Holistic Chaos?

Zeno's famous *Arrow Paradox* has been repeatedly a fundamental terminator of our most basic assumptions for 2,500 years, and to a large extent, we **still** have not found an answer to the questions that he posed in his full set of Paradoxes.

The crucial attack was against the two alternative ways of dealing with the analysis of movement in Reality, where we never been able to see any alternatives to either regarding it as an entirely *continuous* process, or one which can be divided into *descrete* intervals of both time and space. Though these two seem to present the **only** alternatives, Zeno effectively buried both as being in any way legitimate; by taking each one in turn to its conceptual limit, and showing they both resulted in insurmountable contradictions when he did this. It was clearly the case that both of these were human inventions, and did NOT encapsulate what was happening when movement took place.

Never the less, Mankind has *still,* ever since, continued to use one or the other of these alternatives when it allowed them to get what they needed. The fact that a single one of them could NOT be used coherently in all circumstances was not allowed to faze them at all.

But, such a wholly pragmatic attitude always sets a limit to any extracted understanding. It regularly and ultimately exhibits a classic, contradictory **dead-end,** which always signals that our fundamental assumptions are indeed mistaken, and our "place-holder" explanations, as a whole, will have to be replaced by something better.

But the last 2,500 years have taken us from the era of **Zeno** and the **Buddha**, all the way to the *Large Hadron Collider*, which therefore seems to confound any analysis which has us still standing before the *exact same* insurmountable contradiction, throughout **the** swiftest developments by Mankind in its whole history.

And, at the same time, we can hardly say that we have been *immobilised* by this unresolved dichotomy, can we?

That is certainly not true!

Our progress in dealing with the World did not stop dead at such a barrier; indeed, we found **another way** of avoiding the route which always terminated in such a cul de sac.

We embraced **Plurality** instead!

Now, for those unfamiliar with this idea, a few words of explanation are perhaps required.

Plurality sees the World as entirely divisible into Parts.

Any particular Whole is analysed into its constituent Parts, then each of these in turn is taken as its own **Whole**, and similarly sub-divided.

We very easily took to this way of analysing the World, because, "at one Level at least", things were very easily separated into descrete and persisting entities.

Individual people were quite evidently "separate" from their surroundings and other people, as was this "rock", or that "forest".

Plurality was obvious!

And, it was only as Mankind attempted to push Wholes and Parts further than mere categorisations, that problems began inevitably to arise.

Man had frequently *glimpsed* various relations between things in Reality, and separating such a circumstance into its various contributing Parts to reveal that relation, Mankind assigned properties to these components and formulated what seemed to be **eternal relations** between them.

But, initially they all invariably *failed* when it was attempted to actually apply their extractions. The **glimpse** was too often replaced by the *absence* of the relation and nothing could be achieved.

Such extractions were incredibly unreliable. Now, that might have been the end of Plurality, which was evidently NOT the complete story, but Mankind's increasing ability to *control* things saved the day. He found that, if he arranged to keep many involved (but apparently inessential) factors **constant**, and "nailed most of the rest of the situation to the floor", he could much more easily extract his glimpsed relation.

And if he thereafter maintained these same constraints when he came to *use* his extracted relation, it worked perfectly!

He had found a methodology to go with his principle of Plurality, which though it could NOT explain Reality-as-is, certainly delivered it when its necessary conditions were provided.
He could use such relations within their appropriate **Domains of Applicability**, which he *could* deliver.

The Dead End of our assumptions had been "got around"!
Mankind did not so much *crack* Reality-as-is, but found how it could be *made* **reliable** in pockets. He always, thereafter, spent a great deal of time discovering appropriate, deliverable Domains, in which he could both *reveal* relations, and then *use* them. And this he certainly did, more and more, over the last 2,500 years.

In a recent TV programme on how *homo sapiens* came to be, the presenter, Alice Roberts, was able to demonstrate that this species had been in existence for almost 200,000 years, and yet for all but the last 3 or 4 per cent of this, hardly any **significant** developments had occurred even though they were even then, *already exactly US*, with the same abilities and intelligence. For all of that period the most sophisticated tools were slivers of chipped flint. Yet this could not be put down to the inadequacies of the species. So why did it occur in that way?

Clearly, we cannot explain that history either by a *continuous development* throughout, or by a series of discernable, **descrete steps**. For some reason the developments were, for a vast amount of time, almost non-existent.
In spite of the advances over the last few millennia, the still-standing dichotomy has **not** been solved, and thousands of chickens are set to come home to roost, as more and more problems end up at the **Zeno Paradox**.
We have to address it and solve it now!

Now, I earlier mentioned that around the time of Zeno, there was, in India, a holy man who they called the Buddha, and he, even then, rejected the idea of Plurality, and saw the World instead as full of both multiple inter-relationships and consequent incessant change. This integrated view is termed **Holism**, and the Buddha formulated a view of how people should live in this complex World. But, though his religious ideas conquered a good part of Asia, they were not ideas that could be used to understand or conquer the given environment. The approach was entirely about changing the "self" for the next cycle of existence. They did not equip his followers to Change the non-human World in any way. Instead they were devised solely to enable people to change themselves, and thereby for each to possibly and eventually achieve a personal **Nirvana**.

Comparing the holistic and the pluralistic approaches, it is clear that the latter won hands down in *getting the most* out of Reality.
So **Buddhism,** and its approach, **Holism**, did not develop either a Formal Logic or Science, and hence on a World scale did not become the dominant human approach.

But, the crises precipitated by a purely pluralist view have vastly increased of late, and Mankind had to re-address these alternatives with a view to overcoming the descrete/continuity dichotomy.
Clearly, Plurality's Parts are not eternal!
They are mostly quite useful in ordinary (or more accurately in deliberately constrained) circumstances, but when they **vanish** completely (as they certainly do); we always have to *start again*.
This starting again whenever our analysis fails, has become **The Method**. We have no trouble in abandoning what no longer helps for another analysis which does! We cheerfully, divide the World into more and more

differently constrained Domains, within which our pluralist assumptions are valid, but which are NOT *continuously* **articulated**, one to the other.

We have a stepping-stone set of paths through Reality, between our man-constructed Domains, and these have proliferated to such an extent that they are now almost innumerable "specialisms", and no single person (or discipline even) expected to be competent in more than ONE!

We have to re-visit Holism, to first understand it, and then take it beyond the Buddha's **personal interpretation**, and instead consider the true nature of Reality-as-is. Though Pluralist Domains allow short cuts to reliable ends and means, they do NOT *explain* how Reality is when totally unfettered and unconstrained.

But, the ancient Holism was not, and is not, equipped to deliver what we need, because it is entirely man-centred, or even individual-centred. It finds an acceptable road in a World totally un-amenable to Control and Change *by intention*. **We** have to consider a Holistic World very differently.

> This must be continued to address the problem in the ***Order out of Chaos Addendum***, which requires a clear idea of a real holistic Reality with "whatever" units we see it composed of. These cannot be pluralistic Parts – but must therefore be non-permanent elements, which change, and in turn *change* that World with them.

(1,450 words)