

A Refined Kernel

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I have been struggling to clearly articulate the problem I am addressing in this study. It has taken a lot of reading and writing. Now I think I have it:

This philosophical-theoretical study examines one possible way of addressing the polarity between the natural sciences and the human sciences in psychology. Murray Bowen defined what he saw as a new way of integrating empirical research with clinical practice using concepts from the philosophy of natural systems. The resulting theory assumes that human behavior is determined more by what man has in common with all of life, from the most complex vertebrates to single-celled organisms to protoplasm, than by psychological factors that are unique to homo sapiens (Papero, 1990). The most novel concept of the theory is the family as an emotional unit, which is based on an even more basic concept, the emotional system. The emotional system concept pertains to the interdependent and emotive nature of the components that make up all living systems. It is rooted in systems thinking as “the ability to be aware of the process of nature as opposed to simply the content of nature” (Kerr & Bowen, 1988, p. kpp 24). By utilizing the natural systems perspective, Bowen theory represents a broad paradigmatic departure from the poles of reductionism in the natural sciences and holism in the human sciences toward the development of an accepted science of human behavior.

It is possible that the Buddha may have also defined a theory of life and suffering that is better understood through a natural systems perspective than through analogical comparison with psychological theory. This theory, known as the Second Noble Truth, or the “cause of suffering,” (Goenka, 2012) defines the suffering as a process of nature that is inherent to all of life and so predates homo sapiens. Though referred to as the “truth” of suffering, the theory is taught as a falsifiable hypothesis which stands to be disproven through rigorous experiment (Hart, 1987). This experiment represents the core of the Buddha’s teaching and is called Vipassan? meditation. If true, the similarities between these two schools may support a new direction for the science of human behavior that transcends polarity between the natural and human sciences and with a deeper connection to the rest of the natural world.