

Constructive Relativism

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In this paper a new philosophical approach is presented, that could be termed Patīccasamuppādin that is different from the conventional materialistic and idealistic approaches. The materialists starting with the Greeks in the west, and the Dravyavadins in Bharat, in general attempted to reduce all phenomena to a materialist base. The Buddhist idealists in the form of Vinnanavadins and the Greek idealists on the other hand wanted to show that the mind is supreme, and that the so-called material world was the creation of the mind. We present a different approach, where the world as an observer 'sees' is created by the observer due to avidya of anicca, dukka and anatta which could be 'roughly translated' as ignorance of impermanence and soullessness. The 'world' is anicca, dukka, anatma and sunya. However, anicca and anatta are not concepts, and as such it is futile to attempt to translate them into English or any other language. Even in Pali they should be considered as non-concepts that defy explanation using concepts or other words. Also, unlike in Madhyamikavada sunya is not elevated to a concept with sunyata coming into the picture as a noun. We argue that the world is nothing but the creation of the observer, and the world is same as the knowledge of the world. In the present approach it is not assumed that a world exists independent of the observer who attempts to know or gather 'information' of an already existing world. The observer creates knowledge of the world, and hence the world exists relative to the sense organs, mind and the culture of the observer. The knowledge is thus created by the mind with the aid of the other sense organs. There is no knowledge or world, before such knowledge of the world is created, and the knowledge is created as concepts, theories, etc., by the observer. Thus, the so-called world is the conceptual and theoretical world of the observer that has been created in the mind. It should be noted that the concepts need not be in the form of words, as images formed in the mind are also considered as concepts. However, according to the approach presented in the paper the mind is not an absolute that has an independent existence. A 'model' is created in which the mind of an observer is also created by the mind itself! The mind is presented as a stream of 'cittas' which themselves are the concepts that could be supposed to exist in the smallest duration that can be created (grasped) by the mind. The logic of the present approach is cyclic and fourfold, and not Aristotelian.

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