

The Meaning-making of Dag Hammarskjöld

Kristian Stålné¹

Abstract: Dag Hammarskjöld, United Nations' second Secretary-General 1954-1961, is getting recent attention for two reasons: he is going to front the new Swedish 1000-kronor note, the highest value; and this September it was 50 years since he was killed in an airplane crash in UN service in Congo. With that event, the most successful career in an international service that a Swede has ever had was terminated prematurely, a service that would set an unmistakable imprint on the UN organization as well as on the world stage of politics. But what made Dag Hammarskjöld such an exceptional leader and how did he view the world and his role in it? He was not only exceptional as a leader and world-centric visionary; he was also a mystic and an aesthete with a highly analytic mind. What is unique is the fact that large parts of his thinking and personal struggling are available to the world through a dense material of his speeches and personal writings. This has made it possible to analyse the stages of development represented in them. Using ego development theory, described by Jane Loevinger as well as Robert Kegan, I offer the analysis that his writings, including during his most severe personal crisis, indicate he passed through a transition between the *individualist* and *autonomous* stages.

Keywords: Adult development, autonomous, Dag Hammarskjöld, ego development theory, individualist, meaning making, stages.

Biography

Dag Hammarskjöld was borne in Jönköping in Sweden 1905 but grew up in Uppsala where he studied language, philosophy, and above all national economy in which he wrote his doctoral dissertation in 1933. His father, Hjalmar Hammarskjöld, made a career in the Swedish state bureaucracy and was Sweden's Prime minister in 1914-1917. With him, Dag early came in contact with the nation's intellectual elite, and made a quick career in different positions within the National bank, the Department of finance and as a Swedish delegate within OEEC (Organization for European Economic Cooperation, today OECD), as secretary of the Cabinet within the Foreign state department and as a minister in Tage Erlander's Social democratic government 1951-1953 – despite the fact that he was not a member of the party. In 1953 he was elected into the Swedish academy replacing his father after his death (Urquhart, 1972).

¹ **Kristian Stålné** has a PhD in Structural Mechanics and an MSc in Engineering Physics. He conducts research in the fields of adult development psychology, structural mechanics and engineering acoustics and the combination of them. He is a founding member of the European Society for Research in Adult development, ESRAD, the organizer of its first meeting and part of the Swedish network for adult development. Kristian runs the blog fictionation.se that introduces adult development theories in Swedish to a broader audience.

Kristian.Stalne@construction.lth.se



In 1952, the UN's first Secretary-General, the Norwegian Tryggve Lie, resigned after have been in conflict with the Soviet Union that declared him non-existing. After many turns Dag Hammarskjöld was introduced as a candidate that all could agree on for many reasons. First, he had shown his skills as a negotiator and diplomat within the OEEC; second, he could speak French which the French always had as a demand for candidates to Secretary-General; third, he came from neutral Sweden and appeared as a very neutral person in general – an intellectual and skilful bureaucrat that could organize the dysfunctional secretariat; and finally and most important, accomplishing such challenges without making too much noise and in any way challenge the superpowers. Dag Hammarskjöld was nominated and offered the position as Secretary-General on April 1st, 1953, accepted, and swore the oath on April 10th. He was welcomed to New York the day before by Tryggve Lie with the less than encouraging words: “You are taking over the world's most impossible job.”



Dag Hammarskjöld 1959. Photo: UN/DPI

Hammarskjöld started by restructuring the entire UN from within and reorganized the secretariat before he started to give his own imprint on the scene of world politics, foremost by his signum, the quiet diplomacy and his ability to establish mutual trust with different parties that were being locked in fixed positions. He succeeded with negotiating the release of several

American UN-flyers from China and thereafter with mediating between Egypt and Israel in the Suez crisis. He was unanimously re-elected in 1957 to a second five-year period as the Secretary-General.

Chaos erupted in Congo in 1960 after independence from Belgium, and Dag Hammarskjöld created a peacekeeping force to try to establish some order. Congo still remained his major headache, under severe pressure from the Soviet Union. He decided to resign if he would fail to solve the problem in a satisfactory way, and set out on his travel there. During a flight from Leopoldville in Congo to Ndola in the present Zaire for a negotiating session the night between the 17th and 18th of September, 1961, the plane crashed for yet today unknown reasons and all 16 passengers including Dag Hammarskjöld was killed. He was awarded a posthumous Nobel Peace Prize later that year for his efforts “to bring peace and goodwill among nations and people.”

Dag Hammarskjöld was, as evident in his statements and actions, an exceptional man, but what makes him even more fascinating is that he at his death left behind his very personal diary entries from most of his life, which gives us a glimpse of his inside. These entries have the form of short text passages, aphorisms, and haiku poems which express his innermost uncensored thoughts, reflections, doubts, and sometimes even despair. The entries are in chronological order with the specified year, sometimes even dates. The notes were found in his apartment after his death with the following instructions to the cabinet secretary, Leif Belfrage.

Dear Leif,

Perhaps you may remember I once told you that, in spite of everything, I kept a diary which I wanted you to take charge of someday.

Here it is.

It was begun without a thought of anybody else reading it. But, what with my later history and all that has been said and written about me, the situation has changed. These entries provide the only “profile” that can be drawn. That is why, during recent years, I have reckoned with the possibility of publication, though I have continued to write for myself, not for the public.

If you find them worth publishing, you may have my permission to do so—as a sort of white book concerning my negotiations with myself—and with God.

Dag

The notes were published posthumously in unedited form under the title “Markings” (Hammarskjöld, 1964), which has become a classic and rests on many UN officials’ bookshelves. This amazing insight into the interior of one of the greatest leaders of all time makes it possible to make an analysis from an adult development perspective. Here Dag Hammarskjöld’s meaning-making, i.e., the assumptions that constitute and thereby determine how he organises reality, will be described and analysed with respect to ego development according to Jane Loevinger (Hy & Loevinger, 1996) and Robert Kegan (1982; 1994).

The sources of this analysis are his own diary entries of Markings, Mats Svegfors’ biography “Dag Hammarskjöld – den förste moderne svensken” (Svegfors, 2005), Kai Falkman’s “To speak for the world” (Falkman, 2005) which is a compilation of Dag Hammarskjöld’s speeches as the Secretary-General, and Brian Urquhart’s biography “Hammarskjöld” (Urquhart, 1972).

The Crisis

The primary source to analyse the meaning-making of Dag Hammarskjöld in the pre-UN part of his life comes from Markings. As a person he was often described as a withdrawn and rigid person with a high degree of self-discipline and perfectionism. His performances were not particularly charismatic, unlike his predecessor, Trygve Lie, and he often read his speeches monotonously, straight from the script that he usually wrote himself. In Markings he is, however, completely honest and reveals an existential depth and sometimes even darkness, despite all external success.

These wretched attempts to make an experience apprehensible (for my sake? For others?)—the tasks of the morrow—Y's friendship or X's appreciation of what I have done: paper screens which I place between myself and the void to prevent my gaze from losing itself in the infinity of time and space.

Small paper screens. Blown to shreds by the first puff of wind, catching fire from the tiniest spark. Lovingly looked after— but frequently changed.

This dizziness in the face of *les espaces infinis*—only overcome if we dare to gaze into them without any protection. And accept them as the reality before which we must justify our existence. For this is the truth we must reach to live, that everything *is* and we just in it. (Hammarskjöld, 1964, pp. 40-41)

A recurring theme in the pre-UN time is the existential and spiritual quest inward and the loneliness that follows. Although Dag Hammarskjöld was always a believing Christian, God appears only sporadically in the first part.

The longest journey
Is the journey inwards.
Of him who has chosen his destiny,
Who has started upon his quest
For the source of his being
(Is there a source?).
He is still you,
But without relation,
Isolated in your feeling
Like one condemned to death
Or one whom imminent farewell
Prematurely dedicates
To the loneliness which is the final lot of all.

Between you and him is distance,
Uncertainty—
Care.

He will see you withdrawing,
Further and further,
Hear your voices fading,

Fainter and fainter.
(Hammarskjöld, 1964, p. 48)

This is very typical for a person at the individualist stage, seeing through the shallowness of existence and following his own path and looking inward. The political neutrality when he entered the Tage Erlander government in 1950 was also a hallmark of an individualist: he wanted to remain outside the group and the Social Democratic Party, viewed himself primarily as a servant of the people which was also difficult enough to want to have this formalized before the king.

Mats Svegfors called the notes from 1950-1952 (Hammarskjöld, 1964, pp. 28-73) the “the crisis years” (Svegfors, 2005, p. 97) and it seems here as if Dag Hammarskjöld penetrates deeper and deeper into the darkness whereas a question or theme emerges, the quest for meaning or purpose in life.

Give me something to die for –!

The walls stand
Speechless and cold, the banners
Faffle in the wind. (Hölderlin)

What makes loneliness an anguish
Is not that I have no one to share my burden,
But this:
I have only my own burden to bear. (Hammarskjöld, 1964, p. 71)

Pray that your loneliness may spur you into finding something to live for, great enough to die for. (Hammarskjöld, 1964, p. 72)

What I ask for is absurd: for life to have a meaning.
What I strive for is impossible: that my life shall acquire a meaning.
I dare not believe, I do not see how I shall ever be able to believe: that I am not alone.
(Hammarskjöld, 1964, p. 72)

Is the bleakness of this world of mine a reflection of my poverty or my honesty, a symptom of weakness or of strength, an indication that I have strayed from my path, or that I am following it? – Will despair provide the answer? (Hammarskjöld, 1964, p. 72)

The loneliness is striking, but that is not the biggest source of his despair and existential angst. He seeks not primarily someone who can share his burden, but rather, he seeks someone else’s burden that *he* can carry, something he could die for. He wants to serve but has no clear image of what to serve. Here is the downside of the individualist stage, it has made its way out of the immediate struggle for survival, from authority, ideologies and -isms and there is no longer any great cause that one is prepared to die for. But the disadvantage is precisely that, if there is nothing worth dying for, there is really nothing to live for. There is the fundamental cause of Dag Hammarskjöld’s existential crisis, and the downside of the meaning-making of the individualist stage.

In this mode, one could guess that an offer of a position as Secretary-General showed up and changed everything, but that was not how it came down. In an existential search such as this it is easy to search for an external challenge, and that the right cause to die for appears out in the world. But what marks a further shift from the individualistic stage is in fact something that happens on the inside, although in some other cases it may be triggered by external events. This shift can be noted in the first quotation from 1953, that Svegfors (2005, p. 110) calls the “dramatic turnaround.”

– Night is drawing nigh –
 For all that has been – Thanks!
 To all that shall be – Yes!
 (Hammarskjöld, 1964, p. 74)

What is important to keep in mind here is that this and the next notes that have a different, lighter tone than previous written before Dag Hammarskjöld is considered for the Secretary-General position. Svegfors writes:

His crisis was conditioned by a kind of career futility. He had become everything he could reasonably be in the Swedish civil service. But it gave him no answer to the question of the meaning of his life. He turned inward and away from the big stage of public life and he found the answer. But once this had happened there occurred an entirely improbable peripeteia in his life. He was summoned to the office as Secretary-General of the United Nations. (Svegfors, 2005, p. 130)

The Spirituality

After the turning point in Dag Hammarskjöld’s life, his meaning-making can best be described by addressing the different domains of his life, or psyche, one at a time. And it seems most appropriate to start with the spiritual side. Even if Dag Hammarskjöld was a believing Christian, it appears in his notes as if God did not join him at his trip downwards. But the first note after the turning point, i.e., the second entry in 1953, reads as follows:

It *did* come – the day when grief became small. For what had befallen me and seemed so hard to bear became insignificant in the light of the demands which God was now making. But how difficult it is to feel that this was also, and for that very reason, the day when the Joy became great. (Hammarskjöld, 1964, p. 75)

Here it appears as if God is back in the picture, partly in the description of the psychological burdens as something that had meaning, in that it was subordinated to something that was greater, the requirements God placed. But how did God come into the picture of Dag Hammarskjöld? The next note is the book’s shortest but probably the most succinct:

Not I, but God in me. (Hammarskjöld, 1964, p. 75)

God was not with him on the journey down, but awaited him at the bottom. Believers and non-believers make meaning at different stages. And after submitting the most fundamental piece of

the puzzle, the keystone, pieces fall into place and Dag Hammarskjöld makes the transition from the individualist stage to the autonomous stage of ego development, or meaning-making. His faith in God is usually described as very complicated; you could say that it is a post-conventional type of Christian mysticism. A few years later he quotes Rumi, a classic Persian mystic from the 1200s.

The lovers of God have no religion but God alone. (Hammarskjöld, 1964, p. 86)

This is post-conventional in the sense that they both seek a direct personal relationship with God instead of going through a religious community or congregation, and also to seek God within himself, which many mainstream believers would regard as direct blasphemy or hubris. Mystics are often in conflict with the more traditional supporters, and especially by the respective fundamentalists, regardless of religion. They often find greater fellowship and inspiration from mystics of other religions than from the conventional elements of their own: “A theme of many critics was that Hammarskjöld would have identified with Christ, not just trying to work in his imitation. Dag Hammarskjöld would have suffered an unprecedented hubris” (Svegfors, 2005, p. 146).

One can understand that Dag Hammarskjöld was not completely open about his faith during his lifetime. And many post-conventional leaders can get into trouble being completely transparent about their beliefs, because they can be easily attacked by the mainstream.

I am the vessel. The draught is God's. And God is the thirsty one. (Hammarskjöld, 1964, p. 76)

The first thing is to empty the vessel from all psychological material, stripped and deconstructed of the personality of an individualist. Then you can fill it, the integration of an autonomous ego. Looking back at his journey, Dag Hammarskjöld expresses it in the following manner in a radio performance from 1954, entitled “Old beliefs in a new world” (Falkman, 2005, pp. 57-58)

The world in which I grew up was dominated by principles and ideals of a time far from ours and, as it may seem, far removed from the problems facing a man of the twentieth century. However, my way has not meant a departure from those ideals. On the contrary, I have been led to an understanding of their validity also for our world today. Thus, a never abandoned effort frankly and squarely to build up a personal belief in the light of experience and honest thinking has led me in a circle; I now recognize and endorse, unreservedly, those very beliefs which were once handed down to me.

From generations of soldiers and government officials on my father's side I inherited a belief that no life was more satisfactory than one of selfless service to your country – or humanity. This service required a sacrifice of all personal interests, but likewise the courage to stand up unflinchingly for your convictions.

From scholars and clergymen on my mother's side I inherited a belief that, in the very radical sense of the Gospels, all men were equals as children of God, and should be met and treated by us as our masters in God.

Faith is a state of the mind and the soul. In this sense we can understand the words of the Spanish mystic, St. John of the Cross; "Faith is the union of God with the soul." The language of religion is a set of formulas which register a basic spiritual experience. It must not be regarded as describing, in terms to be defined by philosophy, the reality which is accessible to our senses and which we can analyse with the tools of logic. I was late in understanding what this meant. When I finally reached that point, the beliefs in which I was once brought up and which, in fact, had given my life direction even while my intellect still challenged their validity, were recognized by me as mine in their own right and by my free choice. I feel that I can endorse those convictions without any compromise with the demands of that intellectual honesty which is the very key to maturity of mind.

At the autonomous stage the cognitive capacity is available to distinguish between different internal domains such as spiritual experiences with its descriptions and the philosophical description of the mind's experience of reality, which we may describe as phenomenology and empiricism. A critical and honest intellect is an asset as long as it knows its limitations.

The Ethics

Another example of the cognitive capacity at the autonomous stage is the ability to distinguish, separate, and even combine, ethics with aesthetics. And it is the ethics that get the most room in Dag Hammarskjöld's life and as he describes his ethics in terms of meaningfulness in a new way:

You will know Life and be acknowledged by it according to your degree of transparency, your capacity, that is, to vanish as an end, and remain purely as a means. (Hammarskjöld, 1964, p. 134)

Meaningfulness is thus to put self-interest entirely aside and see oneself solely as a means to something greater. If this goal is truly greater than oneself, then one's own suffering will be easy to endure. Meaningfulness is thus self-chosen self-sacrifice for a greater cause. But what is greater? What is to be accomplished, he himself is the means but what is the goal?

The goal is usually not about to foist on others his own God or his own doctrine since autonomous persons have great respect for others' autonomy, hence the name of the stage. We can find some answers in one of his speeches in which he articulates what is worth dying for. The following speech was made for the UN correspondents' luncheon for the Secretary-General April 9, 1958, which begins with a poem:

The past is always with us and to the coming
days we are those who carry the past centuries
and also our own few days.
(Gunnar Mascoll Silverstolpe, 1893-1942)

This poem is written by a close friend of mine who is now dead. I think that is really the way we must look at all our various efforts in the realm of international peace, of the movement towards a world of order and justice.

We have back of us the responsibility created by, in fact, centuries of development. We have in front of us millennia. And in between those centuries and those millennia there are a few years which we might measure in days and weeks and years and five-year terms of office of the Secretary-General, if I look at it from my angle, and those days are really nothing in comparison to what is back of us, and what is in front of us. But they get their sense from what is back of us, and they get their sense in what they mean for the future; that is to say, what we can hand over after our time of work is not just what we have managed to add to the heritage, it is the whole heritage with the little we have managed to add.

It is a confession to a kind of conservatism, a confession to a belief in the continuity of human history, of the history of society, of the history of human endeavour in a sound direction. I cannot belong to or join those who believe in our movement towards catastrophe. I believe in growth, a growth to which we have a responsibility to add our few fractions of an inch.

It is not the facile faith of generations before us, who thought that everything was arranged for the best in the best of worlds or that physical and psychological development necessarily worked out towards something they called progress. It is in a sense a much harder belief – the belief and the faith that the future will be all right because there will always be enough people to fight for a decent future.

I do not think that there is anything automatic with progress. I do not think that there is anything we get for nothing in success. But I do believe firmly that here in this room, around this Organization, in this city, in this country, in this world, there are enough people who are solidly engaged in this fight and who are strong enough and dedicated enough to guarantee its success. It is in a sense a switch from the atmosphere of pre-1914 to what I believe is the atmosphere of our generation in this time – a switch from the, so to say, mechanical optimism of previous generations to what I might call the fighting optimism of this present generation. We have learned it the hard way, and we will certainly have to learn it again and again and again... (Falkman, 2006, pp. 52-54)

From this talk, we learn that the highest good that Dag Hammarskjöld is prepared to die for is the development of humanity in a healthy direction of peace and order, and it is up to us to take responsibility for ensuring that things are moving in the right direction. We also get an idea of the time span he takes into consideration, many generations back and forth. And we add as our small contribution the little time we have at our disposal.

When Dag Hammarskjöld was appointed Secretary-General he began to manage what he was supposed to do, namely to bring order to the United Nations and he did it from the inside out. First order within himself, then order in the Secretariat before UN and himself could act with power on the world stage. But it was not only the organizational structures he changed. With speeches such as the one above, he created a culture where the international service was in the

centre, a culture that still lives and breathes in the United Nations organization and its officers, regardless of its current leadership.

Another aspect of personal development is the ability to take responsibility, first for oneself, then for one's group or nation and eventually the whole world: egocentric, ethnocentric and finally world-centric. One's identification and care can extend and embrace more and more without any contradiction or conflict between the different levels since you yourself are part of the group or nation, which in turn is part of the whole of humanity, something Dag Hammarskjöld describes when he expresses the international service ("service" of course comes from "to serve"):

The question is not either the nation or the world. It is, rather, how to serve the world by service to our nation, and how to serve the nation by service to the world. (Falkman, 2005, p. 138)

It is thus possible to serve for the UN while in the same time serving his country, a dialectical argument. What is good for the United Nations is good for all constituent countries and all individuals. Similarly, he recognizes that the UN's most fundamental problem is that the organization has no formal power, none of the more influential member nations wanted to voluntarily relinquish power and would prefer a UN that isn't too inconvenient. For them it is either our best or the UN's top. His words from 1957 are relevant today:

The United Nations finds itself in a difficult stage of its development. It is still too weak to provide the security desired by all, while being strong enough and alive enough effectively to point out the direction in which the solution must be sought. In its present phase the Organization may look to many like a preacher who cannot impose the law he states or realize the gospel he interprets.

It is easy to say that it is pointless to state the law if it cannot be enforced. However, to do so is to forget that if the law is the inescapable law of the future, it would be treason to the future not to state the law simply because of the difficulties of the present. Indeed, how could it ever become a living reality if those who are responsible for its development were to succumb to the immediate difficulties arising when it is still a revolutionary element of the life of society? (Falkman, 2005, pp. 69-70)

Although the UN has no formal powers, it can still exert influence by providing a global moral compass and point the way toward the future, a future that it is in everyone's interest to reach. And with Dag Hammarskjöld at the helm there is no doubt about the direction. Today you would say that the UN has a major influence in the form of the strong brand that Dag Hammarskjöld helped to build and that Ban Ki-moon now is draining (Ekdal and Ahlenius, 2011), even though the entire blame of course cannot be laid on him.

The Intellect

Dag Hammarskjöld was brought up in Sweden's intellectual elite. He received his Ph.D. at age 28, quickly made a career as an officer and became known for his intellectual sharpness. He was

elected to the Swedish Academy, spoke fluent English, French, and German, and was at the time of his death engaged in the translation of Martin Buber's "Ich und Du."

The human progress that he builds his ethics on is described in terms of an institutional evolution in a speech at the University of Chicago 1960.

Men organize themselves into families. The families join together in villages or tribes. The tribes and the villages fuse into peoples, and one day, out of the self-consciousness of a people, there develops a feeling of difference and separateness, the positive expression of which is a feeling of nationhood. The nation organizes its life within a set of constitutional rules, evolving in practice or crystallized as law. Under the constitution the people develop national organs with different functions and a division of responsibilities representing a balance of power. Through those organs laws are given, setting the pattern for the lives and activities of the individuals and the groups which constitute the nation. (Falkman, 2005, pp. 158-159)

Here, Dag Hammarskjöld demonstrates an evolutionary view of law, institutions and, although expressed vaguely, consciousness.

I believe it is useful, in the discussion of the development of human society, be it national or international, to keep in mind this sociological perspective taken over from theories of biological evolution. (Falkman, 2005, p. 160)

The fact that he employs the evolutionary theory from biology on sociology is a sign of a very high cognitive capacity and complex thinking. Coordinating evolutionary patterns in diverse disciplines is at least metasystematic according to hierarchical complexity theory (Commons, 2008; Commons, Miller, Goodheart, Danaher-Gilpin, 2005; Commons & Goodheart, 2008). Had adult development theories been available to him at that time he would certainly had been able to weave them into the analysis.

The Aesthetics

Another reason for Dag Hammarskjöld's described loneliness was that he never lived in any partner relationship, he remained single throughout his whole life. He had, however, a deep friendship with the British artist Barbara Hepworth, which began when he took a liking to her artwork single form of sandalwood (Fröhlich, 2001).



Barbara Hepworth, *Single Form*. © Bowness, Hepworth Estate.
Reproduced with permission.

She offered it to him as a gift and he kept it in his office and wrote about the artwork in *Markings*:

SINGLE FORM

The breaking wave,
And the muscle as it contracts
Obey the same law.

An austere line
Gathers the body's play of strength
In a bold balance.

Shall my soul meet
This curve, as a bend in the road
On her way to form?
(Hammarskjöld, 1964, p. 148)

After this meeting followed a long correspondence that lasted until his death. It was not just the ethics, the international service, that defined Dag Hammarskjöld; aesthetics were also a central aspect. Also this is a dialectical approach, not to be swayed by just one or the other

but to see how the two are mutually supportive as evidenced in a speech at the Museum of Modern Art in New York:

In modern international politics – aiming toward that world of order which now more than ever seems to be the only alternative to disruption and disaster – we have to approach our task in the spirit which animates the modern artist. We have to tackle our problems without the armour of inherited convictions or set formulas, but only with our bare hands and all the honesty we can muster. And we have to do so with an unbreakable will to master the inert matter of patterns created by history and sociological conditions. (Fröhlich, 2001, pp. 18-19)

Here, he draws parallels between the ethics of politics and the aesthetics of the artist. In both cases it can be described as man moving from chaos to creation order, in the form of an artwork or a calmer and more peaceful world. In *Markings*, he draws on a parallel between the artwork and the artist:

A poem is like a deed in that it is to be judged as a manifestation of the personality of its maker. This in no way ignores the beauty as measured by aesthetic standards of perfection, but also considers its authenticity as measured by its congruence with an inner life. (Hammarskjöld, 1964, p. 109)

All are thus interconnected, what you do in the world, whether it is about creating a work of art or an act as an international service, is a manifestation of who you are inside you. And in the correspondence and relationship with Barbara Hepworth, one can say that Dag Hammarskjöld became whole on many levels. From Kaj Falkman's introduction to "To speak for the world":

The correspondence shows that the Barbara Hepworth broke through Dag Hammarskjöld's emotional isolation. Thereby she integrated him also emotionally with the unity with the universe that he intellectually and morally had already incorporated into his personality. Hammarskjöld's first impression of the "Single Form," he writes in the above mentioned letter in October 1960 "is not only one of great beauty but also by a heightened sense of drama in the ongoing struggle between subhuman chaos and human creation order." (Falkman, 2005, p. 49)

The Synthesis – The Big Three

In this evolutionary context a triad of values that are sometimes referred to is "the big three", a division of the three spheres of ethics, aesthetics and science, or "beauty," "goodness" and "truth", as Plato called them (Wilber, 1995). The three are kept separate where no one may be subordinated to anyone else. And if one would summarize Dag Hammarskjöld's personality one could say that it comprises of an integration of these big three: scientific clarity and intellect, along with a sense of aesthetics and an ethics, which means a total dedication to international service. A psychology where three such systems or value spheres can live side by side would, according to Robert Kegan's Subject-object theory, can be described as trans-system, i.e., 5th order consciousness, which corresponds to the autonomous stage according to Jane Loevinger's ego development theory (Kegan, 1982).

Dag Hammarskjöld can be said to be ahead of his time, but even today it is not easy to find leaders with similar characteristics – although we now have the tools to evaluate stages of meaning-making or ego development. It is not possible to write a management book filled with tips and checklists on how to acquire these properties. Nor can it be taught in a workshop.

The last word goes to Dag Hammarskjöld, who nevertheless makes an attempt to describe how to cultivate what he means by a spiritual maturity and leadership that has made such an impression on the world.

Respect for the word is the first commandment in the discipline by which a man can be educated to maturity – intellectual, emotional, and moral.

Respect for the word – to employ it with scrupulous care and an incorruptible heartfelt love of truth – is essential if there is to be any growth in a society or in the human race.

To misuse the word is to show contempt for man. It undermines the bridges and poisons the wells. It causes Man to regress down the long path of his evolution.

But I say unto you, that every idle word that men speak... (Hammarskjöld, 1964, p. 94)

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