# Materialism, Dualism, and the Philosophy of Yoga

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## Introduction

In the present paper[1] I propose to address some important issues in the area of Western philosophy of mind and to show how these issues are dealt with in the classical Yoga philosophy of India, that is, what is usually called in the texts, Pātañjala-Yoga or the classical Sāṃkhya-Yoga philosophy in the tradition of Patañjali as found in the *Yogasūtra* and its commentaries. I also hope to show the ramifications that this discussion might have for both philosophical discourse and theological discourse in Indian and Western thought. Specifically, I shall be discussing the "mind-body" problem (or the "mind-brain" problem) and current explanatory approaches in terms of various formulations of dualism (substance dualism, epiphenomenalist dualism, elemental property dualism and interactionist property dualism) and in terms of other formulations such as reductive materialism or identity theory, functionalism, non-reductive materialism, and eliminative materialism.[2] I shall not explicitly deal with so-called "mentalist" conceptions of the mind-body problem—for example, the thought of George Berkeley, other "idealist" formulations or the so-called "neutral monists"—for two reasons. First, such conceptions are for the most part considered to be implausible in current discussions within philosophy of mind. Second, and perhaps more to the point, there are few if any interesting comparisons to be drawn with Pātañjala-Yoga philosophy.

*International Journal of Hindu Studies* 17, 2: 183–221

DOI

The various formulations of dualism, functionalism, and materialism, however, are very much at issue in current discussions within philosophy of mind. Moreover, these formulations have interesting and somewhat unexpected affinities with Pātañjala-Yoga philosophy. Some of the relevant issues include the following: (*1*) the manner in which physical states differ or are the same as mental states; (*2*) the manner in which physical states relate or are "identical" with mental states; (*3*) the manner in which physical states cause, run parallel with, systematically interact with, or are simply the equivalent of mental states; (*4*) the manner in which physical states and mental states relate to the problems of "consciousness" and "self-consciousness"; and (*5*) the manner in which the traditional "folk psychology" of the "person" can or cannot be retained.

I have two reasons for selecting the philosophy of mind as an interpretive framework for discussing Yoga. Primarily, of course, for philosophers who may have only a limited knowledge of non-Western philosophy, the idiom or discourse of philosophy of mind may provide a helpful interpretive framework for understanding the philosophical claims and significance of Yoga. Secondly, in my judgment, too much has been written about Yoga in terms of mystical experience, gnostic understanding, and paranormal experiences. As a result, research on Yoga has largely been the province of religious seekers. To be sure, Yoga has an important spiritual dimension, and "extraordinary cognitive attainments" have a significant role to play in understanding Yoga. Nevertheless, what is equally important in Pātañjala-Yoga is its potential philosophical and scientific significance for understanding the functioning of the body and the mind. Yoga is, after all, one of the oldest experimental, empirically based research programs regarding mind-body interaction known to the human species, and it deserves to be taken seriously as an important chapter in the quest for human understanding. Put directly, it is long overdue to demystify and demythologize Yoga in order to bring it into conversation with the many contemporary inquiries concerning the nature of mind and consciousness.

I want to argue (*a*) that classical Yoga philosophy analyzes these basic issues in an interestingly different manner from Western discussions and (*b*) that the classical Yoga formulation may well provide some helpful new directions for research and reflection regarding these important issues in Western thought, Indian philosophy generally, and Indian theological

discourse. Let me push what I want to argue even one step further and make even a stronger claim. One might think that what I am suggesting is a comparison and contrast argument along the lines of what is usually understood as comparative philosophy. That is true enough, of course, in the rather obvious sense that I shall be comparing and contrasting philosophical views in what follows. My stronger claim, however, is that much more is at stake in what I am presenting, since I wish to press the claim that there is no comparable argument for dualism in Western philosophy (or in Indian philosophy as well). My strong claim, then, is that the eccentric or peculiar dualism of Sāṃkhya-Yoga philosophy is unique in philosophical discourse and has no counterpart with which it can be plausibly compared. Thus, my analysis is not a comparative philosophy paper in the conventional sense, but rather contains the much stronger claim that Pātañjala-Yoga (and Sāṃkhya) is a unique and innovative interpretation of dualism.

**Dualism versus Materialism and/or Physicalism**

Put simply, the basic difference between dualist claims and materialist/physicalist claims has to do with whether mental states can plausibly be reduced or at least reinterpreted in terms of physical states. The dualist wishes to maintain that finally it is implausible to argue that such capacities as the creative use of language, the processes of logic and reasoning, the intrinsic qualities of sensations, feelings and emotions, and the semantic significance of beliefs, desires and other intentional states can ever be adequately explained or accounted for solely by way of the neurophysiology and neurochemistry of brain states as described in terms of chemical and electrical interactions and/or "firings" of impulses across the "synapses" of countless thousands and millions of neurons, dendrites, and axons throughout the specialized structures of the emergent, organic brain. The materialist maintains, to the contrary, that the growing body of research in biological science, cognitive science, physics, chemistry, biochemistry, cybernetics, and computer science holds out the promise that, in fact, a purely materialist account is not only possible, but, indeed, quite likely. As Paul M. Churchland has put it, "the important point about the standard evolutionary story is that the human species and all of its features are the wholly physical outcome of a purely physical process"

(1988: 21).

Apart from this basic and fundamental difference, of course, there are a variety of positions that have been formulated by way of explaining or analyzing the dualist or the materialist claim—or put somewhat differently, there are various kinds of dualism and various kinds of materialism, as well as the position of functionalism, that have been and are currently being argued; and, as indicated at the outset, I want to offer a brief analytic survey of some of the more important of these positions by way of providing an overview of the possible positions regarding the "mind-body" or "mind-brain" problem in current discussions within philosophy of mind.

*Substance dualism:* That the realm of the mind or the realm of ideas is fundamentally distinct from the realm of material stuff or the realm of the body is as old in Western philosophical traditions as Pythagoras and Plato, but the *locus classicus* for the discussion of dualism in modern Western philosophy is, of course, the substance dualism of René Descartes.[3] Moreover, Descartes is quite clear in setting forth his own method as well as the basic deductions for his dualist position based on a few theological presuppositions.[4]

Quite apart from the philosophical difficulty of how to account for causal interactions between unextended thought and the extension of body, which Descartes struggled to explain with his "animal spirits" and the pineal gland, his characterization of the physical in terms of extension in space is, of course, fundamentally flawed and simplistic. Also, his use of God as a warrant for "clear and distinct perceptions" is highly problematic. Matter or the body is now understood, not simply in terms of simple mechanics and spatial extension, but in the broader terms of mass, energy, the point-instants of electrons and electromagnetism, atomic and subatomic particles, quantum mechanics, probability theory, and so forth. The old Cartesian substance dualism, in other words, is implausible philosophically, theologically, and scientifically.

*Epiphenomenalist dualism:* In an effort to solve the problem of interaction between unextended mental states and physical brain states, a second sort of dualism has been proposed, based not upon notions of separate substances (thought and extension), but rather on the notion of emergent properties. That is to say, mental states are different from physical states, but rather than representing two substantive realms, the realm of the mental is simply a set of emergent properties that come into being at

certain higher levels of organic evolution. This, of course, is the position of epiphenomenalism and has been argued by Thomas Henry Huxley and other Darwinians.[5] According to what I am calling epiphenomenalist dualism, the realm of mental states is a realm that is different and finally irreducible to physical states, and it is for this reason that epiphenomenalism is a dualist position. The mental is a realm that has emerged as a result of the long process of evolution. Moreover, while it is the case that physical states can act causally on mental states and, indeed, that mental states first emerged as a new realm out of or from older physical states, it is not the case that mental states can act causally on physical states. In other words, there is no interaction between mental states and physical states. Mental states are simply epiphenomenal emergents out of older physical states, and any apparent causal action on physical states is fundamentally illusory. Causal action is only in one direction, namely, from the physical to the epiphenomenal mental. This is, to say the least, an odd account of the relation and interaction between mind and body or mind and brain, but it is one somewhat plausible, if unlikely, way of preserving dualism without buying into a full substance dualism.

*Interactionist property dualism:* A somewhat more commonsensical or popular interpretation of dualism is what Karl R. Popper and John C. Eccles (1983) have called their "strong dualist hypothesis," involving a full interactionism between mind and body and, even more than that, a dominant role for "self-conscious mind" that controls attention, provides overall integration or a unitary sense of identity, actively modifies physical brain events, and performs ongoing scanning functions with respect to the well-being of the organism.[6] Like epiphenomenalist dualism, this version of dualism interprets the realm of "self-conscious mind" as an emergent property or development in the long process of evolution. Self-conscious mind, therefore, is very much a product of physical, organic evolution, but once it emerges it becomes a dominant force with respect to the survival of the human organism. Hence, self-conscious mind exerts what Popper and Eccles (1983: 14–21) call a powerful "downward causation." The self-conscious mind has no extension in space, but it does have temporal duration. Popper and Eccles speak of Worlds l, 2 and 3: World l being the realm of physical, brain states (with spatial extension and temporal duration), World 2 being the realm of subjective, mental states (with only temporal duration), and World 3 being the derivative, cultural world of

artifacts (books, art works, scientific theories, literatures, and so forth, with spatial and temporal duration), all three of said Worlds regularly interact to support the uniqueness of specifically human existence. Worlds 2 and 3 are irreducible to World l and, indeed, are essential for the survival of World 1. Interestingly, Popper and Eccles come very close to a kind of substance dualism, although Popper maintains a basically agnostic position regarding a possible separate survival of the mental World 2 apart from World 1. Eccles, on the other hand, is more inclined to a traditional view of World 2 as involving a kind of immortal soul able to survive separation from the body by reason of a divine providence. The great weakness in the "strong dualist hypothesis," of course, is that it finally fails to explain much of anything in terms of the relation between mind and body. To be sure, it is able to present each side of the dualist claim with great sophistication and subtlety. Especially noteworthy is Eccles's remarkable command of brain neurophysiology and neurochemistry. On the other side, Popper brings to bear the full force of the various philosophical arguments against reducing mental states to physical states. In the final analysis, however, they simply assert that mind and body are totally irreducible to one another and that the final explanation of the relations and interactions must remain something of a mystery. This is all well and good, but it is finally only prolegomenon. That is, it only brings us to the threshold of the problem of mind and body and cannot seriously be considered a reasoned treatment or explanation of the problem.

*Elemental property dualism:* Yet another interpretation of dualism that takes seriously the irreducibility of mental states to physical states while also maintaining a strong interactionism between mind and body, but at the same time seeks to offer a plausible explanation of the relation between mind and body, is what has been called "panpsychism" or what can also be called "elemental property dualism." Inasmuch as mental properties and physical properties are irreducible to one another, it must be the case that both sorts of properties are intrinsically or inherently part of what is from the beginning. In other words, reality has a "mental" side in terms of elemental properties as well as a "physical" side. Sometimes these two sides are expressed in terms of the "inside" and the "outside" of events or entities, or sometimes these two sides are characterized as fundamental "attributes" of nature or the world. G. W. Leibniz's "monadology" is one important articulation of panpsychism. Benedict de Spinoza's "thought"

and "extension" as attributes of "Nature" or "God" is another. A more contemporary version of the same type of position is the process philosophy of a Alfred North Whitehead or a Charles Hartshorne. The problem with panpsychism or elemental property dualism is that it comes close to begging the basic question. In terms of very simple forms of life or simple objects, if one wishes to use the terms "mental" and "physical," quite obviously the terms cannot mean the same as they mean with regard to more advanced forms of life. One has to posit something like "pre-mental" and "pre-physical" tendencies that will later emerge or show themselves as mature mental states and complex physical states. But however one wishes to characterize the earlier stages of "mental" and "physical" processes or tendencies, one still has the problem of accounting for the transition to mature mental states or complex physical states. Moreover, the problem of the relation between mature mental states and complex physical states still remains to be addressed by the panpsychist or elemental property dualist.

*Eliminative dualism:* There is one other version of dualism that should also be mentioned, but as Churchland has pointed out, it has never been seriously argued, at least in Western philosophy. Churchland suggests that there is a possible dualist position

> …that to my knowledge has never been cited before, but it is real just the same. Specifically, the P-theory [that is, the notion of mental states or the "Person theory"] might prove to be replaceable by some more general theory of "ectoplasmic essences,"…but to be irreducible to that more general theory. The ontology of the P-theory would thus be eliminated in favour of the ontology of the more general theory that displaced it. We might call this possibility "eliminative dualism"! It is perhaps not surprising that this possibility has gone unremarked, since the preservation of the common-sense ontology of the mind has always been part of the dualist's sales-pitch. Let it be noted then that the demise of our common-sense P-theoretic ontology is every bit as possible in a non-materialistic ontology as it is in a materialistic ontology (1979: 108).

According to eliminative dualism, in other words, the usual characterizations of so-called "folk psychology" in terms of a "self-conscious mind"

or "person" having certain sensations or feelings or having such propositional or intentional states as hoping that p, or believing that p, or desiring that p, and so forth, are fundamentally mistaken and require reformulation in terms of a dualist framework that goes beyond conventional "folk psychology." I shall be suggesting in the sequel that although Churchland is correct that the position of eliminative dualism "has gone unremarked" in the history of Western philosophy, it is not the case that it has gone unremarked in Indian philosophy. I want to suggest, in other words, that the position of eliminative dualism has been argued in Indian philosophy, and specifically in Pātañjala-Yoga, but more on this in the sequel.

Before turning to Pātañjala-Yoga, however, let me first complete my summary overview of commonly held positions regarding the mind-body problem by looking at reductive materialism or identity theory, functionalism, non-reductive materialism, and eliminative materialism.

*Reductive materialism or identity theory:* This position is close to the various property dualisms already discussed (epiphenomenalism, interactionist property dualism and elemental property dualism) with the crucial difference, however, that the reductive materialist argues that there is simply no need to posit any sort of special status for mental states. Mental states simply *are* physical states, and when neuroscience reaches a mature stage of sophistication, the so-called "mental states," including sensations, feelings and the various intentional or propositional attitudes, will all be shown to be numerically identical with specific brain events or neurological events within the central nervous system. Just as we now know that our experience of "light" is simply another way of talking about sequences of electromagnetic waves and our experience of "warmth" is simply another way of talking about high average levels of molecular kinetic energy, so eventually in a mature neuroscience our mental states will have a precise inter-theoretical reduction to physical states or processes within the central nervous system. Such a position of reductive materialism has been maintained by such theorists as Herbert Feigl and J. J. C. Smart.[7] "Mind"-talk or "mentalistic"-talk will be completely reduced to "brain-process"-talk. Mind, thought, ideas, sensations, and so forth, will be reduced to some sort of material stuff, energy, or force. The reductive materialist or identity theorist position is, of course, an attractive position inasmuch as it purports to accomplish two important philosophical tasks, that is, (*a*) it simplifies the task of explanation of the mind-body

problem to a single level of neuroscientific discourse in contrast to the much more complicated dualist frameworks, and (*b*) it preserves all of traditional "folk psychology" by providing a full and complete inter-theoretical reduction. The problem with the position, however, is that both claims have become suspect even among materialists/physicalists themselves. Regarding the first claim of economy or simplification of explanation, it is becoming increasingly evident in empirical research that the functioning of the brain or the central nervous system is much more complex than earlier theoretical work suggested. To claim to be able to offer a simple neuroscientific explanation of mental states in terms of numerical identity is coming to be recognized as both naive and implausible, certainly in terms of a "hard" correlation of a "type-type" characterization (between the mental and the physical) and even suspect in terms of the much "softer" "token-token" account.[8] Similarly, regarding the second claim of a complete inter-theoretical reduction of "folk psychology," it is becoming increasingly clear that such a direct one-to-one reduction is not only highly unlikely because of the magnitude of the task, but, more to the point, because such a reduction is unworkable in principle.

*Functionalism and non-reductive materialism:* Functionalism and what can be called non-reductive materialism are perhaps best discussed together. The positions are logically distinct, but they coalesce to the extent that they both clearly reject reductive materialism or identity theory. Moreover, most functionalists are also, in fact, non-reductive materialists/physicalists.

The position of functionalism is most commonly linked with the work of Hilary Putnam[9] and has been nicely summarized in the following characterization of Churchland:

> …Psychological states are functional states in the sense that for any being to have a psychology (to be subject of psychological states) is for it to instance or embody a certain functional organization among its sensory inputs, internal states, and motor outputs. Talk of psychological states is therefore ontologically neutral…since descriptions at that level are innocent of any commitments as to the nature or constitution of whatever it is that instantiates the relevant functional organization.… Accordingly, psychological descriptions are not reducible to descriptions concerning any of the various substances that might instantiate them. They are descriptions at a level of abstraction from such matters.

> Thus emerges the essential point of difference with the identity theory: it is the reducibility of psychological descriptions that is denied by Putnam. And the reason for the denial is the multiplicity of different substrata that can instantiate those descriptions (1979: 111).

Mental states as functional states operate at a higher level of abstraction. To reduce them to purely physical descriptions would be to undercut a proper understanding of their higher order functioning. Moreover, functional psychological states can exist in various kinds of physical embodiment, including, for example, embodiment in computers. In other words, there is no one-to-one correlation between functional psychological states and ontological physical states, and thus it is inappropriate, almost a kind of category mistake, to expect a complete reduction of the former to the latter. There is no need to maintain psycho-physical identities and, hence, no need to expect or even want inter-theoretical reduction. Another way of putting the functionalist position is to say that psychology is still both possible and desirable as an independent academic discipline. Because the functionalist position does not commit itself to a particular ontological description regarding mental states, it is compatible with either a materialist or dualist or even an idealist position, even though most functionalists are, in fact, also materialists or physicalists—for example, Putnam himself is a materialist, arguing that the actual instantiation of functional states is a matter of empirical research, the evidence for which (at least currently) is largely materialist/physicalist.

What I am calling non-reductive materialism is represented by such figures as Donald Davidson and John R. Searle. Davidson argues for a position known as "anomalous monism," a materialist position which combines the notion (*a*) that mental states and physical states interact, (*b*) that causality is lawlike or "nomological" among physical states, but (*c*) that mental states cannot be captured by the lawlike principles of causality, that is, that they are somehow also "anomalous."[10] The discipline of psychology is still possible, and a materialism that leaves room for freedom is still possible (Priest 1991: 115).

Searle's non-reductive materialism sets forth a distinction between "macro-level" descriptions (for mental states) and "micro-level" descriptions (for physical, neuronal processes), arguing that the macro-level and micro-level are both causally real. "Both of them [that is, mental and

physical] are causally real, and the higher level causal features are both caused by and realized in the structure of the lower level elements" (Searle 1984: 26).[11]

The problem, one might well suggest, about all of these views, namely, Putnam's functionalism, Davidson's anomalous monism and Searle's macro-level-cum-micro-level analysis, is that although they avoid the difficulties of reductive materialism or identity theory, they really do not go very far in accounting for the mental beyond simply asserting that the mental cannot be reduced to the physical. And, of course, in this sense they are hardly more plausible than the dualism of a Popper or an Eccles.

*Eliminative materialism:* Finally, mention must also be made to what Popper and Eccles have called "radical materialism" or "promissory materialism" and what I am calling, following Churchland (and, of course, Richard Rorty), "eliminative materialism."[12] Unlike reductive materialism, functionalism and non-reductive materialism, eliminative materialism does not accept the notion that mental states as conventionally understood in terms of traditional or modern "folk psychology" is in any sense a corrigible interpretation of personal or mental life. In other words, our traditional understanding of the "person" or the "self-conscious mind" as "having" certain sensations or being the subject of intentional attitudes such as believing that p or desiring that p is fundamentally mistaken and flat out wrong or false. Traditional person theory or "folk psychology" fails to give an adequate account of reasoning; is inadequate in understanding learning theory; is vague and superficial in its account of perception; is murky and unsatisfactory in understanding the dynamics of emotion; and is nearly useless in understanding the nature or causes of mental illness (Churchland 1979: 114). It is a seriously incorrect view of the human condition, and far from being corrigible in terms of inter-theoretical reduction (à la reductive materialism) or functionalist interaction (à la functionalism), it needs to be dismissed or eliminated in any attempt to set forth a cogent interpretation of the relation between mind and body or mind and brain—hence, the expression "eliminative" materialism. Popper and Eccles refer to eliminative materialism as "radical materialism" because it expels "person"-talk from the lexicon of plausible accounts of mental states, and they also refer to it as "promissory materialism" inasmuch as what new discourse will take the place of "person"-talk is at present only a distant promise of what will emerge from a mature neuro-

science (1983: 96–97). Here again, it is fair to say that the major problem with the position of eliminative materialism is that it also is finally only prolegomenon. That is to say, it is little more than a vague hope that eventually a mature neuroscience will give us the kind of discourse that will prove to be an adequate substitute for the "folk psychology" that we are told must be eliminated. Furthermore, if "folk psychology" is to be eliminated as simply wrong or false, the eliminative materialist bears the not insignificant burden of providing a new theory of meaning or semantics that is not itself caught up in the "folk psychology" that has supposedly been expelled or eliminated from the explanatory corpus. There is some evidence that some progress has been made recently in devising the required new theories of meaning,[13] but clearly the enterprise still has a very long way to go.

**Pātañjala-Yoga Philosophy**

I have briefly analyzed a variety of interpretations of the mind-body problem in recent work in the philosophy of mind, five on the dualist side (substance dualism, epiphenomenal dualism, interactionist property dualism, elemental property dualism and eliminative dualism) and four largely on the materialist side (reductive materialism, functionalism, non-reductive materialism and eliminative materialism). There are, of course, some other possible interpretations—one thinks, for example, of so-called Humean "bundle" theory or one or another kind of "mentalist" or "neutral monist" view mentioned at the outset of this paper—but perhaps a sufficient number of interpretations have been briefly outlined to provide a useful catalog of the basic issues being addressed in most current discussions within Western philosophy of mind.

Since so much of comparative philosophy has had a predilection for comparing traditions of Indian philosophizing with various formulations of Western idealism or "mentalism"—witness the endless titles along the lines of Śaṃkara and Bradley, and so forth—one might anticipate that Pātañjala-Yoga would come out on the dualist side of things and especially the strong dualist side tending towards "idealism" or "mentalism." I want to suggest, to the contrary, a rather different perspective.[14] It is, of course, true that Pātañjala-Yoga is a thorough-going dualism, but it is not at all a conventional Western mind-body or thought-extension dualism, nor is it

tending in the direction of any of the Western idealisms or "mentalisms." In terms of dualism, Pātañjala-Yoga appears to represent, as mentioned earlier and perhaps somewhat surprisingly, that formulation of dualism that, according to Churchland, "has gone unremarked" in Western philosophy of mind, namely, "eliminative dualism." Furthermore, and perhaps even more surprising, classical Yoga's eliminative dualism is built upon what Western philosophy of mind would characterize as "eliminative materialism" (of the Churchland or Rorty sort). That is to say, Pātañjala-Yoga is at one and the same time *both* an eliminative dualism *and* an eliminative materialism. In terms of Western philosophy of mind, in other words, Pātañjala-Yoga represents a radically unconventional dualism and an even more radical physicalism.[15]

**Yoga's Top-Down Materialism/Physicalism**

Regarding the materialist perspective, ordinary awareness (*citta*) and its functions (*citta-vṛtti*) are said to be made up of three material constituents or constituent processes, known as *guṇa*s or *triguṇa*, namely, cognition (*sattva*), spontaneous activity (*rajas*) and determinate formulation or objectivation (*tamas*). Ordinary awareness, or *citta*, in other words, is part of a tripartite material energy continuum that encompasses all of manifest reality. Here, of course, Pātañjala-Yoga is simply setting forth its appropriation of the older Sāṃkhya formulation of primordial materiality (*mūlaprakṛti* or simply *prakṛti*) and its tripartite constituent processes of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* (see Larson 1987: 65–73). The dynamic or continually changing (*pariṇāma*) tripartite material process, which actually constitutes or is primordial materiality, may be described either with reference to objectivity or with reference to subjectivity, because, according to Sāṃkhya and Yoga, the tripartite process underlies both sorts of descriptions. From an objective perspective, the tripartite process is a continuing flow of material energy that is capable of spontaneous activity (*rajas*), cognition (*sattva*), and determinate formulation or objectivation (*tamas*). Primal material energy can activate or externalize itself (*rajas*) in a manner that is transparent or intelligible (*sattva*) and substantial or determinate (*tamas*), and all manifestations of primary material energy are, therefore, purposeful (*rajas*), coherent (*sattva*), and objective (*tamas*). From a subjective perspective, Sāṃkhya and Yoga describe the tripartite process as

a continuing flow of experience that is capable of pre-reflective spontaneous desiring or longing (*rajas*), reflective discerning or discriminating (*sattva*), and a continuing awareness of an opaque, enveloping world (*tamas*). The continuing flow of experience actively seeks continuing gratification (*rajas*), reflectively discerns (or learns) the intelligible dimensions within the flow of experience (*sattva*), and continually encounters contents within experience that are opaque and oppressive (*tamas*). Moreover, the quest for gratification (*rajas*) is frequently frustrated (*duḥkha/rajas*), and, although there are occasional times of reflective discernment (including aesthetic apprehensions) that bring satisfaction (*sukha/sattva*), there are also moments when experience is completely overwhelmed by the sheer plenitude of the world (*moha/tamas*). In everyday ordinary life, therefore, experience tends to vacillate between the discomforting failure to attain gratification, occasional moments of reflective comprehension that bring a sense of comfort and tranquility, and moments of confused uncertainty. Philosophy (*jijñāsa* or the "desire to know") begins, then, for both Sāṃkhya and Yoga, as a result of the experience of failure and frustration and represents a desire to overcome that frustration. Crucial to realize is that the constituents of the tripartite process presuppose one another and make up a single material energy continuum. There can be no gratification unless there is something external to be appropriated; there can be no reflective discerning in the absence of discernibles; and there can be no confused uncertainty in the absence of a living being or entity seeking discernment of some sort. More than this, however, there is the recognition that the subjective dilemma of the flow of experience is the obverse side of the inherent objective dilemma of material energy itself (*prakṛti*). That is to say, for Sāṃkhya and Yoga, there is no polarity or bifurcation of subjective and objective within the tripartite process, no ontological distinction between "mind" and "matter" or "thought" and "extension." The subjective flow of experience is simply another way of describing the objective primal material energy that unfolds in a continuing tripartite process of spontaneous activity, rational ordering, and determinate formulation. The tripartite process of material energy is, in other words, a sort of philosophical Klein bottle or Möbius strip in which the usual distinctions of subjective/objective, mind/body, thought/extension simply do not apply. Therefore, the subjective dilemma of frustration is an inherent objective dilemma of the material world itself.

Thus far, mind (*citta*) and its ordinary functions are being described solely in terms of a process materialism or dual-aspect materialism, and the only differences between the Sāṃkhya description of materialism and the Yoga description of materialism have to do with the technical terminology employed. Sāṃkhya describes its materialism in terms of "primordial materiality" (*mūlaprakṛti*) made up of the three constituent processes (*guṇa* or constituent "strands" or "strings") of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, as just described above. The dynamic strands mutually interact with one another and are inseparable from one another. One strand may become totally dominant, but at no point can the material system be without all three of its constituent processes.[16]

The Sāṃkhya materialism, it should perhaps be noted, is what might be called a "top-down" materialism rather than a "bottom-up" materialism. Or, put somewhat differently, the Sāṃkhya materialism is, as mentioned earlier, a dual-aspect materialism or a materialist form of panpsychism. In other words, traditional materialism is usually thought of in terms of atoms or other sorts of components that combine together and eventually generate higher order forms, as in, for example, ancient Greek materialism. The Sāṃkhya materialism reverses this usual picture and poses, instead, the notion of a subtle material energy (*prakṛti*) that is at the outset exceedingly translucent (*sattva*), but gradually becomes increasingly reified as its own inherent capacities (*rajas* and *tamas*) appear in the various manifest *tattva*s. The Sāṃkhya and Yoga theory of manifestation in which *prakṛti* unfolds from the "top-down," as it were, and in which all material effects are already included in a primordial material cause (*satkāryavāda*), differs interestingly from the two other dominant paradigms in Indian philosophy. The other two theories are the "bottom-up" atomism of Vaiśeṣika (and Nyāya) and the Buddhist theory of substance-less temporal moments (*dharma*, *kṣaṇikavāda*) in which effects are different from their cause (*asatkāryavāda*).

What I am calling "top-down" theorizing, it should perhaps also be noted, is typical of most of the later *bhakti* theologies in Indian thought, many or most of which make use of reconstructed or reworked notions of materiality (*prakṛti* or *mūlaprakṛti*) for their formulation of the notion of God (*īśvara*). More on this in the sequel, however, when we look at the eccentric notion of "consciousness" (*puruṣa*) in Sāṃkhya and Yoga (and Indic philosophical/theological discourse generally).

Yoga philosophy accepts the Sāṃkhya materialist framework but utilizes a different terminology. Instead of speaking in terms of the Sāṃkhya threefold internal organ functioning in terms of ascertainment (*adhyavasāya*), self-awareness (*abhimāna*) and thinking (*saṃkalpaka*), Pātañjala-Yoga combines the three into one composite term, *citta* (ordinary awareness)—or, to use James Haughton Woods's idiom, "mind-stuff." Moreover, the older Sāṃkhya threefold cognitive functions of ascertainment, self-awareness, and thinking are expanded by Pātañjala-Yoga into the fivefold "functions of ordinary awareness" (*citta-vṛtti*), which are said to be both "afflicted" and "unafflicted" (*Yogasūtra* 1.5). The fivefold functions are correct awareness (*pramāṇa*), misunderstanding (*viparyaya*), verbalization or verbal construction (*vikalpa*), sleep (*nidrā*), and memory (*smṛti*) (*Yogasūtra* 1.2–11).

The "functions of ordinary awareness" (*citta-vṛtti*) are set forth in *Yogasūtra* 1.5–11, and the "afflictions" which, as it were, clog the functions are spelled out in *Yogasūtra* 2.3–9. They may be described together in the following manner. Correct awareness (*pramāṇa*) arises through the exercise of the three means of knowing—perception, inference and reliable authority (*Yogasūtra* 1.7)—and these three are characterized in the same manner as in Sāṃkhya. Misunderstanding (*viparyaya*) is incorrect awareness based on the misapprehension of something as other than what it is (*Yogasūtra* 1.8). This arises primarily through the afflictions (*kleśa*), which include ignorance (*avidyā*), personal identity (*asmitā*), attachment (*rāga*), aversion (*dveṣa*) and clinging to conventional life (*abhiniveśa*). The first of the five afflictions, ignorance, is the principal affliction and is the foundation for the other four whether these other four be dormant, declining, inhibited, or fully active (*Yogasūtra* 2.4). Ignorance involves the mistaken apprehension of what is changeless, pure, satisfactory and conscious, in what is not changeless, pure, satisfactory and conscious (*Yogasūtra* 2.5). Personal identity involves the error of thinking that one's individual awareness is the same as one's consciousness (*Yogasūtra* 2.6). Attachment relates to pleasure (*Yogasūtra* 2.7). Aversion relates to frustration (*Yogasūtra* 2.8). Clinging to conventional life involves relishing one's own continuing life, characteristic of all living things (*Yogasūtra* 2.9). Verbalization or verbal construction relates to the distinctions that arise from the nature of language and the problems of meaning that arise when language operates apart from its purely denotative function (*Yogasūtra*

1.9). Sleep is the awareness of absence (and not the absence of awareness) (*Yogasūtra* 1.10). Finally, memory is the retention of the contents of what has previously been experienced (*Yogasūtra* 1.11).

What is striking about this analysis of cognition is the implicit skepticism about the reliability of ordinary awareness. To be sure, correct awareness (*pramāṇa*), the first function of ordinary awareness, is possible, but only after most of the ordinary modes of self-understanding have been overcome (*nirodha*)—hence, of course, the basic definition of Yoga as "the cessation of the functioning of ordinary awareness." It is in this sense that the term "eliminative" may be usefully employed by way of understanding what Pātañjala-Yoga philosophy is claiming. That is, while correct awareness is ultimately possible via the path of disciplined reflection and meditation, correct awareness can only arise after having largely "eliminated" most of our ordinary apprehensions about the world and ourselves, which are hopelessly confused and for the most part incorrigible. Correct awareness is, as it were, undercut by a profound misunderstanding (*viparyaya*) or fundamental ignorance (*avidyā*) that leads one to mistake one thing for another regarding the nature of what is immutable, the nature of purity or beauty, the nature of genuine happiness, and the nature of authentic consciousness. These basic confusions then lead to flawed self-understanding (*asmitā*) which in turn generates attachment to pleasure, anger, or hatred because of delayed gratification and a tenacious clinging to one's own life or, if you will, a clinging to one's own ignorance. Likewise, while the symbolic importance of verbalization (*vikalpa*), the third function of ordinary awareness, is fundamental for communication, and hence certainly not the same as the afflictions of misunderstanding, nevertheless, language by its very nature sometimes leads to positing assertions that have no basis in reality. Or, again, the usual interpretation of sleeping as the awareness of absence is often misconstrued as absence of awareness. Finally, the fifth function of ordinary awareness, memory, becomes a kind of storehouse for retaining what has been previously experienced.

Moreover, these functions of ordinary awareness encompass more than one life and more than one life form. They refer to all forms of life, "from Brahmā down to a blade of grass" (*Sāṃkhyakārikā* 54). In other words, the "functioning of ordinary awareness" is not a humanistic notion or, perhaps somewhat more accurately, is not primarily a humanistic notion.

It refers to the entire range of life forms from the highest levels of the gods down through the levels of the smallest embodied forms (*Yogasūtra* 1.40). The functioning or functions of awareness (*citta-vṛtti*) produce "traces" or "markings" (*saṃskāra* and/or *vāsanā*) that are remembered (*smṛti*) and stored (*āśaya*) in the field of becoming (*Yogasūtra* 1.5, and the *Vyāsa Bhāṣya* with Vācaspatimiśra's gloss). The traces or markings become predispositions that in turn influence the manner in which new functions of ordinary awareness will develop. In other words, a wheel (*cakra*) of becoming occurs (*Yogasūtra* 1.5, *Vyāsa Bhāṣya*). The functions generate "traces" that then become predispositions that in turn influence upcoming functions, whether in this life or in rebirth. As Vyāsa explains:

> The functions of ordinary awareness, distorted by the "afflictions," become the field for the heaping up of the store of karmic tendencies.… Predispositions in keeping with the functions of ordinary awareness are produced, and subsequent functions of ordinary awareness are produced by predispositions. Thus, there is a continuously turning wheel (*cakra*) of functions and predispositions. This process continues to recur by means of its own momentum or until the process itself goes into reabsorption (*pralaya*) (see *Vyāsa Bhāṣya* under *Yogasūtra* 1.5).

Actions (*karman*) and their traces or markings reach fruition or "ripening" (*vipāka*) at various moments in a particular embodiment or in some future embodiment (*Yogasūtra* 2.12). In general, actions produced by the functions of ordinary awareness in any particular embodiment gather together at the conclusion of that given embodiment, that is, at the moment of death or dissolution of a given life form (*Yogasūtra* 2.13). The *citta* then immediately manifests itself in a new embodiment, whose form of life (*jāti*), length of life (*āyus*) and quality of experience (*bhoga*) have been programmed by and are compatible with the previous rebirth (*Yogasūtra* 2.13). It should perhaps be noted at this point that Yoga differs somewhat from Sāṃkhya with respect to the process of rebirth. Sāṃkhya interprets the *tattva*s of *buddhi*, *ahaṃkāra*, and *manas* together with the sense capacities and action capacities in terms of location within a single embodiment, thus requiring a subtle body for transmigration from life to life. Yoga, in contrast, construes the composite notion of mind, or *citta*, as all perva-

sive (*vibhu*), thus eliminating the need for a transmigrating subtle body. Because the mind, or *citta*, is all-pervasive, rebirth occurs immediately upon the cessation of a particular embodiment (*Yogasūtra* 2.13).

As mentioned above, the "functioning of ordinary awareness" is not totally "afflicted." There is the possibility of correct awareness, but this can only occur when the basic afflictions have been overcome (*nirodha*). Such an overcoming, however, is no minor undertaking. Required is a complete reorientation of ordinary awareness. The means for accomplishing this is said to be twofold, practice (*abhyāsa*) and renunciation (*vairāgya*) (*Yogasūtra* 1.12). Practice is steady effort in disciplined meditation that is continuous over a long period of time in order to attain a condition of stability in which the *citta* can attain a peaceful flow without its ordinary distorting functions (*Yogasūtra* 1.13–14). All of the second Pāda, the "Sādhana Pāda," and the first five *sūtra*s of the third Pāda, the "Vibhūti Pāda," including *kriyā-yoga*, 2.1–27, as well as *yogānga* or *aṣṭānga-yoga*, 2.27–3.5, are the relevant Yogic activities requisite for "practice." The remainder of the third Pāda, having to do with the "comprehensive reflections" (*saṃyama*), refer to the relevant *ekāgra* (one-pointed) or sequential concentrations that arise as a result of pursuing ongoing practice. Renunciation means turning away from ordinary everyday life as well as from conventional religion (*Yogasūtra* 1.15). Moreover, there is an ultimate renunciation (*para-vairāgya*) that entails turning away from the realm of materiality (*triguṇa*) in its entirety. This means, of course, turning away finally from any and all intentional functions of *citta*, which is a state of pure *citta-sattva* in which *rajas* and *tamas*, although still present, are no longer operative. The requisite reorientation, in other words, involves the elimination or cessation of our usual understanding of "mental" states or, put in the idiom of eliminative materialism, the denial that our usual understanding of ourselves is a corrigible possibility. The afflictions are so much a part of what ordinary subjectivity means that the very notion of ordinary subjectivity must be eliminated from the explanatory corpus.

*Summary:* Ordinary awareness (*citta*) and its functioning or functions generate various levels of awareness (*bhūmi*). States of awareness, whether distracted, depressed, partially distracted, one-pointed or object-less, are all distillates of one or another mixture of *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*. They are, in other words, physical states, albeit subtle physical states. Yoga as a learned inquiry into the nature of ordinary awareness (*citta*) is espe-

cially interested in the one-pointed and objectless "states of awareness," since these two types of awareness are important for gaining control over ordinary awareness and for eliminating the distortions in awareness. Yoga is simply "disciplined meditation," and the definition of Yoga is said to be the "cessation" (*nirodha*) of "ordinary awareness." The means for bringing about this cessation are practice and renunciation. Cessation of ordinary awareness, or, in other words, the realization of objectless concentration, is the goal of disciplined meditation, but the goal cannot be achieved without attending to the "one-pointed" (*ekāgra*) levels of awareness that are prerequisite for the Yogin being able to attain objectless awareness. Hence, Yoga as disciplined meditation that will bring about the cessation of ordinary awareness is twofold. It involves properly understanding and attaining the largely *sattva* (with just a trace of *rajas*) states of "one-pointed" awareness, that is, *samādhi* with an intentional content (*saṃprajñāta-samādhi*), and the purely *sattva* (with *rajas* and *tamas* present but inoperative) "object-less" state of awareness (*a-saṃprajñāta-samādhi* or *nir-bīja-samādhi*).

**Yoga's Eccentric Dualism**

By reinterpreting the notion of ordinary awareness (*citta*) and its functions in terms of a tripartite material energy continuum (*triguṇa*), one might well conclude, as I have been suggesting thus far, that Pātañjala-Yoga, finally, is simply an eliminative materialism, almost in the sense of a Churchland or a Rorty. That is, like Churchland and Rorty, our usual "folk psychology" or ordinary awareness of "egoity" (*ahaṃkāra*, *asmitā*), "mind" (*manas*), "person" (*jīva*), and its everyday perceptions, inferences, and traditional interpretations of phenomenal life (religious, mythological or otherwise), or what Rorty has called "the Myth of the Given," are profoundly in error and cannot be salvaged. There are no "mental states" in the ordinary sense of mind, ego, or commonsense personal awareness. There are only the ongoing transformations of *triguṇa* (*sattva*, *rajas*, *tamas*), or as the *Bhagavad Gītā* 3.28 puts it, "*…guṇā guṇeṣu vartanta iti*," or the *Gītā*'s 14.23, "*…guṇā vartanta iti*."

Oddly enough, however, Pātañjala-Yoga and/or Sāṃkhya makes an additional puzzling claim that undercuts the materialist/physicalist orientation (that is: *traiguṇya* = *sattva*, *rajas*, *tamas*) and introduces, instead, a

unique and admittedly puzzling form of dualism. Having succeeded in bringing about the cessation or "elimination" of the functioning of ordinary awareness, instead of coming upon the cessation of experience, one, rather, comes upon what enables experience. That enabling presence or "witness" (*sākṣin*) is described as "consciousness" (*citi-śakti*, *draṣṭṛ*, *puruṣa*) and is said to be ontologically distinct from "awareness" (*citta*). I use the word "puzzling" because it is difficult to grasp what could possibly be intended by making a distinction between "awareness" and "consciousness."

Here it may be helpful to turn to the text for clarification. Just as the great Śaṃkara neatly and succinctly sets forth his famous doctrine of *adhyāsa* at the outset in his famous *adhyāsa-bhāṣya* to his *Brahmasūtra Bhāṣya*, which is commonly recognized as the essence of the Advaita position, so the *Vyāsa Bhāṣya* to the *Yogasūtra* sets forth the presentation of the unique dualism of Pātañjala-Yoga at the outset of the commentary.

[*Vyāsa Bhāṣya*] tasya lakṣaṇa-abhidhitsayā idaṃ sūtraṃ pravavṛte—
**yogaś citta-vṛtti-nirodhaḥ** (*Yogasūtra* 1.2)

[*Vyāsa Bhāṣya*] sarva-śabda-agrahaṇāt saṃprajñāto 'pi ity ākhyāyate ‖ prakhyā-pravṛtti-sthiti-śīlatvāt triguṇam ‖ prakhyā-rūpaṃ hi citta-sattvaṃ rajas-tamobhyāṃ saṃsṛṣṭam aiśvarya-viṣaya-priyaṃ bhavati ‖ tadeva tamasā anuviddham adharma-ajñāna-avairāgya-anaiśvarya-upagaṃ bhavati ‖ tadeva prakṣīṇa-moha-āvaraṇaṃ sarvataḥ pradyotamānam anuviddhaṃ rajomātrayā dharma-jñāna-vairāgya-aiśvarya-upagaṃ bhavati ‖ tadeva rajoleśa-mala-apetaṃ svarūpa-pratiṣṭhaṃ sattva-puruṣa-anyatā-khyāti-mātraṃ dharmamegha-dhyāna-upagaṃ bhavati ‖ tat-paraṃ prasaṃ-khyānam ity ācakṣate dhyāyinaḥ ‖ citi-śaktir apariṇāminy apratisaṃkramā darśita-viṣayā śuddhā ca anantā ca, sattva-guṇātmikā ca iyam ato viparītā viveka-khyātir iti ‖ atas tasyāṃ viraktaṃ cittaṃ tām api khyātiṃ niruṇaddhi ‖ tadavasthaṃ saṃskāra-upagaṃ bhavati ‖ sa nirbījaḥ samādhiḥ ‖ na tatra kiñcit saṃprajñāyata ity a-saṃprajñātaḥ ‖ dvividhaḥ sa yogaś citta-vṛtti-nirodha iti ‖

[*Vyāsa Bhāṣya*] tadavasthe cetasi viṣaya-abhāvād buddhi-bodha-ātmā puruṣaḥ kiṃ-svabhāva iti—
**tadā draṣṭuḥ svarūpe 'vasthānam** (*Yogasūtra* 1.3)

[*Vyāsa Bhāṣya*] svarūpa-pratiṣṭhā tadānīṃ citi-śaktir yathā kaivalye ‖ vyutthāna-citte tu sati tathā api bhavantī, na tathā ‖

[*Vyāsa Bhāṣya*] kathaṃ tarhi ‖ darśita-viṣayatvāt—
**vṛtti-sārūpyam itaratra** (*Yogasūtra* 1.4)

[*Vyāsa Bhāṣya*] vyutthāne yāś citta-vṛttayas tad-viśiṣṭa-vṛttiḥ puruṣaḥ ‖ [etc., etc.][17]

My translation of these introductory passages on the eccentric or peculiar nature of the Sāṃkhya-Yoga dualism is the following.

*Yogasūtra* 1.2 [Preface by *Vyāsa Bhāṣya*] He (the Sūtrakāra) introduces this *sūtra* in order to set forth a definition of it (Yoga). **Disciplined meditation (Yoga) (involves) the cessation of the functioning of ordinary awareness (*citta*).**

[*Vyāsa Bhāṣya*] Since the word "all" (*sarva*) is not mentioned [in the sense of "all" aspects of ordinary awareness] it is intended that the "intentional awarenesses" (*saṃprajñāta-samādhi*, or in other words, the "one-pointed" awarenesses) are also to be included within Yoga. Ordinary awareness (*citta*), since its characteristic inclinations are cognition, sensory-motor activity and bodily maintenance, is made up of the three constituents or constituent processes (*triguṇa* = *mūlaprakṛti*). Ordinary awareness in its natural *sattva*-condition (*citta-sattva*), when mixed with *rajas* and *tamas*, becomes favorably inclined towards objects and power. That same awareness (*citta-sattva*) when mixed with *tamas* becomes inclined towards erratic behavior, ignorance, worldliness, and lack of self-control. That same awareness (*citta-sattva*), when the veil of delusion [that is, the *tamas*-condition] has been inhibited and when characterized on all sides by cognitive clarity, with just a small portion of *rajas* continuing to function, becomes inclined towards appropriate behavior, knowledge, detachment, and self-control. That same awareness (*citta-sattva*), when devoid of even a trace of *rajas*, established in its own natural form, and given over completely to the contemplation of the difference between the *sattva*-condition and consciousness (*puruṣa*),

becomes inclined towards the meditative state known as "Dharmamegha."[18] Those highly proficient in Yoga call this condition the "supreme reflection" (*paraṃ prasaṃkhyānam*).[19] On the one hand, there is consciousness (*citi-śakti*) [or *puruṣa*], which is unchanging and without intermixture, in which all objects [or "intentional contents"] are reflected, which is pure [or content-less] and eternal—and, on the other hand, standing over against that is the *sattva*-condition of discriminative realization (*viveka-khyāti*). When ordinary awareness [at this highest accomplished level of *saṃprajñāta-samādhi* or Dharmamegha or *prasaṃkhyāna*] becomes indifferent even to discriminative realization, it inhibits (*niruṇaddhi*)[20] even that discrimination. Ordinary awareness reaches a condition in which only residual predispositions (*saṃskāra*) are operative. That is known as the "seedless" (*nir-bīja*) [or content-less] awareness (*samādhi*). Therein nothing at all is cognized—it is the "non-intentional" or "content-less" awareness (*a-saṃprajñāta-samādhi*). The cessation of the functioning of ordinary awareness is, thus, twofold. [That is to say, there is the "one-pointed" level as in the *saṃprajñāta-samādhi* and the totally "inhibited" content-less level as in the *a-saṃprajñāta-samādhi*.]

*Yogasūtra* 1.3 [Preface by *Vyāsa Bhāṣya*]: When ordinary awareness is in the condition of no longer experiencing objects, what is the inherent nature of consciousness (*puruṣa*), whose essence is (usually) the illumination of the contents of ordinary awareness? **Then there is the condition of the seer [that is, consciousness] in its inherent form (*svarūpa*).**

[*Vyāsa Bhāṣya*] Then, consciousness (*citi-śakti*) is situated in its own essential nature, as it were, in spiritual "isolation" (*kaivalya*) [or perhaps better, in spiritual "liberation"/"freedom" in the sense of recognizing that "consciousness" is totally distinct from the mind-body/thought-extension "awareness" of the *triguṇa/mūlaprakṛti*]. When ordinary awareness (*citta*), however, is functioning in its usual manner of cognizing objects, consciousness continues to be in its own inherent nature, although it appears not to be so. [That is, consciousness appears to be what it is not, even though, in fact, it is unchanging and without intermixture.]

> *Yogasūtra* 1.4 [Preface by *Vyāsa Bhāṣya*] How (is it possible that consciousness comes to appear to be different from what it is)? It appears to be different inasmuch as objects are displayed in it. **Otherwise [that is, when consciousness is not in its pure state] there is conformity with the functions of ordinary awareness.**
>
> [*Vyāsa Bhāṣya*] The functions of ordinary awareness in everyday life appear to be indistinguishable from consciousness. [Hence, the need for discerning (*viyoga*) the distinction between "consciousness" (*puruṣa*) and "awareness" (*citta-sattva*), namely, "the cessation of the functioning of ordinary awareness," which is the definition and goal of Pātañjala-Yoga, that is set forth as an "explanation of Sāṃkhya" (*sāṃkhya-pravacana*).]

The term "consciousness" in English is perhaps the best term for this unique notion of *citi-śakti* or *puruṣa*. The English term is derived from the Latin "*scire*" ("to know") with the affix, "*con*," meaning "along with" or "together with." The term "*con-scire*" suggests, then, that there is some-thing present along with what is known. The term "awareness" is the best term for the *citta*, since awareness refers primarily to what is known together with the process of knowing it. The term "awareness" is from the Anglo-Saxon "gewaer" and related to the German "gewahr" and refers to objects (contents) that are noticed, discerned, or caught sight of and the process of accomplishing that. Consciousness is always present simply as a bare witness (*sākṣin*), whereas the functioning of ordinary awareness involves the transactions of the subject-object world of everyday experience. The realm of awareness is the realm in which there are objects, both gross and subtle, to be encountered, sense capacities for apprehending the objects, both gross and subtle, and subjects or egos that apprehend the world (*Yogasūtra* 1.41). Awareness, then, is always intentional in the sense that life in the world is always "about" something, whether believing, desiring, hoping, or acting. It is the realm in which language functions, and it is the realm in which the beginningless wheel of becoming turns for all embodied life forms "from Brahmā down to a blade of grass." Consciousness, on the other hand, in its fundamental nature is understood to be non-intentional or non-thetic, a bare, content-less presence which is neither subject nor object in terms of the intentionality of

awareness. To be sure, objects, subjects, and the apprehending that links up objects and subjects are shown or appear in consciousness, but consciousness only illumines or reveals all of these as being not consciousness. Consciousness because it is content-less and non-intentional, can only show itself as what it is not. Hence, it appears as if it is the intentional contents of ordinary awareness, and these contents in turn appear as if they are conscious. In other words, a double negation takes place with consciousness appearing as what it is not and awareness appearing as what it is not. Yet it is crucial to understand that both principles (*citi-śakti* and *citta*) can only be what they are by appearing as what they are not. That is, *citta* becomes aware of itself by means of the presence of what it appears not to be. Similarly, *citi-śakti* is able to become a witness and to see what it is only by means of the presence of what it appears not to be. In Sanskrit the term "*adhikāra*" refers to the notion of authority, prerogative, competence, and the right to do or function in a certain fashion. One might well say, therefore, that it is the *adhikāra* of *citi-śakti* to appear as what it is not and to be a simple, content-less witness. It is the *adhikāra* of *citta* to make the tripartite material energy continuum (*triguṇa*) appear as what it is not, that is, to make it appear as if it were conscious. More than that, however, it is the *adhikāra* of *citta* to provide the intentional awareness (*viveka-khyāti*) that this double negation must and can be undone (*viyoga*). Only then is embodied life able to recognize what, in fact, has always been true, that there is a transcendent freedom (*kaivalya*) that is as near to embodiment as embodiment itself inasmuch as it makes the awareness of embodiment and its transcendent freedom possible.

Pātañjala-Yoga (and/or Sāṃkhya), then, presents its argument in the following fashion. First, there is the claim that what appears to be the realm of ordinary awareness (that is, *citta*) is not really, in fact, a "mental" realm that is separate from embodiment, but rather a modality of a fundamental materialist/physicalist realm of *triguṇa/traiguṇya* made up of the constituent processes of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, which is equivalent to *prakṛti* or *mūlaprakṛti*. This realm, although fully real and coherent, is nevertheless profoundly misleading because afflicted (*kleśa*) beginninglessly (*an-ādi*) by ignorance (*avidyā*), egoity (*asmitā*), attachment (*rāga*), repulsion (*dveṣa*), and a tendency to cling to its own mistaken self-understanding (*abhiniveśa*) (or what eliminative materialists would call "folk psychology" or everyday naively believed "person" theory).

Within the *traiguṇya* realm itself, however, there is the seed of discernment (*citta-sattva*), which permits a process of reflection (*viveka-khyāti*) and which allows one gradually (through philosophical analysis and meditation), utilizing one's inherent capacities (*vṛtti*) (perception, language, memory, and so forth), to overcome the mistaken experiences of ordinary awareness. *Thus far, Pātañjala-Yoga is a form of eliminative materialism/physicalism.* Ordinary awareness cannot be reinterpreted or reduced in any of the usual materialist reductions. It must be eliminated in favor of a new explanatory framework along the lines of *traiguṇya* = *sattva*, *rajas and tamas* = *mūlaprakṛti*. (*Mutatis mutandis*, I might add parenthetically, the *guṇa* theory could well lend itself to a recasting in terms of the eliminative naturalism that has been proposed in some of the work of scientific theorizing of figures such as John Archibald Wheeler and the Churchlands).[21]

Let me move, however, to the next step in the Pātañjala-Yoga (and Sāṃkhya) argument, namely, eliminative dualism. As the *Vyāsa Bhāṣya* points out, when reflective discernment (*viveka-khyāti*) reaches its limit, there is "nothing" more to discern:

> When ordinary awareness becomes indifferent even to discriminative realization, it inhibits (*niruṇaddhi*) even that discrimination.…That is known as the "seedless" (*nir-bīja*) [or content-less] awareness (*samādhi*). Therein nothing at all is cognized—it is the "non-intentional" or "content-less" awareness (*a-saṃprajñāta-samādhi*).…
>
> Then, consciousness (*citi-śakti*) is situated in its own essential nature, as it were, in spiritual "isolation" (*kaivalya*).…When ordinary awareness (*citta*), however, is functioning in its usual manner of cognizing objects, consciousness continues to be in its own inherent nature, although it appears not to be so.

The basic dualism is that between "ordinary awareness" (*citta*) (= *prakṛti*) and "consciousness" (*citi-śakti*) (= *puruṣa*), and it is an "eliminative" dualism in two important senses. First, the "consciousness" side of the dualism is neither mind, thought, nor mental states of any kind, nor any of the other ways usually used to describe consciousness. All such notions are expelled or eliminated from the explanatory characterization of consciousness and ascribed, rather, to the side of *traiguṇya* = *sattva*, *rajas*

and *tamas*. Even more startling, however, it is an "eliminative dualism" in the sense that it reverses the notion of the One and the Many. For Pātañjala-Yoga (and Sāṃkhya) "consciousness" (*puruṣa*, *citi-śakti*) is construed pluralistically (*puruṣa-bahutva*) (= the Many), whereas the realm of *traiguṇya* = *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* = *prakṛti*, *mūlaprakṛti* is a single, internally intelligible world (= the One). Because consciousness is a content-less, non-intentional presence, it, therefore, cannot know or intuit itself. The presence of content-less consciousness can only be intuited by *citta-sattva* in its reflective discerning and in an intuition that the *citta-sattva* in itself is not consciousness. Because *citta* encompasses all manifest embodied life forms in their various trajectories and circumstances (*Yogasūtra* 4.4) in accordance with the varied manifestations of the tripartite process, content-less consciousness can only be disclosed pluralistically. Pātañjala-Yoga and Sāṃkhya, therefore, reject the old cosmic *ātman* of the Upaniṣads and argue instead that content-less consciousness accompanies every particular embodied life form.

Obviously, since consciousness is not an intentional object that can be counted, the notion of a plurality of *puruṣa*s or *citi-śakti*s must be construed in a peculiar sense. Perhaps the most interesting attempt to deal with this peculiar notion of "plurality" is to be found in the work of Krishnachandra Bhattacharya, who argues that the plurality of *puruṣa*s implies the absolute uniqueness of each *puruṣa*. Says Bhattacharya:

> It [the plurality of *puruṣa*s as a general notion] is an abstraction in the sense that it cannot be represented like a universal or a substance as really or apparently comprising individuals (or modes) under it, being intelligible only as the *svarūpa* (or character of being itself) of the individual.…The subject is manifest as what has no character (*nirdharmaka*), but this characterlessness is itself taken as its character of self-manifestness.…
>
> …Selfhood is this necessary universality of a singular, being universal only if uniqueness or the unique-in-general is universal. Unique-in-general means *any* unique, not *all* uniques. "All A is B" indeed means "*any* A is B" but "any A is B" need not mean "all A is B," for even the distributive *all* has an implied collective character. As applied to the object, any and all may be regarded as equivalents but not as applied to the subject.…In point of being, each subject is absolute.…In this sense

> we may say that the self is known in *buddhi* [*citta*] as having with it a community of selves (1956: 195–96).

The Pātañjala-Yoga view, it would seem, is that non-intentional consciousness (*citi-śakti*, *puruṣa*) is the warrant for the absolute unique significance of every embodied life form "from Brahmā down to a blade of grass." Non-intentional consciousness (*puruṣa*), then, inasmuch as it illumines the absolute uniqueness of every embodied manifestation becomes the obverse of Leibniz's "identity of indiscernibles." It becomes instead, paradoxically, the warrant for the "discernibility of non-identicals."

The dualism of Yoga, then, is interestingly different from what might be called garden-variety dualisms. As mentioned at the outset of this paper, the difference between the typical dualist claim and a standard materialist claim has to do with whether mental states can plausibly be reduced or explained or interpreted in terms of physical states. The typical dualist wishes to maintain that finally it is implausible to argue that capacities—such as the creative use of language, the processes of logic and reasoning, the intrinsic qualities of sensations, feelings and emotions, and the semantic significance of beliefs and desires and other intentional states—can ever be adequately explained in purely physicalist or materialist terms. The typical materialist maintains, to the contrary, that a purely materialist account is not only possible, but, indeed, quite likely. As Churchland has put it, cited earlier in the paper, "the important point about the standard evolutionary story is that the human species and all of its features are the wholly physical outcome of a purely physical process."

Pātañjala-Yoga (as well as Sāṃkhya), to be sure, is a dualism but not in the sense of any of the standard accounts of dualism, including substance dualism, epiphenomenalist dualism, interactionist property dualism, or elementary property dualism. Given any of these standard positions, Pātañjala-Yoga comes out on the side of eliminative materialism. That is, Pātañjala-Yoga would agree with the materialist claim that language, logic, reasoning, the *qualia* of immediate experience, the semantic significance of beliefs, desires and other intentional states are all best explained in physicalist or materialist terms, that is, in terms of its theory of *triguṇa*. Pātañjala-Yoga, however, also argues for a non-intentional consciousness (*citi-śakti*, *puruṣa*) that is ontologically distinct from the mind-body realm

of *citta* and its functioning. In other words, Pātañjala-Yoga also finally rejects a purely materialist account.

In this regard, as was mentioned in the first section of the paper, Churchland comments about a version of dualism that is possible but has never seriously been argued, at least in Western philosophy. Churchland suggests, as cited earlier, that there is a possible dualist position

> …that to my knowledge has never been cited before, but it is real just the same. Specifically, the P-theory [that is, the notion of mental states or the "Person theory"] might prove to be replaceable by some more general theory of "ectoplasmic essences,"…but to be irreducible to that more general theory. The ontology of the P-theory would thus be eliminated in favour of the ontology of the more general theory that displaced it. We might call this possibility "eliminative dualism"!

Pātañjala-Yoga, I would argue, is precisely this sort of dualism! Whether the theory of *triguṇa* is a plausible account of mental states or whether the concept of a pluralistic contentless consciousness is a plausible notion, are matters, of course, requiring much further critical discussion. I am inclined to think, however, that the manner in which Pātañjala-Yoga (and Sāṃkhya) poses the problem of dualism is worth further consideration in contemporary discussions within the philosophy of mind.

The Pātañjala-Yoga and Sāṃkhya notion of "consciousness" as distinct from "awareness" is, in my view, a distinctive and important contribution that has been influential throughout many of the philosophical and theological traditions of Indian intellectual history. The materialist/physicalist theory of *triguṇa* is widely utilized by all of the Vedānta traditions and most of the *bhakti* theological traditions, although admittedly its permutations are not always cast in a dualistic framework. Moreover, the rigorous notion of a radical "consciousness" (*citi-śakti* or *puruṣa*) that is ontologically and epistemologically distinct from the mind-body realm of empirical existence is a recurring theme in India's theological conceptualizations of God as *īśvara*.

Theological interpretations, of course, differ dramatically from one tradition to another. In Advaita, on the one hand, there is a desperate attempt to avoid the ontological and epistemological reality of *pradhāna* or *mūlaprakṛti* with the realization, nevertheless, that somehow primordial

materiality must somehow be acknowledged over against a quality-less *caitanya*. The price Advaita pays for its avoidance of materiality, however, is perhaps too high, nothing less than the denial of our concrete material existence. In Buddhist traditions, on the other hand, there is a desperate attempt to avoid the ontological and epistemological reality of "consciousness" (*puruṣa*, *ātman*, *citi-śakti*, and so forth), and, again, the price is perhaps too high, namely, the denial of a plausible notion of transcendence. The other Vedāntas and the other *bhakti* theologies, however, beginning with Rāmānuja and continuing throughout the range of the many debates regarding identity and difference, the one and the many or how God (*īśvara*) might be conceptualized utilizing a *prakṛti* model, a *puruṣa* model or some combination of both, continuously struggle with what to do with that elusive and mysterious witness (*sākṣin*) that is somehow always present, providing nothing more (nor less) than our simple awareness of being here rather than there!

**Notes**

1. The present paper is a combination of two former efforts on my part to struggle with explaining the nature of philosophical dualism in Western thought and in Indian thought. Let me briefly explain what I am trying to accomplish.

The first half of this paper (see the section with the subject heading, "Dualism versus Materialism and/or Physicalism") is for the most part a reprint (with appropriate editorial changes to fit the present context) of an article that was originally published in India under the title, "Classical Yoga Philosophy and Some Issues in the Philosophy of Mind" (Larson 2000; reprint 2007), and I wish to acknowledge and thank the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture for permission to reprint much of that article. A version of the original article was first published under the same title in *Religious Studies and Theology* (Larson 1995), and I also wish to acknowledge and thank that journal for permission to use the article in this expanded version.

The second half of the paper (see under the sections "Pātañjala-Yoga Philosophy" and "Yoga's Top-Down Materialism/Physicalism") is for the most part derived or reprinted from a portion of my introduction, "The Philosophy of Yoga," to *Yoga: India's Philosophy of Meditation* (Larson

2008; reprint 2011), primarily the portions on the "Materialism of Yoga" and the "Dualism of Yoga" (pages 78–91), and, again, of course, with appropriate editorial changes to fit the present context; and I wish to acknowledge and thank the publisher, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, for permission to reprint these sections.

A first draft of this paper was given at the East-West Philosophers Conference of the Society for Asian and Comparative Philosophy held at Massey University in Palmerston North, New Zealand, in August 1994, some twenty years ago. A revised draft was then prepared based upon the helpful critique of the earlier draft by Professor Roy Perrett. That original effort focused largely on Western philosophy with only a brief mention of the philosophy of Yoga. In the following years, I have considered the problem of dualism as formulated in the philosophy of Sāṃkhya and Pātañjala-Yoga (or simply Sāṃkhya-Yoga) much more extensively. In this regard, readers may be interested in the full introduction, "The Philosophy of Yoga," to *Yoga: India's Philosophy of Meditation* (Larson 2011). Also, see my articles: Larson, "An Eccentric Ghost in the Machine: Formal and Quantitative Aspects of the Sāṃkhya-Yoga Dualism" (1983) and, more recently, "Pātañjala Yoga in Practice" (2012a).

In any case, I have wanted to pull together the various strands of my writings on the problem of dualism in Western and Indian philosophy for some time, since I think that Sāṃkhya-Yoga dualism is a distinct treatment of the problem of dualism and may well have important implications for current discussions of the general problem of "consciousness" in both Western and Indian philosophy and of "theism" and/or "non-theism" in comparative philosophy.

2. In terms of identifying and naming the various dualist and materialist positions, I have found the following discussions helpful: (*1*) Karl R. Popper's analysis and criticism of radical materialism, panpsychism, epiphenomenalism, and identity theory in Popper and Eccles, *The Self and Its Brain: An Argument for Interactionism* (1983), especially pages 51–99; (*2*) John C. Eccles's discussion of radical materialism, panpsychism, epiphenomenalism, identity theory, and dualist interactionism in Eccles and Robinson, *The Wonder of Being Human: Our Brain and Our Mind* (1985), pages 24–45 and see especially page 34: "Diagrammatic Representation of Brain-Mind Theories"; and (*3*) Paul M. Churchland's discussion of substance dualism, simple dualism, property dualism (epiphe-

nomenalist, interactionist and elemental), reductive materialism, functionalism, and eliminative materialism in his *Scientific Realism and the Plasticity of Mind* (1979: 107–16) and *Matter and Consciousness: A Contemporary Introduction to the Philosophy of Mind* (1988: 6–49). Other important works that have been consulted for this paper are the following (in alphabetical order by author): Antonio Damasio, *Self Comes to Mind*: *Constructing the Conscious Brain* (2010); Daniel C. Dennett, *Consciousness Explained* (1991); David Eagleman, *Incognito: The Secret Lives of the Brain* (2011); Henri Ey, *Consciousness: A Phenomenological Study of Being Conscious and Becoming Conscious* (1978); Michael S. Gazzinga, *Who's In Charge: Free Will and the Science of the Brain* (2011); Richard L. Gregory, ed., *The Oxford Companion to the Mind* (1987); William G. Lycan, ed., *Mind and Cognition: A Reader* (1990); Stephen Priest, *Theories of the Mind* (1991); Hilary Putnam, "The Nature of Mental States" (1991); Richard Rorty, *Objectivity*, *Relativism and Truth* (1991a), and especially the essay, "Non-reductive Physicalism" (pages 113–25); David M. Rosenthal, ed., *The Nature of Mind* (1991); John Searle, *Minds*, *Brains and Science* (1984) and *Mind: A Brief Introduction* (2004); and Anthony Smith, *The Mind* (1984).

3. "…because, on the one hand, I have a clear and distinct idea of myself in so far as I am only a thinking and unextended thing, and because, on the other hand I have a distinct idea of the body in so far as it is only an extended thing but which does not think, it is certain that I, that is to say my mind, by which I am what I am, is entirely and truly distinct from my body, and may exist without it" (Descartes 1968: 156).

4. A reasonably full statement of Descartes's own method and his basic deductions are nicely set forth in his "Letter from the Author to the Translator of the *Principles of Philosophy*, to serve as a Preface":

> …by considering that he who decides to doubt everything cannot nevertheless doubt that he exists while he doubts, and that what reasons thus, in not being able to doubt itself and doubting nevertheless all the rest, is not what we call our body, but what we call our soul or thought, I have taken the being or the existence of this thought for the first principle, from which I very clearly deduced the following truths, namely, that there is a God who is the author of all that is in the world, and who, being the source of all truth, has not created our understanding of such

> a nature as to be deceived in the judgements it forms of the things of which it has a very clear and distinct perception. Those are all the principles of which I make use concerning immaterial or metaphysical things, from which I deduce very clearly the principles of corporeal or physical things, namely, that there are bodies extended in length, breadth and depth, which have diverse shapes and move in various ways. Such are, in brief, all the principles from which I deduce the truth of all other things (Descartes 1968: 179–80).

5. For an excellent discussion of epiphenomenalism, see Popper and Eccles (1983: 72–74).

6. Popper and Eccles (1983), especially pages 373–76, but also see the entire book, *passim*, which argues at great length for the "strong dualist hypothesis."

7. For an excellent anthology which nicely brings together many of the most important articles regarding the various interpretations of materialism, see Rosenthal, ed. (1991), especially the articles in the third Part, entitled "Mind and Body," pages 161–288.

8. For a useful, brief discussion of the "type-type" versus "token-token" accounts, see Priest (1991: 113–14).

9. Compare, for example, his well-known essay, "The Nature of Mental States" (Putnam 1991).

10. Priest has characterized Davidson's position as follows:

> The two central tenets of Davidson's anomalous monism are the materialist view that every mental event is identical with some physical event, and the view (usually denied by materialists) that there are no psychophysical laws. It remains an open possibility on Davidson's theory that every event is mental under some description, but he holds it as certain that, if some event is mental, then it is also physical. The fact that there exist no psycho-physical laws—that no mental events may be subsumed under deterministic scientific generalizations—entails that mental events cannot be explained in purely physical terms. For example, no law about physical events enables any prediction about a mental event (1991: 117).

11. Searle continues:

> To summarise: on my view, the mind and the body interact, but they are not two different things, since mental phenomena just are features of the brain. One way to characterise this position is to see it as an assertion of both physicalism and mentalism. Suppose we define "naive physicalism" to be the view that all that exists in the world are physical particles with their properties and relations.…And let us define "naive mentalism" to be the view that mental phenomena really exist. There really are mental states; some of them are conscious; many have intentionality; they all have subjectivity; and many of them function causally in determining physical events in the world. The thesis of this first chapter can now be stated quite simply. Naive mentalism and naive physicalism are perfectly consistent with each other. Indeed, as far we can know anything about how the world works, they are not only consistent, they are both true (1984: 26–27).

12. Churchland (1988: 43–49, 1979: 114–16). See also Rorty (1970, 1991b).

13. See, for example, Churchland (2007).

14. I have developed my interpretation of the dualism of Sāṃkhya and Yoga in four earlier publications, and I refer the reader to them as follows: Larson, "An Eccentric Ghost in the Machine: Formal and Quantitative Aspects of the Sāṃkhya-Yoga Dualism" (1983), "Is South Asian *Yoga* 'Philosophy,' 'Religion,' Both or Neither" (1994), "Krishna Chandra Bhattacharyya and the Plurality of *Puruṣa*s (*puruṣa-bahutva*) in Sāṃkhya" (1992), and "Introduction to the Philosophy of Sāṃkhya" (1987: 73–83).

15. For the Sāmkhya references in what follows, see Larson, *Classical Sāṃkhya: An Interpretation of Its History and Meaning* (2012b) and Larson and Bhattacharya, ed., *Sāmkhya: A Dualist Tradition in Indian Philosophy* (1987). For the Sanskrit text of the *Yogasūtra*, the *Yogasūtra-bhāṣya* of Vyāsa and the *Tattvavaiśāradī* of Vācaspatimiśra, I have used *Pātañjala-Yogadarśanam*, ed. Ram Shankar Bhattacharya (1963). For the Sanskrit text and translation of Vijñānabhikṣu's *Yogavārttika*, I have used *Yogavārttika of Vijñānabhikṣu*, ed. and trans. T. S. Rukmani (1981–89). For translations of the *Yogasūtra*, Vyāsa and Vācaspati, I have consulted *The Yoga-System of Patañjali*, trans. James Haughton Woods (1914) and *Yoga Philosophy of Patañjali*, by Hariharānanda Āraṇya (1983). Also, of great value for understanding the original texts of Yoga is Usharbudh

Arya, ed. and trans., *Yoga-Sūtras of Patañjali with the Exposition of Vyāsa*, Volume 1: *Samādhi-pāda* (Arya 1986) and Volume 2: *Sādhana-pāda* (Bhāratī 2001). Finally, although this paper as well as the Yoga volume of the *Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies* do not address technical philological issues, there is now after many years at least the beginning of a new critical edition of the first Pāda of the *Yogasūtra* and the *Vyāsa Bhāṣya*, namely, Philipp André Maas, *Samādhipāda: The First Chapter of the Pātañjalayogaśāstra for the First Time Critically Edited* (2006). For my review article of this important beginning critical effort, see Larson, "Differentiating the Concepts of 'yoga' and 'tantra' in Sanskrit Literary History" (2009).

16. I have discussed the Sāṃkhya ontological materialism together with the manifestation of the various *tattva*s for both Sāṃkhya and Yoga in my work, *Classical Sāṃkhya: An Interpretation of Its History and Meaning* (Larson 2012b), at some length, and in the two volumes of the *Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies*: Larson and Bhattacharya, eds., *Sāṃkhya: A Dualist Tradition in Indian Philosophy* (1987) and *Yoga: India's Philosophy of Meditation* (2011).

17. Bhattacharya (1963: 4–7). The Sanskrit from the Bhattacharya reading is identical word-for-word with Maas's reading except for his reading of the line, "citi-śaktir apariṇāminy apratisaṃkramā darśita-viṣayā śuddhā ca anantā ca, sattva-guṇātmikā ca iyam ato viparītā viveka-khyātir iti," the last part of which he reads as, "puruṣātmikā seyam, ato viparītā viveka-khyātiḥ iti," which I pointed out in my review article of his book is probably wrong, given the total context.

18. This may be rendered simply as "the Cloud of Truth" and is a technical term, or *saṃjñā*-word, that names the highest level of discrimination that occurs just before final liberation.

19. Here again, "*prasaṃkhyāna*" is a technical term, apparently here synonymous with Dharmamegha.

20. Note the play on "*nirodha*."

21. I have tried to show how this might be done with Wheeler's work in my article, Larson, "The Anthropic Principle: Life, Cosmos and Consciousness" (2003). See also in this regard Churchland's "Catching Consciousness in a Recurrent Net" in *Neurophilosophy at Work* (2007: 1–17). Of similar interest is Churchland's definitive critique of John Searle's philosophy of mind in "Betty Crocker's Theory of Consciousness" (1998).

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