

**HISTORY AND  
SYSTEMS OF  
PSYCHOLOGY**

**JAMES F. BRENNAN AND KEITH A. HOUDE**

**SEVENTH EDITION**



## HISTORY AND SYSTEMS OF PSYCHOLOGY

*History and Systems of Psychology* provides an engaging introduction to the rich story of psychology's past. Retaining the clarity and accessibility praised by readers of earlier editions, this classic textbook provides a chronological history of psychology from the pre-Socratic Greeks to contemporary systems, research, and applications. The new edition also features expanded coverage of Eastern as well as Western traditions, influential women in psychology, professional psychology in clinical, educational, and social settings, and new directions in twenty-first-century psychology as a cognitive and a positive science. Assuming little prerequisite knowledge, the authors discuss the people, places, and concepts that have shaped psychology's story, and show that we remain fascinated by the same enduring questions that confronted our ancestors – namely, our wonder at our subjectivity and consciousness of self. The seventh edition is fully supported by robust pedagogical features, instructor resources, and a companion website to aid student learning.

**James F. Brennan** served seven years as Provost of The Catholic University of America, rejoining the faculty as Professor of Psychology in 2014. He has held academic administrative and faculty positions at a number of universities, continuing a program of empirical research focused on drug actions in hearing pathologies. His interest in psychology's history stems from his doctoral minor concentration, mainly through Kent State University's School of Library Sciences.

**Keith A. Houde** is Associate Professor of Psychology and Chair of the Department of Psychology at Ave Maria University in Florida. He previously worked as a clinical psychologist within a Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Maine, including service as Psychology Training Director for a predoctoral internship and postdoctoral fellowship program. With an academic background in psychology and theology, his interest in the history of psychology flows from a fascination with theories of human nature throughout the history of thought.



# HISTORY AND SYSTEMS OF PSYCHOLOGY

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JAMES F. BRENNAN

*The Catholic University of America*

KEITH A. HOUDE

*Ave Maria University*

**SEVENTH EDITION,**

fully revised, updated, and expanded



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UNIVERSITY PRESS

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Para a minha mulher, Maria Cândida,  
para as nossas filhas, Tara e Mikala,  
os nossos genros, e para os nossos netos,  
por todo o seu opoio.  
J. F. B.

To my wife, Mary,  
and to our children, Joshua, Sarah, Joseph, Benjamin, and Matthew,  
our daughter-in-law, and our grandchildren,  
for the gift of their life and love.  
K. A. H.





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Washington, District of Columbia

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Keith A. Houde  
Ave Maria, Florida



## PREFACE

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Psychology's contemporary diversity, both as a vibrant research discipline and in its varied applications, compels one to ask how the field came to be. Just as today's marketplace of careers and ideas shows the influence of psychology in multiple guises, so too does psychology's past reveal the presence of psychological inquiry in the full gamut of intellectual speculation. Indeed, until the late nineteenth century, psychology did not exist apart from its expression in other disciplines.

An accounting of psychology's past is critical to understand the diversity of our contemporary understanding of the major disciplinary themes and extensions, and equally significant is the lens of psychology as intellectual history per se and the philosophy of **science** generally. As psychology struggled for identity in pre- and post-Renaissance thought, it was the emergence of modern science that pushed toward the eventual declaration in the 1870s of a formally defined disciplinary study. That story is important.

With so much of the story of psychology's past embedded in the breadth of intellectual history, the approach of this text recognizes a challenge for both students and instructors. How do you tell the story of psychology's past when so much of its content is derived more from general history than from what most people regard as psychology? Indeed, this challenge is the central rationale for this book.

The present authors are personally fascinated with history, the history of thought, and the history of the content, methods, and applications of psychology. Within our teaching experience, we have recognized that, especially for the uninitiated, the history of ideas in psychology may sometimes seem dry or lifeless, abstract or disconnected. Because we are passionate about the field, we are seeking to bring the ideas within the history of psychology to life, that is, to breathe life into the sometimes dry soil of the story of psychology.

### Approach and Coverage

In his *Outline of Psychology*, Hermann Ebbinghaus (1908) famously wrote: "Psychology has a long past, but only a short history" (p. 1). The present authors believe that it is essential to begin at the beginning, in the long past, rather than with the short history that starts with the founding of modern psychology. The narrative of modernity coherently emerges only within the context of the chronicle of antiquity. It is necessary to learn from psychology's past in order to help pave its pathway to the future.

We first consider the persons and places that shaped psychology's story. The great persons and seminal thinkers of psychology are considered within the context of their life and times. We then consider perplexities and paradigms within the field. As the field of psychology appears to be in search of a unifying paradigm, recurring questions emerge throughout the narrative, and commonalities in the answers coalesce around certain repetitive themes or schools of thought.

In order to help make sense of the various approaches across the ages, we seek to highlight and "connect the thoughts" among the remarkably common themes running throughout. From the beginning of the story in Greek antiquity, we recognize five orientations that appear to be present throughout the narrative: biological, empirical, functional, humanistic, idealistic. Along the way, we observe and chart a natural course or flow among these various streams of psychology through the ages: from theory (content) to research (method) to practice (application). Psychology's first questions are theoretical problems related to the content of study, that is, the nature of human nature, including the mind-body problem and its derivatives. Closely related are research considerations around the nature of knowledge and the method of study, where we provide in-depth coverage of two complementary methods of natural science and human science. Within the contemporary American context, theory and research in psychology seem inevitably drawn to converge in funnel-like fashion toward practical application for the solution of various problems and prospects of living.

This work is divided into two parts: The first, "Psychology's Historical Foundations," deals with the evolution of competing models of psychology from the ancient thinkers of philosophy and religion to the emergence of empirical psychology in the 1870s. Although the study of psychology is our main concern, such a study must be placed within the broad, rich context of western European intellectual thought. In so doing, we implicitly recognize that psychology is an integral part of the tradition of Western civilization. The first part of this book, then, presents psychology's history – a history that is intimately linked to the milestones of Western civilization. In particular, the close association of psychology's history with Western traditions flows logically from basic philosophical premises about the nature of the person, which date back to the ancient Greeks. However, in order to keep an accurate perspective on psychology, it is critical to recognize that important statements about human activity were made within the rich traditions of non-Western thought. Thus, the enduring questions about human experience have channeled a certain direction in the thematic commonality over the centuries of intellectual progress. But, we should be aware of the universal diversity of assumptions about the nature of people as we then proceed to the main themes of psychology within Western intellectual history.

The second part of the book, "Systems of Psychology," starting with [Chapter 14](#), considers the major movements that developed as psychology became

more distinct from philosophy, physiology, and physics. It is difficult to conceive of these movements or systems of psychology without an understanding and appreciation of the events preceding the last 150 years. As will become apparent, few of the critical issues that have emerged since psychology's formal establishment as an independent discipline are really novel. Emphases have shifted, new technologies for study have been developed, and new jargon has been invented, but essentially we are stimulated and perplexed by the same issues that confronted our ancestors in their wonder about themselves.

**Highlights and features** of the present text include:

- **antiquity to modernity:** comprehensive overview and coverage of the history of psychology from ancient to modern times;
- **East to West:** emphasis on Western foundations of psychology, with a survey of Eastern contributions to the history of psychology;
- **zeitgeist:** consideration of the "spirit of the times" and places, the historical eras and geographical locations which served as the context for the ultimate emergence of psychology as an independent discipline;
- **great thinkers:** identification of seminal thinkers of each age and prototypical representatives of various historical approaches and schools within psychology;
- **enduring questions:** consideration of recurrent questions within psychology with regard to the nature of reality, standards of truth, ways of knowing, and human nature;
- **persistent paradigms:** within the context of psychology's search for a unifying paradigm, recognition of five orientations or streams of thought that may be followed as an organizing framework throughout psychology's history;
- **natural science and human science:** Proper recognition of these two approaches to empirical research within the developing field of psychology;
- **practical applications:** survey of contemporary applications and various subfields of psychology;
- **pragmatic pedagogy:** sensible and well-organized instructional materials for student and instructor alike (described further below).

## Intended Audience

---

The target audience is three-fold. The first intended audience is undergraduate students interested in psychology, but whose background in history, philosophy, and philosophy of science is not presumed. The book deliberately tries to fill in the background by providing significant detail as well as suggested directions for individual pursuit by students eager to know more. The second audience considered is graduate students in psychology who are in search of a solid reference point from which to pursue more in-depth study. A third audience is more general and includes all who are interested in psychology who are fascinated by the core questions involved in that which attracts all of us to this discipline – namely, our own wonder at our subjectivity and consciousness of self.

The book is designed to serve as the primary text for an undergraduate or graduate course in the History and Systems of Psychology. It provides students with a sensible framework to help organize and learn otherwise confusing and complex material. It offers everyone from seasoned professors to novice instructors, who may initially be less familiar with the subject, a comprehensive and integrated package of teaching materials.

## Pedagogical Features

### Reader Resources

We are pleased to present your passport and entry point into the fascinating history of psychology. Throughout the book, we consider the enduring questions within psychology. We frame the zeitgeist or “spirit of the times” of each period in the history of psychology through consideration of the time and place, politics and economics, religion and education, exploration and invention, as well as the architecture, art, music, and literature of the day. Maps and timelines will assist us along the way. Within the intellectual conversation of each era, we will feature “great thinkers” who particularly represent the ideas of the age (indicated in the text by the Greek letter  $\Psi$ ). We will follow five streams of psychological thought, as we seek to help you to “connect the thoughts,” comparing and contrasting concepts and recurring themes throughout the history of the field. Finally, we bring it home, as we consider the many ways in which psychology is applied in contemporary life.

**Helpful features** of the text include the following:

• Format:	Readable, uncluttered, single-column format
• Contents:	Overview of text
• Chapter outlines:	Overview of chapter at a glance
• Chapter introductions:	Preview of concepts and historical context (zeitgeist)
• Key terms:	Bolded first appearance in text (defined in Glossary)
• Chapter summaries:	Review of material covered
• Discussion questions:	Critical thinking, reflection, analysis, and application
• Bibliographies:	Reference list of primary resources and relevant studies
• Timeline, maps, and tables:	Visual summary of chronology, geography, and concepts
• Glossary:	Definition of key terms in the history of psychology
• Name index:	Index of significant persons noted in text
• Subject index:	Index of significant topics covered in text

## Instructor Resources

To provide a comprehensive, chronological overview of the history of psychology, optimal use of the text would follow it sequentially from start to finish. However, practical realities and/or pedagogical preferences may suggest other approaches. The most essential and pivotal chapters, those that provide the rationale and framework for the text, would generally include the following:

- **Chapter 1:** Past for Present: Psychology in Search of a Paradigm
- **Chapter 3:** Psychological Foundations in Ancient Greece
- **Chapter 13:** The Founding of Modern Psychology
- **Chapter 20:** Contemporary Psychology

Beneficial variations may include the following:

- Consider the two parts of the book separately, selectively studying “Psychology’s Historical Foundations” and/or “Systems of Psychology.”
- Consider an alternate division of material, separately studying from ancient times through the Enlightenment (**Chapters 2–11**) and/or from the nineteenth century to the present (**Chapters 12–20**).
- Determine whether or not to include the material on “Psychology in the Ancient and Classical East” (**Chapter 2**).
- Consolidate coverage of the Enlightenment period by combining **Chapters 8** and **9** on French sensationalism and British empiricism, and by combining **Chapter 10** on German rationalism and **Chapter 11** on romanticism and existentialism.
- Streamline coverage by selecting only the most prominent thinkers of each era (“Great Thinkers” designated by  $\Psi$  in the text or chosen by the instructor) and/or prototypical representatives of key approaches and schools (as identified in **Table 20.1** on “Psychology’s history”).

**Teaching resources** for instructors include the following:

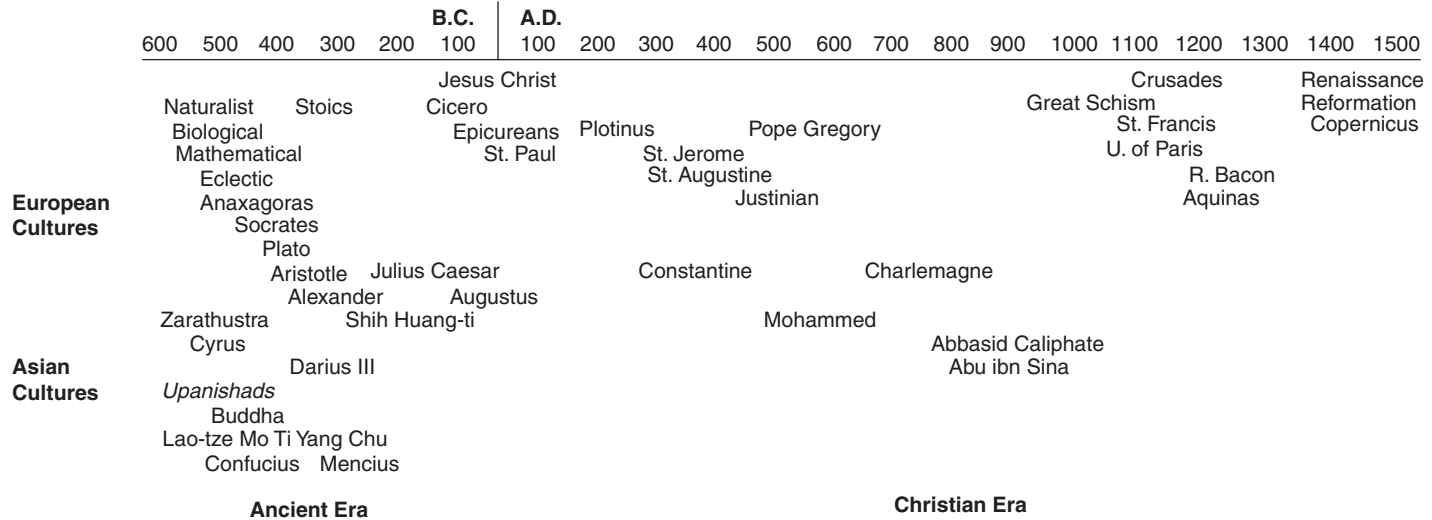
- PowerPoint Lecture Slides
  - Chapter Outline
  - Learning Objectives
  - Lecture content
  - Timelines (Historical periods, “Great Thinkers”)
  - Tables (“Psychology’s History,” “Connect the Thoughts”)
- Instructor’s Manual
  - Learning Objectives
  - Chapter Summary
  - *Zeitgeist* Time Capsule

- Multimedia Links
  - “Virtual Tour”
  - “Virtual Museum”
- Discussion Topics (and/or Short-Essay Exam Questions)
- Multiple-Choice Exam Questions

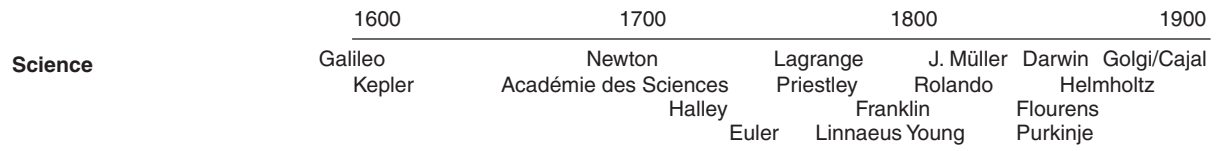
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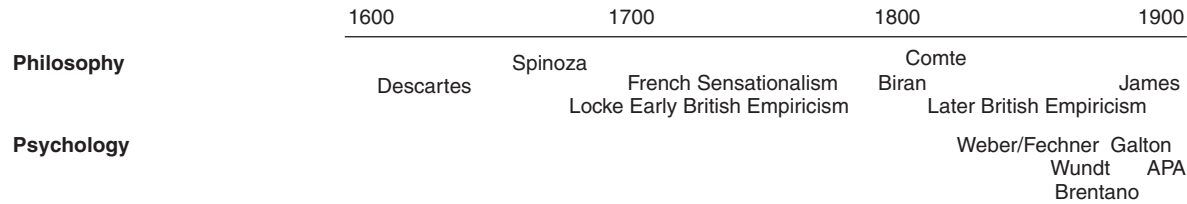
Ebbinghaus, H. (1908). *Abriss der Psychologie [Outline of psychology]*. Leipzig, Germany: Veit & Co.

**Writers and Events to the Renaissance**

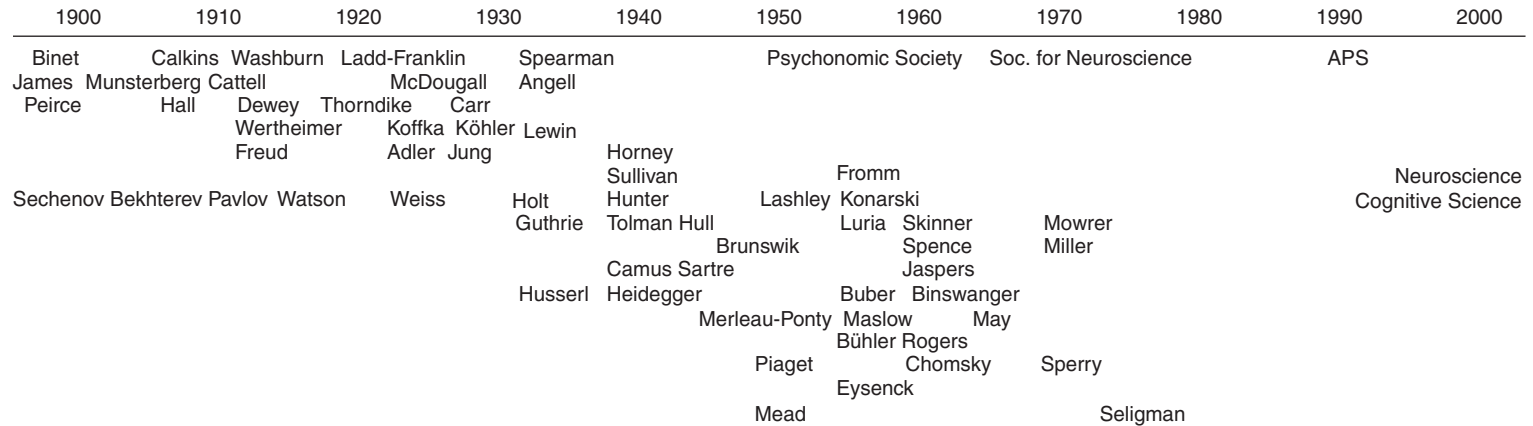


**Intellectual Developments: Post-Renaissance to pre-Twentieth Century**





**Twentieth-Century Psychology: Major Representative Figures**





## **PART I**

---

# **Psychology's Historical Foundations**



# 1

## Past for Present: Psychology in Search of a Paradigm



### Chapter Contents

Approaches to Historical Investigation	4
Psychology's Search for a Unifying Paradigm	5
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Psychology seems to mean many things to many people. In everyday life the word *psychology* has a variety of meanings with mentalistic, behavioristic, or abnormal implications. The popular media seem to reinforce this perception. For example, we often hear the words *psychological*, *psychiatric*, and *psychoanalytic* equated and used interchangeably. We often read or see research results on smoking or drug hazards conducted by psychologists but described as medical research. Or we see instances where a psychologist, using “armchair” methodology, responds with profound advice in a newspaper to a reader in distress. Nor does the college-level introductory course to psychology necessarily dispel the confusion. Those who have taken such courses may have dim, confused recollections of IQ tests, dogs salivating, hierarchies of anxiety, the Oedipus complex, figure-ground reversals, rats running through a maze, heart rate control, peer group influence, and so on. Similarly, listing the range of positions held by psychologists does not resolve the confusion. We find psychologists in hospitals and community mental health centers, in advertising and industry, in government and the military, and in universities.

Whereas the diversity of modern psychology is a source of bewilderment, psychology's range of study is justifiably broad. As a formal, independent discipline studied and taught in universities, psychology has been in existence for only just over a century. However, we should recognize that people have been “psychologizing” since they first began to wonder about themselves. The long history of theories and models of psychology slowly evolved, mostly within philosophy, until the nineteenth century, when the methodological spirit of science was applied to the study of psychology and the formal discipline of psychology appeared in Western intellectual institutions.

The emergence of psychology as a formal discipline takes us to the problem of **science**. Generally, science is defined as the systematic acquisition of knowledge. However, from a narrower perspective, the acquisition of knowledge is limited to **observations** validated by our senses. That is, we must see,

hear, touch, taste, or smell events to confirm their existence as scientific data. This type of science is called **empiricism**, and its most controlled application is called the *experimental method*, in which variables are manipulated and measured. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, this narrower, empirical definition of science linked up with a nineteenth-century model of what psychology should study to form the discipline of psychology. Yet neither at that time nor during the subsequent years did that form of psychology win universal acceptance. Some scholars argued for a different model of psychology, a broader definition of science, or both. Thus, psychology's long past, coupled with more recent differences of opinion about the form that the discipline of psychology should take, resulted in the heterogeneous discipline we study today.

Although the variety of opinions about psychology can be confusing, it can also be a source of excitement. Psychology is a young, unsettled, and often unwieldy discipline that has a highly stimulating subject-matter to investigate – human activity. The purpose of studying psychology's history is to help remove the confusion caused by the diversity of psychology. By using this diversity as a resource rather than a hindrance, our understanding of psychology's development makes contemporary psychology richer for us. There are other reasons to study the history of psychology. Knowledge of the past, per se, is certainly worthwhile and beneficial in providing perspectives. Furthermore, the study of psychology's history may help illuminate some of the questions that have concerned scholars through the ages. However, the most pressing reason to study the history of psychology may be to understand the basis of its present diversity.

## Approaches to Historical Investigation

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In their examination of the past, historians have proposed structures, or models, within which events may be categorized, correlated, and explained. For example, the preeminent historian of psychology E. G. Boring (1950) contrasted the **great person** and **zeitgeist** models as they applied to the history of psychology. Expressed succinctly, the great person view holds that historical progress occurs through the actions of great persons who are able to synthesize events and by their own efforts change the path of those events toward some innovation. The zeitgeist, or “spirit of the times,” model argues that events by themselves have a momentum that permits the right person at the right time to express an innovation. Accordingly, Martin Luther (1483–1545), in nailing his theses condemning corruption in the Church to the church door at Wittenberg in 1517, may be viewed either as a formidable figure starting the **Reformation** or as the agent of Reformation forces already at work.

A variant of the zeitgeist view for the history of science, proposed by Kuhn (1970), suggests that social and cultural forces develop **paradigms**, or models, of science at various stages and that scientific work is conducted within a given paradigm for a limited period until the paradigm is replaced. The change in

paradigms is a by-product of both the cultural needs of the age and the inability of the old paradigm to accommodate new scientific findings. Accordingly, Kuhn presents scientific progress as a cyclic process. Within a given scientific paradigm that is accepted by a consensus of scientists, an anomaly arises that cannot be explained or accommodated by the paradigm. A crisis is generated, and new theories compete to replace the inadequate paradigm. Finally, a single view gains the commitment and allegiance of a group of scientists who implement a scientific revolution, and a new paradigm is accepted. When an anomaly again arises, the cycle is repeated. Thus, Kuhn proposed a relativity in the understanding of theories, facts, and observations that is sensitive to the implicit assumptions of scientists.

Watson (1971) proposed another manner of structuring the historical progress of science. Watson offered prescriptions, or dimensions for classifying psychological issues, by examining and describing the relationship between scientific findings and the prevailing cultural forces of a given age. Essentially, Watson's strategy evaluated a number of possible underlying assumptions and consequent implications of theoretical positions. This approach is useful as an evaluative tool to compare the issues and implications for various theoretical positions within psychology.

Interpretations and explanations of historical events certainly help us bring order to the history of psychology. As we examine psychology's past and its contemporary state, we shall refer to the various interpretations of scientific history to understand the meaning of specific intellectual movements. However, this book may be best described as eclectic in orientation. As its authors, we are not historians, but rather psychologists writing of the historical antecedents of our discipline in the clearest way we can, without any commitment or allegiance to a particular interpretation of historical events.

## Psychology's Search for a Unifying Paradigm

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Although a definitive framework for psychology has proven elusive, the search for one nevertheless is often compelling. Consider these quotes from some prominent figures within the modern history of psychology:

A string of raw facts; a little gossip and wrangle about opinions; a little classification and generalization on the mere descriptive level; a strong prejudice that we *have* states of mind, and that our brain conditions them: but not a single law in the same sense in which physics shows us laws, not a single proposition from which any consequence can causally be deduced....This is no science, it is only the hope for a science. (William James, 1892/1910, p. 468)

To reach a clear understanding as to the true meaning of psychology is a more difficult task than the solution of any special psychological problem. (Hugo Münsterberg, 1914/1923, p. 8)

It is generally agreed that nowadays psychology has arrived at a very undesirable degree of disunity. Each school, if not each individual, seeks to establish the science independently both of his predecessors and even of his colleagues. The result is that all alike have come into general discredit. Psychology is a byword of reproach among other sciences. (Charles Spearman, 1935, p. 11)

Even now after some forty-five years of sustained effort I am not sure that I have made any progress, have learnt anything of human nature.... The science implied by the word "psychology" is beyond our reach, no such science exists and no such science is possible to us.... The present condition of psychology is deplorable. (William McDougall, 1936, pp. 3, 5)

Using Kuhn's terminology from above, the desire and expectation that psychology must be a scientific study push the discipline toward an explanatory order so that valid and reliable laws or relationships can evolve. That is, psychology must aim for order and organization of the principles that govern human experience, and the framework that accommodates the progress of psychological inquiry is the paradigm for psychology at a particular point in that progress. As mentioned, the definitive paradigm that merits complete agreement among psychologists has yet to emerge.

## Psychology's Enduring Questions

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Despite the dissonance about psychology's definition, as reflected in the quotes from the prominent scholars above, certain questions seem to recur since psychology's inception as a formal discipline in the nineteenth century, and these may be summarized as follows:

**The mind:** Does each person possess a mind, and if so, is the mind the entity in subjective experience that gives each person a sense of identity and self-knowledge or **consciousness**? This question is both obvious and profound. It seems obvious because of the Greek roots of the word "psychology" (*psyche*), meaning the study of the mind or **soul**. It is profound because it gets to the **essence** of what it means to be human and to understand why we know that we know – that we are self-aware. If the mind is real, how does it work? Does the mind act on the external world, or does it react to external reality? Alternatively, if the mind does not exist, what explains our sense of identity, unity, and self-awareness? Do the layers of neural systems give rise to that subjective experience, so that mechanics of the nervous system are sufficiently explanatory?

**Sources of knowledge:** How do we acquire the content of our experiences? How do we learn and grow? Does the person interact with the environment as a kind of passive receptor, such that information comes into our nervous system and is stored, or are our internal learning processes more

active and **dynamic**? Do we in fact act on the information coming from our experience, which involves individual interpretation, judgment, and values? These questions also directly impact our understanding of memory. Do we store experiences that generally conform to the elements of the experiences as they occurred, or do we flavor memories depending on our individual character, motivations, and values?

Fortunately, historians of psychology (e.g., Allport, 1940; Watson, 1967; Coan, 1968; Hergenhahn & Henley, 2014) have organized and identified many of the recurring themes and enduring questions within the field. We can present a summary of them here, since we will be coming back to them as our story of psychology's history unfolds.

**Naturalism–Supernaturalism.** What is the nature of ultimate reality? Is reality explained entirely by principles found within nature (**naturalism**), or must we seek answers that transcend nature (supernaturalism)? Is the universe empty and impersonal (impersonalism) or full and personal (personalism)? Does God exist, and if so, what is the nature of God (atheism, agnosticism, deism, monotheism, polytheism, pantheism)? What is the origin and end of human **existence**: Is human life random and meaningless (**skepticism**) or full of purpose and meaning (teleology)? Related questions include whether reality is made of one entity (**monism**) – either matter (**materialism**) or mind (idealism) – or two entities (**dualism**), consisting of both matter and mind. These questions are very profound and have powerful implications for psychology. This level of thought falls under the field of philosophy called **metaphysics**, which is concerned with the overarching nature and structure of reality.

**Universalism–Relativism.** What is the nature of truth? Is truth eternal, universal, and knowable (**universalism**), or is truth transient, relative, and/or unknowable (**relativism**)? Are there reliable standards and guides for living? What is good and what is evil for human persons? How do we understand suffering, and how do we attain authentic happiness and human flourishing? These questions are likewise related directly to psychology and are usually pondered under the purview of **ethics**, which is another part of philosophical study that considers the nature of truth, goodness, and beauty.

**Empiricism–Rationalism.** Does human knowledge come primarily through experience (**empiricism**) or through reason (**rationalism**)? Related questions include the following: Does knowledge move from specific instances to general principles (**induction**) or from general principles to specific instances (**deduction**)? Is the human mind passive as a recipient of knowledge, or is the human mind active as a creator of knowledge? Is knowledge derived from sensory **association** (**empiricism**), mental processes (rationalism), and/or **innate** categories

(**nativism**)? As we shall see, the answers to these questions determine psychology's position relative to the natural and physical sciences, and they fall under the part of philosophy known as **epistemology**. This branch of philosophy studies the nature, sources, and methods of obtaining human knowledge.

**Reductionism–Holism.** Another group of questions coming to psychology from epistemology asks the following: Does research consider **analysis** of the parts (**reductionism**) or synthesis of the whole (**holism**) of its subject or object of study? Are psychological data presented in terms of relatively small units (**molecularism**) or relatively large units (**molarism**)? Related questions include the following: Is there an emphasis upon knowledge that is measurable in numbers (**quantitativism**) or that is distinguished in **essence** or structure (**qualitativism**)? Is there more of an emphasis on operational definitions (**operationalism**) or phenomenological descriptions (**phenomenalism**)? Is there an emphasis upon discovering general principles and laws (nomotheticism) or upon describing particular events or persons (**idiographicism**)?

Four categories of questions come to psychology from **anthropology**, which seeks to understand and articulate human nature. That is, how do human persons fit into relationships with other forms of life, the earth, and the universe?

**Body–Mind.** How are mind and body related in human nature? Typically referred to as the “mind–body problem,” this relationship elicits an array of answers to questions of monism or dualism as applied to human nature. While there are many subsets of questions that flow from the basic answers to the body–mind problem, the fundamental issue is whether at some level there are one or two aspects to human experience. Is human nature composed of both body and mind (dualism) where both physical body and non-physical mind interact and influence one another (**interactionism**)? Or is human nature composed of either body or mind (monism), as a physical body only (materialism) or as an immaterial mind only (idealism)? Related to the mind–body question is the question of whether human nature may be sufficiently understood by mechanistic, material laws (**mechanism**) or through additional consideration of a vital, nonmaterial force (**vitalism**).

**Determinism–Voluntarism.** Is human nature free or determined? If free (using distinctions suggested by James, 1897/1979, p. 117), is this freedom an absolute freedom (indeterminism) or a limited/finite freedom (soft determinism)? If determined (hard determinism), is human nature determined more by biology (nature, heredity), environment (nurture,

experience), or psychology (thoughts, emotions)? These influences are further discussed within the next two dimensions below.

**Irrational–Rational.** Is human nature rational or irrational? Is human nature guided more by rational aspects (rationalism), such as intellect, reason, and conscious thoughts, or irrational aspects (irrationalism), such as emotions, intuitions, and **unconscious** instincts? A related question is whether any distinction between humans and other animals is merely quantitative (**evolutionism**) or truly qualitative (**humanism**).

**Individual–Relational.** What is the nature of human individuality and relationality? At least two aspects of this “problem of the self” may be considered. First, regarding personality, is there a substantial and persistent self, mind, soul, or identity (**staticism**) that accounts for a unity and continuity of experience and behavior? Or, is there lack of such a persistent self (**dynamicism**) resulting in a discontinuity of experience and behavior, either as a fragmented stream-of-consciousness (idealism) or as a random stimulus-and-response sequence (materialism)? Second, regarding relationality, is the individual personality developed primarily from within, through nature (heredity) and/or natural adaptation, or influenced primarily from without, through nurture (environment) and/or social construction?

The intellectual domains of metaphysics, ethics, epistemology, and anthropology have fed the richness that is the integrating platform we know as psychology. The questions arising from these intellectual domains have recurred with fair consistency throughout the history of psychology and are summarized in [Table 1.1](#).

**Table 1.1** Enduring questions in psychology

Domain	Enduring Question
Metaphysics	Naturalism–Supernaturalism
Ethics	Universalism–Relativism
Epistemology	Empiricism–Rationalism
	Reductionism–Holism
Anthropology	Body–Mind
	Determinism–Voluntarism
	Irrational–Rational
	Individual–Relational

These questions provide a platform for beginning a study of psychology's past. They have been asked since the beginning of recorded history, and various answers have contributed to the paradigms of psychology through the ages. Certainly, we can see that the answers we offer to these questions will lead us in different directions. So, as we consider the long past of psychology, it will be beneficial to keep these questions at the forefront of our study.

## Western and Eastern Traditions in Psychology

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As noted previously, psychology, as it emerged as a formal discipline of study in nineteenth-century Europe, was the product of an intellectual tradition that viewed human experience through a particular set of assumptions. These assumptions were largely derived from answers to the questions listed above to basic human experience. The very conceptualization of psychology as we know it today was formed, nurtured, structured, and argued over during the 2,500 years of turbulent intellectual progress that have elapsed since the flowering of classical Greek thought. Psychology's reliance on Western intellectual thought must be appreciated, and this relationship justifies this book's emphasis on Western traditions.

Whereas the long intellectual tie between contemporary empirical psychology and Western thought is apparent, it is also important to recognize that non-Western philosophies have likewise given considerable attention to the nature of the person and the internal world of individual reflection. So, before proceeding with our story, it is appropriate to pause briefly to acknowledge that there are alternative approaches to the subject-matter of psychology, articulated through a variety of intellectual works in religion and especially in Eastern philosophies. The non-Western heritage of psychology's past often brought new achievements to Western intellectual progress or resulted in the rediscovery of ancient writings preserved by Eastern scholars. For example, algebra, usually attributed to ancient Indian philosophers, was first used in the West by ancient Greeks of the fourth century before Christ (BC), but was lost during the Middle Ages. Western Europe recovered it as a result of contacts with Islamic culture during the Crusades. Arab scholars had preserved algebra, and through them its methodology and very name were reintroduced to the West (*aljbr* means "to reunite separate or broken parts").

As we begin the study of psychology's past within Western intellectual history, starting with ancient Greek thought in [Chapter 3](#), keep in mind the broader perspective – namely, that intellectual achievements were occurring simultaneously in other cultures and traditions. For the most part, these events were parallel developments with little interaction, but in some cases these advances enriched Western traditions. So, we offer some acknowledgment of these other traditions coming from Eastern cultures before we begin consideration of the ancient Greeks. Then, the remainder of the story in this book is told from a

predominantly Western perspective in terms of psychology's emergence as an intellectual trend within the mosaic of Western civilization. Recognizing such recurring themes as unity, universal harmony, reflective knowledge, and virtuous living, we find psychology deeply embedded in the teachings of religion and moral philosophy. Thus, as we begin a more focused historical journey, we should be mindful of other rich traditions that readily accommodate the subject-matter of psychology within alternative perspectives.

## The Study of the History of Psychology

As a specialization, the study of the history and systems of psychology is a small but robust area of scholarship. Probably because of psychology's youth relative to other disciplines, the systematic study of its history was largely ignored before World War II. Several important and still interesting scholarly works, however, examined the history of psychology during the prewar period. The first was the erudite *History of Psychology* by G. S. Brett, published in three volumes between 1912 and 1921. Also in 1912, an anthology of excerpts of the psychological writings of scholars from Greek antiquity to the nineteenth century was published by B. Rand under the title *The Classical Psychologists*. In 1929, two Americans, W. B. Pillsbury and E. G. Boring, published books on the history of psychology. Of the two, Edwin Boring (1886–1968) became something of an institution and a spokesperson for the history of psychology. His work *A History of Experimental Psychology*, published in 1929 and revised in 1950, became a classic reference for the study of the history of psychology.

Since World War II, the history and systems of psychology have evolved into a recognized field of specialized study. In 1966, the Graduate School at Loyola University Chicago awarded a Ph.D. to Antos Rancurello, late professor of psychology at the University of Dayton, for the first discursive dissertation in psychology on a historical topic – a study of Franz Brentano. Subsequently, doctoral specialization in the history of psychology was offered in comprehensive programs at the University of New Hampshire and Carleton University. In 1966, the American Psychological Association established a division of the History of Psychology (Division 26); this was followed in 1969 by the formation of Cheiron: International Society for the History of the Behavioral and Social Sciences. The Archives of the History of American Psychology were started at the University of Akron in 1965. Most importantly, the *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* began publication in 1965 and continues to publish scholarly research of an interdisciplinary scope, now part of John Wiley & Sons. In addition, since 1988, the *History of the Social Sciences* has been supported by Sage Publications, and the American Psychological Association through Division 26 sponsors a quarterly journal, *History of Psychology*. All of these developments have stimulated research in the antecedents of modern psychology.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Contrast the “great person” with the “zeitgeist” interpretation of historical progress and cite an example of each.
2. Given psychology’s varied definitions and applications, is an overall paradigm possible? Is this assumption at odds with the goals of psychology as a unified scientific discipline?
3. Two central categories of intellectual debate within psychology were described as questions relating to the mind and those related to the sources of knowledge. Are these sufficient and complete?
4. Discuss the notion that “psychology has a long past, but a short history,” especially in relation to other disciplines of the natural and social sciences.

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# 2

## Psychology in the Ancient and Classical East



### Chapter Contents

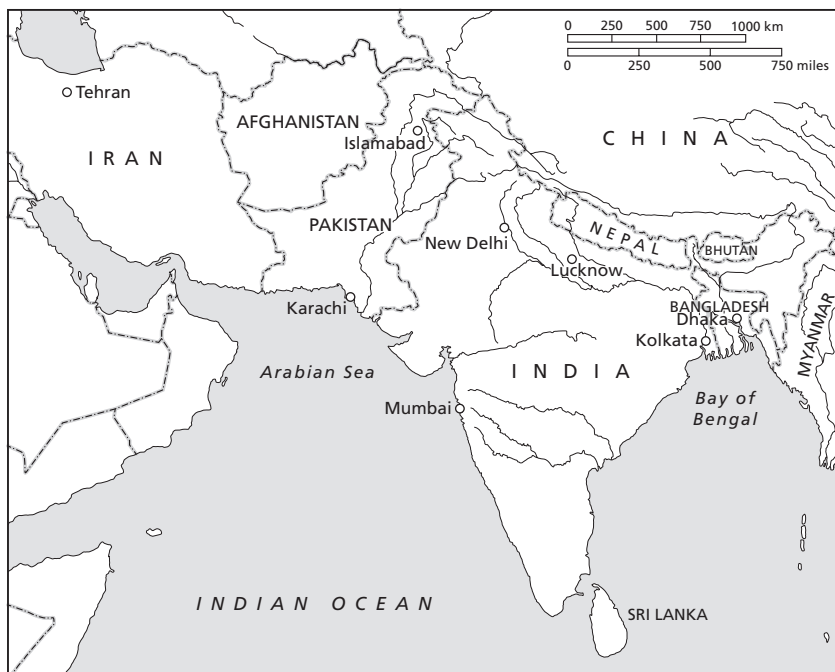
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The story of psychology's emergence as a science in the late nineteenth century is largely one of reliance on developments in western Europe from direct foundations in Greek philosophy of science. The close association of psychology's history with Western intellectual traditions flows logically from basic philosophical premises about the nature of the person, which date back to the ancient Greeks. As we shall see, the basic assumption attending the flowering of ancient Greek thought is that the person is a dualistic entity composed of body and soul – the physical and the psychical, non-physical aspects of human experience. Through a complicated and complex history, psychology entered the twentieth century as a newly founded academic discipline and heir to a Western tradition that conceived of the person in terms of physical and psychical parts. As physics and physiology studied the former aspect, so too did the psychical aspect of experience require study, and thus was defined the purview of psychology.

In a real sense, the twentieth-century systems of psychology all evolved by accepting or rejecting the ancient Greek dualistic conception. With the emergence of modern science in post-**Renaissance** Europe, and the gradual abandonment of theological and metaphysical explanations of the psychical aspect of human experience, the need for an empirical psychology

became more and more compelling. However, as psychology was redefined by nineteenth- and twentieth-century scientific advancements, its subject-matter and methodology were repeatedly debated. The twentieth-century systems, reviewed in the second half of this book, reflected differing solutions to questions about the content and method of psychology, but they all remained within the Western intellectual heritage stemming from the ancient Greeks.

While the long intellectual link between contemporary empirical psychology and Western intellectual history is apparent, it is nevertheless the case that non-Western philosophies have given considerable attention to the nature of the person and the internal world of individual reflection. These non-Western sources of psychology's past may be considered in two ways. First, the important influence of non-Western thought on the course of Western psychology and science provided a rich resource. Indeed, we can point to certain historical periods during which contacts with Eastern intellectual and religious traditions, sometimes more advanced and often more varied than in the West, brought new or recovered achievements to Western intellectual progress. For example, in the study of the Bible, one of the first editions of a Bible printed with movable type was a version called the Complutensian Polyglot, commissioned in 1502 by Cardinal Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros (1436–1517). Not only is this early printed work valued for its religious significance, the simultaneous translations



**Map 2.1** Present-day India, Iran, and neighboring states.

benefited from the contributions of Christian, Jewish, and Islamic scholars, all reflecting their specific intellectual traditions, particularly those of the Hebrew and Arab cultures. Regrettably, soon after the completion of the translations in 1517, the expulsion of the Jews and Muslims from Spain eliminated the exciting intellectual climate of scholarly collaboration that supported the project.

A second source of Eastern influences on psychology occurred more recently, starting with a resurgence of interest in ancient and modern Asian philosophers and religions. In part, the varied sensitivity to non-Western sources of psychology and philosophy has evolved to question the very assumptions behind our study of human processes. So, before proceeding to the foundation of Western psychology in the classical Greek culture, this chapter outlines some of the various psychological themes and interpretations present in the history of Asian and Middle Eastern philosophy and sciences.

## The Crossroads: Persia and the Middle East

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The Crusades, which are described within their historical context in [Chapter 5](#), made many beneficial contributions to Western intellectual progress, especially in providing contacts beyond the intellectual limits of western European thought of that period. Indeed, it was the scholarship of Muslim and Jewish teachers in Islamic territories that had preserved the essential body of ancient Greek writings and extended their interpretations in philosophy, science, and medicine. Islamic scholars were able to build upon earlier intellectual achievements because of their contacts with various Eastern civilizations, so that Eastern thought was transmitted from its origins to centers of intellectual achievement in the Arab world, and from there to western Europe.

In much the same way as her Arab neighbors, Persia served as a conduit between East and West. Occupying roughly the territory of present-day Iran and the immediately surrounding area, the ancient Persians were an Indo-European tribe that came into contact with India to the east, Russia and the Slavic tribes to the north, and Arabia and the Middle East to the west. Led by great kings such as Cyrus (reigned 550–529 BC) and Darius I, the Great, (reigned 522–486 BC), ancient Persia grew in territory and power. However, when Alexander the Great (356–323 BC) defeated Darius III (reigned 336–330 BC) at Arbela, resulting in the latter's death, Persia became a province of Macedonia. Whereas Persia lost its empire, ancient Greece increased its contacts with the East, to the ultimate benefit of Greek intellectual life.

The central religious philosophy of ancient Persia was named after the priest and prophet Zarathustra (c. 628–551 BC), also known by the Greek name Zoroaster. Legend has it that he was born of the spirit of the supreme god, Ahura-Mazda, the Lord of Life. Zarathustra personified goodness, love, wisdom, and beauty, and overcame severe temptation by the devil to do evil. As a reward for his virtue, God gave him the *Avesta*, a book of knowledge and wisdom, which formed the basis of Zarathustrian teaching. The *Avesta*, or what

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survives of it, is a collection of prayers, legends, poetry, and laws that describes the struggle between the god of good and the devil. Earthly existence is a transition in this conflict between good and evil, and it will last for 12,000 years. The virtues of purity and honesty will lead to everlasting life. Because they are targets of evil in life, the bodies of the dead must not be burned or buried, but rather left to birds of prey or thrown to the dogs and returned rapidly to nature. The supreme god, Ahura-Mazda, created and ruled the world and was assisted by lesser gods; Zarathustra taught that Ahura-Mazda had seven aspects for people to emulate or strive for: light, good mind or wisdom, right, dominion, well-being, piety, and immortality.

As part of this earthly conflict, individuals were engaged in a struggle between good and evil, and had the free will to choose between them. This psychology led to a code of ethics and values that stressed honesty and piety. The major sin in this code was unbelief, which was dealt with swiftly. The moral code was enforced by the priests, called *magi* (from the Persian word for “sorcerer”) because of their reputation for wisdom, who were also practitioners of Persian medicine. As in pre-Renaissance Europe, religion and medicine were mixed in their service to the masses by the priestly class.

The legacy of Zarathustrian philosophy and religion was far-reaching. The conflict between good and evil was expressed in the works of the ancient Greek philosophers. The emphasis on one god was paralleled in Judaism, and there may have been other Zarathustrian influences on Hebrew thought. Even the Christmas visit of the Magi and the birth of the boy-god have precedents in Zarathustrian tradition. Occupying the bridge between the **Hindu** society of India and the Arabic and Greek societies of the Middle East, Persia was advantageously placed and influenced the mix of ideas. We shall see the continuation of this influence in [Chapter 4](#) where we consider the achievements of Islamic culture, particularly in science, at a time when intellectual pursuits in Christian western Europe were at a low point. The storehouse of Eastern advances in knowledge provided by Persia and its successor states heavily influenced, in turn, the success of Islamic centers of scholarship that emerged at the end of the first millennium.

## India

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As the birthplace of Buddha, the historical home of the Hindus and the metaphysical *Upanishads*, the target of repeated Muslim invasion, and the object of colonial exploitation by several European powers, India is a storehouse of deep intellectual variation. As a subcontinent filled with polyglot tribes, often clashing yet more often living in mutual tolerance, India’s material and human resources have attracted outsiders throughout history. Western interest in India goes back a considerable time in recent history. Marco Polo visited India in the thirteenth century, and was followed two hundred years later by the Portuguese navigator Vasco da Gama. Columbus was in search of India when he encountered the

Americas in 1492. In succession, the Dutch, French, and British established power bases and colonial economies in India.

## Hindu Science and Philosophy

Much of the knowledge of ancient India comes from the *Vedas*, the Book of Knowledge. The *Vedas* are a collection of lessons, hymns, poetry, and prose that were compiled from oral recitations. The *Rig-veda* is perhaps the most famous as a literary achievement, composed of many hymns and poems praising various objects of worship, such as the sun, moon, wind, dawn, and fire. But the *Upanishads* are of interest to us as representing the collected wisdom of Hindu scholars who thought about the person's relation to the world. An early expression of Hindu pantheistic philosophy, the *Upanishads* are a collection of over a thousand discourses authored by various scholars. Written between 800 and 500 BC, these teachings sought to describe individual relations to the universe. Several predominant themes in the *Upanishads* reflect the unique character of Indian philosophy. Distrust of the intellect and sensory knowledge is a dominant theme, as is the search for self-control, unity, and universal knowledge. The process of attaining these goals involves shedding knowledge, participation, and even awareness of the particular and ephemeral. We are not body or mind or both; rather, we are an impersonal, neuter, and pervading reality. Within the lessons of the *Upanishads* are themes of special metaphysical knowledge that secure for us a release from the bonds of the particular and material. The *Upanishads* focus on methods of spiritual transcendence. Transmigration of a person's essence is viewed as punishment for evil living, and eventual release from successive reincarnations is the way in which we transcend these bonds. By eliminating individual desires through ascetic living, we can escape from our individualism and be reabsorbed into a whole unity of Being.

The goals expressed in the *Upanishads* lead to a psychology that is quite opposite to the basic philosophical tenets of Western psychology. Whereas the latter recognizes the individual asserting himself or herself as a process of successful development and adaptation – indeed, much of Western psychology actually describes and predicts ways to facilitate this individuation – the *Upanishads* propose the opposite. Their mystical, impersonal, and unified themes reveal a harmony that can be achieved by rejecting individual expression. These themes pervade Hindu and **Buddhist** thought and offer a striking contrast through which to understand some of the basic differences between Indian and Western thought. Again, the differing assumptions underscore the directions that psychological inquiry takes depending on the answers to basic questions about the mind and knowledge.

The Hindu philosophies have important implications for psychology. First, the individual is characteristically a part of a greater and more desirable unity. Individual growth, then, is away from individuality and toward an emergence into the bliss of universal knowledge. Second, the assertion of individuality is seen not as meaningful in itself, but rather as an activity to be minimized and avoided. Sensory and mental events are unreliable. Indeed, truth lies in

transcending sensory and mental activities and voiding consciousness. Finally, the emphasis on humanism and the centrality of the individual self, expressed in some Western views of psychology, is out of synchrony with the major themes of Indian philosophy. According to the basic Hindu conceptualization, the integrity of the individual person is questionable, because the individual occupies an insignificant place relative to the entire, harmonious complexity that is the cosmos.

## Buddhism

Although Buddhism spread to China, Japan, and Southeast Asia, it originated with the Indian philosopher and teacher Siddhartha Gautama (c. 563–c. 483 BC) – Buddha. Indeed, Buddhism served as a vehicle for exporting many Indian products besides philosophy. Buddhist missionaries introduced the decimal system to China, and the mathematical bases of Chinese astronomy came to China with Buddhism.

Like the Sophists of ancient Greece described in [Chapter 3](#), Buddha traveled from town to town speaking to crowds of people who had heard of his reputation as “the enlightened one.” His doctrine was assembled as threads (*sutras*) to jog a person’s memory. Buddha taught a **theology** that bordered on the godless. He did not condemn the regular worship of the gods, but taught that some rituals were foolish. The pain and sorrow that pervade human experience overwhelmingly impressed Buddha. He found no order in the confusion of life, but rather some good and much evil, precluding any design by a knowing and personal deity. At best, Buddha taught a type of agnosticism, so that his religion became a prescription for virtuous living detailed by simple rules of deportment leading to a sense of subjective well-being.

Within this philosophy of religion, Buddha taught in a somewhat contradictory manner about the individual. In contrast to the Hindu traditions, but consistent with some expressions of modern Western psychology, Buddha dismissed the notion of a soul or mind as being merely a human invention needed to accommodate some unexplained aspects of experience. Sensory input is our only source of knowledge. The perceived unity of personality, according to Buddha, is caused by a succession of habits and memories. As individuals, we are not free to will our fate, but rather we are governed by the determinism of habit, heredity, and environmental events. The individual personality does not survive death.

Buddha’s psychology sounds almost behavioristic and materialistic, similar to some twentieth-century expressions of psychology. Yet Buddha also accepted reincarnation and transmigration as unquestioned premises to his system. If there is no soul, what transmigrates? As far as we know, Buddha did not directly address this contradiction, but some resolution is provided in his belief in the goal of subjective well-being and the heritage of Hindu thought. A possible answer is that if we strive, through ascetic self-discipline and careful training, to attain the happiness of annihilating individual consciousness, then we begin to participate in the experience of the spirit, which lies at our very essence. The spirit is that aspect of us that moves beyond individuality. Our