

THE IDEA OF HOLISTIC MAN

AN INQUIRY INTO THE EDUCATIONAL POSSIBILITIES

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for the Degree of Master of Education.

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**ABSTRACT**

Educational theory and practice stems from the generally accepted concept of Man, such as apartheid ideology which forms the basis of the South African educational system. Separatist thinking of some kind determines the perspective and actions of many people throughout the world. The pathology of this mode of consciousness has generated numerous crises, and is the root cause of the psychotic behaviour which is currently dominating the international scene. Inherent in any crisis is opportunity. New ways of being emerge through the struggles and mistakes of living. Counteracting the reductionist trend is the balancing notion of holism. This thesis examines the suitability and necessity of a holistic educational paradigm, particularly in this country. It explores the emerging holistic world view in two important areas of human endeavour - science and religion. Furthermore, it looks at the nature and psychology of change, Smuts's concept of holism, defines holism as modes of seeing, knowing and being, and describes the new world person with reference to South Africa's future. However, further work is needed to formulate a holistic concept of Man in order to derive a more comprehensive educational theory and practice.

## DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation is my own, unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Master of Education through the University of Cape Town. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other university.

Signed by candidate

Signature removed

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Stuart Hope

31<sup>st</sup> day of July, 1987

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PREFACE

There are a number of reasons why this thesis took an inordinate amount of time to research and write.

Firstly, it was conceived and researched as part of a much larger work, approximately one-fifth of the overall draft, which will endeavour to develop and set out a holistic concept of Man from which educational principles and theory could be derived.

Secondly, I had great difficulty in articulating the original idea. To find the words and concepts to express and order amorphous intuitions, and sometimes chaotic impressions; to assimilate ideas, opinions and arguments from various disciplines, and to synthesize what appeared to be disparate viewpoints, proved no easy task.

Thirdly, many of the references that I needed to consult were not available in any of the libraries in the country. This meant that I had to order these books from America and Britain which took approximately six and three months respectively. I could not have managed this without the invaluable assistance of June Abrahams from ID Booksellers. I am greatly indebted to her for setting up a tributary to the mainstream of ideas.

Fourthly, I underwent the whole roller-coaster psychology of thesis writing that all post-graduate students seem to go through, made all the mistakes, had all the set-backs, and ended up in many cul-de-sacs before I found the golden thread on which to weave my ideas.

Throughout all this I had the support, patience and belief of two people especially - Professor Steinberg, ex-Chairman of the Higher Degrees Committee, and my supervisor, Dr van Wageningen, who has given

me invaluable guidance. I am extremely grateful to them both that they decided to persevere with me.

I would also like to thank my father for his invaluable assistance in the laborious task of proof-reading the manuscript. Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to Jenny Zinn for her expertise, advice and skill in capturing and editing this thesis on the word processor. I value her friendship and admire her striving for excellence.

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## I N T R O D U C T I O N

This thesis had its genesis in personal experience, by witnessing first hand, in the classrooms and through the anguish of the schools boycotts, the devastating effects on children and the community at large of a reductionist concept of Man. Educational practice in the schools for the oppressed is a travesty. Our children are victims of a great injustice because the theoretical foundation of our education system is based on misconceived notions of what human beings are or should be, as well as the type of world in which they are expected to live.

English-speaking academics in our universities have been extremely critical of fundamental pedagogics, the deformed brainchild of their Afrikaans-speaking counterparts, and have been reluctant to formulate any concept of Man from which an educational theory could be derived. They have taken the analytical approach, focusing mainly on particular educational problems and issues. They justify their stand by pointing out the defects in our present system and the damaging effects that an ill-conceived notion of the human being can have on a child's self-image and self-esteem. Most Afrikaans-speaking academics, on the other hand, adopt the phenomenological approach, and have countered these criticisms by pointing out that the education of a child must be based on some conceptual understanding of what the child ought to be. They have criticized their English-speaking colleagues for not having formulated some concept of the human being.

There are certainly merits in both arguments. This thesis, however, takes the stand that all educational theory and practice should be based on some conception of the human being, in particular, a spiritually conceived, holistic concept of Man and not one that engineers human nature to fit some racial, social, political, economic or scientific mould.

This conception of the human being should not be static and, in fact, must undergo periodic revisions as our knowledge and understanding of human nature expands and develops. It is analogous to the dynamic growth of a great tree. It must be deeply rooted in the universal and spiritual ground of human existence; its trunk is the *axis mundi* from which all branches of human knowledge extend. These branches symbolize the plane of manifested differentiation which are synthesized through the holistic approach. It is like the Cosmic Tree which unites heaven and earth and represents the unity in diversity.

## CHAPTER ONE

### THE EMERGING HOLISTIC WORLD VIEW

We bear witness, during this world epoch, to a profound and unique moment in the brief history of humankind on this planet. Something is happening for which we have no precedent, no previous experience or knowledge of; something which we can only comprehend in an amorphous, undefined way. It is an awareness that, till now, has defied description; a perception that is more a holistic sensing of something truly significant which is about to affect this planet as a whole.

Our civilization is undergoing a "paradigm shift", a realignment in our thinking that is precipitating a cultural transformation of such dramatic proportions that its causative effect will possibly continue for many generations into the future. A new vision of almost limitless possibilities is opening up before us challenging the present generation to transcend the Damoclean horror of nuclear war, which threatens to extinguish the entire human race and all life on this planet, through a belief in the regenerative power of the human spirit to make the seemingly impossible possible. To realize this we need to be committed to the future by understanding, and responding to, the world-wide crisis confronting us now.

There seems to be a "great awakening" in the collective consciousness of Man<sup>1</sup>, a revival that is not the result of "depressions, wars, or epidemics, but of critical disjunctions in our self-understanding."<sup>2</sup> Quite suddenly, the inner personal experiences and

conscious realities of ordinary people everywhere do not correlate with the philosophical maps that society, through its institutional structures such as the church, and the political, economic and educational systems, has conditioned them to accept. A spontaneous, domino effect of changes is occurring, causing a multi-dimensional intensification of human experience which is generating crises on all levels in human affairs. The situation is urgently demanding a change in our thinking and attitudes to the world around us, whether it be in terms of deeply personal concerns such as the relationships we have with ourselves and others, or the realization that there is a need for the expression of a higher morality in the social, political, economic, technological and ecological spheres of our lives.

### Two Dominant Mind Sets

Our understanding of the world around us is largely determined by our very personal, yet socially conditioned, interpretation of our own perceptual experience of the phenomenal world. Consciousness is structured according to our mode of seeing and thinking. This, in turn, delimits human experience. We, therefore, choose to experience the world we can bear.

However, any profound or traumatic experience can alter consciousness. For example, Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus which thereafter gave his life a new purpose, or if a person is suddenly confronted with the fact that they have contracted a terminal disease such as cancer, and now have to face the prospect of only a

short time left to live. Quite suddenly, dreams, plans, goals for the future disappear, become unattainable. Things that were important become unimportant. All that's left is the present; now. Every moment becomes precious. The focus is entirely now centred; to live each day as fully as possible. What has happened to the conscious mind is a dramatic realignment in attitudes, beliefs and the value system by which this person had lived, causing an immediate, and often, permanent change in life-style. A shift in consciousness has occurred necessitating a re-orientation in self-understanding.

The key point, therefore, is the dominant mode of seeing and knowing which determines a particular mind set or world view. A mind set arises from the dominantly held epistemology, or it can comprise a wide-ranging, loosely knit, yet interrelated, set of epistemologies essentially sharing a similar world view. They all have a common methodology which results from the predominant mode of seeing and knowing the phenomenal world. The resulting overall concept of Man embodies a complex and dynamic set of beliefs, values, norms, perceptions and motivations which are enacted in various ways of living.

A mind set, by its very nature, produces a fixed state of mind. If human experience confirms a particular world view that person tends to become evermore rigid in his or her outlook. Very soon, in subtle ways, the boundaries of the knowable world begin to be delimited by what can be safely explained and accommodated by the currently held set of beliefs. That which does not fit into this particular world view is excluded or dismissed as unknowable or non-existent. Unfortunately, the confidence that grows out of an ability to explain most

phenomena quite often, in lesser minds, develops into a form of intellectual arrogance with its resulting lack of tolerance for other possibilities. The adventurous tendency of the mind, in this case, is usually thwarted, even suppressed, in order to remain in the safe confines of the known world. Consequently, a tremendous amount of mental energy is expended on maintaining and defending this particular world view.

A very good example of this mental tendency is seen in the adherents to the philosophical doctrine, Logical Positivism. This group of philosophers asserted the view that metaphysics is meaningless because it consisted of propositions which could not be verified by empirical observation or demonstrated through logical analysis. Religious and moral utterances were regarded as metaphysical, and therefore, meaningless.

If, however, human experience begins to contradict a particular world view, confusion and disorientation soon set in causing a disjunction in self-understanding. An extreme and negative reaction to this would be to view traditional values and beliefs as being senseless, and consequently, existence as meaningless. Someone entrapped in these nihilistic delusions could quite easily form the radical opinion that conditions in the social system are so bad that the destruction of social institutions is not only desirable, but necessary, irrespective of whether or not there are any programmes for reconstruction. A positive response to the changing view of self would be to see it as an opportunity for regeneration and transformation.

It is possible, in a very broad sense, to identify two dominant ways of seeing and experiencing the present world situation. The first is a mind set that is reductionist in its methodology. Its response to the phenomenal world is to reduce phenomena to their dysfunctional, fundamental parts; examine, test, identify and categorize. This process of codification allows for the effective, but limited, organization, manipulation and control of the natural and human environments. Its Promethean character, which all too often tends to become intoxicated by the power of its own creations, seeks, through the application of scientific techniques, dominion in some measure over the natural world to ensure the continued survival of the human species. Yet, in our determination to control Nature, our very survival on this planet is being threatened by the wanton destruction of complex, dynamically balanced ecosystems, and the befouling of the biosphere through a failure to comprehend the fragile interconnectedness that exists throughout the manifest diversity of the natural world. Generally, this mind set seems to be altogether devoid of sensitivity to a vast continuum of consciousness that reflects the oneness of all life.

It is also prejudiced by the apparent irreconcilability of the human condition. It is believed by some, that in order to establish a manageable society human options need to be limited or curtailed through a process of acceptance of limitation by conditioning.

B.F. Skinner, a leading exponent of behavioural psychology, wrote a fictionalized account of modern utopia, *Walden Two*, in which he visualized a behaviourally engineered society where technology was used to create conditions of perpetual happiness and good. In order

to achieve this state, Frazier, the founder of Walden Two, who happens to be the only unhappy person in this society, sees it necessary "to suppress some of the most powerful human emotions and motives. Intellect is stultified or diverted into hypnotic meditations, ritualistic incantations, et cetera. The basic needs are sublimated. False needs are created to absorb the energies."<sup>3</sup>

A particular characteristic of this type of thinking is the utterly confident, almost arrogant belief that technology can solve most, if not all, human and social problems. Yet, despite this there are those who have resisted the seductiveness of such theorizing, and have been sounding perceptive warnings about the dehumanizing effects of a society where technological norms and values take precedence over human ones.

Since early this century social commentators such as Aldous Huxley and George Orwell have envisaged, through their respective novels, *Brave New World* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the cost in human damage to maintain and support such technological utopias. In both novels the protagonists are victims of monolithic systems. They both struggle heroically against overwhelming odds to reclaim their humanness.

From their particular perspectives both authors have attempted to show how the human spirit prevails despite the forces ranged against the free expression of human individuality. In a way, it is analogous to the resilience shown by plants that one sometimes sees growing out of cracks in concrete or tarmac in urban areas. Somehow, the plant manages to find a space for itself to grow in amongst the smallest

crack. In one sense, it is as if the plant is trying to reclaim the landscape where it originally grew.

Despite these warnings, reductionist concepts of Man, because of their finiteness, remain attractive to many thinkers of social reform. Nevertheless, some notions of *homo sapiens* are extraordinary for their lack of perception. For example, some reductionist views range from seeing human beings as "nothing but a complex biochemical mechanism, powered by a combustion system which energizes computers with prodigious storage facilities for retaining encoded information",<sup>4</sup> to a belief that our species does not possess "a purpose beyond the imperatives created by its genetic history."<sup>5</sup>

This mind set expresses itself in many ways. In its more negative and extreme manifestations it produces fanatical ideologues whose moral conscience has been numbed by a dark pessimism and hatred, who, with passionate invective, cynically exploit human and national fears, and cherished ideals, to set one person against another, one nation against another. To a lesser extent there are others who are victims of despair, or paralyzed by indifference or anomie. Those whose thinking has placed them in an "existential vacuum",<sup>6</sup> impotent and ineffectual. The more positive expression of this particular mind set is that which produces great insights into specific problems, and makes outstanding contributions to human knowledge. However, the overall individual and collective effect of a reductionist concept of Man is dehumanizing and self-alienating, and ultimately, self-destructive.

In contradistinction to this, the second category of response is a mind set that has a holistic perspective of the present world situation and views this period as the crisis of transformation which, if seen positively and creatively, is providing many opportunities for personal and collective growth.

Their approach is inclusive and integrative as opposed to being exclusive and disintegrative. Instead of trying to understand a phenomenon in terms of its parts they endeavour to see how it operates as a completely integrated, functioning system interconnected with other organic systems.

Although the reductionist approach, in its positive sense, is valued as a means of gathering information about the phenomenal world, and should not be excluded as a means of knowing, the main thrust of the holist is to find ways of synthesizing our present knowledge into one unified system. This does not mean that they are advocating the abolition of the various disciplines into which human knowledge has already been divided. Rather, it is seen as sharing the discoveries made in one field as a means to possibly solving problems in another. A good example of this is the way modern physics has revitalized philosophy and philosophical thinking. Another, is the work of a Belgian physical chemist, Ilya Prigogine, who won the 1977 Nobel Prize for chemistry for his theory of dissipative structures. His work "bridges the critical gap between biology and physics - the missing link between living systems and the apparently lifeless universe in which they arose", and "has been used by the United States Department of Transportation to predict traffic flow patterns".<sup>7</sup>

A holistic understanding of the human being is not based on a psychology which views a person as a disintegrated, stunted or crippled personality, but one that is person-centred and self-actualizing. They believe in the inherent ability of ordinary people to transform themselves firstly, through the activation of their own personal power, and secondly, through direct contact with the sacred. Human experience is seen as a process of becoming whole. This can only be achieved, however, by raising the level of one's consciousness to facilitate communion with one's higher spiritual nature.

The self-actualized person places great value on life-supporting, humane qualities such as compassion, tolerance, open-mindedness, sympathy, and they usually tend to be altruistically motivated. They generally tend to be non-judgemental, willing to take responsibility for their actions, and are ready to listen with empathy to another person's thoughts and feelings. The way of a self-actualized person is epitomized in an address given by Jan Smuts on Table Mountain at the unveiling of the Mountain Club War memorial, 25 February 1923, in what he called *The Religion of the Mountain*:

The Mountain is not merely something externally sublime. It has great historical and spiritual meaning for us. It stands for us as the ladder of life. Nay, more, it is the ladder of the soul, and in a curious way the source of religion. From it came the Law, from it came the Gospel in the Sermon on the Mount. We may truly say that the highest religion is the Religion of the Mountain. What is that Religion? When we reach the mountain summits we leave behind us all the things that weigh heavily below on our body and our spirit. We leave behind all sense of weakness and depression; we feel a new freedom, a great exhilaration, an exaltation of the body no less than of the spirit. We feel a great joy.

The Religion of the Mountain is in reality the religion of joy, of the release of the soul from the things that weigh it down and fill it with a sense of weariness, sorrow and defeat. The religion of joy realizes the freedom of the soul, the soul's kinship to the great creative spirit, and its dominance over all the things of sense. As the body has escaped from the over-weight and depression of the sea, so the soul must be released from all sense of weariness, weakness and depression arising from the fret, worry and friction of our daily lives. We must feel that we are above it all, that the soul is essentially free, and in freedom realizes the joy of living. And when the feeling of lassitude and depression and the sense of defeat advances upon us, we must repel it, and maintain an equal and cheerful temper.

We must fill our daily lives with the spirit of joy and delight. We must carry this spirit into our daily lives and tasks. We must perform our work not grudgingly and as a burden imposed upon us, but in a spirit of cheerfulness, goodwill and delight in it. Not only on the mountain summits of life, not only on the heights of success and achievement, but down in the deep valleys of drudgery, of anxiety and defeat, we must cultivate this great spirit of joyous freedom and uplift of the soul.

We must practise the religion of the mountain down in the valleys also.

This may sound a hard doctrine, and it may be that only after years of practice are we able to triumph in spirit over the things that weigh and drag us down. But it is the nature of the soul, as of all life, to rise, to overcome, and finally to attain complete freedom and happiness. And if we consistently practise the Religion of the Mountain we must succeed in the end. To this great end Nature will cooperate with the soul.

The mountains uphold us and the stars beckon to us. The mountains of our lovely land will make a constant appeal to us to live the higher life of joy and freedom. Table Mountain, in particular, will preach this great gospel to the myriads of toilers in the valley below. And those who, whether members of the Mountain Club or not, make a habit of ascending her beautiful slopes in their free moments, will reap a rich reward not only in bodily health and strength, but also in an inner freedom and purity, in an habitual spirit of delight, which will be the crowning glory of their lives. May I express the hope that in years to come this memorial will draw myriads who live

down below to breathe the purer air and become better men and women. Their spirits will join with those up here, and it will make us all purer and nobler in spirit and better citizens of this country.<sup>8</sup>

### The Age of Transformation

How has our changing world view been reflected in the two great creations of the human mind, science and religion? In fact, the question should be turned around. How have these two systems of human thought changed our understanding of the universe and our relation to it?

It has been mainly in the scientific field, more specifically modern physics, which has not only radically transformed our world view, but precipitated fundamental changes in human society that are both beneficial and detrimental. The results of atomic physics have also become powerful determinants to our future existence on this planet.

The extraordinary discoveries made by a body of physicists who lived and worked during the first half of this century have had a profound influence on virtually all aspects of modern society. The incarnation of this collective genius, headed by Einstein, who dared to think the impossible, initiated a period of imaginative scientific exploration on the atomic and subatomic levels of existence which has resulted in a fundamental revision of our most basic concepts concerning not only classical physics itself, but also our philosophical and theological conceptions of the universe.

The Newtonian world-machine, together with the mechanistic Cartesian philosophical system, was dramatically usurped by two radical conceptual changes in physics; Einstein's theory of relativity and the quantum theory. Quite suddenly, "the universe begins to look more like a great thought than like a great machine."<sup>9</sup> The Cartesian and Newtonian world model has been transcended by an understanding of the universe which is "made up of a multitude of separate objects, but appears as a harmonious indivisible whole; a network of dynamic relationships that include the human observer and his or her consciousness in an essential way."<sup>10</sup> The repercussions that these discoveries have had on modern physics and scientific thinking in general is to show that "scientific theories can never provide a complete and definitive description of reality", but that "scientists do not deal with truth; they deal with limited and approximate descriptions of reality."<sup>11</sup>

It has also dispelled the notion that science can be value-free. In 1939 Niels Bohr, the Danish atomic physicist, brought news to Einstein that the German refugee scientist, Lise Meitner, had split the uranium atom. Bohr speculated that a controlled chain reaction splitting of uranium atoms would result in a tremendous explosion. With a European war imminent and fearful of the possible consequences if Hitler's scientists developed the atom bomb first, Einstein was persuaded by his colleagues to write a letter to President Roosevelt urging "watchfulness and, if necessary, quick action"<sup>12</sup> on the part of the United States Administration to become involved in atomic bomb research. This recommendation eventually led to the Manhattan Project

and the production of the "first self-sustaining nuclear chain reaction - the first man-made nuclear fire"<sup>13</sup> which razed Hiroshimá and Nagasaki. This final act of the war saw the death of the old order and the rebirth by fire of a new world order, the nuclear age.

The horrendous power of the bomb and its defensive use or misuse by either democratic or dictatorial governments weighed heavily on Einstein's conscience. And it was because he was someone who was "in a position of unique public esteem", that "he felt a profound moral obligation to use his influence to the utmost to try to save mankind from horrors that, despite Hiroshima and Nagasaki, it did not yet comprehend."<sup>14</sup>

Only a few scientists were able to comprehend the enormity of Einstein's work when it was first published in 1905. General recognition and world acclaim came only much later. As the years went by and the contributions of other physicists confirmed and expanded Einstein's pioneering work he seemed to emerge as the high priest of a new esoteric science. It was as if this unique band of scientists had discovered the magical keys to unlock an absurdly puzzling and paradoxical universe. Even they did not initially realize the enormity of the power propounded in the formula  $E = mc^2$ . They remained the guardians of this knowledge so long as it remained intelligible to the few elite minds that could comprehend it. But, science does not operate in secret closed off to all except the initiated. Results are published, theories openly discussed, debated, argued. Dialogue between scientists transcends national and cultural barriers. As more and more people began to understand how this knowledge could be put to peaceful use or abused to achieve world domination, the idea began to

germinate in the scientific community that the activities of scientists are not beyond ethical and moral considerations. What these physicists had done out of natural curiosity was to open Pandora's Box and release all sorts of temptations to incite the Promethean character of humankind. This is what Einstein must have had in mind when asked about his involvement in making the atom bomb possible:

If only I had known, I should have become a watch-  
maker.<sup>15</sup>

It was as if the sacred temple of science had been invaded and plundered by unscrupulous men blinded by their obsession for world power. The world has since witnessed the biggest build-up of nuclear and conventional arms ever stockpiled on this Earth, collectively containing a destructive power that could destroy this planet several times over. The proliferation of nuclear weapons amongst nations demonstrates a collective madness that could have cataclysmic consequences. All it needs is one moment of temporary insanity to set off a chain reaction to world annihilation. So far restraint has been exercised by the general realization that a nuclear war would inevitably result in what has been appropriately called MAD, mutual assured destruction. There would be no victors in this type of warfare.

Modern physics may have revolutionized our ideas about space and time, but it certainly has not changed human behaviour. The broad realignment of the world powers after the Second World War into two opposing ideological camps, both sides bristling with nuclear weapons, has made the possibility of a peaceful future seem ever more remote, and to many, unattainable. The period since the war has seen the

outbreak of numerous wars, both civil and foreign. It is as if they have acted as safety valves to release world tension and prevent mass suicide.

The nuclear threat has created a very powerful thought-form in the minds of people everywhere, especially in Europe, of an imminent apocalypse. But, there is also another predominant and balancing thought-form. One that is filled with light and hope for the future.

There are those who believe in the dawning of a new age, what has been symbolically called the Age of Aquarius. The Aquarian symbol is an "allegorical representation" of "a figure of a man pouring water from an amphora."<sup>16</sup> The Waterer symbolizes a Christ-like person or sage pouring living water, spiritual wisdom, into the lives of thirsty Mankind. Water also represents consciousness. The great lesson of our present time is to develop a sense of group consciousness and to think in terms of the brotherhood and sisterhood of one humanity, and a life that is seen as part of a greater whole. It is a self-transcending process. This expansion of human consciousness can only happen through the development of higher psychic powers such as intuition and spiritual perception.

The pouring of water also symbolizes the spiritual process of purification; of cleansing the system of those pollutants that poison our physical, emotional and mental natures. This purgatory occurs individually as well as in the collective body of humanity. On the physical level it is the purging of those urges and drives that enslave people into leading indulgent, sordid and disintegrative lifestyles, helplessly obsessed by their endless need to satisfy their

cravings. Then, there is the purifying of those emotions that continually torture us: hatred, greed, jealousy, anger, fear, revenge and other feelings that cause people to behave in separatist ways. On the mental level it is the shattering of those obsolete, crystallized thought-forms that shut us up into mental prisons. It is the destruction of those ideologies that are based on racism, prejudice, superstition, fear and lies; all those harmful and negative ideas that strip human beings of their dignity and self-respect.

Spiritual enlightenment can only take place through the disintegration of these negative thought-forms which distort human consciousness. This would then facilitate the re-synthesis of those neural pathways which make the experience of the transcendental dimension of human existence possible.

This cleansing has already begun, and it is likely to be an ongoing process without any conceivable end. So far, only the most sensitive minds have responded to what is happening. It is highly unlikely that everyone will be so affected because not everyone has the desire or inclination to change their way of being. People rarely change of their own volition. They usually change only when circumstances compel them to change. Nevertheless, the effects of this purification process will only be revealed when a significant number of individuals show signs of having transformed their lives.

The Aquarian symbol is also an archetype of the "symbolic flood which stands not only for the end of a formal universe but also for the completion of any cycle by the destruction of the power which held its components together."<sup>17</sup> One can certainly describe the events of the latter half of this century as the process of "dissolution and

decomposition of the forms" existing within one cycle and the liberation of new building energies for the transmutation and transformation to another.

### The Schism Between Heaven and Earth

When Nietzsche, in the nineteenth century, pronounced God dead he was more than anything else articulating the depth of religious angst that gripped the Victorian mind. But his words were later to prove prophetic, announcing as they did the beginning of a period which has since seen a profound loss of faith as our concepts of Man underwent radical changes with, for example, the publication of Darwin's theory of evolution, and the subsequent disintegration of all our metaphysical certainties under the ideological onslaught of atheists such as Marx, who described religion as a "false consciousness" and the "opium of the people", and Freud, who saw it as a "universal compulsive neurosis". This has given rise to the view that traditional religious beliefs are "enabling mechanisms for survival", and religious institutions existing simply "to enhance the persistence and influence of their practitioners".<sup>18</sup>

The Promethean character of Man asserted itself through a rebellion against a religious dogma that has made human beings subservient to some unseen deity whose supposed actions seemed manifestly unjust and cruel in the light of all the human suffering in the world. In place of religion Promethean Man has attempted to construct a new "mythology of scientific materialism, guided by the corrective devices

of the scientific method, addressed with precise and deliberately effective appeal to the deepest needs of human nature, and kept strong by the blind hopes that the journey on which we are now embarked will be farther and better than the one just completed."<sup>19</sup>

But, the question remains. Will the deification of reason fill the "existential vacuum" created by the erosion of our religious beliefs, and can it satisfy our need for transcendence? It seems not. The Cartesian division between spirit and matter has created in modern Man a split consciousness that is resulting in all sorts of psychotic and schizoid behaviour patterns. And this, in spite of the undeniable success of our technology and the power science has over the common mind. Modern Man's "existential frustration"<sup>20</sup> is largely due to a personal existence that has lost all meaning, that is devoid of spiritual purpose.

Modern atheism has attempted, on the altar of our beliefs, to supplant God, a Father-figure projection, with Man, who is seen as an independent, self-sufficient creator and the only one who determines human destiny. As a result, we began to interpret our existence merely in the image of our own creation, the machine.<sup>21</sup> Instead of the machine serving our purpose and needs as it was designed to do, this form of idolatry has allowed for the "triumph of technological norms and values" in the "direct control of society" by a technocratic elite which consists of "technicians and scientists dedicated to standards of efficiency dominated by the dictates of machine production and social bureaucratization".<sup>22</sup> This "technological conscience" or "technicism" is essentially "a state of mind that rests on an act

of conceptual misuse, reflected in myriad linguistic ways, of scientific and technological modes of reasoning". A technician, therefore, would misuse "scientific and technological reasoning to the point of imperial dominance over all other interpretations of human existence."<sup>23</sup>

Human ingenuity has constructed a technological world that requires constant service and maintenance, thus creating a state of technological dependence which is calculated to ensure its continuation. Through the mystification of our creations, we, the inhabitants of the modern industrial society, have surrendered our right and freedom to choose, and consequently, our dignity as individual human beings. This subjugation by the technological metaphor is in itself a dehumanizing act.

The most extreme and horrendous example of the technician mentality in action was the implementation of the final solution to the Jewish problem by the Nazis during the Second World War. Millions of people were systematically exterminated at killing centres sited in Germany and Eastern Europe.

Eichmann was an extreme example of a bureaucrat. Eichmann did not send the hundreds of thousands of Jews to their deaths because he hated them; he neither hated nor loved anyone. Eichmann "did his duty": he was dutiful when he sent the Jews to their deaths; he was just as dutiful when he was charged simply with expediting their emigration from Germany. All that mattered to him was to obey the rules; he felt guilty only when he had disobeyed them. He stated (damaging his own case by this) that he felt guilty on only two counts: for having played truant as a child, and for having disobeyed orders to take shelter during an air raid. This does not imply that there was not an element of sadism in Eichmann and in many other bureaucrats, i.e. the satisfaction of controlling other

living beings. But this sadistic streak is only secondary to the primary elements in bureaucrats: their lack of human response and their worship of rules....

Once the living human being is reduced to a number, the true bureaucrats can commit acts of utter cruelty, not because they are driven by cruelty of a magnitude commensurate to their deeds, but because they feel no human bond to their subjects. While less vile than pure sadists, the bureaucrats are more dangerous, because in them there is not even a conflict between conscience and duty: their conscience is doing their duty; human beings as objects of empathy and compassion do not exist for them.<sup>24</sup>

This is surely the price we have had to pay for our monstrous conceit in alienating ourselves from the sacred. If we are to find the answers to the questions concerning the meaning and purpose of human existence, then we have to stop denying the sacred as an unnecessary or non-existent dimension of human experience. It seems to be the only possible way of healing ourselves.

### Cyclic Transformations

According to Taoism<sup>25</sup> the whole of differentiated existence is in a state of ebb and flow. Everything is subject to unceasing change, which periodically goes through mutations and transformations. Nothing is static. Nevertheless, these changes are rhythmical, and proceed in orderly cycles. These cyclic patterns of change can be seen in nature; day follows night, winter becomes spring. The basic outline of each pattern is endlessly repeated varying only within narrow limits. The cycles are, therefore, foreseeable, but not necessarily the variations within each cycle. In other words, we know that

the future will follow the rhythmical pulsation of time; day and night, and the cycle of the seasons, but the details of variation within each cycle are difficult to predict and specify.

Everything is also in a state of reversion. This is the law of return. The natural order of things is to return to its point of origin. Undifferentiated Non-Being becomes the multiplicity of Being, which in turn, returns to the primordial unity of Non-Being. If the pendulum of change has been such that a situation has been allowed to develop which manifests extreme qualities the trend will be to revert to the opposite qualities.

Reversion is the movement of the Tao.

(Lao-Tzu)<sup>26</sup>

The symbol that best represents this dynamic principle of change and revolution is the yin-yang sign. It consists of a circle bisected by a sigmoid line. The dark half denotes yin the negative, passive, feminine, instinctive, intuitional and contractive principle - the earth. The light half represents the positive, active, masculine, rational, analytic and expansive principle - heaven. Each aspect has within it the other force in embryonic form implying that the masculine and feminine principles do not exist exclusively, but that the one contains the vitalized germ of the other.

The circle that holds these two forces together signifies undifferentiated Non-Being. The interplay of these two mutually interdependent forces creates form, differentiated Being. Although they

appear as separate they are essentially one. Seen as a whole the yin-yang symbol represents the "Cosmic Egg, the primordial Androgyne, the perfection of balance and harmony."<sup>27</sup>

Modern scientific consciousness, which has as its models for thinking the rationalism of Descartes and the empiricism of Bacon, is manifesting to an extreme degree the masculine yang characteristics. Rational, analytic, linear thinking has been over-developed at the expense of the intuitive, synthesizing, non-linear mode of thinking - the feminine yin characteristics.

Rational, analytical thinking is mainly focussed in the left hemisphere of the human brain, whereas, intuitive, symbolic knowing is located in the right hemisphere. The rational and intuitive polarities are complementary, not antagonistic, modes of functioning, and it is therefore necessary that both hemispheres are actively developed in order for the brain to operate holistically.

The scientific mode of consciousness, through its methodology, suppresses the intuitive faculty of the brain. Nevertheless, some of the greatest scientific discoveries have been made using the symbolic, intuitive aspect of the human mind. Friedrich August Kekule, a professor in chemistry at Ghent, Belgium, fell asleep one afternoon in 1865 and had a dream which resulted in one of the most important discoveries in organic chemistry, and proved to be one of the cornerstones of modern science.

"I turned my chair to the fire and dozed", he relates. "Again the atoms were gambolling before my eyes. This time the smaller groups kept modestly in the background. My mental eye, rendered more acute by repeated visions of this kind, could now distinguish larger structures, of manifold conformation; long rows, sometimes more closely fitted together; all twining

and twisting in snake-like motion. But look! What was that? One of the snakes had seized hold of its own tail, and the form whirled mockingly before my eyes. As if by a flash of lightning I awoke."<sup>28</sup>

Traditionally, the rational mind is associated with science, and the intuitive mind with mysticism and religion.<sup>29</sup> Einstein recognized the interdependence of science and religion when he wrote that

Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind.<sup>30</sup>

Modern society has "consistently favoured the yang over the yin - rational knowledge over intuitive wisdom, science over religion, competition over co-operation, exploitation of natural resources over conservation, and so on. This emphasis, supported by the patriarchal system and further encouraged by the dominance of sensate culture during the past three centuries, has led to a profound cultural imbalance which lies at the very root of our current crisis - an imbalance in our thoughts and feelings, our values and attitudes, and our social and political structures."<sup>31</sup>

Furthermore, the pride that our culture takes in being scientific has given rise to an arrogance that believes that scientific knowledge is the only acceptable form of knowledge, and an intolerance that does not recognize intuitive knowledge as being valid and reliable. This attitude is known as scientism, and pervades our "educational system and all other social and political institutions."<sup>32</sup>

Our patriarchal society has propagandized the view that women and Nature must be dominated and controlled, together with the "belief in the superior role of the rational mind." This attitude has been

"supported and encouraged by the Judeo-Christian tradition, which adheres to the image of a male god, personification of supreme reason and source of ultimate power, who rules the world from above by imposing his divine law on it. The laws of nature searched for by scientists were seen as reflections of this divine law, originating in the mind of God."<sup>33</sup>

However, there are distinct signs that the yang principle has reached its zenith, and that we are in the throes of a reversal towards the yin principle. This evolutionary oscillation began in the counter-culture movements of the 1960s and 1970s. This period saw the beginnings of a marked shift in attitudes and values, especially amongst young people, who challenged every aspect of the inherited value system. These movements seem to have originated at grassroots level, and not from academic institutions or the enlightened thinking of a few individuals.

Another clear sign of this process of reversal is the way the whole structure of the patriarchal system has been profoundly and radically undermined by feminist ideology which has been successfully disseminated by the women's movement.

There is no doubt that these philosophical, ecological, political and spiritual movements are gaining momentum as we progress towards the end of the century.

### Quest for the Sacred

Any world view is dependent upon social support for its general acceptance. The integrated strength and reliability of the support determines just how firmly established this body of interpretations of reality would become in human consciousness. The typical pre-modern society creates conditions for the individual where religion becomes an objective certainty. In modern society, however, the individual lives in religious doubt and uncertainty. Religion has been robbed of its "taken-for-granted status" through the undermining of traditional values and beliefs; it has lost its hold on the human mind. The destiny of the pre-modern individual is inexorably linked to the fate of the gods, whereas the modern individual is faced with the necessity of choosing between a plurality of religious alternatives. This pluralizing process has had a powerful secularizing effect on religion.<sup>34</sup>

The English word "heresy" comes from the Greek verb *hairein*, which means "to choose". A *haireisis* originally meant, quite simply, the taking of a choice.<sup>35</sup> Therefore, to be heretical is to exercise one's freedom to choose or to form one's own opinion. But, the word has a specific religious connotation in the Christian tradition in that a heretic was someone who rejected the authority of the Church as being the final arbiter of religious doctrine by refusing "to accept the tradition in toto". Instead, the heretic "picked and chose from the contents of the tradition, and from these pickings and choosings constructed his own deviant opinion."<sup>36</sup> The Church, in an attempt to maintain its position of authority, labelled heresy a sin.

In pre-modern societies "heresy is a possibility - usually a rather remote one", whereas, in modern society heresy for the individual " becomes a necessity". In other words, "modernity creates a new situation in which picking and choosing becomes an imperative."<sup>37</sup> Consequently, the individual in modern society is compelled to exercise his or her heretical imperative in order to lead a meaningful existence. Failure to do so would result in a loss of meaning.

Modern Man has had to pay dearly for this new-found freedom. With it has come many psychological problems. Fromm has argued that freedom for modern Man has a twofold meaning:

...that he has been freed from traditional authorities and has become an "individual", but that at the same time he has become isolated, powerless, and an instrument of purposes outside himself, alienated from himself and others; furthermore, that this state undermines his self, weakens and frightens him, and makes him ready for submission to new kinds of bondage. Positive freedom on the other hand is identical with the full realization of the individual's potentialities, together with his ability to live actively and spontaneously.<sup>38</sup>

Whereas Fromm has argued that the psychological problems of freedom and individualism cannot "be separated from the material basis of human existence, from the economic, social, and political structure of society"<sup>39</sup>, Frankl contends that freedom is a state of being, and the undermining of traditional values and beliefs has created an "existential vacuum" which has frustrated the individual's attempt to find meaning in his or her personal existence. In contrast to former times modern Man is "no longer told by traditions and values what he should do. Now, knowing neither what he must do nor what he should do, he sometimes does not even know what he basically wishes to do.

Instead, he wishes to do what other people do - which is conformism - or he does what other people wish him to do - which is totalitarianism."<sup>40</sup>

The search for meaning became apparent and intensified to an extraordinary degree during the 1960s and 1970s when many young people started experimenting with hallucinatory drugs, hypnosis, meditation and various other ways to achieve altered states of consciousness. The search to find answers to fundamental questions of human existence, and the need for a more personal religion through which the seeker would achieve direct communion with Divine Reality led many to embrace Eastern religions.

Another manifestation of this search for meaning is an intense yearning for transcendence which is a direct response to the complexities of the human condition. It could be argued that this need for transcendence is nothing but escapism, an inability or refusal to confront the human dilemma. Transcendence should not be confused with escapism. If they are not the same what, then, is transcendence, and how does it differ from escapism?

The word "transcend" comes from the Latin *transcendere*, which means "to climb". To transcend means to aspire beyond the limits of, to ascend. Transcendence, as an ascending principle, is an act of will, an endeavour to seek ultimately transcendental wisdom through union with the Universal Mind. Therefore, in the context of the present world situation, the need for transcendence is indicative of the search for meaning, for wholeness; it is the will to meaning. It signifies the natural process of redressing planetary imbalances through the recognition of the need for, and a return to, the sacred.

Escapism, on the other hand, is a descent by any means into separateness and isolation. It can take the form of being mentally scattered by frivolous activities, an excessive preoccupation with sensual pleasure and other hedonistic activities, addiction to alcohol and drugs, psychosomatic illnesses and hypochondria, madness, and the ultimate escape, suicide.

This striving of the human spirit for divine inspiration and understanding can be symbolically represented by the star which is traditionally seen as a symbol of the spirit. It signifies "a light shining in the darkness", and "stands for the forces of the spirit struggling against the forces of darkness". The five-pointed star is the most representative and significant symbol for the present world situation because it means the "rising upwards towards the point of origin", and "to bring up", "to educate". In other words, it symbolizes the education of the human spirit. The inverted five-pointed star is the symbol of the descent into the "infernal".<sup>41</sup>

This striving of the human spirit can be further symbolized by the representation of the human figure standing with outstretched arms and legs, the five points forming a pentacle or pentagram which is enclosed by a circle. This is the sign of Man as microcosm, the image of the Universal Man. The five points represent the five basic elements: spirit or ether, air, fire, water and earth. The posture of the human body is highly symbolic because it expresses "the human tendency towards ascendance and evolution".<sup>42</sup>

### Summary

We are going through a process of great sifting. This period of crisis is challenging us all to transform ourselves. We are being urged to learn from the mistakes of the past and to seek, through the trials of the present, new ways of being. There is a great urgency for responsible action; people everywhere, in many personal ways, are being confronted with situations that demand greater commitment. Those who are unable to respond to the opportunities provided by the pathology of crisis are being left behind as they fall by the wayside.

There are those who cling to old forms and ways because their fear of the unknown is far greater than their fear of the known. They are habituated to the familiar, even though that to which they hold on to is the cause of their suffering and unhappiness. Many who are in such a situation will not let go, even if a way out is offered to them. It is like someone trapped on a narrow ledge; they are so paralysed with fear that they cannot even loosen their grip to reach out for the hand that wants to guide them to a safer space.

Then there are those who are entrapped in nihilistic delusions, who have no hope or vision of a better way. They find meaning in riotously destroying anything and everything simply because they see the destruction of all things and, ultimately, self-destruction, as an end in itself.

As a counterbalance to all this, there are those who are willing to take risks, who have faith in the process that new ways of being

will emerge through personal striving and struggle. They see the destruction of those old forms and structures which can no longer accommodate new growth as vitally necessary because it allows for the best of the old to be assimilated with the evolving forms that are adapting to the demands for new forms. As a result, the quest for the sacred has become of late very real and intense. Overall, there is a great search for new meaning.

CHAPTER TWO  
THE GREAT AWAKENING

There are no historical precedents, certainly none that have been accurately recorded or that we conclusively know of, that help provide a measure to what humanity is going through now. Cyclic transformations have occurred, and, with predetermined inevitability, will continue to occur, but it is possible that they have not been on the scale and magnitude with which it is happening now.

Myths and legends left to us by ancient civilizations that poetically describe the creation of the world, or chronicle catastrophes and upheavals such as the biblical flood, and epic poems and folklore that tell us of the feats and deeds of great mythological heroes are really the only records available to us of what seem to be previous periods of cyclic change. Unfortunately, factual evidence of those changes has been subjectively obscured by the mythopoeic thought processes that produced those legends.

Every age has had its prophets, who from their solitary perspectives fearlessly described and announced their vision of coming events. They were usually ostracized and feared, and were largely ignored by the many and only heeded by a few. But this time it is vastly different. There are many perceptive minds in different parts of the world intuitively sensing and accurately articulating the present process of planetary transformation. Many are actively preparing themselves for the great changes ahead. The most important difference from previous times is that never before has there been

such a collective awareness of what is happening, how it is happening and why it is happening.

One thing is definitely certain. We are passing through a critical historical moment; a sudden evolutionary spurt which is consequentially raising the level of human consciousness. This great evolutionary leap is being initiated by the tremendous thrust resulting from the cyclic re-awakening of the sacred in the collective consciousness of Mankind.

#### Problems of Historical Perspective and Contemporary Evidence

So far, the argument begs the question that a universal quest for the sacred does in fact exist. What evidence is there, then, to support such a belief?

One of the most difficult problems facing any commentator of the contemporary scene is to achieve and maintain the clarity of vision that results from a dispassionately objective mind when, almost always, the investigator is in some way subjectively immersed in the living of the time. It is difficult to stand aside and observe things as they happen without being drawn into it in some way or other. Invariably, the observer influences, and is influenced by, that which is being observed. The mind set of the investigator, whether consciously or unconsciously, cannot help but reflect in some small way the perceptions, speculative theorizing, assumptions, prejudices and beliefs

of the time in which he or she is living. Coupled to this, the investigator who has allowed his or her vision to be conditioned and narrowed by a particular ideological paradigm will obviously interpret the past, and the present in terms of the past, according to the refracting prejudices and assumptions inherent in that paradigm. In the final analysis, all investigators are trapped in the contemporary perspective, and therefore, subject to the limitations of perception that delineates that space-time.

For the contemporary investigator to comprehend the macrocosmic interrelationships of current events, and try and estimate their importance in the long-term historical process, is extremely difficult because, firstly, significant points of reference or trends are not always easily recognizable at the time; secondly, the future is obscure and uncertain, and difficult to predict, and thirdly, important information is not always available to the investigator at the time of happening. This may only come to light at a much later date. Historical trends and patterns reveal themselves much more accurately when seen reflectively from the detached distance of time. Analyzing an historical event or period retrospectively has the advantage of a different time perspective. This does not, however, eliminate the possibility of making inappropriate or false interpretations of the past. Nevertheless, our history is going through a continuous process of re-evaluation as our perceptual understanding of ourselves and our past changes.

There have been moments in history when the participants were aware to some extent that they were involved in a history-making event. However, very few people have a sense of history. Those with

a sense of destiny who did had an almost messianic awareness of their role in history. Men like Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, Napoleon, Lenin, Hitler and Churchill, just to name a few, have dominated their times with a megalomania that was fuelled by an undoubted belief in the ability to influence the course of history.

Others had a more symbolic role, such as the two English queens, Elizabeth I, who, through her statecraft and ability to inspire loyalty and dedicated service, and Victoria, through her longevity, each in their own respective way, unwittingly personified an age.

One of the most revealing insights about the process of history is its apparent ordinariness. There were many events that at the time of happening were simply taken for granted, and there were many important historical figures who led quite ordinary lives. They quietly worked at whatever they were inventing, thinking, composing, painting or writing, not always realizing or understanding the full importance of what they were doing. Most often they were simply responding to a strong compulsion to create. But, there were those rare few who did have a profound sense of destiny, who were aware of a deep, inner purpose that was being articulated and expressed through their lives. Their works later proved to be intellectual time-bombs which were destined to shatter old patterns of thinking and seeing, and force us to re-evaluate ourselves and our understanding of the world in which we live. It is only retrospectively, when all the facts are known, that an accurate assessment of the past can be made. It is then that the historian reveals the extraordinary nature of what at the time appeared to be a commonplace, everyday event, or a distinctly ordinary life.

Quite often the most significant and far-reaching events in our history happened without fanfare or publicity. Take for example the publication of Einstein's theory of relativity in the prestigious German physics monthly *Annalen der Physik* in 1905. At the time it attracted the enthusiastic attention of only one outstanding scientist, Max Planck. He alerted his colleagues and persuaded them to study seriously Einstein's revolutionary ideas. But, the attention that Einstein was later to receive was still many years off. This came when Sir Arthur Eddington and the British Astronomer Royal, Frank Dyson, reported to the Royal Society that their scientific expedition to Principe Island in the Gulf of Guinea had successfully photographed the solar eclipse on May 29, 1919, and their calculations verified the predictions made by Einstein that gravity will bend the path of light when it passes near a massive star. In retrospect, physicists now regard the year 1905 as one of the most significant dates in scientific history. It was the year that Einstein's genius flowered bearing the fruit of four research papers that were the result of an extraordinary mental effort that has since permanently altered our understanding of the universe.

But, then again, certain historical events do attract initial attention. When Martin Luther drew up and posted his *Ninety-five Theses* on the door of All Saints Church, Wittenberg, on October 31, 1517 "for the purpose of eliciting truth",<sup>1</sup> he certainly knew what he was about. He was fully aware that his protest would stir up controversy with the Church of Rome. But even he had no idea that in the long-term it was to prove a profoundly significant act; that crucial moment in history which was to give impetus to the Reformation.

Sometimes, an invention that would change our way of living or a set of ideas that would effect a re-structuring of old paradigms will only be accepted by society and allowed to facilitate changes in the social structure when its potential and advantages are more fully realized, and when it can be seen to benefit society as a whole.

Change is usually very rapid when society as a whole, or certain sections of society, demand those things or accept those ideas that would be most effective in initiating change. Unfortunately, it happens all too often, the pressure groups who agitate for immediate change do not always fully realize the implications of what they are demanding, tend to be unprepared themselves for the changes that follow and are usually unwilling to take responsibility for the consequences of change. Their commitment is generally focussed on initiating change, and not on seeing it through the problematical growth process.

When the Wright brothers achieved the first powered, controlled and sustained flight on December 17, 1903, they fulfilled one of Man's most ancient dreams. At the time, however, except for the perceptive few, the possibilities of powered flight had yet to be realized. Sadly, it took a great human tragedy, the First World War, to reveal the destructive potential of aircraft, and it also took the courageous efforts of a few dedicated and pioneering aviators, such as Charles Lindbergh, to demonstrate the commercial possibilities of air travel. The phenomenal progress made in aircraft technology was a direct result of the accelerating effect of two world wars and the battle to achieve air superiority by having bigger, better and faster aircraft.

The post-war aerospace industry in America and Russia developed as a direct result of the work carried out by the American physicist, Robert Goddard, who is generally acknowledged as the father of modern rocketry, and German rocket scientists at Peenemünde during the Second World War. Incredibly, just over sixty-five years after the first powered flight, on July 20, 1969, the American astronaut, Neil Armstrong, became the first man to walk on the moon.

This amazing technological progress has taken place over a period not longer than the average human life-span. Today, this invention has become such an integral part of national and international life that we cannot imagine modern society functioning at the pace it does and the way it does without the benefits and protection of the aeroplane.

Society can also undergo radical and fundamental changes when a set of perceptions about a particular human condition is logically ordered into a coherent, critical framework, and these ideas are then readily accepted by a significant number of people to the extent that these concepts are actively integrated into daily life. The growth of the feminist movement which advocates the social, economic and political rights and equality of women, and is committed to changing fundamentally the role of women in society, aptly illustrates this process.

The twentieth century has seen the rise of the feminist movement, but its beginnings go all the way back to the writings of the ancient Greek comic dramatist, Aristophanes, who prefigured the modern image of the female activist in his play *Lysistrata* written in 411 BC. The play depicts a revolt by the women of Athens who seized the

Acropolis and treasury, and, through Lysistrata's instigation, in solidarity with all the other women of Greece, declared a sex strike until such time as the men came to their senses, stopped their warmongering, and made peace.

Other enlightened precursors of the modern movement range from the eighteenth century social critic Mary Wollstonecraft to the nineteenth century novelist Charlotte Brontë, and early twentieth century campaigners such as Mrs Emmeline Pankhurst. These women were well ahead of their time. The times in which they lived were not receptive to their ideas. Their seed-thoughts, however, instead of dying, lay dormant until the conditions were suitable for germination. This came about when a significant number of women grew dissatisfied and disillusioned with their roles in family and social life, and demanded changes. As the numbers grew, more and more women became receptive to feminist ideals and took up the cause.

The feminist movement has been most effective in the more technologically advanced societies where it has successfully lobbied for legislative changes, and managed, despite its growing pains and the ideological problems created by its more militant members, to conscientize an influential number of women on their rights, and sensitize an increasing number of men to be more accepting of the changing role of women in society.

One of the most important reasons why the feminist movement grew so rapidly during the post-war period was that our ability to disseminate new ideas was greatly enhanced by technological advances which enabled us to communicate with anyone anywhere on the globe. It is

now possible to achieve the critical number necessary to effect change in a very short time.

The critical number can be defined as being that number of people who readily accept an idea or set of ideas to the degree that they form a pressure group which challenges the existing order and initiates significant changes in the social structure.

The amazing and rapid advances made in the field of communications technology in this century have compressed time and space to the extent that we can witness, through a complex media network, any event anywhere in the world as it is about to happen, or is happening, or after it has happened. We can now sit comfortably in our living rooms and watch or listen, through the mediums of television and radio, history being made. For instance, many millions of people throughout the world watched Neil Armstrong step on to the moon's surface and proclaim that achievement for all humanity. We all knew that we were witnessing one of the greatest moments in the history of the human race. Significantly, this great historical moment was shared by a planetary audience that, all too briefly, transcended national and cultural barriers. We watched a fellow human being, a representative of Earth, achieve something special for the whole human race.

The exploration of outer space has been proclaimed as the last frontier. This is simply not true. The last quarter of this century sees us about to venture into, and open up, a new frontier - the exploration of inner space. This is the realm of human consciousness; the unseen world of the human spirit. It is in this area of human endeavour that some of the most significant and unheralded changes are happening, with potentially the greatest long-term effects.

We have invented instruments such as the telescope which has enabled us to study distant planets and galaxies, and the microscope to reveal the unseen world of microbes and bacteria. But, what instrument do we use to explore inner space, an area that no technological device so far invented by us can record? So far the only answer we have to this question is the human mind. There are no known devices that perform the same function. For this reason we must begin to learn what the human mind is all about and how to use it. As we delve deeper and deeper into the human psyche, unravelling the mysteries of the mind as we go along, so we will explore further the realm of inner space.

The transcendental reality of inner space has traditionally been the preserve of religion. Our most common notion of religion is that it is a particular system of faith and worship, such as Christianity, Islam and Buddhism, just to name a few. It is quite common practice amongst many religions to encourage the worshipper to believe in a deity that is simply an anthropomorphic projection. It is unfortunate, too, that many religious institutions have used in the past, and in some cases, continue to use, fear and guilt to coerce people into believing. However, the coercive power of religious institutions is today diminishing. There is far greater pressure on the individual to conform to the scientific establishment.<sup>2</sup>

Religion and religious experience are much more than this. Our understanding of religion has been largely structured by archaic definitions which tend to diminish the true value and purpose of religion and religious experience. Consequently, it has now become necessary to redraw our conceptual maps of religion.

The study of religion and religious experience has been greatly neglected. The little work that has been done has been by social anthropologists and psychologists, and in the field of comparative religion. The work of two psychologists in particular stand out. The first was Carl Gustav Jung who, in his study of the archetypes of the collective unconscious, came to the conclusion that all human beings have a "natural religious function", and that the psychic health and stability of the individual depends on its proper expression.<sup>3</sup>

Viktor Frankl supports this view and says that there is clinical evidence to suggest that the atrophy of our religious sensibilities results in a distortion of our religious concepts, or as he poetically puts it "once the angel in us is repressed, he turns into a demon". He goes on further to assert that in this century the reign of scientific reasoning and a "megalomaniac technology are the repressive structures to which the religious feeling is sacrificed. This fact explains much of the present condition of man, which indeed resembles a 'universal compulsive neurosis of mankind,' to quote Freud".<sup>4</sup>

The other psychologist was William James. In his pioneering work *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, James explains that he chose to ignore institutionalized religion, and instead, focus his attention entirely on personal religious experience which he regarded as being more fundamental.<sup>5</sup> This was a crucial decision because James correctly recognized that

the founders of every church owed their power originally to the fact of their direct personal communion with the divine. Not only the superhuman founders, the Christ, the Buddha, Mahomet, but all the originators of Christian sects have been in this case; - so personal religion should still seem the primordial thing, even to those who continue to esteem it incomplete.<sup>6</sup>

Any study of institutionalized religion would research religious revivals, whereas personal religion is anecdotal because the facts of religion arise from the testimony of direct experience. However, there are certain difficulties amassing anecdotal evidence in this scientifically conditioned century which was beginning to become a problem to William James at the turn of the century.

The eminent biologist, Sir Alister Hardy, three-quarters of a century later, realized that apart from the work of James and a few others, there was still very little organized knowledge on this subject. He, therefore, decided to set up The Religious Experience Research Unit at Oxford University to "explore the spiritual nature of man as systematically and objectively as possible."<sup>7</sup> He decided to approach it in the following way:

First, we have tried to build up a body of knowledge of actual experiences by collecting thousands of individual first-hand accounts which we have then collated under classificatory labels. Secondly, we have examined these examples in depth, looking at development, their dynamic patterns, antecedents, and consequences. Thirdly, we have begun quantitative studies. Finally, I have tried to draw certain tentative conclusions. For only when we have collected, collated, examined, and counted a great many first-hand accounts can we hope to learn more about the essential part that man's spirituality plays in his make-up.<sup>8</sup>

From the outset he made it clear that he was not in any way endeavouring "to find support for this or that form of institutional religion, or indeed for the doctrines of any particular faith. It is not my desire to be doctrinaire in any way. I am essentially concerned with man's spiritual feelings in general: with increasing

knowledge about this sense of awareness and finding out more about the effect it may have upon a man's life".<sup>9</sup>

The first stage of Hardy's work was to collect records of personal experiences. This he did through making newspaper appeals and circulating pamphlets. He initially decided against using "a definite questionnaire" because he felt that

These experiences are so precious and personal to the people who have them that many are likely to be put off by being asked to fill in such a form about them; secondly, and still more important, the very manner of asking the questions would be apt, I believe, to give a slant to the content of the replies. The specimens we are hunting are shy and delicate ones which we want to secure in as natural a condition as possible; we must at all costs avoid damaging or distorting them by trying to trap them within an artificial framework. In the first instance we prefer a description set down in the words and manner thought most fitting by those who have had the experiences; these tell us so much more about the personality of the sender than any replies given to a series of questions on a form like an income-tax return.<sup>10</sup>

During the second stage, however, the questionnaire technique was used. One of the most important points to bear in mind when drawing up a questionnaire is that much depends on how the questions are put, especially when asking about religious and mystical experiences. When Sir Alister Hardy decided to undertake a national survey of religious experience throughout Great Britain, David Hay, a lecturer in biology from Nottingham University who later joined the research team, reports that they had to consider very carefully the types of questions that they were going to ask in the questionnaire. The obvious questions about age, sex, education, economic background and geographical area were automatically included. The main question, however, had to be

phrased in non-technical language, and in such a way that virtually anybody could understand it. The question that they finally decided on was the one Hardy had used in his newspaper appeals:

Have you ever been aware of or influenced by a presence or power, whether you call it God or not, which is different from your everyday self?<sup>11</sup>

The survey produced some interesting results. It showed that just over one third (36%) of the people approached responded positively to the main question. To the question

Have you ever felt as though you were very close to a powerful spiritual force that seemed to lift you out of yourself?

slightly less (31%) answered this question positively which was comparable to the 35% of Americans who claimed to have had an "ecstatic" experience in a poll conducted in 1973. Even the pattern of frequency was similar on both sides of the Atlantic.<sup>12</sup>

Hay found that many of the respondents had great difficulty in putting their experience into words. Many felt embarrassed talking about it, and most often kept it to themselves because they "feared ridicule, or that they would be classed as mentally unbalanced."<sup>13</sup>

It seems that twentieth century attitudes towards religion are very similar to nineteenth century attitudes towards sex - religion is to us, as sex was to the Victorians, a taboo subject.

This aptly illustrates the point that "human beings require social confirmation for their beliefs about reality".<sup>14</sup> The influence of the scientific establishment is such that we do not have social permission to talk freely about our religious experiences or feelings

about religion. Viktor Frankl reports that one of his patients quite spontaneously expressed the dilemma confronting an individual whose inner reality and set of moral beliefs were not confirmed through social support.

How come I am ashamed of whatever is religious, that it seems to me bothersome and ridiculous? Well, I know very well myself why I feel so ashamed about my religious longings: underlying all the psychotherapeutic treatment I have had these last twenty-seven years was the more or less tacit conviction on the part of my doctors that such longings are nothing but unrealistic, baseless speculation. As they put it, only the tangible is real, and everything else is nonsense, caused by a trauma or by the wish to escape life by fleeing into disease. So whenever I expressed my longing for God I was almost afraid they would bring in the straitjacket. Until now every type of psychotherapy missed the point.<sup>15</sup>

The poll also showed that the type of education we receive plays an important part in either facilitating religious experience or extinguishing it entirely. Hay reports the experience of a young woman with a degree in biology:

At the age of fourteen I had a definite feeling that there was something there, but at the age of sixteen or seventeen this feeling stopped. At that time acquiring new knowledge, especially scientific knowledge, seemed to make such a thing untenable, and in a short time I stopped having this kind of feeling.<sup>16</sup>

He gives another example of a member of a Marxist revolutionary group who, through commitment to a belief system that rejects religion as false consciousness, refuses to accept even the possibility of religious experience:

At times of selfishness, I stumble into otherworldliness, when I feel the need to lean on some emotional peg (I suppose some people would call it prayer). But

when I catch myself, I stop it by saying "There is no power that can help me"...The aspect of subservience disgusts me.<sup>17</sup>

The findings of this research seem to indicate that religious awareness is a "perfectly natural kind of human awareness, differing certainly in many respects from everyday sensory awareness, but having valued outcomes which enhance people's ability to survive".<sup>18</sup> Hay goes on to suggest that religious awareness "could be a potential in the species which either is or is not attended to".<sup>19</sup>

So far, the discussion has been centered on the findings of one research group working in Britain during the 1970s. It is a small beginning to the study of religion, and inevitably, many questions remain unanswered, and many new ones surfaced as a result of the initial inquiry. Except for America and Britain, we still know very little about the religious attitudes in other countries, especially in communist countries where religion is not officially recognized. In the final analysis, there seems to be very little concrete evidence to support the belief, and convince the rationally-minded, that there is a universal return to the sacred. Nevertheless, there are many enlightened thinkers who do believe in a planetary re-awakening of Man's religious sensibilities. This belief originates more from an intuitive sensing through identification with the whole than from empirical fact.

To give order to the chaotic contemporary experience so as to reveal the patterns of history proves to be an extremely difficult task. What we are going through now will only be fully understood in

the future. This is the vocation of the historian who puts the moments of the past into perspective.

Maybe future generations will reflect on this time and see the efforts of those debunkers of religion and metaphysical experiences as being absurd, and of those who now endeavour to verify the existence of God, which to them in many ways is self-evident, as being similar to the way Galileo tried to convince Church authorities that the Earth revolved around the Sun, and not the other way around.

### Building the Rainbow Bridge

What is the real value of religion and religious experience, and why is it so necessary in order to maintain psychic health?

Throughout the ages, and in numerous cultures in virtually all parts of the world, the belief in a First Cause of some kind has persisted, and continues to persist, despite the coercive influence of present day scientific materialism and the persuasive arguments of certain brilliant sceptics who regard the proof of the existence of God as one of our perennial intellectual problems.

To the atheist and agnostic the great Sufi poet Rumi put this question: "Where in this world is to be found a single minaret in praise of the unbelievers?" He goes on to point out that

The unbeliever's argument is just this, that he says, "I see no place of abode except this external world."

He never reflects that, wherever there is anything external, that object gives information of hidden wise purposes.

The usefulness of every external object is, indeed, internal: it is latent, like the beneficial quality in medicines.<sup>20</sup>

Even the most brilliant argument for the existence of God cannot convince someone to believe if their hearts and minds are shut off from the notion of a Divine Reality. The Buddhist, Shônin Hônen, reminded his disciples "that it is useless to try to force those to believe who will not, for even the Buddha himself cannot do that."<sup>21</sup> And it is equally true to say that if someone has been intimidated into believing through fear of what might happen in the hereafter, or by a deep sense of guilt instilled by a poor self-image which readily identifies with the role of an undeserving sinner, the belief that they have all too often turns out to be self-deceptive and illusory, and is less likely to be permanent and enduring because it is not based on gnosis; on the transformative knowledge gained through direct experience of Divine Reality. Conversion should always be a natural and willing process. It should never be forced.

When gnosis is established in the heart of the gnostic, the empire of doubt and scepticism and agnosticism is utterly destroyed, and the sovereignty of gnosis subdues his senses and passions so that in all his looks and acts and words he remains within the circle of its authority. (Hujwiri)<sup>22</sup>

The resilience of religious belief suggests that it means more to us than "merely a matter of explaining reality" or "a set of commandments or moral prescriptions". "The essence of religion is its

inwardness"<sup>23</sup> for it holds the extraordinary possibility of mystical union with the Divine.

A study of comparative religion reveals that all religions not only proclaim this possibility, but also affirm its attainability by anyone dedicated enough to make the considerable effort necessary to realize this goal. The first step on this long journey towards God realization is an act of faith. Progress along the path can be made only if individual will is willingly surrendered to Divine Will; to let Thy will be done as opposed to my will be done. To do this requires an act of faith.

The logical necessity of faith is not difficult to grasp: the spiritual domain is invisible to the temporal, and as long as the temporal is the domain that rules us, faith is indispensable for the perseverance required if one is to break through the specious "reality" one knows to the as yet unknown Reality.<sup>24</sup>

True faith has its genesis in the heart. It is a trust innate to a consenting heart which creates a state of receptivity that encourages the metaphysical participation of the I-Thou relationship.

Faith is the belief of the heart in that knowledge which comes from the Unseen. (Muhammad b. Khafif)<sup>25</sup>

Faith in this sense is a state of being not a state of mind. The intellect is often an obstacle to true faith for a doubting mind diminishes faith and obscures Divine Reality. Faith on its own, however, is not enough. It is more a condition, a probationary qualification of discipleship, albeit an important one, not a method. So, the question remains: How does the seeker bridge the great

illusory divide that separates the temporal world from the spiritual realm?

In his attempt to describe the spiritual nature of Man, William James came to the following conclusions:

Summing up in the broadest possible way the characteristics of the religious life, as we have found them, it includes the following beliefs:-

1. That the visible world is part of a more spiritual universe from which it draws its chief significance;
2. That union or harmonious relation with that higher universe is our true end;
3. That prayer or inner communion with the spirit thereof - be that spirit "God" or "law" - is a process wherein work is really done, and spiritual energy flows in and produces effects, psychological or material, within the phenomenal world.

Religion includes also the following psychological characteristics:-

4. A new zest which adds itself like a gift to life, and takes the form either of lyrical enchantment or of appeal to earnestness and heroism;
5. An assurance of safety and a temper of peace, and, in relation to others, a preponderance of loving affections.<sup>26</sup>

Sir Alister Hardy, in his investigation of contemporary religious experience, came to very similar conclusions:

It seems to me that the main characteristics of man's religious and spiritual experiences are shown in his feelings for a transcendental reality which frequently manifest themselves in early childhood; a feeling that "Something Other" than the self can actually be sensed; a desire to personalize this presence into a deity and to have a private I-Thou relationship with it, communicating through prayer.<sup>27</sup>

An interesting characteristic to emerge from both these studies, which are separated by a period of just on eighty years, is the importance of the I-Thou relationship of prayer in the religious life of the individual. It seems that prayer is a natural human response which comes quite easily when the need arises to communicate with the Deity. Prayer, contemplation and meditation are graded spiritual exercises, the practice of which is aimed at achieving a state of inner communion with the Deity. In fact, all religions not only confirm this, but prescribe a set of spiritual disciplines and a code of living which neophytes are encouraged to follow in order to achieve this state of consciousness. The great difficulty, of course, lies in developing the discipline necessary to adhere to such a strict regimen. Herein lies the great human struggle; the victory of spirit over matter.

But, what is the difference between prayer and meditation, and why should these practices become a necessary and integral part of our daily lives?

Prayer is communication between the temporal and spiritual domains. In its most exterior usage, the word implies petition of the individual before the Creator. Meditation will then be a deepening and continuation of prayer, where individual interests are superseded by a quickening of attention upon divine qualities and "spiritual perspectives" for their own intrinsic worth and pre-eminent reality.<sup>28</sup>

Our conception and general usage of prayer takes the shape of a wish-projection or appeal for some form of high intervention in the life of the individual, usually to satisfy a wide range of needs which have their roots in the desire or emotional nature of the aspirant. Four

degrees of prayer can be distinguished, each stage demonstrating an increasing level of selflessness:

- \* Prayer for material benefits, and for help.
- \* Prayer for virtues and for graces of character.
- \* Prayer for others, intercessory prayer.
- \* Prayer for illumination and for divine realization.<sup>29</sup>

At the fourth stage prayer ends and meditation begins. Prayer is a method which involves the emotional nature of the aspirant, and is based on a belief in a God who gives, whereas meditation involves the mental nature and is based on a belief in the innate divinity of all human beings. Meditation is the practical work done on the mental plane to harmonize mental energies and prepare the mind of the aspirant for the realization of Divine Reality. It is a method for self-mastery, and it is for these reasons that it should be practised regularly. This means that the practitioner of meditation should set aside a period each day for a retreat into silence, and, through the withdrawal of the senses from the temporal world, refocus and centre all the faculties on the Divine Source, the Godhead.

We cannot put ourselves directly in the presence of God if we do not practise internal and external silence.<sup>30</sup>

However, this retreat into silence should not be seen as a form of escapism. Mother Teresa of Calcutta, along with her fellow nuns from the order she founded, the Missionaries of Charity, work every day in the midst of the utmost poverty, disease and misery. For her, a period of silence is the inbreath, the act of being inspired by the

wisdom of God so that the daily activity of living aspires to bring spiritual nourishment to the dying and destitute.

It is not possible to engage in the direct apostolate without being a soul at prayer. We must be aware of oneness with Christ, as He was aware of oneness with His Father. Our activity is truly apostolic only in so far as we permit Him to work in us and through us, with His power, with His desire, with His love. We must be holy, not because we want to feel holy, but because Christ must be able to live His life fully in us. We are to be all love, all faith, all purity, for the sake of the poor we serve, and once we have learned to seek God and His will, our contact with the poor will become the means of great sanctity to ourselves and to others.<sup>31</sup>

From Mother Teresa's profound experience as a contemplative working in the secular world (she does not see herself as a social worker), emerge a number of significant points about the value of deep prayer and meditation as a necessary part of daily life. It is important to note that Mother Teresa makes no distinction between prayer and meditation. Definitions, concepts and theories are not important to her. She simply sees herself as a worker for God. In many ways she exemplifies the true marriage of mind and heart; being totally at one in the single-minded desire to attain divine illumination. At this point prayer and meditation merge, become one process. Definitions are not important any more because she works from her own direct experience which is all that matters.

Firstly, it serves as an integrating process that helps maintain physical, emotional and mental balance. Certainly, as a sensitive and compassionate person, Mother Teresa would never have been able to work in such appalling conditions day in and day out for all those long

years of dedicated service if she had not been strengthened and revitalized by the grace and love of God. She would have been easily overwhelmed by the intensity of the suffering if she did not realize the need to pray and take the trouble to pray regularly.

The more we receive in silent prayer, the more we can give in our active life.<sup>32</sup>

Coupled to this, the fervor of her desire to be an instrument of God's will, and the profundity of her faith that is doubtless in its belief that this purpose will be enacted through her life, has enabled her to maintain a sense of perspective and persevere despite what to others might seem a futile and wasted effort.

Secondly, in its highest expression, it becomes prayer-in-action or a continual meditation; in other words, a way of life.

Prayer for me means becoming twenty-four hours a day at one with the will of Jesus to live for Him, through Him and with Him.<sup>33</sup>

Here the desires and aspirations of the lower self are sublimated and attuned to the will and purpose of the higher Self. In this sense it becomes not only a means of attunement, but also a way of being continually mindful of the fact that the purity of this higher purpose could be so easily tainted and distorted by the wilfulness of the personality self if sublimation did not occur through attunement. Purity of motive is thus ensured.

Obviously this higher purpose, as it works through her, is coloured by Mother Teresa's character, but it is not distorted or refracted because her single-hearted desire is to be one with the will

of God. All lower self desires are surrendered to this one desire. Consequently, through her selflessness, Mother Teresa's work amongst the poor assumes a powerful moral significance.

It is quite common to judge a man or woman by the greatness of their works. But, we rarely question their motives or, as in the case of humanitarian works, tend to assume that their motives originated from high ideals. So often a man or woman starts a mission to serve humanity in some way with the highest possible intentions only to fail the tests of human strength and integrity as they succumb to the glamour and power that any public position brings with it. It is so easy to become entrapped in self-delusion, caught up in a web of illusions spun by the desires, needs and weaknesses of the personality self if there is not a conscious effort to attune oneself to a higher purpose and will, and an honest attempt at self-scrutiny.

In the final analysis, the crucial factor determining the true greatness of a work or deed is the motive which prompted and maintained it, not necessarily the scale of the work. It is the measure of self involved in it. Selfish motives always seek reward for work done, whereas unselfish motives see the work for its own sake. The reward is in doing the work. This non-attachment to the outcome of work is true freedom because it is free from the fetters of self. In this sense, then, the act of working becomes a form of meditation; the way of self-forgetfulness.

Thirdly, it is a means of realizing at-one-ment with the Divine.

In silence we will find new energy and true unity.  
The energy of God will be ours to do all things well.  
The unity of our thoughts with His thoughts, the unity  
of our prayers with His prayers, the unity of our ac-  
tions with His actions, of our life with His life.

All our words will be useless, unless they come from within - words which do not give the light of Christ increase the darkness.<sup>34</sup>

Through identification and communion with Divinity, Mother Teresa becomes a God-infused personality. In this way her lower, personality self is sanctified through integration with the higher, divine Self.

The essence of human wholeness is holiness. The path to true wholeness is one that recognizes the spiritual dimension as being a fundamental part of human existence and acknowledges it as a valid and necessary experience for the maintenance of psychological health and well-being. This means that the quest for the sacred is a search for wholeness. Wholeness is realized when the lower, personality self is overlit and interfused with Divinity, when the lower self merges and becomes one with the higher Self. Ultimately, then, to become whole is to become holy.

Fourthly, it causes an expansion of the heart centre; "it enlarges the heart". This facilitates the flow of love enhancing the potential for loving.

The need for human love has never been greater than it is now, during this period in our history. In fact it is so imperative that we learn how to love, and learn to live the Christian precept of "Love thy neighbour" that it has become a matter of survival.

The spiritual poverty of the western world is much greater than the physical poverty of our people. You in the West have millions of people who suffer such terrible loneliness and emptiness. They feel unloved and unwanted.

These people are not hungry in the physical sense but they are in another way. They know they need something more than money, yet they don't know what it is. What they are missing really is a living relationship with God.

Today, the poor are hungry for bread and rice - and for love and the living word of God.

The poor are thirsty - for water and for peace, truth and justice.

The poor are homeless - for a shelter made of bricks, and for a joyful heart that understands, covers, loves.

The poor are naked - for clothes, for human dignity and compassion for the naked sinner.

They are sick - for medical care, and for that gentle touch and a warm smile.<sup>35</sup>

The problem is that we have forgotten how to love. We have forgotten how to love ourselves, not in an egocentric, narcissistic fashion, but a love that originates from our humanness, that results in the joy and wonder of self-discovery. It is from the self-knowledge earned through the conscious experience of self that a tolerance and understanding for others is developed. It is impossible to love another person unless one first learns to love oneself.

The problem of loving stems from the imbalance caused by the rapid development of the human intellect over the past few centuries. This has resulted in a tendency to intellectualize and fantasize about love instead of being committed to the experience of it. We do not understand what love is because we have misconceived it, and use a single word to describe a wide-ranging set of interrelated experiences. It is no wonder, then, that the word "love" is so often misused and abused. The concept "love" will always remain an enigma to

us so long as we fail to realize that it is an experience that demands commitment and is not an intellectual pursuit.

Love defies description. To explain it would be like trying to describe the brilliance of a multi-faceted jewel. Each facet radiates a different aspect of the character of the inner fire that gives the jewel its mysterious beauty. As with love, any attempt at description is like trying to picture what someone looks like from the shape and size of their shadow. It is just simply beyond the power of words. All we can do is give a hint, through simile and poetic images, of what the true experience of love is like.

Yet, this does not mean to say that love is beyond human comprehension. It can only be known through direct experience. In order to do this, however, we need to learn how not to distort the naturalness of love by scattering the power of the experience through the refracting intellect or the perverted senses. We need to learn how to surrender to the spontaneity and flow of love.

Another aspect of love that has yet to be understood is its healing power. Love is the antidote to the poisons of hatred, anger, jealousy, revenge, bitterness, guilt and fear that infect the emotional body of humanity. On the personal level the path to inner peace is through the exorcising power of forgiveness. Not a forgiveness that assumes a holier-than-thou position of superiority. That is hypocrisy. Rather, it is a forgiveness that is practised by someone who is willing to change their misperceptions of the person who harmed them by letting go of all the fears, grievances and condemning judgments that they have about that person. The person doing the forgiving is healed through the release of anger, fear and guilt. The

tension that existed in the relationship is eased setting free the energy that was tied up in maintaining a rigidly unforgiving mental attitude that wanted to inflict hurt on others for hurt caused by others. Only then can the task of repairing the human damage begin. This is the path to true inner peace.

To learn how to love necessitates an act of will to remove the obstacles to loving. Besides the conscious effort required to do this knowledge of what has to be done is essential. The traditional source of this wisdom is found in the great religions of the world. For example, the essence of the teaching that came through the Christ incarnation is the way of love. Everything that the Master Jesus taught, through word and example, elucidates the meaning and healing power of human and divine love. In this way, Christianity, like most religions, is pragmatic because it sets out practical guidelines for living. This is the great value and purpose of religion.

Fifthly, prayer and meditation are techniques for transcending the temporal world so as to make contact with the spiritual domain. They form a bridge to higher states of consciousness. This is called building the rainbow bridge. The rainbow traditionally symbolizes the meeting or union of heaven and earth; the bridging of one world with another. This inner psychological bridge is constructed step by step, stage by stage through the regular and diligent practise of prayer and meditation. It is the pathway that brings the seeker to God-realization.

Mother Teresa, through her missionary work and personal example, stands out like a brilliant beacon of hope for a future darkened by

the mental anguish and despair of a humanity that is struggling to maintain its sanity.

This century has witnessed the presence of two outstanding women whose lives bear testimony to the Christ Light. They both have the same name. The first is the mystic and stigmatic Theresa Neumann of Konnersreuth. Her life and spiritual experiences have been well documented and researched. She bore the sacred wounds of Christ - head, breast, hands and feet - at a time when the terrible cancerous evil of Fascism was spreading over Europe. Theresa Neumann was born on Good Friday, April 9, 1898. At the age of twenty she became blind and paralyzed through injuries received in an accident. She miraculously regained her sight in 1923 through prayers to St Therese of Lisieux. She later regained the use of her limbs. From 1923 onwards she abstained from taking food and drink, except for the daily intake of one, small consecrated wafer. Her stigmata appeared in 1926, thereafter she experienced the Passion of Christ on the Friday of every week until she died of a heart ailment on September 18, 1962.

Theresa Neumann's life embodied the mystical side of Christianity, whereas Mother Teresa's life demonstrates the pragmatic value of a living Christian faith. Her life is one of service based on unconditional love and charity.

The very poor do not need words but actions and I cannot analyze systems, economic patterns and ideologies. I recognize that each person has a conscience and must respond to its calling. Mine is this. So many times I have been told that I must not offer fishes to men but rods so that they can fish for themselves. Ah! my God! So often they do not have the strength to hold the rods. Giving them fish I help them to recover the strength necessary for the fishing of tomorrow. There are in the world those who struggle for justice and for human rights and who try

to change structures. We are not inattentive to this but our daily contact is with men who do not even have a piece of bread to eat. Our mission is to look at the problem more individually and not collectively. We care for a person and not a multitude. We seek the person with whom Jesus Christ identified himself when he said, "I was hungry, I was sick".

To know the problem of poverty intellectually is not to understand it. It is not by reading, taking a walk in the slums, admiring and regretting that we come to understand it and to discover what it has of bad and good. We have to dive into it, live it, share it.<sup>36</sup>

The mystic and the pragmatist, each in their own way, not only demonstrate a faith free from the binding limitations of religious dogma, but they have been and are living conductors in the process of earthing the Christ energies.

### Revitalization Movements

Some of the world's great religious movements have had their genesis in the spiritual odyssey of one man who single-mindedly strove to awaken himself inwardly and achieve full enlightenment. Such an aspirant was a man called Siddhartha, whose solitary inner quest led him to the realization of the highest Truth, the state of Nirvana. From that moment on he was known as the Self-Awakened One, the supreme Buddha.

Siddhartha was born into the family called Gautama who belonged to the warrior class in Aryan society known as Kshatriyas. The first twenty-nine years of his life were spent in luxury and comfort. He soon began to realize that self-indulgent immersion in sense-pleasures leads to bondage to sense-desires, and associated with it, the pain

that goes with the need to satisfy them. This he believed was the root cause of human suffering.

He removed himself from the lure of sense-desires by abandoning home, and spent the next six years resolutely putting himself through all sorts of austerities in an effort to attain Nirvana. This he finally achieved under a Bo-tree or Bodhi-tree, the Tree of Awakening,<sup>37</sup> on the banks of the River Nerañjana.

Thereafter, he gathered around himself a group of disciples, and began to discourse on the Middle Way, the course of moderate action between the extremes of self-indulgence and asceticism. He also taught the Eightfold Path to Enlightenment. The name Buddhism was given to this body of teaching. It was later to spread from India, where it declined as a religious force, to China, Japan and the Far East where it is today the dominant religion.

The rise of Buddhism, as with Christianity and Islam, all originated as revitalization movements which inaugurated a period of social transformation through a fundamental reorientation in the belief-value systems of those societies where these religions took root. This process of cultural change has been described by the anthropologist, Anthony F. Wallace, who formulated his theory from studies of so-called primitive societies.<sup>38</sup>

Even though the social groups that Wallace looked at were pre-literate and homogeneous, his work focuses mainly on the Seneca Indians and the Handsome Lake religious movement; he himself believed that his model could be applied to movements as varied and complex as the rise of Buddhism, Christianity, Islam or Wesleyan Methodism.<sup>39</sup>

Wallace defines a revitalization movement as a "deliberate, organized, conscious effort by members of a society to construct a more satisfying culture".<sup>40</sup> The process of revitalization is the deliberate attempt by those who view their social system, or major parts of it, as being unsatisfactory, and introduce innovative changes that would fundamentally renovate the whole system.

An integral part of the concept of revitalization is the notion that "human society is here regarded as a definite kind of organism, and its culture is conceived as those patterns of learned behaviour which certain 'parts' of the social organism or system (individual persons and groups of persons) characteristically display."<sup>41</sup> This "organismic" view of society means that as "a network of intercommunication" events occurring on one sub-system level must effect other sub-systems.<sup>42</sup>

Therefore, it is "functionally necessary for every person in society to maintain a mental image of the society and its culture." This mental image Wallace calls "the mazeway" which contains the "perceptions of both the maze of physical objects of the environment (internal and external, human and non-human) and also of the ways in which this maze can be manipulated by the self and others in order to minimize stress. The mazeway is nature, society, culture, personality, and the body image, as seen by one person."<sup>43</sup>

What, then, is revitalized by revitalization movements?

Whenever an individual who is under chronic, physiologically measurable stress, receives repeated information which indicates that his mazeway does not lead to action which reduces the level of stress, he must choose between maintaining his present mazeway and tolerating the stress, or changing the mazeway in an attempt to reduce the stress. Changing the mazeway

involves changing the total Gestalt of his image of self, society, and culture, of nature and body, and of ways of action. It may also be necessary to make changes in the "real" system in order to bring mazeway and "reality" into congruence. The effort to work a change in mazeway and "real" system together so as to permit more effective stress reduction is the effort at revitalization; and the collaboration of a number of persons in such an effort is called a revitalization movement.<sup>44</sup>

Wallace postulates that a revitalization movement is a "behavioural unit" that has "genotypical" structure "independent of local cultural differences". Therefore, the revitalization process, wherever it may occur, will "display a uniform pattern, coloured but not obscured by local differences in culture".<sup>45</sup> Wallace has identified five overlapping stages in the revitalization process.

The first stage is called the "steady state". The status quo is maintained through the vast majority of the population accepting and using "culturally recognized techniques for satisfying needs". These operate with such efficiency that "the chronic stress within a system varies within tolerable limits". These techniques may be gradually modified, or even rapidly substituted, so as to satisfy some needs without in any way disturbing this steady state. This can happen if, firstly, the "techniques for satisfying other needs are not seriously interfered with", and secondly, the "abandonment of a given technique for reducing one need in favour of a more efficient technique does not leave other needs".<sup>46</sup>

The second stage is what he calls "the period of increased individual stress". This happens when more and more members of a society or social group begin to experience a build-up of severe stress because the "stress-reduction techniques" are becoming increasingly

ineffective in reducing stress. This results in all sorts of neurotic and psychotic behaviour as physical and psychic ill-health increases. The institutional bonds of society begin to disjoin as more and more individuals experience social disjunction. The first signs of this disruption are seen in the break up of the family unit.

The third stage is called "the period of cultural distortion". If the system is afflicted by a prolonged period of social disorder caused by natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes or epidemics, or threatened with military conflict, political oppression and subversion, internal cultural quarrels or economic uncertainty and possible collapse, and the stress-reduction mechanisms are not coping, the build-up of stress would inevitably reach abnormally high levels.

Wallace notes that those people with a more rigid disposition often prefer to tolerate high levels of chronic stress rather than make changes in their lifestyles. The more flexible types would try out different ways to reduce stress while others again, behave differently.

Some persons turn to psychodynamically regressive innovations; the regressive response empirically exhibits itself in increasing incidences of such things as alcoholism, extreme passivity and indolence, the development of highly ambivalent dependency relationships, intragroup violence, disregard of kinship and sexual mores, irresponsibility in public officials, states of depression and self-reproach, and probably a variety of psychosomatic and neurotic disorders. Some of these regressive action systems become, in effect, new cultural patterns.<sup>47</sup>

This was most evident in the counter-culture movements of the 1960s.

The fourth stage is called "the period of revitalization". This occurs in the form of a movement, usually religious in character,

which attempts to check the process of social decay through a reformulation of the mazeway. A revitalization movement most often has its genesis in the personal visions or hallucinations or dreams of a single individual. This prophet-to-be or charismatic leader has a series of traumatic life experiences which epitomize the crises plaguing that society.

A supernatural being appears to the prophet-to-be, explains his own and his society's troubles as being entirely or partly a result of the violation of certain rules, and promises individual and social revitalization if the injunctions are followed and the rituals practised, but personal and social catastrophe if they are not.<sup>48</sup>

The seer or dreamer is then gripped with a sense of missionary zeal or messianic purpose which manifests itself as a strong need to spread the message. He now becomes a prophet preaching his revelation to anyone who will listen. He gradually converts people to this new formulation for living and gathers about him a small clique of disciples.

As the movement develops resistance to it inevitably grows. In order to survive the movement may have to "use various strategies of adaptation: doctrinal modification; political and diplomatic manoeuvre; and force."<sup>49</sup> Eventually, cultural transformation will take place when more and more of the population come to accept this new religion or set of social norms for individual and group behaviour.

The last stage, called "the new steady state", is reached when the new cultural system has proved itself viable and is accepted as a normal part of everyday custom.

William G. McLoughlin has identified five great awakenings in American history, the last beginning in the 1960s. In each of these awakenings there was no single prophet, although there were many charismatic religious leaders. As we approach the end of the century Marilyn Ferguson has described a process which she calls the "Aquarian Conspiracy". She chose the word "conspire" because, in its literal sense, it means "to breathe together". It is an "intimate joining". The word "Aquarian" indicates the "benevolent nature of this joining". She writes that she was attracted by the "symbolic power of the pervasive dream in our popular culture: that after a dark, violent age, the Piscean, we are entering a millennium of love and light - in the words of the popular song, *The Age of Aquarius*, the time of 'the mind's true liberation'."<sup>50</sup> She describes this "conspiracy" in the following way:

A leaderless but powerful network is working to bring about radical change in the United States. Its members have broken with certain key elements of Western thought, and they may even have broken continuity with history.

This network is the Aquarian Conspiracy. It is a conspiracy without a political doctrine. Without a manifesto. With conspirators who seek power only to disperse it, and whose strategies are pragmatic, even scientific, but whose perspective sounds so mystical that they hesitate to discuss it. Activists asking different kinds of questions, challenging the establishment from within.

Broader than reform, deeper than revolution, this benign conspiracy for a new human agenda has triggered the most rapid cultural realignment in history. The great shuddering, irrevocable shift overtaking us is not a new political, religious, or philosophical system. It is a new mind - the ascendance of a startling worldview that gathers into its framework breakthrough science and insights from earliest recorded thought.

The Aquarian Conspirators range across all levels of income and education, from the humblest to the highest. There are schoolteachers and office workers, famous scientists, government officials and lawmakers,

artists and millionaires, taxi drivers and celebrities, leaders in medicine, education, law, psychology. Some are open in their advocacy, and their names may be familiar. Others are quiet about their involvement, believing they can be more effective if they are not identified with ideas that have all too often been misunderstood.

There are legions of conspirators. They are in corporations, universities and hospitals, on the faculties of schools, in factories and doctors' offices, in state and federal agencies, on city councils and the White House staff, in state legislatures, in volunteer organizations, in virtually all arenas of policy-making in the United States.

Whatever their station or sophistication, the conspirators are linked, made kindred by their inner discoveries and earthquakes. You can break through old limits, past inertia and fear, to levels of fulfillment that once seemed impossible...to richness of choice, freedom, human closeness. You can be more productive, confident, comfortable with insecurity. Problems can be experienced as challenges, a chance for renewal, rather than stress. Habitual defensiveness and worry can fall away. It can all be otherwise.

In the beginning, certainly, most did not set out to change society. In that sense, it is an unlikely kind of conspiracy. But they found that their lives had become revolutions. Once a personal change began in earnest, they found themselves rethinking everything, examining old assumptions, looking anew at their work and relationships, health, political power and "experts", goals and values.

They have coalesced into small groups in every town and institution. They have formed what one called "national non-organizations". Some conspirators are keenly aware of the national, even international, scope of the movement and are active in linking others. They are at once antennae and transmitters, both listening and communicating. They amplify the activities of the conspiracy by networking and pamphleteering, articulating the new options through books, lectures, school curricula, even Congressional Hearings and the national media.

Others have centered their activity within their speciality, forming groups within existing organizations and institutions, exposing their co-workers to new ideas, often calling on the larger network for support, feedback, back-up information.

And there are millions of others who have never thought of themselves as part of a conspiracy but sense that their experiences and their struggle are part of something bigger, a larger social transformation that is increasingly visible if you know where to

look. They are typically unaware of the national networks and their influence in high places; they may have found only one or two kindred spirits in their workplace, neighbourhood, or circle of friends. Yet even in small groups - twos and threes, eights and tens - they are having their impact.

You will look in vain for affiliations in traditional forms: political parties, ideological groups, clubs, or fraternal organizations. You find instead little clusters and loose networks. There are tens of thousands of entry points to this conspiracy. Wherever people share experiences, they connect sooner or later with each other and eventually with larger circles. Each day their number grows.

However bold and romantic this movement may seem, we shall see that it has evolved from a sequence of historical events that could hardly have led elsewhere...and it expresses deep principles of nature that are only now being described and confirmed by science. In its assessment of what is possible, it is rigorously rational.

"We are at a very exciting moment in history, perhaps a turning point," said Ilya Prigogine, who won the 1977 Nobel Prize for a theory that describes transformations, not only in the physical sciences but also in society - the role of stress and "perturbations" that can thrust us into a new, higher order.

Science, he said, is proving the reality of a "deep cultural vision". The poets and philosophers were right in their intimations of an open, creative universe. Transformation, innovation, evolution - these are the natural responses to crisis.

The crises of our time, it becomes increasingly clear, are the necessary impetus for the revolution now under way. And once we understand nature's transformative powers, we see that it is our powerful ally, not a force to be feared or subdued. Our pathology is our opportunity.<sup>51</sup>

### The Great Approach

There is at this time a great sense of expectation in both the West and East of the coming of a Divine Intermediary, a Saviour who will rescue us from ourselves, and help us break free from the vicious cycle of hatred, prejudice and war.

This belief in the West stems from the Christian doctrine of the Second Coming, the reappearance of the Christ<sup>52</sup> as prophesied in the Bible. The Master Jesus also predicted that before this great event takes place, many false prophets will claim to be the Christ.

However, the notion of divine incarnations has been a fundamental part of Eastern teaching for many thousands of years. This is known as the doctrine of Avatars. Rama, Krishna and Buddha, just to name a few, were regarded as avatars, and the Buddhists are now expecting the return of the Maitreya.

The teaching in the East regarding avatars differs somewhat from the West in that the appearance of these Divine Mediators is viewed as a continuing process. It has occurred, and will continue to occur, many times, whereas the belief in the West is that it has happened only once with the incarnation of the Christ.

According to the doctrine of Avatars, they make their appearance when civilization has reached its nadir, during times of social disorder and chaos. It is usually, though not always, at the end of one cycle and the beginning of a new one. These great incarnations have, through their teaching, helped finalize the destruction of the old order and lay the foundation for a new world order. This certainly did occur at the time of the Christ incarnation. Roman civilization was in a state of collapse, a stage which had been reached many decades before the arrival of the Christ. As we know, the Church was founded on His teachings which, much later, gained ascendancy in Europe when it was officially recognized by Constantine the Great who was instrumental in directing the evolution of the Roman Empire into

becoming a Christian state, and prepared the way for the emergence of a distinctly Christian Western and Byzantine medieval culture.

In the Bhagavad-Gita Lord Krishna, charioteer to the warrior, Prince Arjuna, in a dialogue between them which takes place on the battlefield just as the great war between the Pandavas and the Kauravas is about to begin, explains the purpose of an avatar:

In every age I come back  
To deliver the holy,  
To destroy the sin of the sinner,  
To establish righteousness.<sup>53</sup>

Ramakrishna, who was in his lifetime acknowledged throughout India as an avatar, told this story to explain the reason why these Divine Intermediaries come into the world:

Three men went walking in a field. In the middle of the field there was a place surrounded by a high wall. From within this wall came the sounds of music; instruments were playing and voices sang. The men were charmed by it and wanted to see what was happening. But there was no door anywhere in the wall. What were they to do? One of the men found a ladder somewhere and climbed to the top of the wall, while the other two waited below. When the man who was on top of the wall saw what was happening inside, he was beside himself with joy. He even forgot to tell the two below what he saw; he uttered a loud laugh and jumped down inside. The other two exclaimed: "A fine friend he is! He didn't tell us what he saw. We'll have to look for ourselves." So the second man climbed the ladder. And, like the first man, he looked over the wall and burst out laughing with joy, and jumped. So what was the third man to do? He too climbed the ladder and looked over the wall and saw what was on the other side. It was like a market of happiness, given free to all comers. His first thought was to jump down and join in the rejoicing. But then he said to himself: "If I do that, no one outside will ever know that this place of joy exists. Am I to be the only one to find it?" So he forced his mind away from the sight, and he came down the ladder and began telling everyone he met: "In there is the market of happiness. Come with me - let's enjoy it together." So he

took everybody with him, and they all took part in the rejoicing.<sup>54</sup>

The Sanskrit word *Ava-tara*, a derivative of *avat* which is "to go down", means "descent (especially of a deity from heaven); the appearance of any deity upon earth; incarnation of a deity."<sup>55</sup>

These great Beings took birth as ordinary men do, and, through the experience of living in the manifest world, their lives became a process of learning about the problems and needs of the time in which they were born. From their own inner struggles they found ways to transcend the limitations and delusions of the physical realm. This they then taught to anyone who was willing to listen and learn.

They were pathfinders. They expressed within themselves the sum total of human achievement, and had attained the highest possible initiations which they recapitulated in each incarnation. They also acted as channels for the transmission of divine energy which greatly enhanced the environment in which they lived, and accelerated the rate of evolution of all those who came into contact with them. To be present within the aura of a great Master is regarded as a special privilege and honour.

Their main concern lay with the spiritual unfoldment and development of humanity. Through divine revelation they brought the light of comprehension through their perceptive interpretations of old truths, and revealed, through their teaching a new understanding of the cosmic laws governing the evolution of the human spirit.

In many ways their teaching method is analogous to teaching children difficult concepts. For example, if we want to give school children, whose ages range from thirteen to fourteen, an understanding

of the natural laws governing the movement of the Earth around the Sun, we would obviously use a terminology that was within their mental grasp. We would simplify our explanation of these fundamental principles without in any way distorting them. Our method of teaching these same concepts to older children would obviously need to be changed and adapted to their intellectual development and maturity. Consequently, university students studying the same subject should have the intellectual maturity to be able to comprehend most, if not all, of the complexities and intricacies of these natural laws. Therefore, difficult concepts have to be graded to the level of understanding of those who are being taught them.

Christ's teaching was based on this same teaching method. Many of the people who came to listen to His sermons were farmers, merchants and fishermen. They were simple people who worked with their hands mainly, and did not have the time or inclination to indulge in deep philosophical discussions about the nature and purpose of life. Yet, Christ taught them profound spiritual truths by using parables and images which they could all identify with and understand. His sermons were illustrated with images of the land, of farming, of fishing, of buying and selling, of shepherds and sheep, wine and fish.

There was no scientific tradition, as there is now, during Christ's time. The fact that there is one now demonstrates how much Mankind has matured mentally over the last two thousand years. There are presently many seekers after spiritual truth who have outgrown the anthropomorphic concept of God transcendent, and are attracted to the Eastern notion of God as being immanent. They also desire a more scientific understanding of the laws governing the inner and outer cosmos

of Man. It stands to reason, therefore, that any avatar who incarnates at this time would use the language and knowledge of this age to reveal more about the deeper mysteries and purpose of life.

Divine incarnations will ever continue to take place so as to guide the spiritual destiny of Mankind. The teaching that results from these great approaches has been and will continue to be specifically suited to the evolutionary needs of the time. The purpose of an avatar is to enlighten and expand the consciousness of humankind through divine revelation. Revelation, then, is directly proportional to Man's ability to comprehend these great truths. Much more of the Cosmic Play would be revealed to us as our ability and desire to comprehend increases. This process is known as the doctrine of the continuity of revelation.

It is, however, our responsibility to seek the Truth. We have to go to the well and draw water from it in order to satisfy our thirst. The water will not come to us. But, hopefully, someone will come along to show us where the well is. That is the purpose of an avatar. Ramakrishna was once asked about the nature of true yearning. He replied that

As the drowning man pants hard for breath, so must  
one's heart yearn for the Lord, before one can find  
Him.<sup>56</sup>

It is the nature of the evolutionary process that we are all destined to become seekers after spiritual Truth. So, the real question that confronts us is not whether we will become seekers or not but, when we will become seekers. This is the true meaning behind the story of the Prodigal Son. Like him, we will all reach a stage in our

evolution when we will become sickened by the level of degradation to which we have sunk, by the spiritually barren inscapes that characterize our inner lives. Our repugnance, together with the desire to lead a more meaningful life, will eventually be the motivating force that compels us to seek our Father's house. The only choice we have lies with choosing when we are going to return, not if we are going to return. A man must develop a thirst first before he will endeavour to seek the well. He becomes a seeker through necessity.

The incarnation of an avatar is a response to the needs of the time. For this reason, the avatar becomes an embodiment of a particular divine principle or quality which is earthed through that incarnation. These incarnations are known as divine approaches. Each incarnation has a specific purpose. This was demonstrated in two great approaches, the life of Buddha and the life of Christ.

The Buddha came embodying in Himself the divine quality of wisdom; He was the manifestation of Light, and the Teacher of the way of enlightenment. He demonstrated in Himself the process of illumination and became "the Illumined One". Light, wisdom, reason, as divine yet human attributes, were focussed in the Buddha. He challenged the people to tread the Path of Illumination of which wisdom, mental perception and the intuition are aspects.

Then came the next great Teacher, the Christ. He embodied in Himself a still greater divine principle - greater than the Mind, that of Love; yet at the same time, He embraced within Himself all that the Buddha had of light. Christ was the expression of both light and love. Christ also brought to human attention three deeply necessary concepts:

1. The extreme value of the individual son of God and the necessity for intense spiritual effort.
2. The opportunity, presented to humanity, to take a great step forward and undergo the new birth.
3. The method whereby a man could enter into the kingdom of God, voiced for us in His words, "Love your neighbour as yourself". Individual effort, group opportunity and identification with each other - such is the message of the Christ.<sup>57</sup>

It is extremely difficult to draw up a set of criteria so as to recognize an avatar. But, the question remains: How do we recognize an avatar? This same question bothered Arjuna, the companion of Lord Krishna. Krishna appears to him as an ordinary man with exceptional wisdom. Arjuna intuitively knows that Krishna's teaching reveals the truth about the Atman or Universal Self.

Krishna, this is the truth that you tell: my heart  
bids me believe you.<sup>58</sup>

But, he still longs to behold Krishna's Divine Form.

If you find me worthy of that vision, then reveal to  
me, O Master of yogis, your changeless Atman.<sup>59</sup>

Krishna decides to grant Arjuna his wish and says to him:

But you cannot see me thus with those human eyes.  
Therefore, I give you divine sight. Behold - this is  
my yoga power.<sup>60</sup>

Arjuna is given inner sight and is totally overwhelmed and terrified by the vision that unfolds before him. He prostrates himself before Krishna and begs His forgiveness.

Carelessly I called you "Krishna" and "my comrade",  
Took undying God for friend and fellow-mortal,  
Overbold with love, unconscious of your greatness.

Often I would jest, familiar, as we feasted  
Midst the throng, or walked, or lay at rest together;  
Did my words offend? Forgive me, Lord Eternal.<sup>61</sup>

When Krishna returns to his ordinary human form again, Arjuna, in his relief, cries

O Krishna, now I see your pleasant human form, I am myself again.<sup>62</sup>

So it seems that we need to develop inner vision in order to really answer that question. There is, however, another important consideration to take into account. We need the blessing of ignorance in order to enter into normal dialogue with an avatar. Through the disguise of an ordinary human form we are thankfully relieved of the pressure of awe.

Nevertheless, there do seem to be some clues which might indicate the presence of an avatar. The following are tentative suggestions:

- \* An avatar is fully aware of his divine nature and purpose.
- \* His life is a demonstration of saintly purity and sacrificial love. He is without sin.
- \* He takes on the sufferings and weaknesses of ordinary men and women so as to demonstrate, through example, ways of transcending sense-desire.
- \* He embodies a specific divine principle or quality which imbues every thought, word and deed.
- \* He has tremendous powers of concentration and control over his mind. He is also gifted with extraordinary psychic powers.
- \* He has the power to transmit spiritual enlightenment to another person simply by touching him or her.
- \* His life is hallmarked by miracles.
- \* The clarity of his vision and his profound, accurate and original interpretation of ancient scriptures is revealed in

his teaching. Also, his teaching outlines new ways of being.

- \* He attracts many followers through his magnetic personality, and elicits from them intense devotion and veneration.
- \* He generates such a vortex of spiritual energies that a religious movement is quickly formed by his followers to carry his message far and wide.

Besides the Buddha and Christ, there are two people who come to mind whose lives exhibited all the above criteria. One comes from the West and the other comes from the East. They may be regarded as lesser divine approaches.

The first is St Francis of Assisi (b. 1181/82 - d. Oct. 3, 1226). He founded the Franciscan order for men and women and assumed the leadership of the religious movements in the early thirteenth century that were attempting to reform the medieval Church.

This mission that he undertook was prompted by an experience he had had in the ruined chapel of S. Damiano just outside the gates of Assisi. He heard the crucifix above the altar command him to

Go, Francis, and repair my house which, as you see,  
is well-nigh in ruins.<sup>63</sup>

From that moment on he did everything he could "to imitate the life of Christ and to carry out so literally Christ's work in Christ's own way".<sup>64</sup> He advocated total poverty and fraternal charity, and his magnetic personality drew many thousands of followers to his side.

In the summer of 1224, while praying one morning at the mountain retreat of La Verna, not far from Assisi, he received the stigmata, the same wounds that Christ had received in the hands, feet and side. He saw, coming towards him, an exalted figure:

As it stood above him, he saw that it was a man and yet a Seraph with six wings; his arms were extended and his feet conjoined, and his body was fixed to a cross. Two wings were raised above his head, two were extended as in flight, and two covered the whole body. The face was beautiful beyond all earthly beauty, and it smiled gently upon Francis. Conflicting emotions filled his heart, for though the vision brought great joy, the sight of the suffering and crucified figure stirred him to deepest sorrow. Pondering what this vision might mean, he finally understood that by God's providence he would be made like to the crucified Christ not by a bodily martyrdom but by conformity in mind and heart. Then as the vision disappeared, it left not only a greater ardour of love in the inner man but no less marvelously marked him outwardly with the stigmata of the Crucified.<sup>65</sup>

Francis took great care to hide the stigmata, and for the next two years he lived in constant pain. He was almost totally blind from an eye disease he had contracted in the East. He died on October 3, 1226. Nearly two years later he was canonized a saint and has since been regarded as the patron saint of Italy.

The second person who fits this category is Ramakrishna (b. Feb. 18, 1836 - d. Aug. 16, 1886) who was recognized throughout India during his lifetime as an avatar. Through his own personal example he demonstrated the essential unity underlying the diversity of all religions. They were, for him, simply different paths all leading to the same goal.

Many are the names of God and infinite are the forms through which He may be approached. In whatever name and form you worship Him through them you will realize Him.<sup>66</sup>

Throughout his life he fought against sexual passion and money, lust and avarice, which he regarded as the twin evils of bondage, and definite obstacles to spiritual progress.

Ramakrishna received no formal education. Instead, he chose to realize God through the way he lived and worshipped rather than from books.

There was much legend surrounding his birth. Both his mother and father had a series of visions of the child long before he was born. Chandra, his mother, told of an experience she had had while talking to a friend near a temple of Shiva.<sup>67</sup>

"All of a sudden," Chandra told Khudiram, "I saw that the holy image of Lord Shiva inside the shrine was alive! It began to send forth waves of the most beautiful light. Slowly at first, then quicker and quicker. They filled up the inside of the temple, and then they came pouring out - it was like one of those huge flood-waves in the river - right towards me! I was going to tell Dhani - but then the waves washed over me and swallowed me up, and I felt that marvelous light enter into my body. I fell down on the ground, unconscious. When I came to myself, I told Dhani what had happened. But she didn't believe me; she said I'd had an epileptic fit. That can't be so, because, since then, I've been full of joy and my health is better than ever. Only - I feel that light is still inside me; and I believe that I'm with child."<sup>68</sup>

Ramakrishna also described a vision he had had about his own birth while in a state of samadhi.

His mind, while in samadhi, had ascended through the world of gross matter into the subtle world of ideas, and thence to what he described as "the fence made of light" which separates the divisible from the indivisible. Beyond this fence, even the gods and goddesses could not penetrate, because all form ceased there. Nevertheless, within the realm of the indivisible, Ramakrishna saw seven sages, whose bodies were made only of the light of pure consciousness. These sages sat in samadhi and their greatness exceeded the greatness of the gods. As Ramakrishna watched, he saw a something shape itself out of the undifferentiated light, and this something took the form of a child. The child came down to one of the sages, threw its arms around his neck and tried to rouse him from his samadhi. The sage awoke at last. Seeing the child, his face became bright with delight, and Ramakrishna knew that they were eternal companions. "I am going down there," the child said to the sage, "and you must come with me." The sage did not answer, but his eyes expressed his joyful agreement. He went into samadhi again, and then Ramakrishna saw a part of him come down to earth in the form of a bright light.<sup>69</sup>

After his death the Ramakrishna Mission was founded by his chief disciple, Swami Vivekananda. It is a religious society that does extensive educational and philanthropic work in India. It has centres in numerous western countries that are exclusively devoted to spreading Ramakrishna's teaching in the West.

It would seem that these lesser approaches have the specific task of preparing a significant proportion of humanity to reach a state of readiness so that when the predestined moment of Coming arrives an influential number of men and women would be most receptive to the teaching that would inevitably follow.

How, when, where, and in what form this Great Approach will take place still remains a mystery. It may occur in the form of an incarnation in which case it might only become widely known after the event. It will certainly be known at the time by those who are most

intuitive, perceptive and responsive to such influences. Buddha and Christ were not widely known during their lifetimes, except in the regions in which they operated. They were certainly not universally acknowledged as avatars. As the Master Jesus so aptly said:

No prophet is accepted in his own country.<sup>70</sup>

The physical appearance of the Christ would have to be a gradual process. Firstly, it would begin to occur on the inner planes with the Christ Light overlighting those who have become attuned to His vibration and are working in the physical world. The minds of these workers would be influenced telepathically. Secondly, there would be a reorientation in the hearts and minds of men and women everywhere. Christ would become immanent in the heart of humanity, thus increasing the desire for a divine incarnation. The first two phases would prepare the way for the final phase which is the appearance on the physical plane.<sup>71</sup>

All the indications are that the gulf between humanity and the Godhead is narrowing; that planetary consciousness is willing the descent of a Divine Mediator who will help us build the rainbow bridge. Not only has this Great Approach been long prophesied in the West and East, but also the scale and intensity of yearning has never been greater.

### A New World Religion?

Institutionalized religion, as we have come to know it, has, in this scientific age, lost its power to coerce the common mind to blindly accept theological dogma as fact rather than as possible conjecture or misperceptions by fallible human minds. Furthermore, it is the human element in religion, corrupted as it has been throughout the history of the Church by material and political ambitions, that has largely contributed to this disenchantment. The degeneration and fragmentation of the Church into squabbling sectarianism, each group attempting to foist their narrow, fundamentalist interpretations of the Scriptures on to the masses, and the blatant use of fear to intimidate belief through the presentation of a vengeful God that seeks "retribution in some mythical hell", or an angry Deity who is only appeased by death, and only loves those "who interpret Him in terms of some particular school of theological thought",<sup>72</sup> or the picture of Christ's agony on the cross to instil guilt and remorse are all really the reflection of Man's own thinking; it is an anthropomorphic projection of our lower nature.

Also, repeated translations of the Scriptures have distorted the purity of Christ's teaching; a teaching that was originally given orally. Much of the esoteric wisdom inherent in the Scriptures has been ignored in these interpretations due to the very materialistic bias of the minds who claim familiarity with the mind of God.<sup>73</sup> It is wrong to assume that these interpretations are infallible, and that the person who did the translation was divinely inspired. That is

largely dependent on the purity and receptivity of the mind that did the translation in the first place.

There have always been strong emotional connotations attached to the word "religion", and sadly, it has been the cause of many wars. Unfortunately, it has now become a taboo subject in this materialistic twentieth century. The original intent prompting the use of the word has been lost in the miasma that now surrounds it. What, then, does the word "religion" mean? Paramahansa Yogananda defines religion in the following way:

The word religion is derived from the Latin religare, to bind. What binds, whom does it bind, and why? Leaving aside any orthodox explanation, it stands to reason that it is "we" who are bound. What binds us? Not chains or shackles, of course. Religion may be said to bind us by rules, laws, or injunctions only. And why? To make us slaves? To disallow us the birthright of free thinking or free action? That is unreasonable. Just as religion must have a sufficient motive, so its motive in "binding" us must also be good. What is that motive? The only rational answer we can give is that religion binds us by rules, laws, injunctions, in order that we may not degenerate, that we may not be in misery - bodily, mentally, or spiritually.<sup>74</sup>

Certainly, the subject comparative religion has shown that there are universal principles and truths common to all religions, and that the different world religions all exhort their followers to live according to rules, laws and injunctions. This comparative perspective has also shown us that all world religions are essentially different routes up the same mountain. They all lead to the same beginning. But, there is another aspect to the meaning of the word "religion" which is highly significant at this time.

The rejection of theological dogma and fundamentalist doctrines certainly does not mean that there is a turning away from, or denial of, the sacred as is commonly believed by many orthodox churchmen. In some cases it would be correct to assume this, but it is also indicative of great spiritual progress, of a deep spiritual need and striving to find new forms of religious worship and expression, and a demand for values embodying spiritual truths. But it does imply a failure of the Church to meet the needs of the time.

Those who seek a more personal religion have come to realize that it is not necessary to belong to a church or believe in a particular religious dogma in order to come into contact with the Holy Spirit, and that we do not need mediators to petition God on our behalf. There is no higher authority between the individual and God than God. This new attitude was summed up by a Catholic theologian, Anthony Padovano, who, at a 1976 conference on meditation, remarked that

The religious response that has occurred in the Western world - a revolution that has made us more sensitive to the religions of the Orient - is an understanding that whatever answers there are must come from ourselves. The great turmoil in the religions is caused by the spirit demanding interiority. Faith is not dying in the West. It is merely moving inside.<sup>75</sup>

These defections and rebellions against and within institutionalized religious structures are in effect the loosening of the bonds that have held the human spirit in bondage to obsolete thought-forms and beliefs which have long been obstacles to spiritual unfoldment. The weakening of the power of religious institutions is necessary for the regeneration of new forms and systems that would embody esoteric laws and wisdom for the proper guidance and evolution of the human

spirit. Religion in its old form cannot meet the needs of the time, that is why there has been a weakening of the power which has held its components together for so long. That which is pure and true will remain as new ways of being religious emerge from the chrysalis of the old form. A new process of binding together is therefore taking place. This is a natural self-organizing process.

There are esoteric groups that are working to bring about a new world religion. It is, at this stage, in its embryonic form, but it has moved a long way from being a subjective realization which usually precedes any objective manifestation. A statement read to the United Nations in October 1975 by a convocation of spiritual leaders bore witness to this trend:

...The crises of our time are challenging the world religious to release a new spiritual force transcending religious, cultural, and national boundaries into a new consciousness of the oneness of the human community and so putting into effect a spiritual dynamic towards the solutions of the world's problems... We affirm a new spirituality divested of insularity and directed towards planetary consciousness.<sup>76</sup>

### Difficulty at the Beginning

For those who are able to transcend the interfering rationalizations of the intellect and intuitively sense the whole there is no doubt that planetary consciousness is going through a great spiritual awakening. This is happening on a very personal level as each man and woman becomes enlivened by the birth of the sacred in their hearts and

the consequent enlightenment of their minds. Many are now living in Light.

A dramatic consequence of this awakening process is that old forms and structures are breaking up simply because they can no longer accommodate the subsequent emergence of new ways of being. The raising of new structures from the ashes that would embody the principles of this new self-understanding is rapidly moving from subjective idea to objective manifestation.

The Chinese book of oracles, the *I Ching* or *Book of Changes*, has a hexagram which aptly explains this process that we are now going through. It is called *Chun* or *Difficulty at the Beginning*<sup>77</sup>. This is symbolized by a "blade of grass pushing against an obstacle as it sprouts out of the earth".

Periods of growth, especially rapid growth, are usually beset with great difficulties. The present situation is one of "teeming, chaotic profusion", and many of our difficulties "arise from the very profusion of all that is struggling to attain form". Everything is still unformed and dark, but always in a state of motion. This movement is towards resolution through the discovery of the order implicit in the chaos. The whole process resembles a "first birth".

It is during these times that the true character of a person is revealed. Sometimes the obstacles are too great for some and they give up the struggle. They remain stuck and never find their way out, while others, again, behave in an inferior manner and give way to the darkness by failing to act in a higher sense. Times of crisis are periods of great shifting. This takes place through the way we choose

to respond to the challenges that confront us. What we are is revealed by what we do.

It is vital during times of new beginnings that the superior person participates with inspiration, guidance and a discriminating mind, and lends a hand to give order and form to the "inchoate profusion". This requires perseverance and a belief that it can be done by "discerning the seeds of coming events".

### Summary

The term history should be viewed in two ways. Firstly, it is the factual evidence of events and actions that together make up the human past. Secondly, it can be seen as the various modes of investigation that construct and describe past happenings.

Historians attempt to make history intelligible by revealing the patterns of history. For them, the subject matter of history is the acts of Man which has some order or design. It is not a patchwork made up of a series of random incidents and episodes. Past human actions and achievements, also failures, should be viewed in terms of the circumstances and cultural milieu in which those historical situations took place. They are all pieces of a much larger puzzle. The task of the historian is not only to describe the pieces, but also to fit them together.

The synoptic vision of the entire historical process reveals the progressive unfoldment of human consciousness. This is a cyclic

progression, not a linear one. The imbalances of each phase of the historical process create the means of negating the trend towards excess by producing a counterbalancing affinity of those elements that would facilitate the emergence of something new, thus representing another stage in the long progression towards human wholeness.

Modernism has had a secularizing effect which has alienated humankind from the sacred. This darkening of the spiritual light has had a detrimental effect on the general well-being and has caused intense psychic ill-health. The problems of our time are of our own making. More than anything else, they reflect the individual's terrible inner struggle with his or her lower nature. The human spirit is at war with itself, and has created the very obstacles that block greater self-expression. But the human spirit also has within itself the means of overcoming the impediments of self. This happens through a process of personal transformation, and can be seen in an earnest quest for the sacred. This drive towards self-transcendence is an attempt to restore some sanity and meaning to our existence. It seems to be the only possible way of healing ourselves.

### CHAPTER THREE

#### T H E   C A R T O G R A P H Y   O F   C O N S C I O U S N E S S

The human species is gifted with an extraordinary sense of curiosity. In the past few millennia this young and adventurous species has braved the unknown and embarked on astonishing journeys of discovery. These voyages of exploration around the globe are characteristic of humankind's eternal quest to know and understand the phenomenal world.

Epitomizing this great spirit of adventure, and very much in the tradition of a long series of journeys into the unknown was the launching of the two Voyager spacecraft in 1977. These space probes moved on an arcing trajectory past Mars, through the asteroid belt towards the Jupiter system. Taking advantage of Jupiter's gravity, the Voyagers were accelerated on to a close encounter with Saturn. Again, using Saturn's gravitational pull to sling-shot them out on to Uranus and then Neptune, they are following a course that will take them out of the solar system and beyond on an outward bound journey to the stars.

As they plunge into the great cosmic dark they take with them messages from Earth. Attached to each is a gold-plated, copper phonograph record with a cartridge and stylus, and, on the aluminium record cover, instructions for use. These records contain scientific data about ourselves, greetings in sixty human tongues, music from many cultures, the sounds that can be heard on our planet, and many more bits of information about our thoughts and feelings, and our need to

share these with other interstellar civilizations. It is hoped that these messages will be picked up and deciphered by some extra-terrestrial civilization sometime in the expected 1,2 billion year life-span of these spacecraft. This wonderful, yet poignant human gesture is like a castaway tossing a bottle containing a message into the vast cosmic ocean. It is an act of great faith and imagination.

This insatiable need to reach out, to know through direct experience is the legacy of being human. It has never been abated, and it is highly unlikely that it ever will because there will always be new things to discover.

In ancient times when our primitive ancestors sat outside their caves and surveyed the world around them; the rocks and soil, the trees and plants and animals, the sun that warms and gives life to all living things, and at night, the moon, the stars and the space of utter darkness beyond imagination, they must have wondered deeply, tried to comprehend, endeavoured to find meaning in their encounter with the myriad phenomena of the manifest world. This interaction must have triggered off some innate understanding that knowledge is a prerequisite for survival.

Spurred on by the thrill and exhilaration of discovery we have now reached a stage where we are beginning to realize that our knowledge has created the means to destroy us. It has now become a matter of survival that we embark on a voyage of self-discovery; an inner pilgrimage to find the discipline and sacred guidance to prevent such a catastrophe.

Thoroughly to know oneself, is above all art, for it is the highest art. If thou knowest thyself well, thou art better and more praiseworthy before God, than if thou didst not know thyself, but didst understand the course of the heavens and of all the planets and stars, also the virtue of all herbs, and the structure and dispositions of all mankind, also the nature of all beasts, and, in such matters, hadst all the skill of all who are in heaven and on earth.

(Theologia Germanica, IX)<sup>1</sup>

### Mapping the Geography of Consciousness

Man is a wayfarer, a wanderer who has become lost in the multiplicity of manifested forms. The problem is that we have come to believe that this form and substance is the real world. We have deluded ourselves by giving truth to illusion.

The Supreme Spirit, unlimited by time and space, of His own will and by the power of His omnipotence, takes upon Himself the limited forms of time and space. Know that the world, although appearing as substantial, has nothing substantial in it: it is a void, being merely an appearance created by the images and vagaries of the mind. Know the world to be an enchanted scene, presented by the magic of maya.

(Yoga-Vasishtha)<sup>2</sup>

The phenomena of life may be likened unto a dream, a phantasm, a bubble, a shadow, the glistening dew, or lightning flash, and thus they ought to be contemplated.

(Prajñā-Pāramitā: Diamond Sutra)<sup>3</sup>

And so, the greater mass of humanity wander through life aimlessly, without purpose or direction.

A life devoted to the interests and enjoyments of this world, spent and wasted in the slavery of earthly desires, may be truly called a dream, as having all the shortness, vanity, and delusion of a dream; only with this great difference, that when a dream is over nothing is lost but fictions and fancies; but when the dream of life is ended only by death, all that eternity is lost, for which we were brought into being.

(William Law)<sup>4</sup>

However, there are others who are responding to a persistent longing, a vaguely remembered memory of an inner place, a region which is their native land. For so long now they have felt like sojourners in a foreign country. Like the Prodigal Son, many are heeding the call to return home. More and more are taking up the life of a pilgrim seeking to find a way through this poorly charted territory. They go in the belief that somehow the way will be revealed to them.

A fund of omniscience exists eternally in our heart.

(Tipitaka)<sup>5</sup>

A wanderer is someone who engages in aimless activity, whereas a pilgrim is one who takes a direct and purposeful path. The transition from wanderer to pilgrim is a matter of free will.

You failed to go on the pilgrimage because of your ass's nature, not because you have no ass.

(Dîvâni Shamsi Tabrîz, XLIII)<sup>6</sup>

Stretching before us is a region through which very few have ventured. There have been pilgrims, great teachers and saints who have marked the way in their own fashion, but the terrain has not been properly mapped. Most have travelled through without leaving any sign that they had ever been there.

There is no trace of any that have penetrated the hidden depths of Its infinitude.

(Dionysius)<sup>7</sup>

A good traveller leaves no track.

(Tao Te Ching, XXVII)<sup>8</sup>

This virgin territory that lies before us has to be explored and surveyed by pathfinders using the sketchily drawn maps left to us by those who have passed through previously. The terrain has to be mapped, old maps redrawn and trails have to be laid for others to pass through. This can only be done empirically.

Cross-culture comparisons reveal this realm to have been similarly described. The same landmarks and features have been identified, only the names and signs are different. In order to draw up maps that could be universally understood, selected and agreed upon signs and symbols have to be used, and significant features chosen. The problem lies in deciding which features to include and which to exclude.

A map is a conceptual representation of reality. It is a scaled down abstraction of reality. Maps must accurately portray the essential network of interrelationships that make up a given reality. Basic relationships are preserved and selected features highlighted. The complexities are usually glossed over in order to maintain simplicity and clarity. It is important, therefore, to realize the limitations of maps and to remind ourselves that they are a means to an end.

The ultimate reality itself is not a symbol, it leaves no tracks, it cannot be communicated by letters or words, but we come to it by tracing them to the source where they come forth.

(Hori Kintayû)<sup>9</sup>

### **Beyond the World of Indirect Knowledge**

Our perception of reality or, stated differently, our world view is determined by the reaches of our consciousness. Consciousness is always intentional. As our consciousness expands and becomes more inclusive we inevitably begin to discover new aspects of reality previously not seen or ignored or unknown to us. Our world view perspective shifts along with corresponding changes in self-understanding. As a result our conceptual maps of reality have to be redrawn.

Many of our present philosophical or cognitive maps will have to be redrawn as we venture into the metaphysical realm of inner space.

Compiling these maps for living can only come about through the uplifting experience of the altered states of consciousness produced by direct contact with the Atman or Universal Self. Yet, one of the most common problems confronting those who attempt to articulate their experiences of this dimension is without doubt the great difficulty in expressing the inexpressible.

This experience of Moksha or Nirvana is indescribable. Buddha aptly says: "Do not dip the string of thought into the Unfathomable; he who questions errs and he who answers errs."

(Swami Ramdas)<sup>10</sup>

(The Essence is) incommunicable, indivisible and ineffable, transcending all name and all understanding.

(St Gregory Palamas)<sup>11</sup>

The Absolute has never been defiled, for no one as yet has been able to express it by human speech.

(Sri Ramakrishna)<sup>12</sup>

The knowledge gained through the direct experience of these higher states of consciousness has for the knower a meaning that lies beyond the threshold of language. For the seeker there is always the distinct awareness that any attempt to find words to fill the linguistic void would be a futile exercise.

Gnosis is nearer to silence than to speech.

(Abû Sulaymân al-Dârânî)<sup>13</sup>

However, human beings have a great need to express themselves, to communicate their thoughts and feelings and to share their experiences with others. It is only natural, then, that language was developed as a tool for communication because to be human means to enter into dialogue through encounter with ourselves, with others, with the natural world around us, and most importantly, with the Creator who gave us life. Our existence becomes meaningful through this dialectic. The ego or personality self only becomes conscious of the meaning and purpose of self through the type and quality of relationships that that ego has managed to establish. These relationships may take on a variety of forms from I-Me to I-We, I-Them, I-It, and finally, I-Thou types. The truly holy person has only one relationship; the open-ended dialogue of the I-Thou relation with God, because the omnipresence of the Divine Spirit is seen interfusing every atom of created existence.

The structure and form of language is determined by the predominantly held world view. Linguistic limits are set by what is known and experienced. Inversely, the extent of what could be experienced is hindered by language. It is quite easy to deny the reality of an experience that is beyond our linguistic ability to explain it. For many, it does not exist because there are no words in our vocabulary to describe it. Nevertheless, our world view is constantly changing.

As a consequence, language grows organically and new terms are invented as the need arises. If, however, we wish to understand the world and ourselves properly, we should endeavour to clear the semantic blockages that prohibit true understanding, and use a language that corresponds as accurately as possible to this changing reality.

Our conceptual understanding of the world around us shifts according to our doing; it is what we do not so much what we think or say that counts. To have the direct experience of something is an infinitely more valuable way of knowing than to be entrapped in the conceptual cocoon of words and ideas.

Say, for example, we had the privilege to encounter a being from an extra-terrestrial civilization where no one on this planet knew how to laugh, and they had never before heard the sound of laughter. They had simply never experienced the pleasure of laughter. It was beyond their ken. We could attempt to describe the mechanics of laughing by explaining how the facial muscles move the jaw and lips, how air is expelled by the lungs past the vocal chords filling the mouth with explosive sounds, and then we could end our discourse with a detailed account of the physiological and psychological benefits derived from laughing. It is highly likely that after this rather lengthy exposition on laughing our alien friend would most probably have a fairly sound intellectual understanding of the process called laughter. But, this is only indirect knowledge of what laughter is because our visitor has never had the experience of laughing. Direct knowledge comes only when we teach our alien friend how to laugh. This results in true understanding because it transcends word-knowledge.

It is, therefore, wrong to put too much emphasis on language. But this has not been the case in the Western schools of philosophy which have stressed logic and reasoning as being the only legitimate means of formulating philosophical ideas and concepts. The analytical philosophers especially, put strong emphasis on precise language usage, the proper definition of terms to clarify meaning and the presentation of logically reasoned expositions of concepts. This is certainly a necessary philosophical procedure, but not to the extent that it becomes the sole purpose of philosophy. This has unfortunately been the case. As a result, many thinkers and philosophers have become trapped by the rigidity of the thought-forms created by the Western mode of thinking. Instead of attempting an understanding of the metaphysical realm through direct cognition, many thinkers are seduced by the power and beauty of logical analysis and have made it an end in itself. So, the philosopher becomes an analyst and is not really concerned with the nature of things, but only with the way in which they are spoken about. Philosophy has been turned into a meta-theory of philosophizing about the true nature and purpose of philosophy - a conceptual web of word-knowledge.

However, modern physics has changed much of that. The physicists were the first to break free from the narrow confines of classical logic that has dominated Western thinking for the past two thousand years. Their attempts to comprehend and describe the paradoxical and puzzling world of the atom forced them to discard the classical models of reality as they found themselves exploring a metaphysical dimension that transcended the barriers of language. In the process they had to change their way of thinking and seeing.

But, this is not new to the Eastern mystic. The great masters of the East have long realized the limitations of logic and reasoning, and they have developed several ways of dealing with the paradoxical aspects of transcendental reality. Hinduism has a strong philosophical tradition which presents great religious truths in mythical and symbolic language, whereas Buddhism and Taoism defy all attempts to turn them into philosophical systems through rationalizing or trying to make sense of the paradoxical nature of reality. Instead, the paradoxes are emphasized rather than concealed. The way of teaching is to demonstrate reality rather than to talk about it. It is for this reason that Zen Buddhism is known as the "direct pointing to reality".

The Zen master uses the *koan* system to baffle the intellect of the disciple through contradiction and paradox. A *koan* is a nonsensical, irrationally worded riddle which is designed to help the disciple break free from the conceptual mode of thinking. The disciple's mind is loosened from the grip of concepts because it is not possible to solve these intriguing riddles by ordinary cognition. The following is an example of a well known *koan* usually given to beginners:

You make the sound of two hands clapping. Now, what  
is the sound of one hand?

In Zen, often what is not said is more important than what is said. Language is simply a means of hinting at the ungraspable, dynamic emptiness beyond thought. The disciple is urged to

Think the not-thought.

(Dôgen)<sup>14</sup>

This is also reflected in Zen art, especially painting. The artist continually tries to achieve the balance between form and emptiness. The void is intrinsic to the painting and is not merely unfilled background. In landscape painting the innate harmony and rhythm of Nature are blended into one - trees, a river, mountain peaks seem to emerge out of the great space of the sky; the tangible is accentuated by the intangible.

#### **Words are not Things**

The discovery by modern physicists of the "void within the atom" resulted in the shattering realization that there were no more eternal certainties. In a world which was suddenly seen primarily in terms of relations, different frames of space with reference to the location of objects, absolutes became meaningless. The belief in absolute knowledge or eternal truths had no relevance any more. Scientists now accept the proposition that our perspective of the world is the truest picture we have relative to the sum total of knowledge as yet discovered by us. Consequently, our world picture is continually changing as we discover more about the world in which we live. This operational approach makes knowledge relative and not absolute. The same applies to language.

So far in this dissertation certain words such as "Divine Reality", "Universal Self" and "Universal Mind" have been used without any attempt being made to define them. The problem is that these concepts are so abstract, so beyond our present frames of reference that they have very little meaning for us except to suggest something other, something that defies conceptual analysis. The question that immediately comes to mind is: If these terms cannot be defined properly why use them? A corollary to this question is another: Is it legitimate to use terms in an argument that cannot be defined?

It is highly likely that an analytical philosopher in the traditional Western mode of thinking would automatically dismiss any term that could not be defined as being irrelevant, and argue that the use of these terms in the presentation of an argument is a delusive mode of reasoning. But, from the Zen Buddhist point of view the use of these terms has legitimacy in that they are used in the "direct pointing" mode of knowing. The words can be compared to the finger pointing to the moon. Why waste time and mental energy trying to intellectually grasp the finger when the moon is the goal.

Words have always had a greater potency and importance in the Western intellectual tradition than they have had for the Eastern mind set. However, the theory of relativity which shows greater correspondence to Eastern thinking than it does to classical Western systems of logic has changed all that. One of the most difficult problems encountered by physicists was their inability to use ordinary language to describe the behaviour and structure of atoms. The concepts of

ordinary language could no longer be applied to the quantum and relativity theories. Our everyday language proved inaccurate and inadequate. T. S. Eliot summed up this problem with words in his poem *Burnt Norton*:

Words move, music moves  
Only in time; but that which is only living  
Can only die. Words, after speech, reach  
Into the silence. Only by the form, the pattern,  
Can words or music reach  
The stillness, as a Chinese jar still  
Moves perpetually in its stillness.  
Not the stillness of the violin, while the note lasts,  
Not that only, but the co-existence,  
Or say that the end precedes the beginning,  
And the end and the beginning were always there  
Before the beginning and after the end.  
And all is always now. Words strain,  
Crack and sometimes break, under the burden,  
Under the tension, slip, slide, perish,  
Decay with imprecision, will not stay in place,  
Will not stay still.<sup>15</sup>

The language we use reflects the way we think. But, language also moulds thought which in turn shapes culture. Unfortunately, the relational approach to the use of words is not evident in our everyday language because our language is a language of boundaries.

For example, we use the word "identical" to describe monozygotic twins - they come from one egg which splits after fertilization. The word "identical" means "absolutely the same". But, a closer examination of any set of "identical twins" will reveal distinct physical and personality differences. They are in fact not "absolutely the same". The word "identical" used in this sense is a misnomer because it totally ignores the uniqueness of each child. It would be better to use

the words "most like" or "most similar" when trying to describe twins. It would be more accurate.

But this poses a question: Is it possible for anything to be "identical"? Can two things be "uniform in quality or appearance" or "absolutely the same"? The answer to these two questions must be a resounding no because it is certainly not possible to create the same set of circumstances each time in the natural world, and it is doubtful whether it can be done "absolutely the same" in a laboratory too. Certainly, the scientific method requires that conditions be the same each time the experiment is repeated in the laboratory. But, should the conditions be exactly the same or should they be "most similar" to the original experiment? What degree of latitude is permissible for the experiment to work? The answers to these questions will surely depend on the type of experiment being conducted. It is certainly doubtful whether the conditions can be exactly the same every time an experiment is carried out. It is more than probable that the conditions be only "most similar" to the original in order for the experiment to work.

The word "same" also falls into this category of words that are not only untrue, but also meaningless.

Another problem concerns the inaccurate use of words when verbal judgements are made about someone. A parent or teacher uses a word such as "good", "bad", "lazy", "failure", "naughty" or any other word to label a child. These verbal judgements more often than not reflect the prejudices or misperceptions the parent or teacher has about the child's character. No person is wholly good or wholly bad or totally any other quality for that matter. The label ignores the rest of the

child's character. The label, if used regularly, will begin to exert considerable influence on the mind and behaviour of the child who is so labelled. Sadly, this can cause unfortunate psychological problems if the label is a negative one because the child is subtly indoctrinated by significant others into believing that he or she is the label. The child in the end becomes the label by believing that the label has been correctly applied. An appalling example of labelling can be seen in the Population Registration Act (1950) which requires everyone living in South Africa to be allocated to a particular racial group. Those people who are racially categorized as coloured often refer to themselves as "so-called Coloured people" because "the term 'Coloured' came to be associated with 'inferior'; in time 'Coloured' came to mean inferior".<sup>16</sup>

However, the label is not the thing or person. This is the problem of identifying words with things. A word is accepted into our language when there is common agreement on that which the word refers to or means. For example, if person A is speaking to person B and in the course of their conversation person A mentions the word "chair", person B will immediately form a mental picture of a chair based on his past experience of having previously sat on objects called "chairs". He knows what person A means when the the word "chair" is used because the meaning of the word is associated with previous experience. But, the word "chair" does not in any way describe the object "chair". Person B does not know anything about its shape or size, or the materials from which it is made unless of course they are talking about a specific chair which is familiar to both of them. Even then, their knowledge of the chair is sketchy. Many things about

this object are assumed or taken from granted. The word "chair" does not convey anything about the intrinsic nature of this object. The word is simply not the thing. Words merely suggest things to the mind.

The assumptions we make about the substantial nature of solid objects, and the inaccuracy of the words we use to describe these things was contemplated by Sir Arthur Eddington one day when he was sitting at his desk preparing lecture notes. There were, for him, two tables - the one he was sitting at writing his lectures, and the other which he called his "scientific table":

One of them has been familiar to me from earliest years. It is a commonplace object of that environment which I call the world. How shall I describe it? It has extension; it is comparatively permanent; it is coloured; above all it is substantial. By substantial I do not merely mean that it does not collapse when I lean upon it; I mean that it is constituted of "substance" and by that word I am trying to convey to you some conception of its intrinsic nature. It is a thing; not like space, which is a mere negation; nor like time, which is - Heaven knows what! But that will not help you to my meaning because it is the distinctive characteristic of a "thing" to have this substantiality, and I do not think substantiality can be described better than by saying that it is the kind of nature exemplified by an ordinary table....

Table No. 2 is my scientific table. It is a more recent acquaintance and I do not feel so familiar with it. It does not belong to the world previously mentioned - that world which spontaneously appears around me when I open my eyes, though how much of it is objective and how much subjective I do not here consider. It is part of a world which in more devious ways has forced itself on my attention. My scientific table is mostly emptiness. Sparsely scattered in that emptiness are numerous electric charges rushing about with great speed; but their combined bulk amounts to less than a billionth of the bulk of the table itself. Notwithstanding its strange construction it turns out to be an entirely efficient table. It supports my writing paper as satisfactorily as table No. 1; for

when I lay the paper on it the little electric particles with their headlong speed keep on hitting the underside, so that the paper is maintained in shuttlecock fashion at a nearly steady level. If I lean upon this table I shall not go through; or, to be strictly accurate, the chance of my scientific elbow going through my scientific table is so excessively small that it can be neglected in practical life. Reviewing their properties one by one, there seems to be nothing to choose between the two tables for ordinary purposes; but when abnormal circumstances befall, then my scientific table shows to advantage. If the house catches fire my scientific table will dissolve quite naturally into scientific smoke, whereas my familiar table undergoes a metamorphosis of its substantial nature which I can only regard as miraculous.<sup>17</sup>

Seen in this way all our preconceptions about the substantive nature of solid bodies disappear like mist in the heat of the morning sun. Things are not what they seem anymore. The material world appears solid, yet from the atomic perspective it dissolves into tiny specks of matter floating in empty space. The physical dimension becomes a world of appearances, porous and insubstantial.

The external world of physics has thus become a world of shadows. In removing our illusions we have removed the substance, for indeed we have seen that substance is one of the greatest of our illusions.... In the world of physics we watch a shadowgraph performance of the drama of familiar life. The shadow of my elbow rests on the shadow table as the shadow ink flows over the shadow paper. It is all symbolic, and as a symbol the physicist leaves it.<sup>18</sup>

### **The Map is not the Territory**

The measure of our perceptual understanding of the world around us is seen in the words we invent to describe the phenomena we encounter in

our everyday environment. Take for example the phenomenon called "snow". The English language has only one word in its vocabulary to describe this phenomenon. The English-speaking peoples are presently scattered around the globe. Many live in areas where they do have seasonal contact with snow while others live in more tropical climates where snow never falls. But before this colonization took place the language had its origins in a country where the inhabitants encountered this natural phenomenon only on a seasonal basis. Their contact with it was limited to a certain time of the year. The Eskimos or Inuits, however, live in the Polar regions which are covered with snow throughout the year. It is a continual part of their reality. Their survival depends on their ability to live in snow and master the cold conditions that produce it. As a result they have invented many words to describe the different forms of snow seen at different times of the year. Their perception of snow is far more refined and accurate than those who have limited contact with it.

Through this encounter with the world around us we invariably build up a vocabulary and conceptual system for living. These concepts in turn structure the way we perceive the things around us. Our understanding of the natural scheme of things and our place in this cosmos is relative to our cultural conceptual systems.

Nevertheless, conceptual systems are fundamentally metaphysical in nature. What is conceived in the mind is reified by living it as if it were real.

We are caught up in the illusion that the phenomenal world is made up of independent entities. We experience ourselves as being separate because our sense of self has been diminished and narrowed to

the extent that we have lost touch with the whole continuum of consciousness that underlies an existence that is essentially interdependent and interrelated. A world with boundaries is created by naming, describing, defining and classifying. We separate what in essence is inseparable. Consequently, the world appears to us as a complex wilderness of separate things and unrelated events.

The borderlines between phenomena exist only in the minds of those who map reality. The full play of a world of opposites becomes a conscious reality because we believe the boundaries to be real. In this way the map becomes the territory.

But, the map is not the territory. The boundaries are real only from our illusory point of view. Boundary lines can blur or undergo radical shifts through transpersonal experiences of other realities. These experiences usually have a transformative effect on those who have them. Shifts in self-understanding invariably necessitate the re-mapping of these inner changes. Old maps are then discarded for new ones.

### Summary

There are an increasing number of people everywhere who, for various compelling reasons, are undertaking a spiritual journey of self-discovery. This is an inner, subjective exploration that is prompted by a great need to re-connect with the Primordial Self that has been

lost or separated by the delusions of self which are a figment of the process of individuation. It is a progressive recovery of a state of unity which has never ceased to be, but appeared separate when seen from the perspective of a world of multitudinous forms. The seeker becomes a gnostic who, through flashes of insight or spiritual illumination, becomes a living witness to metaphysical truths of a universal order.

This knowledge of the mysteries, revealed through direct experience of transcendental reality, is not limited to time or place or form. It is part of a profound esoteric existence which by definition defies systemization because it transcends and eludes formal limitations.

This mode of discerning the *materia prima* is in contrast to the rationalist tradition with its excessive concern for logic and the proper use of language. This striving to achieve intellectual control is at the expense of personal knowledge. Feelings and intuition are avoided; concept is valued at the expense of image. This has led to a loss of inwardness through the dissociation of self with the source of our being. A conceptual barrier of word-knowledge has been erected which prevents us from asking searching questions or thinking up impossible answers. Nevertheless, the situation demands that we have the courage of our convictions to break down these self-created obstacles in order to unleash the latent powers of the human psyche. This can only be done empirically, through trial and error, and with a belief that it is possible.

CHAPTER FOUR  
REVISION REALITY

The world is as we perceive it. That is our problem. What we see is determined by the limits of our perception. The world we see is not the world that really exists. Rather, it is a misperception of what we want it to be. That is our grand delusion.

If the doors of perception were cleansed every-  
thing would appear to man as it is, infinite.  
For man has closed himself up, till he sees all  
things thro' narrow chinks of his cavern.<sup>1</sup>

It is not only the physical senses, the "five windows" that "light the cavern'd Man", that present us with a distorted view of reality so that all we see are "small portions of the eternal world",<sup>2</sup> but also the refracting power of the intellect which judges, compares and discards those perceptual experiences which cannot be accommodated by our beliefs. We are what we believe because our experiential reality is a projection of our state of mind. Without realizing it what we see and how we interpret what we see is coloured, most often, by the thoughts, feelings and attitudes which preoccupy us.

The mind is its own place, and in itself  
Can make a Heav'n of Hell, a Hell of Heav'n.<sup>3</sup>

In this sense, then, we are responsible for what we see.

Blessed as we are with the burden of free will we have the option of changing the way we see things. This is done by questioning the postulates of our belief system together with a willingness to discard those cherished assumptions and values that do not work anymore. Unfortunately, many are paralyzed by the fear of change because their notion of change is associated with the apprehensive prospect of the unknown. They prefer to remain in the safe confines of a belief system with established boundaries, becoming resignedly tolerant of its inadequacies. In the end, this mental prison becomes the only imagined reality. The dimension beyond the prison walls ceases to have significance. It becomes the unknowable unknown not sought to be known. The prison walls are real to those who believe they are real.

Those who imagine themselves beyond the prison walls or who gaze

With such a wistful eye  
Upon that little tent of blue  
Which prisoners call the sky<sup>4</sup>

are usually dismissed as daydreamers or fools. Those with vision who manage to free themselves from the mental prison into which they were educated often return through a desire to share their discoveries with others, and hopefully, liberate those who remain imprisoned. It is unfortunate that most often their efforts are viewed with suspicion, distrust and fear.

Our history reveals evidence of a strong propensity in the Western mind set to ridicule, ostracize, persecute and, in some cases, condemn to death the visionary geniuses who have periodically made their appearance in society. Men such as Socrates who was forced to

drink hemlock after being condemned to death for his unpopular political ideas; Jesus who was crucified, and the many who were martyred for their Christian beliefs or excommunicated for their heretical interpretation of Scripture; Galileo for his scientific discoveries; Darwin for his theory of evolution; Mahatma Gandhi for his Satyagraha struggle of non-violence and non-cooperation to achieve independence for India; and women such as Joan of Arc who was condemned as a heretic; Mme Blavatsky who was declared a fraud for her studies in the occult sciences, and Mrs Pankhurst for her militant campaign to achieve suffrage for women. These are just a few of the many who were initially rejected, but found general acceptance when, much later, their works and ideas were more fully understood.

There have been, however, many more men and women of genius whose ideas and works were readily accepted and used by society. Certainly, twentieth century attitudes to men and women of genius have vastly changed from previous times, and educational policy in the latter half of this century makes every attempt to cultivate and develop exceptional talent. Much effort is being spent now in developing sporting, artistic and scientific talent. But, this is still within the accepted norms of society. Except possibly for the natural sciences, certainly not the human sciences, it seems that none of these areas of human endeavour at this time is likely to threaten the tenets of society or produce the changes that could revolutionize our self-understanding and alter our perspective of the cosmos which exists beyond the boundaries of the finite self. Psychic talent which reaches deep into the metaphysical realm of human consciousness is not recognized as a legitimate field of human experience. Educational

policy ignores this aspect of human nature, and is geared more specifically for developing scientific and technological expertise.

It seems unlikely that the scientific world will provide the next major shift in the same way Einstein's theories had done at the beginning of this century. This might seem an odd statement to make considering the remarkable breakthroughs made in the scientific world during this century. Einstein's ideas not only opened up all sorts of possibilities which we are still exploring, but they also shook the foundations of the scientific world to the extent that we were catapulted into the nuclear age. These tremendous changes came about because the scientific world at that time, more particularly physics, had reached a critical point and was ready for change. Nineteenth century physics had reached an impasse. All it needed was for someone to imagine their way out. Also, science was gaining ascendancy over the religious dogma of the time and was rapidly being accepted by the common mind as the dominant mode of knowing, largely due to the spectacular successes scientists had achieved in the nineteenth century. The scientific community had also developed the means to verify Einstein's theories.

Einstein was a discoverer of natural laws not an inventor. An inventor is someone who creates the instruments and techniques to harness natural laws discovered by others to the advantage and betterment of society as a whole. Although new discoveries are continually being made much of the effort in the scientific community is directed towards utilizing and implementing the discoveries made by physicists at the beginning of the century, and by scientists working in other areas, especially genetics. The essential point is that Einstein's

theories caused fundamental shifts in our perspective on reality, and nothing of that magnitude has happened since in the scientific community. Small shifts yes, but nothing so profound as to radically change the status quo.

Everything seems to indicate that we are readying ourselves for another major breakthrough. Present trends suggest that this critical point is being reached on the inner planes of human consciousness, and that the genesis for change is likely to happen in the spiritual realm and not through scientific discovery.

A profoundly new idea or discovery can be a fundamental threat to the status quo. Galileo's discoveries threatened the authority of the Church; that was why he had to be silenced. They could not allow his disproof of Church doctrine to become public. Unfortunately, Galileo worked at a time when the Church dominated the common mind. Today, the situation has reversed itself. The scientific method largely dominates our thinking, and scientific theories are readily accepted by society. The sad consequence of this imbalance is that the discussion of religion is now a taboo subject, and the investigation of religious experience is seen as a waste of time. The subjective nature of these experiences, as well as the fact that there are too many variables which cannot be regulated sufficiently, make any conclusions too unscientific to satisfy the rationally-minded.

Many societies have been, during this century, the battleground of conflicting political ideologies. But it is debatable whether the many revolutions that have occurred in so many countries throughout the world have really created fundamental changes of any significance in those societies. The names of a particular social system may have

changed, and different people adhering to a distinctly different political philosophy from the previous one have taken over positions of power, but it is questionable whether the social system has been radically altered in any way. It may be fundamentally the same system in another guise. It would seem that institutional structures are greater than the power of those who endeavour to change them. Dramatic changes will occur only when the unit of society, the individual, decides to change and then mobilizes others to create structural changes.

There is no doubt that a spiritual void exists in the hearts of many ordinary people everywhere. The natural laws which govern the destiny of all living things always work in a way so as to redress any imbalances that might have occurred in the natural world. Human nature is not exempt from these laws. Present trends seem to indicate that a spiritual re-awakening of some kind is about to happen. Some might even say that it has already begun. If these tendencies have been correctly intuited it would seem that it is likely to occur on the individual level through a process of personal transformation. It is unlikely that everyone will be so affected or choose to respond in this way. Present patterns suggest a gradual polarization of those who are willing to change as opposed to those who, through fear or stubbornness, remain attached to old forms and ways of being. It would seem, then, that the next revolution will not be a scientific one, but one that is likely to occur on the inner planes of human consciousness.

### What is a Paradigm?

A term that is very much in vogue and one that was coined by the historian and philosopher of science, Thomas Kuhn, in his widely read and controversial book, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, to describe the frames of reference or patterns of thinking governing a particular perspective of reality is the word "paradigm" (from the Greek *paradeigma*, meaning pattern, example or model).

It seems that the first person to use the term "paradigm" was the mathematician Georg Christoph Lichtenberg (1742 - 1799). A paradigm was for Lichtenberg "an exemplary scientific achievement upon which the solutions of further problems may be modelled by an analogical process".<sup>5</sup> He had transposed the term "paradigm" from its grammatical usage where the word refers to the standard example or model for the conjugation of a verb or the declension of a noun, and used it to explain his view of scientific development.<sup>6</sup>

Another philosopher who used the word "paradigm", and was greatly influenced by Lichtenberg, was Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889 - 1951). In his book *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein proposes the notion that in language we play games with words. This process of using words he called "language-games". Wittgenstein's notion of paradigm "in our language-game" is that it is "something with which a comparison is made". In other words, it is the standard upon which we unquestioningly base our understanding or judgement of something such as a standard colour sample or the standard metre as used in Paris. It is a mode of representation which relates language to the way we look

at things and the world - "In this language-game it is not something that is represented, but it is a means of representation".<sup>7</sup>

Much of the criticism levelled at Thomas Kuhn's book when it was first published concerned the careless and loose manner in which he used the term "paradigm". In the second and enlarged edition (1969) he added a postscript in which he clarified and distinguished two basic aspects of the term "paradigm" which he wished to retain. When the term is used in its "global" sense, a paradigm means a "disciplinary matrix", that is, a distinct scientific community who share a constellation of beliefs, values and techniques. They are "practitioners of a scientific speciality" who belong to a particular linguistic community. The fundamental characteristics of a group of scientists are that

...they have undergone similar educations and professional initiations; in the process they have absorbed the same technical literature and drawn many of the same lessons from it. Usually the boundaries of that standard literature mark the limits of a scientific subject matter, and each community ordinarily has a subject matter of its own. There are schools in the sciences, communities, that is, which approach the same subject from incompatible viewpoints. But they are far rarer there than in other fields; they are always in competition; and their competition is usually quickly ended. As a result, the members of a scientific community see themselves and are seen by others as the men uniquely responsible for the pursuit of a set of shared goals, including the training of their successors. Within such groups communication is relatively full and professional judgement relatively unanimous. Because the attention of different scientific communities is, on the other hand, focussed on different matters, professional communication across group lines is sometimes arduous, often results in misunderstanding, and may, if pursued, evoke significant and previously unsuspected disagreement.<sup>8</sup>

It is quite possible, however, for gifted scientists to belong to several scientific communities at the same time because paradigms function at many levels. A good example is James Watson, who, together with Francis Crick discovered the molecular structure of deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA), originally did his doctoral work in microbiology. While studying biochemistry in Copenhagen he realized that X-ray crystallography, of which he knew nothing, was the key to genetics. That brought him to Cambridge University to learn X-ray diffraction techniques from Sir William Bragg who was a pioneer in this field. Watson teamed up with Francis Crick who began his career as a physicist, but later switched to biology.<sup>9</sup>

The second aspect in which Kuhn uses the term "paradigm" is that paradigms are standard exemplary problem solutions which serve as models for the solution of outstanding problems in the discipline.

Scientists solve puzzles by modelling them on previous puzzle-solutions, often with only minimal recourse to symbolic generalizations.<sup>10</sup>

### Paradigm Shifts

The solution to a problem often remains elusive because the investigator follows the traditional approach to problem-solving. The mind of the investigator has been educated to think paradigmatically. This means that the mind has been conditioned to think in a certain way; the thinking processes have been habituated to follow the same

neural pathways. Mental habits, as with any habit, are difficult, but not impossible, to change.

Kuhn notes that the process of "educational initiation" varies according to the requirements of the discipline into which the student is being inducted. In music, the graphic arts and literature the student is exposed "to the works of other artists, principally earlier artists". Secondary sources such as textbooks are less important, but play a supplementary role. In history, philosophy and the social sciences textbook literature is more important, but the student is still required to read "classics" in the field of study. In the natural sciences, however, the student relies entirely on textbook material and is seldom required to read the original sources. This narrow and rigid education is effective in that it ably equips new scientists for the task of problem-solving within the confines of "normal-scientific work". But this rigid scientific training does not equip the scientist to deal with "significant crises" that might be generated through "normal science". A fresh approach to the problem usually originates from a young person, Einstein was only twenty-six when he published his *Special Theory of Relativity*, or someone who is new to the field.<sup>11</sup> Kuhn's central thesis is that scientific advancement occurs in two ways: the tradition-bound pursuit of normal science with its accepted scientific achievements, and the tradition-shattering process of scientific revolutions. Much of the effort in normal science is directed towards paradigm articulation where the subject matter under investigation is matched to the paradigmatic viewpoint of the researcher. But, if in the process of normal scientific research the observable data reveal patterns of existence which do not conform to the

framework of the dominantly held paradigm a crisis of understanding ensues. The inadequacies of the extant paradigm in dealing with the anomalies of the emerging problems come to the fore. The resulting crisis causes a blurring of the paradigm and a "loosening of the rules for normal research". The crisis finally ends with "the emergence of a new candidate for paradigm and with the ensuing battle over its acceptance".<sup>12</sup> This paradigm switch is known as a paradigm shift. The history of science has many examples of paradigm shifts caused by a great heretical idea or an original insight.

The idea of sudden evolutionary spurts in the intellectual history of humankind is not a new one. Researchers working in the geological sciences are now finding evidence to support the concept of periods of explosive evolution. It has long been thought that the development of life on Earth was a progressive process. But a new look at the geological record seems to indicate an "explosion of life on land" during periods when the oxygen content in the atmosphere had reached certain critical levels. The first critical level was when the oxygen in the atmosphere had reached one percent of the total amount. Fossil records indicate a proliferation of plant and animal life-forms in the oceans, rivers and lakes. The second critical level was when the oxygen in the atmosphere had reached the ten percent point. This caused the Earth to cool down sufficiently for newly evolving organisms to spread in profusion over the land surface. The conclusion is that there seems to be a correlation between the rise of the oxygen level in the atmosphere which at definite critical points dramatically influenced the rate of evolution of the life-forms on the planet.<sup>13</sup>

### Fear of a World without Walls

Paradigms and paradigm shifts are not confined to science alone, but any area of human knowledge or endeavour that deals with problem-solving or self-understanding. The essential point about paradigm shifts is that it involves new ways of seeing and thinking. Quite often the solution can be seen only when we think that the impossible is possible. Einstein contemplated what would happen to someone travelling at the speed of light by imagining himself riding on a light ray.<sup>14</sup> The new paradigm that emerged from Einstein's observations proved to be a more accurate model of reality than the Newtonian one.

Furthermore, even though there was a delay of some years, Einstein did not have much problem in getting others to accept his theories largely due to a number of factors which facilitated acceptance. Firstly, his theory was not only an important advancement in the field of physics, but a major breakthrough in the history of ideas. The more other scientists took the trouble to study Einstein's original ideas the more they saw the truth of it embodied in his elegant theories. Secondly, the accuracy of his predictions were conclusively verified by Eddington. Thirdly, the scientific world was ready for such a principle to be discovered - "the plum was overripe, yet for half a century nobody came to pluck it".<sup>15</sup> All it needed was a dramatic *tour de force* by a young creative genius to show the way.

Others have had less success in getting their theories accepted. Kuhn cites a perceptive passage written by Charles Darwin at the end of his *The Origin of Species* concerning the difficulty of getting his views accepted by others:

"Although I am fully convinced of the truth of the views given in this volume..., I by no means expect to convince experienced naturalists whose minds are stocked with a multitude of facts all viewed, during a long course of years, from a point of view directly opposite to mine. ...[B]ut (sic) I look with confidence to the future, - to young and rising naturalists, who will be able to view both sides of the question with impartiality."<sup>16</sup>

New paradigms are nearly always received with hostility, ridicule or blind prejudice. The discoverer is treated as a heretic, and most often every straight or crooked argument is used to discredit the person or ideas put forward. Many times the greatest resistance to this set of new ideas comes from those established and respected scientists who have invested a lifetime of work in the old paradigm, and have built up their reputations on paradigm articulation. They are rarely converted and remain doggedly attached, emotionally and mentally, to the old view and way of doing things. Their behaviour is often a stubborn, irrational reaction which totally contradicts the impartiality of the scientific method which they had worked by for so much of their professional lives.

However, this does not mean that new ideas should receive uncritical acceptance. Criticism is necessary to hone and polish the theory into shape. Nevertheless, it is very important for those who criticize to understand that most often the discoverer of new principles has made an intuitive leap into the unknown and needs time to work out

the details of the idea. This requires patience, perseverance and painstaking effort to amass the evidence to support the new idea. It also demands intellectual honesty and a willingness to discard those aspects of the theory that do not work. Understanding the psychological processes that generate a furore to new ideas will help the discoverer put the sometimes harsh and unfair criticism that inevitably results in these situations into perspective.

Paradigms by their very nature establish boundary lines; mental walls behind which we feel psychologically safe. The discoverer of a new paradigm is someone who comes along and breaks down the walls revealing an unbounded vista of new possibilities. What might be to the discoverer a sincere and selfless act motivated by a desire to set others free from their mental prisons is most often regarded with fear and distrust by those who have for so long seen only walls. Sir Laurens van der Post, who spent three and a half years in Japanese prisoner-of-war camps, vividly describes the sensations of his heightened perception to the world around him when he stepped through the gates of the camp for the first time after so many years in confinement:

I would walk out of the prison walls and feel that I had never even in my childhood seen the physical world with such intensity and known it to be so beautiful and so full of wonder. I would emerge from the purple shades of prison and pause by the gates to gaze at it for as long as I felt it wise - in order not to provoke the undesirable attention of the guards. I would pause, indeed, not only to take in the beauty of the scene beyond the walls but because so much and so profoundly had prison walls become a part of one's life that, on these extremely rare occasions when one was allowed to walk through them, one's senses reeled from the impact of a world without walls. It was almost as

if walls had come to mean not just instruments of confinement but a physical support against the vast, free, comparatively empty and uncontained world outside. One seemed afraid that without walls for one's vision to lean on, one's spirit would not only totter but one would lose one's balance and, giddy, fall bodily to the ground. I was to learn, when talking to friends who had been in prison with me, later on when the subject was no longer too painful for public discussion, that they had for days after their release precisely the same sensation of being in danger of falling over without prison walls to support them. We were in this regard like men who had been forced to walk on crutches because of broken limbs for so long that they were afraid to abandon them weeks after they themselves were mended again, and for months would hanker to have their crutches back.<sup>17</sup>

But, are boundaries, psychological and otherwise, necessarily a bad thing, and can human nature deal with the notion of unlimited possibilities?

The *I Ching* has a hexagram called *Chieh* or *Limitation*<sup>18</sup> which gives a profound insight into the idea of the limits of limitation. The Chinese word for limitation "denotes the joints that divide a bamboo stalk". Seen in relation to ordinary living it means "the thrift that sets fixed limits upon expenditures". This, of course, makes sound economic and common sense. In the "moral sphere it means the fixed limits that the superior man sets upon his actions". Therefore, in order to become strong "the superior man creates number and measure, and examines the nature of virtue and correct conduct". In other words, the "superior man" accepts the limitations "ordained by duty" through understanding what that duty is in order to attain significance as a "free spirit". The imposition of "galling limitations" would be injurious to one's own nature, and the imposing of excessive

limitations on others would cause them to rebel. It is therefore necessary "to set limits even upon limitation".

Unlimited possibilities are equally not suitable because this would cause human life to "dissolve in the boundless". The idea of having unlimited possibilities in the manifest world is a false one. Limitations will always be set through the play of opposites, the yin and the yang. Consequently, the setting of proper limits in human life is necessary for the individual to achieve significance. This requires the development of discrimination so as to clearly define what should be the suitable limits to stimulate personal growth. This is the great value of limitation because in this sense it is "the backbone of morality".

How is this seen in terms of paradigms? A paradigm has obvious definable limits. A paradigm shift occurs when the old paradigm does not work anymore and a creative genius comes up with an original insight or idea which blurs the boundary lines of the old paradigm causing a shift in perspective. The resulting new paradigm establishes new boundary lines for problem-solving and paradigm articulation. Later on someone else will come along and institute a shift to that paradigm. And so it goes on. Boundary lines are necessary to provoke growth. The essential point to remember is that boundaries are not fixed; they can be changed and periodically need to be redrawn. Human growth will be stunted if we fail to realize this. Individual curiosity and initiative, and the courage to be adventurous are suppressed by conforming to the limits set by others or by the delusion of the fixity of boundaries.

### To See with New Eyes

Our position at the top of the evolutionary pyramid of all life-forms on this planet bestows upon us certain unique talents with their incumbent responsibilities. We have an extraordinary ability to be conscious that we have a consciousness. The whole pattern of life, human life in particular, is a process of becoming more conscious; of expanding the horizons of consciousness from instinctive subconsciousness to perceptive self-consciousness to selfless identification with universal consciousness.

The evolution of consciousness occurs when we are drawn into situations that generate life experiences which act as lessons to make us more conscious of ourselves. We are continually being challenged to become more conscious of self, and those areas within our consciousness which we have been previously unconscious of through the interaction of living in the manifest world. But, the revelations of self bring with it added responsibilities. A shift in perspective has occurred when we have become more conscious of self. We then see ourselves with new eyes. With this change in perspective comes a new understanding of self. Our ability to respond to these realizations of self, and use this knowledge to restructure our consciousness to become ever more inclusive and at one with all living things is our responsibility. In the final analysis, we are all compelled to exercise our option of free will to transform ourselves. We transform our lives when we choose to respond to the opportunities of growth. We delay the process when we fail to make the effort to change.

Gradually, the evolution of consciousness develops increasingly into a conscious evolutionary process as the individual becomes more and more aware of the role that he or she can play in determining the course of their destiny. We simultaneously become a witness to our conscious participation in the evolutionary process of personal transformation. This is the way of becoming through conscious evolution.

### **Mazeway Resynthesis**

Anthony F. Wallace, in his work on revitalization movements, discusses the concept of personal transformation in terms of "mazeway resynthesis". Wallace's notion of the mazeway is that it may be "compared to a map of a gigantic maze".

The mazeway is the brain's organized and codified archive of cognitive residues of perception bearing on the characteristics of the extra-bodily environment, the body itself, techniques, and values. The mazeway thus contains the individual's perception of the sociocultural and natural system of which he is a part, and the mazeway determines his behaviour to it.<sup>19</sup>

The basic function of the mazeway is "to give meaning to messages, to relate incoming sensory data to the whole complex of objects, values, and techniques that is the mazeway, so that action may be taken that can be expected to reduce stress or maximize pleasure not merely in the presenting situation but within the great maze of situations that the mazeway represents".<sup>20</sup> It is therefore important

that in order for the mazeway to function properly it must have "fairly high levels of internal communication, of internal consistency, and of correspondence with reality".<sup>21</sup> If there has been inadequate mazeway development or adjustment, a lack of correspondence with reality results and the mazeway becomes unable to reduce the accumulation of individual stress. The mazeway is then regarded as being in a state of disorder. Mazeway resynthesis, however, is a process of restoring the "internal biopsychic equilibrium". It is an "autotherapeutic process that reduces stress".<sup>22</sup> This involves a change in "the individual's perception not only of himself but also of the environment, and it may involve his taking action to ensure correspondence between the new mazeway and reality".<sup>23</sup>

Pathological disorder of the mazeway can be caused or greatly aggravated by the type of education that a person receives in the long process of induction into a particular social system. On the other hand, proper education can also facilitate mazeway resynthesis.

### Summary

The world we see is a creation of our mind; it reflects our thoughts. This idea is a reversal of the belief that the world determines what we perceive. Rather, our thoughts determine the world we see. If we see only the fragmentation of life, the suffering caused by the problems of separation, then we are committed to a set pattern of actions

based on this viewpoint. We have made a choice and are therefore responsible for what we see. But, there are other ways of looking at the world. We could choose to see the etheric interconnectedness that exists between all phenomena, and focus our attention on the joy of living. Making such a choice could be seen as a highly significant act because it means that we are prepared to take responsibility for what we see and, consequently, do. We would then see that our main challenge is not the problems of the world, but the difficulty of seeing.

What we see reflects what we think we see. So, the problem of seeing is caused by the way the mind labels meaning to what we see. <sup>x</sup> The mind structures what we see by ordering, judging, selecting, categorizing and discarding the impressions from the five senses according to habituated patterns of response. In order to see clearly we have to free the mind from attachment to past associations. To retrain the mind requires self-honesty and diligence. It is as if the mind is a tape-recorder that continually plays the tapes on which are recorded all the thoughts, beliefs, impressions, images, feelings and experiences of our past. Consequently, the present is never experienced as it really is because it is continually being distorted by our past. Mental retraining necessitates the letting go of past attachments and old habits. In other words, the tapes have to be wiped clean.

Our ideas about reality do not make up reality itself. Words, ideas, concepts, theories and language are really the symbols and signs that attempt to map the actual world. They make up our symbolic

maps which form an indispensable and practical guide to reality. But the problem comes about when we confuse the maps with reality.

A shift in perspective generates new ideas about reality. This means that new maps have to be drawn up. Quite often the sudden and rapid changes which new ideas generate can engender much fear and distrust of the new. The old world view becomes meaningless, yet many will cling desperately and irrationally to the known through fear of the unknown. This is understandable, but it should not deter others from finding new ways of looking at reality. The trouble is that we are always confining ourselves to what is possible. When we start asking improbable questions our minds are then challenged to think of ways of finding the answers in terms of the impossible through the belief that the impossible is possible.

CHAPTER FIVE

A N O T H E R   B R I C K   I N   T H E   W A L L

It should be the task of each successive generation to critically examine the philosophical maps for living passed on to them by the cultural group or society to which they belong. Failure to assess the inherited belief-value system and question the legitimacy of the perspective depicted by these philosophical maps would see the next generation perpetrating the sins of their fathers and mothers. Each generation is obligated to learn the lessons of history so that the mistakes of the past are not repeated again. Failure to do so would see that particular social system degenerate into a state of dis-ease. Many great civilizations and empires have fallen because they lost the will to regenerate themselves.

The progressive development of any social system is analogous to the growth of a tree. The stability and strength of a tree lies in the depth to which the roots have penetrated and the area over which they have ramified. The roots provide sustenance for the whole tree. Similarly, the traditions that are observed in the present are the cultural roots to the past. Some traditions die out naturally because they are no longer meaningful any more. This is necessary for healthy growth. Religious adherence to traditions which are no longer relevant to the present restricts the development and acceptance of new, more meaningful traditions.

The tree is subject to two areas of change, both of which are ecologically interrelated and interdependent. The first is from within the organism itself, and the second is from the milieu in which it grows. The growth of the tree is greatly affected by the type of environment in which it is rooted. It has to adapt itself to the particular climatic conditions prevalent in that area. A very good example of this can be seen in the way the Jewish people have managed, in many instances, to maintain their identity and social character by observing their own cultural traditions despite the pressures to conform to the social mores of their adopted country.

Every now and then the dead and wayward branches of the tree need to be pruned. This necessary procedure helps to stimulate growth in the proper direction. This is the task of every new generation. Those elements which are not worth preserving anymore need to be pared to encourage new growth. Those who perform this vital and necessary task must at all times obey the dictates of their conscience, and according to some inner vision of possible future outcomes, otherwise it could degenerate into a reactionary, self-destructive exercise.

But, how can each new generation be expected to perform this task if they are not culturally literate, and they do not have the critical and linguistic skills to make such an analysis? Someone, whether it be their parents or teachers or both, has to provide them with an understanding of the cultural forces that shape their outlook on life, a knowledge of the cultural traditions of the social system to which they belong, and a method of seeing and thinking so that they can make perceptive and considered judgements about those aspects of the culture that are not worth preserving.

Cultural literacy should be an important component and aim of public education. Unfortunately, in certain societies, South African society in particular, this is untenable because it has the potential to undermine the political order.

The South African education system has as part of its original design the hidden aim to prevent or discourage change. It has since become, ironically, the most important arena of agitation for social and political transformation. There has been dramatic, often violent, resistance to the imposition of a culturally imperialistic conceptual map with its embedded racial and sexist attitudes and beliefs and taken-for-granted social habits. The schools boycotts of 1976, 1980 and 1985 were not only confined to school-based issues which had been long the cause of much dissatisfaction, but they were also public demonstrations rejecting the economic, political and social set-up in this country. South African society, at this time, is being subjected to great internal and external pressures to change into a more democratic and open society.

#### **In Whose Image?**

The economist, E. F. Schumacher, on a visit to Russia, described the sudden revelation that he had had about the inadequacy of the philosophical maps that had been taught to him at school and university, and how this realization had affected him:

On a visit to Leningrad some years ago I consulted a map to find out where I was, but I could not make it out. I could see several enormous churches, yet there was no trace of them on my map. When finally an interpreter came to help me, he said: "We don't show churches on our maps". Contradicting him, I pointed to one that was very clearly marked. "This is a museum," he said, "not what we call a 'living church'. It is only the 'living churches' we don't show."

It then occurred to me that this was not the first time I had been given a map that failed to show many of the things I could see right in front of my eyes. All through school and university I had been given maps of life and knowledge on which there was hardly a trace of many of the things that I cared about and that seemed to me to be of the greatest possible importance for the conduct of my life. I remembered that for many years my perplexity was complete; and no interpreter came along to help me. It remained complete until I ceased to suspect the sanity of my perceptions and began, instead, to suspect the soundness of the maps.<sup>1</sup>

The significance of Schumacher's experience in Leningrad was that it provided him with the metaphor to help order and articulate his amorphous perceptions, ideas, feelings and thoughts about the validity of the maps that he had been given. The metaphor of a philosophical or conceptual map is a powerful analytical tool because firstly, it helps us to see conventional education, in the way we have come to know it, as being a long process of indoctrination of the newer members of society into accepting certain conceptual maps for living; secondly, it enables us to question the legitimacy of the world view represented by these maps; and thirdly it empowers us to query the perspective of the map-makers.

All map-makers base their maps on their concept of Man. Social institutions, the formal education system in particular, become the moulds that produce the type of human being that these map-makers

envisage. It is not without reason, then, that many have come to compare schools with factories which every year churn out in conveyor-belt style certificated individuals who are then allowed to take their place as acceptable members of society.

Ivan Illich has argued persuasively in his book *Deschooling Society* for the disestablishment of schools. He uses the school as a paradigm to question "the mutual definition of man's nature and the nature of modern institutions which characterizes our world view and language"<sup>2</sup>. He claims that our present school system performs a "three-fold function" in a similar way the powerful churches have done throughout history:

It is simultaneously the repository of society's myth, the institutionalization of that myth's contradictions, and the locus of the ritual which reproduces and veils the disparities between myth and reality.<sup>3</sup>

The school is universally recognized as the "institution which specializes in education"<sup>4</sup>. Illich defines "school" as the "age-specific, teacher-related process requiring full-time attendance at an obligatory curriculum"<sup>5</sup>. For him, schools are "false public utilities" which make people "abdicate the responsibility for their own growth" and "leads many to a kind of spiritual suicide"<sup>6</sup>. This is certainly true when one considers that the most dominant value taught by the school system is conformity. The school cannot function properly as an institution unless there is obedience to the rules that regulate behaviour within the system. This stress on conformity inevitably leads to mediocrity and the smothering of individuality.

The school is not designed to cater for the educational needs of the individual. The main function of the school is to process whatever number of clients the institution can tolerate to an acceptable degree. Schools "pervert the natural inclination to grow and learn"<sup>7</sup>, and they stifle spontaneity and free expression. In subtle or obvious ways, the independent thinker or exceptionally creative teacher and child are either forced out of the system altogether because it becomes too intolerable for them to remain, or they have to submit and learn how to conform to the standards set by the mediocre.

Many students, especially those who are poor, intuitively know what the schools do for them. They school them to confuse process and substance. Once these become blurred, a new logic is assumed: the more treatment there is, the better are the results; or, escalation leads to success. The pupil is thereby "schooled" to confuse teaching with learning, grade advancement with education, a diploma with competence and fluency with the ability to say something new. His imagination is "schooled" to accept service in place of value. Medical treatment is mistaken for health care, social work for the improvement of community life, police protection for safety, military poise for national security, the rat race for productive work. Health, learning, dignity, independence and creative endeavour are defined as little more than the performance of the institutions which claim to serve these ends, and their improvement is made to depend on allocating more resources to the management of hospitals, schools and other agencies in question.<sup>8</sup>

It is difficult to dispute Illich's hypothesis that the "institutionalization of values leads inevitably to physical pollution, social polarization and psychological impotence"<sup>9</sup> when schools are seen in the context of the South African social system.

There are many different opinions about the aims and purpose of education. Some see it as a form of social engineering; as a means to establish and maintain a particular social system or order, such as the South African apartheid system. Others see it as a means of achieving social reform and change. They see it as part of the political process either to attain greater social equality and justice or as a means of depriving certain sectors of the population of their birthrights. Others again, see that vague concept "adulthood" as the ultimate aim of education. Yet again, some see education as essential if solutions to social, economic and political problems are to be found. Unfortunately, many see the main function of schools as instruments of commerce and industry. For them, schools provide technical and vocational education and the necessary training for a skilled labour force to ensure proper economic growth.

The current myth, however, is that a good education necessarily guarantees work. Unemployment figures in most industrial countries, certainly all of the poorer nations, have been increasing since the 1970s. The worst affected are the unskilled workers, which seems to prove that education does guarantee work, but many skilled workers are also finding themselves out of work. The problem is so great that many nations now adjust their economies to cope with what is termed "structural unemployment". This means that most governments have accepted the idea that there will always be a certain percentage of the total labour force that will remain unemployed because job creation lags far behind the numbers coming annually into the labour market. The seriousness of the situation was summed up by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) whose member

nations include Western Europe, Canada, United States, Iceland, Turkey, Australia, New Zealand and Japan. Its September 1983 analysis states that:

The general magnitude of the task of dealing with unemployment can be illustrated by the following simple calculation: 20,000 extra jobs will be required every day during the last five years of this decade if OECD unemployment is to be cut to its 1979 level of 19 million. The labour force is likely to grow by some 18 to 20 million people over the five years 1984-89 and 1984 unemployment is projected to be 34-3/4 million - so up to 20 million jobs need to be created just to keep unemployment from rising and over 15 million extra jobs are needed to get unemployment down to 19 million. This rate at which new jobs would need to be created is significantly larger than the figure of 11,500 jobs a day which was achieved during the period of recovery after the first (1973) oil shock.<sup>10</sup>

With these facts in mind it would be extremely foolish and short-sighted to equate education solely with job training. The school-leaver who is unable to find work would certainly feel betrayed by the system that promised so much and delivered so little. Education, with such a limited aim, would lose its value. Disenchantment would grow, and it would become extremely difficult to justify and motivate why it is necessary for the young to go to school.

It, therefore, becomes imperative that we critically examine the concept of Man embodied in the conceptual maps taught by schools. We need to question the aims and purpose of education, and ask ourselves in whose image we are educating our young and for what purpose.

### The South African Educational Matrix

Government policy since the Second World War has ensured that the South African educational system had as part of its design the specific aim to inculcate acceptance and ensure the maintenance and continuance of apartheid society. The essence of apartheid ideology, which has been legally embodied in the Population Registration Act of 1950, was based on the belief that peaceful co-existence could be secured between the various race groups if the country was divided up into different racial communities. Political and economic power, however, remained in the hands of those who have been racially termed whites. Consequently, separate education was provided for the different racial groups through such laws as the Bantu Education Act of 1953, the Coloured Persons Education Act of 1963, the Indian Education Act of 1965, and the National Education Policy Act of 1967 which formed the framework for white education.

In the National Education Policy Act (1967) there are two key principles which form the foundation of what is called the Christian-National world view. The first is that all state run educational institutions must have a "Christian character". The term "Christian" is defined in the following way:

The education in schools ... shall have a Christian character founded on the Bible and imprinted -  
(a) through religious instruction as a compulsory non-examination subject, and  
(b) through the spirit and manner in which all teaching and education, as well as administration and organization, are conducted.

In the implementation of the policy to the Christian character of education, the religious convictions of the parents and pupils shall be respected in regard to religious instruction and religious ceremonies.<sup>11</sup>

The second basic principle is that education should have a "broad national character". The word "National" is more comprehensively defined:

Education in schools ... shall have a broad national character which shall be imprinted

(a) through the conscious expansion of every pupil's knowledge of the fatherland, embracing language and cultural heritage, history and traditions, national symbols, the diversity of the population, social and economic conditions, geographical diversity and national achievements; and

(b) by developing this knowledge in each pupil into understanding and appreciation by presenting it in a meaningful way where appropriate, in the teaching of the two official languages, national history of the fatherland, civics and geography in school teaching and further through the participation of pupils in national festivals, and their regular honouring of the national symbols, so as to -

- (i) inculcate a spirit of patriotism, founded on loyalty and responsibility towards the fatherland, its soil and its national resources;
- (ii) enable every pupil to gain a balanced perspective; and
- (iii) achieve a sense of unity and spirit of co-operation.<sup>12</sup>

These two principles, on the surface and viewed separately, along with the definitions thereof, appear quite innocuous, even admirable. But, they take on a more insidious character when seen in terms of apartheid ideology. The stated aim of the white education system is to build up a sense of nationalism by inculcating a "spirit of patriotism". This national character, however, refers to white South

Africans only. Blacks are excluded from this concept. However, it is even more parochial than this. The form of nationalism referred to is specifically Afrikaner nationalism, and it applies to all white children, including English-speaking children.<sup>13</sup> Malherbe points out that the official definition of nationalism talks about "unity" in such a way that it blurs the fact that the Act of 1967 divides white children into different language and cultural groups.<sup>14</sup> Also, the definition of the term "Christian", linked as it is with the term "National", seems to subliminally suggest that there is some form of religious justification for the "spirit and manner in which all teaching and education, as well as administration and organization, are conducted." The inclusion of the phrase "administration and organization" as part of this definition implies that there is some Christian basis for the division of the education system into different racial and cultural categories. Furthermore, the word "schools" in the definition refers only to white schools. Does this mean that other schools, black schools in particular, do not have a "Christian character founded on the Bible"? Certainly, there are different religious groupings such as the Jewish, Hindu and Islamic communities which do provide religious instruction for their own children. But they are in the minority, and their religious beliefs and festivals are respected. However, many blacks seek guidance in the teachings of the Bible regardless of their cultural background. Nevertheless, one cannot escape the implication that the definition "Christian" refers to whites only, and in particular, the Afrikaner interpretation of the Bible and what form the "Christian character" should take. Also inherent in the

definition is the syllogism that all whites are Christian. Consequently, the Act of 1967 is not in any way neutral or value-free because it embodies the political and religious world view of a specific power group.

Besides the fundamental racial issues that underlie apartheid ideology, the philosophical basis for this way of thinking stems from a hybrid educational mode of inquiry and theory called Pedagogics. This form of pedagogical thought has dominated the field of education in South Africa for the past four decades. It is taught in all universities and teacher training colleges, except in the English-language universities. This type of educational thinking had its origins in Europe, especially the work of Dutch and German philosophers. Its development has hardly been influenced, if at all, by ideas from the English-speaking world. This new way of studying education "makes sweeping claims to being the only reliable method of revealing the essence of education and to being a scientific study which is independent of other sciences".<sup>15</sup> Pedagogics, as a recent development in the field of education, can be described in very broad terms as being a so-called science which uses the phenomenological method of perceiving the world, particularly the educational milieu of the child. In a form of intellectual arrogance it is regarded by its practitioners as being the only legitimate way of studying education. Pedagogics is also seen as

...indispensable for devising the basis of, inter alia, an accountable and sound Christian-National education system. But it also provides the opportunity for people holding different philosophies of life to establish their educational systems on the truths revealed. (Viljoen and Pienaar)<sup>16</sup>

One can certainly understand the appeal that the phenomenological approach has for Afrikaans-speaking academics considering that apartheid ideology is a construct of the Afrikaner mind set. The phenomenological method conveniently provides the philosophical justification for the policy of separate development. Human reality is delimited into different realms of experience and meaning. The child grows up in a bracketed world where differences are emphasized to an exaggerated degree. Comprehension of self is confined, and ultimately, hindered and stunted by this narrow world view. The child fails to make contact with the substratum of collective unconsciousness that unifies individual consciousness with all living things, and is the means of networking with the world of multiplicity.

Pedagogicians have devised an eclectic phenomenological mode of inquiry, but it generally follows the same procedure signified by the term phenomenology. It is a descriptive philosophy of experience, Pedagogicians insist that it is scientific, which requires the investigator to place all his or her beliefs in abeyance so as to reveal the essential nature or character of the phenomenon. Only by bracketing the world can the pure essence of the experience be known. What is then revealed is carefully described. True understanding of the phenomenon is reached because it has been freed of all presuppositions and speculative constructions. It is, therefore, possible for a Pedagogician using this method of inquiry to claim that Pedagogics is an autonomous science which has nothing to do with politics or any other discipline because:

The aim is to search for the essential, unchangeable, typical, universally valid, undeniable components, relations, objectives, activities, categories and criteria that make education what it is and without which it cannot come into being, so that when these essential "laws" are known and applied in new educational situations, they may serve to improve educational practice and bring it more clearly into agreement with its own true nature.<sup>17</sup>

There is another reason why the claim has been made that Pedagogics is a science separate from other sciences. Scientific reasoning has a strong hold over the common mind. The facts and knowledge derived from scientific research are readily accepted by most as being true. Very few have the time or expertise to question the methods used or critically assess the conclusions made by scientists. It is assumed that scientists rigorously follow the rules of science in order to arrive at objective truth about the phenomenon that is being studied. Unfortunately, not all scientists are so true to their profession.<sup>18</sup> By claiming that Pedagogics is an autonomous science, Pedagogicians, whether they consciously realize it or not, are endeavouring through the education system to turn the myths of apartheid ideology into scientific fact.

Gluckman<sup>19</sup> concludes in an analysis of the various writings by the major proponents of Pedagogics that "those who work phenomenologically" do not follow the standards of objectivity and consistency that they have set for themselves. Much of their work shows evidence of bias and a lack of objectivity. Gluckman argues that the reason for this is that "the writers concerned are working from a certain religious basis, Calvinism, which is so deeply ingrained that they are not

even aware to what extent these religious presuppositions colour all their findings".<sup>20</sup>

The concept of the child embodies the negative Calvinist thesis that "the child is born sinful and must grow up towards God, that is spiritual adulthood".<sup>21</sup> The idea of the evolutionary and natural development of the human species is rejected because it contradicts the description of humankind's origins as set out in the Book of Genesis. The aim of education which is "adulthood" is seen as the "Christian goal of education". The concept of adulthood is unconsciously idealized because it is equated with the Calvinist ideal of the most perfect adult role model, namely Jesus Christ. This notion of adulthood is also inextricably tied to the "norms of the community and its culture".<sup>22</sup>

These writers on Pedagogics also contradict themselves about the concept of authority. Teachers are exhorted to help their pupils develop a questioning, reasoning and critical approach to what they are taught. They want their pupils to be independently minded. Yet, a good teacher is viewed as someone who demands that his or her authority is respected and obeyed. Here, too, the Calvinist belief in authority comes through strongly. Obedience and respect to the teacher, who as an authority figure is treated with reverence by pupils, are more highly valued than an independent and critically-minded approach to what is taught in the classroom. The task of the teacher is to transmit the norms and values of the cultural group to which the pupils belong. The pupils are expected to "accept, appropriate, appreciate and adhere to",<sup>23</sup> but not critically discuss, discard or attempt to revise. Gluckman's conclusion is that of the

writers she studied, and despite their claims to the contrary, they are indeed biased because they have "allowed their Calvinist and Christian-National Education beliefs to influence not only their choice of a 'scientific' method, but also their Pedagogical findings".<sup>24</sup>

In a sense, this mystification of the educational experience, despite its strong Calvinist inclinations, is typical of modernist thinking. Abstract thought which is equated with power is given priority over common sense and other tacit forms of knowledge which are discounted as being less important. Social experience is organized into component parts which are re-structured into new systems so as to assert and maintain rational control over these systems. These abstract ideas expressed as a system or model of social reality are there to guide human experience within the newly organized social construct. The South African education system, with Pedagogics as its underlying educational theory, centralizes authority so as to exercise control over the decision-making process. This also ensures greater efficiency which can be easily measured, and guarantees the predictability of educational outcomes.

### **Mind-Forged Manacles**

Parents send their children to school in the belief that the twelve years of schooling that most children have to endure will more than adequately equip them for living. But can schools justifiably claim

to teach children the art of living? Are the young adults who leave our schools psychologically ready to take their place in our society?

The conventional life expectation in our society is that after a period of full-time education at primary, secondary, and in some cases, tertiary institutions the adult male is expected to establish himself in a career, find himself a wife and start a family, accumulate the usual range of possessions and achieve a certain level of social influence and status that outwardly signify that he has made a success of his life. After a long working career he is retired and can then expect to fritter away the rest of his life as he patiently waits to die. It is also accepted that women will work until they get married, and then become full-time mothers and housewives. In fact, this is the exception and not the rule for women. In most families the wife has to work and bring up her children at the same time because the cost of living is too high for them to come out on one salary cheque. But even those women who can afford not to work are rebelling against the traditional roles into which a patriarchal society attempts to slot them. They too want to establish a career for themselves.

Although many people, especially women, are trying to redefine their roles in society and are searching for a new, more meaningful purpose in their lives, many more people are succumbing to the pressures of urban life. What might appear to be an outwardly successful life might in fact be very far from the truth. How people are coping with personal and social crises is shockingly revealed in statistics on suicide, divorce, drug abuse, alcohol dependency, wife and child abuse, crimes of violence, and physical and mental ill-health. It is

obvious from these figures which are increasing annually at an alarming rate that many people in our society are leading lives that are chaotic and miserable. They simply do not know how to deal with their problems. Most are reduced to a struggle for survival.

Many causes can be found for the disintegration of personal and social life. One in particular is most evident; our children are not receiving the right education. What, then, do our children learn at school?

There are two major interrelated social forces that play a powerful coercive role in structuring the education system and the way in which educational outcomes are determined. These are the political and economic systems of society.

Besides the many other functions performed by schools the political and economic organization of society ensure that schools serve society in two ways. The first is to socialize children to accept the dominant belief-value system of that society. This is taught in all sorts of ways, but mainly through what is called the hidden curriculum. Certain political ideals, forms of behaviour, attitudes and social norms are either overtly or covertly impressed upon the mind of the child through the organizational set-up of the school and the role models presented by significant others. The child's self-concept and world view is shaped in this way. The aim is to ensure acceptance of the political system and preserve the status quo. The other important function of schools is to prepare children for the labour market. They are taught certain skills and knowledge which are regularly tested and examined so that they can gain the necessary certificates that would qualify them for work. Parents and teachers put pressure on

their children to get a good education because specific qualifications are definitely linked to certain types of work. A young adult leaving school with a matriculation certificate soon discovers that he or she will have to study further or undergo specialized training in order to gain the knowledge and technical expertise that is required by certain jobs. Even then, good qualifications do not necessarily guarantee work. There may be an economic recession which results in a shortage of jobs. There may even be an over-supply of highly trained personnel in a particular sector of the labour market. There is no doubt that the less educated and the poorly qualified struggle to get work, and are usually the first to lose their jobs during periods when the economy is moving through a depressed phase.

There are sure to be those who would find these arguments objectionable and partly, if not completely, false. They can quite rightly point out that schools are there to serve and teach the higher principles and values of education as well. But to what extent do they in the South African context? To answer this question one must look at the way in which schools are organized and to what degree they embody the beliefs, values and practices of society at large.

There are separate education departments for the different racially separated population groups. There is no one education department for all. Further sub-divisions occur. Schools are divided up according to language differences, for example, English-speaking pupils are separated from Afrikaans-speaking pupils; gender - there are schools for boys only and girls only; religious differences, for example, there are Muslims, Jewish and Catholic schools; and there are private and government schools. This emphasis on racial, cultural,

sexual, religious and economic differences has the following effects on children going through the system. Firstly, it fragments and distorts the world view of the child. It creates a form of social schizophrenia. Secondly, it makes it extremely difficult to establish cross-cultural contact which, if it were to happen, could only have an enriching, self-expansive effect on those who come into contact with people from another culture. Thirdly, it creates an exaggerated awareness, and ultimate acceptance of, human differences. Fourthly, separate education departments do not guarantee equal education for all.

The life-world of the school child is further fragmented through the way schools are organized. The lives of children are highly regulated and controlled throughout the school day. They are organized into standards and classes. They are further divided up according to ability and interest. This depends on their choice of subjects. This is called streaming. The school day is divided up into periods and knowledge is separated into subjects. Children learn facts, concepts and theories and very seldom do teachers attempt to synthesize or provide an interdisciplinary approach to the various forms of knowledge taught in the classroom. The pressure of examinations most often forces the teacher to adopt the banking concept of teaching, although sincere attempts are being made by some to develop a more critical consciousness among students and pupils. The banking concept is most evident in the schools for the oppressed. In fact, it mirrors the oppressive structures of our society and perpetuates the myth of racial inferiority:

- (a) The teacher teaches and the students are taught;
- (b) the teacher knows everything and the students know nothing;
- (c) the teacher thinks and the students are thought about;
- (d) the teacher talks and the students listen - meekly;
- (e) the teacher disciplines and the students are disciplined;
- (f) the teacher chooses and enforces his choice, and the students comply;
- (g) the teacher acts and the students have the illusion of acting through the action of the teacher;
- (h) the teacher chooses the programme content and the students (who were not consulted) adapt to it;
- (i) the teacher confuses the authority of knowledge with his own professional authority, which he sets in opposition to the freedom of the students;
- (j) the teacher is the Subject of the learning process, while the pupils are mere objects.<sup>25</sup>

So, apart from the various forms of knowledge taught at school, what else do schools teach children? Schools are highly organized institutions. There is a hierarchical structure with authority and the power of delegation diminishing downwards. Children learn to respect people in positions of power. They also learn to develop the right attitudes and behaviour to their peers and to those in authority. They learn to conform. They very seldom gain a holistic understanding of what they are learning. The demands of parents, teachers, the syllabi and examinations teach them to cope with pressure. They

also learn how to write and pass tests and examinations. The way in which they are graded greatly influences the development of their self-image.

It remains difficult therefore, taking the above points into account, to dismiss the "correspondence theory" of Bowles and Gintis,<sup>26</sup> which, stated briefly, postulates that schools are organized in such a way so as to correspond to the organizational structures of the workplace. It is also difficult to ignore the trend to expediently subordinate educational principles and values to bureaucratic, political and economic norms and demands.

### **The Struggle Unto Being**

It is a terrible indictment against our education system in particular, and society in general, when the majority of school children in this country use their schools as forums of violent and public demonstration to reject their school curriculum which was being used as a means to indoctrinate them into accepting apartheid ideology as they did in 1976, 1980 and 1985. During those years we saw children burn their books, and sometimes their schools; picketing students or mass meetings break up into stone throwing mobs; violent confrontations with the police who most often resorted to viciously beating children into submission in the classrooms, on the playing fields and in the streets. The police also threw teargas canisters into classrooms and amongst demonstrating students, and they mercilessly and indiscriminately shot children in order to break up angry, protesting crowds.

Many children were further brutalized and traumatized in police stations after they had been arrested.

Furthermore, in 1985 we had the extraordinarily sad and ironic situation where white troops were used to quell the disturbances in black townships. All of those young conscripts had attended privileged white schools where the influence of the military has been growing through the cadet training and youth preparedness programmes. We also saw that year family life in the townships ripped apart by the violence as parents lost control of their children who projected their frustrations and rage on to authority figures, on to each other, and on to that abstract entity called "the system". There were also radical minorities who spread hatred and violence, and were not the least interested in the human rights or the welfare of the children they exploited.

But, many parents came to understand the sacrificial mood amongst their children and joined them in their protests. Many of these children were prepared to die for what they perceived as a just cause. Sadly, they have come to regard themselves as the lost generation who have very little to live for because they see themselves as victims of some barbaric social experiment. This attitude is reflected on walls and desks in classrooms where one will see graffiti describing themselves as the "Dead-end Kids" or "Freedom comes only by sacrifice".

Another symptom of a social system under stress, and one that until recently had been under-diagnosed, is what appears to be the increasing level of child abuse. Statistical evidence is hard to come by because no comprehensive research programme has been yet carried

out in this country, but there are clear signs that this social problem is much more prevalent than many social scientists had previously realized. There are many reasons for the lack of knowledge about this very serious social problem. One in particular is that it happens within the confines and privacy of the home. Family members, the abuser as well as the abused, will often go to great lengths to hide this deviant behaviour from outsiders. This makes it all that more difficult to gauge the extent to which child abuse is happening in the nuclear family.

What is child abuse? Broadly, it is any act or non-action that is detrimental to the child's well-being. This could take the form of physically injuring the child or neglecting to care for the child's medical and nutritional needs; sexual abuse; the systematic destruction of the child's self-esteem through emotional and psychological abuse; abandonment; the administration of, and consequent addiction to, drugs and alcohol; and by failing to provide proper education.

This social phenomenon occurs throughout the whole socio-economic spectrum, but it is more common in those communities and families that are poverty-stricken. There are many causes for the increase in child abuse. The severe stresses of modern urban life; the uncertainty of rapid social, political and economic change; the break-up of the nuclear family; overcrowding; unemployment and financial difficulties; inadequate preparation for parenting; drug and alcohol abuse; physical and mental ill-health; an inability to communicate feelings and articulate problems; poor education; illegitimacy and unwanted pregnancies; no fixed abode; the political structure which has played a major

role in the break-up of family life, just to name a few of the many causes that have been so far identified.

All this has serious consequences for our future society because it has been found that unless this vicious cycle of inflicting hurt on others is consciously broken, abused children grow up to become psychologically malformed and damaged adults and parents who most often become, in turn, child abusers.

### Summary

Our schools, more than any other social institution, characterize the fragmented nature of apartheid society. They are microcosmic embodiments of social reality which reflect to an extraordinary degree the extreme socio-economic disparities that exist between the various racial groupings in our society.

It is commonly accepted that the failure to provide adequate education and the systematic destruction of a child's self-esteem are both forms of child abuse. The majority of our children do not receive proper education, mainly due to government policies which guarantee the unfair distribution of the State money allocated each year for educational purposes. More money is spent on the white child's educational needs than on an Indian or coloured child, with

the least of all spent on a black child. Equal educational opportunities for all simply do not exist. Coupled to this, most of our children are born into a society that treats them as if they were inferior human beings simply on the basis of their skin colour. This notion of racial inferiority, which forms the basis of our school system, is also portrayed in various ways throughout the school curriculum. In this and many other ways, the oppressed child's self-esteem is methodically undermined and eroded. In terms of the definition on child abuse and the key role the school system plays in this process of disempowerment, child abuse in one form or another has been institutionalized in the schools for the oppressed.

The heart of the conflict in the South African educational system lies with a complete rejection of the fundamental premise on which the school system is based, that is, a racial concept of Man which serves to justify the existence of a social order that effectively deprives the vast majority of opportunities to share in the country's wealth. But it is much more than this. It also has to do with leading a meaningful life, of having a sense of purpose and continuity with the future.

CHAPTER SIX

T H E   C O N C E P T   O F   H O L I S M

An education system that in practice, regardless of its theoretically stated ideals, fragments and distorts the child's world view, and fails to provide that child with an integrated understanding of himself or herself and life as a whole because socio-political limitations have been placed on education, greatly contributes to the increase in the general level of misery, frustration, antagonism, suffering, confusion and ignorance in the world. The individual is more important than any system and should not be treated as just another brick in the wall.

What, then, is the right kind of education? Krishnamurti hints at the answer to this question when he writes that:

The ignorant man is not the unlearned, but he who does not know himself, and the learned man is stupid when he relies on books, on knowledge and on authority to give him understanding. Understanding comes only through self-knowledge, which is awareness of one's total psychological process. Thus education, in the true sense, is the understanding of oneself, for it is within each one of us that the whole of existence is gathered.<sup>1</sup>

Education that is of any significance should be based on principles that seek to foster a holistic understanding of life and attempt to transform personal existence. It should endeavour to awaken the creative intelligence of the individual through self-knowledge and

develop those faculties that would help integrate the lower self with the higher, spiritual Self. It is for these reasons that we need to envision and formulate a holistic concept of Man from which new educational principles and practice could be devised.

### Holism as a Paradigm for Educational Inquiry

In a paper entitled *Paradigms in Educational Inquiry*, Jerome Popp distinguishes two types of educational inquiry. Inquiry is the process of asking and trying to find answers to questions. Educational inquiry, therefore, is asking and attempting to find answers to questions about education. In other words "educational inquiry may be distinguished from other types of inquiry on semantical grounds". The questions that we ask can be divided up into those that require the "construction of hypotheses (claims or declarations about what education is) and questions which must be answered by prescriptions or directives about what is to be done in a particular situation". The former propositional type of question is regarded as "epistemically-oriented" and generate what is called "epistemic educational inquiry". Questions of the latter type are "practice-oriented" and give rise to "practical educational inquiry".<sup>2</sup>

Inquiry always takes place within the disciplinary framework or paradigm that comprehensively explains the empirical reality of the investigator. Epistemic or philosophical inquiry is concerned with global or universal educational issues, whereas practical inquiry relates to finding practical solutions to specific problems within a

given context. Both forms of inquiry are conducted within the paradigm chosen by the investigator.<sup>3</sup> According to Popp, the literature on education and psychology suggests at least three dominant paradigms that direct the course of educational inquiry. He makes this claim on the basis of asking three questions: What are the basic "ways of seeing" which determine the kinds of questions researchers ask? What are the models of great achievement in research? What are the current ways in which researchers are being taught to view their work? From the answers to these questions he deduces three distinct paradigms which he gives the descriptive names of behaviourism based on the work of B.F. Skinner, interactionism represented by the studies of Piaget and Kohlberg, and naturalism best seen in the work of Maslow.<sup>4</sup>

Popp is certainly correct in his claim that these three are the dominant paradigms most chosen by educational researchers and practitioners, but they are definitely not the only paradigms that influence educational thinking. For example, the South African education system is being used as a means to impose or resist diametrically conflicting political and economic viewpoints. This clash is between the capitalist economic paradigm which is mainly supported by the more privileged whites, and Marxist economic theory and critique which has its adherence mainly among the disenfranchised oppressed. Both of these viewpoints greatly influence educational theory. Whichever viewpoint gains ascendancy over the other will ultimately determine the future structure of South African society. It may be argued, however, that the Marxist paradigm could be described as being humanistic in character, and therefore fits Popp's category termed naturalism. This is a

semantic debate about the proper interpretation of the terms naturalism and humanism and the distinction, if any, between them, and whether or not Marxism fits into any of these categories.

Popp does point out, however, that educational researchers and practitioners do face the problem of which paradigm to select, and that it is possible to choose different paradigms for different situations.<sup>5</sup> This certainly happens when the matter of which paradigm to choose is a problem. This means that the investigator adopts an eclectic approach. In order to cope with the problem of paradigm choice "practical eclecticism" seems more common where "different methods grounded in different points of view are utilized in different situations". This kind of eclecticism rarely occurs in science and philosophy.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, it is important to bear in mind that education should be as eclectic as possible so as to allow the student to explore his or her beliefs, and "the beliefs of those who have developed more unified substantive and methodological points of view".<sup>7</sup>

In another research paper entitled *The Holistic Paradigm in Educational Theory*, Ronald Zigler suggests that Popp failed to take into account the "emergence of a new paradigm in contemporary thought - the Holistic paradigm which sees the various approaches that Popp outlined as integral parts of a more inclusive whole or system".<sup>8</sup>

In his discussion about the nature of this paradigm, Zigler focuses on the operational mode of inquiry that guides the research of problems within a paradigm and the methods of finding possible solutions to those problems. A paradigm, however, is much more than this. It also represents a set of assumptions about the nature of Man and

the relationship humankind has with all living things. No comprehensive holistic concept of Man is proposed in this article. This is understandable considering the scope of such a synthesis and that Zigler's main aim in writing this paper was to be "suggestive" of possible new directions for "educational inquiry and model building" by "stimulating awareness of the emergence of the Holistic paradigm".<sup>9</sup>

The holistic paradigm is inclusive of all other paradigms because all areas of human knowledge are regarded as being "interdependent and interconnected". This assumption is "related to some of the early work in Gestalt psychology" which postulated that "features or laws defining the whole system are not entirely derivable from the study of its parts".<sup>10</sup> Zigler quotes Maslow's contention that inquiry should not only begin with an analysis of the whole structure, but also end with a more unified conception of the whole.

Starting with a vague grasped whole, we analyze its structure into sub-divisions, parts, etc. Through this analysis we discover difficulties with our original conception of the whole. The whole is then re-organized, redefined, and re-phrased more exactly and more efficiently, and is, as before subjected to analysis. Again this analysis makes possible a better, more precise whole, and so on.<sup>11</sup>

Zigler notes that science has produced a plethora of piecemeal information which is mainly limited to highly specialized fields of study. Scientists have failed to simplify and synthesize their findings so as to ensure an integrated view and understanding between the

various disciplines, and make this knowledge and expertise more relevant and useful to human concerns as well.<sup>12</sup>

Zigler traces the roots of the contemporary holistic paradigm to the work of William James who "attempted to integrate the empiricist's inclination to study parts, and the rationalist disposition for constructing intellectual wholes and unifying principles". James's ideas were "extended more fully into a scientific model" by John Dewey. Dewey saw science as a means of unifying conflicting views of reality.<sup>13</sup>

Dewey's concept of wholes is best expressed in what he termed imaginative or aesthetic experience. Imagination was for Dewey "a way of seeing and feeling things as they compose an integral whole".<sup>14</sup> Its function was not to construct fanciful or imaginary unrealities. Aesthetic experience was synonymous with "connected whole" which meant much more than an individual's appreciation of beauty. Both these terms served similar functions for Dewey. Dewey's theory of aesthetic or imaginative experience encompassed areas of human experience which are termed "mystical".<sup>15</sup> William James has studied this dimension of human experience at great length in his book *The Varieties of Religious Experience*.

As Zigler points out, mystical and religious experience had up until recently been a somewhat dubious area of inquiry. But the discoveries of modern physics, and the latest research data on the functioning capabilities of the human brain and the nature of consciousness suggest interesting parallels between these findings and ancient mystical literature and thought.<sup>16</sup> Brain research and studies on

human consciousness reveal two distinct modes of knowing - the analytical, rational and sequential mode as opposed to the intuitive, symbolic and non-linear mental processes. Zigler believes that this research can provide a possible explanation why the transcendental reality described by mystics and modern physicists is not a common human experience. He suggests that this is due, in some measure, "to the educational models we presently employ" which focus on and over-develop the verbal, analytical brain processes to the detriment of non-verbal, intuitive knowing.<sup>17</sup>

The holistic paradigm has special relevance for educational theory and practice. At present, education as a whole suffers because the major educational paradigms are disconnected and lack the broad perspective which takes into account "all areas of ascertained knowledge that is relevant to human ends in general and educational questions in particular". Education is an "interdisciplinary matrix" which necessitates a synthesis of human knowledge and "all findings relevant to educational practice".<sup>18</sup>

Zigler's concept of Man concentrates mainly on the psychological and biological aspects of human nature. A person is seen as a "human organism" or a "living system" which shares two essential characteristics with all other living systems:

First, living systems are "open systems"; i.e., their boundaries are, at least, partially permeable, permitting the transmission of "matter-energy" to cross between them - thus linking all living systems into another hierarchy of general systems theory, ecosystems. The second characteristic of living systems is that they seek to maintain "negentropy" (negative entropy) even though entropic changes occur in them as they do everywhere else. This second characteristic is important because it suggests that living systems,

and thus the human organism, are goal oriented. That is, in general, they all seek to perpetrate themselves, to maintain homeostasis or health within the system as it interacts with other systems - the social system, the ecosystem.<sup>19</sup>

Health is viewed as "optimal psycho-biological functioning" and has an "ultimate value". The reason for this emphasis is that "welfare and well-being are interconnected and interdependent with the social environment on a psychological and biological level". This makes us "potentially responsible for the distress and disease of each other". Inherent in the holistic paradigm is a conception of "good" which is

...dependent on natural properties (the human nervous system and its physical and social environment), yet, this conception is not to be identified with any one particular property. It is, rather, a functional estimate of a "system state" - a state in which individual organism, physical and social environment enter into mentally enhancing relations.<sup>20</sup>

Therefore, the holistic paradigm as viewed by Zigler would be

...committed to the total enhancement of the individual's capacity for functioning as a psychological and biological organism - whereby the student may learn how to enter into mutually enhancing relations with his or her social and physical environments. This implies a concern, on the part of the educator, for both external and internal events affecting the learner as a living system - psychological and biological events.<sup>21</sup>

Zigler's paper is mainly explorative and far from satisfactory. He omits to point out that the concept of wholes is certainly not a

new one. It is found in various forms throughout the recorded tradition of Western thought right back to the great triumvirate of Greek philosophers, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. Even they made no claim to having discovered this notion of wholes, the many in the one. This idea was ancient even then. In the Eastern tradition it goes back even further in time. It has formed the basis of Vedanta, the philosophic system based on the Vedas and Upanishads which are extremely ancient texts containing the esoteric wisdom recorded by the seers of antiquity. He also ignores the work of Jan Smuts who seems to have been the first person to coin the word "holism" which was expounded and defined in his book *Holism and Evolution*.

Another serious limitation in this essay is the view of the human being as nothing more than a psycho-biological organism. Although Zigler does not explain what he means by the word "psychological", there does appear a strong undercurrent of behaviourist thinking in his use of this concept. He sees the "human organism" as a "living system" which is hierarchically linked to a "general systems theory". The biological function of this organism needs to be regulated and controlled that is why health has such a central value in his thesis. In the process of living "virtue" is equated with the human being's capacity to preserve or maintain homeostasis or health, and "good" means a "total, holistic complex of mental, physical and societal states in which existence is maximally assured".<sup>22</sup> No mention whatsoever is given to the spiritual nature of Man.

He does make the valid point, however, that the conflict in values stems not so much because we lack knowledge about human beings, but through a "failure to see the connections among those areas of

knowledge available which are relevant to human beings and human ends - whether educational or otherwise".<sup>23</sup>

### Smuts's Concept of Holism

The seed ideas for his book *Holism and Evolution* were planted in Jan Smuts's mind when he wrote, as a young undergraduate at Cambridge University, a short study entitled *Walt Whitman: A Study in the Evolution of Personality*. Many years later he compared the effect that Whitman's poetry had had on him to St Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus. He believed that Whitman's conception of a "natural man" had liberated him from his strict and narrow Calvinist upbringing.<sup>24</sup>

The ideas in this paper continued to engage his interest, and in 1910 he wrote another article called *An Inquiry into the Whole*. None of these treatises were published. It was during that year that the Union of South Africa was formed. Smuts had fought against the British during the South African (Boer) War (1899-1902). As a Boer commander he aptly exploited the guerilla tactics which had proved so successful in fighting the vastly superior and well-supplied British forces. An interesting aside related to this period was that Smuts had been instrumental in capturing Winston Churchill who was covering the South African war as a war correspondent for *The Morning Post* in London. Smuts played a major role in drafting the peace terms that ended the war. He and General Louis Botha formed a remarkable partnership to ensure that Boer rights were upheld. Their first objective

was to establish responsible governments in the former Boer republics of the Orange Free State and Transvaal. Union was later achieved between the old republics and the Cape Colony and Natal. It was during this eventful period in his life that he developed further his ideas on the existence of wholes and the wholeness of Nature. He also realized that the tendency towards wholes is a universal phenomenon. This new understanding greatly influenced his political thinking.

Smuts was later drawn into international affairs when, during the First World War, he was made a member of Lloyd George's war cabinet. In this position he was involved in all the major decisions concerning the war. He attended the peace conference at Versailles, and was one of the principal progenitors of the League of Nations. Shortly after their return from the peace conference in Versailles, Louis Botha died and Smuts succeeded him as prime minister. He remained in office for nearly five years until he was defeated in 1924 by a coalition between the Nationalist and Labour parties. It was only then that he had a chance to set down his ideas on holism which had remained for so many years in the incubation stage.

Jan Smuts was a complex character. On the one hand he was an Afrikaner born and bred according to the strict Calvinist code of ethics. Yet, in many ways he was a true Renaissance man. Besides being a great statesman he was also a lawyer, soldier, and in his spare time, a botanist who was a great authority on grasses, and a philosopher. At Stellenbosch University he studied science and the arts, and went on to study law at Cambridge University. He was a brilliant student who could have gone on to a distinguished academic career. He also read widely in poetry and philosophy. In this way,

his intellectual vigour and desire to not only know and understand the phenomenal world, but also Man's relationship and place in this world demonstrated the holistic principle of treating the various fields of knowledge as interdependent and interrelated.

But Smuts seems to have been torn between allegiance to the demands made on him by his fellow Afrikaners and his vision of an independent South Africa that was inextricably linked to the British Empire which was slowly evolving at that time into the Commonwealth of Nations. These contradictions were seen in the way in which he dealt with the Satyagraha struggle led by Gandhi. This protest by the Indian minority against the unjust race laws of the country lasted for seven years. It was finally resolved when Britain and India put pressure on the South African government for Smuts to come to some negotiated compromise with Gandhi. Smuts later wrote to a friend on Gandhi's departure for India that "the saint has left our shores". Twenty-five years later he wrote that he had been fated to be "the antagonist of a man for whom even then I had the highest respect".<sup>25</sup>

Yet, in the end, Smuts remained true to his visionary ideals. In the process, however, he lost the respect and trust of his fellow Afrikaners who saw him as a betrayer of their cause to establish a true Afrikaner identity and culture. The bitter memory of what the British had done to the Boers during the South African War, especially the burning of farms and the imprisonment of women and children in concentration camps, was still fresh in the minds of many Afrikaners. This anti-British sentiment was partly directed towards Smuts who was derided as being a lackey of the Empire. The Nationalists eventually

achieved their aim of an independent South Africa outside the Commonwealth.

It is important to understand the political context in which Smuts developed his concept of holism. The reductionist thinking of Afrikaner nationalism with its inherent fears and prejudices, and its closed-minded obsession with self is contrary to everything that Smuts believed were in the spiritual interests of Mankind. The ideas of wholeness and interrelatedness which he so strongly advocated were swept aside by an irrational trend to fragment social life to the point of absurdity. This has caused much suffering and distress, and greatly contributes to the psychic ill-health of our society. But Smuts's belief that there is in Nature and in Man a tendency towards wholes is presently being realized, in some ironic way, in this country. There are very clear indications of a return to a nationhood that embraces all the peoples of South Africa, and a desire to be accepted back into the family of nations. Smuts's concept of holism seems not only destined to be vindicated, but also provide an understanding of the processes of healing which we are now about to enter.

What is Smuts's concept of holism? The word "holism" comes from the Greek word *holos* which means whole. Smuts coined the word to describe the tendency in the universe to create greater and greater wholes. This fundamental factor is operative in both the general and specific sense; a *vera causa*. The essential point is that it is a universal principle. He believes that the idea of wholes and wholeness should not be confined to the "biological domain; it covers both inorganic substances and the highest manifestations of the human spirit".<sup>26</sup> The whole should not be regarded as irreducible units each

with their own fixed character, but rather as a "unity of parts which is so close and intense as to be more than the sum of its parts".<sup>27</sup> This synthesis causes the function of the parts to be altered in such a way that they function towards the whole. The whole and the parts reciprocally influence and determine each other so that the parts appear to more or less merge their individual characters. The whole is contained in the parts and the parts are in the whole. The whole is the result of the synthesis of its parts.

Holism, as an impulse towards wholes and wholeness, is not only creative, but also self-creative. It is a process of creative synthesis which results in wholes that are not static, but dynamic and evolutionary. Smuts asserts that there is a "progressive grading of this holistic synthesis in Nature" from inorganic and organic matter to various life-forms, then mind, and finally, personality which is seen as the "highest, most evolved whole among the structures of the universe".<sup>28</sup>

He also postulates the conception of a field which is extended into the space around any natural whole. An organism is really a "unified, synthesized section of history, which includes not only its present but much of its past and even its future". It can only be understood and explained "by reference to its past and its future as well as its present".<sup>29</sup>

The main characteristics of Smuts's general concept of holism can be summed up in the following way. Firstly, he believes that holism is a universal principle that could be described as the "ultimate synthetic, ordering, organizing, regulative activity in the universe".<sup>30</sup> It is not simply an empirical generalization explaining the trend of

natural processes. Secondly, the holistic process involves creative synthesis. In the organization of wholes it is both creative and self-creative. Thirdly, holism explains not only the existence of wholes and the wholeness in Nature, but also the tendency towards wholes in the universe. It accounts for all the "structural groupings and syntheses in it, from the atom and the physico-chemical structures, through the cell and organisms, through Mind in animals, to Personality in man".<sup>31</sup> Fourthly, the supreme whole is always more than the sum of its parts. The whole is influenced by the parts as the parts determine the character of the whole. The parts always demonstrate a tendency towards the whole. Fifthly, the field of the whole is located in a definite part of space at a definite time. Therefore, it can only be understood and explained in terms of the past, future and present. Lastly, it is nothing more than a cosmic process. The holistic force is seen as the "all-pervading and ever-increasing character of synthetic unity or wholeness" in the various structures which reveals the concept of holism as being the "fundamental activity underlying and co-ordinating all others".<sup>32</sup>

The eminent scholar and statesman, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, who was president of India from 1962 to 1967, found Smuts's holistic concept not quite satisfactory.<sup>33</sup> His objections were that firstly, Smuts overlooks the difference between a descriptive statement of the general characteristics of the world process and a creative force that operates universally throughout Nature. He believes that the former is a problem of science, whereas as the latter is the realm of metaphysics. He feels that there is a need for a metaphysical explanation of the holistic force. Secondly, he questions the relationship of the

different classes of wholes to one another. Holism connects what Smuts perceives as four aspects of reality - matter, living organisms, mind and personality. They occur as a series which is successive and continuous. Radhakrishnan queries the nature of a whole that includes all the others, and how it is related to other wholes. Smuts's concept of mind posits a view that it is a "holistic structure" which "performs more fundamental functions in the order of the universe" than that described by psychology. Psychology treats mind in higher animals and human beings as various modes of activity involving "consciousness, attention, perception, feeling, emotion, will, etc." In Smuts's view, mind is seen from a different perspective, that is, as an aspect of holism.<sup>34</sup> Smuts sees personality as that which results from the interconnection and interpenetration of body and mind. The holistic personality develops with all the "specialized mental and bodily functions, and produces out of their deliverances those syntheses and unities which are distinctive of personal experience. All experience, all intuitions, judgements, actions, beliefs and other mental acts are holistic products of Personality."<sup>35</sup> This he calls personality. Smuts's explanation of these concepts is unsatisfactory. More than anything else it reveals the limited psychological knowledge that was available at that time. It also fails to explain adequately enough the mind-body problem which has long perplexed philosophers. Radhakrishnan's third objection is that whereas idealists explain the temporal world as a scheme through which eternal values express themselves, Smuts does not explain the primal source of the ideas on truth, beauty and goodness. Fourthly, Smuts tends to reduce God to a stream of holistic tendencies. Human beings struggle blindly for a

spiritual order which is a unified whole. This is nothing more than a crude form of naturalism. Fifthly, Smuts does not reveal what the end of this whole-making universe is likely to be or anything about its ultimate nature. The sixth objection is whether time is as important as Smuts makes it out to be or if it is only the medium through which a higher purpose is working out its plan. Lastly, Radhakrishnan wonders whether the principle of holism is itself going through a process of development.

Those aspects of Smuts's holistic concept which explain the process of creative synthesis and the tendency towards wholes remain sound. It is true that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, and the functions of the parts are superseded in its unified form by the function of the whole. But Smuts's argument becomes shaky when he attempts to explain this concept in terms of the various aspects of what he believes reality to be made up of, especially his explanation of mind and personality as holistic structures.

### **The Holistic Mode of Knowing**

There has been some interesting and far-reaching research on the human brain over the past few decades that has resulted in a new understanding of the brain's functioning capabilities and potential.

Although the brain can be regarded as a single structure it is in fact divided into two equal halves called cerebral hemispheres. These two parts are linked by several bundles of nerve fibre. Each hemisphere shares the control of the body's basic movements and sensations.

Almost all of the motor control and sensory pathways between the brain and the rest of the body are crossed over so that the left hemisphere controls the right side of the body and the right hemisphere the left side. This left-right symmetry of the brain does not imply equivalent functioning of the left and the right sides. Very few people are truly ambidextrous. This means that the brain functions asymmetrically. This asymmetry of function is not confined to motor control. Clinical evidence has yielded much information to suggest that each hemisphere has distinctly different capabilities, and the most complex mental functions and behaviours are asymmetrically divided between the left brain and the right brain. Much of this information has come from clinical data on brain-damaged patients and split-brain research.

Split-brain research was first conducted on animals, and later on epileptic patients. Split-brain surgery, which was pioneered by Roger Sperry and Ronald Myers, involves the surgical severing of the band of tissue and nerve fibre called the corpus callosum. The corpus callosum is the largest of several bundles of nerve fibre called cerebral commissures which connect regions of the left brain with similar areas in the right brain. The corpus callosum contains some 200 million nerve fibres. Very little is known about the role of the cerebral commissures. It was thought at first that their main function was to support both halves of the brain. It is now accepted that the cerebral commissures are conduits which channel information between the two hemispheres. Because they are bundles of nerve fibre they cannot control brain function in any way. But they do "serve as channels

through which synchronization of hemispheric function occurs and duplication or competition of effort is prevented". It is also suggested that the corpus callosum serves as a sensory "window" which provides a "separate and complete representation of all sensory input in each hemisphere". But it is thought that it is more likely that "complex, process signals normally traverse the commissures, informing each hemisphere about events in the other and, to an extent, controlling their respective operations. This would allow the whole brain to supersede individual hemispheric competencies".<sup>36</sup> Clinical evidence after the surgical division of the two hemispheres shows that learning and memory continue separately in the left brain as well as in the right brain. The split-brain patient is still able to perceive, sense, and to a certain extent, conceptualize in each half of the brain. The brain is plastic enough to adjust its functions according to the damage inflicted on it in the best possible way. All the studies on hemispheric processes show that there are distinct hemispheric differences and specialities.

The most widely agreed upon characteristics that describe the processes of the left brain and the right brain can be tabulated in the following way:

LEFT HEMISPHERE	RIGHT HEMISPHERE
Verbal Sequential, temporal, digital Logical, analytic Rational Western thought	Non-verbal, visio-spatial Simultaneous, spatial analogic Gestalt, synthetic Intuitive Eastern thought

The characteristics at the top of the table are based on experimental evidence, whereas the sequential-simultaneous distinction is a theoretical model that is not universally accepted. The other descriptions are more speculative.<sup>37</sup>

There has always been a tendency amongst investigators to categorize and label hemispheric functions. A number of questions come to mind as a result of this organization of brain functions into two parts. Firstly, are they convenient labels describing how the hemispheres deal with information? Secondly, do they imply that the hemispheres differ in cognitive styles? Thirdly, is it possible to view the specialized functions of the left brain and right brain as distinct modes of consciousness?<sup>38</sup> Lastly, are the hemispheric specialities not superseded by whole brain functioning?

As we know, the method of scientific investigation follows the procedure of reducing, labelling, categorizing and describing. Unfortunately, many become so absorbed by the functions of the components that they fail to grasp holistic functioning. Inevitably, the categories take on an exaggerated importance. The following is a speculative list of the dichotomous qualities that could be regarded as different cognitive styles if the left brain and right brain were to operate independently.

COGNITIVE STYLES	
Left Brain	Right Brain
Convergent intellect deductive rational vertical focused reasoning directed differential sequential explicit objective successive relational analysis realistic logic	Divergent intuition imaginative metaphoric horizontal diffused recognition free existential multiple tacit subjective simultaneous integrative synthesis impulsive symbolic

The problem with this form of categorization is that it creates an all-or-nothing situation which ignores the possibility of gradations between them. It is certainly a convenient way of viewing complex situations. But does the brain function in such an independent manner? It has been shown that each hemisphere is capable of handling a wide range of tasks, but each differs in approach and efficiency. There is no doubt that the higher mental functions, certainly most human behaviour, utilize what is common to both hemispheres, but actually involve whole brain activity that transcends the overall individual capacity of each hemisphere. This supports the holistic notion that the parts tend to merge their individual functions with the complete functioning of the whole. However, experimental evidence does suggest that cerebral hemispheres can operate to a certain extent

independently of each other as well as simultaneously or holistically.

The psychologist Robert Ornstein put forward the idea<sup>39</sup> that different modes of knowing are reflected in hemispheric functions. He pointed out that Western societies place great emphasis on rational, analytical thinking and word knowledge which are typical functions of the left hemisphere. As a result, the development of the right hemisphere has been largely neglected. In other words, a form of cerebral dominance exists in most Western thinking. Furthermore, he has suggested that Eastern cultures, through their religious and mystical thought, show a greater development of the right hemisphere. He has used the different hemispheric functions as a metaphor to describe the difference between Western and Eastern types of thought. The following table is a symbolic representation of the different modes of knowing derived from cerebral hemispheric differences:

WEST	EAST
causal active masculine (yang) sun matter day historical heaven (The Creative)	acausal receptive feminine (yin) moon spirit night timeless earth (The Receptive)

Ornstein has supported his claim by pointing out that Western society places greater value on logical, deductive reasoning, conceptual thinking, and word knowledge. This is reflected in the type of

education children receive in schools which devote a large proportion of school-time to the development of left hemisphere skills. Priority is given to the "Three Rs" - reading, writing and arithmetic. Mathematics and the sciences are regarded as being extremely important because they are allied to the technological needs of a modern industrial society. Music, art, dance and drama classes are seen as extra-curricular activities that do not form part of the examination curriculum. The arts programme tends to be regarded as something that most schools can ill-afford. Most often economic rather than educational considerations are taken into account when deciding whether or not to continue with the arts programme. This discrepancy between various school subjects is reflected in the priority given to certain types of professions and work. The highest material awards and status go to those who are doctors, lawyers, dentists, accountants, scientists, computer experts, and those with technological expertise. Artists, musicians, poets, and those in the dramatic arts find it difficult to achieve success in a technologically oriented society. There are, however, many examples of those in the arts who do make a lot of money and have a lot of status, but they are the exception not the rule.

An unfortunate aspect of this imbalance was revealed in a recent study which found that children who had been previously classified as subnormal or retarded actually showed normal or superior artistic ability.<sup>40</sup>

Those schools that devoted an equal proportion of school-time to the arts, and allowed their children to spend half their time immersed in artistic activities found that their performance in mathematics and other science subjects actually increased significantly. In fact,

their performance in all school subjects was well above average. Schools in America and Europe that tried similar programmes had the same results. In other words, the extra time devoted to the development of right brain faculties helped those associated with the left brain.<sup>41</sup> A holistic educational programme, therefore, would be one that would develop both cerebral hemispheres.

Many of the greatest minds in the history of civilization were people who used the faculties of both hemispheres. Max Planck, the father of the quantum theory, wrote in his autobiography that the pioneer scientist must have a "vivid intuitive imagination for new ideas not generated by deduction, but by artistically creative imagination".<sup>42</sup>

Educationalists are now beginning to realize the need for greater balance between the arts and sciences in the school curriculum. Nevertheless, largely through neglect, the methods on how to develop the faculties of the right hemisphere are only vaguely known. It still remains uncharted territory.

Throughout the centuries, in both the West and East, the great sages of the past have long held that spiritual illumination and transcendental consciousness could only be attained through the way of dhyana or meditation. Meditation forms part of the triad of temporal activity which includes the disciplines of right action (karma yoga) and devotion (bhakti yoga). The practice of these disciplines becomes a way of life for the seeker who wants to unravel the Ultimate Mystery.

What is meditation? There are many forms of meditation. The techniques range from the focus of one's attention on a subject, for

example, a religious text or profound idea or concept; an object, such as a candle flame, symbol or divine image; to the chanting of mantras or the repetition of a sacred word or name (japa). All these techniques are designed to quicken inner growth to higher levels of being. The attainment of higher states of consciousness comes only through the discipline of body, emotions and mind. Yoga is then achieved, which means that the individual soul experiences union with the Universal Soul. But the Yoga system also includes the methods to achieve this union. The physical realm of the aspirant is regulated through the practice of karma yoga which is dutiful work and right action. The heart or emotional life is disciplined through devotion, worship and the cultivation of the higher emotions. Meditation controls the thinking mind. Self-control is exercised, through meditation, over mental functioning and the willing self. The Universal Self is realized through the path of self-knowledge.

He who is born from the womb sees only this world;  
only he who is born out of himself sees the other  
world.

(Ayn al-gudat at Hamadhani)

I am knowledge, the known and the knower. I am wisdom,  
the wise man and his wiseness.

(Ibn' Arabi)<sup>43</sup>

Meditation also facilitates the development of will. This in turn helps the mind to focus on a chosen goal or hold steady a particular thought form, insulate mental activity from negative influences and control self-destructive urges or tendencies. Meditation increases and concentrates the power of thought. The laser-like power

of thought achieved through meditation is best illustrated in the following story:

I remember when I was a little boy, my father took me to a cave that extended underground for about a mile. My father held a great torch, and I followed him carefully, while looking at the big shadows on the walls and listening to the echoes of our words.

At last we stopped by some rocks. My father showed me a tongue-shaped rock, about two feet thick projecting from a shelf in the cave. He also showed me a finger-like rock up above, from which drops were rhythmically dripping down. After I saw both these rocks he said, "I have a question for you. You saw that drop from the ceiling, but did you see where it went?" He looked at me, and held the torch up to help me see better. I noticed the drops were falling on the rock and passing through it. It was curious because the rock was very thick. I crawled under the rock to see what was going on. I saw that the rock was drilled through one inch in diameter and the drops were passing directly through a tube-like hole and falling on the ground.

"Do you know how it happened?"

"No."

"Think!"

"The drops kept hitting the rock for centuries and they drilled through the rock."

"Yes! I brought you to see this fact and to learn a lesson. A concentrated thought in any direction, if continued, can do things that seem impossible."

When we were just out of the cave, my father looked again into my eyes and said, "The power of thought and the secret of how to think - these are the keys to all locks. Do not forget. The weakest thing is a drop, but it can drill through rock."

Then he jumped on his horse and pulled me up in front of him. We were going through high mountains toward the symphony of sunset.<sup>44</sup>

The great interest shown in Eastern religions during the 1960s resulted in a spate of research on meditation and altered states of consciousness. Two Japanese neuropsychiatrists used an electroencephalograph (EEG) to study the brain activity of Zen Buddhist monks

during meditation. They identified four stages in the brain wave patterns: firstly, the appearance of alpha waves; secondly, the increase in alpha activity; thirdly, the decrease in alpha frequency; and lastly, the appearance of rhythmical theta waves. This represented the physiological state during meditation. Alpha waves are associated with deep relaxation, and theta waves with serenity and creativity. They also found that those monks who had been meditating for many years showed EEG activity mainly in the third and fourth stages.<sup>45</sup>

However, the most comprehensive scientific exploration on the physiology of meditation was carried out by Wallace and Benson.<sup>46</sup> Their subjects were practitioners of Transcendental Meditation (TM), a meditation technique and philosophy brought to the West by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. They found that during the practice of this technique the subjects were in a state of deep rest coupled with heightened alertness. This was physiologically revealed in a number of ways. There was a drop in the metabolic rate at cellular level. Less oxygen is burnt up with a consequent decrease in the production of carbon dioxide when cellular metabolic activity decreases naturally. Oxygen consumption was reduced significantly with a proportionate decrease in the amount of carbon dioxide that was exhaled. This did not produce any respiratory abnormalities. They also noticed that the breathing rate was about half of the resting rate. An important correlation with this indicating a state of deep rest was a simultaneous drop in the heart rate. Another measure of relaxation was an increase in the Galvanic Skin Response (GSR). The GSR usually decreases with an increase in stress, anxiety or tension. There was also a significant drop in the concentration of arterial blood lactate. This is a

stress-related blood chemical. During the post-meditation period the concentration of blood lactate increased with a subsequent rise in the metabolic rate, but remained well below the pre-meditation level.<sup>47</sup>

Further studies were carried out on brain wave activity during the meditative state by the neurologist J.P. Banquet.<sup>48</sup> His measurements clearly defined a state of consciousness that was separate from other states. The EEG changes during meditation were specifically related to the practice, independent of any interaction between the subject and the outer world. He found that alpha waves spread synchronously from the back to the front of the brain in each hemisphere. There was also a synchrony of the brain waves between each cerebral hemisphere. Meditation showed what he termed "hypersynchrony" of alpha and beta frequencies during meditation, whereas non-meditators only showed synchrony of the slower theta and delta wave patterns which indicate drowsiness or sleep. During waking consciousness the brain wave activity is random and chaotic, but meditators show greater coherence of frequency.

This integration of brain function through deep relaxation and restful alertness had positive psychological effects on meditators. There was a significant decrease in anxiety which resulted in greater emotional well-being. Consequently, health generally improved through the reduction of psychosomatic illnesses. A higher level of personal integration was also achieved. This led to improvements in performance and behaviour. There was also a reduction in the dependency on non-prescribed drugs by abusers, and the use of alcohol and cigarettes.

As a result of these findings Wallace proposed that the psychophysiological state achieved during meditation qualified as a fourth state of consciousness distinctly different from the other three states of waking, dreaming and sleeping.

All this research puts the value of meditation beyond doubt. It also confirms the intuitive insights of the great seers of the past.

Another method, one that employs more right brain activity than left, is the faculty of creative visualization. Everyone has the ability to create inner images, except that it is more developed in some than in others. Nikola Tesla, a contemporary of Thomas Edison, was someone whose faculty of visualizing was developed to a supreme degree. Tesla discovered the rotating magnetic field which is the basis of all alternating-current machinery. He was universally acknowledged as a great inventive genius, "one of the outstanding intellects of the world who paved the way for many of the technological developments of modern times".<sup>49</sup>

Late one afternoon in Budapest, during February 1882, he visualized the principle of the rotating magnetic field that led to the development of the induction motor. He was able to construct in his mind various types of machines to test this principle in mental experiments. His power of visualization was so great that these mental conceptions had a reality for him of solid objects. He did not take the trouble to write down or draw any of the details that he visualized. In his mental workshop he would design, construct and test these motors, each one built mentally with meticulous care. Incredulously, he was able to test these machines by allowing them to run in his mind to see if there were any signs of wear. He was able

to memorize every detail of these mental constructs. When these visualized motors became solid realities in his machine shop they worked exactly in every detail as he had seen it in his mind. There was no need to change a thing. It is interesting to note that Tesla was as a boy left-handed, but later became fully ambidextrous. Tesla wrote an interesting article describing this strange faculty of creative visualization:

During my boyhood I had suffered from a peculiar affliction due to the appearance of images, which were often accompanied by strong flashes of light. When a word was spoken, the image of the object designated would present itself so vividly to my vision that I could not tell whether what I saw was real or not. ...Even though I reached out and passed my hand through it, the image would remain fixed in space.

In trying to free myself from these tormenting appearances, I tried to concentrate my thoughts on some peaceful, quieting scene I had witnessed. This would give me momentary relief; but when I had done it two or three times the remedy would begin to lose its force. Then I began to take mental excursions beyond the small world of my actual knowledge. Day and night, in imagination, I went on journeys - saw new places, cities, countries, and all the time I tried hard to make these imaginary things very sharp and clear in my mind. I imagined myself living in countries I had never seen, and I made imaginary friends, who were very dear to me and really seemed alive.

This I did constantly until I was seventeen, when my thoughts turned seriously to invention. Then, to my delight, I found I could visualize with the greatest facility. I needed no models, drawings, or experiments. I could picture them all in my mind....

By that faculty of visualizing, which I had learned in my boyish efforts to rid myself of annoying images, I have evolved what is, I believe, a new method of materializing inventive ideas and conceptions. It is a method which may be of great usefulness to any imaginative man, whether he is an inventor, businessman or artist.

Some people, the moment they have a device to construct or any piece of work to perform, rush at it without adequate preparation, and immediately become engrossed in details, instead of the central idea. They may get results, but they sacrifice quality.

Here, in brief, is my own method: After experiencing a desire to invent a particular thing, I may go on for months or years with the idea in the back of my head. Whenever I feel like it, I roam around in my imagination and think about the problem without any deliberate concentration. This is a period of incubation.

Then follows a period of direct effort. I choose carefully the possible solutions of the problem I am considering, and gradually center my mind on a narrowed field of investigation. Now, when I am deliberately thinking of the problem in its specific features, I may begin to feel that I am going to get the solution. And the wonderful thing is, that if I do feel this way, then I know I have really solved the problem and shall get what I am after.

The feeling is as convincing to me as though I already had solved it. I have come to the conclusion that at this stage the actual solution is in my mind subconsciously, though it may be a long time before I am aware of it consciously.

Before I put a sketch on paper, the whole idea is worked out mentally. In my mind I change the construction, make improvements, and even operate the device. Without ever having drawn a sketch I can give the measurements of all parts to workmen, and when completed all these parts will fit, just as certainly as though I had made the actual drawings. It is immaterial to me whether I run my machine in my mind or test it in my shop.

The inventions I have conceived in this way have always worked. In thirty years there has not been a single exception. My first electric motor, the vacuum tube wireless light, my turbine engine and so many other devices have all been developed in exactly this way.<sup>50</sup>

This is an interesting explanation of the creative process. The idea is conceived, and then there is a period of incubation. Then follows a period of mental effort to bring the solution, which he believes is in his subconscious mind, out into the full awareness of his conscious mind. He then tests his idea mentally before constructing the machine in his workshop.

He was also able to imagine himself in different places, cities or countries, and especially "some peaceful, quieting scene" if he wanted to relax and free himself from the "tormenting appearances".

The act of visualizing involves the creation of thought forms which are seen on the mental plane. The more highly developed this faculty is, the more real is the visualized thought form. Visualization, as with intuition, is a process of synthetic understanding. Visualization in its lowest aspect takes the form of day-dreaming. This is common imagining. The highest form of visualization is the technique of creative imagination which is the ability to intuitively perceive the symbols and great archetypes of the unconscious mind. Symbols can be regarded as the alphabet that enables us to comprehend the unknown and indescribable aspects of the human psyche. It enables us to go beyond the threshold of consciousness.

A knowledge of symbols plays an important part in the interpretation of dreams. Carl Jung, who developed his own ideas on dream analysis from the pioneering work of Freud, believed that each dream represents a small segment of the whole complex pattern underlying the inner growth of the human psyche. The symbols in the dream take on the inventive character of the dreamer's subterranean psychological processes. For this reason, Jung urged his pupils to learn as much as they could about symbolism, and then forget what they had learnt, so that they did not project their own interpretation of the symbols during the analysis of someone else's dream. The meaning of the dream had to be divined through the spontaneous interaction between dreamer and analyst.<sup>51</sup>

Symbols can also have different meanings in different cultures. The great Chinese philosopher Chuang Tzu once dreamt that he was a butterfly:

Once upon a time, I, Chuang Tzu, dreamt I was a butterfly, fluttering hither and thither, to all intents and purposes a butterfly. I was conscious only of following my fancies as a butterfly, and was unconscious of my individuality as a man. Suddenly, I awaked, and there I lay, myself again. Now I do not know whether I was then a man dreaming I was a butterfly, or whether I am now a butterfly, dreaming I am a man.<sup>52</sup>

For the Chinese the butterfly represents "immortality; abundant leisure; joy". Associated with the chrysanthemum it, "portrays beauty in old age", and with a plum it is "longevity". The Japanese see it as a "vain woman; a geisha; a fickle lover". A pair of butterflies is "conjugal happiness", and a white butterfly is a "spirit of the dead". The Christian viewpoint is that it signifies the "stages of development" which are "life, death and resurrection". The Greeks see it as "immortality; the soul; the psyche; also Psyche in Greek art".<sup>53</sup>

It is incorrect to view the functioning brain as a set of separate activities each one hemispherically located and compartmentalized. It may be a convenient way to unravel the anatomical and electrical complexities of the brain, but it does not contribute very much to an understanding of whole brain functioning. Certainly, it has been shown that cerebral dominance does in fact exist, and that our education contributes to this dominance by overdeveloping faculties that are located more in the left brain than in the right. But even then,

the brain functions holistically, to the full extent of its development.

Just as we all had to learn how to walk, talk, read and write, and many other things in the process of growing up, so too do we have to learn how to use our brains. Much of our present education is aimed at teaching children how to reason logically and deductively, to analyze and think conceptually, but not to use creative imagination, or learn how to decipher and interpret symbols and dreams, or how to perceive intuitively. These faculties need to be developed as well. We should aim at whole brain development, and not partial brain development as we have done so far.

It is important to realize that the brain functions to the limit of its developed capacity. Obviously not all the time. It would depend on the focus of operation. Intuitive perception would play a lesser role if the thinker was in the analytical mode. The brain needs to be consciously developed in order to utilize its full potential. The techniques and the manner in which this should be done can only be found through greater knowledge and understanding of the operational capabilities of whole brain functioning. This requires the acceptance of all tacit forms of knowing.

The holistic mode of knowing integrates all forms of cognition from the innate impulse of instinct, to the rational faculty of the intellect, to the apprehensive powers of intuitive perception.

Instinct is at the bottom end of the scale because it is that aspect of human nature which is characteristically animal-like. There are at least five instincts which human beings share in common with animals.<sup>54</sup> Each one of these animal characteristics has a spiritual

prototype which can be transmuted into their higher counterparts by the reasoning faculty of the intellect. The instinct for self-preservation which is so vital for the enhancement of body life, but is incited by the fear of physical mortality, would be superseded by the realization of the immortality of the human spirit. The second instinct, the powerful urge to propagate the species would be transmuted into the magnetic attraction and conscious desire by the self for union with the Godhead. The third instinct, the wilful assertion of lower self individuality will give way to the ecstatic surrender of oneness with Divine Will. The herd instinct would be transformed into the selfless interaction of group consciousness. The last instinct, the inquisitive urge to inquire and investigate gives way to intuitive perception and understanding. In this way the reasoning intellectual faculty uses spiritual knowledge to gain dominion over our animal nature so as to facilitate the emergence of our divine nature.

Instinct lies below the threshold of consciousness. The intellect, which sets humankind apart from animals as thinking, self-determining, free-willing entities, is a higher faculty than instinct, but a lower mental expression than intuition. Intuition is synthetic vision. Intuition is characteristically feminine and receptive in its mode of operation. It is not found exclusively in women, although women use their intuition far more than men. This is largely as a result of cultural conditioning and the myths surrounding intuition. Men are not encouraged to use their intuition, and it is often regarded in a derogatory sense by those who dispute it as a legitimate mode of knowing. It remains largely an undeveloped mental faculty.

Intuition transcends thought and personal experience. The higher mind senses and apprehends intangible realities exactly as they are free from projections or misperceptions. Intuition attempts to order, unify and give coherence to the chaotic impressions of direct knowing. It is a visionary mode that results in complete and immediate comprehension, and sudden illumination.<sup>55</sup>

#### Holism Defined

The word holism comes from the Greek word *holos* which means whole. Holism is a universal principle which is not only creative, but also self-creative. The holistic impulse is a dynamic, evolutionary process towards the creation of wholes. It is an underlying principle in Creation. The universe itself is a whole that is made up of lesser wholes. The whole is more than the sum of its parts. The individual function of the parts merges with the overall function of the whole. They lose their individual characteristics as a result of the creative synthesis that produces the whole.

Holism as a mode of inquiry regards all areas of human thought as being interrelated and interconnected. Each field of study is recognized as a legitimate discipline containing its own specialized techniques of investigation and expertise for the gathering of specific, detailed knowledge. But all disciplines are interdependent. They supply piecemeal information which if synthesized provide a more global understanding of the phenomenal world. Holism is well suited as a

paradigm for educational inquiry because education is characteristically an interdisciplinary field of study.

Charges of eclecticism can be made against the holistic approach. Many specialists treat the eclectically minded as heretics, sinners or fools. Their reaction tends to be more a demonstration of territorial imperative. But they are correct when they point out that most often the eclectic does not have the specialist knowledge to make considered judgements, and tends to draw superficial conclusions from information taken out of context. Nevertheless, creative synthesis is vitally necessary if solutions to the problems that plague us are to be found.

The holistic mode of knowing employs all forms of cognition from the predominantly left brain activities of analytical, rational thinking to right brain tacit forms such as creative visualization, symbolism, dreaming and intuition. In other words, the full range and potential of brain functioning is used. It begins with an intuitive sensing of the whole, then a systematic and logical analysis and description of its sub-divisions and component parts, and finally, it is re-constituted and re-defined as a functioning whole that is inter-related and interconnected with other wholes.

ASSUMPTIONS OF THE OLD PARADIGM OF EDUCATION	ASSUMPTIONS OF THE NEW PARADIGM OF LEARNING
<p>Emphasis on <i>content</i>, acquiring a body of "right" information, once and for all.</p>	<p>Emphasis on learning how to learn, how to ask good questions, pay attention to the right things, be open to and evaluate new concepts, have access to information. What is now "known" may change. Importance of <i>context</i>.</p>
<p>Learning as a <i>product</i>, a destination.</p>	<p>learning as a <i>process</i>, a journey.</p>
<p>Hierarchical and authoritarian structure. Rewards conformity, discourages dissent.</p>	<p>Egalitarian. Candour and dissent permitted. Students and teachers see each other as people, not roles. Encourages autonomy.</p>
<p>Relatively rigid structure, prescribed curriculum.</p>	<p>Relatively flexible structure. Belief that there are many ways to teach a given subject.</p>
<p>Lockstep progress, emphasis on the "appropriate" ages for certain activities, age segregation. Compartmentalized.</p>	<p>Flexibility and integration of age groupings. Individual not automatically limited to certain subject matter by age.</p>
<p>Priority on performance.</p>	<p>Priority on self-image as the generator of performance.</p>
<p>Emphasis on external world. Inner experience often considered inappropriate in school setting.</p>	<p>Inner experience seen as context for learning. Use of imagery, storytelling, dream journals, "centring" exercises, and exploration of feelings encouraged.</p>
<p>Guessing and divergent thinking discouraged.</p>	<p>Guessing and divergent thinking encouraged as part of the creative process.</p>
<p>Emphasis on analytical, linear, left-brain thinking.</p>	<p>Strives for whole-brain education. Augments left-brain rationality with holistic, non-linear, and intuitive strategies. Confluence and fusion of the two processes emphasized.</p>

### Summary

Education, by its very nature, is traditionally conservative, and therefore more resistant to dynamic change than other areas of human endeavour. Nevertheless, an ill-defined trend towards a more humane and intellectually rigorous type of education has been emerging over the past decade. It is evolving into what could be loosely termed transpersonal education, drawing most of its ideas from a similarly named branch of psychology which focuses on the transcendent capabilities of human beings. It views learning as a transforming process which is designed to provide not only basic skills, but also aids self-transcendence.

This emerging holistic paradigm which aims to educate the whole person is ideally suited to education in general, especially in the South African context where reductionist thinking has been taken to an illogical dimension. The assumptions underlying the old educational paradigm are compared in the following table with some of the new ideas on learning:<sup>56</sup>

ASSUMPTIONS OF THE OLD PARADIGM OF EDUCATION	ASSUMPTIONS OF THE NEW PARADIGM OF LEARNING
<p>Labelling (remedial, gifted, minimally brain dysfunctional, etc.) contributes to self-fulfilling prophecy.</p>	<p>Labelling used only in minor prescriptive role and not as fixed evaluation that dogs the individual's educational career.</p>
<p>Concern with norms.</p>	<p>Concern with the individual's performance in terms of potential. Interest in testing outer limits, transcending perceived limitations.</p>
<p>Primary reliance on theoretical, abstract "book knowledge".</p>	<p>Theoretical and abstract knowledge heavily complemented by experiment and experience, both in and out of classroom. Field trips, apprenticeships, demonstrations, visiting experts.</p>
<p>Classrooms designed for efficiency, convenience.</p>	<p>Concern for the environment of learning: lighting, colours, air, physical comfort, needs for privacy and interaction, quiet and exuberant activities.</p>
<p>Bureaucratically determined, resistant to community input.</p>	<p>Encourages community input, even community control.</p>
<p>Education seen as a social necessity for a certain period in time, to inculcate minimum skills and train for</p>	<p>Education seen as lifelong process, one only tangentially related to schools.</p>
<p>a specific role.</p>	<p>Appropriate technology, human relationships between teachers and learners of primary importance.</p>
<p>Increasing reliance on technology (audiovisual equipment, computers, tapes, texts), dehumanization.</p>	<p>Teacher is learner, too, learning from students.</p>
<p>Teacher imparts knowledge; one-way street.</p>	<p>Teacher is learner, too, learning from students.</p>

CHAPTER SEVEN

T H E I D E A O F H O L I S T I C M A N

In traditional Hindu society, which is strongly patriarchal, boys are made full members of the community after they have gone through the rite of initiation (upanayana) which roughly corresponds to confirmation in Christianity. The chief feature of the ceremony is the investiture of the sacred thread (yajñopavita) to the boy which is hung over his left shoulder and under his right arm. He must keep it free of defilement and wear it for the rest of his life. The boy now enters the first of four stages (asrama) in his life. He becomes a celibate student (brahmacarin). The boy whose age may vary from eight to twelve years leaves home and begins a long course of study at the feet of a master or guru. He lives a frugal existence studying all the ancient religious texts. When he has completed this period in his life as a student he returns home as a young man to marry and enter the second stage, that of a householder (grhastha). The family is the most important unit in Hindu society. For this reason, every young person is expected to marry at the appropriate age. This stage in his life is spent in pursuit of three aims - religious merit, wealth and pleasure. The first should always override the other two, although they are also regarded as legitimate and desirable for the ordinary man. He enters the third stage that of a hermit (vanaprastha) when his hair turns grey and he sees his children's children. He then

abandons home and takes up residence in a forest with his wife to devote his time to religious exercises and penance for the welfare of his soul. The fourth and final stage is when he renounces all worldly attachments and wanders the countryside as a homeless, religious beggar (sannyasi).<sup>1</sup>

Very few of today's modern Hindus follow this framework for living which has guided Aryan society for millennia. But there are still elderly men who after a busy life immersed in worldly affairs give up their material possessions and comfort for a religious life devoted to meditation and worship.

The old-fashioned Hindu way of life shows a profound insight into and understanding of human nature. Strong religious beliefs and ideals provide the basis for moral and ethical guidance at every stage. All activities whether they be individual, family or social are seen as fundamentally religious activities. For them, religion offers not only a system of belief, but also the guiding principles for right action. The first stage provides the student with a religious framework for the life ahead. The wisdom of the ancients provides him with a knowledge of how to act and live in the world (dharma), and yet be free of attachment to the world. The material world is seen as a fetter and hindrance to spiritual life. That is why after performing his duty to family and society, the ideal Hindu becomes a seeker of eternal truth living in the world yet not part of the world. The major flaw in this code of living is the subordinate role of women in Hindu society. Women are rarely independent. The wife's duty is to wait on her husband, and when he leaves home to take up the religious life she is looked after by her children. However,

there have been exceptions where some extraordinary women in ancient and recent times were revered as great saints.

Although this way of living is not suitable to modern life it does demonstrate the value of having a good balance between what Erich Fromm calls having and being.<sup>2</sup> Modern Western society places high priority on the accumulation of possessions and the glamour of material rewards. Success is measured according to a person's material wealth which determines social standing and status in our society. Much energy and effort is put into maintaining an existence that is spent accumulating material wealth. In fact, it is very difficult to survive in this society without money. The poor are those who do not have money to buy the necessities and luxuries that would make their lives more comfortable. They quite often cannot get good jobs because they do not have the education and skills to get work that would generate more income. Deprivation in the home and community inhibits the opportunities for a good education. So in this way the materially underprivileged are caught in a vicious self-perpetuating cycle of despair and poverty.

A modern myth claims that material prosperity creates greater freedom to explore new alternatives for living. But our socio-economic system is so monolithic and demanding that it discourages new ways of being by creating false needs and material dependence. This bondage is the price that is paid when we believe that we must possess things in order to live. In this scheme of living, religion, which should be taking the lead in providing an ethical and moral code for living, becomes an adjunct to the acquisitive mode of existence. The

spiritual life that seeks to find and explore new ways of being is subordinated in our society to a life of materialism.

Yet, all the great religious teachers of the past have made having and being the central aim in their respective systems.<sup>3</sup> The craving for material wealth leads to spiritual poverty. The great masters of the West and East without exception all set out in their teachings the code of behaviour and conditions necessary for achieving spiritual wealth. Ownership of material things is but a transitory state. They pass on to others when the owner dies. Owning and possessing things is a delusion. Nothing can be owned or possessed. They are accumulated, used, cared for, and temporarily owned, and then they are passed on to others. A true seeker will always renounce the worldly life for the spiritual life. They can take part in worldly affairs, own material things and use them appropriately, but they remain non-attached to possessing, and they do not make the accumulation of material wealth the all-consuming focus of their energies and time. Being true to the inner call and yearning of the human soul, and living a life-enhancing life is all that matters to them.

Native land, and home, and all possessions,  
I know you all to be but empty things;  
Any thoughtless one may have you.  
As for me, the devotee, I go to win Eternal Truth.

(Milarepa)<sup>4</sup>

Though gold and gems by the world are sought and  
prized,  
To me they seem no more than weeds or chaff.

(Fu Hsian)<sup>5</sup>

It is only after the disappearance of all worldly interests that the universality of the transcendental Spirit is known.

(Yoga-Vasishtha)<sup>6</sup>

There is a new consciousness developing in Man, one that is trying to lift the human race beyond fear, prejudice, hatred, war and ignorance to a much higher level of being. It is like the smell of rain in the air after a long drought that promises to revitalize and regenerate the spiritual and moral wasteland in which we now exist. Rapid and fundamental changes signify this evolutionary process as significant numbers of men and women everywhere struggle to articulate new ways of being.

### Entering the Labyrinth

Prometheus, who in ancient Greek legend was the creator of Mankind, has come to personify the audacious scientific spirit that seeks to know and master the phenomenal world. Prometheus stole fire from the gods and gave it to Man who was able to make weapons to subdue all other animals, tools to cultivate the land, provide warmth in dwellings so as to be relatively independent of climatic conditions, and coin money for trade and commerce. Zeus, the supreme deity, swore revenge on Prometheus, and had him chained naked to a pillar in the Caucasian Mountains where a vulture tore at his liver all day, every day, year in, year out. As part of his revenge he sent Epimetheus, brother of Prometheus, the most beautiful woman ever created, Pandora.

But the anti-feminist Zeus gave her a superficial, fickle, mischievous, foolish nature; a woman who idled away her days in vain pursuits. One day, seized with curiosity she opened a jar that Prometheus had warned Epimetheus to always keep closed. Out flew a multitude of plagues and pestilence such as Old Age, Labour, Sickness, Insanity, Vice and Passion which scattered far and wide attacking the mortal race of Man. Only delusive Hope remained in the jar to discourage Mankind, with her lies, from committing mass suicide.

Scientists, who have come to epitomize the bold, impudent spirit of Prometheus, have pitted their intellectual powers against the natural forces that hold sway over, and the maladies that afflict, humankind. Their incredible, but limited success has had some unfortunate side-effects. Lesser minds have tended to adopt an arrogant, almost god-like belief in their ability not only to gain control over the natural world, but also to create new life-forms in the laboratory. Certainly, primitive life has been engineered in the laboratory, but these scientists most often lack the moral and metaphysical understanding of what they are really doing when they try to play god. They see themselves as a power elite who are the true masters of human destiny. This is a naive, somewhat deluded belief which far exceeds present human capabilities. However, the greatest scientific minds are truly aware of their place in the natural scheme of things, and have what Einstein calls a "cosmic religiousness":

...I maintain that cosmic religiousness is the strongest and most noble driving force of scientific research. Only the man who can conceive the gigantic effort and above all the devotion, without which original scientific thought cannot succeed, can measure the strengths of the feeling from which alone such

work ... can grow. What a deep belief in the intelligence of Creation and what longing for understanding, even if only of a meagre reflection in the revealed intelligence of this world, must have flourished in Kepler and Newton, enabling them as lonely men to unravel over years of work the mechanism of celestial mechanics.... Only the man who devotes his life to such goals has a living conception of what inspired these men and gave them strength to remain steadfast in their aim in spite of countless failures. It is cosmic religiousness that bestows such strength. A contemporary has said, not unrightly, that the serious research scholar in our generally materialistic age is the only deeply religious human being.<sup>7</sup>

There is, however, a new trend which is emerging in human consciousness; one that is epitomized by the ancient Greek hero, Theseus. Theseus was the son of Aegeus, King of Athens, and Aethra, daughter of the king of Troezen. Just before his birth, Aegeus parted from Aethra and instructed her to send his son to him when he became strong enough to roll away the stone under which Aegeus had placed his sword and sandals. When she thought he was ready to recover the tokens of his heritage, Aethra led Theseus to the stone which he easily removed and took the sword and sandals. The sword and sandals are ancient symbols of royalty. Other great initiates such as Odin, Galahad and Arthur were also expected to perform similar feats. He then set off on the journey to his father's kingdom.

Theseus decided to take the more perilous journey over land because he was impelled by a desire to emulate the feats of the great solar hero, Heracles, whom he greatly admired. He endured many labours and ordeals along the way all of which he managed to overcome. He arrived in Athens only to face new dangers. Medea, a sorceress who had become the wife of Aegeus, knew who Theseus was, and fearing the loss of her influence over her husband, attempted to poison him. As

he was about to drink the cup containing the poison, Aegeus recognized the sword and prevented him from taking the fatal draught. Medea fled Athens and Theseus was acknowledged by his father, who publicly declared him his successor.

Theseus soon discovered that the Athenians were forced to pay tribute to Minos, King of Crete in recompense for the death of Androgeus. Every ninth year seven youths and seven maids were to be sent to the Cretan Labyrinth where they were devoured by the Minotaur, a bull-headed monster. It was immensely strong and savage, and ran freely through a complicated, artfully designed labyrinth constructed by Daedalus. Theseus decided to volunteer as one of the victims in an attempt to free the Athenians from this calamity. He exacted a promise from King Minos that if he managed to kill the Minotaur the tribute would be remitted.

Theseus sailed for Crete in a ship bearing black sails, and promised his father that if he was victorious he would change the sails to white ones on his return. When they arrived in Crete, Ariadne the king's daughter, fell in love with Theseus at first sight. She promised to help him kill the Minotaur if she could return with him to Athens as his wife. He readily accepted, and she gave him a sword and a magic ball of thread. Daedalus, before he left Crete, had given the ball of thread to Ariadne and had shown her how to enter and leave the labyrinth. She told Theseus that he must tie the loose end to the lintel at the entrance and let the ball roll along and so lead him to where the Minotaur was sleeping. After he had killed the Minotaur in the innermost recesses of the labyrinth he was to follow the thread

back, rolling it up as he went along. Later that night Theseus carried out her instructions and killed the Minotaur. On the way back to Athens he abandoned Ariadne leaving her asleep on the shores of a small island called Dia. As they neared home Theseus neglected to raise the white sails, and his father thinking that his son was dead, took his own life. So, Theseus became king of Athens. He lived on to have many adventures, his most celebrated was against the Amazons.<sup>8</sup>

The labyrinth is a highly complex symbol. The labyrinth that Theseus entered was multicursal "which is designed with the intention of confusing and puzzling and contains blind paths, requiring knowledge of the key or solution to the problem". The labyrinth also symbolizes the return to the centre, the attainment of realization after ordeals, trials and testings - "the rights of passage from the profane to the sacred". It is also the "journey of life through the difficulties and illusions of the world to the centre". The labyrinth shares the symbolism of the enchanted forest because they both permit and prohibit. The way in is difficult, exclusion, and the way out is also difficult, retention. Only those who are "qualified in and equipped with the necessary knowledge can find the centre, those venturing without knowledge are lost".<sup>9</sup>

The Minotaur at the centre represents the savage passions of human nature. The centre in this legend is Hell, and the Minotaur is the Devil. It is filled with the miasma of evil emotions.<sup>10</sup>

The magical thread that Ariadne gave Theseus symbolizes human destiny or fate "spun and woven by divine powers". It was divine intuition on which the life of Theseus depended.<sup>11</sup> The sword which is also a diverse symbol represents in this context discrimination, the

"penetrating power of the intellect". Wielded in the hands of a solar hero such as Theseus he becomes a conqueror of demonic powers. Through his courage, strength and leadership he displays the "higher forms of knighthood" using the sword to discern the truth and dispense justice. Victory over ignorance is achieved with penetrating insight.<sup>12</sup>

The legend of Theseus killing the Minotaur is an allegorical portrayal of a man who struggles through great difficulties, trials and ordeals on the journey of life developing through this experience the penetrating insight and spiritual wisdom of a discriminating mind to overcome and subdue the savage passions and bestial nature of his lower self, and emerge back into the light as a great initiate. He becomes master of himself and is transformed by his own efforts. Throughout this testing time he is guided and protected by the thread of divine intuition. He dispels the miasma of base emotions and the negative thought forms of the lower mind with the inspirational outpourings of the spiritually illumined mind. Theseus, the solar hero or Christ-like figure, shows the way through his own efforts and example. This, then, is the way ahead for humankind.

### **Know Thyself**

A new birth is imminent in human consciousness. The spirit of Man is about to break free from the limitations of the physical plane through the awakening of the dormant faculties of higher perception. Human

consciousness has for too long been trapped in what the poet Martin Armstrong calls *The Cage*:

Man, afraid to be alive  
Shuts his soul in senses five,  
From fields of uncreated light  
Into the crystal tower of sight,  
And from the roaring songs of space  
Into the small flesh-carven place  
Of the ear whose cave impounds  
Only small and broken sounds,  
And to his narrow sense of touch  
From strength that held the stars in clutch,  
And from the warm ambrosial spice  
Of flowers and fruits of paradise,  
Into the frail and fitful power  
Of scent and tasting, sweet and sour;  
And toiling for a sordid wage  
There is his self-created cage  
Ah, how safely barred is he  
From menace of Eternity.<sup>13</sup>

The human spirit is quickening to break free from the restriction of sense-bound thinking and being. It is inspired by a vision of wholeness and impelled by a strange, unseen force that D.H. Lawrence ascribes to a wind in his poem *The Song of a Man who has Come Through*:

Not I, not I, but the wind that blows through me!  
A fine wind is blowing the new direction of Time.  
If only I let it bear me, carry me, if only it carry  
me!  
If only I am sensitive, subtle, Oh delicate, a winged  
gift!  
If only, most lovely of all, I yield myself and am  
borrowed  
By the fine, fine wind that takes its course through  
the chaos of the world  
Like a fine, an exquisite chisel, a wedge-blade  
inserted;  
If only I am keen and hard like the sheer tip of a  
wedge  
Driven by invisible blows,  
The rock will split, we shall come at the wonder,  
we shall find the Hesperides.

Oh, for the wonder that bubbles into my soul;  
I would be a good fountain, a good well-head,  
Would blur no whisper, spoil no expression.

What is the knocking?  
What is the knocking at the door in the night?  
It is somebody wants to do us harm.  
No, no, it is the three strange angels.  
Admit them, admit them.<sup>14</sup>

The way ahead will be revealed through self-knowledge. Carved on the temple at the Delphic Oracle in Greece, a holy place from remote antiquity, was the moral precept "Know thyself". This act or process of cognition is known as gnosis.

Ignorance of self is a form of self-destruction. A lack of self-knowledge causes a person to be driven by impulses which he or she does not understand. They live in the oblivion of their own suffering not understanding what is happening to them because they lack the insight to the cause of their suffering. Their lives become a confused and terrible nightmare of physical, emotional and mental delusion - anguish, distress, instability, doubt and separation. Self-ignorance is darkness. In this sense, the individual is a victim and not the initiator of positive experience.

The injunction to know oneself contains within it the belief that the human psyche bears within itself the potential for self-liberation or self-destruction. The gnostic is someone who becomes embroiled in the inner struggle to achieve mastery over the lower self. Great solitary effort is required to overcome the lethargy and desire to remain unconscious of self, to awaken anaesthetized senses to higher perception, and to control the urge to pursue wayward desires.

The inner journey of self-discovery leads to the illumination that the self is not the self, but the higher Self separated as self. The higher mind is the guiding principle that dispels the delusions of self. The notion of a separate self is banished through the revelation that the self is in reality an extension of the higher Self caught up in the illusion of separateness through the play of opposites. This cannot be intellectually understood. It has to be recognized through direct knowing.

The man who is inseparate from all things enjoys divinity as God himself enjoys it.

(Eckhart)<sup>15</sup>

He, knowing all, become the All.

(Prasna Upanishad, IV.10)<sup>16</sup>

But one cannot know the higher Self unless one knows oneself first.

Self-knowledge is the shortest road to the knowledge of God. When 'Alî asked Mohammad, "What am I to do that I may not waste my time?" the Prophet answered, "Learn to know thyself".

('Azîz ibn Muhammad al-Nasafî)<sup>17</sup>

Thou knowest Myself in thyself, and from this knowledge thou wilt derive all that is necessary.

(St Catherine of Siena)<sup>18</sup>

Every great seer in every religion has taught that the search is inward through self-knowledge. The answers to the eternal questions that have always perplexed us cannot be found in the phenomenal world or in any other way.

"Seek within - know thyself", these secret and sublime hints come to us wafted from the breath of Rishis through the dust of ages.

(Swami Ramdas)<sup>19</sup>

No one can be saved without self-knowledge.

(St Bernard)<sup>20</sup>

This is the true meaning of the legend of Theseus killing the Minotaur in the labyrinth. Through our inner struggle and search we develop the discriminating insight and knowledge of self to overcome our lower natures.

#### Some Characteristics of the New Man

According to Fromm the having mode of existence is the fundamental basis of the acquisitive society. The individual has the inalienable and unrestrictive right within the law to acquire and own private property, and to make a profit in the industrial society.<sup>21</sup> But this is not confined to property or things. Having knowledge, ideas, beliefs, habits and a certain type of lifestyle are all extensions of the ego's sense of identity. Our bodies (health, physical fitness and good looks), our name and social status (family as an indication of genetic stock, private wealth and social standing), our possessions (the things we own including our knowledge) are all projections of the image we have of ourselves and the image we want others to have of

us.<sup>22</sup> The essential point is that the individual ego believes that: "What I have constitutes what I am". Yet, all the great teachers from Buddha to Christ have taught that coveting things and the craving of sense-desires are fetters that cause bondage and suffering. This leads to spiritual poverty.

The being mode is an anomaly in a sensate, possessive culture. It is also difficult to define and describe where the having mode is the norm. The having mode is concerned with appearances and things, whereas the being mode means "authentic relatedness to the world". It is concerned with the essence and truth of who or what is, free from subjective projections and misperceptions. Great importance is placed on human experience; the true nature and true reality of a person or thing in contrast to deceptive appearances.<sup>23</sup> Attempts are made to overcome the barriers of separateness so as to understand the whole person or entity, and the complex interrelatedness of living, interconnected wholes.

Fromm regards having and being as two fundamental modes of existence representing two different kinds of "orientation towards self and the world", and two different kinds of "character structure the respective predominance of which determines the totality of a person's thinking, feeling, and acting".<sup>24</sup> Fromm believes that a fundamental change in human character from a predominantly having mode of existence to a more predominant being mode is vital if we are to save ourselves from psychological and social catastrophe. He asserts that human character can and must change if the following conditions exist:

1. We are suffering and are aware that we are.
2. We recognize the origin of our ill-being.
3. We recognize that there is a way of overcoming our ill-being.
4. We accept that in order to overcome our ill-being we must follow certain norms for living and change our present practice of life.<sup>25</sup>

These four points correspond to the Four Noble Truths from which Buddha derived his teaching concerning the general condition of human existence.

Fromm suggests that the emergence of the new Man should be fostered and encouraged through the development of the following qualities:

- \* Willingness to give up all forms of having, in order to fully be.
- \* Security, sense of identity, and confidence based on faith in what one is, on one's need for relatedness, interest, love, solidarity with the world around one, instead of on one's desire to have, to possess, to control the world, and thus become the slave of one's possession.
- \* Acceptance of the fact that nobody and nothing outside oneself give meaning to life, but that this radical independence and no-thingness can become the condition for the fullest activity devoted to caring and sharing.
- \* Being fully present where one is.
- \* Joy that comes from giving and sharing, not from hoarding and exploiting.
- \* Love and respect for life in all its manifestations, in the knowledge that not things, power, all that is dead, but life and everything that pertains to its growth are sacred.
- \* Trying to reduce greed, hate, and illusions as much as one is capable.
- \* Living without worshipping idols and without illusions, because one has reached a state that does not require illusions.
- \* Developing one's capacity for love, together with one's capacity for critical, unsentimental thought.

- \* Shedding one's narcissism and accepting the tragic limitations inherent in human existence.
- \* Making the full growth of oneself and of one's fellow beings the supreme goal of living.
- \* Knowing that to reach this goal, discipline and respect for reality are necessary.
- \* Knowing, also, that no growth is healthy that does not occur in a structure, but knowing, too, the difference between structure as an attribute of life and "order" as an attribute of no-life, of the dead.
- \* Developing one's imagination, not as an escape from intolerable circumstances but as the anticipation of real possibilities, as a means to do away with intolerable circumstances.
- \* Not deceiving others, but also not being deceived by others; one may be called innocent, but not naive.
- \* Knowing oneself, not only the self one knows, but also the self one does not know - even though one has a slumbering knowledge of what one does not know.
- \* Sensing one's oneness with all life, hence giving up the aim of conquering nature, subduing it, exploiting it, raping it, destroying it, but trying, rather, to understand and co-operate with nature.
- \* Freedom that is not arbitrariness but the possibility to be oneself, not as a bundle of greedy desires, but as a delicately balanced structure that at any moment is confronted with the alternative of growth or decay, life or death.
- \* Knowing that evil and destructiveness are necessary consequences of failure to grow.
- \* Knowing that only a few have reached perfection in all these qualities, but being without the ambition to "reach the goal", in the knowledge that such ambition is only another form of greed, of having.
- \* Happiness in the process of every-growing aliveness, whatever the furthest point is that fate permits one to reach, for living as fully as one can is so satisfactory that the concern for what one might or might not attain has little chance to develop.<sup>26</sup>

It is quite easy to dismiss Fromm's suggestions on the basis that they are too idealistic and, therefore, impossible to achieve, given

the present world situation and the manifest human tendency for self-destruction. Whether these aims are possible to achieve or not is not the point. The key issue here is that we should be committed to trying, no matter how hard it may seem. Doing something in spite of the odds is a far more positive act than not doing anything at all.

An important question to consider here, too, is whether we can do it alone. We certainly need the co-operation of each other, but we also need the guidance that comes from inner communion with the sacred. The one facilitates the other. We should also bear in mind that we are not aiming to achieve an ideal state of existence. Instead, we should be centred on being through becoming.

The futurist, Barbara Marx Hubbard, has identified what she terms the evolutionary personality. She has drawn up a checklist that best describes the new, emerging human characteristics.<sup>27</sup> This type of person is self-actualizing, whose peak experiences occur through self-transcendence, the loss of identity with self. They have developed the ability to empathize and enter into communion with others. They take great pleasure in loving, extending and deepening their connectedness with others. The development of creativity is a priority in their lives. They embrace all forms of knowing from rational, scientific inquiry to intuition and other tacit forms of awareness. They are willing to take risks at the expense of security. They are fairly well integrated people who view crises as not only times of danger, but also times of opportunity. They are struggling to re-define the roles and relationships between men and women. They are breaking free from the traditional dominant-submissive male-female roles, and are looking for ways to achieve greater intimacy and equality. They are

relatively self-disciplined and are unwilling to abdicate their decision-making freedom to others or authority figures. They tend to be highly individualistic, but will co-operate easily with others. They have balanced egos that do not seek to manipulate or control. They are more interested in self empowerment. They tend to be physically healthy and practise some form of meditation or creative visualization technique, or methods for developing positive mental attitudes, or a combination of these. These people have a long history of aloneness, but realize and feel a deep need to connect and stay in touch with others. They understand that their own potential cannot be fully released unless there is interaction with others. They are willing to assume a lot of responsibility and readily take the initiative if there is a need for something to be done. Materialism does not form the basis of their reality. They are conscious of a greater spiritual reality that lies beyond themselves.

They do not feel completely comfortable with remaining loyal to one form of institutionalized religion. They draw sustenance and wisdom from all the world's great religions, as well as all fields of human knowledge. They do not accept the artificial barriers put up by the human mind. They see these as unnecessary obstacles that prevent us from gaining a deeper understanding of the human condition and finding ways to solve the problems that plague us.

Carl Rogers has also come up with a similar checklist based on his personal experience with individuals who display certain common traits.

- \* These persons live life as a process, an energy flow, a changingness. The static, rigid life has no appeal.
- \* They live in a comfortable relationship to nature, a responsible kinship. The conquest of nature is an abhorrent concept.
- \* They see that power over others is simply another form of conquest, equally abhorrent and unacceptable. Their goal is to empower each individual, to share power in common enterprises.
- \* As part of this relatedness to nature they experience their relatedness to each other. This relatedness underlies their building of human-scale communities, their flexible way of dealing with common problems.
- \* These persons do not like to live in a compartmentalized world, divided into body and mind, health and illness, intellect and feeling, science and common sense, individual and group, sane and insane, work and play. They strive rather for wholeness of life, with thought, feeling, physical energy, psychic energy, healing energy, all being integrated in experience.
- \* These individuals are fundamentally indifferent to material possessions, comforts and rewards. Money and material status symbols are not their goal. They can live with affluence, but it is in no way necessary to them.
- \* They are seekers, but their quest is essentially spiritual in nature. They are aware of and influenced by the larger rhythms of the universe.
- \* They are at home with altered states of consciousness, with psychic energy, with meditative and mystic experiences. They wish to find a meaning and purpose in life which transcends the individual.
- \* These persons have an openness to the world - inner and outer. They are open to experience, to new ways of seeing, new ways of being, new ideas and concepts, and a newly discovered world of feeling.
- \* I find these persons value communication as a means of telling it the way it is. They reject the hypocrisy, deceit and double-talk of our culture. They are open, for example, about their sexual relationships rather than leading a secretive double life.

\* These persons are caring, eager to be of help to others when the need is real. It is a gentle, subtle, non-moralistic, non-judgmental caring. They are suspicious of professional "helpers".

\* These individuals have an antipathy for any highly structured, inflexible bureaucratic institution. They believe that institutions should exist for people, not the reverse.

\* These persons have a trust in their own experience and a profound distrust of external authority. They make their own moral judgments, even openly disobeying laws they consider unjust.

\* Their lives are built on a consistent philosophy - a basic trust in the constructive nature of the human organism, a respect for the integrity of each person, a belief that harmonious communication between individuals can be facilitated, a recognition that the experience of intimate community is essential to the good life.<sup>28</sup>

No one person possesses all these qualities, and they only describe a small number of people out of the total world population. But they form part of a critical number of people who are committed to pioneering new ways of being through a process of continual transformation and change.

### Summary

The future is unknown and open-ended, and suggests the adventure of new, exciting and surprising possibilities. These people, who represent the emerging new world person, believe in the evolutionary not

the revolutionary process because they are aware of a divine, guiding Intelligence which is unfolding the involuted design of a higher reality. For this reason, they see themselves as co-workers in a far greater creative process which is directing the destiny of this planet. They are motivated by a deep desire to transform themselves and the world around them because they believe in a positive future. They want to create a more humane and human world.

CHAPTER EIGHT  
C H O O S I N G T H E F U T U R E

South Africa has contributed two important words, among others, to the international lexicon of ideas that represent diametrically contrasting ways of being - apartheid and holism. Holism is the very antithesis of apartheid, a social system which is the root cause of all the conflict, suffering and misery in our country.

Ironically, both concepts were formulated by the Afrikaner mind set. Smuts, the originator of holism, was born and bred an Afrikaner. And yet, in certain ways, he never really overcame the parochial nature that is so characteristic of the Afrikaner. Smuts, the domestic politician was, in a sense, very different to Smuts the international statesman and philosopher. It was as if he were two different people. For example, the Botha-Smuts regime implemented a segregationist strategy that was aimed at deliberately depressing the economic and political growth of the African people. Their "native policy" disapproved of racial miscegenation, regarded the idea of a black political majority as unthinkable, provided labour for white farms and the mines by restricting land ownership so as to force African men from the rural communities, ensured that African urban workers were placed in locations, and aimed to control black labour's bargaining power in the workplace. The Botha-Smuts period instituted a set of segregationist laws that was comparable to the era of Verwoerd.<sup>1</sup> But, as soon as Smuts moved on to the international stage,

his perspective widened and he displayed all the qualities of a true universal visionary.

Nevertheless, Smuts left us with a set of ideas that are the key to our future well-being. The concept of holism helps us to make sense of a world of apparent separateness by revealing the network of interconnecting relationships that make up the underlying pattern. He has also opened our eyes to the fact that everything in Creation is in a state of becoming whole. The life-force that guides the destiny of all created things is continually striving towards greater wholeness through a process of reorganization and restructuring. This transformative, creative synthesis is a universal principle.

South Africa, having reached the apogee of social disintegration, is slowly awakening to its potential as a nation and has already embarked, in imperceptible ways, on this long, transformative journey towards greater wholeness. But it is certainly not going to be easy. It is quite possible, in these very early stages, for us to choose the wrong direction. If we allow bitterness, hatred and a desire to avenge the past to poison our decisions, then our future as a nation is greatly in doubt. But if we decide on a path of redemption because we truly desire to create a positive future, then it is certainly possible that our sincerity of purpose will carry us through the greatest difficulties. In order to assist this process, we need to develop a holistic concept of Man from which educational principles could be derived so as to heal our crippled self-image.

### The Rights of the Child

In order to create a more humane society we have to be prepared to bear witness to human injustice. But this is not always easy to do, and it is a sure test of our courage, commitment and determination to create a more just society. A holist is someone who is not only concerned with their own personal, inner development, but also with the whole living environment - human and natural - in which he or she lives and grows. Their responsibility extends far beyond their own private domain and concerns.

The best, and possibly the hardest, way to approach this task is to take a non-ideological stand. Those who stress human values instead of ideological ones expose themselves to criticism from every quarter, that is why it is such a difficult thing to do. Yet it has to be done if we are to create a more caring society. Becoming aware of our lack of caring is the first stage in learning how to care for others.

Those who make a stand against human injustice find themselves trespassing into politics, especially if the political structure of that society is the root cause of those injustices. This will happen even if those who speak out are committed to human values rather than ideological ones. Nevertheless, cataloguing the facts and incidents that expose human injustice does not amount to a political diatribe. Rather, it is an attempt to disturb the conscience by pointing out the need to take appropriate action.

It would be pertinent at this stage to look at the Declaration on the Rights of the Child that was unanimously adopted by the United

Nations General Assembly on October 20, 1959, and to see whether or not South African society upholds these rights in every possible way.

**Principle 1.** The child shall enjoy all the rights set forth in this Declaration. All children, without any exception whatsoever, shall be entitled to these rights, without distinction or discrimination on account of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status, whether of himself or of his family.

**Principle 2.** The child shall enjoy special protection and shall be given opportunities and facilities, by law and by other means, to enable him to develop physically, mentally, morally, spiritually, and socially in a healthy and normal manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity. In the enactment of laws for this purpose, the best interests of the child shall be the paramount consideration.

**Principle 3.** The child shall be entitled from his birth to a name and a nationality.

**Principle 4.** The child shall enjoy the benefits of social security. He shall be entitled to grow up and develop in health; to this end special care and protection shall be provided both to him and to his mother, including adequate pre-natal and post-natal care. The child shall have the right to adequate nutrition, housing, recreation, and medical services.

**Principle 5.** The child who is physically, mentally, or socially handicapped shall be given the special treatment, education, and care required by his particular condition.

**Principle 6.** The child, for the full harmonious development of his personality, needs love and understanding. He shall, wherever possible, grow up in the care and under the responsibility of his parents, and in any case in an atmosphere of affection and of moral and material security. A child of tender years shall not, save in exceptional circumstances, be separated from his mother. Society and the public authorities shall have the duty to extend particular care to children without a family and those without adequate means of support. Payment of State and other assistance toward the maintenance of children of large families is desirable.

**Principle 7.** The child is entitled to receive education, which shall be free and compulsory at least in the elementary stages. He shall be given an education which will promote his general culture, and enable him on a basis of equal opportunity to develop his abilities, his individual judgment, and his sense of moral and social responsibility, and to become a useful member of society.

"The best interests of the child shall be the guiding principle of those responsible for his education and upbringing; that responsibility lies in the first place with his parents.

"The child shall have full opportunity for play and recreation, which should be directed to the same purpose as education; society and the public authorities shall endeavour to promote the enjoyment of this right.

**Principle 8.** The child shall in all circumstances be among the first to receive protection and relief.

**Principle 9.** The child shall be protected against all forms of neglect, cruelty, and exploitation. He shall not be the subject of traffic in any form.

"The child shall not be admitted to employment before an appropriate minimum age. He shall in no case be caused or permitted to engage in any occupation or employment which would prejudice his health or education or interfere with his physical, mental, or moral development.

**Principle 10.** The child shall be protected from practices which may foster racial, religious, and any other form of discrimination. He shall be brought up in a spirit of understanding, tolerance, friendship among peoples, peace and universal brotherhood, and in full consciousness that his energy and talents should be devoted to the service of his fellow men."<sup>2</sup>

South Africa, along with Cambodia, were the only two countries that abstained from voting. Why did the South African delegation do this? What was happening politically in South Africa at the time that

influenced the government's decision to withdraw its support for these admirable humanitarian principles?

At the time when the United Nations adopted this Declaration, Verwoerd, who had succeeded Strijdom as Prime Minister in 1958, was proposing his homeland policy through the Promotion of the Bantu Self-Government Bill which effectively terminated any possibility of future black representation in Parliament. The Verwoerdian vision outlined a South African commonwealth which formed the framework for the inclusion of separate, but independent, Bantustans. The goal was the total separation of whites and blacks. Verwoerd, himself, had laid the foundation for this "great reformation" when he became Minister of Native Affairs in 1950. He zealously approached the task of stemming the integrationist tide by introducing a crop of legislation which was aimed at controlling every aspect of a black person's life. Also, the Bantu Education Act of 1953 was geared to what the government considered black educational needs to be. Through these laws apartheid ideology took hold, and Verwoerd became its leading publicist.

The Verwoerd era saw a greater commitment to the policy of setting up independent Bantustans. Also, a decision was made by the government for South Africa to leave the Commonwealth and become a republic. This decision was announced in Parliament on January 19, 1960. Two weeks later the British Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan, visited South Africa after a tour through Africa and delivered his famous "winds of change" speech. All this took place against a background of increasing tension that eventually climaxed in massive demonstrations on March 31, 1960, which resulted in the killing of 69 blacks with another 180 injured when police opened fire on a crowd of

demonstrators at Sharpeville. It is no wonder, then, that the government was disinclined to support the United Nations declaration on the rights of children when seen in the light of the political thinking and social climate at that time.

Nevertheless, does South African society give all its children the very best it can give? The best way to answer this question is to use the Declaration as a measure because it is the one document that has been universally accepted as the most comprehensive bill on the rights of children that there is.

This Declaration is primarily a statement on those human values which have universal applicability. That is the holistic perspective. But those governments that do not uphold these rights would view it as a political statement that attempts to interfere in their domestic affairs. In the final analysis, the acceptance or rejection of this document is largely a matter of perspective and opinion.

THE FIRST PRINCIPLE: South Africa does not have a bill or any other humanitarian declaration of intent constituted to protect the civil rights of its citizens. There are no higher constitutional structures in this country which could regulate the actions of the government as exemplified by the role of the American Supreme Court. Consequently, many of the present laws enacted by Parliament flagrantly violate human rights. For example, the police have been given, over the years, sweeping powers to detain suspects for an unlimited period without having to bring charges against them, or they can put individuals under house arrest, or place them or organizations under banning orders. This abuse of civil liberties has, since the schools boycotts of 1985, resulted in the detention of a large number

of children. At one stage there were 3 aged 12, 18 aged 13, 91 aged 14 and 169 aged 15, totalling 281 children detained under the emergency regulations. The reason given by the Minister of Law and Order for doing this was to combat "revolution-inspired crime".<sup>3</sup>

THE SECOND PRINCIPLE: The racially segregated structure of South African society means that not everyone is equal before the law. Whites on the whole enjoy "special protection" in terms of the law, and their children are given every opportunity and facility "to develop physically, mentally, morally, spiritually, and socially in a healthy and normal manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity". But not so for the majority of our children who are victims from birth of oppressive laws which have created conditions of physical, mental and social deprivation and poverty. These children grow up in conflict with a society which limits their freedom and assaults their dignity as ordinary human beings in every possible way. They are treated as being inferior in terms of the law. It is no wonder, then, that they quite justifiably regard the tenets on which this society is based as being morally wrong and un-Christian. This moral outrage has been expressed through various sociopathic patterns of behaviour. The most significant and sophisticated expression of this moral indignation, however, took the form of a far-reaching motion initiated by Dr Allan Boesak and passed by the World Alliance of Reformed Churches pronouncing apartheid a heresy. There is certainly no doubt that the "best interests" of the majority of our children are not the "paramount consideration" of the legislators in Parliament.

THE THIRD PRINCIPLE: The aim of the homeland policy was to set up independent Bantustans within South Africa. The Bantu Homelands

Citizenship Act of 1970 attempted to attach citizenship of one or other homeland to every black person living in South Africa. This meant that a migrant worker from the Transkei living and working on the mines in the Transvaal was a citizen of Transkei, an "independent state" that has not been accorded international recognition. Consequently, he was not entitled to South African citizenship and was in a sense stateless. He was also not allowed to bring his family to live with him in the Transvaal and could be resettled back in the Transkei at any time. Blacks who are entitled to claim South African citizenship do not enjoy the full rights of citizenship. Therefore, the majority of our children have been deprived in one form or another of their birthrights.

There are debatable issues here, mainly over what is the best form of government for South Africa and what are the rights of citizenship in a multi-cultural society such as ours. These are dilemmas which we still have to solve. Nevertheless, this does not excuse us from continuing with closed social and political hierarchies which effectively block individuals from rising through them according to merit or prevent anyone from criticizing those who originate policy and hold authority in these organizational structures.

THE FOURTH PRINCIPLE: There are four areas of concern here - nutrition, housing, recreation and medical services.

South Africa produces more than enough food for everyone, and annually exports over R1,5 billion worth of livestock, beef, grain, vegetables and fruit (1980 figures). And yet, despite this apparent abundance of food, severe malnutrition exists in South Africa. In general terms, approximately 20% of coloured and Indian and more than

30% of black pre-school children are underweight-for-age. These proportions are almost double for school-age children in the three race groups.<sup>4</sup> The infant mortality rates among coloureds and blacks are up to six times the allowed maximum.<sup>5</sup> The child mortality rate for blacks is 14 times higher, and for coloureds 13 times higher, than those for whites.<sup>6</sup> These figures would obviously vary from region to region, and are therefore only approximates of the nutritional states of the whole population.

What are the causes of malnutrition in this country? There are many contributing factors: drought and the economic recession, low wages, high unemployment, poor education of the mother, a lack of dietary understanding, non-availability of protective foods, broken families, large families, a lack of creches and child minding schemes for working mothers often results in poor supervision and feeding of children during the day.<sup>7</sup> The central cause of malnutrition, however, is disabling poverty.

Malnutrition becomes a scale by which one measures the level of poverty in a society. This means that the "extent of protein-energy-malnutrition (PEM) in a society is an unchallenged index of the equity of social, political and economic structures on which it is founded."<sup>8</sup> The prevention of PEM is often equated with the "elimination of poverty and the promotion of social justice".<sup>9</sup> In a country which is a net exporter of food the central problem is one of maldistribution. The tragedy is that hunger should not exist in a land of plenty.

It is estimated that four million houses will be required for blacks between 1983 and the year 2000. This means that over a 20 year period, 80,000 houses will have to be built per annum, or 320 houses

every working day. At this time the government is building only 1,6% of the required number of houses. This has resulted "in untold misery, daily suffering, epidemic and endemic diseases and mushrooming of squatter camps, from Crossroads to Inanda."<sup>10</sup> Consequently, the recreational needs of blacks, coloureds and Indians are very low on the list of governmental priorities.

Very little money is spent on health care in general (1,59% of the GNP) with most of it going on curative services. The denial of political rights to the majority of South Africans and the absence of democratic processes and structures for these people to express their demands and needs means that the interests of the white elite take precedence over them. This means that there is a racially biased allocation and distribution of resources. This is "clearly reflected in racially determined disparities in health, patterns of disease and distribution of health services".<sup>11</sup> Government policy has resulted in the "fragmentation of comprehensive health services, differential financial subsidies and an enormous discrepancy between services in the homelands (where the majority of the people live) and those in the urban areas".<sup>12</sup> Coupled to this, "health services for Africans located in so-called white areas have been deprived of funds in order drive these patients towards homeland services and thereby compel the homeland authorities to cater for their health needs".<sup>13</sup> Officially, the homeland authorities must provide health services for people living in those areas. But they are unable to do so because of financial and other restraints. The doctor to population ratios are one white doctor/400 whites; one Indian doctor/900 Indians; one coloured doctor/1 200 coloureds and one African doctor/90 000 Africans.<sup>14</sup> The

health care services in South Africa are characterized by the following features:

1. The absence of democracy with political control and decision making vested in a minority.
2. The existence of high technology Western style medical service providing mainly curative care which is not meeting the needs of the people.
3. Since health care is subject to market forces it is inversely available to those who most need it.
4. The existence of powerful interest groups such as the medical profession and its association, the hospital industry, the drug industry working in collusion with the State to maintain the dominance of the private sector.<sup>15</sup>

THE FIFTH PRINCIPLE: The special needs of the handicapped have always been a low priority issue in terms of private and public spending. For example, architects have only recently been including design modifications in their buildings that would assist the mobility of the handicapped, such as ramps for wheelchairs, handrails, and lifts and toilets specially designed to take wheelchairs.

Much of the budget for education is spent on trying to make up the backlog in schools, teacher training, equipment and sporting facilities. Very little is devoted to the special educational needs of the handicapped child. A white handicapped child, though, does have a better chance of receiving special treatment and remedial education than does the black, coloured or Indian handicapped child. Furthermore, it is not unusual for a teacher teaching in a black, coloured or Indian school to be confronted with the problem of overcrowded classes and the added difficulty of dealing with pupils who

have a wide range of academic ability. For example, a teacher could be faced with a class containing above average or bright children to children who need special attention such as dyslexics, ones with slow learning ability, or others with a variety of organic problems. Most often, a teacher in this situation does not have the time or expertise to deal with their needs, or the backup of specialized agencies to which these children could be referred. This teacher, then, has no alternative but to concentrate on the educational needs of the majority of the children in his or her class. Sadly, the stragglers are left behind and inevitably drop out of school.

THE SIXTH PRINCIPLE: It is commonly recognized that the family is the normal social and biological structure in which the child should develop. This was acknowledged by the Minister of Health when he introduced the Child Care Bill to Parliament<sup>16</sup>. And yet, the urban residential rights of black migrant workers, who are forced to seek work in the cities because of severe poverty in the rural areas, have been restricted by government legislation. These men can be prosecuted for illegally harbouring their wives and children in urban areas. Consequently, there are a great number of fathers who are denied the possibility of living with their children for up to 94% of the year. This may go on throughout the entire childhood of their children.<sup>17</sup> These migrants are "denied the opportunity to participate with their families in an economic and cultural synthesis. The State has institutionalized dissonance into the rules that govern their existence".<sup>18</sup> The devastating impact of this enforced separation on family life and the cultural ethos as a whole can never be underestimated. It causes alienation within the family unit and breaks the

traditional means of imparting cultural values from one generation to the next. This greatly affects the individual's sense of identity because these values are deeply embedded in the close-knit relationships of the family which provide the best environment for their transmission and synthesis. The fathers cannot fulfil the culture's ideal of fatherhood, and when they do return home they seem like strangers to their children.

**Dakada:** In the three weeks of leave, the first few days are very difficult as the children are frightened even if I speak.

**Zisani:** When I return, I find that the children are a bit unruly. They do not have much respect for their mother. I try to correct that and for the first few days I am an intruder. It makes me very sad.

**Matshanda:** The children are not happy to have us back and ask their mothers, "Mama, when is this man going away?"<sup>19</sup>

THE SEVENTH PRINCIPLE: When Verwoerd introduced the Bantu Education Act to Parliament in 1953 he made it quite clear that the school system proposed in this Act was designed to prepare blacks for certain types of labour, mainly at the lower levels of the job pyramid. The schools also aimed at teaching them suitable attitudes and values, in particular, to accept the idea that as adults they would have no political rights. Thus began the era of apartheid education with all its inequalities and inherent injustices.

A brief look at the statistics will reveal more about the structural inequalities of the education system in this country.<sup>20</sup> Whites comprise 19% of the total population, and yet, the per capita expenditure on white education is eight times more than blacks, two and a

half times more than coloureds, and one and a half times more than Indians. The gap in the money spent on white children and black children is not getting smaller even though government expenditure on education is increasing every year. Because there are very many more blacks than whites it would cost an enormous amount of money to bring black, coloured and Indian education on a par with white education. School attendance figures show that there is a high drop-out rate among black children with a low drop-out rate for white children. More than half of the black children at school (57,3%) are in the first four years of school. Also, very few black children reach Standard 10, whereas most white children do. The pass rate for white candidates in Standard 10 is 94% (1981 results) with 49% achieving matriculation exemption, compared to the 53% pass rate for blacks with only 13% obtaining matriculation exemption. Pupil-teacher ratios reflect the shortage of classrooms and teachers. For example, the ratio for whites (based on average class size) is 1:18, Indians 1:24, coloured 1:27 and blacks 1:43. A lack of qualified teachers is also a major problem. Most black teachers (82,2%) and over two-thirds of coloured teachers (69,5%) had not passed Standard 10. All white teachers had passed at least Standard 10. Illiteracy rates show that 33% of blacks are illiterate compared to the 0,7% for whites.

Given these facts, it is obvious that most of our children do not receive equal educational opportunities to develop their abilities or an education that promotes their "general culture". "The best interests of the child" has not been the "guiding principle" of those responsible for his or her education and upbringing.

THE EIGHTH PRINCIPLE: In apartheid society the children of the oppressed are certainly not by any means the "first to receive protection and relief".

THE NINTH PRINCIPLE: The political structure in this country has played a major role in the break-up of family life, especially among blacks. The transmission of tribal values and traditions have been disrupted, in some cases lost, through forced removals and the migratory labour system which, because of the extreme poverty in the rural areas, forces the father to leave his family in the homeland while he goes to the city to look for work. This, together with the stress of urban living, has resulted in an increase in child neglect and exploitation. It is not an uncommon sight these days to see gangs of street-wise urchins roaming the streets begging for food and money, scrounging in dustbins for scraps, addicted to drugs and alcohol or anything else that would numb their gnawing cold and hunger, or sleeping in doorways or any other place that might give them temporary shelter. Many of these children have run away from home for one or other reason. It could be parental abuse or neglect, or that they were thrown out of the house, or they were passed on from one family relative to another simply because their parents could not cope any more. Many of these children have received very little or no schooling whatsoever, and they most often resort to petty crime in order to survive.

There has also been an increase in the use of child labour on South African farms over the past few years. Extensive mechanization and the increases in farm size have caused a dramatic reduction in permanent and seasonal employment. The exodus of men to the urban

areas has resulted in a growing number of women and children replacing them as seasonal farm workers.<sup>21</sup> There may be very good economic reasons why these children have to work. It is quite certain that rural families could not survive otherwise. Nevertheless, such exploitation is inexcusable because no society, especially in a land of such abundance, should allow such a situation to arise.

THE TENTH PRINCIPLE: Needless to say, our children are not protected from practices which "foster racial, religious, and any other form of discrimination". The great tragedy is that they are not "brought up in a spirit of understanding, tolerance, friendship among peoples, peace and universal brotherhood".

In a society where human rights are being continually violated through the various oppressive structures which have institutionalized deprivation and misery, the rights of the majority of our children who are victims of the apartheid system are of little concern to the dominant, power elite. They are more concerned about the needs of their own children than for the needs of all the children in this country. This society fails miserably to uphold many of the above principles. In this way our society betrays the innocence of the majority of the children under its care. Certainly, if these practices should continue, the future will be put in great doubt.

#### **The Need for Redemption**

South Africa is a land of extraordinarily complex and contrasting social realities. In fact, the divisions among people have been so

exaggerated by apartheid policies that the task of bridging the abyss seems almost impossible at times. And yet, it has to be done, somehow. It largely depends on individual and national will.

The variance in world views and community experience is at times so great that it is difficult to believe that different groups of people could even begin to understand one another. The oppressive hardships of the blacks are beyond the ken of most whites. Whites in general, along with other racial groups, have a distorted view of reality largely due to their bracketed existence in areas clearly demarcated by the Group Areas Act. This gives rise, sometimes, to quite bizarre situations. During the schools boycotts, for example, on any given day, mothers in white areas could be seen caringly or impatiently taxiing their children to school by car or dropping them off at special schoolbus pick-up points where they were taken to school to spend an uninterrupted day learning in well-lit, properly ventilated, comfortable classrooms from well-qualified teachers who have the use of all the appropriate teaching aids. These children usually ended their school day on the sports fields or pursuing some extra-curricular or cultural activity organized by their teachers. There is nothing wrong with this. But, in direct contrast to this, and only a few kilometres away, coloured or black school children were boycotting classes, having mass meetings organized by the SRCs to plan awareness programmes and strategy, or had picket demonstrations broken up by tear gas and baton-wielding policemen who many times brutally assaulted children of all ages, boys and girls, in the playgrounds and even in the classrooms. SRC members and other so-called radicals were arrested and detained for indefinite periods. The parents of these

children were left helpless in the wake of these draconian measures, anxiously waiting for their children to be released from prison, not knowing where they were or what was happening to them. All this was happening in areas that are not too distant from one another. And yet, in another sense, these communities are light years away from one another.

The social crisis in South Africa is manifesting, most dramatically, through the school system. Compared to their black and coloured counterparts, white youth in general are unaware, apathetic, politically illiterate and naive. Most, if not all, are unprepared for their future political role in this country. The black, coloured and Indian youth, however, through their education-based resistance movement are at the cutting edge of social, economic and political change in this country.

During the schools boycotts, most parents found themselves helplessly swept aside by the wave of revolutionary idealism that surged with adrenalin-incited urgency through their children. They suddenly realized that they had no control over their children any more, and were confronted with hurtful accusations made by their children that they had been conniving in their own oppression through their docile acceptance, over the years, of government policies. The youth thought that their parents had let them down. This resulted in numerous crises, and at times, deep divisions within the family unit. But then, after this initial period of painful catharsis, the "education struggle" shifted its strategy from the politics of refusal - protest and boycotts, to involving the community in the transformation of the education system into a mass-based alternative. The rallying call was

captured in the slogan "People's Education for People's Power". Now parents, teachers and students are being urged to unite and become involved in the liberation struggle. Transformation within the present system is seen as impossible. Educational demands are now linked to a programme for economic, social and political reconstruction. Meanwhile, the white youth continue to blithely live out their bourgeois fantasies, blissfully unaware that their future, to a large extent, is now being determined for them in the townships.

The liberation struggle in South Africa has overcome the inertia of the initial stages and has moved a long way down the road to freedom. What the youth in the townships did not realize when they accused their parents of docility was that their parents were gripped for a long time by the fear of freedom. Also, the oppression during their time was at its most extreme. What the oppressed youth are now trying to do in their own way is to break the racial mould and create a new one that embodies their own inner image of themselves.

But what of the future? What is their image of the "new person", and how do they see themselves in a post-apartheid society? What will those who spent their formative years growing up during the apartheid era be like when they eventually come to power? In other words, what is the legacy of apartheid? Will they be able to choose a new direction, one that can repair the human damage and heal the past, or will they also be guilty of perpetrating the sins of their oppressors? Whether they realize it or not, the present generation is faced with a choice between reacting to the painful memories of the past or responding to the best within them by working in hope for a better future.

These questions are difficult to answer because this image of the "new person" is still in the embryonic stage of development. We will have to wait and see. Nevertheless, we can still look for clues that would help us answer these questions.

The Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire, has noted that during the initial stage of the liberation struggle the oppressed find in their oppressor their role model for "manhood". Oppression has taken away their "manhood". So their ideal is naturally to be men. But for them, to be a man is to be an oppressor.<sup>22</sup> The oppressors prescribe behaviour and this gives rise to a situation where "the oppressed, having internalized the image of the oppressor and adopted his guidelines, are fearful of freedom."<sup>23</sup> Freire explains this phenomenon as happening at a certain moment in the existential experience of the oppressed when they adopt an attitude of "adhesion" to the oppressor. The oppressed are certainly aware that they are downtrodden, but their impaired perception of themselves is seen in the image of the "new man". Their vision of the "new man" is for them to become, in turn, oppressors.<sup>24</sup> Freire believes that in order to "surmount the situation of oppression", the oppressed have to assess critically its causes so that they could take "transforming action" to create a new situation "which makes possible the pursuit of a fuller humanity". This has already begun in the struggle to transform the situation of oppression.<sup>25</sup> Liberation, therefore, is a painful childbirth. Freire asserts that the education of the oppressed must take this "tragic dilemma" into account.<sup>26</sup> The present education of the oppressed, and the alternatives being proposed in these schools, certainly do not take this into account.

The same psychological dynamic is found in abused children. The "adhesion" to the parent is partly explained by the child's need to win approval from, and be liked by, a disapproving parent. The great tragedy of the situation is that the parent becomes a role model for parenting and the manner of disciplining so that when the child becomes, in turn, a parent these are the guidelines that he or she will follow. Abused children most often turn into child abusers when they become parents.

There is, currently, a prevailing attitude that the end justifies the means. Oppression in any form and by any standards is morally wrong. It is quite natural that the oppressed see themselves as victims of a great wrong. Therefore, they are well within their rights to take every legitimate means to right that wrong. But this is made even more difficult when they do not have recourse to democratic action. What is in question here, though, is the manner in which they do it. Apartheid has created structural and institutional violence. The way of violence has become a norm for the oppressed. Their lives are filled with violence and they are violated at every turn. As we know, violence begets more violence. When all else fails violence usually wins the day. Nevertheless, using violence to right a wrong and institute structural changes does not legitimate the use of violence or, for that matter, make it morally right. But for many, it seems the only possible way of bringing about change. And that is the great danger which threatens peaceful change in this country.

Compounding this situation, the mood among the white power elite is generally belligerent and unheeding. Does this mean that white South Africans will adopt scorched-earth policies in order to counter

the revolutionary forces and their scorched-earth policies before any side capitulates? Or, are those, such as Chief Buthelezi, right when they believe "that there is not going to be a titanic struggle between the black liberation movement and then, suddenly, victory and a transfer of power" because there is general acceptance that the violence will create a situation where "any future government will have to attempt to rule not only over a deeply polarized South Africa, in which there will be no consensus among the country's population groups about how South Africans want to be governed, but it will also have to attempt to do so with a destroyed economy which will leave it incapable of making liberation meaningful to ordinary people in terms of improved standards of living".<sup>27</sup> Buthelezi's credibility as a black leader is not the issue here. The point he makes is a valid one which even the most radical elements of the liberation struggle are now beginning to accept. But will this attitude prevail, given the present mood?

The focus of the oppressed is on creating the structural changes in our society that would hopefully improve the economic, social and political lot of everyone living in this country. That is the obvious strategy and necessary if their concept of the "new person" is to emerge. But so far, all indications suggest that this "new person" is seen in terms of the attainment of economic and political power. It is more a reactionary self-image which is largely prompted by the need to take control of their own lives, and possibly over others. There is still a great need to experience the power that comes with economic and political control. It is likely that Freire will prove to be

right because this image of the "new person" seems to be deeply imprinted with the impressions and tendencies of the oppressor. The oppressed youth react very strongly against all forms of authority and resort easily to anarchical methods in order to resolve their problems. They have been cut off from their traditional cultural roots and show scant respect for the older generation. Their moral development is highly questionable and many have become simply amoral. The oppressed generally are still caught up in the having mode of existence. The imbalances of apartheid have created great needs in the oppressed. This means that we will have to go through a period where these needs are satisfied first, before we can move on and reach a point of greater balance and harmony.

However, there is the holistic blueprint of another "new person" in the ether, one that transcends nationality and embodies all the values and qualities that are necessary for redemption to take place, not only in this country, but also in the world at large. This is the new world person described by Hubbard and Rogers. South Africa has its fair share of them, and those who live here are concerned with reconnecting and establishing communion with our spiritual nature because they see modern South Africa as a nation in search of a soul.

Hopefully, the values, qualities and standards of being of the new world person will be the ones that ultimately prevail because they are universal to all human beings. They do not belong to any one culture, and yet all cultures strive to embody them. They also promise the greatest healing potential. For this reason alone, these human and humane qualities and values should form the basis of our future education system.

It will take many generations to repair the human damage and heal the psychic wounds of this young nation. The legacy of apartheid will remain with us long into the future. The rate of healing, however, is determined by our willingness to forgive. We should not forget past wrongs because they are the lessons for future generations. But, at the same time, we should also let go of the past and live in the present because the seeds of the future are being sown now. We will have to endure the purgatory of our past, though, as we reflect, through the revision of our history, the wrongs of our forefathers. But we need to hold on to the idea that this is a stage in our future growth, something that we have to go through in order to become whole as a nation. To help this psychological process we need to develop a holistic concept of Man so that we could educate the present generation and the unborn generations of the future into new ways of being, and help them work out, collectively, the trauma of the past. This is the true way of becoming whole.

#### The Emergence of Holistic Thinking in Education

The trend towards holism is already manifesting itself in educational thinking and practice. Educators are beginning to view education as a lifelong process and not just for a certain period in a person's life. It goes far beyond the educational matrix of the school, which has been mainly concerned with the inculcation of certain skills, values and norms, and the social conditioning of its clients. Education is now seen as the process of self-actualization in the transformative

journey of the individual - the awakening of the transcendent capacities within the human being as he or she endeavours to lead a more meaningful life. It is education of the whole person. In this sense, then, it has great power for social healing. Herein lies the importance of the holistic concept for education.

The learner is regarded as someone who is open to, and interacting with, the natural and social environments. Learning is the process of transforming theoretical and experiential information that is either assimilated osmotically or consciously acquired. The world view of the learner is subject to continual change as the consciousness of the learner expands and becomes more inclusive. Learning shifts are precipitated through the resulting crisis of change. For this reason, the student is taught how to learn; how to ask pertinent and searching questions; how to be open to, and evaluate properly, new ideas and concepts; how to apply what is learnt and know how and where to find the necessary or appropriate information. The move is away from acquiring a body of "right" information. The learner is taught how to develop a critical awareness of himself or herself and the world at large. In this way, the learner is in a constant state of becoming. Consequently, there is a greater balance between theoretical and abstract knowledge and experiment and experience. The move is away from the primary reliance on "book knowledge" which tends to remove the learner from the context of learning.

Human knowledge is subject to continual revision, change and expansion with many disciplines overlapping one another. The holistic approach blurs the boundaries between the various categories of knowledge and incorporates all forms of knowing. Therefore, the attitude

to the curriculum is to proportion school-time equally between courses in the arts and humanities, and science subjects. The teacher would take an interdisciplinary approach to these subjects in order not to fragment or bracket the world view of the child. In this way, the curriculum is seen as a relatively flexible structure which is open-ended enough to allow for the many different ways that are possible to teach a given subject. Neither is the curriculum wholly prescribed. It is flexible enough to adapt to new demands. The teacher is open to the needs of the students and is also a learner in this situation. There is greater tolerance for candour and divergent viewpoints. The teacher is not closed off to his or her students, and is willing to be transformed by the relationship with them. The teacher's role is more of a facilitator for inner transformation than someone who simply imparts knowledge and discourages dissent. These teachers would encourage their students to be authentic and real; to be themselves at all times, and yet, responsible in the experience of their uniqueness. They would help their students to be free, yet interdependent; an individual, yet a valued member of society. But they would discourage conformity and blind obedience to people in authority. These teachers are primarily concerned with helping their students realize their potential in every possible way. They would challenge them to push beyond their outer limits; to transcend perceived limitations. Priority is placed on the self-image and self-esteem of the student and not on his or her performance. For this reason, labelling is used only in a minor, prescriptive role, and not as a fixed evaluation from which the student inevitably struggles to free himself or herself. Labels,

used indiscreetly, stunt personal growth and greatly cripple the self-image of the individual.

The curriculum, together with the new techniques on learning, endeavour to develop whole brain functioning. Our present education puts great emphasis on analytical, linear, left-brain thinking. Whole brain education is concerned with the development of both cerebral hemispheres. To help this process, divergent thinking and imaginative guesses are encouraged, as well as the use of imagery and symbols, story telling, the keeping of journals of dreams and intuitive insights, meditation and visualization exercises, and other tacit forms of knowing. The inner, personal experience of the individual is seen as an important context for learning to take place. There is a greater balance between the inner and outer worlds of the learner.

There is also a growing realization that there should be greater community involvement in the life of the school, even to the extent that the community takes control of the school. For this to happen, the school system as a whole needs to be decentralized. The school should extend out into the community and should not be walled off from it. This means that the educational matrix of the learner should extend far beyond the walls of the school in order to create greater opportunities for learning from other sources. A holistic education does not separate learning from life.

These are just some of the most identifiable trends in education. At the moment there is no unifying philosophy or overall vision of education. But that will undoubtedly emerge as parents and their

children demand a type of schooling that is more attuned to their spiritual and human needs.

### Summary

This thesis began with a look at the emerging holistic world view that has become most evident in two important areas of human endeavour, namely, science and religion.

Scientists who are at the cutting edge of their disciplines are beginning to enter into a new dialogue with the natural world. This is largely due to fundamental shifts in the classical conceptions of science. The Newtonian and Cartesian mechanistic models of reality were superseded and corrected by two great revolutions in physics at the beginning of this century; quantum mechanics and relativity. These discoveries had repercussions that went far beyond the field of physics. It influenced in some measure virtually all the other physical and natural sciences, re-shaped our way of looking at the world, brought science and religion closer together than they had ever been before, and unleashed forces that could prove beneficial in the long term, but have also brought humankind to the brink where total annihilation of all living things is now a real possibility. It all depends on our ability to control our self-destructive urges.

The mechanistic world view emphasizes stability, order, uniformity and equilibrium. The natural world is seen as a closed system

with linear relationships and connections. In other words, it operates like a machine. But the reality is far different. Most phenomena are, in fact, open systems that are continually exchanging energy and matter with the environment. This includes social systems as well as biological ones. Everything is in a process of ebb and flow, flux, change, process, disorder into order and back into disorder as new structures and systems evolve from the old. Adaptation is going on continually. This evolutionary continuum is revealed in cyclic transformations. Everything is in a state of becoming.

There are also clear signs of a great spiritual re-awakening. This self-transcending, expansive, unfolding of the human spirit is manifesting itself in two ways. The first is a more fundamental revival signified by the symbol of the fish. In the Christian tradition the Early Fathers called the faithful *pisciculi* and the Apostles were fishers of men. Christ was depicted by the rebus ICHTHUS (*I*esous *C*hristos *T*heou *H*uios *S*oter) which means Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour.<sup>28</sup> The fish has always been an early Christian symbol. But it also represents the last sign of the Zodiac, Pisces, which is the sign of cyclic regeneration.

The second aspect of this revitalization movement is symbolized by the zodiacal sign of Aquarius. This is the sign of the Waterer also signalling cyclic destruction and renewal. Water is symbolic of consciousness, regeneration, renewal, cleansing, sanctification and baptism. The crises that beset us in the world suggest a process of dissolution and destruction of old forms and structures so that a new order may emerge out of the chaos. Many believe that a new world

religion will possibly come into being in answer to our present evolutionary needs because they regard our present religious perspective and understanding as being conceptually equivalent to the once prevailing belief that the Earth was flat.

Periods of great and rapid change result in fundamental shifts in our way of seeing and knowing the phenomenal world. A crisis occurs in the old framework of thought or paradigm when it fails to provide an adequate explanation of the perplexing observations and apparent contradictions that persistently remain unanswered. A paradigm shift occurs when a profound, heretical idea or original insight introduces a new perspective that opens up new areas for exploration, reconciles the inconsistencies and offers solutions to old problems. New paradigms are nearly always received with scepticism, sometimes cynicism and hostility.

The emerging holistic world view, which is a strong move away from reductionist thinking, is rooted in the concept of holism that was formally outlined by the South African philosopher and statesman, Jan Smuts. Although the idea did not originate with him, he was the first to coin the word holism which comes from the Greek *holos* meaning whole. Smuts believed that the universe is made up of wholes which are interrelated and interconnected to form one whole. The tendency towards wholeness is a universal principle in Creation and is found at all levels of existence. The whole is more than the sum of its parts, and the whole determines the nature of its parts. The parts cannot be understood if considered in isolation from the whole. That is why the reductionist approach of reducing wholes to their parts provides inadequate understanding of the whole, and is not an end in itself. A

process of creative synthesis is required because the parts are dynamically interrelated and interdependent. They always merge their individual functions in whole functioning.

The holistic paradigm is inclusive of all areas of human knowledge and wisdom. The holistic mode of knowing entails whole brain functioning with the proper development of both cerebral hemispheres. The rational, analytical approach is treated with equal importance as is intuition and other tacit forms of knowing. Although charges of eclecticism can be made against the holistic approach, it is now regarded as a valid and necessary methodology if solutions to the many problems that cause misery and suffering, and hinder creative human growth are to be found.

The holistic paradigm is ideally suited to education, especially in South African society where separatist thinking has done so much harm to human relationships and perverted our natural self-image. The healing potential of holism is implied in the word which also means holiness. The tendency towards wholeness is, in the human situation, the will to holiness or the sacred. A holy person is someone who is wholly integrated by and interfused with the Divine. The striving towards wholeness, therefore, has a deep spiritual meaning and purpose in human life.

Some of the main characteristics of the emerging "new person" have been identified, but no holistic concept of Man has been offered by this thesis. This lies outside its scope. But one is certainly needed if we are to develop sound educational principles to properly educate the new world person of the future. That is the task of further research.

C H A P T E R   N O T E S

Chapter One: The Emerging Holistic World View

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