

The *Aum*, the *Tao* and the *One Love*,
it's ALL ONE:
Introducing Dialectical Incarnation

Martin J. Schade

Humanity has been in search for the one substance which unifies the universe since the onset of human consciousness and the recorded history of philosophy, both Oriental and Occidental perspectives. This quest chronologically began with the Hindu philosophy of the *Aum*, followed by the Chinese philosophy of the *Tao*. Together they comprise a philosophy similar to a western one that began with the Ionian Cosmologists' search for the "one stuff" of the universe. This concise historical development will begin with the East and move quickly to major western philosophies indicating their contribution to the one substance understood now as the "Dialectical 'One Love,'" where God is love and the totality of reality.

The symbol *Aum*,¹ is the most sacred symbol in Hinduism. Volumes have been written in Sanskrit illustrating the significance of this mystic philosophy. The goal, which all *Vedas* declare, which all austerities aim at, and which humans desire when they live a life of continence, is the *Aum*. *Aum* is indeed Brahman. *Aum* is the highest.

The *Aum* is the first manifestation of the unmanifest Brahman, the single Divine Ground of Hinduism, that resulted in the phenomenal universe. Essentially, all the cosmos stems from the vibration of the sound "*Aum*".

Gods and Goddesses are sometimes referred to as *Aumkar*, which means "Form of *Aum*" and implies limitlessness, representing the vibrational whole of the cosmos. In Hindu metaphysics, it is proposed that the manifested cosmos, coming from Brahman, has name and form, and that the closest approximation to the name and form of the universe is *Aum*, since all existence is fundamentally composed of vibration. This is considered by some to be reminiscent of some current physical theories such as quantum physics and super string theory.

In *advaita* philosophy the *Aum* is frequently used to represent three subsumed into one. It implies that our current existence is *mithya*, or "slightly lesser reality." In order to know the full truth we must comprehend beyond the body and intellect and intuit the true nature of infinity. This Divine Ground is imminent yet transcends all duality and cannot be described in words. This metaphysical symbolism resembles the dialectical nature found in much of Western philosophy. When *moksha*, or any other similar experience of liberation, is attained, one is able not only to see or know existence for what it is, but to become it. In attaining truth one simply realizes the fundamental unity of all of reality. When one gains true knowledge, there is no split between knower and known: one

¹ *Aum* is also spelled as *Om*. I will be using *Aum* because the three letters represents the dialectical nature of the symbol which is three curves. For detailed explanation of the *Aum* see Wikipedia at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki>.

becomes knowledge/consciousness itself. In essence, *Aum* is the signifier of the ultimate truth that all is one.

As we will discover, this description of the *Aum* coincides with the Dialectical “One Love.” It is a unity of diversity which is expressed in the oneness of all reality and which also resembles the *Tao*.

The *Tao* can be defined as 'path', or 'road'.² The way of the *Tao* is the way of Nature and of ultimate reality. *Tao* is often described as a force that flows through all life. A happy and virtuous life is one that is in harmony with the *Tao*, with Nature.

This philosophy understands *Tao* as the one thing which exists and connects the many things. *Tao*, Nature, Reality are One. Already we see the resemblance with western thinking when G.W. Leibniz professes that “reality cannot be found except in One single source, because of the interconnection of all things with one another.”³

In that *Tao*, Nature, Reality are One, we humans have evolved from Nature, i.e. the *Tao*, we ultimately depend upon Nature for our survival. We humans are connected to the Reality, to *Tao*. We must be wise and able to evolve within our cultural knowledge so as to live in harmony with Nature, with *Tao*. This is the task of *Aum*, this is the task of *Tao* and this is now the task of “One Love.”

Hylozoism

In understanding of the dialectical “One Love” we begin with an understanding of hylozoism. *Hyle* serves as the first principle out of which the objective Universe was formed. Hylozoism leads to pantheism, with its different forms, and finally to a philosophy called Dialectical Incarnation where “God is love and the totality of reality.”

Inorganic and organic, inanimate and animate, matter and spirit, immanent and transcendent, many of our western philosophies have succumbed to dualism since philosophy’s written origin. The philosophy of hylozoism, like that of the *Aum* and the *Tao*, breaks down major elements of this dualistic understanding when it states that all material things possess life. The inanimate/animate, inorganic/organic separation is over. Most simply explained, hylozoism states that there is no such thing as inorganic matter, and everything has life.

For too long humanity has believed that there is a separation between matter, as “void of life,” and that which is “living.” This inorganic/ organic separation has been a major factor in the way modern humanity views existence. Some ancient philosophies understand that there is only One Life in all of creation, and that the universe (and all that it contains) is the outward expression of that One Life. In our western framework we call this universal entity God. It is not God and creation but God *as* creation that is at the root

² For detailed explanation of the *Tao* see <http://www.spaceandmotion.com/Philosophy-Taoism-Tao.htm>.

³ Leibniz, G.W. , *The Monadology and Other Philosophical Writings* (London, Oxford University Press, 1948). *Origin of Things*, see note 27.

of this thought. We can see why it is, therefore, that the inorganic/organic duality is illusionary. For if there is only One Life manifesting as, and through, the cosmos, then nothing can escape the livingness of that One Life, not even “inorganic” matter.

Ionian Cosmologists

The Ionian cosmologists were seeking this one, primordial stuff, Thales called it water. Anaximander struggled with the “materiality” of his predecessor and called it “the indefinite,” or the “boundless.” Anaximenes, synthesises these two seeming poles into what he claims as the “primordial stuff” of “air.” It is this dialectical method which will serve in explaining how the philosophy of Dialectical Incarnation has emerged.

Nicholas of Cusa

For Nicholas of Cusa, God is the *coincidentia oppositorum*, the synthesis of opposites in a unique and absolutely infinite being. Finite things are multiple and distinct, possessing their different natures and qualities while God transcends all the distinctions and oppositions which are found in creatures⁴ God is all things through the mediation of the universe. God and the world are inseparable terms, and God is the unity of the possibility of things.

When the Incarnation is brought into Nicholas’s philosophy and theology it is explained that in all things God is, absolutely, that which they are, just as in all things the universe is, restrictedly or contractedly, that which each is. In the same way, the Incarnation, is the universal contracted being of each creature. God ontologically precedes and unites contradictories, one such union is that of spirit and matter.

Giordano Bruno

During the Renaissance Giordano Bruno revived the doctrine of hylozoism and held a form of Christian pantheism. He had a superb love of nature and understood God and nature as one. The universe is infinite and is full of a plurality of heliocentric systems, which are composed of matter and soul. Both matter and soul are, rather than principles, two aspects of a *single substance* in which all opposites and all differences are reconciled. The soul of the universe is intelligent; it is God, conceived of as “Natura naturans.” The world, “Natura naturata,” is an effect of God. Birth of life in any form, according to Bruno, is the individualization, the materiality, the finite of the infinite, non materiality. As a result, death is the return of the finite to the infinite.

“All things are one,” says Bruno. The soul of the universe is the “ordinator” of the world itself, the interior force of everything. Such a force is not transcendent, but immanent; it adheres in all things. It is God producing all and ordaining all to its end; it is infinite. The world, as the effect of an infinite cause, is also infinite.

Bruno, in his time, was charged with atheism because the universe was God, and God was the universe. For Bruno, divinity revealed itself through individual things, and all

⁴ Frederick Copleston, S.J., *A History of Philosophy, Volume 3, Part II* (Garden City, New York: Image Books 1963) p. 41. Hereafter cited as Copleston with Volume and Part.

things are infused with divinity. His statement is “All is in all things.”⁵ To identify God and Nature was not a negation but an explanation. God is the source, cause, medium, and end of all things, and therefore all things are participatory in the ongoing Godhead. In this way every individual thing has something of the whole within itself, and everything interpenetrated with everything else: “Each thing is within every other.”⁶

As stated, everything is infused with divinity. God animates each thing and harmonises everything into a single universal whole.

In dealing with the continued struggle of a seeming dualistic world of transcendent and immanent, divine and nature, spirit and matter, etc., Bruno tried to find a synthesis. Yet, it seems he was never able to resolve the conflict in his philosophy. Perhaps he had not yet grasped the fullness of dialectical reasoning although Hegel himself acclaimed Bruno a prophet.⁷ Bruno offers much to the evolution of hylozoism through his *monistic immanentism*. Yet, the journey continues as we move toward Baruch Spinoza with his “pantheism” and understanding of God and nature.

Baruch Spinoza

It is actually Spinoza's idealism which tends toward hylozoism. Although he specifically rejects identity in inorganic matter, he sees a life force or living force within, as well as beyond, all matter. Spinoza recognized one universal indivisible substance. He created a radical monism in which the single underlying of all reality was what he called “God.” This substance is identical with the natural cosmos and so Spinoza equates God with Nature, resulting in a strong form of pantheism.⁸

The philosophy of Baruch Spinoza can also be used to highlight the validity of my Dialectical Incarnation. Spinoza states in *Ethics* that the “Mind’s intellectual Love of God is the very Love of God by which God loves [God’s] self.”⁹

Baruch Spinoza, as did Giordano Bruno, describes the one substance of the universe, as two sides of God *or* Nature. One is comprised of the active, productive aspect of the universe. It is God and God’s attributes, from which all else follows. The other aspect Nature or the universe is that which is produced and sustained by the active aspect. Spinoza’s fundamental insight is that Nature is an indivisible, uncaused, substantial whole. It is the only substantial whole; outside of Nature, there is nothing. Everything that exists is a part of Nature and is brought into being

⁵ *Scientific Pantheism: Reverence of Nature and Cosmos*, by Paul Harrison.
<http://www.pantheism.net/paul/index.htm>.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Copleston, Vol. 3, Part II, p. 70.

⁸ “Participation, Organization and Mind: Toward a Participatory Worldview” by David Skrbina.
<http://www.bath.ac.uk/carpp/davidskrbina/summarycontents.htm>.

⁹ *Ethics*, p. 612.

The beauty of Spinoza exposition continues when he states, “not insofar as [God] is infinite, but insofar as [God] can be explained by the human’s Mind essence, considered under a species of eternity. He goes on to demonstrate that the “more perfection each thing has, the more it acts and the less it is acted on; and conversely, the more it acts, the more perfect it is.”¹⁰ The more the human subject uses his or her mind as an active, incarnational being, he or she will also know oneself and the God who is love and the totality of reality.

G.W. Leibniz’s Harmony of Love

With our proposal of Dialectical Incarnation it is to G.W. Leibniz that we must turn in that his philosophy is expressed as a “harmony” with the entire cosmos or world. The “God is love” of Spinoza’s monism is united with the pluralism and harmony of Leibniz so as to become a “harmony of love.” The two synthesized together bring about a genuine dialectical incarnational system of One Love.

According to Leibniz, perfection is understood as reality. God has infinite perfection and every existent being other than God, which includes the entire universe, possesses a limited degree of perfection. Creation is limited and only God has unlimited perfection. For Leibniz metaphysical perfection is constituted by harmony which is a unity in variety, a unity in diversity. Harmony is when a variety of “bodies” are ordered in accordance with general laws or principles. He says: “Thus bodies are ultimately or really (as distinct from phenomenally) independent forces (Monads), which differ from one another endlessly but are yet in such harmony that they form one perfectly regular system.”¹¹ When God and Nature are one, as it is for Nicholas of Cusa, Spinoza and Leibniz, God needs humans to be God, i.e. the “totality of reality” of God who is love.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin integrates the statement that Christ as the cosmic Incarnation is “the *Alpha* and the *Omega*” into a complete cosmological, philosophical and theological synthesis and thus prepares one to recognize that, through a full incarnation, God is the “totality of reality.” The immediate manner in which Teilhard prepares the way for the emergence of Dialectical Incarnation is through his prophetic voice challenging us to “see” and to have fuller vision and therefore “fuller being.” He states:

“*Seeing*. We might say that the whole of life lies in that verb—if not ultimately, at least essentially. Fuller being is closer union...union increases only through an increase in consciousness, that is to say vision... *To see or to perish* is the very condition laid upon everything that makes up the universe...vision is fuller being.”¹²

¹⁰ Ibid, V, P. 40, p. 614.

¹¹ Leibniz, , *Principles of Nature and Grace, Founded on Reason*, in *The Monadology and Other Philosophical Writings* (London, Oxford University Press, 1948) p. 418, note 49.

¹²Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers , 1975), pp. 31, 33. Hereafter cited as PM.

Teilhard's mission as prophet is to "teach how to see God everywhere, to see [God] in all that is most hidden, most solid, and most ultimate in the world."¹³ From the onset of his mission he breaks down the barriers that divide God and the world, for he says "that our lives, and...the whole world are full of God,"¹⁴ and therefore "by virtue of the Creation and, still more, of the Incarnation, *nothing* here below is *profane* for those who know how to see."¹⁵ In breaking down the barrier between God and the world, Teilhard also razes the wall between spirit and matter. For matter and spirit are not two separate substances, set side by side, differing in nature; they are two aspects of "one single cosmic stuff and there is between them no conflict to baffle our intelligence."¹⁶

Karl Rahner

The proposal that "God *is* the totality of reality," within the philosophy of Dialectical Incarnation, brings us to the "element of truth in pantheism."¹⁷ It is *not* a pantheism in which creation is seen an emanation from God. This intense communion of God and human beings-in-the-world, found in Rahner's philosophy and theology, describes Teilhard de Chardin's "absolutely legitimate pantheism;"¹⁸ one that must be understood as dialectical and incarnational. As philosophical concepts, there is nature, there is divinity, understood as distinct but not separate. In the existing world, the world God freely created, and in which humanity actually exists, there is no such thing as "pure nature," although the concept is legitimate¹⁹ and, thus, humanity lives characterized by the "supernatural existential."²⁰ The world, humanity, "all in all" is divinized and incarnate with God's actual, indwelling presence, which is the now reality, and which cannot be separated.²¹

¹³ Teilhard, *The Divine Milieu* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1968), p. 46. Hereafter cited as DM.

¹⁴ DM, p. 47.

¹⁵ DM, p. 66.

¹⁶ DM, p. 22. This is Pierre Leroy, S.J. speaking in the beginning of the book in the section called, *Teilhard de Chardin: The Man*, 22.

¹⁷ Karl Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith* (New York: Crossroad, 1992), p. 63.

¹⁸ PM, p 310.

¹⁹ Karl Rahner, *Theological Investigations*. Trans. Kevin Smyth. Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1966, 4:7, p. 185. Hereafter cited as *TI* with Volume and Article.

²⁰ Supernatural existential is Karl Rahner's term which states that the human person is a "graced event" and "divine" being. The human being is not just natural but is supernatural. Graeme Nicholson's *Illustrations of Being: Drawing Upon Heidegger and Upon Metaphysics* (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1992) offers a very good understanding of dialectical, Christian philosophy of transformation. See chapter 9 "Form and Transformation". Hereafter cited as *Illustrations*.

²¹ *TI* 4:7, p. 176

In defence of my thesis, it is necessary to identify two statements as we groan through the evolution of hylozoism and the emergence of Dialectical Incarnation. The first is Hegel's reminder that "the proposition [of dialectical reasoning]...is so paradoxical to the imagination or understanding, that it is perhaps taken for a joke [for it] is one of the hardest things thought expects to do."²² Secondly, it is Teilhard's prophetic challenge "to see" so as to have a "vision [which is] fuller being."²³ In the strife and struggle necessarily present in the dialectical process, we need to be open to the fact that God's creation is God's otherness; not a part of God, not absorbed by God, but is God intrinsically and existentially. Rahner states that "[t]he world receives God, the Infinite and the ineffable mystery, to such an extent that [God, Godself] becomes its innermost life."²⁴

As we have come to discover how the philosophy of hylozoism has evolved to pantheism which then serves as the foundation for Dialectical Incarnation, it is now time to better explain this philosophy.

Dialectical Incarnation: GF. Hegel and Karl Marx

The manner in which the dialectical method is understood and used for our purposes is the way it was defined by Johann Fichte and then employed by Georg Friedrich Hegel.²⁵ According to their understanding, dialectic is a process involving the triad of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. When the synthesis is made, it becomes a new thesis, to which there would be a new antithesis, and so on. The dialectical procedure brings to light contradictions, and other types of opposition not sensed before.

Hegel's system begins with *Being* as the thesis, *Nothing* as the antithesis, and *Becoming* as the synthesis. According to our understanding of the dialectic we must realize that *Being* and *Nothing* are *One*. This is a new vision, the new consciousness that is needed to grasp this proposal of a Dialectical Incarnation. *Becoming* is the unity of *Being* and *Nothing*.

The dialectical method of Hegel begins with the exigency of a being to move from itself (thesis) to "otherness" (antithesis) as a moment in its self-realization (synthesis).²⁶ Is this exigency truly a necessity? Karl Rahner's philosophy of symbol states: "being is itself

²² Samuel Enoch Stumpf, *Socrates to Sartre* (New York: McGraw-Hill Publishing Company, 1998), p. 334. Hereafter cited as Stumpf.

²³ PM, p. 31.

²⁴ "Christology Within an Evolutionary View," *TI* 5:8, p. 172.

²⁵ See "Dialectic" in William L. Reese, *Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion*, (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1996), p. 174.

²⁶ Thomas Pearl, "Dialectical Pantheism: on the Hegelian Character of Karl Rahner's Key Christological Writings," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 42 (1975), p. 127.

symbolic, because it *necessarily* ‘expresses’ itself.”²⁷ Hegel also states that the dialectic is “the principle through which alone immanent condition and necessity enters into the content of reality.”²⁸ For both Hegel and Rahner we see that being *necessarily* expresses itself, and we know too, as Rahner states, that “being ‘comes to itself’ in its expression.”²⁹ Therefore, we have come to realize that for Rahner, with the Hegelian influence of a dialectical method, God is God’s self in the total otherness of God. Our challenge is to demonstrate that the *otherness* of God remains totally itself in this unity.

It is now that we must turn from the thesis of Hegel to the antithesis of Karl Marx and his dialectical *materialism*. Marx says that the “mystification which dialectic suffers in Hegel’s hands by no means prevents him from being the first to present its general form of working in a comprehensive and conscious manner. With him it [the dialectic] is standing on its head. It must be turned right side up again, if you should discover the rational kernel within the mystical shell.”³⁰ Marx furthers his critique when he states that:

My dialectic method is not only different from the Hegelian, but is its direct opposite...With me, on the contrary, the ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind, and translated into forms of thought.³¹

In the same way that Marx continually referred to Hegel’s dialectic in comparison to his own, so too, we will make reference to both as we define our synthesis of *Dialectical Incarnation*.³² The need for a synthesis lies in the nature of the dialectical method itself. The dialectical idealism of Hegel as thesis evokes the antithesis of Marx and Engels’ dialectical materialism. Though both Hegel and Marx have an end to their system, the Absolute Idea in the former, the classless society of communism in the latter; both need to call out for a synthesis. It must be admitted at this point that this new synthesis should become a thesis in itself, and thus the dialectical process will continue. However, our objective is to discover the synthesis and let it evolve in its own evolutionary manner.

²⁷ Rahner, “Theology of Symbol,” *TI* 4:9, 229. Emphasis is mine. Graeme Nicholson’s *Illustrations* describes illustration much the way Rahner uses symbol. Nicholson speaks of illustration which “incorporates a signifier of the very difference between itself and what it illustrates” (p. 25).

²⁸ G.W.F Hegel, *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences, The Logic*, trans. by W. Wallace (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984) pp.147-8.

²⁹ “Theology of Symbol,” *TI* 4:9, p.229.

³⁰ Karl Marx, *Karl Marx Selected Writings*, edited by David McLellan, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 420, from Volume One of Capital.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² As a synthesis of these two philosophies the term I originally used was Dialectical Incarnationalism but a Rastafari adage says “No ism, no schism” indicating the fluidity of Rastafari, not Rastafarianism. So too, this philosophy is fluid and so the rigidity of “ism” has been dropped.

Another reason for the need of a synthesis is the simple fact that matter and spirit have for too long been separated. Can we “see” dialectically and paradoxically so as to no longer separate the two?³³ In theory we refer to the distinction between matter and spirit, but in reality we need not separate the two. The union and distinction between matter and spirit is analogous to Aristotle’s matter and form, which together are substance. We are reminded again that matter never exists without form or form without matter in nature. Instead of saying that one is the “reflection,” the “expression,” or “disclosure” of the other, the manner in which Hegel and Marx do, can we simply understand theoretically what matter and spirit are and recognize that they are not separate?

Given this understanding of the dialectical method, it is the intention of this thesis to synthesize the poles of matter and spirit, divine and human, God and the world. The philosophies of *Aum*, *Tao* and hylozoism has prepared the way. So too, it is through Teilhard’s understanding of creation and incarnation as one single act of God’s love that one is able to recognize the fullness of the incarnation in the world. It is also Rahner’s dialectical and incarnational understanding of God in the world that grounds the proposal of Dialectical Incarnation.

Conclusion

One may still ask, “Why this dialectical “One Love”? Because it is greater glory to God when the human person, who is in the created world as an expression of God, who is the condition of the possibility of God’s self-communication, and who is the means of the disclosing of God’s creative nature in the world, is also completely one with the God who “is all in all” and the “totality of reality.”

In closing, we make a crucial, final statement of our thesis. In this post-modern era of ours, there is the desire to liberate humanity from the shackles of God. By making God the “totality of reality,” one would think that we have lost humanity to God. This is contrary to the very nature of the dialectical method of our proposal. It is the intention of Dialectical Incarnation to glorify the totality of humanity in the world by recognizing the divine, life-presence in “all in all” and identify the genuine unity in difference. Therefore, in having established the thesis of “God is love and the totality of reality,” we must be aware of and acknowledge that the antithesis is necessarily and equally true: “humanity is love and the totality of reality.” What this means is that since God did create the world, freely and lovingly, then humans, as “supernatural existentials,” are co-creators with God in the “all in all.” In this way, and from our new vision, we see, from the words of Angelus Silesius, that “God needs man [and woman].”³⁴ As such, God needs humanity to be God.

³³ Remember how Pierre Teilhard de Chardin speaks about the verb, “to see,” and the importance “seeing” as in having “fuller being” and “closer union.” Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man*, pp. 31, 33.

³⁴ Quoted in Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *Hymn of the Universe* (New York: Harper Row, 1961), p. 10.

The Jesuit poet, Gerald Manley Hopkins, states “[t]he world is charged with the grandeur of God.”³⁵ We have come to better understand the evolution of *Aum*, *Tao*, and hylozoism in which all of nature, all of matter, is alive and divine as One. It is now the challenge of us to “see” and have “fuller being” in our understanding of a “legitimate pantheism.” Metaphysics is not dead, but very much alive and well, in that we have come to understand God and Nature as united in the Dialectical Incarnation of “One Love” where “God is love and the totality of reality.”

³⁵ *The Poems of Gerald Manley Hopkins*, Fourth Edition, Edited by W.H. Gardner and N.H Mackenzie (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984) p. 66.