

THE MAKING OF A TRADITION: THE VISION OF NATARAJA GURU

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PART I: THE DISCIPLE

1. Introduction

Guru Narayana (1854-1928) of Kerala is prominent not only among the Ezhavas in particular or the Malayalis in general, but is increasingly recognised as an outstanding figure among the socio-religious reformers and mystical thinkers of the Indian subcontinent. He has been unanimously selected as the 'Man of the Century' in Kerala. This article attempts to expose the vision of Guru Narayana through the 'eyes and mind' of Dr. Natarajan, more popularly known as Nataraja Guru. The first part of the article highlights the life of Dr. Natarajan. It contains a short life sketch followed by a cursory assessment of his writings and studies on him. The second part will be a presentation of Dr. Natarajan's appraisal of the vision of Guru Narayana, summed up in the term he coined, 'Unitive Understanding.'

The perspective of the present study will be to capture the disciple's depiction of the vision of the Guru. A disciple described Dr. Natarajan as "a contemplative Guru in search of answers to real human problems."¹ He had acquired from Guru Narayana and from his own meditations and observations of human beings in the wide world, a *normative absolute reference* in responding to reality around him.²

1.1 Life - An Outline

Dr. Natarajan was born in Bangalore on February 18, 1895. His father was Dr. Palpu and mother Bhagavathi. He had two brothers, Gangadharan and Hariharan, and two sisters, Anandalakshmi and Dakshayani. One brother and sister were older and the other two younger. His father completed his studies in

Medicine. Not finding employment at Cochin due to caste prejudices,³ he moved to Mysore State and was posted as Durbar physician at Bangalore⁴.

Nitya Chaitanya Yati describes Dr. Natarajan's life:

Whatever Nataraja Guru said or did immediately the world around him became suspicious of it. They did not understand the intention. Even in the family being the middle child, it was difficult for him to take the sides of his juniors or seniors. There was some sort of loneliness or aloneness about him. He was almost like an alienated person.⁵

His school education was done in Bangalore, Trivandrum, and in Kandy (Ceylon). He had familiarised himself with five languages – English, as universal language; Sanskrit, as mother language to Indian languages; and, Tamil, Kannada and Malayalam as sister languages.⁶ The young Natarajan received the best education one could receive in the early part of this century. He completed his Master's degree from Madras Presidency College in 1922.

The contact with the Guru and idealistic leanings urged him to experiment with the *Gurukul* mode of life, first at Alwaye, and later at Ooty in Tamil Nadu State. It was followed by his taking up the Headmaster's post at Varkala High School begun by Guru Narayana. With the latter's approval and encouragement he spent five years for studies abroad, from 1928 to 1933.

He taught for some time at the Quaker International School, Geneva, Switzerland,⁷ while working at his Doctorate of Letters at the Sorbonne in Paris.⁸ During vacations he visited the North European countries by favour of friends he had made.⁹ On his return, he was welcomed coldly by the followers of the Guru and the organisation founded for continuance of the cause, the S.N.D.P.Y.¹⁰ He spent two years looking for a suitable job at different places in the country.¹¹ He returned to his Gurukula at Fernhill in 1935. He was for sometime Advisor in Rural Reconstruction for Cochin State,¹² and later set up an Institute and

Bureau of Education in Mysore State.¹³ His second visit to Europe and America lasted from 1949 to 1951.¹⁴

On his second return he was publicly acknowledged as a Guru. He travelled widely in India and abroad after 1951 to set up *Gurukulas* and meet friends. He devoted the intervals to his literary activities. He attained *mahasamadhi* on March 19, 1973 at the headquarters of the Narayana Gurukula Movement founded by him at Varkala.

1.2 The Word of the Guru

The literary output of Dr. Natarajan includes translations and commentaries on all the writings of Guru Narayana of a more serious nature. His very first work along these lines was his biography of Guru Narayana entitled *The Path of the Guru* and serialised as articles in *The Sufi Quarterly*, Geneva, from December 1928 onwards.¹⁵ This probably was first the exposure of Narayana Guru, through the eyes of an Indian disciple, to the western world.

The introduction of Dr. Natarajan to the literary world came through the magazine *Values*, begun by John Spiers,¹⁶ the first European disciple, in September 1955. It was begun to provide the Gurukula with an official outlet, and as “a ploy to induce Nataraja Guru to write an article each, month after month.”¹⁷ We get a taste of the literary project of Dr. Natarajan from the foreword to the first edition of *Word of the Guru*: “Here you will find nothing escapist. Such religion as it presents is philosophical and psychologically interpreted rather than urging any creed or belief.”¹⁸ Similarly, the project of disclosing the Absolute, a concern of all his writings, is spelt in the first issue of *Values*:

“Wisdom is the highest of human values. The Absolute, whose mystery Wisdom will unravel, is not a thing, an entity or even a mere reality. Neither by logical reasoning nor mere philosophical speculation, however systematic, methodical, or correct, can that be reached, if the Absolute is not conceived as a human value.”¹⁹

The task of writing, begun with *Values*, continued even

after.²⁰ All his works, except *Word of The Guru*, *The Integrated Science of the Absolute*, in three volumes, and the commentary on *Bhagavad Gita*, were all initially published as articles in the above mentioned magazine. Along with the second edition of the *Word of the Guru*²¹ was included a collection of seven poems,²² and the translation and commentary on *Atmopadesasatakam*²³ of Narayana Guru.

1.2.1 An Autobiography

The *Autobiography of an Absolutist* was first published serially, and in 1989 as a book.²⁴ In the epilogue Dr. Natarajan comments on the title: “An absolutist is one who regulates his life with the Absolute as his norm of reference. He is generally [one] a man who refuses to make compromises. Earnestness, a wholeheartedness, honesty to oneself, and serious life-long dedication without compromises.... distinguish the state which is natural to the so-called absolutist.”²⁵

1.2.2 The Bhagavad Gita

The translation and commentary of the *Bhagavad Gita* is another major work. It began, as Dr. Natarajan says in the preface, with a dialogue with the Guru in 1925: “‘How could Krishna ask Arjuna to kill?’ Finding no ready answer myself, the Guru replied in a low voice, ‘he would have regretted later.’” Two years later, on the occasion of a discussion on Gita, it was the disciple’s turn to propose a solution: “in the study of the Gita the blemish of the canvas should not be attributed to the picture in the mind of the painter.”²⁶ After thirty years, in 1954-55, the centenary year of the birth of the Guru and the sixtieth birthday of the disciple, the commentary, prepared with the assistance of John Spiers, was released.²⁷ The third edition of the same was brought out in 1989.

1.2.3 The Quest for the Absolute

Nataraja Guru’s *magnum opus* is the commentary on the

Darsanamala of Narayana Guru, in three volumes, entitled *An Integrated Science of the Absolute*. It was published posthumously by the Varkala Narayana Gurukula over a span of five years, the first volume being issued in 1977. It runs into more than a thousand pages, with an encyclopaedic sweep of knowledge, to establish certitude in the absolute after the manner of Guru Narayana's *Darsanamala*. We shall have more to say on this in the second part of this article.

1.2.4 The Vision Applied

The doctoral dissertation of Nataraja Guru was published in French in 1932 under the title, *Le facteur personnel dans le processus éducatif*. Some significant portions of it were translated by him and published in English under the title *World Education Manifesto* (1975). The other works, *Dialectical Methodology* (1977)²⁸, *Wisdom's Frame of Reference* (1973), *Memorandum on World Government* (1986),²⁹ *Vedanta Revalued and Restated* (n.d.), *The Philosophy of a Guru* (1986), and *The Search for a Norm in Western Thought* (1986) were all collections of his serialised articles in *Values*. The spirit of these works is captured by Swamy Mick: "Nataraja Guru showed tendencies of a cosmopolitan attitude (and in) all his study and research his aim was always to establish norms which could stand as common reference points for all men at any time, anywhere."³⁰

A rearranged edition of these above works was published under the titles *Wisdom: The Absolute is Adorable* (1995)³¹ and *Experiencing One-World* (1996)³². One of the last works of Nataraja Guru as referred to in his *Autobiography*, and completed during his final days in the hospital at Trivandrum, is the English translation and commentary of Sankaracarya's *Saundarya Lahari*. It was published posthumously as *Saundarya Lahari: The Upsurging Billow of Beauty* (1988)³³. Despite doubts on authorship, due to *tantric* influence in the work, Nataraja Guru considers *Saundarya Lahari* fully *a-dvaitic*, presenting Vedanta "in a pictorial language."³⁴

In conclusion, his writings and their context reveal the

concern of the disciple to make the Guru known, even at the cost of him being misunderstood.³⁵ In the words of Yati, “one thing known to all who knew Nataraja Guru is that he never wanted to have popularity, to become a popular guru, or a popular teacher or a popular theoretician.”³⁶ His autobiography, describing the travails of a soul, comes close to Augustine’s *Confessions* and is a classic in metaphysical or mystical writing.

1.3 The Gurukul Experiment

Among the accomplishments of Dr. Natarajan in promoting the cause of Guru Narayana, the *Gurukul* project figures prominently. He founded several centres in India and abroad to promote the *Gurukul* way of life. It had roots in his experience of an *ashramic* life, attempted in 1923, in the Nilgiris.³⁷

These centres aimed at the revival of a life style with a global attitude,³⁸ the inspiration being Guru Narayana and the heritage of India. The centres grew over the years and have evolved in different ways. Their development, relevance and contributions could themselves be an object of study.³⁹

1.4 Studies on Dr. Natarajan

A couple of studies have been undertaken so far on Nataraja Guru. Professor P. Unnikrishnan of Calicut University has done a doctoral dissertation entitled “The Philosophy of Nataraja Guru.”⁴⁰ Swamy Cidambaratheertha has come out with a recent work entitled *Guruvum Vacanavum* (March 2000) highlighting the personality of Nataraja Guru. In the year 1995, to commemorate his birth centenary, Nataraja Guru’s works were reprinted by the Narayana Gurukula at Fernhill. Nitya Chaitanya Yati, a direct disciple of Nataraja Guru and his successor in the Narayana Gurukula Foundation, has written two works of biographical nature: *Nataraja Guru and I* (1995), and *Guruvum Sishyanum* (1990, third reprint). As the writings of Dr. Natarajan are interpretative of Guru Narayana’s writings, so Nitya Chaitanya Yati’s works are interpretative of Guru Nataraja.⁴¹

Our attempt is to study Guru Nataraja as a re-valuator of Guru Narayana, and thus focus on the relevance of the tradition for a liberative vision of life. We do not stress the socio-political dimension of Guru Narayana, as that is a well-established fact, but intend to look at the vision that initiated and sustained such involvement, and draw its relevance for a liberative Indian religiosity.

PART II: UNITIVE THINKING: A REFORMULATION OF THE VISION OF GURU NARAYANA

2. Introduction

Dr. Natarajan's writings present a number of difficulties to the reader. First, the vast canvas of his mind and the cross-references to diverse fields of knowledge within every chapter, make the writings heavy and difficult. Second, repetitions of his position from different perspectives, intended as it were to instruct the reader, pose a problem. Third, there is an ease with which he moves from the part to the whole, from the universal to the concrete and *vice versa*, which is a hurdle for the reader. Fourth, the language (writing style) is convoluted, as he himself acknowledges.⁴²

The subject matter poses the greatest hurdle, as the basic presupposition is that of a secret 'hidden to the generality of men.'⁴³ He therefore writes in an axiomatic and apodictic language, the source of certainty being more than academic erudition. There is, in short, a universal, absolutist approach, not easily acceptable, for it requires that one go against the natural tendencies of relativistic thinking. One almost feels that one is entering a 'New World,' the codes and customs of which are still in the making.

We shall first, in what follows, elaborate on this special 'world' of Nataraja Guru. Subsequently we will take a look at the sources, the content, and the methodology of the New Vision.

2.1 Crossing the Boundaries

Nataraja Guru was a genius. He was, besides, a free man,

one who considered himself a world citizen in the truest sense of the word. He was a contemplative or mystic. His autobiography is an ample proof of these assertions. He crossed the boundaries of prescribed fields of knowledge in search of truth, besides crossing boundaries of nationality, culture and civilisation.⁴⁴ In and through his writings he initiated an inter-disciplinary⁴⁵ approach, which is simultaneously cross-cultural. One of the assumptions operating behind all the literary output of Nataraja Guru is his own rootedness in two philosophical (knowledge) traditions, wanting to merge the Indian vision of reality with the Western.

The writings of Nataraja Guru further reveal a twofold concern: first, to arrive at the core of inner experience, and second, to match the truth discovered in the inner depths with the outside world. The paradoxical fact, that knowledge of the world outside is equally knowledge of the world inside, is a component of his vision that we would like to elaborate. Basing on this principle of identity, he seeks parallel truths perceived in different cultural paradigms.⁴⁶

Nataraja Guru set about reformulating the vision of Guru Narayana at a time when 'Philosophy'⁴⁷ was in disrepute in the western world.⁴⁸ His own contemporaries in the western world were yet to develop an effective critique of modernity. The resistance to the culture of war in Europe, and the consequent attraction for the ways of peace in India and the East, motivated his own writings.

The attempt of Nataraja Guru is to situate Guru Narayana as an eminent re-valuator of the *Vedantic* tradition. In reformulating a unitive vision, Guru Nataraja has enlarged the borders of knowledge and given the parameters for discovering wisdom in modern times.

2.2 Sources of Reformulation

We have already stated that the person and writings of Guru Narayana were the prime influences on Dr. Natarajan in developing his own philosophy or vision. Among the writings of Guru Narayana, the two he found most stimulating for entry into the

mystical frame of mind of Guru Narayana were *Atmopadesasatakam*⁴⁹ and *Darsanamala*.

The first commentary by Nataraja Guru was on *Atmopadesasatakam* of Guru Narayana.⁵⁰ The commentary on *Darsanamala* was the fruit of long years of work begun in 1925.⁵¹ After completing the latter work in 1967, he re-edited the first in a series of articles.⁵² The fact that Nataraja Guru did not bother to comment on a whole set of poetic works of Guru Narayana has irked some. They consider him biased towards a *Vedantic* interpretation of Guru Narayana.⁵³ The appraisal of the vision of Guru Narayana attempted by Nataraja Guru relies on *Darsanamala* as the central text.

Darsanamala stands out among the writings of Guru Narayana for various reasons. The most important is that “while a profound depth of non-dual philosophy is presented in various guises throughout Narayana Guru’s recorded words, the highest degree of structural organisation is to be found in *Darsanamala*.”⁵⁴ Secondly, the circumstances in which it was composed, in 1916 on request by his disciples, is interesting. It was chanted by Guru Narayana a verse at a time without any repetition and written down by Swami Vidyananda.⁵⁵

Thus the production of this work was used as a tool to further the training of a disciple. When the Guru had finished chanting a set of verses, they were committed to memory and then written by the disciple. Later they were read back to the Guru, who gave a title to each set of ten verses uttered on different days, making in all ten visions. The work was titled ‘*Darsanamala*’ meaning ‘A Garland of Visions.’⁵⁶

In the prologue to the principal work of Nataraja Guru, based on the above and entitled *Integrated Science of the Absolute*, he says the following:

The *Darsanamala* is conceived with perfect symmetry between each of its chapters, as also within each chapter, that as a whole it has such a self-consistency at every stage that the question of proof does not arise. Each vision or *darsana* results from the meeting of the *a priori* and the *a posteriori*, wherein the outer

experience neutralises inner experience, and yields both dialectical as well as apodictic certitude.⁵⁷

About his own project, he says that he wants to relate the basic framework of the *Darsanamala* with the large body of modern knowledge. His effort was to re-value and re-state the Vision in the light of the notion of the Absolute.⁵⁸

With this intention of integrating modern knowledge with the structure of the *Darsanamala*, the chapters are re-titled in his work as follows: *Adhyaropa Darsanam* (vision by supposition) as Cosmology; *Apavada Darsanam* (vision by Non-supposition) as Methodology; *Asatya Darsanam* (vision of Non-Existence) as Phenomenology; *Maya Darsanam* (vision of Consciousness) as Normalization; *Karma Darsanam* (Vision of Action) as Instrumentalism (Pragmatism); *Jnana Darsanam* (vision by Reason) as Awareness; *Bhakti Darsanam* (vision by Devotion) as Contemplation; *Yoga Darsanam* (vision by Meditation) as Meditation and *Nirvana Darsanam* (vision by Absorption) as Absorption.⁵⁹

The first chapter deals with the working of the human consciousness, beginning from a common sense, matter-of-fact apprehension of the material world. The second chapter deals with the existent, created world as an effect, whereas the cause is consciousness itself, the underlying substratum, which supports all 'the passing show' of phenomena. The third chapter gives a description of how the mind meets matter and creates its many subjective and objective worlds.

The chapters that follow, review various kinds of errors the untrained mind is prone to (chapter 4); provide a neutral view of consciousness devoid of conditioning or functional activities (chapter 5); give the proper perspective regarding work or action (chapter 6); and the correct use of 'reason' or wisdom (chapter 7).

While the first three chapters have a special concern with the objective, the outward and the phenomenological, the last three are characterised by a subjective, mystical interiority. The eighth chapter locates the self, the agent of contemplation, shifting the attention away from the 'actual' here and now. Chapter nine gives

instructions on practice of meditation, and the last chapter talks about the end, death, balancing with the first chapter that talks about the beginning and birth. Therefore its title 'Absorption.'⁶⁰

The twentieth century, from its beginning to its close, has seen an increasing "cross-pollination between the analytic and the synthetic extremes."⁶¹ But they remain still "entrenched as the rival polarised camps of materialism and spiritualism."⁶² Guru Narayana, and with him Dr. Natarajan, maintain that "the most beautiful attitude is one that combines the best of both in a dynamic conception."⁶³ It is that common root or meeting point, in a dialectical integration of the conceptual and the practical that underlies the entire study of *Darsanamala* entitled *Integrated Science of the Absolute*. Every age needs a new vision. This new vision cannot afford to disregard the ancient, nor can it pretend to ignore the present in being faithful to the past.⁶⁴

The source of Dr. Natarajan's unitive thinking or non-dual vision can be ascertained as the following. First, the very ambient of the culture in which he grew up; secondly, the personal contact with an *a-dvaitin*, a non-dualist like Guru Narayana; thirdly, his meditations (study) on the texts of Narayana Guru's compositions; and fourthly, his explorations into Western philosophy (which began with his westernised education), religion and science,⁶⁵ wherein he discovered a non-dual (dialectical) tradition.

2.3 *Integral Vision: Unitive Thinking*

In Dr. Natarajan's appraisal, Guru Narayana was a mystic of the genuine Indian spiritual tradition, but with a difference.⁶⁶ He discovered the Absolute in the Self, and discovered the equality of human beings, as a consequence of perceiving Self as Absolute. His own concrete efforts to bring about this equality among the people with whom he lived are well known and we have made reference to them already.

Dr. Natarajan's exposition of Guru Narayana integrates the principles of scientific truth with *Vedantic* truth and perception of reality.⁶⁷ Therefore it is called an integral vision or science. It is integral for two other reasons as well. First, there is a dialectics

involved in arriving at the vision. Any vision is a mode of knowing or of perceiving reality; we shall say more about this in the section on the Methodology of the Vision. Second, the vision of reality is integral, because it has an inherent non-dual structure. The essence of the reformulation is the *mahavakya* of Guru Narayana, which we briefly exposed in an earlier article.⁶⁸ We will return to this before concluding this section.

2.3.1 Science and Vedanta

Integral Vision or Unitive Understanding⁶⁹ is a term applicable to the age-old wisdom of India. It is more commonly known as *a-dvaita* in the Indian *darsana* systems. But in essence it transcends the systematisation efforts of the schools of any time and place. In fact when Vedanta is referred to as being monotheistic or idealistic in character, the most important virtue by which it remains a unique form of non-dualism is lost sight of.⁷⁰ Besides, the stress on the non-systemic dynamic aspect of the *a-dvaita* vision is what constitutes a re-valuator or re-formulator. It is in and through such re-valuators that the same ancient wisdom continues to reverberate and keep alive a civilisation. Dr. Natarajan claims the role of a re-valuator for Guru Narayana and we intend to show the same as applicable for Dr. Natarajan.⁷¹

The words 'integral vision,' 'unitive understanding' or 'unitive thinking' imply a notion of unification. The word 'unified' is usually used to mean the possibility of putting together different disciplines (or aspects, parts) into one totality. An integration of different disciplines into 'one' implies two dimensions – a quantitative one, the sum-total of the class of elements or disciplines put together, and a qualitative one, a rationale, a spirit that overrides or transcends the quantitative. For example, there is a sense in which 'internationalism is not the same as the arithmetic of all nations.'⁷² In other words, there is a qualitative element as well as a quantitative one, and these neutralise each other when two conjugates like body or mind, time or space, matter or energy, physics or metaphysics are integrated into one.

2.3.2.1 Unifying Factor

It is easy to conceive a 'unified science' of all sciences, and similarly, to conceive a 'unified philosophy' of all philosophies and these have been attempted with varying degrees of success.⁷³ The former is based on an *a posteriori*, relativistic and experimental outlook dealing with percepts. The latter, the realm of metaphysics, depends on *a priori* and axiomatic postulates of pure reasoning. But what about an integration of the two above unified fields? Such is the field of integral vision.⁷⁴

Dr. Natarajan agrees with Bergson, Eddington and others⁷⁵ that post-Einsteinian scientific thinking leaves the door open, and understands genuine scientific thinking⁷⁶ as capable of joining hands with an integrative, unitive thinking of wisdom literature across the world.⁷⁷ On the other hand, he stresses the fact that genuine non-dual, *a-dvaita* philosophy offers scope for a dialogue not only between different philosophies but even with the new scientific thinking. In other words, according to Dr. Natarajan, the new scientific thinking is also the field of the authentic traditional thinking of *a-dvaita*.⁷⁸

Both experimental and axiomatic thinking enter into modern science as equal partners in what is now known as post-Einsteinian and non-Newtonian physics. Philosophers of science like Eddington give at least as much importance to the conceptual aspect of physics as to the experimental. In reality, in spite of disclaiming the *a priori* approach, physicists at all times have relied on mathematical verification or demonstration.⁷⁹

2.3.2.2 The Midway

Dr. Natarajan stands on firm scientific as well as speculative grounds to assert that there is a meeting point between the truth of science and Vedanta. He delves into deep analysis of the laws of nature, and he also probes the depths of the mind, the self, the psyche. "The science of the Absolute," he says, "can also be called a science of sciences, a unified science, or an integrated body of knowledge."⁸⁰ When he refers to the 'Absolute', it is to this

integrally perceived totality of reality that he refers.

Further, such an approach is termed by him as the ‘absolutist approach’ despite difficulties and prejudices about the very use of the word. “It is one of the ironies of history that what actually identifies the most inclusive framework comes instead to be considered as a narrow philosophical attitude.”⁸¹ What he means by ‘Absolute’ then is the totality of the knowledge situation. It is the content as well as norm of philosophy.⁸²

2.3.2.3 Philosophy as Science

About the word ‘philosophy’ he says, “we mean it to cover the whole field of speculation, omitting neither existence, subsistence nor value.”⁸³ His purpose then, is to convince his contemporaries and readers of the inherent unity of vision, whether objectively arrived at, as in the mathematical and pure sciences, or subjectively, as in Vedanta reformulated by Guru Narayana. The critique of philosophy by science is responded to by the philosophy of science, which is also a science of philosophy. The realm of philosophy has no barriers, either from the sciences in the West, or from the schools of the East, because philosophy is the integration of all knowledge.

2.3.3 Non-Dual Threesome

Integral vision or unitive understanding of reality implies also a cosmotheandric⁸⁴ insight into Being or the Absolute. Reality which is One exists or manifests itself in a cosmic, divine and human form, at one-and-the-same time. Absolute is a meeting of opposing tendencies and these tendencies or forces are of one or the other realms – “theological, psychological or cosmological.”⁸⁵ The Absolute, in other words, sums up the polarities contained in the divine, in the human and in nature: one and many, self and non-self, universal and particular.⁸⁶

The human being is a play-field of cosmic and divine forces; the cosmos is a play-field of the divine and the human; and the divine is a play-field of the cosmic and the human. It is this

interpenetrability or relationality between these three dimensions of reality that overcomes the paradoxes of one and many, matter and spirit, psychic and divine. Reality is consciousness as well as matter, being as well as becoming, static as well as dynamic, subject as well as object, truth as well as falsehood, light as well as darkness.⁸⁷

In short, the 'Absolute' is the totality of reality. The Absolute is the implicit and explicit starting point, basis or presupposition of any and every knowledge.⁸⁸ In consciousness, 'knowledge' is self-reflective. In the primacy of consciousness there is no separation between the "knower, the known and the knowledge."⁸⁹ Pure knowledge is the Self. Self is the Absolute. The Absolute is the meeting of transcendence and immanence.⁹⁰ Integral vision is an appropriation of the nature of the 'real'. The real, which is *sat*, *cit* and *ananda*, being, consciousness and bliss, or, as translated by Nataraja Guru, "Existence, subsistence, and Value."⁹¹ The possession of the Absolute, which is the self, is the goal of this vision. Integral vision *is*, or is true, only when it is actualised in self-realisation. There is no Absolute without its counterpart, the Self.

2.3.4 Code for One-World

In order to conclude this section, we shall attempt an interpretation of the central and vital sentence or dictum of Guru Narayana's philosophy in the light of the integral vision of true *a-dvaitic* (trinitarian) lineage exposed above. As already noted, the dictum "One Caste, One Religion, One God for Human being"⁹² does not promote any particular Caste, or God, or Religion, but rather draws attention to the human predicament upon earth, which is individually and collectively in search of '*atmasukham*' (spiritual happiness).

"One religion, one caste, and one God for the human being." This human being, in the *a-dvaitic* interpretation, is none other than the Absolute, the real. The real is nothing but a combination, a union of three dimensions, the divine, the human and cosmic. Human being (Man) really attains the stature of the

Absolute, recognises the true vocation or responsibility of being Man (human being), only in appropriating the ‘Oneness’. This means a trinitarian, threefold, symbolisation: ‘caste/*Jati*’ symbolising the cosmic, biological, natural domain of the human; ‘religion’ symbolising the collective, communitarian inter-relational domain of the human; and ‘God’ symbolising the divine, transcendence-immanence domain of the human. This dictum, is in short, an assertion of the truth of cosmotheandristm.⁹³ No God without man and world, no man without God and world, and no world without man and God.⁹⁴

This dictum is a call to a new awareness of what it means to be human, to be rooted in the world and to be divine, and it is the breaking forth of new consciousness of integrality – a new integral unitive vision. Our following section looks into the possible ways of appropriating such a vision.

2.4 Methodology of Integral Vision

Integral vision of reality is had in and through unitive understanding. As already introduced in the previous section, we now take to ‘dialectical methodology.’⁹⁵ If the ‘Absolute’ is the totality of reality, all knowledge must be systematizable in it. In the earlier section on ‘Sources’, *Darsanamala* was taken to be a garland of visions had by Guru Narayana in a mystical appropriation of the integrality of reality. “It can boldly be asserted... that in *Darsanamala* Guru Narayana for the first time been able to string together all the points of view natural or possible in the context of human understanding.”⁹⁶

It is indeed a bold assertion and means that “unitive understanding is nothing other than bringing all forms of awareness and every kind of understanding to fall within an overall scheme of correlation or an all embracing structure which one cannot avoid seeing if favoured with the vision of the Absolute.”⁹⁷ At its heart, integral vision is about the finite, visualising the infinite, ‘in *oneself*, seeing the *self of all*.’⁹⁸ Nataraja Guru asserts that, like Aristotle and Francis Bacon before him (authors respectively of the *Organon* and the *Novum Organon*,⁹⁹) who attempted to systematise

knowledge, Guru Narayana also makes a similar effort to see the total-knowledge-situation¹⁰⁰ together.¹⁰¹

It would be too naive to think that the individual can actually amass all knowledge, but rather it means one can have an access to all knowledge with a scheme. 'Garland of Visions' is one such. What then are the features of a method that enables a comprehensive view of reality, or in other words, what enables the possession of the Cosmotheandric intuition or experience? They are the following: co-ordinates system, dialectics, structuralism and proto-linguism. Together these are called the 'dialectical methodology' or the 'methodology of integral vision.' We shall comment briefly on each.

2.4.1 Coordinates of Vision

The first help comes in the form of co-ordinates. Co-ordinates are part of a system or scheme for identifying the position of points.¹⁰² This system has recourse to lines or axes, one horizontal and the other vertical, with the point of intersection being '0.' This enables a point to be identified in any one of the four quarters.

Nataraja Guru, in arriving at truth, uses this system of identifying a point as a tool. In any field of knowledge there are exaggerations possible. In any field of knowledge one can identify a vertical value factor as well as a horizontal value factor. For example, in economics he refers to the world of opulence controlled by a market (mercantile) economy as a horizontal value factor and a world of abundance controlled by political economy as a vertical value factor.¹⁰³ Avoiding exaggeration on either side is the way to preserve an economic system that will take true human happiness into consideration. Thus for Nataraja Guru, co-ordinates are a tool that can be applied in any field. They are an instrument for locating wisdom, and in that sense a window to the 'Absolute.'¹⁰⁴ About the horizontal and vertical aspect of total knowledge situation he writes as follows:

The total knowledge situation, which is the subject-matter and the object-matter at the same time, has always two complementary

sides which are related to each other in the form of a one-one structural and complementary relationship. Whether we call these two, reality and appearance, noumenon and phenomenon, quality and quantity, time and space, the conceptual and perceptual, the self and the non-self, cause and effect, etc., these two aspects are always present.¹⁰⁵

In an overview of western thought in general, Nataraja Guru concludes that the sciences gave greater and greater attention to the horizontal, *a posteriori*, perceptual world of knowledge. Their successes tended to discredit the other source, the *a priori*, vertical, conceptual world of knowledge. In his opinion, if the spirit of modernism continues extolling the horizontal value factor at the expense of the vertical, “it is not only oriental philosophy which will have no future, but speculation itself will lose its significance and thus defeat the whole purpose of philosophy.”¹⁰⁶

Applying the same scheme to science and metaphysics in their search for truth, he says: “it is neither induction nor deduction which gives the central or scientific certitude to physics or metaphysics. It is the meeting of the *a priori* and the *a posteriori* approaches.”¹⁰⁷ Further, taking a sweeping glance of the growth of thought across cultures he acknowledges that eastern philosophy has excelled in the *a priori* while western science has given primacy to the *a posteriori*. An interfacing of both these windows to reality was a life-long dream of Nataraja Guru.

2.4.2 Non-Dual Dialectics

The second tool for appropriating the integrality of reality is dialectics. Dialectics, according to the Oxford Dictionary, means “art of discovering and testing truths by discussion and logical arguments,” and “criticism that deals with metaphysical contradictions and how to solve them.” It is a verb used as a noun and a method treated as a doctrine.¹⁰⁸ Describing dialectics Nataraja Guru says, “dialectics is called by Hegel the soul of the world process, or by Plato the mirroring likeness of eternity and by Aristotle as mind which is free from the present.”¹⁰⁹

Dialectics exposes the binary opposition in language as

well as reality. Bipolar terms like teacher-student, husband-wife, numerator-denominator, ruler-ruled reveal as much. In every situation or aspect of reality “dialectics is implied as its principle as well as its method.”¹¹⁰ In dialectics there is always an opposition or polarity and it is their mutual relation that makes a unitive whole.

It is thus related to paradox, which can be perceived in a ‘person, thing or situation displaying contradictory features.’ Non-dual philosophy perceives the inherent contradiction or paradox of reality. Dialectics as a method is a way of containing these oppositions or contradictions. The word ‘*a-dvaita*’ itself is a solution to the opposing possibilities of *dvaita* and *ekatva*, or *nanatvam* (pluralism) and *ekatvam* (monism).¹¹¹

The insight that the truth of reality is arrived at by correlating and integrating or ‘placing together’ what are apparently opposing or differing is dialectical wisdom.¹¹² The dialectical insight is what is most prominent in the study of the Absolute made by Nataraja Guru in his monumental work, as the following quote reveals:

The absolute is not a thing nor is it a mere idea. When the philosopher has correctly located the paradox lurking between appearance and reality, the paradox itself tends to be abolished into the Absolute. The Absolute is a neutral notion in which all the real things and all possible ideas about them can be comprised without contradiction or conflict. Thus it is both a thing and an idea at once.¹¹³

Dialectics then is a way of thinking that enables the opposing tendencies or dimensions to be perceived as merging. It is the core of the non-dual insight or intuition enabling an integral vision.¹¹⁴

2.4.3 Structuralism

The third key to integral vision used by Nataraja Guru is structuralism. Structuralism comes from the word structure. Structure means “inner organisation of a system constituting a unity of stable interrelations between its elements, as well as laws governing these interrelations.”¹¹⁵ In other words, there is a structure

underlying all objects and the change they undergo. Structuralism “is the scientific methodological trend that evolved to discover the structure inherent in objects of study.”¹¹⁶

In philosophy, ‘structure’ has similarity to the ‘structure of thought’ spoken of by Kant in his *schematismos*.¹¹⁷ It had its prominence also in mathematics¹¹⁸ and physics, in sociology and linguistics, and in other fields.¹¹⁹ In the first quarter of this century it was believed to be “of definite methodological importance in promoting interdisciplinary study of cultural phenomena, and in bringing the humanities and natural sciences closer together, their specific nature remaining unaffected.”¹²⁰

This possibility of structuralism to link up diverse fields of knowledge is at the root of the integration of Eastern and Western knowledge in *Integrated Science of the Absolute* of Nataraja Guru. In every field he identifies the fourfold structure on the basis of the quaternion formed by the correlates. He uses it like on a mathematic graph to add knowledge upon knowledge to construct an ever-increasing totality of knowledge.

Taking the insight further, “to be human is to be a structuralist.”¹²¹ Structural arrangement in entities and situations can be said to have the following characteristics: “the idea of wholeness, the idea of transformation and idea of self regulation.”¹²² First, by wholeness is meant internal coherence with the constituent parts conforming to certain intrinsic laws that determine the nature. In this sense a structure is not an aggregate. Second, by transformative character of structure is meant that it is not static, but capable of transformational procedures, whereby new material is processed (for example, language, a basic human structure, is capable of undergoing transformation). Third, by self-regulating is meant that a structure makes no appeals beyond itself in order to validate its transformational procedure (for example, a language changes according to its own internal rules than according to external criteria).¹²³

Structuralism is fundamentally a way of thinking about and describing the world in terms of its constitutive structures. It is intrinsically connected with scientific discoveries of early twentieth century, ruling out pure objectivity as the sole arbitrator of truth. A

totally objective perception of or by an individual is, therefore, not possible. Any observer is creating something of what he or she observes. The relation between the observer and the observed then achieves a kind of primacy. The relationship becomes the only thing that can be observed. It becomes the stuff of reality itself. Moreover the principle involved must invest the whole of reality. In consequence, the true nature of things may be said to be not in things themselves but in the relationship which one constructs.

The structuralist principle that the world is made up of relationship rather than things, when applied to the totality of reality, gives rise to the integral vision we have exposed in the previous section: a vision of reality that is cosmotheandric, a network of relationships involving God, World and Man, the cosmic, the human and the divine.

2.4.4 Way of the Ancients

The fourth key to integral vision of reality is found in ancient wisdom sources. Dr. Natarajan uses 'proto-linguism,'¹²⁴ a term borrowed from iconography, for this purpose. As mathematics is used by science to integrate opposing theories of space and time by transcending their contradiction through a dialectical way of thinking,¹²⁵ similarly proto-linguism is employed in the Vedas and Upanishads as a key to a non-dual perception of reality. This is an ancient mode of Indian structuralism. It also proves the point that structuralism has always been inherent in reality, though perceived differently by people of diverse cultures, leaving scope for a cross-cultural reading.¹²⁶ The co-ordinate structure common to proto-linguism is referred to in the *Mandukya Upanishad*, verse two:

All here is the Absolute (*Brahman*) indeed,
This self (*atman*) is the Absolute,
This same Self (he) is four-limbed (*Catuspad*).¹²⁷

This is interpreted in the light of the previous verse which has reference to AUM, and is considered to be symbolic of the four states of consciousness as explained in the verses that follow:

the wakeful (*jagrat*, v. 3), dreaming (*svapna*, v. 4), sleeping (*susupti*, v. 5) and deep sleep (*turiya*, v. 7). The explanation connecting each of the states of consciousness with one or the other quarter in the quaternion occurs from vv. 9-12.¹²⁸

The past, the present, the future – everything is just the word *Aum*. And whatever else that transcends three fold time – that, too, is just the word *Aum*.¹²⁹

The four limbs (*catushpad*) of this *Upanishad* is parallel to the co-ordinate system of vertical and horizontal axes crossing each other at right angles with their positive and negative poles. This scheme used in the *Mandukya* is applicable in any problematic situation “by first distinguishing the opposing sides, which apparently make up the problem as positive and negative.”¹³⁰

When any conflict is deeply scrutinised by taking a cross section view, as it were, of the inner and outer factors, a twofold tendency is revealed – the negative acting horizontally, and the positive acting vertically. The sharpness of contradiction or grossness of conflict get diffused once the two tendencies or ‘sides’ are seen as complementary. They are perceived then as “acting not only against each other but through each other and by each other.”¹³¹ Such a perception of the problem provides a means to live or cope with it and even transcend it.

In short, in the process of diffusing the conflict, one uses not only ‘reason’ with its mechanistic ‘either-or’ (right-wrong) principle of non-contradiction but also ‘intuition’ with its ‘both-and’ (right-and-wrong) principle of identity, resulting in a unitive understanding which brings ‘spiritual happiness’ (*atmasukham*).

3. Conclusion

As it is self-evident by now, the four keys of Integral Vision we have thus far briefly outlined go together and complement each other, like the same key being used to unlock a multi-lock system. This comprehensive dialectical methodology or methodology of integral vision is applied consistently by Nataraja Guru to

Education,¹³² Economics,¹³³ Politics,¹³⁴ Aesthetics,¹³⁵ Religion and Ethics,¹³⁶ Science,¹³⁷ and Religion.¹³⁸ We have not attempted to summarise the author's thoughts on these various topics, except for passing comments for reasons of brevity.

Notes

¹ Swamy Mick, Editorial in *Guru Message: Journal of Gurukula Island Home*, 4/7 (March 1982). (Hereafter, Swamy Mick, *Guru Message*.)

² Ibid.

³ Kilimanoor Visvambaran, *Kerala Samskara Darsanam* (Kilimanoor: Kachanagiri Books, 1990) 245.

⁴ Nitya Chaitanya Yati, "Nataraja Guru," Editorial, *Gurukulam Darsanika Masika*, 33/12 (March 1997) 515. (Hereafter, *Gurukulam*.)

⁵ Nitya Chaitanya Yati to George Thadathil, "The Discovery of a Tradition (*Parampara*)," *Divyadaan: Journal of Philosophy and Education* 9 (1998) 5.

⁶ Nitya Chaitanya Yati to George Thadathil 6.

⁷ The name of the school in French was *L'Ecole les Rayons*. Nataraja Guru, *Autobiography of an Absolutist* (Fernhill: Gurukula Publishing Home, 1989) 196. (Hereafter, Nataraja Guru, *Autobiography*.)

⁸ Nataraja Guru, *Autobiography* 211.

⁹ Nataraja Guru, *Autobiography* 219ff.

¹⁰ Nataraja Guru, *Autobiography* 260.

¹¹ Nataraja Guru, *Autobiography* 263-74

¹² Nataraja Guru, *Autobiography* 290.

¹³ Nataraja Guru, *Autobiography* 296.

¹⁴ Nataraja Guru, *Autobiography* 318-358.

¹⁵ Nataraja Guru, *Life and Teachings of Narayana Guru*, revised ed. (Varkala: Gurukula Publishers, 1990) xv. (Hereafter, Nataraja Guru, *Life and Teachings*.)

¹⁶ Nataraja Guru, *Autobiography* 304.

¹⁷ Nitya Chaitanya Yati in the preface to Nataraja Guru, *Autobiography* x.

¹⁸ Nataraja Guru, *Life and Teachings* ix.

¹⁹ Nataraja Guru, *Autobiography* ix-x.

²⁰ *Values* continued till 1971, after which *Gurukulam* was started. *Gurukulam* continues to be published from Varkala in Malayalam and from Bainbridge, USA in English.

²¹ First published by Paico, 1952.

²² These are: A Critique of Caste (*Jati -Mimamsa*), Prenatal Gratitude (*Pinda-Nandi*), Kindness to Life (*Jiva-Karunya-Panchakam*), Song of the Kundalini Snake (*Kundalini-Pattu*), Thought and Inertia (*Chit-Jadangal*), Scriptures of Mercy (*Anukampa-Daskakam*), and The Science of the Absolute (*Brahma-Vidya-Panchakam*).

²³ First published by Gurukula Publishing House, Varkala, 1969.

²⁴ *Values* is the magazine in which it first appeared. More recently, some portions of his other writings have been reproduced by Nitya Chaitanya Yati in *Gurukulam*.

²⁵ Nataraja Guru, *Autobiography* 682.

²⁶ Nataraja Guru, *Bhagavad Gita* (Varkala: Gurukula Publishing Home, 1989) ix.

²⁷ It was released at a function at Madras Gurukula presided over by Fr. Sequeira, the Principal of Loyola College. Cf. Nitya Chaitanya Yati, *Nataraja Guru and I* (Fernhill: Narayana Gurukula, 1995) 37-38.

²⁸ This work was re-edited and published in 1996 under the title *Man-Woman Dialectics*.

²⁹ This is an outline of what Nataraja Guru envisages as an application of the unitive vision, wisdom and approach to life in the area of politics. He integrates the wishful expectation of a world government with the utmost truth – the truth of reality, the inner, spiritual dimension of reality. The World Government he talks of is not a ‘parallel government,’ but rather an alternative way of influencing the running of governments, through renewed involvement of individuals.

³⁰ Swamy Mick, Editorial in *Guru Message* 4/6 (February 1982) 3. (*The Search for a Norm in Western Thought* was serialized in ten parts also in *Guru Message*.)

³¹ Nataraja Guru, *Wisdom: The Absolute is Adorable* (D.K. Printworld, 1994?? 1995??). (Hereafter Nataraja Guru, *Wisdom*.) This book treats of the need for bringing about unity between the various theological and scientific trends. Standing in the neutral zero of the Absolute, the book purviews the developments in science and theology, and calls for a retrieval of the frame of reference of the Absolute, to further the cause of wisdom.

³² Nataraja Guru, *Experiencing One-World* (Delhi, D.K. Printworld, 1994).

³³ Nataraja Guru, *Saundarya Lahari: The Upsurging Billow of Beauty* (Varkala: Gurukula Publishing Home, 1988).

³⁴ *Ibid.* ii.

³⁵ On the type of relationship he had with Narayana Guru, cf. Nataraja Guru, *Autobiography* 110-111.

³⁶ Nitya Chaitanya Yati to George Thadathil 15.

³⁷ Nataraja Guru, *Autobiography* 129ff.

³⁸ “It is Man’s destiny to ponder on the riddle of existence and as a by-product of his wonderment, to create a new life on this earth.” F. Keltering, quoted in *Guru Message* 1/10 (June 1979).

³⁹ John Spiers, his first disciple, died at the Bangalore Gurukula. Nitya Chaitanya Yati, the legal successor to Nataraja Guru, died at the Fernhill Gurukula, Ooty. The Ramanthali Gurukula, which had the bigger group of an international nature, published the *Guru Message* from 1978 to 1983. The *Gurukul* moved to Bangalore after the acquisition of the property for a naval base by the Government of Kerala. The Varkala center functions as the headquarters also of the East West University (estd. 1974), a prolongation of the ‘Education Bureau’ idea of Dr. Natarajan, and has as per its prospectus 16 centres in India and 14 centres in other countries.

⁴⁰ I had access only to parts of this work, which is currently in the press.

⁴¹ A complete list of the writings of Nitya Chaitanya Yati, both in English and Malayalam, prepared by the present author for his doctoral research project on “Nitya Chaitanya Yati’s Interpretation of Guru Narayana,” is available at the Narayana Gurukula, Fernhill, Ooty as well as at Varkala.

⁴² Nataraja Guru, *Experiencing One-World* 361.

⁴³ Mark Albert, “One World Religion,” in Curran de Brueller, ed., *Unitive Understanding* (Fernhill: Narayana Gurukula, 1973) 2:17.

⁴⁴ Nataraja Guru, *Integrated Science of the Absolute* (Varkala, Gurukula Publishers, 1977) 1:145. (Hereafter, Nataraja Guru, *ISA*)

⁴⁵ Nitya Chaitanya Yati, *Nataraja Guru and I* (Fernhill, Narayana Gurukula, 1995) 41.

⁴⁶ Nataraja Guru, *ISA* 1:333.

⁴⁷ Nataraja Guru makes a distinction between the traditional or classical understanding of philosophy and the modern western understanding of philosophy. It is his opinion that the classical notion of philosophy cannot be done away with, and is perennial. The modern understanding of philosophy is in progress from the dualism initiated by Descartes to the nihilism propagated by post-modernists.

⁴⁸ Cf. Nataraja Guru, *The Search for a Norm in Western Thought* (Varkala: Narayana Gurukula, 1986). (Hereafter, Nataraja Guru, *Search for a Norm*.) Cf. also Rudy Rucker, *Infinity and Mind: The Science and Philosophy of the Infinite* (New York: Bantam Books, 1983) 170, for the objections against philosophy by logical positivists.

⁴⁹ It is the most popular writing of Guru Narayana in Malayalam to date and one that has elicited the highest number of commentaries. It is also known as the ‘Bhagavad Gita of the Malayali.’

⁵⁰ First published along with the second edition of *The Word of the Guru*, a biography of Guru Narayana by Nataraja Guru.

⁵¹Nitya Chaitanya Yati, *Nataraja Guru and I* 38.

⁵²Nataraja Guru, *The Philosophy of A Guru* (Varkala: Narayana Gurukula, 1986) i.

⁵³T. Bhaskaran, *Sreenarayana Gurudevamananam* (Kottayam: Lalu Books, 1994) 9-24.

⁵⁴Scott Teitsworth, in Nitya Chaitanya Yati, *The Psychology of Darsanamala* (Varkala: Gurukula Publishing House, 1987) 6. (Hereafter, Nitya Chaitanya, *The Psychology*.)

⁵⁵Teitsworth 7. Cf. also Nataraja Guru, *ISA* 1:174.

⁵⁶The circumstances that led to the writing of *Integrated Science of the Absolute* are as interesting as the writing of the original. When he was in Brussels, Nataraja Guru had an accidental opportunity to enter the Royal Academy of Sciences. The discussion there was on 'how to evolve a common methodology for an interdisciplinary sharing of scientific knowledge with those working in different fields.' This captured his attention, as it was a project dear to him for long. On his return to Fernhill, Ooty, he got the help of Nitya Chaitanya Yati, his disciple, to complete the work. Such a concern in his mind was the result of the fusion of more than one wisdom tradition in his own life.

⁵⁷Nataraja Guru, *ISA* 1:144.

⁵⁸Nataraja Guru, *ISA* 1:144-45.

⁵⁹Nataraja Guru, *ISA* 1:143.

⁶⁰Nataraja Guru, *ISA* 3:202-206.

⁶¹Teitsworth 2.

⁶²Teitsworth 2.

⁶³Teitsworth 3.

⁶⁴That the integration of East and West was of concern to Narayana Guru can be surmised from a couple of facts: (1) the presence of the West through Christianity as a religion and the British Raj as a political reality in his context; (2) his own efforts at promoting Sanskrit on the one hand and English on the other, as a means of helping the new generation accommodate the old and the new; (3) his contacts with Western thinking through a disciple, Ernest Kirk.

⁶⁵Nataraja Guru, *ISA* 1:1-132.

⁶⁶Cf. Nataraja Guru, *Life and Teachings and Word of the Guru*.

⁶⁷Nataraja Guru, *Wisdom* 255.

⁶⁸George Thadathil, "The Birth of a Tradition: The Philosophy of Narayana Guru," *Divyadaan: Journal of Philosophy and Education* 10 (1999) 293-318.

⁶⁹'Unitive Understanding,' 'Unitive Vision,' 'Unitive Thinking' are used as interchangeable and are representative of the 'Integral Vision.'

⁷⁰ Curran de Brueller, ed., *Unitive Understanding* (Fernhill: Narayana Gurukula, 1973) 2:ix.

⁷¹ De Brueller 2:ix. Cf. also Nataraja Guru, *ISA* 2:173.

⁷² De Brueller 2:x.

⁷³ Fritjof Capra, *The Tao of Physics*, and Ken Wilber, *Spectrum of Consciousness*, are but two among many.

⁷⁴ Nataraja Guru, *Wisdom* 191.

⁷⁵ Among those who have taken to such a project in the past three decades are Fritjof Capra, Alan Watts and Ken Wilbur. Kurt Goedel, Cantor and even Stephen Hawking too would fall in this group. Cf. Rucker 57-97; 203-236.

⁷⁶ ‘Scientific thinking’ and ‘science’ in Dr. Natarajan’s usage are to be taken in the meaning he attributes them. Science for him is ‘Certitude,’ that which provides certitude, that which is in search of truth in its integral sense, avoiding polarisations. True science (which is what he means by science) is that which overcomes the bifurcation in knowledge because of which Science (as ordinarily understood) emerged. The differentiation is crucial to understanding Dr. Natarajan.

⁷⁷ Nataraja Guru, *ISA* 2:108-110.

⁷⁸ Nataraja Guru, *ISA* 1:382, 395.

⁷⁹ De Brueller 2:x.

⁸⁰ Nataraja Guru, *ISA* 1:2. See also his *Search for a Norm* 120-123.

⁸¹ Deborah Buchanan in Nataraja Guru, *The Search For A Norm* viii. Cf. also Rucker 170, for the objections against philosophy by logical positivists. Note also the parallel we drew to the Roman Catholic tradition earlier.

⁸² For a philosophical exposition of the same there is a work by Guru Narayana titled *Arivu*. Cf. Nataraja Guru, *ISA* 2:202-204.

⁸³ Nataraja Guru, *Search For Norm* 2. “Anything that deserves the attention of man must fulfill the following three basic requirements: It must first respond to the question whether it exists; secondly, it must respond to the question whether it remains true even when subjected to logical scrutiny; and thirdly, whether it has any value-significance to man.” In Nataraja Guru, *ISA* 1:42.

⁸⁴ I have borrowed this word from the writings of Raimond Panikkar, because I find that it conveys very well the insight of Nataraja Guru on Integral Vision. For Panikkar’s use of the word, see his article, “Ecology from an Eastern Philosophical Perspective,” *Monchanin* 50 (June-December 1975) 23-28. One of the instances where an interpretation to this effect is possible in Nataraja Guru is when he says: “It is a hard task to give a real or tangible content to the notion of the Absolute. All disciplines,

whether cosmological, theological or psychological, imply a notion of the Absolute, without which, at least as a reference, all philosophy or science tends to become incoherent, purposeless and inconsequential.” (Nataraja Guru, *Saundarya Lahari* 16.)

⁸⁵Nataraja Guru, *Wisdom* 93-111.

⁸⁶In commenting on verse 14 of *Atmopadesasatakam* he has the following to say: “The subjective and objective causes of erroneous appraisal of truth have first to be removed. *Triputi* is here translated as ‘the three-fold view.’ *Tribhuvana*, ‘triple-world,’ refers to the cosmological worlds of value within which the spirit of man with its aspirations may be said to live. A one-one correspondence is implied between these three-fold conditionings... *Putra* means base, as that of a leaf, and this tribasic quality affecting our appraisal of truth, consists of dividing our knowledge into the subjective, the objective and the meaning aspects, which tend to be thought of separately instead of unitively.” (*Life and Teachings* 513.)

⁸⁷Nataraja Guru, *Vedanta Revalued and Restated* (Varkala: Narayana Gurukula, n.d.) 15-17; Cf. also Nataraja Guru, *ISA* 2:184. The words of Nataraja Guru that give legitimation to an interpretation we are attempting are as follows: “Vedanta attempts to integrate and hold together unitively different branches of knowledge such as the psychological, the cosmological and the theological, with a scheme of reference of its own.” (*Vedanta Revalued and Restated* 68); “Indian philosophical systems, so called, are not so much dependent on logical sequence, as on the total vision of the knowledge-situation on whose basis it derived its degree of clarity or certitude.” (*Vedanta Revalued and Restated* 69); “When both poles of the knowledge situation are treated together, and when the highest of human values called final emancipation is kept in view, the resultant philosophy might resemble Theology. Psychology, cosmology, eschatology, science and religious practices, all come within the purview of an integrated or complete concept of philosophy, which uses experiences, reason and intuition as means for arriving at total certitude” (*Vedanta Revalued and Restated* 70.)

⁸⁸“The Absolute could be the antecedent respectively of ‘I,’ ‘You,’ or ‘It’ in three sentences written as predications about the Absolute, but in the first, second and third person. The *mahavakyas* (great dicta) of the *Vedanta* do just this when they declare: ‘I am the Absolute’ [*Aham Brahman*], ‘This Self is the Absolute’ [*Atman Brahman*], or ‘Thou art *That*’ [*Tat Tvam Asi*]. (*Life and Teachings* 513-514.)

⁸⁹Cf. Narayana Guru, “Epistemology of Gnosis,” *Arivu*, v.8 (Varkala: Narayana Gurukula, n.d.) 15-16. This is in *Vedantic* language *triputi*. Cf. Also *Atmopadesasatakam* v.4., in Bhaskaran, *Sampoorna Kritikal* 339-

40.

⁹⁰ Nataraja Guru, *Search for a Norm* viii.

⁹¹ Nataraja Guru, *Wisdom* 229.

⁹² Though most translate the word *manushyan* as 'Man,' we have preferred to keep 'human being' as more true to the original Malayalam sense of the word.

⁹³ Though the word definitely is Panikkarian, the potential for an interpretation to this effect is legitimately of Nataraja Guru. The reason for this assertion is that many of his commentators and those who have studied Guru Narayana's philosophy consider him to be incomparably original in his insight. He is considered as bringing to life a new tradition, a new revaluation. Therefore the possibility of reading into his basic philosophical assertions, the fundamentals of a cosmotheandric vision, seem legitimised. Cf. T. Bhaskaran, *Sreenarayanaguruvinte Kavyasarani* (Kottayam: D.C. Books, 1991) 120-121.

⁹⁴ Commenting on verse 14 of *Atmopadesasatakam* Natarajan says: "The three worlds and the tribasic conditioning of consciousness vis-à-vis the knowledge of the Absolute, may be said to refer to the vertical and the horizontal aspects of the Absolute." (*Life and Teachings* 515)

⁹⁵ Though this is the word used by Dr. Natarajan, we feel the word 'non-dual' comes closer to his intent than the word 'dialectical.'

⁹⁶ Nataraja Guru, *ISA* 1:143, 139-41. Not all share the optimism of Dr Natarajan on this point. See, T. Bhaskaran, *Sampoorna Kritikal*, Introduction to *Darsanamala* 415. He could be understood as having meant a potential integration of 'all points of view' in non-duality or through non-duality, which is the core of *Darsanamala*.

⁹⁷ Nitya Chaitanya Yati, *Meditations on the Self* (Varkala: Narayana Gurukula, 1974) 180.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ Cf. Saifulin Murad, *Dictionary of Philosophy* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1984) 405.

¹⁰⁰ This is a phrase that is often used, and means 'the world as known to the knower.'

¹⁰¹ Nataraja Guru, *ISA* 1:170.

¹⁰² A coordinate system is a mathematical method used to represent the position of points. The Cartesian coordinate system charts a point based upon its location along intersecting vertical and horizontal axes, denoted as axes *x* and *y*. The polar coordinate system charts a point based upon its distance from a focal point, the pole, and an angle formed between a fixed axis through the pole and a line drawn through the pole and the point. The Cartesian coordinate scheme can be used in pictorially representing the

vertical and the horizontal dimensions of reality implicit in the Absolute.

¹⁰³ Cf. de Brueller 2:155-191.

¹⁰⁴ Nataraja Guru, *Search for a Norm* 46.

¹⁰⁵ Nataraja Guru, *Search for a Norm* 46.

¹⁰⁶ Nataraja Guru, *Search for a Norm* 16.

¹⁰⁷ Nataraja Guru, *Search for a Norm* 21.

¹⁰⁸ Deborah Buchanan, *Gestures in Silence: Who and What Narayana Guru Is* (Varkala: East West University, Varkala, n.d.) 14.

¹⁰⁹ Nataraja Guru, *Search for a Norm* 94.

¹¹⁰ Nataraja Guru, in his commentary on verse 15 of *Atmopadesasatakam*, quotes the following Upanishad: “Not inwardly cognitive (*antah-prajna*), not outwardly cognitive (*bahih-prajna*), not both-wise cognitive (*ubhayatah-prajna*), not a cognition-mass (*prajnana-ghana*), not cognitive (*prajna*), not non-cognitive (*a-prajna*), unseen (*a-drishta*), with which there can be no dealing (*a-vyavaharya*), ungraspable (*a-grahya*), having no distinctive mark (*a-lakshana*), non-thinkable (*a-chintya*), that cannot be designated (*a-vyapadesya*), the essence of the assurance of which is the state of being one with the Self (*ekatma-pratyaya-sara*), the cessation of development (*prapanchopasama*), tranquil (*santa*), benign (*siva*), without a second (*a-dvaita*) - [such] they think is the fourth [state]. He is the Self (*Atman*). He should be discerned.” (*Life and Teaching* 517-518.)

¹¹¹ Cf. Raimond Panikkar, *The Vedic Experience: Mantramanjari: An Anthology of the Vedas for Modern Man and Contemporaray Celebration*, 3rd Indian edition (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas, 1994) 652-659; Narayana Guru, *Darsanamala* vv. 3-4; and *Atmopadesasatakam* vv. 36-42.

¹¹² Nataraja Guru, *Search for a Norm* 48-49, 93.

¹¹³ Nataraja Guru, *ISA* 2:backflap.

¹¹⁴ Natarajan in his commentary on *Brahma-Vidya-Panchakam* (The Science of the Absolute) says the following: “The *Guru* and *Sishya*, the Teacher and inquiring Disciple, are inevitable counterparts of such a dialectical revaluation, or progressive culmination of *Vedantic* wisdom. A bipolar relation is established between them when preliminary conditions have been fulfilled.... The duality of man and God is finally and boldly abolished, not in favour of self-conceit, egotism or self-deification, but as a dedication to the high cause of Self-realization.” (*Life and Teachings* 376-377.)

¹¹⁵ Saifulin Murad, *Dictionary of Phikosophy* 406.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ “Schematism is an intermediary function between sensibility and understanding, which on the one side unifies the sensible in order to make it understandable through concepts, and on the other gives to the concept

a sensible figuration. The Schema is thus homogeneous on the one side to the concept, and on the other to the sensible.” Translated by Nataraja Guru from Immanuel Kant, *La Raison Pratique* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1959) 241, in *Integrated Science of the Absolute* 1:59.

¹¹⁸ “Hilbertian mathematics has also given a strong impetus to structural ways of thinking and it can be predicted that structuralism in the near future will be fully recognized as the factor giving unity and validity of reference to many widely different disciplines.” Cf. Nataraja Guru, *ISA* 1:62

¹¹⁹ De Brueller 2:7. Linguistic structuralism began with Ferdinand de Saussure, but socio-political structuralism goes back to Giambattista Vico in the early 18th century.

¹²⁰ Saifulin Murad, *Dictionary of Philosophy* 405.

¹²¹ Attributed to Giambattista Vico, whose *The New Science* (1725) had ideas about structures of development of society; quoted in P. Unnikrishnan, *The Philosophy of Nataraja Guru: A Critical Study* (unpublished doctoral dissertation at University of Calicut, Calicut, 1984) 48. Cf also. Saifulin Murad, *Dictionary of Philosophy* 444.

¹²² Unnikrishnan 444.

¹²³ Cf. Nataraja Guru, “Integration of Elements of Thought in View of a Language of Unified Science” in *Experiencing One-World* 271-375.

¹²⁴ Nataraja Guru, *ISA* 3:8-9. Cf. also *Saundarya Lahari* where he says: “Sankara’s great commentaries are primarily metalinguistic while this work is proto-linguistic. *Tantra* is only a structural, proto-linguistic, non-verbal approach to Indian spirituality at its best, when taken as a whole. We have to think of *mantra*, *yantra* and *tantra* at once as presupposing one another, if we are to enter into a sympathetic and intuitive understanding of the dynamics that *tantra* essentially represents.” (Nataraja Guru, *Saundarya Lahari* 10).

¹²⁵ “It is impossible to consider the mechanism of our intelligence, as well as the progress of our science, without arriving at the conclusion that between intelligence and matter there is in effect a symmetry, concordance and correspondence.” Cf. H. Bergson *La Pensee et le mouvant*, translated by Nataraja Guru in *ISA* 1:62.

¹²⁶ Claude Levi-Strauss, *Myth and Meaning* (New York: Schocken Books, 1995) 10.

¹²⁷ Nataraja Guru, *ISA* 2:111

¹²⁸ Nataraja Guru, *ISA* 2:111-113.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ Mark Albert, in de Brueller 2:20.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Nataraja Guru, *World Education Manifesto* (Varkala: Narayana Gurukula, 1975).

¹³³ Nataraja Guru, *Experiencing One-World* (Delhi: DK Printers, 1996) 41-151, reprinted from *Values* (Bangalore: Narayana Gurukula, 1961).

¹³⁴ Nataraja Guru, *Experiencing One-World* 1-39.

¹³⁵ Nataraja Guru, *Man Woman Dialectics* (Varkala: Narayana Gurukula, 1996), reprint of *Dialectical Methodology* (Varkala: Narayana Gurukula, 1986).

¹³⁶ Nataraja Guru, *Experiencing One-World* 247-259.

¹³⁷ Nataraja Guru, *Wisdom, and Experiencing One-World* 261-373.

¹³⁸ Nataraja Guru, *Experiencing One-World* 93-143; 233-281.