Chapter 26
Situating Systems of Psychology Within the Traditional Indian and Modern Western Knowledge Systems

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Abstract This essay intends to identify critical features of approaches to psychological issues within the context of Indian and Western knowledge systems. The distinction between Vidyā and Avidyā in the Indian knowledge system and the difference between natural sciences versus human sciences provide the backdrop against which aspects of Yoga on the Indian side, and four prominent trends in contemporary (Western) psychology, namely radical behaviorism, mainstream of psychology, classical psychoanalysis, and humanistic/transpersonal, are examined within the contests of the Indian and Western knowledge systems. To help focus on specific issues that are common to both Indian and Western psychologies, William James's views of consciousness and self are chosen. Toward the end, a comparative perspective is suggested.

Keywords Vidyā · Avidyā · Self-as-subject and self-as-object · The fourth state of consciousness · Transcendence

The traditional Indian perspective on psychology is ensconced in a knowledge system explained in the crucial distinction between Vidyā and Avidyā which is different from the knowledge systems of the West. In this context, the present essay is aimed at locating traditional Indian and modern Western systems of psychology within their respective knowledge systems.

Knowledge systems have a long and rich history in both Indian and Western intellectual traditions. Normally, the issue concerning the nature of knowledge and criteria for the evaluation of truth claims is part of epistemology as a branch of philosophy in the Western tradition and is associated with *pramāṇa carcā*—discussion about epistemic principles—in the Indian tradition. Given the vast expanse of literature in this area of studies, it is neither possible nor necessary to deal with this entire field. When modern psychology originated in late nineteenth century, its two founders, William James and Wilhelm Wundt, both thought of consciousness as a topic of core concern. Both of them also considered introspection as the appropriate methodology for the

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study of the nature of consciousness. James recognized the close connection between consciousness and self and discussed the nature of self and identity with a focus on the subjective versus objective aspects of selfhood. Interestingly, consciousness and self have been core topics of psychology in the Indian tradition as well. As such, this essay is focused mainly on approaches to self and consciousness since it allows to make meaningful comparisons of the place of psychology in the Indian and Western systems of knowledge.

In this specific context, in the *first* section of this paper, I begin with a discussion of William James's view of the self and point out how the Jamesian distinction between self-as-subject and self-as-object and the unity of the self-as-subject have their close parallels in the Upaniṣadic tradition in India. In the *second* section, I discuss the distinction between Vidyā and Avidyā as two knowledge systems in the Indian tradition and examine select aspects of Patañjali's *Yoga Sūtras* in relation to these two systems. In the *third* section, I point out how, in the early decades of the twentieth century, introspection, long considered to be the royal road to the study of consciousness, was declared by Watson (1913) as null and void, and the direction modern psychology took in the study of consciousness and self. These developments are discussed in light of the two major knowledge systems, namely logical positivism of the Vienna Circle on the one hand, and Dilthey's division between the natural sciences (*Naturwissenschaft*) and the human sciences (*Geisteswissenschaft*) on the other. The implications of these knowledge systems for the approaches to the study of self and consciousness in relevant trends of modern psychology are pointed out. In the last section, the implications for Indian approaches for modern psychology are discussed.

I

Views of James and Wundt on the Nature of Consciousness and Self and Their Parallels in Indian Thought

It is well known that both Wundt and William James considered consciousness as a core topic for psychology. While Wundt initiated studies of consciousness using the method of introspection, James (1890/1983) wrote a chapter on introspection in his *Principles of psychology* expressing doubts about the viability of the method of introspection. His doubts in this regard followed Auguste Comte who had pointed out that the self cannot be divided between two parts such that one part continues to reason or think while the other part observes. Wundt's followers recognized that while the self cannot be divided into two parts, it was possible to have a present thought look back on a previous thought, thus substituting retrospection for introspection. As Boring (1953) points out in his account of the history of introspection, retrospection proved to be fraught with other serious problems such that the current observer thought was quickly replaced by another and another, thus leading to an

infinite regress. Besides, by the time an observer thought determined the nature of the thought that was observed, long period of time had elapsed creating a problem of memory, which was not too reliable. More specifically, as the books on the history of introspection repeatedly tell generations of students of psychology, Wundt's students in Germany could not agree with Titchener in the USA about the putative existence of "imageless" thoughts, and Watson declared that serious disagreements about the results of introspectionist studies proved that the method of introspection was null and void. Thus, the method of introspection, which was for long considered to be the royal road to approach consciousness, was abandoned by a majority of psychologists, thus ushering the rise of behaviorism. All this is patently known to students of modern psychology.

As we may note later in this essay, Patañjali also asked would-be yogis to turn their attention inward into the domain of consciousness, which is a maneuver similar to that of introspection. However, unlike the introspectionists, he did not aim at *observing* the contents of consciousness and *analyzing* the contents into the basic "elements" of which consciousness was composed. Instead, he asked the would-be yogis to *stop* the flow of thoughts in what James called the "stream of thought" and Patañjali's commentator Vyāsa called the "*citta nadī*" meaning mind-river. Thus, Yoga approached consciousness in a radically different way than that of the introspectionists and came to a radically different conclusion: that it is possible to effectively stop the flow of thoughts, and further that the true self is revealed in a higher state of consciousness called the Samādhi.

A brief comparison between two instances of Western and Indian perspectives of consciousness should indicate how the issues of consciousness and self are intimately connected. Interestingly, William James's analysis of the nature of the self in a hundred-page-long chapter makes a crucial distinction between the self-as-subject and self-as-object which happens to have close parallels in the Indian tradition as well. A crucial issue in this context is what James called the "I," or the self-as-subject, and the "Me" or the self-as-object. The Indian counterparts of these concepts are, respectively, *Ātman/Puruṣa* and *ahaṁkāra*. The latter involves the entire domain of the "mine": my body, family, language, community, country, property, social roles played, and even my thoughts and dreams. Except for the thoughts and dreams which the "I" alone can observe, the rest are observable not only by myself but by many others around the "Me." James made a simple but very important observation about the self-as-subject, which is that it involves the experience of "I" which maintains unity and sameness—or identity—from the cradle to the grave, while most everything in the domain of the self-as-object is both multiple and open to change from time to time. James elaborately discussed the problem of identity that is the unity and sameness of the "I" while examining and critiquing a number of great thinkers of the European period of Enlightenment: Descartes, Locke, Berkeley, Hume and Kant in particular. He came very close to accepting Kant's idea of the "transcendental" ego which remains beyond everything that is open to change: a thinker beyond all the thoughts that keep changing and populate the stream of consciousness. But in the end, he concluded that the current thought is the only thinker; there is nothing beyond.

All these concepts and issues have their counterparts in the Indian intellectual and spiritual traditions. We many now turn to the Indian side and see where these issues stand in the Indian knowledge traditions.

II

Vidyā and Avidyā: The Two Types of Knowledge in the Indian Tradition and Their Significance for Views of Self and Consciousness

The *Īśāvāsya* Upaniṣad (also called the *Īśa* Upaniṣad for short) makes a distinction between two types of knowledge: Vidyā, which is concerned with what remains unchanged in the world and in the person/self, while Avidyā deals with everything open to change, both within the person and in the universe at large. It insists that both types of knowledge are essential for human beings. A very short text of a mere 18 two-line stanzas, the *Īśāvāsya,* does not explain detail of what is involved. The *Muṇḍaka* Upaniṣad, however, adds clarification to the cryptic account of the *Īśa*. In essence, the *Muṇḍaka* considers what the *Īśa* calls *Vidyā* as transcendental knowledge (*parā Vidyā*) through which the unchanging is comprehended, and Avidyā as non-transcendental knowledge (*aparā Vidyā*). It further explains that "imperishable" which is grasped by Vidyā is an all-pervading, ungraspable, eternal, and exceedingly subtle principle which the Upaniṣads call the Brahman. In contrast, the domain of Avidyā includes all sciences (*śāstra*s) known to scholars in the ancient times, such as astronomy, grammar, phonetics, etymology, and so on even including the four Vedas. If, indeed, by definition, Avidyā includes all sciences known in those days, then it follows that Avidyā does *not* mean ignorance as the term Avidyā is sometimes (wrongly) translated. In effect, to put it in contemporary context, Avidyā includes the entire gamut of knowledge in the rational-empirical mode as in most modern sciences. Such an interpretation of the notion of Avidyā becomes clear if we take into consideration the views of the *Māṇḍūkya* Upaniṣad which deals with the views of consciousness.

The *Māṇḍūkya* identifies four distinct states of consciousness: the wakeful, dream, deep sleep, and a fourth state which is designated not by a name but by the number as the fourth state of consciousness. The *wakeful* state is described as having an outward-looking gaze and working with the help of the sensory and motor organs and is involved in the experience of pleasure or pain relating to objects in the environment. In the *dream* state, on the other hand, the gaze is directed inward, looking at imaginary objects that may appear pleasurable or fearful and so on. In contrast, in *deep sleep* devoid of dreams the metal apparatus is directed neither inward nor outward and the person tends to enjoy some sort of a bliss. The characterization of wakeful, dream, and deep sleep in terms of respectively outward-, inward-, and neither-directed gaze is clear and common-sense. However, the *Māṇḍūkya* offers an intriguing account

of the fourth state of consciousness. The fourth state, it says, is "not that which cognizes the internal (objects), not that which cognizes the external (objects)." It is further described as "unseen, incapable of being spoken of, ungraspable, without any distinctive marks, unthinkable, unnamable, the essence of the knowledge of one self, … the peaceful, the benign, the non-dual" (translation by Radhakrishnan, 1953/1994, p. 698).

What this enigmatic description suggests is that there is a state of consciousness in which the gaze is directed neither inward as in dream nor outward as in the wakeful state. In that respect, it is like deep sleep. However, the fourth state is said to be radically different from sleep in that, most importantly, it reveals the "one self" and is benign. More specifically, it is called non-dual meaning that it lacks the subject-object duality. It must be noted in this context that rational-empirical knowledge is not possible without an essential duality between a knower on the one hand and objects of knowledge on the other. In other words, rational-empirical knowledge always happens in what Brentano (1874/1974) called "intentionality" where consciousness is always directed toward objects of thought or knowledge. The "one self" in this context implies that it transcends the continually changing thoughts and the implicit self-definitions ("I think…") associated with each thought. To put it in light of William James's language, the fourth state reveals the self-as-subject that accounts for the principle of unity underlying the multiple and continually changing thoughts and perceptions of the self. In the Upaniṣadic tradition, the Self-revealing character of the fourth state of consciousness is greatly valorized. In contrast, by and large in the Western tradition, the ungraspable and indescribable nature of such a state of consciousness is dubbed as "mystical" and is mostly banned from not only science but also from psychology and even philosophy. Also, in the West, followers of Brentano have insisted that consciousness is *always* intentional, thus denying the possibility of non-intentional and non-dual states of consciousness. In sharp contrast, in the Upaniṣadic tradition, states of consciousness such as the fourth are considered not only attainable but are also thought to lead to magnificent existential benefits such as persistent bliss and freedom from suffering. Yoga is a generic term that refers to many different techniques designed to help attain such a hallowed state. The technique described by Patañjali in his *Yoga Sūtras* has been traditionally thought of as the quintessence of the Indian approach to applied psychology designed to attain states of Samādhi similar to the fourth state described by the *Māṇḍūkya* Upaniṣad. What Patañjali's Yoga offers is a way of attaining *Vidyā*, or more specifically *parā Vidyā*, through the direct experience of the transcendental self-as-subject. As such, Patañjali's approach deserves a brief account.

Patañjali's Yoga

In his text called the *Yoga Sūtras* (for an English translation see Larson, 2018), Patañjali explains an eightfold path to the attainment of Samādhi, which involves a series of increasingly higher states of consciousness that culminates in a state of

consciousness comparable to the fourth state of consciousness. As is widely known, the eight "limbs" of Patañjali's Yoga are:

(1) *Yama*: a set of behavioral *restraints* which require a practitioner to avoid violence, falsehood, theft, incontinence, and avarice,
(2) *Niyama*: a set of *observances* that ask a practitioner to observe cleanliness, contentment, ascetic self-control, self-study, and surrendering the fruit actions to Lord God,
(3) *Āsana*: a steady and comfortable *posture*,
(4) *Prāṇāyāma*: *breath control*,
(5) *Pratyāhāra: withdrawing of attention* from objects of the senses,
(6) *Dhārṇā*: *restricting the range of attention* or concentration,
(7) *Dhyāna*: *sustaining attention* for a length of time, or contemplation, and
(8) *Samādhi*: a graded series of increasingly *higher states of consciousness.*

For the present purpose, it is not necessary to describe all these "limbs" which involve a complex and integrally related whole of complex procedures. The term "limb," which is a translation of the Sanskrit word "*aṅga,*" implies that these eight are not mere aspects or steps to be taken in a sequence, but rather integral parts of a whole like the interdependent limbs of a body. As can be easily seen, the first "limb" involves a set or ethical guidelines that *proscribe* undesirable behaviors such as violence, falsehood, avarice, and so on, while the second "limb" involves a set of *prescribed* behaviors such as cleanliness, contentment and so on. (We shall soon return to the set of prescribed behaviors.) The next two "limbs" involve postures and breath control, which are physical aspect of the practice of Yoga that have become popular around the world and are known for their benefits for health, fitness and well-being. The fifth "limb" involves turning attention inward, which is a basic maneuver and a starting point leading to the subsequent steps of slowing down and controlling the flow of thoughts in the mind toward a complete stop. For our purpose, it is not necessary to describe the entire eightfold path; there are numerous books that provide elaborate accounts of the entire program. To keep the discussion simple, it would be adequate to describe in some detail *Kriyā Yoga* which is a set of introductory practices that are expected to lead to the core of yogic practices leading to the transformation of ordinary consciousness into successive states of higher consciousness or Samādhi.

Kriyā Yoga

In the second chapter of the *Yoga Sūtras,* Patañjali describes *Kriyā Yoga* as a procedure that involves the last three of the set of five observances noted above, namely ascetic self-control, self-study, and surrendering the fruit actions to Lord God (*Īśvara*). The ascetic self-control essentially involves self-imposed restrictions on such things as time, frequency, quantity, or type of food consumed in a scheduled manner. Another aspect of ascetic self-control involves sustaining for predetermined time unpleasant experiences such as remaining hungry or facing cold and so on. Such self-imposed restraints are common aspect of a variety of religious rituals, such as avoiding meat

or going without food on specific days of the week common among Hindus or avoiding food for entire days of the month of Ramadan among the Muslims. Here, the basic idea is to voluntarily forgo something that one normally finds pleasurable and do this is a sustained way so as to develop self-control on one's behavior. The next part of the three parts of *Kriyā Yoga* involves self-study. What this means is not the same as an academic exercise in description and systematic analysis of the various self-definitions that constitute empirical studies of "self-concept" in contemporary psychology (see Leary & Tangney, 2012 for examples). Rather, it means a serious and sustained, and deeply personal examination of one's own sense of selfhood and personal/social identity. Patañjali and his commentators explain that reading the literature on the various spiritual practices is a good way to engage in self-study. An example of such a spiritual exercise is the one we find in the literature on *Jñāna Yoga* described in the Advaita Vedānta tradition in which one is asked to critically examine what is it in the varied and continually changing self-definitions that remains unchanged (*nitya-anitya viveka*). Such examination is expected to lead to a "deconstruction," so to speak, of the various ways in which one understands who one is so that one arrives at the conclusion that it is only pure, contentless consciousness which allows a person to cognitively construct and reconstruct varied self-definitions—like writing, erasing, and rewriting text on a "magic writing pad" which keeps itself endlessly empty of content through endless cycles of writing and erasure (see Paranjpe, 1998, for an account of such process of cognitive deconstruction in meditation as described in the system of the Advaita Vedānta.)

The self-study as part of *Kriyā Yoga* is essentially a contemplative practice associated with the *Jñāna mārga*, or the spiritual path of knowledge, as distinguished from the concentrative meditation which is at the core of Patañjali's Yoga in the three "limbs" of Dhārṇā, Dhyāna and Samādhi. Dasgupta (1920/2001, pp. 125–126) clearly indicates that a spiritual aspirant who successfully practices *Kriyā Yoga* as described by Patañjali can go straight onto the practice of Jñāna Yoga. Indeed, there is no compartmentalization of the various yogas; there are no separate self-contained silos in which the paths of knowledge (*Jñāna*), devotion (*Bhakti*), or action (*Karma*) are neatly sequestered. Indeed, the third component of *Kriyā Yoga*, namely surrendering fruits of action to Lord God, combines essential features of Bhakti Yoga and Karma Yoga. Plurality of pathways leading to the common goal of the experiential realization of the transcendental self is a distinctive feature of the Indian spiritual traditions.

The selective account of contemplative approach to psychology is expected to serve as an illustration of a distinctive Indian approach to the attainment of *parā Vidyā* or transcendental knowledge through the experience of self in a higher state of consciousness. With this, we may now turn to an examination of major trends in modern psychology so that we can place the Indian/Upaniṣadic approach to psychology in a comparative context.

III

Natural Science and Human Sciences in Modern Western Systems of Knowledge and Systems of Psychology in Their Context

In the long and rich intellectual Western tradition through millennia from ancient Greece through modern Europe, there have been different approaches to knowledge such as rationalism, empiricism, positivism, and so on. During the medieval times in Europe when Christianity dominated, there was a long-lasting debate between faith versus reason as means to knowledge. Although this background remains relevant today, it would be particularly relevant to focus on knowledge systems that evolved around the same time as the founding of modern psychology around 1875 with Wundt in Germany and William James in the USA. As is well known, the roots of modern psychology are primarily traced to the development in biology and physiology from the middle of the nineteenth century. Wund's pioneering use of experimental methods in psychology was a reflection of the significant developments in the natural sciences. Similarly, James's *Principles* indicate the influence of developments in physiology when he discusses the nature of mental functions in relation to brain functions. It is during these early years of the development of modern psychology that Dilthey (1883/1989) identified two distinct knowledge systems: the natural sciences on the one hand (*Naturwissenschaft*) and the human sciences (G*eisteswissenschaft*) on the other. In Dilthey's view, the core of the human sciences is understanding (*verstehen* in German) of meanings conveyed through language, which are open to *interpretation.* The natural sciences, on the other hand, try to rule out alternative interpretations of claims to truth by sticking most closely to causal analysis through experimental methods.

Without doubt, the natural science approach dominates psychology since the behaviorist revolution explicitly followed the natural sciences, and logical positivism further promoted physics as the ideal for the search for knowledge in all fields. As Jerome Bruner points out in *Acts of meaning* (1990), when he joined George Miller and other colleagues to start the "Cognitive Revolution" in the 1950s and 60s, its explicit purpose was to focus on meaning making following the human sciences. However, as he laments, "very soon, computing became the model of the mind, and in place of the concept of meaning, there emerged the concept of computability" (p. 6). Cognitive science, which soon eclipsed cognitive revolution's original thrust of studying meaning making following interpretative social sciences, machine learning became the way to study human minds. It is beyond the scope of the present essay to discuss the dominance of natural sciences as reflected in the influence of cognitive science. However, it would be useful to focus on the following main trends in contemporary psychology—radical behaviorism of Skinner, the so-called mainstream of psychology, psychoanalysis, and humanistic/transpersonal psychology—and examine how these trends stand in relation to the natural and human sciences.

As we proceed with such an examination, we may also try to note where Yoga psychology stands in the context of these trends.

Radical Behaviorism of B. F. Skinner

Skinner's radical behaviorism is arguably the most closely aligned with the natural sciences than even the mainstream. As pointed out in detail by Smith (1986), Skinner's views developed in tandem with the views of logical behaviorism of the Vienna Circle of philosophers. Interestingly, one of the books published by Watson (1913), the founder of behaviorism, was favorably reviewed by the British philosopher Bertrand Russell, and the philosophers of the Vienna Circle were introduced to, and influenced by, behaviorism via Russel's praise of Watson. One of the members of the Vienna Circle, Rudolph Carnap became Skinner's colleague at Harvard, and as Smith notes, Skinner's ideas developed in tandem with those of Carnap's logical positivist philosophy. What is important to note in this context is that logical positivism developed in Austria around the 1920s and the 1930s at a time when Einstein's theory of relativity and quantum physics had made great strides, and physics had become greatly influential. Under these circumstances, the logical positivists considered physics as the ultimate form of the pursuit for knowledge such that even philosophy had to be modeled after physics.

The main principles of logical positivism are fairly straight forward (see Passmore, 1967 for a concise introduction to positivism): physicalism (mainly the idea that the ultimate reality is matter in motion), empiricism (that observation is the only source of knowledge), and "value-free" science (the idea that "ought" statements are not empirically verifiable and hence meaningless). That Skinner essentially followed these principles should be easy to see (for a detailed discussion, see Paranjpe, 2019). Skinner's allegiance to physicalism is indicated by the fact that, against the backdrop of Descates's division of reality between matter and mind, Skinner uses the word "mentalism" in a most pejorative way so that, having rejected the mind, what remains is matter. Skinner is clearly most committed to empiricism. Having followed Watson in rejecting introspection, he not only rejects the so-called self putatively residing somewhere inside the mind, he explicitly claims that his is the psychology of the "other-one." In other words, one can study psychology only by observing others, or rather by watching the movement of bodies in space and listening to sounds they emit. For Skinner, speech is only "verbal behavior" and words and sentences mainly sound waves that influence or reinforce behaviors; the meanings are thus basically irrelevant. Such a view of speech and language makes the "interpretive" human sciences irrelevant to radical behaviorism and throw it squarely in the camp of the natural sciences.

Given Skinner's dismissal of the self, and his insistence on environmental rather than self-initiated control of behavior, radical behaviorism is virtually opposite to Yoga psychology.

The "Mainstream" of Contemporary Psychology

It is well recognized that the mainstream of contemporary psychology is a mélange of a wide variety of approaches such that it lacks a single united Kuhnian "paradigm" that "mature" natural sciences like physics, chemistry, and biology are supposed to have. Nevertheless, in recent years, Toomela (2014) has articulated specific themes which together define the worldview of the mainstream of contemporary psychology. The following is a list of themes based on Toomela's entry in the *Encyclopedia of Critical Psychology* with few additions: (i) Commitment to the idea of "science," (ii) humans viewed within a Darwinian biological perspective, (iii) empiricism, (iv) emphasis on "methodology" and measurement, (v) fragmentation of the human being and resulting fragmentation of the field, (vi) the study of individual differences, (vii) atomism, the concept of "variables," and use of statistics; (viii) brain as the seat of mind and reductive materialism, and (ix) disdainful attitude toward religion (which I am adding to their list due to its relevance for the present work).

Although such characterization of the mainstream may be arguable, it should be clear that a great emphasis on methodology, especially on measurement and on hypothesis testing through statistical analysis of data, is an inescapable feature of the mainstream of psychology. This and most other features are borrowed from the natural science approach. It is commonplace that the key issue in starting of research in the process of training at either undergraduate or postgraduate level is the availability of a method or a measuring instrument preferably appearing in relatively recent papers in some journal of the American Psychological Association. Against this background, the interpretive approach aligned with the human sciences is not totally absent (Messer et al., 1990), but it is marginalized. The primary methodology of the human sciences called "hermeneutics," which deals with methods of interpretation derived from the tradition of the interpretation of scriptural texts, is rarely heard in gatherings of psychologists of the mainstream.

Psychoanalysis

Psychoanalysis holds no commanding place in the mainstream of contemporary psychology. Freud's pioneering work has led to a proliferation of varied subschools of psychoanalysis from Adler and Jung through Melanie Klein, Anna Freud and her followers in ego-psychoanalytic theory, Kohut, Winnicott, Lacan, and dozens of others. But they have all flourished in the work of clinical practitioners outside of the mainstream of academic psychology. Here, in an attempt to place psychoanalysis in the context of knowledge systems such as natural science versus human science perspectives, we may focus only on select features of Freud's "classical" approach to psychoanalysis.

No doubt Freud started with a natural science approach coming from his training in physiology, especially in Ernst Brücke's laboratory. Brücke was a classmate of Hermann von Helmholtz, and along with two of their fellow graduate students Brücke had signed in his blood a "pact" which said that no forces other than physical or

chemical manifest in human bodies. This background indicates Freud's closeness to "hardcore" natural sciences. In *Project for ascientific psychology*, a work he communicated to his friend Fleiss but never published for whatever reasons (it was posthumously published in 1950), Freud tried to explain his entire set of concepts in terms of neural structure and functions. Notwithstanding such grounding in the natural sciences, Freud turned to the interpretive approach of the human sciences. This turn is clearly manifest in his *Interpretation of dreams* (Standard Edition, Vols. IV and V). In the second chapter of this book, Freud (1900/1953) explains the concept of symbol, saying that when an object cannot for some reason be represented by its image (perhaps due to the censorship exercised by the ego or superego finds such expression unwelcome), the object is represented by a different image. Such substitute images are *symbols*; they are images that stand for something different from the correct image. In other words, the symbols convey a different, hidden, meanings and thereby require a process of interpretation that would reveal the true meaning. Thus, in his work on dreams, Freud clearly took an interpretive turn to human sciences.

Freud extended the scope of interpretation beyond dreams to help make sense of pathological reactions where a distortion of meaning is involved, and correct interpretation of hidden meaning is needed. A good example is the way Freud solved the case of Little Hans's phobia for horses (For a detailed discussion of this case and its symbolism, see Brown, 1965). A careful and detailed inquiry into the events in the boy's childhood indicated that his father used to play with Hans carrying Hans on his back like riding a horse. Moreover, the father wore dark classes which made him appear like wearing a horse's blinders. In reality, the boy was afraid of his disciplining father who wanted Hans to stop playing with his genitals, but Hans could not consciously acknowledge the fear for his father and his feelings were repressed. Due to the similarity between father's dark glasses and the blinders usually placed on horses—which were common sight on the streets in those days—the fear of father was projected to a substitute object, the horses. According to the famous case history of Little Hans, we are told that the interpretive insight that discovered the true source of the phobia led to the cure of the boy's phobia; Hans no longer was afraid of horses.

To put it simply, Freud's approach involved both systems of knowledge that prevailed in the Western tradition. While his neuronal model in the *Project* followed the natural science model, his approach to dreams and to some forms of pathology clearly followed the human science approach. Lesche (1985) has pointed out how Freud's interpretive approach broadly fits within Dilthey's view of the use of hermeneutic approach of meaning making that originated from the tradition of exegesis, i.e., the methodology developed for interpreting the correct meaning of scriptural texts. Thus, in psychoanalysis, a case history serves as a text, and therapeutic exercise basically involves hermeneutic principles for meaning making. In his book titled *Sigmund Freud and the Jewish mystical tradition*, Bakan (1958/1975) has traced Freud's turn to interpretive science to his Jewish background. According to Bakan, Freud's approach to the interpretation of dreams and case histories is fashioned after the mystical tradition of the Kabbala in which the scriptural text of the Torah had to be understood in light of the symbolic meanings hidden behind the literal meanings of its words. Notwithstanding his disdain, and even denigration, of

religion as responsible for the discontents of the entire human civilization, Freud not only considered himself a Jew but also had deep knowledge of the mystical traditions of Judaism. Bakan has painstakingly shown how psychoanalysis is a product of a religious intellectual tradition even as he was a product of the tradition of the natural sciences.

Humanistic and Transpersonal Psychologies

As is well known, humanistic psychology arose in the USA as a "Third Force" intended to be an alternative to two powerful "forces" in modern psychology, namely psychoanalysis and behaviorism. Without going into the details, a few major ways in which humanistic psychology differed from both psychoanalysis and behaviorism may be pointed in broad strokes. Rogers (1951) developed a "client-centered" approach to therapy which rejected the behaviorist, and particularly the radical behaviorist approach which placed the therapist in the position of power, essentially denying the client's power to self-direct. Also, in contrast to the psychoanalyst view of the ego as a puppet under the influence of the id, Rogers as well as Abraham Maslow viewed human behavior as directed by the urge for self-actualization. While psychoanalysis emphasized redressal of pathology as the primary role of the therapist, humanistic mode of therapy aimed at facilitating the positive aspects of human development. Thus, while Rogers aimed at the ideal of a "fully functioning person," Maslow set his eyes on the "farther reaches of the human nature." Humanistic psychologists were generally not fascinated by the natural science approach to the study of human nature nor were they aligned specifically hermeneutics or other methodologies of the human sciences. They seriously tried to find a different way to approach psychology, calling it a "Third Force."

There is one specific aspect of Maslow's work that is of particular significance for the current study since it is aligned with certain core themes of the Indian approaches to psychology. Maslow (1964/1970) is known for popularizing the concept of "peak experiences" that are similar to higher states of mystical experiences in being highly positive and fulfilling. As Koltko-Rivera (2006) has pointed out in detail, Malsow (1969) amended his earlier model of personality development, placing self-transcendence as a motivational step beyond self-actualization. With the initiative of Maslow and his colleagues in the field of humanistic psychology, transpersonal psychology arose as another field of Western psychology. Psychologists in this field of studies have become closely aligned with interests and insights of Indian and other Asian approaches to psychology expressing close interest in higher states of consciousness and the notion of self-transcendence, i.e., reaching a state of existence beyond the confines and dictates of the ego or the sphere of the "me" and the "mine."

IV

Discussion

The field of traditional psychology as well as that of modern psychology is greatly rich as well as highly diverse. In a short paper aimed at indicating the place of contemplative psychologies of the Indian tradition in the knowledge traditions of India and the West, the scope of discussion had to be considerably narrowed. The non-Vedic traditions of Buddhism, Jainism, were set aside regardless of their deep insights and the increasing popularity of Buddhist technique of mindful meditation. As well, an account of modern psychology had to be narrowed down to brief sketches of some distinctive features of a few prominent trends to the neglect of a myriad of innovative approaches that are further enriching not only modern psychology but also the Indian traditions that continue to be alive and well. Given all these limitations, major—and rather obvious—points of comparison and contrast may be noted. Again, as noted at the starting section of this essay, the themes of self and consciousness and the method of introspection were on the agendas of Wundt and James, the founding fathers of modern psychology. Since these are also the central topics of Indian approaches such as Yoga and Advaita Vedānta, they can serve as focal points for a meaningful cross-cultural comparison.

At the outset, some obvious points of contrast may be noted. In the Indian tradition, spiritual uplift has been the guiding principle of psychology in Yoga and Advaita and their pursuits have been connected with the practices of Hinduism although partisans on either side try to pull them apart now and then. Thus, the concentrative meditation of Patañjali's Yoga, called the *Dhyāna Yoga*, as well the *Jñāna Yoga* (the path of knowledge) have found a place in the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, which is recognized as a popular scripture of Hinduism. As noted, the *Kriyā Yoga* prescribed by Patañjali explicitly speaks of surrendering the fruits of action to God (*Īśvara*). Against this background, the disdain for religion, which is a pervasive feature of modern psychology, stands in sharp contrast. As academic institutes in India have been aligned since colonial times with secular science, attempts to introduce contemplative approaches of Yoga and Advaita into college and university curricula can expect problems arising from the taint of their religious backgrounds.

As regards the concept of self, radical behaviorist view is clear cut. Skinner firmly denies that there is such a thing as the self. It is not simply that the self is not an object that is open to observation. What he is more clearly against is that self is not an agent that is free to initiate action. But then what about the scientist who could initiate some—hopefully desired and planned—actions? In Skinner's view, the behavior of the scientist is also governed by the genetic factors and environmental forces. While this conceptual maneuver ensures internal consistency of his model, one wonders how Skinner, qua scientist, could ensure that his interventions truly translate the values such as peace and freedom from conflict which he espouses in the preface of his utopian novel *Waldon Two* (1948/1969). At any rate, Skinner's (1971) view that environment totally determines behavior (which he put forth in his book *Beyond*

freedom and dignity) of all humans militates against control of one's body and mind as the core of the Yogic enterprise.

The mainstream of contemporary psychology, however, does not have an aversion to the concept of the self; indeed, the self consistently has been a highly popular topic of study. According to a recently published *Handbook of self and identity* (Leary & Tangney, 2012), by March 2011 the PsycINFO data base showed 260,000 abstracts on self-related topics such as self-concept and self-esteem and so on (p. 9). The handbook covers the literature on the self in over 750 pages in 31 chapters. One of these chapters titled "Two selves" written by Klein (2012) is particularly relevant to the topic of the present essay. In this chapter the two selves he writes about are essentially the same as the self-as-object and the self-as-subject as William James called them (although Klein's term for the self-as-subject is the *ontological self*). According to Klein, the ontological self is essentially unobservable, and as such it is unfit as a topic for science since science deals with only publicly observable entities and events (p. 625). Small wonder, then, that authors putatively researching under the mantle of science would be concerned with the self-as-object. The entire thrust of a contemplative approach to self as in Yoga and Advaita is on the self-as-subject as revealed in the fourth state of consciousness described in the *Māṇḍūkya* Upaniṣad. Such approaches demand a deeply personal engagement with one's own selfhood, which is an anathema to the stringently cultivated impersonal and objectivist stance found in today's academia.

This brings us to the perspectives on consciousness in traditional Indian and contemporary (Western) psychologies. Research on consciousness was eclipsed during the rise of behaviorism. Around the 1970s consciousness arrived again on the scene of modern psychology due to various reasons: the discovery of in mind-expanding psychedelic drugs such as LSD, their popularity among rebelling American youth during the Vietnam war, the general interest in Asian (particularly Indian) music and spirituality, and the interest in transcendental meditation popularized by Mahesh Yogi. Young psychologists Richard Alpert (later Ram Dass) and Daniel Goleman started to write on ideas of meditation and consciousness they discovered in Indian thought. Subsequently consciousness emerged as a topic of serious interdisciplinary research often reported in the *Journal of Consciousness Studies*. As the scope of such studies is very broad, it is hard to capture the significance of research in this field within the knowledge systems of natural and human sciences approach. However, a brief mention may be made to neuropsychological studies of consciousness inspired by the natural science approach.

One of the early studies in this genre is the highly publicized study of the physiological conditions related to the higher states of consciousness by Wallace (1970) which was reported in the prestigious journal *Science*. The reference made in this study to fourth state alluded to fourth state of consciousness in the *Māṇḍūkya* Upaniṣad. This was rightly criticized for inadequate definition about the fourth state as described in the *Māṇḍūkya* Upaniṣad. Also, doubts were raised about the possibility that novice meditators briefly trained in transcendental meditation could have reached such a state. However, more sophisticated studies of higher states of consciousness attained by highly experienced Buddhist meditators were conducted at

the advanced neuropsychological laboratories at University of Wisconsin by Richard Davidson. A lucid account of these studies is presented in a book titled *Destructive Emotions* by Goleman (2003). It is beyond the scope of this essay to describe and critique these and similar studies. In regard to the natural science perspective adopted in such studies, one basic issue may be mentioned. Neurophysiological studies of consciousness imply the assumption that consciousness is a product of the brain, and as such it can be reduced to, and explained in terms of, bodily correlates. The adequacy of such a reductionist thesis deserves critical examination.

Before concluding this discussion, we may briefly return to the Upaniṣadic distinction between Vidyā and Avidyā, that is, between "higher" or transcendental knowledge (*parā Vidyā*) and "lower" or rational-empirical knowledge (*aparā Vidyā*). It is important to remember in this context that, despite the apparent assignment of rational-empirical knowledge to a "lower" status, the latter is neither denigrated nor dismissed as useless. Rather, the *Īśāvāsya* Upaniṣad insists that both types of knowledge is needed for different purposes. While the "higher" knowledge attained in higher states of consciousness can lead to exceptional existential gains unattainable by "lower" knowledge, the latter is indispensable in solving problems of normal life. This traditional inclusive and pluralist approach is reflected in the work of the pioneering psychologist of India, Girndrasekhar Bose, who wrote a book (1921) on the Concept of Repression in psychoanalysis while interpreting it within an Advaitic framework and wrote another one (1957) on the *Yoga Sūtras* of Patañjali. Working within such as an inclusive and pluralist approach, Banerjee (1975) concluded that, while psychoanalysis is useful in treating forms of psychopathology such as obsessive–compulsive disorder, Yoga can help in attaining high levels of inner satisfaction and bliss. To quote Banerjee's (1994) concluding words: "The wisdom and genius of the two [East and West] combined might accomplish what neither can do alone" (p. 46).

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