

Yoga

Procedural Devotion to the Right

Shyam Ranganathan

Ranganathan, Shyam. "Yoga: Procedural Devotion to the Right." In *Ethical Theory in Global Perspective*, edited by Michael Hemmingsen. 351-66. Albany: SUNY, 2024. (Draft)

1. Introduction

It is common for people the world over to become aware of Yoga (the philosophical system) via postural exercises (*āsana*), also called “yoga.” It is hence common for people to understand, learn, and practice yoga in terms of these exercises. And in so far as people are motivated to engage in these exercises called “yoga” (whatever they may be) for further ends (such as mental or physical health, liberation from trouble, enlightenment, etc.) it seems that yoga is a consequentialist project, where the practice of yoga is itself motivated and justified by further ends.

Another reason that Yoga is interpreted as being a version of consequentialism is that it is typical for people to interpret East Asian and South Asian moral theory in terms of available and familiar options in the Western tradition (cf. Sreekumar 2012; cf. Theodor 2010). However, the reason that these exercises are called “yoga” is that they are a way to practice the distinct moral philosophy: Yoga. This metaethical and normative theory is systematically elaborated in

Patañjali's *Yoga Sūtra*, but also in the *Bhagavad Gītā* (and the wider epic it is a part of, the *Mahābhārata*) (both 200 CE), and much earlier in the *Upaniṣads* (1000-500 BCE).¹

While Yoga (also called Bhakti, “devotion”) is a comprehensive philosophy, it is importantly an ancient and *basic* ethical theory, unique to South Asia (what is commonly called the Indian tradition). It is not a variant of virtue ethics, consequentialism and deontology, but is an additional *kind* of moral theory. And in its literary articulation, in dialog and story (such as the *Mahābhārata* and the *Upaniṣads*), it has a long history of criticizing teleological ethical theories, including—and especially—consequentialism. It is a radically procedural ethical theory, does not require the Good to elucidate the Right, and provides a critical response to all three alternatives.

The main obstacle to understanding Yoga is methodological. It pertains to how we can understand philosophical options that we do not necessarily agree with, and which are novel relative to our background assumptions and beliefs. Without methodological clarity, we will be doomed to understand alternatives in terms of familiar options. Yoga itself provides direction on how to engage in the project of philosophical understanding, thereby grounding itself not only as a normative ethical theory, but as the philosophy (and the metaethics) we need to understand all possible philosophical and theoretical options.

2. Grounding Philosophical Understanding

Before I began my contributions to the study of South Asian moral philosophy, the ordinary way that authors wrote on Indian philosophy, and anything connected to South Asia, was to proceed by assuming their own world view—including a range of options for ethical theory—which would then be used as the stock of explanatory resources for making sense of South Asian philosophical discourse. In the literature this mode of explanation is called *interpretation*. If

South Asians had a word that they used to discuss ethical issues—and they did: “*dharma*”—each such use would be interpreted in light of the beliefs of the interpreter. The result is that “*dharma*” could only be acknowledged as meaning “ethics” or “morality,” particularly when the use of “*dharma*” in South Asian literature coincided with what the interpreter would be willing to call “ethics” or “morality.”

Narcissism in the ordinary sense involves an inflated sense of the importance of one’s own opinions. Interpretation as an explanation by way of one’s own opinions is methodological narcissism. With the interpretive method, South Asian moral philosophy disappears. The result of this methodological narcissism is the widespread erroneous conclusion that “*dharma*” is a term with many irreconcilable meanings.²

Interpretation itself has many defenders in contemporary Western philosophy.³ It is a most Western mode of explanation, just as, and especially because, reliance upon belief (an attitude that a thought, *p*, is true) as an explanatory resource is a very basic feature of the Western tradition. To the extent that belief plays a role in South Asian philosophy, it is identified as the key factor in erroneous cognition and the fabrication of an ersatz mental reality.⁴

From what I can tell, the motivation for this approach to understanding as dependent on belief (as though the conflation of thought and belief is unavoidable) is a historical and ancient theory of thought and language in the Western tradition which we might call the linguistic model of thought.⁵ Accordingly, thought is the meaning of what we say—a theory that has roots in the ancient Greek idea of *logos* (thought, speech, reason). If thought is the meaning of what I say, then the line between what I say and what I think is blurred. But as what I would say is typically what I believe, then the line between belief (the propositional attitude of endorsing a thought *p*) and a thought (*p*) is blurred: all explanation seems like an interpretive exercise.

Given this methodology, a deep commitment to the linguistic account of thought in the Western tradition, and the pre-eminence of virtue ethics, consequentialism and deontology in the Western tradition, Western interpreters would only be able to account for South Asian ethical theory in so far as it was an example of familiar theories. But since South Asian ethical theories differ from Western counterparts, even when we are considering examples of virtue ethics, consequentialism and deontology, South Asian examples cannot be identified by interpretation. Worse, Yoga/Bhakti—a theory unique to South Asia—would be completely uninterpretable. Instead, as the philosophical tradition with roots in ancient Greek thought expands (a tradition I call the West) it tries to interpret everything on the basis of its intellectual history, and the residua gets called “religion”—with South Asian religious identity explicitly manufactured in contexts of British colonialism (Ranganathan 2018b). The acknowledgment of South Asia moral theorizing and South Asian religion are hence inversely correlated.

One problem with interpretation is that it relies upon our beliefs to deliver explanation; the explanation it delivers depends upon our beliefs. Our beliefs in turn depend upon the contingencies of our experiences, as well as various sociological and natural factors. Whatever result we arrive at in an interpretation tells us more about our beliefs than what is being interpreted. These beliefs will be determined (in part) by empirical influences outside of our control. In Yoga, these external empirical considerations comprise nature, or *prakṛti*. But these considerations are also narcissistic, as they consist in the inflation of the importance of one’s own opinion. Yoga identifies this fault of narcissism as egotism (*asmitā*): the fault of conflating oneself with one’s outlook (YS II.6). While we might feel that our interpretations protect our independence as they rely on our beliefs, belief undermines our independence as it depends on external influence.

In contrast to interpretation, I favor what I call *explication*. Explication is the application of logical validity to the task of understanding a philosophical theory. If we were to explicate talk about *dharma* in South Asian philosophy, we would look to every perspective's propositions to derive, via logical validity, a theory that entails, via validity, its claims about *dharma*. We would further deduce that the topic or concept of *DHARMA* is what everyone is disagreeing about with competing theories of *dharma*. If we were to engage in explication, we would observe that the topic of disagreement where *dharma* is concerned is *THE RIGHT* (PROCEDURE) or *THE GOOD* (OUTCOME). We could apply this same method to discussions of morality or ethics in the European tradition, or the *dao* in the Chinese tradition, and we would find the same topic of dissent. Moreover, we would see that there are four basic theories that differ on the relationship between *THE RIGHT* or *THE GOOD*. One of these basic four normative theories includes an option not heard of in the Western tradition: Yoga.

While this distinction between explication (explanation by the logical ordering of propositions in perspectives that entails their claims and furthermore the topic of conversation) and interpretation (explanation by way of propositional attitudes, especially belief, which are not the objects of logic) is a modern way of talking about two mutually incompatible methodologies, they are themselves modern retellings of a basic distinction between Yoga and anti-yoga, which we learn about at the start of the *Yoga Sūtra*. But—and here's the catch—we will only be able to understand this if we are explicating. For if we choose to interpret, as has been common in the “study” of South Asian philosophy, we would only ever appreciate what we already believe, which is narcissistic. However, if we explicate, we see that the *Yoga Sūtra* begins with an important distinction: First, we learn that Yoga is the normative constraint of mental content that results in the autonomy of the agent from what they contemplate. (YS I.2-3). Second, failure to

engage in this activity results in the identification with what one contemplates via propositional attitudes (*vṛtti-sārūpyam*) (YS I.4).

What is centrally important about this distinction is that it presents us with a *choice* between two mutually exclusive approaches to relating to mental content. As they are mutually exclusive, they cannot both be endorsed without contradiction. Which methodology we endorse is up to us, but there are distinct consequences to either option. And the choice is methodological, not a matter of what the facts are. Yet the anti-yoga interpretive option treats the facts (especially as one sees it) as dispositive. The anti-yoga option is thereby out of step with what is required to appreciate the methodological choice before us. Hence, we must endorse Yoga, which is the methodology of distinguishing between options. We can spell this out, in standard form, in a disjunctive syllogism implicit in the opening aphorisms of the *Yoga Sūtra*:

Either we should organize mental content to understand the options and preserve our autonomy (Yoga), or we simply identify with the facts as we see it (anti-yoga).

As we understand that (1) is a disjunction of two mutually exclusive methodologies, and not a fact, in understanding (1) it is not the case that we can simply identify with the facts as we see it (anti-yoga).

Therefore, we must organize mental content to understand the options and preserve our autonomy (Yoga).

Adopting Yoga does allow us to appreciate the choice before us, but what we have to give up is our self-identification with a perspective, or interpretation. This is described as an ethical cleansing (*dharmameghasamādhi*) that results in our autonomy (*kaivalya*) (YS IV 29-34). Put another way, even understanding that there are choices and options requires getting over a moral impediment, namely the egotism/narcissism of interpretation.

This disjunctive syllogism, implicit in the dense opening aphorisms of the *Yoga Sūtra*, captures the metaethics—or metaphilosophical procedure—of Yoga. It entails the methodology of Yoga, which in general terms allows us to make sense of the options. Explication is an example of this Yogic methodology, and in the next section I will explicate four basic ethical theories, of which Yoga is one. Yoga functions both as a metaethics and as a normative ethics in so far as one can endorse the practice of Yoga (the metaethics) as one's personal practice (normative ethics). Then it is recast not merely as a methodology, but as the practice of devotion to the ideal of the Right; the ideal of personhood; and the ideal of Sovereignty: Īśvara. Īśvara in turn is comprised of two procedural aspects (YS I.24) that we are further committed to by way of this devotion: unconservatism (*tapas*) and self-governance (*svādhyāya*) (YS II.1). When we explicate, for instance, we engage in both of these subsidiary procedures. To explicate requires that we get over prejudices and narcissism that get in the way of understanding other perspectives (unconservatism) and we also give ourselves the freedom to choose our own values, not as a matter of casual propositional attitudes of what comes before our attention, but as a matter of deliberate, determinative choice (self-governance).

3. Normative Theory

To employ explication in understanding the options is to deductively derive from a perspective its theory that entails its controversial claim about its topic. We can then understand the central concept of the topic in terms of what competing theories are disagreeing about. In the case of *DHARMA* or *ETHICS* this is *THE RIGHT* or *THE GOOD*. The first three options are familiar:

Virtue Theory: the *good* (state) conditions/causes the *right* (actions).

Consequentialism: the *good* (ends) justifies the *right* (actions).

These two theories are teleological. What is distinctive about virtue ethics is that it is a theory of moral production, of the requirements of making the right kinds of decisions and doing the right kind of thing (Hursthouse 1996, 2013). Consequentialism in contrast is a theory of moral justification: it helps us determine what we should do, given certain ends. Both can be run together in a teleological ethical theory. For sure, philosophers and authors writing on virtue ethics or consequentialism may have fuzzier or more expansive theories in mind. This may be because their project is fundamentally interpretive, concerned with elaborating the implications of what they believe is virtue ethics or consequentialism. For our explicatory purposes, we reconstruct these options in terms of a basic disagreement. And this sheds light on two *procedural* options. The first is well known:

Deontology: the *right* (choice, reasoning, considerations) justifies the *good* (actions, rights, outcomes ...).

Deontology is the mirror image of consequentialism. It occupies the same kind of philosophical space as it too is concerned with providing moral justification. But in this case what is being justified are outcomes (whether actions or freedoms) that already have something going for them (they are good in some measure). These outcomes become duties or rights in so far as they can be justified by the relevant procedural considerations (cf. Alexander and Moore Winter 2012).

The first three options can be found in the South Asian tradition (Ranganathan 2017a). But what is certainly unique to this tradition is a fourth basic ethical theory, which is the mirror opposite of virtue ethics:

Bhakti/Yoga: The Right conditions or produces the Good.

Whereas virtue ethics gives priority to the goodness of the virtuous agent in its account of moral activity, Yoga is the opposite: it gives priority to right procedure as *producing* good outcomes.

Here is one reason that Yoga is incorrectly interpreted as a version of consequentialism. Like consequentialism it identifies good ends as something that should be valued. However, unlike in consequentialism these ends do not justify our moral activity. Rather, in Yoga, right activity consists in devotion to the procedural ideal of the Right, called Īśvara, which we could translate as “Sovereignty” or “the Lord.” If anything counts as a justification for our doing, it is this procedural devotion to the Right, not the good (and hence, Yoga is not a form of consequentialism).

Īśvara is often confused for a theistic God, but they are opposites. The theist’s God (a virtue theoretic model agent) is defined by Its goodness. Īśvara, in contrast is defined by its rightness. It is hence an ideal of choosing and doing that plays a role in our own personal transformation when we decide to be devoted to it. Whereas the good God might tell us the right thing to do, we have to figure that out via our devotion to Īśvara.

Īśvara is comprised of two essential traits: it is unconservative and it is also self-determining and self-governing. Hence to fully practice this devotion to Īśvara (*Īśvara praṇidhānāna*), the Yogi practices these two traits of Sovereignty: self-challenge by getting over old habits (*tapas*), while also owning choices and values as a matter of self-governance (*svādhyāya*). These three practices—Devotion to Sovereignty, Unconservatism and Self-Governance—constitute the three basic practices of Yoga as a normative theory (YS II.1). The good is nothing more than the perfection of this practice. It is not an independent outcome that can justify practice, and hence practice cannot be treated as a means to an end. Instead, good outcome is rather what we bring about via our devotion to the practice. Therefore, goodness can play no role in the Yoga account of right action. In this respect, Yoga is even more procedural than deontology.

A basis of the Yoga criticism of both consequentialism and virtue ethics is the observation that while good outcomes correlate with ethical practice, it is a mistake to treat these outcomes as conditions or causes of proper ethical practice. True, good outcomes and character are important. But these are best thought of as outcomes of moral practice, not as the conditions of moral practice or moral justification. For instance, the expected utility of unusual and wonderful accomplishment (including an improved character) is usually very low, statistically. Even while working to achieve these accomplishments, they remain distant and unlikely outcomes. If we measured the meaningfulness of our effort in terms of that unlikely outcome, our effort will seem like time wasted. Many other common, unspectacular ends will have a higher expected utility as we have a higher likelihood of success in pursuing them. But if we give up measuring the meaningfulness of our activity in terms of the outcomes, we can commit procedurally to the Ideal of being a procedure based individual. And in due time, with repeated practice, the unusual outcome will be produced as a by-product of our devotion. This is not because that end justified the practice, but because we got rid of ends as justifications for practice. This is a theme of Kṛṣṇa's famous argument for Yoga in the *Bhagavad Gītā*.

The *Bhagavad Gītā* is part of the epic, the *Mahābhārata*, which is a sustained dialectical investigation into the problems of the familiar three ethical theories. These theories are united in defining the right by way of the good. This commonality gives rise to *conventional morality*: the morality of good character (virtue ethics), good ends (consequentialism), and good rules (deontology). The story reveals the problem with this approach to ethics: it leads to morally good people (in the story, the Pāṇḍavas, including Arjuna) constraining their activity by way of the possibilities of the good, which are undermined by moral parasites (in the story, the Kauravas).

While the conventionally moral constrain themselves by conventional morality, moral parasites downgrade the prospects of the conventional moralist's utility by: (a) acting outside of the bounds of conventional morality to usurp the conventional moralists' utility, and by (b), relying upon the self-imposed moral restraint of the conventionally moral that prevents them from retaliating. Conventional morality is hence turned into a weapon by moral parasites against the conventionally moral. This is already a state of war. Arjuna, the protagonist of the *Gītā*, provides virtue theoretic, consequentialist and deontological arguments against fighting the moral parasites, while Kṛṣṇa (in the dialog, Īśvara) spends the entire dialog motivating Yoga on its own terms, and as a means of resetting the moral order. By switching to Yoga, the formerly conventionally moral are no longer bound by conventional constraints and this deflates the advantage of moral parasites. And whereas the moral parasites have no common cause with all other people, Yoga consists in devotion to the common interest of people (Ranganathan 2019). The just (Yoga) warrior hence acts outside of the bounds of conventional moral expectation, but in a manner that is consistent with everyone's interests, thereby resetting the moral order and ridding the world of moral parasites.

4. Ideal and Non-Ideal Ethical Theory

In the *Yoga Sūtra*, as with the *Bhagavad Gītā*, we see a similar recognition of the importance and requirement to destroy moral convention as a foundation for Yogic practice. This is formalized in the Eight Limbs of Yoga, which Patañjali describes as a remedial measure (*upāya*) to correct difficulties faced in the practice of Yoga (II.26). In modern terms, the basic practice of Yoga as devotion to Īśvara, with the concomitant practice of the traits of Sovereignty (Unconservativism and Self-governance) constitutes ideal theory—an account of how we ought to proceed in

contexts lacking obstacles. The Eight Limbs of Yoga corresponds to Yoga's non-ideal theory, and it is what we engage when there are impediments.

The first limb, called *yama* (YS II. 30-36), is a universal obligation to disrupt systemic harm (*ahiṃsā*), that reveals the fact (*satya*) of people not deprived of their requirements (*asteya*), their personal boundaries respected (*brahmacharaya*), and no one hoarding (*aparigrahaya*). This activism has the effect of getting opponents to renounce their hostility (YS II.36). It not only exemplifies a devotion to Sovereignty, but it also has the effect of attenuating social impediments to the ideal practice.

Having engaged in this activism, one can then proceed on to the *niyama* (the second limb) where the practitioner commits to the three basic ideal practices of Yoga, while working on being content and pure in this commitment (YS II.32).

The third limb is *āsana*, which is literally described as the comfortable steady state of continuous yogic practice (YS II.46-8). In contemporary yoga talk, “*āsana*” is the word for postural exercise. This exercise bears a resemblance to what is discussed in the *Yoga Sūtra* to the extent that postures are ways to practice the three basic procedural commitments of Yoga. This, and all further yogic practice, happens within the context of the original activism: *yama*. Contemporary practices called “yoga” are often ethical deviations in so far as they do not occur within the context of this activism. The philosophical importance of *āsana* is more than physical posture. It is described as initiating the twin procedural accomplishments of continuous effort and endless relaxation. This is the practice of occupying the space created by the first two limbs (YS II.47).

The fourth Limb is *prāṇāyāma*, which superficially relates to practices of breath, but is also described as the process of deconstructing natural barriers between oneself and the external

world (YS II.51). The fifth limb of *pratyāhāra* is the withdrawal of the senses from objects, but the correlative abstraction of objects from beliefs. This puts the senses under the control of the person (YS II.54-55).

The first five limbs form the core of the social aspects of Yoga's non-ideal theory. While it may seem as though many of the limbs are goal oriented, they are called limbs of yoga as they are means of implementing Yoga, the ultra-procedural ethical theory, both metaethically and ethically. Each limb involves the metaethical challenge of appreciating alternatives, and each exemplifies devotion to sovereignty and the two component practices of unconservatism and self-governance.

The last three limbs are bundled together as what one practices "with-yama" (*saṃyama*). They constitute three procedures essential for research and problem-solving: *dhāraṇā* (concentration, focus), *dhyāna* (following implications) and *samādhi* (involvement with findings). Together they allow the practitioner to overcome problems and gain unusual powers. Patanjali notes that these very same powers can pose obstacles for achieving liberating outcomes as striving for them is a consequentialist endeavor (YS III.38, 52). The way out of being stuck in non-ideal ethical practice, by avoiding this regression to consequentialism, is overcoming methodological narcissism (interpretation) in every context via an ethical cleanse: *dharma-megha-samādhi*. This refocuses activity to methodological and procedural considerations free of teleology, and delivers the practitioner into an ideal state of autonomy (*kaivalya*) (IV.29-34).

5. Influence of Yoga

Martin Luther King's influence on subsequent, progressive protest movements is general knowledge. And it is also well known that King sites M.K. Gandhi as his source for, and for

demonstrating the effectiveness of, nonviolent direct action (King September 1, 1958 (Accessed 2021)). What is not widely appreciated is that Gandhi derived his political philosophy from the *Yoga Sūtra* (cf. Puri 2015, who shows Gandhi extensively crediting Patañjali for his politics in his collected works). Yoga has had a global influence on progressive politics, and it (a) understands persons not in terms of superficial natural attributes (whether race, sex, gender, orientation, species) but in terms of a person's interest in their own self-mastery as the crucial ingredient in thriving; and (b), acknowledges the necessity of discarding conventional ideas of the good to make room for people of diverse natural constitutions. Indeed, whereas the linguistic account of thought that we find dominating the Western tradition encourages anthropocentric models of personhood (as language as studied by linguistics is naturally human), the lack of such a commitment in the Yogic tradition and the emphasis on the procedural requirements of thriving allows for an expansive approach to moral standing.

Not all living things are persons (for instance, plants), but those that *are* persons (most animals, and the Earth) require their own Unconservativism and Self-governance as a condition of their thriving. On the Yoga account, legitimate activism is devotion to an abstract ideal of Sovereignty, and this makes room for a diversity of sovereign individuals with a diversity of perspectives. Yogic activism is indistinguishable from the ordinary life activity of the yogi, except that it meets with conventional moral resistance. It is a public exercise of explication. This activism continues even after conventional moral resistance ends. By contrast, illegitimate protest is conservative and revolves round the egotism of individuals, which is their identification with their perspective (which they may share with others by way of national or ethnic identity or by way of voluntary affiliation). Conservative activism in this case is purely strategic, centered around some idea of the good, and ceases when ends are met, or the cost

associated with the activity downgrades the expected utility of the activity. It is a public exercise of interpretation.

6. Summary

All ethical theories are practical in so far as they illuminate *THE RIGHT OR THE GOOD* as the foundation of choosing. The concrete applicability of Yoga begins with its metaethics, which makes clear that there are two incompatible methods we could adopt to understand the options. Interpretation reifies our experiences and prejudices as the criterion of explanation. Explication in contrast allows us to understand options that we may not agree with, and this essential practice of Yoga's metaethics has concrete epistemic outcomes for choosers and deliberators: it helps make the diversity of options clear.

Next, the normative ethics of Yoga, which consists in Devotion to Sovereignty and the practice of the essential traits of Sovereignty—unconservatism and self-governance—is the DIY (Do It Yourself) normative ethical practice. Here, each practitioner—via their own devotion to Sovereignty—has to come to terms with their own past as something that they will not allow to constrain them (unconservatism). But they must also be transparent to themselves about the values they choose to live by (self-governance). While this in the abstract is the same for all people, how it plays out in people's lives will depend in part on the past that they must come to terms with and the values they choose to abide by.

However, this normative practice entails a certain *normative* account of persons as the types of things that thrive given their own unconservatism and self-governance. This normative practice hence entails a solidarity with other people who similarly have an interest in the same practice. This requires political activism, as flushed out by the non-ideal ethical theory. As the

normative practice of Yoga teaches us that the interests of persons are identical, it entails a requirement for a shared, safe, public space for individuals. It was historically the ground of social justice movements the world over and continues to provide the *deep structure* rationale for activity that disrupts systemic harm. Yoga brings to light the ways in which people are often willing to put up with systemic injustice because it seems to maximize utility, measured in some way. But what this measure ignores are persons who are united in sharing an interest in unconservatism and self-governance. The activism of Yoga is an outcome of the normative practice, which is decolonial: it emphasizes ensuring that people are not deprived what is theirs, that their personal boundaries are respected, and that at the end, there is no appropriation or hoarding.

The philosophy of Yoga is unique in specifying the procedure that we require to understand alternative options. Any such option has to be understood not in terms of our propositional attitudes, but rather its theoretical implications, and Yoga the meta ethical practice specifies what this looks like. It involves organizing and controlling mental content to permit our own autonomy as evaluators. But it also entails a normative practice of devotion to Sovereignty, which has been historically influential beyond its cultural origin, but has yet been occluded by colonialism, which operates according to the interpretive considerations Yoga criticizes. Learning from this ancient practice can help us correct the course of the academic study of philosophy and bring clarity to the challenges of normative practice.

Further Reading

Primary Sources

Patañjali. 2008. *Patañjali's Yoga Sūtra: Translation, Commentary and Introduction by Shyam Ranganathan*. Black Classics. Delhi: Penguin Black Classics.

Secondary Sources

Alexander, Larry and Michael Moore. 2012. "Deontological Ethics." In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Edward N. Zalta.

url=<<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2012/entries/ethics-deontological/>>.

Hursthouse, Rosalind. 1996. "Normative Virtue Ethics." In *How Should One Live?*, edited by Roger Crisp, 19–33. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hursthouse, Rosalind. 2013. *Virtue Ethics*. Edited by Edward N. Zalta. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. URL =

<<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2013/entries/ethics-virtue/>>.

King, Martin Luther, Jr. September 1, 1958 (Accessed 2021). "My Pilgrimage to Nonviolence." In *The Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute*.

<https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/king-papers/documents/my-pilgrimage-nonviolence>.

Maas, Philipp A. 2013. "A Concise Historiography of Classical Yoga Philosophy." In *Historiography and Periodization of Indian Philosophy*, edited by Eli Franco, 53–90. Vienna De Nobili Series.

Puri, Bindu. 2015. *Tagore-Gandhi Debate on Matters of Truth and Untruth*. Springer.

Ranganathan, Shyam. 2016. "Review of David Gordon White's *The Yoga Sutra of Patanjali: A Biography*." *Philosophy East and West* 66, no. 3: 1043–1048.

Ranganathan, Shyam. 2017a. *The Bloomsbury Research Handbook of Indian Ethics*. Edited by Chakravarthi Ram-Prasad and Sor-hoon Tan, *Research Handbooks in Asian Philosophy*: Bloomsbury Academic.

- Ranganathan, Shyam. 2017b. "Patañjali's Yoga: Universal Ethics as the Formal Cause of Autonomy." In *The Bloomsbury Research Handbook of Indian Ethics* edited by Shyam Ranganathan, 177-202. London: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Ranganathan, Shyam. 2017c. "Western Imperialism, Indology and Ethics." In *The Bloomsbury Research Handbook of Indian Ethics*, edited by Shyam Ranganathan, 1–122. London: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Ranganathan, Shyam. 2018a. "Context and Pragmatics." In *The Routledge Handbook of Translation and Philosophy* edited by Philip Wilson and J Piers Rawling, 195–208. New York: Routledge.
- Ranganathan, Shyam. 2018b. *Hinduism: A Contemporary Philosophical Investigation*. Investigating Philosophy of Religion. New York: Routledge.
- Ranganathan, Shyam. 2019. "Just War and the Indian Tradition: Arguments from the Battlefield." In *Comparative Just War Theory: An Introduction to International Perspectives* edited by Luis Cordeiro-Rodrigues and Danny Singh, 173–190. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Ranganathan, Shyam. 2021a. Bhagavad Gītā. In *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by James Feiser and Brad Dowden. <<https://iep.utm.edu/bha-gita/>>.
- Ranganathan, Shyam. 2021b. "Idealism and Indian philosophy." In *The Routledge Handbook of Idealism and Immaterialism*, edited by Joshua Farris and Benedikt Paul Göcke. Oxfordshire: Routledge.
- Ranganathan, Shyam. 2022. "Modes of Interpretation." In *Encyclopedia of Religious Ethics*, edited by William Schweiker, David A. Clairmont and Elizabeth Bucar. Hoboken NJ: Wiley Blackwell.

Sreekumar, Sandeep. 2012. "An Analysis of Consequentialism and Deontology in the Normative Ethics of the Bhagavadgītā." *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 40, no. 3: 277–315.

Theodor, Ithamar. 2010. *Exploring the Bhagavad Gītā: Philosophy, Structure, and Meaning*. Farnham: Ashgate.

¹ All translations from the Sanskrit are mine. For my translation of the *Yoga Sūtra*, see Patañjali 2008; see Ranganathan 2017b, for a review of the text and its ethical theory; see Ranganathan 2021a, for a similar deep dive into the Bhagavad Gītā and its moral dialectic.

² For a review of the secondary literature, see Ranganathan 2017c, 52-77.

³ For a review of the literature, and for the alternative, see Ranganathan 2022.

⁴ For a historical review of South Asian diagnosis of propositional attitudes like belief as the source of error, see Ranganathan 2021b.

⁵ For an account of how this theory influences dominant approaches to thought, translation and understanding in the Western tradition, see Ranganathan 2018a.