

Reimagining and Refashioning Integral Management

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Abstract

The function of Management in the present complex world cannot be over-emphasized. The role of ethics in Management, especially in the Indian context, is even more profound. Despite a vast amount of work in this area, repetition and exaggeration have become commonplace, so much so that certain concepts without validity have taken root. This paper ventures to provide an alternative understanding of human psychology drawn from the philosophical insights of Sri Aurobindo, with significant implications for Management education and practice. While surveying the history of ideas in modern civilization, Sri Aurobindo's ontological formulations appear to have an edge, which unfortunately have not received much attention. Moreover, there is perceptible resistance from various interest groups and dominant philosophies, especially in the context of the prevailing political situation. This paper uses select concepts from Sri Aurobindo's philosophy to point out how radically our thinking should change. His stress on personal development through Yoga and integral education constitutes a task in the domain of self-management. Accommodating these facets into management education as well as practice is a challenge that needs to be taken up by interested individuals and institutions in right earnest.

Keywords: Sri Aurobindo, Integral Management, Evolution, Self Growth, Ethics, Indian Values, Yoga, Veda, History of Ideas, Consciousness, Philosophy, Futurology

INTRODUCTION

Nigel Nicholson, professor at London Business School and the author of *The "I" of Leadership: Strategies for Seeing, Being and Doing*, wrote an article in *Harvard Business Review* in which he examined implications of individual differences vis-à-vis Leadership.

‘As noted at the outset of this article, evolutionary psychology does not dispute individual differences. Indeed, an increasingly robust body

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of studies on twins conducted by behavioral geneticists indicates that people are born with set predispositions that harden as they age into adulthood. Genes for detachment and novelty avoidance have been found, for instance, which together appear to amount to shyness. It used to be assumed that shyness was induced entirely by environment — if a shy person just tried hard enough, he or she could become the life of the party. The same was said for people who were highly emotional — they could be coaxed out of such feelings. But again, research is suggesting that character traits such as shyness and emotional sensitivity are inborn.

That personality is inborn is not news to any parent with more than one child. You provide a stable home environment for your brood — the same food, the same schools, the same basic experiences on a day-to-day basis. And yet the first child is introverted and grows up to be an R&D scientist. The second, who never stopped chattering as a child, grows up to become a flamboyant sales executive. And still a third child is as even-keeled as can be and pursues a career as a school-teacher. Evolutionary psychology would tell us that each one of these individuals was living out his biogenetic destiny.

All three of these children are hardwired for certain dispositions. For instance, each falls somewhere along the continuum of risk aversion described earlier. But each one's level of aversion to risk differs. The point is, along with each person's fundamental brain circuitry, people also come with inborn personalities. Some people are more dominant than others. Some are more optimistic. Some like math better than poetry. People can compensate for these underlying dispositions with training and other forms of education, but there is little point in trying to change deep-rooted inclinations.

Now, the question is what exactly ensures this predetermination of character traits? Science has no definite answers yet, and hence, we perforce turn to Philosophy. Interestingly, the gap between Science and Philosophy is declining. Evolutionary Cosmology has gained widespread acceptance as people are willing to believe the story of the universe as unveiled by Science. Biotechnology, biolinguistics and

bioethics provide ample space for interdisciplinary explorations and reciprocal ramifications.

Friends, as we sit in this hall, we all know that our planet is moving in its orbit at a great speed, and the galaxies too are rushing away from each other. There is movement all around as well as within our bodies. We can view this movement as Evolution underlying all that we know or are attempting to understand. Evolution, as a scientific concept, is an established phenomenon but its aim and objective have not received enough attention. Sri Aurobindo was writing on this topic 100 years back and the cosmological framework he has provided is worth knowing for people from every profession and pursuit.

During the last two decades, the talk of integrating or applying Indian values in Management has gained momentum. Many success stories are also there. But, it should be remembered that the notion that just by adopting ethics, success would ensue may not be true. Why? The reasons are Evolutionary in nature. Evolution is irreverent towards rules and customs. It can use any unconventional route to achieve aims.

INFLUENCE

The 20th century was a period of great intellectual fermentation, which saw top thinkers endeavouring to understand life and the world through various lenses. The major streams can be enumerated as follows:

- Phenomenology — Existentialism — Structuralism
- Semiology — Hermeneutics — Deconstruction
- Poststructuralism — Postmodernism — Postsecularism
- Critical Theory — Critical Realism — Speculative Realism
- Evolutionary Psychology — Neuropsychology — Consciousness Studies
- New Age — Integralism — Environmental Ethics, etc.ⁱⁱ

As such, communication modes and content have exploded and pose fresh challenges, especially in the virtual space. That choices have multiplied is considered as an upside, but being buried under options is no happy situation either. Further, being able to edit content runs the risk of being insulated and under-informed. This leads to lack of development of adequate sensibilities and life skills. Such screen-based worl-

view may be creating a more distorted ontological framework than what thinkers from (Hegel, 2008 to Nagel (2012) have systematised or poets from Dante to Sri Aurobindo have seen.ⁱⁱⁱ

A basic philosophical background, therefore, should be considered integral to Management. Apart from learning logic and understanding fallacies, how pure thought structure has been harnessed by sages — from Aristotle to Zizek or Spinoza to Deleuze — forms a wonderful saga of human achievement. Although each thesis is contested by subsequent students, they provide rare opportunity for young learners for mental gymnastics and consequent suppleness in thinking. Similarly, Cultural Studies is another wide field to make managers sensitive in the social and artistic arena, to enable them to appreciate heterogeneity as well as common universal undercurrents. Harboursing a sympathetic attitude towards fellow human beings as emphasised by Levinas or Habermas should also be a priority, as it becomes ever relevant in our complex worlds fraught by strife.^v

No doubt, all these movements have employed rare intellectual power to probe issues and see connections but have ultimately been proved to be partial or parochial. *Beyond Physicalism* is a recent book that looks at the past attempts from a scientific angle. It also suggests looking beyond what Sri Aurobindo characterises as the ‘illusion of the obvious’. *The Singularity & Socialism* is another book that attempts to reconcile the capitalist and socialist worldviews.^{vi} An advantage of our time is that many fierce ideological battles of the past have subsided and people are eager to discover wherever harmonising situations emerge.

In this context, the contributions of Sri Aurobindo stand out. His is a prominent voice responding to Marx, Darwin, Nietzsche and Freud. Besides, his Evolutionary Philosophy bears resonance with that of Schelling, Bergson, Alexander, Whitehead and Teilhard de Chardin. He introduced Integral Yoga from which the term ‘integral’ has since been borrowed for applying to diverse fields.^{vii}

The word ‘integral’ has plurality implicit in it and hence is liable to be interpreted as a strong antidote to diversity. This reversal, though perceived to be politically incorrect, is, in fact, a quest for harmony

through democratic negotiation and adversity negation. Integral, in the context of Management — in contradistinction to Philosophy, Psychology, or Sociology — is not anchored to any prefixed schema but would rather be open to continuous refashioning through live situations or lived reality. Management, of course, is never value neutral as a positive outcome is ordinarily expected. However that should be seen as a strength and a spur for the overall integral spirit. This overriding aspect needs to be understood properly from a larger ontological viewpoint.

Management, from the minimalist point of view of its problem-solving function, has something profound to learn from Sri Aurobindo when he affirms, ‘all problems of existence are essentially problems of harmony.’^{viii} (Cf. concept of entropy which points that nature tends from order to disorder in isolated systems.) A purpose and path are presupposed in the form of Evolution proceeding towards Harmony. This leads to the logic that all worldly attempts need to be tethered to this greater purpose. In other words, everyone must persuade themselves to feel and act in consonance with this larger motive in view.

This brings one to another famous statement by Sri Aurobindo, ‘All life is Yoga’ where Yoga would basically refer to any volitional effort to mould oneself.^{ix} So, Evolution towards Harmony well fits into the Yoga scheme as part of self-management. This transition from the problems of existence to an individual’s action and motivation might seem too wide, but an ontological understanding would reconcile it easily. There is no methodological anomaly involved in this since it is agreed how a map facilitates any journey.

The metaphor of the map, however, needs to be clarified a bit further. The map may not have any intrinsic value; knowledge, on the contrary, is a catalyst and stimulates transformation in alignment with Evolution. Knowledge (information or intellectual recognition) thus turns the vehicle of Yoga despite a person’s passivity. One is led literally pulled by knowledge, and hence the need for caution as to the source and veracity of knowledge. Sri Aurobindo would recommend the Veda as the safest primordial fount of knowledge. One may or not agree with him but there is no harm in being acquainted with what he says.

Most of us know about the word, *indriya* or Senses but are not very sure about Indra. In Sri Aurobindo's interpretation, Indra is the master of the five *indriyas*, which essentially means that Mind lords over the Senses. So the meaning of Indra is mind or intellect, which has several layers or levels. One such level in the higher regions is Varuna, and the task of an individual is to progress from the Indra to the Varuna state. This process is Evolution, the method being Yoga. Apart from this, it is also instructive to understand Varuna from the perspective of leadership and core competence.

Knowledge, Power, Harmony and Work are in fact the four functional powers for running a society that inspired the *varna* system. Varuna, in a broad sense, represents Knowledge. The other powers are Aryaman, Mitra and Bhaga. Sri Aurobindo brings out their deeper connotations so that it becomes easier to understand their relevance to our tasks and ambitions. In this connection, the first thing to understand is that our actions are never isolated, but coeval with various other evolutionary forces. From a simple rational view, this might sound weird but that is exactly where Integral Management differs from the conventional version.

ASSIMILATION

The writings of Sri Aurobindo and her spiritual collaborator, The Mother including their conversations and correspondences run into 100 volumes.^x Major exegetical works by disciples that are absolutely necessary to be conversant with also span an equal number. So, it is actually difficult to be conversant about his philosophy even at the basic level. But, understanding his views about the individual and his possibilities is important from the point of view of Management. This involves a radical change in attitude as well as priorities, which can be understood as follows.

- An individual is a combination of two persons: one inner and the other outer. The inner person is aware of the true goal of life, which the outer person executes. The inner person has also some preferences and it arranges the outer situation accordingly to derive desired experiences. These experiences need not be moral or pleasant always; the inner person exercises its liberty to decide the mix de-

pending upon circumstances and contingencies. This is a very broad sketch with enormous complexity in the details.

- In a collective situation, this amounts to the inner persons of all deciding to be sharing different responsibilities to gain respective experiences. Skills and hierarchies valued at the outer level are not the same for which the inner person has consented to be in the team. The inner person has a neutral attitude as to whether it is the master or the slave but is particular about the educative and aesthetic aspect of each type of experience.
- In this scheme of things, all the inner persons would seem almost similar as well as equal but their outer beings are deliberately programmed for limited capabilities and possibilities having manoeuvring facilities within a narrow range. Here it is important to note that such configurations are genetically ensured through birth in respective families. So, heredity and environment are both marshalled to conform to the inner person's script.
- Despite appearing to be so, the inner person's permutations are not arbitrary but are aligned to a greater purpose. Each individual is a participant in the cosmic Evolution and his inner person's trajectory is geared towards it. The inner person tries its best to carry out its intention through the outer person but faces difficulties. This entails constant friction and reformulation of goals and means.
- The outer person comprises three different parts: body, life and mind. They are endowed with different traits and capacities. They are also in conflict with each other perpetually. So, there is imperfect communication and faulty execution of the inner being's wishes. This is the reason why there is so much of error and failure in human undertakings. But, it may be reiterated that many a time, failure and suffering are also intended by the inner being.
- Thus, people's actions are mostly dictated by agendas that seem to be predetermined. This sounds fatalistic without any freedom for the individuals. But that is not wholly true. Always, there are a host of possibilities of which a few become actualities. The power of aspiration in man alters the course of events to some extent, if not fully. Mind, being more powerful than life and body, is capable of reformulating the future within the overall Evolutionary frame.

Having sketched a very simplified picture of how the world moves,^{xi} let us consider its implications for Management in general.

- Everything can be managed: that is perhaps the most ambitious objective of Management and hence the concept of Zero defects, etc. But the Integral approach doesn't subscribe to such optimism. Sri Aurobindo has outlined three principles of Education, the first of which is 'nothing can be taught'.^{xiii} In the same vein, it can be asserted that nothing can be managed. However, this is not pessimistic, but rather surrendering or aligning the human endeavour to the forces of Evolution in constructive spirit.
- When it comes to judging individuals and their strengths and weaknesses, one derives a more sympathetic attitude from the Integral approach. For, as we now know, the outer person is constrained by the stipulations imposed by the inner being. So blaming or punishing someone is useless as (s)he is unable to come out of the way (s) he is wired or required to function. Both genetic as well as circumstantial sedimentation in a person is hard to remove or remedy.
- Planning the future and dreaming about projects is normal to Management where commercial viability becomes the litmus test. But the Evolutionary relevance is a much more valid criterion under the Integral approach. Here it is vital to mention that no one has the ability or clarity as to what actually helps the Evolution but a general sense of goodwill and benevolence underpinning our wants and ambitions can be considered salutary.
- These kind of insights by themselves are not passports to success or fast growth. Individual persons will surely respond to their various situations to the best of their capability but a broad orientation in Integral approach arms them with crucial cautions and anchors so that they don't flow with emotion, enthusiasm or passion.
- Ethics is the foundation and the aim and not merely the means. One's sense of good, reminds Sri Aurobindo, should guide action both at the individual as well as the collective level. In the practical field, one may not find it beneficial at times but its transforming effect bears the potential of changing the course of events. In fact, there must not be any utilitarian calculations about the benefits being derived from adhering to ethics. In this sense, ethics and perfection should be considered as synonymous.
- However, ethics need not be perceived as bondage. Since everyone will follow their own nature, they will be exercising the freedom of transcending ethical rules if and when the occasion demands. This, *inter alia*, takes care of ethical dilemmas and inhibitions when act-

ing under orders from superiors. Reliance on ethics and the greater goal are sure formulas for future routes being streamlined.

INTEGRATION

I can understand that when I introduced the Veda or Varuna in this paper, many may have been alarmed because of its association with a particular religion.^{xiii} I share the broad consensus that religion should be kept outside of all secular domains in general and Management in particular. It is interesting to note that politics and economics, etc. most often follow the crowd, like religion, whereas Management has no such compulsion. So it is the bounden duty of Management, both in its role in education as well as practice, to distill wisdom from whatever source and preserve it for the benefit of future generations. That particular Knowledge may lack popular acceptance during its day or seem impractical but Management has the wherewithal to nurture such embryonic evolutionary treasures.

Thus, we arrive at a serious predicament. While Management would be discerning in sourcing wisdom from tradition, at the same time, it must not be a slave to mythology or popular culture. The current political situation in India presents a precarious situation. Most people are willing to surrender their critical faculty to the dominant religious sentiment aligned to the ruling party. They cannot be blamed as they find a complex narrative stretching over thousands of years providing legitimacy to matters involving their day-to-day lives as well as future aspirations. This sort of herd dynamics, however, is a challenge for Management and it must explore firm anchorage.

The role of the West, in this context, is a mixed one. Pushing the envelope in all fields of human knowledge has been phenomenal in its case, but when it comes to understanding the human situation, it has been parochial and provincial. India, in general, is outside its radar. Further, as the title of a famous book says it aptly, *We have never been modern*. It means that although western studies exhibit austere scholarship, they hide somewhere in their text or subtext, a bias towards Christianity or an implicit acceptance of biblical cosmology. Thus, their inferences remain constrained to that extent. Again, we cannot blame the West since its university system and curricula are built around such focus

areas. But, we in India have the advantage of conducting comparative studies, in the real sense of the term, and bring out the results based on merit. Management, here, has a crucial role to play.

Coming back to the dilemma as regards sources of wisdom vis-à-vis religion, one thing needs to be remembered clearly. Hindutva, as it is being disseminated today, is basically a political ideology. Its intention is clear: to create an ecosystem where people suspend their disbelief and follow the tradition, thus blurring the borders between science, politics and religion. But then the question is whether the answers to all concerns of the future are available in the tradition and its texts. At this point, it is very difficult to find a safe choice, but fortunately, we have Sri Aurobindo in India. It is in order here, therefore to glance at some salient points about him.

- Aurobindo inaugurated an enduring foundation for East–West synthesis as precursor to the Life Divine upon earth.
- The most important thing to learn from Sri Aurobindo is a firm teleological account of history, especially of India, tethered to Evolution.
- Hegel’s vitalistic supremacy of State and Nietzsche’s aggressive Overman were both duly moderated by the Nation-Soul and Superman of Sri Aurobindo.
- Sri Aurobindo produced a couple of landmark scientific/philosophical principles:
- (1) Logic of the Infinite^{xiv} and (2) the Supra-physical being beyond empirical probe, which are currently percolating into Consciousness studies.
- The philosophical aspect of Sri Aurobindo is such that comparisons are a must, but the same is not true of his Yoga Psychology.
- Sri Aurobindo inflicts a terrible blow to the materialist theories of Darwin, Marx, and Freud.

Scholarship in India as such can be seen as broadly falling under three streams: 1. Marxist, 2. Nehruvian, and 3. Hindutva. These schools have their set agendas and procedures due to which truth is always at a discount. Management has the responsibility not to be wedded to any particular ideology and search for the right clues with ruthless independence. Sri Aurobindo makes this task easy. He, in his ontological formulations, bypasses the aforesaid streams to present an overarching

system that is in consonance with science. His invoking of the Vedic symbolism further imbues it with pregnant possibilities of a sublime human destiny. Thus, in the scheme of Sri Aurobindo, life and religion merge, which he terms as Integral Yoga.

This may be a huge lesson for Management. While it is legitimate to keep religion and secular activities separate, Sri Aurobindo announces that such a strict bifurcation is impossible since no action is separate from cosmic action and evolution. Being aware of the ongoing action of Evolution and its intention all the while remoulds the very motive and tenor of any individual action and more so that of a leader. This transforming alchemy, difficult to decipher through traditional tenets of Management or manipulation, underscores the Emergence aspect of cosmic fermentation. To be awake to such trysts is a tremendous challenge for Management education and theorisation.

Having thus argued that Management has no option than to adopt Sri Aurobindo, the question of how to approach him arises. This is a subject in itself and for the purpose of this short paper, I may indicate a few points briefly. It is true that one may not be able to read all his works but it is not wise to avoid them if found difficult. Another complaint may be lack of relevance to one's work. However, reading the works of Sri Aurobindo leads to personal growth and intellectual culture, which ultimately prove as rewarding as other professional subjects. Besides, a certain poetic ability as well as a knack for theorising is normal to be expected from such endeavours.

A word of caution as regards Indian tradition. A lot of literature has come into existence during the last two decades involving the relevance of Indian wisdom to Management. Despite good intentions, this can be deceptive. I'm not making any specific mention, but in general, an attitude of scepticism and critical judgement is preferable. Indology or Sanskrit are not innocent fields of study. One is likely to be misguided unless acquainted with Sri Aurobindo's interpretations. The Mother & Sri Aurobindo suggest not delving deep into the so-called Indian Philosophy, which is heavily influenced by the Buddhist discourse. The Vedic nirus, as represented by the thought and action of The Mother & Sri Aurobindo in the present age, is antithetical to the nihilism of Buddhism.

When The Mother & Sri Aurobindo decided to work together in 1914, a great East–West synthesis was forged which was to blossom as The Life Divine. The Knowledge system that The Mother & Sri Aurobindo have honed is unique and unprecedented. If mixed with other teachings, it becomes ineffective. In their inimitable way, they sought to integrate religion with ordinary life by invoking psychological aspects instead of rituals or other physical methods. All individuals have their own unique way and how they would acquire knowledge cannot be predicted. So they did not prescribe any fixed method of Yoga. Further, Sri Aurobindo presents us the epic *Savitri* that helps one climb the ladder of Consciousness that sows seeds of Harmony.^{xv}

There is no gainsaying that the world has undergone enormous changes since Sri Aurobindo wrote his last lines in 1950. So, when some perceptive critics disagree with some of his theoretical formulations, they need not be dismissed as superficial speculations. Rather a much more significant opportunity arises for re-examining the whole gamut of issues so as to find perspective. These sorts of methodological innovations are necessary while dealing with the varied terrain of Sri Aurobindo's oeuvre. How to evaluate the two sides of the argument and derive the best advantage from such an engagement should be the sole focus for refashioning integral management.

Whether one likes it or not, the world has been living in a state of uncertainty for the last 200 years, especially since the days of Feuerbach. Many philosophical as well as scientific currents have emerged and disappeared, adding a sense of instability and suspicion. Against such a backdrop, it is worthwhile to be grateful to Sri Aurobindo at least for one reason. His writings provide a firm and vast ground in serving as a point of departure for diverse fields of intellectual exploration.

Sri Aurobindo's writing imparts a global touch, or more accurately, a universal context. At once one is lifted from one's narrow confines to the countless concerns of the whole humanity; its past, present, and the future. Thus, an interdisciplinary approach to probe them becomes imperative. This has remarkable advantage in view of the ongoing globalization and communications revolution facilitated by information

technology. Science plumbing the depths of consciousness via neuropsychology is also an emerging field.^{xvi}

That Sri Aurobindo is a meeting point for the East and the West is common knowledge.^{xvii} Despite certain well-meaning criticisms, his insights are unique and invaluable. Besides, his knowledge of both the West and the East from the vantage point of an insider is of immense value. Thus, his penetrating insights on men and events offer considerable scope for judging implications for the future of the world.

The foregoing is ample proof of an alternative vision for the future of Management. The emphasis on Sri Aurobindo might surprise some. But, it has been an attempt to drive home the primacy of his thought and prophetic vision. This can be realised by any careful reader of his works with a critical eye and sympathetic view. At this point it is important to note that the notion of nationalism itself is undergoing a metamorphosis in India at present. Certain civilisational values having universal appeal are being questioned and undermined under political patronage. Sri Aurobindo indeed anticipated such vicissitudes of history.^{xviii} Safeguarding these endangered values constitutes a priority and hence should drive our intellectual discourses. To summarise, Sri Aurobindo is useful to Management education and practice in a number of ways.

- Sri Aurobindo obviates the hesitation of Management of dealing with religion by turning it into Yoga, a process of psychological exploration and enrichment, thus avoiding rituals and superstitions.
- By invoking the Veda, he affords a solid background of the Indian tradition but without the ceremonial paraphernalia. This becomes easy to handle for Management, with accentuated profundity.
- In theorising on Evolution and endowing it its true significance, Sri Aurobindo takes Science by the horn. Thus, the trajectory from Veda to Evolution becomes an invaluable vestibule for Management to explore further.
- Sri Aurobindo brings in the fair perspective by discrediting the Marxist antipathy towards religion. Management benefits a great deal by eschewing a narrow and rigid conception of religion and the nagging concern of avoiding it.
- Sri Aurobindo deals with the West with aplomb, borrows what is best and points out where it lacks. He does it without any inferior-

ity or victim's mentality, making postcolonial sentiments outdated. This is in sync with an egalitarian cosmopolitan outlook.^{xix}

- He goes a step further than western analysis as he has the advantage of Indian wisdom drawn from the strength of its texts and thought. So, Management may find him of more use than the western offerings.
- Sri Aurobindo also provides a much safer route than that promised by Buddhism and other branches of Indian Philosophy in terms of principles, ideals and goals. Management may learn not to be too impressed by the popularity and sophistication of the latter, and rather cultivate a rational, critical approach.
- Sri Aurobindo is the most credible authority and bypasses his other famous contemporaries. Management could perhaps avoid invoking three or four names simultaneously, challenge the bane of superficial engagement, and attempt to effectively concentrate on Sri Aurobindo.
- Sri Aurobindo, most importantly, is a stout antidote against Hindutva. By proposing a symbolic approach to religion, he advocates the emergence of a liberal and global fraternity. The philosophical underpinning of this aspect should be internalised by Management.

Notes:

- i. For ideas on leadership, see Richard A. Davis, *The Intangibles of Leadership: The 10 Qualities of Superior Executive Performance* (Toronto: J. Wiley & Sons Canada, 2010). Further critical examination of ethical issues may be found in Lawrence E. Harrison and Samuel P. Huntington (eds), *Culture Matters: How Values Shape Human Progress* (New York: Basic Books, 2000); S. K. Maitra, 'Outlines of an Emergent Theory of Values', in S. Radhakrishnan and John H. Muirhead (eds), *Contemporary Indian Philosophy* (London: G. Allen & Unwin, 1952); Rajendra Prasad (ed.), *Ends and Means in Private and Public Life* (Shimla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study and Indus Pub. Co., New Delhi, 1989); and Jyotirmaya Sharma and A. Raghuramaraju (eds), *Grounding Morality: Freedom, Knowledge, and the Plurality of Cultures* (New Delhi: Routledge, 2010).
- ii. Related exploration of these histories may be found in Georges Vrekhem, *Patterns of the Present* (New Delhi: Rupa & Co, 2002); Richard Hartz, *The Clasp of Civilizations: Globalization and Religion in a Multicultural World* (Los Angeles, CA: Nalanda International and New Delhi: D.K. Printworld, 2015); Rod Hemsell, *The Philosophy of Religion* (Auroville,

- Pondicherry: Auro e-Books, 2014); and J. N. Mohanty, *The Self and Its Other: Philosophical Essays* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000).
- iii. Prema Nandakumar, *Dante and Sri Aurobindo: A Comparative Study of The Divine Comedy and Savitri* (Madras: Affiliated East-West Press, 1981); and K. D. Sethna, *Classical and Romantic: An Approach Through Sri Aurobindo* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1997). For an insightful study of the journey of poetry, see Meena Alexander, *The Poetic Self: Towards a Phenomenology of Romanticism* (Atlantic Highlands, N.J: Humanities Press, 1980). A perceptive account of literary studies may be traced in Prafulla C. Kar, Kailash C. Baral and Sura P. Rath (eds), *Theory and Praxis* (Delhi: Pencraft International, 2003).
- iv. Some foundational ideas are covered in Terry Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (Cambridge, Mass: Blackwell, 1990); Zygmunt Bauman, *Hermeneutics and Social Science* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978); Paul de Man, *Blindness & Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971); and Paul Ricoeur, *The Conflict of Interpretations* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1974).
- v. See Ananta K. Giri, *Knowledge and Human Liberation: Towards Planetary Realizations* (London: Anthem Press, 2014). Also, Leela Gandhi, *The Common Cause: Postcolonial Ethics and the Practice of Democracy, 1900–1955* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014); Mark Lilla, *The Stillborn God: Religion, Politics, and the Modern West* (New York: Knopf, 2007); Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Justice: Rights and Wrongs* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008). Also, Aakash Singh Rathore and Alex Cistelecan (eds), *Wronging Rights? Philosophical Challenges for Human Rights* (New Delhi: Routledge, 2011); Samuel Moyn, *Christian Human Rights* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015); Robert N. Bellah, *Religion in Human Evolution: From the Paleolithic to the Axial Age* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2011); and R. Sundara Rajan, *The Humanization of Transcendental Philosophy* (New Delhi: Tulika, 1997).
- vi. C. J. Townsend, *The Singularity & Socialism: Marx, Mises, Complexity Theory, Techno-Optimism and the Way to the Age of Abundance* (Rancho Cordova, CA: Createspace Independent Publishing, 2015). Also, David Harvey, *Justice, Nature, and the Geography of Difference* (Cambridge, Mass: Blackwell Publishers, 1996) and Paul Mason, *Postcapitalism: A Guide to Our Future* (London: Allen Lane, Penguin Books, 2015).
- vii. Sri Aurobindo, *Letters on Yoga-I: Foundations of the Integral Yoga*, The Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo, vol. 28 (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Publication Department, 2012).

- viii. Sri Aurobindo, *The Life Divine*, The Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo, vol. 21 (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Publication Department, 2005), p. 4.
- ix. Sri Aurobindo, *The Synthesis of Yoga*, The Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo, vol. 23 (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Publication Department, 1999), p. 1.
- x. These can be found at <http://sabda.sriaurobindoashram.org/catalog/booksearch.php>, <http://www.collectedworksofsriaurobindo.com/> <http://incarnateword.in/> and <http://www.sriaurobindoandmother.com/> (accessed 16 October 2015).
- xi. For a detailed study, see Don Salmon and Jan Maslow, *Yoga Psychology and the Transformation of Consciousness: Seeing Through the Eyes of Infinity* (St. Paul, MN: Paragon House, 2007); Debashish Banerji, *Seven Quartets of Becoming: A Transformational Yoga Psychology: Based on the Diaries of Sri Aurobindo* (Los Angeles: Published by Nalanda International and New Delhi: D. K. Printworld, 2012); Jugal K. Mukherjee, *Mysteries of Death, Fate, Karma, and Rebirth: In the Light of the Teachings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 2004); and Stephen H. Phillips, *Yoga, Karma, and Rebirth: A Brief History and Philosophy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).
- xii. Sri Aurobindo, *Early Cultural Writings*, The Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo, vol. 1 (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Publication Department, 2003), p. 384.
- xiii. 'Sri Aurobindo: Life, Language and Yoga', pp. 121–84 and 'The Rigveda: Text and Interpretation', pp. 272–92 in J. L. Mehta, *Philosophy and Religion: Essays in Interpretation* (New Delhi: Indian Council of Philosophical Research and Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1990); and M. P. Pandit, *Aditi and Other Deities in the Veda* (Pondicherry: Dipti Publications, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1970).
- xiv. Heidegger's *aletheia* like Sri Aurobindo's exclusive concentration is disclosure or unconcealment, transcending which may not be feasible for the individual. See Thomas Sheehan, *Making Sense of Heidegger: A Paradigm Shift* (London: Rowman & Littlefield International, 2014).
- xv. Sri Aurobindo, *Savitri: A Legend and a Symbol*, The Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo, vol. 33 (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Publication Department, 1997). For an understanding of evolution's scientific and psychological aspects see R. Y. Deshpande, *Narad's Arrival at Madra* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, 2006).
- xvi. See Joseph Vrinte, *The Concept of Personality in Sri Aurobindo's Integral*

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- xviii. Sri Aurobindo, *The Human Cycle; The Ideal of Human Unity; War and Self-Determination*, *The Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo*, vol. 25 (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Publication Department, 1997). See also, Mangesh Nadkarni, *India's Spiritual Destiny: Its Inevitability & Potentiality* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Society and UBS Publishers' Distributors, New Delhi, 2006).
- xix. See also Sachidananda Mohanty, *Cosmopolitan Modernity in Early 20th-Century India* (New Delhi: Routledge, 2014); Vasanthi Srinivasan, *Hindu Spirituality and Virtue Politics* (New Delhi: SAGE Publications, 2014); and Sudha P. Pandya and Prafulla C. Kar (eds), *Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Modernity* (Delhi: Pencraft Publications, 2001).

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