

Lecture 4

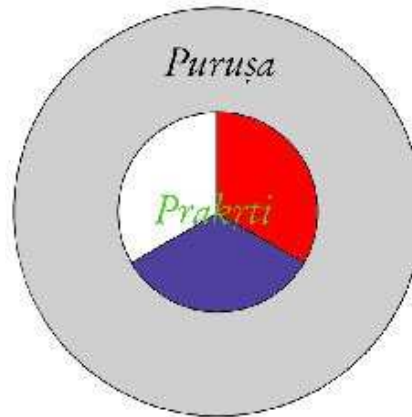
The Six Orthodox Schools

Samkhya-Yoga School

- first philosophical interpretation of *Upanishads*
- modifies terminology
 - Atman/Brahman → Purusha
 - Maya → Prakriti
- *Key*: purusha and prakriti are equally real

Samkhya-Yoga School

- prakriti is a continuous substance that takes on different forms
- three **gunas** (characteristics) of prakriti
 - sattva
 - rajas
 - tamas
- purusha is a witness to changes in prakriti



Continuity of Prakriti

1. The present world of appearances exists as the result of previous changes.
2. Change is not the production of something new, but rather the transformation of what already exists, because ...
3. That which undergoes the changes is prakriti.
4. Hence, the present world is the result of previous transformations of prakriti.
5. And prakriti is able to transform itself because ...

Duality of Prakriti and Purusha

1. Many things in the world of appearances exist for the sake of something else.
2. And these, in turn, exist for the sake of yet other things.
3. Hence, the world of appearances must exist for the sake of something else, because ...
4. This something else cannot be a state of prakriti, because ...
5. The name for this something else is purusha.

Relation of Purusha and Prakriti

- Samkhya-Yoga has some analogies for the relation between purusha and prakriti:
 - purusha "sees" but does not "move", prakriti "moves" but does not "see"



Relation of Purusha and Prakriti

- purusha shines on prakriti like the moon shines on water
- the illumination of prakriti by purusha is called **buddhi** = reflective discernment
 - buddhi exists within prakriti
 - buddhi explains the *interdependence* of prakriti and purusha



Yoga

- The goal of yoga is to understand and develop buddhi, through disciplined practice and training of mind and body.
 - the untrained self is like a clouded pond



Four Aspects of Yoga

- Moral constraints: develop compassionate love for all creatures
- Cultivation of good habits: cleanse mind and body
- Ascetic practices: deny the body's needs
- Breathing and postures: bring one's body under the control of one's consciousness

Nyaya-Vaisheshika School

- Reject metaphysics of Samkhya-Yoga
 - Vaisheshika: the world of appearances is atomistic and pluralistic, not continuous
 - **visesa** = plurality
 - Nyaya: the Self is not pure consciousness; consciousness is only a quality of the Self
- The result is an alternative interpretation of the *Upanishads*
 - still an orthodox school, because ...

Vaishsehika's Atomism

1. If the world is continuous, then a stone can be divided into infinitely-many parts.
2. If a stone has infinitely-many parts, ...
3. Hence, if the world is continuous, ...
4. But this is impossible.
5. Therefore, the world is not continuous – it is atomistic.

Nyaya on the Self

1. The Self has qualities of desire, pleasure, aversion, pain, etc.
2. These are not qualities of any physical substance, because ...
3. Hence, these qualities must belong to a non-physical substance.
 - This raises a question: is the non-physical substance consciousness?

Nyaya on the Self

1. The Self is always the subject of experience, because ...
2. What is the subject of experience can never be ...
3. Hence, the Self can never be ...
4. Consciousness sometimes can be ...
5. Thus, the Self is not consciousness.

Nyaya's Epistemology

- Apart from its arguments about the Self, the Nyaya School is most famous for its logic and epistemology
 - What is knowledge?
 - What are the valid means of knowing?
 - We don't have time to cover these issues.
- Vaisheshika and Nyaya unite into one school, because ...

Overview of Nyaya-Vaisheshika

- The result of Nyaya-Vaisheshika's arguments is an interpretation of the *Upanishads* according to which
 - prakriti (Maya) is real, not an illusion
 - purusha (Atman/Brahman) is something other than selfless awareness

Mimamsa

- Rather than engage in metaphysics, the Mimamsa School focuses on ...
 - **mimamsa** = investigation
 - The Mimamsa School develops a theory of knowledge according to which ...
 - and it develops ...
- Although not influential as a philosophy, Mimamsa has a profound influence on ...

Vedanta

- Provides a *third* interpretation of the *Upanishads* that focuses on ...
- There are three different branches within the Vedanta School
 - We only have time to cover the oldest branch:
Advaita Vedanta

The Advaita Vedanta School

- **advaita** = non-dual
- developed by **Shankara** in the early 8th century



Differences of Interpretation

- Maya exists but is not real, because ...
- Monistic, rather than dualistic (Samkhya-Yoga) or pluralistic (Nyaya-Vaisheshika)
 - The only thing that is real is ...
- Maya is not independent of Brahman
- Brahman is ...

Shankara *contra*
Nyaya-Vaisheshika

1. If Maya is a collection of atoms, and if (as the Nyaya-Vaisheshika School supposes) consciousness is not a quality of physical objects, then ...
2. But ...
3. Hence, the world of appearances is not a collection of atoms.

Shankara *contra* Samkhya-Yoga

1. If Maya is real, then changes in Maya are real, because ...
2. If changes are real, then changes are caused, because ...
3. If changes are caused, either each change pre-exists in its cause or not.
4. If a real change does *not* pre-exist in its cause, then the change comes to exist out of nothing.
 - But changes cannot come to exist out of nothing, because ...
5. If a real change *does* pre-exist in its cause, then there are no real changes, because ...
6. Hence, there are no real changes.
7. Therefore, Maya is not real.

Samkhya-Yoga's Objection

- Maya is a continuous substance (called prakriti), and this substance itself does not change.
- The only thing that changes are the forms prakriti takes.
- Shankara's Reply: ...

Shankara's Conclusions

- Perceived changes are illusory
- Since Maya is the world of appearances and appearances are illusory, Maya is ...
- The only reality is ...
- This reality is unchanging, because ...

Shankara's Analogies

1. Maya is like a dream, and the experience of Brahman is like the experience of waking from a dream.
 - What is perceived in a dream exists, as part of the dream: if the elements of a dream did not exist, there would be no dream.
 - Similarly, ...
 - The unreality of a dream can be realized only by awakening from the dream and experiencing the consciousness of waking life.
 - Similarly, ...

Shankara's Analogies

2. Brahman is like a magic trick and Maya is like ...
- Maya is the result of perceiving reality without knowledge true reality is
 - Brahman does not do anything to make itself appear as Maya, because ...

"Just as a man thinks that a body in sunlight is itself bright, so he thinks that the mind which appears to be the Seer is indeed 'I, the Seer'. Whatever is seen in this world, *Atman* comes to be identified with it. Consequently a man is deluded and so he does not recognize *Atman*."

-A *Thousand Teachings* A.12

Shankara's Analogies

3. Brahman is like a snake and Maya is like the poisoning nature of the snake's venom

- The snake's venom is poisonous to us but not to the snake
- Similarly, ...



Shankara on the Existence of Ignorance

- From the point of view of Brahman, ...
 - Brahman in itself is **nirguna** = without characteristics
- From our point of view, caught up within Maya, ...
 - Brahman as it appears to us is **saguna** = with characteristics
- The existence of ignorance is ...

Shankara on Ignorance

- **Problem: mistaking Maya for Brahman**
 - this is like actors in a movie thinking they really are their characters
- **Solution: participate in Maya as an illusion**
 - this requires practical knowledge: direct personal experience of ultimate reality

"Since the root cause of this transmigratory existence is ignorance, its destruction is desired. Knowledge of *Brahman* is therefore entered on. ...Only knowledge of *Brahman* can destroy this ignorance; action cannot destroy it since action is not incompatible with ignorance. Unless ignorance is destroyed, passion and aversion will not be destroyed."

-A *Thousand Teachings* A.1

Shankara on Maya

- Shankara departs slightly from the *Vedas*
 - he adds that the world of appearances is ...
 - he then understands Maya as ...
 - the result of enjoying Maya is **lila** = play
 - all the world (of appearances) is a stage, literally



Flowcharting Indian Metaphysics

- Is there something "behind" the mental-material world?
 - *Upanishads*: Yes
 - Samkhya-Yoga, Nyaya-Vaisheshika, Mimamsa, Vedanta: Yes
 - Non-Orthodox Schools: No
 - example: Buddhism
- NB: The *Upanishads* are not like a Hindu bible -- there is no presumption of scriptural authority.

Flowcharting Indian Metaphysics

- If "Yes", then:
 - A: Is the mental-material world real?
 - B: Is pure consciousness what is "behind" the mental-material world?

The Six Schools give different answers:

- Samkhya-Yoga = ...
- Nyaya-Vaisheshika = ...
- Advaita Vedanta = ...

Unifying Features

- All orthodox schools agree that distinguishing the Self (whatever it is) from ordinary mind-body awareness is the key to ...
- And they agree that the goal of philosophy is ...
- They also are confrontational, because ...

Reading for Next Time

- Bhagavad Gita
- Kupperman: 42-57

also: **Midterm 1 is next week!**

(covers Lectures 0 – 5)