3 An outline of Mādhva philosophy

Vyāsatīrtha begins the *Nyāyāmṛta* with a series of eight benedictory verses (*maṅgalaśloka*s) which summarise central points of Mādhva theology and celebrate some of his predecessors in the tradition:

(1) I worship the spouse of Lakṣmī, whose body consists entirely of auspicious qualities, who is permanently free from what is detestable, who can be known through the purest awareness, who is the means to obtain pure bliss, who can be known through every passage of the Veda, who is referred to by every word, and whose body is the colour of a newly formed cloud.

(2) I serve Hari, who removes all obstacles, the [instrumental] cause of this entire, *existent* world, an ocean of compassion, the friend of Ānandatīrtha [(Madhva)].

(3) I serve the peerless Ānandatīrtha, who annuls the three forms of suffering, and who is devoid of error, without impediment, swift of mind, and ever free from impurity.

(4) The words of Śrī Jayatīrtha shine forth, illuminating the thought of the guru [(Madhva)] with clear words and profound, irrefutable sentences.

(5) Always do I serve the sun that is [my *Dīkṣā-guru*] Brahmaṇyatīrtha, who is ever devoted to the feet of Viṣṇu, and who has dispelled the shroud of darkness and illuminated the true path.

(6) I offer my salutations to my *Vidyā-guru*, Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa Muni, endowed as he is with so many auspicious qualities such as knowledge, dispassion, and devotion.

(7) Churning the milky ocean that is Madhva's *śāstra* with the mount Mandara that is [my] intellect, [I] drawn up the nectar that is the reasoning [found in Madhva's works] to delight the learned.

(8) Since in some passages [my *Nyāyāmṛta*] draws together what is scattered [in the works of Madhva and Jayatīrtha, and] since in some passages it explains what has already been said [in their works, and] since in some passages it says things that have *not* already been said [in the works of Madhva and Jayatīrtha], this effort of mine [in writing this text] is fruitful.[1]

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1 *nikhilaguṇanikāyaṃ nityanirdhūtaheyaṃ śubhatamamatimeyaṃ śuddhasaukhyāptyupāyam | sakalanigamageyaṃ sarvaśabdābhidheyaṃ navajaladharakāyaṃ naumi lakṣmīsahāyam || vighnaughavāraṇaṃ satyāśeṣaviśvasya kāraṇam | karuṇāsindhum ānandatīrthabandhuṃ hariṃ bhaje || bhramaṃ bhaṅgarahitam ajaḍaṃ vimalaṃ sadā | ānandatīrtham atulaṃ bhaje tāpatrayāpaham || citraiḥ padaiś ca gambhīrair vākyair mānair akhaṇḍitaiḥ | gurubhāvaṃ vyañjayantī bhāti śrījayatīrthavāk || samutsārya tamaḥstomaṃ sanmārgaṃ samprakāśya ca | sadā viṣṇupadāsaktaṃ seve brahmaṇyabhāskaram || jñānavairāgyabhaktyādikalyāṇaguṇaśālinaḥ | lakṣmīnārāyaṇamunīn vande vidyāgurūn mama || śrīmadhvaśāstradugdhābdhiṃ dhīmandaramahībhṛtā | āmathyoddhriyate nyāyāmṛtaṃ vibudhatṛptaye | vikṣiptasaṅgrahāt kvāpi kvāpy uktasyopādānāt | anuktakathanāt kvāpi saphalo 'yaṃ śramo mama ||* (NAB, 1:1–2.) *Cf.* Jayatīrtha's benedictory verse in the *Vādāvalī*: *namo 'gaṇitakalyāṇaguṇapūrṇāya viṣṇave | satyāśeṣajagajjanmapūrvakartre muradviṣe ||* (VĀ: 1.) "Homage to Viṣṇu, replete with innumerable auspicious qualities, the enemy of the

In verses 3–6, Vyāsatīrtha praises his primary influences in the Mādhva tradition: Madhva, Jayatīrtha, and his "consecration" and "intellectual" preceptors, Brahmaṇyatīrtha and Śrīpādarāja (Lakṣmīnārāyaṇatīrtha). Notably, Vyāsatīrtha does not allude to Viṣṇudāsācārya, who, as I discussed in the previous chapter, has been shown by modern scholarship to have had a major influence over his work. In verse 7, Vyāsatīrtha explains the metaphor behind the title of his text, the *Nyāyāmṛta*—"The Nectar of Reasoning" or "The Nectar that is Reasoning". He explains that the title alludes to the famous story found in the epics and Purāṇas where the gods collaborate with the *asura*s to use mount Mandara to churn the milky ocean to recover the nectar of immortality from it. Vyāsatīrtha compares his act of authoring the *Nyāyāmṛta* to that of the gods: he uses the "mount Mandara" of his intellect to "churn" the "ocean" of Madhva's philosophy in order to extract the "nectar" of the critical reasoning found in his guru's works. Consistently with this metaphor, in the final benedictory verse Vyāsatīrtha ascribes himself a (misleadingly) modest role in the *Nyāyāmṛta*, claiming that he is simply drawing together what has been said by his intellectual predecessors in the Mādhva tradition, occasionally making original observations here and there.[2]

The first and second of these verses give important information about the *Nyāyāmṛta* and Mādhva theology. The first verse states that god is a being possessed of infinite auspicious qualities who is simultaneously free from any flaws. Sentient beings can strive to obtain an immediate awareness (*aparokṣajñāna*) of god,[3] and god himself rewards those who attempt to comprehend him with liberation from transmigratory existence, liberation being a state of permanent bliss befitting the innate virtues of the individual soul in question. The central question that drives the discussion in the opening chapters of the *Nyāyāmṛta* is not the nature of god, however; it is rather the nature of the empirical world and its relationship to god/*brahman*.

In the second verse, Vyāsatīrtha states that the world "exists" and that it is an effect of Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa. As is common in Sanskrit philosophical literature, the contents of these benedictory verses precipitate the philosophical discussion that unfolds in the *Nyāyāmṛta*. Just after the verses, Vyāsatīrtha gives voice to a hypothet-

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[Daitya] Mura, who is the agent responsible for the origination and so on of the entire, *existent* world". Śrīnivāsatīrtha explains that it is Vyāsatīrtha's description of the world as "existent" in the second of his benedictory verses that prompts the response from the Advaitin *pūrvapakṣin* at the beginning of the *Nyāyāmṛta*: *satyāśeṣaviśvasya kāraṇam ity upakṣiptaṃ viśvasya satyatvam asahamāno māyāvādī pratyavatiṣṭhate—nanv iti.* (*Nyāyāmṛtaprakāśa*, NAB, 1:20.)

2 See Williams (2014: 123–128) for a discussion of the significance of this verse.

3 Vyāsatīrtha's commentators offer multiple different interpretations of the meaning of the Sanskrit word *mati* in this verse. I follow an interpretation of this part of the verse proposed by Śrīnivāsatīrtha. See *Nyāyāmṛtaprakāśa*, NAB: 7 for this analysis.

ical Advaitin philosopher. This philosopher, apparently provoked by Vyāsatīrtha's claim that the world exists in this way, interjects and states emphatically that the world is "illusory" (*mithyā*). This interjection marks the beginning of the Advaita *pūrvapakṣa* of the *Nyāyāmṛta*, in which Vyāsatīrtha carefully reconstructs the philosophy of the classical Advaitins, paying close attention to the nuanced differences between their individual philosophical positions.

I will analyse Vyāsatīrtha's reconstruction of Advaita philosophy in Chapter 4 of this volume. The Mādhvas' realist stance about the empirical world needs to be seen against the backdrop of their wider theological positions about god, the world, and how the two relate to one another. In this chapter, I will sketch the central features of the Mādhva theology that Vyāsatīrtha defends against the Advaitins in the *Nyāyāmṛta*. My goal here is not to give a comprehensive overview of Mādhva philosophy, as has already been attempted for instance by Sharma (1986), Siauve (1968), and Sarma (2003). Rather, it is to give some context to Vyāsatīrtha's arguments against the Advaitins in the *Nyāyāmṛta*, emphasising the themes that are particularly pertinent to my analysis of his critique in the chapters ahead.

I will here primarily refer to the works of Jayatīrtha, alluding to Madhva's own writings in many instances. This analysis is not intended to be a philological reconstruction of Madhva's own thought, as has been attempted for instance by Mesquita (2000 and 2016). In general what I present here is Madhva's philosophy as it was standardised by Jayatīrtha in the fourteenth century. As always in Sanskrit literature, it is open to question about whether Jayatīrtha represented Madhva's thoughts accurately. He was not a direct student of Madhva, and his commentaries are generally philosophically constructive, drawing long chains of reasoning out of Madhva's laconic remarks. Nevertheless, Jayatīrtha's interpretation of Madhva's corpus came to be regarded as the standard one for later Mādhvas, and it is clear that Vyāsatīrtha largely interprets Madhva through the lens of Jayatīrtha's commentaries. Presenting primarily Jayatīrtha's interpretation of Madhva's philosophy therefore serves to give a good backdrop to Vyāsatīrtha's arguments.

3.1 Realism and god's independence

The *Nyāyāmṛta* is primarily an attempt to defend the Mādhva realist stance about the world against the anti-realism of the classical Advaitins. Realism about a domain is widely held to entail two positions regarding the objects/facts that belong to that domain. The first is that the objects/facts in question can be said to "exist"; the second is that they exist somehow independently of consciousness. As he shows in his benedictory verses to the *Nyāyāmṛta*, Vyāsatīrtha certainly agrees that the world of our senses exists. Later in the text, he states that the world enjoys whatever "exis-

tence" it is that *brahman*/god himself does. In the *Sattvanirukti* ("Determination of Existence") chapter of the *Nyāyāmṛta* he says emphatically: "The very same sort of 'existence' that belongs to *brahman* must be present in the world as well" (*yādṛśaṃ brahmaṇaḥ sattvam, tādṛśaṃ syāj jagaty api*).[4] What it means to say that *brahman* and the world "exist" is a complex question. How to define "existence" and "nonexistence" was one of the central points of debate among Mādhva and Advaitin intellectuals in the early modern period, and I will turn to Vyāsatīrtha's definitions of these concepts in Chapter 5. In any case, unlike the Advaitins, Vyāsatīrtha clearly does accept that the world enjoys exactly the same sort of "existence" that *brahman*/god does.

The stance that the world exists was always at the centre of Mādhva theology, and this is reflected in the terms that Mādhva philosophers used to identify themselves. The Mādhva tradition is today perhaps most widely known outside of India as the "Dualistic" (Dvaita) tradition of Vedānta. However, medieval Mādhva philosophers usually referred to themselves as *tattva-vādin*s, a compound which can be translated as: "philosophers who hold that [the world] is real". The Mādhvas contrasted this designation with the term they usually used to refer to the Advaitins. Mādhva authors widely referred to the Advaitins as *māyā-vādin*s, which could be translated as: "philosophers who hold that [the world] is illusion".[5] In texts like the *Sumadhvavijaya*, these designations also have a deliberate polemical force. By construing the terms differently one could translate the compounds as "proponents of the true philosophy", and "proponents of the fraudulent/false philosophy", respectively.

The Mādhvas have been described by modern scholars both as "dualists" and "pluralists". Seen from one stance, Mādhva theology is indeed dualistic, because of its bifurcation of reality into "independent" (*svatantra*) and "dependent"/"nonindependent" (*paratantra*/*asvatantra*) beings. From another perspective, the Mādhvas could legitimately be described as "pluralists". Madhva and his followers often emphasise that they accept that reality can be divided into at least three different types of beings: god, the individual souls, and insentient beings. They emphasise that these classes of beings are eternally distinct from one another, and that the individual members of these classes are likewise all intrinsically differentiated from the other individuals belonging to the same class. Madhva himself famously argued that there are five types of difference in reality (his "doctrine of five differences" [*pañcabhedavāda*]). According to Madhva, the five fundamental types of difference

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4 NAB, 1:248.

5 According to Mesquita (2016: 34), Madhva himself never uses the term *dvaitavāda* to refer to his own philosophy, but rather refers to his own thought with the term *tattvavāda*. The Mādhva philosophers who contributed to the *Nyāyāmṛta* literature usually use this title too.

are the differences between: (1) god and the individual souls, (2) god and insentient entities, (3) the various sentient beings themselves, (4) sentient beings and insentient entities, and (5) the various insentient entities themselves.[6]

The ultimate goal of Mādhva theology is to understand god and his relationship to the world of sentient and insentient beings. Madhva taught throughout his writings that the highest truth taught by scripture is that Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa is a flawless being of infinite perfections, who is entirely self-dependent. The world, by contrast, exists in a permanent state of dependency on god. Like the Advaitins and the other traditions of Vedānta, the Mādhvas are primarily a tradition of scripture. They believe that knowledge of god can only be obtained through a correct understanding of the Veda and the large body of other texts that they accept as "true scriptures" (*sadāgama*s). According to Madhva and his followers, knowledge of god cannot be obtained purely by perception or inference because god is, by his very nature, inaccessible to the senses and reasoning. Mādhva philosophers therefore eschew the type of "rational theology" found in the works of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosophers like Udayana and Gaṅgeśa, who attempted to prove the existence of god using inference alone.[7]

While Mādhva philosophers clearly accept that inference is a valid means of knowledge, they are generally sceptical about its ability to prove grand metaphysical truths such as the existence of god, or the illusoriness of the sensory world. Nevertheless, they do not reject reasoning *per se*, nor do they deny that it can play an important role in the process of obtaining liberation. What they reject, as Jayatīrtha sees it, is "*pure* reasoning/inference" (*kevalatarka* or *kevala-anumāna*), that is, inference that operates independently of scripture and perception. Reasoning, however, can play an indispensable role in the process of obtaining liberation, provided it takes place within the overall framework of scriptural interpretation. A purpose of texts like the *Nyāyāmṛta* is to deepen and strengthen this understanding of scrip-

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6 Madhva explains this in the following verses of his *Anuvyākhyāna*: *jīveśvarabhidā caivaṃ jaḍeśvarabhidā tathā | jīvabhedo mithaś caiva jaḍajīvabhidā tathā || mithaś ca jaḍabhedo yaḥ prapañco bhedapañcakaḥ |* (*Anuvyākhyāna*, SMG1: 56; verse 1,4.111.)

7 According to Madhva, Jayatīrtha, and Vyāsatīrtha, inference is inherently incapable of apprehending *brahman*/god. They argue that, like "proper conduct" (*dharma*), god is eternally beyond the scope of reasoning/inference. When commenting on *Brahmasūtra* 1,1.3 (*śāstrayonitvāt*) for instance, Vyāsatīrtha says that god is inherently beyond the ken of inference; inference is incapable of grasping god, just as one sense modality cannot grasp qualities/tropes that correspond to another sense-modality: *cakṣurādi yathāśaktaṃ rasagandhādivastuṣu | anumāpi tathāśaktā dharmabrahmādivastuṣu ||* (TāC: 256.) "Just as the visual-faculty [and the other external faculties] are not able [to grasp] things such as taste, smell, and so on, so too is inference impotent [to grasp] things like proper conduct (*dharma*), *brahman*, and so on".

ture by ruling out alternative (and, from the Mādhvas' point of view, false) interpretations of scripture like the Advaitins'.

Mādhva philosophers accept that scripture is a form of verbal testimony (*āgama*), which they regard as a separate means of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) besides sense-perception and inference. In the *Pramāṇapaddhati*, Jayatīrtha defines verbal testimony as "flawless speech" (*nirdoṣaḥ śabdaḥ*). For the Mādhvas, testimony includes both "personal" (*pauruṣeya*) and "impersonal" (*apauruṣeya*) speech. Jayatīrtha says that in both personal and impersonal testimony, the individual syllables (*varṇa*s) that make up the speech are eternal and the words are innately linked to their objects. The difference between personal and impersonal testimony lies in whether the speaker of the text in question creates, with some measure of independence, a new text, or simply repeats verbatim what they have already learnt from tradition. The Mādhvas believe that the Veda is impersonal, since it passed down from teacher to student in uninterrupted succession; those who speak the Veda only repeat it parrot-like as they have heard it from their teachers. In the case of personal testimony, by contrast, the speaker is the active creator of the text who does not depend in this way on tradition.[8]

Madhva began his topical treatise the *Viṣṇutattvanirṇaya* ("Ascertainment of the Truth about Viṣṇu") by giving a list of texts he considered to be "true scriptures" (*sadāgama*s). Like the Pūrva-Mīmāṃsakas and the other classical schools of Vedānta, the Mādhvas hold that the Veda is entirely impersonal; it has no author, human or divine. The remainder of scripture is produced by various personal beings. Perhaps the most important text besides the Veda for the Mādhvas is the *Brahmasūtra*. They attribute the *sūtra*s to Veda-Vyāsa, whom they regard as an *avatāra* ("incarnation") of Viṣṇu himself. Madhva wrote two commentaries on the *Brahma-*

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8 *āgamo dvividhaḥ—apauruṣeyaḥ, pauruṣeyaś ceti. tatrāpauruṣeyo vedaḥ, pauruṣeyo 'nyaḥ. varṇāḥ sarvatra kūṭasthanityāḥ, sarvagatāś ca; padāny api niyatāny eva. teṣāṃ padārthasambandho 'pi svābhāvika eva. tathāpi vākye padānām ānupūrvīviśeṣasya svatantrapuruṣapūrvakatvabhāvābhāvābhyām ayaṃ bhedaḥ.* (PP: 521.) "Testimony is of two sorts—impersonal and personal. Of those, the impersonal is the Veda; [everything] else is personal [testimony]. In all cases [of testimony], the letters (*varṇa*s) are unchanging/eternal and all-pervading; likewise are the words always fixed [in terms of their order]. The relation [of words] to [their] objects too is always natural (*svābhāvika*). Nevertheless, the distinction [between personal and impersonal testimony] lies in whether the *particular sequence* of the words in the statements [contained in the testimony] is, or is not, produced by an *independent* personal being". Jayatīrtha's seventeenth-century commentator Janārdana Bhaṭṭa clarifies that the term "independent" (*svatantra*) in this passage simply means that the speaker of the text has not learnt it verbatim from another source: *anadhītatādṛśasandarbhavattve sati tatpravaktā svatantrapuruṣaḥ; tādṛśaś ca laukikavākye kālidāsādiḥ. vedavākye tādṛśo nāsty eva. pravāhato 'nādyadhyāpakaparamparayā pūrvatanam evedam adhyāpayāma iti vedasyānusandhīyamānatvād iti bhāvaḥ. (Jayatīrthavijaya, PP: 522.)*

sūtra—the *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* and the *Anuvyākhyāna*. His *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* is treated with special reverence by his followers. According to the *Sumadhvavijaya*, its contents were taught to Madhva by Vyāsa himself while Madhva stayed with him in Badarikāśrama.[9] Madhva also accepted the validity of the two great Sanskrit epics, the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*, as well as the Vaiṣṇava *Purāṇa*s. Madhva wrote an extensive work on the *Mahābhārata* entitled the *Mahābhāratatātparyanirṇaya*. He also wrote a brief exposition of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (the *Bhāgavatatātparyanirṇaya*). Madhva further recognised the validity of the various *Dharmaśāstra* texts which lay down injunctions for the everyday life of the different castes.

Like the Viśiṣṭādvaitins, Madhva and his followers accept the *Pāñcarātrasaṃhitā*s as valid scriptures. *Pāñcarātra* is an ancient form of Viṣṇu-worship which finds its earliest extant reference in the *Mahābhārata*. The *Pāñcarātrasaṃhitā*s deal with a diversity of subjects, including particularly the nature of god, cosmology and cosmogony, temple and idol construction, and proper personal conduct. In the *Viṣṇutattvanirṇaya*, Madhva emphasises that the *saṃhitā* literature should be accepted "in its entirety". Madhva also wrote the *Tantrasārasaṅgraha*, a short compendium summarising many of the magic rituals found in the *saṃhitā* literature. He further stressed that any other traditionally accepted texts that do not conflict with those he has already listed can be accepted as valid scripture.[10]

Besides these established scriptural texts, Madhva also accepted the existence of texts that are unknown to modern scholarship and which were also apparently not known to medieval scholars outside of the Mādhva tradition. In his *Śatadūṣaṇī*, the fourteenth century Viśiṣṭādvaitin theologian Veṅkaṭanātha accused Madhva of falsifying certain texts, as did the sixteenth century Advaitin scholar Appayya

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9 The story of Madhva's composition of his *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* is narrated largely in the fifth chapter of the *Sumadhvavijaya*. See Sharma (1981: 80) for a discussion of the circumstances under which Madhva is taken to have written his *Bhāṣya* by the tradition.

10 *r̥gādyā bhārataṃ caiva pañcarātram athākhilam | mūlarāmāyaṇam caiva purāṇaṃ caitadātmakam || ye cānuyāyinas tv eṣāṃ sarve te ca sadāgamāḥ | durāgamās tadanye ye tair na jñeyo janārdanaḥ || jñeya etaiḥ sadā yuktair bhaktimadbhiḥ suniṣṭhitaiḥ | na ca kevalatarkeṇa nākṣajena na kena cit | kevalāgamavijñeyo bhaktair eva na cānyathā* | (*Viṣṇutattvanirṇaya*, SMG5: 11.) "The [four Vedas,] the R̥g-[, Yajur-, Sāma-, and Atharva-Veda], as well as the [*Mahā-*]*Bhārata* and the *Pāñcarātra in its entirety*; the original [(= Vālmīki's Sanskrit)] *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Purāṇa*s, and that which consists in them; as well as those texts that are consistent with [the texts just mentioned]—these are all true scriptures. ['Scriptures'] other than those are false scriptures, and Janārdana [(Viṣṇu)] cannot be known through them. [God] can be known through [these scriptures] by those of steadfast devotion who are permanently integrated (*yukta*); [he cannot be known] through mere reasoning, not through perception, and not through anything [else]. He can be known through scripture by those devoted [to him], and through no other means." Madhva ascribes this verse to the *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa*.

Dīkṣita. These unknown texts generally resemble *Pāñcarātrasaṃhitā*s or *Purāṇa*s. They include the *Brahmatarka*, a text on epistemology which Madhva and his followers refer to frequently. Mesquita (2000) examined Madhva's references to these texts and presented an extensive argument that they were, in fact, composed by Madhva himself. Traditional scholars such as Sharma (2001) have denied that Madhva composed these texts, arguing that they were simply lost to tradition in the centuries following his death. Vyāsatīrtha himself quotes many of these works in certain parts of the *Nyāyāmṛta*.[11]

3.2 God and the world

According to Mādhva philosophers, the fundamental truth these texts can reveal to us is the nature of god and his relationship to the world. Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa is a being of infinite positive qualities who is divested of all flaws. Mādhva theologians place a central emphasis on god's independence. Madhva himself used the property of independence to distinguish god's being from the being of all other entities in reality. At the beginning of two of his shorter topical-treatises, the *Tattvasaṅkhyāna* and the *Tattvaviveka*, Madhva says that god is the only "independent" (*svatantra*) being; the rest of reality is "dependent-on-another" (*paratantra*)/"non-independent" (*asvatantra*) because it permanently depends on god in various ways.

The fact that the world is dependent on god is not incompatible with the stance that it exists, according to the Mādhvas; for Madhva and his followers, something can be dependent but nevertheless existent. In fact, according to Jayatīrtha, to say that the world depends on god is to say that it derives its existence (*sattā*) from god. Jayatīrtha explains that to say that something is "dependent on another" (*paratantra*) means to say that that thing "requires something else from the point of view of the triple characterisation of 'existence' as essence, knowledge, or action". In the *Nyāyasudhā*, Jayatīrtha clarifies that his explanation of dependence here reflects different interpretations by Indian philosophers of the concept of "existence". To say that something "exists" could simply be to say that that thing has an essence (*svarūpa*). Alternatively, it could mean (as per some Naiyāyikas) that the thing in question is accessible to the means of knowledge. Or, it could mean (as per Dharmakīrti and Buddhists who follow him)[12] that that thing possesses causal efficacy. Jayatīrtha emphasises in the relevant passage of the *Nyāyasudhā* that dependent

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11 See Stoker (2016: 123–124) for a discussion of how Vyāsatīrtha uses these sources in his arguments on the subject of the hierarchy of spiritual beings in liberation.
12 See below, Chapter 5, p. 130, for a discussion of Dharmakīrti's definition of existence.

beings always derive all of these three things from god. All beings derive their essence from god; similarly, whether they can be known and whether they can act in the world around them depends on god.[13] So all other beings are existentially dependent on god because they derive their essence, knowability, and activity from him.

Like the other classical traditions of Vedānta, Madhva and his followers accept that god is, in some sense, the cause of the world. However, unlike the Advaitins and the Viśiṣṭādvaitins, the Mādhvas do not accept that god is the *material* cause (*upādānakāraṇa*) of the world. As I will discuss below, according to the Mādhvas the material cause of all material things is material nature (*prakṛti*). God is, nevertheless, the instrumental cause of the world. Like Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja, Madhva accepts that *Brahmasūtra* 1,1.2 (*janmādy asya yataḥ*) teaches that god is responsible for the "creation, maintenance, and dissolution" of the world. However, Madhva developed a more expansive conception of god's causality, which he summarised in the *Tattvasaṅkhyāna* as follows:

> The generation, preservation, and dissolution of this entire world, as well as its governance, ignorance, enlightenment, bondage, liberation, pleasure, pain, concealment, and illumination[14]:

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13 In his *ṭīkā* on the *Tattvasaṅkhyāna*, Jayatīrtha writes: *svarūpapramitipravṛttilakṣaṇasattātraividhye parānapekṣaṃ svatantram; parāpekṣam asvatantram.* (*Tattvasaṅkhyānaṭīkā,* TS/TV: 46.) "That which does *not* require another being in respect of the triplicity of existence characterised as 'essence', 'knowledge', or 'action' is independent; that which *does* require another being in that respect is non-independent." In the *Nyāyasudhā,* Jayatīrtha sheds more light on his characterisation of dependence/independence when explaining Madhva's refutation of the theistic Sāṅkhya position: *pradhānapuruṣayos tadīyānāṃ śaktīnāṃ ca sattā—svarūpam, pratītayaś ca pramāviṣayatvaṃ ceti yāvat, tās tāḥ sarvāḥ pravṛttayaś ca—sarvadā tadadhīneti yojanā. ke cin manyante svarūpam eva vastunaḥ sattvam iti, apare tu pramāṇayogyatvam, anye punar arthakriyāvattvam. tad idaṃ trayam api prakṛtyādīnāṃ bhagavadadhīnam eveti.* (NS, 7:191.) "[This verse of Madhva's in the *Anuvyākhyāna* should be] construed as follows: The existence of primary matter (*prakṛti*) and the person (*puruṣa*) along with their potencies (*śakti*)—[which existence consists in their] essence, their 'cognitions' (i.e. their being an object knowledge), as well as all their various actions—are permanently dependent on [god]. Some believe that the 'existence' of something is simply its essence; others believe that it is [that thing's] being amenable to the means of knowledge; yet others believe that it is [that thing's] possessing causal efficacy. All of these three things belonging to material nature[, the person, and their potencies] always depend on god." Jayatīrtha is glossing here the following verse of Madhva's *Anuvyākhyāna* (SMG1, 73; verse 2,2.35)—*sattā pradhānapuruṣaśaktīnāṃ ca pratītayaḥ / pravṛttayaś ca tāḥ sarvā nityaṃ nityātmanā yataḥ //.* See also Sarma (2003: 52–53) for some discussion of the concepts of dependence and independence in Madhva's thought.

14 In his *Tattvasaṅkhyānaṭīkā* (TS/TV: 237), Jayatīrtha explains the activity of *niyama* as "instigating [the individual souls] to action" (*vyāpāreṣu preraṇam*). He says that the words "concealment" (*āvṛtti*) and "illumination" (*jyoti*) refer to "external darkness and illumination" (*bāhyatamaprakāśau*). See also TSṬ: 30–33 for a translation and discussion of the relevant part of Jayatīrtha's commentary.

all of these [are effected] by Viṣṇu; [this list of causal activities must be] expanded or contracted to fit [to the various different things in the world].[15]

So besides creating, maintaining, and destroying the world, Madhva takes it that god is further responsible for the various other aspects of the world he lists here. As Madhva seems to have realised, the different activities he lists here cannot all apply to each and every thing in the world. Eternal substances like time cannot be created or destroyed, and the insentient substances produced from material nature cannot be subject to bondage and liberation, for instance. He therefore seems to indicate in this passage that the activities that define Viṣṇu in *Brahmasūtra* 1,1.2 do not all apply to every type of being that depends upon god. As Jayatīrtha explains Madhva's words here, only "governance" and "preservation" apply to all things; whether or not the remaining individual activities apply to some part of reality needs to be decided on a case-by-case basis.

The fact that the world depends on god in these various ways does not imply for the Mādhvas that it is somehow nonexistent, or that it lacks the same sort of "existence" that god enjoys. Nevertheless, this relationship of dependency clearly implies a profound inequality between god and the world. Although the Mādhvas accepted that the world is not reducible to *brahman* in the way that the Advaitins hold, they were not straightforward dualists as their most widely used title ("Dvaita-Vedāntins") might be taken to suggest. Both god and the rest of reality exist, but this does not mean that they exist on an equal footing. God is an independent, flawless being of infinite perfections; the world is a profoundly inferior domain that exists only in a permanent state of existential dependence on god. In fact, Madhva himself sometimes speaks of the world using terms like *asat*, *asattva* and so on, which should usually be translated using terms like "nonexistent" or "unreal" in Mādhva philosophical works. However, it is clear that in these contexts the terms are meant to communicate the *inferiority* of the world in relation to god, and not to suggest that it literally does not exist.[16]

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15 *sṛṣṭiḥ sthitiḥ saṃhṛtiś ca niyamo 'jñānabodhane | bandho mokṣaḥ sukhaṃ duḥkham āvṛttir jyotir eva ca || viṣṇunāsya samastasya samāsavyāsayogataḥ |* (*Tattvasaṅkhyāna*, TS/TV: 236.)

16 Madhva himself sometimes refers to the world as *asat* in his works, and occasionally identifies the terms "independent" (*svatantra*) and "dependent" (*paratantra*) with *sattvam* and *asattvam*, respectively. For instance, an untraced verse Madhva attributes to the *Mahābhārata* in his notes on the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* says: *sattvaṃ svātantryam uddiṣṭaṃ tac ca kṛṣṇe na cāpare | asvātantryāt tadanyeṣām asattvaṃ viddhi bhārata ||* (SMG3: 742.) " 'Existence' is said to be independence, and that belongs to Kṛṣṇa and not to others. Know that beings other than [god] are 'nonexistent' because they are not independent, O descendant of Bharata". It is clear that the words *sattva* and *asattva* should not be translated as "existence" and "nonexistence" in passages like these. Rather, they imply the *inferiority* or *total dependency* of the world on god. Mesquita (2016: 230–231) observes: "However, it

In the *Nyāyāmṛta*, Vyāsatīrtha himself argues that the world can be spoken of as *asat* simply because it is a dependent realm of being. He observes that the Purāṇic literature sometimes refers to the world as "nonexistent", but gives alternative explanations for what words such as *asat* could mean in those contexts:

> When the *Purāṇas*[, epics, and so on] refer to the world as being "nonexistent", they say it because the world is a wicked place (*asādhutvāt*)[, using the word *asat*] like in the expression "[One] should not rely on a no-good (*asat*) person". For, the [*Bhagavad*]*gītā* says—"The word *sat* is used both in the sense of 'existence' and 'being-virtuous' " (BhG: verse 17,26); and— "Whatever is offered, given, whatever austerities are undertaken, and whatever is done by one who lacks faith is termed 'no-good' (*asat*); it is [useless] in this world and the next" (BhG: verse 17,28). And it is said in the *Viṣṇupurāṇa* that the word *sat* means "good" (*sādhu*).

> Alternatively, [the *Purāṇas* and so on refer to the world as being *asat*] because [it is] *not independent*. For, the [*Mahā*]*bhārata* says—" 'Existence' is said to be independence, and that belongs to Kṛṣṇa and no other. Know that beings other than [god] are "nonexistent" because they are not independent, O descendant of Bharata." If [the word *asat* were *not* interpreted in these ways in passages such as these, and instead were taken to mean literally "nonexistent",] then it would follow that [the world] must be completely nonexistent[, like the hare's horn, as is claimed by the nihilistic Buddhists]![17]

According to Vyāsatīrtha, when the Purāṇas and similar texts refer to the world as *asat*, we should take them to mean that the world is ethically corrupt, or that it is inferior to god by virtue of being dependent on him. Such passages clearly cannot be taken to imply that the world is literally "nonexistent" as the nihilistic Buddhists claim! So the Mādhvas accept that the world of our senses truly exists, even if it is by its very nature profoundly inferior to god.

Another feature widely associated with realism about a domain is that the domain in question must exist "independently of consciousness". On the one hand, the Mādhvas do accept that the very existence of the world depends on Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa, who is a conscious intelligent being. The world I have just outlined only exists because Viṣṇu wills it to do so, and it would cease to exist if he ceased to will as such.

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is at end a derived, finite, or unreal being (*cañcala* / *anṛta* / *avastu*), which in its core is dependent on Viṣṇu, that is to say, Viṣṇu preserves all finite beings in their existence since He is their abode (*adhiṣṭhāna*). Without this abode finite beings would be nothing (*na santi yadupekṣayā*)".

17 *purāṇādiṣu kva cij jagato 'sattvoktir asādhutvāt, nāsatpuruṣam āśrayed ity ādi vat. sadbhāve sādhubhāve ca sad ity etat prayujyata iti, aśraddhayā hutaṃ dattaṃ tapas taptaṃ kṛtaṃ ca yat | asad ity ucyate pārtha na ca tat pretya no iha || iti ca gītokteḥ. sacchabdaḥ sādhuvācaka iti viṣṇupurāṇokteś ca. asvātantryād vā—sattvaṃ svātantryam uddiṣṭaṃ* [1]*tac*[1] *ca kṛṣṇe na cāpare / asvātantryāt tadanyeṣām asattvaṃ viddhi bhārata || iti bhāratokteḥ. anyathātyantāsattvāpātāt.* (NAB, 2:252.) Emendations: (1.) The edition reads *na* here. I have emended this to read with the text of the verse Vyāsatīrtha is quoting here as it is found in the edition of Madhva's *Bhāgavatatātparyanirṇaya*. See below, fn. 16, for the reference to this verse.

Nevertheless, they clearly do not accept that the world is a "product of consciousness" in the same way that certain anti-realist/idealist philosophers in India such as the Yogācāra Buddhists or certain strands of Advaita thought do. The Mādhvas clearly accept the existence of both physical and mental substances. Both are fundamental to reality, and there is no question that physical substances are somehow reducible to the mental states of any conscious being. The world of conscious beings and unconscious matter depends for its existence on god's consciousness, but it is not therefore reducible to consciousness or conscious states.

3.3 The structure of the world in Mādhva philosophy

Mādhva philosophers developed a detailed picture of what the world contains. In several of his works, Madhva gave an inventory of the different types of conscious and unconscious beings that exist in a state of dependence on god. The ontological theory scattered throughout Madhva's works was elaborated and systematised by Jayatīrtha, and then later by Vyāsatīrtha in his commentaries on Jayatīrtha's works. Madhva's ideas were clearly influenced by the pluralistic ontology of the Vaiśeṣika and Sāṅkhya schools, as well as by the *Pāñcarātra* literature.

Later Mādhva philosophers sometimes presented Madhva's metaphysical theories along the lines of classical Vaiśeṣika ontology. An eighteenth century introduction to Mādhva philosophy, the *Padārthasaṅgraha* ("Compendium of the Categories"), for instance, presents Mādhva metaphysics by identifying the elementary "categories" (*padārtha*s) that Madhva seems to have accepted in his works, before defining them and the various sub-categories of being that belong to them. In his *Tattvasaṅkhyāna* and *Tattvaviveka*, Madhva himself presented his ontology in a hierarchical fashion more reminiscent of the approach of the Sāṅkhya school than the classical Vaiśeṣikas.[18] He begins by discussing god, before outlining the various classes of sentient beings who depend on god. He concludes by analysing the various insentient substances in the world and the different sorts of properties that belong to these substances.

The most inclusive ontological term that Madhva used is *tattva* ("reality"). "Reality" in this sense includes god himself, as well as the various conscious and unconscious beings that depend upon him. It also includes *negative* entities/"absences" (*abhāva*). Such "absences" should not be confused with impossible/fictional entities like the "son of a barren woman", which Mādhva philosophers usually designate as

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18 See Sarma (2003: 61–63) for an overview of the different Sāṅkhya categories that Madhva uses in these works.

"nonexistent" (*asat*). An "absence" is always the absence of something from some part of reality; for instance, one might speak of the "absence of an elephant" from the table I am writing on. For Mādhva philosophers, such absences constitute parts of the real world just as positive entities do. However, "reality" clearly does not include outright nonexistent things like "hares' horns" or "the sons of barren women" according to the Mādhvas. Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosophers also accept the category of absence and the Mādhva theory of absence was clearly influenced by their theories.

The remainder of dependent reality consists of "positive" beings. These positive beings can be divided into two types: conscious beings and unconscious beings. Madhva and his followers believe that the individual souls are eternal, sentient, and permanently distinct from one another. Each dependent conscious being has a definite place in a rigid hierarchy, beginning with Viṣṇu's spouse, the goddess Lakṣmī/Ramā, and ending with the wretched souls of demonic beings. This hierarchy is eternal and immutable. Of the souls who form part of dependent reality, only Lakṣmī is said to be permanently free from suffering. The remainder of conscious beings experience suffering at some point and to some degree in their journey through transmigratory existence (*saṃsāra*).

A distinctive Mādhva doctrine, which some have argued was influenced by Jaina or Ājīvika philosophy,[19] is that the inherent nature (*svabhāva*) of an individual soul determines its ultimate fate in reality. At several points in his works, Madhva says that there are three types of selves: gods, men, and demons. All gods are eligible for liberation and demons are condemned to hellish realms, but the situation with human beings is more complex. The most virtuous human souls are eligible for liberation, while those of middling character can look forward to an eternity of wandering in transmigratory existence. The most degenerate of the human souls will inevitably reach a kind of hell (what Madhva refers to as "the darkness").[20] The

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19 See Zydenbos (1991) for the argument that this aspect of Mādhva doctrine was influenced by Jaina thought. On the other hand, Basham (1981: 281–282) suggests that it is probable that the Ājīvikas influenced this aspect of Mādhva doctrine. According to Basham, Ājīvikas were still present in South India until the fourteenth century, and there is reason to believe that Ājīvika doctrines may have influenced not just the Mādhvas, but also the Pāñcarātrins.

20 For example, Madhva states in the *Tattvasaṅkyāna*—*duḥkhaspṛṣṭaṃ tadaspṛṣṭam iti dvedhaiva cetanam | nityāduḥkhā ramānye tu spṛṣṭaduḥkhāḥ samastaśaḥ || spṛṣṭaduḥkhā vimuktāś ca duḥkhasaṃsthā iti dvidhā | duḥkhasaṃsthā muktiyogyā ayogyā iti ca dvidhā || devarṣipitṛpanarā iti muktās tu pañcadhā | evaṃ vimuktiyogyāś ca tamogāḥ sṛtisaṃsthitāḥ || iti dvidhāmuktiyogyā daityarakṣaḥpiśācakāḥ | martyā iti caturdhaiva tamoyogyāḥ prakīrtitāḥ || te ca prāptāndhatamasaḥ sṛtisaṃsthā iti dvidhā |* (*Tattvasaṅkhyāna*, SMG5, 60–61.) "Conscious beings are of two sorts—those who are touched by suffering and those who are not. Ramā [(Lakṣmī)] is permanently free from suffering, but every other [conscious being] is touched [to some degree] by it. Those who are touched by suffering are of two sorts—those already liberated and those who remain in suffering. Those

idea that one's ultimate destiny is determined by factors that cannot be changed through individual action has led many to compare this aspect of Mādhva's theology with John Calvin's doctrine of predestination, although modern Mādhva philosophers have rejected these comparisons.[21]

Consistently with their view that the world is dependent upon god, the Mādhvas deny any true agency to the individual souls. David Buchta (2014) has already made a study of Madhva's conception of agency. Madhva and his followers stress that the individual souls possess only "dependent agency" (*parādhīnakartṛtva*). According to Madhva, this entails that god always causes the individual souls to undertake their various actions. God does not do this arbitrarily, however; he always takes into account the souls' volitions, past deeds, and individual ethical natures. All of these factors are, however, themselves dependent on god.[22]

3.4 Insentient beings

Besides the individual souls, Madhva and his followers also had a rich ontology of insentient beings. All souls are eternal according to the Mādhvas, but many insentient beings are not. In the *Tattvasaṅkhyāna*, Madhva divides up insentient beings

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who remain in suffering are [further] of two sorts—those who are elligible for liberation and those who are not. Now liberated [sentient beings] are of five sorts—gods, sages, ancestors, monarchs, and men; those elligible for liberation are also [of those five different sorts of beings]. Those who are *not* elligible for liberation are of two sorts—those destined for the dark regions, and those who are trapped [permanently] in transmigratory existence. Those who are destined for the dark regions are said to be of four different sorts—Daityas, Rākṣasas, Piśācas, and men. And [those who are destined for the dark regions] are [further] of two sorts—those who have [already] reached the great darkness and those who remain in transmigratory existence."

21 See Sharma (1986: 289–299) for a discussion of this Mādhva doctrine in relation to Calvinism. See also Buchta (2014) and Williams (2021) for discussions of this issue in the context of the Mādhva theory of agency and theodicy.

22 For instance, in his *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* (verse 2,3.42), Madhva attributes the following verses to the *Bhaviṣyatparvan*: *pūrvakarma prayatnaṃ ca saṃskāraṃ cāpy apekṣya tu | īśvaraḥ kārayet sarvaṃ tac ceśvarakṛtaṃ svayam || anāditvād adoṣaś ca pūrṇaśaktitvato hareḥ |* (*Brahmasūtrabhāṣya*, SMG1: 104.) "God would cause [an individual soul] to act only having taken into account (1) [that soul's] prior actions, *and* (2) [its] volition, *and* (3) [its] inherent nature (*saṃskāra*); and all of those things are caused by god himself. [However,] since there is no beginning to [the chain of actions belonging to the individual souls in *saṃsāra*], god is not at fault by virtue of being all-powerful." See Buchta (2014: 262–263) for a discussion of Madhva's comments on this part of the *Brahmasūtra*. I follow Buchta (2014: 263) in taking it that the term *saṃskāra* is understood by Madhva in this passage to mean *svabhāva*, that is, the inherent-nature or essence of the individual soul. The *Bhaviṣyatparvan* is a work not known outside of the Mādhva tradition.

primarily according to their temporal careers. He says that insentient entities can be divided into those that are (1) eternal, (2) non-eternal, and (3) those that are *both* eternal *and* noneternal. In the *Tattvasaṅkhyāna*, Madhva says that the eternal entities comprise the Vedas; Jayatīrtha adds that this category encompasses the syllables (*varṇa*s) of the Sanskrit language and also space.[23]

In the *Tattvasaṅkhyānaṭīkā*, Jayatīrtha explains that the category of beings that are "both-eternal-and-noneternal" includes "that which is not completely unchanging, but which is neither simply noneternal". According to Madhva and Jayatīrtha, time and material nature (*prakṛti*) are both examples of entities that are both-eternal-and-noneternal. Jayatīrtha explains that time qualifies for this category because, while time itself is eternal insofar as it has no origin and persists forever, its states (*avastha*) such as seconds, milliseconds, etc., are clearly impermanent. Unlike the Veda, the personal scriptures accepted by Madhva (the Purāṇas, the epics, and *dharmaśāstra* literature) are also both-eternal-and-noneternal. In the *Tattvasaṅkhyānaṭīkā*, Jayatīrtha explains that this is so because these texts are composed afresh in each world era, but their purport remains the same in each case.[24]

According to Madhva, material nature is the stuff from which the material universe is created by god. It is, in other words, the "material cause" from which all material effects are formed. Madhva says that material nature exists perpetually but the modifications/effects that are produced from it are noneternal. In the *Tattvasaṅkhyāna*, Madhva outlines a theistic Sāṅkhya-like cosmogony wherein Viṣṇu impels material nature to manifest itself and evolve into the material world. In the same text, he includes a list of twenty-four evolutes of *prakṛti*, including the *mahat*, *ahaṅkāra*, the *buddhi*, the *manas*, and so on, as well as the "primordial egg" (*hiraṇyagarbha*) from which the material universe unfolds.[25] These are all noneternal entities according to Madhva.[26]

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23 Unlike the Naiyāyikas, the Mādhvas accept that space (*deśa*) is actually a type of *ākāśa*, a term that is usually translated as "ether". The Mādhvas differentiate between two types of *ākāśa*. The one that is known as "space" (*deśa*) is the "unmanifested ether" (*avyākṛtākāśa*), which is eternal and non-produced. The second, the "manifest-ether" (*vyākṛta-/bhūta-ākāśa*), is an effect resulting from a transformation of matter that is created in every cosmic era. See Siauve (1968: 142) for a discussion of the Mādhva theory of space.

24 See above, fn. 8, for a translation of a relevant passage of Jayatīrtha's *Pramāṇapaddhati*.

25 See Sarma (2003: 60–63) for an overview of Madhva's account of the emanation of material nature. See also Sharma (1986: 234–236) and Siauve (1968: 124–125) for a discussion of Madhva's theories about cosmogony.

26 Madhva summarises the various divisions of dependent insentient entities as follows: *nityā vedāḥ purāṇādyāḥ kālaḥ prakṛtir eva ca || nityānityaṃ tridhā proktam anityaṃ dvividhaṃ matam*

Besides the conscious and unconscious substances mentioned above, the Mādhvas also accept that reality includes the various kinds of properties (*dharma*s) that are present in these substances. Like Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosophers, they accept that these properties include "qualities"/"tropes" (*guṇa*s)[27] such as contact, magnitude, numbers, and so on, as well as specifically mental tropes like cognition, pleasure, pain, and the like. Like Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosophers, the medieval manuals of Mādhva ontology also accept that motions (*karman, kriyā*) are a kind of property present in certain kinds of substance.

Madhva and his followers do accept that reality contains "natural kinds" (*jāti*s) in some sense of the term. However, their understanding of this type of property is very different from that of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosophers. As I will discuss in

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/ *asaṃsṛṣṭaṃ ca saṃsṛṣṭam asaṃsṛṣṭaṃ mahān aham* // *buddhir manaḥ khāni daśa mātrā bhūtāni pañca ca* / *saṃsṛṣṭam aṇḍam tadgaṃ ca samastaṃ samprakīrtitam* // (*Tattvasaṅkhyāna*, SMG5, 60–61.) "The Vedas are eternal. That which is both-eternal-and-noneternal is said to be threefold,[consisting of] the Purāṇas and [the other scriptures created by persons], along with time, as well as material nature. What is noneternal is thought to be of two sorts—that which is *not* completely generated (*asaṃsṛṣṭa*) and that which *is* completely generated (*saṃsṛṣṭa*). That which is *not* completely generated consists in the great principle (*mahat*), the ego (*ahaṅkāra*), the intellect (*buddhi*), the mind (*manas*), the ten faculties, and the five subtle/gross elements. That which *is* completely generated is the primordial egg and everything contained in it." Jayatīrtha comments: *yan na sarvathā kūṭasthaṃ, nāpy anityam eva, tad ucyate nityānityam. tasya tisro vidhāḥ sambhavanti— utpattimattve sati vināśābhāvaḥ; ekadeśa utpattivināśau, ekadeśinas tadabhāvaḥ; svarūpeṇotpattyādyabhāve 'py avasthāgamāpāyavattvaṃ ceti.* (*Tattvasaṅkhyānaṭīkā*, TS/TV: 211.) "That which is not *completely unchanging*, but which is neither simply *noneternal*, is called 'both-eternal-and-noneternal'. There can be three sorts of [both-eternal-and-noneternal things]—that which lacks an end while having a beginning; that which comes into being and comes to an end in one place, but which [neither comes into being nor comes to an end] in another place; and [that which], even though it by essence neither comes into being [nor comes to an end], has *states* (*avastha*) that 'come-and-go'." See also Sarma (2003: 60) for a discussion of this aspect of Madhva's philosophy.

27 The Sanskrit term *guṇa* is often translated as "quality". However, as Karl Potter (1954 and 1957: 13) has pointed out, this is potentially misleading, since the term "quality" is often used to refer to *repeatable* properties in Western philosophical literature, whereas *guṇa*s are decidedly not repeatable for the Naiyāyikas. Following Potter, I have translated the name of the second category, *guṇa*, as "trope" throughout this book. This translation reflects the use of the term in modern metaphysics to refer to "non-repeatable property particulars" (a particular shape, colour, weight, texture, etc.). For a recent discussion of the use of this term in "trope-theory" in Western philosophy, see Maurin (2023). There are of course issues with this translation. For instance, trope-theorists in Western philosophy tend to assume that tropes are classified together in thought and language because of their resemblance to one another. For the Naiyāyikas, by contrast, tropes such as "green" or "blue" are classified together because they share a universal (green-ness, blue-ness) which is singular yet instantiated in all of the those individuals. Nevertheless, for the reasons just outlined, the term "quality" is potentially more misleading, and I have deliberately used the more technical term "trope" to help clarify what *guṇa*s are for the reader.

Chapter 5, for Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosophers, natural kinds are very much like Aristotelian universals: they are eternal properties that are somehow multiply instantiated in different individuals. Mādhva philosophers, by contrast, deny that *jāti*s are repeatable/multiply instantiated (*anugata*) properties. They are rather non-repeatable properties that are unique to the individual they occur in. We tend to group real things together into classes because of the innate similarity (*sādṛśya*) these things possess to one another, and not because they somehow possess an identical property in each case.

A central problem for all Vedānta philosophers was how to explain the relationship between properties and their substances. This problem was especially significant to Mādhva philosophers because of its theological implications. The Mādhvas accept that god is a being of infinite positive qualities and they must therefore explain the relationship between god and his qualities. Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosophers accepted that the properties of a substance are entirely different from the substances in which they inhere. The Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsakas by contrast held that they are both different and non-different from their substrates, and Viśiṣṭādvaitin theologians argued that god's qualities are both different and non-different (*bhedābheda*) from him. Madhva adopted a different position about the relationship between properties and their substances from all of these traditions. He held that, depending on the type of property in question, properties are either identical with their substance, or both-different-and-non-different from it.

According to Jayatīrtha's interpretation of Madhva's words in the *Tattvaviveka*, Madhva divides properties into those that are coeval with their substance (*yāvad-dravya-bhāvin*s) and those that cease to exist before their substance does (*a-yāvad-dravya-bhāvin*s). Properties in dependent reality are sometimes coeval with their substances and sometimes not. God's attributes, on the other hand, are always eternal and coeval with him. Madhva seems to accept that non-coeval properties are both-different-and-non-different from their substances. He claims that coeval properties, on the other hand, are simply identical with their substances. In the *Tattvaviveka*, Madhva explains this distinction as follows:

> Properties (*dharma*s)—tropes, motions, natural kinds, and so on—are all identical with [their own] substances; they are of two sorts—those that are coeval with [their own] substance, and those that are destroyed [before their substance is]. The "destroyed" [kind of property] is both different from and identical with [its own substance]; coeval properties are not different [from their own substance].[28]

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28 *guṇakriyājātipūrvā dharmāḥ sarve 'pi vastunaḥ / rūpaṃ eva dvidhaṃ tac ca yāvadvastu ca khaṇḍitam // khaṇḍite bheda aikyaṃ ca yāvadvastu na bhedavat /* (*Tattvaviveka*, SMG5: 64.) I have

In his commentary on the *Tattvasaṅkhyāna*, Jayatīrtha expands on the Mādhva theory of properties as follows:

> Tropes (*guṇa*s) are colour and so on; motions are throwing upwards and so on; natural kinds are existence (*sattā*) and so on. The word "etc." (*pūrva*) [in this verse of the *Tattvasaṅkhyāna*] refers to [the other categories we, the Mādhvas, accept:] potentiality (*śakti*), similarity (*sādṛśya*), the qualified thing (*viśiṣṭa*), and so on. [The words] "of substance (*vastunaḥ*)" [in the verse] mean "of substance (*dravyasya*)". …
>
> Unlike positive beings and so on, which are completely different [from one another], tropes and [other properties] are not [completely different from their substances]. Rather, they are essentially identical with the substances that act as their own substrate. Hence [Madhva] does not mention [properties] separately [in the root text]. But when [tropes and other properties] are distinguished [from their substances] in thought, then a distinction can also be made [between the two]. …
>
> Certain tropes and [other properties] are coeval with [their own] substances, i.e. they exist for as long as [their] substance does. Other [tropes/properties] are "destroyed", i.e. they themselves cease to exist even though [their own] substance continues to exist. Thus are [properties] of two kinds.[29]

A problem with this position is that we seem to speak about such coeval properties as being distinct from their substances. For instance, we refer to the "equanimity (*samatva*) of god" or "god's equanimity", even though god and his property of being equnimous are, according to Madhva's analysis, identical with one another. We might also speak of substances and their properties by using "grammatical apposition" (*sāmānādhikaraṇya*); for instance, we might say that "god is equanimous" (*īśvaraḥ samaḥ*). However, if "god" and "equanimity" are, as Madhva claims, not different things, then would this not simply express a tautology like the statement, "A pot (*ghaṭaḥ*) is a pot (*kalaśaḥ*)"? The point is that we think and speak about even coeval properties in a way that suggests we are differentiating them to some degree from their substances. If, in reality, such coeval properties are completely identical with their substance, how are we to explain that fact? Madhva and his followers argued that we need to accept a further category of beings called "distinguish-

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translated this passage largely following the commentary of Jayatīrtha. See Mesquita (2016: 90–91) for a different interpretation of this passage.

29 *guṇā rūpādyāḥ, kriyotkṣepaṇādyāḥ, jātiḥ sattādyāḥ. pūrvapadena śaktisādṛśyaviśiṣṭādigrahaṇam. vastuno dravyasya. … yathā bhāvādayo 'tyantabhinnāḥ, na tathā guṇādayaḥ; api tu svāśrayadravyasvarūpabhūtā eva. ato na te pṛthak kathyante. yadā tu buddhyā vivicyante, tadā viveko 'pi kartavya iti. … kiṃ cid guṇādikaṃ yāvadvastu—yāvatkālaṃ dravyaṃ bhavati—tāvat tiṣṭhati. kiṃ cit khaṇḍitaṃ—saty api dravye svayaṃ naśyatīty evaṃ dvidham.* (*Tattvasaṅkhyānaṭīkā*, TS/TV: 302–304.)

ers"/"differentiators" (*viśeṣa*s) to account for the way in which we speak and think about such properties.

The category of *viśeṣa*s is clearly based to some extent on the category of the same name that was accepted by the classical Vaiśeṣikas, although it is philosophically distinct and serves quite a different purpose in Madhva's ontology. In Vaiśeṣika thought, *viśeṣa*s are a separate category of being which explain how otherwise identical atomic substances can be ontologically distinct from one another. According to Madhva and his followers, the *viśeṣa*s are a category of self-differentiating "distinguishers" which have the power to create the *appearance* of difference when there is none in reality. These *viśeṣa*s explain how we are able to distinguish god from his eternal attributes, even though in reality god and his attributes comprise a unity. The Mādhvas' *viśeṣa*s are self-differentiating. They are taken to be present in substances yet, unlike the Vaiśeṣikas' *viśeṣa*s, they do not require a further relation such as inherence to relate them to those substances.

In his *Mandāramañjarī* commentary on Jayatīrtha's *Upādhikhaṇḍanaṭīkā*, Vyāsatīrtha (UKh: 137) defines the *viśeṣa* as "that which causes [us] to speak of the difference [between things] when there is absolutely no difference [between them]" (*atyantābhede bhedavyavahāranirvāhakatvam*). He also gives the following definition of the *viśeṣa*—"being the cause of the fact that multiple words which denote things that are not different from one another are non-synonymous" (*a-bhinnārthābhidhāyyanekaśabdāparyāyatānirvāhaktvam*). The *viśeṣa*s thus explain why we employ grammatical apposition even in the case of coeval properties and their substances. Even though such properties are identical with those substances, the *viśeṣa*s make it possible for us to speak and think about them as being non-identical. In reality, the words "god" and "equanimity" refer to identical things; however, statements like "God is equanimous" do not appear as tautologies because the operation of the *viśeṣa*s allows us to distinguish in thought and speech between substances and their coeval qualities.[30]

3.5 Knowledge and the world in Mādhva Vedānta

Madhva articulated his own theory of knowledge in texts like the *Pramāṇalakṣaṇa* ("Definition of Knowledge/the Means of Knowledge"). As I discuss in Chapter 7, in the opening chapters of the *Nyāyāmṛta* Vyāsatīrtha often draws on Navya-Nyāya theories to help refute Ānandabodha's inferences. In the *Prathamamithyātvabhaṅga*,

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30 For a recent discussion of the concept of *viśeṣa*s in the Mādhva system in relation to the Vaiśeṣikas, Advaitins, and Viśiṣṭādvaitins, see Okita (2016: 94–100).

for instance, he uses specific arguments from Gaṅgeśa's work on the theory of inference to evaluate the Advaitins' claims. Nevertheless, Vyāsatīrtha frequently refers to distinctively Mādhva theories about knowledge throughout the *Nyāyāmṛta*. Some background in these theories is therefore needed to fully understand Vyāsatīrtha's defence of realism. For the remainder of this chapter, I will give an overview of the epistemological theory developed by Madhva and Jayatīrtha, focusing particularly on their theory of perception and how we can be certain that our judgments about the world are true.

Madhva and his followers hold that the conscious souls inhabiting the world can obtain knowledge (*pramā*) of the way the world really is through the valid instruments of knowledge (*pramāṇa*s). According to Jayatīrtha's interpretation of Madhva's epistemological works,[31] Madhva himself realised that there is an ambiguity in the term *pramāṇa*, which can be taken to refer both to the means that produce knowledge and to knowledge itself.[32] Jayatīrtha takes Madhva to have attempted to overcome this ambiguity by holding that there are two types of *pramāṇa*. The first is *kevala-pramāṇa*, which refers to a veridical cognitive episode generated by one of the means of knowledge, and the second is *anu-pramāṇa*, which refers specifically to the *means* that produce such episodes of knowledge. In the *Pamāṇalakṣaṇa*, Madhva seems to give a general definition applicable to both of these sub-types of *pramāṇa* as "what accords to its object" (*yathārthaṃ pramāṇam*). In his *Pamāṇalakṣaṇaṭīkā*, Jayatīrtha says that this means that a *pramāṇa* is something that "takes for its object the thing as it stands" (*yathāvasthitārthaviṣayīkārin*).

Indian philosophers generally tended to think of cognitions, rather than linguistic statements, as being "valid"/"invalid" or "true"/"false"; it is cognitions that are usually regarded as the bearers of validity/veridicality (*prāmāṇya*). Like the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas, Mādhva philosophers tend to think of "knowledge" as a sort of quality/trope (*guṇa*) which occurs under certain conditions in the individual selves. Like the Naiyāyikas, the Mādhvas define "validity" in terms of object-correspondence ("veridicality"). Our mental judgments are valid/veridical in case they correspond/accord to their object. Different Mādhva philosophers explained

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31 Zydenbos (1991) and Mesquita (2016: 30–31) have argued that the terms *kevala-pramāṇa* and *anu-pramāṇa* have a different sense in Madhva's philosophy. My interpretation of Madhva's theory here largely follows Jayatīrtha's analysis.

32 According to the analysis of Nagaraja Rao (1976: 14), the word *pramāṇa* is taken to be formed from the word *pramā* ("knowledge", "accurate conception") with the addition of the *lyuṭ* suffix (-*ana*). The suffix can be used without modifying the sense of the term, in which case *pramā* ("knowledge") and *pramāṇa* are synonymous. On the other hand, the suffix can yield the sense of an "instrument", in which case the word means "an instrument of knowledge", i.e. an instrument that produces knowledge.

the notion of correspondence differently. In the *Pramāṇapaddhati*, Jayatīrtha claims that "object-correspondence" (*yathā-arthatva*) simply means that the cognition in question does not "go beyond" (*an-ati-kram*) its object. Jayatīrtha's definition here partly reflects his theory of error, which states that a cognition is erroneous if it mistakenly identifies its object with some other individual.[33]

In his commentary on Jayatīrtha's *Upādhikhaṇḍanaṭīkā*, Vyāsatīrtha gives a slightly different analysis of this definition of knowledge. He argues that in the definition of knowledge as *yathārthaṃ jñānam*, the word *yathā* should be interpreted in the sense of "similarity" or "likeness" (*sādṛśya*). A true judgment, in other words, is one that is "similar to"/"like" its object. The obvious objection to this is that knowledge and its object are not necessarily anything like one another. Knowledge is, according to the Mādhvas, a trope/quality that is present in conscious subjects. My knowledge that there is a table in front of me therefore seems to be nothing like its object, the physical substance that is the table. Vyāsatīrtha anticipates this objection, but argues that knowledge and its object have the commonality of being "existent" (*sattā*). He argues that this excludes error from the definition, since in the case of error there is no such similarity between a cognition and its object. This is because, as I will discuss shortly, Jayatīrtha and Vyāsatīrtha both believe that the object of erroneous judgments (the "silver" we mistake mother-of-pearl for) can be entirely *nonexistent*.

The other sub-type of *pramāṇa*, the *anu-pramāṇa*s, are the instruments that lead reliably to veridical cognitions. (In practice, Madhva's followers, like other Indian philosophers, usually refer to these simply as the *pramāṇa*s.) All episodes of knowledge are produced by one of these means of knowledge. Jayatīrtha says that an *anu-pramāṇa* is something that grasps its object *indirectly* (*paramparayā*). In the *Pramāṇapaddhati* (PP: 5) he says that it is the "cause of object-corresponding cognition" (*yathārthajñānasādhanam*). All Mādhva philosophers accept that there

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33 *yathārthaṃ pramāṇam. … atra yathāśabdo 'natikrame vartate. arthaśabdaś cāryata iti vyut-pattyā jñeyavācī. jñeyam anatikramya vartamānaṃ yathāvasthitam eva jñeyam yad viṣayīkaroti, nānyathā, tat pramāṇam ity arthaḥ. jñeyaviṣayīkāritvaṃ ca sākṣād vā sākṣājjñeyaviṣayīkārisād-hanatvena vā vivakṣitam iti nānupramāṇeṣv avyāptiḥ.* (PP: 1–2) "*Pramāṇa* ('episode of knowledge'/'means of knowledge') is what accords to [its own] object. The word 'accords to' (*yathā*) is used in the sense of 'not going beyond'. The word 'object' (*artha*) refers to what can be known (*jñeya*) by the derivation, 'It is known' (*aryata iti*). That which, not going beyond the object of knowledge, takes for its object something that can be known exactly as that thing is, and not otherwise, is a *pramāṇa* ('episode of knowledge'/'means of knowledge'). And by 'the property of taking something that can be known for its object' is meant 'either directly or by virtue of being *the cause* of something that directly takes [some] knowable thing for its object'; hence [the definition] does not fail to apply to the means of knowledge [which do not *directly* take knowable things for their object]."

are three, and only three, means of knowledge: perception (*pratyakṣa*), inference (*anumāna*), and verbal testimony (*āgama*).

The other schools of Indian philosophy often accepted more or fewer means of knowledge. The Naiyāyikas accepted the existence of a fourth *pramāṇa*, "comparison" (*upamāna*), which accounts for how, in certain circumstances, we are able to spontaneously apply words to kinds of individuals we have never encountered before. The classical Vaiśeṣikas, on the other hand, argued that verbal testimony is actually a form of inference, and that only perception and inference should therefore be regarded as true *pramāṇa*s. The post-Śaṅkara Advaitins accepted, like the Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsakas, that there are six *pramāṇa*s: perception, inference, verbal testimony, comparison, circumstantial implication (*arthāpatti*), and non-perception (*abhāva*). In the *Pramāṇalakṣaṇa*(*ṭīkā*) and the *Pramāṇapaddhati*, Madhva and Jayatīrtha argued at length that all of these so-called *pramāṇa*s can be subsumed under either perception, inference, or testimony.

3.6 Perception

The nature of perception and what it tells us about the world lie at the heart of the debate between the Mādhvas and the Advaitins. Perception seems to reveal a world of discrete, mutually-differentiated objects and conscious subjects. As I will discuss in Chapter 5, Advaitin philosophers argued that this difference is illusory. They developed arguments to show that perception cannot really reveal difference to us, or that the difference it seems to reveal is merely "practical" or "transactional" and not ultimately real. An epistemological defence of perception is therefore vital to the Mādhva defence of realism, and Mādhva philosophers accord a special place to perception in their epistemology. Madhva and his followers defended a sort of empiricist theory of knowledge. For Mādhva philosophers, "seeing is believing"; in the *Nyāyāmṛta*, Vyāsatīrtha emphasises that perception is the primary means of knowledge, and that it is innately stronger than the other means of knowledge in case they seem to come into conflict with one another.

Madhva himself gave a very similar definition of perception to that found, for instance, in the *Nyāyasūtra*. According to *Nyāyasūtra* 1,1.4, perception must be a cognition that arises from the connection (*sannikarṣa*) of one of the sense-faculties with some object. In the *Pramāṇalakṣaṇa*, Madhva defined the means that produce perceptual knowledge as: "The connection of a flawless object with a flawless sense-faculty" (*nirdoṣārthendriyasannikarṣa*). Perceptual knowledge arises when one of the external sense-faculties is somehow connected with an object, provided that

both the faculty and the object it is connected to are not afflicted by some kind of fault.[34]

For Mādhva philosophers, perception is always "conceptual"; unlike the Advaitins and the Naiyāyikas, the Mādhvas refuse to accept the existence of "non-conceptual perception" (*nirvikalpakapratyakṣa*). According to the Naiyāyikas, non-conceptual perception is simply non-predicative cognition. As Jayatīrtha interprets the Nyāya theory in the *Pramāṇalakṣaṇaṭīkā*, perception happens in two stages. In the first stage we apprehend the mere essence of some thing (a substance, quality, or so on); an example would be the cognition "This is something-or-other". In conceptual cognition, on the other hand, we apprehend something as qualified by a name, a trope, a motion, a universal, or so on. An example of conceptual perception would be the judgment "the pale-skinned *brahmin* is walking", where we perceive that a particular substance has both a trope (the "light" colour trope) and a motion (walking). The first perception in this process is itself not perceptible according to the Naiyāyikas—we can only infer that it takes place. We reason, that is, that our *conceptual* perception of a substance as qualified by a trope, motion, etc., could not have occurred unless we had already had a perception of those properties beforehand.[35]

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34 My interpretation of Madhva's definition here is based on Jayatīrtha's explanation in the *Pramāṇalakṣaṇaṭīkā*. There, Jayatīrtha indicates that the term "flawless" (*nirdoṣa*) in Madhva's definition of perception is to be taken both with the term "object" (*artha*) and "sense-faculty" (*indriya*): *nirdoṣatvam arthendriyayor viśeṣaṇam. arthagrahaṇenākāśādīnāṃ cakṣurādisannikarṣavyudāsaḥ. atra tattadindriyaviṣayo 'rtha ucyate. tannirdoṣatvagrahaṇenātisāmīpyādidoṣayuktārthānām indriyasannikarṣanirāsaḥ. indriyagrahaṇenārthānām evānyonyasannikarṣanirāsaḥ. tannirdoṣatvagrahaṇaṃ mano 'nadhiṣṭhitatvādidoṣavadindriyāṇām arthasannikarṣavyāvṛttyartham.* (*Pramāṇalakṣaṇaṭīkā*, PL: 70.) "'Flawlessness' is a qualifier of both 'object' and 'sense-faculty' [in Madhva's definition of perception]. The term 'object' serves to preclude the contact of the visual-faculty with the ether and so on. In [this definition of perception] 'object' (*artha*) refers to the object (*viṣaya*) of one or the other of the sense-faculties. By stating that [the object must be] flawless, [Madhva] excludes [from the scope of the definition] cases where an object that has a flaw (e.g. being overly-proximate) comes into contact with a sense-faculty. The term 'sense-faculty' serves to exclude the contact of objects themselves with one another. [Madhva] specifies that [the sense-faculties too] must be 'flawless' in order to exclude cases where sense-faculties that have flaws such as 'not being present to the mind', for instance, come into contact with an object." So according to Jayatīrtha's gloss, the sense-faculties themselves can suffer from faults, as can the objects they come into contact with.

35 See Amit Chaturvedi (2020) for a recent treatment of Vyāsatīrtha's refutation of Gaṅgeśa's theory of *nirvikalapaka-pratyakṣa* in the *Tarkatāṇḍava*.

Unlike the Advaitins and the Naiyāyikas, the Mādhvas regard all perception as determinate.[36] In his commentary on the *Pramāṇalakṣaṇa*, Jayatīrtha argues against the Nyāya theory on ontological grounds. As we saw above, according to Jayatīrtha's interpretation of Madhva's ontological theory, properties like tropes, motions, etc., are not completely *different* from their substances as the Naiyāyikas assumed. While coeval properties are taken by the Mādhvas to be identical with their substances, they can be distinguished from those substances with the help of the "distinguishers" (*viśeṣa*s). So from the Mādhva point of view it is impossible to perceive the properties of a substance separately, as the Nyāya theory seems to require.

Like the Naiyāyikas, the Mādhvas accept that there are six material (*prākṛta*) sense-faculties which produce different sorts of perceptual knowledge. These are: the faculties of sight, sound, smell, touch, taste, and the internal faculty/"mind" (*manas*).[37] Under normal circumstances, these faculties operate to produce veridical judgments about the external world. The sense-faculties are, in other words, innately disposed to produce knowledge rather than error. Perceptual errors do occur of course, but they are the exceptions that prove the rule that our perceptual faculties present us with an accurate picture of the world.

36 *nirvikalpakasavikalpakabhedād dvividhaṃ pratyakṣam ity eke. yad dravyaguṇādisvarūpamātrā-vagāhi, na tu tadviśeṣaṇaviśeṣyabhāvaviṣayam, tan nirvikalpakam. yathā yat kiṃ cid etad iti jñā-nasādhanam. prāthamikam. sañjñāguṇakarmajātiviśiṣṭārthaviṣayaṃ savikalpakam; yathā śuklo brāhmaṇo gacchatīti. dvitīyam iti. nirvikalpakam eva pratyakṣam ity apare. tad etad ayuk-tam. guṇāder dravyeṇātyantabhedasya nirviśeṣābhedasya cābhāvena viśiṣṭabodhasyaiva sākṣisid-dhatvāt.* (*Pramāṇalakṣaṇaṭīkā*, PL: 144.) "Some [i.e. the Naiyāyikas] claim that perception is of two kinds, because of the difference between conceptual and non-conceptual [perception. They say that perception] that apprehends only the essence of a substance, quality, or so on, and does not have for its object the relationship of qualifier and qualificandum, is 'non-conceptual' [perception]; for instance, the cause of the judgment, 'This is something or other'. [Non-conceptual cognition] is primary. Conceptual [perception] has for its object something that is qualified by a name, a trope, a motion, or a natural kind; for instance, the cognition, 'The pale-skinned *brahmin* is walking'. [Conceptual perception] is secondary. Others [i.e. the Yogācāra Buddhists] opine that there is only non-conceptual perception. This is all wrong. For, [in our view as Mādhvas] tropes [and the other sorts of properties] are not completely different from [their own] substances, yet nor are they non-different [from their substances] without distinction (*viśeṣa*). Hence only the knowledge of the qualified thing (*viśiṣṭa*) is established by the witness [and there can be no perception of the bare particular substance]."

37 See PP: 159.

3.7 Perceptual error

According to the Advaitins perceptual illusions throw realism into question. Under analysis, claim the Advaitins, illusions are simply indeterminable; they frustrate our best attempts to explain them, and in doing so force us to abandon our deeply-held beliefs about "existence" and "nonexistence", ultimately throwing into question the ontological status of the empirical world itself. I will discuss the Advaitins' standpoint of "indeterminacy" (*anirvacanīyatā*) extensively in Chapter 4. By contrast to the Advaitins, the Mādhvas argue that perceptual errors are mundane and perfectly explicable events which only occur under exceptional circumstances. According to Jayatīrtha, error is simply the converse of knowledge. In the *Pramāṇapaddhati*, he defines error as: "the certainty [about some object] that it is contrary [to the way it really is]" (*viparītaniścayaḥ*). A cognition is said to be erroneous, in other words, when it grasps its object as being different to the way it is in reality.

For Jayatīrtha and Vyāsatīrtha, error involves the active misidentification of one individual with another, for example, when one believes that a piece of mother-of-pearl is silver, or that what is really a post further down the road is an approaching man. In the *Pramāṇapaddati*, Jayatīrtha recognises that, like veridical cognitions, erroneous cognitions might be produced by a variety of different means. He says that erroneous cognitions always arise from a "pseudo" means of knowledge (*pramāṇa-ābhāsa*). Just as veridical cognitions are produced by either perception, inference, or testimony, erroneous cognitions are produced by either *pseudo*-perception (*pratyakṣa-ābhāsa*), pseudo-inference, or pseudo-testimony.[38]

When I discuss error in this volume, I am usually concerned with what Jayatīrtha would call "pseudo-perception", that is, the causal antecedents that produce a perception-like erroneous cognition. These episodes have always been problematic for realist theories of knowledge. The central problem is that they show that cognitions that appear to be veridical perceptions can arise even when the conditions that produce veridical perceptions are (apparently) absent. This raises the prospect that all our cognitions can arise in the absence of an external object, and thus opens the door to nonrealist positions.

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38 *viparītaniścayo viparyayaḥ. viparīteti samyaṅniścayavyudāsaḥ. niścaya iti saṃśayajñānasya. sa ca pratyakṣānumānāgamābhāsebhyo jāyate. yathā śuktikāyām idaṃ rajatam ity ādi.* (PP: 79.) "Error is the certainty that [something] is contrary [to the way it really is. The word] 'contrary' (*viparīta*) [is inserted into this definition of error] to exclude *accurate* certainty; [the word] 'certainty' has the purpose [of excluding] doubtful cognition [from the scope of the definition]. And [error] is produced by pseudo-perception, pseudo-inference, and pseudo-testimony. An example [of error] is the judgment 'This is silver' [made] in respect of a piece of mother-of-pearl."

The realist schools of philosophy in India argued against Buddhist philosophers that perceptual illusions do not have the radical metaphysical implications that they were often taken to have. A proper analysis shows that the factors that produce illusions are not so different from those that produce veridical perceptions after all. The Naiyāyikas argued that error involves the active misidentification of one individual in reality with another, or the misattribution of a natural kind to an individual that really lacks it. In the *Nyāyasudhā*, Jayatīrtha attempted to show that Madhva's theory is a sort of revised version of the Nyāya explanation of illusion. There is one key difference between the two positions. In order to protect their realism, the Naiyāyikas attempted to show that the different components of the confusion that happens in error can be traced back to parts of the real world. Jayatīrtha and Vyāsatīrtha, by contrast, actually accept that the object of our illusions does not exist anywhere in reality. The "snake" we mistake a length of rope for in the darkness is *completely nonexistent*, although our cognition must occur somehow under the influence of earlier perceptions of snakes. This is one of the most distinctive Mādhva philosophical positions.

3.8 Knowing veridicality: the witness

According to Mādhva philosophers, validity/veridicality (*prāmāṇya*)—the fact of cognitions according to/being like their object—is a property that occurs in cognitions, which in turn belong to the individual souls. Indian philosophers had extensive debates about how we come to know that our cognitions are veridical or nonveridical. Mādhva philosophers believe that we *perceive* the veridicality of true cognitions, and that the faculty responsible for such perceptions is the very same faculty that perceives the bare cognitions themselves. This view situates them in broadly the same camp as the Advaitins and Pūrva-Mīmāṃsakas, who are taken to defend the theory that validity/veridicality is apprehended "intrinsically" (*svataḥprāmāṇyavāda*), although the Mādhva position is very different from these traditions' in crucial ways. Mādhva philosophers also believe that our sense-faculties are innately disposed to produce veridical cognitions. Our senses do not require the assistance of external "epistemic virtues" such as those theorised by the Sāṅkhyas and Naiyāyikas in order to produce veridical judgments.

In the *Pramāṇapaddhati*, Jayatīrtha gives the following succinct account of the Mādhva position:

> According to [our] teacher[, Madhva], a cognition qualified by veridicality is produced by merely the sense-faculties [in the case of perception, knowledge of the reason in the case of inference, and speech in the case of testimony. Contrary to the Sāṅkhyas] epistemic virtues

(*guṇa*s) [belonging to the means of knowledge] have nothing to do with [the production of veridical cognitions]. Nonveridicality is produced [in cognitions] by the sense-faculties[, knowledge of the reason, and speech] insofar as they are afflicted by [some kind of] flaw.

Likewise, both cognition and its veridicality are cognised by the witness alone. The witness apprehends only the essence of nonveridical cognition; the nonveridicality [of such cognitions], on the other hand, must be inferred.[39]

In the *Nyāyasudhā*, Jayatīrtha says that veridicality is grasped "intrinsically" because it is "grasped only by the thing that grasps the cognition [itself]" (*jñānagrāhakamātragrāhyam*).[40] As he indicates in the passage of the *Pramāṇapaddhati* translated above, the faculty that perceives both cognitions and their veridicality is the "witness" (*sākṣin*).[41] The witness is, according to Jayatīrtha, simply the essence of the knowing subject. Under normal circumstances, it perceives the veridicality of a cognition; it only fails to do so if it becomes aware of some factor that rules out that cognition's being veridical. Error, on the other hand, is only apprehended "extrinsically" (*parataḥ*), that is, by a means of knowledge other than the witness. For Jayatīrtha and Vyāsatīrtha, we come to know that a cognition is erroneous only through a process of rational reflection in which we evaluate the consistency of the erroneous judgment with our other beliefs.

In accepting that veridicality is apprehended "intrinsically", the Mādhvas therefore disagree sharply with the Naiyāyikas. According to the later Naiyāyikas, veridicality is apprehended extrinsically; that is, by something other than that which cognises the cognition possessing the veridicality itself. For the Naiyāyikas, we only come to know that a cognition is veridical through an inference that tests its consistency with our other experiences. In everyday life, the bias is towards belief; however, in important yet uncertain matters (e.g. the existence of god, the self, and so on), veridicality is not apprehended automatically. We need to engage in reasoning to come to believe that our judgments are veridical in these cases.

For Jayatīrtha and Vyāsatīrtha, to say that the veridicality of our cognitions is apprehended "intrinsically" is to say that it is apprehended by the witness, which also apprehends the bare cognition itself. In the *Tarkatāṇḍava*, Vyāsatīrtha gave several analytical accounts of what this entails. At the very beginning of the text,

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39 *indriyādimātreṇaiva prāmāṇyaviśiṣṭaṃ jñānam utpadyate. guṇās tv akiñcitkarāḥ. aprāmāṇyaṃ doṣasahakṛtendriyādibhir utpadyate. tathā jñānaṃ tatprāmāṇyaṃ ca sākṣiṇaiva jñāyate. apramāṇajñānasvarūpamātraṃ sākṣivedyam; tadaprāmāṇyaṃ tv anumeyam ity ācāryaḥ.* (PP: 546.)

40 NS, 7:218.

41 Mādhva authors adopt an approach similar to that of Citsukha, who regarded the *sākṣin* as being the essence of the individual self which apprehends internal states. See V. A. Sharma (1974: 38–39) for a discussion of Citsukha's treatment of the concept of the *sākṣin* in the *Tattvapradīpikā*.

he argues that for the purposes of debate the witness fulfills the same role as the Naiyāyika's faculty of apperception (*anuvyavasāya*). The witness is responsible for introspective awareness; it is the cogniser of cognitions. Vyāsatīrtha says that when the witness apprehends some cognition, it invariably apprehends the veridicality of the same cognition *provided that* none of the factors which would rule out the cognition's veridicality are present. A factor that could rule out the cognition's veridicality could be, for instance, a fault in the perceptual faculties or the presence in the internal faculty of some doubt about the truth of the cognition.[42]

Besides explaining how we can know that our judgments are veridical, the witness also has a number of other functions in Mādhva philosophy. In the *Pramāṇa-lakṣaṇaṭīkā*, Jayatīrtha explains that the witness is actually a sort of sense-faculty (*indriya*), but one that, unlike the other six, is identical with the knowing subject itself: it is the "essential faculty" (*svarūpendriya*). Why should the witness, the very essence of the self, be considered a faculty like the visual faculty and so on? In the *Pramāṇapaddhati*, Jayatīrtha says that the witness, like the six material sense-faculties, qualifies as an *anupramāṇa* (an instrument of valid knowledge) because it manifests (*abhivyanakti*) "essential knowledge", that is, knowledge of the self's own nature. Like the material sense-faculties, the witness is a factor in the production of knowledge because of its capacity to illuminate/manifest a certain type of knowledge.

According to Jayatīrtha and Vyāsatīrtha, the witness perceives internal states (knowledge, pleasure, pain, and so on). It can also perceive the sense-faculties themselves, which explains how it can perceive any faults that would rule out the veridicality of a cognition produced by them. Jayatīrtha and Vyāsatīrtha further accept that the witness can directly perceive at least certain external substances. They accept that it perceives bare time and space, as well as the invisible, sound-conducting substance known as "the ether". This puts the Mādhvas at odds with

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42 In the *Tarkatāṇḍava*, Vyāsatīrtha explains "veridicality" as follows: *yāthārthyarūpasya tattaj-jñānaprāmāṇyasya grāhyaprāmāṇyavirodhyupasthāpakasāmagryasamavahitagrāhyaprāmāṇyāś-rayatattajjñānaviṣayakasākṣijñānaviṣayatvanaiyatyaṃ svatastvam. tārkikābhimatānuvyavasāya evāsmākaṃ sākṣī.* (TT, 1:4–6.) "The 'intrinsicality' of the veridicality of some cognition—[which veridicality] is nothing more than [that cognition's] corresponding to [its] object (*yāthārthya*)—consists in [that veridicality's] being invariantly the object of the cognition of the witness, which has [also] the cognition that is the locus of the veridicality that is to be apprehended for its object, *provided that* the cognition of the witness is not associated with factors [a fault of some kind in the (putative) means of knowledge—doubt, etc.—]that indicate something that rules out the veridicality that is to be grasped [in that cognition]."

Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosophers who argued that we can only *infer* space, time, and the ether, but never perceive them directly.[43]

According to Mādhva philosophers, the witness is inerrant and incorrigible. The witness's perception is permanently free from faults, because it leads only to certainty and never to doubt. The perceptions of the witness, they argue, are always attended by a sense of certainty and are never sublated at a later point in time. In this respect, the witness differs from the six external sense-faculties, which on occasion err in respect of their object. Only *mānasapratyakṣa*, consisting in a modification of the inner-faculty (*antaḥkaraṇapariṇāma*), can be false or doubtful. When commenting on relevant passages of Madhva's *Anuvyākhyāna*, Jayatīrtha explains this position as follows:

> It is clear that there can be faults in the case of the perception of the inner-faculty; [yet] why is it that there can be no [faults] in the case of the perception of the witness? With this in mind, [in the following verse of the *Anuvyākhyāna*, Madhva] says—'Very firm' (*sudṛḍha*).
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> What is 'very firm' is what is never subject to sublation. Resolution is a mental judgment that is characterised by certainty. The particle 'where' (*yatra*) [in Madhva's verse] is used in the sense of 'that which …' (*yaḥ*).
>
> This is what [Madhva] has said [in this verse]—We postulate that a cognition has faults either because [we] observe that it waivers, or because it is undermined by a stronger, sublating [awareness]. As it is said—"… and it is only through a stronger means of knowledge that faults are to be known, and not otherwise". And the perception of the witness consists only in certainty, and is [never] sublated; this has been explained in the "pṛthagupadeśāt" *adhikaraṇa*[44]

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43 In the *Pramāṇapaddhati*, Jayatīrtha argues as follows: *indriyaśabdena jñānendriyaṃ gṛhyate. tad dvividham—pramātṛsvarūpaṃ prākṛtaṃ ceti. tatra svarūpendriyaṃ sākṣīty ucyate. tasya viṣayāḥ—ātmasvarūpam, taddharmāḥ, avidyā, manaḥ, tadvṛttayaḥ, bāhyendriyajñānasukhādyāḥ, kālaḥ, avyākṛtākāśaś cety ādyāḥ. sa ca svarūpajñānam abhivyanakti.* (PP: 156.) "By the word 'faculty' (*indriya*) is understood the *cognitive*-faculty [and not the faculty of *action* (*karmendriya*). The cognitive-faculty] is of two sorts—that which is the very essence of the knower (*pramātṛ*) and that which is derived from material nature (*prākṛta*). Of those [two], the faculty that constitutes the very essence [of the knower] is called the 'witness'. Its objects are the essence of the self; the properties [of the self]; nescience; the internal faculty (*manas*); the modifications [of the internal faculty]; the external faculties; [the self's internal states,] cognition, pleasure, and so on; time; the unmanifested ether; and others. And [the witness] makes manifest (*abhi-vyañj*) essential knowledge[; hence it qualifies as a 'means of knowledge']."

44 Jayatīrtha is here referring to an earlier section of the *Brahmasūtra* beginning with the *sūtra* "pṛthag upadeśāt" ("because of being mentioned separately"). This *sūtra* is number 2,3.27 according to Madhva's sequence of the *sūtra*s. The commentators on the *Nyāyasudhā* indicate that Jayatīrtha has in mind here some specific verses from Madhva's *Anuvyākhyāna*. See SMG1, 99–100 for the relevant portion of the *Anuvyākhyāna*.

[of the *Brahmasūtra*]. Therefore, since there is no reason to believe [it is subject to faults, the perception of the witness] cannot be subject to faults.[45]

In the same passage of the *Nyāyasudhā*, Jayatīrtha attempts to ground this stance about the witness in the apparent infallibility of our perceptions of our own internal states. While our external perceptions might sometimes deceive us, Mādhva philosophers assumed we can never be in error when we are perceiving our own internal conscious states such as pleasure, pain, desire, aversion, and so on. We can never believe erroneously that we are in pain or that we are currently feeling pleasure, for instance. These judgments, in other words, are infallible; we never find out later that we were in error about them, and they are never doubtful in character. The witness itself must therefore be responsible for perceiving such internal states:

> [Madhva] has said that there is never any doubt concerning something that is established by the witness. In order to bring this fact to experience, [he] first of all states the objects that are established by the witness [in the verse of the *Anuvyākhyāna* beginning with the word] "desire": "Desire, cognition, pleasure, pain, fear, the absence of fear, compassion, and so on are all established by the witness; for, nobody is in any doubt about them in any case". (*Anuvyākhyāna*, SMG1: 184; verse 3,4.143.)

> By the words "and so on" (*ādi*) [in this verse] are understood effort and aversion, as well as their absences. "So what?" doubts [Madhva] and responds—*"[For,] no [one] (na) ...*". There is never the doubt, "Do I feel pleasure, or not?"; nor is there the doubt, "Is the pleasure [I am experiencing] real, or not?"; this is the meaning of the word "for" (*hi*) [in this verse].[46]

Still, why should we accept that the witness is inerrant in all cases? Even if we concede that we can never be in doubt about our internal states, surely perceptual error itself shows us that the witness can be wrong in certain cases? In the same passage of the *Nyāyasudhā*, Jayatīrtha argues that we must conclude that all error consists in the perception of the inner-faculty (*mānasapratyakṣa*) rather than the perception

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45 *mānase darśane doṣāḥ sambhavantīti sphuṭam; sākṣidarśane na sambhavantīty etat kuta ity ata āha sudṛḍha iti—sudṛḍho nirṇayo yatra jñeyaṃ tat sākṣidarśanam // sudṛḍhaḥ kadāpi bādha-rahitaḥ. nirṇayo 'vadhāraṇātmakaḥ pratyayaḥ. yatreti nipāto ya ity arthe. idam uktaṃ bhavati—doṣās tāvaj jñānasya ḍolāyamānatādarśanena balavadbādhakopanipātena vā kalpyāḥ. yathoktam—balavatpramāṇataś caiva jñeyā doṣāḥ, na cānyathā. ... sākṣidarśanaṃ ca nirṇayātmakam eva bhavati, na ca bādhyata ity upapāditaṃ pṛthagadhikaraṇe. ataḥ pramāṇābhāvān na tatra doṣaḥ sambhavati.* (NS, 11:208.)

46 *sākṣisiddhe 'rthe saṃśayo nāstīty uktam; tadanubhavārūḍhaṃ kartuṃ sākṣisiddham arthaṃ tāvad āha—iccheti. icchā jñānaṃ sukhaṃ duḥkhaṃ bhayābhayakṛpādayaḥ / sākṣisiddhā na kaś cid dhi tatra saṃśayavān kva cit // ādipadena prayatnadveṣāv etadabhāvāś ca gṛhyante. tataḥ kim ity ata āha—neti. na jātu mama sukham asti, na veti saṃśayaḥ; nāpi pratīyamānam idaṃ sukhaṃ sat, asad veti saṃśaya iti hiśabdenārthaḥ.* (NS, 11:209.)

of the witness. This may sound *ad hoc*, but he argues that we need to accept this in order to explain how practical activity (*vyavahāra*) is possible at all. In order to engage in practical activity, Jayatīrtha reasons, we need to be certain about objects in the world around us, and, in order to have this certainty, we must be certain that our judgments about those objects are veridical:

> *Objection*: It is not possible that the perception of the witness is never sublated, because [we] observe that cognitions like the mother-of-pearl/silver [confusion] are sublated. For, no other cognition can occur at the same time that the [erroneous] cognition is taking place. With this objection in mind [Mādhva] says—"*That which* (*yad*) ...". "For, perception that deviates in some cases [from its object] is perception of the inner-faculty". (*Anuvyākhyāna*, SMG1: 184; verse 3,4.143.)

> That perception which sometimes deviates in respect of [its] object—in the case of the mother-of-pearl/silver [illusion], for instance—and which can be sublated must consist in a modification of the inner-faculty (*manas*), and it has the visual-faculty and so on for its cause. Why is this so? Because if [we] accept that the perception of the inner-faculty is sublatable, then nothing problematic follows. But if [we] accept that the [perception of] the *witness* is [sublatable], then, as has been said [earlier in this text], it would follow that all practical activity would be annulled.[47]

The witness is the faculty responsible for telling us whether our judgments are veridical or not. Therefore, if we were aware of just one instance where the witness was in error, we could have no confidence in it and thus in our ability to distinguish truth from error. Yet we can and do distinguish between veridical and non-veridical judgments in our everyday life, and we act successfully and with confidence on the basis of this. To explain this fact, we need to assume that erroneous awareness always belongs to the inner-faculty and postulate the inerrancy of the witness. If we dismiss the witness's inerrancy, then we dismiss with it the whole edifice of practical activity and religion, which is based on its ability to distinguish truth from falsity.[48]

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47 *sākṣidarśanam abādhitam eveti na yujyate, śuktirajatādau bādhadarśanāt. na hi pratīti-samayamātravartini tatrānyajñānaṃ sambhavatīty ata āha—yad iti.* yat kva cid vyabhicāri syād darśanaṃ mānasaṃ hi tat / *yad darśanaṃ kva cic chuktirajatādau viṣaye vyabhicāri bādhitaṃ syāt, cakṣurādikaraṇakaṃ manaḥpariṇatirūpam eva, na sākṣidarśanam. kuta etat? mānasadarśanasya bādhyatvāṅgīkāre 'niṣṭābhāvāt; sākṣiṇas tu tathātve sarvavyavahāravilopaprasaṅgasyoktatvāt.* (NS, 11:209–210.)

48 In the *Nyāyasudhā*, Jayatīrtha expands on his argument that the witness must be inerrant in order to explain the fact of practical activity as follows: *yadi sākṣī kva cid vyabhicaret, tadā tenāviś-vasanīyena karaṇadoṣādiniścayo na syāt. tadabhāve ca pratyayānāṃ bhramatvādi na niścīyeta; tathā ca vastunirṇayo na syāt; kāraṇābhāve kāryāyogād ity uktam. tatra mā bhūd etat sarvam iti cet, na; tathā sati hānopādānādisarvavyavahāravilopaprasaṅgāt. katham? sarvavyavahārāṇāṃ tatkāryatvāt* (NS, 8:603.) "If the witness erred in just one case, then it would not be trustworthy,

3.9 Conclusion

The fundamental question of the *Nyāyāmṛta* is the relationship of *brahman* to reality. In his benedictory verses to the text, Vyāsatīrtha claims that the world is an existent effect of god. The world may depend on god in various different ways, but this dependency does not imply that the world does not truly exist. As a dependent realm, the world is profoundly inferior to god, and scriptural texts often emphasise this inferiority to divine being. Yet the world enjoys exactly the same kind of "existence" that god does. The deep truth that scripture seeks to reveal to the sentient beings trapped in *saṃsāra* is not the unreality of this world, but the fact that it exists in a permanent state of existential dependence on god. A deep understanding of the nature of god has the power to move him to liberate conscious beings from bondage in transmigratory existence, but only if their immutable ethical natures warrant such a blessing.

As I will show in Chapter 5, Vyāsatīrtha uses the Mādhva theories of perception and knowledge outlined in this chapter to defend Mādhva theology against the inferences made by Advaitin philosophers to show that the world is a kind of illusion. The world that perception reveals to us—a pluralistic world of discrete conscious and unconscious entities—is ultimately real. Our perceptual faculties show us that this world is not some illusion which can be dispelled through an insight into a deeper level of reality. The witness—itself a kind of perceptual faculty—gives us certainty that the contents of our veridical perceptions will never be falsified, and thus rules out any possibility that the knowledge of our senses will be undermined by some future realisation of an underlying reality. Perceptual error does not open the door to anti-realist positions. On the contrary, perceptual illusions are easily explained, and only go to prove the rule that perception is a reliable source of knowledge of the world.

For Advaitin philosophers, by contrast, our perception of this pluralistic world of conscious and unconscious beings is simply a profound error which can be annulled by a deeper awareness of the reality of *brahman*. The world of mutually differentiated entities revealed to us by our senses, as well as the psycho-physical in-

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and we could no longer ascertain by means of it that there is a fault in [one of the] sense-faculties, for instance. And without such [certainty, we] could not be sure that our judgments are erroneous [or veridical], and so there could be no certainty about the object [of such judgments]; it is said that there cannot be the effect in the absence of the cause. *Objection*: Very well, do away with all of this [certainty, knowledge that our judgments are true/false, and the like]! *Reply*: This is untenable, because if that were so it would follow that all practical activity—to shun [things] or obtain [them]—would be [similarly] done away with. How? Because all practical activity is rooted in [certainty]."

dividuation of conscious beings itself, is merely an illusion caused by a mysterious force the Advaitins call, among other things, "nescience" (*avidyā*). For the Advaitins, the world is not a complete nonentity as certain Buddhists were taken to claim, yet the "reality" that perception reveals to us is very much provisional. The Upaniṣads have the power to dispel this world-illusion by showing that our imagined differentiation into distinct individuals is merely the result of a distortion of *brahman* by nescience. In the next chapter, I analyse Vyāsatīrtha's own exposition of the philosophy of the classical Advaitins that he devotes most of the *Nyāyāmṛta* to refuting.