

Part and whole theory

Parts resemble their whole, like when a leaf resembles its tree, when a drop resembles its river or when we humans resemble the Earth. This paves way for a sense of belonging to a certain whole. The way we humans have been built is an explanation enough that we belong to the soil, the water, the air, the fire and the ether that surrounds us. A part of a part of a part is still a whole. And a whole like the Earth is still a part of a great, more complex system.

It was established by Aristotle that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. If a pig's heart replaces the human heart during a cardiac surgery, does the human become a pig? What kind of a whole would that become? If that's the case then what value does the rest of the human body have? Does the brain start thinking like how a pig would or would it still think like a human- because the heart and the brain often share a love hate relationship. Oh! And what about the mind? It usually works so closely with the heart.

Flowers are ideal examples of this study of parts and their whole. When one draws a flower, what does one see? The colour and the geometry of the flower or the symmetry of it? The name of the flower or the image of it? The beauty of the flower or the creed of it? The caste of the flower or the shadow of it? The identity of the flower or the nature of it? What is this whole Aristotle was talking about when he stated the whole is greater than the sum of its parts? What if the sum changes on the way to becoming the whole? Will the whole change? If a red rose grows a blue petal, will it still be called a red rose? Is that the essence of the red rose?

I ask myself: does the essence of the rose lie in its softness? If that is the case, then the softness that arouses a sensual passion for love becomes the whole. If it is the natural geometry that brings a philosophical sense to numbers then that becomes the whole. If my knowledge of the rose is the essence then that becomes the whole. The whole is

free from the attachments of the parts of the sum. It is like the humaneness in a human who possesses a pig's heart.

A question follows this very dramatic argument that I just indulged you in: When a human dies (or when the whole dies), where does the whole go? Are we born with this whole? Or are we born with the parts first to give birth to the whole eventually? A rose often needs to journey from being a bud to maturing into a beautiful and responsible part of the plant in order to find its own whole, the whole that maybe only the rose knows about.

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