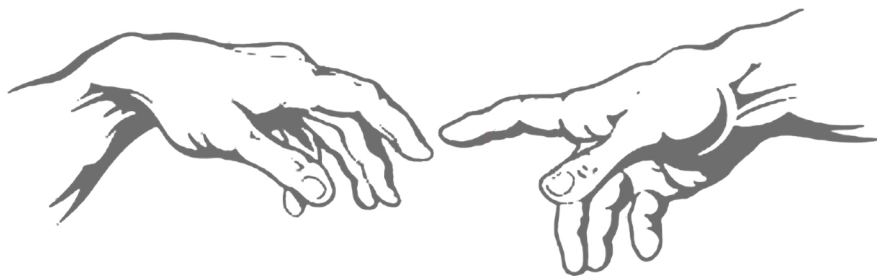


# AutoRicerca 12

Journal of inner research

Year 2016



*Between mentor and pupil*  
**Talking about reality**

English edition



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# **AutoRicerca**

*No. 12, Year 2016*

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*Editor*: Massimiliano Sassoli de Bianchi  
*Cover*: Paola Patocchi

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## WARNING

The pages of a book, whether paper or electronic, possess a peculiar property: they are able to accept whatever variety of letters, words, phrases and illustrations, without ever expressing a criticism, or disapproval. It is important to be aware of this fact when we go through a text, so that the lantern of our discernment can always accompany our reading. To explore new possibilities, we must remain open-minded, but it is equally important not to succumb to the temptation to uncritically absorb everything we read. In other words, the warning is to always subject the content of our reading to the scrutiny of our critical sense and personal experience.

The editor and authors of the published articles can in no way be held responsible for the consequences of a possible paradigm shift induced by the reading of the texts in this volume.





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## EDITORIAL

This twelfth volume of *AutoRicerca* (the first to be also published in English) contains a single monographic text, written in dialogical form by *Massimiliano Sassoli de Bianchi*.

The text was published for the author many years back, as an essay with the title “Talking about reality.” Thanks to *AutoRicerca*, and the author's availability, this particular text, full of useful information for anyone promoting a path of self-research and self-development, becomes now available to a wider readership. In that respect, let me remind that *AutoRicerca* is an *open-access* journal, whose volumes in electronic format (pdf) can be downloaded free of charge, directly from the journal's website ([www.autoricerca.ch](http://www.autoricerca.ch)).

Let me also remind that in volume Number 7 (Year 2014), the author already invited us to an interesting Socratic dialogue between a “teacher” and a “student,” on the themes of science, reality and consciousness. That of reality remains a central theme of the present meeting, which portrays a fictional conversation between the “mentor part” of the author and his “pupil part,” to explore some fundamental questions, such as:

*What is reality?*  
*What is it made of?*  
*What is our relationship with reality?*  
*What can be done to make it better?*  
*What is suffering?*  
*What is its purpose?*  
*Why do we often feel impotent?*

*Are we really?*

*What is science?*

*Why do even scientists suffer?*

*What is the being?*

*What distinguishes it from the consciousness?*

*What is our next evolutionary step?*

*How can we reach it?*

... and many more.

With pleasure, I can already anticipate that mentor and pupil will meet again in the pages of *AutoRicerca*, to continue the exciting conversation they started in this volume.

For now, as always, I wish you an enjoyable reading and a reflection rich of new consensual gestations.

*The Editor*

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*Massimiliano Sassoli de Bianchi* received the Ph.D. degree in physics from the Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne (EPFL) in 1995, with a study on temporal processes in quantum mechanics. His current research activities are focused on the foundations of physical theories, quantum mechanics, consciousness studies and quantum cognition. He has written essays, popular science books, children's stories, and has published numerous research articles in international journals. He is a life member of the American Physical Society and the American Association of Physics Teachers, as well as a full member of the Society for Scientific Exploration and the International Academy of Consciousness. He is the editor of the Italian journal *AutoRicerca* and currently the director of the *Laboratorio di Autoricerca di Base* (LAB), whose mission is the furthering of a knowledge that can maximize the human potential, starting from an evolutionary and multidimensional perspective. For more information, please refer to the author's personal website: [www.massimilianosassolidebianchi.ch](http://www.massimilianosassolidebianchi.ch).



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# **BETWEEN MENTOR AND PUPIL TALKING ABOUT REALITY**

*Massimiliano Sassoli de Bianchi*

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# 1. NEGATION

*When the consciousness negates reality, reality reacts by negating the consciousness, according to the known principle of action-reaction.*

PUPIL. I'm happy that we have finally met to discuss some of our most important themes.

MENTOR. It's really a precious opportunity. Let's see not to waste it in futile small talk and get right to the point.

PUPIL. Good, well then I will ask you without any mincing of my words: what is, according to you, the fundamental problem of us human beings?

MENTOR. Would you like a short answer?

PUPIL. Sure, and maybe also concise.

MENTOR. The fundamental problem of us *Homo sapiens sapiens* is the one of *false identification*.

PUPIL. What does that mean?

MENTOR. That we have the unfortunate tendency to impersonate all that we are *not*.

PUPIL. Why would that be a problem?

MENTOR. Because false identification results in *negating reality*. And conflicts, both internal and external, are always a consequence of the process of negating reality. Furthermore, as you know, conflicts are the very reason of our suffering, be it physical, emotional, or mental.

PUPIL. You have been decidedly concise, maybe a bit much for

my tastes. I am not sure if I have understood.

MENTOR. What have you not understood?

PUPIL. To be honest... everything!

MENTOR. To be specific, what did you not understand from that everything?

PUPIL. For example what do you mean by “false identification”?

MENTOR. Do you own a car?

PUPIL. Yes, I just bought a beautiful sports car recently.

MENTOR. Imagine that right under your very eyes an individual approaches your beloved new car and vigorously scratches the entire side. Can you imagine that?

PUPIL. Yes, I can!

MENTOR. What do you feel?

PUPIL. I feel pain. It is as if he were scratching me. I also feel a great anger welling up inside of me, with the desire to strangle that creep!

MENTOR. You just experienced a *false identification*!

PUPIL. Explain yourself better.

MENTOR. You are a human being, right?

PUPIL. That is without a doubt.

MENTOR. You are not a sports car.

PUPIL. That seems evident.

MENTOR. For what reason then when an individual scratches the body of your car, you suffer as if he were scratching your own skin?

PUPIL. You don't want me to believe that I have identified myself with my car?

MENTOR. In a certain way, yes. Moreover, since you are not a car, but a human being, it sounds like false identification.

PUPIL. Hmm... I doubt that your conclusion is correct. I know



very well that I am not a car: I possess a car, and that is different.

MENTOR. Why do you suffer then?

PUPIL. I suffer because he is damaging something that belongs to me, something that I cherish. What would be wrong with that?

MENTOR. Nothing. However, if you think it is more desirable to live without suffering than to suffer, you could ask yourself why this happens.

PUPIL. Do you mean to say why do I suffer when someone damages my car?

MENTOR. For example.

PUPIL. Your answer, if I have understood well, would be that I suffer because I am in a state of deep confusion, because I believe I am a car.

MENTOR. In a certain sense, yes.

PUPIL. But I know very well that I am not a car. In addition, I know that you know that I know that I am not a car.

MENTOR. That is why at first I said “in a certain sense”. Undoubtedly, you are perfectly capable of distinguishing between you and your car.

PUPIL. So, you agree: I did not identify myself with my car.

MENTOR. Not in a strict sense. However, you do entertain thoughts about your car.

PUPIL. Of course, that’s normal.

MENTOR. Thoughts that you think are true.

PUPIL. Obviously.

MENTOR. Thoughts that you believe in.

PUPIL. Without a doubt.

MENTOR. Naturally, those relative to your car are only a small part of your thoughts that you hold as true and in which you

believe. Tell me: are these thoughts or are they not part of you?

PUPIL. Being my thoughts, in which I believe, I imagine they are part of me.

MENTOR. We can therefore affirm that you are what you believe.

PUPIL. Hmm... I never thought of it in this way.

MENTOR. Do it now.

PUPIL. Well, I cannot of course confirm that I am exclusively what I believe, but that in which I believe is undoubtedly a part of what I am.

MENTOR. In other words, your identity, or at least a part of it, consists in what you believe in, in your *belief systems*.

PUPIL. I think it is correct to say that, but where is it that you are going with this?

MENTOR. I am already there. You confirmed that you have beliefs connected to your car: can you give me an example?

PUPIL. My car is new and can go up to 250 kilometers an hour. This is a thought that I think is true, in which I believe.

MENTOR. So, because your beliefs are part of your identity, and your car is a part of your beliefs, isn't it possible to deduct that you are partially identified with your car?

PUPIL. Could you repeat that please?

MENTOR. Your belief systems that define in part your identity of human being have many aspects. Among those, there is that of your car. Therefore, your beliefs about your car are part of your identity and it is justified in saying that, because of this, you are partially identified with your car.

PUPIL. I agree, but I don't see why this would be a problem.

MENTOR. Now I will explain it to you. Let us suppose that among your beliefs about your car there is also the belief that no one should scratch it.

PUPIL. You don't have to guess at that, I believe it strongly:

nobody should scratch my car, for no reason whatever! People should always respect other people's property.

MENTOR. It undoubtedly has something to do with what you believe. In addition, because you believe it, then it is part of your identity.

PUPIL. A very little part though.

MENTOR. Yes, a very little part, in which you identify necessarily.

PUPIL. I don't see what's wrong about identifying yourself with your own thoughts, those in which you believe: it all seems like a natural process.

MENTOR. Well maybe, but such a process becomes problematic when the thoughts in which you identify are false, because in this case it deals with false identification. Better, it deals with an identification that is doubly false. It is false at the first level, because the thoughts in which you identify are false. Moreover, it is false at the second level, because your identity is not reducible to the mere content of your thoughts.

PUPIL. I do not understand: what is there so wrong with thinking that nobody should scratch my car?

MENTOR. Your thought is only a thought and as such cannot be wrong. The mistake, if we can talk about mistakes, is in holding that the contents of this thought expresses a truth, when in fact, undoubtedly, it expresses a falsehood. In fact, it *negates reality!*

PUPIL. What reality?

MENTOR. Your personal reality, all that exists for you, in the sense of all that is available to you to experience. Imagine again that individual that scratches your precious car. His action could simply be an unknowing act of vandalism. Do you think that such a thing could be possible or impossible?

PUPIL. Decisively possible. To be honest, such a thing happened to me.

MENTOR. You're telling me that your brand new car has already

been scratched by someone?

PUPIL. Yes, just yesterday I noticed a scratch that I am sure that I did not do. I think it happened in the parking lot.

MENTOR. And what do you feel when you think of that scratch?

PUPIL. I get really angry!

MENTOR. Looking down deeper, what is behind that anger?

PUPIL. I believe it's pain, the pain that came from that scratch.

MENTOR. A little bit like as if it were done to your own flesh?

PUPIL. Something like that.

MENTOR. Anger is a reaction to the pain. A reaction of aggressive nature towards whom or what in our way of seeing it is responsible for our pain.

PUPIL. I understand, someone hurts me and I react by trying to hurt him back.

MENTOR. But by doing that, you start a vicious circle, which can only be broken when the victims realize that nobody is able to hurt them, except themselves.

PUPIL. That seems like a drastic statement.

MENTOR. It is. It has to do with a radical change in your outlook: from being a complete victim to taking full responsibility for your own life. However, let's not get side tracked. We were analyzing your beliefs about your car and in particular the one that nobody should scratch it. This belief of yours is it true or false?

PUPIL. True: nobody should do that!

MENTOR. But somebody did. You are the one that told me such a thing is possible.

PUPIL. Are you telling me that the fact that someone could scratch my car means that my thoughts are not correct?

MENTOR. It seems evident. The fact that there are people who could scratch your car shows exactly this: it's not true that they

shouldn't do it.

PUPIL. For what reason?

MENTOR. For the simple reason that they can do it and every so often they do it, as you yourself confirmed. Moreover, if they do it, then it cannot be true that they should not do it.

PUPIL. It's a play on words.

MENTOR. No, it is not. The possibility of someone scratching your car is an aspect of your reality that *falsifies*<sup>1</sup> in fact the *theory* in which you believe.

PUPIL. Maybe it is, but I still think that no one should scratch my car.

MENTOR. I know. Your conviction is the real reason for your suffering, not the individual that actually scratched your car. In other words, you are the only one responsible for your pain.

PUPIL. I am not following you.

MENTOR. Let's go by steps. Your theory is founded on the principle that no one should scratch your car. However, reality shows instead that there are people who will scratch others cars and therefore violate the principle on which you have founded your theory. Do you follow me?

PUPIL. Until here yes, at least I think so. The very existence of individuals that do not respect other people's property implies that my theory cannot be correct.

MENTOR. Yes, because your principle of not scratching your car does not apply to these individuals. They go by another principle, opposite to yours: every so often, they have to do it, and in fact, they do it!

PUPIL. In other words, my theory would be false and I would do better to undo it, or correct it.

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<sup>1</sup> The term "falsify" is used here in its philosophical meaning, that is to say in the sense of "demonstrating the falsity" of something, and not of counterfeiting something, i.e., imitating it in a fraudulent sense.

MENTOR. Exactly. On the other hand, this is how scientific research works: theories are constantly put to the test by experiments of critical nature, able to confirm them or to falsify them.

PUPIL. In the case of my theory, what is the critical experiment?

MENTOR. Simply the observation that individuals exist that delight in scratching other people's cars. But since your theory doesn't contemplate the existence of such individuals, it openly *negates the reality of the facts*.

PUPIL. I understand. Reality does not behave in this way. It only has to do with my desire, which is based on a wrong conviction.

MENTOR. That is, a conviction that does not take count of empirical data, of your observations.

PUPIL. Yes, I neglected to correct my theory in light of the data that I had at my disposition.

MENTOR. And for this you suffered when they scratched your car. So, in the ultimate analysis, *your suffering is self-inflicted*.

PUPIL. I am missing something. I understand that I made a mistake by not correcting my theory when I had the elements to do so. However, I am still convinced that the person responsible for my suffering is not I, but the person who scratched my car.

MENTOR. Again, it has to do with a mistaken conviction.

PUPIL. Can you explain it to me?

MENTOR. Do you agree that your convictions are entirely your own responsibility, because you are the only one that chooses in which theory to believe?

PUPIL. I agree. Nobody can force me to believe anything.

MENTOR. Which means that you are free, at least inside.

PUPIL. Undoubtedly.

MENTOR. A man that freely chooses to believe that nobody should scratch his car, right?

PUPIL. Yes, even though I understand that this belief should be

corrected.

MENTOR. Because through our conversation you realized that it negates reality. Now ask yourself: what caused your pain while you visualized the individual scratching your car?

PUPIL. Not what, but who. In my opinion, it was exactly that individual that caused my pain.

MENTOR. Amazing, right? Was that individual a magician by chance?

PUPIL. What do you mean?

MENTOR. He must have immense powers. Without even a slight touch, he was able to cause you intense pain. How did he do it?

PUPIL. To tell you the truth, I don't know.

MENTOR. Do you know how the mechanism of physical pain works?

PUPIL. Vaguely. Please remind me.

MENTOR. Our body is equipped with specific receptors called *nociceptors*. When we suffer an aggression, of whatever nature, the nociceptors are activated, transmitting to the brain an unpleasant sensation of pain. The activation of the nociceptors and the consequent pain sensation is a useful reaction, of a defensive nature. The pain informs us that there is an aggression in act, and we have to react if we want to avoid that the body suffer structural damages that would endanger its functionality.

PUPIL. What does this have to do with our discussion?

MENTOR. Now that you know of the existence of the nociceptors that determine our pain sensations, I can ask you the following question: how did the individual succeed in activating your nociceptors without ever getting in contact with your body?

PUPIL. A great mystery!

MENTOR. No mystery. He couldn't possibly activate your nociceptors because he didn't attack your body, but your car.

Furthermore, I would like to remind you that you experienced a painful sensation even just imagining the scene.

PUPIL. I give up: if that individual, real or imaginary, didn't even touch me, he couldn't possibly be the one responsible of the nociceptors' activation.

MENTOR. Who else is left?

PUPIL. In your opinion, it would be I that in a very masochistic way inflicted pain upon me.

MENTOR. In a way, yes.

PUPIL. I do not understand: if there is pain, then there is an aggression. If there is an aggression, necessarily there is both a victim and an aggressor, at least two entities. I am only one entity and if I exclude that that one individual is in any way responsible for my sensations, I am the only one left to simultaneously fulfill both the role of the victim and of the aggressor. How is that possible?

MENTOR. We have two possible levels of analysis. On the first level, you are perfectly right: necessarily two entities have to be present. One that does the aggression and one that is subject to the aggression. However, on the second level of analysis, you may discover that the entity that is subject to the aggression is itself responsible of its own aggression.

PUPIL. What is the reason?

MENTOR. Because it chooses to let itself be assaulted when it could avoid it. In other words, it is itself the mandate of its own aggression.

PUPIL. On the first level of analysis, I can however still assert that it was that individual to assault me, right?

MENTOR. I thought that it was already clear to you that he could not have assaulted you, since he did not even lightly touch you. The only entity that he attacked is your car, when he scratched it.

PUPIL. So explain to me: on the first level of analysis, who is the notorious aggressor?



MENTOR. Reality.

PUPIL. Reality would have assaulted me?

MENTOR. In a way, yes. Let it be clear, it doesn't have anything against you personally.

PUPIL. Then why did it do that?

MENTOR. Because you provoked it.

PUPIL. You are making fun of me.

MENTOR. I have never been more serious. Reality strongly believes in the *third law of Newton*. Do you remember?

PUPIL. If my memory does not fail me, the third law of Newton says that if object A exerts a force on object B, object B exerts an equal and opposite force on object A. Something like "if I push you, you react by pushing me".

MENTOR. In fact, the third law of Newton is also called the *law of action and reaction*.

PUPIL. So, if I understood right, reality attacked me as a reaction to my action. But what did I do that was so terrible?

MENTOR. You tried to negate it, by affirming that it should be different than it is. However, reality cannot be different from what is. For that, we cannot negate it, even if sometimes we try to do it.

PUPIL. I still do not understand exactly in which way I have tried to negate reality.

MENTOR. You did it when you believed in your *false theory* in which human beings should not scratch other people's cars. Reality, as you yourself admitted, does not agree with such a theory, that consists in an outright attempt to negate it.

PUPIL. I have the impression that reality is too susceptible. I just had a theory.

MENTOR. Reality is not susceptible. Reality just simply is, and cannot be anything else than what is. If you throw a porcelain plate against a cement wall the plate disintegrates, because of

the force of reaction by the wall. Would you for that reason say that the wall is susceptible?

PUPIL. I get the concept: through my theory, I tried to negate reality, and because of the third law of Newton reality reacted.

MENTOR. It reacted by negating your theory, therefore falsifying it.

PUPIL. Why is the effect of this reaction so painful?

MENTOR. Your theory is part of you. You are what you believe, remember?

PUPIL. So reality reacts by negating what I am?

MENTOR. Not all of what you are, but only that part of you that tries to negate reality.

PUPIL. Like a porcelain plate that tries to negate the reality of the solidness of the cement wall?

MENTOR. Exactly. The plate could not hope to make it: porcelain cannot penetrate cement.

PUPIL. But in order to have pain it is necessary to have contact with the aggressor.

MENTOR. You and reality, in fact, are always in intimate contact. If it weren't like that, then you wouldn't be a part of it.

PUPIL. If I have understood well, when I adopt a false theory of reality (for example believing that no one should scratch my car), I am like a porcelain plate that believes it to be harder than a cement wall. Therefore, when reality crashes with my theory, it breaks into pieces, with the consequent activation of my nociceptors. It's as if my body is literally constituted of all my theories of reality.

MENTOR. It is not "as if". It is so.

PUPIL. It was only a metaphor.

MENTOR. It is much more than a metaphor. Did you ever hear of the *bodymind* connection?

PUPIL. I believe so: my mind perceives reality through my body. For example, when my body is assaulted what perceives the

pain, in the final analysis, is my mind.

MENTOR. Things work the other way around too: when your mind is assaulted, your body is hurt. Your thoughts, especially those in which you believe, are objects of energy that are capable of interacting with your body. When you provoke reality with a thought that tries to negate it, reality reacts by attacking that thought, therefore your mind. And because of the interaction between mind and body (mediated by your brain), the repercussion comes out into the physical plane.

PUPIL. That's why they say that thinking negative is not healthy.

MENTOR. Negative thoughts are often false and eventually suffer an adverse reaction from reality.

PUPIL. If I have understood well, it is as if our body cannot tell the difference between physical reality and that imagined by our mind.

MENTOR. If you imagine biting a lemon, what happens to your salivary glands?

PUPIL. They act as if I am biting a true lemon!

MENTOR. Exactly like that.

PUPIL. But if between mind and body there is such an intimate connection, wouldn't it be more correct to assume that body and mind are the same?

MENTOR. That is what I just confirmed. Our body and our mind are inseparable aspects of the same entity.

PUPIL. And how would you call this strange "bodymind" entity?

MENTOR. Simply *mind*, or as you just said *bodymind*.

PUPIL. In other words, you are telling me that we human beings are essentially of a mental nature.

MENTOR. Not just us humans, but everything living.

PUPIL. Even a microbe?

MENTOR. Yes, even it.

PUPIL. But to have a mind don't you have to have a brain?

MENTOR. Not necessarily. The mind, as the seat of *cognition*, that is to say the *process of knowing*, can be likened to the process of life and its evolution. In that way, the mind is not dependent on the existence of a brain, the perception being sufficient to give even a simple microbe the capacity of cognition, even though at a very elementary level. According to this point of view, we human beings, and more generally all living things, are purely cognitive, mental entities, the body structures of which are nothing more than a support to manifest our theories of reality in a tangible way.

PUPIL. More than living organisms, we are therefore strange *living theories of reality!*

MENTOR. In a certain way, yes. Don't forget though the second level of analysis.

PUPIL. What do you mean to say?

MENTOR. At the first level, we observed that reality attacks, if you could say that, our false theories of reality, a process in science that is called *falsification*. At the first level of analysis, there are therefore two entities: the reality that attacks and you that are attacked. This description is only partially correct because with a more attentive analysis we discover that the choice of theories in which we identify is our own responsibility. If we chose to identify with false theories, we cannot consider reality responsible for its reaction, apparently aggressive, just as we cannot consider a wall responsible for our bruises if we go and crash against it. So, at the second level of analysis we find that the victim and the aggressor are the same entity. Moreover, if it is true that we have total freedom of choice about which theories to adopt, that means that we are not only the sum of our theories, but much more! Would you liken a sculptor to his statues?

PUPIL. Of course not, a sculptor is the author of his statues.

MENTOR. And are we not maybe the authors of our theories, and

more generally of our thought processes?

PUPIL. Well yes, obviously.

MENTOR. You will conclude then that it is not exact to say that we are living theories of reality, because in fact we are much more: we are the makers of our theories, we are the builders. That is quite a difference, don't you believe?

PUPIL. We are not statues, but sculptors!

MENTOR. Yes, omnipotent creators of inner realities in which we integrate, and by which we express, our knowledge of reality.

PUPIL. Therefore, we are not reduced to mere mental entities.

MENTOR. We possess a mind, or a bodymind, if you prefer, but we are not a mind.

PUPIL. What are we then?

MENTOR. Something more.

PUPIL. Does that something perhaps have a name?

MENTOR. We can call that something the *consciousness*. The term consciousness comes from the Latin *cosciente*, which is the composition of *con*, (to have, to possess) and *scire* (knowledge). According to the etymology of the word, a consciousness is therefore a being (in the sense of a subject) gifted with knowledge.

PUPIL. Knowledge of what?

MENTOR. Of reality, be it inner or outer. A knowledge in continual evolution, that the consciousness expresses through the construction of operational theories of reality. Theories based on one's own experience and integrated into one's own intimate structure of bodymind.

PUPIL. Our body, or bodymind, or mind, or whatever we want to call it, would be then a sort of walking, dynamic memory, in which we consciousnesses integrate, under the form of theories, our experiences of the real.

MENTOR. Rightly so. And in the measure that we amplify, deepen and refine our experience-knowledge of reality, we tirelessly rewrite our memory replacing obsolete theories with theories that are more advanced. A process which is called *evolution*, or more precisely *evolution of the consciousness*.

*CHAPTER SUMMARY*

*False identification produces negation of reality, which in turn generates conflict, pain and suffering.*

*The consciousness manifests in reality through a bodymind, which is the seat of its own theories of reality (beliefs).*

*When the consciousness acts based on theories that negate reality, reality reacts according to the principle of action-reaction, negating in turn these same theories.*

*Reality cannot be negated, being itself exactly what is, and not being able to be anything else.*

*When a false theory of reality comes against reality, it is always the false theory that loses, not reality.*

*The clash between a false theory and reality is a process of falsification, that generates in the consciousness the well-known sensations of pain and suffering.*

*The consciousness is a being gifted with knowledge, that evolves in a process of expansion, deepening and fine-tuning of the content of its own theories of reality.*

## 2. DUTY

*If we permit “duty” to dominate our life, we lose sight of the other possibilities.*

PUPIL. In your opinion, what is the best way to promote the evolution of our theories of reality?

MENTOR. There are essentially two ways. The first consists of letting reality have its way. The second is in anticipating it.

PUPIL. Which of the two would be best?

MENTOR. It is a matter of taste. The first requires a lot of time and is very painful; the second instead is faster and almost painless.

PUPIL. It doesn't seem to me a matter of taste: the second is decidedly more preferable than the first.

MENTOR. A great part of humanity doesn't seem to share your opinion.

PUPIL. Maybe because they don't know about the second method, of the possibility of anticipating the moves of reality.

MENTOR. Or maybe because the majority of women and men of this planet have not grown tired of playing “the victims of reality”. In any case, the practice of the first method leads inevitably to the discovery of the second: it's only a matter of time.

PUPIL. It seems to me to be an observation a bit cynical: humanity suffers!

MENTOR. I understand, but it is its choice.



PUPIL. I believe that human beings don't have to suffer to evolve.

MENTOR. Tell me: does this thought make you suffer?

PUPIL. Yes, when I think of all the suffering that there is in the world, I suffer.

MENTOR. So to the suffering of the world is added yours, and the suffering grows.

PUPIL. I continue to believe that you are a bit cynical and not very compassionate.

MENTOR. Yours is a very quick judgment. I'm not saying that I am indifferent to the sufferings of others. However, being sensitive to the suffering of my neighbor doesn't mean that I have to suffer as well.

PUPIL. If you had the power, wouldn't you make a way so that your human brothers wouldn't suffer?

MENTOR. No, I wouldn't do it.

PUPIL. Why not?

MENTOR. Because I respect them too much to deprive them of the most precious thing that they have: freedom. A wellbeing that is obligatory could never be a true wellbeing.

PUPIL. I didn't say that you have to obligate them.

MENTOR. What other way would there be, given that suffering is their choice?

PUPIL. So according to you is it right that man suffers?

MENTOR. What do you think?

PUPIL. I think that they shouldn't suffer.

MENTOR. This is a theory in which you evidently believe.

PUPIL. Certainly... wait a moment!

MENTOR. What happened?

PUPIL. I just realized that my thoughts are again negating

reality.

MENTOR. A very good reflex, congratulations! A good part of humanity is choosing to grow by the way of suffering. Therefore, it cannot be true that they should not suffer, because in fact they are choosing to do so.

PUPIL. And since I was again negating reality because of a false theory, that explains why I was suffering in thinking that humanity shouldn't suffer.

MENTOR. Reality, as always, honors your choice to negate it, by responding with a double negation.

PUPIL. Why double?

MENTOR. You negate reality and reality negates your negation. Therefore, it is a double negation. However, there's a difference between the two negations: you try to negate reality without being able to, whereas reality is perfectly able to negate your false theory. That is why it is you who suffers and not reality.

PUPIL. Why is there this difference between reality and me?

MENTOR. Because it seems that you still need to suffer to know what is, while reality already knows what is, if you can say that.

PUPIL. So, according to you, I shouldn't suffer for the suffering of humanity.

MENTOR. If I would cultivate such a belief, undoubtedly I would suffer.

PUPIL. Hmm... I think I *should* eliminate the "should" out of my vocabulary.

MENTOR. For sure it's not that you *should* do it, but rather you *could* do it.

PUPIL. I understand: I *should* replace the "should" with the "could".

MENTOR. So, do it, please!

PUPIL. What? Oh, yes, how could I not realize it! I wanted to say: I *could* replace the "should" with the "could".

MENTOR. That's better. If you do that, it would save you a lot of suffering. Try it with your theory.

PUPIL. The one that says "no one *should* scratch my car"?

MENTOR. Yes, try to replace the "should" with the "could".

PUPIL. No one *could* scratch my car. However, that seems clearly false!

MENTOR. Exactly, with the "could", and without the "should", *self-deception* becomes more difficult.

PUPIL. You mean to say that by simply substituting the verbs I can easily see if my theories are in conflict with reality or not?

MENTOR. If you take a false theory containing the verb "should" and replace it with the verb "could", then there are two possibilities: its falsity will become more evident, or the replacement will automatically correct it.

PUPIL. And if instead the theory is correct?

MENTOR. In that case, it will be the same even after the replacement, even though it might sound a bit strange.

PUPIL. Another example would be nice.

MENTOR. Tell me a theory in which you believe that contains the verb "should". For example about a person that you know very well.

PUPIL. Would my partner be all right?

MENTOR. Fine.

PUPIL. Let me think... yes, here it is: I think that my partner *should* be more understanding of me!

MENTOR. Congratulations, a great example of a false theory of reality. How do you feel when you believe such a thought?

PUPIL. I feel hurt, and especially angry.

MENTOR. Who is it that hurt you?

PUPIL. My partner, obviously, with her lack of understanding of me.

MENTOR. Are you sure?

PUPIL. Agreed, it's just an old reflex. In truth, I have hurt myself by going up against reality, that I tried to negate.

MENTOR. Exactly, but if you replace the "should" with the "could" you can easily correct and transform it into a theory that is perfectly compatible with reality.

PUPIL. Let me try... my partner *could* be more understanding of me.

MENTOR. What do you think?

PUPIL. Hmm...

MENTOR. What is it?

PUPIL. The new version is undoubtedly more pertinent than the preceding one, but...

MENTOR. The preceding one was false. This one instead, until the opposite is confirmed, adequately describes a part of your reality.

PUPIL. Yes, but...

MENTOR. Spit it out.

PUPIL. If my partner could be more understanding of me, but is not, what does that mean?

MENTOR. You tell me.

PUPIL. If she could be, but she is not, that means she doesn't want to be.

MENTOR. Bingo!

PUPIL. That's terrible! That means that...

MENTOR. Simply that you don't know your partner very well.

PUPIL. Actually, I do know her as we've been together for many years.

MENTOR. That's not exactly right: it's many years that you are together with your theory about your partner.

PUPIL. I've been in a relationship with a theory, and a false one at that, rather than with a human being?

MENTOR. In part, yes. But now you have the possibility of removing your false theory, just like removing deformed lenses from your glasses, and looking at the true face of your companion for the first time.

PUPIL. And if it turns out that I don't like that face?

MENTOR. In that case, you can always put the deformed lenses back on. You already know what the price is to pay for that.

PUPIL. Suffering?

MENTOR. Exactly. But if you had the courage to take off those glasses you could avoid the suffering and learn to know who is really in front of you. You might like it just as much as you might not like it, but in either case, if you think about it, you have everything to gain. If you really want to know something or someone, your view should be neutral, in the sense that it should be free from unfounded prejudice. You need to observe accepting everything you see. Only in this way can a real meeting happen, in the total acceptance of the other. Because *acceptance means absence of negation*.

PUPIL. Do you mean to say the absence of theories that negate the other?

MENTOR. The absence of false theories that negating the other generate a conflict. And in the absence of conflicts there is no space for suffering, only for harmony.

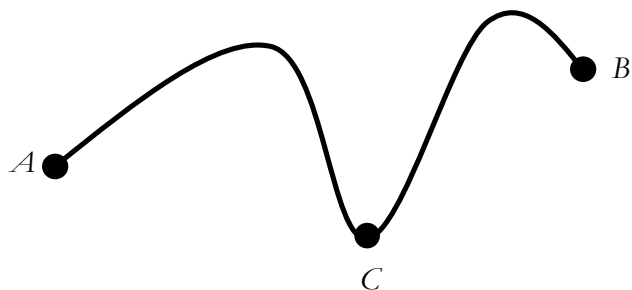
PUPIL. Before, while you were talking, I listened attentively to your words. I noticed you often pronounced the verb "should", for example when you said, "If you really want to know someone, your view *should* be free from prejudice". If it is true that in the verb "should" there is hidden a certain deceit, a negation of reality, then why do you use it?

MENTOR. Because the verb "should" does not have a counter-indication when you use it to express a *structural necessity*.

PUPIL. A what?

MENTOR. A structural necessity, that is to say a *need*. Imagine a curve that joins two points, A and B, that passes through an intermediate point C.

PUPIL. Like a road that connects two towns passing through a town in between?



MENTOR. Exactly. If you want to go from A to B, then you *should* pass through C. In other words, if from A you need to go to B, it is a *must*, a *necessity*, to pass through C.

PUPIL. Do you mean to say that when there are no alternatives, when there are no other ways possible to go from A to B, it becomes a *duty* to pass through C?

MENTOR. It becomes a duty under the condition that you want to go from A to B. If, instead, you do not want to do it, or there are other roads, other possibilities, then it is not correct to state that you *should* pass through C, but simply that you *could* pass through C. In other words, when we use the verb “should”, we implicitly refer to a law, in the sense of a constraint we cannot avoid in any way.

PUPIL. If I have understood well, we can use the verb “should” when we have no other possibility.

MENTOR. Yes, and if there is but one possibility, it is because there exists a *structural constraint*, a *law*, which forces us to act

in a certain way. Before employing the verb “should” (or “have to”, “must”, etc.), it is advisable to control that the validity of the law in question be confirmed by sufficient in depth and critical research. Furthermore, it is important not to forget that every law has a domain of applicability: a set of conditions that need to be satisfied in order for the law to be valid. For example, the law that states you should pass through C is valid only in the condition that you find yourself in A and want to get to B. If, instead, you do not find yourself in A, or you find yourself in A but do not want to go to B, then such a law can no longer be applied.

PUPIL. If I don't want to go to B, I don't need to pass through C, it seems logical.

MENTOR. In the same way, if you do not desire to know your partner intimately, you are not obligated to get rid of your false prejudices of her.

PUPIL. Hence, I can use the verb “should” when there exists a constraint, that is to say a law, that limits the field of my possibilities, provided I make explicit its domain of applicability.

MENTOR. Exactly. The correct form is: “I *should* (or *must*, *have to*) do X *if* I want to obtain Y”. Conditions like this are still very rare, because in life the roads to pass from A to B are almost always more than one, and they don't all pass through C.

PUPIL. A good prevention then would be to avoid using as much as possible the verb “should”.

MENTOR. And to use as much as possible the verb “could” (or “can”). Also because when a law limits our possibilities, it's always better to ask ourselves: are we certain it cannot be infringed? What are our evidences?

PUPIL. I understand, we could be unaware that, in spite of appearances, there exists another road that is still unknown, that leads to B without passing through C.

MENTOR. Well said. Therefore, unless proven otherwise, a

pressing need, necessity, constrain, law, or duty, cannot be but relative and never absolute. The risk that we take when we let “duty” dominate our lives is to lose sight of the other possibilities. And because reality is made up of possibilities, when we say “I should” (or “I must”, “I have to”) we don’t do anything more, in the final analysis, than to negate reality. It’s quite typical the expression “*I can’t because I have to...*”.

PUPIL. Who knows how many times I’ve said that.

MENTOR. Give me an example.

PUPIL. I can’t accept your invitation because *I have to* go to another appointment. I can’t eat that desert because *I have to* lose weight. I can’t allow myself a love affair because *I have to* respect my partner.

MENTOR. The truth is that you can accept my invitation, but you don’t want to, because you want to go to the other appointment. You can eat that desert, but you don’t want to, because you want to lose weight. You can allow yourself a love affair, but you don’t want to, because you don’t feel like breaking your word and being rude to your partner. You can choose to do all these things because there are no laws against it that would prevent you from doing them. Naturally, if you choose to do them, you must be willing to face the consequences, but that is another story.

PUPIL. Therefore, all these phrases that I usually say to justify myself, they negate the existence of other possibilities?

MENTOR. More specifically, they negate your power to act upon other possibilities.

PUPIL. And they as well end up creating more suffering?

MENTOR. Yes, because they act like chains that in the long run limit your freedom, making you impotent. And to withstand the constant pressure of heavy chains, as far as I know, is not a particularly pleasant thing.



## CHAPTER SUMMARY

*When “duty” dominates our life, we lose sight of the other possibilities.*

*The typical phrase “I can’t because I have to...” is often synonymous with negation of reality, and in the end promotes a deep feeling of impotence.*

*If in a false theory we replace the verb “should” with the verb “could”, we have two options: the falseness of the theory will be quite evident, or the replacement automatically corrects it.*

*Substituting “could” for “should” makes it more difficult to be self-deceived.*

*The verb “should” (or “have to”) can be used to express a structural necessity, namely a law that limits our field of possibilities.*

*It is always advisable to scrupulously check the validity of a law and specify its domain of applicability through the conditional conjunction “if”.*

*The correct expression is “I should (or I must, I have to) do X if I want to obtain Y”. Conditions of this type are so rare though because in reality the possibilities of reaching a determined objective are usually more than one.*

### 3. POSSIBILITY

*Reality is all that we could have experienced in the present if we would have chosen so in the past.*

PUPIL. When you say that reality is made of possibilities, is it a metaphor or do you mean it in a literal sense?

MENTOR. I mean it in a literal sense.

PUPIL. Could you explain yourself better?

MENTOR. How would you define *your reality*?

PUPIL. Do you mean to say *everything that exists for me*?

MENTOR. That's a good start. Your personal reality is made up of all that exists for you. But more precisely, what do you mean by the word "exist"?

PUPIL. I am tempted to answer that something exists if it is real.

MENTOR. In that case you would end up like the serpent that is biting its tail. Let's be pragmatic: what do you see on the table?

PUPIL. A good cup of Earl Grey tea.

MENTOR. Does the object "cup of tea" exist for you?

PUPIL. Without a doubt.

MENTOR. Why?

PUPIL. Because I can touch it.

MENTOR. And what is "touching a cup of tea"?

PUPIL. An action, a process.

MENTOR. How would you call more precisely an action or a process that you live in a conscious way?

PUPIL. An *experience*?

MENTOR. Yes, that is the word I wanted you to say. Therefore, the object “cup of tea” *exists for you* in as much as it is *available to your experience*.

PUPIL. I agree.

MENTOR. So you would also agree that “being available to your experience” would make a good *test* to determine if whatever object exists for you or not.

PUPIL. Certainly.

MENTOR. Let’s consider your car. Where is it at the moment?

PUPIL. In my garage at home.

MENTOR. Can you tell me if your car exists for you in this moment?

PUPIL. What a question, obviously it does.

MENTOR. How can you be so sure?

PUPIL. I had an experience with my car just a few hours ago.

MENTOR. So a few hours ago you knew it existed, because it was part of your experience. But from the moment that you can’t have an experience with your car *now*, how can you pretend that it is existing in your present?

PUPIL. I can’t be sure. That vandal that scratched my car could have followed me home, waited until I left and then done his work, setting my car on fire. If that happened, and I hope it didn’t, my car wouldn’t exist anymore at this moment.

MENTOR. This is a possibility that we shouldn’t exclude. But let’s imagine for a moment that you have perfect control over your environment, so much so that you could exclude any exceptional circumstance that would have brought about the destruction of your car. In such a case, can you tell me: would your car exist right now? And I insist on the word “now”.

PUPIL. If things were like that, then I could certainly confirm that my car would exist in this moment, even if in this moment I am not able to have an experience with it, since I am here with you and not at home.

MENTOR. How can you be so sure?

PUPIL. Hmm... the situation reminds me of an old riddle, or *Koan*, that said: "If a tree falls in the forest when no one is present, does it or does it not make noise?" In the same way, you are asking me: "If I cannot perceive an object, does it or does it not exist for me?"

MENTOR. More precisely: does it or does it not exist *in your present*? A question to which you have answered affirmatively, under the condition that it excludes exceptional circumstances, of which you would be unaware, that would have destroyed the object in question. But in spite of your certainty you still haven't justified your answer.

PUPIL. Every time I leave my car somewhere I have always found it there when I came back. It therefore seems logical to me to conclude that in the meantime, even if I was far away, it didn't cease to exist.

MENTOR. A very good remark. According to your observation of reality, which is also mine, objects like your car have a tendency to manifest *continuity on being*, persisting in their existence uninterruptedly, at least for a period of time corresponding to their life span.

PUPIL. Yes, they don't just disappear without any explainable reason.

MENTOR. Let's try to benefit from this observation of yours, this undeniable fact, to conclude something about the substance of reality.

PUPIL. It has all the appearance of a complicated metaphysical problem.

MENTOR. Not if we confront it with the right instruments.

PUPIL. I'm all ears.

MENTOR. First of all it is important to realize that *to exist* is a *property*. There are objects that exist and objects that don't exist. The objects that don't exist are those that have been destroyed or that have not yet been created. For them the property to exist is only *potential*. Instead, for all the others, those that exist *de facto*, the property is *actual*.

PUPIL. What do you mean exactly for property?

MENTOR. A property is something that an object *possesses* independently from the type of context it is confronted with. Let's take a simple example: your body possesses the property of "being taller than 1.5 meters", do you agree?

PUPIL. Undoubtedly.

MENTOR. And if I'm not mistaken, tonight, when you return home, you will still be taller than 1.5 meters.

PUPIL. You are not mistaken.

MENTOR. Therefore, the property of your body of "being taller than 1.5 meters" is something it possesses in a relatively stable way, in the sense that it doesn't change according to the changing of the setting in which it is found. But more exactly, would you know how to explain what possessing the property "being taller than 1.5 meters" means?

PUPIL. It means that if I take a measuring tape and measure my height, it would result in being more than 1.5 meters.

MENTOR. Exactly. What you have just indicated is an *experimental test* through which it is possible to *operationally* define the property in question. It is a procedure that makes it possible to answer the question.

PUPIL. What question?

MENTOR. "Does your physical body have the property of being taller than 1.5 meters? That question. Using your test (or other equivalent tests) it's possible to give a definite answer. For example, if the measuring tape shows a value less than 1.5

meters, the answer is negative and you can conclude that the property in question is only *potential*.

PUPIL. Because in the future I could still grow?

MENTOR. We can't exclude that.

PUPIL. But if the measuring tape shows a value more than 1.5 meters, the answer is affirmative and the property *proven*, right?

MENTOR. Not proven, only *confirmed*.

PUPIL. I don't understand: if you take the measuring tape, measure my height, and it's more than 1.5 meters, then the property is not only confirmed, but proven.

MENTOR. I'm not saying that it's not possible to prove that your body is more than 1.5 meters. I'm just saying that an affirmative answer to the test can at best confirm such an assumption, but certainly not prove it.

PUPIL. Why not?

MENTOR. Because as Einstein and two of his collaborators already observed in 1935<sup>2</sup>, it's only when you can *predict with certainty* that the result of a test will be positive, *without the need to perform it*, that you can claim to have proven a property. Only in such circumstances you can state that an object possesses a property in *actuality* or, more simply, that the property is *actual*.

PUPIL. I'm not sure if I have understood: how can you know beforehand, and with certainty, the result of a test?

MENTOR. Consider another property of your physical body: that of "being burnable". This property, as you know, corresponds to the capacity of your body in certain conditions to combine with oxygen to produce heat. Would you know how to describe a test to me that could *operationally* define this property of your

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<sup>2</sup> Einstein, A., Podolsky, B. and Rosen, N.; *Can Quantum-Mechanical Description of Physical Reality Be Considered Complete?* Phys. Rev. 47, p.777; 1935.

body?

PUPIL. Light a crematorium, put my body in the oven, wait a few hours and see if it is burnt up. And if that's the case then the result of the test is affirmative, otherwise it's negative.

MENTOR. A great test. In your opinion does your body possess the property of "being burnable" as defined in your test?

PUPIL. It sure does.

MENTOR. How can you know that? I haven't even done the test.

PUPIL. And I can assure you that you are not going to do it.

MENTOR. Are you telling me that you can predict with certainty that the result of the test will be affirmative?

PUPIL. That's right.

MENTOR. How can you be so sure?

PUPIL. It's a question of experience. An uncalculated number of physical bodies the same as mine have already undergone the test of crematory ovens, and as far as I know the answer has always been affirmative. As a result, I think I can conclude with *reasonable certainty* that my physical body possesses the property of "being burnable", without the need of doing the test.

MENTOR. Precisely. And if you can conclude that the property of "being burnable" is an *actual property* of your physical body, it is because you know the answer to the test *beforehand*, even before doing it.

PUPIL. I understand, my knowledge of this is a consequence of my previous experiences.

MENTOR. Yes, if a researcher has done the same test many times on equivalent objects, always obtaining the same result, excluding possible anomalies he is therefore able to predict, with reasonable certainty, that if he would perform the same test one more time on an object of the same type, the same result would appear. In other words, the researcher can conclude, without having to do the test, that the object possesses the property in question. As Einstein would have said, for the

researcher the property in question corresponds to an *element of reality* that exists *independently of his observation*<sup>3</sup>.

PUPIL. All of this is very interesting, but what does it have to do with our discussion?

MENTOR. In a little while you will understand. Do you still have the idea that “being burnable” is a property that your body has at this moment?

PUPIL. Certainly, because should I decide to do the oven-test, the affirmative answer would be certain.

MENTOR. But to do the experiment would require some time and you wouldn't have the answer *now*, in the present, but only in a few hours, in the future. How can you then sustain that your body is burnable in this precise moment, in the present?

PUPIL. Hmm... what I do know is that a test, whatever it may be, always requires a certain amount of time to be done. So the result of a test will always be found in the future and never in the present.

MENTOR. Right. But isn't it also true that you could have done the test in the past, so that the result would be available to you in the present?

PUPIL. Anyhow, the result wouldn't be available in *my* present, given that after the test I would be dead and all burned up.

MENTOR. Until proven to the contrary, as an evolving consciousness you are not just a physical body. Don't mistake the vehicle with the driver.

PUPIL. A false identification?

MENTOR. Yes, but that's not what we want to talk about, otherwise we'll get off track.

PUPIL. Please continue then.

MENTOR. We were saying that if you had wanted, you could

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<sup>3</sup> The term “observation” is here to be understood in the wider sense of “measurement”, or “experimentation”.



have done the test of the crematory oven in the past, let's say a few hours ago, in a way so that the result would have been available to you now, in your present, not in your future.

PUPIL. If I have understood well, you are saying that if it is true that my body possesses the property of "being burnable" in my present, it is because if I had decided a few hours ago, in my past, to do the test of the oven, the affirmative answer would have been certain in this moment, in my here and now.

MENTOR. You've got the idea. And now we have all that is necessary to determine what your reality is made of. Think about your car again. Every time that you have found yourself in its vicinity and have decided to have a conscious interaction with it, it has always demonstrated itself to be available, therefore part of your reality. So, based on your repeated experiences, you are able today to assert with reasonable certainty that if you had *chosen* in the past to remain home, instead of finding yourself with me in this tea room, you could have had an experience with your car instead of the cup of tea.

PUPIL. Now I understand where you wanted to go with your long digression. If I had decided to stay at home, in this moment I would have obtained an affirmative answer to the *existence-test* of my car. And based on this prediction, of which I am reasonably certain, I can affirm that my car exists now, in my present, even though in my present I am not having an experience with it.

MENTOR. That's it, and that means that your personal reality, everything that exists for you in your present, is made up of all your *possible* experiences, *those that you could have lived in your present if you had chosen them in your past*. Even if in this moment you are having an experience with your cup of tea, in your past you could have chosen to act otherwise, and if you had, in this moment you would be living other experiences, with other objects available to you. All these objects available to your experience, in the present, are by definition part of your personal reality.

PUPIL. That's why you said before, in a literal sense, that *reality is made up of possibilities*. If New York exists for me in my present, even if I find myself at this moment with you here in Lugano, it's because in the past, let's say a few days ago, I could have chosen to take an airplane, and if I had, I would now find myself in New York, instead of Lugano.

MENTOR. Exactly, in your past you could have chosen a different *goal*: go to New York instead of staying in Lugano. A goal that you could have reached with reasonable certainty in your present. For this reason you can say that New York is just as real to you as Lugano: because New York, as a *possibility*, is an objective that you could have chosen in the past to reach in the present. In other words, the *mother substance* of which our reality is made of, is *possibility*!

PUPIL. It's strange though, a reality made up of possibilities, isn't it... how would I say it... a bit intangible?

MENTOR. You don't need to think of possibilities as if they were unsubstantial entities. There's nothing more concrete than possibilities: it's only with them that you can fuse yourself in an experience.

PUPIL. There's still something that I don't get.

MENTOR. Some doubt in our reasoning?

PUPIL. What is the reason that possibility enters our analysis? Why possibility and not, for example, *probability*, or something else?

MENTOR. The concept of probability is very different from that of possibility. When we are not sure of something, for example the existence of a determined object, we can quantify our uncertainty, our ignorance, by a probability. But that's another story.

PUPIL. Alright, but... where do possibilities come from?

MENTOR. Simple: they come out from *choice*. We consciences, as individual expressions of the totality, manifest through relatively limited vehicles, that don't allow us

to experiment all of reality simultaneously. Therefore, we make choices, selecting those fragments of reality that, step by step, become part of our experience. Our capacity to choose is one of the fundamental attributes of the consciousness, which modern science is absolutely not able to explain. A choice in fact, if it is really free, is a *primary cause*, a *primary principle*, fundamental, uncaused, not derived from other principles and therefore technically unexplainable. In other words, if our reality is made of possibilities, it is because we consciousnesses are giving structure to it through our free choices.

PUPIL. Now that you tell me, it seems evident: what sense would it make to have possibilities without choice?

MENTOR. Possibility and choice are the two sides of the same coin. *A consciousness, by choosing, brings possibilities into existence that, therefore, are made of its own choosing.*

PUPIL. It seems a bit strange, but I believe I understand: possibilities are the foundation of our reality, being a reflection of our power of choice.

MENTOR. Precisely. And now, to finish on a good note our conversation on the substance of reality, I would like to bring up what one of my physics professors<sup>4</sup> loved to repeat to his students, while waving at the blackboard with chalk in hand.

PUPIL. I'm curious, what did he say?

MENTOR. It's important not to confuse the *breakable* chalk with the *broken* chalk.

PUPIL. What did he mean by that?

MENTOR. That our observations, that is the tests we chose or not to perform, transform our reality.

PUPIL. Do you mean to say that our possibilities continually change, because of our choices?

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<sup>4</sup> Speaking of *Constantin Piron* (1932-2012), professor of theoretical physics at the Geneva university.

MENTOR. Exactly. When we interact with the field of our possibilities the process is always twofold: on one hand we *discover* possibilities that already exist, and on the other hand we *create* always new possibilities, that didn't exist before.

PUPIL. Such as in the case with the broken chalk?

MENTOR. Yes, before the test the chalk possessed the property of being breakable. Which means that if we would decide to apply upon it, with our hands, an intense couple of forces in an attempt to break it, that is *to observe its breakability*, the result would surely be positive. But once the test is done, the property will no longer be present, because a broken chalk, as is known, is no longer a chalk that is (easily) breakable. In other words, though confirming the property, the test destroys it. But on the other hand, new properties, hence new possibilities, are created.

PUPIL. For example?

MENTOR. A chalk broken in two halves is a multidimensional tool that permits you to write on the blackboard with two hands simultaneously. That is a property that the single piece of chalk did not possess.

PUPIL. Therefore our choices always correspond to a double process of destruction-creation.

MENTOR. Yes, a process through which we promote an incessant change, transformation and evolution of reality.

## CHAPTER SUMMARY

*We cannot experiment reality as a whole, in one big hit, but we can explore it systematically, bit by bit, through our power of choice.*

*What we call reality is the set of our possible experiences: those that we could have lived in our present if we would have chosen so in our past.*

*Possibility and choice are the two sides of the same coin: every time we make a choice, we bring possibilities into existence.*

*When we explore the field of our possibilities through our choices, the process is always twofold: on one hand, we discover already existing possibilities, and on the other hand, we create always-new possibilities.*

*Existence is a property.*

*A property is something that an object possesses independently from the type of context it is confronted with.*

*A property is defined by means of a test: an experimental procedure that permits to answer a question.*

*As Einstein has already observed, it is only when we can predict with certainty the result of a test, without the need to perform it, that we can affirm that an entity (actually) possesses a determined property.*

## 4. SELF-CORRUPTION

*The biggest obstacle to our integration is the preconceived idea that we should already be integrated, when instead we are not.*

PUPIL. I was thinking: if it's true that reality is made of possibilities, then just negating a possibility is already negating reality.

MENTOR. When we are upset by some event, don't we often use the expression "It's not possible!"?

PUPIL. If I dropped an expensive porcelain plate, I would certainly feel like saying it.

MENTOR. That would mean that, according to your distorted vision of reality, the possibility of the plate falling should be impossible, instead of possible.

PUPIL. But if I dropped the plate, I would only be negating the evidence.

MENTOR. And how would that make you feel?

PUPIL. Very irritated.

MENTOR. The same happens to some "scientists" when they find that reality doesn't bend to their theories. In their irritation sometimes they exclaim: "If the theory doesn't work then too bad for reality!" In the same way, when you drop a plate and you yell "It's not possible!", you are telling reality that fragile objects like a plate should not fall downwards, obeying the force of gravity, but peacefully float in the air.

PUPIL. Reality however does not obey my theory.

MENTOR. Not because it has something against you. If it obeyed you, it would create a gravitational anomaly of paradoxical nature and the entire physical dimension would collapse. If it does not listen to you, it is because it knows that in your heart you do not desire to live in a collapsed world where your strange theory would reign.

PUPIL. Nevertheless, I get mad like a little child when his mother doesn't let him eat the whole cake.

MENTOR. Yes, but it is better to get a little mad than a dangerous indigestion. By not granting our most infantile demands reality protects us, like a loving, patient and wise parent, perfectly fair in its answers. Because *parent-reality* is very concerned that its beloved children grow up healthy and strong.

PUPIL. And these beloved children would be us?

MENTOR. Certainly. Our growth, as consciousnesses, corresponds to the evolution of the vehicles in which we manifest, our bodymind, the receptacle of our theories of reality. An evolution whose beginning, if there ever was a beginning, is lost in the mists of time.

PUPIL. How can we promote the evolution of our vehicles, of our theories of reality?

MENTOR. It's simple: every time we realize that we have made a mistake, we correct it right away.

PUPIL. Then the ideal would be to never make mistakes.

MENTOR. This is humanly impossible, other than being not desirable. It is thanks to mistakes that we are able to progress in our life.

PUPIL. But if the mistakes were instruments that we use to progress, then in fact they wouldn't be mistakes.

MENTOR. The mistake, if you can talk about mistakes, is not in making a mistake, but not correcting it when we have a chance. Because, if we do not correct it, then we will repeat it.

PUPIL. That brings to mind the famous Latin saying: *errare humanum est, persevere autem diabolicum*.

MENTOR. Which translated means: to make mistakes is human, that is to say desirable as functional to growth, but to keep repeating them is diabolical, means not desirable, as not functional to growth. Naturally, the term here “diabolical” is not to be understood in a literal sense: it only serves to indicate the greater seriousness of consciously repeating a mistake.

PUPIL. Why is it that when we are conscious of a mistake we don’t always correct it?

MENTOR. Because of an inner mechanism called *self-corruption*. Do you remember some of those cartoons where there is a person with a little angel and little devil accompanying them?

PUPIL. Yes, the little devil is always the one that suggests doing bad things, while the angel the good.

MENTOR. That’s right. The little angel and little devil are a metaphor of our *inner fragmentation*, which is at the origin of the phenomenon of self-corruption: a conflict of identity of an evolving consciousness that has not yet reached a sufficient level of integration of its own self. As a consequence, it reacts in a *schizophrenic* way, continually changing ideas on what is good and bad, what is right or wrong, on what is useful or counterproductive for its evolution. In other words, the little devil always tries to corrupt the little angel and, vice versa, the little angel always tries to corrupt the little devil.

PUPIL. If I have understood well, in a given moment a person thinks that it is right, that it is useful, to do a certain thing, then in the next moment he rethinks and doesn’t do it anymore, or even does something the exact opposite.

MENTOR. Exactly. The person possesses in the same moment two or more different visions, two or more theories of reality which are mutually *incompatible* and in which he or she believes simultaneously. These theories form a composite wider



structure that, lacking coherence, necessarily leads to contradictions. In other words, the fragmented individual adheres as a whole to a false theory that reality in the end will always negate.

PUPIL. In the self-corruption process, negation then would be primarily internal.

MENTOR. Yes, because the individual hosts inside fragments of competing theories, that negate one another. To give an example, a theory of the little angel might say: “You shouldn’t go out and waste time with your friends, but only think about your study!” The theory of the little devil instead might be: “You’ve got plenty of time to study, just think about having fun!”

PUPIL. We need to eliminate the little devil and just keep the little angel.

MENTOR. How would you think to eliminate him?

PUPIL. I could forbid him to talk.

MENTOR. Are you telling me that you are able to decide which thoughts to think and which not to think?

PUPIL. Maybe yes, if I try really hard.

MENTOR. Can I put you to the test?

PUPIL. OK.

MENTOR. Pay attention then: try *not* to think of a horse.

PUPIL. ...!

MENTOR. Did you do it?

PUPIL. No, an image of a pureblood Arabian horse appeared to me and it came to mind when I fell from a horse. I also thought about how I do not like horsemeat and how colts are fearful animals.

MENTOR. A complete success, I would say. Maybe we didn’t understand each other: you were supposed to *not think* of a horse and not *to think about it*.

PUPIL. Very funny.

MENTOR. Shall we try again?

PUPIL. I'm ready.

MENTOR. Look at this sign and while you are looking at it try not to think in any way of its meaning.



PUPIL. ... it's impossible! Just looking at it quickly brings to mind the *Yin* and the *Yang* of Chinese tradition.

MENTOR. And yet I asked you to look at it without thinking anything.

PUPIL. You've won: I am not able to control the fluctuations of my thoughts.

MENTOR. Welcome to the club, I can't do it either.

PUPIL. Why is it so hard?

MENTOR. Because our mind continually receives stimuli, which in turn generate new stimuli and so on in an associative process that practically has no end.

PUPIL. With your request to not think about a horse you stimulated my mind to do so.

MENTOR. And your mind reacted to my stimulus producing new images, a succession of horse-like associations.

PUPIL. I didn't have a choice: I couldn't not think about a horse.

MENTOR. Not thinking about a horse would have meant

negating my stimulus, something that you couldn't have done seeing that it was decisively real.

PUPIL. And I am not able to negate the reality of a real stimulus, right?

MENTOR. Probably no one is able to do so. In any case, the stimuli that your mind receives don't come only from the outside, but also from the inside. In fact, your bodymind, as a system, is made of numerous subsystems that, even though functioning with relative autonomy, continually exchange information, therefore stimuli.

PUPIL. What are these subsystems?

MENTOR. The three principal ones are the *physical*, *emotional* and *intellectual*, which we can call respectively, *physical mind*, *emotional mind* and *intellectual mind*.

PUPIL. In other words, when you asked me if I was able to control the flow of my thoughts, you were asking me if I could control the activity of that part of my bodymind that you call *intellectual mind*.

MENTOR. Exactly, and if you are not able to do so it's because your intellectual mind possesses purely mechanical aspects, able to react autonomously to the continual stimulus it receives, from the inside or from the outside, for example those that come from your physical or emotional mind.

PUPIL. I understand, my physical and emotional perceptions continually stimulate my flow of thought.

MENTOR. And vice versa, your flow of thought stimulate, retroactively, new emotions and new physical sensations.

PUPIL. So, if I wanted to control the flow of my thought I would have to isolate my intellect from the rest of the world.

MENTOR. Something that you obviously cannot do. But even if you could, it doesn't mean that you will reach your goal.

PUPIL. But that way stimulus would cease, therefore the chain reaction induced by the mechanical associations.

MENTOR. Your own intellect could be self-stimulating.

PUPIL. In what way?

MENTOR. Through the manifestation of an inner conflict from the part of the little devil and the little angel.

PUPIL. I forgot about those two!

MENTOR. If I'm not mistaken, you wanted to get rid of that little devil by forbidding him to talk.

PUPIL. Now I understand that trying to do that is destined to fail. What do you suggest I do?

MENTOR. Try to look again at the *Thai Chi* symbol. What does it say to you?

PUPIL. The symbol shows the combination of two principles: the black is the principle *Yin*, which if I remember well expresses the negative polarity, night, femininity, while the white is the principle *Yang*, which corresponds to positive polarity, day, and masculinity.

MENTOR. Yes, these two universal polarities, like stillness and movement, cold and hot, inside and outside and so forth, apparently contrast, that is they negate each other. Even so, the Thai Chi symbol indicates another possibility. Can you see what it is?

PUPIL. The two principles in the symbol, even though they mutually contrast, at the same time they complete and sustain each other.

MENTOR. Exactly right. The symbol suggests that the road to integration is not just possible, but actually desirable, and in a certain sense obligatory. Because it is only through the integration of apparently contrasting forces that we can create always wider and more stable equilibriums in our lives.

PUPIL. In the case of the little devil that incites me to have unbridled fun and the little angel that exhorts me to remain faithful to duty, how can I integrate them? How can I get the two of them to agree?

MENTOR. You can start by asking yourself the following questions: do those two know each other? Have they ever met? Have they ever talked with each other? Did they ever share their thoughts, their visions, and their respective theories of reality?

PUPIL. I imagine not.

MENTOR. You imagine well. Because of the problem of identification, those two usually do not talk to each other.

PUPIL. What does identification have to do with it now?

MENTOR. It's because more often than not the consciousness allows itself to be taken up by the voices of the little angel and little devil, thus identifying each time with them. In that way though, their conflict cannot be resolved.

PUPIL. Why?

MENTOR. Because by reason of its alternatively impersonating the little angel and the little devil, when there is one there is never the other. In that way, how can they ever get to know each other?

PUPIL. What can we do then? The situation seems hopeless.

MENTOR. It's not, as long as the consciousness is aware of the mechanism of self-corruption that is in action: a strange ballet in which it alternately identifies with personalities apparently irreconcilable.

PUPIL. How can it become aware of such a schizophrenic ballet?

MENTOR. The ballet makes it suffer, provoking for example an unpleasant *sense of guilt*. When it's out having fun it feels guilty because it's not at home studying, and when it's studying it feels like it's trapped and would like to go out and have fun. In both cases, the consciousness never does what it wants and lives with a deep sense of frustration.

PUPIL. All right, let us say that due to the frustration it is aware of the problem, of the inner fragmentation. But how can it solve the situation?

MENTOR. One possibility is to let another character come into

play, *the observer*, whose function is, as his name implies, to observe. Observe his parts, observe himself, and observe his own observation. By doing so, he creates a space in which the little devil and the little angel can finally get to know each other and exchange their respective visions.

PUPIL. Am I mistaken or do you presume that both the little angel and the little devil always have valid reasons to sustain what they sustain?

MENTOR. Every living entity always looks for the best for itself and for others given its own vision of reality. According to the little devil's vision, it's more important to enjoy all that the present has to offer rather than to think of the future, that is, of the consequences of its own action. Instead, according to the little angel's vision, the future is more important than the present and life is to be lived with a profound spirit of sacrifice.

PUPIL. It seems to me that they both have a very narrow vision of reality.

MENTOR. Their theories contemplate correctly only certain aspects of life, but negate others, not taking them in due consideration.

PUPIL. So it is not correct to say that the little devil is bad while the little angel is good: they are both good, according to their own personal way of seeing things.

MENTOR. Right, but both have an interest to expand their respective visions. And the best way they can do that is to learn to know each other.

PUPIL. Thanks to the meeting space created by the consciousness in the role of observer?

MENTOR. Exactly.

PUPIL. But wouldn't those two then risk to speak it out?

MENTOR. Not at all. When consciousness enters into the role of observer, it steals energy from the little devil and the little angel. In that way both are more pacified and their dialogue

can't be anything but constructive.

PUPIL. What happens during their meeting, under the vigilant look of the observer?

MENTOR. What happens is summed up in the symbol of the Thai Chi: they find that they both are right, or they both are wrong. That in both of their visions there is in fact something valid and at the same time something mistaken, because they are partial visions. For example, the little angel might discover that one can't live for the future, because only the present exists. On the other hand, the little devil might realize that in the evolving reality, there exists a law, called *cause-effect*, according to which the choices we make in our "today-present" determine the possibilities of our "tomorrow-present", and even though taking advantage of the moment, we have to also reflect about what we are sowing.

PUPIL. They both make the same mistake: they perceive their partial vision as being a complete vision.

MENTOR. That's right! Naturally, we are reasoning in very general terms. According to the circumstances, the little devil and the little angel's messages can become much more specific.

PUPIL. For example how?

MENTOR. Sometimes the little angel is simply the voice of a parent, of a specific community, or the entire society, that are telling us what we should do to be accepted, recognized, loved, according to their personal point of view about it.

PUPIL. Like when a father exhorts his son to follow his own profession?

MENTOR. It's a good example. The father acts in the best interest of his son, pointing out the way that, *according to him*, is the best to follow. His voice is like the one of a little angel that encourages him to apply himself, for example to study.

PUPIL. And the little devil?

MENTOR. The little devil in this case can assume the voice of

corruption, that exhorts the boy to disobey the father's will by deserting his studies.

PUPIL. And which of the two is right?

MENTOR. As usual neither of the two, or both. In fact, when the little angel or little devil meet they realize that they aren't that different from each other, and have a great need one for the other to grow.

PUPIL. But what could be, in this more specific example, their meeting point?

MENTOR. Thanks to the part of the little devil the boy could realize that the father's profession is not for him, whereas the part of the little angel could help him to comprehend that the problem is not so much in studying as it is in the choice of orientation.

PUPIL. I understand, they both possess an important piece of information. If he listens only to the little devil he risks abandoning his studies forever, whereas if he listens only to the little angel and follows in his father's steps he risks to develop a growing sense of dissatisfaction.

MENTOR. The little angel and the little devil don't have any reason to fight but everything to gain by merging their respective visions into a vision that is wider, deeper, more complex and more compatible with reality. As a result of their meeting they can form a single integrated fragment, a new theory of reality, more advanced, that the self-observing consciousness can adopt to move in reality in a way that is more harmonious, comfortable and productive. In other words, with the new theory the boy will finally be able to recognize his own desires that he would be able to realize without the need to self-boycott himself.

PUPIL. Hmm...

MENTOR. What are you thinking?

PUPIL. I was thinking about my personal little angel and devil. Taking into due consideration also the voice of the little devil,



that tells me to not worry and just take things as they come, I tend to give more value to the voice of the little angel, that tells me to always think about tomorrow. I don't seem to be able to put those two exactly on the same level, the way you do and the Thai Chi symbol seems to do it.

MENTOR. What is your little angel telling you exactly?

PUPIL. He tells me I should behave in life in a perfectly ethic and responsible way.

MENTOR. This is the theory of your little angel, which is also yours, given that he is a part of you. But tell me: are you able?

PUPIL. What?

MENTOR. Are you able to behave in life in a perfectly ethic and responsible way?

PUPIL. Not always. Actually almost never!

MENTOR. And how does that make you feel?

PUPIL. A failure.

MENTOR. And how do you feel feeling like a failure?

PUPIL. Not good, suffering.

MENTOR. Does that remind you of anything?

PUPIL. I've identified myself with a false theory of reality.

MENTOR. That's right. Your theory, or the theory of your little angel if you prefer, cannot be true, being that your actions continually disprove it. You don't have to behave in a perfectly ethic and responsible way.

PUPIL. I don't have to... why?

MENTOR. Simply because you don't do it. And if you don't do it that means you don't have to do it, only that you could do it. Always acting in a perfectly ethic and responsible way is an ideal that in the reality of your evolutionary course you will never be able to reach.

PUPIL. I understand: I'm not a perfect being, just a being that

tends towards perfection, that is evolving, learning from his own mistakes.

MENTOR. What makes you believe that you are imperfect? In my point of view, every evolving consciousness is perfect as it is, being exactly as it should be. No, the reason for which you are not able to reach the ideals of your little angel is another.

PUPIL. And what would that be?

MENTOR. Think about it. It's very simple.

PUPIL. ... I don't get it.

MENTOR. If you don't get it, it's because the answer is so simple that you can't see it.

PUPIL. I'm all ears, actually all eyes.

MENTOR. What is stopping you from being perfectly ethic and responsible in your life is exactly the thought that you have to be.

PUPIL. It's a paradox.

MENTOR. Only an apparent paradox. Do you agree that in light of the facts the theory of your little angel is obviously false?

PUPIL. I am forced to admit it.

MENTOR. And tell me: what could be more unethical and irresponsible in life than to base your actions upon a theory that is evidently false?

PUPIL. Now that you bring it to my attention, you're exactly right, it's completely unethical and irresponsible to continue to believe in a false theory and base upon it one's own evaluations, choices and actions.

MENTOR. Therefore, you can start to become more ethical and responsible in your life only when you stop believing that you have to be.

PUPIL. But if I do that don't I risk justifying any type of my behavior?

MENTOR. You could do that, certainly, but you're not obligated

to. If you free yourself from the yoke of your false theories of reality, how would you use your new freedom?

PUPIL. To tell you the truth, I really don't know.

MENTOR. "I don't know" is a marvelous thought that opens up to totally new experiences. But one thing is sure: once you are free from the duties imposed by your false theories of reality, you will finally meet and know your own nature more profoundly.

PUPIL. And would I like that?

MENTOR. Those who have found it have described it in terms such as: beauty, peace, love, serenity, harmony, joy, happiness, blessedness...

PUPIL. Sounds promising.

MENTOR. It is!

## CHAPTER SUMMARY

*To negate a possibility means to negate reality.*

*Reality is a loving parent that protects us, avoiding fulfilling our most childish whims.*

*If we want to promote the evolution of our theories of reality we need to correct our mistakes, avoiding to continually repeat them. When we do not, it is because there is in action an inner mechanism of self-corruption.*

*Self-corruption is the expression of a conflict of identity of the consciousness, which alternatively identifies with apparently irreconcilable personalities.*

*When the consciousness assumes the neutral role of the observer, it creates a meeting point in which its conflicting parts (each one possessing an important piece of information) can meet, get to know each other and integrate.*

*Paradoxically, the greatest obstacle to integration is the false belief that we should already be perfectly integrated, when instead we are not.*

## 5. PAIN

*Using our intellect properly means to recognize the real significance of pain and not indulging in suffering.*

PUPIL. When I asked you how to promote our evolution, you told me there are essentially two ways: the first consists of letting reality do it, and the second is in anticipating it. I am not sure exactly what you meant.

MENTOR. The first method is based on *suffering* while the second is based on *pain*.

PUPIL. What would be the difference?

MENTOR. As I already mentioned, the first method requires a lot of time and is very unpleasant, while the second is faster and almost painless.

PUPIL. But if the second method is also based on pain, how can it be painless?

MENTOR. If you try to touch the point of a pin, what do you feel?

PUPIL. A minor sensation of pain.

MENTOR. What does this minor sensation of pain make you do?

PUPIL. It makes me pull my finger away.

MENTOR. When you pulled your finger away, does it still hurt?

PUPIL. No more.

MENTOR. How do you evaluate this experience, which consists of touching the end of a pin, perceiving a brief sensation of pain

and then pulling your finger away: would you define that as painful?

PUPIL. Not exactly. The sensation of pain was very slight, also because it was very brief. And it is exactly that feeling that warns me of the risk I would run by applying more pressure with my finger on the point of the pin. If I would do that, the experience would become really painful.

MENTOR. If you would do it, that brief and slight sensation of pain would transform into a real suffering. Whoever applies a strong pressure on a pin, in spite of the warning, applies the first method, while whoever pulls his finger away quickly, applies the second method.

PUPIL. If I have understood well, you are distinguishing between *pain* and *suffering*.

MENTOR. In everyday language, these two terms are almost synonymous. However, there is a big difference. As you know, pain is an unpleasant sensation, a consequence of the stimulation of certain receptors, called nociceptors, which act as an alarm signal, thanks to which we can avoid danger. Suffering, instead, is a tormenting condition due to an enduring pain. In other words, when pain is unbroken, continual and unceasing, we are dealing with suffering.

PUPIL. Why is it that in some circumstances pain does not cease?

MENTOR. Because instead of pulling our finger away from the pin we continue to push with force on the sharp point.

PUPIL. A very irrational behavior!

MENTOR. Yes, a behavior that negates reality.

PUPIL. The reality of pain?

MENTOR. Even before negating the reality of pain, there is negating the reality of the point of the pin. When we continue to push on the sharp point of the pin, in spite of the warning of pain, we are convinced that a pin should not puncture.

PUPIL. A false theory of reality?

MENTOR. That's right, a false theory of reality that produces the equivalent of something like a *perceptive hallucination*, that prevents us from properly evaluating the protective signal of pain. Which, in the long run, would transform our lives into a long road of suffering, totally incomprehensible, where everything is perceived as a possible threat. This would naturally lead us to develop an attitude of being a victim.

PUPIL. It seems like a condition with no way out.

MENTOR. There is always a way out. However, if the hallucination generated by our false theory is very vivid, because the identification is particularly intense, a lot of time and suffering is needed before the person understands his mistake. But when this happens, he finally has the possibility of abandoning the role of the victim and modify his behavior, pulling away his finger from the point of the pin. The suffering can then cease and the natural and protective feeling of pain can return to be perceived without dangerous distortions.

PUPIL. How does this realization come?

MENTOR. It comes by reality gradually disintegrating the false theory. The process is not always among the most pleasant, especially when our false theories are deeply rooted in the most solid structures of our bodymind.

PUPIL. Are you talking about *disease*?

MENTOR. Yes, disease is a result of a prolonged conflict between a false theory of reality and reality itself. A conflict in which the consciousness has the opportunity to correct its own mistakes and *self-heal*.

PUPIL. And the second method?

MENTOR. The second method consists of giving full attention and significance to our feelings of pain.

PUPIL. Which means?

MENTOR. Every time we perceive pain, be it physical, emotional

or even intellectual, we need to ask ourselves: “Where is the pin?”

PUPIL. And pull our finger away instead of putting on more pressure!

MENTOR. Exactly. The second method consists of quickly correcting the mistakes embedded in our false theories, anticipating, if I can say so, the repercussion of reality.

PUPIL. Why do we usually not do it?

MENTOR. That is a question which is not easy to answer. Maybe it is because we find ourselves in a delicate stage of our growth, as evolving consciousnesses.

PUPIL. Explain yourself better.

MENTOR. Since time unmemorable, we are developing our vehicles. Initially we were mostly dedicated to the development of our physical mind, and then passed onto our emotional mind.

PUPIL. Are you telling me that we began to build our theories of reality since the dawn of our biological evolution, when we were but simple microorganisms?

MENTOR. That is right, we have written our theories of reality on many levels. Initially in our physical structure, for example in the genes, in the cells, in the tissues and in the organs. Then in our emotional matrix, when more recently we have evolved into so-called superior animals. Until that moment, we can hypothesize that the process did not present any particular problems, in the sense that every time our bodymind entered into conflict with reality, it quickly revised, correcting in real time its inner structures, that is, its own theory of reality.

PUPIL. If I have understood well, when, through the mechanism of pain, the bodymind perceived that it was trying to negate reality, as much as possible it promptly adapted without indulging in the conflict.

MENTOR. Yes, in that time the “perseverare autem diabolicum” was not yet in fashion and the consciousness learned quickly



from its own mistakes, thanks to the guiding role of pain.

PUPIL. Then what happened?

MENTOR. Growth passed onto a successive stage, particularly delicate: the development of the intellectual mind. This development allowed us to reach the present evolutionary level, that of *Homo sapiens sapiens*.

PUPIL. Why sapiens twice?

MENTOR. We humans, in biological terms, are classified as belonging to the family of *Hominidae*, of the genus *Homo*, of the species *Homo sapiens*, and of the subspecies *Homo sapiens sapiens*, the only one surviving until our present time. But apart from the technical questions of nomenclature, I like to think that the first “sapiens” stands for “the man that knows”, while the second “sapiens” stands for “the man that knows that he knows”.

PUPIL. In other words the *self-conscious* man?

MENTOR. Yes, the man that has reached such a stage of development to render manifest and stable the attribute of consciousness of his own flux of thought. This would be the so-called modern man. Consider though that modern man is not the only terrestrial animal that has attained the possibility of *metacognition*, that is the capacity to “know what he knows”. Recent experiments<sup>5</sup> have demonstrated that besides monkeys other simple animals, like a rat, have the capacity to reflect on the content of their knowledge, even if not, clearly, at the level of modern man, where metacognition has become a very true form of *self-awareness*.

PUPIL. Do you want to say that modern man has become self-aware due to the awareness of his own flow of thoughts?

MENTOR. Yes, although it is nevertheless a limited form of self-awareness, being that we consciousnesses are much more than

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<sup>5</sup> A. Foote e J. D. Crystal, “Metacognition in the Rat.”, *Current Biology* 17, 1–5, March 20, 2007.

just the content of our thought processes. However, to return to your former question, we can hypothesize that the development of intellectual faculties has lead man to the threshold of a very delicate evolutionary passage. In fact, through thought and imagination man has become able to produce proper and true simulations of reality, due to which he has learned to predict the course of events.

PUPIL. An instrument undoubtedly useful to survive in a hostile environment, where many species compete among themselves.

MENTOR. Yes, a very useful and powerful instrument. In a certain sense, too powerful.

PUPIL. What do you mean to say?

MENTOR. With the passing of time we can suppose that these simulations of reality produced by the intellectual mind, always more complex and significant, have started to live a life of their own, creating an inner reality so rich in content that the consciousness began to perceive it as real as the outer reality. A sort of second reality that little by little went on superposing and mixing up with the first.

PUPIL. The consciousness would have started to confuse its own theories of reality with reality itself?

MENTOR. Exactly, and this marked the beginning of the hallucinatory process of which we have spoken, not being able to discriminate correctly between what is internal – its own theories of reality – from that which is external, reality<sup>6</sup>. Probably this confusion between reality and the simulation of reality explains the emergence of new cognitive superstructures that have made the relationship between the human consciousness and reality so difficult.

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<sup>6</sup> The terms “internal” and “external” are not to be understood here in a strict sense. The internal reality is in fact, in turn, contained in the external reality (understood here as all of reality), and therefore is not disconnected from it.

PUPIL. Can you give me an example of these superstructures?

MENTOR. The *past* and the *future* are among these. With the development of the intellectual mind, the consciousness has begun to perceive the past and the future as real entities, when instead time does not exist, as every living entity having not yet developed a thinking mind knows perfectly well.

PUPIL. In what sense would the past not exist?

MENTOR. The past is a result of our records, called memories, which only exist in the present. Furthermore, being that our memories are energetic structures, sooner or later, inevitably, they will begin to change. So, contrary to what we are used to believe, the past is not something that is unchangeable: it can change and in fact continue to change, in the measure in which our memories change. In all probability, our present in a far off tomorrow will possess a past that is very different from the past, as we know it today.

PUPIL. What you say is very surprising: I have always believed, without reflecting much I admit, that the past was something definite and unchangeable, even if not necessarily known.

MENTOR. The past instead is only a set of memories, of energetic forms, the characteristics of which are necessarily changeable. When we bring to memory a past event, recorded in our memory, the event is relived, re-elaborated, reinterpreted, and in the end re-updated, before being recorded again. Therefore, it will not be remembered in the same way.

PUPIL. Hmm... I still am not getting it.

MENTOR. It's all very simple. Without memories the past cannot exist. Past and memories are essentially one and the same. And because memories can only exist in the present, the past is found in the present, a present that continually changes.

PUPIL. And the future?

MENTOR. In the case of the future we are more inclined to believe that it does not exist in itself. However, just as it is for the past, the future is only a memory in the present. Not a

memory of an experience lived, but a memory of a simulated experience, an experience that we can live depending on our choices.

PUPIL. If I have understood well, for you time doesn't exist. Only the present exists.

MENTOR. Not only for me, but also for you. You can't have an experience with the time-entity. You can't subject it to the *existence-test* of which we spoke about earlier. Therefore, time is not a real entity.

PUPIL. Nevertheless, it flows from the past toward the future.

MENTOR. It seems so.

PUPIL. Isn't it so?

MENTOR. If it flows it would possess a *velocity*, wouldn't you think?

PUPIL. Certainly, a velocity that would characterize its flowing from the past toward the future.

MENTOR. What is velocity? For example the velocity of a car?

PUPIL. It's a measurement of the variation of its position with respect to the variation of time.

MENTOR. And what would be the velocity of time? The measurement of the variation of what?

PUPIL. Of time, of course.

MENTOR. With respect to what?

PUPIL. With respect to...

MENTOR. Were you about to say: "With respect to the variation of time"? But that way you end up again like the serpent biting its tail. It does not make any sense to define the variation of something relative to itself. As a consequence, time doesn't flow! And if it doesn't flow then it doesn't exist. Better, it exists but only in our false theories of reality.

PUPIL. It all sounds a bit strange. If time does not exist then neither the past or the future should exist.

MENTOR. They don't exist as entities by themselves, but it's always possible to talk about them in terms of records.

PUPIL. If I have understood well, our bodymind is similar to a moving mega memory in which we record both our experiences of an illusionary past as well as our simulations of an illusionary future.

MENTOR. Yes, and these memories in continuous change are an expression of our theories of reality. Part of these theories we have written in a remote past, when we still did not have an intellectual mind. Then, more recently, we have added new elements, conceived by our most powerful intellectual instrument. Elements so vivid that in time they were mistaken for that same reality that they only intended to describe and explain. But then we fell into a terrible trap: we identified so much as to become prisoners of our own theoretical creations, and for a long time only suffering reigned, without us being able to hear the precious and clear alarm signal of pain.

PUPIL. A bit like as if suffering prevented us from being clear minded and to analyze reality with the proper discernment?

MENTOR. Yes, but in the long run, in spite of the tormented road of suffering, or maybe because of it, some of us ended up, willingly or not, receiving the message and pulled our finger away from the pin. In time, many of our false theories crumbled as a consequence of a prolonged friction with the unflappable reality of all that exists.

PUPIL. Opening us up to the possibility of the second method?

MENTOR. Exactly, because the second method consists of not anymore mistaking pain and suffering, distinguishing between our internal reality (our theories) and our external reality.

PUPIL. But before possessing an intellectual mind we already knew how to do this. So what did we gain by all this suffering?

MENTOR. The mastering of our intellectual mind: the most sophisticated and advanced instrument available at present. An instrument so powerful that at first we could not control, but can

now learn to make it function properly, if that is in fact what we want to do.

PUPIL. Thus, using properly our intellect would mean to reacquire the true meaning of pain, without indulging in suffering anymore.

MENTOR. You said it well. However, there is more to it: the recognition of the constructive role of pain and subsequent disidentification from the content of our theories of reality, open us up to the possibility of a third evolutionary method, even more advanced: the one of *scientific self-research*.

## CHAPTER SUMMARY

*Time only exists in our false theories of reality.*

*The past and the future are only records: energetic forms in continuous evolution, expressions of our theories of reality.*

*Recently on the evolutionary scale, we have added new elements to our theories of reality, conceived by the powerful instrument of our intellectual mind. Elements so vivid and significant that they have been mistaken for that very same reality they were only meant to simulate.*

*Through the mechanism of identification we have lost the capacity to discern between that which is internal (our theories of reality) and that which is external (reality), distorting the cognitive value of pain and transforming our life into a long road of suffering.*

*We can distinguish three evolutionary methods. The first is based on suffering, as a consequence of identifying with our false theories of reality. The second, more advanced, is based upon the possibility of correcting our false theories quickly, every time the signal of pain offers us the possibility. The third, even more advanced, is scientific self-research.*

## 6. SCIENCE

*Science is a human activity based on experience whose purpose is to understand reality through the construction of critical theories able to explain it.*

PUPIL. Can you talk with me about this third method, scientific self-research?

MENTOR. It's an approach that is based on a correct understanding and application of the so-called *scientific method*.

PUPIL. Do you mean to tell me that the only ones applying this method are men of science?

MENTOR. Unfortunately, it isn't so. As strange as it may seem, there are few scientists that possess a clear understanding of what it means to do true science.

PUPIL. Aren't you being a little drastic?

MENTOR. It's a realization of mine based on the fact that many scientists have never, in the course of their training, thoroughly studied those principles that permit them to qualify a knowledge as scientific, distinguishing it from a knowledge only apparently or potentially scientific. Moreover, most men of science have not yet begun to transform their research into *self-research*.

PUPIL. If I understand right, even though they are researchers by profession, they don't bother to question their own personal beliefs.

MENTOR. Exactly, and this explains why even today their research programs are based on visions that are shortsighted and



extremely conflicting. Visions that have produced a fragmented and incomplete body of knowledge whose applications have transformed this beautiful planet into a real garbage dump in orbit.

PUPIL. How can we make things better?

MENTOR. By everybody becoming good self-researchers. This is the goal that everyone will reach sooner or later: it's only a matter of time. We can delay for a while our realization of it, but the day will arrive in which we will surrender to the evidence of what we really are.

PUPIL. And what are we?

MENTOR. Creators of theories of reality, continually exploring and reshaping that big everything that we are part of.

PUPIL. Therefore, wanting to or not, we are all apprentices in science.

MENTOR. That's right. We all possess complex theories of reality through which we describe, explain, evaluate, translate and predict those phenomena that we continually experience. Theories that we use as maps to orient ourselves, to act and create in our lives. When we use the *first method*, our theories change slowly, mechanically, because of the prolonged battle with the undefeatable reality. When we use the *second method*, we awaken from a long sleep and again react quickly to the stimulus of pain, correcting our distorted vision at every opportunity. When in the end we reach the *third method*, we are the ones to take the initiative, to assume the properly active role in this long process of rectification, deepening, expansion and refinement of our theories.

PUPIL. I was just reflecting: the first method is of a passive type, the second is essentially neutral, while the third is active.

MENTOR. Yes, with the third method we reach the full evolutionary efficiency. We do not wait anymore for reality to provide the occasions to correct our theories, but it is we, ourselves, that create our opportunities to change, like scientists

that autonomously conceive their own laboratory tests. In this way, we re-search actively, freely and systematically for all the errors that still hide in our belief systems, generating an impressive acceleration of our consciencial evolution.

PUPIL. And what would be our research laboratory?

MENTOR. Entire reality!

PUPIL. If I understand well, we should transform our life into an immense research program directed towards the advancement of our personal theories of reality.

MENTOR. It's not that we have to do it, because in fact we are already doing it. Wanting to or not, we are already exploring the content of our reality, even though most of the time without any criteria. However, if we become aware of our status as apprentices in science, we can adopt more advanced research methods. And the most advanced method today available on the planet is the scientific one.

PUPIL. I would like to know more about the scientific method. I only have a vague memory of it.

MENTOR. It's very simple. First, can you tell me what *science* is?

PUPIL. Well, a human activity!

MENTOR. No doubt about that. The animals, for example, don't do science, as scientific activity needs an intellectual mind which is still in the embryonic form in the animal kingdom. What else?

PUPIL. Science, I believe, is an activity dedicated to the discovery of demonstrable and indisputable truths, precisely called scientific truths.

MENTOR. This is a cliché that describes precisely what science is not. The distinctive characteristic of science is not its infallibility, but rather the opposite: its fallibility!

PUPIL. A very astonishing statement. Explain yourself better.

MENTOR. Let's go by steps. Beginning with, the term "science"

has its origin in the Latin *scire*, which means *to know*.

PUPIL. Science is therefore a human activity whose goal is knowledge.

MENTOR. Yes, this is a possible definition, even though a bit too vague. More precisely, we can say that science is a human activity based on *experience*, whose main goal is to *understand* reality through the formulation of *theories* – called *scientific* – able to *explain* it. This activity makes use of a particular method of *critical* nature: the *scientific method*.

PUPIL. A nice great definition, I would say. However, I didn't understand much. Can you give me an example?

MENTOR. To explain to you what scientific theories are, and in which way they *evolve* through the *scientific method* (or reasoning), I will tell you the story of a chicken<sup>7</sup>.

PUPIL. A chicken? You just finished saying that animals don't do science.

MENTOR. I'm talking about a metaphoric, anthropomorphic chicken, representing the human being trying to understand the laws that govern the world. Are you willing to imagine yourself being that chicken for a moment?

PUPIL. If it's really necessary.

MENTOR. Imagine that the farmer where you live gives you good food every day.

PUPIL. Yum, yum!

MENTOR. Suppose also that you are gifted with a good sense of observation thanks to which you are able to see that this action was repeated for ten consecutive days.

PUPIL. Do you mean to tell me that for ten days the farmer was concerned enough to bring me food?

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<sup>7</sup> Here it's talking about the famous chicken of Bertrand Russel, the English mathematician, philosopher and logician. Russel that is, not the chicken!

MENTOR. That's right. But because he is not the mother hen, that used to take care of you and nourish you, his behavior presents you with a *problem*.

PUPIL. What problem?

MENTOR. Being able to explain the motives of his action.

PUPIL. Why should I?

MENTOR. Because your own survival could depend on his behavior, or simply because you are a very curious chicken. How would you go about it?

PUPIL. I think I would fry my brain trying to figure out why he acts that way.

MENTOR. And to do that you would probably place the data of your observation in a wider explanatory frame, made from that body of ideas and beliefs to which you usually refer, as a chicken, to explain reality.

PUPIL. Do you mean to say the set of my theories of reality?

MENTOR. Yes, and particularly those theories that determine your general vision of the world: a wide conceptual reference frame called *paradigm*.

PUPIL. And what does my paradigm of the chicken say?

MENTOR. It says, for example, whoever offers food is always full of good-natured thoughts. Beginning with this general assumption, you can suppose that the food offered daily by the farmer is reflective of an expression of love, as it was in the case of mother hen.

PUPIL. My theory would be then that the farmer loves me.

MENTOR. Exactly and this is just the kind of explanation that you were looking for. Now you are able not only to understand his behavior but also to *predict* what his future behavior might be. Do you have any ideas?

PUPIL. I imagine that if he loves me, he would bring good food to me *every day*.

MENTOR. A prediction that is a logical consequence of the explanation contained in your theory. Suppose now that you receive food from the farmer for another fifty days. What can you tell me at this point of your theory?

PUPIL. The fifty new observational data added to the previous ten agree perfectly with my prediction, therefore with the assumption that the farmer loves me. I believe then that I can conclude that my theory has been somehow *verified*.

MENTOR. Do you mean to say that the new observations have made your theory truer?

PUPIL. Yes, more reliable, more probable.

MENTOR. Unfortunately, this is a very widespread opinion, still taught today in many schoolbooks. But it is a serious error of evaluation.

PUPIL. I don't understand, which kind of error?

MENTOR. An error linked to the false belief of the existence of a systematic and unambiguous method to extrapolate observational data in reliable theories<sup>8</sup>.

PUPIL. If what you say is true, you should be able to show me that I made a mistake.

MENTOR. Nothing would be easier: you just have to wait until the sixty-first day.

PUPIL. What happens that is so important on the sixty-first day?

MENTOR. Every day, for sixty days, the farmer brought you good food. But on the sixty-first day something new happens: he breaks your neck!

PUPIL. I knew I should not have played the chicken! In any case, what does this prove?

MENTOR. That the majority of the observations that you have accumulated in favor of your theory have not increased its truth

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<sup>8</sup> In epistemology this is the well-known *problem of induction*, which has been solved by the philosopher Karl Popper.

value.

PUPIL. Is this because in the end it proved to be false?

MENTOR. Exactly. On the sixty-first day, you had to face a new observation, which consists of a *critical experiment* for your theory.

PUPIL. Not only for my theory, but also for my neck!

MENTOR. You are right, but seeing that the chicken was totally identified with his false theory, the farmer broke the neck of both.

PUPIL. Don't tell me now that the farmer did it only to obey the principle of action-reaction.

MENTOR. That's right. With his theories, the chicken tried to negate the real motivations of the farmer, which were obviously very different from those more loving of the mother hen. That is why he received a repercussion from reality through the critical experiment on the sixty-first day.

PUPIL. I don't believe I understand. Why do you speak of repercussion? As far as I know, the farmer would have pulled off his neck anyway, in spite of what he believed.

MENTOR. Are you sure? What does a chicken do that believes blindly in his master's love? Does it run away at the first opportunity or does it remain pecking away in its pen? Does it hide every time that it sees the farmer or does it run to him trustingly in search of food?

PUPIL. I understand, if the chicken had not believed in his false theory, he would probably still be alive now.

MENTOR. Unfortunately, with his false beliefs he negated other possibilities and therefore reality (disguised as the farmer) reacted by *falsifying* his belief and part of the paradigm in which he believed.

PUPIL. But now that he's dead he won't have the possibility to correct his theory anymore.

MENTOR. Maybe he will do it in another life. In any case, other

chickens on the farm, his companions in adventure, could have observed the critical experiment and corrected their paradigm of reference.

PUPIL. More than companions in adventure, I would call it a misadventure.

MENTOR. Yes, but tell me: if you were one of them, which new theory would you elaborate on the farmer?

PUPIL. Without a doubt my new theory would assert that farmers are beings with strong chicken-cide tendencies.

MENTOR. A good tentative explanation, but incomplete. Your new theory does not explain why the farmer amuses himself feeding the chickens before he kills them. In other words, you are now facing another problem: a lack of proper explanation for the apparently paradoxical behavior of the farmer, which first feeds and takes care of you and then pulls your neck off.

PUPIL. I imagine that to solve this new problem us chickens had better come up with some more advanced theories.

MENTOR. Yes, more complex and articulate explanations, able to solve the apparent contradiction in the behavior of the farmer. We can suppose for example that after an intense activity of research two opposing theories are debated among the chicken community. According to the first, the farmer doesn't kill because of killer instinct, but rather to satisfy an alimentary need, and if he nourishes the chickens before he kills them it is because he is constrained to obey a commandment of god Chickenel, that forbids humans to feast on chicks that are too young or too skinny.

PUPIL. More than a theory, it seems like a superstition.

MENTOR. We humans cultivate something very similar in some of our religious beliefs.

PUPIL. You're right, maybe we're not that much more advanced than those chickens. But you said there was another theory.

MENTOR. Another group of chickens, less susceptible to the

easy idolatry, have created the following explanation: the farmers kill the chickens to eat them, and if they nourish them first it is because if they are fat they taste better and there is more meat to eat.

PUPIL. This other theory is similar to the previous in the first part, but it's different in its explanation on why the nourishment from the farmer.

MENTOR. Exactly, and if the two theories are competing it is because they are both compatible with how much the chickens were able to observe up until that moment.

PUPIL. But that one on god Chickenel seems a bit pulled by the hair, or should I say feathers. Nobody ever met that guy.

MENTOR. That doesn't mean that he doesn't exist.

PUPIL. Ok, but other chickens can invent other stories, just as much compatible with the observed facts. Stories that instead of Chickenel could contemplate other invented entities, that nobody ever met. Isn't there a risk of multiplication of explanations beyond necessity?

MENTOR. The risk is real, that's well understood, especially as long as the chickens don't assume a more critical attitude regarding their theories of reality.

PUPIL. New experiments would be needed to determine which of the two theories is the right one.

MENTOR. Not the right one, but the wrong one. Unfortunately, because of their conditions, the chickens don't have easy access to new experimental data to solve the argument between the two competing theories.

PUPIL. If only god Chickenel would appear...

MENTOR. Yeah, but it seems he never had and probably never will.

PUPIL. Couldn't they simply just ask the farmer why he does what he does?

MENTOR. That's an idea, but because of the obvious language



problem I don't think the communication would be very easy.

PUPIL. What else can they do?

MENTOR. They can reason and discuss it among themselves, in a critical way. By doing so, the brighter could realize that it's perfectly useless and counterproductive to multiply explanations to the utmost. Because in this way the problems multiply too.

PUPIL. In what way do the problems multiply?

MENTOR. The theory that mentions god Chickenel, even if it resolves one problem, it creates an even bigger one from the beginning. In fact, even if it can explain the reasons for the behavior of the farmer, now one would have to explain the reason for the behavior of Chickenel. Why does he do what he does? Does he ever change his ideas? Isn't that a hypothetical god of the humans, Humanel, will come one day and eat Chickenel, so that in the future even the little chicks will become food for the humans?

PUPIL. I understand, the reality of the chickens is much more complicated with the theory of Chickenel.

MENTOR. But this complication is not necessary. The second theory, which considers the fatter a chicken the more able it is to feed a human, explains in a way that is just as exhaustive the behavior of the farmer, without the need to introduce new imaginary entities.

PUPIL. Therefore, unless there came out some evidence in favor of the existence of Chickenel, all the chickens would end up adopting this second theory.

MENTOR. Yes, because it's the only one able to survive a serious rational criticism, as it explains the observed phenomena with the due simplicity, coherence, and without the need to invent on purpose new entities of which we know absolutely nothing about and, thus, we should not even talk. But it is to be expected that the process will neither be prompt nor painless. The chickenelian priests may not be so compliant in

letting go of their beliefs and all the related benefits. In any case, let us leave it up to the chickens the burden of bringing up-to-date their belief systems or, to say it better, their process of *scientific research*.

PUPIL. I thought the scientific method was something more complicated.

MENTOR. No, it is not. The process of scientific investigation always begins with a *problem* that you want to solve, made of an ensemble of ideas, (beliefs, theories, paradigms) which you consider to be inadequate to explain the observed phenomena and that you want to replace with more appropriate ideas, that is to say, theories that are more advanced. In other words, scientific research is nothing but a *problem-solving* process.

PUPIL. If I have understood well, the motor of scientific research would always be a problem due to a lack of explanations.

MENTOR. To a lack of explanations or, more simply, to the presence of explanations which are insufficient, incomplete, inadequate. Stimulated by this cognitive vacuum the scientists propose new theories, that is new explanations, more complete and better articulated. New *conjectures* that shall be brought to the test through new critical experiments.

PUPIL. Why *critical*?

MENTOR. The adjective “critical” has its origin in the Greek word *kritikós*, which in turn comes from *krisis* (crisis) which means *choice*. A critical experiment is therefore a test that confronts the different competing theories with reality, letting you make a choice.

PUPIL. The which, I imagine, will fall on the theory that better adapts to the experimental facts.

MENTOR. Exactly, seeing that scientific theories not only have to pass tests of a logico-rational nature, validating their degree of consistency and explanatory power, but would also have to be *confirmed* through experimental tests, of a practical nature.

PUPIL. Confirmation but not demonstration, right?

MENTOR. Right. Scientific theories are leading-edge relative truths: their validity is always and only temporary.

PUPIL. And this is because the famous scientific proof doesn't exist.

MENTOR. To confirm doesn't mean to prove.

PUPIL. But often you read in the papers that a certain theory has been scientifically proved.

MENTOR. This shows that many journalists, in company with many scientists, have not sufficiently studied the essence of the scientific process.

PUPIL. Yet, all you would have to do is tell them the little story of the chicken: they would understand right away that no matter how many times the farmer shows his affection by bringing good food, that doesn't mean he will love you forever.

MENTOR. As is evidenced by the fact that because of its false theory the chicken ended up losing his head.

PUPIL. Then what happens? When the critical tests have allowed the choice of the winning theory, or theories, does the process stop?

MENTOR. Obviously not. The choice is always and however temporary. Unfailingly, new and more advanced theories will always be presented, with the goal of explaining reality even better and more deeply. It has to do with a process which, until proven to the contrary, is without end. By the way, I don't know if you noticed, but that which we have described is entirely comparable to an evolutionary process, guided by a principle of natural selection.

PUPIL. And which would be the organisms in evolution?

MENTOR. The scientific theories.

PUPIL. Do you mean that scientific theories undergo variations and selections similar to those of biological evolution of the organisms?

MENTOR. Scientific theories are none other than *organic*

*complexes of knowledge* that express our best explanations of reality. As far as organisms, they have to confront and adapt to the surrounding environment, which is exactly that reality they are trying to comprehend.

PUPIL. And this evolutionary confrontation between theories and reality would be through tests of a critical nature?

MENTOR. Yes, significant experiences able to put in evidence possible incompatibilities.

PUPIL. That is those aspects of the theory that negate reality?

MENTOR. I see that you understand. The critical tests (both practical and logico-rational) form a sort of filter that the different theoretical structures have to pass through to be able to evolve. Those that can make it through the filter survive and mutate into more advanced theories. The other ones instead, those that are irreparably false or unlikely to be amended, end up being extinguished.

PUPIL. Just like living organisms!

MENTOR. We're not talking about a mere coincidence. As I've already mentioned, our biological organism is an entity of a cognitive type that evolves by constantly exchanging information with the outside and consequently adapting its very structure, that is to say its own theory of reality.

PUPIL. That's why you felt compelled to say the entire physical body is like a mind.

MENTOR. Exactly, a physical mind that in turn is part of a greater mind that embraces dimensions of emotional and intellectual nature. A vast and complex multidimensional construct in continuous evolution, to which we can give the name of *holotheory*<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> The Greek prefix "holo" means "whole".

## CHAPTER SUMMARY

*Science is a human activity that is based on experience, whose purpose is to understand reality through the formulation of theories able to explain it. To do so, we use a method of critical nature, called scientific method.*

*The motor of scientific research is always a problem resulting from a lack of explanations.*

*Scientific theories are leading-edge relative truths: their validity is always and only temporary.*

*The famous scientific proof does not exist.*

*Scientific theories undergo variations and selections similar to those of biological evolution of the organisms.*

*Scientific theories are organic complexes of knowledge that express our best explanation of reality.*

*The critical tests (both practical and logico-rational) form a sort of a filter that theories have to pass through to be able to evolve.*

*Our biological organism is comparable to an entity of a cognitive type: a mind that evolves exchanging information with the outside and consequently adapting its very structure.*

*Our physical mind is part of a greater mind that embraces dimensions of emotional and intellectual nature: a vast multidimensional construct in continuous evolution, called holothory.*

## 7. HS<sup>3</sup>

*If we don't promote the investigation of our theories of reality, then reality will unfailingly do it, with a much less pleasant effect.*

PUPIL. Would what you have described to me be the so-called process of scientific research?

MENTOR. Yes, the process of evolution of our theories of reality, regulated by an advanced evolutionary mechanism of *critical* nature, which uses both experimental and logico-rational instruments, with the goal of identifying and eliminating theories that adapt badly to reality (because they negate it) and replace them with more compatible, more advanced theories, at least until new evidence to the contrary.

PUPIL. And in that sense the scientific method would be similar to the mechanism of natural selection in the evolution of living organisms?

MENTOR. Right on the dot.

PUPIL. But if this is true, then even a dog would be applying, in its way, the scientific method, because even a dog would be evolving its canine theories of reality, through a mechanism of adaptation to the exterior environment.

MENTOR. You're right, a dog uses pain as a cognitive instrument to adapt to reality. Every time it perceives a discomfort, it instinctively reacts, automatically correcting its own theories of reality.

PUPIL. Then, pain for it would be the equivalent of a critical

test?

MENTOR. The pain is a sensory response that it receives as a result of a critical test which permits it to point out the incompatibility between its holothory and reality. Thanks to the response of pain, the dog can harmonize in an efficacious way with its environment, correcting little by little its errors of interpretation. However, a dog doesn't promote its critical experiments in a conscious way: its evolution is mostly mechanical and reactive. A scientist instead, different from a dog, besides using the logico-rational criticism, is also able to design and perform his own tests in a conscious way. So you can conclude that the essential difference between a dog and a scientist lies in the fact that the first applies the scientific method passively, unconsciously and partially, while the second applies it in an active and fully conscious way.

PUPIL. And complete as well.

MENTOR. No, that no. The scientist, like the dog, applies the scientific method only partially, incompletely.

PUPIL. What do you mean to say?

MENTOR. Do you remember the three evolutionary methods?

PUPIL. Of course: the first is based on suffering, the second on pain and the third... how was it?

MENTOR. The third method is also based on pain, but in an active modality.

PUPIL. Ah yes, the essence of the third method is to search for the truth in an active way, instead of a passive way as in the first method, or in a neutral way as in the second.

MENTOR. Allow me to correct you: it is not about searching for the truth, but rather for the *falsity*.

PUPIL. And what would be the truth?

MENTOR. I can't tell you what truth is. However, I do know instead what a *relative truth* is.

PUPIL. And that is?

MENTOR. A relative truth is a theory that makes up the best available explanation (or one of the best explanations in the case of coexisting theories) for that given set of phenomena to which the theory refers to.

PUPIL. Couldn't we say then that the absolute, non-relative truth would be the whole reality?

MENTOR. We could say that, but we would be doing nothing more than define a perfect synonym of the word "truth", without adding anything to our comprehension of what it is.

PUPIL. But in time our theories of reality, in their evolution, will include always greater parts of reality. Can we not therefore hypothesize that they will end up converging into a final immense holothory, a faithful and articulate explanation of reality as a whole, that is by definition the truth?

MENTOR. Naturally, you can define anything you want to. However, there is no guarantee that a final holothory, isomorphic to the whole reality, could ever be constructed. It has to do with a problem of coherence and convergence that is very complicated! In any case, what is most important is that we can progress in our discovery of always more advanced relative truths through a systematic process of double-negation, which is, negating those theories that negate reality. And this is the essence of the scientific-evolutionary process.

PUPIL. Returning to the comparison between the dog and the scientist, is it correct to say that the scientist applies a more advanced scientific method than that of the dog?

MENTOR. In a certain way yes, because his investigation is not only active, but also conscious.

PUPIL. But you also said that similar to the dog the scientist is not applying the scientific method in a complete way.

MENTOR. To apply the scientific method in a complete way means to apply the third evolutionary method, something that a scientist of our era rarely does.

PUPIL. And what does he do?



MENTOR. Like the majority of *Homo sapiens sapiens*, he mostly uses the first method.

PUPIL. How can you say such a thing?

MENTOR. I remind you that most of the scientists on this planet suffer.

PUPIL. That's true, they suffer in their life just like the rest of the people.

MENTOR. If they suffer, they are still using the first method.

PUPIL. If I understand well, what the modern scientists are missing is recognizing the *critical role of pain*.

MENTOR. That's right. Modern scientists are able to promote in an active and conscious way very specific and advanced research, but they haven't yet learned how to boost a true – three hundred and sixty degrees – investigation. Having lost along the way the critical instrument of pain, their scientific research has not yet transformed into *scientific self-research*.

PUPIL. What should they do then according to you?

MENTOR. They don't *have to* do anything, but surely they *could do* something. For example, they could add the test of pain to the artillery of their cognitive tools. The pain's test is the only one in fact that can reveal with efficiency and efficacy the presence of false theories of reality. Only when this powerful critical instrument returns to be fully operative (but unlike a dog in a fully conscious way) can we confirm that a researcher is applying the third evolutionary method, that of *scientific self-research*. A method the practice of which will lead to a gradual and systematic elimination of suffering in the life of every individual of this planet.

PUPIL. You're talking about putting an end to suffering?

MENTOR. You're exactly right. The man who besides knowing also knows that he knows is the so-called *Homo sapiens sapiens*. But it's not enough to know that you know, because, as you know, not all knowledge is the same.

PUPIL. Some knowledge being better than other?

MENTOR. Not better in the sense of a judgment of value, but simply more advanced, more evolved and more compatible with reality.

PUPIL. More than “knowing that you know” it would therefore be desirable “to know that you know the more advanced knowledge”.

MENTOR. Exactly. And he that knows the more advanced knowledge we could classify as *Homo sapiens sapiens sapiens* – a triple sapiens! – or better yet, as *Homo sapiens sapiens scientificus*.<sup>10</sup>

PUPIL. Which we could anagrammatize as  $Hs^3$ .

MENTOR. A great idea.

PUPIL. But how can the  $Hs^3$  know that his knowledge is the most advanced?

MENTOR. He knows it because he has carried out a critical and self-critical investigation of reality that has allowed him to adopt, based on the most advanced scientific criteria, those that are the leading-edge relative truths. In other words, thanks to his scientific research and self-research, he is able to establish with reasonable certainty that his knowledge is among the most advanced available today.

PUPIL. So the  $Hs^3$ , unlike the  $Hs^2$ , would make full use of the scientific method.

MENTOR. That is because he added to his critical variables the fundamental one of pain. With this simple addition the instrument of suffering, the so-called first method, becomes completely obsolete for the  $Hs^3$ .

PUPIL. It's hard for me to imagine a life without suffering, not to speak of a world without suffering!

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<sup>10</sup> Naturally, we are using here in a very free and creative way the usual scientific classification.

MENTOR. A world without suffering is a world populated by mature consciousnesses able to master in a lucid and critical way their own evolution.

PUPIL. An incredible goal.

MENTOR. It's not so far away. We are not lacking in anything to make that next evolutionary leap and add a little "s" to our acronym.

PUPIL. If we're not lacking in anything then why don't we do it?

MENTOR. Some are already doing it.

PUPIL. And who would they be?

MENTOR. Common people, that do not necessarily possess a specific scientific pedigree. People who have sufficiently suffered and now desire a more advanced knowledge. People that want to take responsibility and understand how their own relationship with reality works. People like you and me!

## *CHAPTER SUMMARY*

*Because of their failure to recognize the critical role of pain, modern scientists (with some exceptions) have not yet transformed their research into self-research. This explains why they suffer in their lives just like the majority of people do.*

*Only by repossessing the critical instrument of pain can we practice the more advanced method of scientific self-research which, inevitably, will lead us to a gradual and systematic elimination of the suffering in our lives.*

*A self-researcher is a lucid consciousness that searches actively, freely and systematically for all the errors that are hiding in its own belief system.*

## 8. CRITERIA

*Every statement on reality that by its own construction cannot be proved wrong is an irremediably unscientific theory.*

PUPIL. I'm perplexed. I have the impression that any theory that is in agreement with reality, in the sense that it doesn't negate it in an evident way, is in fact a scientific theory, if not until proven to the contrary.

MENTOR. This is a point that maybe we haven't clarified enough. Even if not being necessarily scientific, a theory that doesn't manifestly negate reality is nonetheless *potentially scientific*. This is because *strictu sensu* it's not possible to exclude that someday it may become.

PUPIL. What happens when a theory passes from the status of potentially scientific to that of fully scientific: does it become more true?

MENTOR. The theories never become more true. As I tried to explain to you, there does not exist in science a process of verification, but only a process of falsification, or of temporary confirmation.

PUPIL. So what distinguishes a scientific theory from a theory that is only potentially scientific?

MENTOR. To have passed successfully a certain number of *scientific criteria*.

PUPIL. Which would be?

MENTOR. There is no unanimity between scientists and

philosophers on the number and nature of criteria that allow demarcating a scientific knowledge from a knowledge that is only potentially scientific. However, the most important are without a doubt agreed upon by the majority of the theoreticians of science.

PUPIL. Which do you hold as being most relevant?

MENTOR. Being *open to criticism* in a broad sense. A theory, to be called scientific, must be criticizable by means of reasoning, argumentation, reflection, analysis and discussions (logico-rational criticism), and through a comparison of his predictions with empirical data (experimental criticism). Scientific theories are in fact systems that to evolve need to be open to a dialectic confrontation with reality and be vulnerable to the process of *falsification*.

PUPIL. Can you give me an example of a theory that is not open to criticism?

MENTOR. Evidently all theories are, by themselves, open to logico-rational criticism, even though according to the historico-geographical context such exercises can become quite delicate, if not impossible. An example is what happened at the times of the Catholic “holy” inquisition, during which the thinkers who were too critical regarding the orthodox theories risked simply to burn at the stake. But apart from the attempted oppression of critical thought (unfortunately ever present on this planet) not all theories are necessarily open to a criticism of an experimental type. For example, every statement on reality that by its own construction cannot be proved wrong, is a theory that is not experimentally criticizable, therefore unfalsifiable, and in such sense irremediably non-scientific. A typical case is the one of *solipsism*, which says that all of what an individual experiments is just a projection of his intellectual mind. According to this theory, you would not possess an autonomous existence, but you would be only a production of my thoughts.

PUPIL. I assure you that I exist.

MENTOR. No, you are only a projection of mine that affirms it

exists. You do not really exist apart from me, outside of my thinking mind.

PUPIL. I understand, it would be very difficult for such a theory to ever be refuted.

MENTOR. You cannot falsify it through an experimental test, but you can exclude it. Not because it is manifestly false, but because it is manifestly inadequate to *explain* reality.

PUPIL. Inadequate in what sense?

MENTOR. In the sense that it does not say for what reason you, that are just a projection of my mind, act as if you were not. The solipsist theory is a sort of superstructure that does not add anything to our understanding of reality. It should therefore be discarded because it does not satisfy one of the most important scientific criteria: *explicative power*. To be called scientific, a theory should be able to *explain* the observational data in the most complete and precise possible way.

PUPIL. Can you give me another example of a theory that lacks explicative power?

MENTOR. *Materialism*.

PUPIL. That's interesting, I always thought that materialism formed the very foundation of scientific knowledge.

MENTOR. A very shaky foundation. Materialism, in its usual meaning, is absolutely not able to explain the multidimensional nature of the reality that we experience, both at the personal level and in the laboratories. But that is a vast topic which if you agree we will talk about at another moment.

PUPIL. Agreed. Therefore, scientific theories are open to criticism, both rational and experimental (falsifiability), and possess sufficient explicative power.

MENTOR. Exactly. However, I would like to underline that although falsifiability is one of the fundamental criteria of science, the demand to possess sufficient explicative power is not any less important. Many theories are discarded not because

they are incompatible with experimental data, but simply because they are too weak in cognitive content. In other words, they are discarded because they do not explain much of anything!

PUPIL. Can you give me another example?

MENTOR. According to my own personal theory, the best way to get rid of a migraine is to jump out with a parachute at exactly the altitude of 3500 meters, right after eating four good servings of whatever kind of apple pie. What do you think, does that sound like a scientific theory?

PUPIL. That sounds really stupid to me.

MENTOR. Nevertheless, my theory is definitely open to experimental criticism and has, as far as I know, not been proven false unto this day.

PUPIL. Who would even bother to put your theory to the test? It doesn't make any sense!

MENTOR. I can't tell you if it makes any sense or not. I think it might even work.

PUPIL. And why is that?

MENTOR. That's the point: I don't know! And that's exactly why nobody tries out my theory.

PUPIL. Because it doesn't have explanations?

MENTOR. Exactly. My theory makes a certain prediction, but doesn't say anything about the why of the prediction. That's why every respected scientist would throw it out, judging it (at least temporarily) as non-scientific and unworthy of further investigation.

PUPIL. Otherwise we risk losing our time putting to the test all kinds of stupidity.

MENTOR. Yes, we have better things to do.

PUPIL. In substance, your theory would be discarded because it would not withstand a serious rational criticism.



MENTOR. Yes, falsifiability is not enough to confer the scientific label to a theory. To merit such it must also be able to explain reality. Predictions with no explanations are theories that have no foundation which, rationally speaking, we can do none other than to discard them.

PUPIL. Even if the predictions are correct?

MENTOR. Why should we weigh down our cognitive baggage with predictions that are without foundation? For sure they don't help us to understand reality, nor to relate to it in a more harmonious way. Predictions without foundation have a name: *superstitions*.

PUPIL. Can you give me another example of pseudoscientific theories, without foundation?

MENTOR. There is a theory that says that all the emeralds of the earth are *greenellow* in color, that is *green* until the *first of January 2087*, but after that date they will all turn *yellow*.

PUPIL. That seems unsustainable.

MENTOR. Why?

PUPIL. Because it's obviously false.

MENTOR. You cannot say that. All the experimental data at our disposition today, and I can assure you that they are numerous, unflinching confirm the validity of the theory. All the emeralds of the earth are in fact of a greenellow color, until proven to the contrary.

PUPIL. But they are also green!

MENTOR. You're right, there are two competing theories, one that says emeralds are greenellow and the other that they are green. Both are confirmed by the same experimental data.

PUPIL. But the theory that emeralds are greenellow cannot be true!

MENTOR. No theory ever is.

PUPIL. I mean to say: it's surely false!

MENTOR. You cannot say that, at least not yet. Logically speaking, the theory can be proven false only in 2087. What do we do in the meantime: shall we teach it in the schools as an alternative theory?

PUPIL. That would be irresponsible.

MENTOR. Why?

PUPIL. Because what you say isn't reasonable.

MENTOR. Why wouldn't it be?

PUPIL. I have never seen an emerald suddenly change color, and even more so I do not see how it could happen to all the emeralds of the earth at the same time. On top of that, why in 2087 and not in 2088? No, I don't have any reason to believe in this theory.

MENTOR. That's the point: *there are no reasons*. Even if being compatible with the data of our experience of reality, the theory doesn't explain anything about its predictions. The which, by the way, would constitute an unexplainable and dramatic anomaly in our knowledge of the physics of crystals and more generally of physics in itself. A respectable scientific theory has to always start with explanations and from these are derived its predictions. In other words, the predictions have always to follow the explanations.

PUPIL. Otherwise anybody could say anything!

MENTOR. Exactly. Unfortunately, since our childhood we are bombarded with messages about reality that are equivalent to superstitions, that is theories that are totally lacking in explicative power. These pseudo theories, because they are difficult to prove false from the experimental point of view, end up conditioning our lives and darkening our capacity to explore critically reality. And yet, already from the first years of life, we humans express our critical sense towards all that we still don't know or desire to comprehend. Isn't it typical of children to "pester" adults with a simple yet penetrating question: "*Why?*"

PUPIL. The so-called *age of why!*

MENTOR. An age that could never have an end. Unfortunately, the spontaneous, and spontaneously critic, investigation of children is often cut short at birth. In fact, it's not unusual to hear an impatient, or even irritated adult, close the mouth of a child with "Because that's the way it is!" By responding in this way, the adult negates reality, or better tries to negate it.

PUPIL. What reality are you referring to?

MENTOR. That which is expressed by the intelligence of the child. An intelligence yet to be conditioned, in complete contact with reality, if you can say it like that. But because reality doesn't let itself be negated, the child (which is part of the reality of the adult) quickly fires back, shooting even more aggressively with another "Why?"

PUPIL. But in the end the whys cease.

MENTOR. For reasons of survival, the child adjusts to the level of the family's ignorance. A child is not an adult. It is not able to face the environment in which it lives without the protection of the parents or whoever has its care. It knows very well that it is to his best interest, if it wants to survive, to harmonize with its protectors, avoiding as much as possible all forms of outer conflict. That's why it ends up extinguishing its cheeky curiosity, convincing itself that the facts of life don't necessarily need an explanation.

PUPIL. In this way though, it ends up negating reality, by negating its own intelligence.

MENTOR. This is the price to pay to be able to survive, grow and reach the full autonomy of adult age. Fortunately, if you can say so, the process of negation of one's own intelligence produces a growing suffering that will permit the child, once he has become an adult, to reawaken and return to ask its fundamental and critical whys.

PUPIL. Opening himself up to scientific self-research?

MENTOR. Exactly.

PUPIL. I was thinking: a little is true though.

MENTOR. What are you referring to?

PUPIL. The fact that things are the way they are, and as such don't need an explanation.

MENTOR. You see, when you observe whatever entity, you can always point out two levels. The first is that of the *structure*. For example, a table is a physical entity whose structure is formed by a horizontal plain lying upon four vertical elements, called legs. When you describe the structure of a table, you can obviously say that it is what it is, simply because it is, namely because such is the data of your observation. However, when a child asks "Why does the table have four legs?", its question begins with an observation that goes down deeper, beyond the structure on the first level. The child's intuition tells it that in reality everything changes and that the table is not only a *structure* but also and above all a *process*. That's why it asks: "What gave that form to the table? Why was it created with four legs and not with three or even with two? Why is it made from that material?" To explain why the table, as a structure, is what it is, means to explain the process by which the entity table emerges, the laws that govern it, the circumstances that define it and so forth. In other words, when the child asks: "Why the table?", what it's really asking is: "What is the most advanced theory of the table available at present?"

PUPIL. The next time a child asks me something I will take it more seriously.

MENTOR. It would be better.

PUPIL. But, returning to the level of the structure, do you agree that facts are facts and as such don't need an explanation, or theories?

MENTOR. That's a delicate question. When we talk about reality we always use mental representations through which we process our sensorial data. In other words, we communicate, with others and ourselves, the reality of our sensory experiences through a complex cognitive construct, made of physico-energetic, emotional and intellectual elements.

PUPIL. A construct that you have baptized as holothery.

MENTOR. Right, but now I ask you: how can you distinguish a fact from the theory you adopt to give a sense, a meaning, and a place to such a fact in your inner universe?

PUPIL. I'm not sure I understand your question. I am perfectly capable of distinguishing facts from their interpretation. A fact is an objective reality, independent from my speculations, while the explanation of a fact is a sort of superstructure that I superimpose, in fact, to the reality of the facts.

MENTOR. If I understand well, according to you there would exist an objective reality perfectly distinguishable from the subjective reality, or rather from the numerous subjective realities pertaining to the different evolving consciousnesses?

PUPIL. Yes, objective reality would be the one relative to the facts, while the subjective reality would be the one that is relative to the interpretation of the facts, through theories.

MENTOR. Unfortunately, or maybe fortunately, such a distinction between facts (understood as empirical data) and theories (understood as explanations of those facts) cannot be made but in relative terms, and certainly not in absolute terms. Theories are not disassociated from the empirical facts of which they refer to, and in the same way the facts are never "naked and crude facts", but acquire meaning only in relation to the theories of those who experiment them and communicate them. In other words, the so called facts are always and in any case statements full of theory.

PUPIL. Do you want to say that every one of our experiences is "contaminated" by our theories of reality?

MENTOR. In his famous phrase the writer Mark Twain said that for whoever has only a hammer sooner or later everything else will seem like a nail. Our theories of reality are exactly that: instruments that we consciousnesses use to manifest and experiment the reality of which we are part. The impressions that we derive from our interaction with reality inevitably

change according to the instrument that we use, that is the type of theory that we adopt to express such an interaction. That is why we are cognitive entities that manifest in reality through a complex holothory, made apparent through our own bodymind. But our holothory is not only a multidimensional matrix of explanations and meanings that allow us to interpret the data of our experiences: *our holothory is the vehicle itself of our experiences.*

PUPIL. A concrete example would help me.

MENTOR. Consider two consciousnesses of which their physical vehicles are equipped with different visual sensors. The vehicle of the first consciousness has photoreceptors of only one type, which gives it a monochromatic vision, in black and white. The vehicle of the second consciousness has instead different types of photoreceptors, that give it a polychromatic vision, in color. The two vehicles are the manifestations of two distinct “color theories”. A monochromatic theory for the first vehicle, and a polychromatic for the second. For the consciousness owner of the first vehicle the leaves and trunk of a tree, for example, are typically of the same color, and this constitutes for it an undeniable fact. For the consciousness owner of the second vehicle it’s an undeniable fact instead that the leaves and trunk have distinguishable tones. In other words, even if interacting with a same entity – the light radiation emitted by the tree – the two consciousnesses have access to different empirical data, that is different facts (or phenomena).

PUPIL. But what would then be the real objective reality?

MENTOR. Objective reality, if you want to call it like that, is a malleable entity, able to meet the different points of view of the evolving consciousnesses. An entity whose nature is intrinsically *theoretico-practical*, as it’s not possible to distinguish, in the final analysis, the theory from the practice.

PUPIL. But can we not simply say that the consciousnesses filter the objective reality through their vehicles? Isn’t that exactly what happened with the photoreceptors in your example? The

consciousness that has only one type of photoreceptors filters reality in a rougher way compared to the consciousness that has multiple photoreceptors.

MENTOR. Tell me: this objective reality that the two consciousnesses filter through their optical systems, what color is it? Or better, how many are the colors of reality?

PUPIL. I believe they are infinite, even if our eyes can only recognize some of them.

MENTOR. Yes, the physical human eye is able to recognize only a few hundreds of different colors. But how can you know that the colors that our eyes don't see really exist?

PUPIL. I know because, if I remember well, according to the *theory* of color perception that goes back to the pioneering studies of *Isaac Newton*, the different sensations of colors correspond to the different *frequencies* of the waves that reach our eyes.

MENTOR. You said "theory"?

PUPIL. Well, yes

MENTOR. Are you telling me that to say that reality has an infinite amount of different colors you have to refer to a *theory of colors*? I thought that for you the facts were independent from theories.

PUPIL. Well, I could forget about the colors and just simply say that reality emits electromagnetic radiations of different frequencies. In this way, I only refer to physical objective properties, like frequencies, and not subjective ones, like the colors.

MENTOR. And what would be the frequency of a ray of light?

PUPIL. According to the *electromagnetic theory*...

MENTOR. Am I wrong or did you say again the word "theory"?

PUPIL. Darn it!

MENTOR. As you can see our empirical data are full of theories.

Even if it is correct to say that we filter reality through our vehicles, it is just as correct to say, or maybe more correct to say, that through our vehicles, expressions of our theories, we literally construct our reality, or at least part of it.

PUPIL. Even when we share a simple fact, an experience, we are at the same time sharing a theory?

MENTOR. Exactly, there is always an intimate relation between an experience and the set of concepts that we use to communicate it, describe it, explain it, to ourselves and to others. This intimate relationship finds expression in another very important ingredient of scientific theories: *operationalism*.

PUPIL. What is operationalism?

MENTOR. It says that the concepts that form the base of a scientific theory must be defined *in operative terms*, that is, be founded on experience.

PUPIL. Like when I used the test of the oven to define the properties of my body as being burnable?

MENTOR. That's right. The basic idea of operationalism is to define every concept in a clear way through specific *experimental operations*. In this way, the different concepts can be easily understood and shared by everyone. Of course, if you want to investigate all of reality and not only a part of it, it is important to understand the terms "experience", "experimental operations" and "experimental tests" in a wide sense, considering *subjective experiences* of the consciousness as the primary data. Then, the so called *objective experiences* are none other than private experiences shared among the different consciousnesses and commonly recognized as being sufficiently similar. Moreover, it is important not to limit the subjective experiences to those relative to our physical senses, including also those of purely emotional, intellectual, parasensorial nature, and so forth.

PUPIL. I'm a little confused. I thought that scientific theories were by definition *objective theories*, whose goal was to explain



*objective reality.*

MENTOR. And it is: *objectivity* is an important scientific criteria.

PUPIL. But if every experience is not only practical but theoretico-practical, and if every evolving consciousness filters and constructs its own reality in a perfectly subjective way, how can we talk about objectivity?

MENTOR. We can talk about it in terms of *intersubjectivity*. Scientific theories are objectives because they are able to generate *consensus*, accommodating the different subjective visions inside a single coherent scheme, easy to be shared, of intersubjective nature.

PUPIL. However, not everybody adheres to the same beliefs. Not everybody believes in the same theories, as scientific as they may be.

MENTOR. As we have already observed, different competing scientific theories can coexist at the same time. The criteria of objectivity doesn't require that everybody has to share the same theory, but only that it can be shared in line of principle, as it satisfies those criteria that make it eligible to the role (however always and only temporary) of leading-edge relative truth.

PUPIL. Therefore, it is not necessary that there be a factual consensus between the different researchers, but only a *possible consensus*.

MENTOR. Yes, that's it.

PUPIL. Are there other important criteria in science?

MENTOR. Another criteria that we have mentioned only indirectly is that of *compatibility*. This says that scientific theories, although falsifiable, should not be falsified. In other words, they should be compatible with all known facts.

PUPIL. It seems logical to me: a false theory cannot be scientific!

MENTOR. But sometimes it can happen that a theory held as false in the light of certain experimental data becomes then

rehabilitated.

PUPIL. How is that possible?

MENTOR. The experimental data being in their turn full of theories can give place to erroneous interpretations, or simply contain errors, for example of procedure. In this case, contrary to what one would expect, it is the theory that falsifies the facts and not the other way around. Another confirmation that the phenomena of our reality, whether classified as theories or as facts, are always and only hybrid entities, phenomena that are essentially *theoretico-practical* or *practico-theoretical*.

PUPIL. All right, but what can you tell me about the *fact* that a pin pricks? It seems to me to be a statement of a purely practical nature, without theoretical elements.

MENTOR. The “fact” that pins prick is such only because the “theory of that fact” has found numerous confirmations in your personal experience. If you were an alien with hard skin like steel, it would not be a fact for you that pins prick, but rather a false theory of reality.

PUPIL. OK, maybe I wasn’t clear enough in my statement: pins prick humans!

MENTOR. I’ve never seen them do it.

PUPIL. Stop being funny. I’m referring to the fact that when a human takes a pin and forces it into his skin he feels pain.

MENTOR. Many fakirs have demonstrated that your assumed fact is a false theory.

PUPIL. Alright, let’s say that except for a few exceptions the majority of people feel pain when they are pricked with a pin.

MENTOR. Agreed, but more than a fact it seems to me that yours is only a solid theory, corroborated by a number of experimental data.

PUPIL. Consider then one of these experimental data. Just yesterday for example I was putting my hand into a box of pins and I got pricked. Would you agree on considering this single

event as a fact and not a theory?

MENTOR. Let's say that it deals with an aspect of your reality that you choose to classify, for convenience, in the category of facts. That means you decided to give more relevance to the practical side rather than to the theoretical side.

PUPIL. And what would be the theoretical side to my pricked by a pin?

MENTOR. I remind you that the language itself that you use to communicate is a complex theory of reality, that contains explanations of what is a pin, a human being, what it means to be pricked, to feel pain, etc. But not only: the experience of the prick has been mediated by the specific neurophysiology of your physical body, which is the receptacle of your biological theories of reality. How would you describe this same experience if you were given a completely different biological vehicle? Moreover, how trustworthy are your perceptions? Were you really pricked or did you only imagine it? And, are you sure that it was the point of the pin and not the head of the pin that pushed upon your skin?

PUPIL. OK, I got the idea. But at this point we can't simply say that the so called facts are nothing but theories solidly acquired and shared, that form a sort of stable substratum on which we build new theories, which in turn become the factual base on which we build new theories, and so forth.

MENTOR. An interesting view, which has the advantage of reminding us that there does not exist unmistakable affirmations, purely factual, definitive, absolutes, about reality. That is because our experiences are necessarily mediated by that vast and complex holothory which is our own bodymind. With regard to this, Einstein himself said that it is wrong to believe that we build our theories on our observations (the so-called experimental facts), the exact opposite being true, that it is our theories that determine what we are able to observe.

PUPIL. Therefore facts would follow the theories and not the opposite.

MENTOR. Exactly, which means that the so-called facts always contain – in fact! – much theory.

PUPIL. I'm starting to like these scientific criteria. Do you have any others?

MENTOR. One criterion that we have already discussed is *simplicity*, better known with the name of *Occam's razor*. The criterion says that a scientific theory should never complicate explanations beyond necessity<sup>11</sup>. Otherwise the superfluous complications themselves will remain, in turn, unexplained and the theory would end up lacking explicative power.

PUPIL. Other criteria?

MENTOR. We've already mentioned that of *inner coherence*, to be intended as a *principle of non-contradiction*. Scientific theories must be *coherent*, that is they must not contain internal logical contradictions.

PUPIL. Like the parts of the little devil and the little angel that discredited each other?

MENTOR. Precisely. A theory that contradicts itself is necessarily false, because it is incompatible with reality.

PUPIL. Reality never contradicts itself?

MENTOR. It cannot do it, being by definition the set of everything that exists in the affirmative sense.

PUPIL. Any other important criteria?

MENTOR. I think we have listed all the important criteria. It's good though not to forget that scientific criteria are also part of a *metatheory* of knowledge, which in turn is also subject to evolution. Maybe one day we will recognize new criteria, just as fundamental or even more fundamental still from those that we have listed. Anyway, we can still mention the criteria of *clarity* and *precision*. Scientific theories must express their content in a language that is as clear and precise as possible, as

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<sup>11</sup> This is the version of *David Deutsch* of the criteria.

in the case for example of modern physical theories that use a considerable amount of mathematics. Our common language, obviously, is not as rigorous as the language of mathematics, but that does not stop us from using it in the most clear and precise possible way.

PUPIL. I've heard it said that some scientists also use an *aesthetic* criteria.

MENTOR. It's true, but there is no unanimity about its value.

PUPIL. What do you think?

MENTOR. Beauty is the expression of harmony and harmony is the expression of compatibility, of absence of conflict. Therefore, I believe that the aesthetic criteria, if used with sensibility and discernment, can be a valid guide in the discovery of leading-edge relative truths.

PUPIL. And what is your belief founded on?

MENTOR. It is not about a belief, but more about a working hypothesis, that in the practice has demonstrated a certain potential.

PUPIL. Do you mean to say that it has to do with an assumption that, unto this day, has been confirmed?

MENTOR. A confirmation that is not only external, but also internal, of an intimate nature. From my direct, intuitive and emphatic perception of reality, emerges a feeling of great harmony and beauty. I can therefore reasonably suppose that the theories that express at a certain level of their structure these same qualities have a better chance to evolve.

## CHAPTER SUMMARY

*To be called scientific a theory must be open to criticism – both rational and experimental (falsifiability) – and possess sufficient explicative power.*

*From the explanations contained in scientific theories, we can form predictions. However, predictions without explanations are only superstitions.*

*Objectivity is an important scientific criterion. Scientific theories are objective entities in as much as they are intersubjective, that is, able to generate consensus.*

*Theories cannot be disassociated from the empirical facts of which they refer to, and the so-called facts are always and in any case statements full of theory.*

*Reality is a complex construct of an intrinsic theoretico-practical nature.*

*We consciousnesses are cognitive entities, which manifest through a complex holothory of reality, made apparent by the instrument of our bodymind.*

*Our holothory is not only a multidimensional matrix of explanations and meanings that allow us to interpret the data of our experiences: it is the vehicle itself of our experiences through which we filter and more so construct our reality.*

## 9. EXPERIENCES

*An experience always has a “verb” element, active, of creation, and a “substantive” element, passive, of discovery.*

PUPIL. When I asked you if you believed in the value of esthetic criteria, you told me that yours is not a belief, but a hypothesis. Do you mean to say that we are not obligated to believe in our theories?

MENTOR. No, we are not. In the beginning of our conversation I spoke about the problem of false identification, remember?

PUPIL. Certainly. You said that it is the problem of problems, because the false identification generates negation of reality, which in turn generates conflicts, therefore pain and suffering.

MENTOR. Correct. But, as you know, the false identification is doubly false. It is so at the first level, when the theory in which we identify is a *false* theory, incompatible with reality. And it is so at a second level, because the very process of *identification* expresses a subtle form of denial, completely independent from the theory in which we identify.

PUPIL. Even if it is a leading-edge theory?

MENTOR. Yes, even if the theory possesses all the good characteristics of which we have widely discussed: coherence, compatibility, falsifiability, openness to criticism, explicative power, simplicity, inter-subjectivity, clarity, precision and so on. Even when we identify with a theory which has been confirmed by all experimental observations that we know of, and that has the best scientific attributes, even in this case, at a

more subtle level, but not any less deep, we are still *self-deceiving*.

PUPIL. Why are we self-deceiving?

MENTOR. Do you remember the metaphor about the sculptor?

PUPIL. We are sculptors and not statues!

MENTOR. Exactly. We are consciousnesses that construct theories of reality, not theories of reality. We manifest and participate in reality through our holothoretical instruments, our bodyminds. As consciousnesses we evolve through the evolution of our holotheries, but we are not mere holotheries: we are the *discoverers-creators* of our reality, both internal and external. A reality that we tirelessly discover and rediscover, create and recreate, through our *choices*, that is, our *experiences* that each time *we choose* to live.

PUPIL. It seems that the very concept of reality is based on *experience*. But what exactly is an experience? A sort of *interaction* between two entities?

MENTOR. Interaction is a necessary condition so that there is an experience, but it is not sufficient. In fact, it is essential that one of the two entities can *live the interaction*. This can only happen if the entity in question is, to a certain degree, aware of the interaction, being able to distinguish the situation in which its own self is interacting from the situation in which it is not.

PUPIL. Therefore, for there to be an experience at least one of the two interacting entities has to be a consciousness, that is to say a *self-conscious* entity.

MENTOR. Exactly. Self-consciousness, or *critical knowledge of oneself and the world*, is a fundamental attribute of us consciousnesses, which is added to that of *free choice* of which we have already talked about. Thanks to self-consciousness, an evolving consciousness can distinguish its own self from its own non-self and live personal, *subjective* experiences. But to live an experience self-consciousness alone is not sufficient. An experience requires in fact that the consciousness is also able to



identify the entity – that is the phenomena – with which it interacts.

PUPIL. But if it is a new experience how can it identify it?

MENTOR. Identifying doesn't mean recognizing. Every experience that you live produces in you a certain number of effects. If you *memorize* the pattern of these effects you will have *identified* the experience, even if it's an experience that you live for the first time. That means that there is always an *element of discovery* in the experiences that we live, which is one of the two fundamental elements that comprise every experience.

PUPIL. What is the other element?

MENTOR. It is the *element of creation*, that corresponds to the *active part* of the experience, the one which the consciousness has the power to control.

PUPIL. While the element of discovery would be the *passive part* of the experience, what the consciousness is not able to control, but only discover?

MENTOR. That's right. Putting the two things together, we obtain that an experience is made from the interaction of a consciousness with an available fragment of reality, which we can generically name *entity*. The interaction can always be separated into two distinguishable aspects: one active, of creation, and one passive of discovery. The element of creation is the *animistic* part of the experience, chosen, acted and controlled by the consciousness, while the element of discovery is the *mediumistic* part of the experience, not directly controlled by the will of consciousness, but that makes itself available to its actions and its control.

PUPIL. A concrete example would help me.

MENTOR. The element of creation of an experience is usually described by *verbs*, while the element of discovery is described by *substantives*. Consider the simple experience of drinking your cup of Earl Grey tea. The element of discovery is the

entity “cup of tea”, which is one of the numerous entities present in your reality, available to your experience. Instead, the element of creation corresponds to your choice and action to take the cup of tea in your hands and drink the contents. An action that is fully under your control. The experience as such is obviously the *fusion* of these two elements.

PUPIL. And what have I *created* with this fusion of mine?

MENTOR. For example the entity called “empty cup of tea”, that didn’t exist before your experience.

PUPIL. But I can also affirm to have *destroyed* the entity called “full cup of tea”, which after my experience doesn’t exist anymore.

MENTOR. If you prefer, you can assert even this. Creation and destruction are two faces of the same coin, whose name is *transformation*. But let’s return to the heart of our discussion.

PUPIL. We were saying there are two errors in *false-identification*: the first consists in identifying in theories of reality obviously false, while the second is of a more subtle nature, being embedded into the process of identification itself.

MENTOR. Yes, even when we identify with the most advanced of our scientific theories of reality, fruit of a long scientific-evolutionary process, we are making a mistake. The mistake of believing the theory and identifying ourselves with its content. Because every theory of reality – and more generally the holothory manifested by our bodymind – is nothing else than an entity.

PUPIL. And so?

MENTOR. An entity is only a fragment of reality, available to our experience.

PUPIL. I insist: and so?

MENTOR. We are not entities but intelligent principles that act upon entities and through them. We are primarily the verb part and not the substantive part of the experience. We are

essentially the process and not the form that emerges from the process.

PUPIL. What you are saying is not clear to me. I can easily act on you, as a consciousness, for example by touching you. Therefore, the active element of my experience is my action of touching you, while the passive element is you, as an entity available to be touched.

MENTOR. Correct, except for one detail: it's not exactly me as a consciousness that is available to your experience, but my physical body, which is in fact an entity. Because I am *partially* identified with my physical body you have the impression that as a consciousness I am available to your experience. But it's not exactly so. It is my physical body, or my physical mind if you prefer, which is an available entity to your experience, that you can touch for example. Besides, if it is true that sometimes you can choose to touch my physical body, it's also true that as a consciousness owner of this vehicle I touch it continually, in a very intimate and deep way. In other words, I am continually and intimately *fused* with my soma. This ongoing experience of fusion, or *connection*, between my consciousness which is the verb that acts and my physical body which is the substantive that is being acted, has a name: *incarnation*. The consciousness incarnates into the physical dimension through the continuative (or semi-continuative) experience of a physical vehicle.

PUPIL. Our experience of material reality would be therefore mediated.

MENTOR. Yes, the consciousness interacts with the physical body, which in turn interacts with the entities available in the material dimension. In other words, the physical body is the *mediator* of our material experiences.

PUPIL. I was thinking: couldn't you say that our bodymind, as an object of our experience, is comparable to a kind of *content*, in relation to which we consciousnesses assume the role of *container*? A container which is actually manifested through its own content.

MENTOR. It is a fitting metaphor, if you mean “container” in the sense of an *empty space*, full of *potential possibilities*, inside of which a “content” of *actual possibilities* is made manifest.

PUPIL. Therefore, the consciousness, as an intelligent and creative principle, would express essentially a *spatial* aspect of reality.

MENTOR. Spatial in the sense of *potential*. While what is manifested in terms of content inside the creative space of the consciousness is the *actualization* of that *potential*.

PUPIL. If I have understood well, the contents of the evolving consciousnesses would constitute, as a whole, what we usually call reality, or more exactly *manifest reality*.

MENTOR. Exactly. But let’s explore beyond your metaphor. Consider your intellect in its function as thinking mind. A thinking mind and a thought are not to be confused, just as the container – intended as a space that contains – is not to be confused with its content. Our thinking mind is not reducible to the sum of our thoughts: it can generate, elaborate and capture thought flows, but its nature and existence does not depend on it. The thinking mind exists even in the absence of thought, just as a spatial container can exist in the absence of content. The usual mistake is in confounding the content with the container: we identify with the content and lose sight of the container. The container, obviously, cannot be grasped only in terms of content. It is not possible to comprehend our thinking mind only through our thought process. But, as the content can suggest the existence of a container, in the same way our thoughts can suggest the existence of a thinking mind, which is the space able to generate, contain and temporarily retain them.

PUPIL. Therefore, we should avoid putting thinking mind and thoughts on an equal level.

MENTOR. It would be desirable. But the tendency to confuse mind and thoughts is such that the state of a mind without thoughts, of the container without content, is usually defined as *state of no-mind*. But the state of no-mind is not necessarily a

state which does not contemplate flow of thought, but rather a state where the distinction between mind and thought is fully realized. In other words, a state where the mind, in this case the intellectual one, doesn't identify anymore with the thoughts that it generates.

PUPIL. What does it identify with?

MENTOR. With something that it finds "beyond" its own content.

PUPIL. But beyond its content there is only the container: a space of potential possibilities.

MENTOR. Maybe. But with logical rigor the container could be in turn the content of a larger container.

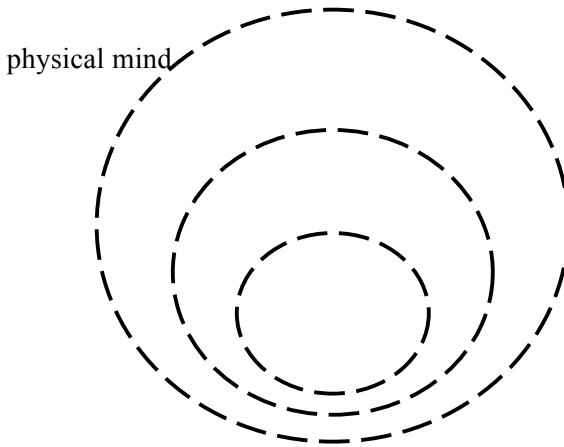
PUPIL. That brings to mind *Russian dolls*, which are contained inside each other.

MENTOR. That's a fitting image. The smallest doll corresponds to our physical body, or physical mind, a space that contains our physico-corporeal forms, through which we interact with other forms present in the material dimension. Instead, the second doll is an emotional entity, a wider space, of a higher dimension, that contains both the physical aspects and those that are typically emotional. Then, there is the third doll: an entity which is imaginative, rational, thinking, intellectual, and the probable seat of our discernment; an even wider space able to contain both the physico-emotional, as well as the typically intellectual, forms.

PUPIL. These three Russian dolls, if I understand well, would make up the entire structure of our bodymind, that is of our holothery.

MENTOR. That is about as much as we can suppose based on our actual level of knowledge. We are in fact able to distinguish physical, emotional and intellectual aspects of our experience of reality, that we can more or less associate to three distinct vehicles. But beyond the *energy forms* manifested by these three vehicles, we don't know if there exist other structures.

emotional mind



PUPIL. Do you mean to say that the intellectual mind might not be the last container?

MENTOR. It could be just as much as it might not be, who's to say? But that's not the point of our discussion. The point is not to confuse the container with the content. Naturally, as suggested in the metaphor of the Russian dolls, from a wider prospect, every container could be comprised as content. We can suppose though that there exists a type of last container, that different from all the others, is not in its turn a content of a bigger container.

PUPIL. A last vehicle?

MENTOR. Exactly, but it wouldn't be correct to define it as a last vehicle. In fact it would be the *driver*, he or she that would act on all structures: the originator of all our processes, the purely *verb* part of our experiences, able to *animate* all of the continuously changing reality.

PUPIL. Do you mean to say the consciousness?

MENTOR. Yes, even though it would be more correct to reserve the term of consciousness to describe the union between the

driver and his vehicles. The *naked driver*, without vehicles, maybe it would be better to call it *being*, or *life*, or *dynamical space of pure potentiality*. While the numerous vehicles of the being, created for the purpose of its incarnation-manifestation, we could call them simply *knowledge*.

PUPIL. If I got this right, the fusion between the *being* and the *knowledge*, that is between the being and its holothory, or bodymind, would give life to the *evolving consciousness*: a space of pure potentiality that is manifested through the experimentation-evolution of a specific content.

MENTOR. Something like that. Obviously, we can only talk of these things in an indicative, metaphorical way, because what exactly the being and the consciousness are, is something that goes beyond our logico-rational capacity to comprehend.

PUPIL. For what reason?

MENTOR. For the simple reason that the consciousness's intimate nature is situated beyond the dimension of forms. Therefore, it cannot be grasped only through our thoughts, as advanced and elaborate as they may be. As Wittgenstein said, to understand the limits of our thoughts we have to be able to think both sides of the limit, that is think of what cannot be thought!

PUPIL. How can we talk about it then?

MENTOR. We can talk about it alluding to something that even though being at the origin of our experiences and of our evolutionary process, permeating and animating all of our reality, is beyond the domain of these experiences, not being subject to any change, as it is the cause itself of the change.

PUPIL. It comes to mind the *center* of a turning wheel.

MENTOR. That's another metaphor that is right on. The center of a wheel is a point without dimension, which from the wheel's point of view – a two-dimensional object – is totally invisible, therefore *non-manifest*. When we find ourselves on (or in) the evolutionary wheel, which unceasingly turns, we can perceive the existence of a hidden dimension whose characteristics are

stillness, peace, serenity. That's the perception of the immobile center of the wheel. It's not visible but we can know its presence perceiving how our inner state changes when from the periphery – where the centrifugal pseudo-force is the most intense – we move toward the center. The center of the wheel is the *source* of its movement. An invisible source, that cannot be directly experienced, because it is situated beyond the two-dimensional domain of experience of the wheel. But not for this is it any less real.

PUPIL. Fascinating. But to tell you the truth I'm a bit lost, I don't know why we are talking about all this anymore.

MENTOR. You're right, we got enchanted by the movement of the wheel and we lost sight of the center, that is the fulcrum of our discussion. But our digression has not been useless. We were talking about the problem of identification.

PUPIL. Yes, now I remember: you said that identification expresses in itself, automatically, a subtle form of denial, independently from the theory in which we identify.

MENTOR. Exactly. That is because when we identify in something we reduce our consciousness to a single object, to a form, to a content, when instead it is primarily a space of possibility without form. Or better, adopting the point of view of the manifest reality, the fusion between this space and the always changing forms contained in it. In short: we are not only *knowledge* but also and above all *being*.

PUPIL. If I understood well, because of the mechanism of identification with the content of our theories, we risk to lose sight of an essential part of our nature.

MENTOR. That's the point, or better the center of the wheel.

PUPIL. How can we avoid this trap? After all, you said so yourself: we are beings in manifestation that experiment the world of energetic forms through a process of fusion. And if I'm not mistaken, *fusion* rhymes with *confusion*.

MENTOR. You're right. The core of the problem, as you have



accurately observed, is in learning the *art of fusion without confusion*, that is the art of being knowingly self-conscious, that is *self-aware*.

PUPIL. But... to fuse ourselves without confuse ourselves, is it truly possible?

MENTOR. Without a doubt. You see, our own discussion through which we have deconstructed the intimate structure of an experience and made evident the duality of *being-knowledge* – that in our language is manifested as the duality of *verb-substantive* – is already a step ahead of a partial disidentification from the content of our theories of reality.

PUPIL. Yes but, more specifically, more practically, how can we learn the art of fusion without confusion, the art of self-awareness?

MENTOR. Simply by not forgetting that your theories are not static forms, but structures in continuous change.

PUPIL. I don't understand. What has this got to do with it?

MENTOR. When you *believe* in a theory, whatever it may be, you immobilize it, you make it fixed. But a theory, when made immobile, is a theory that is not able anymore to embrace reality, because reality dances to the rhythm of the being, the animator of forms, residing beyond the domain itself of forms.

PUPIL. Are you telling me that when I believe in a theory, as advanced as it may be, I find myself in a kind of world populated by soulless statues?

MENTOR. In a world of statues without sculptors, which don't change their form anymore.

PUPIL. I'm confused. Before you said the being is like the center of a wheel, which never changes. On the other hand, paradoxically, it would be the being, that is the immutable part of reality, which is also invisible, to determine the change. How can this be?

MENTOR. A famous aphorism attributed both to the Buddha and

to Heraclites said that: *nothing is constant except change*. In other words, that which never changes is change itself, being that reality is in continuous transformation. The invisible part of reality, that which never changes, is change itself. And “change” is only one of the many names of the *being*. Change is *life* itself!

PUPIL. But life itself ceases when you reach death.

MENTOR. It’s not like that. Death does not oppose life, because *death* is not the antithesis of life, but of *birth*. Birth and death are only the names we use to identify the beginning and the end of a process that originates *from life*, that is *from the being*. It’s good not to confuse life with birth. Life, until proven to the contrary, not being ever born cannot either die.

PUPIL. Ok, but returning to our theories of reality, what would be the antidote to avoid being confused with those?

MENTOR. The antidote is your intelligence, that allows you to discern deep down between the being and the knowledge, between the sculptor and the statues, between the scientist and his/her theories of reality. Consider for a moment the etymology of the term *theory*. The word derives from *theoría*, a Greek term that can be understood as the combination of *theá*, which means *show*, and *horân* which means *to observe*. Therefore, according to this possible interpretation, a theory is the observation of a show: the show of reality! But the term “theory” has been used by the aesthetics also as synonym of *procession*, for example describing a theory of people advancing in line. Thus, putting these two meanings together creatively, we obtain that a theory is a dynamical instrument of observation-experimentation of reality, that is, a *process* through which the being-consciousness participates in the mega-process of the life-reality.

PUPIL. It’s really fascinating, but I don’t know where you’re going with this.

MENTOR. If the instrument itself through which we experiment reality continually changes, just as all of reality incessantly changes, then I ask you: what sense is there to believe? If every

theory is by definition an energy form that is transforming without end, why chose to believe in something specific?

PUPIL. If you put it that way. What would be then the right attitude to maintain towards our theories of reality?

MENTOR. That of the researcher who realizes that every theory, as scientific and advanced as it may be, is only a *relative truth*, a temporary construction-explanation that sooner or later will be falsified, therefore abandoned and replaced by more advanced relative truths.

PUPIL. But we need our theories. After all isn't it thanks to them that we can participate in the grand dance of forms?

MENTOR. True, but a theory is only an instrument. There's no sense in believing in an instrument. An instrument is used as long as it is useful, then it is replaced with a more advanced instrument. We are not the instrument, but those that create and use the instrument. And when we use it we become temporarily part of it, because we become connected with it, just like a driver becomes connected with his/her car every time he/she decides to drive it.

PUPIL. But what does it mean to say to connect to a theory without believing in the theory?

MENTOR. It means going half way between believing and not believing. It means *acting as if* the theory would be true, but remaining fully aware that it cannot be so. In other words, it means to consider that every theory is a *working hypothesis*, an instrument only useful to proceed with an investigation. It's essentially talking about remaining *lucid*, clear minded, to not be enchanted by the ballet of forms. Like when you look at the sky at night and your attention is attracted by the sparkling stars, forgetting what's essential: the infinite space that contains them and permits them to exist.

## CHAPTER SUMMARY

*An experience is always made up of two distinguishable elements: a “verb” element, active, of creation, and a “substantive” element, passive, of discovery.*

*The naked consciousness, in absence of its vehicles, is the being: a space of pure potentiality. The vehicles of the being, created for the purpose of incarnation-manifestation, are the knowledge.*

*The experience of continuative fusion between the being and the knowledge, that is between the being and its holothoretical form, generates the evolving consciousness.*

*The consciousness is a space of pure potentiality that is manifested through the experimentation-evolution of a specific content.*

*When we identify with the content of our minds, we forget that our nature is essentially being-like. To avoid that, we must learn the art of fusion without confusion, that is the art of being consciously self-conscious, or self-aware.*

*Death is not opposed to life because death is not the antithesis of life, but of birth.*

*Birth and death are only names that we use to identify the beginning and the end of a process that has its origin from life, that is from the being.*

*Until proven to the contrary, life cannot die.*

## 10. MIRROR

*To put an end to suffering we can turn our eyes to the big mirror of reality and transform our research into self-research.*

PUPIL. I lost the thread of our discussion: where were we?

MENTOR. Where we have an investigation to complete.

PUPIL. About what?

MENTOR. About reality, self-research and suffering. Don't tell me you didn't realize it.

PUPIL. In fact, we haven't talked about anything else. In that big laboratory which is reality, every human being is a scientist ignoring itself, whose research has the goal of rendering suffering obsolete.

MENTOR. Well said! Every living creature is a researcher of reality. However, we "double sapiens" are going through a very critical passage of our evolutionary story, having the opportunity to reach in a short time our next evolutionary goal: that of Hs<sup>3</sup>.

PUPIL. I wanted to know: would an Hs<sup>3</sup> be always able to disidentify from his own holothory, that is, from its own bodymind?

MENTOR. Let's say that a Hs<sup>3</sup> is a consciousness able to relate in an appropriate way with its own holothoretical instrument, maintaining full *control* of it.

PUPIL. Control in which way?

MENTOR. You said you have a brand new sports car.

PUPIL. Yes, it goes 250 kph. What does that have to do with it?

MENTOR. Every so often, do you push a little too hard on the accelerator?

PUPIL. I admit it, every so often it happens.

MENTOR. When you do that, you are losing control over your sports car: you are not controlling the vehicle anymore but the vehicle is controlling you! The same thing happens with your vehicle of manifestation. When you are not sufficiently clear minded, it's not you anymore that is guiding your bodymind, but it is guiding you.

PUPIL. An Hs<sup>3</sup> though, would never lose control of his vehicle?

MENTOR. Exactly, because he doesn't forget that besides the vehicle there is also the driver. In other words, the Hs<sup>3</sup> never puts it on autopilot.

PUPIL. But isn't it tiring to always keep control?

MENTOR. To keep control doesn't mean to control what isn't controllable, but simply not to fall asleep. One of the characteristics of the Hs<sup>3</sup> is in fact that of remaining always awake.

PUPIL. It never goes to sleep?

MENTOR. It's like that in a way, given that even when he sleeps it remains awake. Even in sleep he remains lucid.

PUPIL. And what would be a lucid sleep?

MENTOR. A lucid sleep is a sleep during which the consciousness remains awake, even if its physical body is sleeping.

PUPIL. Is it possible?

MENTOR. It is, if the consciousness doesn't identify too much with its physical body. In this way, when the body is asleep the consciousness is not constrained to follow it and can stay awake.

PUPIL. And what does it do when it is awake?

MENTOR. Whatever it wants. For example, it can go around to explore the immense multidimensional reality, using its *extraphysical* vehicles of manifestation. But it would be better to discuss this vast argument at another occasion, because we should finish taking care of our false theories.

PUPIL. What else is there to say about this topic?

MENTOR. We still haven't said the essential.

PUPIL. And yet I am aware that I am much more than a simple holothoretical vehicle, and I understand that even the most advanced theories hide the risk of a negation. That is because through the mechanism of identification we can lose sight of our true nature, which is mainly spatial, in the sense of potential.

MENTOR. Well said, but this knowledge will not be of great use to you if first you don't get rid of your baggage of false theories of reality. Continuing with the metaphor of the car, it's of course crucial for the driver to become aware that he and his car are not the same thing, but two distinguishable elements of reality that are able to connect. This knowledge however, would not be of much help to him if the vehicle were broken and not able to travel. To say it in plain words: if the car is broken not even the best of drivers can make it go very far!

PUPIL. I understand, the priority is in fixing the vehicle, and then you can think about the driver.

MENTOR. Even before playing the driver, we need to play the mechanics and repair our damaged holovehicles. That is, renew our false theories into theories openly compatible, not able to produce suffering anymore. Then the aspect of the driver can assume all of his importance. Naturally, I'm simplifying things a bit: the two processes – reparation and driving – always come contemporaneously, in parallel. We are always driving our dilapidated vehicles, that can still move a bit, and while we drive, or better, while they drive us, sometimes we awaken. And

when we awake, besides putting our hands back on the steering wheel, we try to make some fast repairs. What I'm trying to tell you is that for most of the individuals on this planet the main problem is, once they're awake, to make repairs, and not worry about the driver. Unfortunately, there's not too many who take into consideration that there's something to repair! In fact, most people consider that the problem is on the outside of the car. That is, they hold the false belief that reality *should* adjust to their theories! An illusion which is at the origin of negation and consequently suffering.

PUPIL. I would like to try to correct this false belief by replacing the verb "should" with the verb "could".

MENTOR. A great idea.

PUPIL. Let's see... instead of demanding that reality *should* adjust to my theories, I can simply say that... reality *could* adjust to my theories. Hmm...

MENTOR. Are you doubtful?

PUPIL. I ask myself: if it's true that reality could adjust to my theories, then why doesn't it do so?

MENTOR. It does every time your theories show themselves compatible. Otherwise, it cannot adjust to them, because reality, of its own nature, cannot negate itself.

PUPIL. I understand, even if it wanted to, it couldn't choose to adhere to a false theory.

MENTOR. Exactly. But to think of reality as an entity able to choose and want is a bit misleading. Reality is completely impotent, having transferred all of its power to its beloved children: the evolving consciousnesses.

PUPIL. And what can I do with my power?

MENTOR. For example, you can choose to *reverse* your vision. Instead of asking reality to do something it cannot do, not having the power, ask the one who really does have the power, that is yourself, to adjust your false theories to reality.



PUPIL. Why *should* I do that?

MENTOR. Because until proven to the contrary, there is in force a universal law according to which trying to negate reality through a false theory initially produces pain and in the long run suffering. Therefore, *if you want* to stop suffering, then you *should* just do so! You should look at the big *mirror* of reality and transform your research into *self-research*!

PUPIL. I like this metaphor of the mirror. Every time we convey a request to reality, it is as if we are expressing it to ourselves, that is to our theories of reality.

MENTOR. That's right. A particularly significant reversal of vision if we put it into effect with people that are very close to us.

PUPIL. I imagine that the closer the mirror is, the neater and more accurate will be the images that it sends back.

MENTOR. I see you have grasped the concept. By the way, what did that theory about your partner say?

PUPIL. That she *should* be more understanding of me. But then I corrected it by replacing the verb "should" with the verb "could". The amended version now says that: she *could* be more understanding of me. I must say that this change bothered me a bit, because if my partner could be more understanding, but is not, that means she doesn't want to be.

MENTOR. Certainly not in the way that you want it to be. But if you so desire you can go deeper in your analysis and finally understand why your partner doesn't want to be more understanding towards you.

PUPIL. I don't see how I can discover it.

MENTOR. You just have to remind yourself that your partner is part of your reality.

PUPIL. Do you mean to say that...

MENTOR. Exactly.

PUPIL. Wow!

MENTOR. It seems you have just realized something important.

PUPIL. It's really a strange feeling.

MENTOR. Of great freedom and power?

PUPIL. Yes, maybe for the first time in my life I understand that things function exactly as they should function.

MENTOR. At this point, all you have to do is let me participate in your great discovery.

PUPIL. It's so simple! If it's true, as it is true, that my partner is part of my reality, then it's not that she doesn't desire to show more understanding towards me, it's simply that she cannot do it! In fact, if she did so she would adjust to my false theory, and consequently would negate herself. But she can't do that, because reality is not able to negate itself.

MENTOR. Congratulations, you got it!

PUPIL. That's not all: I have understood a lot more! She is not the one who should have to adjust to my demands. As you rightly pointed out to me, it's not reality that should have to adjust to my false theory, but I that should adjust to reality, correcting my false beliefs.

MENTOR. How do you know that it is a false theory?

PUPIL. I know because it makes me suffer.

MENTOR. Exactly: this is the unequivocal symptom that helps you to recognize your false theories. But tell me: how do you think to further correct your theory?

PUPIL. I just need to remember that reality is like a mirror. That what I want to change on the outside, in reality, I need to start by changing it on the inside, in myself.

MENTOR. You've grasped the point in question. Try to apply this turnaround specifically in the case of your theory of your partner.

PUPIL. Let's see... when I ask reality, disguised as my partner, to be more understanding of me, in fact I'm asking it of myself:

it's me that should be more understanding of reality, and in particular of my partner. Double wow!

MENTOR. Yes, you *should if* you desire to stop suffering in vain. You are however free to continue to entertain your false theory if you desire to suffer a little more.

PUPIL. So it wasn't her that was lacking in understanding towards me, but me that was lacking in understanding towards her!

MENTOR. Yes, because you were negating her through a false theory. You were asking her to be something that she cannot be. And that seems to me to be really lacking in understanding towards her. To tell you the truth, not only towards her, but to you also!

PUPIL. What do you mean to say?

MENTOR. With your impossible demand, you were denying yourself the pleasure of relating to her without useless suffering. In that sense, you were really lacking in understanding towards yourself.

PUPIL. What you are saying is really incredible... and such a disarming simplicity!

MENTOR. It's only about using what we see on the outside to look at ourselves, on the inside. I find that this process of "outside-inside" has not been emphasized enough in modern scientific research. Yet, in final analysis, a scientist doesn't primarily act upon external reality, but rather on internal reality, that is on his own theories. A scientist is primarily an explorer and constructor of theories: a self-researcher!

PUPIL. Therefore, if I want to efficiently correct my false theories, I just have to remember that when I'm looking at reality I'm looking at myself in the mirror, and I just have to reverse my vision.

MENTOR. This is the method.

PUPIL. But to be honest there's a part of me that still refuses to

believe these things.

MENTOR. What exactly is that part of you saying?

PUPIL. It says: how can it be that when I look outside I see inside?

MENTOR. Let's see if we can help to answer it, taking a look at the simple mechanism of physical vision. As we have already observed, the luminous energy can be filtered with different modalities, according to the characteristics of the photoreceptive organs.

PUPIL. Yes, I remember.

MENTOR. Obviously, the photoreceptive organ of a biological vehicle is not to be meant only as "eye", but as an "eye-brain" system, because the subjective perception of colors also depends on the characteristics of the *neural system* that interprets the signals transmitted from the photoreceptive cells. In other words, to a specific "color theory" there corresponds a specific "eye-brain" system.

PUPIL. I follow you, but where do you want to go with this?

MENTOR. You will see. As you know, physical vision of an exterior object corresponds to the perception of a light stimulus, emanating from that object. But who is it in the final analysis that perceives the light stimulus?

PUPIL. Obviously the consciousness.

MENTOR. Obviously. Would you also agree that a consciousness, to be able to perceive the stimulus, needs an instrument fit for the purpose?

PUPIL. Certainly, that instrument is the eye, or more precisely the eye-brain system.

MENTOR. Right. We can therefore say that the eye-brain is a system whose task is to interact with the light signals coming from the outside world and transforming them into something that can be "seen" by the consciousness.

PUPIL. Certainly.

MENTOR. Very good. Now tell me: what color is a fried egg?

PUPIL. It's white and red. The white part is the albumen, called egg white, while the red<sup>12</sup> part is the yolk.

MENTOR. Are you sure?

PUPIL. Certainly.

MENTOR. I forgot to tell you that a friend of yours lent you a nice pair of glasses quite in fashion with red lenses.

PUPIL. And so?

MENTOR. When you have those glasses on your nose you *filter* all the frequencies, except those relative to the color red. Did you ever try to look at a fried egg through red lenses?

PUPIL. No, what is supposed to happen?

MENTOR. If you look at a piece of white paper through the red lenses, what color is the paper?

PUPIL. Red, I imagine.

MENTOR. And what does that tell you?

PUPIL. That the color of the paper changes according to the color of the lenses that I use.

MENTOR. Therefore, it wouldn't be correct to say that a fried egg is white and red. In fact it is sometimes white and red, and other times, when for example you look at it through red lenses, it is completely red.

PUPIL. I'm confused: what is the *real* color of a fried egg?

MENTOR. That's the point: it depends. It depends on your color theory. The color of an object does not result only from its intrinsic properties, but also and above all from the visual system that is used. Such a system works in all and for all as a *selective filter* that lets certain frequencies pass, blocking certain others. In other words, when you look at the external reality what you perceive, in the final analysis, is the result of a

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<sup>12</sup> More precisely, the yolk of an egg is red-orange in color.

process of filtration operated by the lenses of your specific theory.

PUPIL. But what has this to do with the supposition that when I look out I see in?

MENTOR. If your visual system is made up of lenses that are completely red, what do you see when you look at reality?

PUPIL. I see everything in red

MENTOR. And what does that “everything in red” apply to: to the color of the external reality or to the color of your theory of reality?

PUPIL. I see where you’re going with this. My eye-brain filters all the chromatic information coming from the outside. Therefore, what I see depends on the characteristics of my filter and not on the characteristics of the outside reality.

MENTOR. More precisely, what you see depends *primarily* on the characteristics of your filter and only *secondarily* on the characteristics of observed reality. If, when you look out, you see in, it is because you are primarily observing the structure of your inner sieve, which you use to filter the information coming from outside.

PUPIL. I understand, if I see outside as all red it is because inside I’m all red, if I can say that.

MENTOR. Naturally, the process of physical vision is only a pale metaphor of our complex and multidimensional way of interacting with reality. But it illustrates perfectly the fact that the input we receive from the outside is not as external as we would believe, because before being perceived by our consciousness it is systematically filtered by our personal holothory. In other words, what we primarily observe is the structure of our holothory, that is the structure of our inner reality. But tell me: that part of you that remains doubtful about the mechanism of the mirror reality, is it opening up some more to this possibility?

PUPIL. It still grumbles, but with less intensity.

MENTOR. Good. The metaphor of physical vision lets us shed some light, if we can say so, on another important mechanism: that of *cognitive blindness*. Consider a hypothetical consciousness of which the visual system is endowed with receptors that are only sensitive to the frequency of the color red.

PUPIL. A consciousness that perceives all of reality as red?

MENTOR. Yes, a consciousness that perceives only that part of reality that is able to reflect the frequency of the color red. For example, it would see a white page as all red, because a white page is able to reflect a broad spectrum of frequencies, one of which is red. But an object that is violet, that would only reflect a frequency of violet, would be perfectly obscured from its vision.

PUPIL. So it wouldn't be able to see it?

MENTOR. Exactly, and since it cannot see it, such an object would not be part of the visual reality of that consciousness. The same is true more generally as pertains to our entire holothory. We consciousnesses experiment reality interacting with a multitude of energetic fluxes. Not only physical, like for example sound and electromagnetic waves, but also *extraphysical*, like thoughts and emotions. Similar to the mechanism of our physical vision, the specifics of our holothory will determine which of these fluxes we can capture and which instead we are not able to receive. Our vision-interaction with reality necessarily involves dark zones, totally obscure, of which we are completely blind.

PUPIL. What exactly are these dark zones?

MENTOR. Possibilities that our holothory doesn't yet contemplate. Remember that we construct our reality based on what we think is possible. When we enact these possibilities we externalize them at different levels, in the form of energy fluxes of different nature. But these fluxes of possibility cannot gather more than what they already contain, like when with red lenses (or a red light source) we are not able to gather the violet color.

PUPIL. If what you say is true then how can a consciousness evolve, that is widen the chromatic spectrum of its own possibilities and open itself to experimentation of elements never seen yet in its reality?

MENTOR. Imagine that consciousness with red visual system while it's looking at two objects: a red billiard ball and a violet one. What do you think it sees?

PUPIL. It only sees one ball, the one that is red color.

MENTOR. Right, but when it looks in the direction of the violet ball, what happens?

PUPIL. Nothing.

MENTOR. Exactly. Even though the violet ball is not optically visible to it, it is nonetheless visible the *absence of its visibility*. It's a negative vision which corresponds to the perception of an absence of perception: a *black hole*.



PUPIL. Are you telling me that we can perceive the presence of that which is beyond the horizon of our perceptive possibilities, just like a consciousness of the red vision can perceive the presence of a violet ball in the form of a black hole, of which it cannot determine its color?

MENTOR. Exactly. All that it can say is that the hole is *not* red. In fact, to perceive the color of the hole the “red consciousness” needs to first evolve its own visual system, widening the spectrum of frequencies that it is able to detect.

PUPIL. It first need to evolve into a “violet-red consciousness”.

MENTOR. Yes, into a consciousness whose visual system is able to perceive not only the red frequencies but also the violet frequencies.



PUPIL. The black hole would then be a non-manifest element of the visual reality of the “red consciousness”, a kind of possibility that is still potential, while for a “violet-red consciousness” it would be an element which is already manifest, a possibility which is already actual.

MENTOR. Rightly so. In more general terms we can say that our holothory constitutes a complex *map-filter* of our reality, containing all the descriptions-explanations of all our possible experiences.

PUPIL. Possible in the sense of actual, of already manifest?

MENTOR. Yes, we use our *holothoretical map-filter* to manifest ourselves, that is to say to orient ourselves and take action in our life. But we cannot see beyond the limits given by the resolution and extension of our own map-filter.

PUPIL. What do you want to say?

MENTOR. That a map is a copy of a territory, and as a copy will always have something missing: areas not yet described, because they are still unexplored. Like those that are beyond the very boundaries of the map.

PUPIL. And what would be beyond the boundaries of our map-filter?

MENTOR. The unknown, that which by definition is situated beyond our present possibilities. That which at the moment we are not able to perceive and experiment. But the interesting thing is that the existence itself of such borders makes us aware that there is more beyond these borders.

PUPIL. If I have understood well, in the measure that we evolve, we amplify the dimension and resolution of our map-filter, adding new portions of territory and new details.

MENTOR. Yes, in its evolutionary movement the consciousness transforms its own potential possibilities – those yet to discover or create – in actual possibilities – manifest – in an incessant process of *actualization of its own potential*.

PUPIL. But you still didn't answer my question. I can certainly admit that it is possible to perceive the presence of our limits and of the immense ocean of potentiality that is beyond them, but how can we develop perceptive and cognitive instruments that allow us to push beyond, as we are not able to experiment what is not yet contemplated in our holothory?

MENTOR. If we were just an holothory, for sure we couldn't do it. A map cannot expand itself! But who is he/she that can expand the map?

PUPIL. The owner of the map, the *explorer*.

MENTOR. Exactly. The explorer is he/she that discovers and at the same time creates those new territories that systematically he/she annexes to his/her own map-filter. "Explorer" is only one of many names we can give to the evolving consciousness, and more precisely to its "being" aspect, that expresses its dimension of potentiality.

PUPIL. Do you mean to say that as explorers we already host in ourselves the entire territory to explore?

MENTOR. If it wasn't so, how could we realize our potential and make manifest that which is not yet manifest? We are that potential. We are that same non-manifest reality.

PUPIL. But in that case ours would not be a true exploration. I want to say: our discoveries would be in reality *rediscoveries*, and our creations would be *recreations*.

MENTOR. I agree with you.

PUPIL. So the explorer, alias the pilot, alias the sculptor, alias the researcher, would be more than anything a *simulator*, one who pretends to discover what he already knows, one who simulates to create what he has already created.

MENTOR. In a way, I think you are right. At a very deep level exists in us the famous center of the wheel: the being. That which from a more exterior perspective we define as potential possibilities, not yet manifest, from the being point of view are already actual possibilities, perfectly manifest. Besides, your

observation just evoked in me an image.

PUPIL. Which one?

MENTOR. That of children *playing*. When children play, what they do most is simulate big peoples' reality. Every *game* is a *simulation* and every game is totally *inoffensive*.

PUPIL. According to you we are only playing?

MENTOR. Yes, a game that we have begun to take very seriously. Probably too seriously.

PUPIL. Why do you say that?

MENTOR. Because excessive seriousness produces identification, which is the seed of false identification, of negation and in the end suffering. And when you suffer the game becomes even more serious, which produces further identification and so on. As you can see, it's a vicious circle.

PUPIL. How can we get out of that?

MENTOR. Live life with a bit of lightness could be a good strategy. However, mind that I said "lightness" and not "superficiality".

PUPIL. How can we become lighter?

MENTOR. Usually one begins getting rid of the useless ballast.

PUPIL. Our false theories?

MENTOR. Exactly.

## CHAPTER SUMMARY

*We usually believe that reality needs to adjust to our theories. Such belief is the mother of all our illusions, from which derive negation and suffering.*

*If we want to end the suffering we need to adjust our theories to reality. An effective way to do it is to make use of the mechanism of the mirror reality: what we see and do not accept outside is exactly what we have to correct inside.*

*Every input we receive is systematically filtered by the structure of our holothory. Therefore, when we look outside what we see is primarily our internal reality, and only secondarily our external reality.*

*Our interaction with reality contains blind spots, perceptive black holes that correspond to possibilities not yet contemplated in our holothoretical map-filter.*

*In the measure in which we evolve, we expand the dimension and the resolution of our map-filter, adding new portions of territory and new details. In this way, we transform our potential possibilities – the ones yet to discover and create – in actual possibilities – manifest – in an ongoing process of actualization of our potential.*

## 11. POWER

*In recognizing that reality cannot be anything but what it is, being perfect as it is, we establish a profound contact with it and access our true power to bring about changes.*

PUPIL. I would like to return to the mechanism of the reality mirror, to the fact that when we observe external reality what we see, primarily, is our inside. I would like to be sure that I understand this mechanism correctly.

MENTOR. Let's consider again your ex-theory about your partner, the one that says she should be more understanding towards you. When you observe her through the (colored) lenses of this theory, what you see is that part of reality that you have labeled as *incomprehension*. To use the analogy of physical vision, we can suppose that the perception of incomprehension for you is the equivalent to the perception of red color.

PUPIL. So my theory would be a sort of red type of visual system.

MENTOR. Exactly. When you observe your partner with this system based on red lenses, what you see is only a small part of her. More precisely, that part that is able to reflect, that is to respond, to the stimulus of your incomprehension.

PUPIL. That means though, that there is red in my partner, which is incomprehension, right?

MENTOR. She probably would not call it like that, but you are right: there is something in her that resonates with what you call

incomprehension.

PUPIL. So I am right when I say that she should be more understanding towards me!

MENTOR. Be careful because this is a very delicate point that you would do well to look into. When you see incomprehension in your partner, you are seeing in her what is reflecting the red of your own incomprehension. And as a consequence of this perception of yours, you tend to reinforce your theory that sustains that she should be more understanding towards you. However, this theory is obviously false.

PUPIL. Yes, we have already talked about it. But tell me one more time: why is it false?

MENTOR. Because it denies the evidence! In spite of seeing red in your partner, it affirms that that red should not exist. But because it exists then it cannot be true that it shouldn't exist!

PUPIL. It's always the same story: I'm asking an apple to be a pear, that is to be something that it is not!

MENTOR. That's right. But don't jump to conclusions too fast as to what kind of "fruit" your partner really is. What you call incomprehension, and more correctly incomprehension towards you, she could call it something else. Your perspectives are different, just as the matrixes of meaning that you use to interpret your perceptions are different. In any case, the fact remains that you are negating her, sustaining that she should not manifest incomprehension towards you. But the interesting thing, besides being surprising, is that it is your own false theory that make manifest the red that you perceive in her. In other words, similar to the red lenses you have sitting on your nose, your false theory *only* reveals that which resonates to its same frequency, forgetting all the rest.

PUPIL. I'm confused. I thought I adopted my false theory in an attempt to eradicate the incomprehension that I saw in her. Now you are telling me that it is really because of my false theory that I have detected such incomprehension.

MENTOR. I see that you are beginning to understand.

PUPIL. Instead, to me it seems like I don't understand anything.

MENTOR. That's a good sign. Your dilemma is like: which came first, the chicken or the egg?

PUPIL. Yes, something like that.

MENTOR. Tell me: which did come first, the chicken or the egg?

PUPIL. I really wouldn't know.

MENTOR. Naturally, the answer depends on how you interpret the question. If we think of the egg as an expression of potential possibilities, then the chicken came first. However, if we adopt a wider perspective, that embraces the manifest reality as well as the non-manifest reality, then the egg and the project contained in the egg, which is the chicken, they coexist simultaneously. In other words, egg and chicken become the two faces of a same coin, that we can call the *chickenegg*.

PUPIL. And in what way is this supposed to help me?

MENTOR. When you interact with your partner you form with her a type of chickenegg system. When you look at this system from the "chicken" perspective, you convince yourself to have elaborated your theory in answer to the incomprehension you think to have found in her.

PUPIL. Certainly, by not being that understanding towards me, I think the assumption is valid that she should modify her behavior to the end that she becomes so.

MENTOR. On the other hand, looking at your system from the "egg" perspective, you will see that if you perceive incomprehension in her, it is because you adhere to your false theory. But which comes first: her presumed incomprehension or your rather incomprehensive theory towards her?

PUPIL. Hmm... a real dilemma.

MENTOR. Maybe it's only an apparent dilemma, like that of the chicken and the egg.

PUPIL. Do you mean to say that the behavior of my partner and my false theory would be two faces of the same coin?

MENTOR. Exactly.

PUPIL. But returning to the visual metaphor, my false theory would be the equivalent of a pair of red lenses, through which I am filtering the light that comes from my partner, right?

MENTOR. Yes, that's right.

PUPIL. And when I filter the light from my partner with the red of my incomprehension, I perceive an image of her that is all red, that is an image of all that resonates in her to the frequency of my incomprehension.

MENTOR. Certainly, and when you see that part which is red you are really seeing the red that is in you, the red of your own theory reflected in the mirror of your partner.

PUPIL. OK but... what I would like to know is if it's really true that my partner lacks understanding towards me.

MENTOR. What color is a white sheet of paper?

PUPIL. What?

MENTOR. Isn't that what you are asking me? When you filter the light from your partner through a pair of red lenses you see all red and you ask: is my partner red? The point is that you can never answer this question as long as you limit the spectrum of your vision merely to the red frequency.

PUPIL. What can I do then?

MENTOR. You can enlarge the chromatic possibilities of your vision, which means correcting your false theory, transforming it into a more advanced theory. If you knew how to do this, you could look at your partner in a new way, interact with her, and verify if something has changed in your perception. You might be surprised.

PUPIL. But it could also be that in spite of the chromatic evolution of my theory she would always result all red.



MENTOR. Certainly, but in such a case, since you will not cultivate anymore the illusion of wanting to see her, at all cost, different from what she is, you will be free to choose: you can stay with her, in spite of her monochrome, or you can search for a new partner whose chromatic spectrum is more in tune to yours. Or, a third possibility, it would be her to leave you, given that following your chromatic expansion she will begin to perceive in you numerous black holes, and could have the impression to not know you anymore.

PUPIL. Wouldn't there also be a fourth possibility, that which consists of helping others to change, to get better and to evolve? If I discover that my partner cultivates incomprehension in her relations, isn't it natural for someone who loves her like me to try to help her?

MENTOR. Help her to do what?

PUPIL. To get better, to widen the gamma of her chromatic possibilities, abandoning incomprehension in favor of comprehension.

MENTOR. Why do you want to do that? Isn't she good enough for you the way she is?

PUPIL. I don't want to say that, it's only that...

MENTOR. It's only that even if you don't want to say this, it is exactly what you are saying!

PUPIL. I only say that if she corrected the mistakes embedded in her holothory, she would become a better person.

MENTOR. Better for who? Who would gain most from her change?

PUPIL. What are you trying to say?

MENTOR. It's the same old story. Because you are not willing to change your false theory, you hope it will be reality to change, to adapt to your theory! In the case in point, not being able to manifest a true comprehension towards your partner, you delegate the burden of such a change to her.

PUPIL. Look, you misunderstood me, I wasn't saying that! I agree with you on the fact that my belief systems influence my perceptions. I want to say, I understand that I have my part of the responsibility for that pair of red lenses that I have on my nose and that have made me see my partner necessarily all red. But what I was trying to tell you is another thing: if after taking off the glasses I continue to see my partner all red, in such a case, and only in such a case, I think it's right to want to help her, so that she can also widen her vision. I'm not trying to negate her, only to help her!

MENTOR. Help her to be different from what she in that moment has chosen to be, right?

PUPIL. That's not what I want to say...

MENTOR. And yet that is exactly what you are saying. On one hand, you say you have taken off those glasses, but on the other hand, you express yourself as if you still had them on your nose.

PUPIL. What did I say that is so wrong?

MENTOR. It's just that you are not consistent. On one hand, you say you accept reality as it is, but on the other hand, you say it would be better if it were different from what is.

PUPIL. What bad is there in wanting to change reality?

MENTOR. Nothing, of course. Besides, you do it continuously. However, if you want to bring about harmonic and deep changes you first need to learn to accept reality exactly for what is, *unconditionally*.

PUPIL. I don't understand, to change reality I need to desire to not change it? It seems somewhat of a paradox.

MENTOR. I understand, but this is the great secret. To be able to change her you need to accept her unconditionally. You need to recognize her for what she is, and you need to recognize that she cannot be any other way than what she is. And that she's perfect as she is! Only with such recognition can you enter into full contact with reality and access your natural power to bring about changes. To say it in other terms, to bring about a true

change you need to establish first an authentic relationship with reality. And an authentic relationship requires *unconditional love*. Not that false love that says “I love you under the condition that...”, but a true love that is declared in total absence of conditions.

PUPIL. So, according to you, my love for my partner is not sincere?

MENTOR. If for sincere love you mean unconditional love, then it is exactly what I am saying. Because you say, even if indirectly, that you would love her more if she would correct the mistakes embedded in her holothory. You can also mask this condition convincing yourself that you just want to help her, but the fact remains that there is a subtle emotional blackmail that is based on trying to negate all there is in her that you do not like, like that red part of her that you call incomprehension.

PUPIL. I have the impression that you are exaggerating: my intentions are good.

MENTOR. What does that proverb say? Hell is paved with good intentions.

PUPIL. Listening to you, people should stop thinking well about others. The world is already half disgusting and if on top of it we all become selfish, for sure it will not get better!

MENTOR. That the world is or not disgusting, or half-disgusting, depends on the theory that you adopt to evaluate it and certainly not on the world in itself. But as for an easy altruism, I can assure you that if I knew for certain that someone was coming to my house with the deliberate aim of doing me good, I would take off running!<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> We're talking about a famous thought from the American philosopher H. D. Thoreau, that in 1845 wrote: “There is no odor so bad as that which arises from goodness tainted [...] If I knew for a certainty that a man was coming to my house with the conscious design of doing me good, I should run for my life.”

PUPIL. What do you mean to say?

MENTOR. That it is not about becoming more selfish, but more *centered*. Because the more that we are centered the less selfish we are.

PUPIL. A decisively paradoxical affirmation.

MENTOR. It might seem so, but it is not. To be more centered I mean to say more *concentrated*, each on their own holothory, and less *concentrated* on the holothories of others. Put simply: we need to learn to mind our own business!

PUPIL. Why should we?

MENTOR. We should do it if we want to remove the suffering in our life and facilitate others, through our example, to do the same. If instead we delight in suffering, then it is undoubtedly more advantageous to go ahead and keep on doing what we have always done, and keep on getting what we have always gotten.

PUPIL. I still do not understand. Wanting to help my partner to change... seems like a noble cause.

MENTOR. Whether it's about your partner or any other person, the problem is in pretending to do good by helping her reach a goal that is yours and not hers. However, this presumption only serves to justify your interference in the intimate sphere of that person, with the goal of manipulating in your favor her inner world.

PUPIL. But if it is for her good...

MENTOR. That is exactly the contradiction: you don't have a say so regarding the good of others. The only good that you have to worry about, and which you are authorized to worry about, is your own. Unfortunately, it is also the one which you do not worry about usually.

PUPIL. What does it mean then doing good for others?

MENTOR. It means bettering yourself, so that your interaction with others is more harmonious. It means primarily to get busy

with your own good, that is with your own evolutionary health. And it means to stop at all costs to be busy doing good for others, pretending to know what's best for them, because this we will never know. In this way others can be inspired by our behavior, by our example, and decide in turn, *freely*, to be responsible for their own evolution, always if that is what they really desire.

PUPIL. What do you have to say about the relationship between parents and children? Isn't it a duty of parents to be busy doing good for their own children?

MENTOR. Between parents and children there exists a contract according to which the children's consciousness confer to the parent's consciousness the mandate to look after their biological vehicles, until they reach the age of adults. On the level of consciousness we are therefore in the presence of entities completely free and autonomous that hold a certain agreement, based on which the children *temporarily* delegate to the parents the role of making choices for them, until they reach full maturity. In that sense, and only in that sense, is it possible to say that a mother, or a father, know what is good for their children. But once they have reached the age of adult the contract expires, and if the parents continue to pretend to know what is best for their children then they are not meeting the terms of the contract. What was first a support, a protection, would transform into a deadly trap that risks impeding the children from reaching full emotional, intellectual, social maturity, etc.

PUPIL. Do you see that even you, at least within the limits of biological parenting, acknowledge that at times it is necessary to help another human being.

MENTOR. I'm not trying to put in question the principle of helping your neighbor, on the contrary! I am only saying that you can't really help a consciousness if at first you are not willing to fully recognize and accept its condition, whatever it is. This lack of acceptance explains why people often feel so powerless in helping themselves and others.

PUPIL. Our powerlessness would be a consequence of the problem of non-acceptance?

MENTOR. Yes, non-acceptance in the sense of negating that which is: negating ourselves, the others, and reality in general.

PUPIL. Therefore, negation doesn't only produce suffering, but also impotence.

MENTOR. The two things are connected.

PUPIL. I can see that the mechanism of negation produces suffering, but I'm not sure if I understand why it would also produce impotence.

MENTOR. The process of negation interferes with your natural power to produce changes in reality. We have already touched upon this argument in relation to the mechanism of self-corruption, but if you like, we can clarify the idea some more considering the example of a very simple action, like the one of drinking a glass of water, what do you think?

PUPIL. That's fine with me. Besides, I've gotten real thirsty.

MENTOR. To drink a glass of water is an *action-creation* that we are all able to do without difficulty. In other words, we have complete control of this specific process of change. Now, if people would ask themselves why they are able to draw from their full power when it has to do with drinking a glass of water, they could apply their conclusion in every aspect of their life and learn to create with great efficiency and effectiveness.

PUPIL. But if everyone, or almost everyone, is able to drink a glass of water without problems, isn't it because it's just a very simple action?

MENTOR. Are you sure? Wouldn't the opposite actually be true, that the action seems so simple to us because when we drink a glass of water we are in full control of our personal power?

PUPIL. I must say that I never thought of it from such a perspective.

MENTOR. If you think about it, drinking a glass of water is not

such a simple action. When we were still babies, we didn't know how to reach this goal autonomously, lacking motor coordination. Even today, as adults, we sometimes lack it, when a glass falls to the ground and breaks, maybe because it was too dark, or because we're thinking of something else, or maybe because we are having a hangover and we lack the needed clarity. But apart from these exceptions, usually when we are thirsty and decide to have a glass of water, our action has successful results. Therefore, the fundamental question that we can ask ourselves is: "Why are we able to create so well with a glass of water, while with other aspects of our life things don't work out so easily?"

PUPIL. So, do you think that the key to overcome our sense of impotence is contained in a simple glass of water? I'm curious: what are we doing that is so special when we drink a glass of water?

MENTOR. More than asking what we do, you should ask what we *don't* do. In fact, when we drink a glass of water and we are fully successful in our action-creation, what we *don't* do is: *to negate* the glass of water!

PUPIL. Round and around we go but there's always this negation!

MENTOR. Yes, when things don't work out there's always negation involved. When things are going smoothly it's because negation is not present.

PUPIL. But what does it mean that we don't negate the glass?

MENTOR. Simply that our theory of the glass is compatible with the reality of the glass that is in front of us at that moment.

PUPIL. Can you be more explicit?

MENTOR. OK. Let's find an example of a false theory of the glass, such as to prevent a thirsty consciousness to create successfully a full glass of fresh water. Would you have any ideas?

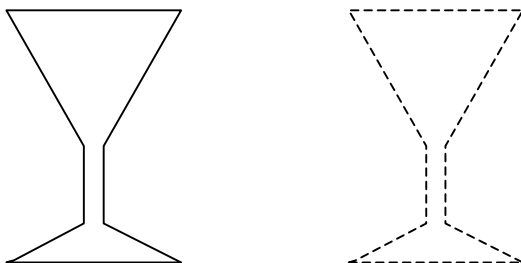
PUPIL. What would you say of a theory that even though

describing correctly the form of the glass, its quality and the liquid it contains, it mistakenly determines its position in space?

MENTOR. A very good example. Acting on this theory is equivalent to falling victim to a perceptive mirage that makes us believe that the glass is found where it is not.

PUPIL. If I'm not mistaken, we experience a similar phenomenon when we observe an object underwater and we extend our hand to try to retrieve it.

MENTOR. Yes, the phenomenon of which you speak is due to the *refraction* of light waves that, passing through one physical medium to another, go through a change in their direction of propagation. If we do not take into account this effect, we will not be able to determine correctly the position of the submerged object, and risk to miss it. But to return to our glass, what interests us is not so much to establish for what strange psycho-physical mechanism we think it is in one position rather than another, as much as to determine the consequences of such a mistake in evaluation. Imagine believing firmly in your false theory of the glass and wanting to quench your thirst. What do you think would happen?



PUPIL. When I would try to grasp it, I would end up empty-handed!

MENTOR. Exactly, which means that your false theory took



away your adherence to reality. And without a good grip you are not able to act on it and quench your thirst.

PUPIL. That's why we always have to come back to ourselves, to our inner reality, to the fine tuning of our false representations.

MENTOR. You say it well. To bring about any kind of change we need to have a theory that works, without which it is not possible to establish a full contact with the substance of reality. Besides, since we are talking about "touching", allow me a brief digression on the sense of touch. We have talked at length about the mechanism of physical vision, as an illustration of the functioning of the mirror reality. But the same is true for the mechanism of touch, because the process of seeing and touching are not so different after all. When we look at an object, we "touch" it through ray-tentacles of light, and from that touch we receive a reflected signal in return, through which we can form an inner representation of the object observed.

PUPIL. However, the signal that is returned is filtered by our visual system, and therefore what we see is not primarily the external entity, but rather the structure of our bodymind, of our holothory, right?

MENTOR. Right. Now consider touch instead of sight, and ask yourself: when you interact with an object, touching it, is it you touching the object or is it the object touching you?

PUPIL. What?

MENTOR. When you touch a glass of water, are you the one to touch the glass or is it the glass that touches you?

PUPIL. Obviously I am the one who does it, since I am the one moving towards the glass.

MENTOR. That is true, but my question is not meant in that sense. When you touch a glass, do you perceive the glass or, through the glass, do you perceive your hand?

PUPIL. Do you know that you are asking strange questions? Probably both perspectives are valid: I perceive the glass and

my hand.

MENTOR. That's right. However, as you yourself admitted, otherwise you wouldn't have defined my question as strange, usually we're more aware of touching the glass and less aware, or not aware at all, that through the glass we are also touching our hand. In other words, we are not usually aware that every time we touch something we are also touching ourselves.

PUPIL. That's very interesting, but what has that got to do with our discussion on power?

MENTOR. Imagine for a moment to have very rough hands, but without knowing it. What is the sensation you have when you touch something?

PUPIL. Roughness?

MENTOR. Yes, you would perceive each material entity as very rough, when instead the roughness is in your hands. You might then desire to make reality a bit smoother and get all sorts of instruments to smooth out the roughness that you perceive in the objects that you touch. But in spite of your diligence, tenacity, all your efforts and resources put into action, the result will always be the same: reality will always remain rough to your touch. In other words, you will discover that you are totally *powerless* to change the grain of your reality.

PUPIL. Now I understand: if I would only become aware that when I touch reality I primarily touch myself, and only secondarily touch reality, I could guess that the roughness I perceive is essentially endogenous in nature, and not exogenous.

MENTOR. Right, but the habit of always looking on the outside and almost never on the inside doesn't help to awaken this awareness. So, you can continue a long time in your attempt to change the external reality, smoothing out to no avail the different entities in which you come into contact. When instead you should simply smooth out your holothoretical instrument, for example using a good cream for the hands.

PUPIL. So, every time that I perceive myself as impotent to bring about a certain change, I should always start with turning around my vision and verify if my problem is on the inside, rather than on the outside.

MENTOR. You shouldn't do it, but you certainly could do it! However, in the external reality you will always find numerous clues that will tell you to turn your look inside. For example, the fact that surfaces of different appearances are perceived by you with the same level of roughness could make you suspicious, suggesting that you better move your investigation from the objects being measured to the instrument of measurement. In the same way, it can make you suspicious the fact that there are people with apparently the same characteristics as you that do not perceive an omnirough reality as you do. What makes these people different from you? Why is their perception of reality so different than yours?

PUPIL. Asking myself these questions I would automatically direct my attention towards the bodymind, towards my holothory, and not anymore towards the external reality.

MENTOR. Exactly. If for another consciousness it's possible to perceive not only roughness but also softness, then, if only you understand what it is they do that you don't do, and you also do it, you could have access to the experience of softness.

PUPIL. According to you, we are always able to follow the footprints of another consciousness? I mean to say: we can always reach the evolutionary heights reached by who is, so to speak, more advanced than us?

MENTOR. I don't see any reason not to believe it, even if it's not possible to prove that such a principle of *evolutionary reproducibility* has any absolute validity. But until proven to the contrary, it is a very good hypothesis on which to base our evolutionary journey.

PUPIL. What do you mean by the term "evolutionary reproducibility"?

MENTOR. That no consciousness, in spite of the evident unique characteristics, possesses a privileged position inside of the evolutionary maximechanism. The evolutionary potentialities are homogenously distributed among all the consciousnesses, in a way that if something is possible for you, then it's reasonable to suppose that it is also possible for me, under the condition that I act accordingly, of course.

PUPIL. In short, if I meet a person with smooth hands that perceives not only a rough reality, but also a soft one, I can reasonably hope to make my hands just as soft as his and access his same type of perception.

MENTOR. Yes, but to do this you must use a method equivalent to his, for example like applying regularly a cream on your hands, or by improving the metabolism of your skin through a more nutritious diet. In other words, when we meet a consciousness that knows how to correct its own false belief systems and access more advanced modalities of relationship with reality, we can reasonably suppose that the same is possible for us, if only we choose to take an equivalent path to *knowledge and clarification*.

## CHAPTER SUMMARY

*When we accept reality for what is, we establish a full contact with it and we access our true power to bring about changes.*

*Our powerlessness is essentially reducible to a problem of non-acceptance (in the sense of negation). When we find ourselves powerless in helping ourselves (or another consciousness) it is because we do not fully and/or unconditionally accept our (or others) condition.*

*To bring about a change the first step is always that of verifying if our holothetical instrument is functioning properly, without which we cannot establish a full contact with the substance of reality.*

*To help others we need to help ourselves first, dedicating ourselves more to the evolution of our holothery.*

*Helping others means recognizing that we don't have a say so regarding their good, because the only good which we have been given to mind is our own. Unfortunately, that is the only one we usually do not mind, delegating to others the burden and responsibility of our evolution.*

*Until proven to the contrary, the evolutionary potentialities are homogenously distributed between the evolving consciousnesses.*

## 12. CHOICES

*We are free to love or not to love what we are. If we choose to love ourselves, our life is a paradise. If we choose not to love ourselves, our life is hell.*

PUPIL. Speaking of clarification, I don't believe I understood very well your position about helping your neighbor. From what you said, except for when we assume the role of biological parents, we should never worry about helping others.

MENTOR. I never said such a thing. Such an affirmation would constitute an evident negation of reality. Consciousnesses often and willingly help and support each other along the evolutionary path.

PUPIL. But you said that we don't have any say so regarding the good of others. That the only good given to us to worry about is our own.

MENTOR. Yes, because when we pretend to know what is better for another person what we're really doing is manipulating him/her in order to obtain some personal advantage, most of the time to the detriment of the other. In this way, we negate the profound nature of the being-consciousness that we find before us, disregarding its natural right to freely and creatively express its own vision of reality.

PUPIL. All right, but if you meet a person in difficulty on the edge of the road what do you do? Would you pass on by without giving him a look just because he/she is a consciousness that is freely determining itself?

MENTOR. I cannot tell you what my action-reaction would be. Every meeting is unique! Would I pass on by or would I stop? There is no pre-established rule of conduct.

PUPIL. It may be, but in our penal code book, the *omission of help* is punished severely.

MENTOR. Of course, when a person is in imminent danger of biological death, we *have to* give help, *if we don't want* to run the risk of the expected punishment of the penal code. However, if we accept running the risk of the punishment, then we can also not intervene.

PUPIL. What are you trying to say with this?

MENTOR. The point in question is not to establish whether I would stop or continue on, but to clarify for what reason I would do so. To avoid the punishment of the custodial sentence of the penal code? For fear of disobeying a moral imperative from the god of my religion, of whom I fear chastening? Or maybe to be able to tell it to everybody, to show that I am a really compassionate being worthy of admiration? Or maybe because the miserable condition of that person bothers me and helping him/her is only a way of effectively clearing me of his/her embarrassing vision, harbinger of sense of guilt?

PUPIL. I understand, most of the time our help is only a mask of altruism and generosity, with which we hide our true intentions.

MENTOR. Yes, most of the time our help is motivated by the desire to obtain a specific personal advantage, or by fear of a judgment hanging over us, be it expressed by people, the penal code, or even the god of the religion in which we believe (and in a final analysis by ourselves!) However, real help is another thing: it is a spontaneous and unconditional impulse that does not look to gain any specific interest. It's a movement that originates from, and develops within, the undivided totality of the being-consciousness. When we help someone, as from such an inner posture, we automatically recognize that the choices of the other do not belong to us.

PUPIL. But through our actions we influence them.

MENTOR. You are right, our presence-existence in reality is sufficient to change the field of possibilities of the other participating consciousnesses. Our bodymind, in fact, works like an *energetic epicenter* that radiates continuously its “holotheoretical light”. Whether you want to or not, we always influence the choices of other consciousnesses. However, be careful, we influence them but we do not determine them.

PUPIL. So, in a final analysis, the consciousnesses would always carry out their choices in a perfectly free and autonomous way, independently of any external influence?

MENTOR. Yes, even if most of the time appearances would suggest the contrary. However, we should not confuse a true choice with a conditioning, which is a reaction of a mechanical nature and only has an appearance of choice. Nevertheless, if we look deeply, beyond the surface of our mechanical reactions, we can perceive the presence of an unconditioned nucleus, the famous center of the wheel, the fulcrum of beingness from which originates every truly free, spontaneous and creative choice. It is with respect to this center of ours that we can reasonably state that no one has the power to make a choice in our place.

PUPIL. Thus, even more so, we cannot be held responsible for the choices of others.

MENTOR. Obviously. But on the other hand, we are 100% responsible for every one of our choices. This is the *golden rule* of the great game of co-creation between the evolving consciousnesses. A sort of equivalent, on the level of the being, of the famous *exclusion principle of Pauli*.

PUPIL. I’ve never heard him named.

MENTOR. Wolfgang Pauli was a famous theoretical physicist and a researcher of the consciousness, which in 1925 formulated a principle in physics that bears his name. According to Pauli’s principle, if an elementary particle – for



example an electron<sup>14</sup> – is found in a specific state, then this state is automatically excluded for any other particle of the same type, in the entire universe. Analogously to the exclusion principle of Pauli, valid for physics, a metaphysical *consciential exclusion principle* would be in force, according to which no consciousness is able to take up a consciential state already occupied by another consciousness, and make choices in its place. To say it in a few words, every bodymind, as an expression of a specific consciential state, can only be occupied and guided by its lawful owner.

PUPIL. However, if I have understood well, the joint participation of consciousnesses in the great dance of reality makes it so that these always influence each other, altering the respective fields of possibilities and therefore the probability of making a determined choice.

MENTOR. Of course, just as by modifying the electric properties of the surrounding physical space, an electron would influence the possible states of every other electron present in the material universe. Every individual consciousness is an epicenter that furthers its vision of reality. A vision that can be amplified or interfered with by other consciousnesses, depending on their respective orientations.

PUPIL. Therefore, if other consciousnesses can interfere with our vision, despite our free choice we cannot always do all that we want to do.

MENTOR. I agree. Evolving consciousnesses all possess the same *evolutionary* potential, and if they so desire can reach the same evolutionary goals. On the other hand, the *personal power* of a consciousness, the field of experiences that it is technically able to live in its present, varies according to the context in which it is found and the evolutionary level reached. However, as advanced as it can be, there are things that a consciousness will never be able to do, such as imposing its own will onto

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<sup>14</sup> Pauli's principle applies to every particle of the great family of fermions, which for example includes neutrons and protons.

another consciousness.

PUPIL. But yet I have the impression that it happens often.

MENTOR. If someone forces you, physically or psychologically, to make a certain choice, then it is not anymore *your* choice. It is impossible to impose our choices on others because once a choice is imposed and made obligatory, it is no longer a true choice.

PUPIL. So, wanting to or not, we always have to reckon with the wants expressed by the other evolving consciousnesses.

MENTOR. Exactly, we always have to make a deal with reality, in the sense of moving *with* it and not *against* it. When we try instead to impose our choice onto another consciousness, even if it is for good, we move against reality, we negate it, pretending to do the impossible.

PUPIL. A sort of omnipotence delirium!

MENTOR. That in the end results in exactly the opposite: a great sense of impotence and of profound suffering. Because it is not possible to do the impossible!

PUPIL. I understand, we need to create *with* reality and not *against* it. It can only work in that way!

MENTOR. First of all, we have to establish a full contact with reality. This can only happen if we pass from negation to unconditional affirmation. Subsequently, once contact is established and we have become fully part of the great dance, can we then contribute to the overall movement with our personal creative impulse.

PUPIL. But this usually doesn't come, because of our practice of negation.

MENTOR. To tell you the truth, it comes anyway, independently from our denial.

PUPIL. But didn't you just finish saying that when we negate reality we lose contact?

MENTOR. It's just a way of saying it. When we negate reality, it

is only *as if* we lose contact, even if in fact we never lose it.

PUPIL. And yet your example of the glass seemed to speak clearly.

MENTOR. To be accurate, we need to say that when we negate reality, or rather when we try to do it, we simply don't move in an harmonious way with the great dance. We dance out of rhythm, but we are still dancing.

PUPIL. When I negate the reality of a glass through a false theory that disregards its position, am I not losing contact with the reality of the glass and thus with reality itself?

MENTOR. Yes, but by losing contact with the reality of the glass you acquire contact with the reality of the empty space that your hand will squeeze in place of the glass. There is no other place to go outside of reality. You are always in contact with something. You are always in reality, whether you like it or not. You are always dancing, whether you know it or not. The point is: how do you relate to reality, that is, to the other dancers? Do you recognize their specific rhythm, their position, or do you project upon them illusory figures. Are you able to move together, to feel them, to follow them, to harmonize and create with them, or are you always moving ponderously against them?

PUPIL. How can I know if I am moving against them?

MENTOR. When you do, you usually suffer, like when you want to make your partner a more evolved consciousness, trying to *negate her for her own good*.

PUPIL. Negate her for her own good... that's an interesting expression.

MENTOR. It's an *oxymoron*: a contradiction in terms. We cannot do good for someone if our action-intention produces his/her negation. It's like wanting to do something good for an ant by pretending it should become a cat, because we believe that a cat, being a more advanced vehicle than an ant, would be better for it.

PUPIL. If you put it like that, such a request seems in fact foolish.

MENTOR. How can we pretend to understand what an ant wants when we don't even know it?

PUPIL. But I do know my partner a little bit.

MENTOR. Are you sure? How can you think to know her when you have not gotten rid of the false theories that you have towards her? Like the one saying that she should be helped by you to become a better consciousness, according to your very personal criteria on the subject.

PUPIL. Hmm... according to you it's only when I have gotten rid of my false theories, that obscure my vision and my judgment, only then can I say that I know my partner?

MENTOR. Yes, because only then can you enter into full contact with her. But to do that you need to stop negating her, pretending to know what is best for her.

PUPIL. To sum it up, what should I do to help my partner? Or rather, what does it mean to offer your help to someone?

MENTOR. It means above all to help yourself, getting rid of your own false theories towards others. Only in this way is a true contact possible. By contact I mean the meeting between the two centers of the wheel, between the two dancers. The being that meets the being. When this happens, we discover that it is not anymore about who helps and who is being helped, but only two consciousnesses that make acquaintance, exchanging impressions on their respective creations.

PUPIL. Hmm... what you say is very nice, but it seems a bit abstract to me. I'm not sure if you have really answered my question. What should I do, concretely, to help my partner?

MENTOR. Start by getting rid of the false thought that your partner needs your help to evolve.

PUPIL. How do you know that it is a false thought?

MENTOR. Go to your partner and try saying: "Honey, being that

I am a more evolved consciousness than you, therefore better, it is my intention to help you reach the same evolutionary peak. That way you will be more worthy to receive my love and respect.”

PUPIL. You are joking. She would punch me in the nose!

MENTOR. Are you saying your theory risks causing you a bit of pain in the nose? Which is, by the way, the symbol of your ego!

PUPIL. If I express myself in that way it is obvious that she will get mad.

MENTOR. In what other way would you like to express yourself? That is exactly the thought that motivates your desire to help her.

PUPIL. Hmm... maybe you are right. And when I get a nice punch in the nose from reality I can presume that somewhere there's an error concealed.

MENTOR. Indeed, because pain is always the symptom of a false theory in action.

PUPIL. What do you suggest I do?

MENTOR. You can try to turn your vision around. Use the mechanism of the mirror reality. The error that you have noticed is not in reality that you can correct it, but in your false theory of reality. Instead of helping your partner to evolve, you could...

PUPIL. Help myself to evolve?

MENTOR. It seems like you are the one who needs it more!

PUPIL. Explain yourself better.

MENTOR. Aren't you the one who thinks an ant should become a cat? It doesn't seem to me to be a very evolved thought. However, if you want you can transform your backwards evolutionary theory into a more advanced one. This you surely can do, while it is not sure that you can transform an ant into a cat.

PUPIL. I'm starting to believe that it's better like that! OK, the first step, as usual, is to correct my false theories. How would I begin?

MENTOR. Initially you entertained the theory according to which your partner should have been more understanding towards you.

PUPIL. A theory which you compared to a visual system based on red lenses, through which I didn't see anything but my own incomprehension.

MENTOR. But then you realized the error embedded in your theory, and so you abandoned it.

PUPIL. Yes, thanks to our discussion I realized that it was me who was lacking comprehension towards my partner, as well as towards myself.

MENTOR. After which, correct me if I am wrong, you asked yourself how your partner would appear without the filter of your red lenses.

PUPIL. Yes, and I concluded that there are two possibilities: that I would have seen her for the first time in Technicolor, or I would have continued to see her all red.

MENTOR. In the second event you said you would have to "help her" to reach your same evolutionary goal, passing from a monochromatic vision to a polychromatic one.

PUPIL. But then I realized that this thought is itself an expression of a false theory that negates the essence of my partner, producing more incomprehension.

MENTOR. In other words, you realized that the red lenses of which you thought you had gotten rid of were still in front of your eyes!

PUPIL. At least I learned that wanting to help someone to become better is not a very advanced thought.

MENTOR. It is a thought that is incompatible with reality, because in reality there is no "better" and "worse", in the sense of something worse that *must* become something better.

Everything is exactly what is supposed to be at the moment in which it is. Besides, we cannot impose a determined change onto another consciousness. And in any case, once we are free from our false representations, we discover that it is never our desire to do so.

PUPIL. My personal change instead would be my responsibility, right?

MENTOR. Right.

PUPIL. I can desire to change myself every time I discover that I don't love what I am, or what I have become.

MENTOR. You can do it, but there is a logical error in your affirmation. The desire to change does not have anything to do with your choice whether to love or not to love yourself. You can love what you are and nevertheless desire to change yourself.

PUPIL. I do not understand.

MENTOR. At every moment of your existence you cannot be anything else than what you are, in the moment in which you are. You can accept this fact or you can try to negate it, with the consequences that you already know of. On the other hand, you can love or not love what you are, and on this you have full freedom of choice. This choice, being free, does not depend on what you are but only on what you *choose to choose*, if you can say so. If you choose to love yourself, your life becomes a paradise. If you choose not to love yourself, your life is transformed into hell. Isn't it simple?

PUPIL. Maybe, but I am both *being* and *becoming*. Therefore, if I do not love what I am I can love what I will become, and use my non-love as a stimulus to change, to become a better version of myself, that I can love more fully.

MENTOR. It seems like you are having a hard time getting rid of those thick red lenses. Yours is a common thought, that many adopt to motivate their own change. However, I repeat: loving or not loving what you are is only a matter of choice. You can

love what you are and continue to love what you will become. In this way, your change can happen in a peaceful and harmonious way. If, instead, your starting point is non-love, it is unlikely that you will appreciate what you will become, because you will never find sufficient reason for unconditionally loving something. Your evolution would then be accomplished in a slow, tiresome and disharmonic way. On the other hand, as you rightly said, we consciousnesses result from the meeting of being and becoming, between what doesn't change and that which changes unceasingly, our bodymind, our holothetical construction. In other words, we are the being that without stopping evolves its own *mode of being* through the evolution of its own holothory. That you think of yourself more as a picture of what you are in a given instant of your present, or as a film, of what you are unceasingly becoming as an evolving consciousness, the point in question is always the same: do you choose to love or not to love your story, your play script, independently from its content?

PUPIL. Why wouldn't my choice of loving myself or not depend on the content of my story?

MENTOR. Because if it were so it would not be such. It would not be a true, free choice, but the fruit of a conditioning.

PUPIL. But when we choose, don't we do it always based on a theory that tells us how we should choose? I want to say, to choose don't we need a set of criteria to establish when and why to change our worldvision and act accordingly?

MENTOR. I agree, and that is the point: you are free to choose these criteria as you believe is best. This is exactly what I am suggesting: the possibility of adopting new criteria according to which your choices don't need to depend on the content of your story, but only on the effects they produce in your life. In this case, I am suggesting to you the possibility of loving yourself unconditionally, in spite of what you have believed about yourself until today.

PUPIL. How do I know that what you are telling me makes



sense, that it is really feasible?

MENTOR. There are some who have already achieved this possibility. That can give you hope. If it is possible for others, why shouldn't it be so for you too?

PUPIL. The famous question of evolutionary reproducibility?

MENTOR. Exactly. But if you want you can also use the power of your intellect to *simulate* a new, renewed reality, in which you have made another choice, that of loving yourself instead of despising yourself, and see what changes. Do you want to try?

PUPIL. What do I need to do?

MENTOR. Imagine yourself, in you're here-and-now, in your life as always.

PUPIL. ... I see myself.

MENTOR. Good. Imagine now that suddenly, for no precise reason, you decide to love yourself unconditionally. From this moment on you are perfectly OK, and you know that you are. You know it intimately, no matter what you think, feel or do. Can you imagine that?

PUPIL. (*smile*)

MENTOR. How does it feel to love yourself unconditionally?

PUPIL. Open... free... full of light.

MENTOR. What else?

PUPIL. It's as if the air is cleaner. Colors are more vivid. I feel a great peace, an inner stillness that nothing can disturb. I see beauty in all that is around me.

MENTOR. Keep going.

PUPIL. The smells... it's all perfume. Even the bad odors smell nice. The sounds... every sound is harmonious, even the noises. Everything is perfect as it is... it is part of a greater geometry that I am just starting to catch a glimpse of.

MENTOR. Where do you find yourself?

PUPIL. I'm still here, but I'm also in paradise.

MENTOR. Remember that this is just a simulation. What has changed in your life, now that you love yourself unconditionally?

PUPIL. Nothing has changed, but at the same time everything changes. Every moment, every meeting... is a dance... a game... it's all gentle and at the same time intense.

MENTOR. Tell me about the others. What has changed in your way of relating with others?

PUPIL. I see them... for the first time I see them. I can see their eyes... I can look into their eyes. There is no fear in what I feel, in what I desire to express. It is all very simple. Now that I love myself, I am also free to love anybody, unconditionally... Wow!

MENTOR. Now return into reality, the true one, the one where you do not love yourself unconditionally.

PUPIL. I would like to go on a little more... trying to bring this simulation into reality.

MENTOR. Your simulation is already in reality, but it is as a simulation. A simulation of reality is not reality, but only a fragment of reality. It would be a big mistake to confuse the two, which would only produce more suffering. Can you tell me what the purpose of simulations is?

PUPIL. As you have said, they help to make predictions.

MENTOR. And your simulation, do you believe it is reliable?

PUPIL. Yes, I believe that it is.

MENTOR. What should you change to infuse your simulation into reality?

PUPIL. The way that I relate to myself.

MENTOR. Which is?

PUPIL. I should choose to love myself unconditionally.

MENTOR. And what would be your reasons for making such a

choice, in spite of the sad contents of your story?

PUPIL. If I choose to love myself I find myself in paradise, otherwise I remain in hell<sup>15</sup>.

MENTOR. Exactly, and that is all there is to it. It's pretty simple, don't you find?

PUPIL. It is, but that is why it is so difficult to believe: it seems too simple to be true!

MENTOR. You are right, too simple and maybe also too threatening!

PUPIL. Threatening to whom?

MENTOR. To your identity. To accept as potentially valid the hypothesis that our happiness, the love for ourselves, is only a matter of choice, of which we are completely responsible, means to challenge our entire system of beliefs on which we have based the perception of our illusory identity. An identity that is nourished by our suffering. If we choose to love ourselves, unconditionally, our illusory "I" implodes and the sensation is like entering a *cognitive black hole*. At first it can be fearful, because we lose our usual reference points, and we have the impression of not knowing who we are anymore. In fact, we are not very used to perceiving ourselves as beings completely worthy of love. But as you were able to verify with your simulation, there's nothing to fear in this.

PUPIL. There's nothing to fear but it seems we fear it anyway, otherwise why would we still be choosing non-love instead of love?

MENTOR. Maybe because we strongly believe in the theory that says that we are guilty and not worthy to love and be loved unconditionally, and that only through suffering can we atone for our sins. It is real foolishness, obviously.

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<sup>15</sup> Hence, contrary to certain preconceived ideas, hell is not a place without return. It is possible to escape from hell at every moment, through a choice of love.

PUPIL. Am I wrong or are you talking about the original sin, when Adam and Eve were kicked out of earthly paradise, as told in the Bible?

MENTOR. Yes, but it wasn't God, whoever he may be, to kick us out of earthly paradise. We were the ones who did it, in the moment in which we believed the false theory of our imperfection, which made us unworthy of our love.

PUPIL. We kicked ourselves out of paradise?

MENTOR. Presumably we did it because of our adventurous spirit, to go in search of ourselves, to find self-knowledge and self-awareness. We negated ourselves for love, to recreate ourselves into an even greater version.

PUPIL. You say we negated our perfection, but is it not maybe true that we are imperfect beings?

MENTOR. I'm curious: what is it that we are lacking to become so?

PUPIL. A lot of things! For example, respect for ourselves, for our neighbor, for our environment, a sense of responsibility, of maturity, and so on.

MENTOR. In other words, everything is imperfect because it is still not what one day it might become! But since nothing can already be what in the future it will be<sup>16</sup>, can we not also say that everything is perfect in its apparent imperfection, being exactly what it is supposed to be in the moment that it is?

PUPIL. I understand, in the end negating that perfection is omnipresent in our reality is equivalent to negating reality itself.

MENTOR. Exactly. In a final analysis, there are no reasons to stop us from loving ourselves and to love unconditionally, except the choice not to do so.

PUPIL. Then why don't we do it?

MENTOR. As I told you, we believe in the false theory of our

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<sup>16</sup> Except for maybe the nothingness!

imperfection, which makes us unworthy of our love. However, it is the theory itself that makes us imperfect!

PUPIL. The same old red lenses.

MENTOR. That's right. When we believe in the theory, we transform ourselves into imperfect beings, and the most we can expect is a little conditional love. Something like: "I will love you if you will do everything you can to better yourself, according to my very personal disposition on the matter!" But conditional love is a false love that is based on the negation of the other, and unfailingly produces suffering.

PUPIL. Why do we continue to choose it then?

MENTOR. Because we have based our identity on suffering, without which we don't know who we are anymore. In other words, we feel threatened by unconditional love and we prefer to continue to be "somebody" in misery instead of a "nobody" in joy.

PUPIL. Well, according to you everything is reduced to a simple choice of love!

MENTOR. It is like that, but initially you have to renew it every day, every hour, every minute, and every second, until you return to dance in complete harmony with the great dance. You will then become a source of inspiration, a radiating epicenter giving evidence to what is possible to realize. This is the greatest help you can ever offer to the other evolving consciousnesses: to teach them by your living example that the release from our false theories is possible and that *suffering is not a strictly necessary condition to evolution*. The teacher, the true one, is he that impresses signs on reality, that he himself livens up, so that anyone can see them shine and return home, if his heart so tells him.

PUPIL. Just as you are doing with me, in our conversation?

MENTOR. What do you mean?

PUPIL. The fact that you are teaching. As you said, you are

doing the illuminated sign,<sup>17</sup> you are pointing me to a few things, to some elements of reality, to some possibilities, in respect to my freedom of choice.

MENTOR. Yes, I am “infecting” you with my vision. On the other hand, you are doing the same with me. Our roles are perfectly interchangeable. Through my teaching I can in turn go deeper in what I teach, bringing to light the residual contradictions, reviewing, broadening and deepening my views, enriching myself from your point of view. In other words, the teacher in turn is a student and the student a teacher.

PUPIL. But wouldn't there be a difference between the two roles.

MENTOR. The difference is only apparent, exterior. The role of the teacher is only a bit more active, more of a proposal, while that of the student is more passive, more receptive, if you can say so. The teacher is like a cook that prepares his best plate of food and offers it to the student, who then tries it, tastes it, expressing his appreciation or his dissatisfaction. From this meeting, or co-creation, future delicacies are born that both can prepare and taste.

PUPIL. A tantalizing metaphor! But returning to the variegated menu that you have kindly offered to me, I would like to express a perplexity.

MENTOR. I'm listening to you.

PUPIL. We have talked about false identification, negation, self-corruption, false theories that can take all types of appearances, like those of false duties. We have discussed about what causes suffering in our lives, on how we can use the precious symptoms of pain and suffering to promote a critical and self-critical investigation of our reality, in order to enhance the evolution of our holothory, which is made of all our beliefs-

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<sup>17</sup> *Note from the translator:* the Italian for “to teach” is “insegnare”, which comes from the Latin “insignare”, meaning “to impress signs” (in the mind). Of course, this play upon words is impossible to be rendered in English.

explanations about reality. Based on numerous arguments, examples and metaphors, we have found evidence on how, almost without noticing it, we continually negate the evidence of what is, creating our sense of impotence and our miserable existence. We have discussed what seems to be the only method to follow, if we decide to better our relation with reality and make the evolutionary mechanism of suffering useless. A method of a critical nature, scientific, which is based on the mechanism of the mirror reality. Because when we look out we mostly see in, when we see reality, we are mostly seeing our theories of reality. It is then enough to turn our vision upside down to be able to identify the mistake, the false belief, and let it go, or simply correct it, opening up ourselves to the joy of paradise, which is not who knows where, but in our here and now, if we only surrender to the rhythm of life, to the beauty, to the love and peace which permeates everything. As everything would be reduced to this, to a simple choice, the choice of abandoning falsehood and returning home, into reality. A reality where every participatory consciousness has a special place, as an entity which is purely creative... complete... perfect.

MENTOR. That is a fantastic summary!

PUPIL. Thank you, but as I said, I am perplexed.

MENTOR. What about?

PUPIL. I know we have already talked, but I continue to believe that it is all too simple to be true.

MENTOR. I do not pretend that everything that we have talked about is necessarily true. If I thought so, I would negate the very essence of our conversation. I believe we have put in place a leading-edge metatheory, not yet proven false, that has all its papers in order to be temporarily adopted and experimented.

PUPIL. OK, but... to think that it is possible to free ourselves from suffering by simply correcting our false theories, one after the other, choosing to love ourselves unconditionally... it's an enthusiastic program, certainly, but... isn't it a bit ingenuous? What about *disease*, that when you least expect it come upon

you and strike you? Try going to a terminally ill cancer patient and telling him that all he has to do is turn around his vision and love himself unconditionally. What do you think he would answer? He certainly did not choose his way of suffering. He did not choose to see his own physical body degenerate and degrade inexorably, until reaching a premature death. His desire was certainly not to create such an experience.

MENTOR. How can you be so sure? How can you know that it was not exactly what he desired?

PUPIL. All you would have to do is ask him, what do you think he would respond?

MENTOR. He could be mistaken.

PUPIL. Do you mean to say that he could not know what he really wants?

MENTOR. He could not know, or not know anymore, that he desired something, and having desired it, he created it. He may not be fully aware of all the consequences of what he desired and his disease could serve exactly that: to make manifest his creation and increase his awareness.

PUPIL. But how can we choose to suffer?

MENTOR. Nobody chooses to suffer for free, without a benefit. Suffering is the price we pay to keep our illusions alive, our false identifications, our false theories, our negations. In any case, you raised a question that would be useful to delve into: *what is disease?* I mean to say: *what really is disease?*

PUPIL. Yes, and more precisely how can we understand disease in light of all that we have said? After all, isn't disease the emblem itself of suffering that strikes us apparently without reason?

MENTOR. You do well to be prudent and say "apparently". Therefore it is decided, our next conversation will be more specifically on the subject of disease.

PUPIL. You mean to say that we are stopping here, just when we



are at an important point?

MENTOR. I admire your enthusiasm, but it is necessary to let some time pass so that the content of our dialogue can settle and integrate in the structure of our bodymind.

PUPIL. In the meantime, could you suggest something for me to read, to deepen the different arguments that we have touched upon?

## CHAPTER SUMMARY

*Truly helping our neighbor is a spontaneous and unconditional impulse that does not look at obtaining a specific interest.*

*No consciousness is able to occupy the consciencial state of another consciousness and make choices in its place.*

*We are almighty creators of inner realities, 100% responsible for every one of our choices.*

*We are free to love or not to love what we are. If we choose to love ourselves, our life is a paradise. If we choose not to love ourselves, our life is hell.*

*It is possible to evade hell at every moment, through a choice of love.*

*Suffering is not a strictly necessary condition for evolution.*

*What makes us imperfect and unworthy of unconditional love is our own believing in the false theory of our imperfection.*

*Everything is perfect in its apparent imperfection, being exactly what it has to be in the moment that it is.*

*A teacher is he who impresses signs on reality, which he himself livens up, so that anyone can see them shine and find again the way home.*

## 13. READINGS

*All prescientific knowledge, be it animal or human, is dogmatic; and with the discovery of the non-dogmatic method, science begins. (Karl Popper).*

MENTOR. What would you like to read?

PUPIL. I would like to delve into the subject of science in general. What would you suggest?

MENTOR. On a subject with such a range you have a lot to choose from. If you are courageous, you can try to read the treatises of Karl Popper, for example the monumental *Conjectures and Refutations* and *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* (Routledge). But maybe it's better to start with something a bit more recent and less voluminous, for example the excellent book by Roger Newton, *The Truth of Science* (Harvard University Press), or the first chapters of *The Fabric of Reality* (Penguin) by David Deutsch<sup>18</sup> which has greatly inspired our discussion on the scientific method. I'd like to also point out *The Web of Life* (Anchor), by Fritjof Capra, in which you will find extensive in-depth examination on the vision of biological life meant as a process of a cognitive nature.

PUPIL. They seem like very interesting books... and somewhat challenging!

MENTOR. Yes, they are somewhat, it's true. If you are looking

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<sup>18</sup> In the book by Deutsch you will also find a deepening of the reasoning on the nonexistence of time.

for something less technical, but just as useful and interesting, then you should absolutely read (rather, you could absolutely read!) the books by *Byron Katie: Loving What Is* (Three Rivers Press) and *I Need Your Love – Is That True?* (Harmony Books). In these books you will find numerous connections with our discussion on the process of negation of reality and on the mechanism of the mirror reality. Byron Katie is certainly not a scientist in the classical sense, but through her personal path she was able to identify what the key elements are to promote a critical and self-critical investigation of our relationship with reality. She calls her method “The Work”.

PUPIL. And what exactly does her work consist of?

MENTOR. It’s very simple: every time that something in reality bothers you, creating stress, discomfort or suffering, you just have to put your thought down on paper (write down your theory!) explaining how things *should* be according to you. Then, through a course made of four questions and a turnaround, it’s suggested that you investigate the content of your thought-judgment on reality, with the goal of highlighting the effects that it produces in your life.

PUPIL. What would be those four questions?

MENTOR. The first two are: “*Is it true?*” and “*Can I absolutely know that it’s true?*” In other words, the first two questions confront you with the legitimacy of your proofs in support of your presumed certainties.

PUPIL. But I already know by now, thanks to our conversation, that if a thought creates stress, discomfort or suffering for me, then it must be a thought that negates reality, which cannot be true.

MENTOR. Yes, you already know this in general terms. However, your intellect might not be so reasonable and yielding when it comes to letting go of specific false theories on which you have based your identity. That is why it is so important to confront yourself *every time* with these two questions, and answer not only with the intellect but also with the heart, that is

with the center of your being.

PUPIL. What is the third question?

MENTOR. *“How do I react, what happens, when I believe that thought?”* This question is equivalent to a *gedanken-experimente*, that is a *thought experiment*. It asks you to use your imagination to simulate the content of your theory, carefully observing what effects it produces in you and in your life. In essence, it’s about recalling your usual reactions towards reality, towards others and yourself, when you believe the thought in question and act accordingly.

PUPIL. What does the fourth question ask?

MENTOR. *“Who would I be without this thought and/or how would my life be if I didn’t believe it?”*

PUPIL. Am I mistaken or haven’t you already asked me this type of question, when you suggested that I visualize my life without believing anymore that I was an imperfect entity, unworthy to love and to be loved unconditionally?

MENTOR. Yes, this fourth question proposes that you simulate your relationship with reality in absence of the thought-theory that was conditioning you, creating stress and suffering. So that you can check in first person that reality has nothing to do with your discomfort. When you adopt a false theory that negates reality, you perceive stress and suffering but, instead, when you free yourself from it, or you correct it, you experience harmony. As a result, reality has nothing to do with it and the power is all in your hands. If you choose to remain attached to your false theory you will suffer, if you choose instead to let it go, or to correct it, you will find peace and serenity.

PUPIL. Am I mistaken or did you also speak of a turnaround?

MENTOR. Yes, the turnaround essentially consists of reformulating your original thought-judgment towards yourself,

instead of towards reality<sup>19</sup>. In other words, it's about moving your vision from the outside to the inside, that is to say from reality as you imagine it should be (but isn't!) to your theories of reality, that instead need a correction.

PUPIL. Like when I realized that the incomprehension that I saw in my partner was nothing more than my own incomprehension, embedded in the prejudice I had towards her?

MENTOR. That's right. Thanks to the turnaround, you can understand that the error is not in reality, or in others, but in our theory of reality. And that it is only in the ambit of our theory that we can bring about a correction, an adjustment, an upgrade, and produce a change. In the books by Byron Katie you will find numerous examples of people that with only these four questions and a turnaround opened themselves up courageously to the work of scientific self-research, abandoning old well-worn theories in favor of mental constructions that are more advanced and more compatible with their life.

PUPIL. That's very interesting, I will be sure to read it.

MENTOR. Good, and since we are talking about mental hygiene, allow me to point out two short manuals, which are a true digest of mental techniques, dictated by a will to effectiveness and simplicity. They are *Oltre i limiti (Beyond the limits)* and *Mind power (Adea)*, by *Vittorio Mascherpa*.<sup>20</sup>

PUPIL. I would be interested in reading something also on the foundations of reality. Your accurate explanation of the substance of reality has greatly intrigued me.

MENTOR. Besides the book by David Deutsch, which I already recommended, I advise the works of *Diederek Aerts*, which I drew extensively from for our discussion about the concept of experience and for the operational definition of reality in terms

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<sup>19</sup> For more information on this and other types of turnaround as proposed by Byron Katie, you can refer to the site [www.thework.com](http://www.thework.com).

<sup>20</sup> As far as I know, for the time being these two manuals are only available in Italian.

of possibilities. Some of his writings are very challenging, but you are certainly able to read<sup>21</sup>: *The stuff the world is made of: physics and reality*, appearing in the volume: *Einstein meets Magritte* (Kluwer Academic).

PUPIL. What would you suggest I read concerning our essence, what we really are, beyond the world of forms, beyond our personal holothory of reality?

MENTOR. Any book of high spiritual content.

PUPIL. One is as good as another?

MENTOR. Obviously not, but a lot depends on your personal tastes. Even if on the outside they may appear different from each other, the spiritual teachings are all speaking essentially of the same thing: of that which is found beyond the veil of appearances, of the unspeakable zero-dimensional (or infinite-dimensional) center of the wheel.

PUPIL. So what do you suggest?

MENTOR. I suggest you explore the shelves of a good library, looking through the volumes, and let yourself be guided by your intuition.

PUPIL. You're not going to point out any author to me?

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<sup>21</sup> In this article you will also find a treatment of the relativistic aspects, that for simplicity we have not considered in our discussion. In fact, according to Einstein's relativity theory, a physical entity that moves at high speed in space undergoes a relativistic effect of time dilatation, according to which one can conclude that part of our future would also coexist in our present. The analysis of these paradoxes depend however on the type of interpretation adopted for relativity theory. If the act of moving through space is considered as a creative process (due to the interaction between the entity that moves and the physical-space-entity that contains it) then these time paradoxes vanish. This hypothesis is referred to in physics as the *Lorentz's process view*, as opposed to *Einstein's geometric view*. Many of the articles of professor Aerts are downloadable freely from his homepage: [www.vub.ac.be/CLEA/aerts](http://www.vub.ac.be/CLEA/aerts).

MENTOR. If you really need to have a name, you can start with the writings by *Eckhart Tolle: The Power of Now* and *Stillness Speaks* (New World Library), besides *A New Earth* (Plume). In a modern, clear and essential style, without harking back to specific traditions (or harking on all of them) Tolle conveys in his teachings a timeless, universal, non-dogmatic message of a theoretico-practical nature, which is the same that has been transmitted by every great spiritual master that has graced this planet with the sole of his/her feet since time unmemorable.

PUPIL. And that would be?

MENTOR. That the transcending of our ordinary state of consciousness, built upon an illusory and conflicting “I”, is an unavoidable goal to reach the inner peace and put an end to the sad vicious circle of suffering.

PUPIL. I thank you, now I have something to read until our next meeting.

MENTOR. Remember though that even the so-called spiritual texts are nothing but theories of reality. The most elevated and elevating thoughts always need to be heard with open minds and hearts, besides with a critical spirit and discernment.

PUPIL. This I have understood by now: every time we rigidly believe something, we close ourselves in a mental capsule, which deprives us of a full contact with reality.

MENTOR. Yes, a reality of which you are part of and at the same time, paradoxically, is part of you, because you are able to enclose it entirely within yourself, in the intimate sphere of your potential being.

PUPIL. What do you mean to say?

MENTOR. That in a certain sense you contain reality, which contains you, which contains reality, which contains you, and so forth, endlessly. A very mysterious relationship, which is at the origin of all our logical paradoxes. Something that our intellect is not able to fully understand. Something that is at the base of our enigmatic “sense of self” and of our feeling so intimate with



the infinite totality of *all-that-is*, both in the actual and potential sense.

PUPIL. Hmm... I will meditate on this fascinating mystery.

MENTOR. See you soon then... have a good meditation and... a good self-research!

## 14. COMMENT

*The word “martyr” means “witness”. Not a witness of faith, but of our false beliefs, through which we continue to aggress ourselves, both psychologically and physically.*

Dear Massimiliano,

I finally had a peaceful moment to carefully read your dialogue: it's very interesting, written with utmost clarity and the right sparing use of words. The dissertation on the relation of will-power, even if it revives a theme that was already explored by traditional psychoanalysis, in relation to the sense of guilt, is sufficiently innovative in its “scientific” approach. I enjoyed the part about being cast out from earthly paradise: it would be worth investigating further on the theme of original guilt, which is a clever subterfuge to withdraw from the responsibility of living your life to the fullest. Maybe a bit of Buddhism wouldn't hurt: Man is God, only if he would wish it... but this great truth is found also in Judaic-Christian traditional writers: for example Isaac Singer in “The Penitent” and “Magician of Lubin”. In any case, here are two constructive criticisms:

1. In the chapter “Negation”, if you replace “scratch on the car” with “the assassination of your son or your mother”, the thesis begins to waver: the question “Why do you suffer then?” becomes, I'd say, untenable. If it's true that reality can't attack us, because this affirmation is simply “absurd”, inasmuch as reality “is” and that's it, even more true is that reality may be

very inhospitable for us humans: if I am born in a Brazilian favelas I will not have the same life as one born in Lugano, this is an inconvertible fact. This I can choose to realize, or refuse to do so, thus hiding behind “false theories”, but in the first hypothesis I’m messed up, that’s the way it is... Said in a nutshell: the fact that our false theories of reality are a source of suffering is only a part of the problem, because, apart from the holothory that each of us may develop individually, reality, if objectively inhospitable, is a source of suffering for the human being (to make another example: imagine if we were born in an atmosphere full of cyanide, instead of oxygen – and in these days the example is not all that theoretical – we may certainly recognize it, but that won’t help us breath any better...)

2. From the previous consideration I think also comes a second consideration: it is not true that if we all become wise and begin loving each other for what we are we would be necessarily excluded from suffering: there still remains physical suffering caused by external means, and consequently also moral suffering, not being able to live the life that we could have lived in its absence.

Your friend always, E.

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Dear E.

It is a pleasure to receive your news and read from you. About your interesting considerations I may say this. It is without doubt that when we compare a banal event as a scratch on the car’s bodywork (event A) with that of the loss of a child, or of a parent (event B), the argument of the mentor may appear to us untenable. But, is that really it? The mechanism which fosters

suffering (in this case uniquely of psychological origin) is always the same, or else is there a substantial difference that makes mentor's reasoning lapse in case B? We can be sure of one thing: that in case B we experience a much more intense suffering than in case A, and normally for a longer time (sometimes for the entire biological life, and beyond). So, facing this increased intensity, it's spontaneous to ask ourselves if the mechanism that in case B makes us suffer is not only quantitatively, but also qualitatively different from case A. The question is relevant, since, as it is known, not always two times more of something (in this case of suffering) is two times more of the same thing, as the great Paul Watzlawick loved to remind us. To give you an example: if a couple of glasses of water are a precious nutrient able to quench your thirst, several liters of water drunk quickly can generate an electrolytic imbalance that could even kill you! I would say, though, that you must make a distinction between the causes and effects. The effects of a very intense suffering are undoubtedly different compared to a light suffering. For example, the unexpected loss of a child could even promote on the physical plane the onset of a tumor (as happened for example to Dr. Geerd Hamer, when his son was killed), while the slash on the car might, at worst, provoke an erythema (or a wart!) The mentor's reasoning, if it pretends being universal, is because it regards the causes and not the effects of suffering. And strictly speaking, if I can neutralize in case B, as in A, the causes of suffering, then it should be possible to "lose" a son or a parent without for this reason suffer (the quotation marks are essential!). Obviously, at our present stage of evolution, this possibility may appear to us as science fiction, and to some extent certainly it is, but in the sense, I hope, of good science fiction, that in the future will become true and transform into real science. Why at the moment is it still science fiction? I believe simply because of our irremovable beliefs on the topic of death and presumed loss, reinforced by the terrifying memories we still have about it. Such extra baggage surely doesn't help us undo our false prejudices on the topic, also because a great part of that luggage is written in a

childish language, primarily emotional. And as long as those parts (subtheories) do not grow, acquiring a more mature and realistic vision of life, more in contact with reality, we will have a hard time freeing ourselves of the great sufferings built into events like type B. The invincible warriors, they say, are those that celebrate their death before going into battle, so as to be free from all fear. They have already consumed their mourning (the mourning of their false theories of reality) and by doing so, they become unstoppable combatants (they are already dead, and cannot die any more). In a less martial metaphor, we may say that the wise man, the real one, doesn't identify himself in the content of his thoughts about the world, neither does he recognize having the paternity of his thoughts, and in this way they cannot overtake him any longer. But not because of a cold detachment, or of a mere anesthesia. Rather, because he has reached a deep and real autonomy with respect to them. The wise man doesn't know if the "loss" of a child, or parent, is a good thing or a bad thing. Actually, he doesn't even bother to have to sort the event in one of these categories. Simply, he takes notice of what is, and, possibly, if ever he chooses to interrogate himself, he does it in a constructive way, and not in a destructive one. He does it to understand evolution, not to harm himself psychologically. How many people, facing the departure of a being they love, have the open-mindedness to ask themselves questions such as: "If it's true that I live in paradise (or, if you prefer, in a potential paradise, which can become real provided that, with my mind, I stop creating hell), what could possibly be good in my child's or father/mother's death, both for me and for them? If it's true that the universe supports us, without distinction, in our evolutionary journey, made of continuous discoveries and co-creations, what could be the reasons for B to be preferred to non-B?" To the extent that we try to answer (but really!) these questions, we may rebuild a vision of the world (of life and the presumed death) that doesn't provoke, gratuitously, inner and outer conflicts, but only harmony. Naturally, to reach this sought after goal, we have a way to go, because the memories are many and deep, and have

on us a tremendous hypnotic power. But we must learn (or rather, we can learn!) to let go of our childish self-images, soaked with distorted visions of life (distorted in the sense of being evidently false.) In other words, first we have to learn to be, and only then can we learn to think, avoiding the interference of those superstructures so pregnant that we have inherited, and mistaken for what we are (an identity founded on suffering instead of joy).

With regard instead to the fact that there are places inhospitable to human beings, the question to be asked in this case is the following: what did I go to such a place for? What unhealthy vision of the world brought me to inflict on myself such suffering? (I'm simplifying, of course, this brings us to the whole issue of intentionally self-inflicted suffering, like when I suffer in the struggle of breaking the chains that imprison me; but in this case it's the correct move, because the final result is liberation). And who is directly born into an inhospitable place without ever asking anything from anyone? Or who is even born with a genetic defect? In that case the (hypothetical) inhospitable environment would actually be the very biological vehicle! Well, obviously in these cases it is necessary to ask ourselves: is it really true that the consciousness comes into being at the moment of the biological birth? And if I do not have certainties in regard, why do I nevertheless choose to cultivate a vision of the world in which the creatures suffer for without a reason! Vision that, among other things, makes me in turn to suffer pointlessly! Is it really possible a reality in which there are intelligent principles, as we are, that choose to suffer for no reason at all? But getting back to genetics: can we really exclude the existence of a paragenetics that precedes it and partly defines it? Have we ever investigated about this? Which choices of my past (in this case extraphysical, that is prior to the "descent" into the physical dimension) have determined my actual condition? In the measure of which we grow (we evolve) as consciousnesses, we can undoubtedly learn to sow better! (In French it would be a good play on words, since "semer" also

sounds like “s’aimer”, which means to love!) It is self-evident to me that the suffering that we experience today is nothing else than the result of our false theories of yesterday, that we have inherited and self-inherited, and believed. And our suffering is just there to remind us of that. It comes to my mind that the word “martyr”, in its original sense, really means “witness”. Not a witness of faith, therefore, but more so of our false beliefs, through which we continue to aggress ourselves, both psychologically and physically. However, if we do not enlarge the (theoretical) conceptual frame with which we investigate our lives, beyond the very reductive one of the mere biological epiphenomenon, I agree with you that the whole matter of our actual (intrapysical) condition may appear as hardly understandable, if not totally absurd. But I have talked enough, I shall end here. I hope that in some measure I have been able to answer your (very justified) perplexities. A big hug my dear friend, and many thanks for your precious contribution.

*Massimiliano*

## ABOUT AUTORICERCA

*AutoRicerca* is the (open access) journal of the *LAB – Laboratorio di Autoricerca di Base* (Laboratory of Basic Self-Research). Its mission is to publish writings of value, in Italian, on the topic of inner research.

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