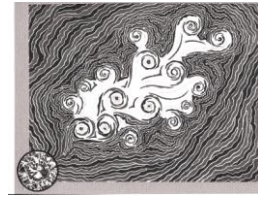


Ariadne's Thread



As part of my work teaching on the Masters in Holistic Science at Schumacher College, I mark the dissertations, each one the outcome of a fantastic and individual journey. These stories are addressed to an active dynamism, caught in the living. When the thesis is delivered, package-like on my desk to be marked, and removed from the living context of its journey, then its colourful arising becomes lacklustre in the scale of grading it.

If one were to see that each work is an act of potential, that is yet to be complete, then one, once more vivifies the connection lived during the writing by the students in community at the college. The lines of imaginative stories cross in vivid consensus. Holistic Science seeks to describe and maintain this focus of potential, in which living secrets may make connections, allowing them to be understood within the whole.

In seeking to give the whole expression, Holistic Science is addressing a potential that is also by definition yet to be complete. It is exactly the striving to give voice to the whole that one wants to embody, without catching it in some half-way definition of what it appears to be. Even in mainstream science, papers are tripping over themselves to make tangible result from a line of inquiry that properly is still in its infancy and needs greater incubation. To have a Holistic Science one needs some framework of potential, in which the activity of the world is assessed at its farthest focus for pattern and meaning.

In Goethe's holistic exploration of the plant, the root beneath the earth is a darkness, which can be any question seeking; the stem of leaves is a watery imaginary knowing that allows the light to play through the leaves; the flower is the airy understanding of the whole resolution; and the fruit completes the cycle returning us again to the fiery potential through the seed.

So accustomed are we to our short term scientific glasses of what things are, it requires a real hard work shift to bring science to see through a focus of what they can become. Even though our everyday activity is full of the imaginative, communicating projects in their potential, we are habituated to setting this down as if its value was already apparent at the surface of things.

The need for this journal is to establish a deep potential reference, in which holistic papers and articles are judged in their collective aspiration. The sculptor, scientist, educator, ecologist and adventurer join easily to tell their own part of the journey to the whole.

The questions of this issue are:

- How does this focus of potential carry into science, art and experience?
- Can we give clarity to complexity theory, systems thinking and quantum theory by seeing them from a dynamic focus?
- Does the focus in the rediscovering of wholeness, change how science relates to the world?

(Ariadne's thread, in Greek myth, guides Theseus back from the source of confrontation with the shadowy figure at the centre of the maze, to the everyday world where potential can again be encountered in its whole appreciation.)

Philip Franses