

Ariadne's Thread

In learning about holistic science, one of the greatest lessons has been about paradox. Unable to cram into our finite beings the hugeness of each moment, we are granted two extreme views of the world, at the periphery of sense-making. On the one side, a rational thinking machine processes its own reality; on the other side, the wholeness of being is made present to our broad attention.

This paradox in knowing is evident across the world today – we see the beauty of the earth but systematically steer for its destruction. The knowledge 'I think therefore I am' has predicated existence to appear after the mind has asserted its own authority. We pilot a machine insensitive to our own good in the flying.

It is to the heart of this deepest mystery into which this issue steps to reveal the trick of the mind we think we have. Emilios Bouratinos challenges science to move from the question 'what do we know?' to 'how do we know?' Henri Bortoft in detail charts Goethe's method to integrate and go beyond these two ways of knowing into the unity of the phenomena. Iain McGilchrist navigates, in his expertise of both medicine and literature, between the evidence and experience of the two ways of knowing.

The lesson is obvious, that when science dissects consciousness with the lens of the analytical attention, it is ignoring both an internal and external aspect of our living relation to whole nature. It is imperative that we open up to the consequence of this.

While we debate the degrees of warming that will cause catastrophe to the earth, our analytical attention having fulfilled its working remit, then goes on to other things; we thereby lose touch with that broad attention that would prioritise something of life-threatening urgency. The understanding about every corner of specialised knowledge is completely useless when we have forgotten all about the knowledge of 'who are we to know?' Our knowledge of where we think we are, hides the choice that relates our being in the feel of a journey we are on.

The issue delves into an exploration of time; Newton's absolute concept of a time standing eternal outside the influence of change, was challenged by Einstein's theory of relativity, where time is a dynamic parameter of the action it measures. Time returned to its whole source becomes a quality of living, rather than a fragmented commodity which can be parcelled out.

The thread of knowing follows into the question of biological formation. We explore how hermeneutics, the interpretation of texts and biosemiotics, the study of signs, enter into the living dialogue of significant parts into an overall meaning.

We arrive at creative unity, about which Tagore wrote (*From 'East and West' in Creative Unity, published by Macmillan, 1922*):

'Truth has its nest as well as its sky. That nest is definite in structure, accurate in law of construction; and though it has changed and rebuilt over and over again, the need of it is never ending [*the analytical mind*]. For some centuries the East has neglected the nest- building of truth. She has not been attentive to learn its secret. Trying to cross the trackless infinite, the East has relied solely upon her wings [*the intuitive journey*]. Shall the messenger of the sky and the builder of nests ever meet?'



Philip Franses