mean the principal deity manifesting the phenomenal universe. This manifestation is real as each entity of this physical world is formed out of the eternity of \textit{māyā}.\textsuperscript{320} The dichotomy of mind and body is to be overcome for the goal of enlightenment. \textit{Māyā} is visualized as the aspect of the Divine Mother, \textit{devī}, \textit{durga} or

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Williams, P. ‘On the Abhidharma Ontology’, 234.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
mahāmāyā, in Saktism. She is portrayed as possessing the combined material power of all the gods and goddesses to fight the evil forces, to protect the world and to restore peace and order in the world. Mahāmāyā is said to blind humans in delusion, moha, and also has the power to free humans. Māyā is also seen as Laksmi, Divine Goddess in Vaishnava tradition.

2.3.9. Reality of Māyā in Contemporary Indian Thought

Contemporary thought in India is very varied. Many old schools of thought, particularly the Vedantic, are still very strong, as they are religious philosophies with deep spiritual bearings. But many schools of Western thought also have made their inroads as India was very closely associated with the West during the last six centuries. All the contemporary Indian philosophers are products of the Indian Renaissance and are greatly influenced by the East and the West. Among the modern and contemporary Indian thinkers, the noteworthy are: Swami Vivekananda, Radindranath Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi, Sri Aurobindo, Krishnachandra Bhattacharya, S. Radhakrishnan, Sir Mohammad Iqbal. Their thoughts brings to the fore the fact that modern and contemporary Indian philosophy is a beautiful blending of the traditional religious and spiritual thought and modern empirical and scientific thought; it is a healthy synthesis of the East and the West. We deal with only three thinkers and their understanding of material reality.

2.3.9.1. Radhakrishnan on Māyā

In the contemporary Indian scenario, Radhakrishnan’s understanding of māyā is worth mentioning. The attitude of world-negation is said to

322 Ibid., 245.
324 Donald A. Braue, Māyā in Radhakrishnan’s Thought: Six Meanings Other than Illusion (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1984), 5.
characterize certain dominant philosophical tradition like Advaita. This alleged notion of world-negation is the advaitic interpretation of māyā. Māyā remains the verbal symbol standing for general belief of unreality of the world. Radhakrishnan had a firm faith in the reality of an unseen world behind the flux of phenomena. \textsuperscript{325} He accepts that reality is one, but is not ready to reduce the whole world of multiplicity to a mere illusion. The world is no a mere illusion. He refuses to interpret māyā as a theory of illusion. \textsuperscript{326} Māyā expresses the ultimate mystery of the relationship between the absolute and the empirical world. Māyā is seen as mysterious power of creation. Māyā is also the ignorance by which we fail to distinguish the true principle of the universe. The world is the accomplishment of a specific possibility whose ideal home is the absolute. Hence, the acceptance of Advaita does not mean a denial of the world. \textsuperscript{327} We have to accept that the world derives its being from god and expresses one of the possibilities present in god. Here, Radhakrishnan differs from Śankara. While Śankara describes the world of māyā as ‘neither real nor unreal,’ Radhakrishnan puts the idea in a positive manner and says that the world ‘both is and is not.’ He thus, removes the elements of negativism from Śankara’s Advaita. \textsuperscript{328} The problem of māyā is arises in the context of axiological and soteriological status of the world. \textsuperscript{329}

2.3.9.2. Vivekananda Māyā as World-Affirming

Swami Vivekananda speaking on the practical and social Vedānta upholds the positive affirmation of the world. The world is one but appears as multiple due to avidya. Freedom from ignorance is by reaching true jñāna. Cause of avidya is the feeling of individuality and separateness. Concept of

\textsuperscript{325} Donald A. Braue, Māyā in Radhakrishnan’s Thought, 9.
\textsuperscript{327} J.G Arapura, Radhakrishnan and Integral Experience: The Philosophy and World Vision of Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan (Calcutta: Asia Publishing House, 1966), 139.
\textsuperscript{329} Donald A. Braue, Māyā in Radhakrishnan’s Thought, 9.
māyā explains the world in relation to the Absolute. When the world is seen through the three categories of space, time and causation, it appears as a world of names and forms. A wave in the ocean is not distinct from ocean only in its form and name. It has no separate existence from ocean. Similarly, the phenomenal world is not unreal, is not a world of illusion. However we give to it independent and absolute reality we misinterpret it. The rise and fall of world is in the absolute. The one reality appears in its ‘causal form’ or in its ‘effect form.’ A process of involution and evolution takes place. We cannot speak of creation in the strict sense but rather of a manifestation. The absolute is the manifestor of the universe. Everything is a projection of infinite intelligence.

2.3.9.3. Synthesis of Spirit and Matter in Aurobindo

Aurobindo’s integral metaphysics speaks of the real as non-dual. This non duality should not be reached by chopping off elements of our integral experience but rather by trying to integrate them in a global vision of reality. Sankara’s Advaita reduces one basic dimension of our experience of reality to illusion. The absolute is satcidananda, pure existence, consciousness and bliss. As pure consciousness the absolute is the super-mind which is the alpha and omega of the process of creation and evolution. Accepting the super-mind as a creating power, Aurobindo can see the world as a real creation. Trying to explain creation he compares it to the process of ideation in the mind. The world appears as ‘idea’ in the super-mind. This world appears as an expression of the cosmic play of infinite consciousness. It can never be reduced to a mere illusion. He explains the ‘descend’ of the absolute consciousness into ignorance. The descent of consciousness does not stop at this level; we see a further descent of it in life and finally in matter. Reaching the level of matter

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it has reached the last stage of descent, material nature, abyssal sleep, a fathomless trance of consciousness. The movement of ascent is the process of evolution that follows the same pattern as the process of descent but in reversed order, starting from matter and reaching to super-mind and thereby sharing in the life of the absolute.\(^{334}\) The process has a triple character; Widening: simple forms of matter take an increasingly complex character so as to admit the concentration of a complex and subtle form of consciousness. Ascent: from lower to higher grade of being. Integration: as soon as the evolution reaches a higher grade, it takes up all the lower grades and transforms them according to its own principles and laws.\(^{335}\)

In his integral Vedānta, Aurobindo has a vision of the Absolute in all its cosmic dimensions. For him, motion, development and progress are of the very nature of the Absolute. This theory of Divine Dynamics reconciles dichotomy between matter and spirit, being and becoming. For Samkhya, Matter is dynamic while Spirit is static. Vedanta also taught the same doctrine. For the Buddha and Heraclitus, there is only becoming while for Aurobindo Being is Becoming.\(^{336}\) Yet, for Aurobindo, the motion of the Spirit and Matter is not mechanistic as in Darwin. It is an out and out Spiritual evolution. Aurobindo says that the Spirit is at work at every step in the evolutionary process. It is also a free movement of the Spirit. It is the play of the spirit (līla) for his self-manifestation. It is a Divine game (līla).\(^{337}\) Aurobindo's system of spirituality of philosophy is an ascending order of development and a descending order of self-manifestation. The Divine descends into matter under the pressure of Consciousness Force. Matter for Aurobindo, is never-pure dead matter: it is nothing but the lowest manifestation of the Spirit, and hence, it is something


divine. Aurobindo breaks the Sāṁkhya, Platonic and Cartesian Dualism totally. The reason is that there is never a moment of time when the Cit is totally absent from it. The Chandogya Upaniṣad declares, "This whole universe is Divine" - Īśāvāsyam idam sarvam. Aurobindo also rejects Śankara Vedanta, in which system the phenomenal world (vyāvahārika satya) is under-valued as illusory. Śankara's world is neither real nor unreal anirvacanīyam of ineffable. For Aurobindo, Matter is as real as the Spirit, since Matter is nothing but the lowest manifestation of the Spirit. There is real identity between the two for Aurobindo.338

2.4. Issues in Realism

In the history of philosophy, both in Western and Indian traditions as illustrated above, there have been continuous debate about what is appropriated as real and how the reality is understood. Throughout the history of ideas, the realists made their claim clear and straightforward that reality exists and it is dependent on nothing. The debate has further intensified the evolution of human thought process on what is meant by the term ‘real,’ as in the contemporary linguistic analytical tradition and in postmodern questioning.

While realism metaphysically establishes the reality of the external world, epistemological issues of realism deal with the deeper inquiry whether the objective world is an existent by itself, entirely independent of human cognition. Ontological dependence and epistemological assertion of the existence of material reality form the core of the issues in realism. Primary proposition of realism is that objects exist and have properties independent of anyone's beliefs, linguistic practices and conceptual schemes. Non-realism such as non-cognitivism, instrumentalism, nominalism, certain styles of reductionism, and eliminativism typically reject realism by rejecting the

338 R. N. Sharma, The Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo (Meerut: Kedar Nath Ram Nath, 1977), 120.
existence dimension of realism. While idealism and subjectivism concede the existence dimension they reject the independence dimension.

Realism in philosophical discussion is a theory of the material world. Metaphysically it establishes that the external world is real as eternal, changeless and ever existent entity. Realism starts with the nature of external material reality, giving an ontological status to its existence. Epistemological consideration of Realism ascertains that the objective world is an existent by itself independent of human cognition. Existence of the material world is accounted for even without the perceptible capability and cognitive powers of the human mind or consciousness.

Realism also deals with the problem of ontological dependence. Some things cannot exist without other things. They depend upon other things for their existence. The two general aspects of realism are the existence and the independence combined as one issue. Realism is concerned with a question if the external reality exists independently apart from everything else. Primary proposition of realism is that objects exist and have properties independent of anyone's beliefs, linguistic practices, conceptual schemes, and so on. Non-realism such as non-cognitivism, instrumentalism, nominalism, certain styles of reductionism, and eliminativism typically reject realism by rejecting the existence dimension of realism. While Idealism and subjectivism concede the existence dimension they reject the independence dimension.

Epistemological issue deals with a question whether the physical world as we perceive it is an exact copy of the physical world as it really is. Certainly, it is a question about the physical world being dependent on a perceiver for its existence or its ‘being’ constituted by perception and constructed by the perceiver. In epistemology realism represents the theory that particular things exist independently of our perception. This position is in direct contrast to the theory of idealism, which holds that reality exists only in the mind. In the contemporary discourse the issue of realism still furthered whether the reality
of the world needs to be proved for its existence or if it is capable of proof. The realists strive to provide a philosophical proof that the external world does exist independently of the mind.

The following theories are proposed to account for the external world. Common-sense or direct or scientific realism is that there is a real physical world that causes us to have the perceptions that we have. Our perceptions are more or less exact copies of the qualities that are really present in those objects. The physical world exists and is in no way dependent on our perception for its existence. It still exists even if there is no one to perceive it.

Subjective idealism or phenomenalism holds the external reality is totally dependent upon the perceiver for its existence. Phenomenalism stands exactly at the opposite extreme from the common-sense realism. It explicitly rejects the “copy” theory of perception and holds that the physical world is completely dependent on the perceptions of a perceiver for its existence. Critical realism suggests a middle path between common-sense realism and phenomenalism. The physical world is partly dependent on a perceiver for its existence and partly independent of a perceiver. What is perceived is in some ways like and in some ways unlike what is really “out there”. There is both similarity and dissimilarity between the world as we perceive it and the world as it really is. More specifically critical realism gives emphasis on the similarity between our perception and the real world. When dissimilarities between the same are given much stress it is called as hyper critical realism. Consequently it holds that the dissimilarity between what is perceived and what is really out there is significantly greater than the similarity.

2.5. Summing Up

Humanity from time immemorial always sought for answers to the manifest world and the multiplicity of reality; in ancient times the answers were clothed in mythological categories but in later times, however, they are expressed in rational categories. Both in the East and the West, many systems
and individual thinkers have been trying to explain the reality in rational categories from different perspectives. Māyā, the metaphysical concept of materiality, is an inevitable concept to be addressed in any philosophical system. Philosophizing could never take place in its absence; in a sense that it has either to be accepted or rejected as a reality in any system of thought. No wonder it is that in every philosophical system māyā is accounted for either in negative or in positive terms.

Summing up the discussion on the material reality in philosophical traditions we find the following theories proposed to account for the external world. Common-sense or direct realism holds that the physical world exists and is in no way dependent on our perception for its existence. Subjective idealism or phenomenalism holds the external reality is totally dependent upon the perceiver for its existence. For critical realists the physical world is partly dependent and partly independent on a perceiver for its existence. What is perceived is in some ways like and in some ways unlike what is really “out there”. There is both similarity and dissimilarity between the world as we perceive it and the world as it really is. Among many theories, direct realism stands out to be an appropriate view on the ontological status of the physical world. Tamil realism is closer to the conception of direct realism, characterized by common-sense. We would elaborately deal with it in the following chapter that serves as a sure foundation to build upon the concept of māyā in Tirumandiram.