

# Realism Versus Idealism

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Most of the controversy in perception during the past century has to do with exactly, what it is that we see, hear, taste, smell, and so on. We might say we see trees, tables, chairs, and so forth. At first, perception may seem quite simple, for example, when I perceive my pen. I open my eyes, look at the pen and see it. Common sense may say that there is nothing between me and the pen to prevent me from seeing it, but an opponent like Buddhist on this matter has led to the view that my mind itself gets in between me and the pen and that I never actually perceive the pen in itself. (i.e., a thing given independently of my mind). So, the question that really concerns us is: What exactly is it that we are immediately aware of in our perception? That is, what is given in perception? (What can we know?). There is no doubt that the problems are connected with the nature of what is ‘given’ and what we ‘construct’ or ‘manipulate’ out of this given. That is why; there is a need to have a deeper understanding of the nature of the reality and its perception. Therefore, I propose to explain, ‘the given’ in perception and try to answer the following questions related to the issue:

1. What is it that we perceive?
2. What is the relationship among things-in-themselves, our sensation of them and our understanding?
3. Is there any difference between what we see and what is given?

4. Whether the tangible world that we perceive and experience really exists or is it a mere construction of mind?
5. Is reality independent of perception, or does perception define reality?
6. What is the status of what appears in our perception?
7. Is there any contribution of our mind to our knowledge of the external world?

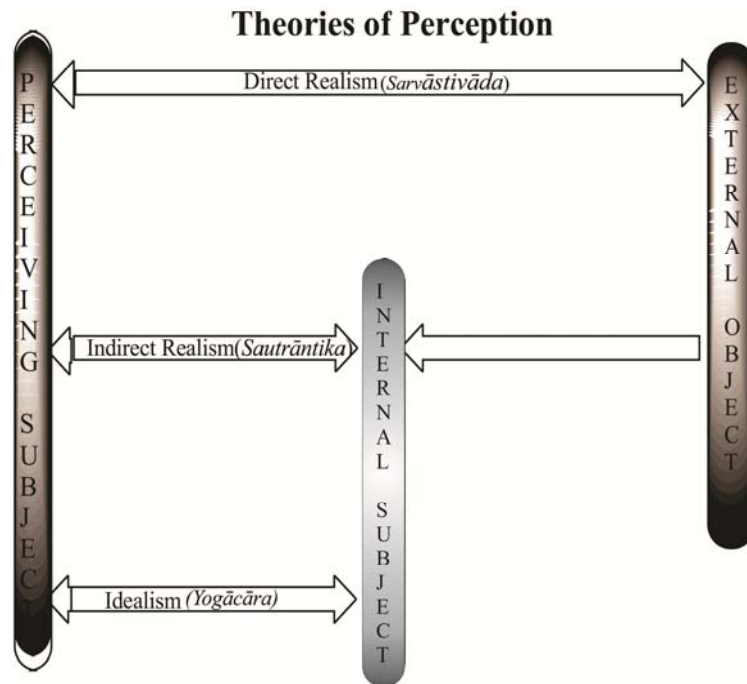
It is within the framework of such metaphysical questions, concerning existence and non-existence of what we perceive and experience, that the various philosophical schools have developed their respective viewpoints and interpretations. Besides, it is not my intention here to address to each of these questions mentioned above separately, but they are certainly taken care of in the following discussion. In order to show this, my procedure will be the following: Firstly, I will describe the contrast between realism and idealism; secondly, I will explain the three theories of perception, namely: direct realism, indirect realism, and idealism, and lastly, I will focus on the difference between the given and the constructed.

### **Realism versus Idealism**

Broadly speaking, there are two main philosophical traditions, namely: Realism and idealism. To be a realist in the philosophical sense of the term about something is to hold that thing exists independently of our perceiving mind. Moreover, realism holds that substances are real and have nothing to do with ideas and their properties (qualities) are not subjective, they belong to the thing, not to our subjective feelings or mind. Now, to be an idealist about something is not to deny the existence of that thing, but instead to

assert that the things existence is mind-dependent. They are not ready to bestow any degree of reality to things independent of the mind. And about properties, the common maxim that beauty is in the eye of the beholder is an expression of idealism about beauty. It does not deny that any one or anything is beautiful, but instead asserts that whether something is beautiful depends on someone's mind, i.e., whether some one perceives it as beautiful or not.

The role that the notions of realism and idealism play in theories of perception concerns the objects we take ourselves to perceive and the properties we take those objects to have. In the history of these philosophical debates, we may discern three main kinds of philosophical theories of perception, namely: Direct realism, indirect realism, and idealism, which can be illustrated through the following diagram.



**Direct Realism (Common sense realism or naïve realism)**

For direct realist, the objects external to us that we typically take ourselves to perceive, for examples, tables, chairs, trees are both directly perceived and retain their perceived properties even when unperceived. Moreover, the object that is perceived by the senses and cognized by the mind is not a figment of imagination nor is it the construction/projection of mind. The object exists in its own right and is a real entity. The advocates of this theory among Buddhist are Sarvāstivādins and among non-Buddhist is Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika. According to the former, every thing (*sarvaṃ*) exists (*asti*) and we can directly cognize the external world through perception.<sup>1</sup> According to the later, reality of the external world is accessible to reason. That is, it accepts the world as it is, at the face value as we see it. Thus, according to this theory, the world is there for us to see directly and we are capable of seeing it for what it really is. And the way we see it is the way it is even when we are not looking. But there is a problem: The existence of illusions, hallucinations, and perceptual errors are normally held to constitute a problem for direct realism. For example, I misperceive a carpet sample to be purple when it is really brown; I mistakenly see a stick in the water to be bent or broken when it is really straight; I see a patch of water ahead on the road that turns out to be only a mirage. Most significant is the possibility of flat-out hallucination: When drunk or drugged one might see a pink elephant. Now, from the point of view of the perceiver, there may be no difference in hallucinating that there is a coffee mug in front of you and having the accurate perception that there is a coffee mug in front to you. In both cases the contents of your mind are the same. What makes one accurate and the other hallucinating is the state of the external world. In an

attempt to explain this, the Sautrāntika philosophy came up with their theory of representationism.

### **Indirect Realism (Representationism)**

The world comes from the idea that we don't perceive the world directly but its representation in our mind only. We cannot be sure that the world really is how we think it to be; our mind is therefore receiving impression and creative image of the world. We know only that representation. There is an internal reality, or an internal aspect. That is the mind, the subtle aspect of matter, and it is out of harmony with the external reality because it gets attached. The propounder of this view is the Sautrāntika. The Sautrāntika, began its career by examining critically the realism as propounded by the Sarvāstivādins and attempted to rectify the short comings that thing found to be too glaring and self-evident in the realism. Its critical attitude becomes quite evident, when the Sautrāntikas cut short the Sarvāstivādins list of 75 *dharma*s to 43 by saying that the remaining 32 were subjective (*prajñaptisat*).<sup>2</sup> An external object, according to them, is perceived indirectly on account of its momentary nature. An object that is momentary can never be reached during the moment it is being perceived. The object ceases to be, the moment perception of the object occurs (time-lag argument). The assertion concerning the perception of the object as being direct would imply that the object persists at least for two moments, i.e., when the object becomes the cause or stimulus for perception, and when it actually is perceived. According to Sautrāntikas, a moment disappears as soon as it appears.<sup>3</sup> The object that is presented to perception is really the successor member in the series, and thereby becomes the cause of

perception. The member in the series that has ceased leaves its impression on the mind that perceives. It is from this impression or idea (*ākāra*) that the prior existence of the corresponding member in the series is inferred. This means that what is cognized in perception exists actually, but the perception of the object does not take place at the time of its actual existing. This view is known as the theory of representation of idea.

Further, regarding the problem of illusion, hallucination and perceptual error which constitute a serious problem for direct realism, indirect realist reply as follows: Whenever we perceive something we are in some mental state; a state of awareness. We are aware of something. If we are aware of nothing then we would be unaware or unconscious. But, we are not unaware or unconscious. So, whenever we perceive something, say a blue mug, whatever state we are in could be replicated under conditions in the mug isn't blue or there is no mug at all. The external object is unnecessary for us to be that state; the mug may have ceased to exist prior to the onset of that state as per the time-lag argument, or never existed at all as per the hallucination argument. Thus, what we are aware of is whatever it is that is necessary for us to be in that mental state. The external object is unnecessary. The internal state is necessary. Thus, what we are aware of is a state internal to us, a state of our own mind. The only way in which we are aware of thing external to our mind is indirectly.

But, there is a weakness in the Sautrāntika arguments. Inference from blue form to blue object is unjustifiable, as it is a jump from known to unknowable, from empirical to non-empirical. That is, the way direct theorist can explain the perceptual error is largely the same way in which the indirect theorist does it. What the direct realist denies is that what one is

aware of in either case (hallucination and accurate perception) is necessarily the representation itself. Thus, this paved the way for subjective idealism of the Yogācāra-Vijñānavāda school.

### **Idealism**

The major school of Buddhist thought to appear was the school of idealism known as *Vijñānavāda* or Yogācāra. One of the most illustrious personalities who are credited with having systematized the teaching of this school is Vasubandhu. His monumental work, the *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi*, consisting of two parts: the *Viṃśatika*, which is devoted to a refutation of the realistic theories, and the *Triṃśika*, where the tenets of the idealistic school are clearly set out. In these two parts, he argues that one can never have direct awareness of external objects, but can be aware only of images within consciousness. However, the crucial point to be noted is that Yogācāra's idealistic position has been described differently by different philosophers like David. J. Kalupahana who describes its position as Metaphysical idealist; C.D. Sharma describes it as Absolute idealist; Th. Stcherbatsky as Spiritual monism; T.R.V. Murti as Idealism-par-excellence; J.N Sinha as Subjective idealist; H.S. Prasad as Scripturalist idealist, and Dan Lusthaus says Yogācāra at times resembles epistemological idealism. Now, in order to bring to lime light the Yogācāra's idealistic position, we have to study in detail the chief tenets/key concepts of his idealism, namely: *vijñaptimātratā*, *sahopalambhanīyama*, externality, subject-object dichotomy, *trīsvabhāvatā*.

The problem confronting us, according to Yogācāra, is the claim that we habitually and incessantly misinterpret our own experience, due to

lack of insight into the conditions of experience. That is, we mistake our own interpretations/projections of the world for the world itself. Those interpretations, which are projections of our desires and anxieties, become obstructions (*āvaraṇa*) preventing us from seeing what is actually the case. That is, we do not at all apprehend the object in the manner it is in itself, because there exists disparities between the way things appears and the way they are. And it is the school of Yogācāra which invites us to erase the mirror that blocks our view through their chief tenets of idealism as follows:

### **Chief Tenets of Yogācāra Idealism**

#### **1. *Vijñaptimātratā***

The doctrine of *vijñapti-mātra* teaches that there are no real self (*pudgalanairātmya*) or real things (*dharmanairātmya*). Everything phenomenal (*saṃskṛta*) and noumenal (*asaṃskṛta*), everything appearing as real and false is not separable from consciousness. But, this does not mean that consciousness alone exists, but rather that all our efforts to get beyond ourselves are nothing but projections of our consciousness. It means to mistake one's projections for that onto which one is projecting.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, *vijñaptimātra* does not at all refer to the absolute reality, or to the final mode of existence. On the contrary, the perception of *vijñaptimātra* is presented only as the first step towards the realization of the unreality of graspable or grasper duality.<sup>5</sup> So, Yogācārins treat the term *vijñaptimātra* as an epistemic caution, not an ontological pronouncement. Because nothing cognized within consciousness can be declared in and by consciousness to be otherwise than consciousness. Since, by definition, everything knowable



through consciousness, nothing knowable can be declared to be real apart from consciousness.

## 2. *Sahopalambhaniyama*

Vasubandhu introduces the positive argument of *Sahopalambhaniyama*<sup>6</sup>, which supplies an epistemological refutation of realism, by demonstrating that there is no external object apart from consciousness. Consciousness diversifies into indefinite modes (transformation of consciousness-*vijñāna-pariṇāma*) which owing to the presence of transcendental illusion are taken to be as external objects. Actually what happened, according to Vasubandhu is that the consciousness undergoes three stratifications. The first stratification is *ālaya-vijñāna* or store-consciousness, the repository of all *vāsanās* (traces of past experience). It is the realm of potentiality. The second stratification of consciousness is *manas* or thought-consciousness. It is the transformation of these potentialities into actual thoughts. The third stratification is *pravṛtti-vijñāna* or active-consciousness, which manifests itself in the contents of various mental states and the alleged external objects. These stratifications of consciousness create the mistaken belief that there are objects such as trees, tables, etc., that exist independently of consciousness. But in reality external objects are not something different from consciousness; they are mere-concepts/representations of consciousness. So both the so-called object and consciousness of object are identical and this identity is inferred from simultaneous perception of them. That is, the blue (concept or idea of blue) and the consciousness of blue are identical.<sup>7</sup> The difference between the two is only epistemic and not ontological. Moreover, Dharmakīrti and Śāntarakṣita also discuss the law of simultaneous apprehension (*sahopalambhaniyama*). Dharmakīrti in his

*Pramāṇavārttika*, discusses this concept in the verses 388-389<sup>8</sup> and Śāntarakṣita does not use the word together (*saho*) which implies non-difference. He says that the apprehension of the cognition of blue and the apprehension of blue are one and the same.

### **3. Externality**

In order for appropriation to appropriate there must be that which is appropriable, i.e., 'external'. Thus, in the positing of external objects what, for Yogācāra, is problematic is not the positing of objects as such (Vasubandhu does not deny the existence of external world/reality i.e., things-in-themselves, they exist). The problem lies in positing externality, the idea or notion of the external. Externality is the necessary condition for appropriation. The questions that really concern us are: When do Yogācārarins deny external objects? What are they rejecting and what, if anything, are they affirming? That is, what does the denial of externality entail? Yogācārarins deny the existence of external objects in two senses:

- a. In terms of conventional experience they do not deny objects such as chairs, colors, and trees, but they reject the claim that such things appear any where else than in consciousness. It is externality, not objects per se, that they challenge.
- b. While such objects are admissible as conventionalism, in more precise terms there are no chairs, trees, etc. These are merely words and concepts by which we gather and interpret discrete sensations that arise moment by moment in a constant flux. These words and concepts are mental projections. The point is not to elevate consciousness, but to warn us not to be fooled by our own cognitive narcissism.<sup>9</sup>

The crux of the problem lies in our inability/incapacity to distinguish the unreal (*pratibhā*, interpretation of the world) from the real (world itself). According to Yogācāra our mental experience is changing, altering (*pariṇama*, *pravṛtti*) every moment. In this fluctuating stream (*vijñāna-santāna*) we tend to posit two constants: *Ātman* (an independent, unchanging observer or witness) and *dharma* (affective, thetic and objective circumstances) against which and through which we cognize and evaluate all that we experience. Forgetting that these posited constants are constructions fabricated (*parikalpita*) through our attempt to suppress the anxieties and fears, we invert our invented constants with ultimate sanctity and significance.<sup>10</sup> That is, we take our own mental construction to be the reality. Moreover, when Yogācārins discuss objects, they are talking about cognitive objects, not metaphysical entities. Thus, the motive behind the denial of external objects is to negate the object, and the self is also negated.

#### **4. Subject-object Dichotomy**

According to Yogācāra, every consciousness essentially and automatically bifurcates itself into the dichotomy of subject (*svabhāsa ātma*) and object (*arthabhāsa, dharma*), i.e., between *grahākatva* and *grāhyatva* respectively. But, actually the appearance of duality, the given and the receiving, the apprehended and the apprehension, are all our doing, results of our manipulation, construction, or representation of consciousness. So, there is no duality, but only idea of duality, like the idea of an illusory elephant. Hence, it is concluded that: (i) The terms subject and object do not refer to anything ontological (*vastu*), but only to the epistemological concepts of subjectivity and objectivity. (ii) Moreover, the denial of existence of subject

and object does not amount to the denial of the concepts of subjectivity and objectivity as something more than mere imagination.

### **5. Is Yogācāra metaphysical or epistemological idealism?**

Yogācāra is not a metaphysical idealism, because the key term *viññaptimātratā* does not imply the claim that mind alone is real and that everything else is created by the mind. However, the Yogācārin writings themselves argue something very different. Consciousness (*viññāna*) is not the ultimate reality or solution, but rather the root problem. This problem emerges in ordinary mental operations, and it can only be solved by bringing those operations to an end. Thus, at times it resembles epistemological idealism, which does not claim that this or any world is constructed by mind, but rather that we are usually incapable of distinguishing our mental constructions and interpretations of the world from the world itself. This narcissism of consciousness, Yogācāra calls *viññaptimātratā*, nothing but conscious construction.

### **6. Doctrine of three natures**

Vasubandhu in his *Triṃśatika*, verses 20, 21, and 22 explains the three natures of reality (*trisvabhāva*) and in verses 23, 24, and 25 explains the three fold naturelessness of the same three realities (*niḥsvabhāvatā*). It is worth noting that Vasubandhu distinguishes among three natures or realms, namely: (i) *Parikalpita-svabhāva* - the imagined nature which is imagined but appears to be real, i.e. , ubiquitously imputes unreal conceptions especially permanent selves into whatever it experiences, including oneself; (ii) *Paratantra-svabhāva* - the other dependent nature, when mixed with the constructed realm, leads one to mistake impermanent occurrences in the flux of causes and conditions for fixed, permanent entities, and (iii)

*Pariniṣpanna-svabhāva* - the absolutely accomplished nature which acts as an antidote (*pratipakṣa*), that purifies all delusional constructions out of the causal realm. And the three-fold naturelessness are, namely: (i) *Lakṣaṇa-niḥsvabhāvatā* - Naturelessness by definition which applies to *parikalpita-svabhāva*, because it lacks a definition by its own characteristics, and whatever characteristics it is believed to have, are all imaginary ones. For example, fictitious flower blooming in the sky (*khapuṣpa*); (ii) *Utpatti-niḥsvabhāvatā* - Naturelessness with reference to origin, applies to *paratantra-svabhāva*, which lacks the power of self-origin and self-existence and depends upon other conditions. For example, the illusion created by a magician; (iii) *Paramārtha-niḥsvabhāvatā* - Naturelessness of elements in their absolute state of existence. Moreover, it is the very essence of the accomplished nature.<sup>10</sup>

In this way, what clearly comes out of from the preceding discussion is that, for Vasubandhu, the extra-mental world, which consists of things-in-themselves, is ineffable (*anabhilāpya*), and therefore beyond all human formulations. What one can think of and speak of is one's own mental construction (*parikalpita=kalpita-ātma*), which has little correspondence with the extra-mental world, Therefore, it would be unreasonable to think that Vasubandhu's criticism of realism is meant to deny the existence of an extra-mental world.

### **Transcendental Idealism (Theory of Immaterialism)**

Now, another form of idealism situated between subjective idealism and absolute idealism, and yet different from both also indirectly develops out of phenomenism, namely: Transcendental idealism. Transcendental

idealism also holds that we do not directly perceive objects as they are in themselves; rather, we only perceive the phenomenal appearance of object. This phenomenal appearance consists of raw perceptual data as well as certain conceptually constructed elements fused with sense data. Transcendental idealist holds that our cognitive make-up is that conceptual construction forms an integral part of all mental events, including perception. The advocates of this idealistic position are Dignāga and Dharmakīrti. Moreover, the kind of idealism advocated by Dignāga is known as *Svatantravijñānavāda*. Besides, more than a bridge between the absolute idealism of Vasubandhu and the critical realism of the Sautrāntikas, Dignāga's theory appears to us to be a fresh analysis of the epistemological problems which ultimately led him to the acceptance of a theory of immaterialism rather than a theory of absolute idealism. Dignāga propounded the theory of immaterialism in his short treatise, namely: *Ālambanaparīkṣā*, where he denied only the materiality of the object of perception and not its externality (as already discussed at greater length in the chapter of *Ālambanaparīkṣā*: Dignāga's Phenomenalism).

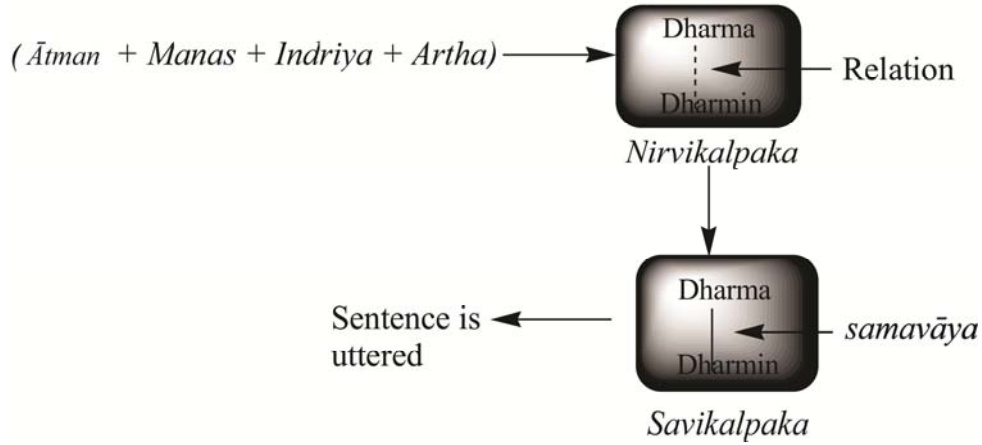
Moreover, the point to be noted is that while Vasubandhu denied not only the substantial reality of matter, but also the efficacy and even the possibility of mere sense experience, Dignāga only denied the substantial reality of matter, but not the efficacy or the possibility of sense- experience. This difference in the treatment of sense-perception is also reflected in their definition of perception. Thus, we may conclude that comparing the two texts, the *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi* of Vasubandhu and the *Ālambanaparīkṣā* of Dignāga, we find that the former employs metaphysical arguments against the acceptance of a substantially real external world, while the later

contains epistemological arguments against the knowability of the reality of matter.

So far we have discussed the contrast between realism and idealism and the three different theories of perception: Direct realism, indirect realism, and idealism, now we are in a position to discuss our main question: Whether the nature of reality is given or constructed? In order to answer this, firstly, I will explain the process of perception from Nyāya perspective, and then a critique by the Buddhist, which will help to establish a Buddhist view.

As already explained above that the Naiyāyikas being utter realist advocate of the theory of direct realism accepts three criteria of reality, namely: (i) Objectivity (*prameyatva*), (ii) knowability (*jñeyatva*), and (iii) nameability (*abhidheyatva*). In other words, whatever is real and existent should be knowable and nameable. Therefore, the world is real because it can be known and it can be verbalized. With this background in brief, we can diagrammatically sketch the whole process of perception from Nyāya perspective.

## Nyāya Process of Perception

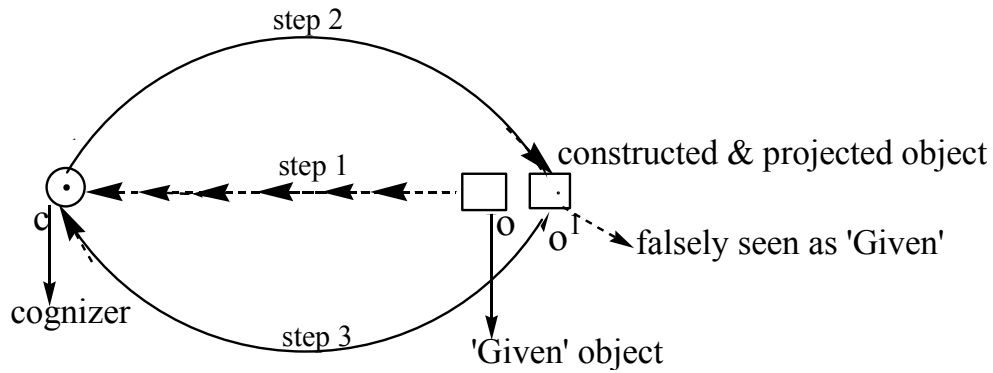


In the process of perception according to Naiyāyikas, first the *ātman* (self) comes in contact with the *manas* (mind), then the *manas* with the *indriyas* (sense-organ). And then finally *indriyas* come in contact with the *artha* (object) which is technically known as *sannikarṣa*. Furthermore, all these factors are given to us in the process of perception and they are called *sāmagrī* (collection of factors). Although, among these factors some are cognitive (like *indriyas* and *artha*) and some are non – cognitive (like *ātman* and *manas*), but they all are *padārthas* and have ontological existence. Now this *sāmagrī* leads to the first stage of perception, i.e., *nirvikalpaka* (non- verbalized), in which lies the content but the structure and relation of *dharma* and *dharmin* is not clear. So it cannot be verbalized, i.e., no conceptual activity of naming and relating takes place in it. This leads to the second stage of perception, i.e., *savikalpaka*, where the structure and relation between *dharma* and *dharmin* is clear, which is the minimum requirement for naming something, according to Nyāya. For



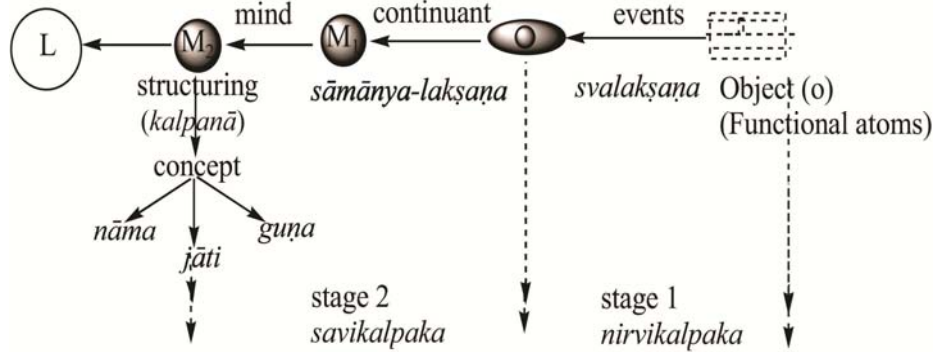
example, when we see a pot, then the minimum structure of *ghaṭatvā*, *ghaṭa* and the relation of *samavāya* must get reflected in the cognition for the utterance/naming of the word pot. Finally, in this stage, we are in a position to verbalize and the process of perception terminates here.

Now, before venturing to explain the process of perception from Buddhist perspective and to delineate the pros and cons of the aforesaid view, it is essential to bring to lime light the difference between what is given and what is constructed. According to Buddhist, we can never directly know the external world and it is possible for us to have experience even in the absence of external stimuli, because there exists a discrepancy between the nature of the object as perceived in our awareness and the nature of the external object as it is. According to Buddhist, reality is dynamic, functional, momentary, and in a continuous flux. Further, they believed in a two tiered level of reality, namely: (i) Ultimate (*paramārtha*) – the world of *svalakṣaṇa* or events, which are given in pure perception and (ii) Empirical (*samvṛti*) – the world of *sāmānyalakṣaṇa* or continuants, which are given by understanding. Moreover, we can never know the ultimate reality (thing-in-itself), because in reality what actually causes a sensation to arise is never that about which we have awareness, so there seems to be an unbridgeable gap between reality and appearance. All that is available to us is a bare sensation and we cannot transcend our sensation and catch the reality. Actually, what happened can be explained by the following diagram, originally illustrated by H.S Prasad, which I am only paraphrasing here.



According to Buddhist, reality (o) is constantly emanating data and these data stimulates the cognizer's senses (c) and get transformed and structured as an idea or image in the mind of the cognizer, which is only an appearance of the given object. That is, object is constructed and structured at the mental level, so subjective, but because of the inherent nature of intentionality (*viṣayomukhata*) it is projected outside as an external object (o<sup>1</sup>). So, what is input to him is never known by him (step-1). He knows only what is output by his mind. The problem is that he does not know this output as output, but as input as shown in the third step. He is totally unaware of the first (original input) and second steps and takes the third step as the first one. So, we mistake our own interpretation/projection of the reality for the reality itself. This is because of our cognitive failure to see the difference (*bhedāgraha*), we are not able to make the distinction between the two. Now, after knowing this fact it would be quite appropriate at this juncture to explain the Buddhist process of perception through the following diagram.

## Buddhist Process of Perception



For both Buddhist and Naiyāyikas, external object is atomic in nature. But, for Buddhist object is unified because of functional atoms, which are functionally holding each other and not because of unifying principle of ‘whole’ as believed by Naiyāyikas. Further, it is only the ‘patch’ of color and not the whole that is grasped by our sense-organs, say eye (s), because eye is capable of receiving the data in that form only. It is the stage 1 of pure perception (*nirvikalpaka*, indeterminate perception), which is free from verbalization. Then this patch is the content (*viṣaya*) for the activity of the mind. It is only in the stage 2 of process of perception (*savikalpaka*, determinate perception) when the mind starts functioning, structuring and the concept is formed. Thought and language are concerned with the later stage and not with the former.

From the preceding discussion, it is evident that we habitually and incessantly misinterpret our own experience, due to lack of insight into the conditions of experience. Moreover, realist gives explanation at ontological level, whereas according to Buddhist there is no need of externality or

ontological commitment, even without it we can have explanation. The Buddhists are not interested in disproving or proving as to what reality is or not as much they are in disclosing that reality per se is not amenable to linguistic discourse or conceptualization. They have recognized the limits of human knowledge and so accordingly came to the conclusion that conceptual knowledge does not exactly depict as to what reality is in itself. Thus, the advantage of Buddhism is that they try to get rid of unwanted crowding of ontological things.

### Notes and References

1. *S*, 4.52-53.
2. *Ibid.*, 3.46.
3. *yatraiva utpattiḥ tatraiva vināśaḥ*  
cf. *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya-vyākhyā*, pp. 43, 20-21.
4. For detail, see Lusthaus, D, (2002), p. 535.
5. For detail, see Kochumuttam, T.A. (1982), P. 203.
6. *Sahopalambhaniyama*- The availability of the object invariably along with its consciousness, thus refuting its independence.
7. *Pramāṇaviniscaya* of Dharamkīrti, I. 55a *sahopalambhaniyamād abhedo nīlataddhiyo*.
8. *Pramāṇavārttika*, verses 388-389:  
*sakṛtsaṃvedyamānasya niyamena dhiyāsaha/  
viśayasya tato 'nyattvaṃ kenākārena sidhyati//  
bhedaścaya bhrānti vijñānairdṛśyetendāvivādvayaṃ/  
saṃvitti niyamo nāsti bhinnayo rnilapitayo//*  
See Chaterjee, A.K. (1975), P. 45.
9. For detail, see Lusthaus, Dan, (2002), p. 538.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 539.
11. Further, the traditional Hindu illustration of the rope and snake is well used by Buddhist idealism. A nescient and unaware person believes he sees a snake and gets frightened; a wise man takes this person close to the apparent snake (*parikalpita*) and makes him realize that it is just a rope (*paratantra*) and that, after all the rope is nothing more than a transitory formation of 'hemp' (*pariniṣpanna*).

This gradual realization illustrates the steps to be taken by the unlighted in order to perceive the ultimate nature of reality and thus attain his final release from bondage and from ignorance. For detail see, Conze, (1996), P. 258.