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## GLOBAL FORUM FOR YOUNG PHILOSOPHERS (GFYP)

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&  
GLOBAL FORUM FOR YOUNG PHILOSOPHERS  
SREE SANKARACHARYA UNIVERSITY, KALADY**

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## Editorial

### Philosophy and Religion: Ethical Reflections and Cross-Cultural Dialogues in Contemporary Thought

The relationship between philosophy and religion has been a long and complex one, marked by periods of harmony and conflict, and has shaped much of Western thought. The very nature of this relationship is a central question in the philosophy of religion, with various perspectives and approaches having been developed throughout history.

There are various ways to conceive the relationship between philosophy and religion, ranging from a virtual identification of the two to a position where philosophy has a minimal role with respect to the religious sphere. Some view philosophy as leading to and issuing in religion. Others see philosophy as the handmaid of religion, explicating its meaning and defending it against skeptical attacks (Charlesworth, 2002). Still others see philosophy as making room for faith by establishing the limits of reason. Some approaches view philosophy as a purely analytical or meta-logical enterprise, analyzing religious language. Postmodernist thinkers view the task of philosophy as purging itself of the metaphysics that has distorted traditional modes of philosophy.

A key issue in the debate is the relationship between reason and faith. Some believe that philosophy, through reason, can lead to religious truths. Others argue that faith transcends reason and that philosophy's role is to defend faith or to make room for it. Some philosophers argue that religion is a matter of the will and practical reason, not a matter of assenting to certain truths.

Some argue that both philosophy and religion are shaped by the "life-world" or the pre-reflective beliefs and experiences that individuals bring to philosophical reflection. This suggests that there is no pure reason, and that reason is shaped by the very thing from which it promises to free us, namely, our life-world. This perspective challenges the idea that philosophy should be a presuppositionless, rigorous science.

Philosophy not only leads to religion but also critiques it. Some philosophies criticize religion for its dogmatism, while others criticize it for its reliance on faith rather than reason. Some philosophers see the critique of religion as a way of ending with the idea that man is the highest being for man.

The concept of transcendence is relevant to both philosophy and religion. The question of how to think transcendence is a perennial problem in philosophy and theology. Some philosophers explore transcendence through the lens of justice. The problem of justice is that we must go beyond our own contexts and histories if we are to be just, but there is no acontextual and ahistorical vantage point from which to do so.

Some contemporary philosophers have turned to religious experience and concepts to rethink traditional philosophical problems (Faulconer, 2003). This has led to a debate about whether such approaches are still phenomenology or whether they have become theology. Some argue that religious experience may be relevant to phenomenological inquiry.

Love profoundly shapes our relationships, worldview, and engagement with justice. Norman Wirzba (2008) argues that love is central to creation, making justice possible and influencing philosophical thought. Love transforms philosophy, particularly within the Continental tradition, engaging figures like Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Derrida, and Irigaray. This perspective highlights the wisdom of love, challenging conventional views on nature, faith, gender, politics, and ethics.

This edition of **JeevaDarshana: Bangalore Journal of Philosophy and Religion** embraces this theme with vigor, presenting a curated selection of articles that examines the rich intersections of philosophical thought and religious discourse. Through rigorous scholarship, these contributions explore timeless questions of existence, consciousness, ethics, and the human spirit while addressing contemporary issues that resonate across cultures and disciplines.

Philosophy and religion, though distinct in their approaches, share an enduring commitment to uncovering the nature of reality, the meaning of life, and the principles guiding moral action. This journal issue highlights the dialogical nature of this relationship, wherein philosophical analysis enriches religious understanding, and religious perspectives inspire new philosophical insights. The collection emphasizes the relevance of these disciplines in confronting the complexities of modern life, from technological advancements and environmental challenges to ethical dilemmas and spiritual crises.

The articles in this edition are summarized as follows:

In the first article, "**Trinity as Relationship: Hegel's Experience of God as Absolute Spirit and as Trinity**," Prof. Joseph Pandiappallil explores Hegel's philosophical interpretation of the Trinity. He presents it as a profound response to the enduring philosophical problem of unity and multiplicity, as well as identity and difference. It examines how Hegel understands God as both subjective and objective, manifested as spirit, and how this relates to human self-consciousness. It also explores how Hegel's philosophy seeks to reconcile philosophical understanding with religious teachings.

In the second article, "**Science Replacing Religion: Possible? And/or Desirable? Some Reflections on the Integration of Science and**

**Religion**," Prof. Stephen Jayard examines the relationship between science and religion. He critically explores whether science can or should replace religion, reflecting on the potential for their integration. The author argues that science alone is insufficient to address all of humanity's existential questions, highlighting the importance of philosophy and religion in areas that science cannot cover. It also examines the potential dangers of scientism and the need for ethical considerations in scientific progress. The author concludes by arguing for the possibility of integrating scientific and religious perspectives.

The third article, "**Søren Kierkegaard's View of Ethics and Its Relevance in the Contemporary World**," by Dr. Mathew Vadakkeputhenpura, explores Kierkegaard's ethical philosophy. It emphasizes the individual's personal relationship with God as the true foundation of ethical duty, as opposed to merely following external law. It addresses Kierkegaard's critique of conventional ethics and explores how his concept of the "ethical man" is relevant in the modern world, particularly with regard to faith, morality, and the individual's relationship to the absolute.

In the fourth article, titled "**Epistemic Responsibility: A Vital Tool for the Post-COVID Era**," Dr. Baiju P. Anthony introduces the concept of epistemic responsibility as an essential tool for navigating the challenges of the post-pandemic world. It emphasizes the importance of truth-seeking, evidence evaluation, and acknowledging the limits of one's own knowledge. The author draws on Lorraine Code's philosophy to explore the ethical dimensions of knowledge production and dissemination, highlighting how these are essential for rebuilding public trust.

The fifth article, "**Hermeneutics of Health and Illness: Gadamer's Significance in Medical Ethics**," by Niveditha A. P., explores Gadamer's hermeneutical philosophy, focusing on his concept of the "enigma of health" and its relevance to medical ethics. It contrasts scientific and technological approaches to health with a more experiential and phenomenological

understanding. The paper advocates for a hermeneutical approach in medical practice, where the patient is seen as a person, rather than just a case, promoting a more therapeutic dialogue.

In the sixth article, titled "**Navigating the Stories: An Analysis of the Moral Teachings in the Yogavāsiṣṭha**," Alwin P. D. examines the *Yogavāsiṣṭha*, a classic Indian philosophical work. The study explores how the text's non-dualistic metaphysical foundation influences and defines its ethical teachings. It explores the paradox of how a text that emphasizes non-duality also advocates for moral action. It focuses on the YV's use of stories and analogies, like the dream analogy, to teach ethical lessons and promote self-knowledge and detachment. It also examines the YV's concept of moral development and liberation.

The seventh paper, "**Revisiting Heidegger's Concept of Poiesis: An Ecofeminist Perspective on Technology**," by Feleena C. L., revisits Heidegger's concept of *poiesis*. It contrasts this idea with the modern technological tendency to reduce beings to mere resources, offering insights from an ecofeminist perspective. It addresses how technology can overshadow authentic human experience and the need for a balance between technology and a meaningful connection with the world. It also highlights how technology aimed at economic gain can lead to environmental degradation.

The eighth article, titled "**Recent Theories of Consciousness and the Advaita Philosophy and its Concept of Saksin and Phenomenology**," by Narasimha Murthy M. N., explores modern theories of consciousness and their connection to Advaita Vedanta philosophy. The author focuses on the concept of *Saksin* (witness consciousness) and examines its parallels with phenomenological perspectives. It examines the physicalist theories of consciousness and then advocates for idealistic analytic theories, asserting that consciousness is fundamental. It explores how Advaita philosophy can

strengthen these idealistic theories by explaining the relationship between experience and reality.

The ninth article, "**Bridging Eastern and Western Philosophies: A Comparative Study of the Mind and Consciousness**", by Rajeev Lochan Tripathi, explores the nature of mind and consciousness by comparing **Advaita Vedanta** with **Cartesian philosophy**. It identifies research gaps in the existing literature, including the lack of interdisciplinary collaboration and the omission of qualitative aspects of consciousness. The study explores how combining insights from both traditions could expand our understanding of consciousness and its implications for issues like AI, ethics, and mental health.

The tenth article, "**Socializing Epistemology: The Enduring Impact of Alvin I. Goldman**" by Dr. Balamurali P.B., honors Alvin Goldman, a key figure in epistemology, known for process reliabilism and social epistemology. It explores his naturalistic approach, contributions to testimony and peer disagreement, and broader influence. The article also examines different views on social epistemology—revisionism, preservationism, and expansionism—while highlighting Goldman's focus on knowledge's social dimensions, truth, and justification.

The eleventh article, "**Language as Innate: A Philosophical Inquiry into Bhartrhari and Jerry Fodor**" by Remya C., compares the linguistic theories of Bhartrhari, an ancient Indian philosopher, and Jerry Fodor, a contemporary Western thinker, focusing on the innateness of language. It examines their perspectives on how meaning is conveyed through language and explores relevant insights from epistemological psychology, incorporating recent research in the field.

The twelfth article, "**Death of the Author and Resurrection of the Reader: A Poststructuralist Reading of Authorless Veda and Its Applications in the Post-Truth Era**" by Jibin Paul, examines Roland

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## **Bridging Eastern and Western Philosophies: A Comparative Study of the Mind and Consciousness**

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### **Abstract**

*This research paper aims at comparing Advaita Vedānta and Descartes philosophy on what is mind and consciousness. Although, the two traditions are resourceful, literature in this area has numerous research deficits in terms of comparative analysis and assimilation. The paper points out these lacunae, including the absence of multi-disciplinary exchange, a poor appreciation of how non-dualism might be actively meaningful in contemporary society, and how the nature of consciousness is principally qualitative. The concepts like consciousness, perception and Non-Duality are explained in relation to the relevant philosophical systems with the help of Descartes and Śankara in particular. The concept of mind and consciousness has also been discussed from the perspective of Buddhist Philosophy in the paper. In establishing the aim of this paper, the following research gaps have been identified: The lack of interdisciplinary collaboration and the integration of empirical knowledge with reflexivity, and the analysis of modern ethical questions using a philosophical approach. In an attempt to better understand consciousness in general and through combining insights of the two traditions, our hope is to gain a wider perspective on how this concept could affect different modern discussions.*

**Keywords:** Awareness, Non-Duality, Mind-Body Dichotomy, Dualism, Buddhism

## Introduction

The topic of mind and consciousness has been of interest to philosophers for a long time now due to the essence of the dialogue that this has created between different cultures and philosophes. Western philosophy has influenced the concept in many ways especially by scholars such as Renee Descartes who engaged in critical thinking processes that also included ideas advanced by reason and observations. There are the Eastern philosophies; these include the *Advaita Vedānta* philosophy which clearly harmonizes with the Eastern worldview in that it denies the concept of the either/or duality by indicating that there is no division in existence, that all is interconnected. This paper seeks to explore the similarities and differences between these philosophical traditions, focusing on the following questions: How do these traditions theorize mind and consciousness? How does their conflict of viewpoints translate to the current issues in regard to philosophy and ethics then? Nevertheless, there exists limited literature, comparing and contrasting these two traditions for scholars to rely on. The development of this paper is intended to point out these deficiencies and provide suggestions for the future research with the view of promoting “a conversation” between Eastern and Western tendencies. In this way, we also intend to expand the concept of consciousness and its relation to different modern phenomena, such as AI and moral values, as well as mental disorders.

## Western Views on Mind and Consciousness

These approaches conform to what has for long been the Western philosophical tradition of the Cartesian dualism of mind and consciousness. Descartes as you know said, 'I think, therefore I exist' he equated thinking as the primary evidence of existence (Descartes, 1985). This dualistic view of consciousness has spawned a great deal of virtual thinking about such phenomena as self-consciousness, intentional states, and the link between

the psychological and neural levels. Nevertheless, this focus on efficiency, the self and cognition has also led to a somewhat disregard of the relational dynamics of consciousness. Modern contributors to the topic including Daniel Dennett, and David Chalmers have pushed forward the debate beyond Cartesian dualism advancing topics such as 'intentional stance' and 'the hard problem of consciousness' to explain the phenomenon of 'conscious experience.' (Chalmers, 1995; Dennett, 1991). However, many of the conceptual paradigms of the abstract Western world have not been able to embrace the positive, qualitative facets of consciousness; they give such attributes a minor consideration compared to the quantifiable angles. This book examines the concept of mind and consciousness in Eastern views.

## Eastern Views on Mind and Consciousness

On the other hand, the Eastern worldview particularly the *Advaita Vedānta* philosophy, anchors on a wholistic theory of consciousness where all existence is linked with each other and where the self is an illusion. Self as well as the truth according to *Śankara* came down to identity with the absolute (*Ātman=Brahman*), and ignorance, or *avidyā*, is the source of suffering and misconceptions (Koller, 2019). What is, in fact, promoted by the non-dualistic ontology of the Self is the transition from the kind of thinking characteristic of the individualistic tradition of the Western civilization to an integrative vision of the consciousness that does not recognize the boundary between the self and others. Additionally, it is quite so that in the Eastern paradigms, the critical *aprōśc* is given to the observation received through meditation and reflection, distinctly from the positivism of the Western traditions. Mindfulness and meditation have become specialties in modern debates on consciousness, which has fuelled a heightened interest in psychological and neuroscience investigation of the practice (Heisig, 2014).

Saying things about the conception of mind and consciousness would be incomplete without throwing light on some aspects and perspectives given



in Buddhist philosophy about mind and consciousness. In Buddhist philosophy there are eight levels of consciousness. Five of them are sense consciousness like: Visual consciousness, Auditory consciousness, olfactory consciousness, gustatory consciousness and tactile consciousness. Sixth is mental consciousness, seventh is Manas consciousness and eighth consciousness is store consciousness (equivalent to the subconscious mind). Store consciousness is both individual consciousness and collective consciousness. The Buddha taught that “I” is a combination of our form or physical body, our feelings, our perceptions, our mental formations and our consciousness. These are called five skandhas (aggregates). These five elements are like the five rivers, all the time flowing or changing. According to Buddhist philosophy, everything is impermanent, and there is constant change in everything, including us, from moment to moment. So there are physical and mental energies in us and they are constantly changing in every moment and there is no permanent unchanging self or an “I” inside our heads; all there is, is just a collection of memories, thoughts, emotions and perceptions which are always in flux and changing. A mental formation means fear, hate, jealousy, love, understanding, compassion, hope and so on. Consciousness is like the soil in which the seeds of mental formations are preserved. Consciousness depends on matter, sensation, perception, and mental formations. So, there is no arising of consciousness without conditions (Hanh, 2002).

The Yogacara notion of *ālaya-vijñāna* formulates that there is a multidimensional model of mind that first differentiates momentary conscious processes from continuous, nonconscious ones, and then articulates an equally continuous and implicit sense of self-identity underlying and informing all our cognitive and affective processes. According to the Yogācāra school of Buddhist philosophy, the mind is the only reality and anything that seems to be there outside the mind is an illusion or a fantasy. The existence of anything outside the mind cannot be proved, as we cannot separate the object from the consciousness of the object. The only reality which is there is the reality of the so-called consciousness and the rest of the states that seem to be outside the mind are

just a construction or a state of this consciousness. The mind is a stream of momentary conscious states according to the Yogācāra view and it contains within a storehouse of impressions of all past experience. At a particular moment that impression comes to the surface, or in other words that reality is constructed for which the situations are most favorable for. Here, we see how our moment-to-moment construction of the world and reality is not something which happens through some outer means but is rather a mental/psychological construction of the mind which is a storehouse of the impressions (Chatterjee & Datta, 2016). Unlike the Upanishadic seers of his own era, the Buddha 3 (ca. 480-400 BCE) was concerned not so much with Being (*sat*), with what is purportedly real and permanent (*nitya*), as he was with becoming, with how things come to be. Specifically, he was concerned with the arising and, above all, with the cessation of the mental obscurations and afflictive actions that keep beings trapped in the cycle of compulsive behavioral patterns known as *samsāra*. From its beginnings, then, Buddhist analyses of mental processes were not only couched in the language of causation—of how things arise and cease due to their causes and conditions—but were also aimed toward transforming these processes and thereby alleviating the suffering they entailed. It was thus both formally similar to, yet oriented quite differently from, modern scientific analyses of mind (Waldron, 2003). Like the five forms of sensory consciousness, mental awareness also has certain, specific conditions: it arises on the basis of the mental faculty, mind (*manas*), and two distinct kinds of instigating stimuli. First, when a sensory cognitive awareness occurs, it is often followed by an awareness of that awareness, an awareness that such and such a sensory awareness has occurred. This reflexivity is closely related to the second condition for the arising of mental cognitive awareness: non-sensory 'objects' such as thinking, reflection, or ideas. These are considered formations of speech which are closely associated in the early texts with the mental faculty itself, the mind. Despite this reflexivity, though, mind is not 'cognizing itself.' Mental cognitive awareness no more 'cognizes' thoughts than sensory cognitive awareness 'cognizes' objects, since neither of them are agents or faculties, nor, for that matter, actions. In the causal syntax of

dependent arising cognitive awareness does not cognize anything—it simply is the awareness that arises when requisite conditions come together. Failure to appreciate this—to interpret consciousness as an act rather than an event, as watching rather than seeing—is to miss the most distinctive feature of early Buddhist thought: its radically depersonalized model of mind, its analysis of experience without a subject. For if cognitive awareness is not an act which one does but an event which occurs, then there is no need, indeed no place in cognition for an active agent or a substantive subject (Waldron, 2003).

Despite the rich insights offered by both Western and Eastern philosophies, several significant research gaps persist:

**1. Lack of Comparative Analysis:** It still makes a comparative analysis of both traditions in order to critically evaluate their points of view concerning the mind and consciousness rare. From one tradition or culture to another, researchers limit themselves, this means a lot of research work ends up giving results that are half baked.

**2. Integration of Non-Dualism:** The consequences claimed to arise from non-dualism as laid down by Advaita Vedanta have seldom been expounded in Western settings. This gap leaves an important gap in research and understanding how post-metaphysical non-dual philosophies might contribute to present day discourses of consciousness and self.

**3. Qualitative Aspects of Consciousness:** Despite the fact that consciousness is now an important area of research interest in the Western world, particularly in cognitive science and neuroscience, the more qualitative poles of consciousness, including the phenomenal or lived aspects of awareness, are frequently overlooked. This omission hampers the perception of consciousness as a rich experience in its comprehensive sense.

**4. Interdisciplinary Dialogue:** Interdisciplinary discussion between philosophy, psychology, and neuroscience need to expand to build a better

understanding of consciousness. By incorporating understanding from the Oriental contemplative practices and scientific data from the West, the discussions can be much fuller and more detailed.

However, there are several gaps in the current research that inform the methodological framework proposed in this paper, and they include interdisciplinary research and cross-country comparison as main features of the proposed framework. The following components will guide the research process:

### 1. Comparative Analysis

A comparative study of cognition and sine qua non of *Advaita Vedānta* and Cartesianism, especially, applicable methodology regarding the subjects' understanding of consciousness and perception, self. For this analysis, therefore, there is a need to read both the primary texts and secondary literature that deals with each tradition.

### 2. Interdisciplinary Collaboration

In this chapter, the author aims to connect to the current studies at the intersection of psychology and neuroscience by presenting a review of the existing empirical data on consciousness. It will also reduce the basic division of qualitative and quantitative research and bring the two together, making the exploration of the topic to be more wholesome.

### 3. Application to Contemporary Issues

Exploring the ways in which concepts from both paradigms might be used in modern ethical reflection on current issues, including but not limited to artificial intelligence, mental illness, and the question of what it means to be conscious. In this application, the participants will be shown how philosophical reflections are useful in practice and how both traditions are useful for dealing with today's issues.

## Conceptual Framework

This part will lay out important ideas that formed the focus of the debate on mind and consciousness in the two philosophies. Knowledge about these concepts is necessary if one wants to explore the differences between Eastern and Western approaches.

### 1. Consciousness

In Western philosophy, consciousness is defined as the ability to know about something and possess the capacity to reason regarding oneself and the world at large.

Descartes' definition of consciousness leans heavily toward a consciousness of self. Modern theories, including those of Chalmers, acknowledge this and note a dual relationship between consciousness and consciousness a division between the 'easy' problems and the 'hard' problems of consciousness (Chalmers, 1995). What the western psychology has to say about consciousness is in fact quite different from how *Advaita Vedānta* defines it. Consciousness or chit is accepted by Śāṅkara as the substance of the cosmic realm which he equates with the Reality, the Brahman. According to this point of view, the individual ego is unreal due to ignorance and knowledge is when identity is taken as (*Ātman and Brahman*). Consequently, in *Advaita Vedānta*, consciousness is wider than individual contemplation and enshrined in the universal essence. In Buddhist philosophy, consciousness does not have one single name, and does not include all conscious activities. Essentially, it is classed as one single entity or element (dharma) that functions in association with its mental concomitants, which influence its behaviour and ethical qualities. Thus, the totality of conscious experiences is split into consciousness and mental concomitants. Among several terms in Buddhist texts denoting consciousness, three occupy a primary position: citta, manas and vijñāna. It is said in the canonical texts and reaffirmed in the Abhidharma sources that these three terms are synonyms (ekārtha). However, although they refer to

the same thing, namely consciousness, their interpretations as given in different contexts and taxonomies are not the same. The Abhidharmakośa and its commentaries state that the terms citta, manas and vijñāna refer to the same thing, but have different etymologies (nirvacana): citta accumulates (cinoti), manas thinks (manute), and vijñāna cognizes (vijānāti) (Skorupski, 2014).

### 2. Perception

This final point is important in the discussion of consciousness as presented in both traditions and the role that perception has to play. In the Western perceptual thought process, perception has generally been used to describe how individuals acquire information about their surroundings. The empirical approach allows for the appreciation of comprehensible sensory experiences as well as mentally constructed forms of knowing (Papineau, 2002). Nevertheless, it is seen that aspects like perceptual error reduce the potential for objective knowledge. On the other hand, in respect of *Advaita Vedānta* the perception is known to be a conditioned experience that reflects the mental status and the social environment. Śāṅkara further avers that the relativity of objects and their diversity are actually reflections of illusion, which disguises reality in its true sense (Koller, 2019). This understanding calls into question the very idea of perceiving in a 'realistic' manner and brings into the face of it a searching analysis of the nature of consciousness.

### 3. Non-Dualism

The first principle of *Advaita Vedānta* is non-dualism which says that really there is no division between self and other. This perspective motivates people to move from the dichotomous approach to a view wherein everything is connected. According to Śāṅkara, understanding of '*Brahman*' destroys the '*Sa sārā*' which implies suffering and being reborn time and again (Koller, 2019). However, Western philosophy has been characterized hitherto by a dualism of mind and body, self and others. The division gives a new perspective on the debates revolving around identity and

consciousness. But now more and more contemporary philosophers are starting to consider non-dichotomous conceptions, and ideas, as simple dichotomy is not sufficient, and further, it harms the integration of new aspects to understanding of consciousness.

### Theoretical Implications

Drawing from the interactions between Eastern and Western philosophical orientations presents the following theoretical creases in the analysis of mind and consciousness. In this way, the integration of both types of findings from this research will help to build an elaborate conception about What is consciousness?

#### 1. Holistic Understanding

Combining measures which are used in the system of Anglo-Saxon philosophy and psychological practices of the East provides the holistic picture of subject's consciousness. Through such a synthesis, we can uncover how again and again the subjective and the objective interlocks in influencing our awareness of the world.

#### 2. Redefining Consciousness

The ideas from *Advaita Vedānta* demonstrate an assault on the Cartesian dualistic model of brain consciousness. First, and perhaps most importantly, it becomes possible to abandon the notion that consciousness is flawed in some fundamental way and to expand the definition of consciousness into aspects of relational and/or collective. This redefinition might also prompt new research question concerning the ethical issue of consciousness in diverse domains including the usage of AI where questions regarding consciousness and awareness come to the foreground.

#### 3. Interdisciplinary Approaches

The opportunity to continue the dialogue with empirical material from the

psychology of consciousness as well as from neuroscience, based on the phenomenological approach, suggests new possibilities for the study of consciousness. For example, research on mindfulness and meditation overemphasize the psychological effects of introspection which has been described by eastern philosophers as therapeutic for the self (Kabat-Zinn, 1990). It could have led to the development of outstanding therapeutic practices that combine the two different modes of thinking.

#### 4. Ethical Considerations

Comparatively approaching the subject of consciousness stimulates critical ethical concerns. For example, the *Advaita Vedānta* understanding of non-duality could be applied where issues on how nonhuman entities should be treated could be discussed and then petroleum or coal assets could be deemed capital and used to create value through the development of biofuels. In contrast, Western discourse of consciousness includes the aspects of rights and duties thus it could be missing the relation that is stressed in Eastern philosophies. In this way, the author attempts closer at coming to a broad ethical synthesis of the two approaches.

As part of the concerns in applying the synthesis of Eastern and Western philosophies, this section provides samples of how these notions can be applied in the current concerns.

#### 1. Artificial Intelligence

There have been many recent developments in Artificial Intelligence (AI) that have raised questions concerning consciousness, sentience, as well as moral consideration. Discussions of this sort in the Western context are usually couched in a binary mode and wonder whether it is possible for machines to experience consciousness in the manner humans do. For example, the Turing Test measure how intelligently a given machine will behave and compares it with a human subject (Turing, 1950). *Advaita Vedānta* non-dualistic view argues that the idea of a divide between human

and machine consciousness may not be as rigid as it seems. If consciousness is indeed interconnected with one another, the phenomenon of developing Artificial Intelligence (AI) might be making people rethink the concept of consciousness itself. Such a view raises questions about our ethical relations with AI subjects demanding a reconsideration of legal rights for robots based on a changing concept of consciousness. Buddhism demonstrates dependent origination through the complex system of causal connections which binds together diverse phenomena. The approach describes how all elements arise through their interdependent conditions to form integrated structures. Machine Learning (ML) algorithms together with AI technology work through massive datasets to find patterns that help researchers identify the interlocking relationships of different variables. By carrying out this analysis scientists can track how distinct variables connect through the system to affect their end results. Buddhism explores universal interconnectedness while all algorithms work to identify essential connections throughout complicated data structures for the revelation of different components' interconnected relationships. The religious practice of Buddhism emphasizes individual growth as a key aspect which drives its entire system. Practitioners participate in endless self-improvement via a continuous daily quest in accordance with Buddhist teaching. On the other hand, AI/ML systems function through designs which replicate these ongoing learning and enhancement methods. Technology based on AI/ ML needs ongoing performance that uses iterative training programs with feedback loops. The basic concept of perpetual learning reaches the same conclusion about personal development whether you analyze Buddhism or the fundamentals of artificial intelligence and machine learning. They share the necessity of progressive modification coupled with programming adjustments on the path to superior insight and operational performance. When practicing meditation, one strives to maintain vigilant mindfulness while observing how the mind operates. From advanced training comes meditation experts who have expanded their knowledge of deep mental processes. Advanced practitioners of meditation gain access to subtle mental layers which maintain their intelligence beyond what novices in

meditation practice can discover. Ambient learning analytics technologies harness substantial databases and execute quick and precise document control similar to AI and ML methodologies (Bajracharya, 2024).

## 2. Mental Health

The increase in mindfulness and contemplative practice within counselling and psychotherapy points culture of assimilation of Eastern precepts into Western psychological paradigm. The use of mindfulness techniques has been found to positively affect emotional intelligence; decrease stress levels; and increase general health (Kabat-Zinn, 1990; Hayes et al., 2006). This trend reveals the possibility to extend introspective practices by using them in conjunction with empirically-based research to create novel therapeutic strategies. Furthermore, what *Advaita Vedānta* calls relational aspects might be applied to thinking about mental health. Appreciating the connectedness of persons might help in treatment, utilizing the involvement of others especially the suffering patients in the society. Such an integration of perspectives can in fact help conceptualize mental health in a way that factors in relational factors. In Buddhism, mental and physical illnesses are considered as the sufferings (dukkha). However, birth, aging, illness, death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair, association with loathsome people, separation from the loved ones, not getting what is desired are all considered as sufferings. Put it differently, suffering is the attachment to the Pañcāpādānakkhandha, the group of five aggregates, namely. Rūpa (the matter), Vedanā (the feeling), Saññā (the perception), Samkhārā (the states of mind) and Viññāna (the consciousness). Suffering is the first of the Four Noble Truths and one of the three characteristics of life along with anicca (impermanence) and anatta (no-self). (Anattalakshana Sutta) Every person at every moment is going through one or the other kind of suffering, but people do not realize it as such. Every kind of experience in life is connected to some kind of suffering. This is the truth of the existence. Suffering arises from various sources such as stress, interpersonal conflict, depression, confusion, hatred, anger, greed, or behavior problems. Some sufferings, such as sickness, old age, death and the like are existential sufferings. The

moment we become emotionally and psychologically attached and dependent on an object of experience, then that develops a sense of dependency of ourselves for that object and as we know as things are impermanent, so we eventually are going to loss that object and when we will lose that object, that will cause suffering (Tuladhar, 2022).

### 3. Environmental Ethics

The non-dualistic approach raises a number of considerations when contemplating on environmental issues as far as different ecological challenges the world is faced with are concerned. The non-dualism of *Advaita Vedānta* provides an understanding of the interdependence of all beings contrary, to mainstream anthropocentric attitudes, which put human interests above the rest. This point of view is consistent with modern environmentalism which calls for active integration of all forms of existence into the moral community (Naess, 1989). While western ethical systems are mainly centered on individual rights and obligations there is possibility of losing the relational aspect that is central to Eastern culture. Combined, these perspectives will lead to a better environmental ethic where ethics of responsibility, interconnectedness, as well as ethic that values nature based on its intrinsic worth will be integrated. It can, therefore, alert policymakers and regulate human actions and responsibilities to environmental problems.

As we attempt to tackle the discussion and definition of consciousness using both Eastern and Western philosophical underpinnings, such an endeavor will create a number of research directions, the studies of which will expand our current knowledge of the mind and its applications in diverse disciplines. In this section, we identify further research directions and discuss the relevance of these research avenues.

### 1. Socio-Cultural Comparison of Self/Other Consciousness

Future research may well be enhanced by substantive comparative investigations focused on the identification of parallels and dissimilarities between Eastern and Western theories of mind. These studies could be

orientated towards such notions as self, awareness, and reality. Performing cross-cultural comparisons enables authors to find out similarities and differences, which enhance insight into consciousness. For instance, it would be possible to research the ways in which the concept of self is understood differently in the *Advaitic* perspective as opposed to existential and phenomenological traditions. This could further help in understanding the relationship between these two clerics and what might have been their audience's impression of these differences in their views on personal identity, morality and social relationships.

### 2. Neuroscientific Studies

Another area is the further development of the combination of philosophical methods of rational thinking and true empirical studies in neuroscience. The progress in neuroimaging technologies interferes with an ability to investigate neural substrate of consciousness and subjective quality. It may be slightly fanciful, but cross disciplinary work between philosophers and neuroscientists could explore how the insights of *Advaita Vedānta* are relevant in the neuroscientific search for the neural correlates of consciousness. For example, research can be aimed at long-term course and structural and functional changes in the brain in meditative states in which, according to the survey, people change their consciousness. Knowledge of the neurophysiological processes that underlie such phenomenon would extend our understanding of consciousness and may eventually pave the way for novel modalities of treatments of various mental health disorders.

### 3. Ethical Frameworks and Policy Implications

It is even crucial to find out more about conscious studies and ethical research in its intersection. As pointed out throughout this paper, an attempt to merge the Eastern and Western system of thinking makes it possible to develop a sophisticated system of ethics which recognizes the liberty of one subject for the existence of others. Subsequent research may explore how these philosophical concepts apply to the modern-day ethical issues

including those of Artificial Intelligence, Climate change or social inequality. For instance, the following arguments could be explored: What more can a non-dualistic outlook to consciousness do to engender a new moral agenda for relations with nonpersons? It could also be used to formulate recommendations on animal usage and conservation, as well as the proper usage of artificial intelligence. I believe that interactions with ethicists, policymakers, and environmental scientists would help elaborate better all-encompassing ethical frameworks.

#### 4. Shifting from Basics of Mindfulness and Psychological Methods

Mindfulness and contemplative practices are receiving increasing attention in mental health care, and this is why it is necessary to introduce philosophical findings into psychology. Other research could establish the effectiveness of mindfulness-based interventions focusing on eastern and western perspective where the cultural differences have an impact on therapeutic process. It could also be useful to study philosophical ideas as applied to the practice of mindfulness. For instance, the discovery of how the concept from the *Advaita Vedānta* helps to improve mindfulness theory and practice might culminate to the creation of better therapeutic approaches. Integrative approaches to developing new forms of psychological therapies: Psychologists together with philosophers maintain the ability to create novel treatments matching both personal and relational brain processes. Following Mindfulness practitioners walk the “Right Mindfulness” path of Buddhism which leads toward spiritual peace as well as freedom from suffering and enlightenment insights. The Buddha' Eightfold path stands as a central Buddhist doctrine which Buddhist practitioners use for developing enlightenment and liberation. The fourth teaching in the Four Noble Truths (core wisdom teachings) of Buddhism establishes one fundamental basis for the faith. Through the eightfold path people learn a full ethical and behavioral orientation which leads toward overcoming suffering and ignorance to achieve both peace and spiritual wisdom. It includes elements that counteract the tendencies influenced by what Buddhists refer to as the fundamental sources of suffering, that is,

desire or attachment, aversion or animosity and confusion or ignorance. Mindfulness and “Right Mindfulness” within the Buddha's Noble Eightfold Path are closely intertwined, forming an essential path way towards inner tranquility and liberation. In conclusion, mindfulness encompasses both the embodiment of timeless wisdom and modern applicability. History provides a deep wealth of wisdom as mindfulness originated while delivering fundamental direction relevant for current existence. This system serves both as the path to spiritual awareness and enlightenment while simultaneously providing strong tools for obtaining psychological freedom. When we combine mindfulness practices with contemporary scientific knowledge, we create substantial opportunities to support human physical and emotional wellness. Research should explore mindfulness' various applications because the historical Buddha transmitted mindfulness at its core (Ji, 2023).

#### 5. Educational Applications

The findings of including Eastern and Western approaches can generally have profound consequences in education as well. Further research could be focused upon, how these philosophical approaches can be applied to the curricula of the proposed subjects, like philosophy, psychology and others. Putting into practice cross cultural aspect in education system helps in students' critical evaluation, bring about understanding of the auto and the non- auto-cultural perspectives in the world. Further, studies could explore the effects of Mindfulness and Contemplation in Education environment. Perhaps, understanding these practices impact on students' cognitive and affective daily experiences could offer meaningful information on how to design effective student-supporting learning contexts.

#### Conclusion

The analysis of the processes of cognition and mind using neuro-philosophy and ontological approaches within the framework of both Eastern and Western philosophical systems demonstrates the majority of the ideas and

theoretical promises. This paper demonstrates that by integrating both empirical and experiential viewpoints, the researchers can design a more complex view regarding the meaning of consciousness. This integrative approach not only poses value to develop philosophical discussion but also provides recommendations for present ethical discussions, clinical psychology, and sustainability. As this paper has shown, Further discussion and research can be done that entwine *Advaita Vedānta* and Cartesian philosophy. Scholars can address the identified gaps in the literature by increasing interdisciplinary cooperation and using the comparative approach to advancing one's knowledge of consciousness. This conversation can help not only philosophy but also many branches of science as it explores a common territory between the two traditions and serves as its foundation for the development of further studies toward the integration of the mind and consciousness. By delving deeper into the how the conceptions such as dependent origination, consciousness and mind can be applied in a practical in improving and enhancing contemporary issues such as Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, Cognitive Science and Neuroscience can help the readers to look for new research questions and problems for further insightful research. Not only can these conceptions be put only on a sheet of paper for writing thesis and research articles, but if these conceptions are understood deeply and we see how they are intertwined to each other, then we can have a good lived experience in our day-to-day experience of life where all the faculties like thoughts, emotions and actions work in harmony.

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## **Socializing Epistemology: The enduring impact of Alvin I Goldman**

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### **Abstract**

*This article commemorates the life and work of Alvin Goldman, a renowned epistemologist who significantly impacted the field with his naturalistic approach and development of process reliabilism. Goldman pioneered social epistemology, examining how social factors influence knowledge acquisition and dissemination. His work on testimony, peer disagreement, and social networks has had a profound impact on various fields, including cognitive science, law, and political science. While facing critiques, Goldman's contributions have solidified social epistemology as a valuable area of study.*

**Keywords:** Alvin Goldman, Epistemology, Reliabilism, Social Epistemology, Testimony, Peer Disagreement

It is with sorrow that we note the passing of Alvin Goldman, who served as a Board of Governors Professor at Rutgers University from 2002 until his retirement in 2018. Born on October 1, 1938, he passed away on August 4, 2024. He earned his B.A. from Columbia University in 1960 and his Ph.D. from Princeton in 1965. He taught at the University of Michigan (1963-