

Coleridge and Hinduism

Coleridge and Hinduism:

The Unstruck Sound

By

Antonella Riem Natale

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I dedicate this book to my parents, Ines Argia de Vescovi and Luigi Riem, highly honoured and esteemed professors of Italian language and literature, for their infinite love and intelligence, for their devotion to literature, poetry and the arts; to my beloved *sposo* Luigi Natale, born on the 21 of October, like Samuel Taylor Coleridge, for his exquisite and intense poetry, for the passion, enthusiasm, laughter, truth and beauty he brings to us all.

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This book also “materialises” thanks to the kind solicitation of some colleagues and friends who appreciated my previous work on the topic, to the interest of the publisher and to the invaluable support of Dr. Adam Rummens, Commissioning Editor of Cambridge Scholars, who I thank wholeheartedly.

¹ Panikkar, Raimon, *Lo spirito della parola*, 2007. See also: Phan, Peter C. & Young-chan, Ro, eds., *Raimon Panikkar: A Companion to his Life and Thought*, Cambridge, James & Clarke, 2018.

² <https://www.tessitori.org/Events.70.0.html>.

³ <https://sites.google.com/site/dcisnew1/home>.

PREFACE

THE “UNSTRUCK SOUND”, A METAPHOR FOR ONENESS

From a very early age, and until his very last years, Coleridge yearned to find a sense of Oneness and Unity with all things and Life, the “One Life” as he calls it in “The Aeolian Harp” (ll. 26-33, p. 101)⁴. He longed to delve into the meanders of this issue and write about it from manifold different angles – poetical, philosophical, scientific, metaphysical, psychological, and spiritual, because he felt his duty as a poet was to explore it and enlighten it from within, for the benefit of all, be it family, friends or readers. This idea of Oneness in life can often be found in the metaphors connoted by the ‘absence’ of sound, movement, or light Coleridge uses to describe it. For example, in Frost at Midnight, the “secret ministry of frost” that hangs “silent icicles / Quietly shining to the quiet Moon” (ll. 72-74, p. 242) shows how unity manifests in quiet and stillness. In “To the Evening Star”, an intense meditative gaze induces the presence of oneness, for he “all spirit seem to grow” (l. 4, p. 16). This oneness is connected to the *anāhata cakra*⁵, the centre of the heart, where oneness resides and the subtle vibration of the *anāhata nāda*, the “unstruck

⁴ Coleridge, Samuel Taylor, *Poetical Works*, Coleridge, Ernest Hartley, ed., Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1983. All quotations from Coleridge’s poetry are from this edition, with line number and page reference in brackets.

⁵ For Sanskrit words, spelling may vary according to the authors quoted.

sound of life”⁶, can be heard and felt⁷.

These metaphors, as this book will show, are present in many of Coleridge’s texts, both in poetry and in prose; they echo a very similar desire to reach the still centre of Being found in Hindu metaphysics. This profound yearning for a creative and poetic *word* that could express the true source of imagination made Coleridge look for answers and read omnivorously from any possible source he could find:

I am, and ever have been, a great reader, and have read almost everything – a library cormorant. I am deep in all out-of-the-way books, whether of the monkish times or of the puritanical aera. I have read and digested most of the historic writers, but I do not like history. Metaphysics and poetry and ‘facts of mind’ (i.e. accounts of all strange phantasms that ever possessed your philosophy-dreamers, from Thoth the Egyptian to Taylor the English pagan) are my darling studies. In short, I seldom read except to amuse myself, and I am almost always reading⁸.

⁶ In Sanskrit, *anāhata cakra* is the fourth of the main seven chakras, or wheels, subtle centres; it is the seat of the *jīvātman* (individual soul) in the subtle body, where the consciousness of being emanates (see: *Glossario Sanscrito*, Gruppo Kevala, ed., Roma, Edizioni Asram Vidya, 1998, p. 35). *Anāhata nāda* means “unhurt, unstruck, and unbeaten sound”; it refers to the Vedic concept of unstruck sound, the sound of the celestial realm. It is the “spontaneous unstruck sound heard by Yogins as emanating from within the body” (Aranya, Swāmi Hariharānanda, ed., *Yoga Philosophy of Patanjaly*, New York, State University, 1983, Glossary, appendix E p. 459). *Anāhata* is associated with compassion, balance, calmness, and serenity. See also: Stutley, Margaret and Stutley, James, *Dictionary of Hinduism: Its Mythology, Folklore and Development, 1500 CE-1500 BCE*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977; Minchin, Stephanie, <https://www.moreyoga.co.uk/anaahata-compassion-unhurt-unstruck-and-unbroken/>.

⁷ As Mark S. G. Dyczkowski says in his *The Doctrine of Vibration. An Analysis of the Doctrines and Practices of Kashmir Shaivism*, (Delhi, Motilal Bandarsiddass Publishers, 1987): “[...] the Doctrine of Vibration [Pratyabhijñā] stresses instead the importance of experiencing Spanda, the vibration or pulse of consciousness. The mainstay of the Doctrine of Vibration is the contemplative experience the awakened yogi has of his true nature as the universal perceiving and acting consciousness. Every activity in the universe, as well as every perception, notion, sensation or emotion in the microcosm, ebbs and flows as part of the universal rhythm of the one reality, which is Śiva, the one God Who is the pure conscious agent and perceiver. According to the Doctrine of Vibration, man can realise his true nature to be Śiva by experiencing Spanda, the dynamic, recurrent and creative activity of the absolute” (p. 21).

⁸ Coleridge, Samuel Taylor, Letter LXIV to John Thelwall, November 19, 1796. Coleridge, Samuel Taylor, *The Letters*, Volume I, Coleridge, Hartley, Ernest, ed., North Charleston, Jazzybee Verlag, 2018.

As Nehru says in 1946, many thinkers, philosophers and contemporary scientists, share Coleridge's thirst for knowledge, his quest for Oneness, his drive to explain this Oneness of Life, in spite of the apparent multiplicity of experience:

The human mind appears to have a passion for finding out some kind of unity in life, in nature, in the universe. That desire, whether it is justified or not, must fulfil some essential need of the mind. The old philosophers were ever seeking this, and even modern scientists are impelled by this urge. We are told now by some able thinkers and philosophers that this basic conception is false and there is no such thing as order or unity in this accidental universe. That may be so, but there can be little doubt that even this mistaken belief, if such it was, and the search for unity in India, Greece, and elsewhere, yielded positive results and produced a harmony, a balance, and a richness in life⁹.

I do not believe the eternal human urge to find a sense of Unity in our Cosmos is a false conception and that "there is no such thing as order or unity in this accidental universe". This fervent search for a "unity in life", for balance, beauty, truth, harmony is found in Occidental and Oriental philosophies and in Indigenous ancestral traditions alike, and, significantly, also in contemporary quantum physics, biology and systemic science¹⁰. There is a constant and mutual *dialogical dialogue* and *inter-independence*¹¹ between East and West, in their constant quest for the "One Life".

Working with the most recent critical material and bibliography on the topic, this new book revises, integrates, updates and expands my previous studies on the relationships between Western and Eastern Philosophies and their impact on English Romanticism¹². Its goal is to

⁹ Nehru, Jawaharlal, *Discovery of India*, abridged ed. edited by C. D. Narasimhaiah, New Delhi, Indraprastha Press 1991, pp. 98-99.

¹⁰ See: Capra, Fritjof, *The Turning Point: Science, Society, and the Rising Culture*, Bantam, Simon and Schuster, 1982; Capra, Fritjof, *The Web of Life: A New Scientific Understanding of Living Systems*, New York, Anchor, 1997; Capra, Fritjof & Luisi, Pierluigi, *The Systems View of Life: A Unifying Vision*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2016; Capra, Fritjof, <https://www.fritjofcapra.net/books/>.

¹¹ Phan, Peter C. and Young-chan, Ro, eds., *Raimon Panikkar: A Companion to his Life and Thought*, Cambridge, James & Clarke, 2018, p. 193. See also <http://www.raimon-panikkar.org/english/gloss-ecosofi.html>.

¹² See: Riem, Antonella, *The One Life. Coleridge and Hinduism*, Jaipur, Rawat, 2005; The Creative Word, The Birth of Sound and Imagination in Samuel Taylor Coleridge, in Riem, Antonella *et al.*, eds., *The Tapestry of the Creative Word in*

broaden and deepen our critical knowledge and understanding of how profoundly certain Hindu philosophical and metaphysical ideas took roots in the European Romantic period, and especially in Coleridge.

The West has always looked at the East with a double-standard lens: on one side, even if often defines it as primordial, primitive and “savage”, it shows a passion for the oriental world-view, because of its “difference” and its “exotic” mysticism. On the other hand, the West feels a sort of repulsion in the view that Oriental philosophy is childish and surpassed by the sublime peaks of Western knowledge. The link between these two apparently opposed views can be found in an intuitive and imaginative understanding of the Hindu vision of the Absolute Oneness, present in the poetic works of Romantics, Coleridge in particular. It is a uniting, dialogical and non-divisive knowledge, which is typical of *Advaita* that joins together what on the surface may appear different and disparate, but is instead identical and One in its most profound Essence. Coleridge and many other Romantic poets¹³ found a philosophical and metaphysical answer to their quest for Oneness in particular through the actual (*advaita*) religious and philosophical vision coming from Hinduism, in what has come to be known as Indic Renaissance¹⁴. The *Advaita*’s approach differs from the Western dichotomic Cartesian one and from the

Anglophone Literatures, Udine, Forum, 2013, pp. 47-60; *Imagination, Meditation and the Mind: Reflections on Coleridge and Contemplation*, *Le Simplegadi*, 2018, XVI, 18, pp. 239-247; Coleridge e Panikkar: la parola creativa che manifesta l’Uno, in Boccali, Giuliano and Freschi, Fausto, eds., *Yoga e Advaita*. Roma, Carocci, 2019, pp. 78-96; *L’Immaginazione poetica e l’Induismo: una visione Advaita (a-duale) tra Oriente e Occidente nel Romanticismo inglese*, Udine, Forum, 2021; Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s Organicism and Ecosophy in “This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison”, in Riem, Antonella and Hugh-d’Aeth, Tony, eds., *Ecosustainable Narratives. Partnership Relationships in World Literatures in English, Applied Linguistics and Language Education*, Cambridge, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2022, pp. 1-18.

¹³ On this theme, see: Drew, John, *India and the Romantic Imagination*, Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1987; Srivastava, K. G., *Bhagavad Gītā and the English Romantic Movement. A Study in Influence*, Delhi, Macmillan, 2002; Vallins, David, Oishi, Kaz and Perry, Seamus, eds., *Coleridge, Romanticism and the Orient*, London, Bloomsbury, 2014; Cheyne, Peter, ed., *Coleridge and Contemplation*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2017.

¹⁴ Schwab, Raymond, *La Renaissance Orientale*, Paris, Editions Payot, 1950. First translated into English in 1984, *The Oriental Renaissance: Europe’s Rediscovery of India and the East, 1680-1880*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1984, with a foreword by Edward Said.

Indian *Sāṃkhya* system, which is similarly dualistic¹⁵. *Advaita* postulates unity, union, oneness, at the core of reality, and therefore at the centre also of personal inner speculation and experience. *Advaita* concerns a partnership and dialogical interaction; it thinks and operates in *et et* and not *aut aut* terms. *Advaita* is a very powerful ontological system, which influenced Western philosophy especially for what concerns the metaphysical quest and aspiration towards oneness in Romantic poetics and poetry. As Giuliano Boccali says:

Differently from the Western (cartesian) dualistic system but also from the Indian *Sāṃkhya*, which is very similar to it, the *advaita* puts unity at the centre of reality and therefore of speculation and inner experience¹⁶.

Focal part of *Vedānta* doctrine, which manifests maybe its most radical position in *advaita*, is its aim of dissolving the incantatory and misleading veils of material manifestation (*Maya*), so that Truth as embodied in the One ineffable Being can shine is all its potency. Life as One, is found in the Tao, in *Advaita Vedānta*¹⁷ and many other ancient world spiritual traditions that have gone amiss, because of a “brief forgetting”:

We must remember the chemical connections between our cells and the stars, between the beginning and now. We must remember and reactivate the primal consciousness of oneness between all living things. We must return to that time, in our genetic memory, in our dreams, when we were one species born to live together on earth, as her magic children. These are things human beings have known for most of our time on earth. For at least 500,000 years of human time we have known them; for about 5 billion years of earth time we have known them; for a good 13 billion

¹⁵ See: Chakravarti, Pulinbihari: *Origin and Development of the Sāṃkhya System of Thought*, Calcutta, Metropolitan Printing and Publishing House, 1951; Chattopadhyaya, Debiprasad, *Lokāyata. A Study in Ancient Indian Materialism*, Delhi, People's Publishing House, 1959; Larson, Gerald James, *Classical Sāṃkhya. An Interpretation of its History and Meaning*, Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 1979; Kumar, Shiv, *Sāṃkhya Thought in the Brahmanical Systems of Indian Philosophy*, Delhi, Eastern Book Linkers, 1983; Larson, Gerald James and Bhattacharya, Ram Shankar, eds., *Sāṃkhya. A Dualist Tradition in Indian Philosophy*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1987 (vol. IV in *Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies*); *Asiatische Studien / Études Asiatiques*, 53 (1999), pp. 457-798.

¹⁶ Boccali, Giuliano, Per una Premessa, in Riem, Antonella, *L'Immaginazione poetica e l'Induismo: una visione Advaita (a-duale) tra Oriente e Occidente nel Romanticismo inglese*, Udine, Forum, 2021, pp. 9-12, at p. 9, my translation.

¹⁷ Pelissero, Alberto, *Le Filosofie classiche dell'India*, Brescia, Morcelliana, 2004, pp. 283-293.

years of galactic time we have known them – and, no doubt, longer than that. Set against this long galactic, terrestrial, and human time of knowing our oneness, the past four thousand years of patriarchy’s institutional and doctrinal denial of our oneness, once we see it for what it was, will appear a mere aberration. Just a brief forgetting¹⁸.

This is close to the biocultural partnership model of Riane Eisler, where one searches for genuine and harmonious human contacts and relationships, rather than the antagonistic and conflictual attitude of the dominator paradigm. Eisler’s approach works within an ample intercultural framework, identifying what supports and encourages all positive human qualities like creativity, love, caring and peace, the deep human capacity for empathic union with the other, also the “natural” and cosmic other. This without ignoring the tentacles of the dominator world view pushing towards violence and brutality¹⁹. Eisler’s vision of love as a spiritual element points towards the unifying and caring approach to other peoples that takes form in everyday actions – political, social, cultural. Her vision recalls Raimon Panikkar’s concept of “dialogical dialogue”²⁰, born from the courage to be authentic as the “automatic fruit of the purity of the heart [...], primary condition to act in an appropriate way and to have a fruitful life”²¹. Literature and art have always been relevant instruments that can inspire us and orient our path more and more toward the common good of all life.

This meaningful and natural human yearning for Oneness and inter-being is often silenced in the Western materialistic and Cartesian idea of the world as a mechanism, made of separate parts where order and unity do not exist because this is only an “accidental universe”. However,

¹⁸ Sjöö, Monica and Mor, Barbara, *The Great Cosmic Mother. Rediscovering the Religion of the Earth*, San Francisco, HarperCollins, 1991, p. 424.

¹⁹ See: Eisler, Riane, *The Chalice and the Blade: Our History, Our Future*, San Francisco, Harper & Row, 1987; *Sacred Pleasure, Sex, Myth, and the Politics of the Body: New Paths to Power and Love*, San Francisco, Harper & Row, 1996; *Tomorrow’s Children*, Boulder CO, Westview Press, 2000; *The Real Wealth of Nations. Creating a Caring Economics*, San Francisco, Berret-Koehler, 2007; with P. Fry, Douglas, *Nurturing Our Humanity. How Domination and Partnership Shape our Brains, Lives, and Futures*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2019. For the Italian translations see also:

<https://forumeditrice.it/percorsi/lingua-e-letteratura/all/il-potere-della-partnership>.

²⁰ See: Panikkar, Raimon, *Lo spirito della parola*, Milano, Bollati Boringhieri, 2007; *Concordia e armonia*, Milano, Oscar Mondadori, 2010a; *Vita e Parola*, Milano, Jaca Book, 2010b. See also: Phan and Young-chan, *Raimon Panikkar*, 2018.

²¹ Panikkar, R., *Concordia e armonia*, 2010a p. 81, my translation.

contemporary scientists, especially quantum physicists and biologists²², tend to leave behind this rigid vision of reality and focus more on the interconnectedness of all life, theorised in the dynamics of emergence and self-organization conceived by Francisco Varela and Humberto Maturana²³. Fritjof Capra further developed these ideas inviting us to “explore the new systemic conception of life at the forefront of science and its application in economics, management, politics, design, medicine, and law”²⁴ and many other scholars in systemic science, the theory of complexity²⁵ and the Gaia

²² Bohm, D., *Wholeness and the Implicate Order*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980.

²³ Maturana, Humberto and Varela, Francisco, *Autopoiesis and Cognition: The Realization of the Living*, Boston Studies in the Philosophy of Science, vol. 42, Ridel Publishing Company, Dordrecht, Holland, 1980; Maturana, Humberto and Varela, Francisco, *The Tree of Knowledge: The Biological Roots of Human Understanding*, Boulder, Shambhala, Revised, 1992. On January 15, 2020, the Center for Partnership Studies awarded the second International Prize for Research, Study, and Dissemination of Partnership Studies to Humberto Maturana and Ximena Davila Yáñez in recognition of their pioneering international work through Instituto Matriztica (<http://matriztica.cl/>) on the biology of relationships and love in alignment with partnership cultural principles. The inaugural CPS prize was attributed to Antonella Riem in 2018, “in acknowledgement of [her] international scholarly work on partnership studies”: https://centerforpartnership.org/programs/awards_prizes/.

²⁴ See Capra’s invitation to his course: <https://www.capracourse.net/>. See also: Capra, Fritjof, *The Tao of Physics*, London, Flamingo-HarperCollins, 1975; *The Turning Point: Science, Society, and the Rising Culture*, Simon & Schuster, Bantam, 1982; *Die Seele Indiens: Tamil Nadu*, Hamburg, Ellert & Richter, 1984; *Green Politics*, New York, Dutton, 1984; *Uncommon Wisdom*, New York, Simon & Schuster, 1988; *Mindwalk*, Bern, Scherz, 1991; *Belonging to the Universe*, San Francisco, Harper, 1991; *EcoManagement*, San Francisco, Berrett-Koehler, 1993; *Steering Business Toward Sustainability*, Tokyo, United Nations University Press, 1995; *The Web of Life*, 1997; *Die Capra Synthese*, Bern, Scherz, 1998; *The Hidden Connections: A Science for Sustainable Living*, New York, Doubleday, 2002; *The Science of Leonardo: Inside the Mind of the Great Genius of the Renaissance*, New York, Doubleday, 2007; *La Botanica di Leonardo*, Sanssepulcro, Aboca Edizioni, 2009; *Learning from Leonardo: Decoding the Notebooks of a Genius Hardcover*, San Francisco, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2013; *The Systems View of Life: A Unifying Vision*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2016; Capra, Fritjof, and Luisi, Pier Luigi, *Vita e natura. Una visione sistemica*, Sanssepulcro, Aboca Edizioni, 2014; Capra, Fritjof and Mattei, Ugo, *The Ecology of Law: Toward a Legal System in Tune with Nature and Community*, San Francisco, Berret-Koehler, 2015. See also: Capra, Fritjof, <https://www.fritjofcapra.net/books/>.

²⁵ Morin, Edgar, *Le paradigme perdu [Paradigm lost]*, Paris, Seuil, 1979 (Original publication date, 1973); Morin, Edgar, Self and autos, in Zeleny, M., ed.,

hypothesis²⁶. These scientists leave behind hyper-specialistic and separate fields of study that depend on dogmatic, preconstituted, unalterable and untouchable “truths”. In the ever-renewed awareness that wisdom is polysemic, multidimensional and intercultural, they maintain that knowledge derives from the dialogue of different scientific perspectives, sometimes conflicting but fruitfully so, as Morin says:

We sense that we are approaching a considerable revolution (so considerable that perhaps it will not take place) in the great paradigm of Western science. What affects a paradigm, that is, the vault key of a whole system of thought, affects the ontology, the methodology, the epistemology, the logic, and by consequence, the practices, the society, and the politics? The ontology of the West was founded on closed entities such as substance, identity, (linear) causality, subject, object. These entities do not communicate amongst themselves. Oppositions provoke repulsions or cancelling of a concept by another (e.g., subject/object). “Reality” could be grasped by clear and distinct ideas.

Autopoiesis: A Theory of Living Organization, New York, Elsevier, 1981; Morin, Edgar, From the concept of system to the paradigm of complexity, *Journal of Social and Evolutionary Systems*, 15, 4, 1992a, pp. 371-385; Morin, Edgar, *Method: Towards a Study of Humankind. The Nature of Nature*, New York, Peter Lang, 1992b; Morin, Edgar, *California Journal*, Brighton, Sussex Academic, 2008a; Morin, Edgar, *On complexity*, Cresskill NJ, Hampton Press, 2008b; Morin, Edgar, The reform of thought, transdisciplinarity, and the reform of the university, in Nicolescu, B., ed., *Transdisciplinarity: Theory and practice*, Cresskill NJ, Hampton Press, 2008c, pp. 23-32; Ceruti, Mauro, *La danza che crea. Evoluzione e cognizione nell'epistemologia genetica*, Milano, Feltrinelli, 1989, Prefazione di Francisco Varela; Ceruti, Mauro, *Constraints and Possibilities. The Evolution of Knowledge and Knowledge of Evolution* (A. Montuori, trans.), New York, Gordon & Breach, 1994; Ceruti, Mauro, *Il tempo della complessità*, Milano, Raffaello Cortina Editore, 2018; Bocchi, Gianluca and Ceruti, M., eds., *La sfida della complessità*, Milano, Feltrinelli, 1985; Ceruti, Mauro and Lazlo, Ervin, eds., *Physis: abitare la terra*, Milano, Feltrinelli, 1988; Morin, Edgar and Ceruti, Mauro eds. *Simplicité et complexité*, Milano, Mondadori, 1988; Waldrop, M. M., *Complexity: the emerging science at the edge of order and chaos*, New York, Simon & Schuster, 1992; Watzlawick, Paul, *How real is real?* New York, Vintage, 1977; Wells, J. *Complexity and sustainability*, London, Routledge, 2013.

²⁶ Lovelock, James Ephraim, Gaia as seen through the atmosphere: Atmospheric Environment, 1972, 6, 8, pp. 579-580, *The Practical Science of Planetary Medicine*, London, Gaia Books, 1991; Lovelock, James Ephraim and Margulis, Lynn, Atmospheric homeostasis by and for the biosphere: the Gaia hypothesis, *Tellus*, Series A, Stockholm, International Meteorological Institute, 26, 1-2, 1974, pp. 2-10.

In this sense, scientific methodology was reductionist and quantitative. The logic of the West was a homeostatic logic and destined to maintain the equilibrium of the discourse by banning contradiction and deviation. Imagination, illumination, and creation, without which the progress of science would not have been possible, only entered science on the sly. They could not be logically identified, and were always epistemologically condemnable. They are spoken of in the biographies of great scientists, but never in manuals and treatise ... it is obviously the whole structure of the system of thought that is finding itself thoroughly shaken and transformed²⁷.

Therefore, we can notice how, as usual, poets of great intellectual curiosity and metaphysical depths, always anticipate the progress of science and philosophical thought. Coleridge would perfectly agree with Morin's idea that the Western system should be "thoroughly shaken and transformed" by a new paradigm, where Imagination (which is fundamental in Coleridge's theories of art and creativity), illumination (described in *Advaita* as the immediate apprehension of the oneness of Life), and creation become fundamental for art and science alike.

Like Coleridge, these contemporary systemic scientists and scholars present a unifying vision of life, a coherent systemic and complex framework, advocating for the dialogical dialogue and interconnectedness of different disciplines. Biology, ecology, anthropology, sociology, philosophy, art, psychology, mythology, literature, economy, quantum physics, spirituality and many others create scientific cross-cultural branches and rhizomes like, for example, ethnophilology²⁸, and neurobiology²⁹:

As Eastern thought has begun to interest a significant number of people, and meditation is no longer viewed with ridicule or suspicion, mysticism

²⁷ Morin, Edgar, *California Journal*, Brighton, Sussex Academic, 2008a, pp. 34-35.

²⁸ See: Benozzo, Francesco, *Etnofilologia*, Napoli, Liguori Editore, 2010; *Breviario di Etnofilologia*, Lecce-Brescia, Pensa MultiMedia, 2012; *Il giro del mondo in ottanta saggi. Scritti scelti di linguistica, filologia ed etnofilologia*, vol. I, Linguistica, etnolinguistica, dialettologia, Roma, Aracne editrice, 2016.

²⁹ See: Mancuso, Stefano, *Rhythms in Plants: Phenomenology, Mechanisms, and Adaptive Significance*, Berlin, Springer, 2007; *A New Understanding of Plant Intelligence and Behavior*, New York, Atria Books, 2019; Mancuso, Stefano and Viola, Alessandra *et al.*, eds., *Brilliant Green: The Surprising History and Science of Plant Intelligence*, Washington, Island Press, 2020a; *The Incredible Journey of Plants*, New York, Other Press, 2020b; *The Nation of Plants*, New York, Other Press, 2021; Wohlleben, Peter, *The Hidden Life of Trees: What They Feel, How They Communicate*, Vancouver, Greystone Books, 2018.

is being taken seriously even within the scientific community. An increasing number of scientists are aware that mystical thought provides a consistent and relevant philosophical background to the theories of Contemporary science, a conception of the world in which the scientific discoveries of men and women can be in perfect harmony with their Spiritual aims and religious beliefs. [...]

At the subatomic level, matter does not exist with certainty at definite places, but rather shows “tendencies to exist”, and atomic events do not occur with certainty at definite times and in definite ways, but rather show “tendencies to occur”³⁰.

As Morin says in the quotation above, while “The logic of the West was a homeostatic logic and destined to maintain the equilibrium of the discourse by banning contradiction and deviation”, in this new world-view, scientific epistemology and methodology have finally come to accept the essential part that “imagination, illumination, and creation”³¹ play in our scientific discoveries. These human faculties work at a “subatomic level”; they create and show us the “tendencies” to occur of what we define as reality, which is fluctuating, moving and constantly changing. They speak of the manifold “possibilities” of existence and manifestation. They transform our world-view and our scientific approach from a dogmatic dominator ideology, where something is either is ‘right’ or ‘wrong’, to a partnership poetic dimension, where all human faculties interact holistically, where “scientific discoveries” are not “reductionist and quantitative” and can be in perfect harmony with human “Spiritual aims and religious beliefs”³².

In the same way, the poet, traditional Celtic harpist and philologist Francesco Benozzo proposes a fresh and clever approach in place of the dominator scientific procedures characterising our times. Since the art of philology has become a “discipline”, with its fixed methods and its surgical “nonchalance in front of mystery”, Benozzo founded what he defines as an “indiscipline”³³ – ethnophilology, the “philology of the people with their multiple forms of cultural expressions”³⁴. Ethnophilology studies ancient and modern texts, with special focus on

³⁰ Capra, Fritjof, *The Turning Point: Science, Society, and the Rising Culture*, Bantam, Simon & Schuster, 1982, p. 78 and p. 82.

³¹ Morin, Edgar, *California Journal*, Brighton, Sussex Academic, 2008a, pp. 34-35.

³² Capra, Fritjof, *The Turning Point: Science, Society, and the Rising Culture*, Bantam, Simon & Schuster, 1982, p. 78 and 82.

³³ Benozzo, Francesco, *Etnofilologia*, 2010, p. 263, my translation. If not otherwise specified, all English translations are mine.

³⁴ Benozzo, Francesco, *Breviario di Etnofilologia*, 2012, p. 206.

popular traditions and oral creations of different cultures, in order revive and preserve the “emotion of meeting with texts and words”³⁵. Like Capra’s “tendencies to occur” in contemporary science and Eisler’s idea of partnership as a world cultural paradigm, ethnophilology “aims at extending the opportunities for free thought for generations to come, hoping they can welcome and disseminate them, refusing any resurgence of authoritarian thrusts”³⁶ not only in science, but also in our lives. According to Benozzo, science in its truest meaning must retrieve its passion for liberty, unchaining itself from dogmatisms, ideologies and rigid critical rules. From this perspective, ethnophilology encourages our visionary capacity not to fix or imprison living traditions within canonical forms and structures, defined boundaries, withered and crystallized interpretative patterns established by a dominator authority. Very similarly to Coleridge’s concept and practice of Imagination as an instrument of knowledge, ethnophilology reminds us to be open to challenges, to discover the different lyrical dimensions of words and texts and feel the vibrations they create in us. It is an invitation to embrace alternative, mobile critical stances, ready to review and challenge our previous statements, if needed, while we explore words and texts, meet with peoples and flow with life:

The idea of a (philological) revolution can be defined in terms of dissemination and social metamorphosis, in opposition to the appropriation and substitution method (of authority). Philological practice, understood in terms of an original drive towards liberty, can give us a glimpse of a series of consequences [...] ‘we can (and must) engage in tackling problems which have a human significance’³⁷.

This approach will make “evident and available the beneficial effect of opening to the unknown, becoming a mouthpiece, among other sciences, of the concrete experiences (cartographic, *en plein air*, anti-hierarchical) of uprootedness”³⁸.

In the relational and participative desire to transform our lives for the better of all, partnership studies, Capra’s system theory, and Coleridge’s imaginative perception of things have a poetic affinity with ethnophilology. All these analogical, open and creative approaches to poetry, song and life

³⁵ Benozzo, Francesco, *Etnofilologia*, 2010, p. 1.

³⁶ Benozzo, Francesco, *Memorie di un filologo complottista*, Lucca, La Vela, 2021, p. 108.

³⁷ Chomsky quoted by Francesco Benozzo, *Memorie di un filologo complottista*, 2021, p. 107.

³⁸ Benozzo, Francesco *Memorie di un filologo complottista*, 2021, p. 109.

talk to our emotions as human beings, readers, writers and scholars and they resonate deeply in our minds, hearts and souls. Since, as Morin says, a scholar also needs “Imagination, illumination, and creation”³⁹, my epistemological approach is not neutral but dynamic, heartily participative and engaged, dissolving the myth of the impartiality of the scholar who analyses with absolute detachment⁴⁰. The strength of my book lies in this dynamic and passionate participation, in its *multicommunitarianism*⁴¹, in the engaged and engaging meeting between Coleridge’s work and *Advaita Vedānta*, in the “inter-indisciplinary” approach and pluralistic diversity of the themes explored. As Benozzo says about ethnophilology, this new context is necessarily “dynamic – not pre-determined” and recalls some ideas of contemporary physics. It is a context that “expands with the expansion of knowledge”⁴² and its research questions. In spite of the insistence of some on the diktats of technocratic science, we can detect a deconstruction of the “myth” of the “neutral observer”⁴³ in many fields of research, where we find more and more specific attention being paid to the interaction between the observer and the observed. This interaction does not only engage the rational mind, but all aspects of human intelligence, imagination, creativity, emotion, and the capacity to capture the intrinsic reality and interrelatedness of all things:

[...] one of the conquests of biologists, physicists and chemists is indeed that of having freed themselves, at least since the beginning of the 1950’s, of this late positivistic *habitus*, to the advantage of a more credible (and methodologically fruitful) awareness that any researcher,

³⁹ Morin, Edgar, *California Journal*, Brighton, Sussex Academic, 2008a, pp. 34-35.

⁴⁰ See: Benozzo, Francesco, *Memorie di un filologo complottista*, 2021, pp. 107-109.

⁴¹ Benozzo, Francesco, *Breviario di Etnofilologia*, 2012, pp. 195-196. This term was coined by Touraine [Touraine, A., *Faux et vrai problèmes*, in *Une société fragmentée? Le multiculturalism en débat*, Paris la Découverte, 1997, pp. 289-320] to show the difference between the idea of multiculturalism, which underlines the need for respecting other cultures and traditions, while multicommunitarianism focuses on the concrete everyday relationships within a shared ‘community’. See also: Morin, E., *Pour entrer dans le XXIe siècle*, Paris, Seuil, 2004; and Momin, A. Multicommunitarianism in a fragmented world, *Asia Europe Journal*, 2, pp. 445-459 (October 2004).

⁴² Benozzo, Francesco, *Etnofilologia*, 2010, p. 46.

⁴³ Benozzo, Francesco, *Etnofilologia*, 2010, p. 46.

even the one who experiments in a laboratory, through his observation, continually constructs and modifies what he is observing⁴⁴.

Coleridge too, moved between the rigidity of Western positivist, scientific ideas and religious dogmas and what Benozzo, discussing about ethnophilology, describes as “the study of a tradition and of the texts that transmit it first of all as an encounter with the other, underlining in this a human dimension of its methods that is also emotional and participative”⁴⁵. I believe Coleridge approached all of his studies and readings with this very same active and participative poetic feeling and intelligence. His spiritual, poetic and scholarly interests were directed also to the first English translations of sacred Sanskrit texts, like the *Bhagavad Gītā*, which had a profound impact on his Imagination, his intellectual and poetical work. In his youthful years, he was more open to new horizons, while later, as sometimes happens, he turned to more reassuring and familiar dogmatic reasonings. Still today, science, which tends to be conservative and resists new approaches and ideas, tries to subdue novelties and change, which necessarily would oblige scientists to transform and renew completely their notions and sometimes revolutionise their world-views and reassuring habits of thought. If we think of Galileo’s fate, the consequences of his scientific discoveries and the resistance of the establishment to admit he was *right* and *had the right* to express and carry on his research, we have a good picture of what continues to happen to anyone who dares challenge pre-conceived and conventional ideas:

While the new physics was developing in the 20th century, the mechanistic Cartesian worldview and the principles of Newtonian physics maintained their strong influence on Western scientific thinking, and even today many scientists still hold to the mechanistic paradigm, although physicists themselves have gone beyond it.

However, the new conception of the universe that has emerged from modern physics does not mean that Newtonian physics is wrong, or that quantum theory, or relativity theory, is right. Modern science has come to realize that all scientific theories are approximations to the true nature of reality; and that each theory is valid for a certain range of phenomena⁴⁶.

True scientific research then moves from one approximation to another, slowly discovering the reality of life, in a sort of spiralling dance,

⁴⁴ Benozzo, Francesco, *Etnofilologia*, 2010, p. 47.

⁴⁵ Benozzo, Francesco, *Etnofilologia*, 2010, p. 47.

⁴⁶ Fritjof, Capra, *The Turning Point: Science, Society, and the Rising Culture*, Bantam, Simon & Schuster, 1982, p. 93.

which evokes the vortex of atoms. We need to recognise “the voice and song that had accompanied us and that we had lost, the multitudes of lives that inhabited us”⁴⁷.

Prejudice happens also in the humanities, of course, and thus, to investigate with full philosophical, textual and critical evidence, the influence of Sanskrit texts on Romanticism has been for a long time a “new” (and controversial) element in Romantic studies. Apart from Raymond Schwab’s *La Renaissance Orientale* of 1950⁴⁸, which focuses more on European culture, the first studies to deal with a Hindu influence on the British Romantic movement were those of John Drew (1987) and K. G. Srivastava (2002)⁴⁹, which concentrated on India and the Romantic imagination in more general terms. The first book focuses in particular on different “passages to India”, from Europe and return; and the second on the *Bhagavadgītā* and the English Romantic movement, in what Raymond Schwab defines as the “second” or “Oriental (or Indic) Renaissance”. Srivastava establishes a significant connection between the *Bhagavadgītā*, the English Romantic Movement and “the imaginative mind of the West since the times of Homer”⁵⁰. He studies some of the most important Romantic writers, from Blake to Keats⁵¹, comparing some of their most famous poems to passages from the *Bhagavadgītā* as translated by Charles Wilkins. His thesis, I believe, amply demonstrates that: “the inspiration behind many passages in the great poems of these romantics can be traced to the Indian text”, a fact that has “sadly gone unacknowledged and unnoticed but richly deserves to be highlighted by impartial and sensitive students of English romantic poetry”⁵². This is in line with my work on Coleridge and Hinduism since the 1990s, which, I imagine, is around the same time Srivastava was working on his excellent book. We have both been following analogous meditations and studies unknown to each other. This is how inspiration and Shakti work.

⁴⁷ Benozzo, Francesco, *Memorie di un filologo complottista*, 2021, p. 51.

⁴⁸ Schwab, Raymond, *Oriental Renaissance*, 1984.

⁴⁹ Drew, John, *India and the Romantic Imagination*, 1987; Srivastava, K. G., *Bhagavad Gītā and the English Romantic Movement*, Delhi, Macmillan, 2002.

⁵⁰ Srivastava, K. G., *Bhagavad Gītā and the English Romantic Movement*, 2002, p. 336.

⁵¹ Srivastava, K. G., *Bhagavad Gītā and the English Romantic Movement*, 2002, pp. 136-335.

⁵² Srivastava, K. G., *Bhagavad Gītā and the English Romantic Movement*, 2002, p. 337.

My book *The One Life: Coleridge and Hinduism*, published in 2005⁵³ and my previous and subsequent studies⁵⁴, are, to my knowledge, the first to address extensively and systematically Samuel Taylor Coleridge's deep poetic and imaginative relationship with Hinduism and the *Bhagavadgītā* translated by Charles Wilkins (1785), especially in his quest for Oneness in life.

To render it available to English speaking countries, my *The One Life* expanded on my previous study on Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *L'Intima Visione*, (1999)⁵⁵, and allowed me to delve once again into this (almost infinite) subject. As many critics share, all monographic studies are a never-ending and continuing process that always carries a strong desire to revise and re-edit, so, I continued to read and study Coleridge's work across the years, and I published other articles and essays dealing with his work in relation to Hinduism⁵⁶. More recently, various publications and dissertations have focused on related topics⁵⁷. Thus, I felt it necessary to investigate once more Coleridge's relations with Hindu belief through an intense "dialogical dialogue"⁵⁸ with key elements and ideas also stemming from the new critical debate, updating my bibliographical

⁵³ Riem Natale, Antonella, *The One Life: Coleridge and Hinduism*, Rawat, Jaipur, 2005.

⁵⁴ See note 12 of this book.

⁵⁵ Riem Natale, Antonella, *L'Intima Visione. Frammenti dell'Uno nella Poesia di Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, Udine, Campanotto, 1999. My Italian book was widely implemented in *The One Life*, with new references and reflections on the connections between East and West, also thanks to the interesting and fruitful suggestions offered over the years, by colleagues in international conferences and my MA and PhD students and research fellows during our international workshops, seminars and discussions. The 2005 book shows Coleridge's constant intellectual inner dialogue through the different genres he uses to meditate upon "the One Life". Poetry, personal prose works, such as *The Notebooks* and *The Collected Letters*, philosophical, metaphysical and political texts, all reveal this very same foundational metaphysical quest.

⁵⁶ See note 12 of this book.

⁵⁷ See: Drew, John, *India and the Romantic Imagination*, 1987; Srivastava, K. G., *Bhagavad Gītā and the English Romantic Movement*, 2002; Vallins, David, Kaz, Oishi and Seamus, Perry eds., *Coleridge, Romanticism and the Orient*, 2014; Cheyne, Peter, ed., *Coleridge and Contemplation*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2017.

⁵⁸ "Dialogical dialogue begins with the assumption that the other is also an original source of human understanding and that, at some level, persons who enter the dialogue have a capacity to communicate their unique experiences and understandings to each other" (Gerard Hall SM, *Multi-Faith Dialogue in Conversation with Raimon Panikkar*, *Australian eJournal of Theology*, 2, February 2004, pp. 1-12, at p. 4).

references with other more recent texts and further relevant comments and readings.

The expression “dialogical dialogue” comes from Raimon Panikkar, world-renowned interreligious and intercultural scholar, who differentiates “dialogical dialogue” from “dialectics”:

Dialogue seeks truth by trusting the other, just as dialectics pursues truth by trusting the order of things, the value of reason and weighty arguments. Dialectics is the optimism of reason; dialogue is the optimism of the heart. Dialectics believes it can approach truth by relying on the objective consistency of ideas. Dialogue believes it can advance along the way to truth by relying on the subjective consistency of the dialogical partners. Dialogue does not seek primarily to be duo-logue, a duet of two logoi, which would still be dialectical; but a dia-logos, a piercing of the logos to attain a truth that transcends it⁵⁹.

In order to continue my intertwined dialogical dialogue “of the heart” with Coleridge and Hinduism, trusting that learning and knowledge are always in the process of being built, continually modified and enriched by one’s own and others’ study and observation, I decided to delve once again into Coleridge’s work in this new book entitled *Coleridge and Hinduism: The Unstruck Sound*. This book extensively investigates Coleridge’s profound ties with the “Oriental Tales” he read throughout his life, from a philosophical, poetical and metaphysical point of view. I aim at scrutinising in detail these connections through a close textual analysis of Coleridge’s major, so-called minor and youthful poems, looking for analogies, echoes and precise references in his other published and unpublished material, widening and deepening my study by drawing on more recent critical debate. I intend to inject new life into what is still, to my knowledge, the only comprehensive and specialistic study of the way the translations of Hindu works influenced Coleridge, and to offer a detailed critical study of how this influence saturated all his writings and in particular his poetry⁶⁰.

⁵⁹ Panikkar, Raimon, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, New York, Paulist Press, 1979, p. 243. See also: Panikkar, Raimon, *The Intra-Religious Dialogue*, New York, Paulist Press, 1978.

⁶⁰ Interesting on the topic of contemplation in Coleridge’s work is the volume *Coleridge and Contemplation*, Cheyne, Peter, ed., Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2017. Brilliantly edited by Cheyne, with a Foreword by Baroness Mary Warnock, it is a thorough and comprehensive collection of essays by renowned and younger scholars from different research backgrounds, who put together their varied expertise to scrutinise Coleridge’s philosophical, poetic, scientific and metaphysical thoughts (in poetry and prose) from a wide range of perspectives, but

My sincere and heartfelt wish is that all readers, old and new, may find some “joyance” in reading this book and feel inspired to go deeper into Oneness and feel the unstruck sound of the heart, the *anāhata nāda*, and fully enjoy it:

Listen to the subtle inner sounds that are not caused by any external source and are continuous, like the roar of a waterfall. Become adept at merging in these manifestations of the Infinite in the form of sound, and you will become the Infinite (*Vijñāna Bhairava Tantra*, verse 38)⁶¹.

It is Coleridge’s “One Life” joyfully and rhythmically shimmering, resounding and echoing inside:

O! the One Life within and abroad,
Which meets all motion and becomes its soul,
A light in sound, a sound-like power in light,
Rhythm in all thought, and joyance every where –
“The Aeolian Harp” (ll. 25-29)⁶².

with a main focus centred on the idea of contemplation/meditation in his opus. See my review on Cheyne’s book: Riem, Antonella, *Imagination, Meditation and the Mind: Reflections on Coleridge and Contemplation*, *Le Simplegadi*, 2018, XVI, 18, pp. 239-247.

⁶¹ Lyon, Lee, *The 112 Meditations from the Book of Divine Wisdom. The Meditations from the ‘Vijnana Bhairava Tantra’*, with Commentary and Guided Practice, Santa Fe, Foundation for Integrative Meditation, 2019, p. 38.

⁶² Coleridge, S. T., *Poetical Works*, 1983, p. 101.

INTRODUCTION

COLERIDGE'S PHILOSOPHICAL AND METAPHYSICAL IDEAS AND BACKGROUND

i. Yoga and Advaita

The *advaita* (a-dual) tradition speaks of union and unity, rather than duality or the typical binary approach found in the West, but also of a classic Indian philosophical vision such as *sāṃkhya*. *Advaita* is very similar to Riane Eisler's partnership biocultural approach, which aims at the harmonic contact between what may seem as 'opposites', where one reasons in terms of inclusion, *et et*, and not exclusion, *aut aut*. The paradigm Eisler purports operates within an ample cultural frame which identifies what supports and encourages the human qualities of creativity, love, caring and peace. Eisler values the deep human capacity for empathic unity with the Other, also intended as nature and cosmos, being at the same time aware of how the dominator model pushes towards brutality and violence⁶³. Eisler's approach, her spiritual vision of love, of the union between individuals and peoples, which descends also in everyday reality and materialises in political, social and cultural actions, closely recalls Raimon Panikkar's idea of "dialogical dialogue"⁶⁴, born from the courage of being authentic, as the "automatic fruit of our heart's purity [...], first condition for an appropriate action and a fruitful life"⁶⁵.

Art, literature and spiritual quest have always been efficacious instruments to be inspired and to orient our world vision more and more towards common good. As Panikkar says, "Dialogical dialogue begins with the assumption that the other is also an original source of human

⁶³ See: Eisler, Riane, *The Chalice and the Blade*, 1987; *Sacred Pleasure*, 1995; *Tomorrow's Children*, 2000; *The Real Wealth of Nations*, 2007; Eisler, Riane and Douglas, P. Fry, *Nurturing Our Humanity*, 2019.

⁶⁴ Panikkar, Raimon, *Lo spirito della parola*, 2007. See also: Phan, Peter C. and Young-chan, Ro, eds., *Raimon Panikkar*, 2018.

⁶⁵ Panikkar, Raimon, *Concordia e armonia*, Milano, Mondadori, 2010, p. 81, my translation.

understanding and that, at some level, persons who enter the dialogue have a capacity to communicate their unique experiences and understandings to each other⁶⁶.

The most ancient translations from Sanskrit focused mainly on a powerful metaphysical vision, which influenced the West, in particular for what concerns the constant aspiration towards Oneness in Romantic philosophy and poetry described by Coleridge, in a similar way to Advaita, as “The One Life, within us and abroad”.

There are profound analogies between Coleridge’s verses from “The Aeolian Harp” and what the *Kātha Upaniṣad* states about the essence of ultimate and original reality, called *Brahman*, which is “without sound, touch, form, imperishable, with no taste, eternal, with no smell, no beginning or end” (III, 15)⁶⁷. Even if perceiving reality through our senses does not take us directly to *Brahman*, which is infinite, for Coleridge even sensorial meditation and contemplation of the world’s beauty, which manifests Divinity, can lead us to the mystic and ecstatic union with the divine, transcending the sense of duality limiting our absolute knowledge of the One.

This quest for a *union*, which is the literal translation of the word *yoga*, is a fundamental element of *advaita* doctrine⁶⁸. The term *yoga* derives from the Sanskrit root *yuj-*, uniting, yoking, controlling⁶⁹, from which also derives the Latin *iugum* and the Germanic *joch*⁷⁰.

In the *Ṛgveda*, Savitar is invoked as the son of Aditi, the primordial Goddess (I, 89, 10)⁷¹, Mother of all Gods, *devamātā*, without any limits and constraints, celestial mother of every being and form, connected to the cosmic space (*ākāśa*) and to the mystic and sacred word (*vāc*). Savitar is asked to “harness” the spirit of devotees, keeping them on

⁶⁶ Hall, Gerald, Multi-Faith Dialogue in Conversation with Raimon Panikkar, *Australian eJournal of Theology*, 2004, 2, pp. 1-12, on p. 4.

⁶⁷ Della Casa, Carlo, ed., *Upaniṣad*, Torino, UTET, 1976, p. 361, my translation.

⁶⁸ From now on, for all philosophical references, please see Tucci, Giuseppe. *Storia della filosofia indiana*, Bari, Laterza, 2005 (1st ed. 1957) and the most recent Torella, Raffaele, *Il pensiero dell’India*, Roma, Carocci, 2008.

⁶⁹ Flood, Gavin, *L’induismo*, Torino, Einaudi, 2006, pp. 127-128; Whicher, Ian, *The Integrity of Yoga Darśana*, New Delhi, D. K. Printworld, 2000, p. 7.

⁷⁰ Dasgupta, Surendranath, *Yoga Philosophy in Relation to Other Systems of Indian Thought*, Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 2005, p. 43.

⁷¹ Sani, Saverio, ed., *Rgveda. Le strofe della sapienza*, Venezia, Marsilio, 2000, p. 178. “Aditi is the sky, Aditi is the atmosphere, Aditi is the mother, is the father and son, Aditi is all gods, Aditi is the five human races, Aditi is what was born and what has still to be born”, my translation.