

Synthetic Trends

Donna Brown

Summary

This article explores shifting paradigms in human thinking and the emergence of a new system of values based on unifying or synthetic tendencies. Utilizing Fritjof Capra's *Web of Life* as a structural reference, the author draws upon some of the latest research and development in the sciences, education and the esoteric philosophy to illustrate how the mechanistic worldview, idea of individual selection and the illusion of separateness are beginning to give way to the new Aquarian ideals of holism, networking, and cooperation.

These developments, along with the cross fertilization of ideas, races and cultures and the nexus being created between science and spirituality are posited as evidence of humanity's burgeoning recognition of the "synthesis that eternally is."

Introduction

As thought ascends to ever higher levels, previously valid premises must yield to more comprehensive points of view. *William N. Johnston.*

For many eons humanity has been predisposed to what the Ageless Wisdom terms "the great heresy of separateness." The Tibetan Master Djwhal Khul tells us that the illusion of separateness is an inherent part of human nature stemming from the *ahamakara* principle or personality identification with the senses.¹ Although this principle is necessary for individuation and is what eventually prompts humanity to seek liberation, prolonged reliance on the five senses with the self-centeredness that results, along with the selective nature of the mind and its tendency to divide and separate, have produced a world full of turmoil and dissensions.

Humanity's sense-oriented living and dissociated, fragmentary thinking has been reinforced by our current systems of education which has long advanced a mechanistic worldview; a belief that the world is comprised of disparate and purposeless parts having little or no relationship to one another. It doesn't take long to see how this kind of mindset could have evolved into our present "dominator system of social organization."² This dominator model is seen as the prototype for patriarchy, militarism, rigid hierarchies, racism, imperialism, some elements of capitalism and many other social, economic and politically exploitative systems.³

Humanity, however, has begun to undergo a significant alteration in perception. Beginning with the shift from the Piscean era (with its focus on the dualities and the struggle between the opposites) to the advent of the Aquarian Age (with its inclusive, blending energies) an increasing number of visionary, unifying thinkers have begun to focus on a new understanding of the world and a new system of values. This new approach toward thinking and living attempts to balance humanity's separative, self-assertive tendencies with what are termed "integrative tendencies."⁴ Instead of viewing the world through the lens of the neo-Darwinist dogma of individual selection or as a competitive struggle for supremacy or self-assertion, of man against man and man against

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nature, the idea of interconnection, of life as a living organism or integrated system motivated by group selection and cooperative effort has begun to emerge as a potent force in human thinking.

This “holistic” or integrative point of view implies seeing the world and all that is in inclusive terms and as “dynamic network.”⁵ It involves a more balanced way of thinking and living with an emphasis on the Aquarian ideals of equity, relationship, partnership, identification, brotherhood, connectivity, organization and a new kind of unity that allows for differentiation.

The instinct toward Synthesis, which is said to be the keynote for our universal order and one of the three Laws of our solar system,⁶ has begun to emerge in virtually every field of human endeavor. In the sciences, (science, we are told, is “occultism made accessible to the masses”)⁷ the idea of synthesis has become quite prominent. H. P. Blavatsky foresaw something of this when she prophesized that the sciences, particularly chemistry and physics would discern the subtle realms underlying and inspiring physical manifestation.

Science and Spirit

And so it is that some of the most powerfully transformative ideas now working their way into human consciousness have their origin in the various fields of science. It is interesting to note that humanity’s growing capacity to grasp and utilize some of these new underlying concepts en masse is a sign, in and of itself, of increased mental polarization, integration and fusion brought about in large part by the higher aspects of the fifth Ray of Concrete Science.

In the cutting edge science of Quantum Physics for example, we learn that “things have no meaning (especially on energetic levels) as

isolated entities, and can only be understood in terms of their interconnections.”⁸ Relevant theory goes on to describe the world as a dynamic and constantly fluctuating whole that can not be known by any attempt to divide it into parts. Other research in this area points to the existence of a Zero Point Field, a vast network or field of energy that relates and exchanges energy with everything in the universe.⁹ These hypotheses correspond to some of the basic principles in the Ageless Wisdom such as the idea that “synthesis is” or that the ineradicable tendency to blend, relate and synthesize is an instinct inherent in the cosmos and in life itself.¹⁰ Concepts such as these

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have begun to displace the old Cartesian dualism with its tendency to divide and separate, with the thought that mind/body and spirit/matter are intertwined and causally linked on virtually every level.

In large part these new ideas with their vast metaphysical implications are responsible for taking

spirituality out of the sphere of conventional religion thereby facilitating a growing intersection of science and spirit. This intersection or nexus might be seen as laying the foundation for the wide spread acceptance of the New World Religion; a religion based on an accord between all the major religious traditions and other genuine systems of self-realization, such as science and reason, that are directed toward the comprehension of life’s most meaningful questions.

Additional trends in keeping with this new synthetic model are the current views about the earth itself as a single organism or a “living system in which all the numerous subsystems co-evolve and interact in varied but mutually dependant ways.”¹¹ The Gaia Hypothesis along with the concept of General Systems Theory (which focuses on relationships and

common principles and views the world as a unity of interlinked elements.) stress the importance of interdependence, networks, collective behavior, responsibility and an interdisciplinary approach towards understanding the world. These new ideas working their way into human thinking represent an essential aspect of the Divine Plan which can lead toward the establishment of right relations in the human and subhuman kingdoms and to the universal recognition that there is One Humanity and One World.

Discoveries in the chemical/biological sciences are also contributing to this trend. Current research proves that “information sharing and other forms of cooperation are taking place in organisms ranging from bacteria to humans.”¹² This markedly different point of view sees the process of evolution as a “team sport” based on the power of group interaction, whose members sacrifice so that the unit may flourish and evolve.¹³ Developments such as these have led to the concept of a networked global brain or superorganismic mind that is much older than and not simply the result of, the Internet, the World-Wide-Web or the technological age. Some researchers have provided evidence that the so-called “global brain in not just an expression of human intelligence but something webbed between species... a mass mind that knits the continents, the seas, the skies and all creatures great and small... into the truest planetary mind.”¹⁴

Networking and synthesis, it would seem, have been crucial to the evolutionary process from the very beginning and were present ever since the cosmos was breathed into being.¹⁵ These discoveries serve to substantiate the Tibetan’s claim that synthesis is not new, but needs only to be recognized. They are also in keeping with his statement that “synthesis has constituted the basic, subconscious urge since the very dawn of evolution.”¹⁶

Another facet of this synthetic trend now working its way into expression is “interdisciplinary thinking.” This new attitude toward knowledge is based on the belief that all life is bound together as a whole. According to this view all inquiry into the nature of life must be connected and brought into “consilience.”¹⁷

This means that the restricting specialisms of knowledge must be bridged and directed toward a common aim. The thought behind inter or trans-disciplinary thinking is to develop unity of knowledge; a new epistemology or ground of knowledge based on a synthesis of religion, esotericism, education, economics, philosophy, politics, science, the arts and psychology so that reality can be studied in a holistic way.¹⁸

Currently there are efforts underway to evolve new learning institutions where students are trained to be future-oriented and where students and faculty share facilities and work in a collaborative “Round Table” way.¹⁹ The internet, which many believe is an aspect of the global brain and an example of the trend toward synthesis, is being used as a tool to “co-evolve knowledge” and to link individuals and organizations into a world-wide problem-solving network.²⁰ These endeavors, while leading to a greater synthesis of knowledge, can also be seen as an attempt to subordinate individual/separative academic or professional identities and concerns into organized group activities consciously directed to the good of the whole. They are based on the new Aquarian/Seventh Ray model that understands the cooperative, shared nature of responsibility for manifesting the Plan, along with the importance of organizational structures based on networks rather than a “graded level or chain of command.”²¹

New Modes of Thinking

In keeping with the goal of educating toward synthesis, the development of a new framework for thinking is also underfoot. Although this framework was originally developed with the thought of defining “ecological thinking,”²² it may also have universal application. These eight distinct but overlapping types of thinking are:

1. scientific thinking (evidence based and critical thinking)
2. systems thinking and hierarchy thinking.
3. temporal thinking (short term, historical and evolutionary thinking)

4. spatial thinking (geographical, place-based and contextual thinking)
5. trans-disciplinary thinking
6. ethical thinking
7. creative thinking
8. empathic thinking

We might add a ninth, truly synthetic way of thinking: that of straight knowledge or intuitive thinking. While the intuition actually supersedes the thinking process and works independently of physical nature and the modifications of the mind, it can be defined “literally as the synthetic and immediate grasp of the truth”²³ and the principle of universality that does away with any sense of separateness. But even without the inclusion of the all important intuition, we might see the merging or fusion of these eight types of thinking as nourishing and fostering synthetic thought, and as striving toward unity and identification with the whole.

These specific methodologies including all those built upon the cooperative, contributive, and values centered models are based on the idea that “appropriate ways of knowing are essential to guiding right action.”²⁴ They are an expression of goodwill and indicative of the budding of an overall synthesis in education that the Tibetan says must become the norm. Methodologies such as these are part of an inner/Hierarchical effort to educate the public in the underlying principles of right thinking, right relations and group work.

Other notable developments such as the concept of unity in diversity as a ethical basis for operating in the world, multiculturalism, the interfaith movement or ecumenism, social ecology, world trade, globalism and immigration, (despite their attendant problems,) can be seen as facilitating a synthesis or a cross fer

tilization of relations, cultures and races. They are a reflection of humanity’s increasing recognition of shared traits, values and goals and its aspiration to rise above the dogmas, ideologies, rivalries and the many allegiances²⁵ which divide and separate.

Closing Thoughts

In observing these many inclinations we can see that the instinct toward synthesis involves the constant exchange and integration of ideas and energies across traditional boundaries. It requires that we learn to see Life with all its differentiation and multiplicity as a functioning unit whose true meaning can only be discovered through a progressive identification with the totality or the whole. And it requires that we rid ourselves of fear, all forms of prejudice and the notion of ascendancy so that we can open ourselves up to life in all its many forms and guises in an ongoing process of creative renewal.

Also reflected in this nascent world view is a deepening integration between the physical and the invisible worlds along with the emergence of the new evolutionary challenge for humanity that will bring the New World Order into manifestation and reveal in time, some aspect of planetary Purpose.

While the recognition of synthesis is still far from being complete, these many developments are an unmistakable indication that separateness, the great illusion is beginning to give way. They indicate humanity’s growing awareness of and responsiveness to the power of the One Life in all living systems, the force of Love as it impels humanity and all life toward right relations and the value of the One Work or truly integrative action.

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- ¹ Alice A. Bailey. *A Treatise on White Magic*. Lucis, 1934, p. 226.
- ² Raine Eilser, *The Chalice and the Blade*. Harper, 1988, p. xvii.
- ³ Fritjof Capra, *The Web of Life*. Anchor, 1997, p. 8.
- ⁴ *Ibid*, p.10.
- ⁵ *Ibid*, xviii.
- ⁶ Bailey. *A Treatise on White Magic*, p. 402.
- ⁷ Malvin Artley, *Cancer Full Moon*.
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- ⁸ Capra. *The Web of Life*, p. 30.
- ⁹ Lynne McTaggart. *The Field*. Perennial Currents, 2003.
- ¹⁰ Alice A Bailey. *Esoteric Psychology*, II. Lucis, 1942, p.220.
- ¹¹ Capra. *The Web of Life*, p 33
- ¹² Peter J. Richardson. *Principles of Human Ecology*.
- ¹³ Dorian Sagan. *Biospheres*. Ballantine, 1990.
- ¹⁴ Harold Bloom. *Global Brain*. Wiley, 2001, p. 270.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid*, p. 14.
- ¹⁶ Bailey. *Esoteric Psychology*, II, p.236.
- ¹⁷ Edward O Wilson, *Consilience: The Unity of Knowledge*. Vintage, 1999.
- ¹⁸ www.lightnet.co.uk/goodwrld/holistic.htm.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid*.
- ²⁰ *Ibid*.
- ²¹ Lucille Cedercrans. *Leadership Training*. Wisdom Impressions, 2003, p. 8.
- ²² Alan B. Berkowitz. Institute for Ecosystem Studies, *Towards a Definition of Ecological Literacy*.
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- ²³ Bailey. *Esoteric Psychology*, II, p. 134.
- ²⁴ www.lightnet.co.uk/goodwrld/holistic.htm.
- ²⁵ Baha'i International Community, *Uplifting Voices*. www.bahai.org.

