

STONE, MAN AND THE SUN  
A NON-REPRESENTABLE TOTALITY

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The title of this paper is inspired by George Lakoff's (1987) book, which he calls *»Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal about the Mind«*. Lakoff gets his title from the fascinating and bewildering way in which things are classified in traditional Dyirbal, an aboriginal language of Australia (p. 92-93). There is a suggestion that the way in which people relate things together, the way in which they perceive the boundaries, must provide an insight into the nature of their universe.

On first impact the title of this paper can appear a little mystifying, but perhaps less so if we started to see the stone as a metaphor for space, and began to see the sun as a metaphor for time – and visualised man as a creation of all the complex relationships that space and time make possible. This might help to stir the imagination to conceive the different ways in which man's universe is constructed and deconstructed and in this process to find a meaning for the sacred. The approach that I wish to adopt is to contemplate at some depth the idea of man as relationship set within the discourse of unity and diversity. Something similar has been attempted, I think, within the concept of holism.

I should point out that this paper is part of a more comprehensive project that is under development – and that this is the beginning. A somewhat hesitant and nervous beginning, some might suggest. Not too surprising, considering that this is an entry into a discourse that is not a normal part of the world of psychologists. It is even more so the case since the aim is not to study religious behaviour, the behaviour of persons holding religious beliefs. The intention is to explore and analyse the discourses that reflect the nature of man's relationship to the world with all its meaning structures. It is quite natural to see meanings as culturally transmitted sign systems. But meanings are not closed static entities, they are dynamically active and changing functions that inform us that man is part of a dialectical system whose existence implicates imagination and active searching. This is also the paradigm for language whose existence manifests itself as embodiment in activity.

Whenever man confronts the world, whenever he is in contact with features and events in the world, he faces a certain *»problem«* – what is this, what does it mean? It is in most cases a spontaneous and unmeditated reaction, and in any case, no normal adult can totally neglect or be unaware of his environment. What he has, in fact, at his disposal is his evolutionary

past, a system of signs and a history of past experiences to generate a meaning. This process can also legitimately be called RELATING. And it can be suggested that what constitutes consciousness is this phenomenon of relating. The actual nature of this phenomenon is, in fact, the subject of our study and reflection in this paper.

The term »relating« also embraces the fact that man has to face questions about his existence and being – about birth and death, creation and destruction, suffering and sickness, about the verification of reality and truth. Here too we cannot escape the problem of meaning – here too he has to relate himself to what he inevitably must confront.

Thus there is a sense in which we can refer to Man's need for meaning and what is ultimately his desire for truth and knowledge – however, collectively this may come to be framed – which corresponds closely to the framework that we have been trying to develop for our study. But not all meanings are literal or representable in this context.

In relation to the concept of meaning it is important to realise that while meaning is not in the head but in the relationship, it is still an embodiment, because no »I« can be effectively divorced from its body. Thus we must acknowledge that the relations and meanings we enter into are also constitutive of our being as flesh and blood. Fortunately, this does not oblige us to subscribe to any concept of a Cartesian self or cogito – or any transcendental philosophy in the traditional sense.

Given the keyterms »relating« and »meaning« we shall now search for what could be sacred about them.

Within this framework we hope that there will emerge something for which we might venture to use the term sacred.

I am not unaware of the risk that I am running of being branded a heretic when I relate the word sacred to man. The heresy lies in the fact that I am likely to fall into some deep pit of essentialism, transcendentalism or old style universalism. True as this may be, I do not think that the problems in themselves are in any sense resolved or that they have become irrelevant. I think it still makes sense to talk about **relating, meaning and embodiment** as features of being human, in a sense that might still command our reverence and wonderment.

What to my mind is one of the most inviting projects is to explore the classical problems of holism, diversity and unity, but this time without the legacy of the transcendental self, the cogito and all the dualism that follows, be it the platonic-aristotelean spirit-form dualism or the Cartesian mind-body dualism.

Perhaps such problems are never to be resolved and yet the discourse will never become irrelevant. This discourse is perhaps a vital part of the fact of our human existence and being.

The first problem one meets with the term »sacred« is that, when the word is not used within a Christian theological framework, it is difficult to apply limiting conditions. The question then arises as to whether the

concept retains any relevant meaning if we (our discipline) do not subscribe to the idea of a divinity. At the moment I do not wish to discuss the different modes in which divinity can be conceptualised outside the Christian faith, though that is not irrelevant to the topic.

However, the concept of the sacred has frequently found a place in art and literature, not seldom outside a formal religious framework. To an extent, the same is true for Man's relation to myths and rituals. They seem to wield a certain power and influence, even when they are not directly associated with religious deities. The sacred is also a concept that figures when anthropologists are tempted to generalise about the nature of human nature.

When we approach the concept of the sacred from a philosophical angle, it is, indeed, a long and complicated story, made no easier by the complex interplay of religious and philosophical conceptualisations. However, what is still pertinent to the context of our inquiry is that there are some serious developments in continental philosophy, outside any institutionalised religious framework, which indicate the relevance of what is implied in the concept of the sacred for the understanding of Man's nature. Heidegger's concept of Being and Dilthey's concept of Dasein are cases in point.

There are also other traditions which, despite major differences, provide discourses on human nature in similar terms. I have the neoplatonists and the German idealist philosophers like Fichte and Schelling in mind. One can, for example, see the influence of the latter on the poetic thought of Coleridge (Orsini, 1969), much of which has a sacred tone. It can be suggested that, in Man's search for meaning and truth, certain attributes of his own nature come to expression. This, of course, does not imply that one is thereby obliged to accept that philosophy in general.

What has been said up till now will suggest that the concept of the sacred must refer to something significant, however intangible that may be, in Man's experience and understanding of himself and the world in some kind of unity.

In the light of what has been said up to now, I consider that it would be fruitful and interesting to take a look at the history of ideas and pick up the relevant discourses that might illuminate the subject matter of this inquiry – the concept of the sacred in human nature.

I shall do this by taking up certain themes and recreating certain scenarios which, for the most part, are embedded in European history. However, I shall by no means be attempting to do anything like a systematic historical analysis. What I hope to do is to explore certain relevant themes and discourses in the history of thought and ideas – themes and discourses which can be seen as Man's search for meaning – including a way to understand his own nature and place in the universe. The expression of this search, its nature and what it entails, will hopefully reveal something about Man's relationship to the world, something about »the nature of Man's nature«,

which will help to give a meaning to the term »sacred«. In this venture I shall not be encumbered by too many strictures to limit my treatment of the discourses, but will expediently relate them to each other to unfold the relevant perspectives: ways in which Man relates himself to the world and ways in which he merges with the universe.

Let me start by listing some of the possible themes that I think it would be interesting to look at – to turn around in one's mind: »*The ancient theme of diversity and unity; the question of singularity and boundaries; dethroning the transcendental self and the philosophy of dualism; the truth of impermanence; post-modernism and deconstruction; the language of art, poetry and architecture; holism; the concept of the absolute*«.

There is some suggestion that these different themes are in some sense interrelated; hence it is interesting to speculate on the existence of any underlying archaeology. The question is whether this is possible without the language of metaphysics which for long has locked our thinking in a kind of essentialism. What is perhaps exciting are the perspectives that will emerge when the deeply engrained notion of the transcendental self is removed from the scene. At the same time this will probably invite the notion of the flesh and embodiment into the emerging perspectives. The idea of a living body, which was brought into prominence by Merleau-Ponty, has now, for example, been taken up by Lakoff (1987, pp. 265-268) in his theory of experiential realism.

Considering the different themes mentioned above, an underlying principle that suggests itself is the concept of relationship. What this implies becomes more comprehensible if we contrast it with that notion of singularity and inherent structures which has led to much of the essentialist thinking mentioned earlier – at least in the field of psychology. At this stage, however, the concept of relationship is being treated in a very general sense, including both relationship between persons and between persons and the world. Within the frame of reference that is being developed in connection with the concept of relationship, it is relevant to understand that categorisation of units and events involved in any description is not taken as an inherently fixed feature. The units and events do not in themselves have only one fixed boundary description. Another important point is that the notion of relationship needs to be conceived in terms of an extended field, which is principally limitless. At the same time, the field must be seen as dynamic, non-static and not restricted to the present – it has a past and a future.

We also know that in the history of science the »picture of the world« was radically influenced during the Renaissance with the evolution of the concept of relationship as against the aristotelean idea of essences.

What the concept of relationship could suggest is that it may still be possible to conduct a discourse on »the nature of Man's nature« without being forced into any commitment to totalisation. The risk is, of course, there; we know, for example, how difficult it is for Habermas to extricate

his theory of communicative rationality from the charge of colonisation or totalisation. However, it is worth a trial to see if an idea of relationship can be formulated in a language that does not make it vulnerable to the charge of totalisation, at least in the traditional sense. On the other hand, the label of totalisation is easy to argue for and difficult to defend against.

Let us try and direct our attention to some of the themes that have been mentioned earlier.

Peter Winch (1989) has published a very interesting book on Simone Weil, which in many ways is pertinent to the subject matter of this paper. He traces the development in her thinking, which matures in the sense of spirituality and concern while retaining a close touch with reality and the pragmatics of life (Simone Weil, 1958; 1973). In fact, Winch finds much that is common to her way of thinking and that of Wittgenstein, which I find is also relevant to the kind of thinking that is being attempted here. Winch (pp. 25-26) explains e.g. how Simone Weil's and Wittgenstein's ideas coincide concerning the inadequacy of the present as providing the framework for understanding the event and the meaning. While Simone Weil in this context relates her criticism to sensations (as found in empiricist epistemology), Wittgenstein relates his criticism to propositions and the principle of verification.

I have a feeling that the actual thinking that is involved here is in some ways similar to my suggestion that interrelationships should be conceptualised in terms of extended fields, and that the units should not be taken as fixed. This line of thinking can also develop into a holistic philosophy, implying that meaning rests in a network of relationships that has a global character. However, the concept of »a network of relationships that has a global character« can be conceived in very different ways. Herein enters the description of the entities in terms of their discreteness, boundaries and permanence and the character of the configurations that emerge.

Equally important is the time element in defining the nature and identity of the phenomenon. Time, as we know, was central to Heidegger's understanding of the essence of Man's Being in the World. What I find particularly interesting is the phenomenology that concerns the integration of the present moment with the eternal and vice-versa. This is important to the concept of totality that I shall be attempting to develop.

Holistic models can also be constructed in terms of a system theory that would provide one picture of the world. But in the language of holism there can be other conceptualisations generating other dimensions of experience.

Reflecting on the notion of creation, Simone Weil suggests that the world exhibits a finality comparable to a work of art where there is a finality without any representable end (Winch, 1989, p. 169). Simone Weil (1951) says, »It is exactly the same with the universe and the course of the universe, the end of which is absolutely immanent transcendent and not representable«.

The conception of finality without any representable end also finds an expression in Weil's understanding of beauty. Beauty offers itself in all human pursuits as a finality which, as Winch says, *»is possible, however, only if some ends are seen as having a value which they do not derive from their relation to something else. Beauty constitutes the only finality known to us, she argues because everything else is an end only relatively«* (p. 169). In a sense, the same thought is implicit when we state that the crisis of our age is reflected in the fact that all truth has been replaced by value.

**It is significant that the concepts of finality and beauty are internally linked to the concept of the world as totality.** This conception of holism is similar to what I have expressed elsewhere in relation to another culture, where I found that the concept of a pre-given totality of the world was an essential part of their structure of consciousness (Cawasjee, 1988).

**What is also important to realise is that the totality embraces the person – that it does not exist as an external object. Neither is totality merely an abstract conception. It has a phenomenology that is rooted in the real world and manifests itself as embodiment with various implications for one's moral, social and physical being. Moreover, the nature of this embodiment releases the concept of totality from the lure of transcendentalism.**

From such conceptualisations of the universe there emerge rather different dimensions of experience than is the case when the world is seen through the spectacles of an objective-empiricist tradition.

The idea of totality also finds a reflection in the concept of the Absolute. But the conception of the absolute, particularly its expression in neoplatonic thinking, opens still other dimensions of experience and comprehension. In a recent publication appropriately called *»Metaphysical Horror«*, Kolakowski (1988) provides a lucid and illuminating discussion of the almost obsessive engagement of neoplatonists with the notion of the absolute. But the obsession does appear to be logically sound. After all, given the fundamental uncertainty of his life and the impossible task of finding the Truth, Man's need for the absolute which is total, self-supporting and self-grounded, is not difficult to understand. As Kolakowski (p. 33) argues, no particular truth can be assuring unless it is part of the whole, which remains unattainable.

As a natural follow-up, there has been the perpetual problem of removing all person-like attributes from the Eschaton. In this context the attribute of good has caused particular difficulties. As Kolakowski (p. 38) says, *»The gap between the One which is inherently good and the divine protector who is good to us, remains unbridgeable«* – my emphasising.

To understand the concept, one has to constantly generate descriptions that are attribute-free and without the labelling of predicates. Here is another example Kolakowski (pp. 35-36) provides, *»Therefore the Absolute is timeless and not everlasting. If it could remember the past as past, i.e. as something that was but is not any longer, and anticipate the future as such, i.e. as what is not yet but is going to be, and if it had to arrive at self-understand-*

*ing by the intermediary of memory and anticipation, it would never be complete, never whole, but always compelled to distinguish itself between what it is and what it could be.» – »It is thus that we come to the idea of Nothingness as the least distorting name for the Absolute« (p. 48).*

As I said before, there is a certain overpowering logic about the neoplatonic conceptualisation of the Absolute. But I also think that, however, esoteric, it is eminently reflected in a number of important discourses. I shall briefly point to three of them. Concerning the great works of art, we find that our discourse often suggests something very similar to what we have been saying about the absolute. Secondly, I think that there have been inspiring efforts to search for meaning and authenticity which have ended up with concepts similar to the absolute – here I am thinking of Heidegger's concept of Being. And thirdly I feel that the **whole movement involved in the dethroning of person-attributes could find its own project reflected in a discourse relating to concepts of the absolute and the ultimate.**

There is something about holistic thinking which seems to invite the notion of the sacred. In relation to the approach that is being adopted in this paper, the following conceptual scheme can be suggested.

- i) the reality of Man's being and existence can only be grasped in terms of relationships;
- ii) the structure of relationships is multiple and changing and the entities entering into a relationship do not have one fixed description. There is essentially both diversity and unity;
- iii) the meaning in the relationship is not confined to the present, as was earlier illustrated with reference to Simone Weil and Wittgenstein. The field of relationships (meanings) is in fact limitless.
- iv) at the same time, the **totality has an immanent status in human consciousness.** It is the basis for all other discourses. In some ways this could be the crucial point, to which we shall be returning later. **For the time being it is important to remember what was stated earlier concerning the status of the concept – namely, (i) the perceiver is also a part of the totality, (ii) its field of reference is the real world, (iii) it manifests itself effectively as embodiment.**

However, what is also interesting, and requires reflection, is the mode in which the field of relationships can be perceived as multiple and changing in nature – and the kind of ambiguity and timelessness that manifests itself as an inherent character of the field. Perhaps the immanence of the totality has some internal relationship to this ambiguous and timeless nature of

the field of relations. This in a way brings us to poetry, architecture and painting – and we shall now seek to continue our search in those realms.

The idea that the poet is actually pleading for an entry into the World is effectively brought out in a poem by the young Danish poet Søren Ulric Thomsen (1987, p. 37).

*Political Poem*

To you,  
 who incriminate poetry for exclusiveness  
 and raise your voices: Away with the language! –  
 it is **the world** that is the ivory tower;  
 every poem is an application for an entry

(my translation)

Implicit I think is the poet's longing for a deeper understanding and communion with the world.

But then poetry also has the language to do this.

Referring to Heidegger, Vattimo (1988, p. 71) states »*Poetry can be defined as that language in which a world (of unfolded meanings) opens up, and in which our terrestrial essence as mortals reverberates*«. Vattimo (p. 68) also reflects on Heidegger's concept of **Zeigen** (»showing«) which I find particularly insightful. Zeigen »... *is radically irreducible to a representational and referential concept of language. .... this Zeigen subverts both our usual referential way of understanding the word – thing relation and our own relation to language itself. To experience language as Zeigen or, in what amounts to the same thing, as Sage (»originary sayings«) means that 'language is not a mere faculty of man'. It 'ceases to be something with which we, speaking men, have a relationship', instead, it becomes clear that it is 'the relation of all relations'. Language is Zeigen not by being an instrument for showing things, rather Zeigen means Erscheinen lassen – that is, to make appear*« ...

When Vattimo talks about the shattering of the word in poetry he is to my mind suggesting the breaking of the conventional slumber, of destabilising conventional thought – and looking at the world in a new intense light.

Winch (1989, p. 165) I think has a similar message in his use of the term hesitation: »*I have so far represented that concept of our fellow human beings which grows out of this hesitation as an exception to the general rule that our concepts have their roots in our projects. But it appears from what Simone Weil is saying about beauty that there is something analogous to this hesitation in our reaction to the natural world also*«.

If I understand rightly then hesitation suggests an interval between impulse and the act, reflecting a relationship, a knowing which is not



directed to any instrumental end. It could be said that this knowing, this relationship, is an end in itself like beauty is.

In a sense this discourse has certain features in common with what is known as the problem of the other. The problem is particularly relevant because it brings the status of self and subjectivity to the forefront. This was an issue which engaged both Satre, Merleau-Ponty and Heidegger who all considered it an ontological problem, unlike Kant and Hegel.

For Satre the other appeared basically as a threat, a rival reflecting perhaps Satre's idealist position. Merleau-Ponty on the other hand was drawn by the poetic inspiration of Valery which embraced the other in a crossing of regards.

But it is Levinas (1985) who enlightens the discourse with the idea of a revelation. He talks about the 'face' which enlightens our beings and reveals the universe as ethics and eternity.

We can start asking ourselves whether poetry is not, in fact, a demonstration of what we have been referring to as concepts of beauty, finality, totality and the absolute. Is not poetry essentially an expression of the »transcendental« nature of man's relationship to the world. The relationship that is basically dynamic and infinite. Thereby I mean that Wordsworth's daffodils and Keat's nightingale are intimations of immortality, reaching for their meaning in terms of a world that is infinite and timeless.

This thought could also be expressed in another language to extend its boundaries to other forms of artistic creation. It could be said that poetry is a revelation of the idea of unity in multiplicity and that in this revelation there comes to expression a sense of ambiguity and timelessness. Continuing our search we discover that this sense of ambiguity and timelessness also forms an important theme in the world of architecture where man symbolises his sense of space and time in stone and masonry.

I have taken some random examples of what architects have said or what has been said of them to illustrate the point. In two of the cases they are distinguished Indian architects who have grown up under the impact of both Eastern and Western traditions but are acutely sensitive to the traditions of the classical architecture.

Charles Correa (1988) refers to architecture in terms of mythic images that exercise a primordial power. He talks about the transforming influence of court yards, passage ways and corridors, and the open sky – spaces that are highly ambiguous and create a sense of timelessness.

Doshi (1988) is critical of intellectual and function oriented styles and states that the psychic experiences in architecture are central. He says (p. 336-337) »*In my opinion, supreme amongst architectural experiences are those which occur along routes of movement and in spaces that could be characterised as pause or ambiguous plural spaces .... Time and space become internalised, and a deeply rooted personal identity with the built form gets established. Several of these space-psyche experiences over a period of time generate a set of span-*

*dana (vibrations), so that the qualitative aspects of the experiences becomes memorable, cherished by the community at large as well as by individual members and passed on to subsequent generations as part of their heritage. Here rituals play a significant role in elevating the psychic response to a built form. Rituals invite considerations of environment, of society and of human kind, and they endure longer than individuals, society, or even the environment. .... at this point I think architecture emerges. The built form becomes timeless and has a quality that goes beyond the obvious, a meaning and profoundness that transcend the particular person or action. It enriches the entire living order.»*

What is particularly interesting here is the idea of the interaction of architecture and rituals. It can perhaps be suggested that the psychic responses that rituals accentuate are, in fact, the same architectural symbols that we have referred to as ambiguity and timelessness. One could perhaps rightfully extend this relationship and say that **ritual practices lead to an embodiment of these psychic responses, that the architectural symbols of space and time (ambiguity and timelessness) become a part of the body subject. Moreover the nature of the ritual practices suggests that the embodiment is not only an individual attainment but also a communal heritage.**

Joze Plecnik was a famous Yugoslavian architect who used classical design in modern architecture to great effect. Simon Pepper (1990) reviewing a book on Plecnik comments on his work *»Roman columns, sometimes «correct«, often stretched beyond reason .... together with obelisks, pyramids, pylons, porticoes and pavilions. Byzantine monoliths, domes and vaults are employed, together with the timber beams and columns, fieldstone and roughcast walls, and the overhanging caves of Slovenian vernacular. A highly ambiguous timelessness is achieved« (my emphasising).*

If we had to sum up our discourse on architecture in a few words, it would probably sound something like **»the creation of unities in diversity in such manner that it generates a profound sense of ambiguous timelessness«.**

I should now like to briefly refer to two Indian artists, painters, both of whom have been influenced by Indian and Western artistic traditions. Their paintings and the manner in which they address themselves to art reveals that some of the basic issues of artistic creation are the same across the hemispheres. Ambiguity and movement, the fading of conventional boundaries and timelessness are symbolised in nearly all great works of art.

Sheikh (1989, pp. 107-108) is critical of the notion of singularity and states that his article *»was written in response to a prevalent view of one world – one culture and a singular notion of time taught to us as a philosophy of life .... The world as it came to me, however, came almost invariably manifold, plural or at least dual in form. .... The multiplicity and simultaneity of these worlds filled me with a sense of being part of them all. Attempts to define the experience in singular terms have left me uneasy and restless, .... «*

We are also provided with a reference to a catalogue («Place for People», Bombay and New Delhi, 1981) which vividly brings the message home – *»Like the many-eyed and many-armed archetype of an Indian child, soiled with multiple visions, I draw my energy from the source«.*

Talking about his latest work he writes *»what preoccupies me now is the epic trajectory of time and space .... The latest deals with horizontal panels on a vertical plane spilling into each other«.*

Patel (1989, pp. 128-129) commenting on a drawing of Patwardhan (Vermeer's *Maid Pouring Milk* given an Indian face mask covering the mouth) states *»The tenses of past, present, and future begin slowly to lose their rigid, encapsulated boundaries. Finally, two sets of isolated eyes gaze away deprived of context – an act of looking from one undefined dimension into another.«* And more generally about the artist's other works he says: *»There is a quiet shuttling between the tenses, or unexpected combinations of them, an intimation of an existence with fluid boundaries«.*

In all these more or less randomly selected instances of artists and their creations the message is fairly unitary: In man's relationship to the world there is a desire for meaning that transcends the immediate and is symbolised in terms of an ambiguous timelessness. This implies amongst other things that descriptions of the mind in objectivist terms is most unlikely to be fruitful.

I feel that much of what has been stated above is also at the heart of the narratives that deal more explicitly with the theme of multiplicity and unity. It is a theme that has been central in the dialogues and debates relating to neoplatonic philosophy and Christian theology.

That the world is seen as constituted of diverse elements and categories is obvious enough, the point is whether, what appears as multiple at one level can be meaningfully comprehended as part of the same totality. An implicate order to use Bohm's (1980) term that relates the seemingly diverse elements as parts of the same totality – the unity of the cosmos.

There are many different ways in which part-whole relationships can be conceived. But the main point is that both diversity and unity emerge with very different horizons when put within a common dialectical framework.

The notion of multiplicity in Unity certainly raised problems for Christian theology considering the influence exercised by neoplatonic philosophy on Christian thought. This encounter has been discussed by Clarke (1982). The fact is that the notion of multiplicity was fundamental to neoplatonic thinking. But ultimately it was the world of ideas that was both real and multiple. While Christianity has had problems with the idea of multiplicity in relation to the idea of a Christian God, seen as the source of all divine ideas, the root of the problem seems to rest in the neoplatonic doctrine of the ultimate reality of ideas. However, as Veena Das (1989, p. 49) suggests, pluralism seen as an expression of humanism in practice was not alien even to Christianity. In general, she lends a powerful voice to the cause

of pluralism and multiplicity. Her mission is of a practical nature and is related to her deep and sincere concern for the spread of violence amongst the religious groups in India.

The introduction of a secular state and a secular philosophy has not abated violence and murder, perhaps to the contrary taking a historical perspective. Veena Das as a staunch advocate of pluralism sees no contradiction between diversity and unity. She, however, emphasises that unity is not homogeneity – and that is an important point. What is implicitly and importantly suggested is that **unity in diversity is a principle that is deeply rooted in man's relationship to the world and is the source of moral values and self-realisation, both in a communal and individual sense.** The philosophy of homogeneity and singularity with which we have been constantly indoctrinated in the past, and to which Sheik (1989) also makes reference, need to be seriously questioned, both in relation to individual psychology and community life. This suggests that Man's search for meaning and self-realisation relates him to the world in symbols that recreate the realities in terms of the ambiguous and the timeless – going beyond the immediate and the singular.

I had earlier mentioned that we will need to confront the idea of a transcendental self and the concept of dualism that consequently emerges.

Lately there have been a number of well reasoned attacks on the Cartesian Doctrine, Parfit (1984) and Kenney (1989). Kenney's is a particularly lucid exposition of Descartes myth. See also Troels Engberg Pedersen (1990) who finds serious problems with retaining the concept of the person as found in Western philosophy.

The important point is that the implications of a Cartesian ego are even more malignant than we had realised. It creeps surreptitiously into all our analyses and discourses when we seek to disentangle our fundamental concepts of knowledge, experience, truth, etc.

Even the apostolic iconoclasts of the traditional order have been victims of the very concepts that they were trying to dislodge. Bruehl (1989, p. 86) reflecting on the works of Hannah Arendt as a critical pupil of Heidegger, brings out the problem of subjectivity in Heidegger's earlier studies, » ... *but he did conclude that he had been – more than he understood at the time of writing Sein und Zeit – rooted in the very methods he was trying to overcome – those of Descartes and Kant. He felt that he had been too much of a subjectivist ...* «

Solomon (1988, p. 4) introducing the problem of self in Western philosophy states, »*The self in question is no ordinary self, no individual personality .... The self that becomes the star performer in modern European philosophy is the transcendental self, or transcendental ego, ...*«. Solomon (p. 175) also states that to different degrees Satre, Camus and Merleau-Ponty, all adopted the metaphysical dualism of consciousness and the world. However, I think there are valid and serious qualifications in the case of Merleau-Ponty as has been so convincingly demonstrated by James Schmidt (1985) in what

I think is a brilliant exposition of the development of Merleau-Ponty's thinking. On p. 157 he states, ».... Merleau-Ponty was seeking to wrest the account of the life-world free from the account of transcendental subjectivity. The analysis of the life-world does not lead Merleau-Ponty back to the 'subjective operations' which Husserl saw as the ultimate foundation of this world. Rather, the analysis of the life-world proceeds with no recourse to 'consciousness' whatsoever. What was fundamental for Merleau-Ponty was 'flesh' and the 'chiasm', not consciousness facing a noema«. Merleau-Ponty had inherited from Valéry the concept of the 'chiasm', the crossing of regards – a »'simultaneous, reciprocal limitation' which yields a 'decentering', ... a 'co-functioning' of self and other«, p. 91.

This move away from the idea of the cogito and the mind as a thing, seems also to have been a part of the process of maturity that we find in the case of Simone Weil, Winch (1989, pp. 7-9).

I think that the defenestration of the cogito and the subsequent release from dualistic conceptualisations is in harmony with those conceptions of relationship and meaning that I have been attempting to put forward. After all, the language of multiplicity and unity and the language of ambiguity and timelessness as expressions of a totality, have been a part of high culture (Buddhism) without any notion of personal identity or dualism.

In fact, I would argue that when meaning is embedded in a totality which is in its essence timeless and ambiguous, then the notion of a cogito or transcendental self is a misfit, it is incongruous. Embeddedness implies that all my relationships as a human being are cradled in this totality and derive their meaning through it, even if only implicitly so. Any form of a transcendental mind ego and dualism would be incompatible with the nature of the meaning that is implied in this context.

This embeddedness in a totality that is timeless and ambiguous has a way of influencing the nature of all our relationships and meanings as they emerge. Consider the happening when a mother who is embodied in this world of totality is in communion with her child – in what ways her Being in totality contributes to cultivate the child's world of relationships, meanings and experiences. There is a certain depth of meaning in this framework of relationships embraced by a totality: the way you look at me and the way I look at you, the way in which you are related to me and the way in which I am related to you, and all the meanings inherent in our relationship, are of another order compared to the objectivist paradigms that we normally operate under. The difference is created by the concept of a totality that is non-representable, that is ambiguous and timeless but has a mode of finality.

It is quite an exciting project to consider how the conception of totality (with its embodiments) effects the meanings that emerge in the process of relating. Saussure impresses us with the notion that meanings exist in the differences and that these differences are built in the sign functions.

I should like to speculate that in addition to this, *radical transformations are generated within the meaning system with the entrance of the totality as a regulative system. The nature of the affordances can take upon a new sign that effects all other signs.*

I think one could refer to certain examples, where, introducing the concept of totality into the discourse could be seen to influence the events in question. Hohendahl (1985) reflects on Habermas's critique of the Frankfurter School and states that the life-world and the system of art have been radically segregated with little hope of an integrating paradigm. Personally I am not convinced that the possibility of a concept of totality in the sense that I have been talking about is ruled out. Moreover, I think that a totality conceptualised and embodied in the terms referred to could generate an integration of art to the life-world.

Erik Schultz in his contribution to this journal suggests the possibility of a 'new ethics' where each individual person is socialised, grows up, to record 'his own' ethical judgement. I like the idea, and I don't think that it is too far fetched in relation to the way society is evolving in certain regions of the world. You are expected to give your view as an individual, to function independently of institutional pressures. But personally I still feel that all these individuals will need to function in relation to some world view. In this context the concept of totality that I have presented could be relevant.

A somewhat similar discourse has cropped up concerning an appeal to public opinion by trade unions in case of conflicts involving public services. This happened during a recent ambulance dispute in the U.K. when individual members of the public were expected to give their personal judgement. This is very similar to Schultz's problem and in my opinion the individual still requires a certain world view, a certain conception of totality – with all its ambiguities of timelessness – to function in a wholesome manner.

The idea of a totality can, of course, be formulated in a number of different ways, where it would be relevant to see what the different conceptions have in common. I think that certain interesting similarities will emerge. I have for example the feeling that Heidegger's treatment of anxiety and the notion of 'Sorge', care, that he developed, generates a concept of totality that has certain significant similarities to the concept that I have been putting forward.

One feels quite importantly, that a concept of totality creates an experience of reverence and freedom. I should like to suggest two reasons for this experience of reverence and freedom.

- i) firstly because the totality is not an instrument for anything else – it has no goal outside itself. It has a finality without a representable end, as beauty has for Simone Weil. As a matter of fact, Simone Weil (1951) uses the same terms for the universe.

- ii) secondly because we experience ourselves as part of this totality – which is unrestricted, and the identity of which requires no instrumental goals.

It was encouraging to find that, in fact, one psychologist, Katzenelson (1989) has had the courage to use the concept of reverence and respect in relation to both 'nature' and 'Man's nature'.

While I have not directly introduced a discussion of these concepts (nature and Man's nature) in my paper, I feel that they are somehow meaningfully related to my concept of totality. For the moment, I should only add that we cannot truly realise the totality if our understanding of our psychic inheritance is misinformed.

However, in the context of this discourse a brief digression into one of the mainstreams of Indian philosophy might be interesting. Duty (dharma) is regarded as the supreme principle of life – the principle behind the realisation of one's being as humans. But duty here does not in fact refer to obedience to social or other external strictures – it actually refers to the fulfilment and realisation of one's nature. In my language, to fulfil this duty is to relate oneself to the totality.

It can perhaps be suggested that **totality** and its embodiment has a radically transforming influence on the concept of the person and the notion of world views. In other words, it reformulates the relationship between Man and World. And in this sense it has a legitimate place in the present day culture debate.

We had started our journey planning that the creatures we were looking for will make themselves known in terms of relations and meanings. Which they did, displaying certain fascinating traits which characterised their universe of relations and meanings: the beauty and finality of Simone Weil, the hesitation of Peter Winch, Vattimo's shattering of the poetic word, Levinas' 'face', Merleau-Ponty's battle of the Cogito, Valery's crossing of regards, the void and nothingness of the neoplanotists, the ambiguity and timelessness of Sheik and Doshi and so on. But ultimately there emerged **the concept of the non-representable totality**. This – it has been argued – is what finally commands reverence and freedom.

Stone, Man and the Sun have a long history – their story is not only 'good', it is also beautiful and in that sense it is true.

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