

**WORLD VIEW AND THEORY IN INDIAN PHILOSOPHY**

*Edited by*  
**Piotr Balcerowicz**



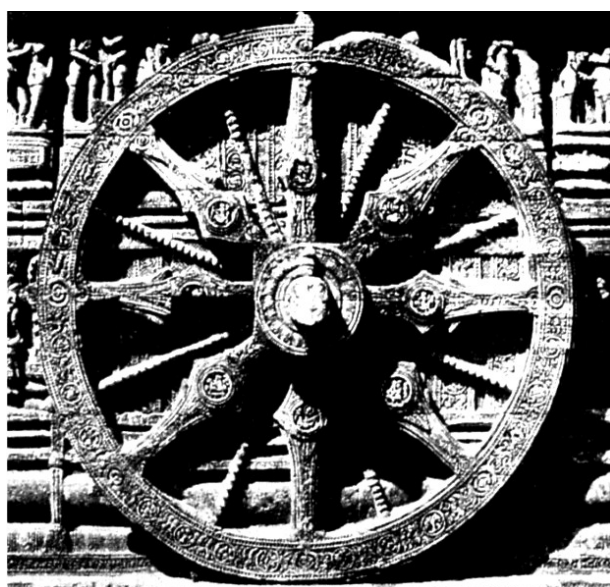
# **WORLD VIEW AND THEORY IN INDIAN PHILOSOPHY**

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**MANOHAR**

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# **World View and Theory in Indian Philosophy**

*Edited by*  
Piotr Balcerowicz



**MANOHAR**  
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Piotr Balcerowicz



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## Preface

How can we know that our brain (consisting apparently of cool and moist tissue) allegedly is neither an organ providing control over actions of our bodies nor responsible for our mental processes, including information processing, thinking and rationality, but an organ meant solely to cool hot blood heated up in our hearts? As Aristotle argues, ‘Since everything needs its opposite [to counterbalance it], so that it preserves its moderation and the mean (for it is in the mean, not in either of the extremes, that true essence and rationality lies), nature has developed the brain to counterbalance the region of the heart alongside the heat contained in it...’ (*On the Parts of Animals* 652b).<sup>1</sup> Such a conclusion was not merely driven by a lack of adequate understanding of physical structure and functions of living organisms in Ancient Greece and Aristotle’s general presupposition that everything needs its opposite to counterbalance it, which provided a theoretical scheme for his endeavour to describe the workings of human body and its anatomy. In fact, his conclusion, which seems so counterintuitive from the viewpoint of modern science, which allocates the site of all mental processes precisely in the brain, was influenced by a dualistic world view which juxtaposed inert matter, e.g. bodies (including celestial bodies) and souls, as the singular conscious agents that trigger all motion in the universe, expressed by the Stagirite just a few lines before the above reasoning: ‘Indeed, nutrition and causing motion of the body are the functions of the soul’ (*On the Parts of Animals* 652b). Ergo they cannot belong to the body and its brain. Rationality and source of motion had therefore to lie outside of the body, composed of inanimate matter, and such a world view consequently left no room for even a faint possibility that the brain could perform any operations and tasks which are nowadays associated with it.

The above case can serve as an illustration of how our theories, including philosophical theories and whole philosophical systems, are effectively affected by preconceived beliefs and are construed within a conceptual framework imposed by a particular world view, to which we have been acculturated and which often proves much more rigid and inflexible than one would expect.

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<sup>1</sup> Which could be expressed in India as: \**hṛdayōṣṇa-rakta-śīti-karaṇārtho mastiṣkaḥ hṛdayōṣṇa-pratyudyamatvāt, anta-dvaye yad antam tad sāmīyāvasthārtham tad-vīparītāntākāṅkṣam*, or in a similar manner.

Philosophers are humans, flesh and blood and belief, in whom rationality and irrationality meet like in any other omnivorous or vegetarian human. Philosophical systems and theories are, in theory at least, constructed rationally and supposed to fulfil a requirement of consistency, whereas world views often are not. When dealing with, say, what is good, desirable, useful, pleasurable etc., ethics as a system is a theory, whereas morality understood as people's set of beliefs on how to live properly is not. In traditional societies world views, one of whose roles was to provide an explanation for things we objectively could not (or subjectively did not want to) investigate fully rationally and thoroughly, were often shaped by religious convictions. In addition, world views were equally an emanation of a particular social set-up (including power structure) and a position a particular individual or group occupied within it, and when it expresses the group's interests of social, economic and political nature, they become ideologies.

But a question arises whether we can at all speak of world views or ideologies in Indian philosophies or theoretical systems (scientific, legal etc.), or in classical Indian culture in general? Further, provided we could answer the above in the positive, what would be the way to draw a differentiating line between a philosophical theory and a world view in India so that it could be equally meaningful and useful in our cultural analysis of Indian cultural and intellectual context?

Clearly Indians were not exception, and we may justifiably expect that we can indeed speak of world views and ideologies also in India which had their palpable impact on how theoretical (philosophical, legal and other) systems were constructed and on how the understanding of certain ideas and notions was affected, and often restricted by the way one believed the world was or should be. Also in India such world views and ideologies which nurtured philosophical theories were frequently of religious nature, but not exclusively.

What was then the actual background of world views and ideologies which were at work while particular philosophical theories were being developed in India? How far was social, cultural, religious, linguistic and other factors influenced the way philosophical theories were moulded? And to what degree, if at all, the same factors informed world views and ideologies? Did language have any traceable impact on the formation of world views, ideologies or philosophical theories? Did philosophical ideas and legal theories reflect social structure, power set-up or political institutions? And *vice versa*, were theories and philosophical concepts of how the society and the state should function reflected in institutions in classical Indian society? What was the actual relationship between world views and theories in India? Were the relations between 'background' phenomena on the one hand and ideologies and theories on the other universal or specific to pre-modern India? Are conceivable findings to these questions merely India-specific or can one extrapolate results obtained from the study of Indian traditions and cultures to other regions of the



world? Can these findings tell us anything universal about what it means to be human, to have a world view, to entertain a belief or to rationally develop an explanatory theory?

These are the considerations and reflections, mediating between research on the Indian tradition of thought and other branches of cultural studies, which informed a range of analyses compiled into the present volume. Some of these contributions, albeit not all, were presented in person by the authors during the International Conference ‘World view and theory in Indian philosophy’, which was held in Barcelona, Spain, between 26–30 April, 2009 (for a detailed programme of the Conference see below p. 11). This *Congreso Internacional ‘Teoría e ideología en las filosofías de la India’* was at the same time the first conference on South-Asian Studies held in Spain, which attracted most (if not all) Spanish Indologists with an intention to boost South-Asian studies in the Iberian Peninsula.

The Organising Committee of the Conference comprised as organisers Piotr Balcerowicz (no academic affiliation), Johannes Bronkhorst (Université de Lausanne), Claus Oetke (Stockholm University), Martín Sevilla Rodríguez (Universidad de Oviedo) and José Virgilio García Trabazo (Universidade de Santiago de Compostela). The Co-organiser was Casa Asia ([www.casaasia.org](http://www.casaasia.org)) which provided the (absolutely marvellous!) venue for the conference. The advisory board of the Organising Committee included Juan Arnau (CSIC, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas) and Juan Luis Vermal (Illes Balears). The Conference was sponsored by the grant under the Antoni Montserrat Programme 2009, summoned yearly by Casa Asia, without which the conference could not have taken place.



CASA ASIA

I would like to avail myself of this opportunity to express, on behalf of the organisers of the conference and myself, most profound thanks to Casa Asia and its most friendly and efficient staff for the excellent co-operation and organisation as well as for the generous Antoni Montserrat grant. I personally fell most obliged to my dear colleagues who were conference organisers and advisers for their invaluable involvement in the conference as well as to Eva Borreguero, the director of Educational Programmes of Casa Asia, Barcelona, for exemplary collaboration.

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*Lahore, Autumn 2012*

PIOTR BALCEROWICZ

SESSION PROGRAMME OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE  
'WORLD VIEW AND THEORY IN INDIAN PHILOSOPHY'  
26–30 April, 2009, Barcelona, Spain

27 April, 2009

Session 1: Theory of Debate, Logic and Epistemology:

Juan Arnau: Philosophy at Stage: Theatricality, Ritual and Logic in Ancient India  
Brendan Gillon: The Correspondence Principle: Its Versions and Its Uses  
Stephen Phillips: Cannibalizing Nyāya Epistemology

Session 2: Theoretical Topics of Buddhist Philosophy:

Birgit Kellner: On the Relationship between *bāhyārtha-vāda* and *vijñāna-vāda* in Dharmakīrti's Thought  
Helmut Tauscher: Empty or Shining Bright?

Session 3: Later Buddhism and Sāṃkhya:

Joerg Tuske: Śāntarākṣita on the Emotions  
Emilio García Buendía: Parmenides and the *Sat-kārya-vāda* Doctrine of Sāṃkhya

28 April, 2009

Session 4: Hermeneutics, Mīmāṃsā and Law:

Larry J. McCrea: Rationalization and Sincerity in Mīmāṃsā Hermeneutics  
Timothy Lubin: The Relation Between *Adhikāra* and *Pramāṇa* in Legal Contexts  
Paolo Magnone: *Aho kauśalam apūrvam*. Hermeneutical Wrigglings about the *Īśōpaniṣad*

Session 5: Nyāya Philosophy:

Ernst Prets: Fragments of Early Nyāya  
Hiroshi Marui: The meaning of a Diversity of Established World Views or Tenets (*siddhānta*) in Debate: What Does Jayanta's Explanation of *Nyāya-sūtra* 1.1.26–31 tell us?

29 April, 2009

Session 6: Jaina and Buddhist Thought:

Akihiko Akamatsu: 'Sky-flower' in Perspectivism  
Peter Flügel: Epistemological Foundations of the Jaina Doctrine of Omniscience

Ferran Mestanza: Theoretical View (*dr̥ṣṭi*) and the Literary Genre of Philosophical Summa (*siddhānta-saṃgraha*) in Buddhist Indian Literature

Session 7: Sāṃkhya, Yoga and Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika:

Óscar Pujol: Physicalism and Consciousness in the *Yoga-sūtra*  
Piotr Balcerowicz: The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika tradition and the *Artha-śāstra*

Session 8: General Topics in Indian Philosophy:

Johannes Bronkhorst: Buddhist Thought *Versus* Brahmanical Thought  
Olivia Cattedra: *Sūkṣma* and *Bandhutā*, Subtle Visions of the World, Its Origins and Its Projections in the Actual Vision of the World  
Claus Oetke: Tacit Assumptions in Indian Philosophies

Session 9: Indian Epics:

Ana Agud: The Relative Weight of the Different Ideologies in the *Bhagavad-gītā*  
Shujun Motegi: On the Concept of Non-possession in the *Mokṣa-dharma*  
José Virgilio García Trabazo: *Dharma* and Literature: On the World View of the Classical Indian Epics

30 April, 2009

Session 10: Religious Salvation:

Parimal G. Patil: Navya-Nyāya Theories of *mukti*  
Takanori Suzuki: On the Theories of Emancipation among Vaiśeṣikas

Session 11: General Perspective of Indian Thought:

Vincent Eltschinger: Apocalypticism, Heresy and Philosophy  
Andrew J. Nicholson: Unifying Hinduism: Philosophy and Boundary Formation in Late Medieval India  
Sven Sellmer: Implicit and Scientific Psychology as Elements of Indian World Views