THE ADVAITA PRINCIPLE OF RAIMON PANIKKAR
Francis X. D’Sa, S.J.

0. Introduction

Advaita is so to say the mind-set not just of the Hindu intellectual but implicitly and indirectly also that of a great number of Hindus who have no difficulties or scruples sharing and participating in faith traditions other than their own. Implicitly and indirectly the principle of Advaita is at work in them.1 In their world-view “both this and that” makes sense. But the “either this or that” of the Christian world-view sounds odd to the Hindus. But the real protagonist of Advaita is without doubt the great Shankaracharya.2

Among moderns who make copious but creative use of the Advaita principle is Raimon Panikkar who even speaks of ‘the authentic non-dualistic experience of the advaitin’.3 If one were to search for the cornerstone of Raimon Panikkar’s cosmotheandric approach, one would probably find it in “Advaita” (“neither one nor two” or more recently “a-dual”). His Advaita is of course not the Advaita of the Advaita Vedanta.4 “Advaita (as differentiated from Advaita Vedânta) would be the fundamental principle of nondualism (a-dvaita: nonduality, a-duality), devoid of its connections with the rest of the Vedântic philosophical garb.”5 For Panikkar Advaita “transcends these extremes of monism and dualism”.6

Though Panikkar’s Advaita principle has its origins in the Advaita Vedanta, he has probably the unique distinction of being one of the very few philosophers who have reflected thematically and philosophically on the meaning and implications of Advaita. He makes clear that “Advaita is not a weakened monism or relative dualism, but an independent and third possible experience of reality”7. Advaita does not spurn reason and rationality because as rational beings we use synthesis and analysis, induction and deduction. Advaita does not deny reason but transcends it. “The negation of both a dualistic and a monistic structure of reality, because of the fact that we cannot bring reality into an intelligible oneness, is the very core of advaita.”8 Advaita, according to Panikkar is not saying “that Being is non-dual”. “Advaita says that Being is-not dual, that duality is-not the case. And it adds further that Being is-not one. Advaita does not make an objective statement about reality.”9

The following essay aims at working out the role of the Advaita principle in the more important symbolic expressions that like bricks constitute Panikkar’s theanthropocosmic (or cosmotheandric) vision. One important side-effect of such an undertaking would hopefully be

1 The Encyclopedia of Religion, Mircea Eliade (Ed), Vol 13, 64 (under Śaṅkara).
5 Ibid. 288, footnote 1.
6 Ibid. 281
7 Ibid. 274.
8 Ibid. 275.
9 Ibid.
that a somewhat coherent ‘picture’ of Panikkar’s approach will emerge, a picture that could possibly be of some help at least to those who have attempted to read and understand his writings but have found the going arduous. Admittedly reading Panikkar is difficult but this is so not so much because Panikkar’s work is as demanding as for instance Martin Heidegger’s or because he is chaotic and unsystematic as some tend to think but simply because his is a new genre of writing. Those who have grown up in the well of a monoculture will find it impossible to grasp Panikkar’s multicultural thought. For Panikkar is at home in the Buddhist, Christian, Hindu and secular worlds and it is from such a non-dualistic home that he has been expressing himself over the years. As Ewert Cousins has put it, Panikkar is “a mutational man, one in whom the global mutation has already occurred”\(^{10}\). He is today, what humankind will be in the future generations, that is, persons who will have crossed the boundaries of their traditions and will be at home in more than one tradition. The justification for this article is to be seen as a step towards making intelligible to some extent the meaning of ‘crossing boundaries’\(^{11}\).

It is important to begin by reflecting on Panikkar’s own application of the Advaita principle. This will make clear the direction, which this principle inevitably takes, and the goal, which Panikkar keeps before his eyes in its diverse applications\(^ {12}\).

The starting-point of our discussion could be “the problem of the relationship between politics and religion”\(^ {13}\) where we note “the monism/dualism dilemma that has tormented western civilisation since the Pre-Socratics.”\(^ {14}\) What Panikkar states here is applicable to all the cases where he makes use of the Advaita principle. Though the very point of departure, politics and religion is distorted, he believes, “we are approaching the close of the modern Western dichotomy between religion and politics, and we are coming nearer to a nondualistic relation between the two.”\(^ {15}\) Religious issues are at the same time political issues and vice versa. One without the other is either uninteresting or irrelevant.\(^ {16}\) Panikkar is not so much concerned with analysing the relationship between religion and politics as with “a consideration of the real nature of these two concepts”\(^ {17}\). The point made is well made because our concepts of religion and politics are such that from the very start they are separated and thus distorted.\(^ {18}\)

Panikkar makes use of the Advaita principle to get rid of artificial separations. Separations are always of our making. His argument is that an extrinsic relationship between religion and politics demands a third factor to sustain the autonomous relationships between them while an intrinsic relationship leads to a heteronomous relationship wherein either one dictates and the other becomes subservient or vice versa.\(^ {19}\) Hence neither autonomy nor heteronomy are the solution. In Panikkar’s vocabulary pluralism\(^ {20}\) and radical relativity\(^ {21}\) are other aspects of the Advaita principle.

\(^ {10}\) E.J. Cousins, “Raimundo Panikkar and the Christian Systematic Theology of the Future”, Cross Currents XXIX (Summer 1979), 141.


\(^ {14}\) Ibid.

\(^ {15}\) Ibid. 45.

\(^ {16}\) Ibid. 46.

\(^ {17}\) Ibid. 49

\(^ {18}\) Ibid. 49-50.

\(^ {19}\) Ibid. 47.


1. **Ontonomy**

It is here that Panikkar brings in *ontonomy (= nomos tou ontos)*. The Advaita principle is primarily an ontological, not an epistemological principle. The ontonomic relationship “can be one of constitutive interdependence regulated by the very nature of both [say in the case of,] religion and politics as being *two elements of one and the same human reality*”. As the word suggests ontonomy functions at the level of being. It is this level that needs to be taken seriously in order to critique our epistemological distinctions because for Panikkar ontonomy and the Advaita principle go together. Our separate categories of ‘temporal’ and ‘eternal’ are in effect abstractions and so are incapable of doing justice to reality.

Reality for Panikkar is neither of a dualistic nor of amonistic nature. It is advaitic. For “the distinctions natural-supernatural, temporal-eternal, secular-sacred, human-Christian, individual-personal must be reconsidered in depth and, in any case, cannot be turned into ultimate ontological divisions”. Instead of ontological division, Panikkar suggests an ontonomic relationship between things. ‘Ontonomic’, like the Vedic symbolic expression *rtam*, refers to the fact that there are no divisions in reality but a continuous flow so that each thing is what it is because it is determined by its surroundings and at the same time itself determines its surroundings too.

What ontonomy throws light on is a new way of perceiving the whole of reality wherein the identity of each part is intimately connected with the identity of the rest of reality. Nothing, that is, no thing is so independent that it finds its identity in itself. On the other hand, no thing is so dependent on other things that it does not have its own identity. Panikkar discusses ontonomy in the context of ‘sacred heteronomy’ and ‘profane autonomy’. Sacred heteronomy “relies on a hierarchical structure of reality, which considers that the regulations in any sphere of being come from a higher instance”. Thus, “God is not only superior to man but also his creator and thus his lord. Man has not only to obey God, but also the hierarchical order... It is a hierarchical conception of the world. Not only cesaropapism and theocracy, but also the caste system and state-communism could be adduced as examples of a cancerous heteronomy.”

The heteronomic world-view brings forth three operative values: adoration on the anthropological level, eternity on the metaphysical level and sacrifice on the cosmological level. On the other hand ‘profane autonomy’ is a reaction to this kind of world-view. The key values here are respect, temporality and service.

‘Theandric ontonomy’ however recognizes neither the heteronomous authority dependent on a higher being nor the autonomous freedom of each sphere of being. Vis à vis heteronomous authority and autonomous freedom, ontonomy stresses both the wholeness and the interdependence of reality. Reality is neither monolithic (monistic) nor dualistic.

Accordingly ontonomy not only rejects all kinds of dualisms and dichotomies but it takes for granted that it has to do with a whole that is, so to say, organic. Panikkar has added the adjective ‘theandric’ to qualify ontonomy precisely to show that reality is both divine and human, like “the revelation in Jesus Christ, real man and real God”. The key values here are devotion or love, tempiternity and participation.

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22 Panikkar, “Philosophy as Life-Style”, *Philosophers on Their Own Work*, André Mercier & Maja Svilar (Eds.) (Frankfurt, etc: Peter Lang 1978), 203.
23 Ibid. 49.
24 Ibid. 50:
25 Ibid. p. 51.
26 Ibid. 29.
28 Ibid. 30.
29 Ibid. 31ff.
30 Ibid. 34-35.
31 Ibid. 41-42.
32 Ibid. 42.
At each level (of heteronomy, autonomy and ontonomy) Panikkar has suggested three values which are characteristic of that level. The levels refer in fact to the cosmic, the human and the divine. While the stress of heteronomy and autonomy is one-sided and partial, the approach of ontonomy is holistic because it does justice to all the three dimensions of reality. This is so because avoiding all dichotomies ontonomy brings out both the uniqueness and the interdependence of each of the dimensions. Thus love (operative on the ontonomic level) brings in both respect and adoration; tempternity (characteristic of ontonomy) does not neglect either the aspect of ‘eternity’ or that of ‘temporality; and participation (in the ontonomic order) does justice both to service and sacrifice.\(^{33}\)

2. The Cosmotheandric (Theanthropocosmic) Vision
Ontonomy inevitably leads to Panikkar’s ‘cosmotheandric vision’\(^ {34}\) which is seen not so much as a new discovery (because Panikkar insists that it was always at work since times immemorial, namely, wherever the experience was authentic\(^ {35}\)) but as a thematization of an holistic experience. To avoid misunderstandings we have to note that the vision is not a metaphysical thesis but is based on a phenomenological analysis. A deeper look at how we interact in and with reality makes it clear that we find ourselves not in a monistic or dualistic kind of reality.

Thus if we take any experience it will show first of all an object-dimension. There is something or someone that we are speaking about, or referring or pointing to. This is the cosmic (material or object-) dimension of reality. It is the quantifiable, measurable and perceptible aspect of all reality which is as it were the address of reality since it locates, gives a locus to, a thing. For anything to be real then the perceptible dimension is indispensable. The dynamics of this object-dimension are centrifugal; the knower is drawn towards the cosmos.

However this would not be possible if corresponding to and accompanying the perceptible dimension there were not the perceiving dimension, the dimension that has to do with the knower. Its dynamics are centripetal. This is the dimension of human consciousness. Human consciousness is aware that it is drawn by the cosmic dimension. The objectifiable is possible because of the objectifying dimension and vice versa. The objectifiable and objectifying dimensions are correlative.

Now if we take a closer look at both the cosmic and the human dimensions we notice a common characteristic. They both have a sort of endlessness, infinity, ‘attached’ to them. The objectifiability of any thing is infinite, so too the know-ability of a knower. No thing can ever be known exhaustively. And we never reach a stage where we are able to state that there is nothing more to be known about it. The objectifiable remains by definition objectifiable without any limit. The same is the case with the knower. There is no limit to the knower’s knowing. That is to say, there is both in the knower and the known a depth-dimension which acts like an ever receding horizon. The closer we come to it the more it recedes in the background.

This shows at the same time how the knower’s know-ability, as well as the knowability of the known and the depth-dimension are advaitically connected to one another. They cannot be separated but for the knowing-process the knower’s knowing, the known and the depth-dimension are all necessary. To put it differently, what attracts is the depth-dimension which is attracting. The cosmic is the attractive dimension because it embodies the attracting power; and the human is the one who is attracted. There is no separation between the attracting, the attractive and the attracted. They are so intimately connected with one another that were one missing the

\(^{33}\) Panikkar, “Philosophy as Life-Style”, *Philosophers on Their Own Work*, 204.

\(^{34}\) “Colligite Fragmenta: For an Integration of Reality” in: F. A. Eigo and S. E. Fittipaldi (Eds.), *From Alienation to At-One-ness*. Proceedings of the Theology Institute of Villanova University (Villanova, Pa: The Villanova University Press, 1977), 19-91. This essay together with other essays along these lines has now appeared in: Scott Eastham (Ed.), *The Cosmotheandric Experience. Emerging Religious Consciousness* (New York: Orbis, 1993).

other two would not be at all. Each dimension is equally important, equally unique, equally indispensable but equally irreducible to the others. The important point here is that uniqueness, interindependence and interrelatedness are all characteristics of an advaitic relationship which obtains between the cosmic, the human and the divine dimensions. The advaitic relationship here highlights the fact that the three dimensions are not World, Man and God but that the World is cosmotheandric, Man is cosmotheandric and God is cosmotheandric.

3. The Trinity
At this stage it should not be overly difficult to see how the cosmotheandric vision is the latest and most relevant edition of the way we ‘understand’ and express the Christian Trinity. The Father is the apophatic dimension of the real. “The Father has no being, the Son is his being.”36 Apophatism does not mean merely that we cannot speak of the Father; most especially it means the silence of Being (subjective genitive), that dimension which is silence.37 The Father, “the kenosis of Being,”38 is “a movement towards… no place, a prayer, which is always, open towards… the infinite horizon which, like a mirage, always appears in the distance because it is no-where.”39

The Son, Panikkar says, is God-from God and Light-from Light.40 For whatever is asserted of God is really asserted of the Son. Panikkar insists that only the Son is. The Son is the Being of God, that is why the Son is God-from God and Light-from Light. “Strictly speaking one does not see the Son outside the Father nor the Father outside the Son.”41

If the Son is the Logos then the Spirit is the divine immanence. If the Father were said to be the absolute ’I’ the Son would be the ‘Thou’ and the Spirit would be the ‘We’. Panikkar elucidates the divine immanence in an illuminating manner. The Father eternally empties himself (kenosis) in the Son but without ever exhausting himself as it were. This eternal inexhaustibility is due to the Spirit who is the eternal return to the Father.42

There is an interdependence and mutual penetration (perichoresis or circumincessio) between Father, Son and Spirit where the irreducible uniqueness of each ‘Person’ is preserved without in any way diluting their interindependence.43 In other words, there is an advaitic relationship between the three Persons. Father, Son and Spirit are each unique but fully interdependent so that no one can be without the other. Panikkar’s advaitic principle is not like the magic touch of King Midas that turns every thing into gold. Rather in each instance, say, of Father, Son and Spirit, or the Divine, the Human and the Cosmic, or past, present and future is experienced not as separate but as interdependent but in such a way that the uniqueness of each is preserved in a way that it is becomes as the same time the reason for the interindependence as well.44

The Trinity is a ‘Christian’ version of the cosmotheandric vision. The cosmotheandric vision far from concentrating exclusively on the traditional understanding and formulation of the God-experience of the Christians in Jesus goes beyond it. In Panikkar’s words, “the Trinity opens us up so that we may grasp better the ultimate constitution of the real”45. But whether it is the Christian experience of the Trinity or the cosmotheandric experience the relationship that obtains between the trinitarian persons and the trinitarian dimensions is advaitic: one in three, three in one. The cosmotheandric experience highlights the specific dynamics of each of the

37 Ibid. 47-48.
38 Ibid. 47
39 Ibid. 48-49.
40 Ibid. 51.
41 Ibid. 49.
42 For another example see ibid. 42.
43 Latterly Panikkar has been employing this expression.
44 Ibid. xv.
45 Ibid. xvi.
constituents of the trinitarian relationship; and shows that the specific dynamics are specific precisely because they are interrelated and mutually determined through this interrelationship.

Keeping in mind these two points let us take the classical formulation of the Trinity of the three persons of the Father, the Son and the Spirit. The Father is quite different from the Son and the Spirit. So too the Son and the Spirit. Each is unique. But the uniqueness of each is not a separate uniqueness but is constituted in and through mutual relationship between the Father, the Son and the Spirit. The specific dynamics of the *fons et origo* of the Christian tradition make it clear that it cannot remain *fons et origo* without some sort of *kenosis*, self-emptying (of the river of Divinity). But the self-emptying is not the same as *fons et origo*. The dynamics of the *fons et origo* are very different from those of *kenosis*. *Kenosis* is what it is because of the *fons et origo*. Self-emptying gets its identity from the *fons et origo*. Now both of these cannot be what they are without a third, namely, the *pneuma*, the Spirit. Rightly called the Spirit of the Father the *pneuma* is also the Spirit of the Son, it is in effect the Spirit of fullness (*pleroma*), *perichoresis* of the Greek Fathers and the *circumincessio* of the Latin Fathers. Traditionally spoken of as the ‘return to the Father’ (the *fons et origo*) or the immanence of the Father and the Son it is ‘the End, the limitless Ocean where the flux of divine life is complete, rests and is consummated (*plenitudo et pelagus totius divinitatis*)’.46

4. **Symbol and Symbolic Difference**

Another realm where Panikkar employs the *advaita* relationship is his understanding of symbol. Symbol has a special meaning for him. He does not use it the way symbol is popularly understood (e.g. ‘The flag is the symbol of the country’). To put it my way: the cosmic, the human and the divine dimensions are part of a symbolic world. A smile, for example, is a symbol of the joy, which is the *symbolized reality*. But this symbol (smile) really makes present the joy in the heart. The joy is accessible to the perceiver only through its symbol, the smile. A symbol (like a smile) ‘symbolizes’, that is, it expresses the ‘symbolized reality,’ the one who ‘sees’ the joy in the smile is the symbolizer.47 The symbolizer who is caught up with the *smile does not invent; she only discovers the smile*. With the discovery of the symbolized reality in the symbol the person is transformed into a symbolizer.48

The cosmic dimension is the symbol, which symbolizes the depth-dimension, and the human dimension is the symbolizer. Here too symbol, symbolized reality and symbolizer are all advaitically related to one another. The advaitic relationship obviates any separation between the three; at the same time it ensures the specificity of each one of them. That is why the world of symbols is a holistic one just as the language of symbols is holistic. If however the symbolizer fails to ‘grasp’ the symbolized reality in the symbol, then what we have here is not a symbol but a mere object. An object does not reveal any depth-dimension.

A symbol is always the symbol of itself, not of something else. This is not so in the popular way of understanding a lily as the symbol of purity. The lily stands for, represents (but does not really make present) purity. My body is the symbol of my person because my body ‘symbolizes’, that is, it really makes present my person. But my body is not my person. To identify my body with my person is to ‘overlook the *symbolic difference*, i.e., to mistake the symbol for the symbolized, is precisely *avidya*, ignorance, confusing the appearance with the reality. But reality is reality precisely because it ‘appears’ real.’49 Such ‘appearance’ is not to be set in opposition to ‘reality’ but is to be seen as that mode of being through which reality ‘puts in its appearance’. The appearance is the symbol-dimension and reality the symbolized-dimension. The symbolic difference is the mirror image of the Advaita relationship.

Symbol, symbolized reality and symbolizer correspond to the cosmic, the divine and the human dimensions and like them they are sustained by an advaitic relationship in which and through which their uniqueness as well as their interindependence are safeguarded. The Advaita

46 Ibid. 63.
47 What I have called ‘symbolizer’ in Panikkar it is the consciousness of the symbol.
48 Ibid. ix. My emphasis.
relationship between the three dimensions not only ensures the uniqueness of each of them; it does more. It guarantees the pluralism of reality. Like symbol, symbolized reality and symbolizer, the cosmic, divine and human dimensions are what they are because of their interrelationship. *It is through interrelating with one another that each of the three realizes its specific dynamics.* The Advaita principle also cautions us not to draw borders between the threefold dynamics. These flow into each other, making each one be what it is.

Connected with the world of symbols is symbolic language. Symbolic language or metaphor has its home in the *mythos* but terms are housed in the *logos*. Symbolic language evokes wholeness whereas terms introduce separations. This does not mean that terms are useless; it only means that one needs both to distinguish between symbols and signs, and words and terms; and also to become aware of the potentiality and limitations of their respective worlds. For pragmatic purposes we look upon the perceptible level of language as the semiotic structure but ex-presses itself in the symbolic.

5. **Mythos and Logos**

Panikkar’s symbolic approach to reality has much to do with his way of looking at human consciousness. One of the themes that keeps coming up repeatedly in his writings is the dominant role of ‘reason’ in the modern mind-set. His by now famous formulations in this regard are well known; that “reason is not the whole of Logos”, “that Logos is not the whole of Man”, and that “Man is not the whole of Being”. This is so because for Panikkar ‘*mythos*’ and ‘*logos*’ are two modes of awareness: “by *mythos*, I mean that human organ of apprehension on the same level as the *logos* and in constant relation with it. *Mythos* and *logos* are two human modes of awareness, irreducible one to the other, but equally inseparable.” In the age of modernity reason has dominated human consciousness to such an extent that the mythic mode of consciousness has been almost totally neglected. The mythic mode is the background consciousness (i.e., our non-thematizable universe of meaning) that functions as our ‘operating system’ of being-and-understanding. To a great extent it cannot be objectified; like in the case of an iceberg only a part of it is recognizable in the thematized world of the *logos*. If one were to roughly characterize the two modes with the help of everyday language, one could say that mythic consciousness is dominant in our ‘knowing’ and *logos*-consciousness in our ‘knowing about’. However there is a constant movement from *mythos* to *logos* and from *logos* to *mythos*. What this means is that whatever is understood comes sooner or later to be expressed in language and that the meaning of whatever is expressed in language comes so much to be taken for granted that it recedes into the background and becomes part of our operating system.

Here too like in the world of symbols the advaitic relationship between *mythos* and *logos* is operative. Not only can *mythos* and *logos* not be separated there cannot be the one without the other. One experiences symbol at the level of the *mythos*, not at the level of the *logos*. When one reduces a symbol to an ‘object’, i.e., when one has overlooked the symbolic difference, then one has reduced it to the *logos*-level. The *mythos* speaks through the *logos* and *logos* leads to the *mythos*. Hence *mythos* cannot be [speaking] without the *logos* and the *logos* cannot mean without the *mythos*.

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50 Panikkar, *The Trinity and the Religious Experience of Man*, ix-x.
54 Ibid. 100-101.
55 Ibid. 100.
With his insistence on ‘symbol’ in place of ‘concept’ Panikkar has initiated a paradigm change. This is not just a change in words but a real metanoia, a going beyond reasoning. The world of symbol is very different from the world of concepts. The former is the world that grasps us; the latter is the world where we grasp (conceive) things. But the latter takes place only when the former has grasped us in the first place. The concept can be conceived and articulated with the help of heuristic abstractions. Only the symbol points and takes us to the real ‘thing’ that is symbolized. The smile transports us to the joy that is the source of the smile where there is an advaitic relationship between the symbol-smile and the symbolized reality -joy. But concepts stick to their fixed meanings, which point to artificially separated referents. One of the catastrophes of the modern world is that it is built on a world of such fragmented meanings.

6. Faith, Belief and Dialogue
Symbolic language and descriptive language refer to the realms of the mythos and the logos respectively. The distinction becomes important when we enter the realm of religion. Religion cannot be treated as if it belonged to the descriptive mode alone. “Dialogue between cultures, and the mutual fecundation that can result from it, must be enacted first of all on a mythic level rather than in the confrontation between logoi... If the logos has priority in intracultural confrontation, the mythos takes primacy in intercultural encounters.” The diverse universes of meaning have somehow to meet if mutual understanding is to emerge.

In a context like this Panikkar’s distinction between faith and belief makes sense. Faith, as existential openness, is that which enables the experience (of faith) and belief is the expression of such an experience. Belief in this sense is always a symbolic expression of a faith-experience. Faith and its symbolic expression are related advaitically, i.e. they are different but not separate, unique but interconnected. “Our human task is to establish a religious dialogue that, although it transcends the logos – and belief – does not neglect or ignore them.” The advaitic relationship between faith and belief implies that faith without belief is directionless and belief without faith is empty.

Furthermore Panikkar distinguishes between dialectical and dialogical dialogue. The former refers to discussions, clarifications, inconsistencies, etc (= realm of the logos); the latter consists of personal authentic witness (= the realm of the mythos). In discussions we stick to the word and its meaning so that clarity may emerge and misunderstandings removed. But the language of witness pierces through the word (dia-logon) and transports one to its mythos. Now to share in the mythos of the other is to share in the other’s universe of meaning and thus to have entered upon the path of dialogical dialogue.

Dialogical dialogue is in fact interreligious dialogue, the place where the encounter of religions takes place. Such encounter has a further effect. It brings about changes in the way one understands and experiences one’s religion. Awareness of such changes, Panikkar says, is intrareligious dialogue, the dialogue with one’s own tradition and with one’s own self. Interreligious and intrareligious dialogue are advaitically related. One without the other is not possible, though one is not the other. One leads to the other and vice versa. They are not separate; the Advaita relation highlights their ontonomic nature: one flows into the other without

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61 Ibid. 59.
62 Ibid. 60.
63 Panikkar, “Philosophy as Life-Style”, Philosophers on Their Own Work, 205.
getting merged into the other. With his distinction between interreligious and intrareligious dialogue Panikkar is drawing our attention to their mutual enrichment and correction.\(^{64}\)

It is not out of place here to mention here Panikkar’s diatopical hermeneutics, the hermeneutics that “brings together radically different human horizons”.\(^{65}\) The way a culture understands itself cannot be the way to understand other cultures. Both cultures have to collaborate and enter into dialogue and bring out a way that advaitically is neither the same as nor different from the original way.

7. Tempiternity
Among Panikkar’s many neologisms is tempiternity and he uses it to speak of the tempiternal character of reality.\(^{66}\) Panikkar has been insisting on taking the whole process of secularization seriously, the process namely of taking the saeculum, the age, time and the world seriously. Reality is shot through with time but, Panikkar rightly warns, time is not the whole of reality, it is only one aspect of reality.\(^{67}\)

Our commonsense view of time is fragmented, time ‘now’ and eternity ‘later’. Eternity is as much a characteristic of reality as time. Because of our avidyā, our fragmented perspective, we concentrate only on the time aspect of reality, not on its eternity aspect. A holistic experience has to do not so much with time as with tempiternity. There is an Advaita relationship between time and eternity. In other words, there is no time without eternity and no eternity without time but, at the same time (!), time and eternity are not identical. To take time really seriously we have to be touched by eternity\(^{68}\) and to be really in touch with eternity we have to know time.

Time is the logos dimension and eternity is the mythos dimension. To recall an earlier metaphor, time is the symbol (body dimension) and eternity is the symbolized reality (person dimension). Though body and person are not two realities they are not simply one.

8. Conclusion
A final quote from Panikkar on the Advaita principle:

> The times begin to be ripe now to gather again the broken pieces of these partial insights into a new wholistic vision: there is no matter without spirit and no spirit without matter, no World without Man, no God without the Universe, etc. God, Man and World are three artificially substantivized forms of the three primordial adjectives which describe Reality.\(^{69}\)

Advaita is not a magic wand that does our bidding; rather it is our access to a world that is neither one nor many but simply non-dually pluralistic. Panikkar’s pluralistic insight is multiple: a) Reality cannot be classified either as one or many; b) Multiplicity in such a world is in effect organic interconnectedness where whatever is real is necessarily a living part of the whole; c) Only the approach of symbol and symbolic language, not of concept and conceptual language, can open the door to such a world; and) Advaitic pluralism alone can help us steer safely between the Scylla of monism and the Charybdis of dualism. In the last analysis such a world is the home of wholeness and harmony but the paths that lead to it are all partial. In such a context Panikkar’s Advaita principle can greatly contribute both to a more holistic understanding of the different parts of the whole and to a profounder realization of their interconnectedness.

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64 Panikkar, “Faith and Belief”, Intrareligious Dialogue, xvi-xix.
65 Ibid.
66 Ibid. 205-206.
68 See Richard Wilbur: Richard Wilbur, America Oct. 15, 1994, 18. “All that we do Is touched with ocean, yet we remain On the shore of what we know.”
69 Panikkar, “Philosophy as Life-Style”, 206.